

# BRANDES GEORG

EMINENT AUTHORS OF  
THE NINETEENTH  
CENTURY

**Georg Brandes**  
**Eminent Authors of**  
**the Nineteenth Century**

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Eminent Authors of the Nineteenth Century / Literary Portraits:*

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# Georg Brandes

## Eminent Authors of the Nineteenth Century / Literary Portraits

PAUL HEYSE

1875

"How does it happen," I asked recently of a distinguished portrait-painter, "that you, who formerly have made successful efforts in several other branches of art, have at last confined yourself wholly to portrait-painting?"

"I think it is because it has given me the most pleasure," replied he, "to study and to perpetuate an object which has never existed before, and will never appear again."

With these words he seemed to me strikingly to designate the interest which attracts a person to distinct individuality, that of the inner as well as that of the outer being. To the critic, too, the individual is an especially alluring object; to him, too, the execution of a portrait is a singularly fascinating occupation.

Unfortunately, his means of communication are deplorably far behind those of the painter. What can be more difficult and more fruitless than the attempt to express in words that which is purely individual – that which in accordance with its very nature must mock at every effort of reproduction? Is not personality, in its uninterrupted flow, the true *perpetuum mobile*, which does not admit of being constructed?

And yet these insolvable problems ever charm and attract anew. After we have gradually become familiar with an author, have come to feel ourselves perfectly at home in his writings, to perceive dimly that certain of their characteristics dominate others, and then happen to be by nature of a critical turn of mind, we can find no peace until we have rendered ourselves an account of our impressions, and made clear the indistinct image of the character of another *ego* that has arisen within our own soul. We hear or read criticisms on an author and find them absurd. Why are they absurd? Other statements seem to us but half true. What is lacking to make them wholly true? A new work of importance from his pen appears. How far have the earlier works been a preparation for it? We almost become curious to learn how we ourselves would characterize his talent – and we satisfy our curiosity.

# I

Whoever casts a glance on the long row of closely printed volumes which form Paul Heyse's complete works, and remembers that the author was born in the year 1830, will first of all be apt to exclaim, "What industry!" Involuntarily he will trace back this astonishing productiveness to a will power of rare endurance. None the less, however, does it owe its origin to a singularly fortunate nature. This nature possessed within itself so luxuriant a fruitfulness that it has yielded its harvest without the least effort of the will, without any undue exertion; it has yielded a harvest of such variety that we might believe it to be fostered according to a defined plan and with a painstaking will; nevertheless, it has obviously been permitted to act with thorough independence. To allow nature to rule, to follow one's own pleasure or bent (*sich gehen zu lassen*<sup>1</sup>), has been from the outset, as we soon come to feel, Heyse's motto, and so it happens that with qualities which usually lead to a wandering, scanty, fragmentary productiveness, he has completed and perfected each undertaking, having written lyric and epic poems, one grand epos (*Thekla*), a dozen dramas, more than fifty "novellen," and two large romances. He began early; while yet a student, he entered on his literary career. Free from care as a pedestrian tourist who gayly whistles as he strolls along, never hurrying,

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<sup>1</sup> One's movements, step by step to measure,

pausing to drink at every spring, lingering before the bushes by the wayside, and plucking flowers as well as berries, resting in the shade, and wandering along in the shade, he has gradually trodden a pathway of such extent that we could only expect to see it traversed by one who maintained a breathless march, with eyes fixed unwaveringly on the goal.

The voice followed by Heyse as an author is unquestionably the voice of instinct. North German though he is, nothing is farther removed from him than cool deliberation and premeditation. Born in Berlin, he nevertheless takes root in Munich, and finds in the ardent South German race and in the throbbing South German life the surroundings most congenial to his temperament; at home in South Germany, he yet feels constantly drawn to Italy, as the land where the human plant has attained a more beautiful and luxuriant growth than elsewhere, one that is less disturbed by reflex action, and where the voice of the blood speaks most distinctly, most powerfully. This voice is the siren voice which allures Heyse. Nature! Nature! keeps ringing in his ear. Germany has authors who appear almost wholly devoid of inspiration, and who have only been made what they are by a vigorous North German will (as Karl Gutzkow, for instance); others (as Fanny Lewald) whose works bear the impress of an active North German intellect. Neither through volition nor deliberation does Heyse create and fashion his works, but simply by heeding the inner impulse.

Many an author is tempted to impart to his reader an idea

of himself differing somewhat from the correct one. He takes pleasure in representing himself as that which he *would like* to be, – in former times, as being endowed either with keener sensibilities or deeper melancholy than he ever possessed, in our day as being now more experienced, now colder or harsher, than he really is. More than one distinguished author, as Mérimée, or Lecomte de Lisle, has so shrunk from manifesting his emotions that he has succeeded, on the other hand, in exhibiting an appearance of lack of feeling by no means natural to him. Such people make it a point of honor not to breathe freely and easily until they have crossed the snow-line where the human element in our natures ends, and their contempt for those who lay claim to the sympathy of the multitude on the plane below leads them to yield to the temptation to force their way up to a height whither pride, not instinct, bids them ascend. For Heyses this temptation does not exist. He has never for a moment been able or willing to write himself into either greater warmth or coldness than he actually felt. He has never professed to be writing with his heart's blood when he was fashioning calmly as an artist, and he has patiently submitted when the critics censured him for lack of warmth. On the other hand, he has never been able to report, as so many of the most eminent French authors have done, a horrible or revolting occurrence with the same stoic tranquillity, and in the same tone that would be suitable in stating where a man of the world purchases his cigars, or where the best champagne could be obtained. He aims neither at the ardent

style of passionate temperaments, nor at the self-control of the worldling. In comparison with Swinburne he seems rather cold, and in comparison with Flaubert naïve. But the narrow path in which he wanders is precisely that which is pointed out to him by the instinct of his innermost being, by the purely individual and yet so complicated being which is the result of his nature.

## II

The power which an individual obeys as an artist, necessarily becomes the power which in his works is exalted to the place of honor. That is the reason why Heyse as an author glorifies nature. Not what a human being thinks or desires, but what he is by nature interests Heyse in him. The highest duty in his eyes is to honor nature and heed her voice. Sin against nature is the true sin. Give her free scope, and let her act her own pleasure.

There are, therefore, not many authors who are such marked fatalists as Heyse. In free will, according to the traditional sense of the word, he does not believe, and is evidently quite as sceptically opposed to Kant's categorical imperative as his Edwin or his Felix.[2] But if he does not believe in innate ideas, he does believe in innate instinct, and this instinct is sacred to him. In his "novellen" he has described how unhappy the soul feels when this instinct is either disturbed or rendered uncertain. In his "Kenne Dich Selbst" (Know Thyself) it is intelligence, in his "Reise nach dem Glück" (Journey after Happiness) it is morality that is the disturber of the peace.

In the first of these "novellen" Heyse has represented the anguish which proceeds from a too early or a premeditated invasion on the instinctive life of the soul. "That beautiful stupor of youth, that dreamy, unconscious plenitude of the powers, the pure faculty of enjoyment of the yet unexhausted senses,

was lost to young Franz through his premature struggle for self-consciousness."<sup>2</sup> He here portrays the sleeplessness of the mind, which is as dangerous for the health of the soul as actual sleeplessness is for the welfare of the body, and shows how one in whom the reflex faculty is maimed "loses that mysterious, obscure substance which is the very pith and marrow of our personality."

In "Die Reise nach dem Glück" it is conventional morality, which by supplanting instinct has shattered the soul. A young girl, having conquered her own natural impulses from motives of inculcated morality, has banished her lover from her presence late at night, and thereby become the innocent cause of his death. The remembrance of this misfortune haunts her constantly. "If one's own heart does not point out the way, one is sure to go astray. Once before in my life I was made wretched because I refused to hearken to my heart, let it cry as loudly as it would. Now I will pay heed if it but whispers to me, and I will have ear for nothing else."<sup>3</sup>

In instinct the entire nature is present. Now if the inner devastation which results where instinct has lost its guiding power, be in Heyse's eyes the most profound of all misfortunes, to the characters he delights most in delineating, the consciousness of life presents the exact opposite; that is, the most profound sense of happiness in the enjoyment of the totality

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<sup>2</sup> Gesammelte Werke, iv. 135.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., v. 199.

and harmony of their natures. Heyse, as a matter of course, is far removed from considering self-introspection as a principle inimical to the healthy sense of life. His own views appear to be about the same as those expressed by the invalid in "Kenne Dich Selbst" in the words: just as agreeable as it may be for him to awaken in the night, to consider and to know that he is able to sleep still longer, just so glorious it appears to him to arouse from his dreamy state of happiness, to collect his thoughts, to reflect, and then, as it were, to turn over on the other side and indulge in further enjoyment. At all events, in his romance "Kinder der Welt" (Children of the World), he has permitted Balder, the most ideally fashioned character in the book, to carry out this last thought in a still more significant way. Melancholy views have just been expressed, speculations regarding the sun which shines indifferently on the just and on the unjust, and looks down upon more wretchedness than happiness, and about the infinite, ever-recurring miseries of life, and more to like effect. Franzel, the young socialist printer, has been expatiating upon the opinion that one who had truly considered the lot of humanity, could never find rest or peace, and in his distress has called life a lie when Balder attempts to show him that a life in which repose was possible, would no longer deserve the name. And then Balder explains to Franzel in what the enjoyment of life for him consists; namely, in "experiencing past and future in one." With the utmost originality he declares that he could have no enjoyment if his experiences were incomplete, and that

in his silent moments of contemplation all the scattered elements of his being were united in one harmonious whole. "Whenever I have wished to do so, that is to say, as often as I have desired to make for myself a genuine holiday of life and to enjoy to the utmost my little existence, I have, as it were, conjured up all the periods of my life at once: my laughing, sportive childhood, when I was yet strong and well, then the first glow of thought and feeling, the first pangs of youth, the foreboding of what a full, healthy, mature life must be, and at the same time the renunciation which usually becomes a habit only to very old people." To such a conception of life, human existence is not divided into moments, which vanish, leaving us to bemoan their disappearance, nor is it broken into fragments in the service of reciprocally contending impulses and thoughts; to one who possesses the faculty of casting out an anchor at any moment, of realizing the totality and reality of one's own being, life cannot lacerate like a bad dream. "Do you not think," says Balder, "that he who can generate within himself at any moment, if he but choose, such a fulness of the sense of existence, must consider it empty talk when people say, it were better never to have been born?"<sup>4</sup> It must be remembered that it is a cripple whose days are numbered, who utters these words; and a cripple, moreover, whom the poet has evidently modelled after the image of the so differently thinking Leopardi. The peculiar kind of epicurean philosophy expressed by them, and which, through

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<sup>4</sup> *Kinder der Welt*, ii. 162.

a synthetic reflection, gathers together all time in the eternal present, is in reality the poet's conclusive conception of life. It is the hearkening of harmoniously planned nature to her own harmonies. The infinite gods make all their gifts to their favorites complete, all the infinite joys and all the infinite sorrows. This life-philosophy admits into its inner harmony even the discord of infinite pain, and succeeds in finding for it a satisfactory solution. Here is the point wherein Heyse most sharply differs from Turgenief and the other great modern pessimists of poetry. He makes bold to impute to his favorite characters even the most unlovely and shocking errors, in order that he may restore to them, after divers trials and afflictions, their inner peace. The young baron in the romance, "Im Paradiese" (In Paradise), is an instance of this. A sin against his better self weighs upon his conscience. He has lost that inner harmony with his own emotional nature, "on which everything depends." It becomes manifest in the course of the book that through this failing, he has, besides, transgressed against his best friend. Nevertheless, through all the mistakes and misfortunes, which are the inevitable result, he finds himself again. The harmony of nature was but temporarily set aside; not, as he had feared, hopelessly destroyed.

Instinct is directly the voice of the blood. Hence it comes that Heyse's characters are deeply rooted in family and race. Like the law of Moses, they seem to teach that the soul is in the blood. They follow the voice of the blood, and to it they appeal. The undeveloped ones among them are the vigorous expression of the

type of a race; the developed ones know their own nature and respect it; they accept it as it is with the feeling that it cannot be altered; they are as thoroughly guided by the instinct of their natures as are the characters of Balzac by selfishness. In order to render clear my meaning, let me quote a few passages from the "Kinder der Welt." When Edwin falls passionately in love with Toinette, his brother Balder, unknown to him, goes to her to implore her not to reject his brother, through caprice or frivolity, and throw herself away on a stranger. Her answer to his appeal is that she has but just learned and comprehended wherefore it is that in her whole life she has never been able to gain happiness. She has been informed of the secret of her origin, namely, that her unhappy mother had been betrayed into her father's power through force, and from this fact she draws the certainty that it is impossible for her to love. "My friend," says she, "I feel sure you mean well by me, you and your brother, but it would be criminal in me to persuade myself that you could help me now that everything is so clear to me, and that I am convinced that my destiny irrevocably *lies in the blood*." (The words are emphasized in the text.) This is in her eyes the last irrefutable argument. In all the characters of the book this respect for nature, almost bordering on superstition, is prominent. As it is with Toinette, so it is in the case of her opposite pole Lea. They are contrasts in every point; in this one particular alone they accord. After Lea, who has become the wife of Edwin, has learned how much power the memory of Toinette still exercises over his heart,

and is overpowered with grief at the discovery, she is one day reading a book by Edwin, and for a time consoling herself by considering how much she understands of his writings that would be above the comprehension of another woman, when suddenly she flings away the book, for the thought rushes through her brain "how powerless is all comprehension of *minds* in comparison with the blind, irrational elemental attraction of *natures* which enslaves all freedom and infatuates the wisest." She is a woman apparently of a purely intellectual mould. A lively, ardent desire for knowledge and for clearness of mental vision has led her to Edwin; he gave her instructions in – philosophy. One would therefore suppose that she, on her part, would at this crisis have attempted to combat the magic power of the blood by an appeal to the intellectual forces which have for so long united her with Edwin. On the contrary. Far from being characterized as all mind and soul, she is beyond all else a *nature*. She has always loved Edwin passionately, but she has feared that his love, less ardent than her own, would be made to recoil by outbursts of her passion, and yet she – the philosopher – has said to herself, in her loneliness: "Love is folly – blissful madness – laughter and weeping without sense or meaning. Thus I have always loved him until reason was lost and forgotten." Now that the happiness of her wedded life is at stake, she breaks out into the words: "If he perceives that the blood of my mother flows in my veins, – hot Old Testament blood, – perhaps he will discover that he made a grievous mistake when he thought that he could form

with such a being 'a marriage of reason.' Perhaps the day may come when I dare tell him everything, because he himself is no longer satisfied with a modest life-happiness, because he has come to demand something prouder, more unrestrained, more overwhelmingly profuse – and then I can say to him, 'You need not seek far; still waters are deep.'"<sup>5</sup> Everything is here characteristic, the tracing back to origin and race, as well as the protest of this ardent, passionate nature against the disguise of spontaneous passion as a reasonable sacrifice. Only those who are familiar with this fundamental trait of Heyse will have true comprehension of and interest in one of his dramas which might otherwise be considered his weakest, and which in many respects appears to me not wholly worthy of him; I mean "Die Göttin der Vernunft" (The Goddess of Reason). Is it not extremely singular that Heyse, with the whole gigantic French Revolution to choose from, should single out this theme of all others and treat it in precisely the way he has done? Many a poet in the selection of such a subject would have in view an organ for the pathos of the revolution, or would allow the purely ideal inspiration of the goddess of reason in the historic crisis to ennoble a past which, though frivolous and undignified, has nevertheless tragically avenged itself. Such a poet as Hamerling could no doubt make something appropriate out of the theme. Heyse, true to his temperament, paused awestruck before this apparition: a woman, a bit of nature, with feminine instincts and

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<sup>5</sup> Kinder der Welt, iii. 210, 242, 256.

feminine passion, is proclaimed to be reason, the goddess of reason, that is to say, the dry, rigid, dead, rationalistic reason of the eighteenth century! Thereupon Heyse creates a fictitious woman who by virtue of the depth of her nature (upon the whole, far in advance of her time) is overpowered by the feeling that vast, all-embracing life does not admit of being traced back to any scholastic formula, a woman who loves and fears, suffers and hopes, who trembles for the life of her father and that of her lover, who in her anguish lest her lover should misunderstand her, falls into a state of despondency, who as a genuine child of her author has said: "To me the highest aim is to do nothing which causes me to be at variance with myself," and then permits this woman – her every fibre quivering with passion, in a frenzy of personal despair, without a thought of the universal and the abstract, of the Republic or of intellectual freedom, and while her father is being murdered before the church door – to be driven to proclaim from the altar the new gospel of reason, which she herself has once mockingly designated the world's law that two times two make four. This drama appears to me of far greater value as a contribution to the psychology of its author than from a poetic point of view.

Nevertheless, it would be an injustice to Heyse to infer from what has hitherto been made prominent, that he recognizes nothing higher than elemental nature and its impulses. By the word instinct is meant something wholly different from *isolated* impulses. Instinct is the inner need of being true to one's self.

Therefore, it is that Heyse can consistently permit an independent sympathy to triumph over the ties of blood, and even over the closest bonds of relationship. In the novel "Der verlorene Sohn" (The Lost Son), a mother conceals, and tends unawares the innocent murderer of her son, and after he, through his amiability, has won the heart of the mother as well as that of the daughter, the poet makes him lead home the daughter as his bride. "The lost son" had been killed in honorable self-defence in the midst of great peril, and his opponent did not even know his name. Even when the mother learns the particulars concerning the death of her son, she places no hindrances on account of them in the way of the marriage, but bears alone, and without confiding her secret to a living mortal, the misfortune that has befallen her. Here, then, with the full accord of her character, a purely spiritual tie enters into the place of the ties of blood; the mother adopts as a son him through whose hand her own son has fallen; but in so doing she acts in harmony with the depths of her nature, and preserves her soul intact. It is the same in all cases where Heyse allows the personality, through considerations of duty, to repress a genuine passion, a deep love. Wherever this takes place (as in the drama "Marie Moroni," in the novelette "Die Pfadfinderin" – The Path-finder – or in the romance "Die Kinder der Welt") it is in order to maintain loyalty to self, in order not to forfeit the unity and healthfulness of the individual being, and duty may be seen to flow freely forth from the well-springs of one's own nature, inasmuch as the command not to

be at variance with self is esteemed the highest law of duty. So far is Heyse removed from conceiving nature to be inimical to spirituality and duty.

In his eyes nature is all-embracing; everything that lies within the range of our possibilities, all that we perform or achieve, so far as it be of any value, bears infallibly her stamp, and over all which is not within our power, over our entire hereditary destiny, she rules directly, immediately, all-powerfully, and absolutely. Even the most unfortunate character which Heyse has portrayed, however badly fate may have dealt with him, finds consolation in the fact that he is a child of nature; that is to say, that he has not been shorn of his birthright. "If the elements of my being, which exclude me from happiness, have met and become intermingled through a great blind dispensation of the universe, and if I be doomed to ruin because of this combination, it is an unpleasant, but by no means an unendurable thought. On the other hand, a Heavenly Father, who *de cœur léger*, or perchance through pedagogic wisdom, would permit me, poor creature, to drift about so sorrowfully between heaven and earth, in order to accord me later a recompense throughout eternity, for my wasted time – no, dear friend, all the royal or unroyal theology in the world cannot make that seem plausible to me."<sup>6</sup>

Thus with Heyse, even he whose life has been the most aggravating failure, takes his refuge in the conception of nature as the last consoling thought; and thus he himself, in the most

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<sup>6</sup> Kinder der Welt, iii. 109.

painful moments of his life, takes refuge therein, and to this the marvellous poems "Marianne" and "Ernst," the most profound and most touching of all his writings, have remained as witnesses. Nature is his starting-point and his final goal, the source of his poetry and its last word, his one and all, his consolation, his creed.

