

THE NOTION OF UTOPIANISM IN HESSE'S *THE GLASS BEAD GAME*

by

MOHAMMED AMINE KALAKHI

(Under the Direction of THOMAS CERBU)

ABSTRACT

This work explores the notion of utopianism in Hermann Hesse's novel *The Glass Bead Game*. It tries to show that Hesse has a unique view of what a Utopia is. It is not simply a place where perfection reigns. In fact, he sees it as a striving towards that perfection. I am interested in exploring this ambivalence and the social and political ramifications it culminates in.

I will also contrast this notion of utopianism to those of other writers and thinkers such as Plato, Rabelais and Mann. It is my aim to situate Hesse's work within a greater tradition and show his unique approach.

INDEX WORDS: Utopianism, Castalia, Feuilleton, Magister Ludi, pedagogical province.

THE NOTION OF UTOPIANISM IN HESSE'S *THE GLASS BEAD GAME*

by

MOHAMMED AMINE KALAKHI

BA, Hassan II University, Morocco, 2019

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2022

© 2022

MOHAMMED AMINE KALAKHI

All Rights Reserved

THE NOTION OF UTOPIANISM IN HESSE'S *THE GLASS BEAD GAME*

by

MOHAMMED AMINE KALAKHI

Major Professor: THOMAS CERBU
Committee: TIMOTHY CLEVELAND
ARI LIEBERMAN

Electronic Version Approved:

Ron Walcott
Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
December 2022

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, who were always there for me and supported me in numerous and incalculable ways. Attending graduate school would have been impossible without their unconditional love and support. I also dedicate this to all of the people who helped me during my stay in Athens and showed a tremendous generosity in many different ways.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to Dr. Thomas Cerbu, who is my chief adviser. He exposed me to many great literary works including Hermann Hesse's *The Glass Bead Game* during a selective reading course. I owe him immense gratitude for being generous with his time and energy. Without him, this thesis would not have been possible. I am also thankful for my committee members, namely Dr. Timothy Cleaveland and Dr. Ari Lieberman. Thank you for agreeing to serve on my committee and for your patience. Your generous feedback and kindness mean a lot to me, especially given the exceptional circumstances of this thesis. I also would like to thank my dear friend Marouane El Fedidine immensely for contributing to the editing of this thesis. It would have been a daunting task for me to do this on my own. I will never forget the zoom meetings we've had to work on this. My friend Zhiwen also contributed to this editing process. Thank you for your help despite your busy schedule.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER	
1 THE MEANING OF CASTALIA.....	6
2 JOSEPH’S ENCOUNTER WITH FATHER JACOBUS	29
CONCLUSION	49
REFERENCES	51

INTRODUCTION

One of the fundamental problems of modernity is the question of progress and whether humans can build a better future for themselves. In fact, 20th-century European modernist literature attempted to deal with this subject in an extensive way. Industrialism, the rise of ideologies like nationalism and fascism, and the decline of religious institutions led many writers to question whether man can create heaven on earth, especially after the dethronement of religious teachings. Many writers expressed a sense of hopelessness. Yet some still retained faith in man's ability to do better. One of these writers was Hermann Hesse.

In his novel *The Glass Bead Game*, he explores the idea of what it means to live in a good society. This has been the concern of many writers. It is a tradition that goes back to the ancient world. Philosophers like Plato attempted to deal with the notion of utopia. Also, many writers took up the same concern in the Renaissance, like the French author François Rabelais. Yet Hesse's notion of utopianism remains a distinct one. This shows in the transformation of his protagonist, Joseph Knecht. He moves from being a member of Castalia, which is an order devoted to the things of the mind, to becoming conscious of the importance of the active life.

My argument is that Knecht's personal transformation shows Hesse's skepticism about the existence of a utopian world. Surely, the author demonstrates the challenges of creating a perfect society. It is worth bearing in mind that Hesse experienced the horrors of the Second World War and witnessed its destructiveness. Yet he does not reject utopianism altogether. The construction of Castalia and Joseph's journey illustrate the fact that Hesse's form of utopianism should be understood as a striving to reach perfection while not necessarily attaining it. Hesse seeks to impart that it is important to combine both thought and action to create a better world

through commitment. Thus, it is fair to say that Hesse's vision has social and political ramifications. Joseph's awakening suggests that intellectuals should not be caught up in the technicalities of their fields in an exclusive manner. If this is the case, intellectual activity becomes a game, hence the title of the novel.

My thesis consists of two parts. First, this work will examine the meaning of Castalia in the novel. The aim is to show that Castalia represents a longing for an authority to fill the vacuum created by modernity. This is referred to in the novel as the Feuilleton Age where there is a great deal of cultural decay and political crises. It is a notion taken from the section of the newspaper that was devoted to gossip about artists and famous cultural figures. Hesse saw that the dethronement of the church led to a crisis of legitimacy. Castalia was meant to represent that institution to replace the Catholic church. But it turns out to be a rigidly hierarchical order that stifles dissent. This leads the protagonist to question the validity of this pedagogical province.

In order to explore the concept of Castalia, it is necessary to take a look at many of its elements. One of these is music. As an order, the study and performance of music is one of the primary disciplines that Castalians are interested in. Hesse viewed music as the embodiment of unity because it harmonizes many disparate elements. In other words, it creates oneness out of many things. In this sense, unity is a major component in both Castalia and Hesse's notion of utopianism.

Another aspect of Castalia is its emphasis on hierarchy. It is evident that Hesse wrote his novel in the middle of the Second World War. He saw that there was anarchy in the outside world and that there was need for some form of order. For him, the war is the result of a chaotic world. In this context, he creates a world that is based on hierarchy as one of its foremost principles.

I will also attempt to compare Hesse's novel to other literary works and conceptions of utopianism. It is important to situate Hesse's work in a tradition of utopian thought that goes back to the ancient world. In fact, *The Glass Bead Game* shares many things in common with Plato's *Republic*. Some of these things include learning, hierarchy, and music. Thus, Hesse's Castalia is not the first republic of letters in the history of ideas.

Moreover, I will contrast Hesse's vision to that of the 16th-century writer François Rabelais. In fact, he is considered the first French writer to put forth a utopian vision in French literature. In his work *Gargantua*, he describes an abbey where people are free from any constraints. It is also depicted as a place of education and learning. Both Rabelais and Hesse were inspired by the notion of monastic orders that existed in Europe. I will also show how Castalia is modeled after monastic orders.

In addition, I will explore how Hesse's novel relates to Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*. Certainly, both these writers are interested in ideas and their implications for the world. Yet there are also divergences. While Hesse shows some hope for the future of mankind, Mann has a different perspective. His work is skeptical about the possibility of human progress. I think that comparing these two writers will help reveal Hesse's utopianism as opposed to that of other modernist writers.

The second part will be focused on Joseph's awakening as a result of his encounter with Father Jacobus. This part will show that this encounter is the key to Knecht's personal transformation. It is worth bearing in mind that Jacobus as a character represents the teachings of the great historian Jacob Burckhardt, who was one of Hesse's major influences. It is through his encounter with Jacobus that Knecht moves from an absolutist to a relativist understanding of the world and its institutions. Also, this encounter pushes Knecht to reexamine the notion of

Castalia's contemplative approach and its seclusion from the world. This leads Knecht to become aware of the importance of commitment.

The point is that Father Jacobus' approach represents an antithesis to the Castalian ideal. This is part of Hesse's dialectical approach to the world of ideas. Knecht's awakening is meant to be a synthesis that results from the confrontation of these two ideals. This synthesis is based on the fact that the contemplative and active life are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they are both necessary to human progress and Hesse's conception of utopianism.

Knecht's encounter with Jacobus leads the protagonist to grapple with the notion of engagement. He realizes that Castalia is not the world. Indeed, it is merely a part of the world and not an autonomous kingdom. This shows Hesse's skepticism about the notion of a utopia as a good place. But he still clings to a notion of utopianism as a form of striving to attain that perfect state of being.

The protagonist's journey from the contemplative life to an existential commitment is central to Hesse's novel. He begins to doubt the purpose of Castalia and decides to give up his position as Magister Ludi in order to serve the community as a teacher. This demonstrates Hesse's own journey from a form of Romanticism and detachment to one of existentialism and engagement. In this context, Hesse shares this form of commitment with one of the major philosophers of the 20th century, Jean-Paul Sartre. In his seminal work *What Is Literature?* Sartre argues that writing prose cannot be separate from engagement. In fact, he views writing as a form of acting because of its use of everyday language. My aim is to explore how this conception relates to Hesse's notion of engagement. I will also examine Knecht's letter of resignation from Castalia and attempt to sketch out his personal transformation.

My conclusion will attempt to answer why *The Glass Bead Game* is still relevant to our contemporary world. This is because it deals with themes that cut across cultures, histories, and geography. Also, Hesse's concept of utopianism has social and political ramifications. It is a novel that calls on intellectuals and thinkers to think about the broader issues that face humanity and not to live in an ivory tower. This union of thought and action is what drives human progress towards a better future.

CHAPTER 1

THE MEANING OF CASTALIA

This part will investigate what Castalia stands for in the novel, for without a thorough understanding of its Order, the picture remains incomplete. It is important for the reader to study Castalia and discover its potential as well as its flaws. It is within this elite institution that the reader may have access to Hesse's world view.

One of the first tasks is to situate Castalia in its historical context within the novel itself. It comes after the Feuilleton Age, where there is a great deal of cultural decay and a loss of any sense of purpose. Then, one has to relate that to Hesse's social and historical backdrop. Hesse wrote the novel in the middle of the Second World War, which transformed Europe as well as the world. Given the destructive forces Hesse witnessed, he looked to the past for guidance. This is where the romantic influence comes in. Yet the setting of the novel is in the future. This shows that Hesse was hopeful that the human race could extricate itself from the bloody history of the 20th century.

Hesse also witnessed the untrammelled individualism that the bourgeois society unleashed on the world. He sought to mitigate that by creating an order that adheres strictly to hierarchy. Also, he ties this order to the study of things such as music and mathematic, not history and politics. This shows that Hesse believed in the transformative power art has in creating a better society.

