

Twentieth-Century
Literary Criticism

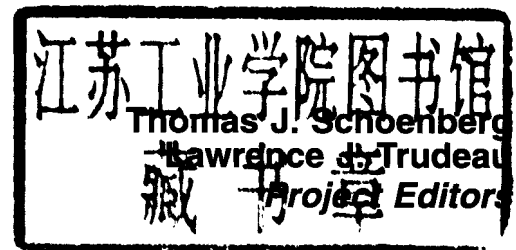
TCLC

192

Volume 192

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

**Criticism of the
Works of Novelists, Poets, Playwrights,
Short Story Writers, and Other Creative Writers
Who Lived between 1900 and 1999,
from the First Published Critical
Appraisals to Current Evaluations**



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Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism, Vol. 192

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Preface

Since its inception *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism* (TCLC) has been purchased and used by some 10,000 school, public, and college or university libraries. TCLC has covered more than 1000 authors, representing over 60 nationalities and nearly 50,000 titles. No other reference source has surveyed the critical response to twentieth-century authors and literature as thoroughly as TCLC. In the words of one reviewer, “there is nothing comparable available.” TCLC “is a gold mine of information—dates, pseudonyms, biographical information, and criticism from books and periodicals—which many librarians would have difficulty assembling on their own.”

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TCLC is designed to serve as an introduction to authors who died between 1900 and 1999 and to the most significant interpretations of these author’s works. Volumes published from 1978 through 1999 included authors who died between 1900 and 1960. The great poets, novelists, short story writers, playwrights, and philosophers of the period are frequently studied in high school and college literature courses. In organizing and reprinting the vast amount of critical material written on these authors, TCLC helps students develop valuable insight into literary history, promotes a better understanding of the texts, and sparks ideas for papers and assignments. Each entry in TCLC presents a comprehensive survey on an author’s career or an individual work of literature and provides the user with a multiplicity of interpretations and assessments. Such variety allows students to pursue their own interests; furthermore, it fosters an awareness that literature is dynamic and responsive to many different opinions.

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A TCLC entry consists of the following elements:

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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.
- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication date of each work is given. In the case of foreign authors whose

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- A complete **Bibliographical Citation** of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism. Source citations in the Literary Criticism Series follow University of Chicago Press style, as outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).
- Critical essays are prefaced by brief **Annotations** explicating each piece.
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An alphabetical **Title Index** accompanies each volume of *TCLC*. Listings of titles by authors covered in the given volume are followed by the author's name and the corresponding page numbers where the titles are discussed. English translations of foreign titles and variations of titles are cross-referenced to the title under which a work was originally published. Titles of novels, dramas, nonfiction books, and poetry, short story, or essay collections are printed in italics, while individual poems, short stories, and essays are printed in roman type within quotation marks.

In response to numerous suggestions from librarians, Thomson Gale also produces a paperbound edition of the *TCLC* cumulative title index. This annual cumulation, which alphabetically lists all titles reviewed in the series, is available to all customers. Additional copies of this index are available upon request. Librarians and patrons will welcome this separate index; it saves shelf space, is easy to use, and is recyclable upon receipt of the next edition.

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Ingeborg Bachmann

1926-1973

Austrian poet, short story writer, novelist, critic, librettist, and playwright.

The following entry provides an overview of Bachmann's life and works. For additional information on her career, see *CLC*, Volume 69.

INTRODUCTION

Bachmann is widely considered one of the most significant German-language writers of the mid-twentieth century. Although she began her career as a poet, Bachmann later turned to other genres, especially fiction, to interpret the trauma, guilt, and anxiety of the post-World War II era. She achieved immediate fame and won numerous literary awards for her first volumes of poetry, *Die gestundete Zeit* (1953; *Mortgaged Time*) and *Anrufung des großen Bären* (1956; *Invocation of the Great Bear*). Since her death Bachmann has received more critical attention and recognition for her fiction. Her unfinished novel cycle, *Todesarten*, has been especially praised for its treatment of such issues as war, oppression, identity, and language, as well as its psychological study of the female experience and perspective. Because of her innovative narrative techniques, conceptual complexity, and linguistic dexterity, Bachmann has been ranked among some of the most important modern literary figures writing in German, and critics have acknowledged her influence on a number of her contemporaries, including Christa Wolf, Günter Grass, and Thomas Bernhard.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Bachmann was born June 25, 1926, in Klagenfurt, Austria, where she lived with her mother, Olga Haas Bachmann, and her father, Mathias Bachmann, a high school teacher. Bachmann attended coeducational schools for much of her childhood. In 1938 she enrolled in the all-girl's Ursuline High School, where she first began writing poems, stories, and plays. After graduating in 1944 Bachmann attended a pedagogical institute in Klagenfurt until the end of World War II, and then began studying philosophy at universities in Innsbruck, Graz, and Vienna. In 1949, at the University of Vienna, she completed a doctoral thesis on the reception of Martin Heidegger's philosophy of existentialism. From 1951 to

