HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHALS

TERZINEN ÜBER VERGÄNGLICHKEIT

AND

DAS MÄRCHEN DER 672. NACHT,
A Study of Ambivalence
by

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The early works of Hugo von Hofmannsthal reveal a strong dichotomy. On the one hand he is drawn towards a mysticism in which he is strongly influenced by the German Romantics, particularly Novalis. The Romantics' tendency to negate the value of temporal existence is reinforced in Hofmannsthal's thought by the influence of the late nineteenth century aestheticism of his colleagues Arthur Schnitzler and Leopold Andrian, as well as of his contemporaries, Stefan George and Gabriel d'Annunzio. Hence there is in Hofmannsthal's early works a mystic sense of a non-temporal, non-spatial, all-embracing existence. Yet at the same time there is also an increasing awareness of the value of this earthly life, the need for a willing acceptance of it and actual participation in it.

The ambivalence of Hofmannsthal's attitude reaches a climax in the year 1894-95. In that year Hofmannsthal is forced out of a hitherto much sheltered life in which he could devote himself almost entirely to his learning and his art into contact with the real world. In the spring of 1894 he takes his law examinations, and in preparing for them he is conscious of passing out of the years of schooling and preparation into the years of maturity and responsibility. During the previous autumn he wrote to his friend Edgar Karg about the earnestness of life: "Ich will diesen Ernst heuer sehr ernst nehmen und über meine Pflichten und Rechte ein bißchen nachdenken: damit
meine ich nicht die dumme Staatsprüfung. Eher meine ich den Beruf im tieferen Sinn. Es gibt so viel, das vielleicht zusammenbrechen wird. Die Zeit hat etwas aufregend schönes.\textsuperscript{1}

In July his friend Josephine von Wertheimstein died and, probably for the first time, Hofmannsthal felt death as personal reality.\textsuperscript{2} In the autumn of the same year Hofmannsthal enters the military service where he would have to learn to face a real possibility of his own death, and where, again for the first time in his life, he would have to work in the service of others, and live in a disciplined system with them. All these experiences combine to break down the isolated and artificial life which he had enjoyed till that time.

In the summer of 1894, in the space of a few days following the death of Frau von Wertheimstein, Hofmannsthal writes the four *Terzinen über Vergänglichkeit*, primarily an expression of his Romantic mysticism, and at the same time he works on his *Märchen der 672. Nacht* (completed the following year) which is a violent exposure of the meaninglessness of a life removed from social morality.

The purpose of this thesis is to attempt to show the nature of Hofmannsthal's dualism through an analysis of these


\textsuperscript{2} Just the Christmas before Hofmannsthal had described Frau von Wertheimstein as one of those "Die uns mehr als alle anderen sind", with whom he felt a mystic communion of souls. *Gedichte*, p. 516.
two major works of the crucial 1894-95 year in which the opposite poles of his thought are most evident.

Before looking at the works themselves it will be necessary to turn to *Ad me ipsum*, Hofmannsthal's notes on his personal philosophy as a background for the understanding of his works, and to consider this philosophy as it derives from Romantic thought and as it is expressed in some of the other early works.
INTRODUCTION

Hofmannsthal's concept of the eternity which gives this temporal life its validity is of a Platonic ideal realm similar in many ways to that Weltall envisaged by the Romantics. That such a concept is central to his thought and work is seen in his fondness for the following quotation from the *Vita Mosis* by Gregor of Nyssesus: "Quocirca supremae pulchritudinis amator quodjam viderat tamquam imaginem eius quod non widerat credens, ipso frui primitivo desiderabat."\(^1\) The quotation occurs twice: first as the motto for *Ad me ipsum*. In the first paragraphs Hofmannsthal translates it and adds a preface: "Der Dichter, aus jener höchsten Welt, deren Bote der Tod, herausgefallen: (Er, der Liebhaber der höchsten Schönheit, hielt was er schon gesehen hatte nur für ein Abbild dessen was er noch nicht gesehen hatte und begehrte dieses selbst, das Urbild zu genießen.)\(^2\)

\(^1\) *Aufzeichnungen*, p. 213.

\(^2\) *Aufzeichnungen*, p. 214.
The quotation is referred to again in connection with the following note to Ad me ipsum: "Hierher: jenes Jugenderlebnis (16 - 22 Jahr etwa) daß alles gegenwärtige Schöne in der Natur nur auf ein ganz unerreichtbares Früheres hinzudeuten schien."\(^1\)

In addition the idea is echoed many times in the early works as, for instance, in the poem "Mein Garten" where the beauty of a garden reminds the poet of a dimly remembered and lovelier garden "Wo ich früher war"\(^2\) and for which he still longs.

Both Hofmannsthall and the Romantics believe that man was a part of the ideal world before entering this life. Hence there is a sense of knowing already what one experiences in life. Korff cites Novalis on his Heinrich von Ofterdingen: "Obwohl er alles von außen und als etwas zweifellos Neues erfährt, es ist ihm nie wie wirklich neu, und er hat das Gefühl, als habe er alles immer gewußt."\(^3\) Carl Burckhardt writes about Hofmannsthall himself: "Sein eignes Leben hat er vorausgekannt, bevor er es begonnen hatte."\(^4\)

At death one returns to the ideal reality. The thought of death is the messenger which constantly intervenes in our lives to remind us of that reality out of which the individual came

1 [Aufzeichnungen](#), p. 227.
2 [Gedichte](#), p. 75
and to which he must return. The Romantics then often equate that reality with death, or with night, symbolizing death.

Earthly life is regarded as an interruption of the eternal, non-individuated existence; it is a passing illusion; the world is a "Schattenwelt". Novalis feels that "das Leben wie eine schöne genialische Täuschung zu betrachten (sei), daß wir schon im Geiste in absoluter Lust und Ewigkeit sein können und daß gerade die alte Klage, daß alles vergänglich sei, der fröhlichste aller Gedanken werden kann und soll!"¹ Life's whole purpose is as the way back to the original, eternal reality. "Wir gehen immer nach Hause"² is the Romantic ideal of "progress".

Hofmannsthal, however, cannot so easily dispense with concern for this life in order to live in and for the ideal like some Romantics. Two factors prevent his complete commitment to the Romantic view - first, man's philosophical experience since Romanticism, and secondly, Hofmannsthal's life-centred morality which hinges upon his conception of "Treue".

In Ad me ipsum Hofmannsthal equates his idea of Treue with fate.³ Having been born into this imperfect world man

² Novalis, Heinrich von Ofterdingen, Schriften, 4, p. 224.
³ Aufzeichnungen, p. 217.
must accept himself as part of it and subject to its laws of birth, growth, decay, and death, like all other forms of life. Whereas many Romantics advocate a passive acceptance of life as part of this natural cycle and a complete surrender of the self to the whole of nature as the perfect morality, Hofmannsthal believes that man must fulfil his unique fate as man, the only aspect of nature capable of rising above nature and its laws. He can do this by establishing responsible relationships with his fellow man in love, friendship, or service, that is, through Treue. Treue is thus almost synonymous with love because it is only when the individual esteems the worth of another or others enough to sacrifice all or part of his life for them that these relationships can be made. The bonds of Treue are independent of the natural bond uniting the individual with the Weltall. Therefore man can establish independent value in this life, Hofmannsthal believes, whereas for Novalis, love and morality are themselves aspects of the great universal force.

On the basis of his morality Hofmannsthal divides life into two stages - PraeExistenz and Existenz. Man, like all forms of life, is born into the state of PraeExistenz. In this natural and amoral condition the individual feels the totality of all life, including himself. He has an intuitive knowledge of the essence of the universe. However, man must not remain in this state. Man's desire for relationships with his fellows, for Treue, is a natural desire and it breaks down
the subjective isolation of PraeExistenz. One relinquishes the natural bond with the Weltall, the original oneness with all nature, for the sake of the human bonds. For Hofmannsthal these human relationships within the temporal world, but superior to it, represent the higher value.

In Tieck's Runenberg Christian abandons his wife and family and his place in society, in order to follow the demonic forces in nature. In Hofmannsthal's Der Kaiser und die Hexe, however, the emperor's love for the demonic witch changes to become love for his human wife. Again in Die Frau ohne Schatten human sacrificial love triumphs over the demonic and a family tie is established. In Novalis' Heinrich von Ofterdingen the death of the beloved leads Heinrich away from society to a longing for death and reunion with her. On the other hand, in Hofmannsthal's Der weiße Fächer the death of the loved one brings a period of grief and mourning but eventually a new love and a re-entry into society. In Hofmannsthal's works social values triumph over the cosmic.¹

For the Romantics PraeExistenz, the child's condition, is the ideal state. They regard the child as a person of superior wisdom because he still lives close to the All from which he has just emerged. He is not yet conscious of himself as an individual, nor has he learned to think in man's rational terms,

¹ With the exception of the final version of Der Turm.
or to accept his rational and moral system of values. "Ein Kind ist weit klüger und weiser als ein Erwachsener",\(^1\) writes Novalis.

Hofmannsthal's estimation of the child is similar,\(^2\) although for him PraeExistenz cannot be the ideal state because the child in it does not know social purpose and thus cannot accomplish Treue. "Im Anfang des Lebens ist man am subjektivisten und begreift am wenigsten die Subjektivität der anderen",\(^3\) he writes in his Buch der Freunde. Treue depends upon a recognition of one's own and others' individuality. On the other hand, this freedom from moral responsibility in the child obviously attracts Hofmannsthal very much as is seen in the Märchen when he writes of the longing for childhood, or in his adopting of the child's perspective in so many of his poems, including the Terzinen.

\(^1\) Novalis, Fragmente, Schriften, 2, p. 309.

\(^2\) "Was ihm am Kindesalter anzieht, ist der Geheimnisstand, die Vertrautheit mit allen Elementen, das Einsgefühl mit dem All." Werner Metzeler, Ursprung und Krise von Hofmannsthals Mystik, München, (1956,) p. 43.

Also: Hofmannsthals quotation from Der Tor und der Tod in Ad me ipsum, p. 227. "Warum bemächtigt sich des Kindersinns/ So hohe Ahnung von den Lebensdingen/ Daß dann die Dinge wenn sie wirklich sind/ Nur schale Schauer des Erinnerns bringen?"

\(^3\) Aufzeichnungen, p. 23.
The Romantics emphasize the necessity of becoming like a child if one would understand ultimate reality. In the *Lehrlinge zu Sais* the Messiah of nature is pictured as a child and only children or adults with a childish spirit can recognize him and his way.\(^1\) Hofmannsthal believes however that once the innocence of PraeExistenz has been lost it can never be regained and should not be sought, as will be seen in the study of the *Märchen*.

An approximation of the child's perspective, of the state of PraeExistenz, is however possible for the adult for brief periods through the dream. Like the child the dream shares in both ultimate and worldly reality. It has its source in the realm of the All or death, for the dream comes in sleep which is a temporary death, a loss of the conscious self. At the same time the dream is the product of the individual's mind. It is based on his experiences of the world and what he has seen and known there. Only his rational categories are not consistently applied and thus all things and experiences are metamorphosed into cosmic significance.

In the dream as in childhood one sees the true essence of all things:

"All in einem, Kern und Schale
Dieses Glück gehört dem Traum".\(^2\)

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2 "Besitz," *Gedichte*, p. 100.
The vision of totality is overwhelmingly beautiful to one who usually sees only separate phenomena. In the poem "Spaziergang" Hofmannsthal writes:

"Sag, meine Seele, gibt es wo
Ein Glück, so groß und still,
Als liegend hinterm Bretterzaun
Zu träumen, wie Gott will,
Wenn über Schut und Staub und Qualm
Sich solche Pracht enthüllt,
Das sie das Herz mit Orgelklang
Und großem Schauer füllt?"\(^1\)

The empathy towards all things induced by the dream is seen as magic. The dreamer feels so much at one with the object of his dream that he actually changes into that object. Momentarily his own life is lost in another existence.

The artist, who is more sensitive to the essence of the All in himself than are most adults, can more often come into the dream state of union with other forms of nature, and can even bring himself into the dream state consciously. This power, which Novalis calls "bewußt träumen" makes the artist a magician: he can change himself into anything. "Der Künstler wird zu allem, was er sieht und sein will".\(^2\) In the poem "Gute Stunde" Hofmannsthal describes people carrying about their

\(^1\) Gedichte, p. 180.
\(^2\) Novalis, Fragmenten, Schriften, 2, p. 302.
common wares, while he, the poet, is contained in all the things they carry.

