THE OLD AND THE NEW:
Art, Society, and Cultural Change in Goethe's Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre, Keller's Der Grüne Heinrich, and Thomas Mann's Doktor Faustus

PhD Thesis
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University College London
2002
ABSTRACT

This thesis explores three novels: Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Keller's *Der Grüne Heinrich*, and Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus*. It suggests that what they have in common is a concern to understand the relationship between art, the artist, and society, with art being at issue in terms of the artist's psychology, the forms, genres and modes of art itself, and ways in which art is received socially as a product by its actual or potential audience. There is a conceptual framework which both explicitly and implicitly informs the theme of the interplay between art, the artist's psychology, and society: it is that of the old and the new. All three novels endeavour to understand problems arising from social and cultural change, and arrive at no confident judgements with respect to them. The energies of the new may be subversive and disorienting, but might also imply vitality and creative possibilities. Wilhelm Meister seeks to reconcile the specialization of the modern world with his deeply rooted aspiration towards wholeness. Heinrich Lee discovers that his emotional, erotic, artistic and professional life is undermined at every turn by the abstraction and fragmentation of the modern world. Adrian Leverkühn finds that the attempt to achieve a radically modern form of creativity exacts an intolerable price in human and social terms. To read the three novels comparatively is to bear witness to a historical narrative about the pressures acting upon the bourgeois subject in the late Eighteenth Century (Goethe), the mid and late Nineteenth Century (Keller), and the first half of the Twentieth Century (Mann).
Theology 296
Society 304
Conclusion 322
Bibliography 325
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank for their very great help my parents, my supervisor, Professor Martin Swales, and Mr. William Abbey of the Institute of Germanic Studies.
INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with three novels — Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Keller’s *Der Grüne Heinrich*, and Thomas Mann’s *Doktor Faustus* — which are, by any standards, ‘classic’ texts of German prose fiction. As such they have attracted an immense amount of critical and scholarly attention, and the great debt which I owe to this corpus of secondary literature is acknowledged in the footnotes accompanying the individual chapters, and in the bibliography. Given the range and distinction of much of the scholarly literature, I must strongly emphasize at the outset that it has not been my aim to offer radically new readings of the novels in question. Rather, the goal of this thesis is three-fold. Firstly, it is comparative in spirit, in that it seeks to hear the three novels in debate with each other. Secondly, it seeks to generate this debate under one particular thematic aspect, and that concerns the analysis offered by all three novels of the relationship between art, the artist, and society. At issue here is a whole complex of themes — the psychology of the creative artist, the forms and modes of art itself, and the way in which art is received socially as a product by its actual, or potential, audience. Thirdly, I argue that there is a conceptual framework which, explicitly and implicitly, literally and metaphorically, constantly informs the theme of art and society, and that this framework represents the coexistence and interplay of the old and the new. A tenacious, differentiated and sophisticated debate on the issues of the old and the new results. The balance of sympathies is often complex, with no unequivocal endorsement of either tendency emerging. Both the old and the new represent compounds of sometimes contradictory energies and this leads to a complexity of evaluative perspective. The old may be seen as an
obstructive corpus of outworn conventions, but it may also be understood as associated with coherence, custom and dignity. The new may be felt to be the locus of vital energies, but it may also produce a sense of fragmentation and socio-cultural displacement. As a further complication, the demarcation between the old and the new may frequently be unclear, and a single phenomenon may be characterized by both old and new associations.

While the conflict and interplay between old and new currents is in itself a source of division in the novels, a sense also emerges that the complex of energies associated with the new are fragmentary and divergent in themselves. This fragmentation emerges in terms of sets of polarizations, between, for example, the inner life and the practical life, or cerebrality and emotion. When added to the division between the old and the new, these manifold oppositions characterize each of the novels, and in each case, attempts are made to hold together some of these oppositions, but these attempts meet with at best only provisional success, and at worst catastrophic failure. However, the attempt of the protagonist to mediate both the oppositions between the old and the new, and the internal oppositions, particularly within the new, is to a significant extent the story of each of the novels.

The old, while presented more in terms of coherence than fragmentation, receives complexity not only from the contrasts between attitudes of denunciation and nostalgia, to which it is subject, particularly in Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre and Der Grüne Heinrich, but, in Doktor Faustus, the picture is complicated by the existence of several versions of the old, some of which may be facets of the new. That is, in addition to the understanding of the new as the pre-modern, defined in terms of broadly medieval associations with traditional religion and feudalism, such as exists in all three
novels, the old in *Doktor Faustus* is also paradoxically the birth of the new, in the Renaissance period, and is, in addition, fuelled and distorted by often fantastic conceptions of the primitive era of precivilization. While this tendency for apparently old aspects to be part of the internal dynamic of the new is explored particularly closely in *Doktor Faustus*, some element of coopting of the old into the logic of the new is present in both of the other novels. In *Der Grüne Heinrich* this takes place by means of the protagonist's insistence that conservative attitudes are simply the inevitable element of reaction in a kind of dialectical process, while in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* there is an attempt to treat aspects of older values as a more positive balancing element in that projected new approach to life which the bourgeois-aristocratic alliance at the end of the novel is meant to suggest.

The three novels I am examining in this thesis have, apart from, to some extent, *Doktor Faustus*, received comparatively little attention from the reading public outside the German-speaking world; but I hope to suggest that they are an important part of the Western novelistic tradition in their dealing with the issues of the emergence and development of modernity, and exhibit a high degree of artistic subtlety and engagement with major concerns.
CHAPTER ONE: GOETHE'S WILHELM MEISTERS LEHRJAHRE

Introduction

In this chapter I propose to examine the problematics of the old and the new as they emerge in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. I shall examine the fields of character, especially as regards the protagonist, of society, and of art, treating them generally in that order, while allowing for the considerable interdependencies between the three fields in the novel. In contradistinction to many critics I shall be viewing the novel as having a sustained social thematic, one which is involved in the arguments throughout the novel, and which constantly draws on notions of the old and the new.

The central framework of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, around which the whole novel is built, is the education of the protagonist, Wilhelm Meister.¹ This education is a process of formation of character, not an institutionalized, school education,² although certain kinds of institutions other than schools, such as the theatre, the religious community, and the secret society, do feature in the novel. The process is described theoretically in the latter part of the novel, in which there is little action, but the process itself takes place to a large extent during the comparatively untheoretical earlier part, in which Wilhelm is involved in a series of picaresque adventures, mainly involving love affairs and travelling theatre companies.

While the educational process in the novel is presented in terms of the development of Wilhelm's character, viewed in

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² See ibid., p.122.
comparison with the characters of other figures, Wilhelm's character is not very specifically defined as that of a particular individual. Rather, he represents a space in which an exemplary process of personal development, aimed to be potentially valid for as wide a range of individuals as possible, may take place. So, while I shall treat Wilhelm's educational process as the main subject to be dealt with under the heading of character, its discussion will be relatively free of reference to any particular idiosyncrasies of Wilhelm, since he displays few, if any.

Society and art both have crucial roles to play in the central process of Wilhelm's personal development. Social issues are the stimulus for Wilhelm's self-conscious quest for personal development, as well as being an integral part of the whole vision, of which the developed character is aiming to be a constituent element. Unlike *Der Grüne Heinrich*, in which social issues could be said to be the basis on which art and character depend, in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* the formation of individual persons, or at least a group of them, is seen as capable of affecting the development of society, and so the personal sphere has a kind of centrality, and this may be one reason why the novel is optimistic in tone. In fact, the introduction of the Society of the Tower, in the latter part of the novel, broadens the perspective from Wilhelm's own education to

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4 See Lukács *Die Theorie des Romans: Ein geschichtsphilosophischer Versuch über die Formen der großen Epik*, Darmstadt: Luchterhand und Neuwied, 1980, pp.117-128, for example, who sees the novel as about a mutual adaptation between the individual and the world, and as, philosophically, between abstract idealism and Romanticism.
that of a group of like-minded individuals, whose personal inner achievements are expected to bear fruit in society.

Art, on the other hand, is regarded more as a means of education, than as an end in itself, as far as Wilhelm is directly concerned, and he moves on from his dalliances in the theatre, for which there is in any case some doubt as to the extent of his talents, to what are presented as more serious, social concerns, when he moves into association with members of the Society of the Tower. Art in the latter section of the novel is presented with a greater attention to aesthetic considerations, and is seen as demonstrative of the inner state, sound or otherwise, of the producer, and, ideally, emblematic of the kind of harmony and balance, in the individual and in society, which is aimed for.

As social issues are presented as initiating Wilhelms need for self-conscious education, it will be necessary to discuss these in an introductory way before discussing character. It will also be necessary to amplify the discussion on character in connection with the later discussions on society and on art, since Wilhelm educates himself partly through art, and towards a vision which includes a social dimension, one that aims to reconcile tradition and modernity.

The problematics of the old and the new are addressed less explicitly and directly in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* than in *Der Grüne Heinrich* and *Doktor Faustus*, although they do form the novel's background. This is because *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, being written at an earlier stage in the modern epoch than the other two novels, is more concerned about the setting up of the project which will bring about the new, and less with the consequences of discarding the old, these perhaps being in any case less evident at
such an early stage. Nevertheless, Wilhelm’s attempt to escape bourgeois specialization by means of education can be seen as a reaction to early evidence of the dangers of burgeoning commercialization, and thus attests to a considerable awareness on Goethe’s part of possible disadvantages in the modern world. Nevertheless, a progressive Enlightenment rhetoric of doing away with inherited wisdom, and of each individual discovering independently from first principles, is a leading characteristic of the novel, and establishes the novel’s philosophical sympathies as being firmly modernizing.

Before embarking on detailed discussion of these issues, I want to recall the corpus of critical response to which Goethe’s novel project has given rise. A summary of the tendencies in criticism of the Wilhelm Meister novels up to 1980 can be found in Am Beispiel ‘Wilhelm Meister’: Einführung in die Wissenschaftsgeschichte der Germanistik, edited by Klaus Berghahn and Beate Pinkernell. This study sees criticism on the Wilhelm Meister novels as dividing into schools, characterized to a large extent by whether they analyse the novels from the point of view, on the one hand, of aesthetic or philosophical considerations, without connecting their analyses to social or political concerns, or whether, on the other hand, social and political concerns are the main point of orientation for the criticism. Post-war criticism of a non-social kind is classified as ‘Werkimmanente Interpretation’, which includes critics such as Emil Staiger, and is linked to pre-war tendencies such as positivism on the one hand and ‘Geistesgeschichte’ on the other. The social criticism is divided into the Marxist school, including critics such as Lukács, and the social history school, including critics such as

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5 Volumes I and II, Königstein/Ts:Athenäum Verlag, 1980
Habermas. Interpretations of both the Marxist and social historical schools view *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* as representing the emerging historical ascendancy of bourgeois capitalism over feudalism. Concerns such as the meaning of the seemingly somewhat artificial, or tentative, ending, and the significance of Wilhelm's abandoning the theatre, also arise among the critics discussed in Berghahn and Pinkernell's analysis.

Thus two main strands emerge from this survey, one concerned with the psychological, philosophical, moral, aesthetic, and other, issues arising from Wilhelm's quest for education, experience, and understanding of himself and his environment, the other viewing Wilhelm's quest as symptomatic of socio-cultural change, and arising from, for example, the transition from feudalism to capitalism, and issues such as the increasing specialization of labour. A third important trend which has emerged, and which is not dealt with in the survey, concerns the status of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* as a 'Bildungsroman', and emphasizes the Germanness of the genre, and the way it involves the inner life of the protagonist interacting with an outer world. Work by critics such as Michael Beddow, Michael Minden and Martin Swales take up this approach, and a collection essays pursuing this approach, some of which discuss *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, can be found in *Reflection and Action: Essays on the Bildungsroman*, edited by James Hardin. My

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argument in this chapter could be seen as a bringing together of these three strands, in that I attempt to show that in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, as in the other two novels I discuss in the thesis, the inward life is symptomatic of the outer world, and the individual's self-understanding can express a situation of cultural transition, in which values associated with the old and the new are in question. This constellation of concerns can be seen as a central element in the German novelistic tradition.

**Society**

Before moving on to the issue of character and its formation, I shall now introduce the social issue which forms the background to Wilhelm's quest for education. Wilhelm's problem is that he feels his bourgeois background does not afford him the possibility of a general development of his personality, and, rather, limits him to a one-sided specialization for practical purposes. His background is that of a prosperous and cultured bourgeois family. His grandfather was an art collector, and Wilhelm has known the collection as a small boy, but his father, who has more narrowly commercial interests, intends Wilhelm to go into business, which is against Wilhelm's inclinations. The clearest exposition of the problem in the novel comes in Wilhelm's letter to Werner, in Book 5, Chapter 3, Werner being Wilhelm's commercially-minded friend, who is encouraging Wilhelm to use his travels for the purpose of acquiring business-related knowledge, rather than for the theatrical activities.

Wilhelm has in fact been pursuing. The letter compares the limited, goal-determined training available to the bourgeois with the disinterested furthering of personal refinement available to the aristocrat, Wilhelm contrasting the possibilities as follows, for example: 'Ich weiß nicht, wie es in fremden Ländern ist, aber in Deutschland ist nur dem Edelmann eine gewisse allgemeine, wenn ich sagen darf, personelle Ausbildung möglich. Ein Bürger kann sich Verdienst erwerben und zur höchsten Not seinen Geist ausbilden; seine Persönlichkeit geht aber verloren, er mag sich stellen, wie er will.' (p.290) So, instead of the aristocrat's coherent development of the self, the bourgeois must content himself with a partial, and divided, development, acquiring earning skills, and perhaps also, but separately, pursuing some spiritual or at least intellectual culture. A certain dividedness, or at least one-sidedness, of the self is therefore the lot of the bourgeois. Another aspect of the contrast is the following: 'Wenn der Edelmann im gemeinen Leben gar keine Grenzen kennt, wenn man aus ihm Könige oder königähnliche Figuren erschaffen kann, so darf er überall mit einem stillen Bewußtsein vor seinesgleichen treten; er darf überall vorwärts dringen, anstatt daß dem Bürger nichts besser ansteht, als das reine, stille Gefühl der Grenzlinie, die ihm gezogen ist.' (p.291) The specialization of the bourgeois leads him to be limited in terms of the circles in which he can move and the activities in which he can engage, and Wilhelm wishes to escape from this sense of limitation and acquire the open possibilities he believes an aristocrat has by virtue of a general, coherent, rather than divided, education.

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8 Page numbers in this chapter refer to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Werke (Hamburger), Band 7: Romane und Novellen II, Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1982.
Wilhelm further contrasts the respective modes of acting of the aristocrat and the bourgeois: 'Jener [the aristocrat] soll tun und wirken, dieser [the bourgeois] soll leisten und schaffen; er soll einzelne Fähigkeiten ausbilden, um brauchbar zu werden, und es wird schon vorausgesetzt, daß in seinem Wesen keine Harmonie sein noch sein dürfe, weil er, um sich auf eine Weise brauchbar zu machen, alles übrige vernachlässigen muß.'(p.291) The difference between 'tun und wirken' and 'leisten und schaffen' is between something holistic, disinterested, and on the grand scale, on the one hand, and something narrow, limited, and acquisitive, on the other. The narrow focus of the bourgeois, who may only develop particular abilities, deprives him of the harmony which the aristocrat, through an all-round development, may attain.

Wilhelm identifies the cause of this contrast as social: 'An diesem Unterschiede ist nicht etwa die Anmaßung der Edelleute und die Nachgiebigkeit der Bürger, sondern die Verfassung der Gesellschaft selbst schuld; ob sich daran einmal etwas ändern wird und was sich ändern wird, bekümmert mich wenig; genug, ich habe, wie die Sachen jetzt stehen, an mich selbst zu denken, und wie ich mich selbst und das, was mir ein unerläßliches Bedürfnis ist, rette und erreiche.'(p.291) So, although it may be the current constitution of society which makes his quest for education necessary, he does not, at this point, see any social dimension to the solution, but sees the social background only as creating the impasse from which he must save himself.

The novel therefore, although positing a social problem, bases itself on a solution to that problem which is, at first, personal. Wilhelm expresses this when he says: 'Ich habe nun einmal gerade zu jener harmonischen Ausbildung meiner Natur, die mir meine
Geburt versagt, eine unwiderstehliche Neigung.’(p.291) This personal process then works back towards the social, in the latter part of the novel. The idea of harmony will later in the novel be the key to reintegrating the social dimension with the personal, but here it is the initial task of establishing some harmonious development inside the self which is emphasized.

The problematics of the old and the new emerge here in the idea of the specialization which is forced on the bourgeois subject due to his involvement in an increasingly articulated commercial and industrial economy. This modern tendency contrasts with the aristocratic model, representing the older tendency of a less intensely specialized, and, it is suggested, less exclusively economically motivated approach to living. Wilhelm aspires to the benefits of the older model, but cannot attain to them by what he sees as the older means, that is, by being born to them. What he has to do is to step outside the established social framework, and to acquire a personal development by means which are, arguably, extrinsic to the serious functioning of society, these means being the theatre. In his letter Wilhelm in fact identifies the theatre as his educational substitute for the aristocratic life: ‘Du siehst wohl, daß das alles [the opportunity to educate his spirit, or intellect, and taste] für mich nur auf dem Theater zu finden ist, und daß ich mich in diesem einzigen Elemente nach Wunsch rühren und ausbilden kann. Auf den Brettern erscheint der gebildete Mensch so gut persönlich in seinem Glanz als in den oberen Klassen; Geist und Körper müssen bei jeder Bemühung gleichen Schritt gehen, und ich werde da so gut sein und scheinen können als irgend anderswo.’(p.292) The theatre offers the same balance between the
inner and the outer elements of the self. How he will reenter society with his newly acquired personal accomplishments is left till later in the novel to resolve, but that the artistic medium is more an instrument of education than an ultimate aim in itself is indicated by the abrupt dropping of any concern with the theatre when Wilhelm joins the Society of the Tower. I shall return to the social and artistic themes later in the chapter, while I shall now discuss in more detail the shape of the personal project of education, as it appears in the novel.

The Educational Project

Wilhelm's character is the locus for the educational project which Goethe is proposing, and is, in fact largely determined by it. Everything which Goethe reveals about Wilhelm's character is part of the description of his gradual development, and there is no thoroughgoing attempt to furnish him with any idiosyncratic features, which might serve to individualize him, and diminish his representativeness. However, his educational development is presented as self-motivated, and to a substantial extent, but not exclusively so, self-directed. The concern is therefore, initially, with a process of inner development, rather than with organized, externally imposed education, which is not portrayed in detail in

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9 For a view which sees Wilhelm as mistaken, not only in seeking self-realization in an older form of life, but also in thinking that he will find aristocratic values in the theatre, which was already bourgeois in tenor, see Stefan Blessin, *Die Romane Goethes*, Königstein/Ts.: Athenäum, 1979, pp.15-16.

10 See Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989, pp.12-14, particularly for Wilhelm's wish to acquire a public persona, which seems incompatible with bourgeois life, but available to the aristocracy. Habermas points out that underlying Wilhelm's wish to acquire an aristocratic education and demeanour is a bourgeois emphasis on personal development.
the novel, and to the extent that it is discussed, is mainly couched in abstract terms.

Goethe bases Wilhelm's educational project on a set of pedagogic ideas, which add up to a kind of modern philosophy of personal development. These, in outline, involve an individual subjectivity which feels an inborn impulse to develop. Following this impulse it strives in various directions, errs until its errors produce tensions which resolve themselves in crises, from which the subjectivity emerges at a higher level of development and understanding, and begins to strive anew. Thus there is a kind of dialectical process of repeated strivings, errors and resolutions, which produce an ever more sophisticated subjectivity. The process is promoted by the individual's interactions with the outside world and other individuals. If the individual subjectivity continues to strive in an unconstrained, energetic manner, then it develops different sides of itself, maintaining a balance between the inner contemplative life and the outer, active life. This leads to the production of an increasingly harmonious plenitude in the individual. This balance between the inner and outer sides of the individual corresponds to the way in which developed individuals may interact harmoniously with a developed society. While the impulse to strive is unself-conscious, a gradually developing self-conscious reflectivity, accompanying the development of different faculties, helps to ensure that the individual appreciates the importance of continuing to strive, and avoiding an excessively one-

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11 For a description of some of the philosophical ingredients of Goethe's conception of 'Bildung', including the view that a relatively static, Kantian Enlightenment conception and a Protestant-inspired idea of ongoing secularization are involved in a relationship of tension, see Karlheinz Gradl, Säkularisierung und Bildung: Eine Studie zu Goethes Roman 'Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre', Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1985, especially p.51.
sided development, although particular gifts in different individuals may be part of the harmonious plenitude of the society as a whole.

As if to reflect the active and reflective sides to this process, the novel portrays it in two separate but complementary ways. In the earlier part of the novel, the emphasis is on illustrating the process in action, and Wilhelm is shown engaging in picaresque adventures, having disastrous or inconclusive affairs with women, and experimenting in various ways with the theatre. He also interacts with a great variety of people, not all of whom he benefits, but from all of whom he learns. He is shown committing errors, and emerging from the ensuing disasters with increased reflective understanding each time. In the latter part of the novel, the theory of the educational process is stated discursively, by members of the Society of the Tower, who begin to appear in the earlier part, but dominate the latter part. Taking account of this dual approach, I shall proceed to discuss the educational process in more detail, with reference both to its embodiment in Wilhelm's, and some other characters', career, and to the theoretical statements of it which various characters, especially members of the Society of the Tower, make. I shall discuss the impulse by which it starts, the cyclical pattern by which it develops, and the issue of interaction and balance between internal and external elements, which is crucial to it.

The impulse to personal development, the novel proposes, is an inborn one, not imposed by society, though society may either nourish or frustrate it. Wilhelm, in his letter to Werner, states, 'mich selbst, ganz wie ich da bin, auszubilden, das war dunkel von Jugend auf mein Wunsch und meine Absicht'(p.290), suggesting that the impulse starts as something inchoate, felt but not understood, the
understanding of which comes later. He continues, 'Noch hege ich
eben diese Gesinnungen, nur daß mir die Mittel, die mir es möglich
machen werden, etwas deutlicher sind.'(p.290) This indicates that
the impulse remains constant, while self-conscious understanding,
an enabling factor, increases. The idea of the innateness of a will to
education in Wilhelm, given Wilhelm's representative function,
could be understood as a general belief Goethe holds about human
nature. However, Goethe is not explicit about the extent to which
every human is endowed with such an impulse, or the extent to
which some early stimulant in the environment might not be
necessary to awaken it, if it is present. Wilhelm, for example, though
he is born into a potentially limiting bourgeois social environment,
has had early exposure to his grandfather's art collection. This
experience leaves an indelible impression on him and might be said
to awaken his sense of a goal of harmony to strive towards. He is
particularly impressed by a painting of a young prince, who is
compelled to conceal his love for his father's new bride. Wilhelm
confesses this to a member of the Society of the Tower, whom he
meets at the time when he is courting Mariane, recounting of
himself, 'Wie jammerte mich, wie jammert mich noch ein Jüngling,
der die süßen Triebe, das schönste Erbtell, das uns die Natur gab, in
sich verschließen und das Feuer, das ihn und andere erwärmen und
beleben sollte, in seinem Busen verbergen muß, so daß sein
Innerstes unter ungeheuren Schmerzen verzehrt wird!'(p.70) This
seems at least partly to stand for the frustration which awaits
Wilhelm if his impulses to development are obstructed by a
restrictive social background. Indeed the rural cleric, another
associate of the Society of the Tower, whom Wilhelm meets while he
is still with the acting troupe, suggests, in a conversation with
Wilhelm, that early impressions are crucial, and that a cultured upbringing will lead to a happier life for the beneficiary:

‘...denn niemand glaube die ersten Eindrücke der Jugend überwinden zu können. Ist er in einer löblichen Freiheit, umgeben von schönen und edlen Gegenständen, in dem Umgänge mit guten Menschen aufgewachsen, haben ihn seine Meister das gelehrt, was er zuerst wissen mußte, um das übrige leichter zu begreifen, hat er gelernt, was er nie zu verlernen braucht, wurden seine ersten Handlungen so geleitet, daß er das Gute künftig leichter und bequemer vollbringen kann, ohne sich irgend etwas abgewöhnen zu müssen, so wird dieser Mensch ein reineres, vollkommeneres und glücklicheres Leben führen, als ein anderer, der seine ersten Jugendkräfte im Widerstand und im Irrtum zugesetzt hat.’(p.121)

While the opinion of no one member of the Society of the Tower can be taken as Goethe's, and the members disagree in emphasis among each other, the rural cleric backs up the idea that any latent impulse there may be in the self needs stimulation to start off in the right direction. Moreover, he is responding to Wilhelm asking whether genius will not always overcome obstacles. Although this belongs partly to the debate about the extent to which erring is fruitful, to which I shall return, nevertheless, if even genius may be frustrated by unfavourable circumstances, it seems that either the lack of genius or the lack of suitable stimulus for genius would prevent the individual from starting the journey towards the fullest harmony and development.

That Wilhelm in particular has this genius in potential, which might not be shared by all individuals, is indicated by the actress Aurelie, who says to him, 'es scheint eine Vorempfindung der
ganzen Welt in Ihnen zu liegen, welche durch die harmonische
Berührung der Dichtkunst erregt und entwickelt wird.'(p.257) Once
again, something inchoate in the individual, it is suggested, needs
awakening by something harmonious in the world, in this case art.

Wilhelm himself supports the idea that only an inner impulse
related to a particular area can ensure achievement in that area,
and that without the impulse nothing can be realized, when he says,
in relation to the actor Melina's mundane approach to the theatre,
'Wer mit einem Talente zu einem Talente geboren ist, findet in
demselben sein schönstes Dasein! Nichts ist auf der Erde ohne
Beschwerlichkeit. Nur der innere Trieb, die Lust, die Liebe helfen
uns Hindernisse überwinden, Wege bahnen und uns aus dem engen
Kreise, worin sich andere kümmern abzügigen,
emporheben.'(p.54) It is interesting that Wilhelm, here maintaining
that an impulse can be related specifically to a certain area of
endeavour, at this point believes that he is particularly talented with
respect to the theatre. He will later revise this view, and, upon
achieving greater maturity, feel called to a wider sphere of activity.
Wilhelm also, later in the same monologue, talks of a spark, which
lives in the individual, and needs to be fed in order not to be
suffocated by daily cares and indifference:

'du [Melina] fühlst nicht, daß in den Menschen ein besserer
Funke lebt, der, wenn er keine Nahrung erhält, wenn er nicht
geregt wird, von der Asche täglicher Bedürfnisse und
Gleichgültigkeit tiefer bedeckt und doch so spät und fast nie
erstickt wird. Du fühlst in deiner Seele keine Kraft, ihn
aufzublasen, in deinem eigenen Herzen keinen Reichtum, um
dem erweckten Nahrung zu geben.'(p.55)
This suggests some kind of latent potential in individuals generally, though not necessarily of a particularly all-encompassing kind, and again suggests the power of art, and, in this case, the responsibility of artists, to awake the potential in others. A prefiguration of the leadership role Wilhelm and others are eventually to take on themselves, together with an indication of the way in which art is a rehearsal of it, is contained here.

It is Aurelie to whom Goethe entrusts the articulation of his solution to the fact that, as he seems to imply, not everyone has the potential for the plenitude of development for which he has destined Wilhelm. She says, ‘Es fragt sich, ob unter der großen Masse eine Menge von Anlagen, Kräften und Fähigkeiten verteilt sei, die durch günstige Umstände entwickelt, durch vorzügliche Menschen zu einem gemeinsamen Endzwecke geleitet werden können.’ (p.264) So, a variety of talents, put together, add up to a whole which requires particularly developed individuals, such as Wilhelm, to lead it, although Aurelie is here thinking of Lothario, a leading member of the Society of the Tower. Thus in the kind of society which Goethe sees developing, one characterized by the specialization of a highly commercial economy, most individuals, he implies, may not be able to aspire to any particular wholeness in their own persons, and can only participate in a wholeness characteristic of a whole society, but certain leading individuals are to be to some extent microcosms of the wholeness of the society, retaining something of the coherence which the aristocratic culture of the older model of society exhibits. This area will be dealt with further when the Society of the Tower is discussed in more detail.

However, the Romantic insistence on the need for inborn impulses, and on the importance of allowing those impulses
untrammelled scope for development will tend to be inimical to older emphases on tradition and authority, and is thus modernizing in its implications.\textsuperscript{12}

The issue of the inbornness of initial impulses is intimately connected with and overlaps with the issue of the way in which the impulses develop as the individual matures. The novel portrays a process of striving, erring, reaching a crisis, and resolving at a higher level of consciousness, in action in the life of Wilhelm, and a similar pattern is at work in other cases, as, for example, in the life of Lothario's aunt, the 'Schöne Seele', although in her case the process is characterized by a certain one-sidedness. However, opinions expressed by characters in the novel on the process of development differ in the extent to which they recommend that the individual subjectivity should be left free to err at will, and since it will find its own resolution to its errors, learning in the process, or, by contrast, suggest that valuable time and effort can be spared, and even the chance of irreversible damage averted, by the intervention of a benevolent outside party, who might point the striving subjectivity in the right direction. Wilhelm's life is the primary illustration of the mechanism of Goethe's dialectic of personal development in action, and, although I shall discuss later some of the means through which it takes place, I shall here

\textsuperscript{12} See Lukács, \textit{Goethe und seine Zeit}, Bern: Francke, 1947. Lukács, in discussing \textit{Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre} (pp.31-47), points out that a strand in the novel is Goethe's polemic against the German Romantics, and their attachment to exaggerated inwardness (pp.38-39). However, he also acknowledges Goethe's allegiance to the kind of educational model I describe (p.42). This model might in a broad sense be described as being characterized by thought of a Romantic type, although in the context of the German late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries, the term Romantic is often used in a narrower sense to refer to an exclusively inner application of the ideas of free development of the personality.
consider some of the repeated statements of its shape which are
distributed through the novel.

Wilhelm, in the opening phase of the novel, recounts the story
of his childhood, and his early experiences with the puppet theatre,
to his first love, Mariane. At one point he says, 'Es ist eine schöne
Empfindung, liebe Mariane ... wenn wir uns alter Zeiten und alter,
unschädlicher Irrtümer erinnern, besonders wenn es in einem
Augenblicke geschieht, da wir eine Höhe glücklich erreicht haben,
von welcher wir uns umsehen und den zurückgelegten Weg
überschauen können. Es ist so angenehm, selbstzufrieden sich
mancher Hindernisse zu erinnern, die wir oft mit einem peinlichen
Gefühle für unüberwindlich hielten, und dasjenige, was wir jetzt,
entwickelt, sind, mit dem zu vergleichen, was wir damals,
unentwickelt, waren.'(pp.16-17) This speech describes a single stage
of development, up to a successful resolution, and the somewhat
complacent tone derives from the fact that Wilhelm is not taking
into account that he has more periods of seemingly insurmountable
difficulties to go through. The mistakes which have been committed
are regarded benignly as having been legitimated by the higher
stage of development in the individual which they were part of
reaching. The process of recounting one's life in retrospect is
important in the novel, and occurs frequently, since it allows a
reflective appraisal of the course already followed, and the
development of an awareness that there is more to be done. The
sense is expressed here that the process of striving, erring and
resolving inevitably produces a higher state of consciousness, and
that movement in the subjectivity, at least when not subject to
distortion by outside limitations, is automatically progress. The idea
that the path forged by striving could lead anywhere other than uphill is not entertained.

Another moment where Wilhelm reflects on his position in the cycle of development occurs in the last chapter (Chapter 14) of Book 4, where, having wandered for a period with a band of actors, he is contemplating whether to leave them altogether, although he has been persuaded, despite his unconquered misgivings, by Melina, one of their number, to invest in the company, allowing the reacquisition of the theatrical equipment. He is also uncertain as to his feelings for Philine, one of the actresses, over whom a duel, of a relatively harmless kind, has just been fought, by two other admirers. Reflecting on his confused and uneasy feelings on the situation, his thoughts are as follows:

Er [Wilhelm] erinnerte sich der Zeit, in der sein Geist durch ein unbedingtes, hoffnungsreiches Streben emporgehoben wurde, wo er in dem lebhaftesten Genusse aller Art wie in einem Elemente schwamm. Es ward ihm deutlich, wie er jetzt in ein unbestimmtes Schleudern geraten war, in welchem er nur noch schlürfend kostete, was er sonst mit vollen Zügen eingesogen hatte; aber deutlich konnte er nicht sehen, welches unüberwindliche Bedürfnis ihm die Natur zum Gesetz gemacht hatte, und wie sehr dieses Bedürfnis durch Umstände nur gereizt, halb befriedigt und irregeführt worden war.(pp.141-2)

This state of confused dissatisfaction occurs just before a crisis, in which his errors have led him to a point where he is no longer moving forward, and has lost momentum. In using the word 'Schleudern', Goethe is emphasizing that Wilhelm is caught in desultory, directionless activity, lacking in a forward-looking energy and purpose, and this is the opposite of the sort of attitude which
Wilhelm, as a future reforming figure, must display. His frustrated inner need for development, however, demands resolution, which might take the form of concerted action on Wilhelm’s part, but in this case, in fact, takes the form more of a coming together of circumstances to open up new horizons. When, after these reflections, Wilhelm tells Mignon, the girl he has more or less adopted, that he must go away, she has an attack of distress which prompts Wilhelm to recognize his fatherly feelings for her, and his responsibility to her. Given this development, and his having already financed the reequipping of the theatre company, and the newly reconstituted company’s hiring by the local aristocracy, Wilhelm soon finds himself with the actors in the castle, and a new stage in his development is underway. Clearly as far as Wilhelm’s actual experience goes, the progress is shown as more a happy conjunction of circumstances accompanied by a constant drive on his part, than anything more organized or deliberate.

Wilhelm’s reflections on another of his crises, at the beginning of Book 5, are this time occasioned by his receipt of a letter informing him, unexpectedly, that his father has died. He has been working with the theatre director, Serlo, and the crisis is produced by the sudden change of circumstances, for which he is not prepared. As the narrator explains, ‘Der Mensch kann in keine gefährlichere Lage versetzt werden, als wenn durch äußere Umstände eine große Veränderung seines Zustandes bewirkt wird, ohne daß seine Art zu empfinden und zu denken darauf vorbereitet ist.’(p.284) The narrator explains the inner conflicts which Wilhelm ponders over, and notes that while his intentions are praiseworthy he lacks experience, and relies too much on that of others (‘Seine Gesinnungen waren edel, seine Absichten lauter, und seine Vorsätze
scheiden nicht verwerflich. Das alles durfte er sich mit einigem
Zutrauen selbst bekennen; allein er hatte Gelegenheit genug gehabt,
zu bemerken, daß es ihm an Erfahrung fehle, und er legte daher auf
die Erfahrung anderer und auf die Resultate, die sie daraus mit
Überzeugung ableiteten, einen übermäßigen Wert und kam dadurch
nur immer mehr in die Irre.'pp.284-5) A reliance on the opinion of
others is, from the perspective of Goethe's approach, a putting of
limits on one's own impulses and self-formation, leading to
frustration and disharmony. The individual subjectivity must find
its own way and not rely on second-hand experience, a stance which
naturally favours innovative over traditional approaches. Disunity
in the self, the opposite of the harmony which the subjectivity
strives for, is in fact what Wilhelm experiences during this crisis: 'So
entfernte sich Wilhelm, indem er mit sich selbst einig zu werden
strebte, immer mehr von der hellsamen Einheit, und bei dieser
Verwirrung ward es seinen Leidenschaften um so leichter, alle
Zurüstungen zu ihrem Vorteil zu gebrauchen und ihn über das, was
er zu tun hatte, immer mehr zu verwirren.'(p.285) So Wilhelm,
relying on the ideas of others, becomes more confused, and the
disunity between his emotions and his reason leads his emotions to
pursue interests not necessarily consistent with the interests of the
whole.

An outward circumstance again provides the stimulus for the
resolution of this crisis, this time the letter from Werner attempting
to persuade Wilhelm to return home and take up business. This
provokes Wilhelm's letter, discussed earlier, in which he self-
consciously opts for further education of his person in the theatre.
The crisis here has led to reflection, and the resolution has been
accompanied by a new awareness, and by what is presented as a
higher state of reflective self-consciousness, which may serve as a basis for the next stage in his progress. He is now showing an increasing understanding of the process he is involved in, and of the reason why he is not ready for a practical occupation at present: ‘Was hilft es mir, gutes Eisen zu fabrizieren, wenn mein eigenes Inneres voller Schlacken ist? und was, ein Landgut in Ordnung zu bringen, wenn ich mir selber uneins bin?’ (pp.289-290) This pronouncement suggests that he is beginning to see that his educational project may eventually make him fit for practical business, but this understanding only comes gradually, and is not clearly grasped until the end of the novel.\(^\text{13}\)

Wilhelm’s crises do not become less frequent or less acute for his advancing maturity, and his pattern of errings, crises and resolutions continues right through the novel, including the latter part, much of which he spends in company with the Society of the Tower. The revelation to him that Mariane has died, to a large extent through his fault, his irresolution over whether Felix is really his son, and a sense of suspicion that the members of the Society of the Tower are keeping things from him, which cumulate towards the end of Book 7, are succeeded, at the end of it, by his initiation into the Society of the Tower, during which he is assured that Felix is his son. Book 8 starts with him enjoying his new-found sense of responsibility to his son, walking with him in the garden just after the ceremony, and viewing his relationship to education in a new light: ‘An diesem Tage, dem vergnügtesten seines Lebens, schien auch seine eigne Bildung erst anzufangen; er fühlte die

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\(^\text{13}\) See Hans Eichner, ‘Zur Deutung von Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre’, Jahrbuch des Freien Deutschen Hochstifts (1966) pp.166-196, who emphasizes that Wilhelm is never actually seen doing any practical activity, and takes this as indicating that it is practical activity among other characters which the novel is thematizing.
Notwendigkeit, sich zu belehren, indem er zu lehren aufgefordert ward.' (p. 498) As at each stage, Wilhelm’s education here is in a way beginning anew, because he has a new sense of self, and new insight into what the educational process is about, understanding it in this case, perhaps for the first time, in relation to his responsibility to others.  

His last crisis comes right at the end of the novel. He has become betrothed to Therese for practical reasons, but without a greatly passionate attachment, and he meets Natalie, Lothario’s sister, who turns out to have been his rescuer on the occasion of the robbery, and to whom he immediately feels passionately attached. He resolves to remain faithful to Therese, only to find that the impediment that had prevented her from marrying her former love, Lothario, has been removed. He is torn by the contradiction of his feelings for Natalie and his wish to keep his word to Therese, and suspicious of the motives of the Society of the Tower, which he feels is trying to get him out of the way, when it proposes educational trips to him, so that Lothario can take Therese from him. The resolution, in which it is revealed to Wilhelm that Therese has agreed to give up Wilhelm on condition that he becomes engaged to Natalie, and that Natalie does love him, comes in the last few pages of the book, and his recognition of the situation not until the last sentence. The position of the attainment of a worthy spouse for Wilhelm right at the end of the novel, as the resolution of his last crisis, suggests that, while it is his highest accomplishment and happiness up to that point, and the culmination of that stretch of

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34 See, for example, Thomas P. Saine, ‘Was Wilhelm Meister Really Supposed to be a Bildungsroman?’, in James N. Hardin (ed.), Reflection and Action: Essays on the German Bildungsroman, pp. 118-141, for a view suggesting that Wilhelm’s education is about moving away from introspectiveness and towards family life with Felix and Natalie.
his education portrayed in the novel, it nevertheless does not mark
the end of the process. Rather, once the joy of the new
circumstances has been appreciated, a new striving will begin, with
a new dimension, in that it will be undertaken in company. By
ending the novel where he does, at a moment of change, Goethe
shows that Wilhelm's cycle is still in motion, and avoids the
impression, which a long dwelling on Wilhelm's happiness might
create, that a final resolution has been arrived at. In fact, what final
resolution, if any, a striving individual might be aiming at, is left
unresolved in this novel, and only a hopeful pointing towards
further progress, both for Wilhelm and for his society, is present. In
addition, it is notable that the happy resolution of the crisis at the
end of the novel seems the result as much, if not more, of good
fortune, than of any deliberate and successful activity or planning.\textsuperscript{15}
This lends a certain tentativeness to the optimistic tone of the
novel's conclusion.\textsuperscript{16}

As well as the illustration of the dialectic of educational
development through Wilhelm's character, a number of statements
are made by other characters, either about themselves or about
others, which reveal aspects of the process, although these are not
always fully concurrent with each other. In particular, a kind of

\textsuperscript{15} For a view which sees the author's role in arranging the novel's happy
ending as an indirect representation of something similar to Divine
Providence in the world outside the novel, see Gerda Röder, \textit{Glück und
glückliches Ende im deutschen Bildungsroman: Eine Studie zu Goethes
'Wilhelm Meister'}, Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1968, pp.179-181. See also,
Stefan Blessin, \textit{Die Romane Goethes}, pp.11-14, who sees the happy result of the
novel for Wilhelm, which he has done nothing to plan for, as an attempt to
illustrate a theory of the market place, such as that of Adam Smith, according
to which the selfish and competing impulses of the individual participants
combine to produce the common good.

\textsuperscript{16} For a view which sees the irony, discernible here, as elsewhere in the novel,
as intended to give critical distance but not to undermine, see Michael Beddow,
\textit{The Fiction of Humanity: Studies in the Bildungsroman from Wieland to
Thomas Mann}, p.86.
debate takes place as to whether a striving subjectivity should be allowed to err freely, the errors automatically leading to their own resolution, or whether gentle guidance helps avoid the unnecessary detours in the path to progress. This debate cannot be said to be finally resolved, except inasmuch as Wilhelm's own development takes place through a mixture of some fairly wide-ranging and sustained erring, and at the same time supervision, and, at times, guidance, from the Society of the Tower.

Accounts of the lives and educational developments of a number of characters other than Wilhelm are given during the novel, that of Serlo, the theatre director, for example, taking the whole of the eighteenth chapter of Book 4, and that of Natalie and Lothario's aunt, the 'Schöne Seele', occupying the entire sixth book. Both of these characters attain an advanced level of development of a kind, if not as full as that of Wilhelm. I shall discuss the one-sidedness of both these characters later, but a revealing account of the unboundedness of the process of development comes at the end of the 'Bekenntnisse einer Schönen Seele' (Book 6): 'Ich erinnere mich kaum eines Gebotes, nichts erscheint mir in Gestalt eines Gesetzes, es ist ein Trieb, der mich leitet und mich immer recht führet; ich folge mit Freiheit meinen Gesinnungen und weiß so wenig von Einschränkung als von Reue.'(p.420) The emphasis here on the importance of an absence of restriction, and the insistence on limitless, unfettered striving according to inner impulses, with their highly Romantic tone, are particularly remarkable for the fact that Goethe puts these words

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1 For an account of how Goethe presents characters in contrasting pairs, see Eric A. Blackall, *Goethe and the Novel*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1976, pp.122-224, and see the sixth chapter in general (pp.111-136) for detailed accounts of some of these characters, for example, Serlo, Aurelie, and the 'Schöne Seele'.
into the mouth of someone who is generally presented as devoutly Christian. There is a certain lack of traditional morality, not uncommon in the novel, in the conception of development here, only to some extent tempered by her subsequent reference to a horror in each person, which only a higher power prevents from growing. That Goethe manages to romanticize the philosophy of the most explicitly Christian figure in the novel who expresses herself at length, in the sense of putting it mainly in terms of overcoming limitations, breaking through boundaries, and paying no heed to authority imposed from the outside, suggests that he is going to great lengths to replace traditional thought with something he sees as progressive, and liberating, although at the same time the exclusively inward application of the philosophy is presented as a liability. As a result, older modes of thought are generally not expressed in their own terms in the novel, since those who might be expected to express them have in fact been coopted, to at least some extent, into Goethe's view of the world. Thus the aunt's conceptual approach would be in line with that of the novel's successful characters, if turned outwards and applied to an engagement with the external world.

Lothario, a leading member of the Society of the Tower, owner of the castle in which it is based, and brother of Natalie, Wilhelm's eventual bride, is a figure whose character is described by others rather than by himself, and is prominent particularly for his exemplary energy. Jarno says of him, 'Vielleicht könnte Lothario in einem Tage zerstören, woran dieser [the doctor, another member of the Society of the Tower] jahrelang gebaut hat; aber vielleicht teilt auch Lothario in einem Augenblick andern die Kraft mit, das Zerstörte hundertfältig wiederherzustellen.'(p.553) So it is the pure
unboundedness of Lothario’s energy which justifies any damage it may do to others. Jarno suggests that, in such a case, it is appropriate to be confident that, whatever damage is done, the eventual benefits may be greater, though the grounds for this confidence are, perhaps, not clearly elaborated. In fact this general confidence that the results of unbounded striving will be, in the end, for the best, whatever the short term consequences, is the attitude which the pattern of Wilhelm’s own development may be meant to inspire. Wilhelm’s various errings do lead to happy results, in the end — but for reasons which are far from clear. Goethe seems to content himself with the intimation that the energetic desire to extend the self is an inherent good.

  Jarno, in building up to this praise of Lothario, makes the general statement, ‘Der Mensch ist nicht eher glücklich, als bis sein unbedingtes Streben sich selbst seine Begrenzung bestimmt.’(p.53) No external limitations, no customs or externally established morality, this suggests, ought to impinge on the subjectivity’s pursuit of its own needs. To propose that the subjectivity ought to follow its impulses in defiance of any externally imposed requirements, that this is not only right and to be admired, but will also, in the end, result in good, and good sufficient to compensate for any destruction along the way, is by implication a negation of all traditional values, as well as a highly optimistic vote of confidence in modernity. It suggests that the subjective self should ignore any external limitations, and should change the order of the world to fit its perceived needs as it develops. Moreover, Jarno’s statements suggest that the destruction of that which preexists, whether old, or even recent, is always justified by what will later, it is confidently
proposed, be produced to replace it, though it may not yet be in evidence.

As is often the case in the novel, even if no voice of overall opposition is allowed to be heard, varying opinions on aspects of the programme are expressed, and the positions suggested by those advocating the need for absolutely unbounded striving are tempered by the views of those who propose that some guidance is desirable.\(^\text{18}\) Natalie, for example, who educates young girls, believes that rules are indispensable to bringing up children, and to life generally. However, that the members of the Society of the Tower encourage her in her endeavours is attributed to their tendency to encourage all individuals to operate in their own way. So the fact that the children in her charge are not allowed their freedom to err is balanced by the fact that Natalie is allowed hers, if erring is what she is doing by imposing rules.

Jarno is also impatient of erring and attempts to lure Wilhelm away from his acting early in the novel. He admits to his attitude later, to Wilhelm, which he contrasts with the priest's position with which he disagrees: 'Darüber hatte ich nun immer meine Not mit dem Abbé, der behauptet, der Irrtum könne nur durch das Irren geheilt werden.'(p.550) Jarno himself would, he says, call to the erring individual to save him from danger, but as he also admits to being a bad teacher, in the same breath, his credibility is to some extent undermined ('ich bin ein sehr schlechter Lehrmeister, es ist mir unerträglich, zu sehen, wenn jemand ungeschickte Versuche

macht, einem Irrenden muß ich gleich zurufen, und wenn es ein
Nachtwandler wäre, den ich in Gefahr sähe, geradenweges den Hals zu brechen.’(p.550) He does in fact interfere too early in Wilhelm’s life, before Wilhelm has exhausted his interest in the theatre, but while his attempt to draw Wilhelm away from the theatre at that time fails, his introduction of Wilhelm to Shakespeare is fruitful. Wilhelm has in fact to reach his own conviction that he has exhausted the possibilities that the theatre offers him, confirming, within the framework of the novel, the priest’s more patient approach, and the idea that the error itself, if allowed to exhaust itself, leads back to forward movement.

This more positive approach to error is repeated and elaborated during Wilhelm’s ceremony of initiation into the Society of the Tower, by the rural cleric (‘der Landesgeistliche’) who looks like the priest (‘der Abbé’) but may be his brother. He proclaims, ‘Nicht vor Irrtum zu bewahren, ist die Pflicht des
Menschenerziehers, sondern den Irrenden zu leiten, ja ihn seinen
Irrtum aus vollen Bechern ausschüttren zu lassen, das ist Weisheit
der Lehrer. Wer seinen Irrtum nur kostet, hält lange damit haus, er
freuet sich dessen als eines seltenen Glücks, aber wer ihn ganz
erschöpft, der muß ihn kennen lernen, wenn er nicht wahnsinnig
ist.’(p.494-5) So the guidance provided by the educator ought to be, not to spare the learner the effort of a deviation, as Jarno would be tempted to do, but to make sure that the learner commits the error in full, because only by exhausting the possibilities of the error will it become evident to the learner that it is an error, and the learner will then automatically, out of self-motivation, give it up. In this explanation of the function of error it is clear that the whole process is a kind of dialectic, in something like a Hegelian sense, in
which it is only by pursuing a particular route to its furthest extent that resolution to a higher state is produced, through the intolerable sense of impasse or contradiction which has built up. However, what the role of the educator is in practical terms, beyond observation, is not clear, and may be no more than to take the place of other would-be educators who would be inclined to intervene, and interrupt the process.

After his initiation into the Society of the Tower, and his recognition of his responsibility to his son, Felix, Wilhelm expresses the understanding he has achieved himself of the educational process he has been undergoing, as follows: 'O, der unnötigen Strenge der Moral! ... da die Natur uns auf ihre liebliche Weise zu allem bildet, was wir sein sollen. O, der seltsamen Aufforderungen der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft, die uns erst verwirrt und mißleitet und dann mehr als die Natur selbst von uns fordert! Wehe jeder Art von Bildung, welche die wirksamsten Mittel wahrer Bildung zerstört und uns auf das Ende hinweist, anstatt uns auf dem Wege selbst zu beglücken!' (p.502) Here Wilhelm is rejecting the idea that morals or social impositions, that is, rules elaborated and enforced by others, should be allowed to interfere with the process of development, but asserting that the process will nevertheless proceed in the right direction without these. Rules, he suggests, moral or conventional, pervert the process and frustrate the individual, whereas the process, uninterfered with, proceeds naturally. What Wilhelm means by nature here is not spelled out, and it could refer to the inner nature of the individual, or to the outer circumstances of chance which the individual interacts with, and may well refer to a

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For a different view, which compares the Goethean dialectic to the Hegelian, but emphasizes its differences, see Stefan Blessin, *Goethes Romane: Aufbruch in die Moderne*, Paderborn, etc.: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1996, pp.144-145.
combination of both, in which case a faith is required that the combination of circumstances which an uninhibited individual meets with will be for the best. However, social influences of a moralizing or deliberately educating kind are held to be positively harmful, so a traditional approach to morals, and moral training, are clearly rejected and replaced. To what extent the dialectical approach to education is aiming at the same kind of result as a traditional approach is not altogether clear. Nature will educate individuals to be everything they should, but the idea of what they should be according to nature is less strict than what they should be according to bourgeois morality, Wilhelm proposes. Moreover, the being on the way, from the natural point of view, is to be emphasized, rather than the achievement of an actual goal, so it may be presumed to follow that no feelings of guilt should be attendant on any failings that are simply part of the process of development, the end of which there is no hurry to reach. So, it can be said that the kind of dialectical process of development proposed in the novel is a radical departure from traditional thinking in its rejection of outwardly imposed rules and morality in favour of inwardly derived energy, in its lack of recognition of any notion of guilt, and in its concept of a self-directed pattern of inevitably, when not obstructed, forward movement.

The idea of the balance of the inner and outer aspects of character is a crucial element in the ideal of personal development towards which Wilhelm is striving, and which, to at least some extent, he achieves. The novel suggests that the ideal character should balance reflectiveness, sensitivity, and taste, with practical action and dealing with the world. As well as Wilhelm's character being shown eventually achieving something of this balance, though
his inner side is in advance of his outer early in the novel, a series of other characters are presented who illustrate and represent various imbalances of development, and the attendant dangers, and if some of these characters may not be so deformed as not to be able to play a role in a balanced society, others come to grief as a result of the seriousness of their deficiencies.

As well being part of the ideal of the developed character, interaction between the inner and the outer world is part of the dialectical process by which the character develops. The character, by being exposed to circumstances and phenomena outside itself, as well as changing them, changes itself, and they are the means by which it stretches itself, and which provide the stimulus for it to overcome its impasses. In Wilhelm’s fairly erratic interaction with the outside world, which occurs especially in the early part of the novel, his interaction with the world of the theatre and his affairs with women are particularly prominent elements. In discussing the relationship between the inner and outer worlds in the formation of character, I shall start with the mechanism of interaction between the two, with reference to Wilhelm’s early exploits, involving the theatrical world and several encounters with women, and move on to the issue of the achievement of a balanced character, examining Wilhelm’s relative success, and then considering a number of subsidiary characters who illustrate various kinds of imbalance.

In discussing the theatre in relation to the role of interaction with the outside world in the development of Wilhelm’s character, I shall restrict myself to a few observations, since I shall deal with the theatre in detail when I come to discuss art, later in the chapter. However, without going into how the theatre as art provides training for Wilhelm, it is worth pointing out that his association
with a group of travelling actors, and his accompanying them on their wanderings, is instrumental in his being brought into contact with a wide variety of situations and people, so broadening his experience beyond that which would have been likely had he stayed in his home environment, and Goethe is keen to point out how each experience changes him and develops him.

Apart from the somewhat Bohemian atmosphere of the theatre company itself, which is in stark contrast with Wilhelm’s sober bourgeois background, it is the theatre company’s engagement by the count to perform at his castle which gives Wilhelm his introduction to the aristocratic world.\(^\text{20}\) The expectation of the kind of knowledge he is likely to gain is in fact a key factor in Wilhelm’s decision to accompany the actors to the castle: ‘... und unser Freund [Wilhelm], der auf Menschenkenntnis ausging, wollte die Gelegenheit nicht versäumen, die große Welt näher kennen zu lernen, in der er viele Aufschlüsse über das Leben, über sich selbst und die Kunst zu erlangen hoffte.’(p.154) So, aspects not only of the outside world but also of himself will be uncovered by the interaction of both.

Wilhelm’s time at the castle does result in many of the kinds of discoveries he was expecting, including a direct acquaintance with the ways of aristocrats, an amorous encounter with the countess, and an introduction to the works of Shakespeare. An example of the way in which his experiences help him to develop the practical side of his personality, and his ability to act in the world, comes when

the baron, an associate of the count, presents him with a gift of money on behalf of the count, in return for Wilhelm's services during the time the theatre company has been at the castle. Wilhelm accepts it unwillingly, in order to replace his parents' money which he set out with, and which he feels he has squandered. Counting it afterwards, he begins to intuit its value: 'Es schien, als ob ihm der Wert und die Würde des Goldes, die uns in späteren Jahren erst fühlbar werden, ahnungsweise zum erstenmal entgegenblickten, als die schönen, blinkenden Stücke aus dem zierlichen Beutel hervorrollten.' (p.206) So this is still only a dawning understanding, but is the beginning of something which will be part of the potential social usefulness he will be portrayed as having achieved later in the novel. This episode is also related to the theme of the relative merits of aristocratic patronage of the arts and their competing in the marketplace, a theme which runs through the novel's discussion of the arts, and which I shall refer to when I discuss the arts in more detail.

Later in his association with the acting troupe, Wilhelm comes into contact with Serlo, the practical but shallow professional theatre director, with whom, despite their contrasting temperaments, Goethe shows him enjoying a productive relationship. Serlo forces Wilhelm to face some of the practical pressures of the theatre, persuading him for example to produce an abbreviated version of Hamlet, despite his disinclination to do so, and Serlo's anecdotal way of thinking is shown usefully to temper Wilhelm's abstract, deductive approach (cf. p.273). Wilhelm thus benefits from the influence of imperfect individuals, even when they themselves appear destined to remain imperfect, as does Serlo, who eventually ousts Wilhelm from the theatre company in order to continue on more mercenarily commercial lines, and it is men as
well as women with whom Wilhelm has interaction meaningful to him in his development, notwithstanding the particular prominence of his interactions with the latter in the novel.

The Role of Women

Wilhelm’s amorous and semi-amorous encounters with women form a kind of sub-theme throughout the novel, each encounter contributing to his gradual development, culminating in his eventual betrothal to Natalie, right at the end of the novel. Natalie, who is his ideal, is glimpsed in a unclear way earlier in the novel, in the form of the ‘Amazon’, who comes to his aid after he has been injured by robbers, and this early indication of something which is only fully disclosed later is parallel to the many instances in the novel of inklings and intuitions which eventually develop into understanding and revelations. However, the path to this fulfillment is long and tortuous, and the women whom he deals with as he progresses are all flawed in their own ways.

While Wilhelm is shown to gain something from all of his encounters, it is not clear that this is the case for any of the women, and in fact some are substantially harmed through their encounter with Wilhelm.²¹ That the fate of those women whom Wilhelm seriously harms is viewed to a significant extent in the light of the impetus they give Wilhelm in his successful development, and that Wilhelm, in accordance with the book’s ethos, is not allowed to let

any regrets he may have deflect him from his course of strenuous self-development, is an indication of the extent to which the novel is a departure from traditional morality, and advocates a different approach to guilt and transgression. It tends to suggest that, in the scheme which the novel proposes, the advancement of capable individuals justifies the destruction of the less capable, who contribute to the advancement of the more capable in the process.

Wilhelm's first love, and the woman who suffers the most obviously disastrous consequences from her association with him, is Mariane, an actress, who, though in love with Wilhelm, tolerates the attentions of another, wealthier lover, due to the pressures of straitened circumstances and the encouragement of a cynical attendant. When Wilhelm discovers the existence of her other suitor, he abandons her immediately, without asking for explanations. He finds out only much later in the novel, when he is already in association with the Society of the Tower, that she had in fact rejected her other suitor, and died forsaken, after giving birth to Wilhelm's child.

Wilhelm's love for Mariane is an experience which is presented as developing and extending him: 'Schon zu jener Zeit, als ihn Verlangen und Hoffnung zu Marianen hinzog, fühlte er sich wie neu belebt, er fühlte, daß er ein anderer Mensch zu werden beginne; nun war er mit ihr vereinigt, die Befriedigung seiner Wünsche ward eine reizende Gewohnheit. Sein Herz strebte, den Gegenstand seiner Leidenschaft zu veredeln, sein Geist, das geliebte Mädchen mit sich emporzuheben.'(p.33) So even the anticipation of a relationship with her had begun to transform him. Unfortunately, she herself does not participate in this elevation of spirit, as she is hampered by a kind of false consciousness on account of her awareness that she is
entertaining another suitor. Instead of pursuing her instincts without circumspection she vacillates: 'Denn Leichtsinn kam ihr zu Hilfe, solange sie in niedriger Verworrenheit lebte, sich über ihre Verhältnisse betrog oder vielmehr sie nicht kannte'. (p.34) Her lack of seriousness means that she can derive no personal improvement from the situation ('und [sie] fand sich äußerlich und innerlich um nichts gebessert.' p.34) Goethe seems to be implying that, despite extenuating circumstances, Mariane is not worthy of Wilhelm, not capable of the kind of development that Wilhelm is destined to achieve, so that Wilhelm must move beyond her in pursuing his education. While Wilhelm sees the friendly hand of fate working in the way he is able to plan his escape to the world of theatre with Mariane, which does not in the end happen, at least not with Mariane, ('er erkannte den Wink eines leitenden Schicksals an diesen zusammentreffenden Umständen' p.42), Goethe may intend the reader to see the hand of fate working favourably for Wilhelm in the fortuitous set of circumstances which allow him to make a clean break with Mariane, discovering the existence of the other suitor but not encountering him face to face, and not being diverted by any communication from Mariane until it is too late.

