

TRANSLATION

The Structures of Everyday Narration

Translator's preface

On September 17, 1986, Hermann Bausinger turned sixty and his colleagues and students both in Germany and abroad honored him not with one but with two *Festschriften*.¹ The publication of two separate *Festschriften* is indicative of Bausinger's tremendous impact as a person and scholar on the international community of folklorists, and this despite the fact that only very little of his work has been translated to date! 1986 also marked the twenty-fifth year since Bausinger published *Volkskultur in der technischen Welt*.² This work illustrated that folk culture is not a thing of the past, doomed to extinction with the onslaught of technology. "Structures of Everyday Narration" appeared three years prior to the publication of *Volkskultur in der technischen Welt* and in many ways can be regarded as a precursor of that work. This essay highlights the continuity and evolution of narrative themes and structures in a modern world no longer bounded by traditional narrative genres and contexts. It took decades for this analytic insight to be accepted by European folk narrative scholars--indeed there are many who continue to disregard contemporary modes of narration in favor of traditional genres. In the United States, however, where the socio-cultural conditions conducive to some of the "classic" European genres, such as the folktale, scarcely existed, there was a growing interest in everyday, conversational

narration. This interest culminated in the coining of a new genre, the "personal experience narrative."³ Indeed, of all Bausinger's work, "Structures of Everyday Narration" is probably most frequently quoted by American folklorists. The translation of this seminal article, therefore, is long overdue. With this translation, we hope to provide American folklorists with an English translation of this important essay and to extend a belated birthday wish to the author.

1. Jeggle, Utz, Gottfried Korff, Martin Scharfe and Bernd Jürgen Warnecken, eds. Volkskultur in der Moderne (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1986); and Jeggle, Utz, Wolfgang Kaschuba, Gottfried Korff, Martin Scharfe, and Bernd Jürgen Warnecken, eds. Tübinger Beiträge zur Volkskultur vol. 29. (Tübingen: Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde, 1986)
2. Hermann Bausinger, Volkskultur in der technischen Welt. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1961). A second, revised edition appeared in 1986.
3. Sandra K.D. Stahl, "The Personal Narrative as Folklore," Journal of the Folklore Institute 14 (1977): 9-30, and idem, "The Oral Personal Narrative in its Generic Context," Fabula 18 (1977): 18-39.

THE STRUCTURES OF EVERYDAY NARRATION*

by Hermann Bausinger

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Every narrative researcher knows the delight --surpassing the mere pleasure of discovery-- which a true storyteller can evoke, a bubbling fountain in a sparse landscape whom one may encounter to this day. Researchers from all countries report unanimously how quickly contact is established and how warm the rapport is, for frequently not only the researcher is happy to have found a narrator, but the narrator is pleased to have found an attentive listener. Precisely this reciprocity contributes to the delight. I don't know whether every researcher has felt the uneasiness which is the necessary complement to this delight. The reason that the narrator so willingly opens up to the researcher often derives from the fact that the narrator's audience has declined over the years. Through his interest, the researcher reconstructs a past situation. There is certainly no wrong in this, and everyone knows the rich findings such interest has promoted to date. However, behind all this the question about contemporary narration** and the narrative as an effective force in contemporary folklife looms uneasily and urgently.

One can answer this question by pointing to the fact that the fairy tale continues to play a significant role at least in the nursery. One can also point to various accounts of modern legend formation, which could certainly be further accumulated through comprehensive observation.¹ Developmental psychology maintains that a child, faced with difficult obstacles or a frightening situation, reverts to earlier stages

of development. Such "regression" occurs also in the thought and behavior of adults. It can be repeatedly observed how the logical attitude of individuals is broken in critical situations, and how that is articulated in his stories. To light come not merely harmless rudiments, rather the often very strong magical notions. The extent to which the latest stages of development can meet and correspond with the earliest can only be indicated here: the "fragmentary form" of a legend² can be very similar to its Urform; the anthropomorphic conceptions of demons and revenants can signify the humanization of the legend; they can, however, also go back to the earliest stages of myth.³ The surrealist joke is hardly distinguishable from the animal tale in its external form.⁴ Such examples illustrate the problems and correlations that should perhaps be examined under the topic of "magic and technology," which however, lead to fundamental anthropological questions as articulated in the title of Arnold Gehlen's most recent work, "Primitive Man and Civilized Culture."

As powerful as such regressions may be, they are nonetheless only understandable as anomalies, albeit tradition-oriented, group specific anomalies. The notion of anomaly is used here in its theoretical, rather than evaluative sense. The researcher, who records such attitudes and expressions, understands them as deviations from the norm, as exceptions in the everyday. At this point one should ask whether it would be worthwhile to examine this "everyday." In costume research the inclusion of everyday dress has opened important avenues of research. Even if we should not expect such advances in narrative research, it would appear to be advisable to also consider everyday narrative. The important, festive emphases which pervade fairy tale and legends are the same as those marked by the Sunday costume; however, they determine very little of the

continuous everyday of the folk.

Brief references to narrative forms outside the traditional genres are occasionally found in folklore scholarship. Mathias Zender notes:

"Today the travels which one has undertaken play an important role in conversation. Stories from one's military period, however, were very popular at all times." "Today [people] occasionally tell stories they have read--not only fairy tales and humorous tales, but also novels." "Many have traveled quite a bit around the world, this is told and politicized."⁵

Robert Petsch mentions everyday narratives, which he labels "conductor stories" after an expression by Unold.⁶ Andre Jolles combines all these stories under the designation "memorable" (not *casus*, as Petsch indicates!). Jolles attempts to give these narratives a common designation and assigns them to *Geistesbeschäftigung*^{6a} with the factual.

