Image and Autonomy

Women Figures in Thomas Mann’s Work

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ABSTRACT

Critical orthodoxy tends to perceive Thomas Mann as an intellectual or cerebral writer; and, in consequence, it is often argued that he is interested not in individual characters as convincing, engaging, human entities, but rather in stereotypical figures who embody certain values or attitudes. And – so the argument runs – this limitation is particularly evident in respect of the women figures. The publication of the diaries has led critics to invoke his latent homosexuality as further evidence for his inability to create credible women characters. This thesis seeks to challenge this orthodoxy by arguing that time and time again Thomas Mann’s women figures challenge – or, at the very least, call into question – the stereotyping that is foisted upon them by their socio-cultural context and lay claim to a measure of human autonomy.

Of course Thomas Mann understands the omnipresent workings of the stereotypifying agencies – the family, male desire (as enshrined in a resolutely male culture), patriarchal myths, and so on. But he reflects upon these stereotypes on frequent occasions. And he seems to take profound narrative and human delight in instances of emotional, psychological and cognitive freedom on the part of his women figures. The thesis concentrates on Tony and Gerda Buddenbrook, Clawdia Chauchat, Lotte Kestner, Mut-em-net and Rosalie v. Tümmler. In the complex, often surprising, and sometimes painful processes by which these characters free themselves from the roles wished upon them, they challenge that particular and prevalent function, which is assigned to women in Western European literature – to advance (or to hinder) the male self in its quest for self-realization. Perhaps Mann’s repressed (homo-)sexuality helped him to understand states of inhibition and repression, and, by this token, the female predicament. In any event, this thesis seeks to suggest that the women figures are some of the most credible and appealing creations in Thomas Mann’s fictional universe.
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A Declaration on Context and a Note on Sources

It was about thirty-five years ago when I first came across Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*. And I remember still the sheer fascination that I felt for his writing; it led to a life-long reading experience of all his work. Later, as an undergraduate, I involved myself with some minor research projects concerning Thomas Mann but promised myself that I would one day find the time and space to return to his novels and find a subject for a thesis. I could not have known that I would have to wait such a long time and then would write about his women characters. If, however, I have kept faith with him, what is even more important is that he has kept faith with me. The prose he writes seems to me as exciting now as it did in my youthful days, moreover, my appreciation of his work has deepened and I never fail to find a new aspect or angle that will spark some inspiration for discourse or writing.

This thesis owes much to the careful advice of my supervisor, Martin Swales, who helped me over the years to articulate my ideas and saw me through some rough patches, when it could have been all too easy to close the books and give up. My thanks go to him for his faith in me and his unfailing support. Still further, I am very grateful for the encouragement and willingness to debate my points of my husband and our five children, who with patience and affection listened to my numerous musings and argumentations and who are by now quite versed in Thomas Mann's novels.

Quotations from TM's literary and discursive work are taken from the following edition:


The source is given in a footnote and itemizes the volume number (in Roman) and then the page, thus: GWI, p. 58.
Quotations from correspondence edited by Erica Mann (see Bibliography p. 292) is abbreviated as follows Br. I, Br. II, Br. III.

Quotations from *Dichter über ihre Dichtungen* are abbreviated DüD.

‘Schöne Charaktere’ – An Introduction

In an essay on Goethe’s Faust, which was published in 1938, Thomas Mann wrote the following about the two principal female characters in Goethe’s drama:

Gretchen trägt halb verwischte Helena-Züge; sie war ursprünglich Helena, sie ist es ein wenig geblieben; aber freilich ist bei der Verwandlung der liederlichen Sagenschönheit in das lieblich unselige Töchterchen der Pfandleiherin ein unendlich lebensvoller Frauenbild zustande gekommen, als es dem jungen Dichter hätte gelingen können, wenn er schon damals der Legende gefolgt wäre, statt aus eigenem zu geben.²

Mann registers here what we might call a triumph of the creative imagination. When Goethe takes up the Faust legend, he finds himself saddled with a particular, stereotyped women figure – Helen of Troy. Yet, so Mann argues, Goethe trusts the promptings of his own imagination, and creates Gretchen, a character who is persuasive and convincing in every way. Most readers of Faust would probably agree with Thomas Mann; his observation is not in and of itself particularly striking or original. What is interesting is that it was, of all writers,

Thomas Mann who was struck by, and felt he had to comment on, the difference between the two figures. He was, in other words, alive to questions regarding the characterization of women in literature. And this thesis is devoted to exploring the different modes of characterization that operate in respect of the women figures in his oeuvre.

I am not the only critic to have looked at Thomas Mann’s women figures. Two recent books have been written about this aspect, they are Claus Tillmann’s *Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann* and Doris Runge’s *Welch ein Weib*. Both are concerned with the current prevailing negative image in the secondary literature of Thomas Mann’s women characters. Doris Runge, who has also examined the Mut-em-enet and Hetaera Esmaralda figures in earlier articles, presents a largely intuitive response to the women figures. This thesis will refer to her book at appropriate points but she is on the whole content to chart the *femme fatale* figures in Thomas Mann’s oeuvre, whereas I shall endeavour to call into question the omnipresence of this stereotype. She emphasizes that Thomas Mann’s characterization of women improves in his later works, and admits that it was the reproach of misogyny by other critics that led her to read Thomas Mann’s work from beginning to end:


Claus Tillmann’s book *Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann* concentrates on Tony Buddenbrook and Clawdia Chauchat and I have engaged with

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his argumentation in the appropriate chapters. In his introduction he too criticizes the negative interpretation of the female characters in Mann's oeuvre by critics throughout the history of Thomas Mann scholarship. Notwithstanding this, his main point remains however that the women as individuals are subordinate to the main and male characters, but, he argues: ' [...] so fordert die Idee der Frau, die Weiblichkeit als solche, um so entschiedener die ganze Aufmerksamkeit des Autors/Erzählers heraus. [...] das Prinzip des Weiblichen – selbst oder gerade die homoerotischen Konstellationen sind ohne das weibliche Element undenkbar – ist wichtiger als die einzelne Frau.' 5 In respect of figures such as Ingeborg Holm or Lisaweta Iwanowna, I agree with Tillmann that they are nothing but 'Abziehbilder' 6 but elsewhere I disagree. Where the women inhabit a stronger position, in 

_Buddenbrooks or Lotte in Weimar_, for example, the richness of their presentation is unmistakable. Thomas Mann deftly uses interior monologue, internal focalisation and subtly humorous perception of inconsistency as tools to familiarize the reader with his characters Tony Buddenbrook, Lotte Kestner and Rosalie v. Tümmler, so that they appear complex and many-facetted. Matters are somewhat different with the two Gerdas or Clawdia Chauchat; initially they do embody an idea, a scheme rather, as Tillman points out, but then they break the stereotypical mould and assert their selfhood – Gerda v. Rinnlingen by rejecting Friedemann’s advances and talking about herself, Gerda Buddenbrook with her music and her refusal to compromise it, and Clawdia, firstly by insisting that Hans should break with his infatuation and actually listen to her, and secondly by introducing her dying friend Mynheer Peeperkorn to Hans and entering into a bond with him, to extend his and her humanity to Peeperkorn. Mut-em-enet is yet a different type; initially she is drawn with representative features but

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5 Claus Tillmann, _Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann_, pp. 7-8.
6 Ibid., p. 7.
her love for Joseph begins to individualize her; this development is gradual and manifests itself in numerous interior dialogues, culminating in her grand soliloquy at a crisis point in the novel that makes her one of the most memorable characters in Thomas Mann’s oeuvre.

Runge and Tillmann are two recent examples of a long tradition in Thomas Mann criticism and both subscribe to the prevailing critical view that Thomas Mann was uninterested in women and that his female characters are inadequately drawn. An earlier critical contribution condemned Thomas Mann out of hand as a misogynistic writer:


Karl Werner Böhm’s comment in his chapter on Frauen-Gestalten in his study Zwischen Selbstzucht und Verlangen is typical: ‘Hierin waren sich Kritik und Forschung von jeher einig: ein großer Frauengestalter war Thomas Mann nicht.’ His view is echoed by Hans Mayer8 and Hermann Kurzke.9 At the heart of such an orthodoxy is the contention that

masculinity, and specific forms of male self-imaging generate stereotyping of women. Male desire, male ambition, male careerism define roles for women. Within the otherwise male environment women inhabit a space that houses stereotyped, caricatured delimited selfhood – very often the product of male desire. And since the publication of his diaries at the latest, we know about Thomas Mann’s homoerotic leanings. Thus Böhm argues that Mann’s misogynistic pen-portraits have their roots in his repressed homosexuality: ‘Es konnte nicht ausbleiben, daß Thomas Manns reservierter und offenkundig wenig inspirierter Umgang mit Frauenfiguren im Gefolge der Tagebuchedition als Ausdruck des tief verwurzelten horror feminae des Homosexuellen interpretiert wurde.’

This might, of course, be true. But it is worth reflecting that homosexual writers from Tennessee Williams to Alan Bennet have been particularly impressive in their ability sympathetically to depict women figures. Horror feminae is simply not in evidence. On the contrary, homosexuals share with women a marginal position vis-à-vis male society. If we look at the context in which Thomas Mann’s women are depicted (social, sexual, institutional), at the actions they perform, at the way they interact with each other and what they say, my key concerns are, then, with situation, action and dialogue. From this concern the following approximate typology emerges:

i) The two Gerdas as artists, misunderstood by the patriarchal world that surrounds them;

ii) Clawdia Chauchat, whom even Anthony Heilbut calls a ‘Feminist’ character;¹²

iii) Lotte, who refuses to be simply Werther’s Lotte surrounded by playing children, to be that picture of happiness and peace that Sylvia Bovenschen describes in Die imaginierte Weiblichkeit;¹³

¹¹ Karl Werner Böhm, Zwischen Selbstzucht und Verlangen, p. 170.

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and Tony, who rebels twice against the dictate of the patriarchy to sacrifice herself;

iv) Rosalie v. Tümmler and Mut-em-enet, who defy their male dominated society and culture to express their love even at the risk of provoking outrage. Of course, compared with the ‘new women’ found in E. M. Foster’s and D. H. Lawrence’s novels these figures may not challenge traditional gender boundaries in a radical way, but as I investigate their role during the course of this thesis I shall hopefully be able to suggest that they belong in the company of the liberated females that people the fiction of the early 20th Century.

Of course, the issue in respect of Thomas Mann’s ability or inability to create believable characters is a general one; it is not only the women figures who are felt to be inadequate, indeed, his tendency towards typification has often been remarked on. His Schopenhauer-inspired love of Species or archetypes is well known and documented. His characters are often criticized for being mere caricatures or mere stereotypes. Manfred Dierks explains that Thomas Mann’s understanding of mythisches Kollektiv or mythischer Typus returns to its origins, thus: ‘Er ist die vollkommene Übersetzung des Schopenhauerschen ‘Species’ – Abdruck einer ewigen Idee – in die neueroberte mythische Ausdruckswelt.’

Thomas Mann uses the form of Species widely; he is, like Aschenbach in Der Tod in Venedig: ‘Der geduldige Künstler, der in langem Fleiß den figurenreichen, so vielerlei

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13 In Die imaginierte Weiblichkeit, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a. Main, 1979, Sylvia Bovenschen argues that where the man dreams, fantasizes, imagines, poeticizes, the feminine is implemented as the medium of his idea of a happier world, as set in opposition to the constraints of bourgeois routine - Werther’s Lotte surrounded by playing children, a picture of happiness and peace - but where he takes refuge in the prosaic reality of domestic life, where he sees, or believes he sees, the routine face of the feminine, that is the site of regimentation, rules, work and constraint for the woman.
Menschenschicksale im Schatten einer Idee versammelnden Romanteppich, ‘Maja’ mit Namen wob. He takes an archetype, Urtyp or Urbild, and creates a personality. To do this, he concentrates on a gesture or a facial expression that captures the spirit of the individual person as a Leitmotiv. The effect of this was incidentally, often resented by Thomas Mann’s ‘victims’, that is to say, those people he caricatured or absorbed in some way in his fictional work and who felt hurt and insulted by it, famously Arthur Holitscher, Gerhard Hauptmann and Annette Kolb. Holitscher was particularly upset by the portrayal of his physiognomy in Tristan but Hermann Hesse has a much friendlier interpretation of Mann’s way of characterization:

Sieht man genauer zu, so sind die Ungeheuer keine Ungeheuer, die Fratzen keine Fratzen, es ist nur die scheinbar zufällige, höchst durchdachte und ausstudierte Beleuchtung – sobald wir die Laterne etwas anders stellen, erkennen wir in dem Spuk unsre Freunde, Brüder, Vettern, Nachbarn, manchmal auch wohlbekannte Züge von uns selber. [...]Es gibt Tage, an denen wir die Welt mit einer Mischung von nüchterner Kritik und uneingestandener Sehnsucht betrachten; an diesen Tagen zeigen Menschen und Dinge uns solche Gesichter wie Th. Mann sie malt, so zum Lachen ernsthaft und zum Weinen komisch.

Of course Thomas Mann understands the omnipresent workings of the stereotypifying agencies – the family, male desire (as enshrined in a resolutely male culture), patriarchal myths. But he reflects on them. And on frequent occasions he seems to take profound narrative and human delight in instances of emotional, psychological and cognitive freedom on the part of his characters. Many critics have felt that Thomas Mann’s most usual stylistic method is to stamp fictive personalities with his

\[15\] GW VIII p. 450.
\[16\] In René Wellek’s & Austin Warren’s Theory of Literature I find support for my argument: ‘In the depiction even of a fictional character the writer may not suggest visual images at all... At the most, a writer suggests some schematised outline or one single physical trait – the frequent practice of Tolstoy or Thomas Mann.’ René Wellek & Austin Warren Theory of Literature, (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1954), p. 27.

stereotypical formulae rather than individualize them. But as I hope to illustrate, Thomas Mann’s understanding of mythisches Kollektiv or mythischer Typus takes him to the blueprint – the idea, but then he goes into the heart of the character, or, as Thomas Mann tells us of Goethe’s idea of characterisation: ‘[...] nicht wachsplastische Panoptikum-Illusion, vor welcher der Pöbel das Maul aufsperrt: Es ist Leben im Licht des Gedankens, die ideelle Transparenz der Charaktere, die aber keineswegs wesenlose Ideen sondern Menschen sind, – das empfand er als “würdige Kunst”, und er gibt in der Tat damit die Bestimmung des Dichterischen.’

However, even allowing for the general tendency towards typification, it is, as we have already noted, particularly the women figures who seem to be excessively pigeon-holed. It is perhaps helpful at this juncture to review certain of the recurrent versions of the female stereotype that recur in Mann’s oeuvre. One is the woman as artist. One thinks of Gerda v. Rinnlingen and Gerda Buddenbrook. They are artists par excellence in the vein of Tonio Kröger and Adrian Leverkühn, and have similar constitutions (a disposition for depression, neuroses and attacks of migraine); and Thomas Mann gives them a platform in his fictional universe. But he does so in the context of the theme of repressed creativity in women. His creations serve almost as an introduction to a set of problems that has been and still is central to feminist studies and issues. Elaine Showalter notes in her key study The Female Malady that ‘Biographies and letters of gifted women who suffered mental break downs have suggested that madness is the price women artists have had to pay for the exercise of their creativity in a male-dominated culture’ And Gilbert and Gubar write in their celebrated work The Madwoman in the Attic: ‘If then, as Anne Sexton

18 Ibid., p. 519. 
19 GW IX, p. 951. 
suggests […], the red shoes passed furtively from woman to woman are the shoes of art, the Queen’s dancing shoes, it is as sickening to be a Queen who wears them as is to be an angelic Makarie who repudiates them. Several passages in Sexton’s verse express what we have defined as “anxiety of authorship” in the form of a feverish dread of the suicidal tarantella of female creativity […] Since the two Gerdas are minor characters the reader is not informed of their final fates, of whether their bridled creativity would be their undoing; we know that it caused the death of Gabriele Klöterjahn in Tristan, an early novella by Mann that I did not include in my thesis.

There are other concepts of femininity that play a prominent role in Thomas Mann’s work, for instance motherhood. Sometimes it is the autobiographical element that supplies this theme in Mann’s work, as he reminisces in his essay On Myself: ‘[…] und mit meiner Mutter, wie sie war (denn sie ist seit sechs Jahren tot), sind jene beiden Frauen-Figuren [Gerda Buddenbrook and Tonio Kröger’s mother] tatsächlich nur durch die beiden Motive der Musikalität und des Weither-Seins verbunden.’22 Or Thomas Mann describes mothers as an early influence the artist both seeks and flees (Tonio Kröger, Adrian Leverkühn). Claus Tillmann writes about Friedemann, Tonio Kröger and other, earlier characters: ‘Das verfehlte Leben dieser “Heimgesuchten” ist oftmals ausgespannt zwischen zwei grundverschiedenen Frauen: am Anfang steht die Mutter, die durch ihr Beispiel die Abkehr von der Brutalität der Wirklichkeit lehrt: am Ende steht deren Gegenspielerin, die meist unerreichbare Geliebte, die das Glück, die Sinnlichkeit, das unbändige

21 ‘All those girls, who wore red shoes, each boarded a train that would not stop[…] They would not listen. They could not stop. What they did was the death dance. What they did would do them in.’ poem by Anne Sexton in Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, The Madwoman in the Attic, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2000), p. 56.
22 GW XI, p. 420.
Leben repräsentiert und die jene unterdrückte Welt wieder tragisch wachruft.'

Thus, mother and *femme fatale* form a binary opposition that occupies a prominent position in the work. And Nina Auerbach tells us that: ‘The family is the first community we know, and it takes the shape of Mother. The government of the mother over her family is an uncomfortable reality that has been exalted to celestial proportions, denounced as the source of all psychic ill, and explained away.’

Gerda Buddenbrook is castigated for her remoteness and is by implication a bad mother. Yet, if we look at many Victorian and Edwardian female figures that are discussed in the feminist studies mentioned in this thesis, then, the two Gerdas or Clawdia Chauchat avowedly resist the stereotypification of femininity. They are not interested in bearing children and will not sacrifice their autonomy for the sake of male desire, and as such they are rare creations from the pen of a writer who, it has to be said, had little interest in feminist issues.

Many of Thomas Mann’s women figures act as images or symbols, either for the family (Tony and Gerda Buddenbrook), or as objects of male desire (Gerda v. Rinnlingen, Clawdia, Lotte) and thus may be described as ‘characters of manners’ as Ian Watt would have it. Either their inner lives as such are not explored, we only have their own account of what they feel and think; this is the case with the two Gerdas and Clawdia Chauchat. Or we recognize instances where their inwardness is directly expressed – as happens with Tony, and predominantly with Lotte, Mut-em-enet and Rosalie von Tümmler. But in any event, we witness processes by which they frequently transcend the narrow delimitation of their roles and become moral entities in their own right. This interplay of the forces that banish them into mere

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23 Claus Tillmann, *Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann: Der Wille zum strengen Glück, Frauenfiguren im Werk Thomas Manns*, p. 20


stereotypification (on the one hand) and of forces that give them life (on the other) is one of the most fascinating features of Thomas Mann’s writing. In this sense the women figures are party to a complex interplay of insubstantiality and substantiality – and this thesis is dedicated to the attempt to understand this process.

Frequently, one can see him invoking that schematic opposition between the emotionally repressed, but intellectually and/or artistically creative male and the physically procreative female. But, on other occasions, Thomas Mann makes stereotyping the theme of his work (women as objects of collective male fantasy). And sometimes women characters ‘grow out’ of stereotypes and assert a measure of autonomy (as interplay of physicality and interiority). I would summarize this female portrait gallery as follows:

I. Passionate Women who risk appearing foolish – the women figures in *Felix Krull;* Sibylla in *Der Erwählte,* Mut-em-enet in *Joseph in Ägypten;* Rosalie v. Tümmler in *Die Betrogene.* While the women figures in *Felix Krull* are utterly subservient to the protagonist’s role as a Hermes figure and artist, Mut in *Joseph in Ägypten* develops into a character in her own right. Although she figures in just one episode of this vast novel, the

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26 Wolfgang Schneider’s book *Lebensfreundlichkeit und Pessimismus, Thomas Manns Figurendarstellung* is actually dedicated to the subject of characterization in Thomas Mann’s oeuvre. In his second chapter *Fragwürdiges: Systematischer Schopenhauerianismus* he writes: ‘Zu deutlich ist die Lust dieses Autors am objektiven ‘Genaumachen’, zu offensichtlich die Lebenslange Inspiration durch die großen, ‘realistischen’ Erzähler, die, wie die Tagebücher belegen, fast allabendlich nach den Tagesgeschäften zur „Lektüre“ herangezogen wurden, zu groß die Freude an Tolstoi und Turgenev, Flaubert und Fontane, Hamsun und Conrad, daß die pejorativen Formeln von ‘Oberfläche’ und ‘Vordergrund’ zutreffen könnten.’ Schneider puts one of his key messages into focus, one I heartily agree with, when he criticizes the overly Schopenhauerian interpretation that has flourished since Heller’s *Thomas Mann: The Ironic German.* Whilst not disputing some of its value, he points out: ‘Thomas Mann selbst hat, was er unter Realismus verstand, ohne dogmatische Verkrampfungen definiert. In einem Brief an Henry Hatfield vom 19.11.1951 findet sich die durch ihre pointierte Einfachheit überzeugende Äußerung: ‘Im Neu-Russischen, der marxistischen Kritik, bedeutet ‘realistisch’ ja nichts als ‘gesellschaftsbezogen.’ Aber welche gute Kunst wäre denn eigentlich nicht realistisch? Das Getroffene, das ‘Echte’, das frappierende Wiedererkennen des wirklichen Lebens ist es zuletzt doch immer, was uns freut an der Kunst, im Seelischen wie im Gegenständlichen. [...] wir mögen stilisieren und symbolisieren soviel wir wollen – ohne Realismus geht’s nicht. Er ist das Rückgrat und das, was überzeugt.’ (Br III, 231). Quoted by Wolfgang Schneider in *Lebensfreundlichkeit und Pessimismus: Thomas Manns Figurendarstellung,* (Frankfurt a. M., Klostermann, 1999), p. 129.
processes in her soul become central to the narrative. She introduces a set of problems entirely her own and separable from the fate of the male hero Joseph. Rosalie in *Die Betrogene* is actually the heroine of the novella and thus occupies a rare position amongst Mann’s pre-dominantly male main characters. The story deals with problems that are inherent to her sex but are also an expression of philosophical issues involving the relationship of human beings to nature.

II. *Femmes fatales* – Gerda v. Rinnlingen, Gerda Buddenbrook and Clawdia Chauchat. These women have all the features of a *femme fatale* but outgrow any such stereotyping and develop a self-sufficiency as characters with an autonomous voice. The process begins with Gerda v. Rinnlingen and develops further in *Buddenbrooks*. The fullest and richest example of that growth process that leaves all stereotypicality behind is Clawdia Chauchat in *Der Zauberberg*, who moves from femme fatale, from the fetishized object of male desire to become a moral agent. I shall return to the *femme fatale* in a moment.

III. Spiritual confidantes – Examples are Lisaweta from *Tonio Kröger*, and Adrian Leverkühn’s circle of friendly women in *Dr. Faustus*. These women are there to debate the ideas of the male hero, not to take centre stage themselves as women. In a sense they could just as well have been male characters. But they are marginal figures and hence they can be excluded from my thesis without damaging the argument that I am pursuing.

IV. Seemingly naïve figures – Tony Buddenbrook can be on occasion a kind of spiritual confidante to Thomas Buddenbrook but does not share the dilemmas of his corrosive inwardness. Because of her very different perceptions she remains very much a character in her own right rather than acting as a foil to Thomas. Lotte Kestner is the catalyst for
events recounted in *Lotte in Weimar*. In some ways she is a comical figure, not unlike Tony, self-deprecatory as well as curious and a little vain – an endearing character. But as the novel unfolds Thomas Mann weaves her more and more into Goethe's world; she has a privileged insight into his mind's working because of their shared past. Thus she begins a dialogue, initially via the inhabitants of the Weimar court but finally with Goethe himself.

The *femme fatale* figure comes to prominence in fin de siècle literature i.e. Symbolist, Decadence, New Romantics (Baudelaire, Wilde, Mallarmé, Yeats) and was also eagerly taken up by the Naturalists (Zola's *Nana*). Mann knew and admired them and defended Wedekind's controversial plays, *Die Büchse der Pandora* and *Erdgeist*, which concern a *femme fatale* (Lulu) *par excellence*. In his early writing, Thomas Mann is influenced by the prevailing style of his day in *Jugendstil* literature. The perhaps commonplace archetype of the *femme fatale* plays a large role in his first stories. In *Luischen* and *Gefallen* the women are strikingly cold, indifferent to their reputation and stand apart from the other women around them. They are a destructive, predatory force that incites first passion then death. By the time Thomas Mann wrote *Der kleine Herr Friedemann* in 1895 (which laid the cornerstone for his oeuvre) he had developed both stylistically and thematically beyond those early sketches. Gerda v. Rinnlingen is described as a true *femme fatale* in appearance and personality, she embodies the fetishized female of the male point of view. But, as we shall see, there is more to her than this image allows.27 She is arguably the

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first example in Mann’s oeuvre of that process that will be explored throughout my thesis – one in which (to put it most simply) a female stereotype becomes a woman character.

Friedemann sees Gerda for a first time as she is driving the carriage herself, her chauffeur sits idly behind her. Her looks are described in great detail and already she has such a reputation that his companion, on noticing her little yellow hunting coach, exclaims: ‘Der Teufel hole mich, wenn dort nicht die Rinnlingen dahergefahren kommt.’ The devil certainly gets the better of Friedemann who from now on never has a moment of peace until he dies. This death is often put down to Gerda v. Rinnlingen’s power as a femme fatale. But is she really such a figure? It is true that Gerda upsets Friedemann’s world and turns it upside down. She disturbs his carefully constructed, complacent environment and leads him into regions of emotional intensity he had thought were closed to him. But can she be compared with Zola’s Nana, Wedekind’s Lulu or Oscar Wilde’s Salome? These femmes fatales bear a grudge against men. Men have trapped them. Unable to achieve any public restitution for the harm done to them, they look for a weak male on whom they can take revenge. None of this applies to Gerda v. Rinnlingen. We do not know much about her but we can safely assume that she was not forced into marriage against her will. She has perfect command over herself and her situation; she is not her husband’s slave. Thomas Mann himself offers an explanation of the inner workings of her character:


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28 GW VIII, p. 85.
29 To Frau Willy Wolff, 28.IV.1909, Br. I, p. 75.
It is soon evident that Frau v. Rinnlingen is not interested in men as such. The catty women in the little town talk about little else but her coldness towards her husband, her general indifference towards men. One of the dowager ladies exclaims to another: ‘Sie ist nicht kokett, und ich bin, Gott weiß es, die letzte, die das nicht lobenswert fände; aber darf eine so junge Frau – sie ist vierundzwanzig Jahre alt – die natürliche anmutige Anziehungskraft ... vollkommen vermissing lassen?’

Friedemann pays her a return visit following her initial acquaintance call. On this occasion she invites him to visit her on some other occasion when they can play music together. He stammers some reply of affirmation – but never takes up her offer. When she chooses Friedemann as an equal she is acknowledging a fellow sufferer set aside from ordinary existence by his disability as she is by her wretchedness – but he does not accept this offer, it is not what he wants. Women as autonomous beings have no place in his world. His early experiences between nurse, mother and sisters and his only encounter with love have not prepared him for mutual interchange. He sees Gerda only as an object of sexuality, a symbol – in short, she is his *femme fatale* and she has entered literary history as such. Yet critics have acknowledged that Gerda is not the reason for Friedemann’s breakdown, but ‘lediglich der Anlass’. Claus Tillmann argues that the so-called *Heimgesuchten* in Thomas Mann’s work are torn between the mother as an anchor and the generally unobtainable loved woman, who plays havoc with the protagonist’s sexuality. There is much truth to this view. But it does not provide the interpretative key to Herr Friedemann’s reactions.

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30 GW VIII, p. 84.
33 Claus Tillmann, *Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann*, p. 20.
suggest that Thomas Mann sees Gerda v. Rinnlingen as deeply misunderstood. Furthermore, she also partakes of a very different archetype - that of the distant and unapproachable artist - a type specifically developed by Thomas Mann and identified with his greatest male heroes.

While Friedemann devours Gerda with his eyes during their first conversation, she is quite absent minded; thinking about herself, she is perfectly self-absorbed. While he fantasizes 'Sie will mich quälen und verhohnen', dachte er 'wie ihre Augen zittern! [...]34 she herself is entirely calm and untouched, and replies quietly with 'einer ganz hellen klaren Stimme: [...] Thus the problem is not with Gerda v. Rinnlingen; it lies in Friedemann himself. Moreover, Gerda puts herself on his level as a sufferer and 'unnatural' being: 'Auch ich bin viel krank', fuhr sie fort, ohne die Augen von ihm abzuwenden: 'aber niemand merkt es. Ich bin nervös und kenne die merkwürdigsten Zustände.'35 As far as she is concerned she sees a man set aside from the rest of his narrow world because of his physical malformation and delicate health, seeking refuge in the arts, in particular in music. Gerda appreciates his large soulful eyes, his detachment from the rest of society, his inwardness. But the sexual conflict proves too strong. Mindful of his affliction and convinced of his unworthiness Friedemann does not visit Gerda v. Rinnlingen to make music; all he has to offer her is his obsession with her physicality and that draws from her both repulsion and contempt.

The hatred he has felt in the past when sensing that Gerda's eyes rest on him, his interpretation of her behaviour towards him as mocking and humiliating, drive him to self-destruction. In his self-disgust and fury he reminds one of 'Rumpelstiltskin' rather than the tragic victim of the symbolists' femmes fatales.36 It is Friedemann's perception, male and

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34 GW VIII, p. 95.
35 GW VIII, p. 95.
36 'Was ging eigentlich in ihm vor, bei dem, was nun geschah? Vielleicht war es dieser wollüstige Haß, den er empfunden hatte, wenn sie ihn mit ihrem Blick demütigte, der jetzt, wo er, behandelt von ihr wie Cont. on next page
chauvinist, which drives him to his death, not Gerda or her heartlessness; indeed, he has no claim on her heart. It is the image rather than the person of Gerda that destroys Friedemann. He fantasizes about a relationship (a physical one) and she is willing to give another (a spiritual one); Clawdia Chauchat will make a similar offer to Hans Castorp so many years later in *Der Zauberberg*.

Gerda invites him to share her spiritual world, to give him something nobody in the little world they share is even faintly aware of. Not surprisingly she reproaches him for not taking up her offer of duet playing. Nevertheless she gives him another chance: during her soiree she leads him into her garden for a talk. Once again she confides in him and speaks of her unhappiness. But blind as he is to her needs, he cannot see her as anything else but a physical presence. He collapses when she asks about his handicap and takes this as a mockery of his physicality. As Herbert Lehnert suggests: ‘Solche ‘Masken, Buckligkeit oder Impotenz, sind Zeichen für sexuelle Besonderheit, zugleich für Ausschluß aus der bürgerlichen Normalität, Außenseitertum.’

In the novel *Königliche Hoheit* we find a similar scene between Imma and Klaus Heinrich in Imma Spoelmann’s library; here it has a positive outcome. Again the woman asks the disabled man to reveal his handicap but it seems to confirm their mutual understanding as outsiders. It is at this moment that the confession of desire is made. In that novel the two come together; in *Der kleine Herr Friedemann* it leads to the protagonist’s loss of his object of desire and consequent self-destruction.

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2. I do not wish to over-interpret Gerda v. Rinnlingen. Thomas Mann himself did not have a high regard for this story, although he liked it better than all his other very early work. When he heard of a plan for an anthology and there was a choice of an early story, he wrote in a letter to Henry Hatfield on 25.2.1952: ‘Gegen Ihre Wahl des ‘Kleinen Herrn Friedemann’ habe ich aber Einwände. Das Stückchen ist zu gering, um neben den Arbeiten von Schnitzler und Kafka, die Hauptsstücke ihrer Produktion darstellen, zu bestehen’, DüD I, p. 23 but on 6.12.1941 he wrote to Georg Martin Richter ‘Besonders Cont. on next page.
To summarize my argument, then: the stereotype of the *femme fatale* is present in Mann's oeuvre; but what is noteworthy is how often the characters in question take on a life of their own. They may be *femmes fatales* in looks and behaviour but then they break that mould and acquire different, and more complex identities. In the next two chapters I shall examine Gerda Buddenbrook and Clawdia Chauchat, and what it is that sets them apart and makes them so very 'fateful.' As Eckhard Heftrich points out:

> Als er [Thomas Mann] die für Friedemann so verhängnisvolle Figur der Gerda von Rinnlingen schuf, die er alsbald so selbstverständlich als Gerda Buddenbrook, geb. Arnoldsen, wiederaufstehen ließ, wie den bereits anverwandten Apotheker Gieshübner alias Friedemann als Makler Gosch, kurzum, als er u.a. auch die längst zum Klischee gewordene Spezies *femme fatale* des *fin de siècle* um die doppelte Gerda vermehrte, tat er es auf seine, ihm allein eigene Weise; womit, wie inzwischen bewiesen, garantiert war, daß seine verhängnisvollen Frauen im Unterschied zum Riesenschwarm der literarischen Eintagsfliegen noch immer nicht gestorben sind.39

Hitherto I have been summarizing the stereotyping tendency at work in Mann's characterisation of (particularly) women figures. And I have endeavoured to suggest that, on frequent occasions, he thematizes the stereotypifying process – that is to say, he portrays women who are aware of, and do battle with, the cliché expectations that surround them. But it might be said that this argument does not get us very far. And, moreover, that any attempt to defend Mann's power of characterization is now quixotic because the whole climate of current textual and literary theory has discredited the notion of character as something important to imaginative literature. That disparagement of characterization goes hand in hand with the assertion of the textuality of this text, the insistence that all literary works – including even the most realistic of novel fictions – are made of language, structure, genre, rather than of substantial human affairs. Irreducibly, then, fiction offers

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us the discourse of substantiality and not the substance itself. All this is, of course, true. But it does tend to enfeeble the reading experience. At one point Settembrini (that most eloquent pedagogue of the sanatorium in Der Zauberberg) who is described as a man of letters of some distinction and an expert in the use of language both creatively and philosophically, reports a conversation about the role of characters in the novel:


I assume that the brewer rejects literature because it has to do not with everyday matters but with ‘beautiful characters’. Settembrini quotes his remark no doubt to illustrate the kind of philistinism, which surrounds him. But, in the context of our current critical orthodoxy his views would accord with those of many commentators who believe that any interest in characters – whether they be ‘schön’ or not – is trivial, because literature should be about structures and texts, rather than substantial-seeming human beings. Wolfgang Schneider criticizes this trend:

Hier wird eine die Literaturwissenschaft überhaupt kennzeichnende Vernachlässigung deutlich: Nichts ist offensichtlicher, als daß Romane von Menschen erzählen, daß die Kunst des Schriftstellers vor allem anderen in der Darstellung literarischer Figuren besteht. Dennoch tut sich die Forschung schwer; oft hinterläßt die Sekundärliteratur den Eindruck, als sei nicht ein Roman, in dem Menschen beschrieben werden, Gegenstand der Untersuchung gewesen, sondern eine Abhandlung, die einen theoretischen Diskurs verfolgt. Meist werden die Figuren eines Romans nicht als dargestellte Menschen, sondern lediglich als Problemträger analysiert, und das literaturwissenschaftliche Vorgehen, das oft genug Abstraktionshöhe mit Wissenschaftlichkeit gleichsetzt, verliert bei der theoretischen Erörterung des ‘Problems’ schnell die gestaltete Figur aus dem Blick.

40 GW III, p. 137.
41 Wolfgang Schneider, Lebensfreundlichkeit und Pessimismus, p. 24.
His view echoes that of Thomas Mann in *On Myself*, where he tells us however much his characters are meant to be exponents, representatives and messengers of spiritual realms, they also are meant to live as knowable personalities: ‘Ich hoffe, sie sind deswegen keine Schatten und wandelnde Allegorien. Im Gegenteil bin ich durch die Erfahrung beruhigt, daß der Leser diese Personen, Joachim, Clawdia Chauchat, Peeperkorn, Settembrini und wie sie heißen als wirkliche Menschen erlebt, deren er sich wie wirklich gemachter Bekanntschaften erinnert’.\textsuperscript{42} The ability to people his plots convincingly is one of the keys to Thomas Mann’s œuvre as Rainer Maria Rilke recognized early in a contemporary review of *Buddenbrooks*: ‘[…]daß es sich trotzdem darum handeln würde, Dichter zu sein und viele Gestalten mit überzeugendem Leben, mit Wärme und Wesenheit zu erfüllen.’\textsuperscript{43} That Thomas Mann, often seen as a ferociously cerebral artistic temperament, could delight in material substances for its own sake is illustrated by his comment in a letter to A. E. Meyer: ‘In der wundervollen Sammlung des Metropolitan Museums war ich auch neulich wieder Stunden lang. Ein Hemd und ein Kopftuch, einem Modellkopf kunstgerecht aufgesetzt, machten mir am meisten Eindruck.’\textsuperscript{44}

Of course, it might be thought that, precisely in the present context of theory, a writer such as Thomas Mann, a supremely discursive talent if ever there was one, comes very much into his own. He gives us, in other words, discourse rather than substance, and is in that sense attuned to our critical concerns nowadays. There is an element of truth to this argument. Feminist theory that has drawn attention to the various forms and modes by which women are ‘texted’,

\textsuperscript{42} Thomas Mann, *Einführung in den Zauberberg*, in GW XI, p. 512.
\textsuperscript{43} Quoted by Peter de Mendelssohn in *Der Zauberer*, p. 467.
\textsuperscript{44} To A. E. Meyer, 21.10.40, Br. III.
to the ways in which and the extent to which gender has especially to do with performativity, does relate to Thomas Mann’s oeuvre. And I have benefited greatly from it because it has alerted me to the fact that Mann’s stereotypifying tendency may be not only symptom of but also – potentially at least – a critique of patriarchal culture. This, in the last resort, has been the line of argument I have sought to pursue in this thesis. And I have drawn some of my ammunition from another theoretical armoury – that of narrative theory. In one sense narrative theory is part of that theoretical consensus that stresses textuality. But, taken together with reader response theory, it alerts us to the reader’s ability to ‘answer back’. It was my own position as a reader that led me to write this thesis and while I hope that I do not succumb to the limitations of ‘character analysis’, to that combination of ethical high-mindedness and watered-down psychology that Bakhtin so disparages in his The Dialogic Imagination, my approach is, in one sense, an old-fashioned one. It attends, of course, to the narrative statements of the text. But it seeks to suggest that Thomas Mann’s texts are more often ambiguous, that they may achieve more than is given in their overt purpose. My argument has been enriched by, but it departs from, the present theoretical climate in literary scholarship. Firstly in that narrative theory together with reader response theory alerts us to the reader’s ability to hear intimations beyond the obvious force of the governing rhetoric of the text (which in Thomas Mann’s case may include a stereotypifying of both male and female characters); and secondly in that gender theory (queer theory/feminist theory) all alert us to the representation of gender, the ‘texted’ self (both socio-culturally and in the specific literary text before us). In his theory of reception aesthetics Stanley Fish tells us that: ‘[...]the reader’s activities are at the centre of attention, where they are regarded not as leading to meaning

45 M. M. Bakhtin, Introduction to The Dialogic Imagination. Four Essays, ed. by Michael Holquist, University of Texas Press Slavic Series, No. 1.
but as having meaning.'\textsuperscript{46} I also hold with Kierkegaard that 'an objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth, the highest truth attainable for an existing individual'.\textsuperscript{47} In his study \textit{Forms of life, Character and Moral Imagination in the Novel} Martin Price argues in Kierkegaard's spirit that:

\begin{quote}
All the questions or problems that are raised by the character are resolved. If they are not, if the novel deliberately leaves the character ambiguous, the very ambiguity is a resting point. This is where we are meant to be left, the point of that we have read. It is ambiguity to be taken as ultimate, not one such as in actual life we seek to get beyond. In that sense one can say that characters exist for the sake of novels rather than novels for sake of character.\textsuperscript{48}
\end{quote}

My thesis has both a technical aspect, then (concerned with processes of character-drawing) and a thematic one (concerned with situations in which women figures go some way towards liberating themselves from forms of straight-jacketing). Certain terms will recur throughout my thesis in binary opposition – for example insubstantiality and substantiality. Here the first term denotes the space of typification and curious non-being that so often surrounds the women characters. But the opposing term in the duality is one that invokes the possibility of an escape from stereotyping into something that we the readers recognize as a substantial human presence that claims empathy; and in Thomas Mann's \textit{oeuvre} it manifests itself as something incarnated, as some kind of heterodox, unpredictable, untidy selfhood. Hence my thesis is crucially not about Thomas Mann’s women figures in the light of feminist literary criticism but about women figures as examples of superb characterization. Superb, since the author removes them from their marginality as minor characters and allows them to move closer to centre stage. Of course,

\textsuperscript{46} Stanley Fish, \textit{Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 158.
Thomas Mann wanted to write about ideas and concepts or a Weltanschauung, but while his male characters help to debate them and engage the reader in analysis, the female characters often introduce a kind of humanization of the intellectual argument. Whether it is Tony reaching out to Hanno, the victim of her brother's principles, Clawdia who personifies the humane (or “das Mahnschliche” as she has it) in contrast to Settembrini’s humanism, Lotte’s goodness that still touches the old Goethe ossified in his Weimar Olympus or the last two women in my thesis in the grip of the most human condition of all, passionate love, at such moments the women become the weighty voices within the totality of what Thomas Mann’s work achieves.

Further, I would claim that the process has something very profound to tell us about Thomas Mann’s creative career. From about the early 1920’s on (the period of the completion of Der Zauberberg) he was increasingly concerned to find some kind of human affirmation in the midst of the wasteland of post-first-world-war Europe. That quest produced some notable essays in defence of Humanität; it produces such key moments as the snow vision vouchsafed to Hans Castorp and the apotheosis of Joseph as humane provider in the final volume of the Joseph tetralogy. Yet such moments, fine as they are, sometimes have the flavour of a heavily theorized agenda of decency, a principled demonstration of valuable humanity. My case is that the true demonstration of that humanity is less a matter of theorizing and discursivity than it is one of incarnation through complex processes of characterization that cannot always be categorized or tidily explained. For this reason the fundamental thrust of my thesis is away from (textual and feminist) theory – although, as I have already indicated, I have, I hope, learnt from such arguments. I do not wish to bring a theoretically defined feminism to bear in order to challenge a masculine novel universe – I do not wish to bring notions of textual slippage to bear in order to dismantle what might seem to be a somewhat schematic
novel universe. Rather, I hope to highlight moments of lively and enlivened characterization, moments where abstractions such as humanity and womankind find concrete expression in instances of felt characterological specificity. Thomas Mann may have meant something like this when he wrote: 'Die Menschheit – ich gebe zu, daß mein Verhältnis zu dieser Abgezogenheit zweifelhaft ist; der Mensch aber hat von jeher mein ganzes Interesse in Anspruch genommen [...].' The weight of human selfhood is present in many of his women characters. Of course, in the overall argument of the works in which they figure, they may play largely subordinate roles. Yet time and again they acquire a very distinctive voice and presence in the fictional environment. Hence, I would claim that the issue of women figures as believable selves in Thomas Mann's fiction is not just an aspect of what he has to offer us; it is an important part of his achievement. What is remarkable is how much the novels yield when read in this way, how rich they are in implication.

49 GW XII, p. 448.
Preface

In its title (which names not one character but a family) and in its subtitle (*Verfall einer Familie*), Thomas Mann’s *Buddenbrooks* proclaims itself to be a novel of family life.

It is, then, the family that provides the all-important focus, both thematically and cognitively. Characters are related to the family drama that provides the events of the novel and to the family consciousness that provides the sphere of awareness that governs the narrative process. Within this prevailing focus there are three kinds of women in evidence:

(i) The marginal, the ‘hangers on’ (Klothilde, Sesemi Weichbrodt, Ida Jungmann etc.). They help to enhance the narrative position held by the two main female characters with whom this chapter concerns itself.

(ii) Tony – who will sacrifice herself and be sacrificed to an inflexible ethos of family requirements (the acceptable marriage in terms of clan, social position, wealth, continuity).

(iii) Gerda, the mysterious centre of Thomas’s desire. In part, she fulfils the family expectation (elegant, sophisticated, wealthy, the product of the appropriate background). But in part she does not. (She is not going the be the mother of numerous Buddenbrook offspring; she takes only a superficial part in Thomas’s civil and public life. She is not really interested in the activities and values of Thomas’s world; ultimately she is only engaged in art, music).

In a sense all of these women figures in their various ways move in and out of intelligibility in so far as they enter (or leave) that family–
centred focus of the novel. One could call this ‘community of women’ a
sisterhood, whereby Tony is the most important character followed
closely by Gerda, her sister in law, the ‘Mutter zukünftiger
Buddenbrooks’. Klara, the natural sister, is a minor character, someone
to enhance the plot. Older sister or adviser figures are Sesemi and Ida.
The cousins are negative forces and then there are still the shadowy friends, Armgard v. Schilling and Eva Ewers, who help to give Tony’s fate and through her that of the Buddenbrooks a new direction (the Munich episode leads to Permaneder, the ‘Poppenrader Ernte’ to the definite decline of the Buddenbrook firm). A bond grows up between Gerda and Tony that is of immense importance to the narrative; it struck me as significant enough to devote a whole chapter to it. Otherwise, apart from one renegade phase (the summer at Travemünde), Tony is largely comprehensible in terms of her desperate attempt to do the right thing by the family. By contrast, Gerda is left mysterious and inscrutable. If the essential dimension of her being becomes at all comprehensible, it does so on those occasions when her son Hanno plays his own music in order to explain himself to anybody in the family who may care to listen. It is my wish in this thesis to give Tony in particular, but also Gerda the psychological and cognitive space they deserve within and outside the landscape of Buddenbrook family history, and to suggest that they are both much more complex and interesting as individual characters than they have generally been given credit for.

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The characterization of Tony Buddenbrook

Dort kommt deine kühne Maid; jauchzend jagt sie daher. 51

*Buddenbrooks* is the most widely read and popular novel by Thomas Mann; he himself wondered in his old age whether this was not the work of his that would live the longest.52

At the time of writing *Buddenbrooks* (1897-1900) Thomas Mann is very much in the tradition of the realist/naturalist writers (Tolstoy, Fontane, Dickens, Ibsen, Kielland, Lie, to name but a few) and this is reflected in the characterization of Tony.53 Tony’s emotions and her fate are closely bound up with the prevailing times (middle to late 19th century). In his essay on *Effi Briest* Christian Grawe quotes a statement by a prominent Social Democrat, Adelheid Popp (1869-1939):

Wie sehen aber bei den besitzenden Klassen oft die Ehen aus? Die niedrigsten Motive sind nur zu häufig maßgebend. Oder ist es anders als niedrig, wenn die Tochter eines reichen Hauses wider ihren Willen durch „strebsame‘, eitle Eltern einem Manne vermählt wird, nur weil er einen „Namen‘ hat und Ansehen nach außen genießt?54

That sums up Tony’s fate completely. As to the style, in his *Pariser Tagebuch* Thomas Mann tells us how he defended it to some representatives of the German embassy by invoking ‘den

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51 Wagner, *Die Walküre*, Act I, Scene II Brünnhilde to Wotan
Exaktheitsdrang eines Schriftstellers, der durch die naturalistische Schule gegangen.\textsuperscript{55}

T. J. Reed refers to \textit{Buddenbrooks} as 'Thomas Mann’s only conventional novel that belongs very obviously to the traditions of nineteenth-century realism and draws on its predecessors for inspiration and in details of technique.'\textsuperscript{56} Out of this tradition grew the clarity of description in its ‘almost caricaturely sharp observation of detail.’\textsuperscript{57} It is therefore an easy enough task to take the main female characters, Tony and Gerda, and subject them to a thorough investigation. Critics have done this before\textsuperscript{58} in the context of their examination of \textit{Buddenbrooks} but apart from noting Tony’s general appeal, they generally consider her to be without complexity. Or, to put it positively, T. J. Reed describes her as ‘aesthetically rich though psychologically not complex.’\textsuperscript{59} By way of analysing Mann’s writing technique he adds:

\begin{quote}
Scenic method is halfway to intimacy in that it gives us character direct, rendering what is spoken and leaving the inner life to be inferred. With someone as spontaneous and heart-on-sleeve as Tony, this is entirely sufficient. What would a closer inspection of her inner life add? Only a confirmation that there is virtually no further substance beneath her familiar mannerism...\textsuperscript{60}
\end{quote}

Hans Wysling acknowledges the crucial role Tony plays in the narrative and gives her a mythological dimension\textsuperscript{61} in comparing her to Brünnhilde, Wotan’s daughter. He likes her – that is obvious – but cannot assign to her any weight as a character because she is not intellectual. While he suggests: ‘Es geht in diesem Roman zuerst und zuletzt um Selbsterkundung’\textsuperscript{62} he limits this to Thomas and Christian.

\textsuperscript{55} GW X, p. 74.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{58} e.g. Hans Wysling, Doris Runge, Peter de Mendelssohn etc.
\textsuperscript{59} T. J. Reed, \textit{Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition}, p. 59.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., p. 56
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., p. 211.
Yet Erika Mann said: ‘...in jeder dieser Gestalten in ‘Buddenbrooks’, besonders aber im Thomas ist ja sehr viel Thomas Mann drin, wie auch im Christian, wie auch in der Tony[...]’

Claus Tillmann, whose recent *Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann* I already discussed in general terms in my introduction, notices that the narrator’s sympathy is with young Tony and tends to exhaust itself as the novel unfolds. In his chapter ‘Degradierung einer Hauptfigur: Tony Buddenbrook – Die tragische Rolle der kindlichen Heldin’, Claus Tillmann develops the theory that halfway through the novel Thomas Mann loses interest in his Tony. After initially making her a prominent character in the novel, he then treats her almost with contempt as she grows older. The omniscient narrator describes her outbreaks of tactlessness, her lack of judgement, her repetitiveness and more and more Tony is reduced to a minor character. Tillmann claims: ‘Von ihrem Kommentator schließlich achselzuckend aus der Hand gelegt, vollführt sie, ähnlich einer Kleist’schen Marionette, ihre natürlichen, erwarteten, womöglich Sympathie erregenden, aber im Innersten leblosen Bewegungen.’

Doris Runge, also discussed in my introduction, seems to agree on the whole, but is less negative about Tony. I particularly agree with her view that Thomas Mann had a special closeness to aspects of Tony’s experience:

Unbestritten gehört ihr des Autors Sympathie. Eine Auszeichnung, die, wie wir wissen, der weiblichen Zunft im Werk dieses Dichters nicht häufig widerfährt. Allein die Tatsache, daß nicht nur Hannos Ferienglück, sondern auch Tonys kurzes Liebesglück mit Morten Schwarzkopf dort angesiedelt wird, wo Thomas Mann selbst die glücklichsten Tage seines Lebens verbracht hatte, in Travemünde, zeigt das Mitleiden und die Anteilnahme am Geschick auch seiner weiblichen Protagonistin.

But then she argues that ‘Allerdings, wenn es darum geht, sie mit geistigen Rüstzeug auszustatten, dann beruft sich ihr Dichtervater auf

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64 Ibid., p. 56.
die tradierten literarischen Muster.' Inge Diersen, who wrote her study of Thomas Mann's work in the German Democratic Republic, and evaluates it in a socio-historical light rather than a psychological or philosophical one, concentrates on Tony's fate as a woman in a capitalist Wilhemine society rather than on the character herself. In the Buddenbrooks-Handbuch edited by Ken Moulden and Gero von Wilpert, Ernst Keller examines all characters, major and minor, in the light of the Buddenbrooks' decline. Again, Tony is given rather lightweight treatment; her role seems to be described rather than analysed; presumably it is felt that the character does not warrant a thorough investigation.

Yet Tony is a character who seems to appeal to the average reader of Buddenbrooks. The reaction of the viewers of both the filmed versions of 1953 and the television version of 1990 appears to support this. (Both productions did admittedly little justice to Thomas Mann's novel: in the first Tony is portrayed as utterly shallow; she is not allowed any dignity, in the second, her characteristic manner of speaking and her courage get lost in endless tears.) Rolf G. Renner makes the point that the film of 1959 proved to have great entertainment value, and to entertain was certainly an ambition of the young Thomas Mann when writing this novel. And Claus Tillmann, who feels that Thomas Mann used Tony's simplicity to offset the psychological complexity of his male characters, asserts that 'die wenigen Verfilmungen des Romans kommen naturgemäß ihr und nicht den männlichen Protagonisten zugute. Während die Ironie und der feine

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66 Ibid., p. 51.
69 'Sie (Tony Buddenbrook) ist eine der perfektesten Chragenfiguren, die ein deutscher Romanautor von Wiese, (Düsseldorf, Bagel, 1963), p. 194.
70 There was an earlier silent version of 1923. Thomas Mann thought very little of it and it is as good as forgotten.
Spott, mit denen sie vom Erzähler zunehmend bedacht wird, in diesem Medium unausgedrückt bleiben müssen, triumphiert das Eindeutige und faßbare in der Gestalt Tonys über dem Zwiespaltigen, Widersprüchlichen und Geheimnisvollen der männlichen Charaktere.«

I rather wonder whether it is the realistic and convincing delineation of a woman's plight in 19th Century Germany that has endeared Tony to readers and viewers. The sheer empathy she commands on account of the very real calamities that befall her may have singled her out for readers' commiseration. There is in my opinion a noticeable Dickensian dimension to the characters in Buddenbrooks, not least Tony. Thomas Mann named Dickens amongst his other sources of inspiration when writing Buddenbrooks. And as I shall discuss in my next chapter, the greatest and most obvious contrast to Tony’s artless nature is the artistic and mysterious Gerda, another woman figure.

Of all the female characters in Thomas Mann’s oeuvre Tony is most notably not stereotyped in physical terms. Possibly her delicate appearance reminds one of a fin de siècle type, the femme fragile. We find her in Mann’s early stories, i.e. Tristan (Gabriele Klöterjahn) or the fantasy Der Kleiderschrank (the girl in the cupboard). But this description does not really fit Tony; she is mentally too robust and apart from her elfin prettiness not at all ethereal. Unlike Gerda, she is not an artist, nor does she represent an ideological position nor is she representative of a particular human attitude. This type of characterisation is common enough in Thomas Mann’s oeuvre: Thomas, Christian and Hanno are on one level personifications of decadence, of Schopenhauer pessimism or Nitzschean nihilism. However, Tony seems to me to embody the pure delight the young Thomas Mann felt in

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72 Claus Tillmann, Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann, p. 56.
creating characters. In a speech in Lübeck on 5.5.1993 Hans Wysling says as much:


\('Kühn und herrlich'\) refers to an address of Thomas Mann to his daughter Erica. He uses it during her courageous wartime mission in England, quoting Wotan's praise of his daughter in Wagner's *Die Walküre*. But I support Wysling's comment. The Schopenhauerean pessimism that sits like a cloud over Thomas and Hanno is not present in Tony,\(^75\) unless we interpret her unwillingness to change or to learn like Erich Heller, who comments that Tony is 'die komische Inkarnation von Schopenhauers Idee der Gattung'.\(^76\) Her cheerfulness in the face of the calamities that befall her is brave and very admirable, in that sense 'kühn und herrlich'. More than once the text refers to the enlivening effect she has on her family. 'Die einzelnen Familienglieder wußen der heimgekehrten Antonie Dank für ihre Heiterkeit'\(^77\) or 'Du kommst mir


\(^77\) GW I, p. 311.
sehr erwünscht. Ich habe heute abend so allein essen müssen wie der Papst.  

Tony believes and obeys her men folk; she is trapped in conventions and deluded by false ideals (the family god: the firm), and fervently upholds the image of the Buddenbrooks as an infallible institution until the very end. Though she may on the way through life lose her belief in god and in justice, she will never despair of the superiority of her clan. It is not for personal gain that she sacrifices her young love, that she endures a second marriage, that she tries tirelessly to push the fortunes of the family into a more positive direction. Her fetish, the family, makes it worthwhile to sacrifice herself. After all, on the centenary of the firm she presents the Buddenbrook emblem almost single-handed to Thomas, only weakly supported by her nephew Hanno. I shall discuss this scene later in more detail but for now it suffices that she is described as presenting 'das Bild einer verzückten Märtyrerin'. Perhaps it is this delusion as well as her deplorable naivety that makes critics like Claus Tillmann and others consider her a diminished character who, as the book progresses, loses the sympathy of its creator to the point of inviting his contempt: 'Offene Kritik und sogar Verachtung bringt der Erzähler seiner Figur dann aber entgegen, als sie selbst beim Tod des Bruders schnelle Tröstung in ihren Kindertränen sucht und dabei alles andere als Haltung und Würde an den Tag legt, die sie doch zeitlebens für sich beanspruchte.' while Hans Wysling writes about her static role: 'Die einzige, die den Prozeß der ständig zunehmenden Reflexivität nicht mitmach, ist Tony.' It must be admitted, however, that when her family is not directly involved Tony is far from self-deceptive. She sums people up very quickly and astutely as we see in her judgement of her husbands.

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79 GW I, p. 481.  
80 Claus Tillmann, Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann, p. 79  
Although she does not object to the type of match being envisaged: ‘Sie hatte den Beruf, auf ihre Art den Glanz der Familie und der Firma ‘Johann Buddenbrook’ zu fördern, indem sie eine reiche und vornehme Heirat einging[...]Thomas arbeitete dafür im Kontor[...]’ Grünlich is immediately repulsive to her. It is an instinctive, a spontaneous and definite response that is fundamental to her. This trait is already apparent when, as a child, she objects to Hermann Hagenström’s attentions, and it is not for puritanical reasons, as her flirtatiousness as a teenager indicates. Tillmann argues rightly that it is the child and young woman whom the reader remembers and engages with. But then he goes too far when he writes: ‘Tonys ‘Degradierung’ zur Nebenfigur beruht gerade auf dieser radikalen Bloßlegung ihrer Persönlichkeit – ohne Achtung vor dem “Geheimnis des Menschen“ (wie Thomas Mann einmal formulierte.)’ Since the source of that quotation is not given, I am uncertain as to its force. Thomas Mann was concerned to write about the decline of a family and for that he must have always looked foremost towards the male members, since he is describing a patriarchal society where women could only act within boundaries and constrains set by men, even though, to go back to Nina Auerbach, the female community within the Buddenbrook household (as mentioned on p. 32) is ‘[...]endowed with no majestic titles, but must create their own, somewhat quirky and grotesque authority[...]’ In this light, Tony’s drollness that verges at times on eccentricity, the spinster cousins and their cattiness, Gerda’s withdrawal, Klara’s headaches and Klothilde’s slow and steady decline beginning in childhood can perhaps be seen a little more sympathetically. Had Thomas Mann made Tony the centre of interest, the reproach of being offhand with his female characters could never have been made. Yet it is noteworthy how often she moves centre

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82 GW I, p. 107.
83 Claus Tillmann, Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann, p. 86
84 Nina Auerbach, Communities of Women: An Idea in Fiction, p. 9.
stage in the course of the novel, whereas Thomas Buddenbrook, who is undoubtedly the main protagonist, is after all at some point replaced by his son. The sequence of occupancy of the leading position within the narration, then, is for Tony from Part I to Part IV; for Thomas from Part V to Part IX; and for Hanno from Part X to Part XI. It is one of my aims to demonstrate that Tony has her own distinctive personality in the course of the narrative not least because her critical faculties are very acute, although they are only imperfectly noticed as far as her family as a dynasty is concerned. We recognize this when she sums up her second husband Permaneder or her brother Thomas later in the novel. Her struggle not to lose heart may get more and more obscured within the narration, but it does not go away.

In the first chapter of this thesis I already touched upon Thomas Mann’s ability to place so-called stock types in his fictional universe who then somehow transcend that image and have moments where they change from that what is expected to extraordinariness, so that the reader is jolted to a new reality, or as E. M. Foster will have it, these are instances where flat characters become round characters. In Tony’s case, the seminal points in her definition are when she remembers Morten and when she talks openly with Hanno. Then she lets go of the constraints that her upbringing have forced upon her and that express themselves in physical traits and mannerisms used as *Leitmotifs* in the novel. As instances of the latter, there is the way she lets her tongue play on her upper lip, for instance, to express mischievous charm and the little habit of leaning her head back while trying to press her chin on her chest to express dignity. This she shares with Hans Castorp (after all they come from the same social class and milieu – with relatives who are high-ranking members of the Hanseatic chambers of commerce in their black robes and high chinrests). Like Hans, Tony is impressed by the

grandfather figure in her life. It sets the tone for her later life and the same is true of him. Inge Diersen makes the interesting point that in his earlier work up to and including Der Tod in Venedig, Thomas Mann appeared very much as a 'Haltungsmoralist.' And this is reflected in his characters. In contrast to Tony's self-conscious but often futile attempts at dignity, Thomas reaches the point of having to put on a mask when appearing in public, as his son Hanno observes. In extremis Tony can let go of Haltung and often Thomas has to remind her of her duty to maintain it: ‘So, liebe Tony! Nun etwas mehr Haltung und Würde, wenn ich dich bitten darf! Das pflegt dir doch sonst nicht abzugehen?’ With that in mind, I respond differently from Tillmann to the death scene of Thomas where we witness Tony’s last great outburst. She claims for herself the emotional freedom Thomas Buddenbrook denied himself. For once it is cast to the winds.

One factor that makes Tony memorable is the sheer drama of what befalls her. While Thomas’s battles to preserve the family image take place within him, Tony’s, apart from a few precious moments of inwardness, are displayed entirely on the outside. Her constant emotional outbursts lighten the philosophical load that starts to turn the novel into something more intellectually weighty than a mere ‘family saga’, roughly from the point of uncle Gotthold’s death onwards. From the moment that the reader is allowed to share Thomas’s vision of his destiny a line is drawn between ‘reflectiveness and active living: those who come to analyse and question their experience seem incapable of

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88 GW I, p. 411.
89 See quote on page 40, footnote 83.
living their lives with any commitment and zest'. Whereas Thomas is silent, she speaks, when he hides behind a mask she removes it. Examples of this can be seen at various moments in the novel, at the sale of the house in the Mengenstraße, for instance, or when she suggests to Thomas that he buys the Poppenrade harvest.