### III

What he honors, worships, and represents, expressed in a general way, is, therefore, nature. Now as he follows his own nature, it is his own nature which he represents, and its fundamental trait is to be elementally harmonious. Such a designation is very broad and vague. In its indefiniteness it may make Heyse seem, at first, like a follower of Goethe, and would be equally appropriate for the great master himself. This harmony, more closely defined, is not a world-embracing one, however; it is one that is comparatively narrow, it is an aristocratic harmony. There is much which it excludes, much which it fails to conciliate, does not, indeed, come into contact with. Not as a naturalist, but as a worshipper of beauty does Heyse contemplate the motley doings of life. It is plainly manifest that he fails to comprehend how an artist can take pleasure in depicting forms that in real life he would close his doors upon; in fact, he has himself, with great frankness, declared that he has never been able to draw a figure devoid of some lovable trait, or a female character, in whom he was not, to a certain degree, in love.<sup>7</sup> That is the reason why his entire gallery of human forms, with but few exceptions (such as Lorinser or Jansen's wife), consists of homogeneous characters. They have not only lineage, but noble lineage, that is, innate nobility. The

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<sup>7</sup> *Kinder der Welt*, i. III; *Gesammelte Werke*, vi. 206.

quality they have in common is what Heyse himself calls *nobility* (*vornehmheit*). How does he understand this word? Nobility in all his characters is the inherent incapacity to commit any low or base deed; in the child of nature this is regulated by the simple goodness and healthfulness of the soul; in the person of culture, by the conscious sense of his human worth, mingled with the conviction of the privileges of a full, vigorous, human life, which bears within itself its norm and its tribunal, and rather dreads incompleteness than error. Heyse himself once defined his favorite terminus. In *Salamander* we read:<sup>8</sup>—

"I never yet of virtue or of failing  
Have been ashamed, nor proudly did adorn  
Myself with one, nor thought my sins of veiling.

"Beyond all else betwixt the nobly born  
And vulgar herd, this marks the separation, —  
The cowards whose hypocrisy we scorn.

"Him call I noble, who, with moderation,  
Carves his own honor, and but little heeds  
His neighbors' slander or their approbation."

And in almost similar words Toinette, once so blinded by aristocratic display, expresses the following fundamental thought: "There is but *one* genuine nobility: to remain true to

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<sup>8</sup> Gesammelte Werke, iii. 300.

one's self. Ordinary mortals are guided by what people say, and beg others for information regarding how they themselves should be. He who bears within himself the true rank, lives and dies through his own grace, and is, therefore, sovereign."<sup>9</sup> Genuine nobility is the stamp borne by the entire race of beings that has sprung from this poet's brain. They all possess it from the peasant to the philosopher, and from the fisher-maiden to the countess. The simple barmaid in "Der Reise nach dem Glück" expresses a conception of life fully coinciding with what has just been stated;<sup>10</sup> and any one who will take the pains to turn over the leaves of Heyse's works will discover that the little word "vornehm" (noble), or an equivalent, is always one of the first the author brings forward as soon as he makes any attempt to characterize or to extol. It is sufficient to examine a single volume of his "novellen" to see how the word "vornehm" is applied to the external appearance, look and bearing: in "Mutter und Kind" (Mother and Child); in "Am todten See" (On the Dead Lake); in "Ein Abenteuer" (An Adventure).<sup>11</sup> Or in order to be convinced of the thrilling significance of this characteristic, it is only needful to glance through Heyse's two romances. In his "Kinder der Welt" all the personages that appeal to the sympathies of the reader, respectively call each other noble spirits: Franzelius styles Edwin and Balder "the true aristocrats of

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<sup>9</sup> Kinder der Welt, ii. 47.

<sup>10</sup> Gesammelte Werke, v. 201. On page 175 the word "vornehm" is used by her.

<sup>11</sup> Gesammelte Werke, viii. 44, 246, 321.

humanity"; Edwin in his most extravagant transports of passion can find no more exalted praise for Toinette and Lea than that they bear the impress of nobility, and when Toinette, after her interview with Lea, acknowledges the latter to be the worthy wife of Edwin, it is the same expression which as a matter of course presents itself to her; in her letter, she designates Lea "Edwin's *noble*, wise, and most charming life companion."<sup>12</sup> And in the romance "Im Paradiese," the first draught of which we doubtless possess in the versified fragment "Schlechte Gesellschaft" (Bad Society), the so-called "bad" coterie of artists is represented throughout as the truly good and noble, in contrast with the so-called aristocratic society.<sup>13</sup> Not one of the artists is an aristocrat, in the ordinary acceptation of the word. Their origin, like that of the heroes in "Kinder der Welt," is extremely insignificant. But their nobility lies in the blood; they belong to the chosen ones of the earth, who act wisely and rightly, not from a sense of duty, or through the wearisome conquering of evil propensities, but because of their natures. What Toinette somewhere calls "the honest intention to put humanity to no shame," is represented, too, in the romance "Im Paradiese" as the natural nobility, in contradistinction to that *noblesse* which is based upon artificial principles.

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<sup>12</sup> Kinder der Welt, ii. 355. "That you are the best, deepest, purest, noblest of women" – "Poor, brave, free-born breast – bow well it has preserved its patent of nobility." Kinder der Welt, iii. 309.

<sup>13</sup> Im Paradiese, iii. 6.

Few poets, therefore, have portrayed such a series of characters without guile and without vulgarity as Heyse. No one has had more perfect faith in humanity. The most substantial proof of how urgent is his need of rendering prominent upon every occasion the genuine metal in human nature, is afforded by the fact that whenever a change in the character of any of his *dramatis personæ* does prepare a surprise for the reader or the spectator, it is always in the way of exceeding the expectations and showing the personality to be far better and more admirable, far more noble-minded, than any one had supposed. In almost all other poets the disappointment is of an opposite character. In Heyse's "novellen," as, for instance, in "Barbarossa" or "Die Pfadfinderin" (The Female Pathfinder), the reconciliation is effected by permitting the bad character to repent, and since the germ of the nature of the person in question was originally good, and although possessing many irritable and evil qualities, he yet had no really vicious blood in his composition, there comes about a sort of treaty of peace between him and the reader to the astonishment of the latter. Far more significantly, however, than in his "novellen" this characteristic optimism comes out in Heyse's dramas. They unquestionably owe to it their best and most effective, perhaps their most decidedly dramatic, scenes. Let me cite a few examples. In "Charlotte Elizabeth" the Chevalier de Lorraine has availed himself of all manner of unworthy means in his efforts to undo the heroine and banish from France the chief male character of the piece, the German

ambassador, Count Wied. Challenged by the count, the chevalier is severely wounded; and when the count, caught in the meshes of political intrigue, is sent to the Bastille, the chevalier appears in the fifth act in the audience chamber of the king. What can he want? To present still more damaging charges against the count? To continue his dishonorable conduct which has already been productive of so much misfortune to his opponent, and of a wound to himself? Will he have revenge? Does he mean to avail himself to the utmost of the position? No; he comes to make the solemn declaration that the count has acted like a true nobleman, and that he himself is to blame for the duel. He even desires to be himself sent to the Bastille in order that his opponent may not think that he, wholly losing sight of honor, has reported a false cause of the duel; in other words: even in this corrupt courtier there lives a sense of honor as the residue of the ancient French spirit of chivalry, taking the place, to a certain degree, of conscience, and compelling him, at the decisive moment, to rise from his couch of pain in order to interpose in behalf of the enemy whom he has pursued with savage thirst for revenge and without any regard of consequences.

In the beautiful and national play "Hans Lange," there is a scene which, when performed on the stage, holds the spectator in breathless suspense, and whose close always elicits tears from many eyes; it is the scene where the life of the young squire is at stake. He is lost if the horsemen surmise that it is he who, disguised as the son of the Jew, is lying on the bench. Then

the head servant Henning is ushered in by a party of horsemen, who have heard him muttering in the stable that he knew very well how to solve the difficulty for them. Henning has been supplanted by the young squire; before the latter came to Lanzke, Henning was like a child of the house; now he has become less than a stepchild, and he has always owed a grudge to the man who has been thus preferred before him. With the most artistic skill, the scene is now so conducted that Henning, in spite of the entreaties and curses of those who are initiated into the secret, gives the surrounding group clearly to understand that he means to be revenged on the young squire, that he knows where he is, and that no power in the world will restrain him from betraying his enemy, – until he has heaped coals of fire on the head of the other; and then, contenting himself with the fright he has caused, finally speaks out plainly, in order to put the pursuers, who by this time, of course, blindly trust him, on the wrong scent.

And, finally, of precisely the same nature is the decisive and most beautiful scene in the patriotic drama "Colberg." A council of war is being held, and even the burghers are called upon to take part in it, for the importance of the crisis makes it desirable that every voice should be heard. All hope for the beleaguered city seems to be gone. The French general has issued a proclamation, summoning Gneisenau to honorable capitulation. The entire corps of officers resolve forthwith that there can be no question of a surrender of the citadel, and Gneisenau thereupon lays before the citizens the proposal to entreat the enemy to grant

them a truce in order that the burghers, their wives, and children, may leave the city, which is exposed to all possible horrors. Then the pedantic old pedagogue Zipfel, a genuine, old-fashioned German philologist, rises to act as spokesman for the burghers. With many circumlocutions, with Latin form of speech, he spins out his remarks, amid the impatience of all. He is interrupted; he is given to understand how very well known it is that he is only aiming at leaving the dangerous defence of the city to the commandant and the troops. Finally, he succeeds in making clear the object he had in view in his long narration about the great Persian war, and Leonidas with his Spartans; it was to give force to the opinion that it behooved them one and all to remain and die at their posts. This scene Heyse has written *con amore*. It embraces, so to say, his entire system. For nowhere does his good faith in humanity so triumph as in cases where, in the old foggy, he can reveal the hero, and, in the poor pedant, show the man of inflexible will, which no other has discovered him to be than the poet who so well knows that every one of his creations bears within the depths of its soul an indelible stamp of nobility.

## IV

Those authors who, as Spielhagen, for instance, most frequently linger over the conflicts of consciousness and of the will, and are fondest of depicting great social and political conflicts, will as a matter of course have better success in portraying men than women. Such a male character as Leo, in the romance "In Reih und Glied" (In Rank and File), would seek in vain for its equal, but a female character of the same excellence Spielhagen has not drawn. Any one, on the other hand, whose spirit seeks the nobility and grace of the absolutely natural, of visible and spiritual beauty, will as a matter of course give the preference to women, and draw them better than men. Herein Heyse resembles his master, Goethe. In almost all of his productions the female characters are placed in the foreground, and the male forms serve mainly to render them prominent, or to develop them. As woman's nature unfolds its secret being, and shoots forth its fairest bloom in love, since in love, nature as nature, through a thousand illusions, becomes ennobled and spiritualized, so Heyse glorifies in an eminent way the love of woman. He renders homage to love, and he renders homage to woman; nevertheless, it is his greatest delight to represent these two great powers in conflict one with the other. For when love gains the victory, when it appears as the power to whose mandates the feminine heart may not bid defiance, it sparkles

with radiance, vanquishing resistance, as though possessed of omnipotent might, and producing the effect that every woman under its influence, in defiance against it, in conflict with it, animated by it, rouses in all the pride of her sex, and is invested by love with that aristocratic beauty, which no one represents better than Heyse.

Inherent maidenly pride is to Heyse the most beautiful thing in nature. An entire group of his "novellen" might bear the title "Mädchenstolz" (Maidenly Pride) Kierkegaard somewhere calls the essence of woman "a surrender, whose form is resistance." This is an utterance as from Heyse's own heart, and it is this resistance which, as a token of the noble-born nature, interests and charms him. It is that eternally impenetrable stronghold in the feminine disposition which captivates him, the sphinx-like element of her nature, whose riddle he feels ever impelled to solve. The sweet kernel is doubly sweet in its hard shell, the fiery champagne doubly flaming in its surroundings of ice. The feminine natures which Heyse depicts (from L'Arrabbiata to Julie and Irene in his "Im Paradiese") are enveloped in a coat of ice-mail, which conceals, repels, misleads, breaks, and melts away. Woman asserts her nobility by refusing, as long as possible, to give her *ego* out of her own keeping, – by guarding and cherishing the treasure of her love. She maintains her nobility by placing her *ego* exclusively in the hands of one single person, and offering resistance to all the rest of the world. She is subject to no blind force. But once let her maidenly pride be broken, and

conquered, she finds herself again on the opposite side of the gulf, and yields freely, I might almost say as freely as nature. A seduction never occurs among Heyse's creations; if such a thing be alluded to a single time, as a past event, as in "Mutter und Kind" (Mother and Child), it only serves to place in the sharpest possible light proud self-assertion and equally proud conscious self-surrender.

This self-assertion, this power of resistance (Rabbia), is portrayed by Heyse with manifold variations: Atalanta, in the drama "Meleager," possesses the entire untamed wildness of the Amazon type; she prefers life and sport amid the freedom of nature – the race, feats of skill with the lance, and the occupation of the wildwood – to effeminate luxury and flattering caresses; she would rather wear the crown of victory than the bridal wreath. In Syritha we see the first coyness, which, roused by marriage, flees; in "L'Arrabbiata," maidenly pride, which feels how close to the timid request, in the soul of man, lies coarse desire; in the maiden of Treppi, we have the instinctive refusal of maidenhood; in Marianne ("Mutter und Kind"), womanly pride which increases twofold in the so-called fallen woman, under her sense of unmerited shame; in Madeleine ("Die Reise nach dem Glück"), the sense of duty opposed to the conceptions of morality inculcated from childhood; in Lore ("Lorenz und Lore"), the feeling of shame of a young girl, from whose lips a confession of her love has escaped in the presence of death; in Lottka, the melancholy reserve caused by a sense of inherited

degradation; in fair Kätchen, the indignant despair of a young girl at finding herself attractive to every one, which makes her wish all her admirers and her own beauty far away; in Lea, the aversion of a highly developed and reserved woman to allowing any one to have a suspicion of her weakness; in Toinette, the abhorrence of an ice-bound heart to feigning a passion it does not yet feel; in Irene, the strict conventionality of a little princess; in Julie, the coldness of a Cordelia nature – until the supreme moment arrives when all these bonds are burst, when all these hearts are kindled, when the man-hatred of the Amazon, and the coyness of the young maiden, and the modesty of dawning womanhood, and the pride of the wife, and the sense of duty of those who have been strictly brought up, and the melancholy of those who have been humbled, and the mantle of the snow-queen, all, all flame up, like wood on one mighty funeral pyre, and ascend in sweet incense on the altar of the god of love.

For not in resistance, which is only the form and the cloak, but in self-surrender, does Heyse see the essence of womanhood and woman's true nature; and adorer of nature as he is, he does honor to Eros as the irresistible one who breaks through all barriers. Woman never regrets having subjected herself to his power, but she may repent her defiance. Bettina, somewhere in her letters, makes about the following remark, "The strawberries I plucked I have forgotten; but those I left untouched are still branded on my soul." Heyse has made more than one variation on this theme; after the maiden of Treppi has repented her youthful

coyness during seven long years, chance brings the object of her affections once more to her native village, and she overcomes, by virtue of an enthusiastic and superstitious conviction of the power and justice of her love, all external and internal obstacles, even the indifference and coldness of the returned wanderer himself. Madelina, in the "Reise nach dem Glück," as before mentioned, has driven her lover at night from her door, and having been compelled to ride away in the dark, he had a fall from his horse which killed him on the spot. Remorse for this defiance of love gives her no rest. "Of what avail was my virtue?" said she; "it was sound and whole, and by no means threadbare; and yet it chilled me to the innermost recesses of my heart."<sup>14</sup> It is not enough, though, that she regrets having followed the dictates of conventional morality: the image of the deceased haunts her year after year; it seems to be jealously watching over her each time in her life that she thinks it possible to forget the past, and find happiness anew; she hears the finger of the dead man knocking at the door, as he knocked that night she drove him from her. Severe are the punishments of Eros for those who do not sacrifice on his altar. And Heyse in other of his creations still further amplifies this idea. Here the repulsed lover meets his death, simply as an accidental result of the rigor shown him by the being for whose presence he yearned so ardently. Let us suppose the case to be one where, instead of an humble petitioner, one who threatens violence approaches,

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<sup>14</sup> Gesammelte Werke, v. 197.

and that the resistance of the proud woman be not based on a sense of duty that conquers temptation, but is merely self-defence at the time of a dreaded invasion, how then? Even then Eros bestows chastisement, as a zealous god. The drama "Die Sabinerinnen" (The Sabine Women) was evidently written by Heyse for the sake of one single character. How, otherwise, could it have occurred to him to choose for tragic treatment this purely burlesque material, so little adapted to tragedy. This character is Tullia, the Sabine king's daughter. Carried off by a Roman warrior, held captive in his house, she kills him, when, on the bridal night, he dares approach her. If a tragic woe should now befall the rash woman in order that the Roman might be avenged, no one would be surprised; but the psychological point is in harmony with Heyse's entire erotic system; for through the murder of her husband she endeavored to kill the awakening impulse of her own heart, and thus sacrilegiously rebelled against Eros.

"And stooping,  
He bowed his face until it reached my brow;  
His flutt'ring breath went rippling over me,  
And stealthily, like streams of poison, ran  
His low-toned voice through all my veins."

Now left alone with her shattered soul, she recoils with horror at a deed which is so genuinely feminine, and in which she is so entirely justified. The apparition of the dead man haunts her

wherever she goes, but still more than the aspect of his dead body, the remembrance of his caresses. "Only a day and a night have passed since that deed was accomplished," says she, "and yet it lies behind me as a thousand years and a thousand deaths. One thing alone is, and ever will be, present with me: his kiss upon my eyelids, his hand within my own." Toward the end she expresses to her sister the fundamental idea in these words: —

"From Love, oh, do not flee!  
She will o'ertake you if you do. Go humbly  
And kneel before her shrine. For deadly anger  
She heaps on those who dare defy her will,  
And sucks their blood. And is not every maiden  
In bondage stern to this grim god? O sister,  
I only must atone for free resistance."<sup>15</sup>

Even the man that has approached her through violence, cannot be hated by the young virgin. He broke the peace; but what else does Love? He outwitted her; but is not Love crafty? He mocked; but does not Love scoff even at the most powerful and most free? In other words: is not Eros himself a worker of violence, without shyness or shame, a criminal who overleaps all customary bounds.

All? That is saying too much. Heyse has indeed sometimes, as in the instances cited, shown a tendency, reminding one of Kleist, for all purely pathological erotic problems; but his nature

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<sup>15</sup> Gesammelte Werke, ix. 73.

is entirely too harmonious, too mature, and by far too typically German, to admit of his describing passion as bursting all the law and order of society. He is developed enough to see clearly that the laws of passion and the laws of society are two wholly dissimilar things, which have very little in common; yet he pays the latter the respect it deserves, that is, a conditional one. From his earliest youth it has interested and pleased him to show how relative is the truth, and how limited the worth of these laws; to bring forward in his poetic creations instances where their boundaries are overstepped in such a way that the exceptions to the rule seem right, and even the most hardened and narrow-minded person would hesitate to condemn them. In his anxiety to do full, incontestible justice to the exceptional cases, Heyse has sometimes – as in his first drama, "Francesca von Rimini," which is not included in his "Gesammelte Werke" – sought out extremely quaint exceptions; but it is his universal endeavor so to enclose the case with palisades, that no assault of usual morality can cause the downfall of the barricade. When Goethe brings together Egmont and Clärchen, he does not present the case as though it required an apology; the beauty of the relationship is its defence. Heyse, the less grand poet, whose caution is quite equal to his daring, has always fixed an eye on conventional morality, and has continually endeavored to conciliate it, either by ceding the point to it, so to say, in all other cases but just this one where its infringement was unavoidable, or by so atoning for the offence that the individual who is guilty of it is allowed to purchase the

forbidden happiness, with his eyes fully open, and of his own free will, at so high a price that it appears too costly to be alluring to any Philistine.

In "Francesca von Rimini" the circumstances are as follows: Lanciotto is ugly, coarse, and corrupt; his brother, Paolo, noble and handsome. Lanciotto is inflamed with passion for Francesca. Misguided by brotherly love for the thoroughly unworthy Lanciotto, Paolo has allowed himself to be deluded not only into playing the part of suitor, but even disguised as bridegroom on the wedding day, to take the place of his brother, who feared that with his hideous person he could never obtain the maiden's consent. Not until shrouded by the darkness of the bridal chamber, does Lanciotto dare approach his bride. Now Paolo also loves Francesca, as she loves him in return. Therefore, it is no wonder that the young wife, upon discovering this gross deception, the victim of which she has become, feels dishonored by the caresses of her husband, and far from viewing her love for Paolo as a sin, she regards it as justified and sacred.

"The kiss thou gavest me the holy wafer was  
Which my dishonored lips did purify from taint."

