THE GROTESQUE IN THE WORKS OF ERNST BARLACH

by

BERNARD REED ANDERSON

B.A., University of British Columbia, 1963

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Arts

in the Department of

GERMAN

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
September, 1966
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Head of my Department or by his representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of GERMAN

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

Date SEPTEMBER 26, 1966.
Abstract

This thesis attempts to demonstrate the manner in which Barlach used the phenomenon of the grotesque in his prose and dramatic writing. The concept of the grotesque has been examined in the light of a number of the more significant attempts to define it. Particular attention has been paid to the recent studies of the grotesque by Wolfgang Kayser and Lee Byron Jennings, but extensive reference has also been made to the definitions of George Santayana and John Ruskin, as well as to the 1929 dissertation of Ernst Schweizer and the 1940 discussion of the grotesque by Robert Petsch.

The paper attempts to demonstrate that Barlach made use of the grotesque to mystify reality and to point to otherwise hidden mythological aspects of the world, as well as to give expression to what he called a "Panik vor dem So-Sein," i.e., a panic which he felt whenever he compared the temporal existence to the potentiality of some higher realm of being. To demonstrate the universality of the grotesque experience, reference has also been made to the concept of the demonic as described by Goethe, and the grotesque is related to it. Representations of the divine in Barlach's works appear grotesque from a human vantage, because man, in his struggle to maintain his identity and to perpetuate his own trivial world has no eye for higher values or higher modes of existence. Man interprets the intrusion of the divine into his world as a threat to his existence,
not as an act of grace.

The influence of Theodor Daeubler and Albert Kollmann is considered with respect to Barlach's concept of the "high lord", and an attempt is made to come thereby to an understanding of Barlach's relationship to deity. The divine is represented by Barlach as not an extension and perfection of the human, but supra-human and hostile to man in his closed little world. To demonstrate the manner in which the elements of the divine intrude into man's world and threaten his orientation, a study has been made of Barlach's use of grotesque metaphors, objects, and situations, with special reference to Barlach's novel Seespeck and his early dramatic works.

The phenomenon of the grotesque is seen to be related to that of the absurd as presented by modern playwrights, and Barlach is shown to have anticipated the Absurd in many respects. But it is pointed out that Barlach refused to accept the idea of an absurd universe, despite his admitted incapacity to resolve his doubts. Barlach's later plays and correspondence are considered, to establish that he became resigned in his mature years to a state of "not-knowing" as a way of life in which the panic of the earlier years, and with it the grotesque, diminished.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preliminary Remarks</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I: Introduction: The Grotesque - Definition and Delimitation.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II: The Origin of the Grotesque in Barlach.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III: The Function of the Grotesque in Barlach.</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IV: Barlach's Use of Grotesque Metaphor.</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter V: Grotesque Objects and Personages.</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VI: Grotesque Situations.</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VII: Conclusion.</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Selected Bibliography.</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preliminary Remarks

Literary criticism of German writers who wrote during the period of National Socialism in Germany suffers, and for some time to come will continue to suffer, from lack of objectivity. It appears at times to be almost impossible to distinguish between ethics and aesthetics, for the critic is torn between an attempt at scholarly analysis and his emotional need to take a stand on matters of moral concern. As a result, writers associated with National Socialism, such as Ernst Juenger and Gottfried Benn, quite often are given an unfair hearing.

But a writer can suffer from overly assiduous critics as well. The current image of Barlach is that of an opponent of Nazism, and it is therefore assumed that his "Weltanschauung" was diametrically opposed to theirs. With this image in mind, the critic necessarily searches for (and finds) evidence of Barlach's incompatibility with almost every aspect of the "regime" under which he lived, and which (and again the evidence is easy to come by) stifled the creative powers of his mature years and probably hastened his death. But such approaches have paid little heed to Barlach's use of the grotesque, to this, his way of attempting to cope with what the Romantics called "die Nachtseiten der Natur". In his willingness to suspend the rational faculty in an attempt to reach out beyond reality, in his attempt to see the mystical and the mythological in the surrounding phenomena (a much discussed German tendency), Barlach had more in common with his persecutors
than is generally conceded. To be sure, the end result was totally
different in the two cases, but the tendency was similar. It is hoped
that a study of the grotesque in Barlach will be useful in helping to
restore a true perspective and so do justice to those aspects of the
creative world of Ernst Barlach which until now have been almost
completely ignored.
CHAPTER I

Introduction: The Grotesque - Definition and Delimitation

Like so many other literary terms, such as "expressionism" or "the absurd", the term "grotesque" appears to be caught up in a never ending controversy aimed at definition and clarification while actually accomplishing the opposite: Such terms seem to draw most of their vitality from their elusiveness, and in any attempt at delimitation one can hope for at best only partial success. As Eric Bentley has observed: "The trouble with literary terms is that in proportion as they become impressive they become useless, in proportion as they become exact they become inapplicable. A literary term changes colour while you watch it; the only rule must be to watch it carefully." But watching the literary term "grotesque" is not nearly as simple as it at first sounds. The term "grotesque" is yet in the process of being defined, has too many points in common with other related terms, and too few universally accepted distinguishing features of its own. The brunt of the best of modern criticism dealing with the grotesque is concerned rather with the task of investigating the nature of the manifold phenomena termed grotesque in an attempt to delimit and render precise a term used too often more for its "Stimmungswert" than its exactitude. But, as Bentley has pointed out, a compromise between usefulness and universal applicability will have to be struck in any

one consideration, with the result that no really "definitive" treatment is likely to emerge. Furthermore, man is not likely to cease to re-appraise himself, his universe, and his relationship to it, and as he redefines the principals, the derivatives, too, will have to be re-assessed.

This paper therefore will not be concerned with the impossible task of satisfying all comers, of attempting to arrive at an exact and universally applicable definition. Nor will the term be traced etymologically or historically, for this had been done before. To be of maximum usefulness, terms such as "grotesque" must be defined with direct reference to the author or artist under consideration. Abstract words are, after all, at best approximations, or, as Barlach has called them, "eine Kruecke fuer die, denen das Humpeln genuegt."² "Es [das Wort] kann nur helfen, annaehernd das Gefuehlte zu erschoepfen, insofern es menschlich begrifflich ist."³ It will be attempted initially then to arrive at a useful but admittedly restricted definition of the term "grotesque", by means of which Barlach's creative world can better be explored.

Although any classification is arbitrary, attempts to deal with the grotesque can best be divided, for the purposes of this paper, into three categories:

a) those defining the grotesque in terms of the form of expression, or

² Ernst Barlach, Leben und Werke in seinen Briefen, ed. Friedrich Dross (Muenchen, 1952), p. 178. (Hereafter referred to as Br. II.)
b) in terms of the content of that expressed, or finally
c) those which attempt a synthesis of both a) and b) in the hope of overcoming the shortcomings of each individually.

Each treatment has its merits and usefulness, depending whether the creator or the observer of the grotesque tends towards an aesthetic or a mystical "Weltanschauung". Barlach, it will be seen, tends toward the latter. However, in order to maintain perspective, it will be useful to consider a sampling of some of the more important attempts to define the grotesque. To make the sampling as representative as possible, definitions have been chosen as presented by philosophers, scholars and men of letters. They will be discussed so as to maintain approximately the order of the above-mentioned categorization.

An outstanding modern philosopher who has concerned himself intensively with problems of aesthetics is George Santayana. The grotesque, he writes in his work, *The Sense of Beauty*, "is an interesting effect produced by such a transformation of an ideal type as exaggerates one of its elements or combines it with other types." At the outset, then, he defines the grotesque with respect to its effect on the observer rather than to its origin in the creator. For Santayana, the grotesque is but one of a number of aesthetic classifications for artistic creations. He continues: "The real excellence of this, like that of all fiction, consists in re-creation; in the formation
of a thing which nature has not, but might conceivably have offered. We call these inventions comic and grotesque when we are considering their divergence from the natural rather than their inward possibility.\(^5\) But with Santayana it is just this "inward possibility", this life-potential, this possibility of acceptance into the familiar world of man's symbolism and mythology which constitutes their "real charm". "If we...are able to disengage the individual from the class into which we are trying to force him, we can forget the expectation he was going to disappoint. The ugliness then disappears..."\(^6\) And with this disappearance of the ugliness, the type, if it is otherwise aesthetically viable, becomes acceptable and "takes its place among the recognized ideals."\(^7\) Although originally doubtless grotesque in this sense, the centaur and the satyr have long since ceased to be so, and are now part of man's intellectual and aesthetic environment. Thus the grotesque at its best is a transitory phenomenon, depending for its power and excellence upon its spontaneous originality and compatibility with the natural aesthetic intuition of man. An encounter with the successful grotesque is essentially a pleasing aesthetic experience, for we are dealing here, even in the act of observation, with re-creation with a type of competition with nature herself."..if the confusion is not absolute and we have an inkling of the unity and character in the midst of the strangeness of form, then we have the grotesque. It is the half-formed, the perplexed, and the suggestively monstrous."\(^8\) It

5. Ibid., pp. 256-257.

6. Ibid., p. 257.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.
is of passing interest here to note that Santayana's concept of the grotesque agrees more with an earlier than with the present usage of the term. In his recent dissertation, *Beitraege zur Geschichte des Wortes 'Grotesk*', Robert R. Anderson is reported to have amassed considerable evidence which demonstrates that in general usage before the nineteenth century, the term was more synonomous with "gracious" and "charming" than with the more horrific aspects now commonly associated with it. Charm is one of the adjectives used by Santayana to describe the phenomenon, although he may well be using the word in the stricter sense of enticement, or indescribable fascination.

Of the many attempts in our century to come to terms with the phenomenon of the grotesque, one of the most exhaustive and successful, considering its pioneering position, is the dissertation of Ernst Schweizer, "Das Groteske und das Drama Frank Wedekinds", a work to which even Wolfgang Kayser acknowledges a great indebtedness. From both a historical and a cultural approach, Schweizer arrives at four distinguishing characteristics of the grotesque. They are:

a) Die Steigerung,

b) Das Verlassen des Lebensgesetzlichen,


The first of these, exaggeration, he considers the most obvious and essential. "Allen Definitionen des Grotesken ist gemeinsam die Erkenntnis, dass ohne Steigerung kein "Grotesk" möglich ist." But within the scope of the term "Steigerung" he includes abnormal diminution as well as excessive, unnatural enlargement. Santayana had demanded either exaggeration of some characteristic or combination of types although his examples included both, but Schweizer reduced the latter to a special case of his second requirement, the abandonment of the natural laws of life. "Untersucht man den Grad der Steigerung, so ergibt sich, dass es sich um keine gewöhnliche Steigerung handelt, die nur Betonung oder Vergroesserung waere. Wesentlich ist die Uebersteigerung ins Unmögliche, ins Phantastische, ins Unwirkliche. Die Aufhebung des Naturgesetzlichen, des Organisch-Gegebenen ist unbedingt notwendig, um die Bezeichnung grotesk mit Recht zu verwenden." Any occurrence whatsoever which appears in nature can never be grotesque. But Schweizer adds: "Man spricht wohl von grotesken Formen, die die Natur hervorbringt, aber das Wesentliche dabei ist eben der Eindruck, dass sie die Gesetzmaessigkeit des Organischen nicht achten und verzerren. Die Bezeichnungen "bizarre" und "grotesk" werden hier häufig verwechselt."
Equally essential to the definition is "inner dissonance" between the exaggerated, heterogeneous elements constituent to the subject under consideration. Not only the natural external order is to be abandoned, but the function and inner being of the components, i.e., extreme distortion on every level is required. And Schweizer here chooses the hunch-back Quasimodo, Victor Hugo's bellringer of Notre-Dame as the classic example, of a figure which nature seemed to create at cross purposes with herself.

Although he admits that he is almost alone in doing so, Schweizer broadens the normal definition of the grotesque to include a "Betonung des Grausigen und eine gewisse pathetische Groesse." He explains that the grotesque has been linked with the comic in most attempts at aesthetic classification, i.e., in most treatments of the subject, humour is seen to have its origin not in the healthy organism, functioning harmoniously, but in one beset with an awareness of fundamental discrepancies and disharmonies in existence. The comic reflects not the whole, but the fragmented, not a harmless, innocent love of life, but some sickness inherent in the universe. Schweizer makes reference to Fr. Th. Vischer, who regarded "das tiefste Unglueck des Bewusstseins die Voraussetzung fuer den Humor." The "Eigenschaft des Negativen im Grotesken", Schweizer continues, has been smothered in the comic and has not received its due of attention.

Es ist unmöglich, das Groteske jemals mit einem positiven Vorzeichen zu versehen. Alles Schoene, Gute, Feine, Herrliche, Heroische, Liebliche, Anmutige, Harmonische steht

18. Ibid., p. 17.
19. Ibid., p. 17.

Of the modern critics, Erwin Gradmann agrees most fully with Schweizer's definition. In his book, *Phantastik und Komik*, Gradmann takes this negative orientation of the comic for granted. When he then makes the comic an integral part of the grotesque, he automatically fulfills Schweizer's requirement that the grotesque be negatively oriented. He writes:

Vorzueglich in dem Grotesken finder die Begegnung zwischen dem Komischen und dem Phantastischen statt ...

...Der Widersinn, der bis zum Widrigen, Ekel- und Grauenerregenden und Obszoenen gehen kann, ist ein wesentliches Element des Grotesken...

...Mit dem Komischen gemeinsam kann es das Entstellende und Ueberubertreibende haben...

...Das Groteske weist immer schon Zuege des Phantastischen auf, also eines Gestaltwandels und dessen Ausdruck in Zerr- und Mischformen... 21

Thus, although he at first appears to contradict Schweizer by linking the comic and the grotesque, the two critics are actually in full agreement as to the nature of the phenomenon.

For the sake of simplicity, Schweizer's definition might be paraphrased thus: the grotesque is the abandonment of the natural order in a negatively oriented, wilful distortion on all levels of experience. This is essentially a "formal" definition with only the weakest undertones of mysticism, in contrast to a purely aesthetic interpretation, in the treatment of the "Negativ-Erhabenen." Encouragingly enough, the bulk of


modern criticism dealing with the subject accept unanimously the first three of Schweizer's four requirements. It is with the fourth and with the question of content that disagreement still exists.

Throughout his consideration of the grotesque, two factors have acted as norms for Schweizer: man, and associated with him, his normal, every-day reality. The human element is rated highest in his universe, and everything else is judged, not on the basis of intrinsic merit, but in relationship to it. As a consequence of this normalization, Schweizer sees the grotesque as a product of a purely nihilistic tendency within the artist: "Das Groteske kennt keinen Zweck, sondern entspringt einer negativen Grundbestimmung... Sein Wesen liegt tief begründet in der Weltauflösung des Menschen bezw. des Künstlers, dessen Ausdrucksform das Groteske ist." In our consideration of the grotesque in Barlach, our attention will centre around this very problem of "Weltauflosung" and negativity. In Barlach's world Schweizer's norms do not apply, for he aligns himself not with the human, but with that which surpasses and is beyond man and his world. As a result, the dissolution of man's world may well be regarded as a step upwards, and not necessarily as a plunge into chaos.

In an attempt to make the grotesque, as an aesthetic category, as wide and as encompassing as possible, Clemens Heselhaus, in his *Deutsche Lyrik der Moderne*, resists the inclusion of any question of evaluation or content in a "formal" definition. Levels of tolerance to the grotesque he claims vary too much even within one society to allow

22. Schweizer, p. 18.
such as generalization. "Vielleicht ist eine inhaltliche Bestimmung
nicht moeglich, weil das Groteske nach der jeweiligen Gesellschafts-
lage eine andere Funktion und andere Inhalte hat. Wohl aber gibt es
eine formale Bestimmung des Grotesken als die uberraschende
Zusammenfuegung des Heterogenen . . ..In der Vermischung der Bereiche
Ordnungen, Stile besteht als wesentlich die Erscheinung des
Grotesken".

Reinhold Grimm, however, speaks for many when, in his study
of the grotesque in Duerrenmatt, he expressed appreciation of the
difficulties to be encountered in any attempt to define the grotesque
other than "formally", but regrets nevertheless that Heselhaus has
excluded any reference to content in his definition. The grotesque
in Duerrenmatt's artistic world, as in that of many other writers, he
contends, cannot be adequately dealt with without recourse to what he
calls the demonic. He writes:

In Wahrheit umfasst das Groteske bei Duerrenmatt - und wir
duerfen mit Fug und Recht vermuten: das Groteske ueberhaupt -
sowohl das Farcenhafte wie das Daemonische, und in seinen besten Gestaltungen
geht das eine ununterscheidbar ins andere uber. Aus dem
Grotesken erhebt sich das zynische, satanische Gelaechter
und die schrille Lache des Wahnsinns: "le grand rire
infernal", wie Kayser mit Victor Hugo sagt. Aber es droehnt
auch jenes hemmungslose Lachen aus dem Vollgefuehl des
Lebens, das sich kugelt und waelzt, daraus hervor. Angst
und Grauen vor dem Spuk der Welt mischen sich fortwaehrend
mit dem unbaendigen Drang, diese selbe Welt zu foppen, durch-
einanderzuwirbeln und zum Narren zu halten. Boese, aergerliche
Geschichten, sagt Duerrenmatt, - aber auch der Uebermut gehoert
dazu . . . Demnach liegt vielleicht das Eigentliche des Grotes-
ken wirklich im laecherlich-grausen Ineinander des urspruenglich
und wesenhaft getrennten, und wir haetten uns mit einer weit-
gehend formalen Bestimmung zu bescheiden?

23. Deutsche Lyrik der Moderne, von Nietzsche bis Yvan Goll
Mag sein. Ob man sie jedoch dermassen allgemein und ohne jeden inhaltlichen Bezug fassen kann, wie Heselhaus dies will, naemlich allein als "die ueberraschende Zusammenfassung des Heterogenen", bleibt doch wohl fraglich. 24

Such a restrictive definition of the grotesque as "die ueberraschende Zusammenfassung des Heterogenen" will do little more than identify the phenomenon, but will fail to tell us anything about its origin or effect. As will be demonstrated, Barlach was a religious man in the deepest sense of the word and was concerned with form only to the extent that it could unlock the universe for man symbolically. In the period of his creative life in which grotesque manifestations abound, Barlach considered man one of the most insignificant beings in a populated universe. For him the grotesque functioned essentially as a means of acquainting man with higher and nobler realms. As a consequence, any approach to the grotesque which limits itself to a study of the formal aspects alone would be of only limited value in reference to Barlach. Of those attempts to deal with the phenomenon which have been considered so far, only Grimm has introduced the possibility of some transcendental aspect. From these purely "formal" definitions, we must now turn to consider those which pay some heed, first, to the purposes of the artist in electing the grotesque as a means of expression, and second, to the substance of that which he seeks to express through the grotesque.