Geistesbeschäftigung with the factual means the understanding of facts as facts, whereas the other forms which are products of the *Geistesbeschäftigung* with facts relate them more to the metaphysical. The concept of the factual is well chosen, for it more or less includes this lack of connection, and it emerges at a time--regardless of the circumstances--in which the dismantling of metaphysics began. Nonetheless, this designation is unsatisfactory; or it is satisfactory only where the researcher is content with the opinion of Valery on modern literature: "Modernity contents itself with little."^{6a} Meanwhile the literary historian can measure the modern and classical periods, although he will not believe he has provided a sufficient characterization if he labels them non-classical. Thus here, too, we have to continue seeking the sense and variety of that which Jolles terms memorable and which he perceives as growing out of a *Geistesbeschäftigung* with the factual.

Jolles sees only one single *Geistesbeschäftigung* at work in the memorabile. However, he also makes the attempt to trace the *Geistesbeschäftigung* responsible for other forms into the world of the factual. Thus he believes that, "the simple form of the legend" is present in that section of the newspaper which is exclusively dedicated to the reporting of sports; for if "sports records" are not a "wonder in the sense of the Middle Ages," then they are a "wonder in the sense of an accomplishment, which had previously not been achieved, which appeared to be unattainable and impossible and which confirm an active power." The topic of record and wonder requires some evaluative annotations; however, the basic idea is significant, which allows Jolles to draw a correlation between legends and sports reports. It follows that *Geistesbeschäftigungen* that led to other traditional narrative forms also persist in contemporary, everyday narrative.

"There is a *Geistesbeschäftigung*," writes Jolles,¹⁰ "in which the world is constructed as a family, in which the world in its entirety is conceptualized in terms of race, kinship, or blood relationship." This *Geistesbeschäftigung* still exists, less so in the sparse "kinship legend"¹¹ than in the frequent discussion of family relationships. From the outsider's perspective, a group of people can converse for an unbearably long time about who is whose nephew's child, how this nephew's child is related to the branches of other families--as is often the case in villages--and how they converge with branches of one's own family. The world is constructed as an organic structure in such discussions, although such conversations clearly do not constitute actual narratives.

Even the *Geistesbeschäftigungen* that lead to other narrative forms are still effective in the domain of the factual. The living reference to the factual, to the factual as factual, appears

to be more than a mere *Geistesbeschäftigung*. Werner Spanner¹² is correct in recognizing that novel and film have, to a great extent, replaced the fairy tale. He concludes that, "a psychological impetus, which strives to conquer the reality of the world, no longer finds room in an already existing narrative form and creates, in that it remains the same, new forms. If that is possible, then yet another motive must be operative at the birth of narrative forms: it is the cultural-historical general situation of the narrating class." The "cultural-historical general situation" changes the 'reality' of mankind and creates a new collective attitude. The turn toward the factual is one such pervasive mental attitude. It modifies even the individual *Geistesbeschäftigungen*, the basic orientation and "spiritual impulse" of which nonetheless remain the same. As C.G. Jung once approximately defined "archetypes" as "dominant structures of the psyche," so too is the *Geistesbeschäftigung* a type of spiritual dominant structure. Jung writes expressly that the manifestations of the archetype can change.¹³ In the same manner manifestations of one and the same *Geistesbeschäftigung* are apparently capable of change due to a change in the collective mental attitude. We should therefore be able to approach everyday narration of our own time period as well, if we take the traditionally structured narrative forms and their underlying *Geistesbeschäftigungen* as our point of departure.

Present day reality, that is the world of the factual, offers no fairy tales. However, as parts of the fairy tale derive from reality, so are such parts still to be found in reality. Here one should think not so much of individual special motifs, such as trees blossoming in winter or "roasted ducks," supposed to have plummeted in a storm when hit by lightning.¹⁴ This resembles indeed a fairy tale motif, but in

this case is not a motif; it does not advance the plot but is rather an absurd special instance. Rather one should think of short sequences of motifs, events which take a surprisingly happy turn. An older boy tells the following story:

When my father was in the war, they all had horses at one time. Now all the others had new horses, only my father had received an old one, and the others ridiculed him. But he said: "Just laugh!" And then during an attack all at once the other horses started in fear and jumped into a waterhole, and many drowned. Only my father's horse continued to run as if nothing had happened. [15]

Perhaps this story is reminiscent of one's own war experiences and their rendition in narrative; it is the happy ending after the impending danger which often appears to make such an experience worth telling in the first place. It is the "economy of wish fulfillment," which Paul Groth identified as an essential feature of the fairy tale, the thought that "happiness is only felt in proportion to its contrast to misfortune."¹⁶ The same thought prevails in the story about a rich factory owner, which one can often hear in Swabian Zillertal: When he left home, he had only one small bundle. The father pressed a golden twenty mark piece in his hand, but he was so excited that he dropped it. It rolled into a crevice in the floor. Then a carpenter had to come and saw out a piece of the floor, because otherwise the father had nothing more to give his son than a tarnished penny. Today this story often concludes with a jump across centuries; the factory owner has a (very successful) firm, employing over three thousand workers. Precisely this type of short biography--if this designation is not too pretentious--illustrates the structural relation of such stories to the fairy tale. Their materialist nature in no way stands in contrast to the

fairy tale; for in the fairy tale, too, material gain is often the actual content of happiness.¹⁷ One may therefore also consider the many stories of unforeseeable material success in this category.

There was this laborer--I don't know where this was, but it was a long time ago--yeah, he had just put up something, then the window pane fell in. Now naturally he cursed and raved, but while he was still cursing, his wife came in and said, "You won a thousand marks in the lottery." Now of course he was pleased.

Even in this simple story the happiness is contrasted to the previous misfortune which is not further explained, and which is expressed in a blind motif, as it were.