In order to make his intrenchment as solid as possible, it will thus be seen that the poet, in this naïve work of his youth, has constructed the most improbable, most far-fetched, case in the world; for what can be more preposterous than for

Paolo out of pure, simple-hearted kindness to a despicable brother, to expose the woman he loves to the basest deception, which, moreover, annihilates his own life-happiness. But in this exaggerated example will, nevertheless, be found the type according to which, in Heyse's numerous later "novellen," with their plentiful tact and exquisite delicacy, the moral collision is constructed. Let me single out at random several examples. In "Beatrice" it is legal marriage which breaks up the love romance, a forced marriage, as unholy as the marriage of Francesca, although stronger reasons are given for it. In "Cleopatra" the young German resists the love of the fair Egyptian, as stubbornly as Kleist's Count Wetter von Strahl resists the passion of Kätchen von Heilbronn. Not until her yearning for him brings Cleopatra to the brink of the grave, is the liaison between them formed. The proud Gabrielle in the work "Im Grafenschlosse" does not allow herself to be persuaded into the "conscience marriage" with the Count, until he has jeopardized his life for her sake. The young wife in "Rafael" purchases a few hours of companionship with her lover through a lifelong incarceration in the cloister; the self-surrender of Garcinde and Lottka is ennobled by the fact that the outwardly fettered but inwardly free *ego* was unable to conceive of a self-surrender, forbidden by circumstances, under any other conditions than those whose consequences are death. The right to the happiness of a fleeting moment is purchased by suicide.

The goblet of bliss, drained by these personages, has seasoned their destiny with poison. Heyse, therefore, affirms for these

*heroic* souls the right to solve the problem of a conflict of duties in a different way than is customary for "the timid Philistine whose half-way measures are circumscribed by petty customs and considerations," and in the introduction to his "Beatrice"<sup>16</sup> he himself formulates his ethic heresy in the following words: "Genial, self-dependent natures can do much toward extending the boundary lines of the moral sphere, by permitting the measure of their inner power and magnitude to shine forth as an example, through their actions, just as genial artists can burst through those barriers of their art that have been handed down to them by tradition."

No less than through this intimately allied association with ruin and death does Heyse ennoble love, legitimate or illegitimate, as indicated above, through the nature of the self-surrender. It is always conscious. These women whom he characterizes never allow themselves to be carried away by their emotions; they give themselves up as a free gift – when they yield at all. Thus it is in works dating from Heyse's earliest youth, as "Der Kreisrichter"<sup>17</sup> (The Circuit Judge), thus in "Rafael," in "Lottka," and in so many of the "novellen" in prose and in verse. Everywhere the self-sufficiency and the right of spontaneity of the individual is preserved. The woman gives herself as a free gift

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<sup>16</sup> Gesammelte Werke, viii. 168.

<sup>17</sup> Gesammelte Werke, vi. 71: "I have been sold once in my life. How mankind will now blame me if I give myself as a free-will offering in order to suppress the anguish of that disgrace!"

to her lover, she goes freely forth to meet her own destruction, or with her own hand inflicts death upon herself; and where the bliss of love is not ennobled by the price it costs, it is at least exalted by the pride with which it is bestowed and received. By virtue of this pride the personality, itself governed by the strongest power of nature, feels independent and regal in the assertion of its sovereign dignity. In the romance "Im Paradiese" Heyse has for the first time treated as a main problem the freedom of love in antithesis to the laws of society, and maintained its justice. The fundamental idea of this romance is none other than that the morality and dignity, of love between man and woman is independent of the outward ratification of the marriage tie. According to his wont, Heyse has provided the case here given with the most forcible motives. Jansen cannot, without putting his friend to shame, become free from his despicable wife, and without Julie all his hopes as an artist and a man would perish. Yet when Julie in the presence of the assembled friends, adorned with the myrtle-wreath, freely weds Jansen, a decided attack is aimed at the purely exterior morality of society, although the incident is not brought forward as an example for imitation. The poet who in the "Kinder der Welt" urgently impresses it upon the consciences of his contemporaries, that the morality of the individual is not dependent on his metaphysical convictions, in his "Im Paradiese," strives to teach that the purity and dignity of a union of love must not be judged by the laws of outward morality, but that love both without and within the marriage

relation may be true and false, moral and immoral. Everything depends, according to Heyse's views, upon the true nobility of the heart.

## V

I have already said that Heyse as a poet is originally a pupil of Eichendorf. Like the hero in his "Ein Abenteuer" (An Adventure), he appears to have chosen for the companion of his first journeyman-years the romantic "Taugenichts" (Good-for-nothing). Where, in one of his "novellen" (Lottka), he introduces himself as a youth, he sings in Eichendorf's own key, and we recognize that very early in life he has been in the habit of whistling, with rare skill, the melodies of romance. Musje Morgenroth, in the collection of romantic folk-lore tales for children, which as a student he published under the title "Der Jungbrunnen" (The Fountain of Youth), is a genuine brother of the celebrated Eichendorf hero. The book is the work of a boy, and yet it is not without a certain interest, as it marks the first standpoint of our poet. It shows also with what talents he was equipped from the outset: the boyish, yet never inelegant prose flows smoothly, and the verse, which is of a vastly higher character, with all its echoes, is unaffected, fresh, and regular in form. His song is not original, but it is pure; it is in the usual key of romance, but it is sung with youthful freshness and grace. The fact of producing naïvely during the years of boyhood is in itself a phenomenon, and the unusual amount of innate command of language secures the student author from exaggeration or mannerism. The gift of language, inherited

evidently from his father, the well-known philologist, develops in the son into a fluency, a facility for handling words and rhythm, which even in his earliest youth was not far removed from virtuoso-ship. This almost Rückert-like flow of language, as a fundamental element in Heyse's natural endowments, influenced all the other peculiarities which he gradually developed. From the very beginning he sang not because he had more in his heart than the rest of mankind, but because it was far easier and more natural for him than for others to express that of which his heart was full. Since, no mighty inward revolutions or startling outward occurrences were necessary to unseal his lips, as are usually required to rouse the creative fancy of those for whom it is difficult to find form of expression, and who succeed only in moments of passion in bringing forth to the light of day the treasures of their inner being, he turned his gaze not within but without, pondered but little on his *ego*, his calling, and his capabilities; but fully conscious that he bore within his own soul a clear mirror, which reflected everything within his immediate surroundings that interested him, he allowed his gaze, with the keen susceptibility and true creative impulse of a plastic artist, to wander in all directions.

Of a plastic artist, I said; for he did not long continue to carol forth the music of romance. He himself has said, —

"Fair is romantic poesie,  
Yet what we call *beauté de nuit*."

True men, Heyse thinks, understand how to grasp their ideas in the light of day, and he is too thoroughly a child of the sun to be able to linger in the twilight of romance. A lyric poet he is not in the main, and the strength of romance, conformably to its nature and of necessity, lies in lyric poetry. Nor did the surroundings of nature imbue him with an independent poetic interest; such a freshness of the sea and of the landscape as is breathed for instance by the Danish novels of Blicher will not be found in his works; he is not a landscape-painter, and has always availed himself of the landscape merely as a background. What first and earliest met his gaze, as soon as he was developed enough to see with his own eyes, was man; and let it be observed, not man as an intelligence served by organs, or as a will walking on a pair of legs, or as a psychological curiosity, but man as a plastic form. Like the sculptor or the figure-painter it is his wont, according to my opinion, on closing his eyes, to see his horizon first and foremost populated with outlines and profiles. Beautiful external forms and movements, the poise of a graceful head, a charming peculiarity of carriage or walk, have occupied him in precisely the same way as they engross the attention of the plastic artist, and are reproduced by him with the same partiality, indeed, at times with technical exactness of expression. And not only the narrator, but the personages that appear on the scene, often form the same kind of conceptions. Thus, for instance, the main character in "Der Kreisrichter" (The Circuit Judge) says:

"The young people here are healthy, and health constitutes half of the beauty of youth. There is also race development. *Notice the refined form of their heads, and the delicate moulding of their temples, and the natural grace of their bearing in walking, dancing, and sitting down.*"<sup>18</sup> A striking example of the poet's method of contemplation may be found in "Die Einsamen" (The Solitary Ones), where his dissatisfaction at being able to paint so imperfectly with the means which his art affords, breaks forth in the following words: "Only the mere outlines!" he raved to himself. "Only a few dozen lines! How she went trotting about on her little donkey, one leg thrown across the back of the animal, resting firmly and securely, the other almost grazing the ground with the tip of her foot, and her right elbow supported on the knee that was in repose, her hand playing gently with the chain about her neck, her face turned toward the sea. What a mass of black tresses on the neck! Something red lends a radiance thereto. A coral necklace? No; fresh pomegranate blossoms. The wind plays with the loosely knotted kerchief; how dark is the glow of the cheeks, and how much darker the eye!"<sup>19</sup> Such are the pictures of plastic figures, simple, picturesque situations, with which Heyse's imagination has had to operate upon from the beginning, and which serve to form for it a starting-point. And though it may be felt ever so keenly how much more sensible it is to describe a poet than to praise him, still it were scarcely possible to restrain

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<sup>18</sup> Gesammelte Werke, vi. 40.

<sup>19</sup> Gesammelte Werke, vi. 5.

an outburst of admiration upon considering how exceedingly well Heyse, in every instance, has succeeded in presenting his characters, especially, however, his female characters, to the reader's eye. He does not belong to the descriptive school; he does not characterize in detail, as either Balzac or Turgeneff; he describes with a few delicate strokes: yet his creations remain fixed in our memories, from the simple reason that they all have defined style. A peasant maiden from Naples or Tyrol, a servant girl, or a young fräulein from Germany, all obtain, when depicted by his hand, a higher, more visionary, and yet ever-memorable life, because they are all ennobled by strictly ideal methods and the art of representation. They are as perfect in form as statues; they have the carriage of queens. With the exception of the painter Leopold Robert, of whom some of Heyse's Italian works are reminders, no one, to my knowledge, has displayed so grand a style in the delineation of peasants and fishing people as Heyse. And as the forms of the outer person, so those of the inner being are of an exquisitely finished style. Did not the expression seem almost too daring, I should say that Heyse's descriptions of love are plastic. The romantic school always conceived love to be of a lyric nature. If Heyse's love stories be compared with the love stories of the romantic school, it will be found that while the romantic writers give their strength in analyzing their romantic transports as such, and forming a nomenclature for the rarest moods which it has usually been thought impossible to name, in Heyse's writings every psychological force is mirrored in a look

or in a gesture; everything becomes with him contemplation and visible life.

## VI

I remarked that the faculty of preserving and idealizing forms constituted *one* of the starting-points of this poet's imagination. It has, however, another. Quite as inherent as his capacity for delineating character is his fondness for experiencing and inventing "adventures." By adventures, I understand events of a peculiar and unusual nature, which – as is scarcely ever the case in real adventures – have a sure outline, and so clearly defined a beginning, middle, and end, that they appear to the imagination like a work of art enclosed in a frame. From any chance, outward or inward, observation – the fragment of a dream, an encounter on the street, the sight of a tower dating from the Middle Ages, in some ancient city, in the glow of the setting sun – there springs up for him, through the most rapid association of ideas, a history, a chain of events; and as he is by nature an artist, this series of events ever assumes a rhythmic form. Like the beings he creates, it has clear, firm outlines and inner equilibrium. It has its skeleton, its filling up of flesh; above all, its well-defined and slender shape. The faculty of relating a story in brief, concise form, of imparting to it, so to say, a harmonious rhythm, has its origin directly in Heyse's thoroughly harmonious nature.<sup>20</sup> The "novellen" form, as he has carved it out and engraved it, is an entirely original and independent creation, his actual property.

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<sup>20</sup> Heyse und Kurz, Novellenschatz des Auslandes, Bd. VIII.

Therefore he has become especially popular through his prose "novelle." The "novelle" with him always has extremely few and simple factors, the number of the personages introduced is small, the action is concise and may be surveyed with a single glance. But his fiction does not exist for the sake of the personages alone, as in the modern French novels, which only satisfy a psychological or a physiological interest; it has its own peculiar mode of development and its independent interest. A novel like Christian Winter's "Aftenscene" (Evening Scene), whose quaint, old-fashioned grace of style renders it so fascinating, possesses the fault of having no incident. With Heyse the "novelle" is not a picture of the times, or a *genre* painting; something always *does happen* with him, and it is always something unexpected. The plot, as a rule, is so arranged that at a certain point an unforeseen change takes place; a surprise which, when the reader looks back, always proves to have had a firm and carefully prepared foundation in what went before. At this point the action sharpens; here the threads unite to form a knot from which they are spun around in an opposite direction. The enjoyment of the reader is based upon the art with which the purpose of the action is gradually more and more veiled and hidden from view, until suddenly the covering falls. His surprise is caused by the skill with which Heyse apparently strays farther and farther away from the goal which rose beyond the starting-point, until he finally discovers that he has been led through a winding path and finds himself exactly above the point where the story began.

Heyse himself, in his introduction to his "Deutscher Novellenschatz," has expressed his views on the principle to which he does homage in his "novellen" compositions. Here, as in the introduction to the "Stickerin von Treviso" (The Embroidery Woman of Treviso), he calls the attention of those who would place the entire importance on style and diction, to the fact that the narrative as a narrative, what children call the story, is unquestionably the essential foundation of the "novelle" and possesses its own peculiar beauty. He lays stress on the statement that according to his æsthetic taste, he would give the preference to *that* "novelle" whose main motive is most distinctly finished, and – with more or less intrinsic worth – betrays something peculiar, specific, in the original design. "*A strong silhouette*," he continues, "should not be lacking in what is called a 'novelle' in the proper sense of the word."<sup>21</sup> By the term "silhouette" Heyse means the outlines of the story, as shown by a brief summary of the contents; and he illustrates his idea with a striking example and a striking description. He gives the synopsis of one of the novels of Boccaccio, as follows: —

"Frederigo degli Alberighi loves, without meeting with any return; roving in knightly fashion, he squanders all his substance, and has nothing left but one single falcon; this, when the lady whom he loves is led by chance to his house, and he has nothing else with which to prepare a meal for her, he places on the table before her. She learns what he has done, suddenly changes her

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<sup>21</sup> Heyse und Kurz, Deutscher Novellenschatz, Bd. I. s. xix.

resolution, and rewards his love by making him the lord of her hand and her fortune."

Heyse calls attention to the fact that in these few lines lie all the elements of a touching and delightful "novelle," in which the fate of two human beings is accomplished in the most charming manner, through an accidental turn of affairs, which, however, serves to give deeper development to the characters; and he therefore invites modern story-tellers, even when engaged on the most touching and rich materials, to ask themselves where "the falcon" is, the specific object that distinguishes this story from a thousand others.

In the demand he makes on the "novelle," he has especially characterized the task he has imposed on himself and faithfully fulfilled. He prefers eccentric to typical everyday instances. As a rule, we are quite as sure of finding "the falcon" in his prose narratives, as a certain judge was of finding a woman at the bottom of every crime. In "L' Arrabbiata," the biting of a hand is "the falcon"; in the "Bild der Mutter" (The Mother's Portrait) it is the elopement; in "Vetter [Cousin] Gabriel," it is the letter copied from the "lover's letter-writer." If the reader will himself search for the aforesaid wild bird, he will gain an insight into the poet's method of composition. It is not always so easily captured as in the cases just cited. With a power of investigation, a nimble grace, which is rare in a man who is not of Roman race, Heyse has understood how to tie the knots of events and disentangle them again, to present and solve the psychologic problem which

he has *isolated* in the "novelle." He has the faculty of singling out exceptional, unusual cases from the general state of culture, and the condition of the society of which he is a member, and presenting them purely and sharply in the form of a "novelle," without permitting the action to play into the unreal and fabulous, as is the wont of romantic novelists, and without ever allowing it to run into a merely epigrammatic point. His "novellen" are neither brief romances nor long anecdotes. They have at the same time fulness and strictly-defined form. And circumscribed as this form may be, it has yet proved itself sufficiently flexible to be able to embrace within its limits the most diverse materials. The "novellen" of Heyse play on many strings; most abundantly on the tender and the *spirituelle*, but also on the comic (as in the amusing tale, "Die Wittwe von Pisa" – The Widow of Pisa), the fantastic (as in the Hoffman-like "Cleopatra"); indeed, in a single instance, the awful (in the painful nocturne, "Der Kinder Sünde der Väter Fluch" – The Sins of the Children the Curse of the Fathers). The "novelle" as it is treated by Heyse borders on the provinces of Alfred de Musset, Mérimée, Hoffman and Tieck; but has, however, its own special domain, as well as its very individual profile.

## VII

Meanwhile, ready as I am to recognize the significance of this sharp profile as the individual characteristic of the Heyse "novelle," and its significance for the novel in general as a work of art, it is equally hard for me to allow this to pass as the decisive norm for the estimation of individual stories.

The novel is, indeed, as every work of art, an organism in which beautiful proportions, relatively independent of one another and of a totally dissimilar character, contribute to produce a combined impression. We have been dwelling upon the characterizations, and the action; style is the third element. According to my convictions, these three elements are not subordinate one to the other, but co-ordinate; and each one of them, when developed in a masterly way, affords the reader an equally perfect enjoyment.

It is very certain, as Heyse makes evident, that a one-sided development of diction leads to clever capriciousness without any scheme; whoever places too great importance on "the plot" is in danger, on the other hand, of retrograding into mere sensational literature.

"Spring Floods," by Turgenief, is a novel whose action moves on in an unsatisfactory manner, – of the style, in the stricter sense of the word, I cannot judge, as I have never read the story in the original, – but is this lack of much importance

in such a masterwork of individual characterization? Does not the description of the Italian family, in and by itself, outweigh every imperfection in the plan of occurrences? What matters it if the reader would rather have had the end somewhat different, and cannot read it a second time, even though he may read three-quarters of the novel over and over again with unchanged enjoyment?

Blicher's "Diary of a Village Sexton" is a novel in which the action is of but little moment, and most of the characters are absolutely repellant, on account of their coarseness; but it is, nevertheless, a work of the highest artistic worth; its main strength lies in its style, in the masterly execution of the honest sexton's language, which belongs to a period of almost two hundred years past. This language is a guarantee for the cutting truth of the narrative, a truth which is not reached by the path of idealism, and which, therefore, is neither sought nor found by Heyse; I mean that truth which by the French is designated "*la vérité vraie*."

And cannot Heyse be attacked with his own weapons? I think he can. By the stress he lays on what the novel within the novel is, he seems to oppose alike the overestimation of style, and of ideal purport. But of all his "novellen" in verse "Der Salamander" (The Salamander) appears to me to stand the highest; of his prose works "Der letzte Centaur" (The Last Centaur) is one of my favorites. The first of these seems to me to bear off the palm on account of the diction; the last, on account of the idea.

There is no need of taking pains to seek for a "falcon" in Salamander; there is no plot in it, the characters have no development worth mentioning, and yet every reader of any susceptibility will experience such lively enjoyment under the influence of the magic of these terzettos, that it will seem to him as if this poem, in addition to its own merits, possessed also all those which it lacks. Of the epic repose, of the objective style, which is Heyse's precise ideal in the domain of the "novelle," not much will here be found. This epic repose is perhaps less adapted on the whole to the restless spirit of our time. The realization of this ideal of Heyse's has, properly speaking, only perfectly succeeded in the few prose "novellen," which do not touch upon the civilization of modern society, as in those genial pasticcios of the olden time: "Die Stickerin von Treviso" and "Geoffroy und Garcinde," where the noble, simple style of the old Italian or Provençal form of narrative is idealized, or when the materials are taken from the life of the people in Italy or Tyrol; for the people in those lands are themselves a simple piece of the Middle Ages cast in *a form*. Such a story as that little jewel "L' Arrabbiata," which was the foundation of Heyse's fame, actually attains its rights through its plain, rigid setting; adorned with the decorations of style, or with psychologically polished facets, it would lose its entire beauty, if not become impossible. In the same way "Die Stickerin von Treviso," which probably, next to the work just named, has reaped the greatest harvest of applause, in its touching simplicity and grandeur, is so thoroughly

one with its chronicle form, that it cannot be conceived of without this. But in instances where scenes from purely modern civilization are described, the style cannot be too individual and nervous. Heyse himself cannot avoid making his aim in this respect proportionate to his materials; how feverish is the recital in the pretty invalid story in letters "Unheilbar" (Incurable.) However, it is apparently with the utmost reluctance, and without the free exercise of his will, that he permits himself to be carried away into such a passionately surging and trembling style as in "Salamander." This creation is pure style, its beauty depends wholly and entirely on the captivating charm of its metric diction, and yet throughout not a word will be found that is not to the purpose. The entire work teems with active life, every change in style is deeply felt and transparent; the struggling soul of the writer lies like an open book before the reader. The situations are insignificant and commonplace; no Bengal illumination, not even a final tableau. But these remarkable, incredibly beautiful, unnaturally easy, nervously passionate terzettos, which question and answer, jest, sing and lament, invest the theatrical, the enamored yet thoroughly composed blasé coquette, the heroine, and the passion she inspires, with such a charm that no exciting story, with crisis and pole, could be more captivating. Toward the close of the poem the glorious terzettos, which throughout have been transformed into quite a new species of metre, ring out in a manner as surprising as it is genial and bold, in the chords of a triple ritornelle, invested with all the freshness of nature. Such a

poem as this will maintain its place in spite of all theories.