Like Santayana in our day, John Ruskin was considered an important spokesman in aesthetic matters in his. But whereas Santayana approaches aesthetics from an empirical, psychological point of view, the earthly was for Ruskin but a reflection of the divine. Purely "formal" considerations played a much greater role for Santayana than for Ruskin, who placed greater value upon the transcendental content of art. In many ways Ruskin's approach is similar to Barlach's. It thus will be useful in a study of the grotesque as defined by Ruskin. He writes:

... we must, I think, be led to one most important conclusion that wherever the human mind is healthy and vigorous in all its proportions, great in imagination and emotion no less than in intellect, and not overborne by an undue or hardened preeminence of the mere reasoning faculties, there the grotesque will exist in full energy. And, accordingly, I believe that there is no test of greatness in periods, nations, or men, more sure than the development, among them or in them, of a noble grotesque and no test of comparative smallness or limitation, of one kind or another, more sure than the absence of grotesque invention, or incapability of understanding it. I think that the central man of all the world, as representing in perfect balance the imaginative, moral, and intellectual faculties, all at their highest, is Dante; and in him the grotesque reaches at once the most distinct and the most noble development to which it was ever brought in the human mind... 25

The true or noble grotesque, as he calls it, calls into action not only the imaginative and intellectual powers, but also man's moral faculty, and in Ruskin's world and terminology, this can only refer to man's relationship to God and universe; i.e., the grotesque becomes a phenomenon of cosmic significance. At the same time, he goes to some length to differentiate between the true or noble and the false grotesque.

'The noble grotesque', he claims, 'involves the true appreciation of beauty'. In the exact proportion in which the grotesque results from an incapacity of perceiving beauty, it becomes savage or barbarous. Nothing is more mysterious in the history of the human than the manner in which gross and ludicrous images are mingled with the most solemn subjects in the work of the Middle Ages. (and we might add, in the works of Ernst Barlach). With the noble grotesque, a man of 'naturally strong feeling' is acted upon; in the creation of the false grotesque, 'a man naturally apathetic is forcing himself into temporary excitement.' The one, as a revelator, is speaking out a significant truth about man in his universe; the other is but playing with arbitrary creations of his own imagination. The one writes out of necessity; the other out of play. He continues:

The horror which is expressed by the one comes upon him whether he will or not; that which is expressed by the other is sought out by him, and elaborated by his art. And therefore, because the fear of the one is true, and of true things, however fantastic its expression may be, there will be reality in it, and force. It is not a manufactured terribleness, whose author, when he had finished it, knew not if it would terrify anyone else or not: but it is a terribleness taken from life; a spectre which the workman indeed saw, and which, as it appalled him, will appal us also. But the other workman never felt any divine fear; he never shuddered when he heard the cry from the burning towers of the earth,

"Venga Medusa; si lo farem di smalto."

He is stone already, and needs no gentle hand laid upon his eyes to save him.

26 Ibid., p. 189
27 Ibid., p. 168
27a Ibid., p. 168
But Ruskin here makes a qualification most significant in relation to Barlach. "I do not mean what I say in this place to apply to creations of the imagination," he continues. "It is not as the creating, but as the seeing man, that we are here contemplating the master of the true grotesque. It is because the dreadfulness of the world around him weighs upon his heart that his work is wild; and therefore through the whole of it we shall find the evidence of a deep insight into nature. His beasts and birds, however monstrous, will have profound relations to the true." It is this 'deep insight into nature', this closeness to ultimate reality which gives the true grotesque its power to hold the imagination, which fascinates the observer despite his feeling of revulsion. As will be seen in our consideration of Barlach, the grotesque serves to express aspects of the eternal expressible no other way. Despite its horrific element, the grotesque is seen then not as a purely negative phenomenon. Under circumstances, it answers well man's need to reach out beyond himself, to probe the depths of the universe. Whether these depths be internal or external is here unimportant. But Ruskin introduces another element which until now has not been given its due; the ludicrous. In his usage, this is closely linked with play and jest. He writes: 'First then, it seems to me that the grotesque is, in almost all cases, composed of two elements, one ludicrous, the other fearful; that as one or the other of these elements prevails, the grotesque falls into two branches, sportive grotesque and fearful grotesque; but that we cannot legitimately consider it under these two aspects, because there are hardly any examples which do not

28. Ibid., p. 169.
in some degree combine both elements; there are so few grotesques so truly playful as to be overcast with no shade of fearfulness, and few so fearful as absolutely to exclude jest. Grotesque art, he contends, is essentially the art resulting from the "recreative exertion" of minds disengaged from their normal care and toil which prevent them from allowing what we would now call the subconscious from manifesting itself. The mind is now free to dwell on normally repressed issues and can allow itself to toy freely with its images, unobstructed by the inhibitions and patterning of the will. Thus liberated, some minds will produce grotesques which are at best "... the spirit of idiotic mockery ..., evidence of a delight in the contemplation of bestial vice, and the expression of low sarcasm ...," which is "... the most helpless state into which the human mind can fall." Contrasted to this is the "magnificent condition of fantastic imagination ..., one of the chief elements of the Northern Gothic mind." The grotesque created is either noble or false, "according to the tone of minds which have produced it, and in proportion to their knowledge, wit, love of truth, and kindness; secondly, according to the degree of strength which they have been able to give forth ... ." Ruskin's category of the false or ignoble grotesque includes then that which was created without a basis in nature. It deals to some extent with the same subject matter and uses the same or similar modes of expression as the noble, but differs from it chiefly with respect to its origin in the artist.

29. Ibid., p. 151.
30. Ibid., p. 145.
31. Ibid., pp. 157-158.
Now as an aesthetic classification, this leaves much to be desired, for it is the object, existent in its own right, with which we are faced and we would prefer not to have to return to the artist for an explanation before we can classify his work. And again, especially with the grotesque sculpture of the Renaissance, the artist is completely unknown. But one cannot help but suspect that Ruskin is really talking not about the origin of the work, but about its effect upon himself, the observer, and is assuming some mystical transferrence through the object from the artist to his audience — an idea, as will be seen, not foreign to Barlach. And Ruskin freely admits a real difficulty in distinguishing the noble from the false in some cases. However, this difficulty, he contends, arises from the fact that "the mind, under certain phases of excitement, plays with terror, and summons images which, if it were in another temper, would be awful, but of which, either inweariness or in irony, it refrains for the time to acknowledge the true terribleness." This playfulness of the mind is for Ruskin part of its recreative function. When the will is totally disengaged, the mind will play freely and the grotesques it creates will be true; it is created, in a sense, despite the artist's consciousness and will. In playing without restriction the mind is free to range over its complete stock of images, refusing any external dictation, creating even against the will. Ruskin continues:

... the master of the noble grotesque knows the depth of all at which he seems to mock, and would feel it at another time, or

32. Ibid., pp.66-67
feels it in a certain undercurrent of thought even while he jests with it; but the workman of the ignoble grotesque can feel and understand nothing, and mocks at all things with the laughter of an idiot and a cretin.  

Ruskin's definition of the grotesque is well augmented in Lee B. Jenning's study of the grotesque in postromantic German Prose, The Ludicrous Demon. With original research carried out quite independent of Wolfgang Kayser, Jennings arrives at a tempting if deceptively simple definition. "The grotesque," he asserts, "is the demonic made trivial." Now Ruskin had observed that in almost all cases, the grotesque was composed of two elements, one ludicrous, the other fearful, and had used this two-fold nature of the grotesque at least to some extent in his differentiation: noble and false. But Jennings sees the essential dynamic of the grotesque rather in the precarious balance of the two, and any excess of one or the other as a weakening of the grotesque effect, a degeneration into either the bizarre (droll, fantastic) or the terrible (gruesome, weird).

The most intense grotesque effect is achieved when the two aspects of the object, the fearsome and the ludicrous, are both present in pronounced form. Indeed, it can often be shown that the same individual features of the object that inspire laughter.

33. Ibid., p.167
34. Jennings, p. 16
35. Ruskin, p. 151
36. Jennings, p.16
37. Ibid.,p.14
He refers to Duerer's representation of the devil and to the Gothic gargoyles, in which "... the great profusion of claws, beaks, horns and so on, serve as much to diminish the elemental menace of the figure as to emphasise it, and the characteristic bestial leer of the face expresses idiotic clownishness as well as demonic malevolence." The degree of dynamic tension between these two aspects determines the power of the grotesque. To the extent that the fearful element becomesominous and threatens to dominate, it must be disarmed and made trivial by the ludicrous. The playful tendency in man, of which Ruskin spoke, is hereby made a mechanism for preserving the stability and well-being of the mind against the otherwise excessively disruptive forces which threaten to destroy it. Here, in the "undisturbed functioning of the disarming mechanism and the preservation of the balance between the fearsome and ludicrous aspects," Jennings sees the "basis of the unity of the concept 'grotesque'."39

One will not doubt the usefulness of Jennings's category, but one can hardly refrain from asking (and Jennings himself has his moment of doubt) whether such a definition, for all its usefulness and ingenuity, indeed defines the grotesque? If this precarious balance between the fearful and the ludicrous is indeed essential, much of that which has become stock in trade of the grotesque, such as the tortured souls which Dante depicts in his Inferno as trees, must be discarded. Jennings is willing to do so,40 but others are not.41 There would also appear

39. Ibid., p. 17.
40. Ibid., pp. 17-18.
to be an inconsistency in his requiring that the grotesque function as a disarming mechanism, for many of the examples he gives of the grotesque such as late Gothic sculpture, were works of art created by his own admission, with a newly acquired confidence in which the bogey has already been subdued. The effect of such grotesques would seem to be more that of invoking the supernatural than that of disarming it. The artist was motivated more likely by his fascination for the subject than by his instinct for self-preservation. But there is yet another problem here: the term "demonic". Although its inclusion within the definition should satisfy many who are unhappy with a purely 'formal' definition, its usefulness is deceptive. The term may be defined in any number of ways; theologically, metaphysically, psychologically, or even with reference to the natural sciences, and it is subject to constant abuse and misuse. Actually, we are back where we started, for the ambiguity inherent in the word 'grotesque' has been transferred to 'demonic', and a real solution is as far away as ever. "For mankind," wrote C.G. Jung, "it was always like the deliverance from a nightmare when a new name was found." 43 But the nightmare has returned.

As the term is not to be avoided in a study of the grotesque, it will be useful here to enquire as to the nature of the demonic. As it derives from the static, well-defined world of the Middle Ages, our contemporary usage of the term tends to lean toward the evil and devilish. In a closed "Weltanschauung" such as the mediaeval, all phenomena are easily defined. The borderlines between good and evil, the divine and the satanic can easily be drawn. But that such a system

42 Jennings, op. cit. pp. 15-16
43 The Role of the Unconscious (London, 1953), p. 11. (Translator not given) The original German edition was not available to me.
cannot succeed (or at least did not succeed) in containing the whole of human experience is demonstrated by the mystical undercurrents prevalent throughout the Middle Ages, undercurrents which emerge at that point where the system leaves off. This mysticism sought out the irrational and made it the object of its yearning and was concerned more with perceiving unities than in making distinctions. Thus, to the extent that mysticism influenced our understanding of the term 'demonic', it broadened it to include aspects of the divine. In recent times, Goethe has added a new dimension to the meaning of the term. He saw the demonic as a creative as well as a destructive, threatening force in the universe, and this insight has helped greatly to shape the modern usage of the term. It will be useful here to enquire deeper into the origins of his 'demonic' experience.

Goethe's world picture is neither mystic nor bounded, yet it has elements of both. Goethe knew that the universe was much too infinite, the godly much too profound ever to be grasped by man. He knew that it was much greater than man's vision of it. But he did not seek out the incommensurable. For Goethe, man is and remains man, a bounded but perfect type in God's creation. But by the very act of creation, God has set man bounds, i.e. the actualization is in fact a delimitation. The influence of Leibniz on Goethe's concept of man in the universe is unmistakable. In his creation of man and his universe, God chose from all possible forms the best for his desired purpose. In a sense then, the act of creation is a negation of all other possibilities. In such a universe, evil originates not in the actual, but in the possible; not from within God's creation, but from within that which he did not will and therefore did not create. The realms of the universe beyond the
realm of man are thus the source of the powers and tensions which
threaten his existence; it matters little whether these powers be real
or merely in the imagination. Since he sought to grasp everything
"bildlich" Goethe called these influences "daemonisch". It is clear
that the term is a relative one. Nothing would be demonic to a God.
In such a best of all possible worlds, Goethe found it necessary for man
to restrict himself to that which God had intended as man's sphere of
activity. This is the basis of the poet's concept of "Entsagung". The
overstepping of one's bounds in such a universe is equivalent to re-
bellion against God-given order, against the laws of nature and thus
against man's state. But the tragedy inherent in man's position is that 44
he cannot know beforehand whether some new explorations or experience
will lead him out of his divinely appointed bounds into destruction, or
on to greater fulfillment and perfection. Thus the "strebender Mensch"
who desired a full and meaningful life, even if he desired to remain
within the bounds of his "entelechy" as determined for him by God, will
always stand the risk of not doing so and thereby colliding with the
demonic. Carl Jaspers has called this continual encounter with the
demonic, a "Grenzsituation" 45, the continual encountering of the limit.

44. The term "tragic" is used here with reference to man's position
in his world, not with reference to man's ultimate fate in the
universe. Without the frame as presented in the "Prolog im Himmel"
and the final "deus ex machina", Faust would have been a tragic
figure.

45. Carl Jaspers, Psychologie der Weltanschauung, IV Auflage (Berlin,
same work, Jaspers writes: "Das Daemonische ist von Goethe nicht
gesucht sondern nur erfahren und respektiert, die Grenze seiner
Erfahrung. Dadurch steht dieses Weltbild im Gegensatz zu den
theosophischen Konstruktionen derer, die dieses Daemonische als
Stoff benutzen, es sucht, sich erbauen und sich gruseln, danach
luestern sind, und es zum Gegenstand machen, statt als Grenze
hinzunehmen."
Accordingly, man's life, as seen by Goethe, might be viewed as an active existence between an unknown centre and a yet undetermined periphery, in which it is man's task to discover his limits, but once having discovered them, to respect them and thus live within the bounds of his sphere. But Goethe adds: "Wenn ich mich beim Urphäenomen zuletzt beruhige, so ist es doch auch nur resignation; aber es bleibt ein grosser Unterschied, ob ich an den Grenzen der Menschheit resigniere oder innerhalb einer hypothetischen Beschränktheit meines bornierten Individuums." 46

Goethe appreciated the creative aspects of an encounter with the limit -- an encounter awakening within man awe and reverence, "Das Schaudern ist der Menschheit bestes Teil," 47 says Faust. It saves him from calcification and brings him into harmony with the eternal. But even when man resigns himself to his bounds he will see the demonic as an ever-present and necessary part of the world. Goethe spoke of powers which bestow "unerwartet guenstige Dinge," and of demons which aspire "die Menschheit zu necken und zum besten zu haben." 48 He called them both demonic. He explained to Eckermann: "Man kommt dahin, in solchen Faellen an eine hoehere Einwirkung, an etwas Daemonisches zu glauben, das man anbetet, ohne sich anzumassen, es weiter erklaren zu wollen." 49

47. Goethes Werke, op. cit., III, 193. Faust, line 6272.
49. Ibid., p. 94.
As speculation about God was not man's prerogative, Goethe regarded all superior powers with a certain reserve and committed himself entirely to none. It is this state of eternal uncertainty, this "Schaudern", which man experiences when confronted with something greater than himself that characterises his unique position in the universe. Goethe set himself bounds to his activity and research, and had little desire to cross them and so leave the divinely appointed realm of man. He feared to lose his humanity. "Das Höchste, wozu der Mensch gelangen kann," he explained to Eckermann, "ist das Erstaunen, und wenn ihn das Urphaenomen in Erstaunen setzt, so sei er zufrieden; ein Höheres kann es ihm nicht gewähren, und ein Weiteres soll er nicht dahinter suchen: hier ist die Grenze." 50

Perhaps the enormous increase in the incidence of the grotesque in the post-Goethian period can be attributed at least in part to the loss of faith in divinely appointed bounds such as Goethe and his generation envisaged. That which man previously held sacred and thought best left alone has been stripped of its divinity and has become a subject for detached speculation and mass consumption. The grotesque reverses this trend. For Barlach, as for many others, the grotesque had become a means to re-awaken within man the faculty for awe and worship.

It is perhaps ironical that both Barlach and one of the most prominent spokesmen for the men of letters in the Third Reich should agree so closely on the nature and function of the grotesque, but it is nonetheless the case. Barlach was black-listed for his "asiatic" style 50.

50. Ibid., p. 94.
of sculpture and his life-long association with the publishing house of the Jew Ernst Cassirer. His art was classed "entartet", and he was threatened in the last years of his life with a "Schreibverbot". But despite the outer enmity, there were closer ties between Barlach and his persecutors than is generally admitted. A study of the concept of the grotesque as defined by the above-named spokesman Robert Petsch in 1940 will serve both to clarify the concept and demonstrate this paradoxical relationship.

Petsch seeks to link the grotesque with the demonic as described by Goethe, but places the stress predictably on the mythological aspects of the unknown. He writes: "Nun gehoert das Groteske unzweifelhaft zu jenen aesthetischen Erscheinungen, die wir zunaehest mit einem 'negativen' Vorzeichen versehen, d.h. die uns auf den ersten Blick abstoessen, auf die Dauer aber fesseln und dem Schauenden bedeuetsame Zuege des Lebens und Geheimnisse der Welt verraten, zu denen wir auf keinem anderen Wege jemals vordringen koennen." 51 He continues: "...Wo das Groteske sich echt und rein entfaltet, erweckt es immer noch etwas von einer gewissen Scheu vor dem Uralten, Einfachen, Daemonisch-Unberechenbaren, das noch in unsere 'Kultur-Welt' hineinragt." 52 In contrast to Jennings for whom the grotesque functioned as a disarming mechanism, as a means of stripping the demonic, however defined, of its destructive power, Petsch sees in the grotesque a means of extending man's reach beyond his normal, every-day world, of


52. Ibid., p. 222.
a means of introducing into man's world forces and tensions not unlike those Goethe called demonic and advised be best left alone. Petsch extends Schweizer's definition and inverts completely his wholly negative evaluation of the grotesque:

For Petsch, the grotesque is more than an illusion and more than a stimulant as with the Expressionists. For him, the experiencing of the grotesque is equivalent to an encounter with primordial life, which for many of his generation was synonymous with ultimate reality. Petsch does not see the grotesque as the hostile, terrifyingly real attack on the well-ordered world of man. The experience may resemble that of a nightmare, but somehow the dream in all its terror is felt to be closer to the primeval roots of life than "life" itself. For both Petsch and Barlach, the grotesque serves as a means to reveal that which is beyond the normal, every-day world of man, and the technique of the grotesque is surprisingly similar in the two cases. But Barlach is dealing with the transcendental aspects of man, whereas Petsch is concerned with the mythological.

