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*Günter Grass's Use of  
Baroque Literature*

ALEXANDER WEBER

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## PREFACE

This work is the slightly revised version of a PhD thesis accepted by the University of Cambridge in 1991.

I should like to thank my supervisor Professor Leonard Forster for his advice and great support. I am also indebted to Professor Wilfried Barner (Göttingen) and Professor Manfred Windfuhr (Düsseldorf). What I owe to my teachers exceeds all possible acknowledgement in references or footnotes.

I am also very grateful to the Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes for funding this thesis and I should like to thank the Editors of this series for accepting the dissertation for publication.

I wish to dedicate this book to my mother.

## INTRODUCTION

This study tries to show the complexity of the relationship between Günter Grass's writings and baroque literature. It is not simply an investigation of the influence of baroque literature on Grass's works. Because of the great variety of links between Grass and seventeenth-century literature ranging from thematic and structural affinities to the skilful use of baroque literary techniques, this study argues on several different levels. However different the methods employed may be, it generally works on the assumption that baroque literature provides a context which can help us to understand Grass's writings. None the less it does not suggest that the use of baroque literature is the only key to understanding Grass's texts. My aim is to view his works from a certain angle in order to make a contribution to a general picture of Grass's writings, which no single study of this kind can draw.

I also address the general problem of how literature evolves within a framework of certain traditions which can be adapted, modified, rediscovered, or rejected. Grass's use of baroque literature is particularly significant because it takes up a tradition from which German literature had long broken away. I will therefore try to show what is specific about Grass's dialogue with a past literary tradition. Closely related to this is the question of how Grass uses the baroque legacy, the possible modes of use ranging from mere imitation to parody. I will also try to analyse how the use of baroque literature can enrich the mode of writing of a modern author.

This study is structured around the different forms and phases of Grass's use of baroque literature. It moves from an outline of general thematic parallels in the early works to an analysis of the conscious use of baroque literature in *Der Butt* and *Das Treffen in Telgte*.<sup>1</sup> Only in these later novels are baroque poets and their works thematized. Grass's early works, by contrast, draw upon baroque literature only indirectly. None the less, themes such as vanity, *carpe diem* and Stoicism, and literary devices such as the use of emblems or petrarchistic imagery already play an important part at this early stage. Many motifs and themes which are at the core of Grass's later use of baroque

<sup>1</sup> Günter Grass, *Werkausgabe in zehn Bänden*, edited by Volker Neuhaus (Darmstadt and Neuwied, 1987), vols v, vi. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text (Roman numerals refer to volumes of this edition: iii, 380; v, 210, etc.).

literature start developing in his first publications. Therefore this study begins with an investigation of baroque themes in these writings, particularly the use of vanity emblems. Many of these motifs have, of course, been interpreted before, but they need to be re-examined here. I analyse them as emblems and try to establish their meaning within a baroque context. However, there are also significant analogies with the strategies of offsetting a prevailing vanity tone through the use of the *carpe diem* theme, certain emblems of solace, and Stoicism.

I have excluded the parallels between *Die Blechtrommel* and the baroque picaresque novel from this study because it is the only link between Grass and the baroque which has often been discussed in detail.<sup>2</sup> The secondary literature on this topic is vast, while the many other important aspects of Grass's use of baroque literature have never been analysed. Moreover, this study will — contrary to a general tendency in Grass research — focus on the later works. In an excursus I argue that there are similar parallels between *Der Butt* and the courtly-historical novel of the seventeenth century.

In a later part of this work I analyse the use of baroque literature in several chapters of *Der Butt*. The way in which Grass employs baroque sources, fakes quotations and creates archaisms is carefully examined. The close investigation of the use of baroque literature in *Der Butt* allows for a more selective treatment of the matter when its spin off, *Das Treffen in Telgte*, is discussed. Therefore not all references to baroque literature in the latter novel are cited. The important sources are known and most borrowings are quite easily traceable. It is rather my aim to interpret the novel by exploring its use of the baroque literary tradition. I have focused on those aspects of the baroque background which lead to an interpretation of the novel. I have not tried to achieve completeness, therefore, but hope to have provided sufficient examples to show how a modern writer replenishes his artistic devices through a rediscovery of a long-neglected literary tradition.

As this study is engaged in a variety of tasks the status of its arguments changes accordingly. However, all these arguments are addressing one central question. When critics try to describe the essence of Grass's writings a

<sup>2</sup> Recent articles are Bogdan Mircev, 'Günter Grass: *Die Blechtrommel*: Eine Modifikation des pikaresken Romangenes', *Philologia*, 19/20 (1987), 60-67 and Laurence A. Rickels, 'Die *Blechtrommel* zwischen Schelmen- und Bildungsroman', *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur neueren Germanistik*, 20 (1985-86), 109-32; for the earlier literature on this topic see Franz Josef Görtz, 'Kommentierte Auswahl-Bibliographie', in *Text und Kritik*, 1/1a (*Günter Grass*), edited by Heinz Ludwig Arnold, fifth edition (Munich, 1978), pp. 175-99 (pp. 179-82).

frequently used adjective is the term 'baroque'. So persistent is this characterization that it has almost become a stereotype. And yet, even though this term is attributed so often to Grass, the precise connection between Grass and baroque literature is never really spelled out (the only exception is the affinity between Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* and the picaresque novel which is well researched). The following central question forms a starting point for this study: in what sense can the term 'baroque' be applied to Grass's works? A problem that arises in answering this question lies in the definition of the term 'baroque' which is far from uncontroversial.<sup>3</sup> The lack of a conclusive definition of this term need not be a disadvantage, because it allows for a reappraisal of the cliché of baroque style from which Grass for good reasons has distanced himself.<sup>4</sup> What can be learned from the debate about baroque as a literary term is that the word does not have a perfectly consistent meaning; it rather comprises a variety of different and sometimes even contradictory tendencies in the literature of the seventeenth century. If we, for the purposes of this study, take 'baroque' as a term of periodization comprising the whole variety of characteristics of seventeenth-century literature, we can explore the relation between Grass and the baroque much more fully. So far the word 'baroque' has mainly been used in Grass criticism in a very restricted sense, referring, for instance, to some features of the picaresque novel or a general tendency of his writings towards earthliness such as the indulgence in food. These popular concepts are just single elements of this complex term. This study argues that many other features, which deserve no less to be called baroque, can also be found in Grass; sometimes they may form opposites to the popular concepts, e.g. the courtly-historical novel written in the *genus grande*, which in many respects forms a counterpart to the picaresque novel of the *genus humile*; or the decisive theme of vanity which contrasts with worldliness. This comprehensive notion of baroque allows us to take a fresh look at the full range of relations between Grass and seventeenth-century literature.

<sup>3</sup> See *Der literarische Barockbegriff*, edited by Wilfried Barner (Darmstadt, 1975).

<sup>4</sup> See Grass's critical remarks on the cliché 'von einer rülpfenden, fuzzenden Sprache' and of 'volles Lebensgefühl' as baroque: 'Hier zeigt sich eines der typischen Mißverständnisse über den Begriff "barock"...Das sind Barockvorstellungen, die mehr mit Chippendale zu tun haben, mit nachgemachten Dingen, als mit Kenntnis einer Geschichtsperiode, die vage und mehr von der Architektur her so bezeichnet wurde' (Heinz Ludwig Arnold, 'Gespräche mit Günter Grass', in *Text und Kritik*, 1/1a, p. 29). This quotation proves that Grass is well aware of the history of the controversial term 'baroque'. The word was used by Jacob Burckhardt for what in his view was the 'decay' of High Renaissance architecture. Heinrich Wölfflin was the first art historian to use the word to describe architecture in a non-pejorative way.

In order to deal with the variety of these links different methods need to be employed. The first chapter traces thematic parallels between Grass and baroque literature. The argument of this chapter is that some of the fundamental polarities in Grass's early writings (the vanity imagery which is offset by the *carpe diem* theme and Stoicism) is fundamental also to baroque literature. The emphasis is not on sources, but on structural and thematic similarities of a particular kind of imagery (namely baroque emblems). The investigation of Stoicism in Grass's works has a similar purpose. It argues that there is a decisive parallel between Grass and baroque literature in that both adapt a similar philosophical stance which is derived from Senecan Stoicism. Again the main interest is not in tracing the influence of Stoic philosophy on Grass and baroque literature (in this case the evidence speaks for itself). The aim is rather the aim to show that — as in baroque literature — Stoicism can lead to a better understanding of Grass's works; it can also help to explain some developments in the novels following *örtlich betäubt*. Thus the first chapter mainly draws thematic parallels, it aims at understanding literature through comparative study.

In the second chapter this comparative approach is extended; it does not only deal with themes, but also with structures and the question of genre. It has often been argued that there is an affinity between the structure of *Die Blechtrommel* and the picaresque novel of the baroque. These parallels remain valid regardless of whether they are the result of immediate influence or not. Similarly the chapter on *Der Butt* and the courtly-historical novel is concerned with understanding through comparison rather than with sources. In other words, what is being investigated here are general features such as the overall narrative structure of the novels, the literary techniques, the way in which historical events are presented to the reader and some of the main themes. The chapter suggests a specific reading of *Der Butt* just as one might suggest a reading of *Die Blechtrommel* as a picaresque novel or a 'Bildungsroman'.

Chapters three and four differ from the previous chapters because they deal with Grass's conscious use of baroque literature in the later works. Strictly speaking it is these chapters which are referred to by the title of this study, while the first two chapters only deal with the use of baroque literature in a loose sense. However, the chapters on *Der Butt* and *Das Treffen in Telgte* are not confined to pointing out isolated connections between baroque literature and Grass's later novels; rather they aim at demonstrating that the relation is much more substantial than those links which are detectable quite easily. The main argument is this: in these later works it is not just some themes and

motifs that need to be understood through the context of baroque literature; it is to some degree the very texture of these works which ought to be analysed according to baroque poetics. What is of interest here, are not so much the borrowings, but the tendency towards a rhetorical structure in Grass's later works. Grass increasingly becomes a *poeta doctus* who — like the baroque poets — plays a sophisticated game with the reader. It is clear from the depiction of the characters Opitz and Gryphius in *Der Butt* and the character Gelnhausen in *Das Treffen in Telgte* that Grass familiarized himself with baroque poetics. Grass not only treats baroque literature as a topic, he skilfully employs literary techniques and poetic rules of this period. This further justifies the approach to these works through rhetorical analysis.

A major task of this study is to analyse Grass's works without employing categories which are derived from notions such as 'Genieästhetik' or 'Erlebnisdichtung'. These notions of the Goethe period still influence contemporary criticism. Contrary to much of Grass criticism which regards him as a writer who is more gifted than educated and who is often writing about personal experience, this study concentrates on Grass's use of literary techniques. It tries to gain new insights into the fabric of his writings through a rhetorical analysis of the texts. Thus this study tries to break new ground by applying rhetorical categories, which form the foundation of baroque poetics, to the writings of a modern author. It aims at making a contribution to Grass criticism by understanding and interpreting his works as the result of rhetorical *ars* rather than creative potential. It also exploits rhetoric as a source for a new critical language. The rhetorical terminology seems to be more applicable to an author who has become a fully fledged *poeta doctus*, who is well versed in the rhetorical tradition of the baroque and highly conscious of his use of literary devices. Much of the critical language used in our discipline, however, is derived from aesthetic concepts of the Goethe period and the nineteenth century. In the discussion of Gelnhausen's poetical programme which is sketched out in *Das Treffen in Telgte* it will be seen how heavily many critics draw on the 'Genieästhetik' and how dismissive they are of its counterpart, the employment of literary craftsmanship and rhetorical *ars*. The latter has been undervalued by many Germanists whose main training was in the field of Goethe research. It is well known that Goethe used the word rhetoric in a clearly pejorative sense.<sup>5</sup> The eighteenth-century 'Erlebnisdich-

<sup>5</sup> See Wilfried Barner, *Barockrhetorik: Untersuchungen zu ihren geschichtlichen Grundlagen* (Tübingen, 1970), p 14.

## INTRODUCTION

tung' and 'Genieästhetik' broke away from baroque poetics (Gottsched being one of the last influential proponents of a poetics according to the conventional rhetorical system). Ever since, Goethe's verdict against rhetoric seems to have remained largely in force. This makes Grass's turn to the rhetorical baroque literature even more significant. He deliberately takes up and endorses a literary tradition which was rejected during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This is an encouragement to the critic to reappraise in particular Grass's later works through some pre-Goethean aesthetic concepts. This allows us to appreciate more fully the achievements of the later novels which, compared to the success of *Die Blechtrommel*, appear to be underrated.<sup>6</sup>

\*

In order to prevent the task of tracing both affinities and influences from causing confusion about Grass's actual knowledge of the seventeenth century, I shall briefly discuss how he acquired this knowledge. His occupation with the baroque period can be roughly divided into three phases.

The first phase begins shortly after the war when he worked as a stonemason and studied the art of sculpture in Düsseldorf and Berlin. The visual training of these years formed one of his earliest opportunities to gain knowledge of seventeenth-century art. The second phase is that of his novels *örtlich betäubt* (1969) and *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* (1972). For his essay on Dürer published in *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* Grass read Walter Benjamin's *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*. Before that he had already acquired detailed knowledge of Senecan Stoicism while he was writing his novel *örtlich betäubt*. (Senecan thought is, of course, older than the baroque age, but it is an important current in seventeenth-century literature and so it cannot be ignored in this context.) The third phase is marked by Grass's making baroque poets and their writings a topic of *Der Butt* (1977) and *Das Treffen in Telgte* (1979). At this later stage Grass gained a profound knowledge of baroque literature even though he draws on a rather small

<sup>6</sup> To some extent the rhetorical terminology in this study is derived from Ernst Robert Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter*, tenth edition (Bern and Munich, 1984). If one shares Curtius's perhaps rather schematic thesis that European literature develops between the two poles of 'Asianismus' and 'Attizismus', of an elaborate, mannered style and its opposite, a straightforward, classical style, then it can be said that Grass's works tend towards the former rather than the latter (p. 76).

number of sources (mainly the works of two Germanists, Marian Szyrocki and Albrecht Schöne).

Grass's preoccupation with vanity imagery in the early works may have been inspired by his work as a stone-mason. The hero of *Die Blechtrommel* (1959) works in the same profession, he carves reliefs on gravestones:

Korneff und ich füllten das während der Herbstsaison gelichtete Grabsteinlager wieder auf, stampften einige Kunststeine aus Muschelkalkversatz. Auch versuchte ich mich in leichteren Bildhauerarbeiten mit der Punktiermaschine, schlug Reliefs, die Engelköpfe, Christi dornengekröntes Haupt und die Taube des Heiligen Geistes darstellten. (ii. 560)

It is very likely that Grass himself carried out similar work on gravestones. It is significant that Grass only worked in this profession because on his arrival in Düsseldorf he found the academy of arts shut and was advised by a professor to become a stone-mason's apprentice before the academy opened again. This means that during his apprenticeship Grass clearly intended to become an artist. The reliefs and ornaments must have given him the rare opportunity to train his artistic skills. It is therefore very likely that during his frequent visits to graveyards in and around Düsseldorf he would have paid much attention to the reliefs on the gravestones he saw. It is difficult, some forty-five years later, to determine what exactly those reliefs were like which Grass saw at the time. It is, however, safe to assume that apart from religious motifs the young artist would have seen vanity images such as the hour-glass, the skull, and the candle and moth. The effect Grass's training as a sculptor had on his writings is clearly noticeable in the description of the various scarecrows in *Hundejahre* (1963).

The importance of visual arts can be demonstrated further through Grass's first employment of a critical study on baroque literature. It is characteristic that Grass found his first access to baroque criticism through his essay on Albrecht Dürer's engraving *Melencolia I*. For this essay he employed Walter Benjamin's study *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (Frankfurt, 1963). A few years earlier Grass had dealt with Senecan Stoicism, namely the *Epistulae Morales*, in his novel *örtlich betäubt*. Like the baroque poets Grass uses Stoic ideas in the quest for a firm stance in an unfathomable world. Grass's speech on Dürer marks the beginning of his interest in critical studies on the seventeenth century. Benjamin (p. 152) emphasizes that Dürer's engraving foreshadows the spirit of the baroque age. It can be argued that Benjamin shaped Grass's understanding of seventeenth-century literature to some degree because certain concepts he found in this source permeate all his writings on

baroque subject-matter. For instance, in his portrayals of baroque poets Grass frequently refers to the humoral pathology which is discussed by Benjamin. When dealing with the baroque period Grass constantly alludes to various topics in *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* such as the symbolic dog, the close connection of melancholy and geniality, and the astrological relation of Saturn and sloth. Therefore, I have not analysed Grass's Dürer essay separately but I have dealt with it in my discussion of the theme of melancholy in *Der Butt* and *Das Treffen in Telgte*. Grass also used other sources on melancholy such as Erwin Panofsky, but what matters in the context of this study is that ever since his reading of Benjamin he saw the baroque as an age of melancholy and a 'Jammertal'. Through this source Grass could also have become aware of the theory that the Fall was regarded as the cause of melancholy (this idea can be found in *Der Butt*) and that it distorted the original and ideal state of language by making it arbitrary. We will see that in *Das Treffen in Telgte* the baroque poets strive to overcome the state of a corrupted language by making linguistic experiments with emblems. It is along very similar lines that Benjamin develops his theory of language and allegory.<sup>7</sup>

In order to understand how Grass acquired his knowledge of baroque literature it is important to see that a very early link with this subject was established through Martin Opitz and the setting of Danzig. As a result of Grass's studying the history of Danzig for *Die Blechtrommel* he became aware of the fact that Martin Opitz had lived for some time in the city as a refugee after he had to flee his native Silesia. Grass mentions the character as one of the victims of the figurehead Niobe:

Eine etwas dunkle Nachricht will besagen, daß ein aus Schlesien geflohener Poet mit Namen Opitz einige Jahre Aufnahme in der Stadt fand, jedoch allzufrüh verstarb, weil er die verderbliche Schnitzerei in einem Speicher aufspürte und mit Versen zu besingen versuchte. (ii. 225)

In *Die Blechtrommel* Opitz is referred to only very briefly and in passing. There is no evidence that Grass consulted any secondary literature on Opitz at this stage. However, like many Danzig topics in the early works, this short passage forms the nucleus from which extensive narrations in the later period evolve. The main features of the figure in *Der Butt*, the flight from Silesia and the refuge in Danzig, are already mentioned in this early passage.

<sup>7</sup> Compare Hans-Jürgen Schings, 'Walter Benjamin, das barocke Trauerspiel und die Barockforschung', in *Daß eine Nation die ander verstehen möge: Festschrift für Marian Szyrocki*, edited by Norbert Honsza and Hans-Gert Roloff (Amsterdam, 1988), pp. 663-76 (p. 670).

When Grass worked on the novel *Der Butt* after the electoral campaign of 1972 he looked for a way of expressing the compromises he had to make as an artist when he adopted the role of a political propagandist. Martin Opitz whose commitment to diplomacy interfered with his writing of poetry could embody this dilemma. For his studies on Opitz Grass did not go back to the publications of Heinz Kindermann who was the first Germanist to research baroque literature in Danzig in any depth. Grass's works betray no knowledge of Kindermann's anthology *Danziger Barockdichtung* or his essay on the same topic in *Dichtung und Volkstum*.<sup>8</sup>

A short time after *Das Treffen in Telgte* had appeared Theodor Verweyen and Gunther Witting published an essay on the sources Grass had used in this novel and in parts of *Der Butt*.<sup>9</sup> Verweyen and Witting pointed out that Grass was familiar with Marian Szyrocki's biographies of Martin Opitz and Andreas Gryphius.<sup>10</sup> Grass's portrayals of Opitz and Gryphius in *Der Butt* are analysed in the Chapter Three below. Verweyen and Witting also trace the borrowings from another source: Albrecht Schöne's book on *Kürbishütte und Königsberg* which Grass employed for the chapter 'Ach Ilsebill' in *Der Butt* and various passages of *Das Treffen in Telgte*.<sup>11</sup> The allusions to the Battle of Wittstock in *Der Butt* make it clear that Grass also had knowledge of Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus*.<sup>12</sup> In one instance Grass refers to secondary literature about Grimmelshausen's description of the battle.<sup>13</sup>

In many respects the novel *Das Treffen in Telgte* is an elaboration of the baroque passages of *Der Butt* (in particular of the chapter 'Von der Last böser Zeit'). The same is true of the sources. Again Grass drew extensively on

<sup>8</sup> *Danziger Barockdichtung*, edited by Heinz Kindermann, Deutsche Literatur, Reihe Barock, Ergänzungsband (Leipzig, 1939). Heinz Kindermann, 'Die Danziger Barockdichtung', *Dichtung und Volkstum, Neue Folge des Euphorion*, 37 (1936), 296-324.

<sup>9</sup> Theodor Verweyen and Gunther Witting, 'Polyhistor's neues Glück', *GRM*, 30 (1980), 451-65.

<sup>10</sup> Marian Szyrocki, *Martin Opitz*, second edition (Munich, 1974), and *Andreas Gryphius: Sein Leben und Werk* (Tübingen, 1964).

<sup>11</sup> Compare Verweyen and Witting, p. 463f. Albrecht Schöne, *Kürbishütte und Königsberg: Modellversuch einer sozialgeschichtlichen Entzifferung poetischer Texte: Am Beispiel Simon Dach* (Munich, 1975).

<sup>12</sup> For the Battle of Wittstock see Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen, *Der Abentheurliche Simplicissimus Teutsch und Continuatio des abentheurlichen Simplicissimi*, edited by Rolf Tarot, second edition (Tübingen, 1984), pp. 175-78.

<sup>13</sup> The articles which Grass might have known are: Hans Geulen, "'Arcadische" Simpliciana: Zu einer Quelle Grimmelshausens und ihrer strukturellen Bedeutung für seinen Roman', *Euphorion*, 63 (1969), 426-37; Walter Holzinger, 'Der Abentheurliche Simplicissimus and Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*', *Colloquia Germanica*, 3 (1969), 184-98; Ulrich Stadler, *Der einsame Ort: Studien zur Weltabkehr im heroischen Roman* (Bern, 1971).

publications by Albrecht Schöne and he used Szyrocki's biography of Gryphius. Grass had personal contact with both Germanists. Albrecht Schöne gave Grass advice while he was writing *Das Treffen in Telgte*. However, this should not lead us to speculate about the influence of this personal advice because most motifs can be traced back to Schöne's writings. Verweyen and Witting have shown this convincingly; they state:

Das wichtigste Buch, das G. Grass für seine Erzählung 'ausgeschrieben' hat, bleibt jedoch die von A. Schöne herausgegebene und mit kommentierenden Bemerkungen versehene Anthologie *Das Zeitalter des Barock* — genauer noch: die 1968 erschienene zweite Auflage. Dies wird besonders deutlich bei den dem Ritual der Gruppe 47 folgenden dreitägigen Lesungen.<sup>14</sup>

Almost all the quotations from works of baroque poets are taken from this anthology. Verweyen and Witting show that on the first day of the Telgte meeting the poets read from their poetical tracts in roughly the same order as the texts are printed in Schöne's anthology. Verweyen and Witting praise the 'mit leichter Hand vorgenommene, gerade darin beeindruckende Umsetzung von Fakten in eine durch diese genau kontrollierte sukzessive Dialog- und Ereignisbildung (p. 456)'. Apart from Schöne's *Das Zeitalter des Barock* Grass quoted two poems from Eberhard Mannack's anthology *Die Pegnitz-Schäfer*.<sup>15</sup> Verweyen and Witting also argue that another source which Grass would almost certainly have known is the hymn-book. There he would have found the hymns of Angelus Silesius which are mentioned in the novel.

Moreover, there is clear evidence that Grass had actual knowledge of emblems and the way they were used in the works of baroque authors. For instance, Verweyen and Witting mention that the emblem of the purple snail and the notion of *ut pictura poesis* which is referred to in *Das Treffen in Telgte* is taken from Albrecht Schöne's *Emblematik und Drama im Zeitalter des Barock*.<sup>16</sup> I have shown in an essay on *Das Treffen in Telgte* that Grass used this study for the important emblem of the moon and the howling dog which leads to the identification of the mysterious narrator.<sup>17</sup> Some of the emblems in Grass's works cannot be traced back to this monograph, but they

<sup>14</sup> Verweyen and Witting, p. 454. *Das Zeitalter des Barock: Texte und Zeugnisse*, edited by Albrecht Schöne, second edition (Munich, 1968).

<sup>15</sup> *Die Pegnitz-Schäfer: Nürnberger Barockdichtung*, edited by Eberhard Mannack (Stuttgart, 1968). See Verweyen and Witting, p. 455.

<sup>16</sup> (Munich, 1964).

<sup>17</sup> See Alexander Weber, 'Johann Matthias Schneuber: Der Ich-Erzähler in Günter Grass' *Das Treffen in Telgte: Entschlüsselungsversuch eines poetisch-emblematischen Rätsels*, *Daphnis*, 15 (1986), 95-122 (pp. 105f.).

can be found in the comprehensive dictionary of emblems, edited by Arthur Henkel and Albrecht Schöne: *Emblemata. Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*.<sup>18</sup>

Verweyen and Witting find another example for the influence of Schöne's *Das Zeitalter des Barock* in Grimmelshausen's novel *Courasche* which is included in this anthology. This novel is alluded to throughout *Das Treffen in Telgte*. My analysis of the character Gelnhausen, however, shows that Grass also used *Simplicissimus* which is not printed in *Das Zeitalter des Barock*. Here again Grass drew on sources he had known already; the substantial borrowings from *Simplicissimus* evolve from the hints at this novel in the chapter 'Vatertag' in *Der Butt*. Grass's frequent allusions to astrology also make it very likely that he was familiar with Grimmelshausen's *Ewig-währender Calender*.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, Karl F. Otto's survey of the literary societies of the seventeenth century provided Grass with information about the different groups which are referred to in *Das Treffen in Telgte*.<sup>20</sup>

It seems worthwhile adumbrating the different stages of Grass's occupation with baroque literature, because this enables us to see it in relation to the history of the scholarly revival of baroque literature after the war. The first source Grass employed, Walter Benjamin's *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, was first published in 1928, printed again in 1955 and edited in a revised edition in 1963. Benjamin's study emerged from the earliest period of baroque scholarship in this century; it is a work of the 1920s, a time when baroque research was inspired by expressionist literature. Benjamin explicitly draws parallels between the literature of his own days and the baroque period.<sup>21</sup> The various later editions, however, were mainly a result of a philosophical interest in Benjamin's work. Many of his readers seemed to care little about the baroque subject of the book, they read it as a philosophical work. Baroque scholars, by contrast, found it difficult to see how Benjamin's speculative argument could contribute to their understanding of seventeenth-century literature (Schings, p. 666).

<sup>18</sup> Second edition (Stuttgart, 1976).

<sup>19</sup> Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen, *Des Abenteurlichen Simplicissimi Ewig-währender Calender*, reprint of the edition of 1671, edited by Klaus Haberkamm (Konstanz, 1967).

<sup>20</sup> Karl F. Otto, *Die Sprachgesellschaften des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1972). On Grass's employment of this source see Verweyen and Witting, p. 459 and Weber, p. 112.

<sup>21</sup> See Benjamin's remarks under the heading 'Barock und Expressionismus', pp. 40-42.

## INTRODUCTION

Marian Szyrocki's study of Martin Opitz which was first published in 1956 represents the baroque revival after the war. The second edition appeared in 1974, three years before Grass completed his novel *Der Butt*. By contrast, Szyrocki's biography of Gryphius, Schöne's *Emblematik und Drama im Zeitalter des Barock* and his anthology of baroque literature are all works of the 1960s. Each of these publications formed an important contribution to its field, but they appeared at a time when baroque research had already gathered momentum. They were not part of the rediscovery of the baroque period in the 1950s. When Grass began to use these sources many of them had already gone through a second edition.<sup>22</sup> Other works like Otto's book on the literary societies are surveys of an established area of research. Compared to the history of academic interest in baroque literature Grass came to this subject rather late. Though his works were often described as 'baroque' in reviews and though *Die Blechtrommel* was likened to the picaresque novel he did not try to find out for himself what exactly these affinities were. However, when he eventually discovered baroque literature he became deeply involved in it. Thus Grass's belated fascination with the seventeenth century, namely with the poets Martin Opitz in *Der Butt* and Grimmelshausen in *Das Treffen in Telgte*, can be seen as an endorsement of the affinities some critics had seen in the earlier work.

<sup>22</sup> This is true of Schöne's anthology, the handbook of emblems and Szyrocki's biography of Opitz.

## CHAPTER ONE

### BAROQUE THEMES IN THE EARLY WORKS

#### (i) *Vanity emblems*

One of the most remarkable features of Grass's early works is his imagistic way of writing. Concrete visual objects often form the starting-point of the narrative. As his training was in the field of visual arts, it is not surprising that the early Grass would trust the power of imagery much more than other writers of his generation. This focus on imagery can be seen as a general parallel between Grass and baroque literature. More specifically, there is a certain type of imagery in Grass's early works which is reminiscent of baroque vanity emblems. It is the aim of this chapter to analyse this particular form of imagery. Some attention will have to be paid to what may appear to be small details. The significance of these details will, however, become apparent later in this study, for it is one of its major tasks to trace the development of some baroque imagery throughout Grass's whole oeuvre. The emblems of the eel-trap or the creeper, for instance, play a decisive role in the later novel *Der Butt*. Unlike Grass's subsequent use of baroque imagery which is evidently based on secondary literature on baroque emblems, the early use of this imagery is more likely to be inspired by Grass's training in the visual arts. Many of the images in the early works are not plain metaphors which serve to embody some abstract concept. Such a form of imagery is inherent in human speech, it is universal. The images we are dealing with here, however, are not just means of supporting the expression of thought. In Grass's early works it is often precisely the other way around: the image has a priority over its abstract meaning; and, most importantly, it is more complex than a mere metaphor, it may consist of various components which are related to one another. It is well known, for example, that the whole of *Die Blechtrommel* evolved from Grass's attempt to write a poem on a 'Säulenheiliger'.<sup>1</sup> At the core of the poem was the image — its linguistic transformation, expansion, elaboration was secondary. This priority of the image is, however, a main characteristic of baroque emblems which were in deed small

<sup>1</sup> See Grass, 'Rückblick auf die Blechtrommel — oder Der Autor als fragwürdiger Zeuge — Ein Versuch in eigener Sache' (ix. 624-33 (p. 626f.). See also i. 240).

woodcuts or engravings with some added text. Moreover, the combination of elements in the image of the 'Säulenheiliger' is typical of the *pictura* of a baroque emblem.<sup>2</sup> This combination of pictorial elements often forms a story in miniature which is then spelled out, commented on and interpreted by a text in the *subscriptio*. In this sense it could be said that the whole of *Die Blechtrommel* is a *subscriptio* to an image. This process is repeated several times in the novel. It starts from a specific type of imagery, which would lend itself to a depiction in a small woodcut. Later this image is linguistically exploited. It is this process which suggests a parallel between the imagery in Grass's early works and baroque emblems. In both cases we find a similar structure consisting of a powerful and complex image and its transformation into language. A striking example of this is the image of the moth and light-bulb, Oskar's first perception of the world after his birth:

Einsam und unverstanden lag Oskar unter den Glühbirnen, folgerte, daß das so bleibe, bis sechzig, siebenzig Jahre später ein endgültiger Kurzschluß aller Lichtquellen Strom unterbrechen werde, verlor deshalb die Lust, bevor dieses Leben unter den Glühbirnen anfing. (ii. 48f.)

The light Oskar sees after his birth is that of two sixty-watt bulbs. These bulbs attract a moth which casts bizarre shadows on the walls of the room.

Mir blieb jedoch weniger das Licht- und Schattenspiel, als vielmehr jenes Geräusch, welches zwischen Falter und Glühbirne laut wurde: Der Falter schnatterte, als hätte er es eilig, sein Wissen los zu werden, als käme ihm nicht mehr Zeit zu für spätere Plauderstunden mit Lichtquellen, als wäre das Zwiegespräch zwischen Falter und Glühbirne in jedem Fall des Falters letzte Beichte und nach jener Art von Absolution, die Glühbirnen austeilen, keine Gelegenheit mehr für Sünde und Schwärmerei. Heute sagt Oskar schlicht der Falter trommelte. (ii. 47)

The drumming of the moth and the prospect of getting a drum at the age of three entice Oskar to start his life in spite of his immediate knowledge of its emptiness. The emblem of the moth which adores the light forms a complex image, one might say a story in miniature, and it is accompanied by a linguistic explanation of its meaning (the reference to vanity and death is made perfectly clear). It was a favourite motif of baroque love poetry which developed within a petrarchistic framework. The image was a stock motif of the highly conventional petrarchistic imagery and it was employed pictorially by the

<sup>2</sup> A general introduction to baroque emblems is given in *Emblemata*, pp. IX-XX. For an example of an emblem depicting a man on a column see p. 1230.

writers of emblem books.<sup>3</sup> The moth-emblem was widely used because it embodies concepts which particularly appealed to the baroque; it depicts vanity, the danger of uncontrolled passion, and the fatal attraction which deceives the lover and leads to his death. Yet the image in *Die Blechtrommel* does not primarily convey a relationship between a woman and her lover, but is used in a wider cosmic sense — a sense which goes back to Petrarch himself.<sup>4</sup> The image represents the state of a hollow world and thus deals with a theme which is at the core of all of Grass's writings. It is clearly pointed out that the *pictura* denotes vanity.

Grass adds a new feature to the conventional emblem, the drumming of the moth. The leitmotif of the drum forms a medium of remembrance. Hence the dialogue between the moth and the bulb is called a confession. There is something definitive about this drumming; the moth is in a great hurry to tell its tale before it perishes. The drumming is both a confession and a struggle with death. It is significant that throughout the novel Oskar is an aesthete rather than a moralist. He is easily affected by matters of taste, but he has no moral sense. He objects to Nazi rallies merely on aesthetic grounds. It seems unlikely therefore that he pays much attention to the moral or religious implications of the moth's confession; but he is deeply fascinated by its aesthetic effect. The beauty of the passionate and destructive drumming which desperately seeks absolution arouses such approval in him that he is enticed to begin his life — as a drummer.

Even though the emblem is used to depict a general sense of vanity it has not completely lost its original petrarchistic meaning. The erotic attraction of Oskar's mother, for instance, who has an affair with her cousin Jan Bronski, is described in petrarchistic terms. Every week she meets her lover and confesses her sins. In this context Oskar uses the petrarchistic image of

in verschiedenen Stimmlagen summenden Fliegenfängern..., die honigsüß über unserem Ladentisch hingen und im Sommer alle zwei Tage gewechselt werden mußten, während Mama jeden Sonnabend mit ähnlich übersüßer Seele, die sommers wie winters, das ganze Jahr über hoch und niedrig summende Sünden anlockte, in die Herz-Jesu-Kirche ging und Hochwürden Wiehnke beichtete. (ii. 160)

<sup>3</sup> See Leonard Forster, *The Icy Fire: Five Studies in European Petrarchism* (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 7, 52f. and *Emblemata*, pp. 910-12.

<sup>4</sup> See Forster, *The Icy Fire*, p. 21: 'In Neoplatonic thought, by which Petrarch himself was not entirely unaffected, love was a cosmic phenomenon informing the universe and apparent in nature. Nature, therefore, can reflect the passion of the lover; trees and stones partake in his love, and Laura can command nature itself.'

This purification through confession corresponds to the changing of the fly-paper. The theme of confession and absolution links this passage to the moth's dialogue with the bulb. The difference, however, is that the moth makes a last confession which leaves no occasion for further sins, whereas the replacement of the fly-paper is a matter of regular erotic activity; it depicts a sequence of sin, confession and absolution which could be repeated endlessly.

This emblem also occurs in other novels. In *Hundejahre* Grass takes great pleasure in describing the petrarchistic bitter-sweet sound of a dying insect: 'Nur am Fliegenfänger starb übersüß eine Fliege und konnte nicht aufhören.' 'Sogleich...tönen lauter die Fliegenfänger: Was wiegt der Abgesang sterbender Schwäne im Theater gegen den Abgesang bunter Fliegen auf plattem Lande' (iii. 212, 203f.). This whole motif-strand occurs in the earliest of Grass's works. One of the poems in his first publication *Die Vorzüge der Windhühner* is entitled 'Die Mückenplage'. The poem ends with the lines:

Wir wollen jetzt nicht mehr schlafen.  
Meine Söhne sind hellwach,  
die Töchter drängen vor dem Spiegel,  
meine Frau hat Kerzen gestellt.

Nun glauben wir an Flammen,  
die zwanzig Pfennige kosten,  
denen die Mücken sich nähern,  
einer kurzen Verheißung. (i. 17)

A year later, in 1957, Grass wrote a ballet, *Stoffreste*, in which moths are eating cloth and a shopkeeper arrives, switches on the light and tries to drive the insects off (viii. 231). The insects belong to the important animal imagery which runs through Grass's whole oeuvre (for example, *Katz und Maus*, *Hundejahre*, *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke*, *Der Butt*, *Die Rätin*). In the early works the moths and flies embody hollowness and bitter-sweet destruction, representing individual erotic attraction as much as cosmic vanity. All these examples show that Grass is preoccupied with the aesthetic aspects of vanity, for, unlike baroque poets, he does not treat vanity as a moral or religious problem. The function of vanity imagery in the baroque age was predominantly that of a *memento mori* directed towards another world; a means to an end. To the modern artist, however, the emptiness is something which cannot be transcended. Because vanity imagery is no longer a means to an end the focus is shifted towards its aesthetic quality.

In *Die Blechtrommel*, the themes of individual erotic guilt and cosmic vanity merge in the image of the eels which a fisherman catches with the head of a horse as bait. The famous description of the horse's head stuffed with eels is one of the most shocking passages of the novel. Agnes's husband buys some of the eels and tries to force his family to eat the meal he has prepared. A short time later Agnes develops an obsession for eating fish and eventually dies of fish poisoning. In the hospital it emerges that she was three months pregnant, presumably from the relationship with Jan Bronski. The appalling scene at the breakwater produces such an effect on Agnes that she is forced into a self-destructive repetition of this experience. Thus the eel functions as a symbol of sexuality in *Die Blechtrommel*, and also stands for Agnes's relationship with Jan Bronski (see ii. 180). This relationship and the mechanism of erotic attraction and confession which is depicted by the constant changing of fly-paper is brought to an end by Agnes's self-destruction. The bitter-sweet petrarchistic emblem thus contrasts with an appalling image of rotten flesh. The style and content of the chapter 'Karfreitagskost' calls to mind the extreme 'Vergänglichkeitsmetaphorik' in Gryphius's *Kirchhofsgedancken*. The change from the description of erotic attraction in a petrarchistic manner to the elaboration of the decay of the flesh is a technique baroque poets employed with great perfection.

Moreover, the eel-motif not merely refers to the relationship between Oskar's mother and her lover. The chapter is entitled 'Karfreitagskost': the excursion to the mole on the Baltic Sea takes place on a Good Friday. The disgusting eel-image is bound up with the theme of Good Friday and thus stands for the world at its worst state. This forms the core of *Die Blechtrommel* and Grass's later novels. Their main theme is the vanity of a fallen world which lacks any hope of redemption. Good Friday can be seen as a typological re-enactment of the Fall from paradise and it is precisely in this sense that the image of the trapped eels is used in *Der Butt*. It will be seen later that the eel-trap in *Der Butt*, a weir basket, is a modification of the image of the head of the horse. In *Der Butt* the eel-trap is an emblem of the Fall from the paradisiac matriarchy.

Most chapters in *Die Blechtrommel* (in particular in the first book of the novel) evolve from concrete images: 'Der weite Rock', 'Falter und Glühbirne', 'Das Fotoalbum', 'Die Tribüne', 'Karfreitagskost' (the eels), 'Die Verjüngung zum Fußende' (the last chapter title alludes to the shape of a coffin). It is instructive in this context to call to mind that in rhetoric this process of

elaborating metaphor is the standard explanation for the origin of allegory.<sup>5</sup> According to this theory the individual creation of meaning through a metaphor is extended to a parallelism between a factual and an underlying sense. For example, 'Die Tribüne' (ii. 125ff.) is such an extended metaphor: Bebra's instructions for where a dwarf should sit on a stand have a second allegorical meaning (one should not be crushed by mass movements) which is distinct from the practical sense of his words. Apart from the frequent use of *tota allegoria*, which evokes an underlying sense without verbally disclosing it, we sometimes also find a *permixta apertis allegoria* where the allegorical sense is expressed: 'Ein ganzes leichtgläubiges Volk glaubte an den Weihnachtsmann. Aber der Weihnachtsmann *war* in Wirklichkeit der Gasmann. Ich glaube, daß es nach Nüssen riecht und nach Mandeln. Aber es *roch* nach Gas' (ii. 244, my italics). In this passage the allegorical *id est* discloses the intended meaning (it is perfectly clear in the context of the novel that gas is a shorthand formula for the gas chambers). To trace the use of allegory in Grass's works is beyond the scope of this study, but some allegories will be dealt with in later chapters. What matters in this context is that Grass's use of emblems should be understood as part of a general strategy of writing in an imagistic and indirect way. Moreover, it is important to see the structural function of these emblems: potentially they could all be further developed to extensive narrative allegories.

Many of the emblem-like images mentioned above, such as the moth and the bulb, the eel-trap or the coffin have a similar meaning: they depict vanity, which is often bound up with the theme of love. One of the most interesting and most beautiful adaptations of emblems in Grass's early writings can illustrate this fusion of love and vanity. In *Die Blechtrommel* Oskar and Maria Truczinski go swimming at the beach. They eat cherries and Oskar sees how fresh cherry-stones lie in the sand beside old ones from the previous year.

Oskar ließ beim Anblick von soviel Vergänglichkeit den Sand mit dem einjährigen, tausendjährigen und noch blutjungen Kirschkernen auf seine Trommel rieseln, machte also die Sanduhr und versuchte, sich in die Rolle des Todes hineinzusetzen, indem er mit Knochen spielte. Unter Marias warmem, verschlafenem Fleisch stellte ich mir Teile ihres sicher hellwachen Gerippes vor, genoß den Durchblick zwischen Elle und Speiche, ließ an ihrer Wirbelsäule Abzählspiele auf und ab klettern, griff hinein durch die beiden Hüftbeinlöcher und amüsierte mich über den Schwertfortsatz. (ii. 330)

This whole scene is nothing but a transformation of a conventional visual emblem into language. The combination of an hour-glass, the young boy and the relics is a stereotype which can be found in many emblem books of the baroque.

<sup>5</sup> See Heinrich Lausberg, *Elemente der literarischen Rhetorik* (Ismaning, 1990), p. 139.

All these items often occur together; they are stock elements of vanity emblems. It is a stereotype, however, which draws a sharp contrast between a healthy-looking, usually well-fed Cupid and the bones. The destination of life, even in its earliest moments, is death. The infant is separated from death only by time, which is an ephemeral process, as the hour-glass depicts. Hence the two conditions, contrasting though they are, belong together, linked by the hour-glass. Surprisingly, the boy is not appalled by the sight of death — on the contrary, he is fascinated by it: ‘Qvid, formose puer, sic mortis imagine gaudes?’ the *subscriptio* of one of the typical vanity emblems asks.<sup>6</sup> In a similar way ‘genöß [Oskar] den Durchblick zwischen Elle und Speiche’. This fascination is also expressed through the slip from the third- to the first-person narrative (from ‘Oskar ließ...rieseln’ to ‘stellte *ich* mir...vor’). The lover who sees the bones beneath his girl’s rosy skin invokes Hoffmannswaldau’s poems on ‘Vergänglichkeit der schönheit’ and the whole *carpe diem* poetic tradition.<sup>7</sup> In Oskar’s case the fascination is also erotic. He drops cherry-stones on his drum. Cherries are a conventional image alluding to sex; at the same time, however, they can depict vanity. Grass plays with the contrast between the quickly fading pulp and the lasting stone; thus the cherry-stones are related to the relics. The drumming sound the cherry-stones produce is reminiscent of the moth which drums on the bulb. In both cases erotic attraction is bound up with death.

So far I have dealt with emblems which embody the general concept of vanity. There is, however, an emblem in Grass’s early works which transforms the concept of the decaying, destructive and ugly into a poetical programme. In the poem ‘Racine läßt sein Wappen ändern’ Grass shows that literature must not confine itself to the beautiful. Racine’s coat-of-arms shows a rat and a swan, alluding to the two syllables of his name ‘rat’ and ‘cygne’. Racine changed his shield and only kept the heraldic swan, the traditional emblem of a poet.<sup>8</sup>

Ein heraldischer Schwan  
und eine heraldische Ratte  
bilden — oben der Schwan,  
darunter die Ratte —  
das Wappen des Herrn Racine.

<sup>6</sup> *Emblemata*, p. 998.

<sup>7</sup> See *Das Zeitalter des Barock*, pp. 480f.

<sup>8</sup> See the annotation, i. 367 and the ‘Nachwort zu den Gedichten’, i. 352. For the swan as the poets’ emblem see *Emblemata*, p. 840.

...

Es steht Racine  
einem Teich daneben  
und ist auf Verse aus,  
die er kühl und gemessen  
mittels Mondlicht und Wasserspiegel verfertigen kann.

Schwäne schlafen  
dort wo es seicht ist,  
und Racine begreift jenen Teil seines Wappens,  
welcher weiß ist  
und der Schönheit als Kopfkissen dient.

The emblem of the swan in the poem stands for the beauty Racine's verses strive for. And yet the beauty of this scene remains futile until the rat, the ugly counterpart gnaws at the swan's belly.

Es schläft aber die Ratte nicht,  
ist eine Wasserratte  
und nagt, wie Wasserratten es tun,  
von unten mit Zähnen  
den schlafenden Schwan an.

Auf schreit der Schwan,  
das Wasser reißt,  
Mondlicht verarmt und Racine beschließt,  
nach Hause zu gehen,  
sein Wappen zu ändern.

Fort streicht er die heraldische Ratte.  
Die aber hört nicht auf, seinem Wappen zu fehlen.  
Weiß stumm und rattenlos  
wird der Schwan seinen Einsatz verschlafen —  
Racine entsagt dem Theater. (i. 99f.)

The poem is by Grass's standards of rare directness, for it conveys a clear message: literature must not ignore what is beneath the beautiful surface because the disgusting and ugly counter-world, emblemized by the rat, is an important source of art. It is significant that from the early play *Hochwasser* to *Die Rättin* rats play an important part in Grass's works. In *Hundejahre*, for instance, the character Harry Liebenau spends some time as a 'Luftwaffenhelfer' in a military camp. The soldiers get orders to kill the rats in the camp because it is believed that they cause a smell of decay which hangs over the area. 'Der Geruch jedoch, der über der Batterie lag, und selbst bei starkem Westwind keinen Schritt machte, kam nicht von den Ratten' (iii. 507). It is caused by a mountain of bones from the concentration camp nearby. There is no way to escape the

repulsive smell of evil. This allegory of the unsuccessful fight against rats is reminiscent of Racine's attempt to change his coat of arms. 'Niemand sprach von dem Knochenberg', Grass writes in *Hundejahre*, 'aber alle sahen rochen schmeckten ihn' (iii. 514). This is in short a description of post-war Germany unable to come to terms with its past. The suppressed horror of the past is a recurrent theme of Grass's early writings. It puts into practice the literary programme, conveyed by the image of the rat which gnaws at the belly of the swan. It is noteworthy that Grass draws a parallel between the image of the rat and the leitmotif of the mouse in *Katz und Maus*. In this 'Novelle' the mouse stands for the Adam's-apple of the hero Mahlke.

Und die Maus? Sie schlief, überwinterte im Juni. Schlummerte unter dicker Decke, denn Mahlke hatte zugenommen. Nicht, daß jemand, das Schicksal oder ein Autor sie getilgt oder gestrichen hätte, wie Racine die Ratte in seinem Wappen gestrichen und nur den Schwan geduldet hatte. Immer noch Wappentier war das Mäuschen und tat auch im Traum lebendig, wenn Mahlke schluckte. (iii. 115)

The Adam's-apple is a sign of the Fall, of the original sin which stigmatizes all the descendants of Adam. (It was believed that a piece of the forbidden fruit stuck in Adam's throat and caused this lump.) This religious motif is closely related to the emblem of the eel-trap which stands for Good Friday in *Die Blechtrommel* and the Fall in *Der Butt*.

So far we have seen that decisive leitmotifs in Grass's novels are similar in that they are emblems or have an emblem-like structure and depict vanity. This is true of the moth and bulb, heraldic swan and the fish trap (we will see that this image is a baroque emblem, too). This is not to suggest, however, that the early Grass was already consciously adapting emblems from baroque literary sources. Even though this literary tradition has long ceased to be handed down, some elements of baroque (and petrarchistic) imagery have survived until the present day. It is also very likely that Grass was familiar with the use of baroque imagery in the visual arts. The question of the exact origin of these images is less significant, perhaps; what matters most in this context is the way in which this imagery is employed and how it develops throughout his whole oeuvre.

Apart from the conventional imagery (which is derived from certain baroque emblems in one way or another) there are also poems which have an emblematic structure even though they are Grass's own creations. Here is an example:

## Gasag

In unserer Vorstadt  
 sitzt eine Kröte auf dem Gasometer.  
 Sie atmet ein und aus,  
 damit wir kochen können. (i. 41)

At the core of this poem is the image of a toad sitting on a gasometer. The rest of the poem is an elaboration of this central image. In this respect the poem clearly resembles an emblem. The heading 'Gasag', the name of a gas company, invokes the sense of breathing in and out; it is a palindrome. It has a similar function as a *lemma* because it expresses the essence of the *pictura*: gas is being inhaled and exhaled. The last two lines of the poem form a *subscriptio* because they explain the image. As in many emblems it is the juxtaposition of the depicted things (a toad sitting on a gasometer) which is surprising. The *subscriptio* explains this combination: The toad functions as a pump. Finally the *subscriptio* explains the purpose of the image: 'damit wir kochen können'. What is striking about this poem is the epigrammatic conciseness (which is also a characteristic of the *subscriptio* of an emblem). The image arouses an uneasy feeling. The idea that cooking — with all implications of cosiness the word has in German — is linked to a breathing toad makes one think of poisonous contamination. The poem can, in fact, be read in relation to a passage in *Die Blechtrommel*. After Oskar's friend Herbert Truczinski is mysteriously killed by the Niobe, the frightful figurehead is carefully locked away in the cellar of the museum. 'Doch man kann das Unglück nicht einkellern. Mit den Abwässern findet es durch die Kanalisation, es teilt sich den Gasleitungen mit, kommt allen Haushaltungen zu, niemand, der da sein Suppentöpfchen auf die bläulichen Flammen stellt, ahnt, daß da das Unglück seinen Fraß zum Kochen bringt' (ii. 236). The evil cannot easily be noticed, it remains under the earth in the gas pipes or 'in unserer Vorstadt' — and yet it is ubiquitous. The emblem-like poem 'Gasag' again leads the reader to the counter-world of the rat which gnaws at the swan's belly.

The theme of vanity or a counter-world is embodied not only in single emblems, but also through fully-fledged allegories. An example of this can be found in the great final allegory of the novel *Hundejahre*. In the chapter 'Die hundertdritte und tiefunterste Materniade', Matern descends with Brauxel to a mine where scarecrows are manufactured. Tunnels link different subterranean depots of clothing, scrap-metal and all kinds of waste materials which can be used to make scarecrows. In one room skeletons of scrap metal howl and scream and in another room scarecrows roar with infernal laughter. The air is filled with

a smell of sulphur. At the sight of this underworld Matern cries: 'Das ist ja die Hölle hier!' (iii. 808). And yet the place allegorizes human society: different races, ideologies and religions separate the scarecrows — 'Der Orkus ist oben' (iii. 834), as Brauxel says.

It is significant that limbs no longer seem inseparable in the underworld. 'Was die Welt Übertage absurd nennt, schmeckt Untertage real: Einzelne Glieder handeln für sich...Kurzum: Was den Körper vielgliedrig macht, lebt getrennt fort. Arm und Bein, Hand und Torso posieren zu großen Worten, die, sonst von der Rampe gesprochen, hier hinterm Vorhang betont werden' (iii. 827f.). Nothing coordinates the movement of limbs in this allegory. This shows the mechanical and soulless state of the world, because the soul forms the principle which makes limbs and the body a unified whole. The lack of a soul is at the core of the motif of the scarecrow. However, the true nature of limbs and bones becomes apparent when they are separated from a spiritual organizing principle: they are lifeless matter. According to Walter Benjamin this vanity and lifelessness of the material world is the subject of baroque allegory. Together as an organism limbs can form an image of life; on their own, separated from the body, they are but an image of death. The same applies to the body as a whole if it is separated from the soul, as Benjamin has pointed out.

Wenn...im Tode der Geist auf Geisterweise frei wird, so kommt auch nun der Körper erst zu seinem höchsten Recht. Denn von selbst versteht sich: die Allegorisierung der Physis kann nur an der Leiche sich energisch durchsetzen. Und die Personen des [barocken] Trauerspiels sterben, weil sie nur so, als Leichen, in die allegorische Heimat eingehn. Nicht um der Unsterblichkeit willen, um der Leiche willen gehn sie zugrunde (*Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, p. 246).

The scarecrow is a particularly suitable image for the body as mere 'Stückwerk'. The emblematic character of limbs or a corpse in baroque literature was emphasized by Benjamin in the chapter 'Die Leiche als Emblem' in his *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*. Benjamin pointed out that limbs were even more suitable emblems than the whole body.

'Integrum humanum corpus symbolicam iconem ingredi non posse, partem tamen corporis ei constituendae non esse ineptam' [*Acta Eruditorum*, 1683, p. 17f.] . So heißt es in der Darstellung einer Kontroverse über die Normen der Emblemantik. Nicht anders konnte der orthodoxe Emblemantiker denken: der menschliche Körper durfte keine Ausnahme von dem Gebote machen, das das Organische zerschlagen hieß, um in seinen Scherben die wahre, die fixierte und schriftgemäße Bedeutung aufzulesen. Ja wo konnte dieses Gesetz triumphierender dargestellt werden als am Menschen, der seine konventionelle, mit Bewußtsein staffierte Physis im Stich läßt, um an die vielfachen Regionen der Bedeutung sie auszuteilen. (pp. 244f.)

The idea of an organism is bound up with a *telos*, an organizing principle like the soul. Such a principle is not only lacking in the case of the individual scarecrow, it is also lacking in human history at large. Some rooms in the underworld depict history as a purely mechanical and absurd process:

Hier mimen Scheuchen nicht regionale Materniaden, hier finden statt: Investiturstreit und Gegenreformation; durchaus mechanisch und mittels faustgroßer Elektromotoren handelt sich aus: der westfälische Friede; scheuchengerecht tritt zusammen, was, wann, wo, mit wem, gegen wen, ohne England, dieses ausruft, jenes mit Reichsacht belegt und insgesamt Historie betreibt: von Wendepunkt zu Wendepunkt kostümgetreu. (iii. 825f.)

The lack of teleology is a key theme of Grass's writings. His works deal with the vanity and absurdity of the individual life as much as with that of history at large. As will be seen later, this is partly due to the influence of Albert Camus's existentialism.

The essence of the limbs and the body as dead matter can, according to Benjamin also be demonstrated through vanity symbols such as hair, nails and the like.

Nicht erst im Verlust von Gliedmaßen, nicht erst in den Veränderungen des alternden Körpers, in allen Prozessen der Ausscheidung und der Reinigung fällt Leichenhaftes Stück für Stück vom Körper ab. Und kein Zufall, daß gerade Nagel und Haare, die vom Lebenden weggeschnitten werden wie Totes, an der Leiche nachwachsen. Ein 'Memento mori' wacht in der Physis, der Mneme selber. (p. 246)

A motif which can serve as an example of such vanity symbols in Grass's writings is the rotten tooth. Like many other crucial motif-strands tooth ache can be traced back to one of the early collections of poems, *Gleisdreieck*, which mentions already 'jene Fäulnis, die lange hinter der Zahnpaste lebte' (i. 120) (see also the poem 'In eigener Sache'; i. 114). The narrator of the early 'Novelle' *Katz und Maus* complains at the beginning of the story 'Ich hätte zum Zahnarzt gehen sollen...Mein Zahn lärmte' (iii. 6). The rotten tooth is as much a vanity symbol as hair, excrements or nails, for these motifs often occur together in enumerations such as 'Weh, mein Zahn. Weh, meine Haare im Kamm...Weh, Schatten, weh. Kieselstein weh. Weh, Zahnweh, weh' (iv. 31). The allegorical figure of melancholy is characterized in the following words: 'Sie handelt mit keimenden Kartoffeln und Haaren im Kamm' (iv. 377). In a similar way Grass speaks of the 'Stimmung beim Laubrechen Alte-Briefe-lesen Kammsäubern Stuhlgang' (iv. 546). He even compares the process of writing to the cutting of

nails: 'Dann mache ich Worte, Kinder,...und beschneide die Fingernägel von Toten und Lebenden' (iv. 335).