Upon the whole, however, it seems to me that Heyse has formed an incorrect conception of the significance of poetic style. Theoretically, he fears its independent development, and cannot tolerate any works which are "mere diction and style." Nevertheless, in such poems as "Das Feenkind" (The Fairy Child), and still more in such poems as "Frauenemancipation" (Female Emancipation), he has himself furnished productions of this kind. The first of these poems is refined and graceful, but the raillery in it is of too ample length – we do not care to eat an undue amount of whipped cream; the other, whose tendency, however, is the best, suffers from a loquacity without any salt. But a distinctly marked style is by no means the same thing as the formal virtuosship of diction. That an artist of language like Heyse, the translator of Giusti, of the troubadours, of Italian and Spanish folk-songs, must possess this in the fullest degree, is understood as a matter of course. And yet the truly artistic style is not that formal grace which spreads uniformly over everything. Style, in the highest sense of the word, is fulfilment, a form completed from every point of view. Where the coloring of language, the phraseology, diction, and personal accent, still possess a certain abstract homogeneousness, where the author has failed to mirror the character at every essential point in all the outer forms, the drapery of language, of however light a texture it may consist, will hang stiff and dead about the personality of the speaker. The perfect modern style, on the

contrary, envelops it as the flowing robe envelops the form of the Grecian orator, serving to relieve the attitude of the body and every movement. The diction of the mere virtuoso, even when "brilliant," may be traditional and trivial; genuine style is never so. With the mode of narration of Heyse's "novellen," I have not much fault to find; his dramatic diction, on the contrary, does not please me so well.

There are no doubt many who think that if Heyse's historic dramas have not gained the recognition accorded his "novellen," it is because they are invested with too little action, and too much style. If the word style, however, be understood as I have here defined it, it should certainly rather be asserted that the iambic form used was worn threadbare, and that these works have not style enough. The diction in "Elizabeth Charlotte," for example, neither sufficiently bears the coloring of the period in which the scenes are laid, nor of the persons who speak. Only compare it with the dry posthumous memoirs of the princess. The poet who, with his fabulous facility for orienting himself in every poetic form, can produce a drama as easily as he can tell a story, has taken his task almost too easily. The little tragedy "Maria Moroni," a drama which may be ranked next to his "novellen," through its plan as well as through its characterization, might worthily stand side by side with the Italian dramas of Alfred de Musset, of which it reminds us, were not its language-coloring by far too dull and cold. The dialogues of Musset not only sparkle with wit, but glow with ardor and with life. In his dramas Heyse

is not personally present with his whole soul at every point. And yet this "at every point" is the style.

Inasmuch, therefore, as I have placed the highest estimate on "Salamander," of all the versified "novellen," on account of its excellence of diction, so for the sake of its idea I would give a high place to the prose narrative, "Der letzte Centaur" (The Last Centaur), although the latter is, at the same time, farthest removed from the requirements of the definition. It does not treat of an occurrence or a conflict in a defined sphere of life, nor of any especial psychologic instance, but of life itself; it permits the entire modern life to be mirrored at once within a narrow frame. A shot at the central point is so refreshing; why deny it? The peripheric character of some others of Heyse's works is to blame for their not being of greater interest. After reading through a long series of "novellen" one cannot help longing for an art form which is capable of embracing the more significant, universally current ideas and problems in poetic form.

## VIII

Heyse's dramas are in the highest degree heterogeneous: civil tragedies, mythological, historic, patriotic plays of the most dissimilar artistic nature. His talent is so pliant that he feels at liberty to enter upon any theme. A strong impulse for the historical, Heyse has never had; his historical dramas have all sprung from a patriotic sentiment, and are effective chiefly through this sentiment. The one of his groups of dramas for which the poet is most noted is that which deals with antique subjects. At a time when modern political action was everywhere demanded of the higher drama, this employment of old Grecian and Roman materials was lamented over and derided in Germany, with an utter lack of comprehension. People asked what in all the world there was in such a subject as the rape of the Sabine women, or Meleager, or Hadrian, that could possibly interest the poet or any one else. To those who read critically it is very evident what must have attracted Heyse to these themes. They incorporate for him his favorite ideas concerning woman's love and woman's destiny, and his own being is mirrored in them. Any one who will compare the warm-blooded drama "Meleager" with Swinburne's "Atalanta in Kalydon," which handles the same material, will find occasion for many interesting observations, concerning the peculiarity of the two poets. "Hadrian" has perhaps perplexed the critic the most. What could attract the

poet to a relation so wholly foreign to us as that between Hadrian and Antinous, one, too, that is so decidedly a reminder of the shady side of antique life, seems almost incomprehensible. I, for my part, rank "Hadrian" highest of all of Heyse's dramas. I have never been able to read this tragedy of the handsome young Egyptian who, passionately loved by the ruler of the world, surrounded by all the pomp and splendor of the court, free in every respect, and bound alone to his imperial admirer, languishes for freedom, – I have never been able to read this tragedy, I say, without thinking of a certain young poet who, already in his earliest youth summoned to a South German court, soon became an object of envy as the favorite of an amiable and intelligent monarch, as the darling of fortune, while in many a secret moment he wished himself far from court, and in many a fettered moment felt how little even the favor of the best master weighed in the balance against the freedom of one who was entirely unprotected, but entirely independent.

In this drama, by way of exception, all that is scenic is of the highest effect. The actual reason why Heyse, with all his great ability for the stage, still failed to meet with decided success in his dramas, is unquestionably because he does not possess the German pathos proper, that of Schiller. Not until the pathos is broken, not until it has become half pathological, is he able to treat it with entire originality. Genuine dramatic pathos from the depths of the heart, with him easily becomes inartistically national, patriotic, and somewhat commonplace. This is the

reason why the representation of manly action proper is not his province. To however high a degree he may have command in his poetry over the passive qualities of manhood, such as dignity, earnestness, repose, dauntless courage, he nevertheless, like Goethe, wholly lacks the active momentum. A vigorous, effective plan of action that follows a defined goal is as little the essential part of his dramas as of his novels and romances. If there now and then appear an energetic action, it is occasioned by despair; the individual is forced into a dilemma in which the only apparent means of escape may be gained through the utmost daring alone. (Compare the action of the young forester in "Mutter und Kind," when he kidnaps the son of his sweetheart, or the elopement in "Das Bild der Mutter" – The Mother's Portrait.) In the romance "Im Paradiese" a good example of this will be found in the scene where Jansen, in exasperation at all the incompleteness amid which his life has been passed, dashes to pieces the models of his saints. It was an unmanly thing in Jansen to carry on a saint factory, – the whole idea is amusing as a passing jest, but does not admit of being made permanent without disfiguring the character, – but it is a still more unmanly, aye, a truly womanish course of action, when he pours out the vials of his wrath against the dead plaster images. Although from the reason already cited the genuine dramatic nerve and sinew are almost always lacking in Heyse's works, the hindrances which are placed in the way of the poet's decided success on the stage are not of such importance that he may not overcome them with time

and celebrate a scenic triumph. By way of preliminary, a few years ago he made his *début*, to the astonishment of every one, in a species of poetic composition which seemed to be wholly remote from his province, but in which, in a very short time, he won the greatest success.

It is still fresh in the public memory what an excitement the "Kinder der Welt" created when it first appeared in Spener's "Zeitung." For a whole month this feuilleton was the universal theme of conversation. The guileless novelist, who was so completely an alien to worldly life, had suddenly unveiled himself as a purely modern thinker, who ended a philosophic romance with the words of Hölderlin: —

"Cease not to guard with heav'nly buckler  
Fair innocence; thou guardian of the bold,  
Forsake her not!"

It had been apparently overlooked previous to this that through Heise's insinuating poetry there ran a vehement demand for freedom, a complete independence of dogmas and conventional fetters. At his new departure, therefore, people were more astonished than they had any reason to be. Heise is of a mixed origin: from his Teutonic father he has inherited the positive side of his character, the fulness and beauty of his disposition; from his mother, who was a Jewess, a critical vein. For the first time both sides of his nature were revealed to the great public. It must have produced a marked impression on the minds about

him that this Fabius Cunctator who had so long held aloof from the problems of the day, now felt that the moment had come for him to take his position in their ranks, and fight the fight of the times. The romance is a dignified and noble protest against those who would fetter freedom of thought and instruction in our day. It has to back it all polemics against dogmas. All its main personages, with a clear consciousness of their position, are made to live in that atmosphere of freer ideas, which is the vital air of modern times. It is one of those works which possess the intensity of a long-repressed, late-matured personal experience, and therefore has a vitality to which no awkwardness of form, no lack of form, can be prejudicial. The book, as a first attempt, is wanting in many of the elements of the genuine romance; the hero, as might have been expected, lacks much in resolution, in active manly vigor; it does not concentrate itself in a single, absolutely dominating interest; the all-engulfing erotic element does not permit the idea to stand forth clear and central, as it was conceived by the poet. The decisive turning-point of the work seems to be impending where Franzelius, after the burial of Balder, is thrown into prison on the denunciation of Lorinser. Here Edwin says expressly:<sup>22</sup> "You desire open war, you yourself demand it, and there shall be no peace until it has been honestly fought out." But the *open* war does not take place; the entire band of heroes of the book content themselves with the defensive, and when Edwin has finally completed his epoch-

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<sup>22</sup> Kinder der Welt, ii. 265.

making work, the romance ends. Closely associated with this lack is the undue softness of feeling in those parts which treat of Balder. The absence of that strict observance of proportion and limits which distinguish Heyse's "novellen," is plainly felt in this romance. But how would it be possible that great merits in a work of such extent should not be purchased with some lacks. Not only have the ideal female characters here the same points of excellence as in the "novellen"; but the poet has also enlarged his sphere in a high degree; even the least ideal figures, Christiane, Mohr, Marquard, are incomparable. And what a flood of genuine humanity streams through this romance! What a fund of true, versatile culture it contains! It is not only a courageous book, it is also an edifying one.

On certain foul attacks which it drew down upon its author, I will not linger. The denunciations of a couple of insignificant German sheets alone interest me because one of these abusive articles, which so stated the purport of the book that it was represented as dealing solely with the coarsest sensuality, was brought out in Norway by the Norwegian translator of Goethe's "Faust," with an introduction in which all Norwegian fathers of families were warned against allowing the book to cross their thresholds.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Did not a critic of this sort take it upon himself to get up a "warning" in the same style, against Goethe's "Faust"? "The purport of this immoral work," he wrote, "is the following: A physician (Dr. Med.), already pretty well advanced in years, is weary of study, and hankers after carnal pleasures. Finally he signs a bond with the devil. The latter leads him through divers low diversions (which, for instance, consist in making

For a sharp thrust from France, Heyse had every reason to be prepared. It came not unmerited; for the remarks concerning the literature and intellectual tendency of that country occurring in his romance are quite in the style of the general German sentiment; but the cut might have been given in a more chivalrous and skilful manner than the very ignoble and narrow-minded article by Albert Réville in the "Revue des Deux Mondes," which was dictated by national hatred and a love of self-amusement.

Freedom of thought was the fundamental idea of the "Kinder der Welt"; freedom of moral action is the fundamental idea of the romance "Im Paradiese," yet not in such a way that this work must be considered an attempt at justification; for if

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half-drunk students still more drunk) to a burgher's daughter, a young maiden, whom Faust (the doctor) at once attempts to seduce. A couple of rendez-vous at the house of an old procuress prepare the way for this. As the seduction, however, cannot be brought about speedily enough, the devil gives Faust a jewel-case to present to the young maiden. Wholly powerless to resist this gift, that is to say, not even seduced, simply purchased, Gretchen yields to Faust; and in order to be all the more undisturbed with her lover she doses her old mother with a narcotic, which kills the old woman. Then after being the cause of her brother's death, she destroys her child, the fruit of her shame. In prison she employs herself in singing obscene songs. That her lover left her in the lurch we cannot wonder when we consider his religious principles. He is, as the scene in which his donna questions him about his faith clearly proves, no Christian; indeed, he does not even seem to believe in a God, although he endeavors to grasp at all sorts of empty subterfuges to conceal his absolute unbelief." As this wicked book, notwithstanding all this, finds, as we hear to our astonishment, many readers, indeed, even lady readers, and is in constant demand at the circulating libraries in our city, we beg of all fathers of families to watch over the spiritual welfare of those belonging to them, to whom such profligate reading is all the more dangerous because its immoral teachings are veiled in a polished, insinuating form."

the freedom of thought Heyse advocates may be designated as absolute, the freedom of moral action is only relative. Moreover, "Im Paradiese" is a work of quite a different character than the first romance. Even the fact that the scenes of the early romance are laid in keen, critical Berlin, the second one in merry, pleasure-loving Munich, indicates the difference. While the "Kinder der Welt" may be called a philosophic romance, "Im Paradiese" is a sort of *roman comique*, light, graceful, and full of a raillery blended with earnestness. Its greatest value is in being the psychology of an entire city of importance, and the portrait of the social and art circles of this city. All Munich is embraced in this book, and, as a matter of course, the artist life of this city of artists occupies the main place. The conversations and reflections on art have not the useless and abstract character in the pages of this book that they assume in the ordinary art-romance; we feel that it is no theorist but a connoisseur who speaks, and a genuine studio atmosphere is diffused throughout all portions of the book. The entire æsthetics of the author may be condensed into Ingre's old definition, "*l'art c'est le nu.*"

So far as the entanglements and composition of the plot are concerned, "Im Paradiese" denotes an undoubted progress. The interest is sustained throughout, and what is more, it continually increases; a commendation that cannot be bestowed on "Kinder der Welt." Now and then, however, the means used to forward the plot are applied in rather an unskilful manner. For instance, the entire rôle played by the dog Homo as *deus ex machina* is

especially marked in its exaggerations. He reminds us, with his superhuman penetration, of those lions of the sculpture of the "Zopf" period, with human and majestic countenances, framed in masses which too strongly resemble the big wigs of real life. Yet in German romances not the plot, but the delineation of character is the main thing, and in almost all its subordinate figures this book reveals a new side of Heyse's talent. Such forms as Angelica, Rosenbusch, Kohl, Schnetz, have sportive, manifold life that formerly had been almost entirely excluded from Heyse's style. In a word, Heyse's mind has gained humor, the humor of mature manhood, one might almost say, of forty years of age; but a delicate, sagacious, quiet humor which renders complete the gift of the poet and invests its coloring with the true blending.

## IX

We have run through the circle of ideas and forms in which this poetic soul has found its expression. We have seen how Heyse, at last, in the romance accommodated himself to the thought agitating modern times, and to which the "novellen" form was not able to give adequate space. Moreover, I pointed out one "novelle" which was not less distinguished by its fundamental thought than "Der Salamander" was by its style.

Each time that Heyse has attempted to gain a modern interest for ancient myths, he has been fortunate. The charming little youthful poem, "Die Furie" (The Fury), is among the best that he has written. In a little drama, "Perseus" (not included in his collected works), he has given a new interpretation of the Medusa myth; he has felt pity for poor, beautiful Medusa, to whom was allotted the cruel fate of turning every one into stone, and he informs us that the envy of the goddesses who were jealous of her love for Perseus is alone to blame for this. Her head falls by the hand of her own lover, while she, in order not to harm him through her pernicious gaze, buries her face in the sand. Heyse has transformed the ancient myth into an original and sorrowful Märchen. The story of the "Centaur" is bright, and full of profound thought. We are not astonished when "Im Paradiese" informs us that this story inspired the favorite fresco of the painter Kohle. The pilgrimage "unserer lieben Frau von

Milo," which as a picture we almost think we see before our eyes, so vividly is the fresco described, is intimately related as a poem to "Der letzte Centaur" (The last Centaur)! That sounds almost like the last of the Mohikans! What does Heyse know of the last Centaur? How could he possibly introduce him into a regular "novelle"? It is done with consummate art, and yet in the most natural way in the world. He first, so to speak, brings together two circles, then a third circle, and in the latter he conjures up the Centaur. The first circle is the world of the living, the second the world of the dead, the third easily and naturally comprises the world of the supernatural. The story begins, contrary to Heyse's custom, in a purely autobiographical way, therefore with the strongest possible elements of reality. The author, late one evening, approaches a wine-house, where, in his youth, he was in the habit of meeting every week his dearest friends and comrades, all of whom are now dead, and lets them pass in review before his mind's eye. Finally he enters the wine-house, feels weary, and – suddenly it seems to him as though he were summoned to join the old circle, and as the door is opened, lo! his friends all sit together. But not one of them extends a hand to him who is entering, and their faces wear an expression of formality, seriousness, and sorrow. Every now and then they drink long draughts from their wineglasses, while their pale cheeks and dim eyes sparkle and glow for a moment, but directly afterward they sit rigid and silent once more, staring into their glasses. One of them alone is not bowed down by the destiny that has overtaken

them, and of which, from a mute agreement, not a word is spoken in the society. It is Genelli, the distinguished painter, whose "Centaur" in the "Schackschen Sammlung" at Munich is the admiration of all travellers. One of the company remarks that such a Genelli creation looks so life-like that one is almost inclined to believe that the artist himself was a participator in the scene. And as the master calmly replies "And so he was," we glide imperceptibly from the realm of the dead to the world of fiction. He has seen the Centaur with his own eyes, one beautiful summer afternoon, as it came trotting, without thought of evil, into a little Tyrolese village, where Genelli sat over his wineglass. In olden times, the Centaur was a country physician by profession, had grown weary during a professional tour across the mountains, had laid himself down to sleep in a glacier-cave, was then frozen in – and now, after the lapse of centuries, the ice had melted about him, and he could freely gaze on the changed world with his wondering eyes. It is Sunday, and just church time, when, with his mighty body, – a Farnese Hercules above, a superb, heroic battle-charger below, – with floating mane and long, trailing horse tail, with a spray of roses behind one ear in his thick hair, he trots through the empty streets, only now and then terrifying some old woman, who flees, with shrieks of alarm, from the strange apparition. He sees the church door open, the building full of people, and a marvellously beautiful woman with a child on her arm, painted over the altar. Filled with curiosity, meaning no harm, he trots through the portal, over the stone

flags, and approaches the altar. It can easily be comprehended what a hubbub is caused by this monster, newly arisen from hell. The parson shrieks aloud, waves toward the beast whatever consecrated thing he may happen to hold in his hand, and cries "Apage! apage!" (which the Centaur understands because it is Greek). The congregation makes the sign of the cross over and over again; and filled with astonishment, this beast of ancient story then trots out of the door again, and accompanied by all the old women and all the children of the village, who are naturally very much shocked to see "the lofty traveller so lightly clad," presses onward to the village inn, where Genelli is sitting on the balcony. The master then informs the Centaur that he has awakened to life either a couple of hundred years too late or too early. At the time of the Renaissance he would doubtless have been well received. "But at the present day, among this narrow-chested, broad-browed, enervated, unmanned, worn-out race that is called the modern world!" Genelli could not venture to make out a very cheering horoscope for him. "Wherever you may show yourself, in cities or in villages, the street-urchins will run after you and pelt you with rotten apples, the old women will cry murder, and the priest will report you to be the foul fiend himself, etc." And it comes to pass as Genelli has prophesied. While the worthy Centaur, with the good nature that belongs to the strong, allows the public to stare at him, to feel his soft, velvety hide, while he, in genial mood, drains glass after glass of wine, and hands back his empty glass over the railing of the

arbor to the pretty bar-maid, to whom he at once gave his rose, hatred and envy are lying in ambush to work his destruction. A complete conspiracy has been formed against him. "At the head stood, of course, the reverend clergy, who deemed it detrimental to the spiritual welfare of their parishioners to come into closer contact with a certainly unchristian, wholly naked, and no doubt, very immoral beast-man." Equally incensed was an Italian who had been exhibiting on the market-place a stuffed calf with two heads and five legs. The horse-man could be seen gratis, he was alive and drank and talked, and who knew whether he might not even be moved to treat the by-standers to some skilful feats of horsemanship. The calf, on the other hand, was a peaceful genius, and gave no signs of any such extravagant undertakings. The Italian cannot enter into competition. "There is a difference," he explains to the parson, "between a legalized, natural sport, that is carried on with the full approval of the police, and a monster that is wholly beyond the limits of probability, such a one as has never been known to exist before, who, travelling without passport or license, makes the country unsafe and steals the bread from the mouths of honest five-legged calves." But the most passionate opponent of the Centaur is the little bow-legged village tailor, the bridegroom elect of the pretty bar-maid. The tailor, too, discloses his mind to the parson, and expresses his anxiety lest the new fashion introduced by the unknown should ruin the whole tailor's trade, and, moreover, overthrow all conceptions of decency and good morals. So, while the Centaur, in his cheerful mood, is

just engaged in carrying the fair Nanni on his back round the court-yard of the inn, and, at the same time, entertaining the bystanders with an exceedingly graceful and peculiar dance, all the conspirators appear with a company of mounted gens-d'armes to capture him. Without honoring them with the slightest attention, he continues his dance, and softly pressing the maiden's hands on his breast, he makes a magnificent leap over the heads of the peasants and away he goes. Pistol-balls follow him, with sharp reports, without hitting him, and soon he stands free on the next mountain slope. There, moved by the piteous entreaties of the maiden, he allows her to glide gently down to the ground. "Greatly as she had been flattered by the chivalrous homage of the stranger, and pitiful as was the figure her own sweetheart displayed beside him, she could not expect a solid support from this mounted foreigner." Her practical nature triumphs, and like a hunted chamois she springs from stone to stone into her tailor's arms. An expression of divine scorn glides over the countenance of the Centaur; he is seen to move away, and shortly afterward he has vanished from the eager gaze of those who are staring after him.