The treatment of the grotesque which is normally accepted as definitive is Wolfgang Kayser's *Das Groteske, seine Gestaltung in der Dichtung und Malerei*. Kayser attempts a definition aimed at satisfying all demands, but on only the first of his four points do most critics concur, i.e., in his definition: "Das Groteske ist die entfremdete Welt." Here Kayser has neatly reduced all three of Schweizer's original demands into one, but what he has gained in elegance, he has lost in precision and clarity, and he must qualify his statement: "Dazu gehoert, dass was uns vertraut und heimisch war, sich ploetzlich als fremd und unheimlich enthuellt. Es ist unsere Welt, die sich verwandelt hat. . . Das Grauen ueberfaellt uns so stark, weil es eben unsere Welt ist, deren Verlaesslichkeit sich als Schein erweist. Zugleich spuern wir, dass wir in dieser verwandelten Welt nicht zu leben vermoechten. Es geht beim Grotesken nicht um Todesfurcht, sondern um Lebensangst. Zur Struktur des Grotesken gehoert, dass die Kategorien unserer Weltorientierung versagen." For Kayser, Schweizer's "Steigerung" and "Verlassen des Lebensgesetzlichen" are but means to this end, and his "innere Dissonanz" but a symptom. But Kayser's inclusion of the element of surprise is new: "Die Ploetzlichkeit, die Ueberraschung gehoert wesentlich zum Grotesken." This element was one of Santayana's original requirements.

Kayser's remaining three points are concerned with the origin and content of the grotesque, and it is here that he opens himself for

56,57. Ibid., p. 198-199.
attack. Heselhaus regards Kayser's question, "Wer aber bewirkt die Entfremdung der Welt, wer kuendigt sich in der bedrohlichen Hintergruendigkeit an?" as little more than semantical nonesense, and the very posing of it as an unnecessary demonising of the concept.

But for Kayser the question is meaningful because it has no answer, and, in a sense, the question itself is meant to be an invocation of the unknown. A consideration of these elements, he contends, is unavoidable in any thorough treatment of the phenomenon, for the grotesque is in fact "die Gestaltung des 'Es'," "ein Spiel mit dem Absurden," "der Versuch, das Daemonische in der Welt zu bannen und zu beschwoeren."

But if Jennings was guilty of exchanging one ambiguity for another, Kayser has thrice the guilt. However the very nature of the subject matter makes some degree of ambiguity unavoidable. Throughout this paper, detailed reference will be made to Kayser's most important work.

Many attempts have been made to use language in non-conceptual ways, i.e. grotesquely, in an attempt to break through its normal limitations of expression. Barlach had what might be described as a mystical approach to language and words: "Ich glaube aber," he wrote Pastor Johannes Schwartzkopff, "... dass das Wort ein elender Notbehelf, ein schaebiges Werkzeug ist, und das eigentliche und letzte Wissen wortlos ist und bleiben muss. Es ist den Menschen gegeben als Kleingeld zur Bestreitung seiner Beduerftigkeit und masst sich immer

58. Ibid., p. 199.
61. Morgenstern's usage of language has been described as grotesque. See especially Petsch, op. cit., p. 228 f.; Mally Untermann, Das Groteske bei Wedekind, Thomas Mann, Heinrich Mann, Morgenstern und Wilhelm Busch (Dissertation, Koenigsberg, 1929; or Kayser's treatment of Morgenstern's language in Das Groteske, pp. 162 ff.
wieder die Ordnung absoluter Dinge an, ein irdischer Topf der Zierlichkeit, der aus der Ewigkeit schöpfen möchte.\textsuperscript{62} "Und dennoch," he contends, "ist im Wort etwas, was uns direkt ins Innerste dringt, wo es aus dem Lautersten, der absoluter Wahrheit kommt."\textsuperscript{62a} This qualification is a most significant one, for, as Ruskin before him,\textsuperscript{63} Barlach here imbues only the word written in absolute truth and sincerity with the mystical power to transfer this certain "etwas" to the reader. But, he adds, even then "Jeder . . . versteht es anders, er "vernimmt das, was gemäß seiner Art Anteil am Ganzen ihm verständlich, sage lieber, wessen er sich bewusst wird. Hängt er sich an Auslegung, Gemeinverständlichkeit, so kann er seinen Trost haben, da es für ihn nichts Besseres gibt."\textsuperscript{64}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{62} Br. II, 3.12.32, p. 183.
\item \textsuperscript{62a} Br. II, 18.10.32, p. 178.
\item \textsuperscript{63} Ruskin, op. cit., p. 169.
\item \textsuperscript{64} Br. II, 18.10.32, p. 178.
\end{itemize}
The Origin of the Grotesque in Barlach

Some of Barlach's earliest experiences involved encounters with the mystical "Es" of which Kayser speaks, "... jenes 'spukhaften' Es, das Ammann als die dritte Bedeutung des Impersonale (neben der psychologischen - es freut mich - und der kosmischen - es regnet, es blitzt) bestimmt hat."65 In his autobiography, "Ein selbstverzehltes Leben," Barlach describes his experiences as a child intent only on absorbing the world around him: "Mein Bruder Hans half mir bei dieser Aufgabe, so gut er konnte, wir schmarotzten am Frischen so gut wie am Faulen, spuerten aber um uns herum manches Bedenkliche, auf das achtzugeben noetig wurde, Dinge, die man nicht sehen und nicht hoeren konnte und die doch gewiss wirklich waren. 'Es' kann kommen oder nicht machten wir uns aus, als wir am taghellen Sommerabend im Bett lagen - 'sieh du nach der Stubenseite, ich will die Wand bewachen,' denn wir wussten bald, dass 'Es' auch durch die Waende kam."66

Or the mystical insight came to him in his youth with the impact of a sudden revelation, a glimpse through the chinks or cracks in the world, as he later called it. "Beim Streifen durchs Fuchsholz aber fiel mir die Binde von den Augen, und ein Wesensteil des Waldes schluepfte in einem ahnungslos.

66. Prosa I, p. 15. Throughout the remainder of the paper reference will be made to Ernst Barlach, Das dichterische Werk in drei Baenden, Hrsg. Friedrich Dross (Muenchen: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1956-59), by means of the following notation:

Vol. I, Die Dramen, 1956, ... ... ... (Dramen)
Vol. II, Die Prosa I, 1958, ... ... ... (Prosa I)
Vol. III, Die Prosa II, 1959, ... ... ... (Prosa II)
gekommen Nu durch die Lichtloecher zu mir herein, die erste von aehnlichen Ueberweltigungen in dieser Zeit meines neunten bis zwe elften Jahres, das Bewusstwerden eines Dinges, eines Wirklichen ohne Darstellbarkeit - oder wenn ich es haette sagen muessen, wie das Zwinkern eines wohlbekannten Auges durch den Spalt des maigrune n Buchenblaetterhimmels." (Prosa I, p. 20)

These expressions and more like them were not traumatic to a youth such as the young Barlach, concerned only with absorbing whatever was offered him of the superfluity of nature. There was no "Gruebeln", no dwelling on the meaning or ultimate significance of that which was so freely offered and joyously experienced. He knew little but the sweet and simple happiness of receiving. Even at the age of 24, Barlach could write in the same glowing terms to his friend Friedrich Duesel of his experience of watching Hauptmann's "Hannele" on stage:


67 Br. II, 26.2.94, p. 36.
But this once harmless vision was to become traumatic, not because its content was foreign or frightening, but because it was so beautiful and because the vision was to become such a reality as to cause a terrifying, panic-laden estrangement from the world.

It is uncertain and perhaps even inconsequential whether Daeubler and Kollmann were the inspiration or merely the visual representation of Barlach's own original idea of the "hohen Herrn". But it is both certain and significant that as Barlach dwelt upon the vision of something higher, the lower region to which he found himself bound became increasingly more intolerable. Each new glimpse through the chinks increased the desire to escape his narrow confines; each new vision of something higher increased the "Panik vor dem So-Sein" and robbed the normal, every-day experience of its worth and reality.

However, Barlach could not find it within himself to escape entirely through these chinks and lose himself to the world. He remained throughout his life a citizen of two worlds, and seldom found it possible to treat his subjects with much detached irony. Barlach found only that aspect of man of artistic interest which grew out of the misery of the times and so displayed some elemental contact with the eternal; only that aspect of man, "...dessen Freud und Leidausdruck von keiner Ueberlegenheit belaechelt werden kann."

68. I have been unable to find anything in the secondary literature on Barlach which would link Daeubler and Kollmann with Barlach's concept of the "hohen Herrn", but there is good reason in Barlach's work itself to do so. See especially the section of this paper dealing with Daeubler and Seespeck.

He was too heavily engaged in life to allow irony to become dominant. To a significant degree he also resisted the temptation to use his art as a means of creating a world into which to escape, his art remained essentially a means of depicting man "in seiner Bloesee zwischen Himmel und Erde". One is reminded here of Duerrenmatt's words: "Die Welt (die Buehne somit, die diese Welt bedeutet) steht fuer mich als ein Ungeheuereres da, als ein Raetsel ein Unheil, das hingenommen werden muss, vor dem es jedoch kein Kapitulieren geben darf. Die Welt is groesser denn der Mensch, zwangslaefig nimmt sie bedrohliche Zuege an, die von einem Punkt ausserhalb nicht bedrohlich waeren, doch habe ich kein Recht und keine Faehigkeit, mich ausserhalb zu stellen. Trost in der Dichtung ist oft nur allzubillig, ehrlicher ist es wohl, den menschlichen Blickwinkel beizubehalten." It is clear why the grotesque is fundamental to the artistic worlds of both playwrights. The tragic and the comic have common roots. Depending on the viewpoint of the observor, an action may be either comic or tragic, and difficulty is often experienced in differentiating between the two. Characters such as Uebellohe in Duerrenmatt's "Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi," or Clair Zachanasian in his "Besuch der alten Dame" display both comic and tragic elements and are truely grotesque. The same can be said for the situation as created in "Die Panne". In Barlach's play, "Die echten Sedemunds", the crippled Sabine is unable to tell whether the confrontation between the young and the old Sedemund in front of their family tomb is comic or tragic: "Ich bin in der Welt

70.  Prosa I, p. 54-55.

noch zu wenig herumgekommen, wissen Sie," she replies to an enquirer, "Ich weiss gar nicht, war es lustig oder traurig." (Dramen - 238.) Both writers see the human situation as both tragic and comic at once, and portray it so as to produce in the audience that vertigo and feeling of estrangement so characteristic of the grotesque.

It is difficult to speak of a development in Barlach. One must be content with discerning a very gradual maturing of ideas and attitudes. As the "Herr" in "Der blaue Boll" remarked at the end of the play, "...Werden, Herr, Werden vollzieht sich unzeitig, und Weile is nur sein bloeder Schein." (Dramen - 455.) Stubborn doubt and an equally persistent "Schicksalsglaeubigkeit" were Barlach's constant companions. There are periods of relative peace and calm, followed close by torments of sickness with life and despair with the human animal. When the vision is most immediate, the panic is greatest. Thus it is not surprising to see the drama "Der arme Vetter" written in conjunction with the Daeubler experience, or both of these followed by a period of relative calm in which Barlach appears almost content to accept man, despite his limitations, as a reflection of the divine, and regards the bypassing of man in any attempt to approach the eternal as fortuitous. With Daeubler, too, he loses patience:

Aber in Wahrheit: es gibt irgendwo in mir eine Wut auf ihn, da ist ein Schwindel mit Geist und Bedeutung, ein Aufwand an vermeintlicher Tiefe, die mich bald entsetzen, bald empoeren ... Denn ich glaube wirklich, wir, d.h. meine Kuenstlersippe, treibt eine etwas unanstaendige Wichtigtuerei mit dem Geheimen und dem Gehalt der Dingen. Wir spielen uns graesslich auf, als waeren wir Anschlieesser einer Telegraphen-Agentur an Unergruendlichem. Ich glaube wirklich es geht auf natuerliche Art nicht an, "psychische Geometrie", wie sie Daeubler in Picassos Winkelkanten findet, zu portraetieren. Der Psyche soll man nicht so die Kleider und die Haut dazu vom Leibe reissen, der Mensch und seine Geste besagen genug. 72

As Barlach now views it, the eternal has considerably more depth and mystery than before, but it is less immediate to him, and the panic associated with such immediacy is thereby lessened. Man and his world are to be accepted as reflections of the divine, as symbols of the eternal. As he continued to explain in the same letter:


As we see him here, Barlach accepts the empirical world as a reflection of ultimate reality. He is almost too trusting, too willing, to see that which he desires to see. His will is engaged in this (for Barlach) somewhat unnatural act of faith. Suspicions to this effect are substantiated to a degree, at least, when one observes that the works of this period of the mid 1910's are his most ironic. But the irony, as in the play "Die echten Sedemunds", disarms and tends to subdue his panic and desperation of the earlier works.

"Die Suendflut", however, marks another outburst of impatience and despair. Barlach had attempted to gain a degree of critical distance, to view the world stoically and become resigned to patience in an unchangeable situation. "Das Ganze?" he had written late in 1915, "Nein, es ist nur ein Brückstueck, ein Baumeister hat einen Dom begonnen und

73 Br. II, 23.9.15, p. 78
den Rest provisorisch unter Dach und Fach gebracht. - schlicht und bloed
gesagt." 74 Or maybe it was merely a lingering spell of "Pomadigkeit"
with which he often prided himself. At any rate, there were times when
all his faith, whatever its origin, threatened to peel off as a veneer,
revealing chaos underneath. Such an instance was the death of his
Mother in 1921, although Barlach hastens to add that the malaise was
much more deeply rooted. In a letter he wrote at the time to his close
friend, the publisher R. Piper, the whole impact of the return of his
doubts manifests itself in a grotesque imagery usually reserved for his
dramas. He writes:

Das Grab ist mir ein graeulicher Ort, will ich gestehen, alle
muehsam zusammengeklauhte Philosophie faellt mir manchmal
(nicht etwa blos beim "Grabe") wie ein Kartenhaus ein, und
das bohrende "Warum" und "Wozu" faellt von frischem ohne Maul-
korb und mit hoellisch blanken Zaehnen ueber mich her.-
Die Unheimlichkeit dieser ganzen Veranstaltung ist ein bitter-
boeses Wissen; nehmen wir fromm an es gaebe einen Sinn, so
weiss man's doch nicht genau, und man kruemmt sich unter dem
Fluch durch die Jahre hindurch ins Grab hinein. Die Verelendung
in Alter und Zersetzung, wie ich es schon so oft vor Augen ge-
habt, erfuellt mich mit Erbitterung und Ekel. Welche Pfuscherei
- wundern Sie sich wenn ich glaeubig werde und mir diese
Existenz nur als Strafanstalt, Verstossung, Hoelle, Degradi\ngen,
usw. versinnbildlichen kann? Dabei bin ich wirklich zur Heiter-
keit entschlossen, denn es waere ja dann moeglich irgendwo eine
Welt des Friedens anzunehmen ... Neulich gabs hier ein
Beethoven-Fest, im Dom die IX Symphonie. Das ist ein Segen,
und der Fluch wird aufgehoben; aber leider wieder aufgelegt.
Da ist keine Pfuscherei, aber warum sitzt man selbst mitten
drin und kann nicht hinaus? 75

This element of hope and the resolve to live for some higher realm is
unmistakable in almost all of Barlach's works, but so is the emptiness
and chaos which threatens if the will should lapse.

74 Br. II, 23.9.15, p. 79
75 Br. II, 1.6.21, pp. 105-106.
In his cultural-historical speculation in "Weinhaus Wolf", Gottfried Benn wrote: "Alle grossen Geister der weissen Voelker haben, das ist ganz offenbar, nur die eine Aufgabe erfunden, ihren Nihilismus schoepferisch zu ueberdecken ... mit dem religiosen (Grundgefuehl) bei Duerer, dem moralischen bei Tolstoi, dem erkenntnismaessigen bei Kant, dem anthropologischen bei Goethe ... war das Grundelement aller ihrer Arbeiten ... Keinen Augenblick sind sie sich im unklaren ueber das Wesen ihrer inneren schoepferischen Substanz. Das Abgruendige ist es, die Leere, das Resultatslose, das Kaelte, das Unmenschliche."  

Whether or not Barlach saw his artistic production as an attempt to cover up, to overcome a basic nihilism (in Benn's sense of the word), to avoid a face to face confrontation with the emptiness and despair of a threatening void, is likely to remain a matter of speculation, if the question is not ignored altogether. But it is certain that his erosive activity provided a safety valve through which he found release from an otherwise unbearable situation. In 1919 he wrote to his cousin Karl: "... Kinder, denkt daran, das es so, wie es ist, trostlos mit uns aussieht, und rettet Euch, wenigstens in der Idee, in ein wuerdigeres Dasein, da Ihr Euch ja nich alle umbringen koennt."  

