

Estebanillo and Simplex: Two Baroque Views of the Role-Playing Rogue in War, Crime, and Art (with an Excursus on Krull's Forebears)

No one has yet convincingly identified the protagonist who claims to be writing not just another picaresque fiction, but genuine autobiography in *La vida y hechos de Estebanillo González, hombre de buen humor*,¹ which first appeared in Antwerp, capital of the Spanish Lowlands, in 1646. Hans Jacob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen, the real-life experimenter behind the Cervantine masks swathing the first-person delinquent of *Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus Teutsch*,² was identified only two centuries after the initial appearance of his novel at Mömpelgart in 1668. Scholarship has verified most of the historical background — geography, chronology, battles, major personages — in both works. In fact, one wonders whether during his camp-following and antics across Italy, Spain, France, the Lowlands, Germany, Austria, Poland, Russia, and elsewhere, the self-styled centaur, half Gallegan, half Roman, who is conscious of living to outstrip the extant picaresque masterworks, might have rubbed shoulders with the ubiquitous autodidact adventurer Grimmelshausen. Whether or not the still unverified Iberian and now known German witness to the disorders and calamities of the Thirty Years' War ever drank at the same inn or stood in opposing armies (e.g., at the battle of Nördlingen in September 1634), both fictions depict how a desperate underling finds his way as a professional fool in a mad world. But the difference is that, although Simplex engages in worse crimes, he rises to a loftier view of the folly of the age, transcending the role Estebanillo

1 *La vida y hechos de Estebanillo González, hombre de buen humor, compuesto por él mismo*, ed. Nicholas Spadaccini and Anthony N. Zahareas (Madrid: Clásicos Castalia 1978), 2 vols. All future references are to this edition and are indicated in parentheses in the text.

2 Hans Jacob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen, *Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus Teutsch*, ed. Alfred Kelletat (München: Winkler Verlag 1956). All future references are to this edition and are indicated in parentheses in the text.

keeps, and reaffirming his destiny as the Christian fool.³ Grimmelshausen succeeds in wedding this theme, a favorite in German literature since the reappearance of Wolfram's *Parzival* in print (1477), Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff* (1494), and Erasmus' *Encomium Moriae* (1509), with the theme of conversion from the mature Spanish picaresque genre.

Simplex' tale begins when war disrupts his boyhood in a peasant village and he flees to a brief refuge in the woods with a hermit, but then is drawn again into the tumult of the contending native and foreign armies and enters the Protestant encampment at Hanau, commanded by (the historical) James Ramsay, the Scotch colonel in the Swedish army, whom Grimmelshausen makes into the hero's as yet undisclosed uncle, the hermit's brother-in-law, for romanesque purposes. Simplex suffers abasement, being forced into the role of camp fool; gradually he learns deception, greed, and vanity; he pushes into the fighting ranks, furthers his ambition as an intrepid bandit, switches sides when fortune dictates, is carried across the face of Europe by turns of events, as well as explores all sectors of society. Estebanillo, an urban nobody driven by the standard craving for social status, not only gravitates toward the power network of the Empire, serving with the most cynical Falstaffian valor in moments of danger, but also eventually carries out high-level missions as an imperial courier. The novel about Simplex exhibits the grand architectonics of the Baroque world theater; its original five books suggest five acts in a drama of inversely mirrored worldly and spiritual progress. The added sixth book ('Continuatio'), in which the purported author dies in an even more remote hermitage on a desert island after having been lured back into motion, reexamines the fundamental paradigm of worldly inconstancy versus spiritual security. Simplex' misguided picaresque quest for status is transmuted in the ultimate confirmation of his higher birth, a resolution borrowed from older romances.⁴ When, like his true father, he

3 From the perspective of a Catholic humanist, Alexander A. Parker contrasts the two figures in his excellent chapter 4 on 'Germany and the Thirty-Years War' in *Literature and the Delinquent: The Picaresque Novel in Spain and Europe 1599-1753* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1967) 75-98. Since Parker, the best comparative study is Richard Bjornson, *The Picaresque Hero in European Fiction* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press 1977) 75-98. Also consult Bjornson's article, 'Estebanillo González: The Clown's Other Face,' *Hispania* 60 (1977) 436-42, and Nicholas Spadaccini, 'History and Fiction: The Thirty Years' War in *Estebanillo González*,' *Kentucky Romance Quarterly* 24 (1977) 373-87, and 'Estebanillo González and the Nature of Picaresque "Lives,"' *Comparative Literature* 30 (1978) 209-22.

