THE THEME OF ALIENATION IN
THE PROSE WORKS OF PETER WEISS

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC STUDIES

We accept this thesis as conforming
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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
January 1980
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Date January 24, 1980
Abstract

The theme of alienation in the prose works of Peter Weiss is the focus of this study. Each chapter provides an examination of this theme from a particular perspective for each work. The first work, Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers, is considered as it examines the phenomenology of alienation in a detailed analysis of the characters' pursuit of occupations devoid of social meaning. The second of Weiss's works, Abschied von den Eltern, looks at the recurrence of the theme of alienation in Weiss's portrayal of the narrator's recollection of his childhood experiences. In Fluchtpunkt the focus is the dilemma of the alienation of the individual in the midst of political and social upheaval with particular emphasis placed on the alienation of the individual from the objective world and the subjective self. In Das Gespräch der drei Gehenden the ontology of alienation is discussed in terms of the characters' attempts to locate themselves in time and place through the use of social ritual. In Die Ästhetik des Widerstands the ideology of alienation is examined in terms of the narrator's commitment to principles which require the assumption of responsibility for one's actions in the context of a larger world. The conclusion is that, for Weiss, the attempt to recover a sense of self in connection with the world is to intensify the extent of one's separation from that world.

Research Supervisor
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Acknowledgement

I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to Professor Mark Boulby for his insight and understanding as a dissertation director. I would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for its financial support and the Interlibrary Loan Division of the Main Library at the University of British Columbia for its kind assistance in locating and obtaining source materials. In addition, I would like to express my gratitude to my husband and my son for their patience and support.
Introduction

I have chosen to study the prose works of Peter Weiss in order to explore the theme of alienation. Alienation, a pervasive feature of twentieth-century life, concerns, in the context of Weiss's works, the relationships, or rather the disrelationships, between an individual and the world. The prose works were selected in particular because the individual is more fully portrayed in them than in Weiss's dramas. I have not included Das Duell in this study because it is a translation into German from the Swedish; is, as an early work, not comparable in quality to the other prose works; and is more appropriate to a study which focuses on Peter Weiss's development.

The works chosen include: Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers (1960), Abschied von den Eltern (1961), Fluchtpunkt (1962), Das Gespräch der drei Gehenden (1963), and Die Ästhetik des Widerstands (1978). The first work, Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers, examines the phenomenon of alienation and particularly the preoccupation of individuals with themselves to the exclusion of the world. In this work the phenomenon of alienation is portrayed, and may well be regarded, as an "exile from the community." While the characters maintain occupations like those which are found in everyday life (doctor, tailor, writer), their occupational activities are directed only toward themselves. Weiss's characterizations in this work portray a
world in which the experience of alienation is total.

In *Abschied von den Eltern* the narrator attempts to reconstruct his childhood in order to realize the possibilities of freedom which are still denied him. He discovers that the creation of this alienated world involves the internalization of early experiences of powerlessness and inadequacy. His decision is to focus on aspects of the self which allow for freedom and autonomy. These aspects are revealed to him as he becomes aware that the world of his childhood is capable of being challenged, is open to revision.

In *Fluchtpunkt* the world is transformed by the narrator into a world of victims who reflect his own experiences. However, in the process of this transformation the narrator is alienated both from the objective world and from aspects of the self which would allow him to assume a role other than that of a victim among others.

It becomes increasingly evident in *Das Gespräch der drei Gehenden* that the manner in which individuals and the world reinforce each other in their alienation results in figures who dishonor the forms of social rituals and fail to derive meaning from them. In this sense these figures are very much related to the characters in *Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers* in that their activities deny the meaning of social relationships.

Weiss's latest prose work, *Die Ästhetik des Widerstands*, is the attempt to reconstruct a world in which art and politics, individual dreams and visions of community form integral parts of
the whole.

In all of these works the theme of alienation is woven into the individual figure's relationship to the world. It is a world characterized by a preoccupation with the self; cruelty, intentional and non-intentional; meaninglessness; and separation from one's neighbors. The final novel dispels any illusion that alienation is completely overcome by an ideological posture.

In undertaking this study it has been necessary to come to terms with two specific issues. First, there are the problems associated with ideology in literary criticism and, second, the problems of the role of autobiography in Weiss's prose works. Ideology is important to deal with because, for most critics, Weiss's allegiance to a particular ideology—socialism—elicits from them a strong "doctrinal" response: they feel compelled (as do most of us) to enter the debate and to agree or disagree with the particular ideology on political or substantive grounds. These critics, as diverse as Otto F. Best and Reinhold Grimm, thus have a tendency to use literary criticism of Weiss's works as a vehicle for advancing their own views and assumptions. In this they appear to fall into the trap of "doctrinalism" which I would suggest turns serious literary criticism into serious polemics. It may render literary criticism mute but it does add much to the volume of political debate. This "doctrinalism" has the effect of entrapping such critics in the underlying dualistic assumptions which such "Great Debates" between competing ideologies inspire. These underlying assumptions—good versus evil, internal versus external, fathers
versus sons--do of course pervade Weiss's works. They can be
the objects of study as can any set of assumptions which
constitute a world view in an author's works. For this reason,
I have concerned myself in examining Weiss's prose works with
ideology as a form, as a way of viewing the world, rather than
with an evaluation of specific doctrine. The presupposition in
this study is that the world of Weiss's fiction may be
considered separate from the author's political decisions.

The second issue is concerned with the role of autobiography
in Weiss's works. There is a tendency on the part of some
literary critics to fall into the trap of what I call
"psychological reductionism." This approach to literature would
assume that Weiss's works are merely a modestly embellished
account of events in his own life. Much of the justification
for drawing parallels between such events and his prose works
relies on interviews with the author and on his essays in which
he refers to such events. Unfortunately, most of these critics
in order to draw such parallels (or parallels between Weiss's
psychological "experiences" and his prose works) assume that
Weiss is "honest" about such events. There is no guarantee that
he is being "honest" in any conventional sense. In any event,
this approach to literary criticism appears to have a good deal
more to do with history and psychology and less to do with
literature. These difficulties suggest that it is appropriate
to consider the characters in Weiss's works as entirely fictional,
not to be identified with the author himself.

In regard to the format of the investigation, the theme of
alienation is discussed on four different levels. The objective level involves the description of the behavior of people in their everyday lives and is illustrated by the examination of Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers as it concerns the phenomenology of alienation. The reflective level involves the description of the way people examine why they behave the way they do and is illustrated by Abschied von den Eltern and Fluchtpunkt as they concern alienation as a recurrent dilemma. The existential level involves an examination of the questions which people pose concerning their fundamental experiences and corresponds to Das Gespräch der drei Gehenden with its consideration of the ontology of alienation. The last level is interpretative or a description of the way people behave in regard to how they perceive they behave. This level corresponds to the discussion of the ideology of alienation in Die Ästhetik des Widerstands. The "levels" are merely a conceptual framework and represent differences in emphasis.
Chapter 1

Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers:

the phenomenology of alienation

The central theme of Peter Weiss's narrative, Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers, is that of alienation. The concern of the novel is with alienation as a phenomenon, that is, with alienation as it is experienced by the characters in relationship to themselves, to one another, and to the world about them. The following study consists of an examination of the characters of Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers in order to identify and elucidate the central theme of the novel.

Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers is the description, by the narrator, of life on an isolated farmstead. The narrator lives on the farmstead with the Tailor, the Captain, the Doctor, Herr Schnee, the Housekeeper, the Farmhand, and the family which consists of the Father, Mother, Son, and Infant. The only character in the novel who does not live there, the Coachman, arrives at the farmstead toward the end of the narrative. The narrator keeps a written record of his observations of life on the farmstead, and it is this written record which forms the text of the novel. This unusual relationship between the narrator and the text is pointed out by Rose Zeller in her study "Peter Weiss: Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers. Erzähler und Autor":
Der Erzähler dieses Textes tritt als ein Mann auf, dessen Beschäftigung das Schreiben ist. Peter Weiss stellt ihn als den Verfasser hin, indem er ihn seine Arbeitsweise, die Bedingungen, unter denen er schreibt, die Schwierigkeiten und Widerstände, die bei der Abfassung seines Berichts auftreten, den Verlauf und die Fortschritte seines Unternehmens schildert läßt.

Weiss's use of the narrator as the fictional author of the text accounts for much of the complexity of the novel. As Rose Zeller has suggested in the passage cited above, the narrator is the author not merely in the sense that the text is the record of his observations but also in the deeper sense that the keeping of that record is the occupation of the narrator within the novel. Thus, the narrator keeps a record of his observations and he observes in order to record. It is this intimate connection between the narrator's observing and the act of recording those observations which suggests a link between the act of recording and the narrator's observations. At one point in the narration the narrator explains why he has chosen the woodpile as his post of observation for the scenes which follow:

Mit dem Bleistift die Geschehnisse vor meinen Augen nachzeichnend, um damit dem Gesehenen eine Kontur zu geben, und das Gesehene zu verdeutlichen, also das Sehen zu einer Beschäftigung machend, sitze ich neben dem Schuppen auf dem Holzstoss, dessen knorplige, mit Erde, Moos und welkem Laub beklebte Wurzelstücke einen bitteren, morschen Geruch ausströmen. Von meinem erhöhten Sitz aus überblicke ich . . .

In this case the act of observing and the act of recording occur at the same time. Rose Zeller draws attention to this passage from the novel in order to emphasize the programmatic nature of the narrator's observations:
Much of Helmut Lüttmann's study of *Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers* in *Die Prosawerke von Peter Weiss* is concerned with explicating the programmatic nature of the narrator's acts of observing and recording his observations. Since Lüttmann's study involves an exhaustive compilation of textual evidence for all his assertions regarding the activities of the narrator, I shall merely summarize Lüttmann's findings. Lüttmann refers to the method of the narrator as an "Ausprägung der Wahrnehmungsweise." According to Lüttmann, the narrator purports to register the totality of his observations. Thus, Lüttmann explains the narrator's preference for observation posts such as the top of the woodpile: such a vantage point provides the narrator with an overview of the entire scene. This vantage point also allows the narrator to record the scene while he is observing it (see pp. 12-13). The narrator is not only concerned with registering the totality of his observations but is also, according to Lüttmann, concerned with registering them objectively:

> Für den Erzähler des Schattens sind die Hauptkriterien bei der visuellen Erfassung seiner Umwelt: Objektivität und Totalität. Beide Faktoren bedingen sich gegenseitig und führen in der jeweiligen Beobachtungssituation zu einer Systematisierung der Sehweise. (p. 31)

Lüttmann points out that even in cases where the narrator is unable to record his observations at the same time in which he is making them, the narrator nonetheless records only what he has seen at the time of his observations. For example, Lüttmann considers the scene from the novel in which the Farmhand is unloading sacks of coal from
the Coachman's wagon. The narrator records this activity as a series of discrete actions: "In die Kniebeuge gehend, drückte der Hausknecht seinen Rücken gegen den Sack, hob seine Hände über die Schultern, senkte sie hinter die Schultern herab, packte den Sack, straffte die Beine, beugte sich, den Sack auf dem Rücken festhaltend, vor und . . . " (p. 93). It is clear that the Farmhand is bending down in order to pick up the sacks, a fact which even if it is not clear to the narrator at the time of his observing of the Farmhand's movements must be obvious to him at the time of his recording of the scene since he has by then witnessed the results of the Farmhand's actions, that is, seen the entire wagon unloaded. However, to ascribe purpose to the Farmhand's actions is to provide those actions with a subjective interpretation. Thus, according to Lüttnmann, the narrator only records that which he technically saw and thus preserves his objectivity (see p. 24). In this manner, the same values of "Objektivität" and "Totalität" which determine, for example, the narrator's choice of an observation post, also influence the record he makes of his observations. Through showing the applicability of these values to both the narrator's observations and the record of those observations Lüttnmann is able to link the narrator's observations with the act of recording them.

Otto F. Best in his study of Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers in Peter Weiss: Vom existentialistischen Drama zum marxistischen Welttheater. Eine kritische Bilanz refers to such a method as an extreme form of Naturalism in its attention to intricate detail and in its avoidance of interpretative information: "Peter Weiss' Methode, die man mit Alfred Döblin
'streng, kaltblütig' nennen könnte, ist demnach nichts anderes als eine Fortführung dessen, was Flaubert, Spielhagen begannen, was den Naturalismus, den Expressionismus und Futurismus trug und im 'nouveau roman' unserer Zeit weiterwirkt."\(^4\) From this passage it is clear that Best, unlike Lüttmann and Zeller, identifies the narrator with Weiss.

Zeller, Best, and Lüttmann have all been keenly aware of the link between the narrator's observations and the act of recording them. This fascination with the narrative technique of the novel (which is related to the tendency of current literary criticism to "rediscover" the relevance of the modes of narration) has caused these critics and others to pay less attention to the other characters of the novel than would otherwise be the case. Rose Zeller suggests even that since the novel is formed according to the programmed observations of the narrator and therefore has no plot \textit{per se}, aspects of character which would be of interest in a traditional narrative are of no interest here:


Stattdessen hat er hier offenbar die Absicht, seine Umwelt in der Art einer \textit{Studie} auf exakteste Weise zu beschreiben . . . (p. 645)

Thus, according to Zeller, the programmatic nature of the narrator's record, his "\textit{Studie}," renders the other characters in the novel of little consequence. This is a contention with which I would seriously disagree.

In their concentration upon the figure of the narrator,
Lüttmann and Zeller themselves imply aspects of the novel which would seem to suggest that more attention should be given to the other characters of the novel. Rose Zeller points to the ways in which the arrival of the Coachman is foreshadowed in the text through the title of the novel, through the attention drawn to the empty seat at table which the Coachman is later to occupy, and through a series of sexual motifs. The foreshadowing of the arrival of the Coachman is evidence for Zeller of an "authorial" presence. In stressing the fictional nature of the narrator, Zeller is able to point to ways in which the programmatic nature of the narrator's observations is used by the author to achieve certain effects of traditional fiction: "Mit der von seinem Erzähler betriebenen Art des Sehens versucht der Autor offenbar, ähnliche Anteilnahme, Empfindungen und Spannungen im Leser hervorzurufen, wie sie in traditionellen Erzählungen von der Handlung erweckt werden" (p. 655). In other words, certain effects produced within the scope of the narrator's program cannot themselves be accounted for by that program but rather indicate an "author"-consciousness which Weiss permits at times to emerge and become a concrete additional voice in the narration. In his compilation of textual evidence to describe the systematic nature of the narrator's observations and act of recording them, Lüttmann emphasizes a number of cases in which the system followed by the narrator cannot account for the text itself. One such case considered by Lüttmann is the passage in the text in which the Doctor's room is described in minute detail (see pp. 61-63). The fact that the narrator is able to observe the
entire room at a quick glance and then, sometime later, able to
give a complete inventory of the entire room leads Lüttmann to
the conclusion that the narrator possesses "ein 'üermenschliches'
Erinnerungsvermögen" along with "eine 'üermenschliche'
Beobachtungsgabe" (p. 83). Another case of some importance
considered by Lüttmann is the partial rendition of conversations
overheard by the narrator which cannot be explained by his
physical distance from or inattention to the speakers. For
example, the words of the Father in the room of the Housekeeper
are not completely given even though he is shouting and the
narrator is in the same room with him. The reply of the Farmhand
concerning how so many sacks of coal could have possibly fitted
in the wagon is not given in its entirety even though it is given
in answer to a question posed by the narrator himself, thus
attesting to the narrator's interest in the response. For
Lüttmann, the impartial rendering of conversations by the
narrator appears not as description but as symbolism. He
concludes, "Vielmehr scheinen sie mir symbolhaft eine sehr
tiefreichende Kluft zwischen dem Erzähler und den übrigen Personen
anzuzeigen, eine Kluft, über die hinweg ein so elementares
Kommunikationsmittel wie die Sprache nur schadhaft zu ihm dringt"
(p. 39). These cases in which the system followed by the narrator
cannot account for the text suggest to Lüttmann that "der Erzähler
eine fiktive Gestalt ist, von einem Autor erfunden, und dass der
Autor diese Gestalt Grenzen überschreiten lässt, die er ihr
zunächst selbst gezogen hat" (p. 83). Lüttmann further observes
that even when observations are made in accordance with the limits
set by the narrator through his own program of systematically
recording his observations, their full significance can only be
apparent to the author. For example, the fact that the narrator
lives on the top floor of the house implies a symbolic distance
between the narrator and the other persons living there. In
light of this evidence, Lüttmann concludes the following:

This would imply that it might be helpful to examine the
characters of the novel as though the narrator were one of these
characters.

Explanations of the characters of Der Schatten des Körpers
des Kutschers, when they appear at all in the critical literature,
tend to be in the form of parallels drawn to Weiss's other works
or to consist largely of a cataloguing of textual description.

An example of the use of parallels to Weiss's other works
to explain the characters of Der Schatten des Körpers des
Kutschers is to be found in R. C. Perry's "Weiss's Der Schatten
des Körpers des Kutschers: A Forerunner of the Nouveau Roman?"
which contains parallels drawn between the characters in this
novel and those in Weiss's Fluchtpunkt. Perry introduces these
parallels with a general remark regarding the autobiographical nature of Weiss's *Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers*: "Like all Weiss's works, *Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers* stands in close connection with his personal history and his own experience of life." This remark would seem to indicate that the use of parallels to explain characters in *Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers* is based upon an appreciation of autobiographical elements as integral to an understanding of the works of Peter Weiss. Peter Weiss's two most obviously autobiographical works are *Abschied von den Eltern* and *Fluchtpunkt*. In a direct reference to these two works, Otto F. Best points out the following in his study of Weiss's works:

Wenn es gestattet ist, heute im 20. Jahrhundert noch einmal das vielzitierte, zerredete Wort Goethes von der "grossen Konfession" zu gebrauchen, zu welcher seine Dichtungen Bruchstücke seien, so gilt das fraglos nur für wenige Autoren unserer Zeit im gleichen Masse wie für Peter Weiss. (p. 37)

In other words, incidents and characters in *Abschied von den Eltern* and *Fluchtpunkt* are viewed as based upon Weiss's own personal experiences. The presence in *Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers* of characters and incidents similar to those found in *Abschied von den Eltern* and *Fluchtpunkt* is attributed to the fact that the source of such incidents remains the same, namely Weiss's own personal life. However, not all incidents and characters from *Abschied von den Eltern* and *Fluchtpunkt* recur in *Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers*, and even those which do recur are merely similar and not the same. My objection to the drawing of parallels between the works to explain incidents and
characters in Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers is that such a view held by Best and Perry evades the obvious question of the significance of these incidents and characters for the specific work by Weiss in which they occur. The significance of these incidents and characters cannot automatically be assumed to be the same for all the works because otherwise they would recur with obvious regularity and uniformity, which they do not. A more detailed reference to Perry's study "Weiss's Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers: A Forerunner of the Nouveau Roman?" should further clarify my objections to the use of parallels to Weiss's other works to explain the characters in Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers.

In his study of the novel Perry draws a parallel between Herr Schnee, the collector of stones in Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers, and Hieronymus, the collector of fragments from books, catalogues, and newspapers in Fluchtpunkt. Perry refers to a number of other "manic collectors" in Weiss's writings and concludes that "Herr Schnee would thus seem to be a projection from these real-life figures" (p. 217). Perry also points out the resemblance of the isolated farmstead in Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers with the isolated lumber camp in the North of Sweden described in Fluchtpunkt. From this description of the lumbercamp in Fluchtpunkt Perry concludes that the camp cook is the "prototype of the Haushälterin" in Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers (p. 217). While a number of "manic collectors" do appear in Weiss's works and Herr Schnee is an example of such a collector, the mere drawing of a parallel between Herr Schnee in
Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers and Hieronymus in Fluchtpunkt does not in itself clarify the significance of Herr Schnee in the novel in which he appears. The categorization of these characters as "manic collectors" merely serves to point out their similarities and does not finally explain the significance of the characters in either work. The drawing of parallels between the characters in Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers and other characters in Weiss's works actually removes from scrutiny the central issue in a study of character in the novel. This issue would concern the significance of the characters in regard to the larger themes of the work and would consider the relationships of the characters to themselves, one another, and to the world about them.

In regard to the larger themes of the novel, formulation of those themes also relies principally upon parallels drawn to Weiss's other works. This treatment of theme is particularly noticeable in Lüttermann's study of Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers since his discussion of the novel in all its other aspects is almost exclusively based upon textual observation. Lüttermann refers to the description in Fluchtpunkt of a farmstead in Sweden as "ein Ort der Verbannung, der Verdammnis." In order that the similarity between the description of the farmstead in Fluchtpunkt and that in Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers may be more easily discerned, the appropriate passages in the two novels are cited. The passage from Fluchtpunkt is as follows:

Die Tür des Abtritts hing schief in den Angeln und ein Bündel langer Bohnenstangen stand in der Ecke, neben dem Schleifstein. Hinter dem Stall war ein Gehege für
die Schweine, und ich sah ihre schnuppernden feuchten Rüssel zwischen den Balken und hörte, wie ihre Füße im Matsch wühlten und ihre borstigen Leiber sich am Holz rieben. Immer wenn ich mich hier aufhielt, war mir, als könnte ich ewig hier bleiben. Es war ein Ort der Verbannung, der Verdammnis, ein Ort, der an ein Bild erinnerte, das Swedenborg von seiner Vorstellung der Hölle aufgezeichnet hatte.\footnote{10}

The farmstead in *Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers* is described as follows:


Liittmann considers the similarity between the two passages to be so striking that he concludes "es scheint mir durchaus gerechtfertigt zu sein, wenn man dies Fluchtpunkt-Zitat zur Erhellung des früheren Werkes heranzieht" (p. 93). Considering Fluchtpunkt as a description of Weiss's life in exile, Liittmann then views the characters in *Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers* as exiled to the isolated farmstead of the novel. Since any of the political and social conditions which may have resulted in the exile of the characters to the farmstead remain unidentified in *Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers*, Liittmann defines exile in the following manner: "Im Schatten erscheint es als ein existenzieller Zustand, und nicht als eine historisch determinierte Situation" (p. 93). However, Liittmann does not elaborate on any of the particulars of this "existenzieller
Zustand" as it is portrayed in the novel. Otto F. Best also refers to the farmstead described in Fluchtpunkt as an "Ort der Verbannung, der Verdammnis" and makes this reference the focal point of his discussion of Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers.

For Best it is the description of the "Ort der Verbannung" which explains the role of the narrator in the novel: "Nicht mehr mit dem Blick des leidend Betroffenen wird die Hölle gesehen: sie wird vermessen, aufgelöst in die Groteske, entlarvt. Die Sprache ist dem Autor Mittel, sich die Welt vom Leibe zu halten, als Kunst" (p. 42). It should be emphasized here again that for Best Weiss and the narrator are one and the same. The significance of the novel for Best lies in the narrative technique, in "der absurdistischen Überspitzung der naturalistischen Technik ... in der manisch-kühlen Notierung von Abläufen, der Entblössung der Poren einer Realität, deren überwältigende Nähe Ahnung und Wissen bestätigt, Angst und Ekel hervorruft" (p. 53).

It is this very narrative technique in its use of detailed description and lack of interpretative information which renders, for Best, the world described in the novel "ein Ort der Verdammnis." Best elaborates upon this world: "Sie [this minutely described world] bietet sich dar, wie oben gezeigt wurde, nackt, fremd, zerstückelt, herausgerissen aus dem freundlichen Panorama von Tradition und menschlicher Gemeinsamkeit" (p. 51). The world of Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers may be described as "herausgerissen aus dem freundlichen Panorama von Tradition und menschlicher Gemeinsamkeit," but it is not unpopulated and the narrator is only one of its inhabitants.
"Ort der Verbannung, der Verdammnis," it is presumably such for all its inhabitants. In order to derive significance from such a description of this world in Fluchtpunkt, it would seem appropriate to examine the relationships of all the characters of the novel to the world about them. Perry also refers to the description of the farmstead in Fluchtpunkt and concludes that "Weiss's likening this place to Hell leads us back to a consideration of his earlier text as a whole, and tempts us to speculate on the meaning of the world described in it" (p. 218). Parallels drawn between Weiss's texts may serve as particularly fruitful grounds for speculation on the meaning of the world in Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers, and those parallels achieve relevance by a more detailed examination of the relationships between the characters who make up this world.

Lüttmann's examination of the characters of the novel consists largely of a cataloguing of textual description. Lüttmann remarks upon the fact that while the family members are designated by their position in the family (Father, Mother, Son, and Infant), the other characters are designated according to occupation. Lüttmann notes, "Die generelle Kennzeichnung der Personen macht diese Art des Benennens verständlich, denn sie lässt jeden von ihnen als Typus erscheinen" (p. 85). Lüttmann proceeds to assemble the textual references for each character, noting the specific type, or in some cases, anti-type, to which each belongs. For example, in regard to Herr Schnee, the collector of stones, Lüttmann notes, "Schnee verkörpert den Typ des eleganten Privatmannes und Sammlers, der z.B. immer einen silbernen Nagelreiniger bei sich trägt . . . " (p. 88). In this sense,
Lüttmann's understanding of the characters of Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers parallels that of R. C. Perry in his study of the novel. In his study Perry defines the characters as follows: "the characters have little in common with real people—they are exaggerated types, each with one or two special attributes or characteristics which serve to define them" (p. 218). Perry compares the Doctor who cannot heal himself and the Tailor whose clothes are a patchwork of rags with "fairy-tale or parable figures" (p. 218). Perry's use of the word "type," then, refers to a literary convention, whereby characters are described through one or two attributes rather than through a fuller characterization. Lüttmann also employs the term "Typus" in this manner as is clear from the following statement in which he contrasts characterization in Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers with that in other literary works:

"Die relativ selbständig und souverän agierende Persönlichkeit, wie sie für bestimmte Bereiche traditioneller Literatur kennzeichnend war, findet sich unter ihnen [among the inhabitants of the farmstead] nicht mehr" (p. 89).

In summarizing the relationship of the characters to one another, Lüttmann concludes the following: "In ihrer Unfähigkeit, ihren Typus zu verlassen, bleiben diese Personen einander fremd" (p. 91). The inability of the characters to free themselves from the typical ("ihren Typus zu verlassen") is here an existential predicament, and in this sense it is difficult to understand "Typus" as a literary convention. From the foregoing it is apparent that there is a theoretical confusion involved in
the use of "Typus" to describe also an existential state ("bleiben diese Personen einander fremd"). This confusion extends to Lüttmann's reference cited earlier to exile as an "existenzieller Zustand." Lüttmann's attribution of existential states to types is due to his confusion in levels of analysis. This theoretical obscurity is what Alfred North Whitehead called the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness," meaning the transferral of terms developed at one level of abstraction to define events at another level. The error involved in Lüttmann's use of the term "Typus" is that he has applied a term which refers to a literary convention employed by the author in portraying character to the states of being of the characters in the novel itself. Thus, Lüttmann's use of types to summarize the textual descriptions of each character in Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers remains an inadequate explanation of the characters of the novel.

In order to examine the characters of the novel attention will now be turned toward the character of the Tailor. Lüttmann refers to the Tailor as an anti-type in the sense that he fashions his own clothing out of rags, and as a clown-figure in his movements and general appearance. The narrator refers to the Tailor as having been given his name by the other people at the farmstead "weil er sich aus alten Stoffetzen seine Kleider selbst näht" (p. 13). What follows is a description of the Tailor's difficulties which Lüttmann refers to as a "Clownsnummer" (p. 89):

Der Schneider erschien auf der Küchentreppe und kam
The Tailor's predicament is caused then by an unexpected encounter with one of the other inhabitants of the farmstead: "wie immer wenn er unvermutet einem der Übrigen Gäste begegnet, geriet er in einen Zustand völliger Fassungslosigkeit." Before he is disturbed by the presence of another person, the Tailor is carefully negotiating his passage around the mud. The precarious and somewhat contrived way in which he negotiates this journey is emphasized in the use of the word "stelzend." It is the artificiality of his movements that renders him so vulnerable to attack. When he is surprised by his encounter with the narrator a chain of events occurs in which all his appurtenances begin to attack him: the delicate balancing of his pipe and eyeglasses necessitated by the forward tilting of his head to negotiate his path through the mud is upset. Just as he initially tries to put his glasses in his mouth and his pipe before his eyes, so when the narrator leaves him the delicate balance of motion initially necessary for his negotiation of his
passage through the mud has degenerated into wild but ineffective motions: he is stuck in the mud. There is a second reference in the text to the manner in which the Tailor's elaborately executed motions confound him, and again it is the artificiality of these motions which finally causes the distortion. The narrator describes the motions of the Tailor at table—and the narrator emphasizes that the presence of others is not problematical in the same manner here since it is expected—as "Bewegungen die so durchdacht sind, dass sie ständig über sich selbst hinaussteigen, grosse Bogen, verschönerte Arabesken und fuchtelnde Winkel beschreibend" (p. 24). Lüttmann points to this description of the Tailor's motions as "ein Merkmal des Harlekins aus der Pantomime" (p. 89). What Lüttmann fails to note is that, according to the textual description, what is comic about the Tailor's movements is that in their contrivance they so outreach their original function as to achieve an independence and distance from their originator which becomes self-mocking. It is in this sense of being self-mocking that the Tailor is a clown-figure. Just as in the incident in which he is stuck in the mud and his final wild gesticulations are a mockery of the contrived way he set about his initial journey in order to avoid the mud, so here his exaggerated motions mock the initial self-conscious attempt to control his movements. Lüttmann's failure to analyse the source of the comic in the Tailor's movements is only pointed out because of the parallel which exists between my understanding of the Tailor and Lüttmann's analysis of the comic elements involved in the narrator's self-conscious attempt to record his observations. In regard to the comic elements of
the narrator's record of his observations, Lüttmann remarks, "Als eine fast permanente Erscheinung leitet sie [the humor] sich aus der systematischen Pedanterie der Wahrnehmung und Darstellung her sowie aus der damit verbundenen Diskrepanz zwischen dem Aufwand an Worten und der Banalität dessen, was mit ihnen erfasst wird" (p. 103). Just as the motions of the Tailor at table are humorous because of the discrepancy between their elaborate, theatrical complexity and their original intent, i.e., to enable the passage of food around the table; so the humor of the narration, as Lüttmann defines it, results from the discrepancy between "dem Aufwand an Worten und der Banalität dessen, was mit ihnen erfasst wird." The tendency of the Tailor's movements in their artificiality is to end up as a mockery of their original intent either in their inappropriateness, as in the case of his interchanging his glasses with his pipe or in the theatrical nature of his motions at table, or to end in a state of suspended motion as is the case where he is stuck in the mud. A further example of this tendency of the Tailor's elaborate motions to end in a state of suspended animation is furnished by the narrator's description of the Tailor's attempts at eating. As the narrator describes the mouths of each of the people around the table, he characterizes the mouth of the Tailor as follows: "der Mund des Schneiders, gewählt aufklappend und sich erweiternd zur Maulstarre" (p. 26). The narrator also describes the Tailor's appearance as clown-like: To the left of the Farmhand at the other side of the table "sitzt der Schneider, in seinem fadenscheinigen, zusammengefügten Anzug, scheckig
wie ein Harlekin" (p. 24). The Tailor's suit is also apparently always coming apart at the seams, because he spends most of his time stitching it together. The narrator expresses his surprise that the Tailor eats almost as much as the Farmhand "obgleich der Schneider nicht wie der Hausknecht den grössten Teil des Tages im Freien und mit körperlich anstrengenden Arbeiten verbringt, sondern nur in der Stube über seinen Flicken hockt . . . " (p. 25).

Integral to an appreciation of the Tailor is the awareness that although he was given his name by the other guests because he sews his own clothing, tailoring is in fact his occupation in the sense that it occupies most of his time. Rose Zeller in her characterization of the persons of the novel at first remarks that all the people at the farmstead are possibly a little mad "weil sie so merkwürdige Dinge tun" and considers the Tailor's fashioning of "Harlekinskleider aus Stoffresten" as exemplary of this madness (p. 644). However, she then reconsiders her position and notes that the characters need not be judged insane. In regard to the Tailor, she notes, "in einer Zeit der Armut Kleider aus Flicken zusammenzusetzen . . . das alles ist so sinnlos nicht . . . " (p. 644). Even people who refashion their clothing out of rags because of adverse circumstances do not spend all their days doing so. What is unusual about the Tailor, if one were to make references to persons in the everyday world, is that he is a tailor who is his only client. What is humorous about this figure is that as a client he has an incompetent tailor. It is the fact that his occupation consumes his time and his actions that is remarkable. As is attested to by the Tailor's
obsession with his clothing and with his movements, it is not a
preoccupation with self but a preoccupation with an objective
extension of self in terms of his physical appearance and
self-image. The Tailor's social life consists largely of
playing cards with the Farmhand. He engages in this activity
during the socializing in the foyer (see p. 37) and the gathering
in the Housekeeper's room (see p. 78). The mannerisms of the
Tailor even during card playing retain their exaggerated quality
as in the following description where they are contrasted to
those of the Farmhand: "Dann ordnen sie die Karten in der Hand,
worauf der Hausknecht . . . eine Karte hervorzieht und sie mit
Wucht auf den Boden wirft, und der Schneider, hockend mit
übereinandergeschlagenen Beinen, dieselbe Geste, doch ausführlicher, noch einmal vollzieht" (p. 37). The only words
spoken by the Tailor, except for those shouted in unison with
several others when the Housekeeper and the Mother are locked
in the closet and those addressed to the Doctor, are the names of
cards which he calls out in the course of the game in the
Housekeeper's room (see p. 78). The card game is the only form
of social intercourse in which the Tailor is significantly
engaged as emphasized in the manner in which he is summoned to
the game in the foyer by the Farmhand. The narrator describes
the initiation of the game in the following fashion: "Aus dem
Schatten unter der Treppe kommen Geräusche die auf eine
Veränderung der Lage hindeuten und ich sehe jetzt dass der
Schneider, wahrscheinlich kriechend, sich dem Hausknecht genähert
hat und dies wahrscheinlich weil der Hausknecht ihn mit einem
Kartenspiel herbeigewinkt hat" (p. 37). It seems particularly appropriate that the main form of social activity engaged in by the Tailor should consist of a series of separately executed movements.

On the basis of these observations regarding the Tailor, the relationship of the Tailor to himself, to the other characters, and to the world about him may be characterized as estranged. The fact that he is a tailor who is his only client indicates that the particularity of his occupation is its definitive lack of social relatedness. This lack of social relatedness in his primary occupation is illustrative of his estrangement from the world about him. That he is only induced to leave his isolated corner of the room to play cards, an activity that centers around inanimate objects, is descriptive of his estrangement from the other people at the farmstead. Both the way in which he completely loses control when he encounters his fellow guests and the way in which he attempts excessive control over his movements when the encounter with others is expected indicates that he is so estranged from those around him that the presence of others alienates him from his own actions and objects. This alienation is comically apparent when the Tailor's own pipe and glasses seem to assume a life of their own in retribution against him.

