

Elements of Cultural Continuity in Modern German Literature.  
A Study of Goethe, Nietzsche and Mann

(with a summary in Dutch)

Elementen van culturele continuïteit in de moderne Duitse literatuur.  
Een studie over Goethe, Nietzsche en Mann

(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit Utrecht op gezag  
van de rector magnificus, prof.dr. J.C. Stoof, ingevolge het besluit van het  
college voor promoties in het openbaar te verdedigen op vrijdag  
21 mei 2010 des ochtends te 10.30 uur

door

Ramona Simut

geboren op 31 juli 1976  
te Oradea, Roemenië

Promotor: Prof.dr. A.B.M. Naaijken

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT _____	5
INTRODUCTION _____	7
CHAPTER I. JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE AND THE CULTURAL CONFIGURATION OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY _____	21
1. Goethe and Naturalism. Science as a Passion of his Age _____	23
2. Goethe and Kantianism. Transcending the Reason of his Age _____	26
3. The Relationship between Nature and Art in Kant and Goethe _____	34
4. Goethe and Neo-humanism. A Classic against his Age _____	42
5. Goethe between Wetzlar and Weimar. Escape and Return to Cultural Places _____	47
6. Goethe and German Culture. Preliminaries to Identity _____	55
7. German Culture and French Civilization in Goethe's Time _____	56
8. Germany's Freedom and Unity. Goethe's Concept of National Identity _____	67
9. The German Culture as a "Substitute"? Goethe's View of Politics _____	72
10. Goethe between Literature and Music. Tempering the Heroic Ideals of his Age _____	84
CHAPTER II. FRIEDRICH WILHELM NIETZSCHE AND THE CRISIS OF MODERN CULTURE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY _____	105
1. Nietzsche between his Life and Works _____	105
2. Nietzsche between Philosophy and Modern Music _____	119
3. Nietzsche and the False Nietzsche of Posterity _____	127
4. Nietzsche and <i>The Will to Power</i> ? Gods against Modern Morality _____	134
5. Nietzsche and the Archive. Zarathustra and "Weimar's" Superman _____	147
6. Nietzsche and the Enlightenment: a Conclusion against Modern Optimism _____	155

7. Nietzsche and his Contemporaries. Goethean Humanity against Modern Society _____	160
8. Nietzsche and the Germans' Abdication from Goethe _____	169
9. Goethe in Nietzsche's thought. Calm Poetry of a Forgotten World _____	176
10. Nietzsche's Cult of Tragedy: a Transcultural Prophetic Message _____	181
 CHAPTER III. PAUL THOMAS MANN AND THE PROBLEM OF THE MODERN ARTIST IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY _____	 185
1. Thomas Mann: an Artistic Autobiography _____	186
2. Mann, the Man of Culture in the Midst of Politics _____	191
3. Mann: the Unpolitical Writer at War? _____	201
4. Mann's Interim between Political Visionariness and his Ethical Creed _____	220
5. Mann and his Last Works. Preliminaries _____	228
6. Mann and His <i>Doctor Faustus</i> . The Struggle for Artistic Security _____	230
7. Mann and his Literary Character. Cultural Models and Personal Identity _____	234
8. <i>Doctor Faustus</i> and the National Political "Culture" _____	255
9. Mann and the Idea of Music. Criticism against Intentionality in Art _____	261
10. Mann and the Artist's Fate: a Spiritual and Universal Emigrant _____	276
 CONCLUSIONS _____	 299
SUMMARY _____	305
BIBLIOGRAPHY _____	343

## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a survey of the inner relationship between the most representative German writers and thinkers of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century: Goethe, Nietzsche, and Thomas Mann. It examines the content of their thought as reflected in their attitude towards the arts, society, and politics of their times. This is, on the one hand, a synoptic study: it envisages the historical context of these three pivotal centuries and their strategic importance for the cultural and social development of modern Germany and Europe in general. On the other hand though, it provides a detailed analysis of the key aspects in the thought of Goethe, Nietzsche, and Thomas Mann which led to the formation of common themes and concepts in their works and thus to the distinctive and sound message that they convey.

The main purpose of this study is to prove that these common themes—the condition and role of the artist in society, the non-exclusivity of art as related to politics, the need to transcend chaotic nationalist politics, etc.—are a direct Goethean heritage in the thought of Nietzsche and Mann. This idea has two implicit conclusions. First, their message for society was ethical and visionary, representing the goal of their literary-philosophical productions. They were all searching for the meaning of the internal and external events in their lives and manifested opinions towards political turning points such as the French Revolution, Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* or the two world wars. Secondly, their ethical convictions are relevant today, as an increasing number of historians and literary critics try to find in the work of Goethe, Nietzsche, and Thomas Mann an answer to current inquiries which are similar to the ones in the past. After all, the art of writing is an art with a message.



## INTRODUCTION

Who was Goethe in his time and beyond? Was he predominantly—as an increasing number of cultural trends hold today—the representative personality of German culture starting with its classic period? Was Goethe such a salient man of culture detached from any particular role in political life? Should we take into consideration the fact that he was indeed a great man of culture and a patron of the arts in his own country, did not he make use of his position at the Weimar court in order to favor the flourishing of the arts to the detriment of the European social context of the time? In other words, how could one counter the argument—greatly preferred by today’s estheticians, literary critics and sociologists—that Goethe embodies the essence of German spirituality defined by contrast with French civilization?

These are just some of the core questions which this study will attempt to answer as far as Goethe the artist is concerned. The subject is even more interesting as his name does not cease to open new perspectives on the role and the impact of literature in society as well as the reality of its message against general political developments. Furthermore, the above-mentioned questions must be taken into account because Goethe establishes a precedent due to the actual social realm which is a witness—among other things—of the rapid expansion of cultural foundations and institutes that spread the fame of Goethe, the writer all across the world. At the end of the day, is it true or false—and this idea is more actual than ever before—that Goethe played culture against politics?

This study documents from this particular perspective the very ample Goethe phenomenon within the European realm as well as that of the German culture. The first step is to explore the moment of Goethe’s appearance in a critical time for German culture at the very crossroad of artistic and philosophical currents. Thus, the way Germany rose to fame through the primacy of reason in all aspects of life and France through its image as the typical country of the Revolution and political movements will be researched based on the influence of major internal and external philosophical transformations which defined the eighteenth century from one end to another. It should be stressed from the very beginning that these transformations were meant to “enlighten” the masses in both countries and this was a phenomenon which defined itself as rational-Kantian Enlightenment in Germany and materialist-practical Enlightenment in France. Within this particular context, Goethe’s portrait will be sketched in close connection with Kantian philoso-

phy. At the same time, the present study seeks to identify some similarities and dissimilarities between the Kantian philosophical system and the Goethean poetical system, the latter being translated through various concepts which emerge in Goethe's literary and scientific works. Based on this, three types of relationships will be analysed: the relationship between reason and experience, the relationship between nature and art as manifested through the genius-creation connection and the relationship between beauty and truth in Goethe.

The development of Goethean literary concepts within the context of German culture as the embodiment of the German spirit (considered as such *par excellence*) has a paramount importance because it can result in a change of perception as far as Goethe is concerned. It will be revealed that Goethe became a classical writer having already been a scientist, so he managed to overcome romantic subjectivity as well as Kantian critical-empirical methods which concern the genius and the creator of art. From this perspective, Goethe advocates the harmony of nature and art in the sense that the genius does not prescribe rules to art, so he cannot use art in order to justify, for instance, a certain political action. It will be shown thus that in connection with the concept of German culture Goethe's name presupposes a new working definition. Starting from the very foundation of this culture (namely Goethean ideas as distinct from Kantian philosophy), it will be revealed that Goethe is not a promoter of the idea of art in itself (or of German aestheticism) but of the balance between the external realm (nature and everything which is comprised in it) and the internal realm (the life of the genius and his creation).

The connection between the first and the second stage of this study resides in identifying the very aspects through which Goethe is representative for the German culture both contemporary and subsequent to his own career. This goal will be pursued bearing in mind that Goethe prescribed new rules for the German culture in order for this to be eligible as a balanced culture within the larger realm of European civilization. On the other hand though, it would be better to identify the very persons through whom Goethe is representative for the German culture. This should happen because the second stage of this study pictures Goethe as a forerunner of two creators of values who understood to a high degree of similarity the significance of the notion of "German spirit" in connection with a series of aspects which were external to it. Even though either of them had his own explanation in his own specific style, they both followed the same thin red line and this is exactly why they were considered as Goethean descendants within the German culture in general and German literature in particular.

Having said that, this study is an attempt to present as well as analyse some of the elements of cultural continuity in modern German culture as initiated by Goethe and then continued by Nietzsche and Thomas Mann, within the specific contexts of their time and also with reference to the philosophy of the Enlightenment. Even if the influence of Kant's philosophy on Goethe's formation was acknowledged to a certain point, it may seem odd at a first glance to defend the idea that Kant had decisively influenced the thought of Nietzsche and Mann. Nevertheless, this idea can indeed be held true if their spiritual formation is taken into account alongside its various periods and in spite of some specific ideological differences due to the transition from one century to another and from an analytical to a synthetical system in philosophy. It will be argued consequently that Kant's influence on Nietzsche and Mann is impossible without Goethe's work, and this influence works exactly as in Goethe's case, namely in some respects and in closely confined domains of the German culture. Therefore, the Goethe episode will prove to be even more important than the Kant episode in the eighteenth century if one does not miss both the discordant notes specific to Goethe the writer (as related to Kant's rationalist philosophy) and the Goethean perspective which prolongs itself in the thought of Nietzsche and Mann.

However, this introduction is not an attempt to sketch the actual influence of Goethe on Nietzsche and Mann. The three chapters dedicated to their thought and work will speak for this at the proper time. What is needed here is a clear and absolutely necessary preliminary overview on the philosophical-artistic perspective of Western society, which was socially and politically different during the actual lives of the three. The hint here is at the systems which connected the eighteenth, the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, namely the one which was active at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century—highly unstable due to the transition from classicism to romanticism—and the other one—extremist and sinister—which marked the crossing between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. It is no wonder, then, that the eighteenth century witnessed numerous philosophical permutations concerning especially the abandonment of the old Cartesian doubt which had eclipsed the whole of the previous century. Likewise, the social transformations and territorial conquests of Northern Europe (the Seven Year War, for instance) establish an ascendancy over the more isolated part of the old continent; in this respect, the eighteenth century undoubtedly promoted the faith in the unity and inalterability of reason.

Goethe himself did not randomly make a sudden appearance at the beginning of these complex transformations, because his entire work, includ-

ing his famous correspondence, reflects the search of a new authority in philosophy and literature which is specific to the Enlightenment. This trend though does not orient itself towards the past but it builds its ideal being highly receptive to the development of sciences and the synthetic spirit of rationalist philosophy. A question, however, arises. If the eighteenth century prefers to be called “the century of reason” or “the century of philosophy *par excellence*”, where should we look for the features and the distinctive model of this particular understanding? In other words, what is the meaning of “philosophy”?

From the perspective of the eighteenth century as compared to the previous century, the answer to this question brings about a negative distinction. While during the seventeenth century the task of philosophy was to build a “system” of thought, the eighteenth century abandoned the deduction/proof-based model or the exclusively mathematical pattern in evaluating the world outlook (with a higher primordial reason as the starting point), which brought the philosophy of Leibnitz, Spinoza and Malebranche to an abrupt end. Thus, the eighteenth century sought to identify other concepts of truth and other philosophical coordinates to be expanded as well as made more elastic and concrete. This new feature characterizes the entire century, but the systematic spirit is not neglected either. However, while the seventeenth century saw reason as an act of knowledge which participates in divinity, the eighteenth century takes a much lower approach to reason, which is perceived rather as an acquisition than an inheritance. This particular feature is specific to the eighteenth century as a whole, because reason turns itself into a sort of an energy which is confined solely to its forces and agents. What reason is and what reason does cannot be known from its results but only from its function, which is to unite and dissolve, consequently defined as philosophy of analysis and synthesis. Consequently, the first achievement of the eighteenth century in this direction was to delineate the mathematical spirit from the philosophical one, which resulted in the essential distinction between the strictness of French classicism and the style of German classicism (also known as the “Weimar classicism”).

Up to this point, the eighteenth century has been connected to the evolution of the analytical spirit, which was specific to France being looked upon as predominantly the classical realm of analysis. This clarification is needed both philosophically and literarily because the mistake of searching for the sources of the German Enlightenment in the French culture was made more than once. This happened in Germany, where the literary-artistic situation was entirely different from that of the other European cultures, in the sense that the cultural elite remained indifferent to the spiritual movement of its own country. The result was that some members of the German intellectual

elite began to look up to countries like England, Spain and Italy, where the rationalistic spirit of the Enlightenment had already produced a powerful impact. As far as the French Enlightenment is concerned it seems that its status depended to a very large extent on keeping the French bourgeoisie socio-economically viable, otherwise almost totally eclipsed both philosophically and literarily. Therefore, it appears that the writings of Diderot and Rousseau suffer mainly from a social, not a spiritual influence, as well as from a “naturalist”, not a critically-rationalist philosophy as expected.<sup>1</sup>

Contemporary philosophers catch a glimpse of this state of affairs when they notice—like Alasdair MacIntyre, for instance—that one of the reasons why we so often miss the coherence and unity of Enlightenment thinking is the fact that we perceive it as merely an episode of French cultural history. Nevertheless, according to MacIntyre, the French themselves admit that they follow English patterns, while England itself was overtaken by the crucial achievements of the Enlightenment in Scotland. In other words, among the leading figures of the Enlightenment one should count—alongside Kant and Mozart—resonant names such as David Hume, Adam Ferguson and John Millar.<sup>2</sup>

This observation is no longer a paradox; on the contrary, it became a commonplace both among aestheticians and sociologists. This is so because the French lacked three particular aspects which prevented them from creating a rationalistic literature or philosophy based on a scientific spirit, despite Diderot and d’Alembert’s famous *Encyclopaedia*, which Goethe greatly appreciated.

Therefore, the French first lacked the Protestant secularized background. The Protestant Reformation had a crucial role in the emergence of German Enlightenment—a suitable example would be Luther’s *Bible*. This is why France has never had the chance to seriously consider the new wave brought upon by the sixteenth century in philosophy and theology, while Descartes’ philosophy never managed to go beyond the barrier of mathematical reduc-

---

<sup>1</sup> Werner Krauss, *Opera și cuvântul* (București: Univers, 1976). On page 49, Krauss writes that “during the eighteenth century, French nobility persistently promoted the cause of the Enlightenment” and he gives some examples, such as the “nobility of the sword” (Saint-Simon), “nobility of the chancery” (Richelieu), “nobility of the gown” (Montesquieu, Buffon, Marivaux), the bourgeois finances (Hélvetius), and the “nobility of letters” (Diderot, Rousseau). This is probably the pattern accepted by Krauss when he expresses the wish that Germany should have bourgeois writers as well.

<sup>2</sup> For details, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *Tratat de morală. Despre virtute* (București: Humanitas, 1998), 62-63. For the English version, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue. A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd Edition (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 37-38.

tionism.<sup>3</sup> If Protestantism promoted both spiritual renewal and the idea of economic and social progress wherever it spread across Europe, the Catholic France responded to the challenge of practical sciences only two centuries later. Some contemporary historians—such as Georg Iggers—draw a sharp line of separation between the “two worlds” and their social and scientific status at the beginning of the eighteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Thus, they notice that the development of the individual’s self-consciousness in Northern Europe is strictly connected to the fact that the Enlightenment placed history—as an autonomous science—in close relationship with social sciences in order to facilitate the general access to information and truth, thus making the individual responsible for and actively involved in the new events of the beginning of the eighteenth century. On the other hand, in France—which took pride in the embodiment of political unity in the person of the king—the institutions of the state remained petrified for another century, so it was long after the end of the eighteenth century that they could somehow enjoy the renewal that Northern Europe had had for over a hundred years. As a result, the “intelligent” promoters of the 1789 French Revolution started their attempt to reform French society counterclockwise as compared to the Germans. Thus, Diderot and Rousseau were forced to demythologize and demystify the central figure of the king and the role of the monarchy by means of the idea of scientific progress, which resulted in a predominantly materialistic-practical and scientific approach of the French Enlightenment.<sup>5</sup> If in Germany social unity had led to the strengthening of the institutions and functions of the state, as bodies which were responsible for this unity, in France the development of social consciousness demanded an increasingly evident crumbling or disarmament of the bodies which captured political

---

<sup>3</sup> See John R. Pannabecker, “Diderot, the Mechanical Arts and the Encyclopédie: In Search of the Heritage of Technology Education”, *Journal of Technology Education* 6.1 (1994). Pannabecker is interested in Diderot’s influence on the development of arts and trades in France and Europe following the publication of his *Encyclopaedia* while suggesting that its editors are more important for the development of science than for philosophy. It is very likely that Goethe himself shared the same feeling about Diderot’s *Encyclopaedia*, given his interest in physics and mechanics.

<sup>4</sup> See Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century. From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge with a New Epilogue*, and especially the chapter “Economic and social history in Germany and the beginnings of historical sociology” (Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 1997), 36-40.

<sup>5</sup> For details about Rousseau’s political and literary activity, see Jim Miller, *Rousseau: Dreamer of Democracy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996). His *Social Contract* reveals Rousseau as an “oracle of democracy” as well as a staunch supporter of free will and a convinced defender of moral liberty, which resulted in his view of the right socio-political administration in accordance with the rational civic spirit.

unilaterality.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, the interest for the development of arts and trades as a result of scientific progress, as well as the attempts to explain it philosophically in France can be seen as opposed—for instance—to Kantian philosophical system which placed the empirical within the authoritative and non-speculative realm of reason.

Secondly, the French lacked the receptive public which in Northern Europe had long strengthened the vigor of the Nordic Enlightenment. This particular public must have been trained at least to a certain degree if people were to absorb and concretely understand the writings of French Enlightenment philosophers. As in France this was not the case at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Enlightenment *per se* achieved a proper status only after more than one hundred years, namely towards the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

Thirdly, the French lacked the educational institutions which were soaked with the new way of thinking as, for instance, the universities of Königsberg, Edinburgh and Glasgow. At that time, France offered in turn an *intelligentsia* formed of well educated people, who were nevertheless alienated, estranged and unintegrated in society. A correspondent to the French cultural elite is the Russian intelligentsia at the beginning of the nineteenth century, which—very much like its French counterpart—developed into a well-defined, wealthy and cultivated social class, later known as the bourgeoisie.<sup>8</sup>

Particularly, it is precisely the Enlightenment elements which lacked in France that represent German culture. Goethe and his work cannot be properly understood without these coordinates, mainly because the promoters of

---

<sup>6</sup> In this sense, the Paul Lacroix's picture of French society at the end of the eighteenth century supports the definition of French society in a reverse order as compared to German society, namely from sociology to philosophy. A subtle observer of the then unfolding events, Lacroix suggests that this movement was characteristic of the pre-Revolutionary period, against the saturated background of "Court institutions, customs and whims". For details, see Paul Lacroix, *The XVIIIth Century. Its Institutions, Customs, and Costumes: France 1700-1789* (London: Bickers and Son, 1878).

<sup>7</sup> During the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, France was partly a realm of political clashes among nobility and even a land of open war between the State and the Church for political dominance. So, every attempt to mentally "convert" the uneducated classes was bound to be a glorious failure during all absolutist governments. As a particular case, the attempts of the Catholic Church of France to eradicate the Jansenist "heresy" in discreet cooperation with the absolutist government of Versailles in 1756 had both long-term spiritual and social repercussions. See also Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *The Ancien Régime. A History of France, 1610-1774* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> For its later development, see the 1955 study of Ernest Labrousse, "New Path Toward a History of the Western Bourgeoisie (1750-1850)," in *Histories, French Constructions of the Past*, ed. by Jacques Revel and Lynn Hunt (New York: New Press, 1995), 67-74.

the “Weimar classicism”—Goethe and Schiller—deliberately inaugurated a literature which was meant to be integrated in universality as well as a philosophy which was tributary to rationalism and, of course, to Kantianism. Thus, on the whole Goethe’s poetry expresses a modern vision on the relationship between man and nature as well as between history and society, while his short stories and plays reflect a deeper understanding of human individuality. Likewise, the scientific spirit—sharply developed in Goethe—drew him even closer to the perspective offered by Kantian philosophy. In this respect, his modern outlook and his scientific spirit waged an open war against universalized “teleology” whose most notable representatives was the philosopher Christian Wolff.

Goethe, however, remained Kant’s follower for as long as the well-known slogan which demanded the preservation of knowledge within the boundaries of reason was meant to be applied exclusively to natural sciences. When Kant extended its applicability beyond biology and physics to art and implicitly to the notion of genius, Goethe adopted a position which was almost diametrically opposed to Kant, thus promoting ideas about art and the role of the artist which clearly resembled essential concepts pertaining to ancient Greek philosophy. In very much the same vein, the ancient Greeks’ perspective on art is to be found in what Goethe has to say about biology, music, painting, literature and science in general.

This introduction functions as a survey of the cultural and contextual conditions within which German cultural history began to develop, and the eighteenth century was acknowledged as a starting point in what German arts, history, sciences, society, and politics are concerned. The importance of this particular century for Germany and Europe in general, but also the perils it brought upon German culture and its representatives in its time and in the following centuries is not a matter of personal taste or concession as this study also analyses the cultural and political context of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries reflected in the work of Nietzsche and Thomas Mann. This introduction was chosen as preamble to the further examination of Goethe as an event in Germany’s history, and also as an explicit background of Germany’s modern culture from the last two centuries. The reason for this was to establish from the very beginning what German culture meant to the eighteenth century Germans and Europeans, and what it meant, as we are prone to find out, to Goethe and the artistic tradition he settled within the German culture. Our study will not reiterate or resume these considerations on the historical, cultural, and philosophical aspects which led to the formation and definition of the concept of German culture whose meaning remained the same for posterity as it was for the eighteenth century Germans. It provides however an important hint, namely the author’s feel-

ing that two different concepts of culture are at stake here: the first refers to the definition of German culture that every historical textbook conveys, and the second refers to Goethean culture which a close study of the tradition it settled in Germany through Nietzsche and Thomas Mann will certainly bring to light.

## **Methodology**

My thesis constantly focuses on the interrelationship between the biographical data and the works of Goethe, Nietzsche and Mann for three methodological purposes. First of all, I assume that the different historical data—but one and the same worldview and artistic perspective—place Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann in the same history of ideas which originates in Antiquity. Secondly, I defend their role as promoters of cultural dynamics by virtue of their theories about the integrative nature of culture-civilisation relationship and as key figures of European culture. In the third place, my method of unceasingly confronting them with each other, with different writers and thinkers of their times and beyond (who assess their power to change culture and society) make the object of comparative literature. Therefore, the thesis builds on the horizon of ideas in which Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann follow, then it works its way through defending them as promoters of an open German culture within European civilisation. Finally, it ascertains their contribution in the field of comparative literature, as coined by Goethe, and investigates their relationship with other foreign literatures which they influenced. I understand the first and the second of my methodological purposes as both an approval and a reaction to the rather recent perspective on the history of ideas and cultural diversity of the British philosopher Isaiah Berlin. Though I retain Berlin's concern for the relationship between human concepts and historical events and his conclusion that there can be no meaningful idea without experience, I am mindful of his presupposition only as an anti-Marxist and anti-determinist ideologist. I agree, for that matter, with his insight and argue that Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann would not have come to a literary consensus without sharing a common life experience, although separated by many decades. I am, therefore, comfortable with his observations in the essays he produced from 1960 onwards (see *Does Political Theory Still Exist?*, 1962, or *Four Essays on Liberty*, 1969), which draw the line between the personal and social imprinting of ideas within a given culture. In this context I defend his thesis that total liberty and total equality of mankind is equally “dreadful and frightful” since, as a neo-Kantian thinker, the idea that different cultures can think alike is strange without a constant process of negotiation. I, therefore, sug-

gest that Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann were negotiating above the heads of Germans a role for their culture in the European cultural diversity. I disagree, however, with Berlin's way of separating different thinkers as to fit in his monist-pluralist worldview (see his *Hedgehog and the Fox*, 1953), where Nietzsche is a monist thinker following one basic principle in life, whereas Goethe is the pluralist whose many roads in life proved incompatible with his living. There is a contextual explanation for this. Nietzsche's work was just beginning to be properly approached at that time by Germanists such as Mazzino Montinari and Walter Kaufmann; on the other hand, Berlin is an astute opponent of the Enlightenment with which he associated the name of Goethe. In what follows I agree that if I use Berlin's view on the birth of ideas and how they form a culture, I have to present some insight for disagreement by means of disambiguation of the relationship between Goethe, Nietzsche, and Thomas Mann.

When I first thought of a possible relationship between Goethe, Nietzsche, and Thomas Mann, I saw the need to distance myself from perspectives which admit that the liaison is real but dissimulate its purpose, as for instance in Rosaria Egidi's *In Search of a New Humanism* (1999), Seth Taylor's *Left-wing Nietzscheans* (1990), and Caroline Joan Picart's *Thomas Mann and Friedrich Nietzsche. Eroticism, Death, Music and Laughter* (1999). Moreover, even if the themes approached here are not necessarily new to readers of Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann, they dismantle the idea of a mutual denunciation of Nietzsche and Mann as well as their dismissal of Goethe as a less tragic soul. My thesis is not a reiteration of Romanticism which springs from a writer's personal tragedy nor is it a means to assert that the relationship between Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann can be deciphered easily. The feature which seized my attention when I first put their names together was the similar path in their work, a certain shift of ideas which seemed essential at a certain and decisive moment of their literary and philosophical creation. This shift from the early exuberant phase of creation historically manifested in Goethe as the *Sturm und Drang* and the Romantic period, while in Nietzsche and Mann as a familiarity with Modernity was to me a clear sign that they were all searching for a more consistent worldview and so their mature work was given prevalence. Strangely enough, I did not come across important studies which were mindful of this shift in reassessing their long lasting concerns for German philosophy, German music, and German culture. Books such as Nicholas Boyle's *Goethe: The Poet and the Age* (2000), R. J. Hollingdale's *A Nietzsche Reader* (1977), M. S. Silk and J. P. Stern's *Nietzsche on Tragedy* (1981) and Michael Beddow's *Thomas Mann. Doctor Faustus* (1994) were to me only a proof that an extended view on this shift in all the three thinkers is needed.

This was a turning point for my study on Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann and I started to envisage a whole history of ideas between them as a thematic unity.

I can state that the three thinkers shared into the same history of ideas primarily due to their search for harmony which I explain to be of Ancient Greek origin. I understand the concept of history of ideas as the perpetuation of a specific worldview or culture throughout centuries, and in the way this cultural worldview changes society. I believe that, beginning with Goethe and then following with Nietzsche and Mann, we can trace a whole process of redefining culture as a concept which does not depend on a single country, but on those who create it everywhere they may end up going; this is the very aspect which unites the three writers in my thesis. My study places Goethe in this Ancient tradition because, to Goethe, Classicism did not mean a mere imitation of the Ancient Classics. At the risk of seeming an anti-aesthetic neohumanist, Goethe finds in Classicism a literary model postulating that beauty must come from the truth (as in his *Poetry and Truth*). I place Nietzsche in this tradition and present him as a pupil of Goethe against his Romantic age and against the theory that he was the greatest Romantic ever to have lived, as shown in Ernst Bertram's *Nietzsche. Versuch einer Mythologie* (1965). The thesis does not force Nietzsche into the Goethean tradition as Heidegger did in *Nietzsche* (Harper and Row, 1984) based on aesthetic evaluations of Nietzsche's rhetoric. The path I follow centers on how Nietzsche himself advocates a Goethean paternity by means of his clear vision on art and society, by travelling to the same historical places as Goethe, by speaking highly of Goethe in his letters and aphorisms, by defending him as a harmonious spirit against Schopenhauer and Wagner, and by placing Goethe's Weimar in constant opposition with nationalism and Romanticism, an attitude which the Romantic writers would have not shown towards Goethe unless they perceived him as one of them. Moreover, I place Thomas Mann in this tradition by making reference precisely to his typology which is considered almost unanimously to be of Romantic nature. I specifically chose the characters with an obvious misfit personality and seemingly Romantic traits in order to assess the unusual way in which Mann perpetuates Goethe's classical spirituality, that is by virtue of their reaction against the bourgeois life and their search for internal harmony. I also present Nietzsche and Mann's return to Goethe as a return in thought and admit to the fact that physically they were not a living proof of it. Sharing in the tradition opened by Goethe and his definition of the internal harmony of creation is the preamble of how Nietzsche and Mann tried to change the society in which they lived.

The second methodological purpose of my thesis is to show that Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann think of culture as a vivid, dynamic process. If Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann shared so inextricably an ideological heritage, I felt I had to deal with the importance and nature of their specific historical-cultural formation for the society in which they lived as well as for us today. Though it has been said that Goethe and Mann are the promoters of German spirituality as an untouchable island proudly standing above all other European countries (see Wolf Lepenies, *The Seduction of Culture in German History*, 2006, or Francis Mulhern, *Culture/Metaculture*, 2000), I bring Nietzsche into equation and, by analysing their similar social views and political preferences, I seek to dismiss bigotry. The contributions of Eric Heller's *The Ironic German* (1958), Keith Ansell-Pearson's *Nietzsche contra Rousseau* (1991), Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter's *Music and German National Identity* (2002) and Hamish Scott and Brendan Simms' *Cultures of Power in Europe during the Long Eighteenth Century* (2007) helped in portraying the face of Europe and in sketching the relationships between different cultures and artists in each of these three centuries. At the same time, I dismiss the definition of cultural dynamics related to the names of Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann as so extreme as to consider that everything new in society is a good thing. Some of the less known works and letters of the three writers were of great help here, particularly the sporadic correspondence between Goethe and Beethoven, Nietzsche and his family, and Mann and German exiles, such as Leonhard Frank. Though generally ignored and some of them only recently released to the public, these works are a good example of what their authors made of culture in general and of German culture in particular. In this context I agree, for instance, that no culture is an integrating whole, but that varying arts, beliefs, ideas, and societies fluctuate in the process of establishing links. On the other hand, at a closer view, I do not think that Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann overshadow the importance of stability at a cultural and social level, but rather suggest that stability needs to be structural and transmissible. As far as Goethe is concerned, his position toward some fellow writers and countrymen is that of an advisor and critic, except that it manifests as a counter-reaction to his German contemporaries' attitude toward other nations. I sensed that the same social duty was expected from Nietzsche, but he also failed to abide by the expectations of his fellow citizens both ideologically and practically. I constantly stressed the fact that these two men were not equivocal about questions like nationalism and isolated individualism. Basic studies here that I rely on are Walter H. Bruford's *Culture and Society in Classical Weimar* (1962), Klaus Berghahn and Jost Hermand's *Goethe and German-Jewish Culture* (2001), Andreas Gailus' *Passions of the Sign* (2006) or

Robert John Ackermann's *Nietzsche: A Frenzied Look* (1990). Thomas Mann's attempt to dislocate a certain German belief, custom or way of reasoning, and relocate it within another geographical or imaginary realm is presented as an attempt to bring together different cultures, societies, arts, and languages in a dynamic relationship (see, for instance, Terrence James Reed's *Thomas Mann. The Uses of Tradition* (2002) as opposed to Michael Harrington's *The Accidental Century* (1965). These three thinkers are not, in my thesis, confined to a predetermined philosophical doctrine, such as the Enlightenment or Modernism.

As for my third methodological purpose, an explanation is needed. This thesis is primarily based on reliable translations from German into English and from German into Romanian in view of contextualization. The original German source, however, was not left aside, so by comparing it with various translations, I captured the meaning of the texts which were used in the dissertation. I planned to use the ideas behind the actual text in order to have a better grasp of its meaning. This is to say that I was primarily interested in the content of ideas, not the style, although the style in which these ideas were transmitted was not overlooked either. For instance, my perspective on the style of Goethe's works serves extensively to produce meaningful comparisons between Goethe and the philosophers of the Enlightenment, on the one hand, and between Goethe and the representatives of German music in the eighteenth century, on the other. The same technique is employed to present in detail how Nietzsche and Thomas Mann were connected to philosophy and music. Having done this it is not difficult for me to conclude that these thinkers shared not only a similar content of ideas over time, but also a unity of literary style which evokes an almost classical attitude within the literary milieu which they belong to.

My thesis stands in the tradition of comparative literature, the objectives of which can be detected in the chronological and systematic approach of Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann. Assuming that comparative literature is necessarily related to the history of ideas as expressed in literary productions, I understand my thesis' contribution to it as a study of literary and philosophical ideas in different countries. I do not disapprove of what literary critics and theorists usually aim at when comparing different literatures and writers. I chose, however, to focus on the ideas which inspired numerous literary efforts throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and were—at the same time—transposed or induced by Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann. This was not only a benefit from outside, a chance to see how different nations issue similar attitudes towards specific artistic and social problems. It was also a benefit from inside, an opportunity to notice how my interaction with their works is supported by or becomes an alternative to

theories and names in the field. This is why my thesis is not linguistically-oriented though it draws extensively on the problem of German culture and nation. It is rather an attempt to make ideas transparent in expression and message as well as applicable in extended cultural and social contexts by means of the critical understanding of literature in a national and transcultural setting. My thesis stands in the tradition of explaining the assumed literary influence and of exploring the non-literary influence in the writings and thought of Goethe, Nietzsche, and Thomas Mann. This is, finally, an attempt to show that, as far as they are concerned, the literary influence is not yet clear without a cultural disambiguation.

## CHAPTER I

### JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE AND THE CULTURAL CONFIGURATION OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, one of the most famous scholars of the eighteenth century, made a general presentation of the second half of this century in his essays *Elements of Philosophy* (1759). Having carefully studied this crucial work, Ernst Cassirer reaches the conclusion that the second half of the eighteenth century was indeed a turning point in the cultural life of the last three hundred years. Thus, while the Renaissance had started in the second half of the fifteenth century, and the Reformation had reached its goals by the middle of the sixteenth century, Cartesian philosophy had successfully changed the world overview around the middle of the seventeenth century. Taking all these achievements into account, here is what d'Alembert wrote:

If one examines carefully the mid-point of the century in which we live, the events which excite us or at any rate occupy our minds, our customs, our achievements, or even our diversions, it is difficult not to see that in some respects a very remarkable change in our ideas is taking place ... Our century is called, accordingly, the century of philosophy par excellence ... Natural science from day to day accumulates new riches. Geometry, by extending its limits, has borne its torch into the regions of physical science which lay nearest at hand ... The true system of the world has been recognized, developed, and perfected ... In short, from the earth to Saturn, from the history of the heavens to that of insects, natural philosophy has been revolutionized; and nearly all other fields of knowledge have assumed new forms.<sup>9</sup>

When Goethe started his career, Germany was a typically progressist country from the standpoint of its cultural life. Thus, the educated German tended towards the ideal of the universal man, whose *praxis* necessarily demanded a theoretical expression. It should be said here that the idea of progress as referring to the eighteenth century is connected to the influence of Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536) on German spirituality in general and

---

<sup>9</sup> D'Alembert in Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 3.

on German men of culture in particular during the Reformation—as, for instance, Erasmus’ correspondence with Luther—as well as to the influence of Newton’s physics on natural sciences. Within this context, Goethe made a name for himself at the crossroad of significant cultural trends. Born in Frankfurt am Main in 1749, Goethe spent his youth learning classical and modern languages, history, geography, natural sciences and mathematics, but also acquiring various abilities which developed his artistic side as he witnessed the publication of Diderot and d’Alembert’s *Encyclopedia or the Systematic Dictionary of Sciences, Trades and Arts* (1751-1771). His cultural formation as an adolescent was also tied to the country of the great Revolution, especially after the royal lieutenant, the Count de Thoranc, moved in Goethe’s house. The young Goethe made his way to maturity accompanied by the experience of war: first, the French-Prussian Seven Year War (1756-1762) and then the Russian-Turkish War (1768).<sup>10</sup> Making full use of his war experiences and the documents which attested various facts about these wars, Goethe would later produce works of great literary and historical value as, for instance, his epic poems and *West-östlicher Divan* (*The Parliament of East and West*, 1819).

After his childhood and adolescence as well as after his Rococo period—when he combined the fashion of white wigs with the gallant verses typical of French Regency—Goethe would turn into a tempestuous young man alongside of the anarchical, prolific and revolutionary outburst of the *Sturm und Drang*. Nevertheless, none of these influences—either rationalism or romanticism—managed to tyrannize him; he rather made a synthesis out of them which resulted in his everlasting classicism.

Initiated and brought up in the spirit of classical culture, Goethe remained so constantly rooted in the realm of classical research that he developed an antiquely-informed frame of thought which he applied even to his most modern of his daily preoccupations. In all his endeavours, Goethe benefited not only from the cultural support of his classical masters but also from the moral support of his father, who introduced him to the study of culture and would later stir his curiosity for natural sciences. It is interesting though to investigate the way the young Goethe knew how to combine the scientific fact with the artistic manifestation, namely reality and imagination.

---

<sup>10</sup> For a detailed presentation and pertinent commentaries about the period when Goethe was born and brought up, as well as about the political events and the social changes which pushed Goethe towards theatre, poetry and prose, see John P. Williams, *The Life of Goethe: A Critical Biography* [Blackwell Critical Biographies] (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998).

## 1. Goethe and Naturalism. Science as a Passion of his Age

In 1740, Johann Caspar Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's father, wrote in Italian his *Trips to Italy*, which contains the results of his investigations regarding the acquisitions of inscriptions—a written proof of the epigraphic mania of the eighteenth century—as he traveled through the old Roman lands. Besides what nowadays would be called epigraphic monotony, Johann Caspar Goethe demonstrated a sheer naturalistic curiosity manifested in the observation of marine species, the collection of polished alabaster and marble pieces, as well as an inquisitive interest for diamonds similar to Lessing's (see, for instance, his *Trips to Italy* for the description of the diamond owned by the Duke of Tuscany). An even more curious fact is the researcher's hostile attitude towards superstition and religious mystification. The *Trips to Italy* thus contains genuine Voltairian pages, which are also encyclopedic, and this happened long before the famous *Encyclopedia* was printed. Goethe's father was a Lutheran, which accounts for his general disposition to a certain degree, although his total disdain for the mystical element draws him very close to the Enlightenment.<sup>11</sup>

Fifty years after the publication of the *Trips to Italy* (1740) by Johann Caspar Goethe, his son wrote his *Metamorphose der Pflanzen* (1790). The son clearly inherited his father's enthusiasm, so he decided to take a trip to Italy just as his father had done half a century before him. In temper, the father and the son are very much alike because they both shared the pedantry of study; there is though a difference between the two, and this is the genius.<sup>12</sup> The way the young Goethe writes down his scientific observations discloses a *Weltanschauung*. Thus, he carefully observes the geological phenomenon and the overlapping of various layers such as the quartz, the

---

<sup>11</sup> In his *Goethe as a Scientist*, Rudolph Magnus presents the passion of Goethe's father for sciences and the way it was bequeathed to his son. It should be highlighted here that, as far as Goethe is concerned, the discoveries he made in the field of natural sciences with the help of his father did not remain in his daily diary but were later brought to life through art, as proved by his poetry and prose. See Rudolph Magnus, *Goethe as a Scientist* (New York: H. Schuman, 1949).

<sup>12</sup> In recent years, scholars developed a new interest in Goethe's notes, letters and diaries, which are less known to the contemporary public. Thus, in addition to the publication of various editions and volumes pertaining to the *Gespräche mit Goethe*, J. T. Reed revealed both the letters and the diary of the young Goethe during his trips to certain Italian cities. See, for instance, his *Goethe. The Flight to Italy: Diary and Selected Letters* [Oxford World's Classics] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), an unmediated testimony to the admirable ease which transforms empirical observation into verses and portraits as the young man's wonder acts upon it.

granite and the limestone, which instantly captured his attention. Nevertheless, what really fascinates him is not primitive nature (the *natura naturata*) but rather nature as an object of the genius' reflection (the *natura naturans*). Having wandered through the cities of Italy, Goethe eventually reaches Rome, where the classical tradition is presented to the eye of the natural researcher, as a coronation of the nature's work by means of a fourth genus which is superior to the mineral, vegetal and animal realm, and this fourth genus is the human realm. As the essence of his artistic expression lies in the power of form, Goethe rejects both mysticism and metaphysics, so he does not find any pleasure in anything medieval. To emphasize the idea, it could be said that Dante or any other medieval writer would not be counted among his preferences.

Goethe's robustness is not the only proof in favour of the idea that Goethe the writer was unable to turn his novel *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774) into a best-seller. Considered the prison of his youth, this novel is the vivid expression of the regrets which Goethe's hero felt during his stay at the Prussian court. Goethe's genuine work begins to take shape only after his trip in the realm of antique youth, so the two years he spent in Italy (1786-1788) were indeed a real escape. One should not forget though that Goethe's naturalistic preoccupations precede by far his spatial confinement in Wetzlar; so, he will never give up these naturalistic preoccupations, a fact which is confirmed by the geological museum he hosted in his own house.

Within the same line of thought, what could his *Metamorphose der Pflanzen* (1790) be if not a preamble—like all his early studies related to the natural sciences—to his work of maturity, which is essentially artistic in character as reflected in his *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1796) and *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* (1829)? According to the Romanian literary critic, George Călinescu, Goethe's work of maturity “tackles in a clouded fashion some matter from the author's biography.”<sup>13</sup> Even if it were only a Rabelaisian utopia, *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* provides the model of a possible life, as well as the model of an educational ideal which can be both complete and exceptional, classic (through various educational institutions and theories pertaining to school in general) and modern (through the natural history lectures offered by Jarno, who contemplates geological nature: “Stones are mute teaches; they silence the observer”).<sup>14</sup> The educational

---

<sup>13</sup> George Călinescu, *Scriitori străini* (București: Editura pentru Literatură Universală, 1967), 380.

<sup>14</sup> Goethe, *Collected Works (Conversations of German Refugees and Wilhelm Meister's Journeyman Years: Or the Renunciants)*, ed. by Jane K. Brown (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 118.

ideal which is confirmed by Goethe's experience as a scientific researcher is meant to reveal to the public the interrelation between science and art in Goethe's works. Actually, this feature of Goethe as a creator of values did not appear exclusively within the context of the didactic spirit which animated the authors of the Encyclopaedia, the manual of the French Revolution. Thus, there is a series of sharp differences between the French *Encyclopaedia* and Goethe's *Zur Farbenlehre* (1810), which has a direct impact on *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* (1829). Unlike the French scholars who belonged to the same cultural century, Goethe was the first—by means of his observations and conclusions—to revolutionize the ideas concerning the formation, nature and origin of colours as a new branch of the science which investigates the human body. According to Rudolf Magnus, *Zur Farbenlehre* reveals important discoveries, as well as original observations in matters pertaining to chemistry, physics and biology, and this is exactly why it remained Goethe's most important scientific production. Within this particular context, the elements of optics which are targeted by Goethe's theory of colours seem to be physiological in nature, rather than just physical, so it is possible that they laid the basis for the nineteenth century experiments in physiological optics.<sup>15</sup> As a result of Goethe's studies, the science of optics became an integrative part of the research concerned with the study of the eye and the formation of the impression of colour in the brain. Thus, it is even more important to mention *Zur Farbenlehre* at this point and especially in connection with the very complex science of physiological optics. The importance of Goethe's *Zur Farbenlehre* resides first in the fact that it is a manual of science, which opened new perspectives to physicists by showing that—as far as optics is concerned—the then naturalistic and scientific developments produced groundbreaking discoveries for a region of the human body which had been explored to a lesser degree. Second, due to the fact that *Zur Farbenlehre* was not intended to be a scientific manual and thus independent of the rest of Goethe's works, his poetry and prose benefit from his scientific research especially when knit together with his artistic genius.<sup>16</sup> Thus, on the one hand, epistemology is essentially relevant in the realm of art; on the other hand it is vitally important for the genius that he should be brought up in close connection to the external reality of the physical world. For Goethe, colour is not entirely a *mathesis* (science) and—

---

<sup>15</sup> See, for instance, Rudolph Magnus, *Goethe as a Scientist* (New York: H. Schuman, 1949), 2.

<sup>16</sup> See Goethe, Eckermann, *Conversations with Goethe in the Last Years of His Life* (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, and Company, 1839), 145. Newton's physics are shadowed by the more complex Goethean view on physical world.

because it has a long interpretative tradition in the realm of art as it influenced poets, philosophers, painters and musicians—it is in itself an independent object of study.<sup>17</sup>

The naturalistic perspective, however, is just an alternative—among many others—which leads to the discovery of Goethe’s true artistic reality. In his capacity of a naturalistic researcher, Goethe himself believed that nature must be known “within the limits of reason”, in order to grant it the necessary freedom to manifest itself beyond us.<sup>18</sup> “The adventure of reason” prompted Goethe to understand his works and style the very way he understood the transformations of nature and the subtleties of geology. Thus, Kant’s philosophy was essential for the transition from Goethe the scientist to Goethe the artist.

## 2. Goethe and Kantianism. Transcending the Reason of his Age

Before investigating the relationship between Goethe’s thought and Kant’s philosophy, it is important to get a good grasp of the way Kant (1724-1804) was perceived in his own time. A series of critics support the necessity that Kant’s work should be categorically detached from his life, while at the same time they analogically postulate the impossibility of separating Goethe’s work from his life.<sup>19</sup> Such a detachment though is not the best solution if we take into account the fact that German ideology took shape within an essentially social background at least as far as the eighteenth century was concerned. On the other hand, the unilateral approach of the “systems” of thought—which presupposes an exclusively social evaluation—is not acceptable either, if the reason which lies beneath such an approach is solely the validation of the science of philosophy and sociology. To give just one relevant example, this unilateral approach—as applied to the entire context of the eighteenth century—is specific to Marxist philosophy as seen in *The German Ideology* (1846), a study which was co-authored by Marx and Engels:

---

<sup>17</sup> See also Charles A. Riley II in his *Color Codes: Modern Theories of Colour in Philosophy, Painting and Architecture, Literature, Music, and Psychology* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1955), 21. Goethe’s *Zur Farbenlehre* was an inspiration for art in general because—for Goethe—this is the only world in which this theory can truly find a way to further progress.

<sup>18</sup> For details about the relationship between the true knowledge of the world and science in Goethe, see R. H. Stephenson, *Goethe’s Conception of Knowledge and Science* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995).

<sup>19</sup> See, for instance, Mihai Ralea, *Portrete, cărți, idei* (București: Editura pentru Literatură Universală, 1966).

The state of Germany at the end of the last century is fully reflected in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. While the French bourgeoisie, by means of the most colossal revolution that history has ever known, was achieving domination and conquering the Continent of Europe, while the already politically emancipated English bourgeoisie was revolutionising industry ..., the impotent German burghers did not get any further than "good will". Kant was satisfied with "good will" alone [which] fully corresponds to the impotence, depression and wretchedness of the German burghers, whose petty interests were never capable of developing into the common, national interests of a class.<sup>20</sup>

Such a critique addressed to Kant and his influence on the German society presupposes two aspects which have to be taken into consideration. The first has to do with the fact that, while he never left his native town of Königsberg, Kant was keenly aware of the political and historical context of his days and especially of the French Revolution. The second aspect is concerned with Marx's methodology which rapidly grasps anything previously claimed by reason in order to transform it by derogation into a straitjacket of the social, political and economical climate. The Enlightenment, however, did not promote only social aspects but also scientific and moral aspects. This was perhaps the most important feature of Kant's thought, namely the fight against any deviant metaphysics and physics and then the appeasement—if not even the dethronement—of any teleological ideal. Thus, for Kant, the things and events of any kind can be explained only "within the limits of reason". Even the idea of morality should be tackled by means of synthetic philosophy, so this is why Kant believes that ethics should also be approached rationally, in the sense that ethical concepts can and should be treated in a rational way. Therefore, Kantian rationalism characteristic of the eighteenth century precedes and, at the same time, warns against the philosophical tendency of the time to turn objective reality into individual ideas. Consequently, Hegel (1770-1831)—who was diametrically opposed to Kant—proclaimed a phenomenology which encouraged the Germans to believe that each one of them has the right to use science in such a way that they can make visible progress towards one's own viable philosophical perspective; and this is because science can be perceived as a ladder which

---

<sup>20</sup> Karl Marx; Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1970), 97. See also Karl Marx; Friedrich Engels, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and the Communist Manifesto* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1988).

helps us climb towards philosophy.<sup>21</sup> Although Kant acknowledges the role of observation in scientific research, he does not make experience the authority which governs physical or moral principles. On the contrary, these principles must be understood in a higher way and made subject to an authority which is superior to empirical experience and observation. With Kant, if our ethical concepts were subject to experience, not to reason, then they would no longer possess absolute value because every experience becomes subjective from the very start, so moral arguments would be weaker as compared to the strength of human feelings.<sup>22</sup>

Which is then the status of reason and in what way is reason superior to experience? How did Kant formulate the principles of experience and in what way did he set the “limits” of knowledge in order to talk about a “critique of practical reason” and a “critique of pure reason”? First—in close connection to Goethe’s scientific observations seen by him as a prolongation of Kantian thought—it must be mentioned that during his life, Kant had a series of lectures at the Albertina University of Königsberg. These lectures are particularly relevant because they have recently been the object of academic researches and, furthermore, they define Kant’s spiritual formation as a core promoter of the German Enlightenment. Thus, within a year after the publication of Kant’s political writings in English (1991),<sup>23</sup> Hannah Arendt

---

<sup>21</sup> For more details about the relationship between objectivity and theory, as well as between empirical reality and philosophy in Hegel, see *The Philosophy of Right*, ed. by T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967).

<sup>22</sup> Kant, *Lectures on Ethics* [The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant in Translation] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). At this point, ethical considerations are tightly connected to aesthetic theory and religion. Two of the recent critics of Kant’s moral theory confirm the above-mentioned observations concerning, on the one hand, the inferiority of any purely epistemological attempt to solve moral dilemmas and, on the other hand, the bivalence of Kant’s ethical concept. The first of Kant’s critics is Roger Sullivan who wrote *Immanuel Kant’s Moral Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Sullivan integrates Kant’s arguments about the subjectivity of experience within the context of his Pietist spiritual upbringing because the excellence of moral conduct was due to the absolute moral law or the absolute divine truth. Kant’s second critic is Allen Wood, who produced his *Kant* [Blackwell Great Minds] (Blackwell: Oxford, 2005). Wood approaches the debate concerning morality in Kant within the context of his great topics, which were listed in the Table of Contents following the very order Kant himself treated them: a priori synthetic knowledge, the principles of possible experience, the limits of knowledge, the philosophy of history, ethical theory, politics and religion. Unlike Werner Krauss, Wood does not forget to make a sharp distinction between Kant’s works applied on sciences and his works dedicated to philosophical concepts, especially in connection with his understanding of the Enlightenment.

<sup>23</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Political Writings*, ed. by H. S. Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

produced a critical study of these political lectures.<sup>24</sup> Arendt notices that Kant never wrote political philosophy; despite this fact though, there are numerous writings concerning the idea of politics in Kant which cannot ignore his philosophy of history or his writings that tackle general issues. Thus, Kant used general concepts like “eternal peace” (in connection with the relationship between history and politics) which should be understood within the wider context of his lectures on world physical geography, chemistry, physics, mathematics, aesthetics and religion. Although the elements which have a general and practical character do not prevail over specific concepts or even over pure rational concepts, Kant encourages the persistent cultivation of the former in the spirit of neo-humanism because he was indeed a true “universal man”. This particular path taken by Kant as he penciled his ethical theory presupposes dialectic overtones which were clearly delineated, like, for instance, the moral debates which triggered powerful conflicts within the traditional schools of thought. As pointed out by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno—the promoters of the Frankfurt Critical School—from Kant onwards, the entire philosophy of the Enlightenment is essentially dialectic.<sup>25</sup> This is why scholars like R. Sullivan, W. S. Pluhar, H. Arendt, R. Scruton, M. Kuehn, the “frankfurters” and especially A. Wood signal the impossibility to place Kant within a certain cultural current. Synthetic philosophy was never confined to physical terms but it rather took a step forward in order to rethink the old dilemmas. Kant’s ethical theory depends on the conclusions of the theological tradition which preceded him—one should not forget here the distinction between theoretical or speculative philosophy and the practical philosophy of Thomas Aquinas or medieval theologians in general—to the same extent that it depends on the establishment of a system of thought which would allow reason to function exclusively with a priori concepts that are not necessarily anti-epistemological. Is it necessary then for Kantian philosophy to impose itself by contrasting Hegelian philosophy? In other words, is it compulsory to draw a sharp distinction between reason as an a priori element which supports the existence of an absolute moral entity and experience as auxiliary to a phenomenology which is defined as pre- or post-Kantian metaphysics—like, for instance, Hegelian philosophy which was widely embraced by the

---

<sup>24</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

<sup>25</sup> Max Horkheimer; Theodor Adorno, *Dialectics of Enlightenment* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2002).

cultural and theological elites of the nineteenth century?<sup>26</sup> Having extensively studied Kant's ethical theory, Wood reaches the conclusion that:

Human beings [are] subject to an absolutely binding moral law, but ... the sole possible authority for such a law is that of their own rational will.<sup>27</sup>

It is clear then that in Kant an ethical principle is the result of how people work with concepts. If this is true in connection with ethical theory, then it should also be applicable to other sciences like, for example, geography, physics, chemistry and mathematics, as they are all based on absolute laws which generate absolute concepts as well as interdependency. Thus, it could be argued that general guiding principles or the principles which result from mathematical observations are equally important when it comes to analyse the problem of good and evil because an absolute moral authority cannot be conceived based on purely speculative grounds. In other words, mathematical rigor implies an absolute reason.<sup>28</sup>

Within this context, Goethe makes a curious remark in one of his *Gespräche mit Eckermann*. This is, however, very important to Goethe's spiritual biography and has a direct connection with the relationship between Goethe's thought and Kant's philosophy. This is what Goethe said about Kant:

Kant hat nie von mir Notiz genommen, wiewohl ich aus eigener Natur einen ähnlichen Weg ging als er. [Meine *Metamorphose der Pflanzen* habe ich geschrieben, ehe ich etwas von Kant wußte, und doch ist sie ganz im Sinne seiner Lehre.]

(Kant has never taken notice of me; while my nature led me a way not unlike his [I wrote my *Metamorphosis of Plants* before I knew anything about Kant, and yet it is wholly in his spirit.])<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> For details about Hegel's critique of Kant's metaphysics, see *Hegel Reconsidered. Beyond Metaphysics and the Authoritarian State*, ed. by Hugo Tristram Engelhardt Jr. and T. Pinkard (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994). For a clear definition of pre-Kantian metaphysics, see especially chapter 4, "Hegel's Critique of Kant and Pre-Kantian Metaphysics" by Klaus Brinkmann. Brinkmann defines Hegelian philosophy in general as an uninterrupted flux between the finite and infinite theory of purpose.

<sup>27</sup> Allen Wood, *Kant* [Blackwell Great Minds] (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 2.

<sup>28</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 171-176. See also Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983).

<sup>29</sup> Goethe, Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens in Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 19, ed. by Karl Richter (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1986), 214.

Goethe's statement is curious enough to trigger a question which was posed by Faust: "What does this riddle mean?" Or, in other words, which is the connection between Goethe's *Metamorphose der Pflanzen* and Kant? It is logical to raise such a question given the fact that Kant's theory of nature was always the mathematical theory of nature. As such, it is relevant to know that, as far as Kant was concerned, only the things to be found in mathematics can be found in the theories of nature and this was obviously a matter of real science.<sup>30</sup>

This theory is in sharp contrast with Goethe's perspective on nature given his relentless attack on Newton's physics which is used by Kant. It must be said here however that Goethe did not find an ally in this particular field with the notorious exception—perhaps—of Nietzsche. Kant demanded that mathematics should pervade every aspect of the theory of nature, while Goethe energetically rejected such an idea based on his conviction that physics and mathematics must not be kept connected. For Goethe, physics should stay away from mathematics if the study of nature is to be made correctly.<sup>31</sup>

Although it has been suggested that Schiller introduced Goethe to Kant's philosophy, Goethe's reception of Kant is different from Schiller's definition of aesthetic principles; so it appears that Goethe's thought was not a mere compromise. Thus, Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (*Critique of Pure Reason*) and Schiller's theories of aesthetics and ethics seem to be connected only in the sense that Kant's reflections were taken in Schiller's artistic creed.<sup>32</sup> Kant's ethical principle is rewritten in a romantic stance by Schiller, so that reason is brought forward as a means to solve the conflict between the artist or the "idealist" and the scientist or the "materialist". In other words, it seems that a "middle way" can be envisaged between radical idealists and extremist materialists, in the sense that the former must realize that the body is not necessarily a prison of the spirit, while the latter must understand that neither knowledge nor virtue is a means of achieving happiness, as the body does not represent human perfection.<sup>33</sup>

---

See Goethe, Eckermann, *Conversations with Goethe in the Last Years of his Life*, trans. by S. M. Fuller (Boston and Cambridge: James Munroe and Company, 1852), 217.

<sup>30</sup> See Cassirer, *Rousseau, Kant, and Goethe*, 62.

<sup>31</sup> For details, see Cassirer, *Rousseau, Kant, and Goethe*, 62-63.

<sup>32</sup> See Emil Wim, "The Relation of Schiller's Ethics to Kant", *The Philosophical Review* 15.3 (1906); Zvi Tauber, "Aesthetic Education for Morality: Schiller and Kant", *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 40.3 (2006).

<sup>33</sup> Emil Wim, "The Relation of Schiller's Ethics to Kant", 277.

It is worth mentioning at this point that Goethe found his way to Kant long before he befriended Schiller. There is even a proof in this respect, namely Koerner's letter written to Schiller in 1790 which contains a reference to one of Goethe's visits to Dresden. Curiously enough, the essentials of Goethe's discussion with Koerner are also to be found in Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. For Goethe, this was the key to his understanding of Kant because Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* does not insist on physics as applied to the mathematical theory of nature, but permanently correlates two fundamental aspects as well as their results, that is to say art and nature as gratuitous phenomena. The starting point of Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* is his articulated wonder about the fact that science discovers laws which are not denied by experience, an idea which is dwelt upon in his *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (*Critique of Judgment*).<sup>34</sup> Goethe was aware of Kant's third *Kritik* because he notices that it contains references to the inner life of art as well as of nature, in the sense that art and nature work in a mutual relationship from interior to exterior. Then, it is shown that the results of these two realms which are essentially infinite exist for themselves and everything surrounding them exists for them but not in such a way that they affect either of the two.<sup>35</sup>

This is the point where the real connection between Kant and Goethe is revealed, because their ideology appears as a clear declaration against the teleological idealism of the eighteenth century promoted especially by the rationalistic writings of Christian Wolff (1679-1754), who was later followed by Hegel.<sup>36</sup> The detachment from the then contemporary philosophy as well as from Aristotle's philosophy<sup>37</sup> represents the very start of Kant's

---

<sup>34</sup> See Jeanne Hersch, *L'étonnement philosophique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993), (17. Emmanuel Kant).

<sup>35</sup> Cassirer, *Rousseau, Kant, and Goethe*, 64.

<sup>36</sup> "The kind of rationalism which was influenced by Wolff was fit to the necessities of German mentality, which did not lean towards the breach between science and faith but towards their systematic unification. Christian Wolff possessed all the necessary qualities to acquire for his thought a key-position in the realm of German spirituality. There were no objective objections to his doctrine..." Krauss, *Opera și cuvântul*, 138.

<sup>37</sup> If, in his *Physics*, Aristotle worked exclusively with a priori concepts, in his *History of Animals*, he insists on the functions of the natural processes of the body so he reaches the conclusion that these processes point to the relationships between organs—this is to say to the role and contribution of each organ to the welfare of the entire organism—rather than to the morphology or the external and internal structure of the body. Thus, if the physical processes of nature are understood deductively, the organic processes of nature presuppose a teleological perspective. In this respect, both Kant and Goethe believe that biological information must be processed by means of natural sciences; hence their conviction that natural phenomena are self-sustaining. Their position is clearly different from Aristotle's. Thus, if in his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle excluded the accident from the science of theology, he nev-

critical philosophy, so that Leibniz—avidly read by Kant during his pre-critical years by means of Wolff's works—became obsolete both methodologically and teleologically.

It should be highlighted here that neither Kant nor Goethe intended to remove the concept of purpose from their approach of the biological phenomenon, because they both shared the conviction that a purely mechanical description of life is virtually impossible. What Kant refused to accept though was the concept of purpose as a heuristic principle for the investigation of nature. Wolff, however, had revolutionized the German academy of the eighteenth century so he was considered a liaison both to the new wave of the Enlightenment and the university tradition before him. The academic result of Wolff's applied philosophy and mathematics was the postulate that the empirical method used for the research of nature and physics can be used with the same degree of success for the study of metaphysics.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, Kant firmly believed in the inevitability of the concept of purpose but—although he used to call it a sentence of pure reason—he categorically rejected the preliminary forms of naïve and non-critical teleological explanations. It is clear that Kant did not have a high esteem for Wolff, whom he saw as an outdated academic. Thus, to Kant, Wolff was a mere representative of a cultural trend which was almost extinguished in Germany at that time. The spirit of thoroughness embodied by Wolff was about to reach its end at least as far as Kant was concerned. Kant had an equally scornful attitude to Wolff's work, which he described as a book for the German philistine of the eighteenth century who resorts to Wolff for a correct explanation whenever he has any doubts about the things of nature.<sup>39</sup> Thus, the image of Wolff in Kant is that of a university professor who is not the teacher of the eighteenth century Germany but an ordinary scholar who

---

ertheless found explanations for accidental phenomena—which always have teleological implications—in matters pertaining to biology. See Robert Audi (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 42.

<sup>38</sup> For details about Wolff and rationalist philosophy, see Sonia Carboncini; Luigi Cataldi, *Nuovi Studi Sul Pensiero Di Christian Wolff* (Zürich: Georg Olms Verlag, 1992), 6ff.

<sup>39</sup> It seems that Kant was thinking of Wolff's 1719 work *Vernünfftige Gedanken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt* (*Reasonable Thoughts on God, the World, the Soul of Man, and Things in General*) and the fact that the tradition of joining "things in general" with extraordinary things began with Leibnitz and Spinoza and was later accepted by Rousseau and Diderot. See Cassirer, *Rousseau, Kant, and Goethe*, 65. For more details about the general philosophical debates of the eighteenth century, see Lewis White Beck, *Eighteenth-Century Philosophy* (New York: Free Press, 1966).

works only in the daytime lest he should spend too much money on his desk lamp.<sup>40</sup>

Goethe continues Kant's ironical attitude to the German philistine teleologists of the eighteenth century, as seen in his *Der Teleolog (The Teleologist)*: „Welche Verehrung verdient der/ Weltenschöpfer, der gnädig/ Als er den Korkbaum schuf/ gleich auch die Stöpsel erfand!” (“What reverence is due to the world's Creator, who when/ creating the cork tree graciously also invented the cork”).<sup>41</sup> Goethe showed unending hostility toward the philistine perspective on utility so he highly praised Kant for his *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, which he thought had joined art to nature and gave them the right of acting according to the great principles without purpose.<sup>42</sup> It is clear therefore that the discussion regarding the issues of art and nature is not purely methodological. Although Goethe, the poet generally agrees with Kant, the philosopher—who postulated that every value judgment on the concept of art and nature must be divorced from the naïve teleology of popular philosophy and thus from the influence of any mystificatory metaphysics—he nevertheless perceives nature and art differently from Kant. In this particular respect, Goethe is the “naïve” artist when it comes to the approach of sciences. It would have been actually impossible for Goethe to share Kant's view of nature as a *medium* for the action of an arbitrary and omnipotent entity. To be sure, for Kant art is no longer the specific difference between *natura naturata* and *natura naturans*, while for Goethe the principle of the unity between nature and art is fundamental.

### 3. The Relationship between Nature and Art in Kant and Goethe

As a critic of pure reason, Kant investigated the logical form as well as the principles of the empirical knowledge of nature. As an artist and a scientist, Goethe used to talk about the “ultimate phenomenon” which he conceived as a limit both to our own thinking and to our own perspective on the relationship between nature and art. Goethe demanded that the scientist should not go beyond this limit in order to allow the ultimate phenomenon to remain in its eternal peace and splendour,<sup>43</sup> as also acknowledged by Cassirer: “This was always Goethe's attitude. He had no desire to lay bare the secret of life; he rejoiced in life's infinitely rich surface. It was enough for him to

---

<sup>40</sup> For a lengthier discussion on how Kant perceived Wolff, see Cassirer, *Rousseau, Kant, and Goethe*, 66-67.

<sup>41</sup> Goethe, *The Poems of Goethe*, trans. by Edgar Alfred Bowring (New York: John B. Alden Publishers, 1883), 273. See also Goethe's *Distichs*.

<sup>42</sup> Cassirer, *Rousseau, Kant, and Goethe*, 68.

<sup>43</sup> Cassirer, *Rousseau, Kant, and Goethe*, 80.

describe life in symbols.”<sup>44</sup> These thoughts are relevant because they not only explain Goethe’s philosophical ideas—we have already seen the resemblances between him and Kant regarding the perspective of teleologists—but they also show how Goethe distanced himself from Kant’s empirical-critical method. In his poetry, Goethe sought to unite the human nature of the genius with his divine nature<sup>45</sup> because he was convinced that the power of reason and the power of poetry are inborn. Thus, he applied this conviction even to scientific knowledge: he highlighted the valences of both artistic imagination and analytical thinking. This is confirmed by one of his letters sent to Eckermann in September 1823 and reconfirmed in another letter from 1830, where he writes that a genuine scientist cannot eventually think without this higher power, that is to say the power of imagination.<sup>46</sup> In this respect, Goethe is different from Kant and his notion of genius, which limited the field of art through the denial of the scientific genius. As far as Kant was concerned, the entire problem was an issue of mathematical deduction, not of intuition, because the genius is actually the talent to prescribe rules to art. This is then one of the fields in which nature and art as well as truth and beauty remain separate entities in Kant, which are so distinct that they cannot be reconciled in any way.

As for Goethe, he defended the idea that there is a major distinction between physics or mathematics and intuition, due to his conviction that everything beautiful is also true as, for instance, in Shaftesbury who is seen nowadays “as the doyen of modern aesthetics...; his most valuable legacy to us may not so much be his viewing aesthetic response as a *sui generis* disinterested delight as his insistence on its turning, wholly [on experience of] what is exterior and foreign to ourselves’ ... against the case of Narcissus.”<sup>47</sup> This particular aspect of Shaftesbury’s aesthetic theory deserves mentioning, because it clearly explains Goethe’s aesthetic consciousness which places together the beauty of creation and its external truth, which it assumes. With Goethe, “beauty is the manifestation of secret natural laws

---

<sup>44</sup> Ernst Cassirer, *Rousseau, Kant, and Goethe*, 77-78.

<sup>45</sup> Observe, for instance, what he has to say in his *Wissenschaftliches Genie (The Scientific Genius)*: “Wird der Poet nur geboren? Der/ Philosoph wird’s nicht minder;/ Alle Wahrheit zuletzt wird nur/gebildet, geschaut.“ (“Is not but the poet born? The same applies to the thinker./ All truth, in the end, is merely molded, beheld.”) See Goethe, *The Poems of Goethe*, trans. by Edgar Alfred Bowring (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), 449.

<sup>46</sup> See Goethe, *Conversations with Eckerman* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2005), 19; also Goethe, Eckermann, *Conversations with Goethe in the Last Years of His Life* (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, and Company, 1839), 351.

<sup>47</sup> Anthony Savile, “Aesthetic Experience in Shaftesbury”, *Aristotelian Society Supplementary* 76.1 (2002), 55-74.

which without this appearance would have remained eternally hidden from us".<sup>48</sup> Therefore, the transition from nature to art in Goethe is sudden but clear, as confirmed by Rudolf Steiner—one of Goethe's later interpreters—who was convinced that Goethe discovered a flicker of the spirit in nature whenever he studied it.<sup>49</sup>

Lest we should overlook the difference between Kant and Goethe concerning nature and art, Werner Krauss attempted to identify the reason why the two do not get along in this respect. Here is what Krauss has to say about it:

In Kantian philosophy, the irreconcilable contradiction between nature and law mirrors the irremediable antinomies between the power of the absolutist feudal state and the necessary compulsoriness of the bourgeois society approached rationally.<sup>50</sup>

To be fully credible though, this statement should be placed within the realm of social economy, because Krauss—who was a Marxist scholar—understood Kant's philosophy as purely speculative, a sort of *tabula* marked by the bourgeois layers of the French Revolution. It is true that not even Kant remained impassive when it came to acknowledge the social changes of his time, but it would be wrong to suggest that Kant's philosophy suddenly became prolific with the outburst of the French Revolution. A more plausible explanation is at hand concerning the ideological differences between nature and art in Kantian philosophy. In Ernst Cassirer's words:

This construing of the concept of nature follows for Kant from his conception and definition of the understanding ... We must distinguish empirical laws of nature, which always presuppose particular perceptions, from the pure or universal rules of nature, which without being based on particular perceptions merely contain the conditions of their necessary union in experience ....<sup>51</sup>

In other words, Kant promoted the standard of universality which is the necessity to confine larger and encompassing notions in smaller and general sentences of reason, not in intuitive and imaginary speculations. Thinking and judging is not enough for Goethe, the poet; seeing is thus imperative to

---

<sup>48</sup> Goethe, *Maxims and Reflections* (London: Penguin Group, 1998), no. 183, 21.

<sup>49</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *Povestea vieții mele* (Iași: Princeps, 1994), 231.

<sup>50</sup> Krauss, *Opera și cuvântul*, 154.

<sup>51</sup> Ernst Cassirer, *Rousseau, Kant, and Goethe*, 92.

him. In Kant, nature represented the existence of things to the extent that it was determined in accordance with universal laws. This seems to be in fact the true difference between Kant and Goethe. As an artist but also a scientist, Goethe could not remain within the boundaries of this particular nature, which is *natura naturata*. Thus, as revealed in his *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, Goethe advocated both personality and individuality with reference to the consolidation of character in close connection to the surrounding world. His argument begins with his sympathetic approach to those who investigate the sky, whom he understands when they want to make the various parts of our infinite universe available to them by drawing them nearer. However, for Goethe, the fact that the universe is drawn nearer to the one who studies it is not necessarily the best way to proceed. So, the means which help and even increase our feelings or senses do not generally exert a good moral influence on people. Goethe seems to be convinced that the one who watches various things through lenses tends to think of himself in higher terms, that is to say he is prone to consider himself wiser than he really is, because his external senses are no longer in harmony with his inner faculty to judge. At this point, Goethe discloses his elitist belief that only a superior culture is able to harmonise the interior truth with the falsehood of the external realm. This superior culture, however, can only be attained by a few special people. As far as the harmonisation process of the interior truth with the falsehood of the external realm is concerned, Goethe's superior culture can achieve it only to a certain degree, not to its fullest completion. Goethe applies this theory to himself, so he writes that when he watches something through lenses he becomes another man and he does not like this particular man.

Ich begreife recht gut, daß est euch Himmelskundigen die größte Freude gewähren muß, das ungeheure Weltall nach und nach so heranzuziehen, wie ich hier den Planeten sah und sehe. Aber erlauben Sie mir es auszusprechen: ich habe im Leben überhaupt und im Durchschnitt gefunden, daß diese Mittel, wodurch wir unsern Sinnen zu Hülfe kommen, keine sittlich günstige Wirkung auf den Menschen ausüben. Wer durch Brillen sieht, hält sich für klüger, als er ist, denn sein äußerer Sinn wird dadurch mit seiner innern Urteilsfähigkeit außer Gleichgewicht gesetzt es gehört eine höhere Kultur dazu, deren nur vorzügliche Menschen fähig sind, ihr Inneres, Wahres mit diesem von außen herangerückten Falschen einigermaßen auszugleichen. So oft ich durch eine Brille sehe, bin ich ein anderer Mensch und gefalle mir selbst nicht; ich sehe mehr, als ich sehen sollte, die schärfer gesehene Welt harmoniert nicht mit meinem Innern,

und ich lege die Gläser geschwind wieder weg, wenn meine Neugierde, wie dieses oder jenes in der Ferne beschaffen sein möchte, befriedigt ist.

(I understand very well that for you, stargazers, it must be the greatest joy gradually to draw the immense universe as close as I have just seen... this planet. But allow me to say: I have discovered in life, altogether and on average, that these aids with which we enhance our senses have no favorable moral effect. Someone who sees through spectacles considers himself cleverer than he is, because his external senses have been thrown out of balance with his inner judgment; it requires a higher degree of cultivation, of which only superior people are capable, to balance to some degree their inner sense, the truth, with this false image drawn closer from outside... Whenever I look through spectacles, I am another person and I do not like myself; I see more than I ought to see, and the sharper images of the world do not harmonize with the internal ones. I quickly put aside the glasses as soon as I have satisfied my curiosity about how this or that distant object is constituted.)<sup>52</sup>

The contact with nature or education-based experience later to become art—technology and art are mutually complementary—constitutes the essential message of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*. It has already been shown that the difference between Kant and Goethe in connection with their definition of nature depends to a large extent on an intervention from outside which is applied to the secrets of nature, even if—according to Goethe's Wilhelm Meister—it should be the other way around. The fear not to push the limits of mathematics and sciences too much is already a fact in Goethe. If his own soul does not offer a wonderful image when investigated under the microscope, then neither the sky nor the universe has anything greater to gain when studied with lenses. The result of one's various trips across the world is not necessarily the completion of the universal spirit because the genius can see himself even in a specific piece of art and its meaning is utility, namely the capacity to help and assist others. A true genius will never produce inanimate art because he benefits from the power of imagination which is the capacity to see beyond ordinary appearances. For Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, this desire has the power to influence not only the associations of traders but also the physical reality of the state, because

---

<sup>52</sup> Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* in *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Karl Richter (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1986), Erstes Buch: Zehntes Kapitel, 120. See Goethe, *Collected Works (Conversations of German Refugees and Wilhelm Meister's Journeyman Years: Or the Renunciants)*, 178-179.

the state must not be governed according to harsh laws which become more and more tolerant as time elapses, and because nature always imposes its own rights. Goethe's ideal as far as the state is concerned reflects itself on the character of its citizens who are bound to obey tolerant laws, so that they gradually become more severe.<sup>53</sup> The genius then penetrates the *natura naturans*, as Goethe himself explains in his *Natur und Kunst (Nature and Art)*:

Natur und Kunst, sie scheinen sich zu fliehen,  
Und haben sich, eh'man es denkt, gefunden;  
Der Widerwille ist auch mir verschwunden,  
Und beide scheinen gleich mich anzuziehen.

.....

Wer großes will, muß sich zusammenraffen;  
In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister,  
Und das Gesetz nur kann uns Freiheit geben.

(Nature and Art, they go separate ways  
It seems; yet all at once they find each other.  
Even I no longer am a foe to either;  
Both equally attract me nowadays.

.....

For pure perfection's heights will strive in vain.  
To achieve great things, we must be self-confined:  
Mastery is revealed in limitation.)<sup>54</sup>

It is clear then that Goethe does not think like Kant in terms of simple relationships. Goethe can only think in terms of intuitive forms. The intuitive character of the perception of the relationship between nature and art in Goethe does not originate in Kantian philosophy. Goethe is rather a promoter of classical antiquity because it is the Old Greece and the Ancient Rome which polish Goethe's perspective on human nature. This perspective took shape against the background of an acute sensitiveness of perception which concerns the artistic message of antique literary and architectural

---

<sup>53</sup> Goethe, *Collected Works (Conversations of German Refugees and Wilhelm Meister's Journeyman Years: Or the Renunciants)*, 218, 332.

<sup>54</sup> Goethe, *Werke I* (Münich: C. H. Beck, 1988), 245. See Goethe, *The Wednesday Poem. Nature and Art*, in Goethe, *Selected Poems [The Collected Works]*, vol. I, ed. by Christopher Middleton (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 165.

masterpieces. Goethe is greatly influenced by the new wave of an antiquely-inspired humanism, defined by the contemporary critique as neo-humanism.

The motive of the harmony between nature and art is confirmed by Goethe's poem entitled *Der Zauberlehrling (The Pupil in Magic)*,<sup>55</sup> which explains Goethe's ideological context as applied to a realistic understanding of the notion of genius. At the same time, this poem is a perfect demonstration of the artist's power to exercise the never ending forces of nature by means of the magic word or the art of the word. The verses also reveal the huge difference between the artist himself and his apprentice who is not accustomed to "seeing" but only to presupposing the active force of nature:

Hat der alte Hexenmeister  
Sich doch einmal wegbegeben!  
Und nun sollen seine Geister  
auch nach meinem Willen leben!

.....

Und nun komm, du alter Besen!  
Nimm die schlechten Lumpenhüllen  
Bist schon lange Knecht gewesen:  
Nun erfülle meinem Willen!  
Auf zwei Beinen stehe,  
Oben sei der Kopf,  
Eile nun, und gehe  
Mit dem Wassertopf!

.....

Und sie laufen! Nass und nässer  
Wird's im Saal und auf den Stufen,  
Welch ensetzliches Gewässer!  
Herr und Meister, hör'mich rufen!  
Ach, da kommt der Meister!  
Herr, die Not ist groß!  
Die ich rief, die Geister,  
Werd' ich nun nicht los.

(I am now,—what joy to hear it!  
Of the old magician rid;  
And henceforth shall ev'ry spirit  
Do what'er by me is bid ...

---

<sup>55</sup> Goethe, *Poems of Goethe*, trans. by Edgar Alfred Bowring (London: J. W. Parker, 1853), 132-133.

.....  
And now come, thou well-worn broom,  
And thy wretched form bestir;  
Thou hast ever served as groom,  
So fulfil my pleasure, sir!  
On two legs now stand,  
With a head on top;  
Waterpail in hand,  
Haste, and do not stop!

.....  
And they run! And wetter still ...  
Grow the steps and grows the hail.  
Lord and master hear me call!  
Ever seems the flood to fill,  
Ah, he's coming! see,  
Great is my dismay!  
Spirits raised by me  
Vainly would I lay!)

The appeasement of the words which were produced without art is a reminder of the old elysian and shamanist rituals as well as of the celebration of Masonic ordination, which was not unknown to Goethe, as he had become a member of the Masonic order of the Enlightened Brotherhood in 1783. Goethe's perspective though does not depend on the ritualistic inheritance of these ordinations, but on the epistemological argument:

“In die Ecke  
Besen! Besen!  
Seid's gewesen;  
Denn als Geister  
Ruft euch nur zu seinem Zwecke  
Erst hervor der alte Meister!“

(To the side  
Of the room  
Hasten, broom,  
As of old!

Spirits I have ne'er untied  
Save to act as they are told.)<sup>56</sup>

In this world, the element which institutes order is the human factor as the embodiment of the artist, who is essentially natural and free, as well as a contributor to the natural order through the “philosophical wonder” of classical antiquity.

#### 4. Goethe and Neo-humanism. A Classic against his Age

Goethe's literary longevity is a certified fact, if one takes into account that his aesthetic ideas as well as his literary creation include various stages and directions. Having made his debut in accordance with the later rococo, Goethe rose to fame during *Sturm und Drang*, but it was his neo-humanistic period which established his works throughout Europe. In order to support this assessment, the Romanian literary historian Romul Munteanu wrote the following:

At first glance, it is true that the adherence of Goethe and Schiller to neo-humanism represents a caesura between *Sturm und Drang* and romanticism, which is not to be found in other Western currents. Nevertheless, the cult of antique and renaissance art, and the pagan naturalism professed by Goethe, as well as Schiller's aesthetic idealism do not constitute a definitive and integral abdication from all the principles which were defended by the sturmist period.<sup>57</sup>

Munteanu's assessment can be seen as incomplete if one takes into account the transitory character of Goethe and Schiller's adherence to *Sturm und Drang*, and also the structure of the works they published during this particular period of their artistic career. Nevertheless, Munteanu can be right but not in connection with the reception of their works by the educated public of the time; on the contrary, the unrest produced by what Goethe wrote in this period will eventually make his name famous among his contemporaries. Thus, the evanescence of Goethe's involvement in *Sturm und Drang* is

---

<sup>56</sup> Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke*, 4.1 (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1986), 874-875, 877. See Goethe, *The Poems of Goethe*, trans. by Edgar Alfred Bowring (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), 230-235.

<sup>57</sup> Romul Munteanu, *Cultura europeană în epoca luminilor* (București: Univers, 1974), 455. For more details about Goethe's life and works, as well as the various literary trends which defined his career, see Eric A. Blackall, *Goethe and the Novel* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976).

reflected in his work especially from the standpoint of its literary value; Goethe himself repeatedly admitted that his *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* had never been received enthusiastically by the public,<sup>58</sup> which is clearly seen in his *Gespräche mit Eckermann* and other critical opinions.<sup>59</sup> This does not imply that Goethe was willing to deny the novel of his youth, especially because it is exactly *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* that completed his perspective on poetic art.

Munteanu's opinion is thus realistic enough if one thinks that Goethe—as a fundamental representative of the “Weimar classicism”—created in those days an entire atmosphere by means of *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*. Although between Goethe, the Sturmist and Goethe, the neo-humanist one could trace some essential differences which concern the theme and the style of his work but also his adherence to some aesthetic principles, his aesthetic theory as well as his entire artistic creation are profoundly marked by a number of permanent convictions. As a mature writer, Goethe manifested a sustained preoccupation for the destiny of humanity, which he expressed through a balanced art that refuses subjective extremes and his early non-conformity, so that the themes he borrowed from classical antiquity frequently made up the perfect background for the allegory of the modern world. This is why Romul Munteanu wrote that

Some romantic German writers reach romanticism through the itinerary offered by neo-humanism, which makes us understand a whole lot easier what hellenized romanticism really meant as it was soaked in antique

---

<sup>58</sup> See Hans Reiss, *Goethe's Novels* (Oxford: Miami University Press, 1969). Reiss makes references to *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* which he connects to the transition from the bourgeois period to the years of the Revolution. Thus, for Reiss, *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* is a romantic history that reflects “the psychology of the sensational”, which was so familiar to Herder's readers. Developed against the background of a study that investigated the birth of the world's nations and of the popular hero, this “sensational” is a “hereditary” reality in Herder, as reflected in his *On World History. An Anthology*, ed. by Hans Adler and Ernest Menze (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), 76-84. By contrast, the later characterization of the Enlightenment made by Kant promoted the mature man, who is capable to think without anyone's assistance. See John H. Zamitto, *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 3, 8. The transition from sensational to maturity is what makes the difference between Goethe the Sturmist (*Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*) and Goethe the Enlightenment classicist (*Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*).

<sup>59</sup> Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, ed. by Martin Swales (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); and Kurt Eissler, *Goethe. A Psychoanalytic Study, 1775-1786* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1963).

mythology and philosophy according to what we see in Hölderlin and Novalis.<sup>60</sup>

In line with the spirit of Greek antiquity, the centre of Goethe's philosophical and aesthetic theories is man, as conditioned in his own development by immutable laws which are themselves determined by an initial impulse (*daimon*) and by the natural and social context. Thus, even the way of interpreting the universe is different as far as the starting point is concerned, that is the spiritual formation. This is why, Jean Livescu says,<sup>61</sup> Goethe defined his philosophical creed according to the following sketch:

<b>We are</b>		
pantheists	politheists	monotheists
by searching nature	as poets	ethically

Through its rationality, Goethe's pantheism distinguishes itself from the subjective intuitivism of the romantic philosophy of his days as a particular note of his contact with Kantian philosophy. In Goethe, reality is a kaleidoscopic reflection of an eternal divine substance which enlightens and animates the cosmos into a polar pulsation, namely from freedom to necessity. This is probably the origin of its apollinien constitution, as seen in Goethe's *Vermächtnis (Testament)* from 1829—a poem which crowns his philosophical lyrics:

Kein Wesen kann zu Nichts zerfallen!  
 Das Ew'ge regt sich fort in allen,  
 Am Sein erhalte dich beglückt!  
 Das Sein ist ewig: denn Gesetze  
 Bewahren die lebend'gen Schätze,  
 Aus welchen sich das All geschmückt.

.....

Sofort nun wende dich nach innen,  
 Das Zentrum findest du da drinnen,  
 Woran kein Edler zweifeln mag.  
 Wirst keine Regel da vermissen,

<sup>60</sup> Romul Munteanu, *Cultura europeană în epoca luminilor* (București: Univers, 1974), 455.

<sup>61</sup> Jean Livescu in the Preface to Goethe, *Opere*, vol. 1 (București: Univers, 1984).

Denn das selbständige Gewissen  
Ist Sonne deinem Sittentag.

(No thing on earth to nought can fall,  
The Eternal onward moves in all;  
Rejoyce, by being be sustained.  
Being is deathless: living wealth,  
With which the All adorns itself,  
By laws abides and is maintained.

.....  
Now turn yourself about, within:  
Your centre you will find therein,  
No noble soul can this gainsay.  
No principle within you'll miss,  
For independent conscience is  
Te sun that rules your moral day.)<sup>62</sup>

The finality of Goethe's discourses and meditations was always ethical, in the sense that it searched for the role and place of man as a social being who performed a daily verification of his forces through activities which targeted the common good. This is clearly a continuation of Aristotelian philosophy and, within a larger framework, of Greek rationalism which promotes the idea of punishment—as, for instance, in *Wilhelm Meister*—for any deviation from the established rules. Within the same line of thought, Goethe appears as a forerunner of at least some of the promoters of neo-humanism not only in Europe but also in America. As a new philosophical and literary current of the nineteenth century, neo-humanism was a reaction against the social-cultural decline and disorientation of the modern man. Thus, some of the American philosophers of those days—such as Irving Babitt and Paul Elmer Moore—found in Goethe an exponent of the “conservative way” to approach modern society. By means of his ethical theory, Goethe warned against the necessity to restore the sense of absolute truth, which is to save a whole century from intellectual confusion and moral relativism.<sup>63</sup> The source of the absolute truth preached by this sort of new humanism is primarily based on anti-romantic and anti-naturalistic grounds. Truth and Beauty no longer have to be sought in man as the embodiment of perfection.

---

<sup>62</sup> Goethe, *Selected Poems [The Collected Works]*, vol. I, ed. by Christopher Middleton (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 267.

<sup>63</sup> David Hoeveler, Jr., “The New Humanism, Christianity and the Problem of Modern Man”, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 42.4 (1974), 658.

The representatives of the new trend were great admirers of the ancient Greeks because they were fully aware of the supernatural entity which gives immutable laws, so—following in the footsteps of their Greek predecessors—they redefined the destiny of humanity by preaching the “return to origins”. This would be the proper answer to the efforts of the modern man who wants to find out the meaning of life through the powers of the self as manifested in technology.

Nevertheless, Goethe has not always been perceived as a neo-humanist. This is to say that his neo-humanist attitude has not always been interpreted as an ethical and aesthetic resumption of the ancient Greek’s philosophy of life, as a return to a superior and final authority which can regulate man’s place within universe or as a return to the morality of relationships and implicitly to the morality of the work of art. The trend which places Goethe in the vicinity of romanticism rather than of neo-humanism<sup>64</sup> insists that his “reluctant attitude” concerning the principles of Newtonian physics should be a proof of his adherence to the romantic perspective on the world. As shown before, Goethe did not refrain from extending the applicability of Newtonian laws over the *natura naturans* principle, as if this had limited the artists’s or the genius’ freedom of expression. On the contrary, Goethe’s intuition helps the artist see the orderly character of natural things just like ancient nations whose perspective on the world naturally put together the extrinsic life of nature and the intrinsic life of man, thus promoting their fundamental harmony. In Goethe, the contact with the life of nature does not generate a simple artistic-romantic perception or emotion but a powerful realization of man’s place within universe, as well as of the principles—doubled by moral implications—which take shape as man gets closer to nature.

Should there be any purpose which governs natural phenomena or human actions, then this purpose will never comply with a naïve teleological pattern which is purely demonstrative and highly improbable. In Goethe, the finality of human actions as well as of universal laws requires order and logical balance with reference to the movement of the universe. As a representative of the Enlightenment, Goethe switched the centre of any philosophical reflection from vague ideas about causality to the human being as transparency of natural life. This is obvious in connection with the relationship between the man and the lion in Goethe’s *Novelle* and the relationship between the sorcerer and the forces of nature in his *Pupil in Magic*.

---

<sup>64</sup> See, for instance, Rosaria Egidi (ed.), *In Search of a New Humanism* [Synthese Library] (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), 51.

## **5. Goethe between Wetzlar and Weimar. Escape and Return to Cultural Places**

For a better understanding of the historical reality which made up the framework of Goethe's transition from the works of his youth to the works of maturity—but also his move from Sturmism to neo-humanism—and in order not to lose sight of the factual background of his development as a writer, it is important to sketch an overview of the historical, social-political and artistic relevance of the two main towns which witnessed Goethe's artistic transformation, namely Wetzlar and Weimar. As far as Goethe is concerned, the two towns are essential at least for two main reasons. First, they complete Goethe's political perspective on the "two Germanies" by uniting them through the relatively calm atmosphere of the late eighteenth century, and secondly by dividing them through the social-political instability which Goethe felt rather acutely from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the end of his life.

How do we know that Goethe felt threatened by the political instability and that he had foreseen Germany's scission long before it actually happened? In addition to the fact that this idea is present in Mann's *Lotte in Weimar* as a novel dedicated to Goethe, Goethe himself had friends to whom he had confessed—just like Nietzsche and Mann—his fears concerning his fellow human beings. All these letters sent by Goethe to Eckermann were gathered into an impressive written testimony, which was so important that Nietzsche himself said that Goethe's *Gespräche mit Eckermann* had been the best German book ever.<sup>65</sup> The book mainly contains aesthetic and political ideas about various countries such as France, England and Germany which are constantly compared with one another. Goethe's political apprehension is somehow astonishing: the French appear to be almost always contrasted to the Germans. As for the Germans, they would even die in order to get rid of the French, instead of comprehending that they are mere philistines enslaved by philosophy, who did nothing but weaken this century.<sup>66</sup> Within this context, it is relevant to notice that from the very start of his conversations with Goethe (1822-1824), Eckermann perceived the importance of Goethe the writer as he made his appearance at the crossroad of some great historical events, such as the Seven Year War and the French Revolution. Eckermann also highlights Goethe's remark that the then conflicts tend to grow pale if compared to what is about to happen. The political

---

<sup>65</sup> See, for details, J. K. Moorhead (ed.), *Conversations of Goethe with Johann Peter Eckermann*, trans. by J. Oxenford (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998).

<sup>66</sup> J. K. Moorhead (ed.), *Conversations of Goethe with Johann Peter Eckermann*, 433.

and aesthetic ideas from the *Gespräche mit Eckermann* did not first appear in this particular exchange of letters but in the novel which reportedly mirrored the beginnings of an entire nation through the apprenticeship experience and the travels of its hero. As a preliminary observation, it should be said that starting with Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* one can subtly understand how his perspective on art gets connected to his perspective on specific cultures, including his state policy:

Ich kann es mir vorstellen, fuhr er fort, wie vonehme und erhabene Personen einen Dichter schätzen müssen, der die Zustände ihrer höheren Verhältnisse so vortrefflich und richtig schildert. Corneille hat ... große Menschen dargestellt, und Racine vornehme Personen ... Wenn ich seinen *Britannicus*, seine *Berenice* studiere, so kommt es mir wirklich vor, ich sei am Hofe, sei in das Große und Kleine dieser Wohnungen der irdischen Götter geweiht, und ich sehe durch die Augen eines feinfühlenden Franzosen Könige, die eine ganze Nation anbetet, Hofleute, die von viel Tausenden beneidet werden, in ihrer natürlichen Gestalt mit ihren Fehlern und Schmerzen. Die Anekdote, daß Racine sich zu Tode gegrämt habe, weil Ludwig der Vierzehnte ihn nicht mehr angesehen, ihn seine Unzufriedenheit fühlen lassen, ist mir ein Schlüssel zu allen seinen Werken, und es ist unmöglich, daß ein Dichter von so großen Talenten ... nicht auch Stücke schreiben solle, die des Beifalls eines Königes und eines Fürsten wert seien.

(I can easlily conceive ... how people of high breeding and exalted rank must value a poet, who has painted so excellently and so truly the circumstances of their lofty station. Corneille, if I may say so, has delineated great men; Racine men of eminent rank ... When I study his *Britannicus*, his *Berenice*, it seems as if I were transported in person to the court, were initiated into the great and the little, in the habitation of these earthly gods; through the fine and delicate organs of my author, I see kings whom a nation adores, courtiers whom thousands envy, in thier natural forms ... The anecdote of Racine's daying of a broken heart, because Louis Fourteenth would no longer attend to him, and had shown him his dissatisfaction, is to me the key of all his works. It was impossible that a poet of his talents ... should not write such works as a king and a prince might applaud.)<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup> Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* in *Goethes Werke*. Hamburger Ausgabe in 14 Bänden, ed. by Erich Trunz (München: C. H. Beck, 1994), Bd. 7, 185. See Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, Book III, Chapter VIII [The Harvard Classics Shelf of Fiction]

The perspective of the still immature hero on the relationship between art as perceived by the French and the Germans, and the logic which informs the very class which was supposed to mould it is important for at least one reason. Thus—although impressed by the works of the French classics—Goethe feels, through Wilhelm Meister, the manipulative effect which the high political class exerts on art. This is in fact a proof that from the very beginning of his career, Goethe was aware of the role each human being should play in society. Moreover, even if in his letters to Eckermann, which mark the last nine years of his life, Goethe manifested excessive preoccupations for the “well-written book” (to the point of giving minute details which concern book indexing and expressing his wish to be surrounded by men of letters, literary critics, stylists and poets), it does not mean that he put aside the pressing issues of political life. Commenting on Goethe’s *Gespräche mit Eckermann*, Hans-Hermann Hoppe stresses his view of “Germany’s political particularism and culture” as seen in a letter written by Goethe on October 23, 1828. Thus, Goethe expressed his concern that political centralization could destroy civilization because all those who think that a great capital city could express Germany’s unity are very much mistaken. Goethe also doubts that such a city would be as profitable for the masses as it would be profitable for the welfare of a limited number of remarkable persons.<sup>68</sup> In other words, the current means to establish a “great state” is utterly wrong because it involves manipulation and terror, without any reference to unity and equal rights.<sup>69</sup> The best way to illustrate that de-

---

(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917). As far as Goethean posterity is concerned, it should be said here that even from the first volume, Wilhelm Meister foresees Nietzsche’s aesthetic ideal, even if he praises the French for being led by cultivated nobility. In *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* this ideal is only prefigured; in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* though Goethe makes a decisive transition from his perspective on art as capitalization of a certain social potential (in this case, of nobility, the only educated class) to his view of art as capitalization of the surrounding nature (the journey offers the possibility of the return to the mystery of creation and poetry flows naturally from the cultivated spirit).

<sup>68</sup> For details, see Hans-Hermann Hoppe, “The Politics of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe”, *The Wall Street Journal Europe* (Dec. 30, 1999). By “political particularism”, Hoppe means the democratic-nationalist feelings nurtured by the Germans who wanted a unified national state and had witnessed the failure of the French Revolution as well as of Napoleon’s reign.

<sup>69</sup> Goethe’s observation is resumed by Nicholas Boyle, who highlights the fanatical enthusiasm of some Germans at the end of the eighteenth century. These individuals had accepted the ideal of the French Revolution just because it was essentially anti-religious and nurtured their anarchist and anti-monarchist feelings. At the same time and during the same period, Goethe experienced a certain personal stability as he turned forty in 1789. Thus, the Revolution only animated him as an ideal, as a symbol of “unity, liberty and fraternity”, not

spite the ideal Goethe was very eager to apply is perhaps a brief presentation of the history and political situation of these two German cities which were directly linked to Goethe and his work. Some of Goethe's political ideas will later influence Nietzsche and Mann, in the sense that Nietzsche vehemently expressed his discontent for the nationalist-socialist aspirations of his contemporaries, while Mann lived for himself the events which led to the rise of Nazism in Germany and eventually left for the United States of America. Germany's political situation after the establishment of the nationalistic regime as well as the comparison between the political writings of Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann brings forward rare continuity as far as the three are concerned: Goethe knew his fellow citizens, so he warned them a century in advance that their political idealism would result in chaos; fifty years after Goethe, Nietzsche will confirm Goethe's prediction and use harsh words against his contemporaries—whence the huge question mark concerning the trend which ascribes the German's political ideal and nationalistic fervour after 1930 directly to Nietzsche; then fifty years after Nietzsche, Mann not only knew his own people, but also felt their destructive power and hatred when he fled away in 1933—he later used any opportunity to express his anti-Nazi convictions. It is necessary therefore that Goethe should be linked to Nietzsche and Mann not only artistically—with reference to their aesthetic and ethical perspectives—but also contextually—with reference to the places they visited, the people they met and the history they lived.

### *Wetzlar and Goethe*

Located in the Western part of Germany in the valley of the river Lahn and in the vicinity of Frankfurt—and thus very close to Goethe's native region—Wetzlar<sup>70</sup> can trace its history back to the twelfth century. In 1180, during the reign of Frederick Barbarossa<sup>71</sup>, Wetzlar became a free imperial

---

as a desire to overthrow the values of his predecessors, that is to say not as a way to fulfill this ideal by means of the terror promoted by the French leaders of the Revolution. Nicholas Boyle, *Goethe: The Poet and the Age*, vol. 2, *Revolution and Renunciation, 1790-1803* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5.

<sup>70</sup> For details about Wetzlar's geography, cultural development and historical sites, see the recent guide written by Henk Bekker, *Germany, Adventure Guide* (New Jersey: Hunter Publishing, 2005). The chapter dedicated to Wetzlar contains historiographic references, information about the imperial court of 1495, the invasion of the French troops in 1689, Goethe's stay in the city as well as his job at the Reichskammergericht in 1772.

<sup>71</sup> Frederick I Barbarossa was one of the most popular German leaders of the Middle Ages. See Horst Fuhrmann, *Germany in the High Middle Ages, c. 1050-1200* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 135. His reign as well as that of his predecessors led to a

town and it kept this status until 1803. Thus, during his stay in Wetzlar in 1772, Goethe could still sense the greatness of the German Empire as well as its strength among the European states and the wisdom of his famous leader whose genius continues to set the German's hearts on fire—as in Nietzsche's case—as one admires Wetzlar's unfinished cathedral or Köln's Dome. It is relevant to mention that in the seventeenth century, the citizens of Wetzlar enjoyed the same status as those in Frankfurt, which was extremely important as the town had its own chancery. Goethe worked in one of the rooms of the Reichskammergericht between May and September 1772, after he completed his education in Strasbourg, where he studied law until 1771. Little is known about Goethe's legal activity in Wetzlar, but it is a fact that a new wave was felt in literature after the publication of his *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*, a reminder of the love-story he experienced with the young Charlotte Buff, the fiancée of Johann Georg Christian Kerstner, his friend at the Reichskammergericht. The impact of Goethe's novel in Wetzlar was powerful enough to have a street and a museum—both named Lotte—inaugurated in 1863. Those days, *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* generated a genuine “Werther fever” as three rooms of the Lotte Museum host excerpts from the novel alongside of handicraft pieces produced by Charlotte Buff—some of them during Goethe's stay in town. Wetzlar also houses the Jerusalem Museum in Schiller Square, which commemorates Karl Wilhelm Jerusalem (1747-1772), one of Goethe's closest acquaintances, who killed himself at the early age of twenty-five. Jerusalem's suicide, committed out of love for a married woman, announced Werther's gesture as presented by Goethe. The literary inheritance which is hosted by the Lotte Museum in Wetzlar brings to completion Goethe's general historical image as confirmed by the Goethe Museums in Frankfurt, Düsseldorf and Weimar.<sup>72</sup> As the German Empire crumbled in 1806, the Royal Court in Wetzlar came to an end after the French troops had entered the town. In 1815, Wetzlar was given back to Prussia and became the capital of the newly established county of Wetzlar in 1822.

### ***Weimar and Goethe***

After he left Wetzlar, Goethe came to Weimar on August 28, 1775, where he lived—with some small interruptions—until his death on March 22,

---

clear value definition of the empire as compared to England and France. See Fuhrmann, *Germany in the High Middle Ages, c. 1050-1200*, 30-31.

<sup>72</sup> For details, see Michael Hulse, Preface to the *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1989), 1-19.

1832. Ten years later, Goethe began his famous trip through the cities of Italy<sup>73</sup>. The eighteen months he spent there turned him decisively against the Sturmist spirit of *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*, hence the adopted neoclassicism. Thus, the novel of his youth is almost totally eclipsed by his new and powerful *Iphigenie auf Tauris* which—written according to Euripides' pattern—became the true symbol of Goethe's art. It is within the same period that parts of his *Faust* are produced, a masterpiece inspired by his passion for the life and work of Georg Faust, the “witchdoctor and sorcerer” of the sixteenth century. In its complete form, *Faust* was published after Goethe's death in 1832.

This is how Goethe began the history of “the great escapes” which Nietzsche and Mann would later continue within almost the same lines. If Goethe and Nietzsche escaped and found refuge in Italy—although neither Goethe nor Nietzsche saw Weimar as a geographical realm of the “eternal return” but just as a place which allowed them to take refuge in the spiritual realm of art—Mann was the international refugee who made numerous attempts, both by means of art and politics, to come back to his native land, and he eventually succeeded.<sup>74</sup>

Weimar is a small provincial town in the Eastern part of Germany,<sup>75</sup> the home of many German cultural and political personalities. Martin Luther, one of the forefathers of German culture, visited Weimar a number of times because its princes had rapidly accepted the theological principles of the Protestant Reformation. By his actions and sermons,<sup>76</sup> Luther's name will be later mentioned—more or less seriously—in some of the writings of Goethe, Nietzsche and Mann.<sup>77</sup> Another chief representative of the Refor-

---

<sup>73</sup> See Goethe, *Diary and Selected Letters*, trans. by T. J. Reed (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 115.

<sup>74</sup> In 1939, one hundred and sixty five years after Goethe wrote his *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*, Mann published his *Lotte in Weimar* during his American exile. Mann eventually visited Weimar in 1949 for the Goethe bicentennial when he was appointed citizen of honour.

<sup>75</sup> For a geographical description of Weimar, which inspired even the famous Grimm brothers, but also for a presentation of its historical importance, see Bekker, *Germany*.

