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The Operated Jew (1893)

Oskar Panizza

NOBODY WILL BLAME ME for wanting to erect a monument in honor of my friend Itzig Faitel Stern. At least, as long as this lies within my power. I almost fear that I lack such power, for Itzig Faitel Stern, my best friend at the university, was a phenomenon. It would take a linguist, a choreographer, an aesthete, an anatomist, a tailor, and a psychiatrist all in one to grasp and fully explain Faitel's entire appearance, what he said, how he walked, and what he did. Thus, it will not be surprising after what I have just said, when my sketch presents only bits and pieces. I must rely on my five senses, which, according to today's prevailing school of literature, should completely suffice for creating a work of art—without attempting to ask much about the why and how and without attempting to provide artificial motivation and superficial construction. If a comedy should originate instead of a work of art, then let the school of literature bear the responsibility. Itzig Faitel was a small, squat man. His right shoulder was slightly higher than his left, and he had a sharp protruding chicken breast upon which he always wore a wide heavy silk tie ornamented by a dull ruby and attached to a breastplate. The lapels on both sides of this tie ran top right to bottom left so that when Faitel moved along the curbstones, it appeared as though he were veering down the sidewalk to the other side or going in a diagonal direction. Faitel could not be convinced that the arrangement of his clothes

came from the rhombic shift of his chest cage. This is why he complained terribly about Christian tailors. After all, the suits that he wore were always made from the finest worsted.

Itzig Faitel's countenance was most interesting. It is a shame that Lavater had not laid eyes upon it. An antelope's eye with a subdued, cherry-like glow swam in wide apertures of the smooth velvet, slightly yellow skin of his temple and cheeks. Itzig's nose assumed a form that was similar to that of the high priest who was the most prominent and striking figure of Kaulbach's painting *The Destruction of Jerusalem*. To be sure, the eyebrows had meshed, but Faitel Stern assured me that this meshing had become very popular. He even knew that people with such eyebrows had allegedly been drowned at one time. Yet, he countered this by assuring me that he never went near water. His lips were fleshy and overly creased; his teeth sparkled like pure crystal. A violet fatty tongue often thrust itself between them at the wrong time. Neither beard nor mustache adorned the chin and upper lip, for Faitel Stern was still very young. If I may also add that my friend's lower torso had bowlegs whose angular swing was not excessive, then I believe that I have sketched Itzig's figure to a certain degree. Later I'll talk about the curly, thick black locks of hair on his head. This, then, was the student Stern as still life. But who will help me—what clown, what imitator of dialects, what mime—in my endeavor to depict Itzig in motion as he spoke and acted?

Itzig told me that he came from a French family and was raised according to French tradition. He even spoke some French. Naturally, it was warped. It was his misfortune to have moved at a young age to the nearby Palatinate, where he sucked up the enunciated sounds of this region as though they were milk and honey. Of course, Faitel could speak high German, yet it was not his language but that of a dressy doll. When Faitel was in private company and did not have to feel embarrassed, he spoke the dialects of the Palatinate—and something more than that. Yet, before I get to this, let me make a few remarks about his way of walking and gesticulating.

When he walked, Itzig always raised both thighs almost to his midriff so that he bore some resemblance to a stork. At the same time, he lowered his head deeply into his breastplated tie and stared at the ground.

One had to assume that he could not gauge the strength needed for lifting his legs as he went head over heels. —Similar disturbances can be noted in people with spinal diseases. However, Itzig did not have a spinal disease, for he was young and in good condition. When I asked him one time why he walked so extravagantly, he said, “So I can moof ahead!” —Faitel also had trouble keeping his balance, and when he walked, there were often beads of sweat streaming from the curly locks of hair around his temple. The collar wrapped around my friend’s neck was fastened tightly and firmly. I assume that this was due to the difficulty and work Itzig needed to keep his head pointed upright toward God’s heavens. In its natural position, Itzig’s head was always pointed toward earth, the chin drilled solidly into the silk breastplated tie.

Such was Itzig Faitel Stern as still life and in motion. But what were his gestures like? Of course, this depended on Faitel’s mood, whether he was disposed or indisposed; whether he was pleasant or contrary. He was never highly emotional. His constitution prevented him from getting angry. But when he became zealous and had a good opportunity to wage an argument, then he reared up, raised a hand, pulled back his fleshy, volatile upper lip like a piece of leather so that the upper row of teeth became exposed, spread open both his hands like fans pointing upward with his upper body leaning backward, bobbed his head up and down against his breast a few times, and rhythmically uttered sounds like a trumpet. Up to this moment my friend may not have said a thing. But I always knew from the entire series of gestures and expressions in what direction Faitel’s arguments would move. Faitel meowed, rattled, bleated, and also liked to produce sneezing sounds and at the right time so that one could infer even more from all this noise than mere words interjected here and there. If his position were dubious or even endangered, or if he wanted to convince his opponent about an impossible matter, then he threw his rotating upper body with pinched-in stomach away from the side of his opponent and toward himself as though he wanted to pull the concerned person over toward his entire corporeal mass of flesh. The burring sounds that accompanied this act were filled with zeal, grunts, and comfort. Anyone who chanced to see and hear all this for the first time would be astonished and overwhelmed. One

would surrender in the debate, just in recognition of the zealous way in which he went about convincing the opponent. In realizing the effect he had, Faitel would often be driven to even greater heights.

Ultimately, he would become monstrous.

So much for his agitations.