Here Genelli's voice is hushed, the little circle breaks up, and the poet awakens in the ante-room of the inn.

All the qualities which make a poetic work an enjoyment to the reader are combined in this "Märchen"; an exalted humor, which casts a gentle glow over all the details, the tenderest semi-tone and the finest clair-obscure, that permits the action of the

piece to glide gently from the light of day into a dream of a circle of the dead, and then again allows the twilight of the shadow-world to be illumined by a sunbeam from old Hellas. Add to this a profound thought, which is entirely original to its poet. For this sportive tale is in reality a hymn to freedom in art as well as in life, and to freedom as Heyse has conceived it. In his eyes freedom does not consist in a struggle for freedom (as, for instance, in the case of the Norwegian author Henrik Ibsen), but it is the protest of nature against dogmas in the religious sphere, of nature against conventionality in the social and moral sphere. Through nature to freedom! that is his path and that his watchword. Thus the Centaur as half human being, half divinity, is to his fancy a beloved symbol. How beautiful is the Centaur in his proud strength gained from the remnant of old Grecian blood he has preserved in his veins! What must he not have suffered, the poor Centaur, for the remnant of heathenism, that has arisen in him, and that, after having been frozen in a few thousand years, has ventured out into the light of day in our age when all the glaciers are beginning to melt away! How much more instructive, how much more sedate and moral, does the whole civilized world about him find his interesting rival, the stuffed calf, with two tongues and five legs, which are by no means intended for progress, but are conservative legs that with all due propriety keep the place ascribed to them. Such curiosities never exceed the limits of any civil custom, never exhibit themselves without permission from the public authorities and the clergy,

and are therefore none the less unusual. They will always remain rivals of the Centaur, considered by some as his equal and by others as far outshining him.

And is not the poet himself, on his Pegasus in this petty modern social world of ours, the living representative of "the last Centaur"?

## X

I have noted down some expressions of opinion concerning Heyse, favorable and unfavorable all mixed together.

"Heyse," says one, "is the woman's doctor, the German woman's doctor, who has thoroughly understood Goethe's saying, —

'Es ist ihr ewig Weh und Ach  
So tausendfach u.s.w.'

That he is no poet for men, Prince Bismarck has rightly felt." "On the contrary," says another, "Paul Heyse is very masculine. He is pronounced weak by some because he is pleasing, because a finished grace has lent its impress to his creations. People do not realize how much strength is requisite in order to have this exquisite charm!"

"What is Heyse?" says a third. "The denizen of a small town, who has so long played hide and seek with Berlin, with the social life of the world, with politics, that he has estranged himself from our present, and only feels at home among the troubadours in Provence. I always scent out something of the Provençale and of the provincialist in his writings."

"This Heyse," remarks a fourth, "in spite of his fifty years and the maturity of his authorship, has the weakness to wish to

persuade us throughout that he is an immoral, lascivious poet. But no man believes him. That is his punishment."

"I have never in my life been so greatly envied," once said a lady, an old friend of Heyse's youth, in my presence, "as I was to-day, in one of our higher schools for young ladies, which I was visiting, when the rumor was circulated that I was about to pass the evening in a circle where I would meet him. The little damsels (Backfische) unanimously commissioned me to carry to him their enthusiastic greetings. How gladly would they one and all have thrown themselves into his arms! He is and always will be the idolized author of young maidens."

"One can define Paul Heyse," said a critic, "as the Mendelssohn-Bartholdy of German poetry. He appears like Mendelssohn when compared to the great masters. His nature, like that of Mendelssohn, is a German lyric, sensitive temperament, permeated with the most refined Southern culture. Both men lack the grand pathos, the energetic power, the storm of the dramatic element; but both have natural dignity in earnestness, charming amiability and pleasing grace in jest, they are thoroughly cultured in regard to form, they are virtuosos in execution."

*HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.*

# HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.<sup>24</sup>

1869

He who possesses talent should also possess courage. He must dare trust his inspiration, he must be convinced that the fancy which flashes through his brain is a healthy one, that the form which comes natural to him, even if it be a new one, has a right to assert its claims; he must have gained the hardihood to expose himself to the charge of being affected, or on the wrong path, before he can yield to his instinct and follow it wherever it may imperiously lead. When Armand Carrel, a young journalist at the time, was censured by the editor of the paper for which he wrote, who, pointing to a passage in the young man's article, remarked, "That is not the way people write," he replied, "I do not write as people write, but as I myself write," and this is the universal formula of a gifted nature. It countenances neither fugitive rubbish, nor arbitrary invention, but with entire self-consciousness it expresses the right of talent, when neither traditional form nor existing material suffices to meet the peculiar requirements of its nature, to choose new material, to create new forms, until it finds a soil of a quality

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<sup>24</sup> The quotations are from Houghton, Mifflin & Co.'s edition of Andersen's works.

to give nurture to all of its forces and gently and freely develop them. Such a soil the poet Hans Christian Andersen found in the nursery story.

# I

In his stories we meet with beginnings like this: "Any one might have supposed that something very extraordinary had happened in the duck-pond, there was such a commotion. All the ducks – some swimming, some standing in the pond with their heads downward – suddenly jumped on land, leaving the traces of their feet in the wet clay, and sending forth a loud, startled cry," or like the following: "Now, then, let us begin. When we are at the end of the story, we shall know more than we know now: but to begin. Once upon a time there was a wicked sprite, indeed, he was the most mischievous of all sprites!" The construction, the position of the words in individual sentences, the entire arrangement, is at variance with the simplest rules of syntax. "This is not the way people write." That is true; but it is the way they speak. To grown people? No, but to children; and why should it not be proper to commit the words to writing in the same order in which they are spoken to children? In such a case the usual form is simply exchanged for another; not the rules of abstract written language, but the power of comprehension of the child is here the determining factor; there is method in this disorder, as there is method in the grammatical blunder of the child when it makes use of a regular imperfect for an irregular verb. To replace the accepted written language with the free, unrestrained language of familiar

conversation, to exchange the more rigid form of expression of grown people for such as a child uses and understands, becomes the true goal of the author as soon as he embraces the resolution to tell nursery stories for children? He has the bold intention to employ oral speech in a printed work, he will not write but speak, and he will gladly write as a school-child writes, if he can thus avoid speaking as a book speaks. The written word is poor and insufficient, the oral has a host of allies in the expression of the mouth that imitates the object to which the discourse relates, in the movement of the hand that describes it, in the length or shortness of the tone of the voice, in its sharp or gentle, grave or droll character, in the entire play of the features, and in the whole bearing. The nearer to a state of nature the being addressed, the greater aids to comprehension are these auxiliaries. Whoever tells a story to a child, involuntarily accompanies the narrative with many gestures and grimaces, for the child sees the story quite as much as it hears it, paying heed, almost in the same way as the dog, rather to the tender or irritated intonation, than to whether the words express friendliness or wrath. Whoever, therefore, addresses himself in writing to a child must have at his command the changeful cadence, the sudden pauses, the descriptive gesticulations, the awe-inspiring mien, the smile which betrays the happy turn of affairs, the jest, the caress, and the appeal to rouse the flagging attention – all these he must endeavor to weave into his diction, and as he cannot directly sing, paint, or dance the occurrences to the

child, he must imprison within his prose the song, the picture, and the pantomimic movements, that they may lie there like forces in bonds, and rise up in their might as soon as the book is opened. In the first place, no circumlocution; everything must be spoken fresh from the lips of the narrator, aye, more than spoken, growled, buzzed, and blown as from a trumpet: "There came a soldier marching along the high-road —*one, two! one, two!*" "And the carved trumpeters blew, 'Trateratra! there is the little boy! Trateratra!'" — "Listen how it is drumming on the burdock-leaves, rum-dum-dum! ram-dum-dum!" said the Father Snail." At one time he begins, as in "The Daisy," with a "Now you shall hear!" which at once arrests the attention; and again he jests after the fashion of a child: "So the soldier cut the witch's head off. There she lay!" We can hear the laughter of the child that follows this brief, not very sympathetic, yet extremely clear presentation of the destruction of an imposter. Often he breaks into a sentimental tone, as for instance: "The sun shone on the Flax, and the rain-clouds moistened it, and this was just as good for it as it is for little children when they are washed, and afterward get a kiss from their mother; they become much prettier, and so did the Flax." That at this passage a pause should be made in the narrative, in order to give the child the kiss mentioned in the text, is something to which every mother will agree, and which seems to be a matter of course; the kiss is really given in the book. This regard for the young reader may be carried still farther, inasmuch as the poet, by virtue of his

ready sympathy, so wholly identifies himself with the child and enters so fully into the sphere of its conceptions, into its mode of contemplation, indeed, into the range of its purely bodily vision, that a sentence like the following may readily flow from his pen: "The biggest leaf here in the country is certainly the burdock-leaf. Put one in front of your waist, and it is just like an apron, and if you lay it upon your head, it is almost as good as an umbrella, for it is quite remarkably large." These are words which a child, and every child, can understand.

Happy, indeed, is Andersen! What author has such a public as he? What is, in comparison, the success of a man of science, especially of one who writes within a limited territory for a public that neither reads nor values him, and who is read by four or five – rivals and opponents! A poet is, generally speaking, more favorably situated; but although it is a piece of good fortune to be read by men, and although it is an enviable lot to know that the leaves of our books are turned by dainty fingers which have employed silken threads as book-marks, nevertheless no one can boast of so fresh and eager a circle of readers as Andersen is sure of finding. His stories are numbered among the books which we have deciphered syllable by syllable, and which we still read to-day. There are some among them whose letters even now, seem to us larger, whose words appear to have more value than all others, because we first made their acquaintance letter by letter and word by word. And what a delight it must have been for Andersen to see in his dreams this swarm of children's

faces by the thousands about his lamp, this throng of blooming, rosy-cheeked little curly-pates, as in the clouds of a Catholic altar-piece, flaxen-haired Danish boys, tender English babies, black-eyed Hindoo maidens, – rich and poor, spelling, reading, listening, in all lands, in all tongues, now healthy and merry, weary from sport, now sickly, pale, with transparent skin, after one of the numberless illnesses with which the children of this earth are visited, – and to see them eagerly stretch forth this confusion of white and swarthy little hands after each new leaf that is ready! Such devout believers, such an attentive, such an indefatigable public, none other has. None other either has such a reverend one, for even old age is not so reverend and sacred as childhood. In considering this public we can conjure up a whole series of peaceful and idyllic scenes: yonder some one is reading aloud while the children are listening devoutly, or a little one is sitting absorbed in its reading, with both elbows resting on the table, while its mother, in passing by, pauses that she too may read over the child's shoulder. Does it not bring its own reward to write for such a circle of auditors? Is there, indeed, one that has a more unspotted and ready fancy?

There is none, and it is only needful to study the imagination of the audience, in order to become acquainted with that of the author. The starting-point for this art is the child's play that makes everything out of everything; in conformity with this, the sportive mood of the artist transforms playthings into natural creations, into supernatural beings, into heroes, and,

*vice versa*, uses everything natural and everything supernatural – heroes, sprites, and fairies – for playthings, that is to say, for artistic means which through each artistic combination are remodelled and freshly stamped. The nerve and sinew of this art is the imagination of the child, which invests everything with a soul, and endows everything with personality; thus, a piece of household furniture is as readily animated with life as a plant, a flower as well as a bird or a cat, and the animal in the same manner as the doll, the portrait, the cloud, the sunbeam, the wind, and the seasons. Even the leap-frog, made of the breastbone of a goose, becomes thus for the child a living whole, a thinking being endowed with a will. The prototype of such poesy is the dream of a child, in which the childish conceptions shift more rapidly and with still bolder transformations than in play; therefore, the poet (as in "Little Ida's Flowers," "Ole Shut Eye," "Little Tuk," "The Elder-Tree Mother") likes to seek refuge in dreams as in an arsenal; therefore, it is, when he busies his fancy with childish dreams, such as fill and trouble the mind of childhood, there often come to him his wittiest inspirations, as, for instance, when little Hjalmar hears in his dream the lamentation of the crooked letters that had tumbled down in his copy-book: "'See, this is how you should hold yourselves,' said the Copy. 'Look, sloping in this way, with a powerful swing!' 'Oh, we should be very glad to do that,' replied Hjalmar's letters, 'but we cannot; we are too weakly.' 'Then you must take medicine,' said Ole Shut Eye. 'Oh no,' cried they; and they immediately stood up

so gracefully that it was beautiful to behold." This is the way a child dreams, and this is the way a poet depicts to us the dream of a child. The soul of this poetry, however, is neither the dream nor the play; it is a peculiar, ever-childlike, yet at the same time a more than childlike faculty, not only for putting one thing in the place of another (thus, for making constant exchange, or for causing one thing to live in another, thus for animating all things), but also a faculty for being swiftly and readily reminded by one thing of another, for regaining one thing in another, for generalizing, for moulding an image into a symbol, for exalting a dream into a myth, and, through an artistic process, for transforming single fictitious traits into a focus for the whole of life. Such a fancy does not penetrate far into the innermost recesses of things; it occupies itself with trifles; it sees ugly faults, not great ones; it strikes, but not deeply; it wounds, but not dangerously; it flutters around like a winged butterfly from spot to spot, lingering about the most dissimilar places, and, like a wise insect, it spins its delicate web from many starting-points, until it is united in one complete whole. What it produces is neither a picture of the soul nor a direct human representation; but it is a work that with all its artistic perfection was already indicated by the unlovely and confusing arabesques in "The Foot Journey to Amager." Now while the nursery story, through its contents, reminds us of the ancient myths ("The Elder-Tree Mother," "The Snow Queen"), of the folk-lore tale, on whose foundation it constructs itself at times, of proverbs

and fables of antiquity, indeed, sometimes of the parables of the New Testament (the buckwheat is punished as well as the fig-tree); while it is continually united by an idea, it may, so far as its form is concerned, be compared with the fantastic Pompeian decorative paintings, in which peculiarly conventional plants, animated flowers, doves, peacocks, and human forms are entwined together and blend into one another. A form that for any one else would be a circuitous route to the goal, a hindrance and a disguise, becomes for Andersen a mask behind which alone he feels truly free, truly happy and secure. His childlike genius, like the well-known child forms of antiquity, plays with the mask, elicits laughter, awakens delight and terror. Thus the nursery story's mode of expression, which with all its frankness is masked, becomes the natural, indeed, the classic cadence of his voice, that but very rarely becomes overstrained or out of tune. The only disturbing occurrence is that now and then a draught of whey is obtained instead of the pure milk of the nursery story, that the tone occasionally becomes too sentimental and sickly sweet ("Poor John," "The Poor Bird," "Poor Thumbling"), which, however, is rarely the case in materials taken from folklore tales, as "The Tinder-Box," "Little Claus and Big Claus," etc., where the naïve joviality, freshness, and roughness of the narrative, which announces crimes and murders without the slightest sympathetic or tearful phrase, stand Andersen in good stead, and invest his figures with increased sturdiness. Less classic, on the other hand, is the tone of the lyric effusions

interwoven with some of the nursery stories, in which the poet, in a stirring, pathetic prose gives a bird's-eye view of some great period of history ("The Thorny Path of Honor," "The Swans' Nest"). In these stories there seems to me to be a certain wild flight of fancy, a certain forced inspiration in the prevailing tone, wholly disproportionate to the not very significant thought of the contents; for thought and diction are like a pair of lovers. Thought may be somewhat larger, somewhat loftier, than diction, even as the man is taller than the woman; in the opposite case there is something unlovely in the relation. With the few exceptions just indicated, the narrative style of Andersen's nursery stories is a model of its kind.

Let us, in order to know them thoroughly, watch the poet at his work. Let us, by studying his manner of procedure, gain a deeper comprehension of the result. There is one instance wherein his method may be clearly followed, and that is when he remodels anything. We do not need, in such a case, merely to observe and to praise in vague generalities, by making comparison with a different mode of narrative; we can sharply and definitely declare, point for point, what he has omitted, what he has rendered prominent, and thus see his individual production grow up under our eyes. One day, in turning over the leaves of Don Manuel's "Count Lucanor," Andersen became charmed by the homely wisdom, of the old Spanish story, with the delicate flavor of the Middle Ages pervading it, and he lingered over Chapter VII., which treats of how a king was served by three rogues.

"Count Lucanor spoke one day with Patronio, his counsellor, and said to him, There is a man who has come to me and addressed me on a very important subject. He gives me to understand that it would conduce in the highest degree to my advantage. But he says that no man in the world, however highly I may esteem him, must be allowed to know anything about it, and he so earnestly enjoins upon me to keep the secret that he even assures me all my possessions and my life itself will be imperilled if I reveal it to any one. And as I know that nothing can come to your knowledge that you cannot determine whether it be meant for a blessing or with deceitful intent, I beg of you to tell me how this matter strikes you. Sir Count, replied Patronio, in order that you may be able to comprehend what should, in my opinion, be done in this matter, I beg of you to hearken unto how a king was served by three rogues, who sought his presence. The count asked what it was that took place." This introduction resembles a programme; we first learn the bold question to which the story following is to be the answer, and we feel that the story owes its existence solely to the question. We are not permitted to draw for ourselves from the narrative the moral that it seems to us to contain; it must be directed with a violent effort to the question concerning the amount of confidence that is due people who are shrouded in mystery. Such a method of telling a story is the practical, not the poetic one; it places undue limits on the pleasure the reader takes in discovering the hidden moral for himself. True, the fancy is gratified to find its work made easy,

for it does not really desire to exert itself; but neither does it like to have its easy activity anticipated; like old people who are permitted to keep up a semblance of work, it does not wish to be reminded that its work is mere play. Nature pleases when it resembles art, says Kant; art, when it resembles nature. Why? Because the veiled purpose gives pleasure. But no matter, let us read further in the book.