The Castalian world that Hesse creates in the novel can be interpreted in different ways. First, there is the biographical interpretation. Theodore Ziolkowski cites a letter of Hesse's from 1933 in which he explained, "The creation of a purified atmosphere was necessary to me ... This time I did not go into the past or into a fairy-tale timeless realm, but constructed the fiction of a

dated future” (293). The key words are “purified” and “necessary. One may infer from this quote that the notion of Castalia is a representation in Hesse’s mind of an ideal, aesthetic world which exists outside history and politics. It is also worth bearing in mind that the rise of Castalia takes place after what Hesse calls the Feuilleton Age. This is when cultural life is at its lowest and focuses more on superficial elements. In an essay entitled “Institutional Crisis: State and Scholar in Hermann Hesse’s *The Glass Bead Game* and Walter Miller’s *A Canticle for Leibowitz*”, Douglas Texter argues that “Castalia exists in part because academics turned away from what Hesse saw as high art and the preservation and transmission of high culture” (124).

But Castalia is also in the future. By placing it in the future, Hesse understands that Castalia is a work in progress, or one may even say a striving that all writers and thinkers should be moving towards. It is a way to transcend the catastrophes of 20th-century Europe. Jackson posits that the future setting means that “the political and cultural extremes of the twentieth century have been purged and buried in order to make way for new Utopian societies” (186). In this sense, the Glass Bead Game becomes an experience that is accessible to all of its readers. Everyone can delight in this kingdom of culture that Hesse creates.

Another way of understanding the role of Castalia is being aware of Hesse’s concern with the problem of excessive individualism. Given the fact that Castalians value hierarchy above all else, Hesse attempts to highlight the role of institutions in the modern world. He cautions us not to take the individual as the primary unit of analysis to understand society. In his introduction to the novel, Ziolkowski writes that “with this last novel Hesse shifted his focus from the individual to the institution” (Hesse xviii). This leads one to examine the question of genre. Though *The Glass Bead Game* belongs to the Bildungsroman tradition, it is not solely about the personal

journey of Joseph Knecht. It goes beyond this and raises questions about the place of culture in modern life.

One of the interesting questions this vision of Castalia poses is that of legitimate authority. Undoubtedly, challenging religious and political orthodoxy is a significant part of Modernist literature. The attack on the notion of authority is one of Hesse's concerns. The main issue is whether man is condemned to live in a constant state of uncertainty. Castalia may offer an alternative to traditional authority. This new authority would be at the heart of human cultural and epistemological disputes. This is the most plausible explanation for the role of Castalia in the novel. To quote Ziolkowski again: "After human intellect freed itself from the bonds of the Roman Catholic Church, it was no longer responsible to any central and authoritative set of values. As liberated intellect applied itself to various areas of activity, it developed new, often conflicting sets of values" (292). Hesse wanted to preserve what he viewed as this highbrow European culture from the turmoil that Modernism brought: "Hesse's Castalia also fits squarely within the mainstream of nineteenth and early twentieth century German thought viewing high culture itself as an antidote to politics" (Texter 125).

This detachment of art from politics is a constant theme in German literature. Hesse's Castalia could also stand for the artist/thinker and his ambivalent attitude towards Modernity. Theodore Jackson argues that Hesse's last novels are "on one level a depiction of the artist's own struggle with modernity and on the other a depiction of how he struggles to portray this modernity" (12).

Through Castalia, Hesse offers to solve one of modernity's greatest dilemmas, namely that of the production and implementation of knowledge. Clearly, the narrator is skeptical about the Age of the Feuilleton and its cultural decay. Lawrence Wilde suggests that "Hesse appears to

be a romantic writer pining for a lost age of purity and excellence” (86). He did not much approve of technological progress, which explains the lack of any advanced technologies in the world he creates. This does not mean that Hesse was hostile to the notion of progress as such. Indeed, the whole notion of Castalia seems to be that humanity can create a better future for itself.

The notion of engagement is central to Hesse’s project. This Castalian order should not be viewed as something independent from the outside world. Indeed, it is completely tied to it. That explains Knecht’s dissatisfaction with Castalia. Hesse’s vision does not seek to create an alternative community of intellectuals for its own sake. The ultimate aim is to train an enlightened elite who are capable of engaging with the outside world. This is why Knecht decides to quit Castalia and chooses to become a teacher. This is his way of putting his knowledge into practice.

Certainly, *The Glass Bead Game* demonstrates Hesse’s concern about individualism. At the beginning of the book, Knecht’s biographer makes it clear that the importance of the individual only counts in relation to the whole structure: “obliteration of individuality, the maximum integration of the individual into the hierarchy of the educators and scholars, has ever been one of our ruling principles” (Hesse 11). This means that one of the aims of Castalia is to take the authority from the individual and absorb it into the structure. The author recognizes that knowledge production stems from institutions rather than individuals. Hesse struggles against a relativistic world view wherein there is no political, ecclesiastical, or moral authority. This is not an endorsement of an absolute truth claim. I will subsequently show that Hesse recognizes the transitory nature of all institutions. But he also sees that adopting a relativistic perspective is not possible. He clearly recognizes the political and moral challenges this position brings.

According to the narrator, Joseph Knecht is the only Magister Ludi whose life is documented. Hesse writes that “today it is exceedingly difficult, and in many cases completely impossible, to obtain biographical and psychological information on various persons who have served the hierarchy” (11). One may wonder how Knecht is such an exception. Perhaps he is the first one to challenge Castalia and its seclusion from the world. He is the embodiment of this tension between the individual and social structures. It is a dialectical relationship. In fact, the narrator tells us right after this passage that “It is an old idea that the more pointedly and logically we formulate a thesis, the more irresistibly it cries out for its antithesis” (12). In this context, one may infer that Joseph Knecht represents that antithesis that Castalia needs. These intellectuals are the instruments by which Castalia develops. In this sense, individuals are instruments that contribute to the hierarchy at large. The narrator explains that all of the transformations Castalia undergoes “bears the plain imprint of the person who introduced that change” (12). This is Hesse’s way of creating a balanced approach. He clearly does not neglect the role of the individual in the production of knowledge and the making of history. This clearly makes him a modernist author par excellence. It is modernist literature which emphasized the notion that the individual is subject to forces outside of his control.

Hesse views the Roman Catholic church as a great representation in history for his ideal. The narrator states that “many a great organization, such as the Roman Church in the eras of its greatest power, has recognized similar principles” (12). Also, Hesse envisioned the glass bead game as a way to create a synthesis of all human knowledge. In the “General Introduction,” Hesse states that “The Glass Bead Game is thus a mode of playing with the total contents and values of our culture...” (15). Ziolkowski argues that “In the novel the Glass Bead Game symbolizes the universal longing for what Hesse calls the ‘unio mystica of all disparate elements

of the *Universitas Litterarum*' ” (291). In this case, Hesse draws a historical parallel. His ideal is that Castalia may serve as this source of authority that society looks up to.

Hesse attempts to situate the Glass Bead Game in history. In fact, he informs us that it is an old idea that comes up in many different cultures: “There are hints of it in Pythagoras, for example, and then among Hellenistic Gnostic circles in the late period of classical civilization. We find it equally among the ancient Chinese, then again at the several pinnacles of Arabic-Moorish culture” (16). By showing the universal appeal this idea had in the past, Hesse implies that he is not reinventing the wheel. Indeed, he makes a historical argument for the possibility of his ideal. To quote Ziolkowski again: “It is a common denominator, as it were, for the many attempts in modern times to achieve a new unity, a unified field, from the disintegrated values of our civilization” (291).

According to the narrator, the Age of the Feuilleton was “emphatically ‘bourgeois’ and given to an almost untrammelled individualism” (18). This shows Hesse’s discontent with bourgeois modern society and its lack of cultural sophistication as well as of authority. The narrator states that the liberation of thought from the Catholic Church starts at the end of the Middle Ages (19). But we also learn that this freedom needed legitimacy. In other words, as much as Hesse may value this liberation, he sees that it has led to the degeneration of culture: “those struggles for the ‘freedom’ of the human intellect likewise ‘happened,’ and subsequently, in the course of the aforementioned Age of the Feuilleton, men came to enjoy an incredible degree of intellectual freedom, *more than they could stand*” (19; emphasis added). This is related to the “untrammelled individualism” mentioned above.

The narrator states this more explicitly in the following passage: “For while they had overthrown the tutelage of the Church completely, and that of the State partially, they had not

succeeded in formulating an authentic law they could respect, a genuinely new authority and legitimacy” (19). This passage beautifully sums up modernity. It encompasses the overthrow of the church as a powerful entity and the rise of secularism. In addition, it also refers to the rise of bourgeois democracy, hence the partial overthrow of the state alluded to. Hesse’s novel is one example among many that deals with the fall of the center as W. B. Yeats refers to in his poem “The Second Coming.”

Hesse takes issue with the impact of capitalism on the debasement of culture. Indeed, he does not refer to that in an explicit way. The narrator tells us that “[a] torrent of zealous scribbling poured out over every ephemeral incident, and in quality, assortment, and phraseology all this material bore the mark of mass goods” (17). Clearly, this description is applicable to Hesse’s contemporary world, which is the past in the novel. One may infer from this passage that Hesse contends that the production of culture requires some form of standards. In other words, culture should not adhere to the principles of the marketplace.

The “General Introduction” also gives an account of the political and economic instability which existed at that time. The book describes these upheavals as “earthquakes.” The narrator informs us that the people of the Feuilleton Age “dwelt anxiously among political, economic, and moral ferments and earthquakes, waged a number of frightful wars and civil wars” (22). It is necessary to relate this to the previously examined passages. Hesse views this turmoil as a result of the dismantling of institutions and failing to create new alternative ones that would advance humanity’s cause. In his introduction Ziolkowski argues that one of the major issues of the 20th century was the breakdown of traditional views of reality (Hesse xvi).

The Feuilleton Age is also depicted as an age of despair. The people of that age try to distract themselves in order to avoid the harsh realities of their age. In Hesse’s own words, “they

faced death, fear, pain, and hunger almost without defenses, could no longer accept the consolations of the churches, and could obtain no useful advice from Reason” (22). It is worth paying attention here to the use of the word “reason.” It is clear from this passage that Hesse’s position is that reason is not useful to modern man. This is because it failed to put an end to people’s despair. But it also failed to establish that legitimate authority that Hesse longed for. In this sense, Hesse deals with modern man like most modernist writers. Yet unlike many of them, he tries to construct an alternative world that is better despite its imperfections.