Tony is in large measure Gefühlsmensch, a person who acts almost always on impulse; rarely are her thoughts worked out in advance. Even her speech becomes at times fragmented when carried by too much emotion and she already points forward to that other character who is first and foremost a human being, putting his feelings above ideas, Mynheer Peeperkorn:

"Mach Ende oh Herr!", sagte sie, und alles hörte ihr regungslos zu - "mach Ende mit aller seiner Not; stärk seine Füße und Hände und laß bis in den Tod...." Aber sie betete so sehr aus Herzensgrund, daß sie sich immer nur mit dem Worte beschäftigte, welches sie grade aussprach, und nicht erwog, daß sie die Strophe gar nicht zu Ende wisse und nach dem dritten Verse jämmerlich steckenbleiben müsse. Das tat sie, brach mit erhobener Stimme ab und ersetzte den Schluß durch die erhöhte Würde ihrer Haltung.\footnote{GW I, p. 685.}

This scene has some resemblance to Peeperkorn's waterfall speech. Like the Dutch planter's monologue, Tony's prayer is pointless, ridiculous, yet moving. Of course, we are not asked to view Tony uncritically. As always, she is made to look a trifle silly even though the addition 'sie betete so sehr aus Herzensgrund' explains her slip and leaves us with a feeling of compassion towards her. It is this synthesis of comedy and poignancy in Tony that makes her character so interesting. Christian, Klothilde, Sesemi are funny characters and we laugh at them - Hanno and Thomas are serious, complex figures, invoking thoughtfulness, even sadness - but Tony with her impulsive little speeches and those contrasting heart-rending memories is both entertaining and thought-provoking. More than that, her comical self-descriptions that fall wide

\footnote{Martin Swales, Buddenbrooks: Family life as the mirror of social change, (Boston, Twayne, 1991), p. 45.}
of the truth about herself are both amusing and touching. As Thomas so aptly says to his mother: "Sie ist unbezahlbar, Mutter! Wenn sie heucheln will, ist sie unvergleichlich! Ich schwärme für sie, weil sie einfach nicht imstande ist, sich zu verstellen, nicht über tausend Meilen weg..."92 In that light her comments on herself: "Ich bin eine häßliche Frau[...]")93 and "[...]ich bin eine Frau von Takt, die andere nicht mit Klagen belästigt und ihr Herz nicht an jedem Wochentage auf der Zunge trägt, und habe immer zur Verschlossenheit geneigt"")94; about her daughter: "Nun, das Schlimme ist, daß Erika ein wenig zur Melancholie neigt, Tom, sie muß es von mir haben."95 cannot deceive anyone. They fall into the category of her reproach to Gerda: "Ich weiß ja, du kannst mich nicht leiden, du hast mich immer gehasst [...]")96 – all statements which are exaggerated and perceived as such by all including herself in her more lucid moments. They do nevertheless embody that subtextual humour, which is part of Thomas Mann's oeuvre, a humour that is somewhat English in nature and with which the narrator habitually looks at himself.97 We smile with a similar indulgence when Hans Castorp in all seriousness asserts that he would have been perfectly at home as a clergyman or when Lotte with happy, naïve self-confidence leads the conversations with her various visitors back from the great man Goethe to herself. Rosalie's grand statements about nature and her relationship with nature also seem to be made as an aside to the readership – a certain overstatement that gives us the ironic distance. As a humorous character Tony is unforgettable.

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92 GW I, p. 310.
93 GW I, p. 387.
94 GW I, p. 452.
95 GW I, p. 452.
96 GW I, p. 293.
97 In einem Interview mit einem englischen Journalisten gab Thomas Mann 1928 noch einmal seine Sympathie für den englischen Humor Ausdruck, den er an der englischen Literatur, vor allen bei Dickens und Thackeray, schätzen gelernt hatte: "As a youth I received many lasting impressions from English literature, especially from Dickens and Thackeray. I consider England to be the classical country of humour, indeed, I associate and practically identify the word "humour" which unfortunately the German race lacks. (Thomas Mann on Life and Literature, Sunday Referee, London 25.11.1928)") Steven Cerf, 'Thomas Mann und die englische Literatur', in Thomas-Mann-Handbuch, p. 235.
Tony is conceived as a character in relation to other characters – hence, in this chapter I want to explore her in the various forms of her relatedness. The first relatedness is less to a person than to an institution (the family). Like Fontane’s Effi Briest, Tony Buddenbrook is intensely located at the centre of familial expectations in respect of the roles to be played by the dutiful daughter. Like Effi she remains a child to the end but in comparison is indestructible. At the time of writing Buddenbrooks, Thomas Mann had just read Fontane’s Effi Briest (1896) and we find traces of Effi in Tony, or at least in her fate. I agree wholeheartedly with Ralf Harslem who insists that Tony is no ‘Tochter der Luft’. She is too solid, too earthy for that. However, Tony’s life story is not dissimilar to that of Effi; she is as a very young girl persuaded to agree to a socially acceptable match with a much older man. When all goes wrong she tearfully tells her father: ‘Vier Jahre...ha! Manchmal hat er abends bei mir gesessen und die Zeitung gelesen in diesen vier Jahren...!’ This is strongly reminiscent of a similar scene in Effi’s married life: ‘Es war fast zur Regel geworden, daß er sich, wenn Friedrich die Lampe brachte, aus seiner Frau Zimmer in sein eignes zurückzog. “Ich habe da noch eine verzwickte Geschichte zu erledigen.” Und dann ging er [...]. Um neun erschien dann Innstetten wieder zum Tee, meist die Zeitung in der Hand, sprach vom Fürsten, der wieder viel Ärger habe [...]’ Fontane loved his Effi but made her rather naive or at least very unsophisticated, initially at any rate. As her story unfolds her experience drags her into territory of considerable emotional complexity. Tony on the other hand is credited with intelligence: ‘Sie war ein ziemlich keckes Geschöpf, das mit seiner Ausgelassenheit

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99 T. J. Reed, Thomas Mann: The uses of Tradition, p. 73.
101 Harslem also suggests that Tony’s materialism recalls Jenny Treibel. However, that ignores Tony’s inherent honesty and inability to deceive anyone, as her brother Thomas more than once proclaims.
102 GW I, p. 219.
seinen Eltern, im besonderen dem Konsul, manche Sorge bereitete, und
obgleich sie ein intelligentes Köpfchen besaß, das flink in der Schule
erlerte, was man beehrte.'\textsuperscript{104} and she is elsewhere described as
'[...]eine verteuelt schlaue Person, diese kleine Tony!''\textsuperscript{105} But her
psychological profile is simpler than Effi's. Thomas points this out when
he compares her with the much more complex Gerda, he says: 'Du bist
einfacher von Gemüt, bist auch natürlicher...''\textsuperscript{106} T. J. Reed goes as far as
to claim that 'the whole Grünlich episode can be read as a comic
reversal of \textit{Effi Briest}.'\textsuperscript{107} Like Effi, Tony is a willing learner. Like Effi,
her marriage according to the family rulebook lets her down. Yet
neither of them can derive from the disturbance of their lives a fully
articulated critical perspective on that family and its conventions. Like
Effi, Tony too is the loyal subject of her family and the society she lives
in, which means that she can be and lets herself be sacrificed, if
necessary. Effi is sacrificed to satisfy an 'obsolet gewordene
Gesellschaftsmoral am Beispiel des überkommenen Ehrbegriffs...''\textsuperscript{108}
There is one epiphanic moment where Effi openly rejects this code of
honour. However, it passes and at the end she is resigned to the
confusion that has overtaken her. Similarly after her renegade phase in
Travemünde, Tony accepts that to keep up the family image of success
she has to marry, even at the price of her private loss of dignity and
honour. Bearing this in mind, it is particularly moving that she
maintains throughout the novel a certain energy and vitality.

\textsuperscript{104} GW I, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{105} GW I, p. 469.
\textsuperscript{106} GW I, p. 303.
\textsuperscript{107} T. J. Reed, \textit{Thomas Mann: The uses of Tradition}, p. 73.
\textsuperscript{108} Roland Köhne 'Der Roman Effi Briest in Thomas Manns Anzeige' in \textit{TM Jb} 13, 2000, p. 119.
Gerda, ‘die Mutter zukünftiger Buddenbrooks’

[...] uns muß es wahrscheinlich sein, daß von der Frau als Künstlerin das Merkwürdigste und Interessanteste zu erwarten ist.\textsuperscript{109}

Gerda is acceptable within Buddenbrooks terms – she comes from a good family, she brings money into the family, she is sophisticated and elegant. Thomas marries her for all these reasons, and because he is perceptive enough to sense in her dimensions that were hitherto unknown to the family ethos (and there are such dimensions within himself). Her foreignness to the Buddenbrook realm is expressed in her musicality. How does the narrator make us see Gerda?

The information the reader is given about this woman is meagre enough. There is a very thorough physical description (Thomas Mann relishes these) but very little else. Considering the overwhelming influence Gerda has on the fate of the whole Buddenbrook clan it is significant that we should learn so little about her. We are only guided by the impression she makes on others, on Thomas and Tony of course, but also on the inhabitants of Lübeck. Yet although she has fewer entrances and lines to speak than, say, Konsulin Elisabeth Buddenbrook, or even Klothilde and Ida Jungmann, she decides the fortune of the Buddenbrooks. She is, however reluctantly, ‘die Mutter zukünftiger Buddenbrooks’\textsuperscript{110} and in that capacity, as the mother of Hanno, she moves the family line into the direction of the arts, in particular music. Thomas Mann saw this as potentially decadent and he spells this out to his friend Otto Grauthof while he was writing

\textit{Buddenbrooks:}

\begin{flushright}
Der älteste Sohn (Heinrich) ist schon Dichter, aber auch 'Schriftsteller', mit starker intellectuelle (sic...) Begabung, bewandert in Kritik, Philosophie, Politik. Es folgt der zweite Sohn (ich), der nur Künstler ist, nur Dichter, nur Stimmungsmensch, intellectuell schwach, ein sozialer Nichtsnutz. Was Wunder, wenn
\end{flushright}

\textsuperscript{109} Thomas Mann, \textit{Das Ewig-Weibliche}, (1903) GW XIII, p. 387.
\textsuperscript{110} GW I, p. 304.
This is Gerda's *trousseau* – she passes it on to her son Hanno and that is why the Gerda character is of immense importance to the story. The whole weight of the novel is shifted, thanks to Gerda, from a socio-critical study of pre-Wilhelmine life in a Hanseatic city to a cognitive study of philosophical breadth reflecting on the effects of art on the bourgeois mind, ending with Hanno, Gerda's son and a true adherent of *l'art pour l'art* existence.

We meet Gerda briefly as a teenager in Therese Weichbrodt's little school. Then she disappears for many years from the story before she returns to the Buddenbrook house as wife of Thomas. Even in those early school years she stood ‘apart’, as a paradigm of ‘otherness.’ With her violin playing and her striking looks she is considered exotic and ‘albern’ (a strong word of contempt) by her contemporaries (not by Tony, who, like her brother, seems to sense something special in Gerda and with characteristic loyalty steadfastly admires and defends her all her life).

Thus Gerda Arnoldsen incites a mixture of criticism and admiration always. In comparison with the wholesome and likeable Tony, the stereotype of *femme fatale* fits Gerda. We may remember her predecessor Gerda v. Rinnlingen: ‘Verräterisch, die blaulichen Schatten in den Winkeln der engbeinander liegenden Augen, der wissende Blick, die roten Haare – nicht einmal den Vornamen, Gerda hatte sie geändert.’\(^{112}\) I already discussed earlier the frequent appearance of *femme fatale* stereotypes in Thomas Mann's early work. Like that earlier Gerda, she creates havoc amongst the men in town. ‘...Tipptopp’, sagten die Suitiers und schnalzten mit der Zunge, denn das war der

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\(^{112}\) Doris Runge, *Welch ein Weib*, p. 45.
neueste hamburgische Ausdruck für etwas auserlesen Feines, handelte es sich nun um eine Rotweinmarke, um eine Zigarre, um ein Diner oder um geschäftliche ‘Bonität.’

But the establishment finds it hard to accept her: ‘Sie hat ein bißchen was Gewisses [...]’

In the local aesthete, Makler Gosch, she finds an admirer whose worship borders on obsession: 'Welch ein Weib, meine Herren! Here und Aphrodite, Brünnhilde und Melusine in einer Person[...].’ On the one hand a respectable businessman, he cultivates the arts on the other, with a passion much in the vein of Herr Friedemann. But he is positive and not doomed as the former and Gerda’s effect on him is benevolent. In this sense, while she may appear like a *femme fatale*, Gerda does not really behave like one; I do not see her seeking the destruction of those around her. The decay is already there. She may act as a catalyst to that ‘Verfall einer Familie’ but it is not her intention. Although she has an air of superiority, a free and uncompromising self-consciousness that is truly a self-awareness, she is willing to bend her head to her mother-in-law to let herself be kissed and she accepts Tony’s effervescent outbursts of affection with good grace like a divinity who stumbles somewhat to her own surprise onto the human planet to live amongst its inhabitants.

Gerda gives Thomas Buddenbrook only one child, and that very reluctantly, the son who helps to escalate Thomas’s depression into black despair. With him she is willing to share the very thing from which Thomas is excluded – music – here standing for her soul. Only in her music, her violin playing, will she invest her full emotional energy and this reminds us of Hanno Buddenbrook, ‘bei dem Eifersucht auf die Mutter und musikalische Neugier gleichzeitig sich bemerkbar machten, so daß fortan erotisches und musikalisches Interesse eine unauflösliche

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113 GW I, p. 294.
114 Ibid.
115 GW I, p. 295.
Einheit bildeten.'116 'Nun Hanno, noch ein bisschen Musik naschen?’ fragte Gerda in einer Pause und ließ ihre nahe beieinanderliegenden, umschatteten Augen, in denen das Spiel einen feuchten Glanz entzündet hatte, zu ihm hinübergleiten[...].117 He makes music his own element in search of that love, an incestuous love from that point of view; the fact that his own compositions and the playing of them have sexual overtones has often been pointed out. Hanno has learned from his mother to use music as an outlet for his libido. Thomas loses his wife to her music in every way, he loses her physically (Leutnant v. Trota) and spiritually (Wagner), he cannot even remonstrate with Gerda because ‘man stellte Gerda nicht zur Rede, man sprach sich nicht mit ihr aus. Worüber? Das Bündnis mit ihr war auf Verständnis, Rücksicht und Schweigen gegründet.’118 It is therefore small wonder that her son Hanno, who together with his musicality, inherits the gift of keen observation from his mother, makes sure that this is not going to happen to him. It is the one link between Hanno and his father, the anxiety and fear of being betrayed by this beautiful and remote woman.

The narrator does not tell us whether Gerda ever regretted her choice of husband but she certainly shows signs of exasperation. Only once does she burst out in reply to Thomas’s reproach of her taste in music: ‘Thomas, ein für allemal, von der Musik als Kunst wirst du niemals etwas verstehen.....Was freut dich in der Musik? Der Geist eines gewissen faden Optimismus[...]’119 and the gulf between the them widens or, as Claus Tillmann puts it: ‘Statt echter Partnerschaft wird eine routiniert-lieblose, gegenseitige Rücksichtnahme, ein bequemes ‘Sich in Ruhe Lassen’ praktiziert. Hinter schmuckenden, repräsentiven Fassaden verbirgt sich nur allzu oft die Einsamkeit zu zweit.’120 Gerda

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117 GW I p. 497
118 GW I, p. 648.
119 GW I, p. 509.
120 Claus Tillmann, Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann, p. 49.
starts to appreciate the renegade Christian more and more, in spite of
her husband's obvious dislike of him. With her power of observation
she recognizes the conflict of artistic leanings and commercial interests
in the Buddenbrook brothers, a conflict from which she is spared. In the
scene of the passionate outburst between the brothers at their mother's
deathbed she actually looks at them with something like contempt in
her face and this has led critics to see her more than ever as a vengeful
and fateful woman.121 I do not see Gerda like this. It would be too simple.
There is too much of the artist as perceived by Thomas Mann in her; she
is 'gefährdet'122, a 'Sorgenkind des Lebens'123. She is a paradigm of the
artist's 'splendid isolation' that Thomas Mann so often portrays until it
culminates in Gerdas greatest successor, Adrian Leverkühn. Already
we can anticipate Leverkühn, Gerda's male counterpart and
culmination of the species, to which she was an early contribution,
when she questions the role of morality in art. ‘[…] Sie sprechen von
Moral ...aber was verstehen Sie unter Moral in der Kunst? Wenn ich
nicht irre, ist der Gegensatz zu allem Hedonismus? Nun gut, den haben
Sie hier.’124 The ecstasy and orgiastic experience of Wagner's music is
the catalyst for this remark and it is reiterated by Adrian Leverkühn
although in a different context: ‘Alles, wofür ich eine Lanze brechen
möchte, ist eine gewisse Großzügigkeit in Dingen künstlerischer
Moralität. […]Was bleibt von dem ganzen Kling-Klang denn übrig, wenn
man den rigorosesten geistig-moralischen Maßstab anlegt?’125 The same
speculation that gives such an icy, impersonal aura to Adrian is also the
sphere in which Gerda preserves herself and remains almost untouched

121 Doris Runge, Claus Tillman
122 GW III, p. 429
123 ‘Sie sind, wenn ich mich so ausdrücken darf, ein Sorgenkind des Lebens, - man muss sich um Sie
kümmern.’ Ibid.
124 GW I, p. 499.
125 GW VI, p. 550.
by age: ‘Sie schien gleichsam konserviert in der nervösen Kälte, in der
sie lebte und die sie ausströmte.’ We see, then, that Gerda is the
eternal outsider; her state of mind can only be guessed at. She often
excuses herself from her representative duties and her reply to
Thomas’s demands is an almost complete withdrawal into her inner self.
On other occasions she is described as observing Thomas with a
detached objectivity and curiosity, for instance when he receives the
news of Herr von Maiboom’s suicide: ‘[…])noch bemerkte er, daß Gerda,
ohne den Kopf ihm zuzuwenden, ihre nahe beieinanderliegenden
braunen Augen, in deren Winkeln bläuliche Schatten lagen, fest und
spähend auf ihn gerichtet hielt.’ or during the fight between Thomas
and Christian at their mother’s deathbed ‘Gerda hatte das Haupt leicht
in die Hand gestützt und beobachtete die beiden mit verschleierten
Augen und einem nicht bestimmmbaren Gesichtsausdruck.’ Gerda’s
coolness is not just a psychological character trait. Rather, the narrative
asks us to see her as the artist, who looks closely and sceptically at the
people around her.

Thomas Mann does not explain the motives behind the marriage
between Thomas and Gerda. We must assume that she sensed back in
Amsterdam that Thomas would allow her as his wife the right to remain
secluded, that he would be willing to protect her inwardness. And
because he also represents a stratum of society that she is accustomed to
and feels comfortable with, she marries him without ado – she – who, it
is said, spurned all suitors until this day. There is a mutual respect
between them – an understanding of each other that is expressed in part
six, chapter six. Gerda reluctantly accompanies Tony and Permaneder
on their courtship manoeuvre at Thomas’s request. She initially asked

126 GW I, p. 644.
127 GW I, p. 618.
128 GW I, p. 581.
129 ‘diese oder keine’, das war sein Wort gewesen, und es musste sich mit Gerda wohl ähnlich verhalten
haben, denn sie hatte in Amsterdam bis zu ihrem siebenundzwanzigsten Jahre Körbe ausgeteilt und
diesen Bewerber alsbald erhört.’ GW I, p. 643.
him to be exempted from this adventure: ‘Sie würde ihn nicht geheiratet haben, wenn sie nicht bei solchen Dingen im Wesentlichen seiner Zustimmung sicher gewesen wäre.’

The reader knows that Thomas abandoned the beautiful little florist for reasons of class and status. Gerda is everything little Anna is not. She has money, breeding, is exquisitely connected and in every way an ideal match to increase the Buddenbrooks prestige and wealth. Conversely, Anna is everything Gerda is not – she is loving and homely and able to bear several children. As Doris Runge points out, the duality ‘Kunst – Natur’ is very present in the contrast between these two women. But Thomas, unlike Tony, is allowed to make his own choice. He will not repeat the mistake of his uncle Gotthold and marry a shop girl. Yet he is also not willing to do the conventional thing and marry: ‘...jegendeinen Backfisch aus dem Kreise Möllendorpf-Langhals-Kistenmaker-Hagenström’ (that, incidentally, would have been the most sensible thing to do if he really wanted to survive as a true descendent from his practical, down to earth forbears). As Martin Swales points out, ‘Thomas is appalled by the mindlessness and brutality of the practical world and by the demands that it makes upon him. Gerda’s artistic and above all musical gifts, her exotic aloofness from all that the Buddenbrook existence entails corresponds to some of the promptings of Thomas’s renegade inner self.’ If compatibility and mutual understanding are anything to go by, Thomas loves Gerda, or at least he admires her profoundly. He reflects on this in a moment of intimacy with his sister Tony: ‘Daß übrigens auch Gerda Temperament besitzt, das beweist wahrhaftig ihr Geigenspiel; aber sie kann manchmal ein bißchen kalt sein...Kurz, es ist nicht der gewöhnliche

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130 GW I, p. 344.
132 GW I, p. 290.
133 Martin Swales, Buddenbrooks: Family life as the mirror of social change, p. 27.
Maßstab an sie zu legen. Sie ist eine Künstlernatur, ein eigenartiges, rätselhaftes, entzückendes Geschöpf. There is a quality in her that he can identify with. She has married him because she felt reassured that he was not just a 'Bürger' but shared her inwardness or least respected it:

Von Anbeginn vielmehr hatte man nichts als Hoflichkeit in ihrem Umgang konstatiert, eine zwischen Gatten ganz außerordentliche, korrekte und respektvolle Hoflichkeit, die aber unverständlicherweise nicht aus innerer Fernheit und Fremdheit, sondern aus einer sehr eigenartigen, stummen und tiefen gegenseitigen Vertrautheit und Kenntnis, einer beständigen gegenseitigen Rücksicht und Nachsicht hervorzugehen schien.

A number of conversations that are reported serve to confirm that this curious mixture of consideration and detachment between the partners and their dialogue has a certain ironic wit that must be based on a deep sense of mutual understanding, for instance:


[or]

"'Mein lieber Freund[...]du weiß: wie Gott mich gemacht hat, bin ich auf Ruhe und Alltag angewiesen[...]In diesem Falle ist man für Anregung und Abwechslung[...]." "Ja, lieber Gott, du hast natürlich recht, Gerda. Daß man sich über derartigen Sachen amüsiert, ist meistens bloß Einbildung..."[137]

As the years go by Thomas loses this self-confidence, he feels more and more eager to conform and tries to pull his family in that direction too. Thus Gerda is forced to participate in early morning walks to support Tony's new marriage scheme, a dismal activity as far as she is concerned. She is forced to put up with Weinschenk's company at mealtimes, somebody completely alien. She is even expected, if not nagged, to produce a child, preferably a son and heir. Logically, she starts to take an interest in Christian, who is not even trying to fit in.

134 GW I, p. 304.
135 GW I, p. 643.
136 GW I, p. 480.
137 GW I, p. 344.
Degenerate he may be, but Gerda has much in common with him. Finally, Thomas turns against her music, criticizing the element he was initially willing to allow her, make secure for her, indeed, music was part of her great appeal. Even though this development is very understated and Gerda’s psychology remains more or less unexplored, a story of alienation unfolds. A marriage that was undertaken with the best of intentions by both partners and under workable circumstances becomes troubled and finally the partners have no more to say to one another. Gerda turns to another man, probably not for physical satisfaction, but to share with him the very core of her being: music. Music expresses all that is Gerda and that includes her sexuality. When v. Trota and Gerda play music together they communicate their passion and overwhelming desire, not necessarily for each other but as a great force that must have an outlet, however unconventional:

It is precisely that silence that tortures Thomas because he knows what has taken place – the two performers have laid bare their most intimate relationship in front of him. For the common eye there is nothing to see, ordinary people who gossip about Gerda would not have had their satisfaction. There is no affair, no adultery, not in an obvious sense anyway. But Thomas is sensitive enough to sense what is happening. As Manfred Dierks puts it, he cannot analyse this form of betrayal, he cannot put it into language, even into defined thought, he cannot typify it.\textsuperscript{139} His intuitive knowledge that escapes definition is of betrayal.

\textsuperscript{138} GW I, p. 646.
\textsuperscript{139} "Für Thomas Mann funktioniert der herkömmliche Typus "Betrug" und "Ehebruch" nicht mehr, um die Wirklichkeit zu erklären – um sie darin unterzubringen. Thomas Buddenbrook ahnt, daß zwischen seiner Frau und diesem anderen Mann eine Intimität stattfindet, die tiefer geht als jeder Ehebruch im..."
Processes of image-making and stereotypification are frequently at work in the interplay between Thomas Mann's characters, and this is the case here too. Thomas Buddenbrook’s preconceived ideas about being married to Gerda obscure the reality of her presence: he sees someone who will enhance his fortune, represent the image he wishes to convey and bear him sons to procure his immortality (and that of his firm). But Gerda is repelled by childbirth: ‘Gerda behandelte diese Frage mit einem souveränen Gleichmut, der einer degoutierten Ablehnung äußerst nahe kam.’ The difficult and dangerous birth of her only child, Hanno, seems to reflect this. The conflict of interest in fulfilling a woman's biological role versus the assertion of creative autonomy is yet another recurring topic in Thomas Mann's work. (The two functions are often opposed to each other, as I shall illustrate in the section about Lotte Kestner.) Looking at just three well known studies by feminist scholars I find evidence that even women novelists have addressed similar issues: blocking out self-expression leads to barrenness, madness and finally suicide. Elaine Showalter notes in her key study *The Female Malady* that ‘Biographies and letters of gifted women who suffered mental breakdowns have suggested that madness is the price women artists have had to pay for the exercise of their creativity in a male-dominated culture’. And Gilbert and Gubar write in their celebrated work *The Madwoman in the Attic* in a passage that I have already quote of the ‘suicidal trantella of female creativity[...].’ Further, there is the worship of the androgynous image; Virginia Woolf for one adopted this type for her literary aims, and Thomas Mann frequently prefers to dwell on this physiognomy – in particular in *Der*...
Zauberberg. In appearance Gerda Buddenbrook is a very feminine woman. She does not share the boyish features that are present in Madame Chauchat or Gerda v. Rinnlingen. Tall and well built, with a full bosom and long, luxuriant hair she is not an androgyne. ‘Welch ein Weib’\textsuperscript{143} exclaim the businessmen of Lübeck and Tony too refers to her sister-in-law as Weib, suggesting Wagnerian dimensions. This serves even more as a contrast to Gerda’s lack of warmth and empathy, so-called feminine qualities; despite her splendid physique she is unsuitable to be a giver of life.

To sum up, Gerda accelerates the decline of the Buddenbrook dynasty; in part, Thomas Mann reverts to his earlier stereotype, the \textit{femme fatale}; he gives Gerda many of the attributes of this literary creation. But we also discover an identity that belongs to that other recurring prototype in Thomas Mann’s work, the artist \textit{par excellence}. Gerda, with her cold beauty and her foreign mien, in her complete independence of her surroundings and with the claim that she is only able to spread a little warmth when making music,\textsuperscript{144} asserts her special role like those artists of subsequent works: Tonio Kröger, Goethe and Adrian Leverkühn. Like them, she shuts herself away from the world to live in a higher reality, not to waste her energies on living but to preserve them in order to create. In letting Gerda share the fate ‘vom kalten Künstler’\textsuperscript{145} he pays homage to his musical and revered mother, and of course himself. In making the artist a woman here and such a woman, Thomas Mann repudiates the claim made by Böhme, Härle, and Runge, that Gerda is a mysogynistic portrait. This is the type of response we get from the people of Lübeck, who see Gerda as cold and

\textsuperscript{143} GW I, p. 295.
\textsuperscript{144} ‘diese Frau, deren Wesen so kühl, so eingezogen, verschlossen, reserviert und ablehnend war, und die nur an ihre Musik ein wenig Lebenswärme zu verausgeben schien, erregte unbestimmte Verdächtige.’ GW I, p. 644.
imperious. But the narrative insists on her allegiance to her art as in part the cause of her aloofness.\textsuperscript{146}

\textsuperscript{146} For the character of Gerda Buddenbrook Thomas Mann seems to have reversed the dictum of his admired Schopenhauer: ‘Das Weib trägt die Schuld des Lebens nicht durch Thun, sondern durch Leiden ab. Durch die Wehen der Geburt, die Sorgfalt für das Kind, die Unterwürfigkeit unter den Mann, dem es eine geduldige und aufheiternde Gefährtin seyn soll’ Arthur Schopenhauer, \textit{Parerga und Paralipomena}, Hübscher, Wiesbaden 1946-1950, Vol. II, p. 650. Thomas Buddenbrook himself reacts with contempt to such an attitude when Tony tells him of her daughter’s husband Weinschenk: ‘Er verlangt von Erika, daß sie beständig heiter ist, beständig spricht und scherzt, denn wenn er abgearbeitet und verstimmt nach Hause kommt, sagt er, dann will er, daß seine Frau ihn in leichter und fröhlicher Weise unterhält, ihn amüsirt und aufheiteret; dazu, sagt er, sei die Frau auf der Welt….’ ‘Dummkopf!’ murmelte der Senator.’ GW I, p. 452.
Tony and Gerda

The contrast between Tony Buddenbrook and Gerda Arnoldsen could not be more striking. It is Thomas Buddenbrook who sums it up in one of the rare intimate conversations with his sister: ‘Freilich ist sie sehr anders als du, Tony. Du bist einfacher von Gemüt, du bist auch natürlicher...Meine Frau Schwester ist ganz einfach temperamentvoller’, fuhr er fort, indem er plötzlich zu einem leichteren Tone überging.'147 This change of tone is significant; it sets the dynamics for the interrelationship between these two most important female characters in the novel. The thoughtful, searching register with which Thomas describes his feelings for his wife (see p. 44) switches to a more light-hearted, relaxed one – expressing quintessentially the personalities of the two women and their relationship with Thomas.

Tony and Gerda are a Gegensatzpaar148 – where Tony stands for life and Gerda for art (generally art and death go hand in hand in Thomas Mann’s oeuvre). With that in mind, Ken Moulden tells us that: ‘Als Verkörperung von Vitalität, Unkompliziertheit, Naivität und Gesundheit hat Tony keinen Zugang zu derjenigen Kunstform, die im Roman mit den gegensätzlichen Eigenschaften im Bunde steht.’149 It can be said that Tony has few qualms about her social role while Gerda remains aloof. Tony may worship the quality of Vornehmheit but Gerda embodies it, a quality Tony admires her for first and foremost. As it is, Gerda does not seem to mind Tony’s artlessness and ingenuity. There is no indication ever that she feels exasperated with her sister-in-law. She can be irritable with Thomas, with the Buddenbrook family and their quirky customs, but her old school friend seems to have a certain place

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147 GW I, p. 303.
in frosty Gerda's life if not her heart. Tony Buddenbrook is much more open and appealing than the cold and secretive Gerda. Despite her exaggerated notion of nobility, she can always relate to the people around her, providing the status quo is observed, in that she is respected as a member of the Buddenbrook family. But it is a good-natured form of class-consciousness; it is largely harmless. Hans Wysling sees in Tony Buddenbrook 'die einzige Figur neben dem alten Buddenbrook, die Wärme ausstrahlt. Sie kann lieben, und sie spricht. Die kranke Klara und die kalte Gerda, die immer nur lauernd beobachtet, können das nicht.'

Yet, for all their differences, Gerda and Tony are not at all in competition with each other. They become acquainted as very young people. Tony is immediately impressed by Gerda’s aristocratic mien and not put off at all by the rather more critical opinion of her fellow pupils (an early sign of an independent mind that she is to keep throughout the novel). She suggests to Gerda a marriage with one of her brothers (significantly Gerda notices only Christian: 'der mit der langen Nase').

It is the lack of Bürgerlichkeit that attracts Gerda to Thomas, and there is even less of that in Christian. That is the reason why she and Christian get on so well later on in life: 'Er ist kein Bürger, Thomas! Er ist noch weniger ein Bürger als du', she says to Thomas. But the bourgeois ideal, the perfect marriage, is to some extent as important to Gerda as it is to Tony. Like Tony she helps to keep the appearance of their social class intact. She too does not wish to enter a relationship with someone of inferior social status or without wealth. But unlike Tony she does not sacrifice herself. In Thomas she believes she has found the right combination, a member of the patrician class, her own class, but with artistic refinement. One cannot believe that she would

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151 GW I, p. 91.
have consented to a marriage with someone like Permaneder or Weinschenk for material considerations or reasons of pride. Her marriage is not unlike that of Gabriele Klöterjahn (in the sense that she makes that decision unaided, even opposed by her musical father) but she does not marry a philistine. Rather, she marries a well-to-do businessman who has also a fine mind. Gabriele buries any artistic notions deep inside her, represses them; Gerda certainly does not. Freedom to play her violin is part of her condition to give her hand in marriage. Why should she not be able combine both – the world of the *haute bourgeoisie* and its representative duties and the world of art?

Then there is the gossip. All Thomas Mann’s main women characters are gossiped about. Tony and Gerda are no exception. In Gerda’s case she is talked about because she is so unusual and foreign, in Tony’s case she almost invites talk with her dramatic life story. Gerda seems to be unaware of the fact that she walks amongst people who watch her and criticize every step she makes, or at least she is not concerned. She gives not the slightest sign of being daunted by it. Only at the very end, when the gossip actually causes her material hardship (she cannot get repairs done because the workers think she is unable to pay) is she irritated and nearly leaves the town. In contrast, her sister-in-law is familiar with such insulting reactions. Tony herself is painfully aware of the rumour-mill, but tries to stand up to it.

Finally there is considerable perception shown by Tony when in her usual declamatory style she insists of Gerda that: ‘Wir haben sie alle geliebt, obgleich wir ihr wohl immer widerwärtig waren...ja, das waren wir, Gerda, keine Widerrede!’ She does not hamper Gerda or try to dissuade her from leaving Lübeck. Always a realist, she has claimed before that Gerda does not return her feelings with equal strength and she is probably right. Yet it is in Tony’s arms that Gerda allows herself

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153 GW I, p. 755.
to cry and utter the only human expressions of grief and horror we have ever heard from her. In that sense Tony is Gerda’s good angel. She is the childhood friend, for whom the artist in her splendid isolation still has some human feelings – a similar relationship (although on a different level) as that of Zeitblom/Leverkühn. We are allowed one glimpse of human feelings in her usually cold demeanour when she breaks down in front of Tony at the deathbed of her husband. It is a startling scene and somehow unlike Gerda, and their roles here are strangely reversed. When Thomas is brought back to her after his collapse she hides her face on the shoulders of her much more down to earth sister-in-law, for the first time showing real and spontaneous emotion. It is true, ‘Anna wird die Blumengebinde bei seinem Tod bringen und sie, nicht Gerda, die sich nur über sein derangiertes Äußeres erregt, wird um ihn schluchzen.’154 But his appearance was always very important to Thomas, it is one of his key characteristics and Gerda is aware of a terrible irony here. It is not so much grief for the probable loss of her husband that makes her react like this but horror and shock at nature’s spitefulness:...‘Sein ganzes Leben lang hat man nicht ein Staubfäserchan an ihm sehen dürfen....Es ist ein Hohn und eine Niedertracht, daß das Letzte so kommen muß...!’155

After Hanno’s death she leaves the town, goes back to the world from which she came, to live and make music again with her old father. Those who prefer to see her labelled as the archetype of the femme fatale see this as proof of her ruthlessness.156 But Tony is much more perceptive than that. She accepts that her sister-in-law has made a huge sacrifice by staying on after her husband’s death in an environment that is basically hostile to her and to which she is indifferent. The scene at the last meeting of the remaining Buddenbrook women and Sesemi

155 GW I, p. 861.
156 ‘Mochte sie doch zurückgehen an die sumpfigen Gewässer, ihre Teufelsgeige mitnehmen und schweigen’ Doris Runge, Welch ein Weib, p. 45.
Weichbrodt is a significant defence of Gerda. Sesemi reproaches her for her wish to leave, but admits:

‘Es ist wahr, daß du vieles verloren hast...’ ‘Nein, sie hat alles verloren’ sagte Frau Permaneder. ‘Wir dürfen nicht egoistisch sein, Therese. Gerda will gehen, und sie geht da ist nichts tun. Sie ist mit Thomas gekommen, vor einundzwanzig Jahren, und wir haben sie alle geliebt, obgleich wir ihr wohl immer widerwärtig waren[...]ja, das waren wir, Gerda, keine Widerrede! Aber Thomas ist nicht mehr, und[...]niemand ist mehr. Was sind wir ihr? Uns tut es weh, aber reise mit Gott, Gerda, und Dank, daß du nicht schon früher reistest, damals, als Thomas starb[...]’\(^{157}\)

Once again Gerda’s sister-in-law takes her side and sees things from her point of view. If Gerda contributed to the decline of the house of Buddenbrook, the Buddenbrooks certainly did not help to enhance her happiness either. Tony and Gerda between them, in their different ways and unwittingly, have hastened the diminution of the Buddenbrook’s fortune and shattered the image of wealth and power connected with that name. ‘Hanno, kleiner Hanno...Tom, Vater, Großvater und die anderen alle! Wo sind sie hin? Man sieht sie nicht mehr.’\(^{158}\) The men have all disappeared, the women, minor and major characters, are the rearguard. Doris Runge sees significance in the group of women that gathers at the end of Thomas Mann’s novel, the surviving ‘Damenkränzchen’. ‘Alle acht Damen waren schwarz gekleidet’, she reminds us: ‘Man hatte sich zusammengefunden im Zeichen der Trauer und des Abschieds.’\(^{159}\) They do have the last word and their final message is a mixture of human reactions to calamity and suffering.

Gerda and Erika react typically, the first withdraws, the second resigns, Friederike and Sesemi preach defiance and hope but Tony, for once, is sorrowful. She feels the loss of the men most acutely; in her quest to please them she has finally lost her childlike belief in eternal justice and life after death.

In conclusion, it is important to stress that *Buddenbrooks*, in the

\(^{157}\) GW I, p. 755.

\(^{158}\) GW I, p. 758.

\(^{159}\) Doris Junge, p. 37
portrayal of the Gerda/Tony relationship, makes much of the possibility of women's friendship. The claim is made that such closeness can have both psychological and moral authority in a repressive social and institutional mould. One would not normally think of Thomas Mann as a witness in support of that case advanced by (for example) Nina Auerbach in her *Communities of Women*. In this study she suggests that:

Communities of women growing in time constitute a drama of widening cultural consciousness, finally taking shape as an evolving literary myth that sweeps across official cultural images of female submission, subservience and fulfilment in a bounded world. As this myth takes shape as part of our imaginative inheritance, so does the fictional reality of women's autonomy: for though the communities gain substance and stature as we proceed, their isolation has had from the first the self-sustaining power to repel or incorporate the male-defined reality that excludes them.\(^{160}\)

And perhaps the handling of the Gerda/Tony relationship could be taken to be just that. They found one another in such a 'community of women' that is to say in Sesemi Weichbrod's boarding school for girls and this bond, extended to Sesemi herself, has remained strong. It is true that the Buddenbrook brothers play a role in it; Thomas overtakes Christian who has Gerda's early sympathy (and will regain some of it towards the end of the novel) and he has all of his sister's heart. But these feelings cannot obliterate the steadfast relationship between the two sisters-in-law, even when the Buddenbrook dynasty has lost all its power. They stand united (together with some other female characters) as a bulwark against the failure of the masculine world. Indeed, that has crumbled to insignificance. Far from reproaching them, though, Tony and Gerda withdraw back into their more unemphatic community of women.

\(^{160}\) Nina Auerbach, *Communities of Women* p. 6
The Family as a Concept

Female characters in Thomas Mann’s oeuvre usually tend to be the focus of male fantasy and are therefore transformed into images to accord with the perceptions of male desire. Gerda v. Rinnlingen, Clawdia Chauchat, Lotte Kestner and Mut-em-enet are dealt with in such a way. In comparison Tony Buddenbrook is blueprinted by the expectations of her family. Like Gerda Arnoldsen and Gabriele Klöterjahn Tony is fully integrated in her social world; she happily consents to her role as a means to enlarge family wealth and improve family connections with the means of a prudent marriage. But unlike Gerda and Gabriele, she does not have the final choice of her mate. In many sense a good höhere Tochter, she does not mind the sort of matchmaking that goes on around her and involves her: ‘Ich werde natürlich einen Kaufmann heiraten’ she tells her friends in her boarding school (we can hear the voice of Effi: ‘Natürlich muß er von Adel sein und eine Stellung haben und gut aussehen.’

162) ‘Er muß recht viel Geld haben, damit wir uns vornehm einrichten können, das bin ich meiner Familie und der Firma schuldig’ fügte sie ernsthaft hinzu. ‘Ja ihr sollt sehen, das werde ich schon machen.’

163 But when faced with the reality of this ‘Kuhhandel’164 she recoils: ‘Ja, die Art dieser Partie war sicherlich die richtige, aber ausgemacht Herr Grünlich…”

161 GW I, p. 481.
163 GW I, p. 90.
164 Doris Runge, Welch ein Weib, p. 59.
165 GW I, p. 107.
Image-making, then, has here less to do with physicality than with society's wish for conformism. Two years after *Buddenbrooks* Thomas Mann concerns himself with a similar problem in *Tristan*. The story has a different point and purpose but the main female character, Gabriele Klöterjahn, has much in common with Gerda and Tony. Like Gerda she has a deep bond with her father through art; they are both musicians. But like Tony, she marries a man who is quite incompatible. In contrast though, Gerda and Gabriele are not hurried into such important decisions; in fact their respective fathers even advise against their marriages. Tony, however, is sacrificed to preserve the family reputation of wealth and success. The theme of image (family and society) versus the self is central to Tony's experience.

Of course; Tony is pretty and, by that token, she does appeal to male figures. Claus Tillmann mentions how Tony resists with comical pathos the 'Liebeswerben eines Häßlichen', particularly successful in the case of Hermann Hagenström: '[...]die Zitronensemmel, die der plume Junge als Gegengabe für den Kuß anbietet, erinnern dabei unwillkürlich an die gelben(!) 'Favoris' des ebenso abstoßenden Grünlich.' Deep down, Tony is a courageous person, someone who stands up for herself when she feels slighted. But because of her single-mindedness she is ensnared in her beliefs. Her gods are the two deities of family and firm. To serve them she must make sacrifices; after all, Thomas does the same when he deserts the little florist even though he loves her. Having made these sacrifices, though, Tony is not afraid to reconsider them when she realizes they were a mistake. Thus she leaves Permaneder because he has disappointed her expectations, has 'let her down' so to speak by not offering her the status in society she feels is her due. Moreover, she cannot adjust to life in Munich. This should not be dismissed simply as snobbery. Her upbringing does not allow her to seek a new beginning if this impinges on her social rank.

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166 Claus Tillmann, *Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann*, p. 61.
Trapped in the conceptualisation of the Buddenbrook dynasty, she is ready to make the same mistakes all over again. In her moving confession to her old nurse Ida on the eve of her engagement to Permaneder, she tells her: ‘[...]

mach ich nur in aller Ruhe und Selbstverständlichkeit meine erste Ehe wieder gut, denn das ist meine Pflicht unserem Namen gegenüber.’¹⁶⁷

These are more or less the same reasons for her marriage as before, when she finally agreed to take on Grünlich. The only difference is that she is now 10 years older, somewhat hardened by her experiences and she makes light of the physical aspects of living with Permaneder. Grünlich was forced onto her; she found him revolting: ‘er war mir widerlich’¹⁶⁸ and she did not hide the fact. With Permaneder she has to find some kind of rationalisation for the union: ‘In München, wo er unter seinesgleichen war...da liebte ich ihn geradezu....Aber hier...schäme ich mich so sehr, daß ich am liebsten aus der Stube laufen möchte, und kann mir nicht denken, daß ich ihn heiraten könnte[...].’¹⁶⁹

This is a crucial decision for Tony. Her firm belief in her family and what it stands for demands that she sacrifices her autonomy.¹⁷⁰ And since her marriage to Grünlich she is certainly ‘keine Gans mehr’;¹⁷¹ loss of innocence, at any rate, cannot be repeated and her resolve is uncompromising. Together with her old nurse Ida, who represents Buddenbrook values as fiercely as any member of the family, she decides to go with Permaneder. It is significant that Tony is the one who realistically assesses the people around her in this intimate bedtime conversation with Ida Jungmann that she knows that she is once again an object to be bartered for the greater good of the Buddenbrook family.

¹⁶⁷ GW I, p. 341.
¹⁶⁸ GW I, p. 219.
¹⁶⁹ GW I, p. 340.
¹⁷⁰ ’Tony vermag bis zuletzt nicht zu erkennen, daß gerade das, was sie am meisten liebte – die Familie, ihr auch zeitlebens den größten Schaden zugefügt hat. Zumindest ihre spätere Isolation, ihre Lebensfremdheit und ihr soziales Mißverhalten resultieren aus diesem 'Familiensinn'.’ Claus Tillmann, Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann, p. 64.
¹⁷¹ GWI, p. 301.
The reader shares the atmosphere of the summer night in which Tony is once again beleaguered on all sides. This time it is in silence, though, and troubled by her own very astute self-analysis and evaluation of those around her she decides her future and her fate. The conclusion is that the image must be upheld; the self must be subdued. ‘So denkt Mutter, und so denkt Tom....’. Tony, our patrician version of Mutter Courage, is willing to submit to the industry of image-making once again. The outcome will be just as disastrous as before. Like Mutter Courage she refuses to accept defeat and has learnt nothing or as Claus Tillmann comments: ‘Bis zum Ende verharrt sie, unbelehrbar durch die Fingerzeige des Schicksals, mit kindlichem Trotz in ihren Maximen und Zielen’; we can be convinced that on leaving her at the end of the book, she is already looking towards her granddaughter Elisabeth as a possible hope to regain some of the old ground. But we may also remember George Steiner’s judgement of Brecht’s treatment of his heroine: ‘We cannot detach ourselves from the play and merely pass cool judgement on her faults. [...] In the duel between artist and dialectician, he allows the artist a narrow but constant margin of victory. By that margin, Mutter Courage is tragedy; incomplete, perhaps, because of the redemptive politics which surround it, but real and consuming nevertheless.’ In that light, then, Tony can be seen as a tragic or, more to the point, a tragicomic figure. To say this is to contradict Claus Tillmann, who argues that ‘In Anbetracht der Schicksale Thomas’, Christians und Hannos [...] von Tragik zu sprechen wäre indes wohl vermessen.’ All Tony’s later suffering can be put down to the episode in Travemünde, a moment where, significantly, the ironic treatment of her by the narrator is absent.

172 GWI, p. 341
173 Claus Tillmann, Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann, p. 72.
175 Claus Tillmann, Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann, pp. 56-57.
The image of the Buddenbrooks is represented by the old family bible, the family papers and last but not least by the memorial display board put together for the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the firm. Tony and Hanno are carrying it: ‘Tony trug die Tafel beinahe allein, da Hannos Arme nicht viel vermochten, und bot in ihrer begeisterten Überanstrengung das Bild einer verzückten Märtyrerin.’ This alliance of Hanno and Tony is not surprising. Both are made victims by the family, even though in different ways. Tony serves as the sacrificial lamb for the family’s image and Hanno refuses to become such a one (unwittingly of course); thus he is emotionally cast out. Reed concludes: ‘A martyr to the interests of the family and a decadent scion it has thrown up, both borne down by the emblem of its hundred years’ activity: here the two themes meet on an equal footing.’ Yet on occasion, as we have already noted, Tony is prepared to assert herself. Unlike Thomas who is willing to repress anything that could compromise the good name of Buddenbrook, Tony insists on doing what she feels is right irrespective of the gossip to which she may give rise. There is a limit beyond which she will not let herself be pushed. In one of the finest speeches in the novel she silences even Thomas, the politician and most distinguished custodian of the Buddenbrook repudiation:

‘Jetzt sei still, Thomas! Jetzt bin ich an der Reihe! Jetzt hör zu! Wie? Ist nur das Schande und Skandal im Leben, was laut wird und unter die Leute kommt? Ach nein! Der heimliche Skandal, der im stillen an einem zehrt und die Selbstachtung wegfrißt, der ist viel schlimmer! Sind wir Buddenbrooks Leute, die nach außen hin ’tipptopp’ sein wollen, wie ihr hier immer sagt, und zwischen unseren vier Wänden dafür Demütigungen hinunterwürfen?’

But the Buddenbrooks are such people, and Tony breaks the mould. So does her brother Christian, but he is much more crass. Since he is aware that he falls short of the ideal that is consciously upheld by family

176 GW I, p. 481.
177 T. J. Reed, *Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition*, p. 69.
178 GW I, p. 385.
and society, he sins secretly. Like an addict he knows that he cannot
possibly conquer himself so he goes out of sight and hearing to live out
his passion. Not so Tony. She may fall short of her own expectations
and that of her family, but she proudly insists on holding the moral high
ground. At such moments the narrator’s sympathy with his heroine has
returned – although this is denied by Claus Tillmann in his
investigation of Tony Buddenbrook when he claims that: ‘Die
Spannweite seiner Haltungen [the narrator] ist groß, sie reicht von
Sympathie über Ironie bis hin zu kaum verhehlter Verachtung.’

Tony has inherited her grandfather’s admirable practicality, and
she is the only one of the four siblings whose feet stand firmly on the
ground. These qualities are crucial for survival in upper class Lübeck.
Tony’s parents show already a first sign of that inwardness that
characterizes the Buddenbrook decadence, first in Jean with his slightly
unworldly notions; his father together with Pastor Wunderlich smile
indulgently when he reflects on them at the dinner table: ‘Na, assez,
Jean’ sagte der alte Buddenbrook und legte seinen Löffel aus der Hand.
‘Das ist so eine von deinen idées...’. This idealism contributes to the
unfortunate match with Grünlich. Part of Grünlich’s appeal is the fact
that he is a pastor’s son. Jean Buddenbrook personally has a weakness
for all religious things and Grünlich senses this weakness in his
prospective father-in-law and exploits it mercilessly. Twice he implores
him to support him, threatening suicide if he does not do so.

Johann Buddenbrook lehnte bleich und mit pochendem Herzen in
seinem Armsessel. Zum zweiten Male stürmten die Empfindungen
des Mannes auf ihn ein, deren Äußerung durchaus das Gepräge
der Echtheit trug, wieder mußte er, wie damals, als er Herrn
Grünlich den Travemünder Brief seiner Tochter mitgeteilt hatte,
dieselbe gräßliche Drohung vernehmen, und wieder durchschauerte
ihn die schwärmerische Ehrfurcht seiner Generation vor
menschlichen Gefühlen, die stets mit seinem nüchternen und
praktischen Geschäftssinn in Hader gelebt hatte.

179 Claus Tillmann, Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann, p. 80.
181 GW I, p.227.
In that letter he channelled some of Grünlich’s emotional blackmail in his daughter’s direction:

‘Meiner christlichen Überzeugung nach, liebe Tochter, ist es des Menschen Pflicht, die Gefühle eines anderen zu achten, und wir wissen nicht, ob Du nicht einst würdest von einem höchsten Richter dafür strafbar gemacht werden, daß der Mann, dessen Gefühle Du hartnäckig und kalt verschmähest, sich gegen sein eigenes Leben versündigte.’

This religious belief coexists in that generation with the ruthless sense of what the family may properly require of its members. But things begin to change. As Martin Swales puts it: ‘The first instances of inwardness that challenge the practical outer world of the Buddenbrooks are religious in character.’ And Peter de Mendelssohn maintains: ‘...die Familie erlebt es an vier Generationen, wie gewisse Anschauungen und Gefühlsweisen wechseln, sich verändern, absterben, neuen Platz machen. Ihre Geschichte ist eine Entwicklungsgeschichte der Seele[...].’ Tony proclaims herself free of that bigotry that can be detected in her father and later in her mother’s attitudes. In the opening scene of the novel she has an amusing discussion about the text she recites from the catechism with her freethinking grandfather. His acute sense of realism and his scepticism have imprinted themselves on Tony. Just as she sees through Grünlich, sensing an impostor, she describes the religious men in her mother’s house as ‘Leute, die der Witwen Häuser fressen und lange Gebete vorwenden.’ Nevertheless, the narrator makes the point that: 'Sie begriff nicht, womit sie Leid verdient habe; denn obgleich sie sich über die große Frömmigkeit ihrer Mutter mokierte, war sie selbst so voll davon, daß sie an Verdienst und Gerechtigkeit auf Erden inbrünstig glaubte...arme Tony!' In that sense then she has not left the beliefs of her parents as far behind her as

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182 GW I, p.148.
183 Martin Swales, Buddenbrooks: Family life as the mirror of social change, p. 62.
184 Peter de Mendelssohn, Nachbemerkungen zu Thomas Mann I, (Frankfurt a. M., S. Fischer, 1982), p. 35.
185 GW I, p. 281.
186 GW I, p. 370.
the more philosophical Thomas or the fatalistic Christian.\textsuperscript{187} It takes the length of the whole novel to make Tony doubt some of the covenants she took in with mother's milk, for instance that of eternal justice or that the bad will get their just deserts. Religion serves as part of a popular image just as family and firm do. Tony senses this. But in her, rebellions and acquiescent promptings coexist. She may on occasion criticize the family ethos; but she can never ultimately break free of it. Mann's understanding of the dilemma in which she finds herself is profoundly impressive.

\textsuperscript{187} See Ken Moulden and Gero von Wilpert eds., \textit{Buddenbrooks-Handbuch}, p. 291.
Tony in love

In Thomas Mann's love stories the characters learn from each other. This applies to Klaus-Heinrich and Imma, to Hans and Claudia or to Rachel and Jaakob. Here Morten Schwarzkopf is Tony's teacher. It is in Travemünde, away from the eyes of her family and friends, that Tony has the most lasting lessons for her later life. While the two young people are in their little paradise she learns with her characteristic verve and quick mind from this remarkable young man. His teaching of the meaning of freedom, giving her some vague idea of this concept, helps her forever after to bear her terrible setbacks in the face of malice and Schadenfreude without being broken. Amongst other things, she is taught that the local newspapers ignore serious political issues and concentrate on parochial events, weddings and funerals of local dignitaries for instance. She learns about the nature of rulers, who find out too late what the more avant-garde thinkers of their time have already worked out. She finds out about student freedom organisations, the unjust class system, and the corrupt censuring system for the media. These are very adventurous subjects for a young patrician girl. Morten has the confidence to free her from her prejudiced background and her love for him makes her equally sure that she can enable him to enter her social sphere. There is delusion of course, as with most young lovers. But more importantly, these two are compatible; his good education and literacy and her quick mind and lively sense of humour are wonderfully paired. She will treasure all the information she has obtained from

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188 Peter De Mendelssohn quoting from Note Book 3 in Der Zauberer: Das Leben des deutschen Schriftstellers Thomas Mann, p. 315.
Morten for the rest of her life. Anthony Heilbut remarks that Tony Buddenbrook is almost a feminist creation:

By modern standards, invisible to her if not to Mann, she enacts a particular feminist role. For despite her lateral dip from revolutionary politics to family chauvinism, she is coloured for life by her youthful rebellion. She insinuates political lyrics and slogans into the family idiom, thus keeping the language alive. Her undying nostalgia for the old songs is familiar to survivors of the 1960s. An unfriendly observer might take her residual liberalism as some more of Tony’s Quatsch. But her nostalgia for the revolution is indivisible from her personal tragedy. The liberal student was the only right man for her. In Tony’s case, the political is always the personal – with her it could not be otherwise.189

While Heilbut may overstate the political dimension, it remains true that Tony’s lost affair is an act of implicit rebellion against the family. This love story is not grand passion; there is nothing obsessive in it as with Hans and Clawdia. It cannot fall prey to ridicule like the infatuations of Mut and Rosalie since it is wholesome and entirely normal, and it holds out the promise of a lasting and fulfilling relationship.

Thomas Mann touches upon a serious issue in spite of the lightness of tone. The class differences are there, money and status have to be considered. Besides, there are the expectations that decree that, while men do on occasion get away with marrying beneath themselves, women are firmly excluded from engaging in misalliances. Moreover, the difference in social rank is not overwhelming. After all, Diederich Schwarzkopf is a chief navigator married to a vicar’s daughter (Grünlich is a vicar’s son; later Clara Buddenbrook will marry a clergyman) and Morten is a student of medicine. Once qualified he can look forward to a reasonably high social standing in life. It seems somewhat odd to the modern reader’s eye that any type of trader should surpass a medical doctor in status, considering the respect that was paid to the profession already at that time. But the decisive factor for social standing is money, old money preferably, but new money is better than

no money. Professional status and education are clearly secondary considerations. For instance, the medical profession did attract young people from the upper bourgeoisie into the profession, namely Dr. Langhals, Hanno's doctor, member of that old and well to do family. However, he has a private income at his disposal; Morten is not provided with such an advantage.

Whether the match would have worked in the long term is, after all, debatable. The affection between them is true enough but social prestige means a lot to Tony, therefore one wonders whether she could have been happily married to Morten as a modest doctor's wife and no longer part of Lübeck high society. On the other hand, he would have always stimulated her lively mind, and encouraged her native intelligence to flourish, diminishing the faults of her rather constrained upbringing. I feel Tony would have grown into a very different woman under such circumstances. After all, Hans Castorp who comes from a similar background to Tony is allowed a comprehensive education in the 'university' of the Berghof. Tony's first real chance of an education is crudely interrupted. She must exchange the intelligent Morten for the dunderhead and swindler Grünlich. No wonder that all her attempts at self-analysis are in a sense borrowed from Morten.

To reiterate then: Tony is from a good patrician home with money, but only a finishing school education; Morten is from a lower middle class home without a private income but a budding member of the professional classes who can look forward to a good standard of living. Avant-garde and liberal minded, he supports the struggle against class division. It is particularly difficult for him to enter the Buddenbrook clan. The Hagenströms, social climbers yet up and coming, would perhaps have been more lenient (although I doubt that they would have overlooked the money aspect); we learn about Hermann Hagenström: ‘...was ihn auszeichnete... war der liberale und

tolerante Grundzug seines Wesens.' Even then there were voices in society asking for a loosening of the class system: ‘Dem Verdienst seine Krone’, proclaims Senator Giseke, himself son of a fire insurance director, to Thomas Buddenbrook, who defends the old system. Because of the Buddenbrooks’ quirky notion of commercial suitability Tony is allowed to marry the unglamorous if not embarrassing Permaneder and Erika may be connected to Weinschenk (also a self-made man) who is completely uncultured. In contrast, everything we learn of Morten, both from his conversation and from the narrative commentary, conspires to suggest his human worth. Nevertheless, on account of his family background and lack of money he must lose his Tony, as Diederich Schwarzkopf puts it: ‘Ich weiß, wer mein Sohn ist, und weiß, wer Mamsell Buddenbrook ist, und ich habe zuviel Respekt und auch zuviel Stolz im Leibe, Herr, um solche väterlichen Pläne zu machen!’ And Tony’s reasonable request to accept Morten after he has completed his studies and is able to support her: ‘Ich weiß ja, daß es Sitte ist, einen Kaufmann zu heiraten, aber Morten gehört eben zu dem anderen Teil von angesehenen Herren, den Gelehrten. Er ist nicht reich[...]’ falls on deaf ears.

There is an immediate affinity between the young people. Morten is described as pleasing, physically and in his behaviour, unlike Grünlich, who is artificial in his manner and of unattractive looks. Since he and Tony are both young and good-looking it is hardly surprising that some physical attraction will sooner or later manifest itself. When it comes, it is innocent enough, a clumsy, embarrassed kiss, which neither of them fully acknowledges. Hermann Kurzke explains it with reference to Thomas Mann’s own early homoerotic experiences: ‘Die Liebe zu Morten ist, wie die Knabenlieben ihres

191 GW I, p. 409.
192 GW I, p. 667.
194 GW I, p. 147.
Autors, eine “Passion der Unschuld”. Vielleicht wurde auch Tommy einmal von einem Freund so geküßt wie Tony von ihrem Morten.’

I suggest that their closest moment is not this embrace but when they discover the meaning of freedom and share the view of the sea in that light:

“Nun ja, die Freiheit, wissen Sie, die Freiheit....!” wiederholte er, indem er eine vage, ein wenig linkische aber begeisterte Armbewegung hinaus, hinunter, über die See hin vollführte, und zwar nicht nach jener Seite, wo die mecklenburgische Küste die Bucht beschränkte sondern dorthin, wo das Meer offen war, wo es sich in immer schmaler werdenden grünen, blauen, gelben und grauen Streifen leicht gekräuselt, großartig und unabsehbar dem verwischten Horizont entgegendehnte.... Tony folgte mit den Augen der Richtung seiner Hand, und während nicht viel fehlte, daß beider Hände, die nebeneinander auf der rauen Holzbank lagen sich vereinigten, blickten sie gemeinsam in dieselbe Ferne. Sie schwiegen lange, indes das Meer ruhig und schwerfällig zu ihnen heraufrauschte.. .und Tony glaubte plötzlich einig zu sein mit Morten in einem großen, unbestimmten, ahnungsvollen und sehnsüchtigen Verständnis dessen, was “Freiheit” bedeutete.

The narrative comment makes clear what is at stake here: it is *Sehnsucht*, longing and surrender, the dream of freedom dreamed together, whether it takes the form of a social revolution or the removal of repressive convention, that binds the two together rather than physical passion. The sensuous nature of their relationship is understated. Thomas Mann writes to his friend Kurt Martens: ‘Kannst Du Dir meine Tony Buddenbrook verstrickt in sinnliche Leidenschaft vorstellen? Welche Geschmacklosigkeit!”

Perhaps it is the a-sexual nature of Tony’s and Morten’s ‘love story’ that made such writers as Peter Mendelsson and Hermann Kurzke ponder whether Thomas Mann was incapable of writing convincingly about heterosexual love. But this is to overlook the tenderness of the whole episode at Travemünde. The reader is left with sympathy for these two young people who so clearly belong together; their fondness for one another is very appealing, their delight in each

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196 GWI p. 142.
197 Letter to Kurt Martens on 22.12.1907 in DüD I, p. 44.
other's company is extremely touching, and there is a feeling of real loss when it all comes to nothing, a loss of which the novel never loses sight, as we will see.