Wilhelm however does gain important benefits from his relationship with Mariane, apart from the general inner development which it affords him. It is through his plan to run away with her that he conceives of his idea of escaping from bourgeois society by joining a theatre company, and, moreover, she provides him with the son who plays such a prominent role in his coming to recognize his social responsibility, much later in the novel. When Wilhelm learns the truth from Mariane's former attendant in Book 7 (Chapter 8), he feels pain, but not unambiguously regret, and is
soon mainly concerned about whether Felix, whom he has taken over from Aurelie, is really his own son. The several years which Wilhelm spends in business, renouncing the arts, immediately after his break with Mariane, and in reaction to it, can be read as principally an expression of his own disappointed expectations. So Mariane, overall, helps Wilhelm on his way, and her fate does not ultimately hold Wilhelm back. Tragic as the outcome is for her, the reader is meant to regard the situation as having worked out for the best, since that subjectivity which is capable of further development proceeds towards it, and towards a useful social role, while it is the defective individual who lacks the necessary qualities who falls by the wayside.

Compared with his relationship with Mariane, Wilhelm’s relationship with his next interest, the superficial actress, Philine, involves relatively little if any damage to Philine, and the gains for Wilhelm are less significant. Her function appears to a large extent to be to give him a motivation for spending time with the theatre company, and it is in fact through her that he is brought into association with it. His vacillations with regard to whether to attach himself to her or not seem emblematic of his more generally unsettled and wandering condition while he is with the theatre company. Her superficiality, and the lack of seriousness of their relationship, may represent the lack of seriousness of Wilhelm’s engagement with the theatre, and the fact that, as Goethe sees it, the theatre is only a kind of practice for real life for Wilhelm, and that the serious, mature activity has yet to come.

Wilhelm’s next adventure involves the countess, young wife of the owner of the castle where the theatre company is invited to perform. The countess and Wilhelm notice each other immediately, but the relationship does not go much beyond meaningful glances for most of the visit, the countess being portrayed as someone who, unlike her friend, the baroness, would have moral objections to the idea of having an affair. Just before Wilhelm and the countess are due to part, since the count is leaving the castle, and the theatre company is going to move on, they engage in a passionate kiss and embrace. Goethe describes this incident with decided sympathy, and even regrets that it lasts no longer than it does (‘O daß ein solcher Augenblick nicht Ewigkeiten währen kann, und wehe dem neidischen Geschick, das auch unsern Freunden diese kurzen Augenblicke unterbrach!’ p.201) In fact the encounter is interrupted by the countess’s suddenly pushing Wilhelm away, and asking him to go. The results of this encounter on the two characters are in stark contrast. For Wilhelm it is an energizing experience, spurring him on further in his quest for development. He sees it as a constituent part of what he has gained from his stay at the castle, as the narrator reveals, recounting an inner monologue which Wilhelm conducts just before he leaves: ‘Das Beispiel so vieler edlen Krieger hatte ihn angefeuert, die Shakespearische Dichtung hatte ihm eine neue Welt eröffnet, und von den Lippen der schönen Gräfin hatte er ein unaussprechliches Feuer in sich gesogen. Das alles konnte, das sollte nicht ohne Wirkung bleiben.’ (p.207) While Wilhelm is building on what he has got out of his experiences, nothing is heard of the countess until later in the novel, towards the end of Book 5, when Wilhelm learns from the doctor that the countess has become convinced that a slight injury received when embracing Wilhelm,
caused by a brooch containing a picture of her husband being
pressed against her, has not healed, despite the doctor’s conviction
that it has, and she believes that it is going to become malignant.
She has lost her youth and attractiveness, according to the doctor,
and is even prepared to accompany her husband in joining a
religious community, a grave catastrophe in the view of the doctor,
who is an associate of the Society of the Tower, and believes in an
active life. Admittedly, Wilhelm shows distress at the news, and
expresses regret for what he has done, but this is dealt with briefly,
and only rarely and fleetingly resurfaces hereafter.

It is not until late in the novel that Wilhelm discovers that the
countess is sister to Natalie. The fact of this relationship, together
with the fact that the ‘Schöne Seele’ describes the countess, as a
child, as being superficial, may be the key to the significance of
Wilhelm’s encounter with the countess. The countess may be
intended by Goethe as another prefiguring of Wilhelm’s eventual
destiny, that is, to be united with Natalie, and like Mariane the
countess is inferior to Natalie, and so a stepping stone for Wilhelm
to greater things. Even if Wilhelm has damaged her, she has helped
to propel him towards a greater destiny than she could have
achieved, being a flawed individual.

This whole episode again illustrates Goethe’s tendency to
replace traditional morality with his own philosophy. It also again
suggests that he believes that individuals who are seriously flawed
in some way are liable to be undermined by close contact with
individuals of energy and potential, and that while this is tragic for
the victims themselves, this tragedy is more than compensated for
by the benefit which the forward-moving individual derives from
the experiences, as indeed from all experiences, and that any harm
that is done will be more than made up for by the usefulness which a great individual will eventually have in society. A sense of the insignificance of the needs of, especially, weaker individuals compared with the importance of the need for the eventual progress of the collective might be seen in this attitude.

In keeping with the more staid tone of the latter part of the novel, Wilhelm does not have anything which could be described as an amorous adventure, but he does meet Therese, an associate of the Society of the Tower circle, who has been involved amorously with Lothario in the past, and in fact eventually does marry him. Having established a friendship with her, Wilhelm later proposes marriage, impressed by her practicality, and believing that she would make a good mother to Felix, but finds himself in crisis when he discovers that he really loves Natalie. Therese, unlike Mariane or the countess, suffers no permanent damage from her involvement with Wilhelm, emerging, as she does, with the hand of Lothario, which is what she really desired all along. She is portrayed as a basically sound individual, admirably practical, but lacking in reflective depth, and so yet again she is a stepping stone for Wilhelm, one taking him closer to his goal, since she is the first woman he has been involved with not to be seriously flawed, and it is this soundness which allows her to cope with vicissitudes, rather than be destroyed by them. However, an indication of the way in which Therese would not have had all the faculties she would need to satisfy Wilhelm is given when Wilhelm surveys her orderly farmyard: 'Was das Handwerk hervorbringen kann, das keine schönen Verhältnisse kennt, aber für Bedürfnis, Dauer und Helterkeit arbeitet, schien auf dem Platze vereinigt zu sein.' (p.445)
Therese is admirable but limited, and Wilhelm is destined by Goethe for someone who has no obvious limitations.

Wilhelm has relationships with two women which have, arguably, romantic overtones, though they are not unambiguously romantic. The individuals concerned here are Mignon and Aurelie.

Mignon is the girl who dresses as a boy, rescued by Wilhelm from an acrobatic troupe, and who becomes a mixture of foster-daughter and valet to Wilhelm. Wilhelm has a tendency to underestimate the strength of her attachment to him, seeming not to notice the jealousy she suffers over Philline’s attention to him, and provoking a crisis at the end of Book 2 by telling her that he is leaving without saying whether she is to accompany him. Her suppressed and frustrated passions, both for Wilhelm and for a return to her native country, Italy, lead her to develop a heart complaint, from which she finally dies on seeing Therese, who, at this stage, believes she is going to marry Wilhelm, embrace and kiss him. While it is never suggested that Mignon is a possible spouse for Wilhelm, and she is generally described as a child, though her age is not absolutely clear, Wilhelm’s lack of appreciation of her feeling for him through most of the novel exposes her to the kind of emotional strain she eventually dies from, so that she turns out to be another of Wilhelm’s victims, even if his contribution to the tragedy is in this case very much unwitting.

Aurelie is an actress, sister of Serlo, and she makes Wilhelm her special confidant, relating to him in particular the story of her affair with, and subsequent abandonment by, Lothario. Although nothing obviously romantic occurs between Wilhelm and Aurelie, when Aurelie wounds Wilhelm’s hand with a knife, she seems to be treating him as a substitute for Lothario, or for the masculine
gender in general, on which she wishes to take some revenge.\(^\text{23}\)

Aurelie is already in decline when Wilhelm meets her, so he cannot be blamed for this, but he does fail her in the one task he does set himself on her behalf, which is, on delivering the letter she writes to Lothario, personally to rebuke him for his treatment of her. Instead, on arriving at Lothario's castle, he is rapidly taken in by Lothario and the members of the Society of the Tower, and is soon actually assisting Lothario in his intrigues, helping him to remove a mistress from the castle when he needs rest after a duel.

The fact that Lothario, the leading inspirational figure of the Society of the Tower, himself engages in serial affairs, the other parties in which, such as Aurelie or Lydie, appear to fare badly as a result, seems to confirm the impression that it is not engaging in these activities which is wrong, according to Goethe, but being weak enough to allow oneself to be permanently damaged by them.\(^\text{24}\) As Wilhelm puts it, in a moment of regret for the countess, and comparing her with Therese, who has not let sorrow at the loss of Lothario overtake her: 'Wie glücklich ist der über alles ... der, um sich mit dem Schicksal in Einigkeit zu setzen, nicht sein ganzes vorhergehendes Leben wegzuwerfen braucht!'(p.459) Wilhelm and Lothario are strong enough to follow their impulses without restriction, meet with the setbacks and disappointments which periodically result, recover, and carry on with their striving,

\(^{23}\) Romantic undertones between Wilhelm and Aurelie are felt by Karl Schlechta, *Goethes 'Wilhelm Meister'* , Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1953, p.155.

\(^{24}\) See Heinz Schlaffer ('Exoterik und Esoterik in Goethes Romanen', *Goethe Jahrbuch* 95 (1978) pp.212-226) for a view which is critical of Lothario for his serial affairs, but not on the grounds of immorality, but of faithlessness, which he does not attribute to Wilhelm. For a defence of Wilhelm from charges of immorality, see W. H. Bruford, *The German Tradition of Self-Cultivation: 'Bildung' from Humboldt to Thomas Mann*, pp.41-46.
apparently comparatively unscathed, unlike those who, Goethe perhaps suggests, are not strong enough for life.

The idea of progress, as well as being deeply embedded in the notion of personal development which Goethe has written the novel to put forward, is encapsulated in the sub-plot of Wilhelm's movement towards his ideal woman. Wilhelm, himself presents the story of his affairs of the heart in these terms, at a point when he has understood that Natalie would be the realization of his strivings, but does not see a way to attain her: 'So liebte ich Mariane und ward so schrecklich an ihr irre; ich liebte Philine und mußte sie verachten. Aurelien achtete ich und konnte sie nicht lieben; ich verehrte Theresen, und die väterliche Liebe nahm die Gestalt einer Neigung zu ihr an; und jetzt, da in deinem Herzen alle Empfindungen zusammentreffen, die den Menschen glücklich machen sollten, jetzt bist du genötigt zu fliehen!'(p.568) Wilhelm's version here differs slightly from the narrator's, in that he has not been party to the narrator's exposition of Mariane's defects, so he may not appreciate the extent which Natalie, from the general point of view of the novel, is an advance on Mariane, but Wilhelm is able to see how a series of variously unsatisfactory stages have led him to a promised land, albeit one he is not allowed to enter until the last page of the novel.

Having looked at the way in which Wilhelm's interaction with aspects of the world outside himself contributes to the development of his character, and the furthering of his forward movement, I shall consider the emphasis put in the novel, especially later on, on the importance of an outer, active side to the personality, to balance the inner, many of the statements of this emphasis relating closely to
Wilhelm himself. I shall then discuss some of the many characters who illustrate the unbalanced personality.

The Quest for Balance

While the idea of balance, and of the reflective and active life accompanying each other, are constantly present in the novel, there are several concise general statements of the principle. When Wilhelm goes to visit his friend the harpist, who is being treated for insanity by a priest and by the doctor who is associated with the Society of the Tower, they point out the need for an active life to prevent the mental life from becoming distorted and morbid. The priest, who runs the institution, avoids delving into the mental torment which has led to the harpist's insanity, but, he believes, 'ein tätiges Leben führt so viele Ereignisse herbei, daß er bald fühlen muß, daß jede Art von Zweifel nur durch Wirksamkeit gehoben werden kann.'(p.347) So rather than solving the harpist's mental problems by investigating their origins, or discussing them, the harpist is expected simply to move on from them by allowing practical activity to draw him away from morbid introspection. Presumably the aim is not so much that he will become completely unreflective, but that his mental life will move forwards to accompany his practical activity, rather than looking backwards at past events. The doctor, who joins in the discussion, makes a similar point in connection with the count and countess, who are entertaining the idea of a religious retirement: 'Für den Menschen, sagte er, sei nur das eine ein Unglück, wenn sich irgendeine Idee bei ihm festsetze, die keinen Einfluß ins tätige Leben habe oder ihn wohl gar vom tätigen Leben abziehe.'(p.348) The doctor here seems to be
suggesting that continuing to act is more important that what one does, and that the thinking one does should be such as to sustain, not undermine, continuous activity. In this he is confirming the general theme of the novel, that the striving is more important than the direction, which will take care of itself in the long run.

A more considered statement of the relationship between the inner and outer in the personality is made in the 'Lehrbrief', the collection of aphorisms which is presented to Wilhelm on the occasion of his initiation into the Society of the Tower. When Jarno, at a time after the initiation, is reading extracts from the 'Lehrbrief' to Wilhelm, he chooses the following part: 'Derjenige, an dem viel zu entwickeln ist, wird später über sich und die Welt aufgeklärt. Es sind nur wenige, die den Sinn haben und zugleich zur Tat fähig sind. Der Sinn erweitert, aber lähm;t die Tat belebt, aber beschränkt.' (p.550) As well as referring to the way that reflective understanding of what has happened during an individual's development will become available to the individual late in the process, these statements describe the opposition of the reflective and the active lives, as well as asserting that only few are capable of combining both. To the extent that both the paralyzing effect of excessive reflecting and the limiting effect of a purely active approach are illustrated with specific characters in the novel, for example, by the harpist, and Therese, respectively, and Wilhelm is shown gradually acquiring both sides, this statement is an abstract formulation of what is clearly implied by the book as a whole. The insistence that only a few are capable of the balanced life is less obviously deducible from the happenings in the text, but not inconsistent with them, and perhaps connects with the idea, expressed by Aurelie, that those not capable of harmony in themselves can at least be part of a
communally shared harmony, which individuals such as Wilhelm, whom the Society of the Tower has picked out as capable of full development, may be intended to lead.

Wilhelm himself, who has escaped from a relatively unreflecting active life in the mercantile middle classes, is presented as having a dominantly reflective personality in need of the development of an active side, and it is this inner bias which may explain his tendency to indecisiveness.

Wilhelm’s theoretical leaning is noticed particularly by Aurelie, who points out to him that while he shows an impressive understanding of Shakespeare, he has no idea how to deal with people, which he concedes (‘Ich habe von Jugend auf die Augen meines Geistes mehr nach Innen als nach außen gerichtet, und da ist es sehr natürlich, daß ich den Menschen bis auf einen gewissen Grad habe kennen lernen, ohne die Menschen im mindesten zu verstehen und zu begreifen.’ pp.257-8) Goethe later in the novel excuses and explains Wilhelm’s unbalancedness, suggesting that he needs to turn outwards in order to balance himself: ‘Er wußte nicht, daß es die Art aller der Menschen sei, denen an ihrer innern Bildung viel gelegen ist, daß sie die äußeren Verhältnisse ganz und gar vernachlässigen. Wilhelm hatte sich in diesem Falle befunden; er schien nunmehr zum erstenmal zu merken, daß er äußerer Hülfsmittel bedürfe, um nachhaltig zu wirken.’(p.491) What is suggested here is that preoccupation with personal development does inevitably produce inwardness, but that in an individual with the potential for an active side as well, the personal development itself will eventually produce a state of understanding where the individual realizes the need to engage with the outer world in order for the acquired accomplishments to have an effect. This realization comes to
Wilhelm at the moment when he finally renounces the theatre for good, and begins to take an interest in his property, with the intention of developing it with the cooperation of his newfound associates of the Society of the Tower, which suggests the idea that the theatre is a kind of education, but not serious activity, from the point of view of the novel.\textsuperscript{25}

An important indicator of Wilhelm's growing maturity, and of the balancing out of his character, is his growing realization of his relationship with, and responsibility to, his son by Mariane, Felix. This son has been looked after by others during the time of much of the earlier part of the novel, while Wilhelm would presumably have been too concerned with his own development for a son not to have been an obstacle, and he finds the boy in the care of Aurelie, taking him over from her, and only gradually discovering that it is his own son. When Wilhelm finally recognizes Felix as certainly being his son, after he is informed of this during his initiation ceremony into the Society of the Tower, he again is portrayed as having reached a new level of consciousness. As he finds himself in the garden, after the ceremony, with Felix, who is asking him questions about the surroundings, Wilhelm realizes that he must learn about his environment in order to teach the child: 'Wilhelm sah die Natur durch ein neues Organ, und die Neugierde, die Wißbegierde des Kindes ließen ihn erst fühlen, welch ein schwaches Interesse er an den Dingen außer sich genommen hatte, wie wenig er kannte und wußte. An diesem Tage, dem vergnügtesten seines Lebens, schien auch seine eigne Bildung erst anzufangen; er fühlte die Notwendigkeit, sich zu belehren, indem er zu lehren aufgefordert

\textsuperscript{25} See Rolf-Peter Janz, 'Zur sozialen Gehalt der Lehrjahre', for the view that it is Wilhelm's abandonment of his artist's aversion to capital which saves him, from the novel's perspective.
ward.’ (p. 498) Interestingly here, his achievement of a new level of insight is simultaneously an understanding of a need for a new stretch of education, for which he is now ready. While the events of the novel are the story of Wilhem’s becoming ready to engage in the active life, and in this sense is the story of his education, the story of his actual practical activity in the world is not told, and therefore a whole stage of his education, his apprenticeship in his actual calling, is simply implied, as something which is due to begin after the end of the novel, and would need another novel to recount. So although we see Wilhem understanding what his practical role in life is, we ultimately do not see him doing anything practical, at least outside the sphere of the theatre, and the novel does in the end suffer from the theoretical bias which it has been preaching against. Although the novel asserts that Wilhem has become a fully rounded person by the end of the novel, the reader may feel that his ability to perform has yet to be proved, and in this sense, the optimistic conclusion to the novel, with regard to Wilhem, may nevertheless appear tentative.

Wilhelm is surrounded by a cast of characters who fail to achieve, even in principle, the balance which he is shown arriving at towards the end of the novel. They illustrate the limitations, and, sometimes, the dangers, of this lack of balance. The consequences of a lack of balance range from a distortion but apparent viability in some, which may not be inconsistent with the possession of a skill valuable to the community, to a fatal flaw which kills the character during the course of the novel.

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26 See Gerhart Mayer, Der deutsche Bildungsroman: von der Aufklärung bis zur Gegenwart, Stuttgart: Metzler, 1992, p. 53, who sees the characters other than Wilhem as being variants which allow his ‘Gestalt’ to stand out.
Of the characters with a permanent bias towards the inner, the so-called 'Schöne Seele', aunt to Lothario, Natalie and the countess, has the unique distinction of having a whole book dedicated to her. This is Book 6, located strategically, since it occurs just before Wilhelm's arrival at Lothario's castle, the place where he will become associated with those among whom he will decide to act practically. The Book takes the form of a description, by herself, of the aunt's development, and is given to Aurelie as consolation when she is succumbing to despair. The aunt describes her spiritual development in religious terms, and the account suggests that she has attained a high level of personal culture, and a satisfaction in life, but she suffers from chronic ill-health and is not shown to have engaged to a great extent in the outside world, living rather in retirement, and never marrying. The aunt's own account of her spiritual development shows her happy with her achievements, and confident that she is making constant progress, and the fact that she is known as the 'Schöne Seele' suggests that her achievements are at least to some extent appreciated in her circle. However, Natalie, while acknowledging her own debt to her aunt, judges her in a way which suggests that the novel does not intend to present her as an exemplary figure: 'Eine sehr schwache Gesundheit, vielleicht zu viel Beschäftigung mit sich selbst, und dabei eine sittliche und religiöse Ängstlichkeit ließen sie das der Welt nicht sein, was sie unter andern Umständen hätte werden können.' (p.517) So the aunt's lack of engagement with the outer world is a serious fault, but she is also accused of being too moral, an interesting contrast to the novel's...

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heroes, such as Lothario, who would certainly not be prone to that charge. It is notable that Goethe links morality and religiosity with anxiety, implying that a preoccupation with morality and religion is a constricting, irrational, backward attitude, in comparison with what he would consider the reasonable, liberating and progressive nature of his own programme. What is more, the aunt's chronic ill-health might be seen as being a concomitant feature of excessive introspection, especially in the light of other excessively interior characters who die of the morbid illnesses their introspectiveness produces. Particularly indicative of the way that the aunt's spiritualized inwardness is viewed as harmful by the members of the Society of the Tower is the fact that they, as she herself complains of in her memoir, keep the children away from her, to save them from developing a dominant contemplative side.

Despite her shortcomings from the point of view of the novel, the aunt is not completely disabled by her inwardness, and her achievements within her own kind of development serve as an inspiration of sorts to those round her. In contrast, Mignon, the harpist and Aurelie all suffer from an inwardness which completely disables them, and kills them while still young.

Mignon, who has been mentioned earlier in connection with Wilhelm, is inarticulate, except when she sings, and is prone to violent mood swings.\(^2^8\) She is also presented as being a practising Catholic, which is significant given the linkage between religion and morbid inwardness in the novel, Pietism, representing Protestantism, also being associated with excessive inwardness through the 'Schöne Seele', and through the count and countess as

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\(^2^8\) Ivar Sagmo (*Bildungsroman und Geschichtsphilosophie: Eine Studie zu Goethes Roman 'Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*', p.152) sees Mignon as symbolizing the poetry of modern inwardness.
they appear late in the novel. When, later in the novel, she is given into the care of Natalie, her condition, including the heart problem, which has become evident, is analysed as follows: 'Sie [Natalie] erzählte ihm von Mignons Krankheit im allgemeinen, daß das Kind von wenigen tiefen Empfindungen nach und nach aufgezehrt werde, daß es bei seiner großen Reizbarkeit, die es verberge, von einem Krampf an seinem armen Herzen oft heftig und gefährlich leide...' (p.513) So Mignon’s physical illness is directly related to her exclusively and exaggeratedly emotional nature, which, because she contains it, rather than applying it to the outside world, consumes her health. She has not discovered the limited version of personal development which the aunt has, and so, from the perspective of the novel, cannot live.29

Mignon turns out, late in the novel, to have been the incestuously conceived daughter of the harpist, who, it emerges, is the son of an aristocratic Italian family, and his sister. The harpist is first encountered early in the novel as an old man who, like Mignon, is eloquent in song, but otherwise enigmatic. Wilhelm, who has adopted him, along with Mignon, as a member of his entourage, sends him to be treated for insanity after he tries to sacrifice Felix, and the doctor, one of his guardians at the institution, assesses his problem as one of excessive inwardness: 'Seit vielen Jahren hat er an nichts, was außer ihm war, den mindesten Anteil genommen, ja fast auf nichts gemerkt; bloß in sich gekehrt, betrachtete er sein hohles, leeres Ich, das ihm als ein unermesslicher Abgrund erschien.' (p.436) The cause of his exceptionally intense, morbid introspection is a consciousness of guilt, as he admits to the doctor: 'kein Gefühl bleibt

29 See Karl Schlechta, Goethes 'Wilhelm Meister', p.69, who suggests that an old Wilhelm dies with Mignon and the harpist, so that a new Wilhelm can enter a new world.
His feeling of guilt not only keeps him focused on his inner state, but is also paralysing, allowing of no movement in any direction. The role of guilt here as something essentially pathological is significant given the comparative lack of feelings of guilt shown by the more successful characters, such as Lothario and, to some extent, Wilhelm, even when it might seem appropriate. Even the 'Schöne Seele', as I have pointed out earlier, has achieved a kind of religious understanding which does not involve feelings of guilt. Goethe suggests that a traditional moral understanding, involving guilt as the consequence of wrongdoing, is not only limiting but even pathogenic. The harpist's preoccupation with his own guilt is blamed on his Catholic background, which has made him feel guilty about his incest, although his brother, who tells the story, seems to imply that he ought to have regarded himself as innocent ('Der ungebundene freie Verstand sprach ihn los; sein Gefühl, seine Religion, alle gewohnten Begriiffe erklärten ihn für einen Verbrecher.'p.585) It is not clear if he would be regarding himself as innocent on the basis that the incest was originally accidental, or because he has decided that incest is less of an offence than it is often claimed to be. However, the story of his background suggests that religious inclinations encourage morbid introspection. In addition, the harpist does not find anything akin to the aunt’s religion without guilt, a kind of compromise between religion and Goethe's more secular and modern philosophy of emancipation
which the aunt's Pietism is presented as allowing her.\textsuperscript{30} The harpist, in fact, kills himself towards the end of the novel, after a superficial cure, which has revealed him to be younger than his mental condition had made him appear. He proves not to be able to withstand the discovery of the manuscript of his story in the castle, and then the mistaken impression that he has poisoned Felix.\textsuperscript{31} It is significant in the above quotation that feelings, religion, and conventions are grouped together, in opposition to free understanding, the implication being that religion and convention are obstacles to the free exercise of reason, which can best be conducted without the hampering effect of received ideas. Goethe suggests that the unconstrained intellect will tend towards secular thought, while religious and traditional attitudes can only take the form of feelings. This may explain Mignon's inarticulacy, which prevents her from expressing herself in prose, and obstructs her efforts to learn German.

The remaining character who actually dies of excessive inwardness is Aurelle, the actress and sister of theatre director Serlo. She has been romantically involved with Lothario, but has been unable to recover when he has left her, and is brooding on her misery when Wilhelm meets her. That she is at least partly responsible for her condition because of her own cultivation of it is indicated, for example, by a reproach by Wilhelm: 'O, meine Freundin ... könntest Sie doch aufhören, selbst den Dolch zu


\textsuperscript{31} For a different view of the significance of the deaths of Mignon and the harpist, see Heinz Schlaffer, 'Exoterik und Esoterik in Goethes Romanen', who sees the Society of the Tower's educational system as responsible, and believes that Goethe must thereby be aiming to discredit the Society of the Tower and identify his sympathies with Mignon and the harpist.
This progressive self-destruction takes the form of an obsessive self-absorption, which leads her, for example, to play her roles as if they were an expression of her own situation, and she also shows a lack of interest in outer events, neglecting Felix, and acting indifferently, for instance, to musical entertainment which Serlo has organized. When Aurelie dies due to an illness immediately caused by her recklessly exposing herself to bad weather after an exhaustingly self-revealing performance, Goethe seems to be implying that untrammelled self-involvement can ultimately be fatal.\footnote{\textsuperscript{32} See Hans-Jürgen Schings, \textit{Agathon, Anton Reiser, Wilhelm Meister: Zur Pathologie des modernen Subjekts im Roman}, who believes that a harmful obsession with the abysses of the inner self is what Goethe understands as being the modern disease. The harpist, Mignon, the countess and Aurelie are special cases of this inwardness which Wilhelm also suffers from, but is cured of by the end of the novel.}

Compared with the characters who lean too heavily towards the inner world, those whose fault is an immoderate bias towards the outer, active realm of experience are presented as limited but not fatally flawed. The comparative superficiality of characters such as Philine, Serlo and Therese is not inconsistent with health and prosperity, although they seem to lack the scope for development beyond the stage at which they appear in the novel.

Philine the actress is too superficial and inconsistent for Wilhelm fully to return her affection, but she appears able to derive the greatest pleasure for herself out of any situation, and appears by the end of the novel to have become firmly attached to Friedrich, another lively, but not serious, character. Philine engages abundantly with the outside world but is disinclined to reflect on her own actions, as she explains: 'es ist nichts unerträglicher, als sich das Vergnügen vorrechnen zu lassen, das man genießt.' (p.101)
She lacks that interplay between action and reflection on action which produces progress in the Goethean scheme, so although her activity makes her healthy and happy, she cannot learn from her mistakes and move forward in a process of cumulative development.

Serlo is a more complex character than Philine but shows a similar one-sidedness due to a substantial lack of reflectivity. He is an accomplished actor, and the story of his development as an actor is given, but he does not develop as a person beyond being an actor. His superficial relationship to people is described as follows: 'Bei der innerlichen Kälte seines Gemütes liebte er eigentlich niemand; bei der Klarheit seines Blicks konnte er niemand achten, denn er sah nur immer die äußern Eigenheiten der Menschen und trug sie in seine mimische Sammlung ein.'(p.272) So his skills as an actor take over his personality, making him observe people from the outside rather than engage with them emotionally. This process leads to him becoming more confident and self-assured on the stage than in life ('Ja, durch eine seltsam scheinende, aber ganz natürliche Wirkung und Gegenwirkung stieg durch Einsicht und Übung seine Rezitation, Deklamation und sein Gebärdenspiel zu einer hohen Stufe von Wahrheit, Freiheit und Offenheit, indem er im Leben und Umgang immer heimlicher, künstlicher, ja verstellt und ängstlich zu werden schien.'p.273) He does not have the reflective depth to change his direction, relying on anecdotal thinking to address limited problems connected with the theatre, albeit successfully, and tends to deflate Wilhelm when he attempts to reason at a general level. Aurelie tells Wilhelm, 'zum Lichte des Verstandes können wir immer gelangen;

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33 Ivar Sagmo (Bildungsroman und Geschichtsphilosophie: Eine Studie zu Goethes Roman 'Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre', p.138) sees Philine as not being a modern figure.
Serlo appears to be congenitally lacking such a 'Fülle des Herzens', which would give his understanding the basis to reach a broad vision, such as Wilhelm has the potential for. For all his limitations, however, Serlo is successful as a theatre director, particularly in earning money, since he turns his attention to pleasing the audience rather than to educating it, and this contributes to his break with Wilhelm.

If one takes into consideration Therese, who is presented as admirable, and a worthy bride for Lothario, but lacking in harmony and roundedness compared with Natalie, it emerges that to be inclined to unself-conscious activity is far less serious a defect than to be inclined to self-conscious inactivity. The unself-conscious active characters may not reach the fullness of human potential, but they appear to have roles to play in a society led by others. The inactive self-conscious characters, however, appear to have little if any role, and to be doomed to extinction, if they cannot find a way to apply themselves to the outside world.

Werner is an interesting point of comparison with Wilhelm, as he represents what the bourgeois milieu, from which Wilhelm has escaped, is liable to produce. Werner is engaged with the outer world through his business concerns, but has something of the inner, in that he has mentally absorbed the rules and limitations of the bourgeois world. Early in the novel he is shown trying to impose these limits on Wilhelm (‘Werner tat sich darauf etwas zugute, daß er dem vortrefflichen, obgleich gelegentlich ausschweifenden Geist Wilhelms mitunter Zügel und Gebiß anzulegen schien’p.61). This mixture of intensely specialized activity and mental self-restraint produce the Werner who reappears late in the novel, and contrasts so markedly with Wilhelm's flourishing aspect:
Der gute Mann schien eher zurück als vorwärts gegangen zu sein. Er war viel magerer als ehemals, sein spitzes Gesicht schien feiner, seine Nase länger zu sein, seine Stirn und sein Scheitel waren von Haaren entblößt, seine Stimme hell, heftig und schreiend, und seine eingedrückte Brust, seine vorfallenden Schultern, seine farblosen Wangen ließen keinen Zweifel übrig, daß ein arbeitsamer Hypochondrist gegenwärtig sel.(pp.498-9)

Werner's caricature-like figure implies distortion. As usual, a nervous disorder and a suggestion of ill-health are the result of a mental impediment to full physical activity. However, he has been active in his own way, and his ill-health seems more cosmetic than life-threatening in its effects. The figure of Werner represents a major dilemma of the text, since while in general the novel is committedly modernizing, representing old ways of thinking as disabling and superstitious, and supporting change and progress, Werner's kind of specialized limitation is actually more part of the coming world than of the older one, and the novel is an attempt to show how an aspiring individual may attain a fullness of life in the modern era, while escaping the limiting specialization which the accompanying economic developments appear to be promoting.34

The variety of reflectivity which the novel wishes to promote, it seems, is a reflectivity directly applied to one's active life, to produce self-conscious action, not a reflectivity confined to its own sphere. It is by being self-consciously active, rather than simply self-conscious, that the reflective or artistic character in Wilhelm

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34 See Giuliano Baioni, 'Märchen — Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre — Hermann und Dorothea: Zur Gesellschaftsidee der deutschen Klassik', Goethe Jahrbuch 92 (1975) pp.73-127, who believes that Wilhelm has achieved harmony by not becoming capable of doing a job, and that he needs the non-harmonious Werner to create the wealth which supports him.
Meisters Lehrjahre, represented by Wilhelm, the protagonist, transcends the disabling tendencies which afflict the protagonists in Der Grüne Heinrich and Doktor Faustus. Part of the optimism of the novel stems from this proposition that a reflective individual can directly combine active and reflective tendencies, escaping the limitations of both, and achieve a higher consciousness, and the comparative pessimism of Der Grüne Heinrich is equally partly due to the failure of this proposition in that novel, whereas in Doktor Faustus the protagonist makes no attempt to combine reflectiveness and the active life.

Goethe's theory of the development of the personality, as presented through the development of Wilhelm's character, and surrounding discussion, is a Romantic one, to the extent that it is emancipatory, emphasizing liberation from convention and sources of authority outside the self, and in this is part of a modern perspective, and a departure from traditional views. It is not Romanticism in the sense of an exclusive cult of inwardness, which is something which the novel criticizes and rejects. There is a strong emphasis on the good to be attained being already contained in the self, as Therese indicates in a letter to Natalie about Wilhelm: 'Ja, er hat von Dir [Natalie] das edle Suchen und Streben nach dem Bessern, wodurch wir das Gute, das wir zu finden glauben, selbst hervorbringen.' (p.531) Outside authority is consequently to be rejected, as Therese, again, emphasizes, this time in a conversation with Wilhelm: 'Wem die Welt nicht unmittelbar eröffnet, was sie für ein Verhältnis zu ihm hat, wem sein Herz nicht sagt, was er sich und andern schuldig ist, der wird es wohl schwerlich aus Büchern erfahren, die eigentlich nur geschickt sind, unsern Irrtümern Namen zu geben.' (p.460) Traditional wisdom and convention is thus to be
exchanged for direct, subjective impulse. Following from this is the idea that action is to be admired for its inner conviction and sense of forward direction, and not judged on the basis of whether it is right or wrong by conventional standards, as the uncle states in conversation with the aunt: ‘Ich verehre den Menschen, der deutlich weiß, was er will, unablässig vorschreitet, die Mittel zu seinem Zwecke kennt und sie zu ergreifen und zu brauchen weiß; inwiefern sein Zweck groß oder klein sei, Lob oder Tadel verdiene, das kommt bei mir erst nachher in Betrachtung.’ (p.405) It is this project, modernizing, and Romantic in the sense of being emancipatory, and sceptical of convention and traditional authority, which underlies the novel’s proposal for social development, as well as being at the centre of the novel’s theory of art. The presentation of related conceptions is also a key element of Der Grüne Heinrich and Doktor Faustus, but it is their failure to achieve the whole-hearted endorsement of the human processes involved which is an important part of the way in which they contrast with Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre.

Social Aims

I shall now move on to the social aspects of the novel. Although Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre is a narrative which carries social implications, the principal emphasis is on the development of character. However, because the fields of character, society and art are treated as parallel, and indicated to be understandable in terms of comparable patterns, much of what is said about the development of the personality may be understood as applicable to
society, and art, and the novel does not have explicitly to repeat its analysis at equal length in each of the three fields.

I have already discussed the issue of Wilhelm's wish to escape the limitations of his bourgeois background, and his fascination with the rounded education of the personality which seems to be available to members of the aristocracy, and which he believes is only available to him through the artistic life. The novel traces Wilhelm's attempt to gain such a rounded education, and his attention very gradually turns from a concern with himself to a gradual awareness of his social possibilities and responsibilities. It is the Society of the Tower, a shadowy presence earlier in the novel, but a clear presence in the latter part, which offers Wilhelm a framework for his future social engagement, as well as seeming to reconcile his bourgeois background and aristocratic aspirations.

I shall now look at the character of the Society of the Tower, and then discuss its social aims, as well as the social aims expressed in the novel generally.\(^{35}\) The Society of the Tower seems to start as a secret society of like-minded aristocrats dedicated to promoting social development in line with Enlightenment principles, although the decision to admit Wilhelm indicates a bourgeois-aristocratic partnership. It appears to bear a strongly Masonic character, but this is never pointed out explicitly. Members of the Society of the Tower take an interest in Wilhelm's development, unknown to him, from his childhood onwards, which accounts for their periodic appearances throughout the novel, but Wilhelm's arrival at Lothario's castle, the headquarters of the Society, signals the start of his self-aware association with the Society. Jarno has made an

\(^{35}\) For a critical stance towards the Society of the Tower, see Karl Schlechta, *Goethes 'Wilhelm Meister'*. 
earlier attempt, during Wilhelm’s stay at the count’s castle, to engage Wilhelm in an active life, presumably in cooperation with the Society of the Tower, though given Jarno’s impatient disposition, this may simply have been too early in Wilhelm’s development, and he rejects it for the time being. Wilhelm goes to Lothario’s castle with the intention of reproaching Lothario for his treatment of Aurelie, but, instead, Wilhelm is carried away by Lothario’s charismatic character, and finds himself supporting Lothario in his intrigues. Thus, as has happened previously, Wilhelm stumbles into an important stage of his life, and only belatedly becomes explicitly aware of the import of what is happening.

Something of the history of the Society of the Tower is given by Jarno, trying, unsuccessfully, to comfort Wilhelm in one of his periods of crisis. He talks of a young group of people, supported by the priest, who is still the leader, and is older than the others. The ritual symbolism is motivated by the need of the young to have the feeling of grasping an idea of the world when this is still beyond them in a clear form. Eventually a metaphorical form for the group emerges based on the idea of a craft developing into an art, and a terminology of ranks, such as apprentices, assistants, and masters derives from this (cf. pp.548-9). At this point there is also a desire in the group to compile its own compendium of knowledge of the world: ‘Wir wollten mit eigenen Augen sehen und uns ein eigenes Archiv unserer Weltkenntnis bilden’(p.549). The fact of the rituals and the craft-related titles gives the group a Masonic character, linking it with Enlightenment ideals of secular wisdom and social building. The group then, in characteristic Enlightenment fashion, mistrusts inherited tradition, and insists on seeing for itself, relying
on the clear-sightedness it believes it has achieved to build up a knowledge of the world anew, without prejudice.

Wilhelm himself undergoes a ceremony of initiation, which reveals to him the hidden side of the Society of the Tower, the existence of which he had generally suspected, and the feeling of exclusion from which had been worrying him increasingly. What is particularly notable about the initiation ceremony from its description in the novel is its pseudo-religious character. Goethe seems to be implying that the wisdom and practices embodied in the Society of the Tower are meant to replace religion, in a kind of new order in which traditional categories have been superseded by the new. The room in which the ceremony takes place appears to have been a chapel, and there is a large table in place of the altar, and bookcases filled with scrolls round the sides in place of whatever furnishings or decorations there might have been. After various characters whom Wilhelm has encountered before step forward from behind a curtain behind the table, he is handed a 'Lehrbrief' by the priest, who appears last, and he is informed that Felix is his son, and then told, 'Herr dir, junger Mann! deine Lehrjahre sind vorüber; die Natur hat dich losgesprochen.' (p.497) This pronouncement, which comes at the end of the ceremony, emphasizes the pseudo-sacramental nature of what has happened. The initiatory element of it is analogous to baptism or confirmation. On the other hand the idea that he has been 'losgesprochen' seems

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** For an explanation of the initiation ceremony with a different emphasis, see Eric A. Blackall, *Goethe and the Novel*, p.133, who sees the ceremony as verging on the parodistic, and points to Wilhelm's asking about Felix as the significant moment, showing that he has acquired a sense of responsibility.
intended to remind the reader of an absolution, after a confession, only the fact that it is ‘nature’ that has absolved Wilhelm reveals that a radically different set of assumptions from the religious set is involved. The implication is that Wilhelm has no need for forgiveness by an outside power for his failings, rather he has developed in accordance with his own nature, and this in itself justifies everything he has done along the way. Thus a kind of reversal of traditional values is performed, in which, instead of right living involving the restriction of the impulses of one’s nature, the living them out to the full is what is recommended. A function of the Society of the Tower is to propagate this new view in potential leaders of society, like Wilhelm.

Jarno, in conversation with Wilhelm and Natalie, gives an indication of what the character of the Society of the Tower will be in the future, after the period covered by the novel. He explains that the changing political situation in the world threatens property (‘Man darf nur ein wenig mit den Welthändeln bekannt sein, um zu bemerken, daß uns große Veränderungen bevorstehen, und daß die Besitztümer beinahe nirgends mehr recht sicher sind.’p.563) The Society of the Tower is to become a world-wide organization of like-minded individuals with property interests in different countries, so that if members in one country lose their property because of a revolution, they can be supported by those parts of the Society unaffected. Jarno is going to the United States and the priest to Russia in order to pursue this vision. Interestingly, although this development is in line with the Masonic character the Society of the Tower, it suggests that as an organization it does not envisage supporting the most socially radical movements, such as revolutionary ones. It is rather an alliance between aristocratic and
bourgeois elements in society, aiming, between the two, to retain social leadership, and property, and to institute its plans for social reform in a way that remains under its own control.38

Expressions of social attitudes and objectives other than those directly representing the Society of the Tower's stance, often by people associated with the Society of the Tower, are found in a number of places in the novel, and are always broadly in tune with what appear to be the objectives of the Society of the Tower, as well as tending to be the social counterpart to ideas expressed in relation to the development of the character elsewhere in the novel. Early in the novel, for example, at a point where the theatre company is about to set off on a journey to find a new place of employment, the members decide, for the duration of the journey, to rotate the positions of director, and the narrator comments, 'Man nahm als ausgemacht an, daß unter guten Menschen die republikanische Form die beste sei'(p.215). This is only a provisional arrangement, and only concerns the management of a theatre company, but this is the closest the novel comes to a statement in favour of republicanism, and generally the social statements are not particularly explicit politically. However, given the role of art in the novel as a model for other things, this may be taken as a guarded expression of sympathy for republican government. Lothario's having fought for the United States might be understood in the same way.

Lothario's uncle, in conversation with his aunt, the 'Schöne Seele', makes some general statements on what the activity of the

38 For a view which emphasizes the contrast between the Society of the Tower's levelling of differences in social rank, but its nevertheless elite nature, see Jürgen Jacobs, Wilhelm Meister und seine Brüder: Untersuchungen zum deutschen Bildungsroman, Munich: Wilhelm Finck Verlag, 1972, p.86.
individual should be which can be understood as having social
impact, and which also suggest the Masonic character of the
thinking of the Society of the Tower's circle: 'Des Menschen größtes
Verdienst bleibt wohl, wenn er die Umstände so viel als möglich
bestimmt und sich so wenig als möglich von ihnen bestimmen läßt.
Das ganze Weltwesen liegt vor uns wie ein großer Steinbruch vor
dem Baumeister, der nur dann den Namen verdient, wenn er aus
diesen zufälligen Naturmassen ein in seinem Geiste entsprungenes
Urbild mit der größten Ökonomie, Zweckmäßigkeit und Festigkeit
zusammenstellt.'(p. 405) In the uncle's view the individual must,
rather than accepting the shape of anything outside himself as he
finds it, either in the natural world, or presumably, in cultural
tradition, reshape everything in the form of his own conception of
the world, reached independently through the power of his own
mind. This suggests, on the one hand, an intention to dominate
nature, and on the other, an intention to recreate society and
culture from scratch, simply discarding what has gone before if it
fails to coincide with the enlightened individual's independently
thought out conception. This is an admittedly rather extreme
statement of what is nevertheless the general attitude of the book,
which is that unprejudiced individuals like Wilhelm should develop
themselves and their society anew, according to their own
understanding and breaking with traditional restrictions. This
attitude of course assumes that traditional attitudes are likely to be
obstacles rather than aids in understanding the world, and that
individuals can arrive at their own original understanding of the
world and their place in it without the help of inherited wisdom.

Therese gives a straightforward practical view of what an
individual's social, especially economic activity might be when she
describes how she puts an estate in order, something which Wilhelm had expressed himself not yet ready to do when he wrote his letter to Werner. In the estate’s forests, she says, ‘ging es leider nur immer nach dem alten Schlendrian fort, nirgends war Plan und Ordnung ...

(p.454) She describes in more detail what was wrong, and how she put it right, but it is notable that she qualifies the bad state of affairs with the phrase ‘nach dem alten Schlendrian’, whereas the good state is characterized by the presence of ‘Plan und Ordnung’, as her vision here is once again the oft-expressed idea that for things to run in a traditional, conventional manner is the wrong state for them to be in, and that a pre-envisaged conception, then imposed on the state of affairs, is the right way to proceed. Therese is a modernizer in a small way, presented as a praiseworthy but limited character, as I have mentioned earlier, and the grander views are expressed by other figures.

Wilhelm, at one of his moments of illumination, when, after his initiation, he is answering his son’s questions about their garden surroundings, has thoughts of a very social nature, expressed by the narrator and supplemented by the narrator’s own analysis: ‘Er sah die Welt nicht mehr wie ein Zugvogel an, ein Gebäude nicht mehr für eine geschwind zusammengestellte Laube, die vertrocknet, ehe man sie verläßt. Alles, was er anzulegen gedachte, sollte dem Knaben entgegenwachsen, und alles, was er herstellte, sollte eine Dauer auf einige Geschlechter haben. In diesem Sinne waren seine Lehrjahre geendigt, und mit dem Gefühl des Vaters hatte er auch alle Tugenden eines Bürgers erworben.’(p.502) Wilhelm’s consciousness of the relevance of his activity to his son represents a kind of social consciousness, one which, it is suggested, the bourgeois has, but acquires differently. The emphasis on solid achievement, at least
partly on behalf of others, echoes the vision of other associates of the Society of the Tower, and carries with it a hint of traditional values. It is in particular a view which seems unaware that its own achievements are liable to relative impermanence if the next generation inherits the modernizing fervour of the previous one.

Wilhelm and, perhaps, Goethe, would like to fix their vision of life and society for the future, and not see it swept away by those whose own independent attempts at understanding have led them to further and more extreme radicalism. Also significant about this quotation is the way that Goethe sees a feeling, that of the father, as replacing, and making unnecessary an entire set of conventions of behaviour, that of the bourgeois.

Lothario, who is a central member of the Society of the Tower, and is presented as its most charismatic figure, expresses himself on social issues a number of times. During a conversation with Jarno and Wilhelm at the castle, while he is recovering from a wound received in a duel, he talks of the plans he is all the more keen to put into effect for his recognition that any fatal accident would put this out of his power. He has a sense that advances in knowledge, and ‘eine vorrückende Zeit’(p.430), produce economic advantage, which he ought to share with his tenants, and his plan is to reduce the obligations they have to him in recognition of this. He then criticizes himself for having previously devoted his energies to activities in the United States, instead of concentrating on more practical matters on his own estate. He suggests that an insufficiently practical idealism is a fault: ‘das ist ein Hauptfehler gebildeter Menschen, daß sie alles an eine Idee, wenig oder nichts an einen Gegenstand wenden mögen.’(p.431) The indication he makes here that directionless cultivatedness is a paralysing force socially is
emphasized when he then says, 'Ein verständiger Mensch ist viel für sich, aber fürs Ganze ist er wenig.' (p.432) Lothario is supporting the implicit idea that reflectivity not applied to practical activity turns inward, and a socially inactive person, such as the 'Schöne Seele' results. Lothario then pursues the theme of the importance of worldly rather than other-worldly activity, comparing his own plans with the count's intention to give his wealth to a Pietist community, and suggests that the count could have used his resources to create 'a heaven on earth' (einen Himmel auf Erden'p.432) for himself and others. Here Lothario moves from the idea of the primacy of active over purely intellectual pursuits, to the idea that one should seek material rather than purely spiritual happiness. The emphasis on reinterpreting the spiritual as material is characteristic of the novel, and part of its Enlightenment, anti-traditional character, and Lothario goes as far as making explicit a kind of this-worldly utopian vision, one not expressly stated but perhaps implied by the activities and ethos of the Society of the Tower generally.

Lothario in a later conversation tries to explain to Werner why he wants to pay taxes on his possessions. He does this partly by suggesting that, 'in den neuern Zeiten, wo so viele Begriffe schwankend werden' (p.507), it is the non-taxability of nobles' lands which might make ordinary farmers doubt the legitimacy of their possession of them. Lothario is again expressing a sense that a new age has arrived, and that new concepts are replacing old concepts, but, at the same time, he is here suggesting a liberal measure to forestall anything more radical being done by others. Lothario, like other members of the Society of the Tower, does not believe in the abolition of property, nor even in any particularly radical redistribution, but in an elite of enlightened individuals directing
modernizing reform from their position of being well-resourced and in control. He goes on to talk of the citizen’s duties to the state, in terms of paying tax, something which Werner, characterized as having the narrow, private views of the bourgeois, as opposed to the public perspective of an aristocrat, has not thought of. Lothario is clearly confident in the state as a worthy destination for a share of his resources. There is a hint in this exchange, as elsewhere, that an alliance between bourgeois practical pursuit of private interest and aristocratic public-spiritedness is the ideal of the enlightened individual in the modern era, as well as the social basis of the Society of the Tower.

Right at the end of the novel, when Wilhelm is being apprised of the fact that he is to be engaged to Natalie, Lothario outlines the ideal style of activity to which members of the Society of the Tower, including Wilhelm, should aspire: ‘Unglaublich ist es, was ein gebildeter Mensch für sich und andere tun kann, wenn er, ohne herrschen zu wollen, das Gemüt hat, Vormund von vielen zu sein, sie leitet, dasjenige zur rechten Zeit zu tun, was sie doch alle gerne tun möchten, und sie zu ihren Zwecken führt, die sie meist recht gut im Auge haben und nur die Wege dazu verfehlen.’(p.608) So the role for the developed individual is a leadership role, but Lothario gives away the fact that he believes that as an enlightened rational individual, his, and any other equivalent individual’s, plan for what is to be done will automatically coincide with what ordinary people already want to do, but have not quite managed to organize. His

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39 For an account emphasizing the gradualist rather than revolutionary nature of the reforming programme being presented, as well as its communitarian or statist tendency, see Gonthier Louis Fink, ‘Die Bildung des Bürgers zum ‘Bürger’: Individuum und Gesellschaft in Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahren’, Recherches Germaniques 2 (1972) pp.3-37.
optimism has not yet been darkened by a suspicion of the possibility that the people he wishes to lead may have a different understanding of what is in their interest. In this assumption, as in the assumption, for example, that the sincere striving individual will always find that circumstances conspire to provide a felicitous outcome to his education and development, the novel exhibits an attitude of confident optimism which appears to leave itself perilously exposed to the possibility of eventual disillusionment. As for ordinary individuals who, it would seem, are not destined for the kind of personal development which would make them leaders, they still have their role, according to the Society of the Tower's 'Lehrbrief', in the ranks of the led, all of whom come together with the leaders to form a totality: 'Nur alle Menschen machen die Menschheit aus, nur alle Kräfte zusammengenommen die Welt.' (p. 552) This, and Lothario's statement, echo Aurelie's sentiment on the same subject, quoted earlier, who also envisages a large collection of skills and abilities being led to a common goal by prominent individuals. The conception expressed by Aurelie and Lothario differs from a traditional understanding both in the notion that there is some ultimate goal in this world to which people are being led, and in the idea that the led already want to go where the leaders are taking them. There is, therefore, in principle, no sense of rules, restrictions, or of some people imposing anything on others, which, given the consistent rebellion against limitation and the belief in individual self-determination expressed in the novel, would be undesirable.

as being that the reforming aristocracy has the requisite qualities to govern in the name of the whole.
The novel's proposition for a future shape for society has implications for the national question, and this is raised on a number of occasions in the novel, though usually in connection with the theatre. A number of people, including Jarno and Aurelie, make disparaging comments about German literature, theatre, and theatre audiences, while on the other hand characters such as the baron and Wilhelm are presented as being engaged in trying to raise the standards in German theatre, and there is at times an optimistic spirit, and things such as 'eine neue Epoche fürs deutsche Theater' (p.311) are predicted. The presentation of an idea of a progress from cultural underdevelopedness to a sense of purpose in the realm of the German theatre might be an oblique statement of political hopes for Germany, especially given the theatre's role as a training ground for Wilhelm's later social activity.\(^{41}\) Just as Wilhelm as a particularly talented individual tries to use his abilities to give a German theatre company a sense of direction, people like him and other members of the Society of the Tower may be being proposed as destined to do the same for Germany as a whole. Apart from the issue of Germany's cultural development, which possibly stands for its political development, the other specifically German issue brought up is the idea of German inwardness, mentioned by Aurelie as a reason for her own depressive condition: 'Ich muß es eben bezahlen, daß ich eine Deutsche bin: es ist der Charakter der Deutschen, daß sie über allem schwer werden, daß alles über ihnen schwer wird.' (p.278) The narrator makes a similar comment in

\(^{41}\) See T. J. Reed, 'Revolution und Rücknahme: Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre im Kontext der Französischen Revolution', Goethe Jahrbuch 107 (1990) pp.27-43, who views the novel as reflecting a withdrawal of Goethe from an enthusiasm for the idea of the National Theatre, on the grounds that nationalist political aspirations which might accompany it might lead to a revolution, which Goethe wanted to avoid.
relation to Serlo, who is otherwise presented as a somewhat superficial character, but has started to discuss art with Wilhelm: ‘Er [Serlo] fing an, mehr über Kunst zu sprechen, denn er war am Ende doch ein Deutscher, und diese Nation gibt sich gern Rechenschaft von dem, was sie tut.’ (p. 305) If this reflectiveness is a national characteristic, this could be a debilitating factor, from the novel’s point of view, leading to an inwardness which stands in the way of practical activity, but, on the other hand, if purposefully directed towards action, it could produce a more effective forward movement than that of less self-conscious nationalities, if the novel’s theory of personal development is applied. The play Hamlet, the novel’s treatment of which I discuss in more detail later, is used to emphasize Wilhelm’s deliberative character, in identifying him with the character Hamlet, and given the novel’s pointing out of the deliberative character of Germans generally, Wilhelm becomes representative of the German nation in this respect.

Art

Art features prominently in the novel and in mainly two forms. Theatrical matters take up much of the early part of the novel, while later discussion of art tends to be connected with the uncle’s art collection, which had been Wilhelm’s grandfather’s, and its setting in the uncle’s house. There is also less discussion of art later in the novel, as attention turns from artistic to social concerns. While art in both the aspects under which it appears in the novel reflects personal and social issues, and acts as a kind of analogy to the personal and social arguments which the novel makes, in neither case is art presented as an end in itself. It is shown both as a
training ground for the developing individual in social and personal skills, and as a pointer to the state of harmony to which the individual and society ought to be heading.\textsuperscript{42} The idea of a training ground is particularly relevant to the theatrical sections, whereas the art objects function especially clearly as pointers, but both kinds of art shown can contribute to the formation of the individual who interacts with them, while also indicating something about the way to go.

Wilhelm's involvement in the theatre is such a prominent theme in the first five books of the novel that the reader is likely to be under the impression that the theatre is a major theme of the novel as a whole in its own right, until it is dropped abruptly in a way which suggests that it is a prefiguring of Wilhelm's later, more mature, social activity, such that it becomes clear that Goethe is trying to indicate the importance for Wilhelm of growing out of the theatre, and into more practical activity. Nevertheless, the theatre plays a crucial role in Wilhelm's development as a personality. It also acts as a microcosm of society, and, especially given the fact that Wilhelm's eventual social activity is not actually shown, it allows a prefiguration of the kind of role Wilhelm may be preparing to take in society.

Wilhelm has a number of introductory glimpses of the theatre, and of the performing arts generally, before his major involvement begins. Each of these early experiences introduces themes and perspectives which then come together in his more substantive

\textsuperscript{42} For the way that intimations of wholeness in the novel are available in a special realm, rather than wholeness being achieved in reality, see Martin Swales, \textit{The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse}, p.71. For art as an ideal reflection of good society, and its pedagogical function parallel to that of good society, see Giuliano Baioni, \textit{Märchen — Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre — Hermann und Dorothea: Zur Gesellschaftsidee der deutschen Klassik"}.
theatrical engagements, in particular, his stay with the theatre company at the count’s castle, and then his work with the theatre director Serlo. Wilhelm is already as a child showing an interest in the theatre, expressed through his experiments with a puppet theatre, the equipment for which has been set up in his parental home. His recounting of this set of experiences to Mariane emphasizes the idea of educational development through art, showing how his somewhat incomplete and unsystematic attempts to stage a play are part of a step-by-step initiation in which knowledge acquired stimulates new curiosity. He describes the puppet theatre as a ‘small world’ (‘Meine Einbildungskraft brütete über der kleinen Welt’ p.23), indicating that the puppet theatre is standing in, not just for the real theatre, but, more generally, for the wider world of action. Wilhelm is stimulated to interest in the real theatre by his relationship with Mariane, who is an actress, and the incompleteness of his attempts at writing is again indicated, but explicitly justified, by Wilhelm himself, for educational reasons: ‘Zu vollenden ist nicht die Sache des Schülers, es ist genug, wenn er sich übt.’ (p.36) Apart from this renewed emphasis on the educational value of the theatre for Wilhelm, the issue of the national theatre is also brought up at this stage, Wilhelm imagining himself as the creator of the national theatre in the future (‘und in selbstgefälliger Bescheidenheit erblickte er in sich den trefflichen Schauspieler, den Schöpfer eines künftigen Nationaltheaters, nach dem er so vielfältig hatte seufzen hören.’ p.35) This issue, raised both during Wilhelm’s stay at the castle and during his time with Serlo, is an important link

43 For a view which treats the puppet theatre as Wilhelm’s emancipation from his father, in the same way as the theatre is his emancipation from his social background, see Ulrich Stadler, ‘Wilhelm Meisters unterlassene Revolte: Individuelle Geschichte und Gesellschaftsgeschichte in Goethes Lehrjahren’, Euphorion 74 (1980) pp.360-374.
between the social and artistic spheres, the desire for a unified national theatre possibly implying a desire for a unified national state, which Goethe is not prepared to state explicitly.

