

**Building on *Bildung* in the 20th century -
individual and institutional learning in
Wittgenstein and Hesse**

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‘Mögen andere kommen und es besser machen.’

Ludwig Wittgenstein, preface, *Tractatus-logico-philosophicus*.

Short abstract

This thesis will undertake a comparison of the figurative use of “games” in *Philosophische Untersuchungen* by Ludwig Wittgenstein and *Das Glasperlenspiel* by Hermann Hesse. Both works use “games” as an analogy to explore language use as a collective activity. ‘Bildung’ for the purposes of this thesis denotes the authors’ shared interest in how a good education should not only consist in applying oneself to scholarly study but also personal, moral development. I argue that ‘Sprachspiele’ and the ‘Glasperlenspiel’ are literary devices that the authors use in contrasting but complementary ways to explore the following questions: how do we help people to learn to think for themselves (to become well-rounded, independent thinkers) within an institutional environment that is necessarily conformist? How can students be taught to think for themselves, while also encouraging them to have the humility to listen to the opinions of others? The fact that games involve an element of freedom and spontaneity, while also being confined within rules that govern what can and cannot be done, means that the authors’ analogies were carefully chosen. This tension between freedom and rules within games reflects a tension at the heart of *Bildung*, identified by Georg Bollenbeck as dual process of ‘bilden’ and ‘sich bilden’ (whereby an individual is moulded by external forces, but also retains agency within their learning journey). By reading Wittgenstein and Hesse alongside one another, I would like to consider the question: If we were to think of our academic forms of life as a game, how might that change the way we think about what we do?

Long abstract

This thesis will focus on a shared analogy in *Philosophische Untersuchungen* by Ludwig Wittgenstein and *Das Glasperlenspiel* Hermann Hesse. Both works, despite being written by authors who never read one another, were written during the same time period (1930s-1940s) and use “games” as an analogy to think about the nature of language as a collective activity. Wittgenstein speaks of ‘Sprachspiele’ as a way of talking about examples of language use in diverse situations such as commands, conversations, and lessons. In Hesse’s novel, the ‘Glasperlenspiel’ is a fictional academic discipline, that promises to unite scholars in the pursuit of knowledge by enabling them to communicate through a universal language.

On first inspection, Wittgenstein’s language-games and Hesse’s Game have little in common. Wittgenstein’s ‘language games’ are intended to represent examples of “ordinary language” in everyday usage; whereas Hesse’s Glass Bead Game is a rarefied, ideal language which is understood and practiced only by an elite within academic institutions. However, the authors’ analogy between games and language touch on several common themes in the realm of education, such as how we learn our language; whether the conventions and values within our culture are binding or arbitrary; under what circumstances the rules imposed by educational institutions cease to be constructive and become conservative and elitist. If we were to think of our academic forms of life as a game, how might that change about the way we go about our lives?

I could not find an explanation as to why Wittgenstein and Hesse might have selected “games” to be the central analogy of their work. I also found no existing comparison of the two authors, based on their mutual interest in learning,

teaching and education. Finding no existing comparison of these two texts, nor of the authors' works more generally, I was prompted to pursue the following questions:

- Why did Hesse and Wittgenstein choose “game” as a central analogy of their work? (language-games for Wittgenstein, and the Glass Bead Game for Hesse)
- What does the game analogy represent?
- Why games in particular? Why wouldn't any other analogy do?
- What is different about Hesse's and Wittgenstein's respective use of the game analogy?
- How can their different game analogies be fruitfully read together, to deepen our understanding of teaching and learning within educational institutions?

Reading *Das Glasperlenspiel* alongside *Philosophische Untersuchungen* helped me distil what it was that Wittgenstein was trying to teach his readers about language. “Language-games” represented an analogy for language as a collective experience, where people adhere to grammar and linguistic conventions in the same way that the players of a game might follow a shared set of rules. At the same time, Hesse's “Glass Bead Game” helped me to think with greater self-awareness about the language-games taking place in my own daily life in the Academy, and to smile at the thought of spoken and unspoken rules we use, the jargonistic language, the odd conventions (such as punning in journal paper titles), and competitive play in debates and conferences - all of these activities being a fundamental part of professional academic life. There is a lot of truth in the idea

that what we do as scholars and teachers could be thought of as “play” or a “game”. Thus, this thesis explores the connections that *Das Glasperlenspiel* and *Philosophische Untersuchungen* draw between games, learning and institutions¹ - and how reading them together might help us to differently reflect on academic life. Far from being an incidental part of their work, I would like to argue that choosing “games” as a central analogy in their work was a considered choice on the part of Wittgenstein and Hesse, to address their concerns about intellectual life and the state of cultural institutions.

The fruitful contrast between the two works is this: while Wittgenstein’s *Philosophische Untersuchungen* seeks to help people therapeutically come to terms with an over-fondness for abstract concepts (‘a craving for generality’), and Hesse’s novel gives us insight into how this tendency to abstraction can have ethical consequences (in the form of intellectual hubris). The difference in their portrayal of intellectual hubris is evident in their different angles on ‘games’. On the one hand, Wittgenstein emphasises rules - how they can be strict or act as mere guidelines, how they can guide behaviour without being binding - in order to think about the role convention plays in the way we lead our life (our *Lebensformen*). Games are key to his ‘ordinary’ language philosophy - if we see the way we use words as ‘just’ a game, we are less likely to attach overblown, metaphysical significance to particular words. Seeing something ‘as’ or as ‘just’ a game for Wittgenstein is the key to bringing our intellectual high-mindedness back down to earth to something more everyday. In focussing on the rule-following aspects of games Wittgenstein is determined to present games as fundamentally

¹ By “institutions”, I mean primarily higher education institutions, as that is my personal context, but the idea of game-rules and language-games could also apply to cultural institutions, schools, or cultural societies set up to maintain and preserve cultural values and artefacts.

ordinary and everyday - they are just part of how we live our lives with one another.

Hesse, on the other hand, picks up on the extraordinary aspect of games - their capacity to fascinate us, to hold our attention captive, to fully absorb our attention. We can talk of 'game-worlds' and elite players - play is at once playful and 'just a game', but also something to be taken seriously too. Hesse's story traces its development within an entire culture over the course of several centuries through the fascination with a single Game. His focus on the extraordinary nature of games is complementary to Wittgenstein's. Thus, Wittgenstein helps us to see alternatives to utopian readings of *Das Glasperlenspiel* as the 'extraordinary' pinnacle of intellectual life; and Hesse helps us to see what is missing from Wittgenstein's overemphasis of the ordinariness of play - an acknowledgement of the captivating fascination that games (and by extension, our forms of life) can have for us. In this way I believe that reading *Das Glasperlenspiel* and *Philosophische Untersuchungen* alongside one another help us to better realise their shared ambition, which is to undermine intellectual hubris and demonstrate the tension of shared, 'rule-following' communal practice or convention within an institution, with higher education's (especially the humanities') aim to facilitate students to think creatively and independently (this tension is summarised in the dual concepts of *bilden* and *sich bilden*).

The story begins in the 1930s, which is an interesting turning point in Wittgenstein's and Hesse's work. The first two chapters will be devoted to Wittgenstein and Hesse respectively, to do some historical digging, in order to identify and fully explain the "moment" at which their interest in learning and

education brings to fruition the birth of the game analogy. Understanding how ‘games’ arose organically from their priorities during that period will help us to understand what is historically and socially significant about their interest in the relationship between culture and education, at that time but also for us today as we continue to grapple with similar issues (such as the marketisation of higher education; explaining the justification for/usefulness of a humanities degree in times of economic and political crisis; the reassessment of literary canons etc.). This historical background to the analogy also makes clear the distinctively different uses of the games analogy that Hesse and Wittgenstein employ in *Philosophische Untersuchungen* and *Das Glasperlenspiel*, and the significance of those differences for contemplating the relationship between games, culture, learning and institutions.

Chapter 1 will address the gap between Wittgenstein’s private comments on culture in *Vermischte Bemerkungen* and his educational practice in his dictated teaching notes, the *Blue Book* and the *Brown Books*, and his lectures. From this gap we can see that even though Wittgenstein doesn’t participate explicitly in the *Bildung* tradition, he is aware of the tensions at its heart and these remain in *Philosophical Investigations*. Language-games begin as a way of providing ‘clarity’ – a ‘clear’ picture of how culture is constituted of shared collective practices; then subsequently become a tool for teaching, a heuristic device for disarming us of our desire to find a single, all-encompassing rule for why we do what we do or use words the way we do. Games are a case in point – rules are not as simple and unambiguous as they might appear; the search for a rule, by extension, which governs our use of language and somehow describes its underlying logic, is a Faustian mission undertaken under false assumptions. *Bildung* is essentially

personal for Wittgenstein - a personal process of transformation not only into a better thinker but more importantly into a virtuous person who avoids intellectual hubris and can be honest with themselves. Language-games are eventually developed in *PU* as a therapeutic way to facilitate an unburdening of ourselves from intellectual hubris.

Chapter 2 will describe Hesse's views on *Bildung*, which in contrast to Wittgenstein's are more explicit, but are similarly un-dogmatic. Hesse, participating explicitly in the *Bildung* tradition, uses the term *Bildung* to mean both the personal process of transformation that Wittgenstein inherits from Schopenhauer, but also "culture" or a "cultural education" more generally. From the outset, Hesse is more interested than Wittgenstein in thinking about the possibility of *Bildung* on the super-personal level within an institution. To what extent is it possible to replicate a necessarily personal engagement with *Kultur*? The textual focus of this chapter will be on Hesse's essay, 'Eine Bibliothek der Weltliteratur', *Die Morgenlandfahrt*, and the first drafts of *Das Glasperlenspiel*. My intention is to trace a development in Hesse's work from the cultural pessimist disillusioned with a *Bildung* which has become a commodity for bourgeois consumption (in *Der Steppenwolf*); to a dawning realisation that the juxtaposition between the intellectuals (the 'defenders of culture' who attended the 1935 and 1938 Paris Congresses for the Defence of Culture) and the Fascists is false; a defence of culture is realised as not only futile, but Quixotic (Quixote being, for the purposes of this thesis, a kind of benign cousin of Faust, as he is also guilty of intellectual hubris, but the result is perceived as humorous rather than sinful). Chapter 2 will demonstrate how the self-ironizing approach that Hesse undertakes

in *Die Morgenlandfahrt* feeds into the decisions about the premise, structure and narrative voice in *GPS*.

In Chapter 3, I will begin by summarising how Wittgenstein and Hesse underwent changes in their conceptions of games from the 1930s into the 1940s when their works reached fruition. I shall tie together the comparison by looking at the way in which Wittgenstein's and Hesse's uses of games have a similar aim (as a way of looking at language use as an activity through the frame of a 'game', and as a way of examining the premises on which our conception of that game is based), but a different execution (Wittgenstein is interested in the ordinary aspects of games, whereas Hesse brings out their extraordinary nature). Reading Wittgenstein will help us to see how Hesse's Game performs a heuristic function similar to language-games. By reading Hesse's novel after *PU*, we can begin to see how, despite Wittgenstein's silence on pedagogical theory, his work is highly relevant in an institutional context. Reading *GPS* in a Wittgenstein light will help us understand why intellectual hubris among academics has ethical consequences beyond academia.

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Abbreviations

A note on editions:

It would have been ideal to refer to the Suhrkamp edition of Hesse's *Sämtliche Werke* (edited by Volker Michels) throughout this thesis. I have been asked why I did not use them so I think it would be helpful to provide an explanation. For various reasons, I had to make do with the editions I had to hand. Sections of this thesis were written and revised during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022), when I had limited access to libraries for the relevant volumes, which were not available digitally, and which I did not personally own as they are prohibitively expensive. Since 2020, when my studentship funding came to an end, I have been working full time and had limited capacity to re-do all the citations with reference to the SW editions. I share these details not to offer excuses, but to make clear certain personal and financial circumstances that are by no means unique to me and that may well affect others. Such circumstances play a role in the choice of editions we cite in our work.

Works by Hesse

The following abbreviations are used to refer to Hesse's published works (in alphabetical order by abbreviation).

BW, Hesse, Hermann, 'Eine Bibliothek der Weltliteratur', published in *Die Welt Der Bücher: Betrachtungen Und Aufsätze Zur Literatur*, ed. by Volker Michels, Suhrkamp-Taschenbuch; 415, 1. Auflage (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977)

GPS ———, Hesse, Hermann, *Das Glasperlenspiel*, Suhrkamp Taschenbuch, 79 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972)

MLF ———, *Die Morgenlandfahrt*, Suhrkamp-Taschenbuch, 750, 18. Auflage (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2015)

MGPS, Michels, Volker, ed., *Materialien zu Hermann Hesses Das Glasperlenspiel*, Suhrkamp Taschenbuch (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), Erster Band

Works by Wittgenstein

The following abbreviations are used to refer to Wittgenstein's published works (in alphabetical order by abbreviation).

BB, Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Preliminary Studies for the 'Philosophical Investigations' Generally Known as the Blue and Brown Books* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958)

LA ———, Yorick Smythies, and James Taylor, *Lectures & Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, ed. by Cyril Barrett, Reprint (Malden: Blackwell, 2003)

PU ———, *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, Werkausgabe, Band 1, 22. Auflage (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006)

TLP ———, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, Werkausgabe, Band 1, 22. Auflage (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006)

VB ———, *Culture and Value*, ed. by Georg Henrik von Wright, Heikki Nyman, and Alois Pichler, translated by Peter Winch, revised 2nd edition with English translation; (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006). Bilingual edition. German title = *Vermischte Bemerkungen*.

Introduction

Research Questions - What do I want to say?

This thesis will focus on a shared analogy in *Philosophische Untersuchungen* by Ludwig Wittgenstein and *Das Glasperlenspiel* by Hermann Hesse. Both works, despite being written by authors who never read one another, were written during the same time period (1930s-1940s) and use “games” as an analogy to think about the nature of language as a collective activity. Wittgenstein speaks of ‘Sprachspiele’ as a way of talking about examples of language use in diverse situations such as commands, conversations, and lessons. In Hesse’s novel, the ‘Glasperlenspiel’ is a fictional academic discipline, that promises to unite scholars in the pursuit of knowledge by providing them with a universal language that will make their insights mutually comprehensible to one another (so that research in maths can be united with progress in the arts, for example). On first inspection, readers acquainted with Wittgenstein’s work might say that Hesse’s Game has little in common with Wittgenstein’s game and vice versa. Wittgenstein’s ‘language games’ are intended to represent examples of “ordinary language” in everyday usage; whereas Hesse’s Glass Bead Game is a rarefied, ideal language which is understood and practiced only by an obscure elite within academic institutions. However, the authors’ analogy between games and language touch on several common themes in the realm of education, such as how we learn our language; whether the conventions and values within our culture are binding or arbitrary; under what circumstances the rules imposed by educational institutions cease to be constructive and become conservative and elitist.

I could not find an explanation as to why Wittgenstein and Hesse might have selected “games” to be the central analogy of their work. I also found no existing comparison of the two authors, based on their mutual interest in learning, teaching and education. Finding no existing comparison of these two texts, nor of the authors’ works more generally, I was prompted to pursue the following questions:

- Why did Hesse and Wittgenstein choose “game” as a central analogy of their work? (language-games for Wittgenstein, and the Glass Bead Game for Hesse)
- What does the game analogy represent?
- Why games in particular? Why wouldn’t any other analogy do?
- What is different about Hesse’s and Wittgenstein’s respective use of the game analogy?
- How can their different game analogies be fruitfully read together, to deepen our understanding of teaching and learning within educational institutions?

How did I come to these questions? It went something like this:

In 2017 I had been intending to draw a comparison between Wittgenstein and Heidegger for my thesis. The original project was going to undertake a comparison of their writing styles, which contrast a great deal, but which nevertheless produce similar outcomes. Both philosophers leave a deep impression on their readers, insofar as they offer a different way of approaching the philosophy of language through their writing styles. The language they use is important, because “language” as an object of philosophical enquiry is unlike any

other object of philosophical enquiry (such as “beauty”, “being” etc.). Language is an experience or activity that we are always already involved in, and which it is therefore difficult to “philosophise about” because it is both the means *and* the object of philosophical enquiry.

I was talking about this topic to a friend, who recommended that I read *GPS*. I happened to be given a copy some time later and read *GPS* in the summer months preceding the beginning of my DPhil. I was struck at the similarity of the philosophical themes and the formal elements of the novel and *PU*. I was also struck at the shared, figurative use of “games” in *PU* and *GPS*. I had to ask myself, why were games important to both writers? For two texts produced within the same period, was it mere coincidence that they both identified a connection between play, culture, and learning? Or was there something about their mutual influences and contemporary experiences which prompted them in similar directions? What was it that remained subtly different in their respective “games”, and how did that reflect the different things they were trying to say about how we learn as individuals and within institutions?

Reading *GPS* alongside *PU* helped me distil what it was that Wittgenstein was trying to teach his readers about language. “Language-games” represented an analogy for language as a collective experience, where people adhere to grammar and linguistic conventions in the same way that the players of a game might follow a shared set of rules. At the same time, Hesse’s “Glass Bead Game” helped me to think with greater self-awareness about the language-games taking place in my own daily life in the Academy, and to smile at the thought of spoken and unspoken rules we use, the jargonistic language, the odd conventions (such as punning in

journal paper titles), and competitive play in debates and conferences - all of these activities being a fundamental part of professional academic life. There is a lot of truth in the idea that what we do as scholars and teachers could be thought of as “play” or a “game”. When I aired this idea to other colleagues, they seemed amused and thought so too. If we were to think of our academic forms of life as a game, what would that change about the way we go about our lives? That is the personal question I have been occupied with since reading these two works alongside one another, and which I believe the readers of this thesis may also find interesting and hopefully useful.

Thus, this thesis began with curiosity about how and why *GPS* and *PU* connect games, learning and institutions² - and how reading them together might help us to reflect on academic life. It is an attempt to follow the thread of my instinctive interest in the connections I drew between these two texts. On surveying the field of the existing literature on Hesse and Wittgenstein, I could not find an answer to the questions I had (listed above), so I decided to try and answer them myself. I will explain the gaps in the existing literature shortly, but first I will outline the direction that my comparison of Hesse and Wittgenstein took.

Why did I choose to focus on Wittgenstein and Hesse in particular? I began my investigation in 2017 by including *GPS* in a tripartite comparison with Heidegger and Wittgenstein, along the lines of my original topic of enquiry. The Glass Bead Game is portrayed in the novel as an ideal, abstract language but it is

² By “institutions”, I mean primarily higher education institutions, as that is my personal context, but the idea of game-rules and language-games could also apply to cultural institutions, schools, or cultural societies set up to maintain and preserve cultural values and artefacts.

also a daily reality for the characters, practiced and debated routinely in much the same way as music or philosophy (similar to the acts of chanting or prayer, which are expressions of the holy and yet also unremarkable, daily routines of monasteries). The ordinary-extraordinary facets of the fictional Game bridged the gap nicely between the two philosophers, Heidegger and Wittgenstein. Although both philosophers come to similar conclusions about language, they used extremely different styles to convey their ideas to their readers. The understated, self-effacing, sometimes quietly ironic style that Wittgenstein adopts when drawing on examples from everyday life in *PU*, contrasts strongly with the exceptionally obscure, intricately complex, almost self-indulgent style that Heidegger adopts with his reinvention of the German language through neologisms in works such as *Sein und Zeit* and *Unterwegs zur Sprache*. I felt that Hesse's novel and its dual-faceted Game illustrated quite well the fine lines of distinction between Wittgenstein and Heidegger. *GPS* helped me contemplate that distinction: the difference between learning as soul-enriching hard work, and acquiring intellectual skill to boost one's ego; between intellectual debates that are constructive, and the mere sparring rituals of learned sophists. Wittgenstein and Heidegger believed that what they were trying to say about the collective experience of language could not be *said*, and could only be communicated through experience; hence, they each developed an idiosyncratic writing style to create the experience they wanted their readers to have while reading their work. However, I noticed a distinct difference between Wittgenstein's idiosyncrasies and Heidegger's esoterism. *GPS* illuminated these distinctions and made it clear to me why Wittgenstein and Heidegger, who have radically different writing styles, can be mentioned in the same breath. They

were two sides of the same coin. The one motivated by a genuine desire to alter his readers' attitudes, the other motivated by a desire to compel his readers to submit to his ideas.

As time went on, I realised that *GPS* and *PU* warn against a kind of 'intellectual hubris' that Heidegger falls victim to. The term 'intellectual hubris' is one I came across first in Ingo Cornils' article, 'A Model European? Hermann Hesse's Influence on the Suhrkamp Verlag'. Cornils refers to 'intellectual hubris' as something that Hesse and his publisher, Peter Suhrkamp, were keen to avoid when they first embarked on selecting titles in 1950 for a new paperback series of contemporary literature (which would become *Bibliothek Suhrkamp*, the series in which Wittgenstein's works appeared several decades later). Rather than creating a series founded on preconceived or snobbish ideas about what constitutes "good" literature, Cornils explains that Hesse and Suhrkamp embodied the *opposite* of intellectual hubris - they had a 'new openness'.³ To explain this quality in Hesse, Cornils quotes Mauro Ponzi: 'Er [Hesse] setzt sich mit dem Fremden ohne jeden Überlegenheitskomplex, der zunächst den englischen Kolonialismus und später - in noch markanterer Weise - den deutschen Nationalismus gekennzeichnet hat, auseinander.' Moreover, 'Seine [Hesses] Bejahung des Lebens und der Vielfältigkeit der Lebenserfahrungen stellt für ewig gehaltene Modelle in Frage, sie setzt die Selbstvorstellung der abendländischen Kultur aufs Spiel.'⁴ Alongside the colonial and Euro-centric attitudes referred to here, I will use the term 'intellectual hubris' throughout this thesis to refer more generally to a multitude of sins among

³ Ingo Cornils, 'A Model European? Hermann Hesse's Influence on the Suhrkamp Verlag', *German Life and Letters*, 68.1 (2015), 54-65 (p. 63) <<https://doi.org/10.1111/glal.12068>>.

⁴ Cornils, 'A Model European? Hermann Hesse's Influence on the Suhrkamp Verlag', p. 63.

academics, such as an exaggerated belief in our self-importance or a lack of critical self-awareness in our work.

As I explored mutual literary influences that shaped these two works, I discovered that the figure of Faust was important to Hesse and Wittgenstein as a cautionary figure who embodied intellectual hubris. This literary trope is of course not uncommon. Writing in the *Germanic Review* in April 1940, Richard Kuehnemund penned an article titled ‘Faust and Zarathustra in Our Time’. Kuehnemund writes about the two figures as embodying the hubris of Goethe and Nietzsche respectively. Of Goethe’s Faust, he writes, ‘Faust’s hybris derives from the dissatisfaction and despair over the limitations of human knowledge, as well as his hunger for life.’⁵ Lszló V. Szabó describes how Goethe’s Faust, among other philosophical, religious, and cultural influences, are woven into Hesse’s ‘eigene “private Mythologie” und Ästhetik’.⁶ In an autobiographical short story of 1918 called ‘Einkehr’, Hesse references Faust among his literary-philosophical influences: ‘In Wirklichkeit war mein Erlebnis bei Kant, bei Schopenhauer, bei Schelling kein anderes, als das, was ich auch bei der Matthäuspassion, bei Mantegna, beim Faust gehabt hatte.’⁷ Readers of *GPS*, such as Thomas Mann (a long-standing friend and correspondent of Hesse’s), picked up on its Faustian themes. In 1948, Mann gifted a copy of *Doktor Faustus* to Hesse, and wrote a dedication on the title page that established a connection between that work and *GPS* (which had been published only a few years earlier in 1943). Mann’s dedication

⁵ Richard Kuehnemund, ‘Faust and Zarathustra in Our Time’, *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory*, 15.2 (1940), 116-36 (p. 129) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/19306962.1940.11785968>>.

⁶ László Szabó, ‘Tædium vitae: Zu Hermann Hesses Schopenhauer-Rezeption’, in *Hermann Hesse und die Moderne: Diskurse zwischen Ästhetik, Ethik und Politik*, ed. by Detlef Haberland and Géza Horváth (Wien: Praesens Verlag, 2013), pp. 130-43 (p. 136).