All of these stories may have actually occurred. The *Geistesbeschäftigung*, the inner perspective, which used to lead to the form of the fairy tale, would then be effective as a principle of selection: it can in fact be observed that such happy events are preserved more gladly and longer in a person's narrative repertoire than others, which do not lend themselves to this inner form. It is, however, entirely questionable whether the stories really happened as they were told. Among the parables *Stories About Mr. Keuner*, Bertolt Brecht has one with the title, "If Mr. K. loved a person":

"What do you do," Mr. K. was asked, "when you love a person?" "I make a draft of him," said Mr. K. "and see to it that he is similar to it." "Who? The draft?" "No," said Mr. K. "the man." [18]

One may take this story as evidence of Brecht's desire for revolutionary change, which pervaded even intimate human relationships. However, this story says much more: it points to an epistemological problem which touches also upon our question. In fact we do transform everything that we love, or in other words

everything that we are thoroughly engaged in. We shape it according to a draft--which we have preconceived--or more frequently--according to a draft which is prescribed within us. The *Geistesbeschäftigungen* are precisely such drafts. They provide the forms, in which we fashion and order the events and stories. Thus in reality only parts of the happy occurrences actually occurred; in part we transform them into the fabulous in the narration.¹⁹ This is perhaps most apparent if we think of a self-experienced story, which led through several dangerous situations to a happy ending, such as a war experience with a good ending or even a narrowly averted car accident. In no way is it only the boastful braggart who exaggerates the perils beyond the actual event. Even the language itself provides an abundance of words: "just then," "almost," "hardly" as well as exaggerations within folk speech such as "a millimeter wide." These words give the narrative the abstract precision of the "just barely successful,"²⁰ as identified by Lüthi in the fairy tale.

It has often been said that in many ways the movie has assumed the role of the fairy tale. Hans Arnold compares fairy tale and film in great detail in his work "The Magical Element in Film."²¹ He identifies a similar course of events, a similar character through the primitive wish for a world as it should be, a similar type of person, and--without using the term--the one-dimensionality, which prevails in film as well as in fairy tales. Berendsohn's broad definition of the fairy tale as "a love story with hindrances,²² which ends with the final union of the couple" includes many films as well.

We appear to stand at a point in which a continuous psychological need that had previously been articulated in storytelling is now satisfied by a representation coming from

outside of narration. To speak of a *Geistesbeschäftigung* would make little sense as such representations require no formative intervention. At a closer glance, however, the evaluative distinction between passive attitude and active creation proves to be premature and inadequate. Indeed in many cases young people live through film and do not have the opportunity to project beyond it. Karl Bednarik has pointed to this in his study of today's young workers and has entitled one of his chapters "the culture realm of the movie theater."²³ The identification, however, in no way prevents articulation through a particular *Geistesbeschäftigung*. On the contrary, even this case appears to suggest that intensive interest changes the object of that interest, as Brecht's short story illustrated. This becomes apparent when one analyzes narrative adaptations from films. Such adaptations are by no means scarce and constitute a significant portion of everyday narrative. They often depict the characters, who are often quite "round" and complex in the film, as²⁴ simple, flat, and strictly oppositional. One speaks of "a wicked woman" or a man "who helped everyone"--the one-dimensional delineation of character is thoroughly reminiscent of the fairy tale.

The similarity between film and fairy tale is evident in the depiction of love relationships as well. Max Lüthi wrote about the fairy tale that "courting and marriage play a large role in the fairy tale, but they have no real erotic element."²⁵ This is also the case in the narratives of happy occurrences. The happy wedding is frequently reported; the erotic, however, is too subtle and is essentially told only in those situations in which it is simultaneously ridiculed, as in the *schwank* or joke. Love relationships constitute a large part of films, but when retelling the story, the average filmgoer condenses it to "the two were really in

love with each other."

In such retellings the *Geistesbeschäftigung*, which once gave rise to the fairy tale, is thus effective in shaping a happy occurrence or however we want to name the stories with that type of structure. Hence this *Geistesbeschäftigung* would not reflect simply a principle of selection, but an energy which continues to exert a creative and shaping influence. It appears to be even more deeply ingrained as an actual category of perception. In other words, there appears to be a type of "fairy tale thought" with which we approach those facts of reality that we are unable to perceive in any way other than through the lenses of this *Geistesbeschäftigung*. A perfect example of this is the situation before an exam. Even though experience contradicts such expectations, the period after passing the exam is instinctively expected to be a *non plus ultra* happiness and despite all earlier rational consideration is expected to become a permanent condition.²⁶

The euphoric thoughts of happiness would therefore be a category of perception. Although the concept of the factual would suggest that this factual element is something inalterable and objective, closer examination indicates that it is subject to internal creative laws as to where it is perceived, and in particular where it is narrated. Even the theory of poetic naturalism is forced to recognize an unavoidable subjective factor. One thinks of Zola's observation: "A work of art is a corner of nature seen via a particular temperament."²⁷ We attempt to understand this "temperament" as an ordering principle. Thus we move along the paths that Ernst Cassirer took in expanding Kant's categorical system or that Dilthey introduced into literary studies by characterizing literature as the "organ of world understanding." The concept of "inner form" is useful, for the external

distinction between form and content is suspended in favor of an integration, which does not allow for distinction without doing harm to the whole.²⁸ This involves an elementary theme of narration, of speaking, of comprehension--so elementary that it may appear banal. However, it is by no means superfluous. The many attempts to analyze the fairy tale, which neglect the grounding of the fairy tale in a fundamental *Geistesbeschäftigung* and therefore often arrive at absurd conclusions, are evidence of this.²⁹

In his study of folktales and folktale narrators, Franz Heyden identifies the "narrow horizon of the narrator" as conditional for the viability of the tale.