The world which could be created by the mind provided a potential far in excess of reality. And we see Barlach rationalizing such creations, justifying his faith in them on pragmatic grounds: "Mir scheint manchmal, (he wrote in June of 1921) dass die erste menschliche Aufgabe in der absoluten Geduld besteht, als der am schwersten zu lernenden und am meisten versoehnenden Erwerbung ... Voellige Geduld haben, bedeutet schliesslich

76. In Der Ptolemaer (Wiesbaden, 1956), pp. 34 - 35.
nichts anderes als Glauben an das Schicksal und das Geschehen im Ganzen und Absoluten. Wer diesen Glauben nicht gewinnt wird ewig haben und, statt sein Ich zu erhöhen, es nur zerspalten und verhunzen.\textsuperscript{78}

A few years later he is still speculating, still attempting to order a seemingly incongruous world into some larger, intelligent pattern. At times he shows great courage in the maintenance of hope in the face of a mounting despair: "...Die Veranstaltung im Ganzen (i.e. Life) will mir nicht anders sinnvoll und zweckmaßig erscheinen als unter dem Gesichtspunkt als Stadium, als Phase, als schlecht, gelüfteter Engpass, in dem alles sehr schlecht organisiert ist."\textsuperscript{79} And he continues this conversation with his cousin Karl a fortnight later:

Ich füehle oft sehr lebhaft, dass es so etwas geben kann wie fertig sein für die kommende Phase des Seins ... Woher das Produkt das fertige Produkt Mensch, das mag jeder halten wie er will, ich für mein Teil komme von der Vorstellung nicht los, dass wir hier in der Hölle sitzen oder im Zuchthaus, einem ganz raffinierten Zuchthaus mit sehr verschiedenen Strafgräden in dem aber jeder mehr oder weniger zur Rebellion neigt, da uns der Zustand aasig verschleiert wird, so dass der Zustand aus, so gehen wir nach Hause - auch nicht gekannt ist. Haetten wir das Bewusstsein von Vor- und Nachexistenz, ich meine die Sicherheit, so nahme kein Mensch des Lebens Noete ernst. Der ernsteste Mensch wird wohl zuweilen füehlen, dass alles Spiel ist, naehlich in dem erhabenen Sinne des Aufgehens aller Dinge in der allgemeinen Harmonie: Freude, die der Grund, Freude, die der Zweck alles Seins ist. Solche Augenblicke bin ich geneigt für Erfassung der Wirklichkeit zu halten, das strenge Denken ist dagegen eine Art Schulbubendasein ... Man glaubt zu denken und befolgt nur Vorschriften, die der Seele eingeplant sind."\textsuperscript{80}

But Barlach was not so free with his expressions of doubt and despair when communicating with those who came to him for faith and re-assurance. He suppresses his subjunctives and appears as the man of faith. A letter written in reply to a certain Frau G. Poleit at the same

\textsuperscript{78} Br. I, Juni, 1921, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{79} Br. I, 7.4.25, p. 64.
\textsuperscript{80} Br. I, 19.4.25, pp. 64 - 65.
time as the one previously quoted demonstrate this well-meaning, heroic sham: "Wenn man älter wird, sieht man, dass der Irrtum des Lebens nur der Bruchteil einer besseren Wahrheit und höhere Gerechtigkeit ist. Schliesslich wird der Begriff der Zeit ganz fragwürdig, und man erkennt im Leben nur die Durchbruchsphase aus einem in den anderen Zustand. In diesem Hinblick losen sich die Disharmonien auf und werden zu Notwendigkeiten und Bestandteilen der einen grosser Harmonie des Daseins. Das Menschenleben wird ein Stueck, ein Ausschnitt, und so bekommt selbst das fuer sich Unbefriedigende den Wert und die Wuerde des Ganzen, an dessen Guete es teil hat."81 One cannot exercise too much caution in quoting Barlach; the intent behind it must always be considered. Early in his life he came to the conclusion: "...lieber selbst leiden, als andere mit so doppeltem Leid beladen...wer sich noch mit anderer Leid dazu belaedi, der ist erst der wahre Mann." (Dramen - 25/26.)

Barlach had much in common with the expressionists, with whom he is usually linked in literary histories and anthologies. He shared many of their visions and frustrations, and his style has much in common with theirs. But Barlach was less concerned than they with the every-day man in the every-day world and more with that which could be manifest through him. "Gerade das Vulgaere, das Allgemein-Menschliche, die Urgefuehle aus der Rasse, das sind die grossen, die ewigen. Was der Mensch gelitten hat und leiden kann, seine Groesse, seine Angelegenheiten (inklusiv Mythos und Zukunftstraum), dabei bin ich engagiert."82 It is not surprising therefore that much of Barlach's work appears 'rough and unpolished. But Barlach was concerned much more with the truthfulness of his creations than with their aesthetics: "Meine Gestalten sind gut, wenn sie echt sind; 81. Br. I, 2.4.25, p. 64.
Although he readily acknowledged the amount of effort and time spent in wrestling with nature to attain his own particular type of "stilisiertes Menschentum", to his mind, the finished product, if successful, was a creation of nature. "Ich kann aber um eins nicht herum. Ich lebe mit den Gestalten jahrelang so, dass sie mir so unpsychologisch vorkommen, wie uns das Leben um uns. Sie handeln so, weil sie muessen, die Natur schafft es, nicht die Ueberlegung oder Konstruktion. Ich fuehle nicht, dass ich schreibe, dichte, schaffe, sondern ich schreibe nieder, was geschieht, was ich erfahrend wahrnehme. Ich waere versucht, beteurend zu sagen: es war in Wirklichkeit so."  

His poetic world is then felt to be a true projection of the world in which he lives, of the world as he sees it. The artist here is not the sovereign bystander, but is an artist because he is more human than his fellows and suffers longer and more deeply than they. As he wrote in 1933 after a lifetime of preoccupation with the problem: "Gerade, weil er gedraengt ist, ganz und gar sein Menschentum durchlebt, durchleidet, oft mit Verschaerfung, tiefer leiden zu koennen, schwerer leiden zu muessen, ist der Kuenstler, was er ist."  

Barlach never regarded the artist as decadent.

Throughout his life, Barlach attempted to draw from life and nature and never to stray more than necessary into abstract speculation.

84. Br. I, 10.2.18, p. 42.
Kandinsky's attempts to create a purely abstract, non-human form of art he regarded with suspicion even early in life. There was no dichotomy conscious to the playwright between his artistic and his every-day world, for the former was felt to be but an expression of the latter. Art served him cathartically as it did Goethe, for whom artistic creation was but part of one great confession. "Du hast Recht:" he wrote his cousin Karl concerning his own creative process, "ich habe das alles toedlich und schwer erlitten und habe mich durch die Arbeit befreit, man braucht nich zum Revolver zu greifen, sondern kann Vertrauen haben und hoffen." Holzschneiden, he claimed, "ist eine Technik, die zum Bekenntnis herausfordert, zum unmissverstaendlichen darlegen dessen, was man letzlich und wirklich meint." He claimed that each of his characters incorporated a part of himself to the extent that, be they sympathetic or vile, they were of equal importance to him. "... Ich empfinde seit je und immer mehr, die Einheit von Schoepfer und Geschaffenem," he wrote in 1931, "das Gewordene ist die andere Gestalt des Schoepfers, seine Phasen, sein Spiegelbild...." Although he speaks here of the creative act in general, this oneness of creator and created will be of prime importance in a consideration of Barlach's relationship to deity. The artist, as God himself, can but give back that which he is himself. "Und was macht der Kuenstler von ( der Welt ) fuer ein Gesicht, wenn nicht sein eigenes? Und kurz und gut - was zeigt er uns als Bild der Welt, wenn nicht unser eigenes, das auch nur sein eigenes ist, als ob wir nicht wie er am Ganzen teil haetten." (Prosa II, pp.396-397)

The grotesquery manifest in his works is then different from
much of the grotesqueness of expressionism, Karl Otten describes the grotesque manifest in expressionism as essentially stylistic: "In ungewöhnlichen Bildern, Metaphern, Paradoxien, Wortmischungen und Sinnamalgamen wird der Leser mit dem Grotesken aus der Bahn des Normalen gedraengt, in eine Welt verstossen, die von Schreckgespenstern bevölkert ist." For expressionists such as Mynona and Ewers, the creation of grotesque images and situations was chiefly a literary device meant to shake the reader into a fuller awareness of himself and his world. A fantastic, fictitious world was conjured up to awaken man, By means of a glimpse at conceivable chaos and terror, man was to be moved to a greater appreciation of the human potential within. For the expressionists, the grotesque was essentially a means to stimulate; for Barlach, a means to reveal. As Mynona readily admitted with reference to his own writing: "Selbstverständlich sind diese Grotesken nur das spielerische Surrogat, der schallenhafte Vorspuck der paradiesisch unverzerrten, der seelischen Ungebrochenheit echt adaquaten Welt, des objektiven Ideals, das dem 'Himmel'in uns' ebenbuertig antworten sollte."

But Barlach knew nothing of such play with the elements of his

86a Br. I, Fruehjahr, 1919, p. 47.
89. Br. II, 8.2.31, p. 169.
91. Cited in Otten, Expressionismus, pp. 11-12.
world. The matter was of too great a concern to him, he was too much a part of both worlds and without the distance necessary to allow him to be able to play. In his discussion of Barlach's last play, "Der Graf von Ratzeburg," Egon Vietta has observed that Barlach's works must be read and interpreted as "religioese Betrachtung ja Beschwoerung," rather than "'Spiel' mit der Form." He continues: "Barlach unterwertet geradezu den Formtrieb, das Formenspiel, um die Frage, die im menschlichen Dasein zur Erscheinung draengt, nicht zu gefaerden . . . Barlach moechte dem Spiel ein Ende setzen . . . ." 92

Even if his writing was generally much more serious than the majority of the expressionists', they had their points of contact. Mynona describes his own purpose in using the grotesque as follows:

Der groteske Humorist speziell hat den Willen, die Erinnerungen an das geottlich geheimnisvolle Urbild des echten Lebens dadurch aufzufrischen, dass er das Zerrbild dieses verschlossenen Paradieses bis ins Unmoegliche absichtlich uebertreibt . . . Der Groteskenmacher peitscht auf alle menschlichen Heiligtuemer ein, um die goettlichen wenigstens unsichtbar an deren Stelle zu setzen. Verstehen wir also die umgekehrte Heuchelei, welche die haesslich Maske ueber ein Antlitz zieht, welches, umgekehrt wie das der Meduse, so paradiesisch herrlich ist, dass kein menschliches Auge ungeblistet bliebe. Geniessen wir also auch die Haesslichkeit und Schrecklichkeit des Lebens wie die Maske eines Gottes, der der Gemeinheit im Inkognito des Todes und des Teufels erscheinen will.93

Here Mynona and Barlach are striving for essentially the same thing, but Barlach's work is the product of a writer far more "engaged" in his subject. His grotesqueness is not stylistic, not consciously superimposed, but inherent in his world. Everything, he claimed, is expressible,

92. "'Der Graf von Ratzeburg' und der Entwurf einer neuen Barlach-Dramaturgie," Neue Rundschau, LXII (1951), Heft 4, pp. 142-150.
and in the act of expression, certain actualities appear grotesque. With Barlach there was no conscious "Zerrbild" of the vision; the vision itself appeared grotesque. As Morgenstern expressed it: "Gottes materielle Erscheinungsform ist notwendig grotesk." 94 Nor was there an appreciable artificial distortion of humanity to evoke a grotesque effect. Barlach was relatively unconcerned with creating an effect, but was drawn to those figures which appeared to him to be suffering under a natural distortion or deformation, as if they contained irrepressible, other-worldly forces which were seeking release. For him, the grotesque was not a device, but a phenomenon of nature, a means whereby the eternal in the broadest sense found expression in the world: "... Ich glaube wirklich, dass ich mit aller Gewalt darauf aus bin, um stilisiertes Menschentum darzustellen, freilich scheint mir fuer die Plastik nur das Menschentum in Frage zu kommen, das ins Riesenhafe gesteigert ist, durch Schicksal erschuettert, oder durch Selbstvergessen ausser sich gebracht, kurz, irgendwie mit dem grossen Begriff ewig in Verbindung gesetzt, das bei aller Zeitbedingtheit aus der Misere seiner Zeit herausgewachsen ist, dessen Freud-und Leidausdruck von keiner Ueberlegenheit belaechelt werden kann." 95 For Barlach, the grotesque was a phenomenon, through which the eternal, otherwise inexpressible, manifests itself in the world.

Here then is our point of contact which will serve as a guide in this study. Barlach's grotesquery was part of an attempt to reach through man beyond man, to tap the elemental, the visionary regions of

94. Cited in Kayser, op. cit., p. 221.
95. Br.II, 8.8.11, p. 61.
man and the universe; in a word, to plumb "den grossen Begriff," which was for Barlach but another name for God.
"Es ist mir unheimlich, von Liebe zu reden," wrote Barlach to his cousin Karl in 1916. "Es ist wie mit dem Wort Gott. Nimmt man den Begriff so hoch, so weit, so tief er es verlangt, so bringt man die Lippen nicht von einander, nimmt man es haeufig auf die Zunge, so macht man daraus ein Backpflaumenmus."97 It is clear from Barlach's letters that he entertained a basic mistrust of any attempt to speak in rational terms of ultimates. Man could participate in the eternal only by means of mystical insights, and any attempt at precise formulation was doomed to failure. Sixteen years after the above-mentioned letter, Barlach wrote to Pastor Johannes Schwartzkopff: "Ich habe mir vorgenommen, das Wort Gott nicht mehr zu gebrauchen, denn ich fuehle vernichtend den Unterschied zwischen dem menschlichen Empfindungs- und Anschauungsvermoegen und dem alles Sein und Geschehen einschliessenden Begriff."98 But Barlach found the word hard to lose, and relapsed again and again into its use to designate that eternal creative force at work in the universe, and to give meaning and substance to those mystical insights he experienced. Barlach felt acutely the necessity for some all-encompassing term to describe the unity of man's experience with that which is beyond his ken.

Barlach's mystical insights, these glances through the "Spalten" in the world of his experience, may be usefully interpreted as an encountering of the limit of the human condition. In his experience, the thin walls of man's world appear to have been pierced from without,

and Barlach became aware of the presence of that for which he could not account. His experience is similar in many respects to that of the early mystics. But in the period of his life when the grotesque abounds in his works, Barlach lacked almost completely the mystic's trust in a benevolent deity which is concerned with the happiness and ultimate welfare of man. When Barlach envisioned a higher reality than that of earth, he peopled it with deities coldly superior to man and little concerned with him. The higher existence he envisioned was not an extension of man's familiar world, cleansed and purified. It was, on the contrary, very non-human, even threatening and hostile to man.

Barlach believed firmly in the existence of, or which amounted to the same thing for Barlach, in the possibility of higher spheres of reality than the earthly, even though he seldom speculated as to their exact nature. "Ich glaube ja," he wrote in 1916, "dass seit Anbeginn schon hoehere Reiche gebaut und gediehen sind als das Erdenreich des Menschen. Es gibt naturlich goettliche Existenz gegen die menschliche gesehen . . . sollte der menschlich geistig-leibliche Organismus das Letzte: und Hoechste sein?" 99 The problematic of man, aware of the higher yet bound to the temporal, is of course one of the chief themes of his artistic creations. In his sculpture this is extremely obvious. The massive garments which envelope all of his figures weigh down upon them and bind them to the earth from which they would otherwise escape in ecstasy, forgetfulness, or some other means of depersonalisation. Among his circle of acquaintances, Barlach describes some who seem to suffer unduly under the massive weight of the flesh. These Barlach

Barlach envisioned as belonging to some higher form of life, as originating from some higher sphere of existence. As the earthly incarnations of one of these higher forms of existence, one of these "hoeheren Reiche;" Barlach saw his friends Theodor Daeubler and Albert Kollmann, with whom he was long befriended and to whom he often referred in his works, both by name and under the guise of other characters. Of a manuscript dealing with the two, the editor of Barlach's collected works, Friedrich Dross, writes: "Auf dem Titelschild ursprünglich nur die Aufschrift: Der hohe Herr; darüber nachträglich in kleinerer Schrift: Diario Daeubler / Konto Kollmann..." (Prosa II, p. 709) This indicates the position the two men held symbolically in the artist's mind. But Barlach himself is even more explicit. In the fall of 1915 he wrote: "Ich weiss oder ahne nur dies, das ich ohnehin wusste: die Suender und Unseligen sind ebenso gute Heilige, wie die Heiligen selbst, da ist kein Unterschied, wir sind Verfluchte, Verbannte, Straeflinge im Leben - Daeubler, dem gebuert ein hoher Rang, er ist wie ein Grossfuerst in Ungnade, seine Fuerstlichkeit schaut ueberall durch die Naehte seiner Kleider." And shortly thereafter: "Ich meine es ... bitterernst, wenn ich meinen Freund, den Dichter Daeubler, fuer einen verirrten Herrn aus einer hoeheren Existenzform, aus uebermenschlichem Bereich halte. Seit Jahren habe ich ein Drama liegen, das 'Der arme Vetter' betitelt ist, den Menschen als verarmtes und ins Elend geratenes Nebenglied aus besserem Hause ansieht ( uneheliche, bastardhafte Beschaffenheit )."  

100. Br. II, 23.9.15, p. 78.  
But Barlach did not see in Daeubler the conventional divine virtues of love and brotherly concern. On the contrary; "Er ist . . . ein gnadenlos Herabschauender. In seinem Blick, bei aller Milde und Versöhntheit, liegt kein Verbrüderungsanerbieten . . . Er schaut drein wie . . . ein gewaltiger, ungetümlicher Wanderpoet. Der leidet an sich selbst und an der Welt wie ein verbannter Gott.- Er schaut drein wie ein Gesanfter eines barbarischen Kaisers. Veraechtlich erhobenen . . . ." (Prosa II, p. 371) This Daeubler is not superhuman in the normal sense as an extension of the human, but supra-human, "ueber-menschlich" in the Nietzschean sense; belonging to a different species in the galaxy of creation. Köllmann lacks Daeubler's corporeal majesty, but not his royal disdain: "Sein Her- und Absender, sein Abgott ist eine Fiktion, seine Idee, sein Gott, er selbst . . . Er ist unerbittlich, unbarmerzig; Abwesenheit aller Weichheit ist sein Hauptmanko, denn sein freundlichstes Lächeln hat etwas Schabendes, Abblaeterndes. Er ist dann zu schwach, nicht barmherzig; nur zu schwach um zu bohren, zu schießen. Und dabei nichts Belehrendes, eigentlich immer ein Betonen des Gleichen, der Gemeinsamkeiten. Aber dann . . . hebt er den Stein auf und deckt ekelhafte Gaenge und lichtscheues Gewuerm auf in dem Andern." (Prosa II, pp. 387-388)

In "Diario Daeubler" Barlach seeks also to trace the origin of man's fear of, and his apparent incapacity to endure, the face of the divine. He speaks of that element of the unknown in man which, although godly in the highest Barlachian sense, man fears and despises for its inhumanity, for its "over-humanity:" "Die Turmvorkirche St. Marien in Stralsund, das Turminnere als Vor- und Sonderkirche eines uebergoettlichen Gottes ohne Dogma und Konvention, bloss Gefuehl der Gewalt, der Hoehe,
des Ungeheuerseins, kein Verhältnis zum Menschen wie drinnen mit Chor, Schiff und dem ganzen Herkommen - hier vorne nur ein Bekenntnis des Unbegreiflichen, nicht des Menschenvaters, sondern des Unmenschlichen, den doch auch der Mensch in sich ahnt, den er aber nicht verehrt, sondern gegen den er sich baumt wie in Verachtung als Entgelt für Verachtung, für Überein." (Prosa II, p. 373)

One is reminded of Moby Dick and Herman Melville's remark that deep in their hearts all men hate God. But with Barlach the anger is usually directed not against the higher, but against the earthly which falls so short of the divine. For example, in "Der tote Tagi" the son replies to Kules's remark that many men have "Goetterwesen an sich;" "Man muss sie totschlagen dass der Gott in ihnen nicht vorher zu Schanden wird." (Dramen, p.35) Barlach, however, is not without his due of resentment at God's apparent abandonment of man. God alone is "schuldig" he contends, and individual guilt cannot be reckoned.