Tooth ache becomes a major theme in the novel *örtlich betäubt*. The treatment of the narrator's teeth forms the framing plot of the novel. The narrator, Starusch, suffers long periods of pain, against which the novel posits Stoicism as a remedy. In this novel, teeth, and particularly tartar, function as important vanity images. The reader learns that the chalk-like substance is inevitably deposited on teeth through the permanent secretion of saliva. Like the Adam's apple, it is a symbol of innate evil. A part of the treatment is to remove the tartar:

Mein Zahnarzt...stocherte zwischen den zahnsteinverkrusteten Hälsen meiner oberen Schneidezähne...Ich sammle Speichel Schaum Blut mit allen körnig knirschenden Absprengeln, lasse, nachdem ich die Zunge neugierig werden, erschrecken ließ, den Reichtum in die Speischale fallen, greife das handliche, klein gehaltene Glas...spüle, schaue dem Auswurf zu, sehe mehr als da ist, nehme Abschied von meinem zermürbten Zahnstein, stelle das Glas zurück und erlebe belustigt, wie es sich selbsttätig mit lauem Wasser füllt. (iv. 19)

There is an obvious parallel in the novel between the sediment of calcareous tartar and natural deposits in the ground such as pumice and lime-stone. It is noteworthy that, before his change of profession, the teacher Starusch used to be an engineer who specialized in the production of cement; he worked for the 'Kringssche Zement-, Traß- und Schwemmsteinwerke' (iv. 21), a mining company which is run by a former general called Krings. The surrounding area of the mine is polluted by dust which is released into the air by its chimneys. The motif of cement has different connotations. One basic meaning, however, is clear: like the gas in the 'Niobe' chapter it stands for the Third Reich with its 'Autobahnen', 'Westwall' and bunkers. Starusch manages to induce Krings to install a sophisticated dust-removing system, but the progress of the new technology remains ambiguous. The release of dust is reduced, but the higher chimneys spread the dust over a much larger area. Again there is the motif of evil which is generalized and hard to notice because of its ubiquity. For in *örtlich betäubt* tartar — and cement — are clearly equated with evil (see iv. 144).

Again we see the theme of the lack of redemption. When Starusch and his fiancée listen to a recording of Gregorian chants she begins to talk about Easter and redemption, which upsets him in such a way that he scratches the record with a bottle-opener (iv. 229). Time and again the narrator refers to the Lamentations of Jeremiah, 4.1: 'Ach, wie ist das Gold so gar verdunkelt' (see iv.

19, 30, 153, 168, 246). The roots of evil are beyond reach whatever treatment may be applied. ('Doch machen wir uns nichts vor: gegen Zahnstein gibt es kein Mittel', the dentist admits early in the novel (iv. 13)). Thus the treatment of Starusch's teeth does not last. At the end of the novel he suffers severe pain again and a tooth has to be removed. Vanity and decay, it seems, can never be defeated. On this Grass and baroque poets would seem to agree. In both cases the fascination of the vanity theme seems to be that paradoxically its aesthetic depiction arouses a curious pleasure. This imagery can only be understood as part of a polarity.

(ii) *The carpe diem theme*

The vanity theme which has been discussed here is offset by other motif-strands in Grass's writings. To focus exclusively on vanity emblems draws too bleak a picture of Grass's works, for there is a reverse side to the vanity theme which must not be disregarded. According to Karl Otto Conrady the baroque poets drew two contradictory conclusions from what they saw as the hollowness of life:

Nicht immer lenkt die Vergänglichkeitsmahnung...den Blick auf den überwindenden christlichen Glauben oder bleibt bei der bloßen resignierenden Feststellung. Es gibt viele Gedichte, in denen das Wissen ums Vergängliche zu munterem Lebenszuspruch führt. Das Motiv ist alt. Jeder kennt Horazens '...dum loquimur, fugerit invida | aetas: carpe diem quam minimum credula postera.'<sup>9</sup>

It is significant that in Grass's early poems the vanity theme also leads to a sensuous *carpe diem*. His poems often directly or indirectly praise the experience of sensual pleasure. It is a pleasure, however, which does not last for long. It completely depends on the moment, the ephemeral *occasio* in contrast to *tempus*. 'Die Zeit, worin sich die Dichtung des 17. Jahrhunderts bewegt, ist...nicht die Zeit im Sinne der Dauer, sondern die Zeit im Sinne von *occasio*, dem flüchtigen *Augenblick*', as Leonard Forster has pointed out.<sup>10</sup> This distinction can help to explain what appears to be a paradox: why vanity which is bound up with *tempus* can be as much a topic of baroque poetry as the blissful moment, the used *occasio*. This distinction can also be applied to Grass. A very

<sup>9</sup> Karl Otto Conrady, *Lateinische Dichtungstradition und deutsche Lyrik des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Bonn, 1962), p. 283.

<sup>10</sup> Leonard Forster, 'Der Geist der deutschen Literatur im 17. Jahrhundert', in Leonard Forster, *Kleine Schriften zur deutschen Literatur im 17. Jahrhundert* (Amsterdam, 1977), pp. 7-30 (p. 13).

early poem which follows the *carpe diem* pattern is 'Bohnen und Birnen' from *Die Vorzüge der Windhühner*. Conrady has mentioned that worldliness and 'die Mahnung zum Lebensgenuß' are often connected with a conventional 'Vergleich mit den welkenden Blumen' (p. 284). The withering also occurs in the following poem.

Bevor die grünen Dotter welken,—  
 die Hennen brüten einen frühen Herbst,—  
 jetzt gleich, bevor die Scherenschleifer  
 den Mond mit hartem Daumen prüfen,  
 ...  
 laßt uns noch grüne Bohnen brechen.  
 Mit gelben Birnen, einer Nelke,  
 mit Hammelfleisch laßt uns die grünen Bohnen,  
 mit schwarzer Nelke und mit gelben Birnen,  
 so wollen wir die grünen Bohnen essen,  
 mit Hammelfleisch mit Nelke und mit Birnen. (i. 12)

In spite of the alienation ('grüner Dotter' seems to mean yolk rather than the plant dodder) the convention is still obvious. The pattern is clearly that of a *carpe diem* poem: 'Bevor' it is too late, 'jetzt gleich' let us use the *occasio*. (The motif of string beans and pears later forms the beginning of *Der Butt*. The narrator and Ilsebill eat 'Hammelschulter zu Bohnen und Birnen' before the impregnation. Food and sex form the sensual leitmotif of this novel.) Food as a source of pleasure is a theme which is common to all of Grass's works. For instance, Grass's adaptation of Opitz's famous *carpe diem* poem 'Ach Liebste laß uns eilen...' in *Der Butt* turns the appeal not to miss the occasion of love into an exhortation to eat a meal while it is still hot and tasty (v. 315). And in the early poems Grass speaks of 'der Tod, der alle Suppen kühlt' (i. 136).

Very often the declining, pessimistic thematic line of hollowness is offset by an inclining line of solace. The poem 'Efeu — die Zuwachsrate Unsterblichkeit' is a remarkable example of this.

Ach. Einarmig früh schon  
 beschämte der Geiger  
 den doppelpfotigen Beifall.  
  
 Als er vor Jahresfrist plötzlich verstarb,  
 wurde uns seine Verbeugung,  
 dieser Winkel, die Fallsucht zu messen,  
 zum steingehauenen Maß.

Das nämlich,  
wachsende Zuneigung,  
hatte er uns voraus.  
Nicht nur als Denkmal, zu Lebzeiten schon,  
wie diesem Marmor heute,  
hinkte auch ihm  
fatal die bedeutende Schulter.

Doch was sich neigt, muß nicht stürzen.  
Nie wird sein Name platt aufs Gesicht.  
Ihm wächst die Ranke:

hilfreich kletternde Pflanze,  
die seinen Überhang lindert,  
bis sich das Lotrechte  
schiefgelacht hat.

Das nämlich, Efeu,  
die Zuwachsrates Unsterblichkeit,  
hatte er uns voraus. (i. 157)

Like the traditional laurel, the ivy stands for fame which challenges the finality of death. The ivy and creeping plants in general form a motif of solace and hope in many of Grass's works. The image of the creeper has an outstanding tradition as an emblem — 'Rankende Gewächse' form a whole chapter in Henkel's and Schöne's *Emblemata*, (pp. 259-82). The significance of creeping plants in Grass's works can easily be overlooked but, as will be shown, it is a motif-strand worth tracing.

In the novel *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* the motif of the creepers as emblems of hope surfaces again, together with a reference to Schopenhauer. The hopeful ascending movement of the creeper contrasts with the prevailing leaden melancholy in the novel depicted by Dürer's engraving *Melencolia I*:

Zweifel berichtet vom unwillentlichen Verhältnis der zwittrigen Schnecken zur Melancholie, Schopenhauer vom Willen der rankenden Pflanzen, die alle, ob Erbsen Bohnen Hopfen, Zirkelbewegungen in freier Luft beschreiben, bis sie einen festen Körper finden, um den sie sich ranken, wenn sie ihn finden...Zweifel versucht, eine Ranke zu sein. Schon denkt er ellipsenförmig. Aber da ist kein Notnagel; denn unsere Hoffnung, selbst wenn wir sie zum Prinzip erhärten, will nicht als fester Körper dienen: was immer sich ihr entgegenwindet, keiner Bohne bietet sie Halt. (iv. 432)

In his tract on 'Pflanzen-Physiologie' in the book *Über den Willen in der Natur* Schopenhauer is at pains to demonstrate that not only the human world but also the world of plants is shaped by the will. He uses creepers as a prime example: 'Einen deutlichen Beleg der Willensäußerung in Pflanzen geben die Rankengewächse' he states and goes on:

Ueber diesen Gegenstand hat Dutrochet, am 6. Novbr. 1843, in der *académie des sciences* einen Aufsatz vorgetragen, *sur les mouvements révolutifs spontanés chez les végétaux*. ...Das Resultat ist, daß bei *Pisum sativum* (grüne Erbsen), *Bryonia alba* und *Cucumis sativus* (Gurke), die Blattstengel, welche den Cirrus (*la vrille*) tragen, eine sehr langsame Cirkelbewegung in der Luft beschreiben, welche, je nach der Temperatur, in 1 bis 3 Stunden eine Ellipse vollendet, und mittelst welcher sie aufs Gerathewohl, die festen Körper suchen, um welche, wenn sie solche antreffen, der Cirrus sich wickelt.<sup>11</sup>

The ascending movement is an expression of the hope of finding a 'Notnagel' which might hold the plant because it is too weak to support itself. This hope for help is depicted by the emblem 'Erbsenstaude klettert mit Hilfe kleiner Ranken empor' (*Emblemata*, pp. 329f.). The *pictura* of the creeper is a favourite image among writers of emblem books because it can convey a great variety of concepts.

The motif is also used in many different ways in Grass's works. In the poem quoted, 'Efeu — die Zuwachsrate Unsterblichkeit', for instance, Grass plays with the contrast between heavy marble and the light upward creeping plant. The same contrast is used in *Die Blechtrommel* when Oskar Matzerath compares his later and unrequited love for the nurse Dorothea with his first love for Maria. While Oskar is sitting in front of a bunker on the Atlantic coast and his friend Lankes is trying to seduce a nun he begins 'trommelnd aus dieser Betonlandschaft, aus dieser Bunkerwelt, ...einen Ausweg zu suchen' (ii. 677). He uses the drum to call back to mind his vain approaches to Dorothea. 'Nachdem dieses Thema allzubald auf dem Kokosläufer [which separated him from Dorothea's room] verendete, versuchte ich meine frühe Liebe zu Maria rhythmisch aufzulösen und dem Beton gleich schnellwachsenden Kletterpflanzen davorzupflanzen' (ii. 677f.). Here, the hope and promise of early love is embodied in the creeping plant.

Another important aspect of the image is the contrast between the indestructible bunker and the vulnerable, quickly fading creeper. The gourd-vine arbour, an important baroque emblem in the novel *Der Butt*, is based on a complete inversion of this motif. Here, the vulnerable creeper paradoxically forms a refuge and shelter; it has, in fact, a quality similar to a bunker.<sup>12</sup> The gourd-vine arbour is the literary and biblical counterpart to the bunkers which

<sup>11</sup> Arthur Schopenhauers *sämtliche Werke*, 16 vols, edited by Paul Deussen (Munich, 1912), III, 351. As in various other cases the commentary to the *Werkausgabe* of Grass's works fails to mention this reference.

<sup>12</sup> Compare the etching 'Traum vom Eigenheim (1982)' which depicts a snail's shell and a bunker, in Grass, *In Kupfer, auf Stein*, second edition (Göttingen, 1986), p. 170.

are often mentioned in Grass's early writings. This emblem will be interpreted in detail in a later chapter. It should, however, be noted that it can occur in connection with the garden motif as a place of Stoic contemplation, as Leonard Forster notes in his afterword to Lipsius's tract *Von der Beständigkeit*:

Im zweiten Buch seines Traktats zeigt uns Lipsius den Garten als Ort der stillen Einkehr, der philosophischen Kontemplation, der moralischen Exerzitien, wodurch man sich gegen die Stürme der Außenwelt wappnet. Das Motiv klingt immer wieder in der Dichtung des 17. Jahrhunderts an. In Königsberg legte der Dichterkomponist Heinrich Albert einen mit einer Kürbishütte gezierten Garten an, wo er, Simon Dach und beide Freunde dichteten und musizierten.<sup>13</sup>

It is this Königsberg garden which forms the pattern of the gourd-vine arbour as a place of refuge from the world in *Der Butt*. Grass bases his adaptation of the gourd-vine motif on Albrecht Schöne's book *Kürbishütte und Königsberg* (Munich, 1975). All this is well known. However, what has escaped the critics' attention is that he had used the motif long before Schöne published his book. The biblical gourd-vine occurs very early in his work. In *Die Blechtrommel*, for example, Oskar Matzerath disturbs a Nazi rally with his drum. He hides underneath the stand and beats his drum in a waltz and Charleston rhythm until the bands lapse from their crude march music into Oskar's elegant three-four time. Later, SA and SS men beat and kick the wooden stands in order to detect the subversive drummer but they fail to find the dwarf Oskar.

Endlich war Ruhe im Holzlabyrinth, das etwa die Größe jenes Walfisches hatte, in welchem Jonas saß und tranig wurde. Nein nein, Oskar war kein Prophet, Hunger verspürte er! Es war da kein Herr, der sagte: 'Mache dich auf und gehe in die große Stadt Ninive und predige wider sie!' Mir brauchte auch kein Herr einen Rizinusbaum wachsen lassen, den hinterher, auf des Herren Geheiß, ein Wurm zu tilgen hatte. Ich jammerte weder um jenen biblischen Rizinus, noch um Ninive, selbst wenn es Danzig hieß. Meine Trommel, die nicht biblisch war, steckte ich unter den Pullover, hatte genug mit mir zu tun, fand, ohne mich zu stoßen oder an Nägeln zu reißen, aus den Eingeweiden einer Tribüne für Kundgebungen aller Art, die nur zufällig die Proportionen des prophetenschlingenden Walfisches hatte. (ii. 143)

This whole passage is most peculiar. A parallel is drawn in full detail and at the same time it is negated as inappropriate. The narrator is at pains to warn us that the whole episode lends itself to misinterpretation. There is a danger that Oskar might appear as an opponent of Nazism, a moral outsider or prophet like Jonah who is warning of the evil to come. He is, of course, nothing of the kind. He is not a righteous Jonah who after having preached to Nineveh retreats to the

<sup>13</sup> Justus Lipsius, *Von der Beständigkeit [De Constantia]*, edited by Leonard Forster (Stuttgart, 1965), p. 22\*. See also Leonard Forster, 'Meditation in a Garden', *GLL*, 31 (1977-78), 23-35.

gourd-vine arbour because he does not want to mix with the sinful crowd. In the biblical story, Jonah's booth symbolizes too exclusive a place of morality; hence, God had the gourd which provided Jonah with shelter smitten by a worm so that it withered. Thus the biblical gourd-vine arbour embodies an important theme of *Die Blechtrommel*. The petty bourgeois inhabitants of Danzig Langfuhr like Oskar are like most ordinary people elsewhere in Germany inextricably involved in Nazism. A major achievement of *Die Blechtrommel* is its attribution of responsibility not simply to certain politicians, individuals, groups or classes; rather it examines the daily life of the man in the street during the Third Reich. Hence the image of Jonah's booth functions to prevent a self-righteous evasion of responsibility. It will be seen later that in *Der Butt* the narrator also tries to retreat from the world to the gourd-vine arbour; again it will become clear that such an evasion of responsibility must fail.

A general conclusion which can be drawn from this investigation of the imagery is that Grass works with a certain stock of motifs. His early poems remain an important source of images which occur, though often in a modified form, in his later writings. Grass's works show a surprising degree of continuity in the use of images. What appears to be an occasional creation of an image depending on a specific context often turns out to be a conscious development and alteration of older material. This is particularly true of baroque imagery such as the vanity emblems or the creeping plants. The creepers first appear as a rather insignificant particular in the poems and are increasingly elaborated until the gourd-vine arbour forms an impressive allegory in *Der Butt*.

### (iii) Stoicism

The theme of hollowness remains at the core of Grass's works from his early poems and novels to his later writings. The continuity of this theme is striking. However, the question of how to live in a vain world is answered in different ways. There is a development of the motifs which offset the dominant vanity theme. In the early poems there is the sensuous *carpe diem* which later becomes a recurring motif; in *örtlich betäubt* it is Senecan Stoicism; the Stoic theme then continues in *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke*; and a Stoic attitude is also expressed in Grass's adaptation of the myth of Sisyphus which forms a key to the philosophy of all the later works.

It is quite clear that Grass is not and never intended to be a theoretician or philosopher. Like many writers of his generation he never wrote a detailed

aesthetic programme, a philosophy of history, or an anatomy of his ethics (while the younger generation of authors such as Hans Magnus Enzensberger and Heiner Müller have strong theoretical interests). None the less some aesthetical principles can be derived from a poem such as 'Racine läßt sein Wappen ändern' or from passages such as Gelnhausen's poetical confession in *Das Treffen in Telgte*. And Grass's writings are also deeply concerned with problems of history and ethics. Philosophical questions do not form a starting-point for Grass, but rather develop from certain conflicts in the narrative. Hence, his philosophical stance has to be construed from his works. The following pages will engage in this task by tracing the adaptation of Stoic ideas in *örtlich betäubt*. This novel is one of the few texts written by Grass which is directly influenced by a philosophical school.

The tension between vanity and Stoicism pervades all baroque literature, especially baroque drama.<sup>14</sup> At the core of such plays as Gryphius's *Catharina von Georgien Oder Bewehrete Beständigkeit* and *Papinian* are the virtues of the Stoic hero. Even before the main starting-point of baroque literature, the *Buch von der Deutschen Poeterey* and the *Teutsche Poemata*, both published in 1624, Opitz wrote a Stoic poem entitled *Zlatna* (1623). This poem, which is no less programmatic than the later poetics, carries the telling subtitle *Von der Ruhe des Gemüthes*. At the outset of German baroque literature, then, we find a formulation of the ideal which had been the highest goal of the Stoics, tranquillity of mind. However, it is important to see that the adaptation of Stoic ideas in this period has a certain slant: it is a *Christian* Stoicism which equated the pagan concepts of nature and reason with a Christian God. This is not in accordance with the early Stoa of Zeno and Chrysippus and the middle Stoa of Panaetius and Posidonius. The late Stoa of Seneca, however, certainly lent itself to a Christian interpretation. Throughout the Middle Ages it was (wrongly) believed that Seneca had corresponded with St Paul. This fact alone could account for his great popularity with Christian thinkers right down the centuries. Seneca's impact on the seventeenth century was enhanced by Justus Lipsius's splendid edition of his works in 1605. Lipsius's own philosophical treatise *Von der Beständigkeit*, a key work of baroque Stoicism, shows how great a debt Lipsius owes as a philosopher to Seneca.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Giles R. Hoyt, 'Vanity and Constancy', in *German Baroque Literature: The European Perspective*, edited by Gerhart Hoffmeister (New York, 1983), pp. 211-32.

Seneca and the Stoic school have considerable influence on Grass, in particular in the novel *örtlich betäubt*. Throughout the book there are reminiscences of Senecan philosophy, above all of the *Epistulae Morales*.<sup>15</sup> A decisive link between *örtlich betäubt* and Stoicism is the problem of pain which is invoked in the title of the novel. The narrator, the disillusioned school teacher Starusch, describes his dentist as an educated man who knows his Seneca. The dentist treats Starusch's teeth as well as, in some respect, his soul. He is a superior character who never loses his temper and even in the most difficult situations he is always ready to give quick and pointed advice.

Several characteristics of Seneca's *Epistulae Morales* are traceable in *örtlich betäubt*, in particular the famous pointed and epigrammatic Senecan style and the superiority of the Stoic educator. Lucilius asks the aloof sage questions on practical moral dilemmas or on eternal facts of human life such as pain, death, or friendship. Seneca's answers are condensed into epigrammatic, but also imagistic and allegorical advice. The readiness and stylistic perfection of the advice has been much applauded but also criticized; Macaulay's objection to Senecan style is famous: 'I cannot bear Seneca...His works are made up of mottoes. There is hardly a sentence which might not be quoted; but to read him straightforward is like dining on nothing but anchovy sauce'.<sup>16</sup> Grass uses these mottoes in an ironic manner, referring to them as 'goldene Worte' (iv. 54). The whole novel *örtlich betäubt* is spiced with such mottoes. The teacher and his dentist both play with these quotations and are eager to interpret them or to make scholarly comments proving their knowledge of Seneca (see, for instance, iv. 138, 155). They refer to Seneca's borrowings from Hecato and his relationship to the different philosophical schools of the Epicureans and Cynics. In one of the threads of action (which seems to be a product of Starusch's fantasy) Starusch appears as the author of a study on 'Der frühe Seneca als Erzieher des späteren Kaisers Nero. — Philosophische Anmerkungen eines flüchtigen Mörders' (iv. 55). Starusch hands over the manuscript to the police after being on the run for many years because he has murdered his fiancée. The title refers to Seneca's biography: Seneca was, in fact, the teacher of Nero. More than once in his life he had to go into exile, and he was also accused of murder. The theme of flight links the (fictitious) study with Starusch's own

<sup>15</sup> See Werner Rutz's source study which traces the way in which the different characters in the novel quote from Seneca: 'Stoa und Stahlbeton: Bemerkungen zur Seneca-Rezeption in Günter Grass' Roman *örtlich betäubt*', *Gymnasium*, 89 (1982), 122-34.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted from Robin Campbell's introduction to Seneca, *Letters from a Stoic* (Harmondsworth, 1987), p. 23.

experience. Suffering the hardships of flight, Starusch turns to Stoic philosophy. Flight, imprisonment or exile are recurrent themes of Stoic thought (as we find in Opitz's poem *Zlatna*, for example). It is noteworthy that all these features already occur in Oskar Matzerath's life in *Die Blechtrommel* (the exile from Danzig, the flight from the police, and his imprisonment in a mental asylum). We shall see that flight is no less decisive a motif in Grass's later works. Most important of all is the unsuccessful flight from present responsibility as a key theme of *Der Butt*.

Later in the novel, when Starusch becomes engaged for a second time, the dentist makes a peculiar present: 'Er gratulierte und schenkte die Schmekelsche Erstausgabe über die "Mittlere Stoa"' (iv. 250f.). August Schmekel's *Die Philosophie der mittleren Stoa* mainly deals with Panaetius and Posidonius, the philosophers of the middle Stoa.<sup>17</sup> It does not have any great impact on the use of Senecan thought in *örtlich betäubt*. The fictitious study on the young Seneca (note the stilted opposition of 'früher Seneca' and 'späterer Kaiser Nero' in the title) and Schmekel's book (as an engagement present!) are mentioned in an ironic manner. This present shows that Starusch and the dentist want to be seen as connoisseurs. The passage has an ironic slant which is characteristic of Grass's portrayal of pretentious scholarship; the Germanists and other experts interrogated by the tribunal in *Der Butt* and some passages of *Das Treffen in Telgte* can serve as further examples for this. Grass generally likes to endow his leading characters with some scholarly ambition (in *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* Zweifel sketches a study 'deren Titel ihm beim blühenden Heuschnupfen eingefallen sein mag: "Über die Schnecke als Mittlerin zwischen Melancholie und Utopie"'; iv. 353). It may be noted at this early stage of the present investigation that in *örtlich betäubt* Senecan ideas are adapted through an ironic assimilation. We will later see that this is also a predominant mode of Grass's use of baroque literature. The way Grass deals with Senecan thought is ambiguous: in spite of all the irony there is a real assimilation of Stoic ideas in *örtlich betäubt*.

The novel *örtlich betäubt* also illustrates how Stoicism can be abused. Apart from the dentist and the narrator there is a third character who adheres to Stoic ideas. Generalfeldmarschall Ferdinand Krings, the father of Starusch's first fiancée, read philosophy as a young man before he started a career in the army. In the war he soon earned the reputation of being a 'Durchhaltegeneral' (iv. 40).

<sup>17</sup> August Schmekel, *Die Philosophie der mittleren Stoa in ihrem geschichtlichen Zusammenhange dargestellt* (Berlin, 1892).

Krings represents the dangers of a misinterpreted Stoicism. Even after the war Krings cannot surrender, but keeps playing strategic games. Uttering Senecan slogans he tries to win a lost war. In a similar critical way Grass refers to the morally ambiguous role of Seneca as a politician and a tutor to Nero. This whole complex is bound up with a motif which we have touched on already: Krings is the owner of a mining company which produces concrete. Concrete embodies various Stoic virtues such as constancy and persistence. The narrator even suggests that Krings should name a new sort of concrete produced by his company after Seneca. Starusch speaks of the 'stoische Gelassenheit der Betonbunkerkonturen' and asks 'Ja, ist nicht der Betonbunker das angestammte Gehäuse des Stoikers?' (iv. 66). Here the theme of shelter is touched on again. In spite of the critical intention of this passage, it will be seen that Grass later develops this Stoic theme for his own purposes. The image of the snail's shell is just one example of this; the biblical gourd-vine arbour is another. Starusch, for instance, wants to look at a tortoise in moments of despair — an image of refuge which is related to the snail's shell (iv. 211). And in the novel *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* Grass mentions in a melancholic self-portrait that he likes to draw conch shells (iv. 334).<sup>18</sup>

Seneca's most important achievement as a philosopher is the reconciliation of severe Stoic ideas with the realities of practical life; for he is not a great systematic philosopher. However, it is precisely this emphasis on practical moral dilemmas and the conscious disregard for a theoretical all-embracing philosophy which Senecan Stoicism shares with Grass's own thought. If one can ascribe a philosophical position to Grass at all, it is a practical kind of thought which tries to come to terms with an absurd world. In spite of all the irony, the adaptation of Stoicism in *örtlich betäubt* is related to Grass's attempt to find a firm philosophical stand-point in a hollow world. It is one of the striking parallels between Günter Grass and Thomas Mann that irony is used as a means of intellectually possessing something until it is assimilated to such a degree that it is fully integrated into the author's writings. For instance, we will see that Grass's concept of time and the Stoic image of the snail in *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* have a great affinity with Stoic ideas. Stoic concepts also pervade Grass's later novels in various different forms. This is particularly true of *Der Butt*, *Das Treffen in Telgte* and *Die Rättin*. (A later chapter analysing the meeting of Opitz and Gryphius in *Der Butt* will demonstrate this.) However, the

<sup>18</sup> For the bunker and snail compare the etchings in Grass, *In Kupfer, auf Stein*, pp. 42, 170.

effective starting-point of Stoicism in Grass's works is the use of Senecan thought in *örtlich betäubt*.

It is instructive to observe how the adaptation of Stoicism leads to the development of a new theme in Grass's writings. The author starts, though in an indirect way, to be concerned with his inner self. It would be a valuable task to outline the image of the writer's self in the novels from *örtlich betäubt* onwards. In this novel he only very indirectly reveals his persona. Yet it is difficult to deny that the dialogue of the dentist and the teacher is somehow connected to the writer's inner self. The depiction of the writer's self is much more developed in *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke*. Here the author overtly makes his persona a theme; Grass's diary deals with the two decisive poles of all Stoic thought: inner tranquillity and public political commitment. *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* comprises both Grass's party propaganda for the Social Democrats and his personal diary, though the former seems to dominate the latter. The Stoic conflict between the private and the public already occurs in *örtlich betäubt*. Starusch, for example, says: 'Hören Sie Dokter, der alte Rauschebart sagt: "Außerdem befindet sich der Weise nicht außerhalb des Staates, selbst wenn er in Zurückgezogenheit lebt." — Ich verspüre nicht wenig Lust, demnächst zu privatisieren' (iv. 217). A main reason for writing *Der Butt* was Grass's attempt to reconcile public commitment with the self-containment of the inner self; in this novel he shifts the emphasis from the public back to the private. The gourd-vine arbour in the novel — a typical Stoic garden — allegorizes the search for inner tranquillity.<sup>19</sup> And the dispute between Opitz and Gryphius in *Der Butt* illustrates how high a price has to be paid for the Stoic duty of engaging in public life.

The occupation of the artist with his own persona in *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* is indirectly vindicated through an allusion to Dürer's self-portrait which conveys 'so viel verletzliches Ich' (iv. 317). There are a number of self-portraits of Grass, some of them literary, others graphic (in one of them, for instance, the artist drew himself with the Stoic symbol of the snail in his eye).<sup>20</sup> In *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* Grass explains to his children what he means by 'der heitere Pessimismus eures ungläubigen Vaters' (iv. 376f.). After this novel the author's self becomes a recurrent theme of Grass's writings (see, for example iv. 332-40, v. 107f.). This is not the place to trace these self-portraits. Suffice it to say that the characteristic feature of these introspections is

<sup>19</sup> For the link between Stoicism and the garden motif see Forster, 'Meditation in a Garden', *passim*.

<sup>20</sup> See the etching 'Selbstporträt I (1972)', in Günter Grass, *In Kupfer, auf Stein*, p. 42.

a mixture of melancholy and a Stoic constancy, which is expressed by Paul Fleming's poem 'Sey dennoch unverzagt. Gieb dennoch unverlohren'.<sup>21</sup> What is important in the context of this investigation is that the conflict of inner tranquillity and public duty which marks Grass's later works entails a certain way of writing. C. S. Lewis has demonstrated that one main reason for the use of allegory is that it can enable a writer to express things that cannot be depicted by any other means. His main examples are the writings of Stoics such as Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius and Seneca. The reason why these writers use allegory is that they deal with inner conflicts. Inwardness, Lewis argues, cannot be expressed in a direct way:

We cannot speak, perhaps we can hardly think, of an 'inner conflict' without a metaphor; and every metaphor is an allegory in little. And as the conflict becomes more and more important, it is inevitable that these metaphors should expand and coalesce, and finally turn into the fully-fledged allegorical poem.<sup>22</sup>

This important insight helps us to understand many central images in Grass's works: the snail in *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke*, for instance, is an allegorical means of depicting the inner conflict between the extremes of the wish for instant progress and complete resignation. Rolling a stone uphill is a recurrent allegory in the later works for inner resolve in a senseless situation. The gourd-vine arbour in *Der Butt* expresses the ambiguity of retreat and the need for public commitment. The allegorical allusions to melancholy (the sour flavour) in the later works also belong in this context. This list could easily be extended. It is important to recognize that in Grass's works the Stoic focus on the inner self is bound up with an indirect, allegorical mode of writing. We will deal with this in a later chapter commenting on the gourd-vine arbour in *Der Butt*.

Even if one considers all the affinities between Grass's writings and Stoicism it remains strange that a philosophy as remote as Senecan thought should interest a modern writer. The answer may lie in a comparison with two other philosophical schools which Grass repeatedly attacked. In his early novels he focuses very critically on Heideggerian philosophy, and in his later writings he often finds fault with Hegel's speculative thought. One of the famous passages of *Hundejahre* is the description of bones from a concentration camp written in

<sup>21</sup> *Das Zeitalter des Barock*, p. 717.

<sup>22</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (London, Oxford, New York, 1977), pp. 60f.

a pastiche of Heideggerian language. Heidegger's Existentialist language is highly artificial because it aims at a fundamental ontology, an all-embracing system of philosophy which is completely removed from the subject of everyday language. What Grass is trying to suggest is that this remote language was of no use when philosophers should plainly have spoken out against National Socialism. In practical life Heidegger failed to do what needed to be done. His blurred and abstract terminology even lent itself to praise a coming new age in his famous speech *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität* (1933). The criticism implied in *Hundejahre* is this: however impressive a system Heideggerian philosophy might be, when it was confronted with moral dilemmas of practical life it utterly failed. It is a philosophy which locates no moral responsibility in the individual. Grass's writings, by contrast, suggest that the ability of the individual to respond morally to the historical world around him is precisely what matters. Here lies the crucial test for any philosophy. Senecan Stoicism provides precisely this sort of workable ethics. Seneca openly attacks all theoretical reasoning for its own sake. According to him all worthwhile thought is somehow related to genuine ethical problems. Seneca is only concerned with logic and physics where he needs them as a foundation of philosophy; for him they are only means to reach moral insight which is the true end of philosophy, but they must never usurp the place of ethics. Seneca does not strive for a systematic explanation of the totality of the world. Refraining from bold speculation he wants to give straightforward advice about how to deal with certain types of moral predicaments which occur in human life. It is an ethics which is not confined to speculative and abstract definitions of the moral good. According to Seneca each individual participates in nature, fate or God (which are all near-synonyms) and is therefore endowed with reason. The individual is capable of moral insight and hence is, at least to some degree, responsible. This also means that each individual deserves to be treated with respect. The ethical standpoint which is apparent in Grass's writings can be boiled down to a similar respect for the innate reason of the individual.

No philosophy can justify a violation of the rights of the individual. On this Grass's criticism of Hegel is based. The dangers of Hegelianism lie, for instance, in the claim to know that history has a certain goal. One of the turbot's roles in *Der Butt* is to embody the Hegelian 'Weltgeist', the overriding principle of history. The danger of such a philosophy is that any deed, whatever its immediate consequences, can be declared legitimate as long as it is in line with the principle of history. For the same reason Grass criticizes the Marxists.

His writings are overtly anti-Utopian to avoid a certain historical goal being abused to excuse the violation of individual rights.

There is an important difference between Grass's first novels and the novels written after his adaptation of Stoic ideas. One of the most important themes of *Die Blechtrommel* and *Hundejahre* is the defectiveness of human nature, a fatal 'proneness to passion' which is inherent in the human being.<sup>23</sup> The characters of *Die Blechtrommel* are victims of their own passions. There is a sickness pervading the petty bourgeois world of the novel. It is obvious in the novel that passions have to be controlled and brought in line with reason, but it is difficult to see how this should be done. In the early works Grass confines himself to the drastic description of the diseases of human nature. It seems as if demons have taken possession of the characters in these novels. From *örtlich betäubt* onwards, however, Grass introduces the theme of self-restraint. The development of Grass's novels shows a certain moderation. In later novels descriptions of dangerous passions such as the shocking 'Vatertag' chapter in *Der Butt* remain the exception. This whole development can be illustrated by the contrast between the image of the demonic and enraged hell-hound of *Hundejahre* and the thoughtful snail, which embodies the Stoic virtues of constancy and serenity in *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke*. This development is paralleled by a change in the mode of writing which develops towards a certain detachment from the subject. In the early novels, by contrast, there seems to be a writer at work who is obsessed with his topic. Where this process is leading is apparent in *örtlich betäubt*: it is irony, the classical literary device of detachment. This is not to say that Stoic ideas are the decisive cause of this change in the mode of writing, but they are certainly an important element among others.

The novel *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* pleads for keeping an equal distance from melancholy and Utopia. This requires constant self-control for both poles promise great comfort which is difficult to resist. Once one has a certain slant, it is difficult not to get totally absorbed in one of the extremes. The following words sum up Grass's experience of his campaigning trips for the Social Democrats and show that he strives for a combination of melancholy and Utopia. They are also prime examples of the allegorical description of inner conflict: 'Wie kommt es, daß so viele, denen ich unterwegs begegnete und die,

<sup>23</sup> See Leonard Forster, 'Günter Grass', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 38 (1968-69), 1-16 (p. 15).

wie ich, den Stillstand im Fortschritt kennen, immer wieder ansetzen, ihr Bleigewicht aufheben und den saturnisch lastenden Wackersteinen jenen Funken abschlagen, der uns utopische Lichter setzt?' (iv. 567) This polarity between the stone (which is, according to Benjamin (pp. 168f.), a key emblem for melancholy) and the Utopian sparks form a programmatic allegory for Grass's own stance. It can be called a Stoic stance for it always expects to encounter adverse circumstances without surrendering to fate. The lifting of the heavy stone foreshadows the myth of Sisyphus which embodies the philosophy of Grass's later works.

It can be shown that the image of the slowly moving snail which Grass elaborates in the novel involves a particular concept of time which is Stoic. It depicts the dangers of a Utopian concept of history which sacrifices the present for a better future. Another danger is an obsession with the past (Irmgard Seifert in *örtlich betäubt* who cannot shake off her youth in the Third Reich is an example of this). The image of the self-sufficient slow snail conveys an attachment to the present. It stands for the rare ability to save up time. 'Unser Reichtum heißt: Beharrungsvermögen. Wir beeilen uns nicht' (iv. 302) could serve as a motto for the image of the snail. The idea of hurrying suggests that a goal in the future is more desirable than the present. Grass clearly warns his children not to make this mistake: 'Es könnte euch Glaube hellseherisch für ein Endziel und blind für die Menschen in ihrer Gegenwart machen' (iv. 403). All this is summed up in the Stoic concept of time in *örtlich betäubt*: 'Wie sagt der Erzieher des kleinen Nero: "Recht so, Lucilius! Widme Dich Dir selbst, sammle geradezu Zeit und geize mit ihr!"' (iv. 227). The emphasis on the present, on the *ocasio*, is the same as we find in Grass's *carpe diem* poetry. A similar focus on the present can also be found in baroque literature; Gryphius's famous poem 'Betrachtung der Zeit' may serve as an example:

Mein sind die Jahre nicht die mir die Zeit genommen /  
 Mein sind die Jahre nicht / die etwa möchten kommen  
 Der Augenblick ist mein / und nehm' ich den in acht,  
 So ist der mein / der Jahr und Ewigkeit gemacht.<sup>24</sup>

Gryphius shares with the Stoics the belief that time is the only treasure man possesses. 'Seneca sagt: "Alle Güter des Lebens gehören anderen — nur die Zeit ist unser Eigentum"' (iv. 64).<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Andreas Gryphius, *Gesamtausgabe der deutschsprachigen Werke*, edited by Marian Szyrocki and Hugh Powell, II: *Oden und Epigramme* (Tübingen, 1964), pp. 182f.

<sup>25</sup> Compare *Epistulae Morales*, I, 3.

Another feature Grass's writings share with Stoic thought is a strong tendency towards determinism. Grass has often been criticized for his deterministic and even cyclical concept of history. It is, however, important to see that neither Grass's nor the Stoics' belief in historical necessity is a crude determinism which condemns man to passive and irresponsible inactivity. On the contrary, virtue can almost be defined as the ability to cope with fate. We cannot follow here how the Stoics tried to reconcile the problem of moral freedom with the premiss of an all-pervading necessity (the argument runs along the following lines: no one can avoid death because it is fated, but a person may have some influence on *how* he dies). The whole subject of Grass's historical determinism will be further analysed in the later chapters on *Der Butt* and *Das Treffen in Telgte*. Suffice it to say here that according to Grass's writings history forms a repetition of certain typical situations which occur — though in different guises — time and again. Certain patterns of history and the afflictions which are bound up with them will always be repeated. Hence both the Stoics and Grass have a tendency to describe these afflictions not in a language denoting unique events but through *topoi* and allegories which express typical and common things. They see it as a mistake to believe that the course of history could be directed towards a new age in which these afflictions are overcome. The question is rather how to come to terms with fate. The problem Grass's works address is how to find a humane way of living in conditions which are beyond our control. Grass has never written a philosophy of history. The concept of history can only be extracted from symbols and allegories in his writings. The key to the question is provided in his later works by Grass's adaptation of the myth of Sisyphus (see the remarks in *Kopfgeburt*, in vi. 212f., and the interviews in x. 278-81, 323-41).<sup>26</sup> It is the assent to fate which makes Sisyphus superior to his destiny. Grass clearly follows Albert Camus's interpretation of the myth. The Stoic attitude towards fate is similar: life has to be brought into line with providence, nature or reason. The Stoics had little hope for salvation in another world. The same lack of salvation is expressed in Grass's works. (Here lies an important difference between the baroque neo-Stoicism and Stoicism in Grass's novels. The former puts an emphasis on a Christian reading of Stoic ideas whereas the latter is confined to a secular interpretation. To Grass fate is inherent in history, it is not ruled by a supreme being. This comes much closer to the original pagan Stoic thought.)

<sup>26</sup> It should be noted that this type of Existentialist thought has a lot in common with Heidegger's philosophy which Grass so severely criticizes in early works such as *Hundejahre*.

Stoic ethics calls for following fate, not for struggling against it: ‘The willing soul fate leads, but the unwilling drags along.’<sup>27</sup> Zeno and Chrysippus express this in an allegorical way. They hold that man was like a dog tied to a cart. If he did not walk along he would be pulled along.<sup>28</sup> But being pulled along means to be a bad man. (‘Nim dein Verhängnüß an... | Thu / was getan muß seyn, und eh man dirs gebeut’, as Paul Fleming put it).<sup>29</sup> The image of the dog tied to a cart bears great similarity to the myth of Sisyphus rolling a stone uphill. Both seem to have no choice. And yet there is one way of responding to a hopeless destiny. The knowing assent to the inevitable is the ultimate chance of remaining superior to one’s fate. This is precisely what Sisyphus does; he accepts his fate and thus regains his dignity. In an interview Grass has stated that this Stoic attitude is a philosophy of last resort, something one can turn to in a situation where no hope is conceivable:

Wer seine Existenz auf Hoffnung gründet, der verliert jeden Halt, wenn diese Hoffnung sich als Illusion erweist. Ich kann in unserer Situation nur die Camussche Haltung empfehlen, diese Sisyphoshaltung, die gegen Resignation und zynische Hoffnungslosigkeit gefeit ist. Die absurde Situation des Menschen, wie sie Camus beschreibt, erlaubt, weiter tätig zu sein, auch wenn keine Hoffnung besteht. (x. 328)

This is the Stoic ideal of an inner resolve which is independent of contingent circumstances. In other words: if the world cannot be controlled the self can be. This is the ultimate goal all Stoics strove for: to be a master of the self.

<sup>27</sup> *Epistulae Morales*, CVII, 11.

<sup>28</sup> See J.M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1969), p. 127.

<sup>29</sup> *Das Zeitalter des Barock*, p. 717.

## CHAPTER TWO

### EXCURSUS — *DER BUTT* AND THE COURTLY-HISTORICAL NOVEL

So far we have dealt with some themes and images in Grass's early works which bear similarities to the themes prevailing in baroque literature. It is the task of this study to explore the whole variety of affinities between Grass's works and baroque literature. Focusing on themes and motifs may highlight some links, but this does not tell us very much about the structure of Grass's writings. Before a closer examination of Grass's conscious employment of baroque literary techniques in *Der Butt* and *Das Treffen in Telgte* — which will be discussed later — this chapter approaches the affinities between Grass and the baroque from a different angle. This excursus differs from the rest of this study in that it suspends the question of traceable links and concentrates on structural parallels. This, of course, changes the status of the argument. The type of question which is being addressed in this excursus is similar to the question whether *Die Blechtrommel* can be read as a picaresque novel. One can only apply a historically well-defined term like 'picaresque' to a text from a different literary period, if it is used in a loose sense. To use a term in this way not only serves an aim of broader classification or description, it can also become a tool of interpretation as it introduces a comparative element into the understanding of a text. The aim of such a comparison is, for instance, to show which features of a novel form decisive parts of its structure which cannot be altered without changing the character of the novel and which features are accidental and thus less significant. If, for example, some critics argue that Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* is a 'Bildungsroman' (as indeed Friedrich Gundolf did), the main argument is that the novel is concerned primarily with development of character. This example shows that the comparative approach can even allow an application of a term from a later literary period to an earlier period. Needless to say, in this case the question of influence does not even arise.

The parallels between *Die Blechtrommel* and the picaresque novel have become a well researched area within Grass criticism. The following excursus tries to make similar comparisons between *Der Butt* and the courtly-historical

novel.<sup>1</sup> It is a main feature of the picaresque novel that its hero encounters a series of adventures; thus it has a chain-like structure leading from one episode to another. *Der Butt* and the courtly-historical novel, by contrast, are structured like a web, consisting of a sophisticated network of framework plot and flashbacks. The present chapter tries to show that Grass's later novels tend towards ever growing complexity, suggesting a development from a 'Reihenstruktur' in *Die Blechtrommel* to a 'Wabenstruktur' in *Der Butt*.

An extremely complex novel such as *Der Butt* demands a reader's total attention, memory, patience and acumen. There are several factors which make this novel very difficult to read: its sheer length; the great number of characters; the uncertain and often changing identity of these characters and the highly complicated relationships among them; the long flashbacks developing from an overall plot which is divided into three frameworks; the confusing mixture of different time schemes. At first sight, the novel seems to be an inextricable web of narrative strands. However, the comparison with the courtly-historical novel can help us to make this web intelligible, for the most important parallel between *Der Butt* and this genre is the peculiar structure. It is basically a modification of a narrative technique which John Barclay had adopted from Heliodorus. Courtly-historical novels such as Anton Ulrich's *Aramena* or Lohenstein's *Arminius* altered the pattern of Heliodorus's novel in one decisive way. Instead of a single flashback growing out of a framework plot, these novels break down into numerous flashbacks which are intricately related both to one another and to the framework plot.<sup>2</sup> The adaptation of Heliodorus's novel pattern mainly aims at complication which is regarded as enrichment and ornamentation. Like a stylistic mannerism which aims at indirect and concentrated expression, this phenomenon might be characterized as a structural mannerism. Compared to the clarity and straightforwardness of Heliodorus's narrative scheme the intricate structure of the courtly-historical novel seems 'rhetorical'. According to Ernst Robert Curtius (p. 278) mannerism is an abuse of rhetorical ornament. The first two rhetorical devices which Curtius accuses of being manneristic are hyperbaton (*transgressio*, *transcensio*) and

<sup>1</sup> The excursus is positioned in the midst of the main argument of this study because the chronological order of the primary texts discussed is followed throughout. As will be seen its results also form a part of the main argument.

<sup>2</sup> See Blake Lee Spahr, *Anton Ulrich and Aramena: The Genesis and Development of a Baroque Novel* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966), p. 80: 'The technique used in the novel is that of a double focus of interest, although the one lens of this focus often diffuses the interest into a myriad of different directions. The framework forms the one center of action and develops on its own plane, but it is constantly dependent upon motivations having their roots in the past.'

periphrasis (pp. 278-82). Significantly, these rhetorical terms can also be used to describe the structural peculiarities of the courtly-historical novel. In Anton Ulrich's *Aramena* narrative strands are sometimes interrupted for as much as a thousand pages before they proceed again. One of the most important structural devices of the courtly-historical novel is the separation of what initially belonged together (this could be called a structural *transgressio*). Periphrasis has a similar effect of complication and ornamentation. Instead of a plain-spoken brief description of the plot, the courtly-historical novel always prefers a longer, indirect and vague way of saying things. Blake Lee Spahr has stated (p. 81) that in one episode of the novel 'a particular character reacts in a certain way with no apparent motivation. In another episode the same event is presented from a different standpoint and the motivation is divulged'. Thus the same incident is seen from different perspectives over and over again. There is always the possibility of a new version which differs slightly from the previous ones. This technique of retelling and varying stories several times is also a hallmark of *Der Butt*. It has a strong tendency towards inflation. Obviously the rhetorical devices which can be applied to the structure of the courtly-historical novel are those which are used in order to achieve a stylistic *amplificatio* (Curtius, p. 281). The manneristic style and the structure of the courtly-historical novel are extremely elaborate — and as the following argument will show this also applies to *Der Butt*.

*Der Butt* and the courtly-historical novel share the following intricate structure. From a framework plot (which is limited in time) originate a great number of flashbacks (which are not limited in time).<sup>3</sup> The framework plot of *Der Butt* consists of three main settings which have a strong structural impact on the novel.

The first and most dominant framework is Ilsebill's pregnancy. The novel starts with begetting and ends with birth. But the pregnancy not only determines the beginning and the end of the novel, but also dominates the whole narrative as the division into nine months or books shows.<sup>4</sup> The framework of pregnancy seems to be carefully chosen by Grass; it is literally a process of growing and swelling which applies both to Ilsebill's abdomen and to the plot. The literary device which mainly leads to this swelling is the baroque technique of narrating

<sup>3</sup> Madeleine de Scudéry argues in the theoretical preface to her novel *Ibrahim* (1641) that the framework plot should be limited to one year. See Volker Meid, *Der deutsche Barockroman* (Stuttgart, 1974), p. 35. In *Der Butt* the framework plot takes nine months.

<sup>4</sup> The beginning of the *Butt* is not quite *medias-in-res* as in Heliodorus's novels and courtly-historical novels; but this also applies to the beginning of *Arminius*, in which the 'Varusschlacht' is a decisive event which initiates the following plot.

extensive previous lives. From the framework plot, which is situated in the 1970s, a flashback plot emerges which starts in prehistoric and mythical time. At the end of *Der Butt* the flashback plot ends with the protests of dock labourers in Danzig and hence catches up with the time of the framework plot. The flashbacks are addressed to Ilsebill, as the narrator tells her about their common past. The pregnant Ilsebill is very demanding and the narrator tries to evade responsibility by telling stories. Since the process of narrating goes on for the whole nine months of Ilsebill's pregnancy, the book swells with her abdomen. The principle of structural and stylistic *amplificatio* dominates the whole novel, and the pregnancy framework has a strong impact on all the other frameworks of *Der Butt*.

At the beginning of the novel it seems that the narrator tells only Ilsebill about their previous life in common; but already in the first chapter a second framework is presented to the reader. When the turbot is caught (for the second time since the Stone Age) and is taken to the tribunal of feminists, an additional narrator (the turbot) and audience (the feminists) are introduced. Again the setting of the tribunal has an impact on the novel: *Der Butt* is dominated by disputations. As in the novels of John Barclay and Lohenstein, the structure of the novel is in large part disputatious.<sup>5</sup> The narration of flashbacks is usually followed by controversial discussions. As in *Arminius* many of these disputations are very erudite. The tribunal invites all sorts of experts to present their opinions on controversial issues. In accordance with the *ars disputandi*, the tribunal tries to arrive at some conclusions. In most cases, however, its conclusions are far from unambiguous. This is partly because the turbot turns out to be a skilful sophist who is very hard to pin down and partly because many contradictory aspects of a matter are discussed. The result of this is not meaningless relativism. These deliberations rather form an invitation to the reader to engage in an issue more fully and to form an opinion on a controversial issue. Dieter Kafitz's analysis of the disputations in Lohenstein's *Arminius* led him to a similar conclusion:

Erst die Ausbreitung aller Ansichten kann aus dem Labyrinth der Vieldeutigkeit einen Ausweg weisen. Zur relativierenden Aufgabe des Zweifels tritt seine aufbauende, daß

<sup>5</sup> The medieval *ars disputandi* was far from being obsolete in the seventeenth century and was an effective weapon in religious controversies. It is likely that most baroque authors were taught the *ars disputandi* in school or university. See Barner, *Barockrhetorik*, pp. 393-407. The disputatious structure of the courtly-historical novel is analysed by Günther Müller, 'Höfische Kultur', in *Deutsche Barockforschung: Dokumentation einer Epoche*, edited by Richard Alewyn (Cologne and Berlin, 1965), pp. 182-204 (p. 201) and Dieter Kafitz, *Lohensteins 'Arminius': Disputatorisches Verfahren und Lehrgehalt in einem Roman zwischen Barock und Aufklärung* (Stuttgart, 1970), pp. 54-90.

er alle Meinungen untersucht und 'aus allen zusammen einen der Wahrheit gemäßen Schluß' [*Arminius* (1690), II, p. 268a.] macht. Hier liegt ein Hinweis für den Leser der *Arminius*-Gespräche verborgen, welche Folgerungen aus dem Nebeneinander der Meinungen zu ziehen sind. Er soll sich nicht zu einer der vorgetragenen Ansichten bekennen, sondern aus allen zusammen die der Wahrheit gemähesten Aspekte herausgreifen und zu einer neuen Einheit verbinden (Kafitz, p. 73).

Similarly, the unresolved disputations in *Der Butt* and the courtly-historical novel force the reader to look at many different aspects of a controversial issue. Christian Thomasius gives an account of how a seventeenth-century reader reacted to the extensive disputations in the *Arminius*:

Ich kan wohl sagen / ...daß ich keinen Roman gelesen / der mehr nachsinnen braucht als der *Arminius*. Aber hieran ist nicht die Dunkelheit des Schreibers / sondern die Wichtigkeit der entworfenen Sachen schuld / und die Art und Weise / daß der Herr von Lohenstein mehrentheils / nachdem er eine Sache auff beyderley Recht erwogen / nichts determiniret, sondern dem Leser dasselbige zuthun überläst.<sup>6</sup>

Thus *Der Butt* and the courtly-historical novel provoke a similar reaction. In both cases the author does not aim at leading the reader into some passive agreement with a given viewpoint, doctrine, or moral framework, but forces the audience to take an active role in forming an opinion on the different aspects of the matter presented. It could, of course, be argued that to some extent any text requires a reader's mind to be involved, but there is a decisive difference between, say, didactic literature which aims at bringing home a specific moral point to a receptive readership (as a catechism does), and a disputatious text which can provoke a variety of reactions. It can be argued that *Der Butt* and *Arminius* are rhetorical in that they are largely written in the *genus deliberativum* discussing a choice of options. This diversity is by no means inherent in the nature of human speech. For instance, a much narrower form of discourse is the *genus iudiciale* which in dealing with a court case knows only two possible outcomes of a given *quaestio*, guilty or not guilty. Grass who is at pains to involve the reader in an open disputation on the roles of the sexes in history, demonstrates the ideological narrowness of the female protagonists in the novel by highlighting the part they play in the tribunal. While the turbot and the male narrator (often with the help of art) generally aim at creating ambiguity and finding a range of excuses, the women, namely Ilsebill, do not allow for any escape from the question of guilt. They insist on keeping the defendants within the narrow boundaries of the *genus iudiciale* knowing that this is the only way

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Volker Meid, 'Der höfische Roman des Barock', in *Handbuch des deutschen Romans*, edited by Helmut Koopmann (Düsseldorf, 1983), pp. 90-104 (p. 102).

they can reach the verdict they had pursued right from the start. The ironic way in which this genre of speech is treated in the novel is a form of criticism and an option for diversity.

The polyhistoric eclecticism characteristic of the courtly-historical novel can also be found in *Der Butt*. The motive for using multiple perspectives lies in Grass's deep aversion to ideologies. A sceptical slant — which is characteristic of Grass's generation — runs through all his works. (According to Kafitz (p. 79) this combination of polyhistorical eclecticism and scepticism is also characteristic of the transition period between late Baroque and early Enlightenment). On the other hand *Der Butt* does not simply throw arbitrary facts at the reader, but seems to draw a critical distinction between essential and contingent facts. It is characteristic that crucial themes of the novel — such as cookery and sex — are issues usually neglected by historians.<sup>7</sup> The exhaustive disputations are obviously another important device of structural *amplificatio*. A further structural impact the tribunal has on the novel is that the number of couples is largely extended through this framework. The narrator claims to be a lover of several women who take part in the tribunal:

Mit allen habe ich etwas gehabt, sogar mit Helga Paasch...Schlimm verlief die Geschichte zwischen mir und Ruth Simoneit...Mit Sieglinde Huntscha konnte ich jederzeit...mit Bettina von Carnow hätte ich mich...einer naßkalten Herbststimmung wegen beinahe verlobt. So gut wie nichts habe ich mit Therese Osslieb gehabt, obgleich ich mir ein hinhaltendes Bratkartoffelverhältnis mit ihr gut vorstellen könnte. Meine Verehrung für Dr. Schönherr hat während Jahren nicht nachgelassen, auch wenn sie sich an die Nacht in Bielefeld (oder war es Kassel) nicht erinnern will...; mit Ulla Witzlaff kann ich am besten...(v. 447f.)

The narrator also has relationships with several women who occur in other settings of the novel, such as the heroines of the chapter 'Vatertag'. The number of his relationships is further increased because throughout the centuries his identity changes continuously. During his 'Zeitweil' he is the lover of a great number of women most of whom have also had previous lives. As in the courtly-historical novel, the number of relationships and couples is increased to such an extent that it is almost impossible to keep track of them.

A further purpose of the tribunal is to treat the feminists with irony and to show the lack of a culture of public debate in Germany. This might be a further

<sup>7</sup> For the themes of cookery and sex in *Der Butt* see Leonard Forster, 'An Unsystematic Approach to *Der Butt*', in *Festschrift for E. W. Herd*, edited by August Obermayer (Dunedin, 1980), pp. 55-77, (*passim*) and Anthony Phelan, 'Rabelais's sister: Food, Writing, and Power', in *Günter Grass's 'Der Butt'. Sexual Politics and the Male Myth of History*, edited by Philip Brady, Timothy McFarland, John J. White (Oxford, 1990) pp. 133-52.

development of the chapter 'Eine öffentliche Diskussion' in *Hundejahre* (iii. 721-63) which Grass has characterized in one of his essays:

Doch auch eine der beliebtesten Umgangsformen unserer Gesellschaft, die öffentliche Diskussion, stellt sich dar, stellt sich bloß. Unter dem Deckmäntelchen angelernter Demokratie wird die nazistische Vergangenheit Walter Materns mit Methoden aufgedeckt, die ihre Herkunft verdrängt haben...dabei, so meint der Autor, wird allenfalls der Mechanismus öffentlicher Diskussion deutlich und ihre latente Bereitschaft, ins Tribunal zu münden: Wir sind alle Diskutanten. Wen legen wir heute aufs Kreuz? (ix. 276f.)

Thus the function of the tribunal in *Der Butt* is twofold. It sceptically corrects the dominant male version of history but at the same time the interrogation of the turbot creates new biases and distortions. The process of the elucidation of truth itself appears doubtful. We will see that this ambiguity is an important characteristic of Grass's later narrative writings.