Only the poet who can project himself into the heart of all forms of nature really understands nature and its various forms. Novalis writes: "Nur die Dichter haben es gefühlt was die Natur den Menschen sein kann... Alles finden sie in der Natur: ihnen allein bleibt die Seele derselben nicht fremd".¹ Because of his superior understanding the poet is the highest among men. In his mystic dreams he comes closest to the intuitive wisdom of the child and to the irrational harmony with nature. Therefore other men should look to the poet as a guide for life to lead them also to an understanding of the absolute as manifested in nature. "Wer ihr Gemüt recht kennenlernen will, muß sie in der Gesellschaft der Dichter suchen."²

Hofmannsthal believes that all men do long for the empathic understanding of nature which the poet has, and which others can attain through the mediation of art. In the essay Der Dichter und diese Zeit he writes: "Wonach ihre Sehnsucht geht, das sind die verknüpfenden Gefühle; die Weltgefühle, die Gedankengefühle sind es, gerade jene, welche auf ewig die wahre strenge Wissenschaft sich versagen muß, gerade jene die allein der Dichter gibt... Sie aber suchen den Dichter und nennen ihn nicht."³

¹ Novalis, Die Lehrlinge zu Sais, Schriften, 4, p.30.
² Novalis, Die Lehrlinge zu Sais, Schriften, 4, p.32.
³ Prosa 2, pp. 279-80.
In this magic artistic experience which Hofmannsthal calls "Verwandlung" the artist finds inspiration for the creative process. His brief contact with ultimate truth and perfect beauty inspires him to try to recreate the perfection he has known for the rest of mankind in man's terms of words or music or materials. In this he attempts to fulfill his role as guide for those who can comprehend nature only through his mediation. In the poem "Weltgeheimnis" the man who catches a glimpse of the world's mystery expresses it in song, even though he cannot describe it exactly nor do his listeners understand completely what he means. In "Gute Stunde" Hofmannsthal describes how a recognition of the life essence in all things, even the common objects of his room, as seen in the magic of a dream, inspires him to speak "große Dinge mit kindischem Mund".  

If the poet succeeds in conveying the impression of ultimate reality in his work, then the work transports the reader in the same way as the poet himself was transported to a recognition of that reality. Art should effect the same change in man as does the dream, to release him from himself by changing him into the subject of the art or the dream. "Daß sich sein Dasein, für die Dauer eines Atemzugs, in dem fremden Dasein aufgelöst hatte - Das ist die Wurzel aller Poesie", Hofmannsthal writes in the Gespräch über Gedichte. Novalis expresses

1 Gedichte, pp. 191-92.
2 Prosa 2, p. 104.
the same idea when he writes: "Ich-Du ist der höchste Satz aller Wissenschaft und Kunst."\(^1\)

Although man, and especially the poet, longs for contact with the ultimate his only experience of it must be brief and indirect. As the most highly developed form of life man is farthest removed from the source of all life. Whereas the stones and plants, and to a lesser extent, animals and children, can live in harmony with the All, in passive acceptance of its laws and being, man has driven himself away from such harmony by his assertive individuality, his rationality, and his rational morality. As the dream tempers the experience of the ultimate, so also art must temper the expression of the ultimate into terms of known experience. As the dream metamorphoses known objects and experiences, so also art should express ultimate truth by beginning with the known and through it indicating the nature of the unknown All. Objects and experiences of this world are symbols of the ideals which the artist is trying to express. The symbol should have the same power of Verwandlung in art as has the dream in life. The passage from the Gespräch über Gedichte quoted above continues: "Diese Magie (Verwandlung) ist uns so furchtbar nahe: nur darum ist es so schwer, sie zu erkennen. Die Natur hat kein anderes Mittel, uns zu fassen, uns an sich zu reißen, als diese Bezauberung. Sie ist der Inbegriff der Symbole, die uns bezwingen.

\(^1\) Novalis, *Fragmente*, Schriften, 2, p. 309.
Sie ist, was unser Leib ist, und unser Leib ist, was sie ist. Darum ist Symbol das Element der Poesie, und darum setzt die Poesie niemals eine Sache für eine andere: sie spricht Worte aus, um der Worte willen, das ist ihre Zauberei. Um der magischen Kraft willen, welche die Worte haben, unseren Leib zu rühren, und uns unaufhörlich zu verwandeln.¹

This is exactly what Hofmannsthal does in the four Terzinen über Vergänglichkeit, as he conveys his own mystic experience of the ultimate totality of life through a series of concrete and highly evocative symbols.

¹ Prosa, p. 104
Noch spüre ich ihren Atem auf den Wangen:
Wie kann das sein, daß diese nahen Tage
Fort sind, für immer fort, und ganz vergangen?
Dies ist ein Ding, das keiner voll aussinnt,
Und viel zu grauenvoll, als daß man klage:
Daß alles gleitet und vorüberraunt
Und daß mein eignes Ich, durch nichts gehemmt,
Herübergliet aus einem kleinen Kind
Mir wie ein Hund unheimlich stumm und fremd.
Dann: daß ich auch vor hundert Jahren war
Und meine Ahnen, die im Totenhemd,
Mit mir verwandt sind wie mein eignes Haar,
So eins mit mir als wie mein eignes Haar.

Even in the first line of the Terzinen über Vergänglichkeit
the paradox of transience and eternity in human life is suggested.
The poem begins with a positive statement of continuing experience and yet the assertion implies its own negation, for the experience is phrased in such a way as to render illusion more real than reality.

The meaning of the line is further obscured by the ambiguity of "ihren". This may be translated "their", referring to "diese nahen Tage" of the following line. In this case the poet has felt the experience of the days so intensely that he thinks of them as living things. If however "ihren" is inter-

1 The same personification appears in Gestern:
interpreted as "her" then the tercet is a lament at the loss of an intimate friendship, and thus of a possibility for Treue, and a personal experience of loss leads to a more generalized speculation on the nature of transitoriness.

In either case it is a near-physical contact with transience which leads to the question: Why must it be so? Why must time pass? The slower rhythm and the falling tone before the question mark may indicate that the question is a rhetorical one for Hofmannsthal; he seems to know that there is no answer.¹

By using the spatial references "nah" and "fort" to apply to time Hofmannsthal transposes concepts of time into those of space in order to present a visual image of the passing of time. This is followed in the next line by a slow, falling, cadence which comes to a full stop at "vergangen", giving a

tonal description of time's passing. Transitoriness is so real a force that it can be seen and heard and, as in line one, physically felt. In the next tercet it has solidified into "ein Ding", a tangible reality.

The repetition of the "fort" followed by the synonymous and in itself redundant "ganz vergangen", the use of one whole line in such a concise lyric to express the one idea "past", all stress the poignant reality and the inexorable finality of the passing of time. But again, as in the first line, a paradoxical situation is implied. Although the days are actually over, they are still "diese nahen Tage" in the mind of the poet. Again subjective or Romantic reality is opposed to objective world reality.¹ "Noch" in the poet's felt experience is opposed to "für immer fort" of empirical experience.

The same paradox is suggested in an echoing of the "ganz vergangen" in a later poem "Ein Traum von großer Magie" (1896). Here the magician is able to conjure up days which seem to have passed out of existence.

"Er setzte sich und sprach ein solches Du
Zu Tagen, die uns ganz vergangen schienen,
Daß sie herkamen trauervoll und groß: "

In the first **Terzinen** the poet is like the magician for the days are present in his subjective reality although in actual reality he must feel and lament their loss. Because Hofmannsthal finds real value in this life he cannot like Novalis, regard transience as "der fröhlichste aller Gedanken."

Even though transitoriness may be felt as a tangible reality in the real world, it can never be fully comprehended by rational man. "Aussinnt" has a double implication - to think out, and to feel out with the senses. Transitoriness cannot be understood in either of these ways.

Because transience is so far beyond man's powers of intellect or experience, it is useless, even blasphemous, for him to apply his human codes of judgment to the cosmic force, in an attempt to explain it, condemn it or complain of it. Transience is a reminder of man's impotence but also of the magnitude of the divine order.¹

The slow flowing rhythm of the next four lines, the joining of the second and third tercets in a long compound sentence, and the verbs "gleitet" and "Herüberglitt" imitate the flowing motion of the eternal process of the Weltall. Imagery and metre combine to express the idea of the transient nature of life.

¹ The line here echoes the dying words of Georg Buchner which Hofmannsthal quotes in **Buch der Freunde**: "Wir sind Tod,
In view of the eternal flux man's categorie of time and space are meaningless. These measures can apply only to the outer temporal form. The permanent essence of life in all things can never be categorized; it overflows all boundaries of form and age. Even man's own self cannot be held fast. "Durch nichts gehemmt" it flows out of the form of the child into that of the man. This image of the individual split into two selves is found in several of the Hofmannsthal poems — "Erlebnis," "Vor Tag," "Weltgeheimnis" and others — and is to a certain extent the poetic precursor of the concepts of PraeExistenz and SExistenz.

In Ad me Ipsum Hofmannsthal writes of the division in the individual as being that between "das Ich als Werden" and "das Ich als Sein".\(^1\) The "Ich als Werden" is the outer self which identifies the person to himself and to others, the personality, the conscious, rational self. The "Ich als Sein" is that aspect of man which rises from and returns to the Weltall, and which remains permanent despite the outer changes of the individual.\(^2\)

Staub und Asche - wie dürfen wir klagen?"

\(^1\) Aufzeichnungen, p. 33.

\(^2\) Grete Schaeder in "Hugo von Hofmannsthals Weg zur Tragödie," Dtvjss., Vol. 23 (1949), traces some influence of Freud's work on psycho-analysis to Hofmannsthal's concept of the divided self for Freud differentiates between the conscious self governed by the intellect and the subconscious "es" in the self.
It is the self feeling the secret of life which the outer self can only glimpse at rare mystic moments. Always it is described as "stumm". In this it differs from the conscious self which can only understand through words and rational thought. Hence any communication or recognition from the "Ich als Sein" to the "Ich als Werden" can come only through mystic experience when the consciousness is lost and one is in direct communion with the ultimate essence of one's being. In the late poem "Verwandlung" Hofmannsthal describes such an experience:

"Auf einmal war ein liebliehes Gebild,
Auf einmal war's an meines Bettes Rand,
Saß neben mir und stützte seine Hand
Auf meine Kissen und sah still mich an,
Daß süßer Schauer mir das Mark durchrann,
Und ich begriff: dies ist mein wahres Ich,
Das lautlos sich zu mir herüberschlich

... fremde auf ein Fremdes starrend,
Fühlt ich in Innern einen Wahn beharrend,
Dies ist nicht Fremdes, sondern dies bin ich!"¹

Here and in the Terzinen the conscious self is pleased and yet frightened by the experience of recognition. In "Verwandlung" the "Ich als Sein", or to use another of Hofmannsthal's recurrent terms, the "eigenes Ich", is "ein liebliehes Gebild" and the recognition brings an emotion of "süßer Schauer". In

the Terzinen the same mixed emotion is evoked through the simile of the "eigenes Ich" as a dog. The dog connotes faithfulness, companionship, love, but it perhaps also calls to mind the appearance of Mephistopholes to Faust as a dog and in this sense has overtones of the demonic.

The "Ich als Werden" is conscious of itself only in the present. As an adult the poet feels different and distant from the child he once was. Hofmannsthal uses the indefinite article - "einem kleinen Kind" - as though the child were an unknown person. The "Ich als Sein" however remains unchanged through the passing forms of childhood and manhood, uniting past and present in its permanence.

There is a certain irony however in referring to this permanent part of the self as the "eigenes Ich", because, although it is the real life essence of the individual, he usually does not recognize it as such. Except at rare moments he is only conscious of the temporal self which he can never possess precisely because of its temporality.

When the "Ich als Sein" can predominate over the outer self in the individual and make him aware of the All and his unity with it, then one might say that the Romantic morality in Novalis' sense is fulfilled. Hofmannsthal, while he seems

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1 In "Erlebnis" and "Vor Tag" the wonder of the divided self is also expressed in terms of the change from child to adult.
to agree with the Romantics that this "Ich als Sein" is the real essence of man's being in that he calls it the "eigenes Ich", still believes that morality must be achieved through Treue in the real world and therefore by the "Ich als Werden".¹

The next tercet begins with a formal "Dann", breaking the rhythm abruptly as the poem passes on to a new idea, to turn from the particular case of the self within one person to the general of the self within many people. Since the "eigenes Ich" is unhindered by any limitations, even time, it can pass unchanged from the child to the man. By the same token it can survive the death of the outer self and pass from one person to the next throughout generations. The "eigenes Ich" which was in the poet as a child, and now as a man was also in his forefathers a hundred years ago. Therefore the dead are living in the inmost part of him, in the part he calls his own self. Again the realization of the permanency of the "eigenes Ich" through ages as well as through the age of the individual frightens the conscious self, as is suggested in the picture of the self as the forefathers in their winding sheets, and in the unusual simile which describes the closeness of the relationship between the living and the dead, present and past. "Mein

eigenes Haar" echoes "mein eigenes Ich". The poet thinks of his hair as something entirely his own, growing out of him from all parts of him, inseparable from him, distinguishing him from others. The "eigenes Ich" is just as close to him, just as much a part of him, and yet it was equally so to his forefathers. Again the term "eigenes Ich" is ironic; although this is the only real and permanent aspect of the self, it is not really one's own, because it was in others before, and will be in still others after one's death. Later in the Gespräch über Gedichte Hofmannsthal writes of the illusion of the self: "Wir besitzen unser Selbst nicht: von außen weht es uns an, es flieht uns für lange und kehrt uns in einem Hauch zurück. Zwar – unser Selbst! Das Wort ist solch ein Metapher."¹ The repetition of the simile, its final position, and the slow, strong rhythm of the line emphasize the inevitability and the strength of the relationship of the past and the present self.