The problem of man's guilt, so common in German literature, is of only secondary interest and concern in Barlach's dramas. It is, after all, God who created this "schlecht geluefteten Engpass" and man who is in the state of perpetual torture. Although he could write in 1933, "Niemand ist verpflichtet, mehr zu sein, als ihm gegeben," this was meagre consolation for one who had seen the vision. "Es zaehlen nur die hoechsten Sphaeren," wrote a disillusioned Gottfried Benn, "und das Menschliche

103. Br. II, 20.5.16, p. 88. In this regard, F. Duerrenmatt in his Theaterprobleme contends that the reason dramatic tragedies are being written today is that man has lost his sense of guilt. p. 47 f.
zaehlt nich dazu."¹⁰⁵ But Barlach (at least the younger Barlach) knew no such resignation. "Es brennt den Einen mehr als den Andern, es sind Naturen, die nicht darueber wegkommen, dass sie in der Falle stecken, sie wollen heraus und muessen tun, was Ivo [Iver] tut. Es gibt unter gewissen Umstaenden keinen Trost, man lehnt ihn mit Empoerung ab und spukt auf versoehende Geschenke des Daseins. 'Wenn es einen Gott gaebe, wer koennt es ertragen, keiner zu sein!' so ahnlich spricht einmal Nietzsche. Da ist viel Wahres drin."¹⁰⁶ Nor could he suppress the consciousness of his vision and then dismiss it in a kind of Orwellian "doublethink" as he allows Siebenmark to do. In the contortions of a tormented humanity he found expression and partial relief for this mounting panic, as many of his sculptures of the late 1910's and early 1920's demonstrate. But even in the early 1930's he wrote of the "Berserker" awakening continually within him and his need to create in order to suppress it.¹⁰⁷ As late as the last year of his life he testified again to this same, ever-present panic which he almost managed to conceal: "In 'dieser' Zeit habe ich wohl immer gelebt. Die Zeit der gequaelten Unschuld, der Hexen, der Exstatiker und was Sie nennen, war schon und hat nur krassere Farben angenommen.- Die Panik vor dem So-sein hat mir von jeher zugehoert, selbst in den sogenannten paar gluecklichen Jahren, die nur den Leuten als solche erschienen sind."¹⁰⁸ This "Panik vor dem So-Sein" can be observed in all of Barlach's works in varying forms and intensity, and forms the immediate source of most of his grotesque expression. Whenever the panic mounted to the point of

¹⁰⁶. Br. i, Fruehjahr, 1919, p. 47.
intolerability, the fear and desperation broke forth within resulting in tortured and seemingly distorted images.
CHAPTER IV

Barlach's Use of Grotesque Metaphor

One of the chief impediments to an appreciation of Barlach's works is at the same time their strength; the playwright's grotesque use of language. In his attempt at an analysis of Barlach's style, Helmut Krapp has demonstrated that the word standing alone bears the brunt of meaning. Words are essentially transcendental symbols for Barlach. The normal lodging of meaning in the syntax of the sentence has been dispensed with, even though the grammatical form has been retained intact. Krapp writes: "Im genauen Sinn hat Barlachs Sprache keinen Satz ... Wo die Sinnwoerter nicht aufeinander bezogen, sondern bei scheinbarer grammatischer Aufrichtigkeit nur gebuendelt werden, hat die Sprache ihre Vernunft preisgegeben und sich in ihrer Ohnmacht blossgestellt ... Seine Sprachgewalt ist auch Gewalt an die Sprache."109

Another peculiarity of Barlach's style is his dependence on metaphor. Barlach's language, Krapp contends, does not concern itself, "... eine dramatische Welt als Totalitaet zu gestalten, sondern moechte die Realien der Bilder und des Figurenspiels ins Gleichnis umpraegen ... ."110 This tendency to use metaphor to express the otherwise inexpressible resulted in many grotesque comparisons, as his descriptions of his friends Theodor Daeubler and Albert Kollmann demonstrate. In order to express the mystical essence which he saw in the two men, he abandoned the normal routine of description.

110. Ibid., p. 215.

Such imaginative use of language appears at first to be but playful distortion, but Barlach seldom lost himself in detached play with words without attempting something more serious. Referring to his attempt to describe the enigmatic phenomenon Daeubler, Barlach queries: "Aber was geht das uns an?" But his reply to his own rhetorical question reveals his intent and justifies his use of such grotesqueness: "Wir finden Behagen im kleinlichen Humor am komischen Missverhältnis, durch dessen Spalte wir wohl seine Herrlichkeit spüren." (Prosa II, p.377)
Albert Kollmann is described in less transcendental metaphors, but the combination of animal and human features is just as grotesque:

Ist sein Kopf ein Fuchskopf? Wenigstens hat er die Überlaufenheit, das ewige Aufmerken, Spannen, Wenden, Lauschen, Einstellen der Augen, Drehen des Lauschers, Verfolgen, Kombinieren, Verachten des Dummen und Groben. Er schnappt nach Leckerdingen (im Geiste). Sein Kram ist ihm die Welt. Spioniert gerauschlos ... Ueber seine Nasenwurzel stellen sich die zwei Innenwuelste der Augenbraugen gegeneinander, fixieren uns wie ein zweites Augenpaar und machen eine Miene aus, die nichts versteht, alles ablehnt, nur zurueckschreckt; Woelfe haben so diese Ueberaugen, diesen festen Form- oder Farbenpunkt, durch den die Miene das Grausame, Erschreckende, Faszinierende bekommt, Feindliches ankuendet, mit Bellen und Beissen droht ... Und sein Mund: Ein Eingang und ein Ausgang. Zwar kann er ihn schliessen, aber das ist er dann nicht er; dann ist er hinter einem Versteck, und nur wenn er ihn offnet, ist er Kollmann, Ein Marderloch, ein Iltisschlupf; dadrin faehrt das geschaeftige Tier von Zunge blitzschnell auf und ab?, spitzt heraus und laesst das Laecheln wie ein Huschen und Schwenken eines schnellen Schweifes einen Schattenblitz uebers Gesicht werfen.

These attempts at metaphorical description were written around 1912, and have much in common stylistically with the metaphors of Barlach's early plays in which an overlapping of the human and the animal realms is portrayed to similar effect. "Traumgedanken sind schleimige Wuermer, blinde Wuehler im Geheimen der Seele," says Steissbart in "Der tote Tag". "Die letzen sich bei Nachtzeiten und tummeln sich nach ihrer Art bei offenen Tueren der Seele." (Dramen - 13) In his next play, "Der arme Vetter," Barlach has one character state: "Bei unserem Kapitaen faengt der Humor im Bauch an, mit dem Schwanz zu wedeln . . ." (Dramen - 144) Other metaphors are of a similar construction. Frau Keferstein tells Iver: "... Der Mauseschwanz huepft in Ihrem Kopfe und ruehrt alles durcheinander." (Dramen - 132) Elsewhere, the "lady" herself is described as having "unterm Bauch als Gewissen eine zahnlose Laus." (Dramen - 133) His recognition of the base nature of life causes Iver to bellow "wie ein Vieh". (Dramen - 128) "Gott selbst hat
laesterlich geliebt, als er die Welt mit ihren Greu{ßen} gestaltete und
die Schoeheit schuf," retorts the old Sedemund to his son's implied
criticism. "Er wieherte wie ein geiler Hengst dabei," he continues.
(Dramen - 257) In "Die gute Zeit," the moon is called "eine Blase,
voll zum platzen," and is represented as a giant male sexual organ about
to cover the earth with his heavenly seed.(Dramen - 492 f.) Grotesque
metaphors, such as these and many others, written,"wie es scheint [in]
unvermeidbaren skurrilen Verschoerkelungen,"\textsuperscript{111} were the basic elements
of Barlachs expressive vocabulary. "... Dis Sonderbarkeiten, an denen
meine Seele haengt," he wrote in 1899 in early recognition of the
grotesqueness of his stock of images, "lass ich lieber in ihren Ur-
wuchsigen Misgestalten, wo sie gewachsen sind, fuer die Salonspalten
vom Publikum gelesener Zeitschriften taugen sie nicht."\textsuperscript{112}

The forms of the grotesque about which there is a minimum of
disagreement are grotesque objects and personages. Both may be distorted
and transformed without becoming grotesque, as modern painting has
adequately demonstrated. Most works of cubism represent a type of
distortion, as do many of Picasso's portraits, but the distortion here
is aimed chiefly at revealing the hidden but inherent structure or
essence of the subject. With the grotesque, however, the object is used
by and large to express that which is beyond the world of form and
colour, beyond the empirical, conceptual world. Thus grotesque objects
are essentially symbols, and it is to the nature and function of
symbols that we must now turn.

\textsuperscript{112} Br. II, 15.9.99, p. 41.
CHAPTER V

Grotesque Objects and Personages

Alfred North Whitehead states that "... The human mind is functioning symbolically when some components of its experience elicit consciousness, beliefs, emotions, and usages, respecting other components of its experience." 113 We are dealing then with an association of elements within man's experience. In his work, The Role of the Subconscious, Carl Gustav Jung expands the bounds of the term "experience". He writes: "I am of the opinion that the union of the rational and irrational truth is to be found not so much in art as in the symbol per se; for it is the essence of the symbol to contain both the rational and the irrational. It always expresses the one through the other; it comprises both without being either." 114 The power of the symbol lies in its capacity to link any two spheres of experience. Goethe defined its function as the reciprocal transformation of "die Erscheinung in Idee, die Idee in ein Bild, und so, dass die Idee im Bild immer unendlich wirksam und unerreichbar bleibt und, selbst in allen Sprachen ausgesprochen, doch unaussprechbar bliebe." 115 Goethe introduced a mystical element into his concept of the function of symbols. Symbols made accessible to man the realms beyond the normal reach of reason.

In his dissertation, Das Symbolische in der Dichtung Barlachs, Gerhard Lietz has gone a long way in demonstrating both

Barlach's reliance upon symbolism and his symbolic technique. He contends that Barlach knew no other means of expression. Sculpture was his basic art form, and when Barlach turned to writing to express that which he could not otherwise express, he retained the same basic pattern. But the use of symbolism to attain his ends was in fact not a matter of choice. Barlach was almost totally without either the will or the capacity for abstraction, and formulated everything in terms of images. As Lietz summarised it: "Barlach gibt den Ideengehalt seiner Stuecke nie direkt wieder, sondern er kleidet ihn ein, er symbolisiert ihn. Er zeigt Menschen und Bilder, die aber nur Huelle sind von irgend etwas Dahinterliegendem. Sie erhalten ihren wesentlichen Sinn, wenn man sie einordnet, in das Grosse, Umfassende der Idee. Und Barlach braucht ja auch, seiner Weltanschauung nach, nur das wirkliche Leben zu gestalten, um zur Symbolhaftigkeit zu gelangen; denn fuer ihn ist das ganze Leben symbolisch."  

A passage written to an anonymous Fraulein N.-N. in 1915, will demonstrate well Barlach's use of the grotesque to exploit his world symbolically. "Gestern abend haetten Sie mit spazieren muessen auf der Weide und im Wald, auf mondhellen Wegen. Es sind lauter Verborgenheiten ueberall in mir, d. h. im Menschen, grausam viele, aber ich halt's mit dem Mond, er sieht aus wie ein maechtiges Siegel am Himmel, und ich getroeste mich meines Nichtwissens, in dem ich erstaune, was fuer Geheimnisse sein muessen, die so wunderbar versiegelt werden. Nun, der panische Schreck laesst sich manchmal nicht meistern, - aber was fuer ein Dasein!"  

In this passage, the moon is the symbol not

117. Br. II, 23.9.15, pp. 77-78.
only for the secrets of the heavens, but for those of man as well, as
if there were no real differentiation. But Barlach extends his symbols
to and beyond their limit. The real power of the passage lies not in
the imagery, but arises out of the depths of threatening uncertainty
Barlach senses in the beyond. Ruskin speaks of this "Divine fear"
which follows upon the realization that there is more to an object than
one can ever know: "I believe this thrill of mingled doubt, fear and
curiosity lies at the very root of the delight which man takes in
symbolism. For even if the symbolic vision itself be not terrible, the
scene of what may be veiled behind it becomes all the more awful in
proportion to the insignificance or strangeness of the sign itself."118
This "panische: Schreck", as Barlach calls it, is an essential part of
the grotesque in Kayser's sense. The attempt to deal artistically with
the"Es" leads again and again to the point where the artist finds himself
in the terrifying shoes of the "Zauberlehrling." The problem is no
longer how to charm the broom, but how to stop it. As Kayser has
stated it: "Es kann in Heiterkeit und fast in Freiheit begonnen
werden - so wollte Raphael in seinen Grotesken spielen. Es kann aber
auch mitreissen, dem Spielenden die Freiheit rauben und ihn mit allen
Grauen vor den Geistern erfüllen, die er leichtfertig gerufen hat.
Und nun gibt es keinen Meister mehr, der zur Befreiung kommt."119

Not all of Barlach's grotesque figures are charged symbolically
to this extent, but it will be useful here to examine a sampling of them.
"Riesen und Kobolde," observes Petsch, "gehören zu den ursprünglichsten
und vielsagensten Gestalten der niederen Mythologie . . . so umweht
von Urzeiten her alles Ungewöhnliche der Schauer hoheren Geheimnisses:
es ist eben in jedem Sinne das 'Ungeheurere' was unsere Phantasie in
The setting of Barlach's first play, "Der tote Tag," evokes a pregnant atmosphere of such a "low mythology," which Barlach himself called an "Eddastimmung." One of the most important secondary figures of the play is Steissbart, a shrivelled little house-gnome, visible, significantly, only to the son. He has abandoned his father's (Bauchbart's) aggressive tradition in more ways than the position of his beard, and has become house-broken to the point of degradation. The mother ridicules Steissbart's deformities and misproportion, and the audience is at first carried along by the power of her position and the apparent weakness and grotesqueness of his ridiculous position and stature. Despite an initial tendency to laughter and jest, it is soon obvious that Steissbart represents something much more profound and tragic than the misshapen gnome he appears to be. When it becomes evident that he in fact represents the "mother-son," that his position in the household anticipates the son's position were he to remain under his mother's skirts and fail to meet the promise and challenge of the "Father-God," Steissbart is suddenly less ridiculous. Barlach's representation of this caricature of man is pathetic and deeply tragic.

Besenbein is a brutish but extremely timorous fellow house-gnome of Steissbart, with monstrous brooms for feet. This mute gnome spooks through the house at night cleaning it (women's work) with his cumbersome appendages. But for these impediments, he would long ago have broken out into freedom. And this he finally does; on the
hoofs of the stallion meant for the son. But neither Steissbart nor Besenbein are in and of themselves fearful, and stripped of their symbolic content are grotesque only in the most formal sense as defined by Heselhaus. Only when their symbolical significance becomes evident and it is seen that they symbolise a misshapen, deformed and stagnating humanity do they in fact become grotesque. The very possibility of their existence poses a threat to man.

As the personification of pain and torment in the world, the Alb poses a threat of a different nature. Responding to the God within himself, the son takes it upon himself to kill the Alb, thinking thereby to rid the world of torment. In the ensuing struggle, he wrestles with the Alb, tears open his chest, but grapples in vain with his heart. The Alb, however, is not the hardened, evil monster, delighting by nature in cruelty and sadism. He is characterised so as to arouse simultaneously the extreme feelings of fear and compassion. He is unpredictable, changing in an instant from a timorous, horror-stricken soul into a ferocious demon doomed to mete out misery for the good of man. There is a certain unsettling "inner dissonance" in his make-up which defies resolution.

There are other objects in the play which tend to the grotesque (and by formal definitions are grotesque), such as Kule's constant burden, a large stone which once wailed as wails a hungry child for its dead mother, or the staff which has led the blind Kule through all his suffering and finally back to his point of departure. But although both take on life and show independence of will, they inspire little dread and never pose a threat.

Related to these symbols of a deformed humanity is the "Elendskind" in "Der Findling", one of the most gruesome of Barlach's
creations, and doubly gruesome because the subject is a child. The setting of the play is one of pestilence, war and starvation, highly reminiscent of the Thirty-Years war. The child is abandoned at the feet of an ageless stone-cutter who functions in the play as the incarnation of the eternal. The starving people huddle around his fire hoping to get some food, and can think of little else. When the stone-cutter shows them the child they are horror-stricken and cannot endure the sight: "Einen Borstenbart hats an der Backe, sein Haar ist mit ausgeschwitztem Horn verklebt. Wie Klumpen Kot stechen seine Gedaerme aus dem Leib, fingerlanges Gewuerm frisst an der faltigen Haut, sein Ruecken ist ein Geruempel von gebrochenen Knochenstuecken."

(Dramen - 273) It is hard to imagine a more ghastly description. But as is the case with the gnomes, Besenbein and Steissbart, the child himself is not grotesque in the full sense of the word. However, when Barlach uses this monstrosity, symbolically as he has the others, its nature changes radically. No less than five times in the course of the play is the "Elendskind" described in detail (Dramen - pp. 273, 281, 285, 286, 310), bringing home to the audience the full misery of his worm-eaten existence. The child is made the victim of human brutality, a mirror in which mankind sees itself and shudders, and from which it flees in terror.

Ersauft es doch, das Kind ohne Namen,
Der Schreck der Zeit hat es im Schlamm geheckt,
Die Angst hat sich diese Gestalt zurechtgebogen,
Die Sorge hat sich solchen Sohn aus dem Bauch gezogen.
Die Hure Not hat ihn mit geilen Gespenstern gemacht
Und bei Graebern und Galgen aus Totensamen zurechtgebracht.
Die Suende hat ihn hingesudelt ...
Das frischgeformte Grunduebel ganz und gar, ersauft das Elend mit dem Elendskind. (Dramen - pp. 273 - 274)
And with a sudden insight into the real magnitude of this derangement, the young girl Elise calls him "ein Spiegel der Fratze eines verzweifelten Gottes ... Gottes Graulgestalt". (Dramen - 281) The "Elendskind" is no longer a symbol of mere human putrefaction, but reflects the terror of a god in despair. That the god in question is in man is here of little consequence. When at the end of the play the gentle Elise and her friend Thomas demonstrate their rebirth to a better humanity and accept the little bundle of misery as their own, the creature is miraculously transformed into a beautiful child and emerges as the stone-cutter had promised, as the new savior. But the question remains, was it he who was transformed, or was it mankind awakening from its nightmare?