Just as the Tailor is his own client, so the Doctor is his own patient. The Doctor is not only his own patient, but also his only patient. This self-absorption of the Doctor's occupation is suggested in the conversation between the Doctor and the Tailor
during the gathering in the room of the Housekeeper. When the Tailor complains to the Doctor about his bad back, the Doctor responds with a self-diagnosis (see p. 73). The Doctor is completely swathed in bandages and even wears dark glasses. The fact that the Doctor is almost completely covered with bandages is emphasized by the narrator's phrase describing the Doctor's hand: "die Hand des Doktors mit Verbandsschlingen zwischen jedem Fingeransatz" (p. 24). The way in which all these bandages serve to nearly immobilize the Doctor is apparent in the descriptions of his difficulties in eating and drinking. Everyone at the table is able to drink normally except the Doctor, "der nur den Mundspalt, dünn wie eine Messerkerbe, an den Wassertropfen netzt" (p. 27). The Doctor's difficulties in eating are illustrated in the narrator's description of the Doctor chewing his food: "der Doktor würgend, ohne die Zähne zu rühren, mit der Zunge das Essen am Gaumen zerdrückend" (p. 26). His bandaged state renders the manipulation of inanimate objects extremely difficult as is apparent in the way in which he must hold his cup: "der Doktor drückt den Becher zwischen die freie Hand und die Hand die den Löffel hält und in gemeinsamer Anstrengung klemmen die Hände den Becher dem Mund entgegen . . . " (p. 28). As the Doctor's manipulation of the inanimate world is constricted by his many bandages, so his relationship to the other guests is inhibited by his preoccupation with his wounds. During the socializing in the foyer, the narrator notes the Doctor's activities with the following description: "rücklings an den Schirmständer gestützt, ist der Doktor zu sehen . . . mit
der einen Hand den Verband am Gelenk der anderen Hand abwickelnd" (p. 37). The evening for the Doctor consists of the unwrapping of his bandage so that at evening's end his wound is finally revealed: "der Doktor löst, mit verzerrtem Mund, das letzte Stück des Verbandes vom Handgelenk und blickt auf die sichtbar gewordene flammend rote Haut . . . " (p. 38). At the social gathering in the room of the Housekeeper the Doctor's main activity consists of the unwrapping of the bandage around his head until he has uncovered "eine breite, schwärende Wunde" (p. 78). This obliviousness of the Doctor to others is further emphasized through his inattention to the commotion in the Housekeeper's room over the breaking of the music box (see p. 77). Later on in the same evening when the Mother and the Housekeeper are trapped in the closet, the Doctor does not even turn toward the closet door and during the ensuing tumult sits "unbeteiligt in seinem Stuhl" (p. 85). The dual use of the Doctor's room as both his residence and surgery illustrates the synthesis between his life and livelihood. The futility of the Doctor's medical operations is apparent in his remarks to the narrator in which he claims to have cut "bis auf die Knochen" and comes to the realization that the source of infection "sitzt noch tiefer" (p. 59). His medical exercises are hampered further by vision so impaired that he must work in the dark (see p. 60). Given the above examples, a pattern emerges which suggests that for the Doctor the world of self has absorbed into it the world about him. All relationships to the world of objects and to other persons are inextricably linked to his bandages, his wounds, his
treatments. Given this preoccupation, the Doctor's inability to adequately treat his own wounds indicates that the Doctor's estrangement from his world, like that of the Tailor, extends to an estrangement from himself.

Herr Schnee occupies most of his time collecting stones. He has collected three thousand seven hundred and seventy-two stones (see p. 36). The activities of Herr Schnee are described by the narrator as follows:

Grosse Mengen von Steinen hat er schon im Laufe der Zeit aus der Erde gegraben und untersucht, zahlreiche Steine die er als unanwendbar betrachtete, hat er mit einem Schubkarren zu einem Haufen hinter dem Holzschuppen gefahren, andere Steine, denen er sein Studium widmet, hat er in sein Zimmer hinaufgetragen wo er sie in Regalen, die ringsum die Wände ausfüllen, verwahrt. (pp. 12-13)

As Herr Schnee is absorbed in the collection of stones, so the Captain is absorbed in the cleaning of his sword. Their relationship to each other and to the other guests is best illustrated in the episode during the evening social activity in the foyer in which the Captain shows his sword to the Father and Herr Schnee. Herr Schnee then brings out some stones from his pocket "und hält sie über die Säbelscheide, unter die Blicke des Hauptmanns und des Vaters" (p. 32). Social intercourse for the Captain and Herr Schnee consists of sharing objects of their respective occupation: the stones and the sword. Thus, their social relationships merely serve as further evidence for their self-absorption. Nowhere in the narrative is this more clearly suggested than in the episode during mealtime in which the Tailor loses his tooth. The episode is recounted by the
narrator as follows:


Not only is Herr Schnee only capable of relating to the world in terms of his own occupation, but that occupation seems capable of embracing any novel situation. The Tailor, displaying again the tendency of events in his case to end in a state of suspended animation, merely holds up the tooth and stares at it. The Captain and the Housekeeper name the object as though that were sufficient to define the event in all its importance, i.e., as though the tooth itself rather than the losing of the tooth were the event. Herr Schnee, in fact, acts out their definition of the event by appropriating the object into his collection, that is, by relating to any event in the manner to which he is accustomed. The Tailor is still in a state of suspended animation: "Der Schneider legte die Brotscheibe die er schon ergriffen hatte, wieder zurück und sass nun unbeweglich da." The Farmhand, the Doctor, Herr Schnee, and the Housekeeper continue eating. That the Farmhand is completely oblivious to the event is noted in the
words "ass unbekümmert weiter." That the event has no effect on the Doctor is noted in the fact that he eats with the same difficulty as always: "Der Doktor kaute mühsam an seinem Brot."
The repetition of the phrase "ass weiter" for the Housekeeper and the Captain stresses the repetitive nature of the meal despite the unexpected event. The repetitive nature of the meal is emphasized again by the narrator's "Ich ass weiter" and defined as such by his own explanation, "um das plötzlich aufsteigende Gefühl der Unendlichkeit dieses Morgens zu erstickten." The humor in this entire scene lies in the repetitiveness of the bizarre responses of the characters. There has hitherto been no mention of teeth in Herr Schnee's collection and there is no reason for anyone to assume that a collector of stones would also be a collector of teeth. It is bizarre that Herr Schnee collects teeth and that the collection of the tooth passes without notice. The entire moment becomes suspended in time just as the Tailor's movements are suspended in space. The suspension in time is not due just to the repetitiveness in the actions but also to the way in which novelty is subsumed by him. Lüttmann's suggestion that Herr Schnee's tooth collection is in keeping with his name, his physical features (pale face), and his interest in white stones (see p. 88) only serves to emphasize the arbitrary nature of the criteria applied by Schnee to the appropriateness of objects for his collection. The arbitrariness of the criteria also accounts for the suggestion that any novel event is somehow capable of being subsumed by Herr Schnee's propensity for collecting. Furthermore, the collecting of the
tooth suggests that Herr Schnee's relationship to the people about him and to the objects in his world is so estranged that people and objects are only viewed by him in regard to the extent to which they are occupationally useful.

The primary activities engaged in by the Mother consist of the feeding and care of her infant and the sharing of views on child care, food and clothing with the Housekeeper. The first glimpse of the family in the narrative is given in the narrator's description of his view of the family through the open window of their room. He sees the following:

die Mutter . . . mit entblösster Brust und an der Brust den Säugling; der Vater am Tisch in der Mitte des Raumes stehend, die Hände zu Fäустen geballt, vor sich auf die Tischplatte gestützt . . . und ihm gegenüber, nicht sitzend, sondern in der Kniebeuge hockend, der Sohn, das Kinn auf die Tischkante gepresst, die Schultern bis zu den Ohren hinaufgezogen, in den Mund des Vaters hineinstarrrend. (p. 14)

The Son's abject posture in relation to the Father is evidence of the extent of the control which the Father exercises over him. The militant stance of the Father, "die Hände zu Fäустen geballt," expresses his tendency to resort to violence in order to maintain this control. This tendency of the Father to resort to violence is further attested to by the narrator's description of the sounds heard from the family's room during the evening meal: "worauf ein anderes Geräusch erklang, wie von einem auf einen Körper hart niederfahrenden Riemen, mehrmals wiederholt, bis es wieder still wurde" (p. 28). Late that evening the narrator actually witnesses the beating of the Son by the Father, and it is clear that such a beating is a common occurence (see pp. 39-40). The
Father's proclivity toward violence is illustrated in his conversation after he has sent his son on the long journey to town to have the music box repaired which the son has just broken:

"und aus den Bemerkungen die der Vater ... verlauten liess, war zu verstehen, dass er von Prügelstrafen, Spiessrutenlaufen, Erhängungen, Enthauptungen, Einkerkerungen, Ertränkungen, Verbrennungen und Verbannungen sprach" (p. 77). It is clear from the references in the Father's conversation to acts of violence such as "Enthauptungen" which are not normally acceptable as disciplinary methods to be used on children that the Father's resort to violence in controlling his son is expressive of a fascination with more general forms of punitive, violent behavior. Just as Herr Schnee's collection of stones is enlarged to include teeth, so the Father's concern with the beating of his son involves a preoccupation with other forms of violence as well. However, despite the Father's proclivity toward violence, the Son's beating occurs in a specific context and it is this context which is to be examined here. During the socializing in the foyer, the suggestion is made that the Son might help Herr Schnee in his activities. The Father is interested since he sees his son as "zu nichts nutze" (p. 35). He calls the son into the room and it is clear from his words that he views this as the chance of transforming his son from a passive loafer into a productive member of the society of the farmstead:

"Nutzen, Herrn Schnees Tätigkeit, lange genug zugesehen" (p. 36). Herr Schnee assures them that a salary is involved—"auch mit Lohn rechnen" (p. 36)—and it is clear that the Son is to be
initiated into adulthood through his participation in an adult activity. The fact that the venture constitutes a rite de passage for the Son is emphasized by the Captain's use of ritual to close the conversation:

Der Hauptmann hat die Scheide des Säbels aus der Hand des Vaters herausgezogen, er hebt die Scheide und schlägt damit leicht auf die niederhängende Schulter des Sohnes, währenddessen hält die Mutter noch den Jackensaum des Sohnes fest und der Zeigefinger des Vaters ist noch im Knopfloch der Jacke des Sohnes verhakt. (p. 37)

The posture of the Mother and of the Father at the same time attests to the duress under which the ritual is consummated. The beating the son receives later that night further attests to the force necessary to persuade him to follow his parent's wishes. By the following morning order is restored: "Die Bewegungen des Vaters sind kräftig und erwartungsvoll, während die Haltung des Sohnes Schwäche und Ergebung ausdrückt ..." (p. 49). The use of the word "erwartungsvoll," in light of the ritual enacted the evening before, expresses the expectations of a father for his son as his son takes his first step into the world of adulthood. The characterization of the posture of the Son as expressing "Schwäche und Ergebung" is evidence of his repressed disinclination to engage in the activities of the adult world. The Son's engagement in the activities of the adult world consists of the aiding of Herr Schnee in the collection of stones. Herr Schnee's collection exists for himself alone; he is the sole appraiser of his collection. Herr Schnee's occupation is thus marked by the same singular lack of social relatedness as that of the Tailor.
who is the single client for the products of his occupation. The Son's involvement is of little help to Herr Schnee. The Son's attempts to transport the stones by wheelbarrow across the yard are marked by failure; each time the wheelbarrow tips over and the stones are dumped over the yard. The Son's assistance in initially loading the wheelbarrow with stones was superfluous since Herr Schnee insisted on performing each task involved right along with the Son so that Herr Schnee "selbst die Schaufel hob, deren Gewicht durch die Arme des Sohnes noch erschwert wurde, und die Schaufel in den Schubkarren auslud, wobei er die an der Schaufel hängenden Hände und Arme des Sohnes mit sich riss" (p. 51). The extent to which Herr Schnee performs the tasks right along with the Son indicates the extent to which the task involved is Herr Schnee's task and not that of the Son. The only significance of the Son's participation in Herr Schnee's activities is in terms of a rite de passage into the adult society of the farmstead. Considering the activities of the adults of this world, the rite de passage is successfully executed through the Son's participation in this self-alienating act: he is successfully initiated into the estranged world of the adults.

The Son again confronts this estranged world of the adults during the social gathering held in the Housekeeper's room. The confrontation, which is disastrous in its consequences, forms one of the most humorous scenes in the novel. The Son, like the narrator, stands near the window apart from the rest of the company and as the outsider acts as the catalyst for the events which follow: his overwinding of a music box initiates a chain of
events in which the entire party is thrown into confusion by the Housekeeper. However, the role played by the Son in initiating the disaster does not imply that he is responsible for it since the prelude to the event is described in such a way as to make the disaster appear inevitable. The narrator first describes the path taken by each of the guests in entering the room for the party. This description—in a sentence one and a half pages in length, listing all the furnishings of the room as the guests pass by them—is supplemented by an even more exhaustive inventory of the room. The list of furnishings includes all the items which are later to prove problematical: the iron which falls on Herr Schnee's foot as the Housekeeper attempts to reach the music box; the glasses which spill their contents over several guests; the curtains which later fall down as a result of the Son's pulling at them; the planter which is knocked to the floor when the curtains fall down; the music box which the Son overwinds; and the closet door behind which the Mother and the Housekeeper later are trapped. However, no distinction is made in the narrator's description between these objects in the room and any of the other furnishings listed by him. The effect of such a uniform itemizing of all the furnishings of the room is to make the narrator's description appear as an inventory of undifferentiated, potential disaster. Lüttmann discusses the narrator's attempts in his descriptions of rooms to depict all the objects within his view as producing an "Eigenaktivität der Dinge" (p. 20) in that the passive role assumed by the narrator in refusing to grant any one object importance over any other and in relinquishing predominance
over any of the objects places the narrator in the position of subordination to these objects. In regard to the specific instance of the party in the Housekeeper's room Lüttrmann concludes:

Und alle Personen, ausser dem beobachtenden Erzähler der mit dem Sohn am Rande des Zimmers steht, begeben sich in diese Dingwelt hinein und handeln darin, als wäre ihnen die Verfügungsgewalt über sie gegeben. In dieser Konstellation entwickeln die Dinge eine besondere Eigenaktivität, und so ist die Serie der "Katastophen" unvermeidlich. (p. 20)

However I would contend that objects appear animated because the people are made to appear as inanimate objects, as items to be distributed—"verteilt" (p. 69)—among the tables and chairs. Whenever the guests attempt to exert control over the situation they only create further disaster: it is the Housekeeper's attempt to retrieve the music box which actually precipitates the original disaster. When the Farmhand, the Father and the Captain finally do force the closet door open with a crowbar, the Mother and the Housekeeper push it down onto the Father's head. The guests appear to be helpless because they are portrayed as objects in a contest with the other objects of their immediate environment. In such a contest they are outnumbered, and the outcome is for this reason inevitable. Thus, it is a disaster in which all those affected are "innocent" victims, none of whom, with the possible exception of the Son who alone is held accountable for his actions and forced to make the long trip to town to have the music box repaired, suffers irreparable damage. Accordingly it is the position of the Son as an outsider (and hence punished victim) which detracts from the humor of the
situation.

The narrator's chief activity consists of the recording of his observations of life on the farmstead. As has earlier been noted in regard to the link between the narrator's observations and his act of recording them, the record of the narrator reflects his attempt to observe objectively the events of his world in their totality. The act of recording for the narrator is an attempt to order the world about him as he observes it. Just as the Tailor fashions his own clothing out of bits and pieces of his world, so the narrator is occupied with the ordering of the events of his world into a written text. The narrator's occupation is evidence of an estrangement from the world about him, from the other persons on the farmstead, and from himself.

The narrator's ordering of the events of his world reflects an estrangement from that world to the degree that his activities render him incapable of acting on the world about him. The narrator's diminished capacity to act on the world about him may be illustrated through reference to his description of his walk through the farmhouse to his room. The narrator's passage through the farmhouse is marked by a description of each object which passes into his view. Because the narrator is merely describing each object as it appears in his view, all objects are viewed from the same perspective and are of equal importance. The narrator's passage down the hall is described by him as having been executed with greater ease than his earlier passage through the kitchen and the foyer: "Der schmale Läufer zieht sich von der Treppe aus durch den Flur, seine schwarzen Kanten gleichem
Schienen, und im Dahinschreiten war mir als rollte ich in einem Wagen bis vor die Dachstiege hin" (p. 17). Lüttmann concludes the following in regard to the relative ease of the narrator's walk down the hall: "Diese plötzliche Leichtigkeit der Bewegung erklärt sich daraus, dass der Erzähler auf diesem Flur lediglich sechs gleichartige 'braune Türen mit Messingklinke und Schlüsselloch' . . . zu beachten hat: sie können pauschal wahrgenommen werden" (p. 19). In other words, the uniformity of the objects which pass into the narrator's view on his walk down the hall makes his walk down the hall much easier than his walk through the kitchen and foyer, since both these rooms are filled with a variety of objects. Since none of the objects in the kitchen or foyer is an obstacle in the sense of physically impeding his passage through the room, the narrator's greater difficulty in passing through these rooms must lie in his relationship to these objects. The narrator's ordering of these objects whereby each is described as it appears in his view so that each object is of equal importance does not allow the narrator to exert sufficient control over these objects. Thus, these objects are able to impinge upon his movements to the extent that the relative ease of his movements is controlled by them. The extent to which the narrator feels himself to be controlled by the objects in his world is indicated in the manner in which he attempts to escape this world. In an activity which the narrator terms the "Erdenken von Bildern," the narrator places grains of salt in his eyes. He describes how this procedure affects his perception of his room:
und selbst wenn dieser Raum nichts anderes enthält als einen Tisch, einen Stuhl, einen Waschtisch und ein Bett, und wenn auch an der einen schrägen Wand nichts anderes vorhanden ist als die Fensterluke über dem Tisch, und an der gegenüberliegenden senkrechten Wand nur eine Tür, und an den beiden anderen, durch das Dach abgewinkelten Wänden nichts, so stößt sich mein Blick doch noch an diesen Begrenzungen und festen Formen; mit den Tränen löse ich sie auf. (p. 18)

Even the objects in the narrator's sparsely furnished room are viewed as a hindrance to him, and the narrator must put foreign objects into his eyes in order to counteract the control the objects in his room exercise over him. In the description of one of his visions, the narrator describes a feeling similar to that which he experiences during his walk down the hallway: "es war als säße ich, bequem zurückgelehnt, in einem Automobil, einem Omnibus (das Fahrzeug war nicht zu sehen, es bestand nur aus einem Gefühl des Fahrens, des Dahingleitens) ... " (p. 56).

The similarity of this feeling of the narrator experienced during his vision with his experience during the walk down the hall suggests that the narrator's relationship to the objects in the world of his vision remains unchanged from his relationship to the objects he wishes to escape: his posture expresses a similar passivity in relationship to the world about him. During one of his visions, the narrator attempts to reach out to the figure of a woman: "seine Nähe war so stark spürbar, dass ich die Vorspiegelung mit einer Wirklichkeit verwechselte und eine heftige Bewegung mit meinen Armen vollführte, womit ich unmittelbar das Bild zerriss" (p. 20). The narrator is as incapable of acting upon the world of his visions as he is upon the world about him.
The narrator's activities in relationship to the other persons on the farmstead are subsumed under his occupation: he views them much as he observes the objects in his world and stands in a similar relationship to them. For example, in the description of his walk through the farmhouse referred to in the preceding paragraph, the Housekeeper is described in the same manner as the utensils in the kitchen. In the same manner in which the narrator's perspective rendered all objects of equal importance, his perspective renders persons and objects of equal importance. Just as the Doctor's preoccupation with his wounds inhibited his relationship to others, so the narrator's occupation hampers his relationship to the other persons on the farmstead. Whenever the narrator does assume a more active role than that of detached observer in regard to the other persons, the effect of his actions is to insure the recurrence of the activity in which he has intervened. The narrator watches through the keyhole while the Son is being beaten by the Father. He finally enters the room at the behest of the Mother and helps her to put the Father to bed. The effect of the narrator's intervention at this time is to insure the Father's recovery so that he can presumably beat his son the next night. After the collapse of the Father due to a heart attack brought about by the beating administered to his son, the Son looks toward the keyhole: "sein[ the Son's] Blick hatte sich jetzt vom Vater abgewendet und richtete sich auf das Schlüsselloch in der Tür, als könne er meinen Blick in der Dunkelheit hinter dem Schlüsselloch erkennen" (p. 45). The Son's look, since it occurs after the beating, may be understood both
in terms of a plea for assistance for his father and also as a
look of recrimination directed at the narrator for not having
intervened earlier so as to prevent both the beating and the
Father's collapse. Each time the Son tips over the wheelbarrow
in transporting the stones across the yard, the narrator helps
him reload the wheelbarrow so that presumably the Son will have
the chance to reenact his failure indefinitely. The narrator
is so enervated by the repetitiveness of the failure with the
wheelbarrow that he leaves off describing it and turns to a
recounting of another one of his visions. What is striking
about the narrator's boredom is that, because of the manner of his
intervention which insures the recurrence of the activity in which
he intervenes, it is self-induced. Similarly, when the Doctor
comes to the narrator's room, the narrator takes him back to bed
and gets him up for breakfast in the morning so that he can begin
his day and his treatments all over again. Just as the Doctor
treats his wounds by inflicting greater wounds upon himself, so
the narrator acts in such a way as to insure that the very
repetitiveness of the events which he suffers to describe will
continue. To the extent that the narrator's actions insure the
recurrence of the activities in which he intervenes, these actions
suggest more than just his estrangement from the other persons on
the farmstead: they suggest an estrangement from the self as well.
That the narrator is himself alienated from his occupation is
clear from the way in which he describes how he continues to write.

obgleich ich deutlich die Gegenkraft in mir verspüre
die mich früher dazu zwang, meine Versuche abzubrechen und
die mir auch jetzt bei jeder Wortreihe die ich dem
However, in this case the narrator is alienated from his occupation to the extent that he views the subject of that occupation as inappropriate, i.e., "allzu nichtig . . . um festgehalten zu werden." The suggestion of the self-alienation involved in the narrator's acts of intervention is that the narrator himself is implicated, that it is not the object of his occupation that is inappropriate but the occupation itself. The implication is that the way in which the narrator orders the world through the recording of his observations is itself deficient. The deficiency of the narrator's ordering of the world becomes apparent to him when he is faced with events for which he cannot account. Towards the end of the narrative, the Coachman arrives and he and the Farmhand unload several sacks of coal from the wagon into the cellar of the farmhouse. The narrator cannot understand how so many sacks of coal could have fitted in the wagon. He questions the Coachman and the Farmhand but is dissatisfied with their responses:

Doch auch dies genügte mir, selbst wenn sowohl die Worte des Kutschers wie auch die Worte des Hausknechts einiges enthielten das der Wahrheit entsprechen mochte, nicht als Erklärung; und auch heute, drei Tage und drei Nächte später, habe ich noch keine Erklärung gefunden für den unverhältnismässig grossen Unterschied zwischen der Raumgrösse die die Kohlen im Wagen zur Verfügung hatten.
After a three day hiatus during which the narrator is unable to write, he resumes his occupation with a description of the copulation between the Coachman and the Housekeeper. As in the case of the unloading of the sacks of coal where the narrator could describe the number of sacks being unloaded but could not account for the number, so the narrator can describe the copulation of shadows but cannot account for the activity. As the Doctor was faced with the futility of continuing his operations in the dark, so the narrator is faced with the futility of continuing to record activities for which he cannot account.

The Farmhand is concerned with the physical upkeep of the property as evidenced in his tasks of sawing wood and plowing the fields. His conversations center around the weather and the farm animals. The Housekeeper is charged with the maintenance of the household and her conversations with the Mother are mostly about food and fashion. Lüttmann regards the activities of the Farmhand and of the Housekeeper as relatively meaningful in comparison to the activities of the other persons at the farmstead:

Nur die beiden ersten[ the Housekeeper] und the Farmhand ] und die Mutter, die für die Familie kocht und näht und den Säugling versorgt, gehen einer sinnvollen Beschäftigung nach. Die übrigen Personen, d.h. allgemein gesprochen: die Gäste, arbeiten entweder gar nicht oder betätigen sich auf eine sinnlose Weise: Schnee sammelt Steine, ohne dass man erfähre, weshalb und nach welchen Kriterien er dies tut (man vermutet allerdings, dass er monomanisch nur etwas Weisses zusammenhält); der Sohn hilft ihm bei dieser Tätigkeit; der Hauptmann pflegt einen Säbel, den er nicht mehr benutzt; der Schneider setzt seine Kleidung aus Flicken zusammen; und der Doktor fügt sich
That the narrator is also to be included among these guests is emphasized by Lüttmann later in his study: "Der Erzähler befindet sich demzufolge generell in der gleichen Lage wie die übrigen Gäste, denn auch seine Tätigkeiten sind entweder sinnlos oder doch unmittelbar durch die Sinnlosigkeit bedroht" (p. 97).

However, as an analysis of the characters indicates, none of their activities is devoid of meaning. All of their activities are meaningful in the sense that they express states of being which are totally alienating. The Son's assistance of Herr Schnee in the collecting of stones is meaningful as a rite de passage into the alienated world of the adults. The significance of the Father is not that he does not work at all but rather that he does participate in the activities of this world: he participates in these activities through his son. The Tailor, the Doctor, and Herr Schnee each act as the consumers of the products of their own labor: the Tailor is his own client, the Doctor is his own patient, and Herr Schnee is himself the only appraiser of his own collection. What is striking about their occupations is their definitive lack of social relatedness. The narrator is not so much confronted with the meaninglessness of his activities as he is with their futility. In his inability to account for the unloading of the sacks of coal and for the copulation of the Coachman and the Housekeeper the narrator experiences the degree to which his estrangement from the world about him renders his occupation futile. The question, which Lüttmann confuses in his
distinction between meaningful and meaningless activities, is whether or not the Housekeeper, the Farmhand, and the Mother are any the less alienated because the products of their labor accrue to other people.

In his study of *Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers*, R. C. Perry suggests the following as a possible interpretation of the characters and their situation:

A possible interpretation of the characters and their situation is that they represent a sort of grotesque "Endstation" of bourgeois life (the reductio ad absurdum of the bourgeoisie is the main theme of Weiss's play *Die Versicherung*, which was written about the same time as *Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers*). (p. 218)

Lüttmann also considers the possibility of such an interpretation and rejects it for the following reasons:

Wollte man die Pension als ein Modell der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft ansehen, dann würde hiermit über diese Gesellschaft ein vernichtendes Urteil abgegeben werden, demzufolge eine Minderheit arbeitet und die Majorität ein parasitär-sinnloses Leben führt. Diese Deutungsmöglichkeit scheint mir nicht völlig der Grundlage zu entbehren. Aber zum einen wäre dies Modell zu schlicht und realitätsfern, als dass es ohne gravierende Vorbehalte betrachtet werden könnte; und zum anderen wäre ein solcher Angriff auf die bürgerliche Gesellschaft von dem Autor Peter Weiss erst nach dessen Parteinahme für den Sozialismus in der Mitte der 60er Jahre zu erwarten gewesen, nicht aber in dessen weitgehend noch unpoltischer Phase, in die auch die Entstehung des Schattens fällt. (p. 92)

Thus, Lüttmann contends that if the farmstead is to be considered a model for society at all, then society must be judged to be composed of a working minority and a parasitic majority. This contention is related to Lüttmann's assumption that the activities of the Housekeeper, the Farmhand, and the Mother are meaningful
while those of the remaining characters are not. As I have indicated, the activities of none of the characters seem to be devoid of meaning, and there is no suggestion in the text that the activities of the three characters mentioned by Lüttmann are to be construed as more meaningful than those of the others. For this reason, Lüttmann's judgment concerning the composition of society appears highly questionable. However, even if one were to accept Lüttmann's contentions regarding the configuration of this bourgeois society ("die bürgerliche Gesellschaft"), the argument is suspect. This becomes clear when one considers Lüttmann's statement concerning Weiss's "socialism." Although a critical attitude toward bourgeois society is certainly a necessary condition for "Parteinahme für den Sozialismus," "Parteinahme für den Sozialismus" is not a necessary condition for a critical attitude toward bourgeois society. Furthermore, not all attacks on bourgeois society are political so that whether or not Weiss wrote the novel during his "unpolitische Phase" is irrelevant. The degree to which this model of bourgeois society is "schlicht und realitätsfern" itself acts as a limiting factor of the extent to which such a criticism is political. Lüttmann's argument that the model is too "realitätsfern" is also interesting because it suggests that the farmstead can not be construed to reflect social reality regardless of its configuration. The model itself may be considered to be "realitätsfern" in the sense that it is the existential states of the characters which are depicted. However, insofar as these existential states are portrayed phenomenologically, that is, through the experiences of
the characters of the world about them in their respective occupations, this model is not "realitätsfern" but stands in direct relationship to the realities they experience. The question then is to what extent the realities experienced by the characters reflect the realities of modern society.

A number of critics, including Lüttmann, have a tendency to regard Weiss's later works as mainly concerned with man's general social condition while they regard his early works as extremely limited portrayals of social reality. Such a view appears to entail an oversimplification of both the early and later works. It is in the context of this problem that I would like to consider an essay by Marx concerning the nature of capitalist society. I have chosen this essay because it suggests a configuration of the world which is not totally unlike that experienced by the characters in Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers and because as an early essay by Marx it is more descriptive than proscriptive and considers alienation not only in terms of man's relationship to the marketplace but also to his being.

The relationship between alienation and capitalism is discussed by Marx in "Auszüge aus Mills 'Elémens d'économie politique.'" In this essay Marx argues that the capitalist economy is based on the exchange of products produced by individuals for their exchange value ("Tauschwert"). An individual produces in order to satisfy his own personal needs. Moreover, because of private property, the need of an individual is expressed in terms of his exclusive possession of that product, that is, the product which he produces is produced for himself only, without reference to
the needs of others. Traditional economic theory would make a distinction between the product produced to meet an individual's own needs and a product produced in "surplus" of an individual's needs. According to traditional theory, it is the "surplus" product which is traded in the marketplace. This "surplus" product is assumed to have been produced according to the needs of others rather than solely according to the needs of the producer. The producer would then be assumed to have entered into a social relationship with the purchasers of his "surplus" production, a social relationship which is enacted in the marketplace. However, Marx maintains that the product produced by the individual for the marketplace does not represent a "surplus" ("Mehrproduktion") of his production. Such a product is rather, according to Marx, the product which the producer hopes to acquire through his "surplus" production: "Ich produziere der Wahrheit nach einen anderen Gegenstand, den Gegenstand deiner Produktion, den ich gegen dies Mehr auszutauschen gedenke, ein Austausch, den ich in Gedanken schon vollzogen habe." The social relationship between producer and purchaser is thus, according to Marx, "auch ein blosser Schein" because the exchange which occurs in the marketplace is not one in which the producer fulfills the needs of the purchaser, is not a "wechselseitige Ergänzung" but is rather a "wechselseitige Plünderung" in which the producer not only divests himself of his own product in order to fulfill his personal needs but also divests the purchaser of his product (p. 460). In other words, each producer produces according to his own needs and not according to the needs of
anyone else. Such production is "keine Produktion des Menschen für den Menschen als Menschen, d.h. keine gesellschaftliche Produktion" (p. 459). The language spoken between these alienated individuals—alienated in the sense that their production consists of their divesting each other of their own products—is the language of the exchange of their products: "Die einzig verständliche Sprache, die wir zueinander reden, sind unsere Gegenstände in ihrer Beziehung aufeinander" (p. 461).

Marx makes the transition from alienated production to non-alienated production through the notion of "mediation." Embodied in his notion of "mediation" is a principle of reciprocity whereby one's individual products are placed in the service of community. By placing his products in the service of community the producer produces both for himself and for the other since community, unlike the marketplace, involves a recognition of the needs of both producer and consumer and hence an appreciation of value which, in contrast to exchange value, reflects those needs. The producer then experiences himself in a qualitatively different relationship to the consumer. In regard to the consumer he becomes a mediator ("Mittler") between him and his humanity ("Gattung"): 

für dich [the consumer] der Mittler zwischen dir und der Gattung gewesen zu sein, also von dir selbst als eine Ergänzung deines eignen Wesens und als ein notwendiger Teil deiner selbst gewusst und empfunden zu werden, also sowohl in deinem Denken wie in deiner Liebe mich bestätigt zu wissen . . . (p. 462)

In other words, the product produced in the service of community does not serve to alienate the consumer from his product but
rather supplements the value of that product. If one furthermore
accepts the assumption that man is social by nature, then that
production could also be construed to be necessary to the other's
sense of well-being. This assumption regarding man's social
nature also underlies Marx's judgment that only the producer
who produces in the service of community actually produces a
product which reflects his real needs and his true self:

in meiner Produktion meine Individualität, ihre
Eigentümlichkeit vergegenständlicht und daher sowohl
während der Tätigkeit eine individuelle
Lebensäußerung genossen, als im Anschauen des
Gegenstandes die individuelle Freude, meine
Persönlichkeit als gegenständliche, sinnlich anschauliche
... Macht zu wissen ... (p. 462)

It is, then, not only the individual's needs but the "exchange"
between individuals based upon their reciprocal needs which
increases the value of a product. This value is objective to the
extent that when products are produced the producer recognizes
the social use to which they will be put. In this context, there
is no "surplus": there can only be individual and social needs
which are met. The individual producer is thus aware of the
social relatedness of his product, of the relationship between
himself and others. This relationship allows the producer to
affirm his existence as a social being—"in meiner individuellen
Tätigkeit unmittelbar mein wahres Wesen, mein menschliches, mein
Gemeinwesen bestätigt und verwirklicht zu haben" (p. 462).

Marx offers the following description of this "Gemeinwesen"
in a capitalist society in which man's social being consists of
the alienated relationships between individuals in the marketplace
rather than of the reciprocal relationship which occurs in community:

Alienated man lives in an alienated society because a society is no more than the social relationships of its members. The inclusiveness of this alienation as it permeates the society in which alienated man finds himself then serves to distort man's own image of himself and of his world. It is due to this distortion that man views society, not as created by him as an expression of his own alienated and hence, according to Marx, false sense of self; but as an outside force which alienates him. Society is then viewed as the source of alienation rather than as the expression of the estranged relationships of its members. As the source of alienation society becomes a threat to the individual self with the result that man comes to perceive his social life as demanding self-sacrifice ("als Aufopfrung seines
Lebens") instead of providing a means to self-expression. Man's relationship to persons and to objects in his world is likewise distorted since he comes to view those relationships as non-essential to the self and therefore arbitrary because they are not perceived to be of his own creation. Marx's view, on the other hand, is that while man does not choose to be a social being he does create the relationships which in turn determine his perceptions of himself, of others and of the things surrounding him.

An examination of the characters of Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers indicates that the singularity of the activities of the characters lies in the fact that each acts as the consumer of the products of his own labor. What is striking about their occupations is their definitive lack of social relatedness. In light of the foregoing analysis of alienation in a capitalist society, the characters may be said to be doubly alienated from the self in the sense that the exchange of products occurs within the self. As the examination of the characters has shown, the degree to which the characters are self-absorbed in their occupations measures the extent to which they are estranged from themselves, from each other, and from the world about them. It is this alienation which is the existential condition of the characters, and their exile is an exile from community.
Chapter 2

Abschied von den Eltern:

the recurrence of alienation

Peter Weiss's narrative, Abschied von den Eltern, consists of the narrator's recollections of his early childhood and adolescence. The narrative is largely an account of the narrator's estrangement from the world of his parents and closes with his leave-taking of them upon his reaching adulthood. Ian Hilton characterizes the narrative as follows in his study Peter Weiss: A Search for Affinities: "From the start it is an account of extreme alienation." The recollections of the narrator are themselves occasioned by the death of his parents, a recent, final departure which is the continuation of the narrator's estrangement from them and their world into his adulthood. The narrative occasioned by death is not so much an account of as it is an accounting for extreme alienation. The narrative is descriptively explanatory: the recurrence of alienation is identified as patterns of responses to self and world and is revealed through his relationship to his childhood experiences.

Abschied von den Eltern opens with the reflections of the narrator upon the death of both his parents. These reflections of the narrator serve as the extension of earlier reflections upon his parents. The narrator states, "Ich habe oft versucht,
mich mit der Gestalt meiner Mutter und der Gestalt meines Vaters auseinanderzusetzen, peilend zwischen Aufruhr und Unterwerfung."

The degree of abstraction evidenced in the reference of the narrator to the "Gestalt meiner Mutter" and the "Gestalt meines Vaters" indicates the extent to which the attempt of the narrator to come to terms with his parents has been a reflective process.

In his consideration of the text, Lüttmann remarks upon the description of the narrator of himself as "peilend zwischen Aufruhr und Unterwerfung" as indicating "dass das Nachdenken jeweils eine stark emotionale Komponente enthielt." Perhaps more important in this respect is the indication that the terms upon which a relationship between the narrator and his parents is defined are of such an adversary nature that rebellion or submission appear to the narrator to be the only modes of response possible for him. The narrator emphasizes that all attempts to come to terms with his parents have failed: "Nie habe ich das Wesen dieser beiden Portalfiguren meines Lebens fassen und deuten können" (p. 7). The narrator emphasizes their significance as "Portalfiguren" of his life. The death of his parents marks the culmination of the narrator's attempts to come to terms with them: "Bei ihrem fast gleichzeitigen Tod sah ich, wie tief entfremdet ich ihnen war" (p. 7). Death, with its finality, is ultimate separation: in death it becomes clear that all attempts at reconciliation are futile. The irreversibility of this estrangement between the narrator and his parents is described by the narrator in his recollection of his trip to Belgium to reclaim his father's body: "vor mir lag der Leichnam eines
Mannes in der Fremde, nicht mehr erreichbar . . ." (p. 9). The corpse of the father is the symbol for the narrator of death's final separation, as "Portalfiguren" suggest for him the first act of separation which marks the beginning of his life.

