

THE BUREAUCRATIC MUSE:
ON THOMAS BERNHARD'S EXEMPEL, ADALBERT STIFTER'S
DER KUSS VON SENTZE, FRANZ KAFKA'S IN DER STRAFKOLONIE
AND OSWALD WIENER'S DIE VERBESSERUNG VON MITTELEUROPA, ROMAN

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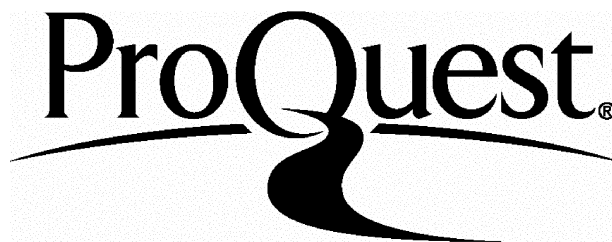
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ABSTRACT

The thesis, as its title suggests, works through examples: it looks at the way in which four literary works have responded to the spirit of bureaucracy. It also looks at the way in which each text, by thematizing bureaucracy, questions itself as a literary text. By working through examples the thesis also thematizes the bureaucratization of literature in that each example is an individual case, selected in order to become one of a group.

In the introduction it is argued that the essence of bureaucracy is the translation of pure formal structure into the organization of society. Bureaucratization is the attempt to create a set of rules of procedure, a value-free, machine-like process. It is further argued that the linguistic mechanism of the metatext is crucial to this enterprise. In order to maintain impersonality it is necessary for those working within the bureaucratic structure to be aware at all stages of procedure of **how** the system functions rather than **what** it is doing.

In Chapter One Exempel, a short text by Thomas Bernhard, is analyzed as the exemplary text amidst exemplary texts. It takes the contextual elements of the courtroom seen through the consciousness of a courtroom journalist to relate the story of a judge who shoots himself in order to set an example. The interpretation argues that the text becomes, as it were, a deterrent to itself. Chapter Two is an analysis of Der Kuss von Sentze by Adalbert Stifter which is seen as an exploration at a very early stage of the consequences and

contradictions that can arise from placing human relationships in the framework of bureaucratic structures. This is particularly apparent in the prose style that attempts to eliminate emotional responses. Franz Kafka's In der Strafkolonie is discussed as a text that realizes in literary form Max Weber's image of the bureaucratic State, a machine made out of human beings, at the same time as it explores the way in which the dialogue about the machine, in its concern with procedures rather than with the pain inflicted by the machine, is a representation of the way in which perspectives are distorted by the institutionalization of the metatext. Oswald Wiener's die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman is an experimental novel that explores the limits of literary expression as well as bureaucratic forms of expression by creating and destroying various forms of structuring the text while discussing in theoretical terms the relationship between language, society and the individual.

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INTRODUCTION

Wehe, Sie lesen eindringlicher, Sie ruinieren sich alles, was Sie lesen. Es ist ganz gleich was Sie lesen, es wird am Ende lächerlich und ist am Ende nichts wert. Hüten Sie sich vor dem Eindringen in Kunstwerke, sagte er, Sie verderben sich alles und jedes, selbst das Geliebteste. Schauen Sie ein Bild nicht lang an, lesen Sie ein Buch nicht zu eindringlich, hören Sie ein Musikstück nicht mit der grössten Intensität, Sie ruinieren sich alles und damit das Schönste und das Nützlichste auf der Welt.¹

Nobody who attempts to write a doctoral thesis on a literary topic can, I suspect, entirely escape a slight feeling of assent to Thomas Bernhard's sentiments quoted above. The desire to read and not to analyze is one often uttered by students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. And yet it is a desire that is largely chimerical - if for no other reason than that reading is, at however rudimentary a level, necessarily a reflexive act. And the more academically professional a reader one seeks to become, the more discursiveness and reflectivity tend to come to the fore. I am aware that this is particularly the case - one might even say, the danger - with my work, which is stylistic rather than thematic in character and which explores in considerable detail a tiny corpus of texts. With the exception of Oswald Wiener's die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman which has a certain bulk, the other texts are short - two of them (Stifter's Der Kuss von Sentze and Kafka's In der Strafkolonie) are of 'Novelle' length, and Bernhard's Exempel consists of one brief paragraph.² I would claim in each case that the issues which I address do take us to the heart of each writer's

oeuvre, but it cannot be stressed too strongly that the aim of this thesis is not to offer a general literary-historical discussion of the artistic production of Stifter, Kafka, Bernhard, ^{and} Wiener. Rather, the texts are submitted - in spite of Bernhard's caveat quoted above - to detailed stylistic analysis. The texts are illustrative material in respect of a central argument which is in essence, theoretical.

I am concerned in this thesis with four texts, which, in both thematic and stylistic terms, highlight the issue of bureaucracy and its modes. In the pages that follow I shall try to spell out clearly how the bureaucratic issue functions in my argument. But at this stage I wish to stress merely one point: I am concerned primarily with bureaucracy as a mental - and above all else linguistic - entity. All of us are familiar nowadays with ^{the} process of filling out forms. When we engage in this exercise, we find ourselves trying to explain our desires, needs, achievements or entitlements to an institution, a hierarchical framework that regards certain things as applicable and others as not applicable. The bureaucratic form attempts to introduce a dispassionate, rational, universal structure of question and answer into the felt particularity of our lives. For this reason, the language of the bureaucratic document can often strike us as not only impersonal but also inhuman. It is some kind of austere metalanguage to our everyday vernacular and in the process of filling out the form, we are made to stand outside ourselves to reflect on ourselves not in our own, but in an institutional, language. Precisely this experience of cognitive and linguistic self-reflexivity is at the heart both of the texts that concern me in this thesis and of my own engagement with them.

To repeat the point with which I began: although there is a connection to be made between the bureaucratization of the world³, Austria's history as a great Central European Empire, the Hapsburg legacy, particularly as a mythological continuity within the world of letters⁴, it would take many more examples and a different approach to turn my project into a comment about Austrian prose fiction from 1866 to 1978. The texts form a group for my purposes not primarily because they are by Austrian or Austro-Hungarian authors but because they all confront bureaucracy in ways which will be discussed. It is important to make it clear however that the thesis is not a sociological or an historical analysis of the relationship between Austrian bureaucracy or bureaucratic prose and literature. It is rather a thesis that remains firmly anchored in the realm of literary stylistic interpretation in the belief that as such it is also a useful contribution to an understanding of the ways in which literature functions and ^{how it has} contributed to an understanding of modern bureaucratized societies. By submitting the texts to close literary interpretive reading I hope to illuminate the ways in which these examples of Austrian or Austro-Hungarian literature have contributed to our understanding and image of such a society.

Because this thesis is concerned centrally with stylistics its focus will be on language, on form and structure. This focus clearly has consequences for the way in which the texts are interpreted, in particular in relation to the question of self-reflexivity. An approach to literature that concentrates on style in a self-reflexive way would seem to be indulging in a circular argument if it were to argue for an interpretation that systematically incorporates, as my

interpretations of the four texts do, self-consciousness or self-reflexivity. This is an issue that recurs in much recent critical theory and literary analysis.⁵ The justification of the method proposed is therefore an important part of what is offered and it depends on the extent to which it genuinely illuminates the texts under discussion. The thesis is hence in part an attempt to find ways of bringing together profitably and consistently a literary interpretative process with an argument about an aspect of institutional language-use in order to make the claim that the four texts themselves bring these two things together - the literary and the institutional - not for purely formal purposes, but in order to exploit the ambiguity and self-generative interpretative possibilities that derive from the juxtaposing of different worlds.

This study started out as an attempt to find a way to characterize the nature of style that would not reduce the study of literary texts to a catalogue of empirically verifiable categories. It started out as an attempt to make the connection between interpretation and stylistic analysis in such a way that would not involve claiming objective necessity, i.e. not in terms of quantifiable proof, but which would also not be arbitrary. The line of enquiry led me to the conclusion that such an analysis has to invoke the role of the reader. In order to explain interpretative necessity the reader has to be part of the equation.

The attempt to characterize the nature of style was carried out using the 'material' of Austrian or Austro-Hungarian literary texts. Certain specific texts were selected, beginning with the puzzles of

Adalbert Stifter's late 'Novellen', going on to Thomas Bernhard's pugnacious monologues, Kafka's precise and analytical step-by-step dialogue in In der Strafkolonie and ending finally with Oswald Wiener's experimental novel, exploring the parameters of the novel form.

These examples have, however, not come together randomly. Apart from the fact that they all fit - with a possible question mark next to Kafka as a Jewish, Czech writer in German in the Austro-Hungarian Empire - into the category of the Austrian literary canon (they are all to be found in the standard text books on Austrian literature), it could also be put forward that each of these writers was, as a **writer**, influenced by his non-literary employment. The text by Bernhard can be seen in direct relation to his work as a courtroom journalist for the Deutsches Volksblatt in Salzburg. The relationship between Stifter's work as a schools inspector and his writings has been discussed in Kurt Fischer's introduction to the collection of Stifter's letters and documents from his work as a school inspector, the Dokumenta Paedagogica Austriae: Adalbert Stifter⁶. In this thesis the connection will be made more emphatically. Kafka's work in the legal department of the Arbeiter-Unfall-Versicherungs-Anstalt für das Königreich Böhmen in Prag is well-documented⁷ and itself practically part of the ^{modern} literary myth. The coincidence that Max Weber's work on the nature of bureaucracy, seeing it in terms of a machine, and Kafka's allegorical machine in In der Strafkolonie were created during the same period, marks the years between 1914 and 1920 as seminal for the literary/bureaucratic connection. And finally, Oswald Wiener, who worked for the firm 'Olivetti' as head of the data bank,

created his own literary/theoretical vision of a machine, a bio-adaptor through which language would be replaced by a direct flow of information between organisms.

The first connection to be made between the title of this thesis and its substance is hence a biographical one. The 'bureaucratic Muse' is a literal reference to the non-literary employment of the authors under consideration in a bureaucratized environment and the way in which it fed into their literary authorship, the literary texts to be discussed. Writers are influenced in their writing by their environment, writing is an act of transforming environments internal and external into literary form. What more pervasive, indeed invasive influence can there be for a belletristic author than the need to write texts in a particular style for a particular purpose? Moreover, if we assume that the literary author is the kind of person who asks questions about writing as such, then the variety of possible text-production, more specifically the question of difference between literary and non-literary texts, is bound to come to the fore.

Although the biographical connection is hence a strong factor in the thoughts presented about the texts analyzed in this thesis, it is by no means the conclusive argument on which the thesis is based. After all, the dual occupations journalist/author, bureaucrat/author, database manager/author are not surprising. Throughout the history of literature authors have lived professionally in two worlds. The more significant aspect of the theme of bureaucracy for the texts to be examined in the thesis relates to the way in which Western society, Austria included, has become increasingly bureaucratized,

increasingly rationalized and the way in which this has altered the relationship between the world of the workplace - the collective world - and the world of the private individual, separating them and creating conflicts between the two. Contrasting an older world order - which he terms a patriarchal order, given legitimacy through traditional loyalties, 'die Autorität des "ewig Gestrigen"'⁸ - with the modern bureaucratized world, Max Weber pointed out that in a patriarchal system the post of official was a part-time, honorary occupation, 'ehrenamtliche Tätigkeit ist Tätigkeit im Nebenberuf'⁹, whereas in the new world order the bureaucrat's post takes up his whole working capacity. Many works have been written on the development of modernity as a process of bureaucratization, most of which, as Axel Dornemann suggests in his book Im Labyrinth der Bürokratie: Tolstoy's 'Auferstehung' und Kafkas 'Schloss'¹⁰, refer ultimately back to Max Weber's characterization of the rational-legal State in which the authority to rule, the legitimate use of force, is founded in the notion of 'legality':

Herrschaft kraft 'Legalität', kraft des Glaubens an die Geltung legaler Satzung und der durch rational geschaffene Regeln begründeten sachlichen 'Kompetenz', also: der Einstellung auf Gehorsam in der Erfüllung satzungsmässiger Pflichten: eine Herrschaft, wie sie der moderne 'Staatsdiener' und alle jene Träger von Macht ausüben, die ihm in dieser Hinsicht ähneln.¹¹

In this process bureaucracy comes as a revolutionizing force:

Die Bureaucratie ist 'rationalen' Charakters: Regel, Zweck, Mittel, 'sachliche' Unpersönlichkeit beherrschen ihr Gebaren. Ihre Entstehung und Ausbreitung hat daher überall in jenem besonderen [...] Sinne 'revolutionär' gewirkt, wie dies der

Vormarsch des Rationalismus überhaupt auf allen Gebieten zu tun pflegt. Sie vernichtete dabei Strukturformen der Herrschaft, welche einen, in diesem speziellen Sinn, rationalen Charakter nicht hatten.¹²

As an example of a more recent writer on bureaucracy, Henry Jacoby writes in Die Bürokratisierung der Welt¹³:

Noch im siebzehnten und achtzehnten Jahrhundert waren die Prinzipien bürokratischer Verwaltung als revolutionäre Neuerungen angesehen worden und erst im neunzehnten Jahrhundert begann jene Verdichtung des Verwaltungsnetzes, welche das Gefühl, vor etwas Neuem zu stehen, rechtfertigt, wenngleich der wirkliche Umbruch viel früher erfolgt ist.¹⁴

Max Weber erscheint gerechtfertigt darin, wenn er schrieb, die zentrale Frage sei 'was wir dieser Maschinerie entgegensetzen haben, um einen Rest des Menschentums freizuhalten von dieser Parzellierung der Seele, von der Alleinherrschaft bürokratischer Lebensideale.'¹⁵

There is no doubt that the most 'revolutionary' trend in the West has been that of increased bureaucratization of all aspects of life, entering more and more into private spheres of individual experience. Each of the texts can be seen in relation to this general trend, in particular in relation to the idea that bureaucratization penetrates not only the private sphere, the home of the individual citizen, but also the mind of the citizen, the way in which the individual thinks.

It is here in particular that the idea of the 'bureaucratic Muse' gains its significance. The idea of a Muse itself can be seen not only in terms of inspiration but also as a process through which the

mind of the poet or the artist is taken over by a force from outside. In this sense the 'bureaucratic Muse' can be seen as the writer's helpless exposure to a force that moulds his (all the authors are male) writing. It is interesting that Max Weber's characterization of the modern bureaucratic State involves the post or office completely taking over the life of the public servant: 'Das Amt ist "Beruf". Dies äussert sich zunächst in dem Erfordernis eines fest vorgeschriebenen, meist die ganze Arbeitskraft längerer Zeit hindurch in Anspruch nehmenden Bildungsganges',¹⁶.

Beim vollentwickelten Amt nimmt die amtliche Tätigkeit die gesamte Arbeitskraft des Beamten in Anspruch, unbeschadet des Umstandes, dass das Mass seiner pflichtmässigen Arbeitszeit auf dem Büro fest begrenzt sein kann. Dies ist als Normalfall ebenfalls erst Produkt einer langen Entwicklung im öffentlichen wie privatwirtschaftlichen Amt. Das Normale war früher in allen Fällen umgekehrt die 'nebenamtliche' Erledigung der Geschäfte.¹⁷

Both Stifter and Kafka complained of the energy that their employment took away from their writing. Both these authors' works have been characterized in terms of their non-literary productivity. The text Exempel by Bernhard and Wiener's die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman - the more contemporary texts - both thematize the idea of the mind taken over by forces outside it.

The 'bureaucratic Muse' hence has an obvious connection with increasingly paranoid responses to the 'world out there'. The individual capacity to express individuality is threatened by the impersonal, neutralizing forces of bureaucratization. Paradoxically,

this is where the most obvious point about the combination of adjective ('bureaucratic') and noun ('Muse') enters in. Bureaucracy and 'the Muse' - or artistic inspiration - are perhaps most obviously seen as opposites. Bureaucracy represents norms, the rule-governed system of administration, the translation of human spirit into community action. The Muse represents individuality, the inspiration of the lyrical voice, the expression of a single consciousness that speaks for all by referring to each. In another way, the Muse is that which gives the community significance by transfiguring the banal. As Goethe, another author/bureaucrat, wrote:

Wer flicht die unbedeutend grünen Blätter
Zum Ehrenkranz Verdiensten jeder Art?
Wer sichert den Olymp? vereinet Götter?
Des Menschen Kraft, im Dichter offenbart.¹⁸

The title hence refers to an opposition. It is an opposition, however, a perception of difference that, it could be argued, has in fact inspired more attempts at defining individuality than any other theme. The paradox lies in the way in which the nature of bureaucracy as something that dehumanizes - again Max Weber characterizes this - inspires the attempt to discover what is human about humanity, what differentiates each individual.

Die Bürokratie in ihrer Vollentwicklung steht in einem spezifischen Sinn auch unter dem Prinzip des 'sine ira ac studio'. Ihre spezifische, dem Kapitalismus willkommene, Eigenart entwickelt sie um so vollkommener, je mehr sie sich 'entmenschlicht', je vollkommener, heisst das hier, ihr die spezifische Eigenschaft, welche ihr als Tugend nachgerühmt wird: die Ausschaltung von Liebe, Hass und allen rein persönlichen, überhaupt allen irrationalen, dem Kalkül sich entziehenden,

Empfindungselementen aus der Erledigung der Amtsgeschäfte,
gelingt.¹⁹

Bureaucratization is not only itself dehumanized but threatens to take over all aspects of life and eliminate individuality. The acceptance of bureaucracy implies the extinction of the self, sacrifice of the self to the whole. The Muse becomes the embodiment of the question: 'what is self?'. The perception of bureaucratization as a lack, or as a threat to individuality, in a sense intensifies the question and the quest for identity.

It is here that the question of style becomes relevant, for what does the question of style ask? 'Style is the man',²⁰ is the best-known, if nebulous definition of style that has been offered, indicating that at the root of the question of style is precisely the question of identity, the question of what it is that is perceived to be unique to an individual as opposed to that which is common to all, or undifferentiated.

An answer to this question may not have been discovered, unless it is that there is no answer or that the question is a non-question. However, for this thesis the connection between the question of linguistic style and identity and the theme of bureaucratization becomes the key to a new understanding of some aspects of the texts to be discussed. What is style? How can a style be unique? How can language be an authentic expression of a unique event? These are questions that are the productive sources that connect the areas of linguistic style, bureaucratization and literary interpretation. What

the texts above all can be seen as doing is to thematize language in a context in which the problem of language connects institutionally to experience. In a sense, the question 'what is style?', in the institutional context, has been displaced by another question, not only addressing the nature of style but also asserting its existence as a response to the threat of uniformity. If the question were to be asked, 'when is it relevant to ask about style?', then the answer I am putting forward is that style is above all relevant in the four literary texts in the way in which they question the relationship between individual expression and the community.

The aspect of institutional language use (which I shall call bureaucratic language) that is important with respect to the literary works to be discussed, is the relationship between the information that is being processed and the linguistic self-consciousness which becomes both self-generating and destructive. By self-consciousness I mean simply the fact that while thinking or speaking it is possible to refer to the fact that we are thinking or speaking, to refer to the fact that we 'think that we think that we think' and so on ad infinitum. As Stubbs puts it in Discourse Analysis:

In the course of conversation, it is quite usual, and passes unnoticed, for an utterance to step outside the conversation [...] such utterances are simultaneously conversational acts in the linear sequence of discourse and also act at a higher metalevel, which comment on the lower level.²¹

In practical terms, this 'stepping outside the conversation' may be in the pursuit of clarity or as part of a conversational strategy or,

more relevantly in the context of this thesis, because the act of saying something has become institutionally relevant. We may speculate about the meanings of words or sentences we have used, especially if we have used language that has caused difficulty in comprehension. If we are reporting the speech of another person we implicitly refer to that person's use of language. In all these ways, and more, we refer to our linguistic activities at the same time as we engage in them. Language, the process of producing and comprehending utterances, becomes an object of attention. This is a frequent and normal aspect of language use. At the same time as attempting to understand the world or achieve communication we are able to be aware, to some extent at least, of the mechanisms by which we are doing so.

In some communicative contexts our consciousness of process even takes precedence over the information that is processed. That is, even though the reason for the discourse remains the information concerned, it is the process of doing so that has become the subject of attention. For example, in a system of government where the procedures of consultation, discussion and implementation are (ideally speaking) understood as valid ends in themselves, it is clear that the fact of discourse itself will be referred to constantly. Christopher Dandeker, in his book Surveillance, power and modernity: bureaucracy and discipline from 1700 to the present day, in discussing Max Weber's writing on the legitimacy of the modern State, points out how fundamental this displacement of attention away from substance and on to procedure is to the stability of the modern community:

The legitimacy of the modern state rests on the fact that its orders are established and exercised in a way that is recognized to be legal. Weber argues that the stability of this system of legitimation rests not on certain substantive values like freedom, democracy and so on, but on the formal logical character of legal norms which have the capacity to express and legitimate any particular substantive end as a basis for state policy. Thus it is in the formal rationalization of law rather than in the substantive rationalization of law in terms of ethical values that the fullest expression of the rational-legal state may be found. As long as state action conforms to formal legal requirements, it can adopt any policies or reflect any values without disturbing the basis of its legitimacy. Legitimacy claims based on particular values are unstable because they can always be challenged by competitors committed to alternative values. For Weber, the stability of legitimation in modern capitalism rests upon the subject population's recognition that, independently of the substantive values expressed in commands, there is an obligation to accept them as technically correct/valid.²²

Thus it is that a trial is legitimate not on the basis of substantive values but on the basis of having been carried out according to pre-existing rules. Similarly, debate in the Houses of Parliament may involve substantive values but is legitimate only by virtue of the fact that it too is in accordance with the rules. Perhaps more pertinently for this discussion, the bureaucratic report of such procedures reflects not only the self-awareness inherent in the trial or debate itself, but also an awareness of the status of the document or report not only as a text conveying information about what took place, but as an object which is itself the fulfilment of due procedure.

These are contexts in which the consciousness of procedure has been institutionalized, a consciousness which stands out because of its institutional importance. What is remarkable about bureaucratic language is the need for a consistent awareness of procedure, owing to the danger of invalidity that forgetting procedure would incur. What distinguishes bureaucratic language is this consistency which becomes most apparent when the information that is processed involves, as it frequently does, reports of human suffering, pain and death, sometimes on a mass scale. When it is the process of the discourse that is focussed on instead of the human situation concerned, we often experience a sense of severe distortion. It is this experience of distortion and its origin in metalingual awareness that is the main subject here. At the same time as it allows the characterization of style, of uniqueness, the metatext becomes an inhibitor, a barrier to authenticity. It highlights the difficulty of expression and in failing or refusing to create the illusion of understanding it creates frustration and anger.

Literature has the potential to share in this provocation. Literature has already been mentioned as an example of drawing attention to language as a phenomenon. Katie Wales, in her Dictionary of Stylistics, summarizes the points under the heading 'Self-reference, also Self-reflexivity':

A recurring idea in discussions of literary language in different critical approaches is that it is characteristically 'narcissistic' i.e. self-referential. So Jakobson and other Formalists and Prague School argue that the essence of literariness is the 'set towards the message' for its own sake,

the poetic function of language. There is an awareness of language and medium, that is not so significant in other types of discourse.²³

There are two sides to this. First, a literary text, because it is fiction and because it can be regarded as an aesthetic object, often asks to be seen as a piece of language per se. When we study literature we can legitimately talk about it not only in terms of its themes, but also in terms of the way in which these themes are accessed - that is, in terms of style, textual organization or genre. A literary text can also have language itself as a theme. The text can refer to itself or to language in the way I have indicated. Within the framework of a literary work that itself puts everything in quotation marks, the consequences of metalinguistic consciousness itself can become the informational content. An example of a sentence in such a literary work might be something like the following: "'What does it mean when I say 'I think that I think that I think'", she said thoughtfully'. In fact, literature can be seen both as an effective and a problematic vehicle for the representation and discussion of language as a phenomenon because of its own nature as part of the phenomenon to be observed. The reader can identify immediately with characters for whom language has become an object of attention.

The literary texts to be discussed in this thesis all thematize language. They have one further aspect in common, an aspect which transforms the thematization of language as a formal issue into a concern with related socio-cultural implications. They inquire into

the meaning of linguistic self-reflexivity in a community which relies on language institutionally, has become preoccupied with it philosophically, and obsessed with it artistically. By linking the formal issues surrounding the philosophical problem of the metatext with institutional problems, the texts extend the problem into a territory where they can explore the issue of authenticity within fiction. One of the means through which the texts achieve this is the way in which each of them contains to varying degrees some form of passion, violence or anarchy. The word 'contains' is used here in both senses. The texts narrate turbulent events, but as texts they are also remote from the violence they describe. In sharing this double-bind with the bureaucratic text that seeks to evaluate individual cases under general rules they all set the struggle with language against the struggle with life so that, even though the struggle with language in the literary context may console or provide hope or even be the last sustaining force in the face of despair, there remains the sense that the real issues have been replaced with a substitute. The concern with language remains a second best.

The four exemplary texts

are taken for close analysis in the light of these conflicts. How does each text use its own nature as a literary work to exploit and explore and perhaps even attempt to defeat the distorting process of bureaucratization?

Thomas Bernhard's Exempel, a short anecdote, is for the thesis the exemplary text amidst exemplary texts and is analyzed both as an introduction to and a culmination of the issues the thesis deals

with. And, as the title Exempel indicates, it is a text that invites such use. It begins with the lament about the condition of the courtroom journalist, 'Der Gerichtsaalberichterstatter', who is 'dem menschlichen Elend und seiner Absurdität am nächsten'.²⁴ This is a lament that Bernhard himself might have made from experience after spending four years working for the Demokratisches Volksblatt in Salzburg, often reporting on courtroom trials.²⁵ The anecdote ends with the judge shooting himself before the court in order to 'set an example'.

What this anecdote does is to take the contextual elements of the courtroom: institutionally structured and monitored conditions of communication, seen through the consciousness of an observer who is integral to and yet not personally involved in the scene, and make them into building blocks for a self-conscious prose style that is intensified and explored by being transferred into the literary medium. In Exempel the reporter is not reporting but recounting what it is like to report, what it is like to earn a living by writing about the uncertainties of accusation. This sets up conditions in which the narrator, freed from the restrictions of the process of reporting, should be able to find an individual voice. However, in this act of reflection the narrative voice becomes trapped in a heightened degree of self-awareness that ends up reflecting most of all on its own ability to be self-aware, at the same time telling the story of a judge who 'sets the example', escaping the metadiscourse in which we see the reporter trapped by putting on the ultimate performance of a public suicide.

After analyzing the close relationship between style and theme in Exempel, I look back to two works by earlier writers who are seen as part of the accepted canon of Austrian prose literature. As literary texts from different historical periods they place the notion of the bureaucratic Muse in the context of an historical development - that parallels the increasing importance of bureaucracy - towards and beyond modernity. Those works are Stifter's Der Kuss von Sentze of 1866 and Kafka's In der Strafkolonie written in 1914 and first published in 1919.

Both Stifter and Kafka were civil servants as well as authors and they worked for organizations that were themselves located at significant historical turning points in the structure of the society they lived in. Stifter worked as an Inspector of Primary Schools in Upper Austria at a time when the duty to educate was beginning to be seen as a real form of political development and was moving out of the hands of the Church and into those of the State. His concern with education involved an idealized symbiotic relationship between the individual and the State: 'darum haben wir ja den Staat, dass wir in ihm Menschen seien, und darum muss er uns zu Menschen machen, dass er Staatsbürger habe und ein Staat sei'²⁶. I discuss one of his late 'Novellen' Der Kuss von Sentze as an exploration, at a very early stage, of the consequences and contradictions that can arise from placing human relationships in the framework of rational bureaucratic structures. Attention is paid especially to the way in which the act of writing on the part of the narrator becomes an explicit and principled process of consciously leaving out emotions that are hinted at, such as jealousy, anger, sadness, attraction, repulsion

in order to avoid upsetting the relationship between the individual and the corporate realm. The result is a didactic metatextuality self-consciously teaching the reader by example how to use self-consciousness as a form of discipline.

Kafka's work in the legal department of the Arbeiter-Unfall-Versicherungs-Anstalt für das Königreich Böhmen in Prag which he joined in 1908, an organization that introduced an early form of social security, bringing in the practice of worker compensation for the first time in the Austro-Hungarian empire, is well-documented as I have already indicated. In der Strafkolonie, the text which I have focussed on, has been seen as the realization in literary form of Max Weber's image of the bureaucratic State, a great mechanical construct made up out of human beings.²⁷ Within this quasi-surrealist structure all that is left for the individual human being is to submit to the overwhelming power of the organization. As in the case of Bernhard's anecdote what interests me about In der Strafkolonie is the way in which the relationship between theme and style highlights the way in which the concern with correct procedure distorts perception. While the officer is fascinated by the machine and the traveller is concerned about his position in the camp, the object of the discourse is actually an instrument of torture. While for the reader, the most psychologically relevant focus of attention is the pain inflicted by the machine, the text describes the officer engaged in a description of its mechanics and the traveller preoccupied with whether he is allowed to object to such procedures in the penal colony or not. Both preoccupations are tantalizingly close to addressing the horror of physical pain but both ultimately deflect away from it. The result is

the abstraction which is the potential nightmare of the bureaucratic situation in which organizational needs take precedence over the human ones.

Oswald Wiener's die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman is, I believe, a text which brings into focus many of the themes of this research. Most importantly, Oswald Wiener's novel represents a new departure in Austrian prose literature in its explicit use of linguistic theory within the literary text itself. What is more, in the novel the issues associated with the use of linguistic theories and metalanguage become integral to a discussion of the ways in which the individual is trapped within the structures of the State through the internal and external structure of language. For Wiener, literature, because it uses the medium of language, is, like the individual, contaminated by the State; hence 'jedes gedicht hat amtscharakter'.²⁸

Like Bernhard, Stifter, and Kafka, Oswald Wiener brings into his literary work problems and issues that derive directly from his non-literary employment. He was a member of the Wiener Gruppe²⁹, a group of individuals often referred to in terms of the employment or training of each individual - Konrad Bayer was the banker, Friedrich Achleitner the architect. Oswald Wiener, for his part, was the 'Kybernetiker' or information technologist. In the work die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman he confronts the problem of the relationship between the individual and society armed with a whole battery of theoretical knowledge culled from the disciplines of linguistics and cybernetics, bringing it together with radical

stylistic experiment in writing and performance developed by the Wiener Gruppe.

What makes die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman relevant in the context of this study is its search - particularly through its experimentation with style and genre - for a way in which the individual can be freed of the shackles of language. Towards the end of the book, in a section entitled **appendix C**³⁰, the reader is reminded of the forces against which the novel is fighting: 'möge er bedenken, welcher kraft, welchen formats es bedarf, gegen eine im grossen ganzen abgerundete, stimmige, einhellige welt aufzustehen, wie sie uns in jedem augenblick an den kopf geworfen wird'.³¹

Although this is a quotation taken from the end of the novel it has implications for the whole work because it places Wiener in a position which is the very reverse of that which can be perceived in the other texts. Part of the power of Exempel, Der Kuss von Sentze and In der Strafkolonie lies in the way in which the language can be seen as an attempt to create order and coherence in a fragmented, distorted, incomprehensible world. die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman in contrast can be seen as a text in which the creation of meaning is a lie and it attempts therefore to rescue the individual from the inauthenticity and restriction that this lie has constructed. The novel never ceases to deny the possibility of confirmation through writing, seeking again and again to destroy any consistency that might arise. Yet paradoxically the novel, by trying to break down consistency, steadily builds up a formidable structure of language. As a piece of literature it therefore remains within the

dilemma in the predisposition of texts and readers to seek for coherence. The attempt to use language to deny that language can create meaning results in a continuing demonstration of the power of language to mean.

Wiener's die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman - and this is part of its extraordinary fascination as a text - remains ultimately anchored in the paradoxes which it seeks to explore and exorcise. To say this is not to pass a value judgement; rather it is to offer a constataction of the multiple ways in which Wiener's text constantly criticizes yet also reinstates itself. It is almost as though self-reflexivity can neither be switched off nor brought to some kind of triumphant conclusion located at some Archimedean point outside the phenomena to be analyzed. Perhaps something similar has to be registered in respect of the self-reflexivity that informs my own enterprise in this thesis. As I stated at the outset of this chapter, I treat the various literary works under discussion as test cases, as examples; and each interpretation is an attempt to deal with each case in an exemplary way. Perhaps, then, it has to be said that interpretation and analysis, as practised in this thesis (but not only in this thesis, of course) have something bureaucratic about them. The metatext is abstract, institutional, in this case academic. The particular case is pressed into the service of some generality, but thereby it becomes (up to a point at least) intelligible - just as language itself moderates between individuality and generality in the service of intelligibility. Perhaps, in the last analysis, we are all, writers and critics alike, dependent upon the bureaucratic Muse.

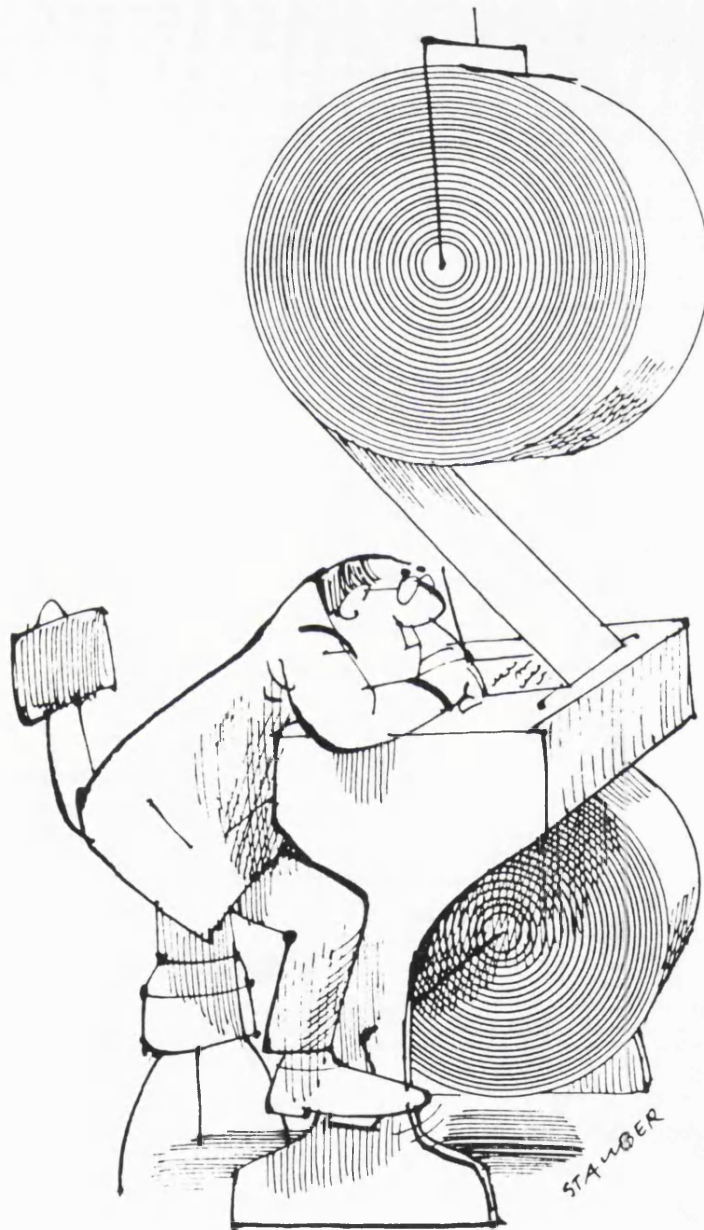
Notes to Introduction

1. Thomas Bernhard, Alte Meister, (Frankfurt am Main, 1985), p.68.
2. Full details of editions used of each of the four texts are given in the bibliography.
3. See Henry Jacoby, Die Bürokratisierung der Welt, (Frankfurt am Main, 1984).
4. See Claudio Magris, Der habsburgische Mythos in der österreichischen Literatur, (Salzburg, 1966).
5. See debate between Stanley Fish and Posner, 'Don't know much about the Middle Ages', in Stanley Fish, Doing What Comes Naturally: Change, Rhetoric and the Practice of Theory in Literary and Legal Studies, (Oxford, 1989).
6. Dokumenta Paedagogica Austriaca: Adalbert Stifter, ed. by Kurt Gerhard Fischer, (Linz, 1961). See also Die Schulakten Adalbert Stifters, ed. by Kurt Vansca, (Graz, 1955).
7. Franz Kafka: Amtliche Schriften, ed. by Klaus Hermsdorf, (Berlin, 1984).
8. Max Weber, Gesamtausgabe, ed. by Horst Baier and others, (Tübingen, 1984-), XVII: Politik als Beruf, ed. by Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Wolfgang Schluchter (1992), p.160.

9. Max Weber, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie, ed. by Johannes Winckelmann, 5th rev. edn, (Tübingen, 1976), p. 562.
10. Axel Dornemann, Im Labyrinth der Bürokratie: Tolstoy's 'Auferstehung' und Kafkas 'Schloss', (Heidelberg, 1984). The introduction contains an extensive introduction to the issues that link Max Weber's writings on bureaucracy with the themes of the literary texts.
11. Max Weber, Politik als Beruf, p.160.
12. Max Weber, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, pp.578-79.
13. See Henry Jacoby, Die Bürokratisierung der Welt.
14. Henry Jacoby, Die Bürokratisierung der Welt, p.23.
15. Henry Jacoby, Die Bürokratisierung der Welt, p.15.
16. Max Weber, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, p.552.
17. Max Weber, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, p.552.
18. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Werke, 14 vols, (Hamburger Ausgabe, 1981) III: 'Vorspiel auf dem Theater', Faust, lines 146 - 157.
19. Max Weber, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, p.563.

20. See the introduction to G. W. Turner, Stylistics, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1973).
21. M. Stubbs, Discourse Analysis, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), p.16, quoted in Jenny A. Thomas, 'Discourse control in confrontational interaction', in The Pragmatics of Style, ed. by Leo Hickey (London and New York, 1989), p.134.
22. Christopher Dandeker, Surveillance, power and modernity: bureaucracy and discipline from 1700 to the present day, (Cambridge, 1990), p.11.
23. Katie Wales, A Dictionary of Stylistics (New York, 1989), p.414.
24. Der Stimmenimitator, p.29.
25. See Herbert Moritz, Lehrjahre: Thomas Bernhard - Vom Journalisten zum Dichter, (Katsdorf, 1992), in particular pp.8-50.
26. Adalbert Stifters Sämmtliche Werke, ed. by A. Sauer and Gustav Wilhelm, 34 vols, (Prague, 1916): XVIII, Letter 158, 26.4.1849, p.1.
27. Max Weber, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, p.570.
28. die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman, p.XII.

29. See, Die Wiener Gruppe: Achleitner, Artmann, Bayer, Rühm, Wiener, Texte, Gemeinschaftsarbeiten, Aktionen, ed. by Gerhard Rühm, (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1985).
30. die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman, p.CXCI.
31. die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman, p.CXCI.



CHAPTER ONE

'Dass er jetzt ein Exempel statuieren werde'

THOMAS BERNHARD'S EXEMPEL

Exempel

1 Der Gerichtssaalberichterstatter ist dem menschlichen Elend und
2 seiner Absurdität am nächsten und er kann diese Erfahrung
3 naturgemäss nur eine kurze Zeit, aber sicher nicht
4 lebenslänglich machen, ohne verrückt zu werden. Das
5 Wahrscheinliche, das Unwahrscheinliche, ja das Unglaubliche, das
6 Unglaublichste wird ihm, der damit, dass er über tatsächliche
7 oder über nur angenommene, aber naturgemäss immer beschämende
8 Verbrechen berichtet, sein Brot verdient, an jedem Tag im
9 Gericht vorgeführt und er ist naturgemäss bald von überhaupt
10 nichts mehr überrascht. Von einem einzigen Vorfall will
11 ich jedoch Mitteilung machen, der mir doch nach wie vor als der
12 bemerkenswerteste meiner Gerichtssaalberichterstatterlaufbahn
13 erscheint. Der Oberlandesgerichtsrat Ferrari, die ganzen Jahre
14 über die beherrschende Figur des Landesgerichtes Salzburg, aus
15 welchem ich wie gesagt, viele Jahre über alles dort Mögliche
16 berichtet habe, war, nachdem er einen, wie er in seinem
17 Schlusswort ausgeführt hatte, ganz gemeinen Erpresser, wie ich
18 mich genau erinnere, einen Rindfleischexporteur aus Murau, zu
19 zwölf Jahren Kerker und zur Zahlung von acht Millionen
20 Schilling verurteilt gehabt hatte, nach der Urteilsverkündung
21 noch einmal aufgestanden und hatte gesagt, dass er jetzt ein
22 Exempel statuieren werde. Nach dieser unüblichen Ankündigung
23 griff er blitzartig unter seinen Talar und in seine Rocktasche
24 und holte eine entscherte Pistole hervor und schoss sich zum
25 Entsetzen aller im Gerichtssaal Anwesenden in die linke
26 Schläfe. Er war augenblicklich tot gewesen.¹

Exempel is the thirteenth of over a hundred short texts in a collection by Thomas Bernhard first published by Suhrkamp under the title Der Stimmenimitator in 1978. The collection has been referred to as a 'Thomas Bernhard for beginners'², an easy way into the themes and styles of a writer known for his usually extremely long and sustained prose works. Alte Meister, for example, quoted from in the introduction, consists, in stark contrast, of a single paragraph of over three hundred pages. Bernhard's prose style and the construction of his monologues are often compared with the structure of music, Bernhard having himself trained as a musician.⁴ The short texts presented in Der Stimmenimitator may be compared with the musical concentration of Anton Webern's works.

Exempel is a concentrated passage of prose fiction in which the themes and the stylistic questions of bureaucratization come together, addressing directly the conflicts between the normative force of the legal process and the wayward or aberrational individual cases that pass through it. What is more, these opposing forces are given space by being presented neither through the eyes of the judge, nor the accused, but from the perspective of the courtroom journalist, a presentation that, *by* adding an extra layer of narrative perspective, allows the problem of authenticity to reverberate. What is more, by relating not a report of a case and its legal outcome, but rather a violent event in court perpetrated not by the accused but by the judge, the anecdote achieves an idiosyncratic, quirky angle on a process that embodies precisely the will to eliminate such events.

Although the anecdote is short its range is considerable, owing to the way in which it functions by feeding on and exploiting different contexts. In this chapter I will discuss the anecdote in a number of ways, initially as the product of a particular experience in Thomas Bernhard's own life - his experience as a young courtroom journalist - as a reflection on a working environment in which many aspects of modern bureaucratized societies are particularly concentrated. From this introduction I shall go on to discuss the wider environment to which the text relates thematically - the legal context - and in which it gains its most serious import. Then I shall work through the text, examining it in close detail as a piece of prose, as a literary text within a literary text, working through a complex network of self-reflexive movements. Finally I will conclude with a discussion on the ways in which this short anecdote, in the brevity of its form and in its multi-valence, is symptomatic of a world in which everything is interconnected. In the course of the analysis I will seek to show how each of these contexts do not only coincide in the exemplary text Exempel, but also interrelate in a way that demonstrates how the literary text both exploits and rejects the notion of the bureaucratized world in which it exists.

Max Weber, in his lecture Politik als Beruf⁵ in 1919, discussing journalism as a career to lead on to public service as a politician, staunchly defended the honour of the dedicated journalist. 'Nicht das ist erstaunlich, dass es viele menschlich entgleiste oder entwertete Journalisten gibt', he wrote, 'sondern dass trotz allem gerade diese

Schicht eine so grosse Zahl wertvoller und ganz echter Menschen in sich schliesst.'(p.196)

It is tempting to ask whether Thomas Bernhard knew of this lecture and whether he was thinking about it when he wrote the anecdote Exempel, for not only does Max Weber recognize and explain the precarious nature of the journalist's vocation, he also compares its difficulties with that of the demagogue, the advocate and the artist - comparisons that would probably have delighted Bernhard.

Der Journalist teilt mit allen Demagogen und [...] auch mit dem Advokaten (und dem Künstler) das Schicksal: der festen sozialen Klassifikation zu entbehren. Er gehört zu einer Art von Pariakaste, die in der 'Gesellschaft' stets nach ihren ethisch tiefstehenden Repräsentanten sozial eingeschätzt wird. Die seltsamen Vorstellungen über die Journalisten und ihre Arbeit sind daher landläufig.(p.191)

However, what Max Weber admires in the journalist is precisely that which Bernhard questions in the text Exempel, namely the ability to transform event and opinion immediately into prose. For Weber, a good piece of journalism contains just as much intellect as any academic writing and is worth more since not everyone is capable of producing a piece of writing on the spot: 'vor allem infolge der Notwendigkeit, sofort, auf Kommando, hervorgebracht zu werden und: sofort wirken zu sollen, bei freilich ganz anderen Bedingungen der Schöpfung, ist nicht jedermann gegenwärtig'(p.191). The bravery of the journalist during the First World War was proof of a sense of responsibility and integrity, but this is never credited to them: 'weil, naturgemäss gerade die verantwortungslosen journalistischen Leistungen, ihrer oft

furchtbaren Wirkung wegen, im Gedächtnis haften'(p.191). In Exempel, however, the character of the journalist is explored not from the heroic point of view of the war-time reporter but from the no less dramatic but more problematic point of view that in fact takes the journalist even more fully into the bureaucratized world that Max Weber described in many of his writings, the perspective of the 'Gerichtssaalberichterstatter'.