The idea of the "Generationskette" is repeated many times by Hofmannsthal - in a letter to Edgar Karg, for instance: "Spür ich nicht Hunderte von Männern und Frauen in mir leise leben? Liegen nicht viele Lebendige und Todte mit uns im Bett, trinken aus unserem Glas und bücken sich, wenn wir uns bücken?"²

¹ Prosa 2, p. 97.
or in *Vorspiel für ein Puppentheater*: "es ist, als träg ich ein Bergwerk in mir, in dessen tiefen, dunklen Schächten sich tausend Leben rühren: alle Besonderheiten und Geheimnisse meines Blutes rinnen zusammen zu Gestalten und Figuren: die Urahnin schlägt in mir die Augen auf, wie ich selber im Schoß ihrer Enkeltochter einst getan.\(^1\)

Thus, even though the conscious self may measure time as past and present, all time is one in the All, and in the "Ich als Sein" which is the All in every individual. One cannot separate one's self from the past and what has been experienced then and from those who experienced.\(^2\) This is what Andrea learned in the early drama *Gestern*.

"Dies Gestern ist so eins mit deinem Sein
Du kannst es nicht verwischen, nicht vergessen:
Es ist, so lang wir wissen, daß es war.

... Was einmal war, das lebt auch ewig fort."\(^3\)

\(^1\) *Dramen*, p. 496.

\(^2\) On the other hand the specific expression "vor hundert Jahren" might make possible a literal interpretation. Hofmannsthal may have in mind here the idea which he expresses in *Buch der Freunde*: "Der einzelne Mensch hat als Kind teilgenommen an den Erinnerungen seiner Großeltern, nimmt als Greis teil an den Hoffnungen seiner Enkel; er umspannt fünf Geschlechter oder hundert bis hundertzwanzig Jahre.", *Aufzeichnungen*, pp. 9-10.

\(^3\) *Gedichte*, p. 248.
TERZINEN II

Die Stunden! wo wir auf das helle Blauen
Des Meeres starren und den Tod verstehen,
So leicht und feierlich und ohne Grauen,
Wie kleine Mädchen, die sehr bläss aussehen,
Mit großen Augen, und die immer frieren,
An einem Abend stumm vor sich hinsehen
Und wissen, daß das Leben jetzt aus ihren
Schlafrunknomen Gliedern still hiniiberfließt
In Baum und Gras, und sich matt lächelnd zieren
Wie eine Heilige, die ihr Blut vergießt.

The second of the Terzinen deals with another mystic bond
that uniting man and larger nature. Again the recognition
of the bond comes in association with the thought of death.
Here the understanding of death and the sense of the totality
of man and nature come as simultaneous experience to the poet.

The understanding of death comes, significantly, as the
poet looks into the sea. For Hofmannsthal, as for the Romantics,
water, and especially the sea represents the realm of the All,
and its fascination for man is symbolic of the fascination of
that other reality.¹ This symbolism is found in "Reiselied,"

¹ In the Lehrlinge zu Saig Novalis writes: "Das Wasser, dieses
erstgeborene Kind luftiger Verschmelzungen; kann seinen wol-
lustigen Ursprung nicht verleugnen und zeigt sich als Element
der Liebe und der Mischung mit himmlischer Allgewalt auf Erden.
"Erlebnis," "Manche freilich," and several other of Hofmannsthal's poems.

Other aspects of the symbol are observed in the Terzinen where Hofmannsthal writes of the "helles Blauen" of the sea, regarding it as a process rather than as a static value "Blau". Even in a constant process of change the sea maintains its identity as sea: like the human self it is both Werden und Sein. Hence the sea has always been the symbol for the idea of "Dauer im Wechsel". In the permanence of nature which it represents death is only one stage in a cycle, not an absolute ending. When the poet transposes the symbolism of the sea to human life, then death to him seems "leicht und feierlich und ohne Grauen". So also the lines which describe it have a soft slow flowing rhythm which rather suggests pomp and ceremony.

A strikingly similar treatment of death is found in Heinrich von Ofterdingen where Heinrich comes to an understanding of death through a dream of Mathilde in which he finds her under

the sea. She tells him that they are at home with their parents, that they will always remain there, and she whispers to him a mysterious word which he forgets as soon as he wakes. The word is the secret of death, which. Heinrich, like Hofmannsthal in this poem, understands for only a moment.  

In both cases the understanding comes from women who have died - for Heinrich in a word from Mathilde, for Hofmannsthal through his identification with little girls and then with a saint. In this poem the sacrificial death of both the girls is lost in union with the one All whether understood as Nature as for the little girls, or as God for the saint.

The little girls are obviously more suited for death than for an Existenz in the real world. They are too weak for life in the world for they are fragile, (sehr blaß), sensitive, (mit großen Augen), and seem incapable of adjustment to the world, (Und die immer frieren). They are ready for death for their limbs are already "schlafrunten".

fühlen nur zu gut diese überirdische Wonne des Flüssigen, und am Ende sind alle angenehme Empfindungen in uns mannigfaltige Zerfließungen, Regungen jener Urgewasser in uns. Selbst der Schlaf ist nichts als Flut jenes unsichtbaren Weltmeeres und das Erwachen das Eintreten der Ebbe."

Schriften, 4, pp. 36-37.

1 Novalis, Heinrich von Ofterdingen, Schriften, 4, p. 163.
The poet imagines them in an evening setting. The evening is a time rich in meaning for Hofmannsthal. In the Romantic symbolism consistently employed by him day and light frequently represent this empirical world, and night and darkness ultimate reality. Evening as used here, seems to be the transitional realm; it shares in both light and darkness and thus reflects the condition of the girls who are caught between life and death.

The girls understand the inevitability of their approaching deaths instinctively and absolutely. They know what is happening to them and they accept it without question or resistance: they stare silently ahead, not looking for explanation or escape. They are silent for their knowledge is irrational and therefore inexpressible in man's terms.

Their death is described as a gentle flowing of the life essence from the bodies of the girls into the trees and grass of outside nature. It is the same sort of movement as the flowing of the self from age to age as was described in the first Terzinen. Again the movement is suggested through the rhythm of the verse, the one long flowing sentence comprising the whole poem, and the use of the verbs of flowing "hinüberfließt" and "vergießt". Just as the "eigenes Ich" can flow

1 As in "Ballade des äußeren Lebens:" "Und dennoch sagt der viel, der Abend sagt/ Ein Wort, daraus Tiefsinn und Trauer rinnt/ Wie schwerer Honig aus den hohlen Waben." Gedichte, p. 17.
from generation to generation, unbounded by time, so also it flows from one aspect of nature to another, unbounded by space or form.

The self of the poet seems to be in the little girls and they in turn in the saint, and in all phenomena of nature, in the trees and the grass as well as in other people. The same eternal life force flows through all creatures and things of the universe through all ages. In the famous Lord Chandos Letter Hofmannsthal describes the unifying flux as "ein ungeheueres Anteilnehmen, ein Hinüberfließen in jene Geschöpfe oder ein Fühlen, daß ein Fluidum des Lebens und Todes für einen Augenblick in sie hinübergeflossen ist".¹

This pervasive awareness of man’s unity with all nature is expressed many times in Hofmannsthal’s works; for instance in the words of Elis in Das Bergwerk zu Falun:

"Mir löst's sich jetzt, daß dieser hier mein Leib
Nur ein gekrösch ist aus lebendigen Erden,
Verwandt den Sternen auch. Wär das nicht so,
Wär nicht gewaltsam nur die Nabelschnur
Zerrissen zwischen mir und den Geschöpfen,
Den andern, dumpfen, erdgebundenen:
Wie dränge mir ans Herz das Hirschen Schrei?
Wie möchte dann der Linde Duft mein Blut
Bewegen?"²

¹ Prosa 2, p. 17.
² Gedichte, p. 420.
or in the diary entry: "Bin dann ein Stück gegen Mutenitz sehr schnell gegangen. Plötzlich unter einer großen Pappel stehengeblieben und hinaufgeschaut. Das Haltlose in mir, dieser Wirbel, eine ganz durcheinanderfliegende Welt, plötzlich wie mit straffgefangenem Anker an die Ruhe dieses Baumes gebunden, der riesig in das dunkle Blau schweigend hineinwächst. Dieser Baum ist für mein Leben etwas unverliebbares. In mir der Kosmos, alle Säfte aller lebendigen und toten Dinge höchst individuell schwingend, ebenso in dem Baum."¹

Similar is Novalis' statement: "Wird nicht der Fels ein eigentümliches Du, wenn ich ihn an rede? Und was bin ich anders als der Strom, wenn ich wehmütig in seine Wellen hinabschau?"²

For both Hofmannsthal and the Romantics the converse is also true, that all nature exists in each individual. "Wir träumen von Reisen durch das Weltall: ist denn das Weltall nicht in uns? ... Nach innen geht der geheimnisvollen Weg." writes Novalis.³ Walther Brecht points out that there is really no contradiction between two seemingly paradoxical statements by Hofmannsthal: "Im eigenen Herzen steckt alles."

¹ Aufzeichnungen, p. 121
² Novalis, Die Lehrlinge zu Sais, Schriften 4, p. 32.
³ Novalis, Blütenstaub, Schriften, p. 114.
and "Draußen sind wir zu finden, draußen."  

In Hofmannsthal's conception of PraeExistenz, the intuitive understanding of the All and of oneself as a part of it is constantly present. Hence the girls of the poem are aware of their eternal existence and can accept death gladly, whereas a character such as Claudio of Der Tor und der Tod has fallen from PraeExistenz, thinks of himself and of all phenomena of nature as separate entities and must resist a union with the All with which he no longer feels at one. Death for the little girls is only a physical fulfilment of what has always been in their minds - a literal return to nature from which they have never parted in spirit. Hence death is to them like a religious ceremony, an acting out of truth. The religious aspect of the union is carried further when Hofmannsthal compares the girls to a dying saint. For both the girls and the martyr death has a positive value as the means to what is, for them, the only meaningful existence, for which they long, and for which they are most suited.

In the poem "Erlebnis" where Hofmannsthal describes a mystic experience very much similar to the one described in these Terzinen where again he, the poet, seems to sink into the sea

1 Walther Brecht, Ad me Ipsum, p. 337 ff.
Also Hofmannsthal: "Es gibt Momente, und sie sind fast beängstigend, wo Alles rings um uns sein ganzes, starkes Leben annehmen will. Wo wir sie alle, die stummen schönen Dinge, neben uns leben fühlen und unser Leben mehr in ihnen ist als in uns selber." quoted by Brecht in Ad me ipsum, p. 336-37.
and into death. However, here he says that he feels

"Ein namenloses Heimweh...
In meiner Seele nach dem Leben".

For Hofmannsthal the Romantic ideal of surrender of life to exist eternally in the All, as exemplified in the dying of the girls or the saint, cannot be free from a longing for life in the real world. His death to the self can only be temporary and symbolic, as in the experience of the Terzinen or "Erlebnis," for he places a value on earthly life which the girls do not know because they have never really left the larger cosmic sphere. Yet in his reverie in the two poems and in many others of his early works\(^1\) he seems to long for the ease of the death of those who can find real meaning there, while he must find it in a turning to life.

Wir sind aus solchem Zeug, wie das zu Träumen,
Und Träume schlagen so die Augen auf
Wie kleine Kinder unter Kirschenbäumen,
Aus deren Krone den blassgoldnen Lauf
Der Vollmond anhebt durch die große Nacht.
...Nicht anders tauchen unsre Träume auf,
Sind da und leben wie ein Kind, das lacht,
Nicht minder groß im Auf- und Niederschweben
Als Vollmond, aus Baumkronen aufgewacht.
Das Innerste ist offen ihrem Weben;
Wie Geisterhände in versperrtem Raum
Sind sie in uns und haben immer Leben.
Und drei sind eins: ein Mensch, ein Ding, ein Traum.

In reference to Shakespeare's Tempest Hofmannsthal in his poem "Gespräch" tells how Prospero's daughter learned: "Daß alles Leben 'aus solchem Stoff/ Wir Träume und ganz ähnlich auch zergeht."¹ The first line of the third Terzinen is a direct translation of the same line from The Tempest. In Shakespeare's play the line is spoken by Prospero who is king over an isolated island where he has magic power over all the elements of nature. Eventually, however, he relinquishes his dominion in this magic realm in order to return to society and

¹ Gedichte, p. 97.
and to take a responsible position in it. The move is effected through the power of love. The situation is thus parallel to the emergence from the magic of PraeExistenz into the attachments and responsibilities of Existenz for the sake of love.