A link extends from Tony Buddenbrook in Mann’s early work to Mut-em-enet\textsuperscript{198} of his late novel \textit{Joseph in Ägypten} – both women consider their first (and only) love as a secret treasure, theirs to conjure up at will to remember and give it an inward space into which to escape from life’s many setbacks:

Sie rief sich alles ins Gedächtnis zurück, was sie in vielen Gesprächen von ihm gehört und erfahren hatte, und es bereitete ihr eine beglückende Genugtuung, sich feierlich zu versprechen, daß sie dies alles als etwas Heiliges und Unantastbares in sich bewahren wollte. Daß der König von Preußen ein großes Unrecht begangen, daß die ‘Städtischen Anzeigen’ ein klägliches Blättchen seien, ja selbst, daß vor vier Jahren die Bundesgesetze über die Universitäten erneuert wurden, das würden ihr fortan ehrwürdige und tröstliche Wahrheiten sein, ein geheimer Schatz, den sie würde betrachten können, wann sie wollte. Mitten auf der Straße, im Familienkreise, beim Essen würde sie daran denken[…]\textsuperscript{199}

Tony’s lost love is only shared with the reader. What better means of defiance! No one else will ever know the source of many of her much cited reflections on life and politics. Only the reader is aware where the repeated phrases stem from (she is accustomed to recite acts of belief, the novel starts with her doing it). They must seem ridiculous to the characters in the novel less well disposed towards her, eccentric to those who are close to her.\textsuperscript{200} The reader remains the only true witness of Tony’s real fate and anguish. Even Thomas cannot know; although aware of her unhappiness, of her conversations with Morten and her subsequent silent vow to remember forever every phrase he spoke to her, he knows nothing. As time goes by, these sayings become more and

\textsuperscript{198} Mut-em-enet also harbours her love for Joseph like a secret treasure within her, unbeknown to the rest of the world. I quote the relevant passage in a footnote on page 231 in the chapter Mut-em-enet and Rosalie von Tümler.

\textsuperscript{199} GW I, p. 156.

\textsuperscript{200} Tony’s phrasemaking is the measure of her mindlessness: she can make even the experience with Morten yield a set of serviceable clichés. Yet behind the clichés we still hear, obstinately present, a selfhood that constantly recalls the time with Morten as part of a private code to which no one else is party.’ Martin Swales \textit{Buddenbrooks: Family life as mirror of social change}, p. 111.
more blurred and indistinct. She does not quite get them right as she repeats them, and sometimes misquotes. But the essence of the matter is that she remains true to Morten’s spirit and we the readers who are ‘in the know’ can see more in these words than mere banal outpourings. For instance, it takes Thomas by surprise and he does not understand when Tony exclaims in one of her many proclamations of crisis:

“Wir können einfach auf den Steinen sitzen” sagte sie schluchzend.
“Auf den Steinen?”
“Nun ja, das ist eine Redewendung [...] eine bildliche[...]”

But the reader knows where this comes from.

The rather gossipy Tony who wears her heart on her sleeve, ever more so as she grows older, never reveals to anyone her secret love, not even to her trusted old nurse and friend Ida Jungmann. For once she matches the repressed dignity of her brother with her own discretion. Tony’s love for Morten is as much a secret as Thomas’s past love story with the flower seller Anna. But the novel tells us very little about that love story – beyond the occasional hint – and the repeat of Thomas’s words to Anna at the end of their affair: ‘Aber wirf dich nicht weg, hörst Du?...Denn bis jetzt hast du dich nicht weggeworfen, das sage ich dir...!’ By contrast, the relationship between Morten and Tony is much more profound. Diedrich Schwarzkopf stands next to them to avoid any more personal contact – and Thomas himself is the agent who puts an end to their love. This is the gravest action taken in the interest of the Buddenbrook success; and significantly it seems to initiate the Buddenbrook decline. Inge Diersen comments: ‘Ein vorausschauendes Planen, das den Menschen dem Geschäftsinteresse unterordnet, wird auf vertrackte Weise in sein Gegenteil verkehrt.’ For these reasons I cannot accept Ernst Keller’s claim: ‘Die Leichtigkeit, mit der Tony auf

201 GW I, p. 553.
202 GW I, p. 170.
Morten verzichtet, zeigt ihre Anpassungsfähigkeit und wie sehr sie der Familientradition verpflichtet ist, was offenbar der Zweck dieser Episode war.\footnote{Ernst Keller, ‘Die Figuren im Verfall’, in Buddenbrooks-Handbuch, p. 183.}

The full force of Tony’s fate is once again recalled by her at the time of the collapse of her first marriage. Since from now on we see her mainly as a hanger-on with little scope significantly to change the action within the novel,\footnote{‘Schon bald nämlich, so früh eben die Ehe mit Grünlich wieder aufgelöst wird, figuriert Tony als eine ‘alte Frau’, die das Leben hinter sich hat, indessen sie doch ‘noch so jugendlich’ empfindet und sich sehnt, ‘noch einmal ins Leben hinauszukommen’ (I, 301). Tony verkörpert also das Schicksal der Überalterung und die Notwendigkeit neuerlicher Verjüngung in einem.’ Bernhard J. Dotzler, ‘Diese ganze Geistertummelage’, in TMJb 9, 1996, p. 200.} it is easy to forget that Tony’s fate carries in many ways as much pathos as that of Thomas and Hanno. If we do not feel inclined to weep for her as we do for Hanno, it is because she masks her feelings behind hackneyed phrases and clichés – and here is, of course, a hint of gentle mockery in the depiction of Tony’s need to memorialise Morten. Occasionally, however, we are allowed to see a glimpse of a different Tony, for instance, we recall that at the time of Grünlich’s bankruptcy Konsul Buddenbrook comes to make the necessary arrangements and considers fetching Tony back home:


For once the unwavering defender of the Buddenbrook efforts is allowed a moment of poignancy. With her hand in this pose she expresses her sorrow at saying farewell to Morten and the love of her life. It is Aschenbach’s gesture; he also realizes he has missed the point of
existence somewhere but he has lived considerably longer, and death rapidly overtakes him. Tony’s struggle with life is only really beginning now.
Tony and her Siblings

So sah ich dich nie!
Was nagt dir das Herz?207

From the very first, Tony Buddenbrook, the first of the Buddenbrook children introduced to the reader, gives the impression of a high-spirited character. She is described as an elfin, pretty, lighthearted child, able to charm her elders in contrast to her staid, dull cousin Klothilde, who can only win approval through obedience and lending a helping hand. Tony's dainty, upper class looks and manners belie her personality. With her liveliness, directness and humour, her high energy, she is by no means a delicate waif. Of all the Buddenbrook children of that generation she is the most robust, both physically, even though she is described as delicately built, and psychologically, due to her ability to release her frustrations and sorrows in immediate tears and talk. As she gets older this is more and more seen as ridiculous, but it keeps her sane. So what rôle does Tony play within the foursome of the Buddenbrook children? The novel has the subtitle 'Verfall einer Familie' and how does the problem of decline affect the children, how does Tony fit into it?

As I already indicated, the decline starts with the religious ardour of the younger Johann Buddenbrook (at times it forces him into decisions his natural practical mind would not otherwise allow). It is clearly passed on to his son Christian, who also looks like his father. He cannot keep a job or pursue any career. He falls into bad habits, squanders money and is finally locked away as mentally ill. An embarrassment to his family, he certainly helps to make the point about the disintegration of the once powerful dynasty. The decline is less visible in Thomas. Outwardly he fits in well with his city's expectations of him. He is representative and able. But one of the main themes of the

207 From Wagner Die Walküre, Act I, Scene II Brünnhilde to Wotan.
novel is his inward struggle with inward tendencies that lie in strong opposition to his commercial interests. His complex inwardness is set off against Tony’s simplicity. The character of the youngest daughter Clara is never developed. She fulfills her purpose of further harming the Buddenbrook fortunes by taking a large dowry but dying young and childless, an event that siphons off yet more money in the direction of her widower. So where does Tony stand?

A good example of her distinction amongst her siblings is her ailments. The battles with ill-health that plague Christian, Thomas and Hanno derive in large measure from inner – that is psychosomatic – causes. By contrast Tony has a physical illness that troubles her. It is a stomach disorder, which can, admittedly, be exacerbated by her sufferings; but even so it seems to be physiologically rather than psychologically grounded. Peter de Mendelssohn points out: ‘Seinen [Johann] Kindern sind nervösen körperlichen Beschwerden gemeinsam, von denen die Vorfahren nichts wußten: Tony hat einen empfindlichen Magen, Thomas neigt zu Schüttelfrösten, Christian ist ein Neurastheniker mit eingebildeten Krankheiten und Zwangsvorstellungen. Tony hat am meisten von den gesunden Seiten ihres Vaters mitbekommen[...].’

But her health and vitality are not determined by inward concerns, and it is the opinion of Hans Wysling that ‘[...] darauf ihr Glück und ihre Stärke beruht.’ The problems that afflict her come, then, from without rather than within, and she is not prone to brood on her ailments. Her fate does not subdue her even though she constantly loses out. That does not mean she is without any depth at all. Tony is naturally very perceptive. Like her nephew Hanno she sees through artifice and masks. She recognizes Grünlich for what he is. She is never deceived by her mother’s clergymen and she knows what she is letting herself in for with Permaneder. She analyzes

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208 Peter de Mendelssohn, Nachbemerkungen zu Thomas Mann 1, p. 36.
Thomas very aptly to the point that he gets annoyed. In short, her intuition guides her well even though she is rarely able to follow it. This is shown at the end of the novel. There she admits a nagging doubt she seems to have had all along and this is an attack on the very intelligibility of her world: ‘Ach, es gibt Stunden, Friederike, wo es kein Trost ist, Gott strafe mich, wo man irre wird an der Gerechtigkeit, an der Güte... an allem.’

Tony’s demonstrative nature is consistent throughout. When she is pulled away from Travemünde and Morten, the reader and Thomas witness her true sorrow. Accompanying her in the carriage her brother can see her suffering – her unhappiness is very urgently conveyed. But no sooner is she back at home than she feels slightly ashamed of herself. Her family ties are too strong; her upbringing asserts itself. Tony is already forgetting her epiphanic moment in spite of her passionate exclamation: ‘Aber ich will ja gerade nicht vergessen!’ rief Tony ganz verzweifelt. ‘Vergessen...ist das denn ein Trost?!’ but only an hour or so later she has returned to her roots and is astonished that she has actually been capable of forgetting: ‘Mein Gott, alles das war geblieben, wie es gewesen war! Es hatte hier gestanden, unabänderlich und ehrwürdig, während sie sich daran als an einen alten vergessenswerten Traum erinnert hatte!...Sie weinte nicht mehr; sie sah sich neugierig um. Das Abschiedsleid war beinahe betäubt....’ Like Rip van Winkle or for that matter Hans Castorp, Tony sits up and looks around her. Psychologically her position is understandable. She has been forced away from Morten and like so many young people (one must not forget she is only 19) she accepts new situations very readily. Mentally, she has already said her farewells while in the coach, when she promises Morten eternal fidelity in her heart. On a very different level her

\[GWI, p. 758.\]
\[GWI, p. 157.\]
\[GWI, p. 158.\]
brother Thomas is going to react in a similar way later on in the novel. His first encounter with Schopenhauer’s writings throws him into a depth of emotions and insights. But this encounter brings him into territory that cannot be reconciled with his practical life. It is the great failing of these two Buddenbrook siblings, the major characters in the book, that they cannot make anything of the possibility of escape when it is offered to them, that they return from some condition of privileged awareness to one of everyday compromises. On one point Thomas reflects on his sister thus:

There is an element of truth to these judgements – but there is also bias in evidence. On another occasion he makes the same point but with more aggression: ‘Und Tony ist ein Kind, - das übrigens bis zur Stunde ebenfalls nichts gewußt hat, denn es hätte ja zur Unzeit geplaudert, nicht wahr?’ When it suits Thomas he indulges her childishness. He tries to tease her out of her very true sorrows, enjoys her effusive self-deprecations that are not deceiving anybody and he humours her little unpredictable outbursts. Only once he tries to cow her and that is when she runs away from Permaneder. His slightly misquoted line from Heine’s poignant poem from the Winterlieder cycle ‘Ich senkt’ auch meine Liebe und meinen Schmerz hinein’ tries to ridicule her second attempt at rebellion and shows how little he understands her. The poem reads ‘Ich legt auch meine Liebe’. Allowing love and pain to sink implies ‘drowning one’s sorrows’, and Tony does not do this. On the contrary, in laying her love and her pain into the coffin Tony displays

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213 GW I, p. 370.
214 GW I, p. 434.
tenderness and an overwhelming sense of loss. She succumbed to giving up her lover and she knows about pain. The Permaneder episode is an echo of that pain and Thomas, who prides himself on his knowledge of literature, shows with that misquotation a side of him that Hanno comes to know – a lack of sympathy with the weak. Nevertheless, this time she gets her way; her righteous indignation is too powerful even for Thomas.

Yet, in spite of her limitations, it is Tony who is the recipient of some of Thomas’s profoundest confessions. She visits her brother in his new house and finds him depressed. The mood of the evening is dark and brooding and Tony listens to him, then they walk in silence: ‘Dann atmete Frau Permaneder so mühsam auf, daß es wie Schluchzen klang.’ 215 E. M. Foster wrote that ‘A chance word or sigh are just as much evidence as a speech or a murder: the life they reveal ceases to be secret and enters the realm of action’. 216 Tony’s sigh puts her shoulder to shoulder with her brother, and this is the narrator’s testimony of Tony’s autonomy within the Buddenbrook novel. Tony Buddenbrook acknowledges the sorrow of her brother; she shares his premonition of disaster that evening, bringing her own fateful messages of Clara’s imminent death and Christian’s neurosis. The feeling of gloom and doom is shared. 217 And at the end of his life Thomas admits to her his abandonment of the struggle for survival and his surrender to death in his speech about the sea and those who are enchanted by it. It takes place, incidentally, in the very same ‘Seetempel’ that saw the happiness

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215 GWI p. 431.
and also the hopelessness of her relationship with Morten: 'Sie verstummte so eingeschüchtert und unangenehm berührt, wie harmlose Leute verstummen, wenn in Gesellschaft plötzlich etwas Gutes und Ernstes ausgesprochen wird.'

It is seen as drawing the distinction between sister and brother: 'Dergleichen sagt man doch nicht!' dachte sie...Und um ihm in der Stille abzubitten, daß sie sich für ihn schämte, zog seinen Arm in den ihrigen.'

Of course, the narrator implies criticism of Tony here; but that she feels ashamed of feeling ashamed suggests that she has some measure of understanding of what goes on in Thomas's soul. Intimidated and embarrassed she may be but she is after all quite familiar with his thought processes. Considering her frequent emotional outbursts it may seem surprising that she reacts in the way she does. Primarily she is ashamed on his behalf. In any event, this is a rare instance of inward narration, applied to Tony, and it contrasts with her usual 'direct' speech, whether in dialogue, monologue or letter – as Claus Tillman rightly points out: 'Indem der Erzähler seine Figur in Rede und Brief direkt zu Worte kommen läßt, beließt er den Leser mit unverfälscht charakterisierenden (und durch keinen Vermittler gefilterten) Informationen.'

And she does share Thomas's feelings about the sea. 'Es ist merkwürdig, daß man sich an der See nicht langweilen kann, Morten. Liegen Sie einmal an einem anderen Orte drei oder vier Stunden lang auf dem Rücken, ohne etwas zu tun, ohne auch nur einem Gedanken nachzuhängen...' she thinks aloud to her friend, and we have a glimpse of a Tony who is not altogether different from her more thoughtful brother. Morten, the thoroughly nice but
practical young man is proof against such feelings: ‘Ja, ja... Übrigens muß ich gestehen, daß ich mich früher manchmal gelangweilt habe, Fräulein Tony[...].’

And Thomas’s despairing Travemünde speech is but the counterpart of the helplessness Tony feels when left alone in her mother’s house after the latter’s death:

Dann, allein geblieben, stand sie inmitten des Zimmers still, und die hinabhängenden Hände vor sich gefaltet, derart, daß die Flächen nach unten gewandt waren, blickte sie mit großen, ratlosen Augen rund um sich her. Ihr mit einem Häubchen aus schwarzen Spitzen geschmückter Kopf, den sie unaufhörlich leise schüttelte, sank, von Gedanken beschwert, langsam tiefer und tiefer auf eine Schulter hinab.

The contrast between that conventionally adorned head and the unaccustomed burden of heavy thoughts is palpable. The tragic element in Tony Buddenbrook’s persona becomes clearer than ever here and I disagree with Claus Tillmann’s argument that Tony lets herself be fobbed off by Thomas’s little joke: ‘Ihre durch nichts zu erschütternde Lebensenergie beruht denn vor allem auch darauf, sich durch Nichtigkeiten von den immer größer werdenden Nöten und Niederlagen ablenken zu können. Noch im Augenblick des größten Schmerzes – der Verkauf des Elternhauses wird beschlossen – vermag ein dummer Scherz von Thomas sie zu trösten.’

The speech with which Tony pleads for her mother’s house is her last ditch defence of all that the Buddenbrook tradition stood for, not just for herself but for the whole family. The sale of the old house, the symbol of Buddenbrook power and honour is the most convincing outward sign of the decline of that family culminating in the death of Thomas, followed by Hanno’s. And Tony is allowed to put it into words, for once not in melodramatic phrases but in heartfelt grief:

‘Tom’, sagte sie und gewann ihrer Stimme, die die Tränen zu ersticken drohten, eine leise rührende Festigkeit ab. ‘Du weißt

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223 Ibid.
224 GW I, p. 586.
225 Claus Tillmann, Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann, p. 61.
Thomas does not contradict her. He has known moments like this, when he just wanted to rest in the safety of his mother’s love and loyalty.\textsuperscript{227} Tony is here the spokeswoman for her family. Unlike Thomas she never hides her feelings. At various stages within the novel Tony takes it upon herself to express the inner life of the Buddenbrooks family, to point towards their hurt pride, their vulnerability. Late in the novel, when so much that was central in her life has gone – mother and husbands, home and family glory, she stands at the threshold of her once splendid home and has to physically hand it over into the hands of her enemy, Hermann Hagenström. With her head lowered, she is for once without tears and without words, just helpless, a figure of mute despair. This scene clearly shows the level to which the Buddenbrooks have sunk and Tony is the barometer of their decline.

\textsuperscript{226} GW I, p. 585. 
Tony and Hanno

‘Plötzlich brach Frau Permaneder in Tränen aus: “Ich habe ihn so
geliebt”, schluchzte sie [...] “Ihr wisst nicht, wie sehr ich ihn geliebt habe
[,] mehr als ihr alle [...] ja, verzeih, Gerda, du bist die Mutter[,] Ach, er
war ein Engel[,]”’

Although this reads like yet another one of Tony Buddenbrook’s grand statements, it is close to the truth and no one in
the group gathered around her disputes it. She really has loved Hanno
more than any one. And he was her angel in the sense that he gave her
opportunity to love wholeheartedly and without restraint. More than
once Mann refers to Hanno in context with Tony as ‘ihre angebeteter
Hanno.’ He allowed her heart that indulgence that she had to stifle for
all those years since Morten. Now that he is dead, even she starts to
doubt such sacred beliefs as resurrection and divine justice.

I have already suggested that Tony acts as a surrogate wife to
Thomas who turns to her for moral support, affection and admiration.
Her warmth and ready sympathy also embrace her nephew Hanno. We
know Gerda as distant and reserved; her son cannot expect physical love
and interest in his childhood concerns from her. She cares about his
appearance and she bequeaths music as her only gift to him apart from
his life, and since music quintessentially expresses her selfhood it is not
surprising that it becomes her son’s second, more valuable life. But
otherwise there is little evidence of any closeness between mother and
son. Tony’s relationship with Hanno is compared with that of his
mother: ‘[…] unter der Sorgfalt, mit der seine Mutter seine Kleidung und
Pflege überwachte, angebetet von seiner Tante Antonie[…]’ and the
same Tony, labelled by Grünlich as ‘nicht kinderlieb’, could not act
more like a loving mother than when she bends over the sleeping Hanno
and kisses him good night:

Der kleine Johann Buddenbrook lag auf dem Rücken...Von Zeit zu
Zeit ging, von unten nach oben, etwas Schmerzliches über dieses

228 GW I, p. 758.
229 GW I, p. 424.
Tony is moved and the narrative voice seems to share in that emotion. At this moment she steps into Gerda’s place and the reaction of Hanno is both natural and touching: ‘[…] hiervon erwachte er. Er umarmte Ida, sah sich mit nassen Augen um, murmelte befriedigt etwas von “Tante Tony” schob sich ein wenig zurecht und schlief dann ruhig weiter.’ The relationship between aunt and nephew is one of trust and emotional compatibility. By contrast, Thomas is not affectionate towards children. We never see his reaction towards poor Erika Grünlich or any other child within the book. Although initially described as a father who watches his son ‘unter den Blicken voll verhaltener Zärtlichkeit’, from school age onwards he treats him always with coldness, shows him his disappointment, is harsh to the point of cruelty and simply does not allow the boy to develop his talents and at his own pace. In a sense he resents Hanno’s lack of energy because it reminds him of his own weakness. Not so Tony (who is after all just as ambitious for the family name to shine as her brother).

There are many little vignettes in the novel where Tony shows intuition and concern for her little nephew. It is Tony who appreciates his feelings of fear and repulsion at his grandmother’s deathbed where Hanno is forced to take leave from her and she leads him away. It is she who understands and shares wholeheartedly his love for the seaside and Travemünde. It is Tony who visits his nurse Ida and discusses with concern and tenderness his early development. Her affection for him is of a physical nature; she touches him, kisses him, and embraces him. In
many ways the child in her, deplored but also loved by her brother, finds an outlet in her relationship with Hanno. True to form, she obeys her instincts with warmth and effusiveness. It is worth recalling the scene of Hanno's little concert. He plays his own composition in front of his family. While Tony has never understood Hanno intellectually, his mind or his music, she does so emotionally, embraces the child almost in tears and kisses him, truly enchanted by his offering. Of course her behaviour is characteristically excessive; the scene is written with a certain ironic humour, and designed to make the reader smile, but Tony's reaction is more humane and appropriate than that of the senator, who does not hide his disdain and objection to Hanno's concert, to musicianship in general: 'Genug, Tony, genug!' sagte der Senator leise. 'Ich bitte dich, was setzest du ihm in den Kopf...'

Ken Moulden writes: 'Anläßlich von Hannos achtem Geburtstag reagiert sie [Tony] ähnlich enthusiastisch und kritiklos auf dessen Vortrag einer eigenen Phantasie, von der sie 'nicht das allermindeste verstanden.' The point is, of course, valid in itself. But what it overlooks is the intense affection which Tony feels for the boy. The bond between them is never sundered. Even as a 15 year old, at his father's deathbed, he lets himself be embraced by his aunt: 'Manchmal, wenn Frau Permaneder zu ihm trat und ihn an sich preßte, vergoß er Tränen [...]' Her lack of intellectual understanding is not a problem but the absence of any emotional bond with his father is.

The main link between Tony and Hanno is their childhood. There is even a physical resemblance between the two children – they share a graceful, rather delicate physique, fragile wrists, and small bone structure. However, Tony is quick witted, lively and full of high spirits. Hanno is melancholic, pessimistic and tired of life. Tony is constantly described as childlike, she has never ceased to be a little girl, probably

233 GW I, p. 507.
234 GW I, p. 683.
because that was the stage when she was truly happy; adulthood had nothing to offer but disappointment and suffering. It is also a form of escapism. And Hanno clings to his childhood because he has a premonition that adulthood can only bring more suffering. He does not have Tony’s resilience and simplicity. But in all situations that require empathy he is a true nephew of hers; for instance, he cannot witness his father’s sadness without sharing it or at least giving his sympathy.

The most moving and significant insight into Tony Buddenbrook’s inner life is her story of the jellyfish. She tells it twice, first to her only love Morten then to her adored nephew Hanno. The first time it is triggered off by a memory that occurs to her when walking with Morten along the more remote bits of beach near Travemünde, into the very depth of Baltic scenery:

It is the realm of Andersen’s little mermaid. Like her, Tony longs for a world and a lover that can never be hers. When she forfeits it, she wishes to preserve it but it will evaporate until just a wet spot remains. We see colours like yellow-green and red-yellow, all reminiscent of Grünlich, who indeed proves to be the poison that kills at least Tony’s love life, if nothing else in her. 'Wollen Sie wissen, wie dumm ich früher war', asks Tony Morten:

Ich wollte die bunten Sterne aus den Quallen heraushaben. Ich trug eine ganze Menge Quallen im Taschentuche nach Hause und legte sie säuberlich auf den Balkon in die Sonne, damit sie verdunsteten . . . dann mußten die Sterne doch übrigbleiben! Ja, schön... Als ich nachsah, war da ein ziemlich großer nasser Fleck. Es roch nur ein bißchen nach faulem Seetang[...]236

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235 GW I, p. 136-37.
236 GW I, p. 137.
Twenty-seven years later Tony gives an identical account to her nephew Hanno. The repeat of this little Leitmotif in Tony’s life conjures up the memory of Morten and that one happy summer allotted to her. She has to make these reminiscences last all her long life. Tony’s memory is an allegory of disillusionment. Her life evaporates like the jellyfish, leaving really nothing but a bitter aftertaste behind. Summing up her tragedy is best done in her own, rather down to earth and perhaps prosaic way, in one of her little conversations with her nephew Hanno, whom she understands as little as he does her, but whom she loves and supports and protects:


Here, with much understatement that underlines the poignancy of her insight, Tony acknowledges and expresses the deprivation that she has suffered to keep the image of power and success for her family intact. ‘We still hear and are hurt by the moral outrage done to Tony’s love by the commercial imperatives of the Buddenbrook ethos.’ And it is her nephew Hanno, the despair of his father, born against her will by his mother, who is privileged to share these moments with her.

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237 GW I, p. 639.
Marriage and Motherliness

Motherliness plays a large role in Thomas Mann’s oeuvre altogether, but especially in *Buddenbrooks*. The mother figures in his novels enjoy either very close relationships with their children (Elisabeth Buddenbrook and her children, Rachel – Joseph, Lotte – Lotte, Rosalie – Anna) or the opposite is the case and they are seen as cold and unapproachable (Gerda – Hanno, Großherzogin Dorothea – Klaus-Heinrich). The dominant mother in *Buddenbrooks* is Konsulin Elisabeth Buddenbrook; her relationship with her children helps to shape their destiny. The next generation is far less prolific and that is one of the key problems of the family dynasty. In the early part of the novel the children are safe and extremely well cared for. All of them are loved and treated with liberal understanding. As their fate unfolds, parental love becomes less of an issue; the concept of earning money and achieving success takes over. The maternal side (standing for tolerance and *joie de vivre*) begins to fade, the paternal side (standing for the firm, wealth and prestige) takes over. It is the father who insists on Tony’s marriage, Konsulin Buddenbrook is simply agreeing with her husband as ‘befits a good wife’. Konsul Buddenbrook’s passion to increase the family wealth transmits itself to his older son, while it completely alienates the younger one. He emigrates as far as he can to the other side of the world and only comes back when the father has expired.

The description of Tony at the beginning of the novel speaks volumes about her future. Her looks and demeanour put her in the category of the Hansens and the Holms. ‘Sie setzte ihre schmalen Beinchen mit in den schneeweissen Strümpfen mit einer wiegenden und

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239 Heinrich Heine *Winterzyklus* set by Schumann in the ‘Dichtliebe’ cycle.
elastischen Zuversichtlichkeit'. There is no trace of doubt about her social standing in Tony, and that will always be her strength. She is described as *keck* and *ausgelassen*. Safe in the knowledge of her social position she is happy to mix with the entire world, to talk to the working people and to accept their little services – but only in Lübeck. When taken out of her accustomed environment she cannot cope. In Munich she does not become adjusted to the fact that nobody is aware of her status as a Buddenbrook. As a child she carries this confidence too far. ‘Sie ging in der Stadt wie eine kleine Königin umher, die sich das gute Recht vorbehält, freundlich oder grausam zu sein, je nach Geschmack und Laune.’ The men in her life describe her as pampered and well looked after, Grünlich describes her as ‘ein von liebender Sorgfalt behütetes und verwöhntes Mädchen’ and Morten as ‘ein verwöhntes, vornehmes Geschöpf.’ It is this indulgence that has a lot to answer for in her character. The reproach of cruelty is made several times. When she first meets Grünlich Tony looks him up and down ‘...und er hustete aufs neue, als er den Blick bemerkte, den Fräulein Antonie auf ihm ruhen ließ, diesen kalten und musternden Blick, mit dem junge Mädchen fremde junge Herren messen, und dessen Ausdruck jeden Augenblick bereit scheint, in Verachtung überzugehen.’ To Morten she relates the incident of Grünlich’s first proposal to her making the point of how ridiculous he looked. ‘Sie sind grausam, Fräulein Tony...Sind Sie immer grausam?...Mokieren Sie sich immer nur über die Leute, die zu Ihren Füßen liegen? Haben Sie wirklich ein kaltes Herz?’ This contrasts strongly with her otherwise softhearted, easily moved temperament. When Grünlich proposes to her she is most upset, feeling very vulnerable. His violent reaction to her refusal (we

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240 GW I, p. 62.
241 GW I, p. 66.
242 GW I, p. 110.
243 GW I, p. 145.
244 GW I, p. 961.
245 GW I, p. 145.
are to learn the true reasons for that later on) comes as a shock to her, she is not hardhearted enough to leave him in this state but bends down to him and promises not to abandon him. This wavering between an exaggerated sense of superiority that she shares with her mother and a native generosity of heart is the key to Tony’s personality. It suggests actually an all-important dimension to her social role: as a Buddenbrook she can often be lofty and condescending; but as a woman she is vulnerable.\textsuperscript{246} Admittedly, by the time she meets Permaneder, she has lost some of that ability. To restore the Buddenbrook reputation she accepts this genial, harmless but extremely unsuitable man in marriage. Since she has given up all idea of a love match she does not focus on whether or not he is attractive or compatible. As Tony discloses to Ida, it is imperative that she gets remarried and is off Thomas’s hands: “’Weißt du, wie Tom denkt? Er denkt: ‘Jeder! Jeder, der nicht absolut unwürdig ist.’ Denn es handelt sich diesmal nicht um eine glänzende Partie, sondern nur darum, daß die Scharte von damals durch eine zweite Ehe so ungefähr wieder ausgewetzt wird.’”\textsuperscript{247} And Permaneder is not completely unworthy. He is honest; he is fond of Tony and her little daughter. He does not marry her for money. When all is over, he returns her dowry to her without haggling. He even apologizes for his uncouth behaviour and long after the divorce he sends his congratulations on the Buddenbrook’s anniversary. But the general coarseness of his manner, looks and outlook is almost as appalling as Grünlich’s repulsiveness. The reader is made to feel that Tony is marrying beneath her, just as Erika, her daughter, will do with Weinschenk.

\textsuperscript{246} The theme of women living in priviledged circumstances since served on hand and foot by servants/slaves yet subdued and vulnerable because of their utter dependence on men has been taken up frequently in fiction [John Fowler’s \textit{The French Lieutenant’s Woman} for example] and recently by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese in her study of white women in the US south, as above blacks but lower than white men, therefore both strong and weak. See Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, \textit{Within the Plantation Household, Black and White Women of the Old South}, 1988 University of South Carolina Press.

\textsuperscript{247} GW I, p. 341-42.
But at certain junctures, she can be very stubborn. At the beginning of the novel she stands up to her grandfather, who rather likes this quality in her and encourages it (of course, she is only a little girl of eight then, no doubt he would have felt very differently if she had been ten years older). She defies young Hagenström, even slapping his face when he tries to kiss her. Yet had she been true to Lübeck’s hierarchical system, she could have capitalized on his attraction for her, married him and the Buddenbrook fortunes would have looked very different. At the end of the novel, Hagenström comes back to her when Thomas sells his mother’s house and the reader is made to realize that he never lost sight of Tony, he never forgot her. He wanted her, not so much for herself but because he covets the image that she personifies, and finally at least he gets her house, symbol of all that is old and venerable.

To return to Grünlich, Tony defies him as long as she can, but since the whole world is in alliance against her she has to give in. This is the tragedy of her life, more so than her failed marriage with Permaneder. Grünlich is a villain – Permaneder is not, he is just incompatible with Tony and she knows that before she marries him; there is no self-deception. As a young and untried girl she lets her family more or less sell her to a man who bears no love for her and is abhorrent to her. Her sacrifice is wasted; in T. J. Reed’s words it only serves ‘to keep Grünlich solvent.’ After such an experience she is prepared for a second sacrifice, body and soul, to try and make good the first failure. But the real responsibility for both Tony’s suffering and her displacement of values lies with the decision makers in her family: firstly her father, who is aware of it even if his self-righteousness never completely admits to the depth of horrors he subjected his daughter to; secondly Thomas, who will never let anything penetrate the wall of self-

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protection that he has surrounded himself with. Both promptly make Tony responsible for the ills that befall her, making the victim the perpetrator.

Constantly Tony finds solace in confiding her past to people around her. This is good therapy. However, back home she can hardly find an ear for her trouble. 'Assez' says Konsulin Buddenbrook, 'ich höre nicht gern von der Affaire.'\(^{240}\) Nobody else does either. Her father is kind because he feels guilty (he has reason to) but when she has the occasional outburst he says: 'Wir sollen nicht richten, mein Kind.'\(^{250}\) Appearances must be kept intact. 'Haltung und Würde'\(^{261}\) is Thomas's principle and 'die Dehors wahren'\(^{252}\). Nonetheless, Tony is not aware of any lack of support; a child of her time and a good daughter, she feels the failure is hers alone and she does not reproach anyone. But to some extent her compulsion to familiarize people with her sad history can be attributed to the fact that she is never able to analyse it and lay the ghosts, nor does anyone in her family help her so to do.

It is Bendix Grünlich, her first husband, who reproaches Tony with not being 'kinderlieb'. When her marriage breaks down and her father comes to fetch her home he sighs: "Gott hat euch beiden ein Kind geschenkt..." and Tony answers: "Ja, Papa...und ich habe Erika sehr lieb...obgleich Grünlich behauptet, ich sei nicht kinderlieb..."\(^{253}\) It is the request for a nurse to look after her only child that triggers off the comment and this fits perfectly within Tony's capabilities; she prides herself on her inclination towards luxury and overspending that can be traced back to her upbringing: "Wirf mir nicht meine Erziehung vor!"\(^{254}\) But to accuse Tony of not being fond of children is particularly unfair of Grünlich, who, after all, benefited from Tony's inherent

\(^{249}\) GW I, p. 233.
\(^{250}\) GW I, p. 234.
\(^{251}\) GW I, p. 411
\(^{252}\) GW I, p. 267, 276, 313 and 614
\(^{253}\) GW I, p. 219.
\(^{254}\) GW I, p. 201.
kindness and maternal instinct if we recall the *Landschaftszimmer* scene: Grünlich is on his knees, begging her to be his wife, for once in earnest (his existence depends on her acceptance). "'Nein, nein!' sagte Tony plötzlich in tröstendem Ton. Ihre Tränen waren versiegt, Rührung und Mitleid stiegen in ihr auf[...]"Nein, nein", wiederholte sie, indem sie sich ganz ergriffen über ihn beugte, "ich verabscheue Sie nicht, Herr Grünlich, wie können Sie dergleichen sagen!...Aber nun stehen Sie auf...bitte"²⁵⁵ and similarly at the end of their relationship, she uses identical words, even weeps, when he begs Tony not to think ill of him (with the hope that she may stay after all and that her father will redeem his debts). T.J. Reed comments: "[...] it was exactly like that other occasion..." is the author's commentary on his own device, as well as being a rendering of Tony's thoughts in the form of *erlebte Rede*,²⁵⁶ Reed’s observation alerts us to a moment when the narrator's voice shares and validates Tony's perception.

²⁵⁵ GW I, p. 112.
Epilogue

Es ist noch einmal zu sagen, was so oft gesagt worden ist: dies Gretchen, die Tochter der Pfandleiherin, wie wir sie im Rahmen des kleinen deutschen Reichsstädtchens, in dieser Kindtaufe und Nachbarngeschwätz, vor uns wandeln, lieben und verderben sehen, ist eine Figur vor unsterblichem Liebreiz in ihrer Menschlichkeit und Weiblichkeit, ihrer reinen Kindhaftigkeit, ihrer Hingabe, ihrem Jammer und ihrem stellvertretenden, anklagevollen Untergang.  

The profile of Tony that emerges in *Buddenbrooks* is remarkable for its unsentimentality and scrupulousness. In one sense, she is, manifestly, a victim; a vivacious woman sacrificed to narrow notions of class, of economic, social and dynastic acceptability. In another sense, she is her own worst enemy in that she internalizes all those values and is willing to serve them. She enters into two marriages without being prepared to accept those husbands; it is almost as though the husbands are there in order to enable her to fulfil her role within the family – and not for the new relationships that they make possible.

Unlike Thomas and Hanno, Tony does not seem to have a complex inner life. Whatever goes on within her is largely expressed by outward signs – by actions she performs and, above all, by the things she says. Hence, in my discussion of her I have paid particular attention to all those outer indications of her personality. Yet that inner life, however predictable it may be (because it is also firmly aligned to the public role of being a Buddenbrook), is not simply repetitious and fatuous. Tony is vulnerable, and Mann’s novel recognizes this – most eloquently in the memories (however formulaic they may become) of the time with Morten at Travemünde. Tony never forgets; nor do we, the readers.

Narratively, Mann’s text sustains an impressive balance of sympathy and critique in the description that is offered of Tony. I have just quoted a remark from T. J. Reed in which he draws attention to an

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257 GW IV, p. 614.
overlap between the narrator's viewpoint and the character’s (Tony’s) perceptions. Any study of narrative technique in *Buddenbrooks* will attend most particularly to the portrayal of Jean, Thomas and Hanno, because, with the growing and problematic inwardness of their experience, the narrative voice needs to find access to the inner recesses of their minds. The great passages of narrative virtuosity, are, then, reserved for these characters. Tony is seen more within the chronicling, mid-person narrative register of (in the broadest sense) something akin to realism. But there are hints of commentary and reflection from the narrative; the text controls the degree of the closeness to Tony. I already quoted Reed’s comment on *Erlebte Rede*. Thomas Mann uses *Erlebte Rede* famously in *Buddenbrooks*, and he makes no exception for Tony here. ‘Und Tony?’ he asks ‘- Arme Tony!’ or, when in Travemünde she is forced away from Morten, she looks at the poor, barefooted fishermen’s children, otherwise to be pitied but in her current state the subject of her envy because ‘Die blieben hier...’

When she is incognito waiting for the results of the Senate election: ‘eine Dame [...] ihr Gesicht ist gänzlich von einem dichten, braunen Schleier verhüllt’, but very obviously Tony, the narrator oscillates between his own observations and her personal feelings on hearing that Hagenström won the election: ‘Ja, ja er ist es nun also. Da ist nichts mehr zu erwarten. Die Dame im Schleier hätte es vorher wissen können. So geht es immer im Leben. Man kann nun ganz einfach nach Hause gehen.’ We can almost hear her adding ‘[...] und auf den Steinen sitzen’, a phrase she likes to use when describing defeat and loneliness.

But one of the few truly empathetic moments in the characterisation of Tony is devoid of either monologue or dialogue in any form. We, the reader, are asked to observe her face and her body

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258 GW I, p. 365
259 GW I, p. 155.
260 GW I, p. 414
261 GW I, p. 416
language to understand the sheer enormity of her loss and the misery that came of it. I return to her father's visit during the Grünlich crisis. The reader and the narrator stand facing Tony; her father, presumably sitting beside her, is not. As before in Travemünde, and then in the coach taking her back home, there is a moment of intimacy with Tony (not shared by her father, who cannot see her face). That face reflects the sadness she undoubtedly feels at this moment about her foiled love in Travemünde and makes us, the reader, aware of her profound regret, followed by resignation. These impressions are recalled every time Tony later remembers Morten or Travemünde or the Schwarzkopfs. At such moments the narrator, who otherwise applies his use of Leitmotif for the Tony character very frequently so that she becomes a comic figure (in this I fully agree with Claus Tillmann), offers her some dignifying space. To conclude, then, Tony's characterisation is comprehensible and predictable as a member of the Buddenbrooks family but her selfhood is asserted whenever her personal relationships are the concern of the narration.

262 See page 80, Footnote 206.
263 Claus Tillmann, Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann, p. 76.
Introduction

It is commonly accepted by both literary critics and general readers that Thomas Mann does not dwell with any real urgency or profundity on powerful heterosexual love. For instance, Tony and Morten Schwarzkopf have a promising relationship, but there is little indication of an erotic involvement. Klaus-Heinrich and Imma are friends and soul mates rather than lovers. Jacob and Rachel love one another but however tender and persuasive, their love is practical; it is driven by a religious desire to bear children and to create the new God State. The affair between Goethe and Lotte lies securely in the past, and Goethe tries to depersonalize it; only the passion of Mut-em-enet for Joseph and Rosalie v. Tümmler for Ken contain elements of convincing physical desire. But, as has been argued by numerous critics, we may be looking at relationships in which the woman's desire is paramount. Hans Castorp's love for Clawdia Chauchat is therefore unique in Thomas Mann's work. Here is a man (even if Hans confesses: '[…] daß ich mir renommistisch und geschmacklos vorkomme, indem ich mich einen "Mann" nenne') in love with a woman who creates havoc amongst the men in the sanatorium. Since the publication of the Thomas Mann's diaries from 1978 onwards, informed criticism has concentrated very much on his homosexual leanings. This approach has brought great benefit, of course – not least in that it has helped us to see him as less of an 'Olympian', sovereign, coolly cerebral writer. But in my view, we do not need to convert the erotic relationships in Mann's

264 Böhm, Sommerhage, Kurzke, Härle to name but a few.
265 GW III, p. 845.
fiction into proto-homosexual affairs.\textsuperscript{266} What is worth noting, however, is that Mann’s latent homosexuality gave him a particular sympathy for and skill at portraying repressed and sublimated emotion.\textsuperscript{267} This kind of emotion is not tied to gender – it is love spiritualized, transferred, and can apply to both men and women.

Inge Diers, who had no access to the diaries, writes in 1975:

\begin{quote}
Hans Castorps Liebe zu Clawdia Chauchat wird nicht nur dadurch motiviert, daß er in ihr alles verkörpert findet, was für ihn die Faszination durch den Zauberberg ausmacht. Die Liebe ist Wiederkehr, Wiederholung eines homoerotischen Gefühlserlebnisses aus seiner Pubertät, gesteigerte Wiederholung, denn jetzt wird praktisch möglich was damals schlechterdings unmöglich war, nicht allein, weil Hans Castorp inzwischen ein erwachsener Mann ist und eine Frau liebt, sondern in erster Linie, weil er im Zauberberg ist, im Reich der ‘Freiheit’, in dem man nicht an die Verbote und Gebote des ‘Flachlands’ gebunden ist.\textsuperscript{268}
\end{quote}

And although Erich Heller wrote his influential \textit{The Ironic German: a Study of Thomas Mann} in 1958, long before any of the diaries were published, I would like to associate my argument with his, that is to say, that the erotic element in the relationship between Hans and Hippe or Hans and Clawdia are similar only in so far that ‘in neither case is it a passion from which marriages are made’.\textsuperscript{269} And that does not cancel out the homoerotic element in the first and a heterosexual one in the second relationship.

Because of Clawdia’s physiognomy it has been claimed that she is the echo of the boy Hippe or at best is androgynous in her appeal. I

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{266} Susan V. Scaff of San Jose State University makes this point too in her review of Stephen D. Dowden ed. \textit{A Companion to Thomas Mann’s Magic Mountain}, (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1999). She writes on the essays in this collection: ‘While it is quite comprehensive in its coverage, the collection mercifully omits an essay on the overworked and somewhat faddish topic of Mann’s homosexuality, but curiously leaves out a discussion of the ever fascinating issue of Mann’s women, notably Clavdia Chauchat.’

\textsuperscript{267} Youn-Ock Kim bases her study \textit{Das weibliche Ich und das Frauenbild als lebens- und werkkonstituierende Elemente bei Thomas Mann} on the assertion that his male identity is a dialectic of male ‘I’ and female ‘I’, the female ‘I’ standing for the homosexual ‘I’ in him.


\textsuperscript{269} ‘[...]Clawdia ist to the young man Hans Castorps what Hippe was to the boy Hans Castorp. In neither case is it a passion from which marriages are made. On the contrary, it is the ‘unreasonable love’ which Hans himself, in a conversation with Clawdia, equates with death and calls by the names of res bina and laps philosophorum, names he has learned from Naphta, who however, added to them ‘the double-sexed prima material.’ Erich Heller, ‘Conversation on the Magic Mountain’ in \textit{The Ironic German}, (Cleveland and New York, Secker & Warburg, 1961), pp. 201-202.
\end{flushleft}
would agree with Claus Tillmann who argues: ‘[...] dass die Androgynität ihrer Erscheinung angedeutet wird: “HC (sic) vollzieht bei seinen Beobachtungen unbewusst die Rücknahme des Weiblichen (‘Eine Dame’ – ‘eine Frau’ – ‘ein junges Mädchen’) zugunsten einer zwei- oder ungeschlechtlichen Jugendanmut.’

And such an image lies in conflict with that of a conventional sex icon; it must be something else that entices the Mannheimer, Behrens and, of course, Hans.

I would say that in spite of the homoerotic elements in the love story of Hans and Clawdia the reader is invited to see Clawdia from the male point of view (of that time), as an object of male fantasy, in this case as a *femme fatale*. In order to have the power to hold young Castorp captive in the magic mountain, she had to exude a strong influence. And that was to be via her sexual allure. When Karl Werner Böhm in his dissertation on Thomas Mann and the stigma of homosexuality claims that Clawdia Chauchat only represents ‘eine Hülle für ein homosexuelles *sujet*’ he narrows the erotic theme of the novel. The biographer Anthony Holden asserts that Hans Castorp actually is a homosexual: ‘Castorp and Clawdia become allies, conspiring on his [Peeperkorn’s] behalf. In other words, an emancipated woman and a homosexual undertake to protect a doomed patriarchy.’

Once again, I find this a narrow view. Certainly, Thomas Mann put much of himself into Hans, and some well-established homoerotic elements have found their way into the character. One must also not forget that the era before and around the first World War was very male-oriented; the military spirit tends to carry certain elements of homoeroticism, however repressed. In that sense, Thomas Mann’s eroticism can also be seen in the context of the times he lived in and the influences of writers

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270 Claus Tillmann, *Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann*, p. 100.
273 I refer to the early attraction to William Timpe and other boyhood romances, discussed by Hans Wysling and all other critics since the publication of the 1919-1921 diary in 1978.
that were most widely read then, writers like Friedrich Huch and Hans Blüher.274 We find many insinuations of Männerbündnisse275 in the Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen (the immediate precursor of Der Zauberberg). Karl Werner Böhm suggests that in making Clawdia an equal partner in a love triangle with Peeperkorn, Thomas Mann delivers a ‘Stich in das Lebenszentrum des Männerbundes.’276 However, this chapter will argue that Clawdia’s role as woman is central to her impact on Hans Castorp’s development and fate, as he declares to Peeperkorn: ‘...aber Clawdia ist jedenfalls eine Frau.”277

My other point is Clawdia’s autonomous presence. So far, Critics have denied her the personal space she deserves. For instance, Peter de Mendelssohn writes in his Nachbemerkungen zu Thomas Mann 2:

Der Roman hat nur eine Hauptperson, nur eine Haupthandlung; er kennt keine Parallel-Handlungen, es zweigen keine Nebenhandlungen ab und kehren zur Haupthandlung zurück; nur die zentrale Hauptfigur, auf die das ganze Interesse des Erzählers gerichtet ist, von der nichts und niemand auch nur vorübergehend ablenkt, bewegt sich vorwärts in der Geschichte, verändert sich, macht eine Entwicklung durch. Alle anderen bleiben, was und wie sie sind. Professor Behrens, Lodovico Settembrini, ja sogar Madame Chauchat sind am Schluß des Buches noch dieselben, die sie am Anfang waren. Nur Hans Castorp hat sich verändert.278

Yet I hope to show that Clawdia is of all the characters perhaps the least static. In particular the change in motive and function she embodies in the course of the novel gives her a decisive and lasting position in Hans Castorp’s story.

Finally, there is a Jungian argument to be found here:

Franz beschreibt vier Stufen der Erscheinung der Anima: “[...]die erste Stufe ist mythologisch am klarsten im Bild der Eva symbolisiert, als einem Bild rein biologischer Bezogenheit. Die zweite Stufe ist zum Beispiel in Fausts Helena veranschaulicht. Sie symbolisiert eine romantische und ästhetische Form des Eros.

277 GW III, p. 845.
vermischt mit sexuellen Elementen. Die dritte Stufe wäre zum Beispiel in der Jungfrau Maria verkörpert als Symbol des vergeistigten Eros. Die vierte Stufe erscheint in der Gestalt, welche die Liebe oft als Sapientia (Weisheit) personifiziert, [...]

That takes us back to “eine Dame – eine Frau – ein junges Mädchen eher” and to the very end of Hans and Clawdia’s relationship, when their love has turned inward and Clawdia embodies the guide that leads Hans to his truest self.

A femme fatale and Venus

[...]da hatte sie vor seinem Blick gestanden in all ihrem schlechthin verhangnishaften Reiz, so daß er klar und deutlich das eine gefühlt hatte, daß es 'um ihn getan' [...] auf immer also um ihn getan sei.  

The door slams, glass rattles and Clawdia Chauchat makes her grand entry into the dining room of Haus Berghof and into the novel of Der Zauberberg. She emerges from behind Hans's back, so to speak; her presence is only to be heard. As a scene of symphonic power it makes at once a statement about Clawdia and the shock she delivers to Hans's system: 'In diesem Fall war die Tür obendrein mit kleinen Glasscheiben gefüllt, und das verstärkte den Choc.' It is a very musical introduction to this very significant character. One could go one step further and say that Clawdia is announced here with the flourish of a grand overture.

It demonstrates of course a significant feature that will keep Hans Castorp on the magic mountain, that is formlessness and Madame Chauchat is the personification of formlessness. Neither Hans nor the reader are able see her physically, dramatic though her introduction is, and the impact of her entrance on Hans is a negative one. Her careless and almost violent manners suggest a different, less orderly form of social behaviour. Immediately we are introduced to another main theme in this novel: the clash of 'West' with 'East' here synonymous with orderliness versus decadence. A background not dissimilar to that of Aschenbach's hotel in Venice is described. There too the Slavonic proportion of guests dominated. Since the novel Der Zauberberg was

280 GW III, p. 900.
281 GW III, p. 67.
283 There is an argument by Julia Kristeva (in her essay 'The System and the Speaking Subject', in The Kristeva Reader, ed. Toril Moi. Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986. 24-33), who uses the terms the Symbolic and the Semiotic, whereby the symbolic aspect is associated with authority, order, a father's repression and control and by contrast the semiotic aspect is characterised not by logic and order but by Cont. on next page
conceived as the Dionysian farce to the tragedy of Der Tod in Venedig\textsuperscript{284} this makes good sense. Unlike Aschenbach, however, Hans is not immediately infatuated; initially his anger at Clawdia’s complete lack of consideration flares up to the point almost of fury: ‘[…] genug, er verabscheute das Türenwerfen und hätte jeden schlagen können, der es sich vor seinen Ohren zuschulden kommen ließ…. Pfü, dachte Hans Castorp wütend, was ist denn das für eine verdammt Schlamperei!’\textsuperscript{285} It means though that he is at once enthralled with her, albeit in a negative sense. The catalyst of this fundamental rejection of a different mentality or for Hans’s overreaction to it is his first night in the Berghof. He becomes an unwilling listener to the sexual games of the Russian couple next door to him. Such blatant disregard for civilized behaviour is abhorrent to him and his respect for privacy and his Hanseatic reserve make him recoil from what he overhears. Yet it also fascinates and tantalizes him. It paves the way for Clawdia, and the attraction she will have for him. So he gives the couple a good stare when he meets them in the flesh in the dining hall. With the same ruthlessness, so uncharacteristic of the placid and well-bred North German, he looks Clawdia up and down to take in all the details of her physicality. Clawdia will look at him in the same brazen way a few chapters later, when he returns from the ill-fated excursion into the mountains. His abandonment to the senses has begun ahead of Clawdia, then, it starts when he overhears the Russian couple’s ecstasies,\textsuperscript{286} just


\textsuperscript{285} Or as T. J. Reed interprets: ‘Das ethnisch Fremde trägt mit zu seiner Verunsicherung bei, am schockierendsten gleich anfangs, als das sexuelle Treiben des Russenpaares von nebenan durch die dünne Scheidewand seines Zimmers unüberhörbar wird.’ T. J. Reed ‘Von Deutschland nach Europa’ in Auf Cont. on next page
as his preoccupation with death starts on hearing the cough of the Herrenreiter ('...jenen Glanz in den Augen, den schon der Husten des Herrenreiters darin entzündet').\(^{287}\) Clawdia becomes the catalyst that brings to life something which has long been dormant in Hans’s soul.

This ambiguous reaction, repulsion mixed with curiosity, already points towards one early aspect of his obsession with Clawdia. She stands for this world of sensual freedom associated with a less restrained nature, symbolized by the vastness of Russia,\(^{288}\) the alleged barbarism of some of its people, as Joachim puts it: ‘Ja, es sind gewissermaßen Barbaren, unzivilisiert mit einem Wort, ich hab’ es dir ja im voraus gesagt. Er kommt immer in einer Lederjoppe zum Essen, abgeschabt sage ich dir, mich wundert immer, daß Behrens nicht dagegen einschreitet. Und sie ist auch nicht die Properste, trotz ihrem Federhut [...]’\(^{289}\)

For the dramatic introduction of Clawdia, Thomas Mann’s choice of language is unspectacular; she is taken through all the stages and ranks of womanhood in reverse sequence: Dame, Frau, to conclude with a young girl ‘Ein junges Mädchen wohl eher’,\(^{290}\) which immediately conjures up the image of youth and a certain innocence. Even the carelessness concerning coiffure (‘röthlich blondes Haar, das sie einfach in Zöpfen um den Kopf gelegt trug’) and manicure (‘nicht sonderlich damenhaft...ziemlich breit und kurzfingrig, hatte sie etwas Primitives...’

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\(^{287}\) Stephen C. Meredith argues that: ‘He [Hans Castorp] is a man of the middle, not only in being mediocre in many ordinary senses - he is of middling abilities and of the middle class, for example - but also in being a German: midway, to use the Spenglerian construction, between the decaying orient and the nascent frontier to the West.’ ‘Mortal Illness on the Magic Mountain’ in A companion to Thomas Mann’s The Magic Mountain, ed. by Stephen D. Dowden (Camden House, 1999), p. 109.

\(^{288}\) GW III, p. 63.

\(^{289}\) Claus Tillmann makes the point that the description of Clawdia as ‘Dame’ is taken back and changed to ‘ein junges Mädchen wohl eher’: Claus Tillmann, Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann, p. 100 (the full text of the quotation is given on p. 105 of this thesis), and Werner Frizen writes: ‘Der Additionsstil nimmt erst Maß und verleiht durch die Paraphrase Konturen – oft so, daß die Begriffe sich selbst korrigieren und erst am Ende zum mot juste gelangen: ‘Es war eine Dame, ...eine Frau, ein junges Mädchen wohl eher’ Werner Frizen ‘Sprache’ in Thomas-Mann-Handbuch, p. 856.
...und Kindliches, etwas von der Hand eines Schulkönchens291) evoke the picture of a schoolgirl – hardly a Venus who uses her female traits as a bait, a lure, to keep her victim, the male, at her feet. We see that on meeting her Hans has difficulty in placing her age and status, and this is one of the conflicts that renders Clawdia an enigma and makes her so enchanting to him. On the one hand she is a Dame, she sits at the guten Russentisch, she is always beautifully and tastefully dressed and Hans observes her wardrobe closely; she has poise, self-confidence and is generally admired. Yet there is also the impression of a certain carelessness, enhanced by her unkempt hands and her hair, carelessly flung in plaits around her head.292 She is to those who desire her a perfect pin-up.

What does this first appearance tell us of her? With the eyes of Hans Castorp we see a youngish, slight women, careless of some aspects of her general appearance but with a catlike grace, emphasized by her trim, somewhat boyish figure. Clawdia looks back on a long lineage of women in Thomas Mann's fiction. She has three clear predecessors: Inge Holm, Gerda v. Rinnlingen and Gerda Buddenbrook. In Inge Holm we perceive her physiognomy and mannerism for a first time (the plaited hair, the neglected and bitten fingernails). Inge is also the centre of an obsessionahical love that is not requited. This type of love is felt for Gerda v. Rinnlingen in Der kleine Herr Friedemann by the impassioned Friedemann. Like Clawdia, she does not seek to incite physical passion; she shows herself almost contemptuous of it. With Gerda Buddenbrook and Gerda v. Rinnlingen Clawdia shares a self-identification that is expressed in her way of life, her love for freedom, in being above social conventions and the restrictive rules of society.

291 GW III, p. 110.
292 Or, as Edward Engelberg has it: 'Falling in love with Clawdia Chauchat is in all ways contrary to his upbringing: her bitten fingernails, her Asian slit eyes, her unkempt appearance, her unladylike entrance into the dining room – all these are the very features that attract. It is a classic case of reaction-formation.' Edward Engelberg Ambiguous Solitude p. 102.
After writing *Der Zauberberg* Thomas Mann no longer allows this character to haunt his work. He has exorcised her.

Clawdia is aware of her own charm and allure and to Hans in particular. Her body is described in detail, including those parts covered by cloth (I shall discuss the importance of veiling in the next chapter). Her small breasts are mentioned more than once. Hans’s boyhood love Hippe, on whom I will elaborate later, has been transformed into a woman but the basic physical attributes are still the same: the Asian features, the colouring, the voice ‘die nicht tiefe, aber eine kleine Schärfe enthaltende, angenehm belegte Stimme, die Hans Castorp kannte – von langer Hand her kannte...’ but the woman Clawdia has also the attractions and characteristics of her gender:

To the modern reader this description does not seem in any way unusual. Many young women look like that. The voluptuous seductress of Heinrich Mann’s preference, the lurid idols we find in his fulsome novel *Göttinnen*, are not the ideal of beauty in the days of post-Twiggy and of Kate Moss. There is of course something ultimately sexy about Clawdia. Her carelessness, both in behaviour and in posture, exudes a sensual power that holds Hans enthralled. She is provocative in her way of walking, making full front to the entire assembly of guests in the sanatorium dining room, smoking carelessly with an open mouth and

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293 GW III, p. 297.
294 GW III, p. 297.
playing to the gallery in many other ways. Yet when she has Hans on his knees during the *Walpurgisnacht*, when he shakes and quivers with desire for her, she coolly begins a discussion with him, reprimanding him, mocking him and arguing with him. This contrast between a woman of great sexual allure and a sophisticated, aloof intellectual is one of the keys to Clawdia Chauchat's quintessential self. She is a woman of great variety. The reader is in for another shock in chapter seven, where we are offered that conundrum of the beautiful Russian returning as a carer and lover of a sick, old man. This point is made particularly well by Claus Tillmann, who writes: ‘Spätestens der Selbstmord ihres Begleiters beweist ihre Bereitschaft zur Hingabe an das Leid und die Gefahr.’\(^{295}\) Whatever the guise is in which she appears to Hans, the impact on him is profound.

With her grand entrance Clawdia jerks Hans to a new level of consciousness. At the second meeting his heart is won over, his senses are captured by her appearance and from now on he is only aware of her as an object of desire. The shock, the earlier rage, changes at once into a passionate curiosity, which very quickly develops into admiration and finally obsession. Is it the contrast between the noisiness heralding her presence and the actuality of her soundless movements, e.g. ‘Sie ging ohne Laut, was zu dem Lärm ihres Eintritts in wunderlichem Gegensatz stand’\(^{296}\) that causes this dramatic and immediate change of reaction? Aschenbach’s reaction on seeing Tadzio is no less dramatic, but he is immediately struck by the beauty of his object of desire while Hans is overwhelmed by the outstanding ‘otherness’ of Clawdia (as Friedemann is by Gerda v. Rinnlingen), that is to say it is an experience of recognizing someone who is not like himself. Hans too has been instantly catapulted into a different sphere but fascination sets in under a negative sign. He starts to desire his object only at second encounter.

\(^{295}\) Claus Tillmann, *Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann*, p. 120.

\(^{296}\) GW III, p. 110.
We are then told who he is reminded of and why, and once he has become aware of the source of his infatuation he turns to Clawdia with longing and adoration.

Other passages see her as nachlässig, schlaff, rücksichtslos even lieberlich. This could just as well be the description of Mérimée’s gypsy girl Carmen. Carmen is a paria, above or beyond conventions and altogether at odds with respectable society. Is Clawdia seen like that? Hans’s attraction to her is that of someone very repressed who is suddenly able to let himself go. His infatuation with her physicality grows obsessive and his condition is described as ‘ausschweifend’ and ‘abenteuerlich’:

Er begriff hinter seiner Stirn die abenteuerliche Freiheit, mit der Frau Chauchat durch ihr Umblicken und Lächeln die zwischen ihnen bestehende gesellschaftliche Unbekanntschaft außer acht ließ, so als seien sie überhaupt keine gesellschaftlichen Wesen und als sei es nicht einmal nötig, daß sie miteinander sprächen.297

I will discuss later how far this perception is based on Hans’s own fantasies. With alarming speed he drops his inner reserves and starts to recognize what he really desires: he wants to know her body in the truest sense (hence his physiological researches) and to possess her. On Shrove Tuesday he mumbles his confessions to her, decorously in French; it would have been horribly improper for him to say these things in German.298 He tells her that he wants to turn her inside out and even embrace those parts of her that are most diseased, her lymphatic glands in the knees and elbows (‘bouchement tuberculeux des vases de lymphe ’299 - Mme Chauchat is incurably ill). The description of this type of encounter is to be found before it actually happens.

Er sah das Bild des Lebens, seinen blühenden Gliederbau, die fleischgetragene Schönheit. Sie hatte die Hände aus dem Nacken

297 GW III, p. 289.
298 ‘[...] mit Präzision und Tiefe sagt er Dinge, die für mich auf deutsch recht schwer in guter Haltung anzuhören wären und die durch den Schleier der fremden Sprache erträglich werden, wie dem guten Hans Castorp ein gewisses radikales Gespräch im “Zauberberg”.’ GW XI, p. 34.
299 GW III, p. 497.
gelöst, und ihre Arme, die sie öffnete und an deren Innenseite, namentlich unter der zarten Haut des Ellbogengelenks, die Gefäße, die beiden Äste der großen Venen, sich bläulich abzeichneten, - diese Arme waren von unaussprechlicher Süßigkeit. Sie neigte sich ihm, neigte sich zu ihm, über ihn, er spürte ihren organischen Duft, spürte den Spitzenstoß ihres Herzens. Heiße Zartheit umschlang seinen Hals, und während er, vergehend vor Lust und Grauen, seine Hände an ihre äußeren Oberarme legte, dorthin, wo die den Triceps überspannende, körnige Haut von wonniger Kühle war, fühlte er auf seinen Lippen die feuchte Ansaugung ihres Kusses.

His desire has grown into a fetishism that reaches the point of necrophilia, a craving he actually shares with Hofrat Behrens. Such is the nature of the love that grips Hans in the first part of the novel.