Hesse does not forget to mention the role of politics in the cultural and moral debasement of the Feuilleton Age. He informs us that there was “great material scarcity, a period of political and military crises, and an accelerating distrust of the intellect itself” (23). Although not much detail is provided about the era discussed here, it is fair to infer that it is the 20th century and its cataclysmic events. But Hesse is aware that for culture to thrive, it cannot be separate from the political. He states that “a degree of reshuffling both of the world and its morality by means of politics and war, had to take place before the culture itself became capable of real self-analysis” (25). Yet Hesse creates a paradox by excluding the political and the historical from Castalia and the Glass Bead Game. In the “General Introduction,” the narrator tells us that the Glass Bead Game rose out of a focus on music and mathematics. The choice of these disciplines is not arbitrary as neither is by nature political. For Hesse, music is pure. He states that “[f]or us it is almost incomprehensible that musical style in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries could be preserved for so long a time in unalloyed purity” (28).

The life of the mind is central to Hesse’s notion of Castalia. This stems from the recognition that intellect is the leading sphere in building a great civilization. In the preface, the narrator attributes the turmoil of the Feuilleton Age to a decay in the life of the mind. In fact,

Hesse writes that “[p]eople know, or dimly feel, that if thinking is not kept pure and keen, and if respect for the world of the mind is no longer operative, ships and automobiles will soon cease to run right, the engineer’s slide rule and the computations of banks and stock exchanges will forfeit validity and authority, and chaos will ensue” (35). In this passage, Hesse offers us a theory about the origin of chaos. For him, the world of the mind should have a say in how societies are run in order to avoid something like the Feuilleton Age. In this context, Castalia is that order which can create a sense of stability. Its intellectuals must devote their time to the life of the mind: “the externals of civilization – technology, industry, commerce, and so on – also require a common basis of intellectual honesty and morality” (35).

The Glass Bead Game also attempts to deal with contradictory statements and ideas in order to reconcile them and create a new synthesis. The narrator explains that “[i]n such a Game the goal was to develop both themes or theses with complete equality and impartiality, to evolve out of thesis and antithesis the purest possible synthesis” (40). This is the Glass Bead Game’s way to achieve the synthesis of all human knowledge. Real dualities must be “opposites held in dynamic, productive tension or opposites bridged or unified in a higher synthesis,” and moreover they have to be “themselves part of an evolving process” (Field 88-89).

The author views culture as something that encompasses a moral dimension. In this case, it is the Christian form of morality that Hesse opts for. He writes that “every important cultural gesture comes down to a morality, a model for human behavior” (Hesse 43). Thus, one may understand that Hesse is not merely interested in the aesthetic value of culture. In fact, he goes beyond that to argue that culture should set the standards for human behavior. He sees classical music as the best embodiment of what values culture should disseminate: “Classical music as gesture signifies knowledge of the tragedy of the human condition, affirmation of human destiny,

courage, cheerful serenity” (44). It is evident that Hesse’s position is that the aesthetic and the moral are intertwined. This is the only way that Hesse’s all-encompassing vision could work.

Hesse’s vision of Castalia is modeled after monastic orders of the Middle Ages. Indeed, there are many things that these orders have in common with Castalia. First, they share an emphasis on hierarchy. The interest of an organization such as Castalia is to make the individual part of the greater community. In this sense, Castalia may be compared with the Franciscan orders that existed in the Middle Ages. S. W. R. Jones states that “some of the finest minds in Europe were converted to the Franciscan style of Christian life; and the enthusiasm and aptitude of the friars minor for teaching became very apparent – transforming them into almost a separate *universitas*” (435). The Franciscans’ commitment to education makes them perhaps the closest monastic order to the notion of Castalia.

Just as monastic orders were established to come to terms with the brutishness of Medieval Europe, Castalia is a modern, secular version of these orders, given the historical context of Hesse’s novel, which is the Second World War. In fact, Hesse witnessed the destructive power of ultra-nationalism and Nazism. Thus, he envisioned Castalia as a refuge from the political altogether. This means that Hesse’s notion of utopianism is a society that values the intellect, art and culture rather than history and politics. Yet his relationship to politics remains an ambivalent one. Lawrence Wilde argues that “Despite Hesse’s disdain for the world of politics, in essays and novels after the First World War there are numerous references to the menace of bellicose nationalism” (89). Wilde goes on to state that Hesse was not a pacifist, but that he was strongly opposed to militarism, which led to his exile in Switzerland. In this sense, one may infer that Hesse’s utopianism is predicated on a sense of humanism that is transcendent.

One may compare Joseph Knecht to Hesse on the score of political activism. Although Hesse was detached from any social movement at large, he realized the value of acting in the world rather than being a mere interpreter. To quote Wilde again: “at one stage [Hesse] overcame his detachment by editing a small circulation youth magazine, *Vivos Voco*” (88). This leads one to reflect on Knecht’s disenchantment with Castalia and his decision to resign and take up a more active life. Hesse’s utopia entails both thought and action. Not only is he interested in theorizing what the perfect society ought to look like, but he also seeks a way to implement it in real life. This aspect in particular distinguishes Hesse’s novel from the utopian tradition.

One cannot understand Hesse’s form of utopianism without being aware of his romantic predilections. In his seminal work on *The Lyrical Novel*, Ralph Freedman explains that “Although Hesse’s awareness of his lyrical conception of narrative was often accompanied by anguish, he felt that in a time of mechanization there is a great need for a survival of romantic values, of which he saw himself as the last standard-bearer” (43). Clearly, Hesse saw this romantic spirit as incompatible with the modern society he was a part of, a society more obsessed with technological and mechanical development than with the growth of the self and the dissemination of high culture. This explains the exclusion of modern technology from the Castalian world.

Another aspect of Hesse’s romanticism is his interest in the material and the sensual vs. the transcendent and the spiritual. Despite the contradictory nature of these concepts, he believes in a possible reconciliation between the two in an attempt to create a higher form of self. Freedman writes that “For a contemporary romantic like Hermann Hesse, the novelist projects inner schisms into a hero who ultimately raises his inadequate sensual self to the state of a harmonious or symbolic self” (49). For Hesse, these two spheres are not mutually exclusive.

One may say that the reason that Knecht leaves Castalia is to try and unite these polarities, thus fulfilling Hesse's sense of utopia.

It is worth examining the notion of the artist as a magician. Just like a magician, the artist can create an alternate reality that is outside current modes of existence. This is done through the imagination, which many of the romantics were interested in. Indeed, there are several allusions to magic and the magical in the novel. For instance, in the preface, the narrator traces the origins of music to magic: "For in prehistoric times music, like the dance and every other artistic endeavor, was a branch of magic" (Hesse 30). This means that Hesse believes in the magical power of the artist. As Freedman puts it, "Magic, then, corresponds to the creative will of the imagination" (50). By recognizing the magical aspect of art, Hesse calls on the artist to harness this power to bring about positive change in the world.

One of the passages that best represents this notion of magic in the novel is Joseph's encounter with the music teacher. The passage describes in detail how the two create music and Knecht's charm and fascination with the whole process: "they surrendered themselves to the lovely, congenial lines and figurations they formed as their parts crisscrossed. Caught in the network their music was creating, they swayed gently along with it, obeying an unseen conductor" (54). This idea of creating a beautiful musical piece from different elements is a truly magical endeavor, as the parts are put together to constitute a whole. Later in the passage, Knecht is mystified by this marvelous process of music making: "Finally, when the melody had come to an end once more, the Master turned his head and asked: 'Did you like that, Joseph?' Gratefully, his face glowing, Knecht looked at him. He was radiant, but still speechless" (54). Eventually, this leads Knecht to describe the music teacher as a magician and a sorcerer. This encounter is crucial for the protagonist as it starts him on his journey to become part of the elect.

The use of magic as a motif in the book demonstrates Hesse's interest in the role of art in society. Since ancient times, magic and utopia have been clearly intertwined. This stems from a longing to transform the world at will and make it into a different place. Indeed, many of the sciences were developed as a result of a fascination with magic. Yet Hesse sees the possibility of art performing magical wonders. Given the historical context, Hesse develops an aesthetic philosophy that necessitates moral responsibility. Art is a craft that can be useful in forging the world of the future.

Certainly, Hesse seeks to create a community that is based on a harmonious existence. Music is one of the devices used in the novel to create that harmony. To put it in Freedman's terms, "It resolves dissonance by organizing experience and directing it toward a total vision rather than toward its consecutive or analytic explication" (54). The aspect of harmony that music brings into the novel contributes to the development of Hesse's utopian world.

In order to understand this, it is necessary to examine the depiction of music in the novel. In the "General Introduction," the narrator informs the reader that "in the legendary China of the Old Kings, music was accorded a dominant place in state and court. It was held that if music thrived, all was well with culture and morality" (28). The narrator also mentions how the Glass Bead Game players look up to this view of music as a model for the Order. Thus, Hesse suggests that music contributes to the development of this utopia. Yet this relationship is much more complex. Hesse quotes Lü Buwei to suggest that music can reflect the state of society: "When the world is at peace, when all things are tranquil and all men obey their superiors in all their courses, then music can be perfected. When desires and passions do not turn into wrongful paths, music can be perfected" (Hesse 29). In this passage, music serves as a mirror by which one can determine the harmony and balance in society. Hence, it is fair to conclude that Hesse tackles the

relationship between art and reality. Art becomes both a reflection as well as a force in determining reality. Without the existence of such a relationship, Hesse's utopian vision cannot come into fruition.

This becomes clearer if one examines the causal chain that Hesse follows from Lü Buwei, who describes the consequences of having good music: "Music arises from Measure and is rooted in the great Oneness. The great Oneness begets the two poles; the two poles beget the power of Darkness and of Light" (29). This ultimately leads to a sense of equilibrium in the world, which creates meaning in the cosmos. It seems that Hesse constructs a corresponding social theory that is based on the idea of socialization. It posits that the individual internalizes the social norms and ideas of society. In this sense, Hesse's utopia cannot be realized without a proper form of socialization, which requires exposure to good art and music. This in turn would have a positive impact on the individual and subsequently contribute to the construction of a utopian world.

