

☐ Contemporary  
Literary Criticism

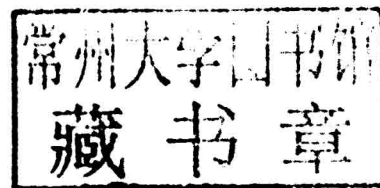
**CLC 383**

Volume 383

# Contemporary Literary Criticism

Criticism of the Works  
of Today's Novelists, Poets, Playwrights,  
Short-Story Writers, Scriptwriters, and  
Other Creative Writers

**Lawrence J. Trudeau**  
EDITOR



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# Contemporary Literary Criticism

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## Preface

Named “one of the twenty-five most distinguished reference titles published during the past twenty-five years” by *Reference Quarterly*, the *Contemporary Literary Criticism* (CLC) series provides readers with critical commentary and general information on more than 3,000 authors from 91 countries now living or who died after December 31, 1999. Before the publication of the first volume of CLC in 1973, there was no ongoing digest monitoring scholarly and popular sources of critical opinion and explication of modern literature. CLC, therefore, has fulfilled an essential need, particularly since the complexity and variety of contemporary literature makes the function of criticism especially necessary to today’s reader.

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CLC is designed to serve as an introduction to authors of the twenty-first century. Volumes published from 1973 through 1999 covered authors who died after December 31, 1959. Since January 2000, the series has covered authors who are living or who died after December 31, 1999; those who died between 1959 and 2000 are now included in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*. There is minimal duplication of content between series.

Authors are selected for inclusion for a variety of reasons, among them the publication or production of a critically acclaimed new work, the reception of a major literary award, revival of interest in past writings, or the adaptation of a literary work to film or television.

Attention is also given to several other groups of writers—authors of considerable public interest—about whose work criticism is often difficult to locate. These include mystery and science-fiction writers, literary and social critics, world authors, and authors who represent particular ethnic groups.

Each CLC volume contains individual essays and reviews selected from hundreds of review periodicals, general magazines, scholarly journals, monographs, and books. Entries include critical evaluations spanning an author’s career from its inception to current commentary. Interviews, feature articles, and other works that offer insight into the author’s works are also presented. Students, teachers, librarians, and researchers will find that the general critical and biographical material in CLC provides them with vital information required to write a term paper, analyze a poem, or lead a book discussion group. In addition, complete bibliographical citations note the original source and all of the information necessary for a term paper footnote or bibliography.

CLC is part of the survey of criticism and world literature that is contained in Gale’s *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism* (TCLC), *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism* (NCLC), *Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800* (LC), *Shakespearean Criticism* (SC), and *Classical and Medieval Literature Criticism* (CMLC).

### Organization of the Book

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- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.
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- Reprinted **Criticism** is arranged chronologically in each entry to provide a useful perspective on changes in critical evaluation over time. The critic's name and the date of composition or publication of the critical work are given at the beginning of each piece of criticism. Unsigned criticism is preceded by the title of the source in which it appeared. All titles by the author featured in the text are printed in boldface type. Footnotes are reprinted at the end of each essay or excerpt. In the case of excerpted criticism, only those footnotes that pertain to the excerpted texts are included. Criticism in topic entries is arranged chronologically under a variety of subheadings to facilitate the study of different aspects of the topic.
- A complete **Bibliographical Citation** of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism. Citations conform to recommendations set forth in the Modern Language Association of America's *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed. (2009).
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- Whenever possible, a recent **Author Interview** accompanies each entry.
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# Ilse Aichinger

## 1921-

Austrian playwright, short-story writer, poet, novelist, essayist, dialog writer, and autobiographer.