But who will help me describe Itzig Faitel Stern's speech? What philologist or expert in dialects would dare analyze this mixture of Palatine Semitic babble, French nasal noises, and some high German vocal sounds that he had fortuitously overheard and articulated with an open position of the mouth? I can't do this. So, I want to confine myself to presenting to the reader what I remember about Itzig Faitel's phrases according to the standard phonetic system. But before I do this, I must emphasize two points about Faitel's speech that are of particular grammatical interest. After this, I shall unfold the horrifying comedy, which Itzig Faitel Stern produced in Heidelberg, where we both studied, without interruption.

Among the numerous and hardly perceptible peculiarities of his manner of speech, Faitel had two in particular—what I shall call speech particles—that recurred time and again and struck me finally as syntactical components of some conceptual value. Faitel Stern said something like this when I questioned him about the immense luxury of his wardrobe and toilet articles: “Why shoodn't I buy for me a new coat, a bootiful hat-menera, fine wanished boots—menera, me, too, I shood bicomme a fine gentilman after this. Deradang! Deradang!”

His upper body rocked back and forth. At the same time, there was a spreading of the hands at shoulder height in a slightly squat position; an ecstatic look with a glossy reflection; an exposure of both rows of teeth; a rich amount of saliva. The reader will have discovered two surprising words here, or rather an annexation, an appendage, and an interjection that cannot be found in any dictionary. “Menera,” a kind of purring word, short-long, with the stress on the last syllable (anapest), was appended with substantives, which were endowed with a consonant. Then “menera” was frequently added, but with such dazzling speed that the stress remained on the substantive, allowing the annex to attach itself as a purring sound with four short syllables. Many times,

it also seemed as if “menera” was only to serve as the connection to the next word if the latter began with a sound that caused difficulty for Faitel’s tongue.

Therefore, it was only used when he talked rapidly or was in an excited mood. The two annexes lacked a declinatory character as is the case with some Negro languages. —The situation was completely different with the strongly nasal “Deradang!” This was an interjection, an exclamatory particle. It had its own word and concept. It was sing-song, babbled with saliva in the mouth. It closed the sentence and seemed to mean so much as “Well, I’m right, aren’t I?” —“You see!” —“Who would have thought of that?” —“That takes care of that!”

Yes, dear reader, try as you might to pronounce “Deradang! Deradang!” you will never be able to do it with such a fatty guttural noise, such soft bawling, such a great amount of spit as Itzig Faitel Stern. Now, I no longer want to keep the reader in the dark as to how I became associated with this remarkable figure. Nor do I want to cloak my purposes in mystery and mislead the reader who might suppose that it was pity that moved me to make the close acquaintance with this dreadful piece of human flesh named Itzig Faitel Stern. There was certainly a great deal of what I would call medical or rather anthropological curiosity in this case. I was attracted to him in the same way I might be to a Negro whose goggle eyes, yellow connective optical membranes, crushed nose, mollusk lips and ivory teeth, and smell one perceives altogether in wonderment and whose feelings and most secret anthropological actions one wants to get to know as well! Perhaps there was also some pity here, but not much. I observed with astonishment how this monster took terrible pains to adapt to our circumstances, our way of walking, thinking, our gesticulations, the expressions of our intellectual tradition, our manner of speech. But there was a much stronger and more egotistical reason for me since I wanted to learn something about the Talmud, which was Faitel’s religious book. All the remarkable rumors spread about this vast prayer book interested me a great deal.

To be sure, Itzig was not a Talmudic scholar, but he knew a great deal about the Talmud. He knew a lot of little customs, weaknesses, practices, and eccentricities, which could not be found in books and

translations of the Talmud, and which had great anthropological value for me. Of course, many of the strangest rumors were spread about me by the students in Heidelberg, who showed little understanding as to why I had chosen to associate with Itzig Faitel Stern. Those rumors were mainly connected to Faitel's money, for Faitel Stern was enormously rich. At that time Heidelberg was a very small city, and the students played such a conspicuous role there that the appearance of Itzig Faitel Stern and everything in his orbit became the talk of the town. And, to put it more succinctly, Faitel Stern was a kind of Kaspar Hauser: here was a man, then, who emanated directly from the stingy, indiscriminate, stifling, dirty-diapered, griping, and grimacing bagatelle of his family upbringing, and as a result of a hasty decision, with his pockets full of money, was suddenly thrown onto the great pavement of life in a European city, and there he began to look around, ignorant, with blundering movements. Consequently, he was beheld with ridicule and astonishment. But the matter could not continue like this.

Soon after the beginning of our acquaintance, I made some suggestions to Faitel in regard to changing him and making him more modern, and I found that he was receptive to these remarks. Hopefully I have not forgotten to mention that we both studied medicine. The fact that Faitel chose this discipline as his field of study was, after all that we know about his appearance, certainly a propitious *testimonium intellectus*. "Faitel," I said to him one day, "you must change your way of walking. You are completely convoluted. And this is why you're mocked and ridiculed by everyone in the city!"

"So wot can I do? You tink dis don't make me depressed?" Faitel exclaimed and stamped his flat feet helplessly but with a great show of force on the floor. "I was walking dis way my life long. Mine fadder goes like dis too und hiss de alte Stern Solomon. Geeve me sum new legs. I should pay vat it costs!"

"Yes, pay!" I cried out. "That would be the right thing to do. But who could possibly straighten out your rickety bones?"

