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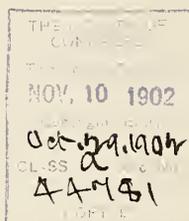
INSTRUCTOR IN GERMAN LITERATURE

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STUDIES IN POPULAR POETRY

PHILIP SCHUYLER ALLEN

I

NATURE INTRODUCTIONS AND VIVIFICATION IN THE OLDER GERMAN "VOLKSLIED"

THERE are two ways of accounting for any given phenomenon in popular poetry: the atavistic and the artistic. The latter term denotes not only the opposite of communal, in that it places the stress upon the individual as against the group-theory of origins,¹ but it forms an exact antithesis to atavistic, in that it insists upon the momentary, as contrasted with the inherited source of the utterance under discussion. The manner of a song is ordinarily artistic, even though its outward form be copied, as is so often the case, from the older folk-lyric, for it bears the impress of the individuality of its author; the matter of a song is ordinarily atavistic, even though it be widely varied to suit the needs of a present occasion, for at heart its theme is the same as that of precedent, traditional balladry. In Müller's two songs, *Thränen und Rosen* and *Abrede*,² the manner is all Müller's, the matter is all the folk-song's; the same may be said, in changing ratio, of many a popular song of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Germany; in fact, if we come to the very root of the matter, and do not quibble overmuch as to facts of external resemblance, there have been few songs of these centuries which have not been distinctly atavistic in content.

Sometimes, however, the external form may be designedly atavistic, as is shown clearly in other stanzas of Müller's,³ when the poet deliberately imitates the *Volkslied* manner, using its very phrases and all the minor aspects of the popular technique. Now, what we find so clearly proven in a time and in utterances so near to our own that it cannot be denied will doubtless be the case in more remote instances, where absolute statement based upon authoritative investigation of fact is denied us. In any case, dogmatic assertions as to general principles applying to popular song—in so far as insistence is made that the manner and matter of any given *Volkslied* are such as we have it solely because of its debt to the songs of foregoing generations, or, on the other hand, solely because of the individual treatment accorded his theme by the poet—are indeed but partial assertions of the truth.

Thus the refrain, so widely employed by the lyric *Volkslied*, may be either the survival of what was originally the whole burden of the song—the intervening stanzas at first but individual modulations or explanations of the refrain—or it may be

¹ GUMMERE, *Old English Ballads*, pp. xlix-lxiv; *Harvard Studies in Philology and Literature*, Vol. V, p. 52; *Beginnings of Poetry*, pp. 118 f.

² *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. XVI (1901), pp. 37, 38.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. XIV (1899), pp. 165, 166; *Journal of Germanic Philology*, Vol. III (1901), pp. 38, 39.

naught but the easily remembered and regularly recurrent interlude of the real drama of the song, introduced to maintain the sympathy of its auditors, perhaps by the auditors themselves.⁴ Thus the terseness and vagueness, so common to the *Volkslied*, may be due to the maiming and mangling, the confusion and omission, which are the circumstances of its existence through oral transmission;⁵ or, again, they may be due to the intense subjectivity of the people who compose the songs—the emotions or happenings being so familiar to the author that he considers explanation unnecessary.⁶

In the light of what has been considered thus far, one can scarce feel content before the knowledge that just in the matter of nature introductions and of vivification the atavistic side of the contention has been omitted in favor of the artistic. With a belief in the doctrine that multiple hypotheses clarify, rather than confuse, it would seem in all fairness essential to state the atavistic possibility in the treatment of nature in the German *Volkslied*.

First and chiefest of the causes which transform to myths the facts of everyday experience is the belief in the animation of all nature, which in its highest form becomes personification.⁷ Nature and man act and react upon each other.

Nature acts upon man.—At the very first man probably did not love nature in any wide sense. He came, it may be, to love that corner of it which was the most familiar to him, that sheltered abiding-place which hid him oftenest from the rigor of the heat or of the cold; but his first feeling for external nature was certainly fear. Before he noticed in conscious fashion the odor of the flower, he shrank before the blast of the tempest, the blare of the thunder, the blinding lightning, the blackness of night. These demonic forces he clad with living shapes, and sacrificed and prayed to them.

Man reacts upon nature.—Almost simultaneously with the above⁸ man must have noticed that something had left the body of a dead person, which continued to dwell in him, which seemed to dwell in the elements around him, in the moving, living nature of his environment. What more natural than to discover the voice of the dead in the wind—to feel that the soul was continued in the life of inanimate nature? Thus would vivification (*Beseelung*) be no *conscious* projection of the human life and emotions into the natural objects and forces about one; it would rather be a primal instinct. We should rid ourselves once for all of the hurtful Ruskinism, *pathetic fallacy*, except in so far as it be employed to connote the last cry of a decadent romanticism in nature; not a treatment of nature, but a mistreatment of it, as in Heine. Hard upon this original vivification would follow the first metaphor; when identity between man and nature was not certain, but the resemblance between them recognizable, there arose the first simile.

⁴ For the literature see R. M. MEYER, *Euphorion*, Vol. V (1898), p. 1; MINOR, *Neuhochdeutsche Metrik*, 2d ed. (1902), p. 532. Cf. also BÜCHER, *Arbeit und Rhythmus*, 3d ed. (1902).

⁵ UHLAND, *Volkslieder*, 3d ed., Vol. III, p. 9.

⁶ WACKERNELL, *Das deutsche Volkslied*, p. 18.

⁷ TYLOR, *Anfänge der Kultur* (1873), Vol. I, p. 281; MOGK, *Mythologie. PGrundriss*, Vol. III, 2d ed., p. 250.

⁸ Perhaps before: E. H. MEYER, *Germanische Mythologie*; MOGK, *loc. cit.*, p. 250.

Now, when especial emergency arose in time of need, by bereavement through death for example, especial pleading would be uttered for which the ordinary formulæ of speech would not suffice, and conscious expression would ensue. Thus would the first poetic imagery be made—a lyric hymn to nature in some one of its chiefest functions: lyric; for what is nearer to man than his own emotions? And the mainspring for early lyric utterance was not erotic passion, any more than it would be the depiction of domestic bliss today,⁹ but fear or loneliness, inspired by the approach of, or the fact of, death.

When the belief in the demonic forces and shapes of nature had waned, there was yet a long period of time when nature remained the chief matter for hymnic outpouring, and for several very patent reasons.

First, it had become stereotyped, like many another formal utterance or orthodoxy, and would not yield until a new conversion came—no, not quite then. A priesthood of some sort must have arisen to maintain and cherish the nature-worship. Metaphor and simile, instinct in all speech,¹⁰ must soon have crystallized this worship into many a formula, incantation, and oracular saying, which would outlast the centuries of sequent nature-agnosticism. And then man was never fully converted from his original state of mind; for customs and usages of this late present have their origin in the old pagan attitude,¹¹ and man still feels that something higher than himself lies in environing nature.

Secondly, what was there ever to replace nature in the popular poetry? Heroes came to succeed the gods as matter for poetic treatment; and unto heroes in a later day came men; and at last in picaresque balladry the lowest dregs of humankind followed men. Alliteration gave place to end-rime, and end-rime to the measured cadence of the verse; and often later this very rhythmic cadence surrendered to the ebb and flow of the thought which burdened it. Christianity was added to paganism, and civilization to Christianity—the social structure changed, chasms of class yawned where parity had been, intelligence strove away from ignorance, wealth away from poverty. Cities rose, and empires; foreign models reigned a while supreme; and still, unchangeable throughout, the one present exponent of the infinite, the one unfailling analogy to the growth and decay of human life, was everywhere the same nature as in the beginning of things, the firmament which showed the handiwork more than human.