The narrating voice is that of a reporter who has spent considerable time observing and writing about the high court in Salzburg. In this text the reporter is not reporting, however, but recounting what it is like to report. The lament that the legal journalist, 'Der Gerichtssaalberichterstatter', is closest to human misery and its absurdity is one that Bernhard himself might have made from experience after spending four years, from January 1952 to December 1955, from the age of 21 to the age of 24, working for the Demokratisches Volksblatt in Salzburg reporting on, amongst other things, courtroom trials.⁶ Many critics have seen this experience as formative in Thomas Bernhard's development as a writer and Herbert Moritz, in his book Lehrjahre: Thomas Bernhard - Vom Journalisten zum Dichter, in describing his experiences of attempting to teach Bernhard the trade of reporting, indicates the influence that both the subject matter and the style of courtroom reporting must have had on Bernhard's later literary style. On the reports that Bernhard wrote Moritz comments:

Bernhards Berichte hielten sich durchgehend an die beim Demokratischen Volksblatt entwickelte Form des Gerichtssaalfeuilletons, der häufig humorvollen, immer

menschlichen, zuweilen sozialkritischen Schilderungen von kleinen Streit- und Straffällen, wie sie vor österreichischen Bezirks- und Einzelrichtern täglich abgehandelt werden.(p.9)

However, although the style of the reports indicates an ability on Bernhard's part to adapt to the needs of the newspaper, the contents appear to have posed more problems. While the apprenticeship as a court reporter may, in fact, be seen as laying the basis for aspects of Bernhard's literary prose style, a more interesting and subversive tendency to pay scant respect to the true facts of the case may be seen as evidence for the impetus to move to fiction while yet retaining the urgency of the close relationship to fact. Moritz writes:

Wesentlich ernstere Schwierigkeiten trug mir aber Bernhards ungezügelte Phantasie ein, die er auch in vielen seiner Berichte über konkrete Gerichtsverhandlungen unbekümmert um Sachverhalte und Richtigkeit frei schweifen liess und damit die Beschwerden und Proteste der Betroffenen heraufbeschwor. Sie gipfelten in so mancher empörten Intervention eines Rechtsanwalts bis hin zur Entgegnungs- und Klagesdrohung.(p.13)

The implications of Bernhard's failure to report accurately are rendered less poetic when it turns out that it was partly a result of laziness. It was speedier if less accurate to use the legal court report as the basis for the newspaper piece than to attend the trial. However, in interview Bernhard maintained an interesting stance in relation to matters of truth, indicating that as a young reporter he had either already developed a sceptical attitude towards the notion of truthful reporting or that his success in arousing

disapproval through his failure to report accurately showed him a potential path towards arousing controversy and attention:

Das kann man alles austauschen. Auch Sie haben absolut recht, wenn Sie eine Wahrheit als Lüge und absolut recht, wenn Sie Lüge als Wahrheit bezeichnen ... Alles ist subjektiv und falsch natürlich. Das ist ganz klar. Ich hab' nie behauptet, dass ich irgendeine Wahrheit oder irgendetwas Richtiges g'sagt hab'.(p19)

In relation to the experience of the courtroom journalist the assertion of the subjectivity of truth conflicts with the rhetoric of the discovery of truth ^{in the name of} the community. However, interestingly it does not conflict with the recognition that the court imposes the status of truth through procedure. It is in this way that Bernhard remains within the coherence of procedural concerns so that the notion of 'Recht' remains intact while the question of truth ('recht') goes begging.

However, what is important in this study is the way in which the issue of the bureaucratization of the law becomes transferred from reality into fiction, from the issue of factual truth to the issue of what truth is for the fictional text, because it is in this transference that the issues become insistently metatextual. Moritz concludes his introduction to Bernhard's journalistic work in the courts with the comments:

Die Bedeutung von Thomas Bernhards Arbeit in der Gerichtssaal-berichterstattung für eine interessierte Nachwelt liegt sicher weniger in ihren heute noch feststellbaren gedruckten Ergebnissen - sie lässt in ihrer Qualität deutliche Hinweise auf journalistisch oder gar literarisch Ausserordentliches

vermissen, und nur ganz selten blitzen Gedanken und Formulierungen auf, die die spätere Entwicklung des Autors voraussehen lassen; sie liegt wohl vielmehr darin, dass der Autor in diesem Milieu wichtige, sein Denken und Fühlen stark beeinflussende Eindrücke und Erfahrungen gesammelt hat, wie sie der abseits der Justiz lebende normale Bürger nicht gewinnen kann. Der in den fünfziger Jahren zweifellos noch vorhandenen Härte der Justiz, die der Berichterstatter sehr rasch als Ausdruck auch von gesellschaftlichen Machtverhältnissen kennenlernte, die aber nicht selten durch menschliche Richterpersönlichkeiten gemildert schien, stehen die Abgründe, aber auch die Nöte und die Verzweiflung kriminell gewordener Menschen gegenüber. Vor dem jungen, sensiblen Reporter tat sich ein Lernfeld auf, das sein unverbrauchtes Interesse fand, auf dem er aber auch so mancher Erschütterung Herr werden musste. Immer wieder stösst man daher im Werk Bernhards auf Passagen, die auf sein Erleben als Gerichtssaal-Journalist zurückgehen. (pp.47-8)

In this passage it is significant that Moritz estimates that the experience of reporting legal cases amounted to the observation of events that 'abseits der Justiz lebende normale Bürger' do not usually find themselves confronted with. That is, the courtroom journalist is compelled as a way of earning a living to observe events that the 'normal' citizen chooses not to go and see. In addition, the observation of those events involved acknowledging the ways in which the legal system was malfunctioning in terms of a sense of strict legality, but perhaps functioning well in terms of mercy and justice. What is more, all this took place in the face of 'Abgründe', 'Nöte' and 'Verzweiflung', what one might call the ingredients of Bernhard's literary vision and which, in this thesis,

count as the essential human background against which the limitations and the strengths of bureaucratization are played out.

Bernhard himself expresses the same idea that the courtroom journalist is unusually exposed to the raw juxtapositions of life and death less poetically but more graphically. Above all he speaks in terms of the opportunities of the occupation ambiguously. The journalist sees what others don't see, carries out a job unlike any other, that allows him to observe life in a way unlike any other profession. Except, that is, perhaps for the medical profession. It is interesting that Bernhard's second prose work, Verstörung⁷ followed a doctor, observed by his son. About journalism Bernhard says:

Da kann man wirklich über Leichen gehen, das kann man in keinem anderen Beruf, auf so lange Zeit. Als Journalist können Sie - wenn Sie mit siebzehn anfangen oder achtzehn - bis sie alt und senil sind und gar nicht mehr lesen und weggehen können, immernoch über Leichen gehen. Bietet kein anderer Beruf.⁸

The autobiographical source for the narrative voice of the Gerichtssaalberichterstatter in Exempel is hence clear. However, autobiography plays a particular role in the case of this fictional anecdote which turns out to be not quite so fictional after all. Moritz refers to it in his book:

Immer wieder findet man ja in Bernhards Oeuvre Hinweise auf Gericht und Gerichtspersonen, wie den Senatsvorsitzenden Zamponi in seinem Stimmenimitator, dessen Vorbild, der hochangesehene damalige Staatsanwalt und spätere Oberlandesgerichtspräsident

Dr. Reinulf Zamponi, ihm bei Strafverhandlungen vor dem Salzburger Landesgericht begegnet war.(p.9)

In the original version of 1978, the name of the judge Ferrari, was Zamponi. The Zamponi family objected to the use of their name, however, and Bernhard agreed to change it. The version given above is hence that in the Bibliothek Suhrkamp edition of 1982. Wendelin Schmidt-Dengeler describes the sequence of events that led to the change of name in his article 'Verschleierte Authentizität. Zu Thomas Bernhards Der Stimmenimitator':

Die Tochter wollte den Autor klagen, da ihr Vater nicht Selbstmord begangen hat, sondern 1977 eines natürlichen Todes gestorben ist. Die Meldung ging durch die Presse und produzierte Artikel, die wiederum im Stimmenimitator selbst hätten Platz finden können. Auch die Justiz geriet in Schwierigkeiten: 'Trotz aller Bedenken gegen Erfindungen solcher Art sei der Tatbestand der Verunglimpfung des Andenkens Verstorbener nicht erfüllt, erklärte dazu der zuständige Staatsanwalt, Hofrat Dr. Karl Hanke. Ein Verfolgungsrecht stehe aber den Angehörigen des verunglimpften Toten zu, wobei vorrangig geprüft werden müsste, ob eine Identität zwischen der in dem Buch erwähnten Person und dem Richter einwandfrei zu erkennen ist.' Unschuldig ist hier die Justiz in eine Grundfrage der Interpretation geschlittert: inwieweit eine Kunstfigur mit einer Figur aus der historisch gegebenen Realität identisch ist. [...] 'Diese Schilderung ist unwahr', heisst es in einer Zeitungsnotiz über das Exempel, 'Zamponi starb nach einem schweren Leiden eines natürlichen Todes in Linz.' Was für den Journalisten 'unwahr' ist, das ist für Thomas Bernhard 'Dichtung'. In einem 'offenen Brief' an die Tochter des toten Oberlandesgerichtspräsidenten entschuldigte sich Bernhard, aber klärte zugleich alle Betroffenen über das, was Fiktion ist, auf: 'Ich habe also niemals behauptet, dass der Gerichtspräsident Zamponi sich tatsächlich umgebracht hat, ich

habe über ihn als tatsächliche juristische Person oder Persönlichkeit niemals auch nur etwas behauptet, denn ich habe eine Dichtung verfasst.' Doch so einfach kann das Problem nicht aus der Welt geschafft werden, denn selbst für Bernhard ist Zamponi offenkundig nicht nur Kunstfigur gewesen, da er [...] sich Zamponi zum Leser wünscht. Das Exempel wollte er als eine 'philosophische Dichtung' zur Huldigung des Verstorbenen verstehen, die diesem 'als Parabel ... sicher wenigstens eine kleine Freude gemacht hätte'. Hier leuchtet ein Paradox auf, das Dichtern, Juristen und Literaturwissenschaftlern zu denken geben sollte: Die Identität, die der Jurist nicht nachweisen kann, kann der Dichter nicht leugnen. Die Person Zamponis war doch präsent, und der Name wurde als Stimulans für eine Provokation gesetzt, auch wenn die 'tatsächliche juristische Person' nicht ins Spiel kommen sollte. Denn der Text sollte nach Bernhards Worten dem 'hochverehrten Staatsanwalt Dr. Zamponi ein ... auf längere Dauer standfestes, wenn auch nur dichterisches Denkmal' setzen. Doch dieses Denkmal ist abgetragen. Bernhard versprach in seinem 'offenen Brief' auch, den Namen Zamponi zu ersetzen, was denn auch in der Edition in der 'Bibliothek Suhrkamp' 1982 erfolgt ist. Aus Zamponi wurde Ferrari.⁹

The description of such a close relationship between Bernhard's experience as a courtroom journalist and one of his literary products unveils Exempel as a provocative invitation to speculate on the factual truth of its contents - and this in turn leads on to a discussion on the nature of truth as defined by the courts as well as in literature. The question of truth is one of identity, one of the nature of literary 'facts', the, 'juristische Person oder Persönlichkeit' and the creation of literary monuments. The destruction of a literary monument for legal reasons in the end brings the text back out of the courts, but its history remains as a

reminder of the way in which one word can alter the relationship between the literary and the non-literary text.

The character Ferrari, the judge who shoots himself, is a fictional character and the reporter who relates this most remarkable incident is also a fictional creation. In his game with the relationship between the autobiographical and the fictional Bernhard managed to create a genuine discussion about the overlap between the discourse of the courts and that of the fictional text, a discussion which returned the text to the context of its genesis, the court - now itself as the object of litigation. The implication of this discussion is that the two forms of discourse are not in essence so very different.

* * *

Of all the contexts in which linguistic communication takes place, the legal courtroom of a Western industrialized and democratically organized State is one of the most highly regulated. It is one in which great care is taken to create consistent conditions in which the procedures deal with all participants in the same way. Enormous institutional effort is expended in the name of providing all parties with equal opportunities to express their point of view, in enforcing adherence to the truth and, above all, in achieving consistency in interpretation. It is perhaps inevitable that this same context is also the one in which interpretation is at its most uncertain, where it undergoes the most scrutiny, and it follows that this process of putting words and their possible interpretations in question

undermines the whole process in the very thing that it is seeking to achieve - namely stability of reference, the discovery of the truth. As Crystal and Davy put it in their study of English legal style:

Faced with [...] a series of constraints - the need to avoid ambiguity, to be precise or vague in just the right way, to evade the possibilities of misinterpretation and to conform to the linguistic dictates of the law - lawyers [...] have remained in their use of language, cautious, conservative, ingenious, and self-aware. There are on record many of the wrangles into which they enter over particularly knotty points of meaning and interpretation. No other section of the community can ever have been concerned so agonisingly about the possibilities raised by the form and/or, or the precise nature of what permutations of meaning are allowable among a string of adjectives, joined by and, which premodify the same nominal head.¹⁰

This process, in which the scrutiny of language in order to find clarity and certainty of meaning in the end produces a problematic relationship between word and referent, is characteristic of our age in more fields than that of the law. However, in the legal, and in the wider bureaucratic context, unlike in philosophical, literary or sociological contexts, there is an answer to the problem - namely, to make the institutional assertion on behalf of the community that the interpretive product of an institutionalized procedure is the truth. Truth is defined as that which is found as fact in the court of law. The law itself can then be applied to the facts as agreed upon in the courtroom.

The bureaucratization of the law, however, the rigorous and strict application of rules to individual cases, is problematic in a society

that believes in the uniqueness of every individual. Bernhard's short anecdote Exempel taps into a set of conflicts that arise out of a single conflict, that between the idea that every event is unique and requires its own rules, its own process of deliberation, and the possibility of providing a structure that will create a real sense of equality between citizens. Bureaucracy, meant to bring about equality amidst diversity, is attacked as the harbinger of uniformity and unthinking injustice.

The judge's act of suicide, the most remarkable incident witnessed by the reporter is part of a process in which the whole procedure of the trial, reported on and imitated in the text, is questioned, and with it the process of history that has led to the institution of the courts and the employment of a body of people to administer them. As such this short text addresses problems inherent in the modern State that have arisen out of the increasing importance of bureaucracy as a means for administering and controlling society, problems that have essentially to do with the perception of bureaucracies as worlds in themselves, separate from and incomprehensible to the 'real' world of the 'ordinary' citizen. The central issues addressed by the text through its struggle with exactitude and the boundaries of language, located between the anxiety of influence and the impersonality of impartial neutrality, are ultimately, to turn to Max Weber again, bound up in the question of 'der Gedanke des lückenlosen Rechts':

Der Gedanke des lückenlosen Rechts ist bekanntlich prinzipiell heftig angefochten, und die Auffassung des modernen Richters als eines Automaten, in welchen oben die Akten nebst den Kosten hineingeworfen werden, damit er unten das Urteil nebst den

mechanisch aus Paragraphen abgelesenen Gründen ausspeie, wird entrüstet verworfen, - vielleicht gerade deshalb, weil eine gewisse Annäherung an diesen Typus an sich in der Konsequenz der Rechtsbürokratisierung liegen würde.¹¹

In a sense there is no better way to translate some of the issues addressed by the text Exempel than to quote the whole passage in which Weber refers to this problem to which there is, of course, no actual solution. Defining the relationship between the application of rules and the degree of discretionary decision-making, ascertaining when a decision is predictable and when it appears to depend on the whim of an individual beurocrat, remains a grey area.

Auch in dem Bereich der Rechtsfindung gibt es Gebiete, auf denen der bürokratische Richter direkt zu 'individualisierender' Rechtsfindung vom Gesetzgeber hingewiesen ist. - Und vollends pflegt man gerade für das Gebiet der eigentlichen Verwaltungstätigkeit - d.h. für alle staatliche Tätigkeit, die nicht in das Gebiet der Rechtsschöpfung und Rechtsfindung fällt - die Freiheit und Herrschaft des Individuellen in Anspruch zu nehmen, der gegenüber die generellen Normen überwiegend als Schranken der positiven, niemals zu reglementierenden 'schöpferischen' Betätigung des Beamten eine negative Rolle spielten. Die Tragweite dieser These möge hier dahingestellt sein. Das Entscheidende bleibe doch: dass diese 'frei' schaffende Verwaltung (und eventuell: Rechtssprechung) nicht, wie wir das bei den vorbürokratischen Formen finden werden, ein Reich der **freien** Willkür und Gnade, der **persönlich** motivierten Gunst und Bewertung bilden würde. Sondern dass stets als Norm des Verhaltens die Herrschaft und rationale Abwägung 'sachlicher' Zwecke und die Hingabe an sie besteht. Auf dem Gebiet der staatlichen Verwaltung speziell gilt gerade der das 'schöpferische' Belieben des Beamten am stärksten verklärenden Ansicht als höchster und letzter Leitstern seiner Gebarung der spezifisch moderne, streng 'sachliche' Gedanke der



'Staatsraison'. In der Kanonisierung dieser abstrakten und 'sachlichen' Idee untrennbar eingeschmolzen sind dabei natürlich vor allem die sichern Instinkte der Bürokratie für die Bedingungen der Erhaltung **ihrer** Macht im eigenen Staat (und durch ihn, anderen Staaten gegenüber). Letztlich diese eigenen Machtinteressen geben jenem an sich keineswegs eindeutigen Ideal meist erst einen konkret verwertbaren Inhalt und in zweifelhaften Fällen den Ausschlag. Dies ist hier nicht weiter auszuführen. Entscheidend ist für uns nur: dass prinzipiell hinter jeder Tat echt bürokratischer Verwaltung ein System rational diskutabler 'Gründe', d.h. entweder: Subsumation unter Normen, oder: Abwägung von Zwecken und Mitteln steht.(p.565)

The problem of administration lies in the self-effacing role of the bureaucrat, the role of the bureaucrat as the vessel through which the process of justice is to take place. When the vessel becomes a shaping force, in effect a decision-making force, and yet remains in the role of a mere agent of justice, the system as a whole begins to lose its foundations. The court reporter's anecdote about the judge who himself sets the enigmatic example, the measuring rod against which everyone else should act or which everyone else should avoid, is both an acceptance and a denial of the role of judge within a bureaucratized State. The judge performs an act which denies and defies reason, which the judge himself normalizes by labelling it an 'Exempel' and performing it ceremoniously before the court.

The anecdote, however, does not work solely, or even primarily through the 'example' set by the judge. The text itself works as an example on another level. An integral part of the courtroom scene is the neutral onlooker, the one who observes and monitors proceedings

on behalf of the general public for whom, it is claimed, the elaborate structures exist. The observer is both part of and outside the process of communication in the court, being part of it in the role of someone who must see what happens in order to reproduce it in report form for those who do not see it, but not part of it in that his observation does not play a role in the sequence of cause and effect.

Exempel takes place in and comments wittily and disturbingly on an environment in which linguistic communication is institutionally controlled and monitored. Above all it is an exploration of the effects of such an environment on the mind of the observer who is both involved and hence implicated in the proceedings as well as being distanced and thus potentially critical of them. Exploiting its nature as a fictional text it invites speculation on why it is necessary to think, speak, and write in this particular way.

In the introduction I referred to the ways in which self-awareness, or self-reflexivity, is a frequent part of language use. I pointed out that while thinking or speaking or writing frequent reference is made to the fact that we are doing so, using expressions such as 'I must think this out properly', or 'what I mean to say is ...' or 'see above'. The reasons for expressing an awareness of using language are many and varied, and are liable to conflict. Reporting the speech of another person, for example, may or may not invite speculation about its meaning or about that person's use of language. In order to clarify matters it may be necessary to go on to make the reference explicit, to refer to the quotation as an example, as in the text

Exempel. To turn a form of expression such as the court report, with biographical elements, into fiction, is a form of self-reflexivity that invites speculation on all linguistic levels, from the phonological to the syntactic, the semantic and the pragmatic. By turning to fiction, language becomes detached from the necessity to ask about factual truth so that other kinds of truth can be explored.¹² The reader is engaged not only in the process of making sense out of the text as an anecdote, but also in the process of looking at language itself. Language becomes the object of attention, self-reflexive, not only as words on a page, but also as the trigger for a whole process of producing and comprehending utterances. Under scrutiny come: the words themselves, their dictionary definitions, their origins, their syntactic and corresponding semantic relationships with the other words; the sentences as propositions, the inferences that can be drawn from them in combination with other propositions; the relationships between the sentences in terms of cohesion and coherence; the relationship between this text and other literary and non-literary texts. In providing evidence for the way in which the world is manifest to another mind, the text creates a relationship between the assumptions of the reader and that of potentially different constructions put on the world. As such, the literary text can be seen as educative, as a means for enlightening the reader and broadening not so much factual but emotional knowledge. This potential for exploration in the literary text has, in a sense, also become institutionalized, exploited by different groups in different ways for different reasons.

As I also wrote in the introduction, the legal-bureaucratic context is one in which self-consciousness or awareness of the process of informational exchange, interpretation and decision-making has been institutionalized as a means of organizing communities, and in legal/bureaucratic contexts this consciousness stands out because of its institutional importance. Furthermore in the legal context and, more generally in the bureaucratic context, consciousness of the process of communication often becomes more relevant than the information that is processed. That is, even though the reason for the discourse remains the information concerned, it is the production of discourse that becomes the focus of attention. For example, an appeal may revolve exclusively around the question as to whether the defence or the prosecution were allowed to use the words of a witness in evidence.

Bureaucratic language is distinguished by this consistent relationship between the information that is being processed and linguistic self-consciousness. In the process of a trial, in debate, or in a report, mechanisms are built in to prevent the participants in the process from forgetting the framework in which discourse is taking place. There is either a neutral observer, or an adversarial system where each side reminds the other of the rules, or a process of checking and counter-checking.

This description of a self-consciously rule-governed style of discourse explains, and to some extent justifies, the impersonal and sometimes tortuous expressions that bureaucratic language indulges in. The ability to control the process of discourse, to allow and

disallow utterances, the process of making sure that each individual is put through the same procedure as the last and so on, can be seen as positive, democratic strengths in human communication on which the structures of modern Western society are built. However, in its self-consciousness, in the necessity to check and recheck its own consistency, in the resulting tendency towards incomprehensibility and lack of human involvement, lie also the problems that are inherent in such language and in such a society, for, when the information that is being processed through the bureaucratic system involves, as it frequently does, reports of human suffering the bureaucratic preoccupation with procedure over content, the focus on the process of discourse rather than on the human situation concerned, brings about a sense of distortion and the bureaucratic style is perceived as sometimes bizarrely inappropriate to the information being conveyed.

The sense of distortion and of the inappropriate in the literary text Exempel is thematized in the reporter's general reflections in the first ten lines, exploring the experience of courtroom reporting, the exposure to stories of violence and criminality and the sense of threat to the reporter's own sanity that comes from such routinely repeated exposure. The reporter writes about the process of earning a living by writing about the uncertainties of accusation, guilt and innocence in the context both of the violence of the original crime and in the present context in which an attempt is made to retain procedural regularity. In spite of the assertion that the most unbelievable things are paraded before him, the conclusion is arrived at that repeated exposure leads to the perception of it all as

normality. The implication is, of course, that the perception of 'das Unglaublichste' as normality, tends to induce the madness mentioned by the narrator himself.

The sense of distortion is not only introduced as a generalization, however, it is also represented, parodied in the language of the anecdote itself. On several levels the relationship between the attempt to contain the wayward and aberrational within procedure, to make it normal through the use of a professional and consistent style and the awareness of the discrepancy between the marginalized and the normalized is explored.

The transfer of the legal into the literary itself creates a context in which awareness of the relationship between context and language use is promoted. Bernhard's use of the name of a real judge in the original version, for example, did in fact give rise to a public discussion about the nature of fiction and to what extent a literary author is allowed to make use of details that refer recognizably to real people. However, Exempel cannot simply be seen as Bernhard reflecting on the experience of the courtroom journalist. There are other complicating factors in this transfer of biographical experience into the literary medium, factors which are exploited, for example, in the titles given both to the collection as a whole, Der Stimmenimitator and to this particular text. Far from leading away from the legal context these factors inhibiting and expanding the interpretive potential of the passage become an extension of an environment in which such an effort is made to regulate and limit linguistic communication. The conflicts that the effort to regulate

sets up, the increase in difficulty produced by the effort to gain precision and freedom from ambiguity, are stretched further by the way in which the literary context undermines the stability of reference and the strength of generalization on which the legal/institutional process so heavily depends.

But, perhaps the most surprising aspect of the juxtapositioning of the legal and the literary is the discovery of the importance of self-referentiality in both as well as the discovery of the importance of institutional expectations in both. There is a fundamental difference in the two contexts in that the legal/bureaucratic depends on the discovery of truth, of facts, in order for the mechanisms to proceed. The literary/fictional context is independent of factual truth, operates by discarding the necessity for truth on the level of a direct relationship between a specific, verifiable world and what is represented in the text. However, the legal context is not one in which factual truth is assumed but in which it must be found out. What is more, it is one which must be found out in a particular way, so that the assertion of a fact as truth can never be made simply on the basis of a declaration of one person, but must be made by the institution. The facts are accepted on the basis that the correct procedure has been followed.

While the legal/bureaucratic context creates self-referentiality in order to find modes of truth-telling where they are in dispute, the literary context is self-referential because its relevance does not lie in a direct relationship between assertion and reality. Because the text is fictional it has to find its relevance in another way.

While institutionalized self-referentiality creates the possibility of declaring truth in the legal context, in the literary context self-referentiality is a means of discovering relevance without declaring factual truth.

There are two aspects to the way in which literature refers to its own 'set towards the message'. Firstly, there is the awareness of medium, the way in which the literary text is seen in terms of a piece of language per se because of its fictionality and its nature as an aesthetic object. Literature can be talked about not only in terms of its themes, but also in terms of the way in which these themes are accessed - that is, in terms of style, textual organization, or genre. Literature is self-referential as literature. Secondly, the literary text can have language itself as a theme by representing characters for whom language has become an object of attention. Because of its own nature as a linguistic phenomenon to be observed, the literary text is a particularly effective vehicle for the exploration of language as a theme.

The combination of these two, the representation of characters for whom language has become problematic, together with the literary text's own problematic nature as language for its own sake, leads to a layering effect in which the thematization of themes itself becomes a theme. In effect the ability to refer recursively to our own use of language becomes both a blessing and a curse. Language is seen both as an all powerful tool through which we are able to manipulate the world and create complex societies, and as an unreliable, paralyzing, imprisoning conundrum which prevents knowledge both of the world and of the self. But

perhaps it is neither of these, neither a matter of control, nor a matter of being controlled by language. Perhaps the most important aspect of literary self-referentiality lies in the possibilities it creates for playing with language and with contexts, in a kind of Schillerian freedom to create combinations and to see what happens.

In the case of Thomas Bernhard's Exempel the game with words begins with their placement in a book, in the form of a collection of short texts under a general title.

Thomas
Bernhard
Der Stimmen-
imitator

There is nothing particularly unusual about this arrangement of words on the front cover of the collection which is based on a design by Willy Fleckhaus and Rolf Staudt. No words have been crossed out, the typeface is plain, the colour scheme pleasant. The name of the author is given and then the title of the collection. What is remarkable about it has nothing to do with introducing a new or unusual style of titling a collection. Instead it exploits the conventional in such a way that the nature of the conventional is revealed. The title problematizes the nature of fiction in the syntactically ambiguous relationship between the name 'Thomas Bernhard' and the title Der Stimmenimitator. Of course, the context - the fact that this looks like a book and is by an author who is known to write fiction - leads to the obvious interpretation that this is a book by Thomas Bernhard

called Der Stimmenimitator. However, the other parsing, putting the two nouns in apposition - Thomas Bernhard, the mimic - remains a possibility reinforced by the texts themselves.

For example, a progression from the first text in Der Stimmenimitator, Hamsun (p.7) to the last text Zurückgekehrt (p.178) implies a corresponding progression in the relationship between Thomas Bernhard the author and his narrative voices. The subject of the first text, Hamsun, the author, bears an interesting relation to Thomas Bernhard, the author. It could be argued that Bernhard began as an author by imitating a model such as Hamsun, that Bernhard imitated the characteristics of extreme subjectivity and personal obsession, finding his own individuality in the process. The last text is closest to what is recognized as Bernhard's own typical style in the anger, scorn yet ultimate loyalty directed at the artist's home country.

Wenn die Zeitungen hierzulande überhaupt von einem aus ihrem Lande stammenden hervorragenden, ja schon weltbedeutenden und weltberühmten Künstler sprechen, sprechen sie immer nur von einem gewissen Künstler, weil sie diesem dadurch viel grösseren Schaden zufügen können in seiner Heimat, als wenn sie gleich schreiben würden, was sie in Wahrheit und in Wirklichkeit von diesem Künstler denken, welchen sie, weil er aus ihrem Lande gekommen ist und ihrer Generation angehört, die nicht gar soviel Nennenswertes hervorgebracht hat, wie nichts hassen und ihn bis an sein und an ihr Lebensende mit ihrem Hass verfolgen.(p.178)

Here again, the possible factual truth of the anecdote is mixed with the notion of mimicry, the notion that Bernhard is unable or unwilling to speak in his own voice with authenticity.

Although the content of the texts often points towards the existence of a corresponding real-life event, all of them, all a single paragraph long (although the paragraphs vary in length from twenty-three to three hundred and eighty-one words) are most easily understood as 'voices' which a narrator mimics, just as the character of the second text, Der Stimmenimitator (p.9), mimics voices for the narrating voice. The question in this text, which gives the volume its name is, however, the question of whether the mimic can imitate his own voice. The mimic replies that this is not possible. 'Als wir ihm jedoch den Vorschlag gemacht hatten, er solle am Ende seine eigene Stimme imitieren, sagte er, das könne er nicht.' (p.10) Whether this implies that an imitation of one's own voice is not able to get rid of the authenticity of the subject's voice, or that all voices are imitations is left open. Thus the problem of referentiality in these texts begins with the inability of the narrator to assert the identity of the one who speaks.

For those who find numbers significant, Exempel is the thirteenth text in the collection. In the context of the collection the voice of the 'Gerichtssaalberichterstatter', is also the voice of a mimic. Such reporting involves strict adherence to a style which can be applied so uniformly that individual reporters cannot be distinguished. Mimicry is hence central to the court reporter's trade in the process of taking on the style of the reporter. Another sense in which the court reporter becomes a mimic has to do with the fact that much of his labour is devoted to the transcription of what people say in evidence. Mimicry is hence also a professional occupation in this text, producing, as in all the others, an

ambivalent relationship between role-playing and authorial identity. The court-reporter, like the bureaucrat, becomes a mere vessel. The bureaucrat's greatest virtue, in Max Weber's terms, consists in the ability to carry out tasks regardless of his/her own opinion:

Ehre des Beamten ist die Fähigkeit, wenn - trotz seiner Vorstellungen - die ihm vorgesetzte Behörde auf einem ihm falsch erscheinenden Befehl beharrt, ihn auf Verantwortung des Befehlenden gewissenhaft und genau so auszuführen, als ob er seiner eigenen Überzeugung entspräche.¹³

Similarly the virtue of the court reporter lies in the impersonality of the report, in the exclusion of the reporter's own reactions to what is described or decided.

The title is one of the most important elements of the text. It imitates the style of the reports Bernhard himself was writing in the fifties - reports with titles such as Um Fünf Kilo Kaffee, Folgenschwerer Faschingsscherz, Zwei "Morde" und Kein Geld or Die Henkersmahlzeit.¹⁴ It then works, as a court report often does, by relating the story to the title humorously. The word 'Exempel' can be interpreted as applying both to the nature of the text and to its informational content. As we have seen, the overall title Der Stimmenimitator refers to the nature of the texts as mimicry, but it also refers to the text entitled Der Stimmenimitator. Similarly, Exempel can be seen as referring to the 'example' set by the judge, but it can also refer to the nature of the text as an 'example' of a kind of text. The possibility that the kind of text it refers to is that of the courtroom journalist is undermined to some extent by the

fact that this is not related as a report but in an anecdotal way, hence destroying the stability of form and reference that the form of the newspaper report would have endowed. Instead, the anecdote demonstrates elements of the courtroom journalist's report, with its mixture of journalese and legal complexities, together with the personality of the narrative voice.

The breadth of connotation in the German word 'Exempel' is greater than the English word 'example' since the German word does not indicate only a neutral or positive model, but also a negative one. 'Exempel' may be translated as 'deterrent'. Hence the title, when seen as referring to the nature of the text itself, may indicate the text as a deterrent, perhaps as an example of the kind of text that should not be imitated.

The bureaucratic Muse is in some ways created by the tension that exists in the need to produce a document out of a mixture of incompatible environments. The 'Gerichtsaalberichterstatter' has to produce a written document out of the various contexts we have been discussing. First of all there is the legal environment in which the attempt is made to discover truth. Although physical items of evidence may be decisive, words play the most important role in this process, not only in the presentation of verbal evidence but also in the act of declaring the validity of the evidence, the validity of the trial itself, in pronouncing the verdict and in documenting the whole proceedings in order that the trial should be seen as part of the whole validating framework of constitutional, legal government. Again, in this very same environment, words are typically treated

with a caution that recognizes that they are volatile components in the process of arriving at and judging the truth. In the legal context, in recognition of the instability of meaning, institutional mechanisms are set up to ensure that words are used in as controlled and predictable a way as possible. The form of questioning that is allowed is restricted, the answers are limited to the question, witnesses are sworn in and threatened with heavy penalties for perjury. The procedure is interrupted frequently for the purpose of ensuring that the rules are followed. It is hence not enough that evidence is believed, it must be presented and accepted in a controlled environment in order even to be allowed to exist.

Secondly there is the report-writing element which involves the need for the writer to observe and report in a pre-established style that is acceptable to a pre-established audience. In this case the style must report the relevant facts in a way that is neutral and informative.

Although this is the context in which the courtroom journalist writes the report, it is not the complete picture with regard to the situation in which the Exempel is written. In the case of this anecdote - the entertaining story relating the most remarkable incident of the courtroom journalist's career - there is the freedom bestowed on the author by the chosen medium to relate that anecdote in his own way. However, the freedom to create his own style is restricted by the need to find an appropriate style to relate the incident effectively. Hence, there is the paradoxical effect that the writer has to resort to the methods from which he has been freed in

order to relate the incident in such a way that its true nature is understood. The text is about the way in which the courtroom journalist is 'dem menschlichen Elend am nächsten'. The reason why this is so is because he reports on crimes and criminals until he is no longer surprised by anything. The single, most remarkable incident is one that arises out of this context of legal procedure and continuous reporting and the narration of it requires the presence of the context in some form in order to be understood. Hence the reporter, in order to fulfil the demands of the story, resorts to the methods from which he has been freed.

Finally there is the literary context that distances the author from his own text by denying it factual truth and detaching it from the practicalities of the decision making process. The literary text is not a court report, nor is it the anecdote of a courtroom journalist based on a real event. It is the depiction of such, a mimicry of such. We end up with a text that has all the ^{stylistic} characteristics of the report and none of the ^{practical} significance.

Ultimately, Exempel presents itself stylistically and thematically as a witty linguistic game that gains its seriousness in the way it consistently undermines the possibility of escape to referentiality and out of the absurdity of validating utterances through self-referentiality. Turning to the level of the text as a linguistic experience there is an exploitation of multiple reference; use of morphological complexity to imitate the legal text, create humour and draw attention to language as language; exploitation of ambiguity and vagueness, complex and extended clause structures; the accumulation

of abstract nouns; the repetition of the word 'naturgemäss'; the foregrounding of detail of dubious relevance and finally an extremely perplexing use of the pluperfect tense.

The word 'Der Gerichtssaalberichterstatter' contrasts humourously with the vagueness of the title Exempel. Referring to a group, humorous in its morphological complexity echoing that of the legal text, it denies any ambiguity or vagueness of reference. Although it could be argued that there is some uncertainty as to whether the group includes the narrating voice at this stage, within the terms of the statement made by the first sentence a meaningful proposition can be extracted without the word having to refer to any particular person. This issue of generality versus particularity is central to the narrating voice, to the events recounted, and to the status of the text as a whole.

On the other hand the predicate is not as exact, however, in that the 'Gerichtssaalberichterstatter' may be seen as either an object of pity for his close physical contact with human misery and absurdity or as an object of distaste for his own miserable and absurd nature (lines 1-2). This ambiguity in the phrase 'am nächsten' is again pivotal for the whole text in the way it uses uncertainty of reference to set up a relationship between the informational content of the text - the story involving human misery - and the nature of the text itself as an example of miserable humanity. The court reporter tells of the victim, the one who suffers and is himself the producer of texts contaminated by the misery and absurdity of the human condition.

That the text itself can be seen as a deterrent is introduced indirectly in the first sentence in the notion that the career of the journalistic court reporter is not one to pursue for life (lines 3-4). The use of the word 'lebenslänglich' with its connotations of the life prison sentence plays on this notion humorously. (It is also interesting to note the similarities in Max Weber's description of the modern bureaucratic post, one that requires the full working capacity of the official, provides social esteem, a fixed salary, the acceptance of a specific obligation in return for a secure existence, a job for life: 'die Lebenslänglichkeit der Stellung'¹⁵.) The consequence of lifetime employment as a court reporter, having to hear about and report on all kinds of crime until nothing is surprising, is, according to the narrator in Exempel, madness.

At this point we have the first stylistic evidence for the way in which the text can be looked at as an example of a kind of text or as a deterrent in itself, for the madness referred to by the narrating voice is also imitated in the structure of the sentence. The interpretive problems of this section of prose lie in the use of the sentence connectives 'nur', 'aber' and 'ohne'(lines 2-4). The syntactic relationships within the sentence and the way in which they influence the course of interpretation through their structure are clarified if the two clauses, 'nur eine kurze Zeit' and 'sicher nicht lebenslänglich' are placed in the sentence alone.

- 1) Er kann diese Erfahrung nur eine kurze Zeit machen,
ohne verrückt zu werden.

- 2) Er kann diese Erfahrung sicher nicht lebenslänglich machen, ohne verrückt zu werden.

Both of these work on their own, although the first one is awkward as the 'ohne' of the second clause interacts awkwardly with the 'nur' of the first. Less awkward, perhaps, would be - 'Er kann diese Erfahrung nur eine kurze Zeit machen. Sonst würde er verrückt werden.' Getting around both sentences conceptually at the same time, however, is like looking at certain pictures, such as Wittgenstein's rabbit-duck, where the sense data can be interpreted in two ways. A parallel could also be drawn with M. C. Escher's lithograph Convex - Concave which can be seen either as the interior of a building or as an exterior courtyard as a result of the ambiguous perspectival representation of the imaginary space.

- 3) und er kann diese Erfahrung naturgemäss nur eine kurze Zeit, aber sicher nicht lebenslänglich machen, ohne verrückt zu werden.

If we read the sentence quickly there is the experience of having jumped from one process of thought to another as if without looking. It demonstrates a natural ability of the human mind, and in the naturalness of the way it is done it points to the way thoughts can slide from one conceptual construct to another in the course of a clause without taking account of the slide. A question for the logical structure of the sentence is, having used 'nur', what role does 'aber' play?. Why not:

- 4) und er kann diese Erfahrung naturgemäss nur eine kurze Zeit, und sicher nicht lebenslänglich machen, ohne verrückt zu werden.

The answer may be that the 'aber', in implying that 'sicher nicht lebenslänglich' contrasts with 'nur eine kurze Zeit', implies an objection to the assertion that the job has only to be done for a 'short time' until the reporter is threatened with insanity. Hence the thought of doing the job for a lifetime arises which is then denied in the next clause. Between the clauses is an implied argument which is never actually expressed and if we now look at the function of 'ohne verrückt zu werden' it can be seen that although it refers back to both of the clauses 'nur eine kurze Zeit' and 'aber sicher nicht lebenslänglich', it does so in different ways, representing two different processes of thought, one assertive, the other negative. It does not work as a parallelism in the way represented by version (4) above and implied by the way the sentence is structured.

The transfer from the probable to the most unbelievable is the next slide we go down (lines 4 - 6). It is only a simple accumulation of nouns indicating what the legal correspondent witnesses, not necessarily indicating any connection between the first and the last. Yet the fact that it begins with the probable, from which it is only a very short step to the improbable - since improbability is inherent in the very concept of probability - leads on to the unbelievable and then the most unbelievable without ever getting at anything that is either definitely true or untrue, makes us see that this group is a group, even though the probable and the unbelievable seem to be at

opposite ends of a scale. They are a group because they are all unable to refer to the truth with any reliability. The original title of the collection was Wahrscheinliches, Unwahrscheinliches¹⁶ which is perhaps evidence for the argument that Exempel is exemplary for the collection as a whole with the same implications that the title Der Stimmenimitator provides concerning the question of authenticity and reference.

The systematic build-up of uncertainty and referential complexity is continued in the embedding of the following two clauses (lines 6 - 9)

- 5) ... (wird ihm, (der damit, (dass er über
 (tatsächliche (oder über nur angenommene, (aber
 naturgemäss immer beschämende Verbrechen)))
 berichtet), sein Brot verdient), an jedem Tag im
 Gericht vorgeführt) ...

The placement of the clauses each side of the embedded clause is clarified in the following examples.

- 6) wird ihm an jedem Tag im Gericht vorgeführt
- 7) der damit sein Brot verdient
- 8) dass er über ... berichtet
- 9) tatsächliche ... Verbrechen
- 10) oder über nur angenommene ... Verbrechen
- 11) aber naturgemäss immer beschämende Verbrechen

Two aspects of this section are significant in the present context. The first is the similarity between the group of abstract nouns leading from 'das Wahrscheinliche' to 'das Unglaublichste' and the 'tatsächliche oder [...] nur angenommene'. Here again we have the concern with the truth coupled with the inability to assert truth unequivocally. This is now combined with a complex clausal structure which also appears to be part of an attempt at exactitude, an exactitude which is made impossible through its own attempt to be exact. Finally there is the fact that the most deeply embedded clause is also the clause which discovers a consistency, a certainty and reinforces it with the word 'naturgemäss' which has nothing to do with the factual truth of the case but with the direct subjective, moral perception of the narrating voice. The consistency that exists is shame. There are two aspects to this. The first is that it does not matter to the reporter whether the crime has been committed or not. The process of accusation, defence, judgement and sentencing still carries the shame of the idea of crime. The reporter still reports the accusation of murder even though the murder may not have been committed. That is to say that the most important aspect of the trial to the defendant - guilt or innocence - does not save the reporter (or for that matter the defendant) from exposure to the process of jurisdiction. Secondly there is the implication that one may draw from the clausal structure that the narrator has had to search through to his deepest thoughts to find this terrible consistency in the process. Having found it the narrator is then forced (almost grammatically) to come back to the thought that he makes his living out of the process of exposure to shame so that the idea that he makes his living out of witnessing and reporting shame,

actual or supposed, makes it all the more true that he is 'dem menschlichen Elend am nächsten'. It justifies, perhaps, the claim that he is closer to it than anyone else in the court, since he has continually to put it into words, to recreate it. Again he is close to it in two senses - himself being made miserable by the exposure and being miserable in his occupation.

'Naturgemäss' is used three times in quick succession (lines 3,7,9). The insistence of this word sets up notions of generality, regularity, of a law of nature (that is perhaps in competition with those laws created by human society). And this law asserts that prolonged exposure to the Law produces not certainty, regularity, orderliness, but aberration and madness. Apart from adding to the effect of embedding, it contrasts with the factual uncertainty of the court scene and refers in certain and accepted terms to the narrator's own experience of the occupation and what it entails. The 'Gerichtsaalberichterstatter' goes mad if he remains in his post for too long; the crimes that must be reported on are always shameful; the 'Gerichtsaalberichterstatter' is soon not surprised by anything.

The switch from generalizations to the specific incident that is to be related appears to contradict the notion that the court reporter is not surprised by anything. At this stage again the narrative style appears to strive for a definite quality through the words and phrases 'Von einem einzigen Vorfall', 'doch nach wie vor', 'bemerkenswerteste'. Again the tendency towards morphological complexity within the legal context is indicated humorously in the noun 'Gerichtssaalberichterstatterlaufbahn', a humour that achieves a

certain poignancy in the face of the general struggle for certainty. The emergence of the first-person pronoun seems to promise a register of personal authenticity, giving the narrative a new direction and the possibility of the discovery of certainty, but at the same time the formality of the phrase 'Mitteilung machen' sustains the bureaucratic register of rendering an account of events after all.

The following sentence (line 13 - 22) can be seen to have several elements of prose style which are characteristic of the attempt to achieve linguistic precision. There is the reference to the judge's title as well as his name, the noun phrase in apposition to define more exactly who the judge is, the quotation from the judge to confirm the assertion that the accused is 'gemein', the detail about the accused and again the accumulation of clauses that is characteristic of the typical legal text. At the same time, however, the same elements can be seen as chatty, personal, anecdotal, such as the lack of clarity as to the relevance of the detail, and the phrase 'wie ich mich genau erinnere'. One effect of this combination of complex embedding with the possibility that the detail is not important is to render the reader uncertain as to whether to read quickly, holding relatively large sections of semantically incomplete statements in the short term memory, perhaps discarding those that appear to be less relevant, or whether to read the text in the constrained way demanded by the legal text, separating out the clauses and working out the relationships between them consciously.

