

*Dieses Exemplar ist  
mit dem deutschen Text verglichen*

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THE LIFE OF LIFE

A PROLOGUE

p. 269 Vol I Die Sprache  
(not exactly the same)

A wretched little sheet of paper is lying before me, half covered with a boy's pleasant handwriting. <sup>But</sup> he was twelve years old when he returned home from school one day after he had heard of Medea, the betrayed Greek heroine. His grandfather was <sup>Abbot Thayer,</sup> a great American painter; his father, however, was more or less insane, and the boy had every reason to be unhappy. And all this, Medea, genius, unhappiness, seems to be poured into the lines on the sheet. They have opened my eyes to the power of the life of life, of the spirit. And I trust that they may open the reader's eyes as well to the quality which distinguishes human utterance from its material causes.

These few lines succeed. . . But first, here are the lines:

medea

Life is black and hearts are black  
and black are the hills where the shepherds lie  
Till by some sweet miracle a heart  
comes fluttering by  
And I seize it and draw it closer and closer  
Till with a burst of love and fear  
I leave it for the drear, drear  
Thoughts of life and death and sorrow  
Till someone better than the rest  
braver than the best  
Shall come. . .

There is one single sign of punctuation <sup>in</sup> this poem's manuscript, <sup>The first</sup> after 'drear!'. The boy was an excellent student and it was not lack of knowledge that prevented him from inserting periods or commas. This shows in the fact that <sup>The</sup> one comma which he did put in, between 'drear, drear,' is in the right place. But it is a place in which the two words are less separated, in elocution, than any of the other phrases which lack signs of punctuation, between them.

The sentences did not need signs in the writer's mind, nor do we need signs.

It is all said in one breath, one <sup>h</sup> rhythm. The existence of the one comma, at an insignificant place, underlines the great fact that this poem is just one undivided whole, conceived as such, from beginning to end and in it, the clauses, sentences, and phrases, are subdivisions sufficiently marked by the flow of the language <sup>in verses</sup> itself without any signs. The fact that this flow ends abruptly with the poem unfinished, is a second argument to prove that a poem is one exhalation of the soul. The torso or fragmentary character, in this case, warrants the genuineness of the outpouring more than any formal perfection could. Because it broke off unfinished, the author did not tarnish the splendour of the original impulse by studied prosaic afterthought and the ~~am~~endments of reflection.

The youth and freshness of the child, the extraordinary circumstances of his home, the existence of a comma in a place of third rate importance and the unfinished and unstudied, embryonic form of outpouring, are four arguments that make me think this to be as good as any poem to study a law of human utterance, <sup>at</sup> its source, <sup>a law</sup> which may expand our concept of logic, a little bit.

It is the thesis of this paper that punctuation is the residue carried over into prose from plain chant, the oldest layer of speech. If this were true, it would mean that to this day, all our logical reasoning is still dependant on this primary layer of language, by being compelled to use punctuation. We hold that the single facts of rests in music, of punctuation in prose, are of primary importance for the understanding of logic.

Punctuation is not a convenience, introduced into an existing prose style. Punctuation is the reminder or ~~residue~~ of ~~the~~ previous ~~phase~~ of speech withing prose, a remnant, the existence of which is not that of a fossil; to the contrary, the survival of punctuation is the minimum requirement by which the purely logical procedure is kept going at all, with the help of which it is able to be meaningful and effective. The punctuation in prose signifies that amount of ~~poetry~~ <sup>musical speech</sup> which even the most extreme rationalisation must preserve within its own style and diction, in order to remain valid and capable of being understood. That is the reason why poetry does need little punctuation; it has the original <sup>h</sup>rythm of *plaisir*, *chant*, of which punctuation is a residue. Prose needs punctuation to keep its connection with poetry. What I am driving at, is this: Prose, logical prose, rational propositions presuppose the constant and perpetual use of man's poetical faculties. They reduce these faculties to a minimum, it is true, and after having them reduced to a minimum, they build on them a second story of reflection, dialectical analysis, and abstract reasoning. But the poetical flow of language and speech is the logical a priori to the crystals of logical language. No argument is possible among people who do not speak the same language. And as we shall see, the sameness of language/ does not rest on or result from logical argument, but on sameness of intonation and <sup>h</sup>rythm, on sameness of poetical expression. Sameness of <sup>activity, sameness of</sup> feeling and sameness of behaviour precede sameness of <sup>verbal communication</sup> ~~argumentation~~. The indebtedness of prose to poetry is permanent. And as a reminder, the <sup>h</sup>rythmical flow of speech imposes itself on the legician in the form of punctuation.