### INTRODUCTION

Coming to prominence in the years following the end of World War II, Ilse Aichinger is known for works exploring the existential ramifications of the atrocities committed during that war. Her first book and only novel to date, *Die größere Hoffnung* (1948; published as *Herod's Children*), details the experiences of Viennese Jews during the Nazi takeover of Austria, and much of her subsequent work examines—sometimes directly, but more often obliquely—the political and cultural legacy of Nazism and the Holocaust. Dense, surreal, and frequently fabulistic, her writing, often compared to the work of Franz Kafka and absurdist playwrights Samuel Beckett and Eugène Ionesco, has a visionary, parable-like quality. Her experimental use of language, motivated in part by her skepticism regarding the capacity of linguistic expression to convey objective reality, has prompted frequent comparisons to such modernist authors as James Joyce. Never particularly accessible, Aichinger's style became increasingly abstruse as her career progressed, a fact that likely diminished the popularity of her writing, much of which remains unavailable in English. Nonetheless, her works have won numerous literary awards and have attracted considerable scholarly attention.

### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Aichinger was born in Vienna on 1 November 1921 to Berta Aichinger (née Kremer), a physician, and Ludwig Aichinger, a schoolteacher. Although Berta was Catholic, her Jewish background made her a frequent target of anti-Semitic discrimination. At some point after the birth of Aichinger and her twin sister, Helga, Ludwig abandoned the family in order to protect his career. Aichinger was raised in large part by her Jewish maternal grandparents and attended various Catholic boarding schools in Vienna. Following the arrival of the Nazis, Berta was barred from practicing medicine and compelled to work in a factory. Aichinger was permitted to complete her secondary education in 1939 but was thereafter denied admittance to medical school and forced to work in a pharmacy. Her sister, Helga, succeeded in immigrating to England, but Aichinger remained behind with the rest of the family.

Despite her Jewish heritage, Berta was protected from deportation and internment by virtue of her guardianship of a

half-gentile minor. However, no such security was afforded to other Jewish members of the family, many of whom—including Aichinger's maternal grandmother—died in concentration camps. Berta's protection ended when Aichinger attained her majority in 1942, but both women managed to survive the next few years, during which time Aichinger involved herself in anti-Fascist political activism and began to take notes for what eventually became *Herod's Children*. Following the end of the war, Aichinger studied medicine at the University of Vienna, but she quit after five semesters in order to concentrate on writing. Her first publication, a 1945 essay titled “Das vierte Tor” (may be translated as “The Fourth Gate”), is often cited as the first work of Austrian literature to address the concentration camps. In an essay from the following year, “Aufruf zum Mißtrauen” (may be translated as “Call for Distrust”), Aichinger discussed the complicity of Austrian society in the horrors of the war and made a case for soul-searching and self-doubt.

When the semiautobiographical *Herod's Children* was published in 1948, Austrian society was not especially eager to dwell on the persecution of its Jewish population during the war. Consequently, the novel was not popularly successful and elicited a mixed critical response, though it was later regarded as a major work of postwar Austrian literature. Over the next few years, Aichinger worked at a publishing house, assisted in the founding of the Ulm School of Design, and participated in the avant-garde German literary association Gruppe 47, which awarded her a prize in 1952 for her short story “Spiegelgeschichte” (published as “Story in a Mirror”).

In 1953, Aichinger married poet Günter Eich, with whom she had two children. Over the following decades, she traveled frequently and wrote copiously, sometimes in collaboration with Eich, consolidating her reputation for innovation and experimentation with poetry, short stories, radio plays, and autobiographical sketches. She continued to produce new works following Eich's death in 1972, though her output diminished significantly in the later decades of the twentieth century. Although she has largely retreated from public life, Aichinger published several semiautobiographical works and prose collections in the early years of the twenty-first century.