If read quickly there is a risk that the sentence will not be properly understood.¹⁷ The problem comes from the positioning of the

auxiliary verb 'war' (line 16) separated from its subject 'Der Oberlandesgerichtsrat Ferrari' (line 13) and its past participle 'aufgestanden' (line 21). The accumulation of clauses between these words stretches the short term memory, creating difficulty in remembering which clause is being completed, hence hiding the subject. It is easy on the basis of swift reading to refer 'nocheinmal aufgestanden' back only as far as the meat exporter. This conclusion is also encouraged by what then happens and by the fact that we have just been told that the meat exporter has been sentenced to twelve years in prison. Also the narrative so far has encouraged us to think that the narrator is going to tell us about a particularly horrible crime. This assumption has been encouraged by the presentation of a particularly despicable blackmailer.

That it is the judge who sets the example is confirmed by the mention of the 'Talar', which encourages the reader to reassess the previous sentence in the context of the uncertainty. The revelation that the horror that we are told about is actually perpetrated by the judge, the one who is supposed to ^{position} preserve a detached ~~position~~, is unexpected. However, it is not until the judge shoots himself rather than the blackmailer that the incident becomes the supremely irrational event that the reporter indicates it must be in order to surpass all that he has seen and heard before.

The possibility of misunderstanding is interesting here in terms of the consistency in the way in which the text can be misunderstood. Through the manipulation of expectation the narrator can lead the reader to a false understanding of a situation without lying, by

exploiting the course of interpretation a text does not even have to omit to tell the truth in order to avoid the truth. The implication here is that the narrative voice is unwilling to come to the point to protect the reader as much as the narrator, and in his reluctance the narrator produces a complexity of expression that confuses the reader, or at least puts demands on the reader to sort out the syntactical relationships within the sentence. In this way the emotional impact of the judge's suicide is lessened by the way in which the reader's attention is directed as much toward deciphering the sense as to the sense itself. In this *respect* it could be said that the text is written by the author in a way that implies that the narrator does not want to be understood and the style of the prose can be perceived as motivated not at all by the need for certainty and clarity, but rather by fear and discomfort. The confusion over who stands up is integral to the problematizing of meaning and certainty, adding the question of what the observer/reader wishes to perceive and understand and complicating the matter with a style in which unpleasantness can be avoided, evaded, left unnoticed.

The penultimate sentence continues to relate the story in the oddly controlled yet multiply ambiguous style that has by now become an indication of some disturbance in the narrator's style of expression. For example, the repetition of 'und' that could be taken as an attempt at immediacy combines with the formality of the phrase 'aller im Gerichtssaal Anwesenden' (line 25) to create a sense of control inappropriate to the scene that is being described. It is helpful if the text is compared with the following possible version:

- 12) griff er blitzartig unter seinen Talar, holte eine
entsicherte Pistole hervor und schoss sich in die
Schläfe.

The repetition of 'und' in the original gives each event equal status, including 'und schoss sich'. The phrase 'zum Entsetzen aller im Gerichtssaal anwesenden' again uses complexity of grammatical structure to prevent the sense of immediacy. Again the positioning of the phrase 'in die linke Schläfe' at the end of the sentence creates an ambiguity. Were those in the courtroom shocked because the judge shot himself specifically in the left temple? A shift of the stress placement to the word 'linke' would imply this possibility. Would they have been less shocked if it had been the right temple (given the predominance of right-handedness and the ease of the shooting position)?

These elements of the style raise questions. Is the reference to where the bullet entered simply an imitation of the style of the courtroom journalist? If so, what does this representation of the style tell us? Why is it not obvious that the incident horrified everyone in the courtroom? Why is it necessary to mention their horror? Why do we switch from a personal narrative - the most remarkable thing the journalist witnessed during his career - to a description of how the court reacted? How did the journalist react? Is this the incident that brought his career in the courtrooms to an end? What did he actually think about what happened? Just that it was a remarkable occurrence? Did he have any idea why the judge did what

he did? Above all, in what way is the judge's act an example or deterrent and for whose benefit is it?

The last sentence is remarkable for the use of the pluperfect tense together with the word 'augenblicklich' and the resulting semantic incongruity. As the sentence is read through, with the word 'tot' it becomes semantically complete in the sense that he was dead instantly. However, the continuation with the word 'gewesen' turning 'war' into an auxiliary verb instead of the main verb, requires the whole sentence to be reparsed and reinterpreted. The reopening puts into question the idea that the judge is dead and points to it as a past event, not only in the past but also past, gone. However, it is part of our knowledge of the world that death is final, at least in the physical world. That we are momentarily pointed to the idea of death as a momentary thing, clashes with our knowledge of the world and reopens the interpretation along the lines of a resurrection. There is nothing to support this idea, however, so that the interpretation is never satisfactorily closed either on a propositional level or on a figurative one. Nor can it be fully closed by the suggestion that the expression is in Austrian dialect, escaping the legal, official context by resorting to a preferred spoken vernacular. It can only be fully closed by referring to it as an example of a sentence whose interpretation cannot be satisfactorily closed. The meaning of this final sentence cannot be defined in terms of its propositional content, nor in terms of a figure of speech. It has to be interpreted as an utterance produced by a particular kind of mind represented by the style of the text.

The question of what the 'example' set by the judge is meant to express, of what the deterrent effect of his action might have been intended to be, is displaced by the narrator's own difficulties within the context of the court. While the narrator complains of the feeling that the court and its procedures are driving him mad, it is the judge who commits suicide. A comparison can be made between the judge and the reporter in that both are witnesses of the same process, both respond to it in forms of madness. There is a major difference between them, however, in that the reporter does not affect the course of events while the judge must and does. It is the judge who sentences the meat exporter to twelve years in prison. That the judge should be the one who commits suicide and that the reporter should report it is thus highly appropriate.

Exempel is a text that explores the conflict between the attempt to establish a way of dealing with the bizarre within a system of norms and the realization that the means and ends lie in a different realm from that which they are treating. It is a text that finds within the figure of the courtroom journalist a way of allowing both the system and the individual to exist side by side in a mutually destructive relationship. The journalist, like the bureaucrat, sifts information, observes and transforms his observation into a passage of prose in a pre-established style suited to its end product rather than to the original situation observed. In the process the writer's way of thinking is moulded by his employment. He may desire to be free of it, but he cannot express himself without it. He has internalized the style and perceived the distortion it brings about, but he cannot express that situation in any terms other than those of the language

that produces it. It is a linguistic trap. Hence his protest becomes an expression of the thing he wishes to deny, a role play of a role he wishes the reader to reject. The role is that of a writer who produces a particular kind of text about human misery. The text becomes a deterrent to itself.

As a final note, it is worth making a comparison with another literary work that shares some of the characteristics of Exempel but which excludes that aspect of Exempel that turns it from the pure imitation of a newspaper report into the court reporter's attempt to find a voice that captures both the process of reporting and that which lies outside the report. The work is by another Austrian author, Heimito von Doderer.

Ehrfurcht vor dem Alter

Durch eine alte Dame mit kleinem Hund, welche infolge ihrer Umständlichkeit die Abfertigung am Postschalter verzögerte, zur äussersten Wut gebracht, schlug er - da ihm denn die Ehrfurcht vor dem Alter hier jede direkte Ausschreitung verwehrte - mit einer schweren, zum Teil eisenbeschlagenen Keule, welche der Angeklagte damals für solche Zwecke stets bei sich zu führen pflegte, die Front des gegenüberliegenden Hauses ein, wodurch drei Wohnungen beschädigt und sechs Personen zwar nicht erheblich, immerhin aber derart verletzt wurden, dass sie ärztliche Hilfe in Anspruch nehmen mussten.¹⁸

Like Exempel, Ehrfurcht vor dem Alter can be read as a text that uses its status as a literary work to comment on the effect of

encapsulating human experience in a bureaucratized prose style. One of the features that links each of the texts discussed in the thesis is the way in which each of them contains violence. The word 'contains' is used here in both senses. The texts narrate violent events, but as texts they are also remote from the violence they describe. In Thomas Bernhard's Exempel, the court reporter describes how a judge stands up and shoots himself. In Adalbert Stifter's Der Kuss von Sentze, a historian researching into a family's history finds documents narrating conflict within a family as well as the participation of the narrator in a civil war. In Kafka's In der Strafkolonie the subject of a long dialogue is a torture machine which ultimately executes the officer in charge of it, and Oswald Wiener's die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman contains, amidst a chaotic assortment of different kinds of text and style, a play - difficult to imagine being performed - consisting in systematic acts of violence. Each of the texts also contains violence in the sense of restraining it, putting it within linguistic structures that in some sense appear to deny its existence. They use their nature as texts, as against, for example, theatrical performances, to image violence at the same time as various forms of controlled, self-conscious analytical sentence structures.

The 'Kürzestgeschichte' by Heimito von Doderer is in some ways the purest of the examples discussed whilst differing most importantly through the absence of the narrator who describes the violent incident and who is not mentioned as part of the narrative. The absence of the narrator maintains the illusion of the newspaper report by imitating their anonymity. In all the other examples to be

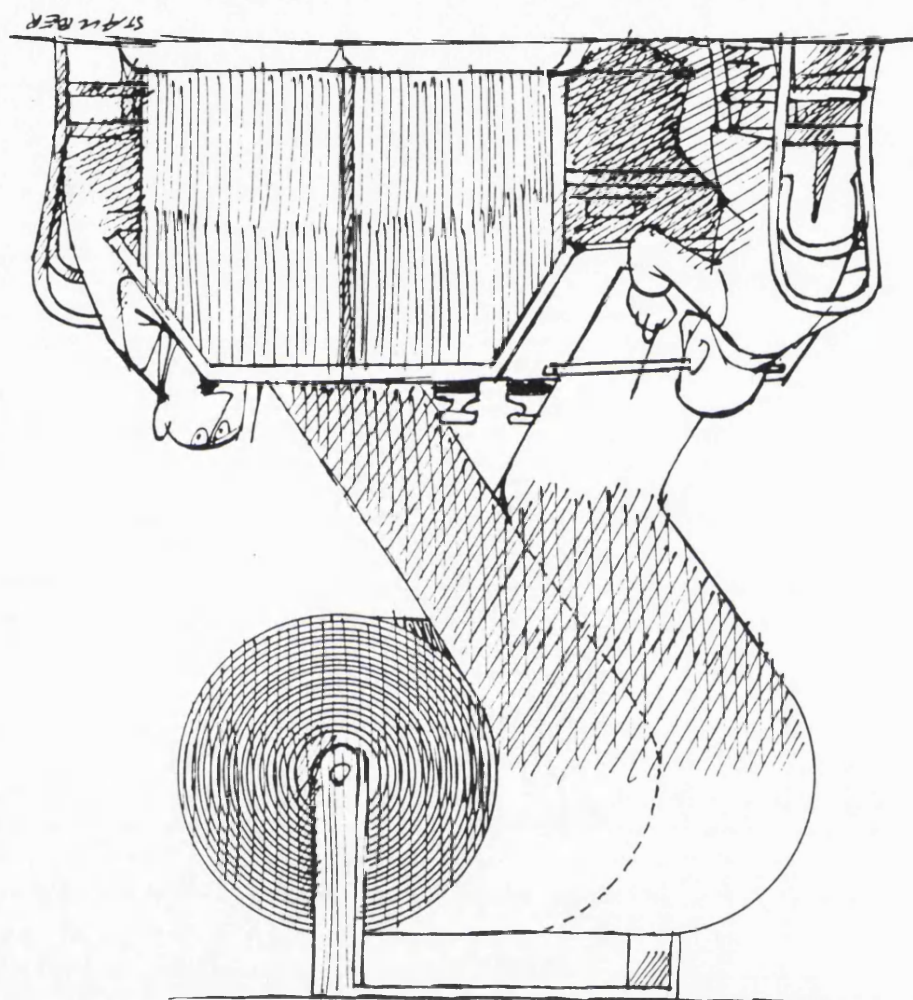
explored there is either a narrator or a character through whose eyes the events are seen. It is hence an explicit part of these works that there is a consciousness that is being or has been affected by what is related and which is working further through the transformation of experience into prose. Ehrfurcht vor dem Alter is an example that works through the contrast between its status as a literary work of fiction and its style of a newspaper item (despite the delay in the use of the term 'der Angeklagte') reporting the facts of a case that has come before the courts. As a literary work it is a comment on such newspaper items, exploiting and extending the possibilities of such concentrated narratives and recognizing them as powerful expressions of individual lives and actions.

The skill and perception of Exempel and Ehrfurcht vor dem Alter in their brevity and significance are an indication of an aspect of the bureaucratized world that has gone unmentioned up to this point. On the one hand there is an implied lament that the world is so full of manifold events that even such complex and interesting occurrences ~~as~~ those reported can be assigned very little space. On the other the economy and concentration of expression that is brought about through a style that remains detached and mentions only relevant detail becomes the most appropriate form in which to convey the nature of the incident, sharing in the terse journalistic technique that points accusingly at both the wider and narrower contexts in which it is played out.

Notes to Chapter One

1. . Thomas Bernhard, Der Stimmenimitator, p. 29. All page references will be to the edition given in the bibliography.
2. Harald Hartung, 'Die eigene Stimme des Stimmenimitators', Der Tagesspiegel, 25.3.1979.
3. See Chapter One, note 1.
4. See, for example, Rossbacher, Karlheinz, 'Quänger-Quartett und Forellen Quintett. Prinzipien der Kunstaübung bei Adalbert Stifter und Thomas Bernhard', VASILO, 25 (1976), 101-115.
5. Max Weber, Politik als Beruf, p.196.
6. See Herbert Moritz, Lehrjahre, Thomas Bernhard - vom Journalisten zum Dichter, (Katsdorf, 1992). See also Jens Dittmar: 'Thomas Bernhard als Journalist beim Demokratischen Volksblatt', in Manfred Jurgensen, Bernhard: Annäherungen, (Bern, 1981), pp.15-35.
7. Thomas Bernhard, Verstörung, (Frankfurt am Main, 1967).
8. Herbert Moritz, p.19.
9. Wendelin Schmidt-Dengeler, 'Verschleierte Authentizität. Zu Thomas Bernhards Der Stimmenimitator', in In Sachen Thomas

- Bernhard ed. by Kurt Bartsch and others, (Königstein/Ts, 1983).
10. D. Crystal, D. Davy, Investigating English Style, (Harlow, Essex, 1969), p.214.
 11. Max Weber, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, p.565.
 12. See John Searle, 'The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse', in New Literary History, 6 (1974/5), 319-332.
 13. Max Weber, Politik als Beruf, p.190.
 14. Herbert Moritz, pp.178-180.
 15. Max Weber, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, p.555.
 16. See Thomas Bernhard: Werkgeschichte, ed. by Jens Dittmar, (Frankfurt am Main, 1981), p.196 and p.205.
 17. That this often happens has been confirmed for me in several discussions about the text Exempel where participants agreed that on first reading it they were initially unsure about who was being referred to.
 18. Heimito von Doderer, Die Erzählungen, ed. by Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, (Munich, 1972), p.310.



CHAPTER TWO

'Der rechte Mensch ist frei von den Gelüsten und Lastern
seines Herzens.'

ADALBERT STIFTER'S DER KUSS VON SENTZE

In this chapter the discussion of Adalbert Stifter's Der Kuss von Sentze¹, written in the first half of 1866, takes the 'bureaucratic Muse' back to a time when what is present-day Austria was but a part of the Empire of Austria-Hungary, and to a writer whose oeuvre has become an established part of Austrian literary history. It also takes us back to a social context half a century before Max Weber's characterization of modern bureaucracy, to a period when it could be argued that Austrian structures of State (to some extent following the Prussian model) were moving away from patriarchal forms of administration towards becoming what Weber would later term rational-bureaucratic structures.

Although Der Kuss von Sentze is not set in a bureaucratic environment, as is the case in Exempel, many aspects of the story place it within the framework of my inquiry, in particular the relationship between the biographical coincidences that brought different environments together in Stifter's life and work, and the methodical attempt on the part of the writer to exclude from his work contingency and coincidence, to create a necessary and whole form out of potentially conflicting forces. In this chapter I will be

indicating ways in which the life, the experience and the environment in which Adalbert Stifter lived and wrote are relevant to a discussion of the text, before going on to discuss the 'Novelle' in detail.

However, as I explained in the introduction to this thesis, I am concerned with the social context of the period when Stifter was writing only in so far as it is relevant to the prose style of the literary work. One of the remarkable aspects of the reception of Adalbert Stifter's works as a whole has been the somewhat strained relationship between an understanding of Stifter's political or perhaps apolitical conservatism and the sheer fascination of the literary style. For example, Friedrich Aspöckl writes:

Stifter's work is a linguistic system which unapologetically situates itself at a further remove from everyday social reality than the work of his great contemporaries.²

Many critical works seeking to account for the attraction of Stifter's late works in particular have pointed to the fascination with formal aspects, with style rather than content. At the same time, many studies have been concerned with the way in which Stifter's works, both thematically and stylistically, are bound up with that social reality with which he was most intensely preoccupied, namely, the context of the relationship between the State and education both in terms of its theoretical significance for the politics of the second half of the nineteenth century, and in terms of its practical day-to-day organization.

What marks out one of Stifter's late works, Der Kuss von Sentze, as particularly relevant to this study in its concern with the relationship between bureaucratization and literature, is the way in which that which appears to be 'weltfremd' about the style of the narrative, its ritualistic repetitions and epic symmetries, clearly relates historically and didactically to the time in which the bulk of the story is set - namely the nine months between March and November 1848 - as well as to the time at which Stifter wrote the story. The relation is an historical one. An allegorical reading shows how the story takes key moments from the history of the relationship between Austria-Hungary and Prussia and seeks to show how a union between the two might come about. A study of the text's prose style, apart from pointing to an allegorical interpretation, can also show how the text, in a manner similar to that of Die Mappe meines Urgrossvaters, attempts through its portrayal of self-restraint in what it allows to be noticed, mentioned, acknowledged but above all judged, to teach its readers how, on the level of individual citizenship, the ideal community is to be created. It is the combination of these two aspects - a direct concern with contemporary affairs that is unusual for Stifter, together with the inherent didacticism enshrined in the restraint of his prose style - that allows the text to be seen as a precursor of those texts that explicitly study the nature of bureaucracy. Many of the ingredients are present: ritual becomes the historical origin of hierarchy, the belief in discipline is shifted from a theological structure onto a secular one, and the process of writing down history which then becomes the basis for structuring actions and relationships in the present. The latter can be seen as an attempt on Stifter's part to

create an organic link between the supposed authenticity of the past and the administratively orderly forces of the present. Above all, however, it is in its prose style that Der Kuss von Sentze relates to this study, through the way in which the narrative perspective is that of a character who seeks in the very words of his document - written consciously as an historical document - to realize or enact a relationship between word and referent that has the stability of a legal document.

Wolfgang Frühwald³ was the first critic to point to the allegorical nature of the story, arguing that the prose style is above all to be explained as a technique that points the reader away from individual character and event towards an interpretation in which the characters and the narrative are to be read as an allegory of the relationship between Austria-Hungary and its rival Prussia. Alfred Schoenborn, in his recent book Adalbert Stifter - Leben und Werk⁴ has developed this interpretation further:

Im Kuss geht es im Grunde gar nicht um Liebe, jedenfalls nicht um die Liebe zwischen Mann und Frau. Der Dichter benützt die Liebesgeschichte der beiden Sentze-Erben nur als veranschaulichendes Beispiel für eine viel kompliziertere Angelegenheit, eine, die weit über die persönliche Sphäre des Liebespaares und seiner Familien hinausgeht und die Bevölkerung eines ganzen Reiches - des Deutschen Reiches - betrifft: nämlich das prekäre, bis zu einem Krieg führende Verhältnis der Präsidialmacht Österreich zu ihrem Rivalen Preussen, das unter Bismarck die Vorherrschaft in Deutschland anstrebt. (p.507)

Schoenborn explains on the basis of the dates mentioned in the 'Novelle', how Stifter wrote the story as a prediction of an Austrian

victory over Prussia followed by a peaceful reunion of the warring nations. In fact the war ended in the signing of the Treaty of Olmütz, in which Austria agreed to be no longer part of the Reich and through which Prussia was acknowledged as the dominant power in Germany. However, the story was not understood by Stifter's contemporaries in allegorical terms at all and was rejected for the nature of its prose style:

Der Hauptgrund, dass der Kuss beim Publikum keine gute Aufnahme fand, dürfte im Umstand liegen, dass man bei seiner Lektüre nur das in der nachrevolutionären Zeit befremdend wirkende adlig-zeremonielle Wesen der Handlungsträger sowie das Manieristische des Stils bemerkte, nicht aber die politische Absicht, die sich hinter all dem verbarg.⁵

As it was clearly not in Stifter's interests to point to the mistake in his prediction, the story was not understood in the terms in which it was written for over a century, and with the passage of time it has become evidence for the view that Stifter's late works were the result of his ever-increasing withdrawal from the world. The fact that it is quite the opposite - a demonstration of Stifter's willingness late in life finally to bring contemporary issues into his literary work - turns the work from tragically misconceived escapism into tragically misconceived politics. However, even though Stifter's beliefs about the outcome of war between Prussia and Austria-Hungary were wrong in the short term, in terms of another historical trend, the gradual process of bureaucratization with its rationalizing, disciplined mentality, the 'Novelle' can be seen to be before its time.

What I am concerned with in this chapter is an interpretation of the 'Novelle' that accepts with admiration the findings of Schoenborn's historical research, but which seeks to show that the 'Novelle' remains valid as a work of art, in spite of its misguided allegorical meaning, through its combination of the theme of the political development of Central Europe with an attempt to demonstrate by means of the prose style the quality of the ideal citizen. Although aspects of the prose style have led to the discovery of the allegorical meaning of the text, I shall argue that it points not away from the individual, but rather, in an experimental way, to the individual who demonstrates a form of self-discipline that tends towards the modern idea of self-surveillance.

In Der Kuss von Sentze, the process of historical research, and the origin, development and maintenance of ritual within the family context are set against statements about the responsibility of the citizen, particularly in relation to wealth, ownership and individual discipline. In consequence, what appears in many of Stifter's works to be a rigorous avoidance of social reality is in fact a revolutionary attempt to transform society, revolutionary (in Max Weber's sense) above all in its affiliation to the legal, rationalizing, bureaucratizing trends throughout the whole of central Europe.

The key to this understanding of Der Kuss von Sentze lies in the sentence quoted at the beginning of this chapter: 'der rechte Mensch ist frei von den Gelüsten und Lasten seines Herzens', a statement made by the narrator, Rupert, to justify his criticisms of the

society he observes in Vienna and his decision to fight for the ruling powers. This is the idea that informs the prose style throughout the 'Novelle', in spite of the fact that it relates the course of a romance that does not run smoothly, telling the sequence of events in chronological order with the sobriety of a bureaucratic report. What I shall try to show in this chapter is the way in which evidence of Stifter's work as a 'Schulrat' refutes the idea put forward that 'Dichtungswelt wie Dichtungssprache sind Amtsdingen und Amtsprache entgegengesetzt'⁶. I shall suggest that just as in his official writing Stifter was at pains to demonstrate the kind of discipline that is characteristic of at least the ideals of bureaucracy, so too in his literary texts he attempted to portray in the prose style not so much a set of values, as rather a way in which human relationships in an environment of potential conflict could be based on a form of rational self-restraint.

Vieles spricht aber auch dafür, dass Stifter bemüht war, sich als Schulrat betont 'sachlich', nüchtern, trocken, von den Sprachmodellen juristischer Studien ausgehend, auszudrücken. Die Stiftersche Argumentation gleicht oft mehr einer juristischen Beweisführung als dass sie sich primär für die pädagogische Sache engagierte.⁷

Part of Stifter's belief in literature lay in the fusion of life and art in the creation of better citizens. What is perhaps remarkable and modern about this fusion of life and art is the way in which it worked in two directions simultaneously. In a conventional description of life feeding into art, Friedrich Simony⁸, described in detail how the 'Novelle' Bergkristall grew out of a coincidence of

events and impressions during Stifter's visit to Hallstadt.⁹ As an admirer of Stifter's early works, Simony was charmed by the recognition of this process. However, the manifestation of Stifter's literary persona in his own speech and way of life, was to his contemporaries more problematic and worrying. A visitor to Stifter in 1845 wrote the following:

Auch hab' ich nie einen Menschen gesehen, der so identisch wäre mit seinen Büchern, er lebt und ist und spricht, als wäre er nichts als eine Novelle, die er selber geschrieben [...]. Ihn selber zu sprechen und ihn zu lesen ist fast dasselbe. Dennoch ist es nicht angenehm, in einem Menschen nichts als eine Novelle zu finden, denn so abgeschlossen von der Zeit, ihren Tendenzen und den momentanen Strebungen der Menschheit, wie seine Schriften, ist er selbst.¹⁰

For this study, what is interesting about these two 'witnesses' is the way in which the relationship between art and life becomes manifestly a matter of education. Art becomes an education for life, art becomes a practicing ground. It is here that Stifter as an author both develops the educational ideas of the Enlightenment and is peculiarly modern and attuned to the conditions of a more highly developed State than the one in which he was living. The self-consciousness of his art, not in terms of a consciousness of the value of literature, but in terms of the possibility of self-reconstruction through art, is characteristic of a society in which structure has become more significant than history. The relationship between Stifter and his art has profoundly to do with his belief that education, administrative development and art are interlocked in the project to reconstruct humanity.

Kurt Fischer, in his introductory essay on the Documenta Paedagogica Austriaca: Adalbert Stifter¹¹, has traced the political and administrative developments of school administration in Austria at the time Adalbert Stifter was a school inspector. His introduction, particularly in its discussion of the historical significance of seeing education in terms of the interests of the State, is an invaluable source of information regarding the specific and general issues that confronted Stifter in his post as 'Schulrat'. It was a time when there were special tensions between Church and State in the field of pedagogy, both of which attempted to gain and maintain control over the administration of schools. At the same time there was a battle within the State as it moved towards democratization, in which education was seen either as a means for the State to mould its people to loyalty and service or as a potentially subversive influence, furthering the people's ability to criticize the State and take power into their own hands. It is worth sketching the development of school administration in Austria not only as the background to Stifter's engagement in the problems of office, but also as part of a general awareness of the process of bureaucratization in Austrian education at that time.

The origins of the system within which Stifter was appointed lay in the Enlightenment, under the rule of Maria Theresia, its structure having been created by Abbot Johann Ignaz Felbiger with the 'Allgemeine Schulordnung, für die deutschen Normal- Haupt- und Trivialschulen in sämtlichen Kaiserl. Königl. Erbländern', which appeared in Vienna in 1774. This revolutionary document brought in compulsory schooling, together with a hierarchical structure of

schools, with 'Trivialschulen' in every town, 'Hauptschulen' in every region, 'Normalschulen' to teach teachers in each province, a schools inspection system with church and secular inspectors and headquarters in Vienna - a complete rationalization of the education system. The revolutionary consequences of this development are underlined by the fact that in 1795 Staatsminister Graf Rottenhann attempted, with the 'Reglementierung des öffentlichen Unterrichtes aus staatspolizeilichen Rücksichten' to counter the movement towards asserting education as a universal human right.

From this point on the State began to realize the potential of education as a way of producing loyal and useful State workers and the move towards gaining complete control over the schools established itself, the main task being to take education out of the hands of the Church. In 1804 the clergy was nevertheless brought back into education, but this time in the service of the State, the Church in Austria having by this time come under the rule of the Emperor. There then came the period of restriction which ended in the revolution of 1848 and was followed by a conservative mood, one that rejected violent revolution and upheld doctrines of evolutionary progress. Reform through education, an ideal which Stifter passionately believed in, became a real, practical aim.

In a letter written in 1849, Stifter wrote about his belief in education as the duty of the State, pointing to a connection between education and citizenship that reverberates again and again in his literary works. He wrote:

Dass nemlich Erziehung die erste und heiligste Pflicht des Staates ist; denn darum haben wir ja den Staat, dass wir in ihm Menschen seien, und darum muss er uns zu Menschen machen, dass er Staatsbürger habe und ein Staat sei, keine Strafanstalt, in der man immer Kanonen braucht, dass die wilden Thiere nicht losbrechen.¹²

The post held by Stifter, that of 'Schulrat', was first created in 1849 with the foundation of the 'Landesschulbehörden'. In this organization experts on pedagogical, didactic affairs worked together with legal officials to ensure the good management of school affairs. The experts were given the title 'Schulrat' and 'Schuleninspektor'. They were to give advice, to bring about the implementation of laws applying to the Volksschulen, to organize the schools, supervise them and lead them.

The organizational structure at the time Stifter took up office was therefore both new and still confused - far from being an efficient machine, the competence of various bodies was not clearly defined and there was as a result a good deal of conflict between local government, the lawyers, the inspectors and the Church. In the period 1850 - 1865 the relationship between Church and State in this area was particularly strained so that many theoretical goals, such as the wish to involve the community in the administration of schools, were not achieved. It is in this context that Stifter defined the attraction of a civil service appointment as follows, indicating that the ideals and potential of public service were more important to him than the reality:

Das Höchste, was bei Staatsstellen locken könnte, wäre die Aussicht, das Hohe, das Göttliche, das eigentliche Reich des Himmlischen auf der Welt fördern zu können.¹³

In his belief in the involvement of the community Stifter behaved as if the democratization of the community were reality or at least a programme to be discussed. He was therefore popular among the people, but the documents show that he was mistrusted by the Church. Stifter may never have articulated these conflicts to himself, but he was at pains to bring about the reforms he believed in while maintaining peace with both the Church and the State. As part of his office he was concerned with a wide range of tasks: the education and remuneration of the teaching body, filling teaching posts and promoting teachers, the erection and maintenance of school buildings, the standardization of didactic methodology, and - significantly in relation to changing values in education - setting up the 'Realschule', an entirely new concept, a kind of secondary modern which taught practical skills. In the context of the development of industry it was natural that education should also involve such teaching. Stifter was progressive in believing that education was possible without teaching Latin and Greek, that education was about helping people to master the needs of their new working lives. In the Realschule he saw the means for this.

It is in relation to the 'Realschule' in particular that Stifter's office as 'Schulrat' places his work in a context that is clearly part of the trend towards the modern State. Of education Weber wrote:

Unsere kontinentalen, okzidentalischen Erziehungsanstalten, speziell die höheren: Universitäten, technische Hochschulen, Handelshochschulen, Gymnasien und andere Mittelschulen, stehen unter dem beherrschenden Einfluss des Bedürfnisses nach jener Art von 'Bildung', welche das für den modernen Bürokratismus zunehmend unentbehrliche Fachprüfungswesen züchtet: der Fachschulung.¹⁴

Fischer writes of the significance of this development in schooling in Austria in the following terms:

Die Förderung des Realschulwesens im 19. Jahrhundert ist im unmittelbaren Zusammenhange mit dem Liberalismus und mit der Ausprägung einer kapitalistischen Gesellschaft zu sehen. Dabei spielt für Stifter die Verknüpfung mit dem 'humanistischen' Erbe eine pädagogisch entscheidende Rolle; er war überzeugt, dass Menschenbildung auch unter Verzicht auf die alten Sprachen im vollen Umfange möglich sei; ja, er erkannte, dass diese neue Aufgabe unserer Epoche gestellt sei, Menschen zur Meisterung ihres Lebens in Ansehung der sich herausprägenden neuen Arbeits-, Gesellschafts- und Lebensformen zu befähigen. Die Realschule schien ihm hierfür das einzig geeignete Instrument.¹⁵

In relation to the practical problems of his post, Stifter was also idealistic in what he wrote in his letters: '[es] muss ein Lehrerstand gebildet und genährt werden, der unterrichtet, edel, gemässigt und weise ist',¹⁶. 'So lange nicht jeder Lehrer so gestellt ist, dass er ohne Sorge in die Zukunft schauen kann, so lange haben wir kein Recht, von ihm ausgezeichnete Begabung und Ausbildung zu fordern.'¹⁷ Even the choice of teacher, however, brought Stifter into conflict with the Church. He was fortunate enough to have the final say in the matter, so that when the Church advisor, as was usually

the case, chose the more experienced teacher over the younger, better educated one, Stifter overruled, giving better qualifications preference every time, locating his values in meritocracy rather than the personal preference of an older order.

Stifter was also concerned with school premises. In letters with surprising affinities to the age of prefabricated buildings he complained about newly built premises which were 'finster, feucht und wie ich vermute auch zu klein'. He saw this as a particularly bad failing:

Welche Verachtung oder wenigstens Nichtbeachtung setzt das sogar bei gebildeten Menschen voraus, welche Verkennung unserer nur zu lange vernachlässigten Pflichten gegen die kommenden Geschlechter in bezug auf geistige und leibliche Gesundheit! Bei alten Schulgebäuden, die gegen jede Menschlichkeit sündigen fühlt man Trauer, was nun, wenn in unserer Zeit, die so viel für die Menschheit tun will, neue Zimmer dieser Art entstehen?¹⁸

Otherwise Stifter was involved in instituting book prizes for the best pupils, libraries, music collections, easier access to schools, money for poorer parents who needed their children to work, instruction at home for very isolated houses and even grants.

Stifter was thus working in a tense and difficult context in which the potential for conflict was always present. While his letters show that he believed the wishes of the three parties - Church, State and local community - were compatible and could be brought together in a vision of education as the force which was able 'die Menschen besser und verständiger machen zu helfen',¹⁹ this did not acknowledge that

even when educated and able to articulate their desires and understand those of others, people still come into conflict, that in fact, the better they are able to articulate their position the more likely they are to enter into conflict. The documents show time and again that Stifter believed that there were rational answers to questions and that therefore there was no need for conflict, only the need to look for the right answers. Hence he never developed his powers of communication with respect to the political context. He refused to acknowledge the political context at all by refusing to entertain the possibility that people could be educated, well intentioned and still disagree. The process of achieving progress through manipulating power remained beyond him.

His career as a school inspector ended on 25 November 1865 when he was pensioned off ^{on grounds of ill health.} At the beginning of his career he had been idealistic and ignorant of the workings of public organizations:

Völlig unerfahren in Amtsdingen und Verwaltungsgeschäften, konnte er sich wohl hinsichtlich pädagogischer Ideen als Sachverwalter des Fortschrittes verstehen, aber die Verfahren der Umsetzung in die Praxis, die Methoden der Durchsetzung wie der Begründung innerhalb eines staatlichen Apparates waren ihm unbekannt. Ganz gewiss hat Stifter auch anfänglich den Rang seines Amtes und damit seine Wirkungsmöglichkeiten überschätzt.²⁰

By the end of his career the documents show that Stifter 'sich der Interessengegensätze bewusst war und sich zu Entscheidung und Handeln aufgerufen dareingestellt fand'²¹.

The question of the relationship between Stifter's literary work and his work as a 'Schulrat' is principally one of ideals, above all ideals which are manifestations of a belief in those values centred around rationality and humanism that provide the rhetoric for Weber's later formulation of the legal-bureaucratic State. What is more, Stifter's insistence in his late literary works in particular on rigid and transparent - or at least apparent - structures within which the characters of his narratives operate, points to a concern with the pragmatic structures of the new society towards which he was working.

Stifter's literary style became increasingly formalized, ritualized, and stilted as he grew older. Many interpretive strategies have sought to explain and evaluate Stifter's late prose style, seeing it in terms of his own increasingly sequestered life, his sense of beleaguered moral rectitude, or even in terms of sheer boredom. Most recently the late 'Novellen' have come under scrutiny and have been decoded as mistaken historical allegories in which he envisaged an Austrian victory over Prussia. In the case of Stifter it is clearly relevant to look at the way in which his life and his art interacted, especially in terms of the way in which the literature became for the writer a process of turning experience into writing, which then itself acted on behaviour. Hubert Lengauer has written about how this process is itself turned into a narrative in Stifter's Die Mappe meine Urgrossvaters, transforming the text into a discourse about itself.²² What will be suggested here is that Stifter's work as an inspector of schools did indeed affect his literary style; his

experience of office led him to reflect in his literary writing on the nature of public service. Further, through the way in which Stifter incorporated this self-conscious demonstration of possible modes of interaction into the narrative style, the late texts in particular shared in the problem of self-consciousness. In the 'Novelle' Der Kuss von Sentze this problem itself is thematized.

Vor die Aufgabe gestellt, Stifters Tun und Lassen als Schulrat auf eine Formel zu bringen, bietet sich Stifter selber an. Sein Wirken ist gekennzeichnet durch das Streben zu tun, was die Dinge fordern, wie Kardinal Guido im Witiko gebietet. Dass dieser kategorische Imperativ alles andere denn eine Gebrauchsregel für sittliches Leben und Handeln ist, geht deutlicher als aus dem Romane aus einem ihm konkret gehorchenden Alltag hervor. Mag die Formel auch formal erscheinen, so erweist sie sich doch, bewusst geworden, als ein Impetus, auch unter schwierigen, niederdrückenden Umständen, angesichts offener Hoffnungslosigkeit das recte vivere verantwortlich immer wieder, Tag für Tag von neuem, auf sich zu nehmen.²³

Der Kuss von Sentze, one of Stifter's four late 'Novellen', relates temporally to the theme of 'the bureaucratic Muse' in two ways. As part of Stifter's oeuvre it is also part of literary history and is itself a text that has contributed to the rhetoric of images of the State within literature and might contribute to the discussion on how the community should function and to the belief that education and literature itself should play an important role in the creation of the community and the State. As a literary text on the other hand, it also remains a living work that can be interpreted in a way that

shows that it still relates creatively to unsolved issues in our times.

The analysis of the text that will make up the rest of this chapter is an exploration of what can now be seen as an experiment, an attempt within a literary work to 'see' in a new way, a demonstration of a belief in the possibility of absolute symbiosis between the individual and the community achieved through education. As Fischer puts it: 'Das leichtfertige Vertrauen ins endliche Gelingen eines Ausgleiches zwischen den einander bekämpfenden Gruppen bewahrte sich Stifter lebenslang'²⁴. In the interpretation of the text it will be argued that the work itself can be analyzed and discussed as a text that throws light on the problems of bureaucratization within Western European States. The text will be seen in terms of an attempt to confront the political problem of reconciling individual with general interests by demonstrating a rationalization of verbal communication within a family context. I shall suggest that Der Kuss von Sentze can be read as a text in which human relationships within a family environment are placed within bureaucratic structures in order to explore the tensions between individualist emotions destructive to the community and the desire of the individual to find security and prosperity through co-operation. The most remarkable aspect of this experiment is the way in which the principle of restraint proclaimed in the narrative applies to the prose itself. What the analysis will focus on will be, as in the discussion of Exempel, the way in which the self-consciousness of this restraint turns the attempt to achieve total stability of word and referent into a revelation of uncertainty and instability.

Der Kuss von Sentze depicts a historical process whereby a family achieves prosperity through the institution of a ritual - the kiss of the title - which turns into a law governing and stabilizing the relationships between family members. The narrative takes place over several generations placing it within the context of a historical sweep from the eleventh century to 1866. It is told by two narrators, one a historian who has researched into the history of the family that is the subject of the story, and the other who has written the document presented to us to read by the historian. The writer of the document is not dead and gone, however, but living on in peace and prosperity. The aspect that is so remarkable about this story is the total lack of any distinction between these two narrative voices, in spite of the difference between the historical perspective of the first narrator and the subjective perspective of the second, who tells the story of his own courtship and marriage. The subjective voice, in its didacticism, is taken over by its consciousness of the history of which it is a part.

At the beginning of the story it is the historian who relates the information that he has learned about the history of the ancient family of Palsentze, the probable ancestors of a family now known to the historian by the name of Sentze, and it is told in a way that signals the narrator as someone who is researching.

In einem Waldwinkel liegen drei seltsame Häuser oder Schlösser.

Das eine Haus liegt an dem Abhange eines Berges. Es ist aus einem rötlichen Steine erbaut, der hie und da eine sanfte Rosenfarbe hat, an den Ecken stehen grosse runde Türme, und die Fenster und Tore haben den Rundbogen und sind mit einem

schneeweissen Steine eingefasst. Von dem Hause geht ein grosser Garten nieder, der allerlei Bauwerk hat und in einer Art Verwüstung ist. Unterhalb des Gartens spaltet sich der Hauptberg in zwei Nebenberge, gleichsam zwei grüne Kissen, die gegen das Tal hinabgehen. Und auf der Wölbung dieser Kissen, liegen die zwei anderen Häuser. Sie sind genau wie das obere gebaut, nur kleiner und das eine ist ganz aus dem weissen Steine, das andere ganz aus dem roten.(p.629)

The first two paragraphs have often been quoted in full as evidence for the allegorical nature of the story as a whole. The most remarkable feature is, of course, the symmetry of the scene described and the corresponding symmetry of the descriptive apparatus. However, there is another side to the perception of the stilted style that has to do with the character, or rather the occupation of the writer. The narrative perspective can be seen as that of an historian, the role in fact played by Stifter himself in the writing of the story. So, for example, the first sentence cannot describe the buildings as either 'Häuser' or 'Schlösser' so puts in both. The term 'seltsam' sets up a mystery which is increased by the refusal to put them into either of the two categories of buildings. However, the mystery is neutralized partly because the narrator refuses to be put out by their oddity, simply giving alternative possibilities. In the presentation of the 'facts' the historian seeks to inculcate in the reader the values and procedure of the researcher. Instead of being encouraged to draw conclusions, the reader is encouraged to focus on what is given. The narrator is someone who looks outside the text to sources we do not have for authority, so that we, as readers, may trust the evidence and draw our own conclusions.

The second paragraph describes the location and structure of the houses in a further elaboration on the word 'seltsam' and the uncertainty about their status. The first paragraph having mentioned three, the second begins with the promise of an enumeration: 'Das eine'. The houses are remarkable for their symmetry in location, architecture and colour. After location comes naming:

Diese drei Häuser heissen die Sentze. Das weisse heisst die weisse Sentze, das rote die rote Sentze und das obere die gestreifte Sentze.(p.629)

Again the symmetry and the resulting sense of the obvious that derives from the writer not making the assumption that the reader would assume the white one would be called the white one and so on, points not only to a possible allegorical reading of the story, in the way that Wolfgang Frühwald describes, but also to method. The landscape is 'filled in' - 'unten ist das Tal mit Gebüsch erfüllt' - as though it is not known that valleys and hills are like this. The description becomes experimental in its attempt to present an unknown scene. The first clear evidence that the narrator has researched his material comes from the explanation of the word 'Wermelin' that we are told has become in the dialect of the local people 'Werblin'. This information implies an investigation, which is itself then thematized in the sentence: 'Von der alten Zeit sind die Nachrichten über die Häuser spärlich'(p.629).

By the time we reach the important information about the origin of this strange setting, the narrative style has already communicated the method and the restraint that is embodied in the legend that lies

at the heart of the story. The information is sparse, but consists in an important family event - the foundation of a tradition. What it reports is the setting up of a situation of potential disaster. In order to prevent minor disaster, the possibility of an even greater disaster is created.

Von der alten Zeit sind die Nachrichten über die Häuser spärlich. Ein Mann soll einmal, da noch der wilde Wald war, die alte Burg gebaut haben. Er hatte zwei Söhne, die in beständigem Hader lebten. Da sagte er einmal: 'Durch einen Kuss hat Judas den Heiland verraten, und das ist die schlechteste Tat gewesen, die auf der Erde verübt worden ist. Ihr solltet euch einmal küssen und von da an sollte keiner dem andern ein Leid tun, weil sonst noch ein Judaskuss auf der Welt wäre.'(p.629)

The significance of the legend is that it has, through many generations, remained a successful mechanism through which the family has maintained peace, and through this stability, prosperity. The legend is hence already in the narrative, not only a curiosity but a message:

Die Brüder küssten sich zu einer guten Zeit und hatten dann eine solche Furcht vor dem Judaskusse, dass sie fortan nicht mehr haderten, ja sich oft zu der nämlichen guten Handlung vereinigten. Die Sache wurde in dem Geschlechte der Sentze forterzählt, da es unter den Nachkommen manche Streitbare gab, wiederholt, sie wurde endlich bräuchlich und zuletzt gar eine Satzung. Die Streitenden konnten den Kuss verweigern, dazu hatten sie das Recht; haben sie ihn aber einmal gegeben, dann mussten sie Frieden halten. Man hat später die Veranlassungen zu dem Kusse aufgeschrieben, und wenn wieder solche kamen, hat man das Aufgeschriebene vorgelesen, oder zu lesen gegeben. Es sind keine Nachrichten vorhanden, ob einmal einer von Sentze die Verpflichtung aus dem Kusse gebrochen hat.(p.630)

This whole passage is largely taken word for word from documents used by Stifter in his research for his novel Witiko. The style in which this information is given is hence not only a reflection of Stifter's own voice as the researcher who interferes with the material as little as possible, but, in its compatibility with the rest of the text, also indicative of the origin of the style. If we ask what the significance of this passage is we ask not only what the meaning of the 'Kuss' might be, but also why the legend is related to us in this way. Given that Der Kuss von Sentze is presented to us not as a historical document, but as a fictional story, what is it about the terse and factual relation of this legend that should occupy us?