Punctuation is <sup>ly</sup>thm boiled down to a minimum, but punctuation <sup>like rhythm</sup> (is subdivision. A book is divided in chapters, the chapters in paragraphs, the paragraphs in sentences, the sentences in clauses, the clauses in words, the words in vowels and consonants.

Let, this whole matter of dividing up the Gettysburg address into paragraphs and Moby Dick into chapters does not alter the fact that the address and Moby Dick are essentially unities. On the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, the Gettysburg address is given without paragraphing. And rightly so. The text impells us to read it rightly. It is one utterance subdivided into parts, not a sum of sentences, added up. The whole of a human utterance dictates the place of its parts. The syllogism, All men are mortal, Socrates is a man, Socrates is mortal, is no exception of this rule.

The syllogism combines a generalization from past experience with the observation of a new experience and makes peace between them. But the three sentences are all present in the mind of the speaker before he opens his fountain pen to write down the first one of them. The sentence: All men are mortal, is not an(a, to which, later ~~be/aa~~ b and c, are added; it is one third,  $\frac{1}{3}$ , of the syllogism  $\frac{1}{3}$ , and the two other sentences are the two other thirds of the unit. All three together are one exhalation, subdivided in three clauses. In other words, the period between "Socrates is a man" and: "hence, Socrates is mortal" is like a rest between two cadences that are part of one whole, a priori. The interpoint is not a "full stop", but literally an interpoint which states an inner relation between particles which are destined for each other and are said because of each other and therefore predetermined by each other like strophe, anti-strophe, and "burden"

of a song. The rythmical flow of argument is emphasized by inter-point. These signs do not deny the unity of the whole within which they are dispersed. That a sentence is the logical a priori to the atoms of single words just as the word "precedes" the syllables (logically, is generally recognized after Wilhelm Wundt. But Holism and linguistic insight cannot stop at the single sentence. The one breath of one sentence belongs to a wave continuum.

This may shock those whose <sup>let their mind be</sup> eyes accustomed to read books determine their notions of speech. Even those might think of the harmonious flow of <sup>the</sup> 3 x 36 songs in Dantes Divine Commedia. Is not the whole immaculate because it is one single sustained utterance, one wave continuum, regardless of single weak lines? Is not the sustaining power so impressive here because the book depicts the surf of the ocean language, in its own expanse?

To the realist, it should be immediately clear that speech are waves, acoustic waves, and that it is quite arbitrary to consider one wave as existing by itself, even in the physical sense. Trains of waves, and <sup>u/</sup> (waves ~~continuum~~ continuum are routine assumptions. And who would look at the ocean and take out one or two waves in isolation? This, we however would do if we tried to understand the whole of language from single sentences.

Hence, the facts of punctuation invite a new consideration. In the most hemmed and hawhed prose, we find interpoint as the representative of rhythm. Punctuation is the residu, in prose, of the rythmical flow of speech. And even prose cannot do without because it is objectified, petrified plainchant. ~~Prose is yesterday's poetry.~~ Even in prose, the sentences are not separate units,

but as bricks become a house only because of their place in the whole, so a sentence depends on the sustained breath of the whole period, paragraph, speech, book, in which it appears. This is the reason ~~why~~ a sentence which is faulty can be a masterpiece within a larger whole. Or a sentence stammered and stuttered can be eloquence incarnate. The whole poem is "a priori", dominates the single line, the whole book dominates each paragraph; the whole of language represents the process and meaning of speaking better than any one sentence or one word. Turgenev stated this in emotional form: "In the days of doubts, in the days of oppressive reflections concerning the destinies of my native land, Thou alone ~~at-my-at~~ art my stay and my staff, O great, mighty, true, and free Russian tongue! Wert thou not, how could one do aught but fall into despair at the sight of all that is happening in Russia? But it is past all belief that such a tongue is given to any but a great people!" <sup>1</sup>.