### MAJOR WORKS

Central to Aichinger's literary reputation is *Herod's Children*, a complex tale about the persecution of Jews in wartime Vienna. Written in a lyrical and self-conscious

style, the novel eschews the strict realism characterizing much Holocaust prose in favor of a more abstract and metaphorical approach. The work's child protagonist, Ellen, is the daughter of a Jewish mother and a Nazi father, and the narrative consists of a series of discrete episodes detailing her relationships with her Jewish friends and the tribulations they face under the Nazi regime. Much of the novel's emotional effect derives from the juxtaposition of the children's naïveté and the bleakness of their surroundings. In the course of the narrative, Ellen is rejected by her father, assists her grandmother in committing suicide in order to avoid deportation, and performs plays with her friends in a Jewish cemetery, where they have gone because there is nowhere else they will be accepted. At the end of the novel, Ellen is killed by an explosion, and many of her friends are sent to concentration camps.

Although *Herod's Children* is probably Aichinger's best-known work, her renown depends at least as much on the repute of her numerous shorter pieces, which are generally more experimental and enigmatic than the comparatively straightforward novel. Among the most famous stories included in her first collection of short fiction, *Rede unter dem Galgen* (1952; published as *The Bound Man and Other Stories*), is "Der Gefesselte" (published as "The Bound Man"), which is about a man who wakes up to find himself tied up with ropes. He eventually learns to move around within his confines and achieves considerable success as a circus attraction. When he is freed from the ropes at the end of the story, he feels terrified and directionless. "Story in a Mirror," from the same volume, tells the life story in reverse chronological order of a young woman who dies following a botched abortion, beginning with a description of her funeral and moving backwards through the unhappy events of her life to conclude with her birth. Among Aichinger's most surreal and Kafkaesque narratives is her radio drama *Knöpfe* (1953; may be translated as *Buttons*), a fable of conformity, exploitation, and the loss of identity in which women working in a button factory are transformed into buttons.

As her career progressed, much of Aichinger's literary output grew less accessible. Her prose less often took the form of conventional short stories, tending instead toward absurdist dialogs and prose poems. The increasingly gnomic quality of Aichinger's later work has been ascribed in part to her growing sense of the inadequacy of language as a means of communication, a theme summed up in the title piece of her prose collection *Schlechte Wörter* (1976; may be translated as *Inferior Words*). The autobiographical collection *Kleist, Moos, Fasane* (1987; may be translated as *Kleist, Moss, Pheasants*) is a comparatively lucid—though still somewhat ambiguous—late work in which Aichinger relates memories from her childhood in Vienna. Starting in the 1990s, Aichinger's style became increasingly forthright. She published critical and semiautobiographical pieces in *Kurzschlüsse* (2001; may be translated as *Short Circuits*), *Film und Verhängnis* (2001; may be

translated as *Film and Fate*), and *Subtexte* (2006; may be translated as *Subtexts*) that explore the experience of persecution in a concrete and direct manner.

## CRITICAL RECEPTION

Although Aichinger remains a relatively obscure figure among English-language readers, she is regarded as an author of considerable stature in German-language literature and has garnered numerous German and Austrian literary awards, including the 1971 Nelly Sachs Prize, the 1975 Roswitha Medal, and the 1995 Austrian State Prize for European Literature. Despite this success, Aichinger is not universally popular. The mannered style and multilayered content of *Herod's Children* has sometimes been criticized as artificial and lacking in historical immediacy, while the esoteric quality of much of her short work has limited her audience.

Much scholarly writing on Aichinger's work focuses on her use of specific literary techniques, especially those relating to interpretive ambiguity and structural innovation. W. Michael Resler (1979; see Further Reading) offered an outline of the unusual narrative chronology of "Story in a Mirror" for the benefit of instructors wishing to include the story in German-language courses. Sabine I. Gölz (1992) analyzed the metaphorical uses of buttons in Aichinger's radio play *Buttons* and Ingeborg Bachmann's 1961 short story "Ein Wildermuth." Catherine Purdie (1998; see Further Reading) explored the thematic implications of the motif of playing children in *Herod's Children*, drawing connections between the children's games and broader issues of human striving.