Later, several years after his break with Mariane, when he undertakes his business trip, Wilhelm immediately starts to run into actors and performances in a way so fortuitous that the reader might be meant to discern the hand of a guiding fate in the encounters, as Wilhelm himself saw in the, at the time, seemingly favourable circumstances surrounding his planned elopement with Mariane. Some of these encounters have a particularly practical import, important for Wilhelm given the fact that, after his break with Mariane, he has expressed the view that the poet has no need of the outside world, and that practical and poetic matters are completely separable, the poet being meant to hover above the world like a bird (p.38). He finds a theatre performance taking place at the same factory in the mountains where he has gone to perform one of his business tasks. He sees a performance which Goethe portrays as being successful in an unrefined way, full of action but without any great development, and thus Wilhelm is given occasion to exercise his critical faculty, reflecting on how it might have been better, and even advising the actresses for the future. Thus the idea of the potential of reflective understanding directly applied to action to produce improvement is introduced, as well as the idea that the theatre is an area in which stages of sophistication are possible.

In the first sizeable town he comes to after this he meets Laertes and Philine, actors who will be part of the theatre company with which Wilhelm will be involved, and Wilhelm starts training in fencing with Laertes, the physical side to a coherent education, even
in the theatre, thus being emphasized. He also encounters an acrobatic troupe, on the basis of whose performance he is occasioned to reflect on the skill of the acrobats in arousing the best possible effect in their audience with the resources they have, using, for example, the inexpertness of the children to show up the expertise of the experienced to advantage (pp.57-58). He is thus led to think about practical aspects of staging, perhaps for the first time.

Melina, an old acquaintance of Wilhelm, arrives soon afterwards and assumes the directorship of the company, and it is soon after this that the members of the company spend an evening reading aloud a German chivalric play ('Ritterstück'), and in an access of national enthusiasm, heightened by drinking, the evening descends into a riot. The issue of Germanness is again raised by this episode, but what the implications of the infelicitous outcome of the evening are is not clear, beyond, perhaps, the need for development in the German theatre towards a greater sobriety and sophistication. It may be being indicated that German theatre is at this stage still in its infancy, and needs the kind of development that Wilhelm is going through in his character.

It is on the day after this that the harpist is introduced, a figure who, together with Mignon, who has made her first appearance with the acrobats, represents lyricism in the novel. In both cases they have a special ability with song. The harpist first entertains the company, and slightly later, Wilhelm by himself, and it is explained how the song edifies by awakening a series of emotions and bringing them into a relationship with each other (pp.138-9). The intense lyricism of both the harpist and Mignon, however, is later presented as the result of mental anguish and
inadequacy. If they are apparently cured in the latter part of the novel, but then die nevertheless, this is not only indicative of the ascendency of the practical over the artistic towards the end of the novel, but also suggests that their kind of highly interior, emotional art has no place in the social order Goethe sees the Society of the Tower as working towards, and that it is only an art which points the way to practical progress which will find its place in Goethe’s ideal polity.

Wilhelm’s stay at the count’s castle is an extended period of exposure to theatrical matters. He accompanies the theatre company, the reacquisition of whose equipment he has just funded, and is accepted by those at the castle as a member of the company, and as the company’s playwright. A key theme of the theatrical discussions at the castle is the comparison of German, French and English theatre, and to some extent cultural achievements more generally. There is a certain disdain for German actors expressed by the count and the countess when they are engaging the company to start with (pp.148-9), while Jarno has a mocking attitude towards German literature, and Mellina, during the preparations and performances just before going to the castle, is accused by the narrator of enjoying the traditional crudeness associated with the role of German courtier in many plays (p.155). In contrast to the suggestion of uncouthness in the German theatre, the prince is only interested in French theatre, especially Racine, whereas Jarno and

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44 For a discussion of Mignon’s and the harpist’s art as the result of their melancholy, which in turn is a result of their dilettantism, see Ill-Sung Joo, Goethes Dilettantismus-Kritik: ‘Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre’ im Lichte einer ästhetischen Kategorie der Moderne, Frankfurt am Main, etc.: Peter Lang, 1999, pp.275-277.

45 For an extended discussion of the role of the contrast between French and English theatre, based on the idea that French theatrical Classicism represents dilettantism, and Shakespearean English theatre the overcoming of this, see ibid., pp.197-207.
others in the prince’s entourage are said by the baron to give
preference to the monstrosities of English theatre (‘den Ungeheuern
der englischen Bühne’ p. 176). It is in fact Wilhelm’s introduction to
Shakespeare, with whom he had been unfamiliar till then, by Jarno,
which is particularly inspiring to him, and awakens feelings and
abilities in him (p. 185), and leads him to declare his desire to gain
in practical knowledge of the world, in order to be able to transform
this experience into his contribution to the German theatre. Jarno
may have intended Wilhelm to be inspired to practical activity for
more ultimately practical purposes than the theatre, but Wilhelm is
in any case gradually moving in a practical direction under
Shakespeare’s influence, and Shakespeare can be said to be fulfilling
the task which the novel recommends for art works, that of pointing
the individual in the direction of achieving greater harmony.

While the English and French theatre are certainly quite
contrasting models for the German, what seems clear is that the
German is not regarded as their equal, and that there is room for a
German theatre to be developed which might be equally esteemed
among connoisseurs.

Indeed aristocratic patronage of the arts is another theme of
the count’s castle episode, and the baron in particular links this
theme with the quest for the development of the German theatre,
since he is a keen supporter of the German theatre (‘da sie [the
actors] an dem Baron einen Mann fanden, der mit dem größten
Enthusiasmus das vaterländische Theater betrachtete’ p. 152), as well
as being an amateur playwright. The count, though less patriotically
minded, is shown as being unusually knowledgeable about the arts
(p. 163). Wilhelm explicitly expresses his view that the aristocrats
need to be involved in German literature, for its own good, in
response to a poem mocking the baron's efforts (pp.182-3). So, while there is a sense that German literature needs to be renewed, and that the old version is unworthy of critical esteem, there is also a belief expressed that the traditional patrons, the aristocracy, have the knowledge and the expertise to help bring this renewal about. This idea parallels the way in which, in the social sphere, the Society of the Tower aims to make use of aristocratic education and resources to promote social reform. This is also connected with a fear that those who work mainly for profit will tend towards cultural narrowness, and this is explored when Serlo is introduced.

As well as an arena for discussions, Wilhelm's stay at the castle also provides him with experience of practical problems. He is commissioned to produce a play for the prince, but finds his efforts inhibited by interference from his patrons. This is a foretaste of the problems he will have balancing practical pressures and the needs of artistic coherence when he works with Serlo, a key issue in that collaboration, and also illustrates that having aristocratic patronage does not eliminate all the problems of extraneous demands which the artist has to face when working for a commercial audience.

Wilhelm's cooperation with Serlo, which covers the period from his recovery from injury to his departure for Lothario's castle, is an extended piece of intense theatrical engagement for him, and many of the same theatrical issues that surface earlier are brought up again in relation to it. This period also coincides with a series of discussions over Hamlet, which lead to its production by the company.

For an account of this section of the novel which focuses more on the failings of the aristocracy as patrons, see, for example, Jane V. Curran, *Goethe's 'Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship': A Reader's Commentary*, pp.93-123.
The national issue is again present in discussions during Wilhelm's time with Serlo, but serves to reinforce the points made earlier, rather than to introduce any new conclusiveness. The lack of sophistication of German audiences is discussed, particularly by Serlo's sister, Aurelie, who nevertheless, as mentioned above, is persuaded by Lothario to view German society, with all the weaknesses of the individuals, as having the potential for development under appropriate leadership. During the description of Serlo's education as an actor, the narrator refers to the poor state of the German theatre at this earlier time: 'Die Monotonie, die damals auf dem deutschen Theater herrschte, den albernen Fall und Klang der Alexandriner, den geschraubt platten Dialog, die Trockenheit und Gemeinheit der unmittelbaren Sittenprediger hatte er bald gefaßt und zugleich bemerkt, was rührte und gefiel.' (p.271) The narrator is criticising a conventionality in German theatre at this time, implying that it is too traditional, but giving the impression that he feels it has since improved. Serlo blames German audiences for his tendency to abridge the plays he stages, claiming the following: ' Wenig Deutsche, und vielleicht nur wenige Menschen aller neuern Nationen, haben Gefühl für ein ästhetisches Ganze; sie loben und tadeln nur stellenweise; sie entzücken sich nur stellenweise' (p.295). By connecting this lack of aesthetic sophistication of German audiences with the idea that Germany is a comparatively new nation, Serlo implies a political dimension to his comment, suggesting, perhaps, that a lack of political unity, or at least of national self-consciousness, has held back cultural development. This view presupposes that the national forum is the appropriate forum for cultural development, implying that some kind of national unification would be a kind of progress. Serlo and
Wilhelm later argue over the comparative merits of the French and English theatre, Serlo favouring the former, Wilhelm the latter, and they institute a series of readings in the company in order to learn from both, but no conclusive results of this are revealed. So once again, the issue of the national theatre, though not being developed to any real conclusions, is used, through its aspirational flavour, to hint obliquely at a liberal political agenda.

The play Hamlet, which is an important presence during this part of the novel, might be taken as emblematic of Wilhelm's condition during much of the novel, in that the character Hamlet's vacillations are parallel to Wilhelm's vacillations. However, Wilhelm, making his own analysis of the play, in conversation with Serlo, gives an indication of a more precise link. Towards the end of his analysis, he quotes the following line, claiming that it is the key to Hamlet's whole behaviour: 'Die Zeit ist aus dem Gelenke; wehe mir, daß ich geboren ward, sie wieder einzurichten.' (p.245) There is an identification in the novel between Wilhelm and Hamlet, Wilhelm playing Hamlet at the performance, and being told later by Jarno that he played the role well only because he was playing himself (pp.550-1). Given this, and the various hints, already discussed,
made by members of the Society of the Tower, on the theme that
times are changing, it may be implied that Wilhelm has the task,
preumably, in his case, together with others, to adjust society to
new circumstances. However, as Wilhelm goes on to explain, Hamlet
is not ready for this task, and the situation produced is ‘eine große
Tat auf eine Seele gelegt, die der Tat nicht gewachsen ist.’(pp.245-6)
Wilhelm’s soul is, equally, as yet, not ready for the practical social
tasks he will be expected to perform as part of the Society of the
Tower, but, unlike Hamlet, the formation of his character is
proceeding in such a way that it will have grown to the appropriate
shape by the end of the novel. There is even an indication of what,
in particular, Hamlet, and, by implication, Wilhelm, are lacking, and
what Wilhelm, unlike Hamlet, is training to acquire. After a
metaphor comparing Hamlet to a delicate flowerpot destroyed by an
oak tree planted in it, Wilhelm explains discursively: ‘Ein schönes,
reines, edles, höchst moralisches Wesen, ohne die sinnliche Stärke,
die den Helden macht, geht unter einer Last zugrunde, die es weder
tragen noch abwerfen kann’(p.246). Wilhelm has a highly developed
inner sensibility, but, as has been noted, his practical capabilities
have, early in the novel, been comparatively underdeveloped. The
goal of his educational development, however, has been to develop
both sides of his self, improving the balance, and making him
capable of heroic, or, at least, significant practical tasks, as we are
meant to believe he is by the end of the novel. His education
therefore has been aimed at developing him so as to be fit to face
the developing times, and take a leading role in social change, the
novel implies.

Apart from its more symbolic significance, Hamlet is also
important in the opportunity it gives Wilhelm to learn to balance
the aesthetic and the practical when he is persuaded by Serlo, against his previous inclinations, to compose an abridged version of *Hamlet* for production. His ability to achieve this is, of course, emblematic of his achieving the capacity to balance his inner sensibility and reflectiveness with an appreciation of outer circumstances and readiness to act decisively, a balance which he will need when he becomes a social actor. That he achieves this balance in a theatrical setting shows the way that the world of the theatre is a training for a wider stage. What Wilhelm does to *Hamlet*, recounted in Book 5 Chapter 4, is to separate what he considers the essential, core action, which he thinks is beyond improvement, from the outer circumstances, which happen off stage, which he considers varied to such an extent as to be distracting, and to damage the effect of the play. He rewrites the outer circumstances so that the only scenes of action off stage are Norway and the fleet. So, he has preserved a sense of aesthetic wholeness, even enhanced it, while tidying up the play, improving on Shakespeare, he believes. Interestingly, Wilhelm's *Hamlet* might be seen as a compromise between English and French theatre, moving the unruly English play very gently in the direction of the dramatic unities, and perhaps this is a hint at the direction a future German theatre might take. That a German angle may be implied is supported by the fact that, at the beginning of the following chapter, Wilhelm, slightly revising his opinion, suggests that the multiplicity of sea journeys in the background of the play might not have been distracting for the audience for whom Shakespeare was writing, the English, on account

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See Jane V. Curran, *Goethe's 'Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship: A Reader's Commentary*, p.182, who notes the move in a French direction, but does not necessarily see it as an intended compromise.
of the English geographical situation, but that his own simplification is more apt in a German context.

Serlo, who performs the necessary role of showing Wilhelm how practical concerns have to be integrated into an artistic enterprise, nevertheless also, in the end, provides an example of how economic considerations can undermine art when not tempered by a concern for the art itself. Serlo, when under Wilhelm's influence, shows some signs of wanting to help form the audience by presenting them worthy material. He says, for example, when talking about the audience in connection with his company's successful period, just after the Hamlet premire, 'Man kann die Menschen sehr leicht durch tolle und unschickliche Darstellungen irremachen, aber man lege ihnen das Vernünftige und Schickliche auf eine interessante Weise vor, so werden sie gewiß darnach greifen.' (p.341) Here he is even expressing a kind of optimistic Enlightenment confidence that the public will inevitably respond to that which is rational and sensible, as long as it is well presented, analogous to Lothario's confidence in the social sphere that people already want to go where an enlightened leader, such as himself, will take them. However, despite this capability to see art from a viewpoint similar to Wilhelm's, his commercial leanings come to the fore as soon as Wilhelm is away. Melina is a former director, whom Wilhelm has previously described as lacking inner conviction, as I have mentioned above, and he approaches Serlo in the last chapter of Book 5 (Chapter 16) and suggests ousting Wilhelm, dismissing the actors, hiring new and bad ones, and performing a kind of opera instead, because this would make much more money, and they agree to renounce any ambition to educate the public. Serlo thus illustrates a danger of one aspect of one-sidedness in art, that is, the
danger of a purely mercenary approach, while in terms of his character, he has also been an example of a different art-related one-sidedness, that of someone who is only confident when acting, and is insecure in real life, as mentioned above, a fate which Wilhelm, by moving on from the theatre, will escape. The destructive nature of Serlo’s mercenary inclinations when independent of Wilhelm’s ideals indicates how Goethe is intending commercial energies to be harnessed for the furtherment of a more rounded social vision, and the theatre, in its liability to be overthrown and distorted by absolutely undirected commercial energy, is again standing in for society as a whole, which, it may be being suggested, might be liable to the same fate if enlightened individuals such as the members of the Society of the Tower do not step in and direct such energies according to their principles of social harmony.

Wilhelm’s grandfather’s art collection, which Wilhelm knew as a child, and which played a part in awakening his strivings, but was sold by his more commercially-minded father, turns out to have been acquired by Lothario’s uncle, and it and its setting in his house become the focus of discussion on art in the latter part of the novel.50 The uncle’s house makes its first appearance in the novel in Lothario’s aunt’s memoirs, the ‘Bekenntisse einer Schönen Seele’. The aunt visits the uncle’s house on the occasion of her sister’s wedding, which takes place there, and describes her impressions. Her initial impression on entering the house is as follows: ‘Wie

50 For a detailed account of the significance of the selling of the art collection by Wilhelm’s father, and its likely eventual reacquisition by Wilhelm through marriage to Natalie, particularly focusing on the painting of sick prince, and the various mentions of it through the novel, see Ulrich Stadler, ‘Wilhelm Meisters unterlassene Revolte: Individuelle Geschichte und Gesellschaftsgeschichte in Goethes Lehrjahren’. 94
The seriousness gives a sense of direction, and of relevance to real life, whereas the harmony represents the goal to be attained. Hence the uncle’s house and its contents are such as to inspire the aunt with a sense of purpose, it is suggested.\(^5\) What is more, the aunt, who is used to inner contemplation, finds that the uncle’s house, as an outer phenomenon, is able to produce something of the sense of harmony which she has been trying to cultivate without outer means, and gives her a sense of the potential parallel between outer and inner dispositions, the kind of relationship on which the novel’s parallel treatment of art, society and the personality, is based.

In describing some of the more practical contents of the house, the aunt notices that these are also in harmony with the house as a whole, and remarks, ‘Aller Hausrat, Tafelzeug, Service und Tischaußsätze stimmten zu dem Ganzen, und wenn mir sonst die Baumeister mit den Konditoren aus einer Schule entsprungen zu sein schienen, so war hier Konditor und Tafeldecker bei dem Architekten in die Schule gegangen.’(p.402) This means not only that the details harmonize with the house as a whole, but also suggests that there is no unmotivated decoration, and that the

\(^5\) See Kurt May, ‘Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre, Ein Bildungsroman?’, Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte 31 (1957) pp.1-37, who sees the uncle as the means through which art becomes part of the idea of the harmonious education in the novel, but also sees the uncle as representing an aesthetic one-sidedness, and his ill-defined pantheism as representing a lack of a religious side. May believes that the one-sidedness of many of the characters such as the uncle in the latter half of the novel is part of the novel’s giving up on the goal of harmonious education and accepting specialization.
emphasis in the building, as well as in the details, is on geometry and proportion, as the reference to the architect implies, rather than on an abundance of decoration. Everything is meant to suggest harmony and seriousness in a deliberate way. The idea of proportion is specifically invoked with reference to some temporary buildings which have been erected in canvass and planks, but built in such 'noble proportions' ('in so edlen Verhältnissen' p.403) that they suggest stone and marble. The impression the aunt's comments give is of a kind of neo-classical style, although the novel does not specify this, and the emphasis on the pruning away of unnecessary detail suggests a moving away from an older, perhaps more exuberant, non-neo-classical form of art to one imbued with a progressive, rationalistic spirit, in which every detail clearly serves the same objective.³²

The uncle's house in its harmonious coherence implies, the aunt says, an equivalent character who has created it ('So angenehm uns der Anblick eines wohlgestalteten Menschen ist, so angenehm ist uns eine ganze Einrichtung, aus der uns die Gegenwart eines verständigen, vernünftigen Wesens fühlbar wird.' p.403), and the way the party has been organized in the house is so perfect as to suggest a 'small world', so perhaps indicating that it is a model for society at large ('Durch diese gute Ordnung schien der Raum, in dem wir uns befanden, eine kleine Welt zu sein' p.403).

As well as the art contained in the house, about the effect of which the aunt expresses herself in the same way as she does about the house more generally ('Nun war ich zum erstenmal durch etwas Äußerliches auf mich selbst zurückgeführt' p.404), the aunt is also

³² For Palladio's 'La Rotonda' as an inspiration for the uncle's house, see Hans Reiß, Goethe's Novels, p.110.
exposed to a performance of choir music organized by the uncle, and the effect that this music produces is similar to that of other art she has experienced in the house. It imparts to her 'a foretaste of bliss' ('einen Vorschmack der Seligkeit'p.410). She also describes the experience as follows: 'Nun vernahm ich eine Musik, aus dem tiefsten Sinne der trefflichsten menschlichen Naturen entsprungen, die durch bestimmte und geübte Organe in harmonischer Einheit wieder zum tiefsten, besten Sinne des Menschen sprach und ihn wirklich in diesem Augenblicke seine Gottähnlichkeit lebhaft empfinden ließ.'(p.411) Music here is again pointing towards an idea of a future state of harmony to be attained. The aunt understands this in a religious way, although the terms she uses could almost be humanist, and members of the Society of the Tower would be likely to understand it in a more secular way. The aunt also understands the looked-for state in its applicability to the individual, but an extension to the social domain, as is so often implied in the novel, would be possible here as well, and, perhaps, the fact that a choir, rather than a single performer, is involved, hints at this. Moreover, it has taken an individual who already exhibits a degree of harmony personally to imbue the music with this sense of harmony, which in turn inspires others. The aunt suggests that this music has an effect unlike the more partial effects of music she has come across hitherto, whether it be pious but uncouth singing, or virtuosic concert playing, implying perhaps that this music is something new, sharing with the other kinds of arts on display at the uncle's residence a kind of enlightened purposefulness. However, the uncle's music, described as 'lateinische geistliche Gesänge'(p.411), might strike the reader as reminiscent more of considerably earlier, rather than later ages.
When Wilhelm reaches the uncle’s house, which is now where Natalie lives, the uncle having since died, he recognizes the grandfather’s art collection, and, otherwise, reacts very much like the aunt did. His first reaction on entering is that it is a holy place (p.512), continuing in the novel’s tendency to replace religion by imputing spirituality to its own secular culture. The next day, wandering around in the morning, and looking at the architecture, he makes the following remark: ‘Ist doch wahre Kunst ... wie gute Gesellschaft: sie nötigt uns auf die angenehmste Weise, das Maß zu erkennen, nach dem und zu dem unser Innerstes gebildet ist.’(p.516) Here he confirms both the analogy between art and the shape of the individual character, and also the way that art indicates the goal for the individual to attain.

Later, Natalie takes Wilhelm to see another part of the house called the ‘Saal der Vergangenheit’, a kind of mausoleum in which the uncle is buried. A description of the details of the room by the narrator is summed up as follows: ‘Alle diese Pracht und Zierde stellte sich in reinen architektonischen Verhältnissen dar, und so schien jeder, der hineintrat, über sich selbst erhoben zu sein, indem er durch die zusammentreffende Kunst erst erfuhr, was der Mensch sei und was er sein könne.’(p.540) Again the stress is on relationships of proportion, and these are such as to hint at a state which individuals might aspire to. Hence the architecture incites to progress, whereas the idea of ‘pure’ architectural proportions might imply an advance on a less pure architectural style, which this new style has superseded. The idea that something new is happening here which is an improvement on older ways is even more clearly in evidence in the fact of the bright and cheerful aspect of the room, and the motto on the scroll which the statue of the uncle holds:
‘Gedenke zu leben.’(p.540) This would seem to be a reversal of the traditional ‘memento mori’, and to suggest a general reversal of traditional attitudes towards dealing with death. It implies the existence of an improved wisdom which has replaced previous concepts.

Then, in response to a series of friezes present in the room depicting various scenes of human life, which Wilhelm has seen, the narrator again indicates that a world is represented to the viewer, and a heaven as well, suggesting a world of aspiration as well as actuality (‘Es war eine Welt, ein Himmel, der den Beschauenden an dieser Stätte umgab’p.541). What is more, the narrator states that something beyond feelings and thoughts inspired by the images is invoked (‘und außer den Gedanken, welche jene gebildeten Gestalten erregten, außer den Empfindungen, welche sie einflößten, schien noch etwas andres gegenwärtig zu sein, wovon der ganze Mensch sich angegriffen fühlte.’p.541), and Wilhelm repeats the point himself: ‘Was ist das ... das, unabhängig von aller Bedeutung, frei von allem Mitgefühl, das uns menschliche Begebenheiten und Schicksale einflößen, so stark und sogleich so anmutig auf mich zu wirken vermag?’(p.541) Something is intimated to the viewer, but what it is, other than that it is not a direct response to the content of the images, and that it is not directly expressible, does not emerge here. Some foreshadowing of a future state of harmony, for the individual and society, may not be inconsistent with what is being suggested, but the emphasis here is on its ineffability. A suggestion of the Kantian aesthetic of ‘purposeless purposefulness’ seems to be present, and, if so, it may be implied that the indirect

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53 See, for example, Jane V. Curran, Goethe’s ‘Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship’: A Reader’s Commentary, pp.287 and 289.
but effective approach to art in the ‘Saal der Vergangenheit’ is an advance on a perceived more direct didacticism in the art of immediately preceding ages, particularly religious art.

Natalie, showing the places in the room which the uncle designed to hide singers, so that their voices could be heard without the distraction of their visual aspect, explains the uncle’s motivation for this idea. According to the uncle, ‘eine schöne Stimme ist das allgemeinste, was sich denken läßt, und indem das eingeschränkte Individuum, das sie hervorbringt, sich vors Auge stellt, zerstört es den reinen Effekt jener Allgemeinheit.’(p.543) He also believes that the sight of instrumentalists is distracting. His attitude here would seem parallel to his approach to the visual arts, in that the arts in his house eschew superfluous detail, and contain only what is necessary to produce the desired effect. This might be seen as a kind of enlightened tidying up of earlier irregularity and arbitrariness. However, it is also noteworthy that, for all the novel’s insistence on avoiding the cultivation of the theoretical at the expense of the practical, there is a certain tendency towards abstraction in this approach to music, and arguably to some extent, in the approach to visual art, with its stress on architectural proportions. Particularly the insistence on not seeing the musicians might be seen as an unwillingness to accept the natural untidiness of human phenomena.

Mignon’s funeral, which takes place in the ‘Saal der Vergangenheit’ later, in Book 8 Chapter 8, is characterized, like the ‘Saal der Vergangenheit’ as a whole, by its secular character.54 The fact that it is clearly not a Christian funeral again emphasizes that Goethe is seeking for ways to replace traditional symbolism with

54 See, for example, ibid., p.289.
something he believes is more appropriate to the new set of beliefs, secular humanism with undefined intimations of the transcendental, which he is proposing. If Mignon's tomb contains consecrated soil, in order to fulfill her expressed wish to be buried on consecrated ground, this is to demonstrate the tolerance of the members of the Society of the Tower for what they are likely to view as error.

The arrival just before Mignon's funeral of the Italian marquess, who had earlier known the uncle and helped him acquire much of his art collection in Italy, gives occasion for a discussion on aesthetics. Before the discussion starts the narrator notes the particularly deep appreciation the Italians have for art: 'Jeder [Italiener], der nur irgend etwas treibt, will Künstler, Meister und Professor heißen, und bekennt wenigstens durch diese Titelsucht, daß es nicht genug sei, nur etwas durch Überlieferung zu erhaschen oder durch Übung irgendeine Gewandtheit zu erlangen; er gesteht, daß jeder vielmehr über das, was er tut, auch fähig sein solle zu denken, Grundsätze aufzustellen und die Ursachen, warum dieses oder jenes zu tun sei, sich selbst und andern deutlich zu machen.' (p. 571) This is a confirmation of the novel's approach to theory and practice, in which it is recommended that each be given separate attention and then brought together with the other. Therefore the whole is formed by the bringing back together of what is first separated, the assumption being made that the prior separation and separate development does not prevent the later reassembly of what are presumably different entities to what they were when they were originally part of a whole. Apart from this, the novel's suspicion of tradition is expressed, and an explicit, clarifying approach to the artist's work is recommended. This of course
presupposes the optimistic assumption that what the artist does is amenable to such an analysis as to make it clear.

Once the discussion itself starts, the theme appears to be a dissatisfaction with the state of art, and art appreciation. It is observed that outstanding works of art are rare in the contemporary period ('in der neuern Zeit'p.572), and the marquess specifies that if the demands made on the artist by the public are not rigorous, the artist will exchange the suffering necessary for real achievement for money and praise, and will remain mediocre. He suggests that the artists of the time are superficial as a result ('Deswegen bieten die Künstler unserer Zeit nur immer an, um niemals zu geben.'p.572) The marquess here is perhaps indicating a contemporary tendency to commercialization in art, and suggesting that the quality of art is endangered by this tendency. He concludes by pointing out that on the basis of observing which works in galleries the mass of people ('die Menge'p.572) prefer, and which they neglect, there can be little pleasure in the present situation and little hope for the future. Pessimistic as this sounds, it has already been established that the Society of the Tower's understanding of its role is that it should use its elite standards of culture to guide the masses, and so the priest can largely agree with the marquess's comments, but, rather than this showing that the future will be a barren epoch, the implication is that the future needs the intervention of such people as himself to prevent it from being a barren epoch. Thus in an environment of increased commercial activity, a kind of aristocratic approach to culture is still needed to prevent the mass culture becoming banal, the Society of the Tower's philosophy suggests, and the Society of the Tower itself is constituted to encapsulate both commercial energies and a sophisticated, non-utilitarian culture. So the priest in
his contribution to the discussion can amplify the marquess’s comments on why the artistic culture of the masses is deficient, at the same time tacitly indicating what is right about the artistic culture of members of the Society of the Tower, by contrast, which qualifies them to lead.

The priest thinks that people react to art unsophisticatedly, as if they were tasting food, but suggests that a different kind of culture is necessary to appreciate art: ‘Das Schwerste finde ich die Art von Absonderung, die der Mensch in sich selbst bewirken muß, wenn er sich überhaupt bilden will; deswegen finden wir so viel einseitige Kulturen, wovon doch jede sich anmaßt, über das Ganze abzusprechen.’ (p.573) The priest here is describing how, in order to attain to the level of personal development necessary to appreciate art, individuals have to divide themselves into faculties and develop each faculty separately. The danger in such an enterprise, he suggests, is to concentrate on one faculty, to the detriment of others. He rephrases this doctrine, under Jarno’s prompting, as follows: ‘sobald der Mensch an mannigfaltige Tätigkeit oder mannigfaltigen Genuß Anspruch macht, so muß er auch fähig sein, mannigfaltige Organe an sich gleichsam unabhängig voneinander auszubilden.’ (p.573) So personal development is a splitting in many directions for, presumably, a later coherence. Goethe, through the priest, appears to recommend division within the self, with the warning that all the divided elements must then receive their share of attention.55 He does not fear that different faculties of the personality, separated, and developed as if independently from each other, might become incompatible, and not reunite into a whole.

55 For a view which connects this idea with the specialization required in a market economy, see Blessin, *Die Romane Goethes*, pp.56-57.
The priest states that without this development of the personality by faculty, the individual will remain unsatisfied, and then describes how most people at the time treat works of art as relative to their own subjective inclinations, rather than seeing them for what they are ('Nun sieht man aber meist die Menschen entschiedene Werke der Kunst geradezu behandeln, als wenn es ein weicher Ton wäre.'p.573) Though the tone in the priest's speech is one of a complaint at contemporary art appreciation among the many, with no solution explicitly offered, the implication would appear to be that those who appreciate the problem, and are capable of the rigorous course of personal development described, are to take the lead in remedying the situation. There is also perhaps a hint, rare in this novel, of a concern that something is in danger of being lost, since the references to what is happening 'now' may imply that the situation has been changing for the worse. It may be that a shift from aristocratic to bourgeois patronage has occasioned what Goethe perceives to be a decline in artistic standards. In this case the alliance of aristocratic and bourgeois elements that is the Society of the Tower might be intended by Goethe as, among other things, a way of bringing a developed artistic culture into a bourgeois commercial life.

Conclusion

*Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* takes place against a background of a changing society, in which, it is gently implied, commercial forces are in the ascendant. However, the impression the novel gives of being affirmatory of the modern does not spring principally from the bourgeois-aristocratic alliance which it promotes in the Society.
of the Tower, since this could equally be read as an attempt to slow
down and temper coming tendencies in favour of older models.
Neither is its stance on artistic styles particularly programmatic,
recommending, as it seems to do, a combination of the best of
English and French theatres as models for the German, and what
appears to be a fairly unspecific kind of neo-classicism in the visual
arts. It is rather the novel's underlying philosophy of progressive
aspiration and anti-conventionality which establishes its
modernizing intention, and this philosophy is illustrated in most
detail with reference to the development of character, particularly
Wilhelm's, but then applied to areas of the social and artistic debate,
both to suggest social reform, and to advocate an art clearly
illustrative of an aspirational attitude. If only occasional hints of
disquiet as to coming tendencies are discernible in the novel, and
the overall tone is of confidence in the achievability of the proposed
programme of enlightened and Romantic expansion and progress in
the individual, and in its extendibility from a group of individuals to
society, and in the possibility of its being modelled in art, the
confidence marks a key difference between Wilhelm Meisters
Lehrjahre and Der Grüne Heinrich, where that same confidence has
begun to break down, and Doktor Faustus, where, arguably, it is
never entertained. At the same time, the way that the outcome of
Wilhelm's adventures is at times suggested to depend on a friendly
fate, or the well-meaning conspiracy of the Society of the Tower,
and the fact that Wilhelm's actual fulfillment of his potential is
never shown in the novel, but only implied to be about to happen,

56 For a view which notes the contrast between the optimism of the ending of
Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre and the sad atmosphere of, the end of Der Grüne
Heinrich, see David H. Miles 'Picaros Weg zum Bekenner: Der Wandel des
Helden im deutschen Bildungsroman', p.394.
could be taken as an indication of a fragility in the optimistic edifice, prophetic of fissures and instabilities which later authors may have to address.\(^5^7\)

A particularly striking quality of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* as a novel is the author's unwillingness to make any judgement on the behaviour of his characters, much of which would be likely to be assessed unfavourably from a traditional point of view. The novel is, rather, experimental and open-ended in its approach, declining to establish any moral framework, and instead advocating an approach in which characters arrive at their own moral position experientially, even where this gradual, cumulative and experimental process is at the cost of some characters succumbing to others. The novel's advocacy of this experimental approach to morality is expressed narratively by its standing back from events and refusing to endorse a traditional moral stance, leaving the reader with a sense of that moral instability which the characters themselves are negotiating. This characteristic contributes to the decidedly modern flavour of the novel.

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\(^5^7\) See Melitta Gerhard, *Der Deutsche Entwicklungsroman bis Goethes 'Wilhelm Meister'*, Bern: Francke, 1968, p.163, who talks of trends such as the isolation of the individual and the breakdown of communal life becoming even more keenly felt after Goethe during the Nineteenth Century. Stefan Blessin (*Goethes Romane: Aufbruch in die Moderne*, p.9) sees Goethe as not having faced up to modern disjunctions.
CHAPTER TWO: KELLER'S *DER GRÜNE HEINRICH*

**Introduction**

In this chapter I shall examine the way in which the issues of the old and the new impinge upon the fields of society, art and character in *Der Grüne Heinrich*. I shall treat the social field as including areas such as politics, religion, social class, education, economics, and the contrast between urban and rural ways of life. Art I shall look at in terms of theory, as well as in its relationship to the idea of community, and to economics. Finally I shall discuss aspects of the character of the protagonist. I shall be referring to sections of the text in which the themes in question are particularly prominent. As I shall be concentrating on the second version of the novel, references will be to this version unless otherwise stated, but I shall be referring to the first version when passages of particular interest are only to be found there.

Heinrich, the protagonist, as well as being an aspiring artist, expresses himself extensively on politics, religion, and other topics. His relationships with social groups and communities, and with women, are also recounted, sometimes in detail. In politics, religion, and social issues, Heinrich consistently advocates a liberal, progressive position, and expresses impatience with anything traditional. His proclaimed position on these issues, although similar in both versions of the novel, is sometimes more radically expressed in the first. However, despite his proclaimed position, he regularly shows signs of feelings of nostalgia or wistful admiration for traditional ways of life. These feelings are sometimes more prominent in the second version than in the first, but are evident in
both. So, it can be said that, in both versions, Heinrich subscribes to what he sees as the logic of the modernizing position, but is drawn by the aesthetic and emotional appeal of older forms. While there is a constant interplay of these two currents in both versions, the first version is more oriented towards the new than the second, which shows more balance.¹

The difference in balance between the two versions results partly from there being slightly different material in each, but also from the narrative configuration of the two. The first version is divided between a third person narrative by an unspecified narrator, and a first person account, written by the youthful Heinrich, of his own youth up to the time of writing. The second version, by contrast, is written throughout in the first person by a narrator representing an older Heinrich looking back on his younger self. The interplay between the older, more experienced Heinrich recounting, and the younger, more enthusiastic Heinrich being remembered, produces a moderating effect on the more radical positions taken in the second version which is not present in the first. This moderating effect is paralleled in the endings of the two versions. In the first, Heinrich does not succeed in changing, or even finding a place in, society, and dies, his failure as stark as his positions are, relatively, uncompromising. In the second version his more conciliatory position towards the old, in social issues, coincides with a compromise ending, in which he finds a place in society, but one which does not satisfy his aspirations, leaving him melancholy, and producing the impression of a mitigated failure.

¹ See Gerhard Kaiser, Gottfried Keller: Das gedichtete Leben, Frankfurt am Main, 1981, p.246, who sees the second version as less revolutionary than the first.
On social issues, Heinrich never renounces his philosophical endorsement of modern theoretical positions, although his conviction in them appears undermined increasingly as one moves from the beginning to the end of the novel, from the first version to the second, and from the younger to the older Heinrich. His positions are undermined not only by his frequent revelations of feeling drawn emotionally to the aesthetic and communal qualities of traditional forms, whether these be aristocratic or ecclesiastical, but also by the fact that he often acts in ways inconsistent with his stated beliefs, and his tendency to theorize one way and act another is a key division in his personality, and important theme of the novel.

The narrator points to the separation of theory and practice, not just as a part of Heinrich's character, but also as a prominent characteristic of modern society, particularly in the division between economics and art, where the modern economy is characterized by mechanical activity, and the modern artist is characterized by an exclusion from mainstream economic life. This division is contrasted with its absence in the older society of craftsmen, alluded to in the artists' carnival, in which art and economics form a coherent unity. The fact that Heinrich shows the same fragmentation which is suggested to be a specifically modern characteristic of society suggests that he is a representative modern individual, embodying in his psychology the social dissociations of the era.²

Heinrich also expresses the division in his psychology, between the reflective and the practical, in his art. He is unable to tie his imagination to the reality of what he is trying to portray in his landscape drawing, and tends towards grotesque fantasy, and then geometrical abstraction. His artistic tendencies are portrayed as related to the artistic theories and trends of the time, as well as to his personal make-up, so his art reproduces the fragmented modern condition both of his self and of contemporary society. Whereas Heinrich's stated sympathies are with modern theory in the social and religious domains, despite his emotional attraction to the old, his theoretical position with respect to art is less clearly modern, since, while he rejects convention, he also rejects the abstract and imaginative experimentation to which he is prone in practice, and claims to want to reproduce the real, which he never succeeds in doing.

Heinrich's tendency to be confounded by his contradictions, and to fail to achieve in the social and artistic spheres, is also operative in his personal life. His evident desire to belong to communities, and to relate intimately to others, particularly women, is constantly undermined by his excessively cerebral approach, which leads him to feel distanced from and often superior to those with whom he might relate, and inhibits any spontaneity. He attempts to compensate for this exclusion by throwing himself occasionally into mass movements, but this reinforces the division of his self into the abstractly reflective and the mechanically active, and does not produce any interpersonal connection.

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For the increasing division in Heinrich between the worlds of reality and imagination, see Martin Swales, *Epochenbuch Realismus: Romane und Erzählungen*, Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1997, p.123.
The older narrating Heinrich of the second version, though the most sophisticated and balanced voice in either version of the novel, is still caught in an aporia, and sees no way out of an uneasy compromise with contemporary society in which, while he cooperates with the practical side of modern society, his modern philosophical aspirations are left unfulfilled and without hope of fulfillment in the overwhelmingly practical, materialistic society he finds himself in. He is unable to find any reconciliation between aspirations and practical activity, except imaginatively in a sphere which is closed to him, the past. It is closed not only because the more traditional forms are, at least in part, being replaced by the newer in the society of the time, and thus becoming unavailable, but also because he cannot see any philosophical basis in traditional forms, and views himself as not naive enough to participate in forms of life which, he believes, one would have to be unenlightened to accept. Heinrich's impasse, and the novel's impasse, is a result both of his inability to repress those inclinations of his which are contrary to the logic he is dedicated to, and also, arguably, of his unwillingness to consider the possibility that the older forms have their own logic, and that his philosophy of the constant rejection of convention is not the only one to have any claim to rationality.

Richard A. Ruppel in his *Gottfried Keller and His Critics: a Case Study in Scholarly Criticism*\(^4\) gives an overview of Keller criticism up to 1998. Work on *Der Grüne Heinrich* appears to focus on a limited number of major areas of interest, particularly, the novel's place in the context of European realism, the psychology of Keller and Heinrich, the sociological context of the novel, and the nature of Keller's philosophical, theological and political world-view as

\(^{4}\text{Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1998}\)
expressed in the novel. Critics such as Martin Swales have emphasized the strongly self-reflective aspect of Der Grüne Heinrich in comparison with the nineteenth-century novel outside Germany.\(^5\) Adolf Muschg has initiated the psychological approach, relying on psychoanalytical concepts, and focusing particularly on the influence of the missing father both on Keller and Heinrich.\(^6\) Earlier sociological studies, by critics such as Lukács,\(^7\) have discussed the problematics of bourgeois society as presented in the novel, often from a Marxist perspective, while later on, Erika Swales, for example, has noticed the way that contradictions and tensions in Keller's writing reveal his decreasing idealism and increasing scepticism in the face of continuing economic and social developments.\(^8\) Studies on Keller's world view have dealt with his liberal politics, his either pantheistic or agnostic religious attitudes, and the extent of the influence on him of figures such as Feuerbach, with disagreement on the extent to which Keller maintains his secularist philosophy in later life.

Given the way that the novel is thus seen both as an autobiographical work, and as a social novel about the loss of idealism and the difficulties of art in the face of the demands of the market in modern bourgeois society, my own argument stresses the way that change in culture and society transforms itself into a part of the developing self-consciousness of the protagonist, taking the shape of patterns of the old and the new.

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Politics

In approaching the social issues which are important in the novel, I shall start with politics, a topic which surfaces on innumerable occasions in the novel, and can be said to frame the novel, beginning as it does, after the ‘Lob des Herkommens’ (Chapter 1), with a portrayal of Heinrich’s father’s liberal convictions and activities, and ending with Heinrich’s own attempt to take up that mantle as a civil servant of the republic.

Heinrich’s political background is in fact very much shaped by his awareness of his father’s political activities and ideals, and these are described in detail in the second chapter. Having come from a peasant background, Heinrich’s father becomes a member of the artisan classes by training as a stone mason, and is shown participating in the liberal, if not revolutionary, enthusiasms of his associates, taking an interest in Enlightenment thinking, especially as mediated through Schiller, founding insurance societies and community schools, and looking forward to a transformed future. Heinrich describes all these projects in positive terms, even talking about ‘die abgeklärten Ideen der großen Revolution’ (p.24), in reference, presumably, to the French Revolution. There is a note of regret only in the relation of the fact that the father put his various

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10 Page numbers in this chapter refer to Gottfried Keller, Sämtliche Werke, Band 3: Der Grüne Heinrich (Zweite Fassung), Peter Villwock (ed.), Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1996, or, when the first version is being referred to, Band 2: Der Grüne Heinrich (Erste Fassung), Thomas Böning and Gerhard Kaiser (eds.), Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985.
business and political commitments before his health and worked himself to death, leaving his wife and five-year-old son behind.¹¹

Heinrich in fact explicitly backs what might be termed progressive causes, liberalism and democracy, against traditional political forms, such as monarchy, whenever the issue arises.¹² In the first edition the first three chapters, in which Heinrich’s departure from home and his journey to Germany are described, contain many expressions of Heinrich’s and the narrator’s pro-republican and anti-monarchical opinions. The narrator, for example, in describing ‘der gesetzgebende Rat der Republik’(p.11) in Zurich, talks of how the faces of the members express ‘das glückliche Geschick, mit einfachem Sinn, das Rechte zu treffen.’(p.11) When Heinrich passes through a Swiss village on the way to the German border, the narrator gives a glowing description of it, noting how it is the result of ‘Fleiß und Betriebsamkeit, im Lichte fröhlicher Aufklärung und unter oder vielmehr auf den Flügeln der Freiheit...’(p.28), and goes on to mention approvingly other signs of its democratic way of life, such as, for example, the way that a servant may have a superior military rank to his employer, or the serious but relaxed attitude of a group of village men who, the narrator relates, may be discussing politics, perhaps in preparation for some political function that they will perform.

¹¹ For the view that Heinrich’s father has pursued his social projects at the cost of neglecting to bear in mind the welfare of his dependents, see Rosemarie Adamczyk, Die realitätsbezogene Konstruktion des Entwicklungsromans bei Gottfried Keller, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1986, p.108.

¹² For Keller’s own radical liberalism, see, for example, Inge Graichen, Der frühe Gottfried Keller: Menschenbild und poetische Konzeption, Bern: Peter Lang, 1979, p.149. See also Gerhard Kaiser, Gottfried Keller: Das gedichtete Leben, p.237, for Heinrich’s radical liberalism, in the context of his political reflections on reentering Switzerland, which I discuss below. Kaiser (pp.248-249), however, argues that Keller himself has given up his liberal progressivism and instead believes in the cyclical pattern of nature.
and the way that rather than showing any common local characteristics they are rather very individualized, a condition attributed to 'jene Freiheit, welche bei einer unerschütterlichen Strenge der Gesetze jedem sein Schicksal läßt und ihn zum Schmied seines eigenen Glückes macht.' (p.30) The incident where, on the other side of the border, Heinrich’s hat is knocked off in an inn by royal functionaries, on the grounds of his lack of respect for them, as representatives of the crown, in putting it on in their presence, suggests the pettiness and silliness of the monarchical system in contrast to Swiss republican sobriety. The incident is immediately followed by Heinrich’s defending, in conversation with the count, whom he has just met, ‘den weltgeschichtlichen Begriff der Republik’ (p.48), when he brings up the argument, forms of which will appear elsewhere in the novel, that the royalist, unlike the republican, simply cannot rationally defend his position. All these episodes are lost in the second edition, in which the description of the journey to Germany is located in the middle of the novel rather than at the beginning, and in their place one finds only an incident where officials at the customs post ‘mit dem fürstlichen Kronwappen’ (p.494) humiliate Heinrich by strewing his belongings over the floor and watch spitefully as he tries to repack.

Again in the first edition, the narrator gives an account of Heinrich’s views of history, which he has been pondering during the time of his informal studies in Germany. Heinrich has become convinced that glorious periods of history which have passed are not to be regretted because the fact of their fall proves their imperfection (‘da dessen Untergang der erste Beweis seiner Unvollständigkeit ist.’ p.691) He discovers that history consists of unstoppable progress, and that ‘der Rückschritt nichts anderes als
der stockende Fortschritt ist...' (p.691) This leads him to conclude that the reactionary position cannot have any motivating principle of its own, but is only a result of the imperfection of the progress to which it reacts ('die Unvollkommenheit des Fortschritts' p. 692). In fact, the reactionaries themselves do not know why they exist ('die Reaktionäre von Profession, die sich so nennen, wissen selbst nicht, warum und woher sie in der Welt sind.' p. 692) In the end, however, history and politics will resolve themselves into 'ein großes heiteres Lustspiel, wo niemand mehr blutet und niemand weint' (p. 696) and all will be reconciled to 'die geläuterte unbedingte Einsicht' (p. 695). So Heinrich has conceived of a historical dialectic of political progress, where conservatism can only be a negative term, and is irrational by definition, and will, in the long run, be defeated. Heinrich is showing here his propensity for highly abstract theorizing, and his valuing of the appearance of straightforward logical rigour over practical applicability. The style of thinking he is exhibiting, with its somewhat Hegelian structure, is in tune with the intellectual climate of the time, but his rather simplistic denial that his opponents can have any rational motivation makes it difficult for him to rationalize his own doubts about aspects of progress.

Heinrich's attitude to conservatism is also expressed in the chapter on 'Die barmherzigen Brüder' (Chapter 17, Book 2), where one of Heinrich's fellow revellers in the aftermath of the Tell festival is found to have a conservative newspaper in his pocket. According

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13 For Heinrich's attitudes to what he sees as reactionary positions, with reference to the first version, see Wolfgang Rohe, *Roman aus Diskursen: Gottfried Keller 'Der grüne Heinrich' (Erste Fassung; 1854/55)*, Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1993, pp. 181-184.
to Heinrich, this man’s ‘schwache Seite’ is his conservatism, ‘den er
weder genugsam zu erklären noch zu verteidigen
vermochte.’ (p.367) Indeed the real reason for his conservatism is
revealed to be no more than the fact that radicalism has made wine
sour and expensive, and that sweet and cheap wine is only available
in old-fashioned inns, a complaint that Heinrich concedes to be in
itself not without a certain cogency.

On his way home to his Swiss home town, having crossed the
border into Switzerland, Heinrich finds that political turmoil is
everywhere in evidence, and this stimulates him to engage in some
further political musings, as he strides across ‘aufgeweckte und
eigensinnig verdunkelte’ (p.832) areas, and reflects on how ‘die
endlich sichere und klare Rechtsmehrheit’ (p.832) is to be arrived at
from the constitutional and political variety which is the Switzerland
of the time. Developing his thoughts on the majority, he affirms that
it is ‘die einzige wirkliche und notwendige Macht im Lande’ (p.832),
and to enlighten the majority (‘sie unvermerkt vernünftig und klar
zu machen’ p.832) in areas where it is unclear is ‘das höchste und
schönste Ziel’ (p.832). He goes on to talk of how the majority is
always ‘liebenswürdig und wünschbar’ (p.833), even when it is
wrong, and then describes how ‘Jede wahre Volksrede ist nur ein
Monolog, den das Volk selber hält’ (p.833) and extols the good
fortune of the individual who can be the mirror of the people, and
reflect nothing else. This burst of enthusiasm by the youthful
Heinrich is tempered by a note of caution, absent, interestingly, in
the first edition, expressed by the older narrating Heinrich, in which
he reflects that he did not at that time realize that he would not be
able to hold on to this ‘idyllische Schilderung’ (p.833) in the long
run, that, for example, majorities could be corrupted by individuals, and, once corrupted, could resist all improvement.

Despite Heinrich's explicit and enthusiastic support for progressive political causes, and his ridicule of any opposition to them, he nevertheless from time to time expresses a sense of disillusionment, and even on occasion betrays an involuntary nostalgia for older forms. Heinrich's administrative post, which he obtains at the end of the novel, after returning to Switzerland, instead of being the culmination of his dreams and ambitions, enabling him to be fully and joyously part of the life of the republic, seems to be uninspiring and a disappointment, and instead of being a mirror of the people he becomes 'der ziemlich melancholische und einsilbige Amtmann' (p. 850). He does not criticize the republican system as such here, only abuses of it, but nevertheless the anticipated sense of satisfaction is strangely absent, as is the impression that he is participating in any kind of ongoing improvement in the state of affairs.

Heinrich's unsatisfying experience as an administrative official is foreshadowed earlier in the novel by that of the high-ranking official whom Heinrich and Anna's father meet during the Tell festival. The official is obliged to have recourse to 'manches verbindliches Lächeln' and 'manche, wenn auch noch so unschuldige Schnörkelei' (p. 349) in dealing with the authorities, instead of the plain dealing which he would prefer, and Anna's father suggests that he is frustrated by these kinds of compromises. When Heinrich protests that the rulers, in a republic, are only part of the people, Anna's father explains how, in recent times, bodies of elected representatives have tended to become something almost inimical ('etwas...fast Feindliches'p. 349) to the people. The official's
difficult position is partly due to his economic dependency on the post. A mismatch between Heinrich’s rather naive idealism and the everyday realities of republican politics in Switzerland is indicated here. Relationships of power can be exploited under any system, and abstract ideals are liable to be undermined by economic motivations.

In the first edition, at the end of the ‘Jugendgeschichte’, Heinrich’s first experience of voting turns out to be an anticlimax, as the subdued mood of the young voters leads him to feel all the more self-conscious, due to his lack of economic status compared with them.

When, in the chapter on ‘Die Geheimnisse der Arbeit’ (Chapter 5, Book 4), Heinrich has finished painting flagpoles for the celebration of the arrival of the crown prince’s bride, he is caught up in the euphoria of the celebrations at the royal bride’s procession of entry into the city until he is disturbed by his ‘republikanische Eifersucht gegen die Macht eines monarchischen Lebens’ (p.684) and prompted by the voice of his political conscience (‘die Stimme des politischen Gewissens’ p.684), he imagines himself in a position analogous to the Swiss mercenaries who have fought for monarchical powers.

To sum up the patterns emerging from a consideration of the politics of Der Grüne Heinrich, one observes not only an explicit theoretical backing of republican, democratic and liberal ideals, on the grounds that they are progressive, and a rejection of conservative attitudes, on the grounds that they are not ideals at all, but pure obstructiveness in the face of progress, but also a tendency for actual experience of the political forms in practice not to result in the reactions on the part of Heinrich which his theoretical
positions would demand. His apparent disappointment at republican forms in practice includes a suggestion of the vulnerability of their ideals to subversion by economic motives, the economic theme being one I shall deal with at more length. His almost lyrical description of the monarchical festivities, his initial responsiveness to them, followed by a feeling of guilt, suggest a sense of something having been lost in the move from the older to the newer political forms. The loss indicated is of a certain sense of communal life, relatively free from obvious dominance by economic considerations. Heinrich is sensitive to the aesthetic qualities of older forms of life, and appreciative of the communal values they express, but his awareness of the increasing scarcity of these qualities in modern life does not lead him to question his theoretical positions. This is because his habit of separating theory and practice leads him to reason abstractly in a strictly deductive manner, and to withhold his more direct, spontaneous reactions to what he sees from rational treatment. He finds himself with a rather impractical and rigid doctrine on the one hand, and a collection of uncoordinated sentimental reactions and nostalgias on the other. His reasoning abilities and his sensitivity are not allowed to interact, and enrich each other, both being impoverished as a result. His reasoning becomes schematic and his feeling unfocused, and both are prone to distortion, as emerges repeatedly during the novel. This disabling division lies behind his failure as a political actor, and an artist as well.
Religion

Religion is another topic which is discussed with considerable frequency in Der Grüne Heinrich. Heinrich from childhood shows a disinclination towards institutionalized forms of religion, and tends instead towards a personalized, romantic theism when young, developing towards a fairly materialist agnosticism later in the novel.¹⁵

Heinrich's non-conformism in religious matters begins early, as a child, when he refuses to say grace before meals in front of his mother. This is not because he will not pray altogether, and he has already been shown praying privately with assiduity, but because he cannot pray aloud, and the saying of grace appears to him to be a 'Zeremonle' (p.43). This episode is followed immediately by the relation of the story of a small girl, Meretlein, who refused to pray or attend services, was sent to board with the pastor in Heinrich's home village, and wastes away and dies as a result of her harsh treatment, but not before showing a remarkable facility for taming wild animals. Both of these episodes indicate a criticism of established, or public religion as oppressive, and suggest the idea that all religious ceremonial is hypocritical. In fact, in the entire chapter (Chapter 5, Book 1) dedicated to the pastor's own account of his dealings with the girl, the pastor is portrayed as being pompous and pretentious, using, as much as he can, Latinate instead of Germanic vocabulary. On the other hand, direct subjective spirituality is being put forward as the only legitimate kind.

Heinrich's struggle with established religion continues as he is forced to attend religious instruction with a view to being confirmed into the official state church of his town. He describes how he avoids much of the instruction, but is still forced to appear in church once or twice a year, to be examined publicly on catechism, something he finds insupportable. As the date for confirmation moves closer, he has to attend instruction more regularly, and describes the way that the forty candidates group themselves according to social class, with the 'Vornehmsten' being most cooperative, since they have been brought up to cultivate an 'äußerer Frieden'(p.303) with the church, whereas the poorer candidates are more restless. This seems to indicate an alliance between the established church and the patrician classes of society, a cooperation of conservative forces.

When the time for confirmation itself arrives, Heinrich chooses to eschew the traditional long jacket, top hat and short hair, worn by all those who can afford to equip themselves this way, and chooses to wear a green jacket, beret and long hair, again showing an aversion to traditional ceremonial, and claiming to be indifferent to whether his costume affects how he is classified socially, although, when, on the succeeding Christmas morning, he must attend church again, for the last time, to receive communion, he does make a point of occupying the bench reserved for his family. This rebellious attitude may seem typical of adolescent behaviour, but the novel highlights how Heinrich distinguishes himself from his contemporaries in the lengths to which he takes his non-conformity and rejection of tradition.

Heinrich reveals further details of his attitudes and beliefs in a number of places early in the novel. In his conversations with the 'philosopher', for example, the young man who is the village school
teacher, they agree a common position on Christian belief, presumably one of rejection, since the school teacher is an atheist. As Heinrich reports, 'Über den christlichen Glauben waren wir bald einig und machten in die Wette unsern Krieg gegen Pfaffen und Autoritätsleute jeder Art'. (p.287) Nevertheless, he refuses to give up his belief in God and immortality. He notes, however that it has not occurred to him to examine the issue seriously. This reservation is a hint that he is later going to lose these beliefs, given the contempt for convictions not based on rational argument which he shows in his comments on political conservatism. He then says that any philosophy is based on a 'Mystik', and that he does not intend to allow anyone to talk him out of his own inborn conviction ('Ich sagte, am Ende wäre die Hauptformel einer jeden Philosophie, und sei diese noch so logisch, eine ebenso große und greuliche Mystik, wie die Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit, und ich wollte von gar nichts wissen, als von meiner persönlichen angeboren Überzeugung, ohne mir von irgend einem Sterblichen etwas dazwischen reden zu lassen.' p. 287) This is an interesting position. It confirms his rejection of human authority in matters of religion, and coincides with his attitude to traditional forms of authority more generally. On the other hand, it shows his not having a rational foundation for his belief in God and the afterlife, which might be seen as justifying his abandonment of this belief later in the novel. However, at the same time it raises a question as to the status of those of his beliefs which he would like to present as being rationally motivated. His claims that his political beliefs are rationally superior to those of his opponents may be undermined if, in the end, his beliefs also are a matter of conviction and rest on a 'Mystik', as, he says, any other philosophy does.
Heinrich continues his protests against Christianity as such in conversations with Anna’s father. However, he recounts that he loves ‘die Person Christi’ (p. 300), but only as a legendary figure. He appears to be prepared to accept some of the more general morality often expressed in Christianity, but to reject all doctrinal content, as suggested, also, for example, where he expresses appreciation for the ‘vertrauliche Vorbereitung’ (p. 315) which the pastor conducts for the candidates on the evening before the confirmation, when the pastor gives a kind of rites of passage speech, telling them that a new life is beginning for them, and encourages them ‘nie das Vertrauen zum Besseren in uns selbst zu verlieren.’ (p. 316) Heinrich then however rejects the same pastor’s sermon in church the next morning, about which he remarks: ‘er [the pastor] ... holte seine Beredsamkeit aus der Rüstkammer der bestehenden Kirche’. (p. 316)

Heinrich’s position during the religious instruction classes before the confirmation is one of a rejection of the specific doctrines, as well as an attitude of superiority in the face of what he sees as the childish enterprise of taking fables seriously, ‘als ob von alten Leuten ein Kinderspiel mit Blumen getrieben würde, bei welchem jeder Fehler und jedes Lächeln Todesstrafe nach sich zieht.’ (p. 305) This sense that Heinrich is like a mature, enlightened person watching children at play in a phantasy world in which they believe again suggests the idea that Heinrich’s position reflects a superior level of rationality and progress compared with the position of those he criticizes, who again might be seen as conservative in comparison with him.