This legend, the justification and the message at the heart of the narrative, is in effect a poeticization of an historical progress which eventually will point towards bureaucratization. Its origin lies in conflict. The solution is found in reference to a religious concept of betrayal and the threat of damnation. Peace is maintained through fear of moral condemnation. Through its success in creating order and prosperity it becomes merely a mechanism, a structure within which family relations can be kept under control. It itself becomes controlled through written rules.

The narrative continues to enumerate the 'Nachrichten'. We learn how the one house became three, how the kiss became transformed not only into the indication of an abyss but of the possibility of love. But this is also categorized, an indication that this event has potentially confused the issue. There is a need to distinguish in

order to prevent misunderstanding. The passage describing the terminology is similar in its methodical enumeration to the one explaining the names of the houses:

Den Liebeskuss nannten sie den Kuss der ersten Art, oder schlechtweg den ersten Kuss, den Friedenskuss nannten sie den Kuss der zweiten Art oder schlechtweg den zweiten Kuss.(p.630)

Again the symmetry of the style can be seen not only in allegorical terms, but as didactic in its imitation of the way in which the dynastic history of the family is turned into legend and handed down. Attached to the end of the whole process, we experience, in reading the story, the process of relearning history in a way that turns that very process of historical research into a moral form of behaviour. The narrator has had to work out the meaning of the first kiss which he then explains to the reader. Similarly, the explanation of the houses' names is also a matter of working through the narrator's own process of understanding. The confusion that has been caused by the terminology - so that the outsider does not understand the shortcuts and their origins - is cleared up. The system is learned along with the words.

A similar distortion, contraction of words, has led to uncertainty about the family's origins so that evidence has to be found from elsewhere. This evidence too consists in words, in names:

Wie dem auch sei, eines ist richtig: in dem Geschlechte der Sentze kommen die Namen Huoch, Rupert, Walchon, Erkambert, Itha, Hiltiburg, Azela, wie sie bei den alten Palsentzen gewesen waren, immer wieder vor.(p.631)

The first section then, summarizes rather than relates the family history, giving circumstantial reasons for the present. It is told by someone who has no inside information, no intuition, no insight into the family history, someone working only from documents and hearsay with all the distortions that either can bring. The effect of this style is to diminish the story as a story and emphasize the information concerning causes and motivations for actions which are to come. The narrator is a figure who has not understood any more than the facts he has presented, but his very ignorance and his attempt to discover the historical facts becomes an exemplary mode of behaviour. Instead of being encouraged to draw conclusions, the reader is encouraged to focus on what is given. As already stated, the narrator is not someone with authority, but someone who looks outside the text ^{for authority} to sources we do not have.

Such a style, in its repetition, symmetry and focus on origins, is indeed an indication that Der Kuss von Sentze could be understood in allegorical terms. However, the additional realism of the historian as narrator adds another dimension to an understanding of the 'Novelle'. This is not to say that Der Kuss von Sentze is an attempt to tell a story realistically, but to say that realism is introduced at the level of the narrative perspective. The didactic historian takes his own methodology as exemplary. That is, it is not the narrator who provides the moral, rather the historical evidence provides the source for such a message. The narrator's presentation of the sources provides not the content but the structure for moral behaviour. The narrator becomes a vessel through which the progress of the family history is reported. In shifting the focus in the

narrative stance from the message to the way in which it is presented, Stifter, in Der Kuss von Sentze, poeticizes the 'virtues' of the political and administrative structures associated with bureaucracy.

Following this preliminary information, we are presented with a document with no warning or explanation or comment.

Wir teilen aus der letzten Schrift des weissen Hauses folgendes mit:(p.631)

The surprising thing about the use of a second narrator is that he is not very different from the first. The shift from one narrator to another, from a researcher with no inner vision to a narrator relating his own life, would seem to signal a change in perspective, a subjective account. What is truly remarkable about the two narrators - and what may be seen as the strongest evidence that the style itself is meant to be exemplary - is this lack of any such change in perspective. In a purely allegorical tale one might ask why two narrators are used at all. In the case of Der Kuss von Sentze the question is why two narrators are used where there is no distinction in the perspective of each. The second narrator is as distanced and uncomprehending as the first about events that take place in his own life. Disconcertingly he manages to describe his own actions and what he observes in a way which makes them too into evidence, as if he too does not understand what is going on. It is as though he does not grasp what has happened and reacts by describing events as he remembers them.

However, the second narrator provides explicitly the moral message implied by the narrative style - namely, the belief that 'der rechte Mensch ist frei von den Gelüsten und Lasten seines Herzens'. It is this struggle against excessive emotion that characterizes the historian and that becomes the moral stance of the second narrator.

Another aspect of the prose style of the second narrator is the relationship between the restraint of his discourse and the character of the ceremony that is described in his relationship to his father. It is here that the writing becomes what it describes - in a process similar to that in Die Mappe meine Urgrossvaters, the novel which Stifter continued to revise throughout the last years of his life. In the fusion of the process of reading, experience and writing, a four-way link is made between the process of historical research, the discovery of the family legend, the son's relationship with his family and the process of writing it all down in a new historical document.

First he describes his father's treatment of him when he reaches the age of majority:

Josef kam herein und sagte, der Vater lasse mich zum Frühstück bittet. Ich ging in die Stube des Vaters. Er war festlich gekleidet. Er stand auf da ich eintrat, ging mir entgegen und küsste mich auf die Stirne. Seine Augen waren feucht geworden. Ich trocknete mir die meinigen.(p.631)

In the description of the meeting between father and son, the restraint of the ceremony is sustained in the prose style. The

meeting is described dispassionately in terms of that which is externally visible. Each event, including entering a room and standing up, is given equal weight, so that the whole can be seen as part of a ritual. Previous events are repeated in order to create an explicit relationship between one movement and another; thus, although we have already been told that the narrator has entered his father's room, the moment that the father stands up is co-ordinated with the narrator's entry. The narrator registers the signs of emotion - no more. The style indicates restraint and concentrates the emotions as much as it plays them down, but most of all it points to the attitude of the narrator in response to the ceremony of the occasion, the ability to see the tears and say only that the tears were seen. Similarly, when the narrator returns to the room after breakfast we again have this strange perception of details. He notes where his father is sitting, the removal of the cloth and utensils etc. It is as if owing to the significance of the occasion there is in the act of writing, an attempt to understand something implied, but no indication as to what it is that should be understood. The sequence of action and speech is meticulously recorded: 'Da wir sassen, sprach er', 'Der Vater hatte seine Rede geendigt und ich antwortete'(p.632).

We learn that the father wants the narrator to make two visits - one to his cousin and one to his uncle. It is these two visits that provide the structure for the rest of the story. The father and uncle hope for a marriage between the narrator and his cousin Hiltiburg, the only two of their generation in the family. The first visit is to see if this hope can be fulfilled. It is not to be fulfilled through

force, however, which is described by the father as: 'das Judastum, das in unserem Stamme so verhasst ist'(p.632). That is, 'Judastum' has been extended to include any kind of disagreement within the family. It is here that the mechanism begins to be seen not only as historically significant, but also in terms of a kind of pragmatism. The principle of peace within the family has been elevated above all other values so that the possibility of conflict arising out of these visits appears to have been avoided even before it could have arisen. Either they will meet, fall in love marry and live happily ever after or they will meet, not fall in love and still live happily ever after. Thus, peace will be sustained whatever the substance of the outcome.

'[...] Mein Sohn, ich bitte dich, gehe in diesem Jahre zu der Base Laran nach Wien und besuche Hiltiburg. Ihr seid als Kinder recht gut miteinander gewesen, vielleicht seid ihr es jetzt nach langer Trennung wieder, vielleicht werdet ihr es noch mehr und es erfolgt eine Eheverbindung, was der schönste Wunsch eurer Väter ist. Dann besuche einmal Walchon. Er ist in der grauen Sentze und betreibt seine Lieblingswissenschaft, die der Moose. Das ist, um was ich dich bitten wollte.'

Der Vater hatte seine Rede geendigt und ich antwortete: 'Ich werde gerne zu Hiltiburg und gerne zu ihrem Vater gehen. Wenn Hiltiburg und ich uns gut sind, wenn wir uns noch mehr gut werden, wenn aber jene Neigung nicht entsteht, die zu einer Ehe notwendig ist, wirst du und Walchon dann noch die Verbindung wünschen.'

'Nein, mein Sohn'" sagte der Vater, 'Das wäre das Judastum, das in unserem Stamme so verhasst ist. Wenn es wird, wie du sagst, dann bleibt liebe Verwandte und sucht euch Herzgespielen nach eurer Art, es werde daraus, was will. So würde auch deine Mutter denken, wenn sie noch lebte.'(p.632)

It is the course of the 'romance' between Rupert and his cousin Hiltiburg that provides the difficulty through which the mechanism of the 'Kuss von Sentze' is tested. It is here that the 'Novelle' becomes in a sense an experiment and in fact questions the basis of the structure it advocates. In so doing, Der Kuss von Sentze can be seen as a literary work that questions and explores rationally structured relationships that avoid conflict through regulated agreement, for the narrative impetus is partly created through the fact that the system of clarity and lack of conflict itself poses a problem. This is first indicated in the letters exchanged between the two cousins. The narrator writes:

'[...] Ich werde Dich in dem Winter, der da kommen wird, in Wien besuchen. Unsere Väter wünschen, dass wir eine Neigung zu einander fassen, aus welcher eine Eheverbindung wird. Wenn ich die Neigung fassen kann, wenn Du auch zu mir diese Neigung zu fassen vermagst, so werde ich sehr erfreut sein. Denke Dir aber nicht, dass ich in dem Sinne nach Wien komme, Dich durchaus heiraten zu wollen, Du hast die Freiheit, wie wenn ich Dir fremd wäre und Du nie etwas von mir gehört hättest. Ich schreibe Dir dieses, dass zwischen uns völlige Klarheit sei. Im Sonstigen bin ich Dein zugeneigter kleiner Rupert, der aber jetzt ein grosser geworden ist.'(p.633)

It is in the relationship between the narrator and his cousin Hiltiburg that the order of things in the family is questioned, for it is in their relationship that the self-conscious desire for probity among the family members is examined in greater detail. First, there is an immediate conflict over whether such a statement about 'clarity' is necessary. Of course, conflict appears to be an overstatement in the context of Stifter's story-telling. However,

structures are created so that conflict does not arise except over the question of whether the structure is being correctly followed. Hiltiburg does not reprimand the narrator personally, but corrects his form of address while in effect welcoming the offer of marriage.

'[...] Es ist bei mir immer die Klarheit, dass ich nach meinem Erkennen tue. Es wäre Dein Brief nicht nötig gewesen. Er freut mich aber. Du hast eine sehr schöne Handschrift bekommen. Ich erwarte Deine Ankunft und bin im Übrigen Deine zugeneigte kleine Hiltiburg, die jetzt auch eine grosse geworden ist.'(p.633)

Rupert's visit to his aunt takes on a highly unusual character. While the narrator's behaviour implies an insistence that there is no offer of marriage, Hiltiburg's behaviour can be interpreted variously. Either she is attempting to dramatize the situation by remaining in her room when the narrator first calls on her family, or it is an attempt to deny the significance of the visit by not receiving him or anyone else. The oddity of this encounter, which can be seen in allegorical terms as a representation of a flirtation between Austria and Prussia, is the consequence of the attempt to discover spontaneity and authentic attachment in spite of the self-consciousness of the contract. In the scenario of the arranged marriage the image uncovers a universal dilemma, the problem of reconciling the rhetoric of love, or the authenticity of political alliance, within structures which are indifferent to the substance of that which passes through them. Characteristically the narrator does not comment:

'Ich habe am heutigen Morgen gesagt, dass ich mich zu dem Feste vorbereite, und dass ich den ganzen Tag niemanden empfangen werde: Was ich gesagt habe, muss ich halten. [...]'(p.634)

In other words, Hiltiburg makes no exception for the narrator, she does not mark him out by going back on her resolve to remain in her room, even on the arrival of such a potentially important guest.

The narrator is then late for the party: 'Ich erinnere mich der Ursache nicht mehr, welche meine Verspätung veranlasste.'(p.634).

This is a strange lapse in his memory considering the situation and the habitual exactitude of his memory. It implies a desire to be off-hand, inconsequential. The description of Hiltiburg which then follows is extraordinary.

Da ich von dem Kleiderzimmer in das anstossende Gemach trat, stand in demselben unter mehreren Menschen ein Mädchen, das auffälligerweise ein schwarzes Seidenkleid anhatte. Von dem Kleide stand an dem Halse eine kleine weisse Krause empor. In den dunkeln Haaren war gar kein Schmuck, an der Brust aber glänzte ein vorzüglicher Diamant. Die Augen des Mädchens waren sehr gross und glänzten noch mehr als der Diamant. Sie mochten, wie die Beleuchtung zeigte, braun sein. Die Haare waren dunkelbraun. Das Angesicht war so schön, wie ich nie ein schöneres Ding in meinem Leben gesehen habe, und die Gestalt war fast noch schöner als das Angesicht. Das Mädchen sah mich an. Es war Hiltiburg. Obwohl ich sie, da sie noch ein Kind war, zum letzten Male gesehen hatte, erkannte ich sie gleich.(p.634)

It is the black dress here that points to Hiltiburg as the figure of Prussia. At first it is clear that the narrator is impressed by Hiltiburg's appearance, and indeed appearances are what are described, the externals of beauty. The description is at first of an unknown woman, yet at the end the narrator writes that he recognizes

her instantly. From the above passage alone the impression would be taken as favourable, yet in what follows, in the image of Hiltiburg, a universal conflict is discovered in the light of which the passage can also be read as a negative impression. The stylishness of her appearance both repels and attracts. The narrator looks at her precisely as something to be looked at, acknowledges her beauty and is stunned into silence. His refusal to react becomes, however, not a signal for restraint, modesty or neutrality, but for uncertainty followed by hostility. In a sense this first meeting between the two characters, given the build-up to this point, is the depiction of a 'worst scenario' through which the nature of the 'Kuss der ersten Art' is revealed not only as a mechanism for peace in the true sense, but for a stalemate between fundamentally warring parties. In this way, the necessity for the 'Kuss der zweiten Art', as a further mechanism to get over the first, becomes apparent. The first exchange between the high moral seriousness of the narrator, insisting on the neutrality of his position, and the more direct and perhaps playful assertion of Hiltiburg, becomes the epitome of unexpressed conflict.

'Sei mir gegrüsst, mein kleiner Vetter und Bräutigam, lebe nun neben mir und siehe, wie es mit uns wird.'

'Sei gegrüsst, Hiltiburg', sagte ich.(p.634-35, my emphasis)

While the narrator mingles with the crowd of guests and socializes, Hiltiburg makes herself noticable by refusing to dance and sitting in a corner. The narrator is similarly stand-offish; he makes the claim that his reticence is out of consideration for her: 'Ich hielt mich überhaupt an diesem Feste ziemlich ferne von ihr, damit sie nicht glaubte, dass ich Rechte geltend machen wolle.'(p.636)

At this stage then, the narrative is that of a man who is insisting on letting things take their course. What becomes significant in the narrative style is, as has been said of Stifter's last Novelle Der fromme Spruch, the representation of a lack of meaning. The description of how the narrator arranges his life and occupies himself is lacking in any significance outside its propositional content, except that it is a conscious lack, an act of will that there should be none. The narrator behaves exactly as intended and indicates that he is not there for the purpose of marrying Hiltiburg. The conflict is over procedure. Hiltiburg insists on regarding the narrator as a suitor, while the narrator insists on remaining simply Hiltiburg's cousin. The two refuse to take part in the set of assumptions of the communicative partner. They refuse dialogue and insist on retaining their integrity by refusing to enter the world of the other. The conflict is on the metalevel. It becomes about whose terms will be accepted.

The observation of Hiltiburg continues so that the visit turns into a kind of test, a question of whether Hiltiburg comes up to the standards of the narrator. An ambiguity develops. He describes her in relation to his observation of Vienna as a whole: 'ein grosser Aufwand und ein Prunk in Wohnungen, Geräten und Kleidern'(p.636). His words, concentrating on externals, on appearance, can be interpreted as either praise or condemnation: 'übertraf', 'blieb weit hinter dem zurück', 'überglänzte', 'stets ruhig, ja fast kalt', coming close in their ambiguity to a semblance of judgement in spite of the continued insistence on maintaining distance.

Aber alle übertraf in diesen Dingen die Muhme Hiltiburg. [...] blieb weit hinter dem zurück, was ich an der Muhme Hiltiburg erblickte. [...] so überglänzte sie fortan alles durch ihre äussere Erscheinung. [...] Viele junge Männer brachten ihr tiefe Aufmerksamkeiten dar, und suchten ihre Neigung zu gewinnen; aber ihr Blick war stets ruhig, ja fast kalt.(p.636-67)

Eventually disapproval is expressed and rebuffed with the implication that the narrator cannot pretend to understand and judge a life he has not known. The exchange becomes explicitly between two worlds that do not know of the other. The narrative style of restraint is maintained even in the way in which the narrator finally expresses his feelings:

Ich sprach zu verschiedenen Zeiten gegen die Hoffart und ihre Folgen.

Eines Tages aber endete ich geradezu über diese Dinge mit Hiltiburg, und tadelte ihre Lebensweise.

Sie antwortete: 'Vetter, ich handle nach meinem Willen, wie ihr alle tut. Mein Vater ist in fremden Ländern gewesen, ich bald an diesem bald an jenem Orte, bis ich zu den jetzigen guten Leuten kam. Du hast mich in meiner Kindheit gesehen, und dann nicht mehr. Und die sich zu ihrem Vergnügen an mich drängen, mögen daran ihr Vergnügen haben.'

Ich sagte von nun an nichts mehr; aber ich konnte mein Gefühl nicht unterdrücken, es kam etwas wie Verachtung gegen Hiltiburg in meine Seele.(p.637)

As we shall see later on in the narrative, the decision not to say anything becomes both the symptom of conflict and the demonstration of the mechanism that has brought about peace, prosperity and wealth within the family. It is interesting to note that here paradoxically the subjective 'I' is used not so much for the representation of an

individual standpoint but in order to relativize and hold at bay the judgement of the individual. In expressing 'etwas wie Verachtung' the feelings are admitted but not permitted. The question of error is allowed to exist. The suspension of judgement disallows further speculation.

At this stage the two worlds, that symbolized by the household living in the white building and that living in the red, are entirely separate. Both sides refuse to accept the terms of the other. In contrast to the absolute failure of this relationship we are given a portrayal of warmth and trust in the rest of the household in Vienna. A warmth which is preserved when they move to the Schloss am Steine, a more enclosed society. Here the narrator describes his decision to go off to war. In a strange declaration he goes abruptly from his belief in developing 'die höchste Menschheit' to his decision to depart at night in secret to go and fight.

Eines Tages, da man sehr angelegentlich geredet hatte, sagte ich: 'Die Freiheit als die Macht, unbeirrt von jeder Gewalt, die höchste Menschheit an sich zu entwickeln, ist das grösste äussere Gut des Menschen. Der rechte Mensch ist frei von den Gelüsten und Lasten seines Herzens, und schafft sich Raum für diese Freiheit, oder lebt nicht mehr. Wer so nicht frei ist, kann es anders nicht sein. Das andere ist die Freiheit des Tieres, das nach seinen Trieben tut. Ich hoffe, dass bei uns Männer sind, diese Freiheit zu fördern, und ihr einen Weg in das Staatsleben zu bahnen, dass sie in ihrer Schönheit erblühe. Wie lange es bis dahin dauern wird, weiss ich nicht. Die meisten derer, die jetzt nach Freiheit rufen, sind noch in den Banden ihrer Gier nach Herrlichkeit, Nutzen und Gewalt, und sind gegen die Unterdrückung Unterdrückter, wie der Dichter vor langem gesagt hat: 'Um den Vorteil der Herrschaft stritt ein verderbtes

Geschlecht, nicht würdig, das Gute zu schaffen.' Bei uns tut es not, dass das Reich nicht wanke, und wenn es fest steht, dann mögen in ihm die rechten Männer den Pfad der Freiheit suchen und wir vorerst dazu die rechten Männer finden. Weil ich aber in den Rat nicht taue, gehe ich zu dem Feldherrn, der jetzt das Reich vertritt, und diene ihm. Ich werde ohne Abschied von hier fortgehen, und einmal nach einer finsternen Nacht nicht mehr da sein.(pp.638-39)

In this passage the narrative moves from the allegorical analysis of history to a rhetorical passage expressing Stifter's own beliefs not about the union between States but about the nature of citizenship and the relationship between individual citizens and the community they live in. The beliefs expressed relate directly to Stifter's reaction to the 'Märzrevolution' the 'Unruhen' which in Der Kuss von Sentze have brought about the family's move from Vienna. The beliefs expressed by the narrator as he goes to war are also the beliefs that Stifter expressed in relation to the less dramatic decision to apply for office in the service of furthering the cause of education.

With the quotation from Goethe's Hermann und Dorothea, Der Kuss von Sentze also links events in Austria with the literary reaction to the French Revolution. In quoting from this epic poem Stifter also tapped a popular source, as Hermann und Dorothea had become a favourite with the middle classes in the 19th century. It was read and studied in all the schools and was often the only book that a family owned. It was a book that almost everyone could quote from. Abridged, annotated, expurgated versions appeared for use in schools. The lines the quotation is taken from are the following:

Oh, wie froh ist die Zeit, wenn mit der Braut sich der Bräut'gam
Schwinget im Tanze, den Tag der gewünschten Verbindung
erwartend!

Aber herrlicher war die Zeit, in der uns das Höchste,
Was der Mensch sich denkt, als nah und erreichbar sich zeigte.
Da war jedem die Zunge gelöst; es sprachen die Greise,
Männer und Jünglinge laut voll hohen Sinns und Gefühles.

Aber der Himmel trübte sich bald. Um den Vorteil der Herrschaft
Stritt ein verderbtes Geschlecht, unwürdig, das Gute zu
schaffen.

Sie ermordeten sich und unterdrückten die neuen
Nachbarn und Brüder und sandten die eigennützige Menge.
Und es prassten bei uns die Obern und raubten im grossen,
Und es raubten und prassten bis zu dem Kleinsten die Kleinen;
Jeder schien nur besorgt, es bleibe was übrig für morgen.²⁵

The source material for Hermann und Dorothea was, as with Der Kuss von Sentze historical, the Vollkommene Emigrationsgeschichte von denen aus dem Erzbistum Salzburg vertriebenen [...] Lutheranen by Gerhard Gottlieb Günther Göcking.²⁶ The story of the flight of the Lutherans from Salzburg in 1731 is transposed into Goethe's present. Goethe took part in the campaign in France in 1793 in the siege of Mainz and had himself seen the flight of the refugees from the left bank of the Rhine. Hermann und Dorothea is the attempt to create an image of peaceful order to set against the disruption of the French Revolution and its consequences. The world of the 'Bürger' is raised to the level of Classical heroism. The poem was received with enthusiasm by the German middle classes as a proclamation of their values and the strength of their way of life and it became Goethe's most popular work after Werther. While Hermann, Goethe's hero, is not forced into battle himself, he declares the readiness to go to war to

protect his own family. The affinities between Der Kuss von Sentze and Hermann und Dorothea are thus clear. In Stifter's story the narrator goes to war in order to come back and arrange his family life on a sound basis.

The two works share the central theme of the institution of marriage, the acquisition of a spouse. In this they both look back to the Middle Ages in which the epic centred on the drama around courtship. However, Stifter takes the historical document as a form for his own work rather than, as Goethe did, as the basis for poetry. In Der Kuss von Sentze the source, the chronicle, becomes the story itself, the way in which information is handed down from one generation to another and the way in which family institutions are founded and perpetuated. In the report there is a description of how word of mouth became written down and made into a form of official institution. And unlike in Goethe's work, there is no irony in the way in which continuity with the past is sought, especially in the search for an authentic way of life based on the customs and rituals of the Middle Ages.

In Der Kuss von Sentze the war is an interlude in the story which otherwise focuses on the family events rather than the those of the 'Märzrevolutionen'. The narrator's declaration of intent has the important function of bringing the narrative explicitly into the context of revolution and ideas about the State so that it can also relate to the question of individual participation.

The phrase 'der rechte Mensch ist frei von den Gelüsten und Lastern seines Herzens' in its connection in the passage to the hope 'dass bei uns Männer sind, diese Freiheit zu fördern, und ihr einen Weg in das Staatsleben zu bahnen, dass sie in ihrer Schönheit erblühe' is what links Der Kuss von Sentze above all with an attitude of mind that is associated as much with Prussia as with Austria, a discipline, that Max Weber half a century later would characterize as the virtue of the bureaucrat, the rational servant of the State who follows the rules regardless of what he himself thinks. What we begin to find in Der Kuss von Sentze from this point in the story onwards is increasingly a demonstration of the narrator's willingness to carry out his task in spite of his misgivings. The description of the virtues of suppressing emotion places this literary work in that tradition of rational humanism that celebrates the virtues of suppressing individual emotion in the service of the peace and prosperity of the State.

Die rationale Disziplin. Sie ist inhaltlich nichts anderes als die konsequent rationalisierte, d.h. planvoll eingeschulte, präzise, alle eigene Kritik bedingungslos zurückstellende, Ausführung des empfangenen Befehls, und die unablässige innere Eingestelltheit ausschliesslich auf diesen Zweck.²⁷

The discipline of this mind is not to draw conclusions, not to go further than what is clearly apparent and can be legislated for. Hence the prose style of Der Kuss von Sentze indicates the narrator's attempt to continue in spite of his lack of complete understanding. Stifter's character is obedient, but out of conviction. He continues to obey even when he doubts, but only as a result of suspending

judgement. The prose style is hence not only allegorical, but also a systematic attempt to suspend judgement and the narrative, in its separation of two kinds of peaceful order, the 'Friedenskuss' and the 'Liebeskuss', explores, but does not solve through the voice of the narrator, the problem of the movement from blind obedience to conviction.

However, the first kiss of the story is an act that takes place outside the prescribed ritual laid down by family law. This is how Der Kuss von Sentze, in spite of the rigor and conviction of its surface, manages to undermine its own professed beliefs in the consciously laid down structures of bureaucratic order and ultimately place its trust in unexplained mystery. In spite of the narrator's secrecy, Hiltiburg knows when he is about to depart and kisses him before he leaves. The narrator's response in his own description of the kiss remains consistent, however, with the attempt up to this point to describe objectively and without implying understanding.

Da streifte etwas an mich, wie ein Frauenkleid, zwei weibliche Arme umschlangen mich, und plötzlich fühlte ich einen Kuss auf meinen Lippen. Dieser Kuss war so süß und glühend, dass mein ganzes Leben dadurch erschüttert wurde. Die Gestalt wich in die Finsternis zurück, ich wusste nicht, wie mir war, und eilte auf dem Gange fort, über die Treppe hinab, durch das geöffnete Pfortchen hinaus, auf dem Wagen zur Post, auf dem Postwagen in der Richtung nach meinem Reiseziele dahin, und konnte den Kuss nicht aus dem Haupte bringen.(p.640)

From the point of view of the narrator, it is never explained why Hiltiburg behaves in this way. Even though everything ultimately ends

'happily ever after' and we can trace how his attitude towards her changes when she moves to the 'graue Sentze', her feelings at this stage of the story, where the narrator is expressing resentment, are obviously misinterpreted. The narrator never refers to this error on his part. He represents only the development of his own feelings as a result of his observation of her. We can speculate on the development of her feelings, but what is significant is that the narrator does not. Secrecy and the automatic acceptance of the need for secrecy is also part of the prose style. Not saying any more than needs to be said, not thinking more than needs to be thought, not researching where such would be taken as prying. Discretion becomes a means of retaining peace and moral integrity. It also becomes the barrier to true understanding and empathy - the 'Kuss der zweiten Art'. As the only inexplicable event so far and the source of perplexity, the kiss remains in the narrator's mind, but it is preserved as not only inexplicable but also untouchable. The narrator writes:

Das erkannte ich, dass der Kuss ein tiefes Geheimnis sein sollte, ich forschte nicht und sagte keinem Menschen ein Wort davon.(p.640)

The end of the fighting and Rupert's return to his father marks a continuation of the tasks set out at the beginning of the story. In the dialogue between father and son the position of qualified success is expressed in an exchange that reasserts the values represented in the speech given by Rupert on deciding to go and fight:

Wir müssen doch über das Geschehene reden. Wie wir beschlossen haben, hast du die Sache ausgeführt. Ich danke zuerst Gott, dass er dich wohlbehalten zurück gebracht hat, dann danke ich ihm,

dass wir an der Tat haben mitwirken können. Die an festem Besitze und an Ausbildung hervorragenden, müssen Säulen des rechtlichen Bestandes sein, je nach den Kräften, einige weniger, andere mehr. Wir von Palsentze mehr. Wie wir schon an Macht bedeutender sind, und diese Macht auf Vereinbarungen, Ausgleichungen und Zusagen ruht, so haben wir die Gewähr des Palsentzekusses, die die Heiligkeit des gegebenen Wortes noch mehr erhärtet. Und in dem gegebenen Worte und dem daraus entsprungenen Rechte liegt die Möglichkeit menschlichen Besitzes und menschlicher Reiche. Wenn ein Reich nehmen dürfte, was ihm gut ist, dürfte es jeder und keiner wüsste, ob das Kleinste sein ist, und wir wären im Tierstande. Verbessert soll immer werden, aber in Vereinbarung aller, wo zu verbessern ist. So wirst du auch einmal im Rate wirken, wenn du berufen werden wirst.(p.641)

This passage is of vital importance to an understanding of the relationship between words and meaning in the 'Novelle' and hence to an understanding of the model that is being explored in the narrative. Words are necessary. 'Wir müssen doch über das Geschehene reden.' Words formulated a course of action which has been carried out. 'Wie wir beschlossen haben, hast du die Sache ausgeführt.' The actions and their consequences are used to confirm the values that went into the decision. The dialogue between father and son represents all the correct values even to the extent of getting them in the right order.

Ich danke zuerst Gott, dass er dich wohlbehalten zurück gebracht hat, dann danke ich ihm, dass wir an der Tat haben mitwirken können.(p.641, my emphasis)

Those with more power and possessions have greater responsibilities.
Power rests on negotiation and negotiation takes place through words.

Words are hence holy and must be secured in their role in order to ensure the continued stability of power, wealth and possession. 'Und in dem gegebenen Worte und dem daraus entsprungenen Rechte liegt die Möglichkeit menschlichen Besitzes und menschlicher Reiche.' These are the values that are to be taken into the service of the State. The belief is hence explicitly in constraining the relationship between words and meaning, in the attempt to ensure truth and consistency. The 'Kuss von Sentze' is understood as a mechanism that anchors this relationship yet more firmly.

Once the dialogue moves on to the question of family relationships, however, the prose style, as in response to the disagreement with Hiltiburg, in its inability to express the substantive issues and in its deflection onto matters of how things are to proceed, transforms the confidence of the previous passage into an uncertainty that questions the restraint that is put on words that have been given such overwhelming importance. 'Das übrige, was wir in unserem Stamme gewünscht haben' says the father, 'lassen wir ruhen' (p.641, my emphasis). The response to the failed attempt to unite the family is not to mention it more than is necessary. The narrator describes how they hesitate to talk of the more delicate family matters interrupted by the wars. As promised there is no acrimony, but there is a strong sense of continued resignation to an unwished-for fate. The redundancy of this resignation comes across in a statement meant to portray the correct, humble values of the first exchange. Yet there is a passivity which is not present in the desire to be an active part of the nation's history. In the following statement the father is speaking of his own lifespan, of course not something over which

he has any control, but the expression of that lack of control is what is interesting in its contrast with what has gone before:

Es kann sein, dass es so ist, es kann sein, dass es auch nicht so ist. Erwarten wir was er sendet.(p.642)

The approach to the delicate subject of Hiltiburg is extreme in the way it does not mention conflict as having arisen, but only as potential.

Und zum letzten mein Sohn, dass ich auch davon rede - da es zwischen Hiltiburg und dir so geworden ist, wie es ist, so wird es notwendig sein, dass ihr euch, damit nicht Hass und Feindschaft entstehe, den Friedenskuss unseres Stammes gebet.(p.642, my emphasis)

The movement from the confidence in the passage about the war to the discussion of the relationship between Hiltiburg and Rupert makes the discussion about family relationships parallel with the considerations of citizenship. Again there has been an agreement, again it has been carried out as planned, but in this case it has not been successful. The response to failure is to avoid it, to institute the mechanism of the 'Friedenskuss', the infinite deferral of conflict.

'Ich gebe gerne dieses Pfand', sagte ich, 'und werde unverbrüchlich darnach handeln'.

'Ich weiss es, und so wäre das abgetan', entgegnete er.(p.642)

The narrator's visit to the 'graue Sentze' comes between the conversation between father and son and the 'Friedenskuss'. Here the narrative clearly turns to the task of representing the gradual

process of reconciliation. Rupert's description of his visit to the 'graue Sentze' is again characterized by investigative observation, except that here the style is more suited to the situation in which he finds himself. The environment is strange. Walchon is eccentric - even in this context - and the attitude that can be discerned radically different from any we have so far encountered. While both the narrator's father and Walchon steadfastly uphold the family tradition, we have the impression that in Walchon's case the effort has been more difficult to sustain. It seems that he has only been able to do so through a kind of grim self irony from which he can only escape in the context of his scientific investigations into mosses. The 'graue Sentze' is a twilight zone between the purity of the 'weisse Sentze' (Rupert and Erkambert) and the passion of the 'rote Sentze' (Walchon and Hiltiburg).

The visit begins with a description of the way into this new environment:

Ich ging aus der Vertiefung gegen die Höhen empor und gelangte endlich in ein Gehege, auf dem ein Trümmerwerk von grauen Granitsteinen begann, zwischen denen hie und da eine Krüppelföhre stand, bis zuletzt ungeheure, häusergrosse Granitblöcke lagen und sich rückwärts zu einem Giebel emportürmten, hinter dem erst wieder der Wald hinan steigt. In ihm standen die schönen Bäume, die gerne auf einem solchen Boden gedeihen: Tannen, Fichten, Föhren, Buchen, Ahorne, Birken.(p.642)

In what follows the greatest problem confronting the reader is that of humour, especially in relation to characterization. The character

of Walchon can be interpreted as ceremonious and ritualistic in the extreme. However, as in the case of Der fromme Spruch, Stifter's last 'Novelle', there is also a degree of self-stylization that can appear comic.

Stifter attempted to explain a gentle form of humour in Der fromme Spruch in response to his publisher's expression of uncertainty about how the characters' behaviour should be interpreted. In a letter to his publisher Stifter writes that the characters: 'nicht gerade satirisch sondern scherzend dargestellt werden'²⁸, a characteristic which, after all, is to be found and appreciated in many of his earlier works. However, Koschorke and Ammer for example, in a deconstruction of Stifter's last work, dismiss this explanation:

Der halbe Versuch dieses Rechtfertigungsschreibens, den erhobenen Vorwurf der Lächerlichkeit vom Text auf das dargestellte Milieu abzuleiten, tritt hinter der Parteinahme des Dichters gerade für den formalen Charakter seiner Erzählung zurück. Es reicht nicht aus, zur Begründung einer sprachlichen Tonlage, die zwischen Komik und Lächerlichkeit nicht unterscheiden lässt, das obskure Sujet anzuführen, auf das sich der Autor darstellerisch verpflichtet habe. Vielmehr scheint die Milieuwahl ihrerseits bedingt durch ein Interesse am Aufschreiben von Ordnung, das unter Vorgabe realistischer Erzählweise gezwungen ist, angemessene Fiktion heranzuziehen [...]. Die oft diagnostizierte Komik der Erzählung ist weniger eine dem Fundus der Erzählhaltungen in auktorialer Souveränität entnommene humorige Stimmungslage als Konsequenz der immanenten Bewegung von Stifters Dichtung überhaupt: Folge des ins Unzeitgemässe treibenden Zwangs, die Dichtung auf Harmonie zu verpflichten, dessen Produkt das weltenthoben Wunderliche des Spätstils und die Verkarstung seiner Sprache ist.²⁹

What is interesting about this critique is the idea implicit within it that the emphasis on formal rigour and on harmony, of necessity excludes the expression of humour, or at least that the permission of humour would be destructive to the seriousness of the whole. In making this point Koschorke and Ammer do not only dismiss Stifter's attempt to defend his story, but also point to a problem that arises when human relationships are placed within such structures dominated by formal concerns, namely the problem of where emotion is to find a space. The argument here is that this is precisely what is being explored, above all in the character of Walchon, who suppresses love for the sake of peace with his brother. It is also what is explored in the reconciliation between the brothers and their offspring. To make a final point in response to Koschorke and Ammer's analysis of Stifter's late style, the question is whether the problem of where emotion is allowed to exist in formalized environments is in fact 'weltenthoben' or whether, in his late style, Stifter was not ahead of his time in anticipating the problems of an increasingly bureaucratized society.

To return to the narrative, many aspects of the encounter between Rupert and Walchon allow a gentle humour to exist without destroying the basis of ritual on which their relationship is based. The uncomfortable sense, however, that the facade is maintained only by the construction of an ironic distance, is another example of the ways in which within the 'Novelle' the limitations of the structures themselves are explored. The narrative becomes a description of how the barriers created by the 'Kuss der ersten Art' are broken down in order to achieve the higher level of the 'Kuss der zweiten Art'.

'So besuchst du mich in meiner Waldburg. Sie ist aus Holz, wie die des alten Königs Etzel, nur ist sie kleiner und steht nicht auf einer grauen Heide, wie die seinige, sondern unter diesen grauen Steinen. Gehe herein.'(p.643)

In this passage, for example, these words spoken by Walchon can be understood as a characterization that is 'nicht gerade satirisch sondern scherzend'. In particular, the comparison between his 'Waldburg' and Attila's can be understood as Wachon's humorous use of historical knowledge. In his self-irony Walchon dismisses himself at the same time as acknowledging himself as host. The narrator in the meantime experiences the hostility of the dog, which typically for the narrator's style again is not explicitly expressed as hostility, but in a rather controlled fashion as the dog 'der einige Misstöne gegen mich gab'(p.644). The narrative never lapses in its methodical progress from event to event. The process recalls the opening of the narrative in its hesitancy over categories and faint suggestions of possible emotion. The description of the room they go into has the hesitancy of the first paragraph, the room is 'eine Art Saal'. Again there is uncertainty about the emotions that are being felt: 'seine Augen glänzten ungewöhnlich'(p.644).

With the symmetry of the opening passages, the narrator is taken around the rooms he is to use. Each is described as something new. First the narrator describes his impression of the room, then Walchon names the room and its use. With the movement from room to room a link is maintained between the impression and the name of the room in the same way as the link was made between each house and its name:

'Die Geräte waren aus Birkenholz gemacht', 'das ist das Birkenzimmer'(p.644) and so on.

In retrospect, considering the narrator's extensive interest in the spartan regime, Walchon's formal greeting can also be interpreted as humorous in the discrepancy between the grand name of the room and the food proffered in it:

'Das ist der Burgsaal. Ich grüsse dich als Gast, iss das Stückchen Brot mit mir, das ich zu bieten habe.'(p.644)

Perhaps the main evidence for an interpretation of humour in the portrayal of the character of Walchon lies in the question of food. Food, or the lack of it, becomes a leitmotif, above all in relation to the improvement of the cuisine as Hiltiburg arrives and takes over. However, that Walchon has saved such a formal greeting until this point is evidence of a difference between Walchon and the narrator's father Erkambert. The difference lies above all in the uncertainty of register. While the encounter with Erkambert is unambiguous in its ceremony, both the narrator and the reader are uncertain how to take the character of Walchon. Elements of personality enter in at this very first stage of the encounter.

It is in the long descriptions of the meals that the narrator's observations begin to allow the possibility for humour to enter. Systematically each item on the menu is described and the remark, 'diese eine Speise war das Mittagmahl gewesen' indicates that the simplicity of the meal is new to the narrator, its frugality is something different, something noticeable. Here the possible humour

in his observation lies not in his attitude towards the regime in the 'graue Sentze', but in the reader's observation of the narrator's discomfort and restraint. The possibility for humour is hence not destructive.

Walchon's self-irony becomes more apparent in his introduction of his 'Besatzung'(p.645). Each is named and, in the same way as he elevated the house by comparing it with an ancient King's residence, he elevates the workforce, giving Wilhelm the title of 'Seneschall'(p.645), the highest ranking civil servant in the royal court. Each is named, including the domestic animals, and even the wild creatures are mentioned: 'Die andern sind freiwillig da: die Käfer, Fliegen, Eidechsen, Falter, Mäuse'(p.645). The sense that this uncertainty of tone also unsettles the narrator is indicated in the reassurance offered to both Rupert and the reader: 'Du wirst alles und den Brauch dieses Hauses kennen lernen'.

It is made clear that the narrator's integration into the household does not happen without difficulty. Hospitality is minimal. At first his getting to know the household consists of experiencing mealtimes and finding out what the rest of the household is so busy doing that they leave him completely to his own devices. His visits to his uncle are strained. The terrain around the house is difficult, although the description of it seems to offer the only potential pleasure.

However, the main difficulty - which is also the most important factor in the depiction of the process of reconciliation - lies in the total silence over family affairs, the absolute concentration and focus on the natural environment and the maintenance of the routine

in hand. Once again the narrator is exemplary in the avoidance of subjects not brought up by his uncle.

Er sprach nur von gewöhnlichen Dingen. Über Angelegenheiten unseres Geschlechtes oder über Mitglieder desselben redete er gar nicht. Ich suchte auch nicht irgend einen Gesprächsgegenstand aufzubringen. Welcher Art die Bücher waren, die ich in seinem Zimmer sah, strebte ich nicht zu ergründen.(p.647)

The breakthrough comes when the narrator collects some mosses and brings them to his uncle. The motivation is clearly to find a link between himself and his uncle, to find a way not only to break down the wall of restraint but also to do it in an appropriate manner. In due course, his entry into the science of mosses opens up the dialogue about family matters and when they get round to talking of them Walchon's attitude becomes clearer.

'Ich habe das Haus, das ich die graue Sentze nenne, zu einer Zeit erbaut, da etwas eingetreten war, das ich nicht verwinden zu können gemeint hatte. Ich habe es aber verwunden und habe wieder in die Zeit fortgelebt. Das Haus ist zu manchen Überwindungen gut und ich habe es öfter besucht. Alle Dinge, die ich seit meiner Jugend zu Gutem und Grossem unternommen hatte, sind nicht in Erfüllung gegangen. Ich habe mich gefügt und habe abermals in die Zeit hinüber gelebt. Nur die Naturdinge sind ganz wahr. Um was man sie vernünftig fragt, das beantworten sie vernünftig.'(p.649, my emphasis)

This 'breakthrough' passage into dialogue is remarkable as much or perhaps more for what is not said as for what is said. The speech does not only represent thematically the problematic side of the 'Friedenskuss', where individuality has had a stronger battle with

the need to conform, it also represents it in the style of expression in which the nature of this struggle also becomes apparent. 'Da etwas eingetreten war' refers to, but fails to name, the quarrel described by Erkambert, indicating that unlike the former, Walchon has not managed to overcome it in spite of his visit to the 'graue Sentze'. Turbulent events that require emotional strengths become 'Dinge, [die] nicht in Erfüllung gegangen [sind]'. The phrase, 'ich habe mich gefügt' is echoed in the restraint of this passage which in its lack of a direct reference to the events, reveals how it is that Walchon has 'in die Zeit hinübergelebt'. The truth of 'Naturdinge' becomes a form of reason without content, without significance, a vessel for thought that is avoiding the problem of passion.

The appearance of Hiltiburg directly after this speech draws the parallel between the quarrel between Walchon and Erkambert and that between Rupert and Hiltiburg. Again there is a hint of humour in the observation that: 'neben der Gestalt stand der Hund meines Veters. Er war ruhig und schien sogar freundlich'(p.649).

The narrative now moves from the stalemate of the relationship between Hiltiburg and Rupert to a common cause. While Hiltiburg's criticism of the narrator was that he judged her without knowing the circumstances of her life, now they are brought together by a task which is common to both - the rehabilitation of Walchon. Again there is the possibility of humour in the narrator's continued instruction in the science of mosses with Walchon. This time the source of the uncertainty of tone is caused by repetition. The narrator brings some mosses which Walchon lays on the table:

'Du bist auf dem Riegelstein gewesen, ich wüsste nicht, wo diese Dinge sonst vorkommen.'

'Ich bin auf dem Riegelsteine gewesen', antwortete ich.(p.650)

The exchange is like a ritual in which the narrator plays the patient role of pupil. The understatement continues. Walchon is concerned first with the mosses and mentions Hiltiburg almost incidentally. Again this can be taken two ways. Either Walchon really is wrapped up in his scientific investigations or, like the narrator, he wishes to play down the significance of the event:

'Du hast schon ein gutes Auge', sagte er, 'wir werden einlegen und pressen. Hiltiburg ist gekommen und wird hierbleiben.'(p.650)

The narrator's potential invitation to discussion is dealt with abruptly:

'Ich denke, dass sie es mit gutem Grunde tat', sagte ich.