Aichinger's skepticism regarding the communicative potential of language is a common topic of critical discussion. Joanna M. Ratych (1987) emphasized this attitude in her introductory overview of Aichinger's work, and Andrea Reiter (1996) elucidated the relationships among Aichinger's modernist literary approach, her distrust of linguistic expression, and her tendency toward ambiguity. Discussing works from across Aichinger's career, Brigid Haines (1998; see Further Reading) investigated the author's employment of various literary techniques that establish a sense of interpretive openness. Marko Pajević (2009) offered a detailed analysis of the 1959 poem "Gebirgsrand" (published as "Mountain Crest") as the foundation for an examination of the political dimensions of Aichinger's ethos of self-doubt, as expressed in her early essay "Call for Distrust."

Scholars have also discussed Aichinger's work in relation to that of other authors, notably Kafka, whom she claimed not to have read until well into her own career. Gertrud Bauer Pickar (1990) scrutinized Kafka's influence—particularly his handling of the grotesque—on the work of such postwar German-language authors as Aichinger,



Martin Walser, and Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Dagmar C. G. Lorenz (2012) also noted various connections between Kafka and Aichinger, analyzing her ambivalent relationship to Kafka's legacy in the context of her conflicted thoughts on her own Jewish identity in the postwar years. Hillary Hope Herzog (2011) examined the development of Aichinger's approach to literature and considered her depiction of Jewish life during and after the war in the context of Austrian literature in general.

James Overholtzer

## PRINCIPAL WORKS

"Das vierte Tor" [may be translated as "The Fourth Gate"]. *Wiener Kurier* 1 Sept. 1945: 3. (Essay)

"Aufruf zum Mißtrauen" [may be translated as "Call for Distrust"]. *Plan* 1.7 (1946): 588. (Essay)

*Die größere Hoffnung: Roman* [published as *Herod's Children*]. Vienna: Bermann-Fischer, 1948. (Novel)

\**Rede unter dem Galgen: Erzählungen* [may be translated as *Speech under the Gallows: Stories*]. Vienna: Jungbrunnen, 1952. Pub. as *Der Gefesselte: Erzählungen* [published as *The Bound Man and Other Stories*]. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1953. (Short stories)

*Knöpfe* [may be translated as *Buttons*]. Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk/Süddeutscher Rundfunk. 16 Dec. 1953. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1955. (Radio play)

*Wo ich wohne: Erzählungen, Gedichte, Dialoge* [may be translated as *Where I Live: Stories, Poems, Dialogs*]. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1954. (Dialogs, poetry, and short stories)

*Zu keiner Stunde* [may be translated as *At No Time*]. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1957. Enl. ed. *Zu keiner Stunde: Szenen und Dialoge* [may be translated as *At No Time: Scenes and Dialogs*]. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1980. (Dialogs and drama)

*Französische Botschaft* [may be translated as *French Embassy*]. Bayerischer Rundfunk. 20 May 1960. (Radio play)

*Seegeister* [may be translated as *Sea Ghosts*]. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1960. (Prose)

*Weißes Chrysanthemen* [may be translated as *White Chrysanthemums*]. Norddeutscher Rundfunk. 4 Jan. 1961. (Radio play)

*Besuch im Pfarrhaus: Ein Hörspiel; Drei Dialoge* [may be translated as *Visit to the Rectory: Radio Play; Three*

*Dialogs*]. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1961. (Dialogs and radio play)

*Besuch im Pfarrhaus* [may be translated as *Visit to the Rectory*]. Norddeutscher Rundfunk. 16 Mar. 1962. (Radio play)

*Eliza, Eliza: Erzählungen* [may be translated as *Eliza, Eliza: Stories*]. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1965. (Short stories)

*Nachmittag in Ostende* [may be translated as *Afternoon in Ostend*]. Norddeutscher Rundfunk/Süddeutscher Rundfunk. 31 Mar. 1968. (Radio play)

*Die Schwestern Jouet* [may be translated as *The Jouet Sisters*]. Bayerischer Rundfunk. 18 July 1969. (Radio play)