The father's death is seen by the narrator as the final confirmation of the estrangement between them. The father's last business trip to Belgium is described as one of many absences. The narrator recalls all the trips and the hotel rooms in his father's life and imagines his father in these hotel rooms studying the pictures of his children and fantasizing a closer relationship with them. In actuality no communication existed between father and children. In recalling scenes from his childhood the narrator later characterizes his father as follows: "Von meinem Vater wusste ich nichts. Der stärkste Eindruck seines Wesens war seine Abwesenheit" (p. 44). Lüttmann points out the double sense in which the father's "Abwesenheit" refers both to his physical absence during innumerable business trips and to the general unresponsiveness of his personality (see p. 193). As the father's physical absence during his many business trips accentuated his figurative absence from the home, so his death confirms the depth of the estrangement between himself and the narrator.

As the physical finality of the father's death marks the narrator's full realization of the extent of the estrangement between them, the division of the estate between family members is a final confirmation of the profound spiritual dislocation of the family. The dissolution of the family is finalized with
the division of the estate, a division which the narrator describes as follows: "Eine Schändung und Zerstampfung fand statt, voll von Untertonen des Neids und der Habgier, obgleich wir nach aussen hin einen freundlich überlegenen Ton besten Einvernehmens zu wahren suchten" (p. 13). "Schändung" and "Zerstampfung" are very violent terms to be used in the context of the division of a family estate. In his summary of his father's life, the narrator emphasizes the importance of the home in terms of the effort expended by his father, through the long period of emigration and the war, in order to maintain a household which afforded him no pleasure in return. The furniture is described by the narrator as "von der Hand unserer Mutter ein Leben lang gehütet und gepflegt" and in the course of the division of the household goods the narrator feels the presence of his mother: "Da war mir, als öffnete sich die Tür und meine Mutter erschien, fassungslos in das geisterhafte Treiben ihrer Kinder starrend" (pp. 13-15). Thus, the violence with which the home is dissembled is juxtaposed to the tenacity with which the parents had preserved it.

The narrator describes the moving of the furniture by the children as they divide up the family goods as the dismantling of an order of things which previously had been regarded by them as inviolate (see p. 13). The "Untertonen des Neids und der Habgier" which act as a source for this violence are partially explained in the narrator's description of the value of the various furnishings to each of the children: each piece of furniture is connected with their memories of the home. The
source of the greed of the children and their hostility toward
the home is explained later in the text when the narrator
contrasts the parents' care with the children's ingratitude.
The parents tried to supplement their concern for their children
with gifts on each special family occasion but "immer waren die
Geschenke falsch, soviel wir auch bekamen, immer standen wir da
mit unzufriedenen, nach Mehr fragenden Blicken. Das was wir haben
wollten bekamen wir nicht, und wir wussten nicht, was wir haben
wollten" (p. 98). The description suggests the children desired
to possess the elusive element which was never a part of homelife
and desired to destroy the very order which prevented that element
from being realized in family life. Although the children had
thus long felt excluded from the home, its dissolution upon the
death of the parents marks the loss of whatever security it
afforded them and formalizes the end of their association with
each other. The hostility toward the home is released, however,
with the death of the parents. The release of this hostility
results in the depredation of the home and in the degradation
of the children as expressed in the juxtaposition of the fate of
the parents with the lot of the survivors: "Die Urnen von Vater
und Mutter standen nebeneinander in der schwarzen, feuchten Erde
des Friedhofs, und wir Geschwister hockten zwischen den
Bruchstücken des zerstörten Heims . . . " (p. 14).

The violence with which the family home is dissembled by the
survivors suggests the degree to which the physical dislocation
of the family unit confirms the existence of a more profound
spiritual dislocation. The existence of the spiritual dislocation
is also attested to by the nature of the narrator's sorrow upon his parents' death:

Die Trauer, die mich überkam, galt nicht ihnen [his parents], denn sie kannte ich kaum, die Trauer galt dem Versäumten, das meine Kindheit und Jugend mit gähnender Leere umgeben hatte. Die Trauer galt der Erkenntnis eines gänzlich missglückten Versuchs von Zusammenleben, in dem die Mitglieder einer Familie ein paar Jahrzehnte lang beieinander ausgeharrt hatten. Die Trauer galt dem Zuspät, das uns Geschwister am Grab überlagerte und das uns dann wieder auseinandertrieb, ein jedes in sein eigenes Dasein. (p. 7)

The concern of the narrator is neither for his parents nor for his family. The grief of the narrator is rather concerned with the loss of the possibility of a fulfilled childhood and family life.

With the physical dislocation of the family unit the narrator proceeds with his first recollection of his childhood and begins a series of recollections which form the main body of the text. The narrator begins with his memories of the various houses occupied by the family. While describing the view from the foyer of one of the houses he alludes to periods in his adult life in which a lapse in control causes him to again experience "die Hilflosigkeit, das Ausgeliefertsein und die blinde Auflehnung aus jener Zeit, in der fremde Hände mich bändigten, kneteten und vergewaltigten" (p. 15). Striking in this first recollection is the violence which the narrator experienced as a child and to which he still feels himself subject.

Later upon describing the "selbstgewähltes Exil" he found in the garden of his home while a child, the narrator remarks upon the persistence of a pattern evinced by this childhood preference into adulthood:

In the garden and in the summerhouse the narrator has the capacity to feel and to act. He describes the sensual intimacy he experienced there in relationship to his environment and contrasts this to the atmosphere of his home where "das Dumpfe, das Eingeschlossenene" (p. 18) inhibits the perception of his surroundings. In the summerhouse the narrator's activities, like his feelings in the garden, are in harmony with his environment as is indicated by the freedom of movement he experiences there (see pp. 18-19).

Lüttmann describes the garden as "ein Analogon zum Garten Eden" (p. 202) in the sense of the happiness the child finds there and in the creative role the child enacts there. Lüttmann compares the mother's call to the child in Abschied von den Eltern with God's call to Adam in Genesis after the Fall, although he can find no reference to any transgression on the part of the child which would be comparable to that committed by Adam: "Allerdings wird an dieser Stelle des Abschieds von keinem Vorgang berichtet, der als Parallele zu dem biblischen Sündenfall betrachtet werden könnte; das Kind ist nur mit seinen Spielen beschäftigt" (pp. 202-03). Nonetheless, Lüttmann sees a parallel between the role played by the mother and that played by God in the
"Vertreibung aus dem Paradies" (p. 203), Remarking upon the fact that the mother is portrayed as "allmächtig und gottähnlich" (p. 203), Lüttmann concludes that the mother's call to the child to come out of the garden corresponds to God's expulsion of Adam from Eden. Lüttmann points out that the mother is also described as a "mythische Schreckengestalt mit Wolfs- und Schlangenattributen" (p. 203). For Lüttmann this depiction suggests the traumatic nature of the child's experience. However, the depiction of the mother as having "Schlangenattribute" more concretely suggests an identity between the mother and the serpent in the biblical story just as the description of the mother as "allmächtig" implied, for Lüttmann, that her role paralleled that played by God. If the mother is also to be identified with the serpent, then the "Parallelle zu dem biblischen Sündenfall" is the child's heeding of his mother's call.

All the child's efforts to resist his mother's call are futile and the child is overcome with fear for the effect of the call is likened to death: "Ich versuchte oft, mich anders zu nennen, doch wenn der Ruf meines einzigen Namens auf mich zuflog, schreckte ich zusammen, wie eine Harpune schlug er in mich ein, ich konnte ihm nicht entgehen" (pp. 19-20). The garden is life for the child in terms of the creative intimacy through which he experiences his world, and the call of the mother as emphasized in the metaphor of the harpoon is a call to death. The fear of the child of the call from which there is no escape corresponds to the fear of the adult "dass alles gleich zuende sein könne" (p. 19). In the case of the adult the call from his work is the threat of
the cessation of creativity which is likened to death.

The child's retreat to the garden is an attempt to create a world in which he feels at home. The narrator's arrival at his parents' house is defined by him as an intrusion: "Wie ein böser Geist war ich in dieses Heim gekommen, in einer Blechbüchse liegend, von meiner Mutter getragen, empfangen von wilden Kesselschlägen, vom beschwörenden Geschrei meiner Stiefbrüder" (p. 16). As the child's presence in the home is characterized as an intrusion, so the mother's activities in the home are intrusive in the life of her child as when she destroys his stamp collection in order to maintain order. The description of the man shot from the roof of the house, a probable reference to the "Strassenkämpfe" of 1918 or 1919 (Lüttmann, p. 114), reinforces the characterization of the world as threatening to the child.

The link between the child's alienation from the home and his retreat to the garden is summarized by the narrator: "Das Haus bleibt mir fremd, in seinem Innern finde ich mich nicht zurecht, doch den Garten nehme ich an mich ..." (p. 18). Lüttmann describes the child's exile to the garden as furnishing him with a "Schutz- und Schonraum" which is necessary for him "weil das gefängnishafte Haus oder Heim die Selbstverwirklichung nicht erlaubt" (p. 222). The child's retreat into the garden, then, is a response to his alienation from the home, a home which Lüttmann characterizes as "das gefängnishafte Haus" and which may be characterized as alienating in the sense that the narrator feels himself to be an intruder while at the same time perceiving his family as intrusive in his life and the world as threatening.
If the garden represents the possibility of fulfillment for the child in terms of the intimacy he experiences there with his environment, then the alienation of the child from himself occurs when he heeds his mother's call. Otto Best refers to the child's acceptance of his name in answering the call as "Namensgebung als erste Vergewaltigung." Of more importance than Best's emphasis upon an identity imposed upon the child as an act of violence is the manner in which the child's heeding of the call renders him an accomplice to this act. As the child in his complicity is diminished in stature the world looms proportionately larger. It is this experience of the world that remains with the narrator as an adult and which is expressed by the narrator in the following manner:

Flüstern ich mich an mit meinem eigenen Namen, und erschrecke mich damit, es ist als käme der Name weit von aussen her auf mich zu, aus der Zeit in der ich noch formlos war. Und dann fühle ich die rasende, ohnmächtige Wut, das Antoben gegen etwas Unangreifbares, gegen etwas unendlich Überlegenes, und dann wird mein Gestammel von einer unsichtbaren Hand erstickt. Da ist das Gesicht meiner Mutter. (p. 20)

The narrator is sufficiently alienated from himself that he no longer regards his own name as belonging to him, as part of himself. With the narrator's recollection of his mother's call to him from the garden the alienation of the narrator from himself is revealed as an internalization of a childhood experience. The weakness of the self experienced by the child in heeding his mother's call is projected into adulthood as impotence before an omnipotent world which suffocates the self.

A better understanding of the child's complicity involved in
answering his mother's call may be reached through an examination of the characterization of the garden as a "selbstgewähltes Exil" (p. 18). Best points out the implications of the narrator's designation of the garden, not as a "Zuflucht," but as an "Exil," an "Ort der Verbannung": "Dieses Bewusstsein, ausgeschlossen, anders zu sein, und zugleich in eine Rolle, eine fremdbestimmte Norm gezwungen zu werden, von welcher der Name ein Teil ist, lässt ihn seinen Namen ignorieren, sich taub stellen" (pp. 26-27). I would suggest that in the use of the term "refuge" the emphasis is on the qualities of the place; in the term "exile" the emphasis is on the fact that one's presence in that place is determined by one's relationship to the homeland. Best's reference to "eine fremdbestimmte Norm" suggests the degree to which the child's being in the garden is dependent upon the mother. However, as the term "Exil" implies the power of the home, so the characterization of the exile as "selbstgewähltes" implies the power of an autonomous self. While the power of the home is overtly recognized when the child heeds his mother's call, the child's answering of the call involves a betrayal of the autonomous self. This betrayal requires the complicity of the child and is thus self-betrayal.

The tension of dependency and autonomy reflected in the designation of the garden as a "selbstgewähltes Exil" is related to what Hilton terms the "polar idea" found in Weiss's work. Hilton elaborates upon this "polar idea" in the following:

The polar idea of light and darkness, life and death,
the sense of belonging and not-belonging, the desire for freedom and the fear of it, finds ample expression in the parent-child relationship, in the symbol of the womb, in the enchanted dream of escape, of isolation (the fairground scene in Abschied von den Eltern): yet in each instance at the very moment of feeling liberty there is the accompanying "burdensome heaviness of being sucked down into the vortex." From the momentary ecstatic feeling of weightlessness suspended aloft above the fairground he plunges down back into the crowd below; from fleeting thoughts of death he is jerked back to the actualities of his position within the stony womb of the city that was pulsating life. (p. 68)

In the fairground scene to which Hilton refers, the narrator describes the freedom he experienced as a child on one of the rides, "Nur einen kurzen Augenblick hielt sich der Wagen in der Schwebe, ehe er in die Tiefe kippte, doch dieser Augenblick genügte, um mich ein ekstatisches Gefühl von Freiheit erleben zu lassen" (p. 28). The freedom in isolation experienced by the child in the fairground is comparable to the autonomy in exile experienced by the child in the garden: the mother's call to the child to come out of the garden is the end of the ride.

Hilton's second reference to Abschied von den Eltern is to the suicide witnessed by the narrator in Prague. The narrator describes the body as it fell to the street as "der dunkle Fetzen" which lies "erstarrt, wie ein Embryo in der grossen Gebärmutter aus Stein" (p. 159). Imagining himself as the victim in a replay of the suicide, the narrator views death as an alien force which both seizes him and entices him: "undenkbar war dieser Sprung, wenn nicht der Tod zur Wollust geworden wäre" (p. 161). The image of the womb is repeated in the second description in which he portrays himself as lying "zerschlagen
in der steinernen Gebärmutter der Stadt" (p. 161), The initial leap, however, is described by the narrator in similar terms as his feeling in the garden as a child: "Im allerersten Intervall nach dem Grenzpunkt, von dem aus keine Rückkehr mehr möglich war, flog ich wie im Traum, mir war, als könne ich aufwärts fliegen, leicht wie ein Vogel, ich würde steigen und steigen, mit ausgebreiteten Armen . . . " (pp. 160-161). In this sense, the stony womb of the city is the source of death, not "pulsating life," and it is from fleeting thoughts of life that the narrator is brought back to an awareness of his position. Lüttmann analyses the narrator's description of the suicide in terms of the Freudian postulates of a "Todes- und Liebestrieb" (see p. 163). Specifically in regard to the text, without recourse to Freud, the image of the stony womb as death may be viewed as related to the portrayal of the mother's call to her child to come out of the garden as a call to the death in life which the home represents for the narrator.

The call of the mother receives its counterpart in the narrative with the narrator's recollection of his anticipation of his own calling. He describes how a chance observation of a Fassadenkletterer presents him with a new sense of possibility for the future, with the "Vorahnung einer Berufung" (p. 25). This experience forms the basis for the narrator's "Sehnsucht nach einer selbstständigen Leistung" (p. 25). In relating his feelings while watching the Fassadenkletterer the narrator stresses that he himself felt the "Schwäche im Magen und in den Kniekehlen, und einen Kitzel in den Fusssohlen" and thus became
The fear faced by the Fassadenkletterer is reminiscent of the fear faced by the narrator whenever he is at work, "dass alles gleich zuende sein könne" (p. 19). The compulsion exercised by fear as "der eigentliche Anlass zu dieser Leistung" is comparable to the function of death as an alien force in the case of the suicide. However, in the case of the Fassadenkletterer, it is controlled flight as opposed to the flight of the suicidal leap. Günter Dallmann in his review of Abschied considers the plight of the Fassadenkletterer to be symbolic of that of the artist: "der von Hemmnissen befreite Künstler besiegt alle Versuchung, das Gleichgewicht zu verlieren." It is clear both from the references to the narrator's paintings and writings in the text itself and from the autobiographical elements of the narrative (see Lüttmann, pp. 113-16) that the vocation of the narrator is that of artist. Thus, I would suggest that the work which the narrator defines as "das Verstecktsein mit mir selbst" (p. 19) is his art. The Fassadenkletterer maintains his balance through self-control; the concern of the narrator is with self-possession. Noteworthy in the narrator's first recollection was the violence to which the child is a victim and the adult a victim, also. Striking in the narrator's recollection of his first exile and of his mother's call is the manner in which the weakness of the child felt in his inability to resist responding to his mother's call is first internalized by the child and is then externalized
by the adult in his alienation from himself and from the world, an alienation which posits the world as an alien force which threatens the "life" of the self.

Concerning the narrator's recollections of scenes from his childhood and adolescence, Lüttmann remarks upon the fact that the authenticity of the recollections themselves are never brought into question. According to Lüttmann, the narrator's attitude toward his past consists of an "Ordnen von etwas ursprünglich Ungeordnetem" (p. 119). While admitting that he is recalling events which occurred several decades before, the narrator states, "ich kann sie[his childhood] jetzt mit durchdachten Worten schildern, ich kann sie zergliedern und vor mir ausbreiten, doch als ich sie erlebte, da gab es kein Durchdenken und kein Zergliedern, da gab es keine überblickende Vernunft" (p. 33). Thus, the narrator has gained a certain detachment from the events of his childhood which allows him to describe and to organize them. For Lüttmann, the assumption implicit in the narrator's attitude toward the events of his childhood is that the past is directly accessible to him, that is, that the narrator's past is identical with his memory of it. It is this assumption which Lüttmann considers questionable—"kaum gerechtfertigt" (p. 119).

In his explication of the text Lüttmann utilizes two categories to differentiate elements in the narrator's recollections involved in the reenactment of emotions felt in the past from elements in the recollections which reflect a rational ordering of past experience. Lüttmann terms these two
categories "das Affektive" and "das Rationale." By way of
illustration Lüttmann refers to the following description in
the text of the narrator's flight from school: "Doch vorm Schultor
floh ich zurück . . . ich kann es jetzt schildern, ich kann es
jetzt überblicken, es war der erste Schultag, es war der Anfang,
es war der Anfang der Panik, ich wollte mich nicht fangen lassen
. . . " (p, 34). Lüttmann remarks, "Diese Reihe kurzer Hauptsätze
versucht die panikhafte Atemlosigkeit des Kindheitserlebnisses
unmittelbar zur Anschauung zu bringen (p. 121). Nonetheless, as
Lüttmann observes, the narrator is able to order the event so
that "Das Affektive und das Rationale verbinden sich hier; und
dies gilt—in einem jeweils anderen 'Mischungsverhältnis'—für
alle Teile des Abschieds" (pp. 121-22). In an earlier reference
to the narrator's rational ordering of his experiences, Lüttmann
observes the following: "Infolge der zeitlichen Distanz hat sich
der Erzähler, pointiert gesprochen, vom Objekt des Geschehens zum
verstehenden Subjekt der Ereignisse gewandelt" (p. 119). The
"'Mischungsverhältnis'" of emotional and rational elements suggests,
although Lüttmann himself does not draw this implication, that
because the narrator is still subject to the threat of being the
object of past experiences the narrator's rational ordering of
these experiences represents an attempt to meet this threat by
reconstituting the past in order to control the present.

In a further consideration of the text, Lüttmann observes
that the recollections of the narrator are set forth in
chronological order with logical transitions between
recollections. Lüttmann remarks, "Diese Folge von Erinnerungen
wird aber keineswegs durch jene spontan-assoziative
Sprunghaftigkeit bestimmt, die zumeist für den inneren Monolog
charakteristisch ist" (p. 132). The dominant form of the
narrative, according to Lüttmann, is the scene. The scene, as
Lüttmann understands it, is meant to be representative so that
"die einmalige Szene transparent wird für das mehrfach sich
Abspielende" (p. 134). Lüttmann views the characters in the
narrative, other than the narrator, as representative types
displaying what Lüttmann refers to as a certain "Funktionalität."
Lüttmann explains what he means by "Funktionalität" in reference
to the portrayal of the character Margit. As Lüttmann points out,
the narrator does not give an adequate description of the appearance
or personality of Margit, "obwohl das Mädchen eine sehr wesentliche
Rolle in dessen[ the narrator's ]Entwicklung spielt," because such
a description would be superfluous in light of the purely physical
relationship between Margit and the narrator (p. 185). The
chronological ordering of the recollections and the portrayal of
other characters in terms of the role they play in the narrator's
development seem to me to imply that the focus of the narrator
is the description of a developmental process in which the discrete
events recollected are relevant only as they symbolize elements
within that process.

As is implied in Lüttmann's analysis of the
"'Mischungsverhältnis'" of the "Afektive" and "Rationale," the
recollections of the narrator are themselves occasioned by the
persistence of feelings originating in the past into the present,
experiences which Lüttmann refers to as not "'bewältigt.'" Thus,
Lüttmann speaks of the recollections as "Traumata." For Lüttmann, the mother's call to the child from the garden constitutes such a trauma: "Diese abrupte Beendigung seines Glückzustandes hat traumatischen Charakter; das beweist nicht zuletzt die bewusst erfahrene psychische Fortwirkung dieses Kindheitserlebnisses bis in das Erwachsenenalter des Erzählers hinein" (p. 122). Lüttmann then characterizes the entire text in this manner:

Bedenkt man, dass—wovon später noch gesprochen werden soll—diese Kindheit massgeblich durch traumatische Erfahrungen bestimmt wird, so darf man wohl die Behauptung wagen, dass die affektive Gebundenheit des Erzählers an seine Vergangenheit massgeblich durch diese Traumata bedingt ist, die nie "bewältigt" wurden, so wie die Gesamtheit der Erlebnisse, die im Abschied dargestellt werden, offenbar nicht "bewältigt" worden ist. Insofern kann die Tatsache, dass der Erzähler ausführlich von seiner Vergangenheit spricht, nachdem er durch den Tod der Eltern die Freiheit dazu erlangt hat, als eine Art Autotherapie, als eine Möglichkeit zur Selbstheilung verstanden werden. (pp. 122-23)

Since a trauma is by definition any emotional experience or shock which has a lasting psychic effect, Lüttmann's explanation of trauma in terms of the narrator's childhood experience of his mother's call is essentially circular. In defining the narrator's experiences as "Traumata," Lüttmann focuses on these experiences as discrete events having a lasting effect on the life of the narrator. However, Lüttmann's qualification of these experiences as not "'bewältigt'"—and according to Lüttmann the fact that these experiences are not "'bewältigt'" constitutes the reason for the narrator's record of his recollections of these experiences—suggests that the significance of these events lies with the process through which they continue to exert this effect.
Of interest, then, is not so much that the narrator "ausführlich von seiner Vergangenheit spricht" but rather the process whereby the recollection of the past becomes an expression of the present.

In this sense Lüttmann's original question regarding the authenticity of the recollections themselves is misleading: the question presupposes a past made up of discrete events sufficiently differentiated from the present that the present may provide a frame of reference by which the events of the past may be authenticated. As is clear from Lüttmann's characterization of the past for the narrator as not "'bewältigt,'" adulthood for the narrator is so marked by the persistence of experiences from childhood that no clear separation between childhood and adulthood exists for him. Lüttmann's question regarding the authenticity of the narrator's recollections is also extraneous to the text because the text is solely the narration of the narrator's recollections and as such these recollections form the only consistent happening. In Hilton's words, Abschied von den Eltern, like Weiss's other narratives, is "one long monologue in effect" (p. 28).

Otto Best, in his consideration of the text, emphasizes the self-preoccupation of the narrator's recollections: "Ein Mensch gibt Rechenschaft über die widersprüchliche Natur, die er in sich entdeckte, mit der er sich immer wieder auseinandersetzt und die ihm, zurückblickend, für Milieu und Epoche repräsentativ erscheint" (p. 25). Its authenticity, then, for Best consists of the "Wahrhaftigkeit subjektiver Rückhaltlosigkeit" (p. 25). Best classifies the novel as "Bekenntnisliteratur" in its
"Verzicht auf den Versuch, die Vergangenheit in toto zu rekonstruieren, das Bild von Kindheit, Jugend und frühem Mannesalter 'objektiv' wiederzugeben ..." (p. 25). Best elucidates further: "Im Bekenntnis wird Gestalt, was für den Erzähler als Erwachsenen noch relevant, was in seiner Gegenwart als Vergangenheit lebendig ist, prägend und geprägt" (p. 25). Best speaks of Abschied von den Eltern as "Selbstanalyse mit Beichte" (p. 25). I would agree with Best in regard to his conclusion that the narrative gives form to that which survives from childhood to adulthood. However, the designation of the narrative as "Selbstanalyse mit Beichte" in its emphasis upon the narrative as subjective analysis ignores the degree to which the narrative is as much concerned with the manner in which the objective world determines the limits and nature of the subjective state. This disagreement may be explained by reference to Best's analysis of the narrator's recollections of his experiences at school.

Best concludes regarding the narrator's account of his school experience: "Mit dem ersten Schultag steigt sich die Furcht zur Panik, die in Bildern der Obsession Gesicht gewinnt" (p. 27). The world through which the child must pass on the way to school is depicted by the narrator as menacing; it is filled with fighting birds, men with knives and scar-like faces, and various tormented creatures (see pp. 36-37). Best identifies the coachman who appears in this scene with the figure of the Kutscher who, "geheimnisvoll und drohend," dominates the world portrayed in Weiss's Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers.
(p. 27). Best concludes, "Fremdheit, Angst, Bedrohung ergänzen einander, die Bilder der Innenwelt erfahren keine Erlösung in den Ereignissen der Aussenwelt, beide potenzieren und spiegeln einander" (p. 27). According to Best's summary of the narrator's school experience, the schoolroom is transformed into a "Folterkammer" (p. 27). The focus of the narrator's account of the child's walk to school is upon the expectations of the child which, as Best points out, are reflected in the child's perceptions of his surroundings. According to Best's conclusion regarding the manner in which the perceptual state of the narrator and the events of the world reinforce one another, the classroom would become a torture chamber only because it is there that the subjective expectations of the child are met and his panic thereby rendered justifiable. However, Best omits from his discussion any consideration of the classroom itself. The effect of such an omission is to imply that for Best the events of the world are themselves reducible to an examination of the subjective state of the narrator.

It is clear from the narrator's description of his running away from school on the first day that in this case it is his response to rather than his awareness of the threatening nature of the situation which differentiates him from the other children. The narrator recalls that all the children carry a "Tüte" for the first day of school and "die Furcht vor der Schule ist klebrig und süß vom Geschmack der Himbeerbonbons" (p. 34). The narrator runs away from school and his mother brings him back to the classroom late "und der Lehrer öffnete die Tür von
innen, und drinnen . . . waren alle zur Gemeinschaft zusammengeschlossen und ich war der Zuspätgekommene" (p. 35). The child's attempt to run away from school parallels his earlier attempts to escape his mother in the summerhouse except that in this case escape is his objective. The narrator describes his temporary refuge and states, "und allmählich beruhigte sich mein Atem und ich fühle mich sicher, und eine Weile bin ich frei und losgelöst von allen Bedrohungen . . . " (p. 34). As indicated in the account of the ritual of the "Tüte," all the children are in need of consolation. Common to all the children is their fear of the school, and as is implied by the narrator's description of himself as an outsider, "der Zuspätgekommene" in contrast to the "Gemeinschaft" within, the source of this "Gemeinschaft" formed by the other children is the repression of their fear. The narrator, in his inability to repress his fears, serves as a threat to this community and by so doing serves as a release for the community's anxieties. The narrator notes his role when he remarks, "Dass alle über mich lachten bewies, dass ich komisch war, und so grinste ich auch, und dies, dass ich andere erheitern konnte, war eine gute Gabe" (p. 37). His threat to the community is indicated by the mutual participation of teacher and students in his punishment: "Die Klasse war eine einzige, dicke, blutdürstige Stille" (p. 38). The punishment (like many of the punitive rituals which pervade the world of Kafka's writings) is construed to require the cooperation of the victim. The narrator describes his punishment as a public procedure in the course of which he is required to hold out his hand to be beaten. The
attempts of the narrator to withdraw his hand during this punishment are reminiscent of his attempts to ignore his mother's call in the garden ("sich taub stellen"). The narrator emphasizes the significance of this experience for his school years: "Dies war es, was ich in der Schule lernte, wie man die Hand unter den Rohrstock des Lehrers hielt" (p. 38).

Lüttmann comments on the adversary nature of the relationship between the narrator and his classmates in the narrator's description of himself as "der Zuspätgekommene": "Wiederum sind die Rollen antagonistischer Art: hier die Gemeinschaft und dort der Aussenseiter" (p. 207). Neglected in Lüttmann's analysis, however, is an adequate explanation for the particular punishment chosen. If seen as a ritual act, this punishment, in order to be effective, requires that the victim through some form of "admission" assure the community that its finding of "guilt" is objective. As an active participant, the victim of the punishment thereby accepts this objective judgment and demonstrates that he has internalized not an adversary relationship but a relationship in which the individual and the community reciprocate. This requires that this individual has sufficiently internalized the sentiments of the community and its prescribed ritual forms. Without such an "admission" (the holding out of one's hand) the relationship would simply be an adversary one and Lüttmann's analysis would be correct.

In heeding his mother's call to come out of the garden the child responds to his own dependency on the mother. The reciprocation of the child with the mother involves a betrayal
of an independent life the child has found in the garden. Similarly, in becoming an active participant in his own punishment, the child at school responds to the threat of physical force through which his dependency upon the community is expressed. Lüttmann assumes that the relationship between this community and the narrator is an adversary one. The role played by the narrator as a threat to the community does presuppose his alienation from that community. It also suggests that the community is vulnerable and that the narrator has the capacity to withstand its rejection of him. Thus, the punishment involves both a denial of the community's vulnerability and the narrator's integrity: he is forced to defer to a ritual in which he is demeaned and his selfhood symbolically destroyed. A community or society is alienating to the degree that it must utilize force to elicit the obedience of its members. By deferring to its wishes and offering himself up for punishment, the narrator is forced to act as if that community were not alienating, as if the community were doing his bidding and acting on his behalf. For the narrator to act in this way is thus to lie not only about the nature of the community but also about its relationship to its members. Thus, the community with which the narrator is reunited is alienating. It is this alienation which informs its sentiments and ritual acts and which is consequently internalized by the narrator in his acceptance of its judgment when he holds out his hand to be punished. The nature of this ritual act of punishment may be further clarified by a reference to another scene in _Abschied von den Eltern_, which involves the father's punishment of his son.
The father's actions in this scene are described by the narrator as follows:

Endlich kam er ins Zimmer gestürzt, lief auf mich zu, packte mich, und legte mich über sein Knie. Da er nicht stark war, taten seine Schläge nicht weh. Qualvoll bis zum Brechreiz war nur die demütigende Gemeinschaft in der wir uns befanden. Er auf mich einschlagend, ich jammernd, lagen wir in einer schreckhaften Umarmung übereinander. Ich schrie um Verzeihung und er schrie unzusammenhängende Worte, und weder wusste er, warum er mich schlug, noch wusste ich, warum ich geschlagen wurde, es war eine Ritualhandlung, von unbekannten höheren Mächten aufgedrängt. (p. 105-06)

The union of the father with his son, "die demütigende Gemeinschaft," prefigures the reconciliation of the family after the child has been punished. The aftermath of the punishment consists of the consoling of the father for having fulfilled his obligation and the reuniting of father, mother and child as part of "der kranke Familienfrieden" (p. 106). As in the case of the child's punishment at school through which he is reconciled with an alienating community, the son through his participation in his punishment is reunited with a family which is totally alienating. The alienation of father and son from the physical affection they feel toward each other is alluded to by the narrator in the implied eroticism of the ritual act in which they are depicted "in einer schreckhaften Umarmung." The punishment itself is described as an imposition upon the participants by an outside force. The father's exhaustion and need for consolation emphasizes his dependency on the mother. The narrator states that the father's involvement occurs at the behest of the mother:

"Die Beziehung in die mein Vater im Heim zu mir trat war eine
erzwungene. Auf das Drängen der Mutter hin machte er sich zuweilen zu einer züchtigenden Instanz, die seinem zurückhaltenden Wesen nicht entsprach" (pp. 104-05). As the father's assumption of the role of disciplinarian is described as physically exhausting, so his role as provider for the family is depicted as equally taxing. In this role the father is dependent upon the factory, a dependency which is particularly apparent when the family is in exile. The narrator describes one such incident when his father asks the narrator to accompany him to a business appointment. While at his father's office, the narrator becomes aware of the vulnerability of his father whose position in the firm is actually that of a subordinate (see pp. 112-13). The humiliation the father suffers in this role is expressed in the narrator's description of his father's reception at the business appointment: "Mit seiner Hand beklopfte er meinen Vater, wie man ein Pferd beklopft, leitete ihn an einen Tisch, wie an eine Krippe, half ihm, die Mustertasche zu entleeren" (p. 114). The father is referred to as being treated like a "beast of burden" and is thus perceived as a victim of the role he assumes. The narrator describes the similar treatment of himself and his co-workers in a London store:

schlugen wir uns durch die Mauern der Fahrzeuge, fochten Stierkämpfe aus mit den Automobilen, hieben mit den Fäusten auf die brummenden metallischen Tiere ein, warfen uns in das Krachen und Kreiseln der Futterstellen, frassen Kartoffeln in abgestandenem Fett, Bohnen und Stücke von faserigem Speck. Enge unterm Kragen, Würgen im Magen. (pp. 121-22)

As the store is viewed from the perspective of the lavatory, so the employees are seen as reducible to their alimentary functions. The world outside the store is viewed as an extension of the store: the "Stempeluhr, deren Zähne klingelnd in unsre Karten hackten" corresponds to "die brummenden metallischen Tiere," which confront the workers with a corresponding hostility. As the workers are reduced to their physical functions, the world is reduced to its mechanical functions. Both workers and machines are characterized as animals and thus share equal status in the world. Lüttmann points out the comic elements of this scene in the use of "klanglichte Elemente (Lautmalerei, Alliteration, Assonanz und Reim)" and also in the "Tiermetaphorik" and comes to the following conclusion: "So werden die sozial depravierten Warenhausangestellten als komische Opfer ihrer Lebensbedingungen vorgeführt" (p. 154). The victimization of the workers to which Lüttmann refers parallels the scene in which the father is portrayed as a victim of the role he assumes. In the case of the father the comic elements are tempered by the implied sympathy of the narrator with the victim.

The mother's activities are elsewhere in Abschied von den Eltern attributed to a combination of heritage and her own ingenuity. The narrator gives an account of the strictness of the mother's upbringing: her father used to crack a whip over his
daughters' heads at mealtime to insure that they sat up properly. The mother expresses her approval of such a disciplined childhood and comments, "sie hat mich stark gemacht" (p. 45). The narrator also suggests that his mother's renunciation of her theatrical career for the security of the home contributed to her difficulties: "Lag nicht der Grund ihrer späteren Unausgeglichenheit darin, dass sie sich ihrem eigentlichen Wirkungsgebiet entzogen hatte" (p. 46). The extent of the investment she has made in her son is clear in her admonishment to him: "Du darfst mir keine Schande machen, sagte sie. Ich leide schlaflose Nächte deinetwegen, ich bin verantwortlich für dich, wenn du nichts kannst, dann fällt das auf mich zurück, leben heisst arbeiten . . . "(pp. 66-67). As in the case of her admonishments to her son to finish his work the mother's activities are generally intrusive in his life. The justification for her intrusiveness usually involves questions of hygiene or, as in the case of her admonishments cited here, conventional moral concerns. As in the instance of the father's exhaustion during his punishment of his son, the mother's dread of impending collapse is indicative of the degree to which she is also alienated from herself and her actions. The narrator refers to this aspect of his mother's life as "die Furcht vorm Verstummen und Erlahmen" from which she has always suffered and which she has always resisted. It is this fear "die sie herrschsüchtig und zornig machte, und die sie zuweilen überwältigte mit jähnen Ohnmachtsanfällen" and which causes her to collapse, "wie von einem furchtbaren Hieb getroffen" (p. 100). The violence to which
the mother feels herself subject is apparent in the narrator's account of one of her dreams. In the dream she is led by her mother into a room in which each person confronts an eagle:

"Jeder im Raum eingeschlossene Mensch wurde zu ihm [the eagle] geführt und der Adler fuhr ganz langsam mit seiner Kralle in dessen Mund und riss ihm die Zunge heraus. Auch ich wurde hin geführt. Mit einem lauten Schrei bin ich aufgewacht" (pp, 100-01).