For as soon as the horizon of the people surpasses the narrow boundaries of a limited possibility, the wide world of reality steps in place of the previous fantasy world that began already at the edge of the next forest. And as the belief in the fairy tale world disappears, the need to narrate from it dies and the traditional fanciful images are repressed by colorful pictures of reality.[30]

What we are attempting to illustrate is a certain lawfulness in this process of repression, which is indispensable to understanding Heyden's provocative, yet thoroughly correct, statement. The narrowness of horizon in no way appears to determine and accompany the fairy tale alone. The entire trinity of traditional narratives--fairy tale, legend, *schwank*--derive from a world which is marked by its comprehensibility, its closeness, its depth. The unknown and the feeling of being at the mercy of others --not only strangers but above all supernatural powers as well--begin at the border of the close, familiar sphere. The fairy tale may adopt the foreign; it bears the colors, forms and customs of foreign countries, but is unable to order this foreignness. In the fairy tale there is the desire that yearns to leave this

closeness. However, the adventure of the fairy tale does not lead into carefully registered foreign areas as does a travel report. Instead it leads plainly into the otherworldly, magical world that nonetheless stands on the same level as the world of the everyday. The schwank seizes the most extreme possibilities of a humorous nature, possibilities, too, of one's own confined existence. The legend is situated on the border of one's own close area, from where it confronts the outside world. The narrowness in the narrative is overcome in this way: through the confrontation with powers of the depths, through the escape in the otherworldly, and through the poetic extension of humorous possibilities. However, this narrowness is not eliminated. A great deal has remained from the "original bipartition of the world that distinguishes everything else outside of the familial and familiar home as second-rate."³¹

The historical development, however, results in the outgrowing of this closeness and the retreat of traditional narrative forms. Lothar Brixius surmises for the legend

that toward the end of the last century superstitious attitudes have ventured forth more openly. They even defined the image of community, before being contaminated by the suddenly expanded vision brought about by technology and transportation. [32]

The knowledge of the "real" world and of "real" relationships in this world has been expanded in connection with technology and transportation. The way and manner in which even simple people today experience events on the other side of the earth illustrates the universality, however vague, of world consciousness. Korea, Algeria, Budapest--all are tremendously close. There is no longer a "remote and distant Turkey." However, not only the experience of feeling threatened has been shifted to the "real" world.

A general "leveling" has set in, which for the time being need not mean a devaluation. If the close, familiar world was previously integrated into the metaphysical world, it now achieves its wholeness in breadth. This development cannot bypass narrative without a trace. It has long been acknowledged that "folkloric narration in essence ... communicates to the folk community the experience of a supernatural world reaching into real, familiar life circumstances."³³ In addition, another task is increasingly ascribed to the narrative: to tell of the laws and of the diversity of the phenomena of the natural, "real" world.

The realistic development allows the report to pass by the story. In earlier times the point at which the unknown began was not that far from one's familiar surroundings and could only be reached in narrative. In this way each report rapidly developed into³⁴ a story. However, reality in the new worldview³⁴ is much more precise, and there are many institutions which have the responsibility of reporting the events of this reality. Even oral exchanges occur much more frequently on the level of the report. This is due to the fact that showing interest--that is sympathy corresponding to one's responsible position--is no longer as narrowly bounded as in previous times.

After a short while, however, each report is open to narrative fashioning, namely as soon as an event has enough import of its own--which most often means that it is recent--and is not merely interesting as an historical fact. For this reason there is still folk narrative. Even though one experience report today follows upon the heels of another, there still exists folk narrative surpassing the merely descriptive report. The descriptive report rarely belongs to the traditional narrative genres, although it is governed by a similar orientation.

As we discovered the happy occurrence to be

the successor of the fairy tale, it is now worth asking what has become of the legend or more precisely: Which form represents the *Geistesbeschäftigung* in the world of the factual that among other circumstances leads to the legend? We cannot turn to Jolles in identifying the form of this *Geistesbeschäftigung*, for his chapter on legend is oriented toward the ancient saga and can almost only hold true for the "clan legend."³⁵ Moreover, the harmless expression, legend, is in no way common where the legend thrives. Designations such as "ghost stories" and the like or just plain "stories" step into its place and often allow the dark powers of these stories to be forgotten. We could offer the following characteristics: a *Geistesbeschäftigung* underlies the genre of the legend in which the world is divided according to inside and outside, familiar and foreign, in being safe and at the mercy of others, the here and beyond. It is a *Geistesbeschäftigung* which watches the boundaries between these two spheres in order that the outside, the foreign, the helplessness, the beyond, and the "other" are not forgotten in one's own sphere, and that it cannot be harmed by these otherworldly powers.

Even this definition does not limit the legend to the discussion of supernatural powers. The other, the foreign, the threatening, that which one feels powerless in the face of, need not be demons. For example, stories about a runner amuck were told for a week long. The experiences underlying the stories were similar to old werewolf legends; feelings of helplessness prevail in a similar manner. The difference is that only the werewolf is associated with supernatural powers. The runner amuck is sick, crazed, and mad, but there is no attempt to find a supernatural reason for this. The following story with the title "Gruesome Rumor" appeared in the *Schwäbische Zeitung* from January 27, 1956:

The rumor of a terrible murder in Ravensburg circulated and continues to spread not only in the communities of Ravensburg, Tetnang, and Saulgau, but also in Wangen. It is said that the child of a family tore a fifty mark bill. In a fit of rage the father suddenly chopped off the child's hands. The mother in her despair did not know what to do and fled in shock. As a result the second child, which the mother was bathing at the time of the incident, drowned in the bathtub. Even with two corpses, the rumor-mongers felt that there was not enough blood. They knew yet that the mother hanged herself as she came home and saw the consequences of her despair. The old experience was confirmed: Nothing can be so unbelievable that it is not believed.