4 In his chapter on 'Translations and Transitions,' in *The Picaresque Hero*, 139-65, Bjornson connects two important phenomena exhibited in Sorel's *Francion*, but

takes refuge in hermitage in Book v, Simplex' farewell to the world — lifted from the Spanish moralist Guevara — asserts the principle of salvation, the need for redemption expounded by Mateo Alemán in *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599).⁵

In contrast, Estebanillo's clinging to the fringes of exalted circles brings no qualitative end to the serial repetition of his escapades. After various scrapes and adventures in southern Europe, even facing the Turks at sea, he gets caught up in the war in Germany. Like Courasche later, he becomes a provisioner off and on and also in other ways turns a quick profit riding the tide of universal madness. What is more striking is how he becomes the Imperial Fool, jester to such greats as the army commander Ottavio Piccolomini and Prince-Cardinal Don Fernando, Philipp

does not directly suggest their applicability to Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus*: one is the loosening of hierarchical norms in the ideal social order under the pressure from the growing bourgeois reading public in France, who could enjoy the story of the ultimate success of a rogue who somehow maintained his sense of truth and identity (p. 154); the other is the use of a 'romance pattern' to resolve the conflict between the inner aspirations of the protagonist and external appearances (p. 157).

5 In *Picaro — Landstörtzer — Simplicius: Studien zum niederen Roman in Spanien und Deutschland* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1972), Hans Gerd Rötzer posits that the changes introduced by Aegidius Albertinus in his German version of *Guzmán* (1615), Grimmelshausen's source, definitely fixed such an emphasis. Albertinus took apart the joined narrative levels of achieved awareness (*desengaño*) and experienced time (*engaño*) in Alemán and transposed them into a progressive linear structure in two parts, the latter consisting mainly of the enormous sermons of *Guzmán* as redeemed hermit. Hence Albertinus's 'Gusman lebt nicht im Konflikt mit der Gesellschaft, sondern nur im Spannungsfeld zwischen Sünde und Gnade' (p. 96); and in turn, Grimmelshausen's Simplex must be seen as an 'artificial' figure involved in a logical series of 'representative' roles, and not as engaged in flight from the world, but renunciation (p. 142f.). In contradiction to Parker's thesis of a conversion, awakening, and social reintegration on the part of the original Spanish *Guzmán*, Benito Brancaforte has proposed that the circular structure of *Guzmán de Alfarache* is 'Sisyphean,' ambiguous, and open-ended (Introduction to his edition in 2 vols. [Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra 1979] 1, 17-37). At their deepest level, his reflections are fraught with contradictions resembling the anxiety in so many modern confessional novels. In *Guzmán de Alfarache: The Unrepentant Narrator* (London: Tamesis Books Ltd. 1977) 37-42, 93-5, Joan Arias has argued that the protagonist is hostile and devious toward his readers and world. The contradictions between his pious rationalizations and driven behavior fit a basic existential pattern. He creates a false idealized identity and condemns the unavoidable evil of mankind only in order to excuse his own failures in life. Bjornson, however, sees at the root of the self-justification the special problems of the *conversos* and other underdogs: 'Alemán displays a profound sympathy for the tragedy and pathos of those whose lives have been distorted by the society which hypocritically disdains them' (*The Picaresque Hero*, 65).

iv's brother, Governor of the Low Countries, thus bringing us into contact with the supreme tier of leaders from an underling's angle. Estebanillo's lucrative drunken fits and his terror during a theatrical menace of castration, perpetrated against him for amusement, strangely captures the nightmarish currents of the age. Like Perkeo, the later celebrated fool of Heidelberg, Estebanillo develops his vice of drunken clownery into a business and, not surprisingly, as his novel closes, he faces inexorable collapse. Hospitalized as a drunkard, he needs more desperately than ever the safe, soft niche he has sought to earn as buffoon to overlords. In a lowlife travesty of the abdication of the exhausted Emperor Charles v and his withdrawal into monastic peace, Estebanillo claims he is orphaned by the departure of so many regal personages from the scene and pleads to retire to a modest gambling casino in Naples. Whereas Simplex reverses the ending of the novel *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1555), in which after trying out the role of ecclesiastical servant as a con game, Lazarillo opts for a *marriage à trois* under the patronage of the archpriest, Estebanillo affirms the Lazarillian principle of the pension: social security, not salvation.