<sup>76</sup> Many of Luther's works were printed in a Weimar edition. See, for instance, his *De servo arbitrio* which was instrumental in defining the doctrine of man, of the crucial teachings of the Protestant Reformation. Luther had written his *De servo arbitrio* as a reaction against Erasmus' *De libero arbitrio*. See also Preserved Smith, *The Life and Letters of Martin Luther* (New York: Routledge, 1968), chapter XVIII; and Julius Kostlin; Charles E. Hay, *Theology of Luther in Its Historical Development and Inner Harmony*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Publication Society, 1897), 480.

<sup>77</sup> In October 1522, during one of his visits to Weimar, Luther had preached *On Secular Authority. How Far Should It Be Obeyed* in the church of the Weimar Palace. See for details, James Martin Estes, *Peace, Order, and the Glory of God: Secular Authority and the*

mation—though of its Radical wing—was Thomas Müntzer. His name was associated with the German Peasant's War of 1524, when he was taken to Weimar's Palace for interrogation. Two centuries later, between 1708 and 1717, the church of the Weimar's Castle hosted Johann Sebastian Bach, who worked here during his early youth. After another fifty years, Weimar hosted illustrious poets and men of culture such as Wieland, Schiller and Herder, the last being a local vicar as well.

Due to all the representative personalities of German spirituality, the cultural atmosphere in Weimar was propitious to Goethe from the very beginning. Even more importantly though, it could satisfy not only his philosophical and artistic passion, but also some of his former and more complex needs, such as his desire to penetrate the unknown secrets of science. It is very likely that Goethe had a prolific exchange of ideas with Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland, a physicist who wrote *Macrobiotics or the Art of Prolonging Life* and lived in Weimar between 1783 and 1793. Within the same time frame, Napoleon himself—"Goethe's friend"—came to Weimar more than once, either victorious or defeated. In the nineteenth century, Franz Liszt composed musical works for the Weimar Court, and it was here that Richard Wagner's *Lohengrin* was performed for the first time. In 1889-1894, Richard Strauss laid the basis of a highly competitive orchestra in Weimar. Between 1890-1897, Rudolph Steiner—the avid researcher of Goethe and Schiller—edited Goethe's works on natural science and promoted man's knowledge through his *The Philosophy of Freedom*. In 1897, Nietzsche was brought to Weimar by his sister, Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche, in order to spend the last years of his life. By renting the Silberblick Villa, she moved Nietzsche to Weimar along with all his manuscripts, thus founding the Nietzsche Archive which until then had been hosted by their parents' house in Naumburg. In the summer of 1912, Franz Kafka and Max Brod made a "pilgrimage" to Weimar. Also within the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Weimar students could enjoy the lectures of some

---

*Church in the Thought of Luther and Melancthon, 1518-1559* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2005). It seems that one of the main ideas of this sermon was taken over by Nietzsche in his posthumous *The Will to Power*, which describes the idea of will as opposed to Schopenhauer's in *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*. In Nietzsche, the will is a positive impulse towards creation and life, which is clearly opposed to Schopenhauer's nihilism resulted from the contrast between weak individuals/society and the will that comes from outside and is imposed on them as a fatal power. Within this context, Nietzsche's admiration for Luther is understandable as Luther encouraged man towards a higher perspective on life as compared to the traditional view of politics and religion. On the other hand though, Nietzsche's admiration for Luther is somehow curious given the fact that Luther did not see man's will as a means to escape the overwhelming power of secular authority because the will itself is enslaved by human sin.

prominent professors like Johannes Itten (a specialist in the “art of colour” as well as the founder of Weimar’s House of Building or the Bauhaus), Vasily Kandinsky (a promoter of abstract painting), and Paul Klee (one of Nietzsche’s best friends during his Basel years), while the then young violin player Marlene Dietrich used to perform frequently in Weimar’s cafes.

This was only a glimpse upon Weimar’s bright history which reflects the entire general history of the Eastern part of Germany. The reason Goethe was connected to three centuries of cultural life in this historical presentation is crucial because—in his capacity as the Minister of the Imperial Court in Weimar—he began to feel a powerful attraction for the small provincial town, which he passed to others who nurtured at least curiosity if not appreciation for Goethe’s person and work. The Goethe Museum in Weimar illustrates the difference between the ideal man dreamt by Goethe and the monster of the twentieth century, whose cruelty ravaged the city and its surroundings in the 1930s and 1940s. Consequently, Weimar also has a dark side which was the result of the German’s lust for national affirmation, so very different from Goethe’s. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Weimar was not able or just did not know how to counter the zeal of the national-socialists—very much the same way Goethe’s contemporaries dealt with the Prussians. Thus, although rejected in Western lands, Hitler could freely speak to the crowds gathered in Weimar’s central square as he stood at the balcony of the famous Elephant Hotel which sheltered the twin statue of Goethe and Schiller. Shortly after Hitler’s macabre visit, the citizens of Weimar and its neighborhood witnessed the founding of the Buchenwald concentration camp, where countless numbers of Germans and Jews as well as later militants against the German Communist Party coming from within Germany or even from other countries suffered some of the most gruesome deaths ever starting with 1937.<sup>78</sup> After the fall of the Nazi regime, the surviving prisoners of the concentration camp built the “Freedom Street”, where Nazi victims were buried, and the “Tower of the Bells” behind the Heroes’ Monument, which contains samples of soil brought from other Nazi concentration camps.<sup>79</sup> Among the survivors of the Buchenwald concentration camp, one could count Elie Wiesel—a Romanian Jew who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace—and Imre Kertesz—a Hungarian Jew who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Many other prisoners how-

---

<sup>78</sup> For a description of the Buchenwald concentration camp, see Marc Torrance, *Concentration Camps. A Traveller’s Guide to World War II Sites* (Boca Raton, FL: Universal Publishers, 2000), 94.

<sup>79</sup> For a cultural study on the events which preceded or followed the Nazi regime in Weimar, see the Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture. The Outsider as Insider* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1968).

ever did not live to see better days, and among them was the German Protestant pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

## **6. Goethe and German Culture. Preliminaries to Identity**

The fact that Goethe's personality was connected to and defined in relation to Wetzlar and Weimar demonstrates his impact on the crucial events of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Likewise, if Wetzlar and Weimar enriched Goethe's experience both historically and culturally, a list of events and personalities that belonged to the post-Goethean period and the transition from the nineteenth century to the twentieth is equally meaningful as it prepares the context for the Germany of Nietzsche and Mann. For these two, Goethe's localization and identification with the culture of the eighteenth century will later acquire a hereditary character. The continuation and appropriation of this particular German cultural inheritance during the lives of Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann was only interrupted by the fights between German lands and the French Revolution in Goethe's time, by the feeble political relationship between Prussia and France in Nietzsche's life, and by the "Great War" as well as the Second World War immortalized in Mann's writings. This cultural continuity which started with the German Reformation, continued with Kant and ended with the dissolution of Imperial Germany was gradually defined as a sort of a second identity for the promoters of conservative-classic convictions as related to the place and role of German culture in Europe.

Goethe's cultural identity took shape in connection with multiple and various experiences given the social-political internal conflicts as well as the extra-territorial fights, but also the numerous Goethean artistic passions which were captured in his literary productions. Likewise, his artistic vision expresses a tight interdependence between the development of a system of thought which is tributary to rational-Kantian philosophy and the careful study of nature by means of new and personal scientific observations.

If Goethe's passion for the study of nature and his ideology about the relationship between nature and art have already been defined, it is equally important to approach the social and political reality which became the background of Goethe's artistic preoccupations. Thus, at least two periods can be politically identified in connection with Goethe's artistic orientation after he realized the vast potential of science and his contact with Kant's philosophy. It has already been mentioned that one of the most significant events which led to the clarification and systematization of the notion of culture in the eighteenth century Germany was the historical period which preceded the French Revolution which had a powerful impact on the forma-

tion of Europe's social and individual consciousness. This implies that it was not the Revolution itself which triggered cultural individual changes regarding concepts like state, king, aristocracy, authority, morality, etc., but the very development of a unified cultural trend in France and Germany. The European culture of the eighteenth century—namely the time of the French Revolution as well as what happened before and after it—took shape in relation to the new cultural wave of neo-humanism. Goethe's epoch mainly revealed permutations of cultural meanings which resulted from the adaptation of neo-humanist principles in Europe's most influential nations. The recognition of this new philosophical and artistic trend by German society as well as by the French was an indication of the fact that Europe had already absorbed the classical ideals to the point of crisis and saturation.<sup>80</sup> In addition to this, if in France and Germany humanism had had identical ideals about the cultivation of freedom and the human intellect, neo-humanism was to become an intellectual and moral trend which led to an interesting phenomenon. Thus, whenever Germany's situation in revolutionary Europe was assessed, the analysis was made by comparison with France and the other way around. This is why Goethe—as a prominent representative of the German culture—cannot be fully comprehended without a genuine understanding of his relationship with neo-humanism but also with the French culture, to which neo-humanism was equally familiar.

## 7. German Culture and French Civilization in Goethe's Time

Before any comparison between the two essential notions is made, it is worth mentioning what Goethe himself had to say about his relationship with German culture. Although written during Goethe's first stage of crea-

---

<sup>80</sup> The understanding of the essential difference between humanism or classicism and neo-humanism is vital for a better perception of the relationship between German and French culture which—starting with the eighteenth century—began to be manifested by means of a permanent contrast. Peter Gay, for instance, makes a retrospective of Europe's intellectual life in the century of the Enlightenment, defined as a return to Greek and Roman antiquity and the aspirations for freedom, morality and human dignity as the voice of Europe's national identity. See for details Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: The Rise of Modern Paganism* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995). By contrast, Harold Mah writes that these aspirations of the “modern” and “enlightened” man are mere “fantasies” and insists that Gay's analysis is only partially true. According to Mah, Gay lost sight of the transition from humanism to neo-humanism in the eighteenth century as a direct result of the social and cultural changes pertaining to the previous century. For Mah, the security of identity offered to the modern man by the Enlightenment is fanciful because it lacks a specific characteristic which is diluted in a wide range of qualities pertaining to the ideal of the multiculturalized man. See Harold Mah, *Enlightenment Phantasies. Cultural Identity in France and Germany 1750-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

tion, the following ideas are programmatic for his entire career as a molders of the German culture:

Wir Deutschen, rief er aus, verdienten, daß unsere Musen in der Verachtung blieben, in der sie so lange geschmachtet haben, da wir nicht Männer von Stande zu schätzen wissen, die sich mit unserer Literatur auf irgend eine Weise abgeben mögen. Geburt, Stand und Vermögen stehen in keinem Widerspruch mit Genie und Geschmack, das haben uns fremde Nationen gelehrt, welche unter ihren besten Köpfen eine große Anzahl Edelleute zählen. War es bisher in Deutschland ein Wunder, wenn ein Mann von Geburt sich den Wissenschaften widmete, wurden bisher nur wenige berühmte Namen durch ihre Neigung zu Kunst und Wissenschaft noch berühmter; stiegen dagegen manche aus der Dunkelheit hervor, und traten wie unbekannte Sterne an der Horizont: so wird das nicht immer so sein, und wenn ich mich nicht sehr irre, so ist die erste Klasse der Nation auf dem Wege, sich ihrer Vorteile auch zur Erringung des Schönsten Kranzes der Musen in Zukunft zu bedienen. Es ist mir daher nichts unangenehmer, als wenn ich nicht allein den Bürger oft über den Edelmann, der die Musen zu schätzen weiß, spotten, sondern auch Personen von Stande selbst, mit unüberlegter Laune und niemals zu billiger Schadenfreude, ihresgleichen von einem Wege abschrecken sehe, auf dem einen jeden Ehre und Zufriedenheit erwartet.

(We, Germans, deserve to have our Muses still continue in the low contempt wherein they have languished so long; since we cannot value men of rank who take a share in our literature, no matter how. Birth, rank and fortune are nowise incompatible with genius and taste; as foreign nations, reckoning among their best minds a great number of noblemen, can fully testify. Hitherto indeed it has been rare in Germany for men of high station to devote themselves to science; hitherto few famous names have become more famous by their love of art and learning ... Yet such will not always be the case; and I greatly err, if the first classes of the nation are not even now in the way of also employing their advantages to earn the fairest laurels of the Muses, at no distant date. Nothing, therefore, grieves me more than to see the burgher jeering at the noble who can value literature; nay even men of rank themselves, with inconsiderate caprice, maliciously scaring off their equal from a path where honour and contentment wait on all.)<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* in *Goethes Werke*, HA, ed. by Erich Trunz (München: C. H. Beck, 1994), 184. See Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, Book

It is useless to say that the “foreign nations” praised by Goethe is in fact a reference to France, the country of arts, as he used to call it when he talked about its men of letters. Upset with the Germans’ scorn for art, Goethe appreciated French civilization, an attitude which caused many reactions both during and after Goethe’s life. Thus, writing about Goethe’s significance for the culture of the eighteenth century, the French literary critic Pierre Moreau said that “il n’est pas de plus riche sujet ni de plus séduisant que celui-ci: Goethe et la France.”<sup>82</sup> Occasioned by the Goethe commemorative meetings of the University of Fribourgh on February 29, 1932, Moreau’s remark did not turn him into a mere verbal extoller of Goethe’s importance for the French culture. Earlier that year Moreau had published a critical volume entitled *Le classicisme des romantiques* which became a reference work for the then as well as for today’s intellectuals. Moreau’s key observation concerning the notion of classicism and its unitary evolution in Germany, France, England, and Italy is that “Racine, Molière and Shakespeare, Voltaire and Goethe, Corneille and Calderon are brothers”.<sup>83</sup> Thus, he insisted on the affinities between the representatives of these cultures—men of letters primarily—as explained in a diachronical and intercultural study. These are, in fact, the ideas promoted by the study of classicism in general or by its definitions as seen in the majority of modern encyclopedias, compendiums, and dictionaries after Moreau. The direction of this study is not given mainly by the notion of classicism as understood in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but rather by the relationships which appeared among cultures as based on the adopted intellectual model, which is unitary and unifying.<sup>84</sup>

---

III, Chapter IX [The Harvard Classics Shelf of Fiction] (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917).

<sup>82</sup> Pierre Moreau, in Theodore Huebener, “Goethe et la France”, *The French Review* 23.2 (1949), 114.

<sup>83</sup> Pierre Moreau, *Le classicisme des romantiques* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1932) 269.

<sup>84</sup> See, for example, *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, ed. by Philip P. Wiener (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1973-1974). In the first volume, the author discusses the late apprehension of the notion of classicism throughout Europe until the end of the nineteenth century given mainly perhaps by the connotations attributed to the words “classic” and “classicism” in Germany, France and England but also against the background of the contrast between classicism and romanticism. The study also includes Otto Harnack’s observations—made at the beginning of the twentieth century—which underline the importance of attributing the word “classic” to Goethe’s work. According to Harnack, Goethe resumed the ancient ideal of the excellence of the work of art, promoted by Aulus Gellius in the second century AD, for whom the word “classic” meant “superior, excellent, first-class”. The difference promoted by Harnack between “classicism” as an act of imitating Antiquity and

Like Moreau, the majority of contemporary literary critics and aestheticians approach the relationship between Goethe and France either from the standpoint of linguistic interest or out of admiration for France's artistic achievements. Thus, the outcome of the thesis that Goethe and Voltaire, for instance, shared the same artistic convictions is the idea of stability both with reference to common concepts and to the attitude toward art in general. Therefore, it seems that Goethe's attitude to the French culture and thinkers betrayed a profound admiration for everything which was of French stock: "The busy statesman and official at Weimar spoke the language almost daily; and the sage at eighty-three began the study of Old French."<sup>85</sup> This observation concerning the interest of old Goethe for the beginnings of the French civilization is crucial as it is that about the passion of young Goethe for old Hebrew.<sup>86</sup>

The idea that Goethe was a factor of stability between German and French art is relevant if it clarifies some conflicts regarding the meaning of German and French artistic productions. The general approach though of the relationship between France and Germany within European intellectual tradition is essentially characterized by a double-opening. Thus, there is first a fine change of perception concerning France and Germany when it comes to the way they are perceived directly by individuals. Such a change of perception generally occurs as a result of external social-political events like, for instance, the French Revolution which produced a lasting impression on Goethe who was deeply preoccupied with France at that time. Secondly, the problems of German national and cultural identity has always been a sensitive issue as related to Goethe's appreciation of France.

---

"classic" as a term applied to the works of Goethe and Schiller presupposes two fundamental ideas. First, it configures the new tendency of Goethe's age to return from classicism as compulsory imitation of antiquity to neoclassicism based on a new model of artistic excellence. Second, portrays the new artistic trend starting with the German culture and the unitary manifestations of classicism in France as a token of the interrelationships between the two cultures.

<sup>85</sup> Theodore Huebener, "Goethe and France", *The French Review* 23. 2 (Dec. 1949), 114.

<sup>86</sup> At this point, the thesis of a generalized anti-Semitism in Goethe's Germany deserves mentioning. See, for instance, Klaus Berghahn and Jost Hermand, *Goethe and German-Jewish Culture* (New York: Camden House, 2001). In the last section of their book, the two reach the conclusion that this thesis suffers from a high degree of subjectivity as well as from a lack of impartiality with reference to the relationship between Goethe (in his youth and then during his period of maturity) and the Jewish cultural setting in Germany, which made a rather positive contribution to Goethe's fame. Thus, Jewish intellectuals from Germany who left the country in 1933 took Goethe's works with them only to return in 1945 and find Germany devoid of its most devoted Goethe audience, namely the German Jews.

The problem of perception is crucial when it comes to the relationship between French and German intellectuals. Thus Germany's cultural role in defining the eighteenth century as an "age of reason" by means of Kantian philosophy and Goethe's works has already been discussed. At the same time, by comparing the German cultural setting with the situation in France, one can identify some clear differences concerning the approach of the context which preceded the Revolution. These differences can be traced first to Diderot's *Encyclopedia* which highlighted primarily the social impact of the development of science and technology. If one takes into consideration the personal contributions of intellectuals like Diderot, Rousseau and d'Alembert who were all concerned with the social, political and economical aspects of culture, France appears to have inaugurated an "age of action" starting with the middle of the eighteenth century. If, on the other hand, one compares the age of the Revolution with its reception in France and Germany during the twentieth century—when Europe was aware of the recurrence of the historical and political atmosphere on the eve of the two world wars which divided Europe in a German and a francophone realm—the implications become nearly universal. Thus, in 1932, Moreau had established Goethe's role in his age as promoting stability and good cultural relationships between France and Germany. Moreau is evidently the advocate of cordiality but his attitude was not universally accepted. A critique of Moreau's argument was launched during the tumultuous mid-1930s as the Second World War approached and the French and German intellectuals experienced the "crisis" of the Revolution and exile anew, in a similar fashion to what happened in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century. So, Adolphe-Jacques Dickman, a European living in America, was upset with the fact that Americans did not know so many things about the French people as they knew about the German culture. In writing about the various fields which benefited from the work of French intellectuals, he identified their prolific activity in connection with science especially during the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries which—according to Dickman—brought French civilization to its best. He also noticed that, in the field of sciences, the French were pioneers rather than perfectionists, a feature which marked the entire French cultural life of the nineteenth century.<sup>87</sup>

Therefore, as a *charta* of the French Revolution, the *Encyclopedia* is not the sole witness of the fact that the tendency of French intellectual life was to discover and encourage the scientist and his literary affirmation as a supporter of this cause. It is equally true, however, that in the eighteenth cen-

---

<sup>87</sup> Adolphe-Jacques Dickman, "What about French Culture?", *The Modern Language Journal* 20.8 (1936), 451-458.

ture Germany, great writers such as Goethe shared both a keen interest in scientific novelty and a deep love for literary penmanship. It is a fact though that the perception of the inheritance bequeathed by the French ideologists and writers of the eighteenth century underwent a drastic change in the nineteenth century with reference to Goethe's creation in particular and German artistic life in general. This difference of perception concerning France and Germany is based on the specific differences between culture and civilization, so a clarification of these two notions is badly needed.

What is actually the relationship between culture and civilization? If the cultural inheritance of a nation is understood as a whole, as the universe of the spiritual values of mankind or, specifically, of a nation, the concept of civilization could be perceived as being somehow inferior to culture, even if its meaning remains the same. The element of inferiority though is given by the fact that civilization represents the development level of a particular nation's material values following the historical stages of mankind. Within this context, the concepts of culture and civilization are separate terms although it is not entirely clear which one is more important. However, if civilization includes primarily the physical, social and political values as connected to the structure of individual states or to whatever belongs to the aim of meeting material needs, comfort and security, then culture should encompass clearly superior values. So, if the two notions are totally separated when being investigated according to their historical origin, then

Culture includes the attitudes, acts and works which are limited to the realm of the spirit and the intellect. The work, the act and the man of culture tend to satisfy spiritual and intellectual needs, such as the revelation of the self, the discovery of the unknown, the explanation of mystery and the appreciation of beauty. Thus, in connection with nature, man and society, they do not intend to establish practical, utilitarian or instrumental relationships but a relationship of mutual communication, search and recapture. This way, the realm of culture includes traditions and customs, religious beliefs and practices ... the works of science, philosophy, literature, music, architecture, paintings, sculpture, as well as decorative and applied arts.<sup>88</sup>

Likewise, it is equally important to understand what civilization is meant to include:

---

<sup>88</sup> Ovidiu Drimba, *Istoria culturii și civilizației*, vol. 1 (București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1985), 6.

Concerning civilization, which is utilitarian *par excellence*, one could make reference to food, housing, clothing (with the exception of adornments), public buildings and the means of communication, technology in general, economic and administrative activities, social, political, military and legal organization; likewise, teaching and education—but only to the degree that they fulfill the demands of practical life.<sup>89</sup>

It is not very clear whether “civilization, which is utilitarian *par excellence*” and “culture [which] includes the attitudes, acts and works ... limited to the realm of the spirit and the intellect” presuppose or not some natural flaws in their evolution as terms, given the fact that they share a certain degree of complementarity. Thus, culture establishes various relationships of complementarity with civilization, because in connection with nature they do not look for utilitarian aspects but for communication, which is in fact Goethe’s artistic creed in his *Novelle*. At the same time, civilization secures the economic, administrative and educational background for “the works of science, philosophy, literature, music, architecture, paintings, sculpture, as well as decorative and applied arts” provided by men of culture, as in Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* and *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, especially in connection with the development of his hero.

Even if the dichotomy between culture and civilization does not involve an opposition between the two, but rather an interrelation which leads to the ideal of plenary realization of man, life, and society, the small details contained in their definitions become a hindrance in affirming their logical connection. These details, which are crucial in an attempt to clarify the difference between culture and civilization—say a lot about the nature and orientation of the definition of culture and civilization. This is the case nowadays and it was not different in Goethe’s time. Thus, these details reveal the attributes of culture which has nothing to do with practical issues because it is limited to the realm of the spirit and of the intellect. At the same time, the division of attributes also determines the concept of civilization, which establishes and verifies, for instance, educational norms, but only those that are practically-oriented. This categorical division of the attributes and the domains of culture and civilization generate a false perspective on their role and function. Thus, the argument that the attributes and the domains of culture and civilization enjoy a certain interrelation seems artificial; it is rather that culture and civilization are placed together on purpose, not as a reflection of how they should be understood in reality. Nevertheless, one fact is sure: the difference (if any) between culture and civilization was not per-

---

<sup>89</sup> Drimba, *Istoria culturii și civilizației*, vol. 1, 6.

ceived before the nineteenth century, when the difference of perception concerning the role of Germany and France as connected to the French Revolution was sensed for the first time.<sup>90</sup>

It must be mentioned here that the dichotomy between culture and civilization requires a certain sensitivity—which is oftentimes too emphasized—concerning the interpretation of these two terms.<sup>91</sup> Thus, if the term “civilization” implies—through its semantics that refer to food, infrastructure, technology, politics, economy, etc.—a general perspective on the entire human society, then the term “culture” undergoes a certain reduction so that its meaning becomes narrower to the point of limiting its specific area. From this perspective, the dichotomy between culture and civilization is over-evaluated because the two terms enter a hierarchical relationship which prompts civilization to gain prominence over culture. While the concept of civilization can include the entire mankind’s aspirations for the ideal state, the relationships among its members and welfare, the dichotomy requires a more subjective, i.e. intellectual—approach to culture, which is not realistic or practical in connection with society, the state or one’s own nation. If the relationship between civilization and culture is understood from this particu-

---

<sup>90</sup> It is true that Drimba himself admitted that culture and civilization had not always been perceived as fundamentally different. Moreover, they were seen as synonymous notions as late as 1938, when the *Quillet Encyclopedic Dictionary* was published. Concerning the national specificity of culture and civilization in Germany and France, Drimba wrote that “the terms were interchanged: the Germans use the word *Kultur* to designate civilization, while the French prefer the word *civilization* to point to culture; thus, phrases like “spiritual civilization” and “material culture” are used frequently, which is an obvious *contradictio in adjecto*”. See Drimba, *Istoria culturii și civilizației*, vol. 1, 5.

<sup>91</sup> This particular sensitivity as applied to culture and civilization in Germany and France appear only as recent perspectives on certain political events or cultural movements which pertain to various historical periods. See, for instance, the almost unanimous opinion expressed by Volker Rolf Berghahn and Harold Mah, who reach the same conclusion regarding the consequences of the French Revolution in Germany even though they use different arguments. Thus, Berghahn the postmodernist uses the methods of the Frankfurt critique in order to analyse the relationship between society, culture and politics in Germany. He concludes that the repercussions of this particular relationship on the people of Germany were different in accordance with German social structure. See Volker Rolf Berghahn, *Imperial Germany, 1871-1914: Economy, Society, Culture, and Politics* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005). Mah begins his analysis from the aesthetic functions of the political moment represented by the Revolution and reaches the conclusion that—very much like Berghahn—the aesthetic ideals of German classicism caused the establishment of two German “cultures”: the culture of the “Volk” and the culture of the upper class (“High Culture” and “Popular Culture” to use Berghahn’s words).

lar point of view, then the hierarchy between the two concepts makes culture a historical or temporal subdivision of civilization.<sup>92</sup>

The separation of culture from civilization to the point of establishing a dichotomy between them leads to the transformation of culture not only in a subdivision, but in a substitute of civilization. Thus, if applied to Germany's relationship with French civilization, the term "culture" can be suspected of causing damage to the rights which are protected by civilization. This would explain Goethe's portrayal as "enemy" of the Jews or Germany's depiction as the country of "cultural wars" in contrast to France, the country of the Revolution.<sup>93</sup> Such an approach can only dilute the real meaning of culture as understood in connection with civilization, which is also the case when one accepts the dichotomy or the hierarchy between culture and civilization.

In addition to the dichotomic and hierarchical approach to culture and civilization, there is also the opposite perspective, which promotes the idea that culture and civilization are essentially synonymic and anti-hierarchical. With reference to Goethe's work and its significance for European culture, Walter H. Bruford proposed a clear and objective definition of culture as applied to Goethe's Weimar years or Goethe's classicism. In addition to the scientific overtones of culture, Bruford explained culture's main significance for Goethe and the Germans in particular, which rapidly became generalized as it spread in other countries. Thus, for Bruford, culture refers to the process of cultivating the mind as well as to its specific results. This is the fundamental meaning of culture as imported from the German *Bildung*, which stands for the process of education and culturalization, as well as a material and cultural good.<sup>94</sup> As far as the definition of culture and civilization is concerned, it is important to understand that the approaches which draw a clear line of separation between culture and civilization are a reac-

---

<sup>92</sup> For details about the idea that culture is a subdivision of civilization, see Wolf Lepenies, *The Seduction of Culture in German History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006). Thus, anyone who attempts to promote a nationally-oriented culture distances himself from the factual achievements of civilization.

<sup>93</sup> See, for instance, what Lepenies has to say about 1789 when—according to his explanation—two revolutions occurred: a cultural and a historical revolution, namely a German and a French Revolution. In his *The Seduction of Culture in German History*, Lepenies makes a long list of comparisons between culture and civilization only to conclude that cultural acts are inferior to the achievements of civilization mainly because of their nationalistic overtones.

<sup>94</sup> Walter H. Bruford, *Culture and Society in Classical Weimar, 1775-1806* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962). Bruford's definition is used by Gisela Argyle as an inclusivist example of the relationship between the culture factor and the individual's external or social-political development. See Gisela Argyle, *Germany as Model and Monster: Allusions in English Fiction* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2002).

tion against the unifying and synonymous significance of the two as promoted by Bruford and taken over by most dictionaries.<sup>95</sup>

From the standpoint of culture and civilization, the relationship between Germany and France in the eighteenth century is important for at least two main reasons. First, the Revolution was perceived not only as a social upheaval, but also as an event which was soaked in the then political crisis. Secondly, regardless how the Revolution has been defined in dictionaries or textbooks, it definitely affected both the material and the spiritual life of the nations which were swept by it. Thus, the crisis was felt profoundly irrespective of whether it was conceived to be a manifestation of the “spiritual civilization” or of “material culture”. On the eve of the Revolution, the time of Kant and Goethe was typically progressist and opened—not only in Germany and France but virtually anywhere else—the possibility of a new perspective on the role of human reason in all the branches of the social structure. Against this particular background, the event of the Revolution as well as its preliminary context prefigured a crisis within the natural development of the ideal. This crisis is equally natural when the ideal tends to neglect its social goals, as suggested by Andreas Gailus. Here is what he has in view in terms of Kant’s *Der Streit der Fakultäten* (*The Conflict of the Faculties*, 1798):

A moment of crisis reveals the permanence of progress; the suspension of established rules announces the inevitability of the future rule of law; and the sudden outburst of intense feelings proves the existence of moral principle. The focus of Kant’s essay is an interpretation of the French Revolution in terms of its reception in Germany. Kant reads the emotional response to the Revolution as an apodictic sign both of the deter-

---

<sup>95</sup> Published in 1962, Bruford’s study is an important proof of his finesse in approaching the various nuances of the word “culture” as already embedded in the then encyclopedias and dictionaries. It was only months before Bruford’s study that *The Oxford English Dictionary* (1961) was printed, which was followed by a series of dictionaries that were crucial for the development of European linguistic research. See, for instance, *The Explicative Dictionary of the Romanian Language* (1961), the *Cahiers de linguistique théorique et appliquée* and *Cassell’s French Dictionary* (1962), and the *Duden Lexikon* (1961-1970). In all these works, the interchangeability between culture and civilization is evident. Thus, Bruford’s study confirms a generally accepted definition—with reference to culture and civilization—in Goethe’s time (Goethe himself understood culture as reference to all the spiritual and material goods of a nation). In this context, the clear separation between culture and civilization as seen in Drimba and Lepenies appears to be an incisive attempt to change generally accepted understanding of culture and civilization.

minative role of moral principle in human history and of the possibility of a true philosophical history.<sup>96</sup>

Thus, the intense emotional element seen as a necessary aspect of the French revolutionary ideal perceived in Germany represents a transient moment in the history of human progress. The equality postulated by Kant between such notions as “crisis”, “suspension of established rules” and “outburst of intense feelings” is not meant to question the significance or the fundamental principles of the Revolution in France or anywhere else in Europe. On the contrary, the true significance of this historical event resides in the access to progress, which is supported by ideas like “permanence”, “the inevitability of law” and “moral principles”. Likewise, Ernst Maas noticed that, in *Achilleis*, Goethe follows in the footsteps of Homer, but he does not present the facts as they happened and he does not narrate the bloodsheds or the crossing of swords; he only mentions the calm atmosphere following these events in a manner which is detached from anything earthly.<sup>97</sup>

The return to calm and the idea of progress were actually the ideals of the 1789 revolutionaries who fought against the French absolutist regime. Gailus notices that the subsequent reception of these ideals in Germany as appeals to “uncontrolled freedom”, “violent reactions” and “chaotic enthusiasm”<sup>98</sup> opened an interpretative frame which was conditioned morally and philosophically. Thus, Kant and Goethe had to face the evident tension between “passion” (the reception of the Revolution per se) and “sign” (the true significance of the Revolution as a historical event). In addition to Gailus’ argument, it is a commonplace that the French Revolution did not spread in Germany; nevertheless, like all European states, Germany was forced to get acquainted to the principles of the French Revolution, such as political freedom and national unity. Therefore, the true influence of the Revolution in Germany is due to intellectuals like Goethe, Kant, and Hegel.<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup> Andreas Gailus, *Passions of the Sign: Revolution and Language in Goethe, Kant and Kleist* (Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 28.

<sup>97</sup> Ernst Maas in Goethe, *Opere*, vol. 8 [Poeme epice] (București: Univers, 1990).

<sup>98</sup> See Gailus, *Passions of the Sign: Revolution and Language in Goethe, Kant and Kleist* and especially the chapter “Revealing Freedom. Crisis and Enthusiasm in Kant’s Philosophy of History”, pp. 30-70.

<sup>99</sup> For a study on their importance within the European revolutionary context, see Gerhard Kurz, *The Great Drama. Germany and the French Revolution* (Bonn: Inter Nationes, 1989).

## **8. Germany's Freedom and Unity. Goethe's Concept of National Identity**

Gailus' analysis of the various interpretative models of the 1789 "European" Revolution is based on a "specific" linguistic pattern, as suggested by Rüdiger Campe:

Gailus has chosen a specific moment in history—the French Revolution—to explore a general and systematic subject matter: How does crisis—a fundamental crisis of the social, cultural, and symbolic order—function as thematic object and as structural element, as destructive and constitutional moment in linguistic representation? ... This book offers a cutting-edge argument for why literature and philosophy from the „Goethe period” matters today: it is the exemplary case of a cultural system to understand crisis—to think crisis, develop form from crisis, and, first of all, let crisis have a place to happen.<sup>100</sup>

The first concept which results logically from the statement that Goethe's age represents a specific linguistic pattern for the interpretation of the crisis of the Revolution is identity. Particularly, it is the specific situation of both Germany and France on the eve of the Revolution. It was mentioned from the very start that, as far as France and Germany are concerned, the difference of perception concerning both countries given by the meaning of culture and civilization has a certain influence on Goethe's age. Thus, the time of Goethe is crucial to what the notion of German political class meant at the time of the Revolution, as well as to the more important reality of Germany's spirituality. The idea of German national identity—seen as the promotion of the ideals of freedom, fraternity and equality among nationals—established itself in Germany and in the whole of Europe for that matter once the Revolution began. This is exactly what proves the strong connection between Germany and France in the time of Goethe. Beyond this, Germany kept its specificity as a country very much like any other country which had heard of the ideals of the French Revolution.

Perhaps to a higher degree than other European countries, Goethe's Germany powerfully illustrates the difference between the revolutionary ideal and its perception as far as social classes were concerned. In this context, Goethe's personality and work appear as imperatives of Germany's image at the crossroad of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Thus, Germany's political identity manifested itself beneficially in relationship with

---

<sup>100</sup> Rüdiger Campe, commendation to Gailus' *Passions of the Sign*.

France as an opposition between the nobility and the bourgeoisie, the latter representing in France the “machinistic” show and the “regrettable impartiality” between the law and its enforcement. Thus, the revolutionaries of 1789-1793 gave laws in favor of those who owned properties,<sup>101</sup> so the very structure of the French city as well as its bourgeois hierarchy was totally different from the reality of the German city as governed by the state (represented by nobility). This argument is supported by a very important fact, namely—as compared with other European countries at the time of the French Revolution—Germany was not essentially bourgeois (the peasantry did not have the role which it had played in France) and its city was a *Burg*, not a *polis* with mobilizing capacities.<sup>102</sup>

Then, it is important to realize that as an element of continuity with a comparative map of Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Goethe himself stresses an important aspect of German society which resembles Gailus’ idea. The Germans’ philosophy of life was totally opposed to that of the French due to the predominant rationalism of Kant’s philosophy. Goethe himself was convinced that no thinker could oppose, reject or get rid of the great philosophical movement inaugurated by Kant in the modern era.<sup>103</sup> Thus, the significance attributed by Kant to the moment of crisis or the Revolution as perceived in Germany around 1789 is essential for the very structure of the German nation and manifested itself as an emotional fluctuation which affects the balance of a state by promoting the impartial re-entry of law (reason).

As far as Goethe is concerned, his autobiographical dates and the proofs taken from his works after his trip to Italy—which he completed just one year prior to the Revolution, in 1788—reveal his transition to artistic maturity whose ideal is, before anything else, the harmony with nature but also with his fellow human beings by means of the highest aesthetic and ethical standards. As a novel of formation, this particular desire is met in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*—it must be mentioned that the experience of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* begins as early as 1780, while that of *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* is completed around 1829. Thus, it can be argued that *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* does not only complete Goethe’s vision of

<sup>101</sup> Nicholas Boyle, *Goethe, the Poet and the Age*, vol. 2 [Revolution and Renunciation 1790-1803], (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 23.

<sup>102</sup> According to Boyle, if Paris had approximately 600,000 citizens who could lead the revolution in the entire country, the cities of Germany were a true obstacle for the Revolution as the largest Germany city had only 50,000 inhabitants, so it was roughly as unimportant as Versailles. See Boyle, *Goethe: The Poet and the Age*, vol. I [The Poetry of Desire 1749-1790], (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 15.

<sup>103</sup> Boyle, *Goethe, the Poet and the Age*, vol. 2, 35.

his hero's true vocation—the aesthetic function of education is crucial here—but also facilitates the hero's access to a mature thought and a powerful character—the ethical-moral element is revelatory at this point. The hero's experience in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* is a suitable preamble to the classically informed poem *Hermann und Dorothea*, in which the poet seizes the perfect opportunity to order his thoughts and feelings concerning the Revolution. Goethe rewrites the history of a group of Protestant refugees who had left Salzburg for Germany in 1731 in close connection with his sketching of Dorothea's portrait who left France on the eve of the Revolution for a German village, where—instead of hatred—she found love and the long-forgotten harmony.<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, for Goethe, it was not this idyllic atmosphere which constituted the reason for young Dorothea's escape from France to Germany. Again, the calm atmosphere and the serene scenery have nothing to do with Goethe's rejection of the effusion of sentimentality which characterized his fellow-nationals in connection with the imminent political crisis. It is clear that Goethe constantly insists on the morality of his fellow Germans, and he actually cannot refrain from sarcastically criticizing their chaotic outbursts. Thus, Goethe's attitude reveals that the idyllic state of the German village which accepted Dorothea is not the historical reality of the German state but an idealistic as well as an ideal image. It is clear that Goethe perceived the real state of Germany on the eve of the Revolution as a mirror reflection of what was happening in France. Nevertheless, it is not the revolutionary ideal which troubles Goethe; on the contrary, he welcomes it as man's (and Dorothea's) impetus to freedom. What really bothers Goethe is German nationalism which, unlike patriotism, will follow French nationalism only to cause situations which were not taken into account by the revolutionary ideal of unity:

I do not fear that Germany will not be united; our excellent streets and future railroads will do their own. Germany is united ... because my suitcase can pass through all thirty-six states without being opened. It is united, because my municipal travel documents of a resident of Weimar are

---

<sup>104</sup> It is now that Goethe verifies the thesis of the restoration of social and cosmic order which was launched by Kant and experienced by the poet after the revolutionary upheaval. As he drafts the spiritual portrait of his characters, Goethe does not lose sight of the events which he himself experienced in 1789. The enthusiasm which was shared by various social classes as they accepted the Revolution as well as their involvement in the Battle of Valmy against France in 1792 convinced Goethe that Germany was not even by far a country of political stability and social tranquility. See Goethe, *Hermann und Dorothea*, 5: "Polyhymnia". The Citizen of the World, in *Faust; Egmont; Hermann und Dorothea* (*Harvard Classics*), ed. by Charles W. Eliot (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004).

accepted everywhere on a par with the passports of the citizens of the mighty foreign neighbors ... One is mistaken, however, if one thinks that Germany's unity should be expressed in the form of one large capital city, and that this great city might benefit the masses in the same way that it might benefit the development of a few outstanding individuals.<sup>105</sup>

The presentation of the fact that, in Germany, not only Goethe but all the German citizens witness the good faith of the state authorities—which is proved as one travels throughout the German states—turns an apparently insignificant detail into a powerful clue concerning Germany's unique position in Europe. It is interesting that—according to what Hoppe had to say about Goethe's observations<sup>106</sup>—this state of affairs as a proof of legality, honesty and administrative “unity” in eighteenth century Germany demonstrates Germany's particular identity as well as its identification with other European countries. The relationship between Germany's political particularism and culture—as revealed by Goethe—presents two significant aspects. First, Goethe does not separate German culture from German civilization so the two notions are seen as essentially interchangeable. While some more or less recent studies—such as Drimba's—perceived the juxtaposition of culture and civilization as a *contradictio in adjecto* or a contradiction in itself as already shown, Goethe explained civilization by means of the word *Kultur* as a logical juxtaposition. If Drimba, for instance, included economic and administrative activities, as well as the social, political, military, etc. organization in the concept of civilization, Goethe noticed that it was the German particularism seen as territorial security which actually maintained civic unity within the country. In other words, Goethe uses both culture and civilization with reference to the same idea (*Kultur*) as he could not find any national incongruence between the two. Indeed, the fact that one of Kant's followers would have intended uncomfortable juxtapositions despite any implicit context is improbable, as not even the “age of reason” perceived any contradiction between culture and civilization. Secondly, the fact that culture and civilization are put together in Goethe reveals that security in

---

<sup>105</sup> Goethe in Hans-Hermann Hoppe, “The Politics of J. W. Goethe”, *The Wall Street Journal Europe* (Dec. 30, 1999). Similar ideas are to be found in Goethe's *Maximen und Reflexionen* where Goethe, a classic liberal, is pessimistic about political centralization as a logical outcome of any nationalistic endeavor.

<sup>106</sup> Hoppe unites the concepts of culture and civilization under the auspices of Goethe's name whom he sees as the first European of the present millennium due to his relevance for the development of the European idea. For Hoppe, Goethe fought the idea of government expansion, centralization and unification because of his conviction that such actions would hinder prosperity and genuine cultural development.

German lands has an integrative function, in the sense that it places Germany at the same level with other “powerful” European countries. Thus, Germany’s identity is seen in the context, namely within the framework of European civilization which, up to that point in time, had witnessed the French Revolution and Napoleon’s wars. In this particular context, Germany’s territorial security seen as unity—either cultural or administrative—is perceived as the optimal possibility of existence within the European realm. Going back to *Herman und Dorothea*, one can see the same specific context and the same Goethean idea about the unity as stability, which motivates Dorothea’s choice of the German village:

Denn wer die Städte gesehn, die großen und reinlichen, ruht nicht,  
Künftig die Vaterstadt selbst, so klein sie auch sei, zu verzieren.  
Lobt nich der Fremde bei uns die ausgebesserten Tore  
Und den geweihten Turm und die wohlerneuerte Kirche?  
Rühmt nicht jeder das Pflaster? Die wasserreichen, verdeckten,  
Wohlverteilten Kanäle, die Nutzen und Sicherheit bringen...  
Ist das nicht alles geschehn seit jenem schrecklichen Brande?

(He who has seen such large and cleanly cities rests never  
Till his own native town, however small, he sees better’d.  
Do not all strangers who visit us praise our well-mended gateways,  
And the well-whited tower, the church so neatly repair’d, too?  
Do not all praise our pavements? Our well-arranged cover’d-in conduits,  
Always well furnish’d with water, utility blending with safety. ... )<sup>107</sup>

Thus, the element of security and stability which, with Goethe, defines Germany and establishes it as a country in its own right as well as a European nation is the very aspect that confers identity to Germans. Moreover, the fact that Goethe associates culture with civilization as a whole completes Germany’s image in the world, so the effective administrative organization is a preamble to durable state unity as well as a factor which continues the German cultural tradition in Europe—with reference to Goethe’s remark that Germany was a proof of good order both to its citizens and visitors. Goethe’s urge that this ideal should be followed has direct implications for posterity which should not be looking for unreasonable centralization but rather be vigilant with a view to promote culture. In other words, it is cul-

---

<sup>107</sup> Goethe, *Hermann und Dorothea*, ed. by Friedrich Bieweg (Michigan: The University of Michigan, 1830), 57 (Thalia, die Bürger). See Goethe, *Hermann und Dorothea*, Cant. III. Thalia, The Burgers, in Goethe, *The Poems of Goethe*.

ture which confers identity to Germans. Thus, if compared to France as the country of the Revolution, the German ideal as depicted in *Hermann und Dorothea* opens another path which is totally different from the revolutionary way. The two cultures, German and French—as compared by Goethe—create a surprising contrast between calm and exuberance, action and “reaction” or—as some would say—between the “German” culture and the “French” civilization.

## 9. The German Culture as a “Substitute”? Goethe’s View of Politics

Goethe’s assessment of the relationship between the “German” culture and the “French” civilization struck at least two sensitive cords. Briefly resuming the previous discussion about the relationship between the German culture and the French civilization, one of the main arguments was that the return of the eighteenth century to the classics—see, for instance, neoclassicism—targeted primarily the aesthetic functions of art and not what art could do in order to reform the social-political reality of the then Germany.<sup>108</sup> This observation confers a certain degree of importance as well as of sensitivity to the discussions concerning national or cultural identity and to the way this was materialized in Germany and France. Thus, the preoccupation for the aesthetic implications of the classical ideal of humanity shaped the cultural identity of the Germans unlike France, where cultural identity had primarily a moral-political dimension. Even so, this observation is based on the comparison between the two types of cultural legacies and it does not disannul Germany’s international achievements—be they exclusively aesthetic in nature.

A second more recent position has to do with the fact that the problem of national and cultural identity degenerated in Germany especially because of the most important representatives of the German culture throughout its entire history. Thus, at the time of the Revolution, when the true interests of German intellectuals eventually surfaced, it was evident that Germany was involved in a “cultural war” rather than in political-reformational conflict. In this particular sense, the typical image of the cultural man in the eighteenth

---

<sup>108</sup> One of the promoters of this view is Harold Mah, who believes that the development of the neo-classic ideal in France and Germany was a problem of national identity. He also tackled the political and aesthetic functions of the two cultures. Mah, however, analysed these two types of identities only until 1914. Mah’s observations are thus an amiable presentation of a range of small details to which the artistic life of the two countries conferred a political as well as a cultural-aesthetic role. See Harold Mah, *Enlightenment Phantasies. Cultural Identity in France and Germany 1750-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2003), 116-179.

century Germany was Goethe, then Nietzsche in the nineteenth century, and Thomas Mann in the twentieth century. The way they contributed to the continuation of a German cultural war, which was essentially anti-revolutionary and anti-social, placed Germany and its artistic life on a pedestal which she created herself based on merits which she attributed to herself.<sup>109</sup> Consequently, the fact that Goethe promoted national unity by pointing out the security offered by Germany's public roads or the fact that important Germans did not refrain from answering difficult questions concerning the political situations in which they actively participated (with reference to Goethe's time) leads to one single conclusion: "national culture"—as claimed by such personalities in the past or in the present—became a "substitute" for political accountability before the world and before civilization. Thus, it was through them that the German culture became a substitute as compared with French civilization:

If there is anything like a German ideology, it consists in playing off Romanticism against the Enlightenment, the Middle Ages against the modern world, culture against civilization, the subjective against the objective, the community against society—in the end glorifying German particularity. This "exceptionalism" was always a point of pride—not least because it was based on a considerable degree on cultural aspirations and achievements. The subjective, inward realm established by German idealism, the classic literature of Weimar, and the classical and romantic styles in music not only preceded the founding of the political nation by more than a hundred years; they were hailed as being a political act that henceforth legitimated any withdrawal from society into the sphere of culture and private life.<sup>110</sup>

The cultural legacy condemned by Lepenies the sociologist is the one which was introduced to him as a child, namely the idea that alongside of Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann he also had to embrace Hitler. Their works, however, do contain a pessimistic accent which is revealed in connection with immi-

---

<sup>109</sup> This thesis belongs to Wolf Lepenies who accuses the Germans for allowing themselves to be seduced by their own culture. In one of his most recent books, Lepenies compiles a list of accusations which he launches against the most illustrious representatives of the German culture. Thus, according to Lepenies, they turned culture into a noble substitute, promoted a diminished particularism and manifested a strange indifference towards politics.

<sup>110</sup> Wolf Lepenies, *The End of "German Culture"*, The Tanner Lectures on Human Values, Harvard University (Nov. 3-5, 1999). The quotation can also be found in his *The Seduction of Culture in German History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 9.

ment changes.<sup>111</sup> According to Lepenies, however, as the endorsement of the establishment of German nation or “nationalism” was also approved by Goethe as the patron of the “Weimar classicism”, the act of placing Hitler’s name alongside those of the most important German cultural (or rather political, to Lepenies) representatives is neither hypocritical nor exaggerated. It is clear from Lepenies’ list that the German nationalist spirit was born out of binary relationships: romanticism-Enlightenment, culture-civilization, community-society, etc. By virtue of their opposition, these relationships are specific to Germany which, using the ideology resulted from their contrasts, turned political maneuvers—like, for instance, the Nazi regime—into a substitute to the German culture. At the end of the day, this is exactly the essential difference between the culture of Germany and the civilization of France or even America, with which Germany never entertained “cordial relationships.”<sup>112</sup>

Although Lepenies correctly notices that over time the German cultural inheritance led to a certain kind of specific particularism, this latest observation coming from a famous sociologist is surprising.<sup>113</sup> The element of surprise resides in the fact that—as a promoter of good cooperation relationships between France and Germany—Lepenies chooses a less common way to carry out his mission, which presupposes a clear imparity between the two sides and is highly unlikely to ever produce a real cooperation between them. Thus, for Lepenies, Germany is from the very start an example of how things should not be done. For instance, in his *The Seduction of Culture in German History*, he presents Germany as anti-social, nationalistic, compelling and driven exclusively by its own interests and purposes. In his description of Germany as well as of its most important cultural representatives, Lepenies leaves the impression of a constant aversion towards this

---

<sup>111</sup> Thus, in his Preface to Goethe, *Poeme epice* (București: Univers, 1990), Paul Michael Lützelar warns that *Hermann und Dorothea* does not end like a fairytale, so the young couple is not promised eternal happiness. In order to symbolize his social-political synthesis, Goethe ironically indicates the future conflicts in his text.

<sup>112</sup> For details concerning the lack of cordiality in capitalism, see Howard Eiland, “Dialogue between Daniel Bell and Wolf Lepenies: On Society and Sociology Past and Present”, *Daedalus* 135 (2006). Eiland explains how Lepenies understood Bell’s attitude towards fundamental social changes as expressed in books with suggestive titles, such as *The End of Ideology* (1960), *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1976) or *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1996).

<sup>113</sup> Lepenies was awarded the Alexander von Humboldt Prize for French-German scientific cooperation. He also founded various cultural-political institutions as “The Institute for Advanced Studies” in Berlin, “The New Europe College” (“Colegiul Noua Europă”) in Bucharest, “The Graduate School for Social Research” in Warsaw and “Bibliotheca Classica” in Sankt Petersburg.

culture, which he perceives as atrocious. As compared to Germany, France appears as a model of how things should be done; thus, France does not compel politically but rather embraces humanity in its totality as an oasis of democracy and sociability.

If the majority of sociological treaties use a specialized and scientific terminology in order to study various social structures, ethnical groups or nations, Lepenies, the sociologist begins his analysis with the artistic language. In approaching German ideology/culture which produced political avatars over centuries, Lepenies, the scientist perceives it as an opposition between romanticism and the Enlightenment or as a manifesto of Weimar classical literature as well as of classical and romantic music. Thus, we should understand that the German cultural realm is subjective, interior and private. It is interesting though that the sociologist sketches this draft of the German culture using a “real” situation which occurred within the context of Hungarian-American diplomatic relationship in 1941, and has no connections whatsoever with the German cultural-political realm.<sup>114</sup> If Lepenies is right, the case of German culture is definitely not singular in Europe or the world for that matter.

Of course, Lepenies has the right to suspect the German culture, as well as the early twentieth century Austrian-Hungarian culture, for disseminating nationalistic ideas. At the end of the day, cultural nationalism was a commonplace at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, as it reflected one of Europe’s most prominent realities which concerned the desire of some Central and Eastern European nations to become independent from the domination of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. Moreover, Lepenies is right in claiming that the artistic life in Goethe’s time is reflected in the social attitude of his German contemporaries as Goethe himself inaugurated the nineteenth century through his own artistic productions. Thus, the idea of cultural nationalism as a trend of the then Europe and perceived by Lepenies as specific to the German realm does indeed reveal a national specificity given, for instance, by customs, traditions, lan-

---

<sup>114</sup> In his *The Seduction of Culture in German History*, Lepenies makes a list of conclusions which resulted from his contact with the Hungarian culture. As the chances of founding an Institute of Social Studies in Hungary’s capital in the recent years were uncertain due to the fact that the Hungarian Minister of Culture wanted to revise the list of Lepenies’ future Jewish collaborators (not because the minister was anti-Semitic but because of the anti-Semitic attitude still present in Hungary), Lepenies reaches a startling conclusion: Hungary has not changed at all since 1941, so he has already been one step away from his real concern, which was the German culture. Thus, Lepenies claims that all these experiences of the past and present offered him a fresh perspective on the past and the present of German culture! See Lepenies, *The Seduction of Culture in German History*, 163.

guage, and music. At the same time, however, cultural nationalism forms the tradition of every nation—be it European or not—as an element which belongs to the cultural identity of each particular nation.

The difference between the German culture and the French civilization (or culture), the specificity of the German's national identity and the way German culture is perceived in the world are to be found in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* which tackles the subject of German culture. Goethe identifies an issue of "specificity" in relation to the German nation, which is clearly inferior to what happened in other nations, including France, where the state encouraged the development of the spirit and culture. It is almost certain that Lepenies had Goethe's remark in mind as well as the fact that he promoted arts during his various diplomatic missions or his activity in Weimar (or at least he tried to diminish the cultural handicap). It is important to realize this because at this point Lepenies comes up with an element of surprise. The political event which lays the foundation for his comparison between the German culture and the French civilization is the French Revolution. Thus, the social-political event of the Revolution in France is associated with the artistic-literary/philosophical event in Germany as represented by Goethe. According to Lepenies, the imparity between the French political event and the German artistic event led to an uncordial relationship between the two countries. Lepenies' idea is clear: the Revolution was an active political episode, which produced a radical social change in the entire Europe. As compared to this, Goethe's name suggests a close and subjective artistic realm, which is incapable of social transformation but generates in turn an ideology, which turns Germany (as tributary to Goethe) into a substitute for political action. In other words, Goethe's name was a brilliantly concealed excuse for the political non-involvement of Germany's most important cultural personalities. Thus, Goethe as well as Germany's men of culture in general bear the whole responsibility for the deteriorating relationships between Germany and the rest of the world.

Lepenies' argument needs some clarifications and observations. Thus, the idea of cultural nationalism must not be mistaken for the notion of political nationalism. If the former indicates cultural facts specific to a nation, the latter presupposes exaggerated political doctrines and practices. Lepenies himself admitted that in Goethe's Germany, the French Revolution did not produce the expected results because the Germans preferred to remain famous in the world as the eternal *Bürger*s. On the other hand, however, Lepenies did not offer any details concerning the roles, the dissemination, and the political significance of the French Revolution. Moreover, in making a sociological analysis of the Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, Lepenies seems to make a remarkable confusion between the 1789 French

Revolution and the 1848 Revolution. Thus, his analysis reveals that the French Revolution animated French society in general so that various social classes worked together in order to achieve social-political freedom. The sociologist, however, omits or loses sight of the cruel episode concerning the Reign of Terror (1793-1794), the economical maneuvers of the bourgeoisie before and after this period, as well as the unending chain of unjust and unfounded executions of the so-called “enemies of the country.”<sup>115</sup> It is true that the French Revolution did not enter Germany and, if Germany was connected to the French Revolution in any way, it was not Goethe who encouraged the Revolution although he was the voice of its ideals. Lepenies is right about Goethe’s role in appeasing the enthusiast tendencies of his contemporaries as related to the French Revolution and about the fact that he encouraged reflection rather than action. The sociologist, however, does not understand the foundation of Goethe’s option as explained by Hans Kohn:

The first news of the French Revolution evoked a warm and often even enthusiastic response in the hearts of German intellectuals. Few of them understood its political and social implications; the great majority was hardly interested in them ... Among the great German writers, Goethe occupied an exceptional position ..., he warned against confusions between Old Greece and German national spirituality ...<sup>116</sup>

As man of culture, Goethe did not feel more comfortable in comparison with the situation of the French revolutionaries. Although he embraced the Revolution’s ideal of unity, fraternity and equality, Goethe warned against the danger of political nationalism, which he could already see taking firm roots in France. Goethe’s anti-nationalistic attitude became one of his generally-accepted features as a poet, which is also true for his entire life. Thus, Goethe was a Bürger amongst nationalists, a poet amongst courtiers, and a man of culture amongst politicians.<sup>117</sup> This image of Goethe may be seen in his *Gespräche mit Eckermann, Maximen und Reflexionen*, and *Hermann und Dorothea* or even in novels which evoke his personality, such as

---

<sup>115</sup> See Hans Kohn, “The Eve of German Nationalism (1789-1812)”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 12.2 (1951), 256-284.

<sup>116</sup> Kohn, “The Eve of German Nationalism”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 12.2 (1951), 256.

<sup>117</sup> These Goethean features as well as his opposition to the nationalism of his contemporaries can be found in James J. Sheehan’s Introduction to Hamish Scott and Brendan Simms (eds.), *Cultures of Power in Europe during the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Sheehan remains faithful to Nicholas Boyle’s image of Goethe as an anti-anarchist poet, who was bitterly critical of German nationalists.

Mann's *Lotte in Weimar*. Lepenies' argument that Goethe and other artists like him quenched the fight for political and social reform in the eighteenth century Germany is confusing both in connection with terminology (cultural nationalism as fundamentally different from political nationalism) and the social-historical significance of the European "revolutions" as compared to cultural movements. In fact, Lepenies' method to identify the "cultural" substratum of Germany's political mistakes—both past and present—resembles the Entente's propaganda, so that "selected passages, quoted out of context from the writings of all sorts of Germans ... were offered in support of the thesis of a singularly iniquitous German national character."<sup>118</sup> Lepenies loses sight of the fact that, in comparison with the French Revolution, whose practices and implications were criticized by Goethe, the 1848 Revolution created a huge wave with numerous implications throughout the entire European continent due to the real cooperation between the social classes as well as to the aspiration for social liberties (free parliament, free press, free public meetings, assistance for the economically disadvantaged social classes, etc.). Within the context of this revolutionary wave, Goethe and Schiller for instance were always used as prominent names with a view to solve some of Germany's major problems which were political or civic in nature.<sup>119</sup> This image of revolutionary Europe which also attracted Goethe's name as a promoter of controversial politics could be an answer to Lepenies' bewilderment as expressed below:

The question how Germany could become a modern economy without fostering modern social values and political institutions is generally answered by referring to the preponderance of the state, which gave from above what, in other countries, the bourgeoisie had to fight for and acquire through its own efforts. Modern Germany, it has been argued, thought primarily in terms of the might and majesty of the state, modern England primarily in terms of the rights and liberties of the citizen." ... This has involved a considerable weakening of politics and of the public

---

<sup>118</sup> "It was a favorite technique of French propaganda in World War I to quote the words of German writers as proof of the unique character of German nationalism and ruthlessness. Nietzsche and Schopenhauer were quoted more often than Bismarck, and Heinrich Treitschke, more often than Kaiser William II." See John L. Snell (*The Nazi Revolution: Germany's Guilt or Germany's Fate*), quoted in Michael F. Connors, "Dealing in Hate: The development of anti-German propaganda (The Entente propaganda)", *Institute for Historical Review* (<http://www.ihr.org/connors/dealinginhate.shtml>).

<sup>119</sup> See Ehrhard Bahr, "German Classicism and the French Revolution", *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 39.1 (2005), 134-137.

sphere. At times, it could seem as if Germany was a state without politics. Yet it never aimed at being a state without culture.<sup>120</sup>

Lepenies' bewilderment discloses a hidden problem. Without mentioning that the opposition he established between German and English economies originates in ideas about German ideology, which can also be found in Marx and Engels' homonymous study,<sup>121</sup> one can suggest another observation which evades a possible impression that this study accuses Lepenies of Marxism. Generally speaking, Lepenies' juxtaposition of culture and politics by evaluating Germany's artistic realm—also represented by Goethe—has a scientific rather than a cultural foundation. One could even argue that the sociologist wages war against the notion of German culture while using weapons which are not specific to it. Such an approach can lead to extreme confusion as pointed out earlier. Thus, Lepenies' observations on the works of Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann can indeed suffer from considerable interpretative flaws which wrongly expose Goethe as the promotor of German political nationalism and Mann as a fanatical eulogist of the power of the state as specific defects of a secular cultural legacy. One can sense here Lepenies' ambition which makes his critiques against the prominent names of Germany's culture seem rather suspicious as far as his real intentions are concerned. At the end of the day, the one who is really "seduced" by the German culture is neither Goethe, nor Mann<sup>122</sup> but Lepenies himself, who called himself one of Germany's most important intellectuals!<sup>123</sup> As for

---

<sup>120</sup> Lepenies, *The Seduction of Culture in German History*, 168-169. Lepenies' allusions to Germany as a foundationless economy or as a state devoid of politics rather than culture could originate in Marxist socialist philosophy which decried the fact that the Bürgers lacked the ambition of industrial conquests and do not get involved in class-fight.

<sup>121</sup> See Karl Marx; Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1970).

<sup>122</sup> While in exile, Mann replied to an article published in the "New York Times", on February the 23<sup>rd</sup> 1938: "Wo ich bin, ist Deutschland. Ich trage meine deutsche Kultur in mir." ("Where I am, is Germany. I carry my German culture in me.")

<sup>123</sup> Shortly after the publication of Lepenies' book, Victorino Matus challenged the sociologist's self-assessment. See, for instance, Matus' review in *First Things. A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life* 169 (2007). Matus questions the very source of Lepenies' arguments concerning the relationship between politics and culture. Thus, when Lepenies suggested Reinhold Niebuhr's *The Irony of American History* as the best book ever about the fight against ideological terror, Matus revealed an inconsistency. Thus, Niebuhr wrote half a century ago about the fact that the new American society and Constitution are far from perfect and do not hold all the answers to the general problems of humanity. As a theologian though, Niebuhr had in mind a superior external entity/being, who can find a solution to these problems. Consequently, the solution is not a better evaluation of the relationship between modern culture and politics, as suggested by Lepenies.

Goethe and Mann, it may be relevant to notice that in Mann's *Lotte in Weimar*, Goethe launches a harsh critique against Germany's intellectuals who were brought to tears by the image of Ferdinand Heineke—the German national hero who was wounded while he fought against France—as it also happened to Dr. Passow:

Doktor Passow namentlich, war Feuer und Flamme für ihn, weil er, seinem Schul-Ideale gemäß, die Verkörperung hellenischer Schönheit im Verein mit vaterländischem Freiheitsheroismus in ihm erblickte mit vielem Recht.

(Dr. Passow especially was all fire and flame for the young man; conformably to his tradition, he saw in him the embodiment of Hellenic beauty united with heroic patriotism and love of freedom.)<sup>124</sup>

Goethe's critique of this sort of intellectual—who not only praised the nationalistic enthusiasm but also mistook the ancient Greek ideal of humanity for its modern counterpart with German pedigree—is confirmed more than once in Adele's words. By calling Goethe the “Augustus” of the German culture and the “author of *Iphigenie*”, Adele shows that Goethe's high vision on humanity is not to be found in his fellow citizen's state of mind: they are so obtuse that they will not adhere to anything in this world „unless it sounds like a Lützow's campaign.” This is to say that Goethe reproached for their nationalism not the “ferocious versifiers” only, but also “the gifted singers of freedom” like Kleist and Arndt, and foresaw “the reign of chaos and barbarism following Napoleon's downfall.”<sup>125</sup>

Taking into account Lepenies' self-assumed title, one can eventually understand what he meant when he said that Germany and France never enjoyed cordial relationships. Thus, the meaning of Lepenies' statement is partially revealed by his disagreement with other foreign intellectuals who want to change the somber perspective on Germany and its culture. According to Matus, Lepenies expressed his disagreement with Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987), which proposed a new perspective on the international significance of Europe's culture (including Germany).<sup>126</sup> This

<sup>124</sup> Thomas Mann, *Königliche Hoheit. Lotte in Weimar* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1990), 534. See Mann, *Lotte in Weimar: The Beloved Returns*, trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 172, 178.

<sup>125</sup> Thomas Mann, *Königliche Hoheit. Lotte in Weimar*, 652. See Mann, *Lotte in Weimar*, 188.

<sup>126</sup> See Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987). See also John Ardagh and Katharina Ardagh, *Germany and the Germans* (London:

disagreement, however, should not be directed against Goethe, because Bloom's book does nothing but exonerate him.

Speaking of cordiality and the transmission of German cultural legacy, it is almost impossible not to mention Horace Bruford's definition of culture. According to Bruford, culture is a concept which in Germany is directly represented as *Bildung*. Bruford's argument is not singular in rejecting Lepenies' acid critique of the German culture. The sociologist's belief that the German culture is in fact a substitute for state politics which actually refused Germany any international cooperation and disseminated anti-Semitism is demolished precisely by those whom Lepenies wanted to defend as an advocate. Here is what we learn about the inspiration offered by Karl Berghahn's study on German-Jewish cultural relationships:

The editors [of *Goethe and German-Jewish Culture*] explain that its „subtext” is a statement by the cultural historian George L. Mosse, who, after being awarded the Goethe Medal in Munich in 1991, concluded his speech: „Hitler destroyed the Jews of Germany, but not their cultural heritage.” In *German Jews beyond Judaism* (1985) Mosse had argued that the German concept of *Bildung* (education and art as formation of the self and as liberation) as advocated by Goethe became an integral part of the identity of German Jews.<sup>127</sup>

Thus, from the standpoint represented by Goethe, the German culture functions as a defining factor of German identity rather than a political surrogate. This aspect naturally results from Goethean personality and the realm which is connected to it. The same aspect results from the “international” reaction or the general tendency of the twentieth century to approach German culture and its contemporary significance retrospectively. If Lepenies sees himself as an ambassador of cordial relationships between Germany and France (or any other country for that matter), he also highlights that he does so in advocating the development of science in his capacity of a scientist. In order to do this, he looks for the common aspect of all the successful attempts to “socialize” internationally in our time. His conclusion is that enthusiasm for empirical observation and for exact sciences (which he strongly

---

Penguin, 1996), and Richard Lord, *Culture Shock! Germany* [A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette] (Portland, OR: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company, 1996).

<sup>127</sup> Beate Allert, review of *Goethe and German-Jewish Culture* ed. by Karl Berghahn and Jorst Hermand, *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 21.1 (2002), 128-130. See also Georg L. Mosse, *The Culture of Western Europe: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. An Introduction* (London: John Murray, 1963), especially chapters II, III about Goethe as opposed to Romantic nationalism.

defends) as a social catalyst is the genuine bonding material in this particular case. Lepenies' discovery though is anything but new because it was also present as a general philosophical tendency in the nineteenth century, especially due to Hegel's concept of "purpose" seen as a promoter of the individual impetus for objective and scientific knowledge. Within this context, Lepenies' project is meant to be at the same time anti-Kantian, anti-Goethean and anti-traditional, with specific reference to the German cultural tradition. Such a conclusion is obvious if one compares Lepenies' attitude towards the traditional German culture and the attitude of the "new world" towards the European (and German) tradition. Lepenies' premise in his *The Seduction of Culture in German History* matches perfectly the introductory observation on American culture made by Alan Bloom in his *The Closing of the American Mind*. Bloom agrees with the revitalization of the American academic environment, schools, and universities in the 1960s, as well as the fact that the material prosperity was the natural results of this interest for natural sciences and of the passionate attempt to push the American nation towards scientific research. Nevertheless, contrary to Lepenies who places the scientific fact as a beneficial action against the European traditional element, Bloom notices that it was exactly this element of the European tradition which activated the intellect of the American students after the transient period of sheer enthusiasm for exact sciences:

Then I began to notice strange things. For example, for the first time, American students were really learning languages. And there were the signs of an incipient longing for something else... The students apparently learned what they were asked to learn, but boredom was not wholly compensated for by great expectations ... The „why” question was coming close to the surface. As a result ... social science and the humanities also began to profit ... They felt the alternative (i.e. to science) had been hidden from them.<sup>128</sup>

Bloom's observation matches Goethe's perspective on education and self-education, which was also noticed by Mosse as an "integral part of the identity of German Jews." This cultural tradition which Bloom considered as inherent and necessary does not exclude the epistemological formation of the scientific spirit, as Lepenies presupposes. The assuming of scientific education is as natural as the acquiring of a social-humanistic formation, and Goethe is top of the list among the intellectuals who succeeded in both. Le-

---

<sup>128</sup> Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988), 50.

penies' refusal to encourage the traditional-humanistic tendencies of modern intellectuals is a perfect match of his refusal to destroy the conceptual barriers between culture (with reference to Germany) and civilization (with reference to France, England, the United States of America, etc.) as well as their encompassing fields. Thus, contrary to Lepenies and in close relationship with the German artistic tradition, the idea of "German culture" includes—like any other national culture—the totality of the achievements of a certain nation to the point of establishing a "national specificity". In fact, this was the significance of Goethe's initial comparison between Germany and other "cultural" nations, namely the fact that the power of the state is not complete without the power of art or vice-versa, so any attempt to talk about national identity without this holistic approach is exaggerated. Concerning Lepenies' idea that posterity understood Goethe as a manipulator of state politics, it must be said that such an understanding of Goethe was rejected long before Lepenies. For instance, Pierre Moreau was not the only one who felt inspired by Goethe at the beginning of the twentieth century as he entered the realm of European art. Thus, the reception of Goethe produced a certain kind of stability which was sensed not only in Western Europe but also in the East. Thus, at the end of a discussion about the impact of the representatives of the German culture in Europe, the Romanian philosopher Andrei Pleșu concluded that Goethe could not be at the same time both an ambassador of peace through his works and a messenger of war through its public position. As a reaction against Romania's political situation, Pleșu resorts to Goethe in order to calm his petrified spirit:

The ambience in which the host [i.e. Goethe] lives, works, and eventually dies is not accessible to anyone because it is not bound to maintain a cult. It is a unity made of three rooms: the library, devoid of any desire to show off, ... then the working chamber, and ... finally the bedroom, extremely small and sober .... The three made up what Goethe used to call "meine Stube" or "my private room." This private room contains the substance, the energy and the justification of his public functions. It is here that the criteria and the purposes, the values and the horizon were established. The ingredients of this construction were mentioned, without affection, in connection with some famous verses: the absorbent experience of the entire world and of a life which was willing to ... faithfully keep what is old and friendly accept what is new in order to enjoy the meaning of the world and have sincere purposes.<sup>129</sup>

---

<sup>129</sup> Andrei Pleșu, "Dormitorul lui Goethe" ["Goethe's Dormitory"], *Dilema Veche* 113 (26 martie 2006). It is worth mentioning that Andrei Pleșu, formerly a Minister of Culture in

Thus, the horizon of German culture includes both the complementarity of culture and politics—which Goethe pursued on a daily basis—and the observation that this unity created no cult either in connection with state politics or with Goethe’s literary work as a symbol of German national identity. Contrary to Lepenies, this complementarity—or rather the idea of non-exclusion—of culture and politics is not a theory which should be implemented only in Germany. The functions of art and the idea that the language holds everything together<sup>130</sup> represent two principles which equally affect the political power and the identity of any nation. The concept of language is crucial in this respect because Goethe is primarily known as a writer. Concerning the functions of art in general, there is another aspect about Goethe’s role within the context of German art which is worth mentioning, namely Goethe’s relationship with national German music. This particular relationship reveals important aspects which can make a sharp distinction between the image of Goethe as a factor of stability within German culture and his portrayal as a promoter of any nationalistic ideal.

## 10. Goethe between Literature and Music. Tempering the Heroic Ideals of his Age

In *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* Goethe expresses, in Wilhelm Meister’s words, his discontent as well as his shame in connection with the indolence of his fellow Germans who mocked the modest artistic initiatives of the political leaders.<sup>131</sup> Goethe believed that the artistic consciousness of a nation should manifest itself alongside its political consciousness and this should happen in any European country whose history contained both periods of

---

Romania, was also the President of New Europe College in Bucharest, founded by Lepenies himself.

<sup>130</sup> See, for instance, Herman Lebovics, *Mona Lisa’s Escort: André Malraux and the Reinvention of French Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999). A contemporary of Lepenies, Lebovics criticizes the preconceptions about France in the second chapter, “On the future trustees of Western civilization”, as he investigates the “power of art” and “the great political power” in France before and during Goethe’s life. Lebovics also writes that, in sixteenth and seventeenth century France, they developed in parallel to the degree that they became a second nature both of kings and artists. The idea of parallel development does not exclude a possible degenerative relationship, so the French themselves must find the significance of culture in their nation. See Lebovics, *Mona Lisa’s Escort: André Malraux and the Reinvention of French Culture*, 27.

<sup>131</sup> Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, 187. See Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*, Book III, Chapter IX [The Harvard Classics Shelf of Fiction] (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917).

decline and progress.<sup>132</sup> As far as Germany is concerned, the problem is whether the artistic consciousness is tributary to politics and vice-versa. In other words, it is important to see whether German music depended on politics to such a large extent that it produced a powerful feeling of national pride which was constantly supported by state politics. Although this issue is primarily connected to the history of arts, it also concerns Goethe as well as the society of the eighteenth and nineteenth century Germany because they witnessed some political conflicts which had major repercussions on the realm of arts supported by Goethe. In this context, Germany becomes particularly important because music propelled it to the top of artistic hierarchy in Europe and the world for that matter. It is in fact extremely difficult if not impossible to discuss German culture without mentioning German music as represented by some of its world-famous composers such as Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven or Schubert. The beginnings of German music as connected to the Lutheran Reformation of the sixteenth century—which encouraged the development of religious music by means of church hymnody—were given a powerful impetus at the crossroad of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries when, for instance, Bach's music mirrored both the musical and the social changes underwent by Germany at that time. Thus, the Thirty Year War (1618-1648), which started between the German Catholics and Lutherans, gradually encompassed Europe's greatest military powers so that the continent became the scene of spiritual and physical devastation up to the point that its artistic achievements were rendered almost useless. Music, however, did not share the same fate. Interestingly enough, while the ravages of war put an end to artistic activities in general and Germany was profoundly desolated by the conflict long after the establishment of peace, its music found the energy to launch an impressive range of illustrious names which had dominated world music for centuries.<sup>133</sup>

The opposition between social destruction and musical enthusiasm presupposes more than just a mere attempt to forget or to reestablish the inte-

---

<sup>132</sup> The idea of cooperation or confrontation between art and politics in Europe, which is an indication of their secular coexistence, was approached for instance in *The Oxford History of Music*, ed. by W. H. Hadow (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902), especially volume 4. The rise or decline of each is nothing but the essence of their reason to exist. See also Michael Raeburn; Alan Kendall (eds.), *Heritage of Music*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). The authors present the impact of the historical period of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert on Germany history. Thus, they highlight the fact that the years 1790-1830 were characterized by crucial political, social and economic changes, which generated enthusiasm and support for composers.

<sup>133</sup> For details about the spiritual source offered to German society by its music which was a pillar of German culture in general, see J. A. Fuller Maitland, "The Age of Bach and Haendel. The State of Music in Germany", in *The Oxford History of Music*, vol. 4, 248 ff.

rior peace shattered by the ravages of war. This is important because the music which was composed during cataclysmic conflicts in Germany may have led to the fortification of the national feeling of corporate membership as a country. If this is true, music could have been perceived as German or Germanic (with reference to Austria, also) national music. Although it was not the musicians or the composers who created this positive feeling, the specifically national significance attributed to music can be traced to Germany's men of culture who perceived music as an integrative part of the development (*Bildung*) of Germany as a nation.<sup>134</sup> The idea of German music as *Bildung* is relevant for the relationship between German music and German national identity. If at the end of the eighteenth century, German intellectuals saw the *Bildung* as a means to educate the masses or the nation, then such a program was in accordance with the then contemporary rationalist ideology. Thus, this particular context leads automatically to a definition of music by contrast with the striking social reality of war (especially Napoleon's military actions). In the eighteenth century, German music became the means for the individual consciousness to identify itself to the German nation as a realm of morality and culture being devoid of any political and belligerent aspirations. In other words, German music during the time of the Enlightenment served mainly the political issue of Germany's self-definition as a nation. The acceptance of such a theory, however, would lead to the instant approval of Lepenies' idea about German culture as a surrogate to state politics.<sup>135</sup>

Such a conclusion as connected to the eighteenth century Germany would instantly reveal Goethe's importance for the issue of German music. While it is certainly true that the links between Goethe and music are rarely investigated by the literary critique, they can hardly be avoided even by those who believe Goethe's relationship with music is a mere exaggeration because his works manifested a certain indifference about the issue at stake.<sup>136</sup>

---

<sup>134</sup> Celia Applegate; Pamela Potter (eds.), *Music and German National Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 4 ff. We are informed that the statement was made in 1799 by Friedrich Rochlitz, editor of *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*.

<sup>135</sup> See Celia Applegate; Pamela Potter (eds), *Music and German National Identity*, p. 2; also Michael Raeburn, *Heritage of Music*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 36-40; and Hans Rudolf Vaegt, "Mann, Joyce, Wagner: The Question of Modernism in Doctor Faustus", *German Quaterly Book Reviews* (2005).

<sup>136</sup> See, for instance, Lorraine Byrne, *Schubert's Goethe Setting* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 3. Byrne uses the argument provided by Ernst Walker—quite famous in Germany's musical circles in the 1930s—who believed that Goethe was the most unmusical of the few exceptions of unmusical poets. Likewise, Moritz Bauer, a German musicologist from the same period and a specialist in Schubert, viewed Goethe as a man with a very limited wisdom as

Although our present study repeatedly attempted to remove the impression that Goethe used art to back his political agenda, his affinity to music or at least the existence of a parallelism between Goethe and the realm of composers cannot be easily dismissed. According to Byrne, this affinity can be proved in connection with at least two levels, and manifested itself as an attempt to polish the field of art which became a matter of interest to many cultural circles. The first level which has to do with Goethe's interest in music is revealed by the years he spent at the University of Leipzig (1765-1768) and they were characterized by the absence of any literary horizon. Over the years, the only memory Goethe had kept from the early age of sixteen was his love for the *Singspiele*, which was inoculated upon him by the composer Adam Hiller.<sup>137</sup> Although the comic musical genre was a perfect match for the still unexperienced young Goethe, his passion for the "played" music was to take shape after many years as he took over the supervision of the Weimar Theatre in a period when he defined this particular genre in connection with his artistic works. It should be mentioned here that Goethe's early interest in the *Singspiele* was later completed—under Herder's influence in Strasbourg—by his interest in folk music, as proved by the parodies to the tunes he himself gathered from peasants and then transcribed manually. The importance of this observation is critical because—as shown in Hiller's *Treatise on Vocal Performance and Ornamentation*—the simultaneous cultivation of this particular genre and popular folklore announces a new tendency in German music as well as introduces the second level of Goethe's literary-musical activity, namely the adaptation of the Italian foundation of German music. This was evident at the Weimar Court, where the art of music could be counted among Goethe's preoccupations, as it revealed a significant detail concerning the internal status of German music in relationship with its external implications. Thus, in Germany, the eighteenth century music was not cultivated on its national soil but it was rather borrowed from Italy. If in England this foreign element did not work as expected, in Germany the situation was completely different. In Germany, it is not nature which makes music understandable but culture and cultivation.<sup>138</sup> So, in Germany the art of music developed in connection with the Italian

---

far as music was concerned. Elizabeth Schumann, the famous soprano, also rebuked Goethe for his indifference to music.

<sup>137</sup> After the publication of her *Schubert's Goethe Setting* which concerns the cultural exchange between Schubert's music and Goethe's poetry, Byrne investigated Goethe's preference for this musical genre in all his thirty six librettos, starting from *Erwin and Elmire* and finishing with *Faust*. See the review to Tina Harmann's *Goethes Musiktheater: Singspiele, Opern, Festspiele, "Faust"*, in *Music and Letters* 87.3 (2006), 433-437.

<sup>138</sup> W. H. Hadow (ed.), *The Oxford History of Music*, vol. 4, 249-250.

element, and the success or [the lack thereof] the naturalization of this external element is logically determined by the very detail which had characterized the Italian music of the time. Thus, a brief presentation of the history of music in Italy can shed some light on the repercussions which were caused by the fact that Italian music was borrowed by the Germans.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, when the Germans benefited from the positive artistic effects of the cultivation of church chorals, in Italy the predominant musical genre was the *opera*, a term with two meanings. First, the *opera* is a work of art, and secondly, it is a musical work produced in the Italian language. This means that the definition of the *opera* as art in Italy coincided with the definition of the national language and the formation of the European nations which were formerly part of the Holy Roman Empire. Consequently, the role of the opera in Italy announced both an artistic-cultural event and a political-national event. As it was equally artistic and national in character, the Italian opera is tributary to the philosophy of the Renaissance which looked for the Greek antiquity as an inspiration source. Thus, on the background of the Greek tragedy, the Italian opera developed two musical genres in the eighteenth century: the *opera seria* (which was essentially earnest in character, as indicated by Sophocles' and Euripides' tragedy), and the *opera buffa* (which was predominantly comic in nature and literally conquered the whole of Italy as well as many other countries). The difference between the two genres resides firstly in their origin or chronology. The *opera seria* appeared at the beginning of the eighteenth century as an effort of the Arcadian Academy to impress a predominantly aesthetic-moral role on art in general, as well as elevate the image of the sovereign ruler<sup>139</sup> (a combination between Aeschylus and Sophocles was preferred). Its ideals were also impressed on the romantic art of the nineteenth century, which focuses on the character's feelings and emotivity, as well as promotes dignity in connection with great historical figures.<sup>140</sup>

The *opera buffa* identifies itself with the beginnings of the European nations—especially with Italy, Germany, and England—and it highlights the role of the actor according to the ancient Greek plays, which balance the

---

<sup>139</sup> John H. Warrack, *German Opera. From Beginnings to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). The beginnings of the German opera are followed from the first theatrical attempts of the *Singspiele* to the later theories as proposed by the romantic philosophy of the nineteenth century, when the character of the German opera deviated from its original direction. The then opera consolidated itself as a mythologizing art in opposition to the ancient art of dramatization. See also John H. Warrack; Ewan West, *The Oxford Dictionary of Opera* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), from p. 11.

<sup>140</sup> For a parallel history of musical genres, see Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

*song-act* relationship in order to diminish the melodramatic elements and offer a realistic perspective on acting.<sup>141</sup> The Italian comic opera which preceded the German *Singspiele* offered a far better dramatic action than the *opera seria* whose main weakness was evident especially during the nineteenth century as a propensity for spectacular presentations (the importance of the orchestra, the impressive central character, the minimization of the plot in order to point to this central character, etc.). As a musical genre which witnessed the birth of the European nations, the *opera buffa* resembles Europe's classical literature and is masterfully represented within the German classicism.

As far as Goethe is concerned, in his capacity of Director of the Weimar Theatre (1791-1817), he seized the opportunity to demonstrate the possibilities presented by the adaptation of an external genre—such as the *opera*—to the national realities of Germany. His love for the Italian opera—which he developed during his Italian journeys in cities like Rome, Naples, Florence, and Venice—will become evident by means of the one hundred symphonic opera and over thirty *Singspiele* produced at the Theatre during his supervision. The fact that Goethe ordered the production of these genres—one naturalized, as in Bach and Haendel's symphonies, while the other one external/exotic, as in the comic genre taken over from the Italian *opera buffa* by Haydn and Mozart—on a national stage was definitely an attempt to adapt them to the German cultural context. Very much like Monteverdi in his native country<sup>142</sup>, Goethe was a genuine pathfinder for the cultivation of the Italian genre in German soil. Thus, the Weimar stage witnessed the production of tens of compositions belonging to foreign authors (Monsigny, Dalayrac, Salieri, Rossini, for instance) which were played more often than some of the famous native works (of Gluck or Mozart, for example) due especially to the richness of their content.<sup>143</sup> To be sure, the *Singspiele* was the musical genre which embodied Goethe's efforts to nationalize and even germanize music. As, for instance, in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Goethe

---

<sup>141</sup> Stanley Sadie; Alison Latham (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 13. See also the discussion about the interdependency relationship between singing and dancing as part of the artistic manifestation of any nation from very ancient times.

<sup>142</sup> Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643), an Italian composer who marked the transition from renaissance music to baroque, conveyed a great importance to the instrumental and the expressive elements of the opera. In stressing the importance between word and music, Monteverdi facilitated both the diversification of musical genres and their enrichment through virtuosity in accordance with the spirit of ancient Greek tragedy, see *The Fable of Orpheus*. See John Whenham, *Claudio Monteverdi: Orfeo* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 2 ff.

<sup>143</sup> Byrne, *Schubert's Goethe Setting*, 5.

made numerous attempts to popularize this musical genre, namely to encourage notable achievements in the field of music as it was the case of the other arts he himself supervised. Of course, his intention was to educate people, taking into account that the *Singspiele* was very appealing to ordinary men and women. At the same time, however, he wanted to elevate the *Singspiele*—which was more than two hundred years old—to the level of the *opera seria*—which was monumental by its emphasis on the role of instruments, orchestra, the paramount importance of a central character, and its tendency to abstract the forms of musical manifestation.

It has already been shown that before he produced any literary work worthy of a literary genius, Goethe had been preoccupied with the music of the German village. The period of his mature creation, when he was also the Director of the Weimar Theatre, boosted this interest which became somehow institutionalized, in the sense that it was the music of the “town” or of the Weimar Court. This particular development is similar to that of the ancient Greek chants, which were specific to old orally transmitted legends (as, for instance, in Homer’s epic poems). This is a proof that Goethe was preoccupied with balance, which was specific to the popular-epical poem in ancient Greece:

Archaic Greek poetry is a different literary phenomenon than modern poetry in terms of content, form, and communication. In ancient times, very much like the works of art, poetic works were a direct and unmediated manifestation of the social and political realities, as well as of the individual’s behavior in the life of the community. It primarily expresses essential events; it also resorts—to a great extent—to mythical narratives ..., but it has predominantly a didactic and pedagogical function. The element that distinguishes it radically from modern poetry is the type of communication—bound to recitation—be it individual or choral. The term used to designate this activity, *mousikè*, signifies a close correlation between text and music.<sup>144</sup>

Goethe had a key-element in mind whenever he decided to approach any musical genre; thus, musical art needs elaboration, the toil of creation which is specific to the genius and was represented in Antiquity by the concept of *amanuensis*, i.e. the product obtained through consuming manual labor (which includes the manual transcription of an oral creation).<sup>145</sup> Thus,

---

<sup>144</sup> Adelina Piatkowski, *O istorie a Greciei antice* (București: Albatros, 1988), 104-105.

<sup>145</sup> The idea of *amanuensis* may be found in Goethe’s *Conversations with Eckermann*, where he talks about his perspective on the artist and the work of art. Thus, Goethe sees

Goethe distanced himself from any attempt to make music accessible to masses and ordinary people in general through the *Singspiele* understood as fraternization with the people, or as nationalization of music by means of the stage performance before the masses. As a result of the unitary relationship between the song and the word, music is defined by Goethe as it was by ancient Greeks who ascribed to it the mnemotechnical function of learning and education. Goethe's attempt to turn music into an art which was compatible in value and function with the other arts developed in Germany<sup>146</sup> until that time is different from the artistic trends of the nineteenth century. Contrary to Goethe, verist modern composers—who craved for the glory of ancient artists—wanted to attract the masses through various works which were on the verge of realism and naturalism by evoking social facts and the daily situation of the common man. This is one of the meanings given by modernism to the idea of the nationalization of the opera, even though modern opera (mainly Italian) had a commercial rather than a social-historical character.<sup>147</sup> As applied to the opera, modernism—which deviated from the original meaning given to the idea of music by the ancient Greeks—lost not only the contact between the text and the song (or tune) but also the artistic reality in itself, which confers significance to music. This is because music is different from art, literary history as well as other domains of history by means of the relationship between historical reality and actual facts/events.<sup>148</sup>

The fact that Goethe encouraged the performance of musical works on the stage of a theatre unequivocally implies the feeling of the cultural result of the stage performance. This culturalization has a different finality from the presupposition that the pedagogical/learning function of music should lead to nationalization or even germanization. According to Goethe, the function of music as a stage performance should have the same result as the

---

himself as an artist who approaches his entire work with *amanuensis* (the toil of writing and transcribing his literary works). See Goethe, *Conversations with Eckerman: Being Appreciations and Criticism on Many Subjects* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2005), 57-58, 248-255.

<sup>146</sup> Byrne mentions Goethe's positive reaction occasioned by the debut of Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, which he saw as the achievement of his dream to reunite musical composition with theoretical appreciations in a highly artistic fashion. Byrne, *Schubert's Goethe Setting*, 5.

<sup>147</sup> For details about verism (from the Italian *verismo*, a musical and literary current in Italy), as well as the nationalization of the opera in ante- and post-war Italy (1890-1915), see Alan Mallach, *The Autumn of the Italian Opera* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2007), 3-13, 337-340.

<sup>148</sup> Katherine Bergeron; Philip V. Bohlman (eds.), *Disciplining Music: Musicology and its Canons* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 95.

concept of *amanuensis*, that is to educate the public through the possibilities given by the cooperation between hearing and sight, or between the song and mimics (as for instance in ancient Greece):

The performance of the [Greek] rhapsodist presupposed mimics and gestures, which presupposes that the means of communication was complex, so it was addressed both to ears and eyes ... In order to meet the requirements of such a performance, the rhapsodist or the singer had to be well endowed and talented ... and he also needed a very good memory. According to what we know from numerous sources, ancient Greece hosted genuine “schools” of rhapsody and lyric poetry, where people could specialize in rhapsodic recitation, hymnic chants and traditional lay songs. Thus, the lyric singer becomes a professional, which allows the author of the *Odyssey* (chant XII, 382ff.) to see him at the same level with an ordinary craftsman, a carpenter or a physician.<sup>149</sup>

During Goethe’s supervision, the Weimar Theatre was a “school” where artists learned how to manifest their talent as “rhapsodists” and “singers” as they were at the beginning of a vast and complex branch of art, very much like the rhapsodists of ancient Greece. Likewise, the practical application of talent on stage resulted in the memorization of certain parts of the performed opera by the public, which was the witness of this new way of communication addressed to their hearing and sight. This was actually Goethe’s idea of culturalization as outcome of the application of the *Singspiele* on the performing scene of Weimar’s Theatre. The idea that, through Goethe, the music of the eighteenth century did not acquire a commercial-national character and did not intend to attract the masses by any means whatsoever (like in nineteenth century Italy) is backed by Goethe’s application of the *amanuensis* concept to music. Following his perspective on poetry, Goethe’s music presupposes cosmic proportions, because it is an expression of geniality and has supernatural overtones, which is also the case of arts in general. Thus, poetry and music require finesse, a lot of work and other activities which involve laborious toil. On the other hand, also like poetry by means of which Goethe distanced himself from his contemporaries in order to look back to antiquity, music manages to escape the peril of verism, so it does not sink into the trifles of society. For Goethe, music is supernatural and extramundane, like for instance the “musicality” of *Der Zauberlehrling* and *Faust*. It creates the same feeling of a “music of the spheres” which is so

---

<sup>149</sup> Piatkowski, *O istorie a Greciei antice*, 105.

characteristic of the two poems that express the vision of the harmony of universal elements as seen in the sorcerer's discourse.<sup>150</sup>

The accusation that Goethe did his best to culturalize music by any means or to turn German culture into a substitute for any other internal or international problem is based on these specific features which consecrated German music especially in Goethe's age, namely music as an expression of cosmic realities, of geniality, of the supernatural as well as cultural majesty. Thus, such music—especially as seen by Goethe—illustrates national majesty because, through Goethe who admired classical antiquity, music was enriched both as art and reflection of the spirituality of the German people.

It has been shown that Goethe's passion for music is confirmed by his interest in popular art as well as in "performed" art, or "theatric" music (*Singspiele*). Moreover, it was a lifetime passion which manifested itself both during his youth as a result of his romantic ideals and his maturity as a balanced vision of musical art while he directed the Weimar Theatre. Thus, Goethe's concern for music was the thin red line which connected his early timid aesthetic manifestations (from his Strasbourg years to his trips to Italy) to the literary exuberance following his Italian experience (after 1788). In a letter to composer Philipp Christoph Kayser dated June 24, 1784, Goethe revealed his deep feelings for this new art, which was being cultivated in Germany and overshadowed the inferior state of the then contemporary poetry. Thus, Goethe wrote he was thrilled by the delicacy and grace which are disclosed as the composer—like a heavenly being—floated over the poet's earthly nature.<sup>151</sup> Goethe's feelings for music in this period indicate, as expected, both the early influence of Adam Miller's *Gewandthaus* soirées and the later influence of Herder's perspective on music, which was exercised during Goethe's formation as an artist with clear romantic-popular-national overtones.

Goethe's voluminous autobiography—which is itself a genuine *Bildungsroman* and a fresco of social-political life with important repercussions on

---

<sup>150</sup> For details, see Hannsdieter Wohlfarth, *Johann Sebastian Bach* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1987), 21. Clarke mentions Goethe's conclusion after he listened to Bach's music. Thus, Goethe reportedly said that Bach's music was as if the eternal harmony communicated with itself, as it must have happened in God's kingdom before the creation of the world.

<sup>151</sup> See the details in Steven P. Sondrup; Virgil Nemoianu (eds.), *Expanding Borders: Non-fictional Romantic Prose* [Comparative History of Literature in European Languages] (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004), 404. This definition seems to belong to Goethe's early period of romantic pursuit, for which music was a necessary and vital asset for the genius to escape the compelling social realm. This perspective on music, however, is not backed by a subsequent explicit and extensive theoretical amplification.

the artist's personality—reveals a detail that has been frequently ignored. Known as *Dichtung und Wahrheit: Aus meinem Leben (From My Life: Poetry and Truth)*, Goethe's autobiography caused an enormous interest among his contemporaries, so it was successively published in Germany and abroad in various forms and editions shortly after Goethe's death. Throughout its thirteen books, however, Goethe's references to the music of his days are quite rare as compared to the impact which this particular art had on his personality. Most of the references to music belong to Goethe's youth until the age of twenty-six when he arrived in Weimar (1775). A reasonable explanation of this situation resides in the fact that Goethe wrote his autobiography in the last part of his life when he dedicated himself almost totally to the literary creation as proved by *Faust*, *Wahlverwandtschaften (Elective Affinities)* and *Italienische Reise (Italian Journey)*. Goethe discloses the fact that his journey to Italy caused him to change his interest from the early idea of the embodiment of popular genius in music to the later perspective on the poetic genius who is indebted to Greek antiquity. Thus, from the idea of the genius' unmediated expression through music, maturity pushes Goethe to a definition of poetic genius who is constantly in unmediated contact with nature.<sup>152</sup> In close connection with Kant's discussion about the genius, Goethe's new perspective on poetic genius places him in opposition to Kant. If in Kant the genius presupposes hard work and inspiration and eventually a matter of deduction, Goethe does not look for imitation when he scrutinizes Greek antiquity. For him, the Greek art is a matter of intuition because the Greek artist was forced to see and experiment nature in itself. Kant's genius prescribed rules to art, while Goethe eliminates the barrier between nature and art. Goethe's autobiography ends with some thoughts about the relationship between nature and art as reflected in *Die Leiden des jungen Werther*. His final ideas are conclusions to his entire work and for Goethe the relationships between the experiences of the past and the act of seeing as a feature of Greek poetry are based on identity. Thus, poetry as reflected in his novel should not be understood in the sense of fabrication or of a collection of factual details but as a disclosure of higher truths. Goethe intended to

---

<sup>152</sup> The identification of this movement from popular to natural is almost a compulsory condition for a correct understanding of Goethe. If this movement is ignored, one could attempt to demonstrate the idea of a profoundly nationalistic significance in Goethe, revealed by the then preference for private music and the sculpture of busts. The movement is ignored, too, in Susanne Kord; Burkhard Henke; Simon Richter (eds.), *Unwrapping Goethe's Weimar: Essays in Cultural Studies and Local Knowledge* (New York: Camden House, 1999), 1-9, and especially chapter 3 (Floating Heads, p. 65 ff.).

present and use his ability to express real truths which led his life as he understood them.<sup>153</sup>

Concerning the debate about the relationship between nature and art in Goethe, defined as his artistic/poetic creed, a key element is given by his scientific observations converted in poetic form. Goethe was very interested in truly cultivating his passion for nature as a scientific environment in close contact with Roman art, in which the sense of sight has a primordial role (reflected in his love for architecture, sculpture and painting). The uninterrupted contact with reality or what is visible and even tangible is not a short time objective established by the episodic contact between Greek and Roman culture. In Goethe, seeing is knit together with hearing, as reflected in his specialized works (see *Zur Farbenlehre*) which coexist with poems, so that both represent the way to beauty (poetry), which is also the way to truth.<sup>154</sup> The clarity of message as transmitted through precise language—oftentimes a specialized and scientific type of language—is in itself a feature of Goethe’s approach to the relationship between classicism and romanticism. His observation, which can be applied directly to his question whether music represents a cultural ascendancy of the German nation, is this: classicism and romanticism should be perceived as two artistic, parallel and competing movements which are not successive (Goethe targeted perhaps his own time). Classicism is essentially objective (Goethe himself declared he was a classic), while romanticism is subjective (Schiller, for instance, was a romantic).<sup>155</sup> For Goethe, the road to truth is fundamentally sincere and honest, as indicated a century before him by Boileau, who in his *L’Art poétique* disapproved the attempts to subject poetry to rhyme when rhyme must be a slave of truth:

To reason’s yoke she [the rime] quickly will incline.

.....

But if neglected, will as easily stray,

And master reason, which she should obey.

---

<sup>153</sup> Goethe, *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, 636. See Goethe, *From My Life. Poetry and Truth*, trans. by Catherine Hutter (New York: Penguin, 1960), 132.

<sup>154</sup> In this particular sense, Goethe’s *Metamorphose der Pflanzen* clearly and explicitly illustrates a chemical process which sets the whole cycle of life (birth, love, death) through a precise and visual poetic language as expressed in words such as “seeing”, “shown”, “observe”, “changes” etc. See *The Metamorphosis of Plants* in Goethe, *The Poems of Goethe*, trans. by Edgar Alfred Bowring (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), 427-430.

<sup>155</sup> Goethe, *Conversations of Goethe with Johann Peter Eckermann*, ed. by J. K. Moorhead, trans. by John Oxenford (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), 19-20.

Love reason, then; and let what'er you write  
Borrow from her its beauty, force, and light.<sup>156</sup>

Very much the same way, Goethe returns from Italy convinced of the necessity of form and clarity with reference to the relationship between rhythm and poetry, so that versification in works such as *Iphigenie auf Tauris* replaces free rhythm with defined rhythm.<sup>157</sup> In Goethe, the perspective on art and the necessity to make poetry objective, which is part of his theory about the *natura naturata*, define both the poet's character and his place within the lines of classical poetry:

The poet deserves not the name while he only speaks out his few subjective feelings; but as soon as he can appropriate to himself, and express the world, he is a poet.<sup>158</sup>

Thus, Goethe does not have an exclusivist perspective on music, or at least such an inclination cannot be seen in his works (not even in his autobiography when he remembers his youth). After his journey to Italy, Goethe is reluctant to compose rhythm without poetry. It should be said that this particular reluctance of Goethe, the poet coincides with the reluctance of Goethe, the writer with reference to the anonymous public or the ordinary people of Germany who could read his works and consequently claim that they have more chances to cultural progress than other nations. Actually, it was as early as 1797, when he wrote *Hermann und Dorothea*, that Goethe called the passion of his contemporaries for rhythm without poetry as being “unhealthy”, which meant that music should be subsidiary to poetry.<sup>159</sup>

By the fact that he hosted numerous *Singspiele*, operas and operettas on the stage of the Weimar Theatre with the clear intention to cultivate these foreign genres in Germany, Goethe, the writer logically subordinates music to literature. The proof is given by his literary works which he published between 1791 and 1817 as well as by his relationship with various composers and writers who placed music above the idea of harmony as defined by Goethe. For instance, while he was writing *Hermann und Dorothea*, Goethe appealed either to a bucolic character or to a peaceful character in order to

---

<sup>156</sup> Albert S. Cook (ed.), *The Art of Poetry: The Poetical Treatises of Horace, Vida, and Boileau* (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1892), 161.

<sup>157</sup> Siegfried Unseld, *Goethe and his Publishers* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 90.

<sup>158</sup> Goethe, *Conversations of Goethe with Johann Peter Eckermann*, 127.

<sup>159</sup> See Unseld, 111-121; also *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, ed. by Don M. Randel (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1986), 448, 464.

renew the idea of structural harmony between artistic creation and nature. Thus, even if the political reality of the time was a deviation from this order (see the French Revolution), Goethe follows in the footsteps of Homer, the rhapsodist of the war between Trojans and Greeks. A saga with heroic characters and bloody warriors, the *Iliad* transmits the story of a certain historical time with nations in search of honor rather than the idea of heroism in particular. The relationship between poetry and music in Homeric tragedy is reiterated in *Hermann und Dorothea* by means of the same scenic procedure of direct transmission, objectification and anamnesis, which works both in connection with the legend and the historical documentary. In Homer's poem, music does not have the role to highlight a certain character or portrait as in classical Greek tragedy represented by Aeschylus (see Oedipus and his individual tragedy) and Sophocles (see Antigone and Electra as powerful characters). Like Homer, Goethe does not intend to develop particular characters, even if the title of some of his poems—like, for instance, *Hermann und Dorothea* and *Egmont*—seem to indicate such an artistic procedure.<sup>160</sup>

In Goethe's poems, there is a music of the spheres which renews balance and harmony, so it is different from the "shakespearian song" which is sentimental and romantic. Shakespeare's vision of Greek tragedy also discloses his perception of the significance of music. In Shakespeare, the song is "an agent to influence the disposition of men; it is only one of the manifestations of the ancient Greek *ethos* of music", which had both ethical and artistic implications in the then cultural setting. Thus, Shakespeare's song does not express harmony, but unrest as it stresses a disposition of the soul, a particular voice and temperament by means of characters such as Hamlet and Othello. This is why "music often has such a charm to make a bad good, and good provoked to harm."<sup>161</sup> As seen by Shakespeare, music can indeed result in a feeling of unrest and straying, as Adorno and Dahlhaus clearly warned when maintaining that the force of the musical genius as a classifying mechanism entered a visible decline during romanticism because of the

---

<sup>160</sup> This is why J. G. Robertson concludes that, while he wrote *Hermann und Dorothea*, Goethe distanced himself from Schiller's and Shakespeare's common perspective on Greek tragedy, so he came closer to Homer. See Robertson, *A History of German Literature* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1970), 1.