Clawdia’s self-confessed love of freedom is expressed in her movements and her bold appearance. She gets the attention of everybody around her without actually seeking it, takes it as her natural right. Generally, she seems to be the centrepiece of any group, in that sense a Göttin indeed (Hans will call her later ‘divine one’ in his grand speech at the end of part I): ‘Sie saß, als Mittelpunkt ihrer Gruppe, auf dem Sofa ....’ on the first evening Hans spends in the Berghof. It is there, looking at her, that he rejects Settembrini’s offer of return to the Flachland, a possibility he had already considered himself. Equally central is her position amongst those who take part in the Sunday afternoon excursions. She sits in the carriage, laughing and talking amongst the old grandmother and the other two Russian women, at the very centre of things. Every day at mealtimes she presents herself to her audience, she is, in short, the life and soul of any party, whether she

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301 GW III, p. 399.

302 ‘Das will ich glauben’, erwiderte Behrens. ‘Die Lymphe, das ist das Allerfeinste, Intimste und Zarteste in dem ganzen Körperbetrieb, - es schwebt Ihnen wohl vermutungsweise so vor, wenn Sie fragen. Man spricht immer vom Blut und seinen Mysterien und nennt es einen besonderen Saft. Aber die Lymphe, die ist ja erst der Saft des Saftes, die Essenz, wissen Sie, Blutmilch, eine ganz delizioso Tropharkeit, - nach Fettnahrung sieht sie übrigens wirklich wie Milch aus.’ GW III, p. 369, - but words like Blutmilch, Fettnahrung and Milch evoke also sensuous images of breastfeeding Madonnas. Thomas Mann elaborated on the effect of such images in his story ‘Gladius Dei’ GW VIII.

303 GW III, p. 121.
goes for a ride with some ladies from the ‘guten Russentisch’ or whether she monopolizes the ‘Raucherkabinett’ with her group. The Goddess is there, dazzling, alluring, and captivating all those men and women who are ready to fall for her charm, not least Hofrat Behrens, who paints her in oil. For all his bonhomie towards Hans, the Hofrat sees a rival in him as these details may suggest:

1. When Behrens gives Hans an injection, he stabs him, giving him as much pain as possible.

2. Behrens loses his temper when Hans wants to stay, even though Joachim wishes to leave the sanatorium; and he accuses Hans of calling him a pimp.

3. His Schadenfreude when Mynheer Peeperkorn arrives with Clawdia.

Then there is the Mannheimer with his pitiful as well as distasteful worship of Clawdia; there is Fräulein Engelhart (she explains to Hans in chapter four, *Tischgespräche*, that Clawdia is a woman of experience) and her coy and repressed adoration. It all helps to create the image of a *femme fatale*, not least because of many of the inmates of the ‘Berghof’; both male and female alike, are infatuated with Clawdia. In her inapproachability and mystique, her catlike, stealthy walk and manner,

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304 When Hans confesses to him that he has got to ‘know’ her better Behrens gives himself away and jabs Hans rather roughly when he administers a regular injection, then he adds on his own accord: “Niedlich, was?” Hans carries on regardless: “[...] aber mit Frau Chauchat und mir hat es in letzter Stunde doch noch getroffen und arrangiert, gesprächsweise sind wir uns...” Hans Castorp zog die Luft durch die Zähne ein. Er hatte die Spritze empfangen. “FF!” machte er rückwärts. “Das war sicher ein hochwichtiger Nerv, den Sie da zufallig getroffen haben, Herr Hofrat [...]” GW III, p. 490. When he tells the Hofrat this, Castorp is perfectly aware what this must mean to him, just as he knows what he is doing when at a later point he drops a hint to Peeperkom about his old affair with Clawdia. Even though we know him as kindhearted and have been convinced of his *Treuherzigkeit*, he is also ‘verschlagen’, as Clawdia states at some point with indulgence.

Behrens gloats over the fact that Clawdia has returned with a new lover, Mynheer Peeperkorn, and Clawdia was always extraordinarily well informed about everyone’s physiological condition, including that of Joachim and Hans. These are signs to worry about and there is friction between the two men, there is rivalry.

305 Thomas Sprecher suggests in his essay *Kur-, Kultur- und Kapitalismuskritik*, in *Auf dem Weg zum Zauberberg*, (Frankfurt a. M., Klostermann 1997), p. 203, that since Clawdia is aware that Joachim is ‘sérieusement malade’ she must have a special line to Behrens, but Fräulein Engelhart knows many little details about Clawdia, including the fact that she is being painted by the Hofrat, without having a special wire.
her beautiful, flamboyant clothes – it is very definitely Clawdia who keeps Hans on the magic mountain.

Even so, there are also rationally determinable causes at work: tuberculosis is an illness, as Behrens explains, with certain side effects:

"Ja, ja Gentlemen, die verfluchte Libido! [...] Sie haben natürlich noch Vergnügen an der Chose, Ihnen kann's recht sein [...] Aber so ein Anstaltschef, der hat davon die Neese plein, das können Sie [...] mir glauben. Kann ich dafür, daß die Phthise nun mal mit besonderer Konkupiszenz verbunden ist ...Ich habe es nicht so eingerichtet, aber eh' man sich's versieht, steht man da wie ein Hüttchenbesitzer...""306

It is also an illness of young people as Settembrini points out to Hans:

"'Wissen Sie, Ingenieur, was das heißt: 'Dem Leben verlorengehen'?
Ich, ich weiß es, ich sehe es hier alle Tage. Spätestens nach einem halben Jahr hat der junge Mensch der heraufkommt (und es sind fast lauter junge Menschen, die heraufkommen), keinen anderen Gedanken mehr im Kopf als Flirt und Temperatur.'"307

The sanatorium is therefore an ideal breeding ground for decadence and morally lax behaviour – 'a stronghold so to speak of formlessness.'308 People like Joachim arrive as innocents and then have to battle to preserve that innocence. People like Hans arrive by chance and make the Berghof their permanent home, but in his case, 'weil er es hinter den Ohren hatte'309, he uses it to enrich his mind and soul, but that includes adventures of a highly physical, sensuous nature too. And Clawdia? Why is she there? Superficially one could argue to seduce and find pleasure in seduction. But as the novel unfolds we learn a different story.

As I have already said, there is an immediate infection at work in the 'Berghof air', in Castorp's case not so much the physiological one but the underlying desire for death and decay. He needs a reason to stay. And Clawdia is the object of his desire; she beckons to him whenever he

306 GW III, p. 576.
307 GW III, p. 278.
309 I refer to GW III, p. 994: 'Aber zuletzt war es deine Geschichte; da sie dir zustieß, mußtest du's irgend wohl hinter den Ohren haben [...]’
feels close to leaving. She does this on the first evening. Hans is feeling shattered and unable to acclimatize and Settembrini sensibly suggests he should pack his suitcase at once and leave: “Sie meinen, ich sollte abreisen?” fragte Hans Castorp [...] “Wo ich gerade erst angekommen bin? Aber nein, wie will ich denn urteilen nach dem ersten Tage!” Zufällig blickte er ins Nebenzimmer bei diesen Worten und sah dort Frau Chauchat von vorn, ihre schmalen Augen und breiten Backenknochen. In chapter four he has an appointment for an examination with Hofrat Behrens. This will decide his permanent residence in the Berghof. There is a moment earlier that day when he wavers and is close to cancelling this appointment. He is just debating this action with himself when she, precisely at the stroke of 2 o’clock, turns to look at him with some provocation: ‘...als wollte sie sagen: “Nun? Es ist Zeit. Wirst du gehen?”’[...]- and das war ein Zwischenfall gewesen, der Hans Castorp in tiefster Seele verwirrt und entsetzt hatte...’ The reader is never told whether this was arranged between Madame Chauchat and Hofrat Behrens, or whether this was Clawdia’s own idea. Later she admits to him in the course of the French conversation that she knew of Hans’s appointment. However, since she makes no further confessions, the reader is not much wiser. The second question Hans asks himself on this occasion is left unanswered: could she have possibly known about the turmoil in his soul whether or not to keep the appointment? Perhaps it was pure intuition on her part, one that immediately turns his doubt into certainty. Of course he will stay. There remains the tantalising question (at least for Hans) whether Clawdia really is promiscuous or not. Gossip has it that she is. After all, does she not share the common lounge-terrace to have her afternoon naps with the other inmates of the sanatorium? The very same lounge where Hauptmann Miklosich turns the light off at will? What about the

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310 GW III, p. 124.
311 GW III, p. 248.
mysterious fellow Russian from Platz, who takes tea with her on a regular basis? And the shocking news about Hofrat Behrens, who paints her portrait in oil? Not forgetting the shadowy husband in Daghestan, who allows his moribund wife all the freedom she wants. These are the main talking-points of the gossip in the sanatorium; the question whether she has a lover or lovers occupies much of the table talk. It is plausible that she does indulge all manners of relationships. That would certainly explain her being so relaxed in handling all these admirers. Hans strongly suspects it, but then all his presumptions about Madame Chauchat are flawed because they are born out of his own desire. She is able to dispose of the gossip about the fellow Russian in the French conversation with some credibility. As to Behrens, the evidence points to some relationship of a not wholly platonic nature. Hans has to discover that he is extremely familiar with her physiognomy: "‘[...] wie wollen Sie denn fertig werden mit einer so vertrackten Visage. Man denkt, sie muß leicht zu erwischen sein, mit ihren hyperboreischen Jochbeinen und den Augen, wie aufgesprungene Schnitte in Hefegebäck. Ja, hat sich was[...] Kennen Sie sie?[...] Kann ich Sie sie denn?’”\textsuperscript{312} But Clawdia remains steadfastly dismissive about Behrens "‘Mais va donc avec ton Behrens!’”\textsuperscript{313} and during her absence there is obviously no correspondence between them; Behrens explains it away with her inability to write in French or German. In any event, Clawdia prefers to remain a mystery, an arcane figure that cannot be easily quantified.

For whatever reason, Hans is convinced of a special relationship between the two, even if it has not been actually consummated. He has to admit to himself when he first observes Peeperkorn: ‘‘[...] nicht ohne die Aufforderung an sein Herz, sich lustig zu machen über die Großmächtigkeit eines gegenwärtigen Besitzrechtes, das durch gewisse

\textsuperscript{312} GW III, p. 359.  
\textsuperscript{313} GW III, p. 468.
Vergangenheiten in ein recht schiefes Licht gesetzt wurde: gewisse
Vergangenheiten in der Tat, nicht dunkel unsichere, auf dem Gebiet der
dilettantischen Ölmalerei gelegen, wie sie ihn selbst wohl zu
beunruhigen vermocht hatten... But there is no proof. Clawdia
remains noncommittal; she goes on afternoon trips with the Russian
grandmamma and her granddaughter, as well as Joachim's beloved
Marusja. She sits at the little card table in the evening, in earnest
conversation with the other guests on her dining table. She has no eyes
for the smouldering Mannheimer, who adores her from afar, and apart
from the occasional amused smile, there is not much attention paid to
Hans either. The issue of Clawdia's promiscuity is inconclusive; all we
can say is that it is central to her image.

When Hans becomes too overbearing in trying to attract her
attention she quite openly snubs him. For days he is devastated. To
him, she is not just a goddess, she is, as T. J. Reed puts it 'the mistress of
his temperature', which falls now she has shown a complete lack of
interest in him. His justification for being near her is endangered. But
Clawdia is also his Angel: he perceives her on his daily walk with
Joachim 'langsam steigend, Frau Chauchat in Weiß, in weißem Sweater,
weißem Flanellrock und sogar in weißen Schuhen, das rothliche Haar
von der Morgensonne erleuchtet.' And then his punishment is over.
No more will she put him in his place with an icy stare, instead he is
forgiven and her eyes are smiling down on him. 'Es war die
Erlösung.' Here his imagination has turned Clawdia into a heavenly
creature, on which his sole happiness and well-being depends. Hans has
entered her world through the correct procedures, that is to say, he has
been accepted by the medical establishment as a patient and thus has
won the right to share her environment as a fellow sufferer. It is left

\[314\] GW III, p. 768.
\[315\] T. J. Reed, Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition, p. 232.
\[316\] GW III, p. 326.
\[317\] Ibid.
open to speculation whether Behrens uses Madame Chauchat as a means to capture another wealthy patient or whether Clawdia just reacts to Hans Castorp's obvious infatuation. Whatever may be the case, she is keeping him in the magic mountain – just as Marusja does Joachim and Frau Redisch almost succeeds with Konsul Tienapple.

So far, we have seen Clawdia as a type (*femme fatale*) and as a symbol (cat, snake, angel) and she has been accepted in these terms by many critics. Claus Tillmann writes in his study of women figures in Thomas Mann’s work: ‘[…] vielmehr sie ist ein Themengewebe, denn ihre (kaum erkennbare) Individualität, ihre psychologische Lebendigkeit wird offensichtlich der Idee, dem Motiv, dem Symbol geopfert.’ And it is, so he claims, her mystique that keeps the reader’s attention focussed on her. But although he draws a very sympathetic picture of Clawdia and has many interesting points to make, he seems to overlook the importance of the *Walpurgisnacht* and the French conversation. Not until then will the reader learn about Clawdia's inner life. It is during the course of the *Walpurgisnacht* that we meet a woman of wit, intelligence and perception; for instance she rebuffs Hans with spirited answers, she insists on an intelligent debate rather than a flirt. A good example is when she makes Hans aware of the seriousness of his cousin’s illness. Like Settembrini she is under no illusion about the doctors and the type of patient they attract. Like Settembrini she is very ill herself, more ill than most of the inmates, certainly more so than Hans. But in contrast to Settembrini she does not rush to moral judgement. On the whole, she is not interested in the reasons behind people’s decision to stay at the sanatorium. It bothers her only in Joachim’s case, because she is kind. It is, however, intriguing that she rejects Settembrini for his disapproval of her but accepts Joachim who has after all a degree more influence on Hans. Is it because of Marusja? The Russian girls may have exchanged intimacies about these two

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318 Claus Tillmann, *Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann*, p. 103
Northern Germans; or is she touched because Joachim makes attempts to learn to speak her language? (Hans, that keen scholar, does not!)

Prior to chapter five we cannot imagine what goes on behind Clawdia’s forehead. We see her entirely through the eyes of Hans and all we know of her is what gossip lets us have. Inge Diersen makes the following comment: ‘Die Darstellung, wie sich zwischen zwei Menschen etwas anbahnt, ohne daß sie miteinander reden, gehört zu den großen erzählerischen Delikatessen des Zauberbergs’. Although Clawdia shares the sphere of Hans’s environment, until the evening before the Walpurgisnacht her inner self is hidden. What the reader perceives is an illusion, an image, an apparition construed out of Hans’s wishes and desires, aided and abetted by the other patients and doctors. In the next chapter I shall explore the metaphor of the veil that alternatively obscures and reveals Clawdia. I want here to anticipate one aspect to conclude the examination of Clawdia as Venus; Hans is overwhelmed by her arm:

‘[…] der kaum bekleidet war, denn der Stoff der Ärmel war dünner als der der Bluse, und die leichteste Gaze, so daß der Arm nur eine gewisse duftige Verklärung dadurch erfuhr und ganz ohne Umhüllung wahrscheinlich weniger anmutig gewesen wäre.’

When he sees it naked he realizes how wrong this assumption was: ‘Irrtum! Verhängnisvolle Selbsttäuschung! Die volle, hochbetonte und blendende Nacktheit dieser herrlichen Glieder war ein Ereignis, weit stärker sich erweisend als die Verklärung von damals, eine Erscheinung, auf die es keine Antwort gab, als den Kopf zu senken und lautlos zu wiederholen: “Mein Gott!”’

The sheer force of Clawdia’s sensuality has been revealed.

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320 GW III, p. 182.
321 GW III, p. 453.
The Symbol of the Veil

Ich denke dabei gleich an den Helden meiner Erzählung, den jungen Ingenieur Hans Castorp, der am Ende des ersten Bandes der kirgisenäugigen Madame Chauchat eine seltsame Liebeserklärung macht, der er das Schleiergewand einer fremden Sprache, der französischen, überwerfen kann. Thomas Mann develops the character of Madame Chauchat from an icon and sex symbol into a woman who emerges out of the dreams and illusions of male fantasy to assert her freedom and autonomy. Generally enigmatically withdrawn, she occasionally comes into sharp focus as a person, moving from absence to presence so to speak. To assist this, Mann uses a powerful metaphor – the veil. Like a stripper, but without the erotic intention, Clawdia loses layer after layer of the props and images Hans has superimposed on her to satisfy his fantasies. As she leaves the image of *femme fatale* behind, as well as her prototype 'Hippe', she emerges from being a fetished object and becomes a moral entity.

Viewed in Freudian terms, the novel deals with repression. Hans is an acutely repressed individual who is profoundly aroused by the morally lax atmosphere of the *Berghof* because of the sudden lapse of etiquette, the raucous behaviour of his neighbours from the 'schlechten Russentisch' and all the other seductive elements so that he is prepared to lay himself open to knowledge (in both its erotic and philosophical connotations), influences he would most likely have resisted in the *Flachland*. Had he remained there his latent sensuality and artistic leanings (the watercolour he produced as a youngster is an indication of it) might have been easily satisfied by some 'gesundem Gänscchen'. The type of feverish passion that prevails at the *Berghof* is very new to him and Clawdia comes to him as some form of revelation. Here is someone who is not repressed or no longer repressed (we know that she

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122 GW XI, p. 602.
has been visiting Krokowski's analytical labyrinth for some time). This expresses itself in her obvious lack of inhibition. In the first instance we are constantly reminded of her way of dressing. The way she clothes her body is of great importance and Hans soon becomes an expert on her wardrobe. In the French conversation we see that she is amused by this: "Du hast ein neues Kleid"; sagte er, um sie betrachten zu dürfen, und hörte sie antworten: "Neu? Du bist bewandert in meiner Toilette?" But by that time she has already exposed her body to him, in the sense that she left her arms uncovered, her arms that seem to symbolize to Hans Castorp the very essence of her physicality. Just as he exclaims "Mein Gott, ich sehe" at the exposure of Joachim's skeleton during the X-ray session, he whispers "Mein Gott" when Clawdia appears with unclad arms. But whether she veils her body or whether she exposes it, her sexual attraction is overwhelming, not just to Hans but to many of the other inmates too, male and female alike. As a foreigner from a land that is perceived as barbaric and where emotions are allowed to erupt into unbridled passion (as Russia was sometimes seen then) and certainly from a country very far away, she is seen as a women who will permit anything and who is capable of setting free new and daring desires in men and women (Fräulein Engelhart pants when she talks about Clawdia, her face becomes red, and her eyes shiny).

324 GW III, p. 466.
325 GW III, p. 305.
326 GW III, p. 453.
327 A good example of how Russia was seen even in 1923 is Klaus Mann's description in his reminiscences: 'Die russischen Emigranten, von denen Berlin um diese Zeit wimmelte, übten eine besondere Anziehungskraft auf mich aus. Warum hatten sie fliehen müssen? Waren sie die unschuldigen Opfer bolschewistischer Willkür? Oder hatten sie es ihrerseits arg getrieben, solange sie noch daheim auf ihren Schlossern saßen? Dort mochte es recht grausig-lustig zugegangen sein; man tat sich gütlich an Wodka und Kaviar, während die Leibeigenen geknöpft wurden und die Damen sich von dämonischen Popen hypnotisieren ließen. Ja, wer sich mit so barbarisch-provokanter Wildheit amüsiert hatte... Klaus Mann, Der Wendepunkt, (Reinbek bei Hamburg, Rowohlt, 2001), p.175 and Frl. Engelhart in Der Zauberberg speculates about Clawdia's marriage: 'Vielleicht gefällt es ihr nicht in Daghestan hinter dem Kaukasus, einer so wilden, entfernten Gegend, das wäre am Ende nicht zu verwundern. Aber ein wenig muß es doch an dem Manne liegen, wenn es ihr so gar nicht bei ihm gefällt. Er hat ja einen französischen Namen, aber darum ist er doch ein russischer Beamter, und das ist ein roher Menschenschlag, wie sie mir glauben können. Ich habe einmal einen davon gesehen, er hatte so einen eisenfarbenen Backenbart und so ein rotes Gesicht...und dann haben sie es alle mit dem Wutki, dem Branntwein, wissen Sie [...]' GW III, p. 194.
Hans watches her from afar, her day-to-day activities. Clawdia appears here and there from nowhere; as Hans walks down the stairs or after strolling through the sanatorium to familiarize himself with his new surroundings, he catches glimpses of her. There she is, suddenly and unexpectedly, walking in front of him, almost as if to tease him. It is difficult to say who instigates this cat and mouse game. The obsession is located in Hans. She reacts with benevolent amusement, occasionally with a mild irritation. But she is aware of his pursuit of her; in the French conversation she comments on the fact that he is such a good and thorough spy. ("Vous êtes joliment fort en espionnage, je l’avoue.")

Hans prefers to enjoy Clawdia with his eyes, he does not really wish to talk to her. "Hans Castorp sah in seinem stillen Verhältnis zu dem nachlässigen Mitgliede derer hier oben ein Ferienabenteuer, das vor dem Tribunal der Vernunft – seines eigenen vernünftigen Gewissens – keinerlei Anspruch auf Billigung erheben konnte: [...] Nein, ihre wirkliche Bekanntschaft zu suchen, kam ihm nicht in den Sinn [...]" Of course, this is a method of bestowing a new identity on her, one that protects his illusion and fits in with his fantasies about this woman. Later, she will chide him for this attitude. But at this point, Hans simply does not wish to be sobered, disillusioned. He takes great care not to destroy the image he has made of her; he tries to avoid any true confrontation. In that sense he prefers her veiled, as he reflects during the first of Krokowski’s lectures. We recall that Hans is sitting behind Clawdia and gazes at her lightly clad arm, ‘eine duftige Verklärung’, that enhances its beauty rather than concealing it. In this spirit he prefers to ignore the fact that although still young, she is somewhat older than he is and this can be traced in her face; ‘Hans Castorp wußte und hatte es früher selbst zur Sprache gebracht, daß Frau

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328 GW III, p. 473.
329 GW III, p. 203.
330 GW III, p. 182.
Chauchat im Profil nicht günstig aussah, etwas scharf, nicht mehr ganz jung. Die Folge? Er vermied es, sie im Profil zu betrachten, schloß buchstäblich die Augen, wenn sie ihm zufällig von fern oder nah diese Ansicht bot, es tat ihm weh.\cite{GW III, p. 315} It explains why he does not seek exchange of thought or even a personal introduction to Clawdia. Joachim, who is even more repressed than his cousin,\cite{GW III, p. 355} knows precisely what Hans is up to; he harbours very similar feelings towards the other young Russian woman, Marusja, at his table. But as a potential army officer he is somewhat more disciplined and keeps better control over his emotional outpourings than does the civilian Hans. Hofrat Behrens is equally suspect. He shares a common ground with his patients and their libido as part of their illness in that he is not just a doctor but also as a fellow sufferer; and as such he is hardly in a position to lay claim to any kind of moral high ground. However, when it comes to portraying his object of desire, Behrens comes closer to the truth then is comfortable for Hans. Although he allows her some drapes, lightly veiling her shoulders and bust, he portrays her as older than she is (at least it seems like that to Hans) and does not flatter her complexion or features. He draws her 'warts and all' or 'wie sie leibt und lebt'\cite{GW III, p. 127} according to Hans Castorp. Nevertheless, he manages to convey the characteristics of her skin with perfect realism. As her doctor he has spent some time studying it and Hans is jealous. In short, Behrens has expressed a truth about Clawdia that cuts through Hans's artificial conception. The Hofrat studies the outer appearance of her body when she sits for him and its inner appearance during his surgery hours. He does not, indeed cannot, close his eyes to reality. The reason for the realism of his painting, so he tells Hans, is that he has precise

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\begin{quote}
\cite{GW III, p. 315.}
\cite{GW III, p. 355.}
\cite{GW III, p. 31.}
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knowledge of the matter. While he is capturing her skin on canvas he is aware as a scientist how it is structured, he knows all about its origins, its functions. It is therefore not surprising that his oil painting shows her as she is in physiological terms, i.e. not the Clawdia Hans would like to see. He explains the nature of her Slavonic face, her eyes, the so-called ‘Steppenwolfslichter’ to Hans, again emphasizing the fact that as her doctor he knows her inside out. One thinks of the episode when Clawdia shares the small waiting room with the cousins. For the first time it is not really any longer possible to cling to illusions. In such a small space Hans observes every detail of her physiognomy but his mind soon sways from the path of reality and ponders about that which he cannot see, her inside: ‘Plötzlich erinnerte sich Hans Castorp, daß auch sie hier in der Erwartung saß, durchleuchtet zu werden. Der Hofrat malte sie; er gab ihre äußere Erscheinung mit Öl und Farbstoffen auf der Leinwand wieder. Jetzt aber würde er im Halbdunkel Lichtstrahlen auf sie lenken, die ihm das Innere ihres Körpers bloßlegten.’ Hans’s face darkens at the thought; he has some way to go yet until he celebrates her body and the organisms that are veiled by her flesh but exposed in the x-ray: ‘Oh, les douces régions de la jointure intérieure du coude et du jarret avec leur abondance de délicatesses organiques sous leurs coussins de chair! […] Oui, mon dieu, laisse-mois sentir l’odeur de la peau de ta rotule, sous laquelle l’ingénieuse capsule articulaire sécrète son huile glissante!’ and as a memento of his love he keeps the X-ray

334 Behrens compares her face to the way she walks: ‘‘Haben Sie schon manchmal gehen sehen? Wie sie geht, so ist ihr Gesicht. Eine Schleicherin.’’ GW III, p. 359.
335 GW III, p. 299.
337 GW III, p. 477.
picture of Clawdia, the essence of sanatorium love, on his bedside table. Both men can only comfort themselves with science – the scientific exploration of her physicality. The true nature of the ‘Genius des Ortes’, that shadowy self, remains a mystery to them and in this sense she stays veiled. Claus Tillmann suggests that ‘Clawdia ist letztlich nur eine “Dame im Vorübergehen”, ein “verwischter Schatten” – auch für die übrigen Protagonisten’ to the point that she is not really able to develop ‘Eigendynamik [...] um sich aus dem Schatten, besser aus dem Traumschatten’ H.C.’s zu befreien.’ I suggest that once Hans’s gaze of male desire has been averted the reader is allowed to perceive Clawdia as more than a vague shadow; there is considerable dynamic development after all for this character.

No doubt Thomas Mann’s own repressed condition helped him to write such a bizarre love story, such a tribute to the indirection of desire. I feel he was right to put Hans’s confession of his desires in the removed medium of French. It does to some extent distance the reader from the contents of the words so that they seem not so much embarrassing as moving; it certainly seems to have the desired effect on Clawdia, who (in spite of the prevailing opinion in the Berghof) has not yet uttered a single vulgar word in the novel (nor will she). The degree of rapture present in Hans’s stammering anticipates Nabokov’s novel Lolita; one thinks of a passage such as the following: ‘My only grudge against nature was that I could not turn my Lolita inside out and apply voracious lips to her young matrix, her unknown heart, her nacreous liver, the sea-grapes of her lungs, her comely twin kidneys.’ Thomas Mann had read Walt Whitman’s poem I sing the body electric, an unashamed glorification of the human body – male or female – in its

339 GWIII, p. 485.
340 Claus Tillmann, Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann, pp. 105-106.
most detailed form. These enthusiasms found their way into Der Zauberberg: "The curious sympathy one feels, when feeling with the hand the naked meat of the body; The beauty of the waist, and thence of the hips, and thence downward toward the knees; The thin red jellies within you, [...] O I say, these are not the parts and poems of the Body only, but of the Soul, O I say now these are the Soul!" Castorp's fantasies about Clawdia oscillate between the veiled body on the one hand and the viscerally exposed body on the other. At one time he wishes to cover her with layers of disguise by superimposing his images onto her, at another time he wishes to strip away all layers and explore her body where no man, (with the possible exception of a doctor or a surgeon) has yet been able to reach. Any last barrier of decency is broken when he wakes from a dream where he kisses the inside of Clawdia’s unkempt hands; it means that the veil is torn aside:

Statt aber zum Guten Russentisch zu gehen, bewegte die unerzogene Frau sich ohne Laut auf Hans Castorp zu und reichte ihm schweigend die Hand zum Kusse, - aber nicht den Handrücken reichte sie ihm, sondern das Innere, und Hans küßte sie in die Hand, in ihre unveredelte, ein wenig breite und kurzflängige Hand mit der aufgerauhten Haut zu Seiten der Nägel. Da durchdrang ihn wieder von Kopf bis Fuß jenes Gefühl von wüster Süßigkeit, das in ihm aufgestiegen war, als er zur Probe sich des Druckes der Ehre ledig gefühlt und die bodenlosen Vorteile der Schande genossen hatte...  

This scene of love revealed by means of a dream appears repeatedly in Thomas Mann’s work, from Aschenbach onwards. This experience is shared by Mut-em-enet in Joseph in Ägypten; she too has a dream in which Joseph kisses the inside of her hands and on waking after that dream she knows she is helplessly in love with him. Sibylla in Der Erwählte has a real-life encounter. When she kisses the wounded hand of Gregorius, her hitherto repressed feelings overwhelm her. On all these occasions the ‘veil is lifted’ and the truth is revealed.

342 Walt Whitman, I Sing the Body Electric, in Leaves of Grass. 1900.
343 GW III, p. 131.
Clawdia emerges out of the twilight of his dreams similar to the
dawn that Hans awaits every morning anew during his enforced stay in
bed: ‘[...]so war es unterhaltend, das allmähliche Ergrauen und
Erscheinen des Zimmers, das Hervortreten und Entschleiertwerden der
Dinge zu beobachten’,\textsuperscript{344} and a few pages further on:

Ihr Bild hatte ihm vorgeschwebt, wenn er, frühwach, in das sich
zögernd entschleiernde Zimmer, oder, am Abend, in die dichter
werdende Dämmerung geblickt hatte (auch zu jener Stunde, als
Settembrini unter plötzlichem Aufflammen des Lichtes bei ihm
eingetreten war, hatte es ihm überaus deutlich vorgeschwebt, und
dies war der Grund gewesen, weshalb er bei dem Anblick des
Humanisten errotet war); an ihren Mund, ihre Wangenknochen,
have Augen, deren Farbe, Form, Stellung ihm in die Seele schnitt,
ihren schlaffen Rücken, ihre Kopfhaltung, den Halswirbel im
Nackenausschnitt ihrer Bluse, ihre von dünnster Gaze verklarten
Arme hatte er gedacht[...] \textsuperscript{345}

The veil is a powerful theme, then, in connection with Madame
Chauchat and an important key to her charm for Hans. The
relationship between them is all about veiling and unveiling. It is about
recognising the unconscious, dragging it into the light of consciousness
and confronting it. Before the French conversation, Clawdia, like
Schopenhauer’s Maja, is to Hans ‘die verschleierte Schönheit als
Blendwerk angesehene Erscheinungswelt.’\textsuperscript{346} The eye-opening
experience starts early on in Hans Castorp’s stay at the \textit{Berghof}.
Already aware of the \textit{Berghof} as a magic circle he tries to escape
temporarily with a walk into the mountains, but it is now that he has to
realize the true nature of his feelings for Madame Chauchat and to
admit to himself his own readiness to stay. In a half-dream Hans
remembers an early erotic adventure with a boy only slightly older than
he when at school; he opens his eyes wide when he comes to:

\begin{quote}
Man könnte sagen, daß die Gestalt des ‘Kirgisen’ unmerklich aus
Nebeln in sein Leben getreten war, langsam immer mehr
Deutlichkeit und Greifbarkeit gewonnen hatte, bis zu jenem
Augenblick der größten Nähe und Körperlichkeit auf dem Hofe, eine
Weile so im Vordergrunde gestanden hatte und dann allmählich
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{344} GW III, p. 283.
\textsuperscript{345} GW III, p. 288.
\textsuperscript{346} See quote at beginning of this chapter, GW XI, p. 602.
At that moment he anticipates his dreams and fantasies later on, when Clawdia's shadow appears to him at dawn, at dusk, always vague, always ready to dissolve into the twilight. I will concentrate on Hippe in the next chapter, but in the context of the veil symbolism I wish to point out that the revelation of his boyhood memory is sudden and startling and as a result he is in deep shock. "Nun, so leb' wohl und hab Dank!" he says, imitating the woodcutters he overheard a little while previously and who impressed him so much. He smiles to himself – and presumably also to Pribislav – with tears welling in his eyes. The unconscious has been freed, the repressed released. Farewell and thank you – this is said to Hippe, as Hans turns away from memory and to his new adventure. Just as the veil of dawn clears away from his room, leaving it visible in the early morning light, a curtain has risen from his inner eye. The memory of his old love is so overpowering that it literally moves him to tears. He can now return to the sanatorium, knowing the catalyst for his profound interest in Clawdia Chauchat. She is the mirror image of an earlier love and he, initiated with blood (his nose bleed) and near collapse, goes to her and makes her the new love of his heart – hence the smile in spite of the tears.

Clawdia is the first person he becomes aware of again after his return to the sanatorium. His seduction has now reached its peak. Again, he feels slightly revolted at the sight of her unkempt hands close in front of his eyes.

Es war beklemmend, die Hand so nahe vor Augen zu haben, - man mußte sie betrachten, ob man wollte oder nicht, sie studieren in allen Makeln und Menschlichkeiten, die ihr anhafteten, als habe man sie unter dem Vergrößerungsglas. [...]Hans Castorps Mund verzog sich, aber seine Augen blieben haften an Madame Chauchats Hand, und eine halbe und unbestimmte Erinnerung ging ihm durch
This reaction of initial repulsion is very much in line with Thomas Mann’s ideas of physical love. In his *Betrachtungen* he writes: ‘Maupassant, der kein Kostverächter war, nennt den Zeugungsakt einmal “unflatig und lächerlich” – “ordurier et ridicule”. Man muß eben sehr verliebt sein, um dem zu widersprechen.’ The best explanation for the relationship between Clawdia and Hans is perhaps given in *Dr. Faustus*:


This time Hans does not turn away in distaste as before, when he heard her slamming the door. He now overcomes his aversion that was after all part of the attraction in the first place and studies the hand in great detail. This falls neatly under the above theory about the initial aversion of one flesh for another. Krokowski’s analytical discourse has done its work on him already. Clawdia’s body takes centre stage; ‘Scham und Ekel’, the disreputable impulses, are put aside by Hans and immediately he is rewarded by the less dubious and the aesthetically more pleasing sight of her slightly veiled arm: ‘Der Arm war schöner, dieser reich hinter den Kopf gebogene Arm’ The human arm is repeatedly an object of fetishism in Thomas Mann’s work, it has great seductive powers, whether we look at Hetaera Esmeralda, Mut-em-enet,

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349 GW III, p. 181.
350 GW XII, p. 465.
351 GW VI, p. 250.
352 GW III, p. 182.
Imma Spoelman or the boys Hanno and Tadzio, even little Lorchen Cornelius.  

As Hans grows more and more obsessed with Clawdia, his fantasy supplants reality and he becomes enslaved by his desire. He did not suffer thus when in love with Hippe all those years ago. Then he was in control, but now he loses it. Quite openly, he makes a fool of himself, becomes a subject of ridicule, a slave to his obsession. Losing control is the lot of all Thomas Mann’s lovers. From Friedemann to Rosalie v. Tümmler they are doomed to become figures of fun or embarrassment, repelling or at least alienating those around them. Clawdia is perhaps the most generous of all objects of desire. Unlike Joseph, who firmly uses his seven carefully phrased reasons to protect his virginity, in order to remain loyal to the god of his father and not to become a victim of ‘Scham, Schuld und Spottgelächter’, Clawdia is the object of Hans’s adoration until she chooses to speak to him. When unveiling her body she also starts to reveal her thoughts, to communicate with Hans. The reader, like Hans Castorp, is in for a surprise.

I already said that many women characters in Der Zauberberg are surrounded by the most incredible gossip and Clawdia is no exception. It is therefore a shock when during the French conversation the reader is allowed to see Clawdia for the first time divorced from all image-making. She talks of the morality of sin, of headlong risk-taking and she does so under cover of the French language:

‘La morale? Cela t’interèresse? Eh bien, il nous semble, qu’il faudrait chercher la morale non dan la vertu, c’est-à-dire dans la raison, la discipline, les bonnes moeurs, l’honnêteté, - mais plutôt dans la contraire, je veux dire : dans le péché, en s’abandonnant au danger, à ce qui est nuisible à ce qui nous consume.’

354 GW V, p. 59.
355 GW III, p. 473.
It is, we know, Thomas Mann's own stance; he learned it from Nietzsche's thoughts on Wagner in *Ecce Homo* and he describes it in a letter to the publisher Paul Steegemann about a new translation of some poems by Verlaine:

> Was eigentlich das Sittliche, was das Moralische sei – Reinheit und Selbstbewahrung oder Hingabe, das heißt Hingabe an die Sünde, an das Schädliche und Verzehrende, ist ein Problem, das mich früh beschäftigte. Große Moralisten waren meistens auch große Sünder...Das Gebiet des Sittlichen ist weit, es umfaßt auch das des Unsittlichen. Große Moralisten, Menschen des weit gespannten Erlebnisses, durchmessen es ganz.\(^{356}\)

The thoughts Clawdia introduces here to Hans Castorp describe very much Thomas Mann's understanding of Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Wagner, Dostoyevsky: 'Meine Scheu [...] vor dem Genie als Krankheit und der Krankheit als Genie' he writes in *Dostojewski – Mit Maßen* and a little further on he elaborates: 'Mit anderen Worten: Gewisse Errungenschaften der Seele und der Erkenntnis sind nicht möglich ohne die Krankheit, den Wahnsinn, das geistige Verbrechen, und die großen Kranken sind Gekreuzigte und Opfer, der Menschheit und ihrer Erhöhung, der Erweiterung ihres Fühlens und Wissens, kurz ihrer höheren Gesundheit dargebracht.'\(^ {357}\) These notions penetrate Mann’s whole oeuvre, are in many ways its cornerstone. To allow Clawdia to utter these lines means that she occupies a very central position indeed, not just in Hans Castorp’s heart and mind but also in the universe of *Der Zauberberg* and Thomas Mann’s work in general. Clawdia spells out her views on morality; she prefers the morality of the trespassers to that of the virtuous, the morality of Sinner-Saints (St. Paul, St. Augustine), and the role of Maria Magdalena. This is a moment when she becomes Hans’s teacher – and we will see later in the novel that he has learned his lesson well.


\(^{357}\) GW IX, p. 667.
The consensus amongst the critics is that Hans Castorp's childhood memory of Hippe is the catalyst causing his great passion for Clawdia. This youthful crush on an older pupil in the playground of his school is long repressed. Because of some physical similarities (Asian features in combination with Nordic colouring), Hans loses himself to the Doppelgänger, but this time the homoerotic has migrated into heterosexual territory. Of course, in every other sense his infatuation is just as pointless: Clawdia is incurably ill, she cannot and must not have children (as Fräulein Engelhart observes), intercourse with her could possibly lead to infection, perhaps she is not even able any longer to entertain physical relationships. A realistic modern comparison would be a courtship with someone who is HIV positive. One would have to be very infatuated to seek physical love with such a person.

*Der Zauberberg* engages very fully with Freudian and Jungian concerns in the sense that this novel is all about repression, 'forbidden love', and longings and sexual fantasies which cannot be admitted. The pencil as a phallic symbol, for instance, is an obviously Freudian concept, as are Hans's dreams that tear the veil. On the other hand, there are hints of Jung's theory of individuation in one of the key themes in this novel: the female may be initially the seductress of the man, but later becomes his guide. Clawdia is very much Hans's anima, that is to say she is a *Führerin nach innen.*

Since research is not really sure how much Thomas Mann was really influenced by depth psychology at that time, it is difficult to narrow the concepts down to

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358 Thomas Mann, *Die Ehe im Übergang,* (1925), GW X, p. 199.
direct influence. Thomas Mann reacted with a certain irritation to Freud and since psychoanalysis was very much common currency then, it would have shaped Thomas Mann’s perception either knowingly or unknowingly and as Manfred Dierks points out, Thomas Mann ‘hatte längst im Sinne der Tiefenpsychologie denken gelernt, bevor er etwas von Freud oder Jung zur Kenntnis nahm’.

The lectures of his fictional psychiatrist, Dr. Krokowski, however, could have been delivered by Jung himself, who wrote: ‘Das Krankhafte kann nicht einfach wie ein Fremdkörper beseitigt werden, ohne dass man Gefahr läuft, zugleich etwas Wesentliches, das auch leben sollte, zu zerstören. Unsere Aufgabe besteht nicht darin, es zu vernichten, sondern wir sollten vielmehr das, was wachsen will, hegen und pflegen, bis es schließlich seine Rolle in der Ganzheit der Seele spielen kann.’ At the time Thomas Mann resumed writing Der Zauberberg, there is an entry in his diary on 24.5.1921 (when he was busy writing the conclusion to the fifth chapter): ‘Mittags im Park gelesen:...Aufsatz über ein neues Buch von Freud, der mich sehr anregte, auf schicksalsbestätigende Weise. Das Ende der Romantik, zu der ich noch gehöre, drückt sich auf alle Weise aus, auch und durch das Erbleichen und Absterben der Sexualsymbolik, die fast identisch mit ihr ist. (Parsifal)’

We know that this passage is about Freud’s paper of 1920 Jenseits des Lustprinzips which concerns itself with repetition compulsion, the theory of ‘death drive’ and ‘love drive’, which certainly underlies the snow chapter but also looms behind the relationship of Hans and Clawdia. It could be used as a model for Hans Castorp’s double obsession. His love for Hippe was ‘pure’ in comparison to what he feels for Clawdia, i.e. the sexual element therein would have been more or less unconscious. His general lack of drive in the matter can be explained in such terms. He did not pursue Hippe in the manner with which he pursues Clawdia; the climax of his relationship with him

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361 ibid., p. 292.
362 Jung, GW 16 §293.
is some kind of foreplay that does not look for fulfilment. Young as he was, it is by definition an adolescent's first awakening, kept in check by convention and lack of knowledge. The repeat of Hans's first love with Clawdia is the conscious admission to the 'love that does not dare to speak its name' that is to say, a relationship that by definition cannot be reproductive or serve as a basis for civic institutions (marriage). Thus, Thomas Mann shows himself very much engaged with the psychological concepts that found their voice during the first decades of the 20th century.

On yet another level, there is a similarity between the two passions in Hans's otherwise phlegmatic existence. Although Hippe was an icon beyond his reach, Hans did have one encounter with him. It was short and sweet but in the end almost forgotten. He borrows a pencil from him – the symbolism of the encounter is pretty obvious, for more than one reason. According to Hans's theory that he explains to Clawdia, it was the onset of his malady, the 'sickness unto death': '[…une fois déjà, lorsque j'étais collégiен, je t'ai demandé ton crayon, pour faire enfin ta connaissance mondaine, parce que je t'aimerai irrationnellement, et c'est de là, sans doute, c'est de mon ancien amour pour toi, que ce marques me restent que Behrens a trouvées dans mon corps, et qui indiquent que jadis aussi jetais malade[…]' He repeats this experience of 'borrowing a pencil' with Clawdia, the new Hippe in his life. 'Und indem ihre Köpfe sich darüber neigten, zeigte sie ihm die landläufige Mechanik des Stiftes, aus dem ein nadeldünnnes, wahrscheinlich hartes, nichtsagendes Graphitstänglein fiel, wenn man die Schraube öffnete.' The Wiederholungszwang here is undercut by an intriguing irony in that Clawdia’s pencil seems thin and sterile.

363 Thomas Mann, Tagebücher 1918-1921, p. 521.
364 'Und zog sein Crayon aus der Tasche, ein versilbertes Crayon mit einem Ring, den man aufwärts schieben mußte, damit der rot gefärbte Stift aus der Metallhülse wachse.'GW III, p. 173
365 GW III, p. 476.
366 GW III, p. 464.
Apart from the phallic symbolism the pen is a powerful symbol for male superiority (the intellect, writing), as Gilbert and Gubar point out: ‘That is, precisely because a woman is denied the autonomy – the subjectivity – that the pen represents she is not only excluded from culture (whose emblem might well be the pen) but she also becomes herself an embodiment of just those extremes of mysterious and intransigent Otherness which culture confronts with worship or fear, love or loathing.’ It is that form of creative intellect that women seem to lack in Thomas Mann’s novels and this gives rise to the reproach of his misogyny. However, the women from Gerada Buddenbrook to Clawdia Chauchat to Lotte Kestner resist the force of this dictum and find a voice of their own.

Whether male or female, both objects of desire are socially unacceptable. The two cases have in common the obsessiveness, the fetishization in place of real interaction. While his relationship with Clawdia goes on Hans is as faithful to her as he was to Hippe. Clawdia physically leaves the Berghof but spiritually she lives on as the ‘Genius des Ortes.’ And Hans remains enthralled, or as T. J. Reed suggests: ‘She has played her role of setting his Bildung in motion so effectively that after the Walpurgisnacht her physical presence is not needed.’ There are however seminal differences between the two love encounters. When the Hippe relationship has reached its quasi-climax, Hans’s desire is stilled. He withdraws from Hippe and only on account of his inherent loyalty and faithfulness does he notice him for another year. The relationship is entirely internalized; apart from the one bold approach about the pen, Hans does not seek any form of communication with Pribislav:

Denn von Freundschaft konnte nicht gut die Rede sein, da er Hippe ja gar nicht ‘kannte.’ Aber erstens lag nicht die geringste Nötigung zur Namengebung vor, da kein Gedanke daran war, daß der Gegenstand je zur Sprache gebracht werden konnte, - dazu eignete er

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sich nicht und verlangte auch nicht danach. Und zweitens bedeutet ein Name ja, wenn nicht Kritik, so doch Bestimmung, das heißt Unterbringung im Bekannten und Gewohnten, während Hans Castorp doch von der unbewussten Überzeugung durchdrungen war, daß ein inneres Gut, wie dieses vor solcher Bestimmung und Unterbringung ein für allemal geschützt sein sollte.\textsuperscript{369}

His pursuit of Clawdia is much more persistent. Be it that he is now older, that he is grown into a man and has made a decision about his sexual inclinations; he will not rest until the act, only symbolic in Hippe's instance, is committed and his yearning has been expressed. He loses Clawdia almost immediately after possessing her. Yet as with Hippe, he learns to adjust to this. But, unlike the first time, he does not resign himself and forget. This, he tells Peeperkorn much later in the novel, is his undoing. He feels he has given his life away for her sake, has been so lost to the world and that he may as well be dead. Later on in this chapter I shall elaborate on the fact that he does not forget Clawdia. Hippe and Clawdia have merged more or less into one, but it is Clawdia with whom he works out his relationship towards love and life.\textsuperscript{370}

The other difference is class-related. Hippe was the son of an eminent academic, and himself a high-flying student; very different from the more average Hans. He was, as Hans cares to remember while looking at Clawdia, from a highly respectable, bourgeois home notwithstanding his pagan, foreign name and unusual looks. Even though their physical resemblance is so very striking, Madame Chauchat is radically different with her lack of restraint, her careless door slamming and her indifference to most rules of civilized society.

\textsuperscript{369} GW III, p. 171.

\textsuperscript{370} Many interesting discourses have been written on the Hippe/Clawdia phenomenon, and in essence I agree with them all (Tillmann, Somerhage, Böhm, Kurzke, Wysling etc.). Where I beg to differ is that I feel that the homoerotic first, non-sexual relationship has developed and grown into adult love, an important factor if one wants to understand why Clawdia is pivotal to teach Hans the lesson on 'Liebe und Güte', indeed, why she returns.
The Romantic element, that is to say the abandonment to death, even the glorification of it, is inherent in his relationship with Clawdia rather than that with Hippe. It is for her that he forsakes his practical inclinations, for her that he surrenders to the charms of speculation and research. To me this is a profound difference – precisely that between adolescent love that does not know its direction or true purpose and adult love that can, if the participants so wish, in its time develop into spiritual creativity and into a mature and reciprocal relationship.

I devote a section of this thesis to Hippe because as the precursor of Clawdia he is very important. Hans Castorp's love for Clawdia has this in common with that for Hippe or any homoerotic relationship: it does not promise creativity in biological terms. Yet its intensity is all consuming:

‘Oh, l'amour, tu sais...Le corps, l'amour, la mort, ces trois ne font qu'un. Car le corps, c'est la maladie et la volupté, et c'est lui qui fait la mort, oui, ils sont charnel tous deux, l'amour et la mort, et voilà leur terreur et leur grande magie! Mais la mort, tu comprends, c'est d'une part une chose mal famée, impudente qui fait rougir de honte...Or, de même, le corps, lui aussi, et l'amour du corps, sont une affaire indécente et fâcheuse, et le corps rougit et pâlit à sa surface par frayeur et honte de lui-même.’  

It is a love that cannot be described by conventional means, i.e. – traditional little songs from the Flachland do not capture it. Hans tries to hum them to himself, to reflect his feelings, then he dismisses these associations with contempt. When turning his emotions away from life, towards what is considered unnatural, he moves away from preconceived ideas of love and life. What he wants is immoderate and deeply unconventional. His feelings for Hippe as a young boy were an overture to that consuming passion he has for Pribislav's reincarnation

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and respiritualization as Clawdia. But crucially the Hans Castorp /Clawdia Chauchat relationship does become a reciprocal relationship between thoughtful, confiding adults.

372 GW III, p. 476.
Settembrini's Reservations about Clawdia

I said previously that many people are in love with Clawdia, but those who do not love her resent her, in particular the self-appointed mentors of Hans Castorp. Clawdia threatens the pedagogue Settembrini, who for all his liberalism is a racist (he refers to Russians as being nothing but Parthians and Scythians and there are many speeches directed against Asia and the Asian stereotype) and a male chauvinist (he will not accept Clawdia, because he fears her sexual power). Settembrini is appalled at what is happening to Hans:


Hans Castorp is warned within the first month or so of his stay by his mentor Settembrini of the dangers of the magic mountain, represented by its 'genius' Clawdia Chauchat:

"Halten Sie auf sich! Seien Sie stolz, und verlieren Sie sich nicht an das Fremde! Meiden Sie diesen Sumpf, dies Eiland der Kirke, auf dem ungestraft zu hausen Sie nicht Odysseus genug sind. Sie werden auf allen Vieren gehen, Sie neigen sich schon auf Ihre vorderen Extremitäten, bald werden Sie zu grunzen beginnen, - hüten Sie sich!"

Hans, trapped between the pedagogue and the slant-eyed women, stands his ground. He defends his right to be near Clawdia. "Sie sind doch Humanist? Wie können Sie schlecht auf den Körper zu sprechen sein?" he asks and triggers Settembrini's definition of all that is objectionable about Clawdia in his eyes. He defends the body when it is a matter of its emancipation and beauty, freedom of the senses and happiness. He despises it 'sofern er als Prinzip der Schwere und der

373 GW III, p. 340.
374 GW III, p. 345.
375 GW III, p. 348.
Trägheit sich der Bewegung zum Lichte entgegenstellt, ihn verabscheuen, sofern er gar das Prinzip der Krankheit und des Todes vertritt, sofern sein spezifischer Geist der Geist der Verkehrtheit ist, der Geist der Verwesung, der Wollust und der Schande.\textsuperscript{376} Hans remains stubborn in his defiance and ends truly in the arms of his Venus and (in Settembrini’s eyes) Circe, in spite of the Italian’s urgings to be sensible. Is Settembrini right in warning Hans of Clawdia? First it is important to note that as a man of letters, Settembrini is always quick to find allegories and literary comparisons for Clawdia, some very dazzling to Hans, all of them apt in their own way. In many ways she is a Circe with her swamp and purple bed to keep Hans in her enthralment.\textsuperscript{377} But it is not true that she turns her victims into swine. Rather, I would think of Hofrat Behrens in this context, since it is he who introduces a game of painting pigs with eyes blindfolded. That drives Hans to seek Clawdia to borrow a pencil from her. But by the time they have been talking to each other the game has moved on. Clawdia, if anything, has actually prevented him from demeaning himself by joining in such somewhat foolish games.

Settembrini quotes from Goethe’s \textit{Faust} and declares Clawdia to be Lilith. Again there is some justification to compare her with Adam’s first wife, who was expelled from paradise because she refused to be inferior to him. This figure has been taken up by feminist writers\textsuperscript{378} and the comparison suits Clawdia. Lilith’s beautiful hair, so dangerous to men, is her only decoration; famously Clawdia never dons jewellery until she reappears with Peeperkorn, wearing his pearls (symbol of

\textsuperscript{376} GW III, p. 350.
\textsuperscript{378} See Sandra M. Gilbert & Susan Gubar, \textit{Th Madwoman in the Attic}, p. 35.
purity and grace). I see her as Lilith in the sense that she appeals to men’s repressed sexuality, but also that she insists on her spiritual independence. Legend has it that Lilith adopted the form of the snake to tempt Adam and Eve out of paradise as an act of revenge. The character of Clawdia is given snakelike qualities (‘sie glitt, sie strich’).

Settembrini’s similes throw an interesting light on Clawdia: on the one hand she is almost a feminist figure in her insistence of being the equal of man; on the other hand she is an unashamed femme fatale. ‘Nicht zufällig ist die charmante und geistreiche Clawdia Chauchat eine der ganz wenigen Frauengestalten im Werk Thomas Manns, die nicht nur als weiblicher character durchgezeichnet, sondern auch intellektuell profiliert ist’ says Inge Dirseen. It is one of the enigmas in literary history yet to be solved: how Thomas Mann, the pater familias and conservative husband, with his repressed homoeroticism and Patrician outlook, managed to create Clawdia, a free spirited yet alluring woman, the very spirit of the magic mountain.

In accordance with another favourite simile of Settembrini, she is also Beatrice who guides Dante through the nine circles of Paradise. It is actually Settembrini who calls Clawdia Hans’s Beatrice and introduces a different image of her, (who up to then has been seen only as a femme fatale by all in the Berghof): ‘Was höre ich, Ingenieur? Was kommt mir gerüchteweise zu Ohren? Ihre Beatrice kehrt wieder? Ihre Führerin durch alle neun kreisenden Sphären des Paradieses?’ But we know what Settembrini really thinks of Beatrice, what he believes Dante to have thought of her: ‘[...] nicht den kränklichen und mystagogischen Schatten der Beatrice habe der Dichter mit dem Namen der ‘Donna gentile e pietosa’ geehrt; so heiße vielmehr seine Gattin, die im Gedicht das Prinzip der diesseitigen Erkenntnis, der praktischen Lebensarbeit

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379 GW III, pp. 204, 293, 478 etc.
381 GW III, p. 717.
Hans Castorp takes everything Settembrini says with a pinch of salt (‘...ganz fest verließ er sich nicht darauf, in Anbetracht der Windbeutelei des Vermittlers’); for him, Clawdia/Beatrice embodies the east and its lascivious tendency towards illness, indiscipline – and also, by implication, much that is humane, or ‘mähnschlich’. While writing Der Zauberberg Thomas Mann offers a contribution to the magazine Jugend on Dante in 1921: ‘Aber im Zwielicht der Zeiten stehend blicken wir mit neuer Schicksalssympathie auf des Florentiners ferne und feierliche Figur, die, zwischen Scholastik und Erkenntnis, zwischen der mystischen Führerin Beatrice und Vergil, dem famoso saggio, ebenfalls von einem solchen doppelten Licht umflossen ist.’

This sympathy may be extended to Hans who is equally placed between the literati and the mystical guide. This theme is further exploited in the third chapter, ‘Von den beiden Großvatern und der Kahnfahrt im Zwielicht.’ Hans remembers a lonely expedition in a little boat on a lake, one Indian summer evening:

Da hatte zehn Minuten lang, während Hans Castorp sich über die stillen Wasser dahin ruderte, eine verwirrende und träumerische Konstellation geherrscht. Im Westen war heller Tag gewesen, ein glasig nüchternes, entschiedenes Tageslicht, aber wandte er den Kopf, so hatte er in eine ebenso ausgemachte, hochst zauberhafte, von feuchten Nebeln durchsponnene Mondnacht geblickt.

The strongly opposing domains of the West (classical enlightenment/the world of work and achievement in his Northern homeland) and the East (Romanticism/indulgence) define the spiritual battleground on which Hans finds himself. And Hans does not waver, unhesitatingly he decides in favour of the sphere represented by Clawdia Chauchat:

Was oder wer aber befand sich auf dieser anderen, dem Patriotismus, der Menschenwürde und der schönen Literatur entgegengesetzten Seite, wohin Hans Castorp sein Sinnen und Betreiben nun wieder lenken zu dürfen glaubte? Dort befand sich...Clawdia Chauchat, - schlaff, wurmstichig und kirgisäugig;

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382 GW III, p. 223.
383 GW III, p. 221.
384 GW X, p. 867.
385 GW III, p. 218.
386 (This is based on a real life experience Thomas Mann had one year on the Chiemsee, he mentions it in the 1919-1921 diaries, while writing Der Zauberberg.)
Settembrini speaks of this Beatrice as the 'kränklche und mystagogische Schatten der Beatrice', a description which suits Clawdia very well, she is undeniably 'kränklch' or 'wurmstichig' although, as Fräulein Engelhart points out to Hans: 'Gewiß, krank ist sie. Aber doch nicht so. Doch nicht so ernstlich krank, daß sie geradezu immer in Sanatorien und von ihrem Manne getrennt leben müßte. Das muß schon weitere und andere Gründe haben. Hier nimmt man allgemein an, daß es noch andere hat.' Clawdia does play a mystagogic role: a Priestess who introduces Hans into the mysteries of the magic mountain, a world of death and decay, she is the true 'genius loci' and Hans will follow her shadow for many years. I already mentioned that the X-ray picture of her skeleton, a shadowy being as if straight from Hades, stands at night on his bedside table next to him when he sleeps. During the day he carries it literally with him in his breast pocket and does so until he leaves the magic mountain.

It is ironic that on account of his prejudice the individualist Settembrini cannot appreciate Clawdia's uniqueness. She in return senses the narrowness of his humanist sympathies, a humanism founded on theory and systems rather than on feelings. It is all-embracing but leaves little scope for affection and love for specific people (barring Hans). This is where Clawdia resents Hans's otherwise very likeable mentor. Hans's mental picture of Clawdia is an echo of his boyhood love, Hippe, or even of an idealized female, an idol; it may be

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387 GW III, p. 226.
388 GW III, p. 194.
worth remembering that he never had any women living close to him (no mother or grandmother, no sister, only ham-fisted Shaleen the housekeeper and one encounter with the female gender in a brothel). Clawdia is the outrageous sex symbol he can fantasize about. She constantly changes her role – that is the foundation of her complexity and allure for Hans, and it makes it impossible for Settembrini to compete with her. Settembrini’s attitude towards love, passion and women is inconclusive. On the one hand, he is described as a playboy, a man with an eye for a pretty woman, a flirt. On the other hand he objects to Clawdia, partly for pedagogic reasons but he also rejects her because he sees her as an inferior choice for Hans. In his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, Thomas Mann draws a quick sketch of the type of ‘literati’ he envisages in Signor Settembrini:

Das Verhältnis aber des philanthropischen Literaten zum Elementaren und zur Leidenschaft ist zwiespältig und unfolglerichtig. Er feiert die Leidenschaft als Rhythmus und generöse Geste, er nimmt sie für sich in Anspruch, und doch ist sein Ziel im ganzen wie im Falle der nationalen Leidenschaft und also des Krieges, die Anämisierung, ‘Veredelung’, ‘Reinigung’, *Heiligung* des Menschengeschlechtes – denn auf Heiligung durch den literarischen Geist läuft sein ‘Fortschritt des Menschlichen’ ohne Zweifel hinaus; wobei er sich zu fragen ganz vergiß, wie denn Leidenschaft und Heiligkeit sich miteinander vertragen sollen. Daß er auch die Religion verpont versteht sich von selbst. Und nur eine Erscheinungsform des Elementaren ist es, die er bejaht und in der er nur die Sublimierung der anderen, und in skrupellosem Gegensatz zur christlichen Kirche und zu Schopenhauer, welche im ‘Weibe’ ein instrumentum diaboli erblickten, adoriert er in ihm die begeisterte Führerin auf dem Weg des politischen Fortschritts, will sagen: der Tugend.390

*Tugend*, is not a quality one associates with Clawdia Chauchat, and Settembrini sees in her the very opposite of his ideal. She is very much an ‘*Instrumentum Diaboli*’ in his view, because she leads his favourite pupil Hans away from the path of enlightened humanity and encourages him to question Settembrini’s moral standing. Because of her sex

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390 GW XII, p. 465,
appeal she has power; and therefore Settembrini resents her. He uses all the arguments he can muster to fight Clawdia’s authority and feels acutely humiliated when he fails. This he does in a most spectacular way during the ‘Walpurgisnacht’, as T. J. Reed points out: ‘She has not only led him to look for a mentor, she has also led him to show his independence of the mentor, in his Walpurgisnacht tasting of forbidden fruit – the Asiatic world of mystical quietism and ‘sin’ which she represents lies outside Settembrini’s ‘civilized’ sympathies and is clearly meant to query these.’

Settembrini’s attitude does not change, even on Clawdia’s return. Since the passion between Hans and Clawdia has notably cooled and there is now Peeperkorn in the way, I can only explain Settembrini’s consistent resentment of her as resulting from a feeling of failure. He could not prevent the union of the two lovers, he senses or knows that for all his goodwill and access to Hans, a little of Clawdia goes a lot further than he does with his grand ideas. Hans’s feelings for Clawdia are much more profound than anything he feels for Settembrini. Although Clawdia does not return Hans’s physical love (apart from the one night), she gives Hans something that is still very dear to him. There is a bond between the two that is outside Settembrini’s province and he must feel excluded. As far as his ill will towards Clawdia is concerned, he has a point in denying that she has any Haltung. As we have seen in the French conversation, she teaches Hans that in order to be moral you have to be able to let go of Haltung, that you should have experienced sin. In return Hans proves to her that he has internalized this lesson when he tells Clawdia on her return: ‘Es ist übrigens moralischer, sich zu verlieren und selbst zu verderben, als sich zu bewahren.’ For a humanist that is a horrific thought but Thomas Mann’s artists from Tonio Kröger via Aschenbach to Adrian Leverkühn all subscribe to this:

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392 GW III, p. 772.
Ein Künstler, meine ich, bleibt bis zum letzten Hauch ein Abenteurer des Gefühls und des Geistes, zur Abwegigkeit und zum Abgrund geneigt, dem Gefährlich-Schädlichen offen. Seine Aufgabe selbst bedingt seelisch-geistige Freizügigkeit, sie verlangt von ihm das Zuhausessein in vielen und auch in schlimmen Welten, sie duldet keine Seßhaftigkeit in irgendwelcher Wahrheit und keine Tugendwürde. Der Künstler ist und bleibt Zigeuner [...].