Barlach enjoyed a deep appreciation of beauty and harmony, and his apparent predilection for the coarse, the ugly, the grotesque, must not be misconstrued. As Ruskin had required, Barlach's grotesquery is a "terribleness" taken from life, and reflects a spectre which Barlach saw and was appalled by, not a creation of the mind meant only to terrify. It is because there is in the mind the vision of something higher that the world appears so miserable and distorted. But man is normally so deceived by the artificial facade of his "normal" world which obstructs his vision that he cannot see beyond. To pierce the barrier to the eternal calls for an all-out assault on man's normal standards and orientation.

Another figure similar in execution if not on significance to the "Elendskind" is the Thersites of Barlach's works, the hunched-back leper of "Die Suendflut". Barlach claimed that he wrote the play to
demonstrate the inherent absurdity of a strict, naive interpretation of the biblical God. 122 To this end, the loathsome leper, a living denial of the justice and divine nature of such a God, hobbles in and out of the action of the play, blaspheming and cursing the cause of his torment:

Hinter mir heult die Wut, vor mir ist keine Hoffnung - ich fluche dem, der mich in diese wutende Welt gebracht . . . Wie kann eine Welt taugen, wenn nur ein Einziger in ihr verdammt ist und verdirbt . . . Ich atme Luft ohne Hoffnung und werde hoffnungslose Luft atmen, bis der Atem still steht. Dann werden noch die Schakale, die mich fressen gegeneinander lachen und sprechen: was fuer einen praechtigen Buckel er hat, sonst ist es ein Werk ohne Wert! Hae, wie ihnen mein Buckel schmecken wird. Ein Lumpenhund selbst fuer Schakale, das bin ich." (Dramen - 353)

The leper too is more than the wretch he seems. He symbolises and speaks for the great mass of suffering humanity apparently outside of the narrow-bourgeois "Christian" pale of mercy. This mass is symbolised elsewhere in the play by the pack of wild wolf-children, the bastards of the "righteous" Noah's son, abandoned to roam the countryside — waifs, reverting to the animal within them in penance for their illegitimate origin.

Two of the most powerful manifestations of an all-pervading grotesque are the carnival-like parades in "Der arme Vetter" and "Die echten Sedemunds". Jennings has observed that the carnival or circus often provides a suitable background in which the grotesque can manifest itself, for in these contexts the normal standards of proportion no longer apply. The carnival creates a fantastic world which departs radically from everyday experience, and is grotesque in itself. In "Die echten Sedemunds", Barlach has created just such a

122 Quoted in Dietrich Fleischhauer, Barlach auf der Buehne (Diss. Koeln, 1955), p. 51
background. The time is "Schuetzenfest", an occasion when men don their courage with their green and parade it through the streets. As if to reflect this sham, Barlach has erected an admittedly unreal world in the form of an amusement park in the centre of the town. But as it turns out, the circus is the last refuge of reality, for it is the home of the lion which terrifies the hypocritical townsfolk, the Gierhahns, Ehrbahns and the Sedemunds, into a moment of truth and a confrontation with their consciences. With what Lietz calls "grausamer Selbstironie" the old Sedemund pushes the crippled Sabine in her wheelchair to the screeching music of the organ-grinder around the ancient, decrepit church into which the towns-people have fled to escape the lion on the loose. They are joined soon by Mankmoos, clutching tightly his sack of money, and eventually the rest of the "eben entlarvten Spitzbuben aus der guten Gesellschaft" , forming in Barlach's words, "...ein Zug der langsam, halb als Karnevalzug, halb als Leichenparade im Raum kreist". (Dramen - 248) The old Sedemund then leads these "Hoellenbrueder" and "Hoellenbraten" (Dramen - 251), this "Schar der Hoelle Entsprungenen . . ., die des Loewen Lachen" (Dramen - 252) out of their refuge and into the grave-yard; away from their ennervating encounter with conscience, back into their familiar, accustomed milieu, back to their existence as corpses in a world singularly concerned with death on all levels.

123 Lietz, op. cit., p. 61
124 Like many of the other young girls in Barlach's dramas, such as Fraeulein Isenbarn, Awah, Celestine, Elise, or Grete, Sabine too has a "sixth sense" which gives her a deeper insight into the nature of reality than her fellow-men. But this insight brings not peace and happiness, but mental anguish and suffering. All of the young women in Barlach's plays display a tender innocence and a pathetic "Ausgesetztheit" in a brutish world of evil and torment. Celestine is even crucified. To symbolise this helplessness, Barlach confines Sabine to her wheelchair, takes her out of the normal, competitive stream of life, and makes her dependent upon the meagre charity of others.
125 Jennings, op. cit., p. 19
In "Der arme Vetter", Captain Pickenpack, who functions in a rather detached role similar to that of the stone-cutter in "Der Findling", emerges like Charon out of the darkness and fog of the Elbe with his ship of fools and looses his charges into the tavern of the inn already occupied by the principals of the play. As the demonic element (in a Goethian sense), the veterinarian Boehnhaase and entourage disembark from the little steamer "Primus" and force their way into the rather quiet, ordered life, bringing with them chaos and disorder, upsetting and overstepping even the rather low social norms they encounter. But the effect is not entirely negative. "Frau Venus" (as the veterinarian is called) and company function as a catalyst upon the individuals, forcing each, through a crass inversion of all value and proportion, better to recognise himself and his situation. Voss abandons, at least for a moment, his "Pomadigkeit" and intervenes in behalf of the harrassed Iver. Engholm forgets for a brief span his own personal cares at home, forgets his own sick son and attempts to come to the relief of another son in need of a father. But although neither can prevent the grisly prostitution of all that Iver holds sacred, there does awaken within them the hope of betterment; they have suffered with him and felt an inklings of responsibility towards their fellow man. Both Iver and Fr. Isenbarn see more clearly their spiritual relationship and the contrast between their vision of a higher realm and the baseness of that which they must leave behind. For Iver, it is but a confirmation; for Fr. Isenbarn, it is an insight, an awakening, recognition of the true face of things. Only Siebenmark refuses to respond, but even in his refusal he has made his characteristic response, the same response he will later make when Iver succeeds where "Frau Venus" failed.
Having fulfilled its "demonic" function, the masquerade marches back into the darkness to the accompaniment of the "Chor der Rache". But the masquerade has another symbolic intent, as is demonstrated by the presence throughout of "schoenen Emil", a life-size, straw-stuffed doll which is hauled out of the attic dust into the midst of the melee and accepted in full fellowship as one of the group. The border between the human and the non-human realms disintegrates as the straw doll takes on a truly spectral life and is shoved from table throughout the room. "Frau Venus" makes little distinction, and ridicules and abuses him even as he does the others. When seated at Fr. Isenbarn's table, he sits as if in leering mockery of not only Siebenmark, whom he replaces, but also of the aspirations of Fr. Isenbarn to a higher form of life. The grotesqueness is enhanced as he is shuttled about the inn and handled in much the same manner as is Iver, for the grotesque is intensified through such characteristic abusive motion. As Jennings writes:

Both the fearsome and the ludicrous aspects of the grotesque situation are increased by the factor of motion. The menace of chaos is much more vivid when we see the familiar world actually in the process of dissolution; and the farcical scenes too, engage the attention more when there is movement. Indeed, the mere setting in motion of the grotesque object often suffices to give the impression of a grotesque situation, and it is often the case that one or more of these menacing figures presides over the scene, as if to hasten the process of decay. 125

Clearly "Frau Venus" is here the all-pervading, all-perverting influence, ominour and threatening enough to be interpreted by one critic as the God in the play 126, and in a sense he is right. But if "Frau Venus" is the force behind the distortion, "der schoene Emil" is the symbol

125 Jennings, op. cit., p. 19
of the distortion, a distortion which, paradoxically enough, is actually a closer representation of reality than the deceptive everyday mask usually presented. As Lietz has expressed it,

Die Leere und Hohlheit aller dieser Menschen, die nur ein "Rattenleben" führen ..., findet so ein wirksames Symbol, und auch die Unwirklichkeit eines solchen Lebens erhält auf diese Weise ihren stärksten Ausdruck. Dazu kommt noch, dass die Zusammenfassung der Menschen zum "Venuszug" ihnen allen ein spukhaftes Gepräge gibt. Es entsteht ein merkwürdiges Zwielicht: halb sind sie wirklich Narren, halb spielen sie nur die Narren, und dieses Durcheinander, das dann auch rücklaufig durch ihr übriges Leben zu verfolgen ist, macht sie zu Symbolen ihres Lebens, ihrer Weltanschauung. 127

Here, as in "Die echten Sedemunds", the human has been dehumanised. Man is but a mannequin here, but a corpse there.

There are many other phenomena in Barlach's dramas which tend to the grotesque and yet cannot be defined as grotesque objects. Consider for example, the billboard display of the lion in "Die echten Sedemunds", or Calan and his fellow sufferers in "Die Suendfluß" in the last terrible moments of their life. In the former, the "scheinbar vom Himmel herabspringender Loewe" (Dramen - 187) lunges into the scene as if to symbolise the hostile elements of the universe which threaten man. But these elements, in the play symbolising the workings of conscience, not only pose a threat to the stability and stagnation of man's normal egocentric orientation, but bring also a torturing awareness of a higher mode of life. This awareness is torturing, because man cannot rise above himself to make his vision an actuality, as the young Sedemund demonstrates when he falls into the tradition of the "echten Sedemunds". The world is estranged from that of man's normal conception.

127 Lietz, op. cit., pp. 60-61.
Jennings has demonstrated that the standard grotesque form is that of the human body or face. Almost any conscious, intentional mutilation of the human form will result in a degree of grotesqueness, especially if the mutilation is unwarranted and unmotivated. This is the case when Calan has his servant Chus hack off the hands of a harmless shepherd boy and nail them to the post in front of Noah's tent, or when Noah's sons' abandoned bastards are allowed to revert to the animal with apparent indifference.

But when God causes one such as the Leper to be born disfigured and dehumanised, or when, with apparently no regard for guilt or justice, God saves old Noah and his faithless family to perpetuate the race and leaves Calan, the Leper, and the mutilated shepherd youth to be devoured by vermin in the rising flood, the grotesqueness is significantly more profound. From man's normal vantage, from the point of view of the audience, God Himself appears to have become foreign and irresponsible, in a word, grotesque. And of course this is Barlach's intention. It has become clear that we are dealing here with something other than grotesque objects. When man's identity and his cosmic-religious orientation are threatened or can no longer be taken for granted we are dealing no longer with mere grotesque objects or personages, but with a grotesque situation, and it is to this phenomenon that we must now turn our attention.

128 Jennings, op. cit., p. 8,
CHAPTER VI

Grotesque Situations

Jennings has described as grotesque a situation where "the familiar structure of existence has been undermined and chaos seems imminent." The effect of a grotesque situation differs from that of a grotesque object inasmuch as "the current of demonic fear expresses itself in this case not as the menace of a bogey, but as the collapse of a world." He argues that any thorough violation of the basic norms of existence can create a grotesque situation. The violation may be that of the integrity of the person or the stability of the environment, but must involve man and must appear to pose a real threat to man's orientation in his familiar world.

The first chapter of Barlach's autobiographical novel Seespeck contains some excellent examples of Barlach's use of the grotesque. It depicts the hero in a state of mental confusion. Because he has an eye for the manifestations of the eternal in man and his world, he is estranged from most of his fellows who do not. But Seespeck has not yet found his bearings in a world of his own. The opening lines of the novel introduce us to the hero all but succumbing to an overpowering vertigo: "Als Seespeck... in einer Postkutsche... auf Buxtehude zu fuhr, sass er mehrere Stunden in eines Mannes Gesellschaft, die seinen gewoehnlichen Zustand so sehr verkehrte, dass es ihm zu Mute war, als staende er auf einer hohen Leiter oder als fasste ihn fuer die ganze Zeit ein Schwindel, weil er in einen Spiegel hineinschaute, in dem sich alles bewegte, was draussen sonst ruhig lag

130. Ibid., p. 18.
und stand." (Prosa I, 337) The man who wielded such uncanny power over Seespeck was quite an ordinary looking man, except for something about his countenance; "Etwas passte hier nicht zusammen ... Die Augen in diesem Gesicht waren so, wie sie durch die Augenloecher einer Maske schauen." (Prosa I, 337) Seespeck met the same man again the next day in the bar of a tiny steamer on the Elbe and struck up a conversation with him. To avoid a drunken, leering baker who was making a nuisance of himself, Seespeck and his companion attempted to go out on deck, but the mighty, corpulent baker first blocked their passage, then cynically offered his hand as if in token of friendly reconciliation. Seespeck's newly-found companion refused the honor and began to boil within. "In diesem Augenblick schien es Seespeck, als sehe er abermals das Widersprechende in seinen Mienen, dasselbe Auge, das durch die Guckloecher einer Maske lugte." (Prosa I, 339) The baker interpreted the refusal as an insult, and he too became enraged, and thus began an almost demonic power-struggle between the two opponents, each attempting to hold his ground and brow-beat the other into submission and so bring him within his power. "Seespeck war es wieder," writes Barlach, "als drehten sich um ihn alle Dinge, und er wusste nicht, wo oben und unten war." (Prosa I, 340) With the increasing dusk, the baker appeared to come into his element, and he began to sing as if to express his self-sufficiency:

Was fuer eine Art Singen es war, liesse sich schwer beschreiben; man koennte denken und sagen, es war das gesungene Portraet des Baeckers, wie er etwa, befreit von der Schwere seines fleischigen Ueberflusses, aber doch als Riese und Ungetuem leicht taenzelnd, muehelois huepfend in grotesker Gewandheit seiner Unfoermigkeit spottend durch Wald und Heide striche, seiner selbst entledigt und doch sein Selbst entfaltend, durchaus unaehnlich dem Begriffe,
den man nach den früheren Vorgängen von ihm haben könnte, und doch müsste man denken, dass sich so, wie er sich nun zeigte, erst die rechte Anschauung seines Wesens ergab.

(Prosa I, 340 - 341)

But the other was seemingly unruffled. Placing his elbows on his knees and blowing smoke up past his eyes,

...er fasste das singende Ungetüm von Baecker ins Auge, er zog sich fest an ihn, er schnitt ihn hinein mit der gelassenen Sachlichkeit eines Operateurs, Seespeck wurde angst und bange. Aber da sah er schon, wie des Baeckers Gesicht, wie aus einer Dunstwolke auftauchend, sich dem andern zuwandte und wie ein Grinsen, dessen Deutung nicht versucht werden kann, diese Gesicht ueberzog und wie die dicke Zunge zwischen seinen Lippen aus verborgener Hoeller hervor auf den Betrachter zielte. Der Baecker schnitt seine Grimasse, und der andre parierte diese Hiebe, die in ihrer Scheusslichkeit, wie Entleerungen von Unrat, schlimmer als Fausthiebe oder Schimpfworte waren, mit der geraeuschlosen Taetigkeit seiner Augen, aber nicht ohne von dem Ekel des Kampfes ermuedet und verwundet zu werden. Man sah, wie seine Schultern im Ringen nach Atem sich hoben und senkten. (Prosa I, 341)

Barlach explains that although a "Buerger oder Mensch von ueblicher Betrachtungsweise" (Prosa I, 341) might have considered the actions of the Baker those of a madman, they did not appear so to Seespeck.

He sought an explanation beyond the normal human realm:

Aber was war das auch fuer ein Wesen, das diese Verzehrungen, diese Entladungen, diese Selbstbehauptungen von unheimlichem Grunde wie stinkende Blasen aus dem Sumpf in Gebaerden und Grimassen heraufquHen machte! Ein Mensch? Wenn ein Mensch so seine Fesseln sprengen kann, wenn er so Rasendes, Vulkanisches in sich hat, dann war es ein Mensch. Man koennte sich einbilden, den Widerhall vom Gebell von hunderttausend Daemonen zu hoeren, die sich gegen Gott empoeren... Pfui Teufel, war das ein Menschenmund, der sich dazu hergab, ein ekelhaft ausgebildetes Ausgusloch zwischen ein paar Hinterbacken zu werden? Und wie Kot und allerlei seelischen Unrat leerte (jener) gelassen aus, wobei es ihm recht darauf ankam, den Vorgang unmissverstaendlich sein zu lassen; er verschob die untere Haelfte des Gesichts so weit, dass die Augen aus dem ordentlichen Zusammenhang gequetscht schienen, er bog den Kopf in den Nacken und mishandelte die Lippen zu einem laechelnden Ausdruck eines schweinischen Be-hagens; aber dies wenige tauderleli anderes gleichzeitig mit

The baker's opponent found it impossible to resist such an all-out assault on the norms of the world from which he launched his defence, and surrendered his will to the baker.

This is essentially the same experience of which Kayser speaks when he defines the representations of the grotesque as a playing with the absurd: "Es kann in Heiterkeit und fast in Freiheit begonnen werden . . . Es kann aber mitreissen, dem Spielenden die Freiheit rauben und ihn mit allem Grauen vor den Geistern erfuehlen, die er leichtfertig gerufen hat." (Prosa I, 131) And Barlach too demonstrates his familiarity with the manner in which play with forces beyond one's normal ken can suddenly become inverted and lose its playfulness in a most terrifying manner. He writes:

Was aber Seespeck bald heraus hatte, war, dass der Sporn all dieser Anstalten zu guter Letzt so etwas war wie eine frevelhafte, bit zur Selbstausschaltung gehende Neugierde, eine ungehoerige Begierde, die wie ein wollustartiger Krampf sich an Fremdes und Anderes wie an Besseres hingibt und verliert. Und ueber allem leuchtete der Schein eines Leidens, wie es einen Menschen zerfleischen kann, der im Jaehzorn sein Kind mishandelt und dabei sein eigenes Gefuehl vergewaltigt. (Prosa I, 343)

Seespeck can endure the situation no longer. "Ein Mensch, der das ansieht und sich nicht beteiligt fuehlt, hoert auf, ein anstaendiger Mensch zu sein", he later exclaims in justification for his present and for later intervention on behalf of the baker's opponent. Seespeck calls out for light to break the spell, for it had become so dark, "dass die Fettleibigkeit des stumm rasenden Baeckers zur Gespensthaftigkeit wurde . . ." (Prosa I, 344) "Der Baecker, der in der
It is clear here that the baker has become a grotesque phenomenon for Seespeck. It is as though he were a being of some other realm and that any manifestation of his true power and majesty (Seespeck feels a certain greatness about him) must of necessity become grotesque in the eyes of man. He comes into his own in proportion as man's world fades into darkness and becomes undifferentiated, for the two are incompatible and mutually destructive.