"Sir Count, said Patronio, there once came three rogues to a king and stated that they were most superior masters in the manufacture of cloth, and that they especially understood how to weave a certain stuff which was visible to everyone who was actually the son of the father whom all the world supposed to be his, but which was invisible to him who was not the son of his supposed father. This pleased the king greatly, for he thought that with the aid of this fabric he could learn which men in his kingdom were the sons of those who were legally accredited to be their fathers, and which were not, and that in this way he could adjust many things in his kingdom; for the Moors do not inherit from their fathers if they be not truly their children. So he gave orders to have the men conducted to his palace in which they could work."

The beginning is delightful, there is humor in the story; but Andersen thinks that if it is to be rendered available for Denmark, another pretext must be chosen, one better adapted to children, and to the well-known northern innocence. And, besides, this king in the story is merely like a figure on the chess-

board. Why was it that the rogues came to him? What sort of character does he possess? Is he fond of show? Is he vain? He does not stand out distinctly before the reader's eye. It would be better if he were an absolute fool of a king. He ought in some way to be characterized, to be stamped by a word, a phrase.

"And they told him that, in order to be sure they were not deceiving him, he might lock them up in the palace until the fabric was finished, and this pleased the king vastly!" They now receive gifts of gold, silver, and silk, spread abroad the tidings that the weaving has begun, and through their bold indication of pattern and colors cause the king's messengers to declare the fabric admirable, and thus succeed in obtaining a visit from the king, who, as he sees nothing, "is overcome by a deathly terror, for he believes that he cannot be the son of the king whom he has considered his father." He therefore praises the fabric beyond measure, and every one follows his example, until one day on the occasion of a great festival he puts on the invisible garment; he rides through the city, "and it was well for him that it was summer." No one could see the fabric, although every one feared to confess his inability to do so, lest he should be ruined and dishonored. "Thus this secret was preserved, and no one dared reveal it, until a negro who tended the king's horse, and had nothing to lose, went to the king" and affirmed the truth.

"Who bids you keep a secret from a faithful friend,  
Will cheat you too as surely as he has a chance."

The moral to this neat little story is most ludicrous and at the same time but poorly indicated. Andersen forgets the moral, puts aside, with a sparing hand, the clumsy precept which causes the story to deviate from the point which is its true centre, and then tells, with dramatic vivacity, in the form of a dialogue, his admirable story about the vain emperor, of whom it was said in the city, "The Emperor is in the wardrobe." He brings the narrative quite home to us. There is nothing whose existence people are afraid to deny for fear of passing for a bastard, but there is much concerning which people dare not speak the truth, through cowardice, through fear of acting otherwise than "all the world," through anxiety lest they should appear stupid. And this story is eternally new and it never ends. It has its grave side, but just because of its endlessness it has also its humorous side. "'But he has nothing on!' said the whole people at length. That touched the Emperor, for it seemed to him that they were right; but he thought within himself, 'I must go through with the procession.' *And so he held himself a little higher,* and the chamberlains held on tighter than ever, and carried the train which did not exist at all." It was Andersen who made the narrative comic.

But we can enter still more closely into relation with Andersen's method of story-telling; we have seen him place before us in a new form a foreign tale; we can now also see how he remodels his own attempts. In the year 1830 Andersen published in a volume of poetry, "The Dead Man, a Folk-lore

Tale from Fünen," the same which he remoulded later under the tide of "The Travelling Companion." The narrative, in its original form, is aristocratic and dignified; it begins in the following way: "About a mile from Bogensee may be found, on the field in the vicinity of Elvedgaard, a hawthorn so remarkable for its size that it can even be seen from the coast of Jutland." Here there are pretty, rural descriptions of nature, here may be detected the masterly hand of a skilful author. "The first night he *quartered* on a haystack in the field, and slept there like a *Persian* prince in his resplendent chamber." A Persian prince! This is an idea quite foreign to little children. Suppose we put in its place: "The first night he slept on a haystack, out in the fields, for there was no other bed for him; but it seemed to him so nice and comfortable that even a king need not wish for a better." This is intelligible. "The moon hung, like an *Argantine* lamp, from the vaulted ceiling, and burned with a perpetual flame." Is not the tone a more familiar one when we say: "The moon, like a large lamp, hung high up in the blue ceiling, and he had no fear of its setting fire to his curtains." The story of the doll's comedy is rewritten; it is sufficient when we know that the piece treats of a king and a queen; Ahasuerus, Esther, Mordecai, who were named in the original, are too learned names for children. If we hit upon a life-like stroke, we hold fast to it. "The queen threw herself on her knees, took *off* her beautiful crown, and, holding it in her hand, cried: "Take this from me, but do rub (with healing ointment) my husband and his courtiers.'" Such a passage

is one of those in which the nursery story tone penetrates the polished form; one of those in which the style that says "thou" to the reader thrusts aside the one that says "you." In illustration, a whole swarm of comparisons throng upon us. "From the host our travellers learned that they were in the realm of the King of Hearts, an excellent ruler, and nearly related to the King of Diamonds, Silvio, who is sufficiently well known through Carlo Gozzi's dramatic folk-lore tale, 'The Three Pomegranates.'" The princess is compared with Turandot, and of John it is said: "It would seem as though he had recently read Werther and Siegwart; he could only love and die." A shrill discord for the nursery tale style. The words are not those of the child's treasury of language; the tone is elegant, and the illustrations are abstract. "John spake, but he knew not himself what he was saying, for the princess bestowed on him so blessed a smile, and graciously extended her white hand for him to kiss; his lips burned, an *electric* current ran through him; he could enjoy nothing of the *refreshments* the pages offered him, he saw only the beautiful vision of his dreams." Let us once hearken to this in the style so familiar to us all: "She looked wonderfully fair and lovely when she offered her hand to John, and he loved her more than ever. How could she be a wicked witch, as all the people asserted? He accompanied her into the hall, and the little pages offered them gingerbread nuts and sweetmeats; but the old king was so unhappy, he could eat nothing, and, besides, gingerbread nuts were too hard for him."

In his youth, Andersen, who then took Musæus for his model, had not advanced far enough to understand how to mingle jest and earnest in his diction; they were always at variance; scarcely was utterance given to a sentiment before the disturbing parody made its appearance. John says a few words, in which he expresses his love, and the author adds: "O, it was so touching to hear! The poor young man, who was at other times so natural, so amiable, now spoke quite like one of Claren's books; but then, what will not love do?" On this point, with this pedantic frivolity, Andersen still persisted in 1830; but five years later the transformation process is at an end; his talent has shed its skin; his courage has grown; he dares speak his own language.

The determining element in this mode of speech was from the outset the childlike. In order to be understood by such youthful readers as those to whom he addressed himself, he was obliged to use the simplest possible words, to return to the simplest possible conceptions, to avoid everything abstract, to supply the place of indirect with direct language; but in thus seeking simplicity, he finds poetic beauty, and in attaining the childlike he proves that this childlike spirit is essential to true poetry; for that form of expression which is naïve and adapted to the general comprehension is more poetic than that which reminds the reader of industry, of history, of literature; the concrete fact is at once more life-like and more transparent than that which is presented as proof of a proposition, and the language which proceeds directly from the lips is more characteristic than the

pale paraphrase with a "that."<sup>25</sup>

To linger over this language, to become absorbed in its word-treasury, its syntax, its intonation, is no proof of a petty spirit, and does not take place merely through love of the vocables or the idiom. True, language is but the surface of a work of poetic fancy; but if the finger be placed upon the skin, we may feel the throbbing pulse which indicates the heart-beats of the inner being. Genius is like a clock; the visible index is guided by the invisible spring. Genius is like a tangled skein, inextricable and knotted, as it may seem, it is nevertheless inseparably one in its inner coherence. If we but get hold of the outer end of the thread, we may slowly and cautiously endeavor to unravel even the most tangled skein from its coil. It is not harmed by the effort.

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<sup>25</sup> Compare such passages as the following: "It was just as though some one were sitting there practising a tune which he could not get hold of, always the same tune. 'I will get it, though,' he says, no doubt; but nevertheless, he does not get it, let him play as long as he will." "The great white snails, which the grand people in old times used to have made into fricassees; and when they had eaten them, they would say, 'H'm, how good that is!' for they had the idea that it tasted delicious. These snails lived on burdock-leaves."

## II

If we hold fast to the clue, we shall comprehend how the childlike in diction and sphere of conception, the true-hearted manner with which the most improbable things are announced, is just what invests the nursery story with its poetic worth. For what renders a literary production significant, what gives it circulation in space and lasting value in time, is the force with which it is able to present that which is propagated through space and which endures through time. It preserves itself by means of the vigor with which, in a clear and polished way, it renders perceptible the constant. Those writings which support tendencies or emotions whose horizon is limited in time or space, those which revolve about purely local circumstances or are the result of a prevailing taste, whose nourishment and whose image are found in these circumstances, will vanish with the fashion that has called them forth. A street song, a newspaper article, a festival oration, reflect a prevailing mood which for perhaps a week has superficially occupied the population of the city, and therefore have themselves a duration of about equal length. Or, to mount to a higher level, suppose there suddenly arises in a country some subordinate proclivity, as, for instance, the fancy for playing private comedies, which became an epidemic in Germany in the time of "Wilhelm Meister," or in Denmark between 1820 and 1830. Such a tendency in

itself is not wholly devoid of significance, but psychologically considered it is thoroughly superficial and does not affect the deeper life of the soul. If it be made an object of satire, as it was in Denmark, by Rosenkilde's "The Dramatic Tailor," or in "Sir Burchardt and his Family," by Henrik Hertz, those works which, without representing the epidemic from a higher point of view, merely imitate and render it laughable, will be just as short-lived as it was. Let us now take a step higher, let us turn to the works which mirror the psychological condition of an entire race, an entire period. The good-natured drinking-song poetry of the past century, and the poetry written for political occasions, are such literary productions. They are historic documents, but their life and their poetic value are in direct ratio to the depth at which they approach universal humanity, the constant in the current of history. With greater and more marked significance in this gradual ascent stand forth these works, in which a people has seen itself portrayed for a half or for a whole century, or during an entire historic period, and has recognized the likeness. Such works must of necessity depict a spiritual condition of considerable duration, which, just because it is so enduring, must have its geologic seat in the deeper strata of the soul, as otherwise it would much sooner be washed away by the waves of time. These works incorporate the ideal personality of an epoch; that is to say, the personality which floats before the people of that time as its reflection and model. It is this personality which artists and poets chisel, paint, and describe, and for which musicians and

poets create. In Grecian antiquity it was the supple athlete and the eagerly-questioning youth who was athirst for knowledge; during the Middle Ages it was the knight and the monk; under Louis XIV the courtier; in the beginning of the nineteenth century it was Faust. The works which represent such forms give expression to the intellectual condition of an entire epoch, but the most important of them express still more; they mirror and embody at the same time the character of an entire people, of an entire race, an entire civilization, inasmuch as they reach the most profound, most elementary stratum of the individual human soul and of society, which concentrates and represents them in its little world. In this way, with the aid of a few names, the history of an entire literature could be written, by simply writing the history of its ideal personalities. Danish literature, during the first half of the nineteenth century, is placed, for instance, between the two types, Oehlenschläger's Aladdin and Frater Taciturnus in Kierkegaard's "Stages in the Path of Life." The former is its starting-point, the latter its perfection and conclusion. Now since the worth of these personalities, as before stated, depends upon how deeply they have their growth in the character of the people, or in human nature, it will readily be recognized that such a personality, for instance, as that of Aladdin, in order that it may be comprehended in its peculiar beauty, must be compared with the ideal personality which from the beginning of the period beamed upon us from the fancy of the Danish people. We find this personality by bringing together a large

number of the oldest mythic and heroic characterizations of the people. If I were to cite a single name, I would choose that of Uffe the Bashful.<sup>26</sup> In virtues as well as in faults he is a colossus of a Danish hero. It can readily be perceived how great a degree of resemblance all of Oehlenschläger's best characters, his calm Thor, his nonchalant Helge, his indolent Aladdin, bear to this hero, and it will be seen during the contemplation how deeply Aladdin is rooted in the character of

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<sup>26</sup> Uffe the Bashful, according to tradition, is the son of a Danish king. His father had been a powerful warrior in his day, but has become old and feeble. The son causes the father the most profound solicitude. No one has ever heard him speak; he has never been willing to learn the use of weapons, and he moves through life in phlegmatic indifference, taking no interest in anything about him. But when the kings of Saxony refuse to pay the old father the accustomed tribute, mock at him, and challenge him to single combat, and the father wrings his hands in despair and cries, "Would that I had a son!" Uffe, for the first time, finds voice, and summons both kings to a holmgang (duel) with him. Great haste is now made to bring weapons to him, but no harness is large enough for his broad breast. If he did but make the slightest movement, whichever one is tried on him is rent asunder. Finally he is forced to content himself with a harness that bears the marks of many blows. It is the same with every sword that is placed in his hand. They all snap like glass whenever he makes trial of them on a tree. Then the king has the ancient sword Skräpp, once wielded by his father, brought forth from the giant warrior's grave, and bids Uffe lay hold of it, but not to test it before the fight. Thus armed, Uffe presents himself before the two foreign kings, on an island in the Eider. The blind old king sits on the river-bank and with throbbing heart anxiously hearkens to the clashing of the swords. If his son fall, he will plunge into the waves and die. Suddenly Uffe aimed a blow with his sword at one of the Saxon kings, and cut him in two right across the body. "That tone I know," said the king; "that was Skräpp's ring!" And Uffe gave another blow, and cut the other king through lengthwise, so that he fell in two halves to the ground. "That was Skräpp's ring again," cried the blind king. And when the old king died, Uffe ascended the throne and became a powerful and much feared ruler.

the people, while at the same time he is the expression of the ideal of an epoch whose duration was about fifty years. It could just as easily be rendered perceptible how Frater Taciturnus is one variety of the Faust type. Sometimes, therefore, it is possible to show how ideal personalities extend through the most divers countries and peoples, over an entire continent, leaving behind them their indelible stamp in a whole group of literary works which resemble one another as impressions of one and the same intellectual form, impressions of one and the same gigantic seal, with wafers of the most varied colors. Thus the personality that becomes most prominent in Danish literature, as "Johann, the Betrayer" (in Kierkegaard's "Either – Or") is derived from Byron's heroes, from Jean Paul's Roquairol, from Chateaubriand's René, from Goethe's Werther, and is at the same time represented in Lermontow's Petschorin ("The Hero of Our Time"). The usual billows and storms of time will not suffice to overthrow such a personality; it was the Revolution of 1848 that first succeeded in setting it aside.

Extremes meet. For the same reason that a universal spiritual malady which exercises a powerful influence over humanity will spread simultaneously through the whole of Europe, and, because of its profundity, will cause the works that were first created as its portraits to live as its monuments; for the same reason, too, those works attain general European fame and become long-lived that reflect that which is most *elementary* in human nature – childlike fancy and childlike emotion, and

consequently summon up facts which every one has experienced (all children lock up kingdoms with a key). They depict the life which existed in the first period of the human soul, and thus reach that intellectual stratum which lies the deepest with all peoples and in all lands. This is the simple explanation of the fact that Andersen alone of all the Danish writers has attained a European, indeed, more than a European, circulation. No other explanation has reached my ears, unless it be the one that would have his renown due to his having journeyed about and provided for his own fame. Ah, if journeys would accomplish such results, the travelling stipends for artists of all kinds that *must* of necessity be awarded each year would in the course of time provide Denmark with a rich bloom of European celebrities, as they have already furnished poet after poet. To be sure, the poets correspond with the way in which they are made. But even the remaining, less malicious explanations that may be brought forward, as, for instance, that Andersen alone among the greater Danish authors has written in prose, and is therefore the only one whose works can be translated without effort into other languages, or that his genre is so popular, or that he is so great a genius, state either too little or too much. There is more than *one* genius in Danish literature who is greater than Andersen; there are many who with respect to their endowments are by no means inferior to him; but there is none whose creations are so elementary. Heiberg, as well as Andersen, possessed the courage to remodel a form of art (the vaudeville) in accordance with his

own peculiarities, but he did not have the good fortune to find any one art form in which he could reveal his entire talent, combine all his gifts, as Andersen was able to do in the nursery story, nor to find materials in which interests of time and locality are of such enduring importance. His best vaudeville "The Inseparable Ones" (De Uadskillelige) would only be understood where there exists, as in the Scandinavian countries, a "Temperance Society for Happiness" (Ibsen's expression for long betrothals), at which this vaudeville aims its shafts. But as the possessor of talent should also possess courage, so the possessor of genius should also possess good fortune, and Andersen has lacked neither good fortune nor courage.

The elementary quality in Andersen's poetry insured him a circle of readers among the cultivated people of all lands. It was still more effectual in securing him one among the uncultivated people. That which is childlike is in its very essence of a popular nature, and a wide circulation corresponds with an extension downward. Because of the deep and grievous but most natural division of society into grades of culture, the influence of good literature is confined almost exclusively to one class. If in Denmark a series of literary productions like Ingemann's romances make an exception, it is chiefly because of qualities which remove them from the cultivated classes through lack of truth to nature in the character delineations and in the historic coloring. With Ingemann's romances it is the same as with Grundtvig's theories: if one would defend them, it could not be

done by proving their truth, but by practically laying stress on their outward usefulness, the advantage they have been to the Danish cause, to the interests of enlightenment and piety, etc. Ingemann's romances stand, moreover, in noteworthy relation to Andersen's nursery stories. The latter are read by the younger, the former by the older children. The nursery story harmonizes with the luxuriant imagination and the warm sympathy of the child, and the somewhat older maiden; the romance, with the fantastic desire for action of the child and especially of the somewhat older boy, with his growing taste for deeds of chivalry, with his conceit, his love of pleasing and daring. Romances are written for grown people; but the healthy mind of the nation has slowly dropped them until they have found their natural public in the age between ten and twelve years. Truth is something relative. At twelve years of age these books seem just as full of truth, as at twenty they seem full of innocent lies. But they must be read before the twelfth year be gone, for at twelve and a half it is already too late for those who are a trifle advanced in intellectual development. With the nursery story the reverse is the case. Written in the beginning for children and constantly read by them, they speedily rose to the notice of grown people and were by them declared to be true children of genius.

It was a lucky stroke that made Andersen the poet of children. After long fumbling, after unsuccessful efforts, which must necessarily throw a false and ironic light on the self-consciousness of a poet whose pride based its justification

mainly on the expectancy of a future which he felt slumbering within his soul, after wandering about for long years, Andersen, a genuine offspring of Oehlenschläger, strayed into Oehlenschläger's footsteps, and one evening found himself in front of a little insignificant yet mysterious door, the door of the nursery story. He touched it, it yielded, and he saw, burning in the obscurity within, the little "Tinder-Box" that became his Aladdin's lamp. He struck fire with it, and the spirits of the lamp – the dogs with eyes as large as teacups, as mill-wheels, as the round tower in Copenhagen – stood before him and brought him the three giant chests, containing all the copper, silver, and gold treasure stores of the nursery story. The first story had sprung into existence, and the "Tinder-Box" drew all the others onward in its train. Happy is he who has found his "tinder-box."

Now in what sense is the child Andersen's ideal form? There comes to every land a certain epoch in which its literature seems suddenly to discover what has long remained unobserved in society. Thus in literature are discovered by degrees the burgher (in Denmark by Holberg), the student, the peasant, etc. In the time of Plato, woman was not yet discovered, one might almost say not yet invented. The child was discovered at different periods in the literatures of different countries; in England, for instance, much earlier than in France. Andersen is the discoverer of the child in Denmark. Yet here, as everywhere else, the discovery does not take place without pre-suppositions and stipulations, and here, as everywhere in Danish literature, it

is Oehlenschläger to whom thanks are due for the first impetus, the fundamental discovery which prepares the way for that of almost every later poet. The installation of the child in its natural poetic rights is only one of the many phenomena of the ascension to the throne of naïveté, whose originator in Danish literature is Oehlenschläger. The eighteenth century, whose strength lies in its critical understanding, whose enemy is its imagination, in which it sees but the ally and bondman of antiquated tradition, whose queen is its logic, whose king is Voltaire, the object of whose poetry and science in the abstract is the enlightened and social human being, sends the child, which is neither abstract, nor social, nor enlightened, from the parlor into exile in the remote nursery, where it may listen to nursery tales, traditions, and robber stories, to its heart's content, provided it take good care to have forgotten all this worthless trash when it becomes a grown person. In the society of the nineteenth century (I do not draw the boundary line sharply on the frontiers) the reaction takes place. The individual, personal human being takes the place of the social human being. Consciousness alone had previously been valued, now the unconscious is worshipped. Schelling's philosophy of nature breaks the spell of Fichte's *Ego* system; war is carried on against the unfruitful intellectual reflection, the folk-lore tale and the nursery story are restored to their rights, the nursery and its occupants are brought into honorable esteem once more, at times even into too great favor. In all lands the folk-lore is collected, and in most countries poets begin to

remould it. The sentimental German authors of the transition period (Kotzebue and Iffland) bring children on the stage, in view of touching the audience, even Oehlenschläger introduces children into his works and is, therefore, obliged to endure the censure of Heiberg. So far as society is concerned, silence has been enforced by Rousseau with his pedagogic declamations and theories, such attention as was never known before, is bestowed on the child and above all on the childlike *nature*, and the enthusiasm for the education of children (Campe) is gradually supplanted by the enthusiasm for the child's "state of nature" (see Rousseau's tendency, as displayed even in Götz von Berlichingen's conversation with his little son).