Thirdly, there is that in the German character, from the long-ago *Sonderwohnen am Quell, im Walde* down to the nature-pilgrimages of today, which has tended to preserve under changed conditions the same nature-worship as that of the earliest sources.¹² And the *Volkslied* has always found its place of sojourn away from the haunts of men, close to the heart of outdoor nature.

⁹ WESTERMARCK, *Human Marriage*, p. 357; GROSSE, *Beginnings of Art*, p. 245.

¹⁰ MAX MÜLLER, *Science of Language*, 2d ser., p. 368.

¹¹ MOGK, "Behandlung der volkstümlichen Sitte, *Grundriss*, Vol. III, 2d ed., p. 494.

¹² DUNGEY, *Rundás*, p. xlii.

With all this clearly in mind, is it wise for us to posit as the beginnings of nature-depiction in German popular poetry those nature-introductions which let the occurrence to be sung appear as in a foreground of landscape, and which are so common in the *Volkslied* from the twelfth century on?¹³ With a few bold strokes the landscape or the atmosphere is sketched in, and particularly fitted to the sentiment of the following verses.¹⁴ And such introduction has been commonly esteemed, in its simplest form at least, to be unconscious and instinctive with the *Volkslied*—"less adornment than necessity."

How can it be instinctive? Would the poet at any time preface to his verses a reference to something which stood only in the vaguest sort of relationship to what followed, unless it were a mere understood convention that he should do so? Krejčí believes he would, for¹⁵ he endeavors to explain the lack of connection between the first and the second couplet of the well-known

Dass 's im Wâld finstr is,
Dâs mâcht dâs Holz;
Dass main Schâz saubr is,
Des mâcht mi schtolz.

by attributing it to the psychic mechanism underlying the uneducated mind, which finds its most conspicuous expression in just the lack of all logical connection, and which is a part of all the other vagueness and naïveté of the *Volkslied*. This may be true in any one instance, or set of instances, but what shall we say when it is found that exactly this *Ungereimtheit* between nature-introduction and following verses is a stated convention in *Schnaderhüpfel* literature, from which Krejčí quotes his illustration?¹⁶ Would it be advisable to believe that the psychic mechanism of the popular mind is such that it not only works vaguely, with rushes and starts, to which our mind cannot leap, but that it works constantly and consistently in a certain unswerving channel of stereotyped vagueness? If the poet were to seek any nature-introduction at all, would he not naturally undertake something which was in close accord with his theme, which explained, paralleled, or expanded it; in case, that is, he were free from conventional let or hindrance in the matter, and but following out his own compelling need? And is the "educated" mind so far beyond the view-point of the "popular" mind that it cannot understand in hundreds, or thousands, of instances the psychic mechanism of the latter?

Surely it is not fair to feel that, so far as the song is the artistic effort of the individual author, he could ever have prefixed to the verses of his composing a reference to nature "which stands in no close connection with what follows, but which lends a faint color to the whole song." Following the rule of his art, rather, as laid down for him in many a well-remembered song, he gave us an opening touch of

¹³ UHLAND, *loc. cit.*, p. 15. "At the first a nature-picture at the top of the song, less adornment than necessity, may have been the indispensable support upon which the following main thought leaned."

¹⁴ J. GRIMM, *Kleinere Schriften*, Vol. IV, p. 218.

¹⁵ *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie*, Vol. XIX (1889), p. 135.

¹⁶ G. MEYER, *Essays*, Vol. I, p. 377.

nature, as naturally as did the majority of our novelists, until comparatively recently, devote a large part of their opening chapter to the limning of some natural scene, into which fine-writing they introduced in leisurely fashion the characters of the drama to be acted.

This nature-introduction is, then, no embryonic beginning of that use of nature which at a later stage of development entered the fiber of the *Volkslied*, and offered a counterpart or foil to every possible human emotion;¹⁷ it is rather the last remnant of what was originally the entirety of the song—the last shred of the nature-hymn.

And the evolution of nature-sense from the simple to the complex—did such an evolution ever exist in point of fact? There is an interchange between intensive and extensive, but who shall say which of the two denominates a fuller life? Does the pathetic fallacy mean a deeper use of human life in nature, or merely a wider use? From the beginning of Germanic life to the present, when did vivification have fullest expression? In latter-day subordination of the natural world to the enlarged demands of the *ego* in poetic utterance, or in the beginnings, when man had no mirror for his indwelling self other than the inanimate world about him? If it has been rightly assumed that vivification, that natural reaction of man upon his environment, be the first way, or a first way, in which he can interpret himself at all, then we must acknowledge that nothing has been added to its primal power throughout the centuries. One cannot speak here in terms of Darwin, or Spencer, or Haeckel; one can merely assert that, under whatever shifting variance of mood or condition, the core of the matter is the same, unchanging: vivification is as natural and as wide as the human breath.

Suggestion is a higher art than detailed reference. The ability to sum up in a phrase what would otherwise require extended explanation is not primal, nor yet antique—it is modern. And surely as subtile an impressionism is contained in the delicate allusions to nature which meet us in twelfth-century *Minnesang* as the mind can well conceive. When fear of nature had died away, and such late love of nature had come to take its place that the poet need but hint at its humblest beauty or significance to put himself in thorough accord with his auditors—then we have proof of a long and thorough appreciation of the poetic symbolism in nature, which is no new thing and novel. It is a survival.

¹⁷ *Journal of Germanic Philology*, Vol. III (1901), p. 44.

II

OLD BALLADS NEWLY EXPOUNDED

LORD RANDAL

1. Oh, where have you been, Andrew my son?
 Oh, where have you been, my darling sweet one?—
 I've been to Pretty Polly's, mother: Make my bed soon,
Refrain.—For I'm sick to my heart, and fain would lay down.
2. What had you for supper, Andrew my son?
 What had you for supper, my darling sweet one?—
 Fried eels, and bread and butter, mother: Make my bed soon,—*Ref.*
3. What kind of eels were they, Andrew my son?
 What kind of eels were they, my darling sweet one?—
 Striped backs and speckled bellies, mother: Make my bed soon,—*Ref.*
4. Oh, you have been poisoned, Andrew my son.
 Oh, you have been poisoned, my darling sweet one.—
 With the fried eels, and bread and butter, mother: Make my bed soon,—*Ref.*
5. What will to your father, Andrew my son?
 What will to your father, my darling sweet one?—
 My suit of new clothes, mother: Make my bed soon,—*Ref.*
6. What will to your brother, Andrew my son?
 What will to your brother, my darling sweet one?—
 The pin in my bosom, mother: Make my bed soon,—*Ref.*
7. What will to your sister, Andrew my son?
 What will to your sister, my darling sweet one?—
 The ring on my finger, mother: Make my bed soon,—*Ref.*
8. What will to your sweetheart, Andrew my son?
 What will to your sweetheart, my darling sweet one?—
 Hell-fire and brimstone, mother: Make my bed soon,—*Ref.*
9. What will to your mother, Andrew my son?
 What will to your mother, my darling sweet one?—
 The gates of heaven opened wide, mother: Make my bed soon,—*Ref.*

LORD THOMAS AND FAIR ANNET

2. Come riddle me this, dear mother, he said,
 Come riddle this unto me;
 Whether I marry fair Ellenor,
 Or bring the brown girl home, home, home,
Refrain.—Or bring the brown girl home.