We agreed that we had to seek the advice of an orthopedist. However, the worthy representative of this discipline declared that Itzig was too old and that his bone structure had become too set. Yet, he

recommended Professor Klotz, Heidelberg's famous anatomist, who might conduct a scientific examination of Itzig's skeletal framework. So, we visited this famous man, and he made all sorts of measurements on Itzig's naked body, had him walk back and forth, and finally clapped his hands over his head. Never in his life had he seen such a thing! Then he took out a well-known book, Meyer's *Statistics and Mechanics of Human Anatomy*, Leipzig, 1873. He had been commissioned to write the second edition, and he was displeased because he felt that he now had to revise the entire book after examining Itzig. At this point he asked whether it was certain that Itzig's parentage was human. Of course, this could be proven without a doubt.

"Then," Professor Klotz closed his remarks, "I may be forced to abandon all hope. It may be possible to restore the joints of the student Stern so that they all simulate human forms of motion. However," the famous anatomist hesitated, "the means and ways . . ."

"I'll pay wot you shood want," Faitel interjected quickly, possessed by a sudden presentiment. "I'll pay hit. I'll gung pay for mine new statue. So de Herr Professor, he'll hev de geld, a lot of geldera. Deradang! Deradang! (to be spoken with a long stress) I'll gonna payera! Deradang! Deradang!"

Spreading of the hands at shoulder length; bobbing of the head into the vest; rocking of the upper body like a pendulum; smiling positions of the mouth; upper row of teeth exposed; rich amount of saliva. Now hard times arrived for Faitel. Night and day, he hung in traction so that his scoliotic bones could be stretched by his own body weight. Or he was stuck in a cast built like a corset. The nape of his neck was shortened and tightened through a bloody operation to allow Faitel a view of the heavens. The bones that had been reassembled in a new harness had to be exercised and reformed week after week with the help of a gymnast. Faitel had to have private lessons since nobody wished to exercise with him. It was impossible for anyone to make use of these exercises for private purposes, nor did anyone want to see Faitel perform his neck-breaking exercises. Enormous sums of money wandered into the hands of the gymnasts, trainers, orthopedists, and those of Professor Klotz, who directed and supervised everything.

After three months the results were mediocre. Naturally the bowlegs remained the same during all these corrective attempts since there had been no possibility to place counterweights in a deeper position and stretch them out. Faitel's advisors were able to calm him down by explaining to him that such legs were also to be found among other classes of human beings such as bakers, and so on. But Faitel was indefatigable. Ever since his pointed chin stopped drilling into the breastplated tie, he had made the firm decision "to become such a fine gentleman just like a goymenera and to geeve up all fizonomie of Jewishness."

About that time a daring operation became known that was called *brisement force*. A crooked bone was intentionally broken and treated as an accidental breaking of the leg with the exception that the two pieces were healed in a straight direction. This method was employed in an operation on Faitel Stern's bowlegs. The consequences and incidental circumstances of this cure led to Faitel's being bedridden for many weeks at a time for each leg, with all kinds of pain and bandages and enormous costs for a process that at that time necessitated a doctor to come from Paris and perform everything according to the proper specifications.

Old Solomon Stern sent check after check, which was gladly honored by every businessman. Then there were weeks and weeks of attempts to walk with the freshly healed limbs of his body. And really, when Faitel Stern now went out for the first time, one could see that he had made great progress. He had become somewhat taller and resembled a respectable human being. Everything was and still remained stiff for a long time, but he could now pretend to be a normal human being. His face stood straight as a candle. His chin revealed itself now to be terribly long and pointed. His chicken breast was flattened out, and the lapels of his coat ran straight down. In order to prevent Faitel's customary bobbing of his upper body—which was always accompanied by his nasal gurgling "Deradang! Deradang!"—a barbed wire belt similar to a collar was placed around his hips on his bare skin (as they do with dogs) so that he was immediately spiked when he tended to move up and down or from side to side. Faitel Stern bore all this heroically and stood straight and tall like a pine tree. Yet, only now did the major problem arise.

It was clear that one could not introduce him in high society with his speech, of which we have already been given some samples, for it was the mode of expression of an oily, base, cowardly character. And though it was merely a question of changing his outward appearance, it was important to complete this change as soon as possible. Since it was hopeless to raise the level of his Palatinate-Yiddish to that of the related pure high German, an attempt was made to bring his former sing-song on the right track through its direct opposite. A private tutor was engaged, and Itzig was to repeat his clear nasal-sounding manner of speech like a schoolboy, sentence by sentence, so that he learned high German like a totally new, foreign language. Moreover, some students from Hanover were employed to provide company for Itzig in exchange for payment of tuition and diverse meals during one whole semester. This series of measures was the result of expert opinion gathered from the most famous linguist of that time in nearby Tübingen. In addition, a Heidelberg physiologist was brought in for consultation. These gentlemen proceeded from the following considerations: In our brain there is just one part for the speech faculties, and it is used either on the left or the right side. It is not impossible to make use of those faculties that have not been used to form a new speech aptitude, and this often takes place quite naturally—for example, after an illness. In such attempts, it is of utmost importance that one makes certain there is nothing in the formation of words and sounds of the new speech that recalls the old idiom—otherwise confusion will arise. As the Tübingen specialist expressed it, a new speech island had to be formed in Itzig. And now he was examined to determine which German dialect contained the least tonal affinity with Faitel's Palatinate-Yiddish.