And all the tongues, Russian, Chinese, Greek, German, Basque, are, in the last analysis, idioms of one tongue. This again is everybody's belief. The Bible has been translated into every language under the sun and there are thousands of them. How is this possible without the common belief that all languages to some extent are open to each other, belong to some universe of which they represent the shares held by various groups of people? What if each language were one share, each nation one shareholder but if they all together found one Corporate Body of speech? The The activities of science do not refute our belief. When Niels Boor construed a model atom in the image of the solar system,

<sup>1</sup>. Translated by B.G. Guernsey (The Vanguard Press, 1943).

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when the Hayden planetarium in New York was built, it was natural to manufacture the particles and the stars, one by one. And they were put together, these metallic elements, afterwards, to form the model of the cosmos. However, the builder of the Planetarium or of the model atom did not imply that the atom or the universe had come into existence in the same manner. Quite the contrary; they would say that their reconstruction did not suggest any such origin. The universe of the stars ~~er~~ certainly came not into existence as the Hayden Planetarium. Only a fool would look for a factory in which the stars of our skies were founded. It came into being in the reverse manner, as one whole within which every part took shape.

The symbol of this enduring dependency of all logic on our participation in a universal rhythm exists in the form of a little word.

When I was for three years the student of Otto Schroeder, the greatest expert on Greek metrics, he used to tell me in rare moments that one real book was still to be written on the most important word of all language. However, he said, he probably would never write it since a lifetime was too short for preparing a man to do the job well. With the boldness of youth, I immediately bought a notebook, put the ominous word on it in quotation marks. I still have the notebook. The label still reads "Und", the German equivalent of "and".

And indeed, the word "and" the logician cannot eliminate, as little as period and comma. This word "and" makes breath and takes breath. In our poem, the same effect is produced by "till" in the last part. However "and" and "untill" are closely related to each other. Both transcend and continue and point forward.

Simple as "and" may appear, <sup>( )</sup>and as joining phrase to phrase, always gives away the secret of speech: It always is longing to make contacts with all language, it never is factual, always creating a movement beyond the factual statement. "And" is the thinker's or speaker's admission that there is more to be said, that he must keep in a larger horizon than in the narrow confinement of one sentence. And as long as our tale or yarn goes on, as long as we add "and", "and", and "and" again we stress our faith that any particular communication should be taken within a larger frame of reference. "And" is the principle of relativity for the mind. And as long as we keep going and have the courage to say "and", we are bigger than our own dogmatism. The best definition of dogmatism might be found in connection with this moving on. The dogmatist confines himself to a self-made prison. He has made up his mind so that he goes not wish to place his statements and propositions within an infinite river of rhythmical speech, of which his exhalation is just one. He prefers his self-made, finite so-called "frame of reference". He denies the identity of all utterances already made with all the unvoiced future yet to come. He sees the daylight of articulation without the dark womb out of which eternally the articles of our faith are restated.

The word "and" defies all such dogmatism. It defies the congruity between the number of statements made and the number of statements that could and should be made. The word "and" does not deal with the question whether the propositions made so far are right or wrong. But the term "and" is the stumbling block for the attempt to identify the quantity of statements made with the quantity of statements that are pertinent.



The word "and" is the same safety valve within words which is represented by punctuation in prose, rhythm in poetry, melody in music. It constantly points to the incongruity between the things said and the things that can be said, between the actual and the possible within our mind and within our mental processes.

The Symbolic logician who replaces "and" by his plus sign, has not abolished the volitional element of the term. Simply by continuing into another sentence, another paragraph, and another book, the logician admits that the life of the mind must remain bigger than that part of it which already has taken shape in articulation. The word "and" is the most representative word for the time element in speech. . It holds the balance between past and future. As long as a man is able to go on with an "and", the greatest danger of the mind is banished. Our lunatic asylums are filled with closed minds who have dogmatized and who have mistaken a sentence once uttered with the infinite Odyssey of speech in which we all with all our words, are verses. "And" added to the sentence: "Every man a king" does not refute the truth of this sentence relative and proportionate: And every man a priest. And every man a boss.