3. The brown girl she hath both money and land,
Ellenor she hath none.—
I'll give you my blessing, my only one son,
But bring me the brown girl home, home, home,—*Ref.*
4. Lord Thomas he dressed himself in red,
His merry men all in green;
And ev'ry town that they rode through,
They took him to be some king, king, king,—*Ref.*
5. He rode till he came to fair Ellenor's gate,
Then he the bell did ring;
There was none so ready as fair Ellenor,
To welcome Lord Thomas in, in, in,—*Ref.*
6. What ails you, Lord Thomas, fair Ellenor cried,
What ails you, Lord Thomas, cried she.—
My mother she bids me the brown girl to wed,
Or no blessing she gives to me, me, me,—*Ref.*
11. Lady Ellenor dressed herself in pink,
Her waiting-maids all in green;
And ev'ry town that they rode through,
They took her to be some queen, queen, queen,—*Ref.*
12. She rode till she came to the castle gate,
Then she the bell did ring;
There was none so ready as Lord Thomas himself,
To welcome fair Ellenor in, in, in,—*Ref.*
15. The brown girl she had a little pen-knife,
It was both sharp and small;
She stuck it in fair Ellenor's side,
And wounded her in the gall, gall, gall,—*Ref.*
- 16, 17. What ails you, fair Ellenor? Lord Thomas he cried,
What ails you, fair Ellenor? cried he;
As he saw the blood flowing down,
* * * * *
18. Lord Thomas he had a little broad sword,
It was both sharp and small;
He took it and cut off the brown girl's head,
And dashed it against the wall, wall, wall,—*Ref.*
19. Lord Thomas he had a little broad sword,
It was both sharp and small;
He stuck the hilt into the ground,
And on it he did fall, fall, fall,—*Ref.*

And that put an end to them all, all, all,
And that put an end to them all.

The two ballads printed above are variants of *Lord Randal*¹⁸ and *Lord Thomas and Fair Annet*.¹⁹ They are from the recitation of Mrs. Eliza Andrus, of Schenectady, N. Y., and were learned by her from an elderly serving-maid in the year 1844, when in Bloomingdale, at that time a suburb of New York city (Seventy-second street). Two facts bespeak the value of these versions: (1) Mrs. Andrus had never seen either of the ballads in print; (2) she was not taught them, but learned them as a child from hearing the maid sing them when at work about the house. A third ballad (*Barbara Allen*) would not appear to warrant regiving, because it is practically identical with an old Wehman-broadside already sufficiently known. The ballads were all sung impartially to a rocking, mournful cadence, although *Randal* was sung to Mrs. Andrus in 1870 by an English girl of sixteen, set to a lively dance measure—the hero's name in this latter case being *Jimmie Landon*, an evident corruption. This raises the interesting question as to whether the first, and intrinsic, distinction between a somber ballad (*Schauerromanze*) and a "Bab" ballad be not, after all, a matter of tune, and not a matter of text. That is, would not the apostate mind but newly freed from a belief in the horrors of Scottish balladry find relief in jingling the tune, before it parodied the text?

For music lends not only color to a song; it is a life-giving principle. How true this is may be seen by the new lease of life which was given the ballad in the early part of the eighteenth century, when music composers found settings for songs, hitherto of such difficulty that only trained singers could do them justice, now simple enough for the slightest talent in musical accompaniment. These simple settings applied to the older ballads, breathing a freshness which was but the resultant of the highest art, gained for them an undreamed-of popularity.

Music re-edits a ballad. It unites with the increasing importance of the time consideration in modern life to lop off ruthlessly the epic breadth of detail which had become incrustated on the ballad, as it ceased to be a dramatic recitative and became through the barren art of the bench-singers at the fairs a most prosaic chap-book history. When mumbled chanting has been laid aside, and the individuality of the musical performer begins to assert itself, the original demand of the first foresinger of the ballad becomes again compelling, which is that the story fail not of its highest effect upon its auditors.

To this end, as the lyric elements come again to ascendancy in the ballad, everything not absolutely necessary to the structure of the moment under description falls away as dross. As the compass of the song is narrowed, the root-situation is more vividly contemplated, the emotional stress is deepened, and the story of it has been reclaimed from the spurious detail which enveloped and threatened to choke it.

A sprightliness results, a laconicism, an omission of middle-terms; the story is suggested, not told. It is the suppression in *Randal* and *Edward* that strikes deep; it is what is not written of the first love between *Thomas* and *Ellenor* that arouses pity—all is impressionistic, not expressionistic.

The above version of *Lord Randal* agrees with six versions as printed by Child,

¹⁸ CHILD, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, No. 12.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, No. 73 D.

A, B, D, F, H, Ic, in that it contains a stanza expressing the fact that the son is poisoned, while this is merely implied in Child's C, E, G, Ia, Ib, Id, Ie, If, Ig, J, Ka, Kb, Kc, L, M, N, O. It might be argued that, as most of these versions are evidently cradle-songs, it was often found necessary to explain to the inquiring mind of the listening child that eels with striped backs and speckled bellies were snakes, and that snakes were poison; but it is curious to note that, with a single exception, Ic, just those versions, I-O, which are the most clearly intended for little children omit any mention of the word "poison." Seventeen versions are thus found to omit the word "poison," six to contain it. Yes—it may be objected—but full nineteen of the versions, A, C, D, E, Ia-Ig, J, Ka-Kc, L-O, contain stanzas which show the eels (fish) were no true eels, in that they either (1) were gathered on the land close by, or (2) killed the dogs (hawks) that got the leavings. This is another matter, for the poison is still only implied, although, by the plodding figure of climactic repetition common to all popular poetry, every possibility that it is not poison may be removed.

Lord Randal, in the above version, falls into two integral parts. The last five stanzas relating to the will and testament²⁰ may be and are attached to any number of ballads which deal with the death of their chief actor. They are, too, implicative of certain death, which is ordinarily not expressly stated. The first three stanzas are the other whole, and as such are perhaps originally sprung from a riddle: "What kind of eels grows on land?" or, "What snakes are without poison?"—"A man ate snakes (eels) and lived," or, "A man ate eels (snakes) and died." Add to such statement the near query: "Who would give a man such eels?" and the consequent thought is at hand: "An adulterous mother, a spiteful step-mother [grandmother must be a mere corruption, except as it connotes *granny, hag, witch, crone*], or a faithless sweetheart." Out of such simples may a ballad be made. But the fourth stanza is of neither first nor second part; it is an interpolation; it expresses what needs no expression; it undoes all that precedes it. In three versions (Child F, H; Pound, *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. XVII, 1902, p. 13) it has crept destructively into the preceding stanza, and in one place (Child H) it has blurred everything:

A cup of strong poison;
I fear you are poisoned,
I fear you are poisoned,
O yes, I am poisoned.

When explication enters the ballad and implication dies out of the ballad, what is left is apt to run like the above. It is then good that we can say, seventeen of Child's variants omit poison, while only six contain it. A pity that in Miss Pound's version, as in the above, two more examples of the corrupted sort are added!

Our version of *Lord Thomas and Fair Annet* is shorter by some eight stanzas than any of the variants of Child's D, to which type it belongs. The American

²⁰ CHILD, Vol. I, pp. 143, 144.

²¹ *Folk-Lore Journal*, Vol. VII, p. 33; CHILD, Vol. VI, p. 509.

version printed by Babbitt²¹ has likewise eighteen stanzas—compare the variants of Tolman. Where any of these variants lack stanzas which are in the type D, as Df–Di, these same stanzas are lacking in our version, which for the sake of convenience may be termed Dx; with a single exception, Di, in which the stanza corresponding to the fourth in Dx has fallen out. That is, out of ten ballads like Dx which have been noted by Child, only one lacks a stanza which Dx has; otherwise Dx is in every case more condensed in every part than any one of Child's ten — D, Da–Di. By comparing the stanza-numbers of Dx with those of Child D, it will be seen that they are practically identical, except that Dx lacks stanzas 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14 of D, while stanzas 16, 17 of D are summed up in one deponent stanza in Dx.