The idea of progress is also connected with Heinrich’s views on the idea of ‘Protestantism’. Heinrich early on describes himself as a ‘born Protestant’ (p. 89) when explaining why, despite no lack of
religious sensibility, he is uncomfortable in churches. However, this cannot be taken literally, since it is initiation into a Protestant church that he is complaining of in this instance, not to mention the fact that he is soon describing himself as not being a Christian at all. It is rather the spirit of protest against spiritual authority that is being referred to, and his attitude is clarified in the section of the first edition where he proposes his view of the dialectic of history. Here he explains that ‘die Reformation ihrer Zeit und Möglichkeit nach eine Halbheit war’. (p.693) This attitude to the Reformation shows how Heinrich’s religious position is a progressive position in a way analogous to his political position. He sees a continuous progress towards spiritual emancipation, in which the Reformation is an important stage, and to that extent he has Protestant sympathies. However, he believes that the process should be taken further, and his early belief in God and the afterlife but rejection of specifically Christian doctrine represent a step beyond the Reformation. His later move to a more Feuerbachian position is then yet another step along the same path. To the extent that this is a path of rationalism, rationalism takes the form of a rejection of inherited doctrines, which are regarded as superstitious. However, the rational basis for whatever subjective religious attitude the rationalizing reformer does allow himself is not substantiated.

Given Heinrich’s view of progress in religious matters it is not surprising to find a particularly negative attitude towards the Catholic Church expressed. Heinrich indeed singles out the Jesuits as his paradigm case of the purely reactionary force, arising, in fact, in reaction to that ‘Halbheit’ of the Reformation already mentioned. On another occasion it is the Capuchins who are blamed for
cultivating superstition among Protestant as well as Catholic peasants (p.69).

In the first two chapters of the first edition, where Heinrich describes his home town, and then his departure and journey through Switzerland towards Germany, the narrator makes several references to established religion, alongside those to politics, and a support for the secularization of society emerges from these. For example, in the description of the home town, a monastery is approvingly described as having been turned into a ‘Volkslehrerschule’(p.13), in which ‘blühende Jünglinge’(p.13) are everywhere in evidence, and, continuing the educational theme, on Heinrich’s journey through Switzerland, in the village which he praises for its enlightened, democratic credentials, the narrator notes that the school building is the most beautiful in the village, a circumstance which, he says, is often the case in that region, whereas the church is ugly (pp.29-31). Coming out of the church is a procession of young girls, confirmation candidates, led by a clergyman, who are portrayed as utterly miserable (‘Schwarz gekleidet, mit gebeugten Häuptern, die tränenden Augen in weiße Taschentücher gedrückt...’p.31), and appear to Heinrich ‘wie ein Flug gefangener Nachtigallen aus dem Morgenlande, welche ein betrunkener Vogelhändler zum Verkauf umherführt.’(p.31) So, apparently, the effects of secular and religious education are in absolute contrast. The church itself is described as having been built thoughtlessly and without enthusiasm, as being used with ‘Schwendian’(p.31), and is compared to a useless piece of furniture which the owner, ‘eigensinnig’(p.31), refuses to discard, which again suggests the theme of the obstructive irrationality of the conservative,
in this case established religious, attitude, in contrast to the enlightened character of the rest of the town.

Heinrich encounters Catholicism again later in the novel, in the shape of Agnes, particularly in the scene where he is taking her to Rosalie's country house. for the continuation of the carnival party, and Agnes, before arriving, stops at a Marian shrine, and recites some prayers. Heinrich views what he sees as a throwback to pagan practice, imagining a temple to Venus two thousand years ago, and continues, 'Ich dachte mich doch unendlich erhaben über die Szene, so artig sie war, und dankte meinem Schöpfer für das stolze und freie Gefühl, das mich beseelte.' (p.564) Heinrich, though still a believer himself at this stage, clearly sees Catholic practice as primitive and unenlightened, compared with his own, advanced, position, despite a hint of nostalgia expressed in his feeling that the scene is 'artig'. However, Heinrich's own position, his 'stolze und freie Gefühl', is expressed in terms of subjective impulse rather than rationalizing.

The party in the country house is followed by Heinrich's duel with Lys, whom he has accused of not believing in anything, and after this the emphasis is on doubt rather than belief. He attends lectures by a materialist natural historian, by whom he is impressed, but finally abandons the convictions he has held hitherto in the count's castle, under the influence of Dorothea.

Dorothea, it emerges, has 'auf ursprüngliche Weise' (p770), from childhood, disbelieved in the immortality of the soul, and has influenced the count himself in the same direction, though in his case he has proceeded 'auf dem Wege des Denkens und der Bücher' (p.771). She however claims agnosticism as to the existence of God, although according to the count, logically, disbelief in
immortality and God should go together. Heinrich then falls away from belief, but rather than explain the reasons for his new position in the narrative, he implies instead that his love for Dorothea has played a significant part in his conversion ('die Fackel, mit der ich in meine alten Gedankenwälder hinein leuchte, brannte um so heißer, als sie an dem Feuer der Liebe angezündet war.' (p. 779) In fact, Heinrich relates that he becomes so argumentative in company on the subject that he becomes embarrassed at his immoderation, and feels that he is becoming 'ein angehender Ruhestörer' (p. 782).

The arrival of a fanatical atheist, Peter Gilgus, at the castle, and the ridicule with which he is regarded, indicate that atheism can be a kind of doctrine, and that it is more an unconstrained, open attitude to spiritual matters, such as that he sees in the count or Dorothea, that Heinrich, at least looking back, as a narrator, would like to aim for, even if the cheerful equanimity which they show is not something Heinrich appears to achieve at any stage.

This absence of apparent joy at his newly acquired 'Geistesfreiheit' (p. 795) coexists in the novel with a number of incidents or utterances indicating certain, at times involuntary, feelings of nostalgia and sympathy for the religious, and even the traditional, established religious ethos. For example, at his confirmation ceremony, when he is called upon to answer 'Yes' together with the other candidates to a question put by the minister, although he does not understand the question and only whispers 'Yes', he trembles for a moment, and there is within him 'eine dunkle Mischung von unwillkürlicher Hingabe an die allgemeine

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16 For the view that Heinrich’s materialism is the source of his sense of alienation, in contrast to the sense of a meaningful world in Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre, see Jürgen Jacobs, Wilhelm Meister und seine Brüder: Untersuchungen zum deutschen Bildungsroman, p. 187.
Rührung und von einem tiefen Schrecken, welcher mich über dem Gedanken ergriff, daß ich, so jung noch und unerfahren, doch einer uralten Meinung und einer gewaltigen Gemeinschaft, von der ich ein unbedeutendes Teilchen war, abgefallen gegenüberstand.'(p.316)

Here it is a nervousness at the idea of starting out on his own, and leaving behind that sense of community which has been available to him, that he expresses, as well as his tendency, which will be discussed in other contexts as well, to lose himself in mass movements.

A more wistful mood is expressed on the day of his last compulsory church attendance, when, before reflecting on his father's moderate Zwinglian Protestant views, he recounts how his father loved church feast days, and would both attend church and go on mountain walks, in a spirit of joy. Heinrich claims to have inherited his father's particular liking for feast days, and describes how beautiful he finds the sound of church-bells on Whitsun mornings, which come up to him from the valleys as he stands on a mountain. He has, he says, often wondered how bell-ringing could be preserved if the churches were abolished, but concludes 'daß der sehnsüchtige Reiz der Glockentöne gerade in dem jetzigen Zustande bestehe, wo sie fern aus der blauen Tiefe herüberklangen und mir sagten, daß dort das Volk in alten gläubigen Erinnerungen versammelt saß.'(p.318) He continues, 'In meiner Freiheit ehrte ich dann diese Erinnerungen, wie diejenigen der Kindheit, und eben dadurch, daß ich von ihnen geschieden war, wurden mir die Glocken, die so viele Jahrhunderte in dem alten schönen Lande klangen, wehmütig ergreifend.'(p.318) Heinrich here expresses awareness of a sense of community and tradition from which he is separated, and a painful regret at this separation, which he
nevertheless thinks is worth the freedom and sense of superiority over its childishness which he obtains.

The way that Reinhold, the Catholic silversmith, vine-grower and violinist from the Rhineland is presented is also of interest. When first introduced, he is described as 'überall wohlgelitten' (p.567). The description continues, 'Dergestalt logierte er in dem katholischen Wesen wie in einer alten Gewohnheit, die nicht zu ändern ist, dachte darüber niemals nach...' (p.567). So having portrayed Reinhold as an attractive and admirable personality, who is also a Catholic, Heinrich feels the need to explain how this conjunction is possible by explaining that his Catholicism is only a habit rather than a set of convictions, and as such need not prejudice his character, although it may be noted that apparently not having a rational basis for his position, Reinhold is actually typical of reactionaries of all kinds according to Heinrich's stated position on the subject.

However, Reinhold continues to be shown in the most favourable light, and in the scene where he proposes to Agnes, of whom he has been taking care after her abandonment by Lys, not only is a successful romantic episode portrayed, contrasting starkly with Heinrich's own experiences, but the Catholic details of the scene are emphasized. Reinhold offers a lyrical description of his life in the Rhineland, and his celebration of feast days of the Virgin, and Agnes, accepting his proposal, says that the Virgin has answered her prayers by providing her with a fiancé more suitable than the one which she had wanted. Even Agnes' mother, hitherto a figure of ridicule, is transfigured and becomes 'die gute Witwe'. (p.607)
Judging from his deeply appreciative description of the scene, Heinrich has clearly seen that something touching and joyful has
happened, but he feels uncomfortable and has to leave, saying to himself, 'Himmel, welch' katholische Wirtschaft!' (p.608), and laughing at the 'Heiligenanbeter'. (p.608) His attitude seems ambivalent, since, although he asks the reader to believe that he has been laughing at the whole proceeding, he rather gives the impression that he has failed to be part of what he appreciates was a genuine moment of joy, something which continues to elude him for the rest of the novel. It is interesting to note that in the first version, this episode is described in considerably less generous terms, and that Agnes even renounces her faith when accepting Reinhold's hand.

The two Catholic priests who appear in person in the novel are both introduced in the latter part, one being the heterodox deist curate, who is a regular guest of the count's household, and another being the orthodox parish priest, who makes a brief appearance at the count's New Year's Day party. Both these characters are portrayed sympathetically, the curate shown as somewhat ridiculous but friendly, while the parish priest contributes to the good spirits of the party by drawing a 'generöse Linie des allenfalls zu Duldenden um seine behagliche Person...' (p.799) These figures are at least less sinister than Heinrich's theoretical views on established religion and especially Catholicism, as expressed earlier, might lead one to expect.

As a culmination to the softening of Heinrich's approach to manifestations of the old in the religious sphere towards the end of the novel, and especially in the second version, he expresses the sentiment, at the end of the penultimate chapter, that his stay at the count's castle has cost him not only his mother, but also his belief that he will see her again, and his belief in God, 'alles Dinge
indessen, deren Wert nicht aus der Welt fällt und immer wieder zum Vorschein kommt.’ (p.848) This somewhat enigmatic statement does not necessarily mean that Heinrich has reneged on his conversion to agnosticism, but at least suggests that he is beginning to doubt whether religion is a field where unidirectional progress towards the secular brings indubitable benefits, and there is a hint that the old may not simply be destined to disappear in the long run.17 Here once again Heinrich’s systematic theorizing and his experience of life fail to tally.

**Class**

A concern with social class appears from time to time in the novel, as has already been seen in the section on the catechism classes. It is in fact his early educational experiences that make Heinrich aware of social divisions. When he is twelve years old he leaves the ‘Armenschule’ which he has attended hitherto, and is sent to the recently founded public school, where he finds himself with the children of wealthier citizens. He recounts how having been ‘der bestgekleidete und vornehmste meiner Mitschüler’ in his old school, he is now ‘einer der unansehnlichsten und bescheidensten’. (p.119) He describes how he finds the fixed conventions of conduct of his new fellow pupils difficult to adapt to, and how he sometimes still seeks the company of the poorer children whose society he now recognizes is ‘mild und gutmütig’ (p.120), despite the ‘äußerlich grinsende Derbheiten in ihren Gebärden’(p.86), which he had

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17 For a view which sees Keller’s polemic during the novel as more directed against conventional, unconsidered, forms in the churches than against their message, see Rosemarie Adamczyk, *Die realitätsbezogene Konstruktion des Entwicklungsromans bei Gottfried Keller*, pp.41-42.
earlier noticed at least in some. It is in fact his efforts to keep up with his new companions which lead him into some of his early difficulties with money. So Heinrich, early on, though showing a clear class-awareness, seems unclear how to classify himself, except that he is somewhere in between a poorer and a richer group, and has found no group to which he clearly belongs. This social unsituatedness is in one respect simply the consequence of the fact that in his semi-orphaned condition he does not have the financial resources to live fully the role which his father's position would assign him. However, the undetermined outsider status which this produces suits his non-conformist religious position. It also coordinates well with Heinrich's political stance, in that he can claim a democratic lack of class consciousness, and sense of equality.

He does in fact make this claim, for example, at the count's castle, when he first discovers that it belongs to a count, and talks of his 'angeborenen bürgerlichen Gleichheitssinn'. (p.747) Expressed this way it is to some extent a paradox, since he is simultaneously claiming a class status as 'bürgerlich', and, in the event, it is Heinrich who is uneasy about meeting the count on social grounds, whereas the count shows no unease in dealing with him.

In the first version Heinrich first meets the count on his outward journey, determining to show no 'ungebührlichen Respekt' (p.41) on his first encounter with aristocracy, and is shocked by the somewhat arrogant behaviour of the count's sister, but establishes friendly relations with the count and his daughter. His conversation with the count is however cut short because the count goes into first class on the train, and regrets the separation too late to remedy it, an implicit critique, on the narrator's part, of an aristocratic lack of 'Gleichheitssinn'.

133
Heinrich's own 'Gleichheitssinn', however, is not always apparent, as, for example, when he meets the working-class Hulda and her companions the evening of the royal festivity, and decides not to give away his 'etwas höheren Rang'(p.686), although he is very conscious of it throughout the evening, and reacts with an outsider's curiosity to the ways 'dieses einfachen Völkchens'(p.690), and, in fact, members of the group had previously thought of him as 'hochmütig'(p.688). Whereas Heinrich, despite holding theoretical attitudes favourable to the 'Volk', is unable to participate in its social life in an unselfconscious way, he, on the other hand, paradoxically, flourishes at the count's castle, in the face of a theoretical anti-aristocratic position. In the first version he even explicitly comes to value aspects of aristocratic social conduct, specifically the attitude of well-mannered tolerance, and is ashamed 'seines früheren Übermutes'.(p.840)

The count himself shares Heinrich's reluctance to act on the basis of his professed principles. His theoretical positions, on which he expatiates during the meal in the 'Rittersaal', are progressive and liberal, like Heinrich's. On the occasion of this meal, when Heinrich shows that he is sensitive to the aesthetic appeal of the various ancestral relics of the count's family ('Ich konnte mich nicht enthalten, eifrig umher zu gehen und die Augen an all' den schönen Dingen zu welden'p.766), the count, in contrast, is keen to show comparative indifference, referring to them dismissively as the 'Familienkram'(p.766), although he has conserved everything carefully. He then rejects traditional ideas of hereditary aristocracy, expressing feelings of being oppressed by the weight of history, and wishing he could have lived 'in einem freien Rechtsstaate'(p.766) in which he might have belonged to a kind of meritocratic aristocracy.
He even claims that if he had had a son, he would have moved with him to the New World, ‘um in der verjüngenden Volksflut unterzutauchen’ (p.767). All this is expressed in a slightly stronger fashion in the first version, where no mention is made of an ‘Aristokratie ... im Sinne erhöhter freiwilliger Leistung’ (p.766), but rather of places ‘wo kein Herkomen gilt, und jeder von vorn anfangen muß’ (p.826), and he describes himself as ‘eigentlich schon ganz überflüssig’ (p.826), and the lineage as being tired and needing obscurity for regeneration. However, although he excuses himself for having done none of this on the basis that he is already the last of the line, these sentiments all seem rather incongruous in one who not only seems to be running his estate as any traditional landed noble would, but even confesses to feeling ‘im übrigen ... mit dem Leben nicht unzufrieden’. (p.767) So the count’s practical satisfaction with his traditional life undermines any inclination he may have to enact those radical courses of action which he expresses a belief in, and he embodies in his own way the characteristic modern dissociation of theory and practice, which Heinrich so often exemplifies.

Dorothea reveals herself to Heinrich as a foundling at the same dinner, and Heinrich is made to feel embarrassed and ashamed of the pride in his bourgeois parentage which he has written of in his account of his youth, and Dorothea has read. He is shown here again to have been less egalitarian than he professes to be.

The count’s heirlessness, and his satisfaction in the imminent extinction of his line, on grounds of egalitarian principle and a belief in progress, might be taken as a sign that the old ways, worthy as they may be in some ways, are inevitably destined to give way.
This interpretation is, however, belied by the surprise news, in a letter from the count to Heinrich, when Heinrich is already back in Switzerland, that Dorothea, the count's step-daughter, has turned out to be his niece, and therefore a countess, and, what is more, is going to marry a baron with the same name from a distant branch of the family, who will become a count and continue the line. This development, which Keller provides only for the second version, suggests that he may not see the older forms as doomed to immediate, or even imminent supersession by the newer, across the board.

Overall, Heinrich's attitudes to social class show a progressivism and egalitarianism in theory, which is accompanied by feelings which conflict with these, such as a consciousness of and pride in his own social status, together with, later in the novel, a certain admiration for and even affinity with the life he finds in aristocratic circles, feelings which he never reconciles with the theoretical principles he shows no explicit sign of giving up.

Education

Although in one sense the whole of Der Grüne Heinrich is about education, that is, the development, not in all ways successful, of the personality and abilities of Heinrich, there is relatively little detailed discussion of education in its own right, although educational concerns do from time to time enter into discussions of art, and other matters. Heinrich professes the Enlightenment belief that education is a force for progress, at least early in the novel, as has already been seen, for example, in Heinrich's description of his father's activities, and, in the first version, his attitude of approval
to villages in which the school-house is the most attractive building. In the case of education it is not so much a nostalgia for old methods of education, but another, arguably new, attitude which threatens to undermine his support for organized education, and this is his Romantic belief that one cannot be taught, but can only teach oneself. Heinrich gives a fairly detailed account of the methods and atmosphere of his first school, the 'Armenschule', which is run on liberal principles, specifically, according to the Pestalozzi-Lancaster method (p.84).[^18] He clearly approves, broadspeaking, of the way the school is organized, and even enjoys what to the observer might seem the regimented, and even militaristic, procedures, involving marching from one area of the room to another between half-hour sessions.[^19] Heinrich even has the chance to manipulate this order in a dictatorial manner when he is deputed to teach small groups, in which the order of seating reflects the merit of the pupils, and he moves the pupils around tyrannically, he admits, according to his whims.

The only two things he does not approve of in this school are the teaching of catechism, for the kinds of reasons already discussed, and the somewhat exaggeratedly punitive regime, in which 'ausgesuchte peinliche und infamierende Strafen' (p.87) are inflicted on the young children, and he recounts various humiliating punishments, including the case of girl who is made to sit for a whole day on a cupboard with a board hung around her neck, and who drowned herself a couple of years later. Heinrich suggests that

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[^19]: For, in contrast, a positive evaluation of the teaching methods portrayed, see Richard R. Ruppel, *Gottfried Keller: Poet, Pedagogue and Humanist*, p.15.
the old ways are partly to blame for this punitiveness ('Es lag dies teils noch im Geiste der alten Zeit, an deren Grenze wir standen...')p.87), and it does not occur to him that the cruel and unusual punishments he objects to may be more a result of the strict, Enlightenment regime of the school, and that the kind of uncomplicated corporal punishment which he approves of ('So lange das goldene Zeitalter nicht gekommen, müssen kleine Buben geprügelt werden...')p.88) might be more characteristic of older ways.

Heinrich later describes his second school in less than glowing terms, recounting how the transitions from one stage of learning to another were not sufficiently transparent, and he blames the lack of coordination on the transitional status of the school, partly that there are amateurish old-style and professional new-style teachers teaching at the same time in different ways, partly that new-style, professional teachers have 'ganz verschiedene Manieren und Methoden ... , die ihrerseits auch noch nicht erprobt waren'(p.148). This state of confusion leaves the pupils, and the teachers, open to the possibility of 'wunderliche Katastrophen und Abenteuer'(p.148). So, apparently, the educational methods are failing for not being organized enough, although, presumably, the trying out of new approaches will also lead to the uncertainty of results which Heinrich objects to, and, if a stable and coordinated approach is soon achieved, this will preclude the opportunities for further progress.

In the corresponding chapter in the first version Heinrich goes into further detail about his experiences in various subjects, and proposes that some subjects should not be started until the
objective of the study can be understood, since some students cannot learn that of which they cannot learn the purpose (p.195).

The idea that learning cannot take place until the individual is ready for it is in tune with the attitude to learning shown later in the novel, where Heinrich becomes increasingly sceptical about the possibility of teaching as such, on the basis that each individual can only learn for himself. Heinrich has in fact been deprived of the educational framework which would have been provided by the later stages of schooling, due to his expulsion, and his father's absence also contributes to his being left to his own devices. He nevertheless finds for himself some useful artistic methods, in the first edition, such as making cloud studies, or practising large and small scale painting simultaneously, claiming this kind of knowledge develops by itself, ‘wo es nicht durch einseitige Schule gehindert wird.’(p.321)

Prompted by his not wholly successful instruction at the hands of Römer, his privately hired art teacher, before his departure for Germany, Heinrich gives an account of the qualities he deems necessary for the successful teacher, specifying ‘unverwischte lebendige Jugendlichkeit, welche allein die Jugend kennt und durchdringt, und die sichere Überlegenheit der Person in allen Fällen.’(p.256) Both of these qualities should be present in each teacher, and there must be at the very least one. Given the demanding nature of these requirements, it is open to doubt whether an entire school could be consistently staffed by such people, so these notions may be seen as a move towards a more sceptical attitude towards organized education.

In the first version Heinrich, attending a natural history lecture in the university of the German city, praises the lecturer for
his style of lecturing, which seems ‘mehr eine Aufforderung zu eigener Belehrung, als eine feststehende unveränderliche Lehre zu sein, bei jedem wieder anders wirkend und sein unmittelbares Selbsturteil erweckend.’ (p.668) So here it is to inspire others to learn rather than to teach which is the ideal.

Heinrich goes further than this later on, where he has asked for advice from an expert painter on a sketch he has made, and the expert’s advice has been predicated on skills which the expert has, but which Heinrich does not, and so has been detrimental to Heinrich’s finished painting. Heinrich concludes that this is evidence that ‘der Fink nichts von der Drossel lernt’ (p.646), suggesting that he may have lost faith in the idea of direct instruction altogether by this stage.

In the latter part of the novel, to the extent that Heinrich’s education does continue, it could be said to take place in a rather informal, even old-fashioned way. Heinrich himself says that in his unofficial part-time studying at the university he is ‘gleich einem jungen Herrensohn, der zu seiner allgemeinen Ausbildung auf der hohen Schule weilt, sonst es aber gerade nicht nötig hat.’ (p.636) On the same note, it is perhaps ironic that it is under old-fashioned aristocratic patronage, that of the count, that Heinrich achieves any success he can be said to achieve as a painter.

If one also takes into account his descriptions of figures represented in the artists’ carnival procession, which will be discussed as a whole later, particularly that of Georg Weber (p.537), who can neither read nor write, but is an exceptional craftsman, one may derive a heightened impression of Heinrich’s growing doubts about the value of formal education. Indeed, in the section on Georg Weber in the first version, the narrator further notes, in the same
sentence that he mentions Weber’s illiteracy, that the combination of qualities which he has is only possible for one who partakes in ‘die mit frommer Kindesunschuld gepaarte Kraft des Volkes’ (p.587), as if his skills might be lost to him if he were to lose his ‘Kindesunschuld’ through education. So not only is Heinrich’s theoretical support for systematic education on the Enlightenment model undermined by doubts of an anti-authoritarian, Romantic kind, but his practice late in the novel seems somewhat amateurish and traditional, though old-fashioned amateurishness has been one of the targets of his criticism earlier in the novel. Here, once again, the split between theory and praxis in Heinrich emerges.

Economics

Questions of the role of economics in society are pervasive in the novel. Since economics is an important factor in a number of issues to be discussed, as well as some of those already discussed, I shall here focus on a couple of passages in which economics is very much the dominant concern. Heinrich’s limited financial means and failure to earn are a constant motif, as is the contrast between a commercial Switzerland and a Germany in which factors other than commerce still play a motivating role. Heinrich’s period is one of industrialization and capitalism, and his attitude is ambivalent between an admiration of what he sees as material progress, and unease at the apparently increasing gap between much economic activity and the provision for basic human needs. In addition he is

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20 See Lukács, Deutsche Realisten des 19. Jahrhunderts, who sees capitalism as incompatible with the rounded development of the individual (pp.172-173), and sees the situation in Southern Germany as showing some earlier features allowing a natural communal coherence which in later stages of development would no longer subsist (p.213).
concerned at a tendency of economic concerns to oust all others in a
commercial society, a concern which I have mentioned during the
discussion of politics, and shall discuss further in connection with
art.\textsuperscript{21}

Heinrich's major passage of reflection on economic issues
occurs in the chapter 'Lebensarten' (Chapter 3, Volume 4), in which
the case of 'Revalenta arabica', a kind of bean-meal flour which is
sold on the basis of its claimed, and, according to Heinrich, entirely
bogus medical benefits\textsuperscript{22} Heinrich's argument is that whereas a
trick, or a fraud, is usually a case of someone attempting to make
money without work, the 'Revalenta arabica' business involves just
as much honest industry as any other business, and provides a
living for innumerable people doing irreproachable work, even if
the idea on which it all is based is empty, although, Heinrich claims,
not positively harmful.\textsuperscript{23} Heinrich notes that this combination of
real work and empty, and, sometimes, actually harmful, foundations
is a common phenomenon. Nevertheless, he seems unable to decide
whether to admire or deplore the 'Revalenta arabica' business. He
seems torn between his tendency to approve of any solid,
workmanlike application, and a disapproval of dishonesty and
abstraction. He moves on to discuss the case of Schiller, whose work
was inwardly meaningful, and has posthumously become the core of
a major business of book production and distribution. Heinrich
treats this as a case of work which combines inner worth with outer

\textsuperscript{21} For discussion of how Keller sees economic motivations overriding his own
social ideals, see Christian Stotz, \textit{Das Motiv des Geldes in der Prosa Gottfried
\textsuperscript{22} For an account of the historical background to the 'Revalenta arabica'
section of the novel, see Wolfgang Rohe, \textit{Roman aus Diskursen: Gottfried Keller
'Der grüne Heinrich' (Erste Fassung; 1854/55)}, pp.198-200.
\textsuperscript{23} For the idea of a fiction as productive in the economy, see Martin Swales,
'Reflectivity and Realism: On Keller's \textit{Der Grüne Heinrich}'.

142
economic usefulness, even though Schiller himself, as Heinrich admits, was unable to profit personally to any significant extent. Heinrich seems to be saying that, quite apart from its worth of an ideal kind, Schiller's work was an achievement simply in terms of the amount of economic activity it stimulated, and thus that economic activity is worthwhile for its own sake, and if it happens to be producing something of value, such as editions of Schiller's works, that is just a bonus. Heinrich sees an ever-expanding Schiller business running in parallel with other progressive tendencies such as more pervasive education, and the end of privilege, so that he imagines every household eventually containing the works of Schiller, a vision of progress towards utopia which he has expressed in other contexts, for example, in his discussion of the dialectic of historical progress, though, notably, the question of how those who depend on the Schiller business will support themselves when this exalted target has been reached is left open. 'Das war ein einheitliches organisches Dasein; Leben und Denken, Arbeit und Geist dieselbe Bewegung' (p.649), Heinrich concludes, although what the reader may have noticed is the separation and contrast between Schiller's intellectual and non-commercial activity on the one hand, and, on the other, the purely commercial activity of the Schiller business, which, to those involved in the running of it, is essentially the same as the 'Revalenta arabica' business.

Heinrich then describes writers who have had to engage in work unconnected with their intellectual activities in order to support themselves, such as Spinoza grinding lenses and Rousseau copying musical scores. He indicates that although this kind of life is 'inorganic' (p.649), it nevertheless works for Spinoza, who finds peace and security for his thinking, but not for Rousseau, who is not
seeking peace. This paragraph is more explicit in the first version, in which it is explained, ‘Die Natur selbst weist nicht auf ein solches Doppelleben’ (p.708), so that, whereas the exceptional self-conscious individual may pursue such a course to demonstrate his power, ‘diese Entsagung, diese Spaltung des Wesens eines Menschen’ (p.708) would only cause distress if generally practised.

Heinrich is thus facing a potential collision between his conviction that an ever-increasing economic activity is progressive and laudable, and his belief that each person should exhibit an organic unity in respect of his intellectual, spiritual and other aspects, an aspiration which may become less, rather than more, achievable in an increasingly commercialized society, as Heinrich discovers himself when he fails to make a living as an artist.

The ‘Revalenta arabica’ discourse in the first version is preceded by a lamentation about the fact that those who work in contemporary culture are cut off from natural means of self-maintenance, even often obtaining the basic necessities from people who in their turn are equally cut off from their sources, with the result that ‘der ganze Verkehr ein Gefecht in der Luft, eine ungeheure Abstraktion ist, hoch über dem festen Boden der Mutter Natur.’ (p.704) In these conditions, ‘wenn die einen die Mittel ihres Daseins von den anderen empfangen, geschieht dieses so unberechenbar, launenhaft und zufällig, daß jeder, dem es gelungen ist, dies nicht als den Lohn seines Strebens, sein Verdienst betrachten darf, sondern es als einen blinden Glücksfall, als einen Lotteriegewinnst preisen muß.’ (p.704) So, the narrator continues, whereas in the world of work in natural conditions everything has its purpose and value, ‘In jener höheren abstrakten Welt aber ist einstweilen alles auf den Kopf gestellt und die Begriffe von der
Doubts are being expressed here, not only about the ultimate value of at least some of what is produced in a commercial and industrial economy, but also about the justice of the way the proceeds are distributed, suggesting that the connection between the work and the benefit is less firm than it would be in an agricultural community. Heinrich may fail as an artist through lack of talent, but, the narrator seems to be indicating, in a modern society, he may simply fall foul of the commercial whims of the time.

Heinrich's own experience of work with direct commercial relevance comes in the chapter 'Die Geheimnisse der Arbeit' (Chapter 5, Volume 4), in which Joseph Schmalhöfer, the shopkeeper to whom Heinrich has sold his collection of sketches, employs him to paint flag-poles for a celebration of the arrival in the town of the bride of the crown prince. This experience of Heinrich's has important positive and negative aspects. On the one hand Heinrich quickly acquires the practical competence necessary to perform the task, and in the two weeks before the celebration earns a sum sufficient to support him for some time afterwards. He not only finds a certain satisfaction in the work, which he pursues diligently, but also gains a new confidence, so that, when the shopkeeper, who has agreed to pay him per piece, tries to lower the rate of pay, on the basis that Heinrich is working far faster than expected and is earning too much, Heinrich is able to stand firm and insist on the original agreement. On the other hand, what Heinrich is engaged in here is a form of mass-production rather than a trade, involving, as Heinrich points out, little thought or pride in the work ('Es war die unterste Ordnung von Arbeit, wo dieselbe ohne Nachdenken und Berufsehre ... vor sich geht.'p.682)
sewing the flags, for example, are instructed by the shopkeeper not to sew too well, as the flags do not need to last for ever.

Schmalhöfer's enterprise here is representative of the newer approach to production, in contrast to the older arrangement of craftsmen and guilds which Heinrich shows his admiration for during his description of the artists' carnival. Heinrich is pointing out the emphasis on quantity rather than quality in the newer economy, as well as the comparative lack of personal involvement of the workers in the work.

Moreover, Heinrich's mechanical activity at Schmalhöfer's shop is work of just such a kind as to produce a division in his self, a division such as that which, he has suggested in first version, discussing the work habits of Spinoza and Rousseau, is liable to produce misery. Heinrich's intellectual and imaginative side has been excluded from his practical activity, and he confirms that he is aware of this division when he attributes the outbreak of somewhat feverish dreaming which he suffers immediately afterwards to the only partial employment of his faculties during the work ('Seit ich nämlich die Phantasie und ihr angewöhntes Gestaltungsvermögen nicht mehr am Tage beschäftigte, regten sich ihre Werkleute während des Schlafes mit selbständigem Gebaren und schufen mit anscheinender Vernunft und Folgerichtigkeit ein Traumgetümmel in den glühendsten Farben und bunter Formen.'p.702). Not only, this suggests, is his imagination making up for its neglect during his work by coming to life in an essentially useless way at night, but it has also broken free from any conscious control and is running according to its own principles, seemingly rational, but possibly not at all. The tendency of aspects of the personality, when divided, to take on a life of their own, and develop according to their own
principles, which may not be in sympathy with the principles and interests of the whole self, is an important part of the novel's assessment of the pathology of the modern subjectivity, of which Heinrich is presented as an exemplary instance.

Heinrich confirms his view of the unsuitability of his work at Schmalhöfer's to his needs when, after waking up from a bout of dreaming he comments, 'Als ich der Sache nachdachte, empfand ich die Gefahr, die darin liegt, sich gegen Natur und Gewohnheit mit dem völlig Geistlosen beschäftigen und nähren zu wollen...' (p.718)

So, although his practical work has supplied Heinrich with some of that physical activity, purposefulness and confidence in his usefulness, which he has been missing in his artistic and intellectual dalliances, he is unable to find a way to combine these things with a proper employment of his intellectual and imaginative faculties in such a way as to make a living in the modern economy, and seems condemned to an inorganic existence. It may be pointed out that Heinrich's eventual employment as an administrative official, while not involving a split between his physical and imaginative sides, possibly does not involve either to any great extent, and, in addition, could be interpreted as a kind of retreat from participation in the modern economy, a sort of frustrated resignation like that of the official at the Wilhelm Tell festival, an inability to take part in that ever-expanding economic activity which he had been prepared to regard as progressive and praiseworthy.

Urban and Rural Life

A related social issue is the contrast between urban and rural life. Heinrich does not reflect on this issue directly, but it is clear
that there is a contrast from the way that Heinrich’s life in town and
dlife in the village are juxtaposed during the account of his early
years, as well as in the way that the values he associates with rural
life are conspicuously lacking in the two urban environments which
feature in the novel. It has been seen in the preceding discussion
that Heinrich values the ideas of integrated, organic ways of life,
and the sense of community, and that he fears that these are under
threat from modern developments, even though he is, on the other
hand, ideologically committed to the idea of progress in a liberal
sense.

Heinrich describes life in the village at times as a kind of idyll,
something largely absent from his descriptions of urban life, and he
at some points achieves a lyrical intensity which is unusual for the
book as a whole. This is especially striking in his description of his
first night in the village, at the end of Chapter 17, Book 1, and that
of his waking up the next morning, at the beginning of Chapter 18.
After a festive reception by the family he goes to bed late by the
open window of his room and describes the scene; 'das Wasser
rauschte dicht unter demselben [the window], jenseits klapperte
eine Mühle, ein majestätisches Gewitter zog durch das Tal, der
Regen klang wie Musik und der Wind in den Forsten der nahen
Berge wie Gesang; und die kühle erfrischende Luft atmend schlief
ich so zu sagen an der Brust der gewaltigen Natur ein.'(p.163) In the
morning he is woken by a crowd of his young relatives and various
animals, followed by his uncle and his uncle’s daughters, all
displaying joy and harmony with each other, just as Heinrich has
experienced a feeling of harmony with nature the night before. The
kind of harmony expressed in the two passages is one which
includes nature, the village, and the village’s inhabitants, animal
and human, in a coherent whole, so that nature and civilization are here seen as in cooperation rather than alienated from each other. In his qualificatory ‘so zu sagen’, however, Heinrich reveals his inability fully to endorse his feelings of the moment, suggesting either that there is something illusory about the scene, or that he personally does not have the simplicity of character to accept it at face value as others might.24

Another expression of the organic unity of the village life occurs at the beginning of Chapter 1, Book 3 when, on the day after the Wilhelm Tell festivities, Heinrich describes the villagers’ efforts to protect the village from the spring floods. When Heinrich gets up he discovers that all the men in the household are already out working on the dams and defences, even though their own house is in no danger. Heinrich goes out and observes that the men are working just as committedly as they had been celebrating the day before. Those who are not engaged on working on the water defences are busy with other tasks. This time Heinrich cannot take part in the organic life of the village which he is admiring, and finds himself superfluous (‘Ich konnte nicht viel helfen und war den Leuten eher im Wege’ p.385), so much so that he decides to return to the town immediately.

In contrast to the sense of community in the village, which Heinrich does not manage fully to participate in, but which is available to him, the descriptions of urban environments focus on Heinrich’s isolation and anonymity in these environments, which are presented as places where various individuals and separate groups subsist without any necessary connection to an inclusive community, and without, for the most part, a sense of common purpose, such as

24 See ibid.
that seen in the village when natural disasters threaten. Whereas in his village Heinrich is known to the population at large, and spends his time in the company of many friends and relations, his urban existence is comparatively anonymous, and his constant circle of community in each city is extremely limited, consisting largely of his two friends, Lys and Erikson, in the German city, and of his mother in the Swiss city. The fact that it is in a comparatively traditional, rural environment that Heinrich’s sense of the ideal is closest to being realized corresponds poorly with his conviction that it is material progress that will lead to utopia, and what emerges again is a tension between Heinrich’s longing for a life of community and natural harmony, and the processes of modernization to which he is ideologically committed. The Swiss and German cities in which Heinrich lives, while both contrasted with the countryside, are nevertheless portrayed differently. The Swiss city, while being the one in which Heinrich is to a greater extent known, since he has grown up there, and his father has had a reputation there, offers him little chance of an artistic career, or even artistic education, dedicated, as it is, largely to trade. In fact, the sensible business-like mentality, characteristic of his Swiss home town, and which he praises during much of the novel, is, from an artistic point of view, limiting, and his own awareness of this is alluded to in the first version (‘Das nüchterne praktische Treiben seiner eigenen Landsleute hielt er für Erkältung und Ausartung des Stammes’p.38). So Heinrich is forced to move to the German city because it harbours artistic activity to an extent that the Swiss city does not, and when he arrives in the German city his description of what he sees (pp.495-496), including its flamboyant architectural variety, and its mixture of variously costumed artists, students, knights, courtesans, old ladies, priests,burghers and
hunters, portrays a place of obvious potential for the artist, both in the presence of artists, and in the presence of varied material to engage the artist's attention. At the same time, however, it is a scene redolent of an older, rather than newer, age, and there are a number of elements in the scene, such as the numerous priests and elaborate church services, the knights and courtiers, which Heinrich would feel, at least from an ideological point of view, were relics of a past order, and ought to be eliminated in the interests of progress. So, it appears that Heinrich, in spite of himself, finds the German city more interesting, despite its lack of liberal credentials in comparison with his home town. This however is despite the fact that much of Heinrich's experience of the potential isolation and alienation of urban life takes place in the German city, none of the constituent communities of which Heinrich belongs to in a solid way.

It is also worth pointing out that Heinrich's Swiss rural idyll has its counterpart in the count's estate. Despite the highly hierarchical traditional organization on the count's estate, in contrast to the more level social profile of the Swiss village, the count's estate offers Heinrich an idyllic retreat from the urban world in the same way that the Swiss village does. In both cases these are idylls that Heinrich leaves of his own will, and with regret, rather than being rejected, as his circumstances, educational in Switzerland, financial in Germany, eject him from both cities.

In summary, it can be said that the more archaic and variegated social arrangements in Germany stimulate Heinrich artistically, whereas the rural environment promotes his feeling of communal inclusion and social confidence. A combination of the two, coming together in the form of old-fashioned patronage, produces an environment of stimulation and support in which
Heinrich is able to produce artistically with that degree of success of which he is capable, even if on a limited scale. Heinrich's home environment, and that which best implements his ideals of democracy and the striving for material progress, that is, his Swiss home town, is that environment which is also most deadening for him as an artist and as a social person, and his failure to fit his personality and temperament to his home environment is a major element of the tragedy of the novel.

Art

Art plays a central role in Der Grüne Heinrich in a number of ways. The novel is the story of Heinrich's attempt to become educated as an artist, and although his attempt is a failure in as much as he does not become a painter, it might be termed a success to the extent that he has, it is implied, become the writer of his own story. Thus the development of Heinrich's character as a whole is closely connected with his development as an artist, and, through this, with the problematics of art in the modern age generally. On the other hand, in presenting art in the modern era as being in crisis, and contrasting this sense of crisis with the idea of a lost sense of unity in the art of the past, Keller makes art reflect his social concerns, and treats the state of art as a kind of indicator of the harmony, or lack thereof, in society.

Art thus mediates conceptually between society and the individual, as its problematics are to be found operating in both spheres. The problematics of the old and the new, with the sense of alienation involved in the new, and the longings for a lost unity

^ See ibid.
associated with the old, are central to the discussions of art in Der Grüne Heinrich, as they are to the discussions of social issues, with, however, a difference of emphasis, in that the sense of progressive optimism, which is part of the social presentation, is harder to detect in the artistic area, whereas the sense of loss and disorientation is all the clearer. In discussing art in Der Grüne Heinrich I shall start with the topic of art theory, and then move on to art and community, and art and economics, both of these conjunctions being brought up in key passages of the novel.

Heinrich's views on the theory of art find expression in a number of descriptions of his own attempts to paint. Although Heinrich does not expatiate theoretically at any length during these passages, he does reveal a consistent concern with the idea of representing the objects he observes directly, without recourse to convention. For example, in recounting the open air sketching expeditions which he makes while still attached to Habersaat's workshop, he describes how he relies on technique, rather than closely observing the reality. Discussing how he approaches painting some waterfalls which he finds, he says, 'Das lebendige und zarte Spiel des Wassers im Fallen, Schäumen und eiligen Weiterfließen, seine Durchsichtigkeit und tausendfältige Wiederspiegelung ergötzte mich, aber ich bannte es in die plumpen Formeln meiner Virtuosität, daß Leben und Glanz verloren gingen, während meine Mittel nicht hinreichten, das bewegliche Wesen wiederzugeben.' (p.253) The first version, making the point slightly more strongly, talks of 'die plumpen und renommierten Formeln meiner lächerlichen Virtuosität' (p.310). The formulae he is therefore treating as inimical

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26 For a view which emphasizes that Heinrich is an artist in terms of identity, or activity, rather than a philosopher of art, see Diana Schilling, Kellers Prosa, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1998, pp.61 and 70.
to the reproduction of the living reality of the water on paper. Heinrich also shows a distaste for artistic convention in his description of the methods of the Habersaat workshop, where, for example, he describes, disapprovingly, the supply of old drawings available to him there ('Zeichnungen von einer gewissen Routine, ohne Naturwahrheit' p.248), and, he continues, 'Eine gewandte, obschon falsche, Technik war das eigentliche Wissen des Meisters...' (p.249) He describes himself, as a result of the way he is taught, as having begun to paint repetitively in a fixed jargon ('in einem fixen Jargon' p.249), a pejorative description of what he has learnt. He is equally dismissive of the way he is taught to mix colours, making clear in the first version that it is the fact that methods are traditional to the workshop, rather than directly related to nature, which is what he objects to.

Heinrich, in his enthusiasm to condemn conventions which deviate from nature, seems to go so far as to fail to acknowledge any role for convention at all in the artistic representation of reality. He appears to believe that nature can be transferred directly onto his canvas, as it stands, without any translation into a conventional artistic language, and that any attempt so to translate it kills the living reality. In his keenness to reject the old, in this case, artistic conventions, Heinrich adopts a simplistic and inadequate philosophy of art, which gives him no notion of how to link his subjective self with the objective reality of nature, through art, since the mediating languages of representation are condemned as deadening and hackneyed. The consequences of his rejection of the role of convention in anchoring his subjectivity to the objective are those developments which his art becomes increasingly prone to, a
fantastic tendency, and an abstracting tendency, both of which he deplores, but is unable to combat.

Heinrich's imagination, unfettered by any established way of relating to nature, leads him early on to indulge in fantastic creations. Encouraged by Habersaat to seek the picturesque in unusual and damaged natural phenomena, Heinrich finds the phenomena which he locates insufficiently striking and starts to invent increasingly deformed landscapes, and then suitable human figures to populate them, and he tries to pass these off as records of his observation. Heinrich as narrator clearly disapproves of this indulgence, and regards it as unhealthy, contrasting it with, for example, 'die edlen und gesunden Formen Claude Lorrains' (p. 255), and with the healthy attitude in the village, where his imaginative creations are laughed at, and he is temporarily cured through embarrassment: 'Ich stand beschämt da als ein Mensch, der voll närrischer und eitler Dinge ist, und die mitgebrachte künstliche Krankhaftigkeit verkroch sich vor der einfachen Gesundheit dieses Hauses und der ländlichen Luft.' (p. 257) With this emphasis on unhealthiness in contrast to health, Heinrich the narrator seems to be saying that the unhealthy forms represent an unhealthy state of mind, which is the detachment of the imagination from reality, and its solipsistic self-absorption. While the tendency which the young Heinrich has engaged with here, to admire the bizarre rather than the regular in nature, is presented as part of the modern artistic climate generally, as it is developing in Heinrich's time, Heinrich's own inclination to adopt the tendency and take it further is a reflection of the way his own personality is characterized by the same alienation of the self from the environment which the art reveals.
The fact that Heinrich has a personal disposition towards subjectivism in his art is recognized by others. His teacher, Römer, in condemning an inventive and unrealistic style of painting practised by a number of artists in Rome, notes Heinrich's clear tendency in this direction.

By the time Heinrich is installed in the German city, he is producing imaginative cartoons on mythological, medieval, or generally religious themes, including an early Germanic aurochs hunt, a medieval townscape, and a Swiss landscape containing Moses and Christ-child figures. As the narrator explains in the first version, the more symbolic he has become, the greyer and paler are his portrayals of nature, and 'am Ende wurden alle diese Dinge zu blösen schattenaften Symbolen, zu gespenstigen Schemen...' (p.556) The symbolic and schematic nature of what Heinrich is now producing is introducing an element of formal abstraction into his work. This formally abstract element is for the time being partnering his imaginative restlessness to produce a vaguely suggestive but subjective symbolism. However, the vagueness and elusiveness of whatever meanings Heinrich has intended in these sketches is such as not to correspond with the formal element in any fixed or precise way, allowing the formal element to detach itself from any imaginative meaning and take on a life of its own. This is in fact what happens in the following stage of Heinrich's artwork, his labyrinth work, in which the alienating tendencies operating in Heinrich's artistic production reach their culmination.

Heinrich's abstract pattern, which connects two fir trees which he had sketched earlier, is produced during the time after the artists' festival and the subsequent duel with Lys, during which
Heinrich is in a dark mood, and has been unable to see any point in completing his previous projects, which now appear 'shallow and unnecessary' ('schal und unnötig' p.608). For a period of weeks he divides his time between gazing through the window at the clouds, and elaborating his enormous abstract pattern, putting, as he describes it, a great deal of effort and determination into what he nevertheless sees as a meaningless work. It is in this style that he is working, 'mit eingeschlummerter Seele, aber großem Scharfsinn' (p.610), when he is caught by the visit of Reinhold and Agnes, and Erikson and Rosalle. His description of his state of mind here indicates that he is using only a part of his mental faculties, the abstract formal part, and that the image-making and signifying parts are dormant. He has been unable to harness his imagination to reality, and neither are present in what he is doing. The bursting in on the scene of Heinrich's isolation of the two blooming and joyful couples implies by contrast the unhealthiness of Heinrich's state, and his desire, on their entering, to hide his works, emphasizes that he himself, even at the time, appreciates the contrast.

On seeing Heinrich's work, Erikson makes a long and somewhat ironic speech on it, which nevertheless has a serious intention. The first part of the speech, an analysis, in the form of ironic praise, of what Heinrich has been doing in his latest work from an art-theoretical point of view, is as follows:

'Du hast, grüner Heinrich, mit diesem bedeutenden Werke eine neue Phase angetreten und begonnen, ein Problem zu lösen, welches von großtem Einflusse auf die deutsche Kunstentwicklung sein kann. Es war in der Tat längst nicht mehr auszuhalten, immer von der freien und für sich bestehenden Welt des Schönen, welche durch keine Realität,
durch keine Tendenz getrübt werden dürfe, sprechen und
raisonnieren zu hören, während man mit der größten
Inkonsequenz doch immer Menschen, Tiere, Himmel, Sterne,
Wald, Feld und Flur und lauter solche trivial wirkliche Dinge
t zum Ausdrucke gebrauchte. Du hast hier einen gewaltigen
Schritt vorwärts getan von noch nicht zu bestimmender
Tragweite. Denn was ist das Schöne? Eine reine Idee,
dargestellt mit Zweckmäßigkeit, Klarheit, gelungener Absicht.
Die Million Striche und Strichelchen, zart und geistreich oder
fest und markig, wie sie sind, in einer Landschaft auf
materielle Weise plaziert, würden allerdings ein sogenanntes
Bild im alten Sinne ausmachen und so der hergebrachten
gläubigsten Tendenz fröhnen! Wohlan! Du hast dich kurz
entschlossen und alles Gegenständliche, schnöd Inhaltliche
hinausgeworfen! Diese fleißigen Schraffierungen sind
Schraffierungen an sich, in der vollkommenen Freiheit des
Schönen schwebend; dies ist der Fleiß, die Zweckmäßigkeit, die
Klarheit an sich, in der reizendsten Abstraktion! Und diese
Verknotungen, aus denen du dich auf so treffliche Weise
gezogen hast, sind sie nicht der triumphierende Beweis, wie
Logik und Kunstgerechtigkeit erst im Wesenlosen ihre
schönsten Siege feiern, im Nichts sich Leidenschaften und
Verfinsterungen gebären und sie glänzend überwinden? Aus
Nichts hat Gott die Welt geschaffen! Sie ist ein krankhafter
Abszeß dieses Nichtses, ein Abfall Gottes von sich selbst. Das
Schöne, das Poetische, das Göttliche besteht eben darin, daß
wir uns aus diesem materiellen Geschwür ins Nichts
resorberen, nur dies kann eine Kunst sein, aber auch eine
rechte!'(pp.611-612)
Basing himself on the modern aesthetic idea of the autonomy of beauty, Erikson is describing Heinrich’s work as a step towards realizing the consequences of this theory in art by the exclusion of any representation of the material world which could interfere with beauty for its own sake. Representation of real things can only be a distraction from a pursuit of the ideal. Erikson notably makes full use of a rhetoric of progress, talking of new phases, steps forwards, and pairing together the ideas of the traditional and the crude. What he sketches is a picture of the progressive ascent towards less and less materiality in the name of a greater logic and abstraction, and it is the process’s underlying logic which makes it necessary and pushes it forward. Erikson here is clearly parodying nineteenth century romantic aesthetic theory, so indicating that the tendencies manifesting themselves in Heinrich’s work are not just characteristic of Heinrich, but also of Heinrich’s time.

After a short interruption from his wife, Erikson continues with the second part of his speech, suggesting that Heinrich has not gone far enough, and must continue the process of progress. In Heinrich’s reforming endeavour, he says, there is still a support in the material, in the way that the web is connected to the sketches of trees. Not only this, but the patterns of the strokes in the web still remind one of patterns in material things, such as cotton cloth or carpets, and are therefore not abstract enough. What Erikson suggests as a further step away from the material into abstraction is the imposition of a kind of decimal system onto the strokes, to create a purely mathematical pattern. As he explains, ‘Solches Dezimalsystem ist vollkommene Zweckmäßigkeit und Logik, das Hinetzen der einzelnen Striche aber der in vollendeter Tendenzfreiheit, in reinem Dasein sich ergehende Fleiß.’ (p.613) As
can be seen, logic is here understood as something purely formal and mathematical, abstracted away from meaning, while usefulness for purpose, and energy, are admirable to the extent that they apply themselves to the goal of completing a formal, abstract, and non-signifying pattern. This further step forward, Erikson continues, will make possible a further progressive circumstance, which is the making irrelevant of differences in skill or ability (‘Können’p.613) between those who wish to produce art, skill and ability being a kind of natural, non-abstract factor. A kind of democratic utopia in the art world results. As Erikson puts it,

‘Das moderne Epos zeigt uns die richtige Bahn! In ihm zeigen uns begeisterte Seher, wie durch dünnere oder dickere Bände hindurch die unbefleckte, unschuldige, himmlischreine Absicht geführt werden kann, ohne je auf die finsteren Mächte irdischen Könnens zu stoßen! Eine goldschnitthetere ewige Gleichheit herrscht zwischen der Bruderschaft der Wollenden.’(p.613)

The utopic, visionary rhetoric, indicating the culmination of the progressive sequence, is notable, as is, again, the idea of breaking through preexisting limitations to attain liberation. Erikson also explicitly connects this vision to the modern era.

In his final development of the theme Erikson describes how a parallel process of abstraction in poetry, in which words are done away with, leads to a stage where poetry and painting are indistinguishable in their outer form, both consisting of abstract patterns on the page based on the decimal system. This development is presented as a kind of ultimate liberation from preexisting limitations: ‘Alsdann wird der reine Schöpfer- und Dichtergeist, der in jedem Bürger schlummert, durch keine Schranke
mehr gehemmt, zu Tage treten...’ (p.613) This theme of a confusion and merging of different art forms into one has already been brought up earlier in the novel by Heinrich, who complains of it as a feature of contemporary art criticism when he is first introduced to Lys (p.644).

This second part of Erikson’s speech, while laden with a heavy irony like the first, turns out to have been, taken with the description of Heinrich’s work itself, an uncanny prediction of the path modern art would take in the century or so after the novel was written.27 Whether Keller was intending to make a prediction, or rather to present the developments as too absurd actually to happen, is not discernible from the novel. What makes the speech all the more ironic is that an important part of what is mocked in it, the exaggerated progressive and visionary tone, and the logic of necessary forward-moving steps breaking through traditional barriers and leading to an ultimate utopia, is very similar to what we find in many of Heinrich’s own, serious reflections on social issues. So a speech in which this mode of thought is frankly mocked in the context of art enjoins on the reader a certain caution with respect to it when it appears in other contexts. Heinrich’s more Hegelian social utterances may be the expression more of a youthful and

27 For a treatment of Erikson’s speech, acknowledging its predictive element, doubting that Keller actually meant it as a prediction, but treating it in retrospect as a confirmation and validation of later abstract art, thus de-emphasizing its critical intent, see Karl Fehr, *Gottfried Keller: Aufschlüsse und Deutungen*, Bern and Munich: Francke, 1972, pp.200-205. Fehr, although treating most of the speech as an unintentional affirmation of later developments in art, does view the speech as non-sensical towards the end, and thus views the end of the speech as a warning about the possible dangers of artistic abstraction. For a view also recognizing the anticipatory element in Heinrich’s abstract art, but seeing it as illustrating the contradictions and dangerous tendencies in modern art, see Lukács, *Deutsche Realisten des 19. Jahrhunderts*, p.213.
inexperienced Heinrich, overly fond of abstractions, than that of a more mature and circumspect Keller.

Having concluded his bombastic speech, Erikson returns to modest tones and assures Heinrich that the speech represents his farewell to art. He proceeds to inform Heinrich that Lys has also given up art, and urges Heinrich to free himself from the trap in which he is enmeshed. Heinrich's web, of course, represents the existential trap, and Erikson symbolically puts his fist through the paper. Heinrich offers Erikson his hand, thankfully. These gestures put the whole episode in the light of a clear rejection of the kind of art, and attitude to art, which has been illustrated in the novel through Heinrich. Heinrich, who has initially taken a progressive approach to art, rejecting the conventions which he feels stand between him and reality, finds that the process of deconventionalization moves him, involuntarily, ever further from reality, and he is forced to reject the ultimate results of what was his own approach, as well as that of his time. The rejection, in art, is much clearer than it is in the social sphere, in which, while Heinrich is clearly uneasy with what he sees as the abstraction of commercialized urban life, which seems to result from a modernizing social agenda, he cannot bring himself to express an outright rejection of it.

In the artistic sphere, as in the social, there is a sense that there has been a certain coherence in the past, which has been or is being lost, and this coherence, in both spheres, is something which does not turn out to be accessible to Heinrich, hence his attitude of nostalgia. Whereas in the social sphere this sense of coherence is portrayed in almost mythicized scenes of life in Heinrich's home village, and the dreamlike, almost too-good-to-be-true events in the
count's castle, environments which, if they are real, Heinrich nevertheless fails to find a way of settling in permanently, in the artistic sphere the idea of what the lost coherence was is represented in the make-believe of the artists' carnival, a representation of a fusion of art and community which I shall now discuss, together with the William Tell festival, in which art and community come together differently.

The two festivals, important episodes in the novel, are both derivations of the traditional pre-Lenten carnival. The William Tell festival takes place in the district of Heinrich's home village, when Heinrich is sixteen, before his stay in Germany, and involves the participation of the local market town and surrounding villages, including Heinrich's own. The project is to stage an open air performance of Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*, over a whole day, using various locations in the area. Heinrich is invited by his relatives to participate, and to help in the preparations.

The Tell festival, while not related to art as painting, is nevertheless intended to contrast with the German artists' festival, and, to the extent that it is a kind of theatrical performance, is an artistic event. The setting of the Tell festival is on the one hand rural, and in that sense traditional, and on the other hand politically republican, and so is a kind of mirror image of the German city, showing an opposite combination of the old and the new. In the German city, the emphasis is on a concern with aesthetic and communal values which are fading in the modern commercial environment that it now is. The traditional side of the rural setting is evident partly in the strong atmosphere of community. Many of the participants are known to each other, and at the communal meals during the day there is a family atmosphere, according to
Heinrich. There is also a sense of continuity in that the villagers' Sunday costumes need little adjustment in order to play the role of medieval dress, and the festival ends with a bonfire of a kind with which, Heinrich surmises, spring festivals have been celebrated since pagan times, perhaps at the same time and on the same spot.

On the other hand, the village is part of republican Switzerland, and the play itself commemorates the birth of Switzerland in the rebellion against monarchical authority. Heinrich the narrator is careful to put the festival in a progressive, modernizing context, relating how the Catholic pre-Lenten carnival spirit had persisted in the area in the form of a general spring festival despite the non-Catholic character of the area since the Reformation, and how the traditional jesting had more recently been replaced by patriotic performances, which had been becoming increasingly organized and elaborate.\footnote{Daniel Rothenbühler (\textit{Der grüne Heinrich 1854/55: Gottfried Kellers Romankunst des 'Unbekannt-bekannten'}, Bern, etc.: Peter Lang, 2002, p.238) notes that both festivals have been secularized.} Heinrich also notes how a few traditional revellers representing 'regression and depravity' ('Rückschritt und Verkommenheit' p.335) try to interrupt one of the principal scenes in the play. By mentioning these survivals of earlier practices Heinrich implies that the old carnival was a primitive manifestation which has been superseded by something more rational.