Apart from these two main frameworks there is another framework which gives rise to flashbacks. In the present time, the narrator travels to Danzig with a 'Norddeutscher Rundfunk' team in order to make a documentary film about the reconstruction of Danzig after the war. Confronted with historic buildings he starts to remember the (partly fictitious) history of Danzig:

Was ich nicht fürs Fernsehen sagte: daß über'n Bauzaun und ins sechzehnte Jahrhundert geguckt, drüben, wo nur noch Reste des Klosterhofes neben Sankt Birgitten stehen, die Äbtissin Margarete Rusch mit ihren freischweifenden Birgittinen die Wortspalterei der Reformationszeit bei zunehmendem Pfefferverbrauch überlebte; daß gleich nebenan, wenn auch ein Jahrhundert später, in den sogenannten Predigerhäusern, der Dichter und Hofhistoriograph Martin Opitz von Boberfeld wohnte, bis ihn die Pest raffte. (v. 139)

In this setting the narrator who in all three frameworks loves different women (Ilsebill, the members of the tribunal) is attracted to Maria, a Polish woman. At the end of the novel the three frameworks are linked; after the turbot is (before the eyes of the tribunal) thrown back into the sea the narrator has to fly back from Møn to be present at the birth of his daughter. Then he immediately flies to Danzig to see Maria. In the final scene of the novel the women from different ages seem to merge:

Es dämmerte schon, als sich Maria mit dem Butt ausgesprochen hatte. Und als sie ihn an die See zurückgab, rillte der Abendwind das Baltische Meer. Sie stand eine Weile und zeigte mir ihren Rücken. Dann kam sie langsam ihren Spuren entgegen. Doch nicht Maria kam zurück. Es wird Dorothea sein, sorgte ich mich. Als sie mir Schritt nach Schritt größer wurde, hoffte ich schon auf Agnes. Das war nicht Sophies Gang. Kommt Billy, die arme Sibylle zurück? Ilsebill kam. Sie übersah, übergang mich. Schon war sie an mir vorbei. Ich lief ihr nach. (v. 645)

This scene has a strong cinematic effect. As in the other frameworks, the making of a film on Danzig affects the way in which the story is told. The sequence of sketches in the novel is discontinuous like a sequence of shots in a film. The perspective of the novel is that of a camera eye. It is not by accident that the tribunal meets in an old cinema where photographs are sometimes flashed on the screen. Grass had used similar devices in earlier novels such as *örtlich betäubt* (to take simply one example: 'Linde...steht auf und geht umweglos in Richtung Villa davon. Die Kamera schaut zu, wie sie kleiner wird'; iv. 26). It should be noted that in such passages Grass is following Döblin who called for the literary employment of cinematic techniques. However, this cinematic strand remains less important than the other two dominant frameworks. It can be found only in a few passages, such as when the turbot is filmed while being thrown into the Baltic Sea or when Billy says that her life is a film:

Oft...hat Billy gesagt: 'Mein Leben ist ein einziger Film.' Weshalb jetzt jener Vätertagausflug zum Grunewaldsee...aus wechselnden Perspektiven erinnert werden soll: bäuchlings im zertretenen Gras, von besteigbaren Grunewaldkiefern herab, aus Büschen, vom glatten See aus, wie sie in Grüppchen am Ufer zwischen Grüppchen sind. Und auch bei den restlichen neunzigtausend und mehr Männern in Spandau...sollen Kameramänner dabei sein und draufhalten draufhalten. (v. 550)

This cinematic strand has a great impact in the chapter 'Vätertag', such as the use of the scenes from Westerns or war films, but it dominates only some episodes of *Der Butt* and does not shape the novel as a whole.

Cinematic techniques later become prevalent in *Kopfgeburten* and *Die Rätin*. It is important to see that in *Der Butt* cinematic devices are clearly inadequate to deal with the complex and interwoven relations between the past and the present. On the other hand it is obvious that Heliodorus's technique of flashbacks is inappropriate for a futuristic text like *Die Rätin*. In this case cinematic techniques are much more appropriate for the apocalyptic scenarios in the novel.

By drawing parallels between *Der Butt* and the courtly-historical novel I do not necessarily presuppose that Grass has deliberately used the courtly-historical novel as a model. Rather I work on the assumption that Grass generally tries to develop his novels in a highly experimental way. As a result of this the structure of his texts becomes ever more complex and sophisticated. *Die Rätin*, for instance, is an attempt at surpassing the experimental narrative technique of *Der Butt*. It is therefore not surprising that at some stage in this process we should

find an affinity with one of the most intricate forms of German prose fiction, the courtly-historical novel of the baroque age.

*Die Blechtrommel*, Grass's first novel, has a much more simple and episodic structure reminiscent of the picaresque genre. The rogue hero of Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* and *Die Blechtrommel* provided an appropriate perspective to demonstrate how a country had been perverted by a recent war. The complex structure of the courtly-historical novel was an answer to the problem of how to deal with the relationship between the sexes and its political implications throughout history. The subject of *Der Butt*, like its concept of history and epistemology, requires a structure similar to that of the courtly-historical novel.

The technique of combining framework plot and flashbacks is effective only if the investigation into the past leads to a better understanding of the present. Hence it implies both a particular epistemological viewpoint and a certain philosophy of history. In epistemological terms the narration of previous lives has a function similar to that of the Platonic *anamnesis* or even Freudian psychoanalysis. The past is what matters and understanding always has a historical dimension. In *Der Butt* this past is a combination of the real past and fiction. David Jenkinson has pointed out that Grass is hostile to conventional historiography in that he marginalizes major historical events.<sup>8</sup> In other words, Grass's treatment of history is eclectic, because it combines a great variety of unrelated aspects of history in an unsystematic way. No professional historian would want to deal with such a range of diverse topics, not to mention the time span from prehistoric times to the present. It has been noted that Grass's treatment of history in the later works is reminiscent of that of baroque polymaths.<sup>9</sup> The polyhistoric eclecticism is also characteristic of the courtly-historical novel. Assuming that the past is decisive, *Der Butt* and the courtly-historical novel have a strong fatalistic tendency. Both in *Der Butt* and in the courtly-historical novel, the investigation of history aims at illuminating a *fatum* which determines not only the past but also the present and future. Hence it is necessary for Ilsebill and the narrator to understand the relationship between the sexes at the times of their ancestors in order to clarify their own relationship.

<sup>8</sup> David Jenkinson, 'Conceptions of History', in *Günter Grass's 'Der Butt'. Sexual Politics and the Male Myth of History*, pp. 51-68 (p. 54).

<sup>9</sup> The title of Verweyen's and Witting's article on *Das Treffen in Telgte* puts it well: 'Polyhistorisches neues Glück'.

Like Arminius and Thusnelda in Lohenstein's *Arminius* or Ahalibama and Eliser in Anton Ulrich's *Aramena*, Ilsebill and the narrator are the leading couple of *Der Butt*. Nevertheless they are of minor interest as individuals though of great interest as representatives of their sexes. The previous life of all these figures is interwoven with the fate of a large number of other characters. In *Der Butt* the narrator has relationships with women of all three framework plots, many of whom themselves have, as we saw, had previous lives. This web of relationships is further complicated because the male story-teller has the peculiar ability to be present at all levels of time from the Stone Age right through the centuries until the present. 'Ich, das bin ich jederzeit' (v. 6), he says. The narrator can place himself quite randomly in any century. Grass coined the word 'Zeitweil' (v. 15) for this 'presence' at a certain time in the past. Moreover, at some time levels the narrator even manages to play the role of two different lovers of the same heroine. During the period of Christianization the narrator develops this strange ability to have a dual identity:

Der Schäfer — der Bischof: Zum ersten Mal zeitweilte ich doppelt, war ich gespalten und dennoch ganz heidnischer Schafshirt, ganz christlicher Eiferer. Nicht mehr ging es so eindeutig zu wie unter Auas Fürsorge und in Wiggas Schatten. Nur noch im Verhältnis zu Dorothea und zur Gesindeköchin Amanda Woyke, die beide keine Zweideutigkeiten zuließen, habe ich mich so eins mit mir verbrauchen können: ungespalten und lebenslänglich. (v. 121f.)

As in the courtly-historical novel, the number of couples is enlarged to such an extent in *Der Butt* that even the most skilful reader cannot keep track of them all. A detailed index of the many characters which was often attached to courtly-historical novels would also make *Der Butt* more accessible.

What makes the who-is-who even more unclear in this sort of novel is that the identity of the characters often changes rapidly. Women pretend to be men and men pretend to be women (a commonplace which in the 'Vatertag' chapter leads to a catastrophe). In Anton Ulrich's *Aramena* there are three different figures who are called Cimber or Aramena while one single person can have three different names.<sup>10</sup> It is characteristic of *Der Butt* that — in addition to the 'inbreeding' between the characters of the novel, who are often relatives — the identity of the figures starts slipping. It is sometimes uncertain which figures have to be identified with the narrator:

<sup>10</sup> See Meid, 'Der höfische Roman des Barock', pp. 98f. Adolf Haslinger, *Epische Formen im höfischen Barockroman: Anton Ulrichs Romane als Modell* (Munich, 1970), p. 320 even counts four Aramenas.

Vielleicht, weil ich nicht so recht weiß, unter wessen Namen ich im Verhältnis zur Nonne Margret Rusch zeitweilte und weil ich mich vergleichsweise an meine Zeitweil im Neolithikum genauer erinnere als an die wirren Verhältnisse zur Zeit der Reformation, sind die Aussagen des Butt vor dem feministischen Tribunal widersprüchlich genannt worden: Er will mich zuerst als Vater der kleinen Margret, dann als Patrizier Ferber und später als feisten Abt Jeschke beraten haben. (v. 248)

The narrator seems able to play any role. The changing of roles and identities is also a part of a *theatrum mundi* concept which permeates all baroque literature. Life consists in playing a role and — what is more important — these roles are predetermined. The fact that characters in the courtly-historical novel and *Der Butt* adopt the roles of other figures does not mean that they are independent of social restrictions. On the contrary, any such role is fixed, determined by the *fatum*, and cannot be changed. Generally speaking, this is what *Der Butt* is about: both in matriarchy and patriarchy the relationship between the sexes is oppressive. It does not seem to matter much whether women — as in the beginning and at the end of the novel — or men dominate the other sex. Certain oppressive roles are perpetuated throughout history. The former underdog may well come out on top, but the mechanisms of oppression are not likely to change. This explains why in *Der Butt* and in the courtly-historical novel the innumerable characters are of minor interest as individuals. In order to understand these novels, it is not necessary to survey the cast of characters in detail, but it is crucial to understand that history is just a variation of a limited number of basic situations. What matters is to understand history as a play in which, under continuously changing guises, certain constellations will occur over and over again.

The relationship between love and politics is a key topic in *Der Butt* and in the novels of Anton Ulrich and Lohenstein. The most private and intimate aspects of life and the most public and social parts of it seem to be two aspects of the same reality. The dialectic of these two contradictory aspects of life is a decisive part of baroque culture. It has a strong tendency to make everything public. All forms of the inner person's experience seek their outer representation.<sup>11</sup> It is characteristic that in baroque novels or baroque dramas the heroes' inner states are the correlative for objective public affairs. Only rural

<sup>11</sup> The public celebration 'zu dem hochansehnlichsten Beilager der Röm. Kais. Majestäten Leopoldi des Ersten und Margariten, gebornen Infantin in Hispanien' in Vienna 1666-68 shows, for example, how the public partook of the love of this couple and how private and political affairs coincided. See Richard Alewyn and Karl Sälzle, *Das große Welttheater: Die Epoche der höfischen Feste in Dokument und Deutung* (Hamburg, 1959), pp. 103-19.

settings like the bucolic landscape create a distance from the public and provide a shelter of privacy for lovers. But such settings remain Utopian, places which can never be reached. To some extent this also applies to *Der Butt*, where the narrator fails to withdraw with Ilsebill to the gourd-vine arbour in order to escape the constraints of social and political life. There is no place where one does not need to respond to society in one way or another. Both in *Der Butt* and the courtly-historical novel, love always has social and political implications. Volker Meid even speaks of an 'Einheit von Liebes- und Staatsgeschichte'.<sup>12</sup> The connection between love and politics may be timeless and archetypal; in baroque literature, though, it has a specific quality because of the courtly sphere. It is the very essence of courtly life to *represent* the state; the relation between courtly love and politics is thus not just causal but also semiotic. The relationship between individuals has a universal meaning, one could say it is allegorical. This dimension is lost in the modern public sphere which emerged during the eighteenth century. In *Der Butt*, too, Ilsebill and the narrator are representatives, their relationship has an allegorical quality.

In a courtly-historical novel such as *Arminius* the concept of love is identical to that of sex. In Lohenstein's writings, sex has a strong impact on politics. He uses the full scale of rhetorical devices in order to describe passions as motives for political action. One of the main goals — and justifications — of the rhetorical manner of writing is to find an appropriate expression for the excited passions which determine the characters' behaviour. Just as the disputations in the novel appeal to a reader's reason, the stimulating rhetorical level appeals to his emotions (it aims at *excitare* and, to use the standard rhetorical term, *movere*). Lohenstein's style is in itself ardent and impassioned. This is even more evident in his plays such as *Sophonisbe* (1680). Sophonisbe for example uses her sexual attraction to subject Masinissa to her political interests:

*Sophonisbe*: Mein Brand zerschmelzt die Seel' und fleucht aus mir in dich!  
*Masinissa*: Und meine lächst nach dir! Ich sincke für dir nieder!  
 Ich gebe dir dein Reich mit meiner Seele wieder.  
 Das Einhorn lägt sein Horn / das Zeppter seiner Macht /  
 So in der Frauen Schoos...<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Meid, 'Der höfische Roman des Barock', p. 91.

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Casper von Lohenstein, *Sophonisbe: Trauerspiel*, edited by Rolf Tarot (Stuttgart, 1981), p. 55. It is noteworthy that the struggle between the sexes which forms an important theme of *Der Butt* is a topic which permeates baroque literature. Petrarchism, a decisive point of departure for baroque literature, forms a powerful paradigm of alienation between the sexes in European poetry. And petrarchism even remains an important frame of reference when the theme is much modified as in the sex war of Lohenstein's plays. In *Das Treffen in Telgte* we will deal with the strained relationship

The metaphors of sexual submission are obvious. In the plays *Cleopatra* (1661) and *Sophonisbe* the heroines fight a sex war against powerful male invaders of their countries.<sup>14</sup>

Another strand of *Der Butt* — food — is also described extensively in *Arminius*. The stylistic *ornatus* reflects the decadence of the ‘Schauessen’ in the novel. The following passage is typical for the elaborate descriptions of food in the *Arminius*:

In der Mitte der Taffel stand ein unbeweglicher Colossus / welcher in der rechten Hand eine Schüssel voll Saltz / in der lincken ein Gefaße voll Wein hatte.... Die Speisen einer jeden Tracht wurden alle auf einmal auf einem vergüldeten Gestüle auf die Taffel gesetzt. In der ersten Tracht wurden alle Speisen auf zwölf güldene Füsse gesätzt / welche die zwölf himmlischen Zeichen abbildeten; und auf jedem dieser Füsse stunden sechs sich darzu schickende Speisen. Auf dem...Wieder war allerhand Wieder=Schaaf=und Lamm=Fleisch. Auf dem...Ochsen Speise von Rindfleische...Auf dem...Löwen allerhand nur erdenkliches Wilpret von vierfüssigten Thieren mit Africanischen Feigen belegt. Auf der...Jungfrau / Gerüchte von Bibern / Geburts=Glieder von gelbem Vieh und Schild=Kröten.<sup>15</sup>

After a long enumeration of dishes another course (or ‘Tracht’ as Lohenstein calls it) follows which symbolizes Roman gods such as Jupiter, Juno and Diana. The dish of Venus shows how food can allude to sex:

An statt der Fische [the sign of the zodiac] zeigte sich das Bild der mit Rosen gekränztten Venus. In sieben Porcellanen...hielt sie zugerichtete Geilen von Kapp=Hahnen / Numidische Hüner / Marenen=Milch / eingesaltzene Eyer von Stören und Hausen / mit Wein=Eßig und Oel eingemachte Eingeweide von Makrelen / und andern zur Geilheit dienenden und destwegen so vielmehr gewürtzten Speisen.<sup>16</sup>

In a similar way the phallic mushrooms, the ‘Buttmilch’, apples, cherries and other food embody the theme of sex in *Der Butt*.<sup>17</sup>

Such allegorical ‘Schauessen’ can also be found in *Der Butt*. The turbot is not sentenced to die — as some radical feminists demanded — but to witness a symbolic ‘Buttessen’: ‘In Gegenwart des Butt, ihm unübersehbar, vor seinen verqueren Augen sollte...das demonstrative, man sagte, zukünftig denkwürdige, das rituale, feierliche, das große Buttessen stattfinden’ (v. 618f.). After the feast

between Gelnhausen and Courasche, a replay of Grimmelshausen’s invention of a clash between a male and a female rogue hero.

<sup>14</sup> For the sex war in *Der Butt* see Forster, ‘An Unsystematic Approach’, pp. 59, 61.

<sup>15</sup> Daniel Casper von Lohenstein, *Großmüthiger Feldherr Arminius*, reprint of the edition of 1689-90, introduced by Elida Maria Szarota, 2 vols (Hildesheim and New York, 1973), II, 432b-433a. Other examples of ‘Schauessen’ are I, 1362a-1366b; II, 1496a-1499b.

<sup>16</sup> Lohenstein, *Arminius*, II, 434b. See also II, 1497b.

<sup>17</sup> For the close relationship between sex and food in *Der Butt* see Forster, ‘An Unsystematic Approach’, pp. 69-74.

the turbot is shown the remaining fish-bones: 'Hier, Butt! Hier! Damit du siehst, was von dir bleibt. Du Todbringer, Lebensfeind!', shouts the narrator, 'und ich hob eine blanke Hauptgräte mit dem zerfledderten Kopf und zeigte sie dem Butt in seinem Glasehäuse' (v. 622). This dinner, being called demonstrative, takes up the baroque tradition of 'Schauessen'. The horrifying effect it produces on the turbot ('Ach, wie er leiden mußte. Ach, wie ihm Recht geschah...') is caused by the visualization of food.

The poisonous meal Sophie Rotzoll cooks for the governor Rapp and his guests is a further example of a 'Schauessen'. Sophie writes meaningful dates and initials on the boned calf's head:

Und weil sie die Gäste des Gouverneurs und deren Spaß an Rätseln und Scharaden kannte, hatte Sophie, bevor sie den gefüllten Kalbskopf in die Bratröhre schob, dessen Fettbacken jeweils mit der Zahl des Revolutionsjahres, dem gegenwärtigen Datum und ganz klein mit den Initialen ihres Freundes Fritz tätowiert, wobei sie die Einkerbungen mit Safranpulver tönkte. (v. 444)

Rapp's guests, stimulated by the hints at the French Revolution and the mushroom poison, start quarrelling about politics, soon lose their temper and pull carving knives and sabres on each other. Meals and celebrations which have a catastrophic tendency recur time and again in Grass's writings. The sinful meal Gelnhausen prepares for the baroque poets in *Das Treffen in Telgte* can serve as a typical example. This kind of catastrophic banquet is reminiscent of Heinrich Wittenwiler's *Ring*. This novel, one of the underrated masterpieces of German literature, describes how a wedding meal triggers off a ghastly war between neighbouring tribes. It would be worthwhile compiling an anthology of descriptions of meals in Grass's writings. Generally speaking one could distinguish between two types of meals: the sinful, disastrous meal which we have just dealt with (perhaps originating from the chapter 'Karfreitagskost' in *Die Blechtrommel*) and the purifying meal such as the cod Agnes cooks for Opitz and Gryphius calming their moods after their clash, or the (biblical) fish meal Greflinger prepares at Telgte which enables the poets to find a harmonious end to their turbulent meeting. One is reminded of a remark of Ernst Robert Curtius (p. 144) which highlights the fact that the opposition between two types of complementary meals is of biblical origin: 'Für die Speisemetaphorik ist doch die Bibel die Hauptquelle. In der christlichen Heilsgeschichte bilden das Kosten verbotener Frucht und die Einsetzung des Herrenmahls dramatische Einschnitte.' Many of these meals are graphically described and they embody a specific meaning as the 'Schauessen' in the courtly-historical novel.

The 'Schaussen' can serve as an example of the allegorical way of writing which forms another parallel between *Der Butt* and the courtly-historical novel. The passages which are quoted above can be read in two ways. On the one hand they are factual descriptions of meals, but on the other hand a further, coded meaning can be construed which is distinct from the immediate sense. For instance, in *Der Butt* certain kinds of food can evoke the theme of sex and, as will be seen later, references to a sour taste can evoke the theme of melancholy. This parallelism of a literal and a secondary meaning created through a shared background or knowledge of the author and his reader is a chief characteristic of allegory.

We can only deal with this topic very briefly here, because a detailed analysis of the use of allegories in Grass's later writings and in baroque literature would lead us far beyond the scope of the present study. It would, in fact, form a topic for a new dissertation. The myth at the beginning of the *Der Butt*, the fairy-tale of the fisherman and his wife, and the turbot as a personification of the 'Weltgeist' are a few examples which demonstrate the importance of allegories in the novel. In all these cases a second meaning can be distinguished from the literal sense of the text. A further analysis of the novel would show that the narrative often evolves from such allegories. The process is, in fact, the same as the development of stories from images we followed in the early works. This is not very surprising if one bears in mind the rhetorical definition of an allegory as an extended metaphor. Grass's works have a tendency to amplify metaphors into narrative episodes and to elaborate allegories into complex narrative strands. This is not the place to analyse this further. I will give some examples of the use of allegories in *Der Butt* in the analysis of the chapters 'Ach Ilsebill' (which forms a Stoic allegory) and 'Vatertag' (which contains the allegory of Mäxchen sitting in a tree).

If it can be said that the baroque surpasses any other literary period in its preoccupation with allegory (with the exception perhaps of the late Middle Ages), then the most respected genre of the time, the courtly-historical novel, certainly cannot do without it. Allegories make it possible to praise the reign of a prince (for example, Leopold through the character Arminius); but at the same time it can be an indirect and safe way of criticizing (for instance, stubborn Catholicism which is represented through a clique of druids in Lohenstein's *Arminius*). The common purpose of allegory in *Der Butt* and the courtly-historical novel is to enhance ornament and entanglement and at the same time allow for an indirect way of speaking. Allegory is a means of stylistic ornament because it is a rhetorical trope and thus closely related to the imagistic way of

writing we dealt with earlier. The indirect way of speaking through allegory can be a means of communicating an idea more clearly to a wide audience (the 'Buttessen', for instance, brings home to all readers that the male 'Weltgeist' is sentenced to die); but it can also be used in an esoteric way addressing a small number of readers who share a special knowledge with the author (this is true of the hints at the humoral pathology which, as will be seen later, refer to melancholy). In both cases the use of allegory is very conscious, it deliberately aims at expressing one thing through another. What is said and what is meant differs — and it differs only because the author has chosen this indirect mode of writing. In understanding an allegory the reader always has to make conjectures about the author's intentions. It is plainly impossible to interpret an allegory without attributing intentions to the author, because the gap between expression and meaning needs to be understood as wilful. How else could one explain that A is said, but B is meant? This importance of intentions is another reminder that the frequent use of allegories is evidence of a rhetorical way of writing. Allegories are to some degree artificial and their effect is calculated in advance. This is why they have been accused of being cold or shallow literary devices, not least by Goethe who despised allegory just as he despised rhetoric in general. This did not, however, prevent Goethe from using allegories in his later works. One might argue that in some cases they are a characteristic of 'Altersstil', that they flourish when skill has taken the place of fresher literary resources and when a writer has become more detached from the subject. Something similar could be said of Grass. The increasing employment of skills, techniques, and reflection distinguishes his later works from the early writings. It is in this context that Grass's affinity to the rhetorical baroque literature should be understood.

To the reader of *Der Butt* or the courtly-historical novel the surface of the narrative is very puzzling. However, with hindsight events which appeared to lack any motivation turn out to be part of a coherent plot. For there is a hidden order underlying the confusing surface. At first sight the reader only notices a multiplicity of accidental historical circumstances which alter rapidly. The guise of the world changes quickly because it is ruled by the inconstant 'Frau Welt' and Fortune. Beneath this deceptive surface, however, history is determined by a *fatum* which can only be understood through examples and analogies. All accidental circumstances must be neglected in order to see that history is

nothing but a recurrence of a limited number of constellations.<sup>18</sup> In spite of the mutability of the world certain underlying historical patterns remain the same. The transience and endless recurrence in history are both depicted by Fortune's swiftly turning wheel, a favourite image of baroque literature.

Let us look at an example of recurrence in *Der Butt*. The turbot, for instance, is caught twice. His role is to support one sex in the struggle against the other. But in neither case is his advice really successful — partly because it is ignored and partly because it does not seem to work. At first sight, the turbot's changing sides seems to indicate a new historical period. A closer look at the text reveals that there is reason to believe that the battle between the sexes is moving in circles. Instead of finding a new way of handling power, the women adopt male behaviour. This is quite surprising because throughout history women seem to have maintained an ironic distance from male eagerness:

So haben alle den Kopf schräg gehalten: ein wenig sorgenvoll und zugleich amüsiert über so viel Gerede und männlichen Eifer. So, doch schon spottbereit, sah und hörte die Äbtissin Margarete Rusch dem Prediger Hegge zu.... So besorgt, doch das Lächeln schon ins Wehmütige verwaschen, sah die Küchenmagd Agnes Kurbiella dem Dichter Opitz über die Schulter.... Mit diesem Ausdruck empfing mich Wigga...als ich fußkrank von der Völkerwanderung nach Hause gehumpelt kam. Und ähnlich sah mich Lena Stubbe, bei schräger Kopfhaltung, sobald ich sie freitags mal wider mit dem Abziehleder verprügelt hatte...(v. 597)

This enumeration shows that women always disparaged male hubris. Such enumerations are characteristic of *Der Butt*. They are another device aimed at *amplificatio*, another 'Darstellungsprinzip der Fülle'.<sup>19</sup> But the enumerations have another important function. They link all the different time levels by highlighting a singular aspect which is common to all of them. In contrast to the framework plot and flashback plots which usually operate on only one level of time, these summations bring the narrative to a standstill and link all the different levels in a manner which Thomas Mann in *Doktor Faustus* termed

<sup>18</sup> This is also one of the main ideas of Spinoza's *Ethics*; everything has to be seen *sub specie aeternitatis*. Only from this perspective can the world's inherent order be perceived. As far as I can see, no research has so far been done on this perspective common to both Spinoza and the courtly-historical novel.

<sup>19</sup> See Haslinger, pp. 319-29. The first enumeration of this kind is the chapter 'Neun und mehr Köchinnen', where the heroines of the flashbacks from Aua to Lena Stubbe and Maria are introduced (v. 12-23); other such enumerations are 'Den Kot beschauen' (v. 276-80); the different concepts of love and marriage (v. 310-15); the most interesting chapter about the different ways of telling stories 'Beim Eichelstoßen Gänserupfen Kartoffelschälen erzählt' (v. 341-53); the passage about the narrator's eating apples with his partners (v. 489-91); the description of the heroines' bodies (v. 605-07) and the narrator's enumeration of his friends (v. 584-89).

polyphonic.<sup>20</sup> One period can only be interpreted in relation to another, the different time levels allude to one another. These enumerations enhance the impression of historical repetitiveness. Throughout the novel Grass refers to a polyphonic parallel between the slaughter of artisans who protested against the patricians in Danzig during the late thirteenth century and the killing of Danzig dock workers in 1970:

Das hört nie auf. Auch nicht im Kommunismus. Immer die Niederen gegen die Oberen. Damals hießen die Bonzen Patrizier. Die machten den Hering aus Schonen teuer. Die setzten, obgleich es genug gab, den Pfefferpreis hoch. Die sagten immer: Der Däne ist schuld....Das sagt der Staat als Partei. Und die hat recht, immer recht. Und die sagt immer: Für Freiheit ist es zu früh. (v. 598)

This concept of history is summed up in the words: 'Seit 1378 hat sich in Danzig oder Gdansk soviel verändert: die Patrizier heißen jetzt anders' (v. 140). It is obvious that *Der Butt* does not deal with unique historical events but rather with examples. A minor rebellion in Danzig can be seen as a pattern for the course of history at large. The microcosm of seemingly minor local history represents the macrocosm of general history. Grass narrates history through the daily life of Danzig. What happened during the Middle Ages in Danzig is likely to happen again — somewhere else and at another time. This view of history cannot be said to make for enthusiasm about political progress. Grass rather keeps an ironic distance from a naive belief in progress, for example, leaving it to the reader to decide whether Sophie Rotzoll's last words were 'Es lebe die Republik!' or 'Rehrücken in Aspik!' (v. 528). Like the courtly-historical novel *Der Butt* does not deal with history as such or with unique events, but with historical *exempla*. Hence the poet is justified in mixing history and fiction and neglecting certain historical circumstances in order to reinforce what is typical about the examples he deals with. Thus both *Der Butt* and the courtly-historical novel tend to employ *topoi* and allegories as means of dealing with the typical and common in history (our analysis of the allegorical description of the Battle of Wittstock in the chapter 'Vatertag' will show this). According to Sigmund von Birken's 'Vor-Ansprache zum Edlen Leser' (which is one of the most important theoretical texts about the courtly-historical novel), the at least partly fictitious genre of 'Geschichtgedicht' is superior to 'Jahrbücher' or 'Gedicht-

<sup>20</sup> Some of the enumerations have the structure of a 'Summationsschema' (see Curtius, p. 293), a further highly technical device which aims at amplification: after an elaborated enumeration of the different ways of how the heroines died the whole passage is summed up in a few words: 'Amanda und Sophie ausgenommen, so viel gewaltsamer Tod: das vergiftete Blut, der ausgehungerte Leib, das verbrannte Fleisch, das erstickte Lachen, der Rumpf ohne Kopf, die erschlagene Fürsorge' (v. 530f.).

geschichte' which only relate historical facts.<sup>21</sup> Birken prefers the allegorical or fictitious 'Geschichtgedicht' because he has a philosophical and interest in history. In Wilhelm Vosskamp's words: 'Das poetologische Interesse an Geschichte ist ein Interesse an Geschichtsphilosophie bzw. Geschichtstheologie, nicht eines an Geschichte als Geschichte.'<sup>22</sup> Birken explains why he believes history to be interesting subject-matter for literature:

Die Welt / ist eine Spiel-bühne / da immer ein Traur- und Freud-gemischtes Schauspiel vorgestellt wird: nur daß / von zeit zu zeit / andere Personen auftreten. Was ist / (predigt der allerweiseste Staatsfürst/) das geschehen ist? eben das / so hernach geschehen wird. Geschihet auch etwas / davon man sagen möchte: Sihe das ist neu! dann es ist zuvor auch geschehen / in den zeiten / die vor uns gewesen sind. Es geschihet nichts neues unter der Sonne. Ist dannhero eine grosse torheit / daß man (wie er fortpredigt') nicht gedenket / wann man auf diesen Staat-Schauplatz seine Person zu spielen antritt / wie es zuvor einem andern gerathen ist.<sup>23</sup>

The reader is meant to learn from historical examples which are similar to his own situation. There are, however, differences between the readers of a courtly novel and those of *Der Butt* because the social context of the novels has of course changed. Courtly novels of the baroque age are addressed to the prince, the nobility or at least to members of the court, whereas *Der Butt* is not addressed to a specific social class. Nevertheless, in both cases, the audience is made aware of the roles it plays in political and social life. The critical purpose of these novels is to urge the reader to analyse political situations as a *déjà vu*. In Grass's novels the *déjà vu* perspective is used in particular to criticize ideologies. Medieval patricians and modern communist party bosses use ideologies in order to justify oppression, violence, or the poor excuse 'Für Freiheit ist es zu früh' (v. 598). Thus the burning of witches is justified by Christianity in the same way as the prosecution of counter-revolutionaries is justified by the devotees of 'reason':

Und selbst Amanda Woyke, die Rezepte wußte, und ganz gewiß Sophie Rotzoll, der alle Pilze bekannt waren, wären den christlichen Herren gut fürs Feuer gewesen. Doch zu Amandas und Sophies Zeiten hatten sich die Saubermänner der Revolution andere

<sup>21</sup> Sigmund von Birken's 'Vor-Ansprache zum Edlen Leser', in Anton Ulrich, *Die durchleuchtige Syrerinn Aramena: Der erste Teil*, reprint of the edition of 1669, edited by Blake Lee Spahr (Bern and Frankfurt, 1975), fols Xijj v.-Xv r. We will see later that Grass's invention of facts in the chapter 'Von der Last böser Zeit' also follows Birken's principle of *verisimilitudo*. In the 'Geschichtgedicht' history can be 'mit andern umständen vermehret / die sich war-scheinlich begeben können' ('Vor-Ansprache zum Edlen Leser', fol Xiiij v.).

<sup>22</sup> Wilhelm Vosskamp, *Romantheorie in Deutschland: Von Martin Opitz bis Friedrich von Blanckenburg* (Stuttgart, 1973), p. 14.

<sup>23</sup> 'Vor-Ansprache zum Edlen Leser', fol Xijj r.-Xijj v. The *theatrum mundi* metaphor and the idea of fixed roles perfectly matches the concept of history as repetition.

Opfer ausgedacht: sogenannte Konterrevolutionäre. Die wurden im Namen der Vernunft scharfgerichtet. (v. 332)

Women were killed in the name of Christianity and in the name of reason. Revolutions which invariably caused similar cruelties were justified by changing principles:

Die uns bekannten Revolutionsverläufe sind orgiastische Todesbeschwörungen gewesen; mal hatte diese, mal jenes männliche Reinlichkeitsprinzip Säuberungsprozesse mit tödlichem Ausgang zur Folge; ob die Inquisition ihre Verhörmethoden zur Ehre Gottes verfeinerte, ob die Guillotine als humanistischer Fortschritt gefeiert wurde, ob die stalinistischen Schauprozesse den Segen der Wissenden und Unwissenden erhielten, ob in nazistischen Konzentrationslagern die Umerziehung zum Tode nur noch ein bürokratischer Verwaltungsakt war: Zu allen Zeiten waren es Männer, die mit kühler Inbrunst...den Tod von Menschen vordatiert haben. (v. 613f.)

This is pointed out because once these justifications of different periods and ideologies are confronted with one another they are exposed as strategies employed by a ruling clique to stabilize its power. Hence the concept of history as repetition has a critical aspect and trains the reader's political acumen. The same goal is achieved by retelling different versions of certain stories — this is particularly true of the tale about the fisherman and his wife. But there are many other examples: Lena Stubbe for instance is declared to have died in 1942 of senility in the Stutthof concentration camp near Danzig; but there is another version: 'Nach anderer Aussage hat ein Küchenkapo, der zu den bevorzugten, weil nur kriminellen Häftlingen gehörte, Lena Stubbe zu Tode geprügelt, als sie die ohnehin dürftigen Kochrationen Margarine und Rindertalg vor dem Zugriff der Kapos schützen wollte' (v. 530).

In spite of all these parallels between *Der Butt* and the courtly-historical novel there are also important divergences. The baroque novel works on the metaphysical assumption of an all-pervading Christian order, an assumption which is alien to Grass's works. The chaotic semblance of the courtly-historical novel is deceptive, only because it always ends with the unambiguous triumph of the Christian *ordo*.<sup>24</sup> All the conflicts are unravelled, the good characters are honoured, the bad ones punished. Providence triumphs over a world of deception. Furthermore, the conclusions of courtly-historical novels provide the reader with criteria for evaluating the characters and their actions. *Der Butt* obviously lacks such an 'Entknotung' showing a way out of the 'Lebens-

<sup>24</sup> In Lohenstein's *Arminius* one might doubt that the world is ruled by a transcendent Christian God; none the less there clearly is a triumph of providence which still has Christian connotations.

Labyrinth'.<sup>25</sup> This important structural difference between *Der Butt* and the courtly-historical novel reflects the works' different metaphysical backgrounds. Christianity provided a transcendental and stable framework underlying the chaos of life in the courtly novel. For Grass humanity has no way of knowing the sense and destination of history and must therefore stay within the narrow boundaries of an absurd world. There is a certain affinity with Döblin's *Wallenstein* which according to Grass is not a historical novel: 'Döblin sieht Geschichte als absurden Prozeß. Ihm will kein Hegelscher Weltgeist über die Schlachtfelder reiten' (ix. 237). Without the 'Entknotung' the situation inside the labyrinth is that of a man who is trapped and has to make decisions in the absence of any rule or plan and will, in spite of all his efforts, sooner or later return to the situation from which he started.<sup>26</sup> The expression 'Helden wider die Absurdität' (ix. 237) which Grass used to describe the characters of Döblin's novels puts it well. Man's relationship to a chaotic world which he cannot understand is one of deep alienation. Clemens Lugowski has pointed out that the baroque concept of a world being ruled by *fortuna* has a similar tendency towards alienation: 'So beruht die eigentliche Haltung des Menschen in dieser Romanwelt auf der *Fremdheit*, die zwischen ihn und die in sich ruhende Wirklichkeit gesetzt ist, und die Grundkategorie seines Lebens ist die *Täuschung*'.<sup>27</sup> But this alienation and deception is overcome by the final 'Entknotung'; according to the courtly-historical novel humanity only has to live in a labyrinthine situation for a limited time. *Der Butt* can thus be seen as a novel which is similar in structure to the courtly-historical novel but lacks the decisive denouement. In both cases, however, the novel deals with the problem of how to live in a world in which no order is discernible. This is further evidence of the need of a Stoic stance in an unfathomable world which we discussed in a previous chapter.

In order to understand a complex novel like *Der Butt* or the courtly-historical novel the reader needs to develop specific skills. These novels are constructed in such a way as to demand of the reader the same acumen and *ars combinatoria* as

<sup>25</sup> For the 'Entknotung' see Vosskamp, p. 17. The term 'Lebens-Labyrinth' is used by Catharina Regina von Greiffenberg in her poem 'Über die Tugend-vollkommene unvergleichlich-schöne Aramena', in Anton Ulrich, *Aramena: Der dritte Teil* (Bern and Frankfurt, 1976), fol. Xii.

<sup>26</sup> The idea of labyrinthine repetition is bound up with melancholy — another important strand of Grass's writings. The famous magic square in Dürer's engraving *Melencolia I* for example shows fatalistic repetition as a major cause of sloth. We will see later that this fatalism is offset by a Utopian strand.

<sup>27</sup> Clemens Lugowski, 'Die märchenhafte Enträtselung der Wirklichkeit im heroisch-galanten Roman', in *Deutsche Barockforschung*, ed. Alewyn, pp. 372-94 (p. 385).

in analysing politics and society. Wilhelm Vosskamp makes this function of the courtly-historical novel clear:

Lesen, schreiben und 'regieren' deuten die Vorreden des hohen Romans nicht als getrennte Bereiche, vielmehr als wechselseitig vermittelten Zusammenhang: Die Romanlektüre erfordert Fähigkeiten des schnellen Überblicks kompliziertester Handlungszusammenhänge, genaues Unterscheidungsvermögen, konzentrierteste Aufmerksamkeit zur Entwirrung eines labyrinthischen Geschehens, Fähigkeiten, die auch dem Handelnden für die praktische Politik notwendig gegeben sein müssen. (p. 27)

The structural mannerism of separating episodes and motifs which belong together trains the reader to combine related strands. This process of combination very often leads to conclusions contrary to the previous representation of events. Once the reader's assumptions about the real events underlying the puzzling surface have reached a certain degree of coherence, new facts are revealed which disrupt this coherence. This frustrating process is repeated several times, leaving the reader even more suspicious about the narrative. This is a main function of the frequent alteration of the same stories in *Der Butt*. It becomes clear that — by making the *post hoc* appear as *propter hoc* for example — the process of narrating in itself tends towards corruption. The reader realizes that the events could just as well be linked in some other way. *Der Butt* is puzzling to such an extent that a reader becomes aware of the part he plays in creating premature coherence. Adolf Haslinger has stated that courtly-historical novels impede the reader's disposition towards rushing to conclusions: 'Die Funktion der überraschenden Wendung beruht für den Dichter oft nicht zuletzt darin, durch sinnreichen Einfall die Kombination des Lesers zu verwerfen. Die Kombination aber ist ein intellektuelles Vergnügen, welches der Leser aus den Strukturen eines solchen Werkes empfängt' (p. 373).

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE USE OF BAROQUE LITERATURE IN *DER BUTT*

#### (i) *Opitz, or the problem of being an artist*

What we have dealt with so far are such things as the use of imagery which was conventional in the seventeenth century, a Senecan Stoicism which pervaded the baroque age, and structural and thematic parallels between *Der Butt* and a certain type of baroque novel. In all these cases the affinities and parallels helped us to understand Grass's early works. Even though it is safe to assume that Grass had knowledge of the baroque visual arts, there is very little evidence that he had first-hand acquaintance with baroque literature at this early stage.<sup>1</sup> It is only in *Der Butt* that he discovers baroque literature as a source of inspiration. The title of this study is therefore applicable only in a loose sense to the early works; but from *Der Butt* onwards Grass actively and consciously used baroque literature.

There are three chapters in *Der Butt* which employ motifs, themes and figures derived from baroque literature. First and most important is the chapter 'Von der Last böser Zeit' which describes a meeting between Andreas Gryphius and Martin Opitz in Danzig. Secondly, in the short chapter 'Ach Ilsebill', the narrator wants to withdraw with Ilsebill to a baroque gourd-vine arbour. And finally there is a motif-strand which is based on the description of the Battle of Wittstock in Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* which runs through the chapter 'Vatertag'. These passages deserve close examination because they form the beginning of Grass's use of baroque literature. It may be noted at the outset that Grass's relations to baroque literature occur at a wide range of rhetorical and social levels. After an analysis of the affinity between *Der Butt* and a type of novel whose complex structure reflects the expectations of a distinctly courtly audience we will now see that the levels of *genus medium* and *genus humile*

<sup>1</sup> Baroque works surface in Grass's early writings only very rarely: Scheffler's *Cherubinischer Wandersmann* is mentioned once in *Die Blechtrommel* (ii. 97). In the same novel the song 'Ännchen von Tharau' is referred to briefly (ii. 361). In *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* Grass deals with melancholy (noticeably influenced by Walter Benjamin). It is in this context that Andreas Gryphius and Quirinus Kuhlmann are described as poets who live in a 'Jammertal' — a word which later becomes one of Grass's shorthand images for the spirit of the baroque age (iv. 560). The name Kuhlmann is also briefly mentioned in *Hundejahre* (iii. 634).

pervade Grass's more immediate use of baroque literature. For instance, the clash of the bourgeois poets Opitz and Gryphius who are striving for a German 'Kunstdichtung', can be described as a quarrel between the *genus medium* and its inflation. The gourd-vine arbour of the bourgeois Königsberg literary circle which forms the background to the chapter 'Ach Ilsebill' is taken from a similar context that is equally remote from aspiring to the grand style and from lapsing into the crudeness of the *genus humile*. The latter plays some part in *Der Butt* because certain motifs from the picaresque novel *Simplicissimus* surface in the chapter 'Vatertag'. We will see that in the later novel *Das Treffen in Telgte* the picture of the social and stylistic diversity of baroque literature is even more comprehensive. This is noteworthy for Grass is generally seen as an author whose writings have a distinctly petty bourgeois slant. It has therefore often been concluded that his novels have a great affinity with the humble perspective and style of the picaresque novel. This may be true for *Die Blechtrommel*; in the later writings, however, we find a much greater diversity.

Before we can focus on the chapters of *Der Butt* which form the beginning of Grass's use of baroque literature some light needs to be thrown on the character Opitz and the role of the artist in the novel. Interestingly enough, one of the very few references to baroque literature in *Die Blechtrommel* deals with Opitz. He is among the victims of the figurehead Niobe: 'Eine etwas dunkle Nachricht will besagen, daß ein aus Schlesien geflohener Poet mit Namen Opitz einige Jahre Aufnahme in der Stadt fand, jedoch allzu früh verstarb, weil er die verderbliche Schnitzerei in einem Speicher aufspürte und mit Versen zu besingen versuchte' (ii. 225). This is the first time that Opitz is mentioned in Grass's works. He is still an insignificant character who only serves to provide a background for the Niobe episode. What made him a recurrent figure is the fact that he is at least to some degree a Danzig character. The passage already contains the nucleus from which the chapter 'Von der Last böser Zeit' evolves — the flight from Silesia and the refuge in Danzig. It develops in such a way that in *Der Butt* Opitz becomes a central character.

One of Opitz's main functions in *Der Butt* is to illustrate the problem of being an artist. It is significant that the narrator — during his baroque 'Zeitweil' — identifies with Opitz. The narrator is an ambitious artist from the late Stone Age onwards. His art endangers the absolute power of the matriarchy. Hence Aua is infuriated by the narrator's drawings (see v. 27). Throughout the novel fiction poses a threat to absolute power, opposing a restricted 'truth' used by those who want to maintain their power. And there is another political dimension to the

representation of art in *Der Butt*, a book criticized by feminists for portraying only men as creative artists, while ‘women’s creativity manifests itself in producing babies and preparing food’.<sup>2</sup> As will be seen, such statements underrate the importance of cooking in Grass’s novels. Also, they do not acknowledge the fact that art in *Der Butt* is ambiguous. Fiction and fantasy may enable men to overthrow the dominant women, but art is also an expression of a defectiveness. In a paradisiac world, the novel suggests, there would be no need for art. According to *Der Butt*, men’s creative ambition throughout history indicates inferiority rather than superiority. The narrator for example confesses that his role as an artist is ‘zwanghaft’: ‘Aal und Reuse wurden als Wortpaar Begriff und durch mich, der ich zwanghaft überall Zeichen setzen mußte, ins Bild gebracht’ (v. 26f.).

‘Zwanghaft’ is a key word which reveals that the narrator’s creativity is an obsession. As women in *Der Butt* are initially more self-contained than men, they do not need art (‘Das konnte Aua nicht, Zeichen setzen, ein Bildnis machen’; *ibid.*); but they can be very creative when they deal with food, and, what is more important, they can give birth. Men can only create something artificial as ‘Kopfgeburten’. There is a difference, however, between women in history who confined themselves to cooking and modern women like Ilsebill who are as ambitious as men. Throughout history art is an expression of male ambition. The turbot always supports men’s creativity (‘er hielt ja von Anfang an auf Kultur’) and encourages them to overcome the restraints of patriarchy through art; he says: ‘Sie [Aua] will sich, nur immer sich bestätigt sehen. Was außer ihr ist, steht unter Verbot. Doch die Kunst, mein Sohn, läßt sich nicht verbieten’ (*ibid.*). The turbot fuels men’s ambition until they break away from paradisiac patriarchy. He causes the Fall; in this sense the turbot allegorizes *superbia* — the driving force behind male history.

It is important to see that Grass is not simply describing the history of the relationship between the sexes on a factual level (the myths — which are Grass’s own creations — and the folk tales in *Der Butt* make it clear that this is not his aim). Nor does the novel suggest that women should confine their lives to cookery or pregnancy. *Der Butt* is rather an account of male consciousness which produces fantasies about the role of women and a lost paradise of patriarchy. Once again one has to bear in mind that the writer of this novel is concerned with his inner self, a self which feels threatened and is running out of

<sup>2</sup> Ruth K. Angress, ‘*Der Butt* — A Feminist Perspective’, in *Adventures of a Flounder: Critical Essays on Günter Grass’ ‘Der Butt’*, edited by Gertrud Bauer Pickar (Munich, 1982), pp. 43-50 (p. 44).

excuses. *Der Butt* is not so much a book about women as a book about a male concept of women. It is useful here to recall Oskar Matzerath's relation to women. He always seeks their protection; he crawls under the skirts of his grandmother and is unwilling to leave the womb of his mother. (Mahlke's veneration of the Virgin Mary is the spiritual counterpart to this dependence on women.) In one sense the paradise of the mighty Aua is a mythical continuation of the motif 'Der weite Rock' in *Die Blechtrommel*. And in both cases we are obviously faced with projections of the male narrator's mind.

The narrator's drawing of the eel trap is particularly interesting because it is the first work of art he produces.<sup>3</sup> The eel trap can serve as an example of the function of images and emblems in the novel. Dull and idle as men are during matriarchy, Aua has to tell them how to plait baskets and it is merely by accident that they discover how to use them as fish traps: 'uns Männern kam ja selten eine Idee' (v. 26), the narrator confesses.

The plaiting of eel-traps (which have the shape of lobster pots) represents men's dependence on Aua and their entrapment in matriarchy. In baroque emblem books the lobster pot is a symbol of narrowness and the state of being trapped; it particularly typifies the contrast between the effortless way into a trap and the struggle to escape from it. One of these emblems depicts a couple at the seaside in front of some lobster pots. According to Henkel and Schöne it stands for 'Gefangenschaft in der Liebe'.<sup>4</sup> The emblem which again forms a complex image suggesting a story in miniature seems to be related to petrarchistic motifs such as the hooked fish.<sup>5</sup> The petrarchistic concept of the fatal trap is used as early as *Die Blechtrommel*, e.g. through the image of moth and bulb.

Emblems of different kinds of fish traps run through *Die Blechtrommel* (the horse's head), *Der Butt* and *Das Treffen in Telgte*. There is a striking similarity between the image of the eel-trap and that of the long-tongued purple snail — which is caught in a fish trap — in *Das Treffen in Telgte*. This emblem, which in the novel is praised by Magister Buchner comes from the famous Chorus of Courtiers in Andreas Gryphius's *Leo Armenius*: 'Desß Menschen leben selbst; beruht auf seiner Zungen' (vi. 60).<sup>6</sup> The emblem represents the potentially fatal

<sup>3</sup> One of the narrator's early drawings resembles Grass's etching 'Großer Aalfang (1973)', in Grass, *In Kupfer, auf Stein*, p. 67. It shows 'sich windende Aale hinter kunstvollem Flechtwerk' (v. 27).

<sup>4</sup> The emblem has the *lemma* 'inhibet via clausa regressum'. See *Emblemata*, p. 1450. For further emblems depicting lobster pots see pp. 721, 730f., 1451.

<sup>5</sup> See Forster, *The Icy Fire*, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Compare *Emblemata*, pp. 730f.

power of rhetoric. This whole motif-strand evolves from the image of the horse's head in *Die Blechtrommel*.

It is characteristic that in *Der Butt* men at first do not understand this image, they simply plait the baskets unaware of what they are doing. They lack any detachment from the object they handle and only gain this distance when their attitude towards the baskets moves from practical craftsmanship to aestheticism.<sup>7</sup> When the men begin to link three baskets and create an ornamental mesh of willow twigs, they realize that they are producing a piece of art:

Und nach ihren [Auas] Angaben, unter ihrer wie Schicksal verhängten Aufsicht haben wir jene zur offenen Seite verengten Körbe geflochten, in die wir später aus Eigenantrieb, ohne daß uns Aua wie auf ewig bevormunden mußte, einen zweiten, dann dritten verengten Korb gehängt haben, um den Aalen die Flucht zu erschweren. Schmiegsame, lang ausgeschossene Weidenruten in ein kompliziertes System gezwungen: schon kunstvoll. Es ging auch ohne Aua. (v. 26)

'Schon kunstvoll' — these words indicate the Fall from paradisiac matriarchy, and are the turning point of the narrative. Suddenly on their own incentive, the men realize that through imagination and art they can create something without Aua's help. She immediately understands that this new attitude endangers matriarchy and she is infuriated by the narrator's drawings: 'Als ich eine fünffach verengte Reuse aus zwecklosem Spaß auf eine Strandfläche übertrug, wurden die Fünferreuse und ihre zeichnerische Entsprechung verboten. Der von Aua mit ihren Brüsten gesetzte Grundwert Drei durfte nicht überschritten werden' (v. 27). Why is art so dangerous? It enables men to understand their own situation. The aesthetic viewpoint creates a detachment from the narrowness of their life, which finally allows them to overcome matriarchy. On the other hand it is important to recognize that matriarchy in *Der Butt* also gives

<sup>7</sup> Compare Edward Bullough, "Psychical Distance" as a Factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle', *The British Journal of Psychology*, 5 (1912-13), 87-118. Bullough explains how the outlook on ordinary objects can be transformed by 'Psychical Distance'. He shows how in practical life a fog at sea, for instance, tends to cause an experience of unpleasantness. However, if one, for the moment, abstracts from 'its danger and practical unpleasantness', it 'can be a source of intense relish and enjoyment' (p. 88). This 'difference of outlook' is 'due...to the insertion of Distance' (p. 89). 'The transformation by Distance is produced in the first instance by putting the phenomenon, so to speak, out of gear with our practical, actual self; by allowing it to stand outside the context of our personal needs and ends — in short, by looking at it "objectively"' (ibid.). The things we use in daily and practical life are usually not perceived in this way. 'This distanced view of things is not, and cannot be, our normal outlook. As a rule, experiences constantly turn the same side towards us, namely, that which has the strongest practical force of appeal. We are not ordinarily aware of those aspects of things which do not touch us immediately and practically, nor are we generally conscious of impressions apart from our own self which is impressed. The sudden view of things from their reverse, usually unnoticed side, comes upon us as a revelation, and such revelations are precisely those of Art' (p. 89f.).

shelter. This means that through art men lose their paradisiac refuge.<sup>8</sup> Thus, art in *Der Butt* is highly ambiguous.

This ambiguity is also significant for understanding the character Opitz, who is a personification of the artist in the novel. Having lost natural shelter and simplicity the artist suffers from the disease of melancholy. When Opitz is briefly mentioned for the first time it becomes apparent that he is far from being a happy man. He is described as ‘angesäuert vom langatmigen Krieg’ (v. 18). The adjective ‘sour’ characterizes the whole man: Opitz is eaten up with melancholy. ‘Von Geschmack das Saure’ is an attribute of Saturn, a planet which represents melancholy.<sup>9</sup> A little later the reader learns that Agnes Opitz’s ‘verbitterte Galle...schonend bekocht’ (v. 19). This points directly to the centre of the disease, the gall. This may be an allusion to Dürer, of whom a self-portrait survives which clearly indicates that his gall caused him pain. In *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* Grass mentions the theory that disease of the gall was the cause of Dürer’s melancholic temper (iv. 552). For centuries melancholy was seen as a result of unsound mixture of fluids of the body. According to Erwin Panofsky it was believed that the happy man was dominated by the most positive fluid, blood, whereas the *homo melancholicus* suffered from the dominance of black gall:

Certain theorists considered the sanguine temperament as the original, or perfectly balanced condition of man; and even after this ideal equilibrium had been destroyed by the sin of Adam the predominance of the blood was much preferred to any of the other alternatives. As the sanguine condition was greeted as the most fortunate, so the melancholic was hated and feared as the worst. (p. 158)

It is significant that the Fall caused the wrong mixture of fluids. Opitz’s suffering from melancholy and his being an artist are closely linked.

Even though melancholy is a concept common to many centuries it is, in Grass’s opinion, particularly prevalent in baroque culture, as the following

<sup>8</sup> The plaiting of baskets also allegorizes simple and protected life in the novel *Simplicissimus*. *Simplicissimus* produces baskets and fish traps while he lives with the hermit in the forest. This sort of work is an expression of modesty: ‘...bald flochten wir Körbe oder Fisch=Reussen....Zwar wolte mich mein getreuer Einsidel ein mehrers nicht wissen lassen / dann er hielte darvor / es seye einem Christen genug / zu seinem Ziel und Zweck zu gelangen / wann er nur fleissig bete und arbeitete’, Grimmelshausen, *Simplicissimus*, p. 33.

<sup>9</sup> This linkage of Saturn with the sour was current in the baroque age, see Grimmelshausen, *Des Abenteuerlichen Simplicissimi Ewig-währender Calender*, p. 101. For Saturn and melancholy compare also Erwin Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1971), pp. 166f. and Grass, ‘Vom Stillstand im Fortschritt: Variationen zu Albrecht Dürers Kupferstich *Melencolia I*’ (iv. 544, 552, 556).

quotation from the Dürer essay 'Vom Stillstand im Fortschritt', published in *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke*, highlights:

Auflösung und Zerissenheit, Krieg und Chaos ahnend, verzweifelten die Humanisten an der Machtlosigkeit ihres Wissens und an der Unwissenheit weltlicher Macht. Ihrer Ohnmacht bewußt, nahmen sie Zuflucht in formal beherrschter Melancholie. Erst im folgenden Jahrhundert, solange der Dreißigjährige Krieg dauerte und nachwirkte, fand barocke Sprache zum Trauerspiel — Andreas Gryphius —, handelte barocke Lyrik vom Schmerz — Quirinus Kuhlmann — wurde aus chaotischer Unordnung die Hoffnung zum Prinzip; ihr Ort hieß Jammertal, ihr Ziel Erlösung. (iv. 560)

This and similar passages in the book are indebted to Walter Benjamin's *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, a book which emphasizes the importance of melancholy in baroque culture. 'Dies Blatt antizipiert in vielem das Barock' Benjamin says about *Melencolia I* (p. 152). He deals in depth with the theory of the melancholic temperament and many other important aspects of melancholy which permeate Grass's writings such as the humoral pathology, the symbolic dog and stone, the close connection of melancholy and geniality, the astrological relation to Saturn, and sloth. Benjamin (p. 154) has a very specific interest in this theory: 'In diesem imposanten Gute, das dem Barock die Renaissance als Erbstück übergab, an dem fast zwei Jahrtausende gemodelt hatten, besitzt die Nachwelt einen geraderen Kommentar des Trauerspiels als die Poetiken ihn bieten konnten.' It is no less a commentary to Grass's writings.