Now, whatever be the comparative artistic merits of D and Dx (and I can imagine none so purblind as not to vastly prefer D), the truth would seem to remain that Dx is closer to the original condition of the ballad than is D. Dx contains the whole story without comment or omission: A swain loves two women, one of whom has lands (cattle), the other nothing. He marries the girl with lands, and the rejected mistress is stabbed by the wife. (Compare the amusing perversions of Babbitt and Tolman ballads.) The maddened husband kills his wife and then himself. D adds touches of beauty to the narrative; motivates it, however, not one whit beyond Dx. The first stanza of D is unnecessary; the longest of the other kindred ballads, A–C, E–H, are without the introductory verses, although H has no less than forty-one extant stanzas. Stanzas 7–10 of D deal with Elinor's compunctions about going to the wedding; they enhance the art-merit of the ballad, but retard its action, as the outcome is foregone. Stanzas 13, 14 of D describe in what way the wife is exasperated, by the taunt of Elinor (13) and the answering love of Thomas (14); but they are not required to explain the jealousy of the brown girl.

A further comparison of the other *Lord Thomas* ballads in Child with D will show that the latter is the most condensed of all, A–C, E–H. D leaves out much repetition: asking advice in turn of father, mother, sister, brother; discussion of Annet's (Elinor's) family, father, mother, brothers; description of the smiths, tailors, maidens, who got the girl largely ready for witnessing the wedding; an account of the bickering between bride and mistress; a narrative of the double burial of Thomas and Annet, with the attendant ritual and the resultant birk and briar twining their branches over the graves of the lovers. D has rid itself of at least twenty such explicatory and swelling stanzas; Dx has shown the possibility of the story with eight or nine stanzas less than D, and yet without an over-pruning.

If, then, Dx be really not an older form than Child D, Da–Di, it is yet a more original form, judged by the tenets regarding the early balladry. Music has re-edited it in this case, for it is more effective as a song of eleven stanzas than ever it could have been as a declamation of not less than forty-one. And what is a song of forty-one quatrains but a declamation, no matter if it be sing-sung? Dx, in short, has become less epic and more lyric.

III

HEINE AND THE "SCHNADERHÜPFEL"

Every investigator of Heine's lyric poetry, from the first to the last (Matthew 20:16: For many be called, but few chosen), has occupied himself somewhat with the debt which it evidently owes to the *Volklied*, for the correspondence between Heine's technique and that of German popular poetry is too close to permit of either denial or of oversight. Two special investigations of this correspondence have appeared (Greinz, *H. Heine und das deutsche Volklied*, 1894, and Goetze, *H. Heine's "Buch der Lieder" und sein Verhältnis zum deutschen Volklied*, 1895), not to speak of shorter articles, such as Hessel's suggestive "Heinrich Heine und das deutsche Volklied" (*Kölner Zeitung*, February 22, 1887). And yet it would seem that little or nothing has been said in the matter of Heine's most important getting from the storehouse of popular song: I mean, of course, his broad use of that ironical antithesis (*Stimmungsbrechung*) which has caused him more misunderstanding than all his published cynicisms, and has ever proven such a stone for stumbling to appreciative criticism of his life and works.

Goetze closes a detailed study of Heine's debt to the popular poetry in the following words:

Heine gave, as we have seen, a popular dress to his songs, and borrowed many a poetic theme from the *Volklied*; but his originality did not suffer the least in this. For there is never visible a slavish dependence upon his model, but rather in many an instance a further development of the seed which he has taken in. And finally Heine owes his popularity to just this circumstance, that, following the suggestions which had been given by Herder and Goethe, he went back to the real poetry of the *Volklied*, to the same root from which the *Heideröslein*, that precious flower of the German lyric, had sprouted.²²

No account is here taken of ironical antithesis as a possible borrowing from the popular; in fact, in another place of the same study (p. 4) Goetze characterizes it as a distinct going beyond the simple nature-treatment of the *Volklied*.²³

Walzel has, to be sure, called attention in his review of Legras's *Henri Heine*²⁴ to the fact that there exists an intrinsic connection between Heine's *Stimmungsbrechung* and the ironic quatrains of the *Schnaderhüpfel*, but his words are, whether designedly or no, most prophetically vague: "Nor do I intend to make clear," he writes, "just how I conceive the origin of this form which Heine held so dear, and would therefore only refer in passing to the ironic songs of the Alpine countries, for these affix to an appreciative nature-introduction a coarse and sarcastic bit of obscenity." This statement seems to me oddly guarded in tone and expression for one who has come so near the truth as Walzel.

²² *Loc. cit.*, p. 47.

²³ For a list of such antitheses with similar comment,

compare SEELIG, *Die dichterische Sprache in Heine's Buch der Lieder* (1891), pp. 70 f.

²⁴ *Euphorion*, Vol. V (1898), p. 151.

Personally, I conceive the matter most concretely. I have ever agreed with Nollen²⁵ that Heine owed more to Wilhelm Müller than is commonly considered to be the case, despite the now famous letter of June 7, 1826; but I think that Heine's greatest debt to Müller lies not in borrowed cadences and meters; for this is, after all, a matter of externality, and, overwhelming as is the long list of correspondences cited to Müller's advantage by Nollen,²⁶ he has therein taken up dozens of coincidences weighed by Hessel²⁷ and myself,²⁸ and adjudged too inconclusive to warrant mention. Not in these matters of meter and trick of speech, then, but in that Müller first called Heine's attention to the art-value of the *Schnaderhüpfel*, with its quick turnings from simple ideality to cynical materialism—therein lies the ineffaceable debt.

Nor can we quite arrive at the real meaning of the *Schnaderhüpfel* by a study of the printed collections, for these are ordinarily required to lay aside their most stinging and clutching ribaldries, out of regard for polite convention. It seems odd that an age which puts its imprint on so many traditional obscenities can offer no unglossed edition of the age-old *Schnaderhüpfel*.²⁹ For an inherent difference between the lyric-epic *Volkslied* and the epigrammatic *Gestanzel* is found in just this matter of unchastity. "The songs of the troopers and the clerks," says Müllenhoff,³⁰ "are not always the most decent, and there exist rimes for the rabble, too, written in the manner of the *Volkslied*—often to parody it. It would be absurd, however, to judge the latter's worth from a depraved example. The true *Volkslied* is chaste, unaffected, and never common or low. No sadder misconception is possible than to assign to it all the prosaic songs which are written in the language of the people." Likewise Wackernell³¹ speaks of the modesty and chastity with which the *Volkslied* deals with the most suggestive material, where art-poets are not disinclined to paint with a broad brush, beneath a transparent veil. These words are true, in so far as they concern the narrative popular song, but this is as different from the caustic *Schnaderhüpfel* as the song of a lark is from the sting of a bee. There is, however, impurity for the sake of impurity in much attempted epigram of the popular sort—the notorious Clara Hätzlerin couplets, for instance—but it may be safely assumed that, although one meets such poverty of wit in manuscripts and books which note the prevailing fashions of their moment, it is not handed down in the inherited stock of the *Gestanzeln* which are based upon oral transmission; for pure dirt never lives.

²⁵ *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. XVII (1902), pp. 104 f.

²⁶ *Loc. cit.*, pp. 262-75.

²⁷ *Zeitschrift für den deutschen Unterricht*, Vol. III (1889), pp. 59, 60.