The mother is so alienated from herself that she perceives her own body as under siege by a powerful outside force. It is evident from her dream that the threat represented by the eagle—the loss of a tongue, the human attribute of speech, of individuation—is comparable to the loss of autonomous self experienced by her son when he is called from the garden. Both become victims of forces beyond their control. Similarly, the participants of the "Ritualhandlung" of the son's punishment are revealed to be victims. The father and mother, who might otherwise be assumed to be in control since they are the perpetrators of the punishment, are themselves revealed to be dominated by a force beyond themselves. Inherent in the nature of the ritual of punishment and the "Gemeinschaft" of the father, mother and son occasioned through the enactment of this ritual is the suggestion that it is through the projection of their mutual alienation that the family derives its identity.

The narrator himself comments on the degree to which he has internalized the alienation of his parents: "Und die Versperrtheit habe ich in mir übernommen. In mir übernommen habe ich das Missverständnis meiner Eltern. Die Befangenheit meiner Eltern
wurde zu meiner eigenen Befangenheit. Ihre Stimmen leben in mir" (p. 98). The influence of the family is compounded through its alliance with other social institutions which the narrator confronts. The narrator indicates in the following the complicity of the mother and the school:

Da war ich wieder der missglückte Schüler, der eingesperrt im Zimmer sass, und das warme, brodelnde Leben draussen war unerreichbar. Da sass meine Mutter neben mir und verhörte mich, und ich konnte nichts. Schwein heisst pig, pig kommt von picken, pick, pick, und sie umfasste meinen Nacken und drückte meine Nase ins Vokabelheft, pick, pick, pick, so wirst du dirs wohl merken. (p. 99)

The tortuous repetition of the word "pick" is a ritual of punishment. The alliance between the mother and those forces in the world which the narrator perceives as threatening to him is most clearly evident when the narrator, upon returning home to Sweden, discovers that his mother has destroyed all his paintings to save their home. The narrator explains that his mother has taken an ax to all his paintings as a "Schutzmassnahme" since she feared that the paintings would cause problems at the border: "Sie hatte das Heim gerettet, die Bilder, Ausdruck einer Krankheit, mussten geopfert werden" (p. 164). The implication is that the mother was able to anticipate the objections of the custom officials to her son's paintings because in fact the objections were her own. Similarly, the father's suggestion that the son leave school in order to go to work and enter into the "Realität des Daseins" invokes for the narrator the sense of a larger conspiracy between his father, the school and the factory: "Die Drohung, hinaus ins Leben treten zu müssen, war nur eine Fortsetzung der langen Wanderung durch Klassenräume und hallende
Korridore, dort wurden wir ja vorbereitet, zu Tüchtigkeit und Verantwortung, wie es hiess, von Lehrern, deren Geist erloschen war" (p. 69). There are occasions, however, when the world of his parents is challenged by a far different world. One such occasion involves the narrator's experience of Fritz W., a friend of the family.

The narrator comes home one day from school to report that he is not to be promoted. Fritz W. is visiting with the narrator's parents. The narrator humorously relates his perceptions of the impending disaster. He tries to delay returning home but he states that he realizes he finally has to go home "weil ich nicht die Kühnheit hatte, mich als Schiffsjunge nach Amerika anheuern zu lassen" (p. 58). When he does arrive home, he reports that his father perceives his discomfort and looks at him "als sehe er alles Unheil der Welt hinter mir aufgetürmt" (p. 59). Fritz W. is able to avert the disaster: "Nicht versetzt, genau wie ich, rief er, ich bin viermal sitzen geblieben, alle begabten Männer sind in der Schule sitzen geblieben" (p. 59). This response fortifies the son's position and disarms the parents since they can no longer charge their son with his failure without implicating the friend whose success they so admire. Fritz W. assumes responsibility for the narrator's not being promoted by reassuring him that failure is a common experience rather than an experience which isolates and alienates him from others. Fritz W. then recasts the experience through an appeal to the very elements of the parents' world which imposed judgment on the narrator. The narrator is released from what he experienced as an all-inclusive
world that trapped him and judged him deficient. He is released because he sees an ordering of the universe which allows him freedom to participate in the world as a successful actor rather than as a victim.

The other incident involving Fritz W. occurs when the narrator's family visits Fritz W.'s family. Fritz W.'s children are running around naked in the grass while the narrator is dressed up in his best clothing. Fritz W. undresses the narrator and the narrator experiences for the only time in his childhood "eine Ahnung von körperlicher Freiheit" (p. 57). The clothing worn by the narrator symbolizes the aspects of his parents' world which prevent him from experiencing what the narrator elsewhere terms "das warme, brodelnde Leben" (p. 99).

The narrator comments on the significance of these two incidents involving Fritz W.:

Diese beiden Begegnungen mit Fritz W waren die Glanzstunden meiner Kindheit, sie zeigen mir, wie anders mein Leben, unter anderen Bedingungen, hätte verlaufen können, und sie zeigen mir den Schatz von unverbrauchter Freude, der in mir war, und der immer noch in mir liegt, unter Geschwüren und Verfilzungen. (p. 59)

At his parents' death the narrator defines his mourning in regard to "dem Versäumten, das meine Kindheit und Jugend mit gähnender Leere umgeben hatte" (p. 7). His experiences with Fritz W. and attendant discovery of the "Schatz von unverbrauchter Freude, der in mir war" suggest that the possibility of a fulfilled childhood for the narrator is itself limited by the constraints of the world of his parents as opposed to the challenges to that world presented by Fritz W. The narrator's reference to the
"Schatz von unverbrauchter Freude . . . der immer noch in mir liegt" emphasizes the continuation of the narrator's diminished capacity for growth due to the constraints of the world of his parents. The development of the self is thus inextricably linked to the events of the world. Moreover, the implication of the narrator's concluding observation concerning his experiences with Fritz W. is that self-discovery for the narrator lies in the process of reconstructing the connections between self and world. As mentioned in my discussion of Best's analysis of the narrator's school experience, Best's consideration of the text, although it assumes a connection between the narrator's subjective state and the events of the world, concentrates upon the narrative as a subjective analysis and thus ignores this process of reconstruction entirely.

The narrator's experience with Fritz W. challenged the world of his parents. The narrator turns to books for further evidence that the configuration of the world is far different from what he has been led to believe by his parents and the school. The narrator comments upon his reading: "In den Büchern trat mir das Leben entgegen, das die Schule vor mir verborgen hatte. In den Büchern zeigte sich mir eine andere Realität des Lebens als die, in die meine Eltern und Lehrer mich pressen wollten" (p. 70). That the actual configuration of this world is a closely guarded secret is evident by the impediments placed between the narrator and its discovery. The narrator must search through his parents' library for books and then, since he is not allowed to read them, his "Lektüre fand unter der Bettdecke statt,
beim Schein der Taschenlampe, oder im Klossett, oder unter der Tarnung von Schulbüchern" (p. 70). Reading is not a passive experience for the narrator. In books he is able to find support to help him reconstruct the world. The narrator describes his reading activity: "Die Stimmen der Bücher forderten mein Mit tun, die Stimmen der Bücher forderten, dass ich mich öffnete und auf mich selbst besann" (p. 70). The narrator's play during his periods of exile to the attic of his parents' home alternates between fantasies of exploratory expeditions and games of war (see pp. 50-51) and thus reflects his own ambivalences about freedom. These ambivalences are also reflected in his choice of reading material. In his reading the narrator is able to explore his sensory impressions of the world: "Was ich behielt lag weniger auf dem Gebiet der allgemeinen Bildung als auf dem Gebiet der Empfindungen . . . " (pp. 71-72). He also finds himself in a world which is governed by the logic of "undurchschaubaren Impulsen" (p. 72) and relates his reading material to his games in the attic: "Die Bilder die ich in der Bibel fand, alle diese Bilder von Verfolgungen und Torturen . . . bildeten die Vorbereitungen zu neuen Visionen, die sich mit meinen zerstörischen Spielen vermengten" (pp. 78-79). The narrator expresses his relief at discovering through his reading that he is less isolated than he supposed: "Dies alles im Bild zu sehen erleichterte mich, ein Teil des inneren Druckes war nach aussen gezaubert worden" (p. 74). The relief felt by the narrator lies in having the dangers to which he feels vulnerable objectified: "Es war besser, ganz nah vor der Gefahr zu stehen und ihr in die
Augen zu blicken, es war besser, zu sehen, dass es sie wirklich gab, als qualvoll allein im Dunkeln zu liegen und sie nur zu ahnen" (pp. 74-75). Literature involves the use of language in all its functions. It involves language as a locutionary act in which meaning is derived through reference to a common world. In his reading the narrator begins to understand himself as part of this common world and is thus less isolated than he had previously supposed himself to be. Language is also illocutionary or has a force of utterance and thus assumes a common world of feelings. It is from this world that the narrator is able to derive emotional support. Literature provides him with a common basis for feelings which would otherwise be presumed to be private and unsharable. Language is also perlocutionary in that it is able to substantiate meanings and feelings as it expresses them. Thus, the dangers and vulnerabilities which the narrator had previously considered to be private and perceived as remote and inaccessible become real components of a common world of shared feelings. To read literature is to participate in a ritual act of language. It is an act which is non-alienating to the extent that it involves the reader in a world beyond the self from which he is able to derive personal meaning. Thus, reading allows the narrator to reconstruct a relationship between himself and the world. The narrator is able to recognize himself in a world which reflects his own anxieties and ambivalences.

The narrator emphasizes that the reconstruction of a relationship between himself and the world is a developmental
process in that the dialogue ("die Zwiesprach") with the outside world which takes place through his reading becomes increasingly more focused and selective ("bestimmter und eindringlicher") so that he is able to conclude, "Alle Stadien meiner Entwicklung hatten ihre Bücher" (pp. 72-73). This process involves a growth in self-consciousness. The narrator comments on the criterion for his reading selections: "Doch je mehr ich meiner selbst bewusst wurde, und je weniger ich vor mir selbst zurückschreckte, desto stärker wurde meine Forderung, dass die Stimme des Buches unverstellt zu mir spräche und nichts vor mir verbarg" (p. 71). In mentioning some of the books selected, i.e. Die Erniedrigten und Beleidigten and Inferno, the narrator explains the motive for his reading: "Es war etwas Magisches in diesen Titeln, sie trafen mich ins Herz. Beim Lesen war das Tasten und Suchen, das ich vor der Tür mit den roten und den blauen Fensterscheiben, und oben auf dem Dachboden, empfunden hatte, herangereift" (p. 81).

The narrator's reference to the "Tasten und Suchen, das ich vor der Tür mit den roten und den blauen Fensterscheiben . . . empfunden hatte" is to the view onto the garden. He mentions this view as one of the places where the process of growth in self-consciousness began for him, where "ich aus mythologischem Dunkel zum ersten Bewusstsein erwachte" (p. 15). The garden is the narrator's first exile, in which he experiences both his autonomy and his dependence upon the mother. The "Dachboden" is also referred to as a place of exile by the narrator: "Mein Exil, das ich in der Gartenlaube gefunden hatte, setzte sich auf
diesem Dachboden fort" (p. 43). In the attic the narrator searches through trunks and old papers to find out more about his parents. He relates this search to his attempts to listen in to his parents' conversations at night and characterizes these efforts to penetrate the world of his parents as a "Tasten und Suchen" (p. 48). His play in the attic reflects his joy at making discoveries about his world: "Nach den grossen Schlachten . . . führte ich kleinere Expeditionen aus, an denen nur ein paar bevorzugte Figuren teilnahmen, diese Expeditionen standen unter dem Zeichen einer Erleichterung und Entdeckungslust" (p. 50). The narrator's play in the attic also reflects a dread of the self that he discovers there in that these "exploratory expeditions" are always followed by a withdrawal to his imaginary field of battle: "Hoch oben über unserm Heim breitete ich Tod und Zerstörung um mich aus. Etwas Unfassbares hatte sich in mir angebahnt. Ich suchte nach Befreiung" (p. 51).

The child's dread of himself is expressed in the narrator's remark years later upon visiting his former home that he feels his childhood "wie ein dumpf schmerzendes Geschwür in mir" (p. 30). The narrator recalls his association with Friederle, who, like the teacher at school, forces him into participating in his own victimization. Each day Friederle and his friends follow the narrator home from school and throw rocks at him. The power of Friederle and his friends over the narrator is their discovery of the narrator's identity: "Diese kleinen pfeifenden Steine, und die höhnen Stimmen da drüben, wie gut sie erkannt hatten, dass ich ein Flüchtling war, und dass ich
in ihrer Gewalt war" (p. 39). The narrator behaves in such a way as to preserve this identity: he pretends to be injured so Friederle and his friends will leave him alone and then, fearing that their guilt will only increase their resentment of him, taunts them with his escape (see p. 39). The narrator's response is self-protective. However, this response also results in the continuation of a situation in which the narrator finds himself a victim. In his room at home the narrator fantasizes about an escape from this identity:


Lüttmann comments that the narrator's fantasy allows him to avenge his tormentors since it transforms the narrator himself into a "gigantischen Unterdrücker" (p. 208). Lüttmann concludes the following regarding this transformation: "Die Repression, der er ausgesetzt ist, fördert unmittelbar den Hang zur Repressivität in ihm selbst" (p. 208). However, the giant itself is a mechanical being and thus involves a suppression of the human qualities of the narrator. The narrator's sense of his own inability to elude Friederle is projected onto all human
beings, who are as vulnerable as "Körnchen" in his hands. By becoming a giant machine the narrator attempts to achieve invulnerability from attack and to identify himself with the powers which appear to be omnipotent and beyond his control. In the process of becoming such a force the narrator has to strip from himself the human qualities vulnerable to attack by Friederle and thus becomes the victim his efforts were designed to save him from becoming. Contrary to Lüttmann's assumption that this process of dehumanization is revenge upon Friederle it is, rather, vengeance directed against the self. In addition, the process of attempting to protect the self by becoming a machine requires the narrator to aspire toward qualities which he perceives as all-powerful: the very qualities attributed to Friederle. In feigning injury while Friederle and his friends chase him, the narrator attempts to achieve protection of the self from powers beyond his control. He must identify, for at least those moments of deception, with the role of helpless victim impotent before all-powerful enemies. He thus first victimizes himself to avoid the pain of victimization. In both cases the consequences of the narrator's activity is the same—he is continually a victim of himself.

The narrator's experience with the Boy Scouts serves as a further expression of the need of the narrator to assume power over a situation which in fact renders that power illusory. As in the case of his persecution by Friederle and of his fantasy about becoming a mechanical monster, the narrator chooses to model himself after his tormentors. The narrator's Scouting activities involve a fulfillment of his erotic and violent
impulses and are characterized by him as the "Verwirklichung meiner alten Kriegsspiele" (p. 62). However, unlike his isolated play in the attic, in his Scout activities the narrator belongs to a community which shares these impulses: "Alle Zerstörungslust und Herrschsucht in uns durfte sich entfalten. Ich wurde zu Friederle" (p. 63). It is a community of which the narrator is pleased to be a member: "ich war von kurzem Glück erfüllt, dass ich zu den Starken gehören durfte, obgleich ich wusste, dass ich zu den Schwachen gehörte" (p. 63). The close proximity of the narrator to one of his victims becomes an experience of self-recognition as he looks into the other boy's terrified face: "Wie eine Mahnung stieg dieses weinende, angstverzerrte Gesicht vor mir auf, irgendwo fühlte ich, dass ich Gewalt an mir selbst beging, doch ich erfasste es nicht, ich war von einem saugenden Wirbel ergriffen" (p. 62). The narrator feels that his attack upon the victim is in fact an attack upon himself. The power he assumes as one of the "Starken" is the power to victimize the self as well as others. As one of the "Starken" the narrator is also a victim although, unlike the victim before him, the narrator is not self-conscious about his victimization. It is in this sense of the victimization of the self that the power assumed by the narrator in modeling himself after his tormentors is illusory.

The narrator relates his Scouting activities to the rise of fascism: "So wie das Falschspielerische und Unheimliche in uns anwuchs, so machte es sich auch auf den Strassen breit . . ." (p. 63). Later, after listening to one of Hitler's speeches, the
narrator learns from his stepbrother Gottfried that he is to be excluded from this community:


Lüttmann points to the anti-Semitism expressed in the narrator's reference to "bestimmte Gesichtszüge" and "Eigenarten des Wesens" (p. 54, n. 114). More important, in my view, is the anti-Semitism expressed in the narrator's assumption that being a Jew constitutes a rational explanation for one's victimization. The narrator states that he began to understand his past only upon learning that he is a Jew. As is clear from the narrator's subsequent reference to the "Verfolgung anders Gearteter," the narrator finds in the revelation that his father is Jewish the explanation for his own role as victim. The narrator has internalized the values of the community from which he is an outcast, and identifies himself with its anti-Semitic sentiments. In light of the narrator's assimilation of the values of the community, his rejection by that community
("Entwurzelung") does not entail his independence
("Unabhängigkeit") from it. The narrator's "Rettung" is that
he, as he was not when he assumed the role of one of the "Starken," is
now self-conscious about his status as a victim. The possibility
from which the narrator is still "weit davon entfernt" involves
an identity which is not dependent upon the community from
which he feels alienated in his "Unzugehörigkeit." This identity
would allow the narrator to participate in the world not as
a victim but as a successful actor in control of his own destiny.

The narrator's experience as an art student in Prague
furnishes further evidence for him that his participation in
the world is limited. The narrator reads a book by Haller (by
implication, Steppenwolf by Hermann Hesse) and discovers in his
reading a reflection of his own predicament: "Hier war meine
Situation gezeichnet, die Situation des Bürgers, der zum
Revolutionär werden möchte und den die Gewichte alter Normen
lähmen" (p. 141). The narrator writes to Haller and receives
the address of Max B., whom Haller suggests may be of some
assistance to the narrator. While in Prague the narrator visits
Max B. and the two make arrangements for the narrator to spend
a year in Prague studying art. Despite his parents' assent to
his plans, the narrator feels guilty for having taken the
opportunity to go to school and in his sleep hears his mother
calling him away from his work (see p. 147). The narrator then
chooses a most peculiar place in which to live: "Dieser Raum
entspricht mir, er ist krank, er ist fleckig und aufgeplatzt von
Ausschlägen, er zeigt mir meine Erbärmlichkeit, er zeigt mir die
Niedrigkeit meines Daseins" (p. 149). In this room, not in his activities in the city, the narrator feels secure: "Die inneren Schichten meines Daseins aber waren von diesem Raum eingeschlossen, dieser Wohnstätte, in der ich mich verbergen konnte" (p. 150). The world the narrator reconstructs in this room is an internally consistent, alienated world in which he finds himself both creative advocate and victim. It is a world that is no longer external to the narrator, no longer imposed by forces acting directly upon him. Rather, it is a world that he nurtures through his own activities, that he fosters through his own actions. The narrator describes this world as follows:

The narrator is able to recreate the world of his childhood in his paintings and in the acts of betrayal, rage and punishment which he perpetrates upon himself. He works as his mother has
admonished him to in the past and inflicts physical punishment on himself as his father and teachers did. In imposing the order of his parents and teachers upon himself he is able to recreate the very identity which they inculcated in him: that of victim. The image of self reflected in his paintings is likewise that of a victim, of his own isolation and despair. As a child the narrator walked in his sleep and sought solace in his mother's room to escape the anxieties and feelings of powerlessness which overcame him while alone at night. As an adolescent the narrator found relief from the tensions he felt in his isolation through a sexual relationship with his sister Margit. The narrator's sister was later fatally injured in a car accident. In her hospital bed she appeared to the narrator "wie in äusserster Wollust einem Geliebten entgegengestreckt, eine Brücke bildend zwischen Leben und Tod" (p. 91). The narrator portrayed his experience of her death in what he calls "mein erstes grosses Bild" (p. 91). In his room in Prague the sister's image appears and reinforces his isolation. The narrator refers to his sexual impotence: "Immer wenn mir der Versuch mit der Lebenden, der lebenden Frau meiner Gegenwart, misslang, tröstete ich mich bei der Toten, der kindlichen Frau der Vergangenheit" (p. 154). He explains that he finds sexual relationships threatening because they present him with the risk of involvement in the external world. For the narrator such involvement would mean exposure and a "Verschlucktwerden, eine Selbstaufgabe" (p. 154). The narrator is able to establish relationships with women who are amenable to his victimization
of them and who leave his world intact: "In meiner Machtlosigkeit suchte ich mir Frauen, die sich quälen lassen wollten, und die in dem unendlichen, nie zu einem Ergebnis führenden Vorspiel aushielten" (p. 155). In his room the narrator is able to create an internally consistent world in which all the participants are victims. This world in its self-consistency precludes freedom: "In Prag, an diesem ersten Ort, an dem ich meine Freiheit suchen wollte, fand ich nur Dunkelheit und Selbstzerstörung" (p. 158).

The narrator's world, although bizarre, is nonetheless a reflection of characteristics of the outside world. The narrator's world, however, is within the scope of his control while the outside world is beyond his control. This outside world places demands upon the narrator: "Als meine Frist nach einem Jahr zuende ging, war auch der Druck der Aussenwelt gespenstisch angewachsen" (p. 158). In the "Aussenwelt" the narrator is a victim in a community of victims. The narrator describes the city of Prague: "Die Bewohner der Stadt waren wie ein einziger, weitverzweigter schwarzer Leib, preisgegeben einer einzigen, ungewissen Erwartung" (p. 158).

The narrator leaves Prague for Switzerland. There he finds peace from the "manische Bedürfnis, tätig zu sein" (p. 163) and is able to overcome his sexual impotence. However, just as the narrator was unable to sustain the world of his despair in Prague, in Switzerland he is unable to remain in a world in which he experiences "eine Freude am Dasein" (p. 163). The narrator explains: "Doch nach dem Auftrieb kam das Sinken. Es war nicht der täglich grösser werdende Druck der Aussenwelt, der zum
Erlöschen dieser Tage führt, der Abbruch lag in mir, ich konnte mich in der Helligkeit nicht halten" (p. 164). "Unfähig, aus eigener Kraft zu leben" (p. 164), he returns home to his parents. As in the case of the narrator's experience in the garden as a child, autonomy is followed by an awareness of dependency upon his home and parents.

The narrator goes to Sweden to work in his father's factory. There he lives "im Luftlosen zwischen Elternwelt und Arbeiterwelt" (p. 167). His relationship to his father as the "Sohn des Chefs" excludes him from "eine Kameradschaft," "eine Gemeinschaft in der körperlichen Arbeit" (p. 167). The narrator states that his "Kampf um die Unabhängigkeit meiner Arbeit" (p. 167) also excludes him from the community of workers. This preoccupation renders him unaware of the conditions of his fellow workers. The other workers can be of no assistance to him since they do not themselves control their work: they merely perform mechanical functions while their individuality is "zerflossen zu gestaltlosem Brei" (p. 168). The narrator's "Kampf um die Unabhängigkeit meiner Arbeit" is a search for a community which will impart objective value to his work:

In diesem Dasein[ at the father's factory ], ohne Zugang zu Gesprächen über Ausdrucks- und Gestaltungsprobleme, ohne Zugang zu diesen Gesprächen in denen man empfindet, dass man sich lebendiger Materie widmet, verfielen alle meine eigenen Aufgaben dem Zweifel, sie hatten keine Lebensberechtigung mehr, und dass ich mich einmal mit ihnen beschäftigt hatte, war nur krankhafte Selbstsucht gewesen. (p. 168)

The need of the narrator is neither for the "Zwiesprach" he found in his readings in his parents' library nor for the
isolation of his attic room in Prague. The narrator seeks to engage in a dialogue with a world which recognizes his work as legitimate.

The narrator's lack of awareness of his fellow factory workers parallels his ignorance of the political events of the world about him. The narrator remarks, "Ich hatte nie Stellung genommen zu den umwälzenden Konflikten der Welt" (p. 171). The world about the narrator is similarly detached from the conflict in Europe as evidenced by the factory which produces window curtains "während draussen eine Welt in Stücke fiel" (p. 170). The narrator's experience of exile, like his awareness of being a Jew, signifies for him his exclusion from a community upon which he is still dependent:


However, a figure appears in the narrator's life, "ein Mann in Jägerkleidung," who is related to the narrator's first "selbstgewähltes Exil" in the garden of his parents' home. The narrator's dependency upon his parents is expressed in "die alte Furcht vor der Verlorenheit im Wald" (p. 172). The "Jäger" is the alter ego of the narrator. The significance of the "Jäger" is that he is not a victim. He is not trapped by the situation which has so influenced the narrator's identity. The role of the "Jäger" is to provide autonomy for the narrator, who
In his dream of the "Jäger" the narrator sees in the sand the "Spuren, die mich von meiner Geburt an bis zu diesem Platz geführt hatten" (p. 174). He represses this image immediately out of a sense of dread. The narrator's remembrances, of which Abschied von den Eltern is the record, are the tracing of his life from birth to this point in which he is "auf dem Weg, auf der Suche nach einem eigenen Leben" (p. 174). The narrator's repression of his memories of his early life and childhood suggests an alienation from the world in which the self was a victim. His response to the call of the "Jäger" expresses the rediscovery and affirmation of aspects of the self which allow for the possibilities of freedom and autonomy. Both the repression and rediscovery of the self characterize the narrative of Abschied von den Eltern and mark the narrator's final leave-taking of his parents and the world of his childhood.
Chapter 3

Fluchtpunkt: the dilemma or
the persistence of alienation

Abschied von den Eltern closes with the narrator's decision to cultivate those aspects of the self which allow for the possibilities of freedom and autonomy. The dilemma faced by the narrator in Fluchtpunkt is the realization that the focus on the self reenacts a relationship to the world in which the world defines the self as neither autonomous nor free but as a victim.

Peter Weiss's novel Fluchtpunkt opens with the arrival of the narrator in Stockholm on November 8, 1940, his twenty-fourth birthday. The narrator takes up residence in a shabby and colorless room in Schedin's Pension in Drottninggata. The boardinghouse is largely peopled by Danish, Czech and German immigrants. One such immigrant is Max Bernsdorf, a friend of the narrator's from Prague. On the door to Max Bernsdorf's room hangs a sign which reads "Don't disturb a sleeping dog." On the one hand, the sign refers to the peculiar status of all the immigrants as Max defines it for the narrator: "Es werden grosse Worte geredet vom Kampf um die Menschenrechte, doch wir, die Bedrohten, werden wie räudige Hunde behandelt" (p. 8). On the other hand, the sign refers to the suspension of Max Berndorf's own life while he awaits the restoration of his homeland. For
Max Bernsdorf the significance of an emigration which takes him from Barcelona to Prague to Oslo to Stockholm and eventually to New York, all places which he finally finds equally inhospitable, is defined by the possibility of his homeland being restored to him whereby he will be able to resume fully his normal activity. In the sense that emigration for Max Bernsdorf involves a postponement of his normal life his fate is allied to that of the other immigrants at the boardinghouse, the anonymous "Überlebende einer gemeinsamen Katastrophe" (p. 31), who await the end of the war for the resumption of their lives.

The narrator contrasts his own position in Stockholm to that of his fellow immigrants: "Ich kam nicht als Flüchtling und Asylsuchender" (p. 10). Both terms, "Flüchtling und Asylsuchender," imply a dependency on the world. In the process of realizing his own freedom the narrator has denied the dependency of himself on the world. In conversation with Max Bernsdorf the narrator explains that his father was a Hungarian Jew who became a Czech citizen after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His mother's family came from Strassburg and Basel. He spent his childhood in various cities in Germany with the result that his language is no longer traceable to any specific region. The narrator concludes regarding the cosmopolitanism of his background, "ich war zuhause in Hafengegenden, auf Jahrmärkten und in Zirkuszelten ... wo der Blick ins Weite gerichtet war" (p. 11). The narrator's interest in this context was a personal one: the freedom to explore self and world without limitation. The appeal
of art for the narrator was that it allowed him to transcend the limitations of his world in that it was cosmopolitan: "In der Kunst gab es keine Grenzen, keine Nationen" (p. 12). Thus, the rootlessness and homelessness, which the "Flüchtling" experiences as abnormal states arising out of his peculiar status, are for the narrator a normal state which he has transformed into the "romantic" expression of his own freedom.

The narrator speaks of having barricaded himself behind his books and paintings in order to escape a world which he experienced as oppressive. According to the narrator, he experienced the world as threatening and the self as subject to random violence. The narrator describes how the experience of the self as potential victim led to his development as a victimizer. In order to avoid being identified by his potential tormentors as a victim he joined forces with them in victimizing another: "Ich hatte das Zeug in mir, an einer Exekution teilzunehmen" (p. 17).

Max Bernsdorf takes issue with the narrator's conclusion on the grounds that the experience of the self as potentially an oppressor is a common one, which serves as a medium for insight into one's responsibility for choosing sides in the conflict. For the narrator, however, the detachment necessary for choice has been eliminated. The threat of violence conditions and obscures choice for him rather than illuminating responsibilities. For the narrator, in fact, it is at the point where the world is most threatening and thus the self weakest and most indefensible that resolution of conflict occurs. This would suggest that decision, for the narrator, depends not on insight derived from
experience so much as on experiences of violence which determine the form such insights are to take—and these insights are not necessarily detached, or free, or responsible. The narrator does not experience himself as a free agent in the world because of conditions imposed by his upbringing, and therefore the only way in which he can realize his freedom is by divorcing himself from the world. The narrator explains his decision:

Ich traf die einzige Entscheidung, für die ich einstehen konnte, an einem Punkt, wo der Druck des Nichtdürfens, der sich fortsetzte aus den gesamten Drohungen der Erziehung, absolut geworden war. Ich musste die Drohung brechen, musste die Anklage der Feigheit, der Selbstsucht abweisen und an mein Vorhaben glauben. (p. 20)

The narrator's resolution is to devote himself to his art as an "Alternative zur Teilnahme am Krieg" (p. 21). In contrast to the other immigrants who await the end of the war for the resumption of their lives the narrator begins his life in exile as the resumption of the only life he has ever known.

For the narrator the war occurs "in einer Welt von Giganten und Dämonen" (pp. 60-61), outside the realm of normal existence and human apprehension. Only the "Vorgänge in alltäglichen Labyrinthen" (p. 61), the interpersonal conflicts of human proportion, are capable of being apprehended. In the face of his friend Hoderer the narrator perceives the debilitating effects of a conflict which is itself occasioned by his friend's refugee status in the war. As a doctor Hoderer had been engaged in social welfare work in Berlin. Under the terms of his immigration he is not allowed to practice his profession in
Sweden. In his inactivity Hoderer suffers from asthma, a disease which the narrator describes as "ein langsames seelisches Ersticken" (p. 61). The narrator details the effects of one of his friend's asthmatic attacks:


Of all those present during the attack the narrator alone is arrested by the image of his friend's vulnerability. Hoderer's wife hands her husband the case containing his injection while the conversation continues as though the attack had not taken place. Hoderer himself responds to the narrator's attention with a look of understanding and sympathy, as though it were the narrator and not Hoderer himself who required consolation. The narrator remarks that in such a situation his aloof stance becomes indefensible. In his analysis of the text Lüttmann points out the manner in which the narrator's attention to Hoderer's attack is contrasted to the apparent indifference of the others present. Lüttmann explains that in appearing to ignore Hoderer's attack the others refuse to accept Hoderer's infirmity as setting him apart from the group and thus express solidarity with him. The narrator's focus on Hoderer's infirmity were it not for the action of the others would have had the effect of defining Hoderer as an outsider. Thus, the expressed solidarity of the others together with Hoderer's acceptance of their solidarity places the narrator
in the role of being attacked, of being the outsider who is weak and thus in need of consolation. The narrator's weakness, according to Lüttmann, is "mangelnde Anteilnahme" (p. 343). Although Lüttmann's analysis of the solidarity of the group is clear, it is not obvious to me why the narrator, who gives his attention to Hoderer's infirmity, should be considered by Lüttmann to suffer from "mangelnde Anteilnahme" in contrast to the others, who ignore Hoderer's condition. In his original description of Hoderer's attack the details supplied by the narrator of the disintegration of Hoderer's face serve to heighten the contrast between Hoderer's symptoms and the patience and composure through which he seeks to maintain self-possession. While the narrator responds to Hoderer's symptoms, his infirmity, the others take responsibility for their friend's illness by responding to his efforts to maintain control over that illness: his wife hands him the injection necessary to control the symptoms while the others by ignoring those symptoms refuse to acknowledge him as a victim of his illness. It is not that the narrator's sympathy is deficient, as Lüttmann suggests, but rather that the nurturance he offers is revealed to be counterfeit. In refusing to intervene, to take sides in the conflict between the symptoms of Hoderer's illness and Hoderer's attempts to control his illness, the narrator relinquishes control over the situation. The narrator alone is immobilized by the image of Hoderer's vulnérability and in this sense the nurturance he offers betrays a fascination, not in Hoderer's recovery, but rather in the maintenance of Hoderer's status as a victim. But,
Hoderer does achieve self-possession and in the process the narrator achieves self-identification: he becomes the victim of his own vested interest.

Hoderer suggests the following as a possible way for the narrator as survivor to reestablish a relationship between self and world:

(pp. 90-91)

In his work History and Human Survival Robert Jay Lifton posits the central experience of the survivor as one of guilt for having been granted priority in the struggle for survival, for having escaped a fate which others did not. In order to expiate this guilt the survivor, according to Lifton, attempts to attach a meaning to the priority of survival which would render his own survival justifiable. Lifton discusses different modes through which the individual is able to derive meaning from his own survival. One such mode discussed by Lifton is the mode of transformation whereby the survivor fashions a vision of remaking the order of social and individual existence. Through his commitment to this vision the survivor is able to justify his own survival as a means to creating a world in which those
who did not survive would have survived. Hoderer's suggestion to the narrator involves such a mode of transformation with the exception that, for Hoderer, the narrator's guilt as a survivor is real, not imagined.

In Hoderer's view, it is not merely that the narrator is unaware of the nature of the opposition and thus of the conditions of his own survival: the accusation posed by Hoderer is that the narrator's flight, since it occurred at a time when the concentration camps were already in existence, involves an evasion of that knowledge. According to Hoderer, it is only by the narrator's coming to terms with the conditions of his own survival, by identifying the bourgeois order (the world of his "bürgerlichen Herkunft") as conditioning his survival, that the narrator can creatively utilize his survival on behalf of those who would change that order. By refusing to break with the bourgeois order, the narrator relinquishes control of the conditions of his own survival and thus transforms his victimization by that order into a self-victimization. Solidarity with those who would change that order, because it would involve a transformation of social existence, would place the narrator in control of the conditions of his survival and thus allow him to attain "self-possession."

The narrator is unable to accept such a solidarity because of his distrust of all connections between self and world, because he distrusts any widening of his perspective which would include the world beyond that of his immediate experience. Only in the fragmentary images of his own experiences of the world is he able
to locate himself in the world. The narrator describes his attempts to hide himself from the school children who pursued him as a child. He describes the force with which he is able to break out from his hiding place to escape his tormentors. The narrator is clear that his own trials become insignificant from the perspective of the events of the war and that his own strength in evading his tormentors would be reduced to impotence in the camps in which his friends Peter Kien and Lucie Weisberger are interned. However, the events of the war are inaccessible to the narrator precisely because he is a survivor and to be a survivor, for the narrator, is to be disconnected from the world of those who do not survive. The narrator survives to work in the seclusion of his room, a seclusion which is symbolic of his being walled off from the world beyond that of the self. Through his work, which consists of locating his experiences within the world, the narrator is able to transform his limited experience of the world into "einem Teil der Geschehnisse ... an deren äusserstem Rand Hoderer und die anderen Wachsamen, Uneigennützigen standen" (p. 93).