The context of Shakespeare's line introduces the old theme of life as a play or a dream, momentary and meaningless in the scope of eternity.

"Our revels now have ended: these our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision
The cloud-clapp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind: We are such stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep." ¹

In the second line of the Terzinen Hofmannsthal attaches a new meaning to the dream, again another in the third line, and so on through the whole poem. The constant changing of significance of the dream symbol and the subtle flowing of image to image suggests that the dream is a living force both in man and in the world he experiences and imply too, an idea of the world and its phenomena as a continual flux where no permanent values can be attached.

First the dream is seen as the means of opening one's eyes to see as children see, in wonder and awe and acceptance, unpredjudiced by rational concepts.

Then the dreams become the children looking at the wonder of nature. They stand under the cherry trees and watch the moon rise. When the picture is complete the poet indicates that the image has changed in it: the dreams are also the full moon, or a perfection in nature. The dream is then the medium for the apprehension of absolute reality, it is the dreamer himself, it is the absolute reality which the dreamer sees. The moon, that is the dream, rises through the "große Nacht", that is, in Romantic terminology, the realm of death or the All. The dream, rising from that other world, sheds a pale light into man's world enabling him to see, but only dimly. The light is obscured by the branches of the trees, symbolic of phenomenological reality which hinders a clear view of the ultimate.

The next tercet brings the dreams back into the world of man with a simple statement of their existence here, "Sind da". They are as much alive as a laughing child. Hofmannsthal's child, however, although he lives in this world is really alive only to PraeExistenz, to the dream state, and in this he is happy in complete harmony with all nature. So also the dream, although it is in man's world, is not in Existenz which knows the sorrow of transience and isolation, but in the praexistential happiness of eternity and totality.
Then the dreams return to the image of the moon which this time is pictured as rising from the trees, that is from the natural phenomena of the earth.

In the last tercet the dreams are again found in man, in his inmost being. They weave themselves into the fabric of his self, becoming an integral part of him. As Hofmannsthal describes it in his essay *Ersatz für die Träume*: "Wir haben unsere Kindheitsträume nur zum Schau vergessen... von jedem Traum... bleibt ein Etwas in uns, eine leise aber entscheidende Färbung unserer Affekte, es bleiben die Gewohnheiten des Traumes, in denen die Stärke und Besonderheit des Individuums sich nach innen zu auslebt." Hofmannsthal calls this fabric of the dream in the individual the "dunklen Wurzelgrund des Lebens."\(^1\)

In the next line Hofmannsthal makes the abstract reality of dreams seem tangible and yet mysterious when he compares them to the hands of spirits in a locked room.\(^2\) Nothing can be locked from the dreams; they are as persistently a part of the individual as the "eigenes Ich". This idea is enforced by another simple statement of the real existence of dreams in man, "sind sie in uns" followed by an equally simple statement of their spiritual

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1 Prosa 4, p.

2 The simile is drawn from a diary entry of 1892: "Der chinesische Glockenbaum Symbol für Gottweißwas, wirkt in meiner Seele wie die Geisterhand im versperrten Zimmer"; Aufzeichnungen, p. 97.
eternal reality: "und haben immer Leben".

Thus, to summarize, dreams are a means to approach the All, they are a force inside and outside of man, they arise in the All and in the phenomena of this world, and in man himself. They live in both temporal and eternal reality. The dream is woven inseparably into the "eigenes Ich". The dream is the eternal aspect of man's being, flowing from and returning to the All, and at the same time existing in all forms of the natural world, and thus binds man to nature in a sense of identity that brings apprehension of the absolute essence of life.

This is the basis for the final statement, effectively standing alone after the tercets, "Und drei sind eins: ein Mensch, ein Ding, ein Traum." The linking is in a trinity rather than as in an equation. It is impossible to set values on and to equate living, changing forms of nature. Mensch and Ding are transitory phenomena although they both contain the same eternal life force in the dream. The dream itself, though

1 The phrase occurs again in the essay Der Dichter und diese Zeit: "Denn ihm (dem Dichter) sind Menschen und Dinge und Gedanken und Träume völlig eins: er kennt nur Erscheinungen, die vor ihm auftauchen und an denen er leidet und leidend sich beglückt... Denn in seine Ordnung muß und will jedes Ding hineinpassen. In ihm muß und will alles zusammenkommen. Er ist es, der in sich die Elemente der Zeit verknüpft. In ihm oder nirgends ist Gegenwart."; Prosa 2, p. 282.
eternal, constantly changes its form; it is a medium of understanding between Mensch and Ding, as well as a common factor in both, and at the same time it is beyond both in the eternal All. This trinity is reminiscent of the better known linking of "Leben, Traum und Tod" which occurs in three poems of the preceding year, and which expresses essentially the same thing. The dream is the bridge between the realms of temporality and eternity, or life and death, because it partakes of both spheres.

The Romantics hail this function of the dream as a bridge between empirical reality and the All and as prophetic of a future poetic Golden Age when all life will be as in the dream or as in PraeExistenz, removed from rational categories. Hofmannsthal, although he suggests that the dream experience approximates the original harmony of the universe cannot regard the dream life as an ideal. In Ad me ipsum he writes: "Zielgedanke: Das höhere Leben muß die Steigerung des Selbst sein,

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3 In "Weltgeheimnis," Gedichte, p. 16.
empfangen durch das Drauf-kommen aufs Richtige, aufs Eigentliche
... es muß sich einstellen als richtige Schicksalserfüllung,
nicht als Traum oder Trance.¹

The dream is however still a valuable experience in this life for it gives man a temporary release from himself and a brief awareness of his identity with the All, from which arises a better understanding of life, and a greater love for it. "Daß aber alle diese Dinge im Dasein, die Menschen mitgerechnet, aufeinander fähig, und in einem gewissen geheimnisvollen moralischen Zusammenhang stehend ... das mit der Seele zu spüren, nicht mit dem Verstand, das nenn' ich ungefähr das Begreifen des Lebens. Von da geht, für mich wenigstens das Erfassen der eigenen Größe und Kleinheit und der Liebe zum Leben."²

¹ Aufzeichnungen, p. 220.
TERZINEN IV

Zuweilen kommen niegeliebte Frauen
Im Traum als kleine Mädchen uns entgegen
Und sind unsaglich rührend anzuschauen,
Als wären sie mit uns auf fernen Wegen
Einmal an einem Abend lang gegangen,
Indes die Wipfel atmend sich bewegen
Und Duft herunterfällt und Nacht und Bangen,
Und längs des Weges, unsres Wegs, des dunkeln,
Im Abendschein die stummen Weiher prangen
Und, Spiegel unserer Sehnsucht, traumhaft funkeln,
Und allen leisen Worten, allem Schweben
Der Abendluft und erstem Sternefunkeln

Die Seelen schwesterlich und tief erbeben
Und traurig sind und voll Triumphgepränge
Vor tiefer Ahnung, die das große Leben

Begreift und seine Herrlichkeit und Strenge.

Hofmannsthal describes in this poem a dream of women who have never been loved, that is, in his system of thought, persons whose lives can never reach their purpose of Existenz. In *Ad me ipsum* he explains that the entry into Existenz can be accomplished only through sacrifice of the self, whether it be a literal sacrifice of life, or a symbolic sacrifice in the deed, the child, or the created work.¹ As a woman can create and act only through love and motherhood, her only means of reaching

¹ *Aufzeichnungen*, p. 216 ff.
Existenz are through actual sacrifice of herself like the saint in *Terzinen II*, or through response to love received. Otherwise she is left like the women of this poem in an aimless existence which Hofmannsthal in another poem calls "ein langes, leeres, lebensleeres Leben".¹

Guilt need not be attached to these women for their failure to reach Treue and Existenz; they are called "niegeliebt" rather than "nieliebende". Perhaps like Claudio or *Der Tor und Der Tod* they were too self-absorbed to give and to receive love; perhaps like the girl in "Die Beiden" they were willing to make the sacrifice of love, brought the goblet of wine, but were unable to make contact, love was wasted, and Treue was not achieved.

Hofmannsthal finds them "unsaglich rührend". The words recall this line from the *Idylle* of 1893: "Unsaglich reizend dünkt dies Ungebundne mir".² These words are spoken by the smith's wife who longs for escape from her prosaic husband and his practical way of life. She admires the amoral freedom of the Zentaur who lives close to nature, always travelling on, constantly making and breaking attachments to others. In a diary entry from the same year Hofmannsthal uses the same words

² *Gedichte*, p. 56.
again in a context similar to that of the Terzinen: "die nicht Geliebte, die im Traum als kleines Mädchen zurückkommt, unsäglich reizend". ¹ From the change of "reizend" to "rührend" in the Terzinen, it would seem that Hofmannsthal both admires and pities those who are unattached and uninvolved in life. His relationship to them is also ambiguous for he says that they come towards him, and yet that he walks with them. The dichotomy of Hofmannsthal's attitude is most clear here: his romantic nature admires the dream-like life of these women, while his moral nature, which affirms social values, is moved by their isolation.

In the first two Terzinen Hofmannsthal described mystic or dream experience, but in both cases he maintains a rational perspective, conscious of the real world and rational criteria of judgment. In the fourth Terzinen his perspective is as though actually involved in the irrational dream. In the dream-consciousness of this poem real world phenomena lose their outward form and significance as concepts of space and time are removed and the phenomena are seen as impressions, feelings, and associations.

Terzinen I began with the adverb "Noch"; the poet was in and aware of present time in the real world. The second Terzinen began "Die Stunden!" as the poet thought of some specific isolated occasions. Now he begins "Zuweilen", and in the following tercet he indicates the time as "Einmal an einem Abend lang". It is

¹ Aufzeichnungen, p. 102.
not clear whether these occasions are in the past, present, or future, for in the dream, as in eternity, all time is present. This is indicated in the tenses of the verbs: the first verb "kommen" is a general present which could be taken to mean either past or future as well. The second verb "sind" is a real present. Then there is a past subjunctive in an unreal condition (waren..gegangen). As the reality of the dream grows in the poet's mind he reverts to the use of the present tense again and this continues through the rest of the poem.

One notices how the age of the women varies. They are first seen as women, then as little girls. As they walk with the poet they seem to be both girls and women for the dream encompasses the whole of their lives, grasps both the potential and the lack of fulfilment.¹ The dream absorbs the totality of an existence in a moment. Nature through the dream

"gibt das Leben
Von tausend Jahren wenn sie will zurück
Indessen du dich bückst um eine Frucht."²

¹ Several times in his letters and diaries Hofmannsthal mentions this idea of potentiality and fulfilment, present, past and future, as embodied in the figure of a young girl: e.g. in a letter to Schnitzler: "Gegenüber ist ein zehnjähriges Mädel, die doch eine Frau ist, und ihr eigenes Kind, ihre eigene Mutter ist."
² Ein Prolog, Gedichte, p. 140.
Hofmannsthal writes in one poem. In another he describes how time becomes an eternity for a moment in the dream experience of Verwandlung:

"Denn dem Erlebendem dehnt sich das Leben; es tuen sich lautlos Klüfte unendlichen Traumes zwischen zwei Blicken ihm auf:

In mir hätt ich gesogen den zwanzigjahriges Dasein -- War mir, indessen der Baum noch seine Tropfen behielt."¹

Place too is indicated in the vaguest terms. The way the women go is first referred to as "Wege" in the plural, and then becomes a singular. The path or paths are described only as dark and distant. The significant thing is that the way seems long and dark to those who walk. In the line "Einmal an einem Abend lang gegangen" the "lang" modifies both "Abend" and gegangen. The one long rambling sentence which comprises the whole poem suggests this same feeling of interminable time and distance. The one time which is stated specifically is evening. This is mentioned in all three of the central tercets. As in Terzinen II evening is symbolic of the dream state between day and night, life and death.

The landscape is also described as a subjective impression of the women rather than as a realistic picture. The women see

¹ Gedichte, p. 93.
all nature in constant motion as they themselves are: "Die Wipfel atmend sich bewegen", "Duft herunterfällt", "Schweben der Abendluft". All nature seems to be alive: "Die Wipfel atmend sich bewegen", "die stummen Weiher prangen". Nature seems to be conscious of the women and to reflect it in all its phenomena. The falling night brings down tangibly the anxiety they feel and the pond reflects the indistinct longing within their souls.¹

The use of the reflected image as a revelation of the self is frequent in Hofmannsthal's early work. The reflection presents a dimmed and reversed picture of reality which may be more beautiful than the actual reality. If, as in this case, the reflection comes in water, which is symbolic of the All, then the reflection is a means of seeing the real world through the All. In this it is like the dream which reflects objects and experiences of this life in cosmic terms. The reflected image is always a subjective view because the image of the viewer is superimposed upon what he sees. Nature and human subjectivity become confused.