This story corresponds quite closely to a newspaper legend reported by Hermann Krügler,³⁶ with the difference that the latter reports it as an actual occurrence, while the former warns of a rumor. In this case as well, it is the fantastic, the unbelievable which apparently makes the story worth telling. For example, the story that frequently emerges about the small child,³⁷ locked in a pig sty and dismembered by the pigs, which is only slightly modified in John Steinbeck's *St. Katy*, belongs to this category.

We can collect these stories, which are the successors of the legend, under the category terrible occurrences. In the word 'terrible' what is 'not right' is unified in its double meaning (as the wrong and as that which suggests the supernatural--just as one says of a haunted place that it is not "right" there). It is the unlimited--the admirable and damnable that surpasses the norm. In speaking of the occurrence, rather than the narrative, we indicate the proximity of such narratives to the actual reality from which they derive and are fostered.

Clearly, these stories are not new. Even in the Grimm legend collection, Hermann Schneider has found "some stories, which have no supernatural characteristics."³⁸ And even among all kinds of humorous anecdotes (!) in Montanus' *Wegkürztzer* there is the story "Adam Stegmann

strangles his two children," dating back to a true occurrence on April 10, 1556. Such stories were also common in broadsides and ballads. In his novella Goethe summarized their meaning with the following observation: "The good people want to be intimidated so that they can later feel how wonderful and laudable it is to breathe freely." However, such gruesome stories not only frighten and evoke pleasure merely in reaction, but maintain in themselves a peculiar pleasure, due to their excess, outrageousness, and madness. Willy Hellpach has examined the question of why evil is such an "ineradicable object of human interest" from a sociopsychological perspective. He noted that above all "it is the fact of evil for which desire craves, and that means for proof of the grim realization of unlimited imaginations."³⁹ It is the unconscious experience of one's own possibilities which makes the terrible occurrence so popular. This can also be seen in a harmless way in the many stories about various kinds of betting. Betting challenges the limits of human potential. The experience is essentially the same for the highest or lowest bet; even when it only revolves around whether it is possible to consume fifty cents of yeast followed by three glasses of beer, or drink an entire⁴⁰ bottle of wine and in addition eat a mouse.

In both cases, the person who wagered the bet dies, and that, too, is an important ingredient of such stories. The limits of one's potential thereby only appear to be extended. In reality they remain stationary, and the experience of safety within one's limited potential joins the experience of the "grim realization of unlimited imaginations." Montanus supplements his account of Stegmann's crime with a moralistic judgment as was the style of the time. Today it is customary for the bipartition of the gruesome and moral to be less abrupt. Instead the moralistic commentary pervades the entire narrative. Riehl

points to the frequency of the "Story of the Ungrateful Children."⁴¹ Stories about the torture of animals are also frequent in which the animal torturer finally receives his punishment. Though precisely here it is sometimes apparent that the torture is described with a peculiar type of pleasure.

An obvious moralistic judgement and warning is embedded in the following story:

There was also a man who played the lottery and he apparently gave the wrong house number. Now the notice was sent to a butcher that he had won I don't know how many thousands of marks. The man grabbed his cleaver and destroyed the entire butcher shop, all the while shouting "I don't have to work anymore!" Only later did he find out that his neighbor, not he, had won.

This story constitutes the counterpart to the previously cited happy occurrence. As the former expressed the "economy of wish fulfillment," this latter occurrence obtains its peculiar character through an economy of misfortune. Stories about lottery winners who meet with misfortune shortly after their fortune are abundant: the happy winner gets drunk and doesn't notice that his three-year-old child runs away and drowns in a pond, whereupon he commits suicide. The winner buys a motorcycle and has an accident shortly thereafter. Or fortune and misfortune are condensed in a single moment: a woman is told that she has won first prize and the sudden announcement causes her to die of a heart attack. The following announcement ran in the newspapers as well:

A poverty stricken Algerian named Mustafa bought a lottery ticket in Paris, in final desperation. He had a learned man read him the list of drawings as he could neither read nor write. He was half crazy with delight when he found out that he had won half a million francs. A businessman lent him money so that he could buy a decent suit. In order to prove that his impoverished days were now over, he set his old rags on fire and danced joyfully around the fire. Only when the

rags were entirely burned did it occur to him that he had left the lottery ticket in the pocket of his old pants. Now he does not know how to pay for the new suit.

It has been proven that this occurrence, which follows the same pattern, also entered into oral tradition.

As with all realistic narratives, the underlying *Geistesbeschäftigung* of the terrible occurrence expresses itself more in the selection, embellishment, and formulation of actual occurrences than in the free invention of such events. For the most part, the stories are read in and developed from the large number of reports, which are offered new daily. In specific instances, however, one can assume a free formulation, as in the example of gruesome war stories that are in circulation in multiple form. Typically it is rare that the situation on the front serves as the basis for such stories, for the gruesome is practically a matter of course on the front. There are no terrible occurrences there because the entire life and events exceed the usual. Therefore, conditions which could be found in one's own village are frequently depicted: an old woman with whom one is quartered; a hairdresser who has cut one's hair. The outrageous, however, is concealed in the everyday. The old woman has hidden a long knife under her apron and can only be overpowered with effort. The hairdresser slits the soldier's throat with his razor and throws the body into his cellar.

Demons become less frequent, but the outrageous and dangerous are still concealed in the everyday. This is expressed almost symbolically in the following narrative, which is exceptionally widespread and continues to be localized:

There was a man who was driving through a forest with an ambulance. A nun, who had a very sweet face, was standing there and waved indicating that she wanted a ride. He picked her up and then noticed

as he drove on that she had thick and hairy hands. He stopped and told her to get out and push because something was broken. And as she was outside, he laid on the gas and drove directly to the police. There the nun's two suitcases were opened; there were a pair of very long knives still covered with fresh blood.