⁷ Szabó, p. 136.

to Hesse stated that *Doktor Faustus* was a ‘Glasperlenspiel mit schwarzen Perlen’. There is also an explicit reference to the fable of Faust in *GPS*, called on by the protagonist Josef Knecht when speaking to teachers in training (we will come back to this passage in Chapter 3).

Faust was of no less symbolic importance for Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein cites a line of Goethe’s *Faust* in his final (unfinished) work, *Über Gewißheit*, written during the last years of his life: ‘Im Anfang war die Tat.’⁸ This quotation is introduced in the context of debating whether it is possible for human beings to really *know* something (hence the title refers to the question of whether knowledge can ever be certain). Ingo Venzke describes how, ‘In the last days of his life, Wittgenstein closely identified with Goethe’s tragic figure Faust who was troubled by the insecurity of knowledge to such an extent that he sold his soul to the devil if only the devil could bring him satisfaction.’⁹ In 1946, Wittgenstein remarks privately that ‘Ich fürchte mich oft vor dem Wahnsinn.’ He recalls ‘der Fall Lenau’ and muses, ‘In seinem »Faust« nämlich finden sich Gedanken der Art, wie ich sie auch kenne.’ For Wittgenstein, ‘Das Wichtigste ist, was Faust über seine *Einsamkeit, oder Vereinsamung* sagt.’¹⁰ Faust was therefore not just the subject of a moral fable for Wittgenstein, but a figure with whom he sympathised and in which he saw elements of himself. Faust could be seen as treated by Hesse and

⁸ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Über Gewißheit*, ed. by Joachim Schulte, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2015), p. 199 §402. In his biography, Ray Monk comments that Wittgenstein quotes this particular line from Faust ‘with approval’ and that it ‘could be regarded as the motto of *On Certainty*’ as well as ‘of the whole of Wittgenstein’s later philosophy.’ (Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (London: Vintage, 1991), p. 579.)

⁹ Ingo Venzke, *In the Beginning Was the Deed, How Interpretation Makes International Law* (Oxford University Press), p. 1 <<https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2169/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199657674.001.0001/acprof-9780199657674-chapter-1>> [accessed 12 May 2020].

¹⁰ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, ed. by Georg Henrik von Wright, Heikki Nyman, and Alois Pichler, trans. by Peter Winch, Revised 2nd edition with English translation; (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), p. 66.

Wittgenstein as a cautionary figure, not just for others but also *themselves*: a reminder to guard themselves from intellectual hubris.

By and by Heidegger came to represent in my comparison what Faustian intellectual hubris meant in the 20th century, particularly within a higher education institution. Heidegger had a career as a professor of philosophy at the University of Freiburg from 1928, notwithstanding a teaching ban for his involvement with the Nazi party between 1945-1949. In the mid-1930s, Heidegger had radical ambitions to reform university life under the Nazis. In his first speech in 1933 as Rector of the University, Heidegger self-consciously deployed the language of National Socialism, to garner support by aligning his ideas about education with the party's ideology. In that speech, titled 'Der deutsche Student als Arbeiter', Heidegger argued that students should become 'Arbeiter' in service to the German state and therefore the nation.¹¹ In the three-way comparison I had planned with Hesse and Wittgenstein, Heidegger transformed gradually into a real-world Faust, a symbolic figure for the intellectual hubris that Hesse and Wittgenstein were working against, and so I eventually dropped his texts from the comparison. Heidegger's shadow hovers on the edge of this thesis, as someone who shared Wittgenstein's and Hesse's cultural pessimism and dissatisfaction with educational institutions, but who as it were, "went in the wrong direction", towards a dogmatic view of education in the 1930s that led to his involvement with National Socialism.

Heidegger's turn to National Socialism was extreme, but his motivation stemmed from a source that will be familiar with many of us working in academia

¹¹ Martin Heidegger, *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges, 1910-1976*, Gesamtausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2000), BAND 16, p. 206.

today. It is the obligation we feel (and indeed, we *have*) to undertake research as a form of public service. Heidegger's dissatisfaction with cultural and intellectual life is expressed when he says that he finds himself within a 'Krise', in which 'der Zusammenhang zwischen der Wissenschaft und einem wirksamen Bildungsideal abgerissen ist'.¹² *Bildung* had lost its efficacy and had become corrupted, in Heidegger's view. In 'Die deutsche Universität' in 1934, Heidegger denounced research that was being undertaken without purpose: 'Forschung um der Forschung willen, gleichgültig was erforscht wird'.¹³ Research had become self-indulgent, which consequently had a negative effect on teaching. According to Heidegger, teaching must spring from research, 'aber die Uferlosigkeit der Forschung hat die Lehre ziellos gemacht.'¹⁴ The trend of specialisation in academia has continued into the 21st century. Stephen Mulhall, commenting on philosophy in an anglophone university context in 2013, questioned 'how far do our departments make room for raising the question of how their various activities relate to each other, as opposed to being an assemblage of self-sufficient enterprises [...]?'¹⁵ Unless the situation improved, Mulhall argued, philosophers 'should not heap all the blame for our present cultural irrelevance on either universities or governments, as if as our fate could have been forced upon us only from without.'¹⁶

¹² Martin Heidegger, *Einleitung in Die Philosophie*, ed. by Otto Saame and Ina Saame-Speidel, Gesamtausgabe, II. Abteilung, Vorlesungen 1919-1944 (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1996), BAND 27, p. 31.

¹³ Heidegger, BAND 16, p. 296.

¹⁴ Heidegger, BAND 16, p. 305.

¹⁵ Stephen Mulhall, 'The Meaning of Being and the Possibility of Discourse', in *Wittgenstein and Heidegger: Pathways and Provocations*, ed. by David Egan, Stephen Reynolds, and Aaron Wendland (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), p. 28

<<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/oxford/detail.action?docID=1221494>> [accessed 26 September 2023].

¹⁶ Mulhall, pp. 28-29.

Heidegger also perceived that, as academic disciplines became increasingly specialised, they were perceived as the pursuit of a privileged class. A few years after 'Die deutsche Universität' he remarked in his private notebooks, the *Schwarze Hefte*, that '»Bildung« ist zwar mit Recht verpönt als Besitzvorrecht einer Klasse'.¹⁷ The use of the term 'Klasse' is evidence of Heidegger's awareness of the appeal of national socialism to people who shared an anti-bourgeois sentiment. By using this term, Heidegger shrewdly aligns himself with the National Socialist movement. Yet his observation was astute: that 'Bildung' had attained negative connotations, as it had become a term that was associated with privileged access to a cultural education. Any validity of Heidegger's point about bourgeois intellectual complacency, however, is undermined by the populist rhetoric he employs to place philosophy (and therefore himself) at the centre of a shakeup of the German higher education system. For example, he proposed in the *Rektoratsrede* that German students undertake 'Wissensdienst' alongside *Arbeitsdienst* and *Wehrdienst*, quite possibly to assert the value of philosophical pursuits alongside these National Socialist policies.¹⁸ In an effort to appeal to policymakers and the public, Heidegger's rhetoric of *Bildungs*-reform manifests itself as populism. He also implies that academic freedom is overrated, declaring 'Die vielbesungene »akademische Freiheit« wird aus der deutschen Universität verstoßen.'¹⁹ His unbridled ambition to reshape university life manifested itself in a will to destroy the very freedom that enables open-minded research.

¹⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Überlegungen II-VI (schwarze Hefte 1931-1938)*, ed. by Peter Trawny, Gesamtausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2014), BAND 94, p. 498.

¹⁸ Heidegger, BAND 16, p. 206.

¹⁹ Heidegger, BAND 16, p. 113.

Heidegger gradually died off from the tripartite comparison due to my increasing conviction of the Faustian nature of his philosophical ambitions. His ambition to make progress in his field was marred by an egotistical striving for knowledge and power. As Heidegger faded into the background, I became more focussed on why Wittgenstein's and Hesse's warnings against intellectual hubris are important for academic institutions today. I became interested in demonstrating how both *PU* and *GPS* use their respective "games" as devices to work against Faustian hubris through the form and content of their work. In Chapters 1 and 2, I will examine the contemporary context in which these works were written to understand the audiences Wittgenstein and Hesse anticipated for their works. I argue that both authors acknowledge that intellectual hubris has its source in, to use Wittgenstein's own term, a 'craving for generality'.²⁰ Wittgenstein's phrase is a useful shorthand what for Mulhall describes as the impulse underlying philosophy: 'Philosophy is the place at which finite human understanding endlessly attempts, and as endlessly fails, to take itself in as a whole; and it thereby reveals that it is internal to the nature of finite beings to be subject to the mysterious, unsatisfiable desire to transcend their own finitude.'²¹ Similar to the idea of 'intellectual hubris' coined by Cornils, what Mulhall describes is essentially a Faustian, tragic condition that can afflict intellectually ambitious individuals. Through Wittgenstein, we will explore the consequences of succumbing to the 'craving' at an individual level, and through Hesse the consequences at an institutional level.

²⁰ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Preliminary Studies for the 'Philosophical Investigations' Generally Known as the Blue and Brown Books* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), p. 17.

²¹ Mulhall, p. 33.

How does the idea of intellectual hubris connect with the idea of *Bildung*?

The road that led Faust to hubris is not dissimilar to the soul-searching journey of undertaken by the protagonist of a *Bildungsroman*. In the essay, 'Modernism and the Bildungsroman', Russell Berman suggests that 'the Bildungsroman derives from the Christian narrative of the journey of the soul towards salvation', but that in secular terms it could be thought of as 'the search for meaning':

Of course not every *Bildungsroman* has that same emphatically religious or philosophical scope; nevertheless the search for meaning is always, ultimately, a search for God - even if for the moderns it takes place in a godless world - and it is precisely this proximity of *The Magic Mountain* to *Parzival* which Mann himself conceded: the hero, he writes, 'is forever searching for the Grail - that is to say, the Highest: knowledge, wisdom, consecration, the philosopher's stone, *aurum potabile*, the elixir of life'.²²

Faust undertook a failed journey to possess knowledge in its ultimate, perfect form, and Heidegger undertook a similar journey to position philosophy as the central, crowning discipline of a new kind of university education. *Bildung*, in its broadest sense, can be spiritually and intellectually enriching, but it can also lead to an inflated sense of the importance of our search for knowledge as akin to a search for 'the Grail', 'the Highest', and so on. In the context of a higher education institution, this kind of hubris is unhelpful for two reasons: firstly, because it elevates the ego of individual academics over others, thereby discouraging collaboration and sharing of knowledge; secondly, because it gives academics a false sense of their own superiority as questers for 'the Highest', as opposed to others who lead a less scholarly life. The pursuit of the superlative

²² Russell A. Berman, 'Modernism and the Bildungsroman: Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Modern German Novel*, ed. by Graham Bartram, Cambridge Companions to Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 77-92 (p. 80) <<https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521482534.006>>. Quotation from Mann taken from: Thomas Mann, 'The making of *The Magic Mountain*', in *The Magic Mountain*, trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York, 1955), p. 725.

also leads to a false belief in the possibility of a perfect, unshakeable conclusion to one's search for knowledge (when, in reality, there is always more to learn).

The question I would like to explore through the work of Wittgenstein and Hesse is: how do we help people to learn to think for themselves (to become well-rounded, independent agents) in an institutional environment that is necessarily conformist? How can students be taught to think for themselves, without inadvertently encouraging hubris in turn? Clearly, a balance must be maintained. These questions lie at the very heart of the German concept of *Bildung*. Both Wittgenstein and Hesse seem to subscribe (explicitly or implicitly) to a belief in *Bildung* in its 19th century sense: as an educative process of personal development, through traditional means (e.g. reading the literary canonical works) but also through experiences that shape their lives and therefore their characters. They perceive a tension at the heart of learning within institutional environments, which is also present at the heart of *Bildung*, and indeed of play itself. If *Bildung* is a continual process of learning through experience rather than by theoretical means, can it ever be *taught* in an institution? Likewise, would it be possible to teach a game through entirely theoretical means? Could you imagine learning a game without ever having to play it? And what constitutes the *use* of play, if any? It is a purposeful activity without having any function per se; it can be enjoyed for its own sake; but lacking a function does not mean that play is a dispensable part of our culture - likewise, what purpose can *Bildung* serve, for Wittgenstein and Hesse in their work, but also especially today? I see many of the questions arising about games - Wittgenstein's language-games and Hesse's Glass Bead Game - as analogous to those of *Bildung*, as well as about the purpose of the humanities more generally.

These questions about *Bildung* predate the 20th century, and have not yet found resolution. In a gradual process that takes place between the late nineteenth and the mid-twentieth centuries, *Bildung* becomes institutionalised in German higher education systems (most famously by Humboldt), in order to disseminate it more widely. Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, both of whom were particularly influential on the young Hesse and Wittgenstein, were unhappy with the institutionalisation of *Bildung*.²³ The mode of mass dissemination through the academy detracted from the necessarily personal and experiential nature of the process of *Bildung*. I regard Hesse and Wittgenstein as thinking in the same vein, and that same problem of whether *Bildung* - which is meant to bring about a *personal* transformation - can be taught on a large scale within an institutional setting, without becoming a mere blueprint or mould stamped onto individuals. Such themes arise in some of Hesse's earliest works, such as *Unterm Rad*, a novel in which a school pupil is caught between his passion for learning the Greek language and the oppressive pressure to perform and conform to academic standards (based on Hesse's own breakdown as a boy at a seminary). These themes are echoed in *Das Glasperlenspiel*, a novel set in a fictional province governed by its academic institutions, whose inhabitants devote themselves to a cloistered life of learning. Feeling disenchanted with academic philosophy following the publication of *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, Wittgenstein became a primary school teacher in rural Austria, and took an active interest in transforming the way his pupils were taught. Dissatisfied with existing teaching

²³ Cf. Schopenhauer, 'Selbstdenken statt Gelehrsamkeit', in *Was ist Bildung? Eine Textanthologie*, ed. by Heiner Hastedt (Stuttgart: Reclam Verlag, 2012), pp. 164-67; Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, 'Drittes Stück: Schopenhauer Als Erzieher', in *Die Geburt Der Tragödie. Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen: Erstes Bis Viertes Stück*. (Leipzig: C. G. Raumann, 1903), pp. 385-496 <<http://dbooks.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/books/PDFs/303605281.pdf>> [accessed 28 September 2023].

methods and materials for helping pupils with their spelling, he decided to get his pupils to write their own spelling dictionaries, as a way of engaging them more actively in their learning. They were given paper and string to bind their own books, and had to write down words that they spelled wrong, in order to refer back to.

However, neither Wittgenstein or Hesse could be described as educational theorists or philosophers of education, and they do not represent a continuation of the *Bildung* tradition following on from Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. In this thesis, the term 'Bildung' will provide a shorthand for a specific type of education that Wittgenstein and Hesse were interested in, which involves a balance of personal and intellectual development, and of reverence for tradition and "going one's own way". Its outcome is a genuine transformation of oneself, where you learn to know your own mind - in the sense of being able to form an opinion that may be counter to convention, but also in the sense of being self-aware or self-critical enough that you are receptive to other people's ideas. *Bildung* will feature frequently, but I use it where possibly with a light touch (for reasons explained below, I find *Bildung* a useful term for tying together my comparison, but this thesis is not 'about' *Bildung*).

The questions that arise from the dual nature of *Bildung* are not answered directly in *PU* and *GPS*. Instead, they are explored and opened up through the games analogies. Play is a purposive yet purpose-less activity; ludo can be played to win; tennis can be played to get fit; chess can be played to train the mind; but all of these can also be done "for their own sake". This too is similar to a humanities education, where students are expected to comply with certain

principles, but humanities training does not have a clear application beyond the university (although that does not necessarily make a humanities education useless). There could be an endless debate about the value and purpose of the humanities - is their purpose an intellectual training according to a shared standard or “rules”? Or is it more about individual character formation? On the one hand, the humanities are widely regarded as having value. On the other hand, those who argue that the humanities are learned and researched “for their own sake” risk becoming out of touch; like the child-like inhabitants of Hesse’s novel, who become wholly absorbed in their own game.

This thesis has been written to retrace the journey I made through the process of researching how and why Wittgenstein and Hesse chose to draw an analogy between games, language and learning. I would like to convey through this thesis what I have learned by reading these two texts together: that being self-critical and questioning the values and premises on which education is based (at an institutional level, but also individual) is vital for education to continue to do what it is meant to do, that is to bring about a genuine transformational development in individuals, to encourage them to think for themselves when they leave the structure in which they were taught for the structures society has built (sometimes the same, sometimes different). Rule following practices can be helpful for learning, canons and grammars are useful, but they must always be questioned for their fitness for purpose, their relevance - all these terms are slippery, but if no questioning takes place at all, the rule-following becomes merely ritualistic. The institution does not grow or evolve over time; it stays the same and ossifies. The gap between it and the ‘real world’ widens; it becomes a class within a class system. It accrues an unfounded sense of the importance of

its own rules, not realising that to the outside their rules are no more significant than those of a game.

As for the importance of these “findings”, I can only say that realising these things has informed my research and teaching practices. By contemplating the comparison I have drawn, perhaps other people will be inspired to read the books for themselves. I have not encountered many other people who have read both *PU* and *GPS*. Those people I met who *had* read both texts tended to have read the novel in the distant past (usually people who associated Hesse with their generation’s younger years), and the comparison did not sit freshly in their mind. As Wittgenstein once remarked, ‘Ein gutes Gleichnis erfrischt den Verstand’.²⁴ There may not be any *new* realisation for readers of this thesis - perhaps only a reminder, a moment of clarity, or a recommendation to them of two texts to compare in a new light.

Justification of Comparison - Why have I chosen these texts?

Why do these texts make a good fit together? While there is no evidence that Wittgenstein read Hesse or vice versa, they have mutual literary and philosophical influences and tastes in contemporary writers. For example, they were both influenced by Goethe, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer (all authors associated with *Bildung* in German thought and literature). In a contemporary context, their shared literary tastes ranged widely from the satirical writer and anti-feuilletonist Karl Kraus, Fyodor Dostoevsky (*The Brothers Karazamov*), to the Indian writer

²⁴ VB, p. 3.

Rabindranath Tagore.²⁵ Aside for their fondness for satire, “serious” 19th century literature, and Eastern mysticism, their dislikes also converge at some points - both were cautiously sceptical about Heidegger’s philosophy (even though comparisons have been drawn between their work and his work) and Esperanto.²⁶ Their circles seem to at some points almost to touch. For example, Bertrand Russell, Wittgenstein’s tutor at Cambridge, corresponded with Hesse’s friend and fellow writer, Romain Rolland.²⁷ In 1919, Rolland penned the ‘Declaration of the Independence of the Mind’, a manifesto undersigned by prominent intellectuals, including Hesse and apparently Russell also,²⁸ as a mutual commitment to honour truth and peace in a post-war world.²⁹ As we will see in Chapters 1 and 2, both Wittgenstein and Hesse both felt alienated from their time, out of place in the 20th century, and shared a sense of cultural decline.

There are of course numerous other writers who shared this sentiment, so why did I choose Hesse and Wittgenstein in particular? I was fascinated by their

²⁵ Hesse’s interest in the writer is evident from his reviews and needs no explanation due to his well-documented interest in Asian literature and thought, although it must be noted that Hesse did not rank Tagore in particularly high regard. (Martin Kampchen, ‘Rabindranath Tagore and Germany’, *Indian Literature*, 33.3 (137) (1990), 109-40, p. 122). Ray Monk describes an anecdote regarding Wittgenstein, when he took a book of Tagore’s poems (perhaps the *Gitanjali*) to read at meetings of the Vienna Circle. (Monk, p. 243.) He also later undertook a “re-translation” of Tagore’s play, *The King of the Dark Chamber* with Yorick Smythies. The play had been translated into English already, but Wittgenstein found the language archaic, which detracted from the important themes of the play, hence he undertook a revision of the English language text (not being familiar with Bengali himself). This suggests a somewhat deeper interest than the general Tagore craze of the 1920s. The “translation” is published in *Wittgenstein’s Whewell’s Court Lectures*, ed. by Bernhard Ritters and Volker A. Munz (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2017), pp. 325-33 <<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119166399.ch11>>.

²⁶ Letter to Felix Lützkendorf, May 1950, Hermann Hesse, *Briefe*, Erweiterte Ausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1964), pp. 327-28. VB, p. 60.

²⁷ ‘Romain Rolland’, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2023 <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Romain-Rolland>> [accessed 28 September 2023].

²⁸ Maria Popova, ‘Declaration of the Independence of the Mind: An Extraordinary 1919 Manifesto Signed by Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell, Jane Addams, and Other Luminaries’, *The Marginalian*, 2015 <<https://www.themarginalian.org/2015/07/07/declaration-of-the-independence-of-the-mind-romain-rolland/>> [accessed 28 September 2023].

²⁹ Stefan Zweig, *Romain Rolland: The Man and His Work*, trans. by Cedar Paul and Eden Paul, 2011 <<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/34888>> [accessed 28 September 2023]. For the ‘Declaration’, see Chapter 22.

shared figurative use of “games”, and in Chapters 1 and 2 I will investigate why “games” may have entered their work. I could not have written about Heidegger, or Mann, for example, because neither of them use that analogy to contemplate the relationship between culture and learning. Far from being an incidental part of their work, I would like to argue that choosing “games” as a central analogy in their work was a considered choice on the part of Wittgenstein and Hesse, to address their concerns about intellectual life and the place of tradition, convention, and culture in contemporary life.

Serendipitous or not, Hesse and Wittgenstein are two writers who are writing about play contemporaneously, and in response to similar concerns about education, culture, and what their current state meant for *Bildung* on an individual and institutional level. *PU* and *GPS* make a good comparison because their respective “games” are represented in a subtly different but complementary way. Beginning with *PU*, Wittgenstein’s language-games are a device that work with his dialogic, aphoristic style to unseat the reader’s assumptions and expectations, to allow them to address their intellectual hubris, that is their ‘craving for generality’. We might see why this could be useful for individual philosophers - even therapeutic, a way out of an all-consuming but never-fulfilled search for a theory of everything. But other than calming the Faustian fires of a few over-zealous academics, does Wittgenstein’s work have relevance beyond the personal level at which he wanted it to take effect? I would argue that *GPS*, a story about a game played on the scale of an entire society, shows how intellectual hubris, at the *institutional* level, can be damaging for the reputation and future of higher education.

While Wittgenstein's *PU* seeks to help people therapeutically come to terms with and therefore treat their own intellectual hubris, Hesse's novel gives us insight into the *causes* of the 'craving for generality'. This difference in their portrayal of intellectual hubris is evident in their different angles on 'games'. On the one hand, Wittgenstein emphasises rules - how they can be strict or act as mere guidelines, how they can guide behaviour without being binding - in order to think about the role convention plays in the way we lead our life (our *Lebensformen*). Games are key to his 'ordinary' language philosophy - if we see the way we use words as 'just' a game, we are less likely to attach overblown, metaphysical significance to particular words. Seeing something 'as' or as 'just' a game for Wittgenstein is the key to bringing our intellectual high-mindedness back down to earth to something more everyday. In focussing on the rule-following aspects of games Wittgenstein is determined to present games as fundamentally ordinary and everyday - they are just part of how we live our lives with one another.

Hesse, on the other hand, picks up on the extraordinary aspect of games - their capacity to fascinate us, to hold our attention captive, to fully absorb our attention. We can talk of 'game-worlds' and elite players - play is at once playful and 'just a game', but also something to be taken seriously too. Hesse's story traces its development within an entire culture over the course of several centuries through the fascination with a single Game. His focus on the extraordinary nature of games is complementary to Wittgenstein's. Thus, Wittgenstein helps us to see alternatives to utopian readings of *GPS* as the 'extraordinary' pinnacle of intellectual life; and Hesse helps us to see what is missing from Wittgenstein's overemphasis of the ordinariness of play - an

acknowledgement of the captivating fascination that games (and by extension, our forms of life) can have for us. In this way I believe that reading *GPS* and *PU* alongside one another help us to better realise their shared ambition, which is to undermine intellectual hubris and demonstrate the tension of shared, ‘rule-following’ communal practice or convention within an institution, with higher education’s (especially the humanities’) aim to facilitate students to think creatively and independently.