393 GW XII, p. 403.
Settembrini and the Du-address

"Wollen Sie mich bitte nicht duzen, [...] ich wüßte nicht, daß wir verwandt oder sonst vertraut miteinander wären." 394

Settembrini sees only a seductress in Clawdia and a danger to his pupil. He does not care to know her better. He cannot accept her ‘otherness’, her freedom from conventional behaviour; to him this constitutes Liederlichkeit. In the battle for Hans’s soul this is perhaps understandable – she is, after all, his antagonist in so many respects – and it is equally easy to see why Clawdia rejects him passionately in return. If Settembrini had been less prejudiced against Russians and one suspects, against women too, he might have sought a discussion with Clawdia. In the French conversation she reproaches Hans for not trying to talk to her earlier. His impression that she did not see a need to talk, that all was understood between them, was obviously a false one. In fact, she pulls him up on it; she finds it not satisfactory that he does not wish to speak to her. She criticizes his failure to seek an exchange of ideas: ‘...Il n’aurait pas été fort difficile de rêver ce rêve-là plus tôt. C’est un peu tard, que monsieur se résout d’adresser la parole à son humble servante.’ 395 Clawdia knows that it is in part Settembrini who has stopped Hans from getting to know her better. And she holds that against him in her heart because she does not consider it ‘mähnschlich.’

Settembrini rejects her rigourously and in his tirade about the use of Du instead of the 'Anrede im gebildeten Abendlande, der dritten Person pluralis' 396, he barely veils his contempt for Clawdia with this allusion to her and her countrymen: ‘Das ‘Du’ unter Fremden, das heißt unter Personen, die einander von Rechtes wegen ‘Sie’ nennen, ist eine widerwärtige Wildheit, ein Spiel mit dem Urstande, ein liederliches Spiel, das ich verabscheue, weil es sich im Grunde gegen Zivilisation

394 GW VII, p. 401.
395 GW III, p. 469.
396 GW III, p. 457.
und entwickelte Menschlichkeit richtet, sich frech und schamlos
dagegen richtet'. Clawdia's impact on him must in part be seen within
the historical context of this novel. Racism was rampant in Europe;
there was certainly an overwhelming prejudice against the Russians, for
more than political reasons. Settembrini's contempt for what he regards
as an incurably barbaric nation, whose culture is not based on a Latin
one, is at that time generally shared by the intelligentsia, in particular
the German speaking one. "Asien verschlingt us. Wohin man blickt:
tatarische Gesichter" he tells Hans. His rhetoric does not, however,
feel aggressive, as is the case with those who participate in the souring
of mood depicted in the chapter Die große Gereiztheit; rather, his
resentment stays on the level of his confused but well-meaning lectures
about global democracy on the one hand and nationalism on the other.
Settembrini is not a malevolent, hectoring racist. But in the light of our
modern day knowledge of racism and its consequences it is very
uncomfortable, and Clawdia, highly intuitive as she is, is right to resent
it.

Hans himself is also not without feelings of superiority. Within
bounds he feels that he belongs to a finer race, although not in an
aggressive and hostile way - he is rather delighted by his little
advantage he imagines having over her. As the grandchild of Hans
Lorenz Castorp, the Hamburg dignitary, this is how he feels:

Es war sonderbar, daß er sich beim Anblick von Frau Chauchats
Sein und Wesen dieses weitläufigen Überlegenheitsgefühls
besonders lebhaft und vielleicht zum erstenmal bewußt wurde, als er
Frau Chauchat eines Tages Deutsch sprechen hörte, - sie stand,
beide Hände in den Taschen ihres Sweaters, nach Schluß einer
Mahlzeit im Saale und mühte sich, wie Hans im Vorübergehen
wahrnahm, im Gespräch mit einer anderen Patientin, einer
Liegehallengenossin, wahrscheinlich auf übriges reizende Art um
die deutsche Sprache, Hans Castorps Muttersprache, wie er mit
plötzlichem und nie gekanntem Stolze empfand, - wenn auch nicht
ohne gleichzeitige Neigung, diesen Stolz dem Entzücken

397 GW III, p. 457.
398 GW III, p. 337.
aufzuopfern, womit ihr anmutiges Stümpern und Radebrechen ihn erfüllte.  

It is the superiority of the settled native over the rootless foreigner, the claim to custom and tradition over mere visiting rights. Clawdia in return makes short shrift of this national pride at their reunion in the third conversation with Hans, and shows him the stereotypical image of the Germans as seen by the rest of Europe; it is actually very unflattering: "Es beruhigt mich außerordentlich‘ sagte sie, den eingeatmeten Rauch heraussprechend, "zu hören, daß Sie kein leidenschaftlicher Mensch sind. Übrigens, wie denn auch wohl? Sie müßten aus der Art geschlagen sein. Leidenschaft, das ist: um des Lebens willen leben. Aber es ist bekannt, daß ihr um des Erlebnisses willen lebt [...]"  

Settembrini should sympathise with this; a foreigner himself he constantly reminds Hans with his finely tuned irony of his nation's global image, and, like the woman he finds so objectionable, the use of the polite Sie-form on such occasions adds a certain acridity to otherwise inconspicuous words: "Bier, Tabak und Musik", sagte er. "Da haben wir Ihr Vaterland! Ich sehe, Sie haben Sinn für nationale Stimmung, Ingenieur. Sie sind in Ihrem Elemente, das freut mich. Lassen Sie mich etwas teilnehmen an der Harmonie Ihres Zustandes!"  

The Du-motif is an important component in Thomas Mann oeuvre. We come across it in Lotte in Weimar, Felix Krull and Dr. Faustus. On 1st April 1921 Thomas Mann noted in his diary: 'Das Du-Motiv ist neu und merkwürdig.' At the time he was writing the fifth chapter of Der Zauberberg and must have thought about this theme. It is central to the mystery of human intimacy and affection with which the novel is concerned. At first sight, it would seem that Sie represents formality and distance, Du intimacy and trust. But it is not that simple.

399 GW III, p. 203.  
400 GW III, p. 824.  
401 GW III, p. 159.  
402 Tagebücher 1918-1921, p. 498.
The *Du* can be disparaging, demeaning even – the *Du* of crude desire, the *Du* of the enforced intimacy of the Carnival. Certainly Thomas Mann used it in this sense in some of his other novels; Madame Houpflé uses it for her satisfaction: “Nenne mich du!” stöhnte sie plötzlich, nahe dem Gipfel. “Duze mich derb zu meiner Erniedrigung! J’adore d’être humiliée! Je l’adore! Oh, je t’adore, petit esclave stupide qui me déshonore[...]”

Thomas Sprecher points out that the use of the familiar *Du* is the very height of degradation from the viewpoint of the wealthy industrialist’s wife. In embracing Felix and having him call her *Du* she sees an expression of perversion, of reversing the role of master and servant.

If Hans’s type of prejudice puts him somewhat in a similar position to that of Madame Houpflé, it is Clawdia who refuses to go along with it. She does not show the same indignation as Settembrini even though the implications of the *Du* with her are so much more intimate. She makes light of it, because she claims that she is not prudish: “Voyons, mon ami. Ich will mich weiter nicht aufhalten über die Form, in der Sie mit närrischer Hartnäckigkeit zu mir reden. Sie werden dessen schon müde werden, und schließlich bin ich nicht zimperlich, keine entrüstete Bürgersfrau[...]” But it is of significance that Mynheer Peeperkom says *Sie* to Clawdia. I will elaborate on his relationship with Clawdia later, but one basic difference between him and Hans is that he uses *Sie* for her as a token of greater respect (there too is the implication that there never was a physical consummation of their relationship).

Castorp’s prejudices play also into his way of addressing Clawdia, even though he is not as extreme as Madame Houpflé. As I already indicated, he feels for different reasons slightly superior to M.

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403 GW VII, p. 442.
405 GW III, p. 825.
Chauchat. It is not so much the social stratum he belongs to that seems to determine this. Clawdia is beyond his carefully regimented class system. But her personality is such that she compares unfavourably with the women of Hans Castorp's sphere. I already elaborated on her hands that were: ‘[...]nicht so gepflegt und veredelt, wie Frauenhände in des jungen Hans Castorp gesellschaftlicher Sphäre zu sein pflegten.’

Thus, we can assume that on one level Hans likes to use the Du in the Houpflé sense, that is to adopt a deliberately casual attitude to the person thus addressed. Settembrini's view of the Du goes much further even than his pupil in the matter of stereotyping. "Bedienen Sie sich der im gebildeten Abendlande üblichen Form der Anrede" he thunders. Little does he know that Clawdia persistently refuses to accept the Du-address. As part of the licence for the Carnival she agrees to it – she is always game when it comes to popular customs and traditions. After all, she dances with the peasants in Spain and wears their head-dress and even dresses up for Carnival, in her own, inimitable fashion of course, with a simple but very effective improvised paper hat. This is a joyous, chaotic, subversive, energetic play with/play against the sterile concepts of the prevailing establishment, for the purposes of shaking free the mind and spirit. It is the true spirit of the carnival, as Peeperkorn will later celebrate it: the Saturnalia, the bacchanal, the holiday of fools. Yet as the clock strikes twelve she returns, in Settembrini's words to the dritten Person Pluralis address and in later conversations she reprimands Hans for insisting on the use of Du. The familiar address is now an intrusion – the Sie-form to her means an appreciative sense of her own private space. She shares this attitude with Gerda v. Rinnlingen, Prinz Klaus-Heinrich and Adrian Leverkühn.

406 GW III, p. 110.
407 GW III, p. 457.
We see that Hans has some of Settembrini’s prejudices, at least at first. It occurs to him that it is not possible to have ‘gesittete Beziehungen, bei denen man Sie sagt’\textsuperscript{408} with Clawdia. He has already assigned the \textit{Du}-form to her when she looks at him just before his consultation with Behrens. She turns his head round, looks him directly in the eyes: ‘[…] als wollte sie sagen: ‘Nun? Es ist Zeit. Wirst du gehen?’ (denn wenn nur die Augen sprechen, geht ja die Rede per Du, auch wenn der Mund noch nicht einmal ‘Sie‘ gesagt hat)’.\textsuperscript{409} Here, Hans projects his own views on her, simply takes it for granted that they are shared. A stereotype does not answer back. But Clawdia never gives him permission to call her \textit{Du}; she even reverses Settembrini’s argument about Russians and their bad manners by turning the tables and calls Hans uncivilized ‘C’est un sauvage’\textsuperscript{410} because he insists on this mode of address.

Hans, who is described by Settembrini as a \textit{Schalk} and by Clawdia as \textit{verschlagen}, knows when to grasp his opportunity. After all these months of silence he takes full advantage of the customary dropping of the polite address during carnival. In the course of the night he has his first and only really long conversation with her and he tells her that he has always called her \textit{Du} in his mind.

\begin{quote}
“Jamais, Clawdia. Jamais je te dirai ‘vous’, jamais de la vie ni de la mort, wenn man so sagen kann, - man sollte es können. Cette forme, de s’adresser à une personne, qui est celle de l’Occident cultivé et de la civilisation humanitaire, me semble fort bourgeoise et pédante. Pourquoi, au fond, de la forme? La forme, c’est la pédanterie elle-même! Tout ce que vous avez fixé à l’égard de la morale, toi et ton compatriote souffrant, tu veux sérieusement que ça me surprenne? Pour quel sot me prends-tu? Dis donc, qu’est-ce tu penses de moi?”\textsuperscript{411}
\end{quote}

The reader knows of his fantasies about her body. Mentally he has possessed her in every possible way – hence he delights in calling her

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{408} GW III, p. 335.
\textsuperscript{409} GW III, p. 245.
\textsuperscript{410} GW III, p. 774.
\textsuperscript{411} GW III, p. 474.
\end{footnotes}
Du. Yet the use of Du stands for friendship too. When Hans tries to say Du to his mentor during the Walpurgisnacht he is bluntly rebuffed by Settembrini, who will nevertheless address his pupil with Du at the end of the novel without any prompting (and kiss Hans in the Russian manner) at the moment of saying farewell. Der Zauberberg plays very thoughtfully with the implications of pronominal address in German.

Clawdia refuses to adopt the Du on several occasions; her love of freedom and independence makes her wary of Hans’s determination to use this familiar address. Her keenness to return to the status quo of the Sie depersonalizes her physical relationship with Hans. When she returns with Peeperkorn and she and Hans go over unfinished business Hans insists that Sie is humanistic (Settembrini), Du is humane (Clawdia): “Soll ich humanistisch reden statt menschlich?” But Clawdia will allow it only on her terms; it seems appropriate after forming an alliance with Hans to protect Peeperkorn; only then will she feel comfortable to use the informal Du herself. The new intimacy is now not based on a physical relationship, although this is not cancelled out as the Russian kiss conveys, but on a meeting of mind and soul, a synthesis of physical and spiritual love. They both drop the familiar form automatically when they realize that their mission has failed. The third person plural is then taken up by Hans without any introduction or explanation. Eckhard Heftrich points out:

Niemals, so haben wir den narrisch Verliebten sagen hören, wird er Sie zu ihr sagen, “jamais de la vie ni de la mort, wenn man so kann, man sollte es können”. Man kann nun so sagen, am Ende, wenn Peeperkorn, eher symbolisch als real, gegenwärtig ist, das heißt wenn er wie der Tod selbst anwesend ist. Da nimmt Hans Castorp seinen Schwur zurück und die Weise, wie er von der zum einzigen Mal mit “Sie” angeredeten Frau Abschied nimmt, ist so sehr vollendet Form und erfüllte Menschlichkeit in einem, daß der Erzähler kein Wort mehr darüber zu verlieren braucht, wie selbstverständlich und klaglos der Held einen endgültigen Abschied nimmt, den weder Hoffnung erhellt noch Verzweiflung trübt.\footnote{GW III, p. 773.}

\footnote{Eckhard Heftrich, Zauberbergmusik: Über Thomas Mann, p. 249.}
It is a plausible explanation, but to me the episode appears less clear cut. The *Sie* seems acceptable now but it expresses the stark finality of the end of their relationship. The separation is not ‘klaglos’ as I shall discuss in my chapter on *Fülle des Wohllauts* and *Der große Stumpfsinn*. When forfeiting the privilege of the *Du*, Hans salutes his friend and rival and admits defeat. But Settembrini has not won.
Settembrini's Defeat

Tod und Liebe, - das ist ein schlechter Reim,  
Ein abgeschmackter, ein falscher Reim!  
Die Liebe steht dem Tode entgegen, nur sie,  
nicht die Vernunft ist stärker als er. Nur sie,  
nicht die Vernunft, gibt gütige Gedanken.\textsuperscript{414}

There are a number of worlds that are operating on the magic mountain. Those that mean most to Hans are his own, that of Settembrini and that of Clawdia.

Hans's own understanding of the world at his arrival is conventional. Neat and tidy, he has lived amongst: "[...] gewöhnliche Leute, die herumgehen und lachen und Geld verdienen und sich den Bauch volschlagen [...]"\textsuperscript{415} as he tells Settembrini. The women who surrounded him in Hamburg were well kept and destined to marry money. "Wer nicht die besten, teuersten Weine servieren läßt bei seinen Diners, zu dem geht man überhaupt nicht, und seine Töchter bleiben sitzen."\textsuperscript{416} Thomas Buddenbrook lectures Tony at one stage about 'immer die Dehors wahren'; this mercantile world of success and wealth protected by Haltung is Hans's world too, but, on reflection and because he must have been earmarked for something special ('müßte er's irgend wohl hinter den Ohren haben'\textsuperscript{418}), he confesses to Settembrini that he finds it abhorrent now that he is far removed from that harsh world of the Flachland: "Es ist eine grausame Luft da unten, unerbittlich. Wenn man so liegt und es von weitem sieht, kann es einem davor grauen."\textsuperscript{419} Settembrini, as Hans's confidant, therefore understands why and how Clawdia exerts this strong fascination over Hans. She is completely opposed to all that Hans's old world stands for.

\textsuperscript{414} GW III, p. 686.  
\textsuperscript{415} GW III, p. 279.  
\textsuperscript{416} GW III, p. 277.  
\textsuperscript{417} GW I, p. 276.  
\textsuperscript{418} GW III, p. 994.  
\textsuperscript{419} GW III, p. 279.
and presents the ultimate diversion for him.\(^{420}\) Since she, the *Genius des Ortes* as Hans has christened her, personifies death, the *Zivilisationsliterat* Settembrini must oppose her; Thomas Mann points out in a letter to Oskar A.H. Schmitz that Settembrini was always meant to be a ‘komischer Gegensatz zur Todesfaszination.’\(^{421}\) Settembrini sees in her a potential danger for his *Sorgenkind des Lebens*, Hans. And of course he is right. Clawdia stands for things that can perhaps be uncovered through analysis as Dr. Krokowski suggests, warning his patients that repressed emotions find other means of expressing themselves, namely through illness.

Hans discusses this complex with Peeperkom who notices the prejudices on Settembrini’s side and takes the side of his partner, Clawdia.\(^{422}\) He proves more loyal than Hans, who quickly brushes over these differences and insinuates that her reserves are based on hurt vanity rather than anything else. Yet Clawdia tells him more than once that she does not consider Settembrini to be very ‘mähnschlich’, a quality that she values above all else. Peeperkom is ‘mähnschlich’, Hans too learns to be ‘mähnschlich’, indeed, it is to be the culmination of his existence, the main reason for him to stay in the magic mountain. But Settembrini with his humanist philosophy, his clever doctrines and eloquent defences, is not. His humanity is above all humanitarian, i.e. theoretical, while Clawdia practises what she preaches – she is personally engaged in her relationship with Hans. As is the case with

\(^{420}\) Settembrini too does not believe in crass materialism; he is a living example of that. But he believes in the world of work i.e. *praktische Lebensarbeit*, of action rather than getting lost in dreams. In short, while he would never endorse gluttony and self-satisfaction, he firmly rejects any form of romanticism, and that is what Clawdia stands for.

\(^{421}\) As quoted by Hans Wysling in *Der Zauberberg* in *Thomas-Mann-Handbuch*, p. 403.

\(^{422}\) I disagree with R. P. Blackmur that: ‘As it is, both Peeperkorn and Hans feel Settembrini’s prejudice against Clawdia somehow justified, as in her own way Clawdia does too. He is not “hu-man” she says, but she knows he understands the human in her as well as elsewhere.’ (R. P. Blackmur, ‘The Lord of small Counterposition: Mann’s The Magic Mountain’, in *Critical Essays on Thomas Mann*, ed. Inta M. Ezergailis, (Boston Massachusetts, Hall & Co., 1988), p. 92.) My argument is that Settembrini sees in her only the seductress who uses her ethnicity and gender to ensnare Hans in the Berghof. He either cares to ignore or simply cannot appreciate the woman with thoughts of her own, who wishes to enter into an intellectual debate with Hans.

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most of the interesting characters in Thomas Mann’s oeuvre, Settembrini is not always entirely true to his stereotype. As it is, at the end of the novel he momentarily loses his civilized restraint. He behaves ‘wie ein Südländer (oder Russe),’ and kisses the overcome Hans on both cheeks, calls him by his Christian name and uses the familiar Du. Let us not forget, though, that he also encourages Hans to throw himself away into mass slaughter, while Clawdia, whom he accused in the past of leading Hans into disorder and self-destruction, has shown herself to be a protector of life. She shows true concern for Joachim and Peeperkorn and points out all that is essentially wrong with Hans, namely that he can, on occasion, divorce his love of experience and learning from the actual people around him. The conclusion reached in his snow dream, given substance by Clawdia in her personification of Liebe und Güte, is the other face to the genius of the location. What has begun during the Walpurgisnacht, a night that Settembrini sees as a moral disaster for Hans, is developed in the second half of the novel.

There are a couple of remarks which Thomas Mann cites in his Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen which certainly depict Hans’s development and also relate to Clawdia: “Dieses Leben” sagt Luther, “ist nicht eine Frommheit, sondern ein fromm werden, nicht eine Gesundheit, sondern ein gesund werden, nicht ein Wesen, sondern ein Werden.” And a little further: ‘Lessing spricht: “Nicht durch den Besitz, sondern durch die Nachforschung der Wahrheit erweitern sich des Menschen Kräfte, worin allein seine immer wachsende Vollkommenheit besteht.”’ These are statements about the moral value of development. Settembrini is secure in his appreciation of the world as it should be, the classical, the orderly, the good, and the beautiful. There is no doubt in him. Both Clawdia and Hans have to

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423 GW III, p. 989.
424 GW XII, p. 537.
battle for their convictions, finding them and losing them, but in the end they have grown significantly in the process.
Naphta

Ich denke oft, wenn die Welt von
einigen verständigen Frauen
regiert würde, wäre sie besser daran.425

Together with Clawdia, Naphta personifies ‘Asien’, but Naphta is the ideological, aggressive element, Clawdia the aloof, indolent one.427 Clawdia’s independent spirit and anti-authoritarianism clashes with the demagogue Naphta, with whom she otherwise shares some ground in that both like risky and scandalous ideas; but in the end she remains too ‘mähnschlich’ for him. His extremist views highlight the unideological energy of Clawdia Chauchat’s humanity.

The character of Naphta is the negative face of the 20th century. He is opposed to modern ideas of democracy and liberalism and looks backwards to dictatorship and absolutism, going as far back as the Inquisition. He could represent either totalitarian regime: fascism or communism. There is a measure of self-loathing in Naphta that leads him to destroy himself like an angry gnome out of a Grimm fairy tale. His negation of the flesh (expressed by the Pieta in his room) is the exact opposite to Clawdia’s sensuality.

There is a definition of the word ‘menschlich’ in Thomas Mann’s novel: “Menschlich ist alles. Das spanisch Gottesfürchtige und Demütig-Feierliche und streng Abgezirkelte ist eine sehr würdige Fasson der Menschlichkeit, sollte ich meinen, und andererseits kann man mit dem Worte “männlich” jede Schlamperei und Schlappheit zudecken, da wirst du mir recht geben.”428 It is Hans and Joachim who discuss this word. Hans refers back to the French conversation

427 In this sense, Naphta personifies ‘Schlüsselburg und Knute’, to speak with Settembrini (GW III 340), while Clawdia is ‘weich und zur Krankheit geneigt’ and copes with suffering by applying ‘Mitleid und unermüdliche Geduld’ (Ibid.).
428 GW III, p. 410.
(Joachim does not know this of course) when Clawdia first uses this expression. From then on it comes up as a *Leitmotif*. Settembrini would see in it ‘Schlamperei und Schlappheit’ (Joachim too sees it that way) and to Naphta this word is anathema. Although Naphta and Clawdia share a certain tendency towards anarchy, Naphta has no humanity, as the humanist Settembrini consistently points out. Because of Clawdia’s very individualistic views and somewhat extreme ideas, Hans thinks that she might be philosophically closer to the uncompromising Naphta. It is true that Clawdia personifies the *Genius der Krankheit*. And it is Naphta who points out the underlying principle that is so appealing to Hans and abhorrent to Settembrini:

> Im Geist also, in der Krankheit beruhe die Würde des Menschen und seine Vornehmheit; er sei, mit einem Worte, in desto höheren Gerade Mensch, je kränker er sei, und der Genius der Krankheit sei menschlicher als der der Gesundheit...Es habe Menschen gegeben die bewußt und willentlich in Krankheit und Wahnsinn gegangen seien, um der Menschheit Erkenntnisse zu gewinnen, die zur Gesundheit würden, nachdem sie durch Wahnsinn errungen worden, und deren Besitz und Nutznießung nach jener heroischen Opfertat nicht länger durch Krankheit und Wahnsinn bedingt sei. Das sei der wahre Kreuzestod...\(^{429}\)

That comes close to Clawdia’s philosophical musings in the French conversation where she elaborates on morality:

> "Il nous semble, qu’il faudrait chercher la morale non dans la vertu, c’est-à-dire dans la raison, la discipline, les bonnes moeurs, l’honnêté, - mais plutôt dans le contraire, je veux dire: dans le péché, en s’abandonnant au danger, à ce qui est nuisible, à ce qui nous consume. Il nous semble qu’il est plus moral de se perdre etême de se laisser dépérir que de se conserver. Les grands moralistes n’étaient point des vertueux, mais de aventuriers dans le mal, des vicieux, des grand pécheurs qui nous enseignent à nous incliner chétinement devant la misère."\(^{430}\)

When Clawdia first hears that Naphta is Settembrini’s foil she is keen to make his acquaintance and although they have some conversations

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\(^{429}\) GW III, p. 643.

\(^{430}\) GW III, p. 469.
together, they find that they have after all little in common. Clawdia cannot share his inhuman views.\footnote{...sie unterhielten sich zuweilen gesondert, Clawdia und der scharfe Kleine, über Bücher, über Probleme der politischen Philosophie, in deren radikaler Behandlung sie übereinstimmten...Aber eine gewisse aristokratische Einschränkung des Entgegenkommens, das der Emporkömmling, vorsichtig wie alle Emporkömmlinge, ihr bezeigte, mochte ihr doch bemerklich werden: sein spanischer Terrorismus stimmte im Grunde mit ihrer türenwerfend vagierenden 'Mähnschlichkeit' wenig überein', GW III, p. 805.}

It is Joachim who on his return informs Hans of Clawdia's impending journey to Spain. Naphta has told Hans this and that about Spain from his inquisitional point of view and Hans, intensely interested in Clawdia, wonders how she will accustom herself to that country:

Und da denke er nun darüber nach, daß Frauch Chauchat also nach Spanien zu gehen beabsichtige. Hm. Spanien, das liege andererseits ebenso weit von der humanistischen Mitte ab, - nicht nach der weichen, sondern nach der harten Seite; es sei nicht Formlosigkeit, sondern Überform, der Tod als Form, sozusagen nicht Todesauflösung, sondern Todesstrenge, schwarz, vornehm und blutig, Inquisition, gestärkte Halskrause, Loyola, Eskorial [...] Interessant, wie es Frau Chauchat in Spanien gefallen werde. Das Türenwerfen werde ihr dort wohl vergehen, und vielleicht könne eine gewisse Kompensation der beiden außerhumanistischen Lager zum Menschlichen sich vollziehen. Es könne aber auch etwas recht boshafst Terroristisches zustande kommen, wenn der Osten nach Spanien gehe [...]\footnote{GW III, p. 697.}

The last sentence concerns Naphta. If Naphta personifies the brutal side of Spain, the Inquisition, the terror, fascism and absolutism, Clawdia takes the position of the people: Mediterranean, casual, fond of dance and music. Her account exemplifies the difference between herself and the terrorist Naphta who sees that country in the light of the Inquisition and its rigid inhumanity, as Hans has already insinuated. Clawdia, however, mixes with the natives, joins in their folkloristic rituals and is 'mähnschlich.' The stereotypical traits appertaining to either French or Russian national character are sidelined now, only Clawdia's quintessential humanity that is supranational is of relevance:

"Oh, in Spanien. Wie war es?"
At once Hans is amused and interested. Because of his deep feelings for her he appreciates the attraction as well as the repulsion that country could have for her, a Russian woman with a French name. Thomas Mann is using stereotypical characteristics to describe the duality in Clawdia’s nature. The Russian is expressed in her relaxed attitude, her ‘laissez-faire’ behaviour, her ‘formlessness’, however her charm, her sanguine manner and light-hearted wit are French. Did Thomas Mann wish to make a conciliatory gesture when he created Clawdia Chauchat, an all-Russian woman, yet with a French name, speaking mainly in that language?

Throughout the book she is constantly referred to as Madame Chauchat, having, as Anthony Heilbutt remarks in his biography, a French cat sneaking within her name. And T. J. Reed writes: ‘Die Strenge des jungen Deutschen gilt einer Schablone, die er gern bestätigt sehen möchte. Bei Französinnen und dem Französischen schlechthin weiß man ja, oder man glaubt doch zu wissen, woran man ist.’ All that is stereotypically French in Clawdia is repulsed by the strict and ceremonial, the autocratic. Hans muses with Joachim on one occasion:

Hast du mal im Theater den “Don Carlos” gesehen und wie es zuging am spanischen Hof, wenn König Philipp hereinkommt, ganz in Schwarz, mit dem Hosenbandorden und dem goldenen Vlies, und...

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433 GW III, p. 774.
434 In his Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen Thomas Mann inveighs against the French and their moral character. By the time he completed Der Zauberberg in 1924 he had renounced most of his reactionary beliefs expressed in that work.
435 Kenneth Weisinger suggests that the dual nationality in Mme Chauchat’s name is indeed political and refers to the Franco-Russian Alliance of 1893-1894. Kenneth Weisinger, Distant Oil Rigs, p. 184-186.
436 Anthony Heilbut, Thomas Mann: Eros and Literature, p. 413.
437 T. J. Reed Von Deutschland nach Europa, p. 301.
That is Clawdia; Hans has summed her up. Yes, in a sense she is a compendium of national characters, stereotypes much used and played with during the war years and immediately before and after.439 But I interpret this generous attitude towards form versus humanity as quintessentially her. The fluidity of her identity allows, to borrow a term from Julia Kristeva, ‘slippage’, and puts her beyond the patriarchal logic and rationality of Naptha and Settembrini.

Settembrini, who regards the East as ‘weich und zur Krankheit geneigt’440, criticizes Clawdia’s ‘Freigebigkeit, diese barbarische Großartigkeit im Zeitverbrauch’441 and Naphta, the Grand Inquisitor, would probably prefer to burn one such as her at the stake. It is therefore very fitting that it is Clawdia Chauchat who introduces Peeperkorn to the Berghof and ‘Denen da droben.’ T. J. Reed tells us that it was Mann’s intention to dwarf the disputants; for this he invented Peeperkorn.442 In bringing him to Hans, Clawdia puts the two mentors (Settembrini and Naphta) into perspective and helps Hans to get a balanced view. It is a subtle form of revenge.

438 GW III, p. 410.
439 Fittingly, T. J. Reed gives us an example with the rich tapestry of characters in Der Zauberberg, who, he explains, were initially (pre-war) conceived as a group of national characters, carefully categorised and simply constructed: ‘Sie paßte damit bestens zur ursprünglich geplanten komischen Novelle, denn das Hantieren mit menschlichen Typen ist ein Hauptmittel eben derGattung Komödie. Bislang bedeutete also ‘Europa’ im Zauberberg allenfalls eine Sammlung von Nationaltypen, eine europäische comédie humaine.’ (T. J. Reed, Von Deutschland nach Europa, p. 303). But, he continues that this comical world gets involved ‘in die tragédie humaine eines europäischen Kriegs’ and now we are looking for a new complexity in the main characters.
441 GW III, p. 339.
442 For the idea [of Peeperkorn] was an intended element in the composition. The disputants were to be dwarfed but Mann was casting about in vain for the figure to do it.’ T. J. Reed, The Uses of Tradition, p. 258.
The Other Side of Clawdia

Tiefste Heimat ist ja der Osten,
Heimat der Seele, Heimat des Menschen,
Heimat ältester, mildester Weisheit.443

I now wish to concentrate on that other Clawdia who re-emerges in the seventh and last chapter of Der Zauberberg. If Clawdia had not returned, her position as another, albeit sublime femme fatale in Thomas Mann's work would have been assured. But she does return; that she does so has immensely important implications, as we will see.

If in the third chapter Clawdia still oscillates between her existentialist abandonment of the soul, her heart-felt pity for Joachim (doomed to die) and concern for Hans (dying to love her), she returns with her mind made up. In the previous sections of this chapter I looked at Clawdia as an object of male desire, acknowledging her role as femme fatale in Hans Castorp's life, and to some extent agreeing with the bulk of critical opinion that considers Clawdia's role to be the seductive element that holds Hans in thrall. It is true that at the end of the French conversation the reader is catapulted from this view and forced to acknowledge a presence in Clawdia Chauchat he had not envisaged or bargained for. She is neither overtly physical nor unrestrained, nor is she indecent or wanton or whatever else Hans may have hoped for. If anything, she is aloof, almost guarded and very aptly uses the weapon of language to keep the ardent Hans at bay. Now, however, she returns in a different role, although it is still one that is stereotypical and male-driven, that of a nurse and carer.

For a long time Thomas Mann did not know whether to let Clawdia come back or not and that bothered him. There are numerous notes in his diaries from 1918-21 about this, and Katia Mann tells us in her memoirs how troubled he was to find a satisfactory solution. His

443 GW VIII, p. 89.

It did – it worked out well in the end. But her character and the role she had to play were very difficult to define. There is an interesting description of the type of woman Clawdia portrays in Mann’s essay Leiden und Größe Richard Wagners from 1933:

[...]
die Figur Kundrys, der Höllenrose, ist geradezu ein Stück mythischer Pathologie; in ihrer qualvollen Zweiheit und Zerrissenheit, als instrumentum diaboli und heilssüchtige Büßerin, ist sie mit einer klinischen Drastik und Wahrheit, einer naturalistischen Kühnheit im Erkunden und Darstellen schauerlich krankhaften Seelenlebens gemalt...

Of course, Clawdia is much more than a Büßerin but in the French conversation she points out that she sympathizes with such a leaning when she airs her Dostoyevskyan thoughts about moralists being often also great sinners and ‘aventuriers dans le mal’. Clawdia, however, is not a purified Grushenka, nor does she resemble Raskolnikov’s Sonya, who makes up for the baseness of her life in selfless abandonment to goodness. Here we find a new stereotype, introduced by the narrator, and as detested by Settembrini as was her role as Venus and Circe. Clawdia as Pflegerin, as carer and nurse is the new image; but I wish to dismantle it as I did the femme fatale earlier.

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444 Tagebürcher 1919-1921, p. 510.
445 Ibid., p. 523.
446 Ibid., p. 549.
447 GW IX, p. 371.
448 GW III, p. 473.
If we accept that Clawdia is also one of the educators, as do Erich Heller, Inge Diersen and Martin Swales,\textsuperscript{449} then I would like to introduce the second conversation with Clawdia, the first after her return, and look at this possibility under this (pedagogic) aspect. T. J. Reed makes the point that because Der Zauberberg was written in two stages (it was conceived and started in 1914 but not completed until 1924), Hans Castorp’s soul is a battleground for all the prevailing thoughts and theories that lead to World War I, he overcomes them to some extent but then dies in this war. The narrator, who identifies with his hero, uses him as a mouthpiece to convey what he himself has learned. Thus Hans has a dual role. ‘He is both the bearer of a message and the object of criticism.’\textsuperscript{450} This is where the teachers come in: the fiery Settembrini with his flawed idealism to keep Hans away from the temptation of decadence and Naphta, the reactionary, who really stands for all the theories Thomas Mann too held to a large extent at the time of his Betrachtungen. In the French conversation Clawdia enters into a discourse with Hans that is in strict contrast to the argumentation of his male mentors. It is conducted on the lines that he must detach himself from Settembrini if he wishes to be free of restraints and follow his instincts.\textsuperscript{451} She provokes him to leave behind his bourgeois correctness and to question both, his origins and the motives of his teacher Settembrini. She tells the ‘Petit bourgeois! Joli bourgeois à la petite tache humide,’\textsuperscript{452} (her translation of Settembrini’s ‘Sorgenkind des

\textsuperscript{450}T J. Reed, Thomas Mann, The Uses of Tradition, p. 262.
\textsuperscript{452}GW III, p. 476.
Lebens') that she has very definite attitudes about morality and virtue, as I quoted earlier. His pleas to stay with her are not successful. She is adamant in insisting on her independence and right of free movement. According to Clawdia, it was not her intention that Hans should remain on the magic mountain, even though her slightly condescending comment that on her possible return, however vague, he would be 'längst weit fort' is ambiguous. Hans interprets it as a promise and an invitation to stay, to prove her wrong. Whatever the truth may be, and as so often in this novel there is inconclusiveness, the effect of Clawdia's actual return with a new companion is a severe shock to Hans. Orthodox criticism has it that by now his passion is dead and the whole affair has become stale. But that is not borne out by Hans's reaction. Let us look at the following passage:

Der junge Mann hielt seine Zeitung zwar so, wie man sie hält, um zu lesen, las aber nicht, sondern lauschte mit schrägem Kopf auf das abgerissene und mit Gespräch durchsetzte Musizieren nebenan, während die Finsternis seiner Brauen darauf hindeuteten, daß auch dies nur mit halbem Ohre geschah und daß seine Gedanken unmusikalische Wege gingen, dornige Wege der Enttäuschung durch Umstände, die einen jungen Mann, der große Wartezeit auf sich genommen, am Ende dieser Wartezeit schmählich zum Narren hielten, - bittere Wege des Trotzes, auf denen es bestimmt nicht mehr weit war bis zu dem Entschluß und seiner Ausführung, die Zeitung auf diesen zufälligen und unbequemen Stuhl zu legen, durch jene Tür, durch die nach der Halle, hinauszugehen und die frostbeißende

453 'Und wenn der Genius ihn Hans Castorp, im Laufe des mitgeteilten Gesprächs und außerhalb seiner einen "joli bourgeois au petit endroit humide" genannt hatte, was etwas wie die Übersetzung der Redensart Settembrini's vom "Sorgenkind des Lebens" gewesen war[...] ' GW III, p.486.
454 'In jener Stunde hatte sein zuckender Mund in fremder Sprache und in der angeborenen so manches Ausschreitungsvolle halb unbewußt und halb erstickt gestammelt: Vorschläge, Anerbieten, tolle Entwürfe und Willensvorsätze, denen alle Billigung mit Fug und Recht versagt geblieben war, - so, daß er den Genius über den Kaukasus begleiten, ihm nachreisen, ihn an dem Orte, den die freizügige Laune des Genius sich zum nächsten Domizil erwählen werde, erwarten wolle, um sich niemals mehr von ihm zu trennen.' GW III, p. 481.
455 '[...] Aber ob früher oder später, - Hans Castorp, so hatte es auch beim Abschied wieder geheissen, werde dann unbedingt "längst weit fort" sein;' GW III, p. 486

Einsamkeit der Balkonloge, zu Zweien mit Maria Mancini, gegen diese verpfluschte Geselligkeit einzutauschen.\textsuperscript{458}

Then Clawdia comes to his rescue:

"Und ihr Vetter, Monsieur?" fragte hinter ihm über seinem Kopf, eine Stimme. Es war eine bezaubernde Stimme für sein Ohr, das nun einmal geschaffen, ihre herbstüfte Verschleierung als extreme Annehmlichkeit zu empfinden – den Begriff des Angenehmen eben auf einen extremen Gipfel getrieben...\textsuperscript{469}

That is hardly an account of \textit{Kameradschaft} and even less \textit{Ernüchterung}. True enough, there is no longer the same emphasis on Clawdia’s powerful erotic charge – after all the story of the \textit{Walpurgisnacht} has been told and the consequences have been drawn. But she is still the same Clawdia who will stir Hans with her tartar face, her narrow eyes and her husky voice. She is still beautiful in an aesthetic sense and there is tenderness in the narrator’s description:

Auch Madame Chauchat trug einen warmen Gurtmantel aus faserigem, großkarierten Stoff und sogar ein wenig Pelz um die Schultern. Den Rand ihres Filzhutes hatte sie mit einem unter dem Kinn gebundenen olivenfarbenen Schleier seitlich niedergebogen, was ihr so reizend stand, daß es die Mehrzahl der Anwesenden geradezu schmerzte, - nur Ferge nicht, der einzige, der nicht verliebt in sie war.\textsuperscript{460}

With her customary unpredictability she has now adopted the role of a charitable figure, a new characteristic with possible echoes of Schopenhauer’s idea that pity is the only way out of life’s crisis, the will for personal gain can only be softened by the will to help others.\textsuperscript{461} Whoever adopts such a philosophy of life must be familiar with suffering – presumably Clawdia, a fatally ill woman, is that and Hans, who has lost all his immediate family, and finally his cousin and close

\textsuperscript{458} GW III, p. 771.
\textsuperscript{459} GW III, p. 771.
\textsuperscript{460} GW III, p. 845.
friend Joachim, has known sorrow too.\footnote{Although it must be remembered ‘Elendstiefen waren nicht seine Sache’, GW III, p. 797.} *Aus Mitleid geborene Liebe* probably describes Clawdia’s feelings for Peeperkorn, and she extends it to Hans when she approaches him and speaks to him first on her return (as we have seen, at a moment when the young man is truly miserable). Typically for her she invites him to speak about his recent heartbreak, that hitherto he has not been able to share with anyone properly: his cousin’s death. The fact that death is her introduction to the reunion with Hans after all this time does not mean that, in Wolfgang Schneider’s words, ‘Clawdia Chauchat zur Sensenfrau verdüster werden muß.’\footnote{Wolfgang Schneider, *Lebensfreundlichkeit und Pessimismus*, p. 319.} Rather, it serves as a means to bring the conversation quickly back to the point where it last stood still: the night of the carnival. Hans repeats Clawdia’s own words to her, when they are first talking to each other again: ‘Es ist übrigens moralischer, sich zu verlieren und selbst zu verderben, als sich zu bewahren.’\footnote{GW III, p. 772.} It shows that he has learned his lesson well from her and this brings me back to Clawdia’s role as his teacher and critic.

In the third and last conversation Clawdia becomes more explicit in her critique of the young man. She certainly does not wish to be one more stage of his *Bildungsroman*, or what Claus Tillmann believes her to be: ‘Mittel zum Zweck, sprich, zur ‘Steigerung’ des Helden’.\footnote{Claus Tillmann, *Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann*, p. 109.} She reprimands Castor:

> ‘Es ist bekannt, daß ihr um des Erlebnisses willen lebt. Leidenschaft, das ist Selbstvergessenheit. Aber euch ist es um Selbstbereicherung zu tun. C’est ca. Sie haben keine Ahnung, daß das abscheulicher Egoismus ist und daß ihr damit eines Tages als Feinde der Menschheit dastehen werdet?’\footnote{GW III, p. 824.}

With these words she proves that she has the measure of the masculine environment of the *Berghof*, from Settembrini and Naptha via Joachim and Wehsal to Hofrat Behrens and Hans, of Germany and its early
indication of a fascist future – a perhaps logical development born out of a militaristic spirit and Prussianism. It can also be argued, as Martin Swales points out in his recent treatment of this novel, that in this passage Clawdia warns Hans, in whom she sees quintessentially the German ‘Bildungsmensch’, that he, like so many of his countrymen is a cerebral onlooker at life, and thereby the enemy of humanity. And in this sense she offers a powerful critique of the Bildungsroman tradition. Indirectly, then, Clawdia Chauchat sets herself apart as a keeper and protector of life, a position that is somewhat contrary to what critics defined her as, i.e. the Venus that lures Hans to his death. Whatever the case, these are wonderful lines she is given here; Clawdia offers an insight that Hans’s wise friend Settembrini cannot provide. Thomas Mann himself could not know then how well he put the case against his nation. The First World War was lost when he wrote this passage; he had come to terms with this and was still in the process of dismantling his earlier reactionary views. It was probably beyond most people’s ability to evaluate truly the events that led to this catastrophe and Germany’s new position in the world. The next crisis was only in its embryo stage and not yet perceived by Mann in its fullness. But he gives Clawdia the role of the prophet, the one who has her finger on the pulse of the times. It is such an apt line that he borrows from it years later in a letter of 19th September 1941 to Siegfried Marck in defence of the accusation of having wholly joined Settembrini’s camp:

Wir haben von deutscher Tiefe vorläufig genug. Diese Tiefe, die der deutsche Geist dem westlichen Pragmatismus, Rationalismus, Eudämonismus als sein Eigen entgegenstellte, ist im Lauf einer tragisch-elenden Entwicklung so verschmutzt, verdorben und jedes Zusammenhangs mit dem Gedanken der Humanität beraubt worden, daß Deutschland heute dank dieser Tiefe als Feind der Menschheit dasteht – es traut seinen eigenen Augen nicht.

467 The force of Clawdia’s critique is undeniable; the authority of her perceptions and her person calls into question the solipsistic tendency of the Bildungsroman. Martin Swales, Der Zauberberg, p. 72.
468 Although we find the underlying currents of its makings described in the chapter Die große Gerizheit.
469 Br. II., p. 207.
It seems interesting to me that there is actually a level where Clawdia Chauchat and her opponent, Settembrini, seem to meet in spirit.
Peeperkorn

Schopenhauer hatte das Gluck und fand die Moglichkeit, aus hochst sensualistisch-leidenschaftlichen Erlebnis-Voraussetzungen zu hochst moralischen Lehr-Ergebnissen zu kommen: zu einer mit dem Christentum ubereinstimmenden Mitleids- und Erlösungslehre, die aus dem illusionaren Charakter des Lebens, dem Blendwerk des principii individuationis abgeleitet wird: Mitleid, christliche Liebe, die Aufhebung des Egoismus ergeben sich aus der Erkenntnis, welche die Täuschung des Ich und Du, des Schleiers der Maja durchschaut.\footnote{GW IX (Schopenhauer, 1938), p. 562.}

Madame Chauchat comes back with a new companion, a different outlook and determined to make Hans see things her way. To everybody's surprise she brings along a new male friend: Mynheer Peeperkorn.

In the first half of the novel she is referred to as 'schmaläugige Kranke', 'schöne Minka', 'Schleicherin', 'unerzogene Frau', even 'ungezogene Frau' whereby her feline qualities are emphasized and her \emph{femme fatale} role is underlined. In the second half, after her return, these descriptions are still in evidence but become increasingly rare. From her reappearance with Peeperkorn as her partner onwards she is referred to as 'Genius des Ortes', 'der Genius' and 'die Heimgekehrte.' I have already elaborated on the nature of the Genius of the Sanatorium. However, as the Peeperkorn character unfolds it becomes clear that Clawdia is really to be seen primarily within that relationship and we find expressions like 'Pflegerin' even 'Dienerin', 'Hörige' and 'Sklavin.' Peeperkorn is identified as her 'Meister' and 'Herr und Gebieter.' The modern reader may feel alienated by such descriptions, in particular when looking at an independent woman like Clawdia. What is her true position in relation to him?

The situation with the old man Peeperkorn is puzzling; it is not likely that Clawdia will have entered this partnership for any sexual gratification (Peeperkorn is old, he admits several times that his sexual
powers are on the wane, he is an alcoholic, he is very ill). So why does she turn to him, who by his own admission seeks solace in food and in particular in drink?

She admits that when claimed and desired by someone, she wants to give herself. 'Er liebt mich', sagte sie, 'und seine Liebe macht mich stolz und dankbar und ihm ergeben'. Hans analyses Clawdia's statement about her relationship with Peeperkorn at his bedside; women, he claims, are reactive and do not initiate. ‘Sie fragen eine Frau: ‘Liebst du ihn denn?’ ‘Er liebt mich sehr!’ antwortet sie Ihnen mit Augenaufschlag oder auch -niederschlag.’ Nevertheless, Clawdia is by no means willing to love unreservedly. The miserable, unattractive Wehsal does not get the slightest attention, however much he desires Clawdia. Doris Runge writes: ‘Madame läßt sich wählen, wobei wir wissen, daß sie sich nicht von jedem wählen läßt, sondern nur von demjenigen ihrer Wahl’. It is improbable that Clawdia gave in to Hans for reasons of passion. His persistent and unusual courtship no doubt played a part. ‘“Tu es en effet un galant qui sais solliciter d’une manière ligne profonde, à l’allemande”’ she says at the end of that fateful carnival evening. At the dead Peeperkorn’s bedside she refers to this night with Hans as foolishness: ‘Er wußte von unserer Torheit?’ she asks. However, to assert that she plays with his infatuation in a cynical manner would be equally far-fetched and not at

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471 GW III, p. 829.
472 GW III, p. 835.
473 Doris Runge *Welch ein Weib*, p. 91.
474 GW III, p. 473.
475 At one point the narrator refers to Hans’s physical adventure as ‘vernunftwidrig’ (he is contemplating Clawdia’s x-ray picture: ‘[...] umgeben dies alles von bläß-dunstiger Hülle, dem Fleische, von dem Hans Castorp in der Faschingswoche vernunftwidrigerweise gekostet hatte.’ GW III p. 540. T. J. Reed argues with regard to that: ‘Daß der Geschlechtsakt im Nachhinein als ‘vernunftwidrig’ bezeichnet wird, (III, 540) kann doch wohl nur auf Thomas Manns eigenen Puritanismus zurückgeführt werden [...]’ T. J. Reed, *Vom Deutschland nach Europa, in Auf dem Weg zum ‘Zauberberg’*, (Frankfurt a. M., Klostermann, 1997), p. 310. Vernunft has not played much of a role in the relationship between Hans and Clawdia, as they both acknowledge on various occasions. Clawdia was the passive partner and retrospectively to her it may seem a ‘foolishness.’ But we also know that it is not puritanism that makes her such a reserved lover, but rather her randomness and love of independence.
476 GW III, p. 867.
all borne out by the text. Since she returns to Hans for help in the matter of Mynheer Peeperkorn she must have some feelings for him, even if they are not of the nature Hans has hoped for or even come to expect.

Naturally, the entire sanatorium has an opinion on why she and Peeperkorn are together. There is plenty of gossip put about by the people surrounding her; jealous men like Hans speculate about the couple (in spite of his remonstrations to Settembrini, he is jealous at first – his philosophical growth takes time). Behrens has a view (‘gemeinsame Reisekasse’ is his contribution), the Mannheimer and Settembrini are both schadenfroh in their own way. The limited Frau Stöhr (she is the one to detect the pearl necklace on Clawdia) comes out with suggestive statements and makes personal comments. Peeperkorn has money – Behrens points out to Hans how wealthy he is – but this cannot have been the main reason for Clawdia to follow him; after all, she is hardly poor.

Clawdia puts her case very differently. She has teamed up with somebody very special, in Hans Castorp’s own eyes a Persönlichkeit. He has a spellbinding effect on every one (except for Settembrini, who puts him into the same category as Clawdia; he dismisses him as a disturbing influence on his pupil). Initially people gather round him because he is rich and colourful. He is tremendously generous. It means nothing to him to treat half the sanatorium to a night of fine food and drink as giver and bearer of gifts, of riches. But soon people, and in particular the impressionable Hans, come to like him for his own sake. He becomes the leader so to speak; his personality proves to be a great inspiration. This cannot be explained in a rational manner nor can it be ideologically defined in any way – it is purely emotional. But charisma and nothing but charisma can be highly dangerous. Peeperkorn knows that. That is why, when his dark hours come, he feels like Jesus at Gethsemane, left alone by all because for once his spell does not work.
This is where Clawdia comes in. It is obvious that she truly cares for this strangely touching wreck of a man. Like Hans, she finds him interesting. He makes a change from the windbags she and Hans have surrounded themselves with hitherto. But above all she responds to his love for her. Peeperkorn is first and foremost a Gefühlsmensch who uses emotional gestures to explain himself rather than logic and language. This culminates in his histrionic speech at the waterfall towards the end of his life. It is a grand test of loyalty and friendship. First he insists that the invited lunch party has its picnic within the immediate neighbourhood of the noisy cascade. Then he stands and gesticulates in front of it, all sound cut out by the noise of the falls, and yet he talks...('Der wunderliche Mann' exclaims the narrator). Most people, but in particular Settembrini, think it ridiculous and we have to assume that Hans too reacted with 'betretenem Lächeln' like the rest of the party since we are not told otherwise. But Clawdia proves to be more then ever before his carer on this day. She supports him on his way through the diseased woods (Calvary) to the waterfall, she shares her meal with him in this incredible location. She sits in the carriage with him, sharing the blanket that covers their knees, a sign of great intimacy but rendered pitiable because of Peeperkorn's obvious age: 'Mynheer saß, die flachen Hände auf dem Plaid, das seine Knie zusammen mit denen Clawdia's umhüllte, und ließ den Unterkiefer hängen.' We remember this physiognomic detail from Buddenbrooks: Leberecht Kröger in his carriage looked like that, just before he died, and it was described as a 'blöde Greisenmiene'. Hans has nothing to say to Peeperkorn at this particular moment. Only Clawdia seems to appreciate the old man's inward hell (it must have been something like that, because shortly afterwards he commits suicide).

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477 GW III, p. 862.
478 Ibid.
479 GW III, p. 863.
480 GW I, p. 197.
So does she love him? Yes, if love is interpreted as a mixture of caritas and sensuality; one is reminded of Nietzsche's mantra that there is no necessary contrast between chastity and sensuality.\textsuperscript{481} When Hans visits the dying patients in Part I his motives are ambivalent. On the one hand his interest in death and decay is suspect and that is precisely why Settembrini worries about him. On the other hand, Behrens, a doctor after all and a good judge of people, praises him for it and the recipients of his kindness are grateful. The same feelings motivate Clawdia Chauchat; she is expressive of Russian soulfulness, emotionally aware of her strong appeal to those who need her. Wolfgang Schneider lists in detail the type of literature Thomas Mann is known to have read during his work on \textit{Der Zauberberg}:

\begin{quote}
Allein auf die sechs meistgelesenen russischen Schriftsteller entfallen mindestens 166 Eintragungen[...] Die Menschlichkeits-Thematik des \textit{Zauberberg} nährt sich aus dieser Quelle, keine andere Nation ist auf dem Berghof so zahlreich vertreten[...]Castorp und Chauchat sind die beiden Figuren, denen immer wieder "Menschlichkeit" attestiert wird: es ist nicht nur ein von Frau Chauchat dauernd im Mund geführtes Wort, "Menschlichkeit" beweist ihr Verhalten: Clawdias Verhältnis zu Männern ist von einem charitativen Einschlag bestimmt, nicht erst als Begleiterin des angeschlagenen Peeperkorn, sondern bereits als Castorps "Dienerin".\textsuperscript{482}
\end{quote}

All the men who are fascinated by Clawdia are, at one level, sexually enthralled. But they are also touched by her humanity. Both responses are explicitly in evidence in Hans's reaction to her return. Initially, he is despondent – and irritated by Peeperkorn's presence, because he sees in him a rival. He has to wait three to four weeks before things change. Just as he loses all hope for himself, Clawdia comes to him. The motif of the veil returns, when he hears her 'herbsüße Verschleierung der Stimme'\textsuperscript{483} and it is also a final allusion to Hippe. The two have exchanged their position from their previous encounter:

\textsuperscript{481} '[...]denn zwischen Keuschheit und Sinnlichkeit gibt es keinen notwendigen Gegensatz: der Gegensatz ist sowenig notwendig wie, nach Nietzsche, der von Sinnlichkeit und Keuschheit.' GW XII, p. 747.
\textsuperscript{482} Wolfgang Schneider, \textit{Lebensfreundlichkeit und Pessimismus}, p. 292f.
\textsuperscript{483} GWIII, p. 771.
she now bends over his head to speak to him while he is sitting in the
same armchair she was sitting in during the Walpurgisnacht episode.
Again, he does not see her but her voice comes from behind. As before,
she communicates with him through sounds rather than vision. Hans
has reached a juncture where he feels extreme bitterness and rebellion.
He is about to leave when her voice speaks to him. Clawdia's intuition
has yet again picked the precise moment for her entry to appeal to Hans.
The voice of both Hippe and Clawdia, what he calls his
‘Schicksalsstimme’\(^{484}\), immediately changes a moment of utmost despair
to one of elation. It is almost an orgiastic experience. Yet what does the
voice ask him? She enquires after his cousin and the first word of
emphasis is on the adjective ‘tot.’ And Hans turns to her with an
expression that has ‘fast etwas Seherisches und Somnambules’.\(^{485}\) Death
then is what follows this reunion – both Clawdia and Hans are doomed
of course, but their death is not of immediate consequence for the novel,
it takes place off stage. It is Peeperkorn whose death is imminent – and
for this reason Clawdia has brought him to Hans, because she needs his
help. It is an act of will in his case to accept Peeperkorn and thus gain
Clawdia's confidence and friendship. There is no question that his
passion for her has diminished, but it has become a mixture of ‘Liebe
und Güte’ and can be extended to her companion, who is both
impressive in his originality and pathetic in his human frailty. As the
only way of remaining close to her, Hans must put aside the past, and
live up to the new status as her friend and soulmate. Undeniably, he
feels flattered when she tells him that she has returned explicitly to him
because in her own words she was looking for a kind person, someone in
addition to herself, to help look after Peeperkorn and thus Hans came to
mind: ‘‘Ich wüBte gerne einen guten Menschen an meiner Seite[...]’

\(^{484}\) GW III, p. 771.
\(^{485}\) GW III, p. 772: like his forbear, as we are informed during the episode in the X-ray cellar, where
Hans remembers his relative with a gift to see those doomed to die soon in skeletal form.
Enfin, wenn du es hören willst, ich bin vielleicht deshalb mit ihm hierhergekommen [...]'". Not his role as a man, or his passion for her, then, is the reason that Clawdia Chauchat comes back to him and seeks his help with Peeperkorn. But his sheer humanity captures her and gives her trust in him. It is Clawdia who calls Hans with some affection 'philosophischer Taugenichts' and 'deutsches Hänschen': ('Ich sehe wohl, man ist immer noch ein philosophischer Taugenichts' and: 'Dein Philosophentum in Ehren, deutsches Hänschen'). In that sense, she invokes Eichendorff's Taugenichts, a character Thomas Mann reflected upon in his Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen, the precursor of his novel Der Zauberberg. At one level, it is Eichendorff's Taugenichts who is one of the models for Hans Castorp:

Der Charakter des Taugenichts ist folgender. Seine Bedürfnisse schwanken zwischen völligstem Müßiggang, so daß ihm vor Faulheit die Knochen knacken, und einem vag-erwartungsvollen Vagabundenstriebe ins Weite .....Er ist von der Familie der jüngsten Söhne und dummen Hänse des Märchens, von denen niemand etwas erwartet und die dann doch die Aufgabe lösen und die Prinzessin zur Frau bekommen. Das heißt, er ist ein Gotteskind, dem es der Herr im Schlage gibt...

Of course Hans is more than Eichendorff's Held. He is a 'philosophischer Taugenichts' as opposed to the other, who is 'human gemäßigt'. 'Er ist Mensch, und er ist es so sehr, daß er überhaupt nichts außerdem sein will und kann: eben deshalb ist er der Taugenichts.' It is that humanity that Clawdia seeks to help her with her great problem. In accepting Peeperkorn as a partner one could say that she has shouldered a very considerable burden. This becomes clear when she confesses to Hans that she is afraid for Peeperkorn, afraid to be alone with him, afraid of the inward solitude with him. We know that Peeperkorn is impotent and that this constitutes a great crisis to his life. He has explained this to Hans twice, once in a drunken state during an
eating orgy instigated by him and again at a later stage when Hans visits him in Clawdia’s absence. Clawdia can accept the situation (we know that in spite of her sensuous appeal she has never shown an overt interest in sexual matters). She tells Hans of her love for Peeperkorn, her wish to help him, to make him feel secure. To share such intimate thoughts she obviously must trust Hans and feel that they have much in common: ‘Man wäre keine Frau, wenn man nicht um eines Mannes willen, eines Mannes von Format, wie du sagst, für den man ein Gegenstand des Gefühls und der Angst um das Gefühl ist, auch Erniedrigungen in den Kauf nehmen wollte.’\(^{490}\) She tells him all this and is confident that he will understand.

The pact between Clawdia and Hans to assist in protecting Peeperkorn is followed by a second alliance a little later; this time it is Peeperkorn himself who asks Hans to form a love triangle centred on Clawdia. But much is concealed here. Doris Runge explains it like this: ‘Das erste Zusammentreffen der schicksalsverstrickten Drei wird uns als mathematische Figur beschrieben: “...die handelnden Personen in einem Dreick ... den Stuhl in ihrer Mitte”. Castorp hatte ihn freigemacht. Wenn nicht für Peeperkorn, dann doch wohl für den Dreh- und Mittelpunkt dieser Geschichte, den Tod’.\(^{491}\) Clawdia is a good person, ‘von Herzen gut’\(^{492}\) as Hans wishes to be after his snow adventure – her pact with Hans is genuine. She is good, not because of philosophical conviction as Settembrini is, but because she follows her instincts, which are generous and loving. It is true to say that she attracts people as the light does insects, but that is incidental. More importantly she is willing to give herself, first to Hans and then to Peeperkorn, both times it is not apparent why precisely she embraces first the younger than the older man. She seems eternally patient and forgiving with her new companion, a revelation to Hans who has not

\(^{490}\) GW III, p. 830.

\(^{491}\) Doris Runge, \textit{Welch ein Weib}, pp. 87-88.
ever seen her in anything like this role. But then, none of the men have ever understood her, not even Peeperkorn. Clawdia is absorbed in serving him, but Peeperkorn cannot forgive himself for not being a lover to her. He regards this as a failure – the fact that she is willing to live with him, to look after him, is not good enough. Hans calls this Peeperkorn’s ‘Ehrenpuschel’, his overestimation of male honour. (It is that same Ehrenpuschel that motivated a much less sympathetic male in German literature, Fontane’s Baron von Innstetten, to shoot his wife’s ex-lover because of an old affair. The hard-hearted Prussian code of honour was not on the side of the humane; it was not mähnschlich.)


From that point of view Clawdia is right in turning to Hans. Because of his lack of male aggression he is able to accept situations other men would not (Settembrini’s reaction to his passivity is a good

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492 GW II, p. 748.
493 The men are all motivated by jealousy: Wehsal, the lowest of them, just suffers; the pedagogues share ‘die Mißstimmung des Erziehers gegen die Frau als störendes und ablenkendes Element, diese stille und ursprüngliche Gegnerschaft, die sie vereinigte weil ihre pädagogisch verdichtete Zwietracht sich darin aufhob’ (GW III p. 806); Hans overcomes his initial jealousy and finally Peeperkorn abdicates in favour of Hans by choosing suicide as a means for this. This is a nihilistic deed that shatters the relationship between Hans and Clawdia and he may have foreseen that this would happen.
494 [...] denn er ist erstens eine Persönlichkeit, was schon allein etwas für Frauen ist, und zweitens ist er kein Zivilist, wie ich, sondern eine Art von Militär, wie mein armer Vettern, das heißt: er hat einen point d’honneur, eine Ehrenpuschel, und das ist das Gefühl, das Leben [...]’ GW III, p. 812.
example for this) and he is oblivious to or at least careless of other people's opinions, even those of his mentors. He takes the philosopher's point of view, a fact that wins him new recognition from Clawdia. "Übrigens hast du dich tatsächlich en philosophe benommen, man muß es dir lassen[...]" The narrator refers to Hans as _verschlagen_ or _verschmitzt_, again a quality that Clawdia appreciates. It constitutes a certain sense of humour, a willingness to 'live and let live' that is alien to men like Settembrini and Naphta and requires great tolerance and a respect for the freedom of the individual that cannot be found anywhere else in the Berghof, least of all from the men. Hans Castorp's remark is lacking in male aggression and vanity. Clawdia recognizes his adeptness and feels there is a basis for friendship: 'Sie sah ihn an. "Es scheint, du bist unverbesserlich. Ich werde dir sagen: Du bist ein verschlagener Junge. Ich weiß nicht, ob du Geist hast: aber unbedingt besitzest du Verschlagenheit. Gut übrigens, es läßt sich damit leben. Es läßt sich Freundschaft damit schließen."' Like her, he has broken with all conventionality; he is above it, so to speak.