However, despite the lofty background of enlightened reform and romantic nationalistic aspirations, the effect is at times one of bathos as the participants show signs of literal-mindedness and narrow material self-interest.

When, early in the day, an over-zealous official demands a toll on cattle crossing a bridge, although they are being moved around
only as part of the celebration and not transported, the innkeeper playing the part of Tell intervenes and personally lifts the barrier out of the way. He is wearing an extravagant costume in national colours, out of keeping with the general attempt at historical verisimilitude in the costumes, and does not seem to be able to distinguish between his own exploits and those of Tell, greeting the contingent representing the imperial knights, who happen to be on the scene, coldly and proudly, as if he thought they were really what they were playing, Heinrich recounts. It is this same innkeeper who is later, at the communal lunch, involved in a heated dispute with a local timber merchant, in front of a government official, over whose property a new road should be built to go past. This argument itself represents a microcosm of the struggle between traditionalism and economic progressivism, in that the timber merchant represents the ultimate pragmatic materialism, which opposes any kind of permanence, and favours makeshift arrangements in the interests of maximum flexibility to respond to commercial opportunity, and whose ultimate aim is simply to promote the maximum possible volume of commercial activity, as an end in itself. The innkeeper, however, believes in the maintenance and embellishment of the age-old institution which his inn is, and in the pursuit of profit only to the extent necessary to maintain a comfortable and unhurried household. What shocks Heinrich, who witnesses the discussion, is that the two men, who both enjoy a certain public standing, but more particularly the innkeeper, considering the kind of public and national values he is supposed to be embodying in the person of Tell, so blatantly fight for their private advantage and ignore considerations of public good.\(^\text{29}\) The witnessing Heinrich feels that

\(^{29}\) See Kristina Sandberg Russell, Das Problem der Identität in Gottfried Kellers
what he has seen confirms the reputation which the Swiss have abroad for pettiness and self-interest (‘der Vorwurf der Kleinlichkeit, des Eigennutzes und der Engherzigkeit’p.346). The government official, whom I have discussed earlier, tries to justify to Heinrich the behaviour of the two men, who have now departed. He explains that a society in which individuals may honestly struggle for their own advantage is a healthy one, not however convincing Heinrich, or Anna’s father, who is with him.

The overall assessment of the carnival by Heinrich the narrator is ambivalent. He unquestioningly regards a secular celebration of nationalism as a rational advance on whatever religiously occasioned festival may earlier have taken place at the season. The choice of a play by Schiller, an author he has endorsed elsewhere in the novel, is potentially inspiring for him, being an elevated expression of the kind of philosophical ideals and aspirations Heinrich claims to identify with. The play is performed competently, and produces absorption and enthusiasm on the part of the audience in many of the key scenes, as well as eliciting a sense of reverence on the part of the performers at renowned moments, for example, at the swearing of the oath, or Tell’s shooting of the apple from his son’s head. However, overall, the narrative suggests that, although the people of the district celebrate this festival as a community, and although it is meaningful to them, what it means is the liberation from government or other authoritarian control in favour of the freedom for the unrestrained pursuit of material gain. Heinrich approves of practical economic activity as part of a wider programme of achieving a liberal vision of progress in the community, but he sees the elevation of economic

interest to the position of leading principle and aspiration as
detrimental to other more cultural aspects of the programme, and
as ultimately barren. Because of this he is disappointed by signs of
the prominence of economic motives in the community.30

As the struggle against governmental interference with
economic freedom is still going on, as illustrated by the incident at
the toll bridge, it is not surprising that reality and fiction tend to
merge. While it must be admitted that this performance does engage
its performers and spectators, and that they understand it in a way
relevant to them, at the same time the way it is understood seems
superficial, and at times when the performance tends to coalesce
with and become indistinguishable from everyday local life, one can
question to what extent it ends up by functioning as art at all, in the
sense that, instead of bringing something into the life of the
villagers, it simply is their life.31 Thus Heinrich is disappointed to
find that the Schillerian Enlightenment aspirations are lost and
replaced by a celebration of economic freedom. If the society
represented in the narrative can be said to be a practically
successful one, and the pageant an expression of its underlying
common sense, it is nevertheless a society without the cultural
depth to satisfy Heinrich the aspiring artist, and without the artistic
interests to support him. Frustratingly, from Heinrich’s point of
view, given his emancipatory convictions, the tendency of
commercial energies, once unleashed, to oust all others makes itself
felt once again. To add to the irony, the William Tell play celebrates
that break of Switzerland from the German Empire which has

30 See Jonas Fränkel, Gottfried Kellers politische Sendung, Zurich: Oprecht,
1939, pp.103-104, who argues that Keller de-idealizes the Tell festival in the
second version.
31 For criticism of the Tell festival as unartistic, see Gerhard Kaiser, Gottfried
allowed its special development, and produced, arguably, that
compulsive cultural aridity of which Heinrich is conscious, as a
result of which even the standard work celebrating Swiss
nationhood is written by a German.

In contrast to the practically relevant but, arguably, shallow
Swiss celebration, the German pageant illustrates aspirations which
Heinrich finds meaningful, but in the context of the past.\textsuperscript{32} However,
the German city presents a different social backdrop from the Swiss
countryside, almost a mirror image, in that it embodies modern
conditions in its large scale and in the consequent possibility of
being anonymous in it, as Heinrich is, while the personal nature of
its monarchical government is very traditional. The German carnival
takes the form of an artists' pageant. In this pageant about eight
hundred members of the city's artistic community, including
Heinrich, stage a procession in which the Nuremberg of the time of
Maximilian I and Albrecht Dürer is represented. The procession
includes three sections, one in which the citizenry of Nuremberg is
represented, including the guilds, and citizens of note, one
representing the imperial court, with the emperor and entourage,
and a final section being an old-fashioned masquerade, including
jesters and mythical personifications. Famous characters of the time
are all represented individually.

Heinrich gives a fairly detailed description of the procession,
with a strong emphasis on the guilds, especially those representing
occupations with an artistic element, and also showing a definite
admiration for the heroic appearance of the imperial knights. He is

\textsuperscript{32} For a very positive assessment of the artists' pageant, which argues that the
pageant shows that art is still possible, and demonstrates its communal setting,
but which views this possibility as being in contrast to Heinrich's own lack of
rootedness, see Hartmut Laufhütte, \textit{Wirklichkeit und Kunst in Gottfried Kellers
clearly absorbed by the occasion, and is enthusiastic in describing the various costumes of the different guilds, as well as giving accounts of what certain individual members were famous for. Heinrich is keen to point out the way that the famous artists and craftsmen combine manual skill with inventiveness, as well as the fact that they both love beauty and ornamentation and produce goods of great practical value, and all this despite the fact that many are illiterate. The wood-turner, Hieronymus Gärtner, for example, who can make a life-like cherry on a stalk out of wood, also makes fountains, while members of the Danner family, gun-makers, have invented a wall-breaking device and the flint-lock. The guilds, he notes, do not lead to a narrow concentration on specialized skills, and many guild members develop additional skills, such as the locksmiths who learn to make watches and clocks. Heinrich here is pointing out how at this period there is an artistic craftsmanship which embodies a coherence of qualities which tend to separate in the modern era, where the artist and the workman tend to be different people, where art aims at uselessness and practical work is indifferent to aesthetics, where physical and intellectual work tend to be separated and carried out by different groups of people.

Heinrich is particularly impressed by the case of a coppersmith, called Sebastian Lindenast, to whom the emperor has granted the privilege of gilding the vessels he makes, on account of his outstanding skill. Heinrich admires the direct relationship here between the head of state and the craftsman. Heinrich’s interest in this relationship is notable, given that in his home town in Switzerland there is an apparent lack of public patronage of the arts on any considerable scale, whereas in the German kingdom where the festival is taking place the king does take a personal interest in
the arts and patronize them, and Heinrich himself eventually has recourse to aristocratic patronage at the count's castle.

Heinrich is also carried away by the magnificence of the emperor and his entourage of knights, even after he remembers that some of the figures represented were involved in an attempt to resubjugate Switzerland to the empire, an attempt which the Swiss successfully resisted, and the narrating Heinrich seems unsure whether the Swiss of that period should be admired for their bravery or pitied for the lack of esteem in which they were held by their neighbours.

In fact the German city in which the festival is taking place is less remote from what is being represented than, for example, Heinrich's home city in Switzerland would have been. As Heinrich is keen to point out, the artists taking part in the carnival are 'members of a fully articulated art-life' ('Angehörige eines voll ausgegliederten Kunstlebens' p.532) which the city possesses, and there is also a personal relationship between the artists and the monarch, who is sponsoring the carnival and is personally present. However, although the distance between contemporary reality in the city and the represented past is less wide than it might be, the festival still, as Heinrich sees it, stands for a healthier integrity, which the present is moving away from. As Heinrich explains it,

So, Heinrich suggests, the contemporary artists can give themselves an extra symbolic sense of worth by symbolizing earlier artists who lived in a fresher and less degenerate time than their own. Heinrich here seems to be holding out little hope that the artists can recreate in their work the integrity they are representing imaginatively in the pageant, since, it seems, the loss of belief, or feeling, which causes artistic degeneration is simply a symptom of the times, beyond the ability of any individual artist to transcend, hence Heinrich's own inability to transcend it in his own work.

Interestingly, although Heinrich describes the period represented as the beginning of an era, it could equally well be seen as the end of an era, as the period just before the order of the Middle Ages collapses in the aftermath of the Reformation, and when medieval belief is giving way to Renaissance humanism. The prominence of Dürer is a sign of this incipient collapse of the medieval world view, and the fact that the city merchants are already wealthier and worthier-looking, according to Heinrich, than the lower and middle aristocracy is a sign that the commercial pressures of the modern world are already embryonically present.

The fact that the society in which art enjoys a now lost integrity is one which is pulled apart by forces which Heinrich supports, by processes such as the Reformation and the Enlightenment, which according to his historical theory are steps towards the ideal society, is Heinrich's dilemma. He does not want to return to a medieval society, or medieval beliefs, and appears to believe that this is not even possible, historico-theoretically, were it
desirable, but he sees no way of practising art in the new conditions. Significantly, the only fulfilled and successful practising artist portrayed in the novel is Reinhold, the maker of religious statues from the Catholic Rhineland, whose social and religious background might be described as not far removed from the medieval. The childlike innocence, however, which Heinrich sees as underlying Reinhold's subsistence in an older set of values, is something Heinrich feels he has lost irrevocably for himself.

The society represented in the artist's pageant also shows individual artists being part of a network of artistic societies, the guilds, which in turn take their place in a recognized way alongside the other sections of the society as a whole, which are presented as showing a sense of common purpose. This essentially communal vision contrasts with Heinrich's own experiences of isolation as an aspirant artist, and as well as with the apparent tendency, as portrayed in the novel, of artistic and commercial interests to be antagonistic to each other, and the lack of an overall sense of public consciousness. These problems are common both to landscape painting as shown in the novel, and to the more profit oriented commercial ventures connected with art. It is also worth noting, from the point of view of the conceptual organization of the novel, that the way that in the pageant it is the community of artists that represents the whole society, is indicative of Keller's intention to make Heinrich, the aspiring artist, embody the wider modern condition in his life.

An episode in the novel which focuses closely on the antagonism between artistic and commercial interests in the modern world, and the tendency of the first to lose out, is that of the Habersaat workshop, where Heinrich spends two years studying art
under the supervision of the owner and manager of the workshop, Habersaat. Habersaat is a painter who has used his apparently limited artistic skills as the basis for a commercial mass-production of Swiss landscapes, together with greetings cards, and other such tasks, and he does this successfully.33 The limitations of Habersaat’s artistic skills, as perceived by Heinrich, have been discussed above, but also significant, particularly from the perspective of the impact of the modern economy, is Heinrich’s description of the workshop itself and the way it is run.

Habersaat’s workshop is situated in the refectory of a former convent, lighted by windows through which one cannot see out, emphasizing that the artistic activity is cut off from nature, as well as practically insulating employees from distractions on the outside. The conversion from convent to factory also hints at a shift from spiritual to material priorities in modern society. Apart from Habersaat himself, who is busy as much with clerical tasks as with artwork, the workshop contains four adult employees, who carry out the lithography, engraving and printing, and a number of youths or boys whose task is to colour in the outlines with water-colours. The young employees are children of poor families who are working in exchange for an artistic training, although they receive very little, in case it interferes with their efficiency. The employees are arranged in such a way that they look into each others’ backs, so that they will not distract each other, and Habersaat sits behind all of them, enabling him to supervise. Heinrich portrays the atmosphere by describing the scene as a kind of hell, in which the employees are various grades of demons. Indeed the young employees are under

33 For a discussion of the Habersaat episode focusing on the idea of the reproducibility of art, see Wolfgang Rohe, Roman aus Diskursen: Gottfried Keller ‘Der grüne Heinrich’ (Erste Fassung; 1854/55), pp.36-47.
such pressure of work that they waste their free time on pranks and joking, instead of supplementing their meagre training. Most of them never progress to become artists and have to take up other trades on leaving the workshop.

Heinrich regards Habersaat’s treatment of the young employees as exploitation, and claims that in being exploitative Habersaat’s business is similar to the industry of the day, which, he suggests sarcastically, indulges in child-exploitation because it makes the resulting products more desirable to the buyers.

On Heinrich’s first day at the workshop he is sent away to buy his own paper and pencils, which he spends most of the morning doing. He says, in reaction to this, ‘Dieses alles, ... erschien mir so nüchtern und kleinlich und im Gegensatze zu dem Treiben, das ich mir dunkel in einer Künstlerbehausung vorgestellt hatte, daß es mir das Herz beengte.’(p.247) The meanness, pettiness and narrowness that Heinrich senses here in the Habersaat workshop are similar to those qualities which he has noted elsewhere in connection with the effects of commercialism on the Swiss culture and way of life. This episode illustrates most clearly Heinrich’s fear that economic progress through industrialization and rampant commercialism tends to oust all other motives and considerations, and is inimical to art, a fear which however is expressed repeatedly through the novel.

Moreover, the scene suggests that the mechanization and monomania of modern economic activity has not time or space for a more symbolic and meaningful creative ethos. It is also that in reacting to the domination of the practical life by modern economic methods, the artist withdraws into an esoteric world, as does Heinrich, to the detriment of his art, which becomes insubstantial. So Heinrich’s experience of art highlights and illustrates that
dislocation of, on the one hand, the practical and, on the other, the intellectual, creative, worlds, which inheres in the modern condition.

**Psychology**

Heinrich, in his own character, is beset by the kinds of splits and polarizations which he describes in art and society. He illustrates this both with his general apartness, which alternates with an occasional need to lose himself in a mass movement, and with his relations to women.

The most salient feature of Heinrich's character, from childhood and all through the novel, is his reflective apartness, his holding himself aloof from others and observing coldly. He sometimes blames this on practical causes, such as his lack of fatherly advice, or his expulsion from school, but it nevertheless appears to be a deeply rooted tendency in him, and while he occasionally wistfully regrets its effects, he generally shows no sign of wanting to overcome it.

Heinrich's apartness has both social and intellectual aspects, since on the one hand he spends much of his time without company, and, on the other, will take nobody's word but builds up his world view on his own. This situation is summed up most succinctly late in the first version, when the narrator says of him, 'Er hatte von Jugend auf, seit er kaum sein inneres Auge aufgetan, alle Überlieferung und alles Wunder von sich gestoßen und sich einem selbstgemachten, manchmal etwas flachen Rationalismus hingegeben, wie ihn eben ein sich selbst überlassener Knabe einseitig gebären kann.' (p.556) Not only does this description
capture his social isolation and his intellectual isolatedness, but it reveals how the world view which Heinrich is creating for himself is a kind of modern world view, very much of his time, one sceptical of tradition and starting again in a self-consciously rational way.

Heinrich, even before his expulsion from school, is an enigmatic child, mistrusted by his teachers. 'Desto eifriger verkehrte ich im stillen mit mir selbst, in der Welt, die ich mir allein zu bauen gezwungen war' (p. 91), he relates at the beginning of Chapter 9 ('Das spielende Kind'), as if this condition were forced on him unwillingly, although he takes to it quite naturally, and spends much of this childhood time creating his imaginary worlds of various sorts, assembling for example a menagerie, which he disposes of cruelly, and making wax models of vaguely human creatures. Then, having been expelled from school, he starts producing landscapes which always include a lone wanderer, representing himself:

Denn nach dem immerwährenden Mißlingen meines Zusammentreffens mit der übrigen Welt hatte eine ungebührliche Selbstbeschauung und Eigenliebe angefangen, mich zu beschleichen; ich fühlte ein weichliches Mitleid mit mir selbst und liebte es, meine Person symbolisch in die interessanten Szenen zu versetzen, welche ich erfand. (pp. 159-160)

This statement emphasizes not only his apartness, but also a kind of division within the reflective personality, which looks at itself, sympathizes with itself, and represents itself, the self becoming divided by being subject and object in all these activities.

Sometimes Heinrich connects his detached stance with the artistic attitude. Already as a child, when a travelling theatre company comes to town, Heinrich objects to the fact that despite his
attempt to become an objective connoisseur of theatrical art, he cannot help also becoming emotionally involved in the performances and losing his objectivity, so he wishes to observe the workings and acting in detail from the wings; 'denn es bedünkte mich, daß es dort besser zu leben sein müsse, als irgendwo in der Welt, leidenschaftslos und überlegen.' (p. 102) Here Heinrich wants the superiority of the few who understand the artistic devices, rather than to be among the many who react emotionally to the impression created. Later in the novel, having just read the works of Goethe, before his departure to Germany, but after his feeling of superfluousness has led him to leave the village during the time of floods, Heinrich again muses to himself on the passive stance of the artist with respect to the world. He says, 'Für den künstlerischen Menschen nun wäre dies [Heinrich’s conception of the world] so anzuwenden, daß er sich eher leidend und zusehend verhalten und die Dinge an sich vorüberziehen lassen, als ihnen nachjagen soll' (p. 388). He goes on to compare the artistic person to someone who observes a festive procession rather than participates in it, in order to be able to describe it, and is thereby not superfluous, but, at an appropriate moment, joins it with his mirror, like, Heinrich suggests, the eighth king in Macbeth’s vision, whose mirror shows many more kings. Heinrich elaborates: ‘Auch nicht ohne äußere Tat und Mühe ist das Sehen des ruhig Leidenden, gleichwie der Zuschauer eines Festzuges genug Mühe hat, einen guten Platz zu erringen oder zu behaupten.’ (p. 389) So the passive attitude of the artist, which Heinrich aims for, and his marginal positioning, which allow him an overall perspective, are not achieved or, presumably, maintained, without effort, and, he hopes, they entitle him to a place in the community by virtue of what he has been able to
record. This being the case, one can project that Heinrich’s entitlement to inclusion in the ranks of his society is based on his presentation of it through the representation of his marginal life, that is, his writing of his novel. This is never stated in the novel, and is left open for the readers to conclude, if they wish.

As well as the linking of Heinrich’s somewhat abstracted personality to the artistic character, in the first version the tenor of German culture is also blamed, by the narrator, for Heinrich’s tendency not to be able to hold the intellectual and the practical together. The narrator relates of Heinrich’s time in the German city,

Aber dessenungeachtet [Heinrich’s partial disillusionment with German culture] ward er mit jedem Tage träumerischer und deutscher und baute alle Hoffnungen auf das Deutsche; denn seit er in Deutschland war, hatte er die Krankheit überkommen, aller Einsicht zum Trotz das Gegenteil von dem zu tun, was er sprach, und Theorie und Praxis himmelwelt voneinander zu trennen.(p.564)

The narrator is here partly blaming German cultural influence for Heinrich’s increasing dreaminess, and associating this influence with his accompanying tendency to separate theory from practice. So what Heinrich’s habitual abstractedness does is to separate his practical side from association with his intellectual and imaginative faculties, allowing both sides to part company and express themselves in an impoverished fashion.34

Heinrich’s tendency towards extremes and the way that he swings, from time to time, from his habitual character to one quite opposite is illustrated on various occasions. For example, Heinrich’s

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34 See Martin Swales, ‘Reflectivity and Realism: On Keller’s Der Grüne Heinrich’.
general apartness and fierce independence is punctuated by periods when he throws himself thoroughly into mass activity, sometimes seeming to express a desire to efface his individual personality completely in the group. Between his periods of isolation there are repeated episodes where Heinrich becomes one of the ringleaders in various gangs. It is one of these episodes that leads to his expulsion from school, when he half-willingly takes part in a kind of demonstration against a teacher to whom he is not personally ill-disposed.

These group tendencies of his often have a military flavour. As a boy, when attending a dance with fellow pupils, at which girls are present, Heinrich joins himself to a group which is imitating soldiers, drinking, singing, and refusing to dance with the girls. When he actually does start military service, he rejoices in his complete loss of freedom and his instrumentality. He relates,

Es galt nun, sich einer eisernen Ordnung zu fügen und sich jeder Pünktlichkeit zu befließen; obgleich dies mich aus meiner vollkommenen Freiheit und Selbstherrlichkeit herausschiß, so empfand ich doch einen wahren Durst, mich der Strenge hinzugeben, so komisch auch ihre nächsten kleinen Zwecke waren ...(p.456)

Here Heinrich shows that despite his generally rebellious attitude to established authorities, particularly in religion but also in art and, when representing traditional ideas, in education and politics, he is in this case prepared to and actually needs to subject himself to authority of a mechanical rigour, far stricter than anything he has rebelled against. So rather than a moderate acceptance of social

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constraint, Heinrich is drawn to an alternation between absolute non-conformity and absolute subjection. He is also separating his intellectual life, which he exercises in isolation and in the abstract, from his physical, practical life, in which he seems to want to be absolved of the need to think. Heinrich explains his acceptance of the military imposition, which has occurred just after he has fulfilled his official religious obligations most unwillingly, by saying that he understands the practical purpose of military activity, in terms of defence of the land. However his ‘thirst’ for superficially pointless and mechanistic drills indicates that it is actually a deep personal need in his character that he is fulfilling, and not simply enlightened pragmatism.

Heinrich’s tendency to extremes also seems to emerge in the pole-painting episode. Although he is not to blame for the mindless nature of the work, and for the isolated conditions in which he works, he takes to the job enthusiastically, making a machine of himself, not wasting a moment through distraction or hesitation, and painting far more poles than his employer had expected.

Heinrich’s relationships with women through the novel also constitute an area in which his character traits reveal themselves. His attitude to women with whom he falls in love is one of extreme self-consciousness, and of a revelling in his own feelings in preference to interaction with the woman in question. Heinrich’s psychology in this area is again characterized by a split into a reflective side and a physical side, each of which pursue their own needs independently and resist integration into a single, coherent unity of attitude. Heinrich here is once again acting as a representative case for the modern condition, in that the fragmentation in his self in this, as in other areas, is the
fragmentation which occurs in the individual who internalizes that fragmentation expressed externally in modern culture, which the novel also portrays. It is a fragmentation which results from a deliberate, self-conscious analysis, a separation of faculties which are subsequently developed individually, and then do not add up to the coherent whole they were abstracted from. Just as the modern factory worker and the modern tortured artist do not add up to the older craftsman, Heinrich's rarified romantic obsessions and his sometimes exploitative, sometimes repressed sensual side do not add up to a capacity for a successful romantic relationship. Heinrich has lost the necessary innocence, or unself-consciousness, to love, just as he has lost the ability to belong to a community, as well as his religious belief, aspects of the old incompatible with a newer need to separate experience into objectifiable elements.

Heinrich's self-absorbed approach begins early when he falls in love, as a child, with an actress in a travelling theatre company, and muses regretfully over their departure for some time afterwards. In the first version he actually runs away from her when he comes across her by chance, 'um mich in den stillen Räumen unserer Wohnung um so leidenschaftlicher mit ihrem Bilde zu beschäftigen'(p.154), he says, which shows that he is already treating his own mental image of the woman, rather than the woman herself, as the primary object of his affections.

Heinrich's relationship with Anna shows many instances of his preferring his own enamoured musings to real interaction with a young woman, even if the occasional genuine romantic interchange between the two does occur. During one of his stays in the village, for example, he spends time lingering on the hill overlooking Anna's
house, unable to determine to go down the hill and visit Anna and her father. However, he admits,

Indem ich jedoch mich nach dem Wiedersehen sehnte, war mir die Zwischenzeit und meine Unentschlossenheit gar nicht peinlich und unerträglich, vielmehr gefiel ich mir in diesem gedanken- und erwartungsvollen Zustande und sah einem zweiten Begegnen eher mit Unruhe entgegen. (p. 212)

So Heinrich enjoys the experience of being in love as a purely mental experience of unfulfilled desire.

Heinrich once again acts perversely with respect to Anna when, on the day after their first kiss, a neighbour appears unexpectedly early to take Heinrich back to town for the year, and instead of staying longer, as his relatives ask, he insists on leaving straight away, partly, he says, because he is afraid that they will attribute his staying to his feelings for Anna, and partly due to an 'inexplicable mood' (p. 240).

On his visit to the village the following year, after hesitating to see her or even mention her, he learns by chance that she has been sent to a college in French Switzerland. The knowledge that she is not there leads him to start visiting her father every day, sometimes staying in her room and contemplating the things in it. He then starts writing love letters to her which he does not send to her. He explains this new stage of preoccupation with her by saying, 'Diese fortwährende Erinnerung an sie und ihre Abwesenheit machten mich insgeheim immer kecker und vertraulicher mit ihrem Bilde' (p. 259). Here Heinrich's familiarity with his own image of Anna benefits directly from his distance from the real person.

Heinrich's later relationship with Dorothea follows a similar pattern, except that it is more extreme. Heinrich's feelings here are
more violently strong, and he does not get as far as any admission of them to Dorothea, despite the encouragement she gives him. Again, it is the image of Dorothea, which this time seems to be as if of cast iron, and oppressing him, which preoccupies Heinrich constantly. He flees from the real woman, and takes to spending his days in isolated places, alone with his passion.

Heinrich's relationship with Judith, and its contrast in his mind to that with Anna, show his tendency to shy away from genuine engagement with others, his preference to live by conceptualization rather than practice, and his need to dichotomize, in this case, as he sees it, between the spiritual and the sensual.³⁶ Heinrich's early relationship with Judith and his relationship with Anna are carried on concurrently, with little sense of guilt or duplicity on Heinrich's part.³⁷ This is because Heinrich sees them as relevant to different parts of his self. He explains thus:

Denn während ich in Anna den besseren und geistigeren Teil meiner selbst liebte, suchte Judith wieder etwas Besseres in meiner Jugend, als ihr die Welt bisher geboten; und doch sah sie wohl, daß sie nur meine sinnliche Hälfte anlockte

...(p.417).

This statement is particularly revealing in that it describes Heinrich in love with part of himself in Anna, rather than with Anna. Judith,

³⁶ For a detailed comparative treatment of Heinrich's relationships to Anna and Judith, see Caroline von Loewenich, Gottfried Keller: Frauenbild und Frauengestalten im erzählerischen Werk, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2000, pp.43-70. For a view which sees the dichotomization more in terms of the real (Judith) and the imaginary (Anna), see Wolfgang Preisendanz, 'Keller: Der grüne Heinrich', in Benno von Wiese (ed.), Der Deutsche Roman vom Barock bis zur Gegenwart: Struktur und Geschichte, Düsseldorf: August Bagel Verlag, 1963, pp.76-127.
³⁷ See Rudolf Wildbolz, Gottfried Kellers Menschenbild, Bern: Francke, 1964, pp.46-7 and 63, who argues that, generally, Keller is not very interested in guilt, and thinks more in terms of the healthy and unhealthy than of the moral and immoral.
though suspecting that the relationship means more to him than he will admit to himself, is forced to play along with the idea that it is not serious to avoid scaring him away.

Heinrich's division of his self in this way leads one relationship to be lacking in terms of practical realization, and the other to lack in terms of personal commitment, Heinrich treating his relationship with Judith as a kind of sensual game. Again, his physical side, when manifested, is unchecked by other influences, from which he has cut it off.

When Anna dies, Judith gives Heinrich the chance to reunite the two sides of himself in a love for her. Heinrich insists on breaking off contact with Judith, in order to remain faithful to Anna. This attitude again indicates that it is Anna's image, rather than Anna, that he has been preoccupied with, since Anna's no longer being alive is not relevant to his continuing passion for her. He would rather renounce Judith, and his physical side, and devote himself to his idea, than be forced to reconcile his spiritual and physical sides in a non-intellectual way through an integral relationship with one woman.

Heinrich is reunited with Judith in the last chapter, only in the second version. He does not, however, marry her, but meets her from time to time, with varying frequency, accepting her suggestion that he should keep his freedom rather than commit himself to the uncertainties of a closer relationship. In missing possible fulfillment and settling for a moderate good without risk, Heinrich's acceptance of a loose relationship with Judith is similar to his taking an administrative post which provides moderate satisfaction but is not ultimately fulfilling. Heinrich accepts a compromise in both cases,
which produces an ending of some solace, but of considerable
disappointment and wistfulness.

Arguably, the leading characteristic of Heinrich's character is
pride, and it is this which makes him unable to accept both
traditional authority and those areas of life which are understood
experientially and resist exhaustive analysis. He cannot allow
himself to enter into a relationship with a woman, for example,
because this involves subjecting oneself to a complex of forces
beyond one's ability to dominate by analysis, and leaves one
trusting to intuition or custom for guidance, neither of which would
leave Heinrich immune from ridicule, since Heinrich often regards
behaviour which the actor cannot defend by rational argument as
ridiculous.

Heinrich's character emerges as a kind of microcosm of the
macrocosm which is society, and it is in the problematics of art that
the being of both is expressed representationally. All three areas
show the same tendencies towards the splitting and dichotomizing
of wholes, the inability of what should be complementary qualities
to work together and their tendency to oppose each other, working
according to one-sided principles of their own. Heinrich associates
this dichotomization with the new, burgeoning state of affairs,
which he contrasts with a lost or inaccessible integrity of the past.
The tone of wistfulness and failure in the novel as a whole springs
from the contradiction between Heinrich's theoretical commitment
to progressive and forward-looking thinking, and his unwillingness
to accept the perceived disjunction and alienation produced by the
change in society which he supports, or to accept their expression in
art, or their consequences in his own personality. Heinrich is unable
to reject his progressive principles, committed as he is to their
apparent rationality, so the novel ends in an impasse, where an uneasy accommodation with the social circumstances is the best that Heinrich can achieve.
CHAPTER THREE: THOMAS MANN'S DOKTOR FAUSTUS

Introduction

In this chapter I shall examine the theme of the old and the new in Thomas Mann's Doktor Faustus under the aspects of character, art, and then society. While, as I have suggested, in Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre, the category of character, especially with regard to the protagonist, is made to carry much of the novel's theoretical argument, and in Der Grüne Heinrich it is the social sphere which carries this weight, in Doktor Faustus the theoretical emphasis is on art, specifically music. However, while making art the theoretical focus, the novel implies that the argument being made with respect to art can be applied to the categories of character and society, just as in the other novels the arguments made principally with respect to one category are intended to apply in similar way to the other categories, as I have argued.¹

In Doktor Faustus, the two central characters, Adrian Leverkühn, the composer, and Serenus Zeitblom, his friend, assistant, and narrator, are more representatives of tendencies in German culture than they are fully individualized characters, and it is the way that they are made to stand for key cultural issues, which are relevant to the discussion of art, that I shall address first. I shall then look at art, through which in particular Mann expounds and explores his theoretical ideas, and with it I shall discuss other fields of cultural endeavour, namely theology and philosophy, which

¹ For art as 'seismograph' of society in Thomas Mann, see Roy Pascal, The German Novel, London: Methuen, 1965, p.266. See also T. J. Reed, Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, p.5, for the idea that Mann is writing (not only in Doktor Faustus) in the midst of a cultural background in Germany in which cultural and political issues are regarded as inseparable.
Mann makes the subject of theoretical analyses parallel to his analysis of music. Finally I shall examine how Mann suggests the relevance of the ideas he has presented through art to the social sphere, particularly to German politics, both at the time of the narrated events and at the time of narration. Zeitblom is presented as writing the story of his friend's life, immediately after his death, and against the background of the unfolding of the Second World War, such that the political build-up to the events surrounding the Second World War in Germany becomes the political theme.

In the case of *Doktor Faustus*, the author's interest is principally in exploring the character of modernity, particularly in a theoretical way, but also with special reference to German cultural history, and to the effects of late modernity on German political life, and on the personality of a modern artist. As a result of the preponderance of this interest, following, perhaps from the advanced stage of modernity at which Mann is writing, the old, if understood as phenomena or thinking characteristic of pre-modern society, is rarely explicitly present, in contrast to what is the case in the other novels. It is often present more by implication, and theoretically, as a lost, but sometimes yearned for, condition, than as a persisting reality, although a few persons and phenomena, exhibiting to a degree what may be meant to be non-modern characteristics, do feature. However, the frequent references to the time of the Reformation and the Renaissance, I shall suggest, within the theoretical framework of the novel, are to be understood as

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representing the birth of modernity, and are therefore more the beginning of the new than they are the old. Therefore, compared with the other novels, *Doktor Faustus* concentrates even more heavily on the new, but the implied presence of the old is part of Mann's argument as to what the new distinctively is, and, in contrast to the other authors, Mann is prepared to question the assumptions of the new, as it has manifested itself, at a theoretical level.

John F. Fetzer's review of the extensive literature on *Doktor Faustus*, up to 1982, including mention of some later work, reveals a number of strands within interpretative responses to the novel. The issue of whether Leverkühn is ultimately saved is discussed in the critical literature, with critics at times viewing Leverkühn as having rejected salvation, and in other cases viewing the idea of grace as offering him hope of salvation, and there is also disagreement as to whether salvation is to be understood in primarily religious or secular terms. Critics debate to what extent Leverkühn is to be identified with Germany, as well as whether German culture as a whole or only parts of it are being blamed in the novel for National Socialism, and whether there is hope for German culture expressed in the novel. Marxist critics, for example, identify bourgeois German culture in particular as being blamed and posit that hope in a future non-bourgeois culture is implied. Many studies are devoted to

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3 For the idea that an opposition between old and new is constantly present as a motif in the novel, see Joyce Crick, 'Thomas Mann: How Late is Late?: Ida Herz Lecture, 1998', *English Goethe Society* 7 LXVIII (1999) pp.29-44.

4 See Georg Lukács, *Essays on Thomas Mann*, London: Merlin Press, 1964, p.50, who notes that both Goethe and Thomas Mann are ambivalent towards the idea of progress. My own argument is that, while this is true of all three of the authors I discuss, Mann is the only one, in the novels I am writing about, to make his doubts about progress explicitly part of the theoretical argument, rather than allowing them to emerge implicitly.

possible intertexts for the novel, with the Renaissance Dr. Faustus legend and Goethe's *Faust* being particularly prominent in discussions. Whereas the Renaissance Dr. Faustus is generally accepted as an important intertext, the role of Goethe's *Faust* is, whether as a model for the novel or even as an antithesis to it, more controversial. The role of the ideas of many philosophers and composers in the text is often discussed, as well as the possibility that some of these serve as models for characters in the novel. Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Wagner, Schönberg, Adorno, Kierkegaard and Beethoven are particularly prominent in such discussions, with the identification between Leverkühn and Nietzsche attracting significant attention. Leverkühn's erotic attachments are debated, both those explicit in the novel, and others postulated by critics. There are discussions about whether the novel exhibits musical patterns in its composition, or even features of dodecaphonic technique. The role of Zeitblom is discussed, including issues of whether there is an identity between Zeitblom and Leverkühn, and whether they both represent facets of the author, as well as issues relating to Zeitblom's narration, such as his seeming omniscience, and his paradoxical disclaiming of artistic talent, given the quality of the narrative. The issue of the novel's irony, ambiguity, or ambivalence, interacts with many of the other topics. The novel's indeterminacy, or even its tendency to polar opposites, which may also, paradoxically, be identical, is widely viewed as being a crucial factor in interpretation. This tendency is also linked to the novel's modernity, while a coexistence of modern and more traditional elements in the novel is often acknowledged.

What emerges as the pivotal theme here is the connection between Leverkühn and Germany, and the way that the musician,
not political but steeped in German culture, exhibits in his artistic self a complex of parallels with the political culture round him. The cultural and political worlds are linked by the way that cultural issues inform the political discourse, and by the crucial prominence in both of issues of the old and the new, which I explore in this chapter.

Although Mann in *Doktor Faustus* is chiefly interested in cultural issues, he does present them, in the form of a novel, through the story of the lives of characters, particularly of the main characters, Leverkühn and Zeitblom. I shall thus discuss the ways in which Leverkühn and, to some extent, Zeitblom, are made, as characters, complexes of cultural significance, which participate in the general cultural problematics of the novel. The exposition of Leverkühn's character takes place mainly in connection with his upbringing and education. Later, he is shown to retain the characteristics he has already acquired, while a number of episodes are recounted to show that love has been forbidden him.

**Representative Characters**

In describing Leverkühn's home district and family background Mann is already indicating Leverkühn's key positioning with regard to German cultural tradition. Leverkühn's father and mother are from the area of Saxony, and from Thuringia,

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6 For the idea that Leverkühn and Zeitblom both represent aspects of Mann's own character, see, for example, T. J. Reed, *Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition*, pp.381-392. See, however, Hermann Kurzke, *Thomas Mann: Das Leben als Kunstwerk*, Munich: Beck, 1999, pp. 512-513, who believes that Mann's self-identification with Leverkühn is more important, and that with Zeitblom only superficial. See also Osman Durrani, 'The Tearful Teacher: The Role of Serenus Zeitblom in Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus*', *The Modern Language Review* 80 (1985) pp.652-658, who, unusually, stresses the similarities, rather than the differences, between Zeitblom and Leverkühn.
respectively, making them native to regions which are very central, geographically, to the German-speaking world. The father, Jonathan Leverkühn, from the somewhat more urban Saxon area, even if himself a farmer, represents the scientific side of German culture, if in an early stage. His description as ‘ein Mann besten deutschen Schlages ... — eine Physiognomie, wie geprägt von vergangenen Zeiten, gleichsam ländlich aufgespart und herübergebracht aus deutschen Tagen von vor dem Dreißigjährigen Kriege’ (p. 18) is perhaps intended to bring to mind an image of someone during the time of the German Renaissance, at roughly the time of the Faust legend, and the way in which Zeitblom describes his amateur scientific experimentation as ‘die Elementa spekulieren’ (p. 20) strengthens this connection. Jonathan Leverkühn’s bible, which includes commentaries by Luther, alludes to the connection between the German Reformation and modern German thought generally, which is often stressed during the novel. The style of scientific speculation which Leverkühn’s father pursues is one of an enquiry into the freaks of nature, particularly areas where boundaries between different spheres seem to be crossed, such as butterflies which look like leaves, shellfish which bear patterns which look like symbols, sand which forms visible patterns in reaction to sound, inorganic chemical creations which look like plants, and drops of

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7 Page numbers in this chapter refer to Thomas Mann, *Doktor Faustus: Das Leben des deutschen Tonsetzers, Adrian Leverkühn, erzählt von einem Freunde*, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1990.

8 For the idea that the beginning of the modern era, with figures such as Luther and Dürer, represents the beginning of specifically German characteristics, see Lieselotte Voss, *Die Entstehung von Thomas Manns Roman 'Doktor Faustus': Dargestellt anhand von unveröffentlichten Vorarbeiten*, Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1975, p. 129. See also Martin Swales, *Thomas Mann: a study*, London: Heinemann, 1980, p. 82, for the connection between Protestantism, Germany, and inwardness.
chemicals which appear to eat things.⁹ Alluded to here are an idea of mysticism and a search for hidden knowledge accompanying scientific and mathematical speculation, the idea of an interest in the parallelism between visible patterns and musical sound, and the desire to produce seemingly living things by mechanical, inorganic means, all ideas which will later be further explored in the novel in relation to Leverkühn's own pursuits, and modern culture more generally. While there is already a suggestion of a partnership between somewhat esoteric, or at least stern, spirituality, and an attitude of scientific speculation, both in the type of scientific activity described, and in its juxtaposition, in Jonathan Leverkühn, with his Lutheran bible reading, one can also suggest that there is a parallel between the Lutheran spirituality and the scientific experimentation, in that the scientific experimentation involves a kind of independent, anti-authoritarian, transgression of boundaries, or, as Zeitblom puts it, trying sympathetically to recreate a premodern perspective, 'ein libertinistisches Sich-einlassen mit dem Verbotenen' (p.20), and something of the same independent, convention-disregarding spirit is part of the Lutheran attitude, hinted at here by the fact that the edition of the bible in question has been printed 'mit herzoglicher Befreiung' in 1700, the secular authorities making possible the kind of self-directed, non-church-controlled religiosity which Jonathan Leverkühn indulges in. The connection between the personal, Faustian quest of liberation by overcoming of conventional limitation, and the culture of

⁹ See Stephen Dowden, *Sympathy for the Abyss: A Study in the Novel of German Modernism: Kafka, Broch, Musil, and Thomas Mann*, Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1986, pp.135-175, who views these phenomena as representing nature's ability to act in ways which had been thought to be only human, and builds an interpretation of the entire novel on the idea that it is anti-anthropocentric, and that Leverkühn's 'Doctor Fausti Weheklag' is the triumph of a non-anthropocentric vision.
modernity, and modern German culture in particular, is a key theme of the novel, and is here already present in outline.

Leverkühn’s mother, Elsbeth, is a contrasting and complementary figure with respect to his father. She comes from the neighbouring but somewhat more rural, and, arguably, more old-fashioned, area of Thuringia, which at the time of the novel was divided into a large number of small realms, in contrast to Leverkühn’s part of Saxony, which was part of the centralising and expanding Prussia. Her character is one of dignified and restrained simplicity, as opposed to her husband’s curiosity, and she even contrasts in appearance, being dark, in contrast to her husband’s blondness. Although the narrator states that her somewhat southern looks are not traceable to any known non-German ancestry, they may nevertheless be intended to hint at an idea of southern instinctiveness, as opposed to German cerebrality. This idea is perhaps connected with the fact that it is to his mother that Zeitblom attributes Leverkühn’s sense of musicality, emphasizing the beauty of her voice (‘dieser natürliche und von instinktivem Geschmack bestimmte Wohllaut’p.31), although, presumably in keeping with her modest and restrained character, she would never sing. The way that Leverkühn’s character is a combination of his mother’s innate aesthetic sense and his father’s cerebrality is stressed by the fact that he has his mother’s features for the most part, but his father’s tendency to migraine, and his eyes are somewhere in between the black of his mother’s and the clear blue of his father’s.

The town in which Zeitblom is born, and both Zeitblom and Leverkühn spend their school years, Kaisersaschern, is a creation of
The use of a fictitious, rather than a real town, allows Mann to emphasize its symbolic qualities, representing key elements of German culture. Its geographical situation is given as being in Saxony, close to Thuringia, on the River Saale, thus putting it not just in the centre of Germany, but also in the middle of the area where the Lutheran Reformation was born, as Zeitblom points out, as well as close to a number of sites important to other aspects of German culture, such as Weimar, where Goethe spent much of his career, and towns connected with Bach. Also possibly relevant are Nietzsche's connections with the area in early life, given the fact that, though Nietzsche is never mentioned, he in some ways, including his move southwards, his infection by syphilis, his descent into madness, and his being cared for thereafter by his mother, may have served as a model for Leverkühn's life. On a more abstract level, the two are perhaps connected by their ambition to break through all boundaries and go further than their contemporaries in their work.

Zeitblom, in describing the town, makes clear its historical representativeness in a number of ways. He points out that it is the burial place of an early German emperor, one who preferred Rome to Germany, and was ‘das Musterbeispiel deutscher Selbst-Antipathie’ (p.48), a characteristic which Leverkühn shares, as Zeitblom later points out (cf p.221). The architecture of the town is medieval, while the atmosphere, Zeitblom believes, conserves something of the spirit of the end of the fifteenth century, ‘Hysterie des ausgehenden Mittelalters, etwas von latenter seelischer

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10 See ibid., pp.47-55.
11 For the connection between Leverkühn and Nietzsche, see, for example, Gunilla Bergsten, Thomas Mann's 'Doctor Faustus': The Sources and Structure of the Novel, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1969, pp.55-64.
Epidemie' (p. 49), which may be meant to suggest a connection between the spiritually excited period of the Reformation in Germany, and the strained and eventually pathological nature of Leverkühn's own spiritual and mental life. As evidence of the slightly disturbed atmosphere of the town Zeitblom adduces the abundance of moderately mad and eccentric people who live there ('die vielen >>Originale<<, Sonderlinge und harmlos Halb-Gelsteskranken' p. 50), and this observation also allows Zeitblom to allude to the political situation current at the time of his writing, suggesting a connection between the persecution of non-conformity at that time, and the persecution of witches at the time of the Renaissance. Thus both the cultural and political sides of the novel's argument are made intrinsically relevant to the formative influences in Leverkühn's character.

The leading feature of Leverkühn's character is coldness, mentioned as such by Zeitblom already in the first chapter (p. 11), and signs of his emotional coldness and ironic detachment are present from very early on, during his childhood. He reacts, for example, with almost uncontrollable mirth to his father's serious reflections on his scientific enquiries, and, as an eight or nine year old, he laughs mockingly when he understands the device behind the musical canon which the family's milkmaid has taught him, with others, to perform. His emotional coldness is signalled by his ceasing to call Zeitblom by his first name, and, much of the time, by any name at all, while they are at school, an early example of an adult tendency not to address people by name, which Zeitblom mentions in the first chapter as evidence of his indifference to others (p. 11).
While an unwillingness to be compromised in a personal way with the outside can already be seen as lying behind his attitude both to people and to intellectual interests, Zeitblom's account of his primary education, which is conducted by private tutoring at home, and in which Leverkühn displays an 'überlegene Leichtigkeit' (p. 48) in his mastering of the material, indicates the possibility of what would clearly seem to be a key element of his disposition, namely pride. Zeitblom suggests that Leverkühn's attitude to learning as a child was such that it might make a teacher feel 'daß ein solcher Kopf eine Gefahr für die Bescheidenheit des Herzens bedeutet und es gar leicht zur Hoffart verführt' (p. 46). Leverkühn's pride is a key element in his later need to go beyond and excel all others in his artistic work, as well as a motif in his self-identification with the Faust figure.

The description of the time of Leverkühn's secondary education reveals what will be his abiding interests, their connections with each other and with his character. Leverkühn, at school, appears as 'das singuläre Phänomen des schlechten Schülers in Primusgestalt' (p. 61), in that he effortlessly masters the subjects studied, but without showing any interest in them. However, there is one subject which is an exception, and this is mathematics. Mathematics stands out, in Leverkühn's view, because of its occupying a place between the humanities and the natural sciences, and he expresses to Zeitblom 'daß er diese Zwischenstellung zugleich als erhöht, dominierend, universell empfand, oder, wie er sich ausdrückte, als >>das Wahre<<.' (p. 61) So a sense that mathematics is no ordinary subject, but might represent the absolute, makes it seem to him worthy of his attention. In addition to this, a preoccupation with the abstractions of order also emerges here, as
he shows, saying to Zeitblom, ‘Ordnungsbeziehungen anzuschauen ist doch schließlich das beste. Die Ordnung ist alles.’(p.61)

In his next sentence, he backs up these assertions by quoting from St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, ‘Was von Gott ist, das ist geordnet.’(p.61-2) So his refusal to take anything less than the most abstract studies of order seriously is paired with an accompanying tendency to abstract spirituality, a pairing comparable to, but even more abstract than, his father’s mystical natural science. He would also seem to be inclined to move as far as possible from any human dimension in his interests.

The other subject that attracts Leverkühn’s interest during his school period is music, though in this case it is outside school hours, and, initially, his own discovery. Though he lives with his uncle in town, who is a musical instrument maker and seller, and has extended opportunity to explore the wide range of instruments kept in the shop, which is part of the house, he shows a minimum of interest in them, accompanying Zeitblom, when he visits, on tours round the shop, but maintaining an air of detachment. However, later, Zeitblom finds Leverkühn experimenting at a small keyboard instrument which had been left in a corridor, and he has taught himself the basics of tonality, the circle of relationships between the keys, and the way to modulate between one key and another using chords which are ambiguous as to their key. The way that Leverkühn discovers music, and what he discovers about music, are indicative of why he is, and will remain, interested in it. It is the abstract, theoretical side of it, rather than the physical, practical

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side, which attracts his attention, and it is notable that he is interested in it for largely the same reasons that he is interested in mathematics, a point emphasized by what he says to Zeitblom at the time, 'Beziehung ist alles' (p.63), partially echoing what he has said about mathematics. He goes on to point out that he has found 'Daß Musik die Zweideutigkeit ist als System.' (p.63) Thus, perhaps, though the abstractness fascinates, the lack of absoluteness may be unsatisfying, and his abandoning of tonality much later may be a bid for absoluteness.

What the episode of Leverkühn's being caught at a keyboard also illustrates is the emotional side of the way he pursues his interests. He pursues them in secret, while pretending to be indifferent, and Zeitblom notes that he must surprise him into admitting what he is doing. When, for example, Zeitblom catches him at the keyboard, and he then reveals the reasons for his interest, while pretending to be indifferent, he nevertheless betrays his excitement through his red cheeks, just as he blushes when admitting to his religious interest, quoting St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. This feverishness, which Zeitblom often refers to, accompanies Leverkühn's true interests, his interest in music here being described by Zeitblom as a passion ('Leidenschaft' p.64). His uncontrolled, almost pathological, way of being interested in an area seems the counterpart of his general coldness and indifference. Rather than a warm interest in his surroundings, he is divided, feeling a cold indifference to anything other than that which appears to him the absolute, for which he feels a burning passion, of which he is ashamed, and which makes even Zeitblom feel ashamed for him (cf p.64). Here, as in the intellectual sphere, Leverkühn is characterized by a tendency to divide an area into its polar
opposites, and pursue each opposite to its extreme, a tendency which is relevant to his artistic work, but also, I shall be arguing, something Mann sees as characteristic of modern German culture in particular, both artistic and political, and modernity in general.\textsuperscript{14}

Crucial developments in Leverkühn's later education are his choice of the subjects in which to specialize at university level, first theology, and then music. The way that his motivation for these choices is presented shows them to be related to his earlier preference for mathematics. The motivation is a continued search for the absolute, nothing less than which will satisfy his pride. Leverkühn's decision to study theology at university becomes known during his last year at school, signalled by his taking up Hebrew, an optional subject at the school. He indicates to Zeitblom that he is intending it as an academic course, not as a preparation for pastoral work. Zeitblom's reaction to Leverkühn's telling him of this decision is to be shocked and afraid, understanding, as he says, 'daß er [Leverkühn] seinerseits seine Wahl aus \textit{Hochmut} getroffen hatte.' (p.112) Zeitblom relates how they had earlier discussed how philosophy can be regarded as the most basic subject, 'die Königin der Wissenschaften' (p.112), as Zeitblom puts it, and his regard for his friend's abilities are such that he has imagined him studying something no less exalted, but he is nevertheless taken aback by the fact that Leverkühn has actually gone beyond him, and found a subject which might be seen as even more absolute than philosophy, to which philosophy could be seen as an ancillary discipline. Zeitblom also believes that the subordinate role that music has played to religion in earlier periods makes theology attractive to Leverkühn, as he would want to be dedicated to an area which could

\textsuperscript{14} For Leverkühn's lack of a centre ground, see pp.19, 21 and 35.
be considered superior to music, as well as to all other subjects (p.114). So this decision of Leverkühn's not only emphasizes the extent of his pride, but also alludes to the issue of music's emancipation from religion early in the modern era and Leverkühn's doubts about whether to celebrate this development, which will be relevant to his career as a composer.

Leverkühn's eventual decision to dedicate himself to music, and specifically composition, which he discusses in a letter to his friend and former tutor Kretzschmar, reproduced in large part by Zeitblom, is related to many of the same considerations involved in his favouring of mathematics and theology. He points out, for example, how both his cultural background and his personal perspective contribute to making a move towards music relevant to his interests, agreeing with Kretzschmar that music is close to theology:

'Mein Luthertum stimmt dem zu, denn es sieht in Theologie und Musik benachbarte, nahe verwandte Sphären, und persönlich ist mir obendrein die Musik immer als eine magische Verbindung aus Theologie und der so unterhaltenden Mathematik erschienen.' (p.177)

That music is a culmination of Leverkühn's personal interests can be seen as an attempt to place him at the centre of modern German culture, and to explain the prominence of music in German culture with reference to the way it may be seen as expressive of many other areas within the culture.\(^{15}\) In Leverkühn's describing the connection between theology and music as 'magic', attention is

again drawn to a juxtaposition of systematic abstract categorization, and that which utterly escapes it.

Leverkühn goes on, in the same letter, to address the artistic status of music and the relevance of this to his character. He hesitates about his suitability for art on the following grounds:


This naivety which Leverkühn refers to might be understood as the warmth that he lacks, the inability to identify with the human sphere, and as the humility that he lacks, his inability to accept that which escapes his attempts to capture it analytically and yet is part of, rather than utterly transcending, the material he subjects to his analysis. He himself specifies the difficulties he foresees himself having, by saying that he knows

‘daß sie [music] über das Schema, die Übereinkunft, die Überlieferung, darüber, was Einer vom Andern lernt, über den Trick, über das >Wie es gemacht wird< weit hinausgeht, aber unleugbar ist von alldem doch immer viel in ihr einschlägig, und ich sehe es kommen (denn das Antizipieren liegt leider oder glücklicherweise auch in meiner Natur), daß ich mich vor der Abgeschmacktheit, die das tragende Gerüst, die ermöglicliche Festigkeitssubstanz auch des genialen Kunstwerks ist, vor dem, was Gemeingut, Kultur daran ist, vor den Gepflogenheiten in der Erzielung des Schönen — daß ich mich davor genieren, davor erröten, daran ermatten,
Like Heinrich Lee, Leverkuhn cannot accept convention in art. He has no interest in that which does not result from logical first principles, and which he could not therefore discover for himself. That which is shared, but seems unmotivated from an absolute, logical point of view, he would like to do without, and his pride would forbid him from making use of. However, this rejection of 'Gemeingut' leaves him in danger of a radical isolation, as he is forbidding himself the language with which he might communicate with others. Equally, however, Leverkuhn's dilemma, while personal, is not only personal, but characteristic of what Mann is presenting as the problematics of modern art, the issue of how it communicates while subject to a perceived need to dismantle its conventional language. This generality of Leverkuhn's attitude, and its link to modern sensibility, are emphasized when he asks, in the same letter, 'Warum müssen fast alle Dinge mir als ihre eigene Parodie erscheinen? Warum muß es mir vorkommen, als ob fast alle, nein, alle Mittel und Konvenienzen der Kunst heute nur noch zur Parodie taugten?'(p.181)

Thus, in late modernity, as in Leverkuhn's mind, that which has been done before, and understood, is only fit to be laughed at if done again.

The issue of Leverkuhn's isolation, and incapacity for love, is, in terms of his character, the main theme of his mature life. A noticeable indicator of his withdrawal into isolation is his use of markedly archaic language, a striking early example of which is the letter (pp.187-193) in which he confesses to Zeitblom his visit to a brothel in Leipzig under possibly diabolical guidance, and his brief
and inconclusive encounter with a prostitute there. The language here, as well as highlighting Leverkühn's isolation, also again reminds the reader of the Reformation and Renaissance period, connecting Leverkühn, in this episode, perhaps to the Faust figure, given the association of Leipzig with Faustian adventure.

The encounter in this episode is one of many in which the adult Leverkühn looks for love in various ways, and fails to find it, and, on occasion, is punished, or punishes, for the attempt. The prostitute known as Esmeralda, who approaches him in the brothel, appears again when he tracks her down to Preßburg, then in Hungary, and consummates his relationship with her, accepting that he will contract the disease which she has warned him she has. He also becomes fond of the company of a violinist, Rudl Schwerdtfeger, who is later murdered by a former lover, after he has become engaged to someone to whom Leverkühn had sent him to propose on his own behalf. Zeitblom suspects that Leverkühn has planned that Schwerdtfeger's death should happen, to punish Schwerdtfeger for being too close to him. He develops an attachment to his young nephew, Nepomuk, or 'Echo', late in the novel, who then dies of a violent illness. Leverkühn interprets this as the devil punishing him for breaking the agreement, made earlier in Italy, by which the devil provides him with inspiration but forbids him love. As much as the incompatibility between Leverkühn's approach to art, and love, is made explicit in his agreement with the devil, it is the result of attitudes Leverkühn has always taken, rather than something which only starts with the agreement, as the devil himself points out ('Solltest dich auch nicht so verquanten, daß du tust, als ob du mich nicht schon lange erwartet hättest. Weißt doch so gut wie ich, daß unser Verhältnis denn doch einmal nach einer
Aussprache drängt.'p.303) His incapacity for love is the consequence of his rejection of common ground with others, and, the novel suggests, part of his configuration as an artist of modernity.

Leverkühn does show signs of longing for what he has lost, both in his failed attempts to find love at a human level, and in his apparent desire for a return to innocence and connectedness. His selection of his abode in later life, the Schweigestills’ farm, apart from being a search for secludedness, may also be seen in this light. The farm’s multiple correspondences to his childhood farm in Saxony are pointed out in detail by Zeitblom (pp.36-38), and Leverkühn even renames the farm dog in his new home after the one in his old. In addition, the rural, comparatively untechnological, Catholic, Bavarian setting of his new home is arguably as close as Mann comes to realizing an environment with pre-modern traits in the novel. This apparent longing for an innocence that he is not part of parallels his plea, towards the end, for salvation, despite his diabolical pact, which I shall discuss further later in the chapter. Thus Leverkühn’s character during the novel is made that of the modern and, particularly, German, artist, in whom the divisions which Mann presents as characteristic of modern art manifest themselves at the level of psychology, the sundering of emotion and structure on the artistic level corresponding to a sundering of thought and feeling in the individual, which leads to an incapacity for the meaning-making conjunction of head and heart which allows interpersonal relationship.