At first, the specialists considered Pomeranian. But this was too difficult for Faitel. Finally, they agreed upon the Hanoverian dialect. My reader can well imagine that all these fine diagnostics cost a barrel of money, for these speech exercises were to continue for another entire semester. It is impossible for me to give the reader an account of all the garnishings, changes, injections, and quackeries to which Itzig Faitel Stern submitted himself. He experienced the most excruciating pain and showed great heroism so he could become the equivalent of an

Occidental human being. He continually watched for new things, studied secret Christian traits, copied distortions of the mouth, puffed cheeks, and gestures, and imagined himself to be part of the heroic Teutonic genre like some young stalwart, blond and naïve, who walked about smiling with great ignorance. Naturally, the tint—the wheat color of Faitel's skin—had to yield to a fine, pastel lead tint, which Itzig learned to exhibit in a superb way. I suspect—it's just a suspicion—that Faitel once nourished himself four weeks in a row on a drug about which I know nothing. It takes the form of a vegetable, and Faitel may have done this to attain the Caucasian color of skin in a natural way.

One relatively simple and harmless procedure that, nevertheless, had a gruesome effect concerned his hair. Right about that time, the English bleaches came into fashion. To be sure, since they were secret formulas, they were extremely expensive, but they did change each and every strand of dark hair into magnificent golden blond. The first English beauticians were traveling around Germany at that time, and one of them had settled down in rich Heidelberg, which was always frequented by people from high society. Faitel was one of the first ones to undergo the treatment. So Itzig's coal black curly locks, under which there had always been a suspiciously smelling sweat, were changed into the golden locks of a child. These locks were then straightened out into long Germanic strands by means of a painful process. In addition, Faitel was given a simple North German hairdo, and—finally—the dumb, awkward German lad was complete, a replica of the figure portrayed at times by Schwind in his paintings. He called himself Siegfried Freudenstern and had his matriculation forms and other papers changed.

Faitel was now an entirely new human being. The last treatments—he was very careful—had been completed during the university vacation period near the city and had changed him to such an extent that he was unrecognizable. It was suggested that he attend another university now, but he rejected this idea, mainly because he wanted to remain near Professor Klotz, who was still in charge of the entire psycho-physical operation. And, in fact, since the bleaching of his hair to gold, Faitel was no longer recognized in Heidelberg. He made his appearance there as the son of a Hanoverian landowner and moved in the finest circles of high

society. He exercised the North German rasping sound with playful ease, and this scored an extraordinary success wherever he went. However, Faitel's ambition mounted even higher. —"Faiteles! Such a bootiful yid, such a fine yid! Such an elegant yid!" —This was the way Faitel frequently spoke to himself when he stood in front of a mirror, but only in his thoughts. —"So you tink now you're a Chreesten, wit no drop Jewishness? You tink you could go wearevver you want wot you shood take a seat wit de fine people wot everyone should tink: dat's one of us!"

Faitel knew that it had not yet come to this. Yes, whatever pomade, makeup, white buckram, some yards of worsted, cotton, and some varnish could accomplish with a human being, all this had been accomplished with Faitel. But what did everything look like inside? Did Faitel have a soul? This question was debated everywhere for months by all those people, educators, and doctors who had something to do with him. Of course, the soul necessary for expression of a few hypocritical sentences such as a marriage vow or for throwing a few silver coins to a poor devil at the right moment—Faitel possessed this soul just like everyone else. But Faitel had heard about the chaste, undefined Germanic soul, which shrouded the possessor like an aroma. This soul was the source of the possessor's rich treasures and formed the *shibboleth* of the Germanic nations, a soul that was immediately recognized by all who possessed one. Faitel wanted to have this soul. And, if he could not have genuine eau de cologne, then he wanted the imitation. At the very least, he wanted to appropriate this soul in all its expressions and daily manifestations. So, he was advised to go to England, where the purest effusion of this Germanic soul was to be found.

Language difficulties soon caused these plans to be dropped. A well-known educator felt that one could reach this higher goal on the basis of a general spiritual predisposition even with Faitel's present one. The famous Cambridge Professor Stokes had only recently published his *Psychological Researches*, in which he explained the primary spiritual predisposition of people like Faitel not as a *spiritual* possession but as a mechanical function or "rotation work," as he called it. This new theory led to the abandonment of all further attempts to cultivate Itzig Faitel's soul.

Once during these tests and examinations Itzig burst out with a question about the dwelling place of the soul. They had to explain to him that ever since Descartes had made the unsuccessful attempt to locate the abode of the soul in the pineal gland of the brain, nobody had tried to locate this spiritual power. Rather, attempts had been made to understand the soul from the combined effects of certain physical and spiritual functions. Since these functions were dependent in a particular manner on the quality of blood, it was possible to assert to a certain degree that the abode of the soul could be located in the blood and its changing condition. Right then Faitel conceived a plan for one of his most daring treatments. Some days after this discussion he was overheard talking joyously to his most intimate associates: "I gonna buy me sum Chreesten blud! I gonna buy me sum Chreesten blud!"

This was how he spoke, despite the fact that his advisors had strictly forbidden him to speak this way. My readers will shake their heads. But you must not forget that Itzig Faitel Stern was a medical student and knew all about the most recent developments in the field. And, furthermore, this is the place to remind you that at that time, when our story was taking place, blood transfusions became fashionable. The rich blood from a body filled to the lymphatics was injected into a supine organism poor in blood by opening an exterior blood vessel in the arm. These operations were extremely dangerous and have already been abandoned today. Faitel was strongly advised not to proceed with this, but he would not be deterred.