Every poem is a piece of art by means of proportion. Proportion is the esthetic aspect of truth. The beauty of truth is a condition of truth. Dogmatism deprives truth of proportion. Punctuation and the little inconspicuous word "and" keep the connection between beauty and truth alive. Poetry and prose, the esthetic and the rational, a sense of proportion and a sense of precision, are indivisible qualities of the mind.

The lack of punctuation in Bernard's poem was natural because

a poem in itself stresses the sense of proportion sufficiently. But in a book on logic, the sense of proportion must be represented at least by the illogical but helpful conjunctions like "and," "thus," "hence," "then," which keep the mind going and emancipated from its own dogmatic statements. Poetical periods lack precision. Logical periods may sterilize themselves by overlooking the balance between precision and proportion. Even the best logician should end his book with an "and" to caution the reader. That may be the ~~reason~~ ~~why~~ reason why Goethe ended his letters with the emancipating antidote against dogmatism, with the formula:

Und so fortan.  
And so onward.

A French writer, in 1937, rediscovered this "<sup>élan</sup>~~élan~~-vital" of speech, and he set out to describe the breathing of a sentence. His hero (Henry de Montherlant, *le Démon du Lien* Paris 1937 p. 275) sits down to work; he writes: "Et la première phrase apparut, sûre de son élan, de sa courbe et de son but, heureuse de sa longueur promise, avec ses virgules et ses ~~points~~ <sup>points</sup> de virgules (il la scandait tout haut: 'virgule. . . pointer et virgule'; c'était la respiration ~~des~~ <sup>du</sup> texte; si le texte n'avait pas bien <sup>respiré</sup> ~~respiré~~ <sup>il</sup> ~~il~~ <sup>il</sup> eut crevé comme un vivant." Yes indeed, if He, the Spirit, did not breathe, he would expire like any living being that stops breathing. It often has been said of the spirit that it is *vita vitae*, life concentrated into some higher state of aliveness. Life is condensed into spirit, as much as chemical and physical processes are not simply elements of the biological process but are actually transformed by the biological process into something basically different from their purely physical existence.

If This were the proper place to do it, we could show that living things differ from mechanics because they may die. Life differs from mere matter because it produces corpses. Death makes life into life. Now it is not more complicated to find out about the next stage, spirit. Spirit is life preceded by death. While in natural life, birth precedes death, in any inspired utterance, the dying precedes the being born. A "natural child" is just born. A legitimate child has parents who have abandoned their own free physical nature of male and female, in a marriage previous to the child's birth. For this reason, the child of "parents" receives a certain spirit, in addition to its physical birth. His father's name is the minimum of spirit which shows to the child that it was expected. Any mother is "expectant" for physical reasons; that the father is made expectant-- with some tribes, the poor man is made to go to bed-- is his inspired contribution to the event. He has died to his own bachelorhood. But this means that the spirit is an actual process, proceeding between dying and coming to life again, as our boy's poem beautifully shows, in its own inspiration from despair to hope. It means that the spirit is nothing unreal, mystical, abstract but as real as electricity or light waves. It is the energy caused and produced by the combination of death with birth. This is the reason why spirit is "life's life", just as life has been defined as "the chemical factory of chemical factories", in a famous definition of a textbook on biology.

This "life's life" has a realm of its own which is bigger than my or your life. The existence of the spirit is so universal that no living being can egress out of it. All utterances ever made and ever to be made provoke each other, stimulate each other,

discord and concord, take place in one field of force. All truly inspired speech is one speech; all human language is one great orchestrated chorus. The realm of the spirit since it makes the origins of beginnings, stretches from the beginning of any speech to the end of all speech.

Every inspired speaker or writer has known it and knows it/; Stephen Vincent Benét formulated his creed, in the Western Star: "Americans are always moving on". In the physical realm, smilingly everybody accepts this description of dynamic living. However, the mental life inhales and exhales in no different manner. Punctuation is the frozen musical element of speech which was once movement, and must remain movement always. The visitor of China, of a Synagogue, of Holy Mass, may still bring to his ear the rhythmic flow of speech. Under the influence of these tones he may cease to look at speech as a bricklaying process. The reverse is true. Thought is breathtaking.~~the~~ The whole Bible is one huge breath. And the melancholic poem of an unhappy boy and Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, share this feature: Their lines and sentences and paragraphs are inside partitions in the wholeness and oneness of a man's sincere movement which makes the poem of the child and the book of the sage, the Bible and Kant, Newton and Dante, memorable. He who misinterprets punctuation as stopping the flow of speech between disconnected atoms of words, need not be read. He who reads and writes interpunctuations because he is carried by a real inspiration, deserves to be understood; for, he understands. It is not trivial to describe the meaning of interpunctuation and to reclaim the wisdom of the word "and"? Why should one have to stress the obvious?