1953 she worked as scriptwriter and editor for the radio network "Rot-Weiß-Rot," or "Red-White-Red," which was named for the colors of the Austrian flag. In 1952 Bachmann's first radio play, *Ein Geschäft mit Träumen*, was produced. She later produced *Die Zikaden* in 1954 and her best known radio play, *Der gute Gott von Manhattan* (*The Good God of Manhattan*) in 1958; the latter work won the Radio Play Prize of the Blind War Veterans.

Bachmann's literary career was firmly established, however, with the publication of *Mortgaged Time* in 1953. The volume of poems won the prestigious Gruppe 47 prize in 1953, and she experienced an almost instant celebrity status. In 1954 she appeared in a cover story in the German news magazine *Der Spiegel*. In 1956 Bachmann published her second volume of poetry, *Invocation of the Great Bear*, which won the Rudolf-Alexander Schröder Foundation literary prize the following year. Bachmann was also awarded membership in the German Academy for Language and Literature, in Darmstadt, Germany, as a result of her poetic success, and she became the first to deliver the Frankfurt Lectures on Poetics at the University of Frankfurt. Delivered between 1959 and 1960, the five lectures addressed various topics, including utopian literature, the narrative voice, the role of the writer, and problems associated with literary translation. In 1961 Bachmann was awarded the literary prize of the Association of German Critics, an honor comparable to the Pulitzer Prize in the United States.

During the 1960s, Bachmann collaborated with composer Hans Werner Henze on a number of projects, most notably the librettos *Der Prinz von Homburg* (1960) and *Der junge Lord* (1965; *The Young Milord*). Also during this time, she published her first collection of stories, *Das dreißigste Jahr* (1961; *The Thirtieth Year*). Bachmann lived in several different European countries during the 1950s and 1960s. While romantically involved with Swiss writer Max Frisch from 1958 to 1962, she lived alternately in Rome and Zurich. After their relationship ended, she moved to Berlin, where she lived until 1965, and then on to Rome, where she stayed until her death.

During the late 1960s Bachmann began writing her novel cycle, *Todesarten* ("Ways of Death"), a work meant to explore the different forms of death women suffer in a patriarchal society. *Malina*, published in

1971, was the only novel of the sequence completed during her lifetime. In 1972 Bachmann released her second short story collection, *Simultan* (*Three Paths to the Lake*). Bachmann left much of her work unfinished, including the *Todesarten* cycle, when she died on October 17, 1973, after sustaining third-degree burns in an accidental fire in her Rome apartment. Two incomplete novels intended for the novel cycle, *Der Fall Franza* and *Requiem für Fanny Goldmann*, were published together in fragmentary form in 1979.

MAJOR WORKS

Bachmann's first poetry collection, *Mortgaged Time*, consists of twenty-three formally innovative poems, all of which deal, in one way or another, with problems of postwar Austria, such as fascism, reconstruction, and the Holocaust. In the opening line of one of her best known poems, "Alle Tage," Bachmann voices a theme that would come to dominate her later writings: "Der Krieg wird nicht mehr erklärt, sondern fortgesetzt" ("War is no longer declared, only continued"). The scarcity of time is another recurring theme in the collection, and many of the poems are driven by a sense of urgency, calling the reader to action or careful vigilance. The reader is cautioned to watch the horizon in "Ausfahrt," which employs the familiar voyage imagery of a ship going out to sea but creates a sense of foreboding by having the ship leave at night, instead of daybreak. Bachmann also employs water imagery in her second collection of poetry, *Invocation of the Great Bear*, but relies on mythical imagery as well. For example, in the title poem of the collection, shepherds converse with the constellation the "Great Bear" and ask him to come down from the sky to earth. Whereas the poems in *Mortgaged Time* herald self-reliance and individual action, those in *Invocation of the Great Bear* depict a flight into childhood and fantasy. The latter collection also explores themes of death, destruction, and identity. In the book's final poem, "Keine Delikatessen," Bachmann questions the adequacy of poetry and language, a theme she would revisit in later works.