¹ Almost the same scene is described in the earlier poem, "Melusine":

"Was sich im Weiher Spiegeln ging
In meinem wachen Augen sich fing:
Gedichte, p. 85."
In this confusing of the identity, in the merging of the self with nature, the women are able to comprehend the meaning of the All and of their own lives. The sense of totality and their part in it does not bring perfect happiness to the women as it did to the little girls of the second Terzinen, for these women have fallen from the state of PraeExistenz. The harmony of the union with the All is disturbed for them by their indistinct feelings of anxiety and longing (Bangen and Sehnsucht). These are the emotions, Hofmannsthal believes, which drive the individual from PraeExistenz to seek Existenz, whether consciously or unconsciously. Although the person who feels the anxiety and the longing may not recognize their source, Hofmannsthal believes that the longing is for the real human contact of Treue, and the anxiety is an existential fear of the meaninglessness of life without the morality and the permanent value of Treue.

These indistinct emotions break the magic of the praeeexistential state. The break, however, does not necessarily entail an immediate entry into Existenz and the achievement of Treue. In Ad me ipsum Hofmannsthal writes of the danger of becoming lost when one leaves PraeExistenz: "Fällt das Wesen aus

1 See p. 40 above.
2 "Bangen und Sehnsucht diesen Zustand zu verlassen", Aufzeichnungen, p. 214.
jener Totalität (PraeExistenz, Schicksallosigkeit) heraus, so ist es in Gefahr, sich zu verlieren, zu verirren:1. This is the lot of the women of the fourth Terzinen and of the merchant's son of the Märchen der 672. Nacht.

1 Aufzeichnungen, p. 217.
The four Terzinen may be regarded as an expression of Hofmannsthal's romantic inclinations. At moments, in a dream trance, he is, like the Romantics, aware of his existence as eternal, as encompassing all of nature and contained in all nature. However, when he considers this state as a permanent way of life, as it is for the women of the fourth Terzinen, he realizes that one cannot permanently recapture the harmony which the child, who is innocent of life, experiences. Even though one can for a few moments feel intensely the beauty and grandeur of such a magic existence, one longs for life in society and for human morality and purpose. It is impossible for Hofmannsthal to turn from a life-affirming morality centred in man, for the sake of a cosmic, death-affirming morality as do the Romantics.

For these reasons he must reject the aesthete's escape from the responsibility of life. For the aesthete there is no absolute morality, either social or cosmic: the only value is transitory beauty. In his Prolog to Schnitzler's Anatol Hofmannsthal describes the way of life which follows from such an attitude - a way of life which was, for a time, his own, and that of many of his colleagues and associates:

"Eine Laube statt der Bühne,  
Sommersonne statt der Lampen,  
Also spielen wir Theater,  
Spielen unsre eignen Stücke,
Frühgereift und zart und traurig,
Die Komödie unserer Seele,
Unsres Fühlens Heut und Gestern,
Böser Dinge hübsche Formel,
Glatte Worte, bunte Bilder,
Halbes, heimliches Empfinden,
Agonieen, Episoden...
Manche hören zu, nicht alle...
Manche träumen, manche lachen,
Manche essen Eis... und manche
Sprechen sehr galante Dinge...

In 1892 when Hofmannsthal writes the Prolog he is already aware of the ultimate meaninglessness of the aesthetic life. The Märchen der 672. Nacht written two years later, demonstrates in a more personal form the terrible consequences of living for the sake of beauty alone.

Das Märchen is the story of a rich young man who turns away from society to live a life of almost total isolation in which his only pleasure and purpose is the enjoyment, almost to the point of intoxication, of the beauty of art, of his own person, of his garden, of his fantasies. When he is finally forced into the outside world he is frustrated and confused by its ugliness and apparent malice. After wandering through labyrinthine passageways and rooms, seeking a shelter for the night he is called into an army barracks and is kicked by a horse. He dies alone, in great pain.

1 Gedichte, p. 39.
The diary entries of 1894-95 reveal Hofmannsthal's preoccupation with the Arabian *Tales of the Thousand and One Nights*, and with one story in particular, the story of the princes Amgiad and Assad. Hofmannsthal describes Assad in these words: "er sieht das Leben fortwährend harmonisch, aber wie hinter einer Glasscheibe, unerreichbar: das gerade Ich... kann er mit dem Fall der Ereignisse nicht vereinigen. Fortwährend verwirrt ihn, daß dieselben Abenteuer in der Vorstellung und in der Realität so gar nicht zusammenzuhängen scheinen, seine Seele ist nicht ganz in Hades hinaus, wie einer der träumt und dem die reale Welt hineinspielt, weil er nicht tief genug schläft."\(^1\)

The description is strikingly similar to that of Hofmannsthal's own youth which he gives in *Ad me ipsum*: "Meine Jugend: wie wenn einer aus so starken Träumen erwacht, daß sie ihm noch immer in den Sinnen liegen; daher dieser seltsame Mangel an Unmittelbarkeit. Diese unglaubliche Tätigkeit der antizipierenden Phantasie."\(^2\) He adds that this way of life is expressed in the *Idylle* of 1893. The smith's wife of that work tells how she lived in a dream world inspired by the figures she saw painted on her father's pottery:

"Als hätte ich im Schlaf
Die stets verborgenen Mysterien durchirrt
Von Lust und Leid, Erkennende mit wachem Aug,

\(^1\) *Aufzeichnungen*, p. 113.
\(^2\) *Aufzeichnungen*, p. 108.
Davon, an diese Sonnenlicht zurückgekehrt,
Mir mahndendes Gedenken an dem Leben bleibt
Und eine Fremde, Ausgeschlossene aus mir macht
In dieser nährenden, lebendigen Luft der Welt.¹

Prince Assad, the young Hofmannsthal, the smith's wife are all seen as living still in the dream state of PräExistenz spiritually, although they are actually adults in the real world. Real experience has never penetrated into their imaginings of life, which derive largely from art. Thus their knowledge of life is almost entirely vicarious and is therefore only a half understanding. Although Hofmannsthal does not follow the Arabian story of Prince Assad in his Märchen it is obvious that the character of the merchant's son is that of the Prince. Thus, as has been shown, it is very similar to that of the smith's wife in the Idylle and to a large extent a self-portrait of Hofmannsthal himself.

Instead of retelling the story of Assad and Amgiad as he planned,² Hofmannsthal writes an ironic adaptation of the story of the 672nd night - ironic because, in the original tale, the merchant's son is completely opposite in character to Hofmannsthal's hero. He is open to all experience which life may offer and enjoys many adventures and much good fortune, whereas Hofmannsthal's character tries to avoid all experience of life.

¹ Gedichte, p. 53.
² In Dec. 1894 he was still planning to write the story, in poetic form. Letter of Dec. 26, 1894, Briefe 1890 - 1901, p. 124.
The only relationship between the original story of the 672nd night and Hofmannsthal's is found in this sentence from the original which becomes a theme in Hofmannsthal's work: "Then he returned to the feasting without a thought that no man escapes his destiny or that there are blows in the sleeve of Fate which shall sound down the ages."\(^1\)

One might also see a certain irony in Hofmannsthal's use of the Märchen form. Considering the Romantic predilection for this particular genre it is paradoxical that Hofmannsthal should use it as a vehicle for the rejection of certain aspects of Romanticism. However, the dream-like structure of the Märchen lends itself to Hofmannsthal's purpose and the work corresponds well with Novalis' characterization: "Das echte Märchen muß zugleich prophetische Darstellung, idealische Darstellung, absolut notwendige Darstellung sein. Das echte Märchen ist ein Seher der Zukunft."\(^2\)

The opening paragraphs reveal much of the inner nature of the merchant's son through a seemingly objective description of the external circumstances of his life. Here and throughout the story the young man is referred to as "der Kaufmannssohn". He has not established an individuality, a character, or profession of his own with which he could identify himself. He lives from his inheritance, taking what is given to him and adding nothing of his own.


He is cut off from society both by natural circumstances and by inclination. He has no parents and no family ties. When he grows bored with a social life, he retires from it with no pangs. His friends mean nothing to him; no woman has attracted him so much by her beauty that he could bear to live with her. He has given nothing and taken nothing from society and hence the withdrawal is painless for him. His father's wealth makes it unnecessary for him to work either for a living or to procure luxuries for himself. The money is also a means for him to avoid life, to buy himself out of unpleasant situations. His social obligations in the city were superficial. His selfish guarding of himself has never really been threatened. His retreat from society is an outward action expressing what has always been inner actuality.

The only social contact he desires is to walk in the streets and to watch peoples' faces. He is outside of society, looking on, untouched by the emotions which he sees mirrored on the faces of other men.

He dismisses all but four of his servants. These he retains primarily because of their attachment to himself; his affection for them is only another facet of his egoism. Such self-absorption leads inevitably to narcissism. He takes pride in looking at himself in the mirror. Although he shuns society he is careful of his appearance always, for he delights in it himself.
"Er lebte...sich immer mehr in ein ziemlich einsames Leben hinein, welches anscheinend seiner Gemütsart am meisten entsprach", (p. 7) Hofmannsthal writes. The use of the adverb "anscheinend" here is significant. The young man genuinely believes that he has found the right way of life for himself, but in the "anscheinend" Hofmannsthal subtly indicates that this is not really so.

The merchant's son locks most of the rooms of his house, symbolic of his locking himself out of life. Later he withdraws even further by closing his city house and moving to his country residence in order to avoid the heat of the city. He cannot bear any intensity in life; even heat is too much for him. Emotionally he is as cold as the atmosphere he lives in.¹ The country house is situated in a narrow valley surrounded by high mountains, a barrier against the outside world.² Here he withdraws even more, for he likes best to sit in the enclosed garden of his home. All his actions in this first part of the story

¹ In Buch der Freunde Hofmannsthal quotes from the Türkischen Spiegel des Kjatibi Rumi: "Kann wohl den Wert des Menschen jemand erkennen, der nicht in der Welt Hitze und Kälte erlitten hat?"; Aufzeichnungen, p. 23.

² The description of this valley coincides strikingly with the valley of the poem "Dein Antlitz" (1892):

"Daß ich mich einmal schon
In früheren Nächten völlig hingegengeben
Dem Mond und dem zuviel geliebten Tal,
Wo auf den leeren Hängen auseinander
Die magern Bäume standen und dazwischen
Die niedern kleinen Nebelwolken gingen
are negative - withdrawing, ignoring, closing off. In the second half of the story his actions are all aimed at preserving his isolated retreat. Only once in the whole story does he take one step out of himself towards life, and this we shall see, is pitifully ineffectual.

The only occupations of the young man are the care of his body, reading, and the collecting of beautiful things for his home. All his activity centres around a pursuit of beauty with no purpose beyond his own enjoyment of it. But of special interest is the fact that he reads most often about the exploits of a great king of the past in whom he enjoys a vicarious life of adventure. His interest in this king is perhaps indicative of an unexpressed wish to escape from the present, and from himself into another age and another identity.

The unconscious attempt to escape into the past correlates with his love of childhood and longing for return to it. He wants freedom from the responsibility of existence in time and tries to reach it by ignoring and evading the usual commitments of the adult. When a decision is forced upon him he feels sorry for himself and thinks of himself as a child, too young to have to deal with such problems. This attitude is typical of the

Und durch die Stille hin die immer frischen
Und immer fremden silberweißen Wasser
Der Fluß hinrauschen ließ."

Gedichte, p. 15.
perversion of Romantic ideals found in the total aesthete. Childhood is for him an artificial retreat from the life which he cannot bear, whereas the romantic idealist admires the wonder, enthusiasm and intuitive wisdom of the child.

His art collection also ensures him a vicarious experience of life. In it he sees "ein verzaubertes Bild der verschlungenen Wunder der Welt". (p. 8) Hofmannsthal's description of the wonders which the merchant's son finds in art is strongly reminiscent of the opening paragraph of the Lehrlinge zu Sais where Novalis describes the wonderful forms and patterns which men find in nature. The difference is that Novalis is writing of finding these wonders in the real world, whereas the merchant's son sees only through the second-hand means of art. Aesthetic pursuits have to be sure some value for him. They make his life "minder leer". (p. 8) Again the words are subtly ironic; his life is still essentially empty; his interest in art only makes it less so.

1 Novalis, Die Lehrlinge zu Sais, Schriften 4, p. 3.

2 Turning away from his own aestheticism Hofmannsthal condemns this latter perspective. He writes to Elsa Bruckmann Cantacuzene: "Wofür schick ich Ihnen heute außer dem Renaissanceband von Pater auch meinen gutgemeinten und schlecht geschriebenen Aufsatz über die englischen Präraffaeliten, wo Sie spüren werden, wie ich von dem etwas leeren Ästhetismus ins Menschenhich-Sittliche hinüberzulenken suche. Denn es scheint mir sehr daraufzukommen, daß die Kunst vom Standpunkt des Lebens betrachtet werde." Briefe 1890 - 1901, p. 103.
The young man prides himself on his intelligence. He knows that he has not found anything of permanent value in his art treasures or in his own beauty. He thinks that he understands the meaning of transience and of death, but for him they are only a means of reinforcing his consciousness of the beauty of his own youth and solitude. His supposed knowledge of death is thus an aesthetic fantasy, just as is his knowledge of life. When he hears the old saying, "Wohin du sterben sollst, dahin tragen dich deine Füße" (p. 9) he pictures himself as a king walking through an exotic forest to a new and wonderful fate. "Er sagte: 'Wenn das Haus fertig ist, kommt der Tod', und sah jenen langsam heraufkommen über die von geflügelten Löwen getragene Brücke des Palastes, des fertigen Hauses, angefüllt mit der wundervollen Beute des Lebens." (p. 9)

He thinks that death will be "etwas Feierliches und Prunkendes", (p. 8) much like Hofmannsthal's imagining of it in the second Terzinen.