Meanwhile, there were great difficulties to be overcome. Approximately six to eight hardy people had been found who were each to give a liter of blood in exchange for a great deal of money. Yet, when they heard that their blood was destined for a Jew, they withdrew their offer and spoke about the blood spilt on the Cross because of the Jews. They could not be convinced to change their minds. Only when seven strong women from the Black Forest, who had come to the country fair, were persuaded that it was time again to be bled could the major difficulty be settled. Faitel himself made the incision in an adjoining room, and since the amount of blood to be emptied had been exactly prescribed, he had the opened artery punctured in a warm bath until he became unconscious. He wanted to shed his

“Jewishness” and let everything run out that could run out. Eight liters of blood from the strong peasant women were then gradually and carefully injected into him during the course of the afternoon. After many days in a coma, Faitel survived this dangerous treatment unscathed.

However, he never allowed himself to be thoroughly questioned about its success and the psychological effect. It appeared that it had not been very great, for after a few weeks we found him again, making new attempts to gain possession of the German soul. Thus, he began reciting pathetic and sentimental passages by poets, especially in the social gatherings of the ladies’ salons, and he astutely observed the position of the mouth, breath, twinkle of the eyes, gestures, and certain sighs that emanated so passionately and strenuously from German breasts satiated with feelings. To be sure, when the ladies from the aesthetic gatherings did not boost his ego enough, Faitel had actors come to Heidelberg from the nearby court in Darmstadt, heroes and lovers, and he learned Romeo soliloquies with them. To tell the truth, this was more successful than other experiments. Now Faitel could express statements with great adroitness in a discussion such as, “Oh, I must confess, when I reflect about this, when I consider this, everything seems gloomy to me, and my heart shudders.”

These words would be accompanied by some brusque movements, both hands pressed on the left side of the breast. It was really a very clever way to pour out emotions. Of course, his eyes would rest lifelessly in their sockets like rotten cherries. Yet, he was able to deceive many people. He learned to inhale and exhale superbly. And one time he had the satisfaction of hearing from a student in the ladies’ salons that Siegfried Freudensterne was a man with soul through and through. But Faitel still had a lot of other, old inherited habits, ways of thinking, comical manners, and eccentricities. On our frequent evening walks he liked to meditate and—I’m not sure whether he wanted to recapitulate his religious lessons or mock his former teachers—he would begin to talk with an altered, carping rabbi’s voice examining himself in the following manner: “What doth Jehovah do at the beginning of the day?” —Then Faitel would answer himself in his own voice, but with a fresh witty accent: “He studieth the commandments!”

Again the first voice: “What doth the holy Lord do thereafter?”

Second voice: “Thereafter he sitteth and ruleth the entire world!”

“What doth Jehovah do after this?”

“Thereafter he sitteth and nourishes the entire world!”

“What doth he do then?”

“Then he sitteth and copulates the men and women!”

“How long doth the holy Lord copulate the men and women?”

“He copulateth the men and women for three hours!”

“What doth the holy Jehovah do then in the afternoon?”

“He doth nothing in the afternoon, Jehovah. He rests.”

“What didst thou say? What doth thou mean? The holy Jehovah doth nothing? What doth he do? What doth Jehovah do in the afternoon?—Huh?”

Now it seemed that a remote squeaking voice of a young boy answered him from the last desk in the back of a classroom: “The holy Jehovah playeth with Leviathan in the afternoon!”

“Naturally,” interjected the rabbi’s voice, “he playeth with Leviathan!”

During these walks Faitel would be delighted and act like a wild little boy. When he went beyond the boundaries of the city, Faitel sometimes took out a white handkerchief, hung it around his neck, held the two tips in front and began to let loose with a barrage of song, rolling up and down the scales with a screeching gurgle that had a peculiar jubilant and cheerful character. I had never heard the words before, and he sung until his eyes popped and foam was on his lips. Then he almost threw up and meandered next to me along the way like a drunkard. When he came to his senses again, he remained silent and introspective, acted secretively, and appeared to be inundated by some unknown happiness. Naturally his advisors were not to know anything about this since they had forbidden all exercises, sounds, and gestures that might remind him of his former predisposition. Yet, I also suspected that Faitel, when he was alone, was still up to some mischief. During the day he was in the European corset, harnessed, supervised, under great surveillance. But in the evening, when he was no longer bound, when he took off the barbed belt and lay in bed, I’m sure he rocked as he formerly did, the

pelvis moving back and forth, his hands spreading into the vest pockets, his tongue gurgling and bawling, “Deradang! Deradang!” And the entire Palatinate-Yiddish deluge could not be checked.

But Faitel still had other things that were even more ineradicable because, unlike movements, they were not controlled by one’s will. Rather, they were lodged in his imagination. Now, in order to present a full picture, I am compelled to touch upon something distasteful: Faitel had a fear of the toilet. He believed in the old Hebrew spirits of the latrine and squalor who bothered people during their most urgent calls. These spirits could take possession of a person and could only be repulsed by certain prayers. However, since Faitel no longer knew these prayers nor could say any of them with conviction, his fear grew even greater. And only the fact that the spirits did not dare attack anyone in the presence of a third party enabled Faitel to dispose of such urgent business in peace—naturally, only after he always provided for the proper conditions.

Such was Faitel’s new formation and transformation. Internally, there was much that had not been filled by new things, old functions that were still in operation. Externally, everything had been smoothed out, combed spic-and-span, thoroughly conditioned, and ready to go. All in all, Faitel and his tutors, advisors, and instructors should have been satisfied with what they had accomplished. Yet, Professor Klotz, whose concerned eye watched over his human work with growing interest from semester to semester, may have had mixed feelings when he congratulated himself. Either he felt like a circus director, who had finally tamed a difficult horse for the ring, or he felt like the sublime Creator, who had managed to blow life into a cold lump of clay. After all, hadn’t Klotz also blown new life into a distorted bag of broken bones?