There is but a step from the child to the animal. The animal is a child that will never be anything else than a child. The same tendency to make life a social life, which thrust aside the child, also banished the animal. The same thirst for simplicity, for nature, for all that is innocent and *unconscious* which led poetry to the child, led it also to the animal, and from the animal to all nature. Rousseau who champions the cause of the child, champions at the same time the cause of the animal; and first and foremost, as his Alpha and Omega, his "præterea censeo," the cause of nature. He studies botany, writes to Linné, expresses to him his admiration and affection. The scientific contemplation of nature determines the social, which in its turn determines the poetic. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, through his exquisite story "Paul and Virginia," introduces

descriptions of nature into French prose, and, what is particularly noteworthy simultaneously with his discovery of the landscape he introduces, as his hero and heroine, two children. Alexander von Humboldt takes "Paul and Virginia" with him on his journey to the tropical regions, admiringly reads the book aloud to his travelling companions in the midst of the nature which it describes, and refers with gratitude to what he owes to Saint-Pierre. Humboldt influences Oersted who in his turn profoundly influences Andersen. The sympathetic contemplation of nature operates on the scientific, which in its turn operates on the poetic. Chateaubriand, in his highly-colored brilliant manner, depicts a nature closely related to the one which Saint-Pierre has received in his peaceful, nature-worshipping soul. Steffens, in his celebrated lectures, first introduces to Denmark the natural system of nature. About the year 1831, at the period, therefore, when Andersen's nursery stories originated, there is founded in England (the land which took the lead in bringing forward the child in literature) the first society for the prevention of cruelty to animals. Branches are established in France and Germany, where societies spring up in Munich, Dresden, Berlin and Leipsic. Kierkegaard in his "Enten – Eller" (Either – Or) turns the establishment of these societies into ridicule; he sees in it but a phenomenon of the tendency to form associations, which in his eyes is a proof of the lamentable condition of individual personality. If we return now to Denmark, we will observe that the national landscape painting, with its literal imitation of

nature, takes its decisive upward soaring flight at precisely the time when nursery stories are devised. Skovgaard paints the lake in which "the ugly duckling" went splashing about, and at the same time – as by a miracle – the large city becomes too small for the citizen of Copenhagen. He finds it wearisome to gaze the whole summer long on its paving-stones, its many houses and roofs, he longs to see a larger bit of the sky, he repairs to the country, lays out gardens, learns to distinguish barley from rye, becomes a rustic for the summer months. One and the same idea, the recovered idea of nature, extends its influence through all the spheres of life, just as the water of an upland stream flowing downward is distributed through a series of different basins. Could an idea produce a more singular effect, or a more suggestive one for contemplation? During the past century there has been nothing similar. We may, as has been wittily remarked, rummage through Voltaire's "Henriade," without finding a single blade of grass; there is no fodder for the horses in it. We may turn over the leaves of Baggesen's poems, without stumbling on a single description of nature, used even as an accessory. What a leap from this poetry to such poetry as that of Christian Winther, in which the human figures are merely used as accessories and the landscape is almost universally the main point of interest, and how far removed was the world, even in his day, from so much as dreaming of a poetry like that of Andersen, in which animals and plants fill the place of man, indeed, almost make

man superfluous!<sup>27</sup>

Now what is there in plants, in animals, in the child, so attractive to Andersen? He loves the child because his affectionate heart draws him to the little ones, the weak and helpless ones, of whom it is allowable to speak with compassion, with tender sympathy, and because when he devotes such sentiments to a hero, – as in "Only a Fiddler," – he is derided for it (compare with Kierkegaard's criticism),<sup>28</sup> but when he dedicates them to a child, he finds the natural resting-place for his mood. It is owing to his genuine democratic feeling for the lowly and neglected that Andersen, himself a child of the people, continually introduces into his nursery stories (as Dickens, in his novels), forms from the poorer classes of society, "simple folk," yet endowed with the true nobility of the soul. As examples of this may be mentioned the washerwoman in "Little Tuk" and in "Good-for-Nothing," the old maid in "From a Window in Vartou," the watchman and his wife in "The Old Street-Lamp," the poor apprentice boy in "Under the Willow-Tree," and the poor tutor in "Everything in its Right Place." The poor are as defenseless as the child. Furthermore, Andersen loves the child, because he is able to portray it, not so much in the direct psychologic way of the romance, – he is by no means a direct psychologist, – as indirectly, by transporting himself with a bound into the child's world, and he acts as though no other

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<sup>27</sup> The fables of the past century (for instance, Lessing's fables) are merely ethic.

<sup>28</sup> G. Brandes: S. Kierkegaards. Ein literarisches Charakterlied. Leipsic, 1879.

course were possible. Rarely, therefore, has charge been more unjust than that of Kierkegaard when he accused Andersen of being unable to depict children; but when Kierkegaard, who, moreover, as a literary critic combines extraordinary merits with great lacks (especially in point of historic survey), takes occasion, in making this criticism, to remark that in Andersen's romances the child is always described "through another," what he says is true. It is no longer true, however, the moment Andersen, in the nursery story, puts himself in the place of the child and ceases to recognize "another." He seldom introduces the child into his nursery stories as taking part in the action and conversation. He does it most frequently in the charming little collection "A Picture-Book without Pictures," where more than anywhere else he permits the child to speak with the entire simplicity of its nature. In such brief, naïve child-utterances as those cited in it there is much pleasure and entertainment. Every one can recall anecdotes of a similar character. I remember once taking a little girl to a place of amusement, in order to hear the Tyrolese Alpine singers. She listened very attentively to their songs. Afterward, when we were walking in the garden in front of the pavilion, we met some of the singers in their costumes. The little maiden clung timidly to me, and asked in astonishment: "Are they allowed to go about free?" Andersen has no equal in the narration of anecdotes of this kind.<sup>29</sup> in his nursery stories we find sundry

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<sup>29</sup> The following composition was recently written in Copenhagen by a little maiden of ten years on the theme, "An Unexpected Joy." "There dwelt in Copenhagen a man

illustrations of the fact, as in the charming words of the child in "The Old House," when it gives the man the pewter soldiers that he might not be "so very, very lonely," and a few kind answers in "Little Ida's Flowers." Yet his child forms are comparatively rare. The most noteworthy ones are little Hjalmar, little Tuk, Kay and Gerda, the unhappy, vain Karen in "The Red Shoes," a dismal but well-written story, the little girl with the matches and the little girl in "A Great Sorrow," finally Ib and Christine, the children in "Under the Willow-Tree." Besides these real children there are some ideal ones, the little fairy-like Thumbling and the little wild robber-maiden, undoubtedly Andersen's freshest child creation, the masterly portrayal of whose wild nature forms a most felicitous contrast to the many good, fair-haired and tame children of fiction. We see her before us as she really is, fantastic and true, her and her reindeer, whose neck she "tickles every evening with her sharp knife."

We have seen how sympathy with child-nature led to sympathy with the animal which is doubly a child, and to sympathy with the plants, the clouds, the winds, which are doubly nature. What attracts Andersen to the impersonal being is the

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and his wife who were very happy. All went well with them, and they were extremely fond of each other; but they felt very sorry because they had no children. They waited a long time, still they got none. At last the husband went away on a long journey and was gone ten years. When the time was at an end, he returned home, entered his house, and was happy indeed to find five little children in the nursery, some playing, some in the cradle. This was an unexpected joy!" This composition, however is an example of the kind of naivete' which Andersen never uses. The point would attract a French storyteller, but, like everything else that alludes to sex, it leaves Andersen perfectly cold.

impersonal element in his own nature, what leads him to the wholly unconscious is merely the direct consequence of his sympathy. The child, young though it may be, is born old; each child is a whole generation older than its father, a civilization of ages has stamped its inherited impress on the little four-year-old child of the metropolis. How many conflicts, how many endeavors, how many sorrows have refined the countenance of such a child, making the features sensitive and precocious! It is different with animals. Look at the swan, the hen, the cat! They eat, sleep, live, and dream undisturbed, as in ages gone by. The child already begins to display evil instincts. We, who are seeking what is unconscious, what is naïve, are glad to descend the ladder that leads to the regions where there is no more guilt, no more crime, where responsibility, repentance, restless striving and passion cease, where nothing of an evil nature exists except through a substitution of which we are but partially conscious, and which, therefore, robs our sympathy of half its sting. An author like Andersen, who has so great a repugnance to beholding what is cruel and coarse in its nakedness, who is so deeply impressed by anything of the kind that he dare not relate it, but recoils a hundred times in his works from some wanton or outrageous deed with the maidenly expression, "We cannot bear to think of it!" Such an author feels content and at home in a world where everything that appears like egotism, violence, coarseness, vileness, and persecution, can only be called so in a figurative way. It is highly characteristic that

almost all the animals which appear in Andersen's nursery stories are tame animals, domestic animals. This is, in the first place, a symptom of the same gentle and idyllic tendency which results in making almost all Andersen's children so well-behaved. It is, furthermore, a proof of his fidelity to nature, in consequence of which he is so reluctant to describe anything with which he is not thoroughly familiar. It is, finally, an interesting phenomenon with reference to the use he makes of the animals, for domestic animals are no longer the pure product of nature; they remind us, through ideal association, of much that is human; and, moreover, through long intercourse with humanity and long education they have acquired something human, which in a high degree supports and furthers the effort to personify them. These cats and hens, these ducks and turkeys, these storks and swans, these mice and that unmentionable insect "with maiden's blood in its body," offer many props to the nursery story. They hold direct intercourse with human beings; all that they lack is articulate speech, and there are human beings with articulate speech who are unworthy of it, and do not deserve their speech. Let us, therefore, give the animals the power of speech, and harbor them in our midst.

On the almost exclusive limitation to the domestic animal, a double characteristic of this nursery story depends. First of all, the significant result that Andersen's animals, whatever else they may be, are never beastly, never brutal. Their sole faults are that they are stupid, shallow, and old-fogyish. Andersen does

not depict the animal in the human being, but the human in the animal. In the second place, there is a certain freshness of tone about them, a certain fulness of feeling, certain strong and bold, enthusiastic, and vigorous outbursts which are never found in the quarters of the domestic animal. Many beautiful, many humorous and entertaining things are spoken of in these stories, but a companion piece to the fable of the wolf and the dog – the wolf who observed the traces of the chain on the neck of the dog and preferred his own freedom to the protection afforded the house dog – will not be found in them. The wild nightingale, in whom poetry is personified, is a tame and loyal bird. "I have seen tears in the Emperor's eyes; that is the real treasure to me," it says. "An emperor's tears have a peculiar power!" Take even the swan, that noble, royal bird in the masterly story, "The Ugly Duckling," which for the sake of its cat and its hen alone cannot be sufficiently admired, – how does it end? Alas! as a domestic animal. This is one of the points where it becomes difficult to pardon the great author. O poet! we feel tempted to exclaim, since it was in your power to grasp such a thought, to conceive and execute such a poem, how could you, with your inspiration, your pride, have the heart to permit the swan to end thus! Let him die if needs must be! That would be tragic and great. Let him spread his wings and impetuously soar through the air, rejoicing in his beauty and his strength! let him sink down on the bosom of some solitary and beautiful forest lake! That is free and delightful. Anything would be better than this conclusion: "Into the garden

came little children, who threw bread and com into the water. And they ran to their father and mother, and bread and cake were thrown into the water; and they all said, "The new one is the most beautiful of all! so young and handsome!" and the old swans bowed their heads before him." Let them bow, but let us not forget that there is something which is worth more than the recognition of all the old swans and geese and ducks, worth more than receiving bread-crumbs and cake as a garden bird, – the power of silently gliding over the waters, and free flight!

Andersen prefers the bird to the four-footed animal. More birds than mammals find place with him; for the bird is gentler than the four-footed beast, is nearer to the plant. The nightingale is his emblem, the swan his ideal, the stork his declared favorite. It is natural that the stork, that remarkable bird which brings children into the world, – the stork, that droll, long-legged, wandering, beloved, yearningly expected and joyfully greeted bird, should become his idolized symbol and frontispiece.

Yet plants are preferred by him to birds. Of all organic beings, plants are those which appear most frequently in the nursery story. For in the vegetable world alone are peace and harmony found to reign. Plants, too, resemble a child, but a child who is perpetually asleep. There is no unrest in this domain, no action, no sorrow, and no care. Here life is a calm, regular growth, and death but a painless fading away. Here the easily excited, lively poetic sympathy suffers less than anywhere else. Here there is nothing to jar and assail the delicate nerves of the

poet. Here he is at home; here he paints his Arabian Nights' Entertainments beneath a burdock leaf. Every grade of emotion may be experienced in the realm of plants, – melancholy at the sight of the felled trunk, fulness of strength at the sight of the swelling buds, anxiety at the fragrance of the strong jasmine. Many thoughts may flit through our brain as we follow the history of the development of the flax, or the brief honor of the fir-tree on Christmas evening; but we feel as absolutely free as though we were dealing with comedy, for the image is so fleeting that it vanishes the moment we attempt to render it permanent. Sympathy and agitation gently touch our minds, but they do not ruffle us, they neither rouse nor oppress us. A poem about a plant sets free twofold the sympathy to which it lays claim; once because we know that the poem is pure fiction, and again because we know the plant to be merely a symbol. Nowhere has the poet with greater delicacy invested plants with speech than in "The Fir-Tree," "Little Ida's Flowers," and in "The Snow Queen." In the last named story, every flower tells its own tale. Let us listen to what the Tiger-lily says: "Hearest thou not the drum? Bum! bum! those are the only two tones. Always bum! bum! Hark to the plaintive song of the old women! to the call of the priests! The Hindoo woman in her long robe stands upon the funeral pile; the flames rise around her and her dead husband, but the Hindoo woman thinks on the living one in the surrounding circle; on him whose eyes bum hotter than the flames; on him, the fire of whose eyes pierces her heart more than the flames which soon

will bum her body to ashes. Can the heart's flame die in the flame of the funeral pile?" – "I do not understand that at all," said little Gerda. – "That is my story," said the Tiger-lily.

Yet a step farther, and the fancy of the poet appropriates all inanimate objects, colonizes and annexes everything, large and small, an old house and an old clothes-press ("The Shepherdess and the Chimney Sweep"), the top and the ball, the darning needle and the false collar, and the great dough men with bitter almonds for their hearts. After it has grasped the physiognomy of the inanimate, his fancy identifies itself with the formless all, sails with the moon across the sky, whistles and tells stories like the wind, looks on the snow, on sleep, night, death, and the dream as persons.

The determining element in this poetic mind was, then, sympathy with all that is childlike, and, through the representation of such deep-seated, elementary, and constant spiritual conditions as those of the child, the productions of this imagination are raised above the waves of time, spread beyond the boundaries of their native land and become the common property of the divers classes of society. The time when genius was looked upon as a meteor fallen from the skies, has long since passed away; now it is known that genius, as all else that comes from nature, has its antecedents and its conditions, that it holds relations of general dependence with its epoch, is an organ for the ideas of the age. Sympathy for the child is only a phenomenon of the sympathy of the nineteenth century for whatever is naïve.

Love of the unconscious is a phenomenon of the love of nature. In society, in science, in poetry and in art, nature and the child had become objects of veneration; in the realms of poetry, art, science, and society, there takes place a reciprocal action. If there arise, therefore, a poet whose affections are attracted to the child, whose fancy is allured by the animal, by plants, and by nature, he dares follow his impulses, he gains courage to give utterance to his talent, because a hundred thousand mute voices about him strengthen him in his calling, because the tide he believes himself to be stemming, rocks him gently as it bears him onward to his goal.

Thus it will be seen we can study the poet's art by studying the ideas which are his inspiration. To contemplate these in their origin and their ramifications, in their abstract essence and their concrete power, is, therefore, no superfluous act, when it becomes our task to make a study of individual poetic fancies. For the bare idea cannot make poetry; but neither can the poet make poetry without the idea and without the surroundings which give it its impetus. About the fortunate poet there gathers a multitude who, in a less felicitous way, are working in his own vein; and about this multitude the people swarm as mute but interested fellow-laborers. For genius is like a burning reflector, which collects and unites the scattered rays of light. It never stands alone. It is merely the noblest tree in the forest, the highest ear in the sheaf, and it is first recognized in its real significance and in its true attitude when it is seen in its rightful place.

### III

It does not suffice to indicate the quarter of the globe in which a genius dwells; we cannot travel through Denmark with a map of Europe for our guide. In the first place, it is necessary to see the locality more accurately described, and, even then, we no more know a genius because we happen to be familiar with his relations and surroundings than we know a city because we have walked around its walls. For though a genius may be partially, he cannot be exhaustively, explained by the period in which he lives. What is transmitted to him he combines under a new law; a product himself, he brings forth products which he alone of the whole world is able to bring forth. We need only exert our powers of observation a little, or hearken perhaps to the opinion of a foreigner, to feel how much there is that is national, local, and individual in Andersen's nursery stories. I was once talking with a young Frenchman about Denmark. "I am very well acquainted with your country," said he. "I know that your king is named Christian, that your greatest author is an unrecognized genius whose name is Hr. Schmidt, that Hr. Ploug is your fatherland's most valiant warrior, whom no battle-field ever saw retreat, and that Hr. Bille is the Gambetta of Denmark. I know that you have a body of learned men who are distinguished for their scientific independence and free investigations, and I know Hr. Holst, whom you call the 'Tyrtäus of Danebrog.'" Seeing that

he had oriented himself pretty well, I interrupted him with the question, "Have you read Andersen's nursery stories?" "Have I read them?" cried he, in reply. "Why, I have read no other Danish book." "What do you think of them?" asked I. "*Un peu trop enfantin*," was the answer, and I am convinced that if Andersen's nursery stories were submitted to a French child five years old, he, too, would find them "*un peu trop enfantin*."

I have stated that the childlike element in Andersen is universally intelligible. This is true, but it is not the whole truth. This childlike tone has a decidedly Teutonic impress; it is best understood in England and in Germany, less well in any of the Latin nations, least of all by the French. In fact, Andersen is very little known and read in France. England is the only land in which romances and semi-romances are devoted to the portrayal of the spiritual life of little children (Dickens's "Paul Dombey" and "David Copperfield," Miss Wetherell's "The Wide, Wide World," George Eliot's "The Mill on the Floss"), and English child nature is unique of its kind. It is only needful to open the first illustrated French book for children that comes to hand to observe the difference. The English child and the French child are as dissimilar as the acorn and the beechnut. Moreover, Andersen could never gain firm foothold in France for the reason that the field is already occupied, having been taken possession of long since by La Fontaine.

There are two kinds of naïveté. One is that of the heart, the other that of the understanding; the former is frank, free, simple,

and touching, the latter has a distorted appearance, is jocose, full of ready wit, and subtile. The one evokes tears, the other a smile; the former has its beauty, the latter its charm; the former characterizes the good child, the latter the *enfant terrible*; and Andersen is the poet of the former, La Fontaine of the latter naïveté. The latter form of naïveté is that expression of precocity which utters the appropriate word without exactly knowing what it says, and which has, therefore, the appearance of a cloak; the other naïveté is that of innocence which takes it for granted that its Garden of Eden is the whole world, and consequently puts the whole world to shame without being aware that it is doing so, and at the same time with so appropriate a choice of words that it assumes the appearance of a mask. If we compare Andersen's nursery stories with the fables of La Fontaine, we shall find a fundamental difference in the contemplation of life exhibited and thus become acquainted with the limits of the Northern mode of viewing life, for every attempt at definition is in itself a limitation.