The opening paragraphs of *Simplicissimus* wittily contrast the inflated glory of princely origins like those in a romance with the banal reality of the country folk. In chapter 2, a brilliant parade of classic and poetic references maintains the ironic tension already inherent in the narrating voice of Simplex. On one level, he is a protagonist acting as if before our eyes; on another, he is the mature witness recollecting the pathway and commenting morally as in the Spanish genre. Although our attention may be riveted on the sudden ravaging of his village, the narrator, from the very first sentence on, tacitly informs us he has meanwhile acquired impressive learning. Beginning with *Lazarillo de Tormes*, the arrival at the role of writer is inherent in the social anxiety and self-consciousness of the speaking 'I' of the delinquent. But in *Simplicissimus*, we are constantly reminded of the fact that Simplex is an autodidact and author of considerable parts. Evidence of the literary prowess of Estebanillo is thrust upon us even before the main text of the novel. In a foreword, Estebanillo compares the twists and turns of his life to the labyrinth of Crete; in a second prologue in verse, he shows off his acquaintance with languages and names some eighty roles he played high and low. There is no mistaking he hopes to seize the attention of courtiers and rulers with his pyrotechnic punning, argot, Latin tags, Biblical and literary allusions, elegant vocabulary and colloquialisms colorfully commingled. Whereas Simplex has complex visions of the epochal criminality, Estebanillo remains heartless to the finish so that his quipping descriptions of barbarity acquire an hallucinatory character. Critics as diverse

as Parker, Spadaccini, and Bjornson agree that Estebanillo epitomizes moral corruption and social degradation, a repugnant anomie that results from institutionalized degradation. It is not merely the lack of serious thought about moral, religious, and social issues that chills our blood, but the virtually total repression of feeling by the Imperial Fool and his dedication of this record of abasement to the highest élite.

Estebanillo's artist father, a painter and gambler, has transmitted to all his sons, like original sin, the familiar picaresque malady, 'que fue ser hijodalgo, que es lo mismo que ser poeta; pues son pocos los que se escapan de una pobreza eterna o de una hambre perdurable' (I, 149). Because being a poet is equated with being a gentleman, art provides the opportunity to rise from proletarian depths. And so, besides instruction in roguery and inevitable entry into a more mundane apprenticeship to gain a living, Estebanillo is encouraged to educate himself, and somewhere along the way he has mastered the poetic idiom of Spain, for he is tireless in composing verses of praise, witty petitions, or amusements for the great. Quite in passing in chapter 10, we find out that it was only by virtue of knowing Latin that he could converse at the court in Poland. But the most bizarre feat accomplished by the aging rogue is his victory in the poetry contest in chapter 12. As so often, it all starts as a joke. Inspecting the forest of competing entries, Estebanillo realizes that they consist more of Greek prose than of Spanish verse. A student, asked about these 'Hebrew or Chaldean mysteries,' despairs of explaining them to him, 'porque lo que de presente anadaba válido era el gongorizar con elegancia campanuda, de modo que pareciese mucho lo que no era nada y que no lo entendiese el autor que lo hiciese ni los curiosos que lo leyesen' (II, 472f). This critique accepted at face value by Estebanillo is framed, according to the point of view of the harsh 'realist' writers of picaresque novels, as a description of Spanish culture toward the climactic breaking point of the Thirty Years' War. The elegant shell is hollowed out within; all parties strain to understand the highflown terms which no longer mean anything. Having watched a chum unpack flour, Estebanillo accepts the challenge to do something very recondite in the manner of Juan de la Encina and, over some wine, produces a hyperbolic and obscure sonnet that outstrips all established pomposity.

Estebanillo's flamboyance mocks that of Spanish letters, and when the academic judges proclaim him a 'second Góngora,' their tribute is a dubious honor. Instantly twenty different explications of his poem are ventured; he is celebrated because he is not understood. No wonder he leaves the 'troupe of a thousand cultivated versifiers' for the more honest of mercenaries who at least know that bread — the subject of his recondite eloquence — is the core theme of all stunts and songs of the rogues

tramping the king's highway. As merely one instance, the thrust of Estebanillo's travesty of Góngorism reinforces that of his whole book: the plea for bread. As the foreword claims, this is not merchandise for the market, but a gift to 'princes and lords and persons of merit' to prompt their reciprocal support. Self-styled as 'flor de la jacarandaina' in sentence one, Estebanillo lures us with generic bait; and he doubles the fiction by swearing in sentence two, 'que no es la fingida de Guzmán de Alfarache, ni la fabulosa de Lazarillo de Tormes, ni la supuesta del Caballero de la Tenaza, sino una relación verdadera con parte presente y testigos de vista y contestes, que los nombro a todos para averiguación y prueba de mis sucesos, y el dónde, cómo y cuando, sin carecer de otra cosa que de día, mes y año, y antes quito que no añadido' (I, 133f). However, in artistic terms, this fiction of 'true' history, in contrast to the picaresque novels in vogue, actually results from Estebanillo structuring his existence by overt or tacit generic reference. He is as much captive to the conventions of roguery as Quixote is to the spirit and deeds of Amadis and other heroes of romance. He appeals to a contemporary audience who are presumed to understand the generic rules and appreciate his efforts to outstrip the existing models. Estebanillo exemplifies the national addiction to the literary drug — not a cure for the deep ills it palliates. His book exudes a manneristic decadence when the genre turns back upon itself self-hypnotically.