Hans is allowed to be party to the mysterious, underlying relationship between Clawdia and Peeperkorn. It is during their third and last conversation in the novel that Clawdia asks Hans to help her. During this he sits in the same chair that was already occupied before by Marusja, where Joachim had his 'allereinziges Gespräch mit ihr', on the night before he changed permanently to the 'horizontal position.' It is Clawdia who asks a favour from Hans this time – it amounts to a confession of another form of love, the only confession she ever makes in the book. Whether that means that she is soon to die is not clear; but it could be inferred. There is a tenderness and physical closeness between them that is touching in its sincerity.

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496 GW III, p. 828.
497 GW III, p. 830.
498 GW III, p. 823.
Clawdia knows she can rely on Hans because of his *en philosophe* behaviour regarding Peeperkorn, who is both heroic and pathetic. She trusts his understanding in this matter: ‘“Du wirst das verstehen, oder du bist der Freundschaft nicht würdig, die er dir widmet[...]Sein Gefühl zwang mich, ihm zu folgen und ihm zu dienen. Wie denn wohl sonst? Urteile selbst! Ist es denn mähnschenmöglich, sich über seine Gefühle hinwegzusetzen?”’

In this scene Hans is privileged to share her full confidence. At the same time Clawdia is portrayed as a complex figure. Her motives are no longer so easily understood. On one level her return can be seen as an act of revenge for Settembrini’s dismissal of her. In bringing Peeperkorn to Hans she upsets the great plan of his mentor. As already said, both pedagogues reject the old man as a bad influence. It is also a forceful display of independence, putting both Behrens and Hans in their place. But there is much more to it. What had begun during the French conversation two years earlier is now taken to a higher level: Although their physical relationship is not renewed, Hans is allowed to share that inwardness of her that with the exception of Peeperkorn nobody has glimpsed — by which I mean her profound humanity. He tells her:


There can, in my view, be no doubt that Hans is sincere when he promises Clawdia his help and support in caring for Peeperkorn. Yet he chooses a somewhat curious road for it. No sooner has the narrator ‘darkened the little stage’ following the Russian kiss for a change of scenery than Hans finds his way to Peeperkorn’s bedside (significantly

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499 GW III, p. 824.
500 GW III, p. 824.
bei der trüben Beleuchtung eines zur Neige gehenden Frühlingstages, zur Zeit der Schneeschmelze\textsuperscript{501} for reasons not entirely clear to himself; he calls them 'lebensvoll schwankende Motive.'\textsuperscript{502} Here he confesses to Peeperkorn his old affair with Clawdia, his disappointment at her return with someone else, and his personal sufferings on her account:

[...obgleich ich mir klar darüber war, daß jeder, der in die Lage kommt darüber nachzudenken, mit solchen Vorgängen, ich meine eigentlich Vorgängern, rechnen muß, und obgleich ich ferner wußte, daß Hofrat Behrens, der, wie Sie vielleicht wissen, in Öl dilettiert, im Laufe vieler Sitzungen ein hervorragendes Porträt von ihr angefertigt hatte, von einer Anschaulichkeit in der Wiedergabe der Haut, die unter uns gesagt zu starkem Stutzen Anlaß gibt. Das hat mir viel Qual und Kopfzerbrechen verursacht und tut es noch heute.\textsuperscript{503}

Peeperkorn, who understands her perhaps a bit better than Hans, replies: ""Sie folgte dem Gefühl"", and Hans says to that: ""Wie sie es in Ihrem Falle weit gehorsamer tat und wie sie es aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach schon manches liebe Mal getan hat""\textsuperscript{504} and in an effort to make his point even stronger: ""[...]und der Mann hinter dem Kaukasus - Sie wissen doch wohl, daß sie einen Mann hinter dem Kaukasus hat[...]""\textsuperscript{505}

In my view, this shows a certain small-mindedness, which Clawdia is simply not capable of and does not deserve. That educational project Clawdia helped to perfect – the liberation of his mind from \textit{Flachland} values and restrictions – experiences a setback here. Despite the sealing of the bond in favour of Peeperkorn with the Russian kiss he cannot fully accept the rivalry. I find the scene of the alliance between Hans and Peeperkorn less convincing than the one between him and Clawdia. With Clawdia it is concern for her partner she shares with Hans and she seals the pact between her and Hans with a kiss that asks for both understanding and forgiveness. As far as Peeperkorn is concerned, not least because of Hans’s revelations, there is agony on his part, hurt

\textsuperscript{501} GW III, p. 832.
\textsuperscript{502} GW III, p. 832.
\textsuperscript{503} GW III, p. 844.
\textsuperscript{504} GW III, p. 846.
\textsuperscript{505} GW III, p. 846.
pride, and a certain amount of male aggression. We are talking of possibilities of duels and bonding, so-called *Männerbündnisse* and the inferiority of women. To seal the agreement, alcohol seems to be the counterpart of the Russian kiss in exchange for the promise; it generally serves Peeperkorn to stand in for his own presentation of his feelings. Hans defines it when he discusses with Clawdia the problems with Peeperkorn: 'Sie resultieren natürlich aus einer Ehrenpuschel, aus seiner Angst vor dem Versagen des Gefühls, die ihn die klassischen Hilfs- und Labungsmittel so lieben läßt.'

In offering Hans the use of the familiar *Du*, Peeperkorn openly declares the love triangle as official, legal and accepted. He proclaims himself too old and ill to fight a duel. In lieu of a duel he more or less invites Hans to share Clawdia with him. In calling him *Du* and allowing him the same right he also makes it possible for Hans to address Clawdia openly in that mode. But Hans finds the *Duzbrüderschaft* with Peeperkorn difficult; he is embarrassed by it. When offered it, he finds excuses to reject it, first on account of society, then with regard to Clawdia 'die vielleicht nach Frauenart nicht ganz einverstanden sein wird mit diesem Arrangement [...]'. When all is waved aside by Peeperkorn’s insistence he even refers to Settembrini: ‘’Richtig, es ist ja finster geworden! Ich könnte mir vorstellen, daß plötzlich Herr Settembrini hereinkäme und das Licht andrehte, damit Vernunft und Gesellschafflichkeit Platz griffen...’’ and finally we have the veiled admission that he is not altogether comfortable with this *menage à trois* that Clawdia’s friend offers him. The comment that three fever-free days will give Peeperkorn the strength to cope with any physical exertion hints at a possible sexual relationship between the planter and Madame

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506 GW III, p. 829.
507 GW III, p. 850.
508 Ibid.
Chauchat that is not in fact welcomed by Hans, despite his assurance that “‘Das freut mich als ob ich Du wäre.’” As it is, the new Duzbrüderschaft does not work. Hans cannot be open about it in front of his friends and fellow patients. He tries to avoid to use the familiar form, thus snubbing Peeperkorn, however discreetly:

“‘Jünger Mann’, sagte er [Peeperkorn] dabei zu Hans Castorp, indem er ihm die linke Hand auf die Schulter legte, “...wie geht es, mein Sohn?”
“Verbindlichsten Dank! Und andererseits?” erwiderte der Gefragte[...]"510.

Although the Duzbrüderschaft is celebrated by exchanging a drink with each other, arms entwined, it is not as intimate as the Russian kiss. The bond with Clawdia is based on friendship and love that has grown into some form of maturity, the bond with Peeperkorn is a pacification, a command almost. This is Hans’s inner rebellion against Peeperkorn’s role in Clawdia’s love: He does accept his abdication, but his promise of brotherhood he does not keep. Just as he before concealed his relationship with Clawdia from Peeperkorn, he now hides behind phrases to avoid using the familiar form with him, because, as he later confesses to Clawdia: “‘Wir waren Duzfreunde. Ich schäme mich in tiefster Seele, daß ich mich dessen schämte vor den Leuten und Umschweife gebrauchte.’”511

Peeperkorn fails because he cannot, like Hans, accept thinking as a substitute for sexual fulfilment. He kills himself with a syringe in the shape of a snake – Clawdia’s symbol. But this seems to drive a wedge between Clawdia and Hans; it puts an immediate stop to what might have been. Peeperkorn drops out of the love triangle and thereby the love is diminished. Since he cannot give a more traditional satisfaction to the younger man, Peeperkorn ‘abdicates’ in favour of Hans Castorp. But neither Hans nor Clawdia will profit from it. Heftrich’s view on this

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509 GW III, p. 850.
510 GW III, p. 845.
511 GW III, p. 867.
is appealing: 'Daß der doppelte Bund Peeperkorns Katastrophe nicht aufzuhalten vermag, macht das Bündnis nicht zur Farce. Denn der Sinn des Bundes liegt nicht darin, die in der königlichen Narretei steckende Hybris zurückzunehmen und so die Tragödie zu verhindern. Wohl aber tritt durch das Bündnis zur Leidenschaft die Caritas, und damit wird die in der gänzlichen Hingabe steckende Vergötzung der Leidenschaft ins rechte Maß gebracht. Es ist das Maß des Menschlichen.' While I agree that the alliances are profound and moving, they denote failure nevertheless. Clawdia and Hans's relationship has reached a zenith and any further development is not really possible. It is significant for Thomas Mann's oeuvre that he is not afraid to be inconsistent, to leave an open end with problems unsolved. Just as we are not quite sure whether Hans is really killed in the war we have to be satisfied with Clawdia's mysterious second disappearance. All the reader is told is that she departed 'im Geiste ehrerbietiger Rücksicht', leaving Hans behind: ‘[...] als sei es mit Welt und Leben nicht ganz geheuer; als stehe es auf eine besondere Weise und zunehmend schief und beängstigend darum'.

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512 Eckhard Heftrich, Zauberbergmusik, p. 69.
513 GW III, p. 871.
514 GW III, p. 871/72.
The Russian kiss

Mich frug mein Freund, wie viele Lebensjahre
Bereits auf meinen Schultern ruhten?
Ich sprach: 'Im besten Falle zwei Minuten.'
Er wies bestürzt auf meine weißen Haare.

Da sagte ich: 'Wir müssen klar erkennen,
Wie sich verteilt des Lebens Wert und Maß,
Ich küßte einmal so, daß ich es nie vergaß...
Den Rest des Erdenseins kann ich nicht leben nennen...'

In this section I wish to return once again to one of the centrepieces of
the novel, the Russian kiss. This demonstrates with a physical example
the central humanism of Der Zauberberg. It acts out the cognition Hans
has to reach – that the underlying force of life is love; that this love is
not specifically passion although it does not exclude it; that it is both
physical and therefore related to death, and spiritual and therefore it
transcends death. Above all, it is also a strong life force: 'Die
Psychoanalyse will wissen, daß die Liebe sich aus lauter Perversitäten
zusammensetze. Darum bleibt sie doch die Liebe, das göttlichste
Phänomen der Welt.'

The elements we see in the magic mountain are
all part of it: These are wild desire and obscenity, obsessive behaviour
and pent-up sexuality displayed by most of the patients in the Berghof,
most emphatically by Hans Castorp, but also tenderness, selflessness
and the wish to share and give. This we find in particular in the second
half of the book, when the relationship between Hans and Clawdia is
seen from a very different angle. There is brotherhood and friendship as
well as passion – Caritas and Eros meet.

In the first book of the tetralogy Joseph und seine Brüder we hear
Jacob's reflections on love:

Das ist die Liebe, wenn sie vollständig ist: Rührung und Lust auf
einmal, Zärtlichkeit und Begehren, und während dem Jaakob vor
Erschütterung die Tränen aus den Augen quollen, spürte er zugleich
die Spannung seiner Mannheit.

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515 Ibn Hasm, poems on the internet.
516 GW IX, p. 381.
517 GW IV, p. 306.
In *Der Zauberberg* Thomas Mann writes of love:

Ist es nicht groß und gut, daß die Sprache nur ein Wort hat für alles, vom Frömmsten bis zum Fleischlich-Begierigsten, was man darunter verstehen kann? Das ist vollkommene Eindeutigkeit in der Zweideutigkeit, denn Liebe kann nicht unkörperlich sein, in der äußersten Frömmigkeit und nicht unförmlich in der äußersten Fleischlichkeit, sie ist immer sie selbst, als verschlagene Lebensfreundlichkeit wie als höchste Passion, sie ist die Symphatie mit dem Organischen, Caritas ist gewiß noch in der bewunderungsvollsten oder wütendsten Leidenschaft.\(^{518}\)

These two statements have much in common. It is the most repeated postulation in Thomas Mann's *oeuvre*, the recognition of the multitudinous guises of love. In *Der Zauberberg*, the Russian kiss is the climax of Hans and Claudiia's love for each other. Claudia, a more intuitive person, returns to Hans for friendship and help but has the wisdom to accept some of his adoration. To use Mann's own metaphor of the theatre we see in our mind's eye as under blazing spotlights the final and perhaps first true love encounter (in the sense of mature and reciprocal love) between Claudia and Hans. In this moment Hans goes beyond his obsessive love and desire and accepts another side of love, one he had encountered during his snow dream. But the kiss is certainly more persuasive as an instance of complex humanity then the snow vision. There we find a principled demonstration of decency,\(^{519}\) here we find the 'Traum von Liebe'\(^{520}\) which Hans carries within his heart until we can presume him dead. In his finishing statement to his novel Thomas Mann refers us back to the snow dream, where the dream of love first occurred to Hans. But how much more convincing is the Russian kiss, where the physicality of two young and sensuous people (ein notorisch 'verschlagener' junger Mann und eine ebenfalls noch

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\(^{518}\) GW III, p. 832.

\(^{519}\) Martin Swales points out that: '.the vision of the nobility of the human species in outward, physical embodiment is problematic, perhaps because notions of human wholeness can be formulated conceptually, can be captured in ideas and reflections, but less persuasively in deeds and outward behaviour. The problem is, in its most drastic form, a moral one. The sensuous, courteous people disporting themselves on the beach know of the human sacrifice in the temple....But they make not attempt to stop it, to abolish the ritual; they simply acquiesce.' Martin Swales, *Der Zauberberg*, p. 46.

\(^{520}\) GW III, p. 994.
junge, reizend schleichende Frau\textsuperscript{521}) is celebrated as well as the ambiguity of this embrace that wavers between desire and friendship in richly thoughtful interplay. If the passage seems perhaps a shade overwritten, it must be seen in the context of this reflective novel; throughout these pages contemplative thought processes are interwoven within the landscape of the fiction. And this episode is no exception. And if Hans’s passion is now less raw, his desire less fiercely expressed, then this is Clawdia’s doing by giving Hans’s concept of ‘Güte und Liebe’ a new meaning and outlet. If he has learned about the attraction of death from her, she now teaches him that love transcends desire, grows into caritas, and, as Krokowski has pointed out in his lectures, one type of love is difficult to distinguish from another. The most important thing is that she comes back to Hans deliberately, not to taunt him or to tease him, but to bring her friend because her feelings tell her that Hans will be on her side. ‘If you are you my friend’ she asks, ‘then, please help me’:

\begin{quote}
Wollen wir Freundschaft halten, ein Bündnis schließen für ihn, wie man sonst gegen jemanden ein Bündnis schließt! Gibst du mir darauf die Hand? Mir ist oft bange... Ich fürchte mich manchmal vor dem Alleinsein mit ihm, dem innerlichen Alleinsein, tu sais... Er ist beängstigend... ich fürchte zuweilen, es möchte nicht gut ausgehen mit ihm... Es graut mir zuweilen... Ich wüßte gerne einen guten Menschen an meiner Seite[...] Enfin, wenn du es hören willst, ich bin vielleicht deshalb mit ihm hierherekommen...\textsuperscript{522}
\end{quote}

This is in stark contrast to her earlier remonstrations for the freedom to sin, her rejection of the established moral codes. Self-denial and uncritical love are qualities that sit uneasily on Clawdia’s shoulders, at least as far as the reader has hitherto been allowed to perceive. This character is truly unpredictable and Claus Tillmann writes: ‘Gerade eine solche scheinbare Widersprüchlichkeit, daß der eben noch “verschlagener Junge” geschimpfene H.C. nun als “guter Mensch” umworben wird zum Zweck eines selbstlosen Bündnisses, hält die Figur Clawdias trotz der aufgezeigten persönlichkeitsvernichtenden

\textsuperscript{521} GW III, p. 831.
\textsuperscript{522} Ibid.
Typisierungen im Bewußtsein des Lesers lebendig. The Self and the Other unite and fuse. The first physical embrace was driven by Hans’s longing to fulfil his repressed desires from the past (Hippe) but the second embrace, the Russian kiss, is driven by Clawdia. Both lovers act this time not for reasons of self-interest but in the spirit of generosity.

The modesty and moral intensity of the conversation preceding the embrace coexists with the magnificent portrayal of this kiss, one of the greatest passages in Thomas Mann’s oeuvre that shares with the reader an epiphanic moment. If this second caress for all its grandeur is more chaste than the first, Clawdia nevertheless gives it completely voluntarily. It is both holy and sensual, just as one would expect from a Russian kiss: ‘[...] die in diesem weiten, seelenvollen Lande getauscht werden an hohen christlichen festen, im Sinne der Liebesbesiegelung’ – and it is the essence of Clawdia – it expresses what she stands for.

Keeping in mind Hans’s level of desire for her it echoes the love night the reader was not privileged to share and recalls all we have learned in the previous chapters about the body and its crafty deceptions and disguises for the physical form of love. The fact that it is not explicit whether it is chaste or sexual is the redeeming factor of love. The Russian kiss is a seal of friendship from Clawdia, a gift of love bestowed upon Hans. The epiphany holds their passion and feeling for each in perfect focus.

523 Claus Tillmann, Das Frauenbild bei Thomas Mann, p. 121.
524 I have already quoted widely from this passage but not given it in its entirety. For greater clarity of this section I feel it should be present: ‘Da küBte sie ihn auf den Mund. Es war so ein russischer Kuß, von der Art derer, die in diesem weiten, seelenvollen Lande getauscht werden an hohen christlichen Festen, im Sinne der Liebesbesiegelung. Da aber ein notorisch ‘verschlagener’ junger Mann und eine ebenfalls noch junge, reizend schleichende Frau ihn tauschten, so fuhlen wir uns, wahrend wir davon erzählen, unwillkürlich von ferne an Dr. Krokowskis kunstreiche, wenn auch nicht einwandfreie Art erinnert, von der Liebe in einem leise schwankenden Sinn zu sprechen, so daß niemand recht sicher gewesen war, ob es Frommes oder Leidenschaftlich-Fleischliches damit auf sich hatte’ GW III, p. 831.
525 GW III, p. 831.
Life after Clawdia

Nun bin ich manche Stunde
Entfernt von jenem Ort,
Und immer hör' ich's rauschen:
Du fändest Ruhe dort!526

‘Der große Stumpfsinn’
But the novel is not finished yet. There are another five sections after
Clawdia’s departure, totalling some 130 more pages, and they chronicle a
souring of the mood. The section following the Peeperkorn episode is
headed Der große Stumpfsinn, and is entirely devoted to showing Hans’s
fall into lethargy.527 I quote in full here a passage, which I have
previously given in excerpts to demonstrate the finality of the break
between Hans and Clawdia:

Seit dem exzentrischen Ende seiner Verbindung mit einer
Persönlichkeit; seit der vielfältigen Bewegung, die dieses Ende über
das Haus gebracht, und seit Clawdia Chauchats neuerlichem
Ausscheiden aus der Gemeinschaft derer hier oben, dem Lebewohl,
das beschattet von der Tragik großen Versagens, im Geiste
ehrerbietiger Rücksicht, zwischen ihr und dem überlebenden
Duzbruder, ihres Herrn getauscht worden, - seit dieser Wende
schi en es dem jungen Mann, als sei es mit Welt und Leben nicht ganz
geheuer;

Without the ‘good genius’ of the sanatorium, Clawdia, a demon seems to
have taken power: ‘...der, schlimm und närrisch, zwar lange schon
beträchtlichen Einfluß geübt, jetzt aber seine Herrschaft so zügellos
offen erklärt habe, daß es wohl geheimnisvollen Schrecken einflößen
und Fluchtgedanken nahelegen konnte, - der Dämon, des Name
Stumpfsinn war.’529

Die Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen gives us the provenance of
the theme of the demon ‘Stumpfsinn’. Thomas Mann was reviewing
Hans Pfitzner’s opera Palestrina in 1916. Der Zauberberg had been put

526 From Wilhelm Müller’s Der Lindenbaum, (set in Schubert’s Die Winterreise).
527 ‘...der Schmerz hat seine Grenzen: der körperliche in der Ohnmacht, der seelische im Stumpfsinn, -
es ist mit dem Glück nicht anders!’ GW VIII, p. 66
528 GW III, p. 872.
529 GW III, p. 880.
to one side for the sake of his polemic writing, but as he analyzes the opera we come across many of Hans Castorp's thoughts and findings until we finally meet the prototype of the Clawdia story. Thomas Mann celebrates the pessimism, the sympathy with the past, the turning away from life, in short all the reactionary forces in Germany and Europe of that day which are expressed in the opera. He goes on to suggest that it pays a tribute to death rather than life and that this is the foundation of all romanticism: ‘Aber hat man bemerkt, daß die Frauengestalt des Werkes, Lukrezia, nicht dem Leben gehört, daß sie nur ein Bild ist und ein Schatten? Sie war Palestrina's Weib, sie starb, und als sie starb, “...da ward es trüb in ihm und leer” singt Inghino.’\textsuperscript{530} Within him grew a gloom and a void - that surely is what Hans experiences when Clawdia leaves him for a second time and this time for good. Like Palestrina's Lukrezia, she has returned to the shadows and life has lost its point for Hans. He is completely and irrevocably trapped in despondency or, as Irvin Stock suggests, 'from now on our hero's story becomes mainly that of the increasing moral decay of one whose 'holiday' has lasted too long.’\textsuperscript{531}

This demon was not so apparent a couple of years earlier, when Clawdia disappeared from the Berghof, leaving Hans to brave it out. Then he threw himself into various activities, spiritually (battles with Naphta, his new opponent) and physically (learning to ski), but now he withdraws and remains aloof and disillusioned. His fever is stilled, Eros has left the realm of the magic mountain with the departure of Venus, and with her the reason to show a raised temperature. The fact that it still exists is explained away by Behrens with a secondary infection; he treats Hans with injections of his own blood serum and Hans accepts the cure even though he finds it ‘...ridikül und ehrlos. Diese Impfungen mit sich selbst wollten ihm als eine abscheulich freudlose Diversion

\textsuperscript{530}GW IX, p. 423.
erscheinen, als ein inzestuöser Greuel von Ich zu Ich, frucht- und hoffnungslos in seinem Wesen. Even Hans, who still worships the X-ray image of Clawdia Chauchat, recoils from insemination with himself. But he has no will left, and thus accepts this obscene gesture as a sign of his final submission to the horrors of the underworld without the consoling presence of his Beatrice. In withdrawing from his life, Clawdia has removed a moral presence from Hans's sphere and that lack proves to be much more detrimental to his well-being then the absence of her physicality and the charge of her eroticism.

\[532\] GW III, p. 882.
‘Fülle des Wohllauts’

In a sense, the section ‘Fülle des Wohllauts’ serves as a memorial service in which Hans remembers Joachim and in particular Clawdia. He buries her in the musical coffin, such is the description of the gramophone donated by Hofrat Behrens. Hans’s good-bye to his great love is expressed by his choice of music and this makes ‘Fülle des Wohllauts’ the most important chapter in Hans’s story after Clawdia has left. We are presented with the gift from one admirer of Clawdia Chauchat to another, a gift which rescues young Hans from his melancholy and enables him to say a proper farewell to her. One of his favourite pieces of music (and he listens repeatedly to it) is Verdi’s Aida. Aida brings herself to share the fate of her lover Radames, unlike Clawdia, whose inevitable death (tuberculosis of the lymphatic system is terminal) takes place off stage and out of the readers’ sphere of experience. In his diaries Thomas Mann refers to Verdi’s Opera as the Italian version of Liebestod and this is how Hans would like to see their relationship. Hans Wysling makes the point that: ‘Von einer Vereinigung im Liebestod kann keine Rede sein’⁵³³ and I would agree with him. Clawdia did not love Hans in the way that Isolde loved Tristan, there is no evidence of that. Hans, for his part, loved her madly, unreasonably, as Tristan may have loved Isolde under the influence of the drug. When Hans stepped back in the second half of the novel and changed the dynamics of his courtship, it was because, if he wanted any form of relationship with Clawdia, it had to be on her terms and that excluded a sexual relationship.

What is allowed to culminate in a sweet reunion of Radames and Aida takes on a very different appearance in Carmen. In the former what happens is that ‘sie hatte sich zu ihm gefunden, die Geliebte, um derentwillen er Ehre und Leben verwirkt, sie hatte ihn hier erwartet,

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sich mit einschließen lassen, um mit ihm zu sterben..." and Hans appreciates how the lost Radames is rejoicing that his lover is willing to share eternity with him: 'mit Recht protestierte der Verurteilte gegen das Opfer so lieblichen Lebens, aber seinem zärtlich verzweifelten 'No, no! troppo sei bellas' war doch das Entzücken endgültiger Vereinigung mit derjenigen anzumerken, die er nie wiederzusehen gemeint hatte, und dieses Entzücken, diese Dankbarkeit ihm deutlich nachzufühlen, bedurfte es für Hans Castorp keines Aufgebotes an Einbildungskraft.' Of course, this is wishful thinking. The 'French' song from Bizet's opera Carmen, on the other hand, conveys something very different. There is no final union between the lovers here. Hans already elaborated on this to Peeperkorn; like José he feels utterly betrayed and rejected by his love. Unlike Aida, Carmen does not wish to share her lover's fate:

Das Weib, die Zigeunerin konnte und wollte nicht verstehen. Sie wollte es nicht, – denn ohne jeden Zweifel: in ihrer Wut, ihrem Hohn war etwas über den Augenblick und das Persönliche Hinausgehende, ein Haß, eine Urfeindschaft gegen das Prinzip, das durch diese französischen Clairons – oder spanischen Hörner – nach dem verliebten kleinen Soldaten rief und über das zu triumphieren ihr höchster, eingeborener, überpersönlicher Ehrgeiz war.536

This is how Settembrini sees Clawdia, why he warns Hans against her; this is how Joachim sees her, and finally that is how Hans has described her to Peeperkorn. Is that how it was? Is Hans like José, led astray by a proud woman who waylays him on his path of honour? Has Clawdia wantonly played with Hans's emotions? Clawdia certainly denies it, she tells him so in their third and last conversation and reprimands him for waiting for her.537 But she also knows how principles can lead people astray, how they prove to be more deathly than remaining in the 'Zauberberg.' She foretold Joachim's death if he was to leave and she was right, and it is Peeperkorn's Ehrenpuschel that destroys him.

534 GW III, p. 895.
535 GW III, p. 896.
536 GW III, p. 900.
537 See page 157.
Perhaps, then, she is better at home in the final song of Hans’s choice, Schubert’s *Am Brunnen vor dem Tore*. It is a summary of all that Hans has learned on the magic mountain, and as such it can have a political interpretation. But in the context of my thesis I would like to contrast it with the songs that Hans used to dismiss so easily. *Der Lindenbaum* is hardly a song to sing for a ‘Gänshen aus dem Flachland’ but more, much more:

> Das Lied bedeutete ihm viel, eine ganze Welt, und zwar eine Welt, die er wohl lieben mußte, da er sonst in ihr stellvertretendes Gleichnis nicht so vernarrt gewesen wäre. Wir wissen was wir sagen, wenn wir – vielleicht etwas dunklerweise – hinzufügen, daß sein Schicksal sich anders gestaltet hätte, wenn sein Gemüt den Reisen der Gefühlspflege, der allgemein geistigen Haltung, die das Lied auf so innig geheimnisvolle Weise zusammenfaßte, nicht im höchsten grade zugänglich gewesen wäre. Eben dieses Schicksal aber hatte Steigerungen, Abenteuer, Einblicke mit sich gebracht, Regierungsprobleme in ihm aufgeworfen, die ihn zu ahnungsvoller Kritik an dieser Welt, diesem ihren allerdings absolut bewunderungswürdigen Gleichnis, die seine Liebe reif gemacht hatten und danach angetan waren, sie alle drei unter Gewissenszweifel zu stellen. Der müßte nun freilich von Liebesdingen rein gar nichts verstehen, der meinte, durch solchen Zweifel geschähe der Liebe Abtrag. Sie bilden im Gegenteil ihre Würze. Sie sind es erst, die der Liebe den Stachel der Leidenschaft verleihen, so daß man schlechthin die Leidenschaft als zweifelnde Liebe bestimmen könnte.\(^{538}\)

The ‘stellvertretende Gleichnis’ of course is Clawdia, the *genius loci*, and in that sense I agree with Martin Swales’s reference to William Blake’s rose in this context.\(^{539}\) Hans ponders about the meaning of this beautiful song with its inherent duality ‘die regierende Lebensfreundschaft, der Liebe zum Organischen und Gegenstand der Selbstüberwindung nach letztgültigem Gewissensspruch’\(^{540}\) a paradox that is quintessentially Clawdia. He sits all night in front of the little wooden coffin-like apparatus that gives him these musical treasures. And this song of death

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\(^{538}\) GW III, p. 905.

\(^{539}\) ‘Castorp’s responses are fully attuned to the subversive loveliness of this remarkable song. At the heart of this ‘Urbild des Innigen, die Liebenswürdigkeit selbst’ he discerns the dark presence of death, like the sickness that gnaws at William Blake’s rose. Castorp realizes that those who surrender uncritically to the magic of the song will confront ‘Ergebnisse der Finsternis’. In Martin Swales, *Der Zauberberg*, p. 48.

\(^{540}\) GW III, p. 907.
and decay, the Romantic principle, is on Hans’s lips as he leaves the novel, to long for it and to embrace it but to remain loyal to the life force of humanity, or in the words of Clawdia Chauchat to all that is ‘mähnschlich.’

It is Clawdia Chauchat who helps Hans to check his inherent Sympathie mit dem Tode – the res bina and essence of Romanticism. She allows him to indulge in the formlessness of his passion, described by the narrator as ‘Tod und Körperunzucht’ but in the last analysis she invites him to come to terms with its dangerous immorality and to decide in favour of that other criterion inherent in love, ‘Güte und Liebe’, the humane principle that Clawdia, conversely described as ‘mystagogischer Schatten’ by her rival Settembrini, affords the young man with her introduction of Peeperkorn. This lies at the heart of the story of Hans Castorp and Clawdia Chauchat.

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541 ‘[…] aber die unvernünftige Liebe ist genial, denn der Tod, weißt du, ist das geniale Prinzip, die res bina, der lapis philosophorum, und er ist auch das pädagogische Prinzip, denn die Liebe zu ihm führt zur Liebe des Lebens und des Menschen.’ GW III, p. 827.
542 GW III, p. 994.
543 GW III, p. 686.
544 GW III, p. 223.
Conclusion

Thomas Mann is very reticent about the character of Clawdia Chauchat. He does not discuss her in his letters nor invite analysis of her or explain her role to the recipients of his letters. As it is, apart from the famous/infamous Agnes Meyer, his American patroness, no one ever requests his comments on the Clawdia figure. To her question he replies about Clawdia’s role in Hans’s education:


The essence of humanity in its conflict between love and death is personified by Clawdia Chauchat. She warns Hans of Joachim’s possible death if he returns to soldiering, just as she foresees the wilderness of war when she reprimands Hans with her accusation that his people will one day be the enemies of all humanity. All these comments are intuitive reactions to the surrounding blustering, boasting, exaggerated notions of honour. Settembrini, for all his virtues, encourages Hans to throw himself into battle, and just before the war breaks out, Hans can see the fruits of excessive male aggression in the fierce fighting between patients in the Berghof, culminating in Naphta’s gruesome suicide. In contrast, the picture of Clawdia (and perhaps she is ‘das allerdings absolut bewunderungswürdige Gleichnis’546) turns Hans’s mind towards his new dream of humanity and dream of love:

[...]In seinem Schneetraum sieht er: Der Mensch ist freilich zu vornehm für das Leben, darum sei er fromm und dem Tode

545 Letter of Thomas Mann to Agnes Meyer of 13. V. 38, Br. II, find page.
546 GW III, p. 905.
This confirms one of the chief concerns of this chapter – which is to suggest that it is Clawdia first and foremost who leads Hans Castorp to the main lesson he has to learn on the magic mountain.

My other line of thought is that Clawdia lives out her own Bildungsroman. Like Gerda Buddenbrook but on a larger scale she leaves the stereotype of femme fatale far behind and develops into an autonomous person. The fact that there are fewer conversations with her (three to be precise) than with Naphta and Settembrini does not diminish their pedagogic force. They concentrate strictly on the spiritual convergence of Hans and Clawdia. The three conversations are pivotal. And they show both Hans Castorp’s development between the French conversation and the last conversation and also a development in Clawdia Chauchat. In comparison with the main theme, the education of Hans, Clawdia’s growth is presented as a miniature. It is not large and grandiose, not like the oil painting by Hofrat Behrens, but nevertheless it is there and reaches out to the reader.

We first see Clawdia Chauchat in her physicality, cat-like, snake-like, seductive and full of sex-appeal. She is the perfect pin-up who will adjust to fit any stereotype the men around her can think of. Hans fantasizes in various ways about her, dresses and undresses her, she is boy Hippe, she is a white angel, she is pure physiology, and he peels off her skin even, ponders about her organs, her skeletal framework.

Then we hear her voice for a first time during the French conversation, no longer Hippe’s voice, that echo from the past, but the

547 Letter of Thomas Mann to Josef Ponten of 5.2.25, Br. I, p. 232.
sound of a ‘Schicksalsstimme’ – Clawdia’s very determined voice that resolutely proclaims her selfhood.

On her return she defies the sanatorium and its conventions by her new role as a carer. She has not lost her erotic appeal for Hans but instead of being his lover again, she asks for his help as a friend. The appeal of this new trust between them is overwhelming; the emotions that had been missing on the occasion of the Walpurgisnacht are now exchanged and culminate in the Russian kiss. There is a moment of complete openness between them, something very close to a spiritual manifestation. Thus Hans has found his ‘Reim auf Liebe’, not just the workings of libido, the chemical process, and the recreational urge or his renunciation of it, but that love is also goodness, and he wishes to reject the notion of death for its own sake.

We remember that Thomas Mann was not sure whether he wanted Clawdia to ever return after her first departure. At one level her function had been fulfilled. But she deserved better. Hans comes to his snow dream conclusion before the Peeperkorn adventure, and it needs reinforcing. Hence Clawdia returns. The lesson he learns from Clawdia runs through the novel like a red thread. While she is very visible early on in the novel, it is just an image of her that is worshipped like a false god. She may be physically present but, before the French conversation, not spiritually so. As the narrative unfolds we witness an amazing interplay of physicality and inwardness, presence and absence – Clawdia is both: the object of infatuated desire and a figure of impressive autonomy. The fact that she is mysterious and inconsistent makes her a highly interesting figure, inviting investigation and critical enquiry. As such she stands supreme amongst the women characters in Thomas Mann’s oeuvre.

548 ‘Was er geträumt, war im Verbliehen begriffen. Was er gedacht, verstand er schon diesen Abend nicht mehr so recht.’ GW III, p. 688.
Ein Lustspiel - An Introduction

Werther muß – muß sein! Ihr fühlt ihn nicht, Ihr fühlt nur mich und Euch... Könntet Ihr den tausendsten Teil fühlen, was Werther tausend Herzen ist, Ihr wärdet die Unkosten nicht berechnen, die Ihr dazu hergebt!  

Thomas Mann read Mörike’s story *Mozart auf der Reise nach Prag* in the Pension Clanque in Le Lavandou in France on Friday, 18th September 1936: ‘Begann Mozart a.d. Reise n. Prag’ zu lesen, das ziemlich genau der Erzählungstyp ist, den ich beim ‘Wiedersehen’ im Auge habe.’ At that time he was mentally preparing for his novel *Lotte in Weimar*. His initial inspiration goes back to February 1935, on re-reading *Eckermanns Gespräche*. The earliest comment in his diaries about this subject is from 19th November 1933 ‘Der Novellen- oder Theaterstoff des Besuches der alten Lotte Buff-Kestner in Weimar fiel mir wieder aufs Herz. Er bildet zusammen mit der Faust-Idee die produktive Ausschau.’ The idea of a *Novella* was soon left behind. Just as before, when Thomas Mann watched his intended novella *Der Zauberberg* grow into something much bigger, this new tale soon showed all the signs of growing into a full-blown novel.

Mörike’s and Mann’s stories begin in a similar fashion. In each a carriage rattles along, stops at an inn to release Mozart and his wife in the Mozart story and Lotte Kestner with her daughter in the Goethe novel. In both cases they are offered a nice and tidy room, reflect on their new surroundings and the ladies lie down to rest.  

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549 Goethe in a letter to Lotte Buff and her betrothed, as quoted by Thomas Mann in *Phantasie über Goethe*, (Stockholm, Bernmann-Fischer, 1948), p. 58.
550 Tagebücher 1935-1936.
551 Tagebücher 1933-1934.
552 To give an example of the similarity of style and type, Konstanze is led into a ‘rein geweihten und schnell gelüfteten Zimmer befand sich unter andern veralteten Möbeln von edlerer Herkunft ... ein
Reise nach Prag and Lotte in Weimar are concerned with exploring and acknowledging the artistically creative self – the extraordinary intensity and energy, the self-consuming, headlong fervour of creative geniuses and, at the same time, the forms of linkage to the surrounding society. Mörike, like Mann, delighted in creating a social context for his central theme. His novella and Thomas Mann’s novel concern themselves primarily with the artist and his fate, the thinking behind the creation, the man behind the work. Both approach their protagonist in an anecdotal manner, attempting to draw a lively and entertaining pen portrait of that complex being, the artist. To succeed in this, as they both do, they contrast the well-known men of genius with the women in their lives, Konstanze and Lotte.

Lotte in Weimar emulates a Lustspiel, a comedy of manners, but Lotte is as little a fictional invention as is Konstanze. In both cases it is a woman who presents a link to the reader and expresses the implied, the short-lived, momentary nature of youth, beauty and passion which is then captured in art and preserved for posterity.

The elegant narration of both stories disguises the melancholy undertow of both stories. Mann follows Mörike’s style closely, in that the gay spirit of the women and the acute sense of comedy and self-irony of the artists themselves at least initially lend both narratives the feel of Lustspiel. Thomas Mann writes to Eberhard Hilscher:

Ich fand, daß diese Anekdote [Lotte’s visit to Weimar in 1816] mir Gelegenheit bot, mich der Gestalt Goethes erzählerisch zunächst auf einem ganz bescheidenen und humoristischen Wege zu nähern, und zwar wäre ich fast darauf verfallen, aus dem Gegenstand ein Lustspiel zu machen. Tatsächlich bin ich dem Versuch nie näher gewesen als damals, ein Lustspiel zu schreiben, und das erste

On the same day he writes to Kurt Hammer ‘Es ist dann freilich nicht bloß beim Humor geblieben[...]’ Similarly Mörike writes on 6th May 1855 to his publisher Freiherr Georg von Cotta:

Meine Aufgabe bei dieser Erzählung war, ein kleines Charaktergemälde Mozarts (das erste seiner Art, soviel ich weiß) aufzustellen, wobei, mit Zugrundelegung frei erfundener Situationen, vorzüglich die heitere Seite zu lebendiger konzentrierter Anschauung gebracht werden sollte.

Mozart and Goethe offer rich grounds for psychological and artistic insights. Mörike’s novella, much shorter and more condensed than Mann’s detailed and weighty novel does not delve into all the manifold aspects of Mozart’s creative self. While Thomas Mann’s Goethe novel is written in a style that is ‘kunstvoll und verschmitzt in seiner oft fast humoristischen Anpassung an die Goethezeit’ he claims that ‘Roman ist eine Notbezeichnung dafür. “Eine intellektuelle Komödie” oder dergleichen wäre wohl richtiger.’

He defines the mood for the reader as follows:


Thomas Mann speaks of the stage but on reading the novel one is rather reminded of the screen, perhaps even small screen. Thomas Mann was a passionate cinema-goer. His diaries are full of comments on various films he has seen. In his Der Zauberberg he gives us a splendid

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555 Thomas Mann to Kurt Hammer on 14.3.51 ibid., p. 106.
556 Appendix to Eduard Mörike, Mozart auf der Reise nach Prag, (Stuttgart, Reclam, 1996), p. 76.
557 Katia Mann to Helen Lowe-Porter on 23.6.37, in Thomas Mann Selbstkommentare, p. 214.
558 Thomas Mann to Ernst Benedikt (Princeton, 2.2.1940), Ibid. p. 47.
559 Thomas Mann in On Myself, March/April 1940, Ibid. p. 54.
description of a cinema performance, of the lovely shadows, non-people who beckon to the public. Thomas Mann acutely felt the mystique and double meaning of celluloid art and he was always keen to co-operate with directors to have his own work filmed. In the context of my thesis this 'interplay of shadow and substance' is particularly meaningful in relation to the female characters in Mann's work. The concept of masking and unmasking, on which I have already touched in previous chapters and will elaborate in the next applies very much to the 'Lustspiel' character of Lotte Kestner.

While Mörike's Konstanze is soon put to the back of the stage to allow other characters to emerge and interact with Mozart, Lotte remains right at the forefront throughout the first six of the nine chapters of the novel. Weimar, its society and the presence of Goethe is registered through her eyes - that of a newcomer, yet an old acquaintance, someone who has known a Goethe no one else has: not Riemer, not even Frau v. Stein. With her intuition Lotte soon sees through the façade of the somewhat pretentious ways of local high society (Riemer, Adele v. Schopenhauer, August v. Goethe). The figures are drawn with the caricaturist's eye for salient detail - the agile, deferential Mager and his love for biography, the garrulous Miss Guzzle, the pompous Riemer, Adele Schopenhauer, who likes to have things and people her own way, the pathetic August; they all tell her a good deal about her old lover - some things are painful to her and sometimes she has to read between the lines.

Many critics have been unkind to the Lotte figure. Those who are inclined to view Mann's work as misogynistic pick up the slightly humorous aspect of the little, compact figure, once 'Bahfee von Volpertshausen', dressed in virginal white with her greying hair.

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560 Martin Swales Der Zauberberg, p. 82.
561 GW II, p.385, see page 213.
Elsbeth Wolfheim is one of them. Three quotations will give a flavour of her argument:

‘Bei den Nebenfiguren, zumal den weiblichen, hat Thomas Mann freilich seinem Hang zur Karikatur nicht selten die Zügel schießen lassen’.

‘Um den Gehalt[...] aus Dichtung und Wahrheit für die verborgene Hierarchie des Romanpersonals in Lotte in Weimar zurechtzuschneiden, könnte man füglich sagen, daß Charlotte darauf beschränkt wird, sich an das ‘gemeine Wirkliche’ anzuklammern, als Goethes Biographie nur aus ihrem Realitätsverständnis zu begreifen[...]’

‘Die Überhöhung ihrer eigenen Bedeutung wird so zum zentralen Motiv, das Thomas Mann mit subtiler Bosheit wieder und wieder anklingen läßt.’

T. J. Reed is also critical, he writes:

Denn ist Lotte nicht so recht jemand, der das eine haben will, ohne das andere zu lassen? Sie möchte unmißverständlich mit ihrer erfüllten kleinen Lebenswirklichkeit der Kunst gegenüber auftrumpfen, besteht aber weiterhin auf ihrer literarischen Vergangenheit und ihrem zeitlosen Ruhm. So erscheint sie zum formellen Lunchempfang bei Goethe im Kostüm der ersten Begegnung der fiktiven Lotte mit Werther, stellt also mit dem Exzellenz und Nationalfigur gewordenen alten Freund gleichsam einen unverschämten literaturhistorischen Flirt an. [...] In so frivoler Weise darf man Dichtung und Wahrheit nicht vermischen, wie Lotte es tut.

Beyond any doubt, there was initially a comic – perhaps even satirical thrust to Mann’s original design for Lotte in Weimar. But the concept mellowed. From Werner Frizen’s research we learn that it was supposed to be Lotte who was initially more interested in ‘Trivialliteratur’ but this idea was then discarded and Rinaldo Rinaldini is instead read and admired by Clärchen, the little maid. Thomas Mann decided against his first sketch of a ‘törichte Frau von sechzig Jahren’ and undertakes ‘nach und nach so etwas wie eine Zurücknahme, zumindest eine Distanzierung und Milderung des grotesken Ansatzes.’


I see Lotte somewhat positively and hope to convey this in the following sections. To begin with, she prepares us to meet the genius throughout the first six chapters, so when we finally meet him personally in chapter seven we feel that we have already some inside knowledge. Goethe has been thoroughly humanized and is now more easy to grasp. In short, the step by step approach was the utterly right way of building up such a complicated pen portrait: to capture the artist, the genius and the man – while at the same time retaining a lightness of tone which Goethe would be the first to appreciate. But above all, it is Lotte who guides us to this goal; it is her questions, the information imparted to her, her thoughts and her conclusions that introduce the reader to Goethe in the Frauenplan. During the long dialogues leading up to it, the reader comes to appreciate Lotte and as Hermann J. Weigand points out: 'To our amazement we notice that Lotte is as keen a listener and as ready a learner as Hans Castorp.'\(^565\)

Mother and daughter

Sie fragte sich, ob sie, die Sinnenglück einmal gramvoll ersehnt, aber nie gekannt hatte, es nicht der Mutter heimlich missgönnt und sie darum mit allerei erklügelten Argumenten zur Sittsamkeit angehalten hatte.

At the beginning of the novel Lotte arrives in Weimar. Her physical appearance is very much as one would imagine an ageing Lotte Buff, the description of her face follows closely the painting we possess of her in her youth by J.H. Schröder, but some forty years older: she appears in a white dress: ‘...und einer hohen Capotte, unter der krauses Haar, von dem aschigen Grau, das ehemals blond gewesen, hervorschaute [...] Die blauen Augen der Frau, von distinguierter Mattigkeit, ....ihr kleiner Mund, eingebettet in einigen Altersspeck der Wangen, bewegte sich eigentümlich angenehm.’ We see her sign her name with ‘feinen Fingern’ and she compares favourably with her daughter, despite being twice her age: ‘Das fein gebogene Näschen der Mutter war bei ihr ein wenig zu scharf, zu hart ausgefallen, in ihrer Jugend mochte sie reizvoller gewesen sein, als die Tochter es heute noch war. Von der einen Seite blickte die Tochter ihr über die Schulter, die hübschen, ebenmäßig gebogenen Augenbrauen (sie hatte sie von der Mutter) zur Stirn gehoben.’ Lotte’s daughter, sceptical Lottchen (Thomas Mann changed the name of the daughter who historically accompanied Lotte to Weimar from Clara to Charlotte or Lottchen, probably for his usual reason to highlight the binary connection), is under no illusion about her mother’s reason for this visit. She reproaches her for staying in

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566 GW VIII, p. 935.
567 GW II, all quotes p. 370.
569 In this context, Wolfgang Schneider points out: ‘Fast alle späteren Werke Thomas Manns enthalten Passagen, in denen die Entlarvungspychologie zumindest relativiert wird.’ Lotte rebels against the Entlarvung through her daughter: ‘Denn ein unangenehmer, ein kränkender Scharfblick ist das, ein Cont. on next page
the inn rather than proceeding on to her relatives and this irritates Lotte in the extreme since her daughter is in large measure right.

The reader is presented with the contrast between the once lovely Lotte Buff and her spinster daughter Lottchen who is not at ease with herself. Lottchen has to play the role of the carer, the ‘quasi wife’ without physical fulfilment. This is a repeat of her mother’s past. The role of mother and carer was also wished on Lotte the elder at a very young age but in contrast she accepted it with ease, grace and great competence, so that the young Goethe at once fell in love with her. This incarnation is closely entwined with Lotte’s real self, it has entered people’s perception forever as Goethe stamped it on the readers’ minds. Mager expresses the common point of view, the way ordinary people see Werther’s Lotte, confusing ‘poetry and truth’:

Es war mir bekannt, daß das verehrungswürdige Frauenzimmer, das Urbild jener ewig lieblichen Gestalt, unter den Lebenden verweilte, und zwar in der Stadt Hannover...Du Grundgütiger, die Frau Kammerrätin befand sich also unter jener Kinderschar, die Frau Hofrätin im Vorsaal des Jagdhauses umdrängten, als Werther zum ersten Male dort eintrat, und die ihre Händchen nach dem Vesperbrot streckten, welches Frau Hofrätin...

Of those qualities, daughter Lottchen possesses only competence. There is a certain bitterness within her that has marked her features, described as harsh and not pleasing. She has little natural charm, something Lotte Buff has had and even as Matrone still has in abundance. All in all as an old lady Lotte Kestner is younger in her heart than her sensible, rational but thoroughly disillusioned daughter. At one point in the first chapter we find Lotte blushing like a young girl in response to the uncomfortable truths told to her by her perceptive but slightly jealous daughter:

Die Hofrätin errötete, was sie gut und rührend kleidete. Es verjüngte sie merkwürdigerweise, veränderte ihr Gesicht ins lieblich-Jungmädchenhafte: man glaubte auf einmal zu erkennen, wie es mit zwanzig Jahren ausgehen hatte, die zart blickenden


GW II, p. 377f.
Augen, das gebogene Näschen, der angenehme kleine Mund gewann in dem Licht, der rosigen Tönung dieses Errötens für einige Sekunden den reizenden Sinn zurück, den sie einst besessen: des Amtmanns wackeres Töchterchen, die Mutter der Kleinen, die Ballfee von Volpershausen trat unter diesem Alt-Damen-Erröten überraschend noch einmal hervor...⁵⁷¹

Lottchen has to turn away, feeling intensely embarrassed and annoyed by this, intolerant as children can be of their parents, as Lotte reflects when being chided by her daughter on her mission.⁵⁷² The relationship between mother and daughter is very similar to that of Rosalie and Anna von Tümler in Die Betrogene. Anna is less acrimonious but there is the same duality – the ingenious, intuitive mother with her natural charm – and her rather more formidable daughter, intelligent and rational but less appealing, unmarried, childless and living a life of self-denial.

The overall impression of Lotte Kestner is that of a very personable, sympathetic character. The effect of her appearance is only startling once she reveals her identity ('Da hast du deinen Stern entblößt. Der Effekt war nicht übel'⁵⁷³ remarks Charlotte the younger, quoting Egmont with a touch of sarcasm). Female intuition, an intimate knowledge of her mother, as well as that already mentioned sexual jealousy makes her aware of this mission's purpose. Her sensitivity allows her to feel acutely in advance the effect Lotte will have and she will be proved right. She foresees Goethe's reserve, the danger of her mother looking like a ridiculous old woman. She does not wish to witness that shame, partly for reasons of deference, partly of filial love. Nevertheless, she does her mother an injustice. Like most people in Weimar, all Werther admirers and of course Goethe himself, she is

⁵⁷¹ GW II, p. 385.
⁵⁷² 'Kinder sind hart und unduldsam, dachte Charlotte, gegen das Eigenleben der Mutter: aus einer egoistisch verbietenden Pietät, die fähig ist, aus Liebe Lieblosigkeit zu machen, und die nicht löblicher wird, wenn einfach weiblicher Neid sich dazwischen mischt, - Neid auf ein mütterliches Herzensabenteuer, der sich als spöttischer Widerwill gegen die weitläufigen Ruhmesfolgen des Abenteuers verkleidet.' GW II, p. 389f.
⁵⁷³ GW II, p. 382.
aware of her mother’s image, created however long ago, but she knows that now reality does not live up to that representation. Be that as it may, Lotte has come to challenge it. The forty-four years saw a gradual change from a young, naturally charming and very attractive but perhaps not very complex being to the person we meet at the beginning of the novel. This development took place off stage. Age has given Lotte a certain gravity that the young ‘Ballfee von Volpertshausen’ did not possess. Yet she must have had an indefinable something (‘etwas Gewisses’, as the businessmen said of Gerda Buddenbrook) or ‘sie mußte es doch wohl hinter den Ohren gehabt haben’ (as is said about Hans Castorp), because all that time ago she aroused that great love in Goethe that in return inspired him to write his greatest bestseller ever.

574 GW I, p. 294.
575 GW III, p. 994.
Lotte’s reception

Das ist die wahre Symbolik, wo das Besondere das Allgemeinere repräsentiert, nicht als Traum und Schatten, sondern als lebendig-augenblickliche Offenbarung des Unerforschlichen.576

The first reaction of Weimar to Lotte’s visit is that it turns into a beehive. There is gossip galore. Be it that the waiter Mager immediately puts the word around, or someone overhears the registration procedure, or Clärchen, the maid, manages to spill the beans on her way to the Riedels – people know within less than an hour of the novelty and rush to see it. This type of reaction is of course always there in Thomas Mann’s work where women appear on centre stage. The two Gerdas trigger the same sort of stir when they arrive in their new towns; Clawdia is the absolute centre of gossip and fantasising in Der Zauberberg. In Lotte in Weimar this phenomenon is particularly well described. With his photographic eye Thomas Mann conjures up a picture of how the throng grows in front of the inn; how various strata of society add to it; how the law is pulled in to keep control. All this for an elderly chubby little lady, whose visit to her sister seems inconspicuous enough.

Leading members of the Weimar Circle around Goethe pay their respects to Lotte Kestner, not for her simple self but because of the role she once played in Goethe’s life. Apart from the droll Miss Guzzle, she receives three of the most prominent players in Weimar cultural politics, all within a time span of about three hours. In a way they come to pay her their respects,577 but for motives of their own. Riemer, Adele

Schopenhauer and August v. Goethe come with different expectations: Riemer seeks the victim in Charlotte but really wants to unburden himself about his own problems. Adele wants Charlotte’s help in the matter of her friend’s engagement to August (she is possibly driven by sexual jealousy) and August v. Goethe has been sent by his father to represent him, but he is also driven by a morbid curiosity. It is true, though, that all of them wish to make Lotte aware that they are fellow sufferers, in that they serve or have served Goethe in his greatness at the price of considerable personal sacrifice. Moreover, despite their obvious sympathy for the charming old lady, they wish to lower her self-esteem so that she cannot stand out too notably from their own crowd – Werther or no Werther. (Happily they do not succeed!)

In Riemer this tangle of motives is most obvious. He stresses the point that though Goethe has used them both and they have suffered as a result, she by having her private life exposed, he by forfeiting a promising academic career, the greater sacrifice is on his side. He then tries to patronize her and downgrade her contribution to Goethe’s work. For that he uses her gender and the status as mother she prides herself on. While giving the appearance of being kind to her, he finds rather discomforting comparisons like the confrontation of Jesus with his mother: ‘Weib was habe ich mit dir zu schaffen?’ (I shall return to this point later) and on the subject of the silhouettes of her children sent to Goethe years back he suggests that Goethe will have lost them long ago. When she remembers one of Goethe’s reviews that he read to her in the old days in Wetzlar, he waves it away: ‘Ich nehme an, daß er es vergessen hat […]’ Thus he tries to discourage Lotte from asserting her position in Goethe’s world, fictional or real, and invites her to

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578 GW II p. 453, how bitter these words can be to mothers is elaborated upon in Dr. Faustus: ‘Einer Mutter ist der Ikarusflug des Helden-Sohnes, das steile Mannesabenteuer des ihrer Hut Entwachsenen, im Grunde eine so sündliche wie unverständliche Verirrung, aus der sie auch immer das entfremdet-gestrenge ‘Weib, was habe ich mit dir zu schaffen!’ mit heimlicher Kränkung vernimmt’ GW VII p. 671.

579 GW II, p. 461.
withdraw into the gallery of minor figures that fill the court around Goethe and to whom he himself belongs. In one sense, of course, he is right. Goethe is more important than the hangers-on. Yet Mann’s novel also recognizes Lotte as a legitimate visitor to Weimar.

The ‘geschwätzige’ Adele Schopenhauer represents a female alliance. She is after all not speaking for herself but for her friend Ottelie who is to marry Goethe’s son on the recommendation of the old man himself. This is on the grounds that she resembles young Charlotte Buff and she wishes Lotte Kestner to act as a mother substitute for the orphaned Ottelie, so much like herself, and prevent this marriage – a gross interference Lotte immediately recognizes and is embarrassed by. Why Adele should interfere is not very clear (although there is a strong implication that the marriage is very problematic). August may have terrible habits, but he appears to be very handsome and for a girl without means from the fringes of Weimar’s high society it is in many ways a great opportunity to be connected to the Goethe family, to bear the grandchildren of Goethe. Adele must surely appreciate that. And there is no viable alternative. The young, good-looking Prussian army officer the two girls rescued was after all not eligible. Lotte may have sensed a certain amount of sexual jealousy, a feeling she actually aroused when young and, as we have seen, she still does so even now. Hence, she does not rush to oblige Adele Schopenhauer, flattering though the proposal is to her.

In every other way, Adele, like Riemer before her, has a tendency to belittle Lotte’s role in Goethe’s oeuvre as overtaken by events and play down her importance for literary history. Adele’s scepticism, however, is not so much directed against Lotte – it concentrates on Goethe. She is already a step ahead of classical literature and is looking to the Romantics, together with her generation of literary friends. There she finds a staunch conservative in Lotte. She may have cried in front of

580 Thomas Mann to Eberhard Hilscher on 28.22.1950, in Thomas Mann Selbstkommentare, p. 103.
Riemer because she feels somewhat used by Goethe but when all is said and done she will be his loyal defender (is she not defending her own position in world literature?). She is, in other words, partisan. At the end of the novel she is invited by Goethe to watch a play written by one of the new generation of writers (not altogether accidentally I am sure) and with relief she judges: 'Nun ja, die junge Schriftsteller-Generation, es stand wohl bei vieler Geschicklichkeit doch alles in allem etwas klaterig um sie, und gar viel hatten die großen Alten am Ende von ihr nicht zu fürchten.'581 Her verdict is not entirely disinterested, and this is firmly implied by the ironic illumination of her in Thomas Mann's novel. On another level, however, Adele personifies the contrast between a somewhat unattractive woman with intellectual ambitions and the self-confidence that accompanies them on the one hand and a woman who represents the acceptable face of the feminine that is housed in the private and the prosaic sphere, and is formulated by Rousseau's ideas of 'natural' and 'ideal' femininity on the other. Adele is another Lottchen perhaps, but successful and with equilibrium.

August does not need an excuse to see Lotte; he has a real message from his father that brings him to her, but he too finds himself pouring out his heart to the friendly lady who could have been his mother. The 'what might have been' exists between them, and both are acutely aware of that. August is fiercely loyal to his mother and, considering her own ambivalent feelings about Christiane, Lotte respects him for that. She tries to obey Adele Schopenhauer's request and dissuade him from this dubious marriage arranged by his father582 but she gets lost in her thoughts, intertwines them with herself and merges Goethe's conjured Lotte-image in Werther with her present self. Thus she falls prey to the same confusion that holds all readers of Werther enthralled:

581 GW II, p. 754.
582 ‘Nun bricht diese Oberfläche der seelischen Reflexe auf und die Tiefenschicht wird sichtbar, in der nicht erst seit Sigmund Freud die inzestuöse Verwirrung haust.’ Eckhard Heftrich, Lotte in Weimar, p. 438.
But this pleasant reverie of repeating the past in the next generation is pure self-deception. Image-conscious Weimar, where art and artifice thrive, rejects such self-indulgence. If at her first reception in Mager's inn she was treated as someone exceptional, she is put firmly in her place at the dinner party Goethe arranges for her at the Frauenplan. Her daughter's worst fears are going to be fulfilled. Everybody notices her dress, although (and this contradicts T. J. Reed's opinion that her appearance is a 'unverschämter literaturhistorischer Flirt') she is easily outstripped in extravagance by all the other ladies. The narrator makes the point that Lotte is actually the 'Alleranspruchsloseste' in comparison with the other ladies: 'Ein Zug zu ästhetischer Freiheit, ja zur Theatralik herrschte durchaus in der Kleidung der Damen.' On this occasion she is sidelined – Goethe himself makes sure of that. He treats her as if there was no past; there is no coquetry, no remembrance. For Lotte that is difficult; since there is so much unfinished business on her side, a reconciliation between Goethe and herself is desirable. The other dinner party guests, if anything, feel satisfaction. But Lotte Kestner has good reason to return to Weimar, and to Goethe, whose beloved she once was. As the novel unfolds, Lotte and we will discover how intractable the mingling of art and life was – and is.

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583 GW II, p. 615.
584 For full quote, see p. 209.
585 GW II, p. 707.
Werther’s Lotte

Lotte comes to Weimar (and to Goethe), and creates a tremendous stir. Initially Thomas Mann’s women figures are (in part at least) defined, pictured, inscribed, stylized by the male self, the onlooker, lover, the artistic maker or whatever. This is particularly true of Lotte – she is known through her depiction in Goethe’s novel Die Leiden des jungen Werther and she returns to the greatest creative spirit of his age – Goethe himself. The meeting of old Lotte Kestner with the old Goethe is based on fact, but little is known of what in fact happened. The first question that comes to mind is, why does Lotte wish for this meeting and why now? Wiedersehen was the original title during the conception of Lotte in Weimar and it is very much a Leitmotiv in this novel (this is expressed in the title The Beloved Returns of the English translation). Lotte wishes to re-live or at least investigate her own past, and come to terms with the emotional upheaval from so long ago. She has matured from the naseweise Blondine (Ch. v. Stein on reading the Werther novel) but has maintained some basic character traits, that is to say a certain naivety, directness and intuitive intelligence.

For the Goethe figure in Thomas Mann’s novel, Lotte is one of the women who indubitably contributed centrally to his work, beginning with his mother and sister and stretching over a series of lovers, whether the relationships included physical consummation or not. The last in the line (within Thomas Mann’s novel) is the little daughter-in-law to be he has picked for August, his hapless, possibly homosexual

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586 GW IX, p. 643.
son. (The only relationship he talks happily about with Lotte is the one with Archim v. Arnim). The resemblance between Ottilie v. Pogwisch and Lotte Kestner is particularly well commented on by August v. Goethe, he exclaims: ‘Was ist Ähnlichkeit! Ich behaupte keine Gleichheit der Einzelzüge, sondern die Schwesterlichkeit der Gesamterscheinung, die Identität des Typus, dies allem Junonischen Ferne, dies Leichte, Liebliche, Zierliche, Zärtliche – das ist es, was ich das Schwesterliche, das Töchterliche nenne.’ Here again we can see the typification, the category into which Lotte as well as ‘das Persönchen’, that is to say Ottilie v. Pogwisch, neatly fit. The category is curiously sexless – a uniform grouping of undemanding subordinate women.