It is significant that in *Der Butt* the melancholic temper is described in terms of flavour and food. Melancholy is a disease of internal organs as Grass himself has pointed out in *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke*: 'Bauernkalender nannten bis ins letzte Jahrhundert hinein Saturn einen sauren mürben Planeten, der Krankheit an Milz und Leber, Galle und Nieren verursacht. Indem diese inneren Organe unter Saturns Verantwortung fielen, waren sie der Melancholie ursächlich verbunden' (iv. 552). The motif of 'Saturn, der bekanntlich Krankheit an Milz und Leber bringt, den man den sauren Planeten nennt', is already mentioned in *Die Blechtrommel* (ii. 20). Grass likes to employ motifs which can be related to cooking. Like the turbot, mushrooms and cucumbers, offal is a symbol which typifies certain ideas or concepts; but it is also treated as concrete palatable food. It is remarkable how *Der Butt* is pervaded by vocabulary of taste; a sense which — compared to sight — is usually neglected in literary language. The following quotation may serve as an example for this. It shows that even the abstract realm of morality can be dealt with in sensuous terms of taste: 'Übrigens rate ich, beim Ausnehmen der Aale auf die Galle zu achten: Verletzt läuft sie über, macht sie bitter, trübt sie uns ein, so daß wir nur noch wie

der Prediger Hegge überall Sünde und Fäulnis vor- und nachschmecken' (v. 265). Offal is a sort of food many people find disgusting. The fact that offal is conventionally regarded as food of low quality makes it particularly pertinent to Grass's interest in neglected aspects of cooking. Alois Wierlacher makes it clear that Grass (like James Joyce) believes that this sort of food should not be despised.<sup>10</sup> The flavour of offal — though not of the gall, which is not edible — is mainly a matter of preparation: 'Unermüdlich betont Grass die Möglichkeit, niedrig bewertete Speisen schmackhaft zuzubereiten' (ibid. p. 85). In *Der Butt*, Agnes is very good at this sort of cooking: 'Als dann die Schweden (pünktlich auf Martin) zurückkamen, blieb von den restlichen Gänsen nur die Schüssel gerührtes Blut, um das gekochte Kleinzeug — Hals, Herz, Magen, die Flügel — mit Wurzelwerk und Birnenschnitzeln schwarz-sauer zu binden' (v. 18). Agnes, still a child at that time, does not prepare this meal for Opitz; it could have done serious harm to him because it would have been far too heavy and sour. The bloody meal alludes to melancholy ('schwarz-sauer') and the hardships of the Thirty Years' War. The dish allegorizes that the century of Agnes (and of Opitz) is a 'vale of tears' compared with the much happier times of the previous cook, Margarete Rusch.

If the disease of melancholy can be described in terms of flavour, then the remedy can be found in the art of cooking. Agnes makes every effort to prepare food in a way which balances the mixture of liquids. 'Hühnerbrühe, Kalbsmilch, Schwadengrütze und ähnliche Schonkost' counteract Opitz's state of sourness (v. 19, see also v. 300, 325). Agnes's cooking was intended to cure Opitz's disease:

Ich bitte sie, meine hartgesottenen Damen, nur noch um ein wenig Gehör. Denn in einem der verschollenen Opitz-Gedichte heißt es, wenn ich abschließend zitieren darf: 'Ist Liebe lauter nichts, wie daß sie mich entzündet? | Ach Liebste laß uns eilen, es könnte sunst dein Fisch, | den du in Milch verkläret, verkühlen auf dem Tisch, | und wolltest doch in Lieb, daß mich der Fisch gesündet'. (v. 315)

This is a pastiche of two famous poems of Opitz; the sonnet 'Ist Liebe lauter nichts...' modelled on Petrarch and the 'Liedt' 'Ach Liebste laß uns eilen...'.<sup>11</sup> Grass turns the lover's *carpe diem* ('Drumb laß uns jetzt geniessen Der Jugend frucht...') into an admonition not to miss the right *occasio* to eat a meal before it becomes cold. In a previous chapter we have seen that the sensual *carpe diem*

<sup>10</sup> See the chapter 'Aufwertung der Innereien. Zur Speisenpolitik von Günter Grass', in Alois Wierlacher, *Vom Essen in der deutschen Literatur: Mahlzeiten in Erzähltexten von Goethe bis Grass* (Stuttgart, Berlin, Cologne, Mainz, 1987), pp. 83-86.

<sup>11</sup> *Das Zeitalter des Barock*, p. 716, 884.

forms a counterpart to the vanity theme. What is of interest here is the replacement of the conventional love theme by cookery. An isolated comparison of Opitz's poem to the one in *Der Butt* might suggest that replacing love with food makes the poem somewhat trivial. However, the significance of this 'Kontrafaktor' can be understood if the poem is placed in its right context, that is, Agnes's treatment of Opitz's disease.

This is further evidence that women's cookery should not be misinterpreted as dull domestic work. Art and creativity might not be the first things which come to mind in the context of cooking, but the parallel between the preparation of food and the art of writing is an old commonplace. Augustine, for instance, pointed out that food and texts need to be spiced in order to be palatable.<sup>12</sup> The word 'satire' was originally a cooking term, meaning 'medley'. Not only the production but also the reception (the digestion) of literature is influenced by cooking terminology as the *palatum mentis* and the German word 'Geschmack' show.<sup>13</sup> (A main reason why *Der Butt* deals with the underrated aspect of cookery as art is that the pleasure food can give is precisely the kind of sensual *carpe diem* which opens up spaces in a determined course of history.) The baroque age still stands in this tradition; *convivium* was a common word in titles of this period; and the 'Accademia della Crusca' and the later 'Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft' elaborated food imagery by comparing the purification of language with separating the bran from the flour. These examples could easily be extended to illustrate that the parallels between cooking and writing poetry were commonplace. We may therefore conclude that the difference between the women and men in the novel is not that of creativity, but is a subjection of a very original and natural art to a derivative form of art.<sup>14</sup> This relationship can be illustrated by the motif of the goose-feather, which Agnes plucks when she prepares food; later, Opitz uses the feathers to create art: he writes verses with them.

<sup>12</sup> See Curtius, p. 145.

<sup>13</sup> For the *palatum mentis* see Curtius, p. 146.

<sup>14</sup> It is noteworthy that according to Bullough 'attempts to raise "culinary art" to the level of a Fine Art have failed' because of the lack of spatial distance (p. 96) (though he later admits that occasionally a transition from one sphere to the other could be possible). Bullough describes the dividing line between 'culinary' and 'Fine' art in the following words: 'It is undoubtedly very difficult to reach an aesthetic appreciation through the lower senses [such as taste and scent], because the materialness of their action, their proximity and bodily connexion are great obstacles to their distancing' (p. 109). However, the emphasis in this argument can easily be shifted: it is equally possible to say that the 'agreeable sensations' (ibid.) of taste are much more immediate and the price paid for 'aesthetic appreciation' in 'Fine Art' is the divorce from the object which gives pleasure. In *Der Butt* food and cookery can thus allegorize original wholeness while more complex forms of art entail a certain degree of distancing and an alienation from a natural context.

It is obvious that the artist Opitz is weaker than the cook Agnes because she manages to take care of two artists at the same time — and both obviously depend on her. In different periods the narrator has a friend:

Der Künstler der Nachbarhorde, ein Fischer...ein grimmiger Kerl, der mein Freund werden sollte, immer wieder während dieser und jener Zeitweil: Ach Lud! Wie wir hochgotisch Jopenbier gesoffen, wie wir uns um die Sakramente gestritten, wie wir im barocken Jammertal Käse vom Messer gegessen und zu jeder Zeit die Kunst zerquatscht haben. (v. 75)

During the baroque period the friend of Martin Opitz is the painter Möller. The narrator has the puzzling ability to play both roles, he is at once Opitz *and* Möller. 'Der Maler, der Dichter....Ich wollte ja Maler und Dichter zugleich sein: leichthin mit Rötelkreide und tüftelnd Versfüße zählend' (v. 325). The artist in *Der Butt* is a personification of the *ut pictura poesis* concept which is a characteristic of baroque poetics. To a certain extent baroque literature is an expression of courtly culture and the counter-reformation which both have a strong tendency towards visualization. We have seen in our earlier analysis of vanity emblems that an important feature of Grass's works is the literary transformation of visual images — a technique which is also employed by baroque poets. In *Die Blechtrommel* whole chapters evolve from images. Since his first publication, *Die Vorzüge der Windhühner*, there has been a close connection between Grass's own graphic designs on the dust-jackets of his books and his writings. The (sometimes esoteric) meaning of such images is crucial for an interpretation of the texts. It is characteristic that some baroque poets, too, were involved in designing the frontispieces of their works. This is true of Weckherlin and Spee, for instance. Moreover, it is assumed that the allegorical title page of *Simplicissimus* was etched according to Grimmelshausen's ideas. This famous frontispiece is generally regarded as holding a key to *Simplicissimus* and has long been the subject of an intense scholarly debate. (We will see that Grass alludes to the frontispiece of *Courasche* in *Das Treffen in Telgte*.)

In *Der Butt* we find a similar tendency towards an imagistic and allegorical way of writing; emblems such as the eel-trap, the gourd-vine arbour and allusions to Dürer's engraving *Melencolia I* are crucial for the interpretation of the whole novel. There is evidence that Grass sometimes approaches a new subject-matter by drawing and only later transforms the concrete visual results into literature. For instance, he drew the turbot first, and then wrote the novel. On the other hand, there are drawings which are inspired by the literary works.

Grass has described this whole process in the essay *Bin ich nun Schreiber oder Zeichner?*:

Als ich kürzlich eine Erzählung schrieb, in deren Verlauf sich gegen Ende des Dreißigjährigen Krieges zwei Dutzend barocke Schriftsteller versammeln, um einander aus ihren Manuskripten vorzulesen, suchte ich nach einem Ausdruck ihrer verzweifelten Lage, fand ihn zuerst im Bild — eine aus Steingeröll ragende, noch immer die Schreibfeder führende Hand —, bevor ich ihn in Worte fassen und meiner Erzählung einfügen konnte. Das gezeichnete Bild, eine Radierung, wurde zum Buchumschlag. Die geschriebene Metapher findet sich beiläufig im erzählenden Text. Auf zweierlei Weise versuchte ich, die barocke Tradition der Emblematis aufzunehmen. Wenn der zeichnerische Einfall voranging, löste der Schreibprozeß zeichnerische Varianten aus. Beide Disziplinen befruchteten einander zwitterig. Der Gegensatz zwischen Zeichnen und Schreiben hob sich bei der Gestaltung einer Bildvorstellung auf, die, ins Wort gesetzt, zeichenhaft wirkt, die, als Zeichen, wörtlich zu nehmen ist. (ix. 789)

However, it should be noted that even though visual motifs can be transformed into poetic images, and certain aesthetic principles may be applicable to both drawing and poetry, they none the less remain different media. (As Lessing argues against the *ut pictura poesis* parallelism: the nature of literature is succession in time while the nature of visual art is juxtaposition in space.<sup>15</sup>) Grass is well aware of the differences between the two media. In *Der Butt* the poet and the painter dislike each other: 'Die beiden mochten sich nicht. Dem Opitz war der Möller zu derb; Möller sah Opitz als dünnbeinige Theorie' (v. 325). According to an interview with Nicole Casanova, Grass himself had experienced this tension of being a artist (or sculptor) and being a poet when he first joined the 'Gruppe 47'.<sup>16</sup> The problem of being an artist and a writer clearly preoccupies the author Grass to the present day. It should not be overlooked that the difference between the two roles may sometimes turn into an obstacle, hindering the creative process. On the other hand, it can form a unique source of inspiration. The mingling of the visual with the poetic is something that sets him apart from many modern writers. In a similar way, the intertwining of the two realms of the visual and the verbal, which finds its most powerful expression in the emblem, marks baroque literature off from literature of other periods.

<sup>15</sup> See Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laokoon: oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie*, in *Werke*, edited by Herbert G. Göpfert (Munich, 1974), VI, 102f.

<sup>16</sup> Günter Grass, *Atelier des Métamorphoses: Entretien avec Nicole Casanova* (Paris, 1979), pp. 81f. 'L'atmosphère me fut d'abord désagréable. Il y avait là des gens, en partie de mon âge, qui discouraient d'une manière fantastiquement acrobatique, à peine avaient-ils entendu quelque chose qu'ils avaient déjà une opinion à ce sujet, et moi j'avais l'habitude de fréquenter des sculpteurs et des peintres, des hommes, qui, s'il leur arrivait de parler, ne s'exprimaient qu'en termes de métier, pour dire comment une chose était faite — tandis que là, le spéculatif ou l'idéologique étaient au premier plan.'

*(ii) The meeting of Opitz and Gryphius*

The portrayal of Opitz as a melancholic is mainly based on a quotation from one of his own poems. (In other characterizations of baroque poets Grass follows the same method and takes features from the poets' own works rather than from secondary literature.) Some lines of the following poem are quoted in *Der Butt* (v. 282; Grass's quotation is in italics):

Gleichwol muß ich bekennen,  
 Ich war nicht der ich bin;  
*Mein Geist wil nimmer brennen,*  
*Noch steigen wie vorhin:*  
*Diß thut für allen Sachen*  
*Der Haß der Dienstbarkeit,*  
*Was Freund und Feinde machen,*  
*Die Last der bösen Zeit.*  
 Bey Sorgen und Gedancken  
 Da wohnt Apollo nicht;  
 Mund, Sinn und Hertze wancken,  
 Und alle Lust gebricht...<sup>17</sup>

It is this poem from which the title of the chapter 'Von der Last böser Zeit' is taken. 'Die Last der bösen Zeit' refers to the political fate of a refugee whose home, Silesia, is devastated by war. Not only have 'die schmutzigen Geschäfte wechselnder Fürsten' (v. 285) discouraged Opitz politically; he has also lost his enthusiasm as a poet — 'Mein Geist wil nimmer brennen' (v. 282).<sup>18</sup> The tension between poetry and politics forms the central theme of this chapter. It is noticeable that here again this strain was experienced by Grass himself. This tension was an important incentive for him to write *Der Butt*.<sup>19</sup> He found that political activities which restricted his language also interfered with his work as

<sup>17</sup> *Des berühmten Schlesiens Martini Opitii von Boberfeld (Bolesl.) Opera Geist- und Weltlicher Gedichte Nebst beygefügteten vielen andern Tractaten so wohl Deutsch als Lateinisch...Jetzo zum siebenden mahl gedruckt* (Breslau, 1690), II, 79, quoted in Marian Szyrocki, *Martin Opitz*, p. 104, which Grass clearly used as a source.

<sup>18</sup> Szyrocki's division of the biography into chapters ('Im Dienste des Burggrafen von Dohna', 'Im protestantischen Lager', 'Opitz in Polen') already emphasizes Opitz's changing sides during his life.

<sup>19</sup> Grass had begun to work on *Der Butt* shortly after the publication of *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* (1972). See *Atelier des Métamorphoses*, p. 172: 'Parallèlement dans le temps se déroulait la campagne électorale de 1972, tandis que je faisais les premières esquisses...qui m'a conduit ensuite au roman *Le Turbot*. La politique a quelque chose d'unidimensionnel, et bien qu'il soit absolument nécessaire de s'en occuper, il faut savoir qu'elle est extrêmement dévoratrice et qu'elle est capable d'étendre ce caractère unidimensionnel à tous les domaines de la vie. C'est là malgré tout mon engagement politique, et bien que je voie la nécessité de l'action politique, que s'élève ma résistance. Cette résistance est également de nature linguistique et c'est pour cela que ce détachement du quotidien politique a eu tout d'abord pour moi un effet libérateur, qui s'est certainement transmis au livre.'

a writer. In the novel Opitz faces a similar problem: he becomes so deeply involved in politics that he lacks the *furor poeticus* and inspiration that was regarded as necessary to write literature.<sup>20</sup>

This lack of inspiration once again shows the importance of Opitz's relationship with Agnes. Both Möller and Opitz turn to the turbot in their despair: 'Butt, sag was! Mein Bett ist halb leer. Ich friere in- und auswendig. Ich bin mit Schlacke verstopft und rieche nach kaltem Rauch' (v. 293). Being clogged with slag again hints at the wrong mixture of liquids and the smell of cold smoke indicates the sort of treatment they need: the 'cold stoves' have to be rekindled — the image is related to the themes of both cooking and sex. The cold smoke appeared earlier as a feature of melancholy in *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke*: 'Auf Bahnhöfen nistet sie: unter kaltem Rauch' (iv. 377). The turbot, who always understands and supports art, analyses the problem: the artists need the kiss of the muse Agnes. She provides them not only with food and sex but also with the inspiration they need. (This is reminiscent of the peculiar relationship of the muse Ulla and the painter Lankes which is part of a satirical description of a Düsseldorf circle of artists in *Die Blechtrommel*; ii. 580.) In spite of Agnes's important role she quietly remains in the background during Opitz's and Gryphius's eloquent clash over literature and politics. It is important to see that the three-cornered relationship between Agnes, Opitz and Möller is a modification of a similar episode in *örtlich betäubt*. In this novel Möller is mentioned as having a relationship with two extremely different women, the daughter of Danzig's mayor and the daughter of a fisherman. An allegorical painting in which the latter figures as a personification of vice causes a great scandal among patricians and Möller has to change the painting several times until a compromise is found. Interestingly enough it is the 'Dreieckverhältnis' which 'hat...dem Maler Möller zur Kunst verholfen' (iv. 256). The constellation of the muse Agnes, the painter Möller and the poet Opitz is therefore more significant than it might seem.<sup>21</sup> It expresses mutual dependence as much as deep tension. It is precisely the sickness of the relationship which inspires the two artists. The sick and abnormal are shown to be a source of art.

<sup>20</sup> See Martin Opitz, *Buch von der Deutschen Poeterey*, edited by Richard Alewyn, second edition (Tübingen, 1966), p. 11: 'Denn ein Poete kan nicht schreiben wenn er wil / sondern wenn er kan / und ihn die regung des Geistes welchen Ovidius vnnd andere vom Himmel her zue kommen vermeinen / treibet.'

<sup>21</sup> Three-cornered relationships form a decisive theme in Grass's writings since *Die Blechtrommel*. In this novel Oskar looks for deep mathematical and cosmological secrets hidden in the constellation of his mother, Jan Bronski and Matzerath on a photograph (see ii. 57-59).

The meeting of Opitz and Gryphius is one of the most famous passages of *Der Butt*. The figure Martin Opitz is mainly characterized as a theoretician; above all he is seen as a man of poetic rules, embodying the spirit of pedantry. Gryphius by contrast is portrayed as a very gifted young man who writes such outstanding poems ‘daß sie dem Autor des poetischen Regelbuches...wegen ihrer lustvollen Leidversessenheit, ihrer alles eitel nennenden Wut, ihrer üppigen Trauer auffielen’ (v. 282). Gryphius has precisely what Opitz lacks: passion and ‘furor’. This contrast between the ageing theoretician who has lost inspiration and the young ardent talent who is a ‘Wohnhaus grimmer Schmerzen’ (ibid.) runs through the whole chapter. Szyrocki mentions that there have been speculations about possible tensions between Opitz and Gryphius, but he unambiguously rejects these theories:

Es wird oft behauptet, daß Gryphius gegen Opitz eine starke Abneigung hegte. Gegen diese Ansicht spricht aber sowohl die Tatsache, daß Gryphius bestrebt war, Opitzens Hinweise genau zu befolgen, als auch der bisher unbekannte Umstand, daß er in seinen Schriften mehrmals Verse des Bunzlauers zitiert.<sup>22</sup>

Thus the opposition between Opitz and Gryphius in *Der Butt* is clearly invented.

The meeting is fictitious too, though its place and time are mentioned with great precision: ‘Im Haus des reformierten Predigers Nigrinius...fand die Begegnung am zweiten September 1636 statt’ (v. 282). It is strange to mention the exact date and place of a fictitious meeting.<sup>23</sup> These details create a sense of authenticity. Grass even backs up his invention with a faked source — a strategy which he will use again in *Das Treffen in Telgte*. He invents a letter of Opitz to his publisher Hünefeld: ‘Anietzo begegnete mir ein newer Scribent, des glückselige Sprache hochvermögend, obzwar nicht aller regel kundig ist. Er heißet Andreas Gryph vndt ist von Glogau kommen. Seyn gantzes wesen hat mich verletzt’ (v. 282). This faked quotation is modelled on a real letter written by Opitz to Prince Ludwig von Anhalt in 1638:

*Anietzo ist ein buch Griechischer vndt Lateinischer Epigrammatum allhier vnter der preße, welche ich auß den besten alten vndt neuen Scribenten Zusammen gelesen, vndt, die glückseligkeit vnserer sprache durch gegen halten desto beßer Zue erweisen, deutsch gegeben habe.*<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Marian Szyrocki, *Andreas Gryphius*, p. 23. (This is obviously a further source Grass used for the chapter.)

<sup>23</sup> Compare Szyrocki, *Opitz*, p. 111: ‘In Danzig nahm der Dichter, wahrscheinlich auf Befehl des Königs, bei dem...reformierten Prediger Nigrinus Wohnung, mit dem er dann eng zusammenarbeitete.’ However, it is certain that Gryphius was not in Danzig at that time. Compare Szyrocki, *Gryphius*, p. 25; see also p. 121 (fn. 38).

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Szyrocki, *Opitz*, p. 117. (Words Grass cites are in italics.)

Grass follows the spelling of the seventeenth century and uses archaic words such as 'anietzo' and 'Scribent' in order to make the pastiche appear an authentic source. His interpolations can be recognized because he uses words in a sense which was not current in the baroque age. The word 'vermögend' would rarely have been used for being gifted. Opitz's remark that Gryphius is 'hochvermögend, obzwar nicht aller regel kundig' and 'seyn gantzes wesen hat mich verletzt' is obviously invented, like the polarity between the characters expressed in these words.

The setting of the meeting is most significant. 'Bis zum Eindunkeln sprachen Opitz und Gryphius' (v. 283). The scenery is veiled in dusk. It is the sort of twilight which also illuminates Dürer's engraving *Melencolia I*.<sup>25</sup> And there are many other details of the setting which allude to Dürer's engraving: 'Zwischendurch Vespergeläut. Die Küchenmagd kam und ging barfuß auf grün- und gelbgliasierten Fliesen' (v. 283). Very carefully and indirectly Grass inserts two motifs from *Melencolia I*, the bell and the pattern of a (magic) square. Panofsky (p. 161) points out that these motifs typify the measuring of space and time (they belong to the 'Typus Geometriae', because 'Geo ponderat' — geometry weighs). Then Gryphius is described: 'Gryphius hatte ein platzrundes Bubengesicht, das sich plötzlich verfinstern und wie ausgezehrt einfallen konnte, so daß ein zürnender Erzengel aus ihm sprach' (v. 283). The dark complexion of the face is a hint at the melancholic's *facies nigra*. According to Panofsky 'one of the chief characteristics of the traditional melancholic is his swarthy, "earthlike" complexion which under certain circumstances can deepen to actual blackness.'<sup>26</sup> Moreover Gryphius, a young poet 'von schwarzgalliger Substanz' (v. 283) is equated with an angry archangel. The angel is the central figure of the engraving *Melencolia I*. Next to this angel lies a dog looking down in despair. The reader learns that 'die oberen Augenlieder...[Opitz's] Blick verhängten, so daß er wie ein geschlagener Hund in alle Zimmerecken, jedenfalls ableitend guckte, sobald er mehr für sich als zu seinem Gast sprach' (ibid.). The dog allegorizes melancholy, because it was seen as an animal which suffers more than other species from depression 'and because he looks the more woebegone the more intelligent he is'.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Here a comet and a rainbow create the twilight. See Panofsky, p. 162.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 163. Compare Grimmshausen's *Ewig-währender Calender*, p. 103: 'Menschen, die unter ihm [Saturn] geboren werden / seyn schwartzer Farb'. In *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* Grass mentions 'das traditionell verschattete Gesicht' of melancholia (iv. 556).

<sup>27</sup> Panofsky, p. 162.

This passage is an impressive example of the baroque art of secret writing which Grass masters with great perfection. The allusions to Dürer's engraving have passed unnoticed in spite of the fact that it is an extremely well-known work of art. We shall see that passages which deal with the baroque age very often bear a hidden meaning; the mode of writing is esoteric and allegorical, however plain the surface of the text may appear. Here lies a difference to other literary transformations of the engraving in Grass's works. Very obvious literary adaptations can be found in *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* where astronauts place the scales, the hour-glass, the bell and the magic square on the moon (iv. 544), Rosa Luxemburg poses with hammer and sickle as Melancholia (iv. 558f.) and Zweifel neatly arranges a still life of scales, a watch, a razor, etc. on his desk. However, in these cases the different items are not disguised; they are elements in a game the author very openly plays with the reader, explicitly encouraging speculation about the meaning: 'Bezüge freihaus. Zweifel bezieht sich auf jenen Kupferstich...und hat Spaß an seiner Melancholia' (iv. 499). By contrast, Grass's allusions to the engraving in *Der Butt* are much more indirect and subtle. Here they are used for an esoteric allegorical purpose. The author speaks to a small number of readers who share a specific knowledge with him. This extreme method of allegorical writing which hides an underlying sense from all but a few readers is a form of conceit. An element of conceit may be part of any allegory; in baroque literature, however, it is cultivated in such an extreme way that decoding allegories requires great acumen. The cultivation of *argutia* and 'Scharfsinnskunst' in the seventeenth century must be seen in this context.<sup>28</sup> The greatest difficulty, however, is to recognize an esoteric allegory of this kind in the first place (for there are no pointers which indicate an allegorical passage such as a dream or a journey nor are there any explicit hints at a secondary sense).<sup>29</sup> The only way of detecting such passages in Grass's writings is to look for a high density of far-fetched or awkward imagery. We will find further examples of this kind in *Das Treffen in Telgte*.

It is obvious that both Gryphius and Opitz are *homines melancholici*. But they represent different types of melancholy. Opitz is a man of literary rules, he is a theoretician whose manners are very formal — 'der nach flämisch-spanischer Mode steif saß' (v. 283). His melancholy is of intellectual origin and

<sup>28</sup> For the '*argutia*-Bewegung' see Barner, *Barockrhetorik*, pp. 42-6 and Manfred Windfuhr, *Die barocke Bildlichkeit und ihre Kritiker* (Stuttgart, 1966), pp. 261-86 (Chapter 4: 'Scharfsinnige Metaphorik').

<sup>29</sup> It should be noted that Grass also uses allegories which are clearly marked as allegories. We have mentioned one example earlier (the 'Gasmann') and we will later have to deal with some further cases.

corresponds to abstract geometry (the bell and squares represent Opitz's home). Gryphius suffers from a more traditional form of the disease, which is an illness of the temper; he can become passionate and angry; he is a 'zürender Erzengel' (ibid.). The intellectual, abstract type of melancholic like Opitz is not at all creative; he is in danger of the sin of sloth. Gryphius, by contrast, is capable of a creative ecstasy. Panofsky shows that according to Aristotle many outstanding philosophers, politicians, poets and artists suffered from melancholy:

The Florentine Neo-Platonists were quick to perceive that this Aristotelian doctrine supplied a scientific basis for Plato's theory of 'divine frenzy.' The action of the melancholy humor, which Aristotle had likened to that of strong wine, seemed to explain, or at least to concur with, those mysterious ecstasies which 'petrify and almost kill the body while they enrapture the soul.' Thus the expression *furor melancholicus* came to be synonymous with *furor divinus*. What had been a calamity and, in its mildest form, a handicap became a privilege still dangerous but all the more exalted: the privilege of genius.<sup>30</sup>

Panofsky maintains that Dürer's engraving combines both abstract geometry and traditional melancholy as a disease of temper.

Dürer's engraving represents a fusion of two iconographic formulae hitherto distinct: the 'Melancholici' of popular Calendars and 'Complexbüchlein,' and the 'Typus Geometriae' of philosophical treatises and encyclopedic decorations. The result was an intellectualization of melancholy on the one hand, and a humanization of geometry on the other...Dürer imagined a being endowed with the intellectual power and technical accomplishments of an 'Art,' yet despairing under the cloud of 'black humor.' He depicted a Geometry gone melancholy or, to put it in the other way, a Melancholy gifted with all that is implied in the word geometry — in short, a 'Melancholia artificialis' or Artist's Melancholy.<sup>31</sup>

This complex 'Künstlermelancholie' pervades those parts of Grass's later works which deal with baroque literature, and is a decisive theme of *Das Treffen in Telgte*. Moreover, this kind of melancholy also seems to afflict the author. We have noticed already that self-portraits play an important part in Grass's writings. The poem 'Wie ich mich sehe' in *Der Butt* is an example of such a melancholic self-portrait. The narrator minutely describes his distorted and ageing face in a mirror. Once again we find the curtained eye-lid — 'Das eine

<sup>30</sup> Panofsky, p. 165. There is evidence that Grass is well aware of this. See *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke*: 'Schließlich hält sich Ficino...an Aristoteles, der wohl als erster die Melancholie legitimiert und als Ursache hervorragender künstlerischer und wissenschaftlicher Leistungen ausgewiesen hat. Nicht anders bei Dürer, der während seiner italienischen Reise oder durch seinen Freund Pirckheimer mit Ficinos Hauptwerk "De vita triplici"...bekannt gemacht wurde' (iv. 550f.).

<sup>31</sup> Panofsky, p. 162. Panofsky sees the engraving as a 'spiritual self-portrait of Albrecht Dürer' (p. 171). The characterization of Opitz as 'inwendig reich an Figuren' (v. 317) seems to be an allusion to Dürer, who said of himself that he was 'full of inward figures' (Panofsky, p. 12). Moreover, Dürer's wife Agnes may have provided the name for Agnes in the novel.

Auge hängt müde, verschlagen das andere wach' (v. 107) — and the shadowy complexion: 'Alles verschattet und mit Erfahrung verhängt' (v. 108). The poem allegorizes leaden melancholy which is bound up with creativity, embodied in the goose quills: 'Noch oder wieder: Federn blase ich leicht | und behaupte, was schwebt' (v. 107), and is closely related to an etching of Grass which depicts him blowing goose quills.<sup>32</sup> The theme of the artist's melancholy forms one of the most important nexus between Grass and baroque literature.

The meeting of the poets begins with some polite small-talk. After this prelude Opitz starts to discuss Gryphius's sonnets. He praises 'das kühne, manchmal freilich zu ungebundene Versmaß einiger Sonette des Gryphius' (v. 283). In spite of this criticism, Opitz is not shown as a man who thumbs poetic rule-books. He applauds Gryphius's line 'Solt denn die Wasserblas, der leichte Mensch bestehn?' (v. 284) even though the apocopes are clearly against his metrical rules. Szyrocki has pointed out that in his early poems Gryphius used metrical tricks, which Opitz had strictly forbidden.<sup>33</sup> Opitz seems to be able to acknowledge the quality of the image in spite of the minor metrical inaccuracy.

What Opitz really criticizes are not petty metrical aspects of Gryphius's sonnets; he objects to their substance and style. 'Dann beklagte er, daß deren ungehemmte Schmerzbekundungen, das Jammertalige ihres Tonfalls und die Verdammung auch der kleinsten irdischen Lust als eitle Nichtigkeit außer Maß seien' (v. 283f.). Opitz does not criticize the theme of vanity as such but the lack of 'Maß'. The ideal of 'Maß' is in fact a chief characteristic of Opitz's works. According to Karl Otto Conrady he kept a 'mittlere Ebene des Sprechens' (p. 200) and his poems were 'rational durchkühlt' (p. 197). Richard Alewyn maintains that Opitz does not have very much in common with baroque style because his works are still deeply rooted in a classical humanist manner of writing:

Im barocken Stil kann man Eigenheiten: besondere Stilfiguren, Abnormitäten, Exzesse nennen und beschreiben, bei Opitz werden wir immer nur deren Nichtvorhandensein konstatieren können. Darin aber gerade werden wir den normalisierten Stil erkennen, den wir als den Opitzianischen Klassizismus bezeichnen.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> See the etching 'Federn blasen (1974)', in Grass, *In Kupfer, auf Stein*, p. 83.

<sup>33</sup> Szyrocki, *Gryphius*, p. 50: 'In der Ausgabe B der Sonette von 1643 hat Gryphius...es nicht gescheut, ganze Verse umzubauen, nur um die Apokopen zu entfernen.' This is precisely what happened to the quoted line, it is replaced by another image ('Soll den das Spiell der zeit / der leichte mensch bestehn', *Das Zeitalter des Barock*, p. 269) which is a great loss.

<sup>34</sup> Richard Alewyn, *Vorbarocker Klassizismus und Griechische Tragödie: Analyse der 'Antigone'-Übersetzung des Martin Opitz* (Darmstadt, 1962), p. 32.

Grass's portrayal of Opitz as a rational and stiff or 'geometrical' character is well founded (the fact that Opitz has 'Maß' is related to the geometrical concept of measuring). The quarrel between Opitz and Gryphius can therefore be described in Conrady's terms as a tension between the 'mittlere Ebene' and its baroque 'Aufweitung', between *genus medium* and its inflation.<sup>35</sup>

Opitz's rigid and unbending attitudes have yet another function: they show that he is a Stoic. He rejects Gryphius's statement that all human efforts are 'hew, staub, asch unnd wind' (v. 284).<sup>36</sup> Opitz argues that Gryphius fails to notice what is beneath the dust and ashes: 'Oft liege unter Trümmern, was seinen Bestand wahre. Die Spur zeuge fort. Selbst im Vergeblichen bleibe der Mut des redlichen Mannes kenntlich' (v. 284). This is the typical structure of a Stoic argument. The vanity of the world is not proved false; on the contrary, it is emphasized. What Opitz objects to is Gryphius's conclusion that life in a hollow world appears senseless. The situation of the dialogue between the two poets bears striking similarity to that in Justus Lipsius, *Von der Beständigkeit* (p. 21v.). Like Gryphius the young Lipsius leaves his home country, the Netherlands, because it is devastated by war. In Liège he meets the humanist Carolus Langius, a mature man who makes him understand that his contempt for life is hypocritical. He tells him that the common moral condemnation of the world is usually nothing but an inability to cope with fate. Opitz's argument follows similar lines: 'Überhaupt sei der Gryphius zu jung, um alle Welt als Jammertal zu lokalisieren und sich pausbäckig, wie er nun mal gesund glänze, Tod und Moderloch zu wünschen. Das alles, Lust und Weh, müsse erst noch gelebt werden' (v. 284). Do not run away, Opitz tells young Gryphius, but stand firm — this is the right way of proving your virtue, but not by hypocritical complaints about the heavy blows of fate. 'Afflictio virtutis est occasio' is the Stoic way of putting this argument.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> For the 'Aufweitung' see Conrady, pp. 115ff.

<sup>36</sup> This is another line which Gryphius changed for metrical reasons in a later edition. Compare the two versions in *Das Zeitalter des Barock*, pp. 268f. The 'asyndetische Worthäufung' in this line clearly is a 'Überschreitung der "mittleren Ebene"' and thus provokes Opitz's criticism. See Conrady, pp. 127f., pp. 149-53.

<sup>37</sup> Conrady, p. 271. Kurt H. Wels finds a similar thought in Opitz's *Trostschrift an D. Müller*: 'Die Tugend liegt in keinem Bette: sie wil herfür gesucht, gefodert [!] und auff die Probe geleet werden.' See Wels's essay on 'Opitz und die stoische Philosophie', *Euphorion*, 21 (1914), 86-102 (p. 94). According to Wels, Opitz initially wanted to call the *Trostgedichte in Widerwertigkeit des Krieges* 'Über die Beständigkeit' following Seneca's *De constantia*; we have mentioned already that the poem *Zlatna* has the significant subtitle *Von der Ruhe des Gemüthes* following Seneca's tract *De tranquillitate animi* (p. 89). For Opitz's Stoicism see also Xaver Stalder, *Formen des barocken Stoizismus: Der Einfluß der Stoa auf die deutsche Barockdichtung — Martin Opitz, Andreas Gryphius und Catharina Regina von Greiffenberg* (Bonn, 1976), pp. 33-56.

The opposition between the healthy Gryphius's youth and his pessimism, like the contrast between his limited experience and his contempt for life, is underlined by the background noise of the dispute: 'Draußen wurden Fässer mit Eisenringen beschlagen' (v. 283), a noise which discomforts Opitz. And while talking Gryphius taps on the table with his forefinger, 'wobei sein rechter Zeigefinger der Tischkante Rhythmen schlug' (v. 284). What seems to be an unimportant particular of the setting turns out to be pointer: the unfilled barrel which is struck by a hammer emblemizes an unwise man's empty torrent of words (whereas the wise man, the full barrel, does not produce clamour and noise).<sup>38</sup>

An important difference between the two poets is that Opitz is convinced of the need for political action, while Gryphius complains that Opitz has wasted his energy on politics at the expense of literature. The sensitive young poet, deeply offended by Opitz's criticism of his poems, now launches a ponderous counter-attack which follows the rhythm of the striking of barrels; the declamation follows a rhythmic pattern of 'Insistierende Nennung' with its characteristic 'Häufungen gleicher Satzteile, Satz- und Satzgliedreihungen'.<sup>39</sup> In each phrase the word 'er' is stressed:

Er, der hervorragende Opitz, habe seine Kraft politisierend vergeudet, er, der vom Kaiser bekränzte, geadelte Opitz, habe der Diplomatie gegeben, was er der Poeterey schuldig geblieben sei, er, der regelkundige Opitz, habe der Hebungen und Senkungen wegen des Menschen ganze Erbärmlichkeit mit Wortplunder verhängt, er, der immer geschäftige Opitz habe, solange der Krieg sich ziehe, die schmutzigen Geschäfte wechselnder Fürsten besorgt und könne auch jetzt, obgleich im sicheren Hafen, nicht davon lassen, hier dem Polenkönig Wladislaw beratende, den kleinen Vorteil wägende Briefe zu schreiben, dort den Schwedenkanzler Oxenstierna mit Agentenberichten über das Anwerben preußischer Söldner für die kaiserlichen Armeen zu beschicken. (v. 284f.)

This accusation is again based on Szyrocki who writes about Opitz: 'Mit der Annahme des Dienstes bei Dohna begann für ihn ein neuer Lebensabschnitt, in dem die Dichtung auf den zweiten Platz rücken mußte. Der gefeierte Dichter wurde zum gewandten Diplomaten.'<sup>40</sup> Gryphius sees in such compromises with politics the reason for Opitz's decline as a poet. One is reminded of Grass's dictum 'Das Gedicht kennt keine Kompromisse; wir aber leben von

<sup>38</sup> See *Emblemata*, p. 1399.

<sup>39</sup> Conrady, pp. 128f. The 'Insistierende Nennung' is another of Conrady's examples for the 'Aufweitung' of the 'mittlere Ebene'. The syntactical pattern of the following example already surfaces in *Die Blechtrommel* (see, for instance, li. 387).

<sup>40</sup> Szyrocki, *Opitz*, p. 73. See also p. 36 where Szyrocki relates that Opitz started making compromises: 'Damit verloren seine Dichtungen an kämpferischer Glut und poetischer Frische.'

Kompromissen. Wer diese Spannung aushält, ist ein Narr und ändert die Welt'.<sup>41</sup> It is this dilemma which is allegorized through the clash of Opitz and Gryphius. Again it becomes obvious that the author tries to come to terms with a problem which besets his inner self. The optimism of 1966 to cope with this tension has long gone. What remains is ambiguity. It is 'Zweideutigkeit, die ihm, Opitz, die Sprache verschlage' (v. 285), Gryphius concludes.

Then Gryphius's attacks become more personal and offensive: he accuses him of having translated an 'antiketzerisches Manuale' (ibid.) for the Jesuits, to have knelt in Catholic churches, and to have written an invective against the Protestant Magdeburg ('Die stets alleine schlieff, die alte keusche Magd').<sup>42</sup> These accusations are followed by further private and embarrassing revelations.

Gryphius, still a beginner in poetry, then starts to criticize Opitz's poems. He accuses him of corrupting art by writing 'antikisch geputzte Lob- und Dankeshymnen' for the 'blutsaugenden Grafen Dohna', a Catholic.<sup>43</sup> In spite of their metrical perfection the verses are 'ohne notwendiges Empfinden und brennend Wort, sondern von lauem Geschmack'. 'Brennen' and 'lauer Geschmack' again allude to the theme of cooking and the image of the stove which has to be rekindled.

Compared to the moderate tone of Opitz's rhetorically well-organized criticism, Gryphius's tirade is an asyndetic compilation of attacks which follows no order but grows more personal and offensive. Opitz is criticized in every possible way, his political attitudes, his religious standpoints, his private love-affairs, his poetry. Opitz, suffering from depression, is deeply hurt by these assaults.

It is significant that the background noise of the discussion changes, when Opitz starts to speak: 'Es wurden Fässer gerollt' (v. 286). As the rhythm of the struck barrels matched the aggressive rhythm of Gryphius's reproach ('er, der...'), the rolling of barrels underlines the fluent syntax of Opitz's answer. After a long rhetorical pause, he answers in one long and flowing sentence:

Er habe sich in kriegswirren Geschäften verzettelt, sei immer mit Botschaften, vermittelnden Gesuchen, verbrietem Hilfsgeschrei unterwegs und in Pflicht gewesen, habe sich mit Breslaus Töchtern mehr erschöpft als vergnügt, habe sich vor Jesuiten fürchten, sich der Fürstengunst versichern müssen, wolle sich aber dennoch, wie der

<sup>41</sup> Grass, *Vom mangelnden Selbstvertrauen der schreibenden Hofnarren unter Berücksichtigung nicht vorhandener Höfe* (ix. 158).

<sup>42</sup> v. 285. Compare Szyrocki, *Opitz*, pp. 84, 139.

<sup>43</sup> v. 285. Compare Szyrocki, *Opitz*, p. 79. The lines quoted in *Der Butt*, 'Du hebst mich über mich, du wilt mich ganz befreyen. Von deiner Waffen last, wilt mich den Musen leyhen...' (v. 285) are difficult to understand without Szyrocki's explanations: 'Der Dichter, dem das viele Reisen und das

hochgelehrte Grotius, dem er in Paris grad so gegenüber gesessen, als ein Ireniker oder Friedensmann verstehen, denn ihn trüge keine Partei, sondern der Wunsch nach Duldung jeglichen Glaubens, weshalb er auch jetzt noch, obgleich schon müde gerungen, den Kanzler Oxenstierna in Briefen bewegen wolle, nun, nach des Kaisers Schwäche, die Armee des Marschalls Baner stark zu machen, damit der Schwede samt Torstensons Reitern und den schottischen Regimentern Lesley und King die Vereinigung der kaiserlichen Truppen mit den verräterischen Sachsen behindere, ja eigentlich strebe er an, weil doch das königliche Kind von der Mutter in Stockholms Schloß schier verrückt gehalten werde, daß sich die Schwedenmacht womöglich mit dem polnischen Wladislaw gegen Habsburg verbünde, zumal der Polenkönig noch immer auch Schwedens Krone spekuliere, weshalb er, Opitz, auch im Vorjahr ein Lobgedicht auf die polnische Majestät gedichtet habe, in dem er zwar des Königs Friedensliebe und klug gewährte Waffenruhe preise — ‘...Daß er, O Vladislaw, für Krieg die Ruh erkießt...’ — doch müsse er immerfort, und sei es zum Schaden der Poeterey, um das schlesische Elend besorgt bleiben, auch wenn er an heilem Ort Wohnung genommen habe, damit ihm noch etwas in Versen gelinge. (v. 286f.)

In contrast to Gryphius’s asyndetic exclamations, Opitz links the phrases of his exhaustive rebuttal through conjunctions and thus creates the impression of a logically coherent, though intricate, argument. It appears as if the whole argument evolved from Opitz’s irenic stance (*‘denn ihn trüge keine Partei, sondern der Wunsch nach Duldung jeglichen Glaubens, weshalb er auch jetzt noch...’*). Most of the following conjunctions are causal and seemingly link the subsequent phrases to the central idea of a peace movement. But the logical structure of the reply is deceptive. It is contradictory to say that *because* of his irenic and tolerant religious position Opitz wants to recommend Oxenstierna to strengthen Baner’s army in order to prevent the joining of the Saxons and the imperial troops.<sup>44</sup> Grass invents the idea of Opitz as a plotter who planned an attack by the Swedes and the Scottish regiments of Lesley and King on the Saxon renegades and the imperial troops. Thus — so the fictitious argument runs — the irenic Opitz causes the appalling ‘Schlacht von Wittstock’, the battle which is described in one of the famous passages of Grimmelshausen’s *Simplicissimus*. In spite of the fluent syntax of Opitz’s response to Gryphius’s attack, his answer is confused and contradictory. Opitz seems to have lost control over his arguments. The rhetorical acuteness which made his first argument so convincing is gone.

The disorganized form of the argument shows that Opitz adheres to too many parties: as a diplomat and spy he is involved in double-dealing; he is an irenicist and plans military attacks; he wants to support his home, Silesia, but he has left

Lagerleben zuwider war, lobte die Absicht seines Gönners, ihm auch fernerhin die schöpferische Arbeit zu ermöglichen.’

<sup>44</sup> In contrast to Gryphius’s accusations about Opitz’s diplomatic role, which are based on Szyrocki, Grass clearly starts inventing facts in Opitz’s counter-argument. All Opitz actually did was to inform Oxenstierna about the movements of Baner’s army. See Szyrocki, *Opitz*, p. 113.

it for the safety of Danzig. This list of contradictions and ambiguities in Opitz's character could be extended. Gryphius's criticism turns out to be true: 'Zweideutigkeit' is Opitz's greatest fault. He wants to do too many contradictory things at the same time. He falls victim to his own tricks and conspiracies which grow so intricate that he cannot keep track of them. This highlights the sort of melancholy Opitz suffers from: he is crossing the boundary where acumen turns into absurdity. How absurd Opitz's refutation is becomes apparent when he draws his final conclusion:

Denn nur darauf komme es an, sagte Opitz wie abschließend, indem er den jungen Gryphius nun mit vollem Blick unterwies: 'Nachmals ist ein jeder verß entweder ein iambicus oder trochaicus; nicht zwar das wir auff art der griechen vnnnd lateiner eine gewisse grösse der sylben können inn acht nemen; sondern das wir aus den accenten vnnnd dem thone erkennen, welche sylbe hoch vnnnd welche niedrig gesetzt soll werden'. (v. 287)<sup>45</sup>

This is supposed to be the essence of Opitz's wordy reply to Gryphius. The inapplicability of quantity to German verses which Opitz stresses in his *Buch von der Deutschen Poeterey* is in no way related to the debate. And yet it is clear what makes Opitz refer to poetics: having lost control over his argument, he escapes to the rules of poetry — the domain where he remains unchallenged.

Gryphius is infuriated by Opitz's reproach. But Agnes tells him to stop quarrelling for the sake of Opitz's health. The serene kitchenmaid serves codfish, a dish which calms down the poets' mood. (It will be shown later that the fish meal has a similar important function in *Das Treffen in Telgte*.) She makes the poets keep quiet with a very simple, though strange line about the fish: 'Mit einem Verslein, das sie ländlich breit und widersinnig betont vortrug und das sagen wollte "Pomuchel verzanken heißt Liebgottchen nicht danken", schaffte sie Stille' (v. 287). The contrast between Opitz's and Gryphius's ambition to create a German 'Kunstdichtung' and the effectiveness of Agnes's simple dialect line could not be greater. The verse sounds like a dialect proverb translated into High German. 'Pomuchel' is a dialect word for cod, but it can also mean 'ein undankbarer' or 'zänkischer Mensch'.<sup>46</sup> The line admonishes the poets, the quarrelsome Gryphius in particular, to be thankful for food and eat in peace. The characteristic Prussian diminutive 'Liebgottchen' is one of the ways the narrator refers to the turbot — thus the line also alludes to the folk-tale

<sup>45</sup> Compare Szyrocki, *Opitz*, pp. 61f.

<sup>46</sup> See 'Pomuchel' in Walther Mitzka, *Schlesisches Wörterbuch* (Berlin, 1963ff.). According to Wossidlo-Teuchert, *Mecklenburgisches Wörterbuch* (Neumünster, 1937ff.) the word was common in Danzig. (See the citation 'de Danziger seggen Pomuchel to'n Dösch, dorüm heiten sei Pomuchelskopp'. Compare *Hundejahre*; iii. 596).

which illustrates that the things 'Liebgottchen' offers should be appreciated. That is to say, quarrelling is a form of immodesty.

Asked by Gryphius about his literary plans, Opitz gives the disappointing answer that he has only minor projects in mind, as he lacks fire and inspiration. None the less, Agnes's food has cleared his mind again, his argument is straight and his tone firm. At the end of the meeting Opitz quotes Seneca and regains his self-control; the touchy Gryphius, however, leaves in anger and disgust. Opitz modestly points at the depleted table, an image of vanity, saying: 'Derentwegen wolle vns ja niemandt verargen, das wir die zeit, welche viel durch Fressereyen, vnnütze geschwätze vnd gezänke hinbringen, mit anmutigkeit vnseres studierens, vnd denen sachen verschliessen, welche die arme offte haben, vnd die reichen nicht erkauffen können' (v. 289). The speech concludes with a quotation from the *Buch von der Deutschen Poeterey*. Grass has shortened the original slightly and inserted the word 'gezänke' (instead of 'verleumbdung ehrlicher leute, vnd sonderlich die lustige vberrechnung des vermögens').<sup>47</sup> Through this interpolation and the gesture of pointing at the table, the quotation is carefully adapted to the context of the chapter. It is a hint for Gryphius not to be so over-ambitious in useless disputes and not to be so greedy for food, but to concentrate on his studies.

The episode ends with Opitz quietly writing a letter to Oxenstierna, telling him that according to his spying in Danzig the occasion has come to attack the Saxons, in order to prevent them from joining the imperial troops. As a result he causes the Battle of Wittstock. This intervention connects the episode of the poets' meeting to another episode in *Der Butt*, which is based on the description of the battle in Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus*.

A closer analysis of the language of the chapter shows that it is a compromise. It is dominated by disputations of the poets who are supposed to speak seventeenth-century German with a hint of Silesian dialect. Sometimes they even change to Latin (Opitz uses it at the end of the meeting to maintain a distance from his quarrelsome guest). Grass openly acknowledges that he was unable to compose such a peculiar mixture of archaic language and dialect: 'Beide sprachen schlesisch eingefärbt: das läßt sich nicht nachschreiben, und manchmal wie gedruckt: das läßt sich zitieren' (v. 283). Therefore the dialogues are all related in indirect speech; the chapter is written not in archaic language

<sup>47</sup> Szyrocki, *Opitz*, p. 65. The passage is quoted from the last lines of the *Buch von der Deutschen Poeterey* which express the self-confidence of the burgher and poet Opitz (pp. 64f.).

but in contemporary German. However, it is a contemporary German with a certain emphasis. The syntax, for instance, has some affinity with baroque style as the 'insistierende Nennung' of Gryphius's attacks and the extremely stretched sentence of Opitz's reply show. Vocabulary, such as 'das Jammertalige' (v. 283), 'Moderloch' (v. 284), 'eitle Nichtigkeit' (ibid.), and in a few cases the spelling, 'teutsches Versmaß', 'Poeterey' (ibid.), create the illusion that the conversation is conducted in seventeenth-century German. All passages in indirect speech are only very slightly stylized, but the alienation still makes the reader aware of the linguistic distance from the implied direct speech. The subjunctive has an ironic overtone which is characteristic of the whole chapter. This irony will also pervade the later novel *Das Treffen in Telgte*. A closer look at the sources Grass used reveals that nearly all passages in direct speech are quotations (which are derived either from poetical works or from letters and, when the dispute comes to its conclusions, from the *Buch von der Deutschen Poeterey*). Some of the quotations are modified according to the context. The baroque language used in direct speech creates the illusion that the conversation continues in the same language when it is reported in indirect speech. It is this well-arranged mixture which makes the meeting of two baroque poets appear authentic. Moreover, the emblematic pointers (the empty barrel) and the esoteric allusions to Dürer's *Melencolia I* are evidence of an allegorical way of writing. (In *Das Treffen in Telgte* Grass applies the same stylistic and allegorical techniques which are already fully developed in this chapter.) However, it would be wrong to call the style of the chapter baroque or manneristic. Apart from oxymorons, like 'lustvolle Leidversessenheit' and 'üppige Trauer' (v. 282), there are hardly any noteworthy elaborate figures of speech, far-fetched images or other forms of rhetorical ornament. It is mainly the shape of the sentences and the vocabulary of the arguments and counter-arguments which are reminiscent of baroque language.

It is surprising that the great variety of styles in *Der Butt* can be achieved merely through such minor changes. Grass obeys a rhetorical *decorum* when he attunes the style of the chapters to the different historical periods they deal with. As will be seen, the Grobianism in the chapter on the nun Margarete Rusch reflects the crudeness which was current in the culture of her times. This can be further exemplified by a comparison of the chapter 'Ach Ilsebill' with the characterization of 'Ollefritz' and the Enlightenment. The enlightened king who dislikes all pomp and ceremony is described in a concise and clear style:

Wie überallhin, auch nach Zuckau kam er unangemeldet. Er wollte überraschen und Bittschriften, Girlanden, Ehrenjungfern und den Vertretern der Landstände aus dem

Weg gehen. Er mochte das nicht: Fisimatenten. Seine Legende war ihm so vorgeschrieben. Also stiefelte er gichtkrumm unterm Hut mit dem Stock querfeld, hielt das Gesinde mit kurzen Bellauten an, nicht zu gaffen, sondern weiterzubuckeln, und blieb erst bei den Körben voller Bulwen stehen. Erste Bemerkungen über die Beschaffenheit kaschubischer Sandböden im Vergleich zu den Böden Hinterpommerns. Lehrreiches Zeug, aus aufklärenden Traktaten gelesen, die man (für ihn) aus dem Englischen und Niederländischen ins Französische übersetzt hatte: den Fruchtwechsel und Kleeanbau betreffend. Der Adjutant notierte im Regen. Ich, sein Inspektor, mußte Hektarerträge aufsagen. Genaue Zahlen wollte er hören, die den wachsenden Handel mit Saatkartoffeln nachzuweisen hatten... (v. 358)

The language of the passage is laconic and unequivocal. The participial phrase 'den Fruchtwechsel...betreffend' indicates the shortened style which is often used when minutes are taken down. Sentences are reduced to their basic information. There are no contradicting statements, oxymorons, melancholic overtones, or ambiguities. Compared to this straightforward style in the indicative which resembles that of a minute-book, the language of the chapter 'Von der Last böser Zeit' is rich in connotations — a richness which reflects the difference in spirit of the baroque and the Enlightenment.

When the tribunal deals with the cases of Agnes, the painter Möller and Opitz, the turbot admits that his attempts to inspire the poet through the muse Agnes have failed; Opitz wrote only minor works, 'Eher mürrisch hat er die Neuausgabe seiner alten Gedichte besorgt. An jeder Auflage seiner Übersetzung eines englischen Schmökers mit dem Titel "Arcadia" hat er Korrekturen gebosselt'.<sup>48</sup> It is noteworthy that the turbot's judgement on the literary quality of Opitz's works is adopted from Szyrocki who writes (*Opitz*, p. 122): 'Heute ist man der Meinung, daß Opitzens Werk keinen großen künstlerischen Wert besitzt und daher — mit Ausnahme einiger Gedichte — den modernen Leser nicht anzusprechen vermag.' This may explain why the only text of Opitz which is applauded several times in *Der Butt* is an early poem: '...Was muste der nun leiden | Der an der Kranckheit lag' (v. 286).

A survey by a literary critic stresses Opitz's lack of imagination and his dubious life. The accusation that he failed to deal with his personal experiences in his writings is based on a misconception of baroque literature, for it never intended to be 'Erlebnisdichtung': 'Alles verschlüsselt, ins Geistige transponiert, mythologisiert oder auf belehrende Pointen gebracht, sogar die Liebesgedichte' (v. 297). This sounds like the typical late nineteenth-century criticism of

<sup>48</sup> v. 294. Szyrocki, *Opitz*, pp. 116f. remarks that in 1638 (two years after the fictitious meeting) Opitz published Sidney's *Arcadia*, which was 'uffs new vbersehen vnd gebessert,... von dem Edlen vnd Vesten M.O.V.B.'

baroque literature by critics who always had Goethe's 'Genieästhetik' in mind when they read baroque works. The survey assumes that Gryphius, by contrast, had the 'metaphorische Sprachgewalt' (ibid.) Opitz lacked; he did not need to draw on literary commonplaces. This is naturally quite wrong: the prime example for Gryphius's 'Sprachgewalt', the 'Wasserblas' image, is as unoriginal as could be. It can be traced back to Petronius, 42: 'Non pluris sumus quam bullae.' The image of the bubble was used as a vanity metaphor in Neo-Latin literature, by Paul Melissus, for instance: 'Bullam | hominem dixeris aut foliolum | Arbusculae aut somnii | Fumive fugientis umbellam.'<sup>49</sup> These misconceptions show how strongly even Grass, who has a good understanding of baroque literature, is attached to categories of 'original genius'. And even Opitz's line: 'die Freyheit wil gedruckt, gepreßt, bestritten werden' (which is quoted 'um darzutun, daß allenfalls Zeilen zu überdauern vermochten'; v. 297) is a commonplace, especially among Protestant writers because during the Reformation the press was praised as the most effective instrument in the liberation from Rome.<sup>50</sup>

### (iii) *Baroque allegories*

Baroque literature also plays an important role in the 'Vatertag' chapter which has an exceptional structural position in the novel. Unlike other chapters the long 'Vatertag' forms a month of its own and it is only loosely integrated into a framework plot. It can be read as an independent story within *Der Butt*. The narrative elements of the chapter like the feast, hubris, melancholic paralysis, rising tension which turns into violence, are those which occur, though in different sequences, throughout the novel (as well as in *Das Treffen in Telgte*). However, 'Vatertag' stands out because more than any other chapter of *Der Butt*, it depicts a dangerous proneness to passion and the need for a Stoic restraint. The atmosphere of 'Vatertag' is fraught with danger. Furthermore, reality in this chapter seems to be perverted, it is a world upside down — another favourite topic of baroque literature. The order of the world is perverted by the 'licence' of the Father's Day: 'Hatte uns Billy nicht versprochen, die ganz große Sau loszulassen? Is doch Vatertag heute, Vatertag heute!' (v. 554). It is not before the artificial rape of Billy that Siggi says to the weeping victim:

<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Conrady, p. 282.