*Auckland: 4 Hörspiele* [may be translated as *Auckland: Four Radio Plays*]. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1969. (Radio plays)

*Auckland*. Norddeutscher Rundfunk. 19 Apr. 1970. (Radio play)

*Nachricht vom Tag: Erzählungen* [may be translated as *Message of the Day: Stories*]. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1970. (Short stories)

*Dialoge, Erzählungen, Gedichte* [may be translated as *Dialogs, Stories, Poems*]. Ed. Heinz F. Schafroth. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1971. (Dialogs, poems, and short stories)

*Gedichte* [may be translated as *Poems*]. By Günter Eich. Ed. Ilse Aichinger. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973. (Poetry)

"Der letzte Tag" [may be translated as "The Last Day"]. With Eich. *Gesammelte Werke* [may be translated as *Collected Works*]. By Eich. Ed. Aichinger. Vol. 3. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973. (Radio play)

*Gare Maritime* [may be translated as *Harbor Station*]. Österreichischer Rundfunk. 1976. (Radio play)

†*Schlechte Wörter* [may be translated as *Inferior Words*]. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1976. (Prose)

*Meine Sprache und ich: Erzählungen* [may be translated as *My Language and I: Stories*]. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1978. (Short stories)

‡*Versenkter Rat: Gedichte* [may be translated as *Free Advice: Poetry*]. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1978. (Poetry)

*Spiegelgeschichte: Erzählungen und Dialoge* [may be translated as *Story in a Mirror: Stories and Dialogs*]. Leipzig: Kiepenheuer, 1979. (Dialogs and short stories)

*Kleist, Moos, Fasane* [may be translated as *Kleist, Moss, Pheasants*]. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1987. (Autobiography)

*Aufzeichnungen, 1950-1985* [may be translated as *Notebooks, 1950-1985*]. Ed. Albert Kapr and Roland Opitz. Leipzig: Reclam, 1991. (Notebooks)

*Werke* [may be translated as *Works*]. Ed. Richard Reichen-sperger. 9 vols. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1991. (Autobiography, dialogs, essays, novel, poetry, radio plays, and short stories)

*Das Verhalten auf sinkenden Schiffen: Reden zum Erich-Fried-Preis 1997* [may be translated as *The Behavior on Sinking Ships: Erich Fried Prize Speech*]. With Gert Jonke. Salzburg: Residenz, 1997. (Speech)

*Film und Verhängnis: Blitzlichter auf ein Leben* [may be translated as *Film and Fate: Flashlights on a Life*]. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2001. (Autobiography and reviews)

*Kurzschlüsse: Wien* [may be translated as *Short Circuits: Vienna*]. Ed. Simone Fässler. Vienna: Korrespondenzen, 2001. (Prose)

*Unglaubliche Reisen* [may be translated as *Unbelievable Journeys*]. Ed. Fässler and Franz Hammerbacher. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2005. (Prose)

*Subtexte* [may be translated as *Subtexts*]. Vienna: Korrespondenzen, 2006. (Prose)

*Es muss gar nichts bleiben: Interviews, 1952-2005* [may be translated as *Nothing Needs to Remain: Interviews, 1952-2005*]. Ed. Fässler. Vienna: Korrespondenzen, 2011. (Interviews)

### Principal English Translations

§*The Bound Man and Other Stories*. Trans. Eric Mosbacher. London: Secker and Warburg, 1955. Print. Trans. of *Rede unter dem Galgen: Erzählungen*.

*Herod's Children*. Trans. Cornelia Schaeffer. New York: Atheneum, 1963. Print. Trans. of *Die größere Hoffnung*.

*Ilse Aichinger: Selected Stories and Dialogues*. Ed. and trans. James C. Alldridge. Oxford: Pergamon, 1966. Print.

||*Ilse Aichinger: Selected Poetry and Prose*. Ed. and trans. Allen H. Chappel. Durango: Logbridge-Rhodes, 1983. Print.