²⁸ *Journal of Germanic Philology*, Vol. III (1901), p. 35 *ae.*

²⁹ In this connection attention may be called to the pervasive American limerick, which in our own time sums up so neatly in its four-versed doggerel many an absurdity and abuse of our modern life, and which, nevertheless, because of its indecency of expression, never sees the light of print. The name "limerick" is lacking in the *Century Dictionary*, and yet it is in common use as applied to the

inimitable epigrams which may be heard exchanged among care-free persons, until score upon score have been given. The simplicity of the cadence-structure fairly invites to improvisation, and new limericks are born as surely as old limericks are sung. The melody to which they are sung rarely varies, and the three-beat measure is maintained with a consequent rigor—the form becoming as stereotyped as that of a triolet or a sonnet.

³⁰ *Sagen, Märchen und Lieder der Herzogthümer Schleswig, Holstein und Lauenburg* (1845), p. xxvi.

³¹ *Das deutsche Volkslied*, p. 21.

Every race possesses a popular literature whose spirit is a scurrilous wit: the people's songs and tales are as racy as they are racial, before they have been expunged and prepared for parlor-presentation. In the astounding abundance of the *facetiae*, the *fabliaux*, the *Schwänke* of the past centuries we do not need to read degeneracy — no matter how they offend today. Such rank growth betokens rather a virility beyond that of any modern form of "polite" literature. The one element in the age-long history of literature which has remained immutable amid all the eddying and shifting currents of change is this same scurrilous wit. From the tales of the unknown monk of St. Gall to the *Schwänke* and *Schnurren* of the German prentice of today, there is a coherence and identity, brought about by the presence of this unvarying situation-humor, which is beyond any that is maintained by polished literature. From the earliest *winileodos* (= *Gestanzeln*) of the Carolingian nunneries to the last lyric-epigram of the Austrian peasant, there has been no permutation in this teasing, plaguing, tormenting, stinging, coarse-fibered wit.

A strange endurance! Nature for the very sake of nature. The rich soil in which the brightest and the fairest expressions of a people's fancy find their roots. Not sensual — this coarse-fibered wit — but materialistic, viewing man frankly as an object among objects in the visible universe, as a product of nature like the plants and the animals. The coarsest of the popular dance-rimes have been stamped *Schlumperlieder*. Little deserving the bitter characterization of Hofmann, which has found but too ready belief:³² "Ungainly street-ballads, for the most part furnished over-richly with indecencies or consisting of coarseness, comprise the larger portion of these vagabond songs. Wit scarce lends them a propitiatory coloring, and they are heard but rarely at the dance or the drinking table, almost never in social gathering or under the village linden." Here again the mistake is made of attempting to separate, along the lines of modern social usage, the impure from the pure, for the same distinguished investigator, who has done so much to attain recognition for the *Schnaderhüpfel*, says of the same dance-couplets, after they have been washed free of their dross (!):³³ "The *Schnaderhüpfel* is one of the most charming phenomena of folk-poetry, the worthiest parallel to the *Märchen* of the German North; both belong to the best that dialect-literature has to offer us." *Schlumperlied* = ungainly, coarse; *Schnaderhüpfel* = charming. And still it is just the outcast coarse-song, outside the realm of print, which has ever fulfilled the demand made of all naïve utterance, that it live entirely by oral transmission. Outside of convention, likewise, and so alive in the hidden corners of a nation's consciousness, together with many another shy remnant of old tradition and superstition.

Now, the justification of many a thing in life may be apparent, while its justification in an art which strives to represent life in its ideal relationships may be doubted. There are thus many prosaic and questionable employments in our environment of the workday week which would lend themselves but ill to poetic mirroring.

³² Koborgher *Quackbrännta* (1857), p. xxvi.

³³ *Frommanns Zeitschrift für deutsche Mundarten*, Vol. III, p. 154.

It is the physician and not the poet before whom every human recess is opened. How, then, can references which seem better fitted to an anatomical chart than they do to a page of polite literature be employed at all in poetic art ?

The strongest instrument at the disposal of the rhetorician or the orator, the historian or the satirist, if he be but sparing in its usage, is antithesis. Nothing stands out so clearly before us as when it is confronted by its opposite—convention never slackens its hold on us till exposed by nature.

No art-form has been so built upon by convention as that of the love-lyric. This seems a paradox, that just the expression which is considered to be the most immediate outpouring of the most essential emotion should be the most stilted. And yet such is the case.

In der heroischen Zeit,
Da Götter und Göttinnen liebten,
Folgte Begierde dem Blick,
Folgte Genuss der Begier.

Satiety would then have been the only possible basis of an early love-lyric—and this were naturally impossible. But when, under convention, the sexes were segregated, and the formulæ of religion and etiquette built up castle walls between them ; when natural selection was hindered in a hundred and then in a thousand ways ; when the human rutting season died away until it found but a final and pale reflex in the sighing ardor which the knight entertained for his mistress—then all the coquetries and whimsies of an artificial love came to find expression in the *Minnedienst* and *Minnesang* of the Middle Age.

As art poetry grew away from people's poetry in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, or as they drew near to each other again in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they yet were never melted the one into positive identity with the other. They grew richer or poorer in imagery and technique, more or less idealistic in expression ; and yet they remained till the time of Goethe ever the mouthpiece of two different worlds. If the class separated itself from the mass in social life, then a class poetry separated itself sharply from a poetry which the mass loved—and this distinction grew vague when the distinctions in social life grew vague. But with Goethe came the beginning of a new order of things. Following out the Rousseau-Herder theory that man was at heart the same, no matter how he be covered over by the thin glaze of conventional life, he wrote poetry which would be the expression of this common heart of man, the most ignorant and the most cultured. And still, despite the songs of Goethe, which have become real people's songs, in that they reach the heart of a whole people, other poetry of his is again burdened with the thought and the philosophy of an acquired culture and world-experience far removed from the simplicity of the mass. Simple poetry, then, can go and does go to all hearts ; complex poetry can go only to the heart which has been controlled and dominated by a deep intellectual experience. Artistic poetry and nature poetry can never fuse in all parts of their being.

It is commonly held, I take it, that Heine never found as full vent for the real experiences of his life as Goethe did. His published pieces would then ordinarily breathe a greater objectivity than Goethe's. At the same time, he was more concerned than Goethe ever was to give color of popularity to all that he wrote. Absolute monosyllabic simplicity of external form is therefore a leading attribute of Heine's verses. Studying the *Volklied*, as did all the romanticists, he took over, as has been sufficiently proved, all the major matters of its technique—its concreteness, its figurative structure, its omission of detail, its prattling rhetoric, its simplicity of meter and guise. Scarce a phenomenon of its homespun demeanor escaped him; and in this direction Goethe, Brentano, and Müller taught him much.

But his figure of ironical antithesis? This figure, which he used so largely, has been deemed a thing apart from the *Volklied* technique, and has been accounted for in Heine by the two following premises: First, "Heine was a romanticist, a pupil of Brentano, and as such made large use of poetic irony."³⁴ Secondly, "Heine but pictures the struggle going on within his own breast. His bitterness against a society which was intolerant of Judaism;³⁵ his failure with *Amalie* and *Therese*; difficulties with his uncle; exile in Paris; terrible years of spinal affliction; etc."³⁶

³⁴ELSTER (*Heinrich Heines sämtliche Werke*, Vol. I, p. 62) says: "This mockery occurs especially at the end of such poems as have a serious beginning. The much discussed ironical endings of these songs were not introduced by Heine into his lyrics without malice prepense. As he has already found a means of avoiding the appearance of over-exuberant sentimentality, by the interspersing among his real lyrics of songs devoted to a sensual love, so he now discovers another means in these conscious destructions of the illusion. Footing upon the celebrated romantic irony, he was at pains to show that he too, the passionately aroused lyricist, was superior to his material—he wished to provide himself with an antidote against the all too strong emotional excitement which frequently threatened to overwhelm him. Thus, by this innovation, did he make it clear that he was striving after the uttermost truth, for it is an established psychological fact that an emotion which has found too free a vent begins to veer suddenly towards the diametrically opposed pole of feeling. And yet this ironic decomposition of true emotion is at times nothing more than a shamed hesitancy on Heine's part to expose the true impulse of the soul; and in isolated instances this irony may be recognized as but the shrill laughter of utter despair."