Methodology - What do I mean by ‘Bildung’?

How do I understand ‘Bildung’, and do I intend to use it in my thesis?

It is generally agreed that *Bildung* is a slippery term that is hard to pin down to any one definition. This is precisely why I like it. According to Russell Berman, *Bildung* has a three-fold meaning of ‘development, internal growth and culture’.³⁰ Bollenbeck highlights the paradox of *Bildung* as ‘ein Resultat und ein Prozeß’, comprising the simultaneous processes of ‘*bilden*’ (through external influences) and ‘*sich bilden*’ (autodidacts finding their own way).³¹ The ambiguity of *Bildung* has earned it a lengthy entry in the *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, which notes ‘intellectual cultivation, the divine imprint on the human mind, the integration of the individual into society’ among its possible meanings.³² These do not, as it were, represent multiple but distinct possible translations. The *Dictionary’s* authors explain that ‘the persistence of secondary meanings that are not

³⁰ Berman, p. 78.

³¹ Georg Bollenbeck, *Bildung und Kultur: Glanz und Elend eines deutschen Deutungsmusters*, 2. Auflage (Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1994), p. 105.

³² Barbara Cassin et al., *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 111
<<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/oxford/detail.action?docID=1543267>> [accessed 28 March 2019].

eliminated by the choice of a primary meaning but are always conveyed in the background.’³³ This is the advantage of using the term *Bildung* for the issues that I wish to discuss in this thesis. *Bildung* is a handy way of signalling the interconnectedness of culture, education and personal development.

By using *Bildung* to talk about what it is Wittgenstein and Hesse are trying to achieve in my pedagogical reading of *PU* and *GPS*, I am also indicating that they are operating within a literary-philosophical dimension (not a theoretical one, nor solely philosophical).

The second advantage of using the term ‘*Bildung*’ is that it is *not* a universally understood theoretical concept, or an educational theory. There is a personal, experiential dimension to *Bildung* that brings together the vast, faceless dimensions of culture and education into a process that produces a human being. I believe that this personal, non-theoretical dimension is key to understanding Wittgenstein’s and Hesse’s texts. If I had wanted to know about ‘learning’ and ‘culture’, I could have done my research on a theoretical text, such as the philosopher John Dewey’s *Experience and Education*, which contains many of the points I have outlined above in the definition of *Bildung*. At the beginning of the book, Dewey remarks that ‘The history of educational theory is marked by opposition between the idea that education is development from within and that it is formation from without’.³⁴ Dewey’s juxtaposition of ‘traditional’ and ‘progressive’ educational theories runs along a similar line to Bollenbeck’s distinction between *bilden* and *sich bilden*: ‘To imposition from above is opposed

³³ Cassin et al., p. 111.

³⁴ John Dewey, *Experience and Education*, The Kappa Delta Pi Lecture Series. [No. 10], xii, p.2 l., 116 p. (New York: The Macmillan company, 1938), p. 1
<://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001117419>.

expression and cultivation of individuality; to external discipline is opposed free activity; to learning from texts and teachers, learning through experience [...].'³⁵ I came to Dewey's text at quite a late stage in my research, and found that it confirmed many of the things I felt that Hesse and Wittgenstein only hinted at implicitly. The understanding of learning as an inherently personal experience through Dewey might therefore be seen as a possible shortcut that bypasses reading *PU* and *GPS*. However, it was the narrative frameworks and styles in both works that got me thinking. Drawing an analogy between games and the language/practices that academics move within was a literary act undertaken by Wittgenstein and Hesse, that helped me to develop a more critical attitude to my own way of life, in a way that reading about the concept of learning as experience did not achieve. Wittgenstein's style is aphoristic, fragmented, anecdotal, and conversational, and Hesse's variation on the *Bildungsroman* speaks with the voice of an academic institution. The point of the form that Wittgenstein's and Hesse's writing takes is that we come to learn the ideas through experience that Dewey lays out in his text. There is no shortcut.

What is the relevance of *Bildung* to institutions? The Romantic ideal of *Bildung* was not only personal, but in some cases also social - that is to say, utopian. Frederick Beiser writes that,

Schiller, Novalis, and Schleiermacher all assume that the perfect society or state is like a work of art because there is an organic unity between the individual and the social whole, which is governed neither by physical nor moral constraints but only free interaction. The early romantic ideal of utopia was therefore the creation of a social or political work of art. This aesthetic whole would be a *Bildungsanstalt*, a society in which people would educate one another through the free exchange of their personalities and ideas. The romantic salons, in Berlin and Jena, were fledgling attempts to put this ideal into practice. If life were only one grand salon, one long learning experience in which everyone participated, the romantics

³⁵ Dewey, pp. 5-6.

believed, then society would indeed become a work of art, and this life “the most beautiful of all possible worlds.”³⁶

Readers who are already familiar with *GPS* will see clearly that this is a moment in German literary and intellectual history that inspires the society of Castalia. In practical terms of realising this utopian vision, Humboldt wrote about questions concerning integrating *Bildung* into academic life. Fichte and Schelling, although not known for their association with the term *Bildung* specifically, were concerned with similar issues in scholarly life using different terminology.³⁷ For example, what role should the state play vis-à-vis universities? How could professors deliver lectures in such a way that they were not merely imparting knowledge to passive vessels, but rather help their students develop personally (or morally) as well as intellectually? To what extent should academic freedom be allowed - would this create disciplinary issues, or allow individual subjects to branch too far away from the united goal *Bildung* would imply? Or is freedom a prerequisite for facilitating personal and moral growth? From these discussions, it is clear that *Bildung* cannot enter institutions unproblematically. *Bildung* may be all very well for the individual protagonist of the Bildungsroman; but if *Bildung* is to have an ethical impact at the societal level, it would have to be taught to people en masse. To what extent can *Bildung* be reproduced in this way without contradicting the principles of ‘sich bilden’?

³⁶ Frederick C. Beiser, ‘The Concept of Bildung in Early German Romanticism’, in *The Romantic Imperative, The Concept of Early German Romanticism* (Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 88-105 (pp. 97-98) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1c99bkt.10>> [accessed 15 November 2020].

³⁷ See Humboldt, ‘Theorie der Bildung des Menschen’, ‘Programm und praktische Reform’, ‘Grenzen des Staats’ published in *Was ist Bildung? Eine Textanthologie*, ed. by Heiner Hastedt (Stuttgart: Reclam Verlag, 2012); Fichte, ‘Über die Bestimmung des Gelehrten’ published in *Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Einige Vorlesungen Über Die Bestimmung Des Gelehrten* (Jena; Bei Christian Ernst Gabler, 1794); Schelling, ‘Über die wissenschaftliche und sittliche Bestimmung der Akademien’ published in Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *Vorlesungen Über Die Methode Des Academischen Studium* (Tübingen: J.G. Cotta, 1803).

Bildung itself has almost become an institution - it has become canonised. Becoming 'gebildet' does not necessarily mean anything profound anymore. As we will see in Hesse's eyes *Bildung* had ceased to be a process of self-transformation and had instead a mode of self-flattery, losing any ethical significance it formerly had. 'Gebildet' can also be a value judgement, a way of evaluating one's status in society, or sorting the *Gebildeten* from the *Halbgebildeten*.³⁸ The 20th century is an interesting time to be looking at *Bildung*, because the humanist, somewhat idealistic values on which it is based are called into question after two devastating wars, mass political movements and the popularisation of culture.

In the 20th century, the limitations of *Bildung* become clear. It is not an incorruptible Romantic ideal. Although the principles of *Bildung* appear to be undogmatic on the surface, once it has become institutionalised it can quickly become the basis of a dogma (where the balance is shifted too much towards *Bildung*). In a *Bildungsroman*, Berman notes, 'the hero's education, undogmatic as it may appear to be, takes place with reference to a particularly privileged curriculum, works of art or, collectively, culture as canon'.³⁹ Another limitation of *Bildung* is that the tradition of *Bildung*, philosophical and in terms of the *Bildungsroman*, is anachronistic. (The novel genre was only coined in the 19th century after the fact by Morgenstern.) In some ways this makes it a good term for talking about Hesse and Wittgenstein, precisely because of their pre-20th century

³⁸ In 'Jargon der Eigentlichkeit', Theodor Adorno criticises a mode of philosophical thought and expression that he diagnoses as 'das deutsche Symptom fortschreitender Halbbildung', associating it with Heidegger's esoteric style and the 'faschistischen Brauch, der das Plebiszitäre und Elitäre weise mixt.' Adorno regards the linguistic style dangerous in part because it entails a 'blank nominalistischen Sprachtheorie', according to which 'die Worte austauschbare Spielmarken sind'. Note the derogatory association of 'Spiel' with a 'half' education and the ideological corruption of language use. (p.425, p.417, p.418) Theodor Adorno, 'Jargon der Eigentlichkeit', in *Negative Dialektik Jargon der Eigentlichkeit*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann, *Gesammelte Schriften, Band 6* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), BAND 6, 413-523.

³⁹ Berman, p. 78.

tastes and values. But for my thesis, and for describing the relevance of their writing for a 21st century audience, I do not think *Bildung* necessarily cuts it - here especially, you will find me slipping into alternative terminology, without fixing on a dogma for the future. I would like you to understand that 'Bildung' for the purposes of this thesis is a springboard, not a box. Play and games, I believe, is where we start to find our feet again with Wittgenstein and Hesse after the leap.

At this point I should be careful to make clear that it is not my project to examine the possibility of *Bildung* surviving into the 20th century. This is for instance what Berman regards as the aim of Thomas Mann's novel, *Der Zauberberg*: 'The novel therefore is examining the prewar project of *Bildung* retrospectively and asking whether it can be rescued, in whatever transformed character, into the postwar world.'⁴⁰ My thesis will not be investigating whether *Bildung* survives into the 20th century. That would be a huge and not very informative project, given that, in the case of the *Bildungsroman* tradition, such "traditions" are established somewhat anachronistically anyway. For instance, it could be argued, as Tobias Boes does, that there is no novel that truly fits the remit of the *Bildungsroman*.⁴¹ For example, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* is often used as a starting point for book-length studies of the genre,⁴² but some critics such as Martin Swales argue that it was in fact already re-shaping the idea of what a *Bildungsroman* should be.

⁴⁰ Berman, p. 84.

⁴¹ Tobias Boes, *Formative Fictions: Nationalism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Bildungsroman* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2012) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.7591/cornell/9780801451775.001.0001>> [accessed 16 June 2019].

⁴² E.g. Michael Minden, *The German Bildungsroman: Incest and Inheritance*, Cambridge Studies in German (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁴³ Can a work begin a new tradition *and* simultaneously reform that tradition? It is a somewhat paradoxical position.

To summarise my methodology, the term *Bildung* is going to be used with a light touch, as a helpful way of highlighting the significant overlap in Wittgenstein's and Hesse's literary-philosophical influences (Goethe, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, etc.); and it helps us to think about their interests in teaching, learning, self-fashioning, culture and education as connected, and as part of a long conversation in the German-speaking context about the possibility of the education of the self within and beyond institutions (something that the term "education" alone does not necessarily cover). I am not going to try to fit my authors into a *Bildung* mould, to say they do or do not continue an 18th and 19th century project; this would involve defining what that project historically *was*, and this is something incomplete that has already taken several book-length investigations. I will not shackle my authors to *Bildung* if what they wish to say about pedagogical issues goes beyond *Bildung*; this is why you will see me consistently slipping between *Bildung* and other English equivalents such "education", "cultivation" or "learning". There are also further members of this semantic family, such as Rorty's 'edification', Cavell's 'moral perfectionism', Foucault's 'askesis', and Nussbaum's 'Socratic' method.⁴⁴ Everything Wittgenstein and Hesse wish to say cannot be squarely encapsulated within *Bildung*, which by

⁴³ Martin Swales, *The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse* (Princeton University Press, 1978), JSTOR <<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt13x14cn>>.

⁴⁴Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); Stanley Cavell, 'Moral Perfectionism', in *The Cavell Reader*, ed. by Stephen Mulhall, Blackwell Readers (Cambridge, MA; Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 353-69; Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 2: The Use of Pleasure*, trans. by Robert Hurley, Reissue edition (New York: Vintage, 1990).; Martha Nussbaum, *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

the time of their writing had already become an aged institution. As a highly revered but ageing relic, we may find at some points that it would be more helpful to throw it away, once we have climbed into our comparison.

Literature Review - Where does my research fit within the field?

Summary of my reading

I'm reading Hesse and Wittgenstein as writing about a tension at the heart of *Bildung* - on the one hand, constrained rule-following practices, according to tradition/convention/ a literary canon, and on the other hand the organic growth of the individual, freedom, the independently thinking individual that these institutional learning practices are meant to produce. There is no "solution" to the tension, but it has to be born in mind; I would suggest that reading their work encourages researchers to think more critically about themselves and the institutions that they work and teach within. Each person within an institution must be personally responsible for adopting this self-questioning attitude (it cannot be done by a "task force" or a "working group"). If an institution does not do this continually, it will become elitist and irrelevant. It will no longer bring about a genuine transformation (*Bildung*).

Bildung risks losing its valuable ethical dimension - to really transform someone and how they relate to the world around them - once it becomes institutionalised. This is because the practices of *Bildung* become convention, habitual - they are preserved in tradition because they are perceived as valuable; but after being performed for a generation or so, it is easy to forget why they were

valuable practices in the first place. Because they were enshrined in tradition for their conservation, it is also easy to assume the practices of an institution are valuable, without probing for justification. This means that the practices can become outdated and irrelevant - they only have value within the bubble of the members of the institution, who abide by its principles.

Wittgenstein and Hesse are unique in encapsulating this in the analogy of “games” - “games” are essential to this reading, because of the tension between rule-following and spontaneity, free play etc. Furthermore, “games” act as a heuristic device in both works - to see our own teaching and learning practices as a “game” is to see them in a different light, and to allow us to contemplate them.

Where does this reading fit within the literature? I will outline the scope of the field below which my comparison builds on. However, I would first like to signpost the aspects of this study which diverge from what has gone before. My reading is unique in two aspects: in its novel comparison of these two authors, and in its focus on the authors’ use of games. Both Wittgenstein and Hesse have been read as interested in education, but no one has placed them alongside each other in a direct comparison. This pedagogical reading of the two authors is also distinct from what has come before it, insofar that I attach particular significance to the use of “games” or “play” as an analogy for learning and teaching practices. The significance of the “game” analogy comes to light when we regard the “education” that Wittgenstein and Hesse are interested in specifically as “Bildung”. I would argue that games are particularly suited as an analogy to *Bildung*. Its use is not coincidental - no other analogy would have achieved the same effect.

Readings of Wittgenstein

There are various strands of Wittgenstein reception in terms of education, culture and (on a very small scale) *Bildung* which I will outline below. It is my intention to bridge the gaps between these strands in my thesis, and to investigate why games specifically are important for Wittgenstein's linking of culture and education. The cultural readings tend to focus on his private remarks in *Vermischte Bemerkungen* (published in English as *Culture and Value*) whereas the studies on Wittgenstein and education focus mostly on the *PU*, but also his lectures and experiences as a schoolteacher in Austria in the 1920s. There is something of a gap here that I believe understanding the implication of Wittgenstein's choice of analogy can help us with.

In terms of reading Wittgenstein as interested in/ being helpful to issues surrounding education, there has been a burgeoning interest in recent years. Michael Peters and Jeff Stickney have recently brought out a comprehensive volume on this topic, *A Companion to Wittgenstein on Education: Pedagogical Investigations*. Paul Standish has outlined the way in which *PU* is useful to educational theorists and practitioners, by providing a critique of scientific attitudes to teaching, such as behaviourism. He shares the attitude of many of the other authors of Peters' and Stickney's volume that teaching should be informed by practice and experience rather than relying overly on theories. The 'scientific tendencies'⁴⁵ Standish warns against are also in danger of encouraging a generalising or top-down approach to educational policy, abstracting a theory from

⁴⁵ Paul Standish, 'Wittgenstein's Impact on the Philosophy of Education', *Philosophical Investigations*, 41.2 (2018), 223-40 (p. 231) <<https://doi.org/10.1111/phin.12198>>.

quantitative experimental data which may not hold true in all real-life classroom contexts.

For all Wittgenstein's usefulness for educational theorists, Standish is quite right not to set Wittgenstein himself up as an educational theorist. Wittgenstein does not expound a theory or methodology in his writing; we are left to draw inspiration from his aphorisms and records from his students. In Standish's edited volume, *Stanley Cavell and the Education of Grownups*, Cavell coins a helpful phrase for thinking about pedagogical readings without reducing *PU* to a "theory" of education. He writes that rather than thinking of Wittgenstein as a philosopher of education, we can think of 'philosophy as education'.⁴⁶

This leads me to the second vein of pedagogical readings, reading *PU* as a learning process for the reader. In his volume on Wittgenstein in the 1930s, David Stern includes essays describing the influence of Wittgenstein's teaching experience on his later philosophy. For instance, Hans Sluga argues that Wittgenstein's development of a discursive lecturing style was highly influential in bringing out the 'dialogic turn' that we can see in the style of *PU*.⁴⁷ The questioning narrator, and his response to questions from an interlocutor, encourages us to let go of the idea that the philosophical author is the authoritative source of knowledge, expounding a treatise or providing an answer to

⁴⁶ Stanley Cavell, 'Philosophy as Education', in *Stanley Cavell and the Education of Grownups*, ed. by Naoko Saito and Paul Standish (Fordham University Press, 2012), pp. 207-14 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt14bs007.13>>.

⁴⁷ Hans Sluga, 'From Moore's Lecture Notes to Wittgenstein's Blue Book: The Emergence of Wittgenstein's Performative Conception of the Self', in *Wittgenstein in the 1930s: Between the Tractatus and the Investigations*, ed. by David G. Stern (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 125-40 (p. 128) <<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108349260.008>>.

a certain question. The questioning style of *PU* encourages the reader to adopt a similarly questioning attitude to their own philosophical views.

Something which is not addressed in these pedagogical readings of Wittgenstein is how his private comments on culture are related to his lectures on cultural topics (such as aesthetics) and his teaching methods. While Standish acknowledges the usefulness of Wittgenstein when thinking about educational practices, he does not explain the disconnect between Wittgenstein's attitude towards institutions (sceptical at best!) and this 'usefulness' of his work to educational practitioners in institutions. As we shall see, I find it is possible to bridge that gap if we compare Wittgenstein's language-games with Hesse's invention, the Glass Bead Game, to see how language-games can 'play out' within an institutional context.

In our second strand of Wittgenstein reception, there are also quite a few readings of Wittgenstein as interest in culture. In *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin connect Wittgenstein's deep interest in culture and his belief that one should lead an ethical life. They explain that this idea, that 'man's art intimately connected with his moral character',⁴⁸ was strongly influenced by figures such as Schopenhauer and Kraus, and found realisation in contemporary figures like the composer Schönberg and the architect Loos (as well as Wittgenstein himself). This contempt for art without substance and general mood of cultural decline which Wittgenstein shared in is of course something in common with Hesse, as we shall see in Chapter 2. It is from these cultural influences that Janik and Toulmin help us to see why Wittgenstein thought of philosophy as 'Arbeit

⁴⁸ Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), p. 81.

an einem Selbst' as he begins his long journey towards *PU* in the 1930s. This idea of 'work on oneself' is how I see *Bildung* represented in Wittgenstein's work.

Another strain of cultural readings of Wittgenstein is Cavell's essay, 'Declining Decline', which is helpful for thinking of Wittgenstein as a philosopher writing on culture, without providing theories on what 'good' and 'bad' culture is (i.e., without undertaking *Kulturkritik*). This reticence about passing value judgements on culture is what distinguishes Wittgenstein's *Vermischte Bemerkungen* from the work of *Kulturkritiker*, such as Spengler. Wittgenstein's sympathy for Spengler's *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* is well documented, as is his reworking of its ideas in the form of the concept of 'Familienähnlichkeiten' in *PU*. Unlike Spengler, according to Cavell, Wittgenstein is 'Endlessly forgoing, rebuking, parodying philosophy's claim to a privileged perspective on its culture'.⁴⁹

Despite interest in these two core aspects of the concept of *Bildung* - culture and education - there are not many interpretations which explicitly situate Wittgenstein in the literary-philosophical tradition of *Bildung*. *Bildung* is scarcely mentioned in interpretations of Wittgenstein perhaps precisely because Wittgenstein himself doesn't ever seem to mention *Bildung* explicitly (at least in the sense of culture/education, though as we will see in Chapter 1 he uses it in the sense of formation/development, e.g. the formation of an idea). However, as M. W. Rowe and Brian McGuinness have shown,⁵⁰ he carries some of the major influences from the *Bildung* tradition into his work; he has a strong sense of

⁴⁹ Stanley Cavell, *The Cavell Reader*, ed. by Stephen Mulhall (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996), p. 73.

⁵⁰ M. W. Rowe, 'Wittgenstein's Romantic Inheritance', *Philosophy*, 69, 1994, 327-51; M. W. Rowe, 'Goethe and Wittgenstein', *Philosophy*, 66, 1991, 283-303; Brian McGuinness, 'In the Shadow of Goethe: Wittgenstein's Intellectual Project', *European Review*, 10.04 (2002) <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1062798702000364>>.

traditional cultural values and pre-20th century tastes; but despite this reverence for tradition he also has a ‘progressive’ approach to education (in Dewey’s sense) insofar as he orientates his teaching towards the practical (drawing on examples from everyday life) and the experience of his learners (e.g. adopting a discursive format rather than monologic format for his lectures, which feeds into the dialogic style of *PU*). There are many ways in which Wittgenstein could be regarded as participating in the *Bildung* tradition, as I shall elucidate further in Chapters 1 and 3. In the following paragraphs, I will highlight those interpreters who (at least to some extent) share this view.

In a vein similar to Janik and Toulmin’s, Rowe and McGuinness explore Wittgenstein’s abiding interest in Goethe. These studies on Wittgenstein’s interest in building on Goethe’s work will not be explored in detail in this thesis, but they are helpful for established Goethe’s profound influence on Wittgenstein and therefore a shared influence with Hesse. In *Anspielungen und Zitate im Werk Ludwig Wittgensteins* edited by Hans Biesenbach, Goethe is one of the most frequently quoted literary and philosophical figures.⁵¹ McGuinness traces the idea of *Familienähnlichkeit* (which comes to be illustrated in *PU* through the ‘family’ of games) from Goethe’s morphology of plants through Spengler’s appraisal of the organic progression of culture and civilisation to Wittgenstein’s *Vermischte Bemerkungen*. He sees Wittgenstein as viewing himself as “walking in the footsteps of Goethe”, and although the ‘Goethean ideal may have become impossible, [it] was always before his eyes’.⁵² This Goethean ideal is essentially a perpetual process of *Bildung*, although McGuinness does not refer to it as such. Wittgenstein

⁵¹ *Anspielungen und Zitate im Werk Ludwig Wittgensteins*, ed. by Hans Biesenbach, *Erweiterte Neuausgabe*. (Sofia: St. Kliment Ohridski University Press, 2014).

⁵² McGuinness, ‘In the Shadow of Goethe’, p. 451.

had ‘had the ideal aim, too high no doubt, of always learning, always approaching nearer to perfection as a man in nature and among friends.’⁵³

In ‘Wittgenstein’s Romantic Inheritance’, Rowe edges more closely to situating Wittgenstein in a tradition of *Bildung*, by arguing that *PU* has affinities with the *Bildungsroman* (in particular, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, which we know Wittgenstein read⁵⁴). According to Rowe, ‘the spirit of the confessional autobiography hovers over the pages of the *Investigations* itself.’⁵⁵ Although Rowe does not make a distinction between the literary and the philosophical ‘genres’ of *Bildung*, McGuinness does touch on this point regarding Wittgenstein. He comments that, ‘he [Wittgenstein] did not *have* to be a philosopher,’ and that it would ‘be wrong to assume that he fitted into a well-defined subject called philosophy. He (of course he was not the first to do so) was trying to change the philosophy.’⁵⁶ I agree with McGuinness’ caution about situating Wittgenstein within a philosophical project, a) because Wittgenstein was not explicit about any such project and b) because Wittgenstein’s greatest influences from this are *are* literary and c) because Wittgenstein himself is often described as a ‘literary’ philosopher;⁵⁷ and finally, d) because *Bildung* itself is a *literary-philosophical* tradition.