The lovely face and the nun's habit are no guarantee for security either: danger, a big and hairy hand, reaches everywhere out of the everyday and seemingly harmless. The terrible occurrence conjures up danger. At the same time danger is exorcised and averted.

In contrast to the fairy tale and legend, the schwank has always stood closer to the factual world. It draws, of course, upon the supernatural, but usually only when measuring it against the factual, in order to reveal its disproportionality.⁴² Thus, the humorous occurrences--as we must label them in order to be consistent--are not a late development, but rather a continuous characteristic of the schwank. The transition from schwank legend to schwank story⁴³ was and is fluid. The schwank stories compiled by Aarne-Thompson in the Tale Type Index are also continually revitalized, not as signs of an old tradition, but on the basis of their occurrence in reality. An example is AT 1361, "The flood." New humorous occurrences replace the old schwank about the expected flood, as happens and will always happen when the end of the world is expected. In the last century, the south Swabian doctor, poet, and folklorist, Michael Richard Buck, recorded such events in a dramatic schwank, "The Bröller is Coming."⁴⁴ When prophecies about the near end of the world circulated in Germany a few years ago, one could note similar reactions everywhere, which quickly became the subject of narratives and have remained part of the narrative treasures of many communities to date.

A certain development has certainly occurred in the realm of the *Geistesbeschäftigung*

creating the schwank as well. However, before we address this we should characterize once more from this perspective the development of the legend to terrible occurrence and the close correlation between the two. There are Schwänke which at first lead straight into the realm of the legend and then suddenly take a turn and yield to the realm of the ludicrous. To this category belongs the complicated and colorful story, which tells of a girl crossing a bridge when suddenly a black hand reaches out of the waters and the cry "Who will make my hand clean?" is heard three times. Finally the answer is also called out. "Persil!"^{44a} To this category also belongs the story, which is widespread among soldiers, of a soldier who is quartered in an old castle. In the night he sees a ghostly white hand emerge from under his covers repeatedly. Finally he grabs for his revolver, shoots, hits, and screams. He had shot his own foot. As in this case with a legend, so the terrible occurrence can conclude humorously in other cases, whereby the border between legend and terrible occurrence is not always easy to determine. Popular and well-known are the types of jokes which, without specific details, nonetheless tell with gruesome clarity, for instance, of someone found under a bridge with his tongue cut out. Only once the listener has shown signs of believing the horror and frightfulness of this occurrence does the explanation follow that it was about an old shoe.

The schwank has always laughingly⁴⁵ negated the believing imagination of the legend. Peuckert correctly maintains that the schwank is not younger than the legend or fairy tale.⁴⁶ This appears to challenge our distinction between mere *Geistesbeschäftigung* and the overlapping mental attitudes. It seems to indicate that the world of the factual is not new, but rather one possible perspective which has always existed.

Although this is correct, the emphases have shifted to such an extent that one may speak of a different mental attitude. Many true legends, which originate today next to the terrible occurrence, reveal that the "surreal" can invade the world of the factual. That is the counterpart to the invasion of "rational" thinking in the earlier attitude, as is manifest in the schwank.

The humorous narrative has also undergone a certain development, which one can best characterize as the path from the schwank to joke. An exhaustive delineation of the differences is not possible here. Only the most prominent shall be pointed out, namely that the joke is shorter than the schwank. Whereas the schwank indulges in colorful description and history, the joke is generally short and told in the present tense. This development points to the social conditions outlining and shaping the world of the factual. The comprehensible world of the past offers people a specific place and a uniform history in which they can become integrated. The world of the factual is no longer comprehensible and, to a certain extent, puts the encounter in the place of the community, a contemporary and singular phenomenon in place of the historical, traditional, spatial, and spiritual community. Urban sociology has clarified these circumstances most lucidly, illustrating how the social life of urban people is disintegrating into many partial encounters, to which the individual neither can nor may give himself completely.⁴⁷ However, today's everyday narratives are told in the context of such relatively brief encounters.

Social psychology is in the process of dissolving the myth of the shapeless mass and illustrating that organized groups are formed even in a rapidly changing society that is no longer so closely bound to tradition.⁴⁸ Folklore also has a similar task. It must attempt to

trace instances of order in the seemingly chaotic confusion of today's everyday life, and find traditional bonds in the seemingly disintegrated folk culture that is accessible only through fashion. This is also the purpose of this study. The responsibility which folklore bears in this regard is evident in the fact that its findings are not only accepted in general by culture critics, but also adopted by scholars of neighboring disciplines in their works. Paul Böckmann writes:

The living narration of stories and one's own experiences disappears from public view, as does social singing and dramatic play. One turns on the radio and is then sentenced to passivity when earlier one had to develop one's own initiative and thereby transmit living narrative further. It is this one phenomenon which concerns not only the folklorist but must also alter the relationship of man to language and fiction, and threaten his ability to find himself in representational imagery.[49]

Just as the widespread and exclusively negative image of the decay of storytelling was capable of influencing the attitudes of this German scholar, the opposite in thought and observation is perhaps also possible, namely that in all the confusing haste of motion and change, patterns that stand in a long and great tradition appear to have survived. That these patterns are subject to the law of "diminishing returns," however, does not distinguish them from the more significant literary forms.⁵⁰

Many observations and efforts are still needed in order to clarify the picture. A "higher mathematic of form" should also be developed, corresponding to that of Walzel.^{50a} Above all, it would be important to conduct corresponding studies in other language areas. In light of the German narratives, it would be logical to begin with the trinity of fairy tale, legend, and schwank, which other narrative forms either closely resemble or from which they

recede as insignificant.⁵¹ As far as the transmission of narrative motifs is concerned, one knows today that one should generally figure on a world-wide dimension. The overall style of narration, too, appears to exhibit strong similarities, regardless of regional or national characteristics.⁵² Despite many preliminary studies,⁵³ the extent to which uniform generic terms can be developed, however, has not yet been adequately clarified.