<sup>161</sup> See, for details, William Sternfeld, *Music in Shakespearean Tragedy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), 83. Shakespeare's idea was taken over by Wagner the romantic who—according to Thomas Mann—assisted by his music the Nazi's maneuvers as a result of which Germany turned from good to evil through devilish tricks, so that the evil Germany is in fact the good Germany which lost its way. For details, see Applegate; Potter (eds.), *Music and German National Identity*, 156.

development of aesthetic autonomy as well as of the departure from musical creation.<sup>162</sup>

By contrast, in Goethe's poems music is truly subordinated to an apparently simple literary "attitude" which is in fact controversial as reflected by the writer himself. This attitude is the inclination to idyll, which Jean Paul called *Vollglück* and works as an epic description of total happiness in poems such as *Hermann und Dorothea*. Goethe's idyll seems to be different from similar attitudes expressed by Schiller, who defined the idyll as *Vollendung* or a representation of a happy and innocent humanity characterized by serenity and the balance of perfection.<sup>163</sup> The idyll as *Vollglück* has nothing to do with the enthusiasm and perfection of lyricism and romance, with the shepherds and the golden age or with the violent passion and human generalization. In Goethe, the idyll can appear virtually anywhere or, as Virgil Nemoianu wrote, in the parochial house or the fishermen's boat and can be manifested as the baptism of a newborn child or the holiday of a sad teacher.<sup>164</sup> This observation sheds light on the significance of harmony or total happiness in Goethe's works. The idyllic model used by Goethe in order to express the idea of total happiness through the close connection between rhythm and significance is manifested primarily within the character, so that the character feels an internal harmony or micro-harmony. This local harmony is a precondition for the universal and cosmic harmony as, for instance, in Goethe's *Novelle*. The two types of harmony, internal and cosmic, confirm each other because only a harmonious internal constitution, which is essentially calm, can come closer to the external and cosmic harmony, while external harmony can reveal itself only to someone who is fully characterized by internal harmony. Thus, in Goethe's *Novelle*, the family which lives with the lion is a classic example of harmonization between the internal realm of the individual and the external realm of nature. Goethe's works reflect on the whole the idea of the convergence between the two types of harmony. So, the internal and local harmony is concurrent with external and cosmic harmony. In Goethe, there is no such thing as an external perfection of nature in connection with the internal enthusiasm of its admirer, because

---

<sup>162</sup> See Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), 285-289. See also Carl Dahlhaus, *Schoenberg and the New Music* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 32-44. See also Jim Samson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 6.

<sup>163</sup> See, for details, Virgil Nemoianu, *Micro-armonia. Dezvoltarea și utilizarea modelului idilic în literatură* (Iași: Polirom, 1996), 11-12. The Romanian critic shows that the idyll is not a literary genre in itself but rather a "model" through which a certain cultural period transmitted its important message for the present as well as the future.

<sup>164</sup> Nemoianu, *Micro-armonia*, 11.

external harmony would be in contradiction with internal harmony, as for instance, in romanticism. On the contrary, Goethe expresses the necessity of the congruence between the two types of harmony, otherwise if one is enthusiastic while the other is calm, a sheer incongruence would be more than obvious.

It is clear then that in Goethe the concept of internal harmony influences the hero's portrait in poems such as *Egmont*. Concerning the relationship between Goethe's literary poem and the conversion of the hero's portrait in music, a certain number of problems emerged in connection with Goethe's intended message in the poem itself and the artistic message as understood by Beethoven in the music he composed for *Egmont*.<sup>165</sup> As shown before, Goethe was reticent about the anonymous or the non-initiated persons who could misinterpret the message of his works. It seems, however, that his reticence was also directed to a different approach to the problems of the hero in the music of that time. Goethe's reticence did not go unnoticed because he did sense the incongruence between his original message and Beethoven's perception of it.<sup>166</sup> Thus, he was aware that the hero's message in his *Egmont* was different from Beethoven's music to *Egmont*, even if the composer's work retained the title of the poem which created the impression of a copycat. For instance, Schiller noticed with a certain degree of indignation that Goethe did not intend to turn his *Egmont* into a masterpiece because *Egmont*, the historical character was more tragic and passionate than Goethe's image of it.<sup>167</sup> In a nutshell, while in *Egmont* Goethe expresses the honest character of his hero as he fought for freedom, Beethoven's music praises not only the personality of the hero, but also clearly illustrates the radical enthusiasm of the Enlightenment which stressed the necessity of in-

---

<sup>165</sup> At this point, it is helpful to have in mind Nemoianu's insistence on the importance of the message as well as on the preservation of its meaning (p. 11).

<sup>166</sup> See Siobhán Donovan; Robin Elliot (eds.), *Music and Literature in German Romanticism* [Studies in German Literature, Linguistics and Culture] (New York: Camden House, 2004), especially David Hill, "Goethe's *Egmont*, Beethoven's *Egmont*, 75-77.

<sup>167</sup> For details, see "Poetry and Agape: Reflections on Schiller and Goethe", a lecture held by Helga Zepp-LaRouche at the Schiller Institute in 1988. This lecture is also the introduction to her *Friedrich Schiller, Poet of Freedom*. Her name is frequently associated with the idea of cultural activism because, according to her own declaration, the Schiller Institute intends to be a movement for the liberation of Germany from the control of the Versailles and Yalta Treaties, so if Schiller represents this type of patriotism, his indignation towards Goethe's *Egmont* is in fact indignation towards Goethe's reticence concerning the nationalistic ideal of contemporary Germans. See [www.schillerinstitute.org/educ/poetry\\_agape.html](http://www.schillerinstitute.org/educ/poetry_agape.html).

dividual sacrifice for the liberation of one's native country.<sup>168</sup> Beethoven's music indicates a certain rupture, a certain discrepancy as it no longer flows gently and the hero's death is in itself a proof of romantic intrusions in the original text. As for Beethoven, he was convinced that the music he composed for Goethe's *Egmont* and the poet himself were symbols of the genuine "cult" which was Germany's most pressing need as seen in his private reflections as well as his personal thoughts expressed in letters to his closest friends. See, for example, the following letter:

When you write to Goethe about me, select all words which will express to him my inmost reverence and admiration. I am just on the point of writing to him about *Egmont*, to which I have written the music, and indeed purely out of love for his poems which cause me happiness. Who can be sufficiently thankful for a great poet, the richest jewel of a nation?<sup>169</sup>

It is a fact though that Beethoven's music and Goethe's poem open a wide range of possibilities concerning the relationship between music and idea or literature.<sup>170</sup> As applied to the historical-real time of the production of the two works—the heroic poem and the musical creation—the theme chosen by Beethoven intrigued Goethe to the same degree as the historical moment itself. As she witnessed Napoleon's invasion, Germany developed a deep sense of "apocalypticism" with reference to the end of history or the end of any meaning of history whatsoever. In other words, Beethoven's *Egmont* is the missing chain between this lack of meaning and the recovery of Germany's historical-cultural significance. Through *Egmont*—as well as through *Fidelio*—Beethoven created the significance of a new apocalyptic history for his fellow Germans, who would appeal to the symbolism of the sacrifice whenever history would force them to face similar situations to the

---

<sup>168</sup> A pertinent concluding remark about the relationship between Goethe, Beethoven and Schiller can be found in Cassirer, *Rousseau, Kant, and Goethe*, 98: "For Schiller the study of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* was guiding and crucial. Goethe came to Kant by way of the *Critique of Teleological Judgment*; Beethoven was seized and carried away by the *Critique of Practical Reason*. They all read the same Kant—and yet for each of them he was new and different."

<sup>169</sup> A. Eaglefield Hull (ed.), *Beethoven's Letters* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1926), 111-112. This particular letter of Beethoven belongs to the early stage of his relationship with Goethe, which was maintained mostly through intermediaries. The letter was sent to Bettina Brentano shortly after the publication of *Egmont's* music (May 24, 1810) and a day before the publication of the overture to the same opera (February 11, 1811).

<sup>170</sup> David Hill, in *Music and Literature in German Romanticism*, 75.

apocalyptic moment of Germany's occupation by Napoleon.<sup>171</sup> This is clearly a romantic feature of Napoleon and post-Napoleon Germany which Beethoven adopted into music and attempted to associate with Goethe's name.

Goethe's reaction to the transformation of the ideal of freedom into the ideal of apocalypticism by means of Beethoven's *Egmont* was in fact the reaction of a classic to the enthusiasm of a romantic, namely silence. It was definitely what Beethoven expected. Goethe's silence is both famous and atypical of Goethe's relationship with other writers, composers or critics,<sup>172</sup> and was caused by the new ideal foreseen by Beethoven in Goethe's poem, to which he added a personal touch and a new message, which was the message of his own music. The message of music or the message of Beethoven, the "poet of tonality", was different from the message of Goethe the "poet of words", which is clear from another letter whereby Beethoven expressed his scorn for Goethe as well as his disillusion that Goethe was not the poet he dreamt of:

Court air suits Goethe more than becomes a poet. One cannot laugh much at the ridiculous thing that virtuosi do, when poets, who ought to be looked upon as teachers of the nation, forget everything else amidst this glitter.<sup>173</sup>

---

<sup>171</sup> For details about the significance of German apocalypticism, see Stephen D. Ricks; Klaus Voldung (eds.), *The Apocalypse in Germany* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000). Some of the chapter titles are particularly relevant for the development of the apocalyptic vision of history from Napoleon's invasion to the establishment of nationalistic politics in twentieth century Germany. See Chapter 5, "History has no Meaning. So Meaning is Created", and Chapter 8, "The Birth of Nationalism from the Spirit of the Apocalypse".

<sup>172</sup> See also Romain Rolland, *Goethe and Beethoven* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1931). Goethe's silence concerning Beethoven is a leit-motif as he kept silence both during Beethoven's life and after his death. This was Goethe's way to express his disagreement with Beethoven or other German intellectuals such as Humboldt, Körner or Schubert.

<sup>173</sup> The letter was sent to Beethoven's Breitkopf und Haertel editor after his return from a concert he conducted for the victims of the Karsbad fire; his brief reference to Goethe gives him the opportunity to express his disdain for Goethe's "high aspirations" as compared to the composer's self-portrait, which was that of a good citizen and patriot. Despite this, in 1823, after a decade of slanderous remarks aimed at Goethe, Beethoven suddenly approached him for the best interest of one of his nephews, whom Goethe's influence at the Court could offer him a higher position in society. The end of the letter is eloquent for the difference between the two: "A few words from you would spread happiness around me. To your Excellence, who inspires. With the utmost esteem, your worshipper, Beethoven." See

So, it was either that Goethe's poetry changed within a very short period of time or the problem of the German nation was perceived differently by the two men of culture. As for Goethe, he had long reached his literary maturity; thus, his artistic convictions were well cemented.

Nevertheless, he was indeed aware that the message of music could be and was different from the message initially intended as programmatic. Within this context, here is how Goethe defined the concept of *Singspiele* as musical content:

Music is play [*Spiel*], but not frivolity [*Spielerei*]. Thoughts and feelings run like blood in the arteries of the harmonious body of beautiful sounds. They are not that body; they are not perceivable, but they animate it. The composer composes and thinks. He composes and thinks, however, at a remove from all objective reality, in tones ... the tones themselves are the untranslatable, ultimate language.<sup>174</sup>

In other words, music understood as absolute language is an abstract reality, not a subjective reality, because the composer's feelings cannot be perceived. Thus, Goethe believes that the message of music in itself is not subliminal but it is the listener's task to discover it. Goethe's perspective on music and his idea that music should charm the ear and fascinate the soul through its beauty and harmony are utterly opposed to a shocking reality which characterized music in those days, namely that "allusive motives would have been the very essence of music."<sup>175</sup>

Therefore, it seems that nineteenth century music as reflected in the then contemporary literature cannot be approached without at least mentioning Goethe's position, which may indicate that Goethe's literature had a sort of a programmatic role for many composers who worked during his life as well as well after it.<sup>176</sup> Thus, although the tones should not be translatable or interpretable as a musical language—which means that one should not continuously look for their "extramusical" meaning—they were indeed constitutive of the being of many German artists. A typical case is that of Richard

---

A. Eaglefield Hull (ed.), *Beethoven's Letters* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, London, 1926), 134 and 294.

<sup>174</sup> Goethe quoted and paraphrased in Christopher Alan Reynolds, *Motives for Allusion: Context and Content in Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 180.

<sup>175</sup> See Reynolds, *Motives for Allusion*, 180-181.

<sup>176</sup> See Jim Samson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 157 ff.

Wagner who—although not contemporary to Goethe—perceived this aesthetic symbolism defined as an allusive motive or interpretation of a literary work in an absolute/musical language. Possessing an impressive culture like all great musicians, Wagner was a listener before he was a composer. Thus, according to Cosima Wagner, the composer was a particularly special listener in the sense that he expected more from music as he was listening to it:

I tell R[ichard] that with regard to myself the curious thing has always been that from the moment music begins to sound, all images, concepts, the whole world of appearances and of the intellect, disappear. He says that he has always sought out the musical significance of things; for example, in the introduction of [Beethoven's] *A Major Symphony* he always thinks of the passage in *Faust*: "Passing gold buckets to each other, how heavenly powers ascend, descend!"<sup>177</sup>

Wagner's attitude as compared to that of other listeners announced a pattern which would later characterize the various approaches to the message of his music for an entire generation at the beginning of the twentieth century. Goethe's silence towards a similar attitude displayed by Beethoven in his *Egmont* reveals his disagreement with Beethoven's strategy to extract a certain kind of symbolism (the warrior hero and the ideal of a great nation) from the literary poem, which Goethe never intended. The fact that Goethe was silent as a means of protest against Beethoven's attempt to find an allusive motive in literature explains his definition of the *Singspiele* musical genre as tonal and absolute music. The practical application of the *Singspiele* on the stage of Weimar's Theatre as *Spiele* (interpretation or performance) was meant to cultivate the *Singspiele* as an act (a stage performance for the spectator's hearing and sight), not as an allusive association of mystical meanings. This is why Goethe never gave exclusive credit to music, namely he opposed the aesthetic autonomy of music in relationship with other creative arts. To Goethe, creativity and creation is utterly important and it presupposes harmony between rhythm and form/poetry, not the exacerbation of the role of rhythm over the role of poetry.<sup>178</sup> Thus, in connection with the

---

<sup>177</sup> Notes from Cosima Wagner's diary, in Reynolds, *Motives for Allusion*, 181.

<sup>178</sup> As a continuation of Goethe's works and in opposition to the Wagnerian-romantic tradition, the twentieth century will witness Arnold Schönberg's original music which discusses the "tonal problem" as a critique of "musical aestheticism". Schönberg's "athonal" method overturns the nineteenth century tradition of aesthetic enthusiasm and "visually" highlights the necessity of cooperation among arts (music and painting, for instance). See Christopher Hatch; David W. Bernstein, *Musical Theory and the Exploration of the Past* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

relationship between Goethe and the national-political factor or even the artistic-cultural factor, it should be underlined that his understanding of these issues necessarily presupposes elements of contact as well as of contrast which Goethe himself systematized through its definition of classicism and romanticism.<sup>179</sup> It is therefore relevant to indicate that—concerning the difference between classicism and romanticism as Goethe perceived it—this particular aspect of new romanticism, namely the powerful nationalistic trend, was targeted by Goethe when he said that romanticism was bad while classicism was good.

---

<sup>179</sup> See Goethe's relationship with the "new romantics" (Bettina Brentano and even Beethoven) or with other individuals during the last period of his life (1824-1832) described in Albert Bielschowsky; William A. Cooper, *The Life of Goethe*, vol. 3 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912), especially Chapter 4.

## CHAPTER II

### FRIEDRICH WILHELM NIETZSCHE AND THE CRISIS OF MODERN CULTURE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), one of the most provocative thinkers of the nineteenth century, continued Goethe's monumental efforts as an outstanding representative of the German culture in the nineteenth century. His connection with Goethe is given from the very start not only by the fact that he became a philosopher, a poet and a classical philologist around roughly the same intellectual centres visited by Goethe—and more than that, Nietzsche died in Weimar at the very end of the nineteenth century—but also by his close connection with the Greek culture and its rationalist philosophy as reflected in Aristotle. Moreover, Nietzsche, the prolific writer was also a passionate naturalist, so he produced works which foresaw a radical change within the German mentality at the end of the nineteenth century, such as his studies on the theory of evolution as well as Schopenhauer's influence on his early thought.

Praising the traditional culture of Antiquity, Nietzsche promoted the idea that the primordial role in the development of modern civilization is given by the tragic vision of a totally different type of a hero who is capable to affirm and support the reason for which he came into this world, in such a way that he himself is his own lawgiver while his law is his own “will to power”. As in Goethe's case, Nietzsche was convinced that traditional values made up a slavery morality—as in his *Zur Genealogie der Moral (On the Genealogy of Morality, 1887)* and his perspective on the legacy of the Jewish-informed Christianity. Thus, they must necessarily be replaced because of their individualistic character and incapacity of persuasion, i.e. the lack of impact in contemporary society (in this respect, the dogmatism of the Jewish law receives Nietzsche's famous retort—“God is dead”—which managed to overshadow the entire spirituality of the nineteenth century). The new morality of mankind appears as a result of the establishment of Dionysus' new cult, which is actually a new cosmic finality, namely the euphoric apocalyptic vision of the harmony between nature and humanity.

#### 1. Nietzsche between his Life and Works

The mere process of reading Nietzsche's works does not necessarily produce a correct understanding of his complex personality. This is why in or-

der to have a balanced perspective on his thought as well as on his spiritual transformation a further step is needed beyond a chronological browse of his writings. It is thus interesting to notice how Nietzsche's love for Schopenhauer, Wagner, and David Strauss was made manifest only to subsequently turn itself into repulsion, while his appreciation became imprecation as reflected in more than one single volume. It is equally rewarding to see how—from an outspoken promoter of his nation alongside of Schopenhauer, Wagner or Ritschl—Nietzsche became the man without a country after he distanced himself from them to the point that even his closest friends failed to understand him.<sup>180</sup> In the midst of this cruel personal experience, Nietzsche found an ally in Goethe, to whom he felt connected both through his perspective on the finality of the artistic work and his relationship with his own country. Then, although his later and posthumous works have not been properly studied to this day, it is relevant to see how, towards the end of his life, Nietzsche's voice became increasingly unclear, as if his message had been modified intentionally in order to confuse an entire generation (one could investigate here his sister's less known influence on his works which produced tendentious and nationalistic overtones that were totally alien to Nietzsche).

Thus, Nietzsche's works and ideas produce a dilemma which can be clarified through a study of his life as a key to the translation of his works. Nietzsche was born in Röcken bei Lützen, a small town between Leipzig and Weimar, in a family of Lutheran pastors and theologians. Since he was only four years old, the death of his father and brother transformed his life into a realm which was exclusively dominated by women, so for the next eight years of his life Nietzsche lived with his grandmother, his father's two sisters, and his younger sister, Therese Elizabeth Alexandra. Before he turned nineteen, his philosophy of life matched that of David Friedrich Strauss, Richard Wagner and Friedrich Wilhelm Ritschl, under whose influence he wrote essays—mainly on Aristotle—and later began his university career at the University of Basel. In 1865, when he was only twenty one, he made acquaintance for the first time—indirectly of course—of Schopenhauer as he came across his *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (*The World as Will and Representation*, 1818) in one of Leipzig's bookstores. At that time, Nietzsche was struck by Schopenhauer's atheistic and even turbulent perspective on the world. At twenty four he personally met Wagner at the University of Leipzig as Wagner himself was very enthusiastic about

---

<sup>180</sup> For details about Nietzsche's life and works see, for instance, Magnus Bernd; Kathleen M. Higgins (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Schopenhauer. The close relationship between the two was not based on philosophic grounds but rather on music as Nietzsche himself had written musical works for piano, chorus and orchestra while he was still an adolescent. Hence the sense of magnetism which Wagner's genius exerted over him let alone the powerful paternal image—at that time, Nietzsche's father would have been fifty six, exactly like Wagner. In 1870, he served in the French-Prussian War in military field hospitals and the experience of war left an indelibly profound impression on him as he witnessed the battles, wounds, diseases and deaths amid soldiers. He was also overwhelmed by his own horrible experience because he suffered from diphtheria and dysentery.

In 1872, at the age of twenty eight, he published his first book, *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* (*The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*), which is a clear testimony of Wagner and Schopenhauer's influence but also a token of his dissatisfaction with contemporary German society and culture. His observations about the particularities of the German culture inaugurate the early stage of his creation, which lasted from 1872 to 1876. From the very beginning, Nietzsche wrote that his main preoccupation in *Die Geburt der Tragödie* was the concept of music, which he perceived as a realm of the genius' freedom and not as a lapse into particularism and unilaterality.<sup>181</sup> Despite his admiration for Wagner and Schopenhauer, the book contains some elements of contradiction between Nietzsche and Schopenhauer's philosophy as well as between Nietzsche and Wagner's perspective on music. These elements can also be found—evidently in a more emphatic form—in Nietzsche's works of maturity which he produced after 1876. Although still one of Wagner's close friends and co-workers, Nietzsche no longer appears to be deeply impressed by Wagner's works as he was, for instance, in his first letters to the composer which revealed his admiration for Wagner's talent, spirit and paternal image:

Basel, 22. Mai 1869: Brief an Richard Wagner

Sehr verehrter Herr:

wie lange habe ich schon die Absicht gehabt, einmal ohne alle Scheu auszusprechen, welchen Grad von Dankbarkeit ich Ihnen gegenüber empfinde; da sich tatsächlich die besten und erhobesten Momente meines Lebens an Ihren Namen knüpfen und ich nur noch einen Mann kenne,

---

<sup>181</sup> Nietzsche wrote that without music, life would be an error. This statement should be seen as a warning sign which will characterize all his attempts to define art and philosophy under the auspices of universality. Thus, the idea of music is present in all of Nietzsche's works one way or another. See, for instance, George Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 1.

noch dazu Ihren großen Geistesbruder Arthur Schopenhauer, an den ich mit gleicher Verehrung, ja *religione quadam* denke ... Ihnen und Schopenhauer danke ich es, wenn ich bis jetzt festgehalten habe an dem germanischen Lebensernst, an einer vertieften Betrachtung dieses so räthselvollen und bedenklichen Daseins.

Wie viele rein wissenschaftlichen Probleme sich mir durch den Hinblick auf Ihre so einsam und merkwürdig dastehende Persönlichkeit allmählich erklärt haben, möchte ich Ihnen lieber einmal mündlich sagen, wie ich es auch gewünscht hätte, alles was ich eben geschrieben habe, nicht *schreiben* zu müssen. Wie gern würde ich an dem heutigen Tage in Ihrer See—und Bergeinsamkeit erschienen sein, wenn nicht die leidige Kette meines Berufes mich in meiner Basler Hundehütte zurückhielte.

Schließlich habe ich noch die Bitte auszusprechen, der Frau baronin von Bülow bestens empfohlen zu werden und mich selbst zeichnen zu dürfen als Ihren treusten und ergebensten Anhänger und Verehrer Dr. Nietzsche, Prof. in Basel.

(To Richard Wagner,  
Basel, May 22, 1869

Dear Sir: How long have I intended to express unreservedly the degree to which I feel grateful to you; because indeed the best and loftiest moments of my life are associated with your name, and I know of only one other man, your great spiritual brother Arthur Schopenhauer, whom I regard with equal reverence, even *religione quadam* ...

My thanks are due to you and to Schopenhauer if I have till now held fast to the Germanic seriousness, to a deepened view of this so enigmatic and questionable life.

How many purely scientific problems have been gradually clarified for me by contemplating your personality, so solitary and of such remarkable presence; this I would rather tell you one day in person, just as I would also wish not to have had to *write* all that I have just written. How I would have liked to appear today in your lake and mountain solitude, had not the tiresome chain of my profession kept me in my kennel in Basel.

Finally, I ask that you give my best wishes to Baroness von Bülow, and that I may have the honor to remain your most devoted and obedient adherent.

Dr. Nietzsche, Professor, Basel.)<sup>182</sup>

---

<sup>182</sup> See Christopher Middleton (ed.), *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishers, 1941), 53-54. This is one of Nietzsche's letters to Wagner after they

Although written in the same exuberant style which was similar to his first letters to Wagner, *Die Geburt der Tragödie* proposes from the start a clearly and scientifically delineated realm of interest because Nietzsche did not mistake music for national pride, as Wagner used to do. This is why he was very pessimistic about the chances of nationalized music to convey a universal message like ancient Greek tragedy, for instance. Nietzsche's first impressions about the role of tragedy and the significance of art in society still suffer from Schopenhauer's influence with reference to style and argument which—in line with Kant—are traditionally rationalistic. At the same time though it should be said that Schopenhauer's influence has nothing to do with Nietzsche's definition of and perspective on tragedy or art. Thus, in Schopenhauer, tragedy and art were part of the aspects which expressed a totally pessimistic perspective on life, because the tragedy of the ancient Greeks was felt as the outcome of the crushing and utterly hopeless social reality manifested in the realm of art. In Nietzsche, however, his use of Wagnerian language in *Die Geburt der Tragödie* indicates the youthful enthusiasm through the entire book but apart from this particular aspect, Nietzsche's work appeared as totally new. If Wagner believed that music and art in general had primarily a moral role because it was animated by certain models—be they earthly or other kind—Nietzsche felt that the role of art was predominantly aesthetic but not in the sense that it was a copy of nature. The elements Nietzsche borrowed from Wagner can be found in his Preface to the 1872 edition of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, which was dedicated to Wagner. These will disappear gradually from Nietzsche's works, so that in his Preface to the 1886 edition to *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, he insisted on terms like “tragedy”, “art”, “music”, “morality”, “Dionysian pessimism” whereby he waged open war to the deviant interpretations given to these concepts by Schopenhauer and Wagner:

Man versteht, an welche Aufgabe ich bereits mit diesem Buche zu rühren wagte? ...Wie sehr bedauere ich es jetzt, das ich damals noch nicht den Muth hatte, um mir in jedem Betrachte für so eigne Anschauungen und Wagnisse auch eine *eigne Sprache* zu erlauben,—daß ich mühselig mit Schopenhauerischen und Kantischen Formeln fremde und neue Werthschätzungen auszudrücken suchte, welche dem Geiste Kantens und Schopenhauers, ebenso wie ihrem Geschmacke, von Grund aus entgegen

---

met for the first time. The letter is strikingly different in content and tonality from Wagner's portrait as depicted by Nietzsche in his later *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, which is his last important work published in 1888.

gingen! Wie dachte doch Schopenhauer über die Tragödie? „Was allem Tragischen den eigenthümlichen Schwung zur Erhebung gibt“—sagt er, *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* II, 495—”ist das Aufgehen der Erkenntniss, daß die Welt, das Leben kein rechtes Genügen geben könne, mithin unsrer Anhänglichkeit *nicht werth sei*: darin besteht der tragische Geist—, er leitet demnach zur Resignation hin.“ Oh wie anders redete Dionysos zu mir! Oh wie ferne war mir damals gerade dieser ganze Resignationismus! ...

*Gegen* die Moral also kehrte damals, mit diesem fragwürdigen Buche, mein Instinkt, als ein fürsprechender Instinkt des Lebens, und erfand sich eine grundsätzliche Gegenlehre und Gegenwerthung des Lebens, eine rein artistische, eine *antichristliche* ... Als Philologe und Mensch der Worte taufte ich sie ... auf den Namen eines griechischen Gottes: ich hieß sie die dionysische.

... trotzdem will ich nicht gänzlich unterdrücken, wie unangenehm es mir jetzt erscheint, wie fremd es jetzt nach sechzehn Jahren vor mir steht, ... an welche sich jenes verwegene Buch zum ersten Male herangewagt hat,—*die Wissenschaft unter der Optik des Künstlers zu sehn, die Kunst aber unter der des Lebens.*

(Do people understand the nature of the task I dared to touch on back then with this book? ... How much I now regret the fact that at the time I did not yet have the courage to allow myself in every respect a *personal language* for such an individual point of view and such daring exploits—that I sought laboriously to express strange and new evaluations with formulas from Schopenhauer and Kant, something which basically went quite against the spirit of Kant and Schopenhauer, as well as against their tastes!

What then did Schopenhauer think about tragedy? He says: “What gives all tragedies their characteristic drive for elevation is the working out of the recognition that the world, that life, can provide no proper satisfaction, and thus our devotion to it is *not worthwhile* (*The World as Will and Representation*, II, 495); the tragic spirit consists of that insight—it leads therefore to resignation.” O, how differently Dionysus spoke to me! O, how far from me then was precisely this whole doctrine of resignation!

My instinct at that time turned itself *against* morality in this questionable book, as an instinct affirming of life, and invented for itself a fundamentally different doctrine and a totally opposite way of evaluating life, something purely artistic and *anti-Christian* ... As a philologist and

man of words, I baptized it ... after the name of a Greek god: I called it the *Dionysian*.

I do not want totally to hide how unpleasant the book seems to me now, how strangely after sixteen years it stands there in front of me ..., a work which that bold book dared to approach for the first time: *to look at science from the perspective of the artist, but to look at art from the perspective of life.*)<sup>183</sup>

The title of the preface indicates that it is a self-critical attempt which presents Nietzsche as a promoter of the aesthetic function of art in the sense that art—though filters and communicates the presence of good in its elements—is not an artifice, a space of propaganda or a moral concept, so it does not have a moralizing function. It also demonstrates Nietzsche's change of perspective concerning the significance and the role of art within society: thus, art is extra-moral or even "amoral", which means that art is devoid of particular-nationalistic implications. The idea that music and art in general have to rid themselves of the social "theatre" will be developed in his later *Der Fall Wagner, Ein Musikanten-Problem* (*The Case of Wagner, A Musician's Problem*, 1888). The resemblance between his Preface to the 1886 *Die Geburt der Tragödie* and his 1888 *Der Fall Wagner* shows a clear continuity between Nietzsche's philosophy and his perspective on art. Likewise, his Preface to the 1872 edition of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* discloses a powerful affinity to equally incisive ideas concerning the works of other contemporary intellectuals amongst whom the names of David Strauss and, again, Wagner, are prominent. On the other hand, Nietzsche's self-critique continues the principles about the finality of art and the meaning of artistic creation which were previously set by Goethe in his theories about the *natura naturata*. In Nietzsche as well as in Goethe, the artistic creation and the artist himself reach maturity only after the realization that, in itself, art defines itself as more than just the result of a mere rational process; thus, art is the outcome of an intuitive process—essentially free and unintended—which makes it vertical. This preoccupation, however, is part of his period of maturity. As far as his early period is concerned, Nietzsche investigated

---

<sup>183</sup> Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie. Versuch einer Selbstkritik in Werke*, ed. by Karl Schlechta (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1977). See Nietzsche, Preface to the 1886 edition of *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* (Plain Label Books, 2007). The quotations are given in the reverse order of pages (in German: 6, 5, 2; in English: 22, 21, 9), because the concepts can be understood easier and the explanation has a better fluency. Concerning the idea of art in Nietzsche in his mature and late period, see Salim Kemal, Ivan Gaskell and Daniel Conway (eds.), *Nietzsche, Philosophy and the Arts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, New York, 2002).

the connection between art and culture as well as between art and philosophy.<sup>184</sup>

Between 1873 and 1876, Nietzsche wrote *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* (*Untimely Meditations*), which contains *David Strauss: der Bekenner und der Schriftsteller* (*David Strauss: The Confessor and the Writer*, 1873)<sup>185</sup>, *Schopenhauer als Erzieher* (*Schopenhauer as Educator*, 1874) and *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* (1876). Written in the spirit of his 1872 *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, these works are made of essays which deal with the role and significance of David Strauss, Schopenhauer and Wagner for the then German culture. Likewise, as Nietzsche explains in his *Schopenhauer als Erzieher*, he began to “know” through their writings the essence of the age he lived in, so he gradually began to distance himself from it. Expressing his doubts concerning the then newly established German state (1871), Nietzsche is equally reticent concerning the relevance of philosophy for the contemporary society, where “man gar nicht mehr ahnt, wie weit der Ernst der Philosophie von dem Ernst einer Zeitung entfernt ist” (“one no longer has the slightest notion how different the seriousness of philosophy is from the seriousness of a newspaper.”)<sup>186</sup> These central themes from his first stage of creation will be resumed later in a totally different manner which announces the second stage of his mature writings.

Thus, Nietzsche’s second stage of literary creation (1878-1882) is inaugurated by his *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. Ein Buch für freie Geister* (*Human, All Too Human. A Book for Free Spirits*, 1878) and has two main coordinates: first, he put an end to his friendship with Wagner which prompted him to approach a new type of philosophy as opposed to Wag-

---

<sup>184</sup> See Aaron Ridley, “What is the meaning of aesthetic ideals?” in Kemal, Conway, Gaskell (eds.), *Nietzsche, Philosophy and the Arts*, 128.

<sup>185</sup> This work is particularly interesting because Nietzsche launches a fierce attack on David Strauss the theologian as well as on the atmosphere generated by his works within German culture. Thus, as far as Nietzsche was concerned, Strauss was a proof of the vulgarity and decadence of the German spirit. Nietzsche’s attack resembles Hegel’s philosophy as opposed to Scheleiermacher’s theology, which did not match Nietzsche’s perspective on Jesus. Strauss’ *Life of Jesus* generated a wide range of reactions as it was thought to inaugurate—both in Germany and Switzerland—a new era in textual criticism. Strauss believed that the wonders and the narratives of the Gospels are essentially mythical, so our image of Jesus is the result of how the first Christians understood the Jewish perspective on the Messiah, not the true Messiah. It is, however, arguable whether Nietzsche lost his faith after he read Strauss’ book.

<sup>186</sup> Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations. Schopenhauer as educator*, trans. by R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 54.

ner,<sup>187</sup> and secondly, he has to give up his university career in Basel because of the recurrence of some of his older health problems. It is now that his connection to Schopenhauer's philosophy enters an obvious decline; thus, Nietzsche questions Schopenhauer's philosophy under the auspices of his own philosophy with metaphysical overtones. The theme of the book is resumed in his *Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche* (*Mixed Opinions and Maxims*, 1879) as well as in his *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten* (*The Wanderer and his Shadow*, 1880). A year later, he published *Morgenröte: Gedanken über die moralischen Vorurteile* (*Daybreak: Reflections on Moral Prejudices*, 1881) which contains the seed of his concept of the will to power, which will later be developed in his *Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen* (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra. A Book for All and None*, 1885). At the end of his second artistic period, he wrote *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (*The Gay Science*, 1882), which contains atheistic reflections—especially section 125—as well as thoughts about the eternal recurrence—sections 285 and 341.

The third period of Nietzsche's creation is given by his works of maturity as well as by his last writings (1883-1887) and it starts with *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1885). In 1886, he republishes *Die Geburt der Tragödie* with the subtitle "*Greichentum und Pessimismus*" ("*Hellenism and Pessimism*"), which naturally took over ideas from his first book in 1872. Also in 1886, he wrote *Jenseits von Gut und Böse. Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft* (*Beyond Good and Evil. Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*), and in 1887 he published *Zur Genealogie der Moral. Eine Streitschrift* (*On the Genealogy of Morality. A Polemic*), which contains three essays as a critique of Christianity, as in the case of his previous book.<sup>188</sup>

---

<sup>187</sup> See Robert Wicks, "Friedrich Nietzsche", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2004). Wicks analyses the premises of Nietzsche's new philosophy in his recent book, *Nietzsche* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2007). Nietzsche launched a fierce and unveiled attack against Wagner in his aphorisms which concern the type of "artist". See also Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2004). Nietzsche's new philosophical orientation which was felt at the end of his first artistic period could be the result of his perception of the main tenets of the French Enlightenment. At the same time, however, Wagner began to produce a triumphalist-nationalistic kind of music as a means to manifest his disdain for the French and their so-called culture. Thus, when Wagner wrote *Parsifal* (1882), Nietzsche felt that his most beloved principles were trodden because Wagner's work contained anti-Semitic hints and was soaked in tendentious religiosity. Disappointed, Nietzsche wrote that he would never forgive Wagner for becoming *reichdeutsch* (i.e., nationalist). Starting with *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, he used any opportunity to criticize Wagner's works as well as their ethical-political content.

<sup>188</sup> For a detailed presentation of Nietzsche's spiritual development from his early writings to his later philosophy, see R. J. Hollingdale, *A Nietzsche Reader* (London: Penguin, 1977).

Nietzsche's last writings which were gathered in a single volume (1888) alternatively express both his disgust and appreciation for religion and Germany's political climate or for various books and authors in a genuine artistic creed. The year 1888 was the last of his artistic creation but it was extremely prolific. Thus, in May-August 1888 he wrote *Der Fall Wagner*, the twin book of his 1873 work on Strauss. It is here that Nietzsche proposed an interesting approach to Wagner's philosophy.<sup>189</sup> Thus, he connected Wagner's later artistic development (until his 1882 *Parsifal*) to his 1864 essay *Über Staat und Religion (On State and Religion)*, which he wrote at the request of King Ludwig II as a token of his support for the king's state politics. It must be noticed that in 1864 Wagner defined himself in opposition to the socialist avant-garde which he appreciated in 1848 but now pitied because it promoted the equality of all social classes. Wagner declares himself the promoter of a new social order, namely genuine nobility, the only social class which is capable to run state politics as proved by the then contemporary government (the 1860s) and its best representative, Ludwig II.<sup>190</sup> Wagner was convinced that Ludwig II's policy did not exclude his preoccupation for the welfare of the masses but it was different from the socialist approach. Thus Ludwig II's policy distinguished itself through its aesthetic ideals and the king himself, as a representative of genuine nobility, had the power to rule and induce to the masses the need for order and artistic beauty. Annoyed by the fact that through these ideas Wagner trod his own dignity as well as the dignity of his own people, Nietzsche reopened "the case of Wagner" and exposes the tight connection between Wagner's political and artistic convictions. Thus, Nietzsche reaches the conclusion that both are in fact decadent because they are tributary to a temporary and temporal government, while the value of art must be searched somewhere else. Consequently, through his art, Wagner signals a disease which threatens to affect the entire society, namely the increasing racism of the German nation.

---

Hollingdale explains Nietzsche's transition from his early concepts of logic, epistemology and metaphysics to his later notions of art, aesthetics, religion, nihilism and anti-nihilism as well as on his fundamental ideas such as the will to power, the superman, the eternal recurrence etc.

<sup>189</sup> Nietzsche saw Wagner as the exponent of a "decadent music" as proved by one of his letters to Peter Gast, see William H. Schaberg, *The Nietzsche Canon: A Publication History and Bibliography* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995). This book contains biographical details concerning Nietzsche's stay at Sils-Maria and Weimar as well as the Nietzsche Archive in Weimar.

<sup>190</sup> For details about Wagner's relationship with Ludwig II and the king's mythologization in Wagner's works, see Christopher McIntosh, *The Swan King: Ludwig II of Bavaria* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2003), 100-150.

In August-September 1888, Nietzsche wrote his *Götzen-Dämmerung, oder wie man mit dem Hammer philosophiert* (*The Twilight of the Idols or How to Philosophize with the Hammer*), which is a critique of Wagner's homonymous work as well as an appreciation of his own talents as a composer. It is here that Nietzsche says whether he is for or against famous thinkers or writers as well as against clearly delineated social and political situations. Thus, he criticizes Socrates, Plato and Kant, early Christianity, the then contemporary German spirit ("too full of beer" as far as he was concerned) as well as the works of Rousseau, Hugo, Sand, Michelet, Zola, Renan, Carlyle, Eliot, Darwin and Dante. On the other hand, he venerates those who—at least for him—opposed the above-mentioned names: Caesar, Napoleon, Dostoevsky, Thucydides and the sophists, as embodiments of a healthier and more vigorous man.<sup>191</sup>

---

<sup>191</sup> Even if Nietzsche divides those whom he criticizes in two distinct categories, it is common knowledge that many of those placed in opposition by Nietzsche actually shared common aspirations and ideas both as finality and significance. See, for instance, Eugene Stelzig, *The Romantic Subject in Autobiography. Rousseau and Goethe* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000). Stelzig offers a careful analysis of Rousseau and Goethe's ideas about the art of expressing the self in artistic works. Rousseau is approached in light of his *Confessions*, while Goethe is seen from the perspective of his *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, where he makes references to his early writings which disclose romantic influences as he describes his relationship with his family as well as his deeds. On the other hand, it is interesting to see Nietzsche's approach to Dostoevsky which appears as almost natural given his formation a representative of existentialist philosophy. Thus, Dostoevsky's novel *Crime and Punishment* expresses a spiritual and Christian (even Christianized) vision of human behavior. In Dostoevsky, man is subject to a constant fall as well as the mercy of his neighbors and is able to sink so deep in his sinful mire that only faith can save him from there. Moreover, his characters are constantly in search of God as they go through a series of costly mistakes and humiliation. If one considered only this particular aspect of Dostoevsky's novel, it would be difficult to understand why Nietzsche preferred him to Zola, whose characters share virtually the same fate—see, for instance, Zola's *Thérèse Raquin* (1868) as compared to Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (1866). Consequently, it appears that Nietzsche's loyalty to Dostoevsky has to do with the finality of the author's message as well as with the nuances of his characters' portrait. Zola preferred a scientific and materialistic approach as he sketched the character's portrait towards naturalism—see Robert Schaeffer, "Der Antichrist: Looking Back from the Year 100", *Free Inquiry* 9.1 (1988/98), while Dostoevsky placed in the minds of his characters some contrasting ideas about the freedom of choice, socialism, atheism, good and evil, happiness etc. What really counts for Nietzsche is therefore the psychology of the character which is crucial in Dostoevsky. This is why his *Notes from Underground* (1864) was seen as a founding work of existentialism in literature, the best overture to existentialism ever written—see Walter Kaufmann, *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* (London: Penguin Group, 1975), 52, as well as a book in which truth cries out from blood—according to Nietzsche, who comments on the importance of Dostoevsky as psychologist, see *The Twilight of the Idols*, in Nietzsche, *Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*,

In September 1888, Nietzsche wrote *Der Antichrist*. Unlike *Also sprach Zarathustra*, *Der Antichrist* no longer poses the problem of the misunderstanding of the author's language or intention, because it was not written in a symbolic key. Nietzsche clearly expresses here his opposition to the Lutheran faith of his father—actually of his sister—and explains that, bottom line, there was one single Christian on earth who ended up killed on a cross, and after him Christianity became the greatest curse being animated by pure revenge and willing to make use of whatever means to accomplish its goals.<sup>192</sup> Within this context, Nietzsche believes that the Christian doctrine is a false representation of reality because it promotes abstract concepts (such as God, soul, spirit) with abstract results (sin, grace, life, etc.). By comparing various religions, he concludes that the gods of the ancient Greeks had higher ideals than Christianity, and that Zeus and Apollo were images of powerful mortals which were projected in heaven—a clear reminiscence of the philosophy of the Enlightenment represented, among others, by Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach (1804-1872), a materialistic philosopher and a critic of religion. Feuerbach's philosophy establishes a connection between Hegel's idealism and later materialist-historical theories, such as those promoted by Marx and the "new Hegelians" (Nietzsche included). Unlike Kant, who attempted to limit the realm of reason in order to give space to faith, Feuerbach tried to demystify both faith and reason to the benefit of concrete reality as embodied by human conscience. His philosophy, anthropomorphic in nature,<sup>193</sup> represents the devaluation of the theistic

---

trans. by Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 219. As far as Nietzsche was concerned, one must look for the psychologist-writer in Dostoevsky. For details about the relationship between Nietzsche and Dostoevsky, see Lev Şestov, *Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Nietzsche* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1978).

<sup>192</sup> See the analysis offered by Robert Schaeffer, "Der Antichrist: Looking Back from the Year 100", *Free Inquiry* 9.1 (1988/98). Schaeffer believes that Nietzsche's attack transcends the realm of theology in order to target derivative concepts which stemmed from Christianity and went beyond their original ecclesiastic intention to occupy a prominent position within the value system of Western Christian society. Nietzsche also explains his departure from Schopenhauer's philosophy which, like Christianity, is decadent because men cannot satisfy the desires of their will so they have to abandon them and resign themselves to unhappiness. Nietzsche criticized again Wagner's music by saying that *Tristan und Isolde* is a symbol of Schopenhauer's nihilism, so Wagner himself is an enemy of life to the point that in his works misery became a virtue. As far as Nietzsche was concerned, Christianity has a clearly delineated foundation which has no need to extend itself over society in order to find its significance in society. Thus, Nietzsche's revolt originates in the attempts to condition the welfare of a nation as based on a particular understanding of the message of Christianity.

<sup>193</sup> Sidney Hook, *From Hegel to Kant* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950). His study explains that, in Germany, Feuerbach's philosophy became the voice of David

outlook. Thus, the individual is a function of the Absolute while the Absolute is a function of the individual. In other words, God or metaphysics is a mere projection of the human conscience. Nietzsche warns that this conscience, which is a false representation of reality, is the result of the modern approach to Christian doctrine that was prevalent in the nineteenth century. In analysing Feuerbach, Nietzsche concludes that idealist philosophy is a diminution of theology, while theology becomes a systematized religious conscience.<sup>194</sup> According to this philosophic system, Nietzsche writes in his *Der Antichrist*, Jesus should be admired at least due to the way he faced death because he did not feel bitterness or resentment for those who imprisoned and crucified him.<sup>195</sup> Nevertheless, unlike Feuerbach who cancelled any supreme authority for morality by his demystification of the idea of religion and divinity, Nietzsche blames modern society for these changes of values and meanings as this is actually the context for his *Der Antichrist* and *Zur Genealogie der Moral*. Feuerbach's philosophical implications were taken over ironically by Nietzsche who becomes an observer of the decadent spirit of his age in matters pertaining to morality. If in Feuerbach religion is just another word for psychological introspection while history is the foundation of any philosophy, Nietzsche is far from searching the measure of all things in man. He highlights the dangerous connection which his age made with philosophy/theology and music through Feuerbach and Wagner, which succeeded in going beyond any ascetic ideal ever nurtured by man:

Man erinnere sich, wie begeistert seiner Zeit Wagner in den Fußstapfen des Philosophen Feuerbach gegangen ist: Feuerbachs Wort von der „gesunden Sinnlichkeit“—das klang in den dreißiger und vierziger Jahren Wagnern gleich vielen Deutschen ... wie das Wort der Erlösung.

(Recall how enthusiastically in his day Wagner walked in the footsteps of the philosopher Feuerbach: “Feuerbach's word concerning ‘healthy sen-

---

Strauss' pantheistic humanism, which was based on a social interpretation of the religious message.

<sup>194</sup> *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. by Robert Audi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 264.

<sup>195</sup> Almost a century after Feuerbach and Nietzsche, Salvador Dali published his autobiography, which presents the shocking transition from the nihilists' “God does not exist” to Nietzsche's “God is dead”. Thus, Nietzsche's observation is a powerful critique of nihilism and it reveals a significant aspect concerning the development of modernism. See Salvador Dali, *Journal of a Genius* (Washington: Creation Books, 1998), 4.

suality’—in the thirties and forties this sounded to Wagner as to many Germans like the word of redemption.”)<sup>196</sup>

Thus, it is not at random that *Der Antichrist* is preceded by *Also sprach Zarathustra* and even the much earlier *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen*. In both, Nietzsche expresses his scorn for non-values or the pseudo-values of the then contemporary society. This is proved by his *David Strauss: der Bekenner und der Schriftsteller* which was included as an essay in his *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen*; it is here that Nietzsche becomes one of Strauss’ fiercest critics. He not only criticized Strauss but also his book *Der alte und der neue Glaube* (*The Old Faith and the New*, 1872), which to Nietzsche is typically modern as it belongs to his age, so it will always be adequate or timely and well received by those who want to take delight in man as the measure of all things, the exponent of history, and the representative of progress based on human science and technology.<sup>197</sup> The proof resides in all these essays and books which are a reaction against nineteenth century materialism as seen in the concepts used by Nietzsche to repudiate the development of the German spirit as supporting the Reich. Thus, for Nietzsche, the German spirit is timely, as opposed to the ancient Greek spirit which is untimely to modern man and essentially religious. The distinction between the two is so acute that, if David Strauss’ *Der alte und der neue Glaube* is seen as timely, then Nietzsche’s attack is definitely untimely.<sup>198</sup> Thus, Nietzsche places himself at the antipode of the German society being influenced by Feuerbach’s philosophy. Likewise, *Der Antichrist* is followed by *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, which contains a devastating critique of the ide-

---

<sup>196</sup> Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral. Dritte Abhandlung: Was bedeuten asketische Ideale?* 3, in *Werke*, ed. by Karl Schlechta (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1977), 68. See Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality. A Polemic*, trans. by Maudemarie Clarke and Alan J. Swenswen (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998), 69.

<sup>197</sup> The publication of Strauss’ book was perceived by Nietzsche as a manifesto of the German Reich, which was established the very same year (1871). In *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen*, Nietzsche believed that the new state had given the final blow to pessimistic thinkers like Schopenhauer, who can no longer be true educators—sentimentally detached—of the then contemporary generation: “The new German Reich is a decisive and annihilating blow to all pessimistic philosophizing”, see Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, trans. by R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 147.

<sup>198</sup> Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, trans. by R. J. Hollingdale, 1997, see pp. 1-10. All the famous names included in *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen*, as revealed by *Schopenhauer als Erzieher* and *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, are analysed in the Introduction by Reginald John Hollingdale under the auspices of the word “untimely” as opposed to Nietzsche’s philosophy which continues the philosophy of Greek antiquity and its vision of man in his relationship with divinity.

alization of this rationalistic-humanist perspective on history. Nietzsche explains that he disagrees completely both with his *par excellence* atheistic age and Wagner as one of its most illustrious representatives in Germany.

In October-November 1888, Nietzsche wrote *Ecce homo*, a book which announces his disillusionment concerning the impact of his *Der Antichrist* as well as his psychological breakdown. Finally, in December 1888 he published his *Nietzsche contra Wagner* which is an extended polemic against the decadence and the anti-Semitic ideas promoted by Wagner's adherents. Again, it appears that Nietzsche's grudge against Christianity is not caused by his understanding of Christianity's spiritual values but by its openness to the political approach to religion as reflected by means of Wagner's music at the end of 1880s.

## **2. Nietzsche between Philosophy and Modern Music**

*Nietzsche contra Wagner* is Nietzsche's last work and it gives him the opportunity to offer one last retort—it is very likely that many others would have followed if his health had been good enough—to the rebel composer in connection with his style and themes as well as his negative influence on the German society.

It is important to establish from the beginning which the difference between Wagner and Nietzsche's perspective on music and art in general is, because a proper understanding of it can open new horizons in Nietzsche's philosophy in connection with the problems of his time and especially the issue of racism and the Jews. *Nietzsche contra Wagner* ends Nietzsche's long chain of untimely meditations concerning Wagner's music and personality in four of its chapters, namely "Wo Ich Einwände Mache" ("Where I Offer Objections"), "Wagner als Gefahr" ("Wagner as a Danger"), "Eine Musik Ohne Zukunft" ("A Music without a Future"), and "Wir Antipoden" ("We Antipodes"). In "Wo Ich Einwände Mache", Nietzsche brings music in general under the auspices of the listener's internal life who, although not a specialist, lives and feels the music's vibrations, so that his soul and his heart beat in accordance with the rhythm of normal and healthy music. Nietzsche's perspective on art reflects an almost physical need for rhythm, which points to the ancient Greeks who were led by the muse according to the lyre's dancing sounds. Nietzsche's words are particularly suggestive and help us perceive his objections as natural and classic, not as a blunt lack of indulgence concerning contemporary art which is barely constrained by the interdependency between poem and dance:

Meine Einwände gegen die Musik Wagners sind physiologische Einwände: wozu dieselben erst noch unter ästhetische Formeln verkleiden? Ästhetik ist ja nichts als eine angewandte Physiologie?—Meine “Tatsache”, mein “*petit fait vrai*” ist, daß ich nicht mehr leicht atme, wenn diese Musik erst auf mich wirkt; daß alsbald mein Fuß gegen sie böse wird und revoltiert: er hat das Bedürfnis nach Takt, Tanz, Marsch..., er verlangt von der Musik vorerst die Entzückungen, welche in gutem Gehn, Schreiten, Tanzen liegen. Protestiert aber nicht auch mein Magen?... Und so frage ich mich: was will eigentlich mein ganzer Leib von der Musik überhaupt?... Ich glaube, seine Erleichterung... Meine Schwermut will in den Verstecken und Abgründen der Volkommenheit ausruhn: dazu brauche ich Musik. Aber Wagner macht krank.

(My objections to the music of Wagner are physiological objections: why should I trouble to dress them up in aesthetic formulas? After all, aesthetics is nothing but a kind of applied physiology ... My *petit fait vrai* is that I no longer breathe easily when this music begins to affect me; that my foot soon resents it and rebels: my foot feels the need for rhythm, dance, march;... it demands of music first of all those delights which are found in *good* walking, striding, dancing. But does not my stomach protest, too? ... And I so ask myself: What is it that my whole body really *expects* of music? ... I believe, its own *ease* ... My melancholy wants to rest in the hiding-places and abysses of *perfection*: that is why I need music. But Wagner makes sick.)<sup>199</sup>

Nietzsche understands art as a whole; rhythm is no longer a pretext which allows him to talk about sadness or joy. On the contrary, rhythm must always produce a certain cadence, it must save from loneliness and sickness as well as restore one’s cheerful attitude through the recurrence to natural beauty. Music is not meant to illustrate one’s inner turmoil but rather appease it.<sup>200</sup> According to Nietzsche, Wagner’s music did not manage to rid itself of its romantic morbidity or the instrumentality which brings impotence and death in music as opposed to the abundance of life. Nietzsche accuses Wagner of staging everything no matter the cost as he never lost any

---

<sup>199</sup> Nietzsche, *Der Fall Wagner, Götzen-Dämmerung, Nietzsche contra Wagner* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1969), 121. See Nietzsche, *The Case of Wagner, Nietzsche contra Wagner, The Twilight of the Idols, The Antichrist*, trans. by Thomas Common (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1899), 67.

<sup>200</sup> For a detailed presentation of Nietzsche’s idea of art, see Salim Kemal, Ivan Gaskell and Daniel Conway (eds.), *Nietzsche, Philosophy and the Arts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

opportunity to turn art into a mere stage “adaptation”,<sup>201</sup> which is unnatural mimetism because it is pushed to its limits:

Was geht mich das Theater an? Was die Krämpfe seiner „sittlichen“ Eckstasen, an denen das Volk... seine Genugtuung hat! Was der ganze Gebärden—Hokuspokus der Schauspielers! Man sieht, ich bin wesentlich antitheatralisch geartet; ich habe gegen das Theater, diese Massen-Kunst par excellence, den Tiefen Hohn auf dem Grunde meiner Seele, den jeder Artist heute hat. Erfolg auf dem Theater—damit sinkt man in meiner Achtung bis auf Nimmer—wiedersehnen... Aber Wagner war umgekehrt, neben dem Wagner, der die einsamste Musik gemacht hat, die es gibt, wesentlich noch Theatermensch und Schauspieler, der begeisterste Mimomane, den es vielleicht gegeben hat, auch noch als Musiker... Und, beiläufig gesagt, wenn es Wagners Theorie gewesen ist „das Drama ist der Zweck, die Musik ist immer nur das Mittel“—seine Praxis dagegen war, von Anfang bis zu Ende, „die Attitüde ist der Zweck; das Drama, auch die Musik, ist immer nur ihr Mittel.“

(What is theatre to me? What, the convulsions of his „moral” ecstasies which give the people... satisfaction! What, the whole gesture hocus-pocus of the actor! It is plain that I am essentially anti-theatrical: confronted with the theatre, this *mass art* by excellence, I feel that profound scorn at the bottom of my soul which every artist today feels. *Success* in the theatre... with that one drops my respect forever... *Besides* the Wagner who made the loneliest music in existence, he was essentially also a man of the theatre and an actor, the most enthusiastic mimomaniac, perhaps, who ever existed, *even as a musician*... If it was Wagner’s theory that „the drama is the end, the music is always a mere means,” his practice was always, from the beginning to end, „the pose is the end; the drama, also the music, is always merely its means.”)<sup>202</sup>

Following Goethe and the ancient Greeks, Nietzsche believes that music and art in general are meant to restore the balance—long lost by the modern

---

<sup>201</sup> Concerning the relationship between Nietzsche and Wagner, as well as their initial agreement and later disagreement, see M. S. Silk; J. P. Stern, *Nietzsche on Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). The authors discuss the moment when Nietzsche understood tragedy as art which is identical to his detachment from Wagner and his Bayreuth circle.

<sup>202</sup> Nietzsche, *Der Fall Wagner, Götzen-Dämmerung, Nietzsche contra Wagner* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1969), 121. See Nietzsche, *The Case of Wagner, Nietzsche contra Wagner, The Twilight of the Idols, The Antichrist*, 68.

world—between man and nature as well as between civilization and wildness. In the great world of arts, music cannot stand isolated but needs a coalition with other arts in order to reach the soul of those who listen to it. Goethe believed in the integrality of music, which must start from itself and, moreover, be innate, but he did not mean the type of music Wagner proposed, which is heavily based on the experience of the individual life. Like Nietzsche, Goethe himself thought that such a music leads to death; this is why, after his stormy years, he gave up the intricacies of life which lead to tragedy in real life. His classical nature proposed the external breeze which comes to music from nature and is totally beneficial because it gives colour and meaning to our emotions. This is why Goethe's advice was that every day one should watch a beautiful portrait, read a beautiful poem, listen to beautiful music and, if possible, say meaningful things. The integrality of art is based on the idea that all its various branches should be connected in order to convey tranquility as well as the high ideals of heroes who cannot stand compromise.<sup>203</sup>

In "Wagner als Gefahr", Nietzsche explains his preference for "old" music which confers man the sense of security with reference to the elements of nature, but without Wagner's foggy attitude. Thus, as far as Nietzsche was concerned, listening to Wagner's music is a permanent flounder which is in fact necessary in order not to be caught by it. If in classics dance accompanied good music, in Wagner music presupposes an effort which in itself makes us forget the beauty of life.<sup>204</sup>

Die Absicht, welche die neuere Musik in dem Verfolgt, was jetzt, sehr stark, daß man ins Meer geht, allmählich den sicheren Schritt auf dem Grunde verliert und sich endlich dem Elemente auf Gnade und Ungnade übergibt: man soll schwimmen. In der älteren Musik mußte man... etwas ganz anderes, nämlich tanzen. Das hierzu nötige Maß, das Einhalten bestimmter gleich wiegender Zeit—und Kraftgrade erzwang von der Seele

---

<sup>203</sup> See Steven Ledbetter, "Basso Concert Notes for December 15", *Bilkent News Interactive* 5.13 (December 14, 1998). It is interesting to notice Beethoven's romantic innovation at this point as he dramatized Goethe's *Egmont*. Thus, Beethoven resorted to a tactical change concerning the role of the overture. He decided not to exhaust the dramatism of the entire play but rather save it from its lack of expressivity by recuperating the same tonality at the end of the play. This way, it became a celebration of freedom in a perfect cyclical composition.

<sup>204</sup> For instance, in *Tristan und Isolde*, young Tristan takes his beloved to his uncle's court in Cornwall, which is famous for its splendid scenery. Wagner, however, ignores Cornwall's beauty in order to present the inner pain of the two lovers which is ended by the fatal potion.

des Hörers eine fortwährende Besonnenheit herkam, und des durchwärmten Atems der Begeisterung ruhte der Zauber aller guten Musik. Richard Wagner wollte eine andre Art Bewegung—er warf die physiologische Voraussetzung der bisherigen Musik um. Schwimmen, Schweben—nicht mehr Gehn, Tanzen.

(The intention pursued by recent music with what is now vigorously, but not at all clearly, called “infinite melody”, can be clarified by an illustration. One walks into the sea, gradually loses one’s secure footing, and finally surrenders oneself to the elements without reservation: one must *swim*. In older music, what one had to do ... was something quite different, namely, *to dance*. The measure required for this, the maintenance of certain equally balanced units of time and force, demanded continual *wariness* of the listener’s soul—and on the counterplay of this cooler breeze that came from wariness and the warm breath of enthusiasm rested the magic of all *good* music. Richard Wagner wanted a different kind of movement; he overthrew the physiological presupposition of previous music. Swimming, floating—no longer walking and dancing.)<sup>205</sup>

Nietzsche was convinced that Wagner’s “infinite music” deliberately breaks the balance between time and force to the detriment of the harmony of music. Thus, even the distance or the time necessary to pass from one note to another in Wagner’s music is considerably prolonged as compared to the classical-tonal type based on a certain rhythm and measure. Wagner gives up the traditional-tonal harmony because he wants to divagate and create a larger space of expression, which abundantly uses orchestration and limits the choir’s intervention to the minimum.<sup>206</sup> Consequently, Wagner becomes the forerunner of artistic atonality a century in advance. His music does not take into account the elements which confer balance or the relationship between harmony, metric rhythm, melody, etc. The abundance of tones as well

---

<sup>205</sup> Nietzsche, *Der Fall Wagner, Götzen-Dämmerung, Nietzsche contra Wagner* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1969), 122. See Nietzsche, *The Case of Wagner, Nietzsche contra Wagner, The Twilight of the Idols, The Antichrist*, 69.

<sup>206</sup> In 1859, when he finished *Tristan and Isolde*, Wagner faced a whole lot of difficulties in finding the adequate stage for such an impressive composition. After he moved to Paris he made numerous efforts to advertise the play but none of the Parisian theaters accepted it. The Dresden Opera House attempted to stage the play for the first time but after seventy seven rehearsals, the play was still far from representing the original scores. King Ludwig II though, a frantic admirer of Wagner, invested large amounts of money as well as influence for the drama to be eventually staged at the Munich Royal Theatre (1866). The orchestra was reportedly so large that the front rows of chair were removed in order to accommodate the musicians.

as their concentration against the background of metric slowness no longer matches a single logical-tonal centre by means of repetition, but tonal finality constantly changes within the same act or play. Thus the prudence or caution of music, mentioned by Nietzsche, which prompts to dance in the cadence of good music, i.e. tonal, disappears in Wagner and is accompanied by clear psychological implications. Unlike, for instance, Beethoven's *Ode an die Freude* (*Ode to Joy*), a true hymn dedicated to life as full of beauty and harmony, Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* is characterized from the very start by romantic inner turmoil as in Schopenhauer. His heroes cannot do anything against fate and, again as in Schopenhauer, they lack the will which could help them revolt against an implacable destiny that can be easily foreseen from the beginning. For example, having killed Isolde's fiancée in order to take his fortress, Tristan is taken care of by Isolde who, despite what Tristan did, falls in love with him and then they remain united until death as they drink the potion of love. The replacement of the potion of poison with the potion of love is actually Wagner's novelty, which changed the entire epical unfolding of the play until its tragic end. In order to support this transformation, Wagner "invented" the infinite melody<sup>207</sup>—harshly criticized by Nietzsche—which was so complex that it could barely be understood as one followed the scores:

Die "unendliche Melodie" will eben alle Zeit, sie hat ihren Reichtum der Erfindung gerade in dem, was einem älteren Ohre als rhythmische Paradoxie und Lästerung klingt. Aus einer Nachahmung, aus einer Herrschaft eines solchen Gaschmacks entstünde eine Gefahr für die Musik, wie sie größer gar nicht gedacht werden kann—die vollkommene Entartung des rhythmischen Gefühls, das Chaos an Stelle des Rhythmus... Die Gefahr kommt auf die Spitze, wenn sich eine solche Musik immer enge an eine ganz naturalistische, durch kein Gesetz der Plastik beherrschte Schauspielerei und Gebärdenkunst anlehnt, die Wirkung will, nichts mehr... Das espressivo um jeden Preis und die Musik um Dienste, in der Sklaverei der Attitüde—das ist das Ende.

(The wealth of its invention lies precisely in that which to an older ear sounds like a rhythmic paradox and blasphemy. The imitation or domination of such a taste would result in a danger to music which cannot be ex-

---

<sup>207</sup> According to Joan Grimbert, *Tristan and Isolde: A Casebook* [Arthurian Characters and Themes] (New York: Routledge, 2002), Wagner invented more than that. *Tristan und Isolde* never had the close-knit form of a popular folk narrative. Still, Wagner used the legend to which he added a specific melody in order to make it a heroic-erotic tragedy.

aggerated: the complete degeneration of rhythmic feeling, *chaos* in place of rhythm ... This danger reaches its climax when such music leans more and more heavily on a wholly naturalistic style of acting and gestures, which is no longer dominated by any law of plasticity and wants effect, nothing more ... *Espressivo* at any price, the slavery, of poses—that is the end.)<sup>208</sup>

The idea that music must not be the voice of propaganda—irrespective of its nature—was present not only in Nietzsche but also in Goethe. Thus, in his *Egmont* and *Römische Elegien* (*Roman Elegies*) Goethe encouraged the concept of value through the ancientness of art and the power of the example. He claimed that the best aspects of music must not exclusively impress by novelty but by the things which are already known (Goethe's propensity for antiquity is evident), which create an ampler resonance in the listeners' souls. On the other hand, when music is too dependent on the artist in order to be properly understood, so that it cannot be comprehended without the artist and his specific psychology, then music comes to its end because it receives a specific personalized character, which reflects the age. This particular kind of music is called by Nietzsche "music without a future" because it is based on the age of national wars and ultramodern martyrdoms, which could temporarily make it famous but its future depends on the future of these historical situations, which is either insecure or even non-existent. As he also had in mind the society which took delight in Wagner's dramas due to their nationalistic flavor,<sup>209</sup> Nietzsche concluded that the Germans themselves would have no future. It was as if the Germans had not know how to relate themselves to art and, when they did search for a remedy in art, they missed its true essence because they clung to artists and philosophers who were too much connected to specific historical events. A classicist as well as a lover of the art of the antiquity, which is powerful enough to drag us out from the whirlpool of historical reality through its serenity, Nietzsche defines himself at the antipodes of these secular artists:

---

<sup>208</sup> Nietzsche, *Der Fall Wagner, Götzen-Dämmerung, Nietzsche contra Wagner* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1969), 124. See Nietzsche, *The Case of Wagner, Nietzsche contra Wagner, The Twilight of the Idols, The Antichrist*, 72. It seems that Nietzsche hinted at the 1866 premiere of *Tristan und Isolde*. The auditorium was reportedly not delighted by the noblesse of Wagner's music or by its well-known pomp. On the contrary, the viewers were shocked by his whims as well as the sensuality which invaded the stage. The accentuated eroticism prompted the gentlemen to take their wives out of the theatre and some even saw a priest making the sign of the cross before he hastened to leave the premises.

<sup>209</sup> See Bertrand Russel, *History of Western Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2004), 719-729.

Aber es gibt zweierlei Leidende, einmal die an der Überfülle des Lebens, welche eine dionysische Kunst wollen und ebenso eine tragische Einsicht und Aussicht auf das Leben,—und sodann die an der Verarmung des Lebens Leidenden, die Ruhe, Stille, glattes Meer oder aber den Rausch, der Krampf, die Betäubung von Kunst und Philosophie verlangen... Dem Doppelbedürfnis der letzteren entspricht ebenso Wagner wie Schopenhauer—sie verneinen das Leben, sie verleumden es, damit sind sie meine Antipoden.

([In every art] ... there are two kinds of sufferers: first, those who suffer from the overfullness of life and want a Dionysian art as well as a tragic insight and outlook of life—and then those who suffer from an *impoverishment* of life and demand of art and philosophy, calm, stillness, smooth seas, *or*, on the other hand, frenzy, convulsion, and anesthesia ... Wagner responds to this dual need of the latter no less than Schopenhauer: they negate life, they slander it, hence they are my antipodes.)<sup>210</sup>

Hence Nietzsche's artistic creed which says that artistic thinking cannot neutralize itself politically or vice-versa. This implies that the same perspective on art and its creative power must be applied to society and politics because art is not a mere philosophical accident but a vital necessity and a means to escape. The breach between Nietzsche and Wagner originated at this very point: Nietzsche understood art as a secure place because it offered calm and smooth seas as also pointed by Goethe who left the impression that beyond art there is hope, freedom and life. In Nietzsche, art is truly Goethe's *natura naturans*, a realm of the genius' creation towards the plenitude of human life. This is an indication that neither Wagner nor Schopenhauer perceived art and thought as limited to arguments or to a certain artistic creed. As far as Nietzsche was concerned, both Wagner and Schopenhauer believed that people expected a sign from them, so they gave it to them. Unfortunately though, Nietzsche contents, they did not say anything because those who expected light from them were given death. In other words, they reacted against a social evil with a worse artistic evil. Thus, *Nietzsche contra Wagner* is a manifesto of creative genius as well as an artistic creed *par excellence*. From this perspective, the enigmatic *Also sprach Zarathustra* and its symbolism must not be taken out from the context of

---

<sup>210</sup> Nietzsche, *Der Fall Wagner, Götzen-Dämmerung, Nietzsche contra Wagner* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1969), 125. See Nietzsche, *The Case of Wagner, Nietzsche contra Wagner, The Twilight of the Idols, The Antichrist*, 74.

Nietzsche's works because its essence must be understood by means of the explanatory note as given in *Nietzsche contra Wagner*.

### **3. Nietzsche and the False Nietzsche of Posterity**

Nietzsche cannot be fully comprehended without a careful assessment of his last years (1880-1899). During this period he had lived as a man without a country,<sup>211</sup> because he gave up his German citizenship before he received a final notification concerning his application for Swiss citizenship. Thus he started his wandering years as he lived either in his mother's house in Naumburg or in various other places from France, Switzerland, Germany, and Italy. He preferred to spend the winter season in Nice while in summer he used to go to Sils-Maria, a Swiss mountain village, and then to Leipzig, Turin, Genoa, Messina, Florence, Venice, and Rome without staying more than a couple of months in each place.

In 1882, when he was thirty seven, Nietzsche met Lou Salome, a young Russian woman who was only twenty one and studied philosophy and theology in Zürich. At that time, Nietzsche was in Rome, where he met again Paul Rée, a painter whom he had known since the age of twenty. They formed a trio which managed to infuriate a considerable number of people. When Lou Salome later turned down Nietzsche's marriage proposal, he distanced himself from her as well as from Paul Rée, who also had feelings for her.<sup>212</sup>

During these last ten years of his life, Nietzsche wrote the previously mentioned books, which defined his mature thinking. Suddenly though, on January 3, 1899, when he was in Turin, Nietzsche had a serious breakdown which left him crippled for the rest of his days. Although it is not known what caused his sudden illness, Nietzsche was very sensitive emotionally, so he used a diverse medication. In his last years, he had some conscious recurrences only to relapse in his almost constant state of unconsciousness. Given this reality, an important question arises concerning Nietzsche's works: did he or did he not truly author the manuscripts which were published posthumously? The following question is merely a logical deduction: are these works the outcome of his psychological distress which marked his last years or the result of an external intervention which was totally alien to Nietzsche?

---

<sup>211</sup> Robert Wicks, "Friedrich Nietzsche", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2004.

<sup>212</sup> Many years later, Lou Salomé became Sigmund Freud's associate and wrote about her psychological closeness to Nietzsche.

The answer to these questions depends on how Nietzsche's sister, Elizabeth, is perceived. He did not have an excellent relationship with his sister, who strongly disapproved of his relationship with Lou Salome and Paul Rée. Even if Nietzsche was rejected by Lou Salome for a second time, this time personally, it seems that Nietzsche was more affected by his relationship with his sister, whom H. F. Peters described in the following words:

If Elizabeth Nietzsche had made a deliberate effort to meet someone who was bound to offend her ... she could not have done better than with Lou. Lou represented everything that she abhorred. Her unconventional habits, her shockingly free behaviour with men, her indifference even to ordinary cleanliness caused Elizabeth to feel an almost physical revulsion. How could her brother want to associate with such a creature?<sup>213</sup>

As she was convinced that Lou Salome wanted to get closer to Nietzsche no matter what, and not the other way around, Elizabeth made everything in her power to prevent such a possibility. Thus, she left her parents' house because she knew that in doing so she would turn their mother against Nietzsche and his friends. Nietzsche had no other option but to leave, so he went to Leipzig and then he traveled throughout Europe. In the meantime, Elizabeth married a certain Bernhard Förster and they both left for Paraguay where they lived for a while. During their stay there, they founded an exclusivist colony dubbed "Nueva Germania" for the refugees who shared their Arian and anti-Semitic views.<sup>214</sup> From a series of letters written by Nietzsche, which were badly unavailable before the second half of the twentieth century, one can easily notice that while he was writing his works of maturity, Nietzsche was suspicious regarding the association between Bernhard Förster and the German spirit:

---

<sup>213</sup> H. F. Peters, *My Sister, My Spouse: A Biography of Lou Andreas Salomé* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1962), 114. See also Jenny Diski's review, "It wasn't him, it was her", *London Review of Books* 25.18 (2003) to a book about Elizabeth Förster written by Carol Diethe, *Nietzsche's Sister and the Will to Power: A Biography of Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

<sup>214</sup> See, for details, Ben MacIntyre, *Forgotten Fatherland: The Search for Elizabeth Nietzsche* (London: MacMillan, 1992). The book is a journalistic investigation with a biographic character written after MacIntyre's visit to the South-American jungle and the former colony founded by the Försters in Paraguay. The work is also a testimony left by the Arians in the New Germany ("the forgotten Fatherland") doubled by the memory of the horrible Nazi crimes performed by Joseph Mengele. The investigation offers MacIntyre the chance to underline the huge differences between Nietzsche's philosophy and his sister's opinions.

To Franziska and Elizabeth Nietzsche  
Nice, March 21, 1885, Saturday

About my sister's future I have apprehensions. By that I mean I do not quite believe in Dr. Förster's return to Paraguay. Europe is really not so small, and if one does not wish to live in Germany, one does not by any means as yet have to be so far afield. To be sure, thus far I have worked up little enthusiasm for "the German soul", but still less for the desire to maintain this "magnificent" race pure. On the contrary.<sup>215</sup>

As he found out about the orientation of Bernhard Förster's movement and while still in Germany, Nietzsche wrote his *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, *Götzen-Dämmerung* and *Der Antichrist*, in order to express clearly his perspective on the "blonde beast" as well as on the disastrous development of Christianity under the influence of certain "monsters" like those from Nueva Germania. Thus, it is not unreasonable to believe that—in addition to various physical factors as well as his inner struggles—Nietzsche's final breakdown could have been the result of his immense sadness as he learned about the Arian convictions promoted by his family. Regardless the cause of his illness, it is certain that as far as his sister and her husband were concerned, Nietzsche's bad feelings amplified constantly and he even made plans, which he confessed to his mother, to keep a safe distance from them, both socially and intellectually:

To Franziska Nietzsche  
Venice, end of May, 1885

Perhaps everything has turned out just as it should be: also the two of us (I mean Dr. Förster and myself) have behaved correctly and with a very good will toward one another. But it's a dangerous situation, and we must be a bit careful; for my personal taste, such an agitator is an impossible person to have more intimate dealings with ... I do not understand the shaping of his future, and for my own part I am too aristocratically inclined to be legally and socially on the same footing as twenty farming families, as he states in his program.<sup>216</sup>

After his mental collapse which left him crippled in 1889, Nietzsche was brought by his mother back to Naumburg where she took care of him until

---

<sup>215</sup> Nietzsche, *Unpublished Letters*, trans. and ed. by Kurt F. Liedecker (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), 112-113.

<sup>216</sup> Nietzsche, *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, trans. and ed. by Christopher Middleton (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1941), 242.

her death in 1897. Four years earlier, in 1893, Elizabeth had also returned home following the suicide of her husband who left her without money and housing. As she came back, Elizabeth foresaw in her brother's deplorable state a wide range of possibilities concerning her own welfare. Thus, having changed her name to Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche, she transformed her parents' house into a genuine Nietzsche monument with no concern for her mother's astonishment and her brother's incapacity, who passively witnessed the radical change of their home into an open space for curious visitors.<sup>217</sup>

Following their mother's death, Elizabeth had at last the chance to promote her brother both as a person and as a writer, so she could freely intervene on either in order to make small alterations. As Naumburg was only a little town with no importance whatsoever, she did not hesitate to move to the nearby Weimar where she rented the Silberbeck Villa which hosted Nietzsche as well as his manuscripts. Her house became rapidly a centre of the national-socialists, while Nietzsche's works were transformed into a means of propaganda for the new ideology through its distortion by his pro-Nazi sister.<sup>218</sup>

While Nietzsche called his nationalistic countrymen barbarians and churls, Elizabeth managed to attract Weimar's attention to their party politics to the point of popular admiration and adulation. While Nietzsche hated anti-Semitism, her sister now mixed his criticism against the Judeo-Christian religion with ultra-nationalistic ideas which she herself invented. Likewise, while Nietzsche cursed Christianity as understood by the nationalists, Elizabeth buried her brother—who died on August 25, 1900—in the most pious Lutheran style next to the church in their native Röcken bei Lützen.<sup>219</sup> As far as her 1935 death is concerned, the Führer himself at-

---

<sup>217</sup> William Schaberg, *The Nietzsche Canon: A Publication History and Bibliography* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 156. Schaberg's book contains valuable information about Nietzsche the artist as well as his life after 1889.

<sup>218</sup> For Elizabeth's interventions in her brother's works as well as for her incapacity to understand the depths of his philosophy, see Rudolf Steiner, *Friedrich Nietzsche, Fighter for Freedom* (New York: Garber Communications, 1985). See also Steiner's 1900 confession, according to which Elizabeth was incapable of any logical distinctions when she was taught her brother's philosophy: "she lacks any sense for fine, and even for crude, logical distinctions; her thinking in void of even the least logical consistency; and she lacks any sense of objectivity... She believes at any moment what she says", see Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche, Philosopher Psychologist, Antichrist*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), 5.

<sup>219</sup> The reason for drawing attention to the major differences between Nietzsche's faith and his sister's religion has to do with the historical and cultural context which is ignored by the majority of Nietzsche's critics even to this day. Elizabeth and her husband founded their

tended her burial alongside some of his most important officers as they paid their respect to her for her constant support for Nazi politics.<sup>220</sup>

If up to this point the relationship between Nietzsche and the false Nietzsche was proved by means of a chronological approach, it must be stressed that, although the Nazi were responsible to a high degree for the misinterpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy, the most serious damage was caused by his sister not only by her adherence to the doctrine of the new Germanism, which was utterly opposed to her brother's faith, but also by the fact that she attempted and even succeeded to insert alien ideas in his works. It seems that the idea of anti-Semitism came to be associated with Nietzsche's work only as psychological posthumous consequence of having had Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche as his sister, and not as a logical hermeneutics of the writings he published during his lifetime.<sup>221</sup>

In 1901, one year after Nietzsche's death, Elizabeth published a book which Nietzsche might have written as a coronation of his lifetime artistic achievements. This posthumous book was called *Der Wille zur Macht* (*The Will to Power*). It has been shown that Elizabeth came back to Germany and took control of Nietzsche's works just when they began to be widely read and debated throughout Europe—since 1888, Nietzsche's writings had been

---

colony in 1888, which they called the Nueva Germania and populated with fourteen German families they brought from Germany. They all sought to fulfill the Arian dream on the banks of the Aguarayá River. This idea occurred to Elizabeth as she read Wagner's article "On Religion and Art", where he expresses his indignation about the welfare of the Jews which he perceived as an insult to the Germans who were hindered from manifesting their culture and power in Germany. This time, however, Elizabeth made the first step towards the "emancipation" of the Germans even if, for the time being, that happened only in the Paraguayan jungle. Elizabeth, her husband and the fourteen families built their own houses, a Lutheran church and a German school by means of which religion in Germany knew significant and dangerous alterations as compared to genuine Christianity as shown in Nietzsche's *Der Fall Wagner* and *Der Antichrist*. It is once again clear that the fact that some Christian principles were taken out of their context to dangerous extremes caused fierce criticism from Nietzsche, who could not accept the new type of religiosity as proclaimed by his sister.

<sup>220</sup> See Anton Kaes; Martin Jay; Edward Dimenbergh (eds.), *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 144. Weimar's dark side is shown by the acceptance of Nazi ideology from the very start and the foundation of the nearby concentration camp as proved by the Nietzsche Archive.

<sup>221</sup> For example Nietzsche made a clear point that he disapproved of his sister's association with the already mentioned anti-Semitic movement. In a letter signed "To Elizabeth Förster in Asuncion, Chur, May 28, 1887" Nietzsche says: "Du sagst, Neu-Georgia habe nichts mit dem Antisemitismus zu thun, aber ich weiß es ganz sicher, daß das Colonisationsprojekt wesentlich antisemitischen Charakter hat," see Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Briefwechsel kritische Gesamtausgabe* 3, ed. by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 22.

published, for instance, in Denmark thanks to Georg Brandes<sup>222</sup>—and even beyond. As he was gravely ill, Nietzsche was totally incapable of opposing his sister's ambitious actions. The distortion of Nietzsche's thought starting from this point is evident in *Der Wille zur Macht*, a voluminous work which Nietzsche started himself before 1886 and was inspired by the material he discussed in his other writings of the time. *Der Wille zur Macht* though was published under Elizabeth's auspices, so—as soon as it was made available to the public—many of those who were well acquainted with Nietzsche's philosophy noticed that the book had been modified especially in connection with Nietzsche's perspective on man as an individual and society. Nietzsche's critics who witnessed the publication of *Der Wille zur Macht* and had a first hand knowledge of its content as it had been written by Nietzsche himself—for instance, his editor and translator Mazzino Montinari, as well as Walter Kaufmann—rightly called it a forgery in order to draw the attention to the fact that Nietzsche as published by Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche and as a supporter of Nazi ideology was not the true Nietzsche as seen in his *Nietzsche contra Wagner* and *Zur Genealogie der Moral*. It must be mentioned here that many of Nietzsche's ideas from *Der Wille zur Macht* are not different from the concepts he promoted during his life as, for instance, the will to power—first mentioned in his *Morgenröte. Gedanken über die moralischen Vorurteile (Daybreak: Reflections on Moral Prejudices)*, or the eternal recurrence in his *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, also familiar in his *Also sprach Zarathustra*. The problem is that Nietzsche's concept of the will to power as seen in his posthumous work does not retain any aspect of his allegory between good and evil, which uncontestedly leads to the foundation of a new type of morality.<sup>223</sup>

Nietzsche's sister wanted to explain that the myth of the Superman and the idea of the eternal recurrence within the fundamental concepts of Nietzsche's philosophy as seen in his *Also sprach Zarathustra* had originated a long time ago, namely in Nietzsche's youth. It is very likely though that Nietzsche himself had never been aware that these ideas appeared so early in his life. Fifteen years after Nietzsche's death, Elizabeth published

---

<sup>222</sup> A series of letters from Nietzsche's last year of artistic creation (1888) were written to Georg Brandes and they contain important appendixes which explain key concepts from his works, including the idea of modernism and culture but also a chronology of his publications to that date. See Nietzsche, *Unpublished Letters*, 128-129, 133-136.

<sup>223</sup> Edward Craig (ed.), *The Shorter Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Oxford: Routledge, 2005), 738-740. The idea of the will to power in *Morgenröte* and *On the Genealogy of Morality* does not lead to a political and social morality as a supernatural reflection on history. By contrast, Nazi politics was meant to be exactly the voice of such a divinity as reflected socially.

another book that was entitled *Das Leben Friedrich Nietzsches* (*The Life of Nietzsche*) which she intended as a biography of her brother. Nevertheless, it is not Nietzsche who speaks in this work and, whenever his sister makes him speak, his ideas are definitely not those from his *Also sprach Zarathustra* and *Ecce homo*. Here is though Elizabeth's explanation to those who accused her of ill will in connection with her brother's initial intention:

The writing of this book, especially of the last chapters, in all their heart-breaking sadness, has been for me a most difficult task. The very title, however, compelled me to explain how it came about that in later years my brother led such a lonely life. At heart, every man of genius is and remains lonely, but Nietzsche, of all men, had no need of loneliness in his relations with the world. He was always regarded as a most lovable personality, and in his youth he was surrounded by a large circle of friends, who idolized him even if they did not understand him. In order to make this plain, I have been forced to tell of much painful and unpleasant treatment suffered by my brother. I would rather have passed this over, but after all I, more than anyone, am in duty bound to repel attacks, to remove errors, and to portray the facts and experiences of my brother's life with the most scrupulous accuracy; for no one stood so near to my brother as I did. Many details of his career and individual traits will here be described for the first time.<sup>224</sup>

It is obvious from the start that Elizabeth has no problem whatsoever to impose herself to the reader as well as to posterity as a reliable mediator between Nietzsche and the rest of the world. The fact that she had made him known as a genius since he was still alive is not a surprise, first because Nietzsche himself was perceived as such by his readers and secondly because she herself had no remorse whatsoever in turning her brother into a genuine show for the sake of her image as the keeper of Nietzsche, the genius and of his works. Nobody knows exactly what happened to Nietzsche during his fatal illness and his sister's "overprotective" domination, but it is very unlikely indeed that he could ever say or do anything to change the new image that she turned him into. If ever conscious in his last year of life it is again highly improbable that Nietzsche could have spoken for himself and it is only reasonable to suppose—given Elizabeth's attitude towards her brother—that he was denied his own words and thoughts about himself and his work. As far as Elizabeth is concerned, she no longer saw Nietzsche as

---

<sup>224</sup> Elizabeth Förster Nietzsche, *The Life of Nietzsche*, vol. 2, trans. by Paul V. Cohn (New York: Sturgis and Walton, 1915), v.

*Zarathustra's alter ego* or as a hero who is spiritually distanced from the rest of the world. The works Nietzsche published during his lifetime do not show at all that he would have ever befriended the society he belonged to or that he would have ever praised it for its orientation, as Elizabeth claimed. On the contrary—as Walter Kaufmann correctly notices—Nietzsche was deeply troubled by the then increasingly nationalistic society when he wrote that the German people would once commit unforgivable sins on behalf of the Reich.<sup>225</sup> Nietzsche's visionary as well as warning statements were forgotten—or rather ignored—by his sister who claimed that they were fabricated by the wickedness of some of Nietzsche's critics. At that time she pointed to Franz Overbeck<sup>226</sup> but now—if she were still alive—she would definitely indicate at least Walter Kaufmann and Mazzino Montinari. According to Elizabeth, Nietzsche's critics invented the letters he himself wrote, as their only purpose was to hurt her as well as discredit her Nietzsche Archive.<sup>227</sup>

#### 4. Nietzsche and *The Will to Power*? Gods against Modern Morality

When it comes to Elizabeth's publication of *Der Wille zur Macht* in 1901, it is important to study the criticism of Nietzsche's posthumous work, because this "chaotic" compilation of aphorisms and texts reveals an interesting detail in connection with its critics, namely that *Der Wille zur Macht* was perceived as separate for the rest of Nietzsche's works for more than fifty years. As the Nazi regime was already gone, it was enough for intellectuals such as Montinari to gain access not only to documents and fragments from Nietzsche's works which had been locked by his sister in the Weimar Archive, but also to letters, articles, and book drafts which had been either purposefully ignored during the Nazi regime or faithfully kept by some of Nietzsche's friends. A famous Germanist and a faithful researcher as well as a critic of Nietzsche's work in the second half of the twentieth century, Montinari studied Nietzsche for almost thirty years and some of his consid-

---

<sup>225</sup> Walter Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Penguin, 1982), 32-50.

<sup>226</sup> Franz Overbeck was Protestant theologian and Professor of theology at the University of Basel. Between 1870 and 1875 he lived with Nietzsche in the same house and they became friends for the rest of Nietzsche's life. Nietzsche's ideas about the origin, doctrines and the "historical" significance of Christianity were shared by Overbeck, who criticized both the principles of traditional-conservative Christian theology and the modern approach of liberal theology as explained by David Strauss and his quest for a modern Christian religion by means of science. See Robin Small, *Nietzsche and Rée: A Star Friendship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 22-55.

<sup>227</sup> Elizabeth Förster Nietzsche, *The Life of Nietzsche*, vol. 2, ix.

erations about the structure and the literary-philosophical content of Nietzsche's works are of a relatively recent date. These are mainly concerned with the legitimacy of the consecutive editions of *Der Wille zur Macht* with a view to Nietzsche's real intention to write and publish a book under this particular title. The result of Montinari's research as well as his final conclusion is that *The Will to Power does not exist*,<sup>228</sup> which is also the title of a book which contains his critical notes to the 1901-1922 editions of *Der Wille zur Macht*.

Having painstakingly studied Nietzsche's entire corpus of writings and manuscripts in minute detail, Montinari expresses his distrust concerning *Der Wille zur Macht* as published in 1901 by Nietzsche's sister who posthumously attributed it to her brother in the Preface. Montinari also suspects that, starting with this first edition of *Der Wille zur Macht*, Elizabeth tried to induce a subliminal message in Nietzsche's philosophy by annotating his texts and thus refusing him the strictness of his message as well as its chronological development. Thus, Montinari also denounces the 1906 Förster-Gast edition of *Der Wille zur Macht* as a conglomerate of interpretations as well as a token of intrusion in the original philosophical material:

Voll. XI-XII (1901) ... contiennent des fragments posthumes allant de l'époque de *Humain, trop humain* jusqu'à *Ainsi parlait Zarathoustra*, soit de 1875-76 à 1886 (ajouts au *Zarathoustra*). Dans la mesure où les manuscrits d'où sont tirés les fragments publiés dans ces volumes, correspondent à une période relativement brève, la chronologie est respectée. Toutefois, le classement, prétendument neutre, de ces fragments en rubriques intitulées "philosophie en général": "Métaphysique", "Morale", "Femme et Enfant", etc. empêche de les considérer en fonction de leur contexte spécifique; de sorte qu'il n'est pas possible, par exemple, de suivre la genèse des oeuvres de Nietzsche de cette époque.)

Voll. XV-XVI (1911) édités par Otto Weiss ... contiennent *Ecce homo* et *La volonté de puissance* sous sa forme augmentée et définitive telle

---

<sup>228</sup> Mazzino Montinari, "*La Volonté de puissance*" *n'existe pas*, trans. from Italian by Patricia Farazzi and Michel Valensi (Paris: L'Eclat, 1998). See also Mazzino Montinari, *Nietzsche lesen* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1982). Assisted by Giorgio Colli, Montinari gathered Nietzsche's manuscripts as reflected in the majority of his works published during his lifetime in order to produce a critical edition of Nietzsche's complete works in Italian. In the introduction to the French edition, Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault concluded that for as long as there was no access to Nietzsche's manuscripts, his earnest researchers knew only vaguely that *Der Wille zur Macht* did not exist as shown in its 1901, 190, 1911 and 1922 editions. They also expressed their desire that the novelty of Montinari-Colli edition should mark the day of Nietzsche's return (see p. 2).

qu'elle avait été précédemment publiée par Peter Gast et Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche. Weiss y ajouta: 1). Les plans, l'ordonnance en rubrique du matériau et les esquisses de 1882 à 1888... est la meilleure réfutation du choix en faveur d'un plan de 1887, sur la base duquel Peter Gast et Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche préparèrent leur compilation; 2) des notes au texte ... trahissent un certain cynisme. Ces notes révèlent au lecteur une partie des innombrables omissions, interpolations, divisions arbitraires des textes qui sont étroitement liés; dans ce cas, en somme, les notes réfutent le texte. L'index des différents manuscrits d'où sont tirés les soi-disant aphorismes de la *Volonté de puissance*, et une table chronologique des manuscrits à la fin du volume, révèlent involontairement la dimension effective du travail de compilation.)<sup>229</sup>

As for instance in a novel, the first part of Montinari's study on *Der Wille zur Macht* entitled "The new critical edition" is the plot as well as the preamble to the clarification and classification in nineteen steps of the way Förster and Gast attributed *Der Wille zur Macht* to Nietzsche. The second part of Montinari's study is entitled "Textual criticism and the will to power"—one may notice that the "will to power" is written with a non-capitalized "w" or "v" (from "volonté") in the French edition—which shows that Montinari took the right path from the beginning which should have also been taken by Nietzsche's sister and his German critic. Montinari shows that the "will to power" is just one of Nietzsche's numerous philosophemes, which he pursues first as an intention of a literary project for Nietzsche then as a result of the posthumous compilation of fragments known as *Der Wille zur Macht*.

Montinari proves that, as a concept, the "will to power" underwent various stages of development in Nietzsche starting with his 1881 *Morgenröte*. The first definition of the "will to power", however, dates from the summer of 1883, when Nietzsche wrote the second part of his *Also sprach Zarathustra* and especially the chapter "Self-Surpassing":

Von der Selbst-Überwindung

"Wille zur Wahrheit" heißt ihr's, ihr Weisesten, was euch treibt und brünstig macht?

Wille zur Denkbareit alles Seienden: also heiße *ich* euren Willen! ...

Aber es soll sich euch fügen und biegen! So will's euer Wille ...

---

<sup>229</sup> Mazzino Montinari, "*La volonté de puissance*" n'existe pas, 14, 15-16.

Das ist euer ganzer Wille, ihr Weisesten, als ein Wille zur Macht; und auch wenn ihr vom Guten und Bösen redet und von den Werthschätzungen.

Schaffen wollt ihr noch die Welt, vor der ihr knien könnt: so ist es eure letzte Hoffnung und Trunkenheit.

Die Unweisen freilich, das Volk,—die sind gleich dem Flusse, auf dem in Nachen weiter schwimmt: und im Nachen sitzen feierlich und verummumt die Werthschätzungen.

Euren Willen und eure Werthe setztet ihr auf den Fluss des Werdens; einen alten Willen zur Macht verräth mir, was vom Volke als gut und böse geglaubt wird.

.....

Nicht der Fluß ist eure Gefahr und das Ende eures Guten und Bösen, ihr Weisesten: sondern jener Wille selber, der Wille zur Macht,—der unerschöpfte zeugende Lebens-Wille.

Aber damit ihr mein Wort versteht vom Guten und Bösen: dazu will ich euch noch mein Wort vom Leben sagen und von der Art alles Lebendigen. ...

Aber, wo ich nur Lebendiges fand, da hörte ich auch die Rede vom Gehorsame. Alles Lebendige ist ein Gehorchendes.

Und dieses ist das zweite: Dem wird befohlen, der sich nicht selber gehorchen kann. So ist es des Lebendigen Art.

Dies aber ist das dritte, was ich hörte: das Befehlen schwerer ist, als Gehorchen. Und nicht nur, das der Befehlende die Last alle Gehorchender trägt, und das leicht ihn diese Last zerdrückt:—

Ein Versuch und Wagnis erschien mir in allem Befehlen: und stets, wenn es befiehlt, wagt das Lebendige sich selber dran ...

Wo ich Lebendiges fand, da fand ich Willen zur Macht; und noch im Willen des Dienenden fand ich den Willen, Herr zu sein. ...

Das ist die Hingebung des Größten, daß es Wagnis ist und Gefahr, und um den Tod ein Würfelspielen.

Und wo Opferung und Dienste und Liebesblicke sind: auch da ist Wille, Herr zu sein. Auf Schleichwegen schleicht sich da der Schwächere in die Burg und bis ins Herz dem Mächtigeren—und stiehlt da Macht. ...

Daß ich Kampf sein muß und Werden und Zweck und der Zwecke Widerspruch: ach, wer meinen Willen erräth, erräth wohl auch, auf welchen *krummen* Wegen er gehen muß! ...

Mit euren Werthen und Worten von Gut und Böse übt ihr Gewalt, ihr Werthschätzenden; und dies ist eure verborgene Liebe und eurer Seele Glänzen, Zittern und Überwallen.

(Self-Surpassing

“Will to Truth” do ye call it, ye wisest ones, that which impelleth you and maketh you ardent?

Will for the thinkableness of all being: thus do I call your will!...

But it shall accommodate and bend itself to you! So willeth you will...

That is your entire will, ye wisest ones, as a Will to Power; and even when ye speak of good and evil, and of estimates of value.

Ye would still create a world before which ye can bow and knee: such is your ultimate hope and ecstasy.

The ignorant, to be sure, the people—they are like a river on which a boat floateth along: and in the boat sit the estimates of value, solemn and disguised.

Your will and your valuations have ye put on the river of becoming; it betrayeth unto me an old Will to Power, what is believed by the people as good and evil...

It is not the river that is your danger and the end of your good and evil, ye wisest ones: but that Will itself, the Will to Power—the unexhausted, pro-creating life will.

But that ye may understand my gospel of good and evil, for the purpose will I tell you my gospel of life, and of the nature of all living things...

Wherever I found living things, there heard I also the language of obedience. All living things are obeying things.

And this heard I secondly: Whatever cannot obey itself, is commanded. Such is the nature of living things.

That, however, is the third thing which I heard: that commanding is more difficult than obeying. And not only because the commander beareth the burden of all obeyers, and because this burden readily crusheth him:

An attempt and a risk seemed all commanding unto me; and whenever it commandeth, the living thing risketh itself thereby...

Wherever I found a living thing, there found I Will to Power; and even in the will of the servant found I the will to be master...

It is the surrender of the greatest to run risk and danger, and play dice for death.

And where there's sacrifice and service and love-glances, there also is the will to be master. By by-ways doth the weaker then slonk into the fortress, and into the heart of the mightier one—and there stealeth power...

That I have to be struggle, and becoming, and purpose, and cross-purpose—ah, he who divineth my will, divineth well also on what crooked paths it hath to tread! ...

With your values and formulae of good and evil, ye exercise power, ye valuing ones: and that is your secret love, and the sparkling, trembling, and overflowing of your souls.)<sup>230</sup>

The juxtapositions of meaning found in this 1883 chapter—namely that the will to power, domination and possession have the same essence—disclose a crucial aspect. Unlike the Förster-Gast compilation, where the will to power is conceptually included within metaphysics, the real meaning of Nietzsche's will to power as present in *Also sprach Zarathustra* is connected to life: life itself, Montinari stresses to Nietzsche's credit, is entirely will to power. Thus, this concept must be followed as an element in development because Nietzsche places it in connection with his perspective on good and evil as well as the eternal recurrence. It should be highlighted though, according to Montinari, that the very meaning of the will to power in Nietzsche remains to the end that of the will to life as shown in *Also sprach Zarathustra*. The fact that the first editions of *Der Wille zur Macht* offer a thematic division of Nietzsche's philosophy produces gaps within its terminology. Thus, this thematic organization does not necessarily imply systematic faithfulness to Nietzsche's work. According to Montinari, in following thematically Nietzsche's fundamental philosophical concepts, Förster and Gast were only looking for a pretext to keep Nietzsche's ideas within Schopenhauer's thought even fifteen years after Nietzsche's clear and definitive break with Schopenhauer. This must be highlighted because, if Nietzsche's 1872 *Die Geburt der Tragödie* and his 1874 *Schopenhauer als Erzieher* confess Schopenhauer's influence on him, later works such as his 1886 *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* as well as his 1888 *Götzen-Dämmerung* reveal the antagonism between Nietzsche's will to power and Schopenhauer's understanding of it. Thus, for Nietzsche, the will to power was just another way to describe the will to life because wherever there is life there is also the will to power, which is manifested either as the will to possession and self-surpassing or as the will to knowledge and truth/self-knowledge. This is clearly in contrast with Schopenhauer who defined the will to power within moral lines, so he turned it into a metaphysical concept which—if connected to representation and art (in Nietzsche, this is the will to see the being by means of the spirit)—caused art to lose its value to the benefit of philosophy. Thus, Nietzsche took a step beyond the then contemporary phi-

---

<sup>230</sup> Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke. Also sprach Zarathustra*, Zweiter Teil: *Von der Selbst-Überwindung*. ed. by Colli and Montinari (München: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), 149. See Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2006), 78; *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, trans. by Thomas Common (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), 107.

osophy against which he revolted as Goethe and Kant did in their age. So, to Nietzsche, if morality is based exclusively on human will, modern philosophy is nothing but a mere relapse in emotivism or teleology. Like Goethe and Kant before him, Nietzsche offers a blunt definition of teleology: “If there is nothing to morality but expressions of will, my morality can only be what my will creates.”<sup>231</sup>

The absence of chronology from the classification of some key concepts in Nietzsche’s thought as well as its unfortunate result from a proper understanding of his philosophy is an attempt to mystify his work in compilations. For instance, Montinari explains that—among Nietzsche’s notes, drafts and papers from the end of the last part of his *Also sprach Zarathustra* (the fall of 1884) to the beginning of the composition of his *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (the spring-summer of 1885)—Nietzsche was primarily keen to analyse the concept of eternal recurrence and especially concerned to debate the issue of the hierarchy of values under a title which bears the same significance, namely the “philosophy of Dionysus” as the fundamental concept. It means that at the time Nietzsche did not intend to write a book entitled *Der Wille zur Macht*. Nevertheless, as noticed by Montinari, the famous aphorism [no. 1067] which closes the Förster-Gast edition of *Der Wille zur Macht* is part of the drafts that belong to the period between 1884 and 1885 when—if Nietzsche’s work is indeed classified thematically—he focused on totally different subjects such as the eternal recurrence of the self, the cyclical character of time and the hope for the future as revealed by part three and four of his *Also sprach Zarathustra*. In this particular context, the quotation of the entire aphorism is absolutely necessary:

Und wißt ihr auch, was mir „die Welt“ ist? Soll ich sie euch in meinem Spiegel zeigen? Die Welt: ein Ungeheuer von Kraft, ohne Anfang, ohne Ende, eine feste, eiserne Größe von Kraft, welche nicht größer, nicht kleiner wird, die sich nicht verbraucht sondern nur verwandelt, als Ganzes unveränderlich groß, ein Haushalt ohne Ausgaben und Einbußen, aber ebenso ohne Zuwachs, ohne Einnahmen, vom „Nichts“ umschlossen als von seiner Grenze, nichts Verschwimmendes, Verschwendetes, nichts Unendlich-Augedehntes, sondern als bestimmte Kraft einem bestimmten Raum(e) eingelegt?!, und nicht einem Raume, der irgendwo „leer“ wäre, vielmehr als Kraft überall, als Spiel von Kräften und Kraftwellen zugleich eins und vieles, hier sich häufend und zugleich dort sind mindernd,

---

<sup>231</sup> This is confirmed by Alasdair MacIntyre, see the Chapter “Nietzsche or Aristotle” in his *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 109-110.

ein Meer in sich selber stürmender und fluthender Kräfte, ewig sich wandelnd, ewig zurücklaufend, mit ungeheuren Jahren der Wiederkehr, mit einer Ebbe und Flut(h) seiner Gestalten/Gestaltungen?, aus den einfachsten in die vielfältigsten hinaustreibend, aus dem Stillsten, Starrsten, Kältesten hinaus in das Glühendste, Wildeste, Sich-selber-Widersprechendste, und dann wieder aus der Fülle heimkehrend zum Einfachen, aus dem Spiel der Widersprüche zurück bis zur Lust des Einklangs, sich selber bejahend noch in dieser Gleichheit seiner Bahnen und Jahre, sich selber segnend als das, was ewig wiederkommen muß, als ein Werden, das kein Sattwerden, keinen Überdruß, keine Müdigkeit kennt: diese meine dionysische Welt des Ewig-sich-selber-Schaffens, des Ewig-sich-selber-Zerstörens, diese Geheimniswelt der doppelten Wollüste, dies mein „Jenseits von Gut und Böse“ ohne Ziel, wenn nicht im Glück des Kreises ein Ziel liegt ohne Willen, wenn nicht ein Ring zu sich selber guten Willen hat,—wollt ihr einen Namen für diese Welt? Eine Lösung für alle ihre Rät(h)sel? Ein Licht für euch, ihr Verborgenen, Stärksten, Unerschrockensten, Mitternächtlischen?—Diese Welt ist der Wille zur Macht—und nichts außerdem! Und auch ihr selber seid dieser Wille zur Macht—und nichts außerdem!