WALZEL (*loc. cit.*, p. 151) likewise finds the beginnings of the ironic antithesis of Heine in romantic irony. "There was romantic irony before Heine; this romantic irony delighted to bring into glaring contrast on the one hand the conventional expression of emotion and coarse realism, on the other hand fantastic-transcendental feeling and the straitening forms of social convention. Brentano, that romanticist who was most congenial to Heine as man and as thinker, found pleasure in this form, and Heine himself, as his *Romantische Schule* sufficiently proves [by the way, it proves no such thing], was well enough aware of this fact. With these premises can it be longer questioned that Heine merely went on to develop a style-motive

which he had got from romanticism and Brentano? And further, that the new thing in Heine's utilization did not lie in the motive itself, but only in the manner of its employment? Literary history does not doubt for a moment that something new is here, for the romantic use of ironic antithesis had not hitherto dared to the boldness of *Tannhäuser* and the winter's tale, *Deutschland*."

³⁵Which is unfortunately so intolerant of Judaism today that the strange statement can be made by Bartels in his two-volume literary history, "written to strengthen the pride in our Germany nationality and to quicken the national conscience," that Heine is not a German poet, but a Jew poet who used the German language (BARTELS, *Geschichte der deutschen Litteratur*, Vol. II, pp. 211, 311). People read and believe such criticisms of Heine today; anti-Semitism is carried into literary history.

³⁶LEGRAS (*loc. cit.*, p. 116) says, while discussing the famous but futile comparison of W. Scherer's, of Brentano and Heine: "Brentano had the bad taste to close very serious narrations with clownish exclamations, such as, "Do you know, I'm hnngrny!" or "Aren't they geese, these girls, I swear they've believed me!" and the attempt is made to trace hither the source of the dissonances which mar the most tender songs of Heine. Besides, if one wishes to maintain that Heine consciously imitated the procedure just described in Brentano, it is then necessary to admit that he was by nature disposed to buffoonery: an evident circle in reasoning. I would, moreover, add, it is little likely that our poet spoiled out of pure caprice, by a brutal word or an ironic exclamation, the mood produced by his poems. If it be insisted that he was a poet occupied solely with effect, one must simply admit that, with no better reason, he destroyed the effect he had produced; if his aim was only to please, he would have listened at least to his critics, and have excised from a second edition of his poems those passages in the first which had been badly received. He did not do this—it seems that the ironic

Now, these and other like reasons, discovered and undiscovered by critics, may have influenced Heine in part or largely to make so overwhelming a use of ironic antithesis; but even then the question still remains unsolved: Where did he find his model? For, search as one will in romanticism before Heine, no like *Stimmungsbrechung* can be found. A most casual reading of Brentano's lyrics and ballads will dispel utterly the theory that Heine found it there, and the statement remains, as many others do in literary criticism, because none takes the trouble to investigate the matter. But if one does trouble to investigate the *Schnaderhüpfel*, there are at once at hand hundreds of analogies to Heine's usage, too close for mistaking.³⁷

Before going farther, however, it will be best to clear away a misunderstanding, which seems all too common, as to just what Heine's ironical antithesis really is. I conceive it, briefly, to be this: Heine brings before our eyes a situation which interests us, and makes an appeal upon our sympathy, to induce within us a certain mood. While we still fancy ourselves secure in the assurance that the situation will resolve itself according to conventional method, we are suddenly confronted, as by lightning from a clear sky, with an irony which for the moment bids fair to destroy all the beauty of description which has been slowly unfolded before us, and which gives us a shock of undeniable surprise—which almost makes us catch our breath. Whether this ironic antithesis find expression in but a verse at the end of a short song, or whether it include a whole canto of stanzas, its aim and its effect are one and the same. This identity of figure is often not recognized, for Legras,³⁸ like many another, strives to set up a specious *distinguendum* between Heine's irony as it occurs in his shorter lyrics and Heine's irony as it occurs in the longer pieces, *Tannhäuser*, *Atta Troll*, *Deutschland*. He bases this distinction, as Hofmann did his between the *Schlumperlied* and the *Schnaderhüpfel*, on the extremely subjective decision as to obscene or not obscene. A great difference does exist, of course, between moral and immoral in the social world, the political world, and, if you wish, in the art-world; but how ironic

antithesis translated faithfully for him the struggle which his own heart was undergoing. Brentano may have been able to help him out now and then with a useful or piquant example; but he did not serve him as master."

³⁷ In the light of such close analogies, Scherer's statement is too general to be of any service (*History of German Literature*, New York, 1886, Vol. II, p. 279): "Heine was only pursuing [in this ironic antithesis] to its last results a principle of romanticism which had originated in the previous century. Since Addison and others, Socrates had been an ideal of European authors, and Socratic irony an object of their aspiration. Friedrich Schlegel discovered irony in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, and demanded irony of every perfect poet; this irony he sometimes defined as analogous to the Socratic mingling of jest and earnest, sometimes as a 'constant self-parody,' sometimes as a 'transcendental buffoonery,' sometimes as 'the clear consciousness which abides amid the perpetual flux of everbrimming chaos.'" This is true, but then it is also true that the *Schnaderhüpfel* is Socratic, and so, it may be said, is life in general, for it mixes jest and earnest most sadly.

³⁸ "I do not believe," says Legras (p. 290), "that another

of Heine's writings has ever produced so brutal a deception as has the end of *Deutschland*. The passages where the bawds of Hamburg parade are sufficiently empty and uninteresting; but anger, almost, takes hold on one when running through for the first time those chapters smeared with an ineffectual ordure, in which the goddess *Hammonia* appears. How could Heine dare to print his scatological allusions under the protection of Molière? How could he not understand that a vulgar object is never comic except in the proper situation? What is there left to be said, when Heine describes the privy-chair of Charles the Great? Ordure is as much out of place here as it is repugnant; it does not add one iota of comedy to the poet's theme, which it but halts profitlessly at these dirty objects. This whole ending of the poem recalls to us sadly what a low environment inclosed Heine at this time. Unhesitant, with a sort of senile satisfaction, he ends that one of his works which might, perhaps, have been the fullest and the most eloquent, with a kennel-like description of a girl in the low districts of Altona, and with a pun on the word 'chair.' Ah, how Mathilde will laugh when her husband tells her such good jokes!"

antithesis can be more or less ironic, or more or less antithetic, according as it happens to be less or more dirty, it is hard to understand.

We have seen above how carefully Heine copied the *Volkslied*. We have his own words as to the "epigrammatic ending" of the *Schnaderhüpfel*, and its influence upon him: "While at work on the little songs [of the *Lyric Intermezzo*]," he writes to Maximilian Schottky, on the fourth of May, 1823, "your short Austrian dance-rimes with their epigrammatic endings have often hovered before me." It may be well to print below a score of the dance-rimes from this epoch-making book³⁹ which contains the ironic antithesis so close to Heine's. More of the quatrains might have been chosen to advantage, were it necessary to add to the list; other larger collections, such as Dunger's *Rundäs und Reimsprüche aus dem Vogtlande* (1876); Hörmann's *Schnadahüpfeln aus den Alpen*, 3d ed. (1894); Greinz-Kapferer, *Tiroler Schnadahüpfeln und Volkslieder*, 4 vols. (1890-93), may be well consulted for a wider development of the teasing, ironic theme-treatment so common to Müller and Heine. But the undeniable base is in these sequent stanzas, *ab omni obscœnitate purgatis*, to be sure, and yet brimful of the bitter-sweet of Heine's constant manner.