Simplex' multi-faceted life has been so thoroughly analyzed by recent scholarship, and deservedly so, that I can concentrate here on a couple of salient distinctions.⁶ It is clear that Simplex educates himself further under the tutelage of the Protestant pastors, of Herzbruder, and so forth, but also through assiduous reading to which there are numerous allusions. By the time Simplex, as the bold Huntsman, secretly plunders and capitvates the imagination of the region of Soest, he is *already* a published author and rather proud of his writings. However, no matter what he may yet derive from European literature, the deepest core of teaching remains the hermit's woodland school in the early chapters of Book 1. The key composition in the novel *Simplicissimus* is thus the nightingale hymn which the hermit intones at midnight to ward off evil. It makes explicit thematically what has occurred in the innocent sounds of the shepherd's pipes in chapter 1: that the paramount function of art is to keep the spirit wakeful through the gloom of existence, to fend off the wolf, emblem of

6 The Grimmelshausen critical renaissance reached a new peak on the three-hundredth anniversary of his death, and fuller bibliography will be found in the listings of *Wolfenbütteler Barock-Nachrichten* 3-7 (1976-80). Consult the special memorial issues of the journals *Daphnis* 5 (1976) and *Argenis* 1 (1977).

spiritual threat. At the pinnacle of worldly success in Book iv, Simplex moves through an exemplary labyrinth, the metropolis of Paris. He is soon a stage idol, known as the Beau Alman, who masterfully sings, in a foreign language he doesn't understand, words which make the ladies of the capital thrill. As the title of chapter 4 states, Simplex is inevitably drawn into the Venus-Berg, the secret edifice of big-city sin, to serve a lady of such august rank that it would be fatal for him to glimpse her face. When he eventually sneaks out of Paris with (so he first believes) a case of syphilis in token of subjection to Venus, his 'illness' over Parisian ways is unmistakable. It turns out that he has actually contracted mere chicken pox, and he later regards this children's disease as a secret instance of grace through chastisement, a reminder of innocent simplicity; the immediate irony, that the great lover is thus disfigured, is scarcely lost on the reader.

The stage triumph of Simplex savors of that strange ambivalence so characteristic of high moments in the novel. M.E. Schmid has convincingly identified the 1647 Paris production of Rossi and Buti's *Orfeo* reported in the *Gazette de France*, as the probable main source, among the plethora of Orpheus dramas and operas, for Grimmelshausen's invented literary episode experienced by Simplex from the perspective of chief performer.⁷ In the opera, having begged Venus' aid to win Eurydice, whom death quickly claims, and having penetrated to Pluto and Proserpina in Hell, rewinning Eurydice only to lose her once more, Simplex commands the spectators with his dolor. Then the story takes a significant turn. Because Simplex-Orpheus forswears women in his grief, the Bacchantes strangle him and pitch him into the water. As any Jungian analyst would note, this is ambiguously the feminine element of the unconscious, also that of baptism. Beau Alman, his head alone sticking from a pit to be visible illusionistically on the surface but whom the operator of the stage dragon cannot locate to chew, is unable to restrain his smirking over the ridiculousness of the whole business. And the ladies of Paris take good note. Günther Weydt has shrewdly pointed out that, in converting the basic 'Adonis' novella, then so popular in Europe, into this section of the novel, Grimmelshausen still retained and even sharpened the Venus allusions despite the shift from Adonis to Beau Alman for the male figure.⁸ An important aspect of the expansion and

7 Martin Erich Schmid, 'Orpheus: Grimmelshausen – Anton Ulrich – Francesco Buti; die Quellen zum Pariser Opernkapitel im *Simplicissimus*,' *Argenis* 1 (1977) 279-99

8 See chapter 3, 'Der motivgeschichtliche Probefall: 'Beau Alman' und seine Herkunft aus Harsdörffer und der romanischen Novellistik,' in Weydt's *Nachahmung und*

deepening that occurs is the achievement of a Baroque perspectivism, a multi-faceted referentiality in the novel equivalent to that familiar from complex Baroque dramas. For example, when Beau Alman, who will penetrate to the secret quarters of imperious women and participate in the underground rites of Paris (Venus-Berg) in an episode that shadows the widely read Adonis tale, is playing Orpheus and pleads for help to retrieve Eurydice, he prays to Venus. This montage technique of the layering and interconnecting of motifs produces a scenic conglomerate rife with ironizing about the nature, processes, and intentions of art. However, Weydt is interested principally in showing that the direct intermediary of the story materials for Grimmelshausen was not *Bandello* or a Romanic source, but his important contemporary, the Nürnberg writer Harsdörffer.