<sup>50</sup> The line is quoted from the *Trostgedichte In Widerwertigkeit Deß Krieges*; see Szyrocki, *Opitz*, p. 47.

‘Das mußte sein. Jetzt erst ist richtig Vatertag. Hoch die Tassen’ (v. 575). This ‘licence’ is used so excessively that the narrative has a surreal air. It is in this specific context that Grimmelshausen’s famous description of the Battle of Wittstock is alluded to. The battle signifies a world which is turned upside down through the ‘licence’ of war. Horses could be seen, which ‘unter ihren Herrn todt darnieder fallen / voller Wunden / welche sie unverschulder Weis zu Vergeltung ihrer getreuen Dienste empfangen hatten’.<sup>51</sup> Other horses die and fall on to their riders, thus having the honour to be carried in their death by those whom they had to carry during their lifetime. All common order is turned upside down: ‘Die Erde / deren Gewohnheit ist / die Todten zu bedecken / war damals an selbigem Ort selbst mit Todten überstreut (ibid.).’ In the chapter ‘Vatertag’ the order of nature is inverted; women pretend to be men with fatal results. It is significant that the atrocities in the ‘Vatertag’ chapter start as mere games:

War ja alles nur Spiel. Wollten nun mal was Lebensechtes erleben. Schossen plötzlich ihr Licht aus drei mal sieben Scheinwerfern ab, trieben Billy, die Frau, die Dickmadame, das nun doch ein wenig verschreckte Häschen vor sich her, mal hier-, mal dahin, in windstille Abzweigungen, wo nur noch Butterbrotpapier und Bierflaschen vom Vatertag zeugten. (v. 579)

The aspect of playing, closely related to the ‘licence’ and freedom of the Father’s Day, is also noticeable in the description of the Wittstock Battle; it all starts as mere fun: ‘in einem Augenblick flog die Luft so häufig voller singenden Kugeln über uns her / daß es das Ansehen hatte / als ob die Salve uns zu gefallen gegeben worden wäre.’ Apart from ‘dergleichen Schertz’ the noise of the battle is compared with music: ‘das gekläpper der Harnisch / das krachen der Biquen / und das Geschrey beydes der der Verwundten und Angreifenden / machten neben den Trompeten / Trommeln und Pfeiffen ein erschrockliche Music!’ (*Simplicissimus*, pp. 176f.).

It is noteworthy that all the female protagonists in the chapter — who, like the narrator, have had previous lives in the baroque age — took part in the Battle of Wittstock: Fränki was a carter; Siggi was among the Swedes after they had beaten the imperial troops. Billy is said to have cooked for the military regiment commanded by Lesley; later she is mentioned as colonel under Baner’s command and as courier of Oxenstierna, who met Opitz in Danzig. The relationship between figures on the different time levels becomes very intricate when it emerges that in the Thirty Years’ War Mäxchen was Axel Ludström, the man who had raped Agnes (it was he who collected Opitz’s literary remains).

<sup>51</sup> Grimmelshausen, *Simplicissimus*, p. 177.

On the other hand, it is related that Mäxchen climbed up a tree during the Battle of Wittstock, ‘und las Zeile nach Zeile in einem Buch, das ich dem Profoß geklaut hatte. Und in dem Buch stand genau beschrieben, was auf dem Schlachtfeld geschah: in Bildern und Worten’ (v. 548). Here Mäxchen, for a moment, takes up the role of *Simplicissimus*. This passage is linked with the chapter ‘Von der Last böser Zeit’ and one of the surveys on Opitz which mentioned Grimmelshausen’s source for the description of the battle:

Neuerlich habe Germanistenfleiß nachweisen können, daß die Beschreibung der Schlacht bei Wittstock an der Dosse im ‘*Simplicissimus*’ zumindest angeregt worden sei durch Schlachtszenenbeschreibungen in der Opitzschen ‘*Arcadia*’-Übersetzung. Womöglich habe der junge Grimmelshausen als Augenzeuge von einem Baum herab die Schlachtszenen mit gedruckten Metaphern verglichen und als tatsächlich erkannt, weil sich die Wirklichkeit, wie ihr von der Literatur vorgeschrieben war, in schrecklicher Anschaulichkeit verhielt; was wieder einmal beweise, daß alles Geschehen schon vorgedruckt sei. (v. 298)

Apart from the display of ‘verkehrte Welt’ and unredeemed humanity the main function of the passages on the Battle of Wittstock is to allegorize the relationship between fiction and reality. Opitz causes the battle in two ways: on the one hand, he is the diplomatic plotter who planned the battle (it takes place only four weeks after Opitz’s meeting with Gryphius and his letter to Oxenstierna); on the other hand, his translation of Sidney’s *Arcadia* strongly influences Grimmelshausen’s description of the battle in *Simplicissimus*.<sup>52</sup> Mäxchen who sits in a tree reading a book is an allegory of the idea that literature can be ahead of reality. The allegory shows the priority of ideas over historical ‘facts’; the latter are a result of the former. The man who deals with ideas and imagination more than anybody else is the poet. Both the book Mäxchen holds in her hands and the real battle are ‘planned’ by the poet Opitz; both phenomena are created by the same faculty of imagination.

But there is more to it. This allegory also highlights the relationship between reality and literature in a much more general way. After the imagistic description of Mäxchen up the tree the allegorical sense is verbally expressed: ‘So ist das mit der Wirklichkeit...Alles, was ist, ist schon vorgeschrieben’ (v. 548), one of the heroines says. This sounds more presumptuous than it is. It does not mean that the poets know everything better. It means that literature

<sup>52</sup> See Klaus Haberkamm, “‘Verspäteter Grimmelshausen aus der Kaschubei’ — ‘Verspätete Utopie’? Simplicianisches in Grass’ *Butt*”, *Simpliciana*, 6-7 (1985), 123-38, and Siegfried Mews, ‘Der Butt als Germanist: Zur Rolle der Literatur in Günter Grass’ Roman’, in *Adventures of a Flounder*, ed. Pickar, pp. 24-31. Haberkamm and Mews point out that the ‘Germanistenfleiß’ Grass refers to is that of Hans Geulen, “‘Arcadische’ *Simpliciana*”, Walter Holzinger, ‘*Der Abenteuerliche Simplicissimus*’ and Sir Philip Sidney’s *Arcadia*’ and Ulrich Stadler, *Der einsame Ort*.

deals with examples and — given that history repeats itself — can express things which are bound to happen again.<sup>53</sup> Therefore literary *topoi* and stereotypes — ‘gedruckte Metaphern’ — are applicable not only to one but to all battles. The allegory of Mäxchen sitting in a tree is the ideal embodiment of this congruity of commonplace metaphors and reality. For allegory perceives reality merely as a series of instances of the common and general. Uniqueness and individual difference cannot be expressed by means of allegory (this is the main reason why Goethe criticized it and tried to replace it with symbol). This particular allegory is therefore a programmatic manifestation of Grass’s cyclical concept of history and the appropriate poetic means of describing reality as a re-enactment of stereotypes. The programmatic aspect is enhanced through the explicit interpretation of the image. It is *permixta apertis allegoria* which is addressed to all readers; it is the precise opposite of the esoteric kind of allegory we dealt with earlier.

A further important example of the use of baroque allegory in *Der Butt* is the chapter ‘Ach Ilsebill’. This chapter is an elaboration of a famous baroque emblem: it is modelled minutely on the gourd-vine arbour of the literary circle in Königsberg. The chapter is related to the framework plot of Ilsebill’s pregnancy. The gourd is a further image of growing and swelling which is equated with the abdomen (the narrator carves Ilsebill’s name in the gourds as Simon Dach and his friends inscribed verses ‘on the cucumbers and pumpkins in the garden, watching the texts grow, wither and decay symbolically with the fruit’).<sup>54</sup> Structurally this impressive allegory is more isolated than the flashbacks dealing with Opitz and Gryphius which surface throughout the novel and which are interwoven with many other threads of action. It is noticeable that the narrator tends to remain in the background in most passages which deal with the baroque; in the chapter ‘Ach Ilsebill’, however, he addresses Ilsebill. Her remarks are only related indirectly through the narrator’s answers: ‘Dir fehlt eine geräuscharme Geschirrspülmaschine. Gut. Wird gekauft. Und Reisen natürlich. Jadoch. Auf die Antillen wie im Prospekt. Und gleich nach der Geburt — Ende Juni sagst du — flattrige Kleidchen, Knautschwarte, schockige Hosen, knappe Pullis. Kriegst du alles. Nie wieder Abwaschprobleme’ (v. 108). Thus

<sup>53</sup> It is noteworthy that the description of the Battle of Wittstock in *Simplicissimus* is also much less a specific account of an eye-witness than was originally believed. As the influence of Opitz’s translation of *Arcadia* shows it rather stands in a literary tradition and uses conventions and *topoi* which surface in many such descriptions of battles. In *Simplicissimus*, too, the Battle of Wittstock is an example rather than a specific historical event.

<sup>54</sup> Forster, ‘Meditation in a Garden’, p. 28 (compare v. 109).

the narrator treats Ilsebill, who is as greedy as the woman in the folk tale, with irony and makes her appear slightly silly. We have seen already that the use of indirect speech leads to an ironic slant, a mode of writing prevailing in the passages which deal with the baroque in *Der Butt*. Again there are only a few traces of baroque language; they are all part of a further fictitious letter. This letter in which the baroque poet Simon Dach addresses his colleague Opitz is a pastiche modelled on Dach's 'Klage über den endlichen Vntergang vnd ruinirung der Musicalischen Kürbs-Hütte vnd Gärtchens'.<sup>55</sup> As the chapter is set in the present the baroque archaisms enhance the sense of the remoteness of the arbour.

Once again Grass has chosen an image which belongs to the important complex of food-motifs: the gourd is palatable.<sup>56</sup> The growth of the gourd and the abdomen incites the characters to make plans, to express wishes. The beginning of the chapter has a visionary tone; the narrator talks about plans and wishes in terms of taste, reminiscent of Ernst Bloch: 'Ahnung erfüllt mir den Mund schon. Ich habe Vorgeschmack' (v. 108). His weariness makes his mind drift. The chapter forms some kind of day-dream, reminiscent of the genre of the dream-vision or an allegorical exploration of an inner 'Seelenlandschaft'.<sup>57</sup> The narrator and Ilsebill have different wishes. She demands things which symbolize her independence from the duties of daily life like a dish-washer, travel and shocking dresses. All these things indicate that she wants to live a self-determined life. He wants to withdraw with Ilsebill and the hoped-for son to the gourd-vine arbour in order to live a contemplative and modest life. Her plans focus on the future and new experience; his draw on the past and the idea of retirement from the present world which finds its expression in the linguistic distance between her trivial modern German and the remote tone of baroque quotations.

<sup>55</sup> Grass's source is Albrecht Schöne, *Kürbishütte und Königsberg*. The text of the poem is printed on pp. 9-15.

<sup>56</sup> See for example v. 434. Moreover, the gourd-vine arbour is a place where food and drinks are enjoyed: 'So hat auch Simon Dach mit seinen Freunden Albert, Fauljoch, Blum und Roberthin...in der Kürbishütte auf der Pregelinsel gaumig gelebt: "Mein Gott, wie oft sind wir biß in die Nacht gegessen Vnd haben vnsere Zeit mit guttem Tranck vnd Essen Vnd singen zugebracht..."' (v. 110). Compare Schöne, *Kürbishütte*, p. 11. And the garden is also a sort of allotment where vegetables are grown. Some of the cooks have such allotments: Mestwina, for instance, grows beans (v. 110) and Agnes has a 'Dillgärtchen' (v. 294, 332). In *Das Treffen in Telge* Courasche provides the poets with food she grows in her allotment (vi. 33).

<sup>57</sup> An allegorical dream of a gourd-vine arbour as a place of tranquillity surfaces again in *Die Rättin*. It occurs in a poem which begins with the lines: 'Mir träumte, ich hätte mich zur Ruhe gesetzt | und meine Malven stünden hoch vor den Fenstern. | Freunde kamen vorbei und sagten über den Zaun: | Wie gut, daß du dich endlich zur Ruhe gesetzt hast. | Und auch ich sagte in meiner Kürbislaube zu mir | endlich habe ich mich zur Ruhe gesetzt. | So, geruhsam betrachtet, | ist mir die Welt mein Grundstück groß...' (vii. 92).

Und ich lasse im Garten (dem Friedhof daneben) für uns eine Kürbishütte ranken, so eine, wie sie, mitten im Dreißigjährigen Krieg, dem Kneiphof gegenüber, auf Königsbergs Pregelinsel drei Sommer lang blühte. In der saß mein Freund Simon Dach, wenn er mir (dem Opitz von Boberfeld) zierlich in Reimen schrieb: 'Hie wünsch ich stets zu wohnen, bei Kürbsen und Melohnen. Hie schöpff ich Luft vnd Ruh vnd sehe durch daß Laub den schnellen Wolcken zu...' (v. 108.)<sup>58</sup>

The baroque setting of the gourd-vine arbour seems to be taken from a remote past. The only relation to the present tense seems to be that the narrator in his 'Zeitweil' was Dach's friend Opitz (who received Dach's letter). The arbour is described as a place of rest where life comes to a standstill. As Philip Brady puts it: 'Simon Dach's arbour, his "Kürbishütte", was a trivial thing in itself, offering scant protection, and it was artificial. Yet it is this creation of an artificial, seemingly fragile distance from events that enables the poet to keep those events in sight.'<sup>59</sup> Therefore it is the right place to watch passing clouds and ignore the fast pace of the world. Yet, the structure of this argument is paradoxical: a gourd-vine arbour only flourishes for a short time, it is a vanity emblem because it grows quickly but also fades overnight.<sup>60</sup> How can the short-lived gourd-vine arbour provide a perspective to see the world *sub specie aeternitatis* as the following quotation suggests? 'Denn im Grunde hat, aus einer Kürbishütte gesehen, der Dreißigjährige Krieg nie aufgehört, weil solch eine Kürbishütte, die ja ein Nichts ist — wie der Prophet Jonas erfahren mußte —, dennoch der geeignete Ort bleibt, die Welt ganz und ihre wechselnden Schrecken alle zu sehen. Das liebliche Jammertal' (v. 109). It is even more surprising that the most vulnerable arbour should provide shelter. It seems to be out of reach of the atrocities of the Thirty Years' War: 'weil uns der Kürbishütte Gebrechlichkeit schützt und du ruhig austragen kannst, was deinen Leib wölbt' (v. 110). The place which, in spite of its vulnerability continues to exist over centuries, is hardly a real gourd-vine arbour in a real garden. The way the motif is used in *Der Butt* can be explained by Leonard Forster's remarks about similar gardens

<sup>58</sup> This is another letter which Grass invented. It is a combination of several phrases which are quoted from Simon Dach's poem: '...Jetzt pflag ich mich zu strecken | Hin in daß kühle Graß, da mich ein Baum bedecken | Vnd überschatten kunt. *Hie schöpff ich Luft vnd Ruh | Vnd sahe durch daß Laub den schnellen Wolcken zu...* | Wer zehlt die Fröligkeit, mit welcher wir vertrieben | Die noch zu kurtzen Tag? Der eine ging vmbher, | Der ander legte sich, sah in die läng vnd quer, | Mit grünem sich verschantzt, vnd wünsch hie stets zu wohnen. | Herr Roberthin sprach zu den *Kürbsen vnd Melohnen...*' (see *Schöne, Kürbishütte*, pp. 10f.). Apart from the new composition of the phrases, which leaves the iambic meter and the rhymes unchanged, only the tense is altered from the past to present in order to make the text appear an authentic letter.

<sup>59</sup> Philip Brady, 'Aus einer Kürbishütte gesehen: The Poems', in *Günter Grass's 'Der Butt'. Sexual Politics and the Male Myth of History*, pp. 203-25 (p. 208).

<sup>60</sup> See *Schöne, Kürbishütte*, pp. 16ff.

as places of recreation which turned out to be idealized and could not be strictly distinguished from arcadian or paradisaical gardens.<sup>61</sup>

However, as will be seen, it is a most ambiguous place. The ambiguity of the garden motif was already highlighted in the baroque age. In the most influential work of baroque Stoicism, Lipsius's *Von der Bestendigkeit*, Langius takes the young Lipsius to one of his gardens. The setting incites his "mild cogitation" (*molli aliquid cogitatione*); Lipsius sums up the effect the garden produces on him: 'I may cast off the remembrance of all cares and troubles.' Langius is not at all pleased at the young man's remarks:

Lipsius, it becomes apparent, is praising gardens for the wrong reason; he is using them as a place of flight from life, a 'nursery of idleness, a verie sepulcher of slothfulness'. The real use of a garden, Langius explains, is 'for modest recreation, not for vanity, for solace, not for sloath'.<sup>62</sup>

This opposition of flight from reality and commitment to practical life is at the core of the chapter.

One purpose of the allegory of the gourd-vine arbour in *Der Butt* is to depict the wish for a place of rest and pleasure. We have seen that this retreat is a place of art. The gourd-vine arbour is, like the eel-trap, an image which creates a detachment from the narrowness of practical life.<sup>63</sup> The artist uses it to distance himself from the world. This distance, however, is not so much an immediate result of the creation but of the experience of art (the writer can change between these two attitudes to his work). The vision of this allegorical place triggers off a reflection which leads to an understanding of vanity in its general timeless form. By creating this detachment the emblems in the novel counterbalance the melancholic tendency. Thus the experience of art can lead to moments of inner tranquillity, the Stoic ideal which is an inherent theme of Grass's writings since *örtlich betäubt*.

However, there is also a danger in this detachment. Edward Bullough has shown that it is in the nature of aesthetic experience that the practical self is, for the moment, absorbed by it:

<sup>61</sup> Forster, 'Meditation in a Garden', p. 33. Ilsebill complains about the arbour as 'Deine Scheißdylle!' (v. 110) emphasizing the idealized character of the place. Her threat 'Eher treib ich das ab, und zwar in London, eh ich mich von dir einranken lasse' (v. 111) shows that she has the power to thwart his hopes. The fact that the narrator dreams of playing with his son in the arbour, but in the end gets — as always in the novel — a daughter proves that the arbour is a delusion.

<sup>62</sup> Forster, 'Meditation in a Garden', p. 25. (Quotations are from the English translation of *De Constantia* by Sir John Stradling (1594), edited by Rudolf Kirk and Clayton Morris Hall (New Brunswick, N.J., 1939), pp. 133-36.)

<sup>63</sup> For the detachment see Bullough on 'Psychical Distance', *passim*.

The aesthetic experience...has its centre of gravity in itself or in the object mediating it, not in the self which has been distanced out of the field of the inner vision of the experiencer: 'not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end.' It is for this reason that to be asked in the midst of an intense aesthetic impression 'whether one likes it,' is like a somnambulist being called by name: it is a recall to one's concrete self, an awakening of practical consciousness which throws the whole aesthetic mechanism out of gear. (pp. 108f.)

This implies that we cannot simultaneously be aware of our self in relation to the practical ends of our lives and be in the midst of an aesthetic experience. In the 'field of inner vision' the practical self is eclipsed by aesthetic experience. If it is 'recalled' our perspective shifts back from the aesthetic to the practical. This ambiguity of the experience of art is at the core of the allegory. If used in the right way it can be a source of recreation leading to a firmer stance in practical life. It is precisely the kind of opening up of *occasio* in the narrow deterministic condition of life we encountered earlier. If, however, the aesthetic experience is used by the self as a means of escaping the pressures of reality and the short *occasio* is turned into a permanent perspective it can lead to a serious deformation of the relationship of the self to the world, quite similar to the deformations caused by permanent somnambulism.

If it is used in the right way the gourd-vine arbour offers more independence than any 'practical' dish-washer or exotic journeys which stand for futile attempts to escape ordinary life. Ilsebill's urge to travel seems to lead nowhere; it is a mere chimera as the absurd circular structure of her plans reveals: 'Reisen willst du....In London Paris interessante Leute treffen, die in Milano und San Francisco interessante Leute getroffen haben' (v. 111). One is reminded of the ironic remarks in *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* about Utopia who is, as Grass put it, the sister of melancholy: 'Ihre Schwester heißt Utopia, ein leichtgläubiges Mädchen: immer auf Reisen' (iv. 378). The arbour, by contrast, is a place 'zum...Nichtreisenmüssen' (v. 109); it is an ideal place because there is plenty of food but no 'Abwaschproblem' (v. 110). The contrast between urban and rural life — a central theme of baroque literature — is also touched on: Ilsebill complains that she does not want to be treated as a 'Landei'; she insists on travel and a 'städtische Zweitwohnung' (v. 111). Ideal rural surroundings are a typical element in allegorical visions.

Two further special qualities make the arbour a place of shelter. It is a place where stories about Aua, Wigga and Mestwina who sat with the narrator in similar arbours are told. The arbour is a place for literature. The real world is banned from the arbour to somewhere 'outside'. The telling of stories about the

past is one way of escaping the present of which the narrator is so tired. Inside the arbour the past casts shadows.

Another feature of the shadowy spot is that it is 'biblisch abgesichert' (v. 109), it is vindicated by biblical tradition. However, this reference to the Bible is further evidence of the ambiguity of the gourd-vine arbour. The prophet Jonah preaches to the sinful city of Nineveh that it will perish. Jonah is upset when God does not punish the repentant inhabitants. He leaves the city, builds a booth and God makes a gourd grow over it in order to give him shelter. On the next day God sends a worm which bites the gourd so that it fades. Jonah complains about this loss, but God tells him:

Dich jamert des Kürbis / daran du nicht geerbeitet hast / hast jn auch nicht auff  
gezogen / welcher jnn einer nacht ward / vnd jnn einer nacht verdarb / Vnd mich solt  
nicht jamern Nineue solcher grossen Stad / Jnn welcher sind mehr denn hundert vnd  
zwenzig tausent Menschen / die nicht wissen vnterscheid / was recht oder linck ist.<sup>64</sup>

It is important to see the contrast between the sinful crowd in Nineveh and the solitary booth of the upright prophet. The gourd-vine arbour is a place which is not contaminated with the evils of the world; it creates space for morality. However, the example of Jonah demonstrates that even an upright man cannot claim to live in such an exclusive place because he is also part of a fallen world and depends on mercy. We have seen already that the motif of the gourd-vine arbour is employed in *Die Blechtrommel* to show Oskar Matzerath is by no means a righteous outsider of society. (The Christian metaphors for life as *curriculum* and as a *peregrinatio christiana* are also opposed to a stationary life in an arbour.)

The theme of irresponsibility and flight is expressly mentioned in the novel. Ilsebill accuses the narrator of escaping present reality by telling stories: 'Deine barocken Ausflüchte' (v. 110), she complains and asks him 'bist wohl müde?' 'Ja, Ilsebill. Ein bißchen schon. Gegenwartsmüde', he admits (v. 111). At the very beginning of the novel, he already escapes the present. 'Ich lief, die Zeit treppab, davon', the narrator says, while she demands a dish-washer. Instead of answering her demands, he starts telling stories about Aua's three breasts (v. 7). This is of great importance because it shows the way in which the flashbacks are linked with the framework plot. A decisive motive for the narrator to tell stories is to escape the present time and Ilsebill's demands. His narrations are largely

<sup>64</sup> Jonah 4. 10-11, quoted from Luther's translation of the Bible of 1534: *Biblia / das ist / die ganze Heilige Schrift Deudsch*, reprint (Leipzig, 1983).

feeble excuses and evasions — a fact which must add to the reader's suspicion. The gourd-vine arbour allegorizes the narration of the whole novel as an — unsuccessful — flight.

Thus the two main chapters in *Der Butt* which deal with baroque literature — 'Von der Last böser Zeit' and 'Ach Ilsebill' — depict the opposition between the extremes of total commitment to practical life and flight from reality. While it can be said that Opitz represents the danger of being lost in politics, the gourd-vine arbour allegorizes the danger of getting lost in art and fiction. This should be seen against the background of a more fundamental dilemma emerging in the seventeenth century, the split between the public and the private sphere. It is in the early modern period that this fateful separation whose consequences can be felt to the present day took place.<sup>65</sup>

(iv) *Some elements of baroque style*

Before we follow Grass's use of baroque literature further to *Das Treffen in Telgte* it should be noted that some elements of style (and related subject-matter) in *Der Butt* have a great affinity with baroque literature. The following examples — 'Greuelschwulst', Grobianism, spiritual petrarchism — are of interest because they are very extreme forms of style, and form a characteristic link between Grass and baroque literature.

An important aspect of cookery in *Der Butt* is that it is bound up with the theme of digestion and excretion. This too is a recurrent topic in Grass's works. The close connection between the consumption and digestion of food is typical of Grobianism, a literary fashion current in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The literature of Grobianism developed from the medieval 'Tischzucht'; it aimed at teaching manners through negative examples. The greed, sloth and rudeness of the glutton were pilloried in a burlesque way. The coarse aspects of this subject-matter were particularly emphasized. The abbot Jeschke in *Der Butt* is a representative of this type of glutton:

Was der Mann alles in sich hineinfräß. Wie sein Kauwerk in Betrieb gehalten werden mußte. Warum er nichts übriglassen konnte. Wer alles hungern mußte, damit es ihm satt auftsieß. Endlich, im Sommer 1584, hatte sie [Gret] den Abt Kaspar Jeschke zu Tode gemästet. Er starb bei Tisch. Das heißt: sein feister Mönchskopf...fiel in...gepfefferte Kuttelfleck'. (v. 246)

<sup>65</sup> See Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (Neuwied, 1962).

The corresponding sphere of the latrine which is elaborated endlessly in Grobianism is no less present in *Der Butt*. There are whole chapters which deal with 'Den Kot beschauen' (v. 276-80) and the 'Arsch der dicken Gret' (v. 238-47); there are poems entitled 'Kot gereimt' (v. 328) or 'Leer und alleine' (v. 280f.), and many passages on uncouth behaviour (such as v. 562), to name but a few examples. Similar motifs can be found in *Das Treffen in Telgte*, such as Courasche's 'Afterwind' (vi. 40), a passage which shows that Grimmelshausen is one of the mediators of Grobianism to later ages.<sup>66</sup> Here is a sample of a Grobianism in *Der Butt*:

Die kochende Nonne [Margarete Rusch] glaubte an die befreiende Kraft des Furzes. Das Wort Nonnenfurz leitet sich von ihrem unbekümmerten Mut her, die Darmwinde streichen zu lassen. Ob sie für Freund oder Feind kochte: inmitten Tischgebrabbls, zumeist einen Punkt setzend oder einer Frage als Antwort nachgestellt, aber auch als Einlage in lustiger Folge ließ sie ihre Fürze fahren. Nachgrollende Gewitter. Feierlich abgemessene Böllerschüsse. Trockene Salven. Oder in ihr Gelächter gemischt, weil die Natur ihrem heiteren Gemüt zwiefachen, doppeimündigen Ausdruck gegeben hatte: wie dazumal, als sie König Bathory den Stadtschlüssel der belagerten Stadt als Füllung im Schafskopf, der einen Schweinekopf füllte, übergab, worauf sie des Königs verdutzte Würde dergestalt zum Lachen und Furzen brachte, daß die polnische Majestät samt Gefolge mitgerissen, wie im Gelächter verrührt und von ihren Afterwinden besänftigt wurde. Da bliebe dem König nichts anderes übrig, als der Stadt milde Bedingungen zu diktieren und auch den Frevel der kochenden Nonne nachzusehen. (v. 245f.)<sup>67</sup>

The combination of eating and this particular kind of uncouth behaviour is typical of Grobianism. An example of this is the escalation of boorish behaviour during the wedding meal in Heinrich Wittenwiler's *Ring*.<sup>68</sup> (In the analysis of the 'Schauessen' we have seen that the type of catastrophic meal in Grass's works is reminiscent of the wedding feast in Wittenwiler's *Ring*.<sup>69</sup> Grobianism is bound to occur in the description of this type of feast.)

<sup>66</sup> Compare Grimmelshausen's *Courasche* in *Das Zeitalter des Barock*, p. 1139.

<sup>67</sup> The 'Schafskopf, der einen Schweinekopf füllte' is a further example of allegorical 'Schauessen' in *Der Butt*.

<sup>68</sup> In this novel a character called 'Fro Hüdeln' pursues the same activities as the fat Gret; see Heinrich Wittenwiler's *Ring*, edited by Edmund Wiessner, Deutsche Literatur, Reihe Realistik des Mittelalters, 6 vols, III (Leipzig, 1931), lines 6140-54. Edmund Wiessner's *Kommentar zu Heinrich Wittenwilers Ring*. Deutsche Literatur, Reihe Realistik des Mittelalters (Leipzig, 1936), pp. 218f. refers to various 'Tischzuchtregeln' on this matter, e.g.: 'Ob dem tisch fült etlicher sein sak, das dar ein nimer mag: er ist ain lap in meinen sinnen, im möcht wol etwas...entrinnen niden oder oben vnd das mag niemant geloben.'

<sup>69</sup> There is a short passage on a wedding feast in *Der Butt* which follows the pattern of Wittenwiler's *Ring*: The guests provoke each other, a girl is (sexually) insulted, a fight breaks out and finally the crowd disperses: 'Reizwörter flogen von Tisch zu Tisch. Und gleich nach der Prügelei, die von einem Deutschritter ausgelöst wurde, der dem geputzten Töchterchen des Patriziers Schönbart einen Gartenrettich roh in den Schoß geworfen hatte, lief die Hochzeitsgesellschaft auseinander' (v. 153).

This aspect of Grass's writings is of interest because Grobianism also forms an important element in baroque style.<sup>70</sup> Even though it was mainly current in sixteenth-century literature it was consciously employed by writers such as Johann Balthasar Schupp, Johann Michael Moscherosch and Jesaias Rompler von Löwenhalt who regarded the deceitful rhetorical style as un-German and therefore preferred the straightforward crudeness of Dedekind, Brant or Murner.

Generally speaking Grobianism stands for any literary style that indulges in the crude and coarse (of which Heinrich Wittenwiler's *Ring* and Rabelais's *Gargantua* are prime examples). In this broad sense one can speak of a strand of Grobianism in Grass's works. However, contrary to stereotypes current in newspaper reviews, the coarse is not the prevailing mode of writing; it is only one of a variety of styles Grass masters to perfection. Furthermore, it can be said that in Grass's works Grobianism usually surfaces at points in the novels where it has a specific function. It is not by accident that in *Der Butt* Grobianism particularly pervades the third and fourth month which deal with the late Middle Ages and early modern times — periods in which Grobianism actually flourished: 'Den Kot beschauen' and 'Leer und alleine' precede the baroque chapter 'Von der Last böser Zeit'; and the chapter on fat Gret, the personification of Grobianism in the novel, is set in the Reformation. To some degree these passages reflect the spirit of the times these parts of the novel deal with. This is clear evidence of Grass's awareness of different styles in different historical periods. In the burlesque chapter on the nun Gret Grass refers to Rabelais's *Gargantua*, the French masterpiece of Grobianism. The turbot says: 'Ach hätte er [Rabelais] sie gekannt! Ich bin gewiß, daß ihm zum Gargantua ein genauso gewichtiges Gegenstück in Gestalt unserer dicken Gret eingefallen und zum platzvollen Buch geraten wäre. Denn uns fehlen weibliche Literaturpersonen in komischer Hauptrolle' (v. 255).<sup>71</sup>

Manfred Windfuhr (p. 324) has mentioned briefly that 'Greuelschwulst', one of the most extreme styles of the baroque, can be found in modern writers such as Gottfried Benn and Günter Grass. Among the many shocking passages in *Der Butt* there is a precise account of the Caesarian section at the end of the novel

<sup>70</sup> Compare the chapter on 'Rhetorischer Grobianismus' in Windfuhr, pp. 293-308. Windfuhr points out that Grobianism surfaced again in the period of Storm and Stress and in contemporary literature; consequently he raises the question whether it is 'eine deutsche Konstante'. Windfuhr also states that the Grobianic style can be found in Grass's works: 'Auch die moderne Grotteske Dürrenmatts und Grass' arbeitet mit groben Elementen' (p. 293).

<sup>71</sup> Grass also frequently mentions Rabelais in interviews and essays when he speaks about his literary precursors (see ix. 319, 629; x. 33, 158).

which is particularly interesting because it demonstrates Grass's close relation to Expressionism and baroque literature:

Wo er sich über der rasierten Scham wölbte, schnitt der Arzt quer in Ilsebills Leib durch die Haut, den Fettmantel, das Muskelgewebe und Bauchfell, was Ilsebill, deren Kopf weitweg abgeschirmt lag, nicht sah. Ich sah das, weil Väter das sehen sollen, wie im klaffenden Leib die Gebärmutter griffig liegt und mit dem Skalpell geöffnet wird. Damit sie leer lief, ritzte der Arzt die Fruchtwasserblase. Wäbriges Blut. Saugfähige Tücher in die Hohlräume gestopft. Venen abgeklemmt. Dann griff er in seinen Handschuhen zu, und schon kam unsere Tochter ärschlings auf die Welt und zeigte — Halleluja! — ihr Semmelchen... 'Und das, sehen Sie', sagte der Arzt durch den Mundschutz zu meiner Unterrichtung, 'ist der Eileiter...' (Außerdem sah ich noch, wie gelb, ähnlich Hühnerfett, Ilsebills Bauchfett ist. Ich hätte mir damit, weil ein Stück abfiel, zwei Spiegeleier braten können)... Als Ilsebills Gebärmutter, die sich gleich wieder zusammenzog, und ihr Bauch wieder zugenäht waren und gleichzeitig auf einem Nebentisch die Schneide-, Klammer und Tupfinstrumente und Saugtücher gezählt wurden, fehlte eine Metallklammer, so daß man die Nähte wieder auftrennen, die Bauchhöhle durchsuchen wollte; doch fand sich die Klammer glücklich im Eimer für die Nachgeburt, wo sie nicht hingehörte. (v. 631f.)

The directness and naturalism of the language in this quotation goes beyond the declared aim (and rhetorical vindication) of the passage: 'weil Väter das sehen sollten'. The mode of description has a tendency towards indulging in the shocking for its own sake. Such descriptions of operations, anatomy and medical treatment were elaborated in twentieth-century German literature, particularly by such writers as Gottfried Benn and Alfred Döblin, both of whom were doctors. Here it becomes obvious that Expressionism forms a link between Grass and baroque literature. However, it was during the baroque period that poets started employing anatomy as a source for literary images. In earlier ages vivisection and autopsy were regarded as examples of man's sinful curiosity to see what nature was hiding from him (this is why a figure like Doktor Faustus was notorious for his secret manipulation of nature). At the beginning of the seventeenth century anatomy was still a highly suspicious subject. Only progressive universities such as Leyden dared to have an anatomical theatre and it was there that the young Andreas Gryphius learned the technique of dissection which he later practised in Breslau. Gryphius made excessive use of his anatomical observations in his *Kirchhofsgedanken* (1657).

Numerous further examples could be found such as the pitiless chapter on rotten Calcutta: 'diese bröckelnde, schorfige, wimmelnde, ihren eigenen Kot fressende Stadt...' (v. 212); the rape and murder of Billy in the chapter

‘Vatertag’: ‘War das noch ein Mensch...’ (v. 581);<sup>72</sup> and the portrayal of the ugly Aua: ‘Es hing ihr der Arsch in die Knie...’ (v. 605).<sup>73</sup> ‘Greuelschwulst’ and Grobianism are stylistic extremes which can be found in most of Grass’s writings. However, the language of the later works is predominantly detached and ironic. Overall Grass’s style tends towards comprehensiveness rather than self-indulgent use of the shocking.

Further evidence of the complexity of style can be found in the juxtaposition of the holy and the crude in Grass’s adaptation of ‘Jesusminne’ and spiritual petrarchism. In order to throw some light on these features of style we have to go back even further in time to the medieval character of Dorothea von Montau.<sup>74</sup> Dorothea’s love for her ‘himmlischer Bräutigam’ Jesus (v. 157), which oscillates between ‘Fleischeslust und Seelenfeier’ (v. 182), stands in the tradition of medieval ‘Jesusminne’. Dorothea’s verses in *Der Butt* closely adhere to the conventions of medieval mysticism; ‘saitenspiel’ (v. 154), kiss (v. 158), ‘Kusen’ (ibid.), embers (v. 182), darkness (ibid.), ‘grunt’ (ibid.) are stock motifs of mystical language.<sup>75</sup> These verses are modelled on the historical Dorothea’s writings, and focus particularly upon images with sexual connotations (such as the image of the spear; ibid.). The closeness of Dorothea’s verses to the Christian mysticism of the nun Hrosvita von Gandersheim and Mechthild von Magdeburg is highlighted in the text (v. 183). Dorothea’s writings merge spiritual veneration with sexual imagery, a blend which also surfaces in different forms in Grass’s works. It sometimes reaches a point at which piousness seems to lapse into blasphemy. However, the way the Middle Ages dealt with this subject was no less daring.<sup>76</sup> Dorothea’s favourite rhyme of ‘jesuherz’ with the oxymoron ‘wunnesmerz’ (v. 167) suggests a kinship of this mystical language with later spiritual petrarchism which was particularly prominent in the baroque age. For medieval mysticism and spiritual petrarchism share the paradox of pain

<sup>72</sup> The rape motif, which also frequently occurs in courtly-historical novels, is referred to throughout the novel. Sibylle is raped by some Russians; Agnes Kurbiella is traumatized when she is assaulted by Swedish soldiers — obviously an allusion to Grimmelshausen’s *Simplicissimus*.

<sup>73</sup> Compare the chapter ‘Häßlichkeitsbeschreibungen’, in Windfuhr, pp. 290-93.

<sup>74</sup> For the historical background to this character see Timothy McFarland, ‘The Transformation of Historical Material: The Case of Dorothea von Montau’, in *Günter Grass’s ‘Der Butt’*. *Sexual Politics and the Male Myth of History*, pp. 69-96.

<sup>75</sup> For these images see Grete Lüers, *Die Sprache der deutschen Mystik des Mittelalters im Werke der Mechthild von Magdeburg* (Darmstadt, 1966), ‘musike’ pp. 229-32, ‘kuss’ pp. 211-13, ‘kösen’ p. 208, ‘brennen’ pp. 150f., ‘dunsternis’ pp. 170-74, ‘grunt’ pp. 188-90.

<sup>76</sup> Lüers, p. 161: Mechthild ‘wagt sogar, den traditionellen Vorstellungen des conubium in starker Kühnheit solche hinzuzufügen, die das Verhältnis von Gott und der Seele als sexuellen Akt darstellen.’

which is bound up with joy. This paradoxical emotion is caused by a languishing for the presence of the beloved person. The lover's approval of this bitter-sweet pain is part of the convention.

However, self-inflicted pain can have a more specific meaning when it aims at an imitation of Jesus's sufferings. This can be illustrated by one of Grass's very first published pieces of prose, entitled *Meine grüne Wiese* (1955). This piece has a surreal slant reminiscent of a medieval mystical vision. The story which is set in Spain comprises a passage on a young girl named Pepita:

'Mein Gott, jetzt geht das Kind über den Platz!' So rief ich damals. 'Pepita, Pepita!' Welch ein leichtgezeichnetes Kind. Es drehte sich vorsichtig um, winkte mir freundlich...bückte sich dann, hob eines dieser scherenbehafteten Tiere [i.e. crabs] und sprach dann, eigentlich nur zu mir, in etwas belehrendem Ton: 'Siehst du, das ist Jesus Christus, der sein Blut für uns gab.' Dann öffnete das Kind sein weißes Kleid und führte das schrecklich bewaffnete Tier an seine noch sehr kleine Brust. 'Pepita', rief ich, 'deine Eltern werden fortan in Kummer leben müssen.' Vergeblich, sofort färbte der Stoff, Pepitas Kleid sich rot und immer dunkler, das Kind lächelte etwas altklug und verging vor meinen verlegenen Augen. (i. 284)

The child knowingly ('altklug') yearns for the pain she suffers. The smile expresses the joy of the wounded lover, a common motif in petrarchism. In his outline of 'Geistlicher Petrarkismus' in baroque literature Manfred Windfuhr has pointed out (p. 231) that such references to Jesus's chest are related to the 'Wundenkult'. The young girl inflicts on herself the chest-wounds Jesus suffered. A prime example of 'Wundenkult' in baroque literature is Angelus Silesius's poem 'Die Psyche begehrt ein Bienenlein auff den Wunden JESU zu seyn'. Here are the first two stanzas of the poem:

I.  
 Du grüner Zweig / du edler Reiß /  
 Du Honig-reiche Blüte /  
 Du auffgethanes Paradeiß  
 Gezweig mir eine Bithe;  
 Laß meine Seel ein Bienenlein  
 Auff deinen Rosen-Wunden seyn.

2.  
 Jch sehne mich nach jhrem Safft /  
 Jch suche sie mit Schmerzen;  
 Weil sie ertheilen Stärk' und Krafft

Den abgematten Herten:  
 Drumb laß mich doch ein Bienelein  
 Auff deinen Rosen-Wunden seyn.<sup>77</sup>

The essence of these stanzas is similar to the ‘Wundenkult’ of Pepita. In spite of the allegorical disguise of the psyche as bee the purpose of both texts is the same: they aim at putting the self in the position of the suffering Jesus. This helps us to understand the obscure image of ‘prüstlin laidvertreib’ Dorothea uses (v. 183); Jesus’s wounded chest can foil all calamities. The simile of the psyche which seeks Jesus’s blood like a bee seeks nectar is used in precisely this sense by Dorothea: ‘Den gesammelten Eiter der Bresthaften aus dem Leichnamsspital nannte sie “herzjesu honigsaim”, wozu ihr des Himmels “immelain” einfielen’ (v. 183). ‘Immelain’ is the diminutive form of ‘Imme’, a bee. The sweetness of honey, and the attribute ‘süß’ which is applied to Jesus (v. 158) once again take up the theme of flavour. (This sweetness is, of course, a biblical motif; see Psalm 34. 9: ‘Gustate, et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus’.)

Spiritual petrarchism, though, is not confined to the veneration of Jesus, for there is also a corresponding form in the veneration of the Virgin Mary. Many of Grass’s characters, such as Mahlke (see iii. 36) or Matern (see iii. 742), seek an imaginary relationship with the Virgin Mary. The same is true of the poet Scheffler in *Das Treffen in Telgte*, who is quoted above as Angelus Silesius (see vii. 48).

Grass also sometimes uses the word ‘Gespons’ which means heavenly bridegroom. It is frequently attributed to Jesus in Friedrich von Spee’s works, another important representative of spiritual petrarchism. The word, for instance, occurs in the dialogue between the narrator and the rat in *Die Rätin*: ‘Alles mögliche, dein Gespons, dein Narr, dein himmlischer Bräutigam möchte ich sein’ (vii. 435). These few examples may have demonstrated that spiritual petrarchism, although it never develops into a dominant theme, can be found throughout Grass’s writings. The use of spiritual petrarchism is further evidence of the specific affinity of Grass’s writings to baroque literature.

<sup>77</sup> Quoted from Louise Gnädinger, ‘Rosenwunden: Des Angelus Silesius “Die Psyche begehrt ein Bienelein auff den Wunden Jesu zu seyn”’, in *Deutsche Barocklyrik: Gedichtinterpretationen von Spee bis Haller*, edited by Martin Bircher and Alois M. Haas (Bern and Munich, 1973), pp. 97-133 (p. 97).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE USE OF BAROQUE LITERATURE IN *DAS TREFFEN IN TELGTE*

#### (i) *The choice of the baroque context*

The most significant use of baroque literature in Grass's works occurs in *Das Treffen in Telgte*. It therefore deserves our closest attention. In this context, it is worth noting that Grass came to write the novel because of a particular event: the seventieth birthday of the head of the former 'Gruppe 47', Hans Werner Richter, — an event which inspired Grass to sketch a meeting of baroque poets. Richter's birthday was celebrated in 1978 in an old tavern in Saulgau, in which the members of the group gathered to read short literary presents which they had written for Richter. These birthday presents — among them the first chapter of *Das Treffen in Telgte* — were published in the book *Hans Werner Richter und die Gruppe 47*. Grass wrote the following dedication to Richter:

Mein Lieber Hans Werner,

anfangs war es nur eine kleine Sonntagsidee, Dir zum 70. Geburtstag ein Gruppentreffen im Jahr 1647 zu skizzieren, doch dann wuchs sich die Idee zu der Erzählung *Das Treffen in Telgte* aus, an der ich nun ein gutes halbes Jahr lang sitze; und immer noch nicht bin ich am Ende. Es macht mir Schreibspaß, Dich und uns alle, einen verquerten barocken Haufen, während drei Tagen zwischen Münster und Osnabrück zu versammeln. So lange ist das gar nicht her: nur dreihundert Jahre — von 1947 zurückgezählt. Außerdem wüßte ich für Dich kein besseres Geschenk; denn Du hast uns damals, als der Dreißigjährige Krieg schleppend zu Ende ging, zusammengerufen. Wenn Du willst, lese ich Dir (und uns) ein Stück draus vor, wenn wir uns in Saulgau treffen, um Dich zu feiern. Dein Freund Günter.<sup>1</sup>

According to this dedication the novel was initially planned as a small sketch similar to the many other short pieces in the collection. If this statement by the author can be trusted — and there seems to be no reason to doubt it — there must have been a strong tension inherent in the fictitious meeting of baroque poets which led to the subsequent growth of the text. This is quite surprising because the subject of a poets' meeting does not allow for much action; one

<sup>1</sup> *Hans Werner Richter und die Gruppe 47*, edited by Hans A. Neunzig (Munich, 1979), p. 199.

would rather expect tedious readings and discourses. And yet tension and restlessness dominate *Das Treffen in Telgte*.

The genre of *Das Treffen in Telgte* is that of an occasional work. However, unlike Goethe's occasional poetry, for example, the text is not based on a particular, individual experience. Rather, it is written for a certain event which is characteristic of occasional poetry of the baroque age. Opitz's and Scaliger's theoretical vindication of occasional poetry made it a highly respected genre during the seventeenth century, while in later periods it was looked down upon. It is noteworthy that the occasional poetry of the baroque was usually related to a datable event which determined its subject. This also applies to *Das Treffen in Telgte*, written for the birthday party at Saulgau. Baroque birthday poetry often played with allusions to the name (anagrams were particularly popular).<sup>2</sup> The genre of the birthday speech has its roots in traditional rhetoric, and the conventional way in which baroque poets dealt with names, mythological allusions and the biographies of those whom they lauded makes it clear that they had certain stereotypes to hand when they wrote this occasional literature. It is also clear that *Das Treffen in Telgte* aims, at least indirectly, at praising the figure of Richter and that Grass uses certain stylistic devices so as to achieve this aim. In this sense the novel can be regarded as a rhetorical birthday poem.

The subject and mode of writing of *Das Treffen in Telgte* evolve from *Der Butt*. The topic of a poets' meeting goes back to the chapter 'Von der Last böser Zeit' and is also touched on in the chapter 'Ach Ilsebill'. The gourd-vine arbour depicts the tension between a 'literary' place of refuge and political reality — a theme Grass takes up again in *Das Treffen in Telgte*. The small island in the Pregel where the Königsberg poets gathered in their arbour provided the model for the 'Emshagen', the island on the river Ems where the poets meet at Telgte. This place also becomes a literary refuge from harsh reality. Sometimes the arbour itself is alluded to. The musketeers, for instance, erect a canopy in the court and decorate its stakes with garlands (vi. 82f.). Another feature *Das Treffen in Telgte* shares with *Der Butt* is the disputatious character of the text; discussions pervade the tribunal of feminists as much as the poets' meeting at Telgte. The disputations in Telgte, which are political as well as literary, take place between the readings. These readings take the form of poetical contests.

<sup>2</sup> In *Das Treffen in Telgte* Grass plays with the speaking names Dach and Richter: 'Wollen wir nun, liebwerte Freunde, in meinem Namen — denn ich habe euch eingeladen — wie unter einem Dache beisammen sein' (vi. 21, see also vi. 109). Grass also alludes to Richter when Paul Gerhardt prays: 'Es möge die Versammlung in allem seine, des höchsten Richters Herrlichkeit preisen' (vi. 51).

The plot of *Das Treffen in Telgte* is also partly anticipated in the chapter 'Die andere Wahrheit' in *Der Butt*. It deals with a meeting of the poets and scholars Achim von Arnim, Bettina and Clemens Brentano, Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, and the painter Philipp Otto Runge in the remote Oliva forester's lodge which is detached from political life. They sleep in the attic and discuss in the kitchen how folk literature ought to be edited. They deal, for example, with the question of whether folk literature's crude style should be preserved or whether it should be elevated to a higher stylistic level by the editor. (Similarly, in *Das Treffen in Telgte* the poets frequently quarrel about dialect and High German literature.) After two conflicting versions of the tale of the fisherman and his wife are read the poets start an argument about which one ought to be published. When the greedy fisherman is compared to Napoleon the dispute suddenly becomes openly patriotic. As in *Telgte*, it is not only patriotism which stirs up the poets' emotions; Brentano, for instance, is suddenly overwhelmed by deeply felt piety: 'Brentano wurde schon bald (als wollte er seine spätere Konversion zum Katholizismus üben) von einem Gefühl tiefer und hoher, umfassender und enggeführter Frömmigkeit überwältigt' (v. 414f.) — the parallels to the character Scheffler who is attracted by the Madonna in *Telgte* are striking. After the poets have gathered mushrooms in the forest they have a peaceful meal until someone mentions the tale of the fisherman and his wife and the row over the two versions seems to start again. Like the crucial thistle scene in *Telgte* this dispute is resolved when the poets are suddenly confronted with the impressive image of the moon: 'Da hätte bald wieder Streit um den langen Tisch seine Ursache gehabt, wenn nicht der zarte Wilhelm plötzlich "Der Mond!" gesagt hätte: "Schaut den Mond!"' (v. 417). At the end of the chapter one version of the tale is burned. The remote setting, the poetical disputes, the emotional patriotism and piousness, the peaceful meal, the overwhelming impact of an image, and the burning of a manuscript show how closely *Das Treffen in Telgte* is related to this chapter of *Der Butt*.

None the less, despite the strong impact of *Der Butt* on the later novel the similarities between the two works are limited. Only single chapters of *Der Butt* are related to *Das Treffen in Telgte*; on the whole the contrasts between the novels outnumber the parallels. *Der Butt* disintegrates into many episodes set in the past, whereas *Das Treffen in Telgte* has only one continuous thread of action. The complex narrator of *Der Butt* who is present right through the centuries differs considerably from the narrator of *Das Treffen in Telgte* who mingles with baroque poets only on one time level.

The two novels follow opposing stylistic principles. The style of *Das Treffen in Telgte* is most concentrated, it follows the ideal of *brevitas*, whereas *Der Butt* tends towards inflation and digression. The differences between the two novels can thus be described in the rhetorical terms of *amplificatio* and *abbreviatio*.<sup>3</sup> At first sight it may seem strange that the principle of *brevitas* should pervade *Das Treffen in Telgte*; for the novel deals with baroque language which is rich in flourishing *ornatus* and circumlocution. However, the narrative proceeds rapidly, rarely comes to a standstill and even when it does such passages are not meaningless digressions. On the contrary, passages which appear to be baroque circumlocutions turn out to be even more fraught with meaning than the obviously compressed parts of the text. The more one grasps of the underlying levels of sense the more it becomes apparent how condensed even the evasive passages are.

The idea of painting a portrait of the 'Gruppe 47' in the guise of some baroque poets is related to the concept of history in the novel. The parallels between the poets' meetings in 1947 and the fictitious gathering of baroque poets in 1647 are seen as more than pure coincidence. In *Das Treffen in Telgte* the devastated country, a contaminated language and the poets' attempts to find the lost identity of the nation seem to be necessary replays of history. The beginning of *Das Treffen in Telgte* makes this clear: 'Gestern wird sein, was morgen gewesen ist. Unsere Geschichten von heute müssen sich nicht jetzt zugetragen haben. Diese fing vor mehr als dreihundert Jahren an. Andere Geschichten auch. So lang rührt jede Geschichte her, die in Deutschland handelt' (vi. 6). This concept of history can be traced back to the early writings of Grass. These lines are from the poem 'Ja' (1967):

Übermorgen ist schon gewesen.  
 Heute war wedernoch.  
 Was auf mich zukommt,  
 eingleisig,  
 liegt weiter zurück als Austerlitz. (i. 145)

This idea of history as recurrence makes it possible to exchange yesterday and tomorrow — even in a grammatical sense. The statement that what happened yesterday will happen tomorrow can therefore also be put the other way around: 'Gestern wird sein, was morgen gewesen ist.' Looking back at history all events seem to move away from the present, but they also approach the present from

<sup>3</sup> For these terms see Curtius, pp. 479-85.

the future. The horizon of the past amalgamates with the horizon of the future and in the present tense, the 'Vergegenkunft', all extensions of time culminate. Grass coined the word 'Vergegenkunft' in *Kopfgeburten oder die Deutschen sterben aus*: 'Wir haben das so in der Schule gelernt: nach der Vergangenheit kommt die Gegenwart, der die Zukunft folgt. Mir aber ist eine vierte Zeit, die Vergegenkunft geläufig' (vi. 233). In no way can this cycle be evaded, and the narrator of the *Kopfgeburten* feels trapped in this succession of repetitions: 'Ich steige nicht aus. Versuche ich es, steige ich immer (scheinbar nur anderswo) hinterrücks in die alten Verträge ein. Meine abgetretenen Fluchstiefel. Oft muß ich Anlauf aus entlegenen Jahrhunderten nehmen, um wieder gegenwärtig zu sein. Es war einmal. Es ist einmal. Es wird einmal mehr gewesen sein' (vi. 249). It is as if the narrator of *Der Butt*, who escapes from the present through telling stories about the past, were speaking here. This concept of time is a key to the notion of 'Zeitweil' which allows the fleeing narrator of *Der Butt* to be present at different time levels simultaneously. The motif of unsuccessful flight which is highlighted in the quotation pervades many of Grass's writings. What is important for *Das Treffen in Telgte* is the fact that any specific distinctions between different ages seem to disappear. History and present can be changed about. This ahistorical perspective is bound up with the allegorical mode of writing about the 'Gruppe 47' in the guise of a poets' meeting of 1647. The poem 'Mein Schuh', published in *Ach Butt, dein Märchen geht böse aus* (1983), begins with the lines: 'Mit ihm zerstritten. | Lläuft gegenläufig davon. | Kommt flüchtig entgegen' (i. 224). Many decisive features of the novel *Der Butt* seem to be expressed in these three lines: the split persona of the narrator, the cyclical course of history, the vain flight, the melancholy of senseless repetition.

This concept of history is not derived from baroque literature, even though it partly coincides with ideas of poets such as Birken. What is more important in this context is that Grass is influenced by certain Existentialist ideas which he absorbed as a young man and which occur again in his later writings; this influence is acknowledged in an essay entitled *Literatur und Mythos*:

Nach dem Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges, als ich, ein junger unwissender Mann, dessen Neugierde grenzenlos war, wie viele meiner Generation..., dem Existentialismus und seinen Moden zulief, las ich zum erstenmal Camus' 'Mythos vom Sisyphos', ohne recht zu begreifen, was mich faszinierte. Heute, gebeutelt von Erfahrung und auch gezeichnet von der produktiven Vergeblichkeit des politischen Steinewälzens, ist mir Camus wieder nah. (ix. 794)

We have already briefly touched on Grass's adaptation of Camus's myth of Sisyphus in our remarks on Stoicism. The concept of history as an absurd

cyclical process occurs in Albert Camus's *L'Homme révolté* (1951) and *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (1942). The latter work depicts the emptiness of human endeavour in a world of senseless repetition.<sup>4</sup> And yet, in spite of the fatality of his situation, Sisyphus is 'supérieur à son destin. Il est plus fort que son rocher'.<sup>5</sup> 'La lutte elle-même vers les sommets suffit à remplir un coeur d'homme. Il faut imaginer Sisyphe heureux', writes Camus (p. 168). For Grass, too, the conscious affirmation to fate is the only way of living in an absurd world. In a previous chapter we have seen that this type of argument is Stoic.

Of course, a cyclical concept of history and its consequences for the conditions of human life were discussed by Nietzsche long before Camus and other Existentialist thinkers.<sup>6</sup> Nietzsche strove for an 'Experimental-Philosophie' which affirms the cyclical process ('sie will den ewigen Kreislauf') through an *amor fati*.<sup>7</sup> However, it is instructive to see the differences between Grass and Nietzsche: Grass's novels only suggest that certain historical constellations are bound to happen again, whereas Nietzsche states that the whole course of history infinitely recurs in exactly the same way. According to Nietzsche this fatalistic thought must terrify those who are weak and unhappy and only the strong 'Übermensch' can look forward to living through everything over and over again. In contrast to Nietzsche's deterministic theory, historical repetitions in Grass's novels allow for a critical insight into history. Thus, they have much more in common with Birken's understanding of history through examples and analogies than with Nietzsche's strict notion of eternal recurrence. It seems that recurrence in Grass's writings is part of a general strategy to develop a reader's acumen to recognize certain constellations in history. It is arguable that ultimately Grass's novels still work on the premiss that insight into history can help us to identify and maybe even prevent ill-fated historical situations. We have noticed already that opposing strands such as vanity and sensual *carpe diem* run through Grass's works. In a similar way the deterministic recurrence of history is one strand in Grass's writings which is counteracted by other motifs.

<sup>4</sup> For Camus's idea of history compare, for example, Lev Braun, *Witness of Decline: Albert Camus: Moralism of the Absurd* (Rutherford, Madison, Teaneck, 1974), pp. 141-48.

<sup>5</sup> Albert Camus, *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, fifty-third edition (Librairie Gallimard), p. 165.