Nonetheless, the structures, models, and patterns which have been touched upon here appear to be so deeply rooted that they may be active everywhere, perhaps resulting in different genres. Perhaps further insights could be reached if a psychiatrist were to report about the pathological borderline cases of narration and the related worldview. The normal is often better understood from the perspective of the abnormal, and precisely a study which examines the everyday should be grateful for such help. Above all, it appears to be imperative that the narrative scholar not underestimate the everyday, but rather attempt to collect, classify, and understand everyday narrative in the same way as traditional narrative.

Notes

**"Strukturen des alltäglichen Erzählens" originally appeared in Fabula 1 (1958): 234-254. We wish to thank both Hermann Bausinger and the editors of Fabula for granting permission to translate this essay.

**Translator's note: The German word Erzählen is a substantive noun of the verb erzählen (to tell or narrate). Whereas Erzählung translates as "narrative" (the thing), Bausinger's use of Erzählen (the act of the thing) stresses the active element of everyday storytelling, i.e. the act rather than the thing.

1. See, for example, Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann, "Berliner

Sagenbildung 1952," Zeitschrift für Volkskunde 52 (1955): 162-170.

2. Regarding this concept, see Lothar Brixius, Erscheinungsformen des Volksglaubens. (Halle: Niemeyer, 1939), p. 16.

3. See Lutz Röhrich, Die dämonischen Gestalten der schwäbischen Volksüberlieferung. Typed Diss. Tübingen 1949, p. 176; and Bausinger, Lebendiges Erzählen. Typed Diss. Tübingen, 1952, p. 120.

4. Recent historical-philosophical writings, e.g. those of Troeltsch and Toynbee mark an obvious meeting of the beginning and late period. To a certain extent they recommend the return to myth once the boundaries of historical understanding have been reached, so that history as past would again pass over to history as story, to the invention of 'fiction.' See in this regard Ernst Robert Curtius, Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter. Second Edition. (Bern: Francke, 1954), p. 17.

5. Mathias Zender, Volksmärchen und Schwänke aus der Westeifel. (Bonn: Röhrscheid, 1935), p. xv-xxii.

6. Robert Petsch, "Wesen und innere Form des Volksmärchens," Niederdeutsche Zeitschrift für Volkskunde 15 (1937): 10.

6a. Translator's note: Geistesbeschäftigung, Jolles' term referring to the mental or spiritual processes which underlie and shape narrative genres, is difficult to translate into English. William Templar and Eberhard Alsen have employed "occupation of the intellect" in their translation of this term in Kurt Ranke, "Einfache Formen" (Journal of the Folklore Institute vol. 4 no. 1). Although correct in its literal sense, this phrase made for an undesirable clumsiness. We have therefore opted to keep Jolles' original term in this translation.

7. Andre Jolles, Einfache Formen. Second Edition. (Halle: Niemeyer, 1956): 165-80; see particularly p. 175.

8. In 1756 the Berlin pastor Spalding translated Tatsache with the English word 'fact' seventeen times in a theological treatise. See Trübners Deutsches Wörterbuch vol. 7 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1956), p. 23.

- 8a. Cited by E.R. Curtius (see ft. 4), p. 25.
9. Andre Jolles, Einfache Formen, p. 48.
10. Ibid., p. 60.
11. See Will-Erich Peuckert, Deutsches Volkstum in Märchen und Sage, Schwank und Rätsel. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1938), pp. 130-135.
12. Werner Spanner, Das Märchen als Gattung. (Giessen: Kindt, 1939), p. 34.
13. C.G. Jung, Symbolik des Geistes. (Zürich: Rascher, 1948), p. 374 (footnote 1).
14. Dunn, "North Carolina." See Stuttgarter Zeitung of May 15, 1954.
15. For dialect version and verification of the narrative see Bausinger, Lebendiges Erzählen.
16. Paul Groth, Die ethische Haltung des deutschen Volksmärchens. (Leipzig: Eichblatt, 1930), p. 48. Also printed in Form und Geist vol. 16.
17. See Adolf Bach, Deutsche Volkskunde. (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1937), p. 380.
18. Bertolt Brecht, Versuche 27/32. (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1953), p.152.
19. As the expression märchenhaft (like a fairy tale or fabulous) is only popular in German slang, it is used only sparingly here. Otherwise one could speak of a "fairy tale like-occurrence" or a "fairy tale-like story." The same is true for the expression sagenhaft (legend-like or incredible), which is used in slang most often for adverbial emphasis. [Translator's note: Bausinger's point in this passage is lost somewhat in the translation, for the English translation of the German verbs does not adequately illustrate the relation of these colloquial expressions to their generic origins.]

20. Max Lüthi, Das europäische Volksmärchen. (Bern: Francke, 1947), p. 41 and 64.
21. Hans Arnold, Das Magische des Films. Typed Diss. München, 1949. Its subtitle reads "Ein Beitrag zum Problem der Wirksamkeit magischer Einflüsse in der Gegenwart unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Films." See in particular pp. 219-253.
22. Walter Berendsohn, Grundformen volkstümlicher Erzählerkunst in den Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm. (Hamburg: Gentz, 1921), p. 35.
23. Karl Bednarik, Der junge Arbeiter von heute - ein neuer Typ. (Stuttgart: Kilpper, 1953), p. 37.
24. In Aspects of the Novel, E.M. Forster distinguishes between "round characters" and "flat characters."
25. Max Lüthi, "Märchen und Sage," Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte 25 (1951): 168.
26. The wedding is a similar imaginary conclusion to the fairy tale in our reality. The psychiatrist knows numerous cases of depression which arise immediately after marriage and which have their psychological basis in this attitude. In terms of the past, one should point above all to the chiliastic movements, whose ideas were to a great extent rooted in a type of "fairy tale thought."
27. Emile Zola, Die Gesellschaft: Realistische Wochenschrift für Literatur, Kunst, und öffentliches Leben II (1889): 670.
28. For the crucial definition of "inner form" in recent literary criticism see, for example, Paul Böckmann, Formgeschichte der deutschen Dichtung. (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1949), pp. 1- 69.
29. Compare the debate over such attempts at an interpretation in Paul Delarue, "Le Conte de l'Enfant a' la queue du loup," Arts et Traditions populaires (1953): 33-58; and Bausinger, "Aschenputtel: Zum Problem der Märchensymbolik," Zeitschrift für Volkskunde 52 (1955): 144-55.