Do we not speak since long of the sustained inspiration of a true poem, of the sustained interest in a play? Yes, in another profession, the unity and wholeness of any book is on official record. Lord Erskine, in his famous speech for the Dean of St. Asaph proved that by taking out sentences from the context of the Bible, it was easy to send any publisher of the Bible to prison for having ~~printed~~ <sup>printed</sup> that there was no God! That the meaning of the whole gives sense to its parts, is a maxim of the law courts. Why, then, carry coals to Newcastle and reassert the obvious?

Literature and law know that which logic, linguistics, ethics, theology, science seem to have forgotten: That all human sentences balance each other. How would it be if all human speech were governed by the law of response between all sentences? If nobody could speak an isolated sentence? If all human speech had started as a system of responses, with inter-punctuations, yes, but nowhere punctuated by complete stops?

~~What if~~ The sentence: "life is black" of our little poem, — never <sup>it</sup> was meant to stand alone from the very origin of speech? If it is only in our grammar books for children and in our logic for students and in our Berlitz schools for foreigners that such unreal dogmas are believed? Would not speech and language and poetry and prose appear in a new light? Indeed, "life is black", in Bernard's poem, "til someone better shall come". By this relation, the meaning of "life is black" is sustained. It has no meaning or inspiration in itself. It is so true in the direction of the black present because ~~of~~ its equally eloquent trend towards the future when someone shall come, points the other way!

Speech has never been a statement of facts but a response

between facts and emotions and acts.

"Life is black  
til by some miracle. . .  
Thoughts of life and death and sorrow  
till someone better than the rest,  
braver than the best  
shall come. . . ."

The factual, the lyrical, the dramatic sustain and condition each other

If the punctuation between these moods is interpunctuation, then speech might perhaps have consisted of dramatic lyrical factual elements always and can be conveyed only as the perpetual unity of all three? Then, the boy, Bernard, ~~speak~~ forsooth as we all should speak, in a sustained responsiveness of various modes. What if speech were man's power to perceive the world and himself in more than one of its aspects, man's crucial gift. Our eyes can never see the truth because it has more aspects than the one which hits the eye. Are we able to speak the truth because speech is the power which makes the different aspects of life simultaneous in one sustained exhalation or inspiration? Is speech man's victory over his incoherent aspects of the truth? Is speech the power to say in one breath

Fiat lux.  
et lux facta est,  
et videbat lucem quia erat bona?

This, indeed, is the revelation of Bernard's poem that man's sustained breath can unite in one meaningful inspiration the aspects through which our bodily senses pass in separation, as through meaningless chaos.

"Life is black", how intolerable. "Life is black til by some miracle", how human.

Speech composes the feuds of our blind reactions since it allows us to comprise, in one sustained inspiration, ~~peer-~~ opposites,

contrasts, facts, feelings, and flats. Perhaps, the drama, the epics, the lyrics, the mathematics condition each other if we only believe in the "ands" between them, if we only believe in inter-punctuation. Then, and only then, can speech fulfill its eternal purpose. Speech eternally promises to experience in one sustained spirit,

Winter and summer  
cold and heat  
~~heat-and-cold~~  
sorrow and joy  
death and birth  
defeat and victory  
war and peace  
revolution and law  
curse and blessing  
end and beginning.

If speech emancipates us from the fetters of the moment and its blindness, should we not study the conditions under which it emancipates?

we gave a special <sup>sequel</sup> ~~order~~ to the pairs which speech, in one sustained inspiration, can synchronize. We placed end before beginning, death before birth, sorrow before joy. And we obeyed the laws of real speech in doing so! He cannot speak, he cannot think who expects to understand death by birth, sorrow by joy, end by beginning. The sciences of the last century did not believe in any such laws of the spirit, any <sup>h</sup> rhythm of inspiration, any unity between single sentences. We were told that the proper pairs were birth and death, beginning and end, joy and sorrow.