Kevin Cahill is the only reader of Wittgenstein that I have come across who positions the term *Bildung* at the core of their interpretation. Cahill uses the term because he sees it as incorporating three processes that Wittgenstein is interested in in *PU*: “process of training, education and cultural formation”. According to Cahill, Wittgenstein’s version of *Bildung*, formed as a reaction to Spengler’s

⁵³ McGuinness, p. 455.

⁵⁴ The novel is cited by Wittgenstein in *Über Gewißheit*, WERKAUSGABE BAND 8, p. 120.

⁵⁵ Rowe, ‘Wittgenstein’s Romantic Inheritance’, p. 351.

⁵⁶ McGuinness, p. 448.

⁵⁷ *The Literary Wittgenstein*, ed. by John Gibson and Wolfgang Huemer (London: Routledge, 2004).

generalisations about culture, is to bring about the dissipation of our philosophical confusions that have been impressed upon us by Western civilisation and culture. Although I feel that this may be the closest we can get to saying what 'Bildung' means for Wittgenstein, two things are missing from this reading. The first is that Cahill does not pick up on the important ethical dimension of *Bildung* - improved self-awareness of our philosophical assumptions (or 'confusions') is certainly part of the process. But why is it important to correct this confusion? Who cares if a bunch of philosophers are 'confused'? Does Wittgenstein just want to be right, to find the most correct form of philosophy? Becoming self-aware does not determine how we act thereafter - self-awareness alone does not bring about an ethical transformation. As I will argue in Chapter 1, Wittgenstein's version of *Bildung* goes beyond self-awareness and into a tackling of intellectual hubris and therefore our relationship with and attitude towards others. That is a question of ethics - an area Wittgenstein was careful not to preach about, precisely because he felt that it was such an important issue. The idea that ethics cannot be taught is also compatible with the experiential nature of *Bildung* - therefore, I would argue that over and above "clearing up philosophical confusions", Wittgenstein's version of *Bildung* also has an important ethical dimension in *PU*, the roots of which we shall explore in Chapter 1.

Cavell takes up this ethical dimension when he places Wittgenstein in his homemade canon of "Moral Perfectionism" in an essay of the same name. Cavell's intentionally loose canon of moral perfectionists includes many texts from the *Bildung* tradition, such as Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* novels and Nietzsche's *Schopenhauer as Educator*, although *Bildung* is not mentioned as such (perhaps

because Cavell's canon ranges beyond a specifically German context).⁵⁸ Cavell views moral perfectionism as an important process of becoming 'true to oneself', through self-criticism and honesty with oneself.⁵⁹ While Cahill puts great emphasis on the importance of Wittgenstein's version of *Bildung* bringing about a cultural shift in Western civilization through the undermining of its readers' assumptions, Cavell takes an intensely personal, ethical reading of Wittgenstein. I would like to aim somewhere in between, because I believe that Wittgenstein himself felt the diverging pull of these tensions.

This brings me to the second point missing from Cahill's interpretation, which is a suitable explanation for what he acknowledges as the 'striking gap' between the culturally focussed preface Wittgenstein drafts for *Philosophische Bemerkungen* in 1930 and the *PU* at the point of its publication, by which point there is a distinct lack of any comment on *Kultur*. This 'gap' is the rift between Wittgenstein's effusion of private comments on culture, and his apparent reticence to speak or write on the topic for a public audience in his teaching and publications. Reading *GPS* as a *Bildungsroman* alongside Wittgenstein's private comments and public teaching and writing helps us to better understand the reason for this 'gap' or his reticence on the topic of culture and education when it came to writing *PU* for publication. While Cahill tries to reproduce Wittgenstein's model of *Bildung* and what he wanted it to do for others, I view the drafting and redrafting of Wittgenstein's preface and philosophical remarks in the '30s and 40's, as a process of his very own personal *Bildung*.

⁵⁸ Cavell, 'Moral Perfectionism', pp. 357-58.

⁵⁹ Cavell, 'Moral Perfectionism', p. 353.

To summarise, I see my reading of Wittgenstein alongside Hesse with a focus on *Bildung* as performed and represented through games as addressing several gaps in the existing literature. The disconnects that are present in pedagogical and cultural interpretations of Wittgenstein are between: culture and education, institutions and personal development, and ultimately theory and practice. This gap is what Frederick Beiser denotes ‘the final paradox’ of *Bildung* itself:

The paradox of German romanticism is its utter commitment and devotion to the education of humanity, and yet its recognition that it cannot and ought not do anything to achieve it. We are left, then, with a striking gap between theory and practice, which it was the very purpose of romanticism to overcome.⁶⁰

The tensions within games - as ‘free’ playful activity that is nevertheless bound by rules - reflect these many levels of tensions pulling within Wittgenstein’s and Hesse’s own work.

Readings of Hesse

What are the cultural and pedagogical readings of Hesse? Hesse’s interest in culture and what is culturally valuable is well documented in his own writing, and in Chapter 2 I will be exploring his views on *Bildung* with the help of his essay, ‘Eine Bibliothek der Weltliteratur’. Marco Schickling also provides a thorough study of Hesse’s attitudes to past and contemporary culture in his investigation of thousands of reviews and essays of literature written by Hesse in *Hermann Hesse als Literaturkritiker*.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Beiser, p. 105.

⁶¹ Marco Schickling, *Hermann Hesse Als Literaturkritiker* (Heidelberg: Universitäts Verlag Winter GmbH, 2005).

I'm not only interested in Hesse's views on culture, but also on education (which goes hand in hand with culture in *Bildung*). The most thorough pedagogical reading (and one of the few recent book-length studies of Hesse) is Peter Robert's book, *From West to East and Back Again: An Educational Reading of Hermann Hesse's Later Work* (2012).⁶² Roberts' book is helpful to see how Hesse's interests in education consistently link up and evolve through his later work (*Die Morgenlandfahrt* and *GPS*). Roberts also makes reference to preceding works (*Unterm Rad*, *Siddhartha*, *Der Steppenwolf*) to show how Hesse's interest in education, within and beyond institutions, was consistent throughout his life. Roberts also connects Hesse to the 19th century philosophical and literary tradition of *Bildung* (Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Humboldt, Goethe, Schiller). Roberts reads Hesse as participating in this long-standing philosophical conversation on how (or indeed whether) to apply the ideals of *Bildung* at an institutional context. My addition to Robert's work is to focus on the analogy of "game" - why is it so central to his novel that engages most deeply with the issues of institutionalising *Bildung*?

The strength of Roberts' work is that his pedagogical study is not limited to *Bildung* (to which I also plan not to limit my study). There is a wider significance of pedagogical readings of Hesse's work beyond the literary tradition of *Bildung* - you do not necessarily need to understand *Bildung* to understand Hesse (although Hesse may help you to understand *Bildung*). My comparison of Hesse with Wittgenstein will show how his novel can have significance for 'Wittgenstein as educator' readers, such as Standish and Stickney. Reading *GPS* alongside *PU* will

⁶² Peter Roberts, *From West to East and Back Again: An Educational Reading of Hermann Hesse's Later Work* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers, 2012) <<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/oxford/detail.action?docID=3034789>> [accessed 18 June 2019].

reveal why Wittgenstein's choice of language-games as an analogy was so apt; some aspects that his 'game' analogy overlooks, such as the potential for games to belong to an exclusive group of players; and how 'language-games' can be transferred into an institutional setting.

Hesse's indebtedness to the *Bildung* tradition is widely acknowledged, in his reading of its philosophers (Goethe, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer) and in particular his engagement with the *Bildungsroman*. Despite wide acknowledgement of Hesse's indebtedness to this literary genre (Ziolkowski, Halpert, Boes, Swales), it is interesting to note that *GPS* seldom appears in book-length surveys of the *Bildungsroman*. Michael Minden in *The German Bildungsroman: Incest and Inheritance* (1997) does not mention Hesse at all, and *GPS* only receives a cursory mention alongside *Doktor Faustus* in Boes' chapter in *Formative Fictions: Nationalism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Bildungsroman* (2012). Swales is unique in devoting an entire chapter to Hesse in his book, *The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse* (1978).

You will notice that Swales' book is the oldest, and was published following what Mileck calls the 'peak' in 1976 of the 'Hesse Boom in the mid-sixties'.⁶³ Reflecting on that period, David G. Richards reflects that 'the reception of his works proceeded with minimal leadership from critics and scholars, who, on the contrary, have been motivated by Hesse's unexpected popularity to discover why his works have such powerful and apparently lasting popular appeal'.⁶⁴ Ingo Cornils launched his 2009 companion to the work of Hesse by posing the question, 'Is

⁶³ Joseph Mileck, 'Trends in Literary Reception: The Hesse Boom', *The German Quarterly*, 51.3 (1978), 346-54 (p. 348) <<https://doi.org/10.2307/404751>>.

⁶⁴ David G. Richards, *Exploring the Divided Self: Hermann Hesse's Steppenwolf and Its Critics*, *Literary Criticism in Perspective*, 1st ed (Columbia, S.C.: Camden House, 1996), p. 8.

Hesse a writer for aging hippies or is he still relevant for a new generation of readers?⁶⁵ The implied answer to this question is “yes”. Anecdotally, the researchers and teachers I have encountered during my time writing the DPhil who had read *GPS* were predominantly white, male, and over 40. (And when I asked them if they were familiar with the book, pretty much all of them had the initial reaction of: yes, it was great when I read it in my teens/twenties, but is it really relevant now?)

Hesse’s decline in popularity in academic circles is largely down to two factors: his appeal to (formerly) younger readers (which Cornils highlights as a key reason for his lasting relevance in the 21st century⁶⁶) and his nostalgic idealism. I would like to contest that the theme of *Bildung* is not just for (male) younger readers but also for those later in their careers. *GPS* along with *PU* are essential reading for anyone contemplating/undertaking an academic career, particularly for those interested in the principles and values on which academic life and learning are based. Rejecting an author on account of the youth of their readership smacks of snobbishness, which is rooted in a reluctance to engage with what makes Hesse (or any author) popular with a wider, non-academic audience, as if younger readers have no sense of what ‘good literature’ is.

Those who reject Hesse on account of the second factor - his nostalgic idealism - are not entirely wrong. The most common reading of *GPS* is that Hesse presents Castalia as an academic utopia, a *Bildung*-utopia. I have often found *GPS* dismissed, by those older readers I mentioned earlier, as a utopian dream. Cornils,

⁶⁵ *A Companion to the Works of Hermann Hesse*, ed. by Ingo Cornils, Studies in German Literature, Linguistics and Culture (Rochester, N.Y: Camden House, 2009), p. 1.

⁶⁶ Cornils, *A Companion to the Works of Hermann Hesse*, p. 13.

in the recently published *Beyond Tomorrow: German Science Fiction and Utopian Thought in the 20th and 21st Centuries* explains that utopian literature is not necessarily synonymous with wishful thinking; it can be a powerful literary tool for highlighting the assumptions on which the status quo is based, and for imagining (and subsequently working towards) a better world.⁶⁷ I would agree with this timely defence of utopian writing in 2020. However, I would not describe *GPS* as a work of utopian fiction, where the pedagogical province of Castalia is presented as a better alternative to the world as it is. Cornils suggests that ‘Hesse had designed it as a mental and spiritual refuge against the barbarism of National Socialism.’⁶⁸ As I will show in Chapter 2, this is an accurate reading of *GPS* at the beginning of its conception in the 1930s, but the final version of the novel goes far beyond offering a utopian refuge for (literally or metaphorically) exiled European intellectuals in the mid-20th century. Instead of describing *GPS* as a utopian novel, I will argue that it is a novel *about* a utopia, and more specifically a utopian frame of mind. The distinction I wish to make is between considering the novel as trying to present a blueprint of a better world, and the novel as critically observing or even subtly parodying the people living within the society they have created from their blueprint.

The key to my reading of Hesse, coming back to Swales, is the importance of irony in his writing. Swales places Hesse in the final position of his *Bildungsroman* trajectory precisely because the *Bildungsroman* is ‘a novel form that is shot

⁶⁷ Ingo Cornils, *Beyond Tomorrow: German Science Fiction and Utopian Thought in the 20th and 21st Centuries* (Boydell & Brewer, 2020), p. 29, Cambridge Core <<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781787447974.010>>.

⁶⁸ ‘Utopian Experiments: Island Idylls, Glass Beads, and Eugenic Nightmares’, in *Beyond Tomorrow: German Science Fiction and Utopian Thought in the 20th and 21st Centuries*, ed. by Ingo Cornils (Boydell & Brewer, 2020), pp. 110-21 (p. 115) <<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781787447974.010>>.

through with irony, with narratively intimated unease.’⁶⁹ To read the novel as expounding a utopia, failed, flawed or perfect, is to read the novel only for its content, and to overlook its parodic narrative framework. Like Swales, Osman Durrani is another “ironic” reader of *GPS*, warning that readers ‘should beware of accepting the chronicler’s Castalia as an ideal.’⁷⁰ The novel mimics a weighty work of biographical history when in fact it is a work of fiction, about a society that centres on a game. Thomas Mann praised the novel for its irony, writing that he found the ‘parodistic element’ helpful and that the novel retained its ‘Spielfähigkeit’.⁷¹ Ziolkowski follows Mann’s reading of *GPS* as ironic up to a point, but concludes that by the time of narration, Castalia has reformed itself from a flawed utopia into a ‘new and ideal Castalia’⁷² - this I have to disagree with. Likewise, Durrani clarifies that ‘The rebuilding of a better Castalia is not the subject of the novel’. A close reading of *GPS* (as we will see 657

There is a great irony in the way in which the novel’s narrator passes judgement on the flaws of culture and society in the 20th century, from the perspective of an apparently superior society several centuries later, because it becomes clear through the plot of the novel that the future version of society is anything but perfect. According to Durrani, ‘a close examination of Castalia and its institutions at work compels us to consider the possibility that it is in no sense a utopia’.⁷³ At best, Castalian society is run by out-of-touch scholars, and at worst it borders on a blend of dictatorship and bureaucracy. As we will see in Chapter 2,

⁶⁹ Swales, p. 157.

⁷⁰ Osman Durrani, ‘Hermann Hesse’s Castalia: Republic of Scholars or Police State?’, *The Modern Language Review*, 77.3 (1982), pp.665-69 (p. 656).

⁷¹ Thomas Mann, quoted in Theodore Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse: A Study in Theme and Structure* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 65.

⁷² Ziolkowski, p. 329.

⁷³ Durrani, ‘Hermann Hesse’s Castalia: Republic of Scholars or Police State?’, p. 663.

Hesse was attracted to and influenced by dystopian writing, such as Franz Kafka's *Der Prozess*. Durrani, aware of Kafka's influence on Hesse, argues that the novel presents a 'satire of the modern police state'⁷⁴. This reading situates the novel as a response to the Nazi regime, which of course it was. However, if Hesse had wanted to satirize authoritarian regimes, why would he choose to set the novel in a *pedagogical* province? Perhaps there is something about the institutions that are ostensibly meant to *uphold* the freedom of thought that Hesse wants to address.

The metafictional structure of *GPS* (where the narrator constantly draws attention to the incompleteness of his historical account) constantly draws attention to the superficiality of Castalia as a utopia. There is even evidence in Hesse's review of Huxley's *Brave New World* in May 1933 that he valued ironic above utopian writing:

Huxleys utopischer Roman hat alle die angenehmen Eigenschaften seiner früheren Bücher, die guten Einfälle, die artige Laune, die ironische Klugheit, seine Wirkung wird nur abgeschwächt durch das Utopische selbst, durch die Unwirklichkeit seiner Menschen und Situationen.⁷⁵

Huxley's strength, in Hesse's opinion, is his 'ironische Klugheit', and the weakness of his new novel lies in 'das Utopische selbst'. We can only assume that this too was his opinion of *GPS* as he was revising the novel's first chapter at this time. For the Castalian characters, then, Castalia is a utopia, that has fulfilled its purpose of preserving culture and an appreciation of culture. But it is not necessarily a utopia for the author and the readers of the novel, which appears to be the argument that Cornils makes when he claims, 'To build that protective wall against the

⁷⁴ Durrani, 'Hermann Hesse's Castalia: Republic of Scholars or Police State?', pp. 663-64.

⁷⁵ Hermann Hesse, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Volker Michels (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2005), BAND 20, p. 386 <[//catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/003559111](http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/003559111)> [accessed 5 August 2020]. (Aus der Beilage zur »Neuen Rundschau«, Berlin, vom Mai 1933)

forces of evil Hesse employed the classic strategy of utopian writing—namely, declaring that the dystopian present has already been overcome at a given point in the future.’⁷⁶ Instead, in my reading, Hesse underscores the utopian ambitions of his factionary society with irony. As Swales puts it, Hesse ‘offers an affectionate, yet deeply critical, examination of a familiar pattern in German thinking.’⁷⁷

Another layer of irony in *GPS* is that the Castalian narrator regards a game - ‘the Game’ - as the greatest achievement of his civilisation. How, might we ask, can something playful and superficially frivolous be treated with such religious - indeed cultic - reverence? It is ironic that the Game has, to use Mann’s term, lost its ‘Spielfähigkeit’ by becoming the fundament of a new civilisation, by being taken so seriously. A game can be taken as ‘just’ a game, or can indeed be taken seriously by its players - but there can be a point where it is taken too seriously. My intention with this comparative study is that, by reading Hesse with Wittgenstein, I will show how the “game” forms part of Hesse’s strategy to frame the very impulse to utopian fiction - the false dream in the Castalians’ case that “culture”, if preserved and performed correctly, can resolve our present socio-political issues. (Indeed, perhaps this is still an assumption today - that, perhaps, the flaw is not in our society or culture but people not being “educated” enough to vote correctly.) The Game is used like a framing device in Hesse’s novel, as language-games were intended to be. Reading Hesse with Wittgenstein allows us to see alternative readings to the utopian ones. It is not invented to be a utopian solution. It is a play-utopia, in which we can look at our utopian assumptions about

⁷⁶ Cornils, ‘Utopian Experiments: Island Idylls, Glass Beads, and Eugenic Nightmares’, p. 115.

⁷⁷ Swales, p. 141.

education - and how precisely those assumptions might lead to a closed, elitist educational system.

Who is my audience?

This thesis may be helpful to those who are interested in using Wittgenstein to think about institutional forms of education (schools, universities), as *GPS* bridges the gap between Wittgenstein's various language-games and the bigger picture of how institutions work. For anti-dogmatic or ordinary language philosophy readers of Wittgenstein, *GPS* will illustrate how dogma has its source in a (potentially Faustian) desire for a higher plane of knowledge, what Wittgenstein calls a 'craving for generality' - and this craving is not unique to philosophers. In being set within educational institutions, *GPS* gives an example of how we could apply Wittgenstein's language-games within that setting.

In terms of German studies, this thesis will of course find an audience with those who are writing on Hesse at the moment. I also hope that, by showing how Hesse's Game has a similar (though not identical) function to Wittgenstein's language-games, I can provide an alternative to utopian readings of Hesse's novel (which can lead, rightly or wrongly, to the dismissal of Hesse as a nostalgic idealist). More broadly, anyone interested in *Bildung*, and its afterlife in the 20th century, may find something of use here, and find in Wittgenstein a potential addition to the literary-philosophical tradition. For literary theory, readers will be interested in the concepts of cultural value and cultural decline (accompanied by cultural pessimism and *Kulturkritik*), which are also explored in the first two chapters.

Finally, in the humanities more generally, this thesis will be of interest to anyone who contemplates the question of the value of the humanities, how they should be taught, and what might ensure the longevity of higher education institutions. In finding the Game and language-games to be a way of treating intellectual hubris, this thesis also considers to what extent elitism/exclusivity are inevitable or preventable in institutional settings.

Chapter Outline - How will I go about answering my questions?

The story begins in the 1930s, which is an interesting turning point in Wittgenstein's and Hesse's work. The first two chapters will be devoted to Wittgenstein and Hesse respectively, to do some historical digging, to identify and fully explain the "moment" at which their interest in learning and education brings to fruition the birth of the game analogy. Understanding how 'games' arose organically from their priorities during that period will help us to understand what is historically and socially significant about their interest in the relationship between culture and education, at that time but also for us today as we continue to grapple with similar issues (such as the marketisation of higher education; explaining the justification for/usefulness of a humanities degree in times of economic and political crisis; the reassessment of literary canons etc.). This historical background to the analogy also makes clear the distinctively different uses of the games analogy that Hesse and Wittgenstein employ in *PU* and *GPS*, and the significance of those differences for contemplating the relationship between games, culture, learning and institutions.

Chapter 1 will address the gap between Wittgenstein's private comments on culture in *Vermischte Bemerkungen* and his educational practice in his dictated

teaching notes, the *Blue Book* and the *Brown Books*, and his lectures. From this gap we can see that even though Wittgenstein doesn't participate explicitly in the *Bildung* tradition, he is aware of the tensions at its heart and these remain in *PU*. Language-games begin as a way of providing 'clarity' - a 'clear' picture of how culture is constituted of shared collective practices; then subsequently become a tool for teaching, a heuristic device for disarming us of our desire to find a single, all-encompassing rule for why we do what we do or use words the way we do. Games are a case in point - rules are not as simple and unambiguous as they might appear; the search for a rule, by extension, which governs our use of language and somehow describes its underlying logic, is a Faustian mission undertaken under false assumptions. *Bildung* is essentially personal for Wittgenstein - a personal process of transformation not only into a better thinker but more importantly into a virtuous person who avoids intellectual hubris and can be honest with themselves. Language-games are eventually developed in *PU* as a therapeutic way to facilitate an unburdening of ourselves from intellectual hubris.

Chapter 2 will describe Hesse's views on *Bildung*, which in contrast to Wittgenstein's are more explicit, but are similarly un-dogmatic. Hesse, participating explicitly in the *Bildung* tradition, uses the term *Bildung* to mean both the personal process of transformation that Wittgenstein inherits from Schopenhauer, but also "culture" or a "cultural education" more generally. From the outset, Hesse is more interested than Wittgenstein in thinking about the possibility of *Bildung* on the super-personal level within an institution. To what extent is it possible to replicate a necessarily personal engagement with *Kultur*? The textual focus of this chapter will be on Hesse's essay, 'Eine Bibliothek der Weltliteratur', *Die Morgenlandfahrt*, and the first drafts of *GPS*. My intention is to

trace a development in Hesse's work from the cultural pessimist disillusioned with a *Bildung* which has become a commodity for bourgeois consumption (in *Der Steppenwolf*); to a dawning realisation that the juxtaposition between the intellectuals (the 'defenders of culture' who attended the 1935 and 1938 Paris Congresses for the Defence of Culture) and the Fascists is false; a defence of culture is realised as not only futile, but Quixotic (Quixote being, for the purposes of this thesis, a kind of benign cousin of Faust, as he is also guilty of intellectual hubris, but the result is perceived as humorous rather than sinful). Chapter 2 will demonstrate how the self-ironizing approach that Hesse undertakes in *MLF* feeds into the decisions about the premise, structure and narrative voice in *GPS*.

In Chapter 3, I will begin by summarising how Wittgenstein and Hesse underwent changes in their conceptions of games from the 1930s into the 1940s when their works reached fruition. I shall tie together the comparison by looking at the way in which Wittgenstein's and Hesse's uses of games have a similar aim (as a way of looking at language use as an activity through the frame of a 'game', and as a way of examining the premises on which our conception of that game is based), but a different execution (Wittgenstein is interested in the ordinary aspects of games, whereas Hesse brings out their extraordinary nature). Reading Wittgenstein will help us to see how Hesse's Game performs a heuristic function similar to language-games. By reading Hesse's novel after *PU*, we can begin to see how, despite Wittgenstein's silence on pedagogical theory, his work is highly relevant in an institutional context. Reading *GPS* in a Wittgenstein light will help us understand why intellectual hubris among academics has ethical consequences beyond academia.