Although Lotte feels competitive with all those beside her who inspired Goethe at some point or other, this feeling does not extend to Christiane Vulpius, who, as Goethe’s Bettschatz, is in a somewhat different league (in Thomas Mann’s universe). August knows that and can feel safe in Lotte’s presence. This woman will not resent the muse that inspired ‘merely’ carnal desire and lascivious poetry as opposed to the tender lyricisms written for the child-brides that people Goethe’s work. When he confides in her about Ottilie Pogwisch and his wish to marry her he refers very openly to Lotte’s maternal experience, moreover, with Adele Schopenhauer he is in agreement that Ottilie is almost a replica of Lotte’s former, youthful self. He recognizes that because of this likeness Goethe pushes this relationship so that August feels obliged to enter into the marriage. We have Goethe’s statement to verify this, it is contained in his ‘Gemurmel’ (chapter seven): ‘[…]und ich hab die Grille, zu tun, als dürft und könnt ichs in ihm noch einmal

587 GW II, p. 612.
588 There is a reflection by Goethe in the 7th chapter that depicts such a notion: ‘Denn die Fülle des Lebens, der Menschheit, das Kindermachen ist nicht Sache der Poesie.’ GW II, p. 647.
589 Thomas Mann to Agnes E. Meyer, Princeton 16.2. 1941: ‘Komisch ist, daß Sch. behauptet, das VII. Kapitel habe im Manuskript ‘Das Gemurmel’ geheißen. Möchte wissen, wie er darauf kommt. Das Wort Cont. on next page
beginnen, verkuppel ihn mit dem Persönchen [Ottilie v. Pogwisch] weils vom Schlage derer, vor denen ich floh... Why is Goethe so set on recreating his own youth in his son’s life? Perhaps Lotte is not the only one who seeks inspiration and reunion with a unique experience. Goethe too looks towards the early models in his life that filled him with such an emotion and led to a burst of artistic productivity. A realist always, Lotte reminds him during the last conversation: ‘Du hast recht wohlgetan, Goethe, auch deine eigene Jugendgestalt beständig zu machen im Gedicht...’ But that aside, Thomas Mann’s Goethe would have preferred not to be confronted again with the real woman who inspired him to write his youthful bestseller. In the seventh chapter he looks back on his first novel with fondness: ‘Gut gemacht, talentvoller Grasaff, der schon von Kunst so viel wußte wie von Liebe und heimlich jene meint, wenn er diese betrieb, - spatzenjung und schon ganz bereit, Liebe, Leben und Menschheit an die Kunst zu verraten.’ This expresses precisely his attitude towards art, the role it plays in the world and what the artist essentially stands for. It won’t do for the real Lotte to appear from nowhere and claim some rights of recognition, of acknowledgement: ‘Die Geliebte kehrt wieder zum Kuß, immer jung, - (eher apprehensiv nur freilich, zu denken, daß sie in ihrer der Zeit unterworfenen Gestalt, alt, auch daneben noch irgendwo lebt, - nicht eben ganz so behaglich und billigenswert, wie daß auch der ‘Werther’ fortbesteht neben dem ‘Divan’). In Goethe’s conversations with Eckermann, he comments on Werther: ‘Das sind lauter Brandraketen’ and expresses his awareness of the sheer dangerous energy of his first novel. Thus Thomas Mann’s Goethe thinks aloud: ‘Soviel gescheite


GW II, p. 654.

GW II, p. 760.

GW II, p. 647f.

GW II, p. 649.


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Sorgfalt bei soviel Gefühlsverlorenheit und Sehnsuchtsstürmen gegen
die Schranken des Individuums, die Kerkermauern des Menschseins.
Verstehe schon, daß es einschlug..." 595 Constantly, Mann's Lotte in
Weimar worries at the issue of the problematic relationships that
conjoin art and life. On occasion, Goethe is shown as willing to regard
life as mere raw material for his creativity. Whereas Lotte wants to be
recognized as having been – and being – something more than raw
material.

Goethe has moved well beyond his Werther phase. Since then he
has written the Westöstlicher Divan and Die Wahlverwandtschaften. He
is even contemplating abandoning poetry altogether and concentrating
purely on scientific writing. And now the reality of this ageing woman,
who has long ceased to play a role in his life and has nothing to add,
appears in melodramatic fashion, as if to demand an hour of reckoning:
‘Konnt' sie sich's nicht verkneifen, die Alte, und mir’s nicht
ersparen?’ 596 In the seventh chapter Goethe's bitterness is manifest. At
first he will not accept the fact that she is physically there. His son
August won't let him get away with it, though. Loyal to his father and a
caring son but also critical and slightly jealous, he is the counterpart of
Charlotte's daughter Lottchen when he insists that his father
acknowledge Lotte's billet. Perhaps it is because he sees in Lotte some
mother image or that he feels some satisfaction at his father's shock and
dismay when the real-life Lotte turns up after all those years that he
feels he must defend her. When Goethe dismisses her nicely written
little letter with "Was meinst du, wie lange das Seelchen daran
gesponnen" August replies: "Man sieht wohl nach seinen Worten,
 wenn man dir schreibt". 597

Not only will Lotte make Goethe painfully aware of the passing of

596 GW II, p. 694.
597 GW II, p. 693.
time and what it does to youth and beauty but she also invites Weimar, Goethe's court, to share this experience with the master. More or less from the moment of her arrival crowds gather to gape at her, and with a certain amount of relish (judging by her visitors' reactions) recognize that this is no longer the Ballfee and young surrogate mother of the orphaned siblings but an elderly, slightly corpulent member of the haute bourgeoisie. Lotte returns as a real woman, but also as the origin of the allusion. Goethe can see this at once, hence his repugnance and hostility and his attempt to establish a gulf between the past and the present. He is defending his poetic point of view. It also explains why his reply to August is as caustic as his comment about flower picking girls quoted by Adele Schopenhauer. In that case he compared them with goats, Lotte's visit he condenses in a little rhyme: 'Man sagt, die Gänse wären dumm! - O, glaubt mir nicht den Leuten: - Denn eine sieht einmal sich rum - mich rückwärts zu bedeuten.' Elsbeth Wolffheim sees this as another one of Thomas Mann's misogynistic attacks:

>Dies Goethe-Zitat just an diese Steile zu rücken, ist gewiß ein hübscher Einfall des Autors, enthüllt indes auch seine durchgehende Tendenz, Charlotte lacherlich zu machen. Gewiß, aus der darin offenbarten misogynen Haltung bezieht der ganze Roman einen Großteil seiner Komik, aber bisweilen wirkt das auch enervierend.

At one level, surely, Goethe's acrimonious reaction is nevertheless an admission of responsibility. We shall see in the final chapter that this responsibility is taken seriously and Lotte, as well as the other characters used/abused for Goethe's art, are reconciled. The goose, as the poet calls her in his irritation, turns and with a shrewd gesture she shows the artist his mirror image or, as Goethe rudely puts it, interprets him with the advantage of hindsight. Although he has an acute sense of why she has come and is not deceived by her official excuse, Lotte's critique of Goethe's egocentricity is accepted, albeit resentfully. If he

598 GW II, p. 692
599 Elsbeth Wolffheim 'Das Abenteuer der Verwirklichung des 'Goethe-Mythos', p. 117.
can appreciate the true motive behind her visit, he knows she too will be able to interpret his dignified and celebrated existence as being, so Hermann J. Weigand, ‘aloof and withdrawn in the padded cell of his inner consciousness.’

It is understandable that Lotte’s idea of Goethe differs from what he actually represents now (as she tells Adele Schopenhauer on her arrival): ‘Die Sache wird die sein, ...daß er jung geblieben ist in der Größe und in dem schweren Ernst seines Lebens dem Lachen die Treue bewahrt hat – es würd’ mich nicht wundern, und ich würd’ es schätzen.’ She refers to the sense of humour they both once shared and the Verschmitztheit Goethe liked in her and still likes to find in people. But when she meets him on the occasion of the dinner party she realizes how far removed this Goethe is from the one of her youth and she sums up her feelings at the end of the book: ‘[...] so sehr wohl und behaglich war mir’s nicht eben in deiner Wirklichkeit, in deinem Kunsthaus und Lebenskreis, es war eher eine Beklemmung und eine Apprehension damit, das laß mich gestehen, denn allzu sehr riecht es nach Opfer in deiner Nähe [...]’ This describes the experience of the lunch party where Lotte finds many of her impressions proved to be true, built up as they were during the earlier conversations with people from Goethe’s inner circle. She comes closer to understanding Goethe because she has an intuitive apprehension of how his mind works. Having known him intimately as a young man, the ossified, glorified, statesmanlike Goethe appears as odd and inappropriate to her as

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600 Hermann J. Weigand, Thoughts on the Passing of Thomas Mann, p. 17.
601 GW II, p. 488.
602 When August praises his friendship with Heinrich Voß ‘[...]über dessen Langweiligkeit und Lippenleiden mir die Gewißheit hinweghalf, daß seine Begeisterung für Vater rein von aller Verschmitztheit war’ [GW II, p. 609] he shows similar traits to the men around Goethe (i.e. Riemer, Meyer etc.) who lack this ‘Verschmitztheit’ too – Lotte possesses it. ‘Verschmitztheit’ is a feature that Lotte shares with Tony Buddenbrook, Rosalie von Tümmler and (to some extent) with Hans Castorp, Joseph and Felix Krull.
603 GW II, p. 763.
Werther’s Lotte in the person of a white-haired, elderly lady does to Goethe. She refers to his other guests as ‘Schranzen’ because they seem opinionated, artificial and pretentious to her. With that she sets herself apart from all of them, and with some justification. The loneliness of the great man is only perceived by Lotte and communicated through her to the reader. A price is exacted from both, Goethe and Lotte. Hence there is not inconsiderable tension at work in *Lotte in Weimar*. Thomas Mann wrote to Kuno Fiedler on 24. 2.1940: ‘Aber ich sehe wohl, wie gut ich getan habe, für einen versöhnlichen Ausklang durch die kleine Gespensterei am Schlusse zu sorgen (denn Wirklichkeit ist das Gespräch im Wagen natürlich nicht). Sie setzt die Härten, Kälten, Aufrichtigkeiten, Ironien des Vorhergehenden doch wohl erst in das rechte Licht.’

The intimacy of this last meeting raises another interesting aspect of the personal relationship between Lotte and Goethe – the use of the personal address. In this chapter they discuss the application of *Du* and *Sie*: ‘Merkwürdig’, schaltete sie ein. ‘August, der unausgesprochene Bräutigam, erzählte mir, du habest seine Mutter, die Mamsell geduzt, sie aber batte dich Sie genannt. Mir fällt auf, daß es bei uns hier umgekehrt zugeht.’ Goethe replies: ‘Das Du und Sie ... war ja auch damals immer, zu deiner Zeit, zwischen uns in der Schwebe...’ In his diary Werther says *Du* to Lotte: “Lotte! Der Segen Gottes ruht über dir und der Geist deiner Mutter!” or “Lebe –wohl, Lotte! Auf ewig lebe wohl!” Occasionally, to widen the gulf when Werther tries to get too close to Lotte, she uses the old-fashioned version of the third person

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604 ‘Du hast recht wohlgetan, Goethe, auch deine eigene Jugendgestalt beständig zu machen im Gedicht, dass du nun als steifbeinige Excellenz in allen Würden der Entsagung deinen Schranzen die Suppe gesegnen magst!’ GW II, p. 760.
606 Thomas Mann Selbstkommentare: Lotte in Weimar, p. 50.
607 GW II, p. 759.
609 Ibid., 115:30.
singular, Er. Furthermore, it is of interest that he calls his employer, Grand Duke August (Serenissimo) Gnädigster Herr and uses such phrases as Empfehle mich Durchlauchtigster Hoheit zu Gnaden, while he in return addresses Goethe as alter Kerl and Du. The ironic distance created through the difference of address is here exploited. In the end it does not matter on which side of the scale one is. Lotte recognizes it at once. 'Es ist curios, wenn auch rührend zugleich und im Grunde ganz wohl verständlich.'610 In the final dialogue in the coach, Goethe and Lotte use both forms of address but finish with the Du. The Sie is formal -- Goethe, the civil servant, uses it initially, true to herself Lotte uses the more confidential Du-Form straight away. But when she is reminded of Goethe's position in Weimar by his title Excellence, she quickly switches. Yet at the end, they both use the Du. After the reconciliation harmony is reinstated and the Du feels like an expression of mutual respect and closeness. Yet even so, one asks if either of them have really come to terms with that what once passed between them. Herman J. Weigand suggests that Goethe has exhausted his emotional reserves on the subject of Lotte, 'abreagiert' in the language of Freud, and this brings to mind Tonio Kröger's classic dictum: 'Ist die ganze Welt ausgesprochen, so ist sie erledigt, erlöst, abgetan [...]’ 611 Thus far I agree with Herman J. Weigand that: 'The inherent cruelty of the transitoriness of life's high moments is soberly registered.'612 But I do not agree with him that there is no 'inner contact'613 between the two. Goethe, Weigand suggests in his essay, is not, cannot be expected to be 'calculable.'614 We hear him reminisce in his early morning soliloquy about Lotte, Werther, the kiss, the raspberries and so forth. Uncertain as Lotte's and Goethe's address to each other may be, they do reach out

610 GW II, p. 597.
611 GW VIII, p. 302.
612 Ibid.
613 Ibid.
614 Ibid.
to one another again. Not, admittedly, that they manage to lay the past generally at rest. But within their imaginary reunion a certain rapprochement is achieved. After all, an imaginary reunion is free of responsibilities and it grants an openness to both that is similar to the absence of social restraints during carnival times.615

This ending is more than just a comfortable happy end to pacify the naive reader. Thomas Mann is too skilful, too sophisticated a writer for that. The fictitious Lotte has materialized and reality has caught up with Goethe. He, who shuns sentimentality in any form, accepts Lotte’s little outburst as part of the energy of her old age. Mann has his Goethe figure speak of renewal and return:

[...]und nicht umsonst war mir kürzlich erst, im frühen Jahre, unser Büchlein, der ‘Werther’, wieder in die Hände gefallen, daß Ihr Freund untertauchen mochte im Frühen-Alten, da er sich durchaus in eine Epoche der Erneuerung und der Wiederkehr eingetreten wußte, über welcher denn freilich nicht unbeträchtlich höhere Möglichkeiten walteten, das Leidenschaftliche im Geist aufgehen zu lassen.616

It is the difference between reality and a higher reality, poetry and truth that has presented Lotte Kestner, Werther’s Lotte, with a dilemma that haunted her all her life, so much so that she feels compelled to return to her former lover and ask him for help to explain the mysterious interplay of art and life. His work born out of Entsagung will live on but the women who inspired him seem to be left behind by the wayside. Not Lotte. She fights with all her might to assert her autonomous self as opposed to the archetype and Goethe honours this in the end. They are both caught in the same cycle of renewal and metamorphosis – Werther/Goethe and his Lotte.

615...in the playful interchange of the ['thou'] and the ['you'] – reminiscent of the ['carnival freedom'] of the Zauberberg... Ibid.
616GW II, p. 758.
Goethe's genius and Lotte's creativity

According to the real Kestner in a letter to his friend August v. Henning, Goethe first saw Lotte when he was in a coach together with her and some other girls on the way to a ball. The fictional Werther, however, sees Lotte for the first time in her position as a foster mother to a group of children and is at once attracted to her. The charming contrast of the girl with her youthful sex-appeal on the one hand and the caring, mature position on the other proved extremely captivating to the young lawyer; it is those two archetypes – the maternal young woman and the commoner's daughter (Mädchen aus dem Volke) – that found their way into his major works: Klärchen in *Egmont*, Lotte in *Werther*, Gretchen in *Faust* and Ottilie (at a stretch) in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*. Each of these characters are discussed in *Lotte in Weimar* and each time a connection can be made between them and Lotte Kestner. The connection with Klärchen in *Egmont* is first pointed out by Riemer who feels as irritated about Lotte as she feels about her rivals in the 'Dom der Humanität' and thus he subtly tries to deprecate Goethe's love for her (or that for any other of the women in Goethe's life) and the role she may have played.

August von Goethe, perhaps in response to his father's coolness towards the visitor from the past, makes a veiled attack on Goethe when he

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618 GWII, p. 473.
619 GW II, p. 467-468.
delivers Lotte’s letter to him: ‘Du hattest in den Wetzlarer Tagen noch keinen spanischen Hofprunk, dich diesem Klärchen darin zu zeigen.’

Elsbeth Wolffheim points out that both Lotte and Goethe pay homage to a Leitmotiv in Goethe’s work: Lotte wears her white dress with a missing ribbon to remind the world of the ribbon that was given to Werther; Goethe wears a gleaming decoration; not unlike Egmont he displays his ‘Stern.’ She comments that men belong to the public sphere and have decorations and honours to wear. Women do not. But Lotte does not see herself as a victim or an inferior object destined to satisfy a man’s desire. For that reason her attire expresses a ‘kleinen sinnigen Scherz.’ It very nearly rebounds on her, as her daughter feared, but because of a certain inherent quality in Lotte, a dignity in her bearing that had after all attracted Goethe to her in her youth, she is saved from becoming a laughing stock. In any event Goethe notices her costume and, as we learn at the end of the novel approves of it. The ribbon is a token of their common past.

Lotte Kestner, well-to-do and connected as she is, is hardly a ‘Klärchen’ or a ‘Mädchen aus dem Volke.’ Goethe of course has reached the very pinnacle of worldly honours – he is one of the greatest men in German speaking lands and enjoys an international reputation. In that sense he is an Egmont indeed, down to donning the decoration that in the course of his career has been bestowed on him. But if Goethe has become formidable and dignified, so in her own way has Lotte. She is as

620 GW II, p. 695.
622 [...] diese Riemer, die immer mucken und maulen, und deren Mannesehr’ auf dem süßen Leime zappelt, und dein armer Sohn mit seinen siebzehn Gläsern Champagner und dies Persönchen, das ihn denn also zu Neujahr heiraten wird und wird in deine Oberstuben fliegen wie die Mücke ins Licht, zu schweigen von den Marien Beaumarchais, die sich nicht zu halten wußten wie ich, und die die Auszehrung unter den Hügel brachte, - was sind sie denn als Opfer deiner Größe. GW II, p. 763.
successful in her role as a mother of many as Goethe is as a man of letters, and she frequently points out this achievement to the slight irritation of her visitors, in particular to Riemer: 'Wollen Sie wissen [...] wieviel Kindern ich das Leben geschenkt habe? Elfen, - wenn ich die beiden mitzähle, die Gott wieder zu sich nahm. Verzeihen Sie meine Ruhmredigkeit, - ich war eine leidenschaftliche Mutter und gehöre zu den stolzen, die gern ihr Licht leuchten lassen und auf ihren Segen pochen [...]'

Her children are her achievement as much as Goethe's writing is his. Furthermore, all her visitors pay homage to her as a mother (Adele Schopenhauer brings flowers, August brings the invitation). However, Riemer, by nature somewhat petty with a tendency to looking over his shoulder, has a way of sidelining Lotte's modest triumph. On her insistence on the importance of her motherhood he reminds her of the harsh anecdote from the Bible and reverses the image of the Madonna into something negative: 'Uns Knaben mühte sich in der biblischen Stunde der Lehrer vergebens ein Wort des Heilands annehmbar zu machen, das seiner Mutter galt, und uns unleidlich, ja ungeheuerlich anmuten wollte: 'Weib, was habe ich mit dir zu schaffen?'

This leads him to criticize Goethe's elusive relationship with his own mother. In Lotte's criticism of Goethe her defensiveness is almost tangible – one of the underlying themes in the novel, that of male creativity expressed in art versus female creativity expressed in reproductivity – manifests itself here for the first time. Riemer's carefully pointed comments wound her and force her into an almost tearful self-defence that is both comical and sad. Like Riemer, like August, she feels not a little exploited, she wishes to have her self-worth restored and to be assured that she is not completely forgotten as an individual. Riemer is certainly aware of this common ground.

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623 GW II, p. 386.
624 GW II, p. 448.
625 GW II, p. 453.
between them: 'Wenn ich ihr in die Karten sehe und auf die Schliche komme, so eben nur darum weil ich mich allenfalls auf die Qual, eine verwandte Qual, verstehe, und weil wir Complicen sind, Complicen in der Qual[...].'

Since motherliness is her great strength, she takes to the son immediately (there is a general assent that he could have been her own) and August feels that he can confide in her. She is always most triumphant when life gives her the opportunity to show herself maternal. There are some touching little vignettes, for instance when she opens his fist for him, finger by finger, to soothe his anger. ‘August nahm mit verschämten Lächeln und einer kleinen Verbeugung zum Dank für den mütterlichen Dienst, den sie ihm geleistet, die aufgelöste Hand wieder an sich.’ The gesture expresses something that is quintessentially Lotte and that charms everyone: both now (Riemer, August) and, of course, all those years ago, Goethe.

Thomas Mann told Agnes E. Meyer: ‘Aber Lotte ist natürlich eine Mutter-Figur.’ and I also refer to Inta Miske Ezergailis’s explanation of the special role women as mothers play in the work of Thomas Mann: ‘But the woman, when she is a good representation of the female principle, has this readiness for life as part of her nature. This is especially so when she is or wants to be mother. Thus, for instance, Lotte and Rachel are frequently described as having a ‘readiness for life’ (Lebensbereitschaft).’ Thomas Mann’s Goethe has a vision of this simplicity that is quite common in Thomas Mann’s oeuvre: the creative force in women exhausts itself in the service of the physical and emotional needs of men. Goethe triumphs in the knowledge that the

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626 GW II, p. 456.
628 GW II, p. 575.
629 Thomas Mann Selbstkommentare, p. 66.
creator in his godlike state remains pure since he can manipulate the creative force and shape it into a work of art:

[...] das Bild hochedler, selig-reiner Fraue, die zum Flusse wandelt, täglche Erquickung zu schöpfen, und dabei nicht Krugs noch Eimers bedarf, da sich ihren frommen Händen die Welle herrlich zur kristallinen Kugel ballt. Ich liebe diese köstliche Kugel, die das reine Weib des Reinen täglich in heiterer Andacht nach Hause trägt, kühl-tastbares Sinnbild der Klarheit und Ungetrübtheit, der unangefochtenen Unschuld und dessen was sie in Einfalt vermag. Schöpft des Dichters reine Hand, Wasser wird sich ballen....Ja, ich will's ballen zur kristallinen Kugel, das Gedicht der Verführung, denn der Dichter, der vielversuchte, der verführerisch vielverführte, kann's immer noch, ihm bleibt die Gabe, die das Zeichen der Reinheit. Nicht auch dem Weibe.631

This total exclusion of women from artistic creativity or intellectual profundity is disturbing, to say the least. Goethe's vision of the female ideal is here 'Das Mädchen aus dem Volke' who becomes guilty because she desires a god and is momentarily shaken off her predestined course. A poet, he muses with some self-satisfaction, can desire and dream and remain pure. It is precisely at that point in his reverie that August delivers Lotte's little 'billet' to his father and the deep rift between the ideal and reality becomes ever more clear. Here is his fantasy of the woman that is touched by divinity and succumbs and becomes 'schuldlos-schuldig', and there is reality and the woman from the past who sets Goethe's little world astir, claiming 'quälende Rechenschaft.' Not surprisingly he is afraid: 'Ich denke, Brahma fürchtet das Weib, denn ich fürcht es, - wie das Gewissen fürcht ich ihr freundlich-wütendes Vor-mir-Stehen, ihr weises Wollen und wildes Handeln [...]'.632

Torn between women as passive and as objects of desire on the one hand and as powerful and dominating on the other, Goethe delivers some strong views on the subject of femininity. Lotte Kestner with her talent for motherhood represents the female body as a power house, Goethe has to accept her as an equal in the end. There is more to it than that of course. The conventional capabilities of the female gender are not

631 GW II, p. 683.
632 GW II, p. 684.
satisfying enough for Lotte, as she tells Riemer, Adele Schopenhauer, August v. Goethe and finally Goethe himself. With her unerring instinct for survival and fulfilment she has rebuilt her life after the disturbing experience of Goethe's love. Against his work and creative energy she can only produce her own legacy by the means nature has provided her with. Thomas Mann puts this problem of artistic creativity in a nutshell – art as an outlet for creativity is really a task for which men are much better suited. He has his Lotte say:


It is one of Thomas Mann's themes that the flame of imaginative creativity is subdued in women by nature's decree to bear children (Gerda Buddenbrook and Gabriele Klöterjahn wrestle with this problem). As a particular form of human creativity it could constitute a subject in its own right. But Thomas Mann’s work is generally concerned with the artist and the nature of artistic creativity. In that sense he can often be seen as complicit in the division of the sexes into creative (male) and procreative (female). Thus an imagined, idealized concept of femininity serves to severely limit real women's spheres of physical and intellectual activity. Yet what is valuable in Lotte in Weimar is that the novel finds its centre of interest in a woman figure and not in the (male) creative artist. The text has space and time for Lotte, for her thoughts and feelings. Not, as we have seen, that she in any way challenges the schematic apportionment of roles as between men and women. But she is a presence, a force in the novel; she has, as it were, a right to be there – in the novel and in Goethe's Weimar. Goethe himself, the real Goethe is reported by Eckermann as saying the following:

633 GW II, p. 583.
Goethe reflects here on his personal experiences. It is not (he claims), a value judgement but a fact he has become aware of. In contrast, Thomas Mann's Goethe adopts an attitude towards creativity in women in which there is both arrogance and male chauvinism. He has created for himself a concept of what women are, and this is particularly fitting for Lotte. She was his Ballfee, the mother figure to her numerous siblings and the unattainable, since she was already engaged to be married. He has stylized her and in combination with several other girls he created Charlotte S. ("die schwarzen Augen kommen woanders her") Lotte tells Mager, the manager of her Hotel in Weimar, when he discusses the character of Werther's Lotte with her). This impression of Lotte in her youth and beauty is to live on forever. However, it also fictionalizes her and puts her, as Lotte herself proclaims many times, in the 'Dom der Menschheit' whether she likes it nor not. The creative impulse is thus all Werther's and his maker's. Goethe sees Lotte in this light: firstly, that women are expected to conform to a certain number of pre-determined roles; and secondly, that they have largely been transformed into passive objects for male viewing pleasure. Intellectually he perceives perfectly well the flaws in his attitude towards women and in particular this woman (he admits this to himself in the interior dialogue in the seventh chapter and to Lotte in their

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635 This is how Thomas Mann describes Goethe's reaction to young Lotte Kestner: 'Sie ist zierlich, blond, blauäugig, von heiterem, tüchtigem Charakter, ohne höhere Bildung, aber auf gesunde Art feinfühlig, kindlich und ernst zugleich, denn seit dem Tode der Amtmännin vertritt sie Mutterstelle bei einer ganzen Schar jüngerer Geschwister und führt ihrem Vater den Hausstand: Goethe sieht sie zuerst, als er sie von ihrem Gehoft abholt, wo sie, schon zum Balle angekleidet, in einem weißen, mit rosa Schleifen garnierten Kleide dasteht und den sie umringenden Kleinen das Vesperbrot schneidet - eine im Werther genau verewigte und von der bildenden Kunst oft wiedergegebene Szene.' GW II, p. 644.

636 GW II, p. 379.
coach conversation at the end).\textsuperscript{637} Yet a very real woman is only a few streets away, preparing to meet her old lover once again, to see what may arise from the ashes. She will confront him for her own sake, to force Goethe to make a statement about the past, to prove to him that she is not only ‘erstwhile’ as T. J. Reed\textsuperscript{638} suggests, but also ‘hier sehr gegenwärtig.’\textsuperscript{639} The interrelation between illusion and reality, a new duality, makes this visit of Lotte in Weimar, the return of the beloved, so exciting and so new.

Why is Lotte then in the grip of this restlessness that makes her abandon her common sense? After all, for forty-four years she accepted that there was no communication between Goethe and herself. Apart from the one or the other son visiting the great man, she played no part in his life nor he in hers. Now, with her husband dead and her children all long grown up, she, a venerable matron, risks derision, rejection, criticism, even ridicule, in travelling to Weimar as a single woman, accompanied only by her maid and her maiden daughter. Werner Frizen suggests that she wishes to identify the purpose of her role in Goethe’s work, to underline its importance for literary history: ‘[...] geht es ihr doch um den Sinn ihrer Reise, mehr noch, um die Sinngebung ihres Literaturgeschichte gewordenen Lebens und um die Selbstbehauptung ihrer Aufgabe in einer männlich geprägten Geschichte des Genies [...]’\textsuperscript{640} I agree of course but would go further than that. When as a betrothed Lotte decided against Goethe and for Kestner


\textsuperscript{638} ‘...aber ich bin gar nicht ehemalig, ich bin hier sehr gegenwärtig.’ GW II, p. 373.


\textsuperscript{640} T. J. Reed, \textit{Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition}, p. 352.
she turned instinctively away from the element that Goethe defines as das Dämonische. It is both a destructive and highly creative force. She could not accept having the orderliness of her life disrupted and suppressed whatever disturbing feelings Goethe may have incited in her. Yet now, on returning to Weimar, she wants to meet that force again, perhaps even to be touched by it. Now this reunion has become reality; after a period of fourty-four years Lotte's initial reaction is one of urgent recognition:

Vor allem erkannte sie auf den ersten Blick das eigentümlich weite Geöffnetsein der eigentlich nicht gar großen, dunkel spiegelnden Augen in dem bräunlich getönten Gesicht wieder, von denen das rechte beträchtlich niedriger saß als das linke, - dies naiv große Geschau, das jetzt durch ein fragendes Aufheben der in sehr feinen Bögen zu den etwas nach unten gezogenen äußeren Augenwinkeln laufenden Brauen verstärkt wurde, einen Ausdruck als wollte er sagen: Wer sind denn all die Leute? – Du lieber Gott, wie sie über das ganze Leben hinweg die Augen des Jungen wiedererkannte!^641

But otherwise the occasion is a disappointment. Goethe has lost the young, warm glow that Lotte still remembers so vividly in chapter two. There is more of his youthful self in his son August then in the stiff dignitary in front of her. When she first meets August a feeling of recognition and memory overwhelms her and moves her to tears. Once the shock of seeing Goethe again subsides her critical faculties become active. Notwithstanding the emotional upheaval she is able to analyse Goethe, his surrounding group of admirers and herself within that group. Although she is an outsider at the court, she feels that she is a privileged observer, and she takes a measure of personal pride in his successes. More so, she appreciates, is even gratified by the general sympathy, even love that Goethe inspires in his listeners:

Charlotte, die mit gleicher Anspannung den Sprechenden und die Zuhörer beobachtete, sah Liebe und Freude auf allen Gesichtern, zum Beispiel auf demjenigen Riemers, wo sie sich ganz eigentümlich mit dem maulenden Zuge mischten, der dort immer waltete; aber auch Augusts Gesicht, ja auf dem Lottchens erkannte sie sie, und besonders in den sonst trocken-unbeweglichen Zügen Meyers, der sich an Amalie Ridel vorbei gegen den Erzähler vorbeugte, um an

^641 GW II, p. 711.
seinen Lippen zu hängen, sah sie eine so innige Zärtlichkeit sich abspiegeln, daß ihr selbst, sie wußte nicht wie, die Tränen in die Augen traten.\textsuperscript{642}

This passage may elucidate what Thomas Mann’s means when he writes to Heinrich Mann about this novel: ‘Ich weiß nicht, ob er mein Schönstes ist, aber das Liebste ist er mir, weil am meisten Liebe und Liebesvereinigung darin ist, trotz aller Bosheiten und ironischen Verismen, in die diese Liebe sich kleidet.’\textsuperscript{643} He refers to his own love of Goethe, a love not unlike that of the sobered and sensitized Lotte herself. Although as a fellow victim she understands how resentful people may feel of ‘the great man’,\textsuperscript{644} she, as a comparatively unsophisticated and unpretentious woman, is somewhat set apart from the rest of the company. Her independence is shown when she worries about their reaction to his comment: ‘Ich bin es müde über Sklaven zu herrschen.’ In reaction to that: ‘Charlotte wagte nicht aufzublicken. Ein Zustand von Absenz, ein Verlorensein in schmerzliche Grübelei trennte ihr Bewußtsein längere Zeit von dem Gespräch [...]’.\textsuperscript{645} It is a condition that sets her above the other critical voices; one senses that she is embarrassed, even shocked by his loftiness and ashamed of the slaves (herself included). Thomas Mann assigns to Lotte insight and intuitive understanding of Goethe by contrast with August, who is after all the most intimately acquainted at the table. His father uses him as his personal organizer and administrator but there is resentment on both sides; the difficult interplay between father and son dominates their relationship.\textsuperscript{646} Lotte’s ‘Frauenscharfblick’\textsuperscript{647} goes deeper than August’s perception.

\textsuperscript{642} GW II, p. 726.
\textsuperscript{643} Thomas Mann to Heinrich Mann on 3.3.1940 in Thomas Mann Selbsterkomentare, p. 50.
\textsuperscript{645} GW II, p. 735-736.
\textsuperscript{646} This relationship in the context of Thomas Mann’s work is discussed by Helmut Kooopmann in Thomas Mann, Konstanten seines literarischen Werks, (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975).
\textsuperscript{647} GW II, p. 718.
However, Lotte would not be Lotte if she were to let herself be
discouraged by the iciness of Goethe’s self-absorption. She manages to
re-assert her story once again by discovering the silhouette in Goethe’s
album (he pretends to look for it but makes it really abundantly clear
that he does not know its whereabouts or care about it) and her little
triumph\(^{648}\) is envied by the rest of the party who would like to put her
back onto the shelf in a Goethe-Museum where in their opinion she
belongs: ‘Die Umstehenden bedauerten seine Bemühung und gaben
immer dringlicher ihre Bereitwilligkeit zum Verzicht zu erkennen.’\(^{649}\) It
is little scenes like these that make the novel so eminently readable.
The sheer humanity of Lotte in her frailty, her inability to pretend to be
any other than she is (so reminiscent of Tony Buddenbrook), is a
wonderful contrast to the great old man, ossified and deified in his
Olympus – surrounded by that servile crowd, overeager to please. Yet it
is true that Lotte is ‘the heroine’ only insofar as Goethe made her one –
all the talk has been of him. Lotte’s thoughts have been of him.
Ezergailis concludes that those whose existence was touched by his
genius bear the scars for the entire world to see. ‘Lotte’s tic nerveux,
secretary Riemer’s shaking hands, August von Goethe’s pathetic
dependence – all are scars from dealings with the genius. They shyly
exhibit their wounds to each other, recoil in horror at their depth, pity
each other, and finally put a good front on it all.’\(^{650}\) However, we must
not forget that Lotte comes to Weimar very much for reasons of her own
– and they have to do with unfinished business. Jürgen Seidler argues
that although ‘vom äußerlichen Opfersog der Größe vorübergehend

\(^{648}\) Martina Hoffmann claims: ‘Das ursprünglich als Beleg für Goethes ‘treulich[en] (p. 746) Umgang
mit den Erinnerungsstücken geplante Vorzeigen der ‘Früh-Comerfeie’ (p. 745) von Lottes Kindern gerät
dabei unversehens zu einer Demonstration der geringen Wertschätzung, die er diesen Resten des
Gewesenen entgegenbringt.’ This is true, of course, but Lotte refuses to withdraw from the scene. Her
point about poetry and truth must be made. Martina Hoffmann, *Von Venedig nach Weimar*, p. 270.
\(^{649}\) GW II, p. 746.
\(^{650}\) Inta Miske Ezergailis *Male and Female: An Approach to Thomas Mann’s Dialectic*, p. 110.
fortgerissen⁶⁵¹ Lotte asserts herself as an independent personality who can hold her own in Goethe's presence. In spite of the common basis of her problem she shares with the people that come to interview her, she is set apart from them, partly because of her inherent wit and intuitive perception, partly because of her particular form of criticism that she applies to Goethe. That has its cause in her privileged knowledge of the young, vulnerable Goethe. Even though it lasted only a short while, it once and for all elevated her into a special position and gives her an insight that is not shared by anyone around her. Thus her observation of Goethe is often sensible and perceptive:

Obgleich aber sein Gehaben das breit aufgepflanzte und Zurückgenommene hatte und er den schönen Kopf hoch trug, schien es dennoch, als stünde jene Würde nicht auf den festesten Beinen; es war, wen er auch vor sich hatte, in seiner Haltung etwas Schwankendes, Unbequemes, Befangenes, das in seiner Unsinnigkeit den Beobachter ebenso beunruhigte wie den jeweiligen Gesprächspartner, indem es diesem den sonderbarsten Zwang auferlegte.⁶⁵²

Thomas Mann's Goethe has adopted a mask and it is difficult to determine how much of this mask is self-parody. There is no such restraint for Lotte Kestner. Her little joke with the missing ribbon on her white dress is not so much a lapse of taste as an expression of her personality, one that the young Goethe would have appreciated but which stands now in strong contrast with the disciplined conduct of the great man. Because of her insider's understanding, she is able to look deeper than the people who represent the inner circle around the master; she sees through Goethe and has an intuitive understanding of him and he acknowledges that in the last conversation:

“Wisse, Metamorphose ist deines Freundes Liebgestes und Innerstes, seine große Hoffnung und tiefste Begierde, - Spiel der Verwandlungen, wechselnd Gesicht, wo sich der Greis zum Jüngling zum Jüngling der Knabe wandelt, Menschenantlitz schlechtthin, in dem die Züge der Lebensalter changieren, Jugend aus Alter, Alter aus Jugend magisch hervortritt: darum war mir’s lieb und

⁶⁵² GW II, p. 717.
Not only is this an admission that he has, after all, noticed her dressing-up manoeuvre but it also indicates that he actually endorses it. They have both been playing roles and Lotte has acquitted herself very well.

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\[GW\ II, \ p.\ 763-764.\]
The Kiss and its Implications

Jedes Gedicht ist gewissermaßen ein Kuss, den man der Welt gibt.654

Now the tables are somewhat turned. With her return, Lotte reminds Goethe of the turmoil from so long ago and this is not a welcome disruption – Thomas Mann wrote to Karl Kerényi:


As he lies in his bed at the beginning of the seventh chapter, reluctantly returning to life from the land of dreams (erotic ones), Goethe lets the women he has loved all pass in front of his mind's eye, like a group of beauty queen contestants or models at a fashion show. Even his mother and sister are remembered. He fantasizes about them all, about his past conquests and what implication they had for his work. In this context he also remembers Lotte from long ago; fondly he recalls her as the fictitious Lotte in his first novel Die Leiden des jungen Werthers and remembers the inspiration that triggered it. It is the same kiss he 'stole' from Lotte when they were picking raspberries and that she remembers 'unter dem Tüchlein' in the privacy of her little hotel room; he reminisces in rather more stately surroundings:


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654 GW IX, p. 318.
655 Letter to Karl Kerényi, Princeton, 16.2.1943, Br. II.

It is a magnificent passage, which embodies the glory and the horror of Goethe’s self-centredness. The theme of the artist in his position between the notion of love as a threat to the integrity of the self on the one hand and the ideal of love as a site of psychic, corporeal, and spiritual rebirth on the other is here as always at the heart of Thomas Mann’s novel. Two key concepts are in evidence, that the essence of spiritual creativity is love, love expressed in differentiated, diffuse eroticism, and not as sexuality; that men’s creativity does not exhaust itself in childbearing as is women’s lot. Goethe has no time for it, as the quotation above makes clear. Martina Hoffmann tells us that: ‘Der Kuß bleibt – zumindest auf einer lebenspraktischen Ebene – folgenlos, denn letztlich wird Kestner ‘der Vater – [ihrer] elf oder doch neun Kinder […]. Als weit weniger folgenlos erweist sich der Kuß allerdings in jener anderen Welt, der Welt der Kunst.’657 The fact remains that Die Leiden des jungen Werthers lives on and continues to be a monument to Lotte Buff, more enduring than all her children together. Yet at the same time as the novel draws us close to the mysterious processes of Goethe’s creative relationship and the world around him, it also acknowledges the existence of that world, a world that is of value for itself and not just as the raw material for art. The kiss, then, may be both love, and vampiric.

Goethe refers to kissing again at his dinner party with a little anecdote. He tells it aptly as the Himbeercreme is served, pink and luscious, and Lotte’s face turns that colour when she hears Goethe’s verdict on her past. The kiss of a young man, left as an imprint on a

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656 GW II, p. 647.
work of art in a freezing cold museum, has stripped away the anonymity of the bestower; Goethe’s kiss, the one he gave Lotte has also been frozen, that is to say he preserved it for all to read about in literature. Lotte is deeply vexed; she feels she has been used. This is a hit that is aimed directly at the core of her concern, her loss of personal privacy in the service of art. To do him justice, Goethe then tries to remedy his rather tactless allegory with his continuation of this theme. He elaborates on the sparrows that pick at the cherries of Apelles:

[...] und von der vexatorischen Wirkung, welche die Kunst, dies völlig einzigartige und eben darum reizvollste aller Phänomene, auf die Vernunft auszuüben vermöge, - nicht einfach im Sinne der Illusionierung – denn keineswegs sei sie ein Blendwerk –, sondern auf tiefere Art: nämlich durch ihre Zugehörigkeit zur himmlischen zugleich und zur irdischen Sphäre, weil sie geistig und sinnlich auf einmal, oder, platonisch zu reden, göttlich und sichtbar zugleich durch die Sinne für das Geistige werbe.²⁴⁴

And this is the lesson Riemer failed to learn while Lotte intuitively grasped the point: ‘As the kiss was a mid-way stage in the consummation of love, at once spiritual discrimination and physical expression, so art is midway between the extremes of coldly abstract spirit and warm animal existence.’ It is during this dinner party that Lotte has to recognize facts that she already feared or had a premonition of: Goethe the artist has little or no relationship with a human Lotte. Art takes precedence, for its sake it is permissible to sacrifice even the most treasured experience of the heart. Lotte is firmly shown her place:

Sie hatte um des eigenen Gemütes, aber auch um des Erzählers willen Hoffnungen gesetzt auf die moralische Rührung, die von dem Beispiel tätiger Kindestreue ausgehen wollte; dann aber hatte der Sprecher dem wohlmutend Sentimentalen eine enttäuschende Wendung ins höchstens Interessante gegeben, alles aufs Psychologische abgestellt und für das Vorkommnis unentbehrlicher Geringschätzung des Genies für seine Kunst eine Gutheiβung merken lassen, die sie – wiederum um ihrer selbst und um seinetwillen – erkältete und verschreckte.²⁶⁰

²³⁸ GW II, p. 741-742.
²³⁹ T. J. Reed, Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition, p. 355.
²⁴⁴ GW II, p. 739.

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It is easy to find fault with Lotte and her simplicity. But as I have indicated above, her critical faculties on the whole are quite excellent. Like Clawdia Chauchat, she is more at home in the sphere of the humane or das Menschliche, than the abstract. Moreover, she represents life, an immediacy and actuality of experience and selfhood on which the artist has predatory designs. Mann’s Lotte in Weimar acknowledges, then, that art, however much its impact can be life-affirming, uses and exploits real people and real places for its own ends. Notions of coldness, sterility, exploitation and vampirism are raised, then. Of course, in that final analysis, both life and art are justified (and this comes as no surprise from the author of Tonio Kröger). But it is important that, in Lotte in Weimar, the advocate of the rights of life is a woman. And strangely, her role goes a long way towards challenging both male voices in the text (Goethe’s or Thomas Mann’s).
Lotte the Pilgrim, or *The Beloved Returns*

Bei allen diesen Gelegenheiten war Charlotte, wie sich versteht, von vieler Ehrerbietung umgeben, und die freundlich gefaßte Würde, mit der sie die Huldigungen entgegennahm, bewirkte bald, daß diese nicht mehr nur ihrer literarischen Stellung, sondern ihrer Person und Menschlichkeit selber galten, unter deren Eigenschaften eine sanfte Melancholie nicht die am wenigsten anziehende war.661

Initially, the English translation of Lotte in Weimar was to have the title *The Wondrous Pilgrimage of Lotte Buff* (letter to Kuno Fiedler, 26.12.1939) and I think this is particularly apt for Lotte with her quest to comprehend the relationship between representation and reality. It is a kind of pilgrimage because she returns to Goethe, who by now has required almost superhuman status.

Lotte is forced to reflect on the truth about her relationship with Goethe while underneath the cover of her handkerchief, protecting her eyes from the harsh and all too revealing daylight.662 She has to explore the complex relationships between poetry and truth. She also remembers with poignancy the decision she made so long ago and that still haunts her – that she accepted the hand of the ‘schlicht Ebenbürtigen’ rather than the ‘Unmensch ohne Zweck und Ruh.’663 It is in this second chapter we are told why Charlotte comes back to see Goethe. One reason is the need to undertake a ‘Journey towards Youth.’664 Lotte wants to focus on occurrences that shaped her life. They happened without any premeditation of the part of those involved, took on tremendous proportions, expanded and then receded, leaving a trail of consequences. These consequences Lotte has had to live with,

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661 GW II, p. 750.
662 Martina Hofmann points out that for Lotte: ‘...die Grenzen zwischen Realität und Fiktion nachhaltig zu verschwimmen drohen, und sie infolgedessen sogar die literarische Wirklichkeit für wahrhaftiger als die nichtliterarische zu halten beginnt.’ Martina Hofmann *Zwischen Venedig und Weimar*, p. 163.
663 GW II, p. 393.
but because her life was exhaustively filled with giving birth and care
for her family she never could afford to stand back to reflect on them
properly except in the following terms:

[...] daß das Gedächtnis ursprünglich keineswegs so sehr darauf aus
gewesen war, sie so ins einzelne zu bewahren, sondern sie erst
später aus seiner Tiefe, Teilchen für Teilchen, Wort für Wort hatte
hergeben müssen. Sie waren erforscht, rekonstruiert, mit
sämtlichem Drum und Dran genauestens wieder hervorgebracht,
blank aufgeräumt und gleichsam zwischen Leuchter gestellt, um
der Bedeutung willen, die sie wider alles Vermuten nachträglich
gewonnen hatten.\footnote{GW II, p. 394.}

And of course, she enjoyed it. To quote Inta Miske Ezergailis: “There
have been many pleasures and much suffering, a whole brood of
children – a full life, it would seem. Yet she feels more real as Werther’s
Lotte.”\footnote{GW II, p. 455.} In that sense, Lotte supports the Weimar image-making
industry. Indeed, her eagerness to measure her growing audience
outside the hotel with furtive peeps from behind the curtain has all the
hallmarks of modern celebrity culture. She encourages society to see in
her the fictitious Lotte and the reader may share a little irritation with
Adele Schopenhauer when observing the elderly Lotte’s preoccupation
with the past that, as it were, put her on the map. Yet there is more to it
than this. At one point Lotte says: “’[...] wiewohl ich nicht leugnen will,
daß eine alte Rechnung schwebt zwischen mir und dem Berge, eine
unbeglichene, und daß möglicherweise sie es ist, die mich herführt, die
alte unbeglichene, quälende Rechnung [...]’”\footnote{GW II, p. 455.} Riemer interprets her
feelings in the context of his own resentment – that is to say he feels that
Goethe is using him (as he used Lotte) without giving proper credit. He
therefore assumes that Lotte is also looking for due recognition of – and
perhaps compensation for the role she played in his fame, to obtain
some share of the glory so to speak. Goethe certainly thinks that: ‘Denn
Ruhm möcht’ sie naschen, ohne Gefühl dafür, wie Ruhm und

\footnote{GW II, p. 394.}
\footnote{Inta Miska Ezergailis \textit{Male and Female: An Approach to Thomas Mann’s Dialectic}, p. 155.}
\footnote{GW II, p. 455.}
Berüchtigung peinlich ineinandergehen" and so does Lotte the younger with her acid comments. But that is not all there is to Lotte's idea of 'die alte, unbeglichene, quälende Rechnung...' In reply to his direct question in the last chapter, whether she returned to be reassured about the uniqueness of her place in the 'Dom der Menschheit' she insists: "Ich kam, um mich nach dem Möglichen umzusehen, dessen Nachteile gegen das Wirkliche so sehr auf der Hand liegen, und das doch als 'Wenn nun aber' und 'Wie nun erst' immer bei ihm in der Welt bleibt und unserer Nachfrage wert ist." Lotte has, in other words, a sense of unfinished business. Thomas Mann writes:

Das Modell ist nach so vielen Jahren immer noch nicht ganz mit dem Erlebnis fertig, und es erhofft sich aus einem Wiedersehen mit dem würdig und berühmt gewordenen Jugendfreund sozusagen ein happy end, eine Aussprache, die den befreienden Schlusspunkt unter die alte quälende Frage setzt: warum jene "Liebe zu einer Braut" - denn Lotte war ja damals schon verlobt mit dem Mann, dessen Namen sie jetzt trägt, als Witwe und Mutter vieler Kinder - und was war es eigentlich, das den jungen Stürmer und Dränger zu ihr und dann jäh in die Flucht trieb; wie er ja immer vor den Frauen, die er liebte, auf der Flucht war bis ins hohe Alter?

Lotte has passed through many stages on the road to Goethe. There is the early correspondence with her and Kestner; she sends him a silhouette of her young family, asking him to be godfather; she visits his mother, and sends two of her grown-up sons to introduce themselves to him. Finally she needs a face to face meeting in order once and for all to clarify the meaning of their relationship, both its place in Goethe's art and its significance for her personally. T. J. Reed writes: 'Her relationship with Goethe has tormented her all her life as an old unsettled score.' The woman who arrives in Weimar one morning in late September 1816 is looking for answers to lifelong questions 'für die

668 GW II, p. 456.
669 GW II, p. 762.
670 GW XIII, p. 168.
671 More welcome then Lotte herself or news about her 'Goethe has ignored her in her married state and preferred scissor-profiles of her children, mere shadows of reality, to meetings with them.' T. J. Reed Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition, p. 351.
überanstrengte, nicht zur Ruhe kommende Lotte’, if not for a conclusion. When it comes, the conclusion is both mysterious and satisfying, as Thomas Mann said in his letter to Lotte Schultheiss of 5.1.1953: ‘Aber selbst ihn [the glorifying reader] sollte der Schluß, das Geistergespräch im Wagen trösten und versöhnen, das durchaus des Trostes und der Versöhnung wegen geschrieben ist.’ In her fantasies in the second chapter we realize that Lotte is not reconciled with the turn her relationship with Goethe took. What precisely the nature of it is, she does not know; the salient point is that at the end of this disturbance she is offered a way out by Goethe that is acceptable to her and she is, presumably, at peace, since he sends her away with a whispered ‘Friede deinem Alter’. According to Thomas Mann both partners were active in creating such a meeting; it is a spiritual confrontation of strange tenderness and beauty. Goethe must have thought Lotte worthy of such a confrontation and Lotte proves perfectly able to hold her own in it. Jürgen Seidel even asserts that the seminal point of the novel is to be found in this mysterious final act.

Now Lotte has reached the end of her pilgrimage. Her personal crisis, that is to say, her struggle between creativity and humanity, only hinted at to Riemer, Adele and August, finally finds expression and its goal. If lessons are to be learned, Goethe too has been taken to task. Whether he likes it or not, he has to debate with himself what role the returned beloved is to play, he has to contemplate where poetry and

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672 T. J. Reed Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition, p. 351.
673 Thomas Mann to Kuno Fiedler on 21.12.37 in Thomas Mann Selbstkommentare, p. 21.
674 Ibid., p. 119.
675 GW II, p. 764. I noticed that Eckhard Hefrich and Martina Naumann both ascribed these words to Lotte. It is however Goethe who speaks them. Thomas Mann makes this clear in his letter of 20.2.1947 to Fritz Grünbaum: ‘Und wie seine Stimme am Schlusse ‘verhaucht’: ‘Friede deinem Alter’ ist auch leicht gespenstisch’ in Thomas Mann Selbstkommentare, p. 86.
676 ‘Es mag sich dann um ein Geistergespräch handeln, das zustande kommt, weil dem Verlangen der Frau das des alten Freundes entgegenkommt, ein Geistergespräch, worin das, was Goethe sagt, sein ist, obgleich er nicht körperlich neben ihr sitzt, und das also doch eine höhere Wirklichkeit hat.’ Ibid., p. 86.

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truth are positioned now – Lotte’s absence and the image of her, immortalized in his fiction, as well as her uncompromising presence, she audaciously forces upon him and his world. On a purely human level Lotte claims equal status with the master and writes to him in her very personable and impressive billet: ‘[...]während wir beide, ein jeder nach seinem Maße, das Leben bestanden[...]’ 678. In giving his character such lines, the narrator sets her very much apart from Riemer for example, ‘den maulenden Famulus, einen Hörigen, der aufmuckt.’ 679 When, as Elsbeth Wolffheim writes that we become ‘Zeugen einer angestrebten ‘unio mystica’ von zwei prominenten deutschen Schriftstellern durch das Mittel der literarischen Vergegenwärtigung’ 680 that is to say, Goethe and Thomas Mann, then we must look on Lotte as a partner in that symbiosis. She represents the other side of Thomas Mann; not for the first time he chooses a female mask to represent himself 681 and she is his mouthpiece, as he writes to Ernest M. Wolf on 2.11.1949: ‘[...] Reiz und Vorzug von meinem “approach” liegen höchstens in einer gewissen Intimität und “kollegialen” Vertraulichkeit, deren Keckheit mir wohl bewußt ist, und die nach Entschuldigung sucht in Lotte’s naivem Ausruf gegen Ende ihres Romans: “Das will ich doch wenigstens davon haben, daß ich mitreden und ein wenig vertraulicher lobpreisen darf als die unzugehörige Menge!” 682 The reader is privileged or forced to look at Goethe through the critical and slightly troubled eyes of Lotte Kestner; they are in part the eyes of Thomas Mann.

678 GW II, p. 387.
681 I refer in particular to Inta Miske Ezergailis study Male and Female: An Approach to Thomas Mann’s Dialectic, p. 6-7, where he offers us a discourse on the male and female position in Thomas Mann’s work: ‘A special ambiguity of the male-female dialectic is its lack of correspondence with men and women. May represent the female principle better, but they do not do so exclusively. Pure masculinity, Mann tells us in The Beloved returns (Lotte in Weimar) is unnatural.’
682 Thomas Mann, Selbstkommentare, p. 100.
In any event, the final *Geisterszene* invites us to reflect one last time on the interplay of art and life that is so central to *Lotte in Weimar*. The notion of any predatoriness in life is now taken up into an idea of ceaseless transformation – as a process central to both life and art. If we take the scene as a real conversation, then it implies that Goethe seeks to make amends for his having exploited the youthful Lotte for his own literary ends. If it is imaginary, then surely we are meant to hear Lotte’s modulation of her irritation at being ignored as a person (both then and now) into some kind of conscious acceptance of why and how the artist functions as he does. Admittedly, this leaves the gender roles intact – men are cultural creators and women are the (willing or unwilling) assistants to genius. But, within the imaginary scene, it would be Lotte who finds Goethe’s words; and perhaps the implication then is that women do not always have to remain in their subservient roles. In subsequent ages (Thomas Mann’s for example) there will be greater opportunity for women to be creative as well as procreative.

Regardless, the *Geisterszene* is the culmination of a process by which, however modestly, Lotte refuses to be a victim, unlike the other loves – Friderike Brion, Minna Herzlieb, even Marianne, her alter-ego, whose poetry was absorbed by that of Goethe. And those around Goethe – Riemer, self-conscious and critical, but entirely involved in Goethe’s existence to the point of forfeiting his own promising academic career, August, the son, in the shadow of his father and deeply insecure, Ottilie, a creature who will marry against her will, even against the will of the bridegroom to please Goethe, are all more or less feeble. In comparison Lotte stands her ground. She returns in part to assert herself as a separate individual, as ‘non-image’, as a person in her own right – but she also seeks to be touched again by that agent of her transformation. The salient point, however, is that Lotte is a non-

683 ‘Eine schwindelnde Ehre’ is Thomas Mann’s comment according to T. J. Reed.
conformist who for a brief while shakes Weimar society out of its complacency, and that includes Goethe. That well-read and enthusiastic waiter Mager articulates the extraordinariness of this event at the very end of the novel. In assisting Lotte out of Goethe's carriage and back to the hotel he exclaims: "Guter Himmel, Frau Hofrätin, ich muß es sagen: Werthers Lotte aus Goethes Wagen zu helfen, das ist ein Erlebnis – wie soll ich es nennen? Es ist buchenswert.""684

684 GW II, p. 765.
Mut-em-enet and Rosalie von Tümmler

Introduction

Du Heilige, rufe dein Kind zurück,
Ich habe genossen das irdische Glück,
Ich habe gelebt und geliebet.  

Schiller’s Thekla expresses a yearning that is shared by the two characters in Thomas Mann fiction I wish to discuss in this last chapter. Moreover, it refers to a special human condition described repeatedly in his works, that is to say, an all-encompassing desire that knows no measure or restraint.

In the texts I am investigating in this chapter we are dealing with passionate love between two incompatible people, a theme often enough pursued in Thomas Mann’s oeuvre. The incompatibility exists generally because of gender, age or social status. On rereading his feelings for Klaus Heuser in his diary of 1927/28 (destroyed) he writes on 24.1.34:

Ich war tief aufgewühlt, gerührt und ergriffen von dem Rückblick auf dieses Erlebnis, das mir heute einer anderen, stärkeren Lebensepoche anzugehören scheint, und das ich mit Stolz und Dankbarkeit bewahre, weil es die unverhoffte Erfüllung einer Lebenssehnsucht war, das “Glück”, wie es im Buche des Menschen, wenn auch nicht der Gewöhnlichkeit, steht, und weil die Erinnerung daran bedeutet: “Auch ich”.

This more or less echoes Mut-em-enet’s feelings in the aftermath of her passion: the pride and satisfaction in the fact that she too has loved, or those of Rosalie von Tümmler, in the realisation that she loves and is loved in return. Longing for ‘das irdische Glück’ finds its way into...

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686 Thomas Mann, Tagebücher, 1933-1934, p. 296.
687 „Immerhin, sie hatte gelebt und geliebt, - zwar unglücklich geliebt, aber gibt es das eigentümlich und sieht sich hier nicht jedes Mitleid als allerne Zutunlichkeit abgewiesen?[…].Und doch ruhte auf dem Grunde ihrer Seele ein Schatz, auf den sie heimlich stolzer war als auf alle ihre geistlichen und weltlichen Ehren, und den sie, ob sie sich’s eingestand oder nicht, für nichts in der Welt dahingegeben hätte. Ein tief versunkener Schatz, der aber immer still heraufleuchtet in den triben Tage ihrer Entschung[…].” (GW V, p. 497.)
688 Rosalie exclaims to her daughter Anna: “Begluckwünsche mich, Liebste, denn ich bin sehr glücklich! Bin ich doch wieder Weib, ein Vollmensch wieder [...] Küss mich, mein vertrautes Kind, Cont. on next page
most of Thomas Mann’s novels and stories; many of his characters, male or female, suffer on account of unrequited or otherwise unhappy love. In his diary on 6th May, 1934 he recalls Schiller’s Thekla when looking back at old diary notes about Paul Ehrenfeld in connection with another project he was working on at that time (Die Geliebten): ‘Die Leidenschaft und das melancholisch psychologisierende Gefühl einer verklungenen Zeit sprach mich vertraut und lebenstraurig an. Dreißig Jahre und mehr sind darüber vergangen. Nun ja, ich habe gelebt und geliebt, habe auf meine Art ‘das Menschliche ausgebadet.’

As I have already had occasion to note, critics often argue that Thomas Mann is not gifted at the characterisation of women. Thomas Mann’s misogynistic attitude, so it is maintained, made his portrayal of women condescending, judgemental or dismissive: ‘Sie strahlen keine Würde aus’, writes Hans Wysling. At first sight, then, the last two women figures I want to look at in my investigation offer ammunition for these negative judgements. On falling in love, both seemingly lose control, thus laying themselves open to ridicule. They appear to lose dignity and composure and risk forfeiting their reputation and status. Given the strong emphasis on forbidden and/or unrequited love in Thomas Mann’s fiction (we think of Tonio Kröger, Lorchen, Aschenbach, Hans Castorp, Sibylla, Adrian Leverkuhn), the often-heard comment that Thomas Mann cannot portray fulfilled passion and rewarding love is perhaps not surprising; and indeed it contains an element of truth. But we must beware of simplification! On unravelling the story of Mut-em-enit and Rosalie v. Tümmler we will find more than libidinous involvement; we arrive at the very core of their problem – their gendered selfhood. Their longing for physical fulfilment does not,

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nenne mich glücklich, so glücklich, wie ich es bin und preise mit mir die Wundermacht der großen und guten Natur!” — GW VIII p. 923

689 Thomas Mann, Tagebücher, 1933-1934, p. 411.

as we shall see, exclude the emotional commitment that characterizes a mature relationship.

Both Mut and Rosalie have their universe shattered by sudden passion; in this state they experience an epiphanic moment, where, in the words of Aschenbach: ‘[...] dies, daß der Liebende göttlicher sei als der Geliebte, weil in jenem der Gott sei, nicht aber im andern.’ Both have only one purpose within their respective novel or story – to fight for an erotic involvement that is ill-starred from the outset. Mann offers a close analysis of how the women arrive at this level of intoxication. The reader is invited to reflect on Mut’s and Rosalie’s psyche, their attitudes and their development since they are initially withdrawn from life (Mut by her calling as a high priestess, Rosalie by her physical condition as a menopausal widow) and then confronted by a strong life-force when falling in love. Many aspects of the female predicament are explored: enforced virginity, biological urges for procreation, menstruation and menopause as well as society’s oppressive rules in respect of the behaviour of women. Mut and Rosalie repress their feelings until they can no longer be restrained, and when the force of their passion overwhelms them it leads to some form of Liebestod in both cases: in the case of Mut it leads to ostracism and removing herself to an other-worldly environment, in that of Rosalie, she dies. Love means death of one kind or another – and this is a central concern in Thomas Mann’s fiction.

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691 GW VIII, p. 492.
Inversion or Perversion

The Sexual Dilemma of Mut-em-enet and Rosalie von Tümmler

The basic dilemma shared by Mut-em-enet and Rosalie von Tümmler is the adoption of the male role in courtship. Both women, one just at the end of her youth, the other a femme d'un certain âge, fall in love with a much younger man. Both are socially superior to the object of their passion and in both cases the young man has to be won over. In Rosalie von Tümmler's case this actually happens, while Mut-em-enet cannot persuade Joseph to enter into a relationship with her (although at the very end he is physically aroused and only just manages to tear himself away from her to keep his virginity 'einigermaßen unangetastet').