<sup>6</sup> For parallels between Nietzsche and Camus see Bianca Rosenthal, *Die Idee des Absurden: Friedrich Nietzsche und Albert Camus* (Bonn, 1977). The eternal recurrence is discussed on pp. 5, 11, 23, 77.

<sup>7</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Aus dem Nachlaß der Achtzigerjahre*, in *Werke in drei Bänden*, edited by Karl Schlechta, (Munich, 1954-56), III, 834.

It may be true that Grass's notion of history is one of the main reasons why melancholy is such a dominant theme in his writings. But this dominant melancholy is offset by Utopian elements (Grass has discussed this polarity at length in 'Vom Stillstand im Fortschritt'). It will be seen that *Das Treffen in Telgte* is endangered by *acedia*, a melancholic paralysis caused by the poets' insight into the pointlessness of all action. This intellectual form of sloth is overcome by the use of experimental Utopian language.

The time and the setting of the meeting were carefully chosen by Grass, and both have an allegorical meaning. The reader is given a most precise description of the place and time of the poets' gathering. It lasts from 15 to 18 July 1647 and takes place on the Telgte 'Emshagen', a small island in the river Ems. Crossing the island is a road, which links Osnabrück and Münster, the two places in which the different denominations negotiate the peace of Westphalia. The tavern where the poets stay lies on this road on the 'Emshagen'. As the couriers between the two places of negotiation have to use this road, the latest news reaches Telgte quickly. Therefore the place of the meeting is highly political. On the other hand, the parallels with the 'Pregelinsel' show that it is an exclusive place of literature which is divorced from the 'real' world. Hence, the setting of the meeting is ambiguous: it is a place both of literature and of politics, of imagination and of harsh reality. However, the name of the Telgte tavern, 'Brückenhof' (like the name Dach), is a clear hint that it is a place in which gaps — such as that between art and politics — can be bridged. (By contrast, the name of the tavern in Oesede, 'Rappenhof', alludes to the military atmosphere of the place, which is not suitable for the poets' meeting.) It is important to see that the setting has an allegorical function because all its components, such as the bridge, the island and the tavern have a specific meaning.

It is characteristic that Grass's use of the baroque in *Der Butt* is related to the setting of Danzig. That place, however, would have been unsuitable for a sketch of a historically disguised meeting of the 'Gruppe 47'. Hence, Grass for once had to leave his favourite setting of Danzig. Telgte, by contrast, bears no such relation to the author; it is a location he has consciously chosen for its geographical significance. Thus the task of bringing this place and the gathering of baroque poets to life is difficult. Compared to Grass's Danzig, Telgte is allegorical rather than 'real'. It is in the nature of an occasional poem that the choice of the setting and characters is largely forced upon the author.

Like the separated threads of action in *Der Butt* which have to be linked by the reader's acumen, the setting of the 'Emshagen' has to be synthesized from many details which are scattered all over the novel. When the poets arrive, the setting is only briefly and vaguely mentioned. It is not until the sixth chapter that the 'Emshagen' is fully described: 'Jetzt sah man, daß, vorgelagert der Stadt, zwischen den Flußarmen eine Insel, der Emshagen, Ort ihrer Versammlung war' (vi. 36f.). Here Grass again uses the technique of separating things which belong together. The passages which describe the setting are both concise and distinct, in accordance with the stylistic *abbreviatio*.

The reader who fails to link together the separate details of the setting into a coherent picture will regard them as parts of an arbitrary and meaningless background. Jürgen P. Wallmann's review of *Das Treffen in Telgte* is a good example of the misconceptions which result from too casual a reading of the novel. He writes: 'Übrigens bleibt auch der lokale Hintergrund blaß, "Telgte, ein trauliches Städtchen" ist ein eher zufälliger Schauplatz, eine nach Bedarf hin- und hergeschobene Papp-Kulisse.'<sup>8</sup> Without the *ars combinatoria* the reader will not recognize how meaningful the background of the novel is. This can be generalized: below the surface of the text are levels of meaning which can only be understood through decoding the arcane allusions.

The time of the meeting can be established with the same precision as the place. During the first day of the meeting the exact date of 16 July (of the year 1647) is mentioned: 'Trautmannsdorff, des Kaisers Oberunterhändler, war plötzlich — man schrieb den 16. Juli — und zwar betont gutgelaunt, aus dem Stift Münster nach Wien abgereist, den Kongreß und dessen verhandelnde Parteien verstört zurücklassend' (vi. 37). This event is a historical fact.<sup>9</sup> The precise description of the place and time of the gathering creates the same illusion of authenticity as does the invention of a letter in *Der Butt*, which makes the meeting of Opitz and Gryphius appear to be a historical event. In *Das Treffen in Telgte* there is a similar fictitious letter from Opitz which serves the same end. Dach is encouraged to organize a meeting in a letter from Opitz: 'Ein treff allmöglicher Poeten, in Breslaw oder im Preußenland, sollt vnser sachen einig machen, derweil das Vaterland zerissen' (vi. 19). The effect of this

<sup>8</sup> Jürgen P. Wallmann, 'Günter Grass: *Das Treffen in Telgte*', *Neue deutsche Hefte*, 26 (1979), 367-71 (p. 370).

<sup>9</sup> See *Acta pacis westphalicae*, edited by Max Braubach and Konrad Repgen, Serie III, Abt. D., *Varia*, vol. 1, *Stadtmünsterische Akten und Vermischtes* (Münster, 1964), p. 198: 'Protokoll des Rates der Stadt Münster': 'Münster 1647 Juli 16...Als der adjutant Peter anzeigte, daß Ihre Hochgräfliche Excellenz von Trautmannsdorff, Kayserlicher primarius legatus, heut nachmittags hora tertia uffzubrechen und zu verreisen vorhabends, ist per Jörgen Wortman bottmeistern, anstatt gemacht, daß ein fahne der burgere zun ehren mit ihren gewehr praesent sein und zum respect auffwarten sollen.'

strategy is twofold; on the one hand it makes the related events appear authentic, but on the other hand the precision of the details enhances the fictitiousness of the narrative. There had been local meetings of baroque poets in places such as Königsberg, Nuremberg and Strasbourg to which the novel could refer vaguely, but in Telgte in July 1647 — this is obvious — no such meeting took place.

Another important aspect of the time of the meeting is, of course, the intended parallel with the postwar gatherings of the 'Gruppe 47'. In this sense *Das Treffen in Telgte* tells the story of the 'Gruppe 47' in disguise. A similar strategy is used by baroque authors, in particular in courtly-historical novels. In Lohenstein's *Arminius*, for instance, the struggle of the Germans against the Romans is an allegory for the antagonism between Habsburg and France.<sup>10</sup> What is characteristic, though, of both Grass and baroque literature is that this use of allegory is bound up with a certain philosophy of history which vindicates the allegorical parallelism through a concept of repetitive time.

In addition to the exact date of Trauttmansdorff's departure, which highlights the political dimension of the novel, there is another aspect to the time of the meeting which is easily overlooked. It takes place during a full moon. Again the reader has to make the link between different passages in which the moon is mentioned in order to realize the significance of this motif. At the evening of the poets' arrival the moon is waxing. Gelnhausen recommends they move to Telgte; 'Keine dreißig Meilen Wegs sei die Mühsal lang. Bei annähernd vollem Mond' (vi. 10). Gelnhausen mentions the moon in a context which is obviously astrological; he declares: 'Er müsse als Vetter des Mercurius, deshalb geschäftig wie dieser, ohnehin nach Münster, um im Auftrag seines Herrn, der als Obrist dem Mars im Geschirr stehe, geheime Nachricht dem Herrn Trauttmansdorff bringen, den als des Kaisers Oberunterhändler der säuerliche Saturn mit Weisheit gemästet habe, auf das endlich Frieden werde' (ibid.). Mercury, Mars and the sour Saturn are not primarily referred to as mythological figures but as planets which have an astrological impact upon the course of events. Gelnhausen is a 'Planetenkind' of Mercury, the patron of merchants, couriers and poets, but also of thieves. His affinity with Mercury enables him to be a mediating courier between the outer world and poetry (he also steals a meal for the poets). The other planets are also omens of the poets' meeting: Mars represents war and the sour Saturn melancholy (we have seen

<sup>10</sup> See Elida Maria Szarota, *Lohensteins Arminius als Zeitroman: Sichtweisen des Spätbarock* (Bern and Munich, 1970), p. 11.

earlier that the sour flavour is a token of melancholy in *Der Butt*). Mars also stands for a danger from outside, that of impending military attacks; Saturn alludes to dangers of melancholic resignation and *acedia* which put the meeting at risk from inside. This 'saturnische Acedia', the prevailing mood of vanity and the insight that all action is pointless tend to paralyse the poets.<sup>11</sup> Above all, the meeting is dominated by the moon which has a stronger impact than the other planets.

Gelnhausen boasts an astrological knowledge which the real Grimmelshausen did in fact have. His *Ewig-währender Calender* proves that Grimmelshausen was familiar with astrology; but, what is more important, his novel *Simplicissimus* has an astrological structure.<sup>12</sup> The moon is an important element in the narrative of *Das Treffen in Telgte*. The way Grass uses such literary devices is quite curious: in spite of their impact on the novel they are quite difficult to notice. The esoteric hints are very similar to the secret allusions to *Melencolia I* in *Der Butt*. The motif of the moon seems to be an insignificant particular which is mentioned from time to time in order to illustrate the background of the novel. In the beginning the reader incidentally learns that the moon is waxing: '...wie man bei Nacht und zunehmendem Mond hinter Pechfackeln der kaiserlichen Reiter, doch verschont von ferngrollenden Gewittern, den gefurchten Weg in Richtung Münster nach Telgte gekommen' (vi. 17). On the following day the moon is full: 'Der Vollmond habe die flache Gegend ausgeleuchtet' (vi. 44). Thereafter the full moon is mentioned time and again. Only when one follows the motif throughout the novel will one notice that it has a variety of important functions.

Firstly it illuminates the scenery during the night, and thus — like a helpful patron — enables the poets to find their way to the tavern. It also shines on the corpses which Zesen sees in the Ems. Zesen interprets it as a bad omen, rendering the motif ambiguous (see vi. 45). It is noteworthy that the moon has an affinity with water which is pointed out by Grimmelshausen in the *Ewig-währender Calender*: 'In deß Mons Stunden ist gut mit allen wässerichten Dingen zuhandlen / als mit Mühlen / Wisen / Weyern / Teichen umgeben / Fischen / Botten senden / durch Schrifften handlen / Tagen'.<sup>13</sup> All these things

<sup>11</sup> For the 'saturnische Acedia' see Benjamin, p. 170.

<sup>12</sup> The astrological aspects of Grimmelshausen's works were mainly examined by Günther Weydt and the Münster school. The essay by Klaus Haberkamm, a member of this school, briefly discusses astrological allusions in *Das Treffen in Telgte*, but is mainly concerned with the problem of the narrator of the novel: "Mit allen Weisheiten Saturns geschlagen": Glosse zu einem Aspect der Gelnhausen-Figur in Günter Grass' *Treffen in Telgte*, *Simpliciana*, 1 (1979), 67-78.

<sup>13</sup> Grimmelshausen, *Ewig-währender Calender*, p. 141.

which are under the auspices of the moon play an important role in *Das Treffen in Telgte*: Greflinger fishes a whole night through, couriers between Münster and Osnabrück pass the tavern and the poets write a manifesto.

Another function of the motif is to create restlessness in the novel. According to the *Ewig-währender Calender* (p. 33) it causes 'unstätes Wesen in allen Sachen'. Such unsteadiness becomes obvious when during the first night of the full moon couriers pass by the tavern: 'beide eilten mit Neuigkeiten, die sich ans Ziel gebracht, veraltet lasen' (vi. 47). During the same night restlessness rules in the attic of the tavern where the young poets Birken, Scheffler and Greflinger sleep with the maids and — 'vom Mond bewegt' (ibid.) — change their partners several times. The poets keep moving from the taproom to the great hall and back again. Restlessness is also an important reason for the poets' gathering in Telgte ('Überdies nahm, während der Frieden ausgehandelt wurde, allgemein die Unruhe, das Suchen zu. Niemand wollte für sich bleiben' (vi. 8)).

The whole novel is ruled by a principle of permanent change and restlessness. The question of what perishes and what endures — which concerned baroque poets like no other question — also forms an important topic of the poets' meeting. Two different motifs in the novel depict this opposition: the quickly fading gourd vine stands for vanity, whereas the hardy thistle emblemizes endurance. The moon, however, is a clear omen that the meeting will not create anything lasting. Therefore the manifesto, 'das bedeutende Papier' (vi. 131) which Dach wants to dedicate to immortality finally burns in the blaze at the end of the novel.

The astrological motif of the moon provides a first answer to the question of how the literary meeting is kept in motion. Apart from the astrological meaning the moon has another function: together with a barking dog, it forms an emblem which provides the decisive clue for the identification of the mysterious narrator of *Das Treffen in Telgte*.<sup>14</sup>

The astrological and emblematic function of the moon shows that baroque literary techniques have a genuine impact on the structure of *Das Treffen in Telgte*. This is an important aspect in Grass's later use of baroque literature: literary history is not merely a topic of his novels, but is employed for literary experiments. Even though it appears to be more conventional than other novels by Grass, *Das Treffen in Telgte* is clearly experimental. The literary tradition

<sup>14</sup> See Alexander Weber, 'Johann Matthias Schneuber: Der Ich-Erzähler in Günter Grass' *Das Treffen in Telgte*, pp. 105f.

Grass uses in this work has long stopped being handed down from generation to generation. It was finally swept away by the eighteenth-century concept of the 'original genius' and 'Erlebnisdichtung' which stressed the individual aspects of experience at the expense of poetry as an *ars* or technique. As a result of this an author can claim that his writings are something like a personal intellectual possession. Imitation is seen merely in pejorative terms of plagiarism. This concept is alien to baroque literature which produced so many 'Schatzkästlein' of *topoi* for a common rhetorical use. Here lies another difficulty for a modern author who wants to draw on seventeenth-century literature. Grass has occasionally complained that his critics expect an author to strive for authenticity, a category which for good reasons never existed in baroque poetics (see x. 367).

The literary traditions which are still present for a modern author like Grass result from the aesthetic preferences of past generations. Only a small part of the literary forms and techniques which were developed throughout history are available for an author writing at a given time. This spectrum is a result of the selections and contributions of his predecessors. However, there is always the possibility of reviving abandoned traditions, as the *ad fontes*-movement of Humanists (and in some sense the Reformation) showed. An author can decide to go against the preferences of his predecessors and break away from the narrow bounds of the tradition which is available to his generation. It was, for instance, to some degree a reaction to the crises of literary tradition (which was expressed in Hofmannsthal's *Ein Brief*) that shortly after the turn of the century Arno Holz started discovering baroque literature for his *Dafnis-Lieder* and *Bleischmiede*.<sup>15</sup> The Expressionists' use of literary tradition which would be of some interest to this study still awaits critical reassessment. It is beyond dispute, though, that during that period it was felt that a literary renewal could be expected from those writers who had some affinity with the baroque.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See Eberhard Mannack who begins his survey of 'Deutsche Schriftsteller des 20. Jahrhunderts als Rezipienten von Barockliteratur — Editionen, Imitationen, Interpretationen', in *Europäische Barock-Rezeption*, edited by Klaus Garber (Wiesbaden, 1991), pp. 705-28 with instructive remarks about Holz and Trakl and states that the relation between Expressionism and baroque literature would deserve a fresh investigation: 'Über das Verhältnis von Expressionismus und Barock ist zwar lange Zeit auf der Grundlage geistesgeschichtlicher Konstruktionen spekuliert worden, doch scheint die massive Kritik, wie sie Ende der 60er Jahre am Vergleich der Bildlichkeit beider Epochen geübt wurde, einer weiteren Diskussion geschadet zu haben. Auch wenn die unterschiedlichen Voraussetzungen etwa im Bereich der Metaphorik nicht gelegnet werden können, bleiben dennoch Fragen, die interessante Aufschlüsse versprechen' (p. 711).

<sup>16</sup> In 1904 when Holz's *Dafnis-Lieder* appeared, Victor Manheimer published a study on Gryphius claiming that there was an affinity between the literary movement of his day and baroque literature; the search for a literary style is explicitly mentioned. Walter Benjamin later approvingly quoted Manheimer: 'Frappante Analogien zu dem gegenwärtigen Stande des deutschen Schrifttums haben immer

Grass once stated that two goals are uppermost in his mind when he starts writing a new text. Fiction, he says, should fill in gaps which are left by surviving historical evidence (this involves writing against an inherent slant of tradition). In a similar way literary traditions which have fallen into neglect should be adopted:

Was wüßten wir vom Dreißigjährigen Krieg, wenn wir nicht Döblin hätten, den *Wallenstein*, aber auch den Zeitgenossen Grimmelshausen, der aus der Sicht der kleinen Leute, der Verlierer, diesen Krieg berichtet hat. Wir kennen nur die Staatsaktionen. Geschichte wird zumeist von den Siegern geschrieben. Hier erfüllt Literatur Lückenbüßerdienste, wichtige, unverzichtbare. Und an diese Autoren erinnere ich mich gerne, wenn ich mit etwas Neuem beginne. Und ich glaube auch, daß Literatur wieder zugänglicher wäre, wenn es gelingen könnte, an diese großen Traditionen deutschsprachiger Literatur zu erinnern. (x. 365f.)

Therefore there is a productive tension between Grass's writings and literary tradition. The poet aims at the correction of biases and accidental circumstances. This is, in Grass's view, an important purpose of fiction. The strong impetus of rediscovering and actively employing what has been lost in the course of tradition makes it possible for a modern author to draw attention to neglected aspects of history and bring to life a remote literary period like the baroque.

It is a further characteristic aspect of Grass's use of baroque literature that his access to seventeenth-century literature is based on recent literary criticism. Only a few decades ago a novel like *Das Treffen in Telgte* could hardly have been written because most texts Grass draws upon simply were not available. The vast majority of literary quotations are taken from the anthology of Albrecht Schöne, *Das Zeitalter des Barock*. Without this anthology it would have taken years for an author to compile such a wide range of baroque texts as is quoted in the novel. Though short, *Das Treffen in Telgte* comprises a broad selection of baroque literature. The poets read (in this order) from poetic tracts, dialect

neuen Anlaß zu einer, wenn auch meist sentimental so doch positiv gerichteten Versenkung ins Barocke gegeben. Schon im Jahre 1904 erklärte ein Literaturhistoriker dieser Epoche: 'Es will mir... scheinen, als ob das Kunstgefühl noch keiner Periode seit zwei Jahrhunderten mit der ihren Stil suchenden Barockliteratur des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts im Grunde so verwandt gewesen ist, wie das Kunstgefühl unserer Tage. Innerlich leer oder im Tiefsten aufgewühlt, äußerlich von technisch formalen Problemen absorbiert, die sich mit den Existenzfragen der Zeit zunächst sehr wenig zu berühren schienen, — so waren die meisten Barockdichter, und ähnlich sind, so weit man sehen kann, wenigstens die Dichter unserer Zeit, die ihrer Produktion das Gepräge geben' [Victor Manheimer, *Die Lyrik des Andreas Gryphius. Studien und Materialien* (Berlin, 1904), p. XIII]. Inzwischen hat die Meinung dieser Sätze, die schüchtern und zu kurz ergriffen ist, in einem sehr viel weitem Sinne sich behauptet' (Benjamin, p. 41). Benjamin goes on to point out parallels between Werfel's *Troerinnen* and Opitz. It should be noted though, that the 'geistesgeschichtliche Schule' — Benjamin refers to the George circle in this context — tended towards thinking in broad historical analogies unacceptable to modern critical methods.

poetry, pattern poems, religious poems, 'Buhlereien', scenes from a tragedy, passages from a pastoral novel, riddles, satirical epigrams, a 'Friedensspiel', a 'Heldenbrief', odes and an elegy. Moreover, there are prayers, graces and hymns and many allusions to Grimmelshausen's picaresque novels *Simplicissimus* and *Courasche* (the latter is also part of Schöne's anthology). This wide range of texts clearly shows how much Grass owes to his scholarly sources.

Theodor Verweyen and Gunther Witting have shown in 'Polyhistor's neues Glück' to what extent *Das Treffen in Telgte* is based on recent research. In addition to the anthology Grass used two other books by Albrecht Schöne: *Kürbishütte und Königsberg* (which was also a source for *Der Butt*) and *Emblematik und Drama im Zeitalter des Barock*. For this novel Grass again drew on Szyrocki's biographies of Gryphius and Opitz. At the time when *Die Blechtrommel* was published a novel like *Das Treffen in Telgte* could not have been written. The fact that it was written also reflects the progress baroque research has made in recent years; the unexpected literary transformation of this research shows that baroque literature is not only of academic interest. It should not be forgotten that the flourishing baroque research in this century started during Expressionism, a primarily literary movement. It might be argued that, from this wider angle, *Das Treffen in Telgte* is a result of a mutual inspiration between literature and scholarship.

### (ii) Language

The language of the novel is minutely attuned to its baroque subject-matter. Various archaisms indicate that the story is set in the seventeenth century. However, Grass tries only rarely to imitate all the characteristics of baroque language. Those passages which strike the reader as different from modern German usage are almost exclusively verbatim quotations, the vast majority of which are drawn from Schöne's baroque anthology. In a few cases Grass tries to fabricate seventeenth-century German and in these he again draws on the baroque sources. Nevertheless, a certain archaic tone runs through the entire novel. In the main parts of the book Grass applies a technique which he had employed in the baroque chapters of *Der Butt*: the extensive disputations in *Das Treffen in Telgte* are a blend of short quotations from baroque sources and long passages in indirect speech. Once again this creates the illusion of disputations conducted in seventeenth-century German. The book would lose its ironic undercurrent and its richness of connotation if the subjunctive were turned into

prosaic indicative. The prevailing tone of the novel is ironic and somewhat detached from its subject-matter so as to avoid mere imitation of baroque literature. However, the trick of using the subjunctive and archaisms gives the book a richness of tone. These devices of creating an antiquated tone deserve closer examination.

Some of the archaisms in the novel are still occasionally used today even though such vocabulary is considered somewhat peculiar. Words like 'Tand', 'Atzung', 'Labsal', or 'Mär' are obviously obsolete even though they might still be used in a literary context. It is noteworthy that Grass often tries to revive the connotation a word had during the seventeenth century. In the sentence 'Der lüge bessere Mär, als sich erdichten lasse' (vi. 10), for instance, the emphasis of the word 'Mär' lies on the notion of an untrue account which is peculiar to the baroque usage of the word.<sup>17</sup>

The revival of an old meaning of a word forms a further category of archaism. In this case it is not the word itself which is obsolete, but its peculiar usage. 'Sichern' is a widely used verb, but the past participle in its old legal sense 'mit einem Begleitbrief...gesichert' (vi. 6) certainly is not. The verb 'widerlegen' usually means to prove something wrong; in the baroque age it also had the meaning of resisting or opposing something, a sense which Grass revives: 'wo doch der Autor den Purpur der Fürsten verklagen und deren ewiges Kriegsgeschäft widerlegen wolle' (vi. 62). A similar case is the word 'abschlagen': 'weil man die Hessen habe abschlagen können' (vi. 10). When Heinrich Albert says about Schütz 'Erst viel später...habe er abermals Urlaub nach Italien genommen' (vi. 52) this means that he had asked for 'erlaubnis, ein dienstverhältnis oder eine bestimmte ordnung zu verlassen'.<sup>18</sup> The word 'Trichter' is fairly common in modern usage but the verb 'trichtern' is not. (This example also illustrates how Grass derives words from his sources such as the title of Harsdörffer's famous *Poetischer Trichter*.)

The archaic tone in the novel is reinforced through the curses and insults which are nearly all archaic in *Das Treffen in Telgte*. Expressions like 'Alte Schell! Rabenaas! Vettel!...Strahlhex!' (vi. 103) are taken from Grimmelshausen's *Courasche*.<sup>19</sup> The name 'Courasche' itself also is an insult. Grass often

<sup>17</sup> The entry 'mär' in Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, for instance, cites the baroque poet Rompler: 'das wörtlein mär wird zwahr ietziger zeit fast allein von falsch-ertichteten dingen genommen, hat aber vor weniger zeit noch ein iede geschicht-erzählung oder verkündigung bedeitet.'

<sup>18</sup> This is how Grimm, *DW*, glosses the old meaning of 'urlaub'.

<sup>19</sup> See *Das Zeitalter des Barock*, pp. 1093, 1114. It is interesting that most of the archaisms Grass's model Alfred Döblin uses in his novel *Wallenstein*, edited by Walter Muschg (Olten and Freiburg im Breisgau, 1965), are insults such as 'Bärenhäuter! Schelme! Malevizverbrecher!' (p. 13).

plays with the sexual innuendo of the word which is already obvious in his source.<sup>20</sup> The expression 'Courasche', however, is not only obsolete but also foreign.

The use of foreign words which were current in the seventeenth century is another characteristic of the language in *Das Treffen in Telgte*. Grass obviously takes great pleasure in imitating what the Telgte poets repeatedly criticize as a 'welsch' jargon. He also uses pejorative phrases like 'italienisch parlieren' — a favourite idiom of baroque purists.<sup>21</sup> Another derogatory phrase used by baroque purists is 'à la mode'; it was applied to foreign dress, language, behaviour which were heavily criticized in Moscherosch's 'A la mode Kehrauß'.<sup>22</sup> *Das Treffen in Telgte* is littered with 'welsch' expressions such as: 'Permission', 'Fant', 'Seniores', 'Boccolino Rouge' and 'Pomp'. All these foreign words are clearly obsolete. (However, Grass sometimes also uses 'welsch' words which are anachronisms; 'malheur', for instance, was not used before the eighteenth century.<sup>23</sup>) The following quotation is an example of the Romance languages being used as a source of immorality:

Sogar Gryphius gab dem Drängen nach und tischte ein paar Mitbringssel seiner Italienreise: verhurte Mönchsgeschichten zumeist, die Harsdörffer zu überbieten versuchte und Hoffmannswaldau zu Drei- und Vierecksgeschichten variierte; wobei sie sich zu dritt ihre Gelehrtheit bestätigten, indem sie, einen Hurenritt einleitend oder eine Kuttenposse ausklingen lassend, ihre welschen Literaturquellen bekanntmachten. (vi. 41)<sup>24</sup>

The linguistic theories in the novel which draw distinctions between German and Romance languages will be discussed later.

Apart from these general archaisms and foreign words the novel is pervaded by jargon terms, some of which are peculiar to the seventeenth century. In fact, the majority of words Grass uses in order to create an archaic tone are drawn

<sup>20</sup> See Grimmelshausen, *Courasche*, in *Das Zeitalter des Barock*, pp. 1100f.

<sup>21</sup> See 'parlieren' in H. Schulz, *Deutsches Fremdwörterbuch*, Fortgef. v. O. Basler (Straßburg and Berlin, 1913ff.): 'erst im 17. Jahrh. zahlreicher belegt, im Kampf um die Sprachreinheit vielfach als Modewort genannt, daher gern in den Fügungen welsch parlieren, französisch parlieren.'

<sup>22</sup> Johann Michael Moscherosch, *Visionen De Don Quevedo: Wunderliche und Wahrhaftige Gesichte Philanders von Sittewald*, reprint of the edition of 1642-43 (Hildesheim and New York, 1974), part 2, pp. 20-176.

<sup>23</sup> See Schulz-Basler, *Deutsches Fremdwörterbuch*.

<sup>24</sup> This passage is modelled on the preface to Gryphius's play *Cardenio und Celinde*. Gryphius relates how he took part in a banquet with friends who urged him to tell a story he had brought back from a trip to Italy in 1646. ('Gab dem Drängen nach' is, of course, a *topos* common to most *exordia*.) The 'welsch' source of the play is an Italian adaptation of a Spanish 'Novelle' *Die Macht der Enttäuschung* by Juan Perez de Montalvan (see Szyrocki, *Gryphius*, p. 95). The reference to this play takes up the theme of three-cornered relationships which frequently recurs in Grass's works.

from a small number of special idioms, such as military, poetical, musical and cookery jargon.

The most obvious specialized vocabulary is that of the Thirty Years' War. It stands out particularly because it is usually both foreign and obsolete. Moreover, some words like 'Fourage' and 'fouragieren' are typical of this period for they refer to an arbitrary ravaging which was characteristic of the Thirty Years' War. A main source for this sort of jargon is Grimmelshausen. Similar military terms are 'Soldateska', 'Marketenderinnenzeit', 'Musketiere'.<sup>25</sup> Other examples include: 'Troßbub', 'Dragonersäbel', 'Quartier' (also 'Quartier machen'), 'Bagage', 'requirieren', 'salutieren'. The most interesting military term, however, is 'Treffen'. According to Grimm the word means 'bewaffneter zusammenstosoz, kampf' and had its 'reichste entfaltung im 17. jahrhundert'. It is obvious that Grass knows this usage of the word: 'Weil Schütz nachfragte, hörte man, daß es zwischen den Kaiserlichen des Gelnhausen und einem schwedischen Kommando...zum *Treffen* gekommen wäre' (vi. 92). The title of the novel thus has a strong combative connotation (which may refer to the controversial literary disputations in Telgte).<sup>26</sup> It is interesting that the word 'Treffen' was certainly not used in the sense of 'Versammlung' during the seventeenth century. 'Ein treff allmöglicher Poeten' (vi. 19), which is mentioned in the pastiche of Opitz's letter, would have been interpreted by baroque readers as a clash or combat of poets. Surprisingly, the meaning of 'Treffen' as meeting or gathering is 'ein junges wort wohl erst aus der Zeit der groszen kundgebungen'.<sup>27</sup> The first entry in Grimm is quoted from Adolf Hitler's *Schlußrede auf dem Nürnberger Parteitag 1934*: 'Das grosze persönliche und geistige treffen der alten streiter und kampfgenossen, die wiedersehensfeier all jener, die schon in den zeiten der unterdrückung und verfolgung glaubensträger einer idee gewesen sind.' This particular usage of 'Treffen' was obviously

<sup>25</sup> According to Schulz-Basler 'Soldateska' means 'Kriegsvolk'. A 'Marketenderin' is a person who sells food to soldiers (compare Grimm, *DW*).

<sup>26</sup> Grass's etching on the dustjacket also seems to depict the combative literary disputes. A whole strand of motifs in the novel is related to the writer's hand rising out of the rubble (and to another etching called 'Westfälischer Friede II (1979)' which shows two hands throwing stones at one another, see Grass, *In Kupfer, auf Stein*, p. 133): 'Überall...bewarf man sich mit wortgewordenen Steinen' (vi. 34); 'Er, jedenfalls, sei vom Steinschlag der Wörter wie zugeschüttet' (vi. 61); 'Moscheroschs inständige Angst, selbst Freunde könnten...ihn...als Juden schmähen, mit Worten steinigen' (vi. 108). Again the image is a development of an old motif, see *Die Plebejer proben den Aufstand*, 'Ratten, Hunde — daran gewöhnt man sich. Objektivist? Kapitulant? Papierkugeln. Abstrakte Steine, die niemand treffen' (viii. 437). Like most images in the novel, however, it has more than one meaning; the etching also shows that literature cannot be defeated by hatred and violence: 'Und wenn man sie steinigen, mit Haß verschütten wollte, würde noch aus dem Geröll die Hand mit der Feder ragen' (vi. 134).

<sup>27</sup> See 'treffen' in Grimm, *DW*.

coined during the meetings of veterans of the First World War in the mid-1930s.<sup>28</sup> It is difficult to establish whether those members of the ‘Gruppe 47’, who referred to their meetings as ‘Tagungen’ (the older alternative to ‘Treffen’) consciously avoided ‘Treffen’ because they knew how and when it was coined. They certainly were a generation acutely aware of the 1930s; and the ‘Gruppe 47’ emphatically criticized the use of words which had been coined during this period. Be that as it may, the word ‘Treffen’ has quite a strong combative undercurrent which contradicts the irenic spirit of the Telgte meeting.

Another special vocabulary is poetical terminology. Unlike the (almost exclusively French and Italian) military jargon, the poetical terminology is partly Latin and partly German. It is important to remember that in the seventeenth century learned debates about poetics would mainly have been conducted in Latin. Grass is quite aware of this, and occasionally mentions that the poets lapse into Latin: ‘Gelegentlich wechselte der Vortragende [Buchner] ins Gelehrtenlatein’ (vi. 27). In *Der Butt*, too, Opitz moves between German and Latin. Grass, of course, does not insert Latin passages into his text. But he does suggest the linguistic mixture of Latin and German through compounds such as ‘Huldigungspoem’ or ‘Opern-Skribent’. Such Latinizations further reinforce the archaic tone of the novel: ‘Skribent’ instead of ‘Dichter’, ‘Poeterey’ instead of ‘Dichtung’, ‘Epistel’ instead of ‘Brief’. In contrast to the often colloquial military terms, expressions like ‘replizieren’ (which allude to the sophisticated *ars disputandi*) are clearly ‘nur bildungssprachlich verwendet’.<sup>29</sup>

Not all literary terms, however, are genuine baroque expressions; some words are — deliberate? — anachronisms. The term for pedantic criticism, ‘Beckmesserisch’, for instance, is obviously a nineteenth-century word, which is based on a character in Wagner’s opera *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.

The presence of Heinrich Schütz at the meeting leads to discussions about composing which involve musical terminology such as ‘basso continuo’,

<sup>28</sup> See further quotations in Grimm, *DW*: ‘meine kameraden! wenn sich heute über 20 jahre nach kriegsausbruch frontkameraden treffen, so soll ein solches treffen in erster linie unser volk daran erinnern, dasz diese männer in der ernstesten stunde der nation die beste manneskraft ihres volkes darstellten *reichskriegsopferführer* Oberlindober *auf dem reichskriegertag in Kassel 1935*; am 11. und 12. mai fand in Marburg das erste treffen des grünen korps statt *nachrichtenblatt d. res.-inf.-reg. 234 juli 1935, 17*; (*der brief*) ist gerichtet an das Lemgoer reichstreffen der auf der insel Man während des krieges internierten und lautet (in übersetzung):...hörte von ihrem treffen und sendet all denen, die er von der insel Man her kennt, seine besten grüße *Berliner tageblatt v. 2. 6. 1935 1. beibl. 1a. häufiger in zusammensetzungen wie reichstreffen, landstreffen, welttreffen, kameradentreffen, frontkämpfertreffen, fliegetreffen, ehemaligentreffen.*’ Grass uses the word ‘Flüchtlingstreffen’ in his poem ‘Kleckerburg’ (i. 208) and in *Katz und Maus* he mentions the ‘Treffen jener Übriggebliebenen...., die es...zum Ritterkreuz gebracht hatten’ (iii. 140).

<sup>29</sup> See ‘replizieren’, in Schulz-Basler, *Deutsches Fremdwörterbuch*.

'Motetten', 'Madrigale', 'Virtuosen', 'Libretti', 'Lamento'. The way in which Courasche addresses Schütz as 'Maestro Sagittario' shows that the Italian music terminology is another 'welsch' element in baroque language. Paul Gerhardt — who feels deeply offended by Schütz's criticism of strophic songs with thorough-bass accompaniment — thus attacks the illustrious composer: 'Er werde es dem Italienerfreund, dem Lobredner des Welschen, dem Herrn Henrico Sagittario zeigen' (vi. 65).

Another kind of jargon, that of cookery, will only be mentioned briefly here because it surfaces in most of Grass's writings and is therefore not peculiar to *Das Treffen in Telgte*. Some of the terms like 'Kumme', 'Schweineflom', or 'flomen' are dialect. Grass sometimes blends two different idioms in order to heighten the effect. When Gelnhausen, for instance, gives a description of the banquet he has prepared in the courtyard, he entices the poets to join him with the words: 'Das werde ein Fest geben, dem die versammelten Dichter nur noch etliche lucullische Doppelreime, epicurische Jamben, bacchantische Sinnsprüche, dionysische Daktylen und platonische Gescheitheiten beisteuern müßten' (vi. 80). Here adjectives which are usually attributed to food are combined with poetical terminology, creating a strong sensual effect.

Apart from the archaic and foreign idioms Grass uses modern German expressions which carry a particular baroque notion. As in the chapter 'Von der Last böser Zeit' he often uses vanity terms such as 'Trug', 'Vergeblichkeit', 'Blendwerk', 'das Jammertalige', 'falscher Glanz', 'Höllenschlund'. Another device Grass employs to express baroque notions in modern terms is the creation of compounds such as 'Seelengebräu', 'Seelengewimmer', 'Bravgereimtes', 'Predigerschwall', 'Klangbilder', etc. Many of these terms embody certain characteristics of baroque literature and style. The text abounds with compounds of 'Wort-' and a specifying term such as 'Wortgefälle', 'Wortmüll', 'Wortwiederkäufer', 'Wortvorlagen', 'Klingwörter' and composed adjectives like 'wortgewordene Steine', 'wortmächtig', 'wortzwingende Kraft'.

There is also a long list of general compounds such as 'Badstubenklatzsch', 'Leichenstrokandidaten', 'Staatsplackerei', 'Buhlwerkzeug', 'Landschacher', as well as numerous adjectival compounds such as 'kreuzquer' (which occurs in various different contexts) and even slightly manneristic compounds such as 'türoffene Kammer'. In this case Grass has obviously created a neologism. Other neologisms are the verb 'Gryphius nichtete'; the adverb 'dunsig' in 'dunsig dunsende Leichen' and the adjective 'zersorgt' in 'zersorgte Stirn'. Here it is the prefix *zer-* which is used in order to create a new word (*zer-* is a favourite prefix of baroque language, as in 'zernichten', because of its

destructive overtone). A similar case of an unusual prefix is 'Sie *verwarfen* die Hände' (vi. 129).

Grass also creates nonce-words from names, such as the verb 'opitzieren' which means to propagate Opitz's poetics. The corresponding noun is 'Opitzerei'. Grass sometimes even combines two different names into a new expression, as in 'verzeste Birkeney', which is a mixture of onomatopoeic experiments, far-fetched neologisms and eccentric spelling. (This is, incidentally, the opposite of 'opitzieren'.)

He also makes some puns which are not his own creations: for instance, 'maulhenckolisch' for 'melancholisch', a word minted by Fischart which alludes to 'maulhängerisch'. The same pun also surfaces quite frequently in Grimmelshausen's works. In *Die Rätin* Grass plays in a similar way with 'ratzekahl' which is a punning use of 'radikal'.

Another device Grass had already used in 'Von der Last böser Zeit' is archaic spelling. In many cases the changes are merely typographical (and leave the pronunciation unchanged). In various faked quotations and during those passages of *Das Treffen in Telgte* where the tone is archaic the letter *u* is often replaced by *v* as in 'vns', 'vnsere'; the letter *u* is sometimes replaced by *w* in Breslaw and *ei* is replaced by *ey* in 'Meynung', 'Poeterey', 'seyn'. Another archaic spelling which occurs time and again in different interpolations is *d* instead of *t* and vice versa: 'dapfere Helden', 'Dintenleiß'; 'Tichten', 'Teutsch'. Grass also mentions the controversies among baroque poets about spelling. For instance, Zesen's attempts to reform orthography are as eccentric as the whole man. His 'neumodische Schreibweise — di statt die, si statt sie, desgleichen die Umlaute: ändlich, stärblich, härz, aber auch trühbnüs, dahrüm — schon etliche Streitschriften (Rists Polemik voran) zur Folge gehabt hatte' (vi. 75). Grass uses this spelling, for instance, in the phrase 'Anschläge "Wider di teutschen Tichter"' (vi. 99) — which seems to be a faked quotation. Another case of archaic spelling which occurs from time to time in pastiches of baroque language is a redundant double *f* or an *mb* as in 'läufft', 'umbdessen' 'frembden'.

Apart from these mainly typographical changes of modern spelling, Grass seems to have adopted a habit of mainly Upper German printers which indicates phonetic and dialectal differences. Grass very often omits an *e* in the final syllable: 'sollt', 'sach', 'Schwed', 'Zäun', 'könn't'. This omitted *e* is a useful criterion for identifying faked quotations. Grass only rarely uses a hypercorrect *e*, as in 'dorret' or 'gesetzt'.

Finally, the syntax in *Das Treffen in Telgte* deserves some attention. On occasions Grass uses archaic genitive forms such as ‘Des Gelnhausen Kaiserliche Wache’ (vi. 44), ‘Diese Lektion...korrigiert den alten Ambrosius Lobwasser seligen Angedenkens’ (vi. 27). The most prominent feature of the syntax, however, is the asyndetic linkage of different clauses. This device can be found on different levels, the most basic of which is the mere enumeration of words without any conjunction or even punctuation, as in ‘Weitab vollzieht sich das Kriegsgeschehen mit Hunger Pest Brand’ (vi. 124); similar examples are ‘jämmerlich dumm verlogen’ (vi. 127), ‘Treue Fleiß Biedersinn’ (ibid.). Grass started using this device at an early stage in his poems, for example, ‘sein Unterfutter Tuff Basalt Granit’ (i. 164), ‘getauft geimpft gefirmt geschult’ (i. 209), ‘Türken Griechen Touristen’ (i. 230). According to Karl-Otto Conrady (pp. 149ff.) such ‘versefüllende Asyndeta’ are an outstanding feature of baroque poetry.

It is noteworthy that the same asyndeta are an important stylistic characteristic of Grass’s acknowledged model Alfred Döblin. In his novel *Wallenstein* (1920) one can find phrases such as ‘Die Briefe waren nach Datierung Stilfeinheiten Intimitäten zweifellos echt’, ‘Der Karren mit Butter Salz Brot.’<sup>30</sup> In a similar unconnected way Grass strings whole sentences together. The influence of *Wallenstein* on Grass’s style is particularly likely because the novel is discussed in detail in Grass’s essay *Über meinen Lehrer Döblin* (ix. 236-55). In *Die Rättin* Grass explicitly refers to the ‘Satzkaskaden des Großmeisters Döblin Roman *Wallenstein*’ (vii. 410). In *Das Treffen in Telgte* such ‘Satzkaskaden’ can be found in abundance. In the following quotation, for instance, one would expect a subordination of a main clause and dependent clauses which would be linked through conjunctions. Grass, however, simply adds bare assertions in a paratactic manner; the sentence is reduced to its basic nominal elements; the lack of verbs, a favourite Grass device, is striking. ‘Danach sah die Festtafel wüst aus. Die gehäuften Knochen und Knöchlein. Weinlachen. Der vormals bekränzte, nun angefressene Hammelkopf. Ekel kam auf. Die runtergebrannten Kerzen. Die sich verkläffenden Köter’ (vi. 94). This paratactic and nominal style can again be found in *Wallenstein*: ‘Auf dem gepreßten Schweinskopf Äpfel’; ‘Die Kuriere aus Prag mit ihrer freudvollen Meldung der Einnahme der Stadt fanden einen totenstillen Hof. Der Kaiser verschwunden. Seine Leibdiener in

<sup>30</sup> Döblin, *Wallenstein*, pp. 64, 15. The parallels between the asyndetic style of Grass and Döblin are also traceable in Grass’s earlier works. See, for instance, Michael Harscheidt, *Günter Grass: Wort – Zahl – Gott: Der ‘phantastische Realismus’ in den Hundejahren* (Bonn, 1976), p. 114-16.

Eisen geworfen. Kein Anhalt über seinen Verbleib.’<sup>31</sup> In a similar way Döblin describes the scenery during a hunt (p.24): ‘Hörner, viele Hörner, grelles Blasen. Menschenrufe. Schwarze Haufen auf dem Feld, bellende Hunde. In ein Gewimmel von Knechten stürmten sie ein.’ The string of nouns in *Das Treffen in Telgte* very often aims at stylistic abbreviation, as in the following example: ‘Trotz Windstille: Funkenflug’ (vi. 135). A similar paratactic device is the ‘relative connection’ of a number of dependent clauses without conjunctions even though logically they are still subordinated to a main sentence. In the following example all the sentences beginning with *Dem* would usually be relative clauses.

Da baue er, Gerhardt, besser auf seinen Freund Johann Crüger, der sich als Kantor aufs strophische Lied verstehe. *Dem* rage nicht die Kunst vor allem. *Dem* seien nicht der Fürsten glänzende Hofkapellen teuer, sondern des gewöhnlichen Mannes Nöte wichtig. *Dem* wolle es mit anderen, wenn auch nicht weitberühmten Komponisten nie zu gering sein, der täglich bedürftigen Christgemeinde zu dienen und strophigen Liedern Noten zu setzen. (vi. 72)

This construction of co-ordinated syntactical parallels is one of Grass’s most distinctive stylistic devices in *Das Treffen in Telgte*. In theory such a construction could go on for ever.<sup>32</sup> Grass manages to write paratactic sequences which are a whole page long. Dach’s account of the beginning of the meeting in the letter to his wife may serve as an example: ‘Sein...Brief sollte in Königsberg Bericht geben...: Wie grob ihnen der Schwed in Oesede die Tür gewiesen; wie Gelnhausen...wie man bei Nacht und zunehmendem Mond...; wie unterwegs schon der Moscherosch...wie aber Czepko und der alte Weckherlin...und wie die meisten...; und wie man trotz oder wegen der verfluchten...Unmoral...’ (vi. 17). Overstretched hypotactic sentences are by contrast very rare in the novel. The paratactic and sometimes verbless style of *Das Treffen in Telgte* is a typical feature of narrative language; and so is Grass’s habit of beginning sentences with the conjunction *Und* — a device which Hofmannsthal and the Expressionists also used. Like Döblin Grass even begins new paragraphs with *Und*. This narrative, paratactic style also permeates main parts of *Wallenstein*. A short passage may demonstrate that many of the mentioned stylistic features of *Das Treffen in Telgte* (*Und*, verbless sentences, ‘relative connection’: *Der*) can

<sup>31</sup> Döblin, *Wallenstein*, p. 10, 704. It is surprising, though, that Grass rarely uses the equivalent device frequently employed by Döblin: the nounless sentence which begins with a verb as in: ‘Kaute, knabberte, biß, riß, mahlte, malnte’ (p. 9).

<sup>32</sup> See Leonard Forster, ‘Über Reihen und Gliedern: Vornehmlich in mittlerer deutscher Literatur’, in *Virtus et Fortuna: Festschrift für Hans-Gert Roloff*, ed. by Joseph P. Strelka and Jörg Jungmayr (Bern, Frankfurt, New York, 1983), pp. 15-36 (p. 25).

be found in Döblin: 'Und der Graf von Bristol immer frisch hinter den Hunden und dicken Weibern her; Wirtschaft, saubere Wirtschaft. Frech kreischte er, als Rusdorf um Mittag erschien. Der ließ es sich schmecken, ohne ihn zu beachten, konversierte mit Pavel' (*Wallenstein*, p. 33). This could easily pass as a quotation from *Das Treffen in Telgte*. And so could the following passage be part of the poets' dialogues: 'Drei Tage blieb Rusdorf darauf unsichtbar. Kam lärmend heraus, in alle Ecken sich umblickend. Was inzwischen geschehen sei. Stunde noch alles auf demselben Fleck wie früher. So mache man Geschichte' (*ibid.*).

We have seen that Grass uses a great variety of devices to create an archaic tone in the novel. He revives the old meaning of words, uses archaic curses, 'welsch' jargon, obsolete military terms, Latin poetical terminology, musical and cookery vocabulary; he creates compounds and neologisms, derives verbs from names, and he employs an archaic spelling. The archaic vocabulary of the novel is mainly drawn from baroque sources such as Grimmelshausen and Schöne's anthology.

The syntactical devices comprise archaic genitive forms, asyndetic enumeration, paratactic and nominal co-ordination and 'relative connection'. The syntax is much more closely related to Döblin's style than to baroque language. Thus it is mainly the highly differentiated, jargonistic vocabulary in *Das Treffen in Telgte* which is archaic, while the mould of the sentence is modern.

### (iii) *The structure of the novel*

We have seen that there are close links between *Der Butt* and *Das Treffen in Telgte*. However, it should not be overlooked that there are important differences of structure and composition. *Das Treffen in Telgte* consists of twenty-three short chapters (the average chapter being not longer than eight pages). The first three chapters form a prelude; they describe the journeys and arrival of the poets. Each of the three days of the meeting is about six to eight chapters long. Thus the novel's composition is quite symmetrical. Instead of an intricate web of framework plot and flashbacks there is a simple order of a prelude and three days of the meeting. The plot is propelled without any interruption or flashbacks.

All three days of the meeting have a similar structure. Each day begins with a modest meal and a conversation about issues which only concern the group

itself. The first day begins with a prayer and the commemoration of poets who have died recently; the second day starts with a welcome for the composer Heinrich Schütz and during the last morning the poets feel guilty for having joined Gelnhausen's sinful meal.

The readings usually take place in the great hall, whereas the taproom is used for recreation and meals. It is important to note that different rooms and places of the tavern have different functions. After the poets have moved from the taproom to the great hall they read from their manuscripts. These readings form a main part of the text. They are followed by a short break in the taproom where political issues are discussed. For instance, when (during the first day) the poets hear that Trauttmannsdorff has unexpectedly departed from Münster they immediately start to discuss politics and move to the taproom. During the second and third day the poets discuss the political manifesto in the taproom. However, the final version of the manifesto is discussed in the great hall — a significant development at the end of the meeting (it was overlooked by those critics who blamed the novel for staying within the realm of literature at the expense of politics). Up to the decisive chapter twenty-one the wideness and space of the great hall, the place of literature, contrasts with the narrowness of the 'political' taproom (we already noticed the same opposition in *Der Butt*). Both realms merge during chapter twenty-one when Gryphius throws the thistle to the ground and thus resolves the crisis of politics and language. The technique of allegorizing certain realms and ideas through different rooms is a device frequently used in baroque novels. A hero of such a novel would, for instance, walk from one room to another and change his frame of mind accordingly.<sup>33</sup> Like the setting of the 'Emshagen' the different rooms of the tavern have an allegorical function.

Before the decisive scene which merges the different realms, politics appear as an interference of the outer world in the poets' refuge on the 'Emshagen'. In *Der Butt*, the gourd-vine arbour on the 'Pregelinsel' allegorized the argument that such a moral retreat from the world is impossible. The poets' guilt is another element common to the structure of all the days of the meeting. During the first day the poets incite one another to narrate suggestive anecdotes until Courasche's report of her looting in the razed Magdeburg turns the wantonness of the poets into horror.

<sup>33</sup> An interesting example of this is described by Conrad Wiedemann, 'Bestrittene Individualität: Beobachtungen zur Funktion der Barockallegorie', in *Formen und Funktionen der Allegorie*, edited by Walter Haug (Stuttgart, 1979), pp. 574-91 (pp. 581-85). Wiedemann shows how the character Markhold in Zesen's novel *Adriatische Rosemund* controls love's rapture in a Stoic 'Bilderkammer'.

Sie [the Courasche] prahlte mit Körben voller Goldklunkerketten, die sie den hingemachten Weibern vom Hals geschnitten hatte. Endlich stieß Gelnhausen sie an, damit sie verstumme. Das Elend Magdeburgs ließ nur noch schweigen zu. In die Stille hinein sagte Dach: Es sei nun spät genug, Schlaf zu suchen. Der ungeschminkte Bericht des Stoffel und mehr noch der Wirtin, zu dem man leichtfertig beide aufgefordert habe, zeige deutlich, wo das Gelächter seine Grenze finde, wie teuer man für zuviel Gelächter zahle, weshalb sie nun alle, mit ihrem Gelächter im Hals, zu schlucken hätten. (vi. 41f.)

All this is only a harmless prelude to the poets' guilt about joining Gelnhausen's banquet on the following day. They are appalled when Heinrich Schütz makes Gelnhausen admit the atrocities he has committed in order to steal the food. In both cases the poets are only indirectly contaminated with the sinful outer world through Courasche and Gelnhausen.

During the third day the trespasses of the previous days are offset by a purifying fish-meal which alludes to the Bible: 'Es war, als wollten sich Greflingers Fische wunderbar mehren' (vi. 132). The sins and purification of the poets form climaxes to the three days.

The different days of the meeting all have a common structure. The morning starts with a short prelude (during which the group gathers); this prelude is followed by long reading sessions. Then political issues dominate the meeting. Finally relaxation turns into licentiousness and sin.

The first three chapters of the novel, however, do not follow the outlined pattern. They form an introduction which is structurally self-contained. The very beginning of the novel deals with a general reflection on the cyclical course of history and the claim that every story in Germany has long roots in the past. This is a vindication of the parallel on which the story is based. Then Grass reveals his motivation to write the novel: Richter's seventieth birthday. Here it is clearly Grass himself who speaks to the reader; however, the identity of the 'I' which narrates the story will soon change. Both the vindication and motivation of the narrative are rudiments of a traditional *exordium* — which is an uncommon way for a Grass novel to begin.<sup>34</sup>

This *exordium* is followed by a long enumeration of the poets' journeys to Oesede (a device Grass often used in *Der Butt*). The second chapter deals with the poets' arrival in Telgte (when dawn is already breaking). The cunning lies Gelnhausen employs to make the merchants leave the 'Brückenhof' show how useful the poet's imagination can be. It is mere fiction which makes the

<sup>34</sup> Only *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* starts with a datable event which can be seen as a motivation to begin narrating the story ('Liebe Kinder, heute haben sie Gustav Heinemann zum Präsidenten gewählt...'; iv. 266).

merchants give way to the writers. Gelnhausen tells the merchants that the poets have contracted the plague. Without his help the poets cannot defend themselves against military force and commerce. Some authors protest against Gelnhausen's immoral lie, but then they are quick to take the incident as a satire; nevertheless the motif of guilt is already introduced at the beginning of the text.

The end of the second and the beginning of the third chapter retell the journey to Telgte from Dach's point of view. Dach who cannot get to sleep, reflects on the course of the meeting so far and writes a letter to his wife (probably a reminiscence of Dach's poem 'Anno 1647 des Nachts, da ich vor Engbrüstigkeit nicht schlaffen können, auff dem Bette gemacht' which is also addressed to his wife and family).<sup>35</sup> Grass once again invents a letter. In this note Dach relates his impressions of the gathering. This retrospection is the only one of its kind in the novel. This again suggests that the first three chapters form a separate part of the text. The events are related from Dach's point of view because the group which is later brought into focus has not yet assembled. The introduction is also the right place to concentrate on Simon Dach, the man who has initiated the meeting (and through him Grass naturally portrays Hans Werner Richter).

The plot of the novel evolves without any interruption or discontinuity. There are none of the digressions or pauses which are so characteristic of *Der Butt*. The one and only thread of action is very tight and is not split up into multiple action. Each chapter takes up the plot precisely where the previous chapter had left it as if there were a *horror vacui* which keeps the narrative in steady motion. Not even at night is there a single break: Moscherosch and Lauremberg drink the first night through. During the second night couriers pass the tavern and in the attic the round dance of the couples keeps moving.<sup>36</sup> When dawn is breaking Gelnhausen leaves the tavern. During the third night Greflinger fishes near the mill while the maids and the town's prostitutes spend the night with the musketeers. Moscherosch, Rist and Harsdörffer are editing the manifesto and Courasche consoles Gelnhausen. When they all finally fall asleep Gelnhausen,

<sup>35</sup> Simon Dach, *Gedichte*, 4 vols, edited by Walther Ziesemer (Halle/Saale, 1936), I, 203f.

<sup>36</sup> The motif of the sexual 'round dance' is conventional. Schnitzler wrote a whole play on it: *Reigen*, in which he shows that characters from completely different social backgrounds who seemingly have very little in common are almost exchangeable in their basic sexual desires. This also seems to apply to the 'round dance' in *Das Treffen in Telgte*. The rough Greflinger, the pious Scheffler, and the shy Birken are also opposed characters. And so are the fat Elsabe, the bony Marthe, and the delicate Marie (vi. 47f.). Yet — moved by the moon — they all change their partners without noticing any difference. Moreover, the maids spend the following night with Gelnhausen's musketeers — which is the only link between the soldiers and the poets during the meeting. This shows that sexuality is the only thing they have in common with the outside world. In relation to sexuality all people are equal.

who was upset by Courasche, meets Harsdörffer at the Ems while Greflinger still fishes until the morning.

Why does the plot never come to a standstill? The secondary literature on *Das Treffen in Telgte* gives no answer to this question. We have seen already that the moon creates restlessness. It is instructive to trace the introduction of new obstacles whenever the plot is in danger of coming to a halt. For instance, there is no rest during the first night because the poets have to move from Oesede to Telgte. Oesede is near the Protestant camp in Osnabrück and is therefore a suitable place for a meeting of mainly Protestant poets. The poets become extremely suspicious when Gelnhausen leads the group to the Catholic town. The setting of the meeting is carefully chosen to add to the unrest created by the moon. It is a place of pilgrimage, where Catholic radicals gather.<sup>37</sup> 'Einzig der pfäffische Ort sei ihm nicht geheuer', Dach writes to his wife, 'man vermute in Telgte heimliche Treffen der Wiedertäufer. Der Geist des Knipperdolling gehe hier noch immer um. Unheimlich mute die Gegend an, doch offenbar geeignet für Zusammenkünfte' (vi. 18).

While the majority of Protestant poets feel uneasy in Telgte and hence become very vigilant, Scheffler (who later becomes a Catholic) is deeply fascinated by the Madonna which attracts so many pilgrims. He even misses the readings during the first day of the meeting because he is looking for the Madonna. Scheffler is the first poet who leaves the tavern for some time during the meeting. Many others will follow him; throughout the whole meeting poets arrive and depart. (During the second night Heinrich Albert and Heinrich Schütz arrive, Gelnhausen leaves the 'Brückenhof' in order to forage. A short time after his return Schütz leaves the assembly and in the following chapter Greflinger is suddenly missing.)

Another noteworthy cause of restlessness is the river Ems. While Scheffler is fascinated by the Madonna, Zesen is attracted by the Ems. After the first day of the meeting he fails to approach one of the maids.