The narrator remarks that Hoderer is repelled by the purposelessness of the narrator's own work. Art, according to Hoderer, must have a "Gebrauchswert" (p. 105), is of social use either in the course of changing the world or in profiting the existing social order. Hoderer admonishes the narrator:

Sie werden dich dulden ... denn du gehörst zu ihrem Luxus. Du erscheinst ihnen pittoresk, und sie werden noch Geld aus dir herausschlagen. Sie lassen dich tanzen, du bist ihr Hofnarr. ... Du gefährdest sie nicht. Sie würden dich fallenlassen und ausstossen, wenn du es
The narrator points to the potential development of the arts which was not realized under socialism by reminding Hoderer of the way in which the works of Eisenstein, Meyerhold and Mayakovsky were condemned as decadent. Hoderer responds that in a world governed by the priority of survival, private needs must necessarily be postponed: "Das Land musste erst gerüstet werden, wir sehen heute, wie richtig diese Politik war. Der Krieg war schon damals unausweichlich, und die privaten Wünsche mussten zurücktreten" (p. 105). The narrator counters Hoderer's argument by refusing to recognize his own life as conditioned by the terms of his survival: "Ich will nicht für die Zukunft leben. . . . Ich lebe heute. Ich will mir den Krieg nicht wie eine Schuld überstülpen lassen und ein schlechtes Gewissen haben, dass ich entkommen bin" (p. 105). The narrator proceeds to justify the attraction of works of art of the Twenties for him through a description of how these works managed to survive a past which attempted to nullify their influence while at the same time projecting themselves into the future by embodying values which yield themselves to further development. The narrator experiences the world as attempting to place restrictions on his development. It may be assumed that he also identifies himself with these artists of the Twenties who similarly faced opposition from the world. The narrator remarks how in Czechoslovakia when he was to join the army he filled in the word "Privat" in the blank in
which he was to list his occupation because he felt that to claim to be an artist was disreputable. The effect was to get him a deferment on the grounds of psychic disability. In his studies of the works of the Twenties the narrator begins to appreciate the possibility of artist as a legitimate occupation. Hoderer's argument is that being an artist is a legitimate occupation and thus exists within the framework of the existing social order. The artist, according to Hoderer, who does not view his art from the perspective of changing the social order acts as an accomplice to that social order. The social responsibility of the artist is inescapable. However, for Hoderer, who is deprived of the right to practice his occupation because of his status as "Flüchtling," the struggle is the result of conditions of the external world as they are directly experienced. The narrator's dilemma regarding his occupation as implied in the story of his deferment is conditioned by the threat of random violence which the choice of joining or not joining the army represents: he is forced to confront his anxieties about calling himself an artist both in relationship to his own self-image and to the image which he projects to the authorities.

Hoderer does, as Lüttrmann suggests (see p. 343), have the last word in the argument with the narrator concerning the role of the individual in relation to the world. The narrator does not refute Hoderer's estimation of the workings of the external world with its accompanying vision for the transformation of the world, but he does deal with the contradictions inherent in sustaining such a vision: "Und doch lag bei diesen Worten ein
Ausdruck von Schwäche in Hoderers Augen. Er sprach von der Zukunft des Sozialismus, von der Ausdrucksfreiheit nach dem Endsieg, aber in seinem Blick war der Vorbote eines Zweifels zu erkennen" (p. 108). The conflict is between Hoderer's private desires for self-fulfillment and his sense of responsibility for existing social conditions. Moreover, according to Hoderer's estimation of the world the contradiction itself is grounded in the existing social order so that the postponement of his own desires is a necessary condition for the overthrow of the existing social order. Thus, a lack of faith in the future of socialism and in the promise of freedom involves an indefinite postponement of his own needs. What is so alarming for the narrator is that Hoderer is fully aware of the contradiction, is able to comprehend the needs of the narrator for self-fulfillment because they are in fact his own needs, so that Hoderer's stance is not an evasion but an acknowledgement of responsibility for the self and the world: "Trotz seinen harten Angriffen hatte er mich voller Verständnis angeblickt, und seine Duldsamkeit, seine Beherrschtheit hatte etwas Erschreckendes" (p. 109). In the spring of 1943, Hoderer neglects to take his injection during one of his asthmatic attacks and in so doing takes his own life. Unable to sustain the vision whereby he assumed control over his own life and the conditions of his survival, Hoderer commits suicide rather than view himself as a victim of those conditions.

The narrator's final confrontation with Hoderer in Fluchtpunkt occurs in the spring of 1945, after the narrator has
just seen a film of the concentration camps. The narrator is reminded of his relationship to his friends Peter Kien and Lucie Weisberger, whom he left behind in Prague, and concludes that it is his own evasion of responsibility in the world which renders him culpable. The narrator had received a letter from Peter Kien, who was interned in Theresienstadt along with Lucie Weisberger. The narrator remarked in regard to the letter: "Ein sonderbar friedlicher Ton sprach aus seinem Schreiben, als befände er sich in einem Ferienaufenthalt, zu dem er Bücher und Malerausüstung mitgenommen hatte" (p. 89). The narrator felt accused by Lucie Weisberger for having left her. He admits that his attempts to achieve Lucie Weisberger's freedom through bureaucratic channels was merely an effort to assuage his own conscience. It furthermore represented an evasion of his knowledge of the hopelessness of the situation and actually made matters worse for her. The reference in Peter Kien's letter to his books and painting materials implies a parallel to the narrator's own sojourn in Stockholm and identifies the narrator with those who would pretend that concentration camps are resorts. This raises the question of whether or not the narrator's own survival has been contingent upon evasion. Upon first viewing the films of the concentration camps the narrator perceives that the war did not occur in a mythic realm, a "Welt von Giganten und Dämonen," that the camps were built by human beings for other human beings. The narrator emphasizes the significance of the camp images for his life:

Ich hatte weitergelebt, mit der ständigen Gegenwart
die Bild. Diese Bilder gehörten fortan zu unserem Dasein, sie waren nie wieder wegzudenken. Lange trug ich die Schuld, dass ich nicht zu denen gehörte, die die Nummer der Entwertung ins Fleisch eingebrannt bekommen hatten, dass ich entwichen und zum Zuschauer verurteilt worden war. Ich war aufgewachsen, um vernichtet zu werden, doch ich war der Vernichtung entgangen. Ich war geflohen und hatte mich verkrochen. Ich hätte umkommen müssen, ich hätte mich opfern müssen, und wenn ich nicht gefangen und ermordet, oder auf einem Schlachtfeld erschossen worden war, so musste ich zumindest meine Schuld tragen, das war das letzte, was von mir verlangt wurde. (p. 212)

The narrator's emphasis is upon the guilt he feels for being a survivor. Even the narrator's guilt for being a survivor is for having been condemned to being an observer rather than having been a participant. Thus, through his guilt the narrator retains his status as a victim and identifies himself with those whom he deserted.

This last discussion with Hoderer occurs within the narrator's own conscience, is confined, as Lüttmann suggests, to the "Selbstvorwürfe des Erzählers" (p. 344). Hoderer accuses the narrator of having evaded the reality of the concentration camps until the end of the war when his survival can no longer be threatened. The implication of Hoderer's accusation is that the grief of the narrator is an inauthentic response to the world. The grief is conditioned not by the narrator's susceptibility to the sufferings of the world but rather by his need for immunity from them. In his celebration of victory the narrator, according to Hoderer, remains a parasite who experiences the elation of others who struggled on his behalf while he sat at his desk and contemplated the misery of the world. The narrator's elation is as inauthentic a response to the world as his grief.
The narrator's defense is that he had chosen no other course than his own flight, his own cowardice and his "Vermessenheit des Abstandnehmens" (p. 213). The narrator asks if he should commit suicide. Hoderer answers that such an action would be superfluous since the narrator's chosen course of action has already brought about his ultimate victimization: "Du brauchst dich nicht zu töten, sagte er, denn du gehörst zu denen die aussterben und vergehen in ihrer Unbeteiligung" (p. 213). Whereas suicide for Hoderer was the ultimate denial of his victimization by the world, suicide for the narrator would be an unnecessary final affirmation of his own victimization. The confrontation of the narrator with Hoderer thus involves not only Hoderer's vision of remaking the order of social and individual existence but is also countered by the narrator's own mode of transformation. The narrator only acknowledges the fragmentary world of his immediate experience, a world which is perceived as accessible to him and thus within his control. His refusal to participate in a larger world involves a relinquishment of control over that world. It is that world which defines him (as his viewing of the film on the concentration camps clearly indicates) as a victim. Through his focus on the world of his immediate experiences, the narrator transposes the conflict of the world to the realm of the self and in this manner gains control over his own victimization. The world is thus transformed not into a world in which those who did not survive would have survived but rather into a world in which all the survivors are
victims.

The case of Hieronymus is presented by the narrator as a final consequence of the despair of ever reaching a view of the world which would allow for individual participation and responsibility. Hieronymus withdraws completely from the world in order to dedicate himself to his work: the banker, mathematician, economist and "Erbauer von Rechenmaschinen" turns his energies to the "Erbauung eines Buches" (pp. 214-215). However, the compilation of his book, which leads to Hieronymus' repudiation of the world as this work takes up more of his time and energy than his position at the bank allows, is his avocation. His vocation is the testing of his own endurance, of his ability to sustain himself in the midst of the deprivations occasioned by his own withdrawal from the world. As Lüttmann observes, in the course of testing his resistance to a hostile world Hieronymus himself becomes the object of his own controlled experiments (see p. 386). Like his experiments, Hieronymus' book serves as a means of containing a hostile world. His book is actually an anthologizing of the world through registering the events of the world in the manner of an impersonal machine. The relationship of Hieronymus' vocation to his avocation becomes evident in the narrator's description of one of Hieronymus' attacks upon himself:

Als ich fragte, was ihm denn widerfahren sei, da er halb zerschlagen, wie ein Schiffbrüchiger quer über einem der Betonsockel lag, sagte er, dass ich mich ein paar Tage gedulden müsse, dann würde er mir die Antwort in der Form eines aufgefundenen Textes geben. Ein solches Stück, das er mir vorlas, konnte eine ausserordentlich detaillierte Beschreibung einer Zimmereinrichtung enthalten, in der mir etwas von der Ungeheuerlichkeit seiner Wanderung aufdämmerte. (p. 220)
Hieronymus' art of impersonalization becomes a vehicle for self-expression. Hieronymus' attempts at self-recovery through his relationship to a ten year old child place him in even more difficult circumstances since the relationship serves to attract hostile neighbors to which he is particularly vulnerable. The hostility arises out of a world over which he has, not only by his withdrawal but also through his work and his experiments, relinquished control. In the end Hieronymus is committed to an institution. It is clear from Hieronymus' analysis of the benefits of psychiatric care and from the narrator's conclusions regarding the institutionalization of Hieronymus that Hieronymus' fate is to be understood as political, as the act of a particularly vengeful society. However, the narrator also mentions that Hieronymus actually welcomed his institutionalization. After all, Hieronymus has been a victim for a long time, and it would seem that his commitment to an institution actually functions as an affirmation of the victimized self which Hieronymus has become.

Parallels do exist between the attitude of Hieronymus and that of the narrator. Lüttmann draws attention to some of these (see p. 335) while at the same time emphasizing that Hieronymus represents an extreme case of this attitude. Like Hieronymus, the narrator perceives the world as essentially hostile to the self. As in the case of Hieronymus, the hostility of the world is real, not imagined. At one point the narrator experiences the hostility of the world as so overwhelming that he initiates
sessions with a psychiatrist in order to discover within the self a basis for resistance to the world. The narrator's criticism of his psychiatric care is more subtle than Hieronymus' but the threat to the self is also more subtle than in Hieronymus' case. The narrator's criticism concerns the attempt of the psychiatrist to exorcise from the inner life of his patient those aspects which are so grotesque, private and unsharable as to hinder the patient's attempt to accommodate himself to the external world. In the relationship between the narrator and the psychiatrist Baahl there is a complicity involved between the psychiatrist whose experience is so limited by the ordering of his own life that he is unable to confront the source of his patient's pain, and the patient himself who is so terrified and repulsed by the grotesque aspects of his own inner life that he is unable to explore them. The narrator comes to realize "wie gross die Kluft war zwischen der stillen kleinstädtischen Klause des Meisters und meiner eigenen Wildnis" and terminates the sessions with "die Masse des Schreckens" still before him (p. 80). It is during these sessions that the narrator makes his first serious attempts at Swedish and in this context the narrator's difficulties with a foreign language reflect his inability to deal with those aspects of his life which he considers tabu. The conflict involved for the narrator parallels his fascination as a child with Douglas Fairbanks in The Thief of Bagdad, the hero who is immune to attack, and his later impression of Murnau's film Tabu, where it is the world which is immune to the hero's efforts to penetrate it. Through his use of Swedish the
narrator achieves immunity from "das Ursprüngliche und Blutige" (p. 79), while at the same time relinquishing accessibility to important aspects of the self. The narrator's criticism of his early paintings was that they sought to obscure rather than reveal, although Max Bernsdorf's response to them was that they as such fix the reality of the narrator's existence (see pp. 52 and 34). This would suggest that the narrator's preoccupation with learning a foreign language involves a continuation of his attempt to communicate with the world without exposing the self to the world. After the departure of Max Bernsdorf the narrator moves to another room in Stockholm where, in the process of rearranging the collection of books which in the past reflected his experience of the world, he rediscovers Kafka's Der Prozess. It is through his reading of Der Prozess that the narrator becomes convinced that a confrontation with the self is unavoidable. The narrator's attempts at Swedish, because it is difficult for him to express himself in that language, seem appropriate to his struggle of self-discovery: "Doch es schien mir, dass dieses Stottern und Radebrechen meiner Situation besser entspräche als das gewohnheitsmässige Hinschreiben einer allzu bekannten Sprache" (p. 96). Thus, the narrator's own reservations regarding himself pose a barrier to the use of language as a means of revealing his inner life; in this context the use of Swedish seems appropriate because it at least reveals the difficulty as one of accessibility to his past. However, the narrator's difficulties in using Swedish also point to the manner in which the problems of accessibility to his past and openness to the world are
interrelated. The other difficulty involved in the narrator's use of German is that even if he is able to express himself in that language his use of German would involve him in an endless "Selbstgespräch," a "Monolog im Vakuum" (pp. 95-96). The hostility of the German-speaking world for the narrator—as he remarks, "was ich dort fand, waren meine Verfolger, und die hatten mir ihre Antwort längst gegeben" (p. 95)—is such that communication with that world is not possible. Communication is seen by the narrator as a necessary factor in self-realization since for the narrator an integral part of self-realization is to restore his experiences of the world: "Zu einer Waffe konnte sie erst werden, wenn ich alles, was ich ausdrücken wollte, greifbar zurückversetzte in die Wirklichkeit, aus der es einmal in mich eingedrungen war" (p. 99).

Yet, the narrator's efforts to restore his experience of the world compound his problems. He feels that his efforts are jeopardized by underlying concerns which are only expressed indirectly in his works: "ich . . . wollte in den Bildern und dem Geschriebenen Zeichen sehen für die Geschehnisse, an denen ich teilnahm, und doch war es immer wieder, als könnte sich nichts halten lassen" (p. 178). The narrator considers the possibility that his work exists as a substitute for what is really threatening him. He relates this perception regarding his work to the anxiety he felt on the evening before his first exhibition. At that time he presented one of his paintings to his friend Max Bernsdorf:

Ich nahm das Bild von der Wand und gab es ihm, und da war mir, als bräche ein Zugwind durch das Loch in
In his consideration of this passage Lützmann observes that as the wall of paintings acts as a bulwark against the surrounding chaos so art for the narrator represents a "Schutz- und Schonraum" (p. 378) from those forces of the external world which are actually or potentially hostile to him. According to Lützmann, the references to the "dünnen aufgespannten Häuten" of the individual paintings and to the terrified gestures of the figures in the painting suggest an identification between the narrator and the paintings themselves. Lützmann concludes that art for the narrator serves as a defense against forces which are internal as well as external to the self. However, the emphasis in the passage suggests that the paintings are inadequate as a defense. The terrified gestures of the figures portray a position of extreme vulnerability. As mentioned earlier in regard to the discussion between the narrator and Max Bernsdorf at the beginning of Fluchtpunkt, detachment is required for choice since experience without detachment cannot serve to illuminate responsibilities. The narrator was unable to make responsible decisions because his experience was conditioned by a fear of random violence. Art is both an experience in itself (the act of painting) and a means of expressing one's relationship to the world (the depicting of one's experience). The depiction of one's experience through a medium such as painting
requires that one become detached from the object being created. The painting represents the experience of the artist and since it involves detachment becomes a medium through which one's experience is objectified. To the extent that painting represents experience it also serves to interpret it. The interpretation or pictorial presentation thereby becomes the objectification of experience. Thus, while the act of painting may serve as a means of protecting the narrator from the hostile forces of the external and internal world the painting itself as it objectifies the narrator's experience of the world betrays his own impotence before those forces. Therefore, the only choice that this medium of insight provides the narrator is the choice of being a victim or being an artist who portrays victims. In neither case does the relationship of the narrator to the world change. In both one is overwhelmed by a world which victimizes and renders one powerless before forces beyond one's control. The only choice before that portrait of the world is collapse. Painting, then, as a medium for insight does not change the narrator's relationship to the world. On the contrary, in so far as the painting serves as an objectification of that relationship and provides the narrator with an identity it serves to reinforce it. The narrator suggests the possibility of such an identification of himself with the objectification of his experience in his art:

So gross war das Vertrauen an meine Fähigkeit des nüchternen Beobachtens, dass ich mit dem Gedanken spielte, mich in das Gestaltlose hineinzuzusetzen, es nicht als Zusammenbruch auszukosten, sondern als unbekannten gesetzlosen Teil meiner selbst. Weiter
als in ein Grenzgebiet gelangte ich jedoch nicht. (p. 180)

This is the "Grenzgebiet" which Hieronymus crosses in bringing about his ultimate victimization.

The narrator does suffer a physical collapse, a fact which, in light of the temptation of the narrator not to regard the threat to which he is subject as a "Zusammenbruch," appears to indicate that a failure on the part of the narrator to recognize the dilemma involved in his work entails self-delusion. The narrator suggested, in regard to his writings and paintings, that his work is a veiled expression of underlying concerns which render that work an inadequate portrayal of the world and which, because of their threatening nature, jeopardize his relationship to that world. However, any attempt to overtly portray that danger ("mich in das Gestaltlose hineinzuversetzen") would only serve to objectify further the vulnerability he experiences in relation to the world. This predicament is similar to that portrayed in his painting of the abject figures: in either case the narrator is faced with the choice of being a victim or an artist who depicts victimization. Bernsdorf's earlier remark that the narrator's paintings as such fix the reality of his existence serves to relate this predicament to other choices which the narrator has made. For example, the narrator's attempts at Swedish because of the difficulties which language poses to him both as a means of self-expression and of communication reflect the realities of his experience of himself and the world. In this context of art as an objectification of individual experience, the narrator's decision to devote himself
to art as an "Alternative zur Teilnahme am Krieg" attains a wider meaning in that the dilemma involved in his art may be applied to the narrator's other decisions as well. I have referred to the narrator's choice to concentrate on his own fragmented experience of the world as involving him in a transformation of the world in which all survivors are defined as victims. The mode of transformation is a change in one's perceptions of the world. For Hoderer, this transformation entails a commitment to a world in which human beings are perceived, not as victims, but as active participants in determining the conditions under which they live. For the narrator, this transformation involves an objectification of his relationship to the world as that relationship is revealed to him in his isolated experiences of the self as a victim. This objectification allows the narrator to view his status as a victim—not as exceptional—but as a general condition which he shares with other human beings. In this manner the narrator is able to identify himself with those who did not survive the war, with the inmates of the concentration camps. Therefore, the narrator's decisions, which he defines as reflecting a "Vermessenheit des Abstandnehmens," do place him in a relationship to the world, and this relationship limits his freedom to participate in the world just as his experiences of random violence rendered him unable to take sides in the war. The narrator's decision thus only serves to implicate him further in an ordering of the world which his actions are designed to escape. It is in this sense that these decisions may be viewed as involving him in a self-delusion.
Self-delusion implies an alienated self. However, the narrator's experience of the world as threatening him with random violence and as limiting his freedom describes a world which is also alienating. This dual aspect of alienation may be discerned in the portrayal of the narrator's collapse.

Lüttmann considers the entire incident of the narrator's physical collapse a stylistic disappointment because the collapse intimated by the narrator in his reference to a "Zusammenbruch" (Fluchtpunkt, p. 179) is a psychic one, whereas the collapse which actually occurs, "Nierenkolik," is purely physical (see p. 318). The narrator suffers from kidney stones and undergoes surgery. Afterwards the narrator interprets the surgical removal of his kidney stones as symbolic of his release from the injunctions of his parents and teachers which he feels have thus far prevented him from realizing his full potential:

Dies war die Wahnwelt, und ich konnte sie verändern, ich brauchte mich nicht mehr damit abzuschleppen, sie war mir aus dem Leib geschnitten worden, sie hatte nur die glücklichen Kindheitsjahre gefressen, aber ich konnte mir andere Jahre erfinden, konnte den faulen Zauber wegwerfen und in das Gelächter der Verachtung ausbrechen, das früher einmal gebändigt gewesen war. (pp. 207-08)

Lüttmann regards this interpretation of the narrator's illness as an example of a "dubioser Symbolhaftigkeit" which deteriorates "in die Nähe des Lächlicheren" (pp. 318-19). It is absurd that the narrator is so alienated from his own past that he feels that he may be released from it through a ritual of surgical exorcism. However, while I agree with Lüttmann regarding the absurdity of
the episode of the narrator's collapse, the use of a purely physical illness to signify a psychic state is not an uncommon metaphor in literature. Lüttmann's objection appears to be that the particular disease of "Nierenkolik" because it is not so readily "romanticized" is inadequate as a metaphor. Yet, Weiss's works often involve the depiction of such illnesses. For example, in his drama Trotzki im Exil Lenin is portrayed as suffering from a skin disease while Trotzki claims a preoccupation with all his bodily functions, with his "Magen. Darm. Herz. Nieren," functions which "nehmen mich oft tagelang in Anspruch." Anneliese Grosse and Brigitte Thurm in "Gesellschaftliche Irrelevanz und manipulierbare Subjektivität" offer the following interpretation of the portrayal of Lenin in Trotzki im Exil:


It is not simply, as Grosse and Thurm would explain it, that Lenin is alienated from the world, from the Revolution, but that his alienation from the world is expressed in terms of alienation from the self. To suffer an eruption on the skin is to experience the self as a threatening object. In this context Trotzki is as alienated from himself as Lenin. Trotzki's surveillance of his own body, whose functions claim his attention for days on end,
suggests that he too regards the self as a potentially hostile other. In contrast to Lüttmann's contention regarding the limitation of disease as a metaphor, the implication here is that disease entails a psychic state, and that psychic state is the experience of the self as object or the experience of the alienated self.

The result of the narrator's collapse is to divide the self. The experience is one of detachment and powerlessness:

Ich kannte nicht die Zahl meiner Rückenwirbel und Rippen, die Form meines Herzens und Magens, konnte den Sitz der Gallenblase, der Nieren nicht genau ausfindig machen, sah nur ein unklares Gebilde, mitschattenhaften Geweben, Sehnen, Adern, wogend, pochend, voller Flüssigkeiten. Dieses Gebilde war ich, mit diesem Gebilde stellte ich mich dar, lief ich herum, und der Kopf war nur eine kleine Observationszentrale. (pp. 196-97)

Consciousness is depicted as trapped within a potentially hostile world over which it has no control. In his collapse the narrator feels so disconnected from himself that he is reduced to the role of passive observer. He experiences himself as an object among other objects so that from his perspective even a crumpled up piece of paper assumes gigantic proportions. The narrator's description of himself being carried out to the ambulance "in einem Heulen und Zähneklappern" (p. 199) suggests that hell for the narrator is the experience of oneself as passive object, as a victim. The actions of the hospital personnel affirm the narrator's assumed anonymity—in giving his statistics he momentarily forgets that he has a wife and child—as dehumanized and estranged from the world, a "Gegenstand wissenschaftlicher Untersuchungen" (p. 202). The macabre depiction of the operating
table as a banquet table set for a celebration indicates the
degree to which the narrator as a patient is alienated from
the "unverständlichen Maschinerie" (p. 204) of the hospital
rituals and also the degree to which these rituals are
themselves alienating. The bright lights, the anesthetic,
the counting as the patient loses consciousness all illumine
the self as object while obscuring the human. Disease, for the
narrator, is the ultimate experience of victimization both
because it divides and alienates the self and because it places
him, as a patient, in a situation which reinforces this
alienation.

The narrator's stay at a farm to work during harvest time
provides another example of the alienating effect of social
rituals. The narrator is distressed by the backward conditions
on the farm and complains of the "Unwille vor Veränderungen,"
the "Urzustand vor einer Aufklärung und Bildung" (p. 125), which
exists despite the fact that Sweden has a progressive
government. He complains about the food which the farmhands are
forced to eat while the overseers sit down to a separate table
of real coffee, butter and meat. Because he has nothing to lose,
the narrator walks in and eats the food set out for the overseers.
The other farmhands do not follow and although they are
intrigued by the narrator's actions they finally come to the
conclusion that his bizarre behavior is to be attributed to the
fact that he is a foreigner who does not understand local
customs. Lüttmann describes the narrator's stance as naive,
socially and politically irrelevant (see pp. 363-64). On the
contrary, it would seem to me that the narrator's recognition of the use of this social ritual to dehumanize, to define the farmhands as less than the overseers and thus as less than human, is rather perceptive. It is not that the farmhands do not understand the narrator's rebellion nor perceive his behavior, as Lüttmann contends, as "sinnvoll" (p. 364). They do understand the full implications of the narrator's actions. The social ritual violates the humanity of the farmhands by defining them as subordinate but it does at least define them in terms of conventional social relationships. The narrator has nothing to lose by violating the ritual in two ways: he has nothing to lose because he is only a temporary worker, and he has nothing to lose in the sense that he already is socially isolated. He is, as the farmhands conclude, an outsider. The decision made by the farmhands is that it is better to be related to the world in a way that is less than human than it is not to be related to the world at all. The narrator's decision as he defined it initially in his conversation with Max Bernsdorf and later in his discussions with Hoderer is that he renounces all relationships to time and place in order to realize fully his own potentialities. The question is whether the decision of the farmhands to ignore the alienating effect of the social rituals renders them any less alienated than the narrator who refuses to participate and in so doing remains an outsider.

As in the case of the farmhands, the narrator is frustrated in his attempts to involve his fellow workers in the lumber
The narrator suggests that the workers have books sent to them but finds himself blocked by the resistance of his fellow workers, by their "stumpfes Misstrauen vor allen Veränderungen" (p. 147). The narrator speculates that his heightened awareness in contrast to the indifference of the others is to be attributed to his middle class status: "Dass ich mir Zeit nahm, die Erscheinungen in mir nachzuzeichnen und mir bewusst zu machen, entsprach das nicht nur meiner alten bürgerlichen Geborgenheit und Musse" (p. 151). Lüttmann considers the narrator's conclusion regarding his middle class status as "einer der relevantesten Reflexionen des Fluchtpunkts überhaupt" and views it in terms of "einer höchst ungewöhnlichen Verständigkeit des Erzählers im Hinblick auf die materielle Grundlage der eigenen ästhetischen Haltung gegenüber der Realität und damit des eigenen Künstlertums" (p. 375). Lüttmann's attention to the narrator's distinction between himself and the other workers at the camp is significant for Lüttmann's understanding of the character of the narrator and of the meaning of the novel. Much of his analysis of the narrator hinges upon an understanding of the narrator as "sozial privilegiert," as middle class. Lüttmann's earlier use of a psychological frame of reference, whereby he explains the narrator's behavior as determined by the traumas of childhood and a search for father figures such as Max Bernsdorf, the psychiatrist Baahl and Hoderer, has become a sociological frame of reference and is key to the work:
Es scheint mir ausser Frage zu stehen, dass auch das nahezu permanente materielle Beschützthein, der "Aufenthalt" in einem Schonraum sozialer Privilegiertheit, eine der wesentlichen Ursachen für die Unfähigkeit des Erzählers darstellt, sich aus der Kindhaftigkeit zu lösen. (p. 373)

However, in contrast to Lüttmann's supposition it would appear to me that much of the novel is concerned with the likelihood that there is no refuge for the narrator. The narrator's portrayal of his own middle class background emphasizes its total inadequacy as a defense against a hostile world.

At the beginning of the novel the narrator makes a reference to the "Geborgenheit" of his middle class home. He speaks of how his mother and sister turned away from one of his self portraits and discusses with Max Bernsdorf how the painting could have originated in a middle class household, "Alles was ihm dargeboten wird, weckt seinen Unwillen, vor den Regungen der Wärme flieht er in selbstgewählte Kälte, er lehnt die Geborgenheit ab . . ." (pp. 41-42). Suggested by the inability of the narrator's mother and sister to confront him with his painting is that this "Geborgenheit" is false because it necessitates a denial of experiences which would reveal it to be inadequate. The narrator comments on his position in Sweden as having been made possible by his father's ability to protect him from a hostile world. He notes that he would have remained in Germany had his father not had the forethought and the resources to enable his family to escape. However, in the process of shielding itself from a hostile world the family expresses the very values of that world which it sought to escape, a plight
which involves the family in a self-delusion similar to that which the narrator portrays in his work. In the course of an argument with the narrator's younger brother the father calls the brother a "verfluchter Judenlümme" and the narrator concludes, "Draussen lag der Hof mit den grunzenden Schweinen, und drinnen im Haus verdammte Abraham sein Geschlecht" (p. 74). The family's material wealth, the plentiful food and surplus of furniture, serves to deny any of its members any real comfort just as the interminable conversations preclude intimacy. The actions of the narrator's friend who destroys his place of work and smashes to pieces all the furniture in the house is indicative of rage directed at symbols of wealth which offer no protection against a hostile society. The mother's categorization of the friend as insane and her dismissal of the narrator's writings as disturbing imply that one function of this family is the systematic denial of the legitimacy of the experiences of its members. In summary, the portrayal of the narrator's family reveals its "Geborgenheit" to be a delusion. The family is described as an alienating world which limits its members by denying the validity of any experiences which would allow for insight into the true nature of their situation.

The narrator describes his decision to work at the lumber camp as a surrendering of the self to "der Verbannung und Verdammnis" (p. 131), as a peculiar act of self-damnation. He explicitly denies that his choice is a response to any particular feature of his world. Moreover, since he chooses the lumber camp because it involves work for which he is least suited, the
narrator's decision has the effect of placing him in a situation where he will be least effective in responding to his environment, where he cannot help but be alienated from the world about him. The narrator's desire to have books sent in to the camp for himself and his fellow workers implies that the normal distractions of life in the camp (card playing, joking and conversation) falls short of the narrator's requirement of sophistication. In "Blanckenburg's Fluchtpunkt oder Peter Weiss und der deutsche Bildungsroman" Reinhold Grimm makes the following allusion to this incident in the novel:

Der Held im Fluchtpunkt spricht nicht bloss von seinem "Werdegang" oder "Entwicklungsgang," sondern nimmt sogar wörtlich Begriffe wie "Bildung" oder "Weiterbildung" auf, deren Fehlen bei Bauernknechten und Holzfällern er zudem, auf gut bürgerliche Weise, zu tadeln geneigt ist.

Lüttmann views the narrator's failure to awaken the interests of the "underprivileged" workers as the result of the limitations imposed on the narrator by his own position of social privilege (see pp. 365-66). According to Lüttmann, the narrator's desire for books to share with his fellow workers evokes a false sense of solidarity since it denies the social difference between them. However, the denial of difference implies that the narrator's wish to share his books defines an attitude the opposite of social privilege: universal entitlement. In his complaint that the workers do not have access to "Weiterbildung" the narrator is advancing the position that the workers are entitled to have their needs met through the exercise of the same middle class options to which the narrator has access. Both Grimm and Lüttmann imply that the narrator assigns to these options a
positive value and that the value of "Weiterbildung" is accepted by him without question. On the contrary, it may be that the narrator desires to share his view of the world with his fellow workers although he is aware of the limitations imposed by his middle class perceptions. This phenomenon is similar to the narrator's decision to leave his only child with his mother despite his awareness of the destructiveness of that environment. It may simply mean that the narrator is unable to imagine a way in which human beings might respond to the world that is not alienating.

The distinction drawn by the narrator between himself and the other workers is that he is conscious of himself and his world. The question is whether or not the narrator's heightened consciousness of the world makes any difference. In contrast to Lüttmann's notion of solidarity, the following description by the narrator of life at the lumber camp suggests an identity between him and the other workers based upon a shared impotence before forces over which they have no control:

und wenn wir dann auf die Nacht warteten, sie über den Spielkarten, den zerlesenen Zeitschriften, ich über dem Heft, mit dem Bleistift kritzeln, verging der kleine Unterschied einer Bildung, eines stärkeren Bewusstseins, in dem ich glaubte, von ihnen abgesondert zu sein, und die Nacht war gleich für uns alle. (p. 150)

Similarly, the narrator's observation regarding the difference between what he sees from the window of the streetcar and what is noticed by his fellow workers (see pp. 152-53), while patronizing, expresses the narrator's own sense of the futility
of his endeavors.

The narrator's experience of identity with others based upon shared impotence before forces beyond their control is a recurrent theme of the novel. In his relationship with the artist Anatol, the narrator is first impressed with the artist's expressed solidarity with a persecuted race and with his ability to escape the seclusion of life in exile in order to depict the concerns of a larger world (see pp. 50-52). Anatol later experiences difficulties with his work, and he attributes his problems to his position as an exile in a country which he finds particularly inhospitable. Anatol's complaint that his paintings only depict terror and powerlessness reminds the narrator of an incident in the artist's early childhood which suggests an initial experience of extreme vulnerability. The narrator begins a lengthy account of the relationship between Anatol, his wife and the writer Fanny. The narrator's account contains the following conclusion:

ich sah, dass das, was ihn [Anatol] peinigte, dazugehörte zu seinen grossen gemalten Visionen, dass es vielleicht bedeutender war als die Vertreibung, die Ausrottung, die Zertrümmerung von Städten, denn dies hier war das Fassbare, dies hier waren die mitteilbaren Erfahrungen von Verfolgung, Misstrauen, Betrug, hier spielte sich das Dasein ab, im Missglücken der menschlichen Beziehungen, in den Lügen, in den Halbheiten, im Mangel an Zutrauen zu sich selbst. Dahinter lag das Andere, das allen gehörte, es durchdrang alles, doch greifbar waren nur die Zigaretten, die er Fanny kaufte. . . .

(p. 232)

Implied by the narrator's conclusion is the existence of three worlds: the larger, historical world; the world of subjective
experience; and the world of the objects experienced. While the larger world is felt through its ability to permeate the other two worlds, only the second world can be apprehended and communicated. However, an active response to the world is only possible through a manipulation of the objects experienced. The growing severity and coldness which the narrator perceives in Anatol's paintings upon the success which follows both his wife's and Fanny's death suggests that Anatol has become a victim to a world in which he has a limited range of response. Similarly, the narrator intimates that the failure of his marriage to Edna is the result of their inability to respond to each other (see p. 165). All persons in the novel with one possible exception are victims of a world in which their range of response is limited. The artist Amos is reduced to manipulating the world for his own personal pleasure. Max Bernsdorf responds to a world which is restored to him too late. The exception is Hoderer who, in choosing not to be a victim, commits suicide.

Fluchtpunkt consists of the recollections of the narrator of the events of his life two decades after their occurrence. The narrator suggests that his recollections are occasioned by an inadequacy of response to the world: he feels the need to relive those moments of his life "die immer übermächtig waren, die sich nie ausschöpfen liessen, deren Forderungen ich nie erfüllen konnte, und die immer weitere Wellenkreise in mir warfen" (p. 291). The narrator speaks of these moments from the past as forcing themselves into the present (see p. 296).
Nonetheless, these moments are not directly accessible to the narrator. The narrator himself has changed, his former self having been subsumed by his present self. For this reason the narrator's attempt to recover the past is also a search for the buried aspect of himself. His attempts to recollect the past are further hindered by his inability to gain clarity as indicated by the fact that his early records and papers offer him little assistance. Just as the Stockholm of the sixties contains little evidence of the city of two decades ago, when the narrator revisits the exhibit of polar bears in the museum he sees no evidence of the struggle he once perceived there. The recording of the narrator's recollections therefore necessitates the reconstruction of a second world. "ein zweites, eingebildetes Leben, in dem alles, was verschwommen und unbestimmt war, Deutlichkeit vorspiegelt" (p. 36). In this second world the narrator is able to recreate "die gebaßte, einmalige Situation," which serves as a reference point ("Anhaltspunkt") in a world of flux (p. 291). The narrator's freedom to manipulate the objects of his experience is limited only by the demands of the present: "ein Jahrzehnt lang, legen sich neue Augenblicke darüber, neue Erfahrungen, und ich peile sie aus, verfälsche sie, benutze sie für meine gegenwärtigen Absichten, suche nach Spuren in ihnen, die in die heutige Stunde führen . . . " (p. 297). The compulsion exercised by the past renders the narrator unable to adequately respond to the world in the present. The detachment necessary for the narrator to experience himself as free and responsible is felt only retrospectively:

Conditions imposed by environment and upbringing were such as to effectively obscure freedom and responsibility. The narrator was left with one choice: flight. The insights of freedom and responsibility which the narrator derives from the reconstruction of the world of his experiences occur too late to have effectively widened the range of choices. Thus, neither the process of recollection nor the insights derived from this surrogate world, this "Ersatz für etwas Verlorenes" (p. 291), define an effective response to the world.