The young man's notion of the isolation of his existence is, we find, also illusory: "Er wünschte, völlig einsam zu leben, aber seine vier Diener umkreisten ihn wie Hunde." (p. 9) The significance of the four servants is manifold, for they embody both the inner life of the merchant's son, and his attitude to society and the outside world. Each of the servants has a distinct identity, symbolic of some aspect or aspects of the young

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1 These two sayings appear in Hofmannsthal's notes on The Thousand and One Nights in his journal, Aufzeichnungen, p. 110.
man's psyche, and yet at times all four can be regarded as a unit, all having the same meaning for the master.

Even as an individual each of the servants expresses an ambivalent symbolism. The old housekeeper is a figure of death. All her family are dead and she seems to wait in life only for her own death. At the same time she is symbolic of the regenerating principle of life in that she reminds the master of his mother. She reminds him too of his childhood. She is dear to the merchant's son because she is a living reminder of those stages of life which he likes to think of and thinks he understands well—childhood, and dying old age—not his present reality—mature adulthood—which he does not want to be reminded of.

Related to the old woman is a child servant. She expresses the aspects of childhood which the master has forgotten of his own:—its animal wildness and cruelty. In his article on the Märchen J.D. Workman points out that the girl bears a strong resemblance to the picture of "Psyche, meine Seele" from the poem of 1892-3. This latter has an evil look and a hard mouth; she is sad, and tired of life; she longs for death. When all that the self can offer to her is a life of dreaming and aestheticism she says: "Dann muß ich sterben, wenn du so nichts weißt Von allen Dingen, die das Leben will."

2 Gedichte, p. 79.
Likewise, the girl of the Märchen is sad and weary of a life which denies the elemental life forces, trying to replace them with an effete intellectualism and aestheticism. Hofmannsthal further characterizes her: "Sie war hart gegen sich und schwer zu verstehen." (p. 12) The merchant's son, who has known only ease and luxury, who cannot even bear the heat of summer, cannot understand self-denial or self-discipline in others. The girl tries to commit suicide by jumping from a window but only breaks a bone. When the master visits her bedside her contempt for him is so great that she turns away from him onto her broken bone and faints with the pain. Her intensity of emotion is in sharp contrast with the complete lack of ability to feel in the young man. It is this servant who later becomes the most perplexing and aggravating for the young man. He has become so refined that he can no longer recognize elemental animal forces even in himself. This aspect of life seems mysterious and evil to him. He tries to avoid a confrontal of it; we are told that he seldom sees the little girl. Man's animal nature, however, cannot be denied or destroyed by the rational mind, just as the girl cannot be destroyed even when she tries to kill herself. It remains in the merchant's son, just as the girl remains in his service, silent and unhappy.

So also the sensual beauty of the older serving girl is "die rätselhafte Sprache einer verschlossenen und wundervollen Welt." (p. 11) for the young man. He is fascinated by the erotic, and yet denies his own sexual desires, just as he is
fascinated by the ancient king's battles and adventures and yet never considers engaging in them himself. He is too absorbed in himself and his sterile fantasies to be capable of love or of action. It is twice mentioned that he thinks of the serving girl as a warlike queen (p. 14, p. 19)—who would then be a fitting consort for him in his imaginary role as the warrior king. But he knows that he will never live like the king, nor love the girl.\textsuperscript{1}

One day he sees the reflection of the older girl in a mirror tilted so that she seems to be rising towards him. She carries in each hand an Indian goddess of bronze.\textsuperscript{2} The man is struck by the beauty of the girl as he sees it next to the cold ornate bronze. Yet he knows that the only love he is capable of is for the bronze statues—for art, the exotic, the lifeless; not of human love.

\textsuperscript{1} Here again the merchant's son is like Prince Assad of whom Hofmannsthal writes in the diary notes: "In das Erwarten der Geliebten und Murmeln 'vita et dulcedo mea' mischt sich doch auch eine Ahnung von der Sterilität dieses Erwartens, eine Art Verliebtheit in sich selber, ganymed-narcissoshaft."; \textit{Aufzeichnungen}, p. 111.

\textsuperscript{2} The description of the idol would seem to be that of the goddess Manasa, goddess of snakes. In some mythologies she is connected with Uma, the mother earth goddess. One legend has it, that a merchant prince called Chand refused to acknowledge her as goddess until convinced of her power by a series of misfortunes.
In a letter to Schnitzler Hofmannsthal tells how any mention of India fills him with romantic longing. Here the Indian goddesses may be regarded as a symbol of the vague longings of the merchant's son, which he substitutes for obtainable human aims and values. He notes that he feels "Sehnsucht" but not "Verlangen" (p. 14) for the serving girl. Like the women of the fourth Terzinen he longs (albeit unconsciously) for love and Treue, and he senses that he could find it in the girl, but he shuns the possibility of satisfaction for the longing. Hence there is for him no "Verlangen"--a realizable desire. He longs for experience of real life, but does not actually want it. He is attracted by the life of his hero king, but does not want to leave the shelter of his garden. He longs for the excitement of a cavalry battle, but later, when a shop keeper tries to sell him a saddle, he replies that he is a merchant's son and has nothing to do with horses. He has accepted life exactly as it came to him, and has never really tried to investigate or to create a new set of values for himself. Hence he has never passed out of childhood.

Yet he cannot completely suppress the human urges for love and Treue within himself, even though his conscious mind has succeeded in converting them to an intellectualized longing.

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1 "ich sehne mich nämlich ungeheuer nach Indien, von jeher; ein paar lebhaft gefärbte Worte über Indien machen mich immer ganz sehnsüchtig"; Letter of Aug. 9, 1893; Briefe 1890 - 1901, p. 88.
The young man feels confused and upset after his recognition of the serving girl's erotic attraction. He turns away from her to look for a flower or herb which would give him somewhat the same sensation and which he could possess without having to give himself. He knows he will never find such a plant. Against the will of the consciousness, his subconscious keeps repeating the futility of his search and indeed of his whole existence. "In den Stielen der Nelken die sich wiegten, im Duft des reifen Kornes erregtest du meine Sehnsucht; aber als ich dich fand, warst du es nicht, die ich gesucht hatte, sondern die Schwestern deiner Seele." (p. 15)

The fourth servant is another mysterious figure of unknown origin. The merchant's son sees him at a dinner at the home of the Persian ambassador, and takes an aesthetic delight in the servant's manner and bearing. When, some months later, the servant suddenly appears and asks to be taken into his service the merchant's son accepts him immediately, dismissing two former men servants. The new servant is extremely devoted, anticipating the master's every wish, and catering to his enjoyment of the a-social and aesthetic life. Yet it is through this servant that the master is betrayed to his way of life. Thus we can see in the manservant a polarity of devotion and treachery.

As can be seen from the above discussion, each servant represents a potentiality for the achievement of Treue in the
master's life. In the old woman is his potential for Treue through filial affection and duty. In the young girl he could find the Treue of love for a child, or regarded in her symbolism as the Psyche, she offers the possibility of Treue to the self. The older girl represents a potential of Treue through erotic love, and the manservant the Treue of friendship.

The young man feels the potential for Treue in himself as a threatening challenge which he fears to accept. His self-imposed isolation denies Existenz not only to himself but to those who were destined to be his partners in the reciprocal bonds of Treue. He feels a silent accusation in himself and from society and objectifies it in the four servants, who take on the character of frustrated emotion in Freudian thought. A pathological condition sets in, for frustrated emotion, particularly frustrated sexual desires, Freud contends, lead to neurotic anxiety. (Angst). ¹

The master thinks of the servants as part of his very body and soul. They are called "Wesen......mit denen er durch die Gewohnheit und andere geheime Mächte völlig zusammen gewachsen war." (p. 16) He feels the burden of their lives in his own limbs. (p. 12) He knows them so well that he experiences their

lives constantly in his own. "Dann vermochte es --- ihren Bewegungen zuzusehen, die ihm so vertraut waren, daß er aus ihnen eine unaufhörliche, gleichsam körperliche Mitempfindung ihres Lebens empfing." (p. 14) He feels the sadness of their existence moving only towards death in the isolated barrenness he has established. Yet he does not realize that their sadness is his own, nor that he too is approaching death in this sterile atmosphere. Hofmannsthal compares the master's awareness of his servants' dreary existence to the horror and bitterness left when one wakes from a terrible dream. In Freudian theory as in Hofmannsthal's concept of the divided self, it is the subconscious, the dream consciousness, which feels and knows elemental truth. The conscious rational self, which cannot bear to confront absolutes, distorts or evades the communications of the subconscious, and yet is troubled by a vague sense of their unwelcome presence. Subconsciously the merchant's son knows the emptiness of his life but consciously is aware of it only in the lives of his servants.

His fear of that emptiness is also objectified away from himself into the servants. He feels that they are constantly watching him. Each one is in a separate room looking at him from a different angle. Together they see "sein ganzes Leben, sein tiefstes Wesen, seine geheimnisvolle menschliche Unzulänglichkeit." (p. 13) We see now that his withdrawal from society is not entirely based on his dislike of it, but is partly a result of his inner conviction of his own inadequacy as a human
being, a conviction which he seems to want to keep secret even from himself.

When the servants' eyes penetrate his whole being he is forced to think about himself, to realize his inadequacy and emptiness. The search into himself is always "unfruchtbar und ermüdend" (p. 13) because his aestheticism has kept him from any more than surface value. He prefers to avoid confronting the reality of himself by escaping into his fantasies.

This becomes more and more difficult for him to do because he senses the presence of the servants most strongly when he seeks to escape reality in fantasy or in aestheticism, when he reads in his book about the king of the past, or when he deliberately tries to concentrate on the beauty of his garden.

His conscious mind battles against his subconscious; he knows that the servants are not really watching him: "und dabei hatte er nie den Gedanken, daß sie ihn unmittelbar ansahen" (p. 13) but still he feels they see his whole being, and he is afraid.

He tries to escape by hiding deeper and deeper in his garden, receding farther and farther into isolation and aestheticism, but the fear grows stronger, for he is only running deeper and deeper into what he actually fears, and what he is trying to escape. Only when he confronts his fears, when he walks towards his servants, does the fear diminish. "Wenn er aber ganz nahe von ihnen war erlosch seine Angst so vüllig, daß er das Vergangene beinahe
Again the parallel with Freudian thought is evident: emphasis is placed upon the confrontations and recognition of one's fears.¹

Most significant in the interpretation of the meaning of the four servants for their master is an examination of the latter's reaction to a threat of the loss of one of them. He feels as though all he has has been threatened: "Es war ihm, als wenn man seinen innersten Besitz beleidigt und bedroht hätte." (p. 16) He sees all four servants threatened; he regards them as an entity, all parts of his closest possession, himself. "Er sah schon seine vier Diener aus seinem Hause gerissen, und es kam ihm vor, als zögten sich lautlos der ganze Inhalt seines Lebens aus ihm, alle schmerzhaftsußen Erinnerungen, alle halb- unbewuβten Erwartungen, alles Unsagbare, um irgendwo hingeworfen und für nichts geachtet zu werden, wie ein Bündel Algen und Meertang." (p. 16) The young man's hysterical emotions, the expression of the subconscious, are a reflection of the truth for the four servants, all inseparably inter-woven aspects of

¹ As shown in the case histories of Selected Papers on Hysteria, Freud, Great Books of the Western World, Vol. 54, pp. 1 ff.
his neurotic self are all he has of life. They keep alive the memories of his childhood, when he did experience human desires and affections, they inspire his vague hopes and dreams of life, all his indefinable anxieties and unrealized longings for real human existence. These few indistinct memories and instinctive concepts are the extent of his experience of real life. They have no substance—they are worth no more than a bundle of seaweed. Again we see ambivalence in the servants' significance—they cause his neuroses and send him deeper and deeper into an escape from reality but they are at the same time his only link with reality, and eventually they force him to a confrontation of it. He cannot ignore them, just as human reality cannot be ignored. His fear of them becomes fear of the inescapability of his human destiny "Eine furchtbare Beklemmung kam über ihn, eine tödliche Angst vor der Unentrennbarkeit des Lebens." (p. 13)

The complexity of the meaning of the servants is conveyed well in the comparison of them with dogs. Dogs can be symbols of unflinching faithfulness and affection but the development of these qualities in them depends upon the attitude of their master. If a dog is not treated with consistent and careful affection, it develops into a wild beast. The merchant's son gives no affection, no time, no care to his servants, to society and his own social potentialities and needs. The servants then become like a pack of vicious dogs for him. Animal need, repressed and distorted to become neurotic isolation and fear, destroys
him who tries to deny his nature as a human animal.