'So ist es', antwortete er.(p.650)

What is more, the improvements to the housekeeping noted by the narrator, particularly in the improvement to the cuisine, mark a particular turning point in his attitude towards Hiltiburg:

Zu unseren Speisen gesellten sich nach und nach Zutaten, und hatten wir morgens Milch, Tee, Kaffee, Butter und kalten Braten, mittags Suppe, Rindfleisch, Gemüse und noch irgend eine Speise und des Abends die Speisen wie des Morgens, nur noch einen warmen Braten dazu. [...] Alle gewöhnten sich an die neue Ordnung, es wurde nichts mehr darüber gesprochen.(p.650)

Just as in Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice Darcy improves in Elisabeth's eyes when she sees his property and the way he treats his servants, so Hiltiburg improves in the eyes of the narrator when she shows she can keep house. Nothing is said, however. Again the narrator observes Hiltiburg, except that this time he approves. It is in a markedly better atmosphere that the 'Friedenskuss' is suggested.

The suggestion that the two should exchange the kiss of peace marks the end of a period that represents the mood of reconciliation. In the banal pragmatism of this section an attempt is made to convey the human psychology of relationships that take place within or perhaps beyond the structures of the ritual.

It is revealing that the repetition demonstrated in the ceremony is allowed to be motivated at this stage not only by the nature of the ceremony itself, but by the hesitation of the participants.

'Weist du das Wort?'

'Ich weiss es', antwortete sie.

'Ich weiss es auch', sagte ich.

Dann fragte ich: 'Soll ich das Wort sprechen?'

'Sprich es', antwortete sie.(p.652)

Hesitation, caution, which perhaps could be seen as the root cause of the narrative style, continues even after the narrator has recognized Hiltiburg as the one who kissed him before he left to go to war. Again, it is partly caused by a refusal to interpret Hiltiburg's behaviour. She goes to the window:

Als wollte sie in die grauen Steine hinaussehen.

Ich ging hinter ihrem Rücken gegen sie, dann ging ich gegen die Tür, dann ging ich wieder gegen sie.(p.653)

The external movements of the characters are what is described, even at the moment of recognition, even though narrated from the subjective perspective. In the end it is the formula that allows him to put the question: 'ist das nur ein Kuss des Friedens gewesen?'(p.653).

There is no reflection on the part of the narrator on how or why it all happens. Although the first narrator returns to report the prosperity that ensues, there is no easily identifiable moral to be drawn. In spite of the insistence on structure, on exactitude, the 'Kuss der ersten Art' and so on, and although the happenings to some extent take place within this structure, there is no clear conclusion to be drawn about the effectiveness of the system, since it is chance as much as anything else that has brought about the good fortune. In fact, the final happiness is delayed because of the family structure, so that the step into the new relationship from the desolation of the old is the more remarkable because of the structural hindrances that have had to be overcome.

The attempt to invest the remains of ritual structures and their origin in religious belief, with the conviction of a secular belief in the stability of the State, becomes an exploration of a modern mentality that is caught between the authenticity that is to be found

in origins and the emotional poverty of structures that are retained for the stability they afford rather than the meaning that they provide. The narration of the path to peace, prosperity and love in spite of its chronological coherence, remains psychologically incoherent. The 'Liebeskuss' has been exchanged but it remains only a hope that the necessity for the 'Friedenskuss' will not arise again.

Schoenborn expresses this ordering of chaos as the result of a belief in ritual:

Heute neigt man in der westlichen Welt überwiegend dazu, Ritus und Zeremonie als bloße prunkvolle Fassade ohne dahinterstehende Substanz abzutun. [...] In seinem vorgerückten Alter glaubte Stifter fest an den Sinn feierlicher Formen und Gebräuche und sah in ihnen ein wichtiges Mittel zur Sicherung des privaten, als auch des öffentlichen Lebens. [...] Der tiefste Sinn des Ritus besteht in der Sicherung des Lebens. Der Mensch unterstellt sich einem sinngebenden Jenseits und richtet seinem Lebensstil danach aus. Rituelles Verhalten bringt Ordnung in das Chaos des Daseins. Ohne Riten scheint der Mensch verloren. Dadurch dass man etwas mehrmals wiederholt, bekommt man ein Geländchen in die Hand, an dem entlang man sich bewegen kann. Das Unbekannte, Gefürchtete wird dadurch zu etwas Bekanntem, Vertrautem. Das Leben verliert durch diese Einbindung in feierliche, traditionelle Verrichtungen seinen Schrecken.³⁰

In Der Kuss von Sentze such ritual, creating the kind of stability that comes from repetition, from the existence of a structure to provide a course of action where there is no sense, is explored both in terms of its necessity and in terms of that which it excludes. It explores the nature of ordered incomprehension in a prose style that reveals a coherent lack of understanding. The world of the characters

is real to them. They live in it, are part of it, can manipulate it, describe it, but they do not understand it, nor does their effort at understanding, couched in terms of describing their experience, bring them or us any joy. After the considerable effort of producing a coherent narration all that is left is a blank, a potential for meaning, a structure in which meaning can be created so that at the end of the story the first narrative voice can return to report on the outcome of the marriage. Typically the outcome is expressed both in terms of the buildings and the prosperity of the family and perhaps most significantly in terms of a pattern of history repeating itself:

Die gestreifte Sentze wird immer stattlicher und wohnlicher, und der Garten immer blühender; die rote Sentze ist fast schon so rein und klar wie die weisse; die graue Sentze ist in ihrem Innern noch ansehnlicher und prunkender als früher ausgerüstet. Hiltiburg und Rupert sind in einem Glücke, wie jenes einzige Fräulein, und jener einzige Junker des Geschlechtes der Palsentze gewesen waren, und es scheint auch von ihnen die Folge ausgehen zu wollen, wie von jenem Paare.(p.656)

The paradox is that both narrative voices, in the rigidity of the structure to which they conform, ultimately relinquish their ability to affect the course of events. The process of narrating becomes detached. There is so much distance between, on the one hand, what is permitted to appear in the narrative as justified, witnessed or documented evidence, and, on the other, the events themselves, that the course of history, one feels, carries on unaffected. The individual experiences - or fails to experience - his life, in the last analysis, beyond the boundaries of the historical report.

* * *

One of the fascinations of Austrian literary history lies in the way it has been reconstructed since the Second World War. The contemporary view of Austrian literary history is the result of two stages of reconstruction. First the attempt post-1945 to use literature in order to create a specifically Austrian identity - by looking back to an era before Austria became implicated in Germany's attempt to create a single German Empire - brought about a nostalgic conservative mode of analysis into which Adalbert Stifter's writings fitted as the expression of a conservative, peaceful, cautious Austrian identity. This was followed in the late 1960's by a violent reaction against what was seen as a repetition of those forces that had led to Austria's involvement in National Socialism. According to this analysis the humanist attempt at creating contented citizenship emerged as a conspiracy against individuality. The following is an extensive series of extracts from Thomas Bernhard's Alte Meister³¹, in which the narrator repeats the rantings of an art critic who sits and contemplates cultural history as it is displayed in the 'Kunsthistorisches Museum' in Vienna:

Die Staatskinder kommen aus dem Staatsbauch auf die Welt und gehen in die Staatsschule, wo sie von den Staatslehrern in die Lehre genommen werden. Der Staat gebiert seine Kinder in den Staat, das ist die Wahrheit, der Staat gebiert seine Staatskinder in den Staat und lässt sie nicht mehr aus. Wir sehen, wohin wir schauen, nur Staatskinder, Staatsschüler, Staatsarbeiter, Staatsbeamte, Staatsgreise, Staatstote, das ist die Wahrheit. Der Staat macht und ermöglicht nur Staatsmenschen, das ist die Wahrheit. Den natürlichen Menschen gibt es nicht mehr, es gibt nur noch den Staatsmenschen und wo es noch den

natürlichen Menschen gibt, wird er verfolgt und zu Tode gehetzt und/oder zum Staatsmenschen gemacht.(pp.56-57)

Die Schule ist die Staatsschule in welcher die jungen Menschen zu Staatsmenschen und also zu nichts anderem als zu Staatshandlangern gemacht werden. Ging ich in die Schule, ging ich in den Staat und da der Staat die Menschen vernichtet, ging ich in die Menschenvernichtungsanstalt.(p.58)

Da gehen diese Lehrer im Staatsauftrag mit ihren Schülern durch das Museum und verleiden ihnen mit ihrer Stumpfsinnigkeit die Kunst. Aber was ist diese Kunst an diesen Wänden anderes als **Staatskunst**, denke ich. Reger redet nur von **Staatskunst**, wenn er über die Kunst redet, und wenn er über die sogenannten Alten Meister redet, redet er immer nur über die alten **Staatsmeister**.(p.61)

[...] die Nachwelt hat nur Unwahrheit und Verlogenheit an den Wänden hängen, nur Unwahrheit und Verlogenheit ist in den Büchern, die uns die sogenannten grossen Schriftsteller hinterlassen haben.(p.63)

Als ich mich vor einem Jahr präzise und radikal mit Stifter beschäftigte, traute ich meinen Augen und Ohren nicht. Ein so fehlerhaftes und stümperhaftes Deutsch oder Österreichisch, wie Sie wollen, habe ich vorher in meinem ganzen Geistesleben nicht gelesen bei einem solchen ja heute tatsächlich gerade wegen seiner gestochenen und klaren Prosa berühmten Autor. Stifters Prosa ist alles andere als gestochen und sie ist die unklarste, die ich kenne, sie ist vollgestopft mit schiefen Bildern und falschen und verqueren Gedanken und ich wundere mich wirklich, warum dieser Provinzdilettant, der immerhin Schulrat in Oberösterreich gewesen ist, heute gerade von den Schriftstellern und nicht von den unbekanntesten und unauffälligsten so hoch geehrt wird. Ich glaube, alle diese Leute haben Stifter niemals wirklich gelesen [...].(p.72)

Stifter ist in Wahrheit einer der phantasielosesten Schriftsteller, die jemals geschrieben haben und einer der anti- und unpoetischsten gleichzeitig. [...] Dass sich der Mann am Ende seines Lebens umgebracht hat, ändert an seiner absoluten Mittelmässigkeit nichts.(p.75)

Das Verwerfliche ist ja, sagte Reger gestern, dass ausgerechnet Stifter ein gefürchteter Schulmann gewesen ist und noch dazu Schulmann in gehobener Position und der so schlampig geschrieben hat, wie man es einem seiner Schüler niemals hätte durchgehen lassen. Eine Seite von Stifter von einem seiner Schüler Stifter vorgelegt, wäre von Stifter total mit dem Rotstift zerkratzt worden, sagte er, das ist die Wahrheit. Wenn wir Stifter mit dem Rotstift zu lesen anfangen, kommen wir aus dem Korrigieren nicht heraus, sagte Reger.(p.77)

Stifter macht uns die Natur eintönig und die Menschen gemütsarm und geistlos, er weiss nichts und er erfindet nichts, und das, was er beschreibt, denn einzig und allein ein Beschreiber ist er, beschreibt er grenzenlos bieder.(pp.80-81)

In this lengthy diatribe against one of Austria's 'Old Masters' those elements are brought together for which Stifter is most well-known: the clarity of his prose, his preference for description, the concentration on nature, the exemplary nature of his characters, the fact that he committed suicide and the fact that he was, aside from being an author, also a schools inspector. They are put in a context in which these characteristics in an Austrian author become part of a general conspiracy in which education and the arts - painting, music, literature - all work together with the State against the individual, against the 'natural' child, turning each person into a 'Staatsdiener'.

In the case of Adalbert Stifter, Bernhard's scurrilous techniques hit a particularly appropriate target since it is part of Stifter's humanist aesthetic that literature can show how education and the arts turn the individual into a good citizen. It is this, presumably, that prompts Oswald Wiener to name Stifter 'ein psychotechniker'³².

However, Stifter has also had the honour of being hailed an 'experimental' writer and perhaps it might be true to say that in the integrity of the struggle that in Der Kuss von Sentze ensues in the attempt to create perfect harmony between the individual and the community, the text escapes such accusations that might be brought against it.

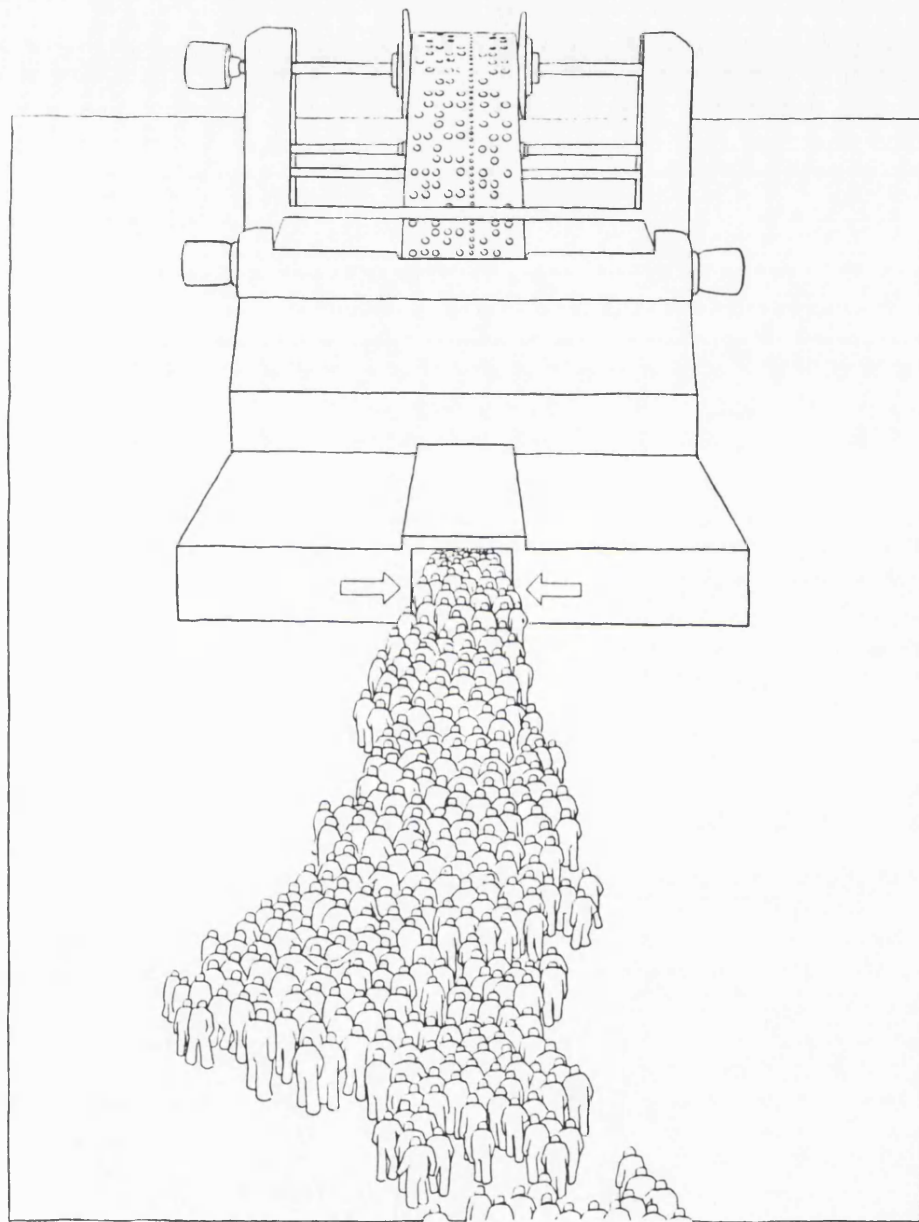
Notes to Chapter Two

1. All page references to Der Kuss von Sentze are to the edition given in the bibliography.
2. Friedbert Aspetsberger, 'Die Aufschreibung des Lebens: Zu Stifters Mappe', VASILO, 27 (1978), p.256.
3. Wolfgang Frühwald, '"Tu felix Austria...": zur Deutung von Adalbert Stifters Erzählung "Der Kuss von Sentze"', VASILO, 36 (1987), 31-41.
4. Peter A Schoenborn, Adalbert Stifter: sein Leben und Werk, (Bern, 1992).
5. Schoenborn, p.518.
6. Dokumenta Paedagogica Austriaca: Adalbert Stifter, ed. by Kurt Gerhard Fischer, (Linz, 1961), p.xxiii.
7. Fischer, p.xxiii.
8. Friedrich Simony, geographer, author of Das Dachsteingebiet, ein geographisches Characterbild in 1895 and Professor at the University of Vienna from 1851.

9. 19 August 1871, letter to Emil Kuh, for his book Zwei dichter Oesterreichs: Franz Grillparzer - Adalbert Stifter, (Pest, 1872).
10. Hieronymous Lorm, April 1845, in Briefe aus dem Vormärz, ed. by O. Wittner, (Prague, 1911), pp.342-343.
11. See note 5.
12. All further references to Stifter's letters and articles are to the Prague edition, Adalbert Stifters Sämmtliche Werke, ed. by Gustav Wilhelm, (Prague, 1916). SW, XVIII, letter 158, 26.4.1849, p.1.
13. Letter to Louise von Eichendorff, SW, XVIII, letter 287, 24.6.1854., p.214.
14. Max Weber, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, p.576.
15. Fischer, pp.xcii-xciv.
16. 'Mittel gegen den sittlichen Verfall der Völker', from the Wiener Boten (1849), SW, XVI, p.128.
17. 'Bildung des Lehrkörpers', from the Wiener Boten, (1849), SW, XVI, p.196.
18. See note 17.

19. SW, XXII, letter 874, 20.3.1850., p.212.
20. Fischer, p.lxxxiv.
21. Fischer, p.lxxxvi.
22. Hubert Lengauer, 'Konstitution und Selbstbeherrschung: Zum Verhältnis von Lebensgeschichte und Zeitgeschichte in Stifter's "Mappe"', in Johann Lachinger and others, Adalbert Stifter Heute, Londoner Symposium 1983, (Linz, 1985), 135-151, p.135.
23. Fischer, pp.c-ci.
24. Fischer, p.lxxix.
25. Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Hermann und Dorothea, (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1987), p.43, (6. Gesang, lines 40-46).
26. (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1734).
27. Max Weber, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, p.681.
28. Stifter to Leo Tepe, SW, XXII, 31.10.1867., p.160.
29. A. Koschorke and A. Ammer, 'Der Text ohne Bedeutung oder die Erstarrung der Angst: zu Stifters letzter Erzählung', DVLG, 61 (1987), 676-719, pp.682-683.

30. Schoenborn, p.481.
- 31.. Thomas Bernhard, Alte Meister, (Frankfurt am Main, 1985).
32. die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman, p.XV.



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CHAPTER THREE

'Das waren Arbeiten, die man eigentlich einem Maschinisten hätte überlassen können.'

FRANZ KAFKA'S IN DER STRAFKOLONIE

In this chapter on Franz Kafka's In der Strafkolonie I shall be focussing on a writer whose literary works have had an enormous influence on the image and conception of bureaucracy, and on a particular work that contains and explores the most powerful image of bureaucracy as the instrument of State - the machine. Axel Dornemann gives an idea of how far-reaching Kafka's influence has been on our understanding of bureaucracy by pointing out that Kafka's works have not only been definitive for literary representations of bureaucracy, but are also listed alongside theoretical works in the bibliographies of text books on bureaucracy.¹ Perhaps one of the most significant aspects of the relationship between Kafka's works and the common perception of bureaucracy is the parallel that has been seen between the 'Kafkaesque' representation of bureaucratic structures and the model of rationalized efficiency represented in the writings of Kafka's contemporary, Max Weber. The following is a passage from Weber's Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft in which, as Axel Dornemann points out, the sociologist expresses a vision of bureaucracy that has itself an imaginary quality. It is the passage that is quoted most often in relation to the image of the machine in Kafka's In der Strafkolonie.

Wo die Bürokratisierung der Verwaltung einmal restlos durchgeführt ist, da ist eine praktisch so gut wie unzerbrechliche Form der Herrschaftsbeziehungen geschaffen. Der einzelne Beamte kann sich dem Apparat, in den er eingespannt ist, nicht entwinden. Der Berufsbeamte ist, im Gegensatz zum ehren- und nebenamtlich verwaltenden 'Honoratioren', mit seiner ganzen materiellen und ideellen Existenz an seine Tätigkeit gekettet. Er ist - der weit überwiegenden Mehrzahl nach - nur ein einzelnes, mit spezialisierten Aufgaben betrautes, Glied in einem nur von der höchsten Spitze her, nicht aber (normalerweise) von seiner Seite, zur Bewegung oder zum Stillstand zu veranlassenden, rastlos weiterlaufenden Mechanismus, der ihm eine im wesentlichen gebundene Marschroute vorschreibt. Und er ist durch all dies vor allem festgeschmiedet an die Interessengemeinschaft aller in diesen Mechanismus eingegliederten Funktionäre daran, dass dieser weiterfunktioniere und die vergesellschaftet ausgeübte Herrschaft fortbestehe. Die Beherrschten ihrerseits ferner können einen einmal bestehenden bürokratischen Herrschaftsapparat weder entbehren noch ersetzen, da er auf Fachschulung, arbeitsteiliger Fachspezialisierung und festem Eingestelltsein auf gewohnte und virtuos beherrschte Einzelfunktionen in planvoller Synthese beruht. Stellt er seine Arbeit ein oder wird sie gewaltsam gehemmt, so ist die Folge ein Chaos, zu dessen Bewältigung schwer ein Ersatz aus der Mitte der Beherrschten zu improvisieren ist. Dies gilt ganz ebenso auf dem Gebiet der öffentlichen wie der privatwirtschaftlichen Verwaltung. Die Gebundenheit des materiellen Schicksals der Masse an das stetige korrekte Funktionieren der zunehmend bürokratisch geordneten privatkapitalistischen Organisationen nimmt stetig zu, und der Gedanke an die Möglichkeit ihrer Ausschaltung wird dadurch immer utopischer. Die 'Akten' einerseits und andererseits die Beamtendisziplin, d.h. [die] Eingestelltheit der Beamten auf präzisen Gehorsam innerhalb ihrer gewohnten Tätigkeit, werden damit im öffentlichen wie privaten Betrieb zunehmend die Grundlage aller Ordnung. Vor allem aber - so praktisch wichtig die Aktenmässigkeit der

Verwaltung ist - die 'Disziplin'. Der naive Gedanke des Bakuninismus: durch Vernichtung der Akten zugleich die Basis der 'erworbenen Rechte' und die 'Herrschaft' vernichten zu können, vergisst, dass unabhängig von den Akten die Eingestelltheit der Menschen auf die Innehaltung der gewohnten Normen und Reglements fortbesteht. Jede Neuordnung geschlagener und aufgelöster Truppenformationen und ebenso jede Herstellung einer durch Revolten, Panik oder andere Katastrophen zerstörten Verwaltungsordnung vollzieht sich durch einen Appell an jene bei den Beamten einerseits, den Beherrschten andererseits gezüchtete Eingestelltheit auf das gehorsame Sichfügen in jene Ordnungen, der, wenn er Erfolg hat, den gestörten Mechanismus sozusagen wieder zum 'Einschnappen' bringt.²

The image of the human body, trapped, tortured and eventually spiritually conquered at the centre of a complex piece of machinery is at the heart of Kafka's In der Strafkolonie. However, the absolutist nature of this image, with its implications for the nature of the relationship between individual existence and the social framework of modern society, is clearly what makes the work relevant to this study. What I shall be focussing on is not so much the symbolism of the machine itself but rather the dialogue that takes place in its shadow, a dialogue that, in centring on the machine as a technical triumph, skirts around the issue of what the machine is actually there for. Roy Pascal pointed out that the drama of the narrative takes place in the mind of the traveller: 'it is his attitude, his hesitations, his rapt attention, his evasions and resolves that constitute the theme of the story'³. What concerns this study is the way in which the dialogue, in three phases, represents three aspects of the bureaucratic environment and its traces in the use of language, specifically in the way it turns the use of language

away from substance and towards procedure. The first aspect of the dialogue has to do with the directing of attention, the organization of thought and the power that comes with the ability to name and to classify. The second is concerned with the manipulation of the dialogue itself, making explicit the mechanisms that are demonstrated in the first phase, in the battle to arrest and then direct the course of the dialogue. In each of these sections, in which the officer attempts to persuade the traveller of the wonders of the machine and then to show him how to represent the interests of the machine, the startling reality that is left almost unnoticed is what should count as the most psychologically relevant factor - the pain inflicted by the machine. In the final section the effectivity of these mechanisms is demonstrated in the representation of a mind that seeks to avoid, but cannot avoid, what it has been exposed to. Throughout the dialogue, what is remarkable is the sense of distortion that arises out of the focus on the machine itself rather than its function, but in the end we see how the traveller is unable - because of the previous detailed instruction given by the officer - either to ignore the machine or to belittle it in the eyes of those around him. What I shall be focussing on in this chapter is hence a game with language made serious through the image at its centre.

However, before going on to an analysis of the text, it is worth considering, as was shown with Bernhard and Stifter, the ways in which Kafka's works can be seen in relation to his own career as a government official. As was the case with Stifter, it is not only the specific environment in which Kafka worked that is relevant, but also

the historical context out of which the form of institution that Kafka worked for grew. The mechanisms that inform the dialogue in In der Strafkolonie can also be perceived in the framework of the growth of the bureaucratic organization.

Kafka studied law at the German speaking University in Prague, his native town, and after gaining his doctorate in jurisprudence, worked temporarily for a private insurance company. In 1908 he joined the legal department of the Arbeiter-Unfall-Versicherungs-Anstalt für das Königreich Böhmen in Prag. Kafka's work as a bureaucrat has been described by Klaus Hermsdorf in his introduction to the volume of collected bureaucratic documents from Kafka's career that have been preserved entitled 'Arbeit und Amt als Erfahrung und Gestaltung'.⁴ It is worth sketching the historical background to the organization for which Kafka worked during most of his career to demonstrate the way in which it reflects the ingenuity of structure, organization and manipulation that can be found in In der Strafkolonie.

Die Unfallverhütung nimmt ihren Ausgang von der privaten Initiative, sie verdichtet sich in körperschaftlichen Veranstaltungen, sie bildet ein wichtiges Objekt der staatlichen Fürsorge und ihr Endziel liegt in der allmählichen Vereinigung aller auf sie abzielenden Bestrebungen.⁵

The establishment of the organization took place in the context of a general movement towards social responsibility in response to the growth of industry. Compensation for industrial accidents grew out of the same political impulse as, for example, the statutory introduction of a rest day on Sunday, the establishment of employment

agencies, the inspection of factories, the establishment of schools for workers, reform in housing, creation of sickness and invalidity insurance and so on. The language of Eugen Pohl's speech (quoted above) on becoming the head of the Institute is an indication of the way in which the organization is seen as a vessel for uniting different agents. Behind the aspiration that all the various interested parties should eventually be united lies the reality of a conflict of interests.

The Institution was created by the State, on the basis of similar institutions in Bismarck's Germany. The organization itself, as with any autonomous governmental organization, was intended to function independently, balancing its own books by predicting the accident statistics and their cost accurately. What is interesting about such organizations, and the mechanisms through which they work, is the way in which on an institutional level a conflict arises between the question of neutrality and the question of influence. At the same time as the organization is designated a neutral body, denying it a will of its own, its purpose is clearly to effect change in the relationship between the factory owners and those who work for them.

The organizational mechanisms through which the institution managed to influence, and yet remain outside the framework of industrial activity are worth noting for the way in which they demonstrate the conflicts that underlie the bureaucratic environment and the way in which those conflicts found their way onto paper. The Institute's role is significant to an understanding of the literary text for the way in which it involves finding a regulated structure that

demonstrates consistency and neutrality whilst at the same time achieving a designated goal. Looked at negatively, such a process is the institutionalization of manipulation. Looked at idealistically it is the creation of rational structures for the regulation and improvement of society. From any angle, the way in which the Institute for which Kafka worked functioned was ingenious. Its role first of all was to create an overall framework to classify the nature of risk in each firm in terms of the machinery it used and number of accidents that took place. On the basis of that framework each firm was required to pay a certain sum into the insurance fund. Having found an overall framework the Institute had to assess each individual firm in relation to that overall framework. Both of these tasks were done on the basis of accident statistics. The way in which the relationship between the firms themselves was worked out meant that each could be classified within the framework entirely on the basis of a mathematical calculation, excluding the need for an arbitrary decision on the part of the organization. The average risk of all insured firms was expressed as a number. The average for the most dangerous firm was given a risk of 100 percent and all other firms were measured as a percentage of that. On the basis of that measurement each firm was put into a category of numerically equivalent percentages. The allocation of the firms into classes of risk and the assessment of the percentage was calculated on the basis of the findings of all insurance organizations and revised every five years. In this way each firm affected the other, so that an improvement in one brought about a relative deterioration in another even if the latter had remained unchanged in terms of its equipment

and safety measures. The framework could thus encourage change while remaining neutral.

However, in spite of this, the organization still came to be perceived as an agent that itself could affect the course of the claims made on it. The power to assess the category of risk was the greatest and consequently the one that met with most resistance. Placed in the ambivalent position of being an organization intended to achieve an improvement in safety standards, but also an administrative body with no intentions of its own, the Institute became a buffer zone between discontented workers, who complained that the compensation they received was too low, and angry business men who complained that their risk category was too high. Kafka was involved in this very aspect of the organization's work, as 'Verantwortlicher für die Gefahrenklasseneinreihung'.

In the conflicts underlying the functioning of the Arbeiter-Unfall-Versicherungs-Anstalt für das Königreich Böhmen in Prag, together with the ways in which these conflicts on paper could be resolved, can be seen in the report 'Unfallverhütungsmassregel bei Holzhobelmaschinen' written by Kafka to appear in the 'Jahresbericht' of 1909.⁶ In this document he describes the advantages of a new design of wood planing machines in terms of improved safety for the machine operator and economic and efficient running for the owner. Kafka received a prize for this report, Brod mentions it in his biography and Hermsdorf praises it for its clarity. In the Gablonzer Zeitung on the 2.10.1910 there was a report on it. What is remarkable about this report is the way in which it celebrates the discovery of

a situation in which the interests of the various conflicting forces can be reconciled. In its proclamation of this discovery the report is almost evangelical in tone, creating a fascinating fusion between its role as a report for a neutral organization and its desire to show, enhance and promote a trend that furthers its aims.

Endlich schreitet die Einführung der runden Sicherheitswellen für Holzhobelmaschinen in günstiger Weise fort. Hierfür bürgt der Zirkularerlass der k. k. Statthalterei und die k. k. B^özirkshauptmannschaften betreffend die Einführung der Sicherheitswellen, sowie die Stellungnahme der k. k. Gewerbeinspektorate, welche mehr und mehr auf Verwendung dieser Wellen dringen und endlich die Tatsache, dass bereits eine ganze Anzahl von Unternehmern mit derartigen Wellen arbeitet und sich in sehr günstiger Weise - die schutztechnische Bedeutung wurde niemals in Abrede gestellt - auch über die praktische Verwendbarkeit der runden Wellen ausgesprochen hat. Es ist daher die begründete Hoffnung vorhanden, dass in absehbarer Zeit die runden Wellen eine derartige Verbreitung werden gewonnen haben, dass für die Einreihung eines Betriebes Nichtverwendung dieser Wellen als Merkmal für eine über das Normale erhöhte Gefahr wird bewertet werden können. [...] Dies hat seinen Grund vor allem darin, dass die runde Welle unter den schutztechnischen Einrichtungen eine ganz besondere Stellung einnimmt, da sie abgesehen von ihrer schutztechnischen Wirkung, die überdies eine vollkommene ist, auch noch eine ganze Anzahl anderer Vorteile in sich vereinigt, indem sie im Grunde billiger ist als die Vierkantwelle, überdies billiger arbeitet und endlich auch besser arbeitet, so dass ihre Einführung an das sozialpolitische Verständnis der Unternehmer nicht einmal Anforderungen stellt, sondern schon dem bloss praktischen Blick sich sofort empfiehlt.(p.134, my emphasis)

The tone of this opening is what lifts it as a report above the usual. It begins on a triumphant note, indicating in the word 'endlich' both previous difficulty and present victory. What is announced, however, is that the introduction of the new design is beginning to meet with some success. That is, the machine is still not universally accepted, but the prospects are that it will be. Hence there is still the need for an extensive description of how and why the new design has been accepted by some firms and why other firms should feel encouraged to follow suit. The introduction to the report has the following characteristics: it is a report based on other bureaucratic documents and declarations, as a report its goal has consequences (reclassification of risk), it creates a role for itself, it organizes discussion into subjects and above all it is persuasive through declaring success.

That the new design is successful, is vouched for by documents and declarations of the organizations affected by the changes. The final result of the process is that the use of the old design will become categorizable as an unnecessary risk and hence be discouraged through higher insurance costs. This report regrets only one thing - that the technical journals have not treated the subject since it would require 'nur einer letzten zusammenfassenden, in alle beteiligten Kreise dringenden Darstellung [...], um in kurzer Zeit die runde Welle zu einer allgemeinen Einrichtung zu machen.' With this plea the report implicitly declares its own role - to summarize all the advantages of the new design and present them to all interested parties in order to achieve universal acceptance. The report does not say this explicitly, however. It says that if the technical journals

did present such a summary, everyone would be convinced. This sentence does two things: first it declares the subject to be exceptional in that the improvement in safety also creates an improvement in efficiency so that the writer does not have to call on the employers' social conscience to justify the new machine; second it organizes the discussion that follows into parts: a demonstration of the improvement in operational safety, of the fall in purchasing cost, in running costs and of greater efficiency.

In keeping with the main concern of the organization - the reduction of risk in the workplace - the section on safety is the longest. The title of the section, 'Die runde Sicherheitswelle schützt vollkommen', indicates that the conclusion is to be demonstrated rather than argued for. It is an advertisement to persuade the buyer rather than a technical document weighing up the pros and cons. It is a mixture of an advertisement and a technical document.

The kinds of injuries sustained by the machine operators are also depicted in diagrams showing hands with one or several fingers either shortened or completely severed. The diagrams accompanying the report comparing the square and the round planes have often been commented on in relation to In der Strafkolonie. Each diagram also depicts a hand moving over the machine as it would when directing the wood towards the cutting edge but without the plank of wood itself, thereby demonstrating where the danger would lie were the wood to be knocked out of the hand. The text describes first the square plane and points out that the danger lies in the gap between the blade and the surface of the table. The diagram depicts the fingers of the

worker going into the gap where they would be cut off by the revolving blade. The text describes how the apparent danger is unavoidable, defeating even the most cautious worker. Note how the text describes the danger in the past tense.

Selbst die Hand des vorsichtigsten Arbeiters musste in die Messerspalte geraten beim Abrutschen, bzw. bei dem nicht selten vorkommenden Zurückschleudern des Holzes, wenn der mit er einen Hand das zu hobelnde Stück auf den Maschinentisch aufdrückte und es mit der anderen Hand der Messerwelle zuführte. Dieses Emporheben und Zurückschleudern des Holzes war weder vorherzusehen, noch zu verhindern, denn dies geschah schon, wenn das Holz an einzelnen Stellen verwachsen oder ästig war, wenn sich die Messer nicht schnell genug drehten oder sich selbst schlecht stellten oder wenn der Druck der Hände auf das Holz ungleichmässig verteilt war. Ein solcher Unfall aber ging nicht vorüber, ohne dass mehrere Fingerglieder, ja selbst ganze Finger abgeschnitten wurden.(p.135, my emphasis)

It is in the sober description of maimed limbs that the report is often seen as related to In der Strafkolonie. In relation to this passage Roy Fuller, for example, writes:

The style here (characteristic in any case of the lawyer who has had to master temporarily and expound the details of some unfamiliar life or process and which may be seen, for example, in written judgements of the English High Courts) Kafka plainly carried over into his imaginative work. One need only instance the phrase somewhat over-violent for the context ('hurled back'). The technical process apparently clearly described but remaining enigmatic; the presentation of the recalcitrance of the material world; the constant alternatives in happenings or causes.⁷

Safety measures actually increased the risk 'indem sie den Spähnen keinen genügenden Fallraum gaben, so dass die Messerspalte sich verstopfte und häufig Verletzungen von Fingern vorkamen, wenn der Arbeiter die Spalte von Spähnen freimachen wollte'.

The use of the past tense is in keeping with the dual purpose of the report, balancing itself between the fact that the text is necessary to persuade those remaining factory owners who have not installed the new machines, and the declaration of great success in the widespread use of the new machines.

At this point the round safety shaft is described, depicted in diagrams and compared with the square shaft. Alternative positionings of the cutting edge are described, along with aspects of the design that make this positioning an improvement on the old model in terms of damage to the machine, cleaning the machine, and ease in directing the wood over the cutting edge. It is only after these advantages have been mentioned that safety is referred to.

Everything is now described in the present tense.

Durch die angeführten Vorrichtungen ist einerseits die überwiegende Möglichkeit beseitigt, mit den Fingern in die Spalte der Vierkantwelle zu geraten, andererseits aber ist selbst für den Fall, dass die Finger in die Spalte kommen, bewirkt, dass nur ganz unbedeutende Verletzungen sich ereignen können, Risswunden, die nicht einmal Unterbrechungen der Arbeit zur Folge haben.(p.138, my emphasis)

Diagrams are given showing the injuries sustained in accidents with the new machine, hands with small scratches on the pads of the fingers. The report then goes on to declare the economic advantages of the new machinery. In part two 'Die runde Sicherheitswelle ist im Grunde billiger als die Vierkantwelle', the price of the cutting edges and the lack of extra safety measures required are mentioned. In part three, 'Die runde Sicherheitswelle arbeitet billiger als die Vierkantwelle', the improvements in speed, the rate of wear and tear, consumption of energy and noise levels in the safer model are listed. In part four, 'Die runden Wellen arbeiten auch besser', the report states that the quality of the planing is better and that less wood is wasted. More kinds of wood can be planed on it and because the cutting edges do not have to be changed so frequently the work can be done faster. Finally, the point is made that the worker can now work faster because he is no longer principally concerned with injury to himself.

Throughout the report a balance is sustained between the representation of the interests of, on the one hand, the entrepreneur attempting to make a profit, and, on the other, the aims of the Institute to improve safety standards and justify the reclassification of firms using the older equipment. In its declaration of success, coupled with its intention to convince as a piece of writing, it is itself a demonstration of the linguistic skills prompted by the bureaucratic situation.

Hermisdorf indicates how the relationship between Kafka's literary style and the style of the report does not involve the production of

'literary reports'. Rather, Kafka's literary work can be seen as stylistically akin to the reports he wrote:

Mit den Begriffen des Gesetzes und der Gesetzesinterpretation ist auch ein Denk- und Darstellungsweise verknüpft, die [...] in der Erwägung diffuser Tatbestände, in der Deutung nur scheinbar deutlicher Nachrichten sich geradezu ausschweifend entfaltet und dies zum Merkmal einer Prosa macht, die in vielen Traditionen wurzelt, aber nicht zuletzt in der Überlieferung juristischer Fachprosa zu suchen ist, mit der Kafka alltäglich sich zu befassen hatte.⁸

The process of interpreting statute law and the involvement in the attempt to steer various competing forces in the direction of safer and better working conditions, placed Kafka in a position where problems associated with the nature and role of language become real, living problems. Kafka was in a position to observe the relationship between language and communication, the relationship between the complex truth of incident and the coherence put on it in the report. The way in which language could be used in a power struggle as a manipulating force, and the reliance of the bureaucratic State on documents, the use of a slippery medium such as language in an attempt to lay down laws and guidelines, led to an exhausting tension that could never be resolved.

Hermisdorf says of the rise of industry:

Im Gebäude der Arbeiter-Unfallversicherungsanstalt registrierte man seine Folgen; vom Triumph des technischen Zeitalters sah man seine Kehrseite in der Gestalt einer rapide ansteigenden Zahl von Arbeits- und Arbeiterunfällen.⁹

The organization was not unaware of its own shortcomings and there were attempts to improve on its procedures. However, its only method of improvement was the institution of new rules. As Hermsdorf puts it:

Es war eine geregelte und immer besser geregelte Tätigkeit, zu deren Regelmässigkeiten es sogar gehörte, dass jeder neue Direktor sie neu zu regeln wünschte.¹⁰

Hermsdorf argues that it is the specialized nature of the work that meant that the overall aim of the Institute was lost in a welter of technical minutiae.

Ihr in 'Kaiserlichen Botschaften' und hoffnungsvollen Gründungsdokumenten proklamierter gemeinnütziger Zweck entzog sich dem Beschäftigten der Erfahrbarkeit, wenn nicht durch die Unzulänglichkeit der Mittel gegenüber dem Zweck, so durch das einfache Vergessen der Zwecke im einförmigen Alltag spezialisierter Büroarbeit.¹¹

It is worth looking at how the position of this particular kind of bureaucratic work might differ from that of the piece-worker whose alienation from the means of production is created through the focus on one stage of production rather than the whole. Unlike the worker in the factory or the entrepreneur in each plant, the bureaucrat is here meant to be in a position to monitor the effects of change on the whole process and to work out the mechanisms through which to alter the framework in order to correct faults. If there is an existential problem in the position of such a bureaucrat, it lies not

in specialization but in the opposite, in the attempt to coordinate so many parts, in attempting to see the whole picture. In such a position, the disassociation between work and end product is even more absolute. There exists a gap between the bureaucrat and his work even at the table at which he sits, what is more it is a gulf that corresponds in a sense to the space between language and meaning.

The connection between language and meaning is not filled with truth but with the act of using language, the pragmatics of the communicative context. The bureaucratic document becomes an act in the way in which it both creates and communicates itself in the formulation and fulfilment of a legal requirement. For the bureaucrat who writes the report, the writing becomes a task in itself, rather than the preliminary stage or the summing up afterwards. The bureaucrat's tools are words, his skill is with language. The report does not only communicate information, it communicates directives, it creates requirements, it creates structures, whole organizations, tasks, goals and in so doing it proclaims itself, it is rhetorical and intends to persuade.

The document is thus powerful, yet the relationship between it and reality is tenuous. In the case of the report discussed above, it is, in its nature as a document, between being a directive and a pure speech act, justifying but not bringing about, the reclassification of risk. In writing the report the bureaucrat finds himself battling with many problems, the origins of which lie in language. It is in concentrating on these that alienation and distortion occur. In In der Strafkolonie, as I shall argue, it is the set of problems

associated with the focus on language itself, rather than what it does or contains, that is explored.

These considerations point to the distortion inherent in the image of bureaucracy as an efficiently functioning machine. While Weber writes that the success of bureaucratic organization lies in this machine-like nature, it is not denied that tensions arise out of the process of rationalizing tasks carried out by human beings:

Der entscheidende Grund für das Vordringen der bürokratischen Organisation war von jeher ihre rein technische Ueberlegenheit über jede andere Form. Ein voll entwickelter bürokratischer Mechanismus verhält sich zu diesen genau wie eine Maschine zu den nicht mechanischen Arten der Gütererzeugung. Präzision, Schnelligkeit, Eindeutigkeit, Aktenkundigkeit, Kontinuierlichkeit, Diskretion, Einheitlichkeit, straffe Unterordnung, Ersparnisse an Reibungen, sachlichen und persönlichen Kosten sind [...] auf das Optimum gesteigert.¹²

In a letter explaining why he could not lie to his superiors in order to take time off from his work, Kafka writes (in brackets) that he is unable to see the organization he works for in terms of an image of the machine and is therefore unable to treat it as such.

(ich kann dort vielleicht schlechter lügen als ein anderer, dem - so sind die meisten Beamten - seiner Meinung nach immerfort Unrecht geschieht, der über seine Kräfte arbeitet - hätte ich doch diese Meinung, das wäre schon fast ein Wiener Schnellzug - der das Bureau als eine dumm geleitete Maschine ansieht - er würde das viel besser machen - eine Maschine, in der er eben infolge dieser Dummheit der Leitung an unpassender Stelle verwendet wird - seinen Fähigkeiten nach ist er ein Ober-Ober-Rad und muss hier nur als Unter-Unter-Rad arbeiten u.s.f., mir

aber ist das Bureau - und so war es die Volksschule, Gymnasium, Universität, Familie, alles, ein lebendiger Mensch, der mich, wo ich auch bin, mit seinen unschuldsvollen Augen ansieht, ein Mensch, mit dem ich auf irgendeine mir unbekannte Weise verbunden worden bin, trotzdem er mir fremder ist, als die Leute, die ich jetzt im Automobil über den Ring fahren höre. Also fremd ist er mir bis zur Sinnlosigkeit, aber gerade das erfordert Rücksichten, ich verberge ja meine Fremdheit kaum, aber wann erkennt das eine solche Unschuld - und ich kann also nicht lügen)¹³

In the same way as the nature of language is located between the machinery of its structure and its organic development through time, so bureaucracy, in its rationalization of human tasks and of the act of writing, remains a living entity that inspires an emotional reaction.