The last flight recounted by the narrator in Fluchtpunkt is his trip to Paris in the spring of 1947, at the age of thirty. In "Die Position von Peter Weiss in den Jahren 1937-1965 und der Prosatext Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers" Dieter Hensing offers an analysis of the change in the narrator which is occasioned by the trip to Paris. Hensing views the four incidents—the reading of the Tropic of Cancer, the narrator's reflections upon a conversation with the writer Fanny, the narrator's return to his parents' house with his daughter, and the narrator's relationship with the actress Cora—which immediately precede the narrator's departure for Paris as laying the groundwork for the change to follow (see p. 140). I agree
with Hensing regarding the importance of these four incidents. For the narrator the effect of reading the *Tropic of Cancer* is to deny the legitimacy of forces which he had experienced as beyond his control and to grant permission to explore those aspects of himself which he had considered tabu. The effect is to render the world vulnerable and the self more accessible. The argument between Fanny and the narrator concerns his attempt to effect personal change through writing. Fanny's position is that, regardless of the insights and personal justification the narrator achieves in his writings, the narrator's art in itself is incapable of bringing about change. In regard to the problems of his marriage, she concludes, "An deinem Schreibtisch klärst du keinen einzigen Konflikt deiner Ehe auf" (p. 261). She suggests that if the narrator's marriage is a failure the only solution is to act on that insight and seek a separation. The narrator separates from his wife and leaves his child with his parents. The narrator experiences his family's efforts to protect itself from the world as futile. His first relationship with Cora ends unhappily because he is unable to distinguish between the real person capable of human response and the actress on the stage. In each of these four incidents is contained the possibility or necessity of an openness to the world which would allow the narrator to participate in the world.

Hensing divides the narrator's experiences in Paris into two sections: the narrator first experiences the loss of everything which conditioned his former existence and reawakens
to a new sense of openness to the world and to the
possibility of his participation in the world (see pp. 146-49).
The first section appears to me to represent the narrator's flight from his perceptions of himself as trapped by his environment and his upbringing. In the second section the narrator assumes an identity in regard to place, is "ansässig in einem Land" (p. 304), and to time, the present. He discovers his own language. It is a means of self-expression independent of the country in which he grew up, and he concludes, "dass es sich auf der Erde leben und arbeiten liess und dass ich teilhaben konnte an einem Austausch von Gedanken, der ringsum stattfand, an kein Land gebunden" (p. 307). Hensing takes issue with those critics who would confuse the incidents immediately leading to the narrator's decision to leave for Paris with the change which the narrator undergoes in Paris. However, there appears to be good reason for confusion. If, as Hensing suggests, the four incidents are to be understood as the narrator's experience of the "Notwendigkeit, sich gegen Isolation und für Anteilnahme (welcher Art auch immer) zu entscheiden" (p. 141), and the change itself to be understood as "Öffnung zur Welt als Möglichkeit der Teilnahme und Teilhabe" (p. 149), then both states are preconditions for participation in the world and are not participation itself. Moreover, the possibility for participation in the world is based upon the narrator's discovery of language independent from culture. This would suggest that the narrator's decision is a passive response to the world through the discovery of a new means for self-expression.
Upon writing to Peter Weiss concerning the title of his novel Lüttmann received the following reply: "'FLUCHTPUNKT ist im geometrischen Sinne gemeint. Die Unendliche in der Perspektive. Weist auf Vergangenheit und Zukunft hin'" (p. 396). In perspective a vanishing point is the point where parallel lines receding from the observer seem to come together. There is a point in which events seem to come together in the past and a point in which events seem to come together in the future: these two points form the same vanishing point. In the beginning of the novel the narrator decides to realize his own freedom by divorcing himself from the world. However, in the course of abnegating his responsibility for the world the narrator becomes a victim of the very world he seeks to escape. The narrator achieves the insight that he is a victim to environment and to conditions over which he has relinquished control. In his final flight the narrator seeks to escape these insights derived from the experiences of his own victimization. In fleeing these insights, rather than embracing them in action upon the world, the narrator permits no possibility of anything but separation from the past and from important aspects of self. It is this separation which constitutes the narrator's alienation and which defines both his past and future.

Otto F. Best in Peter Weiss: Vom existentialistischen Drama zum marxistischen Welttheater. Eine kritische Bilanz emphasizes the significance of the narrator's disclosure of his dual identity as victim and executioner. The narrator comments upon this dual identity in conversation with Max Bernsdorf in
Fluchtpunkt: "Deutlich sah ich nur, dass ich auf der Seite der Verfolger und Henker stehen konnte. Ich hatte das Zeug in mir, an einer Exekution teilzunehmen" (p. 17). For Best, the consideration of this problem in Fluchtpunkt raises a fundamental issue of the twentieth century: "Die Möglichkeit zur negativen Demaskierung ist dem Menschen immanent und in seiner Existenz permanent. Sie gehört zum Wesen unserer Zivilisation, die in der Tatsache des Kissens auf dem elektrischen Stuhl einen Beweis für Humanität sieht."

In Best's view, Weiss's portrayal in Fluchtpunkt of the identity of victim and executioner represents an "Objektivierung subjektiv-privater Problematik" (p. 9). Already in that novel begins for Best the process of the transposition of a conflict which is psychological in origin into the realm of the social and the ideological, a process which Best views as becoming increasingly evident in Weiss's later works (see p. 39). However, the cushion on the electric chair has nothing to do with insuring the comfort of the victim; it has a great deal to do with insulating victim and executioners from the perception of objective reality. Involved is the use of social rituals to circumvent the individual's perception of an event so that he simply does not perceive that what is happening is happening. Thus, both victim and executioner are removed from the subjective reality of their experiences and the objective reality of the event itself. The supposition that a group of individuals fails to perceive objective reality because it is not in its best interest to do so is ideological. To the extent that Hoderer suggests to the narrator that he refuses to
recognize objective reality because it is not in his best interests as a member of the middle class to do so, Hoderer's argument is, as Best maintains (see p. 34), ideological. Nonetheless, Fluchtpunkt is the record of the narrator's evasion of insights about the nature of the world, an evasion which leads to alienation from the self and the world. In deciding to divorce himself from the world the narrator chose to cultivate those aspects of the self which allow for freedom and autonomy. The necessity for this decision arose out of his relationship to the world in which the constraints placed upon him by his parents and experiences of random violence conspired to hinder the development of an autonomous self. The dilemma faced by the narrator is that this focus on the self reenacts a relationship to the world in which he remains a victim. What is objectified in this process of reenactment is not the self but the relationship to the world. This relationship defines the "objective situation" and is reinforced by social rituals which victimize and dehumanize the self. In this manner the narrator is alienated both from the subjective reality of the self in its aspects of freedom and autonomy and from the objective reality of a world in which he is able to participate both freely and responsibly.
Chapter 4

Das Gespräch der drei Gehenden:
the ontology of alienation

Das Gespräch der drei Gehenden opens with a brief description of three men, Abel, Babel and Cabel, who having met by chance hold a conversation while out walking. Speaking in the third person, the narrator describes not only the physical appearance and activities of the three figures but also the thoughts of passers-by concerning them. The presence of an "omniscient author" at the opening of the work is significant since the remainder of the narration consists solely of the conversation of the three men. For this reason particular attention will be given to the narrator's remarks.

The narrator states that the three men speak in succession, no one speaking at the same time as another: "Wenn einer sprach schwiegen die beiden andern und hörten zu oder sahen sich um und hörten auf anderes, und wenn der eine zuende gesprochen hatte, sprach der zweite, und dann der dritte, und die beiden andern hörten zu oder dachten an anderes."¹ The work is divided into thirty-one sections which are neither titled nor numbered but simply divided through spacing. The first of these sections consists of the narrator's remarks. The remaining sections are written in the first person. Since the narrator states that the men are speaking it is reasonable to assume that each of the
remaining sections represents a contribution made by one of the three figures to the conversation. As the three men never address each other by name and there is no indication by the narrator as to the identity of the speaker, it is difficult (and sometimes impossible) to determine which of the three men is speaking at any given time. However, ten of the thirty sections deal almost exclusively with a ferryman and his six sons which suggests that these ten sections are spoken by the same man. At least two of these ten sections are definitely spoken by the same man because in one section (see p. 101) the speaker states that his earlier account of a visit to the ferryman and his family at their home (see pp. 23-24) was incorrect. Similarly, other sections in the work also contain references to earlier sections: a speaker refers to a civil marriage ceremony (p. 67) which he has described earlier (pp. 19-21), a speaker refers his companions to a night spent on an island (p. 100) which he has earlier told them about (pp. 63-67), and a speaker mentions a white house his father entered (p. 117), an apparent reference to the white house he talks about in relation to his father earlier in the conversation (p. 24). Another apparent reference is a speaker's allusion to "das andere" (p. 107) which appears to refer to an earlier description of "das andere" as pursuing and tormenting him (p. 47). The last two references mentioned are based upon a similarity of content between the different sections, i.e., the reappearance of a white house and the repeated allusion to "das andere." It is possible to discern other similarities of content between sections which would make it possible to determine a greater number of sections.
spoken by the same person. However, any parallels between the remaining sections are neither as pronounced nor as conclusive as the ones already mentioned. For example, three sections contain references to carriages: two are descriptions of an accident involving a carriage ride over a bridge, one given by one of the passengers (pp. 10-15) and the other by an observer (p. 77), and a third refers to the aftermath of such an accident although the passengers and their situation seem to be quite different (pp. 115-17). The fact that these three sections contain both similar and dissimilar elements undermines the conclusion that they are spoken by the same person. Helmut Lüttmann in his study of the work tentatively identifies the speaker for each section. Lüttmann assumes that no two successive sections are spoken by the same person and thus is able to derive the identity of certain speakers through a process of elimination. Lüttmann construes the narrator's remark that one man speaks until he has finished and that then another speaks to imply that each section marks when any one speaker has begun and finished speaking. However, each section is also self-contained or, as Lüttmann discusses it, exhibits "Geschlossenheit" (see pp. 501-07) as indicated by the fact that each incident related by the speaker forms a section with a definite beginning and end, i.e., a carriage meets with an accident on a bridge but eventually reaches its destination, a speaker's description of his estrangement from his wife and subsequent flight from his home ends with the speaker's judgment on the finality of that estrangement. The inclusive nature of each section thus marks a complete story related by
one of the speakers, a fact which does not preclude the same speaker from then turning his attention to another topic which would then form another section. In regard to the remark that each man speaks until he has finished, Lüttmann himself interprets this statement by the narrator as formulating a general model for the conversation of the three men. A more narrow interpretation might suggest that the three men speak in sequence which they do not since already in the very beginning of the work both the second and fourth sections concern the ferryman and thus may be presumed to be spoken by the same man. Lüttmann admits that his scheme for determining the identity of each speaker is only plausible and not to be taken as definitively correct. Thus, while Lüttmann's identification of the speakers may be accurate—it is certainly not directly contradicted by the text—it is not necessarily true. What would appear to me to be significant for the work is that it consists of a conversation between three men who can be identified as speakers at a given time and for whom identification is, since the text itself does not allow for conclusive identification of the speakers, nonetheless superfluous.

This tension between what is known and what is possible applies not only to the format of the conversation but to its content as well. The narrator states that the three men speak about what they see and what they have seen: "Sie gingen und sahen sich um und sahen was sich zeigte, und sie sprachen darüber und über anderes was sich früher gezeigt hatte" (p. 7). In fact, all of what they do see is related to what they have seen, to the past. For example, one of the men remarks that he
sees his father going into a white building which is either his father's house or place of business. The speaker describes his father's passage through the interior of the building, a description which becomes more and more detailed as the father enters his own apartments until the last detail becomes the memory of the father entering the speaker's room (see pp. 24-26). It is odd that the speaker's description should become more and more detailed as the events described by him becomes less directly apprehensible. The next speaker states that the building is recent, thus implying that the first speaker could not have lived there as a child. According to the second speaker, the building marks the former site of the docks where the ferryman's sons used to work and where guards patrolled at night (see pp. 26-30). It is interesting that the second speaker should document his contradiction of the first speaker's remarks through a reference to the ferryman's sons. The second speaker claimed earlier in the conversation to have heard of the existence of the ferryman's sons while riding back and forth on the ferry just yesterday (see pp. 15-19). As Lüttmann points out (see p. 424), if the other two speakers are correct in maintaining that the bridge on which two of the speakers met at the beginning of the conversation has been in existence for a long time, then there would have been no need for a ferry across the water. Similarly, the second speaker could not have taken the ferry just yesterday and thus could not have heard the story of the ferryman's six sons. Furthermore, the second speaker twice conditions his own story of the ferryman and his sons suggesting that he may not
have understood the ferryman correctly when he was recounting the story to him and that even the names he gives to the six sons may be just guesses. Similarly, the first speaker had described the building in terms suggesting that his father might have lived there (see p. 25). The second speaker's account of the docks is further contradicted by a third speaker's statement that there is no watchman there at night and that he knows that because he fled there one night from his home (see p. 30). This third speaker may or may not be identical with the first speaker. Thus, we are given three contradictory accounts of the present. Each speaker's account of the present is supported by its relation to an event in the past. Furthermore, each of the speakers relates the present to his own unique set of experiences in the past, not to shared experiences. Thus, it is not merely that past events become the context for the present, but that that context is unable to contain the present in its full significance. Not only are past experiences referred to in order to explain the present but that explanation is also continuously made to appear ambiguous. The ambiguity involved in such explanations may become more evident if we consider, for example, what is known about the white house and what is merely possible.

The white house does exist. We know that a bridge exists because the narrator states that Abel and Babel met each other on the bridge (see p. 7). An argument occurs about how long the bridge has stood just as there is an argument about how long the white house has been there. Because we have the narrator's word that the bridge exists it may be assumed by analogy that
all the other things which the three men directly encounter while out walking exist to the same degree. Thus, the man in the streetcar, the cemetery, the procession at the tomb of the unknown soldier, the river's edge, the entrance to the subway, the office building, and the man entering the white house all exist in the same way in which the bridge exists. We also know that the speaker who identifies the man entering the white house as his father shows the other two men a picture which he claims is a photograph of his father as a young man: the narrator explains that the men carry such documents about with them, "trugen bei sich nur was in den Taschen der Kleidungsstücke lag, was mit schnellem Griff gezeigt und wieder verwahrt werden konnte" (p. 7). However, the narrator in his brief description of the three men furnishes us with no information which would decide the speaker's claim that it is his father entering the white house. The photograph along with the details of the speaker's description merely support the possibility that it is his father. Similarly, the remarks of the second speaker together with that speaker's own lack of certitude and the fact that his remarks are in turn contradicted by the other speakers so that his remarks appear to both refute and not refute the first speaker are such as to insure that the first speaker's remarks remain within the realm of possibility only. In other words, we know that a white house exists but we are unable to ascertain its significance; we do not know what it means, if anything.

The same speaker describes his own perplexity in regard to the house:
Das Haus, in das mein Vater ging, dieses grosse weisse Haus, mit den vielen Fenstern, die Wände mit Steinplatten besetzt, ich weiss nicht, was ich von diesem Haus halten soll, weiss nicht, ob es schön oder hässlich zu nennen ist, und ob es sich überhaupt darin leben lässt. (pp. 117-18)

The speaker proceeds to offer parallel descriptions of the man leaving the house: one man, his father, is out for a walk, confident in his achievements; the other man, also his father, is the porter, who enjoys a few close moments with his son. The fact that the speaker has recourse to the past in order to deal with his perplexity regarding the house suggests that his reminiscences represent a continual search for reference points with which to evaluate the present. However, the speaker also states that the moment of closeness with his father comes upon him in connection with all the houses of the past and of the future suggesting that he is also searching for a connection between the past and the present. However, his recollection of the past consists of two contradictory incidents. The fact that it is not possible for the speaker in the present to decide between these two versions of the story implies that no such connection between past and present exists.

At one point the conversation between the three men focuses upon an incident occurring in the present: a speaker describes a ceremony which Lüttmann identifies as the placing of a wreath on the tomb of the unknown soldier (see p. 410) and a speaker comments on the dispersal of the crowd after the ceremony. The procession is described by the speaker as it arrives at the tomb where one of the participants gives a speech after two others lay
down the wreath. The politicians are described as infant-like, "kleine korpulente Herren mit gemästeten Säuglinggesichtern" (p. 49), and the public is reduced to the role of spectator, is referred to as "alles was sonst noch herumsteht" (p. 50). The speaker is unable to hear the politician's speech at the tomb and furnishes a rather bizarre list of suggestions regarding the content of the speech (see pp. 50-51). The effect of such a description of the ritual is to have the whole event appear as a grotesque historical accident. This is reinforced by a description of the ritual without reference to events which precede it and by a description which continually refers to the diminished capacity of the participants and the observer. The repeated allusions to the "Ledersoldaten" and the fact that the speakers are left in a "Wolke von blauem Gas" (p. 51) suggest that despite its absurdity the ritual is no less ominous. It is a comparable synthesis of absurdity and violence which underlies the ritual involving one of the speaker's induction into the army and which also accounts for the rise of the careerist Jam. Jam, the first of the ferryman's six sons, had been mentioned earlier by one of the speakers who described him as a kind of grotesque receptacle (see pp. 15-16). Lüttmann contrasts this earlier description of the ferryman's sons with the later depiction of Jam the careerist and concludes that with the later depiction Jam's grotesqueness becomes ironic for the following reason:

weil Jam dort als eine Gestalt ausserhalb jeden gesellschaftlichen Kontextes erschien und deshalb wie eine phantastische Figur wirkte, während er hier eine hohe gesellschaftliche Position bekleidet und diese durch das Hervorheben der grotesken Merkmale seines Äusseren gewissermassen mitbetroffen wird. (p. 515)
But the ferryman's first son does originally appear in a social context: he is a part of the ferryman's family. As a child he appears to be as much involved in the family social rituals as Jum who is constantly being fed desserts and Jym who lives in a crate in the yard. A more obvious reference to the family is given by another speaker who after describing how his mother and father repeatedly beat him concludes, "und wir bildeten eine Familie" (p. 44). Of course, such a reference to the family is ironic and is so precisely because it implies a definition of the family which renders it absurd as a meaningful social context. Furthermore, it would appear to me that the conclusion that the family is a meaningless social context is unavoidable. By assuming that the bizarre set of circumstances by which Jam becomes a receptacle for public honors provides a social context for Jam's career, Lüttmann appears to confuse the purely ironic with the factual. The irony of the text is the implication that a social context can be reduced to such absurd sets of circumstances as the family relationships involving the ferryman and his family and also the family of one of the speakers, the ritual placement of the wreath on the tomb of the unknown soldier and the rise of Jam, the careerist. If not in irony, then the notion that these circumstances form a social context at all is highly questionable.

One of the three speakers describes the dispersal of the crowd after the procession to the tomb of the unknown soldier and remarks, "fast ist es, als gehört en wir diesem Getriebe an, als seien wir hier zuhause, als kämen wir selbst hier aus
irgendeinem Loch, als gäbe es hier irgendjemanden, der uns erwarte" (pp. 58-59). In regard to the speaker's implied reference to the doors of people's houses as holes in the wall through which they crawl out, Lüttmann remarks upon the "antigesellschaftlicher Affekt" of this usage while concluding that the speaker's feeling that he himself could be one of these people points to the three men's "unlösbare Verbundenheit mit der Sozietät" (p. 409). According to Lüttermann's interpretation, the three figures of Das Gespräch der drei Gehenden are marginal men, outsiders who exist in contradiction to the social norm, but who are nonetheless dependent upon the society which defines them as outcasts. The problem involved in Lüttermann's interpretation is our dependence upon the text to provide us with an understanding of the social norm and with a basis of comparison by which the three figures may be understood as outsiders. This difficulty involved in Lüttermann's interpretation becomes more apparent when we attempt to evaluate the three figures in comparison to Jam or to the crowd which gapes at and applauds the politicians during the ceremony at the tomb. Since the only context we are given for Jam and for the crowd is their participation in relatively meaningless activities, it is plausible that their involvement in the rituals of their daily lives, their departures and destinations, have merely obscured for them the disorientation from time and space which is in fact the norm. The assumption then would be, in contrast to Lüttermann's designation of the three figures as outsiders, that the only difference between the three men and anyone else is that they are uniquely conscious of their own disorientation from space
The stories related by the three speakers in the course of their conversation indicate that they experience themselves and others as disoriented or dislocated from space and time. One speaker describes how he returned one day after his father's funeral to discover himself displaced from his own home. He experiences himself in motion suspended in time: once when he first enters the apartment and stands in the middle of the room just at the point of fleeing, and again after his flight from the house when he returns and stops in midstep on the stairs. On the steps outside the door to the apartment the speaker first concentrates on the details he can perceive directly: "Ich sah mir die Einzelheiten so genau an, weil ich in jeder von ihnen noch auf das begehrte Wiedererkennen stieß, ich stand still, lauschte, vernahm eine siedende Stille, darin ein Plätschern und Sickern" (p. 32). He then describes the details of the rooms beyond the door as though the imagining of detail would render coherent that which is known to a lesser degree, and place more fully in the present that which is more temporally removed. The speaker's description which becomes more and more detailed as the events described by him become less directly apprehensible is comparable to his gesture when originally entering the apartment before his flight: "Ich wollte in diesem Augenblick die unkenntlich gewordene Zeit noch überwinden, ich hielt immer noch meinen Zeigefinger gehoben, um diese verronnene Zeit für nichtig zu erklären . . . " (p. 39). Each time he describes his flight away from the apartment in terms of a "Geschwindigkeit" by which
he experiences himself as falling, a description which implies the passage of time in the absence of a spatial component. Similarly, both his flight and his return to hide in the woodbox imply the extent to which he feels himself displaced from his home. The speaker's identification of a man on the street, whom the three men see while conversing, as the man who replaced him at home reveals that the speaker is attempting to locate his identity in an historical context which accounts for the present circumstances. His comments that the nature of his flight had been to render his dislocation permanent, had indicated "dass das was hinter mir lag nie wieder erreicht werden konnte" (p. 39), would itself suggest a search on his part for an understandable past event to account for a present predicament. Thus, the speaker not only experiences himself as dislocated from space and time but is also seeking a frame of reference which would provide validation for that experience in the present.

The speaker's story of his flight from home contains elements which recur throughout Das Gespräch der drei Gehenden. The speaker's use of detail to describe events not directly apprehensible is analogous to his, or another speaker's, description of the rooms in the white house and suggests that both are thereby attempting to bridge the past and the present. Another speaker flees his household when he is unable to resolve certain difficulties involving his wife and child. The speaker's description of this household focuses on the rearranging of the contents of one cupboard which contains nearly all their
possessions and which he calls "diesen riesigen Klotz von einem
Schrank" (p. 92) since it takes up a third of their living space
and thus literally as well as figuratively displaces them from
their home. The speaker's meticulous attention to the details
of this cupboard, interminable negotiations with his wife
regarding its contents, i.e., which plates to use for their
meal, which glasses, and finally which bandages to use on the
child, form much of the humor of this depiction of the household.
Implied in the description of the household is that both husband
and wife view themselves largely as victims: the husband
portrays himself as a victim to his wife's incessant demands upon
him and his own inability to fulfill them, and the wife—according
to her version her husband throws the contents of the cupboard at
her—as victim to her husband's aggression. Since there is no
way of reconciling the two versions of the running of the household,
the implied conclusion is that both are victim to forces which
they are unable to control. Similarly, the other speaker's
account of his flight from home with reference to the
"Geschwindigkeit" of that flight and accompanying sensation of
falling defines his flight not as a decision but rather as a
dislocation since it implies no causal connection with events
preceding it. Because of the absence of causal connections
it may be more appropriate to describe the speaker's account
as defining a state of being. The depiction of persons in
Das Gespräch der drei Gehenden as being trapped—-in one case a
speaker suggests as a probable reason for his flight "weil ich
mir drinnen im Haus wie in einer Falle vorkam" (p. 65)—-by forces
beyond their control becomes more apparent in reference to
incidents related by other speakers.

A speaker describes how he wanders around a city for several days. He gradually loses his sense of identity. When some men attempt to revive him while he is lying near the water's edge he feigns unconsciousness so that they will not throw him into the water. The speaker's phrase "und ich liess alles mit mir geschehn" (p. 42) repeats the expression used in regard to the horse which is removed from the bridge after the accident involving the carriages: "und das Pferd liess alles mit sich geschehn" (p. 12). The repetition of the phrase used in regard to the injured animal reinforces the portrayal of the speaker as a victim. This victimization together with the implied violence of the figure of the coachman and the rapidity with which help arrives to clear the bridge—the marshalling of the police and fire departments to clear the bridge is reminiscent of the conspiracy of workmen and government employees conjured up by one of the speakers to explain the overnight appearance of the bridge—suggest the existence of underlying forces of order and violence. The association of this order with victimization is reinforced by the comic portrayal in the incident of the accident of the carriages whereby the actions of the bride's parents cancel each other out (see p. 14). Another description of an accident on the bridge depicts the people trapped in their vehicles in such a manner as to render their situation analogous to that of the spectators after the ceremony at the tomb of the unknown soldier:

Da kommen schon die Sirenen und Trillerpfeifen, und in den Fahrzeugen sitzen sie geduldig an den
Both are depicted as victims of meaningless social rituals.

In regard to the speaker's first account of the carriage accident on the bridge Lüttermann concludes that the symmetry of movements involved in the description of the coachman and the collision of the carriages and in the depiction of the actions of the bride's parents as cancelling each other out impart a "Qualität des Arrangierten und Künstlichen" (p. 509) to the events. Lüttermann traces a similar symmetry in the speaker's version of the chaos which occurs in the office (see pp. 84-86) where despite the surrounding chaos the office hierarchy remains intact. According to Lüttermann the effect of such a symmetry in this scene is to introduce an element of the mechanical so that the participants appear as "Objekte der ständig sich weiter fortentwickelnden Ereignisse" (p. 511) of the office "revolt." The speaker actually provides in his account five versions of life in the office building: the workers are engaged in continual efforts to form relationships with one another while the office work takes care of itself; the workers are engaged in debilitating drudgery; the workers are involved in frenetic activity; the workers revolt and throw all the papers around the office; and in the final version everyone arrives on time, performs his appointed tasks and leaves. Each version supersedes the other and there is no reason to assume that the final version has any more validity than
any of the others. The versions appear to represent an attempt to exhaust the possibilities of life at the office. Considering Lüttmann's contention regarding the persistence of order implied in the office hierarchy, it is perhaps not only that the possibilities are exhausted but that the differences between them are finally inconsequential, that everything changes and yet remains the same. In the fifth version the speaker emphasizes the homogeneity of office life when he remarks, "ich kam morgens pünktlich zu meinen Pflichten, und abends fuhr ich im Omnibus zurück, festgekeiltes Mitglied des Ganzen, Arm in Arm, Schulter an Schulter mit meinesgleichen, im Strom der Strassen" (p. 86). The speaker's description is analogous to another speaker's impression of the monotonous grazing of the cows across the field at the ferryman's farm (see pp. 22-23). The speaker's later reference to the cows in the field in terms of their separation from their calves lends a dimension of cruelty to this image (see p. 102).

This dimension of cruelty and violence is perhaps most evident in the speaker's experience of "das Andere" as pursuing and tormenting him. The speaker describes his imprisonment and imagines that he is buried alive: "Und wenn man mich lebendig verscharrte, wie sollte ich da aus der Erde herauskommen, Zentner von Erde über mir, mein Mund voll Erde" (p. 48). He is haunted by such images and imagines that even when he feels himself free he is still in the power of his tormentors (see p. 49). As he experienced himself buried alive so he also experiences himself in the midst of dismembered
bodies. He attempts to master the situation through a written
description but is only able to produce a list of phonetic words,
a speech without definite sense or reference. In this
manner his attempts at language conform to the disconnected nature
of his experience. The speaker's depiction of himself as
having been consigned to a mass grave while providing his
experience with an imaginary context renders the experience no
less incomprehensible for him. While the speaker has been imagining
the details of this mass grave he has been lying in his room. He
gets up to find out that his telephone line is dead. What
proceeds is a comical description of how he is referred from
workman to foreman to telephone company officials to the main
office to try to resolve his predicament. The speaker states
that he finally gives up all attempts to have service restored
and returns to his room "wo ich die Lage des geringsten
Widerstands wieder aufnahm, und das Vergehen des Tages erwartete"
(p. 115). It is peculiar that the speaker should turn from a
depiction of mass graves to an anecdote of bureaucratic
inefficiency. It is as though in some strange way this force
which threatens the speaker with extinction permeated all
facets of existence so that incidents which are portrayed as
relatively comical like the speaker's difficulties with his
telephone or the hierarchy in the office or the confrontation
with the cupboard are nonetheless supported by this same
underlying malevolent force. A similar pattern is to be
discerned in the incidents involving the ferryman and his family.

The story of the ferryman is largely one of abrupt
dislocation. The ferryman who operates his ferry according to the clock leaving shore at a certain time "gleichgültig ob Fahrgäste eingestiegen waren oder nicht, ob Fahrgäste am gegenüberliegenden Ufer warteten oder nicht" (p. 10) is himself displaced in time. The bridge renders the ferry an anachronism and the absurd claim by the speaker that it is the ferryman whom he sees at the wheel of the streetcar merely serves to emphasize that there is no continuity between the past and the future. Similarly, the story related by the speaker of Jum in bed in "Staubwolken" (p. 103) as the highrises are constructed at the original site of the ferryman's house so that Jum's bed remains looking out over the offices of the telegraph agency represents a grotesque attempt to assimilate elements of the past into the present which in fact bear no relationship to the present. It is as though the speaker through his recognition of the ferryman in the streetcar or Jom at the subway station or his positioning of Jum in the midst of the highrises were able to thus hold on to what has provided meaning for him in the past thereby keeping track of his own identity. For it is not only the ferryman and his family which are dislocated but the speaker as well: in the final scene involving the ferryman and his family not only have the ferryman and his wife been violently ejected from their house but the speaker who once imagined himself as a welcome guest at their home is relegated to watching from the fence.

Lüttnann describes the speaker who is concerned with the ferryman and his family and whom Lüttnann identifies as Abel
as attempting through these stories to recapture the happiness of his childhood:

Dementsprechend ist die Tatsache, dass A fast ausschließlich über den Fährmann und dessen Umkreis spricht, höchstwahrscheinlich ein Indiz dafür, dass er beim Sprechen die Glückhaftigkeit seiner Kindheit, die er in diesem Bezirk erfahren hat, wiederzunehmen versucht. (p. 533)

In contrast to Abel who had a happy childhood even if his efforts to recover this childhood are disastrous, Lüttmann regards Babel and Cabel from the standpoint of their traumatic childhoods (see p. 539). Lüttmann's psychological explanation for the behavior of the three figures implies that these three men may be evaluated as characters. However, as in a film where a sequence of discrete moments forms the illusion of motion, so in Das Gespräch der drei Gehenden a series of discrete moments rapidly piled on top of one another only appears to develop "characters." As I have already suggested in regard to the inclusiveness of each section of the work and to the fact that it is both possible and superfluous to identify the speakers for each of these sections, each one of these moments is both individually distinct yet interchangeable. For these reasons and because I do not find it possible to discern any causal connections between the episodes or within any one episode it may be more appropriate to speak of the sections as describing features of ontological states of being. An understanding of the work as being composed of elements which are both discrete and interchangeable emphasizes the fragmentary
nature of the work and in this context it is possible to draw a parallel between the work and film. In "Literature in the Vicinity of the Film: On German and *nouveau roman* Authors" Hans-Bernhard Moeller identifies "the cutting process, fragmentation," as a predominant cinematic structure which occurs in literature.  

In regard to the three figures of *Das Gespräch der drei Gehenden* who look alike and whose names are so similar, Weiss apparently is saying that these three men regardless of—not because of, since that would imply a causal connection—the uniqueness of their experiences are the same. To say that there is no causal connection is to say that there is no context, that the three figures are presented asocially and ahistorically. The three men in their recollections of the past are involved in a continual search for reference points with which to establish their identity in the present by finding similarity between what is and what was. However, they experience only discontinuity and their own dislocation from space and time. Weiss seems to be saying that alienation is a universal condition of our time. There is no bridge between the past, present, and future. It is not so much that there is no connection of this kind between past and present and therefore there is alienation, as it is that the twentieth century is alienating so there is no connection. Because no such connection exists, any attempt to relate the past to the present seems absurd.

Nowhere is the alienation of the three figures and other persons depicted in *Das Gespräch der drei Gehenden* more evident than in the portrayal of social rituals. It may be assumed that
rituals such as these are used repetitively throughout the text to depict ominous occasions in which individuals seem to be passive victims of circumstances beyond their control. It is possible to argue, however, that rituals are used because they themselves imply social forms in which individuals—regardless of the ritual—are subordinate to the social form. Under ordinary circumstances such rituals convey social meaning from which the individual who subordinates himself apprehends consciousness of himself in relation to the ritual act. It is this relational consciousness which may be called social context. However, in Weiss the grotesqueness of the rituals reveals their emptiness as in the case of the procession at the tomb of the unknown soldier or the people waiting in their vehicles on the bridge. Individual apprehension of social meaning is not derived by those participating. The figures find themselves subordinate victims, devoid of social context. This void is regularly described as a form of betrayal as, for example; in the case of the speaker who feels replaced in his own home, as well as dislocation in which the ritual victims search for the antecedent causes or events responsible for their condition as when the speaker identifies the man in the street as the man who replaced him. However, no such causal relationship exists and the search of the three figures is apparently endless as indicated in the shift in tense at the end of the work when the speaker refers to the present "wo wir jetzt gehen, wo wir gehen gehen gehen" (p. 123). It is in this sense that Das Gespräch der drei Gehenden is a portrayal of the ontology of alienation.
In "Tua res agitur. Zur Ästhetik des Widerstands von Peter Weiss,"
Helmut Müssener draws a relationship between this latest work by
Weiss and the earlier prose works, Abschied von den Eltern and
Fluchtpunkt: "Mit diesem Buch kehrt Peter Weiss nach zahlreichen
Dramen zu der einst auch von ihm bevorzugten epischen Form zurück,
in der er vor mehr als zehn Jahren . . . erste größere Erfolge
erzielte."¹ The basis of comparison between Die Ästhetik des
Widerstands, which Müssener calls a "'Wunschbiographie,'"
(appropriating Weiss's term for the work) and the two earlier
prose works becomes clear when Müssener refers to the former
works as "'Autobiographien,' die nicht nur für die Eingeweihten
notdürftig getarnt waren und 'wirkliche' Personen und
Geschehnisse aus der privaten Umwelt ihres Verfassers zum
Gegenstand hatten" (p. 126). At this point it seems appropriate
to consider the question of the autobiographical nature of
Weiss's prose works.