Only one thing was still missing, for it was also important to reproduce this human race, which it had cost so much to achieve. The new breed was to be grafted with the finest Occidental sprig. A blonde Germanic lass had to help preserve the results that had been garnered through fabulous efforts. This was the way it sounded in theory. In practice, this meant that the poor but beautiful flaxen-haired daughter of a civil servant, Othilia Schnack, was to become engaged to the enormously

rich son of a landowner, Siegfried Freudenstern. This was what was agreed upon, and it met with Faitel's approval. Indeed, Old Solomon Stern, who sat quietly in his village of Patzendorf in the Palatinate, bought some property near Hanover to serve as the next residence for the young couple. The Hanover students, who had already acted superbly as speech instructors at one time, were to provide the necessary introductions to families in the city and district of Hanover when the time came. Some shaky mortgages on the parental homes of these young men in question were scheduled for foreclosure by Old Solomon sitting in Patzendorf in case they did not cooperate. An exceedingly fabulous trousseau was ordered from the best retailers of Heidelberg in case the wedding ties were indeed to be knotted. In turn, this put extra pressure on the business circles in this university city. One talked so much about the engagement it finally meant that the knots had to be tied. Or, this engagement could not be allowed to be dissolved, as though there had already been one at all. The young lady in question, Othilia, had light, starry eyes and was an open, lovely creature, but she had a strong woman's intuition. She did not feel entirely comfortable in the presence of the golden blond youth who purred as he spoke. She sensed something eerie but could not confirm her suspicion. Her father, a fearful man, who had worked himself up from a scribe to a middle-grade official through good behavior and honesty, was very anxious. He always obeyed, never said no, walked with tiny steps as though trotting, carried his chin and neck hidden in an unstarched, open-collared shirt, and as soon as he noticed that something like a family meeting was to take place, he grabbed his hat and cane and went for a walk. Her mother, a big-breasted, ponderous housekeeper who could be charming every now and then, but most of the time was energetic and industrious, was for the marriage. She already possessed earrings with gems as large as pigeon eggs as a gift from Faitel Stern. This clever woman was suspicious of the entire affair only because the Heidelberg professors, especially the professors of medicine, took such a lively interest in bringing about the marriage. Naturally, the hotel owners, wine merchants, clothiers, embroiderers, bakers, jewelers, printers, negotiators, coachmen, and porters were for the marriage. The

Protestant clergy—Othilia was Protestant—also gave a nod of approval to the entire project.

The fact that nobody had met any of Faitel's relatives caused some consternation in the Schnack family. However, word had it that the parents were well advanced in years. And the long journey from Hanover! If only a brother, or better yet, a sister of the groom could have appeared on the scene! But the cawing nest back in Patzendorf naturally took care not to utter a peep. Faitel was now in his sixth semester. His knowledge and good performances were praised. Still, it caused some sensation when it became known that Professor Klotz had appointed the young student from Hanover as his assistant right after he had been granted his degree. This appointment required the confirmation of the ministry in Karlsruhe. It came. Consequently, fuel was now added in Karlsruhe to the flaming rumor about the rich marriage that was going to take place in Heidelberg. The reigning sovereign could not help but hear all this talk. And one day the director of Schnack's office informed the man with a melting smile that someone had talked about his daughter's forthcoming marriage—in Karlsruhe—at the court. Now the peak had been reached! The old scribe kept quiet and held his head stiff behind his tie. His two dry lips tipped with a black-stubbed Kaiser moustache could not even gasp for breath until the tall, haggard director with long coattails disappeared from sight. Then old Schnack threw the feather pen on his desk, spraying some ink in the process, grabbed his hat and cane, and rushed home coughing along the way. "At the court! At the court!"

Now there was no stopping it. Poor Othilia, who shuddered upon hearing this, sobbed, threw herself into the arms of her mother, and declared that she would obey. Her mother immediately sent a message to the newly appointed assistant Dr. Freudenstern, and the wedding day was scheduled.

Now, my dear reader, I should like to have a word with you. Did you ever hear of people wearing a coat in the winter with its collar and lapels topped with fur to make others believe that the entire coat is lined this way? A trivial thing! A small weakness! Do you also wear a coat like this? Oh, then throw it away if you're a man. Otherwise, the fur will trip your

tongue one day when you're most in need of a breath of air. (However, if you're a woman, you may wear it.) But that little bit of fur, there's so much talk about it, isn't that true? —Good! —Still, haven't you seen people, my dear reader, who wear such furs around their souls in order to conceal their porous and shabby constitution? And then they act as though they had a noble soul clad in the finest of fabrics. Oh, what a shame! Oh, the squalor and pity of it all! What if some well-behaved, open soul still clad in its confirmation suit, now somewhat snug, were to have trouble or to be deceived! —Perhaps you yourself, my reader, possess such wrappings for your soul? Oh, then throw this book in a corner if you're a man and spew everything out! This is not for you. Only a woman may lie and cloak herself in false wrappings. Perhaps, my dear reader, you have seen animals talking among themselves. Two pigeons or two roosters, two dogs or even two foxes? Do you think they understand each other? Certainly!