Otherwise Weydt might have gone beyond the casual suggestion that the opera and Venus-Berg episode in *Simplicissimus* seems to anticipate something of the tone of Thomas Mann's Esmeralda Hetaera thematics in *Doktor Faustus* and remarking on the scattered references to the former book in the latter. After having drawn a grim account of the evolution of German culture and of the sicknesses of modernism in his late work *Doktor Faustus*, during the composition of which he had been consulting Grimmelshausen, an author who had written satirically of an earlier collapse of decency and order, Mann sensed a profound craving to grasp meaningfulness in the bitterly compromised traits of the artist. Since the artist figure was linked, in his own mind, with the mythological complex of the hermetic, it should not be surprising that he would find correspondences and consolation in *Simplicissimus* in the long run, a book ostensibly narrated by a person who assumed a whole range of hermetic roles (thief, trickster, scribe, rhetorician, etc.), yet emerged spiritually 'saved' despite his encounters with demonic forces. Whether or not Grimmelshausen was hinting at an allegorical sense to the comic rituals in the Beau Alman passages, the elderly Thomas Mann doubtlessly took great interest in a number of hermetic patterns in the story of the survivor Simplex before and/or anew in *Felix Krull* — as the markings in his copy of the 1909 *Simplicissimus* edition reveal which can be dated roughly by age characteristics.⁹ For instance, on finding, or rediscovering, that 'Simplex' (i.e., Grimmelshausen, hidden behind elaborate authorial

Schöpfung im Barock: Studien um Grimmelshausen (Bern, München: Francke 1968) 47-58.

⁹ I am grateful to the Thomas-Mann-Archiv (Zürich) for the privilege of being able to examine Mann's personal copy; an analysis of the import of the markings exceeds the scope of the present article.

masks in the fashion of the *Quixote* and *Francion*) has just written a *Joseph* novel, Mann slashed a large exclamation point in the margin with uncharacteristic excitement. Of course, Mann expressly interpreted his own Joseph as a Hermes figure, but it would require a careful reexamination to determine whether Grimmelshausen was as clearly conscious of such a linkage with other manifest Hermes traits in *Simplicissimus*; nonetheless, the grounds for self-identification on the part of Mann are quite immediate. In addition, one of the alternate names for Grimmelshausen's hero, Simplex, possesses several qualities which Mann could associate with Felix: The names resemble each other phonemically through the similarity of their final syllable and ocularly through the crossover of vowels. Being bisyllabic, each can suggest the notion of the 'double,' a direct implication in Grimmelshausen's novel ('duplex' and 'duplicitas' as antipodes of 'simplex' and 'simplicitas'), as well as basic to Mann's thematics; both names are anchored metaphysically as positive states, and one can enable the other. The passage through the realm of earthly reality leads by role reversal or doubling in such a way for Simplex that, after being threatened with *duplicitas*, he comes full circle into a regained and heightened *simplicitas*. Whereas Mann conducts us toward, but not onto, the threshold where the youthful, lucky hero will, in formalistic analogy to the traditional *pícaros*, inevitably become disturbed, anxious, needing meaning — in short: ready to become a writer —, the person who has been setting down this confessional fiction and whose later perturbation of spirit is foreshadowed in the opening paragraph of the novel. The exemption, the 'miracle' produced by the novel remaining a 'fragment,' is no accident; Mann never shows us the moment of reversal when Felix ('Infelix') would experience *infelicitas*.

Oskar Seidlin has shown that, in writing *Felix Krull*, Mann was continuously mindful of the picaresque tradition and of Cervantes.¹⁰ When Felix is born by the banks of the Rhine to a family of dubious enterprise, there can be no question but that Mann offers, detail by detail, analogues for the start of the first Spanish rogue Lazarillo, by the river Tormes, the more obvious of many literary ancestors. In a subsequent study, Donald F. Nelson has demonstrated how thoroughly Mann informed his 'satyr-piece' with symbolic meanings on the psychological and mythological levels as an exploration into his own identification with Hermes and the 'archaic depths of the Jungian Collective Unconscious.'¹¹ These apprecia-

¹⁰ Oskar Seidlin, 'Picaresque Elements in Thomas Mann's Work,' *Modern Language Quarterly* 12 (1951) 183-200