Weiss himself states that in Die Ästhetik des Widerstands
he was concerned with the following question: "Wie wäre ich
geworden, wie hätte ich mich entwickelt, wenn ich nicht aus
bürgerlich-kleinhäuslichem Milieu käme, sondern aus
proletarischem?" The narrator of Die Ästhetik des Widerstands is born in Bremen on November 8, 1917, the year of the October Revolution, exactly one year later than Peter Weiss and the narrators of Abschied von den Eltern and Fluchtpunkt. Even if we are to consider that in Die Ästhetik des Widerstands Peter Weiss is reconstructing his life according to an ideological perspective, such an assumption does not exclude the possibility that Abschied von den Eltern and Fluchtpunkt also involve a reconstruction of the author's life. The reconstruction in the earlier works in their emphasis upon individual fulfillment apart from (if not despite) the historical and social situation may be construed to be ideological as well, although the ideology would be far different from that in Die Ästhetik des Widerstands in its emphasis upon social and economic factors as they determine individual and historical development. In all three prose works, if Weiss is recounting his life at all, he is doing so in the guise of a fictitious character who appears in a limited world. Each work thus involves its own particular perspective of Weiss's life. Since either perspective—whether it be the emphasis upon the individual in Abschied von den Eltern and Fluchtpunkt or upon social condition in Die Ästhetik des Widerstands—may be defined as ideological if one chooses to do so, the designation of the latest work as a "Wunschbiographie" as opposed to the earlier works as "'Autobiographien'" appears to draw a rather arbitrary distinction: either case, because it involves the recounting of the author's life according to a limited perspective, entails selection and choice, whether or not that choice involves ideology as a
self-conscious decision, Weiss himself has suggested an ideological evaluation of his earlier works:

Ich könnte weiter in einer Gesellschaft leben, könnte sie kritisieren und wäre akzeptiert, bis ich meinen Standpunkt klarlegte, dass ich mich für eine andere Alternative entschieden hatte.

Dann aber würde sich die Situation ändern. Jene, die meinen härtesten Experimenten applaudiert hatten, jene, denen der Exhibitionismus meiner Verzweiflung gefallen hatte, würden sagen, dass ich jetzt schwächer würde, dass meine Kunst nachlisie.

Of course, one might maintain that the works may be evaluated in terms other than ideological. In conversation with Wilhelm Girnus and Werner Mittenzwei, Weiss appears to suggest the existence of a reference point which presumably is not ideological when he states the following in defense of Beckett:

Es ist schwer zu sagen. Ich finde, jeder arbeitet anders. Ich glaube, für Beckett gibt es diese Besessenheit von einer ganz bestimmten Vision, die doch auf einem künstlerischen Niveau steht, das absolut überlegen ist dem meisten, was sonst in der westlichen Gegenwart über den Zustand der Gesellschaft ausgesagt wird. Eine plötzliche Umdrehung zu machen, zu sagen: Also jetzt zeige ich euch, wie die Welt nach meinem Glauben sein müsste, wie sie verändert werden könnte, das will eben nicht jeder und kann eben nicht jeder. Das muss man auch jedem Künstler überlassen, wie weit er da gehen will.

The implied assumption involved in Weiss's defense of Beckett is that the concerns of the artist to a certain extent exist in a manner which is independent of ideology or at least of ideological commitment. Weiss's defense of Beckett is also interesting because of the parallels which may be drawn between Beckett's works and Weiss's own works, particularly in regard to Das Gespräch der drei Gehenden. The problem involved in viewing Weiss's works from an ideological perspective concerns the
inclusiveness of ideology: once one begins to exercise judgment according to an ideological perspective it becomes difficult to suspend judgment according to that perspective without involving oneself, as Weiss does in the case of his defense of Beckett, in a contradiction. The designation of *Die Ästhetik des Widerstands* as a "Wunschbiographie," concerned with the story of the life of a person other than Weiss, and of *Abschied von den Eltern* and *Fluchtpunkt* as "Autobiographien," concerned with the story of Weiss's life, appears to me to involve a similar contradiction. Weiss's statement regarding the public reception of his works implies that he feels his earlier works receive favorable criticism because they express a view of the world which is ideologically compatible with that of his critics. If the earlier works are to be viewed on that basis—from such an ideological perspective—then we may assume that these works involved a reconstruction of the life of the author in a manner which expresses this ideology. *Abschied von den Eltern* and *Fluchtpunkt* would thus also have to be considered as Wunschbiographien in which the author depicted his life from the perspective of the ideology which he held at that time. For Weiss to imply that the earlier works were not ideological would place him in a contradiction similar to that in which he involved himself in his defense of Beckett. Weiss's evaluation of Beckett involves an affirmation of the value of the authenticity of the artist's experiences. The judgment implicit in the characterization of the earlier prose works as Autobiographien is that they involve a portrayal of the "authentic" Peter Weiss as he exists apart from
ideological considerations. This contradiction is revealed by the fact that Weiss, in *Die Ästhetik des Widerstands*, places himself in a working class milieu in order to ascertain the effect of that milieu on his character. This assumes that the "real" Peter Weiss is the subject of this experiment, a subject who should be considered to be identical to that which appeared in the middle class milieu of the two earlier works and who expressed values which were compatible with those of his critics. If Weiss's contention that the difference between the three works is defined by the difference in social milieu is to be accepted, then the "real" Peter Weiss must be assumed to be equally present in all the works.

Abschied von den Eltern and Fluchtpunkt may be understood to be autobiographical works in the sense that incidents and characters are drawn from the author's own experiences. Weiss himself says as much in response to Girnus' question as to whether the two works are "stark autobiographische Werke":

> Ja, das kann man sagen, sie sind aufgebaut aus autobiographischen Stoffen. Ich habe darin versucht, die Situation der Emigration, die ja für meine ganze Entwicklung wesentlich war, auszudrücken, die Situation von jemandem, der aus seinem natürlichen Milieu herausgesprengt wurde und der also versuchen muss, in dieser Randexistenz einen Standpunkt zu finden. Das war sehr schwer.

However, Weiss's abstraction of the question from his own life to "die Situation der Emigration" suggests that the problem of
the autobiographical nature of his works is more complex than
would be implied by a simple identification of the narrator with
Weiss.

_Abschied von den Eltern_ and _Fluchtpunkt_ both contain
references to actual historical events and persons, i.e., to
the "Strassenkämpfe" of 1918 or 1919 in _Abschied von den Eltern_
and to the status of German-speaking immigrants between 1933
and 1945 in Sweden in _Fluchtpunkt_. Works of art and literature,
such as Kafka's novels in _Fluchtpunkt_, are also mentioned in the
texts. The two works contain veiled references, which Müssener
terms "notdürftig getarnt," to Hermann Hesse (Haller in
_Abschied von den Eltern_) and to Max Hodann (Hoderer in _Fluchtpunkt_).
The narrator's unpleasant trip back to Germany after the war in
_Fluchtpunkt_ corresponds to Weiss's return to Germany in 1947.7
An incident from Weiss's life which even more unmistakably
parallels an incident in _Fluchtpunkt_ involves the narrator's
description of one of his paintings in which he himself is
depicted "zwischen den Konzertierenden im Garten am Cembalo
sitzen, mit entstelltem Gesichtsausdruck, als Insasse eines
Irrenhauses" (p. 41). According to Manfred Haiduk, the
painting which corresponds to the one described by the narrator
in _Fluchtpunkt_ actually exists; as a matter of fact, Weiss still
has it in his possession.8 Best regards the interpretation of
Kafka recounted in _Fluchtpunkt_ as a misreading of Kafka in order
to arrive at certain conclusions, which Best holds to be
erroneous, regarding the necessity of ideological commitment:
"Das ist ein Trugschluss, die kafkasche Problematik wird
Aside from Best's contention that it is Weiss, as the narrator, who is misinterpreting Kafka, the implication is that the reading of Kafka, like the confrontation with Haller in Abschied von den Eltern, serves a formal function in the work involved insofar as it represents a stage in the development of the narrator. In this sense, although Kafka is named and Hesse is disguised in the person of Haller, there appears to be no essential difference in the use of the two persons within the works. In "Max Barth alias Max B, alias Max Bernsdorf: Miszellen zu 'Dichtung und Wirklichkeit'" in Abschied von den Eltern und Fluchtpunkt von Peter Weiss" Helmut Müßener points out numerous discrepancies between the portrayal in the two prose works of incidents involving Max B. and the narrator and the account given by the journalist Max Barth of these incidents. For example, Max Barth states that he never fought in the Spanish Civil War and that the incidents which the character Max B. recounts in Fluchtpunkt (see p. 19) solely serve to dramatize the character in that work, are not themselves based on fact but are fictional. In "Blanckenburgs Fluchtpunkt oder Peter Weiss und der deutsche Bildungsroman" Reinhold Grimm argues that Weiss both describes and creates himself in the prose works, according to Blanckenburg's theory is both "Schöpfer und Geschichtsschreiber seiner Personen zugleich," as Weiss not only recounts the incidents of his life but recounts them in such a way that all the elements reflect the whole, that is, he recounts them from the perspective of the "Punkt, in dem alle Strahlen zusammenlaufen."
This would explain how the works can be viewed as novels rather than as autobiographies. However, the assumption implied in Müssener's study of the "evidence" is that in regard to actual persons and events the two prose works may be viewed as more "creative" than "descriptive." Perhaps the difference between autobiography and a novel in the first person is, theoretically, that in an autobiography we have an individual's interpretation of events in the world whereas in a novel that interpretation is the world, that is, in a novel the novelist creates a world which becomes the world of the novel.

Reinhold Grimm's emphasis in "Blanckenburgs Fluchtpunkt oder Peter Weiss und der deutsche Bildungsroman" on Weiss's portrayal of the narrator as an artist and writer who is reconstructing his own life from memory suggests another dimension to the question of autobiography in regard to Weiss's works. In both Abschied von den Eltern and Fluchtpunkt and in Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers as well an author creates a character who is himself the author of his experiences. In regard to a similar type of narrative, John Barth in "The Literature of Exhaustion" concludes that "when the characters in a work of fiction become readers or authors of the fiction they're in, we're reminded of the fictitious aspect of our own existence." Thus, it is possible to turn the entire matter around so that the problem would not be so much the extent to which the narrators in Weiss's works are fictional characters or represent an actual person, namely the author himself, but the degree to which Weiss by seeking his own identity through the works has rendered his own
existence "fictional," In light of the appearance of Die Ästhetik des Widerstands it may be worthwhile to examine the "fictitious" Peter Weiss as he appears not only in the prose works but in the essays of the collections Rapporte 1 and 2 as well. This would involve a far different resolution of the question of autobiography than is implied in the discussion of the degree to which Weiss is to be identified with the narrators of the prose works. In the essays and the journal entries which would normally be perceived as providing a certain amount of factual evidence regarding Weiss's life, we are again confronted with a highly stylized self-portrayal. The nature of this journalistic self-portrayal obviates any attempt to distinguish between the life reconstructed in the prose works and that depicted in the apparently factual accounts: whether in the guise of fictional characters or as an author directly present the self depicted is sufficiently stylized as to suggest the applicability of the same esthetic criteria to both portrayals. The authenticity of this depiction, then, is not based upon the revelation of a fixed identity but rather upon the integration of various features of the self and the world into a unifying esthetic experience. In the absence of a permanent identity for the author, attempts to identify the "real" Peter Weiss with the narrators of his works are perhaps misleading. More meaningful may be an examination of Die Ästhetik des Widerstands, Abschied von den Eltern and Fluchtpunkt as they express, in regard to Weiss, the continuities and discontinuities of his experience of himself and the world about him.
Because of the difficulties involved in attempts to identify Weiss with the narrators of his prose works and because of the contradiction inherent in differentiating the earlier prose works from Die Ästhetik des Widerstands in terms of "Wunschbiographie" and autobiography, I have considered it appropriate to regard the narrators of each of these works as fictional characters not to be identified with Peter Weiss himself.

Die Ästhetik des Widerstands opens with the narrator's description of the Great Frieze of the Altar of Zeus at Pergamum:


This opening sentence may be divided into five parts, beginning and ending with a depiction of the concerted movement of the figures of the frieze. The image of the figures in concerted movement is reinforced by the repetition of sounds in "um uns" and "Leiber" and "Stein" and also in "eine einzige gemeinsame Bewegung." The two parts adjacent to the beginning and ending are composed of contrasts and the isolated, dynamic elements which form those contrasts. In the second part the contrast is between the tendency of the figures to either coalesce or fragmentate. "Torso" in reference to sculpture suggests mutilation; in the other elements of this part of the description a dynamic fragmentation
is implied by the use of nouns with participial adjectives. As the many figures coalesce or fragmentate so the individual figures are indicated in the configuration of discrete parts. In the fourth part of the description the contrast is between the way in which the figures are almost and yet not quite obliterated ("ausgelöscht"). "Kontur" in reference to sculpture suggests the three-dimensionality of the isolated parts of the almost obliterated figures as do the particular adjectives used with the other nouns. The use of participial adjectives imparts a dynamic quality to the description and the adjectives themselves, as, for example, in the depiction of the figure "mit einem freistehenden vorgestemmten Fuss," likewise imply the three-dimensional movement of the figures. At the center of this description is the third part: the depiction of the struggle. The struggle is portrayed as a rapid succession of movements as indicated in the use of the present participles. This opening description of the frieze may thus be divided into five parts: concerted movement; contrasted, isolated, dynamic elements; rapid succession of isolated movements; contrasted, isolated, dynamic elements; and concerted movement. Furthermore, the transition from the use of past participles to a preponderance of present participles suggests a movement within the sentence itself so that the imagery in total is not itself static but dynamic.

The second sentence of the description of the frieze partially reverses the ordering of the first sentence in that it begins with the struggle and ends in a dynamic contrast: "Ein riesiges Ringen, auftauchend aus der grauen Wand, sich erinnernd an seine Vollendung, zurücksinkend zur Formlosigkeit" (p. 7). The
three-dimensionality of the frieze as the figures are projected outward and the repetition of sounds in "riesiges Ringen" refer back to the opening phrase of the first sentence, "Rings um uns hoben sich die Leiber aus dem Stein." In the depiction of the dynamic elements which form this contrast of "Vollendung" with "Formlosigkeit" it becomes clear that the struggle implied in the contrasts of the description, in the tendency of the figures to coalesce or fragmentate, is reflected in the attempt to reconnect the elements into which the work has, with the passage of time, disintegrated. Thus, the description is concerned with both the original struggle between the Olympians and the giants depicted in the frieze and the reenacted struggle involved in the attempt in the present to recover a work of the distant past. The following description, for example, represents an integration of both these struggles:

Eine Hand, aus dem rauhen Grund gestreckt, zum Griff bereit, über leere Fläche hin mit der Schulter verbunden, ein zerschundnes Gesicht, mit klaffenden Rissen, weit geöffnetem Mund, leer starrenden Augen, umflossen von den Locken des Barts, der stürmische Faltenwurf eines Gewands, alles nah seinem verwitterten Ende und nah seinem Ursprung. (p. 7)

This contrast between the original struggle and the one occurring with the passage of time is repeated in the description of "rauhe Stümpfe neben geschliffner Glätte, belebt vom Spiel der Muskeln und Sehnen" and "geballte Faust am nicht mehr vorhandnen Schwert" (p. 7). The sense of contrast is heightened with the description of the integration of the animal with the human as figures are portrayed "mit Vogelkrallen versehene Hände, Hörner
aus wuchtigen Stirnen ragend" (p. 7). The composite of these contrasting elements is an imagery of violence: "ein Schlangengezücht überall, im Würgegriff um Bauch und Hals, züngelnd, die scharfen Zähne gebleckt, einstossend auf nackte Brust" (p. 7). Similarly, the isolated, dynamic elements are subsumed in a violent struggle across the passage of time, in "diese unendliche Anstrengung, sich emporzuwühlen aus körnigen Blöcken" (p. 7). This description parallels the initial depiction of concerted movement: "Rings um uns hoben sich die Leiber aus dem Stein." The implication of the portrayal of the struggle as not only defining the individual dynamic elements but as also connecting them across the passage of time to the present situation is that it is this concerted movement which serves to unify all aspects of the description as a whole.

A new contrast is introduced between the violence of the struggle and the individual grace of the figures: "wie zierlich das Ornament an den Riemen des Schilds, am Bug des Helms, wie zart der Schimmer der Haut, bereit für Liebkosungen, doch ausgesetzt dem unerbittlichen Wettstreit, der Zerfleischung und Vernichtung" (p. 7). The repetition of sounds in "zart," "zierlich" and "Zerfleischung" as well as the imagery of concerted movement implies an intermingling of the violent and the erotic. The figures are further contrasted in terms of vulnerability and detachment, a contrast which is related to the contrast between the animal and the human:

Mit maskenhaftem Antlitz, einander haltend und von sich stossend . . . überaus verwundbar in der Blösse, und wieder entrückt in olympischer Kühle, unbezwinglich erscheinend als Meerungetüm, Greif, Kentaur, doch grimassierend in Schmerz und Verzweiflung. (pp. 7-8)
The figures are depicted in suspended motion, in a "Metamorphose der Qual" (p. 8), in a state of anguish which transforms the situation by producing a tension which leads to a concentration of forces as sheer resistance accompanied by the desire for resolution. The description proceeds to a depiction of Athena and Alcyoneus from the east side of the frieze to Gaea, who alone appears from the edge of the frieze. At this point the description of the frieze merges with a description of the figures Coppi and Heilmann. This integration between the work and those perceiving it is prefigured in the footsteps which echo through the museum and in the opening phrase of the first sentence. Thus, "Rings um uns hoben sich die Leiber aus dem Stein" refers not only to the way in which the figures are sculptured to such a depth as to resemble statues, but also to the manner in which this effect is perceived by the viewers. This allusion to the effect of the sculpture upon the viewer as well as to the struggle involved in the viewer's attempt in the present to recover a work of the past defines the viewer's role as that of active participant rather than passive observer. The entire description of the frieze consists of a balance of movement: the image of the struggle as it is expanded to include the observer in his attempts both to restore the work to the present and to perceive the unity of the constituent parts of the frieze, is complemented by the concentration on each segment of the altar as it reflects the conflict between contrasting elements.

In contrast to the comprehensive view of the work provided in the opening description of the frieze, the conversation of the three figures involves a selective perception of the work which
focuses on certain historical aspects. As the narrator remarks in regard to the conversation with Coppi and Heilmann, "wir gaben den Gegnern in diesem Gemenge ihre Namen und besprachen, im Schwall der Geräusche, die Anlässe des Kampfs" (p. 8). Through such a selective perception the contradictions within the work are exposed. There is, for example, the contradiction between the work and its social and political use. This contradiction is clearly apparent, according to Coppi, in another work of sculpture, The Dying Gaul. In the Altar of Pergamum the historical events appear in "mythischer Verkleidung" (p. 9): the frieze commemorates the victory of Attalus I of Pergamum over the invading Gauls. Besides the contradiction between the work and its social and political use, there is the contradiction between the work and the conditions under which it was produced: "Indem die Ausgeplünderten ihre Energien in ausgeruhte und aufnahmebereite Gedanken übertrugen, entstand aus Herrschsucht und Erniedrigung Kunst" (p. 14). The struggle, represented in the opening description of the frieze, to recover a work of the distant past becomes a struggle to reappropriate the work for those who produced it. The selective perception of detail, the focus on aspects of the work which expose the contradictions, suggests a process of revelation. What is revealed is the work's relevance for the future. There is an implied reference to the work's present location in East Berlin, where it has become "ours" or "theirs" according to the standpoint of the reader of the novel:

Da unser Ziel die Aufhebung des Unrechts, die Beendigung der Verarmung sei, sagte er [Heilmann], und sich auch dieses Land nur in einem Übergangszustand
befände, könnten wir uns vorstellen, dass die Stätte einmal den erweiterten und gemeinsamen Besitz aufzeigen würde, der in der Monumentalität des Geformten gegeben war. (p. 13)

There is also a contradiction involving the esthetic experience: the contradiction between detached appreciation and emotional involvement. Heilmann points out this contradiction in terms of the historical events which explain the origins of the frieze:

Die Eingeweihten, die Spezialisten sprachen von Kunst, sie priesen die Harmonie der Bewegung, das Ineinandergreifen der Gesten, die andern aber, die nicht einmal den Begriff der Bildung kannten, starrten verstohlen in die aufgerissnen Rachen, spürten den Schlag der Pranke im eignen Fleisch. (p. 9)

This contrast parallels that of the portrayal of Heilmann, who is described as "Wissenschaftler" and "Seher" (p. 8). Similarly, Heilmann, Coppi and the narrator in their observation of the parts of the frieze become so involved in the portrayal of the movement of the figures that the altar begins "im ganzen Umkreis . . . zu vibrieren" (p. 11). The description of the frieze as it is recounted in the conversation of the three figures, in contrast to the opening description of the work, is almost solely in terms of its isolated elements and contrasts as, for example, when Gaea is contrasted to Athena (see p. 10). This accumulation of detail has its own momentum: "Noch einmal wandten wir uns dem Relief zu, das in seinen Bändern überall die Sekunde aufzeigte, in der gewaltsame Veränderung bevorstand, den Augenblick, in dem die gesammelte Kraft die unabwendbare Folge ahnen lässt" (p. 11). The discrepancy between detachment and involvement is further developed in the discussion of the Market Gate from Miletus.
Heilmann identifies the Gate as exemplifying relativity in that "Das, was beim langsamen Umschreiten erfasst werden sollte, legte sich nun seinerseits um den Beschauer" (p. 15). According to Heilmann, "Dieser schwindelweckende Vorgang liesse uns am Ende die Relativitätstheorie verstehn . . . " (p. 15). Apparently this is a reference to the fact that the Market Gate from Miletus consists of alternating recesses and projections so that if one were in, for example, a recess the interior walls would be the exterior walls of the Gate. The contrast between the selective perception of detail which leads to understanding and the holistic view of the Gate which overwhelms the viewer parallels the contrast between the three figures' selective attention to the details of the frieze and the opening, comprehensive view of the altar. The attention drawn to relativity suggests that the difference between the two views of the work is the contrasting points of reference and that these points of reference have equal validity. The suggestion as the three figures move past the Ishtar Gate into the present is that with the passage of time a new focus, a different point of reference is required. The recurrent allusion to the particular time of the conversation, September 22, 1937, in this case to "das taktfeste Schmettern nagelbeschlagner Stiefel" (p. 15), again raises the question of relevance for the future.

As the three figures walk from the museum to Coppi's apartment Heilmann recounts the story of Heracles, the missing figure of the Frieze at Pergamum. Heracles is portrayed as an advocate of social change, as a revolutionary intellectual who explores the known world "um festzustellen, wo es feindliche
The Labors of Heracles are interpreted as compensation for his neglect of the poor during "die Zeit der Umnachtung" (p. 21) in which he served as protector of the city. Heracles' Labors, which alleviate the sufferings of the lower classes but which are nonetheless undertaken in service of the ruling class, serve as a model for both the lower and upper classes: "Während die Aristokraten ihre Denker zu immer größeren Anstrengungen trieben, um sich die fernen Taten des Herakles zu ihrem Vorteil ausmalen zu lassen, sprachen die Eigentumslosen von ihm als dem ihren" (p. 23). Thus, Heilmann interprets Heracles' career as a period of apprenticeship, a "Lehrzeit" (p. 25), in which Heracles, through his explorations of the world and his Labors, manages to consolidate his alliance with the lower classes. However, Heilmann's allusion to Heracles' eventual fate in the absence of any explanation of that fate in terms of the class structure of the Greek city state suggests that an important aspect of the myth has been neglected in this interpretation:

Und doch, sagte Heilmann . . . kam er um unter furchtbarer Pein, niemandem gelang es, ihm das mit dem vergifteten Blut des Nessos getränkte Hemd von der Haut zu reissen, und ihn dran zu hindern, sich im Wahnsinn des Schmerzes in den immer brennenden Scheiterhaufen zu werfen, auf dem Berg Oitê. (p. 25)

The first volume of Die Ästhetik des Widerstands is divided into two parts. Part II is only slightly longer than Part I. Each part is in turn divided into sections of varying lengths. These sections are divided through spacing. The first section contains the description of the Altar at Pergamum; the second is the account of Heracles. The remainder of Part I consists of
a series of conversations which the narrator overhears, imagines
or remembers while he is in Coppi's kitchen, in the kitchen of
his home on Pflügrstrasse and at his parents' home in Warnsdorf
in Czechoslovakia. At the beginning of Part II the narrator has
arrived in Spain to join the International Brigades. He is
assigned to a base hospital, first near Albacete and then in
Denia. The doctor in charge is Max Hodann, whom the narrator
had met in Berlin. Most of Part II consists of a series of
conversations about the Communist Party and its role in the
Spanish Civil War, and about esthetics. Helmut Müßener
describes the content of the first volume of the novel as follows:
"Mehr 'geschieht' eigentlich nicht, und die 361 Seiten des Buches
sind denn auch mit Rückblenden und vor allem endlosen Gesprächen
und Dialogen angefüllt" (p. 128). In regard to the role of the
narrator, Müßener remarks upon the fact that the narrator actually
does very little "sondern saugt wie ein grosser Schwamm stets
rezeptiv alles Gehörte und Gesehene in sich auf, um es in
wohlgeformten Satzperioden wieder von sich zu geben" (p. 128).
In other words, as in the case of many of Weiss's other prose
works Die Ästhetik des Widerstands is the narrator's record of his
experiences, although as Müßener indicates in his description of
the "Ich" of the novel as a "sponge" these experiences are more
obviously vicarious than they are in the other novels.

All of the persons referred to by proper name either as
conversants or as subjects of the conversations resemble persons
living at that time. For example, Hans Coppi was a worker
(occupation: Dreher) in Berlin who belonged to the KJVD
(Kommunistischer Jugendverband Deutschlands) and the KPD (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands). At the age of eighteen he spent one year in prison. After his release he reestablished contact with former classmates from the Aufbau-Schule Scharfenberg in Berlin-Tegel. He later became a radio operator (Funker) for the Schulze-Boysen/Harnack-Organisation ("Rote Kapelle"). Hans Coppi was executed at the age of twenty-six on December 22, 1942, in Berlin-Plötzensee. Details of his schooling, occupation, initial arrest and imprisonment, and even the fact that he wore glasses are compatible with the narrator's depiction of Coppi in Die Ästhetik des Widerstands. Horst Heilmann was a student and soldier in Berlin and was also involved in the Schulze-Boysen/Harnack-Organisation. Horst Heilmann was executed on December 22, 1942, in Berlin-Plötzensee, at the age of nineteen. Weiss claims to have thoroughly researched this period of history and guarantees the authenticity of the historical figures in his novel: "Keine einzige Gestalt kommt vor, die nicht ihre Authentizität hat." It seems appropriate to retain Weiss's use of the term "Authentizität" (authenticity) in this context of the relationship between fact and fiction for two reasons. The first reason is that authenticity implies a relatively broad agreement with the facts insofar as Weiss has been able to assess what the facts are. Thus, the authenticity of the work would not necessarily be compromised by the kind of historical inaccuracies which may be found in the text. The second reason is that all we know of these "historical figures" is what the narrator, who is not an "historical figure" in this
sense, tells us since the novel is in the form of a first-person narrative. The term authenticity would appear to be sufficiently ambiguous to be applicable to such a situation where fact is mediated by fiction. Thus, Weiss is able to state that these "historical figures" are "nicht nur authentisch" as in a "Dokumentarbericht" but also serve a certain function within the work, "werden also durch eine subjektive Erzählfigur zu einer ganz bestimmten Wirkungskraft gebracht." Weiss further explains his use of these "historical figures": "Um den Wirklichkeitsgrad des Buches so weit wie möglich zu steigern und um die Ich-Figur so real wie möglich wirken zu lassen, muss sie zwischen lebendigen Figuren stehen." Weiss continues, "Ich versuchte, den Wirklichkeitswert zu steigern und zu kontrastieren mit dem subjektiven Erlebniskreis des Ich Erzählers." In other words, there is in the novel the realm of "historical figures" and the realm of the "subjective narrator." The form of the novel, the first-person narrative, allows for a juxtaposition of these two realms. As a result of this juxtaposition the narrator may be viewed as having achieved an historical presence and therefore as appearing more real. Weiss's discussion of the authenticity of the work suggests that particular care has been taken that these two realms of subjective experience and objective world not be confused. It would appear to me that much of Die Ästhetik des Widerstands is about the confusion of these two realms, a confusion which I would call mystification. The process of mystification involves creating a situation which is an intentional misconstruction of the objective world. Myths are
created which become the "objective situation," and individuals subject to them are subsumed in them. This mystification assumes the existence of myth-makers who attempt to control the objective situation. It is alienating because it obliterates individual selves for the benefit of the myth-makers. The three figures' selective perception of the frieze in the opening section of Die Ästhetik des Widerstands is an attempt to demystify the work of art by dismembering the myth. Through such a process of demystification the three figures reappropriate the work and thus appropriate the power of the myth-makers. However, the selective perception of the frieze centers on an historical moment in which the altar is understood in terms of class conflict. The appeal to class consciousness is an appeal to a new myth, to an ideology, which is an attempt to be non-alienating. It is this new myth which enriches the narrator's comprehensive view of the frieze provided in the opening pages of the novel. Heilmann's account of Heracles involves a similar process of demystification and closes with the fate of Heracles as it is likewise enriched by the new myth. The figure of Heracles is demystified in the sense that the gods become the upper classes so that the traditional dilemma of the hero who is part man and part god becomes the plight of the socially marginal individual, the outsider, who must himself decide the nature of his pledge, who must decide to which social class he owes his allegiance. Class conflict, then, becomes the force of human existence and permeates the social order much as the struggle defines the order of the frieze and relates all the individual parts of the altar to the whole,
Heilmann's allusion to the death of Heracles implies that this force is larger than the commitment of any one individual, who may be subsumed by it.

At the end of the second part of the first volume of Die Ästhetik des Widerstands the narrator receives a letter in which Heilmann revises his earlier account of the myth of Heracles. In the letter Heilmann considers the possibility that Heracles' Labors are performed because of a subjective need:

Was aber wäre . . . wenn Herakles nicht unverzagt, ständig die Befreiung der Unterdrückten vor Augen, Ungetüm en und Tyrannen seine Taten entgegengesetzt hätte, wenn wir sagen müssten, dass er von Furcht und Schrecken geplagt war und seine Handlungen nur dazu dienten, die eigne Schwäche und Vereinsamung zu überwinden. (p. 314)

However, Heilmann suggests that Heracles' deeds, because they are accomplished actions, constitute an objective response to the world and therefore may be evaluated in terms of social use. This evaluation implies a separation between motivation and deed, between consciousness and action, and would explain Heilmann's earlier allusion to Heracles' eventual fate in which the hero is portrayed as being absorbed by a force larger than himself. A hero who is "von Furcht und Schrecken geplagt" suffers from a diminished capacity to act upon the world so that the self becomes more vulnerable as the world beyond the self looms proportionally larger. In the revised account of the myth Heilmann states that Heracles suffered at the last from "der grössten panischen Angst, die er bereits in der Wiege erfahren und für die er sich zeitlebens zu rächen versucht
hatte, dem Schrecken, dem Abscheu vor der Frau" (p, 318),
Heilmann identifies the experiences of his nightmares with the
struggles of Heracles: "Ich kenne diese löwenartigen, vogelartigen,
schlangenartigen Tiere . . . ich ringe mit ihnen, das ist ein
furchtbarer Zwang, und ich erwache erst, wenn ich schon zerrissen
sein müsste, aber keine Wunde, kein Schmerz ist vorhanden" (p, 315).
The transposition of the struggle to within the realm of the self
involves, one might say, an internalization of feelings of
powerlessness before forces which are perceived as being beyond
one's control: "Solche Bestien setzen uns zu, wenn wir etwas
Übermächtiges tief in uns vernommen haben, wenn wir zittern beim
Gedanken an unsre Unterlegenheit" (p. 315). In the external conflict
the self is perceived as overwhelmed by a more powerful adversary
and thus as relatively powerless. The transposition of the conflict
to within the realm of the self involves an internalization of the
relationship of the self to the more powerful adversary, the self
in its "Unterlegenheit" before "etwas Übermächtiges," and thus
reaffirms the power which defines the self as inadequate. While
the self achieves an illusion of control through the transposition
of the adversary to within its own realm, its power to change the
relationship of power is effectively neutralized. The self is
immobilized and rendered incapable of acting upon the world:
"Für die Hungernden . . . müssen dessen Heracles' Zusammenstösse
ganz im Gedanklichen bleiben, und im Gedanklichen, meine ich, bleiben
sie auch für ihn, sie bemächtigen sich seiner, indem er in sich
hineinstarrt" (p. 315). However, according to Heilmann, Heracles'
final act of self-immolation in which he throws himself upon the
funeral pyre on Mount Oeta involves a final affirmation of self and world because it is a public act in which Heracles vanquishes his tormentors even if the result is his own death. The significance of Heracles is perhaps that he, regardless of his motivations, was able to act upon the world and thus to transcend his own fears and limitations ("Furcht und Enge").

I have given particular attention to Heilmann's revised account of the myth of Heracles for two reasons. First of all, as the original account of the myth of Heracles focused on the hero as a revolutionary, so the revised account, by implication, centers on the hero as an artist and in this manner expresses concerns in esthetics which form a major theme of the novel. As Heilmann explains it, the story of Heracles is "geprägt von der Unvollkommenheit, dem Irren und Suchen, den Fehlschlägen und fortwährenden Neuanfängen, die sowohl zum Wesen der Poesie, der Traumdeutung gehören, als auch zum Drang, sich selbst in der Welt zu bestätigen" (p. 316). Heilmann's description of the dream-like struggles with bird-like and snake-like animals recalls the narrator's depiction of the Frieze at Pergamum. The description also recalls the discussion of Dante and the poet's confrontation with death. The self-immolation of Heracles parallels Heilmann's definition in regard to Dante of the suffering involved in art:

Die Marter des Traums und der Dichtung . . . sei die Auslieferung an eine Situation, aus der es kein Entrinnen gab; alles würde uns dort widerfahren, als ob es wirklich wäre, nur führe im Traum das nicht mehr Erträgliche zum Erwachen, so wie es sich in der Dichtung durch die Übertragung ins Wort befreie. (p. 83)
Art attains value regardless of the motivations of the artist, and because it places the artist in relationship to the world, involves an act of self-affirmation. Thus, in regard to the painters Delacroix and Géricault, the narrator's conclusion is that despite the fact that they may be characterized as much by "Wankelmut und Verblendung" as "Hellsichtigkeit und Empörung" they are able, in their works, to overcome the "Unzuverlässigkeit ihres Denkens": "So fanden sie auch, vorm Weggewischtwerden, eine Bestätigung ihrer selbst, und das Verlangen danach war vielleicht der erste Impuls, der sie zu ihrem Handwerk führte" (p. 349). This "Impuls" is comparable to the significance of the struggles of Heracles in transcending the fears and limitations which cause the individual to turn away from the world and to direct his attentions inward upon the self. The theme of fear and limitation, of "Furcht und Enge," in Die Ästhetik des Widerstands is expressed in the depictions of the kitchens, of the small, sparsely furnished apartments, in which the narrator and his family; Coppi and his parents; the villagers of Spain; and finally even the narrator and Hodann in the infirmary in Cueva (see p. 213), are sequestered. In the narrator's discussion of Kafka's Das Schloß the description of the setting of that novel, of the "Menschen im Dorf, immer zu vielen zusammengedrängt in einem Raum, Frauen, Männer, Kinder" (p. 179), merges with a depiction of his own parents and of Coppi's family. The effect of such a juxtaposition is to clarify the relationship between the novel, Kafka's "Proletarierroman" (p. 179), and the world while at the same time, since the novel as a work of art is itself an artifact, a
"Handwerk," to impart to the Coppis and to the narrator's own family a degree of cultural and historical significance which would otherwise be denied them. The forces which would attempt to deny the working class cultural significance are the same forces, according to the narrator's summary of his father's views on the subject, which deny to the working class proprietorship over the work place: "Wie mein Väter stets Anspruch erhoben hatte auf den Zugang zu den kulturellen Gütern, so hatte er darauf beharrt, dass ihm gehöre, was ihn an seinem Arbeitsplatz umgab" (p. 350). As the workers are alienated from their own work, so they are alienated from the dominant cultural forms. In this sense the passive acceptance of cultural forms would imply an "Entpolitisierung der Kultur," with its accompanying "Absage an den Klassenkampf" (p. 188). The attainment of significance for the working class must occur, according to an earlier conversation between the narrator and his father, as a result of the "Wechselwirkung . . . zwischen dem fertig Gestalteten und dem Suchen nach eignem Ausdruck" (p. 188).