'Was', dachte Seespeck, 'ist dieser Klumpen von einem Baecker ein Verdammter, der hier einmal seine Qual und seine Schuld herausgemint hat? Hat diese Masse leiblicher Unsauberkeit das klare Bewusstsein seiner unsauberen Geistigkeit? Aber was fuer ein Fuerst von einem Uebeltuer!' (Prosa I, 344)

It is now clear that Barlach had one man in mind as his model: Daeubler.

Seespeck has played the good Samaritan only to fall himself victim, and he knows full well that he is no match for this colossus from some higher, foreign sphere now threatening his equilibrium.

"Einen Augenblick blitzten die Grimassen des Kolossus im Daemmerlicht an seinen Augen vorueber. Er hatte die Vision eines Ungetuems, eines boshaften, schaedlichen, unheimlich maechtigen und dabei spottlustigen Riesen." (Prosa I, 347) Seespeck knows only one defense. In a fit of rage he lands a well-placed kick in the middle of the monster's stomach. As even the baker cannot ignore completely his prison of flesh, he cringes in pain and the 'seance' is over. But all this has not resolved anything for Seespeck. These manifestations of the grotesque have given him to be sure a greater insight into not the
insanity of man, but the unknown depths of the universe from which phenomena such as the baker find their way to earth, but his own world has not ceased to spin. As later that evening Seespeck returns home, once again it seems to him "als ginge er an einer langen Planke entlang und faende nirgends einen Ausgang, die Planke aber hatte er im Verdacht, dass sie im Kreise liefe und er mit ihr. Wie er aber hineingekommen, war ein Geheimnis." (Prosa I, 356)

Seespeck was to find neither peace nor stability for his spinning world in his sleep either. In his dreams that night he rode again in a coach, and again the world seemed grotesque. He accompanied a woman and a young girl on a cross-country trip. On the seat next to her and across from Seespeck, the young girl had put down a package she had been carrying, a ham wrapped up in paper. But this supposedly lifeless object sprang continually around in the coach as if possessed of a will of its own." . . . Damit er [the ham] nicht fortwährend vom Sitz sprang, stemmte Seespeck, der gegenüber sass, seinen Fuss dagegen, konnte aber niemals darüber klar werden, ob das Springen des Schinkens vom Poltern und Stossen des alten Rumpelkastens kam oder ob der Schinken sich aus eigenen Kräften bewegte." (Prosa I, 371) But not only does the inanimate appear to take on life, all logical orientation in his life also seems to decay. He sits facing the back of the coach, but thinks it nothing amiss when through the back window he sees a church steeple approaching.

In his dreams, his encounter with the baker also takes on a new dimension. The baker not only retains his monstrous proportions, but also assumes the magnitude of some deranged divinity; he becomes
man's creator, but a creator against whom man must fight to defend himself.

In dieser Nacht traeumte er nun wirklich allerlei Krauses. Er war in Hass und Todfeindschaft verklammert mit jemand, der zugleich niemand war, mit seinem Erschaffer, der sein Vernichter werden wollte. Es konnte ihm begegnen, dass er eine Tuer oeffnete und dabei gegen den schweren aber unsichtbaren Leib dieses Jemands anstiess, worauf er sofort zu wuetenden Streichen ausholte. Er stieg durchs Fenster und geisterte zu Menschen hinein, die ihn mit Entsetzen gewahrten. Er aber wollte sie um Hilfe gegen den einen anrufen, hatte aber seine Zaehe so fest zusammengebissen, dass er keinen Ton herausbrachte. (Prosa I, 370)

In chapters 5 and 6 of the novel, Barlach deals with Daeubler by name and not in the guise of the baker, but it is essentially the same phenomenon, the same threat of overpowering domination, and to the integrity of the "Ich". Seespeck feels the same desperate need as before to seek his own way and assert his own individuality against the threat.

Bei allem aber . . . fuehlte sich Seespeck immer mehr zu Daeubler werden. Er litt im Schatten eines Riesen, der wohl in Stunden und Tagen zum Normalmenschen zusammen-schrumpfte. Er fuehlte sich ausgekaeltet und entleert und dachte bald mit Sehnsucht an sein verborgen eigenes Treiben zurueck. Er wollte wieder in seine Welt zurueck, die ihm Daeubler in diesen Tagen gewaltsam entzogen hatte. (Prosa I, 473)

In the last chapter of his novel Barlach utilises much the same plot as in his drama "Die echten Sedemunds", but the theme is the same as in the earlier chapters. A circus has erected its tents in Guestrow, displaying a motley assortment of wild beasts and birds crowded miserably into small cages. The beasts are depicted as roaring as if despairing in their "Elend". (Prosa I, 473) Following a whim of the moment, Seespeck spreads the rumor that a lion is loose, hoping thereby to instill fear
and trembling within a public intent only on tormenting the beasts,
a public ignorant of the majesty and nobility of a free animal.
However, in the confrontation of a child and an old man, both
frightened by the supposedly escaped lion, Seespeck gained a new
insight. He perceived that the suffering of man in his earthly
bonds, was similar to the suffering of the beasts in their cages.

Here we have the essence of "Die echten Sedemunds", as well as of
Seespeck in a nutshell. For the early Barlach, man is trapped to the
point of suffocation in the prison of his earthly exile. Each man is,
as it were, a latent Daeubler in miniature, a god, forgotten in his
exile. Only when his normal stifling orientation is shattered is his
true state evident. As Barlach wrote in description of the chaos
perpetrated by the "lion": ". . . Die Welt wird frei, gross, kuehn,
wenng sie in Brand, in Not, in Wut geraet." (Prosa I, 480)
There is an all-too frequent tendency in Barlach criticism
to side with one figure in a play, to identify one character with the
author and dismiss the others as secondary. Barlach stated, however,
there was a bit of him and his world in each of his characters. To be
sure, Siebenmark's world is not the author's ideal, but it was well
known to him and its depiction occupied a good deal of his play. Nor
is Siebenmark an especially sympathetic character in his narrow-
mindedness and biggotry, but his dilemma is none-the-less a real one
and one which was of no mean concern to Barlach as is evident from
Seespeck. Edson Chick, however, seems to be missing the point of the
play when he proclaims Siebenmark the "hero" of "Der arme Vetter".
He interprets the play as the struggle of the "everyman" Siebenmark
to maintain his identity and a mean between the polar attractions of
Iver and Fraeulein Isenbarn, i.e., against being overcome by the
sensual, empirical world of his fiancee or by the incorporeal,
spiritual, infinite world of Iver. For Chick, the play is an
assault on the naive view of time and space, centering on Siebenmark's
dilemma. "Heretofore", he writes, "his watch and his sense of direction
have been his best defense in his struggle to give his life secure
temporal and spacial limits." But now that this naive view of time
and space have been attacked, "It is Siebenmark's task to try to assert
himself as a human being against the two extremes." Barlach is thus
made to champion those aspects of the bourgeois life he himself found
so intolerable. The fact of the case is that the Buerger Siebenmark

132 Chick, "Study", op. cit., p. 376
133 Ibid., p. 377
134 Ibid., p. 376
fails to free himself from the bonds of his 'Kultur', not that he succeeds in maintaining a mean. He is not one of those men "born again", as the symbolism of the play implies. The maintenance of a "mean" or a "status-quo" was of little concern to Barlach, as was the 'human being' as typified by Siebenmark. As he wrote in 1916, before the publication of the play: "Ich habe seit Jahren ein Drama liegen, das aus dem Bewusstsein aufgebaut ist, - na, sagen wir gleich, dass man eine Art misslungene Seitenlinie des Hoeheren darstellt. "Armer Vetter". Man ahnt das Bessere, Vornehmere (naturwissenschaftlich: das Zukuenftige), man spuert in Sehnsucht ueber sich hinaus. Ob ein Gott ueber uns lebt oder mein Wille und Trieb zum vergleichsweise Gott gleichen gegen den Zustand der Gegenwart leitet, ist einerlei. Hier faengt der Buerger an zu versagen, sein Gott soll ihn "begluecken", Leben als Fernsein von Glueck und Zufriedenheit als Hoher-Zuechtung (Zuechtigung und Zuechtung) zu betrachten, versagte sich ihm." 135

But even if the world he represents cannot be identified with Barlach's ideal, Siebenmark's dilemma is an excellent example of the manner in which the world can become estranged and threatening, in a word, grotesque.

Siebenmark will have none of Fr. Isenbarn's combination of child-like exhuberance and metaphysical anguish at the contemplation of the transitory superfluity of nature around her. He marks but the march of time in an essentially hostile universe against which he must 135 Br. II, 12.4.16, pp. 82 - 83
constantly shield himself. There is a certain amount of unwillingness in his apparent incapacity to "understand" his fiancée's metaphors. Fr. Isenbarn describes the splashing of water as heard from within a ship as "... das Ziehen und Sausen des Bluts in den Adern des grosseren Lebens um uns, in dem wir treiben." (Dramen - 108) He claims that this is quite incomprehensible to him, although he has just finished describing the same in equally abstract terms: "Das Wasserrauschen hinter der Schiffswand - mir war das immer wie das Getoese der grundlosen, ewigwiderhaarigen Unvernunft, in der wir uns muesam Weg und Steg suchen muessen." (Dramen - 108) "Zwischen uns", he tells his fiancee, "Zwischen uns entstehen gegenseitige zehn Gebote mitten im Chaos. Die zehn Gebote fuer mich vernageln mir die mystische Welt mit bestimmten Forderungen und Verheissungen - so kann ich mein Leben wie einen Raum ableuchten - er hat seine sicheren Grenzen und Weiten." (Dramen - 108). But as Fr. Isenbarn, under the increasing influence of Iver estranges herself ever more from him, and as during his own discussion with Iver he is brought to at least a temporary awareness of the meanness and miserableness of his own safe, well-defined world, Siebenmark experiences for the first time an almost complete collapse of his self-deception. Wolfgang Kayser has defined the grotesque as: "... die entfremdete Welt ... Dazu gehoert, dass was uns vertraut und heimisch war, sich ploetzlich als fremd und unheimlich enthuelle ... Das Grauen ueberfaellt uns so stark, weil es eben unsere Welt ist, deren Verlaesslichkeit sich als Schein erweist." Now Siebenmark's world is but a naive, self-constructed extension of himself, and as he stumbles around on the beach, frothing at the mouth,
this familiar world becomes monstrous and alien. "Wauwau, die ganze Welt is huendisch geworden," he rants, and then in soliloquy continues his nightmare vision of his now inverted world: "Ihr Name ist Siebenmark, verstehen Sie? Darum ist eben alles siebenmaerkisch: Ihre Braut und die Vorstellungen Ihrer Braut von ihrer Brautschaft und alles, alles! Wer schafft die siebenmaerkische Welt aus der Welt: ein Preis wird angeboten! Wer macht die Braut Siebenmarks zur Braut ohne Siebenmark, aber wohlgemerkt, immer vorausgesetzt, dass ich - ich - ich, das heisst doch immer noch Siebenmark - also: zu was denn dann? Kommt dann noch etwas?"

(Dramen - 168) The bonds of the flesh have not been severed; he has not yet gained a critical distance. Yet for a period he does succeed in getting beyond the confines of his narrow world, and he flees from it "... wie ein Affenpinscher, der in einen Spiegel hineinbellt, und es heult ein Wolf heraus." (Dramen - 172) For a moment at least he is no longer Siebenmark, he no longer leads what Fr. Isenbarn called "ein so elendes Leben". (Dramen - 108) To Sieg, the customs official on patrol of the Elbe, who represents in the play a rational focus for the audience, Siebenmark replies: "Herrgottherrgott still, mir daemmert was - reden Sie nur nicht weiter, greulich, greulich -- ich war ausgeloescht so lange, ein gut Stueck Ewigkeit, aber die Lampe wacht - und wacht weiter. . . ." For him the vision was not a release from the torture of the present. That which is a release for Iver, a homecoming, is for Siebenmark more terrible than the endurance of his own barren existence, and , abandoning his higher awareness, he slips back into his former
state of slumber. "Fuer eine Schlafratze kann eine Stund hundert Jahre im Bauch haben - ich will weiter schlafen." (Dramen - 173) And he symbolically sets down the lantern he has been holding and continues his plodding up and down the beach, on the shores of the eternal, but never entering therein. The door to an experience of the superior realm has been opened, but he does not enter. His metaphysical experience was only a transitory glimpse, not a sustained state as was Iver's. His traumatic experience is over; he has become once again little more than what the young Sedemund, with reference to his uncle Waldemar, had called, "... ein Schweigen im All, trotz die Munterkeit seines Mundwerks. . . die Pause, die Atem- und Schoepfungspause, die Hoehlen des Nichts, die das herrliche Was gliedern." (Dramen - 228) But with Siebenmark we have at least heard the "Klagen", "Klingen" and "Klappern" (Dramen - 228) which perhaps forecast something better.

The initial grotesque experience of Iver is not portrayed in the same detail as is that of Siebenmark, but even if it receives a different evaluation by the author, it is essentially of the same nature in both cases. The burning house is not yet so hot under Siebenmark's feet that he is willing to jump to escape, as is the case with Iver, but his initial insight differs from Iver's only in interpretation.

In his previous plays, Barlach had striven to acquaint the audience with the two aspects of man, i.e. with his earthly and his divine component. In "Der tote Tag", the symbolism was obvious and rather primitive. Barlach had his own personal axe to grind, and consequently represented the earthly through the maternal, the spiritual
and divine through the paternal influence on the son. The mother attempted to maintain her possessive hold on the son by shielding him from, and instilling within him fear of, his true spiritual heritage. Represented by the blind Kule, the God-father came to give his son wings to fly his coop, to expand himself and his spirit and thereby bring salvation and a new day to the world. But the mother succeeded in thwarting and smothering the divine, and the new day was stillborn.

At the end of the play the gnome Steissbart and the blind Kule set out to inform the world of the tragedy. "Woher das Blut kommt, bedenken sollen sie. Alle haben ihr bestes Blut von einem unsichtbaren Vater... Sonderbar ist nur, das der Mensch nicht lernen will, dass sein Vater Gott ist." (Dramen - 95) In token of that element of the divine in man which cries out for release and development, Barlach had given his play initially the expressionistic title "Blutgeschrei".

As if to herald the re-awakening in man of the divine component despite its pollution and perversion by the world, Barlach first called his next play "Die Osterleute", but later changed the title to "Der arme Vetter", possibly to avoid a dogmatic Christian interpretation. But the Christian symbolism is an essential part of the play, inviting close comparison to similar works of writers such as T.S. Eliot; in particular, with Eliot's "The Cocktail Party". The final solution proffered by the two dramatists is surprisingly similar, as at least one critic has noted.

In "Der arme Vetter", Iver represents man, inspired by the vision of a higher reality, but trapped in the mire of the world about him. To awaken within the audience the desperation for this divine component (which is never defined, for it varies from person to person), Barlach forces them to participate in the basest aspects of man's normal, uninspired life. Normal bodily functions are exaggerated and paraded on the stage to the point where life itself appears repulsive, distorted, and grotesque. Nothing is spared in this effort to incite the audience to cry out for relief. Conjugal love is reduced to the animal instincts. But there is nothing of the "schoene Bestie" with which Wedekind was concerned. The middle-aged, coarse, and lecherous sailor Bolz and the slattern, dowdy Frau Keferstein copulate but a few paces away from and in sight of the "Hoehenmensch" Iver. The relationship between the young couple Siebenmark and Fr. Isenbarn is thus placed by association in a bad light, and in the course of the play indeed threatens to so deteriorate. Because they are an expression of the animal instinct for self-perservation, i.e. perservation of a self unworthy of existence, not only sex but also eating and sleeping, as well as habits such as drinking and smoking are made to appear as an intrusion of the animal into the spiritual realm of man. Thus a vantage is established from which human life itself, as it is known in all its existant forms, appears degenerate and foreign to the better instincts of man. And because man is none-the-less part of the degeneracy and baseness, because it is his world which has become distorted and estranged, life itself becomes grotesque. But this is a vantage which
allows no disarming irony, and the enlightened man can but yearn for relief. As Fr. Isenbarn rhetorically asks, "Kann das Leben so zur Krankheit werden, dass man dagegen wuetet?" (Dramen - 122)

One of the scenes which expresses well this nausea with life depicts a confrontation with the principals of the play in the attic of the inn where the wounded Iver has just been evicted from his room to make way for the "tired" Frau Keferstein. When a huge rat appears, Frau Keferstein expresses loathing and disgust at the sight. Recalling the earlier events of the day, Iver retorts, "Na, - so ein Rattenleben ist als Musik keinen Ton schlechter als Ihres; sucht ihren Frass und ihr Vergnügen --." In response to her reply that "selbst ein Rattenleben lohnt sich", Iver reveals his vision and the true source of his own death wish and attempted suicide: "Das sagen naturlich alle; auch die Menschen sagen: es lohnt sich. Aber denken Sie mal andie, die sich vor uns ekeln, wie Sie sich vor den Ratten -- hm? wie? Es sieht nett aus, wie Sie durch die Nase rauchen. Ihr Hals verrät uebrigens Ihre Jahre, ziehen Sie doch was an." (Dramen - 135)

To a man inflicted with even a glimpse of the divine, human purposes and functions appear very base and futile. But when some elemental kinship to that divinity is felt within, and this divine vestige itself is threatened with anihilation by its environment, life takes on an aspect of evil. In comparison to spiritual values, life appears degenerate and demented, as though through some demonic machination man had been stripped of his godliness and cast into the
abyss of earth to rot. Barlach often spoke of the "Irrtum des Lebens", and expressed the feeling "dass wir hier in der Hoelle sitzen oder im Zuchthaus, einem raffinierten Zuchthaus mit sehr verschiedenen Strafgraden". In his conversation with Siebenmark in the attic of the inn, Iver too speaks of this sudden realisation of his banishment and impoverishment:

Iver: Haben Sie nicht auch lichte Momente, Herr Zwieback?

Siebenmark: Wieso - wann?

Iver: Na, ueberhaupt. Ich setze voraus, dass Sie wissen, was fuer ein verarmtes - verbuttertes, verbohrtes Ding Sie sind. Das darf ich doch voraussetzen? Wie?

Siebenmark: Setzen Sie alles voraus.


But Siebenmark avoids a direct answer by attempting to make the question appear ridiculous. Slapping the silent "schoenen Emil" on his straw-filled shoulder, he exclaims:

Siebenmark: Bravo, das ist die einzig richtige Antwort!

Iver: Wieso, was sagt er?


Iver: Ihre Meinung ist also gleich der eines Strohkopfes?