¹¹ Donald F. Nelson, 'Preface,' in *Portrait of the Artist as Hermes: A Study of Myth and Psychology in Thomas Mann's 'Felix Krull'* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1971) [i]

tions of the *Bekenntnisse des Hochstaplers Felix Krull* are so instructive that I can point to them with the suggestion that we could add Grimmelshausen on both sides of the ledger; that is, we should evaluate Mann's response to *Simplicissimus* as an act of recognition not merely that the hermetic and picaresque were related, but that they had in fact been artistically joined by the seventeenth-century novelist. In the oft cited letter, dated February 18, 1941, in reaction to Kerényi's book *Das göttliche Kind*, Mann drew together the features of 'hermetic' lack of unity of character and the picaresque in his own novels:

Und den primitiven Mangel an "Einheit der Person," von dem Jung spricht, habe ich in den "Geschichten Jaakobs" ganz auf eigene Hand als humoristische Tatsache behandelt ... Die mythologische Figur, die mich jetzt notwendiger Weise mehr und mehr anzieht, und über die ich wieder soviel Schönes in diesem Buche fand, ist der mondverbundene Hermes. Er spukte schon bisher da und dort durch die Joseph-Bücher; aber im letzten Bande, der den Helden als Staats-Geschäftsmann von reichlicher Durchtriebenheit zeigt, wechselt dieser aus der ursprünglichen Tammuz-Adonis-Rolle immer mehr in die eines Hermes hinüber. Seine Aktionen und Transaktionen sind moralisch-ästhetisch nicht gut anders zu vertreten, als im Sinne des göttlichen Schelmen-Romans.¹²

I would propose that the transformations of role undergone by Simplex cover many of the same mythological moments alluded to above by Mann and that, moreover, the containing framework of the *Simplicissimus* was the newer merged humoristic-picaresque manner of narration, one variety of which had appeared in the *Francion*.

Were we to take up once more the example which intrigued Weydt, the Beau Alman section, it would not be far-fetched to speculate that (regardless of Grimmelshausen's 'conscious' purpose) Mann could have read the Venus-Berg happenings in *Simplicissimus* under Jungian tutelage and regarded the seventeenth-century book as a kind of pre-revelation. If so, Grimmelshausen would have confirmed and reinforced Mann in his own treatment of the story of the artist as a Hermes who interrelates with the Feminine, as a confederate of Venus, as the messenger who penetrates to the life-secret and survives bringing back his knowledge, even if in disguised symbolic form. According to Nelson, the closure of the novel *Felix Krull*, with Maria's exuberant cry 'Holé! Heho! Ahé!' should be read as a veiled reenactment of the ancient mysteries as the mercurial or hermetic mediator Krull passes from the daughter (Proserpina) to the mother

12 Thomas Mann — Karl Kerényi: *Gespräch in Briefen* (Zürich: Rhein Verlag 1960)

(Demeter). '... in Senhora Kuckuck's embrace the end stage of transmutation is reached: the achievement of psychic wholeness through a union of the conscious and the unconscious.'¹³ Simplex' arrival in the bedchamber of the mysterious high and mighty masked lady would corroborate the occult sense of his penetration into the realm of death as Orpheus to resuscitate Eurydice; except, of course, that no modern rescue occurs by breaking off the story in the manner of *Felix Krull*. Grimmelshausen subtly manages to have things both ways in his own fashion. On the one hand, like Leverkühn in *Doktor Faustus*, Simplex retreats from the inner sanctum of the Feminine with a case of 'venereal' disease; on the other, he wends his way toward 'home' bearing the poxicratic scars of 'childhood,' after all.

Both *Estebanillo* and *Simplicissimus* contain such a plethora of allusions to the artist role that we can appreciate its problematical importance in these works quite without extrinsic evidence. Enjoying them naively, 'as if' they were genuine autobiographies (which, of course, they are not), in no way excludes recognition of the ambivalent profile of their artist-narrators. Several scholarly hypotheses, however, can be adduced which, in trying to explain the unusual fusion of educative attainments and roguish career, lend support to the argument that each of the two seventeenth-century novelists was self-consciously using the comic tensions inherent in the apparent contradiction of high and low attributes. Marcel Bataillon has maintained that, in fact, two different personalities were amalgamated to create the strange conflict between Estebanillo's lowly and grotesque function as clown and his position of trust as diplomatic courier.¹⁴ Certain realities of various far-removed power centers of Europe must, according to Bataillon, have been known to the actual author who, being directly connected with the Imperial headquarters in Brussels, wrote the chimerical biography not as a confession, but as entertainment for an in-group, in order to amuse and gain favor from his chief, the great generalissimo Piccolomini. Bataillon's candidate

13 Nelson, *Portrait of the Artist as Hermes*, 106. I am indebted to an anonymous reader of my manuscript for pointing out that Lazarillo cries 'olé, olé' at the end of the first 'Tratado.' This famous wordplay (on the bullfight and the word 'smell') occurs when the rogue gets his revenge on the blind man by inducing him to butt against a post: '¿Cómo? ¿y oliste la longaniza y no el poste ? ¡Olé! ¡Olé!, le dije yo.' I believe that Mann would readily have picked up this exclamation as a 'marker' for a hermetic *pícaro* because of the underground association with the archaic ritual of bullfighting.