I referred to a similar appeal to class consciousness in regard to art as an appeal to a new myth, to a non-alienating ideology. The assumption is that while a view of art as historical and political according to the perspective of ideology is an attempt to create a society which is equitable and just, in which individuals perceive themselves as participants in the process of determining their own cultural significance; it nonetheless is also an attempt to create a totality which becomes the "objective situation." For this reason I have referred to the
appeal to a new myth even though the attempt to create a situation which is non-alienating implies the possibility that this new myth will not itself involve mystification. The process through which Kafka's Schloss is selectively perceived as a "Proletarierroman" and is then merged with a depiction of figures of the working class to form a new totality suggests the formation of such a new myth. One of the byproducts of this process is that as art becomes more and more viewed purely as an artifact, the artist himself is reduced to the role of an artisan. The significance of this process in regard to Die Ästhetik des Widerstands is that because it does involve the creation of a new myth, it involves a new totality. The new totality attempts to preclude mystification and represents an effort to overcome alienation. The image of the "Furcht und Enge" which expresses the alienation of working class existence recurs in the narrator's description of Picasso's Guernica as a depiction of a "langgestreckten kargen Raum, in dem das apokalyptische Geschehn sich abspielte, erhellt von der elektrischen Sonne der Küchenlampe" (p. 333). Because Picasso's Guernica represents a totality of experience it is a portrayal of extreme alienation which is not itself alienating:

Unterdrückung und Gewalt, Klassenbewusstsein und Parteilichkeit, Todesschrecken und heroischer Mut zeigten sich in ihren elementaren, dynamischen Funktionen. Indem das Zerfetzte sich zu einer neuen Ganzheit zusammenschloss, wurde dem Feind eine Abwehr entgegengestellt, die unbesiegbar war. (p. 335)

The narrator chooses art as his vocation as he grows increasingly aware of the possibility "allen Gedanken und
Erfahrungen Ausdruck zu geben" (p. 305). The narrator's choice is the second reason why I have paid particular attention to Heilmann's revised account of Heracles as an artist. Heilmann's letter, which describes Heracles' subjective needs, his "unsägliche Unruhe," also contains a curious reference to the narrator himself: "und stimmt das meiste auch, was uns davon bekannt wurde, mit seinen Hirngespinsten überein, so lässt sich einiges doch für uns verwerten, denn es gibt Kunde von einem Lebensgrund, auf dem du zur Zeit buchstäblich stehst" (p. 316). This remark identifies Heracles' concerns with the narrator's own. This is supported by Heilmann's later reference to Heracles as transcending "Furcht und Enge," although Heilmann's later account of the hero as heralding a new age of exploration in Greece renders the remark a more explicit reference to the narrator's situation in Spain (see p. 319). Nonetheless, the narrator is portrayed in the novel as suffering from the limitations of his existence. He describes the kitchen in Copp's apartment, a kitchen not unlike his own on Pflugstrasse:

Der Küchenraum, der sich langsam verschattete, während die Glühfäden der Lampe schärfer wurden, stellte eine Eingeschlossenheit dar, die uns, die wir um den Tisch sassen, das Gefühl einer überwältigenden Niederlage aufzwingen wollte. Ausserhalb dieser Zelle, hinter den bröckelnden Mauern, dem Treppengebälk, dem Hofschacht, war nur Feindlichkeit, hier und da durchsetzt von ähnlich kleinen verriegelten Räumen, die immer seltener wurden, immer schwerer aufzuspüren oder schon nicht mehr zu finden waren. Jedes Wort musste aus der Machtlosigkeit herausgesucht werden, um jenen Ton zu treffen, mit dem wir uns seit mehr als vier Jahren Ausdauer, Zuversicht und Lebenskraft zusprachen. (pp. 26-27)

This description of the kitchen indicates two types of alienation:
alienation from the world in terms of objective physical isolation and alienation from the self in regard to the incapacity of individuals to express subjective needs. The fact that both types of alienation are depicted through the metaphor of the kitchen with its sameness and "Eingeschlossenheit" suggests that they are interrelated. The narrator is confined to the kitchen as a result of an economic insecurity which arises because as a member of the working class he is denied control over the products of his own labor. He is similarly limited intellectually because he is denied the confidence and means necessary for insight into the nature and extent of his confinement. The narrator's lack of confidence is portrayed in the novel as a "Sprachlosigkeit" which is overcome through a reevaluation of the surrounding culture in order to achieve a new frame of reference or "Gesamtbegriff" (p. 54). Such a frame of reference would only be of significance "wenn er etwas über unsere Lebensbedingungen sowie die Schwierigkeiten und Eigentümlichkeiten unserer Denkprozesse aussagte" (p. 54). The close relationship between alienation as it is subjectively experienced and alienation as an objective condition accounts for the equal importance placed by the narrator on his study of Kafka's *Schloss* and his reading of Neukrantz' *Barrikaden am Wedding*: "Die ästhetische Erfahrung folgt der politischen." 19

The confrontation of the narrator with his father focuses on the political implications of the attempt to overcome alienation. The scene in the apartment on Pflugstrasse in which his father appears to him in the kitchen and the narrator takes
flight out the window implies that the father is one of the obstacles the narrator faces in attempting to overcome his experiences of "Furcht und Enge." The lengthy conversation between the two figures concerns the father's relationship to the Communist Party and the contradiction inherent in his affiliations with the left wing USPD (Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands) and the more conservative MSPD (Mehrheitssozialisten). The father's dissatisfaction with the Communist Party arises from a distrust of the party bureaucracy which he views as assuming custody over the workers in a manner similar to that assumed by the institutions of the society from which he feels himself presently alienated. The narrator's recurrent allusion to the wound to the shoulder his father received in Bremen as giving his father "die Haltung eines ewigen Zweiflers" (p. 33) implies that his father's attitude toward the Communist Party, in view of the historical circumstances which force his removal to Warnsdorf, is similarly incapacitating. The confrontation between father and son is not portrayed as a conflict between generations; the politics of the novel only allow for the existence of class conflict: Thus, any conflict between them is resolved in action: as the father fought on the barricades in Bremen so the son leaves to fight in Spain. Similarly, the conflicting views of Heilmann and Coppi—in the long conversations between them and the narrator Heilmann bears the major burden of the conversation while Coppi assumes the role of censor, constantly reminding Heilmann, a student at the Herderschule, of the exigencies of
working class existence—do not lead to an open confrontation. Any conflict is moderated by the emphasis on action based on class consciousness. Thus, membership in the working class is extended solely to the individual "der mit seinen Handlungen für sie eintrat, gleichgültig, woher er kam" (p. 187). Perhaps this explains how the narrator can be isolated in a kitchen in his own working class neighborhood. However, such a definition of the working class also has the effect of rendering membership a personal decision and thus subjectively qualifying what previously has been portrayed in the novel as an objective condition.

Suspicions, originally entertained by the narrator's father, regarding the functionings of the Communist Party become a major theme of the second part of the first volume of the novel. Hodann's efforts to organize group discussions with the convalescent soldiers are an attempt to enable them to gain insight into the nature of the allegiance they have expressed in their actions in battle. It is interesting that the issue regarding party affiliation is portrayed in the context of an historical situation where the arguments in favor of allegiance appear to their best advantage since the external threat of fascism is most clearly overwhelming. For example, in a meeting in which Hodann is informed of his transfer to Denia, he attempts to defend his article on the soldiers' sexual difficulties: the relationship between the transfer and the article is apparent since Stahlmann mentions the article immediately after Mewis brings up the matter of the transfer. However, Hodann's defense is treated lightly, and he is discouraged from continuing the discussion. The effect of
this treatment is to lend Hodann's remarks the appearance of a subjective response to difficulties he has either seriously overestimated or imagined. This process is not uniquely different from the process of mystification in which an individual's perceptions of the world are not so much refuted as they are simply invalidated. The course of the conversation as it turns toward art with Ehrenburg's implied reference to Babel and Meyerhold clearly indicates the extent of a disagreement which has repercussions beyond Spain. Stahlmann's response—"Die entscheidende Schlacht hat dort begonnen. Und ihr unterhaltet euch über das Wesen der Poesie" (p. 264)—is a direct reference to the situation in Germany. This remark in the context of the conversation indicates that to remind the conversants of the historical situation—the immediate threat of fascism—is to point to the obvious resolution of the dispute between them. Similarly, in another scene in the novel, the Moscow Trials are juxtaposed to the military defeat of the Spanish Republic. In neither case does the narrator himself question his commitment to the Communist Party, a party which he defines as the synthesis of such apparently conflicting views: "Das Harte, Strenge, Disziplinierte gehörte zu ihr, wie die Hellhörigkeit, die Imagination. Die Gegensätzlichkeiten würden sich zu einer Synthese bringen lassen" (p. 298). The earlier depiction of historical development as assuming a spiral form (see p. 74) allows for the juxtaposition of elements temporally far removed from each other. However, the juxtaposition of elements which may not even be historical contingencies is not yet, in this case,
a synthesis, although it may be a vision of future possibilities. This may account for the narrator's claim to belong to the Communist Party without being a member, an "Angehöriger, auch ohne Mitgliedsbuch" (p. 297). This contention as well as the visionary evaluation of the Party implies a separation between insight and action and suggests that the narrator is still alienated from himself and the world. The first volume of the novel closes with the departure of the narrator for France after the dismissal of the International Brigades. The beginning of the second volume of Die Ästhetik des Widerstands represents a continuation of the theme of the dilemma of the narrator in finalizing his commitment to the Communist Party.

The opening sections of the second volume of Die Ästhetik des Widerstands take place in Paris, where the narrator finds a temporary refuge in the Bibliothek der Cercles des Nations, which Aschberg, the Swedish banker, has placed at the disposal of the "Weltfriedensbewegung" and the "Ausschuss zur Gründung einer deutschen Volksfront." There, during the night of September 20, 1938, the narrator begins reading the German translation of a report of the shipwreck of the "Medusa" by two of the survivors (Corréard and Savigny). Early the next morning he wanders through the city and goes to The Louvre to view the painting based on this report: Géricault's The Raft of the "Medusa." He describes his entry into the museum "im Strom der Pilger," and in many respects the narrator, in these opening sections of the second volume of the novel, may be regarded as on a pilgrimage as well. In Drama, Fields, and Metaphors Victor Turner discusses several aspects of pilgrimages. Four of these features seem to apply to
the narrator's activities in Paris; the visiting of places which
are held sacred by the pilgrim, the pilgrim's temporary
existence outside of the order which structures his life, an
experience of brotherhood with other human beings, and a
tension between choice and obligation which is released through
the formalizing of a commitment which had previously been
regarded as relatively spontaneous and voluntary.

The narrator's wanderings through Paris are a suspension
of his normal activities, a "Loslösung aus den gewohnten
Tagespflichten" (p. 13). With the demobilization of the
International Brigades the narrator experiences himself as
separated from the "spontane Gemeinschaft" (p. 19) which arose
out of the sense of purpose and deeply felt commitment involved
in his activities in Spain. Since the narrator's stay in Spain
is also regarded by him as an extension of activities already
begun in Berlin, his departure from Spain marks a disruption of
continuity in his life. The narrator's stay in an unfamiliar
city which regards his presence there as suspect (he is required
to have his papers stamped daily) represents for him a "Sprung
aus dem Festen und Bindenden" (p. 15) and renders him
particularly vulnerable to his environment and to internal
conflicts which his previous commitments had helped him to
suppress. In this respect the narrator's state reflects the
dilemma of the survivors of the shipwreck of the "Medusa" who
were left on the raft to drift on the sea after the towline
was cut. The narrator's reading of the factual account of the
wreck concludes with an identification of himself with the
survivors on the raft: "Mächtige Fluten überrollten uns, Bald
vor, bald zurückgeschleudert, um jeden Atemzug ringend, die Schreie der über Bord Gespülten vernehmend, ersehnten wir den Anbruch des Tags" (p. 13). The empathy of the narrator with the men on the raft implies that the narrator's existence outside of the order which previously structured his life in Spain and Berlin places him in a similar situation of extreme vulnerability.

The narrator's account of the shipwreck also contains an allusion to Chamberlain, and subsequent attention drawn to the Munich Pact and to the mobilization of Czechoslovakia allows a parallel to be drawn between the population of Europe and the survivors on the raft. This parallel is also apparent in the narrator's discussion of the role of the voyage of the "Medusa" in establishing France as a colonial power in Africa: the dualism of the "Profiteure und deren Opfer" (p. 9) which the narrator perceives as defining the French presence in Senegal mirrors the contrast between the statesmen of Europe in 1938 and the victims of their decisions, the workers. However, the narrator's attention to Géricault's portrayal of the wreck of the "Medusa" lends additional significance to the event. In his attempt to depict the incident, Géricault not only constructs a model of the raft based on Corréard's and Savigny's description: according to the narrator, Géricault actually lives on this model for thirteen days and nights so that the sufferings of the survivors become for him a subjective experience which defines his existence as "dieses Dahingleiten auf dem Floss" (p. 17).

The work of art has its origins in the artist's subjective experience, in his confrontation with his own death. In the case
of Géricault, this confrontation reveals the artist's alienation from himself: "der Trieb, sich selbst zu vernichten" (p. 27). The process of creation as it involves both the artist's impressions of each detail of the depiction from his fascination with the bottle of perfume which the men fought over on the raft to his obsession with the lone woman survivor, and his concentration on the final episode of the incident in which the survivors sight the ship which is to rescue them results in the depiction of a totality of experience. It is this totality which presents itself to the narrator in his first viewing of the painting in The Louvre. The painting, this "riesige schwärzlich braune Leinwand," awakens in him "ein Gefühl der Ausweglosigkeit" (p. 21) and "Verlorenheit" (p. 22). His subsequent flight from the museum and the painting is the result of his identification with this subjective portrayal of the event in Géricault's work: "Beim Versuch der Annäherung an dieses Stück teerigen Tuchs war der Zwiespalt in mir aktualisiert worden" (p. 22). The narrator's flight defines the significance of the portrayal of the shipwreck as expressing not only the vulnerability which he feels in regard to the situation in pre-war France but also that which he experiences in regard to the conflicts within the self.

The narrator takes a tour of the city with Katz, who is in Paris at the instruction of the Comintern. Katz takes him to the site of Géricault's former studio where the artist first completed the sketches for The Raft of the "Medusa."
The narrator then returns to the museum. His second inspection of the painting involves an appreciation of the totality of the work as an expression of form rather than of the subjective experience of the artist: "Ich begann zu begreifen, wie sich die Anordnung der Formen beim Auswägen innerhalb einer Steigerung ergab, und wie die Einheitlichkeit sich zusammenfügte aus Kontrasten" (p. 28). The work as the portrayal of the "Gefangenseins" (p. 32) of the artist in his isolation and hopelessness is ineffective in bringing about personal change. However, the painting when viewed as a predecessor to the works of Daumier, Bourbet, Degas and van Gogh represents a development in artistic form which, for the narrator, lends value to the work: "Mit seinem Geben und Nehmen stand er in den universellen Beziehungen und Verbindungen, die den Grund der künstlerischen Tatigkeit ausmachten" (p. 33). The narrator's second viewing of the painting takes place on September 22, 1938, exactly one year after his confrontation with the Great Frieze of the Altar of Zeus at Pergamum. The conception of the artistic form as expressing "Steigerung" and the "Einheitlichkeit" of contrasting elements corresponds to the narrator's depiction of the balance of movement in the frieze. The contrast between the form of the work and the impulses which led to its creation recalls a description in the first volume of Die Ästhetik des Widerstands of Dante's Divine Comedy:

Es erwies sich dann in dem bemessnen, bewusst durchgeführten Gang der Komposition, dass das Anrühren des Todesgedankens, das Leben mit dem Tod und mit den Toten in sich, wohl den Trieb hervorrufen
Prominent in this description is the confrontation with death ("das Leben mit dem Tod und mit den Toten in sich"). In regard to The Raft of the "Medusa" this theme is treated in the narrator's account of Géricault's fascination with the acts of cannibalism which occurred on the raft so that "die noch Lebenden wuchsen mit den Toten zusammen, indem sie diese sich einverleibten" (p. 16). This sense of life as a living death is also encapsulated in the image of "Erstarrung" (p. 33). The artist is able to transcend this experience of death in his art which involves the creation of a new totality in which conflicting elements are subsumed by the whole.

Katz and the narrator walk to Montmartre, a place which they associate both with art and with the Paris Commune. The narrator concludes, "Die politische Vorhut und die Avantgarde der Kunst hatten auf diesem Berg ihren Standort gehabt" (p. 37). He pays his last visit to The Louvre just as the paintings are to be evacuated. This time the narrator's attention is drawn to an entirely different painting from The Raft of the "Medusa" both in regard to form and content: "eine Tafel . . . auf der Sankt Ranier durch die Luft flog, vor der glatten Wand des Gefängnisses, in die er mit dem Wink seiner Hand ein Loch gesprengt hatte, um die Armen, die in den Keller geworfen worden waren, zu befreien" (p. 40). As Géricault's art revealed to the
narrator the vulnerability (and even the defeat) of the self adrift in a hostile, alienating world, in this painting he finds a "Zeichen" (p. 41) of his own anticipated release from the tensions which had plagued his stay in Paris. This release is intimated in the "Leichtigkeit" (p. 41) which the narrator feels immediately after viewing the painting and also in his subsequent discovery of the "Helligkeit" (p. 45) which is also part of the city. The account of this discovery occurs immediately after the description of the march of the small group of "Überlebende" (p. 44) through the streets of Paris under the red flag. Awakened in the narrator is a sense of community with his fellow workers not only in France but in China and Southeast Asia as well.

The narrator's conversation with Münzenberg, whom he visits in Paris, about the Spiegelgasse in Zurich as a "Sinnbild der gewaltsamen, doppelten, der wachen und der geträumten Revolution" (p. 59) involves an affirmation of the potential synthesis of art and politics which the narrator had experienced in Montmartre. The narrator also discusses the French novelist Eugene Sue and concludes the following regarding Sue's work:

Sein Werk, so zweifelhaft und spekulativ es oft erscheinen mochte, aber war nur zu verstehn, wenn es in Beziehung zu Sade und Bretonne gebracht wurde, dann traten in der Wiedergabe der Foltern und Unterdrückungsarten die humanistischen, moralischen Absichten hervor, die Mystifikationen waren nichts andres als die Decke, die die Herrschenden über ihre Komplote legten, die Hervorhebung der Züchtigungen, der Infamie diente der Anprangerung eines gesamten Systems. (p. 66)

It is possible, of course, to interpret Sue's fascination with death and dismemberment (like Géricault, the artist obtained his
models from the city morgue) as displaying far different concerns which are not necessarily moral or responsible. However, the fact that the explanation offered constitutes, for the narrator, the only way in which Sue is to be understood suggests, as in the case of the depiction of the frieze and the recounting of the myth of Heracles in the first volume of Die Ästhetik des Widerstands, the creation of a new totality in which all aspects of human existence are to be interpreted in terms of class consciousness. The sacred places which the narrator visits on his pilgrimage are those which exemplify, for him, this new myth in which art and politics and individual needs and aspirations complement one another. Thus, the narrator not only experiences feelings of brotherhood with other human beings in the solidarity of the workers marching through Paris but also in the "Gemeinschaft der Kunstarbeiter" (p. 35).

Münzenberg, a former colleague of Katz, is involved in a dispute with the Communist Party and is currently in disfavor. The narrator asks Katz about Münzenberg as they approach a gypsy encampment. Katz pays a visit to a woman in the camp and repeats to the narrator what the woman has said to him: "Nehmt euch in acht vor den Schnüren . . . sie sah nur Schnür, nur Schnür sah sie, an denen wir hangen" (p. 65). Clearly Katz is warning the narrator to avoid the kind of entanglements in which Münzenberg is involved in his dispute with the Party. The narrator mentions later that he has nightmares about the "Opfer" (p. 69) required by the Party in its efforts to consolidate its position. However, the repetitious use of "Schnür" draws
attention to the particular choice of this word which is also found in the compound Nabelschnur. (The image of the cutting of the towline of the raft of the "Medusa" is also an image of birth and death.) In regard to Géricault the narrator discusses the artist's relationship to his mother as it is expressed in his painting Hippolyts Tod. That the narrator suffers from similar anxieties is apparent in his reaction to the statues in the Garden of the Tuileries: "Kaum hatte ich mich auf einer Bank zurücklehnt, stellten sich gespenstisch silbergraue Frauen, in langen Gewändern, vor mich hin und verscheuchten mich mit ausgestreckten Händen" (pp. 19-20). While he is working at an orphanage for Spanish children in La Brévière he becomes feverish and during this illness recalls an episode of his childhood in which he felt abandoned by his mother. Münzenberg suffered from a passive mother and tyrannical father as did the Swedish worker whom the narrator met in Spain (see pp. 95-99). Similarly, Rogeby is depicted as staring "in das Dunkel, das seine Kindheit und den politischen Wendepunkt enthielt" (p. 286). It is difficult to understand the relationship between the Communist Party as a political structure and these matters, and the novel does little to clarify them except for the assurance, as in the case of Rogeby, that the experience of individual suffering leads to social commitment. The impression is that these aspects of human existence, expressions of personal anxiety, are not explored fully because they would expose contradictions and conflicts which can not be resolved in terms of the context of the novel.
In Münzenberg and in Hodann the narrator perceives the isolation and alienation which befall the individual who exists outside of social structures, without the support of the Party. His belief that "das natürliche Zusammenwirken durch eine verpflichtende Bindung ersetzt werden musste" (p. 19) is reaffirmed, and he decides to join the Communist Party. He does not officially become a member for reasons of strategy: he is to join a group of metalworkers travelling to work in Sweden, and as a non-member he will be more useful to the Party in its operations in Stockholm. Thus, through his pilgrimage in Paris the narrator becomes aware of his commitment to the Party, of his obligation, as both a meritorious choice and a necessary decision. This choice is meritorious because it involves him in an ordering of human existence in which art and politics are reunited. It is a necessary choice because outside of the structures which order his life lie only isolation and alienation. The remainder of the novel may be viewed as affirming the necessity of the narrator's decision.

The second volume of Die Ästhetik des Widerstands is in two parts nearly equal in length. The first part contains nineteen sections which are divided through spacing. The first seven sections of Part I concern the narrator's sojourn in Paris. Part I ends with an account of the defeat of the Spanish Republic. The second part has eighteen sections. The events of the second volume of the novel are easily summarized since, like the first volume which consists of the lengthy discussion of issues, not very much happens: in Stockholm the narrator works for Alfa Laval...
in a firm which produces centrifuges (Separator Fabrik); he becomes a courier for the underground and delivers newspapers to Rosner who is working for the Communist Party; he renews his acquaintance with Hodann and Rogeby from Spain and forms new friendships; and he works with Bertolt Brecht. Part II deals mostly with discussions involving Brecht and his work, and the novel closes with Brecht's departure for Finland on April 17, 1940. A short, concluding volume to the novel, which is to contain a bibliography, is to be published at a later date.

During the first three months in Stockholm the narrator suffers from his difficulties with the language and from the enforced isolation of his position: he is disguised as a social democrat and must avoid contact with the Communist Party. However, at the factory he first experiences the "Empfindung einer Zusammengehörigkeit" (p. 95) as he follows his father's injunction "in jeder Einzelheit der Arbeit die Notwendigkeit erkennen, keine Tätigkeit als niedrig ansehen, und bei der Ausübung nie von der Konzentration, dem Beteiligtsein ablassen . . ." (p. 94). He is finally contacted by a fellow worker who leads him to Rogeby. The process begins in which this "langen Zustand von Fremdheit" (pp. 109-10) ends for the narrator. On March 15, 1938, with the occupation of Prague, the narrator confirms the importance of the overcoming of this alienation which he first suffered upon his arrival in Stockholm: "Die Überwindung meiner Isoliertheit, die aufgenommenen Beziehungen zu einigen Genossen trugen zur Möglichkeit der Ausdauer bei" (p. 112). He meets Lindner, one of the workers at the orphanage in La Brévière, while applying
for the papers he must have renewed every three months in order to work in Sweden now that his Czech citizenship is no longer valid. Through Lindner he meets Bischoff, a Party worker, who was earlier portrayed as the model of Party engagement (see pp. 77-85). With Lindner and Bischoff he experiences feelings of comradship and "Geborgenheit" (p. 118). On the first Sunday in May the narrator goes to the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm to view Géricault's study, Köpfe von Gehenkten:

Die beiden abgehackten Köpfe lagen auf zerknülltem, grauweissem, blutfleckigem Tuch. Kissen, unter das Laken geschoben, gaben den Häuptern Halt. Wären nicht die rohen Schnittflächen an den Hälsern, das wässrig ausgeronnene Blut zu seh'n gewesen, so hätte der Eindruck eines im Bett nebeneinanderliegenden, vom Tod überraschten Paars entstehn können. (p. 119)

For the narrator it is a portrayal of the necessity to continue on the path he has chosen regardless of his own fears and anxieties: "War die Frau völlig entmachtet, so hatte er [the man] sich, so lange ein Atemzug in ihm war, gewaltsam zur Wehr gesetzt" (p. 120). The defeat of the woman in the painting parallels that in Die Ästhetik des Widerstands of Rosalinde, the daughter of Carl von Ossietzky, the German pacifist and writer (1889-1938) who was awarded the Nobel peace prize in 1935. Obsessed with the death (murder) of her father and with the suicide of her friend Ernst Toller, Rosalinde surrenders to a despair which the narrator terms a "Flucht" (p. 174). Rosalinde, who equates the Communist Party with fascism, accuses the narrator of being engaged in "Täuschungsmanöver . . . die uns niederhielten in Selbstverleugnung" (p. 173). The narrator remarks that Rosalinde tells him that she
is unable to comprehend "wie ich mich freiwillig einer derartigen Reduzierung meiner selbst aussetzen könne" (p. 173). Her accusations recall all the narrator's anxieties to him: "Meine Herkunft hing mir wieder, wie bei jedem Versuch, zu mir selbst zu finden, wie ein Gewicht an, immer stiess ich auf diese Grundbedingung, entrechtet, stimmlos zu sein" (p. 173). Rosalinde decides to follow the example of Toller and attempts to kill herself. As for the narrator, he begins his part time work in Brecht's "factory."

For Brecht the narrator begins assembling material on Engelbrekt, the leader of a revolt in Sweden in the fifteenth century. The narrator also recounts a long discussion between Brecht and Ström and others regarding Swedish politics from the late nineteenth century to the present. A major theme of this discussion is the impossibility of effecting major social change through a participation in the structures of a parliamentary democracy. The conclusion, as in the case of the study of Engelbrekt, is the necessity of using force to transform the world. Brecht, like Gericault, builds a model in order to aid him in his work. However, the emphasis in this model of the ironworks (see p. 219) is on the analytical and the factual. Nonetheless, there is some subjective involvement in this work as is indicated by the narrator's comment that Brecht's illness is related to the fact that they have come to the end of the story of Engelbrekt when it is time to recount the final defeat of the leader of the rebels. The narrator regards his association with Brecht in "seiner unter Dampf stehenden Fabrik"
(p. 213) as a period of apprenticeship. Just as the workers in the factory must prepare for the day in which they will assume management so the narrator studies with Brecht in order to learn his craft. In the course of this apprenticeship the narrator discovers his occupation as "ein Chronist, der gemeinsames Denken wiedergab" (p. 306) and this discovery becomes a turning point in his life:

Von jetzt an war mein Bewusstsein vom Prozess des Schreibens erfüllt, es war darin ein Registrieren von Impulsen, Aussagen, Erinnungsbildern, Handlungsmomenten, alles bisherige war Vorübung gewesen, alles Schwankende, Zersplitterte, Vieldeutige, alle brodelnden Monologe wurden zum Resonanzboden für meine Gedanken und Reflexionen. ... Die ungeheure Kluft zwischen uns, die wir an die Stempeluhr gebunden waren, und denen, die sich in Unabhängigkeit der Literatur, der Kunst zuwenden konnten, hatte nichts Qualendes mehr, vielmehr war es, als sei mir grade durch den Druck der realen Verhältnisse das nahgebracht worden, was ich ausdrücken wollte. (p. 306)

He discovers language as an "Instrument, zugehörig einer Weltwissenschaft" (p. 306). In the first volume of Die Ästhetik des Widerstands the narrator was alienated from himself and the world in terms of the conditions of working class existence and of a lack of confidence in his own ability to describe and analyse those conditions and the surrounding culture in a way which would impart to his life a degree of significance which had so far eluded him. The narrator's discovery of his vocation indicates a similar preoccupation with himself. His allegiance to a system, a "Weltwissenschaft," which allows him to sense that he has overcome that alienation by taking responsibility for it through enabling him in his writings to expose the underlying conditions which determine it, becomes the governing factor of his existence.
While the narrator's commitment to his vocation may well involve a denial of the subjective experience of his own pain ("Die Kluft . . . hatte nichts Quälendes mehr."), it does place him in a relationship to the world by allowing him to view his separation as an objective condition, as the "Druck der realen Verhältnisse."

In my consideration of both volumes of Die Ästhetik des Widerstands I have concentrated mainly on the opening sections of each volume for three reasons. First, my primary interest is with the portrayal of alienation in the work, and it is in these opening sections that the estrangement of the narrator both from himself and from the world about him is most clearly expressed. The beginning of each volume also lays the groundwork for the themes which are to encompass the rest of the novel so that a study of any theme from the vantage point of the opening sections is perhaps particularly fruitful. The second reason is that in a very real sense the protagonists of the novel are art and politics, and the first sections of each volume involves both these fields. The work is concerned with an ideology which offers the possibility of a synthesis of art and politics and a reunion of the narrator with himself and his world. Finally, I have paid considerable attention to certain parts of the novel because it is there that the quality of Weiss's craftsmanship as a prose writer is most clearly apparent.
Conclusion

One of the keys to understanding alienation in Weiss's work is his use of ritual acts or socially prescribed behavior to portray alienated states. The phenomenon of alienation can be understood through the regular, everyday activities of individuals who, were it not for their preoccupations, would be regarded as "normal." Their obedience to everyday rituals in the context of these preoccupations belies this "normalcy."

The use of ritual acts in all of Weiss's prose works is depicted in scenes of violence, punishment and guilt in the form of self-betrayal. Ritual acts perform another function as well in Weiss's works. They objectify subjective experience and thus give expression to a state which otherwise could not be communicated. This feature pertains to all the works whether the ritual acts are in the context of childhood (Abschied von den Eltern), war (Fluchtpunkt) or a new ideology (Die Ästhetik des Widerstands). The conclusion which could be drawn from all these works is that alienation is a state of being. It is a relationship over which one has no control. However, in Die Ästhetik des Widerstands there is an obvious attempt through decisions (Entscheidungen) and acts (Handlungen) to overcome separation. That this attempt fails means simply that one cannot bridge the separation between the self and the world; it does mean, nonetheless, that attempts can be made to assume responsibility
for an alienated world. Ideology (as it is depicted in Die Ästhetik des Widerstands) is in part a response to the overwhelming nature of existential alienation. The fundamental problem is that any ideology entails the acceptance of a world view which denies the legitimacy of this dilemma.

Peter Weiss's excellence as a writer of prose is well established. Passages in his latest novel are comparable in quality to his finest accomplishments in writing. Particularly masterful are the descriptions of works of art such as Picasso's Guernica, the paintings of Géricault, and the Great Frieze of the Altar of Zeus at Pergamum. The reservations I have in regard to Die Ästhetik des Widerstands is that certain aspects of character are never fully portrayed while other themes of the novel are explored to the point of exhaustion.

As in any study of an author's work I have found it necessary to select a specific focus in order to investigate the theme of alienation in Weiss's writings. It appears that certain questions in the works may better be resolved through an approach that is more psychological in its orientation. By a psychological approach I mean a frame of reference which would allow one to explore more fully the inner life of the characters. Such an approach may involve an identification of Weiss with these characters. However, I have serious reservations regarding any frame of reference which would reduce Weiss's works to a series of subjective concerns which bear little or no relationship to society as it either legitimates those concerns
or attempts to invalidate them. It also seems that although the dramas do not involve as comprehensive a portrayal of individuals as do the prose works, they do contain scenes of violence, punishment and guilt in the form of self-betrayal. For this reason a study of alienation as a theme of Weiss's dramatic works would appear to be appropriate.
Notes

Chapter 1: Der Schatten des Körpers des Kutschers: the phenomenology of alienation

1 Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie, 87 (1968), 643. All further references to Rose Zeller are to this study.


3 Helmut Lüttmann, Die Prosawerke von Peter Weiss, Diss. Hamburg, Geistes- und sozialwissenschaftliche Dissertatationen, 24 (Hamburg: Lüdke, 1972), p. 11. All further references to Lüttmann are to this work.

4 (Bern: Francke, 1971), p. 45. All further references to Best are to this work.

5 Germanic Review, 47 (1972), 215. All further references to Perry are to this study.


Chapter 2: Abschied von den Eltern: the recurrence of alienation

1 Modern German Authors: Texts and Contexts, vol. 3 (London: Wolff, 1970), p. 23. All further references to Hilton are to this work.

Chapter 3: Fluchtpunkt: the dilemma or the persistence of alienation

1 Peter Weiss, Fluchtpunkt (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1962), p. 7. All further references to the novel are to this edition.

2 Helmut Lüttmann, Die Prosawerke von Peter Weiss, Diss. Hamburg, Geistes- und sozialwissenschaftliche Dissertationen, 24 (Hamburg: Lüdke, 1972), see pp. 342-43. All further references to Lüttmann are to this work.

3 History and Human Survival: Essays on the Young and Old, Survivors and the Dead, Peace and War, and on Contemporary Psychohistory (New York: Random House, 1970), see pp. 61-80.

4 V. E. Meyerhold, one of the artists mentioned by the narrator in his discussion with Hoderer, was arrested and killed in 1939, a year after his theater in Moscow was dissolved. Since the details of Meyerhold's fate are not given in the text, Hoderer's argument is presumably in defense of Stalinist policy in restricting an artist's accessibility to the public and is not a defense of murder as an extension of that policy.

5 In regard to the "letter" from Theresienstadt, the narrator actually refers to a "Papier von ihm [Peter Kien], das mit blauen und blassroten Pinselstrichen durchkreuzt war und den Stempel des Adlers mit den ausgebreiteten Schwingen enthielt" (p. 89). The narrator also states that he received letters—"Briefe aus ihrer
Hand" (p. 90)—from Lucie Weisberger during the spring of 1942. At that time inmates of the actual Theresienstadt were allowed to "send" postcards of 50 words in block letters. Inmates were also allowed one suitcase weighing 20 kilograms, a fact which renders the narrator's reference to Peter Kien's "Bücher und Malerausrüstung" (p. 89) even more peculiar.

7 Weimarer Beiträge, 16, Heft 2 (1970), 177.
8 Basis, 2 (1971), 240.
9 Amsterdamer Beiträge zur neueren Germanistik, 2 (1973), see pp. 137-49. All further references to Hensing are to this study.
10 (Bern: Francke, 1971), p. 33. All further references to Best are to this work.

Chapter 4: Das Gespräch der drei Gehenden: the ontology of alienation

1 Peter Weiss, Das Gespräch der drei Gehenden (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1963), p. 7. All further references to the work are to this edition.

2 Die Prosawerke von Peter Weiss, Diss. Hamburg, Geistes- und sozialwissenschaftliche Dissertationen, 24 (Hamburg: Lüdke, 1972), see p. 133, n. 7. All further references to Lüttmann are to this work.


Chapter 5: Die Ästhetik des Widerstands: the ideology of alienation

1 Basis, 6 (1976), 126. All further references to Müssener, unless otherwise noted, are to this study.


12 Atlantic, 220, No. 2 (1967), 33.


16 Müßener lists two such inaccuracies on p. 339, n. 5.


Select Bibliography

1. Works by Weiss

a. Prose


b. Interviews, discussion and address


"Peter Weiss in Conversation with A. Alvarez." *Encore,* 12, No. 4 (1965), 16-22.


"Die Bundesrepublik ist ein Morast: Interview mit Peter Weiss." Der Spiegel, 22, Heft 12 (1968), 182-84.


2. Works about Weiss


---------, "Zurück zur Muttersprache: Peter Weiss." Moderna Språk, 58 (1964), 8-12.


3. Secondary Literature


A considerable number of works on Weiss's dramas, such as Johanna Bernhard Rosenwald's "Peter Weiss: Art, Politics, and the Mass Media" (Diss. Queen's University 1978), has been omitted from this bibliography because of the limited relevance of these works to a study of Weiss's prose. Such works have only been included when they contain specific information on the prose works which is not to be found elsewhere as is the case with Manfred Haiduk's Peter Weiss: Eine biographisch-monographische Untersuchung, which examines the prose works in conjunction with Weiss's unpublished "Notizbücher." This bibliography does not include one or two works which were used to elucidate a particularly brief point. Complete information on these works is provided in the notes.