138 Br. I, 2.4.25, p.64

139 Br. I, 19.4.25, pp. 64 - 65
Full of desire and a hope bordering on despair, Iver knows but one escape, and he chooses it. For the other "Strohkoepfe", Iver's theophany is but madness, and his prison a paradise. "Wieso, ist die Welt nicht schoen?" jeers the enigmatic "Frau Venus". "Warum sollte sie besser sein - sind wir nicht alle seelenvergnuegt?" To which the spiritually awakening Fr. Isenbarn can only reply, "Man koennte fragen, wie kann die Welt gut sein, wenn Sie seelenvergnuegt sind. Es ist horrend einfach." (Dramen - 151)

Chick has made mention of the strange, unearthly aspect of both Iver and Fr. Isenbarn, but in Chick's interpretation, this is a negative criticism. In the course of the play, Fr. Isenbarn is twice called a walkyre (Dramen - 152-156), and in the final scene where she elects the dead Iver in preference to the warm and alive Siebenmark, and demonstrates her choice by bending down and kissing the corpse, she must indeed appear so to Siebenmark. Heuer was probably the first to connect Iver with Hans Iver, the werewolf of lower Elbe tales. In his commentary to his poetic version of the traditional tale, Klaus Groth, who is reputed to have been Barlach's favorite Low German poet, writes: "Nach dem Volksglauben muss ein Werwolf, d.h. ein Mensch, der zu Zeiten als Werwolf umgeht - was fuer boesen Zauber, aber auch fuer ein schweres, unheilbares Leiden gilt -, seine natuerliche Gestalt
wieder annehmen, sobald er erkannt und bei seinem richtigen Namen angeredet wird, und ist dann dem Tode verfallen. "  

Heuer saw in Iver the embodiment of Groth's werewolf: "So klingt deutlich das alte Sagenmotiv an: Iver ist im Sinne des Volksglaubens ein Leidender, ein Werwolf; wird er angerufen, beim rechten Namen genannt, ist er dem Tode verfallen."  

Lietz refuses to accept such an interpretation, contending that Iver's need to die is related nowhere in the play by to his having been called "beim rechten Namen". But in a very real sense Iver has been recognised; by himself. It was that sudden insight into his real identity and true nature he experienced when he saw "den hohen Herrn in seinem Glanz vorüberfahren," when he realised he was naught but a "verarmter Vetter" to such majesty. And the "ver" in "verarmter" is highly significant here conveying a sense of loss.

The same basic attempt to dehumanise the normal, every-day world is continued in "Die echten Sedemunds", although here the sphere is widened from the personal to include the social realm of man. Siebenmark had complained of the threat of insanity (Dramen - 171) when he felt his world collapse around him. It was also essentially Iver and Fr. Isenbarn who were out of step with the world. As Barlach


141. Ibid., p. 26. A possible connection between Barlach's choice of the name "Iver" and the French word "ivre", (drunken, intoxicated) has been pointed out to me by Dr. Marketa Goetz Stankiewicz.
wrote to his cousin Karl: "Ivo [Iver] gehoert auf einen anderen Stern. Das Gefuehl habe ich jahrelang mit mir getragen; Man ist hier ueber-fluessig. Ich daechte, so was genuegt, um einen zu zermuerben." 142

In "Die echten Sedemunds" the emphasis has been shifted. Here, as in "Hamlet", it is the world which has lost its bearings and has become insane, and the play is essentially a study of this insanity and its perpetuation.

The experience of the grotesque has long been recognised as approaching that of insanity. As Kayser contends: "Ins Unheimliche verwandelt erscheint das Menschliche im Wahnsinnigen; wieder ist es, als ob ein "Es", ein fremder, unmenschlicher Geist in die Seele ge-fahren sei. Die Begegnung mit dem Wahnsinn ist gleichsam eine der Unerfahrungen des Grotesken, die uns das Leben aufdraengt . . . Die groteske Welt mutet als Weltbild des Wahnsinns an." 143

It will become clear the extent to which the play is constructed around the idea of insanity. The thought and action of the play centres around Grude, a young man, recently married, who has voluntarily committed himself to the insane asylum, contending "... entweder seid ihr alle verrueckt oder ich allein." (Dramen - 190) But like Barlach, Grude is no ordinary individual, content to live an ordinary, normal, hollow existence. Like Barlach, he sees the essence of life in its contact with the other world of man's spiritual self. "Etwas Lebendiges", he contends, "hat immer irgendwelche Beziehungen zum Verborgenen, jeder ist ein Doppel-gaenger und nicht bei sich und mit sich allein." (Dramen - 190) Before

he entered the asylum, he accused his wife Grete of emptiness and lack of spiritual contact; "... du bist eine Papierblüte, ein Ding und weiter nichts, du treibst keine Schaekerei im Verborgenen mit dem Sonnenlicht wie jede Butterblume tut." (Dramen - 190) But Grete is not alone therein. It is because virtually the whole of society about him is existing apparently without reference to this other-self, man's spiritual counterpart, that Grude spreads the fiction that the lion has escaped into the streets. He creates thereby an artificial conscience meant to awaken within man that which has become vestigial. As Grude explains to himself, "Wo keine Furcht bildet, muss ein Bild schrecken. Wer das stille sanfte Säuern nicht hört, dem muss man mit Donnern und Hoernern ins Ohr trompeten. Dicke Kanonen sind zeitgemäß in dieser maßigen Zeit." (Dramen - 219) To be sure, it appears at first glance that it is Grude who is insane, but this misconception is soon corrected. The carnival setting and "Schuetzenfest" atmosphere in which the characters move indicate the extent to which they have strayed from reality. And the social structure protects and encourages the hypocrite. Appearance, and not reality; reputation, and not character, are the yardstick. Social conventions and family traditions exercise seemingly irresistible power over man, to the extent that all resistance must, and finally does, compromise itself. Man is revealed as a base, selfish, vain hypocrite, living in an inverted world, ever-ready to abuse and misuse his family and fellow man. The old Sedemund and uncle Waldemar telegram the son to return to his father, who they
claim is on his death-bed. However, the mortal sickness is but a ruse to lure the young Sedemund back home so his family can have him committed for insanity and thus save itself the embarrassment caused by his radical political activities. The freedom of the son is to be bartered for the reputation of the family. The tailor Mankmoos virtually abandons his children to their own resources upon the death of his wife, but not because he is overcome with grief. He is concerned only with exploiting the occasion to his best possible advantage by begging money. The undertakers too have their minds on other things than corpses. Gierhahn and Ehrbahn have their hands full in callously selling responsibility for Gierhahn's illegitimate child to the town villain. (Dramen - 213) But man does not restrict his brutality to the human race. With little other motive than wishing to join in the insanity and wreak a brutal revenge upon his niggardly employers, the coachman, Karl, attempts to cut off the ears of the emaciated hearse-horse, and is stayed only after he had covered his hands and knife with its blood. (Dramen - 215)

The world which man has thus created for himself is so distorted and insane; man has so accustomed himself to living without his better self that the restoration of a true perspective for even a moment is necessarily a grotesque experience. Man flees from his conscience as from some demon. In the grave-yard scene the voices of conscience are heard rumbling under the earth and apparitions appear to warn and haunt Mankmoos (Dramen - 228) and Gierhahn. (Dramen - 255, ff.) Both promise reform and rue their irresponsible past, but as soon as the
apparitions fade they revert back to their original habits. Man needs a lion loose in the streets, he requires a constant threat to his existence to keep him spiritually alive. Without this, man is but a base, hypocritical creature. There may be a divine spark within, but man does his best to hide it.

In "Der Findling", eating is singled out to represent all the other bestial aspects of man which must be overcome in order to bring about a new order for the world. Only "... wenn der Wurm in eurem Wanst vor Ekel fastet ..." warns the old stone-cutter, "... darf die Welt sich wieder aufwaerts waelzen, darf einen neuen Anfang wagen ..." (Dramen - 281) Thomas and Elise demonstrate their inner transformation by refusing to participate in gorging down the remains of the "roten Kaiser", in refusing to continue to be "Woelfe" (Dramen - 313) and "Menschenfresser", (Dramen - 314) the prototypes of the old world.

Life has not become less a burden in "Der blaue Boll", and much of the panic, and hence much of the grotesqueness, is diminished. Man is charged here, as in "Der Findling" with the task of living and transforming life into something tolerable through love and mutual responsibility. "Der Findling" closed with the vision of the mutual sharing of misery and suffering; "Die Suendflut" dwelt at length on the consequences of both personal and divine irresponsibility. "Der blaue Boll" may be seen as an attempt to overcome the panic and come to a sort of working compromise with life; an attempt to find an ideal for man which will not degenerate with usage and cause stagnation. As the young Sedemund had
expressed it: "Der Mensch ist so geartet: er giert nach einem Gut, einem Glauben, einem Altar, auf dem er sich opfern darf. Also: nur ein Ziel, einen Sinn, und der Mensch stuertzt sich selbst verschwendend in Glueck und Gnade. So - ohne Sinn und ueberpersoenlichen Zweck gilt der ganze Aufwand dem Bauch und dem Beutel." (Dramen - 200) Boll is faced with the task of re-creating himself, of transforming the old Boll into the new, and creating thereby a new world. Man has yet to be defined, and to the extent that man re-defines himself and can move toward his new vision, life ceases to be loathsome and grotesque, and is to be viewed more as a rung on a ladder than as a trap. There is an attempt here to integrate man into the creative, transforming processes of the universe, to make man a creator, a fellow-creator with God, and not merely a creation. Once aware of this, Boll has no choice. "Boll muss". He can no longer satisfy himself with such "primitives Werden" (Dramen - 454) as is to be had by reaching for the pistol or leaping from the tower as he is tempted to do. Boll must re-define himself, must give birth to the new Boll. In his higher function, man is elevated to an unprecedented degree of kinship with the universal creative processes, a kinship with the suffering, "becoming" God depicted earlier. As the spokesman for the divinity in the play replies to Boll's querie whether or not he can continue living: "Weiter? Nein, gewiss nicht, aber von frischem. Es ist erwiesen - Sie muessen, Boll muss Boll gebaeren, und was fuer einer es sein wird - es ist bessere Aufsicht auf Werden als mit dem Schwung vom Turm herab. Gute Aussicht - denn es ist Schwere und Streben in Ihnen, Leiden und Kaempfen, lieber Herr, sind die Organe des Werdens .... Boll wird durch Boll - und Werden, Herr, Werden vollzieht sich unzeitig, und Weile ist nur sein bloeder Schein."(Dramen - 455)
CHAPTER VII

Conclusion

When a grotesque object or personage is distorted beyond the limits of credibility it loses its power to threaten and becomes ludicrous, for it becomes the anomaly in normal surroundings which act as a rational focal point. As has been observed, the grotesque effect is weakened if the observer believes the phenomenon to be more fancy than fact. Similarly, if a grotesque situation is sustained long enough that the mind ceases to attempt to re-orient itself, the situation ceases to be grotesque and becomes absurd. A grotesque situation never exists without a conflict between two orders, between a norm and an anti-norm, one prevailing, the other threatening. It is the intrusion of one order into the other, the partial overlapping of two incompatible and mutually destructive systems which produces the disorientation and frightening vertigo characteristic of the grotesque experience. When the mind ceases to try to discern some order in the apparent chaos and gives up in despair, when it comes to a realisation, founded or otherwise, that the mind is bereft of any ordering logic or principle within the capacity of man to comprehend, it is only then that the grotesque situation becomes absurd. Thus Kayser can speak of the grotesque as "ein Spiel mit dem Absurden," for as long as the mind is only playing with the absurd, it has not yet lost all orientation. It may concern
itself with chaos and with the absurd, may play a kind of Russian roulette with forces beyond its ken, and may not differentiate between apparition and reality. The mind's ordering logic may be threatenend, but as long as the mind maintains enough of a hold on itself to regain stability and its familiar orientation, the limits of play have not been overstepped.

It may well be the case that man will always experience a degree of the grotesque in the break-up of any rational, well-defined "Weltanschauung", for it can be presumed that the mind toys to at least some degree with new modes of thought before burning behind it the bridges of reason. Such is certainly the case with Barlach. His best grotesques were created in the period of his life when his inner conflicts appear to have been the greatest. In his later years, he became resigned to a perpetual state of uncertainty and transition, and ever came to esteem it highly as a way of life. In a fragment written in 1929 but first published posthumously after the war, Barlach attacks the "Unser der Sieg"-mentality which requires "eine gespickte und gepolsterte Wirklichkeit" (Prosa II, 402) to make life tolerable, a mentality totally ignorant of that other reality, "eine . . . abgeschabte, unansehnliche, der als einziger Pomp und Pathos Selbstverständlichkeit und Notwendigkeit wortlos innewohnt." (Prosa II, 402) He continues:

Kann man nun riskieren, von der Tragik des Seins ueberhaupt zu sprechen, dem Daemonischen einen Fingerzeig zu goennen?

Ist die Tragik des Erliegens euch so unverstaendlich? Wisst ihr nichts von der ewigen Unbefriedigung des Seins? Dass es immer zerstoert, um neu zu werden, sich seiner selbst entledigt, um seiner selbst im Besseren habhaft zu werden, immer wieder das Unmoegliche will, um am Moeglichen zu scheitern?
Nein, ihr wisst es nicht. Ihr wollt in unverdrossener Selbstzufriedenheit was sein? Die ewig Gleichen, und ahnt nicht, dass das Gleiche immer verworfen ist, weil es mit seinem Anspruch den schoepferischen Trieb im Sturm des Weltgeschehens beleidigt. (Prosa II, p. 403)

As long as man is concerned primarily with maintaining his identity and with perpetuating his own trivial world, the grotesque will be his common experience. Man must attain a flexibility of mind which will allow him to accept life as meaningful, even when ultimates cannot be defined and neatly categorised. His "Weltanschauung" must be undogmatic, serving as a guide rather than as an authority. Unless man's epistemological limitations are recognised, and provision is made in his world view for change, both in man and in his concept of the universe, the discovery of the unanticipated may easily rock the boat and appear as a threat to man and his orientation in his world. Man must be prepared for change, but he must also be prepared to change. And, as the mature Barlach expressed it, "Zum Werden verhilft einzig bereit sein - in ehrlicher Unerschrockenheit und mit dem Willen, keinerlei Dogmatik ueber sich Gewalt zu lassen." 144 The grotesque will be a part of man's experience until he learns to face up to and to live with the void, meeting it on its own terms, taking final responsibility for himself and his fellow men instead of passing it on to some deity. Boll, Celestine, and finally Heinrich, Graf von Ratzeburg, came to appreciate this, and the latter two chose to make the ultimate sacrifice rather than shirk their responsibility.

It does not follow from this that man must view the world as absurd. However man must not deceive himself with facile solutions. Even in his pronouncing as absurd the primitive concept of God as entertained by Noah in "Die Suendflut", Barlach already envisions the possibility of something higher. It is not the totality of the universe which he declares absurd, but only such a narrow, restricted view of it.

In his study of the absurd in modern drama, Martin Esslin reaches a similar conclusion:

If the Theatre of the Absurd presents the world as senseless and lacking a unifying principle, it does so merely in terms of those philosophies that start from the idea that human thought CAN reduce the totality of the universe to a complete, unified, coherent system. It is only from the point of view of those who cannot bear a world where it is impossible to know why it was created, what part man has been assigned in it, and what constitutes right actions and wrong actions that a picture of the universe lacking in these clear-cut definitions appears deprived of sense and sanity, tragically absurd.

By facing up to anxiety and despair and the absence of divinely revealed alternatives, anxiety and despair can be overcome. The sense of loss at the disintegration of facile solutions and the disappearance of cherished illusions retains its sting only while the mind still clings to the illusions concerned. Once they are given up, we have to adjust ourselves to the new situation and face reality itself. And because the illusions we suffered from made it more difficult for us to deal with reality, their loss will ultimately be felt as exhilarating.

Even if Esslin's formulation of the frame of mind of the playwrights of the Absurd may be somewhat theoretical and point to future developments rather than the present, nevertheless, Barlach had much in common with his successors. As his last plays demonstrate, the

145. Cited in Fleischauer, loc. cit.
universe in its totality grew even more mysterious and incongruous for him than before, but it was no longer either grotesque or absurd. The late Barlach was not to be seduced by the comforts of a "siebenmaerkischen Welt", but he never abandoned hope in the ultimate wisdom of the creation. "So lebe ich in einem gewissen Zwiespalt meines Glaubens und Ahnens", he wrote Pastor Schwartzkopf, "aber seien Sie versichert, nicht ungnern, sondern in der Zuversicht, dass Zweifel und Unsicherheit nichts sind, als was ich einmal in einem sonst schlechten Gedicht das 'Glueck des Ungenuegens' nannte. Ich muss bekennen, dass dieses Glueck beseligend ist, beseligend durch die Erfahrung einer schoepferischen und unaufhaltsamen Ruhelosigkeit des absoluten Geschehens, vor dem weder eine religioese noch philosophische Bestimmung Geltung beanspruchen kann, die ich also hoechstens als die jeweiligen Kennzeichen historischer Hoepunkte der Menschheit anerkennen kann . . . . So lebe ich in einer Ungewissheit, die mir eine Vorstufe erscheint . . . ." 147

Barlach was haunted by the possibility of the existence of an absurd universe, but consciously fought to hold on to an undogmatic hope in some ultimate purpose or pattern. He preferred to see the deficiency not in the universe itself, but in man. "Fuer das Hoechste . . . ," he wrote, "hat der Mensch kein Augenmass . . . , wie er mit dem koerperlichen Auge ja auch nicht den unendlichen Raum als Tiefe erfasst, sondern als Flaeche, die letzten Sterne scheinen neben den naechsten zu stehen." 148 As Iver remarked to himself as he raised his little lantern

high into the star-filled sky before crawling into the dunes to die,

"Es ist nicht zu leugnen, vor meinen Augen ist die Latuechte heller
als der Sirius, eine Tranlampe ueberscheint ihn. Es muss eben jeder
selbst sehen, wie ers macht, dass diese selbstige Funzel nicht alle
himmlischen Lichter ausloescht." (Dramen - 173)
A Selected Bibliography


----------

----------

----------

----------

----------

----------

----------
*The Transformations of God: Seven woodcuts by Ernst Barlach with selections from his writings by Naomi Jackson Groves*, Hamburg, 1962.


----------


-------------


Muller, Herbert J. *The Spirit of Tragedy*, New York, 1951.


---


Vietta, Egon. "Versuch einer ersten Deutung des 'Grafen von Ratzeburg'," in *Ernst Barlach*, a booklet published in conjunction with the premier performance of the play in Darmstadt, 1951, pp. 21-47.

---------  "'Der Graf von Ratzeburg' und der Entwurf einer neuen Barlach Dramaturgie," *Neue Rundschau*, LXII (1951), Heft 4, pp. 142-150.