Scientifically, the sentences "life is black" or "the morning is bright" are considered to stand abruptly by themselves. And the sciences tried accordingly to analyze origins without ends, birth without death, children without adults, we have a child psychology while the aims of the adult (which the child will have to be) remain unknown; we have a "Science of biology in which death is discussed on page 991 of the most current textbook, for the first time. We have an anthropology which unearths the teeth of a man whose final destiny it declares to ignore. Man intends to be happy before he has volunteered for the unhappy aspects of life, to go to heaven without having been in hell. Since man is man, he has fought such chaos. He has challenged all these presumptions. Our power to speak is based on the reverse order. Man can speak of joy because of sorrow. Man speaks because he suffered from the blackness of life and hopes like little Bernard for the coming of somebody better. He speaks because he was overwhelmed by death and tries to make it the womb of a new birth. He speaks at his graves because he believes in his destiny. This is the primeval inspiration of humanity, by which man learned to combine the fragments of his chaotic experiences. Our times have defied and nearly wrecked this revelation. And forsooth, at the end of this spirit-defying century, we see whole nations and whole masses of people lose their power to speak, to converse and to respond. - We lose our power of speech when we puncture its whole, when we slice up our dramatic, epical, lyrical, mathematical powers into separate truths, each separated by a full stop from the others.

We keep our power of speech as long as we believe in the essential unity behind facts, feelings, acts, fiats, a unity revealed in man's sustained breath.



The spirit opposes nature's course. Nature always runs down hill. And when the patient is so sick that nature alone takes ~~her~~ course, he will die. That in him however, which love perceives to be life's very life, will be carried across the abyss which yawns in nature between the death of one individual and the birth of another. As it establishes continuity across separate individuals, it also establishes meaning beyond the breaks in one man's life, or across the catastrophes in the life of whole nations and whole mankind. Since the inhalation of ends holds no terror for the spirit but is its very starting point, it makes us rise because of our fall and out of our fall.

This power of the word happens to us in the midst of life.

We become children of the word which makes us heirs and successors and ancestors and founders, quite apart from the physiological processes of the body. Because our faith connects some previous end to some beginning in us, we know of newness. The man who, one day, decides to become a father in his own right, by marrying- and marriage is the resolution to become a father- connects the end of ~~his~~ father's fatherhood over ~~him~~, and more still the end of his mother's motherhood over him, with his own new beginning. He experiences creation, not evolution, the power of the word as against the powers of nature. And from that moment in his life, he knows the limitations of nature, with its atoms and unconnected fragments. He has learned that the word has the power to create a new status of man. The novelty of every life consists in this very experience that loose ends wait for his word to be One common beginning. By this act, the words from the dictionary suddenly have ceased to be mere words. The word by which a woman bears her husband's name, has become a promise. Words have been replaced by the new name of the wife, the new title of husband. And speech has turned the mere children of two branches of mankind into the ancestors of a new people. This substantial change in the weight of speech from words to names must be experienced and waits for everybody. He cannot know it when he learns to speak. *He must have spoken himself.*

Jacob Grimm, one of the recognized masters of Philology, wrote in the preface to his colossal Dictionary (Deutsches Wörterbuch) a sentence which not only conveys a great truth about human speech, but also applies the truth which "Medea" testifies, the truth that all kinds of speech move in one continuum. Grimm's sentence runs: 'Language is known to everybody and it is a secret<sup>1)</sup> <sup>to/</sup> Here. The word "and" connects two contradictory statements. In logic, we are told that A=A. And by the logical law of contradictions, that which is known to everybody cannot at the same~~ti~~ time be a secret. However, human language has no difficulties in defying this law of logic. It thrives on this defiance. Our sentences are true and worthwhile as long as we make bold to express the truth by ~~contradictions~~ <sup>baseless</sup>. Yes, language is known to everybody and it is a secret because the fragment of one sentence or of one paragraph or of one poem may be known; and then, the secret begins; ~~of-the-realm~~ the secret of the realm of speech in which the sentences, the poems, the books, the libraries, even whole national languages make sense only as waves on the ocean of speech, the ocean which carries all the ships of the spirit, all men.

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1. "Die Sprache ist allen bekannt und ein Geheimnis".