Apart from Leverkühn, the only other character who is continually present during the novel is Zeitblom, who is a family friend and school friend of Leverkühn, and later a kind of informal
assistant. Zeitblom, in a very general way, provides a modest foil for Leverkühn's genius, but his function is at the same time more specific than this. Zeitblom is partly characterized by what is presented as a kind of pre-modern innocence, which is indicated in a number of ways. This makes him distinctly uneasy about Leverkühn's transgression of boundaries, but his uneasiness is instinctive, rather than reasoned, and he is often nevertheless carried away by an admiration of Leverkühn's intellectual prowess. Thus he might be regarded as representative of the way that an older, but not fully articulated attitude intuits the dangers of the excesses of the modern, but is unable to counter its apparent logical rigour. As well as being a link to the pre-modern, he is also a representative of the less radical, humanist, German intellectual tradition, his own principal interests being in Classical languages, and is thus also a participator in modern culture in a moderate way.\(^{16}\) As such, both artistically, but also politically, he represents the failure of modern German bourgeois culture to defend its own values during the period covered by the novel, and I shall say more on this side of his later in the chapter.

Zeitblom himself, early in the novel, emphasizes the importance of his Catholic upbringing to the formation of his character, and states that he has felt this upbringing to be in harmony with his humanism and love of the arts.\(^{17}\) He ascribes the


\(^{17}\) For an identification between Zeitblom and Erasmus, see Ulrike Hermanns, *Thomas Manns Roman 'Doktor Faustus' im Lichte von Quellen und Kontexten*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994, pp.143-145, and for the significance in the novel of the opposition of Erasmus' humanism to Luther, see ibid., pp.135-161. For a similar discussion, and an identification of Leverkühn with Luther in opposition to Zeitblom's Erasmus, see Hebert Lehnert, *Thomas Mann — Fiction, Mythos, Religion*, Stuttgart, etc.: Kohlhammer, 1965, pp.167-170 and 196.
ease with which he is able to reconcile these two sets of influences to
his growing up in Kaisersaschern, a town rich in pre-Reformation
monuments, which recall a time, it is implied, when religion and
non-religious learning were not considered to be in conflict
('Zwischen diesen beiden Persönlichkeitselementen [Catholicism and
the humanities] herrschte stets voller Einklang, wie er denn wohl
ohne Schwierigkeit zu bewahren ist, wenn man, wie ich, in einer alt-
städtischer Umgebung aufwuchs, deren Erinnerungen und
Baudenkmale weit in vorschismatische Zeiten, in eine christliche
Einheitswelt zurückreichen.' p.13) The end of the 'Einheitswelt' that
Zeitblom looks back to, that is, the coming of the Reformation and
Renaissance period, brings about not only a schism between
churches, but also a conflict between religion and science, and
Zeitblom shows his instinctive mistrust of what he might view as the
more irreverent side of academic pursuit when discussing
Leverkühn's father's scientific experimentation ('Übrigens will ich
hinzufügen, daß ich dieses Mißtrauen einer religiös-
spiritualistischen Epoche gegen die aufkommende Leidenschaft, die
Geheimnisse der Natur zu erforschen, immer vollkommen
verstanden habe.' p.20) Zeitblom particularly objects to the
overtones of magic in Leverkühn's father's experiments, so that it is
a sense of impious unrestrainedness which he feels particularly
suspicious of.

Zeitblom shows himself in sympathy with another aspect of
the old when he takes the part of King Ludwig II of Bavaria in an
argument with Rudi Schwerdtfeger, the violinist, who supports the
official position that the king was diagnosed as mad by specialists
and interned for that reason. Zeitblom's appreciation of the bond
between the king and his rural subjects, and rejection of what he
sees as the bourgeois cynicism of his persecutors, calling their action, for example, 'eine brutale Philisterei' (p. 569), suggests both his sense of a kind of innocence, and lost cohesion, in the arrangement he is mourning, but he is also insisting that its sweeping away was not necessary or inevitable, and that the king could have continued his reign in his own way, even though the events discussed are part of the nineteenth century, and thus not in the distant past at the time of the conversation. The idea that events need not, in principle, take the form of an inexorable, unidirectional progression becomes important late in the novel, being relevant to an assessment of Leverkühn's artistic career and to German political history.

However, Zeitblom is more often inclined to bow to the claims of the modern, whether through awe of its energy, or in deference to its seemingly ineluctable logic. While this happens both at a political and an artistic level, and I shall discuss these instances later in the chapter, on a personal level this manifests itself in Zeitblom's devotion to Leverkühn's character and genius, in his helplessly admiring precisely those qualities which he simultaneously suspects as being sinister, or even demonic. He describes this contradiction, for example, when recounting how Leverkühn, at secondary school, comes top of the class, despite showing little interest in the subjects:

Ich sage, daß mich das ängstigte; aber wie imponierend, wie anziehend erschien es mir doch auch wieder, wie verstärkte es meine Hingabe an ihn, der es freilich — wird man verstehen, warum? — auch etwas wie Schmerz, wie Hoffnungslosigkeit beimischte. (p. 61)

Zeitblom is a figure of weakness but also of insight, attracted to Leverkühn's exceptional abilities and energies, accepting, often, his
determination to break through limitations but sensing danger and
coming catastrophe, even from early on. Zeitblom is the character
who senses catastrophe, would not have produced it himself, and
yet cannot prevent it, and even in a small way supports the
tendencies which produce it, and in this attitude in his dealings with
Leverkühn he also represents a large portion of the German
population in their dealings with culture and politics in the early
twentieth century, as I shall suggest again in connection with other
episodes later in the chapter.

Music

The theoretical core of the novel is the treatment of music,
and this consists of both reported speeches and conversations, and
of descriptions of Leverkühn's compositions, which occur through
the course of the novel. The basic framework of theoretical ideas is
laid in the lectures of Wendell Kretzschmar, Leverkühn's piano
teacher, who becomes his music tutor and mentor. Some
information on the development of Leverkühn's ideas on music, and
on his development as a composer, is then given, leading up to the
articulation of the impasse which he has reached, his lack of
inspiration, which takes place in his conversation with the devil,
which is also where a resolution to the problem is promised, at the
price of Leverkühn's being forbidden love. The theme is then
treated mainly in the form of Zeitblom's description and discussion
of Leverkühn's later pieces, for which, it is implied, diabolical help
has been secured, and reaches a final culmination in the speech
which Leverkühn gives at what is supposed to be a preview of his
last work, just before he collapses into insanity, at which he makes
known his wish for salvation, despite his diabolical pact. Thus Leverkühn’s dilemma as an avant-garde artist, the difficulty of creating while regarding all conventions as outmoded and unusable, is exposed, the solution which he finds, by means of taking his anti-conventional approach to its limits, is explained, and his regret at the solution he has chosen is finally expressed.

Wendell Kretzschmar is a German-American from Pennsylvania, who has been working as an organist and ‘Kapellmeister’ in various German-speaking towns, a career perhaps meant to be redolent of that of Bach, and he is on the way to being a composer himself. Both the American connection and the Bach allusions may be meant to associate him with ideas of revolutionary innovation, politically, and artistically, respectively, and religiously, in both cases, given the strong association of German Pennsylvania and Bach with Protestantism.

A particularly notable feature of Kretzschmar is his sometimes debilitating stutter, which alternates with stretches of speech which pass by, by contrast, ‘in ... nicht geheuer Flottheit’. (p. 68) Kretzschmar’s stutter seems intended to be indicative of an imbalance between an almost over-active mental life, and a physical fluency not quite able to keep up with it, something which corresponds to Leverkühn’s own tension between his intense cerebral activity and his incapacity to sustain it comfortably, which his migraines betoken. This disproportionate cerebrality also links with the strongly theoretical bias to Leverkühn’s fascination with music, and his imbalance in favour of the theoretical is one of the themes of this section of the novel.

Kretzschmar gives a series of poorly attended but well received public lectures in Kalsersaschern at the time when
Leverkühn and Zeitblom are at school. Kretzschmar's first lecture is on the topic of why Beethoven wrote no third movement to his piano sonata Opus 111, a piece of which the second movement is characterized by an exceptionally long and complex development of a very simple theme. Kretzschmar dismisses Beethoven's own reported explanation, that he had not had time, and then outlines the circumstances under which the sonata was written, including the fact that he wrote it, together with two others, at a time when his deafness had prevented him from performing his own pieces, and no significant work of his had been published for several years, giving rise to rumours that he was creatively burnt out. Kretzschmar then describes the way Beethoven's friends and admirers react to the new piece. Although they have accepted and admired his mature work, they see his late work as evincing a process of disintegration, involving 'nichts anderes mehr als eine Ausartung immer vorhanden gewesener Neigungen, einen Exzeß an Grübelei und Spekulation, ein Übermaß an Minutiosität und musikalischer Wissenschaftlichkeit' (p. 69), producing the following effect in the second movement of the sonata in question:

— ebenso habe Beethovens Künstlertum sich selbst überwachsen: aus wohnlichen Regionen der Überlieferung sei es vor erschrocken nachblickenden Menschenaugen in Sphären des ganz und gar nur noch Persönlichen aufgestiegen, — ein in Absolutheit schmerzlich isoliertes, durch die Ausgestorbenheit seines Gehörs auch noch vom Sinnlichen isoliertes Ich ... (p. 70)

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So, his contemporaries blame Beethoven's loss of hearing for the exacerbation of a tendency to excessive inwardness and deficient outwardness, and interpret the resulting extreme abstraction as an expression of absolute subjectivity.

Kretzschmar wishes to elaborate on and refine these conclusions, while by no means dismissing them, by suggesting that it is in fact Beethoven's middle period which is most characterized by the idea of unbounded subjectivity, this being expressed by means of the use of harmony, as opposed to polyphony, which Kretzschmar qualifies as objective, and an absolute personalizing of all the conventional content, deconventionalizing it thereby ('welth mehr sei er damals bedacht gewesen, alles Konventionelle, Formel- und Floskelhafte, wovon die Musik ja voll sei, vom persönlichen Ausdruck verziehen zu lassen, es in die subjektive Dynamik einzuschmelzen.'p.70) In Beethoven's late work, Kretzschmar claims, the attitude to convention is rather to allow it to appear in a completely depersonalized form:

Unberührt, unverwandelt vom Subjektiven trete die
Konvention im Spätwerk öfters hervor, in einer Kahlheit oder, man möge sagen, Ausgeblasenheit, Ich-Verlassenheit, welche nun wieder schaurig-majestätischer wirke, als jedes persönliche Wagnis.(pp.70-1)

Kretzschmar characterizes this new relationship between convention and subjectivity by saying that it is determined by death, and then elaborates on this claim:

Wo Größe und Tod zusammenträten, erklärte er
[Kretzschmar], da entstehe eine der Konvention geneigte Sachlichkeit, die an Souveränität den herrschsten Subjektivismus hinter sich lasse, weil darin das Nur-
The implication is that, after overcoming convention by dissolving it in unbounded personalism, Beethoven takes this overcoming of a tradition a step further by then completely depersonalizing convention, so that it represents instead the impersonal, mythic and collective, to greatly majestic effect, as Kretzschmar sees it. So the traditional interaction between the personal and the collective in convention is sundered by producing first the absolute personal, then the absolute impersonal, thus killing the artistic tradition in question. The idea of the impersonal collective and mythic may be a kind of anticipation of what Leverkühn will achieve, who will take the impersonal further, aiming for the impersonal and mechanical, rather than just the impersonal and collective-mythical. However, the fact that the end of the process is the negation of the personal, however majestic the effect, is bound to be worrying for those, such as Zeitblom, who value the personal. That the impersonal results from a development on the immediately preceding stage of absolute personalism suggests that the pursuit of the unboundedly personal may be attended by unanticipated dangers, if they be understood as dangers, in the imminent birth of its opposite. So a kind of dialectical process is being presented here, which starts in a wish to overcome convention, passes through a stage of absolute subjectivity, and leads to a final stage of absolute impersonality.

That the aim is to kill an art form in this process is made clearer in what follows, when Kretzschmar plays the sonata through on the piano, accompanying the playing with his own simultaneous
vocal commentary, a scene perhaps again meant to suggest a bias in favour of the intellectual over the sensory, which is a recurring theme. A recurrent motif in the movement, which, according to Zeitblom, sounds like ‘Leb'-mir wohl’(p.72), among other things, and which he understands as a kind of farewell, after the manifold turbulence of the variations in which it features, comes back in the calmer section at the end in a modified form, with a couple of extra notes, so that it now, among other things, sounds like ‘Leb'-mir ewig wohl’(p.73), and seems comforting to Zeitblom.19 Kretzschmar concludes the talk by saying that a third movement is impossible because Beethoven in the second movement has brought not just the sonata in question, but the sonata as a genre, even, to a definitive end:

Und wenn er [Kretzschmar] sage: >>Die Sonate<<, so meine er nicht diese nur, in c-moll, sondern er meine die Sonate überhaupt, als Gattung, als überlieferte Kunstform: sie selber sei hier zu Ende, ans Ende geführt, sie habe ihr Schicksal erfüllt, ihr Ziel erreicht, über das hinaus es nicht gehe, sie hebe und löse sich auf, sie nehme Abschied, — das Abschiedswinken des vom cis melodisch getrüsteten d-g-g-Motivs, es sei ein Abschied auch dieses Sinnes, ein Abschied, groß wie das Stück, der Abschied von der Sonate.(p.74)

So according to Kretzschmar, Beethoven has actually exhausted the possibilities of an entire art form, apparently with self-awareness, and taken it away from posterity, in an irreversible fashion, as a possible form of artistic expression. Zeitblom’s perception here, that

19 See Hans Rudolf Vaget, ‘Thomas Mann und James Joyce: Zur Frage des Modernismus im Doktor Faustus’, Thomas Mann Jahrbuch 2 (1989) pp.121-150, who points out that another word used to illustrate how the motif sounds, ‘Wiesengrund’, is Adorno’s middle name, and a recognition by Mann of Adorno’s help in this section.
the modified form of the farewell motif has a different, reconciliatory force, which Kretzschmar misses, is notable, as it seems to anticipate a similar reaction of Zeitblom's to Leverkühn's final piece, 'Doctor Faustl Weheklag', which is presented as an attempt to put an end to the Western musical tradition as a whole, and even to the Western humanistic tradition as a whole. Zeitblom in that case sees a ray of hope at the end of the piece, a suggestion of something not quite final about the closing down of the tradition, and his similar reaction here may be intended to provide a hint of dissent from the idea that a cultural tradition can simply be closed down, and made impossible for the future, in the way Kretzschmar describes, by a process of systematic undermining of its constituent conventions.

Kretzschmar returns to a similar theme in his second lecture, entitled 'Beethoven und die Fuge'. This time he talks about rumours which had abounded among Beethoven's contemporaries that he was incapable of writing a fugue, and how at the time this was considered a serious fault in any composer, the fugue being a fairly heavily conventionalized, older style of composition, characterized by the use of counterpoint, rather than the harmony which Beethoven favoured. Eventually, after several rather half-hearted attempts at writing fugues, Beethoven decides seriously to tackle writing them, and produces his Fugue-Overture Opus 124, and the Missa Solemnis, of which the Gloria and the Creed are fugues.

In order to illustrate the degree of struggle and anguish which the writing of fugues costs Beethoven, Kretzschmar relates an anecdote concerning two friends of Beethoven who visited him in the countryside, in Mödling, in the summer of 1819, while he was composing the Creed of the Missa Solemnis. These friends learn on
entering the house that the maids have left that morning in protest at Beethoven’s unreasonable behaviour, since he had refused to take his meal of the evening before when it was ready, and had scolded them for being asleep, and having let the meal be ruined, on entering the kitchen during the night, at approaching one o’clock, shouting, ‘Könnt ihr denn nicht eine Stunde mit mir wachen?’ (p.77) The two friends hear him in his room, and he ‘sang, heulte und stampfte über dem Credo’(p.78). When he comes to the door of his room, they are horrified by his appearance:

In verwahrloster Kleidung, die Gesichtszüge so verstört, daß es Angst einflößte, die lauschenden Augen voll wirrer Abwesenheit, hatte er sie angestarrt und den Eindruck gemacht, als komme er aus einem Kampf auf Leben und Tod mit allen feindlichen Geistern des Kontrapunkts. (p.78)

This scene of crisis has clear New Testament resonances, suggesting that Beethoven is going through a kind of Passion, but more a negative Passion, and thus Faustian, like that which Leverkühn himself will experience, in which the artist struggles with and defeats an art form, thereby, ultimately, achieving supreme artistic acclaim from a world which values novelty above all, but at the cost of the artist’s own equilibrium, and sense of communion with the world. The implication of using the Passion as a metaphor is that the artist is paying the price on behalf of others, that is, of the society which conceives of art in this way, and, more generally, lives in the existential malaise of which the modern attitude to art is a symptom.

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Kretzschmar goes on to talk about Beethoven’s ‘Monstrum aller Quartett-Musik’, especially the final fugue section, which was so shocking to contemporaries, that the publisher had insisted on its being replaced with an alternative section. Kretzschmar describes it as ‘ein wildes Handgemenge ins Höchste und Tiefste verirrter, völlig verschieden figuriert, einander durch irregulären Übergang unter teuflischen Dissonanzen durchkreuzender Instrumentalstimmen’(p.79) and suggests that Beethoven’s deafness contributed to his daring, since he could not hear what he was composing. He remarks on how this combination of intellectual audaciousness and a freedom from the constraints of the sensory nevertheless set the pattern for those who would follow:

Erschütternd nannte es der Redner [Kretzschmar], wie hier das sinnliche Gebrechen die geistige Kühnheit gesteigert und der Zukunft den Schönheitssinn vorgeschrieben habe.(p.79)

Kretzschmar however does not consider it adequate to view the piece retrospectively as being unproblematic in terms of form. Rather he declares ‘daß etwas wie Haß und Vergewaltigung in dieser Art, die Fuge zu traktieren, erkennbar sei’(p.79), and links this attitude to Beethoven’s lack of appreciation for the great composer of fugues, Bach. Kretzschmar tries to explain Beethoven’s hostile attitude to Bach, which he qualifies as paradoxical, since a greater contemporary appreciation of Bach would have made Beethoven’s work more easily understandable, by bringing up the idea of the religious origins of music:

Die Fuge gehöre ihrem Geiste nach einem liturgischen Zeitalter der Musik an, dem Beethoven schon fern gestanden habe; er sei der Großmeister einer Profan-Epoche der Musik gewesen, in der diese Kunst sich vom Kultischen ins
Kulturelle emanzipiert habe. Das sei aber eine wahrscheinlich immer nur zeitweilige und niemals restlose Emanzipation. (p.80)

Kretzschmar illustrates the nature of the only partial emancipation of modern secular music from religion by giving examples of nineteenth century classical music which shows signs of a yearning towards the religious, and includes Beethoven’s Missa Solemnis, mentioning Beethoven’s remarks to the effect that the whole work might be performed a capella, and that unaccompanied vocal performance was the only true ecclesiastical style. Thus, according to Kretzschmar, Beethoven reveals ‘das nie erlöschende Heimverlangen der befreiten Musik nach ihren kultisch gebundenen Ursprüngen’ (p.81) and his great effort with the fugue was ‘das Ringen eines großen Dynamikers und Emotionalisten um die kunstreich-kühle Satzform gewesen, welche in einem strengen und hochabstrakten, von der Zahl, dem klingenden Zeitverhältnis beherrschten Jenseits der Leidenschaften auf den Knien Gott, den Ordner des bahnreichen Kosmos, gepriesen habe.’ (p.81)

So Beethoven has been struggling to achieve a motivated conventionalism, as evinced in fugal music, but, as Kretzschmar’s talk suggests, has tended rather to swing from his native subjectivism to a kind of pure objectivism, devoid of the personal, and horrific because of its lack of personal modulation. Thus Beethoven, in his attempt at spiritual music, appears to yearn for but not to achieve a harmonious fusing of subjective and objective elements, which the religious music of an earlier epoch exhibits. However, it is also notable that that religious music discussed is of the Reformation and Renaissance, admired by Luther, as Kretzschmar mentions, and already shows something of a
formalistic bias in its spirituality, similar to Leverkühn's father's. A series of dislocations between the subjective and objective in music may be suggested in this way, with the spiritual element perhaps already under strain, but still prominent, at the Renaissance stage, and formalism and emotionalism alternating in stages, sometimes within the work of the same composer, and creating an ever widening gap. A sense of an increasing disjunction in the modern cultural psyche, and of a yearning back towards a lost coherence, similar to that I have suggested exists in Der Grüne Heinrich, is hinted at, though, in this case, the stage of music before the beginnings of any imbalance is not named or described, and while this stage could not be later than the medieval, the novel is not committed to its actually having existed in a real rather than ideal sense. Leverkühn will eventually also try to express something spiritual and religious in his final piece, but, like Beethoven, he will be struggling against his tendencies to separate the subjective and the objective, and he will be contending with their even more radical separations in the avant-garde culture of his time.

Talking about the lecture to Zeitblom on the way home afterwards and at school the next day Leverkühn reveals that he has been struck by the idea of cultic and cultural epochs, and he has further developed, beyond Kretzschmar's own remarks, the notion that it is the emancipation of art from its religious context which has produced the absolute solemnity and sense of suffering which Beethoven's struggles represent, and that this need not be its permanent condition ('daß die Trennung der Kunst vom liturgischen Ganzen, ihre Befreiung und Erhöhung ins Einsam-Persönliche und Kulturell-Selbstzweckhafte sie mit einer bezuglosen Feierlichkeit, einem absoluten Ernst, einem Leidenspathos belastet

219
habe, das in Beethovens schreckhafter Erscheinung im Türrahmen zum Bilde werde, und das nicht ihr bleibendes Schicksal, ihre immerwährende Seelenverfassung zu sein brauche.’pp.81-2) He imagines a coming return of the arts to the service of something higher, but not necessarily the Church. Here his thought becomes somewhat open-ended, since although he is sure that ‘die Kultur-Idee eine geschichtlich transitorische Erscheinung sei’(p.82), he is not sure what is to replace it, and is evasive about Zeitblom’s suggestion that the opposite of culture is barbarity, first putting forward the idea of a kind of Hegelian dialectic, in which culture and barbarity may be opposite, but may be followed by something which is neither. On another occasion, however, he proposes that the modern epoch is in fact not an epoch of culture, being too self-conscious for this, but rather a culture of well-manneredness (‘Gesittung’p.82), while linking polyphonic and contrapuntal music to culture, and homophonic, melodic music to ‘Gesittung’, and suggesting that more barbarity might be necessary for culture to become possible again. What is common to these speculations is the desire to enter into a new cultural epoch, and an indifference towards what exactly its characteristics will be, as long as it is new. Though in this case the speculations refer in particular to art, the use of terms such as ‘barbarity’ perhaps indicates a potential political dimension, and later in the novel discussions at, for example, parties in Munich, which I shall discuss in more detail later, show something of the same pattern, but with reference to politics. Mann seems keen to show that an abandonment of previously held principles in favour of the unknown can be a dangerous undertaking, especially where the novelty of the coming
state is adjudged more important than the actual content it might have.

Kretzschmar’s third lecture is entitled ‘Die Musik und das Auge’, and approaches the issue of ways in which music addresses the visual faculty rather than the sense of hearing. He describes the way in which much musical terminology derives from musical notation rather than sound, assures the audience that an expert can gauge the quality of a piece of music by a glance at the score, and explains how composers have always incorporated into their music elements which were unlikely to be detectable to the listener but which would strike the reader of the score, giving the example of the Dutch polyphonic composers including conceits such as making one voice in a piece run parallel with another which it would be identical to if read backwards. Kretzschmar uses these examples to argue that music is characterized by an innate unsensuous, even antisensuous, ascetic quality, that music is the most intellectual or spiritual of all the arts (‘die geistigste aller Künste’ p.85), and illustrates this condition at its most extreme with reference to music which is not intended for performance at all, such as a canon by J. B. Bach, developed from a theme by Frederick the Great, but not designed for voices or any particular instruments. However, despite this wish to be perceived in an altogether non-sensual, even non-emotional, way, being unable to escape from the world of the senses, it compensates for its frustrated tendency by seeking the most sensuously striking realizations possible, actualizing this with the orchestra. The piano however is an instrument which allows music to be performed in a way as close to the abstract as possible, and Kretzschmar cites Wagner enthusing about the ‘reinen Spektren des
Daseins'(p.86) which he has heard in the performance of a Bach piano sonata.

This talk seems designed to emphasize the place of music in the novel's scheme of ideas, since its cerebrality and spirituality, and its compensatory extreme sensuousness, make it particularly emblematic, as an art form, of the predicament of German culture as Mann is attempting to portray it, with a tendency to embody conflicting extremes. The mention of Wagner, and his description as 'Massenerschütterer'(p.86), also reminds the reader of the way that music, as well as, and even at the same time as, representing spiritual ideas, can be used to produce effects of emotional manipulation, and the disjunction of the coexisting intellectual and emotional impulses might be seen as ominous in the light of the political parallels with art which the novel implies. These same characteristics of disjunction also characterize the novel's understanding of modern culture generally, the modern artist's character, and Leverkühn's character in particular.

A fourth lecture of Kretzschmar's is recounted, finally, which is about music and the elemental. Kretzschmar this time starts with the generalization that music has always had the tendency to refer to and celebrate the primitive elements from which it has developed. This is manifested, he says, in Wagner's Ring Cycle, where Wagner exploits it for the representation of his mythical cosmogony, as well as in work by Beethoven and Bach. Bruckner, he says, would clear his mind by sitting at the organ and playing a series of simple chords. He then describes what he supposes the original music was, a kind of howling, and follows by describing early forms of music, including early medieval, in which there was no harmony, and no fixed rhythm, and suggests that contemporary
music shows some signs of an impulse to return to this condition, music being particularly capable of leaving behind its centuries of development, and starting again from scratch, in a new self-discovery. Kretzschmar exemplifies this with a long anecdote about a German immigrant to Pennsylvania, called Johann Conrad Beißel, who, having come under the influence of Pietists while still in Germany, founds a small sect of Anabaptists in the New World, called the ‘Wiedertäufer des Siebenten Tages’ (p. 90), and, after a time, devises a musical system by which to compose accompaniments to his own writings and those of his followers. Having had little formal education, and having even taught himself how to read, his system bears little relation to conventional Western musical practice, and, in its rigid simplicity, produces an other-worldly effect when performed by members of the sect.

The idea of a giving up of cultural traditions, and a return to what are imagined to be first principles, is not in fact unique to music, but rather a key element of modern cultural thinking, and Mann indicates this by the different strands of allusion in the Beißel story. He includes hints at the religious starting again of Protestantism, a very radical form of which Beißel pursues, and the American background suggests the political starting again of the United States of America, the constitution of which is a major document of Enlightenment political theory, and in the founding of which Protestant culture, in the form of the legacy of the Pilgrim Fathers, among others, was important. Given the Reformation’s substantially, if not exclusively, German origins, and given the musicians who are mentioned in connection with the idea of cultural starting again, such as Bach, Beethoven, and Wagner, the strong connection between this kind of thinking and Germany is
emphasized. The idea of starting again from reconstructed first principles, which are thought to be self-evident, is followed by the reelaboration of a system to replace the discarded cultural tradition on lines thought out by an individual, using basic logical principles. Beißel’s musical system illustrates this, dividing the notes of the scale into ‘Herren’ and ‘Diener’ (p. 92) and inventing straightforward rules for their application. When Leverkühn comes to use a system of twelve-tone serialism, this could be seen as a far more sophisticated employment of the same idea, namely, inventing a unitary system, obeying mechanical rules, to replace the non-mechanical edifice of a musical tradition. The tendency of these philosophies of starting again to be accompanied by certain apocalyptic expectations may be implied by the name of the sect (the Anabaptists of the Seventh Day), and so the fact that Leverkühn himself produces major composition with an apocalyptic theme, the ‘Apocalypsis cum figuris’, again points to the connection with Leverkühn’s own work. It is perhaps also notable that the presumed first state, in such a theory, is an imagined reconstruction, rather than anything factual, as may be implied by Kretzschmar’s guess that when music started, singing was ‘ein Heulen über mehrere Tonstufen weg’ (p. 88), something not supported by any evidence, so that what the theory postulates as origins may not actually relate to any real older form of life.

Again, if these ideas, dealt with in terms of art, are applied to the political sphere, the notion of returning to an imagined primitivism and then building up a new system on the basis of simple, mechanical, and rigidly applied rules, might be understood as applying to strands of political thought of the early twentieth century, and that this connection is intended becomes clearer in the
political conversations reported by Zeitblom, which I shall discuss later.

The themes which this lecture introduces, and their relation to Leverkühn, receive further elaboration in the form of the conversation which takes place between Leverkühn and Zeitblom on their way home. They amuse themselves over the Beißel story, which reminds them of a quotation from Terence, 'Mit Vernunft albern zu handeln.' (p.95) Zeitblom however notices that Leverkühn's mockery is qualified by a personal distancing, allowing him to admire what Beißel has done. He says, 'Wenigstens hatte er Ordnungssinn, und sogar eine alberne Ordnung ist immer noch besser als gar keine.' (p.95) Zeitblom objects, 'Du willst nicht im Ernst ... ein so absurdes Ordnungsdiktat, einen so kindlichen Rationalismus in Schutz nehmen, wie die Erfindung der Herren und Diener.' (pp.95-6) He tells Leverkühn to imagine what the hymns must have sounded like. Leverkühn replies, 'Jedenfalls nicht sentimental ... sondern streng gesetzmäßig, und das lob' ich mir.' (p.96) This passage emphasizes Leverkühn's willingness to adopt any order, even the most rigid and eccentric, rather than none at all, and can perhaps be read also as Leverkühn's society's preparedness to grasp after any kind of order in the anxiety to avoid a chaos seeming to be attendant on the casting off of older forms.\(^\text{21}\)

\(^{21}\) For the parallel between the artificial order which Leverkühn here wants to impose in art in the wake of the destruction of artistic conventions, and the similar venture on the political level, see Herbert Lehnert, 'Nachwort:  *Doktor Faustus*, ein moderner Roman mit offenem historischen Horizont', *Thomas Mann Jahrbuch* 2 (1989) pp.163-177. For a similar point about the difference between the artist submitting to a preestablished institutional order, and, on the other hand, creating a personal order out of the freedom produced by the discarding of the preestablished order, the humility of the first approach and pride of the second, see Dieter Borchmeyer, 'Bescheidenheit contra Absolutheit in der Kunst: Ein alternatives ästhetisches Modell im *Doktor Faustus*', in Werner Röcke (ed.), *Thomas Mann: 'Doktor Faustus': 1947-1997*, Bern, etc.: Peter Lang, 2001, pp.263-273.
Leverkühn and Zeitblom continue to discuss the Beißel music, noting that the considerable freedom and even sensuous charm in some of its areas contrast with the rigidity and law-governedness in others. Leverkühn explains his view of the function of laws in music:

‘Das Gesetz, jedes Gesetz, wirkt erkältend, und die Musik hat soviel Eigenwärme, Stallwärme, Kuhwärme, möchte ich sagen, daß sie allerlei gesetzliche Abkühlung brauchen kann — und auch selber immer danach verlangt hat.’(p.96)

To Zeitblom’s suggestion that in Beißel’s music certain aspects, particularly the unusual style of singing, must have restored all the ‘Kuhwärme’ which had previously been removed through ‘pedantische Abkühlung’(p.96), Leverkühn repeats Kretzschmar’s principle from his third lecture: ‘Die Musik tut immer im voraus geistige Buße für ihre Versinnlichung.’(p.96) He cites as another example of this principle the Renaissance Dutch composers, who compose highly abstract and calculating pieces, but then have them sung, the human voice being the most unabstrac mode of realization Leverkühn can think of: ‘An Stallwärme gar nicht zu vergleichen mit irgend einem anorganischen Instrumentalklang.’(p.96) In fact, he thinks, the human voice is ‘beinahe ein pudendum’(p.97).

Leverkühn here, in his disparagement of human warmth and bodiliness, seems to be expressing a discomfort with the organic and human generally. This distrust of the human may contribute to the somewhat mechanical nature of his later music, in that, in composing his music in terms of perfectly analysable and predetermined patterns, he is able, at a basic level, to exclude that which escapes exhaustive analysis and explicability, the human. Whether his final piece nevertheless does, paradoxically, express
something human, is a question the novel raises, and to which I shall return, but a distrust of the organic’s elusiveness, and, perhaps, weakness, and a conscious refuge-taking in the inorganic, and mechanical, is presented as characteristic of Leverkühn’s artistic project, and perhaps, implied to be characteristic of the culture of the time, even if the attempt to do this leads to a state of intense anxiety which may tend to let the emotional and physical back in, in an uncontrolled way, producing a divided self-consciousness.

Zeitblom objects to Leverkühn’s approach, as well as to his proud self-distancing from the subject under discussion, expressed by his describing music as ‘deine [Zeitblom’s] Musik’(p.97), and Zeitblom, feeling maturer, tries to defend an attitude of spontaneous wholeness:

‘Einem Lebensgeschenk ... um nicht zu sagen: einem Gottesgeschenk, wie der Musik, soll man nicht Antinomieen höhnisch nachweisen, die nur von der Fülle ihres Wesens Zeugnis geben. Man soll sie lieben.’(p.97)

Zeitblom would like to restore a coherence to music, and to the relationship of the human subjectivity to music, which Leverkühn and Kretzschmar have broken up by their analysis, but, at the same time, he may be failing to see, and wanting not to see, a real sense of division which may exist in more modern music, even if not inevitably in music of every kind.

The conversation ends with Leverkühn, in response to the previous quotation, asking Zeitblom if he considers love the strongest emotion, and when asked if he knows a stronger, proposing interest, which they agree to define as love with the animal warmth extracted from it. Here, again, Leverkühn seems to want to dehumanize himself, to render himself, perhaps,
invulnerable, but, in admitting to being liable to be interested in things, he is revealing that he does in fact have needs and desires, but these may presumably be distorted by their attempted objectification.

So Mann uses the Kretzschmar lectures to give an extended exposition of the kind of abstract categories in terms of which he intends the reader to understand Leverkühn's musical production, but also music more generally, and the modern cultural situation more generally. The passages which then deal with Leverkühn's early musical education, and early composition, leading up to his diabolical conversation, are shorter in comparison.

Zeitblom, in describing Leverkühn's musical education with Kretzschmar during his later school years, emphasizes the way that Leverkühn's rapidly developing theoretical knowledge is incommensurate with his limited practical skills. Mann is thus able to show the development of that polarisation in Leverkühn's attitude to music, which he sees as characteristic of modern culture. For Leverkühn, music is not a practical craft, but an intellectual game, and this approach favours the leaning towards an abstract mathematical rigour, which in turn leaves the emotional life excluded and untethered. This unbalancedness causes Zeitblom anxiety, even early on, as to how Leverkühn's further development will be affected, Zeitblom remarking, for example,

Die Manie, die er damals entwickelte: sich beständig musikalische Probleme auszudenken, die er wie Schachaufgaben löste, konnte Besorgnis einflössen, da die Gefahr nahe lag, daß er dieses Ersinnen und Bewältigen technischer Schwierigkeiten bereits für Komponieren hielt.(pp.101-2)
As well as his almost mathematical problem-solving, Leverkühn is also already theorizing discursively, and revealing to Zeitblom in the schoolyard the results of his speculation on the significance of chords and melody, polyphony and harmony, a subject which featured in the Kretzschmar lectures. His speculations involve aprioristic postulations as to the priority of some musical elements over others, for example, the priority of the chord over the melody, on the basis that a single note is already a chord, having naturally occurring harmonics, whereas the scale is just an analysis of naturally occurring harmony. He also decides, on the basis of further reasoning, that harmony must be a by-product of polyphony, and that real polyphony will not compromise itself for harmonic reasons, and will therefore be as dissonant as possible. Here, his theoretical endorsement of a dissonant type of polyphony fits with his preference of the objective over the subjective, and he is revealing that he does not view pleasing the auditory sense as being music’s main function, if its function at all. These ideas, together with the fascination he has developed for inventing melodies the notes of which can also form a chord, and vice versa, an idea which has little to do with the acoustic effect of the music, are an anticipation of the method of composition which he will adopt later in his career, when he will be effecting various transformations to a single set of notes, in such a way that, like the visual artifices described in Kretzschmar’s lectures, only the reader of the score, and not the listener, will be likely to perceive what is being done.

The gap between Leverkühn’s theoretical knowledge and his practical skills widens even further as a result of Kretzschmar introducing him to a wide range of classical music, playing it to him
on the piano, even when it is orchestral music, sometimes singing extra parts, commenting simultaneously, and drawing Leverkühn’s attention to similarities, connections, and influences between epochs, countries, and individual composers, while at the same time Leverkühn’s practical skills are still at a fairly elementary level. They also discuss the balance of counterpoint and harmony in composers such as Bach and Brahms, Kretzschmar suggesting, and Leverkühn accepting, that they are both fundamentally harmonic composers. Leverkühn supplements this activity by obtaining scores and reading them, and he is even beginning to do exercises in orchestration, despite his minimal exposure to actual performances, Kalsersaschern being too small a town for musical performers to be attracted regularly. All this is again emphasizing how Leverkühn’s musical education is heavily biased towards the theoretical and abstract. It also emphasizes Leverkühn’s isolatedness, another element linking his education to Mann’s presentation of the characteristics of modern experience.

To help Leverkühn with his difficulties in instrumentation, Kretzschmar takes him to performances in neighbouring towns, from which what most impresses him is his exposure to Beethoven, and having carried a score of the Third Symphony around with him for a few days, he feels prompted to share his thoughts again with Zeitblom. The Third Symphony in Leverkühn’s opinion is not refined but is great. This leads him to speculating on how music like the Third Symphony is ‘die Tatkraft an sich’ (p.110), hints of both Kant and Goethe perhaps being meant to be heard, and he feels that, conceived in this way, music approaches the definition of God. This somewhat grandiose philosophising by Leverkühn suggests why music has traditionally held a central position in German thought
and culture, and shows that Leverkühn lies at the heart of this
tradition. Leverkühn also points out the economical organization of
the piece, 'so daß es nicht eine leere oder flaue Stelle gibt’(p.110),
which again points forward to what he will aim for in his own later
music, in which there will be not a single unmotivated note. He then
calls the music 'good' rather than 'beautiful', for the following
reason:

'Ich mag es nicht schön nennen, das Wort Schönheit war mir
immer halb widerwärtig, es hat ein so dumes Gesicht, und
den Leuten ist lüstern und faul zu Mut, wenn sie's
sagen.’(p.110)

Beauty, involving responses other than the purely analytical
intelligence, is something he cannot trust, and he could not declare
something to be beautiful without thereby making an admission of
straightforward personal involvement, which he is not prepared to
risk, so he prefers a judgement in terms of intellectual quality,
which allows him, seemingly, to keep his distance of objectivity,
although the feverishness and embarrassment which Zeitblom notes
in the way he says it suggests that his emotions are in fact finding
their way in, but in an unbridled manner. Thus the polarisation of
the objectivity and subjectivity, which Mann sees as a
characteristically modern phenomenon, is expressed here, the
young Leverkühn's psychology being shown up in his reaction to
music.

It is significant that it is Beethoven to whom Leverkühn reacts
in this way, since the admiration which he feels for Beethoven at
this point turns into to a kind of antagonism later in his career,
similar perhaps to that of Beethoven to Bach mentioned by
Kretzschmar during his lectures. Beethoven has achieved a kind of
intellectual absoluteness in his work which Leverkühn seeks to overcome, by finding a new level of absoluteness, and it is particularly Leverkühn’s ‘Doctor Fausti Weheklag’ which is meant to supersede Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. Leverkühn’s increasingly martyred aspect in adulthood, which his isolation and migraines, and his intense struggle to create, and overcome, produce, is also reminiscent of Beethoven, particularly as presented in Kretzschmar’s lectures, when described trying to overcome the art of counterpoint.

When Leverkühn moves to Leipzig, after his years studying theology, and resumes his musical training with Kretzschmar, Kretzschmar puts a strong emphasis on instrumentation. However, Zeitblom points out that, unlike Kretzschmar, Leverkühn does not see a combination of harmony and highly developed instrumentation, as in late Romantic style, as representing the highest form of music, in a fixed and unsurpassable way, but he is prepared to study it and master it as a kind of exercise. Rather, Zeitblom suggests, his tendency to want to restrict the role of the instruments to one more of support, as in polyphonic vocal music, and to introduce verbal texts, and produce oratorios, is already discernible. However, his willingness to master a form he intends to leave behind is demonstrated in his ‘Meerleuchten’, the first of his pieces which Zeitblom mentions as being performed, and which is a tone poem, in the style of French impressionism, and, according to Zeitblom, a brilliant example of that style. That he views the genre as exhausted, shows in the piece itself, elements of parody, and of irony with respect to art generally, emerging, Zeitblom points out, in this piece, as they will continue to do in his later work. Zeitblom explains the role of parody here as follows:
In Wahrheit war hier das Parodische die stolze Auskunft vor der Sterilität, mit welcher Skepsis und geistige Schamhaftigkeit, der Sinn für die tödliche Ausdehnung des Bereichs des Banalen eine große Begabung bedrohten. (p.204)

Because Leverkühn cannot reproduce an existing style without a sense of shame, he is in danger of not being able to produce at all, not having yet invented his own style, which, when it emerges, will have to be not just another style, but something beyond all already existing styles. In the mean time, until he achieves his breakthrough, writing parodically allows him to write something, relying on existing styles, but yet disdaining them, keeping his intellectual pride intact, and dispensing him from a need to believe in any aim or meaning they may have. Instead, parody allows him to express his view that as styles, and perhaps as world-views, they have been fully developed, and may not be repeated without requiring to be considered banal. In fact, Leverkühn’s composition is heavily dependent on parody until he manages to develop serialism. Zeitblom, while not being of a highly sceptical and intellectually proud nature like Leverkühn, is prepared to try to understand Leverkühn’s attitude as the inevitable consequence of giftedness, or genius, and thus, despite his frequent instinctive misgivings, is prepared, on an analytical level, to support Leverkühn’s project of bringing to an end art forms to which he may himself be attached. Leverkühn’s tendency to resort to parody can also be seen as symptomatic of the sense that he has, and which Mann thematizes, that he is living at the end of an age, and producing late works in a tradition.  

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^ For an extensive treatment of parody, which uses it as the basis for a postmodern interpretation of the novel, see Inken Steen, Parodie und
When Zeitblom arrives at Leipzig after his military service, his first conversation with Leverkühn is about the superiority of the old modes over the modern major and minor scales, and Leverkühn particularly approves of the idea of their invention by Ptolemy, the ancient astronomer, proving the relationship between music and astronomy. Here Leverkühn is signalling his intention to break with classical music's system of tonality, though he eventually does so not by going back to the medieval and ancient modes, but by inventing something else, and he is also finding a kinship between music and other absolute subjects. This conversation arises on account of a proposed visit to a performance of a late quartet by Beethoven, Opus 132, which has a movement in the Lydian mode. Apart from its using an ancient mode in one movement, what Leverkühn particularly likes about this work is Beethoven's pronounced indifference to its playability, something which again suggests that the late Beethoven and Leverkühn are treating music as an intellectual problem more than as a practical activity. Zeitblom soon after discovers that Leverkühn is projecting an opera based on Shakespeare's Love's Labour's Lost and comments that Leverkühn is increasingly showing a tendency only to compose music accompanied by a verbal element. At this stage he has been concentrating on composing songs and other sung pieces, the texts for which he has been drawing from an anthology of medieval writings in Romance languages, with German translations, including various poetry, and extracts from Dante's Divine Comedy. Although the influence of Mahler is present in the pieces, which Zeitblom sees as unsurprising given the period, signs of Leverkühn's own

parodistische Schreibweise in Thomas Manns 'Doktor Faustus', Tübingen, Niemeyer, 2001. See also note 29.
distinctive, austere, but also grotesque, later style are also present, particularly in the compositions based on Dante. Zeitblom is disturbed by Leverkühn's choosing a text in which Dante deals with souls who are in hell despite their own innocence, mentioning his own dislike for Dante's more cruel side, but he is moved by a piece based on a metaphor from *Purgatory* in which there is a man with a light on his back, showing the way to those behind him, but not to him. Both of these Dante passages may in fact be relevant to Leverkühn's own position, although Zeitblom only notices this with respect to the second, which can be seen as representing Leverkühn's lonely but pioneering journey into unexplored areas of composition. However, the piece about the innocent but unbaptized souls in hell may also raise issues as to Leverkühn's own position, his dealings with inhumane, and even diabolical forces, it is later implied, being at least partly to be blamed on the conditions of his time, which may have made such a course seem necessary, rather than on dispositions purely of his own. Zeitblom does note in the passage, however, a negation of the human in favour of an inaccessible and absolute order ('Mich empörte diese Verleugnung des Menschlichen zugunsten einer unzugänglich absoluten Vorbestimmung' p.217), although an attempt to privilege rigid order over the human is a prominent element in Leverkühn's thinking and creativity, as has already emerged. Although Leverkühn has used medieval texts here, he has chosen them and set them in such a way as to express modern concerns.

Leverkühn is in fact looking for theoretical justifications for his tendency to concentrate on setting words to music. Apart from a declaration by Kierkegaard, which supports his position, he also, again, looks to Beethoven, noting that he wrote his first plans for his
pieces in words rather than musical notation, and concluding that music and language have a natural affinity, which leads to language sometimes breaking out in music, as in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and to German music tending towards the goal of Wagnerian opera, although he admits to Zeitblom's objection that Brahms' unworded music suggests more than one goal. Leverkühn here is again showing how he views music as a story in one-way, ever-progressing development, and how he looks to distant older forms in order to relativize and overcome more immediately preceding, and partly still current forms, rather than to return to the older forms. In this case, the period of classical music, in its predominant wordlessness, is relativized and viewed as a transitory stage compared with what is presumed to have come before and to be coming afterwards. However, there may also be a hint, in Leverkühn's dissatisfaction with wordlessness, of his yearning to achieve communication, even if the style of his music may tend to militate against this being achieved, and perhaps also, of a yearning for an element of explicitly religious expression, lacking very often in the somewhat secular spirit of classical music, even if a cooperation with diabolical forces is a paradoxical way of setting about expressing religious feeling, a straightforward expression of it being presumably, however, in danger of being regarded as banal, under modern conditions.

Leverkühn's projected opera, based on *Love's Labour's Lost*, is in fact to be highly parodistic:

eine Erneuerung der opera buffa im Geist künstlichster Persiflage und der Persiflage der Künstlichkeit, etwas von hoch-spielerischer Preziosität, die Verspottung affektierter
Askese und jenes Euphuismus, der die gesellschaftliche
Frucht der klassischen Studien war.(pp.219-20)
Zeitblom is uncomfortable at the thought that the mockery of the
excesses of an exaggerated humanism leads to humanism itself
being made ridiculous (‘... ich immer etwas unglücklich war über
eine Verspottung von Auswüchsen des Humanismus, die doch
schließlich auch die Sache selbst ins Lächerliche zieht.’p.220), but
this does not prevent him later on, he admits, from producing the
libretto for Leverkühn. Zeitblom here, as elsewhere, is prepared,
motivated by his friendship and admiration for Leverkühn, to
support projects which may threaten to undermine his own values.
Zeitblom also mentions Leverkühn’s determination to have the
opera performed in English, evidence, Zeitblom suggests, of his anti-
Germanness, further evinced by his setting, at this time, of works in
the original by poets such as Blake and Verlaine. Connecting this
feeling with Otto III, the Holy Roman Emperor buried in
Kaisersaschern, who preferred Italy to Germany, Zeitblom explains:
Seine Abneigung gegen das Deutschtum, das er verkörperte
... trat in die beiden Erscheinungsformen verspinnener
Schüchternheit vor der Welt und eines inneren Bedürfnisses
nach Welt und Weite auseinander(p.221).
So Leverkühn’s anti-German sentiment is actually a symptom of his
own fundamental Germanness, and the suggested German yearning
for the outside world, but simultaneous shyness from it, may be the
national parallel to Leverkühn’s own yearning for communion with
others, but inability to achieve it. Germany thus emerges as the
nation which, par excellence, shows the dividedness which
Leverkühn shows in his personality, and Germany is, perhaps,
exhibiting the contradictions of the era in a kind of exemplary fashion, and destined to suffer for it, just like Leverkühn himself.

Leverkühn, during his period in Leipzig, also develops doubts as to the idea of the work of art, and whether, in its completeness, and the artificiality needed to achieve this, he can take it seriously. Zeitblom articulates Leverkühn's reasoning, pointing to the way in which a complete work of art aspires to appear to have come about naturally, rather than to have been made artificially. He comments on this ambition:

Es ist ja Arbeit, Kunstarbeit zum Zweck des Scheins — und nun fragt es sich, ob bei dem heutigen Stande unseres Bewußtseins, unserer Erkenntnis, unseres Wahrheitssinnes dieses Spiel noch erlaubt, noch geistig möglich, noch ernst zu nehmen ist, ob das Werk als solches, das selbstgenügsam und harmonisch in sich geschlossene Gebilde, noch in irgend einer legitimen Relation steht zu der völligen Unsicherheit, Problematik und Harmonielosigkeit unserer gesellschaftlichen Zustände, ob nicht aller Schein, auch der schönste, und gerade der schönste, heute zur Lüge geworden ist. (pp.242-3)

So Leverkühn's problem is partly that he believes he understands how the impression is achieved, and consequently cannot believe in it as such, but there is also a social dimension suggested, to the effect that a lack of a sense of coherence, or completeness, in contemporary, modern, social conditions ought to be reflected in a corresponding unfinishedness, or dividedness, in art, and that to produce a whole in art is untrue. This view presupposes that art ought to portray, or reflect, contemporary social conditions, and that if it does not, it is false, rather than, for example, aspirational.
The possible problem, therefore, arises from this view, that the artist, in feeling bound to produce art commensurate with contemporary social conditions, may actually reinforce them, rather than being free to put forward alternatives.

Zeitblom does not feel these doubts about the contemporary viability of the work of art personally, but he seems nevertheless unable to argue against them, and attributes them to Leverkühn’s incorruptibility (‘Unbestechlichkeit’p.243) in pursuing his insight in this area. He is however worried by them, on Leverkühn’s behalf, as he explains, ‘weil ich gefährliche Erschwerungen seines Daseins, lähmende Inhibitionen bei der Entfaltung seiner Gaben darin erblickte.’ (p.243) Zeitblom knows that Leverkühn is planning a major work, his opera based on Love’s Labour’s Lost, and yet already disbelieves in the idea of a work. Zeitblom speculates that the work will have to be a ‘Travestie der Unschuld’(p.244), in that it will have to convince that it is a work at the same time as stating that such a thing is not possible. Thus Leverkühn is already finding himself in the kind of creativity-inhibiting theoretical impasse which he will need diabolical assistance to transcend.

While still in Leipzig Leverkühn writes a cycle of thirteen songs based on Brentano poems, which are published, although rarely performed, due to the strict conditions for performance on which Leverkühn insists. They contain ironic sequences of simple music against a complex background, as if to ironize tonality, and traditional music as a whole, as Zeitblom points out. Their shortness seems to Zeitblom to suit Leverkühn’s theoretical difficulty with the complete work, and his theoretical preference for the concentrated musical moment, although Leverkühn insists on the cycle being treated as a whole work, and on the songs never being performed
individually. This insistence suggests his desire to communicate in the form of works, despite his theoretical difficulties about producing one. Zeitblom also notices that the cycle, generally characterized by its intellectualism, is constantly evoking folk music as if actually trying to turn into it, but not being able to. Again, the suggestion might be of Leverkühn's yearning for community and communication, but of his incapacity of achieving it due to his inhibiting irony. It is also a symptom of his dividedness, since he tends not to be able to synthesize spontaneity and sophistication, and both instead appear in absolute forms. There is something of this dividedness in the poems themselves, an alternation between a childish popular element, and a spiritual element, as Zeitblom sees it, and admitting that he himself gave Leverkühn the book of Brentano poems, from which those set to music were selected, he wonders, given his sense of culture, at his involvement in something which he sees as tending to the degenerate ('Ein unstimmiges Geschenk, so wird der Leser finden; denn was hatte ich, was hatte meine Sittlichkeit und Bildung wohl eigentlich mit den überall aus dem Kindlich-Volksklanglichen ins Geisterhafte entschwebenden, um nicht zu sagen: entartenden Sprachträumereien des Romantikers zu schaffen? p.248) Once again Zeitblom, with his ambition for Leverkühn, wants to see him excel, and is prepared to help him to it, even when the excellence is in areas about which he has profound misgivings.

After Leverkühn leaves Leipzig, but before his move to Munich, he meets Zeitblom at his home, on the occasion of his sister's wedding, and during a walk in the afternoon they discuss Leverkühn's developing ideas on musical organization. Leverkühn brings up Beißel, from the Kretzschmar lectures, in order to
introduce his own ideas about the need for a new system of organization. He believes that someone is needed to combine, like Beißel, the renewing effects of the archaic with the revolutionary ('einen Systemherrn brauchten wir, einen Schulmeister des Objektiven und der Organisation, genial genug, das Wiederherstellende, ja, das Archaische mit dem Revolutionären zu verbinden.' pp. 254-5), an idea which Zeitblom characterizes as very German. Leverkühn justifies the need for something of this sort on the basis of the conditions of the time:

'Es könnte aber außerdem etwas zeitlich Notwendiges ausdrücken, etwas Remediumverheißendes in einer Zeit der zerstörten Konventionen und der Auflösung aller objektiven Verbindlichkeiten, kurzum einer Freiheit, die anfängt, sich als Meldeau auf das Talent zu legen und Züge der Sterilität zu zeigen.' (p. 255)

So Leverkühn feels too much freedom from convention creatively inhibiting, leaving him with nothing to relate to or connect with. He explains, on Zeitblom's expressing surprise that freedom should ever be unproductive, the idea of a dialectic of freedom and order, suggesting that subjectivity tends to take refuge in sets of rules, and illustrates this from the history of music, using for an example the way that the expansion of the development section in sonata form, under the subjective impulse of Beethoven, leads to an objectification of the development section in Brahms, in whose music the principle of variation, which characterizes the development section and is, in itself, an old principle, is employed in an austere manner, shorn of any non-thematic conventional embellishment. Leverkühn's conception here is one of an extreme freedom turning into and tending towards identity with an extreme
order, complete arbitrariness and rigorous compulsion being expressions of each other, rather than any reconciliatory meeting of freedom and order, which might perhaps be characterized as convention. Leverkühn, during arguments, notes something of the possibility of the mingling of subjectivity and objectivity in convention:

'Die heute zerstörten musikalischen Konventionen waren nicht allezeit gar so objektiv, so äußerlich auferlegt. Sie waren Verfestigungen lebendiger Erfahrungen und erfüllten als solche lange eine Aufgabe von vitaler Wichtigkeit: die Aufgabe der Organisation.' (p.256)

However, Leverkühn here is arguing in such a way as to split the subjectivity and objectivity, following, as he understands it, what has in any case been the development in modern music, and the order with which he is seeking to replace the destroyed conventions is an order of a different kind, one of absolute, inorganic rigour, one which is to transcend not just any particular set of conventions, but conventions altogether. The possible political perspective on Leverkühn's argument is raised by Zeitblom, who uses it to express his doubt that freedom which has submitted to absolute systematic order is still freedom:

'Aber in Wirklichkeit ist sie doch dann nicht Freiheit mehr, so wenig wie die aus der Revolution geborene Diktatur noch Freiheit ist.' (p.256)

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23 For the idea that, in modern art, the purely subjective leads in turn to the desire for an absolute order, see Lukács, Essays on Thomas Mann, pp.69-70.
24 For a view that emphasizes the idea that Leverkühn wishes to go back to tyranny from freedom, rather than, as I have argued, the idea that the kind of order which Leverkühn is envisaging is unprecedented, see T. J. Reed, Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition, p.400.
Leverkühn however, as always, declines to take an interest in the practical implications and issues.

Leverkühn then expounds his own proposition for a new order, and this is the introduction of the idea of twelve-tone serialism. He explains that the different elements of music have hitherto been developed without strict reference to each other, and that he plans to introduce a single organizational principle, 'die Idee einer rationalen Durthorganisation des gesamten musikalischen Materials' (p.257), which will produce a unity of all the aspects of music, including the transcending of the distinction between polyphonic style and the sonata form. He has come closest to a strictly organized piece, he tells Zeitblom, in the song 'O lieb Mädel' in the Brentano cycle, in which he based all the chords and melodic lines on a single sequence of five notes, manipulated in various ways. This has given him the idea that if he uses a sequence of twelve notes, including all twelve tones and semi-tones of the scale, thus ignoring keys and tonality, he can, by various mechanical derivations from the sequence, produce enough strictly predetermined material to compose long pieces. This is basically a method invented by Schoenberg, borrowed by Mann for fictional purposes. Leverkühn has thus achieved the overcoming of distinctions between melody and harmony, as well as consonance and dissonance, since any combination of simultaneous tones is possible if it results from the manipulations of the framework, and if dissonant, need not be resolved. Twelve-tone serialism is to be the

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basis of Leverkühn's later work, having the attraction that it allows him to eliminate human and non-mechanical elements, of shape and meaning, expressed in a direct way, in favour of something exhaustively analysable into pure mathematical process. It also fulfills his need to have produced something which goes beyond anything previously done, surpassing, in a Hegelian kind of way, the work of most avant-garde composers of the time. It however crystallizes the impasse which Leverkühn has been working towards, since he yearns for self-expression and communication, but at the same time, not able to admit to this need in an open way, has created a system of absolute mathematical determination, which, at least apparently, would preclude any possibility for self-expression or communication.

Zeitblom makes several objections during Leverkühn's exposition of his idea of twelve-tone serialism, the first being that the listener would not hear what the composer was doing to compose the music. Leverkühn, reminding Zeitblom of Kretzschmar's lecture in which he talked of musical conceits which were meant for the eye and not the ear, admits that the listener would not hear precisely what had been done, but believes that music ordered in such a way would produce 'eine ungekannte ästhetische Genugtuung'(p.260). That it will be a satisfying experience is presumably a guess, but that it will be something unknown is desirable for Leverkühn, given that the new and unprecedented is valuable in itself for him. Zeitblom further wonders how Leverkühn would react if what resulted from the system happened to be traditional elements, like harmony, and to Leverkühn's assurance that anything outmoded would be renewed by its resulting from the system, he responds that he sees an aspect
of older elements being restored in Leverkühn’s ‘utopia’
(‘Utopie’p.261), in that harmony would not be absolutely forbidden, in the way it would otherwise be in avant-garde music, and some old forms of variation are restored. Leverkühn reacts to this by saying,
‘Interessantere Lebenserscheinungen ... haben wohl immer dies Doppelgesicht von Vergangenheit und Zukunft, wohl immer sind sie progressiv und regressiv in Einem. Sie zeigen die Zweideutigkeit des Lebens selbst.’(p.261)
This point of Leverkühn’s is relatable to the idea, which has already emerged, that in overcoming a prevalent cultural form, elements of a preceding form, real or imagined, may be appeal ed to as a justification or resource for change. Equally, where systems of relations are periodically radically reshuffled, it is unlikely that no combinations which have ever existed before will surface. In fact, logically, for Leverkühn to go beyond tonality and harmony, his new system must be indifferent to harmony, rather than forbidding it, otherwise the old system would still be present by implication, and no Hegelian ‘Aufhebung’ would have taken place. Zeitblom, as earlier, introduces the political, or at least wider cultural, dimension, asking if what Leverkühn has said is not a generalization from German domestic national experience (‘häuslichen nationalen Erfahrungen’p.261). Leverkühn, as usual, has nothing to say on this aspect. Being a retrospective rather than a prospective remark, it must be taken as referring to preceding events, such as, perhaps, the simultaneity of national unification and the rise of national mythologizing of a Wagnerian style, but there is no specification here.