(Do you know what “the world” means to me? Shall I show it to you in my mirror? This world: a monster of energy, without beginning, without end: a firm, iron magnitude of force that does not grow bigger or smaller, that does not expend itself, but only transforms itself; as a whole, of unalterable size, a household without expenses or losses, but likewise without increase or income; enclosed by “nothingness” as by a boundary; not something blurry or wasted, not something endlessly extended, but set in a definite space as a definite force, and not a space that might be “empty” here or there, but rather as force throughout, as a play of forces and waves of forces, at the same time one and many, increasing here and at the same time decreasing there; a sea of forces flowing and rushing together, eternally changing, eternally flooding back, with tremendous years of recurrence, with an ebb and a flood of its forms; out of the simplest forms striving toward the most complex, out of the stillest, most rigid, coldest forms toward the hottest, most turbulent, most self-contradictory, and then again returning home to the simple out of its abundance, out of the play of contradictions back to the joy of concord, still affirming itself in this uniformity of its courses and its years, blessing itself as that which must return eternally, as a becoming that knows no satiety, no disgust, no weariness: this, my *Dionysian* world of the eternally self-creating, the eternally self-destroying, this mystery world of the two-

fold voluptuous delight, my “beyond good and evil”, without goal, unless the joy of the circle is itself a goal; without will, unless a ring feels good-will toward itself / do you want a *name* for this world? A *solution* for all its riddles? A *light* for you, too, you best-concealed, strongest, most intrepid, most midnightly men? / *This world is the will to power—and nothing besides!* And you yourselves are also this will to power—and nothing besides!)<sup>232</sup>

It is clear now why recent critics of Nietzsche place aphorism 1067 as an explanatory note beside the texts on recurrence belonging to Part three of his *Also sprach Zarathustra*. At the same time, as Montinari competently notices, an additional mystifying intervention by Förster and Gast is easily detectable even in connection with the time when Nietzsche manifested indeed his intention to write a book entitled *Der Wille zur Macht*. The reference is to a draft which Nietzsche wrote down in one of his copybooks dated August 1885, where the will to power is salient: “The Will to Power. An Essay about the New Interpretation of Each Event, by Friedrich Nietzsche.” Again, the “theme” discussed by Nietzsche in connection with the will to power in this period of time is not the will to power itself as a moral concept, as suggested by the posthumous editions of his work.<sup>233</sup> The main theme, clearly

<sup>232</sup> Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke. Der Wille zur Macht, Viertes Buch: Zucht und Züchtung: 2. Der züchtende Gedanke*, ed. by Max Brahn (Leipzig: A. Kröner Verlag, 1923), 696. See Nietzsche, *The Will To Power* [Aphorism 1067], in Lawrence Cahoon (ed.), *From Modernism to Postmodernism. An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 130.

<sup>233</sup> In the Afterword to Montinari’s “*La volonté de puissance*” *n’existe pas*, Paolo D’Iorio claims that Nietzsche never had a real project which was supposed to be published and entitled *Der Wille zur Macht* (see p. 115, 132-137). On the contrary, he writes, after Nietzsche’s death a number of “Wills to Power” (this is actually the title of his Afterword) emerged over time. D’Iorio enumerates all of them in the following order: VP1 (1901), containing 483 aphorisms, was entitled *Der Wille zur Macht. Versuch einer Umwerthung aller Werthe* (*The Will to Power. An Attempt to Overturn All Values*) and published by Gast and the Hoerneffer brothers, with a Preface by Elizabeth Förster Nietzsche; VP2 (1906) completely modified the content of VP1 and contains 1067 aphorisms; VP3 (1911), a reprint of VP2 with critical notes by editor Otto Weiss, who signals the arbitrary character of VP2. VP3 is considered the “canonical” version of the *Will to Power* and was used by important critics such as Karl Jaspers, Karl Löwith, Martin Heidegger and Walter Kaufmann; VP4 (1922) or the Musarion edition, edited by Friedrich Würzbach, which no longer contains the VP3 critical notes by Otto Weiss, and VP5 (1936), edited by Alfred Bäumler, an ardent supporter of Nazi politics, takes over the content of VP4 and turns it into Nazi propaganda and Hitlerism. Heidegger, who in the meantime had become a member of the Nazi Party, recommended the Bäumler’s edition to his students as he taught his first course on Nietzsche. Another two less influence editions were published in 1917 by Max Brahn (with 696 aphorisms) and in 1930 by August Messer (491 aphorisms). See Montinari, “*La volonté de puissance*” *n’existe pas*, 126-139.

presented by Nietzsche, is the relationship between pessimism and the absence of the meaning of any event. This theme is purposefully omitted by the second Förster-Gast edition, which also increased the number of aphorisms from 483 to 1067.

It has been shown here that Nietzsche attributed to the concept of will to power a special meaning in comparison to what Schopenhauer understood by the same notion. In Nietzsche's 1885 copybook, the differences in meaning between the will to power in Nietzsche and Schopenhauer are clearly explained by Nietzsche himself. The meaning ascribed by Nietzsche to the will to power in 1885 can be found in aphorism 295 of his *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* and is connected to what he calls the "tempting god Dionysus." Nietzsche argues that it is not pessimism or Dionysus' pessimism which is dangerous but the absence of the meaning of any event—historical or of any other nature—a meaning which died with Schopenhauer. The religious interpretation of events, which preceded modern philosophers (called by Nietzsche "ye wise and knowing ones" in his *Also sprach Zarathustra*), lost its value when it was replaced by Schopenhauer's rational-moral hermeneutics. Thus, by his atheistic representatives, nihilism reversed the values of history and art by means of Schopenhauer's nihilistically informed morality, so that history remained a realm without inspiration as well as the soul which gave meaning to the event (irrespective of its nature). The loss of the world's religious reality is not noticed only by Nietzsche as a "pessimistic anti-Christian" philosopher ("anti-Christian" should be understood here as "anti-modern" because the optimistic meaning of life vanished when modern intellectuals, philosophers and theologians reinterpreted religion as well as Christian theology in liberal terms). Therefore, this acute loss of religious meaning characteristic to the "moral" modern period was also sensed by some theologians—notably Eberhard Jüngel—who admitted Nietzsche's merit to have understood and opposed the metaphysical traditions which impressed on society a bunch of substitutive moral values rather than the traditional religious values.<sup>234</sup> The logical conclusion which emerges even

---

<sup>234</sup> Jüngel notices that specific types of metaphysics—starting from Descartes—promoted imperialistic statements which, once accepted, distort the authentic Christian perspective on God. For instance, the concept of God in Fichte, Feuerbach and Nietzsche derives from the metaphysical tradition, not from Christian theology. Thus, the major forms of atheism (Nietzsche included) specific to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Western society do not reject the Christian concept of God but are reactions against inadequate metaphysical notions of God. Very much within the same vein, Alasdair MacIntyre noticed that the god in which the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries people placed their faith was invented merely in the seventeenth century. See Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology. An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 266.

after a superficial comparison between Schopenhauer's moral message and Nietzsche's "extra-moral" understanding<sup>235</sup> attributed to every aphorism which builds a so-called definition of the will to power is obvious. Thus, if Schopenhauer developed the concept of the will to life, Nietzsche's philosophy is categorically opposed to it. Regardless whether Nietzsche intended to publish a book entitled *Der Wille zur Macht* or not, he nevertheless defined his understanding of the will to power in opposition to "previous values", namely to modern thought as promoted by Schopenhauer, Strauss and Darwin. This is proved by the fact that in his copybooks from this period (summer of 1886 to the winter of 1886)—where the will to power is equivalent of the attempt to overturn all the values and of the new interpretation of the world—the will to power does not prevail as a title but it is rather approached in parallel with other projects, as a reaction against Schopenhauer's morality, which is reflected in his *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* published in the spring of 1886. The editors of the 1906 *Der Wille zur Macht* intentionally lost sight of time when *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* was published as well as the subsequent months when Nietzsche announced, also in a draft, his next literary project. This particular moment is crucially important as it discloses the themes of the works pertaining to the last period of Nietzsche's literary activity (the end of 1887 to the end of 1888). Montinari presented the planning of Nietzsche's future works as organized thematically by Nietzsche himself:

La volonté de puissance

Tentative d'une inversion de toutes les valeurs

En quatre livres.

Premier livre: Le danger des dangers (description du nihilisme, comme conséquence nécessaire des appréciations de valeurs antérieures).

Deuxième livre: Critique des valeurs (de la logique, etc.)

Troisième livre: Le problème du législateur (incluant l'histoire de la solitude).

Quatrième livre: Le marteau. Leurs moyens pour leur tâches.

Sils-Maria, été 1886.<sup>236</sup>

The 1886 draft reveals at least two important facts. First, Nietzsche's intention to change the order of his philosophemes becomes increasingly evident;

<sup>235</sup> Montinari (p. 35-36) shows that in his 1885 draft, Nietzsche proposed an anti-Schopenhauer interpretation of the world by replacing Schopenhauer's morality with an "immoral" or religious perspective on the meaning of life and history.

<sup>236</sup> Montinari, "*La volonté de puissance*" n'existe pas, 41.

thus, the concept of will to power lost its importance as compared to the notion of overturning of all the values. As a matter of fact, the subjects of the four books are arranged in accordance with prevalent themes, namely nihilism, the critique of values, the problem of justice and, finally, an issue which foresaw one of Nietzsche's best 1888 books, the *Götzen-Dämmerung, oder wie man mit dem Hammer philosophiert*. Secondly, the connection between themes like the overturning of all values and the twilight of the idols is natural if one takes into account how the overturning of all the values evolved from mere drafts in copybooks to a literary project which was indeed intentioned by Nietzsche. The intermediary book is his 1887 *Zur Genealogie der Moral* which is a critique of the old values as well as a direction towards a new philosophy or a new morality. In the spring of 1887, as shown by Montinari, Nietzsche had devised another plan which included the title "Will to Power" and was identical with his 1886 project in terms of structure, containing the following themes:

Livre premier: Le nihilisme européen

Livre deuxième: Critique des valeurs suprêmes

Livre troisième: Principe d'une nouvelle détermination des valeurs

Livre quatrième: Discipline et éducation

Le 17 mars 1887, Nice.<sup>237</sup>

Interestingly enough, Nietzsche's 1887 plan was chosen by Förster and Gast as essential for Nietzsche's intention to write a book entitled *Der Wille zur Macht*. The fact that they chose this particular plan as a model for their edition is at least improbable given the first editions of *Der Wille zur Macht*. It should be said here that Nietzsche's 1887 plan, identical with his 1886 draft, discloses the same intention to promote the idea of the overturning of values. Unlike the systematic method of studying Nietzsche's philosophy indicated in the Förster-Gast editions of *Der Wille zur Macht*, the theme of the overturning of values is different in the original Nietzsche. Both in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* and in *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, Nietzsche defines the concept of the overturning of values not as a reinterpretation of values but as a reversal or transvaluation of values. Though constantly present in Nietzsche's works until 1888, this particular meaning was unfortunately lost by Förster and Gast as well as by Heidegger, who compared the transvaluation from Nietzsche's philosophy to the relationship between technology

---

<sup>237</sup> Montinari, "La volonté de puissance" n'existe pas, 44-45.

and aesthetics,<sup>238</sup> not to the relationship between modernity and morality, as understood by Nietzsche. Then, it is weird that Förster and Gast chose the 1887 draft as representative, even if it is identical with that of 1886, because neither these plans nor Nietzsche's allusions to his supposed intention to write anything on the overturning of values can be found in aphorism 1067, as Montinari noticed. This clearly leads to the conclusion that Nietzsche had already been interested in the major theme of transvaluation, so that the will to power became a subdivision of this theme as shown by his last two drafts dated February 1888 and August 1888. In his last draft, the will to power is not even mentioned as a project title. Nietzsche only revealed his intention to publish a book entitled *Der Umwerthung aller Werthe* (*The Overturning of Values*), which is proved by the fact that Nietzsche resumed more chapters from this draft in his next work, namely the *Götzen-Dämmerung* published in August-September 1888. Thus, Nietzsche abandoned the idea to write a book with the title *Der Wille zur Macht*,<sup>239</sup> so the "merit" for the posthumous publication of such a book (which did not respect the divisions given by Nietzsche himself in his copybooks or in the prefaces to his subsequent works), as well as for the insertions and additions of aphorisms (which Nietzsche never intended for such a book), belong entirely to Förster and Gast.<sup>240</sup>

---

<sup>238</sup> Nietzsche approaches the technological problem of his age in the third part of his *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* which includes his "Der Wanderer und sein Schatten" ("The Wanderer and his Shadow") published before 1880. Heidegger, however, curiously associates the ideas from "Der Wanderer und sein Schatten" to the concept of the overturning of values by detaching it from the primordial concept which includes the latter, namely the recurrence of the self, as prevalent in Nietzsche's last years of literary activity and particularly in his *Götzen-Dämmerung*. It is likely that one of the 1880 aphorisms used by Heidegger was aphorism 288 of "Der Wanderer und sein Schatten" entitled: "Inwiefern die Maschine demütigt" ("By What the Machine Humiliates"): "Die Maschine ist unpersönlich, sie enzieht dem Stück Arbeit, sein individuell Gutes und Fehlerhaftes, was an jeder Nicht-Maschinenarbeit klebt,—also sein bißchen Humanität." ("The machine is impersonal, it takes the pride away from a piece of work, the individual merits and defects that go along with all work that is not done by a machine—which is to say, its little bit of humanity.")

<sup>239</sup> See also William Schaberg, *The Nietzsche Canon: A Publication History and Bibliography* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 186-194.

<sup>240</sup> Montinari's statistics of these fragments compiled in the 1901 and 1906 editions of *Der Wille zur Macht* clearly show that from the 374 fragments numbered by Nietzsche for a possible book entitled *Der Wille zur Macht*, 104 were not included in the posthumous editions; from the 270 remaining fragments, 137 were published in an arbitrarily modified and consequently incomplete version; instead of 374 fragments intended by Nietzsche, for Förster-Gast compilation contains 1067 aphorisms, which confirms the lack of neutrality of the posthumous work (see p. 47).

## 5. Nietzsche and the Archive. Zarathustra and “Weimar’s” Superman

The imminent danger of the fact that Elizabeth took control of the Nietzsche Archive can be seen in her own words, namely in the recognition that Nietzsche had many friends—including herself—who venerated him even if they did not understand him. Moreover, if the fate of these friends was to answer the attacks and straighten the mistakes concerning Nietzsche’s creation or even to come up with first-hand details about him for the first time ever, then the true Nietzsche as reflected in his works was indeed a visionary. In *Ecce homo*, his last autobiography, Nietzsche insisted on drawing attention to those who would later take him for someone else, as well as on those who would present him as a man and a philosopher from their own perspective, not his. For the first time, Nietzsche cried out the loudest he could in order for the people to listen to him, not to somebody else. He presented himself as he truly was, so he warned that he should not be mistaken for somebody else. Thus, the true Nietzsche wanted to be understood through his works and this was exactly the reason why he produced such an ample range of writings. The posthumous episode though must be known lest he should be mistaken for someone he was not. Probably more than anything, Nietzsche refused to be confounded—as shown before—with his sister’s voice and beliefs.

The Nietzsche Archive in Weimar was—at least to his sister and her nationalist allies before the 1930s—a pretext for the foundation and the consolidation of what Nietzsche used to call the Superman. In connection with Elizabeth’s attempt to find the origin of the myth of Nietzsche’s Superman at least some objections can be made. She can be blamed for not being sensitive to the moment when Nietzsche changed his attitude to Schopenhauer’s philosophy—and implicitly to Wagner’s thought—which irremediably occurred when he was thirty four and published *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, so when he began his creation of maturity. On the other hand, Elizabeth seems to have been unable to understand Nietzsche’s genius which was oriented to the ancient Greek model of humanity as an aesthetic ideal, not to the early humanist model as pointed out by a hero with high moral standards. Therefore, although she correctly notices Nietzsche’s propensity for the art of Byron and Shakespeare, she does that from the mistaken presupposition that Nietzsche would have sought the primary idea of the Superman in their writings. Here is what Elizabeth has to say about this issue:

During the publication of the first three parts of *Zarathustra* the author soon recognized that his new ideas were subject to much misconception,

especially those of the eternal recurrence and the Superman ... It is greatly to be regretted that he did not carry out this plan, especially Part III, which would have made it clear what my brother then meant by the word “Superman”.

Then she supposedly “unlocks” Nietzsche’s philosophy by her own evaluation of her brother’s life:

It is interesting, in the first place, to find out when and in what connexion my brother first used the term. Strange to say, we have to go back so far as the year 1863, when my brother—then a schoolboy of seventeen—read a paper on Byron’s poetry to his little literary society. In this paper he describes Byron’s heroes as supermen, just as he described Shakespeare’s heroes twenty years later.

She continues her attempt to identify the origin of the Superman with a clear reference to one of Nietzsche’s works, which seems to be his *The Gay Science* published in 1882:

For the long period between these two dates it has been assumed that Nietzsche was so strongly influenced by Darwinian ideas that he conceived the Superman as a “super-type” that might be developed in the same way as the higher organisms, according to Darwin, were developed from the lower. My own conviction is that this is entirely wrong, for my brother’s personal conversation shows that he thought of the Superman only as an ideal being.<sup>241</sup>

It is indeed regrettable that Nietzsche did not live long enough to add another book to his already impressive collection of writings in order to produce a lexicon with a clear definition of the Superman. Happily though—not necessarily for his so-called friends who venerated him as they were fully aware they did not understand him—Nietzsche was an artist as well as a philosopher, so his works were not meant to include such transliterations. It is venturesome to claim that Nietzsche conceived his Superman following the pattern used by either Byron or Shakespeare; on the other hand, it is hazardous to say that Nietzsche’s thought was totally alien to Darwin’s theory. Elizabeth tries to make us understand how Nietzsche used to think but she does so by connecting him to Shakespeare’s dramas and Darwin’s

---

<sup>241</sup> The quotations are taken from Elizabeth Förster Nietzsche, *The Life of Nietzsche*, trans. by Paul V. Cohn (New York: Sturgis and Walton Co.), 198-199.

works. Thus, she claims, it is in Shakespeare that one should look for Nietzsche's impetus to create the Superman. Nevertheless, Elizabeth immediately writes that the Superman must not be understood in Darwin's terms, namely as a social super-type. A logical question arises, namely what exactly prompted Elizabeth to differentiate so clearly between Shakespeare's historical dramas and Darwin's theory of natural selection, when Nietzsche's *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* connects him to Darwin through his clear notes on atheism as well as through various evident references to the principle of the selection of species.

Unlike his sister's conviction, Nietzsche did not refer to Darwin as to an opponent to the Superman's image in *Also sprach Zarathustra*. On the contrary, he used the conclusions of Darwin's theory concerning the social reason for the continuation or propagation of the human species, which he presented as a "moral" impulse that unites the members of society. Consequently, Nietzsche does not deny the results reached by Darwin as he researched the evolution of the human species but, even more so, he imposes Darwin's conclusions as a nucleus of his perspective on the Superman:

Ich mag nun mit gutem oder bösem Blicke auf die Menschen sehen, ich finde sie immer bei *einer* Aufgabe, alle und jeden Einzelnen insonderheit: das zu thun, was der Erhaltung der menschlichen Gattung frommt ... weil Nichts in ihnen älter, stärker, unerbittlicher, unüberwindlicher ist, als jener Instinkt,—weil dieser Instinkt eben *das Wesen* unserer Art und Herde ist.

(Whether I contemplate men with benevolence or with an evil eye, I always find them concerned with a single task ... to do what is good for the preservation of the human race ..., because nothing in them is older, stronger, more inexorable and unconquerable than this instinct, because this instinct constitutes the essence of our species, our herd.)<sup>242</sup>

In Nietzsche's philosophy, the myth of the Superman appears simultaneously with Darwin's principle of the evolution of species. If modern man—that is Darwin's man—is conditioned by and connected to certain ideals and moral rules in his development, Nietzsche's Superman<sup>243</sup> is not an ideal in

---

<sup>242</sup> Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft in Werke*, ed. by Karl Schlechta (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1977), Erstes Buch, 1. See Nietzsche, *The Gay Science (With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs)*, trans. by Walter Kaufman (New York: Random House, 1974), 1.

<sup>243</sup> It should be said here that the word "Superman" is somehow mistaken because it does not refer to an ideal or to someone who is above man but rather someone who will come

itself but a man who constantly surpasses himself in order to free himself from the burden or rules so that he should become independent. The detachment from the compelling self-imposed rules of the modern man who wanted to set moral landmarks or, in other words, the return to nature by means of a correct as well as a free relationship with it is what defines this Superman, who nevertheless goes beyond the ordinary status of modern man because he surpasses himself. Darwin's man or the modern man contributed to the materialization of Nietzsche's Superman, which consequently does not mean that the Superman evolved from a social involute. In this respect, Nietzsche's will to power is totally distinct from what Darwin would have conceived of it, so it shows greater affinity to Goethe's perspective on the relationship between man and nature.

At the same time, however, it must be emphasized that contrary to his sister's view, Nietzsche did not think of the Superman when he made reference to the works of both Byron and Shakespeare. What he did though was rather to discuss their perspective on art as well as the idea of spiritual freedom as opposed to political freedom.<sup>244</sup> Thus, in characterizing Shakespeare's drama *Julius Caesar*, Nietzsche is not preoccupied with the portrait of the Roman dictator but with Brutus' inner struggle seen as an advocate of spiritual independence:

---

after man or someone who cannot exist for as long as we are the witnesses of the modern man's existence. Nietzsche's idea of the Superman ["Übermensch"] is better rendered by means of the English "Overman" [or "Afterman"] and has apocalyptic connotations as it refers to the future time of the overturning of man's old values and morality. In this particular sense, Zarathustra is not himself the Superman but only his prophet even if sometimes the Superman is seen as Zarathustra's "child"/offspring. The new man is born from the prophet's "word" and is truly a "prophecy". To be sure, Zarathustra was not Nietzsche, as Elizabeth and the national-socialists used to claim. See Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, ed. by Robert Pipin and Adrian Del Caro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), xvi.

<sup>244</sup> Walter Kaufmann, *From Shakespeare to Existentialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 35. Shakespeare is contrasted with Goethe to whom Nietzsche was greatly indebted. Kaufmann shown that, while Shakespeare's heroes became famous as a result of political action to the detriment of a high spiritual profile, Goethe's heroes excelled as artists and creators of spiritual thinking. As for Shakespeare, it seems that perhaps only his *Henry V* transcended Shakespearean morality patterns through the rational character of the hero's political decision. It could be interesting to notice what Goethe said through Wilhelm Meister in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* concerning English drama (see Drittes Buch, Achtes Kapitel, 180): "Indessen hat mich alles, was ich von jenem Stücken gehört, nicht neugierig gemacht, solche seltsame Ungeheure näher kennenzulernen, die über alle Wahrscheinlichkeit, allen Wohlstand hinauszuschreiten scheinen." ("All I have heard of these plays has excited little wish to become acquainted with these extraordinary monsters, which appear to set probability and dignity alike at defiance."), which—through Shakespeare—is perceived as non-realistic.

Unabhängigkeit der Seele!—das gilt es hier! Kein Opfer kann da zu groß sein: seinen liebsten Freund selbst muß man ihr opfern können, und sei er noch dazu der herrlichste Mensch, die Zierde der Welt, das Genie ohne gleichen,—wenn man nämlich die Freiheit als die Freiheit großer Seelen liebt, und durch ihn *dieser* Freiheit Gefahr droht:—derart muss Shakespeare gefühlt haben! Die Höhe, in welche er Cäsar stellt, ist die feinste Ehre, die er Brutus erweisen konnte ... War es wirklich die politische Freiheit, welche diesen Dichter zum Mitgefühl mit Brutus trieb,—zum Mitschuldigen des Brutus machte? Oder war die politische Freiheit nur eine Symbolik für irgendetwas Unaussprechbares?... Was ist alle Hamlet-Melancholie gegen die Melancholie des Brutus!

(Independence of the soul! That is at stake here [in *Julius Caesar*]. No sacrifice can be too great for that: one must be capable of sacrificing one's dearest friend for it, even if he should also be the most glorious human being, an ornament of the world, a genius ..., if one loves freedom as the freedom of the great souls and another one endangers this liberty: that is how Shakespeare must have felt. The height at which he places Caesar is the finest honor that he could bestow to Brutus ... Could it really have been political freedom that led the poet to sympathize with Brutus and turned him into Brutus' accomplice? Or was political freedom only a symbol for something inexpressible? ... What is all of Hamlet's melancholy compared to that of Brutus!)<sup>245</sup>

Nietzsche, however, does not mistake Brutus for the Superman, so *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* is a preamble to *Also sprach Zarathustra* through totally different themes, of which the most important are his statements about atheism and the myth of the eternal recurrence. Thus, Nietzsche did not read Shakespeare in order to find the voice of political rigorism in his writings; what he did though was to appreciate the way Shakespeare knew how to point to the deeper preoccupations of his characters without necessarily being predictable, that is without displaying intentions which end up in political action. Following in the footsteps of Goethe, Nietzsche is the advocate of rational action in connection with art, but he also set certain limits to his rational action like Goethe did before him as seen in one of Wilhelm Meister's reflections:

---

<sup>245</sup> Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* in *Werke*, ed. by Karl Schlechta (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1977), Zweites Buch, 98. See Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. by Walter Kaufmann, Book II.98.

(Shakespeares gelesen) sind keine Gedichte! Man glaubt von den ausgeschlagenen ungeheuren Büchern des Schicksals zu stehen, in denen der Sturmwind des bewegtesten Lebens saust und sie mit Gewalt rasch hin und wider blättert. Ich bin über die Stärke und Zartheit, über die Gewalt und Ruhe so erstaunt und außer aller Fassung gebracht...

[Shakespeare's plays] are no fictions! You would think, while reading them, you stood before the unclosed awful Books of Fate, while the whirlwind of most impassioned life was howling through the leaves, and tossing them fiercely to and fro. The strength and tenderness, the power and peacefulness of this man have so astonished and transported me ....<sup>246</sup>

In Nietzsche, the ideal or the model to be followed by men is Zarathustra himself, not the Superman, because we cannot think of the Superman as long as we do not change our way of thinking about him. In order to explain the myth of the Superman, Nietzsche leaves the impression that we first have to discern between his own atheism and the atheism of his time. These two types of atheism are as different as the definitions of the concept of eternal recurrence or the multitude of the human "traditions" which partially led to the atheistic perspective of the nineteenth century, from which Nietzsche delineates himself:

Ich bekenne, daß ich wenige Bücher mit solchen Schwierigkeiten lese wie die Evangelien. Diese Schwierigkeiten sind andre, als die, an deren Nachweis die gelehrte Neugierde des deutschen Geistes einen ihrer unvergeßlichsten Triumphe gefeiert hat. Die Zeit ist fern, wo auch ich, gleich jedem jungen Gelehrten, mit der klugen Langsamkeit eines raffinierten Philologen das Werk des unvergleichlichen Strauß auskostete. Damals war ich zwanzig Jahre alt: jetzt bin ich zu ernst dafür. Was gehen mich die Widersprüche der „Überlieferung“ an? Wie kann man Heiligen-Legenden überhaupt „Überlieferung“ nennen! Die Geschichten von Heiligen sind die zweideutigste Literatur, die es überhaupt gibt: auf sie die wissenschaftliche Methode anwenden, *wenn sonst keine Urkunden vorliegen*, scheint mir von vornherein verurtheilt-bloßer gelehrter Müßiggang.

---

<sup>246</sup> Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* in *Goethes Werke*, HA, ed. by Erich Trunz (München: C. H. Beck, 1994), Buch III, Eilftes Kapitel, 197. See also Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, Book III, Chapter XI.

(I confess, to begin with, that there are very few books which offer me harder reading than the Gospels. My difficulties are quite different from those which enabled the learned curiosity of the German mind to achieve one of its most unforgettable triumphs. It is a long while since I, like all other young scholars, enjoyed with all the sapient laboriousness of a fastidious philologist the work of the incomparable Strauss. At that time I was twenty years old: now I am too serious for that sort of thing. What do I care for the contradictions of “tradition”? How can any one call pious legends “traditions”? The histories of saints present the most dubious variety of literature in existence; to examine them by the scientific method, *in the entire absence of the corroborative documents*, seems to me to condemn the whole inquiry from the start—it is simply learned idling.)<sup>247</sup>

In this context, the great failure of Nietzsche’s sister as well as the huge confusion disseminated among Germans through the Nietzsche Archive was primarily the result of Elizabeth’s refusal to demonstrate her arguments in light of Nietzsche’s mature thought. Thus, it would be interesting to know whether she built the myth of the Superman as a nucleus of certain party politics out of confusion or in full awareness of it. Certain biographical notes which were kept about her proof that she was not unaware of philosophy and political science, because she received instruction from the philosopher Rudolf Steiner since her early youth, while her political initiation happened under the auspices of Wagner’s excessive laudatory discourses about the German State held in Bayreuth.<sup>248</sup> Her thoroughness in disseminating Nietzsche as well as her intentional misrepresentation of Nietzsche’s concept of Superman had a realistic—or better said, materialistic—foundation. The image of Ludwig II as coronation of the German spirit in Europe began to fade away as compared to the authoritative figure of the young Mussolini and that of Hitler which loomed at the horizon following the demise of the Weimar Republic. A first hand testimony in this respect is greatly illuminating as it is unmediated and well acquainted with the then events:

Count Harry Kessler  
[On the Nietzsche Archive and the German Elections]

---

<sup>247</sup> Nietzsche, *Der Antichrist*, 28. See Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, aphorism 28, trans. by H. L. Mencken (Tucson, AZ: Sharp Press, 1999).

<sup>248</sup> Mazzino Montinari, “*La Volonté de Puissance*” *n’existe pas*, 48; and Carol Diethe, *Nietzsche’s Sister and the Will to Power: A Biography of Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 63, 106-108.

Sunday, August 7, 1932, Weimar

In the afternoon visited Frau [Elizabeth] Förster-Nietzsche. The Nietzsche Archives are now, as she herself put it, “right in the centre of politics.” Emge, a Nazi professor of legal philosophy at Jena and a prospective Nazi minister in the Thuringian government, has been appointed chairman. Inside the Archives everyone, from the doorkeeper to the head, is a Nazi. Only she herself remains a nationalist. She recounted how Hitler came to see her after the first night of Mussolini’s play at the Weimar National Theatre ... “Winifred Wagner”, she told me, “is a keen Nazi sympathizer. In fact, this whole section of German intellectuals, whose background is really Goethe and the Romantic movement, is Nazi-contaminated without knowing why. The Nietzsche Archives have at least derived material advantage from their fascism: Mussolini sent them twenty thousand lire at the end of last year.”<sup>249</sup>

Harry Kessler, or the “Red Count”, a well known patron of the arts and a sharp German aesthete, was an eye-witness of the then troublesome events as well as one of the few distant critics of the European culture after 1918.<sup>250</sup> His description of Elizabeth and the Nietzsche Archive briefly illustrates how Elizabeth used her own försterian perspective when she identified the whole of German culture prior to 1932 as essentially Goethean-romantic. Her immediate unuttered conclusion may have been that Goethe was definitely representative for the entire world through his Sturm und Drang which would have inspired the Nazi and their ideals. Such an observation creates the impression of déjà-vu: it has already been shown that Elizabeth had a talent for purposefully creating ideas which were meant to obliterate the true significance of the works of certain artists, such as Goethe but also her own brother. Then, her statement that the representatives of the new generation were contaminated by Nazism without knowing why places her at the other end of political awareness because she knew exactly why she was contaminated by fascism, for the twenty thousand lire were a good enough reason. Merely a year after Kessler’s visit, she will learn why it was profitable to get Nazi-contaminated.<sup>251</sup>

---

<sup>249</sup> Anton Kaes; Martin Jay, *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 144.

<sup>250</sup> See his autobiography and his characterization of the historical, political and cultural European context between 1918 and 1933, in Harry Kessler, *Berlin in Lights. The Diaries of Count Harry Kessler (1918-1937)* (New York: Grove Press, 1999).

<sup>251</sup> After 1933, when Hitler and his party took over political power in Germany, the Nietzsche Archive in Weimar benefited from Nazi funding and support as well as from government publicity. See Kaes; Jay, *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, 142-144.

## **6. Nietzsche and the Enlightenment: a Conclusion against Modern Optimism**

The observation that Nietzsche and Goethe were—in their specific time—promoters of reason in art is particularly important because it issues an important warning, namely that neither Nietzsche nor Goethe was allowed by their contemporaries to continue this specific direction which was in fact their shelter as opposed to the social event. Thus, their contemporaries sought deeper and more encompassing implications of their thinking as reflected artistically, which does not necessarily mean that the aesthetic considerations of either Goethe or Nietzsche had political overtones.<sup>252</sup> On the contrary, like Goethe and as a token of Nietzsche's powerful adherence to the Enlightenment which he so often criticized, Nietzsche takes refuge in Antiquity in order to provide a proper response to the "superior" racism of his day through the superiority of the ancient Greeks. Thus, although Nietzsche virulently attacked the Enlightenment, he was not capable of surpassing its tradition; this is why his works contain numerous elements which pertain to the Enlightenment.<sup>253</sup> At least in his *Also sprach Zarathustra*, Nietzsche's philosophy is saliently highlighted by his art of rhetoric which is the result of his careful discourse that describes the prophet's pilgrimage. He is therefore directly connected to the Enlightenment for which rhetoric had a key role. Other elements of Nietzsche's adherence to the Enlightenment as seen in his *Also sprach Zarathustra* should be understood at the interface between Christianity and Hellenism. Thus, if Jesus reached maturity at thirty, when he went up the mountain for forty days before his great trial, Zarathustra reached maturity at forty (the preferred age of the Greek male), then he appeared before the world having spent ten years on the mountain top in search of illumination. If to the two ways to reach perfection in Nietzsche's view one adds the role and symbolic significance of the animals

---

<sup>252</sup> This is proved by the fact that Nietzsche defended Goethe's classicism as opposed to the tendencies of his contemporaries who were fond of the revolutionary romanticism promoted by Hugo and Wagner even if their nationalism seems to be different from Förster nationalism. In exchange, Nietzsche proposed Goethe's calm and mild classicism, which promote sound reason. It is believed that by his own inner spiritual structure, Nietzsche was a romantic but only in terms of its finesse and creative sensitivity as well as inclination to the popular spirit of the Germans; thus, he could have been influenced by the early romanticism of Novalis and the Schlegel brothers. See Judith Norman, "Nietzsche and Early Romanticism", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 63.3 (2002), 501-519.

<sup>253</sup> Stanley Rosen, *The Mask of the Enlightenment, Nietzsche's Zarathustra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 16, 176-177.

associated with Jesus and Zarathustra—for Jesus the donkey and the camel, which represent the desert and thus bareness and nothingness, while for Zarathustra the lion and the vulture which represent power and elevation<sup>254</sup>—the conclusion is easy to reach: decadent Christianity is opposed to the superior Hellenism. Actually, the entire book is conceived as a reversed path to Christianity, in connection with the philosophy of the new Hegelians and the myth of Dionysus.<sup>255</sup>

It is worth mentioning that the influence of the Enlightenment—especially the French version of it—was more powerful on Nietzsche than it was on Goethe. If Goethe appreciated the benefits of the Enlightenment mainly in connection with the escape from a primitive realm into the higher realm of arts, as well as to the development of certain concepts in economy and industry by means of the *Encyclopedia*, Nietzsche went much further probably because of the fifty-year gap between himself and Goethe. Thus, Nietzsche looked at the Enlightenment for something more than just the capacities of rhetoric. Nevertheless he did read the *Encyclopedia* for some terms which were very close to those once used in David Strauss' book that he criticized so severely. Thus, in his *Der Antichrist*, one can find a small dictionary of explicative terms which include fundamental concepts for Christian faith and practice, such as the Lord's Supper. Nietzsche believed that the Christian Supper originated in an old pagan ritual, which was also the definition in the *Encyclopedia*.<sup>256</sup> Concerning his negative attitude to Christianity, both traditional and modern, it must be said that such attacks—groundless in their majority—were not rare in the nineteenth century, which was seen as the atheistic century *par excellence*. The prevalence of these groundless attacks revealed—as Goethe noticed—the regress of Europe's culture in connection with one of its most important cultural domains. Thus, while Goethe appreciated the Magna Charta of the Enlightenment for its scientific novelties, Nietzsche repudiated them in favor of philosophical concepts.<sup>257</sup>

<sup>254</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 2, *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, trans. by David F. Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), 45.

<sup>255</sup> Nietzsche's reverse way can indeed seem odd taking into account his repulsion for Wagner and the use of this work as a possible answer, but also the fundamental idea that the gods are dead so we no longer can look at the world as we did before. This is why Nietzsche was criticized for his incapacity to detach himself from humanist "morality"; consequently, he has never been able to relate itself objectively to the ethics of Christianity. See Steven E. Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 1890-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 5-6.

<sup>256</sup> See Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, trans. by H. L. Mencken (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishers, 2004), 62, note 36.

<sup>257</sup> See Stanley Rosen, *The Mask of the Enlightenment*, 248.

Returning to Heidegger's perspective on Nietzsche, it must be underlined at this point that Heidegger noticed Nietzsche's affinity for the ancient Greeks in connection with the use of rhetoric, which is stronger than Goethe's. Heidegger's theory is that Nietzsche—in his *Der Wille zur Macht* for instance—criticized Christianity because of the cosmetizing of contemporary Western society by means of its acute and uncontrolled technological progress.<sup>258</sup> Heidegger warns that in the midst of this new enthusiasm humanity is in danger because it can easily collapse once these new technologies break down. This is why a new referential realm is needed but only if we want to get rid of the effects of using the power of technology without art. At the end of the day, this means that whatever we currently call valuable goods or values must go through a real change of meaning—a transvaluation, as he called it—and this can only happen in the light of the old, traditional values.<sup>259</sup>

Traditional values are aesthetic in nature so they can be found in art, not in technology. As for technology, it is the product of a society which denies traditional values and its nihilistic essence is individualistic in nature because progress in itself has a national character.<sup>260</sup> Nevertheless, Heidegger mentions, not even Nietzsche succeeded in making this transfer of meaning or the transvaluation of Western society; moreover, he did not even perceive the entire range of problems which were presupposed by this transmutation of values. Heidegger's assessment confirms the idea that, while Nietzsche ignored the social aspect of life,<sup>261</sup> he focused primarily on the aesthetic fac-

---

<sup>258</sup> The contrast with Victor Hugo's *Legend of the Centuries* is evident. In Hugo, the idea of progress unites humanity over centuries and it expresses itself through man's capacity to create social and comunitary goods, namely through an ample technological process. See *The Legend of the Ages*, in Hugo, *Selected Poems*, trans. by E. H. Blackmore (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001), 318 (*The Earth*) and 400 (*The Mountains*).

<sup>259</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 1, *The Will to Power as Art*, trans. by David F. Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), chapters 3, 7 and 25.

<sup>260</sup> On the powerful industrialized states and the cause of their decline, see the work of Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, 2 vols., trans. by Charles Francis Atkinson (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1922). Nietzsche's idea is very similar, in the sense that Western society and its religion—though industrialized—are inferior to Eastern society, which kept the beauty of the spirit to the detriment of utility. See Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality: A Polemic*, trans. by Maudemarie Clarke and Alan J. Swenswen (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1998), 105.

<sup>261</sup> Beside Heidegger, Gilles Deleuze perceives Nietzsche as a philosopher who had no real preoccupation for social reality. See Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. by Hugh Thomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983). According to Deleuze, Nietzsche's main objective was to ascribe a sense of reason and value to philosophy. Heidegger does not argue with Deleuze; he, however, deciphers Nietzsche's symbolism and concludes that he was not a mere idealist but was animated by an acute sense of the immi-

tor as well as on its rational-aesthetic impact in society and even politics. Unlike the representatives of the Enlightenment, Nietzsche made only sporadic observations with reference to the consequences of the transition from art to social action through technology, and this is exactly what Heidegger rebuked him for. Nietzsche confined himself to predict the implications of the new political orientation of his time but the imprecations he uttered against it are covered in his works by too many symbols and a rhetoric which was much too inaccessible to his contemporaries. The meaning of Nietzsche's rhetoric was later translated by Heidegger by means of some lectures, strictly limited to the academic realm of the university, which were published way too late for the general public, namely after 1954.<sup>262</sup> Even to this day, Western society feels the absence of the true Nietzsche in his works after his 1889 physical breakdown. The problem is that, after him, others have claimed that they were the only ones able to reveal the whole of

---

ment. Deleuze also mentions the overturning of the old morality based on identity and the moral argument which says that moral action starts from individuals as bearers of innate natural rights and thus encourages the idea of retribution (naturalism, for instance). Deleuze sees himself as a follower of Nietzsche because in Nietzsche morality is the product of pre-individual desires and powers (in this, Nietzsche is an existentialist philosopher). Nevertheless, Deleuze fails to catch Nietzsche's fundamental idea about the artistic fact because he states that values must be looked for in the intimate life of the creative individual. Deleuze believes that the value of life resides exclusively in the act of creation, in the act of "bringing into being" not in the act of "judging". By contrast, Nietzsche foresaw the future of the European culture and judged it. For instance, in his *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, the concept of evil includes not only the self but also the entire humanity which is damned never to reach higher peaks. Thus, Nietzsche criticized the tragic consequences of nihilism which are part of such a future. This is an obvious contradiction to Deleuze's philosophy; thus, it is clear that Nietzsche did not exaggerate the result of the creative activity of his nation's spirit as practically applied.

<sup>262</sup> George Bataille—"the metaphysicist of evil"—is among those who failed to understand the true Nietzsche because he claims that the supreme purpose of any artistic, intellectual and religious activity must be a violent and transcendent act of communication. In one of his books, Bataille analyses the artistic and moral action in light of his own person as well as his own life. Thus, he contends that Nietzsche's work discloses extreme attitudes and aspirations beyond moral constraints even if Nietzsche could not always demonstrate this. In order to explain the essence of Nietzsche's thought, Bataille offers himself as an example of the consequences of Nietzsche's philosophy, as a prophet of spiritual decadence taken to extreme. It is certain though that Nietzsche's works do not aim at the death of the artistic spirit because the denial of society in such an alert pace and in such a virulent style presupposes a vivid sense of the artistic conscience and of the moral role of art. For details about Bataille's philosophy, see his book *On Nietzsche*, trans. by Bruce Boone (London: Athlone Press, 1992).

his philosophy and his true image, such as his sister Elizabeth, who managed to impose a misrepresented and erroneous perspective on Nietzsche.<sup>263</sup>

If Heidegger discusses the totality of Nietzsche's works as an aesthetic fact and ascribes to it features which are specific to the Enlightenment as a result of his analysis of Nietzsche's rhetoric, the prevalence of the moral act in Nietzsche represents another way to approach his thought. Thus, a connection is made between Nietzsche's works and the moral-artistic tradition before him, as well as between Nietzsche's three periods of artistic creation represented by his corresponding works. The identification of this moral essence of his writings results in the unity of Nietzsche's works, which is thus a thematic unity. If through the specific unity of his works Nietzsche is opposed to the philosophy of the Enlightenment in general, through the attribution of an ethical meaning to his art he is a continuator of Goethe's thought, even if he does not approve of Goethe's definition of morality. Thus, Robert John Ackermann correctly noticed the constant aspect which linked Nietzsche to Goethe. According to Ackermann, Nietzsche praised the noble life of the Greeks who had lived before Socrates and Euripides. These Greeks were aware of the Dionysian chaos but their life was still dynamic, profound and superior to modern scientific optimism.<sup>264</sup> This way Ackermann gave a proper response to Heidegger's allusion that Nietzsche did not manage to foresee through his art the nationalistic-technological ideals of his age. As far as Ackermann is concerned, Nietzsche did not establish an aesthetic finality for his entire work. The finality of Nietzsche's rhetoric is rather ethical because its message is very clear: unlike Socrates, who used rhetoric in order to grasp the meaning of virtue, Nietzsche uses rhetoric or

---

<sup>263</sup> Although Elizabeth and Bernhard Förster's house as well as their Paraguay colony lie in ruin today and their last followers barely lead a decent life by tilling the land—many of them are married to indigenous people—in recent years there has been a growing interest in the Arian profile of the Nueva Germania. The American composer David Woodard visited the remote village and decided to support the locals through funding and various other “cultural contributions”. A dauntless admirer of Wagner's music and ideas, he read his *Religion und Kunst* propagandistic paper but also Ben MacIntyre's book, *The Forgotten Fatherland*, about the Nueva Germania, from which he found out about the Arian remnant. Woodard was so enthusiastic about today's Paraguayan Arian followers of the former Nazi Party that he devised a rehabilitation project for the Nueva Germania for which he sought the support of the American vice-President Dick Cheney, the Los Angeles City Council as well as other San Francisco charities. He was turned down by most of them when they learned who the beneficiaries of Woodard's project were, but some important charities and some artists are still interested in the propagation of Nazi ideology and the salvation of the Arian “species”. Needless to say, Woodard still hopes to see his dream come true.

<sup>264</sup> Robert John Ackermann, *Nietzsche: A Frenzied Look* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), ix.

art in order to hide previously established moral-philosophical concepts. The reason why Nietzsche refused to understand the transvaluation of society in terms of technology was not given by his great love for nature or the scientific developments in natural sciences. He was indeed a passionate naturalist but his passion took him to other countries, such as Italy, where art did not “nationalize” as it did in Germany. With Nietzsche, the aesthetic reason was only a small part of his moral philosophy through which he ridiculed the technological spirit of his time. The unity of Nietzsche’s art is given by its particular moral character, so Nietzsche’s ethics can be discussed within the lines of his five major books.<sup>265</sup> Thus, the ethical core of Nietzsche’s philosophy is given by the following five aspects: the ethics of art in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, the ethics of morality in *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, the ethics of religion in *Der Antichrist*, the ethics of creativity in *Also sprach Zarathustra*, and the ethics of knowledge in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*. This is of course only one way to divide Nietzsche’s entire creation from an ethical perspective but it demonstrates that Nietzsche focused more on the ethical message, defined as modern counter-ethics, than on the aesthetic message in his works.

### **7. Nietzsche and his Contemporaries. Goethean Humanity against Modern Society**

The German society of the nineteenth century cannot be adequately discussed without Karl Marx’s perspective, which reduces Kant’s thought to notions that belong to the bourgeois social-political essence of the then society in Germany. Marx was convinced that Germany’s *Bürgers* were decadent because they allowed themselves to be dominated by a “rational” thinking accompanied by “benevolence” (see Kant’s “good will”). As they subjected themselves to this thinking, they were actually led by other bourgeoisies (the French and the English), which allowed the ideals of the French Revolution to change the old and feeble pre-Revolution mentalities in their countries. Thus, according to Marx, the eighteenth century Germany had not yet established a mass conscience through which it could have forcefully removed the high class, which was indifferent to the then daily realities. This social transformation or rather reorganization was eventually to take place despite the fact that the force, to which Marx alluded, was characterized by destruction and irrationality. Thus, in opposing the nationalism of his day by means of his revolutionary philosophy, Marx maintains the He-

---

<sup>265</sup> See Peter Berkowitz, *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

gelian dialectics within materialistic lines so that any true ideology or philosophy is the product of the economical system. Marx was convinced that the then Germany's small-bourgeois economy had failed because it was driven by a logical system (a reference to Kant) instead of the reversed possibility. This is why Marx proclaimed the overturning of the old values to the benefit of a new society that was to be founded on a class structure which was in fact given by the revolutionary classes. Consequently, from Hegel's synthesis of nature and mind founded on the Absolute Spirit (practically embodied by the Prussian State), the transition was made to Marx's synthesis of the synthesis, which was much more materialistic but also more pessimistic than its original Hegelian counterpart. Marx was followed by Schopenhauer, who was even more pessimistic than him in describing human society as a stage for the painful and inevitable conflict between individual powers, against the background of traditional values. Following Schopenhauer, Nietzsche tried to restore Marx's thought from another angle, namely by stripping it of its materialism as well as by proposing a new ideal of humanity.

According to Nietzsche, the new ideal or the new humanity must be capable to make the transition from the individualistic society to a superior lifestyle, which was supposed to be devised in accordance with the being of the promising *Übermensch*.<sup>266</sup> The then extremist nationalists did not miss the implications of Schopenhauer's idea of the "will to power" or the way this was taken over by Nietzsche in his *Also sprach Zarathustra*. Combining these two perspectives on the new human society, namely Nietzsche's Superman and the spirit of the German people as romantically glorified, the nationalists transformed the two philosophical concepts to the point that they were attached to the notion of the racial superiority of all the Germans—a policy which eventually led to the two world wars that forced humanity truly to appropriate Schopenhauer's lesson for itself. As for Nietzsche, he was neither nationalist nor extremist—at least not in connection with the "mixed discourse" which juxtaposes Nietzsche the philosopher and Nietzsche the artist. Nietzsche kept Schopenhauer's line for as long as Schopenhauer avoided dialectic materialism; from this point forward though, Nietzsche became a full fledged Goethean. The German society as represented by Schopenhauer's philosophy or by Wagner's music offers a

---

<sup>266</sup> This could be the meaning of the comparison between Nietzsche's idealism and Kant's idealism in Julian Young, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). With reference to books such as *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, *Menschliches*, *Allzumenschliches*, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* and *Götzen-Dämmerung*, Young believes that, because it follows the "biological" path, the ideal of Nietzsche's Superman essentially modifies the character of Kant's idealism, which is transcendental.

very suggestive picture which clearly discloses what Nietzsche did *not* mean by society or culture. Nietzsche characterized the German society of his day not only in his works, which could be misunderstood or even misinterpreted, but also in his letters which are clearer in this respect. One such letter was written in 1888, when Nietzsche was getting closer to the end of his creative life. Here is what Nietzsche wrote in discussing modern people, the society they created and his relationship with it:

Nizza, den 19. Februar 1888: Brief an Georg Brandes  
Verehrter Herr,

Sie haben mich auf das angenehmste mit Ihrem Beitrag zum Begriff „Modernität“ verpflichtet ... Ich bewundere—daß ich es Ihnen gestehe!—Ihre Toleranz im Urtheil ebenso sehr wie Ihre Zurückhaltung im Urtheil. Wie sie alle diese „Kindlein“ zu sich kommen lassen ... Er hatte Straußens „alten und neuen Glauben“ einmüthig, trotz aller religiös-theologischen Partei-Verschiedenheit, als ein Meisterstück von Freiheit und Feinheit des Geistes (auch des Stils!) bewundert. Meine Schrift war das erste Attentat auf die deutsche Bildung (jene „Bildung“, welche, wie man rühmte, über Frankreich den Sieg errungen habe); das von mir formulierte Wort „Bildungsphilister“ ist aus dem wüthenden Hin und Her der Polemik in der Sprache zurückgeblieben.—Die beiden Schriften über Schopenhauer und Richard Wagner stellen, wie mir heute scheint, mehr Selbstbekenntnisse, vor allem Selbstgelöbnisse über mich dar als etwa eine wirkliche Psychologie jener mir ebenso tief verwandten als antagonistischen Meister. (ich war der Erste, der aus beiden eine Art Einheit destillierte; jetzt ist dieser Aberglaube sehr im Vordergrunde Der deutschen Kultur: all Wagnerianer sind Anhänger Schopenhauers.)

(To Georg Brandes,  
Nice, February 19, 1888

Dear Sir: You have most pleasantly obliged me with your contribution to the concept “modernity”. I admire ... your tolerance in making judgments. How you suffer all these “little children” and forbid them not to come unto you ... They had admired Strauss’ “old and new faith” as a masterpiece of freedom and refinement of spirit ... My pamphlet was the first assassination of German culture (that “culture” which they say with pride bore the victory over France). The word which I coined, *Bildungsphilister*, remained in the language after the discussion raged furiously to and fro. The two pamphlets about Schopenhauer and Wagner represent more selfconfessions than real psychological investigations of these masters who were as deeply related to me as they were antagonists. (I was the

first who distilled a sort of unity from both. Now its superstition you will find very much in the foreground of German culture. All followers of Wagner are disciples of Schopenhauer.)<sup>267</sup>

The reason for Nietzsche's departure from Schopenhauer and Wagner is as evident as his preference for Goethe. If Goethe almost ridiculed the efforts of romantic poets to destroy "Paris", the symbol of the French culture, by praising the national hero, Nietzsche continues to express his disagreement with his contemporaries' way of thinking. Thus, Mann's famous twentieth century remark—"German culture is where I am"—can also be applied to Goethe and Nietzsche in their specific contexts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This was at least what they could do in connection with the obtuseness of their co-nationals, who had no problems in interpreting literally their artistic messages.

The way Goethe understood the German society of his time is characterized by Engels as dualistic. Here is what he has to say about Goethe in a review of Karl Grün's *On Goethe from a Human Point of View* (1846). First, according to Engels, Goethe has a dualistic approach of the society of his day because he looks at it with enmity and he wants to escape from it as in his *Iphigenie auf Tauris* and his trips to Italy. Thus, Goethe—Engels says—rises against his own German society like Prometheus and Faust. Moreover, he spits at her with his sarcasm like Mephistopheles. Other times, however, he adapts himself to it (like in his mild *Xenien*) and befriends it; he even celebrates it in his prose (like in his "Procession of Masks") and defends it against the historical movements which assault it, as in all his writings about the French Revolution.<sup>268</sup>

It is clear that Nietzsche follows Goethe in this respect. When he talks about the German spirit, however, Nietzsche does not manage to keep this double positioning in respect to his fellow German within the same historical time. To Nietzsche, the path taken by the Germans of his day had nothing great in it and he himself refused to be their voice in art or philosophy.<sup>269</sup> Moreover, as far as politics is concerned, the German nationalists

---

<sup>267</sup> Nietzsche, *Briefwechsel. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. by Colli and Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 997. See Nietzsche, *Unpublished Letters*, 128-129.

<sup>268</sup> See Friedrich Engels, Preface to Goethe, *Poezie și adevăr*, vol. 1 (București: Editura pentru Literatură, 1967), xix.

<sup>269</sup> See what Daniel R. Ahern has to say about Nietzsche's attitude to the entire Western culture. In his *Nietzsche as Cultural Physician* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1995), Ahern shows that, for Nietzsche, the German society was utterly decadent and the cause of this decadence was its diseased physiological dynamics. This seems to be true even if one talks about the economic regress or the far too big a trust which was produced

not only inspired themselves too much from the ideals which led to the French Revolution,<sup>270</sup> but they also tried to apply the means used by the French to rid themselves of the monarchy, which were rejected by Goethe. Nietzsche defines himself in contrast with these people and this is why he gave up his German citizenship in order to live beyond Germany's borders to the point that he broke his connection with Wagner and his followers but also with his sister, Elizabeth. In Nietzsche, his fierce criticism against the racist tendencies of the Germans became a leit-motif throughout his entire corpus of writings. The feeling of race, which Nietzsche detected in Darwin, is contrasted with Wagner's music and political convictions. In his *Über Staat und Religion*, Wagner defined the German spirit as contrary to Judaism in saying that the Germans had a higher call because they belonged to the class of the masters, the masters of history, while the Jews were the mere offspring of the dominated class who entertained usurping thoughts and this is why they must be eradicated. As for Nietzsche, he staunchly condemned such a proposal as he described the unstable character as well as the lack of moral integrity of the so-called class of the masters:

---

by the progress of sciences and arts. By giving this diagnosis to modern Europe, Nietzsche was the "physician" of Western culture despite his own efforts to fight against his physical suffering. Which is Nietzsche's remedy against the disease of modernity? According to Michael A. Gillespie, a possible solution would be the return to one of the analogous models suggested by the philosophers of the Middle Ages, who had many things to teach their modern colleagues. In his *Nihilism before Nietzsche* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), Gillespie ties the key concepts of Nietzsche's philosophy to William of Ockham's ideas about the new social-political age which will be established by God on earth, when God will reign without the mediation of the church or of nature. Thus, according to Ockham, since man was created in the image of God, man's most important characteristic should be his own will. Thus—and this is Gillespie's conclusion to *Der Wille zur Macht*—if contemporary culture had enough will/desire, it could virtually solve any social, economical or political problem. Gillespie's argument, however, seems to suffer from the same flaw which can also be detected in Ockham's analogy between God's will and man's will: his analogy presupposes not only a difference of degree but also a difference of being, according to which the will is defined. Although Ockham's analogy can indeed have a considerable social significance, it could hardly heal society as understood by Nietzsche, first because it lacks parity and second because Nietzsche did not trust the "power" which comes from man's "will".

<sup>270</sup> In his *Nietzsche contra Rousseau: A Study of Nietzsche's Moral and Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), Keith Ansell-Pearson analyses the disagreement between Nietzsche's philosophy and Rousseau's idealistic thought concerning the role of political institutions. Unlike Rousseau, Nietzsche believed that political institutions are fundamentally corrupt, exactly like the slogan of the individual's sovereignty as well as similar principles which ignited the French Revolution.

... sie sind nach Außen hin, dort wo das Fremde, *die Fremde* beginnt, nicht viel besser als losgelassne Raubthiere. Sie genießen da die Freiheit von allem sozialen Zwang, ... sie treten in die Unschuld des Raubthier-Gewissens *zurück*, als frohlockende Ungeheuer, welche vielleicht von einer scheußlichen Abfolge von Mord, Niederbrennung, Schändung, Folterung mit einem Übermuth und seelischen Gleichgewichte davongehen, wie als ob nur ein Studentenstreich vollbracht sei ... Auf dem Grunde aller dieser vornehmen Rassen ist das Raubthier, die prachtvolle nach Beute und Sieg lüstern schweifende *blonde Bestie* nicht zu verkennen; es bedarf für diesen verborgenen Grund von Zeit zu Zeit Entladung, das Thier muss wieder heraus, muss wieder in die Wildnis zurück:—römischer, arabischer, germanischer, japanesischer Adel, homerische Helden, skandinavische Wikinger—in diesem Bedürfniss sind sie sich alle gleich. Die vornehmen Rassen sind es, welche den Begriff „Barbar“ auf all den Spuren hinterlassen haben, wo sie gegangen sind; ...-, ihre Gleichgültigkeit und Verachtung gegen Sicherheit, Leib, Leben, Behagen, ihre entsetzliche Heiterkeit und Tiefe der Lust in allem Zerstören, in allen Wollüsten des Siegs und der Grausamkeit...

(They [the masters] are not much better than uncaged beasts of prey toward the outside world, where that which is foreign begins. There they enjoy freedom from all social constraint ...; they *step back* into the innocence of the beast-of-prey conscience, as jubilant monsters, who perhaps walk away from a hideous succession of murder, arson, rape, torture with such high spirits and equanimity that it seems as if they have only played a student prank ... At the base of all these noble races one cannot fail to recognize the beast of prey, the splendid *blond beast* who roams about lusting after booty and victory; from time to time this hidden base needs to discharge itself, the animal must get out, must go back into the wilderness: Roman, Arab, Germanic, Japanese nobility, Homeric heroes, Scandinavian Vikings—in this need they are all alike. It is the noble races who have left the concept „barbarian” in all their tracks wherever they have gone ... [with] indifference and contempt toward all security, body, life, comfort; their appalling light-heartedness and depth of desire in all destruction, in all the delights of victory and of cruelty ....<sup>271</sup>

---

<sup>271</sup> Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral* in *Werke*, ed. by Karl Schlechta (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1977), Erste Abhandlung, 11. See Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality: A Polemic*, 22-23, and *The Genealogy of Morals*, trans. by Francis Golffing (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956), 174.

So Nietzsche is anything but the voice of the nationalists or of the German “masters” who fought against the Jews. As a matter of fact, Nietzsche approaches the two classes—of the masters and the dominated—on equal terms without any preferential remarks. Talking about the Jews in his *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, Nietzsche notices with astonishment the high moral character of the Jewish law but criticizes Christian doctrine which—although influenced by the Jewish religion—did not manage to live up to its high standards but it rather produced an ethics for the ordinary people, for the weak and the helpless. It must be mentioned here that, under the influence of idealistic philosophy, Nietzsche wrongly assumed that Christian ethics hindered the realization of the ideal of the plenitude of life, although Christianity is based on the image of Jesus, who overcame death by his resurrection and by the fact that he is the essence of life as well as life itself. Writing about the class of the masters with reference to the Germans, Nietzsche concludes that there is no parity between his specific class and the dominated class,<sup>272</sup> in the sense of presenting both with their positive and negative characteristics. On the contrary, the dominating class—which was supposed to fulfill the ideal of robustness and vitality—produces an unpleasant surprise through the absurdity of its existence as well as through its beastly behavior and spiritual inferiority.<sup>273</sup> In a last word against it, Nietzsche unmasks it and repudiates it:

---

<sup>272</sup> For details about the class of the masters and the class of the slaves, see Harold Alderman, *Nietzsche's Gift* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1977). This book is important because it offers a classification of each class as they constantly appear in at least two of Nietzsche's works, namely *Zur Genealogie der Moral* and *Der Wille zur Macht*. The main features of the dominated class are: resentment, a reactionary nature, openness to others, humility, altruism and a democratic spirit. The class of the masters is characterized by contrast to the dominated class: explosive temper, creativity, self-love and materialism, pride, selfishness and an aristocratic spirit. Alderman's conclusion is that the relationship between the two classes must be defined morally, because the openness to others (“das zu thun, was der Erhaltung der menschlichen Gattung frommt“: “the doing of the good for the keeping of the species”), as Nietzsche called it in his *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, altruism and kindness are characteristics which result from life principles, while the cultivation of the self, pride and selfishness represent a particular and personal morality. To be sure, Nietzsche does not defend either class although he says whether the dominators or the dominated succeeded or failed politically.

<sup>273</sup> Concerning the chaos resulted from the confrontation between superior and inferior classes in Nazi Germany, Steven E. Aschheim is definitely a competent voice in the field. He presents the discrepancy between German culture and politics at the beginning of the twentieth century. For details, see his *Culture and Catastrophe. German and Jewish Confrontations of National-Socialism and Other Crises* (New York: New York University Press, 1996).

Das tiefe, eisige Mißtrauen, das der Deutsche erregt, sobald er zur Macht kommt, auch jetzt wieder—ist immer noch ein Nachschlag jenes unauslöschlichen Entsetzens, mit dem Jahrhunderte lang Europa dem Wüthen der blonden germanischen Bestie zugesehn hat.

(The deep, icy mistrust that the German stirs up as soon as he comes into power, today once again—is still an atavism of that inextinguishable horror with which Europe has for centuries watched the raging of the blond Germanic beast ...) <sup>274</sup>

Another word suggested by Nietzsche in connection with the class of the masters, seen as beasts, as well as to the culture inherited from them is decadence. The idea of decadence underwent a long process from *Zur Genealogie der Moral* to *Ecce homo* but the fact that Nietzsche insists on it even in his letters—where there is no need to interpret it as it is used bluntly—shows that Nietzsche pointed to Wagner and his followers as the embodiment of the masters who are eager to gain power. In a letter to Malwida von Meysenbug dated October 18, 1888, Nietzsche is utterly intolerant of “diese jetzigen Menschen mit ihrer jammervollen Instinkt-Entartung” (“these people of the present age with their lamentable depravity of instincts”), as well as with Wagner’s genius self-entitled “der letzte Ausdruck der schöpferischen Natur” (“the last expression of creative nature”) which is presented as a “Genies der Lüge” (“genius of lies”). By contrast, Nietzsche can be perceived in this context as the “genie der Wahrheit” (“genius of truth”). <sup>275</sup>

It is true though that when he wrote these lines, Nietzsche had not yet seen the rise of the Nazi regime, as this particular episode of Germany’s history was to occur half a century later. Nevertheless, Nietzsche proves what he said by giving as examples some of the events which happened in Germany in 1887 as he was writing his *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, namely when Bismarck was forced to abdicate because of the internal conflicts be-

---

<sup>274</sup> Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, I.11. *On the Genealogy of Morality: A Polemic*, trans. Maudemarie Clarke; Alan J. Swenswen; compare to *The Genealogy of Morals* in Francis Golffing’s translation (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956), 175 (where the “Germanic beast” is said to have descended from the Teutons. In the first translation, however, Nietzsche annotates: “although there is hardly a conceptual, much less a blood-relationship between the ancient Teutons and us Germans”, see page 23.)

<sup>275</sup> Nietzsche, *Unpublished Letters*, 143-144. Thus, in a letter sent to Brandes from Turin in April 10, 1888, Nietzsche is no longer astonished by the fact that Germany is seen as a curiosity because Germany itself perceived the rest of the world within the same lines. Based on this anti-relationship, Nietzsche concludes that the German spirit has become a contradiction in itself, or a *contradictio in adjecto*.

tween the Catholics and the Protestants which resulted in the famous movement known as the *Kulturkampf*. Nietzsche perceives fully the irony of history which in Germany, he believes, endlessly repeats the age of the Teutons who were blinded by their desire to gain political power by any means. By his adverse attitude to the political *Kulturkampf*, Nietzsche proves, on the one hand, faithfulness of mind as well as of writing and, on the other hand, a non-negotiable decision in connection with the meaning of his self-destructive political phenomenon. Nietzsche's attitude can save his image from erroneous interpretations concerning either some of his books like his *Zur Genealogie der Moral* or *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, or the alleged influence he exerted on the nationalistic-social movement in Germany. His decision is clearly explained by what he said in his *Zur Genealogie der Moral* about the Revolution with reference to what happened in Bavaria and Bismarck's actions against his own Parliament as well as the Catholic Church between November 1872 and February 1874. At that time, Germany had two main political forces: the conservative Catholics and the liberal Lutherans. The situation remained the same twenty years later, when Bismarck left the office, in spite of his *Kulturkampf*. What happened then was not entirely surprising given the balance of power which had been the same since the Reformation in the sixteenth century. The novelty, however, was given by the fact that Kaiser Wilhelm I was elected in 1871 as the first emperor of the reunited German Empire, and by his decision to form a government which was to pursue the reformation of Germany's villages as well as the restriction of the then unlimited powers of the great aristocratic families. Bismarck, who came from a very influential aristocratic family, was appointed Chancellor the same year and he intended to limit the political as well as the administrative powers of the Catholic Church, so he engaged in an open conflict with the conservative leaders of the opposition. Germany's internal crisis triggered by Bismarck through his opposition to the administrative reform intended by the Parliament and through his increasingly worse relationship with the Vatican was in fact the result of Bismarck's desire to maintain the unity of the German Empire, which was virtually the only dream he shared with Kaiser Wilhelm I. The fact that Nietzsche never detached himself from the political reality of his day and that he never intended his *Zur Genealogie der Moral* as merely a collection of abstract aphorisms becomes clear within Germany's political context of the early 1870s.

In the light of the above-mentioned assertions about the relationship between the German society and the "German culture" in Nietzsche, the conclusions of various historians concerning the *Kulturkampf* clarify Nietzsche's decision to counter this political movement in his works. Thus,

Bascom B. Hayes explains that, much to the delight of the liberals (Lutherans) and against the Kaiser, Bismarck began a public campaign against the Catholic Church as a reaction to Pope Pius IX's complaint that Catholic priests were persecuted because they had refused to obey the laws of the state more than the laws of the church. This happened against the background of the German liberals and Lutherans who wanted to fight against the Catholics as the supporters of the papal primacy and infallibility (called Ultramontanists) in order to "save" the German culture from their threat.<sup>276</sup> As far as Nietzsche was concerned, Bismarck's numerous measures taken against the Catholic Church by means of various restrictions, attacks on parish churches, and imprisonments of priests led to the decadence of the German Empire, which was ruined throughout its secular history because of the horrible nationalism of its people. Nietzsche's decision not to play the game of nationalistic politics or that of the church's intrusion in politics is clearly expressed in his acid allusions to the events which happened between 1872 and 1874. This is why in most of Nietzsche's books published in the second half of the twentieth century, the title is followed by an appendix which is meant to clarify the content of each book.<sup>277</sup> Lastly, such books cannot induce racial feelings and cannot trigger ultra-nationalistic tendencies such as the Arian convictions inoculated in Germany by the Nazi movement. If Nietzsche had tough words for the then contemporary German society which was eager to see "cultural" transformations through the *Kulturkampf*, it is not difficult to imagine what Nietzsche would have said to those responsible for the horrors of the Second World War.

## **8. Nietzsche and the Germans' Abdication from Goethe**

As an older reminiscence of Nietzsche's literary perfectionism, he issues a series of "untimely meditations" concerning Goethe's reception by the representatives of the German culture as well as by Germans in general with

---

<sup>276</sup> See Bascom Barry Hayes, *Bismarck and Mitteleuropa* (New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1994), 287. In addition to information about Bismarck's life and activity as political leader, Hayes also presents the crisis of 1871-1888, which was prolonged during Kaiser Wilhelm II, Kaiser Wilhelm I's nephew, and led to the First World War. For a philosophical-artistic perspective on the same historical period concerning the "cultural war" and Nietzsche's perception of it, see Gordon A. Craig, *Germany, 1866-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), especially Chapters 3 and 5.

<sup>277</sup> See, for instance, the 1956 edition of *The Birth of Tragedy and the Genealogy of Morals: an Attack*, or the 1996 edition of the *On the Genealogy of Morality: a Polemic. By Way of Clarification and Supplemented to My Last Book Beyond Good and Evil*. The words "attack" and "polemic" suggest that the books are intended to discuss real historical problems, not just abstract philosophical concepts.

reference to the artistic and stylistic facets of Goethe's works. For Nietzsche, Goethe is definitely not a representative of the "Germanism" of his age but rather of classicism. Thus, Goethe is the creator of art who manages to offer a balanced proportion between the rigor of his literary style and the rhythm of the ancient style.

In an annotation to the text of *Morgenröte* (*Daybreak*), Nietzsche defended Goethe's classicism against the revolutionary-romantic ideal by saying that the Germans believe that force must be disclosed in cruelty and harshness, so they can hardly believe that there is force in kindness and tranquility. They also believe there is no force in Goethe but only in Beethoven and, in Nietzsche's opinion, this is a huge mistake.<sup>278</sup> According to Nietzsche, this perception is given by the tendency of Goethe's style to transcend the limitations of various currents and even cultural limitations—this is an indication of the genius—in order to create a type of art which, on the one hand, represents the Germans and their national specificity and, on the other hand, transcends them through the universality of its spirit. So, for Nietzsche, Goethe was above the Germans in all respects both in his time and in contemporary history (Nietzsche's time). Moreover, he is convinced that Goethe will never belong to the Germans because, as Beethoven composed music above the heads of the Germans and Schopenhauer also wrote philosophy above the heads of the Germans, Goethe produced *Tasso* and *Iphigenie* above the heads of the Germans. Then, he concludes that Goethe had never been beneficial for Germans and this is why they do not know how to make use of him. Consequently, to Nietzsche, Goethe was not just a good and great man; he was an entire culture as well as an episode without consequences in the history of the Germans.<sup>279</sup> Therefore, while the German culture always chooses the remnants of a culture alien to its artistic realities and possibilities, Goethe goes beyond the German culture and becomes a stabilizing factor within this particular culture through its universality. As for Nietzsche, the fresh air of Goethe's wisdom corresponds to Goethe's Weimar period, when his works reached the climax of artistic creation.

It must be stated at this point that despite Bertram's attempt to turn Nietzsche into the prophet of the national emancipation of the Germans by insisting that Weimar should be for Germany what Bethlehem was for Judea, Nietzsche did not care too much about Weimar as a geographical loca-

---

<sup>278</sup> See, for details, Ernst Bertram, *Nietzsche—Versuch einer Mythologie* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1965.) See also Bertram, *Nietzsche. Încercare de mitologie* (București: Humanitas, 1998), 168.

<sup>279</sup> Bertram, *Nietzsche*, 169.

tion as long as Weimar was connected to Goethe.<sup>280</sup> In this context, Goethe could be independent of a particular German place or location as well as of a certain, specific German pattern of thought. Like Nietzsche half a century later, Goethe periodically left his location or position whenever he felt there was a danger of nationalism, for instance. Nietzsche creates the premise of Goethe's return as a classical artist and a universal man to the realm delineated by the two worlds of antic classicism: Italy and Greece, which are relevant to the modern artist to the degree that their works were adapted by Goethe. When stating that Goethe adapted the works of classical antiquity, Nietzsche is very cautious because what he really wants to do is to highlight the works of Greek antiquity by means of Goethe's thought. He actually wants to contrast them with the revolutionary ideals of the Germans which, stirred by wars, revolts and class fights in Goethe's time, did not end in his time. On the contrary, they seemed even harsher, like a continuation of the hunger for power and domination of the old Greeks and Romans read at that time through Goethe's "lens".<sup>281</sup>

For Nietzsche, Goethe's name is an advocate under whose defense he enumerates titles like *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, *Zur Genealogie der Moral* and *Der Antichrist* in order to prove his presumption of innocence with reference to the duplicity of philosophical terms such as: Superman, will to power, eternal recurrence and morality. He believed that the Germans abdicated from Goethe because instead of learning from his heroes and finding inspiration in the atmosphere of his work as a patrimony of German classical culture, they tended to look for values in foreign cultural legacies which they did not understand. In this context, Nietzsche links his concept of morality to the virtue of other nations which the Germans unceasingly turned to. Thus, the Superman is not what the German or the Germanic people look for because they became a European nation through the use of force over "slaves". This Superman has nothing to do with the mild morality of Greek

---

<sup>280</sup> See Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche, Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 12-16. Kaufmann rigorously criticizes the Bertram's mythologizing attempt to turn Nietzsche into a legend. Thus, he warns that Bertram's perspective on Nietzsche produces confusion because, as Bertram himself said, Nietzsche's work can be interpreted by each one of us, because the words of a "legend" are philosophical endeavors which suffer from the contact with the surrounding environment as well as with people like Wagner, Elizabeth Förster Nietzsche, Gast, etc.

<sup>281</sup> Kaufmann insists that Bertram's legend intended to associate Nietzsche to the romanticism of that time and to the idea that his detachment from Wagner did not have political and philosophical implications but rather religious consequences through *Parsifal*. Kaufmann stresses the importance of Nietzsche's friendship with Overbeck, a thinker whom Elizabeth made numerous attempts to slander, as well as the fact that Nietzsche always considered himself a classic as opposed to the then contemporary enthusiasts.

classical antiquity as presented by Goethe. In comparison with Goethe (and his *Novelle*), Nietzsche brings forward the origin of “morality” with reference to the nations of “resentment” which choose as their landmark a nation that decides not to use its brute force (see Shakespeare’s tragic characters). Nietzsche corrects this perception by saying that, at a certain moment, such a nation and its force become one:

Daß die Lämmer den großen Raubvögeln gram sind, das befremdet nicht: nur liegt darin kein Grund, es den grossen Raubvögeln zu verargen, daß sie sich kleine Lämmer holen. Und wenn die Lämmer unter sich sagen „diese Raubvögel sind böse; und wer so wenig als möglich ein Raubvogel ist, vielmehr deren Gegenstück, ein Lamm,—sollte der nicht gut sein?“ so ist an dieser Aufrichtung eines Ideals nichts auszusetzen ...— Von der Stärke verlangen, dass sie sich *nicht* als Stärke äußere, dass sie nicht ein Überwältigen-Wollen,... ist gerade so widersinng als von der Schwäche verlagen, dass sie sich als Stärke äußere ... Ebenso nämlich, wie das Volk den Blitz von seinem Leuchten trennt und letzteres als *Thun*, als Wirkung eines Subjekts nimmt, das Blitz heißt, so trennt die Volks-Moral auch die Stärke von den Äußerungen der Stärke ab, wie als ob es hinter dem Starken ein indifferentes Substrat gäbe dem es *freistünde*, Stärke zu äußern oder auch nicht.

(That the lambs feel anger towards the great birds of prey does nor strike us as odd: but that is no reason for holding it against the great birds of prey that they snatch up little lambs for themselves. And when the lambs say among themselves “these birds of prey are evil; and whoever is as little as possible a bird of prey but rather its opposite, a lamb,—isn’t he good?” there is nothing to criticize in this setting up of an ideal ... To demand of strength that it not express itself as strength, that it *not* be a desire to overwhelm, a desire to cast down, a desire to become lord ... is just as nonsensical as to demand of weakness that it express itself as strength ... Just as common people separate the lightning from its flash and take the latter as a *doing*, as an effect of a subject called lightning, so popular morality also separates strength from the expressions of strength as if there were behind the strong an indifferent substratum that is free to express strength—or not to.)<sup>282</sup>

---

<sup>282</sup> Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, I.13. See Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality: A Polemic*, trans. by Maudemarie Clarke (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1998), 25.

Nietzsche proves that Goethe is not guilty of mixing culture with politics and private life. At the same time, he notices that there is in Goethe a simultaneous existence of at least two different types of morality—the morality of the lamb and the morality of the bird of prey—which are subject to popular hermeneutics and essentially subjective, as Goethe himself warned with reference to the ideals of the French Revolution as well as its practical means of application.

If Goethe's reception was highly subjective the same is true about Nietzsche's reception, especially in connection with his critical perspective on Jesus' traditional-Christian image, man's role in society, and the influence of society on the life of the individual. Nietzsche was definitely not the only thinker to have produced such a critical view of traditional Christianity, but he seems to have had a more prominent reception after his death as compared to Hermann Samuel Reimarus and Adolf von Harnack, to give just two names of illustrious representatives of rationalist theology in modern Germany. They all shared a critical perspective on traditional Christianity but it has to be said that, at times, Nietzsche was not so incisive as Reimarus and von Harnack.

Reimarus, philosopher and theologian of the Enlightenment, was famous for his deistic approach to Christianity and said that human reason is capable to know God; consequently, human reason can produce an adequate ethics by means of the study of nature and of inner human reality. Thus, man no longer needs a religion which is based on divine revelation which comes from above or beyond humanity. As far as Reimarus is concerned, religion must have a natural character and the search for the true Jesus—the Jesus who is behind the biblical “story”—must start from below, from us, and not from above, from God, where there is nothing to be found but an alien realm which is utterly non-existent and unrealistic. Therefore, like Voltaire, Reimarus proposed an ambivalent language concerning divinity and our relationship with it: God is at the same time created by human reason as a projection of our nature—Christian Wolff's naturalism is relevant at this point—as well as absent from our world. This God, as defined by Reimarus, wanted to see us happy so he endowed us with ethical virtues, as reflected in his 1774 posthumous *Apologie oder Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes* (*Apology or Defense for the Rational Worshippers of God*) which is heavily indebted to English deism.<sup>283</sup> The difference between Reimarus and Nietzsche becomes evident in connection with the historical im-

---

<sup>283</sup> For details about English deism and continental deism as represented by Reimarus and Voltaire, see *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. by Robert Audi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 188, 688.

age of Jesus, whom Reimarus sees as a mere historical character that instigated the Jews to rebellion. For Nietzsche, however, Jesus is not important as a historical character; this is why Nietzsche takes Jesus out of his contextual background in order to highlight his values and virtues which make him stay in people's hearts and minds: Jesus as an exponent of love, patience and forgiveness to the point of death. Another difference which distances Reimarus from Nietzsche resides in the principle of instinctivity in art as well as in any other realm pertaining to human nature. By adhering to this principle, Reimarus becomes the promoter of a political thought similar to that of Marx and his theory about class society, which—contrary to Nietzsche—is capable to change its political status through emancipation.<sup>284</sup>

With regard to Adolf von Harnack's influence on the German society at the beginning of the twentieth century, this was definitely of paramount importance. Von Harnack was by far one of modern Germany's most prolific and audacious liberal theologians, who—both during his lifetime as well as after his death—produced an entire generation of distinguished university professors that were utterly convinced of the significance of his ideas and the efficiency of his theological methods, so they disseminated them throughout Germany and far beyond its borders. He firmly believed that the theologian must be absolutely free to study the history of the Christian church and of the New Testament, which brought him to the conclusion that Christianity is a mere component of religious life, not a theological system or a sum of dogmas. Influenced by Albrecht Ritschl, like Nietzsche, von Harnack believed that Christian faith is different from metaphysics because the Gospels promoted an essentially ethical message. Nevertheless, unlike Nietzsche who warned against the danger to remain obstinately within the realm of history, von Harnack defended the paramount importance of history [and of the German state for that matter] and the necessity not to lose sight of civilization [including military and intellectual power] in connection with the religious principles of a nation.<sup>285</sup> Von Harnack wanted to “save”

---

<sup>284</sup> In order to get a broader perspective on Marx and the social-economical principles of his *The Capital*, see Duncan Hallas, “Marx and Politics”, *Socialist Review* 83 (1986), 17-19.

<sup>285</sup> Von Harnack was a member of the Prussian Academy of Science, supervised directly by Kaiser Wilhelm II, who rewarded him for his vast work as well as for his patriotism, proved by his numerous administrative positions (Editor of *Theologische Literaturzeitung* for twenty nine years, Rector of the University of Berlin, Director of the Royal Library and President of the Wilhelm Royal Foundation). He is famous for the support he offered to Kaiser Wilhelm II in formulating territorial claims for Germany, as he believed that the high moral standard of the German state is embodied by the Kaiser himself. See Charles E. Bailey, “The Verdict of French Protestantism Against Germany in The First World War”, *Church History* 58 (1989), 71-76.

Christianity by restoring its correct direction, which he believed was damaged by the church. To him, Christianity has value only to the degree that it retains the importance of the historical person of Jesus Christ, who encourages the human spirit to find its meaning in the world.<sup>286</sup> In Harnack, Jesus is only and exclusively a historical character, a revolutionary personality, a sort of Superman, so this way German society could finally see the reflection of Nietzsche's works in von Harnack's ideas. Despite this resemblance between von Harnack's perspective of Jesus and Nietzsche's idea of the Superman, Nietzsche remained closely connected to Goethe, who saw German society in an idealistic fashion or, as Nietzsche said, over the heads of Germans as well as over their history. This is proved by the fact that von Harnack made a decision which Nietzsche opposed vehemently and which convinced many intellectuals from all over the world to deny von Harnack's "visionary" perspective. Thus, he welcomed the First World War by signing the public declaration which contained the claims of the German nation at that particular time in history with reference to its expansionist policy. Von Harnack's theological liberalism was finally able to find its political expression, so he became the promoter of historical realism and political nationalism. His unfortunate decision to support the Kaiser's policy led to an increasing lack of interest in the German Protestantism as well as in the categorical detachment from him and his theology of important representatives of contemporary philosophy and theology, such as Karl Barth.

As compared to Reimarus and von Harnack, Nietzsche was politically almost non-existent among his contemporaries if not with reference to his works but certainly as a person. Nietzsche left Germany as Goethe used to leave it frequently because they both looked for broader horizons of artistic expression. Nietzsche never detached himself from Goethe but rather from his contemporaries who curiously developed a great passion for him, certainly greater than Nietzsche himself would have ever imagined. This happened despite the fact that—to his very moment of lucidity as seen in his *Ecce homo* and even after his collapse—Nietzsche declared himself "the last anti-political German", as Peter Bergmann correctly noticed.<sup>287</sup> According

---

<sup>286</sup> For details about von Harnack's view of Jesus Christ and Christianity in general, see Adolf von Harnack, *What is Christianity?*, trans. by Thomas Bailey Saunders (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1901), 21-26.

<sup>287</sup> See Peter Bergmann, *Nietzsche: "The Last Antipolitical German"* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 239-240. Bergmann is more interested in Nietzsche's politics than in his philosophy, which is an advantage as well as a disadvantage. Thus, Bergmann approach is an advantage because his analysis of Nietzsche's political texts, which explain why he distanced himself from Germany's political events and transformations, help us understand Nietzsche's feelings and perception in this respect. Then, his approach is a dis-

to Bergmann, Nietzsche's declaration means, on the one hand, that he had always manifested his open position concerning Germany's politics during his lifetime (and even after his death, as he was one of the very few Western visionaries). On the other hand, it means that he openly expressed his staunch disagreement with the nationalistic and extremist tendencies of his fellow Germans. Hence he declared himself utterly anti-political in the sense that he intended to demolish their false claims to truth and superiority as well as their irrational politics. Moreover, if Goethe lived long enough to see the vast majority of his works published, Nietzsche died early enough for his sister to profit from his death by "reediting" his entire thought through the Nietzsche Archive as well as through biased biographies.

### 9. Goethe in Nietzsche's thought. Calm Poetry of a Forgotten World

As for Nietzsche, the man of culture is embodied by Goethe in his Weimar years and Nietzsche himself was close to Goethe with regard to his cultural formation. In spite of all the influences which left a mark on this thought, especially Schopenhauer and Wagner, Nietzsche's intellectual presence, the context of his formation and his general humanistic culture were all soaked in Weimar's atmosphere and they all gravitated around Goethe's name. Even in the last period of his life, Nietzsche was still presenting and defending Goethe as a notable exception to German spirituality as well as a personality who would have probably been received more adequately if he had written within another cultural background or even in another language. As he thought of Goethe, Nietzsche believed that his predecessor lived among the Germans barricaded and transvestite as an intelligent man. He was a man of action and of proverbial force—and such a description would definitely please the Germans—but at the same time, he was isolated in between pietism and Hellenism, so Nietzsche asks whether or not it had been better if Goethe would have written in French.<sup>288</sup>

In Nietzsche, Goethe, the classic is praised for being a comrade of Zarathustra's as a Greek spirit among the Germans. At this point, however, a clarification must be made. As perceived by Nietzsche, Goethe has nothing tragic attached to his personality in the sense of Hellenistic tragedy; Goethe's nature is continuously connected to the creative power of the genius within the limits of reason, not to the tragic power of the genius' destiny,

---

advantage because some of Nietzsche's fundamental concepts, such as the will to power and the Superman, are not corroborated with his ethics and his perspective on art, which leads to possible misunderstandings concerning their original intent.

<sup>288</sup> For more details, cf. Bertram, *Nietzsche*, 170.

which is the case in Nietzsche. When we are tempted to believe that Goethe walks in the valleys of tragedy through some of his prose—as, for example, in the young Werther's drama—some elements calming the tension that seemed to have overwhelmed Goethe intervene almost automatically and they are backed by aspects which define the tragic perspective on the role of art as seen by Goethe, the writer and the philosopher. The two tendencies though must not be seen as a parallelism because Goethe's classicism is distinct from his perception of tragedy. There is a gap between Goethe's characters who display calm wisdom and Nietzsche's hero who sacrifices himself as he fights against chaotic darkness. Nietzsche noticed that in Goethe, poetry is—according to his epic temper—the remedy which protects him against full knowledge, while in tragic characters, art is the remedy which cures the disease of knowledge. Thus, in Goethe, life produces anxiety but, Nietzsche continues, as it vanishes before him as an image, he immediately realizes that, despite its anxiety, life is worth being presented.<sup>289</sup>

Even if such an approach never became a constant feature of Nietzsche's life and work, he rightly and permanently places Goethe at the zenith, while he himself goes the other way to the nadir. Despite the fact that he places Goethe in such a high position, Nietzsche somehow perceives Goethe with a certain degree of reproach with reference to Goethe's high moral-artistic standing. This may be the case because Nietzsche saw in Goethe a powerful inclination to social ethics and an unbridled desire to integrate himself in humanity's active life which constantly changes. Goethe's orientation to the contingent character of life is so decisive that even the value of Rousseauistic introspection as a method to self-knowledge and self-control—as in Goethe's early works and his *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*—will be later used and correlated to its significance for society as well as the practical activity for the benefit of the community. Therefore, in his later *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, Goethe will ask how we can know ourselves and the answer is: never through contemplation but through action. In order to know how valuable one can be, a man should do his duty and he will know immediately if he is of any good whatsoever.

In Goethe, the transition from latent reality to accomplished facts is as natural and welcome as man's development from childhood to maturity. Nietzsche always recognized Goethe's apollinien nature even if he disapproved of his morality which lacked tragedy to the point that it was non-Dionysian and consequently anti-Nietzschean. It is certain, however, that Nietzsche's mature perspective on Goethe is not less compatible with the Dionysian ideal of the young Nietzsche. Despite some skeptical fragments

---

<sup>289</sup> See also Bertram, *Nietzsche*, 171.

written by Nietzsche, Goethe's classic Greek nature appeared—at the end of Nietzsche's literary endeavor—even more vigorous than during the time when he wrote *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. This is why Bertram noticed that for the young Nietzsche in his Basel period, Goethe was the great contemplative man, a conservative and peaceful force, not an active and creative-affirmative nature, so he was more a classicist than a classic. However, for Nietzsche in his Sils-Maria years, Goethe reaches the high stage of the positivity and creativity of a bigot of life, which are obvious Zarathustrian features that colour the familiar portrait as drawn by Eckermann.<sup>290</sup>

While *Die Geburt der Tragödie* overshadows the sky of humanity by forbidding creativity and self-determination, in *Also sprach Zarathustra* a transmutation is made so that the human element is transferred to the social realm in order to reform it, which means that the will to power becomes the unshakable will to transcend the self. This is the background of the true meeting between Goethe and Nietzsche, so the name of the god Dionysus is mysteriously related to Goethe, Weimar's wise and creative prophet. As Nietzsche himself believed, what Goethe looked for throughout his entire life was totality; this is why he fought against the factors which separated reason from sensuality and feelings from the will and he did this based on his practical activity. Thus, Nietzsche understood that Goethe could not distance himself from life but rather stood straight in the middle of it.

Whenever Goethe is mentioned by Nietzsche, he does not refer to the early Goethe and his Sturmist years. Thus, Nietzsche does not make any references to Werther and says nothing about Faust's happiness. In Nietzsche, Goethe the poet is the antiquesly serene wise artist, who always displays his old Weimar style. This Goethe is the author of the *Novelle*, which Nietzsche perceived as one of Goethe's most profound and lucid creations, a perfect composition which intends to instruct as well as keep the symbol of perfect nature. As a token of Nietzsche's propensity for this particular work of Goethe, almost everything in Nietzsche bears the mark of "elective affinities". Thus, according to Nietzsche, the aesthetic debates from Goethe's *Gespräche mit Eckermann*—which are mostly connected to the *Novelle*—have a special significance because they represent a metaphor of Goethe's world as well as his creative atmosphere. This particular Goethean realm presents an elementary though dynamic world, where the writer discovered the spirit in its reality. Based on the simple plot of the *Novelle*, Goethe interweaves a complex and controversial theme, which is expressed by the conflict between the elementary, vital force of natural desire (which most of the time has devastating results) and the confinement within suffocating so-

---

<sup>290</sup> For details, check Bertram, *Nietzsche*, 171.

cial norms (which are hostile to any formation or growth). The elementary dynamism expressed through the outburst of plants and animals around the prince's castle is not seen as an isolated reality but rather as an existential element which encompasses all the dimensions of life—this is a typical particularity of Goethe's works—as well as an aesthetic micro-cosmos which overturns the ethical, balanced and cold cemented essence of the then-established social structure.

As he enters the atmosphere of Goethe's *Novelle*, Nietzsche resumes the old "benevolence" of his philosophy, which means that he returns to his theory about the primitivism of life, devoid of any pejorative connotation. Thus, Nietzsche reopens the discussion about the primordial state within which even the confusing psychological particularities of Goethe's works seem to be eventually appeased. Nietzsche is utterly content because Goethe himself discloses the message of the *Novelle*, which is to show that what-ever seems impossible to bridle as well as impossible to defeat can be controlled and contained through love and kindness, not through force—and this is exactly what prompted Goethe to write his short-story.<sup>291</sup>

Nietzsche is aware that an invisible though omnipresent veil separates the rigorism of the life of the *Novelle*'s closed community (the solidly built palace with towers and walls resembling the buildings of the eighteenth century) from the living world which is constantly moving (the wild nature, the inorganic world, the indestructible rocks, fresh and exuberant flora). Nevertheless, the most obvious element of contrast between the two realms is given by the people's fear of beasts (see, for instance, the episode when the princess met the roaming animal) as opposed to the tamed lion's lack of aggressiveness, but also by the sober princely attendants as opposed to the joy displayed by the family of strangers, oddly dressed as if they had come from another universe. By means of these opposing elements, Goethe does nothing but calculate the effect that will be triggered by his choice. Thus, the text which shows prince Friedrich drafting a map of the surroundings of the palace is capable to foresee how Nietzsche's spirit will later affiliate itself to Goethe's personality based on the closeness of their elementary-dynamic spiritual essence, as well as on the interdependence between nature and art in their works in close connection with Greek classicism. Thus, Goethe depicts the prince as he describes one of the highest peaks which can only be seen as one goes beyond the walls surrounding the palace; this peak is monumental and straight on top of it there is a tower, which is so powerfully connected to the peak itself that one could hardly tell where the line separating the work of nature from the art and craftsmanship of man is. This an-

---

<sup>291</sup> See Goethe, *Opere*, vol. 5 (București: Univers, 1987), 458.

cient peak is surrounded by a forest which is full of solid trees that had not heard the sound of the axe for one hundred and fifty years. Goethe concludes, through Friedrich's words, that this is a wild and forsaken world, a realm which is not to be found easily, a rare and unique place where the vestiges of what was once created by the long extinct craftsmanship of man are caught in a life and death war waged against the ageless nature that constantly and everlastingly remakes itself anew.<sup>292</sup>

This world seems to come from a totally different universe and it is from a similar universe that Nietzsche's Zarathustra seems to descend among humans with a powerful message. His message denies the possibility of man's salvation through virtues (powerfully preached by Plato) and invokes the ideal of the Superman (namely, man's self-surpassing), who has the specific capacity to contemplate the forces of nature and to act for the benefit of humanity. While the communion between nature and man and vice-versa is realized through silence and sight—which is also a feature of Goethe's literature—the communication between man and his fellow men is done either by imprecation or by the divine force of the unwritten word, as in Goethe. By invoking the sky and the sea—the two eternities which are intertwined for ever—Zarathustra creates himself through the signs of nature and transcends himself due to the everlasting character of nature as a token of his wisdom. Revealing himself as a new Christ among the petty Jews with petty souls and petty feelings, Nietzsche's hero asks his spectators to “dance” in a totally different way, according to a totally different tablet of the law: “Überwinde dich selber noch in deinem Nächsten: und ein Recht, das du dir rauben kannst, sollst du dir nicht geben lassen” (“Surpass thyself even in they neighbor and the right which thou canst seize upon, shalt thou not allow to be given thee!”)<sup>293</sup> Thus, the “will to power” does not presuppose the action of changing people by people but the surpassing of man through man. In other words, the “sign” given by the appearance of Nietzsche's lion is a foresight of the end of the prophet's mission, namely the reconciliation of humanity with nature, as well as the restoration of the initial and elementary state of creation. If Goethe managed such an achievement at the interface between virtual and real, Nietzsche's hero appears in the magnificent and tragic reality of the divine prophet thrown in a profane world which lost even the right to be pitied. A forerunner of Dionysus, Zarathustra does not celebrate the achievement of his work or his ideal, because his day begins at

---

<sup>292</sup> For details, see Goethe, *Opere*, vol. 5, 467.

<sup>293</sup> Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke. Also sprach Zarathustra*, ed. by Colli and Montinari (München: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), 206. See Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, trans. by Thomas Common (2004), 195.

the “Great (After)noon” (grossen Mittage) of his broken ideal. Therefore, if “God is dead,” the Superman did not have the chance to confront the pettiness of history, because he still had not been born.

## **10. Nietzsche’s Cult of Tragedy: a Transcultural Prophetic Message**

Nietzsche is tragic only within the limits of his Hellenism, and it is from this perspective that he admires Goethe who—in one of his *Gespäche mit Eckermann*—urged his collocutor to study the ancient Greeks again and again before anything else. Goethe explains that in order for us to satisfy the need for something truly special, we always have to turn to the Greeks because their works constantly present us with the image of the beautiful man. According to Goethe, anything else should be seen through the eyes of the historian.<sup>294</sup>

This is also the guiding light of young Nietzsche’s early and enthusiastic preoccupations for the future of the German people. Goethe suggested the restoration of Greek antiquity as a source of optimism and trust in the creative power of humanity in harmony with nature because, when Goethe studies nature, he discovers in it a flicker of the spirit.<sup>295</sup> Nietzsche does not insist on this ideal of humanity because his work did not end with *Götzen-Dämmerung*. Moreover, Nietzsche overcomes Bertram’s model when he urged on the pursuit of the Greek ideal. On the contrary, Nietzsche goes further, like a genuine Dionysian figure, in order to discover the tragic essence of the world under every leaf and every petal which fell to the ground. Thus, in Nietzsche, contemplation leads to tragedy. Resuming Steiner’s idea, he correctly notices that if Goethe finds the spirit in its reality when studying nature, Nietzsche loses even the last trace of spiritual myth when dreaming of nature. It is equally true, however, that Goethe was not a contemporary of either Bertram, who foresaw possibilities of mythologization all over the place and especially in Nietzsche’s life, or Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche, who devised her own method to deify the ideal of the Superman or the will to power, which—she believed—originated in the Greek perspective on man.

Wishing to make Goethe his ally through the adherence to Greek antiquity, Nietzsche does not forget that Goethe is not Zarathustra, but the genius who created Zarathustra in more than one way: either by wearing the mask of Götz, Wilhelm Meister or Faust, or by embodying the odd family from the *Novelle*, so dear to Nietzsche. In this sense, as the Romanian poet and

---

<sup>294</sup> For details about Nietzsche’s perception of Goethe in connection with their view of Antiquity, see Bertram, *Nietzsche*, 166.

<sup>295</sup> Steiner, *Povestea vieții mele* (Iași: Princeps, 1994), 231.

literary critic Ștefan Augustin Doinaș notices, nothing can be done for Zarathustra's lion because he is condemned not to desire to leave Zarathustra out of love, so he acts like a dog who found his master.<sup>296</sup> In Nietzsche, even the Superman is dominated by his tragic destiny and Dionysus is a mere god affected by the power of fate, a literary feature that will be taken over by Thomas Mann. Goethe was a Greek spirit who allowed man to be friend nature. As for Nietzsche, he completed the apocalyptic perspective on the universe by means of Zarathustra's message addressed to the virtuous man and his traditional, outdated values. Thus, a new set of laws come through the message of Zarathustra, who is not Dionysus but only his prophet. Zarathustra's subordination to Dionysus can be explained in two ways. The first explanation has to do with the prophet's message which demolishes all previous values—divine or humane—that had been the object of Nietzsche's nihilism. Thus, Apollo is no longer the eternal master and Zarathustra seems to have completed his mission as he immerses his hands in the lion's mane. The second explanation resides in the fact that Zarathustra does not end up in denial but fully participates in the Dionysian affirmation; Zarathustra is the idea of this affirmation, the idea of Dionysus. As Dionysus is the father of the Superman, likewise Zarathustra calls the Superman his child. Nevertheless—as Doinaș notices—Zarathustra is overcome by his own children; he is only the claimant, not the constitutive element of the eternal recurrence. He does not produce the Superman but rather makes sure that this production is realized in man, so he creates the framework wherein man overcomes himself and is overcome, and the lion becomes a child.<sup>297</sup>

Having said that, it is clear that Goethe's idea is continued, so that Goethe's universal man with antique and renaissance features becomes Nietzsche's universal man without an actual self-conscience, the man of apocalyptic culture who has to bear everybody's burdens as he proclaims a new rhythm, a new poetry, a new art: in other words a new discourse about humanity. In this discourse, even the lion becomes his possible child or, like the child, the lion can be taught Dionysian contemplation.

As far as Nietzsche is concerned, the Goethe event in the German culture was—in contrast with Schopenhauer and Wagner—a mere interlude in a time of “decadence”, as proved by Nietzsche's *Der Fall Wagner, Götzen-Dämmerung* and *Also sprach Zarathustra*, which offer a thorough analysis of the concept of decadence in modern times. This is to say that Nietzsche

---

<sup>296</sup> Ștefan Augustin Doinaș in Preface to Nietzsche, *Așa grăit-a Zarathustra* (București: Humanitas, 1994), 20.

<sup>297</sup> Doinaș in Preface to Nietzsche, *Așa grăit-a Zarathustra*, 20-21.

appreciated Goethe for his realistic spirit. Thus, Nietzsche's message aims at the heat of the nineteenth century society, because to him Goethe is a breath of fresh air, while for the modern man it is a doze of "fatalism":

Ein solch freigewordner Geist steht mit einem freudigen und vertrauenden Fatalismus mitten im All, im Glauben, dass nur das Einzelne verwerflich ist... Aber ein solcher Glaube ist der höchste aller möglichen Glauben: ich habe ihn auf den Namen des Dionysos getauft.

(Such a spirit stands amid the cosmos with a joyous and trusting fatalism, in the faith ... that all is redeemed and affirmed in the whole... Such a faith, however, is the highest of all possible faiths: I have baptized it with the name of Dionysus.)<sup>298</sup>

Nietzsche could not but praise Goethe for his idea of universality as applied to his philosophy of nature. This is why Nietzsche was convinced that Goethe was not a German, but a European. Nevertheless, the fact that this motive is mentioned by Nietzsche in a discussion about the disease of modern man—Goethe himself said that classicism was health, romanticism was sick—taken from Schopenhauer and Wagner proves that the vision of the eighteenth century romantic man about Goethe's fatalism converges with that of the modern man about Nietzsche's tragic perspective.<sup>299</sup> A continuation of the discourse about the tragic fate of the German society within Nietzsche's lines can be found as a dominant theme in the works of Thomas Mann.