Bachmann's short story collection *Three Paths to the Lake* explores the lives of five women in Austria in the 1960s. Whether they are hiding from society or desperately moving about from place to place, each of the five protagonists suffers an existential crisis while trying to survive an inadequate and unfulfilling life. The first story of the collection, "Simultan" ("Simultaneous"; also translated as "Word for Word"), addresses a common theme in Bachmann's work. Nadja, the protagonist, is an interpreter who encounters problems communicating with language and, as a result, begins to fear the loss of her own identity. In "Das Gebell," or "The Barking," Frau Jordon is increasingly menaced by the

barking of a nonexistent dog. Her son, Leo, is a psychiatrist who studies concentration camp survivors but remains emotionally detached in his personal and romantic relationships. Miranda, the nearsighted protagonist of "Ihr glücklichen Augen" ("Eyes to Wonder"), refuses to wear glasses, and she sustains cuts and bruises at the close of the story when she walks into a revolving glass door. In "Probleme, Probleme" ("Problems, Problems"), Beatrix hides behind increasing amounts of makeup and sleeps through much of her life. Elisabeth, the protagonist of "Drei Wege zum See" ("Three Paths to the Lake"), is thwarted while hiking along three paths and never reaches her destination. While facing obstacles along the paths, she ruminates on the fruitless relationships in her life.

Bachmann explores the far-reaching and destructive effects of fascist behavior in her unfinished novel cycle, *Todesarten*. As in *Three Paths to the Lake*, she again focuses on the subtle acts of violence perpetrated against women, seeking to expose those unnoticed and unpunished "crimes" that have long-lasting and irrecoverable damaging effects. In the only complete novel of the cycle, *Malina*, Bachmann reveals through thoughts, letters, conversations, and dreams the quiet disintegration of her protagonist, who ultimately fails in her attempt to express her artistic vision in a male-dominated society. Each of the three chapters of the novel depicts the effect of a destructive relationship, seen through the narrator's experience. The first chapter, "Glücklich mit Ivan" ("Happy with Ivan"), relates the narrator's infatuation with her Hungarian lover, Ivan. The second chapter, "Der dritte Mann" ("The Third Man"), consists of the heroine's nightmares and exposes the pain and suffering of her past, when she was abused by her father. In the third chapter, "Von letzten Dingen" ("Of Last Things"), the narrator disappears completely into her male ego, Malina, and the book ends with her symbolic death, as she slips into a crack in the wall.

The destruction of female identity is also the theme of the posthumously published novel fragment, *Der Fall Franza*, which was intended to be the first book of the *Todesarten* cycle. But in this work the destruction of the protagonist, Franza, is both physical and psychological. Her husband, Leopold Jordan, first introduced in *Three Paths to the Lake*, is a well-known psychiatrist who decides to use his wife as a case study for his book on concentration camp survivors. Franza is psychologically destroyed by the experience, and she suffers a nervous breakdown. Afterwards she travels to Egypt with her brother. While there, she is raped by a white man and dies beating her head against a pyramid, in an effort to express her rage and sense of violation. In *Requiem für Fanny Goldmann* the protagonist is an actress who suffers humiliation when her lover, a playwright named Anton Marek, exposes details from her private life in a book. She becomes an alcoholic and

eventually dies from a lung infection. Bachmann initially conceived of the Goldmann narrative as a short story, but she later decided to expand it and include it as the second novel of her cycle. Though incomplete, the *Todesarten* novel cycle is regarded by many critics as the major work in Bachmann's canon.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

Despite her celebrity status as a poet early in her career, Bachmann was often misinterpreted and underappreciated as a serious artist throughout her life. Most commentators focused on the details of her personal life and, while acknowledging her striking language and the intricacies of her verse, more often paid tribute to her public image as a shy, awkward poet. This was especially the case after Bachmann ceased writing poetry and concentrated on fiction. This linking of Bachmann's life and her work was intensified after the nature of her death became public. In fact, many critics observed similarities between her death and that of the suffering, marginalized heroines in her fiction. Bachmann's later work also suffered as a result of critical misinterpretation. Her struggle against fascism—not simply the overtly political form but the fascism of everyday life in a hostile world—was overlooked and lost in the myth of the timid and suffering intellectual woman that critics and readers preferred to see. Despite the timeliness and seriousness of her art, especially her later fiction, commentators continued to focus on the intricacies and subtleties of her language, a carryover from her early success as a poet.