Certainly! Each knows what the other wants in a flash. But two people? When they stretch their heads toward one another, sniff and peep at each other, and then begin their facial magic tricks, blinking, ogling, rubbing, chewing thin air, and whimpering “fiddlesticks” and “the devil!”—what are they doing? Do they actually understand each other? Impossible! They don't want to. They can't and are not allowed to. The lie prevents them from doing this. Oh, horse manure and stinky resin, you are gems in comparison to what comes out of people's mouths! When Prometheus finally had permission from God to make human beings, it occurred only on the express humiliating condition that they had to have one quality that made them much lower than animals. Prometheus, who was only in a rush to see his artwork finished, agreed to this. It was the lie. Oh, base contract that allowed us all to be born under the same sign of the lie! And were you perhaps the cause for that lying tower of Babel forcing people to separate because they no longer understand each other in spite of the coughing and gesticulating? And, even if the German nations were the last to be created, received the least repercussions from all this because so much of the lying substance had already been used up by the previous Asiatic and Latin races, there is still enough there. —Oh, reader, if you can, spit out this dirt like

rotten slime, and show your lips, your tongue, and your teeth just as they are! —And now listen to the conclusion of Faitel's comedy.

In the Inn of the White Lamb, which was on the Martergasse in Heidelberg, the large hall was filled with a radiant group of people who had witnessed the wedding ceremony of Othilia Schnack with Siegfried Freudenstern. It had been a long time since something like this had been seen in this university city. I'm not certain whether the civil ceremony had been preceded by a church wedding. Most likely. The papers testifying that Freudenstern was Protestant had been acquired from a Hanover pastor with a sympathetic ear. This I know. Nothing had been missing except for the birth certificate. Yet, many communities in the Lüneberger Heide near Hanover had expressed their joy and readiness to add a name to their birth register, especially the name of such a citizen as Herr Dr. Freudenstern, who immediately donated five thousand guilders to one community for the restoration of the church door.

Even the reader must make an extra effort, now that we have come to the end of this affair, to dismiss "Faitel" from his mind. It is only Freudenstern who is presently the hero of the story! A tall young man with strands of blond hair stands before us, or rather is talking at this moment seated at the table with Professor Klotz, while dessert is about to be served. Of course, the formation of the teeth, the padded lips, the nasal pitch in Faitel's face had to remain absolutely fixed to prevent a monster from becoming visible. And whoever had an eye for such things could recognize the sensual, fleshy, and jutting Sphinx-like face in Freudenstern's profile. However, first of all, not everyone has an eye for such things. Second, one does not always look at someone's profile. Third, during a wedding celebration one hardly sees unpleasant things. Fourth, it was still debatable whether the Egyptian Sphinx-face was of Semitic nature. Fifth, Klotz had dropped a remark most elegantly during one of his private seminars on anthropology, in which he was giving students information about the determination of skull measurements, that Freudenstern's cranium formation was one of the purest specimens among all the examples known to him, and that it corresponded closest to the head formation of the Hermunduren, who had been the earliest historically known inhabitants of Germany.

Just then, the pudding was brought out. The friendly innkeeper of the White Lamb went around the table of feasting guests in a sweat and counted and counted, for he was to be paid one ducat per person excluding the wine. The menu did not entirely meet his taste and did not suit, so he believed, the reputation of a first-class inn like the White Lamb. As owner of the establishment, he had demanded a pure French menu. The predominantly German character of the wedding banquet was the result of Klotz's express orders. Yes, even sauerkraut was served, and in his desperation the innkeeper tried to offset this German vulgarity by giving it the French appellation *choucroute*. There were selected morsels of pork, and fatty sparkling rinds gleamed from all the trays entrenched as *entremets* in the middle of the table for the entire evening. Freudenstern sat between the bride, who was pale as wax, and Klotz. Across from them were the Schnacks. The flabby skin of old man Schnack's face seemed to pull back, frightened by the wasteful quantities of food piled up in front of him, and he looked with astonishment through his large silver-framed monocle at these people who were well-versed in consummation. A stand-up collar with a shining white tie held in the correct position his long neck with the dug-out larynx. A medal sparkled on his tidy, black double-breasted jacket. It had arrived the evening before from Karlsruhe. Moreover, Schnack was addressed repeatedly as "Herr Councillor of the Chancellery." Frau Schnack, with her *embonpoint* covered by elegant gray silk, shook her head energetically back and forth. The gems as large as pigeon eggs waddled on her ears. There was a cloud of fetid medicine over this part of the table. —Dessert was still being served.

Now, dear reader, prepare yourself! Something extraordinary appears to be in the making. A sultry atmosphere was forming in the room, like one you feel when a storm is about to break. A great deal of wine had been drunk. Moreover, Faitel, who had been congratulated by everyone, had to make toasts time and again. I don't know whether Faitel could hold a great deal of alcohol. The customs of his race indicate moderation. On the other hand, it is known that if you inundate the brain with spirits, they may not only generate critical explosions in the psychological and motor sensories of humans but also open up parts of

the brain, or rather, zones of memory, which, without the influx of the combustible substance, would normally remain quiet for a long time, perhaps for eternity. As I said, I don't know whether Faitel was accustomed to drinking. What I do know is that Faitel had discarded the barbed belt, the preservative of his correct posture, for the first time right before this celebration. Nobody can reprimand him for this, since the discarding was symbolic. Faitel had entered Christian society for good on this day. Furthermore, the smart female reader will comprehend that a wedding day is followed by a wedding night, which consists of a wedding disrobement, so that this strange ornamental object had to be removed from the eyes of the tearful bride.