Leverkühn struggles with the composition of ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost’, according to Zeitblom, because of the strain of maintaining an
attitude of constant parody, which demands a greater sense of isolation than he can achieve in Munich ('die parodistische Künstlichkeit des Stils war schwer durchzuhalten, sie bedingte eine stets sich erneuernde Exzentrizität der Laune und machte den Wunsch nach Fernluft, tieferer Fremde der Umgebung rege.' pp. 282-3) He moves temporarily to Italy, to the town of Palestrina, near Rome, accompanied by a friend, Rüdiger Schildknapp, and it is here that, during a visit by Zeitblom and his wife, Leverkühn plays on the piano extracts from those parts of the opera which he has now written. Zeitblom notes the heavily self-mocking tone of parts in which the character Biron is talking of his self-abasement because of his passion for Rosaline, and how the music, while parodic, gives Biron the seriousness which he attributes to himself, and on account of which he is all the more humiliated by his loss of self-control. This aspect of shame is likely to refer to Leverkühn's own attitude to his passion for the woman known as Esmeralda, whom he met at the brothel in Leipzig, although Zeitblom does not mention her here, concentrating on his theory that Biron represents Shakespeare, and Shakespeare's shame about his passion for a dark-haired (like Esmeralda) and pale woman, but Leverkühn's anger at his own vulnerability to love, or desire, and its compromising of his position of self-sufficiency, is here expressed artistically. Zeitblom also remarks on how the music not only mocks educated over-cultivation, as does the play, but is equally scathing about over-cultivation's opposing force in the play, natural, spontaneous behaviour, and love, which Zeitblom finds paradoxical, believing that music's inner vocation would be to side with the second force. What Leverkühn has done, however, is in conformity with his attitude of withholding himself from the natural and the human,
and looking on them ironically, and the studied artificiality of the style allows Leverkühn to deal with a theme which involves love while preventing the music from fulfilling what Zeitblom would see as its own tendency, to affirm the human aspect. An example of the emphasis on artificiality is the way that Leverkühn has composed the music to work equally well for the German translation or the English original, a ‘Tour de force’(p.292), Zeitblom admits, but he is concerned that Leverkühn is prouder of this achievement than of his musical ideas, and that the music will be inhibited by the technical achievement. Leverkühn is perhaps however not looking for the kind of ‘uninhibited blossoming’ (‘unbefangenes Blühen’p.292) of musical ideas that Zeitblom says he would like to see, but actually needs a situation of the greatest possible restriction and rigour around which to work. The self-parodying over-cultivation which is characteristic of the work is perhaps an unstable phase, as suggested by Zeitblom’s observation that it appears ‘ein nie entspanntes und spannend halsbrecherisches Spielen der Kunst am Rande der Unmöglichkeit’(p.293), and it is the introduction of serialism into his work which allows him to work in terms of anything other than pure parody, since serialism, with its basis in the absolute of mathematical relations, is the only style that he finds himself able to believe in.

There is also a suggestion, enunciated by Zeitblom, that the audience for Leverkühn’s music is already likely to be a limited one: ein Musikliebhaber, der, müde der romantischen Demokratie und der moralischen Volksharanguierung, nach einer Kunst um der Kunst willen, einer ehrgeizlosen oder doch nur im exklusivsten Sinne ehrgeizigen Kunst für Künstler und Kenner verlangt hätte, würde sein Entzücken
Leverkühn, in eschewing the emotional and communicative potential of much Romantic music, and reacting against this by moving towards the esoteric, but then parodying even this, risks alienating a great part of his potential audience, which, given his suppressed yearning for community rather than isolation, lends the music a tone of despair. His move towards serialism is relevant to this theme of a self-frustrated desire for communication, since the method is so heavily predicated upon appealing to the intellect of the initiate, rather than the ear of the hearer.

The Devil

Leverkühn’s conversation with the devil, which takes place in Palestrina, either during the same stay when he plays extracts of his opera to Zeitblom, or during a similar stay the year before, according to Zeitblom’s estimation, marks a kind of turning point in the drama of ideas concerning music, as well as coming more or less in the middle of the novel, the end of the conversation being the half-way point, although, as the devil suggests, their relationship goes back at least as far as Leverkühn’s consciously infecting himself with a venereal disease, and their conversation is more a confirmation than an initiation of their deal. The conversation is, with the exception of a couple of letters, the only part of the novel not narrated by Zeitblom, being presented as a copy of a manuscript.
written by Leverkühn himself, the day after the event. Whether Leverkühn's conversation is meant to be seen as a dialogue with something outside himself, or as something internal, is left open, both by Zeitblom, and Leverkühn, Zeitblom in particular showing a marked distaste for the idea that it might have been a conversation with the devil in a literal kind of sense, though unable to rule it out.\(^{26}\) The conversation has no witnesses, and takes place on a day when Leverkühn has been suffering from a violent headache, although he has seemed to have recovered before the conversation. On the other hand, the devil seems keen to assure Leverkühn that he is not simply a product of Leverkühn's own mind, and seems to speak with a distinct voice, even responding to questions put to him by Leverkühn on subjects Leverkühn is curious about, such as what hell is like. The actual presence of the devil in person in the novel may be seen as another acknowledgement of the Reformation atmosphere so often alluded to, but the openness as to whether the devil was actually present might also be seen as the novel's way of establishing something of an objective viewpoint, outside the modern perspective, allowing it to make a sort of judgement on the development of modern thought, unlike the other two novels I have discussed, which place themselves clearly inside it.

The devil, when he appears, is immediately fitted in to the framework of the novel, being connected to it in various ways, just as other main characters are. The devil exudes a powerful coldness, which continues throughout the interview, and is what first attracts Leverkühn's attention to his presence. This is connected with Leverkühn's own emotional coldness, and represents incapacity for

\(^{26}\) See Gunilla Bergsten, *Thomas Mann's 'Doctor Faustus': The Sources and Structure of the Novel*, p.203.
love. The devil is then associated with the German Reformation allusions, the first words he says being:

'Sprich nur deutsch! Nur fein altdeutsch mit der Sprache heraus, ohn' einige Bemäntelung und Gleißneri. Ich verstehe es. Ist gerad recht meine Lieblingssprache.' (p.301)

The particular connection between Germany and the novel's drama of ideas is emphasized here, while the expression 'ohn' einige Bemäntelung und Gleißneri' is suggestive of Lutheran language, as well as representing the reforming attitude generally, and in fact Kumpf, Leverkühn's Lutheran theology lecturer, uses more or less the same expression.\(^{27}\)

The first part of the conversation centres on who the visitor is, and why he has come, and a number of allusions are made at the same time, for example, to Dürer, the German Lutheran Renaissance artist, to the German tendency to long for the South, justifying the devil's appearing to Leverkühn in Italy in German guise, to the idea of parody, in connection to the way the devil selects forms in which to appear, and to the period of hysteria in Germany at the time of the Reformation. The devil makes a new reference, to a saying by Bismarck to the effect that a German needs a half bottle of champagne to reach his best potential state, to support his own declaration that Germans are gifted but inhibited, and his own equivalent of the champagne is a kind of infection, which he claims arrived in Germany around the time of the Reformation, and which Leverkühn already has. The devil describes the kind of time which he is offering as one of extremes of inspiration and depression, including physical elation and suffering, mentions twenty-four years as the period he is offering, and suggests that the nature of the time

\(^{27}\) See Martin Swales, *Thomas Mann: a study*, p.88.
offered is such that the beneficiary does not have the chance to think about the approaching end.

The devil introduces the subject of music by way of the character of the artist, suggesting first that Leverkühn's tendency to feel in an opposing way to those round him, as when he laughs at his father's sorrow for his lifeless plant-like chemical creations, is a sign that he is naturally inclined to the diabolical. He moves from this to suggest that states which might be understood from a bourgeois point of view as illness or madness might in fact be more joyful and higher states than ordinary life. 'Der Künstler ist der Bruder des Verbrechers und des Verrückten' (p.318), he argues, proposing that genius is always connected with the diabolical, and always artificial and not natural, the realm of nature being part of primary creation, rather than of art, and being therefore divine. The devil's job is not the creation of new matter, but emancipation:

'Wir lassen die Lahm- und Schüchternheit, die keuschen Skrupel und Zweifel zum Teufel gehn.' (p.318)

What the devil is presenting here is a kind of late Romantic view of the role of the artist, the idea being that the artist needs artificial means to escape the boring conventionalities of the bourgeois and the natural, and that illusions and madness offer an escape from the stale banalities of health. The idea that art is, or should be, about being set free from restrictions is common more generally to modern understandings of art, as I have suggested is the case in the other two novels, for example. The devil is flattering Leverkühn with the idea that he is something exceptional, and that therefore normalities are not good enough for him, while arguing that that which is not normal is automatically diabolical.
The devil also introduces the idea that what he has to offer is something archaic, or primal (‘das ist schon nicht mehr das Klassische, mein Lieber, was wir erfahren lassen, das ist das Archaische, das Urfrühe, das längst nicht mehr Erprobte.’p.318), emphasizing its liberating qualities:

‘Wer weiß heute noch, wer wüßte auch nur in klassischen Zeiten, was Inspiration, was echte, alte urtümliche Begeisterung ist, von Kritik, lahmer Besonnenheit, tödender Verstandskontrolle ganz ungekränkelte Begeisterung, die heilige Verzuckung?’(p.318)

The idea of going back to an ecstatic archaism, perhaps intended to be redolent of Nietzsche, involves, as is made clear in the quotation, not a seeking of earlier stages of civilization, but an attempt to bypass civilization altogether and reach a postulated original state, one as much a product of the exigencies of the theory as of any evidence of it actually having existed. Thus what is aimed at is an imagined primitivism, rather than, for example, medieval culture. The aiming for something which is principally imagined rather than known about, and its being aimed for by highly artificial, and technical means, is likely to produce something that is quite new, rather than anything ever previously known.

The devil, who has in the meantime assumed the form of an art or music critic, which he maintains as long as he is talking about music, as opposed to the tramp-like shape he first appeared in, moves on to music as such, examining the problem of inspiration with regard to the musical theme.28 He claims that anyone familiar with the musical literature will not be able to think of a theme

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28 For the devil’s physical resemblance to Adorno here, forming a parallel to his borrowing of Adorno’s ideas, see, for example, Hermann Kurzke, Thomas Mann: Das Leben als Kunstwerk, p.503.
without being reminded of one already extant in a previously existing piece, and having to modify it in response, thus losing the spontaneity and consequent exhilaration of the inspiration, which only he can provide, though he does not explain how. The argument here is based on the idea of the inhibiting effects of the overwhelming mass of material which already exists, and is recorded by the time one reaches late modernity, combined with the idea that only absolute originality can be truly satisfying. 

The devil encourages Leverkühn to consider other modern composers, noting that Leverkühn tends not to do this, and that he would like the ‘curse of the time’ all for himself (‘du pflegst die Illusion des Alleinseins und willst alles für dich, allen Fluch der Zeit.’p.320) He specifies that he means ‘die ehrlichen, ernsten, die die Konsequenzen der Lage zlehen’(p.320), not folkloristic or neoclassical composers, who are trying to adopt styles from preindividualist times. There would seem to be some hidden flattery in this manoeuvre by the devil, since while seeming to criticize Leverkühn for ignoring other composers, and regarding himself as unique, he is nevertheless implying that Leverkühn, like other composers who ‘draw the conclusions of the situation’, is honest and serious, and further implying that any solution not involving Leverkühn’s route to impasse, and his consequent need for diabolical help, would be dishonest. He is thus making sure he is cutting off Leverkühn’s possible means of retreat, by suggesting the humiliation which would be involved in turning to already existent forms of music.

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29 For the idea of Leverkühn as a latecomer, see T. J. Reed, *Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition*, p.372.
The devil discusses the predicament that those artists whom he labels as serious are in, noting the danger of their ceasing to produce, acknowledging explanations of a more social kind, such as a lack of public demand for their work, and their increasing reliance on patronage, as ‘in the pre-liberal era’ (‘in der vorliberalen Ära’ p.321), but suggesting that the real reason is the difficulty of composition due to inner factors. He proposes that emancipated ideas undermine the traditional coherent work of art, and also that various chords and transitions between chords, which were the means of tonality, and thereby of traditional music, are clichés, and are therefore part of a register of forbidden material that any composer whom he would classify as better would have. He explains that a chord which he describes as impossible now, is possible, and even expressive, for Beethoven, bearing a meaningful relationship to the amount of dissonance then possible for him, or to what he calls the general technical level. In talking about particular chords and other devices as being possible or impossible, the devil is talking in standard art-theoretical language, but the terms nevertheless rest on assumptions which might be described as somewhat Hegelian, involving a notion of necessary progress, and which would have been current at the time, and are characteristic of modern thought more generally. They are not simply self-evident, despite the confidence with which the devil is talking about them, but given his aim of making himself indispensable to Leverkühn, he is more interested in confirming Leverkühn in what is already his position, than in questioning any of the assumptions on which it rests. However, the idea of a necessary, inescapable and undirectable progress in culture and society may be one which Mann is trying to challenge in the novel.
The devil then uses the idea of the possible and impossible to suggest that composition has become a question of providing the only answer to each problem, of what is possible in a given situation, as it comes up, what is possible being understood in terms of what the technical state of affairs allows, that is, presumably, what the next logical step in innovation is. The devil concludes from this that art and criticism become the same, and that a lack of creativity results, thus articulating the impasse which Leverkühn has already found himself in.

Leverkühn realizes that the devil is trying to trap him into accepting his help, and makes an attempt to suggest a way out, claiming that there is at least the theoretical possibility of a natural harmony between the needs of the composer and the time, allowing the composer to create unselfconsciously. The devil argues against this possibility, claiming, 'die Situation ist zu kritisch, als daß die Kritiklosigkeit ihr gewachsen wäre!'(p.322) This seems to mean that modern conditions are characterized by extreme self-consciousness, so that an unselfconscious artistic response would not be harmonious with them in the way Leverkühn had suggested.

The devil continues to attack the idea of the work in modern conditions, for some of the same reasons that Leverkühn has previously, but making additional points. He claims personal satisfaction about the way that the idea of the work has become problematic, but thinks that the cause is not principally a lack of coherence in corresponding social forms, but rather, internal necessity:

'Die historische Bewegung des musikalischen Materials hat sich gegen das geschlossene Werk gekehrt.'(p.323)
He claims that there is an impulse towards concentratedness, that works against anything superfluous, destroys ornament and formal distribution over time, leading to the result that passion and pain cannot be formally or fictively expressed but have to be expressed immediately and undisguised. This last point, about pain having to be expressed directly, being one which takes a stage further an argument which has already been made by Leverkühn, earlier in the novel, Leverkühn finds difficult to take seriously when expressed by the devil, believing that it is hypocritical for the devil to express a kind of sympathy, when he has just declared his sense of Schadenfreude at the way the difficulty of the work has increased. However, the idea of pain being expressed in a raw, direct way seems to suggest Leverkühn's last piece, 'Doctor Faustl Weheklag', which expresses a sense of raw lamentation, despite the simultaneous absolutely mechanical nature of the composition. Apart from this, it is notable that the devil again insists on, rather than explaining, the idea that there is an irresistible mechanism of cultural change, denying the possibility of preserving that which is found to be valuable.

The devil also approaches the critique of the work from the angle of the idea of the finished and complete unity of the work, which it has aimed at, he claims, for the last four hundred years, that is, during the whole modern period up till that time, as illusory, and therefore a deception, again an argument similar to Leverkühn's own, expressed earlier. Explaining the basis for the criticism, he says, 'Die Kritik des Ornaments, der Konvention und der abstrakten Allgemeinheit sind ein und dasselbe' (p.324), and, similarly, 'Es ist geschehen um die vorweg und verpflichtend geltenden Konventionen, die die Freiheit des Spiels gewährleisten.' (p.324) The
devil here is making a Reformation-style criticism of anything in music involved in producing semblance, all the conventions which allow the appearance of a form, or image, which is not an actual thing, and is therefore a trick:

‘Was der Kritik verfällt, ist der Scheincharakter des bürgerlichen Kunstwerks, an dem die Musik teilhat, obgleich sie kein Bild macht. Gewiß, sie hat vor anderen Künsten den Vorzug, kein Bild zu machen, aber durch die unermüdliche Aussöhnung ihrer spezifischen Anliegen mit der Herrschaft der Konventionen hat sie an dem höheren Schwindel gleichwohl nach Kräften teilgenommen.’ (p. 324)

If representing anything is a trick, then the function of art as a whole is arguably being undermined, and, in fact, the devil confirms this in going on to argue that the idea of the reconciliation of individual expression with general, the basis of musical semblance, he admits, is contradictory. By arguing that that which is not actually what it represents is a lie, and that the individual and the general cannot come together, the devil has undermined not only music, but art generally, and even language, or any type of articulated human expression, leaving only the cry of joy or pain as true.30

Leverkühn makes another attempt to evade the deepening crisis by suggesting that one can play with forms and conventions, that one regards as empty, but admits, unwillingly, that, as the devil points out, relying on parody will not satisfy him.31 However,

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30 For the idea that the devil represents the idea of self-destruction, both of art, and of the artist's humanity, see Lukács, Essays on Thomas Mann, p. 75.
31 For the idea that Mann himself views parody as a permanently viable means of artistic expression, and not as a prelude to a breakthrough to something else, in the way that he presents the devil and Leverkühn seeing it, see Michael Neumann, Thomas Mann: Romane, Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2001, pp. 176-177.
trying to soothe Leverkühn, the devil claims that if he is indicating the difficulties that music, as well as everything else, is in nowadays, it is only because he is going to enable him to break through the difficulties and reach tremendous heights of achievement, introducing at the same time a theological dimension, noting that music has simultaneously been regarded as religious and demonic, for example, by the early Church. The idea of the demonic and the divine coexisting in the same fields is an important one in the novel, suggesting that it is precisely by devoting oneself to the most sublime fields that, if one falls, one risks falling the furthest. Thus the novel's argument that the Germans, represented by Leverkühn, are characterized by potentially good features, such as seriousness, and piety, which however, when perverted by pride, produce greater evil than a less conscientious group would be capable of, is supported by this mutual implication of the divine and the diabolical. As well as this, arguably, the novel is obliquely hinting, where diabolical forces are being employed, that an alternative, more divinely inspired approach, might be available.

In explaining to Leverkühn how he is going to break through the impasse and start to be inspired, the devil takes a cue from Leverkühn, who has mentioned 'osmotische Gewächse'(p.325), alluding to his father's inorganic chemical growths, as well as to his own venereal disease, which, according to what the devil has said earlier, can reach the interior of his brain only by means of a process of osmosis (p.316). He then suggests that the inorganic growths are just as natural as organic growths, and that illness lies at the basis of life, making here, once again, a late Romantic argument, that the really exceptional experience is likely to come from the artificial, or the diseased, rather than from the tried and
tested, boring, healthy and natural, which the devil views belittlingly, as ‘spießbürgerlich’ (p.325). The argument includes a Nietzschean inflection to the effect that life-giving falsehood is preferable to stultifying truth:

‘Was dich erhöht, was dein Gefühl von Kraft und Macht und Herrschaft vermehrt, zum Teufel, das ist die Wahrheit, — und wär es unterm tugendlichen Winkel gesehen zehnmal eine Lüge. Das will ich meinen, daß eine Unwahrheit von kraftstelgernder Beschaffenheit es aufnimmt mit jeder unersprießlich tugendhaften Wahrheit.’ (pp.325-6)

This manoeuvre, of regarding the false as true if it is invigorating, is notable given that, in order to undermine traditional methods, the devil has just used an argument to the effect that what is not true in a very literal sense is false and therefore immoral. The devil is therefore consecutively using contrasting arguments, partly as an expedient to achieve his goal, but his speech might also be seen as retracing stages of German, and perhaps more generally, modern thought, since the beginning of the modern period. The idea of the life- and power-enhancing falsehood being preferable to the truth is, in addition, one which features in the political discussions later in the novel. There is also perhaps something of the Wagnerian heroic in the imagery:

‘Und ich will’s meinen, daß schöpferische, Genie spendende Krankheit, Krankheit, die hoch zu Roß die Hindernisse nimmt, in kühnem Rausch von Fels zu Felsen sprengt, tausendmal dem Leben lieber ist als die zu Fuße latschende Gesundheit.’ (p.326)

The Wagnerian and Nietzschean resonances indicate that, to the extent that the devil is suggesting a new kind of religiosity to
replace the secularism of bourgeois culture, as he will suggest, it is a kind of neo-paganism, rather than traditional religion, that he is proposing.  

The devil also brings up a notion of Leverkühn being mad so that others will not have to be, which suggests an idea of self-sacrifice. The idea of self-sacrifice has already arisen in the story of Beethoven's anti-passion, and is brought up later in relation to Leverkühn's own struggles, but that the devil should be recommending madness as a benefit, while at the same time suggesting that Leverkühn will be saving others from the need to be mad, and earning their gratitude, seems to indicate a certain tendentiousness in the devil's mode of argument, congruent, perhaps, with the fact that he is the tempter ('Versucher' p.316), as he in fact describes himself earlier.

The devil concludes his cultural analysis by talking about the end of humanism, telling Leverkühn that he will break through the era of the cult of culture and reach a barbarousness twice as barbaric for coming after rather than before humanism, and claiming to be the only contemporary source from which Leverkühn will hear anything about religion, as opposed, for example, to the liberal theologians. He also asserts that there is a general boredom with secular humanist culture:

'Seit die Kultur vom Kultus abgefallen ist und aus sich selber einen gemacht hat, ist sie denn auch nichts anderes mehr, als ein Abfall, und alle Welt ist ihrer nach bloßen fünfhundert

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32 See Liisa Saariluoma, *Nietzsche als Roman: Über die Sinnkonstituierung in Thomas Manns 'Doktor Faustus'* , pp.165-166, who believes that Mann, in associating Nietzsche's aestheticizing intoxication with evil, has departed from Nietzsche's own amoral understanding of it.
Jahren so müd und satt, als wenn sie's, salva venla, mit
eisernen Kochkesseln gefressen hät...'(p.327)

While asserting the completely secular nature of culture for the last five hundred years, itself something of an exaggeration, the devil is also trying to convince Läverkühn that religious feeling is necessarily and only something like a dionysiac frenzy. He argues that bourgeois culture has seen only the culture in religion and not 'den Exzeß, das Paradox, die mystische Leidenschaft, die völlig unbürgerliche Aventüre.'(p.327) Together with the extravagant imagery he has already used, the impression he gives of what the religious spirit is, is arguably somewhat distorted, and, not surprisingly, given who he is, what he is proposing appears more a perversion of religion, or a collection of unfettered and extravagant forces, than traditional religion, with its features such as discipline, contemplation, and the search for serenity. How Mann's own attitude compares with the devil's is not obvious. Given the catastrophic outcome of the novel, he would not appear to be endorsing a return to barbarity, and, at the same time, the devil's equation of religion with barbarity does not seem meant to be convincing, since none who is not devilish makes the same argument, and the way the devil makes it seems intended by Mann to appear tendentious, rather than carefully argued. Mann, on the other hand, does not, through the novel, give an unqualified defence of modern humanism, emphasizing, rather, through the figure of Zeitblom, its tendency to admit to the claims of phenomena which present themselves as necessary consequences of progress, even when their leading characteristic is inhumanity.33

33 For Zeitblom as representing a weak humanism, see Ritchie Robertson, 'Accounting for History: Thomas Mann, Doktor Faustus', in David Midgley (ed.),
Mann must therefore either be arguing for a stronger humanism, capable of defending its own conventions, and convention generally, or, if the circularity of humanism's worship of itself is intended as telling, possibly for a culture with some theological, rather than diabolical, support, although no altogether clear proposition emerges here.

There is also a sense in which the devil's cultural analysis, with its diagnosis of a culture in its final stages, frustrated by the paralysing self-consciousness caused by 'zersetzende Kritik'(p.318), allowing no response but unsatisfying parody, and his offer of escape from the impasse through 'prangende Unbedenklichkeit'(p.318), may be meant as an echo of elements in political discourse of the nineteen-thirties and forties.34

The rest of the conversation is about what hell will be like, whether there is any way Leverkühn can still be saved, and about Leverkühn's being forbidden to love, as part of the deal. The leading characteristic of hell is that there are no limits or restraints on what can be done in terms of torturing the souls there. This connects it with the theme of breaking through limits, which the devil has been expounding, and suggests that hell is what might result from the total abandonment of conventional restraints, an idea which may be meant to have resonance politically with relation to the Germany of the thirties and the Second World War period.

The question of whether Leverkühn could still be saved arises from the discussion of hell, as the devil claims that Leverkühn is asking about it in order to be made afraid of it, which, according to the doctrine of attrition, would be regret sufficient to allow

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salvation, under certain conditions. The devil asserts that the doctrine of attrition has been 'wissenschaftlich überholt' (p.331), and that real contrition is necessary ('die eigentliche und wahre protestantische Zerknirschung über die Sünde' p.331), and that therefore Leverkühn cannot be saved, because his pride will not allow him to return to the mediocrity of those who are saved. The devil here is using a Protestant argument in suggesting that an emotionally felt inner conversion is necessary, in order to trap Leverkühn, Leverkühn being a Lutheran, but Leverkühn's response is to take the argument, in the same broadly Lutheran framework, a step further, and speculate that the pride which believes that it has sinned too grievously for divine mercy to be capable of forgiving it, is in the truest, most extreme state of repentance, and as such may be forgiven despite itself. This issue is not resolved here, the devil counterclaiming that such an extremely speculative attitude is typical of those who find themselves in hell, but the issue of whether Leverkühn can be saved by paradox is one of the complex of paradoxes forming the basis of the problematics of interpreting Leverkühn's final composition, 'Doctor Fausti Weheklag'.\textsuperscript{35} This complex also includes the issue of whether such mathematically predetermined music can still be humanly expressive, and, from a political and social point of view, given the events of the Second World War period, whether there is hope for Germany, and, perhaps more generally, for modern civilization.

The devil tries to conclude by summing up the case, but is questioned by Leverkühn on the last stipulation, which is that he may not love, and, further pressed by Leverkühn, who points out

\textsuperscript{35} See Herbert Lehnert, \textit{Thomas Mann — Fiction, Mythos, Religion}, p.201, who sees Romanticism in the irresolution of whether Leverkühn can be saved or not.
that there are different kinds of love, he specifies: ‘Liebe ist dir verboten, insofern sie wärmt.’ (p.334) Leverkühn’s life, ‘das extravagante Dasein’ (p.335), which the devil is providing him with, is to be composed of coldness in his personal relationships, and heat in his artistic inspiration, an oscillation between two extremes of coldness and heat which prefigures what he will experience in hell, as the devil has described it. Nothing less, nothing luke-warm, will satisfy Leverkühn’s pride, the devil assures him, and he also provides a naturalistic explanation, in that his life of ecstatic inspiration is bound to have a cost somewhere in the mental and spiritual economy, and it is his soul and his emotional life which will suffer (‘Was denkst du dir denn? Die Illumination läßt deine Geisteskräfte bis zum Letzten intakt, ja steigert sie zeitweise bis zur hellichten Verzückung, — woran soll es am Ende denn ausgehen, als an der lieben Seele und am werten Gefühlsleben?’ p.334) Thus the division in Leverkühn’s self, which is part of his engagement in art, and in modern culture, his cold objectivity and the heat of his unbridled passion, leaves a void in the middle ground, so that he has no warmth, and the lack of the human quality of warmth in his character is also part of his art.\(^{36}\)

**Music again**

When Zeitblom moves to Freising in Bavaria, to be near Leverkühn, who has in the meantime moved from Munich to the Schweigestills’ farm, also not far from Munich, after the stays in Palestrina, Zeitblom finds Leverkühn having had the score of his

opera 'Love's Labour's Lost' copied, and having received a letter from the copyist on the work. The copyist expresses enthusiasm for the boldness and novelty of the music, noting however the contrast between the archaizing elements, exemplified in the revival of an Old French dance, the bourré, and atonal parts. He fears that it is the archaizing parts which will be more inaccessible to the public due to their intellectual rigidity:

Er [the copyist] fügte hinzu: diese Bourrée sei nicht wenig charakteristisch für das verspielt-archaische Element gesellschaftlicher Gebundenheit, das so reizvoll, aber auch herausfordernd mit den >>modernen<<, den freien und überfreien, rebellischen, auch die tonale Bindung verschmähten Parteien des Werks kontrastiere; und da müsse er nun befürchten, daß diese Gegenenden der Partitur in all ihrer Unvertrautheit und frondierenden Ketzerrei der Rezeption fast zugänglicher sein würden, als die frommen und strengen. Hier komme es oft zu einer erstarrenden, mehr denkerischen als künstlerischen Spekulation in Noten, einem musikalisch kaum noch wirksamen Töne-Mosaik, das eher zum Lesen als zum Hören bestimmt scheine — etc.(pp.350-1)

Particularly ironic here is that the parts of the music modelled on the old, in which the copyist expects to find an expression of an older social connectedness, are in fact, at least in his estimation, liable to be highly inaccessible to the public, thus effecting a radical social unconnectedness. In this case, some parts of the copyist's reaction may not be intended by Leverkühn, given that the whole opera is parodistic, and thus those elements which might lead him to expect a sense of social communion are unlikely to be intended to
effect it. In addition, the speculative, visual rather than aural, intellectual rather than artistic tendency which Leverkühn has taken to an extreme was associated in the Kretzschmar lectures with the music of the Renaissance rather than of the Middle Ages, and so in the passages which the copyist understands as representing the old, what Leverkühn is, arguably, doing is rather expressing in an extreme form a characteristic of the early modern, a speculative attitude which gives the objective and abstract priority over the human. The work's failure with the public when staged by Kretzschmar in Lübeck, and disapproving critical reception, is mitigated by a single supportive critical voice, who, Zeitblom reports, writes that the opera is 'ein zukunftshaltiges Werk voll tiefer Musik' (p.352) and calls Leverkühn 'ein gottgeistiger Mensch' (p.352). That Zeitblom takes the part of this lone critic against the others and the public may not mean that Mann himself is fully endorsing the critic's view, since Zeitblom is habitually in awe of Leverkühn and his work, and may thus be inhibited from making the criticisms which he nevertheless sometimes feels instinctively. To add to this, the description of the music as 'zukunftshaltig', while evidently meant as praise by the critic, may, in the context of the novel have less unambiguously positive resonances, since, given the parallelism between art and society in the novel, the future, at this point, is ominous rather than promising. However, Leverkühn's being described as 'gottgeistig' suggests again the idea that Leverkühn is preoccupied by elevated, even transcendent, concerns, and it is this seriousness which makes him liable to fall in a serious, rather than ordinary, way.

Leverkühn is, at the same time as this, engaged in composing songs to poetry by Blake, Keats and Klopstock. Leverkühn's setting
of Klopstock's 'Frühlingsfeyer', with its emphasis on the praise of God, strikes Zeitblom, though not at the time, as being a kind of offering of reconciliation to God by Leverkühn, a sign of, as Zeitblom puts it, 'attritio cordis' (p.355), that is, a fear of damnation, if not an inner, felt regret. The setting also, in a way the poem does not, Zeitblom suggests, explores the idea of the unmeasurable or inconceivable aspects of the universe, and Zeitblom is led to connect this aspect of it to conversations they have been having at about this time, in which Leverkühn talks as if he has been personally introduced by a companion to various unimaginable aspects to the universe, such as being taken to the depths of the sea, an attitude which Zeitblom treats as a kind of joke, but which is reminiscent of the legendary adventures of Doctor Faustus. In analysing Zeitblom's disinclination towards taking an interest in such areas, Leverkühn explains:

'Das Mittelalter war geozentrisch und anthropozentrisch. Die Kirche, in der es überlebte, hat sich gegen die astronomischen Erkenntnisse im humanistischen Geist zur Wehr gesetzt, hat sie verteuft und verboten zu Ehren des Menschen, hat auf Unwissenheit bestanden aus Humanität. Du siehst, dein Humanismus ist reines Mittelalter.' (pp.365-6)

Here, Leverkühn, rather than drawing a distinction between secular humanism and religion, as in earlier conversations, sees the medieval view and Zeitblom's partially secular humanism as animated by the same spirit, anthropocentricity, as opposed to Leverkühn's own fascination with the non-human and inhuman,

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37 For the devilish nature of these adventures, and of Leverkühn's companion on them, see Irvin Stock, Ironic out of Love: The Novels of Thomas Mann, Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 1994, pp.173-174.
which is identified in the novel as starting in the Renaissance. If anthropocentricty is understood as the old, it is nevertheless capable of surviving partially beyond the Middle Ages, as Leverkühn suggests, but has to compete with an opposing perspective. Thus Leverkühn’s ‘Frühlingsfeyer’, with its religious intentions, nevertheless still embodies this non-humanistic attitude, an overwhelming fascination with that which bears as little relation as possible to the human, that which, in Zeitblom’s view, is unlikely to be favourable to religious or pious feeling. So if Leverkühn is to achieve all those things he yearns for, such as communication with others, self-expression in his music, religious salvation, he will have to achieve it, if at all, in a much more difficult way than others, such as Zeitblom, by absolute paradox. These conversations in fact lead towards another composition, ‘Die Wunder des Alls’, an orchestral phantasy of one movement, composed at the end of 1913 and the beginning of 1914, which, unlike ‘Frühlingsfeyer’, is mocking and parodistic, both of the natural universe it is about, and of music. Zeitblom describes it, among other things, as a ‘luziferische Sardonik’ (p. 368), which suggests that the devilish temptations towards utter negativity and destructiveness, which Leverkühn is under, have gained the upper hand at this stage.

When Zeitblom returns from his period at the front, during the First World War, Leverkühn is occupied with his next work, a set of puppet operettas based on a book of medieval legends, called ‘Gesta Romanorum’. The tales are somewhat farcical in nature, and the one which Zeitblom regards as the core piece of those Leverkühn composes is about an individual, who, being born as a result of, and committing, incest, repents and becomes pope. While Leverkühn’s choice of material may reveal an interest in the medieval period,
perhaps a longing for a kind of premodern innocence, the
scurrilous, farcical element in the stories he chooses is unlikely to
allow him to overcome his own tendencies to parody, and, in fact,
although he achieves moments in the music which arouse feeling in
the listener, there is also an element of travesty, which replaces,
Zeitblom suggests, the more serious aspects of the treatment of
medieval legends in Romantic music. The use of puppets not only
contributes to the sense of parody, as Zeitblom points out, but there
is also a connection with Leverkühn’s fascination with the
mechanical and inorganic, particularly when it is on the borders of
what could be mistaken for the organic, like his father’s chemical
growths, and the fact that earlier, when he is thinking about the
work, at Zeitblom’s last meeting with him before going to the front,
Zeitblom notices that he has been reading Kleist’s essay on the
puppet theatre, also alludes to this fascination, given that this essay
is about puppets which can appear human. The story of the
repentant sinner becoming pope would seem to allude to
Leverkühn’s own search for salvation, but there is a
straightforwardness in the forgiveness granted the character in the
story, and his acceptance of it, which will be beyond Leverkühn’s
self-consciousness, and the pre-Reformation origin of the story may
be significant in its approach to sin and forgiveness, given that the
Lutheran perspective is characterized to a large extent by a
problematization of just this area. The fact, however, that what the
character in the story repents, acts of incest which he has been
involved with unknowingly, is not deliberate on his part, may be
suggestive in relation to Leverkühn, if he is to be seen as a victim of
the circumstances of his time, taking a course which is not for the
best, but which he could not have helped taking given the world he was born into and the dispositions and abilities he had.

On one of the evenings at which Leverkühn has played extracts from his composition to his friends, drawing tears from his audience this time, during one scene, a conversation follows, in the course of which Leverkühn principally, according to Zeitblom, talks of ideas of bridging the gap between high and low art, achieved to some extent in Romantic music and literature, and of how, however, afterwards, this gap has reestablished itself wider than ever, between what is considered progressive and what is enjoyable. The theme of the conversation continues:

War es Sentimentalität, daß es die Musik — und sie stand für alles — mit wachsender Bewuβtheit verlangte, aus ihrer Respektsvereinsamung zu treten, Gemeinschaft zu finden, ohne gemein zu werden, und eine Sprache zu reden, die auch der musikalisch Unbelehrte verstand, wie er Wolfsschlucht, Jungfernkrantz, Wagner verstanden hatte? (p. 428)

However, sentimentality is rejected, by the parties to the conversation, as the means to achieve the aim, in favour of irony and mockery, which, shunning Romantic grandeur, will combine with the objective and elemental, that is, the rediscovery of music as the organization of time, something which, however, risks falling back into Romanticism via false primitivism, they, or Leverkühn, believe. The desire of art, the conversants, or, basically, Leverkühn, conclude, is to maintain its sophistication and yet be understood in its workings by everyone, to make the contrivance and technicality produce an effect of simplicity, the simplicity however not being simple but intellectually charged. What Leverkühn has done here,
partly, is to set up another paradoxical impasse for himself, and whether he succeeds in overcoming it is to be judged, as in the case of the others, by his last piece, 'Doctor Fausti Weheklag'. However, music here 'stands for everything', and there is a strong personal element in what is being expressed. Leverkühn's own desire to break out of his isolation is encoded, while the means he chooses to communicate, such as irony, and objectification, are such as to appear to increase distance rather than reduce it.

To the objection by Schildknapp that to deromanticize music would be so much against its nature that it would pay a heavy penalty, Leverkühn responds that he is right that warmth of feeling is being sacrificed to technical intellectual concerns, but that a breakthrough to another stage might be possible:

'Wem also der Durchbruch gelänge aus geistiger Kälte in eine Wagniswelt neuen Gefühls, ihn sollte man wohl den Erlöser der Kunst nennen.'(p.429)

The idea of breakthroughs from earlier to new stages is relevant to the political conversations at discussion meetings which Zeitblom attends during the interwar period, which I shall discuss later, and it is notable that the desire is to enter a new phase, despite having no clear idea as to what the new world being aimed at is, which might be seen as daring experiment in the artistic world, but which transferred to the political sphere has the potential to be dangerous. Leverkühn explains the need for a breakthrough by then talking about the situation of isolation that art has entered

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38 For the idea that Leverkühn's attitudes to producing art (with reference to the idea of intoxication) might be suitable for art, but not for politics, see Patrick Carnegy, p.140. For the idea that the new for Leverkühn means not progress, but the birth of new forms through crisis, see Jochen Strobel, Entzauberung der Nation: Die Repräsentation Deutschlands im Werk Thomas Manns, Dresden: Thelem, 2000, p.284.
since culture has been emancipated from religion and become a replacement for religion, finding itself alone with a cultured elite which, he claims, hinting at the political perspective, there will soon no longer be. Art will, he proposes, be isolated to the extent of being in danger of dying out, unless it finds a way to the 'Volk', or to people ('es sei denn, sie [die Kunst] fände den Weg zum >Volk<, das heißt, um es unromantisch zu sagen: zu den Menschen’p.429).

Leverkühn predicts that art will become more cheerful and modest, in the service of a community which will not be cultivated but may be a culture, and that it will be ‘eine Kunst mit der Menschheit auf du und du’(p.430). Leverkühn admits that this situation is difficult to imagine but claims that it will happen and will be natural. However, although Leverkühn may not have a clear idea of what this post-breakthrough situation will be like, the way he talks about the role of art in it may be seen, in retrospect, to be ominously like the way the role of art might be conceived of in totalitarian societies, something which Leverkühn, at the point at which he is talking, cannot know, but which Mann, writing several decades later, is likely to be trying to indicate. The personal element, in the sense of Leverkühn’s need for a breakthrough to communication, is particularly evident in the idea of art heading for a state where it will be on ‘du und du’ terms with humanity, given Leverkühn’s disinclination to address people as ‘du’, or even by name at all, and Zeitblom notes that Leverkühn has been speaking feverishly, and with a certain trembling in the voice. Zeitblom senses a risk of self-abasement, both for Leverkühn, and for art, in what Leverkühn has said, and defends, as narrator, art’s indirect fruitfulness to humanity in even its most outlandish and unpopular experiments. Zeitblom is perhaps underestimating the cost to the artist of the
resulting isolation, and neglecting the fact that it is precisely Leverkühn's adherence to the principle of a duty to pursue the avant-garde, regardless of popular opinion, which is bringing him to the stage where he feels he has to address people at large, having first reduced his audience to almost himself alone.

Leverkühn writes a major work, his 'Apocalipsis cum figuris', during 1919. It is an oratorio, based not only on the Apocalypse of St. John, but also on apocalyptic literature of all kinds, and even the series of woodcuts on the apocalypse by Dürer.\(^9\) The time of writing is one of a kind of apocalypse for Germany, given that the regime has just collapsed following Germany's defeat in the First World War, circumstances that Zeitblom mentions towards the beginning of the chapter (XXXIV) in which he discusses the work, while the novel is building up towards Germany's even more apocalyptic collapse at the end of the next war. Zeitblom divides the chapter in which he discusses the 'Apocalipsis cum figuris' into three subsections, the first and last principally concerned with the work and its genesis, the middle part however being a report of the conversation at a Munich discussion group on political and cultural themes. This conversation, which I shall discuss in more detail later, draws attention to the apocalyptic mood among Munich intellectuals at the time, and their expectation of the end of the known order and the inauguration of something new and unknown, and its insertion in the middle of the discussion of the 'Apocalipsis cum figuris' signals that Leverkühn's work is part of the intellectual mood of the time, and not unrelated to the unfolding of political

events, despite Leverkühn’s personal withdrawnness. Zeitblom also notes, towards the beginning of the chapter, that the feeling that the end of an epoch, of bourgeois humanism, has arrived, is not shared by the victors in the war, such as France, which see the war as a disruption which is over. Thus attention is drawn to Germany as a particular focus of crisis, as is often the case in the novel.

The period just before Leverkühn actually starts composing is one of a heavy and prolonged attack of his migraine, during which he cannot work, but is reflecting on what he is going to do, having apocalyptic literature read to him, because he cannot read himself. He tells Zeitblom at this time that he feels like a martyr in a cauldron of oil, from one of the woodcuts in Dürer’s apocalyptic series, the idea thus being brought up, again, that Leverkühn himself is being martyred, suffering perhaps in an exemplary way on behalf of others less intensely exposed to the problematics of the time. The composition then takes place in a period of intense activity and inspiration, such that most of it is completed in a period of four and a half months, and the whole work in a period of six, including a relapse into inactivity just before the end. Zeitblom views this period as about the length of time simply copying out the work would be expected to take, and the speed of the composition as uncanny. He portrays Leverkühn as being virtually tormented by the constant stream of ideas, as if it is out of his control and he is a passive recipient. He refers to Leverkühn’s condition, for example, as ‘der Erleuchtungszustand, mit dem er gesegnet oder von dem er heimgesucht war’(p.480), as if it was a disease, and describes him

\[4^{0}\] See T. J. Reed, *Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition*, p.367.

\[4^{1}\] For the idea that Zeitblom’s account of Leverkühn’s life resembles a medieval hagiography, see Hubert Orlowski, *Prädestination des Dämonischen: Zur Frage des bürgerlichen Humanismus in Thomas Manns 'Doktor Faustus'*, pp.117-166.
going stiff, and his cheeks going red, when he is visited by ideas, and wonders if powers, which he says he wishes to know nothing of, are suggesting them to him. Zeitblom is thus relating what is happening to Leverkühn to the promise that the devil made to him, that he would experience lows of depression and suffering, and highs of inspiration and exhilaration, with the difference that the highs that Leverkühn is experiencing are almost as much a torture as the lows (‘Offensichtlich und eingestandenermaßen lebte dieser Mensch damals in einer Hochspannung durchaus nicht rein beglückender, sondern hetzender und knechtender Eingebung’ p.477), such that his condition resembles more closely the way the devil described the experience of hell, in which the tormented soul alternates between equally insupportable extremes of heat and cold.

As for the music itself, apart from a section which is a fugue in which the fugal form dissolves itself by being taken to extremes, an idea familiar from Kretzschmar’s lectures on Beethoven, Zeitblom particularly emphasizes the way in which the work is characterized by a coexistence of opposing extremes, which at times, in their extremeness, become virtually identical. Zeitblom is worried by the parallel which can be drawn between comments by one of the participants in the Munich discussion group, to the effect that a circular movement can be accomplished which leads to a coalescence of the future with the past, and Leverkühn’s going forwards and backwards at the same time, out of harmony into polyphony. Zeitblom describes himself as subject to doubt as to whether the solution to bourgeois culture is, as Leverkühn claims, not barbarity, but community, and suspects that aestheticism has a
role in preparing the way for barbarity. To illustrate the way that aestheticism can lead to barbarity in art, Zeitblom argues that the attempt to renew cultic music in a secular period may lead to going back beyond ecclesiastical music to what he views as a less civilized period, of medicine men and magicians:

Ist zu leugnen, daß dies [the pre-ecclesiastical period] ein vorkultureller, ein barbarischer Zustand des Kultus war — und ist es verständlich oder nicht, daß die spät-kulturelle, aus der Atomisierung Gemeinschaft ambitionierende Erneuerung des Kultischen, zu Mitteln greift, die nicht nur dem Stadium seiner kirchlichen Sittigung, sondern auch seinem Primitiv-Stadium angehören?(pp.495-6)

So Zeitblom is suggesting that those aiming to go forward to the transcendent in late modernity are quite likely to be going, at the same time, back, not to the old as in medieval civilization, but beyond this to the primitive, a pre-civilized state.

In the light of these worries, and admitting the work's vulnerability to charges both of cold intellectualism, and of barbarity, Zeitblom then describes a number of specific features of the work which illustrate the coexistence in the work of seemingly primitive and pre-musical elements, with highly complex and calculated elements, while loathe to actually accept the charge of barbarity, as he then explains. Leverkühn has made frequent use of the glissando, creating an effect of horror at certain points, and Zeitblom clarifies this as an instance of the primitive, given the idea, mentioned in the Kretzschmar lectures, that music must have

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42 For the connection between aestheticism and barbarism, see Eric Heller, *Thomas Mann: The Ironic German*, Cleveland, Ohio: Meridian, 1961, p.266.

43 See T. J. Reed, *Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition*, p.377, who believes that Zeitblom's anxiousness to avoid being seen to agree with the charge of barbarism actually supports it.
developed from what was originally an undifferentiated howling. The choral and orchestral parts are not treated distinctly, and voices sometimes imitate instruments, while instruments sometimes imitate voices, blurring the distinction between the human and the thing. There is a strong contrast between complex and dissonant polyphony, representing heavenly elements, and parodistic quotations of the banal, which represent hellish elements. The rhythm follows the rhythm of speech, reminding Zeitblom of Beißel's music, but, 'ironisch-konservativerweise'(p.499), the rhythmic patterns are still included in the notation rather than actually being left free. As a final, particularly striking illustration of the paradoxes of the work, Zeitblom describes the passage at the end of the first section which sounds like devilish laughter, and the passage at the beginning of the second which sounds like an angelic choir, but which are identical to each other in a note-for-note fashion. Thus the work embodies a whole series of paradoxes, all of which have already appeared in the novel: the primitive and the ultra-modern, the human and the inorganic, the simple and the complex, the devilish and the divine. As well as this, Leverkühn’s tendency not only to seek opposing extremes, but then to seek to blur the distinctions, is emphasized, and highlighted particularly in the demonic laughter and angelic singing passages, in which Zeitblom sees the idea of music as the paradoxical combination of calculation and magic.44

In trying to explain why the work has been charged with barbarity, while not admitting that this charge is justified, Zeitblom

44 See Ehrhard Bahr, “Identität des Nichtidentischen’: Zur Dialektik der Kunst in Thomas Manns Doktor Faustus im Lichte von Theodor W. Adornos Ästhetischer Theorie’, Thomas Mann Jahrbuch 2 (1989) pp.102-120, for a view which, unlike mine, sees the oppositions in, for example, the ‘Apocalipsis cum figuris’ as constituting a dialectical overcoming of themselves.
suggests that the charge may arise from an effect of ‘mass modernity’ (‘Massen-Modernität’ p.500), an element which he describes as ‘stream-lined’ (p.501), using the English term, in conjunction with the theological aspect which consists of judgement and terror. He cites as an example the use of an exceptionally high tenor voice for the part of the seer, which gives the effect of a coldly neutral news report on the catastrophic happenings, as well as the example of jazz sounds used to represent hell, and the loud-speaker effects which are also employed. The impression produced by the juxtaposition of modern technological and mass-produced elements in the midst of spiritual terror and catastrophe is presumably one of indifference and callousness. Zeitblom does not actually explain why this is not barbaric, but does suggest that the fundamental concern of the work is more serious than the ‘mass-modernity’ elements might indicate, being rather rooted in the atmosphere of Kaisersaschern, by which he would seem to mean that the problems expressed theologically are Leverkühn’s fundamental concern in the work, given the way that Kaisersaschern has previously been treated as emblematic of apocalyptic enthusiasms during Reformation times. Thus Zeitblom’s description of the phenomenon is ‘eine explodierende Alterrümllichkeit’ (p.501), which would seem to refer to the idea of an ultra-modern, technological expression of an apocalyptic preoccupation growing out of the German Reformation. Zeitblom then, proposing that it is really soullessness which is what those accusing the work of barbarity have objected to, points to the existence of parts in the work which are capable of producing a tearful reaction, because they seem ‘eine inständige Bitte um Seele’ (p.501). Thus, for all the alienation that Leverkühn expresses in the work through its many paradoxically coexisting polar
extremes, its extreme heat and cold, and absence of warmth, Leverkühn’s longing for the soul, the absence of which his music represents, may indicate that he is himself a victim of the circumstances of his time. He yearns for that sense of connectedness and coherence which his sensitivity to and absorption of the cultural trends of late modernity in early twentieth century Germany deny him.

In 1923 Leverkühn receives a visit, at his abode in Bavaria, from a modern music impresario, from Paris, who wishes to be his agent, and Zeitblom is present at the interview. The encounter has some echoes of Leverkühn’s conversation with the devil, in that Leverkühn is being tempted out of his isolation into the world, and the impresario, Saul Fitelberg, uses language echoing that of the devil tempting Christ in the desert (‘Und dennoch, figurez-vous, bin ich gekommen, Sie zu entführen, Sie zu vorübergehender Untreue zu verführen, Sie auf meinem Mantel durch die Lüfte zu führen und Ihnen die Reiche dieser Welt und ihre Herrlichkeit zu zeigen, mehr noch, sie Ihnen zu Füßen zu legen ...’p.529), but it is significantly different, in that Fitelberg is felt to be an attractive person by Zeitblom, and in that Leverkühn refuses the bargain. In addition, while Fitelberg can be seen as tempting Leverkühn from his seriousness to the comparative triviality of fashionable society in Paris, there is something more human about this triviality than the somewhat inhuman rigidity of Leverkühn’s seriousness, as Fitelberg himself points out, and, in this sense, Fitelberg is trying to attract Leverkühn in the opposite direction to that in which the devil has been drawing him. Fitelberg’s contribution to the novel’s discourse

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45 For Fitelberg’s diabolic connection, see Lukács, Essays on Thomas Mann, p.64.
on music is particularly distinguished by its emphasis of the
Germanness of Leverkühn’s approach to music. In explaining what is
particularly German in Leverkühn’s music itself he describes it as
follows:

‘Gewiß denken Sie, daß ich vor allem Ihre grimmige Disziplin
im Auge habe, et que vous enchaînez votre art dans un
système de règles inexorables et néoclassiques, indem Sie
sie zwingen, sich in diesen eisernen Fesseln — wenn nicht
mit Anmut, so doch mit Geist und Kühnheit zu bewegen.
Aber wenn es das ist, was ich meine, so meine ich zugleich
mehr als das, indem ich von Ihrer qualité d’Allemand
spreche, — ich meine — wie mich ausdrücken? — eine
gewisse Viereckigkeit, rhythmische Schwerfälligkeit,
Unbeweglichkeit, grossièreté, die altertümlich deutsch sind
— en effet, entre nous, man findet sie auch bei Bach. ... Ihre
Themen — sie bestehen fast durchweg aus geraden Werten,
Halben, Vierteln, Achteln; sie sind zwar synkopiert und
hinübergebunden, verharren aber gleichwohl in einer oft
maschinell arbeitenden, stampfenden, hämmernenden
Unwendigkeit und Uneleganz.’(pp.532-3)

What Fitelberg has noticed here is an awkwardness resulting from a
certain rigour of conception, a lack of the elegance which might
result from spontaneity, or an intuitive approach, and views it as
characteristic of modern, in the broadest sense, German music, from
Bach onwards.

Later on in the interview, having already failed to persuade
Leverkühn to take on his services, he relates Leverkühn’s reluctance
to be introduced to the world to his Germanness:

‘Sie wissen wohl garnicht, Maître, wie deutsch Ihre
répugnance ist, die sich, wenn Sie mir erlauben, ein psychologue zu sprechen, aus Hochmut und Inferioritätsgefühlen charakteristisch zusammensetzt, aus Verachtung und Furcht, — sie ist, möchte ich sagen, das Ressentiment des Ernstes gegen den Salon der Welt.’ (p. 538)

So Leverkühn’s own combination of feelings of superiority, due to his seriousness, and inferiority, due to his awkwardness, towards society, are also Germany’s towards the surrounding world. The psychological and social situation is reflected in the music, which Fitelberg has already characterized as serious but awkward. Thus Fitelberg highlights the parallelism of the artistic, psychological and social aspects of the novel, and reinforces the idea that Leverkühn’s condition, with its outstanding but also dangerous sides, is also Germany’s. Fitelberg goes on to compare the attitude to music and musical education of French composers, such as Massenet, which is unsystematic but human (‘Deutsch ist es nicht, aber human.’ p. 539), with that of German-speaking composers, such as Bruckner, which is serious, but not human (‘Pas précisément humain, mais extrêmement respectable.’ p. 540) Leverkühn’s tendency towards dehumanization in pursuit of the exceptional, through his separating of the logical and the emotional, until he achieves a mechanically regular abstractness accompanied by a raw, wild emotional energy, has already been explored in the novel. Fitelberg emphasizes the connection, already hinted at, between these qualities and Germanness, and his diagnosis may be seen as a warning of approaching inhumanity in German society, especially when he talks of the relationship between Germans and Jews, he being of Polish-Jewish origins himself, suggesting that there is a Jewish cultural sympathy with German seriousness, and
particularity, but that the Jews are in danger of becoming victims to German 'Volkstümlichkeit' (pp. 539, 540), and when he warns of a coming misfortune which will result from the German refusal to be introduced to the world. The irony of the Fitelberg episode resides both in his recognition that despite Jewish sympathy with the German sense of an exclusive destiny, they are in danger from just this sense in which they will not be allowed to participate, and in the fact that he is working to promote tendencies in art which, according to his own analysis, suffer from inhumanity and may be connected with coming political disaster.

Before his last major work, 'Doctor Fausti Weheklag', Leverkühn composes four more pieces which are discussed, though not at the same length as 'Doctor Fausti Weheklag' or the 'Apocalipsis cum figuris'. He writes a violin concerto for Rudi Schwerdtfeger, the violinist, of which the premiere is in 1924, which is characterized by a preparedness to take into account the requirements of the virtuoso player not typical of Leverkühn's other music. It also includes passages of a sweetness kept on the border of parody, and a passage in which parody turns into serious passion, producing a sense of shame, as Zeitblom describes it. Zeitblom sees this piece as representative of Leverkühn's relationship to Schwerdtfeger, in which the violinist, who is presented as superficial but charming, appears to succeed in attaching to himself Leverkühn's affections, but is later killed by a jealous lover, an event recounted by Zeitblom in such a way as to suggest that Leverkühn is indirectly responsible, and that Leverkühn required Schwerdtfeger to be punished in revenge for the shame of having had his affections engaged by him, this being inconsistent with his sense of pride, and need for absolute self-control. In a conversation on
music, which happens at about this time, and which Zeitblom reports on the basis of its being connected with the concerto, Leverkühn says,

‘Der Idealismus läßt außer acht, daß der Geist durchaus nicht nur von Geistigem angesprochen wird, sondern von der animalischen Schwermut sinnlicher Schönheit auß tiefste ergriffen werden kann.’ (p.548)

He illustrates this proposition with Wilhelm Meister’s fascination with the superficial but attractive Philine, Wilhelm Meister being partly identifiable with Goethe himself, he says. This suggests that Leverkühn has been captivated by Schwerdtfeger’s charm, and has surrendered to it in the concerto, but that he at the same time resents its power over him. Thus he has not achieved love of a human, balanced kind, but only uncontrolled and resented passion for the sensual, which is the opposite and counterpart of his intended striving for the abstract and calculated. 46

In 1927, after another period of illness, Leverkühn again goes into a phase of intensive inspiration, and produces three pieces of chamber music in the same year. The first piece, written for three strings, three woodwind, and a piano, involves themes which do not return, at least in recognizable form, once they have been developed and have departed. This is explained by Leverkühn as his having wanted to write a novel, rather than a sonata. Zeitblom describes the impression the piece makes as follows:

Es ist, als würde man von einem festen und vertrauten Ausgang in immer entlegenere Regionen fortgelockt — alles

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46 For a view which argues that the comparison between Wilhelm Meister and Leverkühn here suggests the different historical circumstances obtaining for each of the characters, and which emphasizes the eventual harmony possible for Wilhelm, but not for Leverkühn, see Jürgen Scharfschwerdt, Thomas Mann und der deutsche Bildungsroman, pp.244-5.
This piece is perhaps descriptive of the story of Leverkühn's musical career, in which he moves through phases which are apparently quite different from each other, and each one of which is unknown until it is arrived at. The social parallel may also be drawn, in which case Germany's movement from one political phase to another, each one unknown to the previous one, is represented. Ominously, the piece ends in a tragic and then mournful way.

In his string quartet, Leverkühn takes the principle of non-repetition of motifs even further, so that not only are there no repetitions, but also no variations and developments. There is thus no traditional form, as Zeitblom points out. In addition to this instance of going beyond and abolishing traditional forms, Leverkühn also, at the end of the piece, produces an effect such that the quartet sounds like an orchestra. Zeitblom notes that this is the same boundary-crossing and opposition-levelling tendency which featured prominently in the 'Apocalipsis cum figuris'. He cites Leverkühn explaining why he is interested in this idea by referring to what he has been taught when young in philosophy classes about the Hegelian critique of Kant, and points out that this shows the extent to which Leverkühn's creativity is shaped by intellectual considerations, and by his early impressions. However, it is also important that the Hegelian notion of opposite categories being implied in each other, and their opposition collapsing in due course to produce a new concept, has been brought up here, as the idea of the inevitability of progress through the overcoming of traditional categories, and by the production thereby of new and unknown states, which are necessarily better than the old, by virtue of being later stages in a progressive evolution, is both related to the
Hegelian scheme, and a leading feature of the way attitudes to music and to politics are shown in the novel among Germans of the early twentieth century, although it is not suggested that similar attitudes are not more widely spread. Mann's determination to highlight and identify this idea, rather than allowing it to remain an assumption, taken for granted, suggests a desire to question it.