\*Includes "Der Gefesselte" [published as "The Bound Man"] and "Spiegelgeschichte" [published as "Story in a Mirror"].

†Includes "Schlechte Wörter" [published as "Inferior Words"].

‡Includes "Gebirgsrand" [published as "Mountain Crest"], originally published in *Neue Rundschau* 70.4 (1959): 635.

§Includes the translations "The Bound Man" and "Story in a Mirror."

||Includes the translations "Inferior Words" and "Mountain Crest."

## CRITICISM

### Carol B. Bedwell (essay date 1965)

SOURCE: Bedwell, Carol B. "Who Is the Bound Man? Towards an Interpretation of Ilse Aichinger's "Der Gefesselte." *German Quarterly* 38.1 (1965): 30-7. Print.

[In the following essay, Bedwell offers a close reading of "The Bound Man," arguing that the story presents a condensed portrait of the lifetime of an artist. Emphasizing the bound man's dependence on limitation, Bedwell suggests that the scene in which the circus proprietor's wife cuts the ropes illustrates that "love disarms the artist, exposes him to a life for which he is unprepared, robs him of his outstanding achievement."]

Ilse Aichinger's short story "Der Gefesselte,"<sup>1</sup> like many of her stories, presents us with an allegory both intriguing and puzzling. At first reading it seems to be so bafflingly paradoxical as to defy interpretation. Who is the Bound Man? What is the significance of the rope which both hampers him and endows him with superior power? What is the meaning of his short-lived success in the circus and his sudden weakness and defeat when the rope is cut?

The events of the story are easily summarized. A man awakens to the realization that he has been robbed of his few possessions and bound up, though not so tightly as to prevent movement. With difficulty he manages to master a gait so efficient that he is discovered and exhibited by a circus proprietor. He is a tremendous success, but he realizes that his season with the circus must end forever with the passing of summer; his clothes will eventually wear out, his practice of bathing by jumping into the river will have to stop, and if he once allows the rope to be untied, it can never be replaced in exactly the same manner. The circus proprietor's wife becomes fond of the Bound Man and they spend long hours together in quiet conversation. One autumn day a wolf who has escaped from the circus attacks the Bound Man, who throttles it with ease. The people cannot believe in this feat and insist on a second encounter, this time with a caged wolf. But as the Bound Man turns willingly toward the wolf, the circus proprietor's wife cuts the rope; the man, now unbound, feels suddenly weak, and realizing that the whole undertaking is now futile in any case, shoots the wolf, takes flight, and hides from a pursuing crowd. Dawn brings a changed world where new snow has fallen.

How are we to interpret this tale? In Aichinger's stories, as in Kafka's, the reader must be prepared to enter a different world, a world whose superficial divergence from what we know to be real only serves to emphasize what we feel to be true. It is clear that these characters, more convincing as symbols than as human beings, and these events, more intriguing than credible, are not meant to be taken literally.



Let us seek beneath the figure of the Bound Man which raises so many questions in the reader's mind another image which may answer them.

The concrete details given in the first paragraphs form a picture so complete and so convincing that the reader is tempted to take it at face value. The man awakens, roused by sunlight and bothered by gnats which he tries vainly to whisk away, thus discovering that he is bound. He tries to get at his knife, but it is gone; so are his money, his coat and his shoes. He makes repeated efforts to stand up, but finally lies back in exhaustion.