Chapter 1

Wittgenstein's cultural pessimism, teaching, and the birth of the 'game' analogy in the 1930s

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to begin setting up the comparison between *PU* and *GPS* by investigating the circumstances in which 'Spiele' (the analogy common to both texts) began to be used by Wittgenstein in the 1930s. We will see how Wittgenstein's analogy between games and language emerged after his return to philosophical writing, during a period of self-doubt and questioning about his vocation as a philosopher and teacher. The seeds of Wittgenstein's and Hesse's mature works, *Philosophische Untersuchungen* and *Das Glasperlenspiel* (hereinafter referred to as *PU* and *GPS*), are planted in the early 1930s. In their fragmented, embryonic stages, both works are responding to what the writers perceive to be a cultural crisis - that culture is being consumed and commodified, but is no longer something that is created and participated in. Its power to change those who read, view, write, paint, sculpt, compose, design, and play it has begun to decline. By examining in Chapters 1 and 2 the historical, social and cultural context which these authors were responding to, I hope to show why "games" found their way into *PU* and *GPS*. An in-depth look at the historical and contemporary influences and audiences that shaped these works will help us to establish common ground between *PU* and *GPS* and to distinguish between how "games" are used differently in each work, due to the differing motivations that prompted the creation language-games and the Glass Bead Game. The fruitfulness

of this distinction will be brought to light in Chapter 3, when we compare the two works and their use of the term “Spiel” to denote a dynamic, flexible activity as well as a rule-based system that underpins an institution.

In Chapter 1, we will begin the task of understanding the significance of ‘Spiel’ in ‘Sprachspiele’ by establishing the contemporary context which Wittgenstein was responding to when he first started to use games as an analogy in his philosophical remarks and teaching. On first observation, there seems to be very little connection between the early use of ‘language games’ in Wittgenstein’s philosophy lectures in Cambridge and his private comments on culture (among other things) now published collectively in *Culture and Value/Vermischte Bemerkungen* (hereinafter referred to as *VB*). In an essay on Oswald Spengler’s influence on Wittgenstein, Kevin Cahill notes the ‘striking gap’ between the theme of cultural decline in his private remarks and the philosophical themes explored by Wittgenstein in *Philosophische Bemerkungen*.⁷⁸ Cahill’s paper helpfully draws a connection between the two by explaining the important influence of Spengler on Wittgenstein’s interest in correcting philosophical confusions. However, the paper does not address why Wittgenstein should choose to avoid explicitly writing about the theme of ‘Kultur’. As we will see in the lectures on aesthetics at Cambridge, he does not pass judgements on *Kultur* in the way that he does in some of his written remarks, now published in *VB*. Paul Standish notes another gap between Wittgenstein’s commitment to his teaching, his reluctance to talk about theories of education (as noted by Paul Standish, cited in the Introduction to this thesis). Considering Wittgenstein’s clear passion for both culture and teaching, it is odd

⁷⁸ Kevin M. Cahill, ‘Bildung and Decline’, *Philosophical Investigations*, 32.1 (2009), 23-43 (p. 41) <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9205.2008.01360.x>>.

that neither of these themes take up a prominent position in the remarks finally published in *PU*. It could be argued that the absence of these topics is due to choices made by Wittgenstein's literary executors, who administered the publication of the unfinished *PU* following his death. However, it is evident from comparing the draft prefaces Wittgenstein composes in 1930 and 1945 that he is at least in part responsible for the absence of references to his views on *Kultur*. As we shall see through a comparison of the prefaces in this chapter, Wittgenstein's anti-dogmatism led him to remain quiet on such matters. I will also investigate how "games" was an analogy deliberately chosen to be able to talk about the 'rules' of culture, teaching and learning, without actually having to establish a theory on any of these topics.

What do I mean by Wittgenstein's interest in culture? Instead of complaining about the state of *Kultur*, I would like to show how a faint glimmer of hope exists in the core values of *Bildung* for Wittgenstein, as inherited through his reading of Goethe, Schiller, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer (all of whom were also influential on Hesse).⁷⁹ *Bildung* favours a view of 'culture', which Francis Mulhern describes as 'spiritual' and the development of one's 'best self'.⁸⁰ Culture in this sense of transforming or *cultivating* has an ethical function, therefore 'is not merely a repository of value: it is the *principle* of a good society'.⁸¹ In their first attempts at writing *PU* and *GPS* during the 1930s through to the 1940s, Wittgenstein and Hesse

⁷⁹ The latter two might be considered pessimists rather than positive figures in the philosophical tradition of *Bildung*. However, they both argue for a revival of *Bildung* beyond its stultification in the German university. I mention these names here in passing to indicate Wittgenstein's influences, and how he might be considered to be writing in the 'spirit' of *Bildung*. I do not have the space here to consider fully, however, the extent to which Goethe's *Bildung* survives through Nietzsche's into Wittgenstein's.

⁸⁰ Francis Mulhern, *Culture/Metaculture* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. xvi <<https://doi.org/10.4324/978203129821>> [accessed 3 October 2022].

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

position themselves as writers who hold to this ‘principle’, as part of an increasingly small and scattered number of intellectuals. I find ‘Bildung’ a helpful term to refer to this ‘principle’ that engagement with culture should have a pedagogical, transformative effect on individuals. The dark, culturally pessimistic mood is most clearly expressed in Wittgenstein’s attempts to draft a preface for a book length work during the early 1930s, that would not be completed during his lifetime (eventually, a manuscript was compiled posthumously that became *PU*). For Hesse, the feeling of isolation or alienation from one’s own time manifested itself in his ‘Einleitung’ to *GPS*, which is the first chapter of the novel but written in the style of an academic non-fiction writer. In this chapter and Chapter 2, we will come to understand how the feeling of alienation and disillusionment that Wittgenstein and Hesse felt with the culture of their time forms a seed bed, in which the idea of games as an analogy for learning germinated.

As we shall see, the idea of ‘integrity’ was central to both Wittgenstein’s and Hesse’s conception of the artist or writer. The concept will be explored in more detail later, but a general gloss would be this: that the artist’s life is not separate from their work; that their work should not be done for the sake of for public recognition and should therefore be free from merely decorative flourishes; style should be something that is drawn from long and arduous self-reflection, not something adopted according to fashion or to appeal to an audience; all affectation and pretension must be got rid of from one’s art (“art” here being used in a general sense of a “craft”, covering music, literature, philosophy, architecture, etc.) The dark mood that underlies the early draft prefaces to *PU* and *GPS* can be associated with early 20th century *Kulturkritik* and manifests itself

in these texts as an ‘ethico-spiritual critique of mass culture’.⁸² The concept of *Bildung* is also a helpful way of bridging the gap between Wittgenstein’s interest in culture and education.

Before we begin, it is important to emphasise that Wittgenstein rarely mentions *Bildung* in his published philosophical works, and seldom in the sense of a cultural education. Even the matter of *Kultur* is restricted mainly to private remarks. Despite this, a great deal of literature exists on Wittgenstein’s philosophy and culture. Ben Ware regards Wittgenstein as engaging in the metacultural discourse of *Kulturkritik*, particularly because of the influence of Spengler on Wittgenstein’s cultural pessimism.⁸³ Ware notes that two important points of divergence are that, ‘Unlike Spengler and Mann, Wittgenstein does not provide a systematic account of the relation between culture and civilization; nor - unlike Bender and Mannheim - does he attempt to formulate a vision of how society might be organised in the future.’⁸⁴ I agree with Ware on both points, in particular that it is important not to regard Wittgenstein as setting forth a theory on an ideal form of culture. In fact, in his lectures on aesthetics he deconstructs the very idea of a single, universal set of cultural values by which contemporary or past forms of culture can be judged. Janik and Toulmin’s positioning of Wittgenstein in the context of his 19th century influences and his contemporaries in *Wittgenstein’s Vienna*⁸⁵ will provide a helpful way of reading Wittgenstein as holding to certain principles belonging to *Bildung*, without explicitly referring to the term (such as the idea that there are some

⁸² Ben Ware, *Dialectic of the Ladder: Wittgenstein, the Tractatus and Modernism* (London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), p. 75.

⁸³ Ware, p. 75.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁸⁵ Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein’s Vienna* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973).

things one can only learn through being shaped by experience; that studying an art involves transforming one's character and not just increasing one's knowledge).

In summary, this chapter will address the following questions: What does Wittgenstein think of *Kultur*, and how are his views connected to the idea of *Bildung*? How are these put into practice in his teaching? Why is the game analogy an integral innovation in Wittgenstein's own version of *Bildung*, given the important connection between Wittgenstein's views on culture and his desire to teach? By answering these questions, I will establish a common cultural context for Wittgenstein and Hesse, so that we can examine their complimentary versions of *Bildung* as 'games' in the final chapter.

I will begin by discussing a draft preface of *Philosophische Bemerkungen*,⁸⁶ alongside diverse remarks collected and published as *VB*. I will then examine examples of Wittgenstein's teaching: his lectures in Cambridge during the 1930s and the *Blue Book* and the *Brown Book* (both published in a single volume, and hereinafter referred to as *BB* in citations).⁸⁷ The *Blue Book* was dictated to students as a set of lecture notes during 1933-34. The *Brown Book* was dictated to Francis Skinner and Alice Ambrose during 1934-35 and was only intended by Wittgenstein to be a record of his thinking for a small number of close acquaintances. Both were dictated in English.⁸⁸ The *Blue Book* and the *Brown Book* contain some of the first references to 'Sprachspiele' and could therefore be regarded as prototypes for the *PU*. Finally, to create a bridge between this chapter

⁸⁶ *Philosophische Bemerkungen* was composed in the summer of 1930 but was only edited and published posthumously by Rush Rhees. It is widely regarded as a 'transitional' work between *TLP* and *PU* (Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, p. 292). As much of the content is similar to *PU* and does not provide any additional insight on why Wittgenstein chose to write about games, I have not included it in this study.

⁸⁷ The *Blue Book* and the *Brown Book* are named after the colour of their covers.

⁸⁸ Wittgenstein, *BB*, p. v.

on Wittgenstein and the following chapter on Hesse, I will examine *Homo Ludens*, a ludic account of the history of human culture by Johan Huizinga, originally published in 1938. This text will provide a point of reference as to how Wittgenstein's and Hesse's 'games' are unique among contemporaries writing cultural criticism at the time.

What were Wittgenstein's views on *Kultur*?

Wittgenstein's views on *Kultur* are most clear in his remarks written over an extended period in the 1930s and 40s, now published as *VB*. He returned to writing in 1929 after a long hiatus while teaching in primary schools in rural Austria. His decision to teach in Austria and the hiatus in his philosophical writing could be seen as an attempt, following the publication of the *Tractatus* in the aftermath of the First World War, to turn away entirely from the profession of philosophy and devote himself to what he regarded as a more practical and useful vocation. After the failure of his career as a teacher in 1926 Wittgenstein eventually, somewhat reluctantly, returned to Cambridge to take up a fellowship at Trinity College from 1930-1936.

David Stern argues that Wittgenstein's return to writing in 1929 marks a 'transitional period' in his work, motivated by a desire to revise the ideas expressed in *TLP*.⁸⁹ During this transitional period between *TLP* and the *PU*, Wittgenstein began to rethink the idea expressed in *TLP* that all philosophical problems were caused by a single misunderstanding, and would be dissolved once

⁸⁹ *Wittgenstein in the 1930s: Between the 'Tractatus' and the 'Investigations'*, ed. by David G. Stern, Cambridge Core (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 11.

this fact is made apparent.⁹⁰ As Hans Sluga puts it, Wittgenstein's work during the 1930s began to reflect his growing conviction that 'Philosophy deals, in other words, always with specific and partial problems.'⁹¹ Whereas *TLP* claimed to dissolve all the questions of philosophy (at least for those who understood it), the Wittgenstein who returns to philosophy in the 1930s strives to take a humbler attitude to his work. This critical re-framing of his philosophical ambitions, results, as we shall see, in a style that is fragmented and sometimes even cynical in tone.

After returning somewhat reluctantly to Cambridge in 1929, Wittgenstein spent the Easter vacation of 1930 drafting what would be published posthumously by Rush Rhees as *Philosophische Bemerkungen*, in order to put forward an application for funding to continue his research from Trinity College. Despite resettling in academia at a renowned university, the draft preface takes on a dark and isolated tone of profound cultural pessimism:

Dieser Geist ist, glaube ich, ein anderer als der der großen europäischen & amerikanischen Zivilisation. Der Geist dieser Zivilisation dessen Ausdruck die Industrie, Architektur, Musik der Faschismus & Socialismus der Jetztzeit ist, ist ein dem Verfasser fremder & unsympathischer Geist.⁹² [*sic*]

The spirit Wittgenstein claims to be writing in in his draft preface runs contrary to what he perceives as a mainstream *Zivilisation*. The influence of Spengler, author of *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, is clear from the use of the term 'Zivilisation'. However, unlike Spengler's grand narrative of cultural decline, Wittgenstein frames

⁹⁰ See 'Das Buch handelt die philosophischen Probleme und zeigt - wie ich glaube -, daß die Fragestellung dieser Probleme auf dem Mißverständnis der Logik unserer Sprache beruht.' and 'Ich bin also der Meinung, die Probleme im Wesentlichen endgültig gelöst zu haben.' Preface, *TLP*, pp. 9-10.

⁹¹ Hans Sluga, 'From Moore's Lecture Notes to Wittgenstein's Blue Book: The Emergence of Wittgenstein's Performative Conception of the Self', in *Wittgenstein in the 1930s: Between the Tractatus and the Investigations*, ed. by David G. Stern (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 125-40 (p. 140) <<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108349260.008>>.

⁹² *VB*, p. 8.

this as a sentiment that is personal to ‘dem Verfasser’ and emphasises that this is not an objective value judgement about culture. Following the statement above, he writes, ‘Dies ist kein Werturteil’.⁹³ Wittgenstein wants to make it clear that he is not passing judgement on culture or civilisation, contrary to the Spenglerian narrative of decline that he finds so appealing. Wittgenstein does not claim to be describing a historical phenomenon, as Spengler does in *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*. His repeated assurances on this account - that the book is not a critique of culture, but is simply out of step with its own time - provide a clue as to why most of these references have been erased in the final preface of *PU* (with only a vague reference to the ‘Finsternis dieser Zeit’⁹⁴), despite the clear significance of Wittgenstein’s feelings on the subject of culture and politics during the 1930s. A deep pessimism about *Kultur* has motivated this writing - and yet Wittgenstein’s moral conscience has caused him to play it down, so that he refrains from cynically passing judgement on humanity as a whole.

Throughout the rest of the draft preface, Wittgenstein continues to express himself in an apparently self-contradictory way. On the one hand, he uses apocalyptic language to describe the current state of affairs as the ‘Verschwinden der Künste’⁹⁵. Yet Wittgenstein is quick to mitigate this Spenglerian view of cultural decline, saying that ‘Das Verschwinden der Künste rechtfertigt kein absprechendes Urteil über eine Menschheit.’⁹⁶ Wittgenstein’s modesty about his claims regarding *Kultur* made be attributed to a discomfort with the idea of passing judgement on humanity as a whole along with its culture - to do so morally

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Wittgenstein, *TLP*, p. 292.

⁹⁵ *VB*, p. 8.

⁹⁶ *VB*, p. 8.

suspect and cannot be 'rechtfertigt'. However, immediately after mitigating this judgement, he goes on to write that culture is still indeed in a terrible state:

Denn echte und starke Naturen wenden sich eben in dieser Zeit von dem Gebiet der Künste ab & anderen Dingen zu & der Wert des Einzelnen kommt irgendwie zum Ausdruck. Freilich nicht wie zur Zeit einer Großen Kultur.⁹⁷

Wittgenstein cannot seem to resist speaking in generalising terms about 'echte und starke Naturen' and of 'Großen Kultur'. In Wittgenstein's vision of his own time, there seem to be anonymous, unsung heroes whose art may have gone unacknowledged, but whose efforts manage to find expression 'irgendwie'. These figures seem to have a somewhat tragic heroism - it may be that their anonymity is a sacrifice that Wittgenstein admires. In this passage, we see how Wittgenstein finds himself conflicted between an apocalyptic, Spenglerian worldview of cultural decline, and a more hopeful vision of the enduring value of the work of individuals.

Wittgenstein's use of the adjective 'groß' throughout *VB* betrays his deep-seated attachment to the idea of cultural value. There is a sense that he still clings to deep-seated, traditional notions about what "good" culture is. The above preface serves to situate *Philosophische Bemerkungen* and Wittgenstein's developing work in a specific cultural and historical context. However, it is unclear from the preface exactly *how* Wittgenstein intended his philosophy to respond to its times. The combination of pessimism and humility results in a series of dark statements that are peppered with self-effacing caveats that mollify those statements. What then, is Wittgenstein trying to achieve? A year later in 1931, Wittgenstein states that the aim of his writing is to initiate a change in others: 'Ich soll nur der Spiegel sein, in welchem mein Leser sein eigenes Denken mit allen

⁹⁷ Ibid.

seinen Unförmigkeiten sieht & mit dieser Hilfe zurechtrichten kann.’⁹⁸ An important aspect of this metaphor is the mirror. Wittgenstein did not wish to diagnose problems with culture, but instead wanted to enable his readers to diagnose *for themselves* the flaws in their own thinking. In this respect, Wittgenstein distances himself from a *Kulturkritiker* stance adopted by writers such as Spengler, which passes judgement on others but not on oneself. He avoids setting himself up as a figure of authority who takes the task of critique upon himself, but rather seeks to empower his readers to take on what he regards as the true task of philosophy:

Die Arbeit an der Philosophie ist - wie vielfach die Arbeit *in* der Architektur - eigentlich mehr die Arbeit an Einem Selbst. An der eigenen Auffassung. Daran, wie man die Dinge sieht. (Und was man von ihnen verlangt).⁹⁹

Philosophy is ‘work on oneself’ in the sense that it requires a critical reassessment of one’s own views and assumptions. Hence, philosophy undertaken in the Wittgensteinian sense would lead you on a transformative, pedagogical journey of *sich bilden* - self-examination and self-development. Wittgenstein is emphatic that the task of (his) philosophy is inherently personal. In ‘Declining Decline’, Stanley Cavell writes that in contrast to Spengler, Wittgenstein is ‘Endlessly forgoing, rebuking, parodying philosophy’s claim to a privileged perspective on its culture’.¹⁰⁰ The self-effacing style that Wittgenstein uses in *PU*, which we see first being adopted during this ‘transitional period’, leads Cavell to assign Wittgenstein to an ethical-spiritual cultural canon centred on the idea of ‘moral perfectionism’

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 25.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 24.

¹⁰⁰ Cavell, *The Cavell Reader*, p. 73.

along with Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* novels and Nietzsche's 'Schopenhauer as Educator'.¹⁰¹

Wittgenstein's 'moral perfectionism' - the idea of improving oneself by being 'true to oneself'¹⁰² - might seem a bit too individualist to be regarded as a version of *Bildung*, which involves personal development alongside an initiation into wider society. How is 'Arbeit an Einem Selbst' relevant to culture as a wider social phenomenon? Janik and Toulmin in *Wittgenstein's Vienna* help to situate the idea of 'work on oneself' (which they term as 'ethical individualism') within Wittgenstein's contemporary cultural context.¹⁰³ They describe how Wittgenstein participated actively in cultural life, as a writer, philosopher, and even an architect.¹⁰⁴ Janik and Toulmin argue that the desired outcome of 'Arbeit an Einem Selbst' was the 'unity of form and personality'.¹⁰⁵ The idea of 'man's art as intimately connected with his moral character'¹⁰⁶ comes from Karl Kraus, who Wittgenstein cites as one of his major influences.¹⁰⁷ Kraus saw this 'integrity' as fundamentally lacking in many of his contemporaries. Only some figures, such as the composer Schönberg and the architect Loos (also cited by Wittgenstein as a major influence alongside Kraus) were able to cultivate it.¹⁰⁸ In Kraus's opinion, 'virtuosity' or 'technical competence'¹⁰⁹ could not be obtained by those artists and writers who were ambitious for acclaim and material gain; hence 'Kraus's polemics

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 353.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 353.

¹⁰³ Janik and Toulmin, p. 235.

¹⁰⁴ In 1926 Wittgenstein was invited by his sister, Margarethe, to design a house (which still exists in Vienna today) with the architect Paul Engelmann.

¹⁰⁵ Janik and Toulmin, p. 81.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ VB, p. 16.

¹⁰⁸ Janik and Toulmin, p. 93.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 88.

are inevitably *personal*.¹¹⁰ Therefore, ‘On this conception of art, there was no room for sensationalism or crowd pleasing’, which were present in the *feuilletons* of the Viennese press which Kraus detested.¹¹¹ Wittgenstein’s uncompromising Krausian integrity has its roots in Schopenhauer’s asceticism (a third major influence cited by Wittgenstein in the same passage cited above in *VB*). For Schopenhauer, ethics could not be learned in a university, as the shaping of one’s moral character could not be explicitly taught.¹¹² This will become relevant later for when we approach Wittgenstein’s teaching, in shedding light in particular on why Wittgenstein provides very little explicit tuition on culture or ethics in his lectures. Work on culture must therefore start with work on oneself, as art (or in the Wittgenstein-Krausian view, the *best* art) is linked to one’s character.

There is evidence in *VB* to suggest that Wittgenstein’s idea of personal integrity had long been linked with his work. Wittgenstein states that his sculpting of a bust for Drobil, ‘meine Arbeit war eigentlich wieder die des Klärens’.¹¹³ ‘Klären’ is like an odd term to use to describe the purpose of a sculpture, but the choice of words contains an allusion to 4.112 in *TLP*, ‘Der Zweck der Philosophie ist die logische Klärung der Gedanken.’¹¹⁴ The re-emergence of the term ‘klären’ in 1931, ten years after the publication of *TLP*, suggests that Wittgenstein felt a strong motivation to return to some unfinished business. The statement that immediately follows 4.112 in *TLP* reads, ‘Die Philosophie ist keine Lehre, sondern eine Tätigkeit.’¹¹⁵ This hints that the act of *klären* may have been intended as an

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 81. Kraus was, as we shall see in Chapter 2, also read and admired by Hesse. The contempt for ‘feuilletons’ will also be explored, and is a commonality between Wittgenstein and Hesse’s narrator in *GPS*.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 156.

¹¹³ *VB*, p. 16.

¹¹⁴ Wittgenstein, *TLP*, p. 36.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

ongoing activity that would continue throughout his life and work. In *VB*, Wittgenstein emphatically states that ‘die Tätigkeit des Klärens’ must be carried out with ‘MUT [*sic*]’, otherwise it becomes a ‘bloßes gescheites Spiel’.¹¹⁶ Gabriel Citron usefully describes ‘Mut’ as one of Wittgenstein’s ‘philosophical virtues’ that Wittgenstein sought to cultivate in himself and others, along with ‘honesty’ and ‘humility’.¹¹⁷ These were complementary virtues for Wittgenstein, e.g. it takes courage and humility to be honest with oneself: ‘Nichts ist so schwer, als sich nicht betrügen.’¹¹⁸ It is interesting to note that here, the term ‘Spiel’ is used in a negative sense, to denote a superficial or meaningless activity. Yet when Wittgenstein comes to talk of ‘Spiele’ in the context of ‘Sprachspiele’, they do not have the same the same negative connotation. Cultivating the serious ‘virtues’ of honesty, humility and courage is a fundamental part of philosophy for Wittgenstein. The importance of personal development and the cultivation of virtues (‘Arbeit an einem Selbst’) is why I see a connection between what Wittgenstein wanted to achieve with his readers and students, and the concept of *Bildung*.

‘Klären’ could be understood as the first step required to begin working on oneself. Those who lack the ability, or the courage, to challenge their own assumptions will be unable to achieve greatness in their field:

Je weniger sich Einer selbst kennt & versteht um so weniger groß ist er, wie groß auch sein Talent sein mag. Darum sind unsre Wissenschaftler nicht groß. Darum sind Freud, Spengler, Kraus, Einstein nicht groß.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ *VB*, p. 16.