Hesse describes in detail the kind of music that generates a good individual. He opts for a calm and serene kind of music. In fact, a tempestuous kind of music contributes to the decay of society. Still following Lü Buwei, he creates another causal chain to demonstrate how that works: "the more tempestuous the music, the more doleful are the people, the more imperiled the country, the more the sovereign declines" (29). Again, music is the root cause in this passage, which illustrates Hesse's theory of what a good society or government is. For him, the starting point is good art, and the finishing point is good governance. In other words, good governance cannot exist without good people, and good people need to be exposed to good art.

Music is also conceived of in the book as a way to unite two antithetical things. Out of this polarity, it should create harmony. Hesse cites again Lü Buwei: "Music is founded on the

harmony between heaven and earth, on the concord of obscurity and brightness” (29). One may interpret heaven and earth as symbols which stand for the spiritual and religious world, and earth for the material, secular world. Throughout his work and life, Hesse attempted to reconcile these two dimensions. Wilbur B. Franklin suggests that “the conflict between the spiritual and the sensual poles within man was a consciousness he possessed as a result of his religious heritage” (26-27). This might also be interpreted as a critique of the excessive materialism that pervaded Hesse’s time and its lack of any spiritual or religious element. He did not see the spiritual and material as separate. For him, both of these dimensions are essential for the human being to lead a balanced life. And music is the way to attain that goal. As Ziolkowski puts it, music represents for Hesse “the symbolic manifestation of totality because in the counterpoint and harmony of music the most disparate elements can be brought together” (27).

Hesse’s interest in music did not begin with *The Glass Bead Game*. In fact, it is a recurring motif in his works. In his poem “Hours in the Garden,” Hesse outlines his vision of the Glass Bead Game and the role of music in it: “And now there begins within me/ a game of thoughts that I have been practicing for years,/ called Glass Bead Game, a nice invention,/ whose framework is music and whose basis is meditation” (Ziolkowski 45). The poem goes on to state how the Glass Bead Game is a conception of all human knowledge and its unity. This proves that music is an indispensable element in Hesse’s utopia because it creates that totality of reality sought by Castalians.

Of course, the interest in music and its relation to utopia predates Hesse’s novel and the 20th century. One might trace it back to the Platonic idea of what a good education is. In book 2 of Plato’s *Republic*, Socrates and his interlocutors discuss what it means to be educated and what should be prioritized. They conclude that it must include gymnastics for the body and music for

the soul (54). This corresponds to Hesse's vision, which sees music as the key to the Glass Bead Game and the individual's spiritual fulfilment. This is why Knecht's training is in music. Just like Plato, Hesse recognizes the impact of music on the soul. Hesse writes that "the periods of decadence in music would remain totally incomprehensible if we failed to recognize in each one of them the preponderance of the sensuous and quantitative elements over the 'spiritual element'" (90). Thus, the individual's spiritual development is tied to being instructed in music in both Hesse and Plato.

Another aspect common to Hesse and Plato's conceptions of music is the emphasis on harmony. Plato contends that a melody is made up of speech, harmonic modes and rhythm (77). These three elements must be in concert to form a unity. This explains Knecht's focus on music instead of a different discipline. Thus, Hesse seeks to convey that music is necessary to spiritual growth.

One cannot help but notice Hesse's interest in mysticism, as well. It is related to the use of music as a symbol for unity. Ziolkowski contends that many 20th-century writers are "mystics without mysticism" (Ziolkowski 29, quoting Hofmannsthal). This is because they sought earthly solutions to human problems. It is in this context that Hesse's utopia can be situated. This is why the narrator depicts the so called Age of the Feuilleton as a time of disintegration and cultural decay. That Age stands for modern man's predicament. Hesse was not interested in the mystical aspect of reality and the unity of opposites in an ontologically abstract manner. In fact, his focus was more on the implications that can result from raising these questions. This is evident in Knecht's interaction with his friend Tegularius and his decision to resign from Castalia as the Magister Ludi. In this sense, Hesse's interest in mysticism is meant to lead to a better understanding of human nature so as to create a world that is more in line with that nature.

In order to get a better understanding of this aspect of the book, it is crucial to analyze Knecht's letter of resignation to the Board of Educators. Joseph uses the metaphor of the scholar in the attic: "A man sits in an attic room engaged in a subtle work of scholarship. Suddenly he becomes aware that fire has broken out in the house below. He will not consider whether it is his function to see to it, or whether he had not better finish his tabulations" (Hesse 346). This is a prescient metaphor that embodies the dilemma that Hesse is interested in. Scholarship should not lead to seclusion from the issues of the outside world. One may engage in speculation without having to extricate oneself from practical matters. To quote Ziolkowski again: Hesse wants to establish "a new ethical system that suits the exigencies of the times" (31).

The letter also shows Hesse's concern with systems such as Castalia leading to an elite which is divorced from reality and full of hubris. In the letter, Knecht writes that "[t]he conceit that can be observed among the members of our Order is rather more objectionable. I am referring to that class arrogance to which every aristocracy inclines, and with which every privileged group is charged, with or without justification" (348). The passage could not be more revealing. Hesse denounces a form of mysticism or knowledge that isolates humans from each other, instead of fostering a sense of understanding of, and engagement with, the world.

Surely, Hesse did not start a new form of utopianism. In fact, one may situate him in a tradition of writers interested in creating the ideal society. This tradition is centuries old. One of the prominent texts that can be contrasted to *The Glass Bead Game* is Rabelais' *Abbaye de Thélème*, part of his *Gargantua*. It depicts a utopian society that lives in harmony and freedom.

Rabelais' utopia is based on a notion similar to Hesse's Castalia. Just like Castalia, the *Abbaye de Thélème* contains members who are well educated and part of the elite. Not only do they all know how to read and write, but they also play musical instruments and are fluent in

multiple languages. In this sense, the members of this utopian community share much in common with Knecht. Joseph is a musician by training. Moreover, he is a writer, as shown by his posthumous writings.

Yet these two communities diverge in their approach to freedom. On the one hand, the Abbaye de Thélème places great emphasis on the idea of being free. This stems from the understanding that if people are oppressed, they lose their sense of virtue. In this sense, the Abbaye de Thélème places great importance on the role of the human will and its ability to exercise restraint without the existence of an external authority. Hesse's Castalia, on the other hand, is founded on the idea of hierarchy as a central principal of the Order. One need not go far in the reading of the novel to understand the role of hierarchy. In the "General Introduction," the narrator clearly states that "the maximum integration of the individual into the hierarchy of the educators and scholars, has ever been one of our ruling principles" (11). One may account for this by the fact that Hesse witnessed the chaos of the Second World War. Clearly, he was aware that the anarchy at the international level was merely a reflection of the disorder that plagues interactions among individuals. In this context, Hesse views hierarchy as a necessary means by which humanity could overcome its predicament.

Hesse goes even further in showing his concern for law and order. Clearly the rebel is not approved of in the world of Castalia (13). This is because he views the rebel as someone driven by their own desires and passions rather than the collective good. A true Castalian should be ready to sacrifice their individuality for the greater whole. Moreover, a hero or a great individual according to Hesse's utopia is someone who fits in the hierarchy and becomes an organ that is part of a living body (14). As a result, Hesse's notion of freedom is what the individual can do and achieve from within the Order itself.

One of the central themes to understanding Castalia and the game itself is the opposition of concrete and abstract. This is also a necessary issue to deal with when trying to understand notions of utopianism. Ziolkowski states that Castalia might be viewed as a “realistic abstraction” (304). In other words, it is an ideal that Hesse constructs for his protagonist. However, the dilemma is how to build on this abstract vision and give it into concrete realization. Hesse states that Castalia is at the same time both a utopia and a reality. In a letter of 1944, he gives examples of others before him who have tried to concretize a vision similar to Castalia, in Platonic academies, yoga schools or other Orders (quoted in Ziolkowski 306). One may say that the novel itself is Hesse’s medium by which he wanted to bring his vision into the concrete world.

It is worth examining the last name of the protagonist, Knecht. On the one hand, this German word means a knight. On the other hand, it can also mean servant. This play on words illustrates the tension between the abstract and the concrete. While Joseph the knight stands for this ideal notion of chivalry in the world of ideas, he is also condemned by the author to be a servant. This is evident in his resignation from Castalia and his decision to become a teacher and serve the community that Castalia is dependent on. In this sense, service is the way by which one can bring this utopian vision into the concrete world.

It is necessary to go back to the notion of music in order to investigate further the issue of abstract vs. concrete. Franklin suggests that “[m]usic demands a synthesis of the abstract and the concrete and is one of the most conspicuous elements in Hesse’s life” (115). Just like the other polarities Hesse is interested in, such as material and spiritual, he believes in a merging of the abstract and concrete. Ziolkowski points out that “Music ... provided the original basis for the

game and has remained, throughout its history, a central discipline in Castalia” (323). In other words, music embodies the unity of thought and action in the novel.

It is clear from the novel that Knecht understands the concrete aspect of music. He rejects the idea that music is a purely intellectual exercise. In fact, he stresses its sensual character which is far from the abstract nature of the Glass Bead Game. Knecht declares in one of his lectures that “We make music with our hands and fingers, with our mouths and lungs, not with our brains alone” (90). This is a clear affirmation that Hesse values the concrete as much as he does the abstract. And Hesse’s protagonist exhibits this balance when he resigns from the Order and decides to go out into the world.

Castalia is one vision of the world of ideas. This interest in how ideas shape human beings as well as the world is also dealt with in Thomas Mann’s *The Magic Mountain*. Just like *The Glass Bead Game*, the setting in *Magic Mountain* is a miniature world of ideas where the protagonist’s education takes place. In this regard, Mann’s sanatorium shares some similarities with Castalia. Yet it is also different in many ways. Both of these worlds attempt to deal with what it means to create a good society. Also, both authors use a dialectical approach to try to arrive at an understanding of the human condition.