---

<sup>298</sup> Nietzsche, *Der Fall Wagner, Götzen-Dämmerung, Nietzsche contra Wagner* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1969), 105. See Nietzsche, *The Twilight of the Idols and the Antichrist: or How to Philosophize with a Hammer*, trans. by R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1990), see Chapter "Skirmishes of an Untimely Man", 49.

<sup>299</sup> Matei Călinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), 188-190.



### CHAPTER III

## PAUL THOMAS MANN AND THE PROBLEM OF THE MODERN ARTIST IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Thomas Mann (1875-1955) made a prominent appearance in the German literature in the midst of a process which overturned the cultural and human values of the early twentieth century society, and was characterized by political migration as well as by a transition from artistic models to life principles. In his capacity of one of the main voices of the German literature in the first half of the twentieth century, Mann proved to be a man of his age, which was also the case with Goethe and Nietzsche, whose preoccupations he continued in many respects. Thus, it is obvious from his early writings that his preferred themes deal with the artist's situation within a certain historical background; at the same time, he explored the relationship between the artist and the Bürger<sup>300</sup>, as well as between contemplation and action. As a member of the Prussian Academy of Literature, Mann took over the interests of Goethe and Nietzsche both literarily and philosophically.<sup>301</sup> Therefore, following Goethe and Nietzsche, Mann adopted the method of concrete reproduction of details which have to do with modern life as well as the life of antiquity. This was accomplished through the analysis of the characters' psychology, introspection, and the subtle, profound investigation of human typology. At the same time, however, Mann was detached and ironic in connection with his characters but also with their historical context as combined with a deep sense of tragedy. With reference to Goethe, Mann's characters are oftentimes members of the bourgeoisie confronted with a spiritual conflict which is also their drama—as in *Tonio Kröger* and *Buddenbrooks*. On the other hand though, his heroes are artists who create spiritual values as they possess a rich psychology—like, for instance, in his *Der Tod in Venedig* (*Death in Venice*) and *Doktor Faustus*. Through these later works, Mann explained that there is a great discrepancy—often unfavorable to the genius—between the creative spirit as a means of artistic decadence and the habitual character of life, which is given by the robustness and happiness of

---

<sup>300</sup> See the great bourgeois figures as represented, for instance, by Johann Buddenbrook (in *The Buddenbrooks*) or Consul Kröger (in *Tonio Kröger*).

<sup>301</sup> See his 1947 *Essays of Three Decades*, where Mann discusses Nietzsche's influence on him as well as his studies for the conferences related to the Goethe Jubilee Year in Frankfurt am Main and Weimar.

real, physical world. Whatever Mann meant to convey through his works cannot be adequately understood without at least a concise presentation of his life and works.

### 1. Thomas Mann: an Artistic Autobiography

In 1930, Mann wrote his autobiography as an additional note to his public discourse for the formal reception of the Nobel Prize for Literature, which was conferred to him in 1929. A presentation of his entire life and work as seen in his autobiography is extremely helpful for a proper perception of Mann's prominent literary themes.

Mann began his autobiography with a presentation of himself and his family. As a child, he noticed that he did not follow in the footsteps of his father who wanted him to run the family business but he started to work hard in order to acquire a solid education. As he did not like school, he learned by himself so he quickly became an autodidact. His father died prematurely and the family had to relocate in Munich. Mann underlines the fact that he had to complete his formal education, which he did without outstanding achievements, and then he spent a year in Italy with his older brother Heinrich. During this period he published his *Der kleine Herr Friedemann* (*Little Herr Friedemann*) and began to write the *Buddenbrooks*, followed by *Tristan* which includes his famous *Tonio Kröger*. In Mann's words:

I was born in Lübeck on June 6, 1875, the second son of a merchant and senator of the Free City, Johann Heinrich Mann, and his wife Julia da Silva Bruhns ... I was designated to take over my father's grain firm ... I loathed school and up to the very end I failed to meet [my father's] requirements ... Whatever education I possess I acquired in a free and autodidactic manner. Official instruction failed to instill in me any but the most rudimentary knowledge. When I was fifteen, my father died, a comparatively young man. The firm was liquidated. A little later my mother left the town with the younger children in order to settle in the south of Germany, in Munich. After finishing school rather ingloriously, I followed her and for the time being became a clerk in the office of a Munich insurance company whose director had been a friend of my father's. Later, by way of preparing for a career in journalism, I attended lectures in history and literature at the university, and the polytechnic. In between I spent a year in Italy with my brother Heinrich, my elder by four years. During this time, my first collection of short stories, *Der kleine Herr Friedemann* (1898) [*Little Herr Friedemann*] was published.

In Rome, I also began to write the novel *Buddenbrooks*, which appeared in 1901 and which since then has been such a favourite with the German public that today over a million copies of it are in circulation. There followed shorter stories, collected in the volume *Tristan* (1903), of which the North-South artist's novella *Tonio Kröger* is usually considered the most characteristic ...

Mann continues his presentation with his marriage and rather large family of six children, three boys and three girls. Then, he mentions the writing of his *Königliche Hoheit* (*Royal Highness*) as an important landmark for his literary endeavor, which was later followed by *Bekanntnisse des Hochstaplers Felix Krull* (*The Confessions of Felix Krull*), much appreciated by the critics in spite of the fact that it was never completed. During this period, Mann also produced his *Der Tod in Venedig* and was almost on the verge of starting his *Der Zauberberg* (*The Magic Mountain*) but he could not do it because of the imminence of the First World War:

In 1905 I married [Katja] the daughter of Alfred Pringsheim, who had the chair of mathematics at the University of Munich. On her mother's side my wife is the granddaughter of Ernst and Hedwig Dohm, the well-known Berlin journalist and his wife, who played a leading role in the German movement for women's emancipation. From our marriage have come six children: three girls ... and three boys. The first literary fruit of my new status was the novel *Königliche Hoheit* (1909) [*Royal Highness*], a court story that provides the frame for a psychology of the formal-representative life and for moral questions such as the reconciliation of an aristocratic, melancholic consciousness with the demands of the community. Another novelistic project followed, the *Bekanntnisse des Hochstaplers Felix Krull* (1922) [*Confessions of Felix Krull, the Confidence Man*]. It is based on an idea of parody, that of taking an element of venerable tradition, of the Goethean, self-stylizing, autobiographic, and aristocratic confession, and translating it into the sphere of the humorous and the criminal. The novel had remained a fragment, but there are connoisseurs who consider its published sections my best and most felicitous achievement. Perhaps it is the most personal thing I have written, for it represents my attitude toward tradition, which is simultaneously loving and destructive and has dominated me as a writer. In 1913 the novella *Der Tod in Venedig* [*Death in Venice*] was published, which beside *Tonio Kröger* is considered my most valid achievement in that genre. While I was writing its final sections I conceived the idea of the "Bildungsro-

man” *Der Zauberberg* (1924) [*The Magic Mountain*], but work on it was interrupted in the very beginning by the war.

The next stage of Mann’s work is important because it explains his life and work prior to the publication of his masterpiece *Der Zauberberg*. After the First World War, Mann wrote his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* (*Reflections of an Unpolitical Man*) which has to do with his own German origin and how he perceived himself as a German in the midst of a society which was torn apart by numerous conflicts. He began to travel a lot as he lectured abroad in various European countries, from Spain to Poland and from Denmark to Switzerland. This is how Mann presents this period of his life:

Although the war did not make any immediate demands on me physically, while it lasted it put a complete stop to my artistic activity, because it forced me to an agonizing reappraisal of my fundamental assumptions, a human and intellectual self-inquiry that found its condensation in *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* [*Reflections of an Unpolitical Man*], published in 1918. Its subject is the personally accented problem of being German, the political problem, treated in the spirit of a polemical conservatism that underwent many revisions as life went on. An account of the development of my socio-moral ideas is found in the volumes of essays *Rede und Antwort* (1922) [*Question and Answer*], *Bemühungen* (1925) [*Efforts*], and *Die Forderung des Tages* (1930) [*Order of the Day*]. Lecture tours abroad began immediately after the borders of countries neutral or hostile during the war had been re-opened. They led me first to Holland, Switzerland, and Denmark. The spring of 1923 saw a journey to Spain. In the following year I was guest of honour of the newly established PEN Club in London; two years later I accepted an invitation of the French branch of the Carnegie Foundation, and I visited Warsaw in 1927.

The 1920s were crucial for Mann as he published *Der Zauberberg*, which was enthusiastically received by the public, as well as a range of other famous writings which made Mann a compulsory name in contemporary world literature. All the writings produced by Mann in this particular time of his life are a need for a correct understanding of his thought. Mann’s humble attitude in describing some of his greatest literary productions deserves special mentioning, as seen in the following text which he wrote himself:

Meanwhile, in the autumn of 1924, after many prolonged delays the two volumes of *Der Zauberberg* were published. The interest of the public, as revealed by the hundred printings the book ran into within a few years, proved that I have chosen the most favourable moment to come to the fore with this composition of ideas epically conceived. The problems of the novel did not essentially appeal to the masses, but they were of consuming interest to the educated, and the distress of the times had increased the receptivity of the public ... *Der Zauberberg* was followed by a bourgeois novella from the period of revolution and inflation, *Unordnung und frühes Leid* [*Disorder and Early Sorrow*, 1926] (partially published in 1925, it celebrated the author's fiftieth birthday); *Mario und der Zauberer* [*Mario and the Magician*], written in 1929, is for the time being my last attempt at compositions of this size. It was written during my work on a new novel which in subject matter and intention is far different from all earlier works, for it leaves behind the bourgeois individual sphere and enters into that of the past and myth. The Biblical story for which the title *Joseph und seine Brüder* is planned, and of which individual sections have been made known through public readings and publications in journals, seem about half completed. A study trip connected with it led me to Egypt and Palestine in February-March-April, 1930.

Mann also presents the honorary academic degrees as well as the specialized prizes which were conferred upon him as a result of the world-wide impact of his literary works. He is fully aware of his personal success but, at the same time, he knows for a fact that self-criticism is compulsory for a writer of his caliber. In addition to self-criticism, the personal touch of his own life as lived in a very earnest manner did nothing but enrich his works, which are seen as a reflection of his being. This is how Mann ends his autobiographical presentation:

[I was conferred] an honorary doctor's degree by the University of Bonn in 1919; and, to satisfy the German delight in title, the Senate of Lübeck, my home town, added the title of professor on the occasion of a city anniversary. I am one of the first members, nominated by the state itself, of the new literary division of the Prussian Academy of Arts; my fiftieth birthday was accompanied by expressions of public affections that I can remember only with emotion, and the summit of all these distinctions has been the award of the Nobel Prize in Literature by the Swedish Academy last year (1929). But I must say that no turmoil of success has ever dimmed the clear apprehension of the relativity of my deserts or even for a moment dulled the edge of my self-criticism. The value and signifi-

cance of my work for posterity may safely be left to the future; for me they are nothing but the personal traces of a life led consciously, that is, conscientiously.<sup>302</sup>

It should be easier now to understand Mann as a man of culture as well as a writer because, in his autobiography, it is the writer himself that explains the context of his works in respect to both history and politics. It is significant though to notice first that Mann's presentation of himself and his works stops at the year 1930, and second that he only makes brief remarks to the personal details of his life, as seen for instance in connection with his family's move to Munich. Thus, he does not offer details concerning any of the events which prompted him to modify repeatedly his political presuppositions. If from the novella *Tonio Kröger* to the novel *Der Zauberberg*, which were both conceived before the First World War, Mann identifies a change from the presence of the bourgeoisie in society to its active role in world politics, it is ultimately important to understand how Mann the writer changed at the interface between his work and his political involvement.<sup>303</sup>

It is obvious from what Mann himself wrote about his life and works that, even if he did not insist on historical or political events, he nevertheless offers various important hints which point to the significance of the historical background of his works. For instance, he mentions in passing that his *Der Zauberberg*, which was published in 1924, met his expectations with reference to the receptivity of the public, which means that the [political] moment for the official launch of the novel was indeed well-chosen. In this context, one should not lose sight of the fact that the project of *Der Zauberberg* dated from the period when he published *Der Tod in Venedig* (1911-1913), so *Der Zauberberg* covers at least ten years of Mann's life as well as an equal number of years characterized by political instability. Thus, Mann launched his *Der Zauberberg* a sufficient number of years after the end of the First World War, so the world had enough time to cope with its catastrophic consequences, as well as just before the outburst of a new world crisis, which was announced by the year 1926, a year of revolution and inflation, as Mann himself described it. Therefore, the works of the 1920s reveal Mann as a visionary of his time: he had a good perception of the signs which preceded the great economic crisis that, starting with 1929,

---

<sup>302</sup> For the above-mentioned quotations as well as for any other details about Mann's autobiography, see Horst Frenz (ed.), *Nobel Lectures in Literature 1901-1967* (Singapore: World Scientific Publications, 1999), 266-268.

<sup>303</sup> For details about Mann's youth and education, see Hermann Kurzke, *Thomas Mann. Life as a Work of Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

affected all the heavily industrialized nations from Europe, America and Australia with consequences to be felt well into the 1930s. This can only strengthen the impression that Mann was heavily connected to the practical life and experience of his contemporaries from Germany as well as from Europe and even beyond it. If Goethe and Nietzsche wrote about the Germans with a sense of personal detachment, as if they had spoken to them from another country as they actually did more than once in order to avoid the nationalism of their fellow Germans, Mann had lived and worked among the Germans for more than fifty years although, as Nietzsche said about Goethe, he wrote above their heads.

## **2. Mann, the Man of Culture in the Midst of Politics**

Mann put his literary talent to a test for the first time in 1896, when he was in Italy with his brother Heinrich.<sup>304</sup> The first result of this life experience was to appear only in 1901 under the title *Buddenbrooks*, but the book was received with enthusiasm as Mann himself wrote in his brief autobiography. In his novel, Mann was preoccupied to develop the art of portrait as applied to his characters with reference to the Buddenbrook family's power and decline. Mann's accent to the internal life of the character does not mean that action is detached from the social and historical reality. On the contrary, from a social point of view, the novel presents the atmosphere of Wilhelm II's reign—the last of Germany's emperors—as well as the daily life of the Prussian bourgeoisie (a familiar environment for Mann, because the Buddenbrook family is his own family, with its achievements and decline) and the city of Lübeck with its traditional architecture and social structure.<sup>305</sup>

---

<sup>304</sup> Heinrich Mann had been in Italy since 1895, when he went to a sanatorium near Lake Garda in order to recover from a lung disease. Thomas followed him after two years with the express intention to put his literary talent to the test. He actually believed he had to write at least a dozen of novellas before he could call himself an artist. Prior to 1898 they traveled together and visited Roma, Napoli and Salerno, then in 1901 they went to Capua and Ravello. As a testimony of their stay in Palestrina, one could visit the “Via Thomas Mann” and “Largo Heinrich Mann”.

<sup>305</sup> In the *Buddenbrooks*, Lübeck is the universal city of a universal bourgeoisie. Mann said it was a form of spiritual life because it was inhabited by various types of bourgeoisies, such as those from Copenhagen or Marseille. His impressions about Lübeck were written in 1926 after he previously visited Denmark, France and Spain. The physical construction of the Buddenbrooks' house is not an exercise of artistic imagination but the actual description of the Manns' family house in Lübeck, bought by Mann's grandfather in 1842 and sold to the Lübeck City Council in 1891, when his family decided to move to Munich. The house was partially destroyed by the Allies' 1942 bombardments. Then, it was restored and in 1993 it became a museum to the memory of Thomas and Heinrich Mann.

The fact that Mann reportedly defended the monarchist politics of Kaiser Wilhelm II cannot be proved entirely. The action of the novel takes place thirty years before Mann's birth, and it focuses on the social problems related to the 1848 Revolution. The book dwells on the workers' revolts and presents the decline of the Buddenbrook family until 1875, when Thomas Buddenbrook—the last of Johann Buddenbrook's descendents—eventually died. It is suggested though that the real action of the book take place during Mann's life, when German society faced the workers' revolts at the end of the 1880s during Bismarck's government. The German nobility from the novel as represented by the venerable consul Johann Buddenbrook is the voice of the famous Chancellor himself, whose power enters a phase of decline after the coronation of Wilhelm II. Prior to 1890, the Kaiser had maintained his conservative position toward the internal social problems—for instance, the 1889 strike of the miners, for whom the Kaiser ordered better working condition—in an attempt to balance Bismarck's ideas, who wanted to promote a law meant to restrict the freedoms of German industries. Thus, in his *Buddenbrooks* Mann illustrates a reality which was specific to the end of the nineteenth century throughout the entire Europe, namely the demise of nobility as well as of the old bourgeoisie and the development of the new bourgeoisie, the manufacturers favored by the Kaiser's moderate social decisions. Likewise, the fact that Mann's books were so enthusiastically received by the public is a proof that the situation of the Buddenbrooks was typical of the entire generation contemporary to Mann, not to the middle of the nineteenth century. Even the building which hosted the Buddenbrooks was familiar to Mann's German readers as they could see the house of his grandfather, Johann Sigmund, who bequeathed it to Mann's father, Thomas Johann Heinrich. The fate of the Buddenbrooks in the novel is the same as the fate of Mann's family. Thus, the death of his father, the senator and businessman Thomas Johann Heinrich illustrates the death of Thomas Buddenbrook, who is representative of the bourgeois manufacturer. The uncertainty of the German society during his father's life as well as its stern critique is a fact, although Mann does not make any direct references to the political regime which reflected the Kaiser's megalomania. Like his generation in the last decade of the nineteenth century, Mann must have felt the Kaiser's influence as an invasion of the economical and political life both internally and externally.

It is common knowledge that after 1890, Germany witnessed a restriction of the Parliament's political freedom which compulsorily required that the formal sessions of the Parliament should be held under the Kaiser's direct

supervision.<sup>306</sup> This decision resulted in a series of political crises, which could not be overlooked by Germany's cultural debates that highlighted the differences between Germany's status during Bismarck's government and the "new regime".<sup>307</sup> On the other hand, in connection with foreign politics, Wilhelm II made a first mistake by refusing to sign an agreement with Russia after the agreement signed by Bismarck in 1887 which granted Russia the status of neutrality in a possible conflict between Germany, France or Belgium. Likewise, the political relationships between Germany and England were not the best ever, taking into account the tension between Wilhelm II and his uncle, King Edward II of Britain. The fact that his cousin, the new King of Britain, had signed the Entente with France in 1904, and with Russia in 1907, was automatically a sentence for the Kaiser, who was forced to negotiate an alliance with the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. The Kaiser's exacerbated confidence in his capacity to devise good political relationships with his cousins from Russia and England, Tsar Nicholas II, and King George V, as well as his attempt to turn Germany into a great military and naval power (he devised a policy of impressive naval construction to counter the British navy) was not seen sympathetically by the other great powers. When the Kaiser refused to sign cordial agreements with the great powers, Germany found itself caught between enemies after the 1914 Sarajevo Crisis. Unfortunately, the Kaiser was not aware of the entire political situation as Franz Joseph of Austria had signed a declaration of war against Serbia on July 28 without informing him.<sup>308</sup>

Resuming Mann's work, an important writing that deciphers his early concerns is *Tonio Kröger*, which he started immediately after the publication of the *Buddenbrooks*. The main theme of this short story is the opposition between art and life, which can also be found in his even earlier *Little Herr Friedmann*. The six stories of the book present their heroes during childhood as typologies of Mann's own personality at the interface between life as a physical handicap and life as an experience of the totality of feelings and emotions which can be fully known and properly perceived only by those with intense perceptions. The same theme of the antagonism between reality and dream can also be found in *Tristan*. These works present Mann,

---

<sup>306</sup> Cecil LaMar, *Wilhelm II*, vol. 1, *Prince and Emperor, 1859-1900* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 147-154.

<sup>307</sup> See, for details, *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann*, ed. by Ritchie Robertson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 6. Mann was not unaware of the legacy bequeathed by Darwin and Nietzsche, who both insisted on concepts such as heredity and decadence.

<sup>308</sup> Cecil LaMar, *Wilhelm II*, vol. 2, *Emperor and Exile 1900-1941* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 160-168, 193-200.

the ironic in connection with the artist's withdrawal from the struggle of life, which is too blunt and materialistic, in order to find refuge in the world of art. This is shown by the fact that the narrative is not decisively prone either to personal realization through artistic means or through the quietude and welfare of life. Thus, Mann swings between these two facets of life but neither is superior to the other. In *Tonio Kröger*, Mann uses a relevant leit-motif, namely the duality given by the sea and the gypsy's caravan. This highlights the artist's languor in contrast with the agitation of his bourgeois colleagues who want to find material security. As he reaches maturity after the friendship of these children of manufacturers was constantly refused to him, Kröger reaches the point when he really hates the life lived by them, so he decides to live alone in accordance with the nihilistic-schopenhauerian creed. The character's evolution does not overload the basic line of the narrative which is not prone to such pessimistic overtones, because the artist still believes in the fundamental moral values of the bourgeoisie. Mann's irony with reference to the artist's fight against a context which is hostile to his art stresses even more acutely the writer's respect for these values, so Kröger's maturity is just another image of his childhood.

Another fundamental work which defines Mann's philosophy is his novel *Königliche Hoheit*, which is his first production that blends social reality with elements of a modern fairytale. At the same time, it is relevant to point out that this novel was published after his marriage to Katharina Pringsheim. Thematically, this work is not very far from his previous writings even if Mann himself believed this was the first literary fruit of his new status as a married man. Although the daughter of a famous intellectual, his wife was also a member of a well-off family with ties to wealthy manufacturers, so it had a considerable fortune. In this particular context, Mann's new life, which lacked any serious concerns, gives him the chance to manifest his self-irony with reference to the artist in the novel. Thus, if in real life, Mann enjoyed a life without material problems which allowed him to dream unrestrainedly, his hero—a decadent aristocrat—tries to solve his problems in the company of his fellow aristocrats and artists who are free of any material concerns whatsoever. The novel contains autobiographic elements as well as aspects which pertain to a traditional fairytale. Mann's story unfolds in accordance with the narrative of a typical German fairytale with all its classical ingredients. Thus, the novel contains even the wishes and the message of the fates for the firstborn of the royal family. The book actually presents one of the few occasions when a physical handicap—the prince was born with a deformed hand—does not lead to social damnation but is a preamble to a history lesson: despite his physical deformity, prince Klaus Heinrich alone can save his kingdom from destruction. At the same

time, for Mann himself, the novel is a “didactic allegory” as well as “an analysis of royal existence as a formal, composed, super-composed, in a word artistic existence and the deliverance of highness through love.”<sup>309</sup> The prince’s artistic soul is probably saved for the first time by Imma Spolmann, a young lady with impressive material possibilities, because even their relationship was predestined: their love anticipates the happy ending in two respects. First, the kingdom is saved from economic recession, while the throne is not left without heirs.

The wide range of characters in the novel as pertaining to these two realms, the artistic environment and capitalistic society, is actually a presentation of Europe itself before the First World War. The writer’s conscience, however, does not break off from daily reality, which offers the possibility to understand the development of the character’s psychology in connection with the moral dilemmas generated by his own situation.

The novel *Königliche Hoheit* is not important exclusively for its content. Mann was accused of a certain hidden intention as well as of a desire to please the public by creating such a character. In other words, the accusation was that Mann did exactly what Nietzsche had done in connection with Wagner, in the sense that he reportedly produced writings for the public. Mann was aware of a possible recurrence of “the case of Wagner”, so he knew how important it was to explain his own position as well as the reader’s response to his work. The proportion of the discussion about intentionality in Mann’s work is seen mainly in his correspondence prior as well as subsequent to the publication of his *Königliche Hoheit*. An early testimony against any intentionality or desire to please the public can be found in one of his letters to his brother Heinrich:

Was Du über unser Verhältnis zum Publikum und unsere Erfolgsarten schriebst, stimmte mich sonderbar wehmüthig. Es is wahr, alle Wirkungen sind im Grunde verfehlt, und befriedigen können Einen Erfolge eigentlich nur, wenn man eitel ist, was ich zum Glück in bißchen bin. Aber so wie Du den Erfolg des „Schlaraffenl.“ schilderst, ist es nun sicher doch nicht beschaffen... Der Hauptreiz für das Publikum besteht doch, glaube ich, nicht so sehr im Erotischen als in dem Satyrischen und Sozial-Kritischen, wofür man ja jetzt in Deutschland merkwürdig empfänglich ist. Die rein artistischen Bemühungen natürlich gehen verloren, aber das Gesellschaftlich-Satyrische ist doch eine bedeutend edlere Wirkung, als das Geschlechtliche.

---

<sup>309</sup> See Hannelore Mundt, *Understanding Thomas Mann* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2004), 73-74.

*Garrison Infirmary, Munich*  
*Friday, November 2, 1900*

(Dear Heinrich:

What you wrote about our relation to the public and our kind of success made me distinctly melancholic. It is true that the effect achieved is always fundamentally the wrong one, and successes are only capable of gratifying one who is in vain, which, fortunately, I am a little... I don't think the primary appeal [of your *Cockaigne*, n.n.] for the public consists so much in the erotic as in the satire and social criticism, for which readers in Germany are just now remarkably receptive. The purely artistic efforts are lost, naturally, but the social satirical remains a much more worthy effect than the sexual.)<sup>310</sup>

When he wrote this letter, Mann had just finished his *Buddenbrooks*. If this book really stirred the public's interest in Mann's works as people saw themselves in it and shared the writer's feelings about the social-political situation of those days, it is clear that the author himself was aware of his books' appeal to the public, otherwise the meaning of his letter to his brother Heinrich would not be resumed in the skillfully mastered satire of his *Königliche Hoheit*. Even if the action of the novel is confined to the fairy-tale atmosphere of a certain royal court, wherein the bourgeois echoes can be suddenly heard by means of the mundane, specifically financial, contribution of the Spolmann family, the writer does not turn his heroes into mere puppets bound to please the spectators. As he had knowledge of previous situations that involved Wagner's theatric plays, Mann felt the vital need to avoid any similar interference, namely any inappropriate relationship between his work and the emulation that it could unleash. In April 1, 1910, following the publication of his *Königliche Hoheit* and ten years after his above-mentioned letter to his brother Heinrich, Mann wrote another letter in which he resumes the idea of the two interrelated levels of reality and his own work in connection with the issue of intentionality. In addition to a competent draft of the then Germany's artistic life, this letter—written to Hermann Hesse—presents a working definition of Mann's literary creation:

---

<sup>310</sup> *Thomas Mann-Heinrich Mann Briefwechsel 1900-1949* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1995), 6. See Richard Winston; Clara Winston (eds.), *The Letters of Heinrich and Thomas Mann, 1900-1949* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 38-39. The annotation refers to Heinrich Mann's novel from 1900, *Im Schlaraffenland* (*In the Land of Cockaigne*).

München, den I. IV. 1910

Sehr geehrter Herr Hesse:

Meine zur Zeit recht schlechte Gesundheit ist schuld, daß ich erst heute dazu komme, Ihnen für Ihren freundlichen Brief vom 24. März zu danken, und ich bedauere die Verzögerung umso mehr, als sie in diesem Falle wohl gar zu einem Mißverständnis führen konnte. Ich säume daher heute nicht länger, Ihnen zu sagen, daß Sie mir mit Ihrem Schreiben eine wirkliche Freude bereitet haben und namentlich daß Sie Ihrer März-Besprechung von „Königliche Hoheit“ Unrecht thun, idem Sie sie „nörgelnd“ nennen. Das war sie nicht, sondern sie war kritisch ... Die Besprechung aus den „Propyläen“ ist ja gewiß süffiger, sie geht recht glatt durch die Kehle, aber Ihre ist mir lieber und die andere beweist eben nur Ihren Satz, daß zweierlei oder mancherlei Leute bei meinen Sachen auf ihre Kosten kommen. Darin kann man ebenso gut einen schweren Einwand wie einen besonderen Vorzug sehen, und also thut man wohl am besten, es als Thatsache zu nehmen. Gelegentlich Ihrer feinen mißtrauischen Bemerkungen habe ich wieder darüber nachgedacht und dessen kann ich Sie versichern, daß keine Berechnung, kein bewußtes Liebäugeln mit dem Publikum dabei im Spiele ist. Die populären Elemente in „Königliche Hoheit“ sind ebenso ehrlicher und instinktiver Herkunft wie die artistischen, soviel ich weiß.

(Munich, April 1, 1910)

My dear Herr Hesse,

My present poor health prevented me from answering your kind letter on March 24 sooner. I regret the delay, all the more so because it may have led to a misunderstanding and now hasten to tell you that your letter gave me great pleasure and that you are being unjust to your review of *Royal Highness* when you speak of “carping”. It was nothing of the kind... True, the review of *Propyläen* is more palatable and goes down very easily, but I prefer yours; the other merely confirms your observation that my writings satisfy two or more kinds of people. Since that can be regarded equally well as a great asset and as a serious defect, we shall probably do best merely to accept it as a fact. Your shrewdly distrustful remarks have made me ponder the matter once more, and I can assure you that no calculation, no conscious flirtation with the public was at work. To the best of my knowledge, the popular elements in *Royal Highness* are as forthright and instinctive in origin as the artistic ones.)<sup>311</sup>

---

<sup>311</sup> *Hermann Hesse-Thomas Mann Briefwechsel* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2003), 43. See Pete Hamill (ed.), *The Hesse-Mann Letters. The Correspondence of*

The fact that Mann made reference to his *Royal Highness* in order to explain his relationship with the public is utterly important. The meaning of his arguments will stay attached to the rest of his novels, including those he wrote in the last period of his life—he will resume his references to Hesse forty years later following the publication of *Doctor Faustus*). At the same time, his return to the problem of the public's positive response ten years later underlines Mann's perennial presence within the German culture alongside of other famous names such as Hesse. The working definition that Mann put to the test in his works presupposes the concept of "instinctivity"; nevertheless, it is not the work in general which is instinctive but its key social elements, namely those which belong to the public as the receiver. The motive Mann had in mind when he proposed this definition of the meaning of his work is fully revealed only in the second part of his letter to Hesse, where he presents his artistic creed as a tension between instinct and the instrumental role of the public:

Oft glaube ich, daß das, was Sie "Antreibereien des Publikums" nennen, ein Ergebnis meines langen leidenschaftlich-kritischen Enthusiasmus für die Kunst Richard Wagners ist—diese ebenso exklusive wie demagogische Kunst, die mein Ideal, meine Bedürfnisse vielleicht auf immer beeinflußt, um nicht zu sagen, korrumpiert hat. Nietzsche spricht einmal von Wagners „wechselnder Optik“: bald in Hinsicht auf die größten Bedürfnisse, bald in Hinsicht auf die raffiniertesten. Dies ist der Einfluß, den ich meine, und ich weiß nicht, ob ich je den Willen finden werde, mich seiner völlig zu ent schlagen. Die Künstler, denen es nur um eine Coenakel-Wirkung zu thun ist, war ich stets geneigt, gering zu schätzen. Eine solche Wirkung würde mich nicht befriedigen. *Mich verlangt auch nach den Dummen*. Aber das ist nachträgliche Psychologie. Bei der Arbeit bin ich unschuldig und selbstgenügsam.

(I sometimes think that what you call my "playing up to the public" springs from my long, passionately critical enthusiasm for the art of Richard Wagner—that art, as exclusive as it is demagogic, which may have permanently influenced, not to say corrupted, my ideals and artistic strivings. Nietzsche speaks of Wagner's "shifting perspective", meaning that he appeals sometimes to the crudest, sometimes to the most refined

---

*Hermann Hesse and Thomas Mann, 1910-1955* (New York: Jorge Pinto Books, 2005), 1. The Editor shows that the "Propyläen" review belonged to Ludwig Finch, an old friend of Hesse, to whom Hesse actually dedicated his first novel, *Peter Camenzind*.

tastes. This is the influence I have in mind, and I don't know whether I shall ever summon up the will power to shake it off completely. I have always inclined to a low opinion of artists who are interested only in speaking to a coterie. That would not satisfy me. *I need the unlettered as well.* But that is psychology after the fact. When at work, I am innocent and self-sufficient.)<sup>312</sup>

The letter reveals among other things some essential autobiographic notes concerning Mann the artist. In fact, his thoughts about the meaning of art, its definition and his artistic creed were made against the background of his personal life which is constantly present in his writings. Mann's anxiety caused by his reviewer's distrust that the art of Mann, the writer could be neutral is the same anxiety that he felt in connection with Wagner's music. It is actually the anxiety of not being perceived as "shifting" for the sake of the public, namely of not being known as an amenable artist in contrast with the instinctive, free artist. Like Nietzsche who did not want to be mistaken for somebody else so he wrote *Ecce homo*, Mann believed as early as 1910 that the fact that he was mistaken for Wagner and his stage tragedy could not be justified in any way. Following Nietzsche, who wanted to reflect himself in his works, Mann touches the issue of writing, so he says that, when he writes, he is innocent, namely he is himself. The fact that he was passionate about Wagner's music for a long time is mere biographical information, but the reality that when he writes he is content with himself is a creed which defines his entire biography. These two realms must be clearly delineated and so must be the relationship between the public as the receiver and the writer's creative act as devoid of intentionality or of the awareness of the public's instrumentality. In connection with either possibility, Mann defends the verticality of the man of culture in his relationship with society and politics lest he should let his work open to polemics. In this context, the appeal of his works to the public was never a conscious act in the sense of a social pact but, on the contrary, it had an origin as distinctive as the artist himself.<sup>313</sup> The meaning of the artist's verticality and the unconsciousness (lack of awareness) of the function of the creative act is the meaning fore-

---

<sup>312</sup> *Hermann Hesse-Thomas Mann Briefwechsel*, 43-44. See Pete Hamill, *The Hesse-Mann Letters*, 1-2. Concerning Nietzsche's critique to Wagner's work, Mann talks about *The Case of Wagner*, where Nietzsche accused the composer of "visual unrest" in addition to his desire to please all listeners. See, for details, Walter Kaufmann, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (New York: Modern Library, 2000), 625.

<sup>313</sup> The most significant parts of the correspondence between Mann and Hesse as well as between Mann and his brother Heinrich were produced against the background of the accusations concerning the appeal to the public as an intentional act.

seen by Nietzsche as he reevaluated his early works as well as the danger that it should leave the impression of an esoteric creation. This particular meaning of art, which Mann could not simply miss because it tied him to Wagner's music, was defined by Nietzsche in the following words:

Nochmals gesagt, heute ist es mir ein unmögliches Buch,—ich heie es schlecht geschrieben, schwerfällig, peinlich, bilderwüthig und bilderwüthig, gefühlsam, hier und da verzuckert bis zum Femininischen, ungleich im Tempo, ohne Willen zur logischen Sauberkeit, sehr überzeugt ..., als Buch für Eingeweihte, als „Musik“ für Solche, die auf Musik getauft, die auf gemeinsame und seltene Kunst-Erfahrungen hin von Anfang der Dinge an verbunden sind, ... das sich gegen das profanum vulgus der „Gebildeten“ von vornherein noch mehr als gegen das „Volk“ abschließt, welches aber, wie seine Wirkung bereits bewies und beweist, sich gut genug darauf verstehen muß, sich seine Mitschwärmer zu suchen und sie auf neue Schleichwege und Tanzplätze zu locken.

(Let me say again: today for me it is an impossible book—I call it something poorly written, ponderous, embarrassing, with fantastic and confused imagery, sentimental, here and there so saccharine it is effeminate, uneven in tempo, without any impulse for logical clarity, extremely self-confident... like a book for the initiated, like “Music” for those baptized with music, those who are bound together from the start in secret and esoteric aesthetic experiences..., which right from the start hermetically sealed itself off from the *profanum vulgus*..., but a book which, as its effect proved and continues to prove, must also understand this issue well enough to search out its fellow rhapsodists and to tempt them to new secret pathways and dancing grounds.)<sup>314</sup>

Nietzsche's observation about the place and role of art indicates the significant connection between art and history (and time) by means of using contrasting attributes which present the very facet of art, that is art missed by history: “fantastic, confused imagery”; “sentimental, self-confident, baptized with music, hermetically sealed”. The fact that Mann somehow takes over Nietzsche's mature philosophy in order to present the contrast between artistic instinct and social imprint—Nietzsche's evaluation after more than a decade since the publication of his first main work is of course crucial—should be understood against the background of Mann's life as lived in the

---

<sup>314</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, 3. See Nietzsche in the 1886 Preface to his *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* (Plain Label Books, 2007), 10.

then history. Thus, Mann's thought and creation must be studied within the historical context of the early twentieth century, which mirrors the writer's confrontation with his contemporary world and history.

### **3. Mann: the Unpolitical Writer at War?**

In 1912, Mann's fear—which was also Nietzsche's—concerning the fact that he could be misunderstood by the public became real. Mann published his *Tod in Venedig*, a short story which deals with the theme of the artist's withdrawal from reality. As applied to Mann, the historical reason of his escape from reality was the rapid decline of the political and cultural Europe of the time. If in 1898, when still in Italy, Mann began to write a novel with bourgeois overtones—the *Buddenbrooks*—explaining what it meant to be a German at the end of the nineteenth century, in 1912 a more mature Mann decided to change his entire approach of his literary productions. Mann's change resided in the fact that the story was placed outside the life of continental bourgeoisie, as his *Der Tod in Venedig* plainly shows. At the same time, Mann started to write the first chapters of his *Der Zauberberg*, which eventually grew into a monumental project as the writer developed the contour of his main character, Hans Castorp, before the Great War, as well as his journey into the new life experience outside his native context prior to the outburst of the war.<sup>315</sup> Castorp's change of "air", namely his change of realm, describes a linear movement as compared to the previous short story despite the huge difference of altitude between the Italian town and the Swiss sanatorium. Like Gustav Aschenbach, Castorp heads towards the sanatorium—a realm of sickness and death by definition—despite his premonitions and the warning signs about the hidden danger of the site; thus, he stays there not only for three weeks but for seven years.<sup>316</sup> It is, however, only at the end of the story that we understand—as the author urges us to

---

<sup>315</sup> Mann finished *Der Zauberberg* in 1924 only because in the meantime he proved his excellent qualities in writing essays but also because the political instability of the time prevented him from completing his huge project.

<sup>316</sup> In November 15, 2004, the journalist Luke Harding announced sensational breaking news in *The Guardian*, under the title "Inspiration Leaves Mann's Mountain". Harding noticed that the alpine sanatorium which constituted the background of Mann's *Der Zauberberg* became a victim of Germany's economic depression .... For almost a century and a half, Davos had been full of visitors who crowded there to see the site which was made famous by Mann's works. The beauty of the mountain region was not only imagined by the writer but also felt, because in 1912 he brought his wife here as she suffered from acute bronchitis. Like Castorp, Mann himself discovered he had a spot on one of his lungs. Unlike his character though, Mann stayed at the sanatorium for only three weeks but he kept in mind the ravaging beauty as well as the southern image of the Swiss resort.

detach ourselves from the action in order to find its meaning—that the sickness and death of the body is preferable to spiritual death.<sup>317</sup> Although he, the hero eventually rushes down the valley (*in giù*)—a realm defined by the war’s deadly roar—the author bitterly notices the curiosity as well as the lack of experience which caused it. From the beginning to the end, Mann makes us understand that the novel was written within a very long period of time and its delayed publication in 1924 shows that the writer did not catch only the historical moment *per se* but also its echo. This is proved by his reference to the three thousand students at the end of the narrative, but their cause as well as their national identity is not fully revealed. We only know that they are young people of Castorp’s age, some of them are his friends and, like Castorp himself, they do not know where they are heading to and what lies before them. Their anonymity discloses first Mann’s subtle irony not towards the young people’s sacrifice but towards the whole situation which emerged behind them, namely “the desperate dance, in which thy fortunes are caught up, will last yet many a sinful year.”<sup>318</sup> The story itself as well as the time of its unfolding enhances the feeling of anonymity: the three thousand young persons could be a metaphor of the hundreds of thousands of young Germans who died during the war.<sup>319</sup> Likewise, the context

---

<sup>317</sup> Towards the end of the novel, Mann uses the duel between Settembrini, an ideologist of human freedom as well as of the freedom of expression, and Naphta, a promoter of the overturning of the old values of civilization and of absolutist views resulted from moral chaos. This episode as well as Naphta’s suicide evokes a past event which really happened in Davos. In 1936, David Frankfurter, a Medicine student, assassinated Wilhelm Gustloff, the leader of the Swiss Nazi, because the latter had started to interrogate all the German patients of the sanatorium concerning their loyalty to the Führer. The young Jew was imprisoned for murder but, at the end of the Second World War, he was released so he emigrated in Israel, where he worked for the Ministry of Defense. For details, see *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* (New York: Macmillan, 1990). In 1936, Mann wrote the third part of his novel *Joseph und seine Brüder*, entitled *Joseph in Ägypten (Joseph in Egypt)*. The author presents the biblical narrative about the arrival of Joseph the Jew in Egypt and his imprisonment, which ended with his promotion to the second higher rank in the country after the Pharaoh. Mann’s perspicuity is clear and the action of his two novels—*Der Zauberberg* and *Joseph und seine Brüder*, written over a long period of time and as a result of a rich political experience—reflects the beginning of the war against Nazism in real history but also its continuation as a personal creed.

<sup>318</sup> Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain: Der Zauberberg*, trans. by H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), 716.

<sup>319</sup> In September 1918, just before the Great War ended, Philipp Witkop had finished his selection of the letters of the German soldiers prior to their death on the battlefield. The letters were gathered in one volume published in 1929 as *German Students War Letters*; within the same year, Erich Maria Remarque published his novel *All Quiet on the Western Front*. The publication of these two volumes intended to promote a new perspective on the ideals, hardships and vicissitudes faced by the young Germans as a means to demystify the

of the fictitious action which unfolds on the mountain during a halted time—though very rich in ideology and ideals—but also its transformation on the battleground as a historical-real event, dead, however, spiritually—points us to the historical-political compromises, later to be called “agreements”, among the great powers. As for Mann, the definitely did not overlook them. Towards the end of the war, the great powers were joined by China where Germany had had important properties in the Shandong province. China’s gesture was not made out of obligation but rather of constraint as Japan had already been active in the war and submitted twenty one claims concerning the same properties as a reward for its involvement in the war with a relatively insignificant number of troops.<sup>320</sup> Mann’s three thousand young people can, at the same time, represent a real number: disappointed by their search of Western illumination concerning political ideals, three thousand Chinese students protested in Beijing in May 4, 1919, against the decisions of the Versailles Treaty. “The Peace of Versailles” enslaved China because the United States of America and France refused to support her in her relationships with Japan. Thus, China—as well as the German islands in the Pacific—became a sort of Japanese “protectorate”. The Chinese government repressed the protests of the three thousand students but they were backed by numerous other revolts throughout the country. Such reactions were not singular in the world either during or after the war. Thus, in 1917, three thousand American students, professors and graduates enrolled as auxiliary troops in order to support the Allies.<sup>321</sup>

Like in other novels and short stories by Mann, the sanatorium, the figures and the entire war present—in addition to political novelties—a genuine micro-cosmos. Castorp’s skepticism while arriving at the sanatorium as

---

press articles published by Allied newspapers. In a letter sent by the young student Karl Aldag, we find that he could not describe what he felt in a certain afternoon. He explained that he had had no fear of death because he simply resigned himself to fate. Like all the other soldiers who wrote over twenty thousand letters, Aldag was killed in battle. The fact that this volume of letters, Remarque’s novel—which presented the feeling of ostracization experienced by the German soldiers who returned home after the war towards civil society—and Mann’s *Der Zauberberg* were so highly praised by the public following the Great War leads us to believe that the majority of the readers was active in battle or had close connections to the front zone. These three volumes present the unrealism of the situation of those involved in the war and define world politics as a game of the great powers, unfavorable to cordial relationships between nations.

<sup>320</sup> See Leonard von Muralt, *From Versailles to Potsdam* (Hinsdale, IL: Henry Regnery, 1948), 29, 41.

<sup>321</sup> Peter Gue Zarrow, *China in War and Revolution, 1895-1949* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 155-157. See also Henry L. Bretton, *Stresemann and the Revision of Versailles. A Flight for Reason* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1953), 21.

well as his confrontation with a series of other characters and their ideas shows Mann's true conviction before and after the war. Castorp's irony, the way he is approached and allows himself to be approached by other guests of the sanatorium capture a clear change of attitude—even political—between the time of his arrival and the time of his departure. Like his compatriots, young Castorp was educated in the spirit of patriotism, so the apologetic tone towards the German state in Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* (1918)<sup>322</sup> is the voice of the ordinary German, who wanted primarily security and peace within the borders of the Empire. The closing of the borders as the war began and also the hopes of the Germans that the newly created situation will only last for a short time (Castorp wanted to stay on the mountain for three weeks only), the restriction of free circulation of people doubled by the restriction of the free circulation of ideas could only lead to flattening and unidirectional knowledge. For Mann, restriction and unidirectional knowledge is expressed in his 1918 essay within conservative lines, if we take into account that even intellectuals were dominated by monarchical realism (Kaiser Wilhelm II's reign as supreme political reality).<sup>323</sup> The question is what sort of internal change was triggered by Mann's attempt to surpass this deadlock. There was certainly an important turning point which helped Mann understand that Germany had to reintegrate itself within Europe. This aspect needs to be highlighted because his war essays as seen in his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*<sup>324</sup> cast a shadow over the perspective of this "European realm" in connection with the politics which was imposed to its states as well as to its cultural achievements:

We felt the revolting and unnerving sense of being delivered over to foreigners and had the disorders of domestic dissolution break upon us. The

---

<sup>322</sup> Disappointed by the outcome of war, Mann debates the relationship between monarchical authority and the relative values of social democracy within the context of literary creation as irrational sentiment. His position towards German conservatism, decadent as a result of war, is clarified in *Der Zauberberg* through the decision of the main character to return to the world. Castorp's detachment from the closed culture of the sanatorium represents his openness to pro-moral action; in other words, the end of the novel also seals the writer's condition, who is no longer a nihilist or a critic of life but rather a fine observer of life.

<sup>323</sup> As, for instance, supported by Adolf von Harnack. See Harnack, *Adolf von Harnack: Liberal Theology at its Height*, trans. by Martin Rumscheidt (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1990), 22.

<sup>324</sup> The title reminds us of Nietzsche, characterized as "the last apolitical German". The content of Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* is a image of the erosion of Western civilization and expresses the combination between music and poetry under the auspices of the creative genius.

feeling had been strong in me from the beginning that here was the epochal turning-point of an age, whose profound meaning for me personally could not be denied. This was the basis of that intoxication with fate which gave my attitude toward the war its positively German character. To pursue the tasks I had in hand was not to be thought of or... proved mentally impossible. Out of a stock of material that have been accumulating for years I hastily vamped up the essay *Frederick the Great and the Grand Coalition*—its realistic delineation of the king doggedly gave notice that my faculty of polemic essay-writing remained on the alert. And then, by dint of repeated attacks, began my work on the *Reflections*... which was to go on for two years. I have never done any work that seemed so private to myself, so utterly without public implications. I was alone with my torment.<sup>325</sup>

The closing of Germany's borders after the beginning of the war corresponds in *Der Zauberberg* to the hero's need of self-sequestration in the sanatorium, where he develops the same type of thinking as present in Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* (the idea of the artist who resists the world or even closes himself to it). Mann's two writings, however, the novel and the essay, must be read in light of one another with the specification that the novel creates room for hope and openness to the world, while the essay for pessimism and closing to the world. Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* are actually his opening thoughts to his novel *Der Zauberberg*, so they reflect themselves in the novel as a representative introduction before the hero establishes new contacts and makes new acquaintances "on the mountain". In other words, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* can be seen as a guide to Castorp during his journey to the sanatorium. For Mann, the confinement or the restriction of the spirit which was imposed, or worse self-imposed, as well as Germany's abusive deprivation of his political and economical role causes the writer's pessimism (and implicitly Castorp's) and urges the individualization of his country and the glorification of its culture as compared to the rest of Europe:

Als Demokratie also, als politische Aufklärung und Glücks-Philanthropie trat mir das Neue Pathos entgegen. Die Politisierung jedes Ethos begriff ich als sein Betreiben; in der Leugnung und Schmähung jedes nicht-politischen Ethos bestand—ich erfuhr es am eigenen Leibe— seine Aggressivität und doktrinäre Intoleranz. Die „Menschheit“ als humanitärer

---

<sup>325</sup> Thomas Mann, *A Sketch of My Life*, trans. by H. T. Lower-Porter (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 51-52.

Internationalismus; „Vernunft“ und „Tugend“ als die radikale Republik; der Geist als ein Ding zwischen Jakobinerklub und Großorient; die Kunst als Gesellschaftsliteratur und böseartig schmelzende Rhetorik im Dienste sozialer „Wünschbarkeit“: da haben wir das Neue Pathos in seiner politischen Reinkultur, wie ich es in der Nähe sah.

(I met the New Passion then, as democracy, as political Enlightenment and humanitarianism of happiness. I understood its efforts to be the politicization of everything ethos; its aggressiveness and doctrinary intolerance consisted—I experienced them personally—in its denial and slander of every nonpolitical ethos. “Mankind” and “humanitarian internationalism”; “reason and virtue” as the radical republic; intellect as a thing between the Jacobin club and Freemasonry; art as social literature and maliciously seductive rhetoric in the service of social “desirability”: here we have the New Passion in its purest political form as I saw it close up.)<sup>326</sup>

The observation was also noticed by Michael Beddow, who makes a parallel analysis of the novel *Der Zauberberg* and of the ideas from *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* based on the very same starting point which is the character’s confinement within the background of the closing of borders. This closing results in principles which are not as popular as those from the *Buddenbrooks*, for instance, because they belong to the individual self who feels he is being put aside like his own country:

Even more remote from the popular imagination are the *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man*... [Here] organic, vital German “culture” is played off against the commercial, rationalistic, hedonistic “civilization” of the West; the intuitive, “musical” and apolitical German “poet” is contrasted with the shallow, rhetorical, ideologising “writer”; contractual democratic “society” is compared unfavourably with status-based paternalistic “community”; and there is much about a German mission to mediate between superficial “Western” order and profound “Asiatic” chaos.<sup>327</sup>

It has been suggested that Mann should be connected as a writer to his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* and his essays should be understood as his

---

<sup>326</sup> Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen. Vorrede* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2001), 50. See Thomas Mann, *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man*, trans. by Walter D. Morris (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 1983), 16.

<sup>327</sup> Michael Beddow, *Mann: Doctor Faustus* [Landmarks of World Literature] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 3.

political creed from 1918 until his death. The idea of such a suggestion is that the reading of *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* mutilates the writer's portrait from now on either as an essayist or as novelist, because the demarcation established by Mann between the concept of culture (as specific to the German spirit) and that of civilization (wherein the French as well as the rest of the Europeans take pride) was a solid proof of Mann's "anti-humanism", as seen in specialists such as Hanna Arendt and Saul Bellow.<sup>328</sup> Making reference to Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* as well as to his later *Vom zukünftigen Sieg der Demokratie* (*The Coming Victory of Democracy*), Arendt is convinced that whenever Mann spoke about Germany's politics, he expressed wrong and unjustified opinions. Arendt rebukes Mann for his so-called unpolitical/apolitical attitude but also for his political involvement and his disdain for the Nazi after he left Germany in 1933. She believes that Mann's feelings and scorn for the Nazi should have followed a different path, namely he should have ridiculed them while still in Germany. Thus, as far as Arendt is concerned, his efforts to discredit the Nazi while in exile are insignificant as compared, for instance, to Saul Bellow who ignores politics in his novels.<sup>329</sup>

Arendt is not the only one who makes such remarks against the background of what she believes to be an unfair comparison between the German traditionalism praised by Mann as a voice of culture and the distrust in civilization as a voice of democratic-contractual—mainly French—society. Thus, Francis Mulhern for instance criticizes Mann because such a comparison cannot mean but utter contempt and hate for the rest of Western society.<sup>330</sup> All these accusations connect Mann's opinions about the relationship between culture and society to a certain political mania, namely his attempt to support the image of the "absolute monarch" as opposed to the decadent "contractual society". Therefore, if twenty years later he will categorically react against Hitler's policy, in his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, Mann praises imperial politics enthusiastically. It is common knowledge that the reputed German sociologist Wolf Lepenies accused the German intellectuals of their supposed aversion towards democracy, as for instance, in Mann's very personal impressions about the concept of democratic freedom. Here is what Mann had to say about the German idea of democracy:

---

<sup>328</sup> Arendt, for instance, is a full-fledged German who fled to the USA after Hitler's Nazi regime came to power in 1933. While still in Germany, Arendt studied under Heidegger and Jaspers.

<sup>329</sup> For details about the Arendt-Bellow "coalition" against Mann's work, see Gordon Alexander Craig, *The Politics of the Unpolitical: German Writers and the Problem of Power, 1770-1871* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>330</sup> Francis Mulhern, *Culture/Metaculture* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 4-5.

“Tätiger Geist”, das heißt: ein Geist, der zugunsten aufklärerischer Weltbefreiung, Weltbesserung, Weltbeglückung tätig zu sein “entschlossen” ist, bleibt Politik nicht lange im weiteren und übertragenen Sinn, er ist es sofort auch im engeren, eigentlichen. ... Der Politische Geist, widerdeutsch als Geist, ist mit logischer Notwendigkeit deutschfeindlich als Politik.

(“Active intellect”: that is, an intellect that is “resolved” to be active in favor of enlightened world liberation, world improvement, world happiness, does not long remain “politics” in the more abstract, figurative sense: it is immediately so in the strict real sense as well... It is a politics that is hostile to Germany. That is obvious. The political spirit that is anti-German as intellect is with logical necessity anti-German as politics.)<sup>331</sup>

Mann’s impressions about the years when he wrote his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* should be understood through one of his notable observations: “I have never done any work that seemed so private to myself, so utterly without public implications.” This is both a proof as well a preliminary conclusion to Mann’s perception of his own work. It is clear that the period of his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* proposes subjects which are bound for a different type of addressee, if “addressee” is a proper word for Mann’s reader in case his work ever had a certain degree of intentionality. His *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* have a specific rhythm, which was only sporadically present among the mysterious words uttered by some of his heroes—Kröger in *Tonio Kröger* or Hanno in the *Buddenbrooks*:

But while on the one hand there was nothing in my tastes or cultural traditions—which were moral and metaphysical, not political and social, to hold me aloof as others were held...; yet on the other I knew myself, in my physical essence, not made for a soldier and a fighting man. For no more than a moment, in the beginning, was I tempted to disclaim this knowledge. “To suffer with you”—for that there was ample opportunity in the years that followed, in both the physical and the mental sphere; and the *Reflections of a Non-Political Man* was a war service with the wea-

---

<sup>331</sup> Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen. Vorrede*. 51. Thomas Mann, *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man*, 18.

pon of thought, for which ... the time, rather than country or army, enlisted me.<sup>332</sup>

Even some phrases typical of Mann, which we find in his previous short stories and in his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, highlight his ever self-critical spirit, not the social-ironic spirit of his 1918 apolitical manifesto. Phrases such as “to suffer with you” and “to be like you”—although they presuppose different persons as addressees (the country in *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, and the friend in *Tonio Kröger*)—impress on Mann’s writing a touch of particularity that the addressee will never be aware of because it remains only in the subject’s soul and it is only up to him to reveal it. As for Mann, he will explain his 1918 thoughts only twelve years later, in 1930—the year of confessions—when he regains his freedom as he leaves Germany.

On the other hand, it can be proved that in his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, Mann was indeed a patriot without being a nationalist. Like Castorp, he never instigated to armed attacks or counteroffensive because he was hindered from his own moral consciousness which prevailed over his thought as well as over his writing. Also like Castorp, Mann does not deny his conservative background but whenever he has the chance, he draws attention to the fact that he did not use it as a pretext for reactionary-revolutionary actions. In other words, in his *Der Zauberberg*, Mann sees himself not only in Castorp. The writer is ironic especially in this novel and his irony is meant to restore the balance between himself and the rest of society but it also saves him from moral decay and fatalism. J. P. Kroll dismantles the accusation that Mann was a revolutionary conservative. Kroll builds his argument on the same irony which is specific to Mann,<sup>333</sup> so it is indeed a bit difficult to understand the reproach of some of his contemporaries and also of his brother Heinrich concerning Mann’s imperialistic sympathies. In order to incite to political action of any sort, Mann should have en-

---

<sup>332</sup> Thomas Mann, *A Sketch of My Life*, 50-51. The quotation transposes the private conscience in the realm of reality—as seen Germany’s social-political life before the First World War, without loosing anything from the personal nature of his reflections.

<sup>333</sup> Joe Paul Kroll, “Conservative at the Crossroads: ‘Ironic’ vs. ‘Revolutionary’ Conservatism in Thomas Mann’s *Reflections of an Unpolitical Man*”, *Journal of European Studies* 34.3 (2004), 225-246. Kroll is against the accusation of revolutionary conservatism launched against Mann as a friend of Bertram and of his *Nietzsche. An Attempt at a Mythology*. According to Kroll, although some of the ideas expressed in *Reflections of an Unpolitical Man* may be also found in Bertram’s critical study of Nietzsche which was written at the same time with Mann’s essays, the principles that lay at the basis of each book are distinct and opposed.

titled his essays *Reflections of a Political Man* and this would have morally justified—at least in part—his attempts to explain himself, but his 1918 essays clearly target the non-political man, so they convey the idea of non-involvement, of proper reflection, which can belong either to the author or to any other individual:

Ernst Bertram was the confidant of my endless political-anti-political introspections. I read aloud to him from them when he was in Munich; he respected them as a passionate, imperative searching of the conscience, and was at home in their Protestantism and conservatism. As far as this last goes, I know precisely that I felt it more as an artistic inquest and conquest of the melancholic-reactionary sphere than as an ultimate expression of my being. It was a psychological—or, if you like, in the literal sense, a pathological—phenomenon: what I thought stood in the sign and under the seal of the war, and spoke for itself more than for me. And yet there reigned the most painful solidarity and unity between the writer and this subject of his that was so difficult of precise definition.<sup>334</sup>

Irony is present both in *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* and in *Der Zauberberg*; first, irony is directed to Mann's own situation in connection with external changes, then it is meant to deal with internal changes in view of overcoming this situation and of restoring the hope of reopening himself to the social reality. Again, the opening of the individual is equaled to the opening of the entire nation to the European realm. Mann's conservatism in war did not mean—Kroll explains—extremist nationalism and the concept of conservatism itself must be interpreted. As far as Mann was concerned, he was personally not involved politically because implication is necessarily a precondition to any nationalistic vision. Apart from his susceptibility concerning the subjection of art to politics—which he inherited from Goethe and Nietzsche<sup>335</sup>—Mann's criticism of the German (not the French) idea of democracy is connected to the specific and complex situation of the First World War.<sup>336</sup> Mann's thoughts, however, would later target even the new

---

<sup>334</sup> Thomas Mann, *A Sketch of My Life*, 53.

<sup>335</sup> In the chapter dedicated to Nietzsche it was mentioned that Nietzsche's reaction to the political strivings of his countrymen was different than von Harnack's perspective on the Kaiser's internal and external policy.

<sup>336</sup> Thomas Mann, in his *The War and the Future: an Address by Thomas Mann* (Washington, DC.: The Library of Congress, 1944), p. 7, compares the Nazi foreign policy with his own vision of European policy past and present and finds the former (the Nazi) "a corrupt upper-crust, a treasonous gang for whom nothing is holy... The most outrageous of all the Nazi lies is that of a united Europe defending its holiest possessions against the invasion of

democratic German movement in exile which—even after the Second World War—did not take significant steps ahead in order to clarify the idea of democracy as applied to the German nation. Mann’s critical approach to the “Free Germany” movement in his *Die Entstehung des Doktor Faustus. Roman eines Romans (The Genesis of a Novel)*<sup>337</sup> conceals his suspicion that this movement is a mere imitative action, which imported into Germany a democratic ideal that was not sufficiently clarified in the minds of the exiled Germans with nationalistic feelings.

It has to be mentioned here that in connection with his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, Mann was criticized for ideas which were far more dangerous than those viewed, for instance, by Arendt. If Arendt criticized Mann for his incapacity to have identified the proper time for his criticism of “court politics”, Seth Taylor attempted to analyse the term “apolitical” or “unpolitical” in Mann’s essays in contrast with the term “antipolitical”, which is considered essential for any man of culture. Thus, Taylor believes that, by his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, Mann is for the first time accountable to his illustrious predecessors of the German culture. In this context, Mann is contrasted with Nietzsche and especially his later *Der Fall Wagner*.<sup>338</sup> So, Taylor’s study, which places Mann in an obvious antithesis to Nietzsche, explains that

*Reflections ... is a classic interpretation of Nietzsche as a conservative partisan of Germany’s special way ... Mann misquoted Nietzsche here ... Nietzsche called himself the last antipolitical (antipolitisch), not unpolitical (unpolitisch) German ... While Nietzsche rejected politics in favor of culture, he was quite ready to take a political position against the state when the latter interfered in the cultural life of the nation.*<sup>339</sup>

Taylor’s analysis correctly identifies the relationship between Nietzsche and nationalistic politics but he is mistaken when he approaches Mann. It should be noticed, however, that Taylor’s accusation that Mann was not ready to

---

foreigners”. It is clear, thus, that Mann’s previous reference to democracy had a personal foundation and was not illustrating the Nazi politics.

<sup>337</sup> *The Genesis of a Novel* is the English title of the book *Die Entstehung des Doktor Faustus. Roman eines Romans* published separately and serving as a preface (containing autobiographical data and the author’s commentaries) to the novel *Doktor Faustus*. See Thomas Mann, *The Genesis of a Novel*, trans. by Clara Winston (London: Secker and Warburg, 1961.)

<sup>338</sup> Seth Taylor, *Left-wing Nietzscheans. The Politics of German Expressionism 1910-1920* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990), 17.

<sup>339</sup> Taylor, *Left-wing Nietzscheans*, 208.

take a political stand against the state is similar, to a certain point, to Arendt's reproach that Mann was unable to choose the right moment for his criticism. At the same time, one can see that Taylor takes over an idea expressed by Peter Bergmann some years earlier, namely that Nietzsche was the antipolitical philosopher *par excellence* which encapsulates Nietzsche's political creed. Nevertheless, Taylor presents Nietzsche's work by using the word "apolitical"/"nonpolitical" which is also used by Mann in his essays. It is clear that Taylor intended a logical and systematic approach, in the sense that the difference induced by the term "unpolitical", used both by Nietzsche and Mann, had certain antecedents in Nietzsche's philosophy. Thus, Nietzsche's "antipolitical" creed developed against the background of an older perspective on Western culture as decadent, and Taylor notices that decadence actually began in Greek antiquity when Socrates proved to his contemporaries the incapacity of their decadent artistic instinct to compete with his rational perspective on life. According to Taylor, Nietzsche's approach to contemporary society is similar to that of Socrates but it takes the reverse path, namely from the excessive reason of his contemporaries to the true instinct of life.<sup>340</sup>

Taylor's analysis concerning Nietzsche's antipolitical attitude and Mann's apolitical or unpolitical perspective deserves some clarifications. First, the idea of decadence as used by Nietzsche is very broad and covers more than just the last period of his life, which Taylor seems to be aware of. What he does not say, however, is that decadence has a lot to do with the development of some of Nietzsche's deeper philosophical concepts, such as good, evil, art, tragedy, etc. Moreover, Taylor does not say—or does not see—that whenever Nietzsche attacks the culture of the nineteenth century, namely modern culture *par excellence*, he opposes this culture to ancient Greek culture and declares modern culture decadent as opposed to ancient Greek culture. Nietzsche does not say that the philosophy of the modern man is good to a certain point, namely as long as it does not trespass the realm of the self, of free expression, and instinct. Nietzsche's philosophy is no longer the philosophy of the eighteenth century; Nietzsche is not Goethe's contemporary so that he could say with Goethe that Kant's ideas about nature and art or about nature and the genius can be pursued if they do not limit creativity. On the contrary, Nietzsche resorts to the myth of Dionysus, the myth of the god, in order to find a way out of his own nineteenth century, which began to look for new values in exploring the self. Thus, Taylor's statement that Nietzsche's true origins are in the German romanticism is questionable and so it is his belief that Nietzsche's attitude to poli-

---

<sup>340</sup> For details, see Taylor, *Left-wing Nietzscheans*, 17-18.

tics was a proof of his adherence to the political activism of the then romantics, especially that such an activism would never turn Nietzsche into an anti-political thinker.

At the same time, the difference between Nietzsche's antipolitical attitude and Mann's apolitical/unpolitical standing which is supposedly generated by Taylor's use of the word "apolitic" does not presuppose linguistic changes. On the contrary, the definition of the word "apolitical" using the two prefixes ("a-" and "un-") can lead to subjective reductions of meaning. Discussions such as those which support or deny Mann's affinity to politics and Nietzsche's propensity to culture are at least as old as Goethe, who was himself accused more than once of turning culture into a substitute for ardent political problems. As far as Nietzsche is concerned, Taylor believes that his apolitical attitude—and we have to read "antipolitical"—was in fact an anti-statal political conscience because it has to be associated with the political activism of German romantics. However, as we read in Nietzsche's *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, he did oppose the 1870s *Kulturkampf* but not in order to denigrate the then German state. In other words, Nietzsche did not turn his books into socialist anti-imperialistic reflections. Taylor's analysis of Nietzsche though seems to support exactly this idea, so Taylor himself is seen as defending Nietzsche against the conviction that he was undoubtedly the philosopher of the German right-wing.<sup>341</sup> The most quoted book of "Nietzsche" which is used by Taylor is *Der Wille zur Macht* despite the inconsistencies of its various editions and the fact that it cannot be attributed to Nietzsche.

In reality, Nietzsche never said anything about any ideal state, society or individual and this is why the myth of the Superman neither represents the utopical aspirations of his creator concerning contemporary society nor the Arian dream of the later Nazi. Whenever Nietzsche expressed opinions—directly or indirectly—concerning certain political events, his perspective must be discussed against the then historical context as well as understood chronologically. Nietzsche was neither a historian nor a member of any political party of his time, so he must be understood as he really was, namely as a philosopher. He was definitely misunderstood many times in connection with the way he saw the politics of his day, so—following Nietzsche's advice in *Ecce homo* lest we should mistake him for somebody else—his "antipolitical" attitude should be defined rather as "apolitical".<sup>342</sup>

---

<sup>341</sup> Jay Julian Rosellini, *Literary Skinheads? Writing from the Right in Reunified Germany* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2000), 200.

<sup>342</sup> Ultramodern terms such as "apolitics" or "atheology" (written as "a/politics" and "a/theology") express the tendency to divagate from already established definitions. Thus,

Resuming the discussion about Mann in light of the above-mentioned analysis, it seems that his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* demonstrates that his apolitical attitude—to be read “apolitical” not otherwise—is the result of the confrontation between national (German) politics and national (German) culture. In connection with Mann, there is no need to differentiate between culture and civilization or between literature and politics, unless the intention to support either to the detriment of the other in order to defend a certain theory is expressed. Nevertheless, if “unpolitical” means “apolitical”, namely indifference to political life, it is necessary to look for Mann’s apolitical attitude in the chronology of his life or in the specific context of his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*. It is a known fact that before 1918, Mann produced a novelistic work, in which the subject, the plot, the characters as well as the entire action breathe the strong air of various social-political events, but the accent falls always on a certain type of character, namely the character who shares in the feelings and sentiments—psychological in nature—of the author. This means that the message of Mann’s novels prior to 1918 is transmitted in a very personal fashion especially as the hero is in every case a person who cannot adapt him/herself socially. It is natural then that his short stories and essays of this period should have the same spiritual substratum, otherwise Mann would be guilty of inconsistency. His *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* closes this period and it is not different from the rest of his works written prior to 1918.

Seth Taylor, however, would not agree with this assessment because, to him, Mann’s *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* stands as a collection of political ideas which attempts to convince and chases investors because it manifests strong populist tendencies and has an analogical character in the sense that Mann mixes the life of culture with the will of the nation. Taylor’s analysis though ignores the central message of Mann’s work, which deals especially with the individual and inner life, as well as the context of Mann’s creation until 1918 and after this date. As far as Taylor is concerned,

---

a/politics becomes a new type of the analysis of the role and functions of the individual and society within history, a “rethinking” of them in opposition to the humanist perspective of the eighteenth century. For instance, Nietzsche believed that, unlike Schopenhauer, his philosophy is not moral but a/moral, namely extra-moral. Michael Foucault was also preoccupied with the post-humanist genealogical redefinition of discourse in direct connection to the transformation of social and political structures. Thus, Foucault’s genealogical knowledge recognizes the standard economical, social and political causes but in a Nietzschean non-standard framework, namely denying them any teleological explicative essence which could lead, for instance, to Marxist-Leninist degenerative politics. See Robert Audi (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 276. For details about Foucault, see his *Dits et Ecrits*, vol. 2 (Paris: Gallimard, 1971).

Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* becomes a political creed in spite of what Mann himself wrote in connection with the chronological specificity of his essays, thus proving his consistency by highlighting the individual psychological specificity of his entire work. This particular specificity is underlined as a central idea right on the first page of the book where Mann points out that the "intellect" cannot be and must not be "political". Here is Mann's conclusion on his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* within the context of his entire creation:

The problem of the German nation there treated was beyond a doubt my own—therein lay the national character of the book, which through all the torment, all the polemical perversity, proved at last its *raison d'être* as an educational document.<sup>343</sup>

This is an indication of Mann's perspective on the time when he wrote his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, namely a time which announced the Great War as well as the revolt against the "polemical perversity" of the European political realm, a revolt which was both Mann's and his country's. Against this dominant political factor, Mann purposefully structured his early works in two main periods: the apolitical period (1914-1918) with his reflections on war, and the political period (1919-1933), with his writings during the Weimar Republic.<sup>344</sup>

In connection with the chronology of Mann's works, the meaning of the word "apolitical" within the context of his thoughts on war narrows considerably, in the sense that Mann insists on the historical moment to which his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* are attributed. Thus, Mann's personality and work are no longer overloaded with interpretations and meanings that are detached from this particular historical context.<sup>345</sup> The first benefit of the chronological approach is the identification of the direction of Mann's thought against his various stages of creation. Therefore, the fact that Terrence J. Reed approaches Mann in connection with his well-known "German culture is where I am" reveals the intrusion of history and of the context in his works. Nevertheless, it is utterly important to notice that Reed does not relate Mann's famous verdict to his apolitical period between 1914

---

<sup>343</sup> Mann, *A Sketch of My Life*, 53.

<sup>344</sup> Terrence James Reed, *Thomas Mann. The Uses of Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 179-225 and 275-316. Reed is a crucial name in Mann studies also because his works are based on his laborious research of Mann's manuscripts as well as other documents held at the Mann Archive in Zürich, where Mann lived and died.

<sup>345</sup> For details, see Ritchie Robertson's classification of Mann's works from genesis to publication in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann*.

and 1918, which some perceived as detrimental to the writer because of his alleged mixture between the life of culture and the life of the nation. On the contrary, Reed relates Mann's words to his second period of creation, which is essentially political, because the writer tested the majority of his essays, short stories, and novels written during this second period against the new experience of democracy as he fought the new nationalist-socialist phenomenon.<sup>346</sup> Mann's "German culture is where I am" is meant to define this culture in contrast with Nazism which "had narrowed the definition of what was German and what was culture to something crude and chauvinistic."<sup>347</sup> The appropriation of German culture was seen as a prerogative of its representatives and the year 1933 was essential for such a political action as performed by the German intellectual elite which left the realm of its culture, namely Germany.

The distinction between the two periods of Mann's early work can also be seen as a reply to the accusation that the writer approved imperialist politics or that he got politically involved way too late during his exile. This distinction is important because it highlights what type of a writer Mann was. His *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* makes up a work of negation which is essentially negativistic—this is actually how his *Der Zauberberg* also starts<sup>348</sup>—which, far from attaching the notions of conservatism and culture to Wilhelm II's politics, contains deeper meanings of both conservatism and culture deriving from Mann's ethical creed. In his essays, through the ideal of man or society that can be perceived behind his writings, Mann is an outspoken admirer of well-known philosophers such as Nietzsche but also of less known thinkers like Adalbert Stifter. Thus, Stifter was believed to have had close affinities with Goethe in connection with the idealist spirit which animated both of them with reference to the then contemporary society as well as the wars and revolutions whereby society was driven.<sup>349</sup> In addition to these affinities between himself and Goethe, Stifter was also admired by Nietzsche, who believed that Stifter was one of the very few German writers

---

<sup>346</sup> Concerning Mann's true political reflections, see his essay *Vom zukünftigen Sieg der Demokratie* (*The Coming Victory of Democracy*) (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1938).

<sup>347</sup> Reed, *Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition*, 1.

<sup>348</sup> This was noticed by Erich Heller in his *The Ironic German. A Study of Thomas Mann*. For Heller, there is a clear connection between *Die Buddenbrooks* and *Der Zauberberg* within the context of Mann's pessimism and sensitivity which demonstrates continuity with the period of his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* and the interiorization of the hero.

<sup>349</sup> Adalbert Stifter (1805-1868) was an Austrian writer, poet and pedagogue associated to the *Biedermeier* literary-philosophical movement who published idealist-utopian works with conservative substratum. For details about Stifter, see Erich Blackall, *Adalbert Stifter. A Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948).

who deserved to be mentioned alongside Goethe and Eckermann in the history of the German literature.<sup>350</sup> Stifter was especially preoccupied with the notion of ideal as withdrawal of the poetic self from the cruelty of everyday life. Mann should be understood within the same line, because his conservatism in *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* conveys the idea of identification with Stifter's utopian perspective on society and civilization. His *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* does not defend any party politics, for the world of culture to which Mann aspires is as idealistic as Stifter's. According to Mann, although Stifter sought for the ideal of moral beauty everywhere in his books, one could see his inner struggle caused by the materialization of evil and cruelty in history. Based on Stifter's idealism, Mann approaches the historical moment of his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* the very same way he did with all his works, namely with the irony of the writer who could not find the moral substance of the world he dreamt of in the present reality.<sup>351</sup> The difference between Mann and Stifter though resides in the fact that, while the former does not lose his nerve when he realizes the reality of his irony, the latter was never ironic and this is why he felt the full tragedy of the contrast between good and evil.

The reopening of Germany's borders made possible Germany's descent from its "pedestal" into "the valley", among the rest of the European nations. Thus, Mann's novel *Der Zauberberg* embodies the renewal of political convictions. At the same time, it must not be forgotten that the novel is characterized, from one end to the other, by the idea of morality which is a feature of Mann's entire work in accordance with the powerful bourgeois tradition. Politically, the way Germany went down into "the valley" after the war took a path which was as sinuous as the war itself. The novel illustrates the transition from Germany's monarchy<sup>352</sup>—which came to an abrupt end with the fall of the Empire at the end of the First World War—to what was called the Weimar Republic (1919-1933). This period of Germany's history is known as the Weimar Republic because the National Assembly that decided to adopt a new constitution for the German State in order to turn Germany into a liberal democracy was held in Weimar. The new constitution

---

<sup>350</sup> H. G. Barnes, review to Erich Blackall, *Adalbert Stifter. A Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), in *The Modern Language Review* 44.3 (1949), 429-432.

<sup>351</sup> Rosellini, *Literary Skinheads?*, 200, n. 13.

<sup>352</sup> Kaiser Wilhelm II, son of Kaiser Frederick II and of Victoria, the daughter of Victoria the Queen of England, governed the German Empire as its last emperor (1888-1918). Unlike his predecessors, he was the only German emperor who did not cease his reign on the deathbed but was forced to abdicate by a democratic National Assembly. Wilhelm II of Hohenzollern died in 1941 in the Netherlands, where he lived after his abdication.

rearranged the powers of the state based on the social and political legislation which had been adopted during the 1918 Revolution and led to the establishment of the new regime as a parliamentary democracy.<sup>353</sup> There was a long way ahead before such a democracy could be cemented, because the economical crisis which struck the workers in 1918 as well as the political representation of the working class was split. Mann was certainly capable to understand the battle between the two main political parties which sought to gain the power in Germany's largest cities. These two political forces were the traditional party of the working class ("the independent social-democrats"), which attempted to implement a Russian-oriented socialist politics, and the socialist-democratic party ("the majority social-democrats"), which was in favor of a parliamentary political system and eventually managed to seize the power after the Kaiser's abdication as well as marginalize its political rivals. At that time, Mann lived in Munich, which was "invaded" by the marginalized socialists who came from Berlin. While in Berlin the social-democrats were negotiating the founding of the National Assembly to be held in Weimar, the socialists in Munich attempted to proclaim the first soviet republic in Germany. The socialists' revolts and their political movement in Munich were quickly quenched by the army because through the endorsement of the Weimar Constitution a semi-presidential system was established so Germany became a democratic republic on November 9, 1918.

Mann's political orientation was heavily discussed by historians as well as by literary critics but mainly in terms of categorical verdicts. For instance, Michael Harrington—a socialist American writer—believes Mann was a promoter of socialist ideology<sup>354</sup> and he attempts to prove his theory by pointing to Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*. According to

---

<sup>353</sup> For details, see Edgar Feuchtwagner, *From Weimar to Hitler: Germany* (London: Macmillan, 1994) and Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture. The Outsider as Insider* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968). The two historians make direct references to the period which preceded the Weimar Republic. Germany was ravaged by the consequences of war and on the verge of tens of revolts in all its lands, which were caused by hyperinflation as well as by the government's decision to accept the "War Guilt Clause" imposed to Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. This entire situation led to the disappearance of the economical means of the working class which had to face wide-spread unemployment (over one million soldiers and military officials were left without jobs after the war). Thus, in 1918, Germany was virtually in the same political and economical situation as Russia in 1917, when the Great Revolution turned Russian into a Bolshevik state. In other words, Germany was very close to becoming a socialist republic.

<sup>354</sup> See Michael Harrington, *The Accidental Century* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), especially the Chapter "Images of Disorder" which is about Mann. A reply from the past to Harrington's ideas could be Thomas Mann's 24 pages essay, *The War and the Future*.

Harrington, it was in this book that Mann expressed his distrust in connection with the new attempts to establish the Republic and also his nostalgia about the old regime which had encouraged the development of unprivileged social classes as well as Germany's territorial expansion. The truth is that Mann was also accused of instability with reference to his political principles<sup>355</sup> and, towards the end of his life, even of fraternization with communist ideology.<sup>356</sup> Mann's conviction that the writer must be politically active because he is conditioned socially does not necessarily make him conservative during the monarchy, socialist during economic crises or communist/nationalist when critical of the Versailles Treaty. The fact that he experimented all these social-political changes that occurred in Germany over a very brief period of time did not cause him to take refuge in his works or his transformation into a partisan of radical political parties. Likewise, the fact that between the outburst and the end of the First World War Mann did not begin any literary project says a lot in connection with his alleged support to the decadent monarchic spirit. The disapproval of the Versailles Treaty was definitely a feature of the politics promoted by Germany's communists; nevertheless, the Peace of Versailles was not criticized only by communists but also by the Catholics and the social-democrats who founded the Weimar Republic because they had to fight against hyperinflation and unemployment, as well as against Germany's new status as a country devoid of its territories.<sup>357</sup> It has been already shown that Castorp's decision to go beyond the walls of the sanatorium coincides with Mann's decision to travel beyond the borders of Germany, so he visited England and

---

<sup>355</sup> Roy Pascal, *The German Novel. Studies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1956), 77, 95. In Part 1 chapter IV, Pascal writes that during the First World War Mann supported the conservative politics of Kaiser Wilhelm II by attacking liberalism; however, during the Weimar Republic he urged German intellectuals to support Parliamentary democracy. After this episode, Pascal contends, Mann's political principles came very close to social-democracy.

<sup>356</sup> Hundreds of European intellectuals who emigrated in the United States of America were supervised by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which elaborated detailed files about their alleged cooperation with Fascism and Communism between 1930 and 1950. Alongside other famous writers such as Bertold Brecht and Erich Maria Remarque, Mann was accused—as proved by his 98 pages FBI file—of procommunist views because he had denounced the Nazi crimes against the members of Germany's political parties in 1933 (which included tens of victims from the Communist Party). See FBI's FOIA Website, the FBI Files on Thomas Mann.

<sup>357</sup> Germany lost its territories in the Shangdong province in North China, the territories yielded to Denmark, Western Prussia, North-East Silesia, the Sudet Region, Southern Tyrol, etc. The loss of these territories resulted primarily in economic uncertainty and then in the loss of the national identity of many inhabitants who, although initially allowed by plebiscite to remain in Germany, were eventually separated from their country.

France, formerly Germany's war enemies. In these countries he had lectures about his *Der Zauberberg* and the reaction of the public was more than promising. As a politically active writer, Mann was not only Germany's ambassador in these countries but also the supporter of the democratic ideals of the Weimar Republic. Beside the reconstruction of the country's economy, the idea of peace and stability was one of the key ideals of the newly established Weimar Republic, which were also supported by Mann.<sup>358</sup> To Mann, the concept of peace was applied both to Germany and beyond its borders. Thus, in *Der Zauberberg* Mann expresses his suspicion concerning any element which could disturb the tranquility of the sanatorium, with hints even to moral aspects—the small escapades of some of the patients and the quarrels between Castorp's two mentors which culminated in the suicide of Nephta, the radical philosopher.<sup>359</sup>

#### 4. Mann's Interim between Political Visionariness and his Ethical Creed

Stability and calm are also the main features of Mann's novel *Joseph und seine Brüder* (1933-1943), which evokes the writer's life with special reference to the period after the First World War. The period presented in the novel and Joseph's prophetic dream from the biblical narrative (that Egypt will have seven years of abundance, followed by seven years of extreme poverty) form the main idea of the novel as well as the only plausible leit-motif at the interface with history. The description of tranquility and abundance is a good occasion for Mann to present the life of the Germans during the seven years of relative calm during the Weimar Republic (1923-1929), when Germany was governed by Gustav Stresemann, first as Chancellor and then as the Minister of External Affairs.<sup>360</sup> With reference to typology, the

---

<sup>358</sup> For a better understanding of Mann's work and its philosophical background, see T. J. Reed, *Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 415-426.

<sup>359</sup> The tragedies from inside this magic realm disclose another facet of this micro-cosmos. In this, Mann is very close to Nietzsche. Even the original German name of the novel (*Zauberberg*) appears in Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra* with reference to Mount Olympus. In addition to the real-historical significance of *Der Zauberberg* which contains an entire age, Mann presents us with some of the deeper meanings of his novel. Like Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, Mann's Castorp is the traveler who wants to achieve spiritual maturity during his transition from chaos to spiritual tranquility.

<sup>360</sup> Gustav Stresemann is known as initiator of a series of important reforms, such as the introduction of a new German currency in order to reduce inflation, the enhancement of taxes for the payment of the "War Guilt" and the restoration of national economy, various measures to support Germany's industry etc. Internationally, Stresemann played an important role for the endorsement of the Treaty of Locarno, which reinstated Germany's diplo-

overlapping between Mann's literary model and the biblical narrative was perceived as fortunate not only by Mann himself but also by his contemporary literary critics. The emancipation of the republican politician in the novel as a metaphor of the reign of the former slave Joseph gives Mann the opportunity to answer those who accused him either of rightist or leftist political views (Stresemann tested for the first time the viability of an independent government as opposed to rightist and leftist political parties) or of anti-Semitic inclinations in his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*. The eulogy of Chancellor Stresemann's personality as well as the approach of a novel with a subject which was very uncomfortable to any totalitarian regime such as the life of Joseph the Jew not only offered the possibility of interesting political correlations but also opened Mann's work to Europe, where Stresemann's political ideas had a real echo:

No figure since the war has so dominated European affairs as did Herr Stresemann; and no statesman has shown so unwavering a devotion to what he conceived to be the right course for his country. By a fortunate coincidence it was also the right course for the world. Herr Stresemann may be said to have been the first of the Europeans.<sup>361</sup>

If the first part of the tetralogy deals with the story of Jacob and his family in Canaan, the second part deals with the story of Mann's family presented by means of Joseph's exile, who was sold by his brothers and taken to Egypt as a slave. Joseph's journey towards the fulfillment of his prophetic dream comes to an end only in the fourth part, when he becomes ruler of Egypt, is recognized by his brothers and then takes care of them by offering them an abundant life. The novel is perceived as Mann's *magnus opus* because the narrative unfolds through various personal, historical, and political levels. The leit-motif of tranquility, peace and stability appears regularly throughout the novel and culminates in Joseph's glory. The pyramidal structure of the novel blends Mann's life experience with suffering and joy. Thus, the idea of suffering is conveyed by the hate of Joseph's brothers, his selling as a slave and his journey to Egypt as an illustration of the exile of Mann's family in 1933, when the Nazi gained political power over Germany; the

---

matic status among Europe's nations. Stresemann's achievements also include Germany's reception within the League of Nations and the endorsement of the neutrality pact with Russia. See Henry L. Bretton, *Stresemann and the Revision of Versailles. A Flight for Reason*, 26-29.

<sup>361</sup> This is a 1930 assessment by the British historian John Wheeler-Bennet, following the year of Stresemann's death. For details, see Jonathan Wright, *Gustav Stresemann. Weimar's Greatest Statesmen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1.

tempting of Joseph in the house of Potiphar as a testimony of the difficulties of Mann's new life in America, which until then was totally alien to him. On the other hand, the idea of joy and happiness is suggested by the material welfare of Joseph's family as an indication of Mann's rich life before the war, the attention Joseph received from his father as a reference to the acknowledgment of Mann's merits after the war as a member of the Prussian Academy of Literature and a winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, Joseph's care for his brother and the reunification of his father's family in Egypt as a reflection of Mann's life in America, when his family, brother and friends benefited from his fame. All these aspects reveal Mann's real preoccupation in connection with Germany's politics, namely the moral essence and the bourgeois core of the society, which—in his view—is the only reality that could increase the Germans' dignity as a nation. The very substance of these ideas, namely the relationship between politics and morality, can be seen throughout all his important short stories and novels without significant alterations from the *Buddenbrooks* to *Joseph und seine Brüder*.<sup>362</sup>

The novel *Joseph und seine Brüder* has been catalogued in many different ways with reference to its form, plot or even the political context of its genesis. In connection with the spiritual journey given by Joseph's exile, which ended with a time of peace and prosperity, an interesting attempt to approach Mann's novel somehow innovatively is of a relatively recent date. In one of his 1998 studies,<sup>363</sup> Alan T. Levenson dealt with Mann's *Joseph und seine Brüder* as if he had wanted to catch a hidden significance of the novel. Levenson recognizes many of the previous "subtitles" of the novel, such as *Bildungsroman*, historical novel, combination of tradition and myth, etc., and shows that these distinctions are the result of direct observations as applied to Joseph and his history, without any reference to possible stylistic,

---

<sup>362</sup> For more details, see Georg Lukács, *Essays on Thomas Mann* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1965). Lukács analyses Mann's works at the interface between politics and psychology from the *Buddenbrooks* to *Lotte in Weimar*. Lukács, whom Mann characterized as a much too abstract philosopher at the beginning of the twentieth century, had also been through the bitter experience of the Nazi rise to power and the subsequent cultural devaluation of Europe. Nevertheless, his essay "In Search of Bourgeois Man", written for Mann's seventieth anniversary, Mann changed his mind about Lukács who noticed that the entire Germany had gone to exile together with the author of the *Buddenbrooks* and that bourgeois mentality which had produced so many masterpieces could be the only alternative to the social and cultural chaos following the Second World War. See Lukács, "In Search of Bourgeois Man", in Harold Bloom (ed.), *Thomas Mann's The Magic Mountain* (New Haven, CT: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986), 31-36.

<sup>363</sup> Alan T. Stevenson, "Christian Author, Jewish Book? Methods and Sources in Thomas Mann's "Joseph", *The German Quarterly* 73.2 (1998).

more subtle, elements betrayed by the novel. A respected Hebrew scholar, Levenson reaches the conclusion that this particular novel must be looked at through “lenses”, namely the complex presentation of Joseph in his world not only conveys a personal experience or a biblical narrative but also builds an argument which resembles a biblical commentary. Thus, Levenson believes that the novel is a form of biblical commentary with rabbinic overtones, and has evident points of contact with the rabbinic commentaries of the Hebrew Scripture and especially the book of Genesis. Such a method presupposes the evaluation of the Jewish tradition, both written and spoken, in connection with the first five books of the Jewish law. From this perspective, Mann’s *Joseph und seine Brüder* is a movement between what is written and what is said or what the old people said, a clear and conscious hint at the rabbinic method, whose contemporary promoters he met personally during his study journey in Israel before he wrote the novel. Mann noticed the crucial difference between written and oral tradition with reference to the interpretation of prophecy, history or even the interpretation of one word (for instance, the difference between “blessing” and “destiny”). According to Mann, this difference is responsible in many cases for the emergence of new meanings and interpretations of the Bible and implicitly of the narrative about the creation of the world. This is why he ridicules the imaginary elements of this tradition which do not pertain to the “written letter” of the Jewish tradition. Thus, Mann’s novel *Joseph und seine Brüder* is not only a historical allegory seen through the eyes of Joseph, Jacob’s son, but also a token of the great erudition of the writer, who turns his novel into a thinking exercise permanently flanked by his astute irony.

The intertwining between imagination and elements borrowed from the then contemporary reality in Mann’s *Der Zauberberg* and *Joseph und seine Brüder* reveals how he understood the writer’s involvement in society and politics. Actually, the essence of his artistic creed does not have to be looked for anywhere else. The accusation that Mann defended German monarchy for the sake of its expansionist plans is at least bizarre, because compared to the great powers involved in the war, it was only Germany that could not claim to be colonial.<sup>364</sup> Like Goethe and Nietzsche, Mann was disappointed by the incapacity of the German State to secure the peace of its citizens. As shown, Nietzsche turned against the *Kulturkampf*, namely the restrictive policy against the Catholic Church in Germany promoted by

---

<sup>364</sup> Actually, Germany was the only country which entered the war as a monarchy and ended up a republic. At the same time, it was the only country which lost territories after the war. Thus, it is definitely certain that Germany wished to keep his borders as they were before the war. See Anton Kaes, *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, 1 ff.

Bismarck, whom Nietzsche greatly appreciated before the unfortunate episode. As for Goethe, though he was a minister of the Crown in Weimar, he presented the problems of the empire as well as the narrowness of its citizens whenever he had the chance because these flaws led to many of the military conflicts during his life. Moreover, as a token of his disagreement towards such politics, Goethe preferred to picture foreign heroes—see Napoleon or Egmont—in his plays as opposite to German monarchs.

Regardless whether they were written during the Empire, the Weimar Republic or in the exile, the substance of Mann's works in general is not primarily political, but rather ethical as connected to Mann's spiritual formation. Brought up in the spirit of the Enlightenment, German pietism and romanticism like Goethe and Nietzsche, Mann took over in his works the same ethical nucleus of this particular type of culture. Accused of his staunch attachment to the principles of the bourgeoisie, Mann never dismissed the charge but his works show that he does not owe anything to the decadent bourgeoisie of the late nineteenth century. The disappointment of his heroes in connection with their family life, which will also affect their relationship with other people, is in fact a protest against the lack of verticality of the late nineteenth century family and society. Against these social structures, Mann proposes the *Biedermeier* family (tributary to the ideals of the Enlightenment), in which he himself grew up and which he will promote through his own family. The idea of the equal responsibility of the father and mother in this "nucleus" type of family, where children are given the best upbringing, care, and moral education, involves even economical and sexual aspects which must reveal the personal responsibility of the family members. This particular responsibility which is the core of the family leads eventually to the formation of an avid interest for the high things in life, i.e. for art as a mirror of life and the restoration of true morality.

This ethical creed which lays the foundation of Mann's art and is decisive both socially and aesthetically explains why the writer was able to detect the very early conditions for the later establishment of Nazism in Germany. The short story *Mario und der Zauberer* (1929) is the first work where Mann denounces the fascist regime which began to emerge after Stresemann's death within the same year. A year later, in 1930, Mann issued a public declaration entitled *Deutsche Ansprache: Ein Appell an die Vernunft* (*Appeal to Reason*) which is a stern critique of Nazism as well as a call to fight against it by any possible means pertaining both to intellectuals and the working class.<sup>365</sup> In *Mario und der Zauberer*, Mann uses the image of Ci-

---

<sup>365</sup> The working class was seriously affected by the recurrence of economical difficulties after Stresemann's death as well as after the coalition between Hitler's Nazi Party and the

polla, the magician in order to illustrate how Nazi discourses and brain-washing methods destroyed human individuality:

Cipolla hatte in seinem Gesamthabitus viel von diesem historischen Schlage, und der Eindruck reklamehafter und phantastischer Narretei, die zum Bilde gehört, wurde schon dadurch erweckt, daß die anspruchsvolle Kleidung ihm sonderbar, hier falsch gestrafft und dort in falschen Falten, am Leibe saß oder gleichsam daran aufgehängt war: Irgend etwas war mit seiner Figur nicht in Ordnung, vorn nicht und hinten nicht, ...

(Cipolla had in his whole appearance much of the historic type; his very clothes helped to conjure up the traditional figure with its blatantly, fantastically foppish air. His pretentious costume sat upon him, or rather hung upon him, most curiously... There was something not quite in order about his figure, both front and back.)<sup>366</sup>

Before resuming the physical and psychological characteristics of the magician, Mann skillfully presents an introduction to this new and highly improbable world. He talks about the resilience of Italian “nationalists” as opposed to that of other Europeans on the Torre beach. When Italians are present on the beach and do whatever they please, the weather is good but unbearable for the other guests because of excessive heat. When the Italians leave, the beach becomes “denationalized” while the weather is good and bearable for the rest of the world. The apparently local atmosphere of the beach acquires cosmic dimensions not necessarily through sudden weather changes but rather through the quick transition from the feeling of “closing” (nationalization) to that of “opening” (denationalization). Cipolla’s entrance is equally sudden and produces a breach in this context of change as Mann explains that Cipolla made his appearance at a certain point.

Nazi ideology is condemned as hypnotic: it is a drug that threatens to destroy the population of a country situated somewhere in the South and less alert to political maneuvers. This is why this ideology must be rapidly destroyed by all means before it reaches its goal. Cipolla begins to use his hypnotic techniques through an attempt to neutralize young Mario’s will, who was left the only voice of individuality and humanity which distin-

---

National Popular Party (which was in opposition during the Weimar Republic and was made up of the great landlords and the wealthy manufacturers who favored the monarchy and opposed the politics of taxes resulted from the “War Guilt Clause”).

<sup>366</sup> Thomas Mann, *Mario und der Zauberer* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1989), 39-40. See Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice, and Seven Other Stories*, trans. by H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Vintage Books, 1936), 149.

guishes him from the crowds as they are under Cipolla's deceiving spell. People are turned into mere unthinking machines so they are dominated by the magician who urged them to "do" a certain thing, not to "want" something, and this is what he tried on Mario as well. It appears that from the very beginning Mann associated fascism with the denigration of individuality and the loss of personal will, which caused certain "military somnambulism"<sup>367</sup> with serious repercussions first for individuals, then for the status of their country situated among other nations. It is not surprising that Mann—who was in Switzerland when Hitler came to power in Germany—never returned home but prepared to leave behind the future theatre of the European terror, which later became the Second World War. The words used by Cipolla to prove his demonstrative actions to his audience—so these are actions with a clear purpose and intentionality—are meant not only to define the dictator presented by Mann, but also to underline Mann's visionary perspective from his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* as well as his prophecies which came true as time elapsed. Here is what Cipolla says:

Allein mit den Kräften meiner Seele und meines Geistes meistere ich das Leben, was ja immer nur heißt: sich selbst bemeistern, und schmeichle mir, mit meiner Arbeit die achtungsvolle Anteilnahme der gebildeten Öffentlichkeit erregt zu haben.

(It is perforce with my mental and spiritual parts that I conquer life—which after all only means conquering oneself. And I flatter myself that my achievements have aroused interest and respect among educated public.)<sup>368</sup>

By contrast, Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* was given expression for the author himself in a book which—as Mann said after the publication of *Mario und der Zauberer* in 1930—proved its reason for being as an education document through its unrest and political allusions. This assessment confirms that Mann's fundamental ideas must not be immortalized by means of a single book but, on the contrary, by gathering all his novels, short stories and essays as crucial contributions to his complex thought. If Cipolla—or any political leader for that matter—claims to stir the public's

---

<sup>367</sup> Esther Lesser, *Thomas Mann's Short Fiction* (Cranbury: Associated University Press, 1989), 193. See also pages 19-58 for details about Mann's short stories as connected to Germany's politics after 1930.

<sup>368</sup> Thomas Mann, *Mario und der Zauberer*, 47. See Mann, *Death in Venice, and Seven Other Stories*, 153.

interest through hypnosis, Mann did not intend to sedate public opinion with reference to the national collapse. His *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* represents a service of war with the weapons of thinking, which means that anyone who is interested has the freedom to “want” (or not) to adopt the same solution.

The end of *Mario und der Zauberer* like the end of his previous *Der kleine Herr Friedmann* and *Der Tod in Venedig* is conceived in a Kafkaian fashion although not entirely identical with Kafka’s art. Thus, the main characters are eliminated through suicide or the somber presence of plague, despite the fact that they were not predestined to such an end from the start, so they had the possibility to choose another direction in life unlike Kafka’s characters. The end they chose for themselves is primarily an act of self-imposed will. In this context, the end of *Mario und der Zauberer* is a necessary act of will, so there is no doubt regarding the political substratum of Mann’s short story. Cipolla dies in a way he would have never predicted and even the audience is astonished by the totally unexpected turn: Mario shoots him dead and his gesture seems unthinkable even to him as he realizes that the magician-dictator could not turn him into an unconscious machine, so he probably turned an important page in history by stopping evil.

At this point, when Germany was facing the rise of Hitler’s fascist dictatorship, Mann’s work truly began its journey to exile both through the impression left by exile on Mann’s life and by the new orientation imposed by the writer to his works between 1933 and 1955. Once the Nazi started their persecutions in Germany, Mann decided to leave Germany for good, so he lived in Switzerland until 1939 then in the United States of America, whose citizen he became in 1944.

If with the establishment of the Weimar Republic Mann began to be rewarded for his literary efforts first by being appointed a member of the Prussian Academy of Literature and then by being awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, the Nazi’s coming to power coincided with his dethronement as a representative voice of interwar German culture. Even if he left Germany for Switzerland in 1933, Hitler’s government declared him a *persona non grata* and thus expatriated him in 1936. A year later, the University of Bonn withdrew the honorary doctorate conferred upon him in 1919, an injustice which caused him to discuss the condition of the writer in exile through numerous pamphlets and anti-Nazi discourses that continued until Hitler’s death in 1945. After the Second World War, Mann began to visit Europe again as he did after the First World War. In 1946, the University of Bonn reinstated his rights by giving him back his honorary doctorate, and in 1949 he was awarded the Goethe Prize first in Weimar then in Frankfurt. In

1953, Mann returned to Europe but refused to live in Germany. In turn, he settled down in Switzerland, near Zürich where he died on August 12, 1955.

## 5. Mann and his Last Works. Preliminaries

The most important part of Mann's works after 1933 consists of essays and novels which place him closer to writers of similar spiritual configuration. As an essayist, Mann related himself to prominent personalities of Continental Europe's culture, such as Goethe, Cehov, and Schiller. Mann had already written essays especially during 1918-1930 when he produced a range of writings and pamphlets with political intent.<sup>369</sup> The novelty of his late essays concerns the style of his expression, which indicates Mann's transition from his political convictions to his ethical creed. Thus, in 1935, he published a collection of essays entitled *Leiden und Größe der Meister* (*Suffering and Greatness of the Masters*), then individual essays on Goethe (1949), Cehov (1954), and Schiller (1955). Mann's almost uninterrupted preoccupations for the great names of European literature in the last ten years of his life, as well as his own identification with the model and nature of their works betray his desire to transmit a certain ethical and aesthetic message. From as early as *Tonio Kröger* (1903) to as late as *Doktor Faustus* (1947), Mann had consistently proved its antagonist creativity although the antipodes as subjects of his literary creation were never treated unevenly or preferentially. The gap between art and reality, between the life of the spirit and contingent reality does not prevent him from competently presenting both sides. This is why Erich Heller, one of Mann's closest friends and critics, noticed that the writer does not attempt to reconcile art and reality,<sup>370</sup>

---

<sup>369</sup> See, for instance, his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* (1918), *Von deutschen Republik* (*The German Republic*, 1922), *Rede und Antwort* (*Question and Answer*, 1922), *Bemühungen* (*Efforts*, 1925) and *Die Forderung des Tages* (*Order of the Day*, 1930). His social-political essays did not stop in 1930; nevertheless, they no longer had a reactionary-declarative character but they were rather explicative. Mann became increasingly convinced that any dictatorial regime is fatal to society, so democracy as remedy against such political errors is a necessity. See his *Das Problem der Freiheit* (*The Problem of Freedom*, 1937), *Dieser Friede* (*The Peace*, 1938) and *Vom zukünftigen Sieg der Demokratie* (*The Future Victory of Democracy*, 1938).

<sup>370</sup> Erich Heller, *The Ironic German. A Study of Thomas Mann* (Boston: Little Brown, 1958), 271. In Chapter 5, "Conversation on the Magic Mountain", Heller detects in Mann the fine observer of the overturning of values between the artistic world and the real world as portrayed by the then bourgeois society. It should be said here that irony (which is present whenever some characters take either of the worlds too seriously) not only highlights the gap between the worlds but also keeps the balance between them. After all, Mann's characters—like those of Goethe, Cehov and Tolstoi for instance—are members of the

hence the gap between them, but describes them both with their positive and negative aspects by using his astute irony. Tonio Kröger, for instance—who is confronted with his external bourgeois condition as well as with the calls of art within his Mediterranean-conditioned soul from early childhood to maturity—cannot be fully convinced that art alone is able to reveal to him the true meaning of life and genuine knowledge even after he eventually settles down within the southern atmosphere of art. By constantly relating himself to the powerful and serene personality of the bourgeois—see Hans Hansen’s portrait—Kröger perceives Hansen’s innocent vitality with a sense of superiority, while he himself finds thousands of reasons to envy his easy life, which is in fact characterized by a high moral and social responsibility:

So war Hans Hansen, und seit Tonio Kröger ihn kannte, empfand er Sehnsucht, sobald er ihn erblickte, eine neidische Sehnsucht, die oberhalb der Brust saß und brannte. Wer so blaue Augen hatte, dachte er, und so in Ordnung und glücklicher Gemeinschaft mit aller Welt lebte wie du! Stets bist du auf eine wohlanständige und allgemein respektierte Weise beschäftigt ..., indes ich müßiggängerisch und verloren im Sande liege und auf die geheimnisvoll wechselnden Mienenspiele starre, die über des Meeres Antlitz huschen. Aber darum sind deine Augen so klar ... Hatte ich euch vergessen? fragte er. Nein, niemals!... Hast du nun den „Don Carlos“ gelesen, Hans Hansen, wie du es mir an eurer Gartenpforte versprachst?... Zu sein wie du!... frei vom Fluch der Erkenntnis und der schöpferischen Qual leben, lieben und loben in seliger Gewöhnlichkeit!