But now the time has finally come to inform the reader that Faitel had been sitting rigid and motionless for about ten minutes and gaping directly under the table. His face turned crimson at times and then white as chalk. He seemed to be occupied with entirely different thoughts that expanded and entranced him without his help. But not without the help of many glasses of cliquot that he hurriedly gulped down and that the concerned innkeeper quickly filled one after the other since the wine was not included in the cover price.

Faitel raised his right hand from time to time and made a gesture with his index finger as though he wanted to say "Psst! Psst!" so he could hear his inner voice better, for there was still a great tumult, clanging of plates, and chatter in the room. Nobody had an inkling about the wondrous experiment that the avenging angel was in the process of preparing. Faitel appeared to add to this in a very systematic and purposeful way by pouring down champagne as one shoots oil onto a flame that is at the point of extinction. When it seemed that the illumination that glowed within him was about to fizzle, he slowly brought his upper body against the table, stretched out his right hand without regarding it, grabbed the filled glass, drank it down, and then raised his finger as though he wanted to say: "Listen, is it coming?" —And it came.

The contents of this frenetic chain of thoughts seemed to be more cheerful and dynamic, for Faitel slapped himself with the flat of his hands on his thighs a few times, making a loud smack, and he laughed and giggled to himself. Those people who had a good ear could already

hear now a few “Deradangs! Deradangs!” But the guests were not at all aware, as the reader is, about the meaning of “Deradang!” And the joking, laughing, and toasting of drinks drowned out the first warning sounds to a great extent. Klotz was involved in a lively discussion with his neighbor on the left. Only the bride on the right observed these early symptoms of delirium with composure and curiosity. Faitel’s chin drilled itself deeper and deeper into his breast in its rigid position so that it finally assumed that crippled-looking compulsive formation familiar to the reader from the early part of the story. The people closest to Faitel, among them Frau Schnack, who was quick to understand what was happening, were now forced to take notice of him.

However, they seemed to want to attribute everything to a peculiar mood that had come over him. —“Waiterera! . . .” Faitel screamed suddenly with a rasping, vibrating voice. “Waiterera! —Champagnerera! —So *nu*, wot’s de metter? —So vy shoodn’t I hev notink to drink? —I vant you shood know dat I’m a human bing jost as good for sumtink as any ov you!”

Now everyone’s attention in the room was immediately drawn to him. Even the waiters carrying the large piles of dishes came to a stop and stared at the middle of the rows of tables where a bloodthirsty, swelling, crimson visage spewed saliva from flabby drooping lips, and gushing eyes glared at them. Everyone seemed to be under a magic spell, and nobody knew what to do. Even Klotz lost his composure and looked with horror at the Jew next to him. Faitel’s glass had been filled once again by the innkeeper, who stood behind him. While terrified and sympathetic forces focused on him from all directions, Faitel himself began to speak with a squeaky and entirely different tone of voice. “What doth he do in the next three hours, the holy Jehovah? —Deradang! Der a dang!”

With one quick sloop, his thumbs were in the pockets of his wedding vest. Now he bobbed back and forth and gave an infatuated look at the heavens. —Again with a changed voice giving the answer: “He sitteth and copulateth the men and women!” Again the first voice: “How long doth the holy Lord copulate the men and women?” the same

positur; lascivious movements back and forth on the chair; jumping up and down, gurgling, clicking of the tongue. —The voice answering: “Three hours long doth he copulate the men and women!”

First voice: “What doth he do in the afternoon, the holy Jehovah? Deradang! Deradang!” —Answer: “He doth nothing, Jehovah. He taketh a rest!” First voice: “What didst thou say? What doth thou mean? The holy Jehovah doth nothing? What doth he do? What doth Jehovah do in the afternoon? Huh?” —A young boy’s voice from the distance: “The holy Jehovah playeth with Leviathan in the afternoon!” —The first voice interjects triumphantly: “Naturally! He playeth with Leviathan!”

At this moment Faitel jumped from his chair, began clicking his tongue, gurgling, and tottering back and forth while making disgusting, lascivious, and bestial canine movements with his rear end. “Deradang! Deradang!”

He jumped around the room. “I done bought for me Chreesten blud! Waiterera, vere iss mine copulated Chreesten bride? Mine bridera! Geeve me mine bridera! I vant you shood know that I’m jost a Chreesten human bing like you all. Not von drop of Jewish blud! —Wot misery! Vere is mine bridera?”

Everyone scattered. The terrifying visage drove the young ladies from the room. Those people who remained behind watched with horror as Faitel’s blond strands of hair began to curl during the last few scenes. Then the curly locks turned from red to dirty brown to blue-black. The entire glowing and sweaty head with tight gaunt features was once again covered with curly locks. Meanwhile, it appeared that Faitel had peculiar difficulties and struggled with his exalted movements. His arms and legs, which had been stretched and bent in numerous operations, could no longer perform the recently learned movements, nor the old ones. Moreover, the paralyzing effect of the alcohol made itself quickly felt. To be sure, Klotz had cried for ice packs, but it was in vain. Everyone saw that this was a catastrophe that could no longer be prevented. The beautiful Othilia sought refuge in the arms of her mother. Everyone looked with dread at the crazy circular movements of the Jew. The ignominious end, which is the fate of all drunkards, befell Faitel, too. A

terrible smell spread in the room, forcing those people who were still hesitating at the exit, to flee while holding their noses. Only Klotz remained behind. And finally, when even the feet of the drunkard were too tired to continue their movements, Klotz's work of art lay before him crumpled and quivering, a convoluted Asiatic image in wedding dress, a counterfeit of human flesh, Itzig Faitel Stern.

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