Nur Zesen ging leer aus und lief, von Greflingers Spott verletzt, zum Fluß, wo er mit sich allein sein wollte. Doch kaum sah ich ihn über der äußeren Ems stehen..., trieben zwei aneinandergedundene Leichen gegen das Ufer: die waren, obgleich gedunsen, kenntlich als Mann und Frau. Nach kurzem Zögern...lösten die beiden ihr Fleisch aus dem Weidengeschling, kreiselten in der Strömung, waren verspielt miteinander,

<sup>37</sup> See *Westfälische Geschichte in drei Textbänden und einem Bild- und Dokumentarband*, edited by Wilhelm Kohl (Düsseldorf, 1983), *Dokumentarband*, p. 294: 'In den katholischen Gebieten Westfalens lebten seit der Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts die Wallfahrten zu wundertätigen Gnadenbildern wieder auf, Ausdruck einer neuen katholischen Frömmigkeit.'

entkamen dem Strudel, glitten flußab zu den Mühlwehren hin, wo der Abend in Nacht überging. (vi. 37f.)

As we have seen, the *Ewig-währender Kalender* highlights the astrological affinity between the moon and water. In *Das Treffen in Telgte* the Ems and the weir, like the moon, cause unrest. Water, lakes, rivers and spas also play an important role in Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus*, particularly at the end of the novel which (according to the Weydt school) stands under the aegis of the moon. Water can also be dangerous. When a colonel finds *Simplicissimus* in the bedroom of his beautiful daughter he threatens to drown the couple in a river: 'Ich wolte sie ehe morgenden Tags beyde zusammen binden / und in der Lipp erträncken lassen' (p. 274).

In *Das Treffen in Telgte* the universal character Gelnhausen seems to have an affinity with a wide range of planets, for example, to Mercury as a courier, to Mars as a soldier and to Venus as a lover. But he also stands under the auspices of the moon. After the truth about his cruel foraging is unveiled by Heinrich Schütz he tells Courasche that he wants to change profession: 'Endgültig abmustern werde er beim Mars und nur noch friedlich kleinen Gewinn eintreiben' (vi. 102). He plans to become an inn-keeper. The tavern he wants to buy is called 'Zum silbernen Stern' which is a periphrasis of the moon (*ibid.*).<sup>38</sup> This affinity may explain why Gelnhausen, like Zesen, is captivated by the Ems. After being offended by Courasche he meets Harsdörffer at the river. Another poet who is captivated by the water is Greflinger. While the poets assemble in the tavern Greflinger spends much of his time alone at the weir; he fishes under the auspices of the moon ('Deß Mons Stunden', as we have seen, is the right time for fishing).

For Zesen, however, there is another reason to return to the river. He is deeply fascinated by the image of corpses in the Ems. The corpses can illustrate the ambiguities of shocking baroque imagery which were pointed out by Manfred Windfuhr (p. 324). Such images can be justified when they function as a 'moralistisches Schreckbild', when the purpose is not just to indulge in the shocking and horrible for its own sake. At first Zesen is completely carried away

<sup>38</sup> Grimmelshausen in fact ran a tavern called 'Zum Silbernen Stern' for about two years. The reasons why he gave up this profession are not known. Courasche ridicules these plans: Gelnhausen who knows nothing about accountancy would only gain debts from such an enterprise. This accusation is based on speculations that Grimmelshausen was dismissed from several jobs because of unsuccessful accountancy.

Grass plays with the astrological sense of the such names as Silver Star; Heinrich Schütz who advises Gelnhausen to become an inn-keeper tells him that his father's tavern was called 'Zum Schützen', another name with an astrological sense (vi. 103). Like the sign of the zodiac Schütz is also often called 'Sagittario' in the novel.

by the horrifying image; it reminds him of his pastoral novel *Adriatische Rosemund*. But then he starts to reflect on the causes of the horrifying scene. Immorality, he concludes, begins with the language:

Im seitlichen offenen Fenster der Wirtsstube zeigte Zesen sein entsetztes Gesicht: Er komme vom Fluß. Der führe Leichen. Zuerst habe er nur zwei treiben gesehen. Die hätten ihn, weil aneinandergebunden, an seinen Markhold und dessen Rosemunde gemahnt. Dann seien mehr, immer mehr Leichen flußab gekommen. Der Mond habe ihr treibendes Fleisch gezeigt. Er finde nicht Worte, so viel Tod zu benennen. Schlimme Zeichen stünden über dem Haus. Nie werde Frieden werden. Weil man die Sprache nicht rein halte. Weil die entstellten Wörter zu treibenden Leichen gedunsen seien. Er wolle niederschreiben, was er gesehen. Genau. Sofort. Und nie gehörten Klang finden. (vi. 45f.)

The moral crisis of his time is interpreted by the purist Zesen as a language crisis. (The analogy to the 'Gruppe 47' is obvious; the group found the evils of Nazism living on in the corrupted language used after the war.) It is not quite clear, however, whether the corpses the bewildered Zesen sees flowing down the river are something 'real' or whether they are mere products of his imagination. There is reason to assume that — as before in the description of the Battle of Wittstock — we are looking at a literary *topos*.<sup>39</sup> He seems to be able to see the same scene at any time; later in the novel the narrator says: 'Nur mit Mühe gelang es mir, Zesen zurückzuhalten, der ans Ufer wollte: Leichen treiben sehen' (vi. 94). This is more than just an ironic twist to Zesen's obsession with vanity. It is a reminder that the novel does not aspire to create the illusion of an authentic historical account but that the reality depicted is disrupted by obvious fictional elements and literary *topoi*.

#### (iv) *The character Gelnhausen*

In spite of Grass's sophisticated use of baroque literary devices, readers who are not familiar with this remote period can still find the novel accessible. *Das Treffen in Telgte* does not necessarily require an expert reader. The reader

<sup>39</sup> The image of corpses in a river is a commonplace in baroque literature. See, for instance, Simon Dach's *Klage über den endlichen Vntergang vnd ruinirung der Musicalischen Kürbs-Hütte vnd Gärtchens*, in *Schöne, Kürbshütte*, p. 14, in which Dach describes the devastated Magdeburg; the Elbe, he writes, 'wuste keinen Lauff, mit Leichen zugedeckt'. Similar motifs are used by Weckherlin and Gryphius, for instance, in Gryphius's 'Trawrklage des verwüsteten Deutschlands' (in *Das Zeitalter des Barock*, p. 270): 'Drey mal sind schon sechs Jahr als unser Ströme Flutt | Von so viel Leichen schwer / sich langsam fortgedrungen'. It is noteworthy, however, that a similar motif already occurs in *Hundejahre*: 'Amsel fischt an der Deichsohle im Schlamm... Da bleibt eine treibende Katze im Treibholz hängen... da löst sich die Katze, kreiselt weg, fällt den Möwen zu... Da treibt ein toter gelber Hund und dreht sich... Es treibt ein Kalb, das lebt nicht mehr' (iii. 150f.).

simply needs to employ acumen (a form of baroque *argutia*) and make links between related passages of the text in order to understand the function of the motifs, such as the moon, for example. Literary techniques which are unfamiliar to a modern reader are introduced in the novel. *Das Treffen in Telgte* provides a comprehensive introduction to baroque literature. The reader learns about the leading poets of this period and their style and subject-matter (the poets are usually characterized according to their manner of writing and topics: for instance, the epigrammatist Logau as a man of acumen; the author of hymns, Gerhardt, as a pious moralist; Grefflinger, who wrote love poetry, as a lady-killer). The reader is also introduced to the structure and function of emblems. It is even demonstrated how a new emblem, the thistle, is invented. (The thistle only develops gradually to a full-blown emblem; when it is mentioned for the first time it is just an unimportant particular of the novel's background.) Even the literary use of emblems is discussed when Buchner praises the emblem of the long-tongued purple snail in Gryphius's play *Leo Armenius*. *Das Treffen in Telgte* is an interesting and rare case of a novel which demands a specific knowledge of literary history and at the same time provides an introduction to this background. Hence, it is possible for an unprepared reader to find a way into the book. Reinhard Baumgart is quite wrong to accuse the novel of 'erhabene Insider-Scherze' which cannot be understood by the 'Bestseller-publikum'.<sup>40</sup>

All this does not rule out that the *poeta doctus* sometimes speaks to the expert reader. There is a 'learned level' of meaning in the novel which can be distinguished from other levels. In some passages Grass uses an esoteric allegorical way of writing which addresses a small number of readers who share a certain knowledge with him. The question is whether Grass should be blamed for this; accusations like that made by Baumgart and other critics could, for instance, be directed against nearly all the novels of Thomas Mann. It seems that critics are not willing to allow to Grass what is often praised in the case of Mann. The reason for this is that learned elements in Grass's novels contradict the cliché of the uneducated but gifted writer, the 'Naturbursche', which still dominates nearly all reviews of his books.

The allusions to *Simplicissimus* and *Landstörtzerin Courasche*, for example, belong to the 'learned level' of the text. Some hints might be overlooked even by specialists. Only a few readers will recognize that the noble ladies 'die sich

<sup>40</sup> Reinhard Baumgart, '300 Gramm wohlabgehangene Prosa: Die behäbige Literatenkomödie des Günter Grass', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 5, 6 October 1979, p. 132.

im Kreis der Tannengesellschaft nicht nur dichtend und reimend um Rompler gelagert hatten' (vi. 41) allude to the princesses Elisabeth and Anna von Baden who admired Rompler. Who would notice that sword and goose quill in the following quotation are parts of Simplicissimus's coat of arms? 'Als sich die Herren eine schriftliche Begründung ihrer Ausweisung erbat, zog Gelnhausen seinen Degen, nannte den seinen Federkiel, wollte wissen, wem er's zuerst schriftlich geben solle...' (vi. 14).<sup>41</sup> The reader can well understand the image without knowing about Simplicissimus's arms. It can be interpreted as an emblem depicting Gelnhausen's dual role of participating in the literary disputes and interfering in the world.<sup>42</sup> In order to understand the meaning of this image the reader need not grasp the learned or esoteric level of meaning.

What the reader really needs is an *ars combinatoria*, that is the ability to synthesize various passages of the text which are separated even though they belong together. The portraits of the different characters in the novel may illustrate this. There are about twenty poets (and some publishers) who attend the meeting. But they are not characterized one by one as in a portrait-gallery. The different features of the characters are not described in a coherent portrait; they are highlighted in short passages which are scattered all over the novel. Grass combines two techniques which he had already used in *Der Butt*: enumeration and distribution. The first chapter gives a long enumeration of the poets who attend the meeting. It is mentioned in passing that Lauremberg and Greflinger who are both very unpretentious characters arrive on foot. The way they travel to the meeting already briefly characterizes the figures. The difficulty is that the information about each poet is reduced to a minimum and the number of poets is very large. Each figure thus consists of many different elementary points which have to be synthesized by the reader. The core of the poets' portraits is usually a brief reading from their works. Each poet is highlighted

<sup>41</sup> Compare the frontispiece of Grimmelshausen's *Ewig-währender Kalender*.

<sup>42</sup> The reader might also remember the goose quill as a decisive motif in *Der Butt*. In that novel it illustrated women's basic and self-sufficient art of cooking and men's production of art which expresses their melancholic insufficiency. The melancholic tone also pervades *Das Treffen in Telgte*; thus the motif — which Grass also used for the illustration of the dustjacket — is related to a strand in *Der Butt*. But in the quotation above the parallel to the sharp sword shifts the accent to the acuteness of the satirical style in which the novel is partly written. Both a melancholic and a satirical tone permeate the novel. Another image which hints at the satirical style is the thistle to whose spikes manuscripts are attached (vi. 77). The motif has some affinity with the title of a satirical journal, *Skorpion*, which the former editors of *Der Ruf* wanted to publish because the licence of their journal had been withdrawn by the Allies. They met in Bannwaldsee in 1947 in order to discuss the specimen copy of the *Skorpion*. The satirical journal was never published, but the meeting in Bannwaldsee initiated the 'Gruppe 47'.

about fifty times in the short book. The technique of dissolving something complex into basic units is similar to the highly artistic device of Pointillism; Grass adds a puzzling effect to this. He separates the different elements from their original context and merges them into a portrait of a group. It seems as if Grass began to write the novel with very clear sketches of each figure and only later cut them into the pieces which are scattered throughout the novel. It is almost impossible to recognize all the portraits at a first reading. At first sight the distinctions between the figures appear hazy. Surprisingly the portraits turn out to be extremely clear-cut if one traces a single character through the novel. (We have seen that the same applies to the time and place of the meeting.) Even though *Das Treffen in Telgte* is a much shorter novel than *Der Butt* and has a different structure, it uses highly artistic literary devices and requires the reader's acumen like a courtly-historical novel.

The character Gelnhausen can serve as an example for a figure which is dissolved into several elementary features.<sup>43</sup> Gelnhausen arrives at the meeting together with Harsdörffer, Endter and Birken. This is a hint the *poeta doctus* gives to the learned reader who knows that no baroque author had a stronger influence on Grimmelshausen than Harsdörffer. His works formed major sources Grimmelshausen exploited for *Simplicissimus*. The way Gelnhausen is introduced for the first time deserves some attention.

Es begleitete sie [Harsdörffer, Endter and Birken] ein rotbärtiger Kerl, der sich Christoffel Gelnhausen nannte und dessen schlacksiger Jugendlichkeit — er mochte Mitte Zwanzig sein — ein blattriges Gesicht widersprach. In seinem grünen Wams unterm Federbuschhut wirkte er wie erfunden. Jemand sagte: Den hätten die Mansfeldschen im Vorrüberreiten gezeugt. — Doch zeigte sich, daß Gelnhausen wirklicher war als seine Erscheinung. Ihm unterstand ein Kommando kaiserlicher Reiter und Musketiere, das am Ortsrand lagerte, weil der Umkreis der

<sup>43</sup> It should be noted that some research has been done on Grimmelshausen and Grass in a doctoral dissertation by Susan C. Anderson. However, this thesis has a different scope from mine in that it tries to demonstrate how 'Grass's tale partially reconstructs the original context in which... [Grimmelshausen's] works appeared and fuses it with our contemporary one so that we can understand them'. Susan C. Anderson, *Grass and Grimmelshausen: Günter Grass's 'Das Treffen in Telgte' and 'Rezeptionstheorie'* (Columbia, South Carolina, 1987), p. 12. Anderson's dissertation summarizes Hans Robert Jauß's aesthetics of reception, provides introductions to *Das Treffen in Telgte* and Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* and *Courasche* and draws its conclusions in a chapter entitled 'Grass's dialogue with Grimmelshausen'. This final chapter tries to show 'how *Telgte* alters the reader's perception of Grimmelshausen's narratives and *Gruppe 47*' (p. 94). By contrast, my study focuses on Grass's active use of literary tradition and in particular on the manner of writing which evolves from the use of baroque literature. An important aim is to understand and to interpret Grass's writings by analysing the employment of baroque literary devices. For certain levels of meaning in Grass's writings can best be understood if we in turn use baroque techniques of reading. Like Anderson I focus on the role of the reader but as this study works on the premiss of an affinity between Grass's later novels and baroque literature my textual analysis employs rhetorical categories which were pertinent to the baroque age.

Friedenskongreßstädte als neutral erklärt und in ihm jede Kampfhandlung der Parteien untersagt worden war. (vi. 9)<sup>44</sup>

The age of the fictitious Gelnhausen is that of the real Grimmelshausen in 1647 (Grass carefully sticks to the age of his characters in 1647). The age and the Christian name Christoffel are features of the real Grimmelshausen (who was born in Gelnhausen, hence the name of the figure in the novel). Yet, Gelnhausen cannot simply be equated with Grimmelshausen, for the next characteristic which is attributed to the figure does not fit this simple analogy: his pock-marked face clearly is a feature of the fictitious protagonist in *Simplicissimus*. After the 'Venusberg'-episode in the fourth book of the novel the hero has to realize that he had caught 'die liebe Franzosen'<sup>45</sup>: 'WOrmit einer sündiget / darmit pflegt einer auch gestrafft zu werden / diese Kinds-Blattern richteten mich dergestalt zu / daß ich hinfüro vor den Weibsbildern gute Ruhe hatte; ich kriegte Gruben im Gesicht / daß ich außsahe wie ein Scheur-Denne / darin man Erbsen gedroschen' (pp. 310f.). The pock-marks are a fictitious motif. Thus the figure of Gelnhausen stands right between fiction and historical truth. Like Mäxchen sitting in a tree Gelnhausen allegorizes the relationship between fiction and reality. There are other features which highlight the affinity with the fictitious hero *Simplicissimus*. Gelnhausen wears a green doublet; *Simplicissimus*, too, is dressed in 'grün wüllen Tuch'.<sup>46</sup> And so is the plume a part of *Simplicissimus*'s dress: 'Ich liesse mich wieder von neuem grün kleiden / weil mir der Nahm Jäger sehr beliebte...; ich war so kühn / meinen Hut mit einem dollen Federbusch zu zieren wie ein Officier / daher bekam ich bald Neider und Mißgönner.'<sup>47</sup> *Simplicissimus* constantly changes his dress but appears time and again in a green doublet. The same is true of Gelnhausen in *Das Treffen in Telgte*.<sup>48</sup> The character *Simplicissimus* rises from the life of a

<sup>44</sup> Compare *Westfälische Geschichte*, edited by W. Kohl, I, 561: 'Beide Städte [Münster and Osnabrück] und die Verbindungsstraßen [thus including the Telgte 'Emshagen'] wurden für neutral erklärt, die Truppen der kriegführenden Mächte sollten abgezogen werden.' This neutrality adds to the insular quality of the place of the meeting.

<sup>45</sup> Grimmelshausen, *Simplicissimus*, p. 309.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183. He also wears 'silberne Knöpf' (ibid.) which in *Das Treffen in Telgte* are turned into boastful 'Goldknöpfe' (vi. 29).

<sup>47</sup> Grimmelshausen, *Simplicissimus*, p. 186. Like the sword the plume which usually symbolizes a military rank and the hunter's doublet depict Gelnhausen's practical power.

<sup>48</sup> *Simplicissimus* wears all kinds of clothes (the dress of a hermit as well as that of a fool, a hunter and a soldier). In *Das Treffen in Telgte* his clothes vary between a soldier's and a hunter's dress: 'Nicht mehr im grünen Wams mit Goldknöpfen prahlend, sondern...in Pluderhosen soldatisch gekleidet, saß er auf einer der Fensterbänke' (vi. 29). Compare Grimmelshausen, *Simplicissimus*, p. 236: 'Ich scheute mich nicht / nachdem ich Gefreyter worden / ...rothe Scharlachne Hosen...zu tragen.' Later the reader learns that 'dem einstigen Jäger von Soest..., immer noch (schon wieder) das grüne, gülden geknüpfte Wams zum Federhut kleidsam war' (vi. 48).

hermit to being a fool, a successful hunter until he eventually becomes a hermit again. Gelnhausen has the greatest similarity with Simplicissimus as a young and successful hunter, the stage when the character is at his peak (even though some features are taken from other stages of Simplicissimus's development).<sup>49</sup>

The fictitiousness of Gelnhausen is stressed in the remark 'Jemand sagte: Den hätten die Mansfeldschen im Vorüberreiten gezeugt' (vi. 9). This alludes to an episode in Grimmelshausen's *Courasche*:

Da kamen eilff Mansfeldische Reuter...diese packten mich an / und wanderten mit mir...dem Böhmer-Wald zu / als wann sie der Teufel selbst gejagt hätte / ich schrey zwar / als wann ich an einer Folter gehangen wäre / aber sie machten mich bald schweigen; umb Mitternacht kamen sie in eine Meyerey die eintzig vorm Wald lag / allwo sie anfiengen zu füttern / und mit mir umbzugehen / wie zu geschehen pflegt / welches mir zwar der schlechteste Kummer war / aber es wurde ihnen geseegnet / wie dem Hund das Gras / dann in dem sie ihre Viehische Begierden sättigten / wurden sie...überfallen / und...alle miteinander niedergemacht.<sup>50</sup>

Later in *Das Treffen in Telgte* the same episode is referred to in another context; Gelnhausen insults Courasche as a bitch: 'Seitdem sie im Böhmerwald unter die Mansfeldschen Reiter geraten sei, stehe die Courage für jedermann offen' (vi. 103). The two allusions to the 'Mansfeldschen Reiter' are, of course, contradictory. This shows how freely Grass uses motifs from his literary sources. However, the contradiction between the two passages is not meaningless. Gelnhausen and Courasche are a very odd couple; his youthfulness contrasts with her age which becomes apparent from time to time. The two contradictory references to the Mansfeldsche Reiter show that Courasche is both a mother and a bitch to Gelnhausen.

It is significant that after the heroine Ilsebill in *Der Butt* the leading female figure in the following novel is a negative character. Courasche can be equated with 'Frau Welt' who represents the evils of the world. (She is depicted in this role in the frontispiece of the novel *Lebensbeschreibung der Ertzbetrügerin und Landstörtzerin Courasche* where she sits on a mule eating a thistle.) The wickedness of Courasche, however, places her in a strong position; thus she is a negative variation of the theme of women's liberation in *Der Butt*. It is instructive to see Courasche, the 'Frau Welt', in relation to the Telgte Madonna: the purity and virginity of the Virgin Mary can be expressed in the shorthand

<sup>49</sup> He refers to the time when he was the 'Jäger von Soest' as the past even though he still wears his dress in *Das Treffen in Telgte*: 'Er kenne den braven Mann...noch aus jener Zeit, in der er als Jäger von Soest weitbekannt gewesen sei. Damals wäre er in seinem grünen Wams mit den Goldknöpfen überall...' (vi. 92).

<sup>50</sup> *Das Zeitalter des Barock*, p. 1107.

formula *rosa ex spinis*. It is an important feature of the thistle (which in the novel is taken from the garden of the bitch Courasche) that it has spikes.<sup>51</sup> The phrase 'eine hochtreibende Distel, aus dem Garten der Wirtin gestochen' (vi. 56) has a clear sexual connotation which alludes to the immoral life of Courasche. The link between Courasche and the spiny plant is further enhanced in Gelnhausen's insulting remark which again is a strong sexual innuendo: 'Sie selber sei eine Distel, die man stechen müsse, wo sie treibe. Bis zur Wurzel stechen müsse!' (vi. 40).<sup>52</sup>

The first description of Gelnhausen ends with the conclusion that he turns out to be more real than he appeared to be. He provides the military protection for the group — another allusion to the historical Grimmelshausen who was a soldier of the imperial troops in Westphalia. Thus the historical Grimmelshausen is merged with the fictitious protagonist *Simplicissimus*.<sup>53</sup> This inherent complexity of the figure of Gelnhausen endows him with exceptional faculties. He manages to use fiction and imagination to manipulate the 'real' world and also has considerable influence on the men of letters because they depend on his physical power. In all perils the partly fictitious character remains unscathed: 'Was alles geschehen war, nirgendwo hatte er Schaden genommen' (vi. 118). Harsdörffer describes Gelnhausen in these terms: 'Dessen Schwall mache Jesuiten verstummen. Dem seien die Kirchenväter, aber auch alle Götter und deren Gestirn zur Hand. Der kenne des Lebens Unterfutter und wisse sich obendrein überall ortskundig: in Köln, Recklinghausen wie in Soest' (vi. 10).<sup>54</sup> It is his universality which makes Gelnhausen such an exceptional character.

This universality enables Gelnhausen to address the illustrious poets in an ambiguous way. His respect for the learned men is mixed with ironic hints about their one-sidedness. When Gelnhausen suggests the move to Telgte he finishes

<sup>51</sup> Like the Adam's apple and the eel trap the spikes and the thistle are symbols of the Fall. The thistle forms a part of God's curse that follows the Fall; God says to Adam: 'cursed is the ground for thy sake...Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee' (Genesis 3. 17f.).

<sup>52</sup> This is, of course, not the only meaning of the image. Above all the thistle embodies the torn, but enduring fatherland which contrasts with another important motive strand of *Das Treffen in Telgte*, the quickly fading gourd-vine. The image of the thistle is analysed further in the section 'Language as Experiment'.

<sup>53</sup> In Grimmelshausen's novel the literary figure of *Simplicissimus* is already partly modelled on the author's own life. However, unlike Gelnhausen, the character is not a conscious allegory of the mixture of fiction and history.

<sup>54</sup> The power of orientation is also a feature of *Simplicissimus*: 'Meine Gewonheit war / wenn ich so herumb terminirte / daß ich alle Weg und Steg / alle Gräben / Moräst / Büsch / Bühel und Wasser beritten / dieselbige mir bekant machte / und ins Gedächtnis faßte / damit wanns etwan an ein oder anderm Ort künfftig eine Occasion setzte / mit dem Feind zu scharmützeln / ich mir deß Orts Gelegenheit beydes offensivè und defensivè zu nutz machen könnte.' Grimmelshausen, *Simplicissimus*, p. 239.

his speech: ‘Und da Telgte, wie man wisse, von altersher ein Wallfahrtsort sei, werde er den musisch wallfahrenden Herren dort Quartier machen. Das habe er von Jugend an gelernt: allerlei Göttern Quartier zu machen’ (vi. 10). At first sight this seems to be a polite and modest gesture of an uneducated outsider. Harsdörffer apologizes for the strange language of Gelnhausen — ‘Der Kerl spreche zwar närrisch...’ (vi. 9) — when he introduces him to the poets. However, Gelnhausen’s seemingly modest remark has a double meaning: it also refers to the fool Jupiter in the novel *Simplicissimus* who believes that he is a god. This character is looked after by the young hero. Thus the poets are indirectly ridiculed as fools. Gelnhausen’s language appears to be strange or ‘närrisch’ precisely because it bears an esoteric meaning. Two assertions are opposed to each other in this passage. From Harsdörffer’s point of view (and that of the poets in general) Gelnhausen is a fool, while Gelnhausen’s ironic remarks imply that the poets are fools. To Stoffel, who is still inexperienced as a writer but who is familiar with the harsh reality of the Thirty Years’ War, the men of letters appear one-sided and naive. The poets, of course, regard Gelnhausen as a fool because he lacks the proper education of a baroque poet (this is another parallel between the fictitious Gelnhausen and the real Grimmelshausen).<sup>55</sup> In the seventeenth century it was unthinkable that a poet should have attended neither the Protestantisches Gymnasium, nor a Jesuit school nor university. Writing poetry was seen as a craft which required knowledge of poetical rules. The tuition of poetics which was mainly based on traditional rhetoric was the most important premiss for writing literature. The fact that Gelnhausen is a Catholic adds to his position as an outsider (for apart from Gelnhausen only Scheffler is attracted to Catholicism). Thus it is not surprising that only Harsdörffer and Greflinger regard Gelnhausen as a member of the poets’ circle.

Even though Gelnhausen is a Catholic he does not take part in petty religious controversies. He seems to stand above the different denominations. When the Protestant poets wonder whether they should trust a Catholic, Gelnhausen replies: ‘Ihn kümmerge die Religion wenig, wenn man ihm seine lasse’ (vi. 11).

Gelnhausen has a similar universal attitude towards many other controversial issues the poets discuss. He avoids all dogmas and usually pleads for a tolerant solution of political, religious and poetical disputes. The main purpose of the character is to form an allegory of the reconciliation of fiction and reality and of the religious, political and linguistic fragmentation of Germany. Here the

<sup>55</sup> On the education of a baroque poet, see Barner, *Barockrhetorik*, pp. 241ff.

function of allegory is not to create an underlying meaning or to allude to historical parallels but to bridge gaps which cannot otherwise be bridged.

For instance, the universality of this character becomes apparent in his versatile language. While all the other poets only speak their local dialect, Gelnhausen changes from a Hessian to a Westphalian and Alemannic idiom. It is brought home to the reader that Gelnhausen rejects the purist demand that literature must only be written in High German.

Und wieder war es Gelnhausen, der von der Fensterbank her Bescheid gab: Wenn man zum Rhein hin Kappes, zwischen Ems und Weser Kumst sage, sei jedesmal Kohl gemeint. Er könne den Sprachstreit nicht begreifen. Laurembergs Poem habe doch jedem Ohr Beweis gegeben, wie hübsch das platte Maulwerk zum gestelzten Gerede klinge. Also solle beides nebeneinander und gemischt Bestand haben. Wer immerfort nur reinlich halte und dem Besen zuspreche, der kehre am Ende das Leben aus. (vi. 31)

Whenever the language of literature is curbed by restrictive poetics Gelnhausen objects. He is, for instance, openly opposed to Birken's *Teutsche Rede- bind- und Dicht-Kunst* which postulates a rigid rhetorical *aptum*: 'Man hat...zu beachten / daß man jeder Person anständige Reden in den Mund lege: maßen die Kinder kindisch / die Alten verständig / die Frauenpersonen züchtig und zärtlich / die Helden dapper und heroisch / die Bauern grob reden sollen.'<sup>56</sup> Gelnhausen makes it clear that such a prescriptive poetics contradicts his experience of life. Sitting on the window sill he comments:

Er wolle nur anmerken, daß nach seinem kreuzqueren Wissen often die Alten kindisch und die Kinder verständig, die Frauenpersonen grob, die Bauern züchtig und die ihm bekannten dapperen Helden, selbst wenn's ans Sterben ginge, lästerlich redeten. Zärtlich habe zu ihm, mit Vorzug an Kreuzwegen, nur der Teufel gesprochen. Worauf der Regimentssekretär aus dem Stegreif alle angeführten Personen miteinander, zum Schluß den Höllenfürsten parlieren ließ. (vi. 29)

Gelnhausen firmly opposes the formal restrictions of traditional poetics. The learned men, however, can only laugh at his ignorance of basic rhetorical rules (*ibid.*). The comical effect of this passage is based on the deviation from the rhetorical *aptum*; that is to say, it does not conform to expectations of appropriate behaviour (it is, for instance, comical when a lady unexpectedly swears like a soldier).<sup>57</sup> The baroque concept of the comic is based on this deviation from the appropriate role a person has to play. Gelnhausen, however, does not simply want to amuse his audience; he deliberately crosses the

<sup>56</sup> *Das Zeitalter des Barock*, p. 33 (see vi. 28).

<sup>57</sup> For the *aptum* see Barner, *Barockrhetorik*, pp. 150f.

boundaries between the different *genera dicendi* in order to achieve a new stylistic variety. Whenever poetics are discussed Gelnhausen opts for a conscious mixture of different elements which traditional rhetoric wants to keep separate.

Though Gelnhausen is not fully accepted as a member of the literary circle it is his military power which makes the meeting possible. He severely criticizes Libuschka because she does not cater properly for the musketeers: 'Wenn denen nicht knuspriger aufgetragen werde, seien die morgen beim Schwed schon...Und wenn Mars ihm seinen Schutz entziehe, sehe sich der schwanenhalsige Apoll jedem freilaufenden Haumesser geliefert. Was heißen solle: Ohne militärische Protektion müsse der Poetendisput alsbald auffliegen' (vi. 33). This is another esoteric passage where Gelnhausen's strange language is pregnant with meaning. (And once again food is shown to be the true force that rules history — an echo of the treatment of the subject of *Der Butt*.) The god of the muses, Apollo, is the patron of the meeting. There is a significant relation between Apollo and the symbolic chair of the meeting: it is a chair of the *vates*.<sup>58</sup> The term *vates* which denotes prophets or poets of divine inspiration is distinct from *poeta*; it emphasizes passive inspiration, while the term *poeta* implies a more conscious and technical process of writing. Thus the poets who read sitting on the stool are inspired by the muses and are divorced from the real world. The illiterate Gelnhausen, however, is not allowed to sit on the stool. Therefore he brings his own Apollo statue to Telgte when he returns from one of his forages, making it clear that he too has the ambition to become a poet. Apollo is described as 'schwanenhalsig' because in mythology he is related to the swan, the emblem of the poets (hence the names 'Boberschwan' Opitz, the 'Elbschwan' Rist). Moreover, the word 'schwanenhalsig' indicates that art and literature are very vulnerable.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup> See Hermann Koller, *Orbis pictus latinus*, third edition (Zurich and Munich, 1983), p. 479. This illustration shows Apollo sitting on a stool next to which a laurel is depicted (in Telgte it is replaced by the similarly durable thistle). The 'poeta vates-image' is briefly mentioned by Richard Erich Schade, 'Poet and Artist: Iconography in Grass' *Treffen in Telgte*', *GQ*, 55 (1982), 200-11 (p. 207). (The stool in *Das Treffen in Telgte* also alludes to the so-called electric chair of the 'Gruppe 47'.) A special chair was also used by the baroque 'Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft' during the ceremony of enrolling a new member. 'Der Aufzunehmende erhielt den Antrag zum Eintritt gewöhnlich bei Tafel; nachdem er denselben angenommen hatte, wurde er auf den sogenannten *Drehstuhl* gesetzt, ihm die Satzungen der Gesellschaft und die Pflichten eines Palmgenossen vorgehalten, ihm sein Gesellschafts-Name, Bild und Wort auf einem Zettel überreicht.' See the still remarkable book by Otto Schulz, *Die Sprachgesellschaften des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1824), p. 11.

<sup>59</sup> For the swan see the emblem 'Insignia Poëtarum' in Alciatus, *Emblematum Libellus*, reprint of the edition of 1542 (Darmstadt, 1980), p. 236. As we have seen in a previous chapter Grass dealt with this image earlier in the poem on Racine's shield. See also Benjamin Hederich, *Gründliches*

The poets' literary circle, however, is not only threatened by Mars (a hostile outer world), but is challenged from inside by a rival art. The illustrious composer Heinrich Schütz makes a disparaging remark:

Dann setzte er sich wieder und verkündete sitzend, die Versammlung abermals erschreckend, zuerst in lateinischer — 'Ut sol inter planetas...' —, dann in deutscher Fassung des Henrico Sagittario Devise: Wie die Sonne zwischen den Planeten, strahle die Musik inmitten der freien Künste. Entweder hatte Dach...die Anmaßung nicht empfunden, oder er wollte sie überhört haben. (vi. 74)<sup>60</sup>

Heinrich Schütz is, like Gelnhausen, an outsider; the two characters have complementary roles. Gelnhausen is being looked down upon, while the mere presence of the eminent composer Schütz intimidates the poets because they feel inferior as artists. Paul Gerhardt, for instance, who is deeply offended by Schütz's criticism of simplistic strophic songs vehemently defends his plain hymns which are written for the daily religious purposes of the pious congregation. Like Schütz who looks down upon the poets because they fall short of his high standards, Gelnhausen mocks the poets — though from a different, 'humble' angle.

Gelnhausen's role, however, is not only to protect the poets. On the one hand Gelnhausen and Libuschka provide the poets with accommodation and food (it is not until the end of the novel that the poets become independent of their hosts because Greflinger catches fish for them). On the other hand it is through them that the poets are contaminated with a sinful world. It is extremely difficult to assess the merits and faults of Gelnhausen. If Schütz had not urged the poets to conclude the meeting for the sake of art they would have run away after the sinful feast and Gelnhausen's carelessness would have caused the end of the meeting. It is significant that only Schütz keeps calm and realizes that the poets have to bring their meeting to a finish; Simon Dach, by contrast, clearly fails to cope with this situation. There is a lack of firmness similar to that of the un-Stoic Gryphius who is criticized in *Der Butt*. This is the only weakness of a character who is otherwise flawless: Dach tends to run away. This is obviously an intended criticism of Hans Werner Richter. Grass has stated in an interview that Richter had made only one mistake: he ran away from protesting students in

*mythologisches Lexicon* (Leipzig, 1770), p. 337: 'So waren ihm [Apollo] zuförderst die Insel Delos...und andere Örter heilig: von Thieren aber der Schwan, wegen seines vorgegebenen Gesanges vor seinem Tode.'

<sup>60</sup> For this epigram see Jörg-Ulrich Fechner, "'Wie die Sonne unter den Planeten in der Mitte leuchtet, so die Musik unter den freien Künsten.'" Zu Heinrich Schütz' Eintrag in das Stammbuch des Andreas Möring', *Schütz-Jahrbuch*, 6 (1984), 93-101.

1968. This led, in Grass's view, to the end of the 'Gruppe 47'.<sup>61</sup> Even at the beginning of the novel *Dach* shows a lack of firmness — 'schon begann Dach...an seinem Vorhaben zu zweifeln' (vi. 9) — when Gelnhausen arrives and solves the problem. The second important crisis of the meeting is caused by Gelnhausen himself and this time Heinrich Schütz takes over Dach's role and encourages the poets to carry on with their meeting. The dignified Heinrich Schütz and the rough and ill-educated Stoffel fill the gaps left by Simon Dach. Schütz demonstrates that in situations of despair art is not useless, but can provide a solution to seemingly insoluble problems. This foreshadows the crucial scene when Gryphius throws the thistle to the ground. During this second crisis of the meeting it becomes obvious that there are also limits to Gelnhausen's universal abilities. But this does not mean that Gelnhausen is not an exceptional character. He participates in the realms of Schütz and Dach, whereas they have no access to his sphere: he is able both to sing a motet of Heinrich Schütz's *Cantiones sacrae* (vi. 45) and to quote extempore from Opitz's translation of the *Arkadia* (vi. 10). Surprisingly Schütz recommends that Gelnhausen write his 'Lügendgeschichten' down. He — but none of the poets — sees in Gelnhausen an artist.

This constellation of contrasting characters in the novel — Schütz, Dach, Gelnhausen — reflects the literary contest between the different stylistic levels as *genus grande*, *genus medium* and *genus humile*. The limitation of Dach's character coincides with the artistic challenge of the poets' circle by Schütz and Gelnhausen.

When the poets meet for their last reading and their anger at Gelnhausen reaches its peak, he provokes them by entering the room through the window. While Czepko is just about to begin his reading, Gelnhausen interrupts him from the window sill:

mit einer Stimme, die bescheiden vorklang, doch mit Spott unterlegt war: Er freute sich, daß die hoch- und weitberühmten Herren, welche unter Apollos Schirm so gegenwärtig wie ewig versammelt seien, ihn, den vom Spessart entlaufenen Bauernlummel, trotz des gestrigen, vom Herrn Schütz streng gerügten, dann aber christlich verziehenen Schwindels wieder aufgenommen hätten in ihrer Runde, damit er, der simple Stoffel, sich weiterbilden könne, bis daß auch er, dem alles Gelesene wirr überhauf liege, eine Ordnung zu machen verstehe. So belehrt wollte er in die

<sup>61</sup> *Atelier des Métamorphoses*, p. 89: 'C'est fini, et le Groupe manquera. J'ai toujours été opposé à l'arrêt de son activité. J'ai aussi trouvé insensé l'éclat qui se produisit à la Pulvermühle, en 1968, pendant la dernière session — que l'on se soit laissé intimider par une poignée d'étudiants qui se croyaient de gauche, mais qui faisaient partie de cette 'jeunesse dorée' gauchiste par mimétisme...Hans Werner Richter — et c'est le seul reproche que j'ai à lui adresser — s'est laissé effrayer et a alors décidé d'abandonner.'

Kunst, wie grad durchs Fenster, den Einstieg finden und — falls die Musen geneigt — zum Dichter werden. (vi. 112f.)

Again Gelnhausen's remarks form a mixture of modesty and ridicule. However, he clearly knows that he needs to learn the craft of writing poetry (and that he depends on the muses' inspiration). Only if one bears the educational background of a baroque poet in mind can one fully understand the provocation in this passage. The poets are outraged: 'Die Anmaßung, ihnen gleichsein zu wollen, war den weitgereisten Herren der fruchtbringenden, aufrichtigen, pegnesischen und deutschsinnigen Gesellschaften zuviel. Mit Ausrufen wie: Mordbube! Lügenbeutel! machten sie sich Luft. Rist schrie: "Pfäffischer Agent!" Jemand (Gerhardt?) verstieg sich in den Ruf: "Weiche, Satan!"' (vi. 113). Apart from Schütz and Harsdörffer none of the poets accepts Gelnhausen's ambition to write literature. It is characteristic of Gelnhausen that even though he wants to become a writer he does not accept the restrictions of normative poetics. On the contrary, as in his reproach against the rhetorical *aptum* and the elimination of dialects in literature, his poetical programme intends to break all rhetorical boundaries. Before he leaves the meeting he says:

Doch wolle niemand von ihm vertändelte Schäfereien, übliche Leichabdankungen, verzackte Figurenpoeme, zierliches Seelengewimmer oder Bravgereimtes für die Kirchengemeinde erwarten. Eher werde er den großen Sack aufmachen, den gefangenen Stunk freisetzen, des Kronos Parteigänger sein, den langen Krieg als Wortgemetzel neuerdings eröffnen, alsdann ein entsetzliches Gelächter auffliegen lassen und der Sprache den Freipaß geben, damit sie laufe, wie sie gewachsen sei: grob und leisgestimmt, heil und verletzt, hier angewelscht, dort maulhenckolisch, immer aber dem Leben und seinen Fässern abgezapft. Schreiben wolle er! Beim Jupiter, Merkur und Apoll! (vi. 116)

The tone and language of this passage is somewhat reminiscent of some of Grass's statements in his *Rückblick auf die Blechtrommel*: 'Vielleicht gelang es dem Autor, einige neu anmutende Einsichten freizuschaukeln, schon wieder verummtes Verhalten nackt zu legen, der Dämonisierung des Nationalsozialismus mit kaltem Gelächter den verlogenen Schauer regelrecht zu zersetzen und der bis dahin ängstlich zurückgepiffenen Sprache Auslauf zu schaffen' (ix. 625). And yet one should not too readily draw parallels between Gelnhausen's and Grass's poetical programme (if indeed the word programme is appropriate). There is a danger of misinterpreting this poetical confession. A casual look might lead to the conclusion that the passage confirms the old cliché of the gifted but uneducated story-teller (which was also a commonplace of early Grimmelhhausen research). Gelnhausen emphasizes that he has to spend a couple of years reading his source Harsdörffer, learning literary techniques from

Moscherosch, and taking notes from innumerable poetical tracts. Gelnhausen's participation in the meeting would be pointless if he did not seek an access to poetics as an *ars* which can be learned through *praecepta* and *exempla*.<sup>62</sup> Recent Grimmelshausen research has discovered that the seemingly naive author of *Simplicissimus* was a well-educated though self-taught writer.<sup>63</sup> Gelnhausen's poetical programme is not opposed to the use of rhetorical, emblematical, astrological and other techniques of baroque poetics. He wants to learn rules in order to enrich his literary skills but he is equally determined to cross all rhetorical boundaries whenever they might obstruct his flow of words. Thus his programme is both traditional and progressive; traditional in that it uses established poetics, and progressive because it breaks away from all the restrictions which are implied in conventional rhetoric. Moreover, it focuses on 'real life' rather than on the stock of mythical or classical topics which most established baroque poets dwelled on.

It is necessary to emphasize this because many reviews of *Das Treffen in Telgte* attribute such a misinterpreted literary programme to Grass. The parallel seems manifest to many critics because the clichés about Grass and Grimmelshausen coincide so neatly. Ever since *Die Blechtrommel* Grass is seen as a 'Kraftplatz', 'poetischer Naturbursche', 'literarischer Holzfäller', 'kaschubischer Rübezahl', 'Berserker', 'Cassius Clay der deutschen Gegenwartsliteratur'; he is addressed as a 'wilder Einzelgänger in unsrer domestizierten Literatur', a 'literarischer Löwe, der mit kaschubischer Naturkraft in die Gefilde der Literatur einbrach'.<sup>64</sup> The review by Dieter Fringeli is a typical example of the identification of Grass and Gelnhausen: 'Es scheint dem Danziger ein besonderes Anliegen zu sein, das Programm seines Stoffel aus Gelnhausen bis ins letzte Adjektiv hinein zu erfüllen. Der an uns vorbeiziehende

<sup>62</sup> For *praecepta* and *exempla* see Barner, *Barockrhetorik*, pp. 59f.

<sup>63</sup> See, for instance, Günther Weydt, 'Grimmelshausen und Homer: Zum Lektürekanon des *Simplicissimus*-Dichters', *Simpliciana*, 8 (1986), 7-17 (p. 7): 'Hauptursache für solche Unvollkommenheit der Betrachtung und Deutung war fast immer die nahezu unausrottbare Idee von der angeblich unbefriedigenden Vorbildung und sozialen Stellung des Dichters, der bald als Abenteurer, bald als Bauernphilosoph im Schwarzwald, geldbedürftiger Gastwirt, dann als kleiner Schultheiß und gesellschaftlich Alleingelassener, lediglich seinem Ingenium habe vertrauen können. Indessen hat sich seit längerem eine Wandel angebahnt. Man beginnt zu sehen, daß die vorgebliche Simplizität des Simplicianischen Autors immer weniger mit der Tatsache der Beobachtung weiterer Informationsquellen für Grimmelshausen — wir kennen schon hunderte — in Einklang zu bringen ist.'

<sup>64</sup> Franz Josef Görtz has assembled these clichés from various reviews in 'Der Butt im Sardinientümpel: Aus gegebenem Anlaß: Bemerkungen über den Zustand unserer Literaturkritik', *Rogners Magazin*, October 1977, pp. 56-61.

Wortfluss ist fraglos dem (literarischen) Leben und seinen Fässern abgezapft.<sup>65</sup> Like most critics Fringeli only quotes one aspect of the literary programme and does not mention the fact that Stoffel wants to learn the art of writing poetry before turning to the 'casks of life'. This misconception of Gelnhausen's poetical programme coincides with the cliché of the 'poetischer Naturbursche'.

A similar affinity between Grass and Grimmelshausen is emphasized by the blurb of the GDR edition of the novel. The text, for instance, praises the 'kraftvolle Realistik des Erzählers Grass, der sich auf Grimmelshausen als einen seiner Lehrmeister beruft'.<sup>66</sup> This is not to deny that there are parallels between Grass and Grimmelshausen (because they both in fact employ rhetorical means in order to produce an effect upon the reader and Grass surely breaks with the rhetorical *aptum*), but the parallel of the gifted story teller is an oversimplification.

There are, however, some critics who have noticed that Grass's creation of baroque language and his use of baroque poetics are highly conscious and artistic. But this observation is nearly always turned into an accusation against Grass. The word 'Handwerk', which is often used in this context, has a clearly pejorative connotation. Karl-Heinz Bohrer, for example, called Grass's later style 'kunsthandwerklich' in a clearly derogatory sense.<sup>67</sup> The reviews of *Das Treffen in Telgte* tend to employ two contradictory categories: the style of the novel is either praised as full of vitality, 'voller Saft und Kraft',<sup>68</sup> or it is criticized as 'kunsthandwerklich' and mannered. Neither of the two categories, however, is fully applicable. Reinhard Baumgart, for instance, criticizes Grass's style as 'glänzendes Handwerk' and 'altdeutsche Schönstschreibweise' and comes to the conclusion 'auch rein handwerkliche Qualitäten (selbst

<sup>65</sup> Dieter Fringeli, 'Günter Grass in Telgte: Ein Freipass für die Sprache', *Basler Zeitung*, 14 April 1979, p. 47.

<sup>66</sup> Günter Grass, *Das Treffen in Telgte* (Leipzig, 1984). *Das Treffen in Telgte* was the first novel to be published in the GDR after Grass had become a persona non grata because of *Die Plebejer proben den Aufstand*. However, the tension between the GDR and Grass was not only political. Grass's experimental and highly artificial writing did not fit the concept of socialist realism (which Grass openly rejected as 'puritanisch' and 'kunstfeindlich'). Compare, for instance, Arnold, 'Gespräche mit Günter Grass', p. 1). Grass's writings were accused of being formalistic. The fact that *Das Treffen in Telgte* could be seen in the tradition of the seemingly 'realistic' Grimmelshausen (as opposed to the artificial courtly baroque literature) certainly helped to make it acceptable in the GDR. The etching on the dustjacket, however, had to be changed for the GDR edition. The writer's hand rising from the rubble obviously looked too much like the triumph of a writer who had been forbidden for many years. It was replaced by the less provocative etching 'Federn blasen (1974)' (Grass, *In Kupfer, auf Stein*, p. 83).

<sup>67</sup> Karl-Heinz Bohrer, 'Teutonen-Fibel für Ausländer: Wie man uns mag: Günter Grass' *Das Treffen in Telgte* in England', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 8 July 1981, p. 21.

<sup>68</sup> Alexander Bauer, 'Einzig die Wörter glänzten', *Der Report*, 26 April 1979, p. 15.

Wurmlöcher in Stilmöbel setzen) sind eben Qualitäten'.<sup>69</sup> This quotation shows that the reception of *Das Treffen in Telgte* still moves in the accepted — but inadequate — channels of the aesthetics of the Goethe period. According to this 'Genieästhetik' rhetoric and 'Handwerk' indicate a lack of originality they are a symptom that a work of art is of inferior quality. Real art must do without them (here lies one of the reasons for the rejection of baroque literature as rhetorical during the nineteenth century).

It is characteristic that the word 'barock' is one of the terms favoured by critics to describe Grass's style. Ironically they generally use it as an expression for the naive originality, vividness and sensuousness of his style, but not for rhetorical and stylistic awareness. Grass has emphatically rejected the cliché 'von einer rülpfenden, furzenden Sprache' and of 'volles Lebensgefühl' as baroque.

Hier zeigt sich eines der typischen Mißverständnisse über den Begriff 'barock'. Übrigens wird in der *Neuen Zürcher Zeitung*...dieses dauernd beliebige Anführen — ein barocker Autor, ein barocker Erzähler —, ad absurdum geführt, zu Recht ad absurdum geführt. Gerade im Barock-Kapitel [the chapter 'Von der Last böser Zeit' in *Der Butt*] ist die Sprache jammertalig, ist sie geprägt von einer unglücklichen, von einer zerrissenen Zeit...Das sind Barockvorstellungen, die mehr mit Chippendale zu tun haben, mit nachgemachten Dingen, als mit Kenntnis einer Geschichtsperiode, die vage und mehr von der Architektur her so bezeichnet wurde.<sup>70</sup>

Baroque language or style is, of course, highly rhetorical and elaborate. (We have already mentioned that Grobianism does not dominate in this period.) It is symptomatic that the misconceptions about baroque style and about Grass's language coincide. Many critics still think of the baroque in terms of crude sensuousness. Therefore Grass's complaints about the majority of reviews are well founded.

Apart from Gelnhausen's poetical programme his defence against the accusations of the poets is of great significance. A particularly revealing case is Gelnhausen's justification for his lie that the papal nuncio Chigi had told him to ask Harsdörffer for a dedication. Gelnhausen admits that his aim was merely to flatter Harsdörffer,

was auch gelungen sei, denn der Nürnberger habe sich über den Widmungswunsch des Päpstlichen Nuntius ohne Zieren gefreut. Was zähle da noch die Gewißheit, ob sich der Chigi wahrhaftig die Widmung gewünscht habe, ob er sie so habe wünschen

<sup>69</sup> Baumgart, '300 Gramm wohlabgehangene Prosa', p. 132.

<sup>70</sup> Arnold, 'Gespräche mit Günter Grass', p. 29.

können oder sollen oder ob all dies dem Kopf des hier verklagten Stoffel als schönes Bild entsprungen sei'. (vi. 114)

Gelnhausen justifies his lies through their effects. It is difficult to deny that the effect his story produced on Harsdörffer is real and true. Therefore it seems petty to focus on the question of whether the cause of this effect, the invented story, is itself real. Gelnhausen asks the provocative question:

Seit wann seien denn die Herren Poeten so trocken auf platte Wahrheit versessen? Was mache sie linker Hand stumpfsinnig, wenn sie doch mit der rechten geübt seien, ihre Wahrheiten wohlgeremt bis ins Unglaubliche zu erdichten? Werde denn das dichterische Lügen erst dann zur Wahrheit geadelt, wenn der Verleger es drucken lasse? Oder anders gefragt: Sei etwa der in Münster nun schon ins vierte Jahr betriebene Land- und Menschenschacher tatsächlicher oder gar wahrhafter als der hierorts, vor Telgtes Emstor eröffnete Handel mit Versfüßen bei reichhaltigem Wort-, Klang- und Bildertausch? (vi. 114f.)

Gelnhausen shows that the poets' argument adheres to the old accusation that poets 'lie'. Their preoccupation with distinguishing between truth and fiction is reminiscent of Plato's theory of art. Plato had criticized art because of its dubious ontological status. Art only imitates sensual objects which are themselves mere imitations of pure abstract ideas. Gelnhausen, by contrast, justifies fiction through the effect it produces. His remarks are further evidence of the power of rhetoric, which is depicted by the emblem of the long-tongued purple snail.<sup>71</sup> The poets are speechless after Gelnhausen's witty response. Logau admits: 'Endlich wisse man, wer man sei. Solch genauen Spiegel hätten nur Narren parat' (vi. 115).<sup>72</sup> Gelnhausen's statement also enhances the importance of the fictitious meeting in Telgte as compared to the real political negotiations in Münster and Osnabrück. The fact that Gelnhausen criticizes the Platonic depreciation of art in terms of its effects foreshadows the role art will play at the end of the novel: in the decisive thistle scene the paralysed poets are cured by a catharsis which enables them to find the identity of the nation. Thus the poets reach through art what the 'realistic' politicians in Münster fail to achieve. As will be seen this episode of the novel disproves the concept of art to which the poets implicitly adhere and confirms Gelnhausen's views.

<sup>71</sup> See the Chorus of Courtiers in Gryphius's play *Leo Armenius* which is quoted in *Das Treffen in Telgte* (vi. 60, 62). The idea that man's life and death depends on his tongue is modelled on the emblem of the Muricid which is caught by its tongue (compare *Emblemata*, pp. 730f).

<sup>72</sup> Here the theme of the reciprocal accusation of foolishness is taken up again. The difference between the poets and Gelnhausen is that the foolishness of the latter leads to knowledge and understanding, whereas the former are foolish because of their stubbornness. (The revealing fool's mirror is a traditional motif, hence the title *Till Eulenspiegel*.)

But there is more to it than this. The accusation that poets lie was at times a real threat to the very existence of literature. It is quite possible to argue on religious grounds that the poet's creation of a fictitious world is an expression of *superbia* for it competes with God's creation of the world. This argument was quite common in the seventeenth century. In *Das Treffen in Telgte* Gerhardt's distaste for any literature which does not aim at edification is an example of this critical spirit. Birken's rigid poetics, too, have a similar religious slant. And Gryphius proclaims in ponderous words 'den Tod der Literatur' (vi. 36). The moral crisis of the Telgte meeting adds to the dilemma and leads to a temporary paralysis of the poets. There are moments of despair when literature appears as a wholly unjustifiable endeavour. For other aesthetic and moral reasons the members of the postwar 'Gruppe 47' were confronted with the theory that art and literature had come to an end. Grass's own views on this matter are clear. He refused to argue against this position on a theoretical level and strove for a pragmatic refutation simply by writing novels. A letter he wrote to Hans Bender makes this point emphatically:

Ich frage mich: Wenn Robbe-Grillet morgen einen geschliffenen Essay veröffentlicht, darin seitenlang behauptet, der Mensch habe keine Nase mehr; muß ich dann, womöglich gleichfalls und seitenlang, die Existenz der menschlichen Nase beweisen und obendrein hochleben lassen? Seit Jahren werden nacheinander die Ölmalerei, der Endreim im Gedicht, der Roman, das Theater, die Kunst überhaupt totgesagt, man scheut sich nicht, dem Fahrrad die Zukunft abzusprechen; daß nun all diese Dinge weiterhin munter am Leben sind, verdanken sie gewiß nicht vorzüglichen Essays, sondern der eigenen vitalen und unersetzlichen Form. (ix. 22)

The rehabilitation of literature in *Das Treffen in Telgte* must also be seen in this context. The rhetorical function of literature and its effect on the reader can be used to lay bare the shortcomings of a 'Kunst-ist-tot' theory.

Closely related to Gelnhausen's poetics of lying is his tendency to tell stories in different versions. For instance, he narrates four versions of his excursion to Münster — an impressive demonstration of how uncertain the telling of stories can be. In the first version he tells the hungry poets that several geese, pigs and sheep had come his way during his excursions. When he proudly shows all the forage in the court and is being asked how he got hold of the food, he tells the second version in which Count Johann von Nassau, the representative of the emperor, asks him to look after the poets. Heinrich Schütz, however, who has never believed Gelnhausen's stories, persistently interrogates him about his excursion until he has to confess that he is telling lies. In a third version Gelnhausen admits that he has foraged the food from the Swedes who had stolen

it from a peasant who was killed. But Gelnhausen still claims that this was in accordance with the commands of Count von Nassau. The fourth and final version is related by Libuschka. She had consoled the upset Gelnhausen during the previous night and thus claims to be informed about the real events. She says:

Was dem [Gelnhausen] aus dem Maul spaziere, sei alles Lüge aus Lügengespinst, sogar sein Geständnis, das er dem Sagittario abgelegt habe. Nicht dem Schwed hätten des Gelnhausen Reiter und Musketiere die Fourage abgejagd, sondern höchst eigenhändig, dabei mörderisch wie gelernt, habe der ach so witzig parlierende Landstörtzer seinem Ruf Ehre gemacht. Von Soest bis Vechta fürchte man den Grünwams. Dem bitte keine Jungfrau Schonung ab. Dessen Methode bringe selbst Stumme zum Reden. Das Kirchensilber, übrigens, die Altartücher und der Meßwein seien dem Coesfelder Hurenkloster abgegaunert gewesen...So fein spinne der Gelnhausen sein Lügengarn, so haltbar leime der Kerl seit Jahren die fürnehmsten Herren. Sie wisse es leidvoll: kein Teufel könne ihm gleich. (vi. 110)<sup>73</sup>

The reader is inevitably puzzled by this sequence of contradictory reports. Indeed, the retelling of stories aims to confuse the reader. One is inclined to accept the new version as a correction of the previous story. But then the new version is undermined again and replaced by another story. There seems to be no reason to believe that from version to version any more truth emerges. The story Gelnhausen tells to Schütz, for instance, loses credibility because some parts of it are obviously fictitious. Gelnhausen says:

Soviel ihm bei der Eile des Geschehens erinnerlich geblieben, seien dem Knecht und der Magd die schwedischen Manieren nicht wohlbekommen. Und sterbend habe sich die Bauersfrau um ihr Bübchen gesorgt, das er, gottlob, in den nahen Buschwald habe laufen, dem Greuel entkommen sehen. Dann sagte der Stoffel noch: Er wisse eine Geschichte, die ähnlich traurig im Spessart beginne. Denn so sei es ihm als Bub ergangen. 'Knan und Meuder' seien gräßlich verkommen. Immerhin lebe er. Wolle Gott, daß dem westfälischen Buben gleichviel Glück in den Weg laufe. (vi. 93f.)<sup>74</sup>

These fictitious elements obviously indicate that Gelnhausen is yet again inventing stories (another case of story-telling as a poor excuse). The final version must appear even more suspicious to the reader. Here Courage indirectly relates what she claims to have learned from Gelnhausen. It is important, however, that she only tells this story because the poets have asked her how she

<sup>73</sup> *Simplicissimus*, too, gets food from a nunnery. See Grimmelshausen, *Simplicissimus*, p. 182.