One of the most marked traits in La Fontaine's and the Gallic mode of contemplating life is the war against illusion. The humorous play in La Fontaine's naïveté is dependent on the fact that, harmless as this naïveté is, good-natured and gentle as it always shows itself to be, it now and then gives undoubted evidence that it is not altogether foolish, that it will not allow itself to be duped, that it knows very well how to estimate and value all the stupidity and hypocrisy, all the preaching and

all the empty phrases with which humanity permits itself, as by common consent, to be led by the nose or by the heart. With a smile it passes by all the earnestness at whose core is corruption and hollowness, all the greatness which at bottom is but audacity, all the respectability whose essence is a lie. Thus it puts "Everything in its Right Place," which is the title of one of Andersen's most popular tales. The key-note of its earnestness is poetic enthusiasm, and its keen wit has a sting which is carefully concealed. French satire is a rapier with a provisional button. In "Tartuffe," "Candide," and "Figaro," it effected a revolution before the revolution. Laughter is the oldest Marseillaise of France.

The most marked trait in Andersen's mode of viewing life, is that which gives the ascendancy to the heart, and this trait is genuinely Danish. Full of feeling itself, this method of contemplation takes every opportunity to exalt the beauty and significance of the emotions. It overleaps the will (the whole destiny of the Flax, in the story of its life, comes from without), does combat with the critique of the pure reason as with something pernicious, the work of the Devil, the witch's mirror, replaces pedantic science with the most admirable and witty side-thrusts ("The Bell," "A Leaf From the Sky"), describes the senses as a tempter, or passes them over as unmentionable things, pursues and denounces hardheartedness, glorifies and commends goodness of heart, violently dethrones coarseness and narrowness, exalts innocence and decorum, and thus "puts

everything in its right place." The key-note of its earnestness is the ethic-religious feeling coupled with the hatred felt by geniality for narrowness, and its humorous satire is capricious, calm, in thorough harmony with the idyllic spirit of the poet. Its satire has only the sting of a gnat, but it stings in the tenderest places. Which of the modes of contemplation is the best? Such a question is not worthy of an answer. I love the beech, but I love the birch as well. Only because they please me, not in view of casting the balance in favor of either of these modes, I quote the following lines of George Herwegh: —

"My eyes with tears have often been bedewed,  
When hearts I've seen all bruised and maltreated,  
By hounds of understanding, too, pursued.

"Within the breast one little word is seated,  
Yet wisely is its utterance subdued,  
For hearts that beat too high will be defeated."

As different as these modes of contemplating life are the poetic endowments of the two authors. La Fontaine writes clear, elegant, highly melodious verse, whose poetry is a light enthusiasm and a gentle melancholy. Andersen writes a grotesque, irregular prose, full of harmless mannerisms, and whose poetry is a luxuriant, gushing, rapturous conceit. It is this fantastic element which makes Andersen so foreign to the French people whose rather gray poetry wholly lacks the

bright-hued floral splendor found among the Northern people and attaining its highest beauty in Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream," a splendor which may be detected throughout Andersen's nursery stories, and which imparts to them their finest perfume. And as the fantastic caprice of this element is Norse-Danish, its idyllic key-note is purely Danish. No wonder that the earliest and most original of these nursery stories were written during the reign of Friedrich VI. and bear the stamp of his day. We recognize this monarch in all the fatherly, patriarchal old kings represented in them; we find the spirit of the age in the complete lack of social, to say nothing of political satire, that we detect in them. No wonder, too, that Thorwaldsen could never weary of hearing these stories read aloud as he counted his numbers in the game of Lotto, for his Danish temperament was naïve, and his art, with all its greatness, was as idyllic as the art which produced these poetic creations.

A genius, born in an age whose every influence opposes his development, is either hopelessly crushed or goes to ruin like any inferior talent. An Andersen born in Denmark in 1705, instead of 1805, would have been a most unfortunate and thoroughly insignificant individual, perhaps even a maniac. A genius born at a period when everything unites to come to its aid, produces classic, genial creations. Now, this first harmony between a poet and his era (in a measure also, his country) corresponds to a second one between the individual faculties of genius, and to a third one between genius and its peculiar type of art. The

nature of genius is an organically connected whole; its weakness in one direction is the condition of its strength in another; the development of this faculty causes that one to be checked in its growth, and it is impossible to alter any single particular without disturbing the entire machinery. We may wish that one quality or another was different than it is, but we can readily comprehend that any decided change is out of the question. We may wish our poet had stronger personality, a more manly temperament, and more mental equilibrium; but we have no difficulty in understanding that the lack of defined personality, and the incompleteness of the character whose acquaintance we make in "The Story of my Life," stand in the most intimate relationship with the nature of his endowments. A less receptive mind would not be so susceptible to poetic impressions, a harder one would not unite so much flexibility with its more rigid attitude, one more susceptible to criticism and philosophy would not be so naïve.

Since, then, the moral attributes are requisite to the intellectual, so, too, they are mutually contingent one upon the other. An overflowing lyric sentiment, an exalted sensibility, cannot exist with the experience and method of a man of the world, for experience chills and hardens. A lightly vaulting fancy that hops and soars like a bird, does not admit of being united with the logically measured crescendo and decrescendo of dramatic action. An observation by no means inclined to be cold-blooded cannot possibly penetrate psychologically to the

heart of things; a childlike, easily quivering hand cannot dissect a villain. If, therefore, we place genius of this kind face to face with sundry defined and well-known types of art, we can determine beforehand precisely what its relations with each of them will be.

The romance is a species of poetic creation which demands of the mind that would accomplish anything remarkable in it, not only imagination and sentiment, but the keen understanding, and the cool, calm power of observation of the man of the world; that is the reason why it is not altogether suited to Andersen, although it is not wholly remote from his talent. In the entire scenery, the background of nature, the picturesque effect of the costumes, he is successful; but where psychological insight is concerned, traces of his weakness may be detected. He will take part for and against his characters; his men are not manly enough, his women not sufficiently feminine. I know no poet whose mind is more devoid of sexual distinctions, whose talent is less of a nature to betray a defined sex, than Andersen's. Therefore his strength lies in portraying children, in whom the conscious sense of sex is not yet prominent. The whole secret lies in the fact that he is exclusively what he is, – not a man of learning, not a thinker, not a standard-bearer, not a champion, as many of our great writers have been, but simply a poet. A poet is a man who is at the same time a woman. Andersen sees most forcibly in man and in woman that which is elementary, that which is common to humanity, rather than that which is peculiar and interesting. I have not forgotten how well he has described the

deep feeling of a mother in "The Story of a Mother," or how tenderly he has told the story of the spiritual life of a woman in "The Little Sea-Maid." I simply recognize the fact that what he has represented is not the complicated spiritual conditions of life and of romance, but the element of life; he rings changes on single, pure tones, which amid the confused harmonies and disharmonies of life, appear neither so pure nor so distinct as in his books. Upon entering into the service of the nursery story all sentiments undergo a process of simplification, purification, and transformation. The character of man is farthest removed from the comprehension of the poet of childhood, and I can only recall a single passage in his stories in which a delicate psychological characteristic of a feminine soul may be encountered, even this appears so innocently that we feel inclined to ask if it did not write itself. It occurs in the story of the new porcelain figures, "The Shepherdess and the Chimney-Sweep."

"Have you really courage to go forth with me into the wide world?" asked the chimney-sweep, tenderly. 'Have you considered how large it is, and that we can never come back here again?' 'I have,' said she. And the chimney-sweep gazed fixedly upon her, and then he said: 'My way lies up the chimney. Have you really courage to go with me through the stove, and to creep through all the flues?' ... And he led her towards the door of the stove. 'It looks quite black,' said she, but still she went with him and on through all the intricacies of the interior, and through the flues, where a pitchy darkness reigned." After long,

long troublesome ascent they reached the top of the chimney and seated themselves on its edge. "The heaven and all its stars were above them, and all the roofs of the town below them; they could see far around, far away into the world. The poor shepherdess had never pictured it to herself thus; she leaned her little head on her sweep, and wept so bitterly that all the gilding of her girdle came off. 'O this is too much!' said she; 'I cannot bear it. This world is too large. O were I but again on the little table under the looking-glass! I shall never be happy till I am there again. I have followed you into the wide world; now, if you really love me, you may follow me home again.'"

A more profound, more mercilessly true, more self-evident analysis of a certain kind of feminine enthusiasm and its energy when it undertakes to act boldly without regard to consequences, and without looking backwards, can be found, I think, in the works of no other Danish writer. What delicacy of presentation: the momentary resolute enthusiasm, the heroic conquering of the first horror, the endurance, bravery, firmness, until the moment which requires courage, when the firmness is shattered, and the yearning for the little table under the looking-glass is awakened. Many a voluminous romance would have been exalted by such a page, and we find in it a compensation for the fact that Andersen is no master in the province of the romance. The drama is a species of poetic production that requires the faculty for differentiating an idea and distributing it among many characters; it requires an understanding of conscious action, a

logic power to guide this, an eye to the situation, a passion for becoming absorbed and overwhelmed in the inexhaustible study of individual, many-sided characters. Therefore it is that the drama is still farther removed from the genius of Andersen than the romance, and that his lack of capacity for the dramatic style increases with mathematical exactness in the same ratio as each variety of dramatic art is removed from the nursery story, and consequently from his gifts. He naturally succeeds best with the nursery-story comedy; although, to be sure, it possesses little more of comedy than the name. It is a mixed species, and if it were put to the test of the Spanish story, it would be recognized as a bastard. In the comedy of special situations he is happy with respect to the poetic execution of single scenes ("The King's Dream"), but singularly unfortunate in the execution of the idea as a whole ("The Pearl of Good Fortune"). The comedy proper is not poorly suited to his gifts. Certain of his nursery stories are, indeed, veritable Holberg comedies; "The Happy Family" is a Holberg character-comedy, and "It is Quite True" possesses a decided Holberg plot. In stories of this kind character delineation comes easier to him than in the grave drama, for in them he walks directly in the footsteps of Holberg, so strikingly does his talent accord in a single direction with that of this early Northern dramatist. Andersen is, as I have already remarked, no direct psychologist; he is rather a biologist than an especially well-informed student of human nature. His predilection is for describing man through animals or plants, and

seeing him develop from the rudiments of his nature. All art contains an answer to the question, What is man? Inquire of Andersen how he defines man, and he will reply, Man is a swan hatched in the "duck-yard" of Nature.

To a person who takes an interest in psychological investigations, who, without being able to grasp a complex character, possesses a refined development of observation for single qualities, for characteristic peculiarities, animals, especially those with which we are familiar, afford great relief. We are usually accustomed to credit each animal with an individual attribute, or at all events, with a limited group of attributes. The snail is slow, the nightingale is the unpretending singer with the glorious voice, the butterfly is the fair inconstant one. There is nothing then to prevent the poet who possesses the gifts needed to represent these striking little traits, from following in the footsteps of Holberg, the man who wrote "Den Vægelsindede" (The Fickle One), as Andersen did in "The New Lying-In Room." He betrays here, moreover, one of his many points of similarity with Dickens, whose comic characterizations are frequently limited to a few traits repeated *ad infinitum*.

In the epopee, which belongs in our day to the impossible forms of poetry and which demands all the qualities that Andersen lacks, he can merely find play for certain petty fancies, as for instance, when he characterizes the spirit of China, in his "Ahasuerus," in a droll lyric episode, or when he permits the twittering swallows (exactly as in a nursery story) to describe the

festal hall of Attila.

In his descriptions of travel very naturally a large number of his best qualities come to light. Like his favorite, the migratory bird, he is in his element when he travels. He observes with the eye of a painter, and he describes like an enthusiast. Yet even here two faults are apparent: one is that his lyric tendency at times runs away with him, so that he chants a hymn of praise instead of giving a description, or exaggerates instead of painting (see, for instance, the gushing and untrue description of Ragatz and Pfäfers); the other, that the underlying, personal, egotistical element of his nature, giving evidence that his innermost personality lacks reserve, occasionally obtrudes itself in a most disturbing manner.

The latter tendency characterizes with especially marked force the style of his autobiography. The criticism that can with justice be made on his "Story of My Life" is not so much that the author is throughout occupied with his own private affairs (for that is quite natural in such a work); it is that his personality is scarcely ever occupied with anything greater than itself, is never absorbed in an idea, is never entirely free from the ego. The revolution of 1848 in this book affects us as though we heard some one sneeze; we are astonished to be reminded by the sound that there is a world outside of the author.

In lyric poetry Andersen has met with foreign success – even Chamisso has translated some of his songs; yet I am always loath to see him lay aside his bright colored, realistic prose dress, that

is so true to nature, in order to veil himself in the more uniform mantle of verse. His prose has fancy, unrestrained sentiment, rhythm, and melody. Why, then, cross the brook to find water? His poems, too, are frequently distinguished by a peaceful and childlike spirit, a warm and gentle sentiment. We see that the result of his attempts in the different regions of poetry proceeds quite directly, like the unknown  $x$  in mathematics, from the nature of his talents on one side, and the nature of the kind of poetic creation he has chosen on the other.

Thus the nursery story remains his sole individual creation, and for it he requires no patent, since no one is likely to rob him of it. In Andersen's day it was a common thing to attempt to classify all kinds of poetic creations with their varieties in an æsthetic system, according to the method of Hegel; and Hegel's Danish disciple, Heiberg, projected a complicated system in which the rank of the comedy, the tragedy, the romance, the nursery story, etc., was definitely fixed, while to Heiberg's own art-form an especially high rank was accorded. It is, however, in a certain measure pedantic to speak of general classes of art. Every creative artist thoroughly individualizes his own species of art. The form which he has used, no other has it in his power to use. So it is with the nursery story, whose theory Andersen made no attempt to describe, whose place in the system there has been no effort to establish, and which I, for one, should take good care not to define. There is, indeed, something very curious about æsthetic systematic classification; it impresses one very much in

the same way as division of rank in the State: the more one broods over it, the more heretical one becomes. Perhaps this arises from the fact that to think is in the main synonymous with becoming a heretic. Yet like every natural type, Andersen's nursery story has its individual character, and his theories are comprised in the laws it obeys, whose boundaries it may not overstep without bringing to light a monster. Everything in the world has its law, even that species of poetry which transcends the laws of nature.

Andersen somewhere remarks, that he has made attempts in pretty much every radiation of the nursery story. This remark is striking and good. His nursery stories form a complete whole, a web with manifold radiations, that seems to address the beholder in the words of the spider's web in "Aladdin," "See how the threads can become entwined in the delicate net!" If it will not seem too much like bringing the dust of the schoolroom into the parlor, I should like to call the reader's attention to a celebrated scientific work in Adolf Zeising's "Æsthetic Investigations," in which can be found a complete series of æsthetic contrasts, in all their different phases (the beautiful, the comic, the tragic, the humorous, the touching, etc.), arranged in one great star, just as Andersen has planned in respect to his nursery stories.

The form of fancy and the method of narration in the nursery story admit the treatment of the most heterogeneous materials in the most varied tones. Within its province may be found sublime narratives, as "The Bell"; profound and wise stories, as "The Shadow"; fantastically bizarre, as "The Elfin Mound"; merry,

almost wanton ones, as "The Swineherd," or "The Leap Frog "; humorous ones, as "The Princess on the Pea," "Good Humor," "The False Collar," "The Lovers"; also stories with a tinge of melancholy, as "The Constant Tin Soldier"; deeply pathetic poetic creations, as "The Story of a Mother"; oppressively dismal, as "The Red Shoes"; touching fancies, as "The Little Sea-Maid"; and those of mingled dignity and playfulness, as "The Snow Queen." Here we encounter an anecdote like "A Great Sorrow," which resembles a smile through tears, and an inspiration like "The Muse of the Coming Age," in which we feel the pinion strokes of history, the heart-throbs and pulse-beats of the active, stirring life of the present, as violent as in a fever, and yet as healthy as in a happy moment of enthusiastic inspiration.<sup>30</sup> In short, we find everything that lies between the epigram and the hymn.

Is there, then, a boundary line which limits the nursery story, a law which binds it? If so, where does it lie? The law of the nursery story lies in the nature of the nursery story, and its nature is dependent on that of poetry. If, at the first moment, it would seem that nothing is prohibited a species of poetic

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<sup>30</sup> There is not a single Danish poet, who, to such a degree as Andersen, has scorned to produce effect through the romance of the past; even in the nursery story, which from the beginning has been handled by the romantic school of Germany in a manner that can be compared with the style of the Middle Ages, he is always solely and entirely in the *present*. He, as well as Oersted, dares to sacrifice the interesting element in his enthusiasm for King John and his time, and he heartily joins with Ovid in exclaiming, —*Prisca juvent alios! ego me nunc denique natum Gratulor. Haec aetas moribus apta meis.* — ARS. AMAT. III. 121.

creation which can permit a princess to feel a pea through twenty mattresses and twenty eider-down beds, it is but a semblance. The nursery story, which unites unbridled freedom of invention with the restraint its central idea impresses upon it, must steer between two rocks: between the luxuriance of style that lacks ideas, and dry allegory; it must strike the medium course between too great fulness and too great meagreness. This, Andersen most frequently succeeds in doing, and yet not always. Those of his stories that are based on materials derived from folk-lore, as "The Flying Trunk," or those that may be classed with the fairy-tale proper, as "Thumbling," do not attract grown people as they do children, because the story in such instances conceals no thought. In his "Garden of Paradise" everything preceding the entrance to the garden is masterly, but the Fairy of Paradise herself seems to me to be invested with little, if any, beauty or charm. The opposite extreme is when we see the barren intention, the dry precept, through the web of poetic creation; this fault, as might be expected in our reflecting and conscious age, is one of more frequent occurrence. We feel it keenly because the nursery story is the realm of the unconscious. Not only are unconscious beings and objects the leaders of speech in it, but what triumphs and is glorified in the nursery story is this very element of unconsciousness. And the nursery story is right; for the unconscious element is our capital and the source of our strength. The reason why the travelling companion could receive aid from the dead man, was because he had entirely forgotten

that he had formerly helped this same dead man, and even simple Hans gains the princess and half the kingdom, because with all his folly he is so exceedingly naïve. Even stupidity has its genial side and its good luck; with the poor intermediate beings, the Nureddin natures alone, the nursery story knows not what to do.

Let us consider some instances of sins against the unconscious. In the beautiful story of "The Snow Queen" a most disturbing influence is exercised by the scene where the Snow Queen requests little Kay to make figures with the ice puzzle for the understanding, and he is unable to represent the word "Eternity." There is also clumsy and un-poetic bluntness in "The Neighboring Families" whenever the sparrow's family mention the rose by the abstract, and for a sparrow rather unnatural, term, "the beautiful." It would have been understood, without this hint, that the roses were the representatives of the beautiful in the narrative, and in encountering this abstract word in the nursery story we recoil as though we had come into contact with a slimy frog.

This tendency to allegory in narratives for children appears most frequently, as might be expected, in the form of instruction and moralizing; in some of the nursery stories, as in "The Buckwheat," the pedagogic element plays an exaggerated rôle. In others, as "The Flax," we feel too strongly at the conclusion – as in Jean Paul – the tendency to exhibit, in season and out of season, the doctrine of immortality. Toward the end of the latter story a few little, somewhat "insipid beings" are

created who announce that the song is never done. In some cases finally the tendency is more personal. A whole series of stories ("The Duckling," "The Nightingale," "The Neighboring Families," "The Daisy," "The Snail and The Rose-Tree," "Pen and Inkstand," "The Old Street Lamp") allude to the poet's life and the poet's lot, and in single cases we see traces – a rare exception with Andersen – of invention being dragged in forcibly in order to bring out the tendency. What sense and what conformity to nature is there, for instance, in the fact that the street lamp can only let others see the beautiful and symbolic sights that had been interwoven with its experience when it is provided with a wax candle, and that its faculties are useless when provided with an ordinary light? It is quite incomprehensible until we conceive it to be an allegory on a poet's supposed need of prosperity in order to accomplish anything. "And so genius must run after cupboard lore!" wrote Kierkegaard on the occasion of the appearance of "Only a Fiddler." Still more infelicitous is the scene where the street lamp, in its melted-down condition, in its other life, finds its way to a poet and thus fulfils its destiny. So strongly as this the tendency has rarely shown itself.

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