Mann’s sanatorium could be conceived of as what we call a marketplace of ideas. Each intellectual current is represented by a character in the novel. The most prominent ones that have an impact on Hans Castorp are Settembrini, who represents the Enlightenment, and Naphta, who embodies religious fanaticism. These two allegorical characters engage in an intellectual battle to win the protagonist over to one side or the other.

Perhaps Settembrini’s approach would be closest to the order of Castalia. In the novel, he is described as “a quiet and sensitive scholar, a humanist sitting at his writing-desk” (158). In

this regard, he resembles the ideal of detachment in Castalia. In the novel, Settembrini describes himself as “a humanist, a homo Humanus” (60). This takes one back to the issue of the abstract vs. the concrete. Whereas Hans Castorp is an engineer by profession and represents the concrete world, Settembrini is a theorist who lives in the abstract world. This shows the dialectical aspect of Mann’s novel. His characters don’t exhibit a unique sense of self. As Gaertner writes: “They stand for certain philosophies, religions, nationalities, politics, existential attitudes, social mores, ways of thinking and living” (606). Thus, it is necessary for the reader to understand one character in terms of his relationships to the others.

Settembrini’s view of art is that it should be politically and philosophically engaged (Gaertner 607). In fact, he sees himself as the person who could unite the political aspect of his grandfather with the humanistic one of his father: “literature was after all nothing else than the combination of humanism and politics” (Mann 159). Through Settembrini, Mann raises the same question that Hesse grapples with, namely the notion of engagement. Literature may stand for the world of ideas or the republic of letters. Yet this world should have a commitment to the outside world. In this sense, Mann is critical of any form of detachment. For him, ideas have implications in the real world.

Mann expands on this idea of literature and politics again through Settembrini. The latter explains that good writing leads to good thoughts, which in turn leads to good actions (159). Mann shows the intimate relationship that exists between the world of thought, i.e., literature, and the world of actions, which is politics. In this case, Mann deals with the same theme that Hesse tackles through his intellectual Glass Bead Game, namely the unity of all human knowledge. Mann recognizes that it is hard to draw the line where literature ends and politics begins. Mann’s use of the word literature is not confined to fictional works, indeed, he uses the

word in its broad meaning which is anything consisting of letters. This is because Mann's equation is that the combination of literature and politics equals civilization (160). The word civilization, for Mann, encompasses all human endeavors.

Yet unlike Joseph in Hesse's novel, Hans Castorp does not develop a mature world view. Having been exposed to different competing ideologies, he joins the military and becomes one of many soldiers. He does not reach a sense of uniqueness. This is where the two novels diverge. Whereas Knecht realizes the importance of being engaged and leaves Castalia, the encounter with the world of ideas leads Mann's protagonist to be a skeptic. Thus, Mann does not share Hesse's optimism and faith in creating a better world. Apart from the two characters that commit suicide, the novel implies that Castorp is about to die in the Great War's trenches.

It is evident that the two writers exhibit two different approaches. On the one hand, Hesse represents the optimistic artist who seeks to use his craft for the creation of a better world for humanity. As Franklin beautifully states about Hesse's beliefs, "Man need not be only what he is – he can become what he is meant to be" (104). This is what Castalia is all about despite its flaws. For Hesse, it is the striving to build a better society that counts. This awakening to man's potential may take arduous thought and much time (Franklin 104). But Hesse seems to think that a utopia is worth striving for.

On the other hand, Mann represents the view of the skeptic. It is worth bearing in mind that one of Mann's major influences is the 19th-century philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, who was famous for his pessimistic view of the world. Mark Lilla states that Schopenhauer, Wagner and Nietzsche were Mann's intellectual heroes (Lilla in Mann, Reflections xiv). Through his characters and their different world views, he seems to impart that progress is illusory. Whereas Hesse's use of the dialectic approach is meant to lead to a better synthesis, Mann is more

interested in the process itself. He does not seek to use the dialectical method to arrive at a better society or political system. In this sense, Mann adopts a more descriptive approach to deal with the world, institutions, and history, whereas Hesse attempts to make normative claims about the future of humanity.

Castalia may be interpreted in many different ways. It is rooted in Hesse's desire to transcend the turmoil of his specific historical era. Through Castalia, he sought to create an order out of the disorder of his world. His aim is to create a harmonious existence. He also gives a great deal of power to the artist. This is because he saw him as the one with the means to affect change in the world. Thus, Joseph is a musician before he becomes a Magister of Castalia.

Moreover, Hesse tackles the individual's relationship to institutions. This is extremely important given the story of the protagonist. It is true that Knecht becomes the embodiment of Castalia at a certain point. But he eventually becomes disenchanted with a pure world of ideas that lacks any form of engagement. This pushes him to be the first Magister who dares to challenge the order and its seclusion. Thus, Hesse shows that some form of dissent is necessary even in such a hierarchical world as Castalia.

CHAPTER 2

JOSEPH'S ENCOUNTER WITH FATHER JACOBUS

Apart from the music teacher, Father Jacobus is one of the most influential characters on Joseph. His relationship with Jacobus will lead him to question the notion of Castalia as a timeless realm and realize the relative nature of institutions. In fact, the narrator informs us that Joseph's love for Jacobus could only be compared to the music teacher (Hesse 161). In the novel, Father Jacobus is a historian of the Benedictine order. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, this monastic order is not centralized and gives the monasteries much autonomy. It also teaches its members to pray, work and study instead of devoting all their time to one thing. Indeed, it is evident that this order is contrasted to Castalia which is entirely about intellectual pursuits. Moreover, the Benedictine order does not have a rigid hierarchy like Castalia's. Instead, superiors are elected by the members for a number of years. In this context, Hesse's choice of Jacobus as a member of the Benedictine order is far from a coincidence. It is a monastic order that combines the contemplative with the active life.

Father Jacobus invites Joseph for conversation. Despite being part of the Benedictine order, Jacobus shows his interest in learning about the Glass Bead Game. He believes that there is something that relates him to Knecht and that their encounter is not an accident (167). Knecht also recognizes the importance of Jacobus in his own awakening. Hesse states that "from Father Jacobus he learned history. He learned the laws and contradictions of historical studies and historiography. And beyond that, in the following years he learned to see the present and his own life as historical realities" (167). It is this idea of the present as a historical reality that Hesse is

interested in. In fact, this accidental encounter with Father Jacobus may be interpreted as an instance of authorial control in the novel. This becomes more evident given Hesse's interest in Jacob Burckhardt, who is represented by Jacobus. According to Ziolkowski, Burckhardt was the historian that Hesse was most devoted to (314). The purpose of this authorial intervention is meant to awaken Knecht out of his slumber and lead him to realize that Castalia is a present condition that has a historical context, and thus that it is not a perfect institution.

Knecht and Jacobus dispute many things, as one may learn from the novel. Jacobus views Knecht's education as frivolous because it lacks a religious dimension (Hesse 167). One of the issues they discuss, which leads to Knecht's change of mind, is Castalia's relationship to world history. Jacobus criticizes Castalia's version of a history of ideas that lacks an understanding of the political: "Your history is bloodless and lacking in reality. You know all about the decay of Latin syntax in the second or third centuries and don't know a thing about Alexander or Caesar or Jesus Christ" (168). He goes on to state that the mathematical approach Castalia uses does not contain elements of reality, like time or place. In this sense, Jacobus represents Hesse's attitude towards detachment. He strongly condemns any form of utopianism that does not include an existential commitment to the world. Subsequently, it is fair to infer that Jacobus represents Hesse's own voice.

One needs to be mindful of Hesse's technical sophistication. He uses the frame narrative technique to lay out the historical context of this futuristic order. On the one hand, he creates Castalia as an order for his protagonist in order to facilitate the journey. On the other hand, it is the author himself who shows the defects of this order through Father Jacobus as a character. It is again the dialectic nature of the work that helps Hesse convey his point. This is an instance where the form of the novel illuminates its content. Also, it is evident that Hesse draws on

German cultural history and incorporates these ideas into the texture of his fiction (Ziolkowski 284). Father Jacobus is one of these cultural figures. In this context, Hesse employs the history of ideas to show the limits of Castalia by demonstrating that these ideals have a historical context, and thus are not immutable.

One of the main themes that Knecht and Jacobus deal with in their conversation is the notion of the general vs. the particular. Joseph views the systematic organization of knowledge as more important than the singular facts. He expresses a purely Castalian approach. Jacobus cautions him against adopting such a view of knowledge. Surely he acknowledges that one should look at the patterns that exist in knowledge. But one cannot gloss over the particulars of a field of knowledge. He gives the example of the anatomist who sees the pattern but also focuses on the “unique, individual reality of his object” (Hesse 168).

Jacobus provides the ultimate perspective of the historian, who has to deal with the particular elements of a given era to reconstruct its events. This is a direct challenge to the Castalian approach. One may say that this represents Hesse’s existentialist aspect. He is not concerned with the essence of things but the existential dimension, namely the way people or things are in the concrete world. Knecht’s journey also embodies Hesse’s trajectory. Due to the social realities of the 20th century, he moves from a sense of detachment to an “existential awareness” (Franklin 37). Thus, Hesse starts to undermine his own Castalian order.

Hesse’s existential commitment is shared by many 20th-century writers and philosophers who believed in the power of the written word and the change it can effect. One of these figures is the quintessential existential philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. In his famous essay *What Is Literature?*, he expounds his vision of a committed form of writing. In fact, he distinguishes between prose and poetry and views the former as capable of commitment because it has a

utilitarian essence (Sartre 34). Moreover, the prose writer exhibits the same use of language that everyday people do. Sartre recognizes that language is inextricably tied to action. He further explains that “The writer is a *speaker*, he designates, demonstrates, orders, refuses, interpolates, begs, insults, persuades, insinuates” (34). In this sense, Hesse and Sartre converge on the idea that a writer must not stick to an ivory tower notion of writing. Being a writer comes with the obligation of commitment.

Furthermore, Sartre elaborates that prose is used in discourse (35). This means that it is used to express notions that have a meaning in the world. This is exactly what Hesse does in his novel by critiquing his own Castalia. In other words, he attempts to take an aesthetic concept from the abstract world and put it in the prose of everyday language in an attempt to grapple with the historical context of his novel. To use Sartre’s terminology, Hesse engages as a writer “in action by disclosure” (37). By the act of disclosure, the writer’s intention is to bring a form of change into his world. This is what Knecht’s defection from Castalia means in the novel. It is about the desire to change the Order into something better. It amounts to Hesse’s call for all intellectuals to get engaged to create a better world.