<sup>74</sup> Compare Grimmelshausen, *Simplicissimus*, pp. 18f.: 'Unser Magd ward im Stall dermassen tractirt / daß sie nicht mehr darauß gehen konte...den Knecht legten sie gebunden auff die Erd / stecketen ihm ein Sperrholtz ins Maul / und schütteten ihm einen Melckkübel voll garstig Mistlachen=wasser in Leib / das nenneten sie ein Schwedischen Trunck.' The maid 'sprach zu mir mit kräncklicher Stimm: O Bub lauff weg / sonst werden dich die Reuter mit nemmen / guck daß du davon kommst / du sihest wol / wie es so übel: mehrers konte sie nicht sagen'.

has bruised her eye. It emerges that Gelnhausen had punched her in the face during the previous night. Therefore, the story she tells to the poets is obviously her revenge (as, in fact, the Courasche in Grimmelshausen's novel openly acknowledges that the motivation to narrate her life is revenge for the 'Saurbrunnen'-episode in *Simplicissimus*).<sup>75</sup> Thus, each step towards the revelation of the true events is bound up with a new element of suspicion. While former contradictions are resolved new inconsistencies become apparent. The reader, however, keeps searching for a conclusive version; it is precisely this tendency of the reader to create premature coherence which is deliberately disrupted by the text. This is an important feature of many of Grass's novels: not only single episodes but the narration of stories in general is considered dubious. Thus Grass's novels are always open to new and neglected perspectives which throw light on the plot from a different angle. The analysis of *Der Butt* led to very similar conclusions. Wolfgang Iser's remarks about the novel of the twentieth century can be applied to Grass:

Der Leser soll sich der Art seines Wahrnehmens, der Form seiner passiven Synthesen zum Herstellen von Konsistenz [...] bewußt werden. Dies setzt voraus, daß der Roman das Erzählen von Geschichten und das Erstellen von Zusammenhängen aufgibt, um in der Präsentation von Elementarbeständen der Erzähltechniken [...] einen solchen Grad der Irritation zu erzeugen, daß nun der Leser selbst Wahrnehmungs- und Reflexionszusammenhänge erstellt. Diese werden vom Text vielfach dementiert, um dem Leser zu bedeuten, daß die von ihm erstellten Konsistenzen zu kurz greifen und daher viel von dem, was der Text an Konstitutionsmöglichkeiten enthält durch diesen groben Erfassungsraster fallen lassen.<sup>76</sup>

It is impossible for a reader to understand the variety of meanings in a novel without constantly correcting his interpretations. This process

macht dann den Leser nicht nur auf seine ihm selbst verborgenen Antizipationen aufmerksam, die aller Wahrnehmung und aller Bewußtheit vorausliegen, sondern läßt ihn auch entdecken, was als Vorbedingung des Verstehens alles passiert und worin vielleicht am Ende diese Nötigung zur Konsistenzbildung überhaupt besteht. Darin liegt die Chance, daß wir uns in dem ständigen Verstricktsein in selbstproduzierte Illusionen und Fiktionen entdecken. (Iser, p. 11)

<sup>75</sup> Hence the title *Trutz Simplex*. See Grimmelshausen, *Courasche*, in *Das Zeitalter des Barock*, p. 1095: 'Aber höre Courage, wann du noch nicht im Sinn hast dich zu bekehren / warumb wilst du dann deinen Lebens-Lauff Beichtweiß erzehlen / und aller Welt deine Laster offenbahnen? Das thue ich dem Simplicissimo zu Trutz! weil ich mich anderer Gestalt nicht an ihm rächen kan; dann nach dem dieser schlimme Vocativus mich im Saurbrunnen geschwängert...gehet er erst hin / und rufft meine und seine eigne Schand vermittelst seiner schönen Lebens-Beschreibung vor aller Welt aus.'

<sup>76</sup> Wolfgang Iser, *Der implizite Leser. Kommunikationsformen des Romans von Bunyan bis Beckett* (Munich, 1972), p. 10f.

Apart from the device of retelling stories Grass often employs untrustworthy narrators. In *Die Blechtrommel*, for example, Oskar Matzerath tells the story of his life in the Third Reich. It gradually emerges that he is dishonest and that he tries to hide certain aspects of his past from the reader. In *Die Blechtrommel* Grass solves the problem that a certain viewpoint cannot be avoided not by claiming an Olympian view and complete knowledge but by thematizing the distortions of a limited perspective.

In Grass's later works this is further complicated through a deliberate split between the author and his fictitious narrator. Telling stories becomes a contest between two rival parties. I have shown elsewhere that this is the function of the obscure narrator of *Das Treffen in Telgte*.<sup>77</sup> (The competing narrators can already be noticed in *Hundejahre* where several 'Chronisten' 'mit Brauksel...um die Wette schreiben, abweichend von Brauksels Meinung berichten' (iii. 170); from time to time there is also disagreement between Starusch and the dentist on how stories should proceed: 'Mein Zahnarzt war gegen Varianten und wollte keine letzte Aussprache mit Linde dulden...'; iv. 255). However, in *Das Treffen in Telgte* the competition between the author and his fictitious counterpart remains beneath the surface. In the later novel *Die Rättin* the antagonism between the narrators becomes plainly visible. There is an open narrative contest between the 'I' in the novel and the rat; they both try to gain the upper hand in giving the story another slant. Each attempts to discredit the narrative of the other and tries to proceed with the story in a completely different way. The narrator, for instance, tries to defend his version of the events against that of the rat:

Neinnein, Rättin! Noch jemand kommt ans Ziel. Dich will ich nicht hören, rief ich, dich nicht! Es muß noch die andere Reise zu Ende gehn. Da sagt die Rättin, von der mir träumt: Ist ja gut, Freundchen. Auch wenn das alles vergangen und ausgelebt ist, bleib nur bei deiner Gegenwart und sage: Sie wälzen sich in den Hängematten, er fährt im dicken Mercedes die Grunewaldska hoch auf das Olivaer Tor zu, die Frauen werden morgen in aller Frühe, er wird noch heute, sogleich...(vii. 236)

Time and again the narrator has to fight off the rat which tries to take over the narrative: 'Doch noch bin ich dran. Die Rättin muß warten. Dem Ende, falls es zu Ende geht, läuft die Posse voran...' (vii. 242). There are many such passages in the novel. The purpose of the competing story-tellers here is again to disrupt the reader's desire to create coherence. In an interview Grass commented on the part the fictitious rat plays in narrating the novel: 'Sie [the rat] wächst sich mehr

<sup>77</sup> See Weber, 'J. M. Schneuber: Der Ich-Erzähler in Günter Grass' *Das Treffen in Telgte*', pp. 109ff.

und mehr zur Gegenposition des Erzählers aus. Sie bringt ihn von eigentlichen Konzepten, über die er schreiben wollte, ab. Sie bekommt mehr und mehr Gewicht. Und so ist dieses Buch...ein permanentes, immer wieder durch andere Handlungsstränge unterbrochenes Streitgespräch' (x. 346). The disputatious element in *Der Butt* and *Das Treffen in Telgte* surfaces again. In *Die Rätin* Grass pushes the concept of competing narrators even further than in *Das Treffen in Telgte*. The rat, standing for a 'post-human' world, eventually gains the upper hand while the author's 'I' seems to run out of ideas. Such is the catastrophic tendency of the novel that he finally loses control over the narrative. This is an example of the extremes the antagonism between the author and his narrators can reach. The open rivalry reinforces the reader's suspicion that throughout the novel the narrative is invaded by strong biases.

(v) *Language as experiment*

Some light needs to be thrown on the climaxes of *Das Treffen in Telgte*. On the last day of the meeting the poets are paralysed by the guilt they feel for their sinful feast of the previous night. Two motifs which are gradually developed in the novel are employed to overcome this stagnation of the plot: the fish which are caught by Greflinger and the motif of the thistle.<sup>78</sup> When Greflinger unexpectedly returns with baskets full of fish the poets are suddenly determined not to run away but to finish their meeting with dignity. This scene foreshadows the purifying fish meal with its biblical connotations.

After a final reading-session the poets discuss the manifesto in the great hall. The following chapter begins with Logau's harsh criticism of the manifesto. A short draft of the text was discussed earlier in the novel, but the edited version is never read out loud. Hence, there is an interesting gap between chapters twenty and twenty-one, which is in fact the only narrative discontinuity in *Das Treffen in Telgte*. The reason for this gap may be that the 'Gruppe 47' had no literary or political programme. Grass therefore avoids inventing a concrete manifesto; even its final version is mentioned only briefly and in general terms. The style of the manifesto is obviously modest: 'Ganz ohne Rists Donnerworte kam der neue

<sup>78</sup> The thistle which forms the emblem of the Telgte poets was used as a real society emblem. See Georg Neumark, *Der neu-sprossende teutsche Palmaum*, reprint of the edition of 1668, edited by Martin Bircher (Munich, 1970), pp. 39f. 'Der Distel= oder unser lieben Frauen Gesellschaft / hat Hertzog Ludwig der 2. zu Bourbon / im Jahr 1370. angeordnet mit dem Worte: *Esperance. Hoffnung.*'

Text aus' (vi. 130).<sup>79</sup> It is edited by Dach and Daniel Czepko in a concise and clear style. Therefore the final text is not a verbose ideological programme, but a short statement commenting on practical aspects of politics. This is again a tradition of the 'Gruppe 47'. The group intervened in current political debates through brief statements which were individually signed by the writers who supported it. Then these statements were made public.<sup>80</sup> This is the context in which the manifesto must be seen.

It is important, however, that the poets fail to come to any conclusions by means of political debate. Only art, the indirect allegorical depiction of Germany through the thistle, enables them to find their own stance. The political discussions, by contrast, lead the poets into a deep crisis. After Weckherlin admits that many decades of political life have only taught him that all his effort was in vain the frustration of the poets reaches its peak and turns into pure anger:

Jeder goß seinen Kübel aus. Naturgewaltig erbrachen sie ihren Zorn. Sich selbst nährende Erregung riß die Versammlung von den Stühlen, Schemeln und Fässern. Sie schlugen sich die Brust. Sie verwarfen die Hände. Sie riefen einander die Frage zu, wo das so oft berufene Vaterland denn sei? Wohin es sich verkrochen habe? Ob es ein solches und in welcher Gestalt überhaupt gebe? Als Gerhardt, wie um den Fragenden Trost zu sprechen, sicher war: Ihnen allen sei kein irdisches, einzig das himmlische Vaterland gewiß! — hatte sich Andreas Gryphius schon aus dem Knäuel gelöst und andernorts auf Suche gemacht. (vi. 129)

At this climax of despair and paralysis Gryphius spontaneously steps in.

Vorne, neben dem leeren Schemel, im aufgelösten Halbrund stand er, hatte den Topf mit der verpflanzten Distel gefaßt und das Emblem und 'Sinnebild' ihrer Zeitweil gegen die Balkendecke gestemmt. So, von bedrohlicher Gestalt, wuchs er sich gewalttätig aus. Ein Gigant, der Wilde Mann, ein vorerst stöhnender Moses, dem die Zunge noch querlag, bis sich der Wortschub löste: Taub, stechend, vom Wind versät, des Esels Fraß, des Bauern Fluch, des strafenden Gottes Zorngewächs und Wucherplage, das hier, die Distel, sei ihrer aller Blum und Vaterland! — Worauf Gryphius das distelwüchsige Deutschland fallen und zwischen uns zerscherben ließ. (vi. 129f.)

Immediately all the paralysis is overcome. Within a few moments, the manifesto is edited and signed by the poets. Even though art seems to be limited by politics

<sup>79</sup> As so often Grass here describes a poet's works by using his own words; the 'Donnerwort' occurs in Rist's famous line: 'O Ewigkeit du Donner Wort' (*Das Zeitalter des Barock*, p. 208). Rist's first draft of the manifesto is partly based on the preface to his *Friedjauchzendes Deutschland (Das Zeitalter des Barock*, p. 750). Grass adds his own pastiche: 'Weshalb zu Telligt, was nach alter Deutung junger Eichbaum heisset, die hieselbst versammelten Tichter beflissen sind, den teutschen und frembden Fürsten ihre Meynung fürzustellen und als Wahrheit zu verfestigen' (vi. 69).

<sup>80</sup> See Gerd-Rüdiger Helbig, 'Die politischen Äußerungen aus der Gruppe 47' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Erlangen-Nürnberg, 1967).

and by the claim that 'Kunst-ist-tot', this passage demonstrates the overwhelming effect it can produce (this is in line with Gelnhausen's rejection of the Platonic depreciation of art). Only art, the emblem of the thistle, can depict what no abstract political debate is able to express — the meaning of the word 'Germany'.

Sinnfälliger war uns das Vaterland nie bewiesen worden. Fast sah es so aus, als seien wir nun zufrieden und auf deutsche Art froh über die Bildkräftigkeit unseres Jammers. Zudem war die Distel inmitten Scherben und verstreutem Erdreich heil geblieben. Man sehe, rief Zesen, wie unbeschadet das Vaterland den tiefsten Sturz überstehe. Alle sahen das Wunder. (vi. 130)

The allegorical *id est* equates the thistle with the 'Vaterland'. At the end of the novel the opposition between art and reality reaches a surprising turning-point. In their *furor poeticus* the poets create the identity of the nation, something which the powerful delegations fail to achieve in Münster.

This scene of *Das Treffen in Telgte* is related to Grass's concept of a 'Kulturnation'. Grass held that artists in East and West Germany should try to form a common German 'Kulturnation', an idea which politicians in the late 1970s would have rejected as unrealistic. In *Kopfgeburt*, for instance, he claims that the poets are better patriots than the politicians. 'Ist meine Behauptung...es hätten sich die deutschen Schriftsteller, im Gegensatz zu ihren separatistischen Landesherren, als die besseren Patrioten bewiesen...nur eine Trotzgebärde?' (vi. 150). Similar ideas can be found in Grass's works as early as 1965 when he accused Chancellor Erhard of adhering to the tradition 'des deutschen Separatismus' (ix. 114) and deplored that 'die Herrschenden in beiden Teilen Deutschlands wieder einmal ihre kurzsichtige und egoistische Politik betreiben, daß wieder einmal nichts übriggeblieben ist, uns zu einigen, als unsere Sprache' (ibid.). Grass holds that only poets know what should to be called German: 'Sie hätten "mit vielen heißen Seufftzern und Zähnen" die deutsche Sprache als letztes Band geknüpft. Sie seien das andere, das wahrhaftige Deutschland' as the Telgte poets say (vi. 70). All this is, of course, based on the assumption that the division of Germany would last, an assumption which has turned out to be false. But by no means does this make *Das Treffen in Telgte* an obsolete novel. On the contrary it shows that literature was able to deal with the topic of unity at a time when political unification seemed unthinkable. In this sense the novel was ahead of its time. *Das Treffen in Telgte* is a reminder that the religious, political and cultural fragmentation of the country has always been a major problem for German politics, a problem that becomes even more pressing through the unification of Germany. This topic can, of course, best be

dealt with in the guise of the baroque period, because the Thirty Years' War reinforced religious, cultural and political fragmentation.

In *Kopfgeburten* Grass also refers to meetings of poets in East Berlin which form another important background of *Das Treffen in Telgte* (and which has passed over unnoticed in the secondary literature on the novel): 'Ich erzählte, wie wir uns regelmäßig — vier fünf westberliner Autoren, sieben acht ostberliner Autoren — von 1973 bis 77 in wechselnden ostberliner Wohnungen getroffen, uns aus Manuskripten vorgelesen, unsere geteilte Lage und doch immer noch gemeinsame Sprache beklagt und gefeiert haben' (vi. 178). This remark throws some new light on *Das Treffen in Telgte*. Though the novel is dedicated to Richter and obviously alludes to the 'Gruppe 47' it is very likely that when he was writing it Grass had more recent memories of the literary meetings in East Berlin than of the 'Gruppe 47' (which had not met after 1967). This may, for instance, explain further why Heinrich Schütz encourages the poets to carry on with their meeting for the sake of art. Language and art form a decisive link between the two Germanies.

Nehmt sie alle, wenn ihr am Sonntagnachmittag (und sei es beim Puzzle) Deutschland sucht: den toten Heine und den lebenden Biermann, Christa Wolff drüben, Heinrich Böll hier, Logau und Lessing, Kunert und Walser, stellt Goethe neben Thomas und Schiller neben Heinrich Mann, laßt Büchner in Bautzen und Grabbe in Stammheim einsitzen, hört Bettina, wenn ihr Sarah Kirsch hört, lernt Klopstock bei Rühmkorf, Luther bei Johnson, beim toten Born des Gryphius Jammertal und bei Jean Paul meine Idyllen kennen....Pfeift auf die Grenzen. Wünscht nur die Sprache geräumig....Denn Besseres (über die Drahtverhaue hinweg) haben wir nicht. Einzig die Literatur (und ihr Unterfutter: Geschichte, Mythen, Schuld und andere Rückstände) überwölbt die beiden sich grämlich abgrenzenden Staaten. (vi. 250)

All this is symbolized by Gryphius's impressive gesture which, significantly, takes place in the great hall, the place that used to be the domain of literature. Now the distinction between the narrow political taproom and the wide hall becomes obsolete and the gap between the previously strictly separated spheres is bridged.

It is noteworthy in this context that this menacing separation of art and politics — which was, for instance, emphatically maintained in Thomas Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* — had a disastrous effect on German history. The rise of fascism in Germany was to some extent made possible by the widespread bourgeois aversion to politics. After the war the 'Gruppe 47' directed much criticism against the poets of the 'Innere Emigration' who had

completely retreated from the political sphere. It is in this context, too, that the reconciliation of art and politics in the 'Brückenhof' must be seen.

In order to understand how the thistle emblem could produce such an effect on the poets one has to realize that it is bound up with a theme which runs through the whole novel. Time and again the poets' discussions focus on theory of language. They make, for instance, various attempts to define the term 'Naturesprache' (vi. 25). The poets boast: 'Es könne "die teutsche Sprache" mehr als jede Fremdsprache Laut und Geräusch jeglicher Kreatur nachahmen, denn sie "...swiere wie die Schwalbe, kracke wie der Rab, silcke wie der Sperling, lisle und wisle mit den Bächen..."...Jedem fiel neues Naturgeräusch als Beweis deutscher Wortkunst ein' (vi. 30).<sup>81</sup> This concept of an iconic language which truly imitates the world was in fact an ideal seventeenth-century poets strove towards. Herbert Blume has pointed out that in Germany the assumption prevailed 'daß die Wörter wesenhafte Abbilder der Dinge seien. Saussureanisch gesprochen: man sah die Wörter als motivierte Zeichen an.'<sup>82</sup> Blume refers to a passage in Schottelius's *Ausführlicher Arbeit von der Teutschen HauptSprache* in order to illustrate this: 'Daß die Stammwörter [of the German language] wollauten / und jhr ding / dessen Namen sie sind / eigentlich austrücken...bedarf bey einem / der sonst Teutsche Ohren hat / keines langen überweisens.'<sup>83</sup>

It was also generally believed that the origins of German dated as far back as the Babylonian confusion of tongues. Moreover, many theoreticians claimed that the German language was — in contrast to Romance tongues — not derived from another language. The protagonist in Moscherosch's *Gesichte Philanders von Sittewald*, for example, is urged to speak German because 'die Wälsche Sprachen meistentheils jhren Ursprung von der Lateinischen haben; die unserige aber von anfang her von unseren Uranherren Thiutschö von sich / als eine wahre Haupt und Helden sprach / selbst bestehet'.<sup>84</sup> Those 'welsch' languages were regarded as morally inferior to German. The keen purism of many baroque poets thus has mainly ethical and even religious motives. The ideal model of a

<sup>81</sup> Compare Harsdörffer, 'Die Teutsche Sprache' (in *Das Zeitalter des Barock*, p. 43). The quotation is taken from a contest between several languages to imitate the sounds of nature which is, as one would expect in this context, won by German.

<sup>82</sup> Herbert Blume, 'Sprachgesellschaften und Sprache', in *Sprachgesellschaften, Sozietäten, Dichterguppen*, edited by Martin Bircher and Ferdinand van Ingen (Hamburg, 1978), pp. 39-52 (p. 43).

<sup>83</sup> Justus Georg Schottelius, *Ausführliche Arbeit von der Teutschen HauptSprache*, reprint of the edition of 1663 (Tübingen, 1967), p. 62.

<sup>84</sup> *Das Zeitalter des Barock*, p. 52.

language is the *lingua adamica* which God used when he spoke to Adam. The notion of such a language did, of course, not only exist in Germany; there have, for instance, been recent attempts to show that Milton's *Paradise Lost* at times aspires to such a prelapsarian language.<sup>85</sup> The contrast between a paradisiac ideal language and the Babylonian confusion with all its moral implications helps us to understand why Zesen exclaims: 'Nie werde Frieden werden. Weil man die Sprache nicht rein halte' (vi. 45f.). It was a common belief that the Thirty Years' War was God's punishment for sins committed by the people — and, in the poets' view, one of the major sins was the confusion of tongues. The purists' criticism of adulteration always refers implicitly to the Babylonian confusion. Hence, the poets despair after the sinful meal culminates in sentences such as: 'Den Wörtern war der Sinn verkehrt' (vi. 96).

The purism of the Telgte poets aims at an elevation of German to an ideal language. The poets conduct various experiments in order to solve the crisis of a sinful arbitrary language. They seek a linguistic expression which is 'motivated' and representational. According to this Utopian concept of language the form of a word would ideally resemble the object it refers to. One way of achieving this, for instance, is the imitation of 'Naturgeräusche' in which the poets indulge. Zesen's onomatopoeic sound patterns and sonorous words and the experiments of the 'Lautmaler Birken, dem alles zu Klang und Form wurde' (vi. 56) all aim at such a Utopian language (the Nuremberg 'Pegnitz-Schäfer' such as Birken and Harsdörffer were particularly interested in finding new onomatopoeic or pictorial ways of representing the world in language). The 'in Kreuz- und Herzform getürmte... Figurengedichte' are similar experiments using a visual rather than phonetic medium (see vi. 30, 56f.).

However, the most important experiments with visual means are the emblems in the novel. Emblems form a unity of arbitrary linguistic signs (the *lemma* or *subscriptio*) and representational visual signs (the *pictura*). An emblem is abstract and general in its meaning and concrete in its visual depiction of an object, person, action, etc. The interpretation of the *pictura* is based on the assumption that nature is a meaningful 'book' which can be read (like the Bible). It is significant that some emblems evolved from enigmatic hieroglyphs. Thus emblems can be esoteric and yet perfectly rational once the onlooker has the key. The invention or interpretation of an emblem requires acumen; it is not by accident that the *subscriptio* is usually an epigram — a genre which requires

<sup>85</sup> See John Leonard, *Naming in Paradise: Milton and the Language of Adam and Eve* (Oxford, 1990).

particular acuteness in the reader. What is of interest for *Das Treffen in Telgte* is that an emblem is a mixture of visual representation and abstract meaning expressed in words. Thus emblems can be interpreted as an attempt at bridging the gap between abstract linguistic signs and the visual concreteness of the world. This reconciliation between these two opposed realms also seems to be an important feature of the Utopian language the baroque poets sought. Moreover, the *raison d'être* of an emblem is often the moral essence it contains. All this shows that, in the view of the baroque age, a Utopian ideographic language would have to be modelled on an emblematic structure; its reconciliation of the abstract with the concrete and the moral impetus would have formed a counterpart to a language contaminated through Babylonian confusion. As far as I can see, the secondary literature on emblems has not paid much attention to the question of whether the deeply felt lack of a Utopian language was a main cause of the baroque poets' fascination with emblems and hieroglyphs. Whether the often discussed literary transformation of emblems in the baroque age was mainly a compensation for the lack of a Utopian language still needs to be examined. One should, for instance, bear in mind the high expectations among the Humanists in Italy and all over Europe following the discovery of Horapollon's *Hieroglyphica* in 1419. It was wrongly believed that this book might provide the key to the hieroglyphs which, in the view of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, could reveal the secret order God had given to the world.<sup>86</sup> This is not the place to pursue such a thesis, but we do need to recognize that in *Das Treffen in Telgte* emblems have a very specific function: they are a means of overcoming the moral and language crises in the novel, enabling the poets to find an expression for their notion of Germany and thus making it possible to bridge the gap between art and politics. Emblems in fact provide a key to an understanding of the whole novel. If one were to distinguish between different levels of meaning in the novel, the linguistic experiments might aspire to an anagogical level which is distinct from the moral and historical sense of the text. However, one could only speak of a relation to

<sup>86</sup> See, for instance, Claude-Françoise Brunon, 'Signe, figure, langage: les *Hieroglyphica* d'Horapollon', in *L'emblème à la Renaissance*, edited by Yves Giraud (Paris, 1982), pp. 29-47 (pp. 44f.): 'On crut sans doute, avec la découverte des *Hieroglyphica*, avoir trouvé la clef d'un langage originel, quasi divin.... Il s'agit d'un langage direct, par l'image et le verbe, ou plutôt par l'Image-Verbe, ouvrant l'accès à une connaissance intuitive de la vérité profonde des Etres et du Monde. Langage hors du temps, puisque fondé non sur des codes linguistiques historiquement périssables...., mais sur les choses même. Langage difficile aussi et donc hors des atteints du vulgaire, puisqu'il demande une culture initiale, une tension de l'intelligence et le désir de dépasser les barrières trompeuses des apparences, au-delà du discours commun et de ses routines.... Langage donc d'une élite de l'âme et de l'esprit.'

'Heilsgeschichte' in a loose sense, for we have seen that the Christian interpretation of history which was so common in the baroque is not applicable to Grass.

It is important to note that the use of Utopian emblematic language in *Das Treffen in Telgte* offsets the melancholic tendency of the novel. One characteristic of melancholy is its tendency towards futile reflection. This form of reflection fuels itself without reaching a conclusion. Moreover, the sharp analytical mind of the melancholic can be quite destructive, anticipating the uselessness of any action before it is carried out (in contrast to a form of rationality which aims at sustaining practical life). This is suggested, for instance, by the conclusion Weckherlin draws from thirty years' experience as an agent for different parties (vi. 128). The novel treats with irony the great baroque fashion of regarding all human endeavour as empty and vain (vi. 96f.). The belief in vanity can lead to a general affirmation of the way things are; it seems that all attempts at changing things must fail: 'Nur verschlimmbessert habe man alles' (vi. 129) Weckherlin concedes. Again we are dealing with a problem Grass himself confronted. How can one prevent analysis and contemplation from leading to despair, given that history moves in absurd circles? In its final stage this sort of ratiocination is bound to lead to complete paralysis. Dürer's engraving *Melencolia I*, which typifies 'the life of the secular genius in the rational and imaginative worlds of science and art', illustrates this (see Panofsky, p. 151). Grass has emphasized that 'keine dumpfe schwarzgallige Schwermut im Kupferstich Ausdruck [findet], sondern sich selbst begreifende, aus Erkenntnis gewachsene Melancholie' (iv. 556). Here he is echoing Panofsky's remarks about the decisive difference between the crude depiction of sloth in miniatures and woodcuts of the fifteenth century and Dürer's engraving *Melencolia I*. The former deal with simple laziness and the sinful sleep whereas *Melancholia* 'is inactive not because she is too lazy to work but because work has become meaningless to her; her energy is paralysed not by sleep but by thought' (ibid., p. 160). She rests her head on her hand, depicting the disproportion between her dominant intellect and other faculties such as the ability to receive sensual impressions which are neglected. It is precisely this melancholic disproportion which is neutralized through the visual effect of the thistle scene. After this episode the poets overcome their paralysis and can suddenly act upon their own impulses (this scene leads to a catharsis similar to the symbolic eating of the turbot in *Der Butt* which also forms a climax of the novel). The remedy against the futile state of paralysis is a sensual catharsis which purifies the melancholic mind.

We have already seen that the cyclical idea of history is bound up with the theme of melancholy. The recognition of the repetitiveness of history necessarily leads to *acedia*. In *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* Grass enumerates the causes of melancholy, among them: 'die Sinnlosigkeit, der ewige Kreislauf, die Vergewichlichkeit aller Mühe und die Wiederkehr immer der gleichen Puppen' (iv. 377). The experiments with an Utopian emblematic language are another attempt to find a way of acting in a world ruled by a principle of eternal recurrence. These experiments extend the standards of *carpe diem* and Stoicism which run through Grass's works. Within an apparently absurd course of history art can create some space for hope and solace.

A number of critics are therefore wrong to over-emphasize the pessimism latent in the novel. It is important to notice that the poets' dwelling on vanity is treated with irony.

Geil nach Ehre und Ruhm sah man sie wetteifern, die Vergewichlichkeit menschlichen Tuns in prächtigen Bildern zu fassen. Besonders die Jungen waren mit dem Leben in Zeilen schnell fertig. Doch auch den Älteren war der Abschied vom Irdischen und seinem Blendwerk dergestalt geläufig, daß man das Jammertalige und den Erlösungsjubel ihrer fleißig (gegen mäßigen Lohn) geschriebenen Auftragsgedichte als zeitmodisch empfinden konnte. (vi. 96)

Such passages of *Das Treffen in Telgte* indirectly criticize a similar pessimistic tone latent in the 'Untergangsliteratur' of the late 1970s (such as Hans Magnus Enzensberger's *Untergang der Titanic*, Günter Kunert's poems). Not only is the novel based upon a parallel between 1647 and 1947; the meeting in Saulgau in 1979 forms a third time level. Grass's objection to vanity literature is already apparent in the portrait of Gryphius in *Der Butt*. In *Das Treffen in Telgte* this criticism is further developed. From time to time Grass seems to lash out against a certain tendency in contemporary literature; this becomes obvious in *Kopfgeburt* which was written in 1979:

So jammern wir uns ins nächste Jahrzehnt. In Schulaufsätzen und Erstlingsromanen wetteifert Düsternis. Bevor es anfängt, wird mit dem Leben abgeschlossen. In tausend Frühstücksgedichten täglich kotzen sich unsere Poeten aus: lauter Meister im vierfachen Salto der Sinnlosigkeit und in weiteren Disziplinen. Es ist schon so: seitdem die Aufklärung als Heilige Kuh trockensteht, ist dem Fortschritt kein Saft mehr abzumelken. Aussteigen wollen unsere Streichelkinder, sobald ihnen die Fahrtkosten ihrer Umwege zugesichert sind. Wehleidig flüchten die Revolutionäre von gestern (unter Protest) ins Beamtenrecht. Und jeder behauptet, als gehöre sich das, Angst zu haben. (vi. 200)

One of the problems that Grass research will have to solve is the question of why Grass himself later wrote a novel like *Die Rättin* to which this criticism could be applied. The use of baroque literature in *Der Butt* and *Das Treffen in Telgte* occurs between one period in Grass's writings, in which he tried to free himself from the role of a political propagandist without giving up politics as a theme of literature, and another period which is dominated by a general pessimism. The reception of baroque literature is one of the means Grass used to achieve an equipoise between art and politics. This balance was later abandoned again: the political intentions in *Kopfgewürten* are more overt and *Die Rättin* falls into the same category of 'Untergangsliteratur' which is treated with irony in *Das Treffen in Telgte*.

This ironic adaptation of baroque literature may also explain why *Das Treffen in Telgte* is so successful in relating the complexity of German fate and history. It is precisely the fact that Grass has chosen this very subtle and indirect way of dealing with a devastating war which makes the book more successful (and this even in a political sense) than any political pamphlet or historical survey could have been. Even abroad the novel was read with an exceptional sympathy towards German history. Karl-Heinz Bohrer was quite wrong to say that *Das Treffen in Telgte* was very successful in explaining German history to English readers *in spite* of the baroque guise of the book.<sup>87</sup> The fact that baroque literature is nearly unknown in Germany and even more so abroad did not hinder an enthusiastic reception. On the contrary, the strange guise of the story leads to precisely the indirect and ironic mode of writing which creates a distance from the subject and thus helps the reader to understand German history.

One might, of course, ask whether the end of the novel is not as pessimistic as the vanity literature which it indirectly criticizes. The tavern is set on fire by an anonymous arsonist. The result of all the efforts of the meeting, the manifesto, burns to ashes in the tavern. This happens only a short time after it has been dedicated to eternity. 'So blieb ungesagt, was doch nicht gehört worden wäre' (vi. 136), the narrator comments, underlining the pointlessness of the whole meeting. However, there are some significant particulars which must not be overlooked. It is not by accident that the roof of the tavern catches fire — the allusion to the name *Dach* is obvious. Here again Grass's remarks about the end of the 'Gruppe 47' help us to understand this allusion. Two reasons led to the end of the 'Gruppe 47'. Firstly the group had no organizer after Hans Werner

<sup>87</sup> Bohrer, 'Teutonen-Fibel für Ausländer', p. 21.

Richter refused to arrange further meetings. Secondly it could not withstand the students' attacks from outside because the group lacked inner solidarity.<sup>88</sup> It is precisely this destructive effect of discord which is depicted by an emblem which depicts arson under the *lemma* 'Intestinae simultates'. Its *pictura* shows a man who sets fire to a roof while the house is being attacked from outside.<sup>89</sup> According to the *subscriptio* the remedy against dangerous discord is *prudencia*. From Grass's point of view it seems clear that the mistakes of the 'Gruppe 47' could have been avoided; lack of concord and practical common sense made it fail. Thus the end of the novel clearly implies a criticism of the 'Gruppe 47'. But it would be wrong to interpret the burning of the manifesto as a general defeat of literature. We have seen that the relations between art and politics in Grass's works are far more complex than a simplistic reading of the end of *Das Treffen in Telgte* might suggest.

<sup>88</sup> See *Atelier des Métamorphoses*, p. 89. — According to the chapter 'Der Verfall der Gruppe 47' in *Die Gruppe 47*, edited by Heinz Ludwig Arnold, *Text und Kritik*, Sonderband (Munich, 1987), pp. 259-98 Grass over-emphasizes the importance of the scandalous meeting in the Pulvermühle which in his view lead to the end of the group. "Es war eigentlich ein sehr lang währendes Todesritual", stellte Walter Jens rückblickend fest, und diese Umschreibung trifft den Sachverhalt sehr viel besser als der Erklärungsversuch von Günter Grass: "...und dann fand die Tagung in der Pulvermühle statt, die, bei kräftiger Beteiligung der Autoren, zum Ende der Gruppe 47 geführt hat" (p. 259).

<sup>89</sup> *Emblemata*, pp. 1133f.

## CONCLUSION

It was the purpose of this study to analyse the relations between Grass's works and baroque literature. Generally speaking these relations are twofold. On the one hand, there are parallels or affinities between the structure and subject of Grass's writings and baroque literature. The comparison with baroque literature is used as a means to throw light on the texture of Grass's works. On the other hand, we have Grass's deliberate use of baroque literature as a past literary tradition. This conclusion asks what artistic, conceptual and thematic problems are solved through the employment of baroque literature. In other words, what is the purpose of those passages in Grass's writings which deal with the baroque period?

As for the general affinities, it has been apparent throughout this investigation that Grass's later works have a tendency towards a formalism which prefers artistic complexity to straightforwardness. *Der Butt* is an impressive example of an experimental use of linguistic and structural *ornatus*. It is arguable that on a formal level Grass's writings have an affinity with baroque art in that they use all available means of aesthetic embellishment and complication. I have used an analysis of the structural parallels between *Der Butt* and the courtly-historical novel to exemplify the striving for formalistic *ornatus*. Grass's later works in particular express an experimental aestheticism which tries to cross established boundaries of form, structure, style and content.

Another important feature Grass's writings share with baroque literature is their emblem-like structure. Grass's writings often evolve from images which are linguistically elaborated. Abstract concepts or themes, in turn, only rarely escape visual embodiment. Moreover, Grass's allegorical way of writing reinforces an imagistic style. This affinity with emblematic and allegorical structures is the reason why an analysis of imagery leads to the very core of Grass's novels. Many of the leitmotifs in these works are, in fact, emblems or emblem-like images. In this context, it is significant that Grass creates his own illustrations for the dust-jackets of his books. Baroque authors such as Grimmelshausen are also believed to have been involved in the creation of the frontispieces of their works. Grass's imagistic and graphic mode of writing is reminiscent of the concept of *ut pictura poesis* which is a characteristic of baroque poetics. The emblematic structure and the *ut pictura poesis* maxim are outstanding features of seventeenth-century texts (Albrecht Schöne's study

*Emblematik und Drama im Zeitalter des Barock* gives ample evidence for this). However, one might argue that Horace's parallelism of the visual and the poetic art is not specifically baroque for it has been known to many other periods. But, clearly, no period of German literature has come so close to making it into a poetical maxim as the seventeenth century. Baroque literature was initially moulded by courtly culture and the movement of the counter-Reformation, both of which had a strong tendency to employ powerful means of visual representation for their purposes. It is also significant that later theoreticians such as Lessing rejected the *ut pictura poesis* analogy.

A further feature common to Grass's works and baroque literature is their focus upon the shocking and the ugly. As baroque poets indulge in depicting decay and vanity, so Grass deals with an ugly counter-world. Grass's treatment of the ugly is often undertaken in a shocking style. However, the subject of decay is offset by an emphatic worldliness and *carpe diem*. As the concept of vanity is bound up with an abstract understanding of time as *tempus*, so is the *carpe diem* poetry linked with sensual experience of *occasio*. Another common feature is the use of petrarchistic conceits such as the lover's fatal trap. Such petrarchistic motifs can typify the alienation between the sexes which becomes a key theme in Grass's later works. Furthermore, there are elements of spiritual petrarchism in Grass's writings.

*Occasio* can allow for moments of detachment in a determined course of events. In Grass's works and in baroque literature we find a dialectic of determinism and freedom (this is also a characteristic of Stoicism). Closely linked to this determinism is the belief that certain patterns in history repeat themselves. And so Grass and baroque literature approach history through examples. This belief in repetition, the exemplary and the typical, implies that life is but playing a pre-destined role in a *theatrum mundi*. In changing guises history endlessly re-enacts the same plot. This focus on the exemplary and allegorical also indicates that history is not seen as a sequence of unique events. The question of what may be specific about a certain historical period is not asked. Moreover, the treatment of history is eclectic in its choice of examples and polyhistoric in that it combines aspects of life and history which are usually regarded as unrelated.

However, the differences we have found are no less instructive than the affinities: baroque literature still firmly presupposes that the labyrinthine course of history will end in the triumph of an unambiguous Christian *ordo*. Grass's works, by contrast, lack such a denouement. The lack of an organizing principle which marks much of Grass's imagery can be noticed in history at large. People

are trapped in a maze which has a repetitive pattern; the only firm stance possible in this world is a 'heroism of absurdity' (which in Grass can take many different forms, for instance that of an adaptation of Senecan ideas or references to the myth of Sisyphus). Another difference is that Grass treats vanity mainly as an aesthetic problem; he does not aim at a *memento mori* which transcends this world. It is striking that though many key images in Grass's works embody Christian ideas such as the Fall and Good Friday we find no traces of the corresponding anti-types of redemption and Easter. The allegories of shelter such as the snail's shell or gourd-vine arbour form a secular compensation for this.

Apart from the task of analysing these general and formal analogies, it was necessary to deal with Grass's specific interest in baroque literature. At what stage of his development as a writer did he start to use baroque literature? What kind of aesthetic or poetical problems does this solve? It is important to see that when Grass started using baroque literature he was above all looking for new ways of development as a writer. A main purpose of Grass's drawing on baroque literature was the attempt to replenish his literary devices. It is important that this took place at a stage when his productivity had been threatened in many different ways. Moreover, it was a stage at which the self-taught author had become a *poeta doctus* and his writings had reached great artistic complexity. In this situation highly rhetorical and arcane baroque literature allowed Grass to cross boundaries into new fields of productivity. One such boundary could simply have been the exhaustion of literary devices the young and less educated author had readily at his disposal. Another boundary is that of a narrow political idiom which Grass as a political propagandist had to adopt. This idiom posed a danger to his poetic language. The novels *örtlich betäubt* and *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* engaged in political life to such a degree that the fictional threads were in danger of becoming mere means of propping up the political stance of the book. One main goal of *Der Butt* was therefore to re-establish a distinctly poetic language. Apart from the restrictions of political language the writer had to cross aesthetic boundaries. For *Der Butt* forms a highly artistic attempt to prove that a vast historical topic can still be narrated without aspiring to a now untenable olympian point of view common to the narrative techniques used in nineteenth-century historical novels. In *Das Treffen in Telgte* two forms of attack on art, the political and the aesthetic (the 'Kunst-ist-tot' tenet), are made themes. The creation of a new language which is not corrupted by a war or by ideological abuse is a main topic of the novel. The

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linguistic and emblematic experiments are used to vindicate art in its relation to politics. Moreover, the rhetorical quality of baroque literature — that is, the effect fiction can produce on a reader — is used to lay bare the shortcomings of the 'Kunst-ist-tot' theory. Literature is justified through its rhetorical effects as a viable form of communicating ideas which no other idiom can express.

The use of baroque literature also suited Grass's double role of being a writer and an artist. More than any other kind of literature the baroque could provide Grass with a means to cross the boundary between poetry and visual art.

The central character Opitz, who forms the effective starting point of Grass's deliberate focus on the baroque period, represents the theme of the artist's melancholy. For Grass this 'Künstlermelancholie' forms another specific interest in baroque literature. There is evidence for this link among the very first traces of Grass's use of seventeenth-century literature, namely in the essay 'Vom Stillstand im Fortschritt', which takes up ideas from Walter Benjamin's book on baroque drama *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*. The theme of the melancholic artist who is endangered by sloth and resignation runs through the later works. Grass modelled various features of the melancholic characters in his novels on the humoral pathology current in the baroque age. In the novel *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* and in some literary and visual self-portraits the author displays his own proneness to melancholy. Thus the theme of melancholy forms another specific nexus between Grass and baroque literature; it is a way of dealing with the problem of an artist who is threatened by paralysis and resignation.

Closely linked to the (autobiographical) problem of melancholy and resignation is the need for self-control. Here lies a reason for Grass's preoccupation with Stoic ideas (which are characteristic of baroque culture). Grass's interest in practical moral problems rather than systematic philosophy, like his criticism of Utopia and 'heroism of absurdity', made Senecan ideas particularly attractive. All these Stoic topics had an impact on his writings. Another important link with Stoicism is the theme of flight which pervades many of Grass's novels and influences the way *Der Butt* is narrated. Melancholic paralysis, flight and evasion of responsibility form important strands in Grass's writings which are offset by a Stoic stance.

The theme of the artist's melancholy is part of the more general problem of the ambiguous function of art. This is emblemized in *Der Butt* by the eel-trap which on the one hand stands for an aesthetic and critical detachment from the narrow conditions of patriarchy, but on the other hand leads to a divorce from the wholeness of the world of which the beholder ought to be a part. Thus art

causes a menacing alienation from a natural environment. In *Der Butt* the unsound mixture of fluids and the artist's melancholy stem from this divorce. The same basic polarity is elaborated on many different levels. The Fall, for instance, is a cause of vanity, melancholy, or the Babylonian confusion of languages. This whole complex is offset by different forms of creativity such as art as refuge, healing through cooking (Agnes's diet or the biblical meal), or the experimental aspiration to a *lingua adamica*. It is important to see that in Grass's writings these oppositions are mainly expressed through baroque motifs and devices. Art, particularly that of baroque images, therefore has a double function: having caused this division they also provide a means of healing.

Baroque images are not only used to typify oppositions; in the later novels they can form allegories which bridge these divisions. The thistle in *Das Treffen in Telgte*, for instance, can express the identity of Germany and thus help to overcome the religious and political fragmentation of the country. Another such example is that of the figure Gelnhausen sitting on the window sill. I have analysed this character in detail because he allegorizes a reconciliation of various polarities at the core of Grass's later works. The allegorical quality of this character is something specifically baroque. (The use of allegory declined in the eighteenth century when it was confined to the fable. Later it was emphatically rejected as far-fetched and unnatural by Goethe who strove to replace it through his tenet of symbol. Grass's use of allegory is in line with Walter Benjamin's and C. S. Lewis's attempts to revive allegory.) The figure of Gelnhausen can be seen as a further development of the allegory of Mäxchen in *Der Butt* sitting in a tree and observing the Battle of Wittstock which depicts the tension between fiction and reality. The character Gelnhausen mediates between the spheres of politics and literature. This must be seen against the background of the dangerous separation of these spheres by writers such as the early Thomas Mann. In this sense Grass's later works are, like Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, evidence that defining the artist's relation to politics is a preoccupation of German writers in this century. *Das Treffen in Telgte* is an attempt to reconcile this old conflict. The characters in *Der Butt* are by comparison very one-sided: Opitz embodies the sacrifice of literature for the sake of politics, Gryphius is a character who mistakes literary vanity images for the real world.

Compared to this function of allegory, the baroque imagery in the early works appears to be divided into vanity imagery and its reverse side. It is only by accident that these two opposed realms meet. The heraldic swan and the rat embody not reconciliation but tension and antagonism between the two spheres.

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However, if we trace the development of the creeper image from the early works to the gourd-vine arbour in *Der Butt* and further to the Telgte 'Emshagen', we can see how an isolated image of solace grows more complex: in *Der Butt* it depicts the ambiguity of retreat and later it develops into an all-embracing allegory which embodies both a place of retreat and a commitment to the outer world (expressed by the double function of the Telgte 'Emshagen' and the telling name of the 'Brückenhof'). We have seen that in many cases Grass elaborates images from a small stock of motifs which mainly dates back to his early poems. Thus it is not so much the imagery itself which has changed, but its use. This is further evidence of a general development from the early fascination with extremes to a more detached mode of writing. Stoic moderation and thoughtfulness play some part in this development. The growing detachment is paralleled by a development towards formal artistry and comprehensiveness of subject-matter. Grass's use of baroque literature is one factor in this general tendency.

Another issue that falls within the scope of this study is the way in which Grass uses his sources. It is striking how well he has familiarized himself with recent research on baroque literature. This of course is contrary to the cliché of the uneducated story-teller which may have been applicable only to the young Grass, if at all. One incentive for gaining this knowledge is to achieve verisimilitude or probability in the narrative and authenticity in the archaic language (verisimilitude is, of course, another key term of baroque poetics). In *Der Butt* and *Das Treffen in Telgte* Grass develops a highly skilful technique of creating pastiches of baroque language. These pastiches, together with the employment of the subjunctive and archaic vocabulary, lead to a convincing illusion of authentic baroque language. (We have seen that the sentence mould is rarely modelled on baroque language but has much more in common with the syntax of Grass's model Döblin.) The principle of verisimilitude also seems to have guided the treatment of historical facts. Grass sticks to the likely and possible, but uses the gaps between accidentally extant historical facts for the creation of fiction.

However, in spite of the rule of verisimilitude and Grass's indebtedness to scholarship, the treatment of sources and historical facts must not be mistaken for that of the nineteenth-century historical novel of, say, Willibald Alexis or Gustav Freytag. In this genre, which was influenced by Walter Scott and Macaulay, literature and historical research were at times so closely intertwined that some authors, such as Victor Scheffel, started writing footnotes to their

novels. However in Grass's works there are very clear pointers which remind the reader that the narrative is fictitious. In *Der Butt*, for instance, the visionary allegory of the gourd-vine arbour, the surreal tendency of the chapter 'Vatertag' and the allegory of Mäxchen in the tree highlight the fictitiousness of the narrative. The partly fictitious characters of Gelnhausen and Libuschka in *Das Treffen in Telgte* have a similar purpose. Mäxchen compares the commonplaces of the battle description with reality just as Zesen can see the literary *topoi* of the corpses floating in the river as if they were something real. This perception of timeless literary commonplaces as specific historical events enhances the concept of a repetitious course of history. Certain patterns of destruction are bound to repeat themselves as long as history continues. To show this is, above all, the purpose of Grass's treatment of historical facts. If the authority of the unique historical event is challenged through this predisposition towards the typical and allegorical, it is further undermined through the retelling of stories and the unreliable narrator. Historical facts are turned into something unfixed. Grass's treatment of history is thus a mixture of pedantic verisimilitude and an overt use of fictitiousness and alienation. It is this mixture in particular which enhances the aesthetic quality of the later works.

The use of seventeenth-century literature is also bound up with a problem common to all literary history: the writer's need to relate in one way or another to tradition. The case of Grass's use of baroque literature is a most instructive example of this. In order to understand what it means for a modern author to deal with a literary period as remote as the baroque, we have to trace certain lines in literary history which separate Grass from the baroque period. A major difference is that seventeenth-century literature dates back to a time before a standard literary language was established. Of course, there were rhetorical rules and baroque poetics were anything but permissive. None the less, the lack of an accepted literary language in the vernacular led to great stylistic and dialectal variety in baroque literature. No boundaries seemed to have limited the elaboration of extremist styles such as Grobianism or 'Greuelschwulst'. The coarse could coexist with the mannered. Moreover, the playing with devices such as emblems, onomatopoeia, and pattern poems which was particularly popular with the Nuremberg 'Pegnitz-Schäfer' is evidence that the baroque poets sought new and experimental forms of expression. Grass's experimental appropriation of baroque literary techniques, particularly Utopian emblematic language, show that this openness to experimentation can fascinate a modern writer. This openness is characteristic of the baroque, such experiments being

dismissed by eighteenth-century poetics, for example, which preferred a clearer and more natural way of speaking. The *ut pictura poesis* maxim, after being briefly cultivated by Bodmer and Breitinger, was finally refuted in Lessing's *Laokoon*. The powerful rhetorical concept of *inventio* was replaced by the tenet of *perspicuitas*. These changes set in motion a development which led to a German literary language. Eric Blackall has traced how this development culminated in the accomplished language of the 'Klassik' which provided the dominant mode of writing for the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The turn of the century, however, experienced a deep crisis of a language which still moved in the channels of the 'Klassik'. Hofmannsthal's 'Chandos' letter, the starting point of modern German literature, was an attempt to break away from a tradition which left little latitude for development. Another way of responding to this crisis was to go back beyond the rise of an accepted literary language to the variety of baroque language. The lack of a standard German in the baroque age and the uncertainty in matters of spelling, grammar and style appear from this angle to offer liberation from a prevailing literary tradition. This is clearly not how baroque poets would have seen it, for they deeply felt the lack of an established literary language when they changed from Latin to the vernacular. (*Das Treffen in Telgte* highlights this struggle for general rules in poetics, grammar and spelling.) However, if one looks at this uncertainty and openness from the angle of the literary crises at the turn of the century, baroque literature offers fascinating options. This richness may help to explain why Expressionists like Arno Holz or Georg Trakl, drew on baroque literature, a tradition which had long been spurned. In a similar way Grass works his own way back to baroque literature in order to use it as a fresh literary resource. He expresses the richness of baroque language neatly in *Das Treffen in Telgte*: 'so verwirrend reich waren sie an Sprachen, so ungesichert frei war ihr Deutsch; und noch vermögender bewiesen sie sich in allerlei Sprachtheorien' (vi. 25).

Another, more general problem the modern writer faces when he deals with baroque literature is that his use of tradition will conflict with the opinion of many critics that authors should above all express individual experience and strive for originality. The rejection of commonplaces, of writing as *ars*, and the pejorative notion of plagiarism stem from these ideals. These categories are, of course, mainly a legacy of the nineteenth century and alien to the baroque period. The idea of intellectual ownership hardly existed, for writing was mainly regarded as a technique of finding the *topoi* and common devices appropriate to

<sup>1</sup> Eric Blackall, *The Emergence of German as a Literary Language* (Cambridge, 1959).

a given subject. (For example, when baroque poets described a beautiful woman they mainly tried to prove how they mastered the use of petrarchistic conventions.) Bearing these differences in mind, it is not surprising that a modern writer who consciously employs poetical *ars* and revives means which were commonplace is caught in a dilemma between the tenets of a past literary period and the expectations of his contemporary literary public.

For these reasons I considered it appropriate to analyse the texts using a rhetorical model. Rhetoric can help us to understand that some tenets to which the literary public adheres, such as 'Genieästhetik', 'Erlebnisdichtung', or intellectual ownership, are inadequate for understanding texts like *Das Treffen in Telgte*. The way in which the figure of Gelnhausen has been interpreted by many critics is an example of the stereotyping of a story-teller who is highly gifted and thus needs no rhetorical craft. This stereotype, current in many reviews of Grass's works, is based on the legacy of Goethe's notion of the 'original genius' which still permeates much of current Grass criticism. A rhetorical approach, by contrast, can find support in the text itself, for in *Das Treffen in Telgte* the power of rhetoric is made a theme; and, more importantly, fiction is vindicated through a demonstration of the effect it can produce on the reader. Nevertheless, the fact that Grass uses rhetorical *ars* does not mean that he keeps to the rules of *decorum*. He employs baroque rhetorical devices, but in such an unconventional way that he breaks rules restricting subject-matter or mode of writing. In this sense, if any, Gelnhausen's poetical programme can be applied to Grass's writings.

The focus on the rhetorical aspects of Grass's works also led us to the observation that his texts require a specific mode of reading. The poetical *ars* which accounts for the arcane and allegorical mode of writing finds its equivalent in the *argutia* that needs to be employed in order to grasp the different layers of meaning. The reader has to use acumen in order to decipher the esoteric sense underlying the surface of the text. Moreover, *ars combinatoria* is needed in order to synthesize the different threads of action and the changing roles and identities in *Der Butt*. In the same way, the scattered portraits of the poets and the setting in *Das Treffen in Telgte* have to be synthesized by the reader. This ability to synthesize and link is also necessary in order to recognize historical events as *déjà vu*. The reader's critical acumen is further sharpened through the retelling of stories. For the same purpose narrative perspective is made a theme. In short, what is required is critical detachment much more than identification or 'Affekt'. This form of reading is also specific to the baroque for it requires a willingness to deal with the arcane, allegorical and far-fetched. It

## CONCLUSION

requires a distanced and learned reader. This is not to deny that in baroque literature there is also a rhetorical 'Affektstil' aiming at the reader's emotions, but this style does not dominate. It is, however, prevalent in the literature of 'Empfindsamkeit' and Storm and Stress. This later period requires a different mode of reading; here emotional sensitivity is far more important than acumen. Enlightenment literature, to cite another example, is less arcane, less allegorically ambiguous and less structurally complex, and requires a reader who wants to be educated mainly through precision and clarity of thought. This literature aims at the reader's reason and judgement, faculties different in nature from acumen.

Apart from the general problem of literary tradition this study focused on the mode of writing which results from Grass's use of the baroque tradition. The effects are many: the blend of archaic and modern language and the mixing of different levels of style lead to a great richness in connotations; the frequent use of the subjunctive reinforces a general ironic tone; the emblematic allusions and daring linguistic experiments in the texts create multiple levels of meaning. In short, the whole spectrum of connotations is broadened. Moreover, Grass's use of baroque emblematic and astrological techniques has a genuine impact on the structure of the texts. The great stylistic variety which results from Grass's use of baroque literature is remarkable. Research on *Die Blechtrommel* and the picaresque novel has generally confined itself to the parallel of *genus humile* and the 'low' perspective of the novels. The above analysis of *Der Butt* and *Das Treffen in Telgte* reveals no such limitation in style and subject-matter but a juxtaposition of the crude and the sophisticated. Grass's use of baroque literature comprises all rhetorical and social spheres: the courtly, the bourgeois and the low. Accordingly, we find in *Der Butt* Grobianism as well as a conflict between the *genus medium* (represented by Opitz) and its 'inflation' (by Gryphius); in *Das Treffen in Telgte* there is a similar struggle between the *genus grande* (Schütz), *genus medium* (Dach) and *genus humile* (Gelnhausen). Once again the overall tendency is towards comprehensiveness.

The unconventional use of baroque literary devices such as emblems and the detachment from subject-matter through the subjunctive and irony form a safeguard that prevents Grass from lapsing into mere imitation and decadence. Grass also invents new emblems such as the thistle. Moreover, he further develops images from his earlier writings. In this way Grass manages both to use baroque literature as a means of replenishing his literary devices and to avoid the dangers which are inherent in the use of a past literary tradition.

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This is the first study to discuss the relation between Grass's complete works and baroque literature. Grass's employment of baroque literature is of particular interest because he takes up a tradition from which German literature has long broken away. Alexander Weber's argument moves from an outline of general thematic affinities in the early works to an analysis of the conscious use of baroque literature in *Der Butt* and *Das Treffen in Telgte*. He offers both a close reading of Grass and general reflections on how a past literary tradition can be adopted by a modern writer. The study focuses on the themes of vanity, *carpe diem*, and Senecan Stoicism in the early works, it discusses parallels between the rhetorical structure of the courtly-historical novel and *Der Butt* and deals with the artist's melancholy and baroque allegories in *Der Butt* and *Das Treffen in Telgte*.