30. Franz Heyden, Volksmärchen und Volksmärchenerzähler: Zur literarischer Gestaltung des deutschen Volksmärchens. (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1922), p. 81.
31. Leo Weisgerber, Die Entdeckung der Muttersprache im europäischen Denken. (Lüneburg: Heliand, 1948), p. 36. It should also be noted parenthetically that that which is situated "outside" is by no means always considered second-rate. The fairy tale and legend are proof of this.
32. Lothar Brixius, Erscheinungsformen des Volksglaubens, p. 74.
33. Gustav Hagemann, "Zur Lebensform der deutschen Volkserzählung," Zeitschrift für die deutsche Bildung 14 (1938): 160.
34. The expression "new view of the world" should be allowed here, although it should certainly be examined, along with Heidegger, whether "the time of the view of the world" did not actually begin only with the changes to which this article refers. See the essay of the same title in the collection: Martin Heidegger, Holzwege. (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1950).
35. See footnotes 9 and 10.
36. Sudetendeutsche Zeitschrift für Volkskunde 6 (1933): 217. Dr. Dieter Narr has informed me that it also appears in the second edition of Barack's Zimmerischen Chronik vol. II (Tübingen: Mohr, 1881), p. 174. As an additional reference see Alois Siegel, Lichter am Lebensweg: Aus unserer hergebrachten Volksfrömmigkeit. (Karlsruhe: Badenia-Verlag, 1953), p. 98.
37. See Gerhard Gesemann, "Soziologische und psychologische Zusammenhänge in der Sagenforschung," Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Soziologie 4 (1928): 33.
38. Hermann Schneider, Die deutschen Sagen der Brüder Grimm. (Leipzig, Wien and Stuttgart: no year or publisher given), p. 4.
39. Willy Hellpach, Sozialpsychologie. Ein Elementarlehrbuch für Studierende und Praktizierende. Third Edition (Stuttgart: Enke, 1951), p. 201.

40. Both according to stories from Schwabsberg, in county Aalen, West Germany.
41. Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, Die bürgerliche Gesellschaft, vol. 2 of Die Naturgeschichte des Volkes als Grundlage einer deutschen Sozialpolitik. (Stuttgart and Tübingen: Ebda, 1854), p. 59.
42. Alone the schwank-fairy tale claims a special place. See here and for the following Bausinger, "Schwank und Witz" in Studium Generale.
43. For a comparison see Hugo Moser, Schwäbischer Volkshumor. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1950), pp. 399-406.
44. Heinz-Eugen Schramm, Michael Buck als Mundartdichter. (Stuttgart: Verlag des Schwäbischen Albvereins, 1956), pp. 150-62. [Translator's note: Bröller is dialect for 'flood.' The reference is drawn from a local dialect drama in which an underground spring that erupts every few years is considered by local residents to be a bad omen. Personal communication with author.]
- 44a. [Translator's note: Persil is a German brand of cleanser similar to Ajax.]
45. See Kurt Ranke, "Schwank und Witz als Schwundstufe," Festschrift für W.E. Peuckert. (München: 1955), pp. 41-59.
46. Will-Erich Peuckert, Deutsches Volkstum in Märchen und Sage, Schwank und Rätsel. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1938), p. 168.
47. See Elisabeth Pfeil, "Fremdheit und Nachbarschaft in der Grosstadt," Studium Generale 8 (1955): 121-126, in particular the reference to Georg Simmel on p. 122. In addition, see Willy Hellpach, Mensch und Volk der Grosstadt. First Edition. (Stuttgart: Enke, 1939), p. 74.
48. See Peter Hofstätter, "Gruppendynamik: Kritik der Massenpsychologie," Rowohlts Deutsche Enzyklopädie Nr. 38. (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1957).
49. Paul Böckmann, "Der Beitrag der Literaturwissenschaft zu unserer Zeit," Die Sammlung (1952), p.190.

50. See Ernst Robert Curtius, p. 395.

50a. [Translator's note: Oskar Walzel was a Germanist whose work "Gehalt und Gestalt im Kunstwerk des Dichters," Handbuch der Literaturwissenschaft (Wildpark-Potsdam, Athenaion, 1924) greatly influenced post-war literary studies in Germany. In this work he addresses the interdependence of form and content in verbal art. Personal communication with author.]

51. Aside from the fairy tale, legend and schwank, Peuckert's fundamental work names only the riddle in its title. See also Bausinger, "Sage, Märchen, Schwank," Der Deutschunterricht 8 (1956): 37-43.

52. The filler words such as "of course" which are repeated extensively in Richard Dorson's account of stories of a Greek-American family are one such example, for they also shape the stories in this country. See Dorson, "Tales of a Greek-American Family on Tape," Fabula 1 (1957): 114-43, esp. 124.

53. C.W. von Sydow's fundamental treatise, "Kategorien der Prosa-Volksdichtung," should be mentioned here. See Volkskundliche Gaben: John Meier zum 70. Geburtstag dargebracht. Harry Schwebe, ed. (Berlin and Leipzig: de Gruyter: 1934), pp. 253-268.