Nuss af d' Nâcht, Nuss af d' Nâcht
Hâd ma maiñ Vâda brâcht,
Hâd ma s' geb'n mit da Faust,
Dass ma da Kopf hâd g'saus't.

Af 'n Änga bin i gânga
Hâb a Schlâghais'l g'richt;
An'n Buâm hâb i g'fânga,
Und des Diñg hâd mi gift!

Wänn daiñ Hearz a so trai wa^r,
Und so woah^r wa^r, wiâ dâs maiñ,
So miâsst hâld daiñ Schwesta
Maiñ Schwagarin saiñ.

Schwoa^r zaugad muâsst saiñ,
Wännst maiñ Diârnd'l wüllst saiñ,
Und scheñ hâch voa^r da Brust,
So hâd da Daub'r a Lust.

O, du hear^r zigi Nannerl,
Haiñt hâb i an'n Rausch,
I tat di gea^rn hâls'n,
Âb'r i kenn mi nid aus.

Dass d' just nid goa^r sauba bist,
Des sâg i nid;
Wännst âb'r a weñg hibscha wa^tst,
Schâd'n tat' s da nid.

Maiñ Hearz is voñ Sülba,
Und dain's is voñ Gold,
Und daiñ Africhtikaïd
Hâd da Daif'l schoñ g'hollt.

Und du, maiñ liäbi Lena,
D' Sañd'l is schena,
Wänn s' ah koan'n Zâhñd nid hâd —
Kif'ln kânn s' jâ denâ!

I wollt, i war im Himm'l
Und lag im Bet und schliä^f,
Und wa^r mid Krâpf'n zuâdekt,
Dâ ass i voñ da Ziäch!

O God und Hear^r,
Gib ma, wâs i begeah^r;
I begeah^r jâ nid vül,
Nuâ^r des — wâs i wüll!

Und 's Diârnd'l hâd g'sâgt:
s' wa^r 's Fensterl vafroa^r'n;
Wiâ da rehti Buâ is kemma,
Is 's glai afg'laiñt woar'n.

Im Bach'l flîâsst a Wâsserl,
Dâs Wâsserl mâcht Ais —
Wänn a schen's Diârnd'l a Juñgfa wa^r
Des wa^r wâs nai's!

³⁹ ZISKA UND SCHOTTKY, *Österreichische Volkslieder*, Pesth, 1819.

Was häst denn du gess'n,
 Dass di goar a so duärscht? —
 Baim Ämtman an'n Grüll'n
 Und a Fledamauswuärscht!

Und wännst mi nid liäb'n wüllst,
 So lässt d' es hält blai'b'n;
 Maiñ Händ had viär Fiinga,—
 Da Dam zoagt da d' Faig'n.

Dear Buä, dear eahrli deñkt,
 Und dear hält niks vascheñkt,
 Dear wiärd nid g'estimiärt,
 Nuär brav sekiärt!

Denn 's Oañsidla Leb'n
 Des is ma nid geb'n,
 I mecht jä vül liäba
 A Zwoasid'la wear'n.

Ai, du maiñ himmlischa Váda,
 Schik ma do amál an'n Máñ;
 Häd an iäd's Kaz'l iäh'n Káda,
 Und an iäd's Heñd'l sain'n Hähñ!

Dear Buä, dear is a Noar,
 Dear dás Ding tuät —
 Dear sain'm Diä'nd'l d' Nás'n áschnaid't
 Und schtekt s' af'n Huäd!

A Kapuzina mecht i wear'n,
 Nácha bauat i m'r a Zöld,
 Dass i God kinnt recht diäna,
 Und frumm leb'n af da Wöld.

An'n Ros'nkränz liäss i ma mách'n,
 Voñ laut a Muschkatnuss —
 Tat s' in 's Biär aini scháb'n,
 Wäñ mi 's Bet'n vadruss!

Wann i ah so scheñ wa'r,
 Áls wiä d' Lañdlamenscha,
 So tat i maiñ Scheñhaid
 Voar 's Fensta heñga;

Maiñ Scheñhaid voar 's Fensta,
 Maiñ Trailhaid voar de Diär,
 Geh aina, maiñ Hanns'l,
 Und sez di zu miär!

Dás oañ Beargerl affi,
 Dás äñdri hinä —
 Geh, laich ma daiñ Diä'nd'l,
 Dás main is nid dá!

's Diä'nd'l auslaich'n
 Des wa'r ma schoñ recht!
 Du kinnt'st ma 's waviäst'n,
 Dass i 's nimma mecht.

Und wännst af daiñ Diä'nd'l
 So hoagli wüllst sain,
 So kaf d'r a Bábiar'l
 Und wik'l da 's draiñ.

Und so leg 's in a Kist'l,
 Und nág'l da 's zuä,
 Und so kimmt da koan äñdara
 Wiksa dāzuä.

It is scarce necessary, perhaps, to cite examples of ironic antithesis from Heine, so well known are they all; but it may be permitted, as it will aid much in graphic presentation. First of all, then, come the paradigms, of which criticism maintains that they grow naturally from the poet's mood of despair. If they do — and this is granted for the argument — why did Heine turn to just this expression to depict his despair (Goethe, Schiller, Uhland, Eichendorff, Müller made small or no use of it)? And if he did turn to this figure, where did he find it in precedent literature?

Ich, ein solcher Narr, ich liebe
 Wieder ohne Gegenliebe!
 Sonne, Mond und Sterne lachen,
 Und ich lache mit — und sterbe.

Es ist eine alte Geschichte,
 Doch bleibt sie immer neu;
 Und wem sie just passieret,
 Dem bricht das Herz entzwei.

Es ziehen die brausenden Wellen
 Wohl nach dem Strand;
 Sie schwellen und zerschellen
 Wohl auf dem Sand.

Sie kommen gross und kräftig,
 Ohn' Unterlass;
 Sie werden endlich heftig —
 Was hilft uns das?

Er spielt mit seiner Flinte,
Die funkelt im Sonnenrot,
Er präsentiert und schultert —
Ich wollt', er schösse mich tot.

Die Nachtigallen singen
Herab aus der laubigen Höh',
Die weissen Lämmer springen
Im weichen, grünen Klee.

Nur einmal noch möcht' ich dich sehen
Und sinken vor dir aufs Knie,
Und sterbend zu dir sprechen:
Madame, ich liebe Sie!

Ich kann nicht singen und springen,
Ich liege krank im Gras;
Ich höre fernes Klingeln,
Mir träumt, ich weiss nicht was.

Die Welt ist so schön und der Himmel so blau,
Und die Lüfte, die wehen so lind und so lau,
Und die Blumen winken auf blühender Au',
Und funkeln und glitzern im Morgentau,
Und die Menschen jubeln, wohin ich schau' —
Und doch möcht' ich im Grabe liegen,
Und mich an ein totes Liebchen schmiegen.

Also *L. I.*, 14–30–51; *Heimk.*, 6–19; *N. F.*, 40.