During the 1980s Bachmann was discovered by a new generation of critics, especially feminist scholars, who saw in her themes of female isolation and oppression an important contribution to women's literature of the decades after World War II. Critics particularly noted Bachmann's rejection of male-centered language. Ritta Jo Horsley has observed that "in her time, isolated from a women's movement, Bachmann did not have a language adequate to represent experience so long ignored and denied by the dominant culture. Yet by breaking the silence, she had taken a step toward creation of that reality." While early critical assessments of Bachmann's fiction often depicted her work as too dense and overly influenced by poetry and philosophy, later scholars have praised the complexity of her prose writings and noted their formal and stylistic innovations. Karen Achberger has argued that Bachmann's prose "is informed by a tension between surface and subtext." According to the critic, the "subliminal world" occasionally rises to the surface and expresses itself in dreams, hallucinations, poetic images, analogies, and allusions. Recent commentators have also discussed the interconnectedness of Bachmann's poetry and later prose writings, particu-

larly the recurrence throughout her work of basic themes, such as oppression, the persistence of war, the limits of language, and the struggle for an authentic identity.

PRINCIPAL WORKS

- Ein Geschäft mit Träumen* (radio play) 1952
Die gestundete Zeit [*Mortgaged Time*] (poetry) 1953
Die Zikaden (radio play) 1954
Anrufung des großen Bären [*Invocation of the Great Bear*] (poetry) 1956
Der gute Gott von Manhattan [*The Good God of Manhattan*] (radio play) 1958
Der Prinz von Homburg [with Hans Werner Henze] (libretto) 1960
Das dreißigste Jahr [*The Thirtieth Year*] (short stories) 1961
Der junge Lord [with Henze; *The Young Milord*] (libretto) 1965
 **Ein Ort für Zufälle: Mit dreizehn Zeichnungen von Günter Grass* (criticism) 1965
 †*Malina* (novel) 1971
Simultan [*Three Paths to the Lake*] (short stories) 1972
Undine geht (short stories) 1973
Werke. 4 vols. (poetry, short stories, radio plays, novel, and librettos) 1978
 †*Der Fall Franza. Requiem für Fanny Goldmann* (novel fragments) 1979
Frankfurter Vorlesungen: Probleme zeitgenössischer Dichtung (lectures) 1980
Wir müssen wahre Sätze finden (interviews) 1983
Die kritische Aufnahme der Existential philosophie Martin Heideggers (criticism) 1985
In the Storm of Roses: Selected Poems by Ingeborg Bachmann (poetry) 1986
Songs of Flight: The Collected Poems of Ingeborg Bachmann (poetry) 1994

*This work was partially translated as "A Place for Incidents" in the journal *Dimension* in 1969.

†These works are collectively referred to as the *Todesarten* cycle.

CRITICISM

Werner L. Schlotthaus (essay date June 1961)

SOURCE: Schlotthaus, Werner L. "Ingeborg Bachmann's Poem 'Mein Vogel': An Analysis of Modern Poetic Metaphor." *Modern Language Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (June 1961): 181-91.

[In the following essay, Schlotthaus offers a reading of "Mein Vogel," focusing specifically on the poet's use of "obscurity," or an "inappropriate correlation of meaning and idea," as a means of expressing a deeper sense of reality.]

The history of lyric poetry shows strikingly that the modernity of a poem has always been measured by its ability to express the hitherto inexpressible. Many artistic and stylistic devices have been used to make poetic language convey more and deeper meaning and to enter upon untrodden linguistic grounds without inventing a new language. In the last decades, this quest for poetic modernity has entered a new stage: conventional language—with its firmly established system of grammatical, syntactical, stylistic, and semantic laws—has gradually become the greatest enemy of the modern poet. Two inherent qualities of language—its natural tendency to arrest and petrify the floating stream of experience in a system of tokens, and its inclination to seek a compromise between its own inherent linguistic principles and the structural laws of the “nonlinguistic” outward world—have become the main targets for attack by modern poets who try, as Gottfried Benn has aptly put it, “die Sprache zu zerbrechen, um sie tragbar für neue Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten zu machen.”¹

In this pursuit the lyric poets have developed into fierce opponents of the conventional use of language. The literary movement of these modern *Sprachgegner* has already grown into a mighty tree with farreaching branches. In Germany, Friedrich Hölderlin and Clemens Brentano can be called early forerunners. The French symbolists, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, William Butler Yeats, the German expressionists, Rainer Maria Rilke, the poets of Dadaism, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Federico García Lorca, W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, Gottfried Benn, and Dylan Thomas, different as their poetic individualities may be, have this *Sprachgegnerschaft* in common. In Germany, Paul Celan and Ingeborg Bachmann appear to be the most promising contemporary successors and innovators of this movement.