¹¹⁷ Gabriel Citron, ‘Honesty, Humility, Courage, & Strength: Later Wittgenstein on the Difficulties of Philosophy and the Philosophical Virtues’, *Philosophers’ Imprint*, 19 (2019), 1 (p. 2). Gabriel Citron, ‘Honesty, Humility, Courage, & Strength: Later Wittgenstein on the Difficulties of Philosophy and the Philosophical Virtues’, *Philosophers’ Imprint*, 19 (2019), 1 (p. 2).

¹¹⁸ *VB*, p. 39.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

For Wittgenstein, the characteristics that which make someone a good person (such as honesty, humility, and self-awareness) are also what makes them a ‘great’ artist, writer, architect, etc. If we are to say that Wittgenstein’s version of *Bildung* is ‘klären’, we therefore need to bear in mind that providing clarity on one’s own work is an *ethical* as well as a cultural act for Wittgenstein.

In the above passage, it is interesting to note that those writers (Kraus, Spengler) that were particularly influential on Wittgenstein are not necessarily those that he regards as the greatest. In fact, Wittgenstein describes his work as consisting of the clarification or reworking of writers and artists that have influenced him. In a remark from 1931, he describes his ‘Denken’ as ‘nur reproduktiv’:

Ich glaube ich habe nie eine Gedankenbewegung *erfunden* sondern sie wurde mir immer von jemand anderem gegeben & ich habe sie nur sogleich leidenschaftlich zu meinem Klärungswerk aufgegriffen. So haben mich Boltzmann Hertz Schopenhauer Frege, Russell, Kraus, Loos Weiniger Spengler, Sraffa beeinflusst.¹²⁰ [*sic*]

The act of ‘klären’ fits with Wittgenstein’s belief in the virtue of humility, insofar as he does not regard himself as creating new, original work in philosophy.

Here I will turn to Spengler in particular, as his work was most influential on Wittgenstein’s views on culture. The idea of ‘decline’ in culture is an important aspect of Spengler’s work that Wittgenstein wants to ‘clarify’. Wittgenstein argues that, ‘So könnte Spengler besser verstanden werden wenn er sagte: ich *vergleiche* verschiedene Kulturperioden dem Leben von Familien’.¹²¹ Wittgenstein thinks that Spengler’s method would have been correct if it had only been to make a *comparison*, rather than making value judgements on modern culture, claiming

¹²⁰ VB, p. 16.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 21.

that it is in decline and therefore inferior to previous periods. Wittgenstein argues that Spengler's narrative rests on an 'Urbild':

Ich meine: Das Vergleichsobjekt, der Gegenstand von welchem diese Betrachtungsweise abgezogen ist, muß uns angegeben werden, damit nicht in die Discussion immer Ungerechtigkeiten ein-fließen [sic]. Denn da wird alles, was für das Urbild der Betrachtung wahr ist [sic] nolens volens auch von dem Objekt worauf wir die Betrachtung anwenden behauptet; & behauptet »es *müsse immer* ... «¹²²

Peter Winch translates 'Urbild' as 'prototype', although 'archetype' could have been another option. An 'Ur-bild' is an image that the writer might have in mind, *prior to* their comparison; a kind of Platonic version of culture. The point Wittgenstein is trying to make here is not necessarily that it is bad to have an 'Urbild' of culture. By referring to the alternative translation for 'Urbild' in the above passage, I would like to make clear that Wittgenstein is critiquing Spengler's account of cultural history for being based on an archetype, rather than a prototype. If Spengler had been honest about the role of his own assumptions about what a culture should be (according to his own lived experience), then he could have acknowledged the conditions under which he considered the objects of comparison to be culture or not. Instead, he labours under false expectations that the cultures he is comparing *must conform* ('*es müsse...*') to a pre-conceived ideal, or else be labelled as degenerate.

Wittgenstein understands why it is tempting for Spengler to harbour an unexamined *Urbild* in his account of culture. This sympathy leads Wittgenstein to draw a more general lesson about the confusion an 'Urbild' can be subject to:

Da man aber Urbild & Object [sic] vermischt dem Object beilegen muß, was nur das Urbild Charakterisieren muß. Andererseits glaubt man die Betrachtung

¹²² Ibid., p. 21.

ermangle ja der Allgemeinheit die man ihr geben will, wenn sie nur für den einen Fall wirklich stimmt.¹²³

Spengler's fault is that 'Urbild & Object' become 'vermischt', but it is also a fault that Wittgenstein assigns to 'man', i.e. anyone else undertaking a similar project.¹²⁴ Spengler confuses an ideal of culture (*Urbild*) with specific manifestations of culture through history (the 'Object' of his narrative).

Wittgenstein does not try to do away with the idea of a prototype altogether; rather, 'das Urbild soll ja eben als solches hingestellt werden'.¹²⁵ If we understood that 'Culture' with a capital 'C' is a 'prototype', then we would not expect actual manifestations of culture to conform to it in reality. The lesson to be learned from this critique of Spengler is to be suspicious of dogmatic statements: 'Man möchte so bei allen übertriebenen dogmatisierenden [sic] Behauptungen immer fragen: Was ist denn nun daran wirklich wahr.'¹²⁶ Eventually, in a remark recorded in 1937, Wittgenstein formulates this warning into a more general principle:

Nur so nämlich können wir der Ungerechtigkeit - oder Leere unserer Behauptungen entgehen, indem wir das Ideal als das was es *ist*, nämlich als Vergleichsobjekt - sozusagen als Maßstab - in unsrer Betrachtung hinstellen, & nicht als das Vorurteil, dem alles konformieren *muß*. Dies nämlich ist der Dogmatismus, in den die Philosophie so leicht verfallen kann.¹²⁷

Wittgenstein clearly considers it necessary to clarify dogmatic assumptions based on an Urbild, not just for readers of Spengler but for all those participating in the discipline of 'Philosophie'. The need for clarification for Wittgenstein is important to him, because it is an ethical act (combatting 'Ungerechtigkeit'), and not merely a case of correcting an error of judgement (the 'Leere unsrer Behauptungen').

¹²³ VB, p. 21.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 22.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 30.

Wittgenstein's version of *Bildung* is not about cultivating a better appreciation of culture, or an ability to identify what is good and bad in culture. Instead, it focuses on bringing about a personal transformation, which can rectify the intellectual hubris that assumes that everything must confirm with an ideal (that has been shaped by one's own unquestioned assumptions).

Coming to acknowledge our own prejudices is a core part of Wittgenstein's *Bildung* for his readers. Wittgenstein's coinage of the term *Familienähnlichkeiten*, which is later used in *PU*, is adapted from these passages critiquing Spengler, who in turn drew this morphological method from Goethe. McGuinness regards the morphological method Wittgenstein develops as a continuation of Goethe's 'intellectual project'.¹²⁸ In *VB*, Wittgenstein hints at this idea of a project in which Goethe was involved, but he does seem more pessimistic about his part in this project than McGuinness gives him credit for:

Es gibt Probleme an die ich nie herankomme, die nicht in meiner Linie oder in meiner Welt liegen. Probleme der Abendländischen Gedankenwelt an die Beethoven (& vielleicht teilweise Goethe) herangekommen ist & mit denen er gerungen hat die aber kein Philosoph je angegangen hat (vielleicht ist Nietzsche an ihnen vorbeigekommen)[.]¹²⁹

The 'Problem' appears to be what is referred to a few lines later as the difficulty of describing 'den Fortgang dieser Kultur als Epos'.¹³⁰ That is to say, it is difficult to get an overview of the progress of culture through history, in order to attempt to describe "what culture is", because we are always situated within a particular time period. Therefore, Wittgenstein demonstrates a good deal of self-awareness, particularly relating to his own limitations, and understandably appears reluctant to regard himself as a philosopher participating within a tradition or multi-

¹²⁸ McGuinness, p. 447.

¹²⁹ *VB*, p. 11.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

generational project (hence why I have tried to make it clear that I do not consider him continuing in the tradition of *Bildung*, even if he has been influenced by it). Wittgenstein's self-effacement expressed above is why I also do not share Ben Ware's view that Wittgenstein could be situated in the discourse of *Kulturkritik*.¹³¹

It is clear from the above critique of Spengler that Wittgenstein is reluctant to associate himself too strongly with *Kulturkritik* outside of his private notes, as it necessitates adopting a stance where it is tempting to make dogmatic statements. A remark in 1948 on Karl Kraus's aphorisms sheds light on Wittgenstein's view of *Kulturkritik*, when he writes, 'Rosinen mögen das Beste an einem Kuchen sein; aber ein Sack Rosinen ist nicht besser als ein Kuchen'.¹³² Here Wittgenstein explains, 'Ich denke an Kraus & seine Aphorismen, aber auch an mich selbst und meine Philosophische Bemerkungen.'¹³³ The small, sweet dried fruits could represent the pithy aphorisms that have been distilled from hours of thinking and drafting. These 'raisins' might be regarded as the 'best bits' by the author that drafts them, but Wittgenstein muses that they do not make a cake: 'Ein Kuchen das ist nicht gleichsam: verdünnte Rosinen.'¹³⁴ A cake is not made of 100% raisins, even if they are the best bit. The experience of eating a cake is pleasant, and distinct to eating to a bag of raisins. In fact, a cake that only consists of 'verdünnte Rosinen' sounds amusing and not particularly appetizing. The humble cake mixture is just as integral to the whole as the raisins. This analogy could convey a lesson that Wittgenstein has discovered for himself: that in spite of his frequent critical statements about his own writing, succumbing to perfectionism

¹³¹ Ware, p. 75.

¹³² VB, p. 76.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

and obsession with the ‘best bits’ is not the best way to write a book - or bake a cake. Just a few days before writing the remark on cake, he describes his writing as ‘schwächliches Zeug’ but admits: ‘Aber es liegen in diesen schwächlichen Bemerkungen große Ausblicke verborgen.’¹³⁵

We could see the raisins lesson as related to the point that Wittgenstein tries to make about Spengler. If culture were a cake, it could not be regarded as constituted solely from its ‘best bits’ - its greatest artists and works - squashed together. Latent in this lesson on alleviating perfectionism in writing could also be a lesson on alleviating cultural pessimism among *Kulturkritiker* - a pessimism which is based on a false conception of what perfect culture is. Despite these aphorisms and lessons scattered through Wittgenstein’s private remarks, no cohesive vision arises. In the draft preface, Wittgenstein is resigned to the fact that ‘Zur Zeit der Unkultur aber zersplittern sich die Kräfte.’¹³⁶ For Wittgenstein, the continuation of *Kultur* is left up to various scattered, ‘starke Naturen’ (who may be in any discipline, working as architects, artists, writers, intellectuals, doctors) as ‘ein[e] Menge deren Beste nur privaten Zielen nachstreben’.¹³⁷ Intellectuals might continue to work according to the same values but are ‘verstreut’ and ‘zersplittert’. Nevertheless, Wittgenstein envisages the ‘verstreute’ individuals as still maintaining ‘Kultur’ as an ‘Organisation’:

Die Kultur ist gleichsam eine große Organisation die jedem der zu ihr gehört seinen Platz anweist an dem er im Geist des Ganzen arbeiten kann [...].¹³⁸ [sic]

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 75.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

¹³⁷ VB. p. 9.

¹³⁸ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

While this 'Organisation' appears to be quite abstract, Janik and Toulmin provide a slightly more specific version of the same idea. They suggest that artists and writers of 'Krausian' integrity, such as Wittgenstein, Loos and Schönberg (all of whom acknowledge Kraus's influence on them), carry on their work 'by a critique of that particular area of human experience in which the individual artist or writer was himself most at home'.¹³⁹ Wittgenstein's image of artists working away individually at their own discipline, yet according to the same shared principles or virtues, calls forth a strangely anonymous and humbling version of an 'organisation', like ants working together in a colony. There is no clear leader or guiding light in Wittgenstein's vision, only a kind of stubborn, quiet, enduring industry.

This idea of *Kultur* as an 'Organisation' persists for over a decade, and it can be found in Wittgenstein's later remarks during the 1940s: 'Kultur ist eine Ordensregel. Oder setzt doch eine Ordensregel voraus.'¹⁴⁰ In the idea of *Kultur* being an *Organisation* (similar to an Order), facilitating collective behaviour according to 'Regel', we can finally see a potential connection between Wittgenstein's remarks on *Kultur* and *Sprachspiele*, which are used widely in *PU* and first introduced by Wittgenstein had since introduced in the *Blue Book*, 1933-34. If *Kultur* is governed by 'Ordensregel', then perhaps 'Regel' was the salient feature for which Wittgenstein chose to write about games?

Rush Rhees, one of Wittgenstein's students at Cambridge, draws parallels between rule-following and games along these lines:

¹³⁹ Janik and Toulmin, p. 93.

¹⁴⁰ *VB*, p. 89.

A game and an institution - there are important parallels here. If he is speaking of games and institutions the importance of rules seems fairly prominent. In legal institutions the importance of legal rules is obvious. If one speaks of language as an institution, as something that governs our lives in the way legal institutions do, it is misleading. Language does not play this part, or even a parallel part, in our lives; even if the peculiar rules, grammatical rules or what it may be, of a *particular* language, Latin or English or French, could be said to do that.¹⁴¹

In this passage, Rhees is trying to unravel Wittgenstein's interest in talking about 'Regel' in the context of language. Rhees did not think that rules are as important in languages as they are in institutions. Institutions, such as the legal system, have rules that, according to Rhees, govern our lives in a way that languages do not. Rhees argues that rules of a game are more similar to an institution's rules, when compared with grammatical rules. Wittgenstein's own student seems to think that his analogy lacks something, and that "games" would have made a better analogy for "institutions" than for "language". However, the three concepts are linked. Rhees later speculates that 'thinking of language as an *institution*' is in 'some ways better than the game simile, because an institution belongs to the lives we lead as a game does not.'¹⁴²

There are two problems that Rhees raises regarding Wittgenstein's choice of games as an analogy for language in *Sprachspiele*. Firstly, Wittgenstein's choice to use game-rules as an analogy for grammatical rules perplexes Rhees, because (in his opinion) the rules within language are more flexible than the rules within a game. Secondly, Rhees regards 'games' as being outside of our everyday lives, whereas language and institutions influence our behaviour in multiple, sometimes subconscious ways. Although I do not entirely agree with Rhees's comments about

¹⁴¹ Rush Rhees, *Wittgenstein and the Possibility of Discourse*, ed. by Dewi Z. Phillips, 2. ed (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), p. 176.

¹⁴² Rhees, p. 250.

games, I do think that he makes a valuable point about Wittgenstein's choice of analogy. Wittgenstein is interested in certain aspects of games - such as rule-following - but overlooks others, such as the fact that games can seem to occupy a different reality to everyday life. Within the artificial realm of a game, there are rules that apply that do not apply outside of the game (whereas languages are not artificial for Rhees).

As Stephen Mulhall explains, Rhees finds the idea that philosophy is a mere game disconcerting. Rhees perceives a 'threat' in 'any attempt to understand what it is to speak in terms of an analogy with moves in a game, and to understand language as a family of self-sufficient language-games.'¹⁴³ Rhees therefore fears that such analogies between games and language 'risk eviscerating human modes of discourse of any genuine substance, regarding them as akin to moves in a meaningless game'. An analogy between games and language would mean that philosophical questions and discussion could also be considered a sort of game (i.e. a language game), because it too is an example of language use. This horrifies Rhees, Mulhall argues, because such analogies would 'deprive philosophy of any genuine substance'.¹⁴⁴ The decision to associate games with language use clearly had a profoundly troubling, disorientating effect on Wittgenstein's academic readers such as Rhees.

The question is, did Wittgenstein intend *Sprachspiele* to have this troubling effect on his readers? Was he aware that the word 'game' might have connotations of artificiality or triviality? Or did he try to simply distort the use of games, using it in a highly figurative sense to refer only to rule-based activities? It might be

¹⁴³ Mulhall, p. 30.

¹⁴⁴ Mulhall, p. 30.

argued that the confusion that the game analogy caused for Rhee could stem from a difference between ‘Spiel’ in German and ‘games/play’ in English (English not being Wittgenstein’s first language). As mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis, ‘Spiel’ can be translated as ‘play’ or a ‘game’, and so the word has associations with a free activity *and* a rule-guided activity. However, Rhee could read German well,¹⁴⁵ and his observations were right - Wittgenstein did indeed use the word ‘games’ in an odd way. This is evident in the choice of *Sprachspiele* in *PU*. Wittgenstein does mention conventional games, such as chess, but he also refers to a whole range of other activities in §23, which would not be conventionally considered games in German or English:

Befehlen, und nach Befehlen handeln -

Beschreiben eines Gegenstands nach dem Ansehen, oder nach Messungen -

[...]

Eine Hypothese aufstellen und prüfen

[...]

Reigen singen -

Rätsel raten -

[...]

Bitten, Danken, Fluchen, Grüßen, Beten.¹⁴⁶

Reflecting on the list, the author’s narrative voice states, ‘Das Wort »*Sprachspiel*« soll hier hervorheben, daß das Sprechen der Sprache ein Teil ist einer Tätigkeit, oder einer Lebensform.’¹⁴⁷ Clearly, Wittgenstein’s use of the word ‘Spiel’ in ‘*Sprachspiele*’ was intended to be figurative rather than literal.

¹⁴⁵ Rhee was asked by Wittgenstein to undertake a translation of an initial draft of *PU* in 1938. (Monk, p. 414).

¹⁴⁶ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, Werkausgabe, Band 1, 22. Auflage (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006), p. 250.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

If Wittgenstein's figurative use of games as a simile were intentional, then we might well ask, as Rhees did, why did Wittgenstein fail to make a connection between games and institutions? Particularly as he seemed content to speak of *Kultur* as an 'Organisation' in his private remarks? The oversight might have been simply unintentional. Rhees was right - games would make a good analogy for institutions. The activities conducted by members of an institution could be seen as creating a "game-world" guided by its own set of rules and conventions. In order to enter into and be accepted by an institution, one has to be *au fait* with the rules (we need only to think of the 'Gericht' in Kafka's *Der Prozess* and the protagonist's never-ending attempts to navigate it). However, I suspect that Wittgenstein may have *intentionally* avoided making this connection. He may have wanted avoid talking about institutions because he did not condone the (blind or thoughtless) following of rules. For example, he remarks that, 'Alles rituelle (quasi Hohepriesterliche) ist streng zu vermeiden weil es sofort fault.'¹⁴⁸ Wittgenstein is fundamentally sceptical of institutionalisation: 'Ich kann keine Schule gründen, weil ich eigentlich nicht nachgeahmt werden will. Jedenfalls nicht von denen, die Artikel in philosophischen Zeitschriften veröffentlichen.'¹⁴⁹ He is wary of imitation by over-zealous students and philosophical *feuilletonists*. Wittgenstein is to be astutely aware that once ideas become institutionalised, they tend to become ideologies.

Wittgenstein is therefore at pains to avoid the topic of institutions, particularly 'schools' in an academic sense. Wittgenstein's cynicism leads him to

¹⁴⁸ VB, p. 10.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 69.

remain silent on the topics of culture and education. Humility is an essential virtue which Wittgenstein continuously works into his reflections on *Kultur*:

Ich denke oft darüber, ob mein Kulturideal ein neues, d.h. ein zeitgemäßes, oder eines aus der Zeit Schumanns ist. Zum mindesten scheint es mir eine Fortsetzung dieses Ideals zu sein und zwar nicht die Fortsetzung die es tatsächlich damals erhalten hat. Also unter Ausschluß der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts. Ich muß sagen, daß das rein instinktmäßig geworden ist & nicht als Resultat einer Überlegung.¹⁵⁰

In this passage, Wittgenstein is very clear that any ‘Kulturideal’ that he might hold to is his along (‘mein’). By taking possession of his own opinions about culture, and by referring to them as ‘instinktmäßig’, he acknowledges that his opinions are in fact a matter of taste, not the result of rational ‘Überlegung’. Wittgenstein is clearly aware of the flaws of Spengler’s account and in turn adopts an explicitly modest tone about culture, even in what (at this stage at least) were private remarks.

Therefore, it is perhaps more out of a self-conscious modesty rather than an intentional, supercilious exclusivity that Wittgenstein conceives his draft preface for a small audience. He writes, ‘Dieses Buch ist für diejenigen geschrieben, die dem Geist in dem es geschrieben ist, freundlich gegenüberstehen.’¹⁵¹ The tone and phrasing is similar to a sentence in the preface of *TLP*, which has an air of mystical quietism: ‘Dieses Buch wird vielleicht nur der verstehen, der die Gedanken, die darin ausgedrückt sind - oder doch ähnliche Gedanken - schon selbst einmal gedacht hat.’¹⁵² Ware claims that because *TLP* relies on ‘the ability of *individual*

¹⁵⁰ VB, p. 4.

¹⁵¹ VB, p. 8.

¹⁵² Wittgenstein, *TLP*. p. 9.

readers to understand its dialectical form-content relation, the book can be seen to sever its ties from the social and thus to problematize its capacity to speak out against that which it opposes.’¹⁵³ This ‘high modernist impasse’¹⁵⁴ undermines the book’s ability to be understood and therefore to facilitate change in its readers through *klären*. I am not convinced that *TLP* is an example of ‘high modernism’, because Wittgenstein did not *intend* to exclude readers - rather, he felt that only a few people would understand what he wanted to say. There is a case to be made that *TLP* is another example of Wittgenstein’s extreme modesty regarding his work, which was quite possibly rooted in chronic self-doubt. However, Ware’s observation about ‘high modernism’ demonstrates that Wittgenstein’s mode of address can sometimes come across as potentially exclusive or culturally elitist.

In the 1930s, it was not so much cultural elitism but cultural pessimism - accompanied by a sense of hopelessness, not superiority - that leads to the tone of Wittgenstein’s draft preface. The feeling of alienation from contemporary culture was the ultimate cause for Wittgenstein’s extremely low expectations of who would read the book. He states, ‘Ich schreibe also eigentlich für Freunde welche in Winkeln der Welt verstreut sind. [sic]’¹⁵⁵ Wittgenstein pictures his project as one of the ‘privaten Ziele’. The fact that he is addressing ‘Freunde’, rather than a wider audience, may suggest that he did not want or intend his work to bring about a change in his readers at all. He continues: ‘Auch das Vorwort ist für solche geschrieben, die das Buch verstehen. Es hat keinen Sinn jemandem etwas zu sagen

¹⁵³ Ware, p. 72.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ VB, p. 9.

was er nicht versteht [...].'¹⁵⁶ He rescues this reluctance to appeal to a wider readership from elitism, however:

Wenn ich sage daß mein Buch nur für einen kleinen Kreis von Menschen bestimmt ist (wenn man das einen Kreis nennen kann) so will ich damit nicht sagen daß dieser Kreis meiner Auffassung nach die Elite der Menschheit ist aber er ist der Kreis an den ich mich wende (nicht weil sie besser oder schlechter sind als die anderen sondern) weil sie mein Kulturkreis sind [...].¹⁵⁷

Wittgenstein is not trying to be deliberately exclusive in his writing. Instead, he thought efforts to be heard beyond his own small *Kulturkreis* would be in vain.

What then is it that Wittgenstein hoped to achieve through his writing? It never seems to be stated explicitly, only in a series of mysterious aphorisms. As we saw above with the mirror analogy, Wittgenstein is trying to bring about a change in his readers. Throughout his remarks, Wittgenstein develops various other analogies to describe what he is trying to achieve:

Wer heute Philosophie lehrt, gibt dem Andern Speisen, nicht, weil sie ihm schmecken, sondern, um seinen Geschmack zu ändern. (22.11.1931)¹⁵⁸

Die Sprache hat für Alle die Gleichen Fallen bereit; das ungeheure Netz gut erhaltener Irrwege. ... Ich sollte also an allen den Stellen wo falsche Wege abzweigen Tafeln aufstellen, die über die gefährlichen Punkte hinweghelfen. (22.11.1931)¹⁵⁹

Beinahe, wie Einer, der nicht gewohnt ist im Wald nach Beeren zu suchen, keine findet, weil sein Auge für sie nicht geschärft ist & er nicht weiß, wo insbesondere man nach ihnen ausschauen muß. So geht der in der Philosophie Ungeübte an allen Stellen vorbei, wo Schwierigkeiten unter dem Gras verborgen liegen, während der Geübte dort stehenbleibt & fühlt, hier sei eine Schwierigkeit, obwohl er sie noch nicht sieht. (24.9.37)¹⁶⁰

There are several features of these analogies that it is important to note. Firstly, they concern the affect that Wittgenstein's anti-dogmatic method would have on

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 10.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, pp. 12-13.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 25.