(Such was Hans Hansen; and ever since Tonio Kröger had known him, from the very minute he set eyes on him, he had burned inwardly with a heavy, envious longing. “Who else has blue eyes like yours, or lives in such friendliness and harmony with all the world? You are always spending your time with some right and proper occupation... while I wander off somewhere and lie down in the sand and stare at the strange and mysterious changes that whisk over the face of the sea. And all that is why your eyes are so clear. To be like you.” ... “Had I forgotten you?”, he asked. “No, never... Did you read *Don Carlos*, Hans Hansen, as you promised me at the garden gate? ... To be like you! ... to live free from the curse of

---

bourgeoisie, so they cannot (or maybe do not want to) detach themselves from it. The characters reveal Mann’s artistic and ethical creed, and their irony define him as a bourgeois writer in that the bourgeoisie forms the subject of his imagination. See pp. 268, 270, 281.

knowledge and the torment of creation, live and praise God in blessed mediocrity!”)<sup>371</sup>

Likewise, it is not at random that Mann’s essays on Goethe and Cehov accompany his monumental *Doktor Faustus*. As seen before, keeping a chronological evidence of Mann’s works discloses his preoccupations at the time when he conceived or wrote any of his books. Thus, Roy Pascal suggested that, by the works of his late maturity, Mann continued Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister* for the same reason identified by Heller: in his las writings, Mann not only resumes many of the motives pertaining to his earlier novels and short stories but also impresses them a moral dimension which is the result of hard work as well as significant transformations.<sup>372</sup>

The first novel of this period, conceived as early as 1930, is *Joseph und seine Brüder*, a novel in four parts which—as Mann himself declared—leaves behind the individual-bourgeois world in order to enter the realm of history and myth. In 1939, Mann published *Lotte in Weimar*, which portrays Goethe as a mature artist. His most famous novel, however, is *Doktor Faustus*, which he published after the Second World War in 1947 and will be analysed in the following section.

## 6. Mann and His *Doktor Faustus*. The Struggle for Artistic Security

*Doktor Faustus* is probably Mann’s most impressive work both as a proof of literary craftsmanship and from the standpoint of the hard work which was necessary for the completion of such an exceptional production. As Mann himself wrote in his additional notes to the novel entitled *Die Entstehung des Doktor Faustus (The Genesis of a Novel)*, the book appeared almost without any connection to the writer himself, almost out of nothing. Nevertheless, the day of March 15, 1943, when—as he later remembers—he noticed the abbreviation “Dr. Faust” among his daily drafts for the first time happened to be one of the historic days of the Second World War, as indicated by Mann in the novel’s appendix.<sup>373</sup> The novel brings to the reader’s

<sup>371</sup> Thomas Mann, *Tonio Kröger* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1964), 9, 74. See Mann, *Death in Venice, and Seven Other Stories*, 80, 128-129.

<sup>372</sup> Pascal, *The German Novel. Studies*, 76-100. The chapter entitled “The Bildungsroman” analyses Mann’s contribution to the development of German literature and his essays are considered as important as his greatest novels which defined his artistic creed.

<sup>373</sup> Mann constantly received news from Europe concerning the course of the war: the fierce battle for Stalingrad, the destruction of the French fleet in Toulon, the deportation of Jews to Nazi concentration camps in Poland, the Russian army heading to Germany, the landing of American troops in France during Roosevelt etc. At the same time, Mann’s family had to

attention a double subject, which has already been approached by Mann. Thus, the novel presents the destiny of the artist as expressed by means of its main character, Adrian Leverkühn, who is brought up and works within the bourgeois atmosphere so common to Mann, but is never fully understood—not even by his friends, who are artists like him. On this foundation of the novel, Mann builds a second structure, namely the story of the artist who chooses—again, the recurrent theme of indestructible will—to pay with his own life (or obscurity) for the powers of the genius.

At the same time, Mann was at the end of his impressive *Joseph und seine Brüder*, whose final word leaves him with the impression of an artist no longer capable to express his thoughts or build a comprehensive narrative. On top of it, Mann cannot even detect the inspiration which, up to that point, had been provided by his rich documentary material used for his latest production. Until the end of his *Joseph und seine Brüder*, Mann had used as an inspirational source his own life experience as well as historical events prior to 1940 and his visit to the “Promised Land”. All these were sufficiently mirrored in his books and in his tetralogy which spanned over ten long years. There is though an early indication of a subject for a new novel, as Mann himself explains:

Dug up the three-line outline of the Dr. Faust of 1901. Association with the *Tonio Kröger* period, the Munich days... Forty-two years have passed since I had set down something about an artist's pact with the devil as a possible subject for a piece of writing.<sup>374</sup>

At the same time, it was also in 1901 when Mann wrote his first notes on his future volume of short stories, later to be entitled *Tristan*, which *Tonio Kröger* belongs to and contains, among other issues, the idea of the artist's pact with the devil. Thus, the short story *Tonio Kröger* could be a preamble to the future novel, and the fact that Mann saw it like this many years later means that the future work will have to include aspects pertaining to the portrait of the artist and his withdrawal from the society in order to create his own destiny. Nevertheless, the mere fact of seeing a novel written almost half a century ago does not make the implementation of this new novelistic project any easier. On the contrary, what Mann had done in the meantime for more than fifteen years was to insist on a different subject, namely

---

face certain troubles which were common to all German refugees as they were kept under strict surveillance by American Secret Services. See Thomas Mann, *The Genesis of a Novel*, 10-14, 72, etc.

<sup>374</sup> Thomas Mann, *The Genesis of a Novel*, 17-18.

the life of master Goethe as seen in his *Lotte in Weimar*, and then on antique history as reflected in *Joseph und seine Brüder*. Mann's interest in writing was doubled in this period by the interest in his family because the reunion of Joseph's family in Egypt echoes Mann's personal life. The fact that Joseph has children and grandchildren in exile corresponds exactly to Mann's situation, who witnessed the birth of his grandchildren in the New World. The return to such a sensitive subject like the German society and to a possible literary project directly connected to it seems to have been very appealing to Mann who had broken all his ties with it almost ten years before. Mann, however, knows that he cannot avoid the change and that he came to a deadlock:

Only now do I realize what it means to be without the *Joseph* work, the task which always stood beside me, before me, all through this decade. Only now ... I become conscious of the novelty and peril of the situation. It was comfortable, working away on what I had already dredged up. Do I still have strength for new conceptions? Have I not used up my subject matter? ... Shall I still be able to summon up the desire for work?<sup>375</sup>

The temptation to take forward this feeling of security in connection with the creative act comes at this very moment from his family and friends who ask him to continue the action of his previous short story *Felix Krull*. Although such a suggestion seemed outdated in the beginning due to the context which generated the original idea, namely the period defined by the condition of the bourgeois artist, an idea left behind once *Joseph und seine Brüder* became his main interest—Mann does not deny the project he himself left unattended for over thirty years. Resuming a subject like Doctor Faustus after such long time and such a laborious endeavor to find something new has at least the advantage of building a structure on a foundation which already exists, as Mann notices. The internal struggle to choose between the two options is perceived by Mann as uneven because, even if *Felix Krull* could offer him perfect working conditions due to the material and annotations at hand, it would be nothing but a new “something else” which could become a hindrance to the achievement of “the new” and “the dangerous”. From now on, Mann remembers the daily battle between *Felix Krull* and *Doktor Faustus* to the point that the final conclusion is a matter of decision between mornings and evenings: he begins to work at *Felix Krull* in the morning, while in the evening he reads a lot and exclusively on the legend of Doctor Faust. Mann gradually leaves aside his old projects so he

---

<sup>375</sup> Thomas Mann, *The Genesis of a Novel*, 19.

goes again through all the stages of the creative act, such as informative readings, lectures concerning the new project<sup>376</sup> and, later on, the much desired feeling of security concerning the new book. Mann writes the first pages of his new novel on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May, 1943.

Mann's presentation of how he wrote and finalized his novel project allows us to follow—as a leit-motif of his confessions—the double reality of his creation. Thus, all his great novels placed Mann in an odd situation. For instance, as he was writing his *Lotte in Weimar*, Mann experienced for the first time the feeling of incongruence between physical-biological life and cerebral life or the life of the work of art. If when he was sixty he suffered from an unbelievably painful sciatica but still managed to produce some of his best parts of *Lotte in Weimar* within only half a year, Mann was right to fear the infidelity of his now seventy year old body as he prepared for the most demanding part of *Doktor Faustus* entitled “Apocalypsis cum figuris” as well as for a complex lung surgery. The “Mediterranean exhaustion” from *Tonio Kröger* is resumed at the beginning of his new novel as well as perceived in connection with the feelings which haunt him when he sets up to work on a new project:

Mit vierzig, mit fünfzig Jahren, wie schon in einem Alter, wo andere verschwinden, schwärmen, die Ausführung großer Pläne getrost verschieben, begann er seinen Tag beizeiten mit Stürzen kalten Wassers über Brust und Rücken und brachte dann, ein Paar hoher Wachskerzen in silbernen Leuchtern zu Häuption des Manuskripts, die Kräfte, die er im Schlaf gesammelt, in zwei oder drei inbrünstig gewissenhaften Morgenstunden der Kunst zum Opfer dar.

(At forty, at fifty, he was still living as he has commenced to live in the years when others are prone to waste and revel, dream high thoughts and

---

<sup>376</sup> Mann's confessions about the way he worked for his new project are essential as they counterbalance real time with the time of the narrative so that any possible footnote is rendered useless for the variety of information pertaining to the novel. Thus, Mann gathers information about the life and structure of German towns in Luther's land, about medicine and theology, sends a letter to Paul Tillich in New York asking for further information about the organization of theological education and also writes down various thoughts about the relationship between the subject and German problems, especially Germany's isolation from the world, discussions about Nietzsche and the compassion he brings about (he himself and despair in general). He also attends various debates in intellectual circles about the relationship between Goethe and Beethoven, the idea of nature as elevated chthonic element, about humanity as romantically opposed to society and convention (Rousseau). As one way or another all these elements can be found in the novel, the reading of the preface is interesting as well as necessary.

postpone fulfillment. He ... setting a pair of tall wax candles in silver holders at the head of his manuscript, sacrificed to art in two or three hours of almost religious fervour, the powers he had assembled in sleep.)<sup>377</sup>

The discrepancy between physical and artistic as personally experienced by Mann will be transposed in his work in a vivid way and mostly affects his character which—to a certain degree—experiences the suffering of his creator. As a matter of fact, in Mann, the best characters are those in which the author mirrors himself. This explains Mann's perspective on Goethe as reflected in his *Lotte in Weimar*—where Goethe is depicted as an old man, almost crushed by his illness, even if he writes better than ever<sup>378</sup>—which is so utterly different from Eckermann's portrait, who claimed that the mere fact of seeing Goethe's dead body made him think of the physical robustness of the ancient Greeks. As for Adrian Leverkühn, he suffers from another illness as a young musician on the verge of producing the masterpiece of his life. The subtitle of *Doctor Faustus* explains that the novel is actually the story of the composer Adrian Leverkühn written by a friend, called Serenus Zeitblom. This additional information is crucial for the understanding of the new character because a new possibility arises, namely that this new novel does not entirely reflect either Mann's life or the life of any German composer. Leverkühn is a solitary artist, secluded and almost inaccessible like Kröger.

## 7. Mann and his Literary Character. Cultural Models and Personal Identity

If *Doktor Faustus* was not meant to illustrate the relationship between the artist and his characters traditionally used by Mann starting with *Tonio Kröger*, is it reasonable to ask whether Adrian Leverkühn had a correspondent in reality? As usual with Mann, the answer is yes. With reference to his characters—oftentimes tormented by inner struggles caused by the eternal dichotomy between reality and art—their source is certain, in the sense that

---

<sup>377</sup> Mann, *Der Tod in Venedig*, 16. See Mann, *Death in Venice, and Seven Other Stories*, 10.

<sup>378</sup> Mann, *Lotte in Weimar: the Beloved Returns*, 177-178. August Goethe's image of his father no longer points to the robust body of the ancient Greek. August believes that his father lives to the highest degree though since he was young we lived many times on the verge of death. Thus, Goethe reportedly fought many physical diseases, even a serious hemorrhage and some other equally grave illnesses when he was fifty. This is why, for August Goethe, his father entertained a dangerous friendship with life.

they are either Mann's own transposition or the reflection of a famous historical figure, like Goethe in Mann's *Lotte in Weimar*. In *Doktor Faustus*, the character has features which are not directly connected to an imaginary model behind the character itself, but they can be perceived as we read *The Genesis of Doctor Faustus*. Just before he started to write the novel, Mann experienced again the pangs of writing as he was uncertain of his capacity to create anything new, so he read something about Nietzsche.<sup>379</sup> The secluded rural life led by Leverkühn for more than twenty years in the house of the Schweigestill family in Pfeiffering is, of course, Nietzsche's life in Sils-Maria or in any other small village in France or Italy. It is very likely that Leverkühn, who fled from the city in order to create the masterpiece of his life, leads an austere life like Nietzsche in the picturesque atmosphere of the Swiss Alps. Then, Mann abruptly and without any warning whatsoever writes that "Switzerland is the country in which the most gloriously [non-] German things are said in German. This is why I love it." Then, he also writes that "walking around the lake aroused memories of La Chasté, and so established the mental link with the Nietzsche of Sils-Maria—and with my book."<sup>380</sup>

Mann's return to Nietzsche was not made primarily in connection with Mann's character but with the concepts he took over from Nietzsche and developed in the psychology of his character. The absence of relevant parallels between Nietzsche's thought and the daily life of Mann's character (parallel which can be reduced to details about their daily necessities or their favorite walking places) may lead us to question Mann's intentionality with reference to Nietzsche's life in the Swiss village. Is Switzerland Mann's favourite realm in his novel and/or is Nietzsche the genuine cultural figure behind Mann's main character? These are questions which require different answers.

As far as the first question is concerned, it must be said that *Doktor Faustus* is not the only novel in which Mann presents the beauty of Swiss scenery. It could be argued that in *Doktor Faustus*, the beauty of Switzerland is subtly suggested rather than evoked directly. The other novel in which the action unfolds within the mountains of Switzerland is *Der Zauberberg*. As already shown, even if it was written more than twenty years before *Doktor Faustus*, *Der Zauberberg* introduces better than any other short stories the very essence of Mann's literary character as reflected in *Doktor Faustus*, and the way this entire process is done proves to be most revealing. Although secluded somewhere in the neighborhood of Waldshut in Germany,

---

<sup>379</sup> See, for details, Mann, *The Genesis of a Novel*, 132.

<sup>380</sup> Mann, *The Genesis of a Novel*, 71, 103.

Leverkühn is only a few kilometers away from the Swiss border, which he passes whenever he has the chance to attend an artistic event and his musical compositions are enthusiastically received by the local public. On the other hand, though isolated at the Davos sanatorium, Castorp lives to the end of the novel the life of a full-fledged German in a Swiss paradise while his ideas about individualism and socialism, state and freedom are often repudiated. Moreover, the details about the daily preoccupations—even some more intimate aspects such as breakfast or the apartments where Leverkühn and Castorp respectively live—represent the genuine preamble to the development of the psychology of Mann's characters. If in *Der Zauberberg*, these details reveal sumptuous saloons, an eclectic atmosphere, multiethnic people and customs, who are united by the same mountain, in *Doktor Faustus* both the chosen village and small details like the yard, the food, and Leverkühn's room in the Schweigestill house offer important clues for the understanding of this character. *Der Zauberberg* is the novel of the beginning of a new century, wherein the results of the transition between two centuries are felt against the background of uncertainty—the uncertainty of going down in the valley where war is expected to burst out and industrialization becomes a chaotic process just like its purpose. In this novel, the specificity of thought on the mountain represents the entire elite which perceives the tragedy of Germany's entrance into the war as an intelligentsia of deadlock and transition. By comparison, *Doktor Faustus* unfolds a conflict which is much more complex. On the one hand, its complexity is given by the fact that the generation depicted in the novel—although just before the Second World War which continued the war from *Der Zauberberg*—does not fight the same effects of industrialization. These are fought in a deaf battle as the reference point is Leverkühn's isolation in a forgotten village. In *Doktor Faustus* the elite seeks to return to its essence, to the primordial state of the human being. Before composing the masterpiece of his life, Leverkühn must find the geographical spot as well as the daily routine which are meant to bring him back in the midst of nature. Thus, if Castorp's isolation place is the mountain peak, which is not fruitful and where any contact with the rest of the world is lost, Leverkühn secludes himself at the foot of the mountain, where the land is abundantly fruitful and everything points to the long forgotten customs of ancient times.

The atmosphere in Pfeiffering resembles perfectly Nietzsche's Swiss village. Like Nietzsche, Leverkühn lives in the upper room, which looks to the village's hillock which he walks frequently following hours of intense labor for this masterpiece. The austere life of the villagers does not repel him because its freshness and naturalness cannot be found anywhere else. Mann's details concerning the life of the village are far from the proportions of Bal-

zac's capacity, but they still retain a lot from the style of the pastoral novel. As this type of novel is not specifically German, the origin of Mann's village must be sought elsewhere especially because its presence in the novel is not sporadic but it permanently intersects the character's story about his visits to the city either in Germany or in Switzerland. Unlike the rest of Mann's novels in which the presentation of the geographical place is interesting because it portrays either a modern or a classical realm or even a tourist attraction, in *Doktor Faustus* the village of Pfeiffering is surprisingly simple and quiet, like the village described in the novels of Jeremias Gotthelf and Johanna Spyri, both Swiss novelists of the nineteenth century.<sup>381</sup> Even if they maintain the idyllic image of bucolic life to a large extent, Gotthelf's novels are not devoid of elements which present genuine existential crises. These crises, however, are caused by the hero's natural evolution to maturity and the wide range of aspects related to this development. From the hero's fight for independence in the novel *Uli the Farm Laborer*, a poor servant who dreams of becoming a landowner and then, after many problems, he and his family grow richer as seen in *Uli the Tenant Farmer*,<sup>382</sup> Gotthelf's work continues the great novels of existential development such as Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* and *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*.<sup>383</sup> The essence of Goethe's two novels as well as Gotthelf's two novels is identical because of the main character who not only reveals the inner feelings of a solitary hero but also a very complex society.<sup>384</sup> For Mann, Leverkühn is the central hero who—surrounded by other characters—causes changes even in the exterior nature because everything belongs to his experience which takes him to artistic maturity. Leverkühn is one of the few of

---

<sup>381</sup> Jeremias Gotthelf (1797-1854) was a Swiss writer whose works illustrate the capacity of a single character to comprise in his simple life the complexity of an entire society. Together with Johanna Spyri (1827-1901), the author of the famous novel *Heidi*, Gotthelf presents the beauty of the Swiss village as a realm of simplicity and naturalness which witnesses the character's transition to maturity against the background of inner crises.

<sup>382</sup> In his *Die Entstehung des Doktor Faustus*, Mann is convinced that both Gotthelf's novels were necessary for the writing of *Doktor Faustus*, because they successfully join the great epic works.

<sup>383</sup> For details about the motive of apprenticeship as a formative element for the art creator in connection with the *Bildungsroman*, see Randolph P. Schaffner, *The Apprenticeship Novel: A Study of the Bildungsroman as a Regulative Type in Western Literature* (New York: Peter Lang, 1984).

<sup>384</sup> Gotthelf's novels were published within three years, *Uli the Farm Laborer* in 1846 and *Uli the Tenant Farmer* in 1849. For details about a classification of the novelistic genre, see Eda Sagarra and Peter Skrine (eds.), *A Companion to German Literature: From 1500 to the Present* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 134, especially Chapter 6, "From Biedermeier to Realism."

Mann's characters who, as he settles near Pfeffering, lives various dysfunctional experiences caused by the incongruence between him and society. Thus he proves Goethe's thesis concerning the relationship between genius and nature as revealed by the concept of *natura naturans*. Leverkühn's return to nature unleashes the powers of creative genius and, at the same time, presents the image of the master magician of all things as in Goethe's *Der Zauberlehrling* (*The Pupil in Magic*). The "sorcery" episode, when the Schweigestill family's dog is "charmed" by Leverkühn as he settles into their house, proves to be crucial because it resumes the scene from Goethe's poem which pictures a flying broom that stops when the master magician orders it so. In Mann, however, the members of the household cannot calm the animal, which is also the case with Goethe's apprentice who complains that despite his efforts, the broom does not bother to stop:

Herr und Meister, hör'mich rufen!  
Ach, da kommt der Meister!  
Herr, die Not ist groß!  
Die ich rief, die Geister,  
werd'ich nun nicht los.

(Lord and master hear me call!  
Ever seems the flood to fill,  
Ah, he's coming! see,  
Great is my dismay!  
Spirits raised by me  
Vainly would I lay!)

In Mann, the same effort is done by imprecations and spells but it does not seem to work:

Es fruchtete nichts, daß sowohl Mutter wie Tochter wie auch die beim Abladen des Gepäcks behilfliche mistfüßige Stallmagd (Waltpurgis) ihm ihr „Geh, Kaschperl, sei stat!“ zuriefen (das im Dialekt stehen gebliebene althochdeutsche „stâti“, im Mittelhochdeutschen staete, dann „stet“, das ist „ruhig“ und „unbeweglich“). Der Hund tobte weiter ...

(It was to no avail that both mother and daughter, as well as the dairy-maid (Waltpurgis)... called to him with their "Kaschperl, now whist!" (a

dialect form of the even more archaic “husht!”)... The dog continued to rage...)<sup>385</sup>

The relationship between nature and genius in Goethe, which quintessentially presents the art of using the word in order to create the magic or the work, is decisive for the understanding of his thought. It is only the genius who knows how to combine the words in such a way as to create art. It is clear in Goethe that, while both the master and his apprentice use the same language, it is only the master who can handle nature by using mere words:

„In die Ecke  
Besen, Besen!  
Seids gewesen;  
denn als Geister  
ruft euch nur zu seinem Zwecke  
erst hervor der alte Meister!“

(To the side  
Of the room  
Hasten, broom,  
As of old!  
Spirits I have ne'er untied  
Save to act as they are told.)<sup>386</sup>

The gesture of the master magician in nature is calm unlike the unrest displayed by his apprentice. The feeling of communion given by the relationship between the word and listening in Goethe is similar to that which can be found in Nietzsche. He, for instance, expressed the harmony between nature and those who speak its language as noticed in connection with Goethe's *Novelle* and *Der Zauberlehrling*. As a matter of fact, was it not the magician's capacity to talk to animals that caused his notoriety in the Middle Ages? At the same time, was it not the misinterpretation of his science to talk to nature that triggered the public's unrest concerning the magician? Like Goethe's master magician, Leverkühn is equally calm in connection

---

<sup>385</sup> Thomas Mann, *Doktor Faustus. Der Leben des deutschen Tonsetzers Adrian Leverkühn, erzählt von einem Freunde* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1997), 342. See Mann, *Doctor Faustus. The Life of the German Composer Adrian Leverkühn as Told by a Friend*, trans. by John E. Woods (New York: Vintage International, 1999), 271.

<sup>386</sup> Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke* 4.1, ed. by Karl Richter (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1986), 876-877. See Goethe, *The Pupil in Magic*, in *The Poems of Goethe*, trans. by Edgar Alfred Bowring, 235.

with unbridled forces and his gesture offers explicative information about the way Goethe's master magician could appease the broom's spirit:

... und Adrian, nachdem er eine Weile lächelnd hinübergesehen, ging zu ihm heran. „Suso, Suso“, sagte er, ohne die Stimme zu erheben, mit einer gewissen erstaunt mahnenden Betonung, und siehe: wohl rein unter dem Einfluß des beschwichtigend summenden Lautes, kam fast ohne Übergang das Tier zur Ruhe und ließ es zu, daß der Beschwörer die Hand ausstreckte und sanft seine von alten Beißereien narbige Schädeldecke streichelte...

(Adrian, after watching and smiling at him for a time, walked over. “Suso, Suso”, he said, without raising his voice, but in a certain surprised tone of admonishment and behold: ... the animal calmed down almost immediately and let the wizard stretch out a hand and pat his old battle-scarred skull.)<sup>387</sup>

The appeasement of spirits in Goethe, Nietzsche's presentation of the harmony between the man and the lion by means of Goethe's short story as well as his own philosophical perspective in *Also sprach Zarathustra* are completed by the episode of the taming of the animal in Mann's *Doktor Faustus*. Mann's novel is by its own structure a conglomerate of connected episodes which are related by means of the main character. A sorcerer like Goethe's master magician, Leverkühn reestablishes the sometimes lost balance between man and nature even in the bucolic scenery like that of Pfeiferling. The peace and tranquility of the small village seem to be identical to the mountain scenery untouched by civilization which is presented in Spyri's *Heidi* and the perspective on nature as a realm of physical recovery is common to both novels. Thus, they both convey the image of the mountain village as a purifying and curing sanctuary, but it is the presence of the main character that makes the difference between the end of Spyri's bucolic novel and the end with contrasting effects in Mann's novel. In Spyri, Clara—the young paralyzed girl who came from Frankfurt to visit Heidi—begins to walk again as powerfully inspired by her wish to see the beauties of alpine nature. The fact that she learns to walk again is a sign of coming back to life like, for instance, in the biblical narratives about the wonders performed by Jesus, therefore physical recovery points to spiritual recovery. In his novel, Mann keeps this purifying framework and the arrival of small Nepomuk from the city in order to be cured offers the writer the chance to tenderly and

---

<sup>387</sup> Thomas Mann, *Doktor Faustus*, 343. See Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, 271.

astonishingly portray his angelic being in close connection with nature. Mann probably felt the need to complete this crucial novel by introducing the episode of Nepo's stay at the farm, like Goethe used Felix's portrait to complete his perspective on Wilhelm Meister in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* as a character that became mature once he realized his parental responsibilities. Like in the novels of Spyri and Goethe, Mann's character acquires a certain personal charm when seen in tranquility, while a detail or an insignificant corner of nature intensifies his presentation as if in a fairytale atmosphere:

Als ich das nächste Mal auf dem Hofe vorsprach, warein seit seiner Ankunft schon vierzehn Tage vergangen; er [Nepomuk] war eingelebt dort und rings in der Gegend bekannt. Ich sah in zuerst von Weitem... wie er ganz allein im rückwärtigen Nutzgarten am Boden saß, zwischen Erdbeer und Gemisebeeten, ein Beichen ausgestreckt... und, wie es schien, mit etwas distanziertem Wohlgefallen ein Bilderbuch betrachtete, das ihm der Oheim geschenkt hatte... sodaß mir war, als hätte ich nie ein Kind so reizend dasitzen sehen und bei mir dachte, auf diese Manier müßten die Englein droben die Seiten ihrer Hallelujabücher wenden.

(When I next visited the farm, already two weeks have passed since [Nepomuk's] arrival; he had settled in and was known throughout the neighborhood. I saw him first from a distance... as he sat all alone on the ground in the garden out back, among beds of strawberries and vegetables, one leg stretched out,... studying, with what looked like rather detached enjoyment, a picture book his uncle had given him... I felt as if I had never seen a child sitting so charmingly, and it occurred to me that the cherubs on high must turn the pages of their psalters in just that fashion.)<sup>388</sup>

If, however, in Spyri or Goethe the significant turn in the life of the main character generally leads to a happy ending, Mann's *Doktor Faustus* is by comparison a novel of contrasts. The element of contrast is introduced by means of the main character who leads a life which is separated from the life of the rest of the characters surrounding him. Leverkühn feels the pulse of nature and, by seeing his art in subduing it, he seems to feel it more profoundly than the rest of the characters. It is certain though that he does not integrate within the purifying realm of nature, unlike Spyri or Goethe's characters. Leverkühn's pact with the devil makes the conflict even more com-

---

<sup>388</sup> Thomas Mann, *Doktor Faustus*, 613. See Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, 487.

plex which results in a sudden lack of balance with reference to its fictitious action. If before Nepo's arrival in Pfeiffering the occult forces which had influenced Leverkühn remained dormant as if they had left him, the writer suddenly unleashes them and the gravely ill child dies while Adrian is devoid of the strongest feeling of affection and responsibility he had ever experienced. The tragedy of Leverkühn's guilt is so profound that Mann places the little child's illness and heartrending death on Leverkühn's account despite the fact that in the beginning of the twentieth century no child was left alive if struck by poliomyelitis. Leverkühn himself perceives Nepo's death as a repercussion of his own curse, and the moment of the child's tragic demise is the moment when Leverkühn secludes himself in his dark apartment, far away from light and nature. Nepo's death represents the end of the harmony between man and nature as well as the beginning of the conflict between art/genius and the source of his inspiration. In the end, the break of the balance between man and nature culminates in the dialectic and conflicting act of creation which marks the end of nature as the definition of apocalyptic creation.

Leverkühn's self seclusion, the final stage of the apocalyptic act of creation, coincides with the isolation of some famous representatives of the nineteenth and twentieth century culture, who lived the dilemma of uncertainty and transition as a European experience.<sup>389</sup> At this point, it must be stressed that Mann comes very close to Nietzsche once again: Nietzsche is the cultural figure behind Mann's character as representative for Mann's typology.

The first part of Mann's novel describes—with reference to the type of character as well as to the problems raised—an entire generation of searches and attempts to settle down in order to find one's vocation, and this is the meaning of Leverkühn's decision to live in the countryside as he made various efforts to compose his masterpiece. As already shown, the first part of the novel unfolds within the idyllic scenery of the small village situated at the foot of the mountain in the Swiss Alps and defined by characters that are similar to those from the pastoral novels. Mann's main character finds its intellectual counterpart in the real Nietzsche who used to wander through such places in order to write books like *Also sprach Zarathustra*. As a matter of fact, the structure of Mann's novel as presented here depends on the boundary between the entrance into the bucolic realm and self-seclusion. The first part of Mann's *Doktor Faustus* ends with small Nepomuk's death,

---

<sup>389</sup> For details about the writer and the type of character as representative for the literature of the nineteenth and twentieth century, see Richard Ruppel, *Gottfried Keller: Poet, Pedagogue and Humanist* (New York: Peter Lang, 1988).

a moment when Leverkühn loses the element of connection or the intermediary factor between his self and the surrounding nature. The second part of the novel begins with this tragedy and Leverkühn's association with Nietzsche, the philosopher becomes increasingly clear, especially when at the end of the novel we find out that Nietzsche's destiny as a psychologically alienated person is transferred on Leverkühn. His loss of orientation in connection with daily life is explained romantically as an entrance to a new ego, as if the author had contemplated the scene which presents Nietzsche dressed in his white gown at the Villa Silberblick. It is within this specific context that Mann notices the origin of the word "dementia"—explained as meaning nothing but the estrangement from one's own ego or the straying from one's own self:

Ich sage so viel, daß seines Bleibens in Pfeiffering nicht war. Rüdiger Schildknapp und ich übernahmen die schwere Pflicht, den Kranken, ... nach München in die geschlossene Nervenheilanstalt ... zu bringen ... Ihres Kindes! Denn das, und nichts anderer mehr, war Adrian Leverkühn wieder, als die alte Frau eines Tages—das Jahr ging gegen den Herbst—in Pfeiffering eintraf, um ihn mit sich in die thüringische Heimat, an die Stätten seiner Kindheit zurückzunehmen, zu denen sein äußerer Lebensrahmen längst schon in so seltsamer Entsprechung gestanden hatte ... Schauerlich Rührenderes und Kläglicheres ist nicht zu erdenken, als wenn ein von seinen Ursprüngen kühn und trotzig emanzipierter Geist, nachdem er einen schwindelnden Bogen über die Welt hin beschrieben, gebrochen, ins Mütterliche zurückkehrt ... Noch einmal sah ich ihn ... Im Hintergrunde des Zimmers, auf einer Chaiselongue, deren Fußende mir zugekehrt war, so daß ich ihm ins Gesicht sehen konnte, lag unter einer leichten Wolldecke der, der einst Adrian Leverkühn gewesen war, und dessen Unsterbliches nun so heißt. Die bleichen Hände, deren sensitive Bildung ich immer geliebt hatte, lagen, wie bei einer Grabfigur des Mittelalters, auf der Brust gekreuzt. Der stärker ergraute Bart zog das verschmälerte Gesicht noch mehr in die Länge, so daß es nun auffallend dem eines Greco'schen Edlen glich. Welch ein höhnisches Spiel der Natur, so möchte man sagen, daß sie das Bild höchster Vergeistigung erzeugen mag dort, wo der Geist entwichen ist! ... Der wiederholten Einladung der Mutter, doch nur näher zu treten, versagte ich die Folge und wandte in Tränen.

([Adrian] did not come to himself, but rather to an alien self that was only the burned-out shell of his personality... Rüdiger Schildknapp and I assumed the heavy responsibility of transporting the patient to Munich at a

private mental clinic... Her child! For that, and nothing more, was that Adrian Leverkühn once again was when the old woman appeared in Pfeiffering in order to take him back with her to his home in Thuringia, to those scenes of his childhood that the external framework of his life had for so long and so strangely paralleled... One cannot imagine anything more horribly touching and pitiful than when a spirit that has boldly and defiantly emancipated itself from its origins, that has traced a dizzying arc above the world, returns broken to his mother's care... I saw him one more time... At the back of the room, on a chaise longue whose foot was turned toward me, so that I could look directly into his face, there lay, under a light wooden blanket, the man who had once been Adrian Leverkühn, and whose immortal part now bears that name. The pale hands, whose sensitive shape I had always loved, lay crossed on the chest, like those of a figure on a medieval gravestone. The now predominantly gray beard made the narrow face look even longer, so that it bore a striking resemblance to that of a nobleman by El Greco. What a sardonic trick of nature, one might well say, that she is able to create the image of highest spirituality where the spirit has departed! ... I declined to obey his mother's repeated invitation to come closer, and turned away in tears.)<sup>390</sup>

The resemblance between Leverkühn, the character that comes closer to nature, and Nietzsche, the author of *Also sprach Zarathustra*, is felt against the background of Nietzsche's impressions as he read Goethe's *Novelle*. On the other hand, the resemblance between Leverkühn, the creator who secluded himself in his own being, and Nietzsche, the philosopher as seen in 1888—the year of his last thoughts, opens a new perspective on Mann as a novelist of the elite. This new phase of Mann's inspiration which inaugurates the second part of *Doktor Faustus* coincides politically with the period following the Second World War and particularly with his new perspective on Europe's culture as based on social uncertainty and political instability. Within this new context, Leverkühn's life finds its counterpart in the type of a hero presented by the Swiss novelist Gottfried Keller and especially in the life of the elites that—one way or another—lose contact with reality, much as Carl Spitteler or Hermann Hesse.

The coming closer of Mann's character to Keller's heroes prepares Leverkühn's detachment from the fascination of nature and his subsequent isolation in the realm of fatidic artistic creation as illustrated by his masterpiece

---

<sup>390</sup> Thomas Mann, *Doktor Faustus*, 666, 667, 671. See Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, 529, 530, 533, 534. Nietzsche's close friends noticed the irremediable loss of his self consciousness after his final breakdown in Turin.

“Apocalypsis cum figuris.” In Keller’s novel, the heroes breathe the heavy air of intellectualism: they surround themselves with the books they read and comment permanently, but their analysis betrays deep unrest and the attempt to run away from reality even if Keller himself is aware of the importance of transcending the dream in order to adjust it to reality.<sup>391</sup> Thus, Leverkühn’s inner change caused by Nepo’s death presents Mann’s novel as a work of contrasts which is characterized by permutations of artistic orientation from pastoral to elementary and from bucolic to apocalyptic. Mann does not present his novel as an autobiographic work but prefers to create his character finding inspiration in the lives of other contemporary novelists. For instance, Herman Hesse’s biography is a perfect match for Leverkühn’s life which conveys a real-historical expression in the second part of the novel. As seen in Hesse’s autobiographical notes, his life of self-seclusion in the Swiss village of Montagnola is similar to Leverkühn’s desire to meet new people and see new places.<sup>392</sup> In both Hesse and Mann’s character, the journey of creation truly begins only after the real experience of the journey came to an end. Thus, Hesse writes—apparently in haste—that he did not travel at all after the outburst of the First World War and during the Second World War he was preoccupied to write his masterpiece entitled *Das Glasperlenspiel* (*The Glass Bead Game*) which was not followed by any other monumental work. Like Leverkühn after Nepomuk’s death, Hesse—during the two world wars which represent the physical and spiritual death of man as well as of Germany—turned his characters into portraits of the modern man, shattered by the continuous duality between his soul and the world, between the intellect and the physical realm. Thus, heroes like Harry Haller from *Der Steppenwolf* (1927), Narcissus from *Narziss und Goldmund* (1930) or Joseph Knecht from *Glasperlenspiel* (1943) are all exposed to his duality, although in different contexts and situations. In both Hesse and Mann, the battle of the mind with the body and the fight against the devil are attempts to search inner peace as well as to focus on spiritual life. Therefore, the heroes become the *alter ego* of their creators. Their conviction that genuine art comes from the inner human being is a leit-motif which can be seen especially in their last novels.

---

<sup>391</sup> Camillo von Klenze, *From Goethe to Hauptmann. Studies in a Changing Culture* (New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1966), 127-128 and especially the chapter entitled “Realism and Romanticism in Two Great Narrators: Keller and Meyer”. Von Klenze argues that, although an admirer of Byron, Keller avoided the eccentricity of this particular type of romanticism and proposed a hero with a strong social sense.

<sup>392</sup> Like Mann, Hesse was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1946, when he compiled a brief autobiographic presentation later to be published in Horst Frenz (ed.), *Nobel Lectures in Literature 1901-1967*, 417.

Mann's *Doktor Faustus* finds its central idea in Hesse's *Glasperlenspiel* and vice-versa.<sup>393</sup> As Leverkühn's fate resembles Hesse's secluded life in Montagnola—so the character in the novel mirrors the life of a real-historical character, the master of games (*magister ludi*) in Hesse's novel has similar characteristics. Mann's *Doktor Faustus* is a novel of contrasts also because it expresses the duality between external simplicity of the scenery and the internal complexity of a brilliant intellect which is capable of extraordinary creation. Because this stage of creation was reached after a lifetime of work and experience as proved by Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* and *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, the pedagogical, dialectical, and elitist affinities between these two novels and Hesse's *Glasperlenspiel* are more than obvious and so is Hesse's presence in Mann's novel (and vice-versa), mainly due to the literary caliber of Hesse and Mann as well as the small time frame of only three years between the publication of their novels. The fact that Mann's novel was published only three years after Hesse's novel is significant and it discloses important aspects belonging to both novels. If at the end of *Doktor Faustus* Mann blends Hesse's destiny with Nietzsche's fate, in *Glasperlenspiel* Hesse replaces the literary reflection of Thomas Mann—the real image behind Thomas von der Trave, the first *magister ludi*, who dies—with Joseph Knecht, the second master. Before and after the master's death, one can easily notice Knecht's progress in various artistic fields such as sciences, philology, music, etc., which are in fact details that resume in modern times the didactic experience acquired by Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. Hesse's novel insists predominantly on the development of musical abilities. Hesse himself was convinced that the art of music was different from any other art. Thus, Hesse admitted he was always on “familiar and friendly terms with the fine arts” but the most intense was his relationship with music which can be found in all of his works.<sup>394</sup>

The explanation concerning the fate of Hesse's master Thomas becomes clearer now. Prior to 1943, when Hesse published his novel, nobody had written a work which insisted so much on music as the special and saving art of the modern world, and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* as well as his *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* had only shown the way in this particular direction. A contemporary as well as a friend and rival of Hesse, Mann had used his energy to deal with other subjects as seen in *Felix Krull*, *Lotte in Weimar*, and *Joseph und seine Brüder*, which contain important political and historical details ignored by Hesse. The subject of the formation

---

<sup>393</sup> Mann, for instance, said he was frightened by the close connection between Hesse's novel and what preoccupied him so intensely. See *The Genesis of a Novel*, 62.

<sup>394</sup> Hesse, *Nobel Lectures in Literature*, 419.

of the modern elitist man, of individual pedagogy, and the typology of the hero that is torn by the duality between body and soul are innovative aspects in Hesse's novel and prior to 1943 they had only been partially treated by Mann. This is probably the meaning of master's Thomas death in Hesse's *Glasperlenspiel*, namely that—as far as Hesse was concerned—Mann was overcome by Hesse's new hero as well as his new novel. In other words, the way Hesse dealt with the problem of the modern man is so different by means of artistic erudition that the old master, i.e. Mann, will be rendered speechless.

In 1947, when Mann published his *Doktor Faustus* master Thomas returned, and a new type of literary character was born. After he sent his novel to the editor, Mann wrote in *The Genesis of a Novel* that his only imminent preoccupations left were the writing of a lecture on Nietzsche, which he was to read in London (in English), and a paper for Hesse's seventieth anniversary.<sup>395</sup> Some months after Mann wrote the anniversary article on Hesse, the latter received a copy of *Doktor Faustus* with a personal dedication from the author himself, who described his novel as a black glass bead game.<sup>396</sup>

As for Hesse, his novel *Glasperlenspiel* was heavily commented upon especially with reference to the game of the main character as well as the significance of the “game” for contemporary society. It is clear though that Hesse's *Glasperlenspiel* was matched by Mann's *Doktor Faustus* because it is very likely that this was Mann's intention in saying that his novel was a black glass bead game, evidently as compared to Hesse's novel. Given this comparison, made by Mann himself, are there any points of contact between Hesse's character and game and Mann's character and game? Or, furthermore, if Mann wrote his novel with the clear intention to offer a retort to Hesse, what is Mann's novelty and what are the rules of his game?

Hesse's novel reveals various characters and realms which can be known either by dreams or by the experience of travel or even by the direct life experience in Castaglia, the famous province of the elites. All these are enriched by the author's personal experience, so that in some instances ethnic specificity—especially the Indian Oriental specificity—is presented against the background of the direct connection with this particular civilization and its mystic atmosphere soaked in its traditional stories and legends with hallucinating flavor.

The question that arises in connection with Hesse's novel is related to its real essence and the real identity of the master, who is also the main charac-

---

<sup>395</sup> Mann, *The Genesis of a Novel*, 184.

<sup>396</sup> Supposedly, Mann wrote: “To Hermann Hesse, this Glass Bead Game with black beads, from his friend Thomas Mann”, Pacific Palisades, January 15, 1948.

ter of the novel, given the glass bead game of the secret society in Castaglia and the role of the *magister ludi* in leading and supervising the game. For instance, the fact that Hesse chose the cultural-elitist province of Castaglia—where disciples from all over the world or *electi* gather in order to receive instruction in various and unusual arts under the supervision of one single master—as the place for the unfolding of the novel’s action generated a parallelism between Hesse’s society in the novel and the “society” of the cyberspace.<sup>397</sup> Although it is probably useless to identify such intentionality in Hesse, it is indeed important to notice the diversity of the instruction forms used in Castaglia and the fact that what really counts is the finality of instruction or the contrast between the schools from Castaglia and those from outside. Hesse perceives two types of professionals that pertain to each realm: the “free” professionals from outside who are in fact constrained by rigid rules in performing their profession, and the “servants” or the *electi*, namely the “gifted” from Castaglia, who dedicate themselves freely to their profession. The imparity between these two types is obvious as emphasized by Hesse:

Why are just those professions [outside Castaglia] called “free”? ... Let us say that the freedom exists, but it is limited to the one unique act of choosing the profession. Afterward all freedom is over... When he begins his studies at the university, the doctor, lawyer, or engineer is forced into an extremely rigid curriculum which ends with a series of examinations. If he passes them, he receives his license and can pursue his profession in seeming freedom. But in doing so he becomes the slave of base powers; he is dependent on success, on money... For the elite pupil and later member of the Order, everything is the other way around. He does not “choose” any profession... He accepts the place and the function within the hierarchy that his superiors choose for him... In the midst of this seeming unfreedom every *electus* enjoy the greatest imaginable free-

---

<sup>397</sup> For instance, Paul Saffo and Michael Heim believe that the “game” and the realm of Castaglia can be undoubtedly interpreted as references to the practices of modern economy or as metaphors for the relationships which pertain to the virtual space. For Heim, the relationships between the cultural symbols which are specific to the subjects taught in Castaglia and the role of the disciples who animate the province turn Hesse into a prophet of virtual reality and its connections. Likewise, Saffo explains Hesse’s visionary work and the message of his novel over years by saying that Castaglia’s interpersonal relationships protect its society against mechanicism. Thus, the relationships between those who use computers should not be relationships between machines but relationships between persons. See Michael Heim, *The Metaphysics of Virtual Reality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 150-152.

dom... The *electus* enjoys so much freedom that there are many who all their lives choose the most abstruse and frequently almost foolish studies, and may continue without hindrance as long as their conduct does not degenerate.<sup>398</sup>

True freedom invoked by Hesse does not necessarily support the idea that it is a metaphor of the unlimited possibilities of virtual space. However, Hesse does not promote psychedelic experiences through his theory of professional vocation and freedom.<sup>399</sup> Regardless whether one refers to vocation, freedom of expression or any other themes specific to the *Bildungsroman*, it is the character that leads the “game” not only by keeping the balance between various cultural-ethnic orientations and manifestation, but also by the fact that his actions as *magister ludi* indicate the direction of the entire novel, like in Goethe and Mann. The old ideal of the *Biedermeier* hero is present in Hesse as well as in Mann the same way it was present in Goethe: Wilhelm Meister travels—like Knecht and Leverkühn—in order to expand his perspective on art and life, so that these experiences will eventually find their absolute expression in the work of art. In Goethe’s novel, Meister moves between “apprenticeship” and “journey” or between “theatric vocation” (predilection) and “character” (the development of inner possibilities). The movement from one to another is perceived by this eighteenth century hero as a crisis or time of transition which occurs on a personal level both intellectually and spiritually. Its entire symbolism is taken over by Hesse as if—through his hero Knecht—he had wanted to add a third “chapter” to Goethe’s *Bildungsroman*. Thus, Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* presented Meister’s “adolescence” dominated by internal crises, mistakes, and failures with reference to the artistic ego. Then, in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* Goethe presented how the exuberance of youth and its sins is redeemed by Meister’s effort to rid of mistakes in order to strengthen his character. If Hesse’s novel is a continuation of Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, it means that Hesse’s hero does not see only his dream to

---

<sup>398</sup> Hermann Hesse, *Magister Ludi. The Glass Bead Game*, trans. by Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), 49-50.

<sup>399</sup> For instance, throughout their books, Timothy Leary and Alan Watts compare the “game” with Eastern-Asian rituals and practices which are specific to the initiation process into a certain caste under the influence of narcotics. Watts makes reference only to the formation through the “game” as a psychedelic experience and the implications of Taoist philosophy on hierarchical elites. See Alan Watts, *The Tao of Philosophy* (Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 1995). Leary, however, associates Hesse’s image as a writer who loved India with the man of the 1960s and the abuse of drugs specific to the hippie era. See Timothy Leary, *Turn On, Turn In, Drop Out* (Oakland, CA: Ronin Publishing, 1999).

have his own pedagogic province<sup>400</sup> come true (his pedagogic province is founded on Goethe's moral-religious principle expressed in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*), but also the dream to have his own family reunited, an important detail which contrasts Hesse's biography.

Thus, until 1943, Hesse's character remained the final version of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* because Knecht's parallel with Meister implies that Knecht completes Maister's mature portrait as the leader of the game himself, not only as the spectator. In this particular sense, Knecht is Felix, Meister's son, about whom Goethe does not say many things after his acceptance in the pedagogical province. In 1947, when Mann published his *Doktor Faustus*, it became clear that the famous German genealogy started by Goethe's Meister did not end with Hesse's Knecht, who paid with his own life for the mysteries of the game which only he knew. Mann's Leverkühn does not only continue the spiritual formation of Hesse's Knecht but also the unfinished episode of Mann's Castorp following his descent "in the valley", which was too brief and thrilling an introduction to his new journey life in *Der Zauberberg*. After the publication of Mann's *Doktor Faustus*, Hesse's Knecht becomes the intermediary link between Goethe's Meister and Mann's Leverkühn, which could be the result of Mann's intention not to give Hesse the chance to have the final word in connection with the "game".<sup>401</sup> Leverkühn is at last the character that closes the cyclical experience of Knecht and Meister. Thus, he presents once again the image of young Castorp, which corresponds to Goethe's young Meister in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, and—like Knecht—he is given proper credit for his masterpiece by receiving the laurels which guerdons the genius. The difference between the two must be sought in the act of Hesse's master who accepts the laurels as well as in Mann's hero who rejects them. It should be said here that Knecht's gesture to accept the reward for being the master of music is mainly an academic necessity, which Leverkühn finds repugnant:

Er sei an die Tastatur geraten nicht aus Lust, sich zu ihrem Meister aufzuwerfen, sondern aus heimlicher Neugier auf die Musik selbst, und ganz und gar fehle ihm das Zigeunerblut des konzertierenden Künstlers, der durch die Musik und anlässlich ihrer sich vor dem Publikum produziere.

---

<sup>400</sup> For Hesse, Castaglia is identical to Goethe's pedagogical province as it has the same structure and rules established by an "Order". See Hesse, *Magister Ludi. The Glass Bead Game*, 43.

<sup>401</sup> Mann briefly noticed in *Doctor Faustus* the orientation of his novel as compared to Hesse's. Thus, he writes that he read Hesse's novel and saw the relationship between master Thomas and Knecht. He catalogues as "interesting" the difference of approach in connection with the glass bead game. Mann, *The Genesis of a Novel*, 63.

Dazu gehörten seelische Voraussetzungen, sagte er, die bei ihm nicht erfüllt seien: das Verlangen nach Liebesaustausch mit der Menge, nach Kränzen, nach Katzbücherlei und Kußhänden im Beifallsgeprassel.

(He had found his way to the keyboard not out of any desire to set himself up as its master, but rather out of a secret curiosity about music itself; and, besides, he completely lacked the gypsy blood of the concertizing artist, who presents himself to the public through music, using the occasion of music. For there were certain psychological preconditions, he said, that he could not fulfill: the desire for a love affair with the crowd, for wreaths, for groveling bows and kisses thrown amid crashing applause...) <sup>402</sup>

From the quotation which is included in Leverkühn's letter to Kretzschmar, the master of music in *Doktor Faustus*, it follows for the first time that Mann sends an indirect message to Hesse but, in fact, Mann's message is aimed at Hesse as directly as possible. Leverkühn's answer followed the invitation of the master of music to join his school, another pedagogic province, in order to be initiated in the art of music as well as have a fulminant career secured.

Leverkühn's refusal to become an *electus* like Knecht does not mean that he will no longer enjoy the laurels meant for the genius but it is rather a personal decision as his artistic creed forced him to reject the privileges reserved for the elite. Leverkühn is somehow closer to Meister, so he lives among the elite but always outside the elite and its corresponding school. Leverkühn appreciates the intellectual benefits resulting from the investigation of the "alchemist" mysteries of composition or music in itself. He knows that he will not be an idiot in the field but he will rather ennoble the *prima material* by applying a *magisterium* to it and refining it through fire and spirit. Thus, Leverkühn leaves the "game" aside, a game that is not mentioned in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* either; moreover, he feels an inner urge to stay away from it. If we were to find a correspondent to Mann's Leverkühn in Hesse's *Glasperlenspiel*, this would be the famous Bengel with his *Exposition of the Apocalypse*, <sup>403</sup> which is privately dis-

---

<sup>402</sup> Thomas Mann, *Doktor Faustus*, 177-178. See Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, 140-141.

<sup>403</sup> Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752), Pietist theologian, exegete and pastor, who wrote various studies on the Greek text of the New Testament and influenced other great theologians such as John Wesley and Charles Haddon Spurgeon. He also wrote an *Exposition of the Apocalypse*, which was equally praised as well as criticized by the opponents of the disambiguation theory concerning the prophetic language of the Bible. In Hesse's novel, Bengel is mentioned as an inventor of a plan which was supposed to help him organize and

cussed by Knecht and *pater* Jakobus. Knecht admired Bengel for his endeavor to penetrate the object of science and research in order to arrange them organically, and this is the essential idea of the glass bead game. As for Jakobus, he reproached Knecht for the same reason Arendt, Bellow, and Taylor criticized Mann, namely for his incapacity to make the necessary connections between certain historical events such as those preceding the First World War and the organic unity between the concepts of art and civilization. Thus, Jakobus pities Bengel for not having a system similar to their game which would have exempted him from taking the wrong path of converting prophetic numbers and of foreseeing the Antichrist and the one thousand year empire.<sup>404</sup> Jakobus is convinced Bengel was not able to find his desired direction towards a common aim, so his mathematical talent as well as his philological perspicuity produced a bizarre order of times which is in fact a curious mixture between fantasy and scientific rigor.

If Bengel had possessed a system similar to that offered by our Game, he probably would have been spared all the misguided effort involved in his calculation of the prophetic numbers and the annunciation of the Antichrist and the Millennial Kingdom. Bengel did not quite find what he longed for: the way to channel all his various talents toward a single goal. Instead, his mathematical gifts in association with his philological bent produced that weird blend of pedantry and wild imagination, the “order of the ages,” which occupied him for so many years.<sup>405</sup>

So, what is the meaning of the game in Mann’s novel as compared to the game in Hesse’s novel (which according to Bengel would be the sum of all knowledge, arranged “symmetrically and synoptically around a central idea”)? As expected, the answer to this question presupposes first of all the existence of certain similarities and contrasts with reference to the characters. From this point of view, Leverkühn is the character that distances himself from the establishment, according to Goethe’s Meister in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*. Leverkühn and Meister do not remain unmoved but allow themselves to be confronted daily with new perspectives and new forms of creation. In this context, even when Leverkühn settles in the valley for more than ten years, his prolonged halt indicates to and even completes Meister’s

---

synthesize both synoptically and symmetrically—around a centre and within an encyclopedic work—all the knowledge of his time. This tactics was attributed by Knecht to the initiated, or those who knew the “glass bead game.”

<sup>404</sup> See Hesse, *Magister Ludi. The Glass Bead Game*, 103.

<sup>405</sup> Hesse, *Magister Ludi. The Glass Bead Game*, 103.

experience in the house of the beloved holy family—a hint at the biblical image of the family of Joseph and Mary, where Jesus grew up—which is mentioned at the beginning of Goethe's novel. Leverkühn's experience within the Schweigestill family can be compared with Nietzsche's experience of spiritual recapture in the calm Swiss scenery. This is the place where the creator of art comes for the various necessities of creation and to which he returns again and again for inspiration, as seen in Mann's Leverkühn.

With reference to contrasts, the most visible difference between Mann's Leverkühn and Hesse's Knecht is the type of education which affects the work of art. Leverkühn and Knecht do not complete their formal education and do not reach the experience of musical creation based on the same foundation: Leverkühn studies theology first then music, as in Nietzsche, while his vision of the Apocalypse is the consequence of his personal past. It seems that—in attributing such an education in this particular succession, theology then music, to his main character—Mann intended to provide an answer, like Nietzsche, for Wagner's theory about the relationship between religion and state. While Knecht only mentions the names of various theologians as examples for the inconsistency of their ideas, Leverkühn is one of the very few of Mann's characters which does not set a precise identity for himself and does not play the game of an elite or a brotherhood of any sort, irrespective of its personal, artistic, and political consequences. By contrast with a freemason who leads a "game", Leverkühn's portrait is less than precise due to his seclusion at the farm as well as to the unsuccessful attempts of other characters to push him towards fame and reputation. For Mann, Leverkühn was an ideal figure, a hero of our times, a man who bears within himself the sufferings of his age. At the end of the day, Leverkühn was a strange phenomenon to which Mann could hardly attribute a face and a body.<sup>406</sup>

If, in Hesse, the glass bead game is cosubstantial to the master's fate, which is to bring rain—the blessing or the manna—over the region, it means that the game in itself involves a political aspect, namely the mission to administer the citadel which is a responsibility reserved exclusively for the elites of the province. This mission is transmitted genealogically as a royal legacy. This means implicitly that the game also has a political finality, namely to ensure the perpetuity of a state government which impresses everybody through the intellectual abilities of its hierarchy. Hesse's novel produces this impression as a notification for those from outside, who—regardless of their caste—are fundamentally different from the *electi* who

---

<sup>406</sup> Mann, *The Genesis of a Novel*, 74.

live within the province. It is odd, however, that Knecht eventually leaves the province but not as a social reformer but rather as an educator.<sup>407</sup>

Mann's character counterbalances the tendency to separate the pedagogic province from the rest of the world, and this is why he escapes in the world. It has been shown before that Leverkühn was not given a certain face but it is rather a character created out of nothing. His resemblance with Hesse's character though is made at a personal level as he took refuge in the unknown mountain scenery, in the countryside. From now on, the discrepancies between Mann and Hesse in connection with their characters come one after another, and Mann's details in his *Genesis of a Novel* complete the portrait of his main character.

Leverkühn's portrait in *Doktor Faustus* confirms that Mann is indeed a writer of contrasts. Thus, his main character does not meet the expectations of other characters, on the one hand, or those of the contemporary public which had recently witnessed the fall of the Third Reich and was facing its devastating consequences, on the other hand. Even though—apart from the *Buddenbrooks*—*Doktor Faustus* is Mann's only work which presents the German or Germanic realm (Leverkühn lives at the border between Germany and Switzerland) as seriously as possible, it does not mean that the novel itself contains a certain hidden political tendency. The essence of *Doktor Faustus* is given by the type of character as portrayed by Mann himself and by his indication that his work is a novel of music. If *Doktor Faustus* is defined by its character which creates music, it means that—like Mann's characters from other novels and short stories who are interested in music—Leverkühn does not expand his interest towards other subjects. In other words, Mann's Leverkühn in *Doktor Faustus* defines the novel as a "musical"—not political—work, and it is absolutely necessary to understand the novel from this particular perspective.

---

<sup>407</sup> See Stanley Antosik, "Utopian Machines: Leibniz's 'Computer' and Hesse's Glass Bede Game", *Germanic Review* 67 (1992), 40. Antosik talks about Hesse's role within the context of the discussion about European civilization, which—for Hesse—was lost without the game and its guardian elite. Likewise, Antosik underlines Knecht's idea that the inhabitants of Castaglia are unsuited for ruling, unlike Leibniz—used by Hesse as a mathematical model—who preferred Plato's dream of the philosopher-king. Taking into account Hesse's non-political intellectual image, it would be illogical to say that Mann, who follows in his footsteps either through Leverkühn or Tonio, is the promoter of a politically embedded culture.

## **8. *Doktor Faustus* and National Political “Culture”**

Before considering Leverkühn's composition style it is necessary to understand that, through his music, he does not pay any tribute to the “German spirit.” Such an appreciation may of course seem odd because every aspect of Mann's novel breathes the atmosphere “from home”, while the cultural and social life as well as the farm where Leverkühn chooses to seclude himself and the portraits of the peasants, in a word, everything is as German as it gets, and Leverkühn loved every bit of this German world. The novel itself is very German as compared to the first half of the twentieth century in general, and this is the case especially due to the familiarity between the author himself and the novelistic, specifically German, atmosphere. As far as Mann's works are concerned, only the *Buddenbrooks* could probably come closer to *Doktor Faustus* because it was, as Mann himself described it, a very German book. Even if Mann's two famous novels are profoundly German, so they are closely connected to the German society of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century as well as to whatever happened politically during this period of time, they are not truly political in nature. When he wrote his impressions about *Doktor Faustus*, what Mann retained as fundamentally important were not political issues but rather the portrait of small Hanno Buddenbrook, the little boy with a strong passion for music, and he is Mann's favorite character after Leverkühn. As for Leverkühn, Mann sincerely admitted that there was no other character so close to his heart that he loved so sincerely. What is important for Mann has to do with the portrait of his character and especially with his hidden and inner side, not the external social-political background which constitutes the environment of his work. Mann did not use his two essentially German novels to encourage or promote a certain type of state politics, but he rather looked for a definite kind of character in relation to both his “bourgeois” novel *Buddenbrooks* and his novel of contrasts, *Doktor Faustus*.

In other words, through *Doktor Faustus*, Mann has at last the chance to answer the accusations of philo-socialism, conservatism, communism and so on, accusations which seemed to have lost sight of Mann's unitary orientation of his subjects by means of the type of a character chosen and loved by the author himself, and by the fact that he never avoided to answer such accusations. Moreover, in the Afterword to his *Doktor Faustus*, Mann even anticipates some possible unintentional connections between the subject of his latest novel and various political movements, some of them as new as the novel itself. The identification and unmasking of these orientations reveal Mann not only as an eye-witness to the turmoil within the exiled Ger-

man elite but also as a writer whose capacity and accuracy to understand such unrest turned his novel into an intentionally apolitical book:

I recall an evening with Leonhard Frank... Socialist in his political beliefs and an admirer of Russia, he was at the same time filled with a new feeling for Germany and its indivisibility. Given the tenacity with which Hitler's troops were still fighting, this was a patriotism that seemed curiously premature. Yet it was beginning to develop among the German exiles... His emotional involvement with *Faustus* was welcome to me but at the same time worried me. I could not help taking it as a warning—against the danger of my novel's doing its part in creating a new German myth, flattering the Germans with their “demonism”.<sup>408</sup>

The fact that Mann used the word “demonism” points directly to the German culture which created a genuine cult for music but far from promoting music in general it unleashed the music with obvious political prerogatives according to Wagner's model. Mann's association with Nietzsche is gradually revealed as the issue of the relationship between culture and civilization from his previous *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* is brought to an end. In his “capacity” of the last unpolitical German, Nietzsche is a model for Mann with reference to his *Doktor Faustus* but not because Nietzsche would have urged him to be politically neutral. Mann never seemed to have stepped aside in connection with politics, so he did say whatever he had to say about politics when he thought it was appropriate to do so. Nietzsche himself was not a total stranger to the social-political transformations of his days either, so he did criticize German politics when in the name of the German cause the means to carry it out were totally ignored. In this respect, Mann inherited from Nietzsche an acute sense of visionary capability. Thus, while he declares himself an anti-socialist and anti-nationalist, Mann is a staunch advocate of democracy although he was rather cautious in enthusiastically manifesting his political preferences. To be sure, in his Afterword to *Doktor Faustus*, Mann offers a genuine lesson of historical morality—as Nietzsche did before him against the *Kulturkampf* or against Adolf von Harnack—to some famous names of the German diaspora such as Leonhard Frank and Reinhold Niebuhr<sup>409</sup> due to the fact that he had a certain degree of caution when it came to extol a possible “ideal government”:

---

<sup>408</sup> Mann, *The Genesis of a Novel*, 48.

<sup>409</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971) was a Protestant theologian of German stock, born and educated in the United States of America. Following a visit to Europe in 1932, where he witnessed the vicissitudes of the French occupation in Germany, he adhered to pacifism and

I was also chary of appearing because German exile circles, supported by Americans of German descent like Niebuhr, were much concerned with the Free Germany movement, and I was being asked to participate—even to take the leading role. The idea was to prepare a democratic German government that would be ready to take over after Hitler's inevitable collapse.<sup>410</sup>

Unfortunately, "Free Germany" as a new political movement that almost claimed the title of the second German republic as initiated by the German exiles in America became strangely silent only a few years after its takeoff. Mann was strangely prophetic as well as visionary also in connection with "Free Germany" as a movement of national freedom and restoration which, as far as he was concerned, was nothing but a mere attempt of some of his German brothers from America to build the German utopia without any foundation whatsoever. Thus, for Mann, the promoters of "Free Germany" did nothing but saw Germany as a "sleeping beauty" dreaming of the "American dream" despite the daily nightmare faced by their brothers in Germany. As with his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, Mann does not want to turn himself into a political leader overnight but he insists that the power and the value of his opinion reside entirely in his pen. Furthermore, as he himself declared, even the thought to return home with a political message after the war in connection with which he was only vaguely informed was profoundly alien to him.

---

supported the Socialist Party of America and even the Communist Party. After the Nazi rise to power and the outburst of the Second World War, Niebuhr gave up these political convictions and sternly criticized them. As a pastor, he called the Christians from all over the world to get involved actively in war in order to fight against and eliminate social evil, as seen in his *The Nature and Destiny of Man. A Christian Interpretation* (1941). His political philosophy is closely connected to the concept of "Christian realism", which promotes an awareness concerning the role that each Christian must play in order to solve political conflicts. For Niebuhr, solving political conflicts through the active involvement of Christians in society could lead to the construction of a moral state, as in his *Moral Man and Immoral Society. A Study of Ethics and Politics* (1932), and in *Christian Realism and Political Problems* (1953). For details about Niebuhr's connection to the "Free Germany" movement, see Steven Casey, "The Campaign to Sell a Harsh Peace for Germany to the American Public, 1944-1948", *Blackwell Synergy* 90.297 (2005), 62. For Casey, "Free Germany" was a failure given the Second World War and the first signs of the Cold War. Thus, as far as Casey was concerned, "Free Germany" was a total failure from the beginning because it was totally incapable to provide plan for the industrial, social and political recovery of postwar Germany.

<sup>410</sup> Mann, *The Genesis of a Novel*, 51.

These observations and details concerning the political and historical reality behind Mann's *Doktor Faustus* as well as his desire to define his new novel are important for the general perception of the novel. Thus, the context of the novel's kaleidoscopic episodes and the way they were conceived can only add to a correct understanding of Mann's work. This is why *The Genesis of a Novel* is not merely a collection of notes or memories concerning some of the issues which troubled Mann every now and then as he was writing his novel. Although a novel of music, *Doktor Faustus* enters historical reality as a book which never broke itself apart from its historical setting very much like Mann's other literary productions. Like the *Buddenbooks*, *Der Zauberberg*, *Joseph und seine Brüder*, and even *Felix Krull*, a consistent part of Mann's *Doktor Faustus* is a genuine historical book which completes the historical information he offered throughout his literary works. If in the *Buddenbooks* Mann still lives in the age of monarchy and *Der Zauberberg* psychologically prepares Mann's character for the First World War, *Doktor Faustus* continues the history of the beginnings and creation evoked in *Joseph und seine Brüder* and orients it to the future or to the Apocalypse. Thus, Mann's *Doktor Faustus* is probably one of the most successful literary productions that present war as an apocalyptic time and particularly as the end of creation. At the same time, written in a historical context dominated by war, the message of the novel cannot ignore the great problems of modern society. Irrespective of its theological debates—which include the relationship between dogma and reason, heaven and hell, God/divinity and the devil—or its various, sometimes contradictory, discussions on music, composition, and inspiration, it is clear that the names of the German theologians (predominantly liberal) as well as the music are specific to a well defined European realm, namely modern Germany in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>411</sup> The finality of all these debates is predominantly moral because Leverkühn's choice of an idea or model for his music implies a decisional element as well as discernment. Furthermore, even Leverkühn's death is connected to the finality and morality of the work of art. Thus, the history lesson given by Mann to his fellow Germans in *Doktor Faustus* excels through its extraordinary ability to perform this transfer of meanings between the individual decision—Leverkühn's pact with the devil—and collective-historical repercussion. Thus, if careful enough, Mann's contemporary readers could see in Leverkühn's collapse the disgrace as well as the imminent fall of the Third Reich.<sup>412</sup>

---

<sup>411</sup> For instance, Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, 99.

<sup>412</sup> See Brigitte Bergmann Fischer, *My European Heritage: Life Among Great Men of Letters* (Boston: Branden Books, 1986), 172-173.

It has been shown before that there is a social connection between *Der Zauberberg* and *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*. The same holds true in respect of *Doktor Faustus*, which is socially connected to Mann's previous works. Thus, as Michael Beddow notices, elements from *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* prepare the intellectual agenda for Mann's later reflection on Germany as pictured in *Doktor Faustus*.<sup>413</sup> Mann's early arguments are thus still very important for his later work even though their initial vehemence faded away. The resumption of the issue of the apolitical man, which was interrupted after *Der Zauberberg*, clarifies at least two main points. First, it proves that Mann's impressions about the state of Germany prior to the First World War in *Der Zauberberg* did not change at all in *Doktor Faustus*, which foresees Germany's collapse after the Second World War. Second, Mann's irony takes an enormous bite from extremist individualism, which he never approved of and caused an entire nation to fall with Mann's hero. This is why Beddow identified three constant ideas as Mann's main preoccupations in his *Doktor Faustus*:

a focus on Germany's self-consciously problematic relationship with modernity; an exploration of conflicts between the ethos of artistic creation and the demands of private and public morality; a desire to take a stand on moral, cultural, and political issues, uneasily combined with a deep suspicion of the blandishments of solidarity in either assent or dissent, a tension between didactic ambitions and radical individualism.<sup>414</sup>

Germany's self-consciousness and man's place in modern society is a theme which has direct relevance to the problem of Mann's character and can be presented as a moment of transition on the social scene (with reference to the political and military conflict) in close connection with the main character seen as a creator of art. The continuation of this theme is given by the conflict between creation and its external reception, which is evident in the relationship between Mann's novel and Hesse's finality of the creative act as perceived by the masters of the "glass bead game".<sup>415</sup>

---

<sup>413</sup> See Michael Beddow, *Thomas Mann. Doctor Faustus* [Landmarks of World Literature] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 10.

<sup>414</sup> Michael Beddow, *Mann: Doctor Faustus*, 3.

<sup>415</sup> Hesse's Knecht has the specific qualities of a *magister ludi* as an exponent of didactics, pedagogy and academic expertise, as well as extraordinary mystical capacities, reminiscent of ancient Asian-Oriental beliefs, which he masters as a genuine tribe leader. A significant detail which is emphatically presented at the end of the novel is the fact that the master must bring the rain. Thus, the discrepancy between the essence of the game (which is controlled by the master who wants to find the unifying element of universal diversity) and the

Mann's fundamental theme as reflected in the moral, cultural, and political model pursued in his literary works has a definite place in *Doktor Faustus* given Mann's own presentation of *Doktor Faustus* as a novel of music. The model is proposed by Mann in connection with his confessions about how he wrote *Doktor Faustus*. In the novel, Mann puts his argument that Leverkühn does not have a precise image or face to a test. Even if the novel is full of Nietzsche, as Mann admits, and its themes touch sensitive cords of contemporary writers such as Hesse, it is the writer himself who has to clarify the details about Leverkühn's art and technique, because they are essentially modern and they breathe the air of the mid-twentieth century cultural-scientific life. At a certain point, for instance, Mann discloses the fact that he had a private conversation concerning the progress of his work related to the portrayal of his main character. Asked whether he had a certain model from physical reality when he thought of Leverkühn, here is what Mann had to say about this issue:

I added that the difficulty consisted precisely in inventing the biography of a musician who could then take his place among the real situations and personalities of modern musical life.<sup>416</sup>

So, with direct reference to Leverkühn as a character in Mann's novel, the writer's literary effort reached the point when the problem of music was at stake. Like Hesse, Mann acutely feels that his novel exists in two major "times": the "time" of the master (Leverkühn, the master of music) and the "time" of the game, given by the concept of modern music.

If in the novel, Nietzsche is given the name of Leverkühn only to produce a first external impression about his connections with the rest of the characters, in Leverkühn's view Mann, the composer used a certain way to perceive and compose music which was specific to the German exiles in America during the first half of the twentieth century. This aspect was crucially important for Mann who found a second home in America where he could meet his German brothers and discuss social or political issues. These conversations, mainly held during supper, were both an opportunity to speak

---

meaning attributed to the game by the inhabitants of the pedagogical province (the use of secret incantations for the immediate welfare caused by rain) is tempered by the hero's disintegration and the continuation of mystical practices by his son. In Mann, the hero loses himself in his own ego or finds a new ego for himself as he goes insane, while his creation remains suspended because there is nobody to continue it and there is no other message to be transmitted apart from the impressive apocalyptic perspective on the world, as present in Nietzsche.

<sup>416</sup> Mann, *The Genesis of a Novel*, 74.

German and a chance to exchange ideas; either way, it seems that Mann greatly enjoyed them. His option for Nietzsche as an appearance and a social position for his main character offered Mann the possibility to present Leverkühn as a genius because Nietzsche's philosophy was specific to him and quotations from Nietzsche—especially with reference to music—are numerous.<sup>417</sup>

## **9. Mann and the Idea of Music. Criticism against Intentionality in Art**

With reference to the art of musical composition, Mann does not want to be perceived as a classic, so he reaches a sort of a deadlock as he knows Nietzsche was a promoter of the freedom of the spirit, rhythm, and spiritual peace which are all the richest treasure of music. However, in order to understand Mann's literary outlook, also in connection with Nietzsche, one has to approach the meaning of music in his works. The necessity of such an approach is revealed even by the subtitle of Mann's novel *Doktor Faustus*, which directs the readers to the problems of musical composition. Mann's novel is definitely oriented against dilettantism, which brings forth an older discussion, crucially relevant for the formation of Mann's novel. This older discussion has to do with the controversy between Nietzsche and Wagner and gives Mann the opportunity to provide numerous explanations concerning his perspective on music as well as its guiding lines. In *Doktor Faustus*, Mann's explanations are features of individualization, as in Goethe and Nietzsche. This shows why it is with Nietzsche that Mann begins the very long and difficult journey to the establishment of key-concepts like the meaning of the role of music in society by indicating, at the same time, the main figures that either support or reject his definition of music.

In *The Genesis of a Novel*, Mann begins his analysis of the concept of music from the old controversy between Nietzsche and Wagner. His purpose in doing so was occasioned by the accusations—following the publication of his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*—that he either served the German state through art or transformed the concept of German culture by opposing it to the idea of Western civilization. Mann identifies the true problem of Wagner's art, which is identical with that noticed by Nietzsche in his *Der Fall Wagner*. Thus, in Mann—which is also true for Nietzsche—the problem of Wagner's art needs to be discussed in connection with two

---

<sup>417</sup> For details about the way Mann related himself to Nietzsche's philosophy, see T. E. Apter, *Thomas Mann: The Devil's Advocate* (New York: New York University Press, 1979). Apter notices that, in *Doktor Faustus*, Mann approaches the things which transcend life, so artistic creation is seen as a voice of death.

main issues. First, Wagner's idea of music is closely linked to the notions of religion and state, as seen in his famous essays,<sup>418</sup> and second, it is important to clarify the idea of intentionality in Wagner's music.

With reference to the first problem of Wagner's music, in his *Wagner und unsere Zeit* (translated as *Pro and contra Wagner*),<sup>419</sup> Mann discusses the issue of the intentionality of art and notices that Wagner the composer established an indestructible relationship between music, religion, and the German state, which had been socially cemented. Especially in his *Deutsche Kunst und deutsche Politik* (*German Art and German Policy*, 1867), Wagner highlights primarily the popular element (*Volk*) and shows that German society is the realm of action for art and for the religion of the state, which is the religion of the Kaiser. It should be mentioned that, as far as Mann was concerned, this realm is fundamentally opposed to French society, where the individual is autonomous as well as opposed to the image of the king. The idea of the exclusivism of German art as promoted by Wagner leads at least to one logical conclusion, namely that the German cultural space does not only present an anti-Western hegemony but also an anti-Semitic trend, as abundantly clear in Wagner's essay *Das Judentum in der Musik* (*Judaism in Music*, 1850). Mann also clarifies the problem of the similarities and dissimilarities between his artistic creed and Wagner's approach to music, which is also explained in the chapter dedicated to Wagner, called *Leiden und Größe Richard Wagners*.

The second problem of Wagner's music is the issue of intentionality which seems to be Mann's greatest concern in connection with Wagner's perspective on art. This brings us back to Mann's discussion about the problem of the German art in his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* as well as to his impressions about the relationship between the writer and the public, as expressed in his early correspondence with his brother Heinrich and with Hesse. With reference to German art, which is highly praised in *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, the name of Nietzsche is absolutely vital. Thus, if Mann's later novel *Doktor Faustus* is the history of a composer, so it presents a totally different subject as well as character, *The Genesis of a Novel* begins and ends, like a circle with Nietzsche. In the beginning, Nietzsche provides Mann with the idea of the novel, so Nietzsche is Mann's inspiration; in the end, a last consideration about music is made again with

---

<sup>418</sup> See, for details, Wagner's *Über Staat und Religion* (1864), *Deutsche Kunst und deutsche Politik* (1867) as well as other well-known essays as gathered in William Ashton Ellis (ed.), *Art and Politics* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

<sup>419</sup> Thomas Mann, *Pro and contra Wagner*, trans. by Allan Blunden (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

Nietzsche's assistance: Mann says that music was always suspicious especially to those who loved it so much; and the only example given by Mann is Nietzsche.<sup>420</sup> This could mean that, in order to find a source of inspiration for his *Doktor Faustus*, Mann read Nietzsche's *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*. At this point, however, it is important to notice that, if Mann read Nietzsche's *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* it is curious that in *Doktor Faustus*, Mann does not borrow elements from Nietzsche's book and his perspective on music does not resemble the greatness of the German empire so theatrically evoked by Nietzsche in the spirit of Wagner. It is equally true that fifteen years later—as he reassessed his perspective on the cultural significance of his first book whose preface was written by Wagner—Nietzsche himself said it was an immature book, which looked impossible to him, poorly written, painful, the fruit of a confused imagination, even effeminate and devoid of any propensity to logical clarity. Moreover, Nietzsche could not recognize his own voice in this book, so he said that another voice, alien to him, spoke in the book with the seriousness of the German and the lack of scruples of Wagner's disciples.<sup>421</sup> So, Nietzsche's original 1872 *Die Geburt der Tragödie* does not represent his mature perspective on music. As for Mann, whenever he makes references to Nietzsche, he uses Nietzsche's 1886 *Die Geburt der Tragödie* in order to illustrate his point. Thus, Mann's observation that music becomes suspicious to those who love it dearly represents exactly what happened to Nietzsche who accused his own early perspective on music of effemination. Mann identifies a similar idea in another book on music, which said that the valiant Thracian women were aroused by wrath against Orpheus because his songs had effeminated all the men.<sup>422</sup>

The clue, therefore, is clear. The accusation of effemination launched by Nietzsche against his early book is at the same time a direct hint at Wagner's music in general, which used to animate Nietzsche's very early artistic ideals. The same accusation resumed by Mann strengthens his conviction that his novel is totally new and, more importantly, it was born out of nothing, which is also the case with its main character. Thus, if it was born out

---

<sup>420</sup> Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, 689.

<sup>421</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, in the 1886 Preface to his *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* (Plain Label Books, 2007), 10. This reassessment is part of Nietzsche's first section of *The Birth of Tragedy* added to the book many years after its publication in 1872. Nietzsche wrote his reassessment in 1886 and entitled it "Attempt at a Self-Criticism". If the original 1872 edition had a preface by Wagner himself and was written in light of Wagner's definition of music, the 1886 preface—this time written by Nietzsche—is visibly anti-Wagner and apolitical.

<sup>422</sup> Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, 194.

of nothing, it means that it is utterly different from as well as opposed to any other model, so both the novel and its hero are phenomena of contrasts. It is very likely that Mann read also Nietzsche's *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, wherein Nietzsche unmasks Wagner and exposes the populist-nationalistic tendencies of his music. This way, Mann's *Doktor Faustus* gives a powerful retort to all the artists who turned music into a cause which is both hidden and pervaded with politics:

I was thoroughly dissatisfied with Ernest Newman's [Wagner's biographer] psychological explanation of Nietzsche's break with Wagner (which he attributes to ordinary jealousy and even simply social envy). Newman has little respect for Wagner as a thinker, no more than he has for Nietzsche, but he forgives Wagner everything for the sake of his works—as though these had nothing to do with thinking... He does not realize that this aspect of Wagner..., the tendency towards authoritarian pronouncements on everything and anything, the inordinate immodesty which anticipated Hitler's, was precisely what got on Nietzsche's nerves.<sup>423</sup>

Bearing in mind that Mann follows the birth of his novel step by step, this clarification concerning his perspective on the rupture between Nietzsche and Wagner is most relevant. Certain admiration for Wagner in *Leiden und Größe der Meister (The Suffering and Greatness of the Masters)* and also in *Wagner und unsere Zeit (Pro and contra Wagner)* cannot be denied, but this should be understood as admiration or love for Wagner's time, namely for the nineteenth century. Another illuminating details concerning Mann's understanding of the nineteenth century is the fact that he never declares himself to be the exclusive partisan of the German culture in this particular historical period.<sup>424</sup> On the contrary, as far as his relationship with the nineteenth century is concerned, Mann believed that it resembles that between a father and his son, so he is critical of the nineteenth century as he ought to be. He does appreciate the beauty of the nineteenth century and especially the ennobling art of French impressionism, the English, French and Russian novel, German natural sciences, German music.<sup>425</sup> Moreover, with reference to the father-son relationship between Mann and Wagner, for instance, this proves to be critical indeed because a commemorative essay should have

---

<sup>423</sup> Mann, *The Genesis of a Novel*, 176.

<sup>424</sup> See Thomas Mann, *Past Masters and Other Papers*, trans. by H. T. Lowe-Porter (Michigan: University of Michigan, 1933), 15.

<sup>425</sup> Thomas Mann, *Past Masters and Other Papers*, 17.

extolled Wagner's life and works. Mann, however, cannot talk about Wagner without doing justice to the European culture in general and without repressing his impressions against Nietzsche's criticism; this is why he rebukes Wagner for expressing in his music the suffering of an oppressed soul, so his music is devoid of the enthusiasm of dance. The hint to Nietzsche's critique is evident because Nietzsche himself criticized Wagner for making the path to genuine music less accessible and increasingly difficult, like a failed swimming effort rather than a gracious dance.

Resuming the problem of intentionality, Mann always has a person or even a certain public in general to whom he carefully dedicates his work. In his letter or answer to Hesse as well as in *Doktor Faustus*, Mann shows that the enthusiastic reception of some of his novels is a fortunate coincidence which does not increase his impetus to write; in other words, the artist does not create in order to be awarded the laurels of recognition. The anti-model is Wagner, whose artistic intentionality manifested as authority and pride can only lead to dilettantism. In *Doktor Faustus*, the writer acutely senses that he came to a deadlock which also implies the lack of a reference point or of the public, while the deadlock consists of the need for musical novelty that could confer a professional element to the work of art. This professionalism though must have a clear result, so the music composed by Leverkühn must impregnate the reader with the conviction that the composer does an excellent job, so he knows what he does because he is not a dilettante:

There is nothing sillier, in a novel about an artist, than merely to assert the existence of art, to talk about genius, about works, to hail these and rave about their effects upon the souls of their audiences. No, concrete reality, exactitude, were needed—this was utterly clear to me. "I shall have to study music."<sup>426</sup>

In order to avoid dilettantism in *Doktor Faustus*, Mann oriented the entire novel—as early as 1943—to an unexpected direction. Thus, the true essence of the book is disclosed from the very beginning. Mann explains that his novel is indeed a novel of music. Nevertheless, before penetrating the essence of the novel, Mann needs the support of a specialist, a genuine musician, because the novel is not meant to be a mere musical compendium but an encyclopedia of culture as reflected in his time. Any support in this respect is more than welcomed, so the novel is crammed with names of artists and works specific to the art of music (for instance, Schoenberg and Berlioz to give just two of the most famous names). Likewise, in *The Genesis of a*

---

<sup>426</sup> Mann, *The Genesis of a Novel*, 36.

*Novel* Mann records the beginning of his journey in as well as his curiosity related to the lives of various composers which was triggered by a conversation he had with Arnold Schoenberg in the latter's house. Mann even goes as far as to explain how he used Schoenberg's *Theory of Harmony* at the end of his novel.

At this stage, having clarified the problem of the literary character, having approached the issue of music in opposition to Wagner whom he had the courage to call dilettante, and having found inspiration for Leverkühn's musical compositions in a series of brand new musical treatises which introduce the then contemporary cultural atmosphere, Mann is aware that his "deadlock" resides in replacing the psychological effect of Wagner's music with high technical professionalism. Given that in the 1920s-1930s the dodecaphonic or atonal composition style promoted by Schoenberg began to stir the interest of his contemporaries—the serial scores being also found in the works of some famous names such as Stravinski—it was suggested that Mann's novel pay homage to the father of the new musical trend.<sup>427</sup>

The novel, however, discloses a significant detail as the true technical genius of the novel sneaks into the unfolding action indirectly and imperceptibly. He is no other than the famous Theodor Adorno,<sup>428</sup> whom Mann

---

<sup>427</sup> See, for instance, what the Romanian writer Valeriu Râpeanu has to say about the relationship between Mann and Schoenberg. Râpeanu makes reference to Mann's essays from 1932-1934 published later, in a single volume, at the Bermann-Fischer Verlag in Stockholm. According to Râpeanu, the true historical person behind Leverkühn's literary portrait is actually the Austrian composer Arnold Schoenberg. His conclusion has a positive aspect, in the sense that he reached it having searched the motivation of the new musical trend, which is not politically informed as in Wagner, but rather morally-oriented as in Goethe. In other words, the new type of music expresses a totally different state of mind as a reflection of the cultural environment of the twentieth century, not of nineteenth century bourgeoisie. Râpeanu, however, limited his analysis to some episodic scenes belonging to the then "cultural revolution" and does not seem to be aware of its critical nucleus indicated by Mann and his references to the Frankfurt School.

<sup>428</sup> Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) was the cofounder—alongside other equally famous philosophers, psychoanalysts and literary critics like Max Horkheimer (1895-1973), Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979), Erich Fromm (1900-1980) and Walter Benjamin (1892-1940)—of the Institute for Social Research, also known as the Frankfurt School. Some of the well-known names of the Frankfurt School as well as its intellectual direction are mentioned by Mann in his *Doctor Faustus* both in the main text and the footnotes. Most of the representatives of the Frankfurt School joined the German diaspora in America, so Mann and Adorno became neighbors somewhere in Los Angeles. Adorno rose to fame due to his theoretical and social-critical writings whereby he offered a critical perspective on Marxism and "instrumental reason" as seen in his *Dialectics of Enlightenment* (1941). Like Horkheimer, Adorno identified in contemporary culture elements of instrumental-social tyranny—confirmed by the victory of the Nazi in Germany and the extermination of important leaders of opinion like Walter Benjamin—which led to the total manipulation of culture to-

sketches a very brief portrait by saying that he was difficult, exclusivist, and the possessor of a wisdom leading to tragedy. Mann also mentions that Adorno had studied philosophy and music at the University of Frankfurt where he taught philosophy until he was banished by the Nazi. This is also an excellent opportunity for Mann to draft a sketch of Germany's academic world which, according to Mann, was dominated almost exclusively by theoretical, political, artistic and musical preoccupations, and this is actually a short presentation of the Frankfurt School. Mann does not insist on the first development stage of the Frankfurt School which preceded the Nazi regime even if the school proved to be an important impediment to Nazi politics. It is, however, absolutely natural for Mann to leave aside this phase of political rebellion, not because it was unimportant but because he had totally different expectations both from his novel and his "counselor", Adorno. After he left Germany for America, Adorno realized that he lived in a new world, which was open to freedom of speech and wherein political discourse was at least redundant. Having reached full maturity, Adorno gradually turns himself into a different image of Mann, who manifests exclusive aesthetic preoccupations in the novel, exactly like Leverkühn, who refines his creation step by step until he produces the masterpiece of his entire life. It means that the novel itself, namely its projection, as well as the development of its technical-musical language, presuppose a visible maturity and a high degree of perfection/skill which is based on experience and refinement. In this respect, Mann's novel is not very easy to read; sometimes a specialized musical dictionary is a must for phrases like "dodecaphonic technique", to give just one example. At the same time, Mann notices that Adorno, like Leverkühn, was never capable—given his spiritual formation and education—to choose between philosophy and music because he had learned in Nietzsche's school. This is a crucial observation because, like Nietzsche who wrote his famous *Der Fall Wagner* which cynically treated Wagner's theatric world<sup>429</sup>, Adorno is quoted by Mann who used Adorno's *Philoso-*

---

wards the end of the first half of the twentieth century. Adorno, whose perspective on the relationship between culture and society received a fatal blow with the Nazi rise to political power in Germany—reoriented social criticism to aesthetics and suggested the non-instrumental mimetic model for man's relationships with nature and his fellow human beings, as in his posthumous *Aesthetic Theory* (1970). For Adorno, art is the only reality which is capable to shelter such relationships due to its multiple possibilities of affirmation of the universality of the human spirit, namely possibilities of "non-identification" of individuals with their creative potential. For details, see Robert Audi (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 278-279.

<sup>429</sup> Nietzsche on Wagner: „Dem *Künstler der décadence* –steht das Wort... Ein typischer *décadent*... Wagners Kunst ist krank. Die Probleme, die er auf die Bühne bringt, lauter Hysteriker Probleme,—das

*phy of Modern Music*, a profoundly pessimistic book about the state of music and its message to the contemporary world:

Here [in Adorno's manuscript] indeed was something important. The manuscript dealt with modern music both on an artistic and on a sociological plane. The spirit of it was remarkably forwardlooking, subtle and deep, and the whole thing had the strangest affinity to the idea of my book.<sup>430</sup>

The ascertainment of affinity convinces Mann that Adorno is "his man" in the sense that his thought is very close to what the writer himself had in mind in connection with his novel. This is why, with reference to Adorno, Mann exclaims in amazement but with a strong feeling of confidence: "This was my man!"<sup>431</sup>

Furthermore, the affinity between Mann and Adorno can also be seen in connection with their critique of Wagner. Thus, Mann is not the only one who accused Wagner of intentionality and dilettantism. Adorno himself analysed the meaning of the word "dilettante" with direct reference to Wagner. In addition to Adorno's *Philosophy of Music*, his *In Search of Wagner* proves to be very important for Mann because it introduces an element of novelty to the definition of the word "dilettante", which explains the aesthetic function of culture. Based on Mann's bold affirmation that Wagner was an amateur, Adorno writes that Mann definitely touched a sensitive cord given the indignant voices of those who criticize Mann for his assessment of Wagner.<sup>432</sup> The meaning attributed by Adorno to Wagner's dilettantism is mainly anti-aesthetic because, for Adorno, Wagner's attempt to reunite all the arts under the auspices of music was both unfruitful and anti-artistic, which is more than obvious in Wagner's *Religion und Kunst*. In Mann's novel, Adorno's accusation of anti-aestheticism against Wagner is reiterated in different words which retain, however, its fundamental meaning. Thus, Wagner's music is perceived as a paradox because the psychological element is always prevalent, namely it is the factor which motivates

---

(K)onvulsivische seines Affekts, seine überreizte Sensibilität... Als physiologische Typen betrachtet... (eine Kranken-Galerie!) (Nietzsche, *Der Fall Wagner Dämmerung*, Leipzig: C. G. Naumann, 1888, 15-16.)

<sup>430</sup> Mann, *The Genesis of a Novel*, 38.

<sup>431</sup> Mann, *The Genesis of a Novel*, 38.

<sup>432</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *In Search of Wagner* (New York: Verso, 2005), 18.

it, while politics—namely political action—is of secondary importance but it functions as a reflex, or an instrument of music.<sup>433</sup>

The affinity between Mann and Adorno logically presupposes the lack of affinity between Wagner and Leverkühn. As a main representative of the Frankfurt School, Adorno had numerous occasions to say that genuine social criticism is directly connected to the methodology of approaching social-moral models. Thus, for Adorno, modern society lacks the necessary individual specificity because it is ultra-administrative and governed by only a few personalities that can push it into a certain direction by means of political and psychological maneuvers.<sup>434</sup> The predominant political and psychological factor which was characteristic to Adorno's contemporary modern society found its expression in the Nazi political model, based on Hitler's mobilizing discourses that appealed to mass psychology. According to Mann and Adorno, through his essays celebrating the subordination relationship between religion, art, and state, Wagner was the forerunner of this particular type of nationalistic political system. Thus, their warning that the psychological element is for a nation the anticipative motivational factor of political action is the result of the social-political experience of the Germans since Ludwig II of Bavaria.<sup>435</sup>

This propagation of social politics concerning the administration of mass psychology from Wagner to Hitler is understood by the two German exiles, Mann and Adorno, as a process of cultural perversion.<sup>436</sup> About the fact that, according to Adorno, Wagner used music to crown Germany's artistic efforts of proclaiming its greatness and superiority, Mann said that "There are not two Germanys, a good one and a bad one, but only one whose best

---

<sup>433</sup> Celia Applegate; Pamela Potter, *Music and German National Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 155. See especially the chapter "National and Universal: Thomas Mann and the Paradox of "German" Music."

<sup>434</sup> This theme is present in Mann's programmatic writings such as *Mario und der Zauberer*, who took it over from Goethe's idea of the necessity of individual consciousness as complementary to state, organic consciousness—see Goethe's *Gespräche mit Eckermann*, where Goethe explains his perspective on the concept of national identity.

<sup>435</sup> In the context of the nineteenth century, what Wagner did at the court of Ludwig II through his articles which analyse German music from a psychological point of view and especially as opposed to Jewish music mirrors the twentieth century process of ethnic purification initiated by the Nazi. For details about Wagner's use of music and choreography in order to illustrate the superiority of German art, see Marc A. Weiner, *Richard Wagner and the Anti-Semitic Imagination* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 261-271.

<sup>436</sup> Celia Applegate; Pamela Potter, *Music and German National Identity*, 156.

turned into evil through devilish cunning. Wicked Germany is merely good Germany gone astray.”<sup>437</sup>

The idea of Mann’s *Doktor Faustus*—a novel of music rather than a novel of a musician, written in a style which is not perfectible but perfectionist and based not on indirect information about music but on Adorno’s support and guidance who, according to Mann, knows all the music ever composed in this world—is a sample of contemporary critical philosophy on culture and society. The “affinity” mentioned by Mann is a constant reality as the action of the novel unfolds, which through Leverkühn becomes a book of unprecedented artistic evolution. This is true no matter whether we look at it through the eyes of the young student who takes a critical position generally mediated by easy learning and the free discussions about polyhymnia, polyphony and rhythmic alternance, or through the critical approach which tackles Leverkühn the mature musician, as well as its supreme work which points to the *imitatio Dei* by means of the *Apocalypsis cum figuris*. The multitude of specialized musical terms which receive a special, new, and unexpected philosophical meaning through Leverkühn—making him almost imperceptible to his high school teachers and colleagues—is ascribed a greater potency when he reaches maturity. Leverkühn finds and conceives the music meant to express a certain message as well as a language which is not intimidated by the material side of sound. For Leverkühn, what is important is the act of composition wherein resides the true expression of music, the absolutely formal purity given by the subjectivity of its creator. Mann’s presentation of Leverkühn’s compositional fever astonishes through its difficulty, the intercalation of styles, motives, and musical techniques which presuppose a certain education and comprehension capacity. The novel presents a generalized atmosphere of elitism, like the rest of Mann’s greatest novels.<sup>438</sup> Mann’s novel creates the impression of difficulty because it is not

---

<sup>437</sup> Celia Applegate; Pamela Potter, *Music and German National Identity*, 156. Mann offered this report about the state of Germany in a discourse he held at the Library of Congress in May 1945. He staunchly criticized the Germany’s “process of perversion” as a nation which made it susceptible for the moral and political regression that the entire civilized world looked at it in horror and distrust. His conclusion is that the entire guilt for this disastrous situation belongs to German music because music was the best Germany had to offer.

<sup>438</sup> Mann is profoundly impressed by Harry Levin’s observations in *James Joyce*, who appreciated the particularities of the modern novel and the atypical technique of evocation from *Portrait of the Artist*. Due to this technique, modern novel is no longer a novel per se. If “classical” novel presupposed an “act of creation”, Joyce and Mann’s novels ended this tradition, so they are the end of traditional novel. Thus, Mann’s novel has a special structure as it is an “act of evocation”, which only some writers are capable of, because—like Joyce—Mann enormously increases the difficulty of being a novelist. See Mann, *The Genesis of a Novel*, 75.

predictable. Its rigor, richness of information, personalized language—sometimes slightly evasive—show that Mann’s work should not be read selectively but carefully, as it requires intellectual depth due to the fact that its historical and philosophical degenerations impose certain claims. Even with reference to the “theft from reality”—which is called by the writer the “montage principle”<sup>439</sup>, this novel of music is definitely not a cheap imitation due to its individualism which consecrates music without making it “German” as in Wagner. Mann’s novel does not propose a “national music” and does not allow the establishment of a “political identity” because it is created in the midst of cultural elites that present the deep conscience of their damnation in connection with the surrounding world. The elitism of *Doktor Faustus* is admitted by Mann himself since Leverkühn and his creation are not only the dearest of his creations but they also support the feeling of ostracization both of the writer and of the work of art:

Quite literally I shared good Serenus’ feelings for him, was painfully in love with him from his days as an arrogant schoolboy, was infatuated with his “coldness”, his remoteness from life, his lack of “soul”—that mediator and conciliator between spirit and instinct—with his “inhumanity” and his “despairing heart”, with his conviction that he is damned.<sup>440</sup>

Elitism and the conscience of damnation are definitely not specific only to *Doktor Faustus*; they are equally present in *Tonio Kröger* and *Der Tod in Venedig*, wherein Leverkühn’s counterparts struggle from early childhood with the feeling of civil responsibility (given their bourgeois origin) as well as spiritual meditation or dreaming which foresees the great work of art. Like Leverkühn, Kröger joins the unadapted (because of his dreaming) and the damned (because of the depth of his work which causes loneliness), so like Leverkühn he discloses some of the hidden aspects of the creative act:

Denn er war groß und klug geworden... Da kam, mit der Qual und dem Hochmut der Erkenntnis, die Einsamkeit, weil es ihn im Kreise der Harmlosen mit dem fröhlich dunklen Sinn nicht litt und das Mal an seiner Stirn sie verstörte.

(He was grown up and sensible... And then, with knowledge, its torment and its arrogance, came solitude: because he could not endure the blithe

---

<sup>439</sup> Thomas Mann, *The Genesis of a Novel*, 30.

<sup>440</sup> Thomas Mann, *The Genesis of a Novel*, 74.

and innocent with their darkened understanding, while they in turn were troubled by the sign on his brow.)<sup>441</sup>

“The sign of his brow” is a well chosen phrase meant to identify the genius as well as separate him from other people. Thus, it could be argued that Kröger is Mann’s first Faust—or a prototype of Faust—because this sign becomes the mark of magic on Kröger, which is also a brand mark for Leverkusen. The latter’s public confession at the end of his career concerning the reason for his creation not only resumes the popular motive of Faust the alchemist and the fate of the genius, but also explains the very roots of this kind of pride and elitism which can be the result of the act of knowledge and which leaves a deep mark both on the flesh and the soul:

Ich allbereit seit meinem einundzwanzigsten Jahr mit dem Satan verheiratet bin und habe mit Wissen der Fahr, aus Wohlbedachtem Mut, Stolz und Verwegenheit, weil ich in dieser Welt einen Ruhm erlangen wollen, eine Versprechung und Bündnis mit ihm aufgerichtet, also daß alles, was ich während der Frist von vierundzwanzig Jahren vor mich gebracht, und was die Menschen mit Recht mißtrauisch betrachtet, nur mit seiner Hilfe zustandkommen, und ist Teufelswerk, eingegossen vom Engel des Giftes.

(I have smothered it within me so long, yet will keep it pent no longer that I have already since my twenty-first year been wed with Satan, and in full knowledge of the peril, and with duly considered valour, pride, and presumption, I did, out of a wish to find fame in this world, make a bond and league with Him, in such wise that what I would accomplish within the term of four and twenty years and what men would rightly regard with distrust, would come to pass solely by His help and is Devil’s work, poured out by the Angel of Poison.)<sup>442</sup>

Kröger is only the prototype of Leverkusen because he does not have the conscience of the pact with the devil but only contemplates this possibility. At any rate, he does have the feeling of damnation from early youth and this appears against the background of his social disagreements with his teachers and colleagues because of his temper. It is only when he reaches maturity that Kröger understands his damnation as a spiritual difference between himself and other people. Nevertheless, there are other similarities between

---

<sup>441</sup> Thomas Mann, *Tonio Kröger*, 24-25. See Mann, *Death in Venice, and Seven Other Stories*, 92-93.

<sup>442</sup> Thomas Mann, *Doktor Faustus*, 655. See Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, 521.

Kröger and Leverkühn, namely the awareness that being different, damned or great due to your work is not gratuitous because the mere fact of belonging to the elite requires a lot of hard work. It is very likely that the need to work appeared very early as a necessity during the lives of Mann's characters but the real hard work, assiduous and overwhelming, defines these geniuses only when they reach maturity and the proximity of their masterpiece. Thus, in a way, even *Doktor Faustus* can be seen as a bourgeois novel while the theme of creative effort and enslaving work is a constant presence throughout Mann's entire range of works.

"The sign of his brow" with reference to Kröger has a different meaning than Leverkühn's sign and this can be seen by means of small details—though not at random—inserted by Mann within the narrative of *Doktor Faustus*. Kröger's brightness is given by his victory over bourgeois spiritual mediocrity by means of bourgeois weapons such as constant work and study, though the results are primarily poetic in nature. Leverkühn is a promising individual since early childhood because he is highly praised by both his teachers and colleagues so nobody ever questions his future brightness. His damnation has nothing to do with the laurels to which most people thought he was predestined; Leverkühn ostracizes himself willingly and his seclusion in the small village of Pfeiffering for more than twenty years is essentially dual because of the concealment of his mystery (the pact with the devil) and the revelation of his art as a spectacular composer. Like Goethe's Faust, the damnation of Mann's Leverkühn resulted from such a pact not only affects him but also his beloved ones and even the animals. Writing his *Apocalypsis cum figuris*, Leverkühn enters the world which will shelter his work like a magician and Mann suggestively uses the narrative of the encounter between man and animal as a convenient element to the supernatural overtones of the work. The unrest displayed by Kashperl, the dog of the Schweigestill family, vanishes when it sees Leverkühn who suddenly becomes the animal's master. For Mann, this scene is a good opportunity to highlight the spell which surrounds his hero and is also proved by another scene that verifies the latest discovered theory of the ultrasounds at the time. The pipe "invented" by Leverkühn—whose sounds were imperceptible to humans but could definitely be heard by the dog—could be the object of scientific debates just like the technique of the pneumothorax in *Der Zauberberg*, which now becomes a simple means to increase the magic of the hero.