Jacobus states that he is not interested in studying the exploits of heroes and their historical deeds. Instead, he prefers focusing on institutions like his Benedictine order and such organizations that seek to educate and reshape “men’s minds and souls” (Hesse 169). These orders according to Jacobus exist to serve man instead of ruling by virtue of their blood or nobility. The notion of service is essential in this passage. These orders should not exist only to contemplate and meditate on the nature of the world, but to try to change it. This is the notion of utopianism Hesse is interested in. It is a notion that involves the intellectual as well as the spiritual.

Jacobus mentions examples such as the Platonic academy in ancient Greece. But he views the best realization of his ideal in the Catholic church and its monastic orders. This echoes Hesse's admiration of the Catholic church and its role in European culture. These orders last for hundreds if not thousands of years. Jacobus imparts to Joseph that institutions can last for a long time. But they have to adapt to the changes in the world. Such is the case for Jacobus' Benedictine order: "communities such as the Benedictines, the Dominicans, later the Jesuits and others, have survived for centuries and, despite their ups and downs, the assaults upon them, and the adaptations they have made, retain their face and their voice, their gesture, their individual soul" (Hesse 170). Thus, these institutions must embrace historical change in order to survive.

Jacobus is depicted both as a scholar as well as an expert in contemporary politics. This is contrary to Knecht, who comes from a world that is separate from the political. Jacobus is also someone whose advice is sought on practical matters. The narrator describes him as someone "who was consciously participating in world history" (Hesse 170). Accordingly, Jacobus embodies the kind of ideal scholar Hesse envisions.

Freedom is at the heart of *The Glass Bead Game*. In fact, Knecht's encounter with Jacobus allows him to free himself from this aesthetic realm. Ziolkowski explains that the novel depicts Hesse's struggle to liberate himself from this notion of *l'art pour l'art* in favor of a "commitment" to humanity (283). In this context, Joseph's journey mirrors that of the author. Given the historical backdrop of this work, Hesse could not keep his sense of detachment in the face of the Second World War. His vision of art changed from that of a romantic to that of an existentialist. According to Hesse's vision in *The Glass Bead Game*, not only should the artist create beautiful works, but he should also grapple with the social and political dimension of society.

Upon further examination of Knecht's relationship with Jacobus, one may deduce that they have an authentic exchange of ideas. Jacobus' attitude towards Castalia changes from one of irony and invective to one of tolerance and respect (Hesse 172). It is yet again Hesse's attempt to create a synthesis out of the two polarities represented by these characters. In this regard, Hesse imparts that there are elements of Castalia that are worth preserving. But such an Order should be open to engaging with the community that sustains it. This means that Hesse does not completely reject the utopianism Castalia stands for. He merely wants to reform it to include people's concerns.

One of the elements that Knecht encounters in the Benedictine monastery is religion. The narrator informs us that the living version of religion Joseph had found there is something he only knew about "theoretically" (173). To him as a Glass Bead Game player, this form of religion is an ideal: "he became fully aware of how phenomenal this Christianity was" (174), that is to say, the Christianity as practiced by the Benedictine order. Franklin suggests that despite his dislike of the institutional aspects of the Catholic church, the emphasis on meditation in the monastic orders intrigued Hesse (28). It is not a coincidence that Knecht meets Father Jacobus in a monastery. This shows that Hesse seeks to combine the teachings of Castalia with those of the Benedictine order to create his notion of utopianism.

Moreover, Knecht realizes that Castalia is a "secularized" version of Christian culture (174). As discussed above, Castalia does not much differ from a monastic order. In fact, one of the main things Knecht admires about the Benedictine order is its ability to renew itself and adapt to historical change. The narrator describes it as a "living religion" (Hesse 173). What Knecht wants to bring to Castalia is this spirit of flexibility in order to overcome the sense of timelessness that Glass Bead Game players have. In other words, he seeks to get Castalia out of

its isolation. Clearly, Hesse suggests that institutions must be reshaped according to human needs. Orders such as Castalia are created by humans, and there is nothing sacred about them. They should be subject to questioning and scrutiny if they don't serve humanity.

One of the puzzling elements in Hesse's novel is the ending. As Knecht and his pupil go to swim across the lake, the protagonist drowns and his student Tito cannot find him. This takes place after Knecht's defection from Castalia. It is challenging to come up with an interpretation of this ending. Ziolkowski suggests that Knecht sacrifices himself in order for Castalia to reevaluate its principles (302). Also, Knecht clearly states that Castalia had become an "aging organism" that needed to be reformed (Hesse 277). This illustrates Hesse's position that institutions should not be rigid in order to continue their existence. He clearly understood that change is an inevitability.

After meeting Father Jacobus, Knecht realizes the stifling environment that the Castalian hierarchy creates. The narrator compares this to "a stake to which a sapling is tied" (Hesse 179). In this instance, Knecht questions his relationship and obligations to Castalia. As Hesse describes, Knecht had "become part of its structure" (179). In other words, Castalia is depicted as an essential aspect of Knecht's identity. Thus, his exposure to the teachings of Jacobus leads him to undergo a self-examination which leads him to realize the limits of this Castalian world and disentrall himself from its chains.

Gradually, Knecht begins to be less interested in the Glass Bead Game and more interested in the history lessons he receives from Father Jacobus. In one of their exchanges, Jacobus explains that despite its sophistication, this intellectual exercise "remains a game," and he tells Joseph that Castalians do not understand man in his true nature (188). What Jacobus means is that Glass Bead Game players have insulated themselves so much from the real world

that they can no longer relate to their fellow humans. Through the voice of Jacobus, Hesse shows a concern about the detachment of intellectuals towards people's everyday affairs. Joseph's assignment is to win over Jacobus for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Benedictines and Castalia. Yet his mission fails when Jacobus discovers his intent and divulges it. This illustrates Hesse's point even more. It is not the detached Castalia that should win the day. Thus, the approach of Father Jacobus represents that of the author. This could be related to the title of the novel. Castalia represents an approach to knowledge and ideas that favors the contemplative over the active. In this regard, Hesse suggests that this approach is not that different from playing a game.

In fact, Hesse's doubts about the aesthetic realm cannot be separated from the historical context of the novel. The harsh reality of war shattered Hesse's vision of this aesthetic kingdom (Ziolkowski 309). This had a major impact on Hesse's view of the world and of his art. It is reflected in Knecht's move from a belief in the absolute value of Castalia to an understanding of the relative nature of human institutions. To quote Ziolkowski again, "Castalia was but one transitory stage in his own development" (309). In this sense, the move from the absolute to the relative is an essential component of Hesse's form of utopianism. While he is critical of the institution itself, he still wants to maintain the ideal and encourages man to strive for it.

Knecht's interest in history is at the heart of his relationship with Father Jacobus: "he experienced history not as an intellectual discipline, but as reality" (Hesse 192). This shows Hesse's concern with the utility of knowledge, and echoes a famous statement of Francis Bacon's. Bacon recognizes the value of knowledge in so far as it has a utilitarian aspect: "To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation" (Bacon, "Of Studies"). Knowledge should contribute to man's well-being and move humanity

towards perfection. Yet this perfecting for Hesse is an ongoing process. Hesse's form of utopianism entails a sense of commitment.

Father Jacobus is depicted as someone who uses his knowledge to reach other aims. For instance, we learn that he is the force behind the restoration of the power of the Catholic church after it had considerably waned (Hesse 193). Not only does Jacobus study history to interpret the past, but he also uses this knowledge for advancing his own causes and those of the Benedictine order. This is meant to be an antithesis to Castalia, which maintains a position of detachment. Hesse uses this contrast to impart the necessity of the active life. Hesse's ideal for an intellectual is someone who is able to combine the contemplative with the active life.

It is worth bearing in mind that Jacobus is modeled after the famous 19th-century Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt. According to Ziolkowski, Burckhardt was one of the major influences on Hesse, along with Nietzsche and Bachofen (313). This affirms the role of Jacobus in Knecht's awakening. As a historian, Burckhardt was interested in the relationship between religion, culture and politics, and how these can help one understand the history of a given society. But Burckhardt's influence on *The Glass Bead Game* goes further than that. Certain quotes that Knecht uses are drawn from Burckhardt. Moreover, his teaching about the relativity of human institutions is fundamental to Hesse's form of utopianism. As Ziolkowski puts it, "He sees permanency in the human spirit and regards history as a 'spiritual continuum' " (315). This notion of the human spirit is what Hesse is interested in. As long as humans exist, they should strive towards realizing an ideal society despite the failures that may be encountered in the process. In other words, institutions may fail, but the struggle for a better future must go on.

Hesse's emphasis on commitment is also evident in Hesse's conversation with his fellow Glass Bead Game player Tegularius. The latter rejects history and is completely devoted to the

game. In one of their conversations, Knecht declares to his friend that “not everyone can spend his entire life breathing, eating and drinking nothing but abstractions” (Hesse 279). This is yet another instance of Knecht’s skeptical attitude towards the Glass Bead Game and Castalia.

Tegularius represents Nietzsche’s philosophy, which is oblivious to history. In this sense, Hesse orchestrates this debate within the novel to unsettle the reader and push him to question the idea of a purely contemplative realm. He seeks to convey that creating a utopia requires both aspects.

Knecht’s interaction with Pater Jacobus contributes to the protagonist’s maturity. Not only does he grow intellectually, but he is also happier with Jacobus than in Castalia. The narrator describes Knecht’s time with Jacobus as “exuberant” (Hesse 203). Father Jacobus also enjoys spending time with Knecht. Happiness is the goal of any form of utopia. Thus, the interaction of these two characters is a form of unity between the Castalian and the historian’s world view. This kind of balance is critical to Hesse’s utopianism.