¹⁵⁹ VB, p. 25.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 33.

an individual - represented through a change in taste, finding one's way along a route, or being able to search for berries. Secondly, all of these scenarios are quite unremarkable activities - eating, walking and picking berries. The fact that these analogies centre on everyday activities undertaken by individuals suggests that Wittgenstein does not have any grand vision about the impact of his philosophical teaching. This humility about the potential impact of his teaching is evidence for Wittgenstein's reticence on the topic of culture. The *repeated* use of such unremarkable situations as an analogy for philosophical activity is the reason that I consider Wittgenstein's quietism intentional. Although Wittgenstein 'clarifies' Spengler's ideas about culture, we cannot say that Wittgenstein provides any positive theory of culture.

Nevertheless, the prolific nature of Wittgenstein's writing suggests that he wanted to achieve *something*. If not a philosophy of culture, we might wonder whether Wittgenstein developed a kind of philosophy *as cultivation* (what Cavell called philosophy 'as education', cited in the Introduction). Cahill suggests that Wittgenstein's remarks in the 1930s and later in *PU* are directed to 'a reader who is likely to come to philosophy with a certain cast of mind that includes unexamined commitments from a particular cultural context.' As part of this, Wittgenstein is experimenting in his writing with a new kind of 'Bildung' that 'encompasses the concepts of training, education and cultural formation,' the aim of which is 'the dissipation of philosophical confusion.'¹⁶¹ The result of this clearing up of philosophical confusions, Cahill argues, is that it 'would lead to a better understanding of the connection between this confusion and our cultural and

¹⁶¹ Cahill, pp. 24-5.

historical situation.¹⁶² Cahill's argument is plausible, but it does not explain why Wittgenstein did not state that that was the aim of his remarks. Furthermore, what would achieving an awareness of our cultural and historical situation achieve? How would the attitudes of Wittgenstein's readers change as a result of that awareness?

Reading *VB* in isolation, it is difficult to see how Wittgenstein is trying to encourage potential readers to cultivate better awareness of their own 'cultural situation'. For example, Wittgenstein does not say that Spengler falls victim to certain confusions about the idea of an 'Abendland' *because* he was writing from the perspective of a Western writer. Wittgenstein's critique of Spengler might well facilitate an awareness in his readers' that concepts such as the 'West' and the 'East' are artificial, over-generalising *Urbilder*; but this might just be a *consequence* of Wittgenstein's teaching rather than the result of *intention*. To avoid falling into the same pitfall that Spengler did by making overgeneralisations, Wittgenstein chooses to offer as few explicit statements of his own as possible. There is no prescriptive description about what we "should" or "should not" think about culture. To bring about a change in attitude, he must therefore *show* his reader a less biased or overgeneralising way of thinking, rather than telling them to do so. If he told them to do so, it might result in a kind of method or theory and gives its users the feeling that they have a superior understanding of culture - and undermine the cultivation of the philosophical virtue of humility within themselves.

In the next section, I will turn to Wittgenstein's lectures, as well as the *Blue Book* and the *Brown Book*, to see how Wittgenstein tried to put his own version of

¹⁶² Cahill, p. 25.

Bildung into practice, to bring about a change in attitude without allowing his students to become hubristic about their new frame of mind. My reading will focus in particular on the significance of ‘games’ as a device that helps Wittgenstein teach his students what he himself has learned through (continued) work on himself and his Spenglerian sympathies. The lectures I have chosen are those on aesthetics, as these are most closely related to the idea of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ culture that fuelled Spengler’s misguided narrative of cultural decline. I also draw on the *Blue* and *Brown Books*, as they are examples of how Wittgenstein tried to create a book or at least a written document that would recreate for readers the same change in attitude that he was trying to bring about in the lecture room.

Wittgenstein’s lectures on aesthetics: translating ‘Arbeit an Einem Selbst’ into the classroom

Having now examined Wittgenstein’s critique of Spengler’s “flawed methodology” and the moral lessons he drew from ‘clarifying’ it, I would like to address the question: Why does Wittgenstein choose ‘Spiele’ as a way of conveying what he has learned from revising Spengler’s dogmatic vision of culture? In our reading of *VB*, we saw how Wittgenstein’s ‘ethical individualism’ (the idea that one must work on one’s character), is edging towards a form of *Bildung*, but there is very little in his remarks that connect his interest in *Kultur* with his interest in teaching (first in schools and then at Cambridge). The 1938 lectures on aesthetics are one of the few bridges that exist to connect Wittgenstein’s private interest in *Kultur* and his public attempts to address philosophical confusions through his teaching. That is why I will give particular focus to those lectures in this section, even though they only survive as notes that students have taken (and not notes that Wittgenstein

himself wrote). To aid my reading of the lectures on aesthetics, I will draw on material from other sources, such as a series of lectures delivered between 1930-32 in Cambridge, Wittgenstein's conversations with Friedrich Waismann of the Vienna Circle between 1930-31, the *Blue Book* and the *Brown Book*. The *Blue Book* was dictated by Wittgenstein as a substitute for lecture notes to be given to his students, and the *Brown Book* was an attempt to condense his new thoughts into book form (intended for a very small audience of close acquaintances). Through a close reading of the lectures and other source materials from the 1930s, I would like to show why Wittgenstein found 'games' an apt analogy for thinking about the 'rules' of aesthetic judgements on culture in many forms (painting, music, dress, speech, etc.).

But first: Why would Wittgenstein consider it important to pass on what he has taught himself about Spengler's mistakes into lectures for his students? We know from *VB* that Wittgenstein felt it was important to address the flaws in one's own thinking for ethical reasons. Thus, I would like my readers to bear in mind that Wittgenstein's teaching is motivated by the desire to cultivate the virtues of humility, courage and honesty in his students. An ethical transformation of this kind requires *active* engagement from his students, which is why Wittgenstein adopts an atypical lecturing style whereby he encourages questions and debate among his listeners, in place of a monologue. James Klagge explains that Wittgenstein's teaching 'was initially arranged to be an hour lecture on Mondays and a longer discussion later in the week', but later 'Wittgenstein cancelled the lectures and held only discussions, during the Michaelmas Term of 1931 and the

Lent Term of 1932'.¹⁶³ For the remainder of the academic year 1932-1933, 'Wittgenstein no longer distinguished between lecture and discussion'.¹⁶⁴

The shift to a more interactive lecturing style is important, as it is evidence of a more general shift in Wittgenstein's own attitude to philosophy. The hubristic belief that he could solve all the problems of philosophy in a single book with *TLP* has been replaced with a commitment to work on himself. Debate with his students forces Wittgenstein to constantly defend and reconsider his own point of view. That is why we should regard the 1930s as an important, creative 'transitional period' for Wittgenstein. Hans Sluga describes it as the 'dialogic turn',¹⁶⁵ because dialogue becomes a major feature of Wittgenstein's writing style from this period onward. Several phrases used by Wittgenstein to persuade or challenge interlocutors during his lectures also appear in written form in the *Brown Book*, and again in *PU*. What we will be looking at in this section then are the experiments that Wittgenstein undertakes with 'games' as a way of doing philosophy in an educational, transformative way (i.e. as a process of *Bildung*).

Beginning with the 1938 lectures on aesthetics, it is clear that Wittgenstein wishes to address a misunderstanding in his teaching. He begins with a statement that, 'The subject (Aesthetics) is very big and entirely misunderstood as far as I can see.'¹⁶⁶ The misunderstanding, according to Wittgenstein, relates to the 'use of such a word as "beautiful"'.¹⁶⁷ It is the 'use', rather than the definition, of the

¹⁶³ James C. Klagge, 'Wittgenstein and His Students: 1929-1933', in *Wittgenstein in the 1930s: Between the Tractatus and the Investigations*, ed. by David G. Stern (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 109-22 (p. 113) <<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108349260.007>>.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Sluga, p. 128.

¹⁶⁶ Ludwig Wittgenstein, Yorick Smythies, and James Taylor, *Lectures & Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, ed. by Cyril Barrett, Reprint (Malden: Blackwell, 2003), p. 1. (Hereafter abbreviated to 'LA')

¹⁶⁷ LA, p. 1.

word 'beautiful' that Wittgenstein thinks should be the object of the study of aesthetics. Early in the lecture, he is noted to have said, 'An intelligent way of dividing up a book on philosophy would be into parts of speech, kinds of words.'¹⁶⁸ Instead of addressing the topic of beauty in his lecture on aesthetics, he is in fact primarily concerned with language. Wittgenstein's method of teaching philosophy is to concern himself with language - not as an abstract concept, but as 'part of a large group of activities - talking, writing, travelling on a bus, meeting a man etc.'¹⁶⁹ Here we can see what is commonly referred to as Wittgenstein's ordinary language philosophy emerging, where language is thought of as an everyday activity that can be observed, rather than an abstract object of theoretical philosophy. This series of lectures on aesthetics is therefore part of Wittgenstein's general mission to address the problems he perceives in philosophy. Recorded as an aside in the lecture notes in parentheses, Wittgenstein remarks that, '(If I had to say what is the main mistake made by philosophers of the present generation, including Moore, I would say that it is that when language is looked at, what is looked at is a form of words and not the use made of the form of words.)'¹⁷⁰ Wittgenstein's pragmatic attitude, focussing on language *use*, pays attention to concrete examples of language being used in everyday situations. It is this attitude that Wittgenstein is seeking to exemplify and impart to his students in this lecture.

While Wittgenstein wishes his lecture on aesthetics to focus on the use of words, it is important to note that he is not taking a philological approach. The etymology of the word 'beauty' or similar words does not concern him:

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 2.

We are concentrating, not on the words 'good' or 'beautiful', which are entirely uncharacteristic, generally just subject and predicate ('This is beautiful'), but on the occasions on which they are said - on the enormously complicated situation in which the aesthetic expression has a place, in which the expression itself has almost a negligible place.¹⁷¹

It is the context, the 'complicated situation' in which a word such as 'beautiful' is used, that interests Wittgenstein. To think about the meaning of a word, Wittgenstein does not suggest that his students defer to prior definitions of the word, such as those found in a dictionary. Wittgenstein's approach to aesthetics could be summarised in the question, "In what situations would we use the word beautiful?", as opposed to a question such as, "What is beauty?"

If we are to study situations in which words such as 'beautiful' are used, where does Wittgenstein suggest we begin? He begins by pointing to the circumstances when we were taught the use of words as children:

One thing we always do when discussing a word is to ask how we were taught it. Doing this on the one hand destroys a variety of misconceptions, on the other hand gives you a primitive language in which the word is used. Although this language is not what you talk when you are twenty, you get a rough approximation to what kind of language game is going to be played.¹⁷²

The pragmatic method of observing actual examples of language usage is being put into practice from the outset of the first lecture on aesthetics, to avoid 'a variety of misconceptions'. Very young children who cannot read do not learn the meanings of words through received definitions. Instead, the situations Wittgenstein is referring to consist of an adult demonstrating the meaning of a word by using it in certain situations.

¹⁷¹ LA, p. 2.

¹⁷² Wittgenstein, Smythies, and Taylor, pp. 1-2.

Although we cannot make statements with certainty on Wittgenstein's style from these lecture notes, it is worth observing that the pronoun 'we' is used several times, indicating that - even if this may not be a direct quotation from Wittgenstein - he has left the impression on his listeners that they are engaged in a collective, collaborative exercise. By talking of the language, you use 'when you are twenty', Wittgenstein is also possibly making reference to the younger age of his listeners and trying to engage their imagination. By suggesting that his students recall childhood situations in which words are learned, Wittgenstein could be said to be exemplifying the philosophical virtues of humility and honesty for his students' benefit and education. 'Honesty' in the sense that he refers to everyday situations that have some basis in reality; and 'humility' in the sense that he begins by stooping to see things from the perspective of a child; there is nothing particularly grand or glamorous (from an intellectual point of view) about the aesthetics in the 'primitive' situations he wants to focus on.

'Language game' is introduced for the first time as a term in the lecture series on aesthetics in this passage. By 1938, this term had become an established part of Wittgenstein's vocabulary and may have already been familiar to his students. The term was also used by Wittgenstein from around 1930, in other lectures at Cambridge between 1930-32, conversations with Friedrich Waismann in Vienna, and in the *Blue Book* and the *Brown Book*. Although this is not the first recorded instance that Wittgenstein uses the term 'game', it is poignant that the term 'game' is used as an analogy to teach his students about words relating to aesthetics and therefore culture. It is perhaps the only time that we might come close to closing the gap between Wittgenstein's remarks on culture, his critique of Spengler, and his intention teach his students to question their own intellectual

hubris. In the above passage, we can also see an example of how Wittgenstein will eventually use what I am calling the ‘games analogy’. He does not introduce the term *as* a term into the lecture (it is not followed by an explicit definition, even though it is a coinage of Wittgenstein’s own).

Instead, the significance of the term ‘game’ in ‘language game’ gradually makes itself apparent throughout the lecture. Wittgenstein continues by making the observation, ‘If you ask yourself how a child learns ‘beautiful’, ‘fine’ etc., you find it learns them roughly as interjections.’¹⁷³ Wittgenstein points out that a child expresses themselves through such injections because ‘Beautiful’ is an odd word to talk about because it is hardly used.’¹⁷⁴ A word such as ‘good’ is considered to be a more helpful starting point:

A child generally applies a word like ‘good’ first to food. One thing that is immensely important in teaching is exaggerating gestures and facial expressions. The word is taught as a substitute for a facial expression or gesture. The gestures, tones of voice, etc., in this case are expressions of approval. What *makes* the word an interjection of approval? It is the game it appears in, not the form of words.¹⁷⁵

What we might call the “rules” for using the word ‘good’ in connection with food that tastes nice are conveyed to the child via non-verbal means, by ‘gestures and facial expressions’. The lecture has substantially moved on from the idea of defining aesthetic terms such as ‘beautiful’ or even ‘good’ to thinking of aesthetic judgements as acts - here, an act of approval. By focussing on the everyday, and in particular, children’s actions, Wittgenstein is forcing his students to consider a different way of doing philosophy. Examples from everyday situations are crucial to the integrity of this way of doing philosophy.

¹⁷³ LA, p. 2.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

The idea of a ‘language game’ helps Wittgenstein’s students along in this pragmatic approach, by getting them to focus on language *usage* through observing certain behaviours, patterns and conventions of usage (the so-called “rules” of a particular situation, which can be conceived of as a “game”). Wittgenstein begins with an example of a child’s ‘language game’, as opposed to an adult’s, because it might have made more sense for his listeners to hear the term ‘game’ being used in connection with children. Clearly, Wittgenstein’s time as a schoolteacher during the 1920s has influenced this idea of a ‘language game’. As we will see in the next chapter, the child’s language game holds such significance for Wittgenstein that it is the starting point for introducing the term ‘language game’ in the opening paragraphs of *PU*.

The game analogy makes sense when thought of in connection with situations when a child is learning to mimic adult speech and gestures. This, however, does seem to be a somewhat simplistic view of aesthetic judgements. The child learns through language games how to use interjections that express approval or pleasure. But what about when we talk about a more refined or critical aesthetic judgement? Wittgenstein acknowledges that an adult making a more critical judgement might use phrases such as ‘The transition is incoherent’ or ‘His use of images is precise’ when talking about music or poetry. The examples are given by Rhees and Taylor respectively, and Wittgenstein observes that ‘The words you use are more akin to “right” and “correct” (as these words are used in ordinary speech) than to “beautiful” and “lovely”.’¹⁷⁶ In the case of these expressions,

¹⁷⁶ *LA*, p. 3.

aesthetic judgements use words other than “beautiful” to express correctness, according to a standard that has been previously learned.

From a child who learns to say ‘good’ in response to food, ‘In what we call the Arts a person who has judgement develops.’¹⁷⁷ At that point, different levels of judgement emerge: ‘When we make an aesthetic judgement about a thing, we do not just gape at it and say “Oh! How marvellous!” We distinguish between a person who knows what he is talking about and a person who doesn’t.’¹⁷⁸ There seems to be an unspoken, shared standard that the ‘we’ knows - that simply praising something does not constitute an understanding of it. An interjection like “Oh! How marvellous!” is a merely an expression of pleasure, rather than a considered judgement. The use of examples of interjections makes this distinction, but Wittgenstein does not clarify exactly what he means until the second lecture: ‘I see roughly this - there is a realm of utterance of delight, when you taste pleasant food or smell a pleasant smell, etc., then there is the realm of Art which is quite different, though often you may make the same face when you hear a piece of music as when you taste good food.’¹⁷⁹ Again, the lecture notes are phrased in the first person, and the word ‘roughly’ is included, suggesting that Wittgenstein made it clear that his statements were of conjecture rather than fact. The statement has left the impression of being not-yet-formed on the student notetaker, and from this we can see that Wittgenstein was actively *doing* philosophy while he is lecturing - thinking through problems as he talks with his students.

How can we distinguish someone who is discerning from someone who is merely expressing pleasure or disgust? Wittgenstein comments that the choice of

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

words is somewhat significant in demonstrating discernment, insofar as ‘Words such as “lovely” are first used as interjections. Later they are used on very rare occasions.’¹⁸⁰ As an example, Wittgenstein says, ‘We might say of a piece of music that it is lovely, by this not praising it but giving it a character. (A lot of people, of course, who can’t express themselves properly use the word very frequently. As they use it, it is used as an interjection.)’¹⁸¹ The comment in parentheses is a rare example of Wittgenstein publicly expressing his personal opinion on what is ‘proper’ in culture, in a way we saw privately expressed in *VB*. The word ‘properly’ has a similar meaning to the words ‘incoherent’ and ‘precise’, which are indeed ‘more akin to ‘right’ and ‘correct’. It is clear in this example that Wittgenstein’s own values about culture influence his teaching, and the idea of a shared but unspoken standard that should be adhered to.

The idea of correctness and the “proper” way of doing things is quite a traditionalist view of cultural appreciation. We might expect that Wittgenstein’s lecture would proceed to elaborate on this by setting out certain rules or criteria for aesthetic appreciation, making the unspoken standard explicit. However, he continues to introduce examples that disrupt the idea of establishing clear criteria for assessing whether someone is making an aesthetic judgement or merely an interjection. Moving away from the arts, he draws on another more everyday, materialistic example:

If a man goes through an endless number of patterns in a tailor’s, [and] says: “No. This is slightly too dark. This is slightly too loud”, etc., he is what we call an appreciator of material. That he is an appreciator is not shown by the interjections he uses, but by the way he chooses, selects etc.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁸¹ *LA*, p. 3.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Wittgenstein is noted to have drawn a comparison between this scenario and musical composition, saying ‘This is what we call an appreciation.’¹⁸³ It is not the medium (music, poetry, tailored suits, food) or the precise words that are used (dark, loud) but ‘the way he chooses, selects etc.’¹⁸⁴ A person’s skill in aesthetic judgement is not necessarily or only evident in the choice of words they use.

If we are to judge whether someone is good at making aesthetic judgements, what does the shared standard look like, according to which we judge them? Wittgenstein suggests that ‘You could regard the rules laid down for the measurement of a coat as an expression of what certain people want.’¹⁸⁵ There is something both liberating and problematic about this statement. Firstly, Wittgenstein is not claiming that there is an aesthetic standard that could be considered objective - it is the accumulation of what people want (which, presumably, can change from time to time as fashions do). There is nothing essentially or objectively ‘good’ about certain styles of tailoring and therefore no fixed aesthetic standards. However, the idea that aesthetic standards are made up of ‘what certain people want’ is potentially misleading if it is interpreted to be a democratic view of cultural value (where the wants of the majority dictate what is valued in culture). It is important therefore to emphasise that Wittgenstein (or perhaps his note-taking student) has used the word ‘certain’ - which may infer that ideas about what is ‘good’ in culture (fashion included) can be determined by a privileged few or curated by cultural institutions such as schools, universities, museums, and libraries.

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

It is also important to note once again the consistently tentative way in which Wittgenstein makes such statements. Even if these are not Wittgenstein's exact words, he has left the impression on his students that what he has said is not a statement of fact, but a suggestion ('You *could* regard...') Even though there may appear to be a standard of 'correctness' laid down in rules, Wittgenstein does not imply that everyone is in agreement with this standard:

People separated on the point of what a coat should measure: there were some who didn't care if it was broad or narrow, etc.; there were others who cared an enormous lot. The rules of harmony, you can say, expressed the way people wanted chords to follow - their wishes crystallized in these rules (the word 'wishes' is much too vague.) All the greatest composers wrote in accordance with them.¹⁸⁶

It is interesting to note that, while the above passage is not referred to as a 'language game' (indeed the term is not used frequently after its initial instance), the idea of 'rules' in aesthetics has re-emerged. The idea of cultural standards set down in rules might seem traditionalist, but here Wittgenstein acknowledges that the rules can be and are debated. The idea of a 'language game' at the back of his students' minds might have encouraged this attitude, because they might have considered the rules of a game less unshakeable than the "rules" of aesthetic judgement (games being considered more inconsequential than the latter). Wittgenstein's mode of lecturing allows for and even encourages the criticism or revision of phrases and ideas, even as he says them. For examples, immediately after the above passage, he acknowledges that the word "wishes" might be inadequate. The idea that all the best composers wrote in accordance with 'the rules' also receives an objection from his listeners. The objection raised by the student is not recorded, but the reply from Wittgenstein is recorded as:

¹⁸⁶ LA, pp. 5-6.

[Reply to objection:] You can say that every composer changed the rules, but the variation was very slight; not all the rules were changed. The music was still good by a great many of the old rules.¹⁸⁷

Just as with a game, rules can change over time. The rules of the game are not like natural laws of physics because they can be reshaped by the players.

According to Wittgenstein in the above passage, it is important that the rules cannot be changed completely and all at once - there needs to be some continuity of the 'old rules'. The standards of culture could be thought of as going through a gradual evolution over time, similar to the Spenglerian account of culture.

Wittgenstein uses the figurative idea of "rules" to make it clear that he does not (and his students should not) judge past culture according to present standards (a lesson that he has himself learned from Spengler). This presents a distinct contrast to his attitude in his private notes. He says that, 'What we now call a cultured taste perhaps didn't exist in the Middle Ages. An entirely different game is played in different ages.'¹⁸⁸ As with 'rules' above, the word 'game' is employed figuratively here, but there is no explicit indication that it is being used as a simile or analogy. The analogy has now been completely integrated into Wittgenstein's way of speaking to his students and has taken the form of a kind of extended metaphor. In this lecture, Wittgenstein adopts an exemplary persona in front of his students, letting the cultural pessimism of his private remarks fall away into a more open-minded, less judgemental attitude. The game analogy helps Wittgenstein to demonstrate this attitude, by offering a way of talking about different 'cultures' as 'games'. Thinking of past and present cultures as 'games' creates some distance between the student and context they are contemplating,

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 8.

because ‘Spiele’, in and of themselves, are philosophically inconsequential. In contrast to Spengler’s narrative, culture is not viewed as a continuous, *single* entity that evolves through the ages, experiencing golden periods and decline. Instead, culture in the Middle Ages is considered as a distinct ‘game’ among others. If culture is no longer perceived in the singular, but as multiple distinct entities, each with their own “rules”, then it becomes possible to refrain from speaking of the decline/fall of culture, and to speak instead of comparing cultures across space and time.

The ‘game/rules’ analogy for cultural standards is therefore *not* introduced to set out simple laws that dictate what should be considered ‘good’ or ‘bad’ in the visual arts, music, poetry etc. Indeed, the purpose of ‘games’ is to complicate, or rather pluralise, the idea of a single culture or cultural standard. The upshot of the investigation into the question, “What behaviours can we observe when a person is appreciating music etc. with a discerning attitude?” does not have a clear answer. Wittgenstein concludes that ‘An immensely complicated family of cases is left, with the highlight - the expression of admiration, a smile or a gesture etc.’¹⁸⁹ The inclusion of non-verbal forms of expression such as gestures means that the very idea of cultural appreciation becomes more intangible. A gesture means very little in isolation, as does a word. Hence, they cannot be described in isolation:

The words we call expressions of aesthetic judgement play a very complicated role, but a very definite role, in what we call a culture of a period.