Whatever may be said of the verses just quoted, however, they may be supposed to sum up fairly well those instances of antithesis in Heine where "one hears the shrill laughter of utter despair." The other *Stimmungsbrechungen* have a much more objective appearance. Here is one instance, with a well-known parody which it suggests:

Das war eine wilde Wirthschaft!
Kriegsvolk und Landesplag'!
Sogar in deinem Herzchen
Viel Einquartierung lag.

Mei Herzl is klein,
's kann niemand hinein,
Als die ganze Kasern'
Und noch a paar Herrn.

And so with many another case of Heinesque irony, as we pass his songs in review before us—the quick changing from sweet to bitter, the absolute disregard for conventional poetic usage, the childlike, at times fairly childish, delight in saying the wrong thing at the right time, together with the inimitable mockery of the child and the glee with which he brings down with one fell swoop the beautiful card-structure he has reared before us—we have entered the play-realm of the *Schnaderhüpfel*, where a quick rime or a telling bit of wit suffices unto itself, and never has to answer for the results of its flashing nonsense and shallow cynicism. Legras will have it that Heine is "as spiteful as an oriental, as spiteful as Jehovah" (!) in his irony, thus making capital of his Judaic origin—and criticism today, when confronted with the playful venom of *Deutschland*, denominates Heine the outcast Jew, the "French" pariah; as if the poet were really undertaking a determined attack upon organized society in his travesty of a "winter's tale"! *Deutschland* is part of the same realm as that where the *Midsummer Night's Dream* was played; its lorette-goddess, Hammonia, is no more concrete than Queen Titania, or, let us say, than Vashti who came to the anabaptist's bed at night in *Schnabelewopski*. But suppose Heine is as spiteful as Jehovah—whatever that may mean; it sounds like a curse of

some sort—it is a critical mistake to find this spite exemplified in the ironic antithesis of his lyrics, or his lyric-ballads. Where is the “spite” in the following? It sounds delightfully like the gay humor of a dance-rime:

O Liebchen mit den Äuglein klar!
 O Liebchen schön und bissig!
 Das Schwören in der Ordnung war,
 Das Beissen war überflüssig.

Der Sturm spielt auf zum Tanze,
 Er pfeift und saust und brüllt;
 Heisa! wie springt das Schifflein!
 Die Nacht ist lustig und wild.

Ein Fluchen, Erbrechen und Beten
 Schallt aus der Kajüte heraus;
 Ich halte mich fest am Mastbaum,
 Und wünsche: Wär' ich zu Haus!

Konntest du in ihren Augen
 Niemals bis zur Seele dringen,
 Und du bist ja sonst kein Esel,
 Teurer Freund, in solchen Dingen.

Wenn ich eine Nachtigall wäre,
 So flög' ich zu dir, mein Kind
 Und sänge dir Nachts meine Lieder
 Herab von der grünen Lind'.

Wenn ich ein Gimpel wäre,
 So flög' ich gleich an dein Herz;
 Du bist ja hold den Gimpeln,
 Und heilest Gimpelschmerz.

Die Thore jedoch, die liessen
 Mein Liebchen entwischen gar still;
 Ein Thor ist immer willig,
 Wenn eine Thörin will.

Mensch, bezahle deine Schulden,
 Lang ist ja die Lebensbahn,
 Und du musst noch manchmal borgen,
 Wie du es so oft gethan.

Doch jetzt ist alles wie verschoben
 Das ist ein Drängen! eine Not!
 Gestorben ist der Herrgott oben,
 Und unten ist der Teufel tot.

Und alles schaut so grämlich trübe,
 So krausverwirrt und morsch und kalt
 Und wäre nicht das bisschen Liebe,
 So gäb' es nirgends einen Halt.

Und wenn du schiltst und wenn du tobst
 Ich werd' es geduldig leiden;
 Doch wenn du meine Verse nicht lobst,
 Lass' ich mich von dir scheiden.

Sie sangen von Liebesehnen,
 Von Liebe und Liebeserguss;
 Die Damen schwammen in Thränen
 Bei solchem Kunstgenuss.

Teurer Freund, du bist verliebt,
 Und du willst es nicht bekennen,
 Und ich seh' des Herzens Glut
 Schon durch deine Weste brennen.

Glaub nicht, dass ich mich erschieße,
 Wie schlimm auch die Sachen stehn!
 Das alles, meine Süsse,
 Ist mir schon einmal geschehn.

Das Fräulein stand am Meere
 Und seufzte lang und bang,
 Es rührte sie so sehre
 Der Sonnenuntergang.

Mein Fräulein! sei'n Sie munter,
 Das ist ein altes Stück;
 Hier vorne geht sie unter
 Und kehrt von hinten zurück.

Further citation is surely unnecessary. So runs on the ironic antithesis to many a well-known line: *Doktor, sind Sie des Teufels? Kriegen wir leicht den göttlichsten Schnupfen und einen unsterblichen Husten.* Many another lyric, beside those quoted above, is suddenly rounded to a barbed point of wit and sped upon its way with never a second thought for it. The use of this telling figure grows gradually so broad that

it becomes a mannerism of the poet; it is no longer a mere foil for true sentimentality, it is an entity by itself. It grows to be a habit with Heine—a vice, if you will; every mood of his is lightened by it, his coarseness finds expression in it; and when at times, sorely harried and whipped by his appetites and his ill-fortunes, he strikes out about him blindly like a spoiled child (as in certain of the *Zeitgedichte*, for instance), this figure of ironic antithesis transcends all limits and overwhelms his poetic utterance.

But, it may be objected, why ascribe to the *Schnaderhüpfel* a figure which Heine ever used in his prose writings, which answered so perfectly to his personal temperament, and of which he made such unlimited use? As to the prose, Heine could, and doubtless did, find many a prototype in the storm-and-stress and romantic writings of that “transcendental buffoonery” of which he was so fond, of that *laissez-aller* which was part of the revolt against the visible universe. But there was no such precedent in poetry until Wilhelm Müller came upon the *Schnaderhüpfel* in Ziska and Schottky; for if there was one thing which the romantic lyric poet had taken more seriously, more sacredly, than he had himself, that one thing was his verse-compositions—those verses, that is to say, which were supposedly the real expression of his *ego*. For in multifarious foreign and trivial *Gelegenheitsgedichte* the romantic poet had tried his hand, but not his heart.

Now, as to ironic antithesis suiting his personal temperament, and as to his large use of the figure, these are but two parts of one question. Of course, it suited Heine; (as Walzel well says), “he did not fasten *Stimmungsbrechung* externally to his poems.” And the better it suited him, the more was he prone to use it. But did he invent it? No, for in two letters whose sincerity have never been doubted (even by the Heine critics)—the one to Wilhelm Müller, the other to Schottky—Heine records the fact that an entirely new vista, a new conception of poetry, has been opened to him by the study of the *Schnaderhüpfel*. And, when we come to examine Heine’s poems, we find that there is in his first verses—*Junge Leiden*—no single example of the *epigrammatische Schluss*, but that in all the others, written, as he said, after his eyes had been opened, there are instances galore, and, by an almost regular progression, the further he writes, the wider use we find of ironic antithesis. And lastly, and best, the humor of both Heine lyric and popular dance-rime is identical. That this poet developed the figure, once digested, to far other uses and to a greater incisiveness than the *Schnaderhüpfel* had ever cared to do, or had known how to do—is this aught but natural? Does the carefully reared hothouse plant lose its identity because it has been removed from the sunshine of the open roadside, and forced to growths un contemplated in the economy of outdoor nature? Wilhelm Müller, who introduced the dance-rimes in his *Ländliche Lieder*, was content to leave them their simple, roguish rusticity; Heine made of them one of the fullest expressions of his complex personality, by the process of distillation known alone to superlative genius.



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