In order to approach the basic meaning in these beginning paragraphs, it is best to disregard surface detail (the robbery, the rope, the gnats) and express these happenings in the broadest of terms. Taken in their essence, these paragraphs speak of the dawning of consciousness and the discovery of limitation; that is to say, birth. And birth is suggested in many ways. The man is awakened by an unpleasantly bright light against which he has to shut his eyes. This is his first sensation, but it is a strong one and one that remains with him for a time. His first motions, too, are like an infant's; he discovers that he can move his arms freely, though not, at first, very effectively. He tries first a fluttering upward movement of the hands (an attempt to whisk away gnats) and then a downward grasping motion (to feel for his knife). But the process of birth is not completed until the third paragraph. According to the facts of the story, the man's efforts are devoted to trying to stand: "Er zog die Knie an, soweit es möglich war, berührte mit den Händen das frische Gras und schnellte sich hoch" (3). We cannot accept this situation at face value. An adult, bound about the legs and trying to stand up, would hardly adopt this fetal position; the natural impulse would be to roll over and brace the arms and toes against the earth, as the man indeed does in the section which follows. Furthermore, these repeated thrusts of the body are accompanied by pain and blood, much more blood than would seem to be consonant with the loose kind of binding up described here. The pain and the blood increase with the man's efforts; then, suddenly, his struggles cease.

Sleep divides these paragraphs dealing with the man's awakening, stripped of possessions and unacquainted even with his own limitations, from the next ones describing his learning process which ends in mastery of the situation. The exterior facts are as follows: the man braces himself, stands up, and finally manages to evolve a measured gait that serves to take him on his way toward the next village. Despite the thistles which he must hop over, the fear of being observed and laughed at, and a bad fall, he feels in control of himself and keeps up his even, hampered pace until evening.

In this second phase of the man's awakening, the resemblance of his situation to that of a baby is directly expressed in the first of these paragraphs. "Dann hatten sie ihn

hierher gelegt, wie Mütter ihre Säuglinge sorglich unter die Büsche legen, wenn sie aufs Feld gehen" (4). Certainly the Bound Man is as helpless as an infant. But he is no longer distressed by sunlight, and no further mention is made of pain and blood. The effort and the discomfort of birth are past. Now he can devote himself more calmly to solving the problems which confront him. In doing so, he repeats after this second awakening the progression of steps made by a baby learning to stand; he first sits, then, rolling over, he rises to his knees and stands upright. He is beset by dangers, from objects (the thistles), from people (possible observers), and from himself (the fall, due to his own ineptness). In this fine categorization of the threats that surround the developing human being, contact with things comes first, sensitivity to ridicule second and the setbacks of overambitious experimentation third. After these perils have been overcome there is a smooth period in which the man can savor his mastery of the situation.

A curious passage follows, in which the Bound Man feels that he is traveling at a velocity no motorcycle could equal, or else that the land is passing him swiftly as a river might rush past a swimmer going against the current. He sees all sorts of things in this visionary river: bushes, trees, grass and flowers. Finally everything is submerged but the man and the sky. The moon has risen, illuminating the path ahead, and the Bound Man continues along with his quick, measured steps. Before midnight he lies down to sleep.

What causes the sensation of speed? Because our century is so conscious of the relationship between speed and time, it is possible to substitute one for the other. Events which have occurred during a much longer span of time than those previously related are compressed into a short paragraph; none of the action is lost, but time is telescoped. The man's whole adolescence is indicated here, but only in its essence: the man, no longer occupied with his own problems, is absorbed in observation of all the things of this earth. Hunger seems to speed him on ("Der Hunger machte ihn leicht," p. 5); is this the hunger of a maturing individual for a wider acquaintance with this environment? At the end of this section the man's field of vision is broadened and illuminated. He is ready now to set off along the path that will eventually lead him to a career. Sleep terminates this epoch of adolescence as it did that of childhood. It is worthy of note that the only double spacing between paragraphs in the entire story occurs here. This pause concludes the man's developmental phase. The prelude is over.

Before discussing the progress of the Bound Man's circus career, it may be best to consider the symbolic meaning of the rope. If the events in this short story encompass a human lifetime, then it is a lifetime entirely dominated by this rope. The rope is primarily an obstacle, but one whose influence on the man changes as he matures. It is at first an embarrassing and unwelcome hindrance, later a questionable blessing, finally a symbol of the achievements of a lifetime. The man's earliest efforts are directed toward