Leverkühn also writes a trio for violin, viola and cello, which Zeitblom qualifies as barely playable, a quality which recalls Beethoven's indifference to his own pieces' playability mentioned in Kretzschmar's lectures. The piece resembles, as Leverkühn describes it, 'eine Nacht ... in der es vor Blitzen nicht dunkel wird' (p. 605), consisting, as it does, in Zeitblom's description, of a tumult of musical problems and their solutions. The character of this piece illustrates the condition that Leverkühn is in during his states of inspiration, 'Eine etwas unmilde und zappelige Art von Beleuchtung' (p. 605), as he describes it, which emphasizes that it is not an illumination such as daylight, of a steady kind, but something violent, and he mentions the feverishness which the arrival of his ideas produces ('Einfälle, lieber Freund, sind ein unholdes Gelicherter, sie haben heiße Backen, sie machen dir selber auf nicht ganz liebsame Art die Backen heiß.' p. 605) What is significant here is that Leverkühn admits to being uncertain as to whether his state of inspiration is a more desirable condition than his previous state of incapacity, so that here, as in the case of his state of inspiration while writing the 'Apocalipsis cum figuris', it appears that he has lost out in his Faustian bargain, even before his time is up, neither of the two conditions he is subject to proving to be habitable. The unnaturalness of the intense activity is emphasized by the fact that, in addition to the three works he has
written, which, according to Zeitblom, would have required the greatest imaginable concentration to complete in one year, Leverkühn also, in the same year, begins to conceive of his final work, 'Doctor Fausti Weheklag'.

Zeitblom's description of 'Doctor Fausti Weheklag', an oratorio based on the anonymous Renaissance Faust legend, which is written during the latter half of 1929, and beginning of 1930, contains two paradoxes on which an understanding of the description as a whole depends. The first of these paradoxes concerns the mathematical predeterminedness and yet expressiveness of the piece, in relation to which the question arises of what Zeitblom means by the idea that expression is lamentation. The second paradox is that of the suggestion of hope in despair which Zeitblom detects at the end of the piece, which raises issues of the nature of Leverkühn's despair, and the meaning of the parallel which Zeitblom draws with Christ's Passion.

The reader's task of making sense of the description of 'Doctor Fausti Weheklag' cannot be facilitated by reference to an actual piece of music, in contrast, for example, to Kretzschmar's description of real Beethoven pieces earlier in the novel. Given the paradoxical way in which the piece is described, however, it is difficult to imagine what it would be like. Zeitblom insists, on the one hand, that the piece is characterized by a

Formveranstaltung von letzter Rigorosität, die nichts
Unthematisches mehr kennt, in der die Ordnung des
Materials total wird, und innerhalb derer die Idee einer
Fuge etwa der Sinnlosigkeit verfällt, eben weil es keine freie
Note mehr gibt.(p.643)
We are also told that everything is developed from a twelve-note motif, which represents the words of Faust in the Faust legend, 'Denn ich sterbe als ein böser und guter Christ' (p.643). On the other hand we are asked to accept that the piece contains, in summary, 'die erdenklichsten, ausdruckstragenden Momente der Musik überhaupt' (p.644), as well as contrapuntal passages, with partially independent melodic lines, long melodic flourishes, and, in addition, even exploitation of a five note motif, both melodically and harmonically, which he has used before, in an earlier piece, the song 'O lieb Mädel' of the Brentano cycle, to represent Esmeralda. The more contrapuntal rather than polyphonic style here indicates a softer, less stridently dissonant effect to his earlier works. Aspects of this description are not just hard to imagine, but seem contradictory. The solution offered to the seeming impossibility of such a piece is that 'tiefer Dämonenwitz' (p.643) has been necessary to compose it, and to invest its mechanical workings with expressiveness, which is presumably why those without such resources could not have composed such a piece, and might struggle to imagine what it would be like. To the extent that some indication is given as to how the paradox would work in practice, the reader is reminded of the passages in the 'Apocalipsis cum figuris' which are identical in terms of notes, but sound like hellish laughter on the one hand and angelic singing on the other. If the notes are already fixed, then means such as instrumentation, dynamics, and tempo are perhaps free for expressive purposes.

While 'tiefer Dämonenwitz' might be needed to understand how the piece works, the reader is nevertheless invited to imagine the kind of expressiveness which it produces. We are told that the whole piece expresses lamentation ('Klage' p.640), and, moreover,
that in some basic way, all expression is lamentation (‘man kann
dühnlich sagen, daß aller Ausdruck eigentlich Klage ist’p.641).
Music, Zeitblom claims, has been a lamentation ever since it became
expressive, at the beginning of its modern history, which he
identifies here as the baroque period, and this is why, he indicates,
Leverkühn makes prominent use of baroque motifs in ‘Doctor Fausti
Weheklag’. Zeitblom explains that the baroque use of the echo is a
lamentation, because it is ‘das Zurückgeben des Menschenlautes als
Naturlaut und seine Enthüllung als Naturlaut’(p.641), and thus
announces humanaloneness. This explanation suggests that a
mechanical motif, such as repetition, can evoke the idea of modern
existential angst, provoked by the feeling of abandonedness in the
universe which a loss of faith has produced. It is the very lack of
creativity in the repetition, its mechanical appearance, which makes
it expressive of the sense of meaninglessness which follows from the
idea of man’s being alone in the universe. This idea gives another
clue as to how ‘Doctor Fausti Weheklag’ might achieve
expressiveness, in that ‘Doctor Fausti Weheklag’ is a much more
sophisticated mechanical device than the echo-motif, and it its
very mechanical nature which may make it expressive of
meaninglessness and human abandonedness, although the
dialectical process, Zeitblom explains, by which the piece unites its
mechanical boundedness and its freedom to expression is
‘unendlich komplizierter, unendlich bestürzender in seiner
Logik’(p.641) than in the baroque pieces on the basic principles of
which it works.

If the first paradox is an aesthetic paradox, concerning the
creation of the work of art, which takes an existential turn when the
meaning of expression as lamentation is considered, the second
paradox is existential at its core. Zeitblom interprets the single cello note which ends ‘Doctor Fausti Weheklag’ as a symbol of hope, ‘ein Licht in der Nacht’ (p.648), despite the unqualified despair of the piece as a whole, which is a ‘taking back’ of the ‘Ode to Joy’ in Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, ‘Doctor Fausti Weheklag’, it is pointed out, ending by a falling away of the choir, and then of the various groups of instruments in a way opposite to the way the Ninth Symphony ends. Zeitblom tells us, in this connection, that Leverkühn himself has said that ‘es solle nicht sein, das Gute, die Freude, die Hoffnung, das solle nicht sein, es werde zurückgenommen, man müsse es zurücknehmen!’ (p.646) This outburst of despair by Leverkühn is occasioned by the death of his young nephew Nepomuk, while staying with him, from a sudden and violent disease, of which he feels his own demonic dealings have been the cause, since he dared to love Nepomuk, against the terms of his bargain. This relates to the intertext of the Faust legend, which forms the text of ‘Doctor Fausti Weheklag’, since Faust himself despairs of salvation, and the Faust figure in ‘Doctor Fausti Weheklag’, according to Zeitblom, rejects the world of those who are saveable because he despises it. The Faust figure in the oratorio, in despising ‘falsche und matte Gottesbürgerlichkeit’ (p.647), viewing it as a lie, and treating attempts to save him for it, by a pious neighbour, as temptation, shows an overriding horror of mediocrity similar to Leverkühn’s. The Faust figure in the oratorio and

47 For a discussion of the relationship between ‘Doctor Fausti Weheklag’ and Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, see Elvira Seiwert, Beethoven-Szenarien: Thomas Manns ‘Doktor Faustus’ und Adornos Beethoven-Projekt, pp.185-196. See also Helmut Koopmann, ‘Doktor Faustus — eine Geschichte der deutschen Innerlichkeit?’, Thomas Mann Jahrbuch 2 (1989) pp.5-19, who suggests that ‘Doktor Fausti Weheklag’, as well as being a taking back of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony on the musical level, is a taking back of Goethe’s Faust on the literary level.
Leverkühn prefer to deny goodness in an absolute way than to affirm it in a mediocre, imperfect way. It is therefore a proud despair which they both exhibit, as Zeitblom recognizes.

However, if one examines Faust's key phrase, which Leverkühn has made the basis for 'Doctor Fausti Weheklag', 'Denn ich sterbe als ein böser und guter Christ', one finds a hint of something other than denial and rejection. In fact, Zeitblom points out that the legendary Faust sees himself as a good Christian in as far as he regrets what he has done, and still harbours a hope for mercy for his soul, if not his body. This idea of there being something other than denial involved in the piece is also present in the parallel which Zeitblom sees between Leverkühn's and Faust's sufferings and Christ's Passion.48 Zeitblom claims, for example, that the attempted conversion of the oratorio's Faust figure is reminiscent of Christ's temptation in the wilderness. The reversal of the religious intertext is not however a denial of the religious altogether, and is rather an acknowledgement of it, as Zeitblom again indicates.

So the second paradox appears to lead the reader into the theological problem of how salvation is possible for a soul which rejects the good. Two characteristics of Leverkühn and the Faust figure are indicated here which might be said to be redemptive. One of these is the fact that despite their rejection of goodness, they believe that the Good, or God, exists, which, especially from a Lutheran point of view, might allow their salvation. Their second potentially redeeming quality is that their error has been produced by a kind of rigid uprightness, which has led them, arguably, to

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48 For the significance of invocations of the Passion in novel, see Friedrich Marx, 'Ich Aber Sage Ihnen...': Christusfigurationen im Werk Thomas Manns, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2002, pp.231-301. For the idea that the parallel between the Passion and Leverkühn's sufferings is unconvincing, see Michael Beddow, Thomas Mann: Doctor Faustus, p.79.
pursue with a kind of ruthless honesty the consequences of the courses which they have taken.\textsuperscript{49} Taking this perspective, one might blame the circumstances of their times, the problematics of modernity, early for Faust, and late for Leverkühn, rather than their characters, for their downfall. If this is the case, the parallel with Christ's Passion must mean, as it does elsewhere in the novel, with regard to Leverkühn, and also, Beethoven, that Faust and Leverkühn suffer for the faults of their time, and suffer in a special way because of their exemplary characters. To the extent that the fate of Leverkühn in the novel always stands for, among other things, the fate of Germany, this means that Germany, as the country which Mann may be viewing as having taken modern thought most seriously, has had to suffer for the faults of modern thought in an exemplary way.\textsuperscript{50} Following this line of reasoning, it would be possible to suggest that, while Germany has committed real evil, it is a certain depth and uprightness of character among Germans which has led, paradoxically, to this result.

The formal parallels of the two central paradoxes of this section of the novel are typical of the way the novel works, in that Mann starts with an aesthetic issue, and then moves on to a parallel existential issue, so that the modern artist and the modern work of art represent modern society and the modern subject. In the case of the description of 'Doctor Fausti Wehklag' it is the paradox of the mechanical and the expressive qualities of the piece of music which is juxtaposed with the paradox of hope within despair, expressed by

\textsuperscript{49} See J. P. Stern, \textit{The Dear Purchase: A Theme in German Modernism}, pp.371-2, who believes that Mann is relying on the idea that salvation is possible by virtue of the magnitude of the sin and consequent anguish. Stern sees this idea as a misinterpretation of Luther and Dostoyevsky.

\textsuperscript{50} For the allegorical connection between Leverkühn and Germany, see ibid., p.37, and for the limits of the allegorical connection, pp.372-4.
Leverkühn in his piece, about his own, or society's fate. Given this parallelism, it is interesting to note that, whereas the solution to the first paradox, 'tiefer Dämonenwitz', is given, the solution to the second problem is left blank. It is at least conceivable that Mann wants to hint that, if it takes supernatural help of a demonic kind to make a purely mechanical artifice expressive, it will take divine help for Leverkühn, and, possibly, German society, to find redemption.51

In May 1930 Leverkühn invites a group of friends and acquaintances to the farmhouse where he lives to listen to him play on the piano extracts of his newly completed work, 'Doctor Fausti Weheklag'. He in fact does not get as far as playing any extracts, as he collapses at the piano, after the first chord, and never afterwards recovers his faculties. He however succeeds in making a speech to the guests, detailing his musical career in terms of his deal with the devil, and confessing to responsibility for the death of Schwerdtfeger, among other things. The speech and surrounding details have two strong intertexts, one being Christ's Passion, recalled, for example, by the way that a number of the women who have been his helpers crowd round him, as if to protect him, as hostility grows among the listeners to the strangeness of the speech. It is also recalled by the way that Frau Schweigestill, his landlady, who represents human compassion, and simple non-urban living, and is also a kind of second mother-figure to Leverkühn, just as the Bavarian farm is presented as a double of Leverkühn's home farm,

51 For discussion of the possible religious implications of the novel, see Gunilla Bergsten, Thomas Mann's 'Doctor Faustus': The Sources and Structure of the Novel, pp.201-218. For an alternative view, which treats the entire religious theme in the novel as mythic, see Susan von Rohr Scaff, History, Myth, and Music: Thomas Mann's Timely Fiction, Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1998. pp.66-156. For the idea that it is not Leverkühn's works, but the novel itself, which is a human response to the impasses described in the novel, see Reinhard Mehring, Thomas Mann: Künstler und Philosoph, Munich: Fink, 2001, p.124.
grasps Leverkühn as he falls from the piano, before any of the others, who hesitate, and holds him in a pietà-like posture. The other intertext is the ‘Oratio Fausti ad studiosos’ chapter of the Renaissance Faust legend, in which Faust confesses to assembled scholars what he has done, and tells them that his time has run out, that he regrets what he has done, but knows that the devil will at least take his body, doubts whether his sin is not too great to be forgiven him, and asks them to bury him when they find him dead the next day. Although there are many correspondences between this speech and Leverkühn’s own speech, and Leverkühn even uses language of a partly sixteenth century style in his speech, making the parallels more striking, Leverkühn’s speech is by no means identical to Faust’s, and refers explicitly to his own musical career. In particular, in a paragraph in the middle of the speech, he refers to the issue of modern conditions, and his guilt in relation to them:

‘Item, mein verzweifelt Herz hat mirs verscherzt. Hatte wohl einen guten geschwinden Kopf und Gaben, mir von oben her gnädig mitgeteilt, die ich in Ehramkeit und bescheidentlich hätte nutzen können, fühlte aber nur allzu wohl: Es ist die Zeit, wo auf fromme, nüchterne Weis, mit rechten Dingen, kein Werk mehr zu tun und die Kunst unmöglich geworden ist ohne Teufelshilf und höllisch Feuer unter dem Kessel... Ja und ja, liebe Gesellen, daß die Kunst stockt und zu schwer worden ist und sich selbstesten verhöhnt, daß alles zu schwer worden ist und Gottes armer Mensch nicht mehr aus und ein weiß in seiner Not, das ist wohl Schuld der Zeit. Lädt aber Einer den Teufel zu Gast, um darüber hinweg und zum

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52 For a comparison of the speech in the Faust legend with Leverkühn’s speech, see Ulrike Hermanns, Thomas Manns Roman 'Doktor Faustus' im Lichte von Quellen und Kontexten, pp.191-201.
Durchbruch zu kommen, der zieht seine Seel und nimmt die Schuld der Zeit auf den eigenen Hals, daß er verdammt ist. Denn es heißt: Seid nüchtern und wachet! Das ist aber manches Sache nicht, sondern, statt klug zu sorgen, was vonnöten auf Erden, damit es dort besser werde, und besonnen dazu zu tun, daß unter den Menschen solche Ordnung sich herstelle, die dem schönen Werk wieder Lebensgrund und ein redlich Hineinpassen bereiten, läuft wohl der Mensch hinter die Schul und bricht aus in höllische Trunkenheit: so gibt er sein Seel daran und kommt auf den Schindwasen.'(pp.658-9)

So Leverkühn himself at this stage, while blaming the conditions of his time for making art difficult, also blames himself for doing what the scepticism of his time has demanded, that is abandoning the idea of the beautiful work of art, and instead aiming for the parodic, the extravagant, and the breakthrough to the unknown. He outlines instead what he now believes he should have done, that is, to work towards the 'beautiful work' being possible once more. This missed duty to reestablish the beautiful work of art is presented in such a way as to be connected with a social duty, to improve conditions in the world, and the word ‘Lebensgrund’, used to describe the way that the world might be made habitable for the work of art, suggests habitability more generally. This is the only place in the novel where any character suggests that Leverkühn should have taken a significantly different course from the one he has taken. Even Zeitblom, with his frequent expressions of

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53 For the idea that Leverkühn here judges his own activity, see Lukács, Essays on Thomas Mann, p.77. See also Herbert Lehner, Thomas Mann — Fiction, Mythos, Religion, p.202, who sees Leverkühn here as condemning his own Romanticism and aestheticism.
misgivings at the course Leverkühn is taking, appears to believe that such a course is inevitable for someone of Leverkühn's genius, and that not to follow the course he has taken would mean to be mediocre, which would be unworthy of his abilities. Leverkühn, in rejecting the philosophy of breakthrough here, so often discussed in the novel, hints at a careful and constructive, rather than destructive, role, which his abilities might worthily have been dedicated to. While Leverkühn may appear already to be showing signs of insanity during parts of the speech, and is declared insane, on the basis of the speech, by one of the guests present, Zeitblom's defence, earlier in the novel, of Ludwig of Bavaria, might suggest that a declaration of insanity may sometimes be more a suppressing of unwanted attitudes or insights. Thus Leverkühn may here be expressing Mann's protests at a philosophy of unidirectional, inevitable stage-by-stage progress, in art and society, through the constant overcoming of conventions, which he believes has been prevalent at the time about which he is writing, and he believes has led a society to accept the abandonment of its foundational principles, and dehumanize itself. Leverkühn, by taking this philosophy seriously, and applying it with the utmost rigour and logical consequence in his own musical activity, has achieved his insight into its inhumanity, but at the cost of his own destruction, illustrating with his life the biblical citation which he includes in this speech: 'Wer schwere Dinge sucht, dem wird es schwer.'(p.661)  

^ For the novel's openness about what art in the future might be, see Herbert Lehnert, 'Nachwort: Doktor Faustus, ein moderner Roman mit offenem historischen Horizont'.  
^ For a view of the novel as an exploration of a variety of modern ideology both in art and society, see J. P. Stern, The Dear Purchase: A Theme in German Modernism, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp.363-381. For,
Theology

As well as the detailed theoretical and cultural-historical treatment of art, especially music, in addition theology, and, to a lesser extent, philosophy, the subjects which Leverkühn studies during his years at the University of Halle, are also discussed and related to the general concerns of the novel. Zeitblom, who moves to Halle in order to be near Leverkühn, and attends some of his lectures, in order to follow what he is doing, gives his own account of the theoretical development of theology from the Reformation onwards, from a humanist’s point of view, as well as describing the ideas and styles of two of the lecturers in theology.

Zeitblom, in his account of his own views on theology, which occupies the entire eleventh chapter, while noticing that the University of Halle was founded by a Pietist, and sympathizing with the humanist canon of Halle at the time of the Reformation, who attracted Luther’s scorn for his lack of enthusiasm for Reformation ideas, expresses his own lack of enthusiasm for religious reformation.\(^56\) He sympathizes with the objection to the Reformation he attributes to the canon of Halle, who sees in it, according to Zeitblom, ‘einen Einbruch subjektiver Willkür in die objektiven Satzungen und Ordnungen der Kirche’(p.120).\(^57\) Zeitblom believes that this process is the same as that which later produces the rise of Pietism within Protestantism. He regrets the strife produced by the resulting controversy, and indicates that he might

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\(^{56}\) For the significance of Halle in the novel, see Lieselotte Voss, *Die Entstehung von Thomas Manns Roman 'Doktor Faustus': Dargestellt anhand von unveröffentlichten Vorarbeiten*, pp.60-69.

\(^{57}\) See note 17.
rather see the Church decline, than being rescued by reformations. Having so cast doubt on the value of repeated renewals on behalf of subjectivity, he indicates that he is not irreligious, but understands religion as an inner reality, a position which he identifies with Schleiermacher, and believes in pursuing other studies in the light of religious feeling, rather than studying it in itself and developing dogma, and thereby creating grounds for controversy. From his standpoint, more akin to Romantic philosophy than to traditional theology, Zeitblom then makes a critique of liberal theology, arguing that, after the Enlightenment, orthodox theology committed what he sees as the mistake of admitting reason into the religious domain, and has since then been in the process of surrendering beliefs to rationalist criticism. Liberal theology, he believes, is a contradiction in terms, and its relative academic prestige comes at the cost of a loss of religious depth:

Die wissenschaftliche Überlegenheit der liberalen Theologie, heißt es nun, sei zwar unbestreitbar, aber ihre theologische Position sei schwach, denn ihrem Moralismus und Humanismus mangle die Einsicht in den dämonischen Charakter der menschlichen Existenz. Sie sei zwar gebildet, aber seicht, und von dem wahren Verständnis der menschlichen Natur und der Tragik des Lebens habe die konservative Tradition sich im Grunde weit mehr bewahrt, habe darum aber auch zur Kultur ein tieferes, bedeutenderes Verhältnis als die fortschrittlich-bürgerliche Ideologie. (p.124)

So liberal theology is, Zeitblom believes, inadequate, for having to a large extent given up the religious perspective altogether, a perspective which he seems to suggest is an indispensable element
of cultural understanding. In contrast, Zeitblom has noticed that irrationalist philosophies, concerned with vitality and drives, have begun to have an influence on theology, and there has also been a revival of theology in a medieval, Catholic style. Zeitblom believes that theology can recover an attractiveness in this way from an aesthetic point of view, but at the same time admits to an unease at these developments:

Denn die Theologie, in Verbindung gebracht mit dem Geist der Lebensphilosophie, dem Irrationalismus, läuft ihrer Natur nach Gefahr, zur Dämonologie zu werden. (p.125)

Zeitblom, in this sketch of the intellectual and cultural position of theology since the Enlightenment, first describes a process of recurrent outbreaks of subjectivity disturbing objectifications, including those resulting from previous outbreaks, and doubts whether this process can be seen as progress. He then describes a slightly different process, in which theology's attempt to compromise with secular rationalism leads to a virtually non-religious theology on the one hand, and an anti-rational theology on the other. Zeitblom has identified a tendency in theology in the modern period to separate into two opposing extremes, which then do little to moderate each other, a liberal theology which is non-religious to the point of irrelevance, in that it simply becomes secular philosophy, and a Romantic theology, inspired by ideas which appear akin to the Nietzschean, which might become anti-rational to the point, perhaps, of endangering civil society. From his standpoint of non-dogmatism, Zeitblom is unable to influence the direction of developments, able only to observe. Hence this passage illustrates key features of the novel in a field other than art, politics, or character. The modern period is identified with polarization
within fields, and Zeitblom's benevolent humanism does not give him any means to resist the polarization. What the pre-modern position, before the beginnings of polarization, was, is left undisputed here, and it is not altogether clear whether Zeitblom views the revived scholastic theology as being on the irrationalist side of the irrationalist-liberal polarization, or neither side, since he raises it in conjunction with irrationalist theology, but does not then explicitly mention it when explaining his fear about irrationalist theology, concentrating on 'Lebensphilosophie'.

One of Leverkühn's theology lecturers discussed by Zeitblom is Ehrenfried Kumpf, who is a Luther-figure, speaking in a German with features of the Reformation period, espousing a moderate conservative theology with liberal aspects, believing that humanity is too imperfect, due to the Fall, to hold certainty in its thinking, and displaying a robust and almost crude style of manners, which make him appear to resemble Luther himself, and Zeitblom regards his speeches at table, witnessed when he and Leverkühn are invited to Kumpf's house, to be imitations of Luther. As well as being another representative of the Lutheran element in German culture, and in Leverkühn's background, Kumpf connects this element both with a strong sense of awareness of the devil, throwing a bread-roll at a corner of the room where he believes the devil to be during a meal to which he has invited Zeitblom and Leverkühn, and with German nationalism, viewing the labelling of someone as having a Latin background as being equivalent to an insult. Thus Kumpf seems to indicate both that Germany's Reformation tradition

\footnote{For a discussion of the significance of Luther in the novel, see, for example, Ulrike Hermanns, \textit{Thomas Manns Roman 'Doktor Faustus' im Lichte von Quellen und Kontexten}, pp.99-134, or Herbert Lehnert, \textit{Thomas Mann — Fiktion, Mythos, Religion}, pp.195-202.}
did not lead to a diminution of interest in the diabolical, and if anything the contrary, such that the beginning of the modern era in Germany is associated, from the novel's point of view, with a strong demonic element, and with German nationalism, Germany's break with the wider church being associated with the development of the sense of German particularity which the novel emphasizes.

The other lecturer of Leverkühn's that Zeitblom reports is Eberhard Schleppfuß, a temporary lecturer who is only at Halle for two terms. Schleppfuß appears somewhat demonic, possibly being a devil-figure. His appearance is exactly that assumed by the devil at the middle stage of Leverkühn's interview with the devil, including a forked beard and sharp teeth, and he greets students he meets in the street with the words 'Ganz ergebener Diener!' (p.135)

Schleppfuß appears to represent the tendency which Zeitblom described in his summary of the theological situation as the revival of interest in the demonic, coupled with modern philosophy. Under the guise of 'psychology of religion', Schleppfuß lectures on the religious outlook of what he regards as the 'classical epoch' of religious culture, which he regards as being in principle the Christian Middle Ages, except that he is particularly interested in the end of the Middle Ages, which is in fact also the beginning of the Reformation. One of his subjects is the problem of evil, and he views evil as being conceptually necessary if good is to exist, in a way which recalls a Hegelian approach, but he also views evil as an exercise of that liberty which God has had to leave creatures, to give them an opportunity to be good, which would amount to not using the freedom to be evil. Thus he equates evil with freedom, and, Zeitblom has the impression, views the exercise of freedom by committing evil as desirable on existential grounds:
Frömmigkeit und Tugend bestanden also darin, von der Freiheit, die Gott dem Geschöpf als solchem hatte gewähren müssen, einen guten Gebrauch, das heißt: *keinen* Gebrauch zu machen, — was nun freilich, wenn man Schleppfuß hörte, ein wenig so herauskam, als ob dieser Nicht-Gebrauch der Freiheit eine gewisse existenzielle Abschwächung, eine Minderung der Daseinsintensität der außergöttlichen Kreatur bedeutete. (p.137)

Thus an apparent interest in the Middle Ages, combined with modern philosophy, produces a conclusion more Nietzschean than medieval. Apart from this, Schleppfuß tells a number of stories which are about witchcraft and its punishment at the end of the Middle Ages, which are intended by Schleppfuß to illustrate the unity of outlook of the period in that those punished and punishing agree on the justness of the procedure. What Zeitblom notices is the way that Schleppfuß uses terms such as freedom, reason, and humanity, in what he views as perverse ways, allowing him to justify practices, such as burning witches, which the terms would seem at first sight to be far removed from, and he notes that he feels that this same discursive technique is being used in the Germany of the time in which he is writing, blaming it for the state of seclusion he has chosen to assume. 59 This aspect of Schleppfuß would appear to be a parallel to participants in the political discussions, whom I shall discuss later, who wish for a moving beyond bourgeois civilization, and a return to the vitality of barbarity. Leverkühn himself has made related comments with respect to art, although in

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Schleppfuß's, as in the other cases, whether what there is a desire to return to actually existed in the form postulated is open to question.

Leverkühn and Zeitblom study philosophy as an ancillary subject, and go to the same lectures. Zeitblom takes particular note of the lecturing on Pythagoras, as he believes that this is of special interest to Leverkühn. Zeitblom notices a connection between Pythagoras' religiousness, and his theory of the mathematical constitutedness of the universe in terms of order and harmony, the combination of mathematics and spirituality being a feature of Leverkühn's own approach. There is also a strong musical connection, given Pythagoras' traditional association with the discovery of the mathematical relationships involved in pitch, and with the idea that the heavens are arranged in mathematically proportioned spheres, which produce imperceptible music, an idea which Zeitblom mentions. However, Zeitblom is also struck by the way the Pythagorean ideas also supported the foundation of communities based on a strong concept of authority, with blind obedience and absolute submission being required. This combination of mathematical simplicity and rigour, and strict, rigid authoritarianism recalls the Beißel episode, and suggests, perhaps, a possible inclination towards a rigid authoritarianism in those of Leverkühn's cultural background, and the implementation of the authoritarianism in new, utopian communities is significant, suggesting that people sharing Leverkühn's cultural background might be inclined to attempt to establish a new society founded on their principles.

Apart from Pythagoras, Zeitblom mentions Aristotle, whom Leverkühn and Zeitblom discuss after lectures, and they are both

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60 See note 13.
particularly impressed by the idea of entelechy, with, as Zeitblom recounts it, the form of an entity driving the material gradually to take on the shape of its form, acting as a determinant in the development, goal and destiny of organic entities ('Des Aristoteles Lehre von Stoff und Form entzückte uns ... von der Entelechie also, die, ein Stück Ewigkeit, den Körper belebend durchdringt, sich im Organischen gestaltend manifestiert und sein Getriebe lenkt, sein Ziel kennt, sein Schicksal überwacht.'p.129) Leverkuhn expresses his own interpretation of the idea:

'Sie [entelechy] ist der Engel des Einzelwesens, der Genius seines Lebens, auf dessen wissende Führung es gern vertraut.'(p.129)

He adds a religious dimension, in that he believes that prayer is the announcing of the trust in this guidance, and that God is being invoked in such a prayer. The idea of entelechy, as described here, appears a kind of ancestor to the more all-inclusive Hegelian idea of development, and it suggests that the notion that the development and destiny of an entity is already set in advance, and unavoidable. It also suggests that the entity concerned, if capable of thought, or perhaps members of it, if collective, should accept its preordained and inevitable movement towards its, not necessarily known, destiny, unquestioningly. It is this kind of idea that Mann is pointing out as prevalent in thinking on art and society in early twentieth century Germany, and appears to be protesting against, on the grounds of the consequences he sees proceeding from it. The idea is applicable to the destiny of an individual person, such as Leverkuhn, and Zeitblom hopes, at the time, that Leverkuhn's 'angel' will prove clever and faithful. Leverkuhn disenfranchises himself by adopting this idea, since it encourages him to view his own career as
preordained. It is interesting that his idea of a guiding genius resembles Wilhelm Meister’s idea that he is guided in his progress by a benevolent fate, and his own consequent lack of a sense that he needs to know where he is going, as long as it is forward.

Society

While the social implications of Doktor Faustus are an important part of the novel, they are often indicated by means of a hint as to how a problem which has been described in the artistic or personal realm might be understood in a parallel fashion socially. However, the novel does sometimes address the social and political situation more directly, and I shall now discuss some prominent instances of this.

Early in the novel, during the narration of Leverkühn’s time at university, Zeitblom describes a walking expedition in the Thuringian hills which both he and Leverkühn take part in, in company with a few other members of a theology students’ society. 61 The expedition offers the occasion for discussions among the group, on theology, philosophy, and politics, with the emphasis on politics, and Zeitblom reports the course of such a conversation, which takes place in a barn before the participants go to sleep. The conversation, as related, starts on the subject of youth, and the idea of youth as a specific form of life, and whether or not it can be self-conscious without ceasing to be itself, the consensus, with Leverkühn dissenting, being that youth should be self-conscious and has a right to recognition, which it has forced bourgeois society to

61 For a discussion of the group and Mann’s sources for its members’ names and speeches, see Gunilla Bergsten, Thomas Mann’s ‘Doctor Faustus’: The Sources and Structure of the Novel, pp.39-42.
concede to it. Leverkühn believes that society has forced the recognition onto youth. The indication, of this exchange, that society of the time has a preoccupation with the idea of youth, connects with both the society's interest in ideas of renewal, and a tendency to value vitality over culturedness. This consideration of youth as a philosophical entity leads on to one of group, called Deutschlin, linking the idea of youth with Germany, claiming that youth means an immediacy of life and that this is a particular quality of the German people. He argues that the Reformation was the result of immaturity, which he is praising, and suggests that Germans, through their immaturity, will provide the world with yet further revolutions. Only Leverkühn protests against this version of German particularity, which Deutschlin explains further:

'Jung sein heißt ursprünglich sein, heißt den Quellen des Lebens nahe geblieben sein, heißt aufstehen und die Fesseln einer überlebten Civilisation abschütteln können, wagen, wozu anderen die Lebenscourage fehlt, nämlich wieder unterzutauchen im Elementaren.' (pp. 160-1)

This version of Romanticism involves a desire to return to the primitive and elemental, with what exactly this would be not clarified except that it would not be civilization and in it, it is the Germans whose task it is to lead the way. The language used also recalls Kretzschmar's lecture on the desire to return to the elemental in music.

The argument moves to religion, Leverkühn having suggested that the idea of rebirth is not exclusively German, and that the Lutheran Reformation was only the application of the Renaissance to religion. This leads to Deutschlin claiming that religiousness is what he means by youth, and is particularly German. His concept of what
to be religious is appears to owe much more to Romantic or existentialist philosophy than to traditional theology:

'Religiosität, das ist vielleicht die Jugend selbst, es ist die Unmittelbarkeit, der Mut und die Tiefe des personalen Lebens, der Wille und das Vermögen, die Naturhaftigkeit und das Dämonische des Daseins, wie es uns durch Kierkegaard wieder zum Bewusstsein gekommen ist, in voller Vitalität zu erfahren und zu durchleben.'(p.161)

He also further elucidates what he means by religiousness in the sense in which it is particularly German, in response to Leverkühn asking if religiousness and Germanness are linked:

'In dem Sinne, den ich ihr [Religiosität] gab, als seelische Jugend, als Spontaneität, als Lebensgläubigkeit und Dürer'sches Reiten zwischen Tod und Teufel — allerdings.'(p.161)

What he is describing here could be applied to what Leverkühn is going to engage in himself, in his pact with the devil.

Interestingly Leverkühn, here, objects to Deutschlin’s separating the church and religion:

The idea of the church as a keeper within bounds of forces which might otherwise be anarchic was also expressed by Zeitblom, sympathizing with the anxious attitude of some humanists at the time of the Reformation, during his discussion of theology. Leverkühn, strangely, appears to be warning about just the kind of unleashing of demonic forces he himself is portrayed as becoming entangled with in the novel, and he eventually falls victim to madness, the ultimate consequence of non-ecclesiastical mysticism, which he warns of here. The application of a religious kind of attitude and intensity to something not strictly theological, or ecclesiastical, could also be viewed as characteristic of German Romantic culture, including its musical, for example Wagnerian, manifestations, and, beyond this, German nationalistic mythology, leading up to the Second World War period, might be considered to be implicated.

The discussion moves on to the different possible bases for founding a new society, which, as the participants in the discussion see it, is what they must do in order to realize what they see as the religious, and youthful, attitude, practically. They arrive at only two possibilities, the socialist option, and the nationalist option, the former, it is argued, running the risk of being purely instrumentalist, and leaving the question of the purpose of life unanswered, and the latter being characterized by the danger that individuals may claim it rhetorically as their allegiance but fail to live it in any practical, or useful way. Although no choice is made here between the options, it is notable that only two options which

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62 For the contrast between the kind of traditional order represented here by the church, and the kind of non-traditional order which Leverkühn will later create for his music, the former approved of by Mann, and the latter not, see Irvine Stock, Ironic out of Love: The Novels of Thomas Mann, pp.174-177.
might be seen as being in a kind of polar opposition are understood as being available, and there appears to be a presupposition that the institutions of the time must be replaced by something completely new.

The discussion then returns to the idea of German particularity, that only the Germans have depth and form, which follows from the idea that Russians and Western Europeans have only one or the other. At this point, Dungersheim, another member of the group, warns of the dangers of seeing the problematics of modern life as only relevant to Germans. He expresses the problem as follows:

'Man sollte bei alldem doch wohl vom Nationellen absehen ... und die Problematic mit der Existenz des modernen Menschen überhaupt verbunden sehen. Es ist doch so, daß seit das unmittelbare Seinsvertrauen abhanden gekommen ist, das in früheren Zeiten das Ergebnis des Hineingestelltseins in vorgefundene Ganzheitsordnungen war, ich meine sakral imprägnierte Ordnungen, die eine bestimmte Intentionalität auf die geöffnete Wahrheit hatten... daß seit ihrem Zerfall und dem Einsetzen der modernen Gesellschaft unser Verhältnis zu Menschen und Dingen unendlich reflektiert und kompliziert geworden ist und es nichts als Problematic und Ungewißheit mehr gibt, so daß der Entwurf auf die Wahrheit in Resignation und Verzweiflung zu enden droht. Die Ausschau aus der Zersetzung nach Ansätzen zu neuen Ordnungskräften ist allgemein, wenn man auch zugeben kann, daß sie bei uns Deutschen besonders ernst und dringlich ist, und daß die
The idea that the modern subjectivity’s relationship to other entities has become difficult, in a way it was not in pre-modern society, is the same idea on the basis of which art is presented as having become difficult, causing Leverkühn’s struggle with musical composition. Dungersheim here is stating the position which emerges from the novel as a whole, that the difficulties of modern existence are common to modern society internationally, but felt more keenly and addressed more earnestly and urgently in Germany, with a certain ambivalence expressed as to whether this is the result of strength of weakness. However, it is clear, in the novel, that the view of the duty to break out of the difficulties into a totally new, utopian situation, as particularly German, is dangerous, and Dungersheim expresses this himself:

‘Aber wenn wir nun so die Schärfe und Bewußttheit der historisch-psychologischen Problematik uns zur nationalen Ehre rechnen und das Trachten nach neuen Ganzheitsordnungen mit dem Deutschum identifizieren, so sind wir schon im Begriff, uns einem Mythos von zweifelhafter Echtheit und unzweifelhafter Hoffart zu verschreiben, nämlich dem völkischen mit seiner Strukturromantik des Kriegertypus, die nichts weiter ist als christlich verbrämtes, naturales Heidentum und Christus zum >Herrn der himmlischen Heerscharen< stempelt. Das ist aber eine entschieden dämonisch bedrohte Position...’ (p.168)

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63 For Germany’s non-uniqueness, see Lukács, Essays on Thomas Mann, p.67, or Eric Heller, Thomas Mann: The Ironic German, p.259.
Consistently with his general position, Deutschlin is unconcerned by the warning, claiming ‘Dämonische Kräfte stecken neben Ordnungsqualitäten in jeder vitalen Bewegung.’ (p.168) However, Dungersheim’s characterization of German nationalist mythology identifies its basically pagan, rather than Christian, nature, a point which again emphasizes how primitivism can result from an attempt to move beyond civilization, and how the past which is being aimed at is not simply the immediately pre-modern period, but an imagined original condition. Identifying the German sense of particularity as pride also once again establishes the parallel between Leverkühn’s own position and what is being indicated about German society.

The comments by another member of the group, concluding Zeitblom’s report of the political discussion, to the effect that the demonic amounts to drives, and that the psychology of drives is being used, at the time, to give an illusion of reality to ideologies which may nevertheless be false, may be meant to illustrate the idea of extreme objectivity, in the form of modern psychology, and extreme subjectivity, in the form of an ideology which advertises itself on the basis of its favourableness to the fulfillment of drives, supporting each other, in the way that the novel constantly points out juxtapositions and mutual support of polar opposites as a feature of modern conditions.

Zeitblom’s role in the novel with respect to Leverkühn is to be a practical supporter of him in his career, and an enthusiastic admirer of what he does, despite considerable misgivings, and Zeitblom’s partial complicity in Germany’s political course is illustrated particularly by his attitude at the outbreak of the First World War. Zeitblom describes the atmosphere in Germany at the
time of the outbreak of the war as one of popular enthusiasm, one which he suspects was not shared in other countries participating in the war, which however he admits to having fully shared in himself. Despite some concerns and doubts, which he ascribes both to his temperament and to his academic tendencies, he agrees, at the time, that destiny has determined that world leadership should now pass to Germany, as it has previously resided with other powers, and that the bourgeois epoch is to be replaced, by Germany, by a kind of military socialism, not clearly defined, he admits. He appears to have revised his view in the meantime, his voice as narrator reflecting ironically on the Germanness and elementalness of the notion of destiny ('wie >>deutsch<<, dies Wort [Schicksal], ein vor-christlicher Urlaut, ein tragisch-mythologisch-musikdramatisches Motiv!'p.402), and on the self-centredness of the idea that the rest of the world ought to be involved in wars seen as part of the process of German breakthroughs to higher social forms. He notes that Germany is always in a process of becoming, and describes how, despite the achievement of becoming a great power, 'der Zustand war gewohnt und beglückte nicht nach Erwartung.'(p.402) Thus yet another breakthrough, that to world domination, is felt to be necessary. While visiting Leverkühn before he leaves for the front, he explains the war in terms of 'die Psychologie des Durchbruchs'(p.410), on the basis that, the Germans being a primarily spiritual people, the primary motivating force behind the attempt to break through to be a world power is an attempt to break through out of isolatedness into unity with the world. Leverkühn agrees that the problem of how to break through is the only problem, and addresses it in aesthetic terms, with reference to Kleist’s essay on the puppet theatre, and the idea contained in it
that elegance is only consistent with no reflectivity or with infinite reflectivity, not anything in between, to which Zeitblom responds by demanding that the aesthetic issue be seen as determining everything else, since an ugly Germany will also be hated, and alone. While Zeitblom finishes by drawing the parallel between the aesthetic and social spheres, as the novel constantly does, he otherwise shows himself as liable to destroy, on theoretical grounds, the very things he values. This is illustrated graphically by the fact that his rhetoric on Germany’s breakthrough to the world is interrupted by Leverkühn pointing out that the war has prevented him from having the chance of accepting an invitation to conduct at a performance of his own works in Paris. Leverkühn, making this remark, refers to the war as ‘das krude Geschehen’ (p.411), thereby ironizing Zeitblom’s theoretical position, which involves understanding the war as a part of cultural breakthrough, rather than as a war. Thus, ironically, the war is shown destroying the possibilities of cultural openness to the world which Zeitblom, at the time, sees it as meant to achieve. Although Zeitblom by the time of writing has reached a position where he can ironize the enthusiasm, at the time of the beginning of the First World War, for social breakthroughs at the cost of wars with other nations, he does not appear to have given up the notion that bourgeois society does need to be replaced, and by something which satisfies him as being more advanced from a historical-philosophical point of view, whether or not it accords with his own values. He suggests this by comments in a later chapter to the effect that towards the end of the First World War he was sympathetic to the idea of a communist revolution in Germany, despite his own disinclination towards the conditions he would expect it to produce, because he feels, at the time, that its
principles enjoy ‘historical superiority’ (‘historische Überlegenheit’ p.452) to those of the Western allies. Although his view of the Western democracies has improved since then, thanks to their being prepared to take on Hitler and Mussolini, he still talks of them as if their institutions and even their concept of liberty were out of date, and standing in the way of what is new and inevitable (‘bei aller Überholtheit ihrer Institutionen durch die Zeit, aller Verstocktheit ihres Freiheitsbegriffs gegen das Neue und Notwendige’ p.453), the new and inevitable being described in terms such as progress, the perfection of society and renewal, but not involving any clear proposition of what he has in mind, except that it will be better.  

Thus Zeitblom, for all his love of culture and the humanities, and his suspicion of the inhuman, is still locked into a Hegelian-like philosophy of successive and inevitable social changes, leading to social perfection, a state as yet unknown, but which he at least seems to expect to be authoritarian in comparison with the bourgeois society he feels must disappear. His rejection of National Socialism occurs because it turns out to be the wrong kind of breakthrough, not because he has given up his youthful conviction that some kind of social and political breakthrough is both urgent, and yet, at the same time, inevitable. Thus Zeitblom might be seen as representing a certain self-destructive element in the position of the bourgeois humanism of early twentieth century Germany.

During Leverkühn’s time in Munich he and Zeitblom mix with local artistic society, and Zeitblom describes both their acquaintances and some of the conversations which he witnesses. In the period before the First World War, Zeitblom’s commentary on

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64 See Michael Beddow, *Thomas Mann: Doctor Faustus*, pp.94-96, who sees this position of Zeitblom’s as also representing Mann’s own position.
these conversations indicates the political via the aesthetic rather than directly. He describes, for example, an art historian who is courting the daughter of Leverkühn's first landlady in Munich, as a weak individual, but an admirer of violence, as long as it has aesthetic appeal, finding Renaissance Italy particularly admirable for its beauty and violence. Zeitblom claims that this attitude is typical of the period. He also describes a conversation in a salon at which Chaim Breisacher, a scholar, tries to shock those present, especially Baron Riedesel, a court official with a responsibility for culture, and with conventionally conservative attitudes, by expressing highly radical ideas in conservative language. His method is to present any later stage as a degeneration from an earlier stage, doing this with painting, and then music, and then finally explaining the Old Testament as a degeneration from the Pentateuch, in which he claims a god of the people is made to live among them physically by means of sacrifices, to a later symbolic interpretation by Solomon, David and the psalmists. As well as the nationalist implications of emphasizing the superiority of a god of the people to a universal one, and the Nietzschean preference for life-affirming physicality over abstractness, he also dismisses traditional religious concepts such as sin, as modernism, and prefers the idea of mechanical sequences of events, such as mistakes in the mechanisms of rituals, forcing gods to cause events which appear catastrophic. This view has resonances of magic, and the summoning of demonic power, as a replacement for established religion, which is a theme of the novel. Thus by apparently preferring anything older to anything newer, Breisacher manages to recommend a completely amoral way of life. That this mode of life actually did exist at the period he claims is doubted by Zeitblom,
who points out that, contrary to Breisacher's argument, the Pentateuch already contains a statement to the effect that keeping God's commandments is of principal importance and not sacrifices. What emerge here again are the idea of progress and regress, when taken far enough, reaching the same point, the doubtful accuracy of the assessment of past conditions which are then recommended for future implementation, and the powerlessness or unwillingness of the cultural establishment to defend its culture. Baron Riedesel is presented as not sufficiently intelligent to defend his point of view, but Zeitblom, despite sharing with the reader the argument he could have used to counter Breisacher, admits that at the time he respected the intellectual qualities contained in Breisacher's argumentation too much to interrupt him, even while recognizing its destructive nature. He regrets this failure, looking back, as a part of the 'Fehler unserer Zivilisation' (p.380), as well as noting that this is the first occasion that he sensed 'die neue Welt der Antihumanität' (p.380), an expression which, while suggesting the political and social implications, also reminds the reader of the tendencies to inhumanity expressed in Leverkühn's music.

After the First World War Zeitblom attends a discussion group which includes some of the members of the pre-war circle, and the conversation at the meetings is more overtly political. Zeitblom introduces some of the new figures among the participants. These include the host, Sixtus Kridwiß, an illustrator and collector, whose main contribution is qualifying any cultural development as important, never making an attempt at an evaluation as to whether

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65 For Zeitblom's failure to defend his position publicly, and his sense of inhibition because he feels his ideas are unfashionable, see Lukács, Essays on Thomas Mann, p.90.
it is desirable or not. There is a paleozoologist, Egon Unruhe, whose writings are concerned with the scientific validation of ancient legends, thus representing the novel's theme of the partnership of a scientific, speculative attitude with a mythical or magical attitude. A literary historian, who attends, Georg Vogler, has written a history of German literature from the point of view of the regional and ethnic origin of the writer, so representing both the nationalism and the anti-individualism of ideologies the group will be discussing. Particularly strikingly, there is a poet, Daniel Zur Höhe, who wears clothing of somewhat clerical appearance, and has written a work in which a being called 'Christus imperator maximus' gives commands to an army of blindly obedient troops, in vehement language, about the conquering of the world, finishing with an exhortation to the soldiers to plunder the world. This recalls Dungersheim's prediction of a revival of Romantic paganism under superficially Christian imagery. Zeitblom is prepared to recognize that the poem has some aesthetic appeal, but views it as irresponsible, and although symbolic, not unrelated to the subjects under discussion in the group, even if the group is intending what Zeitblom calls a sociological approach, in principle simply registering coming social tendencies. Zeitblom suggests that the indifferent recognition of the coming of tendencies such as the loss of the value of the individual, something which, according to the group, Germany's defeat in the war may have promoted, but which the group views as anyway inevitable, together with the academic

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66 For the real-life counterparts of many of the characters in the Kridwiß circle, see Gunilla Bergsten, *Thomas Mann's 'Doctor Faustus': The Sources and Structure of the Novel*, pp.27-34. Bergsten here also points out that many of the names, in the Kridwiß circle and elsewhere in the novel, are taken from Luther's writings, or connected with that period, thus emphasizing the connection the novel makes between the period of Leverkühn's life and the period of the Reformation.
joy of successful recognition, becomes similar to an approval of the
tendencies, and a critique of bourgeois humanist traditions.

Describing the course of what is either a particular meeting, or a
summary of more than one, Zeitblom recounts the participants
generally agreeing that freedom is an internal contradiction and
liable to turn dialectically into dictatorship, and that the age since
the French Revolution has been heading towards a despotic
leadership over atomized masses. A work of political prediction by
Sorel, which is a source of ideas, and discussed with approval,
suggests that in an age of the masses, parliamentary discussion is
inappropriate as a means of political decision making, and that
instead the masses will be manipulated with fabulous myths, which
will become realities by virtue of their real effects on history. Thus a
situation is described which involves both extreme intellectual
scepticism and the cultivation of emotional intoxication, a key motif
in the novel. This leads to the group enjoying the imagined scene of
a legal contest between representatives of the productive myth, and
of the truth, in which the court, anxious not to be out of step with
the community, finds in favour of the myth. Zeitblom says that this
part of the discussion makes him feel ill, but after a single attempt
to speak in favour of the truth, which is not well received, judges it
better not to oppose the spirit of the discussion by what he
describes as an unfruitful opposition, as long as the spirit is at least
in principle one of cognizance rather than endorsement. Thus
Zeitblom here, though genuinely disturbed in this case, thinks it
better to acquiesce, as so often, rather than to defend alternatives,
when he has the opportunity, intimidated by the seeming
irresistibility of the current. Zeitblom, as narrator, is prompted once
again to reflect on the way that these ideas are old and new at the
same time, notes right and left wing politics becoming increasingly similar to each other, and views the coming state of enforced belief as comparable with the Middle Ages but also modern. He also notes of the circle, with regard to some of their more detailed predictions:

Sie gaben sich mehr die Miene distanziert der Beobachter, und als >>enorm wischtisch<< [Sixtus Kridwiß's pronunciation of 'enorm wichtig'] faßten sie die allgemeine und schon deutlich hervortretende Bereitschaft ins Auge, sogenannte kulturelle Errungenschaften kurzerhand fallenzulassen, um einer als notwendig und zeitgegeben empfundenen Vereinfachung willen, die man, wenn man wollte, als intentionelle Re-Barbarisierung bezeichnen konnte.(p.491)

This assessment unites the artistic and social spheres, being applicable to either, and identifies the way that progress can be seen as a process of dismantling, in which case it is also at risk of being regress. Zeitblom is particularly disturbed when a dental metaphor he and Leverkühn have used when talking together, that of dead teeth left in the mouth representing dead conventions, is used by participants in the circle, except that, they claim, the developing tendency is to remove the dead teeth for reasons of hygiene.

Breisacher, who is present, suggests that the idea of hygiene could be extended to involve the elimination of undesired individuals from the race, or people, and the group in general agrees there will certainly be a need to think about such things as 'die Absage an alle humane Verweichlichung'(p.492) to prepare for a period of wars and revolutions which will resemble not so much the Middle Ages as the period of the Dark Ages, after the collapse of ancient civilization, but before the beginning of medieval civilization, it is specified.

Here again, ideas Zeitblom reports show both a scientific side with
inhuman characteristics, and a sense of going back into the distant past and a period which, it is made clear, is not civilization. Zeitblom reacts with anguish to what he hears at the meetings, even losing weight as a result, and he explains the degree of anguish, apart from the influence of Leverkühn's activities at that time, by the fact that he both felt the participants were accurately diagnosing the developments of the time, and because they show no signs of being worried or of being inclined to criticize the coming tendencies on moral grounds. He feels that their attitude is more that whatever is coming must thereby also be good, and that what they present as their pleasure simply in knowing is really a disguise for their sympathy with the tendencies they are describing. Thus what Mann is presenting is a picture of German intellectual society, between the wars, or at least sections of it, being convinced, on the basis of a logic of progress and breakthrough at least formally similar to Leverkühn's musical thought, that civilization must be disassembled, and moved beyond, and that an era of inhumanity must be welcomed. On the basis of an attitude which might be described as Hegelian, resistance to change is seen as futile, and change itself as necessarily a step towards ultimate perfection, and therefore good. Zeitblom also places emphasis on the social and artistic parallels by inserting the account of the discussion in the middle of Chapter XXXIV, between the account of the process of composition of the 'Apocalipsis cum figuris', and the description of the piece itself. He states explicitly that the piece stands 'in eigentümlicher Korrespondenz, im Verhältnis geistiger Entsprechung' (p.493) with the contents of the Kridwiß circle discussion.

As well as giving some of the social background to Leverkühn's career, and pointing out parallels between social developments and
Leverkühn’s musical developments and personal situation, Mann also provides another source for the drawing of parallels between Leverkühn’s story and the society’s, by having Zeitblom start many chapters by mentioning the events unfolding at the time that he is writing in the latter period of the Second World War, and having him sometimes himself hint at links between these events and those of Leverkühn’s life. For example, at the beginning of Chapter XXI, Zeitblom describes the state of the war at a point when it is beginning to turn against Germany, and then talks of the breakdown, despair, and madness with which it will end for Germany, after the years of high-living and emotional intoxication, a description which resembles the extravagant living which the devil has promised Leverkühn and the fate which awaits him at the end of the agreed period. This commentary comes at a stage in the story when Leverkühn is in Leipzig, which is about the period when his devilish dealings might be said to begin, he having been introduced to the prostitute from whom he later catches his infection here, his guide on this occasion having devilish characteristics hinted at. Later, in the chapter (XLVI) in which he describes ‘Doctor Fausti Weheklag’, before the description, Zeitblom points out that the rise of the political forces which have led to the catastrophe now in progress, was already starting during 1929 and 1930, the last two years of Leverkühn’s mental presence, before his breakdown. Thus, it is suggested, the period of Leverkühn’s own diabolical pact runs out at the time when Germany’s, with National Socialism, is just beginning.

Thomas Mann’s Doktor Faustus thus describes a crisis of modernity in art, society, and the psychology of the modern subjectivity, particularly the artist. As the artist is particularly
modern in terms of vulnerability to the crisis, through awareness of
and sensitivity to the problems, so is Germany, and so is music as an
art form, although the problem is also common to other countries,
individuals and art forms partaking of modern conditions. The urge
to achieve the new is put into effect, to a considerable extent, by
dismantling the old, regarding established conventions of all kinds
as obstacles to be overcome. The new which eventually emerges is,
as a result, one characterized as much by an elemental, pre-civilized
side as a mechanically developed side, and the combination of these
two aspects excludes humanity. So the hopeful institution of the new
in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, and then the determined
commitment to it but disappointment at the lack of resulting
satisfaction in *Der Grüne Heinrich*, is followed by its descent into
despair and catastrophe in *Doktor Faustus*, and the old which is
subject to partial admiration and partial disapproval in *Wilhelm
Meisters Lehrjahre*, and to disapproval but also nostalgia in *Der
Grüne Heinrich*, is, in *Doktor Faustus*, in its civilized form,
something mainly benign but remote, and in its imagined pre-
civilized form, a source of inspiration for a brutalized future.
CONCLUSION

The novels I have been investigating in this thesis are all major representatives of German narrative prose, and, like other novels in this tradition, they analyse the inner life of the individual in order to express the psychologically felt contours of the outer world, reflecting a particular stage of social mentality. Consequently, all three novels take an approach to the social world which is less direct, and may be felt to be less exciting, than that which is to be found in, for example, the English or French realist novel. Nevertheless, it seems to me important to insist that social concerns are in fact crucially present in the German novels, and are mediated through the psychology of the individual.

In light of the way that I believe the novels present a sustained social thematic through the individual viewpoint, I would like to claim that the process of submitting the novels to a comparative study affords a glimpse of a history of different stages in the development of the modern bourgeois subject. Each novel shows us how in the late eighteenth century (Goethe), the mid and late nineteenth century (Keller), and the first half of the twentieth century (Thomas Mann), the self tries to negotiate with the potentially fragmenting energies which are inseparable from emergent modernity. In Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre the hesitant conviction is expressed that the individual can resist overspecialization, and participate in modern energies in such a way as to expand the self while holding on to a degree of coherence, or wholeness. In Der Grüne Heinrich the view is less optimistic. Heinrich Lee’s uneasy attempt to establish a career as a painter is threatened by the abstractions, economic, professional, and
institutional, of modern life, and the novel's tone of resignation results. In *Doktor Faustus*, the artist's attempt to break through from convention to a radically new form of artistic expression is accompanied by disastrous disintegration, psychological, physical, and, by implication, political.

Each of the novels is characterized, at least to some extent, by the background of a historicist set of assumptions, although these assumptions are certainly questioned in *Doktor Faustus*. By this I mean that there is a sense of an inevitable historical progression in the social and intellectual world, with later stages being understood as an advance on, and therefore superior to, earlier stages, whatever the difficulties they bring with them. Despite the unease expressed in all the novels, whether self-consciously or not, about the implications of this view, it is sufficiently a part of the novels to make it difficult for them to recommend any kind of return to the old as a solution to the difficulties of the new which they all recognize. This leads those novels in which the individual fails to find a satisfying coexistence with modern developments to end with something of a sense of aporia, since the individual, bound in these novels to social developments, and reflecting them, seems to some extent destined to react to, rather than form, the shape of coming tendencies. The novel which cautiously suggests that the individual might be able to, and even should, attempt to alter the course of events, that is *Doktor Faustus*, still does very little to elaborate on how this could be done, and what would characterize the state of affairs being aimed for.

I have avoided the term 'Bildungsroman' in this dissertation, despite its being frequently applied to the novels *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* and *Der Grüne Heinrich*, and its presence in the
background of critical approaches to *Doktor Faustus*, because, in contrast to the implications that an invocation of the genre carries, of a development towards harmony in the individual, I have viewed the individual protagonists in these novels as embodying social tendencies which are anything but integrative. I wish rather to stress the irresolution which the texts express, as well as the way they can be seen as a kind of historical symptomatology of the German bourgeois novel.
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