The unreal existence of the merchant's son is shattered by a mysterious letter from the outside world. It accuses his manservant of some heinous but unspecified crime committed in the past, and makes indefinite threats. Life makes its first demand from the merchant's son and he is incapable of meeting it. He feels himself betrayed by life: "Es war ihm, als wenn man .... ihn zwingen wollte, aus sich selber zu fliehen, und zu verleugnen, was ihm lieb war." (p. 16)

The first paragraph of the second part of the story traces the master's mounting panic as his subconscious fears come to the foreground and overwhelm his rational self. At first the letter merely disturbs him a little. After he has read it over a few times however he shows all the symptoms of an hysterical attack - he storms up and down in a fever, overpowered by fear, incapable of examining the fear to find its source, longing only to be rid of it at all costs. He does not investigate the truth of the letter, he does not even mention it to the servant whom it concerns. He tries to avoid an examination of the true nature of his servant and, in him, of himself. He is sorry for himself and wishes that he were a child so that he would not have to

1 The fact that the crime is now long past is of some significance. In a Freudian interpretation of the story, the crime may be the traumatic experience from which the master's neurotic fear of society has arisen, and which the conscious mind has completely forgotten.
meet this difficulty. When he finally does act, it is only
defensively. He tries to preserve the status quo he has always
known, to protect himself from the new demand.¹ He goes off
to the city with no clear plan of action, but only with the hope
of finding peace from his fear.

The decision to go out into the world is the turning point
of the story. Hereafter all the events are an ironically rever­
sed fulfillment of the values and the way of life which the young
man had mistakenly believed to be right for himself. His re­
entry into a social environment comes too late. He finds ugliness
everywhere he goes. In part one of the story where we saw the
merchant's son in his own isolated world, the word "schön" appears
over and over again. In part two, where the man is out in the
world of society the word "häßlich" predominates.

¹ Richard Alewyn's description of Claudio of Der Tor und der Tod
could equally well apply to the merchant's son: "Aus Angst
sich zu verlieren hat er sich nie hingegben und eben darum
sich auch nicht wahrhaft wiederempfangen. So verliert er sich,
eben weil er so eifersüchtig sich bewahren wollte - verdorrt,
erstarrt, verödet und vereinsamt. Unfähig, etwas zu erleben,
werder ein Ding noch ein Du, unfähig zu handeln, unfähig auch
nur zu genießen, lebt er ohne Welt und ohne Schicksal in dem
Kerker seines Ich dahin. Das schöne Leben verkehrt sich aus
einem Segen in einen Fluch."
The merchant's son goes first to the home of the Persian ambassador where he met the servant. There is no one at home. Earlier he abandoned society, now society abandons him. He finds only two old retainers whose ugliness disgusts him so that he refuses to have any dealings with them. He decides to return next day, and leaves.

Since he has severed all contacts in the city and locked himself out of his city home, he must look for an inn for the night as though he were a stranger in the city as he is a stranger in life.

He walks along a stream which is running dry in its isolation, neither giving to nor receiving from others. Next we see him walking along a poor street where many prostitutes live. They, who will give themselves to anyone, stand in contrast to the merchant's son who guards himself from all other people.

Then he enters "eine ganz öde, totenstille Sackgasse" symbolic of the dead end of his life with no purpose. A sense of impending death is suggested throughout the story by the many adjectives formed from the root "tot" - "totenstill", "tödliche", "totenblaß" etc. Similarly the recurrent use of "öde" suggests the barrenness of the man's life. Both are emphasized by the silence of the story. There is no direct conversation. At home the master seldom speaks to his servants. The city is strangely quiet and deserted as the young man walks through it. His inability to communicate meaningfully with his fellow man keeps
him out of the mainstream of life in barren isolation wherever he goes.

The streets the young man walks are unknown to him and yet they seem vaguely familiar as in a dream. One passage leads into the next with no clear idea of space or distance. The atmosphere of the story grows more and more like that of a dream. The order is one of association rather than of logic: a mirror reminds the man of his serving girl and draws him on; the face of a horse recalls to him a whole scene from his childhood. Impossibilities are accepted as valid or rationalized in a ridiculous way: the topographic details of the walk must be impossible and yet the man shows no surprise at them. When he notices that the faces of all the soldiers in the courtyard are alike he tells himself that they must all come from the same village. As in a dream the merchant's son feels compelled to keep walking on and on although he has no clear idea of where he is going. As in a dream the subconscious mind predominates over the rational; thus the merchant's son is overwhelmed by his neurotic fears and his rational self cannot suppress them. As in a dream he sees real world phenomena and believes himself to be reacting to them normally, but his perspective is that of the irrational subconscious. His walk through the city expresses in symbols, as would a dream, his true nature and attitude to life. Ironically this dream brings the merchant's son into contact with the reality which he has managed to escape in his waking life - a reversal of the usual dream function. He wanders
along looking for beauty such as he knows in his dream-like existence, and finding only real ugliness, always seeking rest and never finding it, and finally hazardizing his self in an attempt to keep the illusion intact.

He knows that he must find an inn and a bed for the night, but all can think of is his own bed, that is, his isolation, and the marriage bed of the great king of whom he likes to read, that is, his imaginary world. He does not know where to look for a real bed in the real world. He does not even really want to find one and he never does.

The young man comes to a jeweller's shop and, in his now almost frantic search for beauty, he looks into the window. He sees a necklace which reminds him of his old housekeeper because it is sad and pale. He buys the necklace, not really as a gift for her, but for that melancholy aspect of himself in her, and for the aesthetic pleasure of it. In the shop a mirror reminds him of his beautiful serving girl and he thinks she would be even more beautiful with a golden chain around her neck so he buys one for her, again not for her sake, but as though he were buying an ornament for his house.

As he is about to leave the shop he discovers an interesting greenhouse and he wants to look inside. He seeks the ideal flower in the exotic and artificial atmosphere of the greenhouse (in contrast with the Romantics who seek it outside in nature). In the greenhouse he finds narcissi, symbolic of his self-love
and anemones, symbolic of his exotic life in their rich and varied colours.

Suddenly he notices that there is someone watching him. A great fear overcomes him. The watcher proves to be a little girl who is alarmingly similar to his youngest servant. Unconsciously he walks towards her and, as with his servants, he finds that his fear decreases as he draws closer. When he strokes the child's hair in a spontaneous gesture of love, his fear disappears entirely. This is his one step towards another person and hence towards a meaningful life in society. It is significant that the girl is like his youngest servant, who, as mentioned earlier, represents the psyche. The youth's gesture indicates not only a move towards society but in conjunction with it, an approach towards his own true self.

The merchant's son's one move towards life is cut short by fear. When he realizes what he is doing he remembers how he was rejected in a similar display of affection for his little servant and he draws back his hand. In a helpless gesture to replace love or to buy off his fear of it, he gives the child some silver coins. She throws them to the ground. Although he loves his own idealized childhood and longs for it again, he is frightened by the stark honesty and absolute values of real childhood when he encounters them.

The child is small and helpless and dressed in white - a symbol of innocence. But true to her ambivalent nature she also has an evil look and acts strangely and hostilely and she terrifies
the merchant's son in a way he cannot understand. "Er wußte
nicht, wovor er so namenlose Furcht empfand. Er wußte nur,
daß er es nicht ertragen werde, sich umzudrehen und zu wissen,
daß dieses Gesicht hinter ihm durch die Scheiben starrte." (p. 21)
Thus the girl seems to allegorize the irrational and inexplicable
in life, and the opposite of her childish innocence, guilt.
The merchant's son is drawn into the hothouse of his isolation
by an indefinable combination of innocence of life, in that his
experience is so limited, and a terrible guilt in life because
he has now allowed himself to experience, and has deliberately
tried to preserve the innocence of his childhood.

In nightmarish panic the merchant's son tries to escape
from the greenhouse but the child has locked him in. Previously
he had locked himself from the outside world. Now, ironically,
he is locked in by the outside world and he wants to get out.
At last he finds a door. Several times in the story he has
come to a seeming dead end and at the last minute found a way
out, which is symbolic of the inevitability of his destiny. All
the doors he passes through are iron grillwork doors, again
symbolic of his imprisonment in life.

He imagines he hears strange sounds in the foliage behind
him and he follows them to a hidden door. It leads to an abyss,
spanned by a narrow board. The merchant's son has no choice but
to go forward across it for the door to the world behind him has
been locked. He is filled with a premonition of death as he
crosses the board. The picture of him crawling in terror across
the narrow board towards his death is an ironic reversal of his former image of death coming to him grandly across the drawbridge of his palace.

On the other side the merchant's son feels empty and deserted and wanders aimlessly as though into infinity. "Seltsam war alles von ihm gefallen, und ganz leer und vom Leben verlassen ging er durch die Gasse und die nächste und die nächste." (p. 24)

Soldiers call to him disturbing his typical "achtloses Dahingehen" (p. 25) and drawing his attention to a courtyard where other soldiers are washing the hooves of horses while yet others are carrying loaves of bread. The whole scene — courtyard, soldiers, horses, bread — blends to a total impressionistic picture of ugly grey drabness permeated by the foul smell of the horses' hooves. All the men look alike: they wear the same clothes, have the same ugly yellow faces. The horses too are ugly. One is particularly so, and its face reminds the merchant's son of a man whom he had seen accused of stealing from his father's shop many years before.¹ The horses as well as the soldiers represent general regimented humanity which must lead a drab life in order to earn its drab daily bread. Only because he does not have to work for his bread can the merchant's son afford

¹ Perhaps this scene is the Freudian traumatic experience from which the man's distaste and fear of society have arisen although completely forgotten by the conscious mind.
to cultivate his extreme individuality and his independent isolation. The significance of the horses is indicated in this entry from Hofmannsthal's diary: "1. VIII (1895).- Im Leben gefangen sein. Die Elemente. Der beschwerliche Staub, die mühseligen Steine, die traurigen Straßen, die harten Dämme, die Tücke der Pferde und des eigenen Körpers.

Leben und sich ausleben nur im Kampf mit den widerstrebenden Mächten. So lehrt mich mein Pferd den Wert des Vermögens, der Unabhängigkeit. Sehnsucht, Haß, Demütigung ... sind die Einstellungen des seelischen Augapfels zum Erkennen der eigenen Lage im universellen Koordinatensystem und des Verhältnisses zu den anderen Geschöpfen. Vorher geht man in Gedanken leichfertig mit den Wesen um wie mit Marionetten. (Scheinhaftes Leben).".

The merchant's son feels a dull sympathy for the men he sees working in such ugliness. As he is incapable of real love for them he tries to satisfy the feeling within him by giving them money. Always he has been able to satisfy all his wants with his wealth.

As he fumbles in his pocket he is struck by a sudden indefinite thought, draws his hand from the pocket and the necklace from the jeweller's falls to the ground. The "undeutlicher

1 Aufzeichnungen, p. 127.
Gedanke" (p. 27) is tantalizingly left unexplained. Perhaps it is another memory or fantasy. Perhaps, however, it is a sudden realization that his giving money to the soldier would be useless for them and for himself. Perhaps it is a sudden feeling that he should drop the aesthetic life and hence he drops the necklace in which it is symbolized. But he cannot part with that way of life. He stoops to pick up the necklace. This action is parallel to his futile attempt to preserve his aestheticism by going out to the city. In this one scene the whole story is recapitulated in an instant.

The soldiers carry him to a small room, rob him, and leave. He dies a horrible death totally alone.

The ironic justice of his fate is manifold. He never served others to earn his bread and in a sense he stole from those who did. In the end those who must work for their bread steal from him and destroy him. He ignored general humanity and its misery, now others ignore him in his misery. He wanted to be like a child in its innocence and freedom and dies whimpering like a child in its helplessness, oppressed by guilt because he had refused to surrender the innocence and freedom of his childhood. He was proud of his beauty and careful to preserve it: he dies with his features contorted into an ugliness almost exactly like that of the horse which killed him. The look recalls too that of the child in the greenhouse and of the young serving girl — for all of them have an animal-like hardness and wildness. All
of them - the serving girl, the child in the greenhouse, and
the horse stand for elemental, animal forces in all humanity,
including the merchant's son. He, however, wanted nothing to
do with this aspect of life, and is struck in his own animal
nature and dies of it. He wanted to live alone, but at his
death he wants to cry in frustration because he is alone. He
would not communicate with others while he lived; his voice
fails him as he dies so that he cannot even cry his dying misery
to others.