To repeat the structure laid out at the beginning of the chapter, the dialogue in In der Strafkolonie can be seen in three stages: in terms of a battle in the first stage of the dialogue over what the dialogue is to be about - the machine versus the nature of justice in the camp; in the second stage, in terms of an explicit demonstration of the mechanisms used in the first of how to manipulate the course of communication; and finally in terms of the way in which the exposure to information - the act of witnessing - arrests the observer and compels him into acknowledgement.

The background to and the structuring principles of the discussion of these stages, which address the problem of how utterances 'step

outside the conversation' as I discussed in the introduction, comes from a paper entitled 'Discourse control in confrontational interaction' by Jenny Thomas.¹⁴ In the first part of the discussion I shall be referring to concepts that derive from this research which deals with 'conversational strategy signals' or discourse control acts, which bear on the act of communication as such, rather than on the information conveyed.

In her research Thomas focuses on three kinds of metadiscourse in conversational encounters which are unequal, that is, which presuppose a hierarchical context in which one of the partners in the dialogue is subordinate to the other. Her data comes mainly from an interview between a chief inspector of police and a detective constable who is censured and returned to uniformed duties. However, this context is explored in order to show how, even in such contexts, the social correlates postulated in sociostylistic studies as 'givens' are, in fact, not given, but rather established in the course of the conversation. Thus the discorsal equivalents of the correlates (relevance, rights, obligations) are also established rather than given.

The relationship between this research into the pragmatics of language use and the interpretation of In der Strafkolonie is not intended, however, as any form of proof in support of a particular interpretation, but merely as a use of a discussion which explores the same themes and points to the same phenomena in language as does the literary text. Thomas's research is introduced thus as a revealing parallel, a theoretical analysis of those linguistic

phenomena also addressed by the literary text. In this context the terminology of the pragmatic research is not as important as the ideas and the insights that it affords. As Roger Fowler puts it in his book Linguistic Criticism, the relationship between research in linguistics and the interpretation of literature is not that of applying a machine to data:

As Chomsky has insisted, Linguistics is not a discovery procedure: not an automatic machine which, fed a text at one end, delivers at the other end some significant generalizations about the character of the text. To pursue this mechanical metaphor, it is easy to envisage a machine which would run through a text and count, say, instances of nominalizations, or abstract words, or prepositional phrases, or whatever. But that would be mechanized numerical analysis, not linguistics (which is concerned with the nature of nominalization as part of a speaker's knowledge); and it is certainly not criticism. A critic switching on the machine would need to have some idea that nominalization might be a significant construction and so worth counting; and s/he would need to interpret the numbers that issued as output of the analysis: interpretation which would be guided by the hunch that selected the nominalization for study in the first place. This interplay between thesis and analysis is essential to criticism.¹⁵

Thomas puts forward three kinds of discourse control acts which are used to constrain the addressee. The first kind are 'discourse indicators', which define the purpose and boundaries of discourse and are surface level markers of the speaker's discoursal intent. They define the purpose and nature of the dialogue and set up topic boundaries which create discoursal space. The example given is a statement such as 'I have three points to make'. The second kind are

'metadiscoursal comments' which keep the subordinate to the established path and disallow contributions which do not contribute to the dominant party's goals. They are used to signal new stages, the end, and to legitimize digression. So, for example, 'I am not here to answer questions, you answer my questions'. And finally, there are 'interactional controllers' which are used to secure an 'on-record' response. Here the subordinate is forced to observe what Grice¹⁶ calls the 'politeness principle'. He has to respond to the conversation and produce evidence of participation, cooperation. An example would be the utterance, 'what do you have to say about that?'.

In reading In der Strafkolonie these categories point to the ways in which, in the representation of the dialogue, the struggle to 'define the purpose and boundaries of discourse', or the battle over what the dialogue is to be about - the machine or the nature of justice in the camp - takes place at a metalevel, at the level on which the officer is able to organize the course of dialogue by structuring it in accordance with the structure of the machine. It can be seen how, once the purpose has been defined, the traveller attempts to disrupt it so that the officer has to battle - again through language, although physical violence remains a threat throughout the dialogue - to keep the traveller to the established path. And it can also be seen how the politeness principle is one of the most powerful devices for achieving that goal and in forcing the traveller not only to observe but also acknowledge his participation in the scene.

To turn to the text, Kafka's In der Strafkolonie is well known as an expression of the brutality of the modern State. The machine has repeatedly been interpreted as a symbol of the precedence of the machinery of State over the individual, within which individual suffering becomes insignificant. In studies which have focussed on the discussion between the officer and the traveller it has also been recognized, however, that there is some ambivalence in the text about the machine and the officer's dedication to its preservation. The traveller's distaste is also not seen in an entirely positive light. This ambivalence has been read as a criticism of a lack of force and spontaneity in the humanist position represented by the traveller and admiration for the conviction of a more brutal order.

The drama of the narrative is created by the development of the dialogue. We see a relationship being established in the course of the dialogue, how each partner first conceals and then reveals the motivation behind what is said, showing the difference between the attempt to convey information in ignorance of the other partner and the attempt to use the knowledge of the other partner in dialogue in order to manipulate the course of the dialogue. The officer wishes to present the machine to the traveller and believes that if he does so effectively the machine will be saved. The traveller wishes to retain his distance (partly because he is not in fact entirely neutral), he is concerned with his position and the kind and amount of power he can rightly assert. In the representation of the dialogue between these two positions lie those tensions in the narrative which are recognizably typical of the tensions within a modern bureaucratic State.

In the course of the dialogue we find, on the one hand, dedication, expertise, loyalty, and on the other, neutrality, politeness, restraint and dispassionate observation - that is, the portrayal of the same elements of State service which are meant to prevent or compensate suffering. They are put in a context which distorts them, however. In the introduction I indicated that it is this sense of distortion that is the most relevant aspect, for this thesis, of the reception of In der Strafkolonie, namely, the way in which the officer's obsession with the machine is juxtaposed with the traveller's concern about his position in the camp, whilst the most psychologically relevant object of the discourse, I would argue, is the instrument of torture. For the reader, the idea of the pain inflicted by the machine remains the most powerful impression, even though the text portrays the officer engaged solely in a description of its mechanics and the traveller preoccupied with whether he is allowed to object to such procedures in the penal colony or not. Both preoccupations, as I expressed in the introduction, horrifyingly deflect away from a confrontation with the physical and mental pain inherent in the image of the machine. As a consequence, one is led to question a style of prose displaying characteristics typical of the bureaucratic situation. In such a context, that which is psychologically relevant is frequently peripheral. Central to such a style are organizational needs, the formulation of arguments, strategies, procedures.

The same fascination displayed by all experts in the object of their expertise, with its combination of wonder and complete familiarity, is captured in the first sentence of the story.

'Es ist ein eigentümlicher Apparat,' sagte der Offizier zu dem Forschungsreisenden und überblickte mit einem gewissermassen bewundernden Blick den ihm doch wohlbekannten Apparat.(p.100)¹⁷

In this sentence, in the observation that the officer looking at the machine is a gesture, a relationship is created between what can be seen as the officer's genuine fascination with, dedication to and expertise in the machine, and the way in which this genuine preoccupation becomes a device to capture and direct attention. Throughout the story attention is drawn to the way in which the officer is as comfortable and familiar with this machine as a mechanic, so that his ability and dedication is indeed a matter of admiration, so much so that the officer's use of his obsessive focus on the machine as a device to direct the traveller's attention is successful both in so far as the traveller's interest in the machine, an interest that the officer works so hard to achieve, develops via his interest in the officer's skill, and in so far as the machine itself gains in significance as an object of pure devotion. Again and again attention is drawn in various ways, at various stages to the expertise of the officer, so much so that the position of the 'Forschungsreisender', in his task of observation and investigation, becomes one in which his capacity to observe and appreciate is put under strain by the comparison with the officer.

Das waren Arbeiten, die man eigentlich einem Maschinisten hätte überlassen können, aber der Offizier führte sie mit einem

grossen Eifer aus, sei es, dass er ein besonderer Anhänger dieses Apparates war, sei es, dass man aus anderen Gründen die Arbeit sonst niemandem anvertrauen konnte.(p.100)

It is the energy that comes from the officer's dedication to his task that transforms the scene from a dismal execution on a hot day into an event, and it is the elevation of the task from mere routine, not delegated to 'einem Maschinisten', but carried out by the officer himself, that makes not only the machine the central symbol but also the details of its mechanics. In the extension of the focus of attention from the machine as a device of execution, to a device which itself is made up of many different functioning parts, the symbolism of the machine is extended from the representation of oppression to the representation of an object within which it is possible to find a new world of relationships and significances.

While the officer's interest in the machine renders him immune to all discomfort, his absolute concentration on explaining it is focussed yet more through the combination of the activity of explaining it with the activity of keeping it in good order. The traveller's attention is arrested both by the sheer discomfort of the officer's position in mending the machine and by the casual ease with which he tends to its every need:

Um so bewundernswerter erschien ihm der Offizier, der im engen, parademässigen, mit Epauletten beschwerten, mit Schnüren behängten Waffenrock so eifrig seine Sache erklärte und ausserdem, während er sprach, mit einem Schraubendreher noch hier und da an einer Schraube sich zu schaffen machte.(p.101)

The officer is almost childlike in his familiarity with the machine.

Als sei der Offizier von diesem störenden Rad überrascht, drohte er ihm mit der Faust, breitete dann, sich entschuldigend, zum Reisenden hin die Arme aus und kletterte eilig hinunter, um den Gang des Apparates von unten zu beobachten. Noch war etwas nicht in Ordnung, das nur er merkte; er kletterte wieder hinauf, griff mit beiden Händen in das Innere des Zeichners, glitt dann, um rascher hinunterzukommen, statt die Leiter zu benutzen, an der einen Stange hinunter.(p.107)

This expression of fascination continues right up to the very end of the story, when the officer decides to put himself inside the mechanics. Here the depiction of his expertise is at its most insistent.

Wenn es schon früher deutlich gewesen war, dass er die Maschine gut verstand, so konnte es jetzt einen fast bestürzt machen, wie er mit ihr umging und wie sie gehorchte. Er hatte die Hand der Egge nur genähert, und sie hob und senkte sich mehrmals, bis sie die richtige Lage erreicht hatte um ihn zu empfangen; er fasste das Bett nur am Rande, und es fing schon zu zittern an; der Filzstumpf kam seinem Mund entgegen, man sah, wie der Offizier ihn eigentlich nicht haben wollte, aber das Zögern dauerte nur einen Augenblick.(p.119-120)

Admiration for the officer is inspired not least by the officer's fascination, personal involvement, and above all skill and knowledge with respect to the machine. Through the attraction to expertise - a feeling of admiration particularly relevant to a world in which specialization is well advanced - the officer's total focus on the workings of the machine and his allegiance to an order which brings such a machine into being becomes psychologically plausible. This is

not meant as an excuse for the officer, but as an explanation for the sympathy that the officer arouses both in the reader and in the traveller, just as the worker in a nuclear power-plant may arouse sympathy in an anti-nuclear demonstrator. However, the fascination is recognized as radically distorted. The common accusation against the 'expert' is that he/she becomes so fascinated by the functioning of something that he/she forgets to question the aim which is served by the process of the efficiently functioning mechanism. And in this story, when those questions are asked, the officer affirms his belief in the aim served by the machine - to the point of validating that aim by his own sacrifice. In the same way it is seen as wrong that the explanation of the machine takes precedence over the acknowledgement of human suffering that takes place on it.

In contrast to the officer, the traveller is characterized by his lack of interest and by his desire at first not to become interested, then not to become influential and finally not to have been seen as influential. Neutrality is the counterbalance for expertise in a system which regulates itself through the bureaucrat, the neutral middle man who decides between conflicting parties. Although the traveller attempts to avoid becoming such a middle-man, in the end it is inevitable that he should enshrine the presence of the sceptical voice, even if only as a result of a sense of politeness, perhaps a notion of chivalry, the traces of an earlier order.

However, the traveller's presence at the execution has been brought about not so much by his own desire to observe as by an institutional pressure. It is an important factor throughout the narrative that the

traveller's presence is out of a sense of obligation rather than personal choice:

Der Reisende schien nur aus Höflichkeit der Einladung des Kommandanten gefolgt zu sein, der ihn aufgefordert hatte, der Exekution eines Soldaten beizuwohnen.(p.100)

It is hence the task of the officer not only to manipulate the traveller's weakness in terms of his susceptibility to a notion of doing what is right, but also to go beyond it, to arouse genuine curiosity in the traveller. However, one of the factors against which the officer has to battle is the contrast between his own expertise and engagement, and the traveller's apparent lack of an ability to grasp what is going on even after he has been won over to an inspection of the machine. The relationship between engagement and the ability to observe becomes an important factor, so that it is in his very neutrality that, as an observer, the traveller is not effective:

Der Reisende hatte wenig Sinn für den Apparat und ging hinter dem Verurteilten fast sichtbar unbeteiligt auf und ab.(p.100)

He finds himself overwhelmed by the geographical surroundings.

Er hatte nicht ganz aufmerksam zugehört, die Sonne verfieng sich allzustark in dem schattenlosen Tal, man konnte schwer seine Gedanken sammeln.(p.101)

Even the officer's attempt to counter the traveller's neutrality and reluctance to observe by pointing out that the latter's presence is not a matter of indifference, is resisted strongly by the traveller,

who tries to deny it: 'der Reisende suchte die Ehrung mit beiden Händen abzuwehren'(p.103). Even once his interest has been gained and he wishes to contribute, he is still not effective:

Der Reisende hätte gerne etwas Anerkennendes gesagt, aber er sah nur labyrinthartige, einander vielfach kreuzende Linien [...].

Again and again the narrative returns to his main concern, which relates to his own position in the discourse:

Der Reisende überlegte: Es ist immer bedenklich in fremde Verhältnisse entscheidend einzugreifen. Er war weder Bürger der Strafkolonie, noch Bürger des Staates, dem sie angehörte. Wenn er diese Exekution verurteilen oder gar hintertreiben wollte, konnte man ihm sagen: Du bist ein Fremder, sei still. Darauf hätte er nichts erwidern, sondern nur hinzufügen können, dass er sich in diesem Falle selbst nicht begreife, denn er reise nur mit der Absicht zu sehen und keineswegs etwa, um fremde Gerichtsverfassungen zu ändern. Nun lagen aber hier die Dinge allerdings sehr verführerisch.(p.109)

However, having travelled with the intention of 'seeing', the traveller cannot avoid becoming involved. Ultimately the officer has won his complete attention. The assumption behind this aim - that, once interested, the traveller would be won over to fight to retain the machine - has been destroyed, but the first aim is fulfilled.

Der Reisende verfolgte von unten diese Arbeit ununterbrochen, der Hals wurde ihm steif [...].(p.118)

Once again, however, the traveller shows himself to be an ineffective observer:

Während der Fall der Zahnräder seine ganze Aufmerksamkeit beanspruchte, hatte er versäumt, die übrige Maschine zu beaufsichtigen; als er jedoch jetzt, nachdem das letzte Zahnrad den Zeichner verlassen hatte, sich über die Egge beugte, hatte er eine neue noch ärgere Überraschung [...].(p.121)

There are thus two conflicting forces: the absolute focus of expertise and commitment, and the absent-mindedness of indifference; the one that insists on gaining attention, and the other that struggles to deny attention. These factors delineate the relationship that is the background to the struggle. Nevertheless at the beginning of the story there is the sense that the officer will indeed gain the attention of the traveller, but that once he has done so the traveller will force him to confront the real questions. The dialogue is dominated firstly by the strategies used by the officer to gain attention; secondly by the strain put on the relationship of politeness occasioned by the traveller's refusal to be interested; and thirdly and most importantly by the impression that what is important is ultimately still being ignored.

'Diese Uniformen sind doch für die Tropen zu schwer,' sagte der Reisende, statt sich, wie es der Offizier erwartet hatte, nach dem Apparat zu erkundigen.(p.100)

At the beginning of the story, then, the traveller is not only not paying attention to the machine, but not doing so consciously, and we see how this strategy is a potentially highly successful way to thwart the aims of the officer. For this reason the officer's success in gaining the traveller's attention is seen as a great victory. It

is as if the very act of paying attention automatically wins the observer over to the object of observation. Since there is so much that we can pay attention to, that we pay attention to a particular issue becomes all the more significant. Conversely, the reverse is, of course, also the case: the refusal to pay attention is also registered as powerful, tantamount to a dismissal without trial.

The officer ignores the traveller's strategy (it is indicated later that he does not even notice the traveller's lack of interest) and brings the conversation back to the machine again and again. In so doing the officer manages to override the principle of politeness through the way in which the obsession with the machine allows him to ignore, to some extent at least, matters of social grace in the urgency of his cause. The admiration that is won through his dedication and expertise is also a factor.

'[...] Nun sehen Sie aber diesen Apparat,' fügte er gleich hinzu, trocknete die Hände mit einem Tuch und zeigte gleichzeitig auf den Apparat.(p.100)

The officer gains attention by asking a question - whether the Kommandant has explained the machine. To refuse to answer a direct question, without being impolite, is almost impossible (unless deafness is feigned) so that the traveller is forced to respond. He attempts to do so vaguely ('Der Reisende machte eine ungewisse Handbewegung'), but this is enough for the officer to have won.

Der Offizier verlangte nichts Besseres, denn nun konnte er selbst den Apparat erklären. 'Dieser Apparat,' sagte er und fasste eine Kurbelstange, auf die er sich stützte, 'ist eine

Erfindung unseres früheren Kommandanten. Ich habe gleich bei den allerersten Versuchen mitgearbeitet und war auch bei allen Arbeiten bis zur Vollendung beteiligt [...].(p.101)

It is here that the officer begins to impose a shape on the course of the dialogue. However, he now almost distracts himself from the subject by speaking about the Kommandant instead of the machine. In the process, however, he does give his qualifications for speaking on the subject of the machine, and eventually brings himself explicitly back to the subject ('ich schwätze, und sein Apparat steht hier vor uns'(p.101)).

The officer now sets up an organizational strategy which has two functions - it organizes the presentation of his explanation, but perhaps more importantly, it creates space for him to speak in. Having named three parts the traveller will not be able to break into the discourse without being seen to interrupt.

'[...] Er besteht, wie Sie sehen, aus drei Teilen. Es haben sich im Laufe der Zeit für jeden dieser Teile gewissermassen volkstümliche Bezeichnungen ausgebildet. Der untere heisst das Bett, der obere heisst der Zeichner, und hier der mittlere, schwebende Teil heisst die Egge.' 'Die Egge?' fragte der Reisende. Er hatte nicht ganz aufmerksam zugehört [...].(p.101)

In the tripartite organization of information under names and the way in which names attract attention, the text here recalls the way in which nomenclature is used in Stifter's Kuss von Sentze, in particular those names which in both narratives are said to have grown out of a particular community. Once they have been named

careful attention has to be paid, and instead of there being only one thing to explain there are now two - the origin of the name and the thing it refers to. Here the traveller manages to disrupt the officer's discursial space and hence his strategy - he takes one of the names out of order. Nevertheless he cooperates in another way. He expresses curiosity, not in the machine, but in a word that relates to it, he is struck by the name 'Die Egge'.

'Ja, die Egge,' sagte der Offizier, 'der Name passt. Die Nadeln sind eggenartig angeordnet, auch wird das Ganze wie eine Egge geführt, wenn auch bloss auf einem Platz und viel kunstgemässer. Sie werden es übrigens gleich verstehen. Hier auf das Bett wird der Verurteilte gelegt. - Ich will nämlich den Apparat zuerst beschreiben und dann erst die Prozedur selbst ausführen lassen. Sie werden ihr dann besser folgen können[...].(p.102, my emphasis)

The officer cooperates with the interruption to use the traveller's expressed interest in that particular name, but then brings the discourse back again to his own purposes first by referring back to the organization already set up and then by elaborating on how the discourse is to be organized. The struggle to gain attention, to define the purpose and nature of the dialogue, has at this stage been won by the officer, and it remains only for him to maintain and consolidate his position. As in the case of Kafka's report on 'Holzhobelmaschinen', the discourse is organized in terms of the terminology, a descriptive apparatus that both organizes and focuses attention. It is significant here that the main parts of the structure of the machine are three in number so that a perfect match is created between the rhetorical and mechanical structure.

However, in the following passage a further issue comes to the fore and we can see how the explanation of the machine, as the focus of the discourse, pushes the question of torture to one side. Although the reader is shocked by the treatment of the prisoner, he/she is more shocked by the way it is spoken of.

Also hier ist das Bett, wie ich sagte. Es ist ganz und gar mit einer Watteschicht bedeckt; den Zweck dessen werden Sie noch erfahren. Auf diese Watte wird der Verurteilte bäuchlings gelegt, natürlich nackt; hier sind für die Hände, hier für die Füße, hier für den Hals Riemen, um ihn festzuschnallen. Hier am Kopfbende des Bettes, wo der Mann, wie ich gesagt habe, zuerst mit dem Gesicht aufliegt, ist dieser kleine Filzstumpf, der leicht so reguliert werden kann, dass er dem Mann gerade in den Mund dringt. Er hat den Zweck, am Schreien und am Zerbeißen der Zunge zu hindern. Natürlich muss der Mann den Filz aufnehmen, da ihm sonst durch den Halsriemen das Genick gebrochen wird.' 'Das ist Watte?' fragte der Reisende und beugte sich vor. (p.102, my emphasis)

The underlining is intended to highlight the way in which the officer speaks primarily of the machine, the body of the prisoner becoming merely something that explains the organization of the machine, something around which the structure is constructed. First he takes the word 'Bett', an ironically gruesome word to describe the death bed, and which has already been mentioned as one of the main sections to be explained. Again the officer refers to his own organization of the discourse to put off explaining the function of the wadding. Each part is then explained in terms of what it is for and how it is designed to work efficiently. The sentence 'er hat den Zweck, am Schreien und am Zerbeißen der Zunge zu hindern' is a good example in

the way the screaming and tongue-biting is nominalized and put into a subordinate clause. Again, the mention of the possibility that the prisoner's neck might be broken, rather than being the subject of attention in itself, is merely part of the explanation of how the machine is designed, so that if the traveller were to refer to the danger, rather than to the machine, it would, again, come across as an inappropriate interruption.

The officer's strategies are successful.

Der Reisende war schon ein wenig für den Apparat gewonnen; die Hand zum Schutz gegen die Sonne über den Augen, sah er an dem Apparat in die Höhe. Es war ein grosser Aufbau. Das Bett und der Zeichner hatten gleichen Umfang und sahen wie zwei dunkle Truhen aus. Der Zeichner war etwa zwei Meter über dem Bett angebracht; beide waren in den Ecken durch vier Messingstangen verbunden, die in der Sonne fast Strahlen warfen. Zwischen den Truhen schwebte an einem Stahlband die Egge.(p.102)

The traveller has been 'won over' to the machine in so far as he now finds it worth paying attention to the officer's explanation - it is interesting. What is more, he looks at it in terms of the names which the officer has given him. In a sense it is his ability to look at the machine in terms of its parts that makes it possible and interesting to look at it at all. The description also makes use of these designations to convey the machine to the reader.

In his seduction through the strategies of the officer, the traveller now appears to take part in the officer's inhumanity regarding the machine's purpose.

'Nun liegt also der Mann,' sagte der Reisende, lehnte sich im Sessel zurück und kreuzte die Beine.(p.103)

His interest is in what happens once the body is in the machine and it is set to work. The act of leaning back in his chair and crossing his legs implies an increasing willingness to listen.

The traveller's wish to know the sentence is taken by the officer as a failure in his own ability to explain. The course of the explanation is interrupted while he shows the traveller the drawings. The question whether the prisoner knows the sentence is a more difficult one, because it is the first to show up the gulf between the officer's and the traveller's worlds and the first to threaten seriously the discourse strategy that has been created by the officer.

'Er kennt sein eigenes Urteil nicht?' 'Nein,' sagte der Offizier wieder, stockte dann einen Augenblick, als verlange er vom Reisenden eine näherer Begründung seiner Frage, und sagte dann: 'Es wäre nutzlos, es ihm zu verkünden. Er erfährt es ja auf seinem Leib.' Der Reisende wollte schon verstummen, da fühlte er, wie der Verurteilte seinen Blick auf ihn richtete; er schien zu fragen, ob er den geschilderten Vorgang billigen könne. Darum beugte sich der Reisende, der sich bereits zurückgelehnt hatte, wieder vor und fragte noch: 'Aber dass er überhaupt verurteilt wurde, das weiss er doch?' 'Auch nicht,' sagte der Offizier und lächelte den Reisenden an, als erwarte er nun von ihm noch einige sonderbare Eröffnungen. 'Nein,' sagte der Reisende und strich sich über die Stirn hin, 'dann weiss also der Mann auch jetzt noch nicht, wie seine Verteidigung aufgenommen wurde?' 'Er hat keine Gelegenheit gehabt, sich zu verteidigen,' sagte der Offizier und sah abseits, als rede er zu sich selbst und wolle den Reisenden durch Erzählung dieser ihm selbstverständlichen

Dinge nicht beschämen. 'Er muss doch Gelegenheit gehabt haben, sich zu verteidigen,' sagte der Reisende und stand vom Sessel auf.(p.104, my emphasis)

The traveller's question, prompted by the explanation, threatens to change the subject completely from the description and admiration of the machine, to the question of the system of justice within the camp. However, here again, the traveller is motivated not so much by his own interests as by the sense of obligation towards the condemned man. It is therefore a simple matter for the officer to distract the traveller from the assertion of another topic for conversation by using yet another strategy. The officer's behaviour, his embarrassment at the traveller's ignorance, can be seen as yet another tactic in controlling the discourse. The traveller is now discouraged from asking questions because they reveal his own ignorance. It is only his sense of duty to the prisoner that makes him carry on in the belief that he ought to represent the condemned man in some way. He has, however, no real connection with the man and there is no hint that the man himself arouses the traveller's sympathies. The traveller is merely struck by the moral problems. He mentions three basic rights - to know what one is charged with, have the opportunity to defend oneself against the charge and to know what the final judgement is and why. In spite of the graphic nature of the story it is the abstract nature of these rights that is explored more than the consequences of their denial. The prisoner is denied these rights but also does not ultimately suffer execution. The dilemma, as Roy Pascal rightly points out, is solely in the lap of the traveller, who is morally tested in a situation which he can do little about

because it is not his life that is threatened. It is the problem of abstract involvement, purely intellectual and emotional, having no real, personal consequences for the traveller. The workings of the machine are not relevant to the traveller. He is not affected by it himself, he is only concerned about it because it offends his moral sensitivities. The one to whom the machine is relevant is, of course, the condemned man, who is a silent on-looker throughout the dialogue. Again and again it is pointed out that this man is struggling to understand what is being said and is excluded by his inability to understand the language that is being spoken.

For the officer, it is not the possibility that the traveller may have moral qualms about the machine that disturbs him, but the interruption to the explanation. The traveller manages to be insistent enough, however, with the result that the officer is compelled to interrupt his own plan in order to acknowledge the traveller. How this is achieved is also significant.

Der Offizier erkannte, dass er in Gefahr war, in der Erklärung des Apparates für lange Zeit aufgehalten zu werden; [...] 'Die Sache verhält sich folgendermassen. [...]'(p.104)

At the same time as reorganizing the discourse so that the interruption can be dealt with as quickly as possible and got out of the way, the officer takes the arm of the traveller in a gesture which affirms friendship in spite of the traveller's ignorance. This is the first of several instances where the officer invades the traveller's personal space in his efforts to engage the traveller's interest and sympathy. The traveller remains either passive in such

cases or indicates discomfort. Again, it is a successful strategy for the officer in the way it compels the traveller to acquiesce even if only out of politeness. It also strengthens the impression that the officer is both physically and mentally stronger than the traveller: 'der Offizier hielt den Reisenden mit einer Hand fest, nahm mit der anderen eine Erdscholle vom Wall und warf sie nach dem Soldaten'(p.106), '[der Offizier] ergriff den Reisenden am Arm und zeigte in die Höhe'(p.107). The officer describes the trial procedure in the camp, a description that gives rise to all the questions and moral problems already mentioned. However, having done so he ends:

'[...] Ist nun alles erklärt? Aber die Zeit vergeht, die Exekution sollte schon beginnen, und ich bin mit der Erklärung des Apparates noch nicht fertig.'(p.105)

There is hence no room for the traveller to question the officer about the system of justice in the camp. In contrast, once he has restarted the explanation of the machine, the officer once more has time for questions:

'[...] Ist Ihnen das klar?' Er beugte sich freundlich zu dem Reisenden vor, bereit zu den umfassendsten Erklärungen.(p.105)

In the description of how the machine works and its effect on the condemned man, the officer comes closest to the human experience that is at the centre of the story. Even here, however, the full impact is avoided. He is explaining at the same time as the machine is in operation and the noises it emits force him to shout. The fact that the words are being shouted makes them all the more gruesome, but all the more a matter of a mechanic describing the workings of a machine.

er [...] schrie nun, um sich im Lärm verständlich zu machen, mit äusserster Anspannung dem Reisenden ins Ohr: 'Begreifen Sie den Vorgang? Die Egge fängt zu schreiben an; ist sie mit der ersten Anlage der Schrift auf dem Rücken des Mannes fertig, rollt die Watteschicht und wälzt den Körper langsam auf die Seite, um der Egge neuen Raum zu bieten. Inzwischen legen sich die wundbeschriebenen Stellen auf die Watte, welche infolge der besonderen Präparierung sofort die Blutung stillt und zu neuer Vertiefung der Schrift vorbereitet. Hier die Zacken am Rande der Egge reißen dann beim weiteren Umwälzen des Körpers die Watte von den Wunden, schleudern sie in die Grube, und die Egge hat wieder Arbeit. So schreibt sie immer tiefer die zwölf Stunden lang.(p.107-108)

Here again, the body is handled like an inanimate object, in a similar way to that in the report on 'Holzhobelmaschinen'. Only the mention of blood indicates that there is any pain. The movements of the body with the machine make it almost part of it. And when pain is mentioned it is 'nur Schmerzen':

Die ersten sechs Stunden lebt der Verurteilte fast wie früher, er leidet nur Schmerzen. Nach zwei Stunden wird der Filz entfernt, denn der Mann hat keine Kraft zum Schreien mehr.(p.108)

Pain, loss of strength and hunger make this passage one of the most direct and yet it is still cushioned by the way in which it remains focused on the function of the machine, how long the process takes and what objects move where and when. The fact that the man has no strength to scream any more is not an indication of the humanity of the victim, but the cue to move the felt which he has been biting on.

Hier in diesen elektrisch geheizten Napf am Kopfende wird warmer Reisbrei gelegt, aus dem der Mann, wenn er Lust hat, nehmen kann, was er mit der Zunge erhascht. Keiner versäumt die Gelegenheit. Ich weiss keinen, und meine Erfahrung ist gross. Erst um die sechste Stunde verliert er das Vergnügen am Essen. Ich knie dann gewöhnlich hier nieder und beobachte diese Erscheinung. Der Mann schluckt den letzten Bissen selten, er dreht ihn nur im Mund und speit ihn in die Grube. Ich muss mich dann bücken, sonst fährt es mir ins Gesicht.(p.108, my emphasis)

In this passage a new element has been introduced. Although the image of the man eating is described as a function of the machine, the focus shifts to the condemned man himself. However, because the officer universalizes the way in which the condemned man behaves with regard to the food, and because it is possible to say that all men go through the same stages, the description once again evades the immediacy of individual subjective experience. It becomes universal experience and therefore categorizable and predictable to the extent that the officer can predict the moment when to duck to avoid the food that is spat out.

The climax of the torture occurs when the prisoner realizes that something is being written on his body and begins to work it out. The officer experiences this realization as a moment of truth: 'Ein Anblick, der einen verführen könnte, sich mit unter die Egge zu legen'(p.108). This single moment of understanding is universalized into something mysterious, holy and seductive by the officer, as if it is different from all other moments of understanding. It is a manipulation of the human desire to understand and of the satisfaction that human beings derive from moments of insight, so

that all the injustice of the procedure, even the possibility that the condemnation may have been wrong, is forgotten as the act of understanding the words that are written, coupled with the timing of death, bring about a perfect end. The coordination of understanding with the moment of death is all that is required. Even understanding, a notion that may have signified acknowledgement of the victim as an individual, is reified. What is understood is irrelevant. That understanding occurs and that it is physical 'am eignen Leib erfahren', is what matters.

Wie still wird dann aber der Mann um die sechste Stunde!
Verstand geht dem Blödesten auf. Um die Augen beginnt es. Von hier aus verbreitet es sich. Ein Anblick, der einen verführen könnte, sich mit unter die Egge zu legen. Es geschieht ja nichts weiter, der Mann fängt bloss an, die Schrift zu entziffern, er spitzt den Mund, als horche er. Sie haben gesehen, es ist nicht leicht, die Schrift mit den Augen zu entziffern; unser Mann entziffert sie aber mit seinen Wunden. Es ist allerdings viel Arbeit; er braucht sechs Stunden zu ihrer Vollendung.(p.108)

For the first time the victim is credited with an inner life, yet the notion of deciphering (i.e. understanding) is reified, is a property of the thing or machine. Reading takes place with the body. The prisoner is hence forced in the process of torture to work out and discover his crime. Once this has been achieved, the officer returns to the style of mechanical description we have already encountered.

Dann aber spiesst ihn die Egge vollständig auf und wirft ihn in die Grube, wo er auf das Blutwasser und die Watte niederklatscht. Dann ist das Gericht zu Ende, und wir, ich und der Soldat, scharren ihn ein.(p.108)

The description of torture is universalized through the explanation of how the machine works, with the result that each detail is a description of the order of things rather than a description of suffering. It works in a similar way to a medical text book in that the onset and development of disease is described in terms of an attempt to understand how the disease functions, rather than in terms of the subjective experience of the individual. Such a procedure is, of course, what has allowed us to understand and control, for example, disease, for the benefit of the individual and the alleviation of suffering. There is a sense in which the officer's description of the workings of the machine can be seen in terms of understanding and manipulating the process of pain, the acquisition of knowledge, and ultimately death, so that what the officer considers to be the perfect sentence is executed. However, the layman cannot help but be struck by the odd perspective that results, by the fact that a context has been found in which major themes of human existence, suffering, death, justice, are treated in the same style as a recipe for a cake or blueprint for a new sportscar. It is not even that such themes can be treated in this way that strikes us as odd. It is that in this context it is presented as perfectly normal that these themes are treated in this way and that if they were not it would not be possible to approach them at all in an attempt to understand them. The revulsion at the notion of torture is such that it is not possible to treat it with all due emotional force at the same time as attempting to understand it. To understand is, perhaps, to hold outrage at bay. The dilemma is, of course, that understanding may perhaps be hindered by this very need to separate emotion from

rational understanding. It seems that we may be stuck in an either/or.

It is in this way that the question of bureaucratization and the precise way in which it is seen to be inhumane provides the dilemma around which the course of the dialogue unfolds. As well as through the symbol of the machine, it is expressed dramatically in the conflict between the officer and the traveller, in the way conversational strategies are set up, thwarted, broken down and rebuilt. In the course of the verbal battle the torture machine becomes part of a situation in which the attempt to achieve correct procedures brings about a loss of contact with the purpose of those procedures. The question of justice becomes a question of whether and whither we allow ourselves to direct our attention.

The doubts, which it is assumed the traveller has, are introduced with the words, 'Der Reisende überlegte'. Not that he was shocked, or horrified, or emotionally affected in any way, but that he needed to 'consider' the position. Furthermore, what he considers is precisely his position - as a foreigner, an outsider to whom the rules of this colony, of this State do not apply, as a traveller, as an observer. In his deliberations he excludes himself as a participant in the morality of the decision by speculating on the arguments that a citizen, embroiled in the dispute about the nature of his community, might put in response to interference from such an outsider. 'Wenn er diese Exekution verurteilen oder gar hintertreiben wollte, konnte man ihm sagen: Du bist ein Fremder, sei still.'(p.109) He decides himself that he has no reply to such a criticism and

justifies himself to himself by asserting his understanding of his actions as a defence against all attacks: 'denn er reise nur mit der Absicht zu sehen und keineswegs etwa, um fremde Gerichtsverfassungen zu ändern'(p.109).

At this stage the narrative moves from a demonstration of the way in which the discourse is controlled by the mechanical description of the machine to a discussion in the text itself of the methods through which the course of communication can be manipulated. The traveller recognizes that his situation gives him the ability to influence the outcome of events in the camp. However, in his reasoning, the elements which he analyzes as those which could deflect him from his role as passive observer into the role of judge are 'verführerisch'. They are temptations enticing him away from his present strategy of retaining neutrality through not becoming interested in the machine. While there is no question that the traveller has been persuaded by the fascination of the machine, the question remains whether witnessing the execution itself would finally have won him over. At this stage the narrative suspense lies solely in the question as to whether the traveller will intervene or not.

Nun lagen aber hier die Dinge allerdings sehr verführerisch. Die Ungerechtigkeit des Verfahrens und die Unmenschlichkeit der Exekution war zweifellos.(p.109)

The argument goes on to discuss the question of neutrality. Given that the traveller exercises his opinion, it is now a question for him as to whether his argument will be taken as valid. The fundamental way in which Kafka's prose reflects the style of the

bureaucratic document is in its exploration of the creation of a cohesive movement from argument to argument. The classical style that creates drama out of conflicting world views is bureaucratized into the process in which conflict is subsumed into a rational decision-making process, weighing up pros and cons, suspending judgement until all has been said. This is the 'drama' or non-drama that, as Pascal points out, takes place in the mind of the traveller, whilst it is tempting to see the officer as providing the emotional drama, as the partner in the dialogue who risks everything on the decision of the traveller. On the other hand, however, in the way he spells out the techniques of crowd manipulation to the traveller, the officer too reveals himself to be contaminated by a thought process that ignores the cause in order to concentrate fully on the means. Validity rests not on whether it is swayed by deep conviction, but quite the contrary, on whether the traveller is sufficiently detached. What is more, his position is powerful precisely because he is uninvolved.

Niemand konnte irgendeine Eigennützigkeit des Reisenden annehmen, denn der Verurteilte war ihm fremd, kein Landsmann und ein zum Mitleid gar nicht auffordernder Mensch.(p.109-110)

The final section of the passage concerns the traveller's rank among the people of the camp. He is sufficiently high in status to be considered a worthy commentator, but the most powerful argument in his favour is that his opinion would be likely to be supported by the highest ranking player in the camp, the new Kommandant. The traveller is willing to go so far as to allow his opinion to be used by the Kommandant since they happen to coincide.

Der Reisende selbst hatte Empfehlungen hoher Ämter, war hier mit grosser Höflichkeit empfangen worden, und dass er zu dieser Exekution eingeladen worden war, schien sogar darauf hinzudeuten, dass man sein Urteil über dieses Gericht verlangte. Dies war aber um so wahrscheinlicher, als der Kommandant, wie er jetzt überdeutlich gehört hatte, kein Anhänger dieses Verfahrens war und sich gegenüber dem Offizier fast feindselig verhielt.(p.110)

In the exchange with the officer the traveller retains the first strategy - claiming he has no influence - for as long as he can, while considering how he can use his position to confirm what he understands as the Kommandant's point of view. The officer, however, displays an even greater awareness of the way in which procedure in the camp can be manipulated. In the course of the conversation he repeats the paradox of the traveller's power in his powerlessness:

Er [...] ging ganz nahe an den Reisenden heran, blickte ihm nicht ins Gesicht, sondern irgendwohin auf seinen Rock und sagte leiser als früher: 'Sie kennen den Kommandanten nicht; Sie stehen ihm und uns allen - verzeihen Sie den Ausdruck - gewissermassen harmlos gegenüber; Ihr Einfluss, glauben Sie mir, kann nicht hoch genug eingeschätzt werden.'(p.114)

The argument becomes a game in which the officer makes his awareness of the political context explicit, explaining it as he had explained the machine to the traveller, while the traveller refuses to admit his own awareness of the situation, hoping thereby to avoid conflict with the officer by claiming powerlessness in order to use his power more discreetly. However, by refusing to state his position, the traveller allows himself to be taken as an ally by the officer. As an

ally he is then privileged with the most intimate knowledge possible in a political situation - namely an insight into the strategy behind the officer's behaviour within the political structures of the camp.

Another aspect of the dialogue at this stage is that it is accompanied by an even greater insistence on physical contact on the part of the officer, revealing an even more graphic lack of cooperation on the part of the traveller. The officer, in his attempts to get the traveller on his side, becomes a physical threat. The discussion begins:

Der Offizier ging zum Reisenden, der in irgendeiner Ahnung einen Schritt zurücktrat, aber der Offizier fasste ihn bei der Hand und zog ihn zur Seite. 'Ich will einige Worte im Vertrauen mit Ihnen sprechen,' sagte er, 'ich darf das doch?' 'Gewiss,' sagte der Reisende und hörte mit gesenkten Augen zu.(p.110)

In his description of the execution in former times the officer becomes more familiar than at any other point. It is the only time that the officer recognizes that he has invaded the traveller's space and apologizes:

Der Offizier hatte offenbar vergessen, wer vor ihm stand; er hatte den Reisenden umarmt und den Kopf auf seine Schulter gelegt. Der Reisende war in grosser Verlegenheit, ungeduldig sah er über den Offizier hinweg. [...]
Der Offizier fasste sich schnell. 'Ich wollte Sie nicht etwa rühren,' sagte er, 'ich weiss, es ist unmöglich, jene Zeiten heute begreiflich zu machen. Im übrigen arbeitet die Maschine noch und wirkt für sich [...]'(p.112)

The officer's point of view is clear here. The machine is an argument in and of itself. The traveller has seen the machine and become interested in it. All that remains is to persuade him that his position cannot be neutral and to act on behalf of the machine. The officer continues in his battle to engage the traveller, while the traveller continues in his attempts to remain polite without cooperating:

Der Reisende wollte sein Gesicht dem Offizier entziehen und blickte ziellos herum. Der Offizier glaubte, er betrachte die Öde des Tales; er ergriff deshalb seine Hände, drehte sich um ihn, um seine Blicke zu fassen.(p.112)

Initially, from his explanations of the way in which the traveller was invited to the execution it appears that the officer has more insight than the traveller gives him credit for. It soon becomes apparent, however, that there is not much insight in a process where all possibilities are argued out. The process does not actually give the officer any more insight into the truth than if he had, for example, repeated one possibility over and over again. There is irony not only in the way the officer assumes the traveller to be on his side - whilst in his speculation about the Kommandant's strategy expressing the traveller's actual position - but also in the way he is completely open about the possibility for political manipulation - a possibility which the traveller is particularly anxious to deny.

'[...] wohl aber will er mich Ihrem, dem Urteil eines angesehenen Fremden aussetzen. Seine Berechnung ist sorgfältig; Sie sind den zweiten Tag auf der Insel, Sie kannten den alten Kommandanten und seinen Gedankenkreis nicht, Sie sind in europäischen Anschauungen befangen, vielleicht sind Sie ein

grundsätzlicher Gegner der Todesstrafe im allgemeinen und einer derartigen maschinellen Hinrichtungsart im besonderen, Sie sehen überdies, wie die Hinrichtung ohne öffentliche Anteilnahme, traurig, auf einer bereits etwas beschädigten Maschine vor sich geht - wäre es nun, alles dieses zusammengekommen (so denkt der Kommandant), nicht sehr leicht möglich, dass Sie mein Verfahren nicht für richtig halten? Und wenn Sie es nicht für richtig halten, werden Sie dies (ich rede noch immer im Sinne des Kommandanten) nicht verschweigen, denn Sie vertrauen doch gewiss Ihren vielerprobten Überzeugungen. [...]'(p.112-113)

There are some similarities between this passage and stylistic strategies used by Bernhard in his prose. Most obviously the phrases in brackets '(so denkt der Kommandant)' and '(ich rede noch immer im Sinne des Kommandanten)' resemble Bernhard's technique of punctuating long speculative monologues with reminders of who is speaking at what stage. Of course, Bernhard uses this technique in more obviously for stylistic effect than is the case here in this passage, where its function can be seen as intensifying the irony. However, we are also made more aware of the speculative nature of the passage and of the complexity of this speculation. Not only is it a guess at what might be the case, it is also a guess at what the Kommandant might think is the case. Specifically, it is a guess on the part of the officer as to what the Kommandant might think is the case. Similar layering effects in both Bernhard and Kafka reveals that the basis on which the characters make their decisions is bottomless. Their almost heroic attempts at reasoning out situations are undermined, and the necessity to make decisions on the basis of such uncertain foundations becomes tragic.

However, although the consequences of words and actions are given great importance - 'ein flüchtiges, ein bloss unvorsichtiges Wort genügt'(p.113) - the terror of responsibility is taken away by the insight that the danger lies not so much in the words themselves as in their relationship to the point of view of the Kommandant: 'Es muss gar nicht Ihrer Überzeugung entsprechen, wenn es nur scheinbar seinem Wunsche entgegenkommt'.(p.113) This aspect is emphasized: it is not the point of view of the traveller that is powerful, but the way in which his words and actions may be used by the Kommandant:

'[...] Das alles sind Bemerkungen, die ebenso richtig sind, als sie Ihnen selbstverständlich erscheinen, unschuldige Bemerkungen, die mein Verfahren nicht antasten. Aber wie wird sie der Kommandant aufnehmen? [...] Sie wollen eingreifen, Sie haben nicht das gesagt, was er verkündet, Sie haben mein Verfahren nicht unmenschlich genannt, im Gegenteil, Ihrer tiefen Einsicht entsprechend halten sie es für das menschlichste und menschenwürdigste, sie bewundern auch diese Maschinerie - aber es ist zu spät [...].'(p.113)

For the traveller it thus seems that he cannot help but bring about the result he himself desires.