14 Marcel Bataillon, 'Estebanillo González: bouffon "pour rire,"' in *Studies in Spanish Literature of the Golden Age, Presented to Edward M. Wilson*, ed. R.O. Jones (London: Thames Books Ltd. 1973) 25-44

for the actual authorship is Captain Jerónimo de Bran, quartermaster to the Imperial forces, trusted agent of Piccolomini, acknowledged servant of the Emperor, lover of the arts, a Galician who was educated to write Italian, etc. From the existence of strikingly similar portraits of Estebanillo as rogue (for the novel) and of Bran as an elegant Imperial officer, both engraved by Lucas Vorsterman, Bataillon has ventured the conclusion that the frontispiece and many of the details of Estebanillo's missions were for the sake of mystification, hinting at the identity of the actual author. From the archival evidence of the existence of a Stefaniglio (the name is typical for a jester) in service to Piccolomini, it seems probable that such a person did exist whom the witty literatus Bran could have appropriated for an alter ego in his writings. If Bataillon's suggestive analysis is not totally wrong, it could be modified into the more sensational, but less probable hypothesis that Bran at some time assumed the disguise of a clown (perhaps an actual court fool) under the name Estebanillo. In any event, the lack of sarcastic verve toward the politically great and the ostentatious literariness of Estebanillo's approach to roguery would fit a personage who deliberately studied lowlife.¹⁵

But we know that assuming the point of view of a delinquent or fool constituted a major literary mode of the seventeenth century — not necessarily based on biographical reality. This factor is strikingly evident in the development of Grimmelshausen who, according to Manfred Koschlig, was deeply influenced by (the then still anonymous) Charles Sorel in the process of composing the *Simplicissimus* and thereafter in even greater measure.¹⁶ Such connoisseurs of the seventeenth-century novel as Leibniz, who shared appreciation of *Simplicissimus* with the time's most sophisticated readers, regarded Sorel's *Francion* as a major achievement and model in Europe. Both the *Francion*, explicitly cited by Grimmelshausen (who had read the German edition of 1662), and the *Simplicissimus* are cast in the pseudo-confessional picaresque mode, but their wealth of disparate, often contradictory elements is unified by the constant sense that we are experiencing a fiction. Thus both have the

15 In the Introduction to their critical edition of *Vida y hechos*, Spadaccini and Zahareas do not find any convincing likeness between the two engravings (1, 27), but arrive at an essentially similar view of the generic results: 'Poco cambiaría en cuanto a la composición de la obra: si un autor apócrifo dió a un pícaro inventado una dimensión histórica, un bufón auténtico dió a su vida verdadera una dimensión ficticia o literaria' (1, 29).

16 See the section 'Das Lob des *Francion* bei Grimmelshausen' in Koschlig's *Das Ingenium Grimmelshausens und das 'Kollektiv': Studien zur Entstehungs- und Wirkungsgeschichte des Werkes* (München: C.H. Beck 1977) 45-89.

stamp of real experiences, (auto-)biographical facts, and immediate historical context, while they succeed in bringing together high and low life by the fusion of diverse courtier roles and jester existence. A central preoccupation of the *Francion* is with the behavior and mentality of a new European type, the self-proclaiming 'artist,' who frequently blends into the phantast and madman. The amusing artifices and preposterous schemes and ambitions of this human type contribute to the larger goal of satirical exposure of social realities, as in the Jupiter episode of Book III of *Simplicissimus*. Grimmelshausen successfully combined the new style of fiction demonstrated by the *Francion* and other generic materials and impulses and he superimposed his own lived experiences on them.¹⁷

That is, today we know that a great many of the happenings in *Simplicissimus* feed on actual moments in the author's life, whereas much more derives demonstrably from his insatiable reading and powers of absorption as an autodidact. But this may mean that in a kind of modern naïveté we are pulling apart — and taking a different pleasure in dissecting — what was an accomplished fiction. Koschlig argues that, in terms of the seventeenth-century novel, Grimmelshausen's use of the *Francion* 'Manner' ('Manier') clearly signaled a new, highly appreciated approach in fiction, and that in his case the older Spanish picaresque models exercised a mainly indirect influence through this newer, more comprehensive approach. Key terms that recur throughout Grimmelshausen attest the relationship. The goal of 'satirical' ('satyrisch') writing is 'completeness' ('Vollkommenheit'), i.e., 'truthfulness' ('Wahrhaftigkeit'), a modern disillusionistic verisimilitude that refuses to ignore the low, mean, deviant, ridiculous, criminal in human affairs; hence the reiterated rejection of the older chivalric, pastoral, etc., as mendacious and comic, because self-evidently preposterous. Whereas Sorel's aim is a complete illustration and survey unmasking his world, Grimmelshausen's religious orientation in *Simplicissimus* transmutes the social-critical amusement into an emblematic, symbol-laden tale. His later works then, according to Koschlig, loosen this religious tie and move toward a more utilitarian, rationalistic satire.