However, the reversal of the conventional order of male activity versus female passivity applies to them equally. Mut-em-enet rationalizes this by invoking her position as 'Herrin' while Rosalie puts the matter much more straightforwardly:


The women adopt what is seen traditionally as the male role but the outcome is catastrophic in both cases: Mut suffers defeat and Rosalie death. They react very differently to their position – Mut with despair and hurt pride, Rosalie with pride, even exultation. It must be said that Mut-em-enet's relationship is particularly unhappy – she is given hardly any sign that her feelings are requited. In fact, Joseph reproaches Mut in his heart, comparing himself with the mythical hero Gilgamesh who refuses to be seduced by the goddess Ishtar, accusing her of turning her lovers into beasts:

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692 Es ist ja aber nicht der Prozeß des Alters, der die Würde verleiht, sondern die erreichte Lebensstufe, im Deutschen heißt es 'die Würde der älteren Frau', etwa 'femme d'un certain âge[...]’ Thomas Mann to Louise Servisen, Kilchberg, 13.4.1954, DüD III p. 526.
693 Günther Grass 'Die Fremde als andauernde Erfahrung' in TM Jb 9, 1996, p. 263.
694 GW VIII, p. 902.
We see that Joseph has a fixed conception of Mut-em-enet from the outset; although he does not take his father’s criticism of Egyptian morals very seriously, he is himself not free of prejudices. It seems to him that Mut-em-enet’s actions are flawed, and that she is tainted by her culture. To him she becomes almost one with the bearded goddess. As the story unfolds the comparison takes more and more hold. Mut appears to turn into the angry idol, fighting like a lioness and threatening Joseph, even offering to kill her husband and threatening to have him put to death. Added to this reversal of role in courtship is the social inferiority of the beloved. Mut is in fact keenly aware of the unworthiness of her situation, at least at first. She is not a Madame Houplé who actually feels added pleasure when seeking lovemaking with someone who may be perceived as beneath her in social rank.

Initially at least, she suffers terribly because she feels passion for:

[...] einen Sklaven und Niemandssohn, eine gekaufte Menschensache von asiatischen Hausdienern[...] Das setzte ihrem Damenstolz bitterer zu, als die Geschichte je bisher zu berichten gewußt hat. Es hinderte sie lange, sich ihr Gefühl einzugestehen, und als sie so weit war, es zu tun, mischte es in das Glück, das die Liebe immer bereitet, ein Element der Erniedrigung, das aus Gründen unterster Grausamkeit das Verlangen so furchtbar zu stacheln vermag.

Yet this surely – with its intimation of dark perversion – is clearly excessive. It is not a considered judgement, but is, rather, the measure of Mut’s disarray. Elsewhere the narrator can be much more conciliatory, as when he reminds the reader not to take too seriously Joseph’s mythical reasons for his denial:

[...] denn Eni’s Herzenschwäche für Joseph hatte mit Baalsnarrheit und Aulasaukaula wenig zu tun, sie war ein tiefer und redlicher Schmerz um seine Schönheit und Jugend, ein innigstes Begehren, so anständig und unanständig wie eine andere und nicht verhurter, als

695 GW V, p. 133.
696 GW V, p. 89.
It is the love of Aschenbach for Tadzio with his untouched youth and beauty, and that of Apollo for Hyakinthos.

Rosalie von Tümmler does not have Mut-em-enet's qualms; equally aware of her age and status and therefore of Ken Keaton's unsuitability for a relationship, she nevertheless delights in her feelings. She sees a triumph in her ability to love and it is her daughter Anna who looks upon this rejuvenation of her mother as a perversion and a lapse. Like Lotte's daughter Lottchen, Anna feels that her mother behaves indecorously and plays a role that she (the daughter) does not find acceptable. It must be admitted that Rosalie asks more of her than Lotte Kestner does of her Lottchen. She actually seeks an affair with a man younger then her own children. In the strict society they live in this would mean being an outcast. Rosalie seems oblivious to all that. She astounds her daughter and the reader with her unconventionality: like Aschenbach, she gives way to her passion, even cultivates it but unlike him she does not attempt to hide it from the world.

I have already indicated in previous chapters that love is a disquieting experience when it strikes in Thomas Mann's oeuvre. It fractures the personality until there is only degradation left, in particular in the case of Mut-em-enet. Love drives Friedemann and Aschenbach to their death. But where women are the wooers and men the objects of desire a different picture appears. Women who lose themselves to their passion lose at the same time dignity and respect to a much larger extent then men. Mut and Rosalie become ridiculous far more obviously then the men do. Aschenbach fears that the noble mother and the anxious nurse keep Tadzio away from him, but they do not make fun of him. Heavily made up and dressed as a sycophant, he is still treated with respect by those around him. Hans makes himself look very foolish and people giggle at his attempts to attract Clawdia's

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697 GW V, p. 141.
attention, but the men are sympathetic and supportive (Settembrini, Behrens) or even admire him (Wehsal). By contrast, Mut very uncharacteristically ends up taking part in a most horrific ritual using black magic to entice Joseph into her arms, while the servants of Potiphar’s house laugh at her behind her back. And Rosalie is despised and judged by her son and pitied by her daughter. Last but not least, both women have to fear one thing more than anything else: that the object of their desire will laugh at them, too, and mock them.

Growing up as a member of the upper bourgeoisie, Thomas Mann knew the penalties for offending against society. He also knew that women had to respect an even stricter code of conduct than did the men. Admittedly, he does not go out of his way overtly to criticize the double morality involved; but his portraiture of his women characters does generate real critical potential. In all his novels up to *Dr. Faustus* the plight of women who break this code is made clear. Society sets strict rules of demeanour for the female gender that have to be adhered to – non-observance leads to decline, even downfall as one can see with Tony and Gerda Buddenbrook, Mut-em-enet, Clarissa Rodde and Rosalie von Tümmler. When these women drop convention, they become either ridiculous or they are subjected to gossip and criticism. If a love affair is involved, things become invariably dangerous – therefore it is better to stick to friendship. But the ‘Hunde im Souterrain’ are difficult to keep in check. The collapse of a carefully built reputation of one type or another as an aftermath of passion is one of Thomas Mann’s great themes and he describes this process very astutely. Perhaps because of his own very controlled personality, he is utterly persuasive at portraying repressed, sublimated, spiritualized emotion. And this kind of emotion can apply to both men and women. Mut and Rosalie are desirous of their objects without much hope of requital and their

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emotions are described in the fragment *Maja or Die Geliebten* where Adelaide claims as Aschenbach did before:

> Das Glück ist nicht, geliebt zu werden; das ist eine mit Ekel gemischte Genugtuung für die Eitelkeit. Das Glück ist: zu lieben und kleine Annäherungen an den geliebten Gegenstand zu erhaschen.  

Joseph, who fights for her attention but has actually no wish for a love affair with Mut-em-enet, presumably feels this ‘mit Ekel gemischte Genugtuung.’ He goes to great lengths to paint a dismal picture of his physicality to bring her back to earth and talks about his body in the most derogatory way:

> Aus wie minderem Stoffe das alles besteht, sofern es besteht, aber es ist ja unbeständig, daß Gott erbarm! Bedenke doch, daß diese Haare kläglich ausfallen werden über ein kleines und diese jetzt weißen Zähne auch. Diese Augen sind nur ein Gallert aus Blut und Wasser, sie sollen dahin rinnen, so, wie der ganze übrige Schein bestimmt ist, zu schrumpfen und schöde zunichte zu werden.

But it is to no avail. Intoxicated as she is, she will not listen to him, just as little Ellen Twentyman does not listen to similar warnings by Felix and Felix himself, although not intoxicated, is nevertheless horrified, when the young and lovely Zouzou tells him her ideas about physiology:

> Der Mensch wie schon er sei wie schmuck und blank, 
> Ist innen doch Gekröp' nur und Gestank.

Mut-em-enet is willing completely to abandon her position as a maid of honour to Amun-Rê and occasional goddess. Like Aschenbach before and Rosalie later she smashes her public image into fragments while in the grip of her passion. Her husband Potiphar, who watches her with resignation and pity, has always expected this would happen. But the youthful Joseph is horrified (even though he has caused the whole commotion) and he reprimands her, asking, even begging her to keep her good name intact for the years to come:

> Ich muß dich denn doch beschwören[...]Weljen Erbarmen hast du mit deiner Sage, das muß man gestehen und machst eine Magd aus dir mit Namen ‘Mutter der Sünde’ für alle Zukunft. So bedenke doch,

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699 GW VIII, p. 288.  
700 GW V, p. 130.  
701 GW VII, p. 633.
I think that these fictional characters are beautifully comprehended in
their emotional state. Mann’s portrayal of their suffering is entirely
convincing. After Friedemann, Aschenbach and Hans Castorp, Thomas
Mann uses exclusively female characters when he wishes to explore the
condition of love-stricken people. In his later work only women
succumb to passionate love; the line starts with Mut-em-enet, goes on to
Sibylla in Der Erwählte, Madame Houpflé and Eleanor Twentyman in
Felix Krull and finally ends with Rosalie von Tümmler in Die Betrogene.
As I already discussed in my introduction to this thesis, Mann’s
homoeroticism or latent homosexuality has, if anything, contributed to
the very persuasive representation of women in love. In Jung’s terms
one could theorize that the Anima figure has the effect that Thomas
Mann: ‘[…] überall im Halbdunkel des Unbewussten, wo sein Verstand
weniger klar sieht, die richtigen Werte und Unwerte unterscheiden
kann. Noch lebenswichtiger ist aber, daß ihm diese Gestimmtheit auf die
richtigen Werte den Weg in die eigene Tiefe freigibt […]. Dann erreicht
die Anima die Bedeutung einer Führerin nach innen’ or ‘Alle diese
Aspekte der Anima besitzen die gleiche Neigung wie der Schatten, die
sich auf einen Menschen zu projizieren, so daß sie dem Manne als
Eigenschaften einer wirklichen Frau erscheinen.’

And perhaps it is
his homosexual tendency, then, that enables Mann to describe the great
confusion of the women taking on a male role (as wooers) and the
credibility of their infatuation with the object of their desire. This
phenomenon is not unique in literature. I think of other writers with
such leanings here, Alan Bennett for instance who gave us some
splendid characterizations of women in Talking Heads, or Mann’s
contemporaries Henry James and E.M. Forster. Their renderings of

702 GWV, p. 174.
703 Jung, C. G., Der Mensch und seine Symbole, (Olten, Walter, 1968), pp. 194
women or girls are very convincing. In *A Portrait of a Lady*, Henry James displays his brilliant understanding of human nature. Isabel is one of the most compellingly real female characters created by a male author. James not only focuses on the strengths of his heroine, but also on the weaknesses, making the characterization more intriguing. And I find that Forster’s Mr. Beebe may throw some light on the mixture of sympathy and dispassion with which some male writers can study women characters. He is a clergyman and pronounced bachelor, and it is said of him: ‘All his life he had loved to study maiden ladies; they were his speciality, and his profession had provided him with ample opportunities for the work. Girls like Lucy were charming to look at, but Mr. Beebe was, for rather profound reasons, somewhat chilly in his attitude towards the other sex, and preferred to be interested rather than enthralled.’ Another insightful comment in this type of investigation is given us by W. G. Sebald who informs us in his study of Gottfried Keller:


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Whether it is that their otherness makes these writers more appreciative of the opposite gender, or whether the anima within their psyche is more developed, they achieve a noteworthy success with their credible descriptions of passionate love in the experience of women.
The Mask of Mut-em-enet

Thomas Mann confessed to his friend Otto Grautoff that since Friedemann he had found masks to hide behind. The use of masks to hide behind another gender is a tradition in our cultural heritage and it is much invoked by Thomas Mann. Whether we look at the Walpurgisnacht in the Berghof, or the excessive women in Felix Krull (Madame Houpflé, Senhora Kukuk), Thomas Mann was fond of adopting female characters to exploit the interplay of physicality and spirituality that makes up passionate love. He was, interestingly, particularly fascinated by Wagner's women characters: ‘Die Heldinnen Wagners kennzeichnet überhaupt ein Zug von Edelhysterie, etwas Sonnambules, Verzücktes und Seherisches, das ihre romantische Heroik mit eigentümlicher und bedenklicher Modernität durchsetzt.’ This remark could apply to several of Mann's female characters. The characteristic and questionable modernity points certainly to Clawdia Chauchat and also to the two Gerdas who in their various ways proudly assert their subjectivity. Rosalie von Tümmler in particular is ‘verzückt und seherisch.’ ‘Edelhysterie, etwas Somnambules’ describes Mut-em-enet’s state when she is hopelessly lost in her passion for Joseph and pours out her anguished soliloquy.

As we have already had occasion to note, Thomas Mann excels in

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706 GW X, p. 59.
709 GW IX, p. 371.
the description of obsessive love and desire. The basic theme is always the same: a thwarted love, a strong physical desire that does not find its natural outlet. Why are his accounts of this type of emotion so frequent? His much written about latent homosexuality and self-inflicted sexual abstinence are obvious catalysts. Gerhard Härle suggests that Mut and Rosalie serve the narrator as a disguise: ‘Aber auch von Ihnen gewinnt die neuere Forschung die Überzeugung, daß sie gewissermaßen “Rockrollen” sind, Maskeraden einer Männergestalt, in der sich der Autor umfassend verbirgt und zeigt’.\textsuperscript{710} From that point of view, Bachofen’s assertion (and we know, that Thomas Mann read Bachofen for his \textit{Joseph Trilogy} and used him verbatim) is important: ‘Das wahrhaft wissenschaftliche Erkennen besteht nicht nur in der Beantwortung der Frage nach dem Was. Seine Vollendung erhält es erst dann, wenn es das Woher zu entdecken vermag und damit das Wohin zu verbinden weiß. Zum Verstehen wird das Wissen nur dann erhoben, wenn es Ursprung, Fortgang und Ende umfaßt.’\textsuperscript{711} Certainly Mut-emenet’s rapturous whisperings when she admits to herself her feelings for Joseph are taken straight from Thomas Mann’s notebooks:

\begin{quote}
Dies sind die Tage des lebendigen Fühlen!
Du hast mein Leben reich gemacht. Es blüht –
O horch, Musik – An meinem Ohr
Weht wonnevoll ein Schauer hin von Klang –
\end{quote}

Here, I would like to suggest that in attributing these sentiments to Mut Thomas Mann clearly goes a long way towards identifying with his creation. Just as Tony is privileged to entertain her lover on the beaches of Travemünde – Thomas Mann’s childhood paradise – Mut is given these most intimate lines that Thomas Mann once noted down about his ‘zentrale Herzenserfahrung’\textsuperscript{712} Paul Ehrenberg. Constantly he


\textsuperscript{712} Tagebücher 6.5.1934.
explores the longing for a forbidden love ‘that dare not speak its name’⁷¹³. As Thomas Mann puts it, he strove: ‘...die Dinge durch Einführung des Motivs der ‘Verbotenen’ Liebe auf die Spitze zu stellen...’⁷¹⁴ Hence the female characters work especially well in the interplay between object of desire/desiring subject.

Chastity and self-denial are very much emphasized in the third volume of the Joseph tetralogy. The basic relationship between Mut and Joseph consists of interplay of involvement and detachment. In his vanity young Joseph finds it hard to accept that anyone should be oblivious to him. His strong feeling of Sendungsbewußtsein makes him feel entitled to be the centre of attention. When therefore the mischievous gnome Dûdu tries to draw Mut-em-enet’s attention to her servant, albeit to make mischief and do harm, the latter is delighted. As far as he is concerned, his initial involvement does not have an erotic implication; that comes afterwards. This is very different for Potiphar’s wife. Initially she does not notice Joseph. But once her eyes are opened to him she falls unreservedly in love with him. Because she is inexperienced in matters of Eros (as her gnome points out to her) she goes to extreme lengths to win Joseph. Phèdre-like, she pursues him but, unlike Hippolyte, Joseph is not entirely insensitive to her sexual charms. The reader is drawn into this complex and intimate struggle wherein one individual tries to woo another. We are told that he has seven strong reasons to remain chaste for his God, a chastity, so the narrator reminds us, that is later easily relinquished when he marries. Potiphar is not able to be anything but chaste (it is therefore not a virtue); his parents castrated him as a child and he is a ‘proforma-Gatte’⁷¹⁵ to his wife. This state sets him clearly apart from his fellow men and forces everyone to treat him like someone on a different plane,

⁷¹⁵ GW XI, p. 678.
almost like a god. His wife Mut is obliged to share this existence; like Tony Buddenbrook before her she has to obey her parents and make this ‘desirable’ match for the sake of status and family honour. At an age when she is too young to know what she is agreeing to: ‘Sie war leicht, lustig, ungetrübt, frei. Sie war wie eine Wasserblüte, die auf dem Spiegel schwimmend unter den Küssen der Sonne lächelt, unberührt von dem Wissen, daß ihr langer Stengel im dunklen Schlamme der Tiefe wurzelt.’

She accepts Potiphar. Once it dawns on her what she is now destined for, she, like Joseph’s mother Rachel before her, tries to make sense out of something that is not reasonable and to accept society’s judgement where her own conscience knows it as hypocrisy:

Wie wenig die Ehrenannahmen der Sitte die gesellschaftlichen Übereinkünfte auszurichten vermögen gegen das tiefe, dunkle und schweigende Gewissen des Fleisches; wie schwerlich sich dieses vom Geiste und vom Gedanken betrügen läßt, das mußten wir schon in Frühzeiten der Geschichte, anläßlich von Rahels Verwirrung, erfahren. Mut aber, ihre gaufürstliche Schwester hier unten, stand durch ihre Verbundenheit mit dem Sonnenkämmerer ebenso außerhalb des Weiblich-Menschlichen wie er außerhalb des Männlich-Menschlichen.

We see in this that, far from trying to reduce Mut in value, the narrator gives her equal status to Rachel, Joseph’s mother, who is perceived almost as divine, at least in a symbolic sense.

The extreme difficulty of Mut’s position is already anticipated by the ‘argen Elterlein’, who gave Potiphar’s life its peculiar turning and consequently that of Mut-em-enet. Joseph overhears the truth about their part in Potiphar’s predicament and how they try to convince each other that their action was wholly in the interest of the noble couple:

Schickt es sich dazu nicht vortrefflich, daß ihre irdische Ehe ein

716 That image is put to the reader in the scene between husband and wife. Potiphar sits on a throne-like chair, his huge body erect but restful and his face immobile.
717 GW V, p. 9.
718 The connection between Rachel and Mut-em-enet is given already in Die Geschichten Jaakobs; there we read that the Babylonian Ishtar, the dangerous mother goddess whose love is deadly, decorated the Ketônet, Rachel’s and Lea’s bridal gown and with whom Joseph automatically compares Mut, the Egyptian Isis as she declares: ‘Isis bin ich, die große Mutter, und trage die Geierhaube.’ (GW V, p. 175).
719 GW V, p. 87.
720 GW V, p. 945.
She is denied physical love and motherhood yet she serves as a high priestess dressed with the mask of the bride of the sun, the gold cap with the cow-horns and crescent moon, representing the mother goddess. The terrible conflict between what she is so obviously designed for (Dûdu speaks to Joseph of the fleshly bliss he will enjoy if he gives in to her, listing her attributes like a salesmen ‘infolge der Seidenhaut und der köstlichen Gliederung der Betreffenden’) and the reality of her position as ‘Mondnonne’ is at the centre of this episode. Thomas Mann uses the mythological Leda to demonstrate Mut’s truest character:

This powerful symbol displays perfectly how torn Potiphar’s wife is between what she represents and what she is, as Mechthild Curtius explains:

Time and again the reader is invited to feel pity and even affection for Mut. Neither Potiphar nor Joseph hold her passion against her, certainly both feel secretly guilty about it, in the knowledge that they played their role in inciting it. In Potiphar’s case it is important to

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721 GW IV, p. 870.
722 GW V, p. 149.
723 GW IV, p. 870 & 871.
724 GW V, p. 9.
725 Mechthild Curtius, Erotische Phantasien bei Thomas Mann, (Königsstein/Ts., Athenäum, 1984) p. 148
underline the fact that, in contrast to his parents’ harsh judgement of Mut-em-enet (and the parents are the guilty parties), he has understanding and forgiveness for his much-troubled wife. I do not accept the interpretation of Mechthild Curtius, who regards this as a parody of a marriage, which of course it is, sustained merely by indifference mastered by politeness. She even goes so far as to describe it as ‘Ehehohn’ but she overlooks Potiphar’s wish ‘ihr Genüge zu tun und sich ihr lieb zu erweisen’ as he confesses to himself during their grand meeting in the chapter ‘Die Gatten’. In an act of self-deception, Mut-em-enet turns to her husband to dismiss Joseph. This is her genuine attempt to escape from her passion. Thomas Mann refers to this chapter as ‘recht unheimlich und großartig’.

To strengthen her argument against Joseph and play on Potiphar’s conscience, Mut hints at their marital situation and he has been secretly waiting for such an outburst. When it comes, he is both embarrassed and annoyed because these things are meant to remain covered up – like abuse or addiction in our age; they are not spoken about. Deeply buried resentments and desires are alluded to and once out in the open they will have to be addressed. The atmosphere described in the chapter is indeed ‘recht unheimlich’; the reader is aware of hidden feelings on both sides: the god-like immovable Potiphar with his inner monologue on his throne and the short glimpses of raw passion (not just sexual desire but also profound despair) in Mut-em-enet. As an outward sign for her

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727 ‘Es sollte mich freuen, wenn es mir gelungen wäre, dir Genüge zu tun in dieser Heimsuchung und mich dir lieb zu erweisen mit meiner Macht!’ GW V, p. 275.
728 The ambiguity of love is here again conveyed, this time from the point of view of one who cannot participate in sexual, even erotic practices but loves (and hates) his wife nevertheless, and understands her without reserve: ‘Ich liebe sie, soweit meine berechtigte Selbstsucht es zuläßt; hier aber liegt erst der eigentliche Widerspruch, denn ich hasse sie auch, hasse sie unausgesetzt etwas um des Anspruches willen, den sie selbstverständlich nicht an mich stellt, der aber in unserem Verhältnis allgemein beschlossen ist. Aber ich hasse nicht gern, sondern wollte, daß ich sie lieben könnte ohne Haß. Gäbe sie mir nun gute Gelegenheit, mich ihr lieb und mächtig zu weisen, so wäre doch einmal der Haß von meiner Liebe genommen, und ich wäre glücklich.’ GW V, p. 32. This happiness is granted to Potiphar at the end, and Mut is truly restored to her husband.
‘coming out’ (in every sense; she puts the unspoken matter between them into words for the first time and in her pleading against Joseph she shows the measure of her infatuation), she chooses a paradoxical costume. She is extremely covered up, not at all dressed in ‘gewebter Luft’ as she usually is, but wears two dresses, one that covers her from neck to feet and above that a coat-like garment. A long headdress worn as a wig also covers her head. Potiphar finds this alarming; he realizes that in disguising her body she may wish to reveal something of her inner life. This is undeniably the case. Mut is hiding her true reasons for speaking to her husband about the man she already hopelessly loves, but she is betraying at the same time how much their sham existence hurts her: ‘Ich aber bin Amuns ganz und gar mit all meiner Ehre und Frömmigkeit, denn ich bin seines Tempels Braut und von seinem Frauenhause, Hathor bin ich und tanze vor ihm im Kleide der Göttin, das ist all meine Ehre und Lust, und weiter habe ich keine, meines Lebens Ein und Alles ist dieser Ehrenstand[...].’

This is a scene where the narrator’s heartfelt sympathy with this character comes into focus, one of many it should be stressed, and this sympathy is also given by the eunuch-husband with great readiness, in spite of his discomfort and self-centredness. At the very end of the novel, he will prove his care and humanity with his benign judgement that is designed to send Joseph on to greater honours but also goes some way to restoring Mut’s dignity.

Furthermore, the reader is encouraged to look charitably upon this tormented woman since throughout the denouement the narrator refers to her not just by her proper name but by her intimate pet names like Mut or Eni. In a reply to a review by Herman J. Weigand, Thomas Mann expresses his concern at the critic’s lack of sympathy for Mut:

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730 GW V, p. 9.
731 GW V, p. 43.
Von Herzen hat es mich gefreut, daß Sie für Potiphar so viel übrig haben, was mir freilich Ihre Ablehnung der Leidensgeschichte der armen Mut-em-enet nicht ganz versüßen konnte. Läßt wirklich die erniedrigende Beschworungsszene auf dem Dache bis zum Schluß vollkommen kalt! Ich sollte denken, daß die Anrufung der von der Höhe ihrer Gesittung so tief herabgestiegenen Frau an die 'reineren Geister' am Schluß doch einige Rührung mit sich bringt.733

To his friend Agnes E. Meyer he defends his creation: 'Man muß doch zugeben, daß mein Bild der Frau des Potiphar die Ehrenrettung eines von aller Welt als liederliche Verführerin angesehenen Weibes durch die Leidenschaft ist’734 and on 16.4.1935 he writes in his diary: ‘[...]die Frau wird einen erbarmen; das ist etwas.’735 With that he implies that he has created a character who for a moment grows beyond her functions and dominates the scene in her own right. To ignore her at this point, to dismiss her as a minor character or regard her merely as a stepping-stone to further Joseph’s mission within a meticulously ordered fictional universe does not take account of the richly developed profile of her personality at this stage.736 The reader is asked to share every step of her unhappy love story, from the onset of the infatuation to the full catastrophe of her final actions. Once she assumes a centre-stage role, we are called upon to witness the conflict in her position. She must overcome her natural reserve, her pride, to reach out to the man she loves. She risks laughter, contempt, gossip and shame. Of course, had the affair come about, it would have meant death or at least a traitor’s fate (cutting off her ears and nose and being sent home to her clan, as Dûdu threatens). Her sexuality, previously so repressed that

733 18.11.1937, DüD II, p. 164
734 13.5.1939, Br. II, p. 92.
735 Tagebücher 1936-36, p. 82.
736 Indeed, ‘[...]dieser ,Joseph in Ägyptien, erschien mir fast ohne Frage als der dichterische Höhepunkt des Werkes, nicht zuletzt durch die humane Ehrenrettung, die ich darin vorgenommen, die Vermenschlichung der Gestalt von Potiphars Weib, die schmerzliche Geschichte ihrer Leidenschaft für den kanaanitischen Hausmeier des proforma-Gatten. GW XI, p. 678.
she has been unconscious of it (Mann makes this clear when he talks about the disparity between the expression of her eyes and that of her mouth), is a great force that now asserts itself. Mut-em-enet is suddenly confronted by her desire because of a dream she has. Subconsciously she recognizes the direction her feelings take, or, in Freudian terms, her id asserts itself in this dream, revealing what she most ardently wishes for. Like Aschenbach she fights against it. Her long and painful attempt to persuade Potiphar to send Joseph away is really an attempt to flee from the object of her desire, just as is Aschenbach’s departure from Venice. Like him she suffers total defeat in her struggle against her unconscious self. But in contrast to Aschenbach she has not chosen her repressed existence; this is done by the court, the high-priest, her family and her husband. Nor is she allowed any decisions over her life; even if she wants to, she cannot break out.

The frustration of many years produces the infatuation with Joseph, who cannot resist his narcissistic inclinations. Joseph lays himself open to the passion of the frustrated woman and, of course, love and hate are both triggered:

Der dritte Band, Joseph in Ägypten, der Joseph zum zweiten Mal in die Grube führt, zeigt eigentlich nur, daß es ebenso gefährlich ist, mit der Liebe zu spielen wie mit dem Haß. Denn das nicht sehr gewissenhafte Spiel des jungen Helden mit der Leidenschaft von Potiphars Frau ist es ja, das ihn in seine zweite Grube führt, wie die erste ihm zuteil wird durch seine Achtlosigkeit auf den Haß der Brüder.\textsuperscript{737}

Here is a clear critique of Joseph and his way of dealing with Potiphar’s wife because it is essentially selfish. To satisfy his attention-seeking tendencies he forces her to take notice of him, even though he should know what that can lead to. As Gottliebchen, the friendly gnome, tells him, he is playing with her feelings and may cause greater damage than he can foresee. In succumbing to the Dionysian force, Mut is the true

\textsuperscript{737} Thomas Mann to Erwin Schrotter, Pacific Palisades 11.1.1951, Br. III, p. 182.
tragic heroine of this piece.\textsuperscript{738} Neither she nor Joseph die, thus the irrevocable tragedy is averted, even obliterated at the end; but both suffer. However, we know that Joseph never loses sight of the fact that he is marked out for higher things, whereas Mut has to return to a wholly artificial existence that gives her neither pleasure nor satisfaction.

Mut is a minor character within the totality of the third volume of the Joseph tetralogy, and the old Fontane was fond of saying that secondary figures are often the measure of the novelist’s artistry. The novel consists of seven main chapters and she is first mentioned in the fourth, where she is referred to by the narrator as a ‘verhängnisvolle Person’\textsuperscript{739} to prepare the readers for her future role. Then we do not see her again until she comes fully into focus in chapter six and seven. What then unfolds is as much her story as it is Joseph’s. Contrary to some critics’ assertions that Thomas Mann’s minor characters remain purely functional,\textsuperscript{740} I believe the opposite is the case. This view is supported by Wolfgang Schneider. Commenting on the minor characters in the Joseph novels, he claims that ‘reduzierende Typenkomik kaum noch eine Rolle spielt.’\textsuperscript{741} He also supports my thesis that many of these characters are not just ‘Demonstrationsobjekte und Statisten’ but characters with sympathetic liveliness. Mut-em-enet is the figure that gives the third volume its drama and its fascination. Thomas Mann felt that this character was a major achievement and that she was going to make Joseph in Ägypten a favourite amongst his novels. Shortly before finishing it he writes to Paul Amann: ‘....außerdem muß ich trachten

\textsuperscript{738} [...] im Anfang, wie in der Mitte: vom \textit{kleine Herrn Friedemann zum Tod in Venedig}, der viel späteren Erzählung vom Kommen des "fremden Gottes" spannt sich der Bogen; und was ist die Leidenschaft von Potiphars Frau für den jungen Fremdling anderes als abermals der Einsturz, der Zusammenbruch einer mühsam, aus Einsicht und Verzicht gewonnenen hochkultivierten Haltung; die Niederlage der Zivilisation, der heulende Triumph der unterdrückten Triebwelt.’ GW XIII, p. 136.

\textsuperscript{739} GW IV, p. 816


\textsuperscript{741} Wolfgang Schneider, \textit{Lebensfreundlichkeit und Pessimismus}, p. 324.
mit dem dritten Joseph-Bande zu Rande zu kommen, dessen letzter Teil, die Liebesgeschichte mit der Frau des Potiphar, ein ebensolches literarisches Abenteuer im Kleinen ist wie das Ganze im Großen.'

Later he tells his French translator Louise Servicen: 'Der dritte Band des Romanes, mit dem ich bald fertig bin und der bis zur Katastrophe mit Potiphars Frau reicht, gilt bei Kennern für den besten der drei'[...] and on another occasion he writes: 'Der dritte Joseph ist durch seinen erotischen Inhalt der romanhafteste Teil eines Werkes, das als Ganzes genötigt war, aus dem Roman etwas anderes zu machen, als man gemeinhin darunter versteht.'

It is after all not uncommon for minor characters briefly to occupy the centre stage. I think of Dido in Virgil’s *Aeneid* for instance. Her story is only one episode in the lengthy work but offers the reader one of the most dramatic moments when, after Aeneas’s departure, she, in grief verging on madness, takes her life by the sword, and is cremated on a great funeral pyre, which Aeneas, looking back from far out to sea, sees burning on the shore. It is significant that the unfortunate queen has been celebrated in many works of art, amongst them a play by Marlowe and an opera by Purcell. Similarly, Mut’s laments are equally powerful, first in her wrath and then in her sorrow. Her character, of which the historical sources tell us nothing, is now unfolded in minute detail. Her physiognomy and the alarming changes in it as a result of her passion are described with great care and precision. Her clothes, her behaviour, all become subjects of interest and are moved into the foreground. For the duration of the episode Joseph becomes a minor figure. Apart from learning about his will to survive the struggle against his aroused sexuality for reasons of loyalty to his god, his father

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742 Thomas Mann to Paul Amann, Küsnacht, 21.2.1936, *Thomas Mann, Selbstkommentare*.
743 Ibid., Thomas Mann to Louise Servicen, Küsnacht, 2.5.1936.
744 GW XI, p. 661.
745 In Mutts hochgepflegter Erscheinung ‘mit dem leicht vettelhaften Einschlag’ sind verschiedene Bild- und Malwerke kombiniert: Festgestellt werden konnte eine ägyptische Frauenstatue aus der Zeit der 18. Cont. on next page
and his master and his eager acceptance of this challenge, there is little more to learn about him. The spotlight falls on Mut-em-enet, the first lady of her court and committed high priestess.

We have here the psychological profile of a woman who is significantly older than her love.

Joseph enters her life at this crucial moment and captures her senses – she falls in love. On the one hand she reacts instinctively: she longs for sexual fulfilment. But on the other hand she wants more, she wants this relationship to go beyond physicality and this means he must be emotionally involved. Therefore she shuns the advice her maids give her (for whom the solution to her problems is quite simple):

Schämt euch, ihr Unwissenden, die ihr mir ein Schwert ins Herz stoßt mit euren Ratschlägen und dreht's in der Wunde um! Denn ihr redet und ratet, als sei er ein Körper und nicht auch Seele und Geist in einem damit. [...], Gib mir acht! Wenn nur sein Mund wäre, so ließe sich hören allenfalls und zur Not, was ihr sagt von Befehlswink und Zauber, denn körperlich ist der Mund. Aber da sind seine Augen in ihrer schönen Nacht, von Freiheit und Seele voll [...][...]

Denn kann ich wohl wünschen, daß der Geliebte nur ein bewandnisloser Leib wäre, eine Leiche und keine Person? Das kann ich nicht, denn ich liebe nicht bloß seinen Mund, ich liebe auch seine Augen, sie sogar über alles, und aus diesem Grund sind eure Ratschläge mir zu wider [...][...]

It is this confession that lifts Mut-em-enet’s passion onto the higher level of human experience. She is no longer the despised wife of Potiphar but has become ‘unter den gestaltenden Eingriffen Thomas Manns eine liebende Isis.’ She fully recognizes (unlike Joseph) the nature of physical love and where its poignant beauty lies. In her heartrending soliloquy she acknowledges, at one level, the desperate intensity of her physical desire. She longs to enjoy the touch of his mouth:

"Hört es, reinere Geister, die ich so gerne meiner großen Liebe zu

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‘Eni stand sicher um mehrere Jahre hinter ihrem Gemahl zurück, den man bei Josephs Ankauf als einen Mann Ende Dreißig kennengelernt hat und der unterdessen um rund sieben Jahre zugenommen hatte. Sie war also nicht etwa Mitte Vierzig, wie er, es fehlte viel daran; aber eine reife Frau war sie immerhin, dem Joseph an Jahren unleugbar voran [...][GW V, 17.

Mechthild Curtius, Erotische Phantasien bei Thomas Mann, p. 136.
Yet her elegy conjoins physical and spiritual longings in the spirit of the Russian kiss exchanged by Hans and Clawdia in *Der Zauberberg* but here the imaginary kiss is turned into something else – the delicacy of eye contact.

[...]vielleicht Lust und Glück zuletzt nicht ganz genau möchten zu scheiden und auseinanderzuhalten sein, und allenfalls vielleicht aus jener, wenn sie nur tief genug, dieses erblühen möchte, und unter den unwiderstehlichen Küssen der Lust schlage der tote Knabe die Augen auf, mir den Blick seiner Seele zu schenken, so daß möglicherweise der Zauberbedingung möchte ein Schnippchen geschlagen sein!"^{749}

These are great moments in the immense tapestry of the *Joseph* novels, not least because they appeal for once less to intellect than to the readers’ emotional intelligence. Thomas Mann’s recurring theme that love should always contain a ‘holy’ element even in moments of great obscenity is taken to the uttermost extreme in this narration. The operatic Mut-em-enet with her ‘Sangesstimme’^{750} is a unique female character in Thomas Mann’s work.

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^{749} GW V p. 238
^{750} GW V, p. 256.
Die Betrogene is the last of Mann’s complete pieces of fiction and it is centrally about a woman and her fate. In a key passage, the protagonist Rosalie lectures her daughter about the mystique of womanhood in its most intimate if not crude manifestations. She talks about menstruation, childbirth and the menopause, subjects that even these days are talked about with some discretion and in 1953, when the story was written, would have been largely taboo. ‘Es ist eine Frauengeschichte, die offenbar nichts für Frauen ist.’ states Thomas Mann on 17.VI.53 in his diary and in a letter to Albrecht Goes he mentions: ‘Ich habe die ersten Teile dem Merkur in Druck gegeben – verfrühigt eigentlich, denn gerade hier werden für die Buchausgabe gewisse, den Frauen notwendig ärgerliche – Stellen korrigiert und annehmbarer gemacht werden müssen.’ Mann’s reactions suggest that he has wanted to write something about and for women – and was bothered when the final product gave offence. Significantly he refers to his story more than once as a ‘Novelle’ and more than any other of his stories does this one have at its centre an ‘unehörte Begebenheit’ in the spirit of Goethe’s definition of the genre. Eckhard Heftrich talks of Die Betrogene as ‘das späte Gegenstück zum Tod in Venedig’ and argues that with Friedemann he also found ‘ein Hauptide seines Lebens, das er, bis hin zur Betrogenen, variieren sollte.’ As a work about sickness

752 Tagebücher 1953-1955, p. 72.
753 31.3.1953, DüD III, p. 517.
and death this story belongs in the sequence of *Der kleine Herr Friedemann, Buddenbrooks, Tristan, Der Tod in Venedig, Der Zauberberg* and *Dr. Faustus*. The gynaecological predicament is examined in detail in *Die Betrogene*, with no less precision than typhus in *Buddenbrooks*, tuberculosis in *Der Zauberberg* or meningitis in *Dr. Faustus*. But the character has none of the remoteness of either Aschenbach or Leverkühn, or the pathos of Hanno Buddenbrook. 'Den Todessüchtigen des Frühwerks steht die Lebenssüchtige des Spätwerks gegenüber' writes W. H. Rey, but we may just as well use Thomas Mann's preferred term 'Lebensbereitschaft' – for the experiences of this brave and independent woman. She is the only one of all the love-stricken characters in the oeuvre who stands by her emotions, never looks back and does not make concessions. If there is repression on the part of Rosalie it is entirely imposed upon her by her family and society. She herself proves to be highly emancipated where sexuality is concerned. She has no illusions about her late husband's infidelities. She supports her daughter in her relationship with a young man, passing over his general unsuitability, because she wishes her to fulfil her physical needs. When she falls in love with a much younger man, an unforgivable faux pas in the eyes of her peers, she makes no attempt to conceal what is happening. On the contrary, she is proud of her 'Herzensabenteuer'. Earlier critics saw this emancipation as a sign of moral laxity, even 'Verfallenheit an die selbstsüchtige Leidenschaft.'

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757 Ibid., p. 448.
But perhaps we can be less judgemental nowadays. After all, at the end Rosalie accepts death without bitterness because she has reached the very pinnacle of her life – she has fallen in love and that love was requited – and in that knowledge she dies happily and at peace.

Another recurring theme here, by now very familiar in this thesis, is that of motherhood. The binary opposition of motherhood (Natur) versus art (Geist) is always inherent in Thomas Mann’s work. Julia Kristeva makes the important observation that we do not have adequate discourses of maternity. She argues that religion, specifically Catholicism (which makes the mother sacred), and science (which reduces the mother to nature) are the only discourses of maternity available to Western culture.758 One has the sense that Thomas Mann understood this problem and made it occasionally his concern.

Sometimes his mother figures are idolized – Rachel in Die Geschichten Jaakobs for instance or the mothers Leverkühn and Schweigstill in Dr. Faustus. But in the more dispassionate atmosphere of medical understanding motherhood is a physiological fact, recognized as such in Die Betrogene. This constant oscillation between the elated condition motherhood frequently inspires and the degrading condition nature imposes on women troubles in particular Lotte Kestner and Rosalie v. Tümler. In his biography of Thomas Mann, Hermann Kurzke asserts:

In seinen literarischen Mutterporträts hat Thomas Mann die fragwürdigen Züge beträchtlich verstärkt. Ob Frau von Rinnlingen, die die Männerwelt berückt, ob Gerda Arnoldsen-Buddenbrook mit ihrem schwarzaugigen Leutnant, ob die Großherzogin, die auf nichts als ihre Schönheit bedacht ist, ob Senatorin Rodde mit ihrer unerschöpften, nie recht befriedigten Lebenslust, ihrem girrenden Lachen und der leicht lüsternen Halbbohème ihres Salons – an der Sittsamkeit des Lebenswandels der Muttergestalten werden stets unbestimmte Zweifel genährt. Sie rühren aus der unduldigen Empfindlichkeit von erwachsenen Kindern gegen jede Abweichung des Lebenswandels der Mutter von Würde und Reinheit, die Thomas Mann noch in der späten Erzählung Die Betrogene zum Ausdruck bringt.759

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Kurzke seems very disapproving here; perhaps an alternative response would be to stress how frequently Thomas Mann challenges traditional stereotypes of motherhood in his fiction. In *Die Betrogene* the two women, mother Rosalie and daughter Anna, are reminiscent of the mother/daughter constellation in *Lotte in Weimar*. Anna is kinder than young Lotte, better disposed towards her mother and less frigid, but equally she is a spinster and will in all probability remain one. In her case a club foot cancels most possibilities of sexual fulfilment and she redirects her libido into her art and her work. Like Aschenbach and Leverkühn she is an intellectual and represses her sensuality, and she channels her sexuality into her work, leaving few energies for emotional or physical outbursts. Beside her cool and observant daughter, Rosalie seems almost whimsical and certainly naïve.\(^{60}\) When Rosalie breaks into local dialect – ‘drastisch-humoristisch’ as the narrator remarks – Anna reacts with real distaste\(^{61}\) but to Rosalie, child of nature, this makes good sense: ‘Wir sprechen ja von natürlichen Dingen, nicht wahr, und Natur und Dialekt, die haben für mein Gefühl was miteinander zu tun, so verbessere mich, du bist soviel klüger als ich.’\(^{762}\) Anna von Tümler,\(^{763}\) the intelligent daughter who can analyse and put into words the feelings of her ‘privileged’ mother, talks of the need to adjust the mental state to that of the physical, to harmonize the psychological with the physiological: ‘Körper und Seele, die sind ja eins; das Psychische ist nicht weniger Natur als das Physische; die Natur schließt auch jenes ein, und dir braucht nicht bange zu sein, daß dein Seelisches


\(^{762}\) *GW VIII*, p. 891.

\(^{763}\) Thomas Mann writes in a letter to Richard Baumgart on 13.7.53: Die beste Figur ist wohl die Tochter, die übrigens, wie alle Einzelheiten, frei erfunden ist.’ DüD III, pp. 519-520.
lange sich disharmonisch verhalten kann zur natürlichen Wandlung des Körpers. In saying this, she wants both to comfort her mother but also to point out to her that she is expected to behave with the decorum that befits her condition as a middle-aged matron. Anna wishes to restore her to her previous state of apparent acceptance because she feels endangered by her mother’s emotions and longings, firstly as her daughter, but secondly also as a woman who was not allowed to live out her romantic inclinations. There is some female jealousy of the type young Lotte feels when she watches her mother blush (and realises how desirable the mother has been when young) and this is a reminder of it.

The physical and spiritual adventure of Rosalie’s late love for a younger man is the core of this story. Nature, loved and revered by Rosalie, looked at with sceptical and wary eyes by her handicapped daughter, deceives and betrays the older woman by making her believe that her body is rejuvenated when she is actually dying. The cruelty and irony of this situation is palpable, not only for the amazed then horrified doctors and the heartbroken daughter, but it presents an outrage to the reader too. The only person who remains positive, even grateful, is Rosalie herself, as Thomas Mann stresses in his Letter to Frederick Rosenthal:

Übrigens grollt die Frau der Natur nicht lange wegen ihres dämonischen Streiches. Der Tod ist ja ein großes Mittel natürlichen Lebens, und wenn er für sie, täuschend, die Form der Verjüngung, der Auferstehung annahm, sich in Liebe, Leidenschaft, sinnliche Beseeligung kleidete, so ist das auch wieder eine große Gnade, und sie scheidet vom Leben, versöhnt mit der Natur, die sie immer geliebt, und die ihr – so will sie es schließlich sehen – Liebe erwiesen hat.

'Heimsuchung' is the word Thomas Mann uses for such cases and since Der kleine Herr Friedemann he has developed this theme.

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764 GW VIII, p. 893.  
766 I like to quote Doris Junge’s point here that is very much in line with this particular strand of my thesis, i.e. the identification of the author with this type of obsession: "Anna nennt die Sache bei ihrem Thomas Mannschen Namen: "Warum muß mir immer zumute sein, als ob die ganze Heimsuchung, deren beglucktes Opfer du bist, etwas mit Zerstörung zu tun hätte?" Der Leser weiß spätestens zu diesem Zeitpunkt, daß Rosalies Stunde geschlagen hat." Doris Junge, Welch ein Weib, p. 149-50.
throughout his work. Rosalie is the only successful lover within this category. That makes her death less harrowing. "Nicht der Tod mit der Hippe umarmt Rosalie, ein jugendlicher Amor trug sie hinüber ins Schattenreich," writes Doris Runge.

**Die Betrogene** emerges from the very basis of Thomas Mann's fictional work: 'Erikas Äußerungen darüber, wie sehr es in meinen 'Ur-Kram' gehört. Erzählt von Klaus' Aufregung darüber, daß alle meine Liebesgeschichten dem Bereich des Verbotenen und Tödlichen angehören, - wo ich doch 'glücklicher Ehemann' und 'sechsfacher Vater.' Ja, Ja... The tale comes straight from his heart at a time when he felt most despondent and depressed, devoid of inspiration, physically unwell (he himself had experienced an encounter with cancer but was spared), yet again in a new home in a different country, disappointed with an America of the McCarthy era. He writes:

> Ich war, als ich zu schreiben begann, auf Mutter Natur gar nicht gut zu sprechen und wollte ihr eigentlich nichts als Bitterkeiten sagen. Aber dann hat sich mir unter den Händen die Anekdote doch zu einem kleinen Gedicht vom Leben und Tod gehoben, wie Sie es so schön darstellen.

Instead of ending on a bitter note the story describes another *Liebestod*. It also represents the ageing narrator's own *Lebenstapferkeit* in this last work.

I agree only in part with W. H. Rey's view that, rather then being a romantic, as Anna describes her, Rosalie is of a classical temperament: 'Denn es geht ihr ja um die Konkretisierung des Abstrakten, um die Sichtbarmachung des Unsichtbaren [...] Diese Wendung zeigt an, daß die zuweilen etwas schwer erträgliche Schwärmerei der Naturfreundin in dem Vertrauen auf die glückliche Harmonie des Lebens begründet ist.' Thus far he is right, but we recognize Rosalie's dangerous leaning

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768 Tagebücher 1953-1955, on 2.IV.53, p. 43.
769 Thomas Mann to Alexander Moritz Frey on 2.10.1953, Br. III, p. 309.
towards total indulgence. She shares it with Tonio Kröger, Aschenbach and Adrian Leverkühn in her appreciation of nature's manifestations:

 [...] was die Natur unserem Geruchssensorium an Holdheit, Süßigkeit, würziger Bitternis, auch an Schwülem, Berauschendem zu bieten hat, das liebte sie aus der Maßen und nahm es tief und dankbar, mit der sinnlichsten Andacht auf. An einem Spazierwege gab es einen Abhang, eine gestreckte Bodenfalte und untiefe Schlucht, auf ihrem Grunde dicht bewachsen mit Jasmin- und Faulbaumgesträuch, von dem an feucht-warmen, zum Gewitter neigenden Junitagen ganze Schwaden, Wolken erwärmten Wohlgeruchs beinahe betäubend emporquollen ... Rosalie atmete den schwer aufwallenden Brodem mit bewunderndem Genüß [...].

and we then may remember Settembrini's measured voice, also an advocate of nature but of a very different sort: 'Ehre jedoch dem Hochgebirgsfrühling! [...] Da fehle alles Verwirrende und Aufreizende des Frühlings der Ebene. Kein Gebrodel in der Tiefe! Keine feuchten Düfte, kein schwüler Dunst!' The antagonist, Naphta, is quick to snipe that nature is mindless: '[...]es hieße immerhin Geist in die Natur tragen. Sie hat es nötig [...]’ an attitude not entirely unlike that of Anna who gets headaches when she in the open air and exposed to nature. As her mother ingeniously suggests: 'Ja, weil du deinen Kopf gegen sie setzest ....und ihr nicht huldigst mit deinem Talent, sondern dich mit ihm über sie erheben willst, sie zum bloßen Gedanken machst, wie du selber dich rühmst, und deine Sinneseindrücke Gott weiß wohin überträgst, ins Kalte.' The philosophical argument in Die Betrogene surprisingly comes close to the Lacanian argument that the Real is the maternal, the ground from which we spring, the nature we have to separate from in order to have culture; the phallus is the idea of the Father, the patriarchal order of culture, the ultimate idea of culture, the position which rules everything in the adult human world. Yet, as a form of synthesis we find in Thomas Mann’s story a new nobility and dignity in nature, a Kristevan argument by which the maternal body

771 GW VIII, p. 885.
772 GW III, p. 518/19.
773 GW III, p. 519.
774 GW VIII p. 886.
operates between nature and culture and thus counter-acts stereotypes that reduce maternity to nature. In *Die Betrogene* nature is both benign and cruel. Benign, in that she bestows such beauty on the living, cruel that she can and does withdraw her gifts at any given time. Thus, Rosalie who has lived throughout her ten years of widowhood respectably in her bourgeois neighbourhood starts to behave like the old tree – which she loves.


After her despair about her menopause she is triumphant when she thinks that her menstruation has returned: “‘Was tut die große, gute Natur für ein Wunder an mir und segnet damit meinen Glauben!’”\(^776\) and on her deathbed, far from being resentful she tries to reconcile her shocked and sorrowful daughter: “‘Die Natur – ich habe sie immer geliebt, und Liebe – hat sie ihrem Kinde erwiesen.’”\(^777\) Rosalie has an intense closeness to nature in every way. Her maternal body that bore children and was once so important to give and protect life is claimed again and is both sacred (spiritual) and functional (nature). To refer to Julia Kristeva’s theory again it serves as a model for all subjective relations; it is a subject-in-process.

But Rosalie’s gratitude to nature allows her to override the two treacheries: firstly the one that she cannot argue with but resents fiercely – the final cessation of the menses; secondly the real blow, the

\(^{775}\) GW VIII, p.889.  
\(^{776}\) GW VIII, p. 730.  
\(^{777}\) GW VIII, p. 950.
true deception, her uterine cancer that made her believe for a short while that her menopausal state had been reversed. The biological changes in Rosalie are complex and dark. "Und doch rate ich Ihnen, meine Vermutung zu übernehmen," lectures Professor Muthesius "daß die Geschichte vom Eierstock ausging, - von unbenützten granulösen Zellen nämlich, die seit der Geburt da manchmal ruhen und nach dem Einsetzen der Wechseljahre durch Gott weiß welchen Reizvorgang zu maligner Entwicklung kommen." Was, thus Thomas Mann asked himself in his diary, the disease the catalyst for this passion? In a letter to Frederick Rosenthal (the doctor who advised Thomas Mann on medical matters in his fiction) he elaborates on this:

Das Gefühlswunder wird (für sie) zum physiologischen Wunder...Das physiologische Wunder (für sie) das Produkt des seelischen-sinnlichen, der Liebe. Die Natur läßt das Psychische über das Physische siegen...Ihr Liebesmut schwimmt....Aber denkbar, daß ihre ekstatische Leidenschaft, ihre Liebe, die durch die Person des Geliebten nicht gerade sehr gerechtfertigt ist, ein Effekt der Reizung durch das erkrankte Organ war. Es hätte also nicht das Seelische ein Triumph über das Physische gefeiert, sondern dann Pathologisch-Physische einen trügerischen Seelenfrühling erregt. Das neue Leben war in Wahrheit der Tod.

As with Hans Castorp’s undiagnosed early lung affliction, the sudden infatuation serves Rosalie’s physiological condition as the catalyst to set the process into motion that will lead to her death. The black swans she

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779 GW VIII, p. 949.


feels drawn to towards the end of her life herald the disease that is
devouring her (inseparable from the circulation of blood in her womb).
The feelings she harbours for Ken, however socially unacceptable, are
both sensual and maternal or, as Thomas Mann wrote to his adviser,
‘seelisch-sinnlich.’782 Her body asserts its rights once again but for
Thomas Mann the desire of one human being for another is never
simply just physical. The river, clearly the river Styx, leads her to her
final destination. Duly she pays the ferryman and sets forth on her last
journey.783 The landscape and nature’s beauty in the place of her last
visit are offset by man-made splendour (the Schloß with its décor of
rococo sensuality). She, who was born in spring, a gift that seems to
promise her eternal youth (her daughter was born in winter and is
referred to as die Winterliche), embraces the young man in a room highly
suggestive of Eros with a statue of that god, eyes bound, and turtle doves
on the wallpaper. She acknowledges the coexistence of life and death
when she tells her daughter: ‘Ungern geh ich dahin von euch, vom
Leben mit seinem Frühling. Aber wie wäre denn Frühling ohne den
Tod? Ist ja doch der Tod ein großes Mittel des Lebens...’784 This insight
distinguishes her from Aschenbach who dies because, in August von
Platen’s words, since he has looked upon beauty with his own eyes he is
doomed to die.785 Her acceptance of death as a price for having received
the highest form of life – love – is metamorphosed into spirituality.
In a Goethean universe this process is the concept of ‘das Ewig-
Weibliche’786 (Gretchen’s love for Faust is transfigured) or ‘Stirb und

782 See previous quote
783 Hans Wysling reminds us: ‘Reisen sei ja ein erotisches Phänomen, sagen uns die Psychologen....Wir
denken an jene späte Fahrt der Rosalie von Tümmel an den schwarzen Schwänen vorbei ins Totenreich
des Schlosses Holterhof – eine Liebesfahrt, die zur Todesfahrt wird.’ Hans Wysling ‘Wer ist Professor
Kuckuck’, in Thomas Sprecher and Cornelia Bernini eds., Ausgewählte Aufsätze 1963-1995 (Frankfurt
784 GW VIII, p. 950.
785 I refer to Platen’s poem Tristan: ‘Wer die Schönheit angeschaut mit Augen, ist dem Tode schon
anheimgegeben[...]’
786 ‘[...]denn das Ewig-Weibliche ist ja das Prinzip der Erlösung, nämlich das Bewusstwerden des
Unbewussten, die unendliche Revolution, die Eva einleitete, als sie den Apfel der Erkenntnis pflückte.’
Goethe Werke X, p. 43.
werde' (Goethe's idea of *Entelechie*). Her end, then, is peaceful and positive.
Dignity and Indignity

Both the figures that concern me in this final chapter are, to borrow the title of the last work, 'betrogen.' Their bodies and its senses deceive them. Mut is forced into an unnatural existence by her family and when she suddenly falls in love, it is with someone eminently unsuitable for her: a man much younger than herself, her servant and social inferior and, above all, someone who for reasons of his own is as unlikely to become her lover as is her eunuch husband. Thus, she is truly betrayed – the late revolt of her body leads her into chaos and emotional abyss. With Rosalie the subject is once again revived in a less ambiguous way – she is menopausal. In one last, great rebellion against the dictate of her body this process is reversed as she falls in love but dies before this love can be consummated. The so-called deception by their bodies is also a massive betrayal by nature. The cruelty cuts very deep with both characters – Mut must sink to depths of moral depravity in her fight for Joseph's love. Rosalie's deception is particularly vicious because she is such an ardent friend and admirer of nature. To be confronted with the full extent of that other side, of nature's indifference to the promptings of the soul, is horrible. Yet horror does not have the last word. There is a conciliatory ending, due to Rosalie's positive outlook.

We would do well to recall the 'Russian Kiss' passage from Der Zauberberg, which reminds us that, in human affairs and above all in affairs where love is at issue, there is no bodiliness that is not touched by spirituality, no spirituality that does not seek an expression in bodiliness. And this proves true of these two women figures. What they feel and experience may be (to use the terms of an impassioned passage from Der Tod in Venedig, which is often, of course, seen exclusively in the nexus of Thomas Mann's unacknowledged homosexuality) 'lächerlich und heilig doch'.\(^{787}\) This love is holy in the way the Russian

\(^{787}\) GW VIII, p. 378.
kiss is holy, since ‘Liebe kann nicht unkörperlich sein in der äußersten Frömmigkeit und nicht unfromm in der äußersten Fleischlichkeit.’

Like Aschenbach, Rosalie von Tümmler stammers her admission of love: ‘Großer Gott, ich liebe ihn ja, liebe ihn, wie ich nie geliebt, ist das denn zu fassen?’ putting the stirrings of her heart before and above the ‘Klugelei’ of her daughter. And that love is central to the affirmation Die Betrogene makes. Rosalie, forever eloquent, puts it into words: ‘Ist Glück – Krankheit? Leichtfertigkeit ist es freilich auch nicht, sondern Leben, Leben in Wonne und Leid, und Leben ist Hoffnung.’

The conclusion is ambivalent, both dark and thoughtful, since Rosalie is enriched by what is seemingly disastrous. Of course, Thomas Mann is at pains in this, his final, story to acknowledge the negation that is inseparable from Rosalie’s experience. And it could be argued that thereby he stays within the stereotypical thematization of women: Rosalie’s sexuality is linked with her (imagined) reproductivity; the cancer that kills her is housed in her reproductive organs; she dies in the name of her sexuality as woman. Yet perhaps we can read this story as an attempt to resist the stereotypifying mould, to assert the dignity and autonomy of Rosalie against all the odds, to associate with her love some of her most cherished connections – for example that, however physical its manifestations and causes, love can never be bereft of spirituality. In his last completed work, a woman is witness to that affirmation.

788 GW III, p. 832.
789 GW VIII, p. 901.
790 GW VIII, p. 946.
791 GW VIII, p. 930.
Conclusion

The women characters in Thomas Mann’s fiction have been decried for their lack of sexual or emotional appeal.\(^{792}\) They are accused of being simply walk-on parts, whose function is to enable the male protagonist to develop experientially. To some extent this criticism has to be acknowledged – Clawdia induces Hans to remain in the ‘Berghof’; Lotte inspired Goethe’s most popular novel; Tony acts as a foil to Thomas’s inwardness; Gerda Buddenbrook supplies the oversensitive heir and thus accelerates the decline of the family dynasty; Mut-em-enet is the reason that Joseph is transferred from Potiphar to Pharaoh. Only Rosalie von Tümmler stands truly alone as a female protagonist in Thomas Mann’s imaginative universe – but this is in his last and in many ways problematic work. However, in my analyses I have sought to suggest that Thomas Mann’s imaginative power was not as limited as some of his critics maintain.

The women figures are largely seen through the eyes of others and in that sense they are often metaphors rather than substantial autonomous characters. This is particularly true of the so-called *femmes fatales*: of Gerda v. Rinnlingen, Gerda Buddenbrook and above all of Clawdia Chauchat. Tony’s main role is perceived to be that of the custodian of the Buddenbrook honour and Lotte Kestner consciously returns to the heart of the acknowledged image-making industry of Weimar to be seen as Werther’s Lotte. Mut’s brief appearance is that of someone who is completely taken out of herself in the grip of her passion, and that is also the case with Rosalie von Tümmler.

\(^{792}\) An excerpt taken from an article by Karin Tebben shows that even Heinrich Mann saw his brother as unable to describe women: ‘Thomas könne da gar nicht mitreden, er, ein Schriftsteller, ‘in dessen Büchern ausschließlich die Männer Interessen haben’ und aus dessen einzige um ihrer selbst willen dargestellte Frauenfigur ‘alle sexuelle Energie sauber herausgeschnitten sei, ja, bei dem sowieso die Frauen nur noch castriert vorkämen.’ Karin Tebben, ‘Man hat das Prinzip zur Geltung zu bringen, das man darstellt.’ Standortbestimmung Thomas Manns in 1904: Gabriele Reuter’ in Eckhard Heftrich und Thomas Sprecher ed., *TM.Jb* 10, 1997. Tebben quotes from an hitherto unknown reply by Heinrich Mann of 3\(^{rd}\) December 1903.
In this light, either as a *femme fatale* or victim, the women conform to a stereotyping scheme— in line with the great majority of Thomas Mann’s characters (including the men). This has been substantiated by much research, which I have acknowledged where appropriate in the foregoing pages.

Feminist literary criticism has often concerned itself with the thesis that women in literature written by men are for the most part seen as other—and it is a functionalized otherness in the sense that it either reinforces or undermines the goals of the male protagonist.\(^\text{793}\) It is generally accepted that Thomas Mann, the most autobiographical of writers, took a view of women as wives and mothers that was, despite his own personal complexities, a simplistic one. But like his contemporary Henry James, he was a man of his time. James did not even support women’s rights (and was frequently quite dismissive of female writers), but his female characters are among the most complex in British and American literature. And I hope that my study suggests that Mann’s creative imagination knew better than his conservative views of women allowed and that he frequently endowed his women figures with a significant measure of autonomy. As part of the creative process he, like other writers, develops his characters from a stereotype but ultimately they grow into creatures with a life of their own.\(^\text{794}\)


\(^{794}\) Ich ‘erlebe’ keine Sensationen; im Gegenteil möchte ich sagen: mein Verhältnis zu den Eindrücken des Lebens ist wesentlich passiv, ein unbewußtes Aufnehmen, - irgendwie sickern die optischen und akustischen Wahrnehmungen in mich ein, bildet sich in mir ein Fundus menschlicher Züge und Cont. on next page
It remains, finally, to ask how this 'life' is expressed on the page, what are the literary devices that articulate and make manifest the presence of character? The answer is, in many ways, a largely conventional one. It has to do with Thomas Mann's gift for dialogue and for creating scenes that are eloquently expressive of character. What I have essentially done in this thesis is to 'read for character' along these lines. I have paid, in other words, particular attention to what the women figures say and do, to the context in which they put themselves. I venture to suggest that, if one reads Thomas Mann's texts in this way, we engage with an extraordinary sense of the richness of created (female) life (in a way that, given his reputation as a cerebral novelist, one hardly expects). Time and again he gives his women lines to speak, actions to perform, roles within a given situation that are eloquent and suggestive. None of the women who have concerned me in this thesis are mere ciphers; rather they emerge with a psychological, moral and/or linguistic authority that can serve to challenge the stereotypes and images that are thrust upon them. In saying this, I do not mean that Mann offers a thoroughgoing critique of gender ideology; but such women figures as Tony, Gerda, Lotte, Clawdia, Mut and Rosalie move from potentially secondary status to some kind of noteworthy selfhood. And that seems to be not the least of Thomas Mann's achievements.

Besonderheiten, aus dem ich, wenn die produktive Gelegenheit kommt, schöpfen kann.¹ From On Myself Thomas Mann's 'Doppellecture' to the students of Princeton university on 2/3 May 1940.
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