Der Reisende musste ein Lächeln unterdrücken; so leicht war also die Aufgabe, die er für so schwer gehalten hatte. Er sagte ausweichend: 'Sie überschätzen meinen Einfluss [...].'(p.113)

In a sense, therefore he need not express his own viewpoint, but retain the powerlessness he desires. Even if his point of view is to be upheld, he still does not want to be held responsible for it. Thus, even at this stage in the dialogue, the traveller prefers to

remain on good terms with the officer rather than express his own point of view.

'[...] Wenn ich eine Meinung aussprechen würde, so wäre es die Meinung eines Privatmannes, um nichts bedeutender als die Meinung eines beliebigen anderen, und jedenfalls viel bedeutungsloser als die Meinung des Kommandanten [...]'(p.113-114)

Even when the officer makes an explicit plea to the traveller for help, making his misunderstanding of the traveller's opinion quite clear, the traveller still fails to respond unequivocally. In view of the effect of his final confession at this stage, the traveller's refusal to move from his position of powerlessness amounts to a denial of a climax in the argument.

'[...] Unabgelenkt von falschen Einflüsterungen und verächtlichen Blicken [...] haben Sie meine Erklärungen angehört, die Maschine gesehen und sind nun im Begriffe, die Exekution zu besichtigen. Ihr Urteil steht gewiss schon fest; sollten noch kleine Unsicherheiten bestehen, so wird sie der Anblick der Exekution beseitigen. Und nun stelle ich an Sie die Bitte: helfen Sie mir gegenüber dem Kommandanten!'

Der Reisend lies ihn nicht weiter reden. 'Wie könnte ich denn das,' rief er aus, 'das ist ganz unmöglich. Ich kann Ihnen ebensowenig nützen als ich Ihnen schaden kann.'

'Sie können es,' sagte der Offizier. Mit einiger Befürchtung sah der Reisende, dass der Offizier die Fäuste ballte.(p.114)

However, it is the traveller's refusal to declare his opposition that brings about the revelation of the officer's plan to manipulate proceedings in the camp to regain support for the old order. The officer is still under the impression that he needs to convince the

traveller of his power to alter events. He therefore spells out how it is to be done.

There is obvious dramatic irony in the way the officer builds his plan on misunderstanding. The traveller is not to lie but:

'[...] man soll merken, dass es Ihnen schwer wird, darüber zu sprechen, dass Sie verbittert sind, dass Sie, falls Sie offen reden sollten, geradezu in Verwünschungen ausbrechen müssten. Ich verlange nicht, dass Sie lügen sollen: keineswegs [...]. Er natürlich wird es vollständig missverstehen und in seinem Sinne deuten. Darauf gründet sich mein Plan.'(p.115)

The plan is also built on the manipulation of opinion. In his description of how this will function, we have an indirect criticism of a system which depends on mass opinion rather than on the decision of one leader. The new Kommandant in his struggle to replace the old one has developed showman techniques to manipulate opinion in his favour. The officer proposes to use the same techniques in order to return to the old order. His line of reasoning illustrates the balance that exists in all dialogue - whether between two partners or two crowds or individual and crowd - between predicting how the other party will react and intervening so that they will react in the desired way. Again and again the officer argues that events will definitely turn out as he wishes only to provide an alternative if necessary. The object is therefore not to bring about the wishes of the crowd, but to manipulate the wishes of the crowd to bring about the officer's ends.

'[...] Nun werden Sie gewiss auf jeden Fall zu der Sitzung eingeladen werden [...]. Sollten Sie aber aus irgendeinem

unerfindlichen Grunde doch nicht eingeladen werden, so müssten Sie allerdings die Einladung verlangen: dass Sie sie dann erhalten, ist zweifellos. [...] Sollte es von seiten des Kommandanten nicht oder nicht bald genug geschehen, so werde ich dafür sorgen, dass es geschieht. [...] Natürlich überall Beifallklatschen, allgemeine Zustimmung, ich bin der lauteste. [...] machen Sie mit der Wahrheit Lärm [...]. Aber vielleicht wollen Sie das nicht, es entspricht nicht Ihrem Charakter, in Ihrer Heimat verhält man sich vielleicht in solchen Lagen anders, auch das ist richtig, auch das genügt vollkommen, stehen Sie gar nicht auf, sagen Sie nur ein paar Worte, flüstern Sie sie, dass sie gerade noch die Beamten unter Ihnen hören, es genügt [...].'(p.115-116)

The delays are so persistent that when the traveller finally gives his opinion it is an anti-climax. The narrative tells us, on the one hand 'er war im Grunde ehrlich und hatte keine Furcht'(p.116) and on the other, 'Trotzdem zögerte er jetzt im Anblick des Soldaten und des Verurteilten einen Atemzug lang'(p.116). When it finally comes it is almost with a sigh: 'Schliesslich aber sagte er, wie er musste: "Nein."'(p.116).

What is interesting about the officer's reaction is his silence, which both allows the traveller's point of view - his 'explanation' - to be heard and denies it any validity. What is more, the traveller's 'explanation' is nothing of the sort. There is the bald statement that the traveller is against the system of judgement and execution, but there is no accompanying explanation. Instead we have a confused mixture of the three elements over which the traveller has been hesitating: the question of how to justify his own involvement, whether his intervention would be successful, but most importantly

the statement that he will not misuse the officer's trust. Even at this stage the traveller seeks to honour the officer's conviction at the same time as retaining his own.

Der Offizier blinzelte mehrmals mit den Augen, liess aber keinen Blick von ihm. 'Wollen Sie eine Erklärung?' fragte der Reisende. Der Offizier nickte stumm. 'Ich bin ein Gegner dieses Verfahrens,' sagte nun der Reisende, 'noch ehe Sie mich ins Vertrauen zogen - dieses Vertrauen werde ich natürlich unter keinen Umständen missbrauchen - habe ich schon überlegt, ob ich berechtigt wäre, gegen dieses Verfahren einzuschreiten und ob mein Einschreiten auch nur eine kleine Aussicht auf Erfolg haben könnte. An wen ich mich dabei zuerst wenden müsste, war mir klar: an den Kommandanten natürlich. Sie haben es mir noch klarer gemacht, ohne aber etwa meinen Entschluss erst befestigt zu haben, im Gegenteil, Ihre ehrliche Überzeugung geht mir nahe, wenn sie mich auch nicht beirren kann.'(p.116)

Once again, the traveller is concerned with how the communication will take place, still denying that what he has to say will be of any significance. He seeks to retain his neutrality, or even friendship towards the officer by reassuring him that nothing will be done publicly. The officer responds by ignoring the question of how the communication will be made, referring only to the traveller's lack of support for the machine. Again, the traveller's reaction is interpreted as a failure to understand, as stupid or childlike and therefore unimportant. The officer finally accepts the traveller's opinion as the unimportant thing the traveller wanted it to be, and now that it cannot be used in favour of the machine it becomes irrelevant. The officer's smile marks the end of the dialogue. From this point on, for the officer, the traveller is irrelevant. It is

the traveller who chases after the officer, but for the officer he is no longer worth listening to, he ceases to exist. Having failed to defend himself from the officer's discourse strategies, the traveller now fails to impose his own.

Der Reisende ging dem Offizier nach und sagte: 'Sie wissen noch nicht, was ich tun will. Ich werde meine Ansicht über das Verfahren dem Kommandanten zwar sagen, aber nicht in einer Sitzung, sondern unter vier Augen: ich werde auch nicht so lange hier bleiben, dass ich irgendeiner Sitzung beigezogen werden könnte; ich fahre schon morgen früh weg oder schiffe mich wenigstens ein.'

Es sah nicht aus, als ob der Offizier zugehört hätte. 'Das Verfahren hat Sie also nicht überzeugt,' sagte er für sich und lächelte, wie ein Alter über den Unsinn eines Kindes lächelt und hinter dem Lächeln sein eigenes wirkliches Nachdenken behält.(p.117)

Through the movement from the first section - in which the officer battles to gain the attention of the traveller and persuade him of the fascination of the machine, through a description of the way in which the machine works, to the second section - in which the officer seeks to persuade the traveller to intervene by explaining how it is to be done - the narrative as a whole becomes an exploration of the descriptive apparatus itself. It becomes a text about metatextuality, which, in combination with the image of the machine, becomes an analysis of the mechanisms in which communication becomes trapped in the strategies of conviction. The final section can be interpreted as a portrayal of a mind defeated in its attempt to remain outside these strategies and forced in spite of itself to become a martyr for a cause it does not believe in.

The traveller, having heard the officer's testimony and having been witness to the passion, conviction and skill with which the officer handled the machine and argued his case, becomes in a sense, in spite of himself, the silent defender of the officer's point of view. The 'Forschungsreisende' is put in the position of the report-writer. Having neither the desire nor the capacity to express his own opinion, he acknowledges the position of the officer whose 'case' he has observed. From the point of view of ignorance he believes what the officer tells him about what the machine writes on the prisoner's back:

'Lesen Sie', sagte er. 'Ich kann nicht,' sagte der Reisende, 'ich sagte schon, ich kann diese Blätter nicht lesen.' 'Sehen Sie das Blatt doch genau an,' sagte der Offizier und trat neben den Reisenden, um mit ihm zu lesen. Als auch das nichts half, fuhr er mit dem kleinen Finger in grosser Höhe, als dürfe das Blatt auf keinen Fall berührt werden, über das Papier hin, um auf diese Weise dem Reisenden das lesen zu erleichtern. Der Reisende gab sich auch Mühe, um wenigstens darin dem Offizier gefällig sein zu können, aber es war ihm unmöglich. Nun begann der Offizier die Aufschrift zu buchstabieren und dann las er sie noch einmal im Zusammenhang. '"Sei gerecht!" - heisst es,' sagte er, 'jetzt können Sie es doch lesen.' Der Reisende beugte sich so tief über das Papier, dass der Offizier aus Angst vor einer Berührung es weiter entfernte; nun sagte der Reisende zwar nichts mehr, aber es war klar, dass er es noch immer nicht hatte lesen können. '"Sei gerecht!" - heisst es,' sagte der Offizier nochmals. 'Mag sein,' sagte der Reisende, 'ich glaube es, dass es dort steht.' (p.117-118)

The first way in which the traveller becomes complicit in the officer's actions is in his sympathy with the decision to put himself

in the machine. Here he acknowledges his own part in the outcome, but in justifying the officer's decision, justifies himself:

Er wusste zwar, was geschehen würde, aber er hatte kein Recht, den Offizier an irgend etwas zu hindern. War das Gerichtsverfahren, an dem der Offizier hing, wirklich so nahe daran behoben zu werden - möglicherweise infolge des Einschreitens des Reisenden, zu dem sich dieser seinerseits verpflichtet fühlte - dann handelte jetzt der Offizier vollständig richtig; der Reisende hätte an seiner Stelle nicht anders gehandelt.(p.119)

What is significant here, is that although the question of justice becomes irrelevant within the change of system, or, in the process of change, the sense of right and wrong remains a natural, subjective, intuitive entity. The question becomes in fact not what is right, but what the traveller would have done in the Officer's place - a subjective measuring rod. So that while they are in agreement at this stage, there is also the possibility they might not have been.

In his endorsement of the officer's actions the traveller becomes his representative and feels obliged to defend, in his own way, the officer against both the soldier and the condemned man, who both seek to make sense of what happens by attributing power to the traveller. The description of the scene is full of incomprehension.

In the end, in his regard for the functioning of the machine, the traveller becomes the one who 'understands', he becomes the one who, as representative, is empowered to use the terminology introduced to him by the officer. The traveller is able to sort out what is

happening through the specialist education passed on to him by the officer.

[Der Offizier] hatte die Hand der Egge nur genähert, und sie hob und senkte sich mehrmals, bis sie die richtige Lage erreicht hatte um ihn zu empfangen; er fasste das Bett nur am Rande, und es fing schon zu zittern an; der Filzstumpf kam seinem Mund entgegen [...]. Alles war bereit, nur die Riemen hingen noch an den Seiten hinunter [...].(p.119)

The difference, however, between how the machine is meant to function and how it does function is what renders it silent both literally and metaphorically. The hard-won attention of the traveller, finally directed at the machine with the intensity that the officer desires, is taken away by the gap in his knowledge, by the silence that signifies and fails to signify that the machine is malfunctioning. This ultimate failure to notice the most important event is once again brought about by the 'distracting' presence of the condemned man and the soldier. This time, however, the traveller is motivated in a sense by a need to represent the officer. In ordering the other two witnesses to go home, he attempts to do justice to his own sense of what is appropriate. But the condemned man, whose life has been more fundamentally affected by the machine, refuses to go.

It is noise that regains attention for the machine. This time the traveller observes chaos, but again it is a chaos that can be described up to a certain point through the verbal apparatus supplied by the officer:

Langsam hob sich der Deckel des Zeichners und klappte dann vollständig auf. Die Zacken eines Zahnrades zeigten und hoben

sich, bald erschien das ganze Rad, es war, als presse irgendeine grosse Macht den Zeichner zusammen, so dass für dieses Rad kein Platz mehr übrig blieb, das Rad drehte sich bis zum Rand des Zeichners, fiel hinunter, kollerte aufrecht ein Stück im Sand und blieb dann liegen. Aber schon stieg oben ein anderes auf, ihm folgten viele, grosse, kleine und kaum zu unterscheidende, mit allen geschah dasselbe, immer glaubte man, nun müsse der Zeichner jedenfalls schon entleert sein, da erschien eine neue, besonders zahlreiche Gruppe, stieg auf, fiel hinunter, kollerte im Sand und legte sich. (p.120-121)

Finally the body in the machine is laid bare. It is a corpse, yet 'es war, wie es im Leben gewesen war [...]'.(p.121)

In the final passage the traveller is made to confront his position as the last representative of the officer's convictions: 'er fühlte die Macht der früheren Zeiten'(p.122). In his visit to the grave he confronts his present position as potentially a perceived ally of the officer:

'Als der Reisende das gelesen hatte und sich erhob, sah er rings um sich die Männer stehen und lächeln, als hätten sie mit ihm die Aufschrift gelesen, sie lächerlich gefunden und forderten ihn auf, sich ihrer Meinung anzuschliessen.'(p.122)

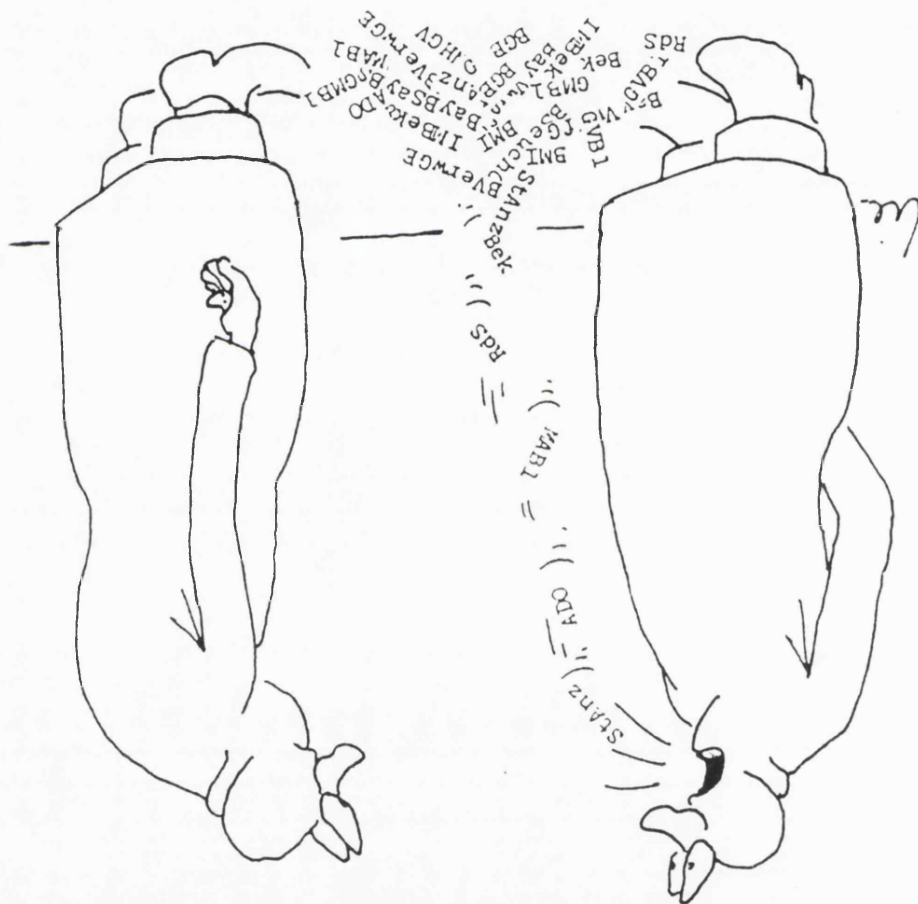
In the end the traveller, in not taking sides, finds that he is thereby once again forced into a position of opposing those he is confronted with. Around him he is invited to share in the opinion that what he has witnessed is 'lächerlich' and refuses: 'Der Reisende tat, als merke er das nicht'(p.122) and hence finds himself representing the wishes of the officer in his silent but unclarified opposition to the residents in the camp. As the impartial observer

the traveller escapes punishment, but remains a vessel capable of and condemned to understanding the substance and the coherence of more than one point of view. He embodies that rationality which, in its limited capacity to observe and represent, remains largely outside the substance of events around it.

Notes to Chapter Three

1. See Introduction, note 10.
2. Max Weber, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, pp.569-70.
3. Roy Pascal, Kafka's Narrators: A Study of his stories and sketches, (Cambridge, 1982), p.77.
4. See Introduction, note 7.
5. Eugen Pfohl, 'Die Organisation der Unfallverhütung in Österreich', in Franz Kafka: Amtliche Schriften, p.336.
6. Franz Kafka, In der Strafkolonie: Eine Geschichte aus dem Jahre 1914. Mit Quellen, Abbildungen, Materialien aus der Arbeiter-Unfall-Versicherungsanstalt, Chronik und Anmerkungen, ed. by Klaus Wagenbach, (Berlin, 1975), pp.134-141.
7. Roy Fuller, 'A Normal Enough Dog: Kafka and the Office', in The World of Franz Kafka, ed. by J.P. Stern, (London, 1980) p.194.
8. Hermsdorf, p.28.
9. Hermsdorf, p.33.
10. Hermsdorf, p.70.

11. Hermsdorf, p.73.
12. Max Weber, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, pp.561-562.
13. Franz Kafka, Gesammelte Werke, ed. by Max Brod, (Frankfurt am Main, 1946-), Briefe an Milena, (1952), pp.138-39.
14. Jenny A. Thomas, 'Discourse control in confrontational interaction', in The Pragmatics of Style, ed. by Leo Hickey (London and New York, 1989), pp.133-158.
15. Roger Fowler, Linguistic Criticism, (Oxford, 1986), p.6.
16. Paul Grice, 'Logic and Conversation', in Syntax and Semantics 3: Speech Acts, ed. by Colep and J. Morgan, (New York, 1975), pp.41-58.
17. All page references are to the edition given in the bibliography.



CHAPTER FOUR

'jedes gedicht hat amtscharacter'

OSWALD WIENER'S DIE VERBESSERUNG VON MITTELEUROPA, ROMAN¹

In this final chapter I will be discussing a work that in formal terms is radically different from the previous three texts, but which, in its self-conscious strategy of opposition, can be seen both as a work that lies within the formal and thematic parameters of the 'bureaucratic Muse' and one which is formally a product of the dilemma that the union of the literary and the institutional brings about. In its assertion that the literary work as a linguistic construct is inevitably part of a conspiracy in which the individual is trapped by the organizational structure put on his thoughts by a language shaped by the powers of the State, the thesis at the heart of die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman shares in the aspirations and the fears of each of the other texts.

^{analyzing}
In/Thomas Bernhard's Exempel, written a decade after Wiener's die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman, I discussed the way in which the text demonstrated, in its prose style, the mechanisms through which the mind of the courtroom journalist is trapped, able to express, but not escape, the self-consciousness, institutionalized by the court, that distances him from his own reactions. The implication of the text is that the discovery and expression of individuality lies in suicide. In its contextualization of linguistic drama in the

courtroom, the text became a reflection on the effects of rationalization not only on the institutions of the community but also on the minds of the people working and observing in it. In its exploration of the mind of the courtroom journalist - the character whose task it is to transform events almost instantaneously into prose - the text became a reflection on the internalization of the process of bureaucratization.

In the chapter on Adalbert Stifter's Der Kuss von Sentze, I discussed the text as an attempt to attain in its stylistic mode that which is lamented in Bernhard's anecdote, namely the ability to discover, in the process of writing a dispassionate account of outward events and observable circumstances, a means of controlling and monitoring the thoughts and reactions of human agents. I discussed how the text, in its commitment to the ideals of enlightened humanism, could be seen both in terms of the literary-historical role it plays, as a work of a writer who has entered the canon of nineteenth century Austrian literature, and as the didactic attempt to create a link between the State and its citizens in order to explore the problems that the attempt to structure, control and monitor human relationships brings about. Although the text itself can be seen to assert the ideal that the individual citizen, in order to fulfil both himself and his community, is he who controls his individuality in the service of the whole, it can also be seen, in the course of the narrative and in terms of the premise of two forms of peace, to be a critique of the sterility that arises out of the suppression of conflict through such institutionalized structures.

Franz Kafka's In der Strafkolonie, with the image of the machine at its centre, was discussed as an exploration of the ways in which dialogue, as a communicative device, through the thematization of its own power structures, embodies and manipulates the battle for control over the thoughts of each partner in discourse. In the struggle to gain control of and manipulate the course of the dialogue, the focus on the structures of language distorts the issue at the centre, the pain suffered by the body placed at the mercy of the machine. The 'cruelty' of the text reflects - and reflects on - the cruelty of the process of bureaucratization both in the symbolism of the machine and in the apparent callousness of the dialogue about the machine.

All three texts, in their concern with language as a defining force in the relationship between the individual and society, use their nature as literary works to reflect on the moral issues that arise out of the ability to regulate human relationships through metatextuality. Ultimately, however, each text remains within the dilemma that the tool through which it is possible to observe the problematics of the relationship between individual and society is also part of the problem itself. The literary text, in adding yet another layer of self-consciousness, compounds rather than solves the problem of language, in its ability to reflect upon itself, building structures that create distance between thought and experience. The implication is that, through the literary text at least, there is no way out. What remains is the question of whether self-consciousness should be 'cured' at all - through the sublimation of individuality or loss of consciousness of the self as a separate identity within the whole - or whether there is a higher form of thinking. This is the

question posed in Oswald Wiener's highly idiosyncratic 'novel', which makes it logically a progression from the previous texts, continuing a discussion which has its roots essentially in the Enlightenment and such works as Rousseau's Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes. The novel might be seen as an attempt to bring this dilemma to end, taking the discussion into a new realm.

If language is a product of society and society, through political progress, becomes the State, making society and State synonymous, then language becomes a product of the State. Any attempt to express individuality in language is doomed since the expression will be contaminated with meanings that subordinate the individual to society, to the State. Even literature, where the voice of the individual has traditionally been heard, is contaminated because it uses the same tool as the State - language. Hence: 'jedes gedicht hat amtscharakter'(p.XII).

die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman is one of the most vigorous and explicit literary attacks on models of society which, while purporting to reconcile individual with general interests, in fact compel the individual, in his/her own interests, to subordinate him/herself to the organization of the whole. It is an attack essentially on the double forces of language and bureaucracy, the administration of the State, functioning in many different guises as the mediator between individual and society. The novel is an onslaught that becomes ever more violent the more it sees itself caught up in the ineluctable circularities created for the free-

thinking individual by the equation of language and the State. As Markus Paul puts it:

Oswald Wiener [wird] nicht müde, die Sprache als unzulängliches Instrument der Kommunikation zu verdammen. [...] Was aber den Sprachkritiker die Sprache hassen lässt, ist die Erkenntnis, dass durch Sprache allein Herrschaft ausgeübt wird, dass es die Sprache ist, die den einzelnen zurichtet.²

The issues, which multiply and become obsessively formulated and reformulated in ever changing forms in Wiener's novel, involve repeatedly the relationship between individual consciousness and the collective medium of language. The questions become explicit: is individual expression possible when the vehicle for expression is the product of society? Does the attempt to find individual expression lead inevitably to contradiction, to silence, to conflict, to the use of force, to insanity? Does the exploration of language lead inevitably to the rejection of language as a means for communication and self-expression? Is language only a means of oppression? Would the rejection of language lead to liberation? Can a consciousness of the mechanisms of language lead to emancipation? Does the study of language and the relationships between language, the individual and society, help or hinder the individual? Is literature exempt from the political problems associated with language or more 'contaminated' still by mechanisms of control and manipulation?

Since rhetoric is rejected - on account of it being a weapon of the State directed against the expression of individuality - the novel is an attempt to escape these circularities through stylistic variation,

contradiction and verbal violence, in particular by adopting and adapting the stylistic preferences of bureaucratic texts and using indexes, headings, subheadings, lists, reporting, repetition and so on inappropriately, in order to reveal their workings and thereby undermine their effectiveness. Ultimately, however, the attack remains ambivalent, so that the model of society that appears at the end of the novel in the form of the 'bio-adapter', can be seen either as a blissful culmination of history or as a terrifying vision of the end of humanity.

This somewhat cursory look at the complex relationship between the individual, language, and society is intended to place Oswald Wiener's novel in the context of this study, by indicating how literary texts are for Wiener part and parcel of the relationship established through language between the institutions of State and the individual.

Like Bernhard, Stifter, and Kafka, Oswald Wiener brings into his literary work problems and issues that derive directly from his non-literary employment. He was, during the fifties and sixties, a member of the Wiener Gruppe, a group of individuals who are often referred to, as I have already mentioned, in terms of the employment or training of each individual - Bayer was the banker, Achleitner the architect, Rühm the composer. Wiener, for his part, was the 'Kybernetiker' or information technologist, working for Olivetti as head of the department controlling the data base. His research in the fields of linguistics, information technology and artificial intelligence was coupled with the conviction that such disciplines

were at the centre of both scientific research and political practice. The focus of his interest was language, but above all the politics of communal language, as a medium constituting the community and imprisoning the individual. In die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman he was therefore able to confront the problem of the relationship between the individual and society with a whole battery of theoretical knowledge culled from the disciplines of philosophy, linguistics and cybernetics, combining it with radical stylistic experiments, developed by the Vienna group in the previous decade or so. die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman is exemplary in its broad spectrum of the preoccupations that characterized the avant-garde of the sixties. Radically experimental in form, defying all attempts at categorization, ambivalent about the relationships between fiction, autobiography, documentary and analysis, it is above all obsessed with the institutional nature of language, its role in forming and sustaining the individual and society and in maintaining the status quo.

What makes die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman particularly relevant in the context of this study is its search, through its experimentation with style and genre, for a way in which the individual can free himself of the shackles of language and of the State to reach a form of expression that is somehow authentic. Towards the end of the book, in a section entitled **appendix C**, the reader is reminded of the forces against which the novel is fighting:

möge er bedenken, welcher kraft, welchen formats es bedarf,
gegen eine im grossen ganzen abgerundete, stimmige, einhellige

welt aufzustehen, wie sie uns in jedem augenblick an den kopf
geworfen wird'.(p.CXCI)

As I said in the introduction, although this passage is taken from the end of the novel, its implications for the work as a whole are considerable since, in a sense, it shows that Wiener starts out from a position which is the very reverse of that which is taken up in the other texts. Exempel, Der Kuss von Sentze and In der Strafkolonie can be interpreted as texts which see the world as at least potentially fragmented, distorted, incomprehensible, and in response to a longing for order they attempt to paper over the cracks or create comprehensibility and underwrite it through language. die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman, in contrast, must be seen as a text which has perceived the creation of meaningfulness as a lie created by States and written as history. The task here is hence the rescue of the individual from the inauthenticity and restriction that this lie has constructed.

die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman was first published in the periodical manuskripte in eleven parts as 'work in progress' between 1965 and 1968, with sections added in 1969. It was first published in book form by Rowohlt in 1969 and reprinted several times owing to the unexpected degree of interest shown in it. In 1972 it appeared as a rororo paperback with a picture of Wiener destroying an old house on the cover and most recently in 1985 Rowohlt brought it out in hardback. The jacket cover of this latest edition - designed by Wiener himself - consists in a photograph of a pair of hands holding a copy of the original edition.

It has been argued that the first, serialized appearance of die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman remains the most suitable on account of its fragmentary nature and because of Wiener's own statements about his inability to complete it. Markus Paul, in Sprachartisten - Weltverbesserer writes, 'Da die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman alles andere als ein in sich geschlossenes Werk ist, ist die Veröffentlichungsform als work in progress die ihm angemessene.³' Markus Paul points out that the work consists of a series of thoroughly heterogeneous texts which comply to no linear form of logic and that this form contradicts the designation 'novel' that is in the title. Manfred Durzak in 'Ende des Romans. Oswald Wieners die verbesserung von mitteleuropa und die Folgen' argues that the novel form is negated in Wiener's book by the denial of fable and story and by the nullification of the hero.⁴

More important, however, than the non-novelistic nature of the novel, is the work's apparently scholarly (or, using the more appropriate German term, 'wissenschaftlich') appearance. The text consists of sections of varying lengths arranged under headings and subheadings, sometimes numbered and in varying styles and sizes of script. When the work was first published in book form there were also two major additions: first a 'personen- und sachregister (auswahl),' (in lower case bold lettering and followed by a smaller heading in italics, 'inhaltsverzeichnis') was added at the beginning and second, 'literaturhinweise' (in slightly larger italics) were indicated at the end. Further, the pages are numbered from beginning to end in roman numerals, a practice with implications which will be discussed below. A glance through the pages of the novel therefore creates the

impression of a scholarly rather than a literary text. Elisabeth

Wiesmayer formulates the impression thus:

ein Textgebilde [...], das durch keinerlei kontinuierlichen Handlungsverlauf diese Bezeichnung [roman] im traditionellen Sinn rechtfertigen könnte: die 'verbesserung von mitteleuropa' bietet sich dar als chaotische, immer wieder durchbrochene Aufeinanderfolge von Aphorismen, Szenarien, Erzählpassagen und theoretisierenden Abhandlungen, die zusammen mit verschiedenen 'appendices' Wissenschaftsnähe simulieren.⁵

The use of such devices as headings and indexes in the scholarly text is, however, conventionally directed towards helping the reader to digest material that would otherwise be difficult to understand and remember. Closer inspection of die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman reveals that Wiener's many headings, different sections and indexes are far from creating a clarifying structure. Markus Paul raises a specific problem that illustrates the reading or deciphering process perfectly:

Auf das 'personen- und sachregister' folgt ein 'vorwort'. Es bleibt aber unklar, wie weit sich dieses erstreckt. Denn die folgenden Titel 'hymne an den erzengel', 'kernstück zu einer experimentellen vergangenheit', 'allah kherim! die erscheinungen sind gerettet. reportage vom fest der begriffe' und abbildung 4: 'der bruch zwischen lene und konrad' sind in anderen Typen gesetzt. Erst der Abschnitt 'PURIM ein fest' ist wieder in ähnlichen Lettern gedruckt, noch aber erst wieder die drei Appendices. Weiters stösst die Paginierung mit römischen Ziffern den Leser vor den Kopf. Ist diese Paginierung, die sonst ausschliesslich für Inhaltsverzeichnisse, Einleitungen oder Vorworte Verwendung findet, vielleicht ein Hinweis darauf, dass das ganze Buch nur aus einem Vorwort besteht?⁶

It is not only the form of the novel that generates this kind of question. In a discussion of its contents, critics have tended to concentrate on concepts, questions of definition rather than narrative fiction. Given that the whole text bears the title 'roman', should we question whether Wiener's interpretation of other thinkers and writers is correct or should we accept what we are given as the real and complete world of a novel? Should we take the contents of the novel as a fictionalized version of the development of the Wiener Gruppe itself? Is argument with Wiener over the interpretation of Wittgenstein relevant, given that he himself in a later essay admitted to misunderstanding the philosopher?⁷ Is it not more relevant to approach Wiener's work as a novel in which the ideas are products of fictionalized characters and explore a possible, not a real world?

The problems posed by this line of enquiry are, of course, preempted by the novel's own line of enquiry. The ideas discussed and demonstrated in the many different sections in their many different styles are precisely those that the reader versed in problems of interpretation and genre is caught up in. We may conclude from statements that can be culled from the text, that Wiener does not believe in literary forms which attempt to reflect on reality through fictional narrative, but neither does he believe in the 'truth' of the scholarly text, or the aphorism, or the report, or the scientific text, or the diary and so on. In short, there is a superabundance of scepticism. He therefore creates a form of prose that is neither

novelistic nor scholarly, but which could perhaps best be termed an experimental essay.

However, the attack on the claims of scholarship, on the process of organizing information coherently, is much more fundamental to die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman than the questions thrown up by its innovation in literary form. For an anarchist who once believed that political change could be brought about through a greater awareness of the power of language, what remains in favour of literary form is its ability to absorb other forms of prose style in order that they be placed into a context where they are open to interrogation both in terms of style and content. Ultimately it is also the case that literary form always questions itself and is thus perhaps the only forum in which Wiener is able to pose the questions that come to the fore in the novel. Hence it could be argued that to call the work a novel is the only possible choice, since it is a form which more than any other has shown itself able to adapt to change (bearing in mind that the process of adaptation is put into question in the novel!). As well as exploring the way in which the scholarly appearance of the novel questions its designation as a literary work, it is therefore also appropriate to ask how the designation 'novel' allows the reader to question the forms of organization in the text that are so reminiscent of non-literary texts. In so doing, we place die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman within a development in which the literary form is used to reflect upon the problems associated with non-literary forms and language in general as a medium that defines both the individual and society.

To start at the beginning with the 'personen- und sachregister (auswahl),inhaltsverzeichnis': whatever expectations may be built up by the title 'roman', they are soon undermined by the appearance of this list at the beginning of the book. Indeed the appearance of a list per se is unusual for the novel - although not unknown in the case of listing characters - and the inclusion of one could be taken at first sight as an innovative way of taking the novel form by means of this stylistic device in the direction of the bureaucratic or scholarly text. However, there are no chapter headings given, as might be the case with a novel, nor is there a list of characters as with a play, nor is there a list of contributions as there might be in a collection of essays. In fact there is also no systematic indication of the contents of the book as one might have expected from a scholarly or bureaucratic text. It is indeed, as one would expect, a list - a select list as it says - of some significant words that appear in the text. As such the device is indeed innovative, as a read through does, in fact, give one an idea of what is to follow. The mere listing of words creates a tone and an idea of content that turns out to be perhaps more expressive than any of the other possibilities. Its playful nature and the juxtapositions that it sets up give one a foretaste especially of the tone of the work. As an example: 'archimedischer punkt [...] architekt(ur) [...] (architektonic) [...] argument [...]. (argumentation [...]) [...] (gegenargument [...]) arsch [...] (- loch) [...] astronaut [...] aufmerksamkei[t] [...] (aufmerksam) [...] auge [...] augen des fisches'(p.I). And so on. An interesting reflection on the title 'personen- und sachregister' (my emphasis) is the entry 'stein' which refers both to a person (Gertrude Stein) and a thing, a stone, and

that the index and word are not quite exact replicas is revealed by the drunken version in the text 'schtein'. Following this entry up further, a comment is (perhaps) made on the circularity of indexed information in that this list of words appearing at the beginning also refers to the 'literaturhinweise', also an index, at the end of the book. The 'perhaps' points to an error (intentional?) in that the page reference given is one page too early!

The 'personen- und sachregister' is followed by the 'vorwort'. One of the problems associated with the 'vorwort' has already been mentioned, namely, the question of where it ends, if at all. The possibility suggested by Markus Paul that the whole book is a 'vorwort' is a very persuasive one and probably one of the most productive in relation to an interpretation of the work as a whole, especially when we bear in mind his comments on the pagination. Seen as a foreword the entire work becomes a reflection on a non-existent novel, a novel that could not be written for reasons which are to be found in the foreword. It becomes a text about a text, classically a metatext, inquiring into the admissibility of the novel in a number of different ways. Detached from the novel itself it becomes a strange metatext with neither a text nor a context, a construction that underwrites, or rather undermines something that does not exist. It becomes an excrescence associated typically with the bureaucratic structure that has gone out of control, creating self-perpetuating layers of meaning that refer to other layers that might or might not exist. As in Kafka's Das Schloss the understanding of this text becomes not an enabling step in the progress towards the castle, but an obstacle, a smoke screen that may or may not be indicating fire.

However, one could, perhaps argue that the foreword is a very short text, lasting only until the next heading 'die sprache analysieren und anwenden'. Conveniently, this would make the foreword quotable in full:

einfach einwirken auf andere, auf sich selber einwirken, sätze einnehmen wie sonst pillen, sich wohin führen lassen, sich in einen zustand versetzen, lassen, mitteilen wollen; auch wohl sich eine hypothese zurechtlegen.(p.XI)

This could be read as a description of a foreword rather than a foreword itself, or a description of what is to come and hence an ideal foreword. Or it may be neither, the foreword never being expressed except in the word 'vorwort' itself. However it is interpreted, the fragmentary and questionable nature of the form is brought to the 'vor' through a discussion of the 'wort'.

The themes that follow in the short paragraphs, sometimes headed, sometimes not, encourage the idea of the eternal foreword through the notion that a definition or model of language will never be found that will be a solid basis for expression. It is as if the very attempt to write a foreword undermines the writing of the work itself. Over and over again, the very medium that is communicating to the reader, communicates despair over its own capacity for communication: 'wie kann ich dir das knäuel in meinem hirn ins maul stopfen'(p.XI). At the same time, there is an indication that through constant alternation in style and form, a consistent belief may be transmitted:

zug zur einfachheit,

permanenz einer idee bei veränderten gedanken, ich frage mich
warum so viel wie die welt mit so wenig theorie, warum soviel
wie ungefähr alles mit nur ein wenig grütze.(p.XI)

Furthermore, after fifty pages there is despair over the way in which the text tends, in spite of its efforts to the contrary, towards the expression of a single idea, towards the formulation of coherence that brings about falsehood. The discourse becomes inevitably caught up in the interpretability that it is fighting against. The strategy then becomes a matter of remaining conscious of this contradiction, introducing the important and also problematic concept of the so-called metalevel. After forty-nine pages of attempts in a variety of different styles to define the problems, on page fifty (or page L) of the novel there appears an ironic or quasi-official self-critique:

kritik der ersten neunundvierzig seiten

meine meisterhafte sprachbeherrschung verführt mich häufig zu
konservativen gedanken. mein humor ist allzu notorisch jener der
amtsbekannten österreichischen intelligenz.
poesie leider ist öfters die frucht meines ärgers.

The same contradiction occurs here as in much of Thomas Bernhard's prose that retains sanity and life by teetering on the brink of insanity and death. There is a section under the heading 'beschränkung' that recalls the theme of the Exempel.

beschränkung,

sich in den mitteln beschränken, als ob man noch mehr in petto
hätte, die welt auf einem nenner.

bei einem bericht sich auf das wesentliche beschränken: sich
selber in den vordergrund spielen, reader's digest, ein

beschränkter berichterstatter.

in meiner sprache fehlt ein wort für das was ein gespanntes
gummiband tut, das man in der mitte seiner längsausdehnung am
einen ende seiner breite mit dem zeigefinger anzupft, ein gutes
wort lässt einen man weiss nicht wie, begreifen; jede
beschreibung ein kriminalroman.(p.XIV)

The variations in this section of the work include putting in or
leaving out the title, putting the title on the same line as the
text, varying the kind of title (one word, two words joined by 'und',
two words with a comma in between, a phrase, a sentence, a repeated
title, as in the case of 'beschränkung'), varying the relationship
between title and text from illustration to definition to irrelevance
to demonstration (e.g. 'sprachen, cat'[p.XIV]), quotation, a title
without a text ('die bitte um gehaltserhöhung vorbild der
sprache'[p.XVI]), a title with a title underneath ('weg mit den
symbolen! / ihr teufel ist denn jede tatsache das gleichnis einer
anderen in eurem schädel? weg mit der klarheit!'[p.XXVII]), the
inclusion of non-linguistic symbols - a star, a planet and a squiggle
- a section entitled 'sprachforschung als gegenüberstellung von
wirklichkeit und sprache!'(p.XXXV) which places two separate texts in
columns next to one another. Eventually, as longer texts creep in
there is a loss of any sense that this is in fact a 'section', an
impression which breaks down completely with the list of letters
beginning:

A ist nämlich idealist und individualist.

B ist idealist und kollektivist.(p.XLVIII)

There is much opportunity for clever formulation such as 'gedicht. ein konvulsivischer moment'(p.IL) and much use of obscenity and direct verbal attacks on the reader. Above all the emphasis is on the avoidance of neutrality, '- ausser schimpfworten - wechsle deine ausdrücke ständig und misstraue der eintönigkeit ebenso wie der klarheit prägnanter worte'(p.XXX). 'mein ideal' writes Wiener, 'ich schreibe für die kommenden klugscheisser; um das milieu dieser ära komplett zu machen'(p.XXX).

Other experiments in modes of textual organization include a variation on the diary form, the listing of 'thesen', which are stages in a narrative, and a 'nachwort' which sums up a section of experiments in the appropriation of the past. It becomes part of the reading process to decipher the ways in which the text is being organized and with what aim. It is as if the shift from style to style becomes a training course for those who will need in future to work with texts from many different organizations, each with their internal 'house style' that to the initiated constitutes a way of thinking, but to the outsider becomes a riddle, consistent, apparently rational, but incomprehensible nevertheless. For example, in order to understand the organization of the section beginning 'allah kherim! die erscheinungen sind gerettet.', it is necessary to know how a German typing keyboard is organized since the sections are arranged under the numbers 2 to 9, followed by the sequence of letters and symbols:

= ß ' q w e r t z u i o o q o w p ü a s d f g h j

and so on, moving along the keys from left to right.(p.LXXXIX-XCVII
In the context, for example, of an English speaking study, such a nationally defined list easily turns an explicable order into an apparently arbitrary juxtaposition of numbers and letters. On the other hand, the process of discovering that there might be an underlying rationale, turns reading into searching and interpretation, into the satisfaction of finding the solution. Such games with order have their origin in Wiener's activities with the Wiener Gruppe. As well as being intriguing they reflect on the mysteries of organization, particularly the institution of the list, and what it means when it becomes clear that the stricter the order, the more culturally defined knowledge has to be in order to be deciphered. Following this section is a text where the letters have been printed on top of one another, rendering it almost, but not quite, unreadable, a concrete representation of the obfuscation that derives from textual stratification.

At the centre of the novel there is a play, 'PURIM, ein fest', seen by Markus Paul as an alternative to language: violence rather than silence as the way out. The name Purim refers to the tradition of Jewish 'Purimspiele' celebrating the deliverance of the Persian Jews from the Wesir Haman. These are one act plays, adopting a kind of carnival form tolerated by the religious authorities, which are seen as the origin of Jiddish drama. Wiener's play reflects on and distorts this tradition. A description of an extreme 'Aktion', a form of performance produced, for example, by the Wiener Aktionisten, of which Wiener was a peripheral member, and designed to insult the audience and make it aware of power structures. Everyone mentioned or

described is humiliated, tortured and beaten senseless so that what results, as Paul points out, is simply a reversal, not a real change in the structure of power. Whether a change in the organization of power is intended is questionable, since a further irony of the 'fest' is its distinctly fascist mentality:

die ganze chose muss zack-zack gehen, damit langeweile nicht aufkommt, es muss also ordentlich geübt worden sein.(p.CXIII)

Of the many parts that make up die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, the first of zwei studien über das sitzen(pp.CXV-CXXXIII) is perhaps the most superficially accessible. It is a section written from the viewpoint of a 'Schriftsteller', there is an 'I', an explicit first-person narrative voice, an identifiable persona who expresses his cognitive problems in emotional terms in a recognizable context. As with many examples of Viennese prose writing zwei studien über das sitzen can even be recognized as part of an old and established tradition, an example of Viennese café prose, where the writer oswald sits making notes in the café Zwerina, interrupted by a group of friends who engage him in highly intellectual discussion. The writing and the discussion merge, the discussion is described in the writing and what is written is offered to the discussion.