Knecht’s doubts about the state of Castalia are corroborated after coming back from the Benedictine monastery. Having learned from Jacobus about the relativity of human institutions, he starts to look at Castalia from an outsider’s perspective. The narrator reports that during the Glass Bead Game festival, Knecht felt more like a guest than an actual member of the Order (Hesse 215). Knecht sees how Castalia had become more important than the welfare of its members, especially after what happens to Bertram, the deputy of Magister Thomas. Clearly, Hesse cautions his reader not to place ideas or institutions beyond the welfare of humans. The death of Bertram is another sacrifice for Waldzell. Throughout history, many leaders or political movements claimed to be creating a utopia. Instead, their policies would lead to a dystopian world. Surely, Hesse had in mind the Nazi rule in Europe when he was writing *The Glass Bead*

Game. Hesse warns that these forms of totalitarian societies are the result of giving institutions more value than the members they're meant to serve.

When Knecht is chosen to become the Magister Ludi, he does not show any form of enthusiasm for his new position. This is supposed to be the highest office in the Castalian realm, yet Knecht does not rejoice. Instead, the narrator states that he had to accept his fate (Hesse 219). Eventually, Joseph resigns from his role after spending some time as Magister Ludi. After the ceremony, Knecht starts to feel a sense of self-effacement by becoming Magister. This is evident in the narrator's description: "he had almost ceased to be Joseph and was beginning to be no more than the wearer of robes and the keeper of an office, a jewel in a crown, a pillar in the structure of the hierarchy" (Hesse 224). This tension between the individual and one's role in an institution is a predominant theme in the novel. Hesse is concerned about the suppression of one's individuality by a system or a powerful institution that has utopian claims.

This question of the maintenance of the self is also an issue in monasteries, which are the closest realization of Castalia. In an article untitled "Monastic Blessings: Deconstructing and Reconstructing the Self," Kurt Bruder argues that "monastics are literally at war with themselves" (87). This means that Joseph's case is not an unusual one. His encounter with Castalia leads him to become something other than his authentic self. Apparently, this loss of his personal identity pushes Knecht towards skepticism. In fact, the narrator reports that he becomes so immersed in being the Magister that he loses his personal side (228). It is another factor that pushes Knecht away from Castalia. Thus, the protagonist is torn between two selves, the Castalian and the private man. Hesse suggests that no institution like a monastery, or any other form of an intellectual or religious order, should survive at the expense of the individual.

Again, the best way to account for Hesse's position is to understand the historical context. The 20th century witnessed many great historical changes, one of which was the spread of industrialization. Hesse saw how much of the population in Europe became merely instruments of this great industrial age. Their sole purpose was to serve the big industrialists at the expense of their humanity. This led to a sense of alienation for the workers who were supposed to ensure the survival of the factory or company, regardless of the consequences on their lives. One may see the parallel between this and Knecht's situation. As the narrator describes, Knecht becomes an "instrument" of Castalia (Hesse 228). In this sense, Hesse uses Castalia as an example of an institution that subordinates the individual to its own purposes just like the state or a corporation. This could not be further from Hesse's notion of utopianism.

Upon taking office, Knecht's life takes a turn for the worse. In fact, we're informed that it had devoured his strength and crushed his hobbies (Hesse 228). This illustrates the idea discussed in the previous paragraph. This is because Knecht needs to devote all his time and energy in leading the elite of this order. This is not a minor detail in the book. In fact, it demonstrates that Castalia as it is does not represent the ideal world which would fulfill Hesse's aspirations.

Hesse seems to be grappling with the issue of the ideal of a society vs. its actual practices. This is a relevant discussion in the politics of many societies. Castalia fits this description since it is considered a "state within the state" (Hesse 233). Based on Knecht's biography, Castalia somewhat fails to live up to its ideals of universality and creating a synthesis of all human knowledge. From Hesse's perspective, it is mainly because it does not have a sense of commitment and takes an elitist attitude. But it is also because it does not contribute to the happiness of its members, like Joseph. Hesse sees how projects that purport to build an ideal

society can degenerate into something completely different from the intended ideal. Hesse seems to take issue with the practices of Castalia, which hinder one's ability to be committed to the outside world. But he still retains the ideal itself.

Knecht's approach as Magister is different from that of previous ones, according to the narrator. In fact, he tries to apply what he had learned from Father Jacobus. In his role inside Castalia, he seeks to reconcile the contemplative with the active life. Knecht clearly declares that "We do not intend to flee from the *vita activa* to the *vita contemplativa*, nor vice versa, but to keep moving forward while alternating between the two, being at home in both, partaking of both" (Hesse 237). What Hesse's protagonist wants to do is to change Castalia from within. He tries to incorporate the principles of engagement and political awareness that Jacobus had taught him. One may infer from this that Hesse's utopian ideal would be an engaged version of Castalia.

It is worth examining Knecht's speech as Magister Ludi. It celebrates the achievements of the Glass Bead Game and its players. But there is also within it Knecht's skeptical attitude about the limits of Castalia. In his speech, he alludes to the Faustian myth to alert future Glass Bead Game players from being devoted entirely to the contemplative life: "History is full of examples of that, and folklore has given us the figure of Doctor Faust to represent this danger" (237). Dr. Faust stands for the aloof scholar who goes beyond his limitations to meet his sorry fate. Thus, Hesse uses this myth to voice his doubts about a purely aesthetic world. He sees that such an approach leads to vanity and emptiness if it is not combined with a sense of engagement.

It is necessary to go back to Knecht's Letter to the Board of Educators in order to understand his defection from Castalia. In this Letter, he informs the Board that his ability to serve as Magister is imperiled (346). He also states that the Glass Bead Game is experiencing a crisis. The aim of his Letter is to make the Board of Educators aware of that. He uses the

metaphor of the scholar in an attic who is oblivious to a fire below. Surely, this could be interpreted as an authorial commentary about the dangers of the insular state of the Order. If one examines this in light of Hesse's historical context, the significance of the fire mentioned in the Letter becomes evident. Hesse gave up his detached romanticism as he witnessed the brutal reality of war. In this context, he no longer believed in the intellectual who lacks a sense of commitment. He needs to give up his intellectual occupation and rush to where the smoke is (Hesse 346).

Knecht also emphasizes that Castalia is not as autonomous as its member might think. It exists within the world and is subject to history like all human institutions. If all human institutions are evanescent, Castalia is one of them and does not defy that law. As Knecht states in his Letter: "Castalia, the Order, the Board, the colleges, the Archives, and the Glass Bead Game have not always existed, are by no means a product of nature, but a belated and noble creation of man's will, and transitory like all such things" (347). This explains Hesse's skepticism towards any utopian project that claims timelessness and eternity.

Knecht seeks to provide the Board with an outsider's view of Castalia. He even goes so far as to call ignoring the "transitory" nature of Castalia and the institutional aspects of the Glass Bead Game an "illusion" (Hesse 347). This is not a condemnation of Castalia per se. It is in fact an indictment of Castalia in its present form. Knecht wants to convey that the sheltered worldview of Castalia is not shared by the populus outside. Accordingly, the members of the Order need to see Castalia from another perspective for it to be more effective in its aim. In this sense, Hesse imparts that creating a utopian society cannot happen without the participation of each and every member of society.

Knecht lists some of the things that endanger Castalia's existence from his perspective. One of these is the idea that the members of this Order may become like any other aristocracy history has produced. Indeed, Knecht seems to question whether Castalia is a meritocracy. He reflects on whether having such a privileged existence is justified (348). One may deduce that Hesse's ideal is not only a utopian existence for the few or the chosen. He noticed what such ideologies have led to, especially Nazism. Thus, he is opposed to any power system whose existence is not justified.

Knecht calls on the Educators to examine the foundation of their existence. He writes that "The average Castalian may regard the man of the outside world, the man who is not a scholar, without contempt, envy, or malice, but he does not regard him as a brother" (Hesse 349). This is the humanist aspect of Hesse. Given the fact that Castalians are human, they are obligated to show a sense of responsibility to non-Castalians as well. Hesse seems to advocate a form of ideal that transcends one's allegiance or nationality. It is an ideal based on our shared humanity. This is the only way that man can succeed in striving for a utopia.

Given the destructive power of the Second World War, Hesse was skeptical of nationalism or any form of tribalism. Knecht writes in his Letter to the Board that "It is treason to sacrifice love of truth, intellectual honesty, loyalty to the laws and methods of the mind, to any other interests, including those of one's country" (359). In fact, Hesse advocated pacifism during the First World War due to Tolstoy's influence, which contributed to his sense of internationalism (Franklin 42). Hesse was also critical of the bourgeois society and its superficial nature. This is clearly outlined in his description of the Feuilleton Age, which stands for cultural decay. Despite his disenchantment, Hesse believed that there had to be some form of alternative existence which would be immune to these forces. This explains the creation of Castalia. But

Hesse sought to make this utopian world accountable to the needs of man and not just to a group of chosen scholars.

Hesse's utopian project entails an awareness of one's place in world history. This is what is evident in Knecht's letter. Yet he sees that Castalia has a purpose, namely that of serving the community by teaching. He views the Castalians who make sacrifices to teach as brave (350). This explains his decision to leave the order and become a teacher. It is the only way to bridge the gap between Castalia and the outside world. By serving the community, the members are able to repay their debt to society and become aware of Castalia's place in history.

In fact, history is one of the fields that Castalians are not interested in. They value the history of ideas more than political or social history. This is why Knecht urges them in his Letter to pay attention to history. He argues that history is not only about struggles for power. Indeed, this is only one aspect (Hesse 351). He further explains that Castalia is also part of history and that being aware of that is necessary for growth and development. In this case, Hesse rejects the idea of a utopia that exists outside history. Any utopian project must consider the historical context it operates in and adapt to changes.

One may infer from this approach towards history that Hesse still held out hope for humanity. Despite witnessing the horrors of the Second World War, Hesse became more interested in history instead of escaping it. He believed that everyone has the power to contribute to history. According to Franklin, the elimination of war was one of his primary aims (88). Accordingly, he did not believe that a change for the better could come from being insulated in an aesthetic ideal. Hope for humanity existed within, not outside world history.

In his Letter, Knecht does not neglect to mention the good things of Castalia. In fact, he depicts the Feuilleton Age as a time of war, instability, and cultural decay. He acknowledges that

many people felt a longing “for rationality ... and for order (Hesse 355). This certainly applies to Hesse as an artist. He wanted an end to wars and believed in internationalism. This clearly shows his utopian thinking in the novel. He writes that “A tremendous craving for truth and justice arose, for reason, for overcoming chaos” (355). That is to say after the Feuilleton Age. Yet he also realized that one cannot bring about this world by pure contemplation. Thus, the value of Castalia in the novel is to provide an ideal to try to live up to.