In his death throes he feels three distinct fears - fear
of being alone, fear of death, and the old fear of the four ser-
vants. He curses the servants. In doing so he really curses
himself, his own repressed emotions and his neuroses which he
has transferred into his servants. It was these which kept him
from society and bring him to die alone. Thus he was kept from
human purpose and usefulness in his life and is therefore unready
for death and afraid of it. All his fears then arise from his
own inadequacy in life, his failure to find Treue. The separate
fears then resolve themselves into one great indistinct fear as
the merchant's son realizes the futility of life and death. "Er
haßte seinen vorzeitigen Tod so sehr, daß er sein Leben haßte,
weil es ihn dahin geführt hatte." (p. 28). When his servant,
his potential for achieving Treue, was threatened, he felt him-
self threatened, as though forced to deny all that was dear to
him. In the end he himself denies all that was dear to him be-
cause he sees its real nature.¹

In a letter to Richard Beer-Hofmann Hofmannsthal compares life to a game of chance. The way the cards fall determines one's destiny in life and the meaning one can find in it. One must be able to find some value there in which one can really believe. "Und dazu gehört ein Zentrumsgfühl, ein Gefühl von Herrschaftlichkeit und Abhängigkeit, ein starkes Spüren der Vergangenheit und der unendlichen gegenseitigen Durchdringung aller Dinge und ein besonderes Glück, nämlich daß die begegnenden Phänomene wie Karten bei der Kartenschlägerin gut-symbolisch fallen, reich, vielsagend und durch ihre Kühnheit auch im schönen Sinn schauerlich tragisch.... Das Fallen der Karten aber erzwingt man von innen her; das ist das Tiefe, Große, Wahre, wovon dem Poldy seine Geschichte ein hilfloses, und mein Märchen ein kindlich rohes, allegorisches Zeichen sein soll."² In the same letter as well as in several other letters and essays Hofmannsthal quotes a French saying "Il faut glisser la vie". One must accept one's destiny passively and yet still find positive value in that destiny. The merchant's son tries to avoid his fate and

¹ Even the wording is identical: "Es war ihm, als wenn man... ihn zwingen wollte... zu verleugnen, was ihm lieb war." (p. 16) and "Mit einer großen Bitterkeit starrte er in sein Leben zurück und verleugnete alles, was ihm lieb gewesen war." (p. 28)

² Briefe 1890 – 1901, p. 130.
and his responsibility of accepting it and valuing it. His subconscious "eigene Ich" however knows that this is impossible. Hence his fear of the servants is "eine furchtbare Beklemmung... eine tödliche Angst vor der Unentrinnbarkeit des Lebens." (p. 13) It is man's fate to need social bonds and to long for Treue, Hofmannsthal believes. The merchant's son's attempt to escape his human destiny and his responsibility to it in his effete isolation must be unsuccessful. He is destroyed by that fate in the form of his own servants. If he had responded to them they could have brought him to fulfillment of the human destiny in Treue. Because he rejected those potentialities in himself, the servants bring him instead to his death.
CONCLUSION

In the Terzinen Hofmannsthal shows a complete lack of concern for society. The poet's relationships are all on a mystic level. He feels a unity between himself and the past and all its dead, with nature, with the dream, with all the phenomena of the world. The "eigenes Ich" of Terzinen I, the girls of Terzinen II, the children of III, and the women of IV are all silent: they communicate in spirit in terms of absolutes, but they do not communicate with one another or with other people in human terms. They are strangely unattached and uninvolved in the real world and its society.

The picture of their existence must be the sort of life that the merchant's son wishes for himself. He wants to live in the past, a spiritual possibility of which Hofmannsthal writes in Terzinen I. The merchant's son wants to die peacefully and grandly, merging into the beauty of nature, as do the girls of the second Terzinen. He wants to believe that his dreams are as valid as real life and its phenomena and experiences, as dreams are conceived of in the third Terzinen. He wants to be unloved and unattached like the women of the fourth poem. Like the girls and the women of the poems he does not want to associate with other people; he believes he can understand them entirely without speech. Because of society, because of the four servants who constantly surround him, the merchant's son cannot live thus. The slow-flowing, peaceful, rich style of the Terzinen and of the merchant's son's fantasies in the Märchen contrasts with
the plain, factual tone of the objective narration in the *Märchen*, the one describing the richly beautiful world of the imagination and the spirit, and the other the harsher facts of human existence. Man is born into society with a place and a duty in it. Any attempt to avoid that place and that responsibility Hofmannsthal believes, is doomed to failure. Although the merchant's son does not realize it, all his life and actions are dependant upon his relationship to society. The a-social perspective such as is found in the *Terzinen* is impossible for the poet to sustain.

In a broader survey of Hofmannsthal's works we find consistently this same tendency. The lyric poetry is romantic, mystic, unconcerned with man as a social animal, whereas in the dramas and Erzählungen, the hero's search, whether conscious or subconscious, for a place and meaning in human society, that is, for Treue, is the central theme.

It is significant that the search for Treue is shown as unsuccessful in all four of the early works on this theme: *Gestern* (1891), *Die Idylle* (1893), *Der Tor und der Tod* (1893) and the *Märchen* of 1894-95. The smith's wife of the *Idylle*, Claudio of *Der Tor und der Tod*, the merchant's son of the *Märchen*, all die without ever having found Treue and in it purpose for their lives. Andrea of *Gestern* does go on living, but in a sterile sort of existence because he squanders the Treue he had, but would not recognize.
No positive guilt can be attached to any of these characters for their failure to achieve Treue. All are raised in wealth and luxury and idleness. Because they do not have to work, they have no notion of the lives of those who do, nor of their sense of values. Because people have always served them, the idea of serving others does not occur to them. They have the wealth and the leisure necessary for aesthetic pursuits and these fill the otherwise empty time for them. The merchant's son honestly thinks that he is doing the right thing when he withdraws from society to live for beauty alone. When the smith's wife tells of her childhood and her dream life it is evident why she is still a dreamer. Claudio, like Andrea of Gestern, is so self-centred that he believes that everyone must think and feel as he does. When Claudio learns how deeply other people have felt for him and realizes the value of such deep involvement with others, he is sorry for his own lack of feeling and wants to start life again.

The autobiographical element in these early characters who fail to find Treue is evident. Like them Hofmannsthal has grown up in wealth and luxury so that he does not need to work for a living. He is free to devote himself entirely to mysticism or to art, as many of his colleagues do. His mystic gifts, his superior intellect, and his social standing all tend to isolate him from the rest of society.¹ Often he feels quite removed

from the world and its reality. He writes to Schnitzler: "Ich bin im gewissen Sinn mutterseelenallein, und doch so montiert, daß ich mich manchmal gewaltsam zwingen muß, an die Realität zu glauben."  

Hermann Bahr thinks of Hofmannsthal as "Ein Mensch, der das Gesicht seiner Mutter nicht kennt", so uninvolved does he seem in this world. To Maria Herzfeld Hofmannsthal confesses that as a young man, he, like Claudio, never felt any intense emotion: "als ich ihn hierauf fragte, was denn für ihn ein starkes Erlebnis gewesen sei, antwortete er mir: 'Ich habe bisher nie eine große Freude oder einen großen Schmerz gehabt.'  

Later Hofmannsthal writes that the death of Frau von Wertheimstein in July, 1894, just before the writing of the Terzinen and the Märchen, was "das erste wirklich Schwere, das ich erlebt habe."  

Maria Herzfeld comments further on a quotation from Hofmannsthal's Kreuzwege: "Über diese Epoche (1892-95) läßt er den Helden seiner Kreuzwege sagen: "Ich erlebte nichts und schrieb in ein lichgelb gebundenes Tagebuch hochmütige und enttäuschte Verse, die ziemlich deutlich eine unruhig fröstelnde Seele ausdrückten,

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4 Letter to Fransiska von Wertheimstein, Sept. 11, 1894, Briefe 1890 - 1901, p. 31.
und Sehnsucht nach vielerlei, ohne Zuversicht und mit manierter Scheu vor dem Pathos der lauten heftigen Worte." Dies "ohne Zuversicht" findet sich allzu häufig in den Niederschriften dieser Zeit, um nicht biographischen Wert zu haben, ganz ebenso wie die Worte von der unruhig fröstelnden Seele" des Einsamen mit der Sehnsucht nach vielerlei". 1 Hofmannsthal himself acknowledges the autobiographical significance of the early works when he writes Ad me ipsum of the "Bekenntnischarakter, das furchtbar Autobiographische daran". 2

The autobiographical significance of both the poems and the dramas and Märchen is equally valid although they express such widely divergent social attitudes. The poems reflect Hofmannsthal's avoidance of the social problem in his romantic aestheticism, while the dramas and Märchen show his growing concern for human relationships.

The events of 1894 have, as we have seen, forced upon the young Hofmannsthal a greater awareness of his function, responsibility and needs as a member of human society. This greater awareness cannot however destroy his natural and acquired leanings towards the spiritual isolation of the Romantic or mystic. It can only make the problem of his own dual nature a more acute one for him. His growing concern is reflected in a more serious treatment of the problem of Treue in his works. In the dramas

1 Maria Herzfeld, Loris, p. 32.
2 Aufzeichnungen, p. 240.
written before 1894, characters who fail to find Treue are really none the worse off for it. When Andrea of Gestern realizes his loss of Treue he accepts it almost too eagerly, rather glorying in his new role as a sadder and a wiser man. The deaths of the smith's wife and of Claudio are not harsh punishment for a failure to achieve Treue. For the smith's wife death is the only solution to her unbearable situation in life. Death leads Claudio gently off stage to the strains of violin music. Death here is not much different from the poet's peaceful vision of it in the second Terzinen. In the Märchen, however, written after the events of 1894, the failure of the merchant's son to find Treue results in a terrible extinction. The violence of the ending mirrors Hofmannsthal's growing fear of his own destiny. He is the merchant's son: he has been just as idle, just as unconcerned with other human lives, just as involved in his own pursuit of beauty. Like the merchant's son he has been able to avoid all ugliness in life. Even death is beautiful in his romantic perception of it. Therefore he must fear that his own life is just as meaningless as that of the merchant's son and that his own death will be an equally terrible frustration and horror. Even while realizing all this he is helpless to act against it. The direction of his destiny is beyond his control.

When Claudio begs for a second chance for life, saying that he wants to learn Treue, the only constant value in life,
he seems to think that if he had known the meaning of Treue he would have lived differently. The merchant's son hates his life because it led to such a death, and in this he implies that if he had known in advance the death he would have to suffer for it, he would not have lived as he did. But death shakes his head at Claudio's words and says that man should not try to understand what cannot be understood. In the Märchen there is constantly present a sense of the inevitability of the young man's doom. This same feeling of the inevitability of human destiny is present too in the second and fourth of the Terzinen.

Treue, Hofmannsthal believes, is not something which can be achieved simply through an understanding of its meaning. The individual cannot choose to bring it into his life: it must be a natural development in his destiny. In 1895 Hofmannsthal writes to Edgar Karg: "Schwer genug lernt man sich lieb haben, das wirkliche, ohne daß man sich was vorlügt". The women of the fourth Terzinen are doomed never to find love, although they may well be capable of it. The merchant's son is conscious of his own inability in life. His two attempts to approach other people, first the child in the greenhouse, and then the soldiers, are pitiful in their awkwardness and ignorance of the nature of human relationships: he tries to buy them, as he is able to buy everything else he needs and wants. Failing in his relationships with others, he tries to replace human ties with the sub-

1 Sept. 5, 1895; "Briefe an Edgar Karg", p. 604.
stitutes of art and exoticism and the search for the ideal flower. Yet instinctively he knows that the substitute will never satisfy him.

Similarly Hofmannsthal knows that his aesthetic romanticism, his search for the ideal blue flower, is self-delusion. "Wir sind zu kritisch, um in einer Traumwelt zu leben wie die Romantiker; mit unseren schweren Köpfen brechen wir immer durch das dünne Medium wie schwere Reiter auf Moorboden."¹ he writes in a letter to Richard Beer-Hofmann. Yet it is evident in the poems, particularly in the Terzinen that, for short periods at any rate, he is living in a romantic dream world, that he is completely preoccupied with the cosmic, and with the beautiful. This is most evident in his attitude towards death and transitoriness. In the Terzinen it makes the poet's enjoyment of beauty even more intense and more precious and it brings him closer to the eternal longed-for union with the All. There is no consideration of its social, human aspects.

In the Märchen, however, the horror of the death of the merchant's son is that he dies completely alone. In the moments of truth preceding his death it is of his relationship to other people, of his fear of being alone, that the dying man thinks, not of his merging with the impersonal All.

¹ May 15, 1895; Briefe 1890 - 1901, p. 130.
On the one hand Hofmannsthal is drawn towards society and his place and purpose in it, on the other to a complete loss of his individuality in total surrender to the mystic and the beautiful. In the works of 1894-95 we see him at the crux of the problem, filled with longing for death, the dream, and the beautiful, as in the Terzinen, and at the same time loathing and fearing such a life because of its amorality and isolation as in the Märchen der 672. Nacht. In these works Hofmannsthal expresses the nature of his dichotomy; the works of the succeeding years resolve it in a gradual approach towards complete commitment to the social ethic of Treue.
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