In spite of its accessibility these conventional qualities which might set it apart from the rest of the novel, it is, nevertheless, positioned as it is between the anarchy of the Purim and the closely argued theoretical essay notizen zum konzept des bio-adapters, - the section that has been most commented on by the critics and which declares itself as a means of interpreting the rest of the text -

one of the most productive ways into both the stylistic issues in the novel and its theoretical arguments. The writer's observation of himself as part of the environment that determines him provides a way of relating to the novel's insistence on the fragmentary, the contradictory, the uninterpretable.

so sitze ich jetzt da und schreibe, wundere mich was für
sonderbare Änderungen mit mir passiert sind in den letzten paar
jahren seit den ersten zeilen, von denen ich kein wort mehr
verstehe.(p.CXVII)

The year is 1967, two years since the first instalment of die verbesserung von mitteleuropa in issue 13 of the manuskripte in 1965, and oswald (the 'I' of this section is called oswald, 'oswald', ossi, 'ossi', metaossi, superossi and so on) finds that he is no longer able to understand what he meant when he wrote those first lines. In the course of the zwei studien über das sitzen what is meant by not being able to understand is explored in detail from a point of view that is both lyrical and theoretical at the same time. It is this fusion of the two, of the literary reflection on subjective experience with the attempt to gain a theoretical grasp of what consciousness is and write it down - report on it - that makes this section so important, placing it within many different genres simultaneously. The fact that the writer expresses the experience of change in this section, especially in terms of a move away from his friends, places the discourse within the genre of the 'Bildungsroman'⁸ as well as the autobiography, the documentary and the essay. Common to all these genres is one problem, that of the

effects of self-reflection on individual consciousness, the question of the possibility of living out a theory.

In respect of Adalbert Stifter's Der Kuss von Sentze I described how the style of the text could be understood as a moral decision on the part of the fictional writer of the text. This moral strategy manipulates the course of communication in order to retain a relationship between the characters founded on a cautious form of respect, which attempts to avoid the possibility of strife by drawing as few conclusions as possible. The result is a curiously stilted style that describes what is done from the outside, concentrating on physical movements, events that can be listed one after the other. It is a process that does not psychologize, takes no short cuts, does not assume that the reader would know very much about what is described and so gives as much information as possible. Above all, it is a style that avoids making direct statements about the writer's attitude towards his partners in communication. In other words, the linguistic style of Der Kuss von Sentze is an act of carrying out a moral programme. At the same time, I argued that the narrative, as a literary text, also explored and reflected on the ways in which this moral strategy hindered as well as helped relations within the family, with the result that two non-linguistic events - two kisses - became key turning points.

The discussion of the style of Der Kuss von Sentze focussed on the effects of the attempt to control the process of communication, even the process of perception (in limiting the possibility of interpretation) in the service of a moral or political goal. More

generally, the line of enquiry was an exploration of the various ways in which the attempt to institutionalize the process of communication were a reflection of an essentially bureaucratic approach to language. In Wiener's text, the discussion again centres on the effects of a politically motivated attempt to control the process of communication (and again of perception) by seeking to persuade the individual that self-censorship of his or her own speech acts is necessary, thereby programmatically manipulating society through stipulating the ways in which language is to be used. Perhaps this is how Wiener understands Stifter as a 'psychotechniker'. However, while oswald may have started out with the idea that to change language is to change society, the specific attempt to alter the relationship between language and oswald himself seems not, as was the case in Stifter's text, to be the beginning of a profound revolution within society, but rather to have preempted the whole process. His intense focus on language leads him into an even more fundamental 'Kommunikationsaporia' than that encountered by Kafka.⁹

sie glotzten [sic] erst mal eine spur von ner minute, dann raffte sich einer auf und transportierte sich rüber, andere folgten, und bald waren die stühle allesamt besetzt. ich wollte vom kellner einen grossen braunen. sie sassen da, hatten ihre getränke mit rübergebracht, und glurten mich freundschaftlich an. sie verzerzten ihre leiber, bogen und streckten die arme, zerknüllten ihre gesichter und glätteten sie [...].(p.CXV)

This is how oswald describes his friends coming over to join him at his table at the café zwerina. In this description some parallels can be drawn with Stifter's narrator or historical report writer in Der Kuss von Sentze, in the attempt at describing the sequence of events

in visual terms, avoiding psychologizing them, and in creating a chronology, one action following another. This attempt at 'objective' description is also applied to the writer himself, here in a witty passage relating the decision to go and urinate:

ich fühlte den druck in meiner blase und dachte vielleicht gehst du jetzt aufs pissoir und machte mir klar dass das am andern ende war und dass ich aufstehen musste und tat es also. ich schritt durchs lokal wie ein wunder und hörte alle stücke die laut genug waren mein ohr zu erreichen.(p.CXVII)

Clearly, such a passage bears few obvious similarities with the style of Stifter's work. There all kinds of conclusions that could be drawn from such a style. oswald could be drunk or drugged, for example, an interesting possibility in the way given that the process of slowing down consciousness through verbalizing it step by step seems to imply some form of impediment. However, Wiener's style here can be compared with Stifter's to the extent that the active consciousness of language use results in a linguistic style that slows down the narration of events, discovering discrete incidents within incidents, separating thought from action, noting that only those sounds can be heard that reach the ear, and, as a result of all this becomes pedantic. Political, moral, theoretical approaches to language and communication culminate in a pedantic style.

However, this aspect of prose style to be found in the texts by Wiener's and Stifter's has its origins, in respect of each writer, in contrasting attitudes towards the consciousness of language use and its potential as a moral, educative force. Stifter, it might be said,

has faith in language, in its power to make explicit or to leave things unsaid. His characters' refusal to draw conclusions as part of a moral decision carried out in the belief that the manipulation of language can create a morally founded relationship between partners in communication. The text Der Kuss von Sentze is a demonstration of this moral strategy that ultimately confirms itself through a happy ending. The fictional writer, relating the course of events after they occurred, continues to express himself in the way which brought about the happy ending. Stifter, then, clearly affirms the attempt to institutionalize the communicative context and throughout the text maintains the refusal to interpret, to draw conclusions. It is a moral strategy that leaves out the stage that might cause problems. oswald, on the other hand, does not refuse to draw conclusions, indeed, as we shall see, he not only draws them, he also spells them out. It is only after this stage that he refuses to accept such conclusions as valid. For Stifter the decision to behave in a certain way linguistically is a part of the moral ground work for the prose style and therefore is not to be spelled out but instead simply perceived. Wiener, on the other hand, demonstrates precisely what the process of interpretation actually entails before going on to refuse to accept this process as 'understanding'.

ich verstand ihn sehr gut, d.h. was er sagte und wie er es meinte, aber das war schon alles, d.h. ich verstand auch was er sagen wollte und was er daraus schloss und wollte dass ich daraus schliessen sollte [...].(p.CXVI)

The process of spelling out what linguistic understanding entails includes, in Wiener's description, not only the propositional content

of the utterances but also the pragmatic context, what the speech act entails and what is meant to follow from it in this particular social context. Finally, the explanation leads into a literal enactment of the process that defines the nature of the 'bureaucratic Muse': namely, the process of turning an occurrence into words which then become the object of scrutiny.

ich verstand auch warum er das gerade mir gerade jetzt erzählte, begriff wie es die geschichte beeinflusst hat und weiter beeinflussen würde, verstand sogar, dass man es so genau nicht wissen kann aber doch so für den hausgebrauch, und dass das völlig ausreichte. dadurch würde die ganze sache zu einer geschichte die einzig mein verständnis anging, und das liess ich jetzt also machen und sagte ihm wahrheitsgemäss dass ich keine ahnung hätte wovon er spreche und erzählte ihm alles was ich eben geschrieben habe von 'ich verstand...' bis '...ausreichte', und dass ich vielleicht im konjunktiv nicht so sattelfest sei wie man es bei einem schriftsteller wie ich einer bin erwarten würde und trank dahinein einen schluck von meinem kaffee, aber ganz automatisch.(p.CXVI)

This listing of all that understanding entails coupled with the assertion of incomprehension, the act of having written down his thoughts and turning the conversation away from what is being said to the question of the use of the subjunctive mood, places Wiener's writer, in a way that is both similar to and different from Stifter's writer, in a position which sheds light on what it means not to understand or to suspend understanding. It puts him in the position of the entirely disengaged and therefore superior observer, a disengagement that is actually an expression of a special kind of hostility. It places the writer and his ability to observe himself

going through the automatic process of swallowing coffee in a position so far removed from the conversation he is ostensibly part of that it insults his conversational partner. It is statement of such complete disagreement as to allow not even the engagement of discord. Were it not for the continued exploration of what such a position involves in both zwei studien über das sitzen and Der Kuss von Sentze it would remain at the level of superciliousness, the classic pose of the disengaged bureaucrat.

oswald's inability to understand is, of course, on one level quite simply a refusal to agree with his former friends, the expression of difference in outlook, so that the theorizing about what it means not to understand could merely be taken as a means of covering up the disagreement. ossi feels himself to be, of course, light years ahead of the new generation and there is, in the history of the journal manuskripte some justification for his point of view. Elisabeth Wiesmayer, writing about manuskripte from 1960 - 1970 and discussing the journal's raison d'être puts it thus:

Die Radikalität von Wieners sprachkritischen Überlegungen und die Konsequenz, mit der sie in seinem Text zum Ausdruck kommen, bedeutet einen Widerspruch nicht nur zu einzelnen literarischen Arbeiten in der Zeitschrift, sondern verhält sich auch zur Haltung des Herausgebers kontrovers, der diese unterschiedlichen Texte unkommentiert nebeneinander bestehen lässt. Bei näherer Betrachtung sprengt die 'verbesserung von mitteleuropa' das inhärente Konzept der Zeitschrift wie kein anderer Beitrag. Kolleritsch genügt für die Veröffentlichung Wieners offenbar das Etikett 'Avantgarde', ohne sich auf die Voraussetzungen der 'verbesserung' einzulassen und sie für sein weiteres literarisches Konzept verbindlich zu machen. Hätte Kolleritsch

aus Wieners ästhetischen Massstäben die Konsequenzen gezogen, wäre das Programm der Zeitschrift ernsthaft in Frage gestellt gewesen.¹⁰

The scene described in zwei studien über das sitzen can be interpreted as an explanation for the complexity of Wiener's stance in relation to his contemporaries in Vienna during the sixties. As such it is a description of disagreements between Wiener and his sparring partners that come about partly as a result of Wiener's progress towards what he describes as incomprehension. It begins as an attempt to live out certain theories of political reform that involve an attempt to alter the relationship between the individual and society. Wiener describes how the 'Weltverbesserer' went about their task of improving society, in doing so placing themselves outside society, thereby creating inconsistencies in their theories and their practice. Wiener remains consistent but in doing so alters his relationship to the group and its goals as well as to his own previous writing:

sie stellten sich in ihren äusserungen neben die gesellschaft, aber nur um sie besser sehen zu können, und sie arbeiteten an ihr um sie zu verbessern und sie wussten schon wie sie auszusehen hatte. ganz ähnlich ist es damals mir gegangen, und darum habe ich meinen roman ja auch 'die verbesserung von mitteleuropa' genannt, damals, und als ich an mitteleuropa ohne besonderen grund das interesse verloren hatte wars noch immer ein schöner titel, und mitteleuropa wurde immer schöner je weiter ich davon wegkam [...].(p.CXX)

In this passage a fundamental shift in political attitude is described. The shift is from structuralism to post-structuralism

(and, perhaps, with hindsight, also from modernism to post-modernism). The arguments against the attempt to stand outside society in order to understand it, the attempt to create a metalanguage to describe and analyze linguistic and cultural structures are well-known in the context of post-structuralist scepticism. The belief in the possibility of objective analysis and improvement is no longer tenable. However, the vacuum that this loss of belief creates is also captured in the passage. The interest is lost 'for no particular reason', but what is more important is that the title of the work remains in place because it is still 'ein schöner titel' and for no other reason. There could be no clearer description of the process of the loss of significance, of the shift from an idealism that sees words as powerful tools, means of defining society, to a scepticism that chooses words for purely aesthetic reasons, there being no other.

The revolutionary impulse died because it did not bring about a revolution, either in the public or private domain: 'einige waren unkonventionell in der tat' writes oswald, 'und zeigten dass sie anders sein wollten, aber so sehr fielen sie nicht aus dem rahmen damit'(p.CXX). He describes the process of discussion within the café and in doing so analyzes why it was that no revolution took place, identifying the problem as the inability to realize - both in the sense of understand and bring about - the implications of their theories. As a result the revolutionaries live in two worlds, one in which everything is questioned and another where everything is taken for granted:

sie lebten dazwischen und suchten sich die tatsachen aus. wenn einer zu ihnen redete so fanden sie ganz mühelos den haken dran raus, wenn er was sagte was ihnen nicht in den kram passte, egal ob es nun stimmte oder nicht, 'stimmte oder nicht', aber wenn einer beiläufig sagte vorgestern hats geregnet so glaubten sie es aufs wort, fandens richtig und sinnvoll und schrieben sich das hinter die ohren.(p.CXXI)

While pointing out the faults in his comrades, the lyrical position is, however, the loss of friendship, the sense of being alone and under threat.

ich aber wurde garnicht fertig mit dem aufpassen dass ich nicht aus dem rahmen falle und meine anstrengungen hatten streckenweise ganz guten erfolg, sodass es ausschaute ich wolle dasselbe wie sie.(pp.CXX-CXXI)

While keeping the title die verbesserung von mitteleuropa because it is a nice title, oswald complains that his critics do not use their words accurately:

schmatz für sein teil hielt mich für nen faschisten, aber er dachte das wohl nur weil ihm das gerade passend erschien und weil sie ja auch zu den polizisten faschist sagen, wo doch polizist an sich völlig ausreicht [...].(p.CXXI)

oswald's position is thus not a happy or satisfied one. It is not simply a matter of knowing better, nor is it one of pure hostility, since it has not found a solution to the problem of improving Central Europe. It is a position that claims to be an inevitable result of the group's discussions which, it argues, do not lead to a perfect society in which the individual is free, in which individual and

State are reconciled in the perfect society, but rather to incomprehension. While the group does not remain consistent - perhaps because the result of consistency would be the loss of group feeling - oswald does, and in the process finds himself having to simulate comradeship. In zwei studien über das sitzen there is an attempt to analyze what the breakdown actually involves, and it is in this analysis that oswald frees himself from the arrogance of taking a superior position. Instead of being a condemnation of the world around him, his own condition becomes like an illness, a social illness marked, above all, by the inability to understand.

ich glaube aber nicht, dass ich ein freund bin, denn ein freund bist du wenn du alles verstehst und das meiste davon gutheisst weil du alles verstehst. aber ich verstehe alles so dass ich nichts davon begreife, und vom gutheissen kann doch wohl überhaupt nicht die geringste rede sein beim [sic] mir.(p.CXIX)

This brings us back to the discussion about the difference between Stifter's decision not to draw conclusions as a moral strategy and Wiener's progression towards incomprehension via the attempt to change society by changing language. Having noted a similar stylistic effect in the way that the descriptive passages refuse to assume knowledge, at this stage it is appropriate to discuss how such a style teeters on the brink of an inability to 'understand', 'grasp' or go along with the 'meaning' of other people's actions, refusing a common ground, a common experience necessary in order to be able to interpret what the other is doing and saying. Through the refusal to draw conclusions, to infer from what is seen and heard, together with the refusal to assume knowledge on the part of the reader,

understanding threatens to become an impossible concept, or rather it becomes a concept that is so limited that it becomes impossible to function in society with the ease and speed that is taken for granted in everyday discourse.

oswald describes how, having become aware of the connection between words and their meanings and having severed the connections because of their political contamination, he finds himself unable to communicate. The result is that he has to learn his language again; yet the process of relearning, parallel to the process of becoming critically aware of the ways in which language works, turns language into something belonging to someone else, a borrowed tool which can be used in order to obtain what one wants, but not in order to express individuality. The process of relearning turns language into an object of exchange, pushed from one person to another, like a bureaucratic document, detached from any speaker and part of a language game:

ich fing wieder zu lernen an, diesmal aber lernte ich reden wie man schwimmen lernt, zu einem bestimmten zweck sozusagen und es war ja tatsächlich jeder satz wie wenn du ins wasser springst beim baden und tempi machst. ein baum wurde langsam wieder ein baum, aber es war eine andere sorte baum als früher und nicht eigentlich ein baum sondern gewissermassen ein 'baum', aber die anführungszeichen konnten sie ja nicht sehen beim reden und das half mir, denn für sie wars dasselbe. das reden war so geworden als ob ich nur in zitatzen redete, aber es klang gut und wenn ich kaffee wollte so hatte sich der ober an die bestellung gewöhnt und es war ihm scheisseegal ob ich günczler zitierte oder den hofrat kringel [...].(p.CXX)

This passage is one of the most significant for an understanding of the novel and of the way in which conscious decisions about how communication should take place interfere with the process of communication to such an extent that it breaks down. What is more, it is a description of how communication can take place simultaneously on two levels, an aspect of language that is also crucial for an understanding of the novel as a whole. On one level meaning is transparent, the propositional content of the sentence is accepted as the message, as the speech act; on another level every utterance is a phenomenon, it exists as a thing itself which can be quoted. Here Wiener points out that quotation is a matter of interpretation, with the result that the quotation marks can exist in the mind of the speaker who knows that he is quoting but not in the mind of the hearer who simply takes the propositional content and acts on it. It is, of course, also possible for this to happen the other way round. The hearer understands an utterance as a phenomenon, as something to look at, to hear as sounds, as grammatical structures, as a quotation, while the speaker wishes it to be understood as a propositional statement, expecting the hearer to engage in discussion as to its truth value.

Some of the most beautiful descriptions in zwei studien über das sitzen are those that describe from a subjective point of view the notion of not understanding language in terms of its propositional content, the detachment of language from meaning. In these phrases and metaphors, Oswald lives one aspect of linguistic theory. There is, for example, a sense of relaxation in the retreat from meaning, in the ability to sit and hear, even sit and listen, and not become

involved in the complicated networks of significance and their accompanying emotions.

ich habe [...] gerade das studiert, nämlich keine auffassungen zu haben, und so fiel es mir extrem leicht, fleischers sätze anzuhören ohne dass sie den geringsten sinn machten.(p.CXVII)

In this position of detachment the discussion that takes place around oswald's table in the café Zwerina can be described entirely through a kind of poetic metatext, a description of what happens to sentences as objects. oswald describes how he contributes something to the conversation by naming the sentence parts for example, 'ich sagte noch etwas, was anderes mit zwei nebensätzen und beistrichen'.(p.CXVII) Or he observes the progress of someone else's utterance: 'ich war froh wenn ein wort ausgesprochen war und zu verblassen beginnen konnte und pustete jedem eilends ein folgendes nach'.(p.CXIX) A less than adequate contribution to a conversation on American psychology 'lag eine zeit lang wie ein fladen auf einem gedeckten tisch'(p.CXVII) and it makes no difference whether it is in quotation marks or not: 'es war ja nicht eigentlich meine meinung gewesen, selbst wenn sie gestimmt hätte, aber weil ich sie gesagt hatte klang es so als wäre sie es'(p.CXVII).

Again and again, however, this position of detachment, one-sided as it is, is one that creates the potential for aggression. It is in the nature of the attempt to communicate that the speaker depends on the good will of the hearer to create a context of understanding.

Wiener's refusal to cooperate is thus de facto impolite. For example, the following quotation hovers between the literal and metaphorical:

ich sah ihn mit seinen worten hantieren und sah seine sätze 3D
vor dem was ich von ihm hielt, und ich hielt von ihm garnichts,
d.h. weder was allgemeines noch was besondres.(p.CXVI)

Sentences, instead of carrying meaning, have become three dimensional objects in space and the listener who is ostensibly paying attention to the speaker asserts a 'lack of regard' for him. The very fact that such a phrase as 'ich hielt von ihm garnichts' is insulting points to the way in which oswald's refusal to be engaged by the process of communication is deeply antisocial. In both English translation and in the original German, the 'lack of regard' implies devaluing the speaker both as a person and in what he says. 'ich hielt von ihm garnichts', as a phrase, is a negative judgement emphasised by 'garnichts'. The insult is partly taken back, however, by the addition of 'weder was allgemeines noch was besondres', which points to a literal understanding of the previous clause. Just as oswald pays no regard to the propositional content of the sentences he listens to, so too he is not able to focus his attention on the person who is speaking. He is not able to think anything specific or general about him. However, the transfer from a judgement on the speaker to a statement about the cognitive state of the listener is bound to leave the actual situation of dis-regard intact, so that any attempt at verbal expression on the part of the speaker, any attempt to engage the hearer, will be futile.

The inner world of someone who has become detached from language must therefore remain a secret one. 'es war mir klar dass sie mich trotz allem früher oder später erwischen mussten'(p.CXXII) writes oswald in

desperation at his lack of ability to understand. The progression towards complete mutedness involves an increase in speed in the attempt, literally, to hold the units of meaning together. It is as if the discovery of so many discrete steps on the way from utterance to meaning has created such a distance between sound and comprehension that it is not longer possible to hold the structure of language together:

die bedeutung verstehe ich nicht. bald wird das stadium kommen in dem ich die laute einzeln hören werde und mühevoll zu worten zusammenfügen muss: dann werdet ihr schneller reden müssen.(p.CXXII)

The final question concerns what lies beyond disconnection, whether the freedom that is hoped for really is the end result of the process.

es bestand gar kein grund zum schreiben mehr, gar keiner. was ich früher geahnt hatte, das hatte ich später zu denken versucht, und nun fühle ich es leibhaftig. ist es wirklich das selbe? was heisst hier dasselbe?(p.CXXI)

The second of the zwei studien über das sitzen - 'eine variante'(p.CXXII) a footnote tells us - is the stylistic consequence of the first. While the first version tells the story, the second version demonstrates through quotation, allusion, misquoting clichés or common sayings, obscenity, blasphemy, the use of dialect, games with sound, the use of dots on the page, capitalization, a blank page, and so on and so on, the state of mind that has been achieved.

ganz allein die ursächlichen übergedanken goldes wert nur weiss
der teufel versteh ich kein wort und kann man nichts machen ...
sie schwirren am ohr vorbei; kennst du das flattern oder auch
das schwirren kleiner flügel kleiner vögel?(p.CXXII)

At the same time, however, the text continues to explicate itself,
dividing and categorizing the progression from one phase to another:

wir gehn jetzt über zur phase drei. seit längstem bin ich
nämlich wieder, wie soll man sagen, zusammengewachsen, auf
diesem sessel visavis und linse rüber und sitzt kein oswald mehr
visavis dem er zuschauen könnte beim gedankenhaben, keine spur
der ist mit haut und haaren herüber eingewachsen hier und heisst
überoswald im undurchsichtigen verfahren der transsubstantion,
wenn ihr wollt. nur die gedanken sind halt freigeworden bei
diesem prozess.(p.CXXIII)

While on the one hand, in phase three, the detachment of thought
allows the observation of utterances as objects - as in the practice
of linguistics - it is also accompanied by the claim that the
reification of language has brought about meaninglessness:

neeex.

nxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

da sind namen...weiss ich. ich bin müd bin ich schon, was wahr
is is wahr. und wenn da einer sagt! Die Bedeutung eines
Worts....säärr witzig. die bedeutung...nöö. is nich. nicht bei
mir. was ersieht die zentraleinheit aus dem gebrauch der
sprache? keine bedeutung.(p.CXXVIII)

Ultimately, phase three is expressed in terms of information
technology, where 'meta oswald' takes control of the world and
departs:

meta oswald schaltet die bilder nach wunsch. oswald, verbannt in die sprache, durch die welten säuselnd, wird nachgerade von signalen durchgerüttelt wie vom erdbeben. die nachricht trifft oswalds empfänger mit unvorstellbarer wucht wumms und löst sich dank der ausgeklügelten verdrahtung, dank des von ihm selber ausbaldowerten begriffsapparats in lauter winzige harmlose bedeutungen auf, die mühelos neutralisiert werden können. farbe auch trifft ein, noch und noch, wird im time-sharing demoduliert, verglichen, transkodifiziert, mit prüfbit versehen, gegen festwertgeber abgestimmt, 'dekodifiziert' (als obs das gäbe!), in random-speicher abgelegt - laterale inhibition filtert die informationen, oswald redet wie ein wasserfall, vergleicht in schnörkeln dies mit jenem, zählt eins und eins zusammen und wird direktor, opfer seiner talente. oswald verspeist den anderen zum frühstück.(p.CXXXII)

zwei studien über das sitzen is followed by the section notizen zum konzept des bioadapters. As an independent essay intended as a means of interpreting the rest of the novel, it again creates a structure which challenges the unity of the work and acts out the relationship of text to metatext. With the end of zwei studien über das sitzen there is a real ending to the extent that all that follows is in relation to all that has gone before. An end is created within the text by the designation of a relationship between the different parts.

ich denke, dass die folgenden zeilen, welche einen geschlossenen abschnitt meines romans bilden, ihn jedoch, wie ich glaube, leichter verständlich machen, wenn man sie zur interpretation des übrigen benützt [...].(p.CXXXIV)

As a text that interprets another text, notizen zum konzept des bioadapters, with its notes and appendices and the

'literaturhinweise' that follow, stands in the same relationship as a piece of criticism to a work of literature, making the explanation of the explanation yet another example of infinitely reciprocal reflexivity, the literary equivalent of a Möbius strip. However, what is described in notizen zum konzept des bioadapters is 'ein versuch der desertion aller weltbilder und der geschichte (deren frucht er ja, letzten endes, ist)'(p.CXXXIV), 'das ausrollen der neuzeit in kybernetik'(p.CXXXIV). In a reassertion of the symbiosis between the individual and the State this section, through a notion akin to 'Virtual Reality', turns the idea of the adaptation of the individual on its head and suggests the reconstruction of the world through an idealized form of language, 'fasziniert von unseren halluzinationen machen wir uns nicht leicht klar, dass die sprache film, medium, leinwand und sinnesorgan zugleich ist'(p.CLII). Architects are to create this world through words in which the model becomes the reality, the metatext the text.

What makes this an end point for this thesis is the synthesis of the machine (the computer, as the device that organizes and rationalizes the community), with language (both in its function as a system that organizes thought and as a means of communication) in a vision of an ultimate form of bureaucratic organization that gives the individual complete control over his world, whilst simultaneously restricting both him and the world through total centralization, thereby eliminating the possibility of a discrepancy between different spheres. It has not been the purpose of this final chapter to analyze the thought behind such a vision, but rather to point to the way in which, as a text, it explores, analyzes and fights against a

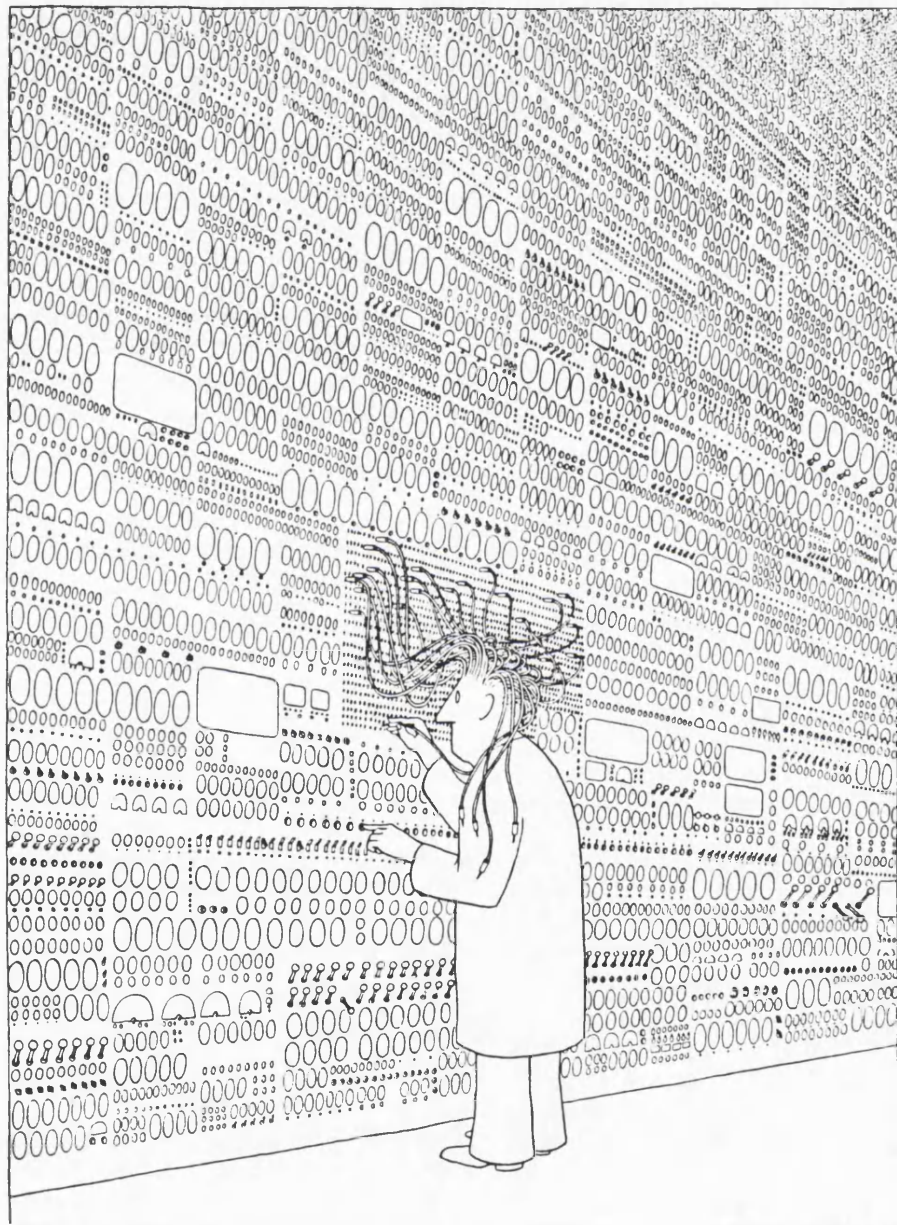
possibility that has been diagnosed in each of the previous texts discussed in the thesis. This is a fight carried out essentially with the tools of literature, in spite of the reservations about the literary expressed within the text itself. For, ultimately, in the orchestration of the relationships between individual texts and between elements within each one, Wiener's die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman exploits the open-ended self-reflexive nature of the literary work in order to break down and undermine the use of self-reflexivity, as a tool employed to service the institutional contract in both the bureaucratic and the scientific text. Herein lies an explanation for the reassertion in die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman, again and again of different kinds of textuality, of different purposes and relationships between different texts.

Notes to Chapter Four

1. Oswald Wiener, die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman, (Reinbek bei Hamburg, Rowolt, 1985). All page references are to this edition.
2. Markus Paul, Sprachartisten - Weltverbesserer: Bruchlinien in der österreichischen Literatur nach 1960, (Innsbruck, 1991), p.72.
3. Markus Paul, p.70.
4. Manfred Durzak, 'Ende des Romans: Oswald Wiener und die Folgen', in Neue deutsche Hefte, 17 (1970), pp.116-127.
5. Elisabeth Wiesmayr, Die Zeitschrift Manuskripte 1960-1970, (Königstein/Ts, 1980), p.70.
6. Markus Paul, pp.71-72.
7. See Oswald Wiener, 'Wittgensteins Einfluss auf die Wiener Gruppe', in Wittgenstein und: Philosophie = Literatur, ed. by Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, Martin Huber, Michael Huter, (Vienna, 1990), pp.89-108.
8. See Rüdiger Engert, 'An den Grenzen der Formulierbarkeit: Zu Oswald Wiener: Die Verbesserung von Mitteleuropa', in Literatur und Kritik, 38 (1969), 502-505, p.504. Compare Josef

Donnenberg, Johannes Höller, 'Versuch mit der "Verbesserung von Mitteleuropa"', in Literatur und Kritik, 69 (1972), pp.550-558.

9. See Gerhard Neumann, 'Franz Kafka: Der Name, die Sprache und die Ordnung der Dinge', in Franz Kafka: Schriftverkehr, ed. by Wolf Kittler and Gerhard Neumann, (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1990), pp.11-29.
10. Wiesmayr, p.74.



Meek

CONCLUSION

'Offen und abgeschlossen zugleich'¹

There is not, at present at least, a conclusion to be written on the bureaucratic Muse, for its fascination and inspirational qualities lie in the very lack of a possibility of a definitive resolution of the various tensions that make up the network of a text or texts. All four texts discussed in this thesis bear witness to the central dilemma of the bureaucratized world - on the one hand the need, indeed compulsion, for order, clarity, rationality, and, on the other the fear that that this order may become a strait-jacket. The texts represent both the potential for clarity and the potential repercussions of not asking questions. They place the idea of rationality against the kind of merely efficient thinking which may serve an enterprise that is itself irrational. Thus the texts offer neither a vindication of bureaucracy nor a vision of escape from its toils: they speak of entrapment. What is more, they speak of an entrapment in language that, whilst bearing witness to the consciousness of the dilemma, appears itself to be compounding the problem.

Not even the concepts of Artificial Intelligence appear to offer any possibility for the establishment of harmony between individual consciousness and collectivity, although Wiener's argument in die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman appears to be that hyper-self-consciousness is simply a stage on the way towards a fundamental

change in the relationship between them. By contrast, it could be argued that the new order is a solipsistic one, the complete recreation of the external through internal programming and hence a sublimation of self not into other but into a greater machine-self made up of all the cogs of society.

However, such a vision in which all individuals become machines, turns out not to exclude the possibility of self-consciousness, as we discover in the novel Nicht schon wieder...! quoted at the beginning of the conclusion. In the foreword to the novel, we are told that the book is published as a record of data found by the editor, Evo Präkogler, on a backup disc, the author declared missing, assumed lost at the centre of a cybernetic universe. The novel (the author of which is, of course, none other than Oswald Wiener writing under a pseudonym, having, it would seem, lost his identity entirely) develops further the exploration of the relationship between individual consciousness and society that was begun in die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman and continued in Wiener's theoretical texts, including Probleme der Künstlichen Intelligenz³, but this time within the framework of a narrative in which the narrator, Zdenko Puterweck, explores the workings of his own mind as part of an attempt to find out what his own involvement has been in a government cover-up over the disposal of nuclear waste. On the jacket cover 'Nicht schon wieder...!' is followed by the words '(leben zu müssen)', as Zdenko Puterweck is dragged back into writing after having come to a stand-still with the phrase 'offen und abgeschlossen zugleich' repeating itself over and over in his mind.

The monologue, recording and analyzing a process of intense self-observation, again works with an oppositional relationship between individual consciousness and, in the case of this narrative, a State bureaucracy (an Austrian one indeed) that attempts explicitly to restrict and control this particular individual. In the end Zdenko Puterweck concludes that he has in fact died and become part of a simulated universe. Nevertheless - as the discovery of the disc bears witness - even as part of a machine he continues as a self-conscious being attempting to make sense of the data that are available to him.

This narrative shuffles the ingredients - private individual, State, bureaucracy, self-consciousness, the act of writing and metatextuality, once again - but this time without arguing that bureaucracy per se is restrictive. Bureacracy here becomes an evolutionary progression, a biological entity as it was referred to in Kafka's letter to Milena². But we are warned against the attempt to draw the analogy between the individual and the bureaucratic organization in terms of the capacity for the creation of meaning and the sense of a single, unique, identity. Here, the assertion is that the possibility for meaning resides solely in individual consciousness (no matter how that consciousness is constituted), with the collective remaining an unconscious, evolutionary phenomon beyond notions of intentionality. The lament is that the teleological view of bureaucracy, as an organizational principle intended to 'improve' society and the individual, leads to the restriction of individual potential. The assertion is once again that bureaucracy is and must remain meaningless, and that the individual must fight to maintain

its sense of identity. In fact, it is this capacity to create a sense of identity, the compulsion to discover meaning, that becomes definitive of self.

Ist dies endlich der heroische Staat? Oh ich weiss wie dieser Staat aussieht! Es ist einfach so weitergegangen wie es angefangen hat. Die Organisation hat ein Ausmass angenommen, in welchem die einzelnen Intelligenzen nichtmehr im alten Sinn funktionieren. Natürlich denkt jetzt nicht der Staat stattdessen; er ist weiterhin nur Medium der Evolution und die sich ausbildenden Massnahmen kann man nicht als vorbedacht ansehen, sie sind evolviert. Sinn ist immer noch die Domäne der einzelnen Intelligenz - aber dieser je private Sinn ist in einer für eine Intelligenz meiner Zeit unzumutbaren Weise durch die über die individuellen Kapazitäten hinausentwickelte Komplexität der kollektiven Organisation eingeschränkt und determiniert. Die Evolution hat die Institution der Absicht überholt.⁴

The bureaucratic Muse hence continues to work, suspended between visions of order on the one hand, and the tenacious sense of identity on the other. The organizational structures become ever more complex, ever more impossible to grasp in their entirety, whilst the idea of individuality becomes ever more nostalgic, ever more tinged with longing. The idea of the unique, of separateness becomes itself a definition of the struggle that this individuality has to assert against monolithic and unreformed modes of centralized activity.

What **can** be pointed out at the conclusion of this thesis is the appropriateness of the literary context for this debate, not only within the individual texts themselves, but also outside them in the discourse that surrounds them. Indeed, it becomes clear in the course

of analysis, that integral to these literary texts - entering as they do into a debate with the society in which they were produced - is the meta-textuality of the response to literature itself. Literature is being questioned in terms of fundamental issues surrounding the questions of the function of literature and of literary interpretation. The lack of a resolution within the literary texts discussed in this thesis, their lament about entrapment, is highly relevant to extra-literary debates given the fact that imaginative literature - however tumultuously, subversively imaginative it is - is itself an institution, a corpus of socialized discourse suspended between the expression of individual and collective identity. The institution of the literary text, understood as a medium for the creation of possible worlds to comment on the reality of society's experience, turns out to be a powerful forum for this debate precisely because of its position, caught between what Stanley Fish would call 'fundamentalist' beliefs concerning truth, authenticity, universality, soul on the one hand, and the institutional and 'hence' arbitrary, inauthentic nature of metaliterary discourse in contemporary western societies on the other. The producers and readers of literature themselves, in their engagement with the medium, are locked into a debate in which literature as an institution itself both upholds and denies the oppositional relationship between literary expression as eternal truth and as historically contingent. The argument is that the essential nature of literature is the expression of the uniquely individual and that the struggle against its own institutionalization is an attempt to uphold its own true nature. The other argument maintains that to oppose the

institutions that enable the existence of literature is to advocate the end of literature itself.

In his essay on anti-professionalism⁵ Stanley Fish discusses the dilemma at the heart of the contemporary debates about institutionalizing literary interpretation, revealing in his own discourse the impossibility of resolution that I have been labelling the 'bureaucratic Muse'. Attacking to the right and to the left, he challenges what he calls 'the assumption that questions of merit have nothing essentially to do with the acts of description and judgment that have their source in the largely political machinery of professional bureaucracies'. And he continues:

I want to call that the anti-professional assumption, and I define anti-professionalism as any attitude or argument that enforces a distinction between professional labors on the one hand and the identification and promotion of what is true and valuable on the other. In some formulations that distinction is very firm and amounts to an equation of professionalism with everything that is evil and corrupting.⁶

Fish defends the professional institutions of literary preservation and analysis as enabling organizations without which the discourse would not exist in the first place. 'The only thing that follows from my argument' he writes:

is that a practice cannot (or should not) be criticized because it is professional, because it is underwritten by institutionally defined goals and engaged in for institution-specific reasons; since here [sic] are no goals and reasons that are not institutional, that do not follow from the already-in-place assumptions, stipulated definitions, and categories of

understanding of a socially organized activity, it makes no sense to fault someone for acting in the only way one can possibly act. This does not, however, rule out opposition, for someone can always be faulted for acting in institutional ways that have consequences you deplore; and you can always argue that certain institutional ways (and their consequences) should be altered or even abolished, although such arguments will themselves be made on behalf of other institutional ways (and their consequences). In short, the alternative to anti-professionalist behaviour (which on my account is impossible) is behaviour of the kind we are already engaged in. One could call it business as usual so long as 'business as usual' is understood to include looking around (with institution-informed eyes) to see conditions (institutionally established) that are unjust or merely inefficient (with justice and efficiency institutionally defined) and proposing remedies and changes that will improve the situation. Of course, what is a change and what is a remedy and what is an improvement will be matters of dispute between agents embedded in different organizational settings with different priorities and interests, but none of the parties to the dispute will be acting purely, that is, with no ax to grind; and no one will be grinding an ax that is not an extension of some rationally defensible sense of the enterprise.

Doing away with anti-professionalism, then, will have as little effect as anti-professionalism itself.⁷

And yet, in spite of all this, his conclusion, interestingly, is that the one requires the other, 'professionalism cannot do without anti-professionalism'⁸:

The ideology of anti-professionalism - of essential and independent values chosen freely by an independent self - is nothing more or less than the ideology of professionalism taking itself seriously.⁹

Anti-professionalism becomes the necessary assertion of 'individual freedom, true merit, genuine authority', without which professionalism could not exist. Abolish the notion of true merit and the institution would collapse as well. Fish argues:

Professionalism is, as I have said, the very emblem of that condition. The professional who is 'spoken' in his every thought and action by the institution and yet 'speaks' in the name of essences that transcend the institution and provide a vantage point for its critique is not acting out a contradiction, but simply acting in the only way human beings can. From the beginning, my argument has been that anti-professionalism is indefensible because it imagines a form of life - free, independent, acontextual - that cannot be lived; that argument now takes its final and curious turn by concluding that professionalism itself cannot be lived apart from such an imagining. In my efforts to rehabilitate professionalism, I have come full circle and have ended up by rehabilitating anti-professionalism too.¹⁰

Much might be written in response to such a conclusion. However, the point is simply that the debate takes place with some urgency both within and outside the literary text. One might point to another example, George Steiner's seductive vision of the perfect, philological literary community, a community in which 'jedes Gespräch über Kunst, Musik und Literatur verboten ist'. In this vision '[würden] Texte [...], wo nötig, weiterhin in strengster und klarster Form erstellt und ediert'.

Dazu gäbe es Kataloge, und zwar durchdacht und sorgfältig angelegt, in denen das oeuvre eines Künstlers, Kunstaussstellungen, Museen, öffentliche und private Sammlungen dokumentiert würden [...] Kunstkritik und journalistische

Rezensionen [...] wären untersagt. [...] Das Ziel ist eine Art von Erziehung, eine Definition von Werten, bei denen in grösstmöglichem Masse auf 'Meta-Texte' verzichtet wird: das heisst auf Texte über Texte [...].¹¹

A seductive vision indeed, but one which, in turn, is also rejected:

Würden Literatur, Musik und Kunst in dieser imaginären Gemeinde existieren, ohne befragt, ohne bewertet zu werden, abgeschnitten von Interpretationsenergien und Erkenntnisdisziplinen? Würde der Ostrazismus, mit dem der höhere Klatsch verbannt wird (das deutsche Wort Gerede bringt genau den Tenor hohler Geschäftigkeit zum Ausdruck), zu einem leeren und passiven Schweigen - Schweigen kann auch höchst aktiv und vielsagend sein - im Umfeld der schöpferischen Vorstellungskraft führen? Keineswegs.

Paradise has not yet been regained within the disinherited mind of the Western Professor of Literature but an endlessly fruitful symbiosis has at least been discovered between the literary text and the diagnosis of the literary community's ailments.

One final point: the struggle to resolve this debate, to go beyond the seductively relevant dilemma, is clearly a utopian project. What is more, it is an enterprise that in spite of its utopian beliefs may indeed be upsetting a balance that appears at present to be maintaining a form of civilized community. Nevertheless, the belief in something beyond that which can be comprehended in the present, institutionalized context of possible signification, retains its sense of adventure, of danger, even if it may exist only as some kind of wish-fulfilment:

die sprache geht sozusagen mitten durch uns hindurch, der wirklichkeit unseres bewusstseins enge gassen vorschreibend, als n mlichkeit identit t erzeugend, die vielleicht m gliche erfahrung verhindernd. wer also seine sprache nicht als letzte richtschnur gelten l sst, begibt sich in zweifache gefahr: er verliert sich selbst in den landschaften des bewusstseins, die zu betreten ihm jedes r stzeug fehlt; und er verliert den beistand der menschheit gegen tod und leben, jene sicherheit der solidarit t, die den staatsb rger  bers ganze dasein hinwegtr gt und sogar noch um den tod betr gt.(p.CXXXVIII-CXXXIX)

It is perhaps the most appropriate conclusion to this utopian quest - present in each of the texts (and in the discourse of the community that finds them worthwhile) in their ultimate struggle for a way out of the trap - that the most promising form of resolution to be implied in any of them is a final entry to a list. The concluding entry of the 'literaturhinweise', which is the final text in the novel die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman reads:

zwicky, f., wilson, a. g., hg., new methods of thought and procedure, berlin, etc. 1967

Notes to Conclusion

1. Evo Präkogler, ed., Nicht schon wieder...!, (Munich, 1990), p.18.
2. See Chapter Three, p.168.
3. Oswald Wiener, Probleme der Künstlichen Intelligenz, (Berlin, 1990).
4. Nicht schon wieder...!, p.250.
5. Stanley Fish, 'Anti-Professionalism', in Doing What Comes Naturally, (Oxford, 1989), pp.215-246.
6. Fish, p.215-216.
7. Fish, p.242-243.
8. Fish, p.245.
9. Fish, p.245.
10. Fish, p.246.
11. George Steiner, Von realer Gegenwart, (Munich, 1990), quoted in programme booklet for Botho Strauss Schlusschor, Münchner Kammerspiele, (Munich, 1991), p.30.

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b. Adalbert Stifter, Der Kuss von Sentze

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