In fact, Knecht celebrates the establishment of Castalia. He calls the early founders of this pedagogic province “heroic” (355). He is impressed by their great effort and asceticism. Knecht gives a historical account of Castalia and argues that it did not always exist. It is people’s commitment to such an ideal that gave it its existence. Accordingly, Hesse wants his reader to have an ideal that is worth striving for.

Moreover, Knecht sketches out for us the development of Castalia. He sees that the laws of history apply to it, namely that of the rise and fall of nations. He wants to convey to his fellow members that this Order is also subject to that law. In his letter, he writes: “Historically we are, I believe, ripe for dismantling. And there is no doubt that such will be our fate” (356). Clearly, Hesse is aware of how different cultures and civilizations go through cycles. Castalia is no exception to this. Although this may sound as a form of cynicism, it is not really the case. Hesse still retains hope for a better world if his notion of engagement is taken seriously by thinkers and artists. But he is skeptical about an alternative existence that is purely contemplative.

In their response to his Letter, the Board rejects Knecht’s wish to leave his position as Magister Ludi. One of the main reasons they state is that this would violate the hierarchy upon which Castalia is built. Even the Magister himself cannot change this rigid system. Hesse critiques the notion of hierarchy because it ignores the place of the individual and constrains him.

Such is Knecht's case with the Board members. Ziolkowski suggests that "While Knecht never forsakes the ideal of spirit consecrated to life, he does, by his defection, reject the tenet of service to the hierarchy" (334). Hesse wants to preserve the ideal of an aesthetic realm. But he rejects the hierarchical aspect of it because it does not give voice to the individual.

One may say that there are two Castalias in the novel. The first is the one Knecht becomes part of and then defects from. It is the institution that lacks a sense of commitment to the outside world. The other one is portrayed by the narrator. It is the one that resembles Hesse's ideal. Ziolkowski argues that the Castalia represented by the narrator is the one Knecht and Hesse longed for (337). These two differing views demonstrate Hesse's ambivalence towards utopianism.

What makes Hesse's utopian vision intricate is his ambivalent attitude towards Castalia. In the last chapter of the novel, the reader has access to Knecht's mind. He dreams of Castalia being the world instead of being part of it (Hesse 377). This is because Castalia stands for perfection in an imperfect existence: "the Province as the world, Castalians as mankind, and the non-Castalian sphere as a kind of children's world" (378). This passage clearly shows Hesse's utopian thinking. One may infer from this passage that Hesse saw that the world we have created is not the best possible world. Accordingly, he still retains faith in humans to build a better world.

It is worth examining Knecht's posthumous writings as they form an integral part of the novel. These writings demonstrates that Joseph already had doubts about Castalia while he was a student. They also give greater insight into Hesse's conception of utopianism. In his poem "Lament," Knecht comments on the transitory nature of human existence. He compares Man to a wave that takes different forms (Hesse 429). This poem is an example of Hesse's own doubts

about the possibility of an eternal form of utopia. This poem also shows the striving that Hesse advocates. This is evident in the following lines: “Mold after mold we fill and never rest,/ We find no home where joy or grief runs deep” (429). Knecht/Hesse conveys that humans are not meant to live in complete joy or grief. Thus, there is no end to suffering as long as humans exist. This is why striving towards perfection is more important than attaining it.

In “The Last Glass Bead Game Player,” Knecht paints a darker vision. He depicts the player as being in a land that is ravaged by war and disease (Hesse 435). He is an old man left alone by his pupils. This shows that Knecht had little faith in the game and that Father Jacobus is a mere catalyst who confirms his doubts. Yet in his poem “A Dream,” Knecht depicts Castalia as a place where all knowledge and wisdom can be found. It is a heavenly kingdom of knowledge (437). It is another instance of Knecht’s ambivalence towards the pedagogical province.

To examine Hesse’s form of utopianism further, one may analyze Knecht’s poem “Stages.” He uses the metaphor of a blooming flower to depict what life is. Just as every flower blooms and fades, so does human life. This poem conveys the same idea about the ephemeral nature of life. Yet the speaker in the poem is an optimist and thinks that we should be ready “to find new light” (444). In this context, Hesse is still hopeful about a brighter future for Man.

Knecht also talks about man’s “grasp of truth” in the poem. He seeks to convey that it is relative, given the fact that he is part of an organization that places the search for truth as its priority. This tells us how skeptical Knecht is about Castalia’s teachings. It is another example of Knecht’s disillusionment with the notion of the Absolute. Knecht writes that “The Cosmic Spirit seeks not to restrain us (444). This clearly shines the light on the cause of Knecht’s personal transformation. He feels that the Castalian environment is constraining and that this is not in harmony with the universe. Moreover, Knecht suggests in his poem that we should not be

“slaves to permanence” (444). Knecht’s literary productions embodies much of what Hesse seeks to impart. The notion of an absolute and perfect utopia is nonexistent. What remains, then, is the striving to create a better world through commitment.

CONCLUSION

There is much more to say about Knecht and his transformation, and Castalia itself may be understood in different ways. The central point is that Hesse remains unconvinced by the possibility of the contemplative life alone to create a heaven on earth. Surely, he was not the one who pioneered this issue of art and its social role. Yet I believe that his novel expresses this issue in a unique way in 20th-century literature.

Many modernist writers expressed a sense of despair in their works. They were skeptical about the possibility of creating a better world. They depicted a world that is devoid of any meaning or purpose. However, some of those writers sought to focus on the ideals that humanity always strove for, such as peace, equality, and freedom. In other words, they still retain a sense of hope which was translated into a form of positive utopianism in their works. Hesse's novel is a great embodiment of this humanist endeavor. He moves away from the traditional conception of utopia as a good place, and redefines it as a collective human longing for perfection. This longing is what drives human progress to this day.

One cannot help but be drawn to this humanistic vision. Given the conflicts and instability that plague the contemporary world, Hesse reminds us that humans can do better, and that the dialectical nature of history does not condemn man to utter hopelessness, as many writers have thought. In fact, that is exactly what Knecht's journey demonstrates. A combination of clearly defined ideals and a sense of commitment may get us beyond the sense of helplessness many of us experience and are stuck in. Hesse revives the notion of human agency for modernist literature.

Knecht serves as a prototype for the struggle of the individual against institutions, be they intellectual, social or political. This tension has always existed throughout human history. Many people were sacrificed, sometimes literally many times symbolically, to preserve a given order. This is the case in Knecht's journey in Hesse's novel. Through Joseph's awakening, Hesse imparts that the validity of institutions is predicated on their utility to human beings. When Castalia no longer fulfilled Knecht's ideals, he decided to resign and lead the life of a regular teacher out in the world. Ziolkowski writes in his Foreword that "Hesse's novels fictionalize the admonitions of an outsider who urges us to question accepted values, to rebel against the system, to challenge conventional 'reality' in the light of higher ideals" (Hesse x).

Hesse's sense of internationalism is also one of the elements that is appealing about his novel. Indeed, his notion of Castalia is not confined to a geographical, historical, or linguistic space. It represents that ideal community that every culture or people have been striving for. But this order is not the end of history. In fact, Hesse demonstrates that there could always be progress towards that ideal. Accordingly, Joseph leaves Castalia but does not abandon some of its ideals. He wants to make engagement an essential part of those ideals.

Not only is Hesse's novel about creating an alternative existence, it also explores the extent to which the artist can influence history. In this sense, Hesse shares this interest with the post-Second World War existentialists who saw literature, especially prose, as a force in determining events. All of these aforementioned ideas make Hesse an author worth spending time on. His ideas cut across time and space and are still relevant to today's world.

REFERENCES

“Benedictine”. Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Benedictines>.

Accessed 16 November 2022.

Bruder, Kurt A. “Monastic Blessings: Deconstructing and Reconstructing the Self.” *Symbolic Interaction*, 21/1 (1998), pp. 87–116.

Field, George Wallis. “Hermann Hesse: Polarities and Symbols of Synthesis.” *Queen’s Quarterly*, 81 (1974), pp. 87-101.

Franklin, Wilbur B. *The Concept of “The Human” in the Work of Hermann Hesse and Paul Tillich*. PhD Dissertation, University of St Andrews, 1977.

Freedman, Ralph. *The Lyrical Novel: Studies in Hermann Hesse, André Gide, and Virginia Woolf*. Princeton N.J., Princeton UP, 1963.

Gaertner, Johannes A. “Dialectic Thought in Thomas Mann’s *The Magic Mountain*.” *The German Quarterly*, 38/4 (1965), pp. 605–18.

Hesse, Hermann. *The Glass Bead Game (Magister Ludi)*, tr. Richard and Clara Winston, Foreword by Theodore Ziolkowski. New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969.

Jackson, Theodore, *Hermann Hesse as Ambivalent Modernist*. PhD Dissertation, Washington University, 2010.

Jones, W. R. “Franciscan Education and Monastic Libraries: Some Documents.” *Traditio*, 30 (1974), pp. 435–45.

Mann, Thomas. *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man*, tr. Walter D. Morris and others, Introduction by Mark Lilla. New York, New York Review Books, 2021.

- Mann, Thomas. *The Magic Mountain (Der Zauberberg)*. tr. H. T. Lowe-Porter. New York, Vintage Books, 1969.
- Plato. *The Republic*, tr. Allan Bloom. New York, Basic Books, 1991.
- Rabelais, François. *Gargantua*. Paris, Gallimard, 2004.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. "*What Is Literature?*" and *Other Essays*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard UP, 1998.
- Texter, Douglas W. "Institutional Crisis: State and Scholar in Hermann Hesse's *The Glass Bead Game* and Walter Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz*." *Extrapolation*, 49/1 (2008), pp. 122-141.
- Wilde, Lawrence. "The Radical Appeal of Hermann Hesse's Alternative Community." *Utopian Studies*, 10/1 (1999), pp. 86-97.
- Ziolkowski, Theodore. *The Novels of Herman Hesse*. Princeton, N.J., Princeton UP, 1974.