The fact that Leverkühn's damnation has mortal repercussion on his beloved ones, like in Goethe, is proved not only by the sudden death of his friend Rudi Schwerdtfeger but also by another, more dramatic, death which is perceived as an irreparable spiritual loss by the hero himself. The portrait

of small Nepomuk, sent to his uncle in Pfeiffering to recover from measles, presents Mann, the writer in a new light, full of tenderness, impressed and entirely captured by the feeble child. In *Doktor Faustus*, the episode which presents the physical portrait as well as the suffering of small Nepomuk has a definite function that cannot be met anywhere else in Mann's writings, namely to interweave for the first time the image of the cultural elite with the embodiment of perfect purity.<sup>443</sup>

"Echo", the name small Nepomuk himself introduced in childish innocence, is more than just a casual diminutive; whenever the child utters it, he reminds Leverkühn of the purity of his own childhood when he was too naïve and too unaware to tarnish his soul. As we read about Echo's portrait, we see Leverkühn as he gets out of his shell, out of himself, and—for the first time in Mann—we recognize that any trace of pride vanishes away when confronted with absolute purity. To the warmth of Echo's angelic face, Leverkühn answers with a totally new appearance, masterfully captured by Zeitblom, the child's protector in the absence of his father. Even if he does not pamper the child, Leverkühn gradually becomes a substitute for his father, for he is serious and funny as well as permanently earnest with his own feelings and the feelings of the child. Thus, it appears that the entrance of the small child in Leverkühn's life and the happiness he experienced in relationship with Echo represent the last attempt of Mann's hero to break the curse of the damned as well as the pact with the devil which, following the child's death, will be revealed entirely. An aggrieved witness of the child's terrible suffering and death, Leverkühn is fully aware that there is nothing left for him to trade for the child's life but, at the same time, he knows for a fact that the child's pure soul has already reached places that are higher than the ground. The tragedy of the last episode of Echo's death takes cosmic proportions as it joins together the human universe (Leverkühn, Serenus, the child's parents and relatives, the fellow human beings, man in general) and the superhuman universe (the worlds from above and below, which—Leverkühn believes—share the child's being, in accordance with an older religious tradition). If prior to this episode Leverkühn was known as a philosopher of music and life, from now on he will be seen exclusively as a *homo religiosus* who is at the beginning of a theological language as he has not yet defined properly his theological terms. His battle with the devil for the child's life is perceived by him as an element of magic because he is

---

<sup>443</sup> Nepomuk's portrait with his angelic appearance and its manifestations (the face, hair, eyes, gestures and mimics) is not only the optical opposite of Leverkühn, who is tormented by bleak and unearthly thoughts but also the missing chain to perfection of the simple and calm nature, not tormented by such thoughts, of Hans Hansen as described by Tonio.

convinced that evil has absolute power over human body (“Take him, monster... Take him, filthy blackguard, but make haste if you will not concede even this, scoundrel... Take his body, over which you have dominion.”<sup>444</sup>) The interweaving between occult faiths and the Christian tradition is taken over by Mann from the legend of Faust and, like the legend it contains the same confession of the feeling of one’s tragic end. Leverkühn knows that in order to publicly reveal his pact with the devil, two convenient stages are essential, namely the breaking of his relationship with the devil and then its public confession. Echo’s death is the best opportunity to put an end to this evil relationship, and his denial of the devil makes him exuberant as he knows the devil does not have the power to subdue pure souls:

Nimm seinen Leib, über den du Gewalt hast! Wirst mir seine süße Seele doch hübsch zufrieden lassen müssen, und das ist deine Ohnmacht und dein Ridikül, mit dem ich dich ausspotten will Äonen lang. Mögen auch Ewigkeiten gewälzt sein zwischen meinen Ort und seinen, ich werde doch wissen, daß er ist, von wo du hinausgeworfen wurdest, Dreckskerl, und das wird netzendes Wasser sein für meine Zunge und ein Hosanna dir zum Hohn im untersten Fluch!

(Take his body, over which you have dominion. But you will have to be content to leave his sweet soul to me—and this is your impotence and your absurdity, for which I shall laugh you to scorn for eons. And may eternities be rolled twixt my place and his, I will yet know that he is in the place from whence you, foul filth, were cast out. And that will be cooling water upon my tongue and a hosanna to mock you in my foulest curse!)<sup>445</sup>

For Leverkühn, Echo is a symbol of purity which, once met, can no longer accept any occult preoccupation. Echo’s death breaks all his connections with evil but at the same time urges him to admit and confess them; Leverkühn will do so but he will also admit the risk of being perceived as insane by his fellow human beings. The confession of his sin—entertained by Leverkühn for a lifetime without being understood by his closed acquaintances—is the real cause of his “dementia” which caused Leverkühn to stray from his own self and to lose his way within himself.

---

<sup>444</sup> Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, 500.

<sup>445</sup> Thomas Mann, *Doktor Faustus*, 629-630. See Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, 500.

## 10. Mann and the Artist's Fate: a Spiritual and Universal Emigrant

Given the experience produced by his political involvement—and the bitter taste it left behind—the feeling of exile is of paramount importance both for Mann, the man and Mann, the writer. This could be a possible explanation of the fact that most of his literary characters and especially those from *Der Zauberberg* and *Tod in Venedig* tend to transcend the common realm of their natural birth in order to settle down—even for a short time—in a higher or more remote realm, usually the Mediterranean south or any large, open spaces. This alternate movement between mountain and valley is unpredictable because it will bring the emigrant back to his birthplace or to the realm of his initial existence. This is clearly reflected, for instance, in Mann's description of the way to death (the sanatorium) or to life (the battlefield of the First World War), of Castorp as a literary character in *Der Zauberberg*, as well as of the final stage of the initiation journey and the interchange between art and the simple life of the Bürger in *Tonio Kröger*. A similar movement is revealed by the tragic journey of the new Faust, Leverkühn, and Mann's impulse to write *Doktor Faustus*.

A continuator of Nietzsche's philosophy, Mann pursues the opening of the ancient realm of humanity towards actuality. This tendency belongs to the cultural as well as the religious conscience of a limited part of the German nation which *Doktor Faustus* belongs to, as indicated by Mann himself. This is the realm of free communication and expression as well as of free interconfessional and multiracial relationships as described against the background of contemporary Catholicism, which is more open to psychological-philosophical speculation than Goethe and Nietzsche's Lutheran Protestantism (even though neither Goethe nor Nietzsche was ever limited by the spirituality of their time). This is the essential nature of Mann's cultural background that turned him into a writer who refused to comply with the thinking pattern of the younger generation too willing to blindly follow misinterpreted philosophical canons. Mann's best retort to such revolutionary anarchists is the mere presentation of his family background:

Unsere Familie zählte zu der kleinen katholischen Gemeinde der Stadt, deren Bevölkerungsmehrheit natürlich dem lutherischen Bekenntnis angehörte, und namentlich meine Mutter war eine fromme Tochter der Kirche, die ihren religiösen Pflichten gewissenhaft nachkam, während mein Vater, wahrscheinlich schon aus Zeitmangel, sich darin laxer zeigte, ohne deshalb die Gruppen-Solidarität mit seinen Kultgenossen, die ja auch ihre politische Tragweite hatte, im geringsten zu verleugnen. Bemerkenswert war, daß neben unserem Pfarrer, Geistl. Rat Zwilling,

auch der Rabbiner der Stadt ..., in unseren über dem Laboratorium und der Apotheke gelegenen Gasträumen verkehrte, was in protestantischen Häusern nicht leicht möglich gewesen wäre ... Es mag mit an dieser Jugenderfahrung liegen... daß ich gerade in der Judenfrage und ihrer Behandlung unserem Führer und seinen Paladinen niemals voll habe zustimmen können. ...

(Our family belonged to the town's small Catholic parish, whereas the majority of the population, of course, was of Lutheran persuasion; and my mother in particular was a pious daughter of the Church, and conscientiously discharged her religious obligations, whereas my father, presumably for want of time, was laxer in such matters, though he never disavowed the sort of open solidarity with his fellow believers that carried a certain political impact. Remarkably enough, both our pastor... and the town's rabbi... were occasional guests in our parlor above the shop and laboratory, something that could not easily have occurred in Protestant homes... It may be due to that youthful experience... that I was never able to agree fully with our Führer and his paladins on precisely the issue of the Jews and their treatment.)<sup>446</sup>

Mann described humanity as building a bridge—which was possible only now, namely at the crossroad of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries—between the North of Europe and the remote South, without expressing a clear and definitive preference for either of them. As a writer of relegation and exile, Mann was trapped for ever between these two worlds as he explored the possibilities of this calm confined environment, different from the historical context of his time. Mann defines himself in opposition to his fellow contemporary writers who—either in Germany or in exile with him—turned their Germanism into Hellenism (with Italic meridional-mediterranean overtones, both solar and pathologic). This is the proof that, unlike his German brethren, Mann avoids their realm twice: first, he avoids the feeling of belonging to Germanism so he is a spiritual emigrant, and second he avoids the feeling of spiritual emptiness given by his new life in America so he is a universal emigrant. As the disease of the twentieth century ravaged by Nazism was expressed in the two world wars, the disease of Mann's literary characters is seen in the Mediterranean crisis of the Dionysian prophet who dies while contemplating beauty. Thus, Mann's characters come very close to Nietzsche's Zarathustra even if the two types of characters have radically different views of art and nature. Characters such as

---

<sup>446</sup> Thomas Mann, *Doktor Faustus*, 12. See Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, 9-10.

Aschenbach or Leverkühn prefer the selfish type of creation, so they are permanently alienated in the sense that they are perpetual emigrants in search of beauty and ideals and they will die dreaming of them.

The destiny of being an eternal traveler throughout the world did not capture Mann, the writer until the tragic moment of Germany's occupation by the Nazi. Since his earliest literary attempts, when the young Mann visited Italy with his brother Heinrich, he had had a somehow natural premonition that physically there was no room for him at home:

We [I and Heinrich] regarded Rome as the refuge of our irregularity, and I, at least, lived there not on account of the south, which at bottom I did not love, but quite simply because there was no room yet for me at home. I accepted respectfully the historical and aesthetic impressions the city had to offer, but scarcely with the feeling that they concerned me or had immediate significance for me. The antique statues in the Vatican meant more to me than the paintings of the Renaissance. *The Last Judgement* thrilled me: it was the apotheosis of my entirely pessimistic, moralizing, anti-hedonistic frame of mind.<sup>447</sup>

It is likely that the vision of a young twenty year old Mann with reference to Italy is not definitive even if it combines the new and the old in such a complex way; it is certain, however, that its essence remained unchanged because many years later it produced the complex music of the spheres resulted from his early perception of *The Last Judgment*, which he turned into the climax of creation in *Doktor Faustus*. To Mann, Italy meant at least a turning point which detached him from his old perspective on art, which was anchored in the belief that art should express the qualities of the German nation. Like Goethe, who put an end to the nationalistic fervor of his literary works after he got acquainted to Italy and its fascination for sculpture, art, and nature as brought together in a unitary whole, Mann did not remain unchanged following his journey to the Mediterranean realm. It is obvious that in Mann's work, from the beginning to *Doktor Faustus*, these two realms—contemplation and creation—are in a relationship of continuous parity. As he hunted the suitable treasures for a *homo universalis*, Mann could not fathom the depth of the human soul without isolating himself from the daily atmosphere soaked in mediocrity, politics, and fascism, to which he paid no tribute like the entire generation of Germans who did their best to root it in Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. Mann was essentially an immigrant between tragedy and technology, between contemplation and ac-

---

<sup>447</sup> Mann, *A Sketch of My Life*, 12-13.

tive creation, between rigor and reverie as he craved for a new “master”—the European who opened new perspectives on antiquity and implicitly on the East, the artist which mediated between north and south, east and west. For Mann, this European artist was Goethe and he did not find it difficult to prove that Goethe was indeed a lucid connoisseur of the German nature; this was why he did not limit his perspectives to the German realm. Following a long tradition, Mann himself was enthusiastically impressed by Goethe’s *Meister* and *Werther*, who both embodied the ideal of self-educated and multi-educated man. Such a man was Mann himself who came across Goethe’s experience on more than just one occasion during his development as a writer, as suggested by the Romanian literary critic Jean Livescu.<sup>448</sup>

In this particular context and with reference to the condition of the modern man as well as to the *fin de siècle* atmosphere, a book like Mann’s *Der Zauberberg* resumes Goethe’s idea of self-cultivation, which was an obsessive preoccupation of German writers in general. Another theme, also crucial for Mann, is the character that entertains a permanent monologue under the impact of moral and social forces. Mann’s incisive irony underlines—through epical detachment—Castorp’s dramatic oscillation between the call of life and the call of death in the sterilized realm of the mountain. Castorp’s problem is a relevant parabolic retort given to Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. Like *Meister*, Castorp’s fate indicates what happens when moral decision is prone to life and the defense of his moral ideals. This perspective on Mann’s character confirms that Mann, like Goethe, wants to be perceived as a representative of the bourgeois age, whose necessary values and virtues he is more than willing to express and defend. Nevertheless, just like Goethe, Mann transcends class boundaries thus opening the horizon of the knowledge of fundamental truth to his entire nation. This *unio mystica* with Goethe, however, does not mean that we need to mystically identify Mann with Goethe; instead it has to be understood as Mann’s self-education in the spirit of Goethe, Livescu explains. Thus, Mann’s option for Goethe meant giving up the “masters” which governed the decline of the Buddenbrooks, namely Schopenhauer, Wagner, and Nietzsche. Livescu is convinced that Mann met them again in his apocalyptic vision—broadened by the unfortunate ravages caused by fascism—of the consequences of the fall in the aestheticism and irrationality of *Doktor Faustus*, which all have repercussions on the writer himself. Moreover, according to Livescu, Mann’s option for Goethe meant to search the answer to his greatest questions, the torment

---

<sup>448</sup> Jean Livescu, in Preface to Goethe, *Opere*, vol. 1 (București: Univers, 1984), xi-xii.

and joy of creation, the ivory tower or the whirlpool of politics, elitism and democracy, irrationality or rationality, anti-humanism and humanism.<sup>449</sup>

These features can be seen in Mann against the background of his return to Goethe while he lived in Italy. Although the trip to Italy does not have the same influence on the twenty year old Mann as it had on the thirty-seven year old Goethe, they both became the great “troubadours” of their centuries as well as immigrants of the entire humanity. They both see the Latin spirit through the eyes of the Greek who shaped it but they do not share exactly the same interest with reference to humanity. Goethe searched Italy as a scientist, as a naturalist who had an eye for visual observation. In his poetry, he could not express the colours of Italy apart from the Homeric verse which laid the shape of stone against the background of the sky, protected by gods, or on the soil from which the artist modeled it. Mann foresaw a new ideal—essentially tragic—of humanity based on the death of these gods as prophesized by Nietzsche in his *Götzen-Dämmerung*.<sup>450</sup> Mann, the young man prior to his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, fails to understand Goethe at the interface with Nietzsche as Nietzsche saw Goethe at the interface with Zarathustra; at least for some time, Goethe is no longer [Nietzsche’s] harmonious man who immigrated in the realm of Antiquity and the artist who caught the aesthetic cosmos within a holistic perspective. For the time being—as far as the young Mann was concerned—Goethe is the man of a book as well as the man of a time. Actually, Mann the “artist as a young

---

<sup>449</sup> See Livescu, in Preface to Goethe, *Opere*, vol. 1, xii. Livescu’s explanations need some clarifications. Mann criticized the overturning of Nietzsche’s philosophy by his sister Elizabeth, and not Nietzsche’s work per se, which—like Rudolph Steiner—he had studied for years. Custodian of the Nietzsche Archiv until he left it in disgust to Elizabeth’s cooperation with the Nazi regime, Mann seems betrayed in his own creed, according to Livescu. This assessment suggested by Livescu may seem partisan especially because, first of all, Nietzsche’s alienation and death occurred many years before the establishment of the Weimar Republic and the confrontations between the social-democrats and the nationalist-socialist. Second, with reference to Nietzsche’s ideal of the Superman, he only expressed the enthusiasm of the nineteenth century or the ideal of self-surpassing and escape from ineptitude. The fact that, more than thirty years later, the Nazi soldiers were inoculated the feeling of super-species based on the model of the Superman has nothing to do with Nietzsche’s own philosophy. Concerning the myth of the Superman as reflected in *Also sprach Zarathustra*, the Romanian critic Ștefan Augustin Doinaș noticed that—as compared to Nietzsche’s prophet—the Nazi pertain rather to the species of the buffoon/jester. The buffoon/jester—who by his inherent nature ridicules everything—endangeres true virtue and the moral doctrine of humanity. See Doinaș, Introduction to Nietzsche, *Așa grăit-a Zarathustra*, editia a doua (București: Humanitas, 1996), 17-18.

<sup>450</sup> For details about Nietzsche’s influence on Mann, see Caroline Joan Picart, *Thomas Mann and Friedrich Nietzsche: Eroticism, Death, Music and Laughter* (Amsterdam: Rodolpi, 1999).

man” perceived Goethe against the background of the *mal de siècle*. Thus, Mann developed his early artistic personality within the context of a century which did not recognize its own values of universality, an age on which Mann the artist had to impress a literary-artistic as well as aesthetic direction, despite the less unanimous perception of his intentions.

### ***Mann and Pathological Tragic***

In the attempt to establish the value of artistic creation through the value of its creator, Mann analyzes Goethe’s predilection for classical antiquity in terms of his physical and corporal constitution, in accordance with the romantic definition of the creative genius. Thus, for Mann, Goethe, the genius dies with the disappearance of the feeling of creation as a masterpiece; creation in itself is the work of a dualist temper. For Mann, Goethe is both the artist with a phenomenal creative power and the artist whose destiny is subdued by another destiny. In order to prove his point, Mann indicates Goethe’s *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*. He attributes to the genius exceptional spiritual qualities which make him tempestuous and troubling while Goethe, the man is seen as unhappy, in constant conflict with the problems of life and his own physical distress. Mann is interested in presenting Goethe’s state of health, namely of a man who was proud of his vitality. According to Mann, the genius cannot be natural in the real sense of the word, simple and bourgeois, the same way a man who is well-endowed by nature is not healthy in accordance with general rules. The physical constitution of the genius is always delicate, irritable so he is prone to crisis and malady; psychologically, he is weird, so in many respects he is odd as compared to mediocrity and almost on the verge of psychopathy. As far as Mann was concerned, Goethe was fully aware of all these things, which is clear in his *Gespräche mit Eckermann*. Thus, according to Mann, Goethe was convinced that the things which were done by men of genius, namely men like Goethe, presupposed a very delicate constitution, both physical and psychological, in order to be capable of rare feelings as well as of hearing the voices of gods. The genius is highly sensitive so his condition must be characterized by extraordinary vitality and this is why he is easily exposed to a permanent state of sickness.<sup>451</sup>

As shown before, in order to complete his assessment of Goethe, Mann used his early *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* whose exponent necessarily presents such a constitution which, in fact, portrays Goethe himself in minute details both as a creator and as a social character. Nevertheless, regard-

---

<sup>451</sup> Mann, *Past Masters and Other Papers*, 218.

less how much Mann wanted to separate these two aspects of Goethe's existence at least for the sake of posterity, he did not succeed although, many years later, he will return to Goethe's works of maturity which display an art full of spiritual health and vitality. Mann's failure was more of an excuse rather than an accusation against Goethe. As for Goethe, such a microscopic confinement of his physical constitution would have seemed at least lacking in delicacy given that his bodily vigor and artistic freshness were abundantly revealed after his death. As Mann was a promoter of psychological introspection, he had to approach Goethe in whatever way he could in order to investigate his spiritual qualities as reflected in his works of maturity (and as Maurice Blanchot studied the case of Kafka<sup>452</sup>). Mann asked himself if Goethe had led his life in accordance with the principles of the mature man but his conclusion was negative, at least with reference to *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*. To Goethe, the poet of harmony and impulses of life in the manner of Tyrtæus, the choice of a subject about a real historical character wherein he hides his inner being and whose story ends in a hospice as well as at the monastery seems at least odd. On the other hand, the bourgeoisie perspective on life morally requires virtues which were kept with sternness as well as an unconditional affirmation of its ethics because reason and morality are the pillars of life.

Mann, however, believes that Goethe defends passion—namely the exalted and morbid nature—in an exclusively bourgeoisie fashion, so he insists that exaltation and sickness should be states of nature and the so-called “health” can only result from the balance of antagonistic forces. Friedrich Gundolf, one of Goethe's prominent exegetes, writes that *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* present not only a state of the soul, a feeling, a shape or feature of destiny, but also a crisis, a conflict resulted from the clash of contradictory impulses. This particular work became the main type of Goethe's confession, which explains Goethe's way to free himself—through the confession of pathological feelings—of the pathological state of the soul.<sup>453</sup>

In other words, it is interesting what Werther is, not what Werther feels; what he does, not what happens to him. Being by nature a poet, namely a creator of images, not a psychologist, Goethe did not produce psychological analyses but chose to picture the human soul by means of manifestations and reactions crystallized in facts. Actually, the idea is confirmed by Goethe in *Dichtung und Wahrheit (Poetry and Truth)*, when he talks about the role of biography as a representation of the relationship between the life of the

---

<sup>452</sup> See Maurice Blanchot, „Kafka and the Work's Demand”, in *The Space of Literature: A Translation of „L'Espace littéraire”* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 57.

<sup>453</sup> Friedrich Gundolf, *Goethe*, vol. 1 (București: Minerva, 1971), 280.

creator of art and the life of nature. The special task of biography is to offer an image of man in close relationship with his own age as well as reveal how and to what extent his age is opposed to him. The biography, according to Goethe, must show if man's life is in favor of him but also if man reflects his times externally in his capacity of an artist, a poet or a writer.<sup>454</sup>

Admitting his inner turmoil and the sentimental troubles of youth, following his journey to Italy and the confrontation with the problems of life in Weimar, Goethe began the first version of his *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* by confessing that he felt an irresistible inclination to the harmonious development of nature which was denied to him by birth.<sup>455</sup> This confession seems to point to the overcoming of the disease of an excessively sentimental age, which resulted from the laicization of Pietism to the point of being mistaken for romanticism, a cultural and religious reality that was not entirely alien to Mann. Nevertheless, the support Goethe found in Kant's philosophy and the Greek ideal of moral beauty which flows from physical beauty, always in harmony with the beauty of nature, is not characteristic of Mann's spiritual constitution. In Goethe, the work was perceived as a continuation of its creator, very much like Goethe's robustness meant the coronation of his ideal. Thus, when Goethe died, Eckermann's words were not a mere hypertrophy of senses as he saw Goethe's corpse but the constant testimony of an artistic creed. Eckermann said he had been amazed by the godly splendor of the shapes of his body: the chest was powerful, wide and arched, while his arms had harmonious muscles. No trace of fat could be seen on Goethe's dead body, so Eckermann concluded that he had seen a perfect human being whose beauty made him forget for a moment that his soul had left the body.<sup>456</sup>

In this context, a comparison between Goethe's Werther and Mann's heroes is definitely necessary but before doing it, we must understand Goethe's idea of fiction as connected to the reality of life. In 1814, Goethe made some considerations about the way he had written *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*. They can be found in his unfinished volume of memories entitled *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, which is in fact a presentation of his poetic art. Goethe begins his memories with some definitions of terms, especially the word *Dichtung* (translated into English by "poetry"). In German,

---

<sup>454</sup> For details, see A. Eaglefield Hull, *Beethoven's Letters*, vii, who explains the calm nature of Goethe the classicist by comparison to the stormy nature of Beethoven the romantic.

<sup>455</sup> See Fritz Martini, *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Alfred Körner Verlag, 1991), 233. See also Fritz Martini, *Istoria literaturii germane de la început pînă în prezent* (București: Univers, 1972), 215.

<sup>456</sup> Eckermann, Preface to Goethe, *Poezie și adevăr*, vol. 1 (București: Editura pentru Literatură, 1967), xxix.

*Dichtung* has a wide range of abstract meanings and even if translated by “poetry”, Goethe does not connect the meaning of poetry to unrealism or non-reality. Thus, Werther was never a long forgotten or even repudiated episode because *Dichtung*, which means poetry, literary work, literature or even fiction, should not be understood as a collection of facts and details about facts but a revelation of higher truths. So, in *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*, Goethe tried to express the real truths which guided him in his life as he understood them. He also tried to avoid the interpretation of the past as he saw it when he wrote his autobiography because his main concern was to see the events as they happened in the past. Was it not Goethe himself who thought that by its internal cheerfulness and external comfort true poetry can free us from the earthly burdens?<sup>457</sup>

In other words, with Goethe, *Dichtung* does not hide fictitious truths or someone who is totally alien to his own experience and actions. *Dichtung* is fiction, namely the novel, a means to poetize, so Goethe’s purpose is clear: to ennoble truths about himself which, by their nature, do not stain his character as a young man because then and now (he was fifty-five when he wrote *Dichtung und Wahrheit*) what he lived in reality did not abase him in any way. Likewise, when he wrote *Lotte in Weimar*, Mann had long read Goethe’s confession, which is proved by the characters of the novel and especially by Charlotte Kestner, who admits she was forced to see herself in the girl depicted in Goethe’s novel although in reality the situation had not triggered the same tragic outcome. Thus, poetic truth acquires, through the word, dimensions which are far more important than the experienced truth. Likewise, Charlotte also knows when she is older (thus strengthening Goethe’s explanations from *Dichtung und Wahrheit*), as she knew in her youth, that all these things happened even if they both had a mysterious feeling that this passion was a kind of a game, a means of the heart for purposes which transcended reality, namely purposes which were almost extra-human.<sup>458</sup>

In Mann, Goethe defines these extra-human purposes in his early works. In Mann’s interpretation in *Lotte in Weimar*, they appear in a more negative light because, according to his artistic creed, Goethe always wrote above the heads of the Germans, so this novel had as a primary purpose to counter the

---

<sup>457</sup> See Goethe, *The Auto-Biography of Goethe: Truth and Poetry: from My Own Life*, trans. by John Oxenford (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1848), 505. See also Goethe, *From My Life. Poetry and Truth*, trans. by Catherine Hutter (New York: Penguin, 1960), 132.

<sup>458</sup> Thomas Mann, *Königliche Hoheit. Lotte in Weimar* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1990), 468. See Mann, *Lotte in Weimar. The Beloved Returns*, 104.

enthusiasm of his contemporaries and their wish to satisfy national interests and selfishness.

Unlike this perspective on Goethe's novel which Goethe, however, does not repudiate but he rather leaves it untouched, the man of the Enlightenment did not randomly define the meaning of *Dichtung* for his readers. The fact that following the publication of *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* he tried so many times to avoid an explanation concerning the purpose of writing the book—it would have probably been in vain given the explosion of sentimentalism, unintended by Goethe, triggered by the novel at that time—seems to be a further argument which confirms his poetic creed. At this point, Mann and Goethe do have an important thing in common. Like Mann many years after him, Goethe probably felt that he needed to change his perspective, his subject and preoccupations, a mixture between poetry and science, so that his novel of youth had to be understood as part of his entire work as having a common purpose for the rest of his literary productions. Thus, the idea of man's communion with nature does not belong exclusively to his post-sturmist period but it goes through all of Goethe's poetry, novels, essays and especially his philosophy as influenced by Kant. Goethe's main purpose in writing *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* was not to unmask and criticize society; at the end of the day, at maturity there was no danger not to be taken seriously concerning the arguments of his works. His purpose was, according to Goethe's own confession, to check older decisions which could make up his poetic creed:

Jener Vorsatz, meine innere Natur nach ihren Eigenheiten gewähren, und die äußere nach ihren Eigenschaften auf mich einfließen zu lassen, trieb mich an das wunderliche Element, in welchem Werther ersonnen und geschrieben ist. Ich suchte mich innerlich von allem Fremden zu entbinden, das Äußere liebevoll zu betrachten, und alle Wesen, von menschlichen an, so tief hinab als sie nur faßlich sein möchten, jedes in seiner Art auf mich wirken zu lassen. Dadurch entstand eine wundersame Verwandtschaft mit den einzelnen Gegenständen der Natur, und ein inniges Anklingen, ein Mitstimmen ins Ganze, so daß ein jeder Wechsel, es sei der Ortschaften und Gegenden, oder der Tags-und Jahreszeiten, oder was sonst sich ereignen konnte, mich aufs innigste berührte.

(The resolution to preserve my inner nature according to its peculiarities, and to allow outer nature to influence me according to its qualities, led me to the strange state in which *Werther* was designed and written. I sought to free myself inwardly from everything foreign; to regard what was without with love, and to permit all creatures from men down, as far

as they could be comprehended, to work upon me, each in its own way. Thus arose a wonderful affinity with the individual objects of nature, and an intimate accord, a harmony with the whole, so that every change of places and of regions, of the times of the day or the year... affected me most inwardly.)<sup>459</sup>

Goethe wrote down these words accompanied by the date and place of their writing: Wetzlar, May-September 1772, which in reality corresponded to the time between the events that happened in Wetzlar's Buff house and young Jerusalem's suicide. This is a sign that the intensity of feelings and events presented in the novel at that time—*Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* was published in 1774—must be understood against the background of a lifestyle which is not always at hand or habitual, because it belongs to an unusual hero, a painter as well as a poet. Unlike Mann's heroes, Goethe's character is bound to admire nature despite his present unhappiness which could seem eternal to him. The hero's tragedy does not affect the external beauty of places and seasons; it is rather the other way around, namely nature and people animate him. Mann's misery—reflected in Goethe's literary characters—is transient and it rather belongs to their youth; this is why the youth and its troubles must not be repeated at old age. Like nature, man must know and live the dignity of his own age.

It is indeed interesting to see the way Goethe takes a work which belongs to his *Sturm und Drang* period and artistically transfers it within the framework of his classicism. It is equally interesting to investigate how Goethe—at maturity—feels the energy of youth with the same passion although he tempers it by means of a warning as well as considerations on the poet's dignity as compared to the genius and the courage of confession. Continuing the argument which concerns the true purpose of his work, the comparison between what he was and what he is as well as the restoration of the balance between the impetus of youth and the dignity of memory at old age are explained by Goethe himself:

Es [*Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*] hat sich nicht als selbständig angekündigt; es ist vielmehr bestimmt die Lücken eines Autorlebens auszufüllen, manches Bruchstück zu ergänzen und das Andenken verlornen und verschollener Wagnisse zu erhalten. Was aber schon getan ist,

---

<sup>459</sup> Goethe, *Aus meinem Leben: Dichtung und Wahrheit in Goethes Werke*, ed. by Erich Trunz (München: C. H. Beck, 1981), 580. See Goethe, *The Auto-biography of Goethe: Truth and Poetry: from My Life*, ed. by Parke Godwin, third part (New York: Wiley & Putnam, 1847), 87.

soll und kann nicht wiederholt werden: auch würde der Dichter jetzt die verdüsterten Seelenkräfte vergebens aufrufen, umsonst von ihnen fordern, daß sie jene lieblichen Verhältnisse wieder vergegenwärtigen möchten, welche ihm den Aufenthalt im Lahntale so hoch verschönten. Glücklicherweise hatte der Genius schon früher dafür gesorgt, und ihn angetrieben, in vermögender Jugendzeit das nächst Vergangene festzuhalten, zu schildern und kühn genug zur günstigen Stunde öffentlich aufzustellen. Daß hier das Büchlein Werther gemeint sei, bedarf wohl keiner nähern Bezeichnung.

(It [*The Sorrows of Young Werther*] has not announced itself as independent; much more it is designed to fill up the gaps of the author's life, to complete many fragments, and to preserve the memory of many lost and forgotten adventures. But what is already done, neither ought to be, nor can be repeated. In vain would the poet appeal to the darkened powers of his soul; in vain demand of them, once more, to represent those cherished relations which gave so high a beauty to his abode in Lahnthal. Fortunately the genius had earlier cared for that, and impelled him, while youth had yet the power to hold fast that which had just gone by, to depict it, and boldly enough, at a lucky hour, to give it to the public. That here *Werther* is meant, can need no more distinct declaration.)<sup>460</sup>

As opposed to Goethe's "type" of man predisposed to apollinien feelings despite the tragic reality, Mann presents in his *Der Tod in Venedig* another "type" of man, which is fundamentally Mediterranean and whose artistic nature is prone to contemplation within a weedy realm constantly threatened by the plague of death, namely Venice at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Thus, Venice—craved for by the writer Gustav Aschenbach as a resting place as well as an opportunity for a "longer stroll"—is hostile to such a pleasure of life from the very beginning. Accustomed to being always welcomed by a bright sky in the wonderful paradise of gondolas, this time the city meets him in a gloomy and bleak atmosphere, covered by a cold foggy rain, a typical image of expressionist literature. The experiences of Mann's hero lack variety; they are monotonous and the obsession related to young

---

<sup>460</sup> Goethe, *Aus meinem Leben: Dichtung und Wahrheit, Dritter Teil: Zwölftes Buch*. 581. See Goethe, *The Auto-biography of Goethe. Truth and Poetry: from My Life*, ed. by Parke Godwin, 87-88. At the end of his novel *Lotte in Weimar*, Mann takes over Goethe's conclusion from his *Dichtung und Wahrheit* as he describes the scene when Goethe meets Charlotte again, namely that a man who is different every day and even every hour must have definitely changed within forty years (see page 300).

Tangio's fury produces the fever of strange considerations about nature and art, about the ideal love against a background which is gradually conquered by plague. This entire realm is unlikely characterized by abstraction:

Müde und dennoch geistig bewegt, unterhielt er sich während der langwierigen Mahlzeit mit abstrakten, ja transzendenten Dingen, sann nach über die geheimnisvolle Verbindung, welche das Gesetzmäßige mit dem Individuellen eingehen müsse, damit menschliche Schönheit entstehe, kam vom da aus auf allgemeine Probleme der Form und der Kunst und fand am Ende, daß seine Gedanken und Funde gewissen scheinbar glücklichen Einflüsterungen des Traumes glichen, die sich bei ernüchtertem Sinn als vollständig schal und untauglich erweisen.

(He beguiled the long, tedious meal with abstract, even with transcendent matters: pondered the mysterious harmony that must come to subsist between the individual human being and the universal law, in order that human beauty may result..., and came at length to the conclusion that what seemed to him fresh and happy thoughts were like the flattering inventions of a dream, which the waking sense proves worthless and insubstantial.)<sup>461</sup>

Due to his inner torment caused by his attempt to appease the conflict between "erotic" desires and ethical demands, Aschenbach irresistibly inclines to voluptuousness which also frightens him. Art and virtue, long debated by Plato, counter by their moral prominence the instinctual need for beauty; thus, Mann's work is a *Lysis* turned upside down. In Aschenbach's almost delirious meditations, the two voices—of artistic conscience and instinctual life—seem like two actors on an essentially tragic stage:

Denn die Schönheit, ... nur die Schönheit ist göttlich und sichtbar zugleich, und so ist sie denn also des Sinnlichen Weg, ist der Weg des Künstlers zum Geiste. Glaubst du nur aber ..., daß derjenige jemals Weisheit und wahre Manneswürde gewinnen könne, für den dem Weg zum Geistigen durch die Sinne führt? Oder glaubst du vielmehr ..., daß dies ein gefährlich-lieblicher Weg sei, wahrhaft ein Irr- und Sündenweg, der mit Notwendigkeit in die Irre leitet?

---

<sup>461</sup> Mann, *Der Tod in Venedig* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1992), 43. See Mann, *Death in Venice and Seven Other Stories*, 27-28.

(Beauty alone is both divine and visible; and so it is the sense way... to the spirit. But do you believe... that such a man can ever attain wisdom and true manly worth, for whom the path to the spirit must lead through the senses? Or do you rather think that it is a path of perilous sweetness, a way of transgression, and must surely lead him who walks in it astray?)

What follows is the outburst of a conflict which is supposed to produce an act of creation:

Siehst du nun wohl, daß wir Dichter nicht weise noch würdig sein können? ... Denn wie sollte wohl der zum Erzieher taugen, dem eine unverbesserliche und natürliche Richtung zum Abgrunde eingeboren ist?

(From this you will perceive that we poets can be neither wise nor worthy citizens... For what good can an artist be as a teacher, when from his birth up he is headed direct for the pit?)<sup>462</sup>

The same type of meditation will later accompany Leverkühn's act of creative irony in *Doktor Faustus*. The complex "music of the spheres" stems from the artist's yearn between clear and obscure, from the diabolic urge to affirmation as well as innovation which leads eventually to alienation and death. At this point, it is important to remember the dialogue—which begins somewhere in a dark room—between Leverkühn and a strange individual who, having imperceptibly appeared out of nothing, stirs his inner soul and incites him to change his artistic vision. Ridiculing the entire previous and actual culture, Mann proposes his own ideal of art which is clear both in his *Doktor Faustus* and his *Der Tod in Venedig* with some overtones that can also be detected in Nietzsche. Because actuality seems to be senseless, Mann suggests the return to the unconscious archetypal essence of creative act as defined entirely by contemplation. Mann's thesis, however, is different from Nietzsche's older attempt to revalorize the entire thought and culture by means of the myth of the Superman because the cultural model of the time could not produce such a perspective on life and human creation from scrap. Unlike Nietzsche, Mann's archetypal model is irrational with a fanciful-ironic substratum which diminishes the tragedy of his vision. In Mann, the inadaptability of the artist torn apart by the inner struggle of creation is caused by the diabolic temptation which is specific to the socially alienated romantic genius. The moment of creative act is experienced in-

---

<sup>462</sup> Mann, *Tod in Venedig*, 109-110. See Mann, *Death in Venice, and Seven Other Stories*, 72.

tensely and unnaturally, while the finality of his masterpiece is tragic like the finality of its creator:

Das ist es, du denkst nicht an die Läufe, du denkst nicht historisch ... Was der in seinen klassischen Läufen allenfalls ohne uns haben konnte, das haben heutzutage nur wir zu bieten. Und wir bieten Besseres, wir bieten erst das Rechte und Wahre, -das ist schon nicht mehr das Klassische, ... das ist das Archaische, das Urfrühe, das längst nicht mehr Erprobte. Was er [Teufel] will und spendet, das ist gerade das triumphierende Über-sie-hinaus-Sein, die prangende Unbedenklichkeit!

(That's the thing—you are not thinking of time in its courses, you are not thinking historically... What he could at best have without us in time's old classic courses, only we can offer now-a-days. We offer better still, we offer foremostly the right and true—a thing no longer even classic,... a thing archaic, primal, a thing that has long since ceased to be attempted... What [Devil] wishes and spends, that is verily the triumph over and beyond [ravaging criticism], the shining want of thought!)<sup>463</sup>

Like Zarathustra and Leverkühn, Aschenbach knows the alien god of creation, Dionysus; however, he does not know him with the mask of Nietzsche's tragic divinity but as depicted by Homer. To Mann, Dionysus is the true Bacchus of the Romans, the god of the south who "sanctifies" his art in pleasure. Mann's perspective on art ends up in a genuine *carmina burana* of nature's frenzy in wild, ahistorical and involute realm. Unlike Leverkühn's creative as well as ironic perseverance/assiduity, Aschenbach's contemplation degenerates in a *dolce far niente* of the modern south. At the same time, his spiritual capacity becomes languorous, devoid of any impetus and prone to dreaming:

Qualmige Glut glomm auf: da erkannte er Bergland ... Und in zerrissenem Licht, von bewaldeter Höhe, zwischen Stämmen und moosigen Feltstrümmern wälzte es sich und stürzte wirbelnd herab: Menschen, Tiere, ein Schwarm, eine tobende Rotte, -und überschwemmte die Halde mit Leibern, Flammen, Tumult und taumelndem Rundtanz ... Und die Begeisterten heulten den Ruf aus weichen Mitlauten und gezogenem u-Ruf am Ende, süß und wild zugleich, wie kein jemals erhörter ... Aber alles durchdrang und beherrschte der tiefe, lockende Flötenton. Lockte er nicht auch ihn, den widerstrebend Erlebenden, schamlos beharrlich zum Fest

<sup>463</sup> Thomas Mann, *Doktor Faustus*, 318. See Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, 252-53.

und Unmaß des äußersten Opfers? Groß war sein Abscheu, groß seine Furcht, redlich sein Wille, bis zuletzt das Seine zu schützen gegen den Fremden, den Feind des gefaßten und würdigen Geistes ... Dünste bedrängten den Sinn, der beizende Ruch der Böcke ... und dazu ein anderer noch, vertraut: nach Wunden und umlaufender Krankheit.

(A glow lighted up the surrounding mist and by it he recognized a mountain scene... From the wooded heights, from among the treetrucks and crumbling moss-covered rocks, a troop came tumbling and raging down, a whirling rout of men and animals, and overflowed the hillside with flames and human forms, with clamour and the reeling dance... And one and all the mad rout yelled that cry, composed of soft consonants with a long-drawn u-sound at the end, so sweet and wild it was together, and like nothing ever heard before!... The deep, beguiling notes of the flute wove in and out and over all. Beguiling too it was to him who struggled in the grip of these sights and sounds, shamelessly awaiting the coming feast and the uttermost surrender. He trembled, he shrank, his will was steadfast to preserve and uphold his own god against this stranger who was sworn enemy to dignity and self-control. But... his senses reeled in the steam of... the acrid stench from the goats... and another, too familiar smell, of wounds, uncleanness, and disease.)<sup>464</sup>

Aschenbach is permanently aware of the contrast between this state and the noblesse of the calm and dignified nature which guided him in the nordic life, so the character turns his creator, namely Mann, into a genuine Goncharov of the Germans. In Mann, the return to the primordial reality means spiritual and physical death as plainly seen in his *Der Tod in Venedig*. Time is a Kantian philosophical category only because it lies beyond us, namely beyond good and evil. When Mann returns to archetypal reality, time appears as unreal and Dionysian (or Bacchic); to be sure, time is only a meander of man's imagination. For instance, *Der Zauberberg* spells death in every corner of space and being by the sterilized atmosphere of the sanatorium which devours souls. When Castorp leaves it, his existence defines itself through action to the benefit of life in real, historical time. Dealing with these issues in his works, Mann brings Goethe again among the Germans. The purpose of Goethe's return offers Mann the chance to make use of the pretext of historical fact in order to explain the tribulations of Goethe's hero

---

<sup>464</sup> Mann, *Der Tod in Venedig*, 102-103. See Mann, *Death in Venice, and Seven Other Stories*, 67-68.

in *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* from the perspective of a different age. The time of life has passed; it is now the time for confession.

### **Goethe's "Return"**

Having gone through Mann's main works, it is clear that Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* is only a pretext for Mann to return to Goethe in order to picture him as a man after his own heart or as an archetype of his own personality. Mann began to sense Goethe's presence in his own time by means of the social realities which eclipsed any spiritual preoccupation in the then Germany. The atmosphere was very similar to the end of the eighteenth century when Prussia was defeated in a battle that changed the course of Europe's history.<sup>465</sup>

Despite its very early character, Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* does indeed contain spiritual values that transcend time. Thus, Goethe impressed on his contemporary society the structure of his own personality by instigating to pro or con attitude. This is why, as Livescu noticed, Goethe's view whereby he justifies his interest in Shakespeare can also be applied to him, namely despite that a lot was said about Shakespeare to the point that almost nothing else is left to be said, a feature of the spirit is to endlessly stimulate the spirit.<sup>466</sup> Having reached maturity, Goethe the thinker and the creator of art was later invoked—due to the authority of his life and works—to offer solutions to the problems of future times which were different socially and existentially, namely Nietzsche's late nineteenth century and Mann's early twentieth century. Mann, however, brings Goethe into his time not to praise the progress of this age but to reveal its utter selfishness. Thus, Mann chose to prove this truth by means of sentimental commemoration rather than spiritual unification. This is why Mann constantly returns to Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* and even insists to see him as a symbol for the saturation of civilization, for sentimental emancipation as well as the nostalgia of the return to sensuality and nature. These aspects turn Goethe's hero into a person who rises against any restric-

---

<sup>465</sup> The Battle of Valmy (September 20, 1792), when the French army defeated the allied Austrian and Prussian troops. The outcome of the battle will make Goethe exclaim: "At this place, on this day, begins a new era in the history of the world", see Richard Friedenthal, *Goethe—His Life and Times* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1963), 313. See also Philip Allott, *The Health of Nations: Society and Law Beyond the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 197.

<sup>466</sup> Jean Livescu, in Preface to Goethe, *Opere*, vol. 1, xii.

tion of the individual and is aware that the thirst for an exalted life results in the desire for death.<sup>467</sup>

This anthropological feature—specific to Mann—is constantly applied to Goethe, the writer who emerges as an outstanding personality as well as a man of culture way beyond his own age. Thus, Mann is convinced that in his capacity of a writer, Goethe lived his entire life based on the substance of his early experiences from youth. As far as Mann was concerned, Goethe was not a man of constantly new attempts and discoveries because his creation is generally a valorization of concepts which had occupied his mind since his early life. This is why, Mann continues, he was a model for Germany and even Europe's youth alongside of Schopenhauer, Wagner, and Nietzsche.<sup>468</sup>

As with reference to Nietzsche, Mann believed that his thought was suitable to young people because they would be set on fire after their first reading of his philosophy; likewise Mann was convinced that Goethe could be viewed as an instigator who urges us to go beyond conventional patterns, as well as a promoter of the revolutionizing of the German youth given his romantic nature. In this context, Mann's *Lotte in Weimar* is opposed to what it had been the ideal of self-knowledge and self-education craved for every German writer who was touched by Wilhelm Meister. It is certain though that the young Goethe transcended the "shell" of the German civilization only after he tread on the soil of antique civilization. If in Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* it is useless to look for such an assessment, Mann's *Lotte in Weimar* actually confirms it. Thus, in Mann's book, one can easily notice everywhere either a book, a painting or a face of a child or a woman that Goethe watches in admiration for the beauty of detail. Like ancient artists, Goethe always asked himself what lay beneath the first impression produced by all these things. If Mann adds to Goethe's portrait in *Lotte in Weimar* the nobility of white hair up to the point that old Goethe

---

<sup>467</sup> Goethe represented the Enlightenment from its beginnings, especially with reference to the idea of the restoration of the individual as a vital factor for society, which he animates through his positive action and thinking. As for Mann, he is the representative of the "New Enlightenment" by means of his perspective on the moral, social and individual status of modern man. Nietzsche himself reinterpreted Goethe and he even confessed his nostalgia as he read his *Novelle* because he wanted to take modern man back to his initial state, like a true father of existentialist philosophy who decries the feeling of confinement/enchainment within fixed patterns. Mann's interpretation of Goethe is directed against the meanness of the bourgeoisie, which was incapable of perceiving the genius' sensuality.

<sup>468</sup> Mann, *Past Masters and Other Papers*, 163. Mann's observation that Goethe was not in constant search of new subjects for his books should be understood in light of Goethe's statement that authors are original not because they presents us with what is new but rather because they know to say something as it had never been said before.

easily forgets what he talked to his servant in the morning, it is impossible for him to ever forget Charlotte's eyes or the taste of a very old wine.

Mann's *Lotte in Weimar* may appear as an attempt to morally and artistically justify Goethe's life. The fact that Goethe's name was added to those of Schopenhauer, Wagner, and Nietzsche—all considered stars of the German people—is definitely a testimony to the almost unanimous respect that Mann's contemporaries nurtured for these men of culture. At a closer look, however, Mann's novel is a false pretence to moral justification. The novel was published in 1935, many years after he had written his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*. His observation that the names of the four great German philosophers appear like stars to the German youth is not, therefore, meant to prove Goethe's merit as a German cultural star. Mann was definitely aware of Nietzsche's impressions about Wagner and of his assertion that Wagner was a genius (a "master" in Mann's translation) of lies, while he pictured himself as a genius of truth. The two types of geniuses or masters are joined as opposed groups—Goethe and Nietzsche on the one hand, and Schopenhauer and Wagner on the other hand—not to prove their merits but to highlight a flaw in the conscience of Germans. This conclusion is supported by other essays written by Mann, such as *Wagner und unsere Zeit (Pro and contra Wagner)*, but also by Goethe's impressions in *Lotte in Weimar* which—even through Adele's words—present the incongruence between Goethe and his contemporary Germans. Following the first discussions between Charlotte Kerstner and Adele Schopenhauer as well as Friedrich Riemer, one can sense that their feelings for Goethe complete each other mutually without producing a definitive conclusion regarding his portrait. In accordance with Goethe's explanations about the word *Dichtung*, the three characters do not actually talk about Goethe the man but about his stay in the valley of the river Lahn (a reference to Wetzlar) or about his life in Weimar. They all know that Goethe was not tightly connected to these places which merely filled the emptiness in the author's life or completed some portions. In other words, Goethe was an immigrant on Germany's soil, and this is how he is presented in the real time of the action unfolding in *Lotte in Weimar*. In the light of this conclusion, the actions and observations of each character of the novel become clearer. Charlotte, for instance, realizes she made the journey from Wetzlar to Weimar in order to find the answer to a question which bothered her from early youth, namely if Goethe—after forty years—still had those encompassing eyes which turned very black when animated by a sincere feeling.<sup>469</sup> Riemer's answer that Goethe's eyes are full of force even now confirms that his eyes only remained the

---

<sup>469</sup> Mann, *Königliche Hoheit. Lotte in Weimar*, 492. See Mann, *Lotte in Weimar*, 114.

same over years, in full accordance with Goethe's words from *Dichtung und Wahrheit* about the eye of the painter that joins the eye of the poet. Deep in his soul, Riemer notices that Goethe is no longer the embodiment of his early tolerance and exuberance but of his present irony which he uses in his poetry as well as rigidity and cold given by his fatigue and the monotonous course of his life: Weimar-Jena-Karlsbad-Jena-Weimar. Thus, although the eyes of the painter remained the same and still picture the harmony of nature, the eyes of the poet betray his distrust in the eternity of things and human beings. Riemer's observation entertains Charlotte's fear that Goethe is no longer the man who painted her portrait in her youth and that her face could fade away under his pen following their encounter.

This spiritual portrait of Goethe was made of course by Mann and this is why *Lotte in Weimar* is a work wherein Goethe appears as a man according to Mann's heart. The same perfectly justified irony animates Mann and Goethe, as well as the same rigidity which caused them in late maturity to write against a false sense of patriotism and against a false Germany. Thus, the young Adele Schopenhauer shows Charlotte how bits and pieces of Goethe's anti-nationalism manifest against many German artists, on the one hand, but also against the Prussians—especially the young—who around the early 1800s looked very much alike those of Nietzsche's time or the young Germans during Mann's life. According to Adele's portrait, Goethe is presented as totally isolated from them after the French retreated from Germany: "Our great German poet was the unhappiest man in Weimar, in the dukedom, very likely in the whole delirious fatherland... To put it mildly, he seemed not to share our enthusiasm."<sup>470</sup> Like Goethe who faced the "patriot" poet Theodor Körner, Nietzsche and Mann confronted Wagner and Frank with his *Die deutsche Novelle (The German Story)*. Although it contains references to famous personalities of German artistic life, Adele's portrait of Goethe is mainly political-historical in nature; nevertheless, it does not oppose but rather completes Riemer's sentimental-philosophical portrait of the same Goethe. Adele says that Goethe despised the artists who were highly appreciated by the new generation of the young German intellectuals like her, for instance. The young lady mentions the artists Cornelius and Overbeck in whose paintings, she says, Goethe would shoot with a gun, but also David Caspar Friedrich's paintings which, as Goethe reportedly said, could be understood the same way if turned upside down. With reference to the writers Uhland and Hoffmann, Adele says that they outrun Goethe for the mere fact that they are closer to her generation and her generation loves them because they represent a new age, say new and personal things as

---

<sup>470</sup> Mann, *Königliche Hoheit. Lotte in Weimar*, 537. See Mann, *Lotte in Weimar*, 182.

compared to a man who is rigid like a rock, commands and dictates restrictions.<sup>471</sup> Then, Adele presents a war of ideas which unfolded during one of the literary reunions organized in their mother's parlor between Goethe and a certain gentleman named Passow, a lover of Greek art. The opposition between the two is evidently the result of Mann's intervention "from the future"<sup>472</sup> not because, during his lifetime, Goethe would have lacked the wit to rebuke Passow for his credulity concerning "German independence" but because Mann had lived "directly" what for previous generations was merely a "foresight". Thus, Passow dreamt of the twine between the Greek and the German spirit so that the love for freedom and the love for the country should take deep root in the hearts of Germans. Goethe senses the effusion in his voice and warns him that this sense of freedom and love for the country is on the verge of turning into a grimace. Thus, Goethe reportedly said that he was terrified by Passow's action because it is the preliminary form—still innocent and generous—of a frightening thing which sometimes in the future will manifest itself among Germans like a terrible madness that will definitely make Passow tremble and turn in his grave:

Von den Alten bilde auch ich mir ein etwas zu verstehen, aber der Freiheitssinn und die Vaterlandsliebe, die man aus ihnen zu schöpfen meint, laufen Gefahr und sind jeden Augenblick im Begriffe zur *Fratze* zu werden ... Vor dem Ihrigen graut mir, weil es die noch edle, noch unschuldige Vorform ist von etwas Schrecklichem...

(I flatter myself that I too know something of the classic authors. But the love of freedom and the fatherland which you think to deduce from them is always in danger, always on the point of becoming absurd... I shudder at your [activities] because they are the first manifestations of something frightful...)<sup>473</sup>

A similar warning, which connects Mann's war writings (opposed to the new German vision of society transposed as democracy) and his exile works (the mature period) can be detected in his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, that contains an ample critique of art in the service of politics. Mann

<sup>471</sup> Mann, *Königliche Hoheit. Lotte in Weimar*, 383. See Mann, *Lotte in Weimar*, 13.

<sup>472</sup> Mann does not intervene exclusively on this theme. Beside the way he builds the dialogues and the precision of Goethe's prophecies which were fulfilled in the future, Mann's influence is clearly seen in Adele's prediction concerning Lotte's house in Wetzlar. Thus, a hundred years before it actually happened, Adele sees that in Charlotte's Wetzlar house were gathered all her embroidery as well as other souvenirs made by her.

<sup>473</sup> Mann, *Königliche Hoheit. Lotte in Weimar*, 510. See Mann, *Lotte in Weimar*, 160-161.

is convinced that such an intellect is something between the Jacobin and the Freemasonry, so art within the context becomes social literature and seductive rhetoric—in the malicious sense of the word—which does nothing but serve social desirability. Despite the fact that these verdicts are evidently Mann's reflections on Goethe and his time, Goethe was indeed very close to Napoleon; he took refuge at the other end of Germany or abroad whenever the Germans' effusions of patriotism outburst and endangered his life. According to Adele's conclusion on the relationship between Goethe and the Germans—though self-exiled in Bohemia or anywhere else during the Austrian-Russian occupation of Weimar—Goethe was loved only because out of all the things he had to endure during his life he suffered enough, or maybe more than enough. Nevertheless, with Adele, Goethe's rigidity is not the only dominant feature in his relationship with people. Goethe's irony does not always sting; in Mann, Goethe's irony turns itself into perfect humour so even the great Wieland has a hard time in controlling his laughter when he listens to him. Like Mann later on, irony and humour save Goethe from the unidirectional perspective on issues such as art or love for freedom and country. Goethe was not primarily romantic because his humour took him serenely through life based on the idea of harmony which must exist among things in nature.

*Unio mystica* with Goethe is seen by Mann through Antonio's words who urges Tasso to know himself and acknowledge himself as he is. Thus, as Livescu said, the anatomic scalpel which dissects Goethe's existence in *Lotte in Weimar* cuts deep into Mann's spiritual flesh, in his ethical, aesthetic and political conviction but mainly in his doubts.<sup>474</sup> As he wanted to be a bourgeois writer like Goethe, Mann—just like him—rose above the mediocrity of this particular social class. Nevertheless, Mann's irony is not the result of ancient serenity, as in Goethe. For Mann, irony is the effect of psychological analysis applied to himself and to the various state of facts which he witnessed. Mann promotes irony and self-irony, not the man of structural serenity that overcomes existential chaos in an apollinien, elegant way. Analysing the spirit of antiquity, Mann inserts some psychologized problems within the ancient tradition itself. His southern, meditative and weedy type of character is defined by the principle of contemplative creation; the northern—and still ancient—type of character depicted by Goethe defines itself through action for the benefit of society even if sometimes action becomes or is perceived as reaction. Both types, however, transcend the limits of German culture, so that—by imitating Goethe—Mann becomes the

---

<sup>474</sup> Livescu, in Preface to Goethe, *Opere*, vol. 1, xi.

RAMONA SIMUȚ

universal immigrant of culture under the auspices of Weimar's Greek pantheon.

## CONCLUSIONS

The present work has examined the problem of cultural continuity between three of the major representatives of German culture as they each decisively influenced its development. Starting with Goethe in the eighteenth century, who through his vast scientific and artistic interests addressed all the major areas of the Enlightenment in his own specific way, our study moved toward a definition of Nietzsche's work whose main features mirror the Goethean classicism and its emphasis on the Greek archaic type of humanity as opposed to the modern society of the nineteenth century. Thirdly, but not least, we decided that particularly these two men of culture and their thought are delineated in the concept of modern artist as found throughout the novels, short stories and essays of Thomas Mann, taking over their tradition in the twentieth century. We decided to envisage just how the tradition settled by Goethe, that of surpassing the "passions", the Reason, and the romantic heroic ideals and music of his age, continues in Nietzsche's philosophical debates on modern music, morality and society, and in Mann's concern for the artist-world relationship, for contemporary politics and music, etc. As a red line surrounding the life and work of these three artists stand their constant attack and reproach against their own times and ideas. However, even if the message against society comes from such notorious men of letters and culture, it is not grounded in aestheticism, but rather in the particular moral model that each one of them developed and that Nietzsche and Mann expressed as a natural consequence as successors of Goethe.

This is the first major conclusion we reached after we studied Goethe, Nietzsche, and Thomas Mann in their own cultural, social and political contexts, and decided that their times reflected an enormous inclination towards German art and especially German philosophy and music.

As this study is an analytical presentation of the cultural elements recurrent in the writings of Goethe, Nietzsche and Mann, it must also contain a philosophical inquiry of this cultural tradition. The sobriety of a rational thought characterized by the solitude of theoretical and practical orientation situates all the three in the lineage—with pros and cons—of Kant as a philosopher who faced Descartes' old doubt concerning the capacity of the creative spirit. Kant's thought demonstrated that artistic work should be perceived as an acquisition of the genius' toil and not only as a so-called inheritance of the golden age of various cultures and their symbols—like, for instance, the French Revolution and the myth of the work of art as production

of the dominant social classes. Nevertheless, if Kant's argument could raise the suspicion that the genius has unlimited powers on art, Goethe, Nietzsche and Mann emerged as geniuses thanks to their works, not as geniuses who prescribed rules to art.

The Weimar classicism as represented by Goethe inaugurated a literature characterized by universality as well as a rationalist thinking that produced a distinctively classical perspective on human individuality, the relationship between man and nature, man and society and on the genius as enrichment of creation. Therefore, if Goethe's age was animated and sustained by Kantian philosophy which brought the realm of art under the auspices of German rationalism, Nietzsche and Mann appeared right in the middle of a social-cultural aesthetic impetus resulting from the Kantian idea of the genius who controls all the art. In relation to the aesthetic enthusiasm of their society, just like Goethe his two successors knew they had to temper and reshape it by offering an idea of morality different from the morality of their age, perceived as entirely corrupt and biased. Of course, the way each of them sought to define and verify their counter moral model was different, given the changing artistic tendencies and the subsequent political repercussions at their specific historical times.

Consequently, even if the three exponents of the German culture rise from specific contexts which at times stress the importance of scientific development, the prevalence of reason, or the priority of German art, they offer a model which is transcultural and universal in purpose. Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann support, despite their different situation and status, the same ideas of freedom and universality in art, society, and politics. These areas and their cultural problems are debated from specific points of view. At Goethe such specifics include: the relationship between poetry and nature, the equal importance of music and all the other arts, or the need for a balance between culture and politics. In Nietzsche's work, they are formulated and preserved under the Goethean import of ancient Greek notion of cooperation between art and nature which complement each other. Advocated by the Greek god Dionysus, the notion of complementarity between the two realms suggests the need for interdependency rather than supremacy of art over nature. This idea of completeness is relevant to the problem of the German culture and German "soul" questioned by Nietzsche, and reflects his response to the German claim to superiority. Nietzsche particularly zeroes in on the incongruence between the art produced by writers or composers supporting Germany's greatness and the art of ancient Greeks which is not oppressive and culturally binding. Return to the noble art of the ancients implies from Nietzsche's standpoint two main principles. In the first place, it involves a detachment from or reevaluation of the existing modern

“values”, that is modern morality and art (see music), or modern optimism in the power of State, culture, etc., and the regain of the soul’s liberty, that is the liberty to think religiously, not morally (not in terms of modern society’s morality). Here Nietzsche is not the advocate of culture, but of the soul, of our primal state as human beings which presupposes a relation to nature as being divine, rather than a relation to human nature in view of its preservation. In the second place, the return to the ancient morality is listening to the “real” Nietzsche and breaking off with the false “philosopher” created by his sister and her activity within the Nietzsche Archive. From Nietzsche’s letters we draw the conclusion that what afterwards Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche intended and managed to do through the Archives was the reverse of genuine Nietzschean thought. Whereas Nietzsche dreamed at the universal relation of man and nature using the idea of the Overman as a model for this type of humanity, his sister made use of the same model but with the purpose of establishing a pure, individualistic race eclipsing all the other nations and being the voice of nationalistic ideals.

The constant moral fight against individualism, nationalism, and cultural narrowness is also a prevalent theme in Goethe and Thomas Mann. This is, in fact, the object of their counter-moral alternative to their specific cultural and social contexts. Goethe used the model of universality and balance between nature and art (see the concept of *natura naturans*) as a reply to his contemporaries’ desire to overcome socially and politically nations like France by use of their cultural heritage and superiority. Bearing this in mind, we sought to demonstrate that whatever accusations are made regarding Goethe’s support for his fellow countrymen praising such cultural supremacy is exaggerated if not premeditated. Moreover, this exaggeration wants the simple and necessary act of listing all the data regarding Goethe’s position toward the cultural emphasis of his time. As Goethe’s relation to Beethoven and the romantic movement in music and art proves, he was neither the promoter of blind patriotism nor of cultural supremacy in general or German culture in particular. His idea of art cannot be detached from the principle of universality of nature and humanity. Hence, the charge against Goethe as a partisan of culture at the expense of politics loses sight of the significant role of Goethe in both artistic and political problems of his time and his urge to maintain a fair balance between these two areas.

As far as Thomas Mann is concerned, there is a clear influence of both Goethe and Nietzsche on his fiction and essays. This influence discloses many themes used by Mann that are similar to subjects commonly debated by Goethe and Nietzsche, see the place of the artist in a chaotic society, the concept of music as symbol of German greatness or spirit, and the related subject of the individual or particular character of German culture in the

world. This last theme is conceived as a final conclusion to all the other subjects: this point is made clear by Thomas Mann especially when it comes to defining and creating his literary characters. An observation is necessary, however, before saying anything about the relation of Mann's literary character to society at large. Though it could seem strange, Mann owes his introspective, ironic, and even seclusive characters to familiar Goethean portraits like the sorcerer from *Der Zauberlehrling* (*The Pupil in Magic*), Wilhelm Meister or idyllic types as Hermann and Dorothea. This typological "loan" from the literature of Goethe reflects the ancient idea of harmony between the internal life of the individual and the external world of nature, and consequently the magical powers of this type of character over phenomenological realm (see Adrian Leverkühn and the art of taming the raging beast). Beside the abnormal qualities of its character, Thomas Mann also retains the Goethean passion for the ancestral, the curiosity for magic that can reestablish the cosmic-individual harmony. There is no doubt in our mind that Goethe transposed this idea of individual harmony to cover the entire artistic life in his time, including literature and music. When we said earlier that Goethe did not perceive culture as a substitute for politics, we considered precisely this intention of Goethe: that the art (the individual life) must live in harmony with nature or the world (external life).

It is clear now, as sustained in our study on Thomas Mann, that Goethe's influence on this modern writer is a factor we should not overlook. But it is also clear that the way to Mann's introspective and damned literary character calls for another influential factor of equal importance and that is, to be sure, the philosophical "loan" from Nietzsche's work. Nietzsche's place in Mann's writings cannot be contested; the writer highlighted this when in *Doktor Faustus*, for example, made some important observations regarding the physical and psychological presence of the philosopher amid his characters. Without Nietzsche's influence, we could not give any account of the sense of apocalypse in his character's mind and society. Mann creates a typology similar to that of Goethe, but its peculiarity shows that there exists a gap between their representative societies. Goethe's age was dominated by the greatness of reason and by a morality deduced from reason and often highly normative. The individual or the nation which succeeded in observing the law (of the State) was considered meritorious, and this virtue was only a step forward to greatness and perfection. Goethe fought these ideas and their terrible implications for society and brought to the public's attention the need for balance to avoid cosmic chaos. But Goethe had to fight his battle against the romantic idea of genius and of political hero. Thomas Mann, on the other way, had to fight for creation and a non-corrupted character knowing that he came from a tradition different from Goethe's and

closer to Nietzsche's. Consequently, Mann decides to step out of the "German" contemporary culture and build his characters in foreign soil. To be sure, they are all born and raised in Germany, but even in the situations when they do not leave the Fatherland, they are still thinking and acting as they were living in a foreign country, precisely like Nietzsche. In this lies the sense of the apocalyptic sense of history and life to which Mann's characters are exposed. Just like Nietzsche and as if he himself created them, Mann's characters feel the pressure of history not only as a cultural burden, but also as social and political misplacement. They expect a different life with a different ideal that outruns this world, and until their expectation is fulfilled they act like emigrants in their country. Like Nietzsche and like Goethe, too, they feel it is useless to try to accomplish the ideal by moving to another country or existence, and that is why they are recognized as universal emigrants. They stand at the opposite of Hesse's characters who choose seclusion in smaller worlds or in a "pedagogical province", and in turn choose to continue the tradition open by Goethe's Wilhelm Meister in his *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* or by Nietzsche's Zarathustra ascending to Olympus. The strong influence of Nietzsche in this area consists in the sharp critique that Mann directs toward precisely the kind of times and society that Nietzsche knew so well and took a stand against (see the Nazi times). Faced with the new political ideologies of the twentieth century, Nietzsche proves to be an outstanding moral model ("immoral" compared to modern morality) from the nineteenth century, and perhaps the only possible model securing the transition from Goethe's art to Mann's typology. In the end, if Goethe foresaw the fatalism of his nation, Nietzsche and Mann experienced it and hence their tragic idea of art and society.



## SUMMARY

This study is an analysis of some of the most important works of Johann W. von Goethe, Friedrich W. Nietzsche, and Thomas Mann. It seeks to determine on the one hand the elements reflecting a common line of thought in their writings, and on the other hand it investigates how those cultural elements or themes point to the three writers as a self-standing “island” pertaining to German culture, though very different from it in problems concerning the perspective on life and the world, the German spirit and nationality, art and music, politics and society. The main goal of our study is to identify the message of their works, the reason why that particular message is set forth, and the need to have such a message in a world where art has for so many times failed to represent the real problems of humanity. In the end, this study encapsulates the main features that led to the formation of an outstanding ethical message within the artistic world through the works and words of these representatives of the German culture.

In order to accomplish our purpose, we first drew up a plan to help us establish some guiding lines throughout the difficult task of working out a compact study without leaving behind important information regarding the context and details of the work of Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann. Bearing this in mind, we planned to follow at least four landmarks to better organize the layout of this study, namely the direction of the study, its purpose, its main motives, and its structure which is accompanied by a selected critical apparatus.

### **The Direction of the Dissertation**

Our study is oriented towards the investigation of a certain type of literature (namely, German literature) and the possibility that it represents—through its main guidelines, personalities, and themes—the European literature as a whole. Such a study of German literature is not directed primarily towards the importance of German culture in Europe. Neither does it seek to “do justice” to the concept of culture (particularly “German culture”) as opposed to the concept of civilization (particularly “French civilization”, as France and Germany disputed the realm of art in Europe beginning with the eighteenth century). Our study is rather an attempt to grasp the importance and the meaning disclosed by this specific literature and its outstanding representatives during the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It also tries

to figure out how their ideas and message worked as an attempt to change some wrong perceptions as well as the face of Europe at that time, and in so doing how it became a universal ethical message for a world in crisis. Consequently, this study investigates deeply rooted (and contrasting) concepts in the literature and philosophy of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, such as classicism-romanticism, Enlightenment-modernism, subjectivism-objectivism, German culture-French civilization, aesthetics-ethics, etc. All these key concepts, which are necessary for the understanding of European art and philosophy in general, will lead to the central idea of our study and not to a specific feature of the German culture or German philosophy at a certain time in history. The central idea which flows like a red line throughout the chapters of this study and as a constant conclusion is that Europe could have searched for a solution in the very time and space where the political and philosophical “crisis” began, namely the works of Goethe, Nietzsche, and Thomas Mann, as representatives of the German literature during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.

### **The Purpose of the Dissertation**

Although our study examines the thought of three writers, it has nevertheless a unitary purpose. In other words, despite the many differences between Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann, which are mostly time related, the *liaison* between them is far-reaching and powerful. Thus, the study is not concerned to depict their opinions about certain events or persons, but rather to identify their creeds as well as the convictions which affected an entire generation of people and their impact in the world.

We are committed in this study to reach the substance of these thinkers’ works by using a specific method, namely by following their ideas (which oftentimes hint at social and political realities) chronologically as well as thematically. Besides the critical apparatus that we use here, the question of how we do this is very important. Due to the fact that we study the works of Goethe and Thomas Mann, generally seen as men of letters and novelists, but also the philosophical productions of Nietzsche, perceived as one of the most abstract thinkers of all times, we sought to accomplish our purpose by taking into account at least two types of writings (literary and philosophical) in each particular case. Provided that for a proper understanding of their message, chronology is as relevant as the themes or concepts they use, the two types of writings (literary and philosophical) will be mentioned and quoted whenever one is necessary to underline or explain the other. In order to achieve this purpose, we selected autobiographical details which are contained in the letters they either wrote or received from others, in personal

journals or memoirs, as well as in other peoples' testimonies about them, etc.

How, then, should the contemporaries of Goethe, Nietzsche and Mann have understood the "odd" fact that although Goethe had "modern" abilities and skills just like them, he was indeed a man of science who stood close to ethical principles? How unfortunate Nietzsche must have appeared to them when despite his many qualities as a philosopher and musicologist, he preferred seclusion and a life without glory to the praises coming from his superficial fellowmen! How utterly radical and merciless should Mann's friends, the German exiles in America, have sensed his distrust in their democratic dream and new government which lacked direction and principles! If we want to find out how much indeed, it is never too late to approach their works bearing in mind three simple aspects: principles, balance, and the ethical message.

From a chronological point of view, Goethe is portrayed in our study following the pattern of his real life, namely as a pathfinder of the cultural and social world of the eighteenth century, a classic personality that experienced not just the "Sturm und Drang" of his youth, but also Kantian philosophical rationalism with which Goethe shared many ideas in the fields of art and society. For instance, as far as art is concerned, Goethe developed his concepts of nature and art in parallel as well as in opposition to the Kantian concept of the artistic genius. This is very similar to the idea of the German spirit which only began to make itself known thanks to the prevalence of reason and the power of the genius in Kant's philosophy. Nevertheless, with reference to society, Goethe shared Kant's opinions towards the teleological view on life and the world, which was very popular during the eighteenth century, and they both repudiated Wolff's philosophy as well as his conviction that human life and society were nothing but a mere chance.

All these ideas that Goethe confronted during his lifetime were born against the background of unparalleled political issues. In offering a solution to those issues, Goethe stood as a "lonely spirit" amidst his fellow brethren and citizens especially with reference to the German internal wars and the French Revolution. Our study takes into account these chronological, political, and social guidelines concerning both the work of Goethe and the classicism he stood for within the German and European culture of the time. Goethe's "singleness" in the eighteenth century reflected itself both in Goethe's attitude towards the French Revolution (he warned against the imminent perils of the Revolution and rebuked his fellow citizens for not being aware of it) and towards the "Magna Carta" of the Revolution, i.e. the *French Encyclopedia*. In 1789, the year of the Revolution, the majority of Germans received wholeheartedly the news of the rapid spreading of revolts

throughout the major cities of Europe, while ignoring the basic message of the *Encyclopedia*, which promoted a rational social order based on the development of science and the establishment of new trades and professions. At that time, Goethe sensed the danger and lack of balance between the high ideals expressed in the *Encyclopedia* and the social-political disorder caused by the people's failure to free humanity because of their violent riots and crimes. Thus, while the *Encyclopedia* supported the idea of liberty within an ordained society, the effects of the Revolution were tyranny and complete political chaos. In this sense, our argument is that Goethe was respectful towards the *Encyclopedia* and saw it as a textbook of handcrafts and scientific discoveries, and not as a manifesto of the French Revolution, which he harshly criticized (see, for instance, his poem *Hermann und Dorothea*, or *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, where Goethe criticizes his countrymen for mistrusting the potential of the French culture). One of the most important ideas here is that Goethe was not a supporter of the "German spirit", which in the eighteenth century was satisfied by its own cultural powers but neglected the intellectual and scientific accomplishments of the neighbouring countries. Goethe instead encouraged European spirituality without being a pupil of the Revolution, but a man of culture whose vision determined his message.

Furthermore, our purpose is to find out how Goethe understood and kept a balanced perspective on the relationship between the art and society of his time. If, as we already mentioned, Goethe did not outwardly encourage his countrymen's nationalistic and chauvinistic views towards other countries, he inwardly worked a lot to show that his attitude toward German politics was right. Generally speaking, Goethe's personality developed against the aspects which represented the very atmosphere of the eighteenth century. This implies that Goethe had to take a stand against all the cultural and social features of his time: literature, painting, music, sciences (like physics and optics, etc.), but also against institutions, politics (his views on war, Napoleon, the German soldier representing German pride, etc.) and the state's security. At a first glance, one could say that these realms do not interfere in any way. Our point is that beginning with Goethe's age, they did interfere: Goethe felt it happening, many of his contemporaries were pleased at this prospect, and Germany became the "cultural" country of Europe. Nevertheless, our purpose is to change the wrong conceptions about Goethe as a man of culture who approved of this particular culture. As in Germany the eighteenth century was and is still perceived as *the* century of philosophy and music, we thought it was rather logical to investigate the relationship between thought and music: first in Goethe and then in Nietzsche and Thomas Mann, in order to see how Goethe's attitude in this respect was present in

Nietzsche and Mann. With reference to music, Goethe never approved of his fellowmen's belief that music was a means to reach fame and define national culture in terms of political emancipation. What he did in turn was to encourage musical performance but also the emergence of new musical genres like, for instance, the *Singspiele*. However, he was not interested in performing a magnificent, heavy instrumental music glorifying the spiritual and mental powers of the genius. Goethe searched for the purpose of music in the simple art of the ancient Greeks, in the classical, clear and objective art, where the genius was at peace with external nature and primarily interested in the quality, not in the quantity, of stage performance. This is, for instance, the real sense of Goethe's suspicion towards Beethoven's music which almost always conveyed an excessively heroic and patriotic message. Goethe sensed that the message of Beethoven's music was not even subliminal: it was a direct challenge to national and political action (and it clearly foreshadowed Wagner's music in the nineteenth century with its nationalistic symbolism and subjective extravagance). For Goethe, nationalistic music was decadent and timely (even opportunistic). Later, Nietzsche followed the same path when he accused Wagner of "dilettantism"; Thomas Mann also shares this view on Wagner's music and aestheticism.

As the most important philosophical and literary productions of Nietzsche and Thomas Mann contain this distinctive perspective on music as an art which opposes Wagner's dilettantism and his nationalist characters, our study draws relevant conclusions about the real essence of music and art in general as expressed in Nietzsche's thought and in Mann's characters. At the end of the day, irrespective of the cultural or social contexts within which Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann developed their specific perspectives on German art, music, poetry, etc., and unlike any other heritage that men of culture ever shared with each other, these three writers always managed to reach the same conclusion about the cultural, social, and political events of their times. The end of their artistic productions is to propose a new ideal of humanity, other than the modern man that inspired the romantics in Goethe's time, Wagner and Schopenhauer in Nietzsche's time, and the Nazis in Mann's time. In search of this ideal humanity, lost ever since modern society turned its back to traditional values, Goethe, Nietzsche and Mann began their pilgrimage outside Weimar or Germany as modern cultural locations. Their gesture was meant to set an example and stress the fact that we need to go back to the sources, to the ancients, in order to understand what real humanity normally is. Their morality is built on this type of humanity and is different from the modern man because its source (Antiquity) honoured life and its essence, whereas modern society failed to find the meaning and purpose of life.

When it comes to Nietzsche, there are significant data related to our subject and purpose, namely those of chronologically detaching Nietzsche's thought from the social and political trends of his age, and of thematically establishing the message of his work which is other than the message forced upon him through extrapolations and misinterpretations. Many of them were produced by the activity of the "Nietzsche Archive" in Weimar which had a tremendous influence on how Nietzsche was perceived as a philosopher during the late nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. For example, it is common knowledge that Nietzsche's sister ran the Archive after his mental breakdown as well as after his death. It turns out, however, that what she wrote and how she interpreted Nietzsche's works was a voluntary distortion of his thought for financial reasons. This is why we shall back Nietzsche's statements against anti-Semitism (which he clearly opposed as it became a national problem in Germany in the second half of the nineteenth century) with the visionary words of his letters where he criticized the future leadership of Germany for precisely such anti-Semitic views. This way, if Nietzsche's contemporaries found an excuse for their obtuseness by saying that Nietzsche's philosophy was way too abstract and hermetic to be interpreted, his letters are extremely clear and reprove his fellow citizens for their national German pride manifested in contempt for their neighbours. Nietzsche's letters thus function as a "decoding key", if we ever needed one, to his philosophy, and the fact that they were carefully dated was an additional historical proof that his thought worked the same way in his writings as well as in his daily life.

As in the case of Nietzsche and Goethe, the purpose of associating Mann's name with theirs is to close a circle which without the contribution of a writer living in postmodern times would be incomplete. In Mann we first looked for the principles he shared with his predecessors, so we made numerous references to his essays, a genre acknowledged to have disclosed his literary skills. The following step is an analysis of his most debated novels and novellas which represent a continuation of the early thoughts and themes contained in his essays; for example, *Der Zauberberg* made Mann famous as author of the novel-essay. Our primary concern is thus to demonstrate the clear continuity between *Der Zauberberg* and his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, an essay of very personal convictions written during the First World War. Because Mann was criticized more than once for his thoughts about Germany and its culture as expressed in *Betrachtungen*, we want to prove that this essay originated in the same impetus like *Der Zauberberg* (in the conviction that Germany and Europe were in danger both culturally and politically), although with different results. The essay represents Mann's personal closing towards Europe, just like Germany closed its

borders during the war. Its continuation, *Der Zauberberg*, reflects the author's opening to Europe as a social event, just like Germany's opening to Europe was a self-decision. In order to come to terms with the principles which both the essay and the novel stand for, and finally to make the desired connection with Goethe and Nietzsche, we resorted to an argument supported especially by their early works, namely the fact that they all came to the point when giving up the old masters and ideas became imminent. Thus, Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, like Goethe's *Werther* and Nietzsche's *Die Geburt der Tragödie* contains personal reflections on the German spirit, music, and the genius which were later to be revised and abandoned as subjective and biased. Nietzsche later referred to *Die Geburt der Tragödie* as a book for those "baptized in music", containing esoteric thoughts which did not make full sense to its author either. Goethe, the mature writer of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, said that even if real, a fact is important to the extent that it has meaning, namely a social meaning. As the three writers themselves explain, their early personal quests (in *Werther*, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, and *Betrachtungen*) were not written for posterity and do not contain their mature artistic creeds as, for example, *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, *Also sprach Zarathustra* or *Doktor Faustus*. The fact that they are invoked as individual literary and philosophical productions and value judgements are passed on them today without paying attention to the above mentioned argument is clearly a proof that Mann was right when, twelve years after in his *Lebensabriß*, he referred to *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* as to "a war service for which time, rather than country enlisted him." For the purpose of our study we conclude that even though Mann's *Betrachtungen* is important for its chronology and bring forward historical data which could easily make the object of some well-documented annals of the First World War, they are a testimony of the first major crisis that the young artist experienced (following in the footsteps of Goethe and Nietzsche), and not the visionary work of the mature artist who is ready to prepare others for future crises.

### **The Motive of the Dissertation**

This study is a survey of the cultural continuity between Goethe, Nietzsche, and Thomas Mann, and not an analysis—as it could have been—devoted to the influence of Schopenhauer on the artistic perspective of Nietzsche and Mann, the influence of Wagner on the idea of music and state in Nietzsche and Mann, the similarities and differences between Kantian philosophy and the view of Goethe and Nietzsche on society and ethics, or even to the concept of *Bildung* as reflected in the characters of Goethe, Thomas Mann, and

Hermann Hesse. The possibilities are numerous because Goethe reunites in his personality an entire culture which, although not limited to Germany and a specific age, is still defined as European. Why then should a “cultural heritage” be possible only between Goethe living in the “Enlightened century”, the “modern” Nietzsche, perceived as a nihilist philosopher during his lifetime, and the “post-modern” Thomas Mann, the novelist and essay-writer, whose literary work repeatedly interfered with mundane political subjects, as his *Reflections* and other essays certify?

The reason why this study approaches only the cultural elements in the works and thought of Goethe, Nietzsche, and Thomas Mann as an evidence of a common creed and a historical bound is twofold. On the one hand, although there are many other men of culture, artists, and philosophers that can be related to Goethe, Nietzsche, or Thomas Mann, what must be kept in mind is the need to clarify and decipher the concept behind a name or a period of time. Let us consider, for instance, the relationship between nature and art (artist, genius) as common concept or theme in the literature of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. These temporal references are very important for a study of German and European cultures because it was in the eighteenth century that they began to produce artists and works which deserve a high status. Before any other literary or philosophical assertion, this study defines Goethe as a classical artist, i.e. as successor of the classical Greek culture of Antiquity and its clearly established vision of the relationship between the external nature (physical objective reality of the world) and internal nature (man’s sentiments and abilities through which he creates art). At first, Goethe was not fully aware of this antique vision of the relationship between nature and the genius. Whereas Greek Antiquity stressed the need for balance between the two realms, Goethe started as a “sturmist” whose definition of the genius embodied in Werther was anything but calm. Following his visit to Rome when he got accustomed to the relics of the past, to ancient Greek and Roman art and having satisfying his scientific curiosities, he concluded that the genius (man of culture) was not above nature but subordinated to it. Thus Goethe understood that it was not the artist who prescribed rules to art through the power of his intellect as in Kant, but nature is a universe that constantly surprises us. This means we cannot limit it within the boundaries of human reason but there is something else beyond our reason that provides for nature, otherwise nature is not a genuine source of inspiration and the genius would become a tyrant. Goethe however extended this view over the role of the scientist, who cannot manipulate nature, and over art in general. Thus, whenever he spoke of music with reference to the German music of the eighteenth century, which his fellow citizens defined as a token of German greatness and spirituality, Goethe

sensed the lack of balance between the high status granted to the musician or the composer in Germany, and the Germans' feeling that the composer created a magnificent art through his own mental and spiritual forces. In this sense, what Goethe does in his *Pupil in Magic* is to put to the test the apprentice's idea that he is powerful enough to take his master's place and command the waters. When Beethoven transformed Goethe's *Egmont* into a theatrical character to impersonate the German national hero who is powerful enough to free the country on his own, Goethe feared that the nightmare described in his *Pupil in Magic* became the daydream of his conationals. Thus, it was straight before his own eyes that Goethe saw how the genius (Beethoven or Egmont) transformed art (which was supposed to be calm, balanced, social ethics) into a means to accomplish political action (political aesthetics).

Nietzsche, for his part, bears in mind Goethe's vision on nature, art and music when he speaks, for instance, about Goethe's *Pupil in Magic* or his *Novelle*. Nietzsche reiterates Goethe's classic, antique perspective on ethics and this is proved by the "philosophemes" or the common philosophical concepts/themes of his work, such as the Superman, the transvaluation of values, time recurrence, the good and evil, etc. Nietzsche's mature philosophy stands in total disagreement with Kantian rationalism or Schopenhauer's nihilism which was very popular in Nietzsche's days. Goethe used to define his idea of ethics as a balance between two forces, namely between nature as external law and the individual as internal law, an aspect that Nietzsche takes over from his predecessor. Where does this conclusion come from? Certainly from the very fact that Nietzsche vehemently opposes Schopenhauer's ethics and Kant's philosophy which are both defined by the concept of "will": the arbitrary, selfish will in Schopenhauer, and the "good will" in Kant which is based on human reason. Whatever these wills use as a foundation, for Nietzsche they are both individualistic and opportunistic. Nietzsche argues that such a will must be transcended or surpassed along with its "moral" values. As this will portrays the entire nineteenth century, which is seen as "modern", Nietzsche describes himself as "anti-moral" with reference to his opposition towards the "morality" of his age, and not to the fact that he would somehow be immoral. Nietzsche wants to surpass the voluntaristic morality of his age, so he expresses it through his definition of the Superman and chapter on self-surpassing in his *Also sprach Zarathustra*, because the two are clearly related. Nietzsche defines his ethics as the surpassing of Schopenhauer's corrupt morality. Thus, Nietzsche could not have written a book entitled *Der Wille zur Macht*, and even if he had nurtured the desire to do it, such a book would not define his own thinking but it would be a parody of the two aforementioned types of

philosophy. In order to fully grasp the idea that Nietzsche and Mann shared Goethe's concept of ethics, we need to have a clear perspective on the status and definition of this ethics not only in Goethe, Nietzsche and Mann but also in the different types of philosophical systems which they knew during their lives.

Why do we say that Thomas Mann is the real successor of Goethe and Nietzsche in the twentieth century? For at least two important reasons: first, the typology which Mann uses in his novellas and novels, and second, the problem of music in Mann and his position towards the German spirit of his age, namely his artistic message. Both reasons are subject to a close comparison with the works of Goethe and Nietzsche. Concerning this comparison, one could suggest that it would be more suitable to consider Hermann Hesse, and not his contemporary Thomas Mann, as Goethe's direct successor, if one takes into account the relationship between Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister Wanderjahre* and Hesse's *Glasperlenspiel*. After all, Joseph Knecht does exactly what Wilhelm Meister dreamt of, namely he enters a pedagogical province, an institution of higher education, where he eventually enjoys the best knowledge of his age in all possible fields. This was, after all, the dream of the Enlightenment, whose best product was Goethe the man of science and culture but also the statesman at the Weimar Court. Thinking of Knecht's ascent within the Castaglian elite, whose leader he himself was appointed, one could easily notice that, in Goethe's time, the aim of every mason was to reunite all the power of the world in his very hands.

To answer this and finally decide if Mann is indeed to be considered Goethe's disciple in the twentieth century, we have to go back to Goethe's definition of culture and to the kind of social message that his work conveys. Goethe's Wilhelm Meister dreamt of ascending to a higher culture when he first began to search for his vocation, i.e. the theatrical vocation in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. Later on, in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, the character developed socially, he is now a parent and faces the great responsibility of setting a personal example for his son. From now on, Wilhelm decides it is time to open himself not only to the needs of his family, namely to settle down and provide for them, but also to the needs of his fellowmen, a demand that requires social experience and a lot of travel. Goethe's definition of culture and the path to acquire knowledge is therefore obvious: as exemplified by his character Wilhelm Meister, everything in our lives has a purpose and a perfect timing. There is a time when we retreat in order to learn and prepare for life, and there is a time when we have to open towards others and settle down. Retreat is not settling down. Knecht retreats within the pedagogical province of Castaglia, within the hidden space of the elites—just like Felix, Wilhelm's son—with the important difference that

when Felix did that, he was the age of his father in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. Even if Knecht eventually gets married and has a son, he remains secluded within the province, because the elites do not experience real life; there is no way out from their caste. They are to “bring rain” into the tribe, not to offer the warmth of their heart.

Following the example of *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, Mann brings forward the character of Adrian Leverkühn, with whom Knecht is formally compared (Mann himself creates Leverkühn as a reply to Hesse’s Knecht, and *Doktor Faustus* as a “glass bead game with black beads” as a reply to Hesse’s *Glasperlenspiel*). Leverkühn combines the story of Goethe’s Wilhelm Meister with the story of a music genius. In this consists Mann’s reply to Hesse’s *Glasperlenspiel*. In short, Leverkühn’s life meets the challenge of study as a schoolboy, the appreciation and esteem of the high cultural circles of his time, and above all the warmth and gentleness of a pure child’s heart embodied in Nepo, his nephew. But there is one thing which is central in Hesse’s character and which Leverkühn, like Meister, does not meet: he does not comply with the elites’ invitation to become their leader and master, he leaves the province, though he would be most suitable to lead this hierarchy. Leverkühn is not only a representative character of Mann’s typology, but also the predominant voice of Mann’s idea of music and artistic message. With this character Mann answers our second question: why is Mann to be perceived as spokesman of the artistic message of Goethe and Nietzsche in the twentieth century? Through Leverkühn, Thomas Mann avoids Wagner’s dilettantism in music. His message is visionary like Nietzsche’s and does not speak for Germany’s greatness, but instead for its collapse as in “Apocalypsis cum figuris”. Just like Hans Castorp in *Der Zauberberg* and like Nietzsche’s Zarathustra, Leverkühn is shown climbing the mountain of knowledge, of seclusion, of “culture”, but in the end descending in the valley, in society where there’s war and pain. However, it is the only place where his message becomes meaningful, ethical, healing. This is for Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann the definition of the ultimate genius: he has to breathe and live naturally, he is the creator of art that cannot stand closed spaces. Instead of being the master of the elite that wants to lead through force, even the force of the intellect, this genius chooses alienation like Nietzsche, that is to know who he is and that he is not a hypocrite.

What we have said so far concerning the reason why our study considers the work of Nietzsche and Thomas Mann as continuation of Goethe’s ideas in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is, as stated, a matter of clarifying or deciphering some key-concepts that support this statement. But there has to be another reason why we chose to identify the common themes in these three writers’ works, to delineate a common history of cultural ideas in their

thought, to finally see how all these trends speak for the unique ethical message they bring to our society, and, very important, to write a thesis about three outstanding German writers in English. Why we wrote it in English is the question that needs to be answered. The reason is as obvious as the tradition to which this thesis owes a lot. If we look closer to the secondary sources of this thesis, it is easy to notice that more than 80% of them belong to the English literary tradition (or were adopted by it) and contain referential names in the field, such as Nicholas Boyle, Eric Blackall, Walter Bruford, Henry Hatfield, R. J. Hollingdale, etc. Apart from these there are other names that belong to my Romanian stock and are highly praised not only in my homeland but also in Europe and in the United States. Writing my thesis in English was a matter of ease for me and for my fellowcitizens, too. A thesis on Goethe, Nietzsche or Thomas Mann is always well-received in all the Romanian academic realms, and the fact that so many synoptic and analitic studies of their works are being published every year is a proof of that. It is well-known that Romanian students in the nineteenth century studied intensively German literature and philosophy at important Austrian and German universities, as the then Northwestern part of the country was under the political administration of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. In the early twentieth century after the First World War, Transylvania was released from the *Kaiserliche und Königliche Doppelmonarchie* and became reunited with Romania. Before and after the Second World War, and especially in the last three decades, Romanian's basic cultural tendency was to build on their culture, but especially in the last three decades to import literature from the West by translations or by loan of ideas, so that the preferred language of culture was English instead of German. I also belong to this tradition. Thus I attempt to make the reading of my thesis more comfortable as it is written in English. At the same time, however, a study of Goethe, Nietzsche, and Mann requires that the main quotations from their poetry, philosophy, novellas and novels should be offered in German. This makes for the genuine character of their ideas and for the faithfulness of the English translation, and perhaps works as remembrance that the language of German culture is not to be confounded with the political whims of an age.

### **The Structure of the Dissertation**

This study has three main chapters. The first is dedicated to Goethe and divided into ten sections which deal with issues ranging from the origin of Goethe's poetical thinking to his influence on art in general and music in particular. The first section tackles Goethe's relationship with naturalism, given his family inheritance and his interest in various sciences. Goethe's

name is frequently associated with the pedantry of study, which is proved by works such as *Metamorphose der Pflanzen* (1790), *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1796), and *Zur Farbenlehre* (1810). These “textbooks” proved to be of great help to Goethe in his attempts to counter mysticism (and not only that) when corroborated especially with the impressions he gathered from his journeys in Italy. Furthermore, Goethean naturalism eventually opens itself to a totally new universe which is worth exploring, namely human genus and genius (see his *natura naturans*). This universe he discovers as a result of his studies on the mineral, vegetal and animal genera (see his *natura naturata*) by means of classic tradition. Sections two and three define the relationship between Goethe and Kantianism, because the closer he got to Kant’s philosophy the more his passion for the human universe was amplified. The materialization of Kantian rationalism in close connection with the teleological ideal—widely spread in Europe at that time—is a theme which Goethe held very dear. The purpose of these sections is to prove that the contrast between Goethe and Kant is given by their perspective on art. If in Kant the [mathematical] genius has an ascendancy over art, which means that he can prescribe rules to art, in Goethe nature and art exist in a relationship of interdependency and inseparable unity. In this respect, Goethean methodology is clearly defined, in the sense that art does not belong to the internal experience of the genius, but to the external experience which is essentially alien to the self. Goethe’s argument is that the genius must not be romantic but classic, namely a creator of disinterested pleasures. Section four explores Goethe’s relationship with neo-humanism. The discussion about Goethean classicism as opposed to his contemporaries’ romanticism is enlightened by his neo-humanistic perspective characterized by his pantheism (love for nature) in opposition to romantic intuition (love for self). Compared to the ideals of the “modern” men at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Goethe poses as a conservative figure who intends to recapture the significance of the truth—hidden by the dull intellectualism and moral relativism of those who call themselves “modern”. The finality of human actions which affect nature must be the logical balance in such a way that man reflects total transparency. Section five takes us into the historical background and presents the personalities of Wetzlar and Weimar that proved crucial for Goethe’s spiritual development. It also discusses Goethe’s transition from various considerations about his philosophical formation to the problem of the German culture and the way this is reflected in his works. Although Wetzlar and Weimar were a phase of transition, Goethe retained the cultural and political essence of these two places which are also extremely important for this study. Sections six to nine contain a necessary debate about Goethe and the notion of German culture. The “lo-

cal” problem is integrated within the larger framework of the relationship between German culture and French civilization. In this context, the definition of terms as well as their social role will be especially underlined.

Thus, this study investigates various opinions concerning how the Germans saw the French Revolution and the historical-political moment which was inaugurated by it. Sections seven to nine form a continuum as they analyse the conviction of some critics that Goethe—who influenced the eighteenth century at least to the degree reached by Kantian rationalism—would have encouraged the culturalization of Germany as a distinctive feature of this particular country within the European realm, which also prevented it from being open to the political movements surrounding it. According to this line of critique, Goethe would have waged a false political battle, which was characterized by a strong sense of national culture and lack of social implication in the context of European revolutions. Towards the end of section nine, it will be shown that—through his daily work and activity at the Weimar court—Goethe supported the thesis of the complementarity between culture and politics as well as that between nature and art. Thus, he did not defend the prerogatives of culture over politics. This observation is put to the test in our study based on excerpts taken from some of his works, such as *Hermann und Dorothea* (1798), the posthumous *J. P. Eckermann Gespräche mit Goethe* (1836) and *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1811) which—alongside many other writings—expresses his attitude towards France. The perspective of some Jewish contemporary intellectuals concerning Goethe’s role and his notion of *Bildung* as legacy for Jewish posterity was also taken into account. Section ten introduces an issue which has long been debated and which places Goethe between literature and music. Thus, the study attempts to foster a proper answer to the claim that music has always been the main vehicle whereby Germany displayed its “national pride” and that the first ideologist of this particular national feeling would have been Goethe, especially in his capacity of Director of the Weimar Theatre. This claim has recently gained prominence especially when backed by the accusation that Goethe tried to avoid his political duties by getting increasingly involved in music. To counter this claim as well as its corresponding accusation, this study shows that the German *Singspiele* evolved from the Italian *opera buffa*. Different from the *opera seria*, which eventually defined tragic opera, the *opera buffa* identified itself with the formation of European nations. The *Singspiele* was preferred as comedy in the eighteenth century, while the *opera seria* reached the peak of its success during the nineteenth century, when it led to the taste for performance as a show and ample instrumentation (as, for instance, in Wagner). Thus, it is shown that Goethe—without being famous in music—encouraged harmony and equality among arts.

Goethe promoted the *Singspiele* as an echo of the *opera buffa*, in order to educate the public concerning the model of identity represented by the musical genre which had mirrored the unification of the European nations. By defining this particular musical genre in contrast with the music of the nineteenth century, our study argues that Goethe opposed both the exclusivism and nationalism of his contemporaries. For Goethe, music—like poetry (for example, Homer's poems)—originates in Greek art and it does not have a certain heroic portrait as a theme but the balance of the realms (internal and external). Within this context, the relationship between Goethe and Beethoven is explored, so that it is no longer left pray to endless uncertainties. Thus, Beethoven's *Egmont*—an opera he wrote based on Goethe's drama (1788)—as well as his famous letters display a vision about the national hero which is tributary to the new German romanticism. Such an approach though is not in accordance with Goethe's classic message, which was sternly criticized by Schiller, who said it had transformed the *Egmont* hero into a more peaceful person than the actual historical character. Put in a nutshell, the first chapter demonstrates that Goethe, the writer sought to express primarily a harmonious vision in culture as well as in politics.

Concerning the other two promoters of the German culture, Nietzsche and Mann, it should be mentioned from the start that they both worked within the same spiritual realm as their Weimar master. Probably more than anyone else, Nietzsche is indebted to Goethe by means of his classicism of ancient Greek stock. This seems to be why Nietzsche promoted the idea that since the development of modern secular society in Western Europe, traditional [Christian] values lost their power over the individual (see, for instance, his astonishing realization that "God is dead"). Thus, Nietzsche criticizes the efforts of his contemporaries to blur the burden of "nihilism" by delegating the final authority to a set of different ideals—such as human nature and reason—as in Hobbes and Rousseau. Instead of these false ideals, Nietzsche proposes a hero who is to affirm the ideal of life even if in modernity it lacks any meaning. Likewise, instead of promoting the material ends as means to effect progress, Nietzsche claims that the purpose of life is to encourage the superior individual, the *Übermensch*, the superhuman who truly perceives human suffering while rationally capable to control his emotions in the spirit of Greek tragedy.

The second chapter of the dissertation has to do with the analysis of Nietzsche's philosophical ideas and it also has ten sections. The whole chapter focuses on the demonstration that the connection between Goethe and Nietzsche is not due only to the admiration which they both shared towards Greek classicism, but also to their essential perspective on the development of the German culture as well as the way it determines the place of

Germany in the world. Beside the actual period of Nietzsche's philosophical creation between 1872 and 1888, the ten sections also approach the posthumous period reflected in the activity of the Nietzsche Archive in Weimar, when Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche forced a series of interpretations and extrapolations upon Nietzsche's work. The period before his death is concerned with the chronology of Nietzsche's life and work, as well as with the changes of perspective corresponding to the four main stages of his artistic creation: the early stage (1872-1876), the middle stage (1878-1882), the later stage (1883-1887) and the final stage (1888). The first section follows these four stages chronologically and it also presents the context of Nietzsche's literary-philosophical works from *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1872) to *Der Antichrist* (1888) and his autobiography *Ecce homo* (1888). At the same time, Nietzsche is analysed within the framework of German cultural life, alongside his early mentors Arthur Schopenhauer, David Strauss and Richard Wagner, whom he supported during his early stage of creation but then criticized during his middle stage, when he changed his perspective on the significance of German culture. The second section is concerned with this particular change of perspective on German culture which is represented generally by his three early mentors and especially by Wagner's music. Thus, the analysis follows the transformation of Nietzsche's great admiration concerning the Bayreuth composer into open grudge, as reflected in his *Der Fall Wagner* (1888) and *Nietzsche contra Wagner* (1888). This study shows how Nietzsche launches a staunch critique of the political message and the proneness to sensational characteristic to Wagner's music, against which Nietzsche defines himself as a defender of old music. This particular type of music creates a background of security for man in his relationship with the elements of nature which is devoid of Wagner's deep feeling of anxiety. Sections three and four seek to answer an important question, namely to which point Nietzsche's philosophy expresses Nietzsche's own words and from which point onwards we begin to hear another voice, that of posterity. The importance of this issue does not reside only in setting some basic landmarks in Nietzsche's work, but also in defining Nietzsche's true perspective on German culture and politics unlike his sister's nationalistic views, such as the Nueva Germania movement. The focus will be set on Nietzsche's letters as well as on the way some of his basic ideas—the Superman, good and evil, eternal recurrence, the will to power—reflect themselves in his writings until 1888. These are compared to his sister's ideas about his work or about the “philosophemes” which she stressed in his posthumous writings. Thus, it is shown that the difference between the works Nietzsche wrote during his life and those published posthumously is caused by the fact that Nietzsche's authentic vision as well as

the chronological development of his ideas were not followed carefully. Moreover, his own ideas were later forced into specific themes which Nietzsche did not even consider. Section five deals with the period of post-humorous reinterpretations of Nietzsche's works based on his *Der Wille zur Macht* (1901), but also on the Nietzsche Archive. Our study demonstrates that this process of reinterpretation reached its peak during Hitler's regime and the domination of the national-socialists. Sections six to eight are an attempt to save Nietzsche's philosophy from the immediate influence of his sister. This particular analysis focuses on his impressions about German culture in particular. Nietzsche's frankness in characterising German culture is obvious in his *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (1886) and *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (1887), which also reflects his relationship with the modernism of the nineteenth century. It will be revealed that, within this context, Nietzsche defines himself as an immoralist against the background of the morality of his time. Section nine depicts Nietzsche as he understands Goethe. Somehow rather serenely, Nietzsche sees Goethe as Zarathustra's companion. The reason for such an assessment is that, for Nietzsche, Goethe becomes more and more classic, as Nietzsche places him against modernism and especially against Wagner. Consequently, Nietzsche sees Goethe as a Greek amid his contemporaries as well as an explorer of the notion of wholeness who defends culture against intrusions which claim exclusivity over the social realm (see his interpretation of Goethe's *Novelle*, published in 1828). In section ten, Nietzsche's view of humanity is briefly compared to Goethe's. If Goethe is the prophet of the balance between nature and art, Nietzsche is the apocalyptic prophet in the sense that the space in which he lives needs a new type of man, unknown to his contemporaries. The unfortunate example of this society helps us to understand the notion of Superman, namely the man who transcends society in order to learn how to resume his connection to nature.