In Book v, Simplex penetrates beneath the Mummelsee on a fabulous voyage to the realm of the Sylphs, learning that all the waters are inter-

17 Spadaccini and Zahareas astutely note the telltale traits of melancholy beneath the professional 'good humor' of the learned buffon (*Vida y hechos*, 1, 45ff.); but they do not connect his pathetic strivings with the new generic type of the desperate or cracked intellectual-adventurer, familiar in the drama and novel of Europe throughout the seventeenth century, nor do they mention Sorel's *Francion* (1622) or Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* (1668).

connected in the earth's depths and finding a utopian order to which that on the surface is a sorry contrast. It incorporates counterparts to all the races and nations of men. Demonstrating 'vorwitzige Importunität,' the intrepid explorer Simplex, in answer to the query of the Sylph King, lies about the behavior of the various classes of humanity; his glowing report is a sardonic topsey-turveyneess reciprocal to the one he has just been privileged to discover. '... ich sehe wohl,' says the King, 'daß du ziemlich kurios bist' (p. 445). The double meaning of 'kurios' is especially appropriate for the particular hermeticism of Baroque Simplex who as clown, thief, illusionist, and confidence man goes about discovering secrets just under the surface of things and, as masked writer, conveys his knowledge, which paradoxically includes the tenet of 'Vorwitz,' the dangerous legacy of the fall in Eden, 'maßen wir noch alle an unsrer ersten Mutter Kuriosität zu dauen [verdauen] haben' (III, ch. 23, p. 296). It is the artist Simplex who, having just play-acted the descent to Hades as Orpheus and about to be invited into the Venus-Berg, can speak with deprecating nonchalance about the occult sciences revealed to him: '... denn ich hatte aus Lust bei meinem Doktor schon perlutiern, resolviern, sublimiern, coaguliern, digeriern, calciniern, filtiern, und dergleichen unzählig viel alkühmistische Arbeit gelernet ...' (IV, ch. 4, p. 313). Being the nephew of Schimmelpreester, Felix lives in other times and may less censoriously become privy to contemporary secrets. But when he dreams of evolution after the grand lecture by Professor Kuckuck on the train from Paris to Lisbon, he envisions himself in the magic transactional idiom of French as if Mann, consciously or unconsciously, echoes the Simplician-Christian term for the strange adventure of curiosity: 'Voilà le voyageur curieux.'

It may not be feasible to do more than speculate how the wars of religion led to widespread disillusionment about the purported ideological grounds of conflict and to new perceptions of realities such as the functioning of the modern state, and the nature of social roles; or how such perceptions influenced the evolution of the picaresque novel. But the two late works in that stream, *Estebanillo González* and *Simplicissimus* — and one could also cite the *Francion* — do exhibit an incontestable fact: the arrival at a significant fusion of the roles of the criminal, clown, and artist. It only makes sense that, by the mid-seventeenth century, we should hear in fiction the first-person voices of aggressively self-defining underdogs who — most often in vain — seek to reshape themselves through role-playing. The drive of the confidence-men and rogues to realize their fortune through theater exhibits the shadowy counterpart to the higher knowledge sought and gained by the sublime Prince Hamlet who, standing at the mid-point of the World

theater in European literary history, disillusionistically tested reality in a flowing series of theatrical meditations and experiments.¹⁸ As the prefatory bragging about his acting by Estebanillo and the opening emblematic portrayal of Simplicissimus as a chimerical monster on the world-stage cannot fail to remind us, the rogue, in becoming self-conscious through and of art, finds his identity within the shifting pages of a bigger play in progress.

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18 I have discussed the thematics of the World Theater as a persisting literary stimulus in my essay 'Dream and Calculus in European Baroque Drama,' in *Critical Dimensions: English, German, and Comparative Literature Essays in Honor of Aurelio Zanco* (Cuneo: Saste 1978) 181-200; and in a review article focused on 'Manfred Schmeling, *Das Spiel im Spiel. Ein Beitrag zur Vergleichenden Literaturkritik* (Saarbrücken 1977)' in *Die Sprachkunst* 10 (1979) 241-8.