With each of these modern poets, linguistic nonconformity has found a different expression, but each has tried in his own way to expand the frontier of the “sayable.” With the exception of the short-lived Dada experiment, animosity toward the conventional use of language has never gone so far as to affect the form and meaning of words or basic grammar. Few modern poets, and generally not the best, have sought new possibilities of expression by violating the rules of syntax. In most cases (such as those of the extreme expressionists), their experiments with mutilated syntax, anacoluthons, and other devices have resulted in rather unintelligible stammering.

The most remarkable and outstanding modern poetic experimenters have discovered new poetic territory by discarding a long-cherished conventional linguistic principle which I would like to call, for lack of a better term, the principle of appropriateness and unambiguousness, commanded by reality, in the relationships established between meanings of words and ideas of sen-

tences. They have tried not so much to break up the language itself, as Gottfried Benn put it rather generally, but to abolish the dictatorship of the principles of the nonlinguistic objective world over language, just as modern artists have emancipated their artistic materials—color and forms—by discarding the dictatorship of the principle of imitation over their artistic creations.

In exactly the same way in which modern art has consequently developed into abstract art, modern poetry has become more obscure and less easily accessible for the average reader. This obscurity is generally based on an ostensibly inappropriate correlation of meaning and idea. It is brought about by a new technique of combination—now frequently referred to as *Montage* or *Struktur*—which must not be confused with the old, traditional, poetic ambiguity achieved through the conventional metaphoric use of language. Even in its most extreme form, the traditional metaphoric ambiguity of poetic diction, created by the rhetorical figures of speech—allegories, similes, images, and symbols—implies an obvious and understandable comparison. This still holds true for so remarkably modern a poet as Rainer Maria Rilke, from whose *Sammlung der verstreuten und nachgelassenen Gedichte aus den Jahren 1906 bis 1926* the following passage may be cited:

Ausgesetzt auf den Bergen des Herzens. Siehe, wie klein dort,
 Siehe: die letzte Ortschaft der Worte, und höher
 Aber wie klein auch, noch ein letztes
 Gehöft von Gefühl. Erkennst du's?—
 Ausgesetzt auf den Bergen des Herzens. Steingrund
 Unter den Händen. Hier blüht wohl
 Einiges auf; aus stummem Absturz
 Blüht ein unwissendes Kraut singend hervor.
 Aber der Wissende? Ach, der zu wissen begann,
 Und schweigt nun, ausgesetzt auf den Bergen des
 Herzens.
 Da geht wohl, heilen Bewusstseins,
 Manches umher, manches gesicherte Bergtier,
 Wechselt und weilt. Und der grosse geborgene Vogel
 Kreist um der Gipfel reine Verweigerung.—Aber
 Ungeborgen, hier auf den Bergen des Herzens. . . .²

The whole paragraph is built on two clear comparisons: the existential situation of the individual soul is visualized and explained in terms of a barren mountainous landscape, and at the same time it is unfavorably contrasted with the happier existence of the plants, animals, and birds. Each term pertaining to the existential situation of the human soul is interpreted by a picture taken from the visualized nature scenery: “Herz”—“Berge”; “Worte”—“Ortschaft”; “Gefühl”—“Gehöft”; “der Wissende”—“unwissendes Kraut”; “heiles Bewusstsein,” “ausgesetzt,” “ungeborgen”—“gesichertes Bergtier,” “geborgener Vogel”; “Verweigerung”—“Gipfel.” This comparatively unconventional technique of correlating realistically unrelated spheres of meaning builds up a figurative sense which establishes itself through the “in-

appropriateness" of the meanings, and the reader finds himself presented with a highly original interpretation of the *condition humaine*. However, this higher figurative appropriateness is linguistically explained to the reader with almost mathematical precision. The comparisons frequently implied in a genitive construction tell him explicitly that "Herz," "Worte," "Gefühl," are in the following lines understood in terms of "Berge," "Ortschaft," "Gehöft."