The third chapter is a lengthier discussion about Thomas Mann which—in its first section—contains an autobiographical presentation. This is much needed as it discloses the central dates of Mann's life and work until 1929, when he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. The first section is also explanatory in connection with the coordinates which both set the way Mann will be approached in this study and place his ideology in relationship with contemporary social changes. Section two is concerned with Mann, the writer and his connection to the political regime, which evolves from the bourgeois structure of the *Buddenbrooks* (1901) to the allegorical novel *Königliche Hoheit* (1909). The main goal of this section is not to present these two books, but rather to investigate the type of relationship which is being built between the creator (as a writer who is keenly aware of social

changes) and the public (which is affected by these changes). Thus, this study questions whether this relationship is characterized by submission—as in Wagner’s contemporaries—or it has a sort of an “instinctive” character—as Mann himself states. The fact that Mann is so careful not to reflect a certain social intentionality in his work and wishes to find a clarification to this problem supports the idea that even the early stage of Mann’s creation places him very close to Goethe and Nietzsche in connection with the way they all define their relationship with the public. Section three presents Mann during the war by mainly offering an analysis of his essay *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* (1918) and the traces it left in *Der Zauberberg* (1924). The analysis insists on the dates of the specific context which generated the ideas of these works, as well as Mann’s change of perspective from the *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* to *Der Zauberberg*. Thus, the focus is on how Mann the writer leaves the internal world of his sombre unrest in order to open himself to the external world as the borders of his own country were opened after the war. The goal of this entire analysis is to define the meaning of Mann’s apoliticism and how it is reflected in contemporary critiques, especially against Nietzsche’s anti-politicism. Therefore, it is shown that Mann’s *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* is not in sharp contrast with the rest of his works, in the sense that *Betrachtungen* were written on a very personal note as they investigate concepts like politics and democracy, which—although highly praised—were rather vague to his contemporaries. If for Nietzsche modern philosophy was decadent, Mann reaches a similar conclusion as far as modern politics is concerned. Section four places Mann between his political visionariness and his ethical creed in a country which was threatened by Nazism, as if his contemporaries listened to Nietzsche again as he spoke against the nationalists of his time. The decisive role of Mann’s irony—so prevalent in his novels and essays—is of great importance at this point. Irony works as an essential binder which keeps together the writer’s imagination and the reality of the 1930s. At the same time, irony denounces the digressions from logic of the writer himself, his characters or even an entire social ideology, so Mann masterfully makes the most of the irony’s literary possibilities. Sections five to eight present Mann and his later works, which are the peak of his impressions concerning the role of the artist and of art within his cultural and social context. Mann’s later creation stage—essentially exilic—resembles Nietzsche, and especially his later philosophy from 1886-1888. Towards the middle of the twentieth century, Mann offers a dazzling surprise by the way he resumes the problematic questions of his previous works, which are fused into a “problem of the character” reflected especially in *Doktor Faustus* (1947). The voluminous preface (of the English edition) entitled “The Genesis of a Novel” clears up the

background of the artistic problems and the sort of masters whom Mann uses in order to find a solution to the cultural and political problems of his country, such as war, Nazism, *Free Germany* as a new political and “democratic” movement, etc. Mann’s hero in *Doktor Faustus* corresponds to Nietzsche’s character in *Also sprach Zarathustra*, and the problem of the German nation is presented apocalyptically through the features of this character confined by modernity. Within this context, the analysis focuses on the juxtaposition of Mann’s Adrian Leverkühn and Hesse’s Joseph Knecht in order to reveal the situation of the modern creator, but also the tight affinity between Mann’s hero and Goethe’s hero (Leverkühn does not choose the province of the elite), and also between Mann’s hero and Nietzsche’s hero (in the sense that the alienation of the artists has an immediate impact on the ideals of their culture). Section nine is the logical consequence of the previous section as it debates the problematic of music, which is a commonplace for Goethe, Nietzsche and Mann. It should be stated here from the very start that the reason for analysing Mann’s view of music was not induced by the full title of his novel *Doktor Faustus. Das Leben des deutschen Tonsetzers Adrian Leverkühn, erzählt von einem Freunde* (*Doctor Faustus. The Life of the German composer Adrian Leverkühn, told by a friend*). The fact that prompted the analysis of Mann’s view of music has to do with a verification, namely to see whether Mann detached himself from Wagner’s music for the same reasons as Nietzsche, and bearing in mind the danger envisaged by Goethe regarding the forcible intrusion of music in everything. Following in the footsteps of Goethe and Nietzsche, Mann warns against the psychological peril to make music reign supreme, thus anticipating political action. In Mann, the same peril to control the psychology of the masses was avoided by Adrian Leverkühn, who chose to flee from it and exile into insanity. This particular section is a proof that Nietzsche’s apocalyptic prophecy finally reached its climax in Mann’s time, and Mann knew very well what he was doing and what he meant when he chose to write a novel about music impersonated in the destiny of his country. Therefore, section ten proposes a return to Goethe based on Mann’s feeling of banishment and of pathological tragic, which is specific to his characters. Mann stands next to Goethe and Nietzsche because he clings to Goethe as a critic of German cultural selfishness, which he will eventually criticize even more acidly than Nietzsche. Nevertheless, Mann’s tragedy as a writer of the twentieth century helps him escape the doubt of not seeing himself in the thinking of his illustrious predecessors.

## NEDERLANDSE SAMENVATTING VAN HET ONDERZOEK

In dit onderzoek worden enkele van de belangrijkste werken van Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Nietzsche en Thomas Mann aan een cultuurhistorische analyse onderworpen. De aspecten in hun werken die duiden op eenzelfde gedachtegang van de schrijvers worden belicht, waarna vervolgens gekeken wordt naar de wijze waarop deze aspecten—of thema's—tegelijkertijd duiden op de positie van deze drie schrijvers als 'op zichzelf staande eilanden', een onafhankelijke positie die eigen is aan de Duitse cultuur, zij het dat ze van elkaar verschillen met betrekking tot kwesties als wereldperspectief, Duitse geest en nationaliteit, kunst en muziek, politiek en samenleving. Het hoofddoel van het onderzoek is om vast te stellen wat de boodschap in hun werken is en waarom juist deze bepaalde boodschap uitgedragen wordt. Onderzocht wordt tevens de noodzaak van een dergelijke boodschap in een wereld waarin kunst de werkelijke problemen van de mensheid niet heeft kunnen weergeven. Uiteindelijk geeft dit onderzoek de hoofdoorzaken weer van het ontstaan van een dergelijke, opmerkelijke, ethische boodschap binnen de wereld van de kunst zoals die voortkomt uit de woorden en werken van deze drie vertegenwoordigers van de Duitse cultuur. Om deze opgave van het opstellen van een compacte studie, zonder belangrijke informatie over het hoofd te zien aangaande de context en de details van de werken van Goethe, Nietzsche en Mann, te volbrengen, zijn er enkele richtlijnen in het leven geroepen die samenvallen met vier oriëntatiepunten: de onderzoeksrichting, het doel, de beweegredenen en de opbouw, vergezeld van een geselecteerd, kritisch apparaat.

### De richting van het onderzoek

Het onderzoek richt zich op de Duitse literatuur en de mogelijkheid dat deze— wat betreft de richtlijnen, de persoonlijkheden en de onderwerpen—representatief is voor de gehele Europese literatuur. Zulk een bestudering van de Duitse cultuur is niet hoofdzakelijk gericht op de rol van de Duitse literatuur in Europa, noch wil deze 'recht doen' aan het concept van cultuur (in het bijzonder de Duitse cultuur) als tegenovergesteld aan het concept van de beschaving *an sich* (en dan in het bijzonder de Franse beschaving, aangezien Duitsland en Frankrijk het oneens waren over het rijk van de kunst in Europa aan het begin van de achttiende eeuw). We willen met ons onderzoek veeleer de betekenis en het belang van deze literaire werken en hun

representatieve karakter van de achttiende, negentiende en twintigste eeuw naar voren brengen. Verder probeert deze studie weer te geven hoe deze ideeën werkten en effectief waren, hoe ze een verandering teweeg moesten brengen in enkele onjuiste inzichten—of zelfs in het aanzien van Europa—en hoe ze zo een universele ethische boodschap vormden voor een wereld die zich in een crisis bevond. Dientengevolge worden in deze studie de diepgewortelde (en tegenstrijdige) denkbeelden in de literatuur en de filosofie onderzocht: het classicisme versus het romanticisme, de Verlichting versus het modernisme, het subjectivisme versus het objectivisme, de Duitse cultuur versus de Franse beschaving, esthetiek versus ethiek, enzovoorts. Al deze sleutelbegrippen, die men moet kennen om een algemeen begrip te krijgen van de Europese kunst en filosofie, zullen leiden naar het eigenlijke onderwerp van dit onderzoek en niet naar een enkel aspect van de Duitse cultuur of filosofie op een bepaald moment in de geschiedenis. Dit centrale onderwerp vormt de rode draad in alle hoofdstukken en leidt tot de steeds bevestigde conclusie dat Europa al een oplossing aangereikt kreeg op het moment dat, en op de plaats waar de politieke en filosofische ‘crisis’ begon, in de personen of liever de werken van Goethe, Nietzsche en Mann naar voren traden als vertegenwoordigers van de Duitse literatuur in de achttiende, negentiende en twintigste eeuw.

### **Het doel van het onderzoek**

Hoewel de gedachtegang van drie schrijvers wordt onderzocht, heeft dit onderzoek een centraal doel. De verbinding tussen Goethe, Nietzsche en Mann is sterk en gaat ondanks onderlinge verschillen tussen de drie (deze zijn voornamelijk tijdgebonden) heel ver. Het gaat dus niet om een weergave van hun mening over bepaalde onderwerpen of gebeurtenissen, maar op de gemeenschappelijke overtuigingen van de drie en hoe deze invloed hadden op een hele generatie, ja zelfs de hele wereld.

Door hun ideeën (die vaak verwijzen naar sociale en politieke verhoudingen) chronologisch en thematisch te volgen, kan men doordringen tot de kern van de werken van deze drie denkers. Ter aanvulling op het gepresenteerde kritisch apparaat wordt ook kort aangegeven hoé dit gebruikt wordt. Aangezien zowel de werken van Goethe en Mann, die men over het algemeen beschouwt als novellisten en literatoren, als die van de filosofische publicaties van Nietzsche onderzocht worden—men ziet hem overigens als een van de meest abstracte denkers aller tijden—worden iedere keer twee soorten van schrijven onder de loep genomen, via een literaire en een filosofische invalshoek. Deze twee soorten moeten de boodschap in de andere soort in thematische en (de even belangrijke) chronolo-

gische volgorde toelichten en onderstrepen. Hiertoe zijn de autobiografische aanduidingen uitgezocht die in hun persoonlijke correspondentie genoemd worden, de persoonlijke dagboeken, verklaringen van derden, enzovoorts.

Hoe zouden de tijdsgenoten van de drie schrijvers tegen Goethe hebben aangekeken, de man die in dezelfde tijd opgroeide als zij en toch een unieke status als ethische wetenschapper had verworven? Zullen ze mededogen gehad hebben met Nietzsche, die ondanks zijn vele kwaliteiten als een filosoof en musicoloog de voorkeur gaf aan een leven in afzondering? In welke mate zullen de Duitse ballingen in Amerika Mann hebben gewantrouwd omdat hij hun droom van de democratie en de nieuwe regering ongestructureerd en ongefundeerd vond? Om hier een antwoord op te krijgen worden drie aspecten van hun werken belicht: de overtuigingen, het evenwicht van het betoog en de ethische boodschap in het verhaal.

Goethe, de wegbereider van de culturele en sociale wereld van de achttiende eeuw, wordt vanuit een chronologisch oogpunt benaderd. Er wordt dus niet alleen gelet op de *Sturm und Drang* van zijn jeugd, maar ook op het Kantiaanse filosofische rationalisme waar Goethe zich vooral op het gebied van kunst en de samenleving zo goed in kon vinden. Als voorbeeld noemen we op het gebied van de kunst Kants concept van het ‘artistieke genie’, een idee waar Goethe het zowel mee eens als oneens was (in dit idee van Kant onderscheidde de Duitse geest zich door middel van de prevalentie van de rede en de kracht van het genie). Goethe was het echter aangaande het vraagstuk van de samenleving absoluut eens met de ideeën van Kant, die een teleologische blik op de wereld en het leven omvatten—deze blik was in de achttiende eeuw populair, en allebei wezen ze zowel Wolffs filosofie als zijn overtuiging dat het leven en de samenleving op toeval berustte, van de hand.

De ideeën van Goethe ontstonden in, en zijn een reactie op een tijd van ongekende politieke spanning. Het waren deze ideeën, hoofdzakelijk met betrekking tot de Duitse binnenlandse conflicten en de Franse Revolutie, die Goethe onderscheiden van zijn tijdgenoten als een solitaire geest. We zullen chronologisch de politieke en sociale aspecten die Goethes werk stuurden belichten, waaronder het Duits classicisme. Goethes ‘apartheid’ wordt weerspiegeld in zijn houding ten opzichte van de Franse revolutie (hij waarschuwde tegen de op handen zijnde gevaren van de Revolutie en nam het zijn tijdgenoten kwalijk dat zij daar geen acht op sloegen) en de zogenaamde *magna carta* van de Revolutie: de Franse encyclopedie. Het revolutiejaar, 1789, en vooral de geruchten over vele opstanden in de Europese hoofdsteden werden door veel Duitsers met enthousiasme verwelkomd. Daarmee legden ze in feite de boodschap van de encyclopedie van een nieuwe, rationele sociale orde waarin de wetenschap tot ontwikkeling werd

gebracht en nieuwe ambachten en beroepen uitgeoefend zouden worden, naast zich neer. Goethe voorvoelde het gevaar dat op de loer lag, in de onbalans tussen de idealen die in de encyclopedie verkondigd werden en de sociaal-politieke wanorde die ontstaat wanneer men de mensheid niet met gewelddadige opstanden bevrijden kan. Het gevolg van de Revolutie was geen vrijheid van een geordende maatschappij maar tirannie en totale politieke chaos. Goethe zag deze encyclopedie dus niet als een manifest van de Revolutie—integendeel, hij leverde sterke kritiek op de Revolutie. Men hoeft maar te kijken naar zijn gedicht *'Herman und Dorothea'* of *'Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre'* waarin Goethe zijn landgenoten bekritiseert omdat ze geen vertrouwen hebben in het potentieel van de Revolutie. Hij zag de encyclopedie eerder als een handboek over ambachten en wetenschappelijke ontdekkingen. Een belangrijke gedachtegang hier is dat Goethe geen voorstander was van de 'Duitse geest' die zich in de achttiende eeuw tevreden stelde met haar culturele macht en geen moeite deed de intellectuele en wetenschappelijke vooruitgangen die de buurlanden boekten te volgen. Zonder een kind van de Revolutie te worden moedigde Goethe de Europese spiritualiteit aan, hij was een man van cultuur, wiens visie zijn boodschap bepaalde.

Er is voorts uitgezocht hoe Goethe een gebalanceerde visie wist te houden op de verhouding tussen de kunst en de samenleving van zijn tijd. Als Goethe de nationalistische en chauvinistische ideeën van zijn landgenoten over andere landen niet deelde, dan deed hij wel erg zijn best om te laten zien dat zijn houding ten opzichte van de Duitse politiek de juiste was. Goethes karakter ontwikkelde zich dus over het algemeen als een reactie op de achttiende-eeuwse samenleving. Dit impliceert dat Goethe stelling moest nemen tegenover alle culturele en sociale aspecten van zijn tijd: tegen literatuur, schilderkunst, muziek, wetenschappen (fysica en optica, enzovoorts), en ook ten opzichte van instituties, politiek (zijn visie over de oorlog, Napoleon, de Duitse soldaat die staat voor de Duitse trots) en staatsveiligheid. Hoewel deze domeinen op het eerste gezicht los van elkaar lijken te staan, wordt er betoogd dat vanaf Goethes tijd deze domeinen wel gaan botsen, op het moment dat Goethe kon toezien hoe Duitsland, tot de vreugde van zijn tijdgenoten, langzaam het 'culturele' centrum van Europa werd. Hier wordt echter aangetoond dat Goethe niet de man van cultuur was die volgens velen deze cultuur in het bijzonder goedkeurde. Aangezien men in Duitsland de achttiende eeuw nog steeds beschouwt als de eeuw van de filosofie en de muziek, lijkt het logisch om de verhouding tussen het denken en de muziek, eerst bij Goethe en vervolgens bij Nietzsche en Mann te onderzoeken, zodat er ook geanalyseerd kan worden in hoeverre Nietzsche en Mann Goethes ideeën hebben aangenomen. Wat muziek betreft was Goethe

het trouwens niet eens met het idee van zijn tijdgenoten dat muziek een middel is om roem mee te verwerven of dat de politieke emancipatie van een natie ermee kon worden gestimuleerd. Wel moedigde hij muziekkuitvoeringen aan en de totstandkoming van nieuwe muziek en muziekgenres, zoals de *Singspiele*. Hij was echter niet geïnteresseerd in luisterrijke, zwaar instrumentale muziek waarin de spirituele en mentale vermogens van het genie bezongen worden. Goethe zocht het wezen van muziek in de eenvoudige kunst van de oude Grieken, in classicistische, duidelijke en objectieve kunst waar het genie in harmonie met de buitenwereld leeft en geïnteresseerd is in de kwaliteit van een uitvoering, niet de kwantiteit van de muziekinstrumenten. Hierdoor kwam Goethe ertoe zich wantrouwend op te stellen jegens Beethoven, wiens muziek bijna altijd een patriottistische en heroïsche boodschap had. Goethe voelde aan dat de essentie van Beethovens muziek niet eens subliminaal was, maar veeleerder een directe oproep tot politieke actie (Beethoven geldt wel als de voorloper van de negentiende-eeuwse muziek van Wagner met zijn nationalistische symboliek en subjectieve uitspattingen). Volgens Goethe moest nationalistische muziek decadent en passend (misschien zelfs opportunistisch) zijn. Nietzsche zette later dezelfde stappen toen hij Wagner ‘dilettantistisch’ noemde, een mening die Mann aangaande Wagners muziek en estheticisme met hem deelde.

Aangezien in de grote filosofische en literaire werken van Nietzsche en Thomas Mann muziek als kunst wordt gezien—een houding die zich sterk onderscheid van Wagners dilettantisme en zijn nationalistische personages—kunnen we relevante conclusies trekken wat betreft de ware essentie van muziek en kunst zoals ze over het algemeen naar voren komen in Nietzsches verhandelingen en Manns personages. Deze drie schrijvers zijn de enigen die uiteindelijk—onafhankelijk van de culturele of sociale context waarin ze hun perspectief op de Duitse kunst, muziek, poëzie, enzovoorts ontwikkelden en in tegenstelling tot andere mannen van cultuur die eenzelfde culturele erfenis met elkaar delen—dezelfde conclusies hebben getrokken aangaande de culturele, sociale en politieke gebeurtenissen van hun tijd. Met hun artistieke producties wilden ze een nieuw ideaal voor de mensheid voorstellen dat afwijkt van het ideaal dat hun tijdgenoten voor ogen hebben (de Romantiek in de tijd van Goethe, Wagner en Schopenhauer in de tijd van Nietzsche en het nazisme in de tijd van Mann). Sinds de moderne samenleving de traditionele waarden de rug toekeerde, is de mens de ideale samenleving uit het oog verloren. Op zoek naar deze ideale samenleving beginnen Goethe, Nietzsche en Mann hun zoektocht buiten Weimar en buiten Duitsland. Hun handelingen moesten de aandacht vestigen op de noodzaak van een terugkeer naar de bron—naar de klassieken—, als men tenminste echt wil begrijpen hoe de samenleving georganiseerd zou moeten zijn.

De opvatting was dat men in de oudheid (de kern van) het leven namelijk eerde, terwijl men in de huidige wereld het doel van het leven niet meer wist te achterhalen.

Wanneer we Nietzsches verhandelingen chronologisch loskoppelen van de sociale en politieke trends van zijn tijd en de boodschap erin thematisch indelen, moet dit interessante en relevante data voor ons onderzoek opleveren. Deze resultaten zullen afwijken van de opvattingen die eerder door misinterpretatie en extrapolatie aan hem opgedrongen zijn. Deze misinterpretaties waren vooral het resultaat van de oprichting van het ‘Nietzsche Archief’ in de Weimarrepubliek. Dit archief bepaalde de receptie van Nietzsche als filosoof in de late negentiende en vroege twintigste eeuw. Interessant is het feit dat Nietzsches zus na diens geestelijke ineenstorting, en ook na zijn dood, het Archief in haar beheer had en vanwege geldzorgen zijn werken op zulk een wijze interpreteerde en veranderde dat het haar financieel gewin opleverde. Dit is de reden dat we achter Nietzsches uitspraken tegen het antisemitisme staan die we in zijn brieven aantreffen (het antisemitisme werd een nationaal probleem in het laat negentiende-eeuwse Duitsland). In zijn brieven veroordeelde Nietzsche met een vooruitziende blik de toekomstige regering van Duitsland vanwege deze houding. Nietzsches tijdgenoten kunnen hem niet beschuldigd hebben van esoterische of te abstracte filosofische ideeën, want in zijn brieven komt ook helder en duidelijk het verwijt naar voren dat zij in Duitse trots op hun buurlanden neerkijken. Mocht er dus ooit een sleutel nodig zijn om toegang te verschaffen tot de filosofische gedachtegangen van Nietzsche, dan zijn deze brieven absoluut een *sine qua non* (de inhoud sluit naadloos aan op zijn filosofische verhandelingen).

In deze studie wordt Manns naam bij die van Goethe en Nietzsche gevoegd, omdat het beeld zonder een postmoderne schrijver incompleet zou zijn. Bij Mann hebben we eerst zijn werken, vooral zijn essays—een genre waarin zijn literaire vaardigheden naar voren kwamen—en de verwijzingen daarin onderzocht op de invloeden van zijn voorgangers. Daarna zijn de uitgewerkte voortzettingen van de ideeën en thema’s die Mann eerst in zijn essays noemde, bekeken, in het bijzonder zijn meest besproken en bekritiseerde romans en nouvelles. Een voorbeeld van zulk een veelbesproken roman is *Der Zauberberg* waardoor Thomas Mann vooral bekend werd als de schrijver van ideeënromans. Als hoofddoel is ervoor gekozen aan te tonen dat zijn persoonlijke ideeën in het in de Eerste Wereldoorlog geschreven essay *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* worden voortgezet in *Der Zauberberg*. Mann werd meerdere keren bekritiseerd vanwege zijn meningen over Duitsland en de oorlog die hij in het essay tentoonspreidde. We willen echter aantonen dat *Der Zauberberg*, hoewel het resultaat anders is, vanuit dezelfde gedachtegang geschreven is, namelijk dat Duitsland en Europa cultu-

reel en politiek gezien in gevaar verkeerden. Het essay laat zien dat Mann zich persoonlijk afsluit van Europa, net zoals Duitsland zijn grenzen sloot tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog. In het werk dat voortborduurde op dit essay, *Der Zauberberg*, stelt Mann zich sociaal open op ten opzichte van Europa, zoals ook Duitsland rond die tijd probeerde. Om tot een vergelijking tussen de twee werken te kunnen komen en ook om de gewenste verbinding tussen Mann, Goethe en Nietzsche tot stand te brengen, wordt gebruikgemaakt van het argument dat ze, vooral in hun vroege werken, zich allemaal van hun oude meesters distantieerden en zelfstandig hun ideeën beginnen te ontwikkelen. Zo bevat Thomas Manns *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*—evenals Goethes *Werther* and Nietzsches *Die Geburt der Tragödie*—persoonlijke beschouwingen over de Duitse geest, muziek en het genie, die hij later herzag of terugnam omdat hij ze subjectief en gekleurd vond. Nietzsche verwees later naar zijn werk *Die Geburt der Tragödie* met de woorden dat het een boek was voor ‘ingewijden in de muziek’ omdat de esoterische ideeën die er in voorkomen zelfs voor de auteur niet volledig te doorgronden zijn. Goethe, de gerijpte schrijver van *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, vond dat feiten alleen belangrijk zijn in de zin dat ze een sociale betekenis hebben. Zoals de schrijvers zelf benadrukken, zijn hun vroegste persoonlijke zoektochten niet geschreven met het oog op het nageslacht en bevatten ze niet het volwassen credo van hun latere werken (*Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, *Also sprach Zarathustra* of *Doktor Faustus*). Men neemt onmiddellijk aan dat het hier autonome, literaire en filosofische verhandelingen betreft, maar wij mogen de woorden van Mann niet uit het oog verliezen wanneer deze, twaalf jaar na het schrijven van zijn *Lebensabriß*, over *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* zegt dat het ‘een oorlogsstuk is dat hij in dienst van zijn tijd schreef, in plaats van in dienst van zijn land’. Met betrekking tot het onderwerp van onderzoek moet nog worden opgemerkt dat Manns *Betrachtungen* vanuit chronologisch en historisch oogpunt belangrijk zijn omdat de goed gedocumenteerde documenten veel informatie bevatten over de Eerste Wereldoorlog. Daarbij moet echter worden gezegd dat juist dit werk van Mann het bewijs levert voor de grote persoonlijke crisis die de jonge schep- per meemaakte (zoals ook Goethe en Nietzsche) en geen afspiegeling is van het vooruitziende werk van een volwassen kunstenaar die er klaar voor is om anderen op een naderende crisis te wijzen.

### **Motieven voor het schrijven van deze studie**

Deze studie geeft een overzicht van de continuïteit tussen de schrijvers Goethe, Nietzsche en Mann en richt zich niet op de meer voor de hand liggende verbanden tussen de invloed van bijvoorbeeld Schopenhauer op de

artistieke denkwijze van Nietzsche en Mann, de invloed van Wagner (muziek en het concept van een natie) op Nietzsche en Mann of de overeenkomsten en verschillen tussen Goethe en Nietzsche aan de ene kant en de Kantiaanse filosofie aan de andere kant, enzovoorts. Er zijn talloze mogelijkheden omdat in Goethe een hele (Europese) cultuur gerepresenteerd wordt. Waarom zou een culturele erfenis alleen mogelijk zijn in het geval van Goethe in de eeuw van de Verlichting of in het geval de ‘modernistische’ nihilistische filosoof Nietzsche en de postmoderne roman- en essayschrijver Thomas Mann, wiens literaire werken zich voortdurend buigen over mondiale, politieke onderwerpen (waarvan bijvoorbeeld zijn essay *Betrachtungen* getuigt)?

De achterliggende reden van dit onderzoek naar enkel de culturele continuïteit in het werk van Goethe, Nietzsche en Mann en hun vertalingen, die het bewijs leveren van een gemeenschappelijke en historische verbondenheid, dient twee doelen: ten eerste is het noodzakelijk dat men het concept achter een bepaald persoon of in een bepaalde tijdsperiode verheldert of achterhaalt. Let bijvoorbeeld kort op de verhouding tussen natuur en kunst (de schepper en het genie) als een veelvoorkomend concept of thema in de achttiende tot en met de twintigste eeuw. Deze temporele verwijzingen zijn erg belangrijk voor een onderzoek naar Duitse en Europese culturen omdat er in de achttiende eeuw kunstenaars en werken verrezen die een hoge status kregen. Voordat we verdere literaire of filosofische uitspraken doen, wordt in dit onderzoek geconstateerd dat Goethe in de waarste zin van het woord een klassiek kunstenaar was: hij is—met zijn sterk ontwikkelde visie op de uiterlijke mens (de fysieke, objectieve wezenlijkheid van de wereld) en de innerlijke mens (sentimentaliteit en zijn vermogens waardoor hij kunst kan scheppen)—een kind van de klassieke Griekse cultuur van de oudheid. Goethe was zich in eerste instantie weinig bewust van deze antieke kijk op cultuur en het genie. Terwijl de Griekse oudheid de balans tussen twee rijken benadrukt, begon Goethe als een ‘*Sturmist*’ die het genie in *Werther* als allesbehalve kalm weergaf. Als gevolg van een reis naar Rome—waardoor hij vertrouwd raakte met relieken uit de oudheid, de oude Griekse en Romeinse kunst—en nadat hij zijn wetenschappelijke interesses gevoed had, concludeerde Goethe dat het genie ondergeschikt was aan de natuur. Het was dus niet het genie (de man van cultuur) die de regels over kunst door middel van zijn intellect bepaalt, zoals bij Kant, maar Goethe ondervond dat het de natuur is die voortdurend weet te verrassen. Dit betekent dat het genie niet binnen het menselijk verstand vastgelegd kan worden, maar dat er iets meer is wat buiten onze verstandelijke vermogens ligt. Anders kan de natuur geen ware inspiratiebron vormen en wordt het genie een tiran. Goethe betrok dit inzicht echter ook op de algemene kunst en de rol van de weten-

schapper. Goethe voelde bijvoorbeeld aan dat de verhouding tussen de hoge status die aan een musicus of componist in Duitsland werd toegeschreven en het idee van zijn tijdgenoten dat een componist enkel door zijn eigen geestelijke en spirituele vermogens een kunststuk tot stand kon brengen, niet in evenwicht was. (Nogmaals, Goethes tijdgenoten zagen de Duitse muziek van de achttiende eeuw als een teken van de grootheid en spirituele aard van Duitsland). In zekere zin test Goethe de overtuiging van de leerling dat hij zijn meester kan overtreffen en het water kan bevelen in zijn gedicht *Der Zauberlehrling*. Toen Beethoven van Goethes *Egmont*, in een toneeluitvoering, een nationale held maakte die zijn eigen land kon bevrijden, vreesde Goethe dat de nachtmerrie die hij in zijn *Zauberlehrling* had beschreven werkelijkheid zou worden. Zo gebeurde het dat Goethe toe moest zien hoe het genie (Beethoven of Egmont) kunst veranderde (kunst had rustig, gebalanceerd en sociaalethisch moeten zijn) tot een middel dat tot politieke actie leidde (politieke esthetiek).

Wanneer Nietzsche het op zijn beurt had over Goethe's *Zauberlehrling* of zijn eigen *Novelle* heeft, denkt hij aan Goethes visie op natuur, kunst en muziek. Hij herhaalt diens klassieke, op de oudheid gebaseerde ethische overtuigingen. Dit blijkt uit de 'filosofemen' in zijn werk, de gebruikelijke filosofische thema's in zijn werk, zoals de *Übermensch*, de herwaardering van waarden, de herhaling van de geschiedenis, goed en kwaad, enzovoorts. Nietzsches volwassen filosofie staat lijnrecht tegenover het Kantiaanse rationalisme of Schopenhauers nihilisme dat in Nietzsches tijd erg in zwang was. Goethe was gewoon ethiek te omschrijven als een evenwicht tussen twee krachten, namelijk natuur (een wet van buitenaf) en het individu (een kracht van binnenuit). Nietzsche neemt dit van hem over. Dit wordt geconcludeerd uit het feit dat Nietzsche Schopenhauers ethiek en Kants filosofie fel bestreed om hun invulling aan het begrip 'wil', de vrije, zelfgerichte wil van Schopenhauer en de goede wil van Kant die zijn basis heeft in het menselijk verstand. Nietzsche vindt deze invullingen individualistisch en opportunistisch en beargumenteert dat zulk een wil overtroffen moet worden, inclusief de bijbehorende 'morele' waarden. Nietzsche noemt zichzelf 'antimoralistisch' omdat deze definitie in de tijd waarin hij leefde wel gehanteerd werd, niet omdat hij een zogenaamd immoreel karakter had. Nietzsche wenst boven de moraliteit, de vrije wil, van zijn tijd te staan door een invulling te geven aan het begrip *Übermensch* en schreef een hoofdstuk over het boven jezelf uitstijgen in zijn *Also sprach Zarathustra* (deze hebben duidelijk met elkaar te maken). Nietzsche beschrijft zijn ethiek als leer die boven Schopenhauers corrupte moraliteit uitstijgt. (Nietzsche zou om die reden ook nooit een boek als *Der Wille zur Macht* geschreven kunnen hebben, omdat dit juist een parodie zou zijn van de twee eerdergenoemde typen

filosofie). Willen we een goed inzicht krijgen in de gedachte dat de ethische overtuigingen van Goethe, Nietzsche en Mann overeenstemmen, dan moeten we niet alleen kijken naar de status en invulling van het begrip in hun werken maar ook naar de ethiek in de verschillende filosofische systemen die deze drie tijdens hun leven gekend hebben.

Wij beweren om twee redenen dat Mann de werkelijke twintigste-eeuwse opvolger was van Goethe en Nietzsche. Ten eerste omwille van de typologie die Mann in zijn novelles en romans hanteert en, ten tweede, vanwege de problemen die Mann had met de artistieke boodschap die muziek in zijn tijd had. Beide redenen worden het onderwerp van een nauwkeurige vergelijking tussen het werk van Goethe en Nietzsche. Wat betreft deze vergelijking: men zou kunnen opperen dat in plaats van Thomas Mann, Hermann Hesse tot hun opvolger zou moeten worden benoemd, vanwege de gelijkenis die we aantreffen tussen Goethes *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* en Hesses *Glasperlenspiel*. Joseph Knecht voert namelijk uit waar Wilhelm Meister van droomt: hij wordt toegelaten tot een pedagogisch instituut van hoger onderwijs waar hij alle kennis van alle vakgebieden kan vergaren. Dit was de droom van de Verlichting: kennis hebben van alle vakgebieden. Goethe was in dat opzicht de vleeswording van deze droom (hij was een man van cultuur en wetenschap, maar ook een politicus aan het hof van Weimar). Knecht maakt uiteindelijk ook deel uit, en wordt zelfs de leider van de Castigliaanse elite. Men zou kunnen betogen dat elke vrijmetselaar zich tot doel stelt alle kennis en macht van de wereld te hebben.

Om een antwoord op deze vraag te geven moeten we teruggaan naar de definitie die Goethe geeft aan cultuur en de sociale boodschap die hij in zijn werken naar voren laat komen. Goethes personage in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* en *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* droomt ervan ooit toe te kunnen treden tot de hogere klasse. Later besluit het personage, wanneer hij vader is geworden, zich dienstbaar op te stellen ten opzichte van zijn medemens door enige sociale ervaring op te doen en veel te reizen. Wat betreft de kennisname van cultuur en de algehele weg tot kennis, is Goethe er van overtuigd dat alles in ons leven een doel heeft en zich op de juiste tijd aandient. Er is een tijd om je terug te trekken om te leren over en je voor te bereiden op het leven en een tijd om jezelf voor anderen open te stellen en je te ergens te vestigen. Knecht trekt zich terug in de pedagogische kring van Castaglia, waar de elite zich ook schuil houdt, wat Felix, zijn zoon, hoewel dan nog een stukje jonger, ook doet. Wanneer Knecht uiteindelijk trouwt, blijft hij een afgezonderd leven leiden in het gebied omdat de elite ook geen echt leven leiden: ze kunnen niet uit hun kaste ontsnappen. Met het personage Adrian Leverkühn treedt Mann in de voetsporen van *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* (en reageert hij ook op Hesses Knecht. Hij heeft trouwens ook

een weerwoord op Hesses *Glasperlenspiel* met zijn ‘zwarte parel’ *Doktor Faustus*. In Leverkühn wordt het verhaal van Goethes Wilhelm Meister verweven met het muzikale genie). Leverkühn stuit in zijn leven op de uitdagingen waar een schooljongen mee te kampen heeft, ondervindt waardering van de leidende culturele kringen en ontvangt bovenal de warmte en vriendelijkheid van een zuiver kinderhart, namelijk van zijn neefje Nepo. In tegenstelling tot Hesses personage komen Leverkühn en Meister echter niet tegemoet aan de uitnodiging van de elitaire klasse om hun meester en leider te worden (ondanks dat ze hier zeer geschikt voor zijn) en verlaten ze hierop de provincie. Leverkühn is niet alleen een representatief karakter van Manns typologie, maar vertegenwoordigt ook diens ideeën aangaande muziek en de ethische boodschap in die muziek. Mann beantwoordt met de creatie van dit personage de tweede vraag over de keuze van Mann als de twintigste-eeuwse woordvoerder van Goethe en Nietzsche. Met dit personage ontloopt hij het dilettantisme van Wagners muziek. Evenals bij Nietzsche is Manns boodschap vooruitziend en spreekt hij niet over de grootheid van Duitsland, maar over haar val (*‘Apocalypsis cum Figuris’*). Zoals Hans Castorp in *Der Zauberberg* en Nietzsches *Zarathustra* beklimt Leverkühn de berg van kennis, van de afzondering van ‘cultuur’ waarop ze later in de vallei neerdalen, in de samenleving, waar pijn en oorlog heerst. Dit is echter de enige plaats waar hun boodschap betekenis krijgt en een ethische, genezende werking heeft. Voor Goethe, Nietzsche en Mann is dit de definitie van het ultieme genie: hij moet leven en ademen zoals ieder ander mens, hij is de schepende kunstenaar die niet tegen afgesloten ruimtes kan. In plaats van de heerser te zijn over de elite die met geweld, intellectueel geweld zelfs regeert, kiest dit genie voor vervreemding om uit te vinden wie hij is zonder hypocriet te worden.

Naast deze uitleg van onze overtuiging dat de werken van Nietzsche en Mann voortzettingen zijn van die van Goethe, is er nog een andere reden voor de keuze om een analyse te maken van de gemeenschappelijke ideeën in de werken van deze drie schrijvers, om eenzelfde ontwikkeling in hun gedachtegang vast te stellen, om de ethische boodschap die ze voor de samenleving geschreven hebben te bespreken en er een Engelstalige dissertatie over te schrijven. De reden voor het laatste lag voor de hand aangezien meer dan tachtig procent van onze secundaire bronnen tot de Engelse literaire traditie behoren (of er in opgenomen zijn). Er wordt verwezen naar grote namen zoals Nicholas Boyle, Eric Blackall, Walter Bruford, Henry Hatfield, R. J. Hollingdale, enzovoorts en ook gebruiken we schrijvers van Roemeense afkomst die hoog aangeslagen worden in Europa en Amerika. Daarom is voor het gemak ook deze dissertatie in het Engels geschreven. In de Roemeense academische wereld worden studies over Goethe, Nietzsche

of Thomas Mann vaak goed ontvangen. Men hoeft alleen maar te kijken naar het grote aantal synoptische en analytische studies van hun werken dat jaarlijks wordt uitgebracht. Verder is het ook een welbekend feit dat in de negentiende eeuw veel Roemeense studenten aan grote Oostenrijkse en Duitse universiteiten Duitse literatuur en filosofie studeerden aangezien het Noordwesten van Roemenië toentertijd onder het imperium van Oostenrijk-Hongarije viel. Na de Eerste Wereldoorlog werd Transylvanië weer verenigd met Roemenië. Het was echter nog lange tijd de gewoonte (tussen de twee wereldoorlogen in en daarna, ook de laatste drie decennia) om literatuur uit het Westen te importeren door werken te vertalen of door de ideeën in de literaire werken te lenen en daar op voort te bouwen, waardoor niet het Duits maar het Engels de voorkeur had. Ook ik behoor tot deze traditie en schrijf deze studie in het Engels vanuit de wens om een goed en alom leesbaar werk te creëren. Tegelijkertijd is het echter een feit dat een studie van Goethe, Nietzsche en Mann uiteraard veel citaten uit het Duits met zich meebrengt. Wil men deze drie geloofwaardig citeren, dan moet de vertaling ook goed en correct Engels zijn. (Dit doet ons er aan herinneren dat de Duitse taal niet hetzelfde is als de wereldtaal van een wispelturig politiek tijdperk).

### **De indeling van deze studie**

Dit onderzoek bestaat uit drie hoofdstukken. Het eerste is gewijd aan Goethe en wordt onderverdeeld in tien delen die handelen over Goethes poëtische opvattingen tot zijn invloed op kunst in het algemeen en muziek in het bijzonder. Het eerste deel behandelt Goethes verhouding met het naturalisme—dit was een familietrekje—, en zijn belangstelling voor verschillende takken van de wetenschap. Goethes naam wordt geassocieerd met geleerd-doenerij, wat wel blijkt uit zijn werken *Metamorphose der Pflanzen* (1790), *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1796) en *Zur Farbenlehre* (1810). Deze ‘tekstboeken’—en vooral de indrukken die hij opdeed tijdens zijn reis door Italië—hielpen Goethe enorm om zich te verweren tegen het mysticisme. Goethes naturalisme opent een hele nieuwe wereld en het genie dat nog ontdekt dient te worden (zie bijvoorbeeld zijn *natura naturans*). Hij ontdekte deze nieuwe wereld toen hij mineralen, planten en diersoorten onderzocht aan de hand van klassieke overleveringen (zie zijn *natura naturata*). Deel twee en drie gaan over de verhouding tussen Goethe en het Kantianisme. Hoe meer hij in aanraking kwam met Kants filosofie, hoe meer zijn passie voor de mensheid zich ontwikkelde. De verwezenlijking van Kants rationalisme samen met het wijdverspreide Europese teleologische ideaal, is een onderwerp dat Goethe aan het hart ging. Het doel van deze delen is om het

contrast tussen Goethe en Kant scherp te stellen door middel van een vergelijking van hun opvattingen over kunst. Waar bij Kant het wiskundige genie boven kunst gaat, wat betekent dat hij regels op kan leggen aan kunst, zijn bij Goethe kunst en natuur gelijkwaardig en onlosmakelijk met elkaar verbonden. Kunst behoort niet tot de innerlijke ervaringen van het genie, maar tot de beïnvloedingen van buitenaf. Het genie moet volgens Goethe niet romantisch maar klassiek zijn, hij moet een schepper van belangeloze bevredigende werken zijn. Deel vier onderzoekt Goethes houding ten opzichte van het neohumanisme. De discussie aangaande het Goethiaans classicisme en het romanticisme van zijn tijdgenoten wordt toegelicht door zijn neohumanistische houding, die weer gekenmerkt wordt door zijn pantheïsme (liefde voor de natuur) en zijn romantische intuïtie (liefde voor het eigen wezen). Vergeleken met de ‘moderne’ mens van de vroeg-negentiende eeuw is Goethe een conservatieve figuur die zich tot doel gesteld heeft de waarde van de waarheid te achterhalen—deze ligt verborgen achter het saaie intellectualisme en het morele relativisme van hen die zichzelf ‘modern’ noemen. Het menselijk handelen zou, wat betreft hun invloed op de natuur, in evenwicht of zelfs transparant moeten zijn. Deel vijf voert naar de historische achtergrond van Wetzlar en Weimar, deze plaatsen zouden cruciaal blijken te zijn voor de spirituele ontwikkeling van Goethe. Tegelijkertijd wordt getoond hoe zijn filosofische verhandelingen zich ontwikkelen en zich uiteindelijk richten op de Duitse cultuur. Deze overgangperiode wordt ook historisch weerspiegeld in Wetzlar en Weimar (van deze twee plaatsen behoudt Goethe overigens de politieke en culturele kern). Deel zes tot en met negen handelt over Goethe en de Duitse cultuur. Het ‘lokale’ probleem zal worden behandeld in het grotere kader van de Duitse cultuur en de Franse beschaving. In deze context worden sociale termen en hun sociale betekenis onderstreept.

Dit onderzoek richt zich dus op de mogelijke oordelen die de Duitsers paraat hadden voor de Franse revolutie en de historisch-politieke beweging die daaruit voortvloeide. Deel zeven tot en met negen vormen een doorlopend geheel dat zich richt op de overtuiging van sommige critici dat Goethe—die in de achttiende eeuw minstens zoveel invloed had als het Kantiaanse rationalisme—de ontwikkelende cultuur van Duitsland en haar verzelfstandiging ten opzichte van de andere politieke stromen in Europa gezien zou hebben als een goede ontwikkeling. Zou deze kritiek gefundeerd zijn, dan had Goethe een oneerlijke politieke strijd met een sterk nationalistische karakter gestreden, zonder zich sociaal betrokken te voelen bij de Europese revoluties die in zijn tijd plaatsvonden. Aan het eind van deel negen zullen we zien dat Goethe in zijn dagelijkse werkzaamheden aan het hof van Weimar de stelling ondersteunde dat cultuur en politiek, evenals

natuur en kunst elkaar aanvullen. Hij verdedigde zodoende de overheersende positie van cultuur ten opzichte van politiek niet. Deze waarneming wordt in ons onderzoek beproefd op basis van delen van zijn werken die zijn houding tegenover Frankrijk weergeven (zoals *Hermann und Dorothea* van 1798, de postuum verschenen *Eckermanns Gespräche mit Goethe* van 1836 en *Dichtung und Wahrheit* van 1811). Ook worden de werken van enkele contemporaine joodse intellectuelen meegenomen in de analyse. Deze werken gaan in op Goethes concept van *Bildung* als erfenis voor het nageslacht. Deel tien introduceert een lang besproken zaak die Goethe tussen muziek en literatuur plaatst. Zo wordt gepoogd een goed antwoord te geven op de stelling dat muziek altijd al het belangrijkste vehikel is geweest om de Duitse nationale trots uit te drukken en dat de eerste ideoloog Goethe was, bijvoorbeeld in zijn functie als de directeur van het Weimar Theater. Deze claim wordt vooral interessant wanneer gekeken wordt naar de recent geuite beschuldigingen dat Goethe zijn politieke verantwoordelijkheden probeerde te ontduiken door zich meer en meer op muziek te richten. In het onderzoek wordt echter aangetoond dat de Duitse *Singspiele* gebaseerd zijn op de Italiaanse *opera buffa*. Anders dan de *opera seria*, de serieuze opera en voorloper op de tragische opera, identificeerde de *opera buffa* zich met de formatie van de Europese natie. In de achttiende eeuw zag men de *Singspiele* liever als een komedie opgevoerd worden terwijl in de negentiende eeuw vooral de *opera seria* de voorkeur had en deze vorm de aanleiding vormde voor de muziekshows met tal van instrumenten (zoals bijvoorbeeld in Wagner). Zo hopen we aan te tonen dat Goethe—zonder zich faam te verwerven in de muziekwereld—de harmonie en de gelijkheid van de kunsten aanmoedigde. Goethe stelde de *Singspiele* op als een weerklank van de *opera buffa* om het publiek te onderwijzen over het muzikale genre dat de eenwording van de Europese naties weerspiegelde. Door dit muzikale genre tegenover de negentiende-eeuwse muziek te stellen, wordt betoogd dat Goethe zowel de exclusiviteit als het nationalisme van zijn tijdgenoten niet steunde. Volgens hem vindt de muziek—en ook poëzie, zoals de gedichten van Homerus—haar oorspong in de Griekse kunst en eigent ze zich het thema van harmonie, zowel intern als extern, tussen de wereldrijken toe (en betreft het niet een of andere heroïsche portrettering). Ook wordt binnen deze context de relatie tussen Goethe en Beethoven onderzocht. Uit Beethovens *Egmont* (1788), gebaseerd op Goethes drama, en uit zijn brieven blijkt dat Beethoven—door het nieuwe, Duitse romanticisme—met zijn muziek wel een nationale held voor ogen had. Zulk een aanpak past niet binnen Goethes classicistische boodschap en werd zodoende ook scherp bekritiseerd door Schiller. Deze merkte op dat de held Egmont als een veel vrediger persoon voorgesteld werd dan zijn eigenlijke

historische antecedent. Het eerste hoofdstuk laat dus kort gezegd zien dat de schrijver Goethe een harmonische visie op cultuur en politiek tot uiting probeerde te brengen.

Wat betreft Nietzsche en Mann, zij en hun werken worden in dezelfde spirituele wereld geschaard als hun meester Goethe. Vooral Nietzsche heeft veel aan Goethe te danken vanwege diens Grieks classicistische houding. Het lijkt dat Nietzsche op basis hiervan uiteindelijk tot de schokkende ontdekking komt dat ‘god dood is’ omdat de traditionele (christelijke) waarden in de ontwikkelende moderne samenleving van West Europa hun zeggingskracht over het individu verloren. Nietzsche bekritiseert daarom dan ook de pogingen van zijn tijdgenoten om de last van het ‘nihilisme’ van zich af te schuiven door een set van verschillende idealen de uiteindelijke autoriteit te geven—de menselijke natuur en het verstand bij Hobbes en Rousseau. Nietzsche stelt een held voor die de belichaming van het levensideaal vormt, of deze idealen nu in de moderne tijd wel of niet gevonden kunnen worden. Ook beweert Nietzsche dat de vooruitgang van de mens niet in materialistische doeleinden ligt, maar dat men zich het superieure individu, de *Übermensch*—de superheld die zijn ogen niet sluit voor menselijk leed maar, naar het voorbeeld van de Griekse tragedie, zijn emoties stoïcijns onder controle kan houden—voor ogen moet stellen.

Het tweede hoofdstuk van deze studie bestaat ook uit tien delen die een analyse omvatten van Nietzsches filosofische standpunten. Ook wordt in dit hoofdstuk gedemonstreerd dat de connectie tussen Nietzsche en Goethe niet alleen afhangt van de bewondering die ze deelden voor het Griekse classicisme, maar dat ze ook dezelfde kijk hadden op de Duitse cultuur en de wijze waarop deze cultuur Duitsland een plaats gaf op de wereldkaart. Naast Nietzsches filosofische creaties uit de periode 1872 tot 1888 worden in dit hoofdstuk ook de postuum verschenen werken van het Nietzsche Archief, waarmee Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche een reeks van interpretaties en extrapolaties aan Nietzsches werken opdroeg, behandeld. Nietzsches leven wordt opgedeeld in vier periodes in die chronologisch afhangen van veranderingen in zijn opvattingen. De eerste periode omvat de beginperiode van zijn artistieke loopbaan (1872-1876), periode twee, de middenperiode, omvat de jaren 1878-1882. De latere periode omvat de jaren 1883-1887 en de eindperiode loopt tot 1888. Het eerste deel van het tweede hoofdstuk doorloopt deze vier periodes in chronologische volgorde en biedt ook een weergave aan van de context waarin Nietzsche zijn literair-filosofische werken *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1872), *Der Antichrist* (1888) en zijn autobiografische *Ecce homo* (1888) schreef. Tegelijkertijd wordt beschreven hoe Nietzsche zich in de Duitse cultuur ontwikkelde ten opzichte van zijn vroege mentoren Arthur Schopenhauer, David Strauss and Richard Wagner,

van wie hij de ideeën aanvankelijk aanhing maar later, in de middenperiode, verwierp (toen zijn ideeën ten opzichte van het belang van de Duitse cultuur ook veranderden).

Het tweede deel van het hoofdstuk handelt over de specifieke verandering in Nietzsches opvattingen aangaande de Duitse cultuur, die over het algemeen belichaamd wordt door zijn drie voormalige mentoren en bovenal in Wagners muziek. We volgen zodoende hoe de grote bewondering van Nietzsche voor de componist van *Bayreuth* in wrok veranderde, zoals dit weerspiegeld wordt in zijn *Der Fall Wagner* (1888) en *Nietzsche contra Wagner* (1888). Ook leverde Nietzsche sterke kritiek op de politieke boodschap van zijn tijd en hoe men doorsloeg naar de sensationele kant (zoals bleek uit hun voorliefde voor Wagners muziek). Nietzsche zette zich van deze trend af door zichzelf neer te zetten als liefhebber van ‘oude muziek’. Zonder het wanhoopsgevoel dat eigen is aan de muziek van Wagner, geeft dit soort muziek de mens een vaste grond onder de voeten in zijn betrekkelijke verwantschap met de elementen. Deel drie en vier pogen een antwoord te geven op de vraag wanneer Nietzsches stem overgaat in die van het nageslacht. Dit is niet alleen belangrijk in het licht van de hoogtepunten van Nietzsches carrière, maar het laat ook zien wat Nietzsches perspectief op de Duitse cultuur en politiek werkelijk was en wat precies de nationalistische ideeën van zijn zus waren (waarvan de beweging *Nueva Germania* afstamt). Nietzsches brieven staan hierbij in het middelpunt, evenals enkele van zijn sleutelconcepten, zoals de *Übermensch*, goed en kwaad, eeuwige herhaling en de wil tot macht. Deze worden vergeleken met de ideeën die zijn zus er over hem op na hield en de ‘filosofemen’ die zij in zijn werken benadrukte. Zo zal blijken dat de postume werken van Nietzsche niet aansluiten op de visie die in zijn andere werken naar voren komt omdat er eenvoudigweg niet goed gekeken werd naar Nietzsches werkelijke visie of de tijdsbepaalde volgorde waarop deze visie uiteindelijk tot stand kwam. Bovendien werden hem postuum ook nog thema’s opgedrongen waar hij zich nooit over zou buigen. Deel vijf gaat over deze postume werken zoals *Der Wille zur Macht* (1901) en het archief. Daaruit zal blijken dat deze aangepaste werken het meest populair waren tijdens het regime van Hitler en de overheersing van de nationaalsocialisten. Deel zes tot en met acht pogen de werken van Nietzsche en vooral zijn houding ten opzichte van de Duitse cultuur te bevrijden van de invloed van zijn zus. Hij verkondigde zijn mening over het negentiende-eeuwse Duitsland openlijk in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (1886) en *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (1887). Hierin staat bijvoorbeeld dat hij meent te beschikken over een immoreel karakter wanneer hij zich vergelijkt met de negentiende-eeuwse moraal. Deel negen gaat over Goethe zoals Nietzsche hem zich voorstelt. Heel verheven vergelijkt Nietzsche hem met *Zarathus-*

*tra*, aangezien hij de man uit de vorige eeuw steeds tot de klassieken vindt behoren in vergelijking met het negentiende-eeuwse modernisme en Wagner. Goethe verdedigde de totaliteit van de cultuur tegen de binnendringende antisociale invloeden (zie hiervoor Goethes *Novelle*, die in 1828 verscheen). In deel tien wordt Nietzsches concept van de mens vergeleken met dat van Goethe. Als Goethe de verkondiger is van een balans tussen natuur en kunst, dan is Nietzsche de apocalyptische profeet: de ruimte waarin hij zich beweegt zou bevolkt moeten worden door een nieuw menssoort dat niet lijkt op zijn tijdgenoten. Dit doembeeld verduidelijkt zijn concept van de superman beter begrijpen, de man die boven de samenleving uitstijgt door zijn relatie met de natuur te herstellen.

Het derde hoofdstuk is een uitgebreidere verhandeling over Thomas Mann. Het eerste deel is een autobiografie van de deze schrijver en bevat zodoende ook de belangrijkste data uit zijn leven en werken tot aan het jaar 1929 toen hij de Nobelprijs voor literatuur ontving. Ook wordt in dit deel uitgelegd hoe Mann en zijn ideologie geplaatst moeten worden in het licht van de sociale veranderingen van zijn tijd. Het tweede deel richt zich op de schrijver Mann en zijn betrekking tot het politieke regime. Dit portret komt tot stand door een analyse van de bourgeois structuur van *Buddenbrooks* (1901) en het allegorische *Königliche Hoheit* (1909). We willen vooral de relatie onderzoeken tussen de schepper (de auteur van het boek die zich bewust is van de sociale veranderingen die om hem heen plaats vinden) en het publiek (dat door deze veranderingen beïnvloed wordt). Wordt deze verhouding gekarakteriseerd door onderwerping—zoals we waarnemen bij Wagners tijdgenoten—of heeft het zoals Mann het zelf noemt een ‘instinctief karakter’? Het feit dat Mann geen bestaande sociologische intentie naar voren wenst te brengen in zijn werk en naar een bepaalde houding ten opzichte van zijn publiek zoekt, plaatst hem al vroeg in zijn loopbaan naast Nietzsche en Goethe. Deel drie vertelt over Mann ten tijde van de oorlog door middel van een analyse van zijn essay *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* (1918) en de sporen die het essay in *Der Zauberberg* (1924) heeft nagelaten. De analyse vereist dat er speciale aandacht gegeven wordt aan de historische context van deze werken, aangezien deze gebeurtenissen de werken beïnvloed hebben. Zo wordt ook Manns verandering van mening die in deze werken tentoongespreid wordt, verklaard. De studie richt zich op de verandering die Mann doormaakt—hij verliet zijn naar binnen gekeerde wereld van sobere onrust en stelde zich open voor de wereld om hem heen, zoals ook Duitsland haar grenzen na de oorlog openstelde—met als doel uit te vinden wat de apolitieke houding van Mann inhield en hoe de critici in die tijd, vooral in het licht van de Nietzsches apolitieke houding, hierop reageerden. Uiteindelijk blijkt ook dat *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* in-

houdelijk niet zo heel veel verschilt van Manns andere werken. Ook deze verhandeling betreft een persoonlijk relaas over de politiek en democratie (hoewel deze ideeën aanvankelijk voor zijn tijdgenoten moeilijk te begrijpen waren). Als moderne filosofie voor Nietzsche decadent was, dan komt Mann tot dezelfde conclusie wat de moderne politiek betreft.

Deel vier positioneert Mann met zijn ethische overtuigingen en visie in een land dat bedreigd wordt door het Nazisme. We stellen ons voor dat zijn tijdgenoten toegesproken werden zoals Nietzsche ageerde tegen de nationalisten van zijn tijd. De sleutelrol van Manns ironie (dit stilistische middel is duidelijk aanwezig in zijn essays en andere werken) dient ook toegelicht te worden. Ironie bindt de fantasie van de schrijver aan de realiteit van de jaren dertig, maar hekelt tegelijkertijd ook de uitweidingen van de logica van de schrijver of de personages in een boek. Dit maakt de verhandeling tot een niet al te zwaar en toch literair meesterwerk.

De delen vijf tot en met acht behandelen Mann en zijn latere werken. Deze vormen het hoogtepunt van zijn ideeën aangaande de rol van de kunstenaar en kunst binnen hun culturele en sociale context. Manns latere scheppingsperiode bevat vooral afzonderlijke werken die vergelijkbaar zijn met Nietzsche en diens filosofische overtuigingen in de periode 1886 tot en met 1888. Tegen het midden van de twintigste eeuw komt Mann met een verrassing aan door verder te borduren op de problematiek van zijn vroegere werken. Deze problematiek wordt vooral in *Doktor Faustus* (1947) samengevat in een ‘problematisch karakter’. Het volumineuze voorwoord uit de Engelse editie van het boek, getiteld ‘de genese van een roman’, legt helder uit wat de artistieke problemen waren waarmee Mann te kampen had en tot welke meesters hij zich wendde om een oplossing te vinden voor de culturele en politieke problemen waarin Duitsland zich bevond (deze problemen omvatten uiteraard de oorlog, het nazisme en het vrije Duitsland als een politieke en ‘democratische staat’). Manns held in het apocalyptische *Doktor Faustus*—deze held vertoont een gelijkenis met het personage van Nietzsches *Also sprach Zarathustra*—geeft de Duitse natie symbolisch weer door middel van een personage dat door het modernisme gevangen gehouden wordt. In dit deel worden Manns *Adrian Leverkühn* en Hesses *Joseph Knecht* naast elkaar gezet om een situatieschets te geven van de moderne schepper. Tegelijkertijd worden de grote overeenkomsten geschetst tussen de helden van Mann en Goethe (*Leverkühn* kiest niet voor de elitaire kringen) en tussen de helden van Mann en Nietzsche (de vervreemding van de kunstenaars heeft een directe invloed op de idealen van hun cultuur). Deel negen vormt een weergave van de problematiek van de muziek waar zowel Goethe als Nietzsche en Mann hun gedachten over hebben laten gaan. Bij Mann leidden we dit niet zozeer af van de volledige titel van zijn

laatstgenoemde roman, namelijk *Doktor Faustus. Das Leben des deutschen Tonsetzers Adrian Leverkühn, erzählt von einem Freunde*, maar wordt geanalyseerd of Mann, om dezelfde redenen als Nietzsche, zich ook afzijdig hield van de muziek van Wagner, indachtig Goethes waarschuwing dat muziek zich overal met geweld naar binnen werkte. Naar het voorbeeld van Goethe en Nietzsche waarschuwt Mann tegen het psychologische gevaar dat imposante muziek vormt voor de samenleving (hij voorzag politieke acties). Manns Adrian Leverkühn ontvlucht het gevaar van de oppermachtige psychologische controle van de massa door als balling in de waanzin te leven. Dit deel vormt het bewijs voor de stelling dat Nietzsches apocalyptische profetie haar vervulling vindt in Manns tijd. Mann was zich hiervan bewust en schreef deze roman over muziek als een vertolking van het lot van zijn volk.

Deel tien stelt een terugkeer naar Goethe voor op basis van Manns gevoel van ballingschap en pathologische tragedie (wat in zijn personages naar voren komt). Mann staat naast Goethe en Nietzsche omdat hij Goethe ziet als en criticus van de Duitse culturele zelfzuchtigheid (uiteindelijk bekritiseert Mann dit nog sterker dan Nietzsche). Ondanks Manns tragische situatie als schrijver in de eenzame twintigste eeuw mag hij zich verzekerd weten van de gelijkenis die hij vertoont met zijn grote voorgangers.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary sources

- Goethe, *Aus Meinem Leben: Dichtung und Wahrheit*, XII-XIII [Signet Classic], translated by Catherine Hutter (New York: Penguin, 1960).
- Goethe, *Collected Works [Conversations of German Refugees and Wilhelm Meister's Journeyman Years: or the Renunciants]*, edited by Jane K. Brown (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989).
- Goethe, *Conversations with Eckermann: Being Appreciations and Criticism on Many Subjects* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2005).
- Goethe, Eckermann, *Conversations with Goethe in the Last Years of his Life*, translated by S. M. Fuller (Boston and Cambridge: James Munroe and Company, 1852).
- Goethe, *Faust; Egmont; Hermann and Dorothea [Harvard Classics]*, edited by Charles W. Eliot (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004).
- Goethe, *From My Life: Poetry and Truth*, translated by Robert R. Heitner (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987).
- Goethe, *Hermann und Dorothea*, edited by Friedrich Bieweg (Michigan: The University of Michigan, 1830).
- Goethe, *Hermann und Dorothea*, in *Goethes Werke*, Hamburger Ausgabe, Bd. 2, edited by Erich Trunz (München: C. H. Beck, 1982).
- Goethe, *Italian Journey (1786-1788)*, translated by W. H. Auden and Elizabeth Mayer (London: Penguin Books, 1970).
- Goethe, *Maxims and Reflections* (London: Penguin Group, 1998).
- Goethe, *Opere (Poeme epice)*, vol. 8 (București: Univers, 1990).
- Goethe, *Opere (Poezia)*, vol. 1 (București: Univers, 1984).
- Goethe, *Poezie și adevăr*, vol. 1 (București: Editura pentru Literatură, 1967).
- Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke*, edited by Karl Richter (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1986).
- Goethe, *Selected Poems [The Collected Works]*, vol. I, edited by Christopher Middleton (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).
- Goethe, *Selected Poems*, translated by John Whaley (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1998).
- Goethe, *The Auto-Biography of Goethe. Truth and Poetry; From My Life*, edited by Parke Godwin (New York: Wiley & Putnam, 1847).

- Goethe, *The Auto-Biography of Goethe. Truth and Poetry: From My Own Life. The Concluding Books. Letters from Switzerland and Travels in Italy*, translated by rev. A. J. W. Morisson (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1849).
- Goethe, *The Autobiography of Goethe. Truth and Poetry: From My Own Life*, translated by John Oxenford (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1848).
- Goethe, *The Flight to Italy: Diary and Selected Letters*, edited and translated by T. J. Reed (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- Goethe, *The Poems of Goethe*, translated by Edgar Alfred Bowring (New York: John B. Alden Publisher, 1883).
- Goethe, *The Poems of Goethe*, translated by Edgar Alfred Bowring (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004).
- Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1989).
- Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, in *Goethes Werke*, Hamburger Ausgabe in 14 Bänden, edited by Erich Trunz (München: C. H. Beck, 1994).
- Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, in *Goethes Werke*, Hamburger Ausgabe in 14 Bänden, edited by Erich Trunz (München: C. H. Beck, 1981).
- Goethe; J. P. Eckermann, *Conversations of Goethe with Johann Peter Eckermann*, translated by John Oxenford (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998).
- Mann, Thomas, *A Sketch of My Life*, translated by H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960).
- Mann, Thomas, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, Stockolmer Gesamtausgabe der Werke Thomas Manns (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fisher Verlag, 1956).
- Mann, Thomas, *Buddenbrooks: The Decline of a Family* (New York: Everyman's Library, 1994).
- Mann, Thomas, *Death in Venice, and Seven Other Stories*, translated by H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Vintage Books, 1936).
- Mann, Thomas, *Der Zauberberg* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1997).
- Mann, Thomas, *Doctor Faustus. The Life of the German Composer Adrian Leverkühn as Told by a Friend*, translated by John E. Woods (New York: Vintage International, 1999).
- Mann, Thomas, *Doktor Faustus* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1997).
- Mann, Thomas, *Gesammelte Werke* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1960).
- Mann, Thomas, *Königliche Hoheit. Lotte in Weimar* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1990).

- Mann, Thomas, *Lotte in Weimar* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1997).
- Mann, Thomas, *Lotte in Weimar: The Beloved Returns*, translated by H. T. Lowe-Porter (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990).
- Mann, Thomas, *Mario und der Zauberer* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1989).
- Mann, Thomas, *Past Masters and Other Papers*, translated by H. T. Lowe-Porter (Michigan: University of Michigan, 1933).
- Mann, Thomas, *Pro and Contra Wagner*, translated by Allan Blunden (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).
- Mann, Thomas, *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man*, translated by Walter D. Morris (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 1983).
- Mann, Thomas, *The Coming Victory of Democracy*, translated by Agnes Elizabeth Ernst Meyer (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1938).
- Mann, Thomas, *The Genesis of a Novel*, translated by Clara Winston (London: Secker and Warburg, 1961).
- Mann, Thomas, *The Magic Mountain*, translated by John E. Woods (New York: Vintage Books, 1996).
- Mann, Thomas, *The Magic Mountain: Der Zauberberg*, translated by H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953).
- Mann, Thomas, *Tod in Venedig* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1992).
- Thomas Mann-Heinrich Mann Briefwechsel 1900-1949* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1995).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, translated by Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Așa grăit-a Zarathustra. O carte pentru toți și nici unul*, ediția a II-a (București: Humanitas, 1996).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Der Fall Wagner. Götzen-Dämmerung. Nietzsche contra Wagner* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1969).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Der Wille zur Macht*, edited by Max Brahn (Leipzig: A. Kröner Verlag, 1923).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Human, All Too Human [Assorted Maxims and Opinions, Wanderer and His Shadow]*, translated by Reginald Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Nietzsche Briefwechsel. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004).

- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *On the Genealogy of Morality. A Polemic*, translated by Maudemarie Clarke and Alan J. Swenswen (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1998).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *On the Genealogy of Morals: A Polemic. By way of clarification and supplemented to my last book Beyond Good and Evil* [Oxford World's Classics], translated by Douglas Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Sämtliche Werke*, edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (München: Walter de Gruyter, 1980).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, translated by Christopher Middleton (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1941).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Antichrist*, translated by H. L. Mencken (Tucson, AZ: Sharp Press, 1999).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Antichrist*, translated by H. L. Mencken (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishers, 2004).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Birth of Tragedy and the Genealogy of Morals: An Attack*, translated by Francis Golffing (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Case of Wagner, Nietzsche contra Wagner, The Twilight of the Idols, The Antichrist*, translated by Thomas Common (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1899).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Gay Science [With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs]*, translated by Walter Kaufman (New York: Random House, Inc., 1974).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Twilight of the Idols and the Antichrist: or How to Philosophize with a Hammer*, translated by R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin Group, 1990).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Will to Power*, edited by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, Inc., 1968).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Thus Spake Zarathustra (Dover Thrift Editions)*, translated by Thomas Common (New York: Dover Publications, 1999).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2006).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, translated by Thomas Common (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, edited by Robert Pipin and Adrian Del Caro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Unpublished Letters*, translated by Kurt F. Liedecker (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Untimely Meditations. Richard Wagner in Bayreuth. Schopenhauer as Educator*, translated by R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Werke*, edited by Karl Schlechta (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1977).

## **Secondary sources**

- Ackermann, Robert John, *Nietzsche: A Frenzied Look* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990).
- Adorno, Theodor Wiesengrund, *Aesthetic Theory* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005).
- Adorno, Theodor, Wiesengrund, *In Search of Wagner*, 2nd Edition (New York: Verso, 2005).
- Ahern, Daniel R., *Nietzsche as Cultural Physician* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995).
- Alderman, Harold, *Nietzsche's Gift* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1977).
- Allison, Henry E., *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983).
- Allott, Philip, *The Health of Nations: Society and Law Beyond the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- Ansell-Pearson, Keith, *Nietzsche contra Rousseau: A Study of Nietzsche's Moral and Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
- Applegate, Celia; Potter, Pamela, *Music and German National Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
- Apter, T. E., *Thomas Mann: The Devil's Advocate* (New York: New York University Press, 1979).
- Ardagh, John; Ardagh, Katharina, *Germany and the Germans. The Unites Germany in the Mid-1990s*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (London: Penguin, 1996).
- Arendt, Hannah, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).
- Argyle, Gisela, *Germany as Model and Monster: Allusions in English Fiction* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2002).
- Aschheim, Steven E., *Culture and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations of National-Socialism and Other Crises* (New York: New York University Press, 1996).
- Aschheim, Steven, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 1890-1900* (Berkeley and LA: University of California Press, 1992).

- Bataille, Georges, *On Nietzsche*, translated by Bruce Boone (London: Athlone Press, 1992).
- Beck, Lewis W., *Eighteenth-Century Philosophy* (New York: Free Press, 1966).
- Beddow, Michael, *Mann: Doctor Faustus [Landmarks of World Literature]* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- Behrendt, Stephen C., *History and Myth: Essays on English Romantic Literature* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1990).
- Bekker, Henk, *Germany Adventure Guide* (New Jersey: Hunter Publishing, Inc., 2005).
- Bergeron, Katherine; Bohlman, Philip V. (eds.), *Disciplining Music: Musicology and Its Canons* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996).
- Berghahn, Klaus L.; Hermand, Jost, *Goethe in German-Jewish Culture* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2001).
- Berghahn, Volker Rolf, *Imperial Germany, 1871-1914. Economy, Society, Culture, and Politics* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1994).
- Bergmann Fischer, Brigitte, *My European Heritage: Life Among Great Men of Letters* (Boston: Branden Books, 1986).
- Bergmann, Peter, *Nietzsche: „The Last Antipolitical German”* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1987).
- Berkowitz, Peter, *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).
- Bernd, Magnus; Higgins, Kathleen M. (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
- Bertram, Ernst, *Nietzsche—Versuch einer Mythologie* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1965).
- Beutin, Wolfgang, *A History of German Literature: From the Beginnings to the Present Day* (New York: Routledge, 1993).
- Bielschowsky, Albert; Cooper, William A., *The Life of Goethe*, vol. III (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1912).
- Blackall, Eric A., *Adalbert Stifter, a Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948).
- Blackall, Eric A., *Goethe and the Novel* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976).
- Blanchot, *The Space of Literature: A Translation of „L'Espace litteraire”* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).
- Bloom, Allan, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1988).
- Bloom, Harold (ed.), *Thomas Mann's The Magic Mountain* (New Haven, CT: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986).

- Boyle, Nicholas, *Goethe: The Poet and the Age*, vol. I: *The Poetry of Desire 1749-1790* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).
- Boyle, Nicholas, *Goethe: The Poet and the Age*, vol. II: *Revolution and Renunciation, 1790-1803* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- Breazale, Daniel (ed.), *Nietzsche. Untimely Meditations [Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy]* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
- Bretton, Henry L., *Stresemann and the Revision of Versailles. A Flight for Reason* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1953).
- Bruford, Walter Horace, *Culture and Society in Classical Weimar, 1775-1806* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962).
- Burke, Peter, *The French Historical Revolution. The Annals School, 1929-1989* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1990).
- Byrne, Lorraine, *Schubert's Goethe Setting* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003).
- Carboncini, Sonia; Cataldi, Luigi, *Nuovi Studii Sul Pensiero Di Christian Wolff* (Zürich and New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1992).
- Cassirer, Ernst, *Rousseau, Kant, and Goethe* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1963).
- Cassirer, Ernst, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964).
- Călinescu, George, *Scriitori străini* (București: Editura pentru Literatură Universală, 1967).
- Călinescu, Matei, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987).
- Clive, Geoffrey (ed.), *The Philosophy of Nietzsche* (New Jersey: The New American Library, 1965).
- Cook, Albert S. (ed.), *The Art of Poetry: The Poetical Treatises of Horace, Vida, and Boileau*, translated by Howes, Pitt, and Soame (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1892).
- Craig, Gordon Alexander, *Germany, 1866-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).
- Craig, Gordon Alexander, *The Politics of the Unpolitical: German Writers and the Problem of Power, 1770-1871* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
- Dahlhaus, Carl, *Schönberg and the New Music* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
- Dali, Salvador, *Journal of a Genius* (Washington, DC.: Creation Books, 1998).
- Deleuze, Gilles, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, translated by Hugh Thomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

- Diethe, Carol, *Nietzsche's Sister and the Will to Power: A Biography of Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2003).
- Donovan, Siobhán; Elliott, Robin (eds.), *Music and Literature in German Romanticism [Studies in German Literature, Linguistics and Culture]* (New York: Camden House, 2004).
- Eaglefield Hull, A. (ed.), *Beethoven's Letters* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1926).
- Egidi, Rosaria, *In Search of a New Humanism* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999).
- Eissler, Kurt, *Goethe: A Psychoanalytic Study, 1775-1786* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1963).
- Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1990).
- Engelhardt, Hugo Tristram, Jr.; Pinkard, T. (eds.), *Hegel Reconsidered. Beyond Metaphysics and the Authoritarian State* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994).
- Estes, James Martin, *Peace, Order and the Glory of God; Secular Authority and the Church in the Thought of Luther and Melancthon, 1518-1559* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2005).
- Feuchtwagner, Edgar, *From Weimar to Hitler: Germany* (London: Macmillan, 1994).
- Foucault, Michel, *Dits et Ecrits*, vol. 2 (Paris: Gallimard, 1971).
- Förster Nietzsche, Elizabeth, *The Life of Nietzsche*, vol II, translated by Paul V. Cohn (New York: Sturgis and Walton Co., 1915).
- Frenz, Horst (ed.), *Nobel Lectures in Literature 1901-1967* (Singapore: World Scientific Publications, 1999).
- Friedenthal, Richard, *Goethe—His Life and Times* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1963).
- Fuhrmann, Horst, *Germany in the High Middle Ages, c. 1050-1200* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
- Gailus, Andreas, *Passions of the Sign: Revolution and Language in Goethe, Kant, and Kleist* (Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).
- Gay, Peter, *The Enlightenment: The Rise of Modern Paganism* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995).
- Gay, Peter, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968).
- Gillespie, Michael Allen, *Nihilism Before Nietzsche* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996).
- Gray, Richard T., *The Complete Works of Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche [Unfashionable Observations, David Strauss. Confessor and Writer, Richard*

- Wagner in Bayreuth, The Case of Wagner*] (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1995).
- Grimbert, Joan, *Tristan and Isolde: A Casebook [Arthurian Characters and Themes]* (New York: Routledge, 2002).
- Grimm, Reinhold, *Re-Reading Wagner*, edited by Jost Hermand (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).
- Gue Zarrow, Peter, *China in War and Revolution, 1895-1949* (New York: Routledge, 2006).
- Gundolf, Friedrich, *Goethe*, vol. 1 (București: Minerva, 1971).
- Hadow, William Henry (ed.), *The Oxford History of Music*, vol. 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902).
- Hamill, Pete, *The Hesse-Mann Letters. The Correspondence of Hermann Hesse and Thomas Mann, 1910-1955* (New York: Jorge Pinto Books, 2005).
- Hamilton, Nigel, *The Brothers Mann [The Lives of Heinrich and Thomas Mann 1871-1950 and 1875-1955]* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979).
- Hankins, Thomas L., *Jean D'Alembert: Science and the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970).
- Harrington, Michael, *The Accidental Century* (New York: Macmillan, 1965).
- Hatch, Christopher; Bernstein, David W. (eds.), *Music Theory and the Exploration of the Past* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
- Hatfield, Henry, *Goethe: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964).
- Hatfield, Henry, *Thomas Mann: A Collection of Critical Essays* (New Jersey: Englewood, 1964).
- Hayes, Bascom Barry, *Bismarck and Mitteleuropa* (New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1994).
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *Enciclopedia științelor filosofice. Partea I: Logica* (București: Humanitas, 1995).
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *The Phenomenology of Right*, edited by T. M. Knox (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).
- Heidegger, Martin, *Nietzsche*, vol. I, II, *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, translated by David F. Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1984).
- Heller, Erich, *The Ironic German, a Study of Thomas Mann* (Boston: Little Brown, 1958).
- Heller, Otto, *Studies in Modern German Literature: Sudderman, Hauptmann, Women Writers in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1905).

- Herder, Johann Gottfried, *On World History: An Anthology*, edited by Hans Adler; Ernest Menze (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1997).
- Hersch, Jeanne, *Mirarea filosofică* (București: Humanitas, 1997).
- Hersch, Jeanne, *L'étonnement philosophique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993).
- Hesse, Hermann, *Jocul cu mărgele de sticlă* (București: RAO International Publishing Company, 1994).
- Hesse, Hermann, *Magister Ludi. The Glass Bead Game*, translated by Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969).
- Hinz, Stella M., *Goethe's Lyric Poems in English Translation after 1860* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1928).
- Hoffmeister, Gerhard, *The French Revolution and the Age of Goethe* (New York: G. Oms, 1989).
- Hollingdale, R. J., *A Nietzsche Reader* (London: Penguin Group, 1977).
- Hook, Sidney, *From Hegel to Marx* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950).
- Horkheimer, Marx; Adorno, Theodor, *Dialectics of Enlightenment* (Chicago: Stanford University Press, 2002).
- Hugo, Victor, *Selected Poems*, translated by E. H. Blackmore (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001).
- Iggers, Georg, *Historiography in the twentieth century [From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge with a New Epilogue]*, 2nd Edition (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005).
- Jeep, John M. (ed.), *Medieval Germany. An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland Publishers, 2001).
- Kaes, Anton; Jay, Martin, *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (California: University of California Press, 1994).
- Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Norman Kemp Smith (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
- Kant, Immanuel, *Critica rațiunii practice. Întemeierea metafizicii moravurilor* (București: Editura IRI, Colecția Cogito, 1995).
- Kant, Immanuel, *Critica rațiunii pure* (București: Editura IRI, Colecția Cogito, 1994).
- Kant, Immanuel, *Lectures on Ethics [The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant]* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- Kant, Immanuel, *Political Writings*, edited by H. S. Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
- Kant, Immanuel, *Prolegomene [la orice metafizică viitoare care se va putea înfățișa drept știință]*, ediția a II-a (București: Editura ALL, 1998).
- Kant, Immanuel, *The Conflict of the Faculties [Der Streit Der Fakultäten]*, translated by Mary J. Gregor (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1992).

- Kaufmann, Walter Arnold, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (New York: Modern Library, 2000).
- Kaufmann, Walter Arnold, *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* (London: Penguin Group, 1975).
- Kaufmann, Walter Arnold, *From Shakespeare to Existentialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980).
- Kaufmann, Walter Arnold, *Nietzsche: Philosopher Psychologist, Antichrist*, 4th Edition (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974).
- Kaufmann, Walter Arnold, *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Penguin, 1982).
- Kemal, Salim; Gaskell, Ivan; Conway, Daniel (eds.), *Nietzsche, Philosophy and the Arts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- Kessler, Harry, *Berlin in Lights. The Diaries of Count Harry Kessler [1918-1937]* (New York: Grove Press, 1999).
- Knox, T. M. (ed.), *The Philosophy of Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).
- Kord, Susanne; Henke, Burkhard; Richter, Simon (eds.), *Unwrapping Goethe's Weimar: Essays in Cultural Studies and Local Knowledge* (New York: Camden House, 1999).
- Kostlin, Julius; Hay, Charles E., *Theology of Luther in Its Historical Development and Inner Harmony*, vol. I (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Publication Society, 1897).
- Krauss, Werner, *Opera și cuvântul* (București: Univers, 1976).
- Kuehn, Manfred, *Kant: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- Kurz, Gerhard, *The Great Drama: Germany and the French Revolution* (Bonn: Inter Nationes, 1989).
- Kurzke Hermann, *Thomas Mann: Life as a Work of Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).
- Kuyper, Kathleen (ed.), *Merriam Webster Encyclopedia of Literature* (Springfield, MA: Merriam Webster, Inc., 1995).
- Lacroix, Paul, *The XVIIIth century (Its Institutions, Customs, and Costumes). France 1700-1789* (London: Bickers and Son, 1878).
- Ladurie, Emmanuel Le Roy, *The Ancien Régime: A History of France, 1610-1774* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 1996).
- LaMar, Cecil, *Wilhelm II*, vol 1, *Prince and Emperor, 1859-1900* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).
- LaMar, Cecil, *Wilhelm II*, vol. 2, *Emperor and Exile 1900-1941* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).
- Leary, Timothy, *Turn On, Turn In, Drop Out* (Oackland, CA: Ronin Publishing, Inc., 1999).

- Lebovics, Herman, *Mona Lisa's Escort: André Malraux and the Reinvention of French Culture* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999).
- Lepenes, Wolf, *The Seduction of Culture in German History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).
- Leppmann, Wolfgang, *The German Image of Goethe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961).
- Lesser, Esther, *Thomas Mann's short fiction* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 1989).
- Liébert, Georges, *Nietzsche and Music* (London: University of Chicago Press Ltd., 2004).
- Lord, Richard, *Culture Shock! Germany [A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette]* (Portland, OR: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company, 1996).
- Lukács, Georg, *Essays on Thomas Mann* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1965).
- Luther, Martin, *The Bondage of the Will: A New Translation of De servo arbitrio*, translated by J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1957).
- MacIntyre, Alasdair, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984).
- MacIntyre, Alasdair, *Tratat de morală. După virtute* (București: Humanitas, 1998).
- MacIntyre, Ben, *Forgotten Fatherland: The Search for Elizabeth Nietzsche* (London: Macmillan, 1992).
- Magnus, Rudolf, *Goethe as a Scientist* (New York: M. Henry Schuman, Inc., 1949).
- Mah, Harold, *Enlightenment Phantasies. Cultural Identity in France and Germany 1750-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2003).
- Mallach, Alan, *The Autumn of the Italian Opera* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2007).
- Martini, Fritz, *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Alfred Körner Verlag, 1991).
- Martini, Fritz, *Istoria literaturii germane [de la început până în prezent]* (București: Univers, 1972).
- Marx, Karl; Engels, Friedrich, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and the Communist Manifesto* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1988).
- Marx, Karl; Engels, Friedrich, *The German Ideology* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1970).

- McGrath, Alister, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 4th Edition (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2007).
- McIntosh, Christopher, *The Swan King: Ludwig II of Bavaria* (New York: I. B. Tauris and Co. Ltd., 2003).
- Miller, Jim, *Rousseau: Dreamer of Democracy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996).
- Montinari, Mazzino, *La Volonté de Puissance n'existe pas* (Paris: Eclat, 1998).
- Montinari, Mazzino, *Nietzsche lesen* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1982).
- Moreau, Pierre, *Le Classicisme des Romantiques* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1932).
- Morgan, Peter, *Critical Idyll: Traditional Values and the French Revolution in Goethe's "Hermann und Dorothea"* (Rochester, NY: Boydell and Brewer Ltd., 1993).
- Mosse, Georg L., *The Culture of Western Europe: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. An Introduction* (London: John Murray, 1963).
- Mulhern, Francis, *Culture/Metaculture* (New York: Routledge, 2000).
- Mundt, Hannelore, *Understanding Thomas Mann* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2004).
- Munteanu, Romul, *Cultura europeană în epoca luminilor* (București: Univers, 1974).
- Niebuhr, Reinhold, *The Irony of American History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952).
- Orr, Mary, *From Goethe to Gide: Feminism, Aesthetics, and the French and German Literary Canons, 1770-1936* (Exeter, UK: Exeter University Press, 2005).
- Pascal, Roy, *The German Novel: Studies* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1956).
- Peters, H. F., *My Sister, My Spouse: A Biography of Lou Andreas Salomé* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1962).
- Piatkowski, Adelina, *O istorie a Greciei antice* (București: Albatros, 1988).
- Picart, Caroline Joan, *Thomas Mann and Friedrich Nietzsche: Eroticism, Death, Music and Laughter* (Amsterdam: Rodolpi, 1999).
- Pluhar, Werner S.; Kitcher, Patricia W., *Critique of Pure Reason* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1996).
- Raeburn, Michael; Kendall, Alan (eds.), *Heritage of Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).
- Randall, Keith, *Luther și Reforma în Germania* (București: ALL, 1994).
- Randel, Don Michael (ed.), *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1986).

- Reed, J. T., *Goethe. The Flight to Italy: Diary and Selected Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- Reed, Terence James, *Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- Reiss, Hans, *Goethe's Novels* (Oxford, OH: Miami University Press, 1969).
- Revel, Jacques; Hunt, Lynn (eds.), *Histories, French Constructions of the Past*, vol. I (New York: New York Press, 1995).
- Reynolds, Christopher Alan, *Motives for Allusion: Context and Content in Nineteenth-Century Music* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2003).
- Ricks, Stephen D.; Voldung, Klaus, *The Apocalypse in Germany* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2000).
- Riley, Charles A. II, *Color Codes: Modern Theories of Color in Philosophy, Painting and Architecture, Literature, Music, and Psychology* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1955).
- Robertson, John George, *A History of German Literature* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1970).
- Robertson, Ritchie, *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- Rolland, Romain, *Goethe and Beethoven* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1931).
- Rosellini, Jay Julian, *Literary Skinheads? Writing from the Right in Reunified Germany* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2000).
- Rosen, Stanley, *The Mask of the Enlightenment, Nietzsche's Zarathustra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, *The Social Contract* (London: Penguin Group, 1968).
- Ruppel, Richard, *Gottfried Keller: Poet, Pedagogue and Humanist* (New York: Peter Lang, 1988).
- Russel, Bertrand, *History of Western Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2004).
- Sadie, Stanley (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
- Sadie, Stanley; Latham, Alison (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- Sagarra, Eda; Skrine, Peter, *A Companion to German Literature: from 1500 to the Present* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1997).
- Samson, Jim (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- Schaberg, William, *The Nietzsche Canon: A Publication History and Bibliography* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995).

- Schaffner, Randolph P., *The Apprenticeship Novel: A Study of the „Bildungsroman” as a Regulative Type in Western Literature* (New York: Peter Lang Pub., Inc., 1984).
- Scher, Steven Paul; Bernhard, Walter, *Essays on Literature and Music [1967-2004]* (New York: Rodopi Publishers, 2004).
- Schreiner, Thomas R.; Ware, Bruce A. (eds.), *The Grace of God, The Bondage of the Will*, vol. II (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1995).
- Scruton, Roger, *Kant* (București: Humanitas, 1998).
- Silk, M. S.; Stern, J. P., *Nietzsche on Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
- Small, Robin, *Nietzsche and Rée: A Star Friendship* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- Smith, Preserved, *The Life and Letters of Martin Luther* (New York: Routledge, 1968).
- Sondrup, Steven P.; Nemoianu, Virgil (eds.), *Expanding Borders: Nonfictional Romantic Prose [Comparative History of Literature in European Languages]* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004).
- Spaethling, Robert, *Music and Mozart in the Life of Goethe [Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture]* (New York: Camden House, 1987).
- Spengler, Oswald, *Declinul Occidentului* (Craiova: Beladi, 1996).
- Spyri, Johanna, *Heidi* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2005).
- Steiner, Rudolf, *Friedrich Nietzsche, Fighter for Freedom* (New York: Garber Communications, Inc., 1985).
- Steiner, Rudolf, *Povestea vieții mele* (Iași: Princeps, 1994).
- Stelzig, Eugene, *The Romantic Subject in Autobiography. Rousseau and Goethe* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000).
- Stephenson, R. H., *Goethe's Conception of Knowledge and Science* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995).
- Sterfeld, Frederick William, *Music in Shakespearean Tragedy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963).
- Strauss, David, *The Life of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1971).
- Sullivan, Roger, *Immanuel Kant's Moral Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
- Swales, Martin, „*The Sorrows of Young Werther*” (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987).
- Șestov, Lev, *Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Nietzsche*, trans. Spencer Robert (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1978).
- Taylor, Seth, *Left-wing Nietzscheans; The Politics of German Expressionism, 1910-1920* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990).

- Terrance, Marc, *Concentration Camps: A Traveller's Guide to World War II Sites* (Boca Raton, FL: Universal Publishers, 2000).
- The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann*, edited by Ritchie Robertson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, edited by Robert Audi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
- Thompson, E. P., *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (New York: The New York Press, 1993).
- Tucker, Robert C., *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971).
- Unsel, Siegfried, *Goethe and His Publishers* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996).
- Von Harnack, Adolf, *Adolf von Harnack: Liberal Theology at its Height*, translated by Martin Rumscheidt (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1990).
- Von Harnack, Adolf, *What is Christianity?*, translated by Thomas Bailey Saunders (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1901).
- Von Klenze, Camillo, *From Goethe to Hauptmann. Studies in a Changing Culture* (New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1966).
- Von Muralt, Leonard, *From Versailles to Potsdam* (Hinsdale, IL: Henry Regnery, 1948).
- Wagner, Richard, *Judaism in Music and Other Essays*, translated by William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).
- Wagner, Richard, *On State and Religion* (Whitefish, MO: Kessinger Publishing, 2004).
- Wagner, Richard, *Religion and Art*, translated by William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1994).
- Wagner, Richard, *Tristan und Isolde. Tristan and Isolda. Opera in Three Acts* (West Stockbridge, MA: Hard Press, 2006).
- Waidson, H. M., *Jeremias Gotthelf: An Introduction to the Swiss Novelist* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., 1978).
- Warburton, Nigel, *Philosophy [The Classics]* (New York: Routledge, 2001).
- Warrack, John, *German Opera: From the Beginnings to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.)
- Warrack, John; West, Ewan, *The Oxford Dictionary of Opera* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
- Watts, Alan, *The Tao of Philosophy* (Boston, MA: Tuttle Publishing, 1995).
- Weiner, Marc A., *Richard Wagner and the Anti-Semitic Imagination* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).
- Whenham, John, *Claudio Monteverdi: Orfeo* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

- White, Andrew, *Thomas Mann* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1965).
- Wicks, Robert, *Nietzsche* (Oxford, UK: Oneworld Publications, 2007).
- Wiener, Philip P. (ed.), *Dictionary of the History of Ideas. Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973).
- Williams, John R., *The Life of Goethe: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998).
- Winston, Richard; Winston, Clara (eds.), *The Letters of Heinrich and Thomas Mann, 1900-1949* (LA: University of California Press, 1998).
- Witkop, Philipp, *German Students War Letters* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1929).
- Wohlfarth, Hannsdieter, *Johann Sebastian Bach* (Cambridge, UK: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1987).
- Wood, Allen, *Kant [Blackwell Great Minds]* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005).
- Wright, Jonathan, *Gustav Stresemann: Weimar's Greatest Statesman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- Young, Julian, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
- Zammito, John H., *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
- Zarrow, Peter Gue, *China in War and Revolution, 1895-1949* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

### **Articles and reviews**

- Antosik, Stanley, "Utopian Machines: Leibniz's 'Computer' and Hesse's Glass Bede Game", *Germanic Review* 67 (1992).
- Bagster-Collins, Elijah William, "Goethe and music", *The German Quarterly* (January 1940).
- Bahr, Ehrhard, "German Classicism and the French Revolution", *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 39.1 (Fall 2005).
- Barilier, Etienne; Volk, Carol, „A Culture or a Nation? Post Festum: Switzerland and the World", *The Literary Review* (Summer 1993).
- Barnes, H. G., review, „Adalbert Stifter, a Critical Study", *The Modern Language Review* 44. 3 (July 1949).
- Bailey, Charles E., "The Verdict of French Protestantism Against Germany in The First World War", *Church History* 58 (1989).
- Byrne, Lorraine, review, „Goethes Musiktheater: Singspiele, Opern, Festspiele, „Faust", *Music and Letters* 87.3 (2006).
- Casey, Steven, "The Campaign to Sell a Harsh Peace for Germany to the American Public, 1944-1948", *Blackwell Synergy* 90.297 (January 2005).

- Dickman, Adolphe-Jacques, „What About French Culture?“, *The Modern Language Journal* 20.8 (May 1936).
- Diski, Jenny, “It wasn’t him, it was her”, *London Review of Books* 25.18 (Sept. 25, 2003).
- Eiland, Howard, “Dialogue Between Daniel Bell and Wolf Lepenies: On Society and Sociology Past and Present”, *Daedalus* 135 (2006).
- Hallas, Duncan, “Marx and politics”, *Socialist Review* 83 (January 1986).
- Harding, Luke, “Inspiration leaves Mann’s mountain”, *The Guardian* (Nov. 15, 2004).
- Hoeveler, David Jr., „The New Humanism, Christianity, and the Problem of Modern Man”, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 42.4 (December 1974).
- Hoppe, Hans-Hermann, „The Politics of Johann Wolfgang Goethe”, *The Wall Street Journal Europe* (Dec. 30, 1999).
- Huebener, Theodore, „Goethe and France”, *The French Review* 23.2 (December 1949).
- Kohn, Hans, „The Eve of German Nationalism (1789-1812)”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 12.2 (April 1951).
- Kord, Susanne, review, „From Goethe to Gide”, *French Studies: A Quarterly Review* 61.1 (January 2007).
- Kroll, Joe Paul, „Conservative at the Crossroads (,Ironic’ vs. ,Revolutionary’ Conservatism in Thomas Mann’s Reflections of an Unpolitical Man)”, *Journal of European Studies* 34.3 (2004).
- Ledbetter, Steven, “Basso Concert Notes for December 15”, *Bilkent News Interactive* 5.13 (Dec. 14, 1998).
- Levenson, Alan, „Christan Author, Jewish Book? Methods and Sources in Thomas Mann’s Joseph”, *The German Quaterly* 73.2 (Spring 1998).
- Matus, Victorino, review, „The Seduction of Culture in German History”, *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life* 169 (January 2007).
- Norman, Judith, “Nietzsche and Early Romanticism”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 63.3 (July 2002).
- Pannabecker, John R., “Diderot, the Mechanical Arts and the Encyclopédie: In Search of the Heritage of Technology Education”, *Journal of Technology Education* 6.1 (Fall 1994).
- Peyre, Henry, „La Notion de Classicisme, tentative d’elucidation”, *The French Review* 6.4 (March 1933).
- Pleșu, Andrei, “Dormitorul lui Goethe”, *Dilema Veche* III.113 (26 martie 2006).
- Savile, Anthony, „Aesthetic Experience in Shaftesbury”, *Aristotelian Society Supplementary* 76.1 (July 2002).

Schaeffer, Robert, "Der Antichrist: Looking Back from the Year 100", *Free Inquiry* 9.1 (1988/89).

Tauber, Zvi, „Aesthetic Education for Morality: Schiller and Kant”, *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 40.3 (Fall 2006).

Vaget, Hans Rudolf, "Mann, Joyce, Wagner: The Question of Modernism in Doctor Faustus", *The German Quarterly Books Reviews* (Winter 2005).

Wim, Emil, „The Relation of Schiller's Ethics to Kant", *The Philosophical Review* 15.3 (May 1906).

### **Other sources**

[www.cc.columbia.edu](http://www.cc.columbia.edu) (for Wetzlar and Weimar).

Wicks, Robert, *Friedrich Nietzsche*, Archives, "The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy" (2004).

[www.operaworld.com](http://www.operaworld.com) (on *Tristan and Isolde*, Richard Wagner).

FBI's FOIA Website, FBI Files on Thomas Mann.

[www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com) (Jean LeRond D'Alembert, *Elements of Philosophy*).



# **CURRICULUM VITAE**

## **RAMONA SIMUT**

### **PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Name and Surname: Ramona Simut

Date of birth: 31.07.1976

Place of birth: Arad, Romania

### **ACADEMIC TRAINING (bachelor, master, doctorate, postgraduate)**

1995-1999: BA in theology and literature at the Faculty of Letters within the State University of Oradea

2001-2004: PhD student, The College of Arts and Social Sciences, School of Divinity, History and Philosophy, Department of Divinity, University of Aberdeen, UK

2004-2006: PhD student, The Faculty of Theology within the University of Tilburg, The Netherlands.

2007-2010: The Faculty of Letters within The University of Utrecht, The Netherlands.

### **PROFESSIONAL CAREER (positions held since graduation)**

2000-2006: Editor, Emanuel University Publishing House, Emanuel University, Oradea, Romania.

2006-2010: Editor, Emanuel University Research Centre, Emanuel University, Oradea, Romania.

2009-2010: Assistant, Faculty of Theology, Department of Letters, Emanuel University, Oradea, Romania.

### **PUBLISHED ARTICLES**

“Reinterpreting Traditional Theology. An Interview with Edward Schillebeeckx”, *Perichoresis* 5.2 (2007).

## **PUBLISHED TRANSLATIONS**

*Sufletul Firmei*, from the original *The Soul of the Firm* by William C. Polard, Emanuel University Press, Oradea, 2001.

*Femeia placuta lui Dumnezeu*, from the original *A Woman Seeking God* by Dorothy Kelley Patterson, Emanuel University Press & Faclia Publishing House, Oradea, 2006.

*Doctrina Baptiste Fundamentale. O prezentare a celor mai importante invataturi biblice*, from the original *Basic Baptist Beliefs. An Exposition of Key Biblical Doctrines* by Harold Rawlings, Emanuel University Research Centre, Emanuel University Press, Oradea, 2007.

*Iata ca El vine pe nori. Studiu biblic despre Mileniu si Rapirea Bisericii*, PhD thesis by Filip Dinca, Emanuel University Press & Faclia Publishing House, Oradea, 2006.

*Semnificatia Mileniului*, from the original *The Meaning of the Millenim. Four Views*, ed. Robert G. Clouse, pending to be published at Logos Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

*Predestinarea si alegerea libera. Patru perspective asupra suveranitatii divine si libertatii umane*, from the original *Predestination and Free Will. Four Views on Divine Sovereignty and Human Liberty*, eds. David Basinger and Randall Basinger, pending to be published at Logos Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

*Alegeri morale. O introduce in Etica*, editia a doua, from the original *Moral Choices—Second Edition* by Scott B. Rae, Emanuel University Press, Oradea, 2009.

## **EDITED BOOKS**

*Conceptul de indumnezeire in teologia lui Dumitru Staniloae* by Emil Bartos, Emanuel University Press, Oradea, 1999.

*Predicarea expozitiva*, from the original *Anointed Expository Preaching* by Stephen F. Olford and David L. Olford, Emanuel University Press, Oradea, 2000.

*Ucenicia natiunilor. Puterea adevarului de a transforma culturile*, from the original *Disciplining Nations. The Power of Truth of Transforming Cultures* by Darrow L. Miller and Stan Guthrie, Logos Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2001.

*Curs de ebraica biblica* by Silviu Tatu and Timothy Crow, Emanuel University Press, Oradea, 2001.

*Biblia sau Sfanta Scriptura. Editie de Studiu Thompson*, from the original *The Thompson Student Bible*, Emanuel University Press, Oradea & La Buona Novella Publishing House, Switzerland, 2002.

*Primii crestini: o scurta introducere*, from the original *The Early Christians—a taster* by Richard Alderson, Faclia Publishing House, Oradea, 2002.

*Biologie cu elemente creationiste* by Maria Popa and Sabin Burca, Emanuel University Press, Oradea, 2002.

*Cine sunt puritanii si care este doctrinal lor?*, from the original *Who are the Puritans... and what do they teach?* by Erroll Hulse, Faclia Publishing House, Oradea, 2003.

*Viata si corespondenta lui Henry Martin*, from the original *The Life and Letters of Henry Martin* by John Sargent, Faclia Publishing House, Oradea, 2006.

*Filosofie si teologie moderna de la René Descartes la Albert Schweitzer. Dialogul dintre filosofie si teologie intre 1650-1950* by Corneliu C. Simut, Casa Cartii de Stiinta, Cluj-Napoca, 2006.

*Doctrina Baptiste Fundamentale. O prezentare a celor mai importante invataturi biblice* by Harold Rawlings, Emanuel University Research Centre, Emanuel University Press, 2007.

*Scurta monografie a Comunitatii Bisericilor Crestine Baptiste din zona Bihor de la inceputuri pana in 1961* by Otniel-Laurean Veres, Emanuel University Research Centre, Emanuel University Press, 2007.

*Orientari ale eclesiologiei in postmodernism*, MTh Thesis by Marius Danci, Emanuel University Research Centre, Emanuel University Press, 2007.

*Lectura textelor patristice—o problema de abordare a Tradiției. Studiu pe caz asupra “Didahiei Apostolilor”*, MTh Thesis by Otniel-Laurean Veres, Emanuel University Research Centre, Emanuel University Press, 2007.

*Catehismul: ancora a credinței și practicii baptiste*, MTh Thesis by Viorel Ie, Emanuel University Research Centre, Emanuel University Press, 2007.

*Doctrina despre mântuire la Philipp Melancthon* by Corneliu C. Simut, Emanuel University Research Centre, Emanuel University Press, 2007.

*Justification by Faith* by Alister McGrath, Logos Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 2006.

*Turning Points* by Mark A. Noll, Logos Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 2008.

*Doctrina creștină. Revelația și scopurile ei în zilele noastre* by Alister McGrath, Logos Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 2006.

*Lady in Waiting* by Debbie Jones and Jackie Kendall, Emanuel University Press, Oradea, Romania, 2008.

*Unitatea Bisericii în teologia lui Karl Rahner și Heinrich Fries* by Ciprian Simut, Emanuel University Research Centre, Emanuel University Press, Oradea, 2009.

*Alcoolismul în comunitățile sarace* by Ioan Popoviciu, Emanuel University Research Centre, Emanuel University Press, Oradea, 2009.

*Deontologia profesiei de asistent social* by Salomea Popoviciu, Emanuel University Press, Oradea, 2009.

*Doctrina mântuirii prin har în teologia lui John Bunyan* by Ciprian Simut, Emanuel University Press, Oradea, 2009.

*Darurile Duhului Sfânt în teologia lui John Owen* by Samuil Marusca, Emanuel University Press, Oradea, 2009.

**UNPUBLISHED WORKS PRESENTED AT ACADEMIC  
CONFERENCES**

*The Epistemology of Edward Schillebeeckx*, paper presented at the Annual Scientific Conference of the Faculty of Theology within the Emanuel University, Oradea, Romania, 1999.

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY**

English

French



This is a non-commercial copy of a doctoral thesis published by Emanuel University Press, RO, for the University of Utrecht, NL.