The often mentioned obscurity in much of the most recently published German poetry results from the simple fact that these explicit comparisons have been abandoned. The intellectual aids for the reader's understanding are no longer furnished along with the product. Paul Celan, Ingeborg Bachmann, and some others now employ a technique which leaves the higher linguistic appropriateness visualized as existing between ostensibly unrelated meanings without linguistic explanation. I will attempt to show that this obscurity can be deciphered and, furthermore, that it constitutes a valuable source of enrichment for the development of modern poetry.

Ingeborg Bachmann, whose poem "Mein Vogel" is the subject of my analysis, was born in 1926. So far she has published two slim volumes of poetry, *Die gestundete Zeit* (1953) and *Anrufung des grossen Bären* (1957). The fifty-seven poems contained in these two volumes, augmented by a lyrical monologue entitled "Ein Monolog des Fürsten Myschkin zu der Ballettpantomime 'Der Idiot'" and her radio play, *Der gute Gott von Manhattan* (1956), have brought her almost immediate recognition.

"Mein Vogel"

Was auch geschieht: die verheerte Welt
sinkt in die Dämmerung zurück,
einen Schlaftrunk halten ihr die Wälder bereit,
und vom Turm, den der Wächter verliess,
blicken ruhig und stet die Augen der Eule herab.

Was auch geschieht: du weisst deine Zeit,
mein Vogel, nimmst deinen Schleier
und fliegst durch den Nebel zu mir.

Wir äugen im Dunstkreis, den das Gelichter bewohnt.
Du folgst meinem Wink, stösst hinaus
und wirbelst Gefieder und Fell—

Mein eisgrauer Schultergenoss, meine Waffe,
mit jener Feder besteckt, meiner einzigen Waffe!
Mein einziger Schmuck: Schleier und Feder von dir.

Wenn auch im Nadeltanz unterm Baum
die Haut mir brennt
und der hüfthohe Strauch
mich mit würzigen Blättern versucht,
wenn meine Locke züngelt,

sich wiegt und nach Feuchte verzehrt,
stürzt mir der Sterne Schutt
doch genau auf das Haar.

Wenn ich vom Rauch behelmt
wieder weiss, was geschieht,
mein Vogel, mein Beistand des Nachts,
wenn ich befeuert bin in der Nacht,
knistert's im dunklen Bestand,
und ich schlage den Funken aus mir.

Wenn ich befeuert bleib wie ich bin
und vom Feuer geliebt,
bis das Harz aus den Stämmen tritt,
auf die Wunden träufelt und warm
die Erde verspinnt,
(Und wenn du mein Herz auch ausraubst des Nachts,
mein Vogel auf Glauben und mein Vogel auf Treu!)
rückt jene Warte ins Licht,
die du, besänftigt,
in herrlicher Ruhe erfliegst—
was auch geschieht.

When we first read this poem, we find ourselves in a paradoxical situation: we have a conventional understanding of every word used and sometimes even understand whole sentences; yet at the same time, we are constantly reminded that the literal meanings of these words and ideas do not cover the figurative meanings which they acquire through the linkage. This applies not only to the "Vogel" and its "Feder" and "Schleier." It holds true for all the imagery used in the poem: the night and the stars, the watchman, the watchtower, the forest imagery, and the fire imagery, to mention only the most frequently and most consistently presented sets of images. The poet establishes relationships between these familiar linguistic tokens which neither mirror nor imitate the familiar relationships existing between these objects in an imaginable reality nor do they have models in the literary tradition of metaphoric usage. We see here a new application of language which is not explicitly limited, as in the example from Rilke's later poems.

The strangest relationship established is that between the bird and the speaker, the lyrical "I." This bird is frequently addressed by the speaker; in fact, the form of the poem, which has completely abandoned the restrictions of rhyme and regular meter, alternates between the forms of lyrical statements and addresses to the bird. Emotionally, these addresses to the bird stand out rather conspicuously in contrast to the quieter statements made. Stylistically, they are marked by frequent appositives and by exclamation marks:

du weisst deine Zeit,
mein Vogel . . .

Mein eisgrauer Schultergenoss, meine Waffe,
mit jener Feder besteckt, meiner einzigen Waffe!