To describe their use or to describe what you mean by a cultured taste, you have to describe a culture.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

The word 'culture' here is being used in a similar way to the word 'game' in the previous statement about culture in the Middle Ages. Cultural standards only make sense within a particular context, and so it is important to describe that context.

This, however, makes the task of describing a culture more challenging:

It is not only difficult to describe what appreciation consists in, but impossible. To describe what it consists in we would have to describe the whole environment.¹⁹¹

According to Wittgenstein, our 'whole environment' forms our understanding of aesthetic appreciation. An almost bewildering number of examples have been brought forth during the lecture to illustrate the variety of contexts in which aesthetic expressions can be used to voice judgement. The depth and complexity of the non-verbal context is what makes it 'not only difficult' but 'impossible' to describe what appreciation consists in.¹⁹² In order to describe the 'language game' of aesthetic appreciation, we would have to in effect describe a 'whole culture',¹⁹³ by which Wittgenstein means that 'In order to get clear about aesthetic words you have to describe ways of living'.¹⁹⁴ By saying this, Wittgenstein is inviting his students to provide contextual examples that shed light on the aesthetic words used in those contexts. Wittgenstein brings his students down from the general to the particular, from abstract concepts to concrete examples.

In this way, Wittgenstein teaches his students to question the idea that cultural value is something fixed and permanent. Instead, what is "good", "correct", etc. is determined by the context. At the beginning of the second lecture, this intention is clearest when he says, 'You might think Aesthetics is a

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁹² LA, p. 7.

¹⁹³ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 11.

science telling us what's beautiful - almost too ridiculous for words.'¹⁹⁵ Despite his own pessimistic outlook on 'Unkultur', Wittgenstein encourages his students to take an open-minded, enquiring approach to aesthetics to avoid generalisations about 'rules'. Through the questions and thought experiments which he discusses with his students, he encourages them to challenge what is meant by the 'correct' way to read poetry or to play a piece of music:

[*Rhees*:] What rule are we using or referring to when we say: "This is the correct way"? If a music teacher says a piece *should* be played this way and plays it, what is he appealing to?

[*Wittgenstein*:] Take the question: "How should poetry be read? What is the correct way of reading it?" If you are talking about blank verse the right way of reading it might be stressing it correctly - you discuss how far you should stress the rhythm and how far you should hide it.¹⁹⁶

Wittgenstein does not ultimately answer Rhees' general question, what "correct" means in terms of artistic performance. There is no 'rule' that can be applied in all circumstances, for all pieces of music - or even, perhaps, for the same piece of music. Instead, Wittgenstein asks Rhees to consider another example (blank verse), and then later proceeds to further examples (such as judging the fit of a suit).¹⁹⁷ There are no answers - only more examples, more cases, thought experiments, questions. Wittgenstein does not want his students to simply accept "the rules" of aesthetic appreciation, but he also wants to make sure that he has got their brain working.

Wittgenstein does not deny the idea that there is a 'good' way to play a piece of music outright - he is not a hardline cultural relativist. The fact that the term 'good' is relative, and can mean different things in different situations, does not

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 4.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 5.

mean that it is absolutely relative. He does justice to artists and craftspeople because his words suggest that playing music, tailoring a suit, or reciting poetry are crafts that require practice to do them well. For example, he likens ‘Geschmack’ to an ‘ausgebildeten’ or ‘trained’ eye.¹⁹⁸ We could say that one of Wittgenstein’s variations on *Bildung* is *ausbilden* - a kind of training, a practical and “down to earth” version of cultural education based on hard work and experience rather than preconceptions.

In this way, Wittgenstein teaches his students to question the idea that cultural value is something fixed and permanent. In contrast to his own pessimistic outlook on ‘Unkultur’ expressed in *VB*, Wittgenstein encourages his students to take an open-minded, enquiring approach to aesthetics and to avoid generalisations about ‘rules’. Wolfgang Kienzler describes this helpfully as ‘train[ing] people in looking for sense rather than truth’.¹⁹⁹ Wittgenstein’s goal in introducing examples in this discussion is to get his students to think more about the *sense* of ‘correct’ in specific contexts - we might even refer to this as a kind of “feeling”. The point is not to find the ultimate definition of ‘correct’ that would apply in all contexts, because an expert would not themselves necessarily be able to give a definition of “correct”. An experienced artist or craftsperson would probably experience their expertise in the form of a feeling or intuition that something is “right” or “not quite right”. In *the Brown Book*, Wittgenstein states:

It was not the function of examples to show the essence of ‘deriving’, ‘reading’, and so forth through a veil of inessential features; the examples were not descriptions of an outside letting us guess at an inside which for some

¹⁹⁸ *VB*, p. 73.

¹⁹⁹ Wolfgang Kienzler, ‘Will There Soon Be Skilful Philosophers? Wittgenstein on Himself, His Work, and the State of Civilization in 1930’, in *Wittgenstein in the 1930s: Between the Tractatus and the Investigations*, ed. by David G. Stern (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 93-108 (p. 105) <<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108349260.006>>.

reason or other could not be shown in its nakedness. We are tempted to think that our examples are *indirect* means for producing a certain image or idea in a person's mind, - that they *hint* at something which they cannot show. [...]

Our method is *purely descriptive*; the descriptions we give are not hints of explanations.²⁰⁰

We can see here how Wittgenstein has developed his critique of Spengler's account of Western culture into a more general point about avoiding the idea of finding the 'essence' hidden behind a 'veil' (also connected with false expectations of an 'Urbild'). By 'purely descriptive', Wittgenstein means that it is not the job of philosophy to say *why* something is the way it is; hence, in his lectures on aesthetics, Wittgenstein does not approach the topic with questions such as 'Why are paintings beautiful?' but instead 'In what circumstances do we call something beautiful?' The latter takes a purely descriptive approach, insofar as it describes an observable behaviour, rather than an essence hidden within.

Reading the notes taken by Rush Rhees during the same lecture series, we can see how Wittgenstein was able to successfully instil in his listeners the desire to avoid making overly simplistic or generalised statements and definitions in the realm of aesthetics. Rhees writes at the end of one of the lectures, 'The craving for simplicity. [People would like to say:] "What really matters is only the colours." You say this mostly because you wish it to be the case.'²⁰¹ Wittgenstein has successfully conveyed to Rhees that human beings have a deep-seated psychological need ('wish', 'craving') to simplify explanations. It would be wonderfully straightforward if we could say that paintings are beautiful not because of what they depict, or the composition, but only because of the colours.

²⁰⁰ Wittgenstein, *BB*, p. 125.

²⁰¹ *LA*, p. 36.

However, the word 'craving' noted by Rhees suggests that there is something potentially unhealthy about the human need for certainty, which does not encourage the development of a genuinely curious and inquiring mind. Therefore, Rhees records at the end of another lecture, 'Much of what we are doing is a question of changing the style of thinking.'²⁰² No new concepts have been introduced and no new discoveries have been made during the lectures. Instead, Wittgenstein brings about a change in perspective on aesthetics by means of the games analogy.

This change in attitude might seem somewhat abstract. How might that change in attitude have ethical consequences in the real world? One example might be a change in attitude to what is conventionally considered a "cultural education". In giving examples of what might be thought of as "appreciation" of art, Wittgenstein says:

There are lots of people, well-offish, who have been to good schools, who can afford to travel about and see the Louvre, etc., and who know a lot about and can talk fluently about dozens of painters. There is another person who has seen very few paintings, but who looks intensely at one or two paintings which make a profound impression on him. Another person who is narrow, concentrated and circumscribed. Are these different kinds of appreciation? They may all be called 'appreciation'.²⁰³

Wittgenstein does not consider a paid-for cultural education necessary to be 'cultured'. In the above examples of 'appreciation', Wittgenstein does not claim that the person who has the money to see a lot of art and travel is superior, compared to the others who only see a few paintings or have a 'narrow' view of what constitutes art. He also does not state that these three examples *are*

²⁰² Ibid., p. 28.

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 9.

appreciation, but that they ‘may all be called’ appreciation. Wittgenstein reserves his own judgement on what is and is not “appreciation”, in order to demonstrate to his students that it is possible to *observe* the patterns of behaviour that might conventionally be associated with appreciation (the “rules” here being the “patterns”). Although these observations may provide examples of how the word “appreciation” might be intended, they are not conclusive. Just because someone has the money to travel, has been to the right schools, is deeply affected by a few paintings, or has a narrow view of art, does not necessarily mean that they are ‘truly’ appreciating art. The act of observing multiple examples of appreciation suggests a pluralistic definition of appreciation, rather than one that relies on assumptions about the education one ought to have, or the reaction that one displays in front of a painting. The effect is that any fixed idea about what appreciation dissolves - this is not to say that there is no such thing as aesthetic appreciation, but that a snobbish attitude to appreciation gets you no closer to understanding what appreciation *is*.

How can we sum up what Wittgenstein is doing with the ‘game’ analogy in these lectures? Could the tacit process of using “games” figuratively be thought of as part of Wittgenstein’s “method”? Kienzler comments that ‘method’ is an unsatisfactory term and adopted ‘for want of a better word’. Kienzler objects to the term because it implies that ‘progress’ can be made in philosophy, that something new can be discovered.²⁰⁴ The ‘method’ Wittgenstein uses during the 1930s is not the endgame of philosophy in the same way that *TLP* was meant to be.

²⁰⁴ Kienzler, p. 107.

I would like to suggest that it might be helpful to think of Wittgenstein's so-called 'method' as a form of *Bildung*, for two reasons: 1) it refers to (moral) character formation as key to good art and artist's integrity; and 2) in contrast to a purely intellectual mode of learning, it can involve a tacit learning process, such as the insights and wisdom protagonists of *Bildungsromane* gain through their life experiences. Although he rarely uses the term himself, there are many ways in which *Bildung* could in fact have been helpful for Wittgenstein in describing the 'method' for the change in attitude he was trying to achieve. Unlike *Kultur*, which calls to mind the forms of life of entire societies, *Bildung* begins first with the cultivation of the individual, which is precisely the ethical stance Wittgenstein wants to take.

However, as noted in the Introduction to this thesis, the term *Bildung* comes with a great deal of baggage. *Bildung* as a purely philosophical concept might be helpful for us as readers of Wittgenstein, but considered in its full historical context, particularly its 19th and 20th century connotations with a cultural education - the process of being initiated into the "great" canonical works of art and literature - 'Bildung' is *not* a helpful term for referring to cultivation of independent, critical minds under Wittgenstein's teaching. It can carry with it too much the idea of assimilation into an institution and conforming to a cultural standard perceived as universal. This tension within cultural education, and specifically in the term *Bildung* in the German context, are implicitly manifest in 'language games', where the rules of the game are the 'rules' of cultural appreciation. In the next chapter, we will see how Hesse's use of the 'Glasperlenspiel' constitutes a more *explicit* use of the game analogy to explore

the tension between creative freedom and rule-following within educational institutions.

Why ‘games’ as an analogy?

From reading Wittgenstein’s lectures on aesthetics, it has become clear that ‘rules’ are a particularly appealing aspect of ‘games’ for Wittgenstein, and that he finds them helpful as a figurative device in his teaching. We can now draw a connection between Wittgenstein’s reticence about expressing cultural judgements, and his efforts to encourage open-mindedness and intellectual humility in his students. What might be less clear, however, is why he does not simply talk of rules - why talk about the rules of a game? In this section, I will draw on a range of sources from the 1930s to observe how Wittgenstein fine-tuned his games/rules analogy, to understand more specifically which aspects of the analogy were appealing to him, and why.

A rare example of Wittgenstein offering a definition of the term ‘language game’ in a pedagogical context can be found in the *Blue Book*:

I shall in the future again and again draw your attention to what I shall call language games. These are ways of using signs simpler than those in which we use the signs of our highly complicated language. Language games are the forms of language with which a child begins to make use of words. [...] When we look at such simple forms of language, the mental mist which seems to enshroud our ordinary use of language disappears. We see activities, reactions, which are clear-cut and transparent. On the other hand we recognize in these simple processes forms of language not separated by a break from our more complicated ones.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ Wittgenstein, *BB*, p. 17.

Language games are introduced as a heuristic device in Wittgenstein's teaching to facilitate *klären*. They are ways of drawing his students' attention to examples of activities in everyday life, to simplify some of their more abstract questions.

The rules of a game, rather than any other kind of rule, might have particular appeal for Wittgenstein because they are not set down according to any justification or logic that is external to the game. The rules are not present in a game in the same way as if they were a natural law of physics, but they are not entirely arbitrary either. This is expressed most clearly in the *Brown Book*:

It is no act of insight, intuition, [*sic*] which makes us use the rule as we do at the particular point of the series [in the 'language game' of counting]. [...] And the mistake which we here and in a thousand similar cases are inclined to make is labelled by the word "to make" as we have used it in the sentence "It is no act of insight which makes us use the rule as we do", because there is an idea that 'something makes us' do what we do. And this again joins on to the confusion between cause and reason. *We need have no reason to follow the rule as we do.* The chain of reasons has ended.²⁰⁶

Games are not *for* anything per se; at some point, we can no longer answer the string of 'why' questions to say why we do what we do.

There are some potential flaws in Wittgenstein's language game analogy and its use in teaching his students to think about aesthetic appreciation. The idea that we do not know when cultural conventions come from, but we just 'do' them because 'they are the rules of the game' is potentially problematic. This analogy with games does not seem to account for the way in which the meaning of *Kultur* and *Bildung* in concrete, material terms is determined by institutions (such as societies, universities, schools). When reading *GPS* in Chapter 3, we will see how the novel helps to fill this gap in Wittgenstein's philosophy.

²⁰⁶ Wittgenstein, *BB*, p. 143.

Using 'play' as a device for narrating cultural history and decline in *Homo Ludens*

In this section, I would like to show how a contemporary cultural historian used the 'game' analogy in an entirely different way to Wittgenstein. *Homo Ludens* is a text that picks up on those aspects about games which Rhees found Wittgenstein to overlook - namely, the ability of rules to form a kind of institution. By likening cultural practices that take place in institutions such as churches, courts and universities, Huizinga takes the game analogy a step further than Wittgenstein. However, I would like to show how this is a step too far, by identifying how Huizinga uses games and play to bend a history of culture into a narrative of cultural decline. If Huizinga's association of games with institutions produces such a flawed narrative of culture, we might then have an answer to Rhees's question - why didn't Wittgenstein make that connection himself? In Chapter 2 when we come to Hesse's use of games when responding to the state of *Kultur* in his writing, we will also investigate how his text, despite drawing the same connection between games and institutions, does not fall victim to the Spenglerian pitfall that *Homo Ludens* does.

Superficially, *Homo Ludens* might seem to offer a Wittgensteinian account of culture, because the author argues that various cultural activities could be considered as 'play'. Huizinga uses the concept of 'play' as a way of describing and comparing activities across different cultures and time periods, such as religious rituals, poetry, Socratic dialogues, and riddles. In this way, *Homo Ludens* offers an opportunity to explore how 'games' might be useful as a comparative tool for cultures across different countries and historical periods. Huizinga draws together many cultural traditions (Greek, Anglo-Saxon, Chinese) and time periods in a high

influential comparative work. 'Games' or 'play' becomes a powerful 'Urbild', a way of bringing diverse traditions into dialogue with one another. Using this *Urbild*, Huizinga argues that play is an essential feature of human cultural activity.

Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* appears just two years after his 1936 book, *In the Shadow of Tomorrow; a Diagnosis of the Spiritual Distemper of Our Time*.²⁰⁷ *Homo Ludens*, therefore, is not only an account of a ludic perspective on European culture, but it also includes a final chapter on "The Play-Element in Contemporary Civilisation" written in the same spirit of 'dunkle Voraussicht' Wittgenstein and Hesse share. According to Huizinga, the 'category "play" is one of the most fundamental in life.'²⁰⁸ While this may sound like the sort of generalising statement Wittgenstein would disagree with, Huizinga writes a disclaimer in his foreword: 'It is ancient wisdom, but it is also a little cheap, to call all human activity "play". Those who are willing to content themselves with a metaphysical conclusion of this kind should not read this book.'²⁰⁹ He also apologizes for the possible gaps in his knowledge of global cultures, saying that such gaps are 'the result of predatory incursions into provinces not sufficiently explored by the raider himself'.²¹⁰ He justifies the shortcomings of his work with a sense of urgency: 'I had to write now, or not at all.'²¹¹ *Homo Ludens* contains within it an urgent response to its time, and this is why we will focus our attention on Huizinga's concept of 'game' and then primarily on the last chapter on 'Contemporary

²⁰⁷ J. H. Huizinga, *In the Shadow of Tomorrow: A Diagnosis of the Spiritual Distemper of Our Time* (W. Heinemann, 1936).

²⁰⁸ J. H. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture.*, 1951, p. 28
<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2087716?origin=crossref>> [accessed 12 June 2019]. J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture.*, 1951, p. 28
<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2087716?origin=crossref>> [accessed 12 June 2019].

²⁰⁹ J. H. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, p. ix.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. x.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. x.

Civilisation', as it offers a key point of reference to Wittgenstein's and Hesse's works.

To what extent does the 'game' analogy allow Huizinga to offer a *descriptive* account of culture in a way Wittgenstein might have envisaged the term 'language-game' being used? In the book's introduction, Huizinga argues that almost all activities of human culture could be thought of as rooted in 'play':

Ritual grew up in sacred play; poetry was born in play and nourished on play; music and dancing were pure play. Wisdom and philosophy found expression in words and forms derived from religious contests. The rules of warfare, the conventions of noble living were built up on play-patterns. We have to conclude, therefore, that civilization is, in its earliest phases, played. It does not come from play like a babe detaching itself from the womb: it arises in and as play, and never leaves it.²¹²

There are all kinds of words that have semantic associations with institutions here, in the way Rhees was perhaps thinking of in his commentary on *PU*. The word 'conventions' is easily comparable with 'rules'. 'Ritual' and 'sacred' have associations with religious institutions. A hint of the occult also creeps in, in 'ritual' as well as in 'wisdom'.

The quasi-religious, faintly occult language in the above paragraph is even stronger in other passages. Huizinga views play as an essentially closed circle of activity, demarcated by its rules, or in some cases even a physical 'limitation as to space':

All play moves and has its being within a play-ground marked off beforehand either materially or ideally, deliberately or as a matter of course. Just as there is no formal difference between play and ritual, so the "consecrated spot" cannot be formally distinguished from the play-ground. The arena, the card-table, the magic circle, the temple, the stage, the screen, the tennis court, the court of justice, etc., are all in form and function play-grounds, i.e. forbidden spots, isolated, hedged round, hallowed, within which special rules obtain. All are temporary worlds within the ordinary world, dedicated to the performance of an act apart.²¹³

²¹² Huizinga, p. 173.

²¹³ Huizinga, p. 10.

The 'magic' circle is of course meant metaphorically - it is not a magic boundary which separates the play from real-world activity. What delineates games is not a line, or a circle, but the practices of the players themselves. The combination of spiritual and mystical vocabulary Huizinga uses to describe the game - 'hallowed', 'ritual', 'forbidden', 'consecrated' is a major point of differentiation from Wittgenstein's *Sprachspiele*. This vocabulary, as well as the spatial (whether real or virtual) demarcation of 'consecrated ground', designates play as a "special" activity. This is something fundamentally at odds with the way in which Wittgenstein wants us to examine the *ordinary* activities in our *everyday* lives through the game heuristic. Huizinga's choice of words related to magic and ritual indicates the fascination that 'games' can have for their 'players', and by extension the power of an institution's rules over the people within its jurisdiction. The ritualistic, "high-priest-like" activities that the players can get drawn into is something which we have already seen that Wittgenstein explicitly wanted to avoid.

There is not a great deal that is 'playful' about Wittgenstein's use of language-games as a heuristic device; the analogy between language and play is primarily based on the similarity of rule-following guided by convention. We should notice that Huizinga's choice of words is entirely different in connection to games. His spiritual vocabulary - hallowed, consecrated - is connected with other word choices that indicate that the games are distinct worlds within the world: forbidden spots, isolated, hedged round. These words are chosen because 'play', for Huizinga, denotes an 'action which is separate from "ordinary" life.'²¹⁴ Huizinga elaborates by stating, 'Playing is no "doing" in the ordinary sense; you do not "do" a

²¹⁴ Huizinga, p. 4.

game as you "do" or "go" fishing, or hunting, or Morris-dancing, or woodwork - you "play" it.'²¹⁵ The examples which Wittgenstein chooses for his 'language-games' in *PU* (such as builders exchanging slabs, or shopping for apples at a grocer's shop) are therefore both unusual and ordinary. They are ordinary in the sense that they are unremarkable activities, in contrast to some of Huizinga's examples such as Socratic dialogues, courtroom debates and poetry. On the other hand, Wittgenstein uses the term 'game' in an unusual way because his usage deviates from the idea that games are not 'done' in the same way as activities in the 'ordinary sense', according to Huizinga.

Although Huizinga might be using the term 'game' in a more conventional way, there is something problematic about his association of games with cultural activities. For Huizinga, the combination of play as bounded/delineated activity, and play as 'special' activity separate from everyday life, leads to the idea that play is also necessarily carried out in an exclusive bubble:

From another angle, of course, we might say that the play-element in art has been fortified by the very fact that the artist is held to be above the common run of mortals. As a superior being he claims a certain amount of veneration for his due. In order to savour his superiority to the full he will require a reverential public or a circle of kindred spirits, who will pour forth the requisite veneration more understandingly than the public at large with its empty phrases. A certain esotericism is as necessary for art to-day as it was of old. Now all esoterics presuppose a convention: we, the initiates, agree to take such and such a thing thus and thus, so we will understand it, so admire it. In other words, esoterics require a play-community which shall steep itself in its own mystery.²¹⁶

The idea of a play community protecting its conventions from popularisation by 'the public at large' through keeping a close circle of 'initiates' may seem much closer to Hesse's *Castalians* than it is to Wittgenstein, who wanted to deconstruct

²¹⁵ Huizinga, p. 37.

²¹⁶ Huizinga, pp. 202-3.

any mystification or confusions in philosophy. However, when we consider how Wittgenstein felt himself to be only addressing his *Kulturkreis*, and how even in 1939 in a draft preface for *PU* he imagines his book to be for an ‘edler[e] Art von Leser’, we can see how Wittgenstein in fact treads a fine line between exclusion out of modest aims and exclusion out of cultural elitism.²¹⁷ It is not my aim to say that Wittgenstein is culturally elitist - he himself is aware of his own blind spots in this regard. Rather, I have wanted to demonstrate the fine line that one treads between intentionally exclusive elitism and unavoidable exclusion based on a difference in skills or values. Huizinga crosses this line once he starts to think of institutions that are player communities ‘initiated’ into the rules of their games. The view of play as necessarily exclusive and ‘esoteric’, combined with the ‘profound affinity between play and order’²¹⁸ means that we can easily draw a link once again between games and institutions. For instance, Huizinga also identifies the ‘whole functioning of the mediaeval University’, such as ‘everlasting disputations’, ‘the solemn ceremonial’, ‘the grouping of scholars’ into ‘divisions and sub-divisions’, as profoundly ‘ludic’.²¹⁹

However, Huizinga does not go so far as to say that academic learning is merely play. He acknowledges that ‘the scientist’s continued penchant for systems tends in the direction of play’.²²⁰ However, if we were to say that all ‘science’ (by which Huizinga also means the humanities) was mere ‘play’, then ‘we might arrive at the amazing and horrifying conclusion that all the branches of science and learning are so many forms of play because each of them is isolated within its own

²¹⁷ *VB*, p. 75.

²¹⁸ Huizinga, p. 10.

²¹⁹ Huizinga, p. 156.

²²⁰ Huizinga, p. 203.

field and bounded by the strict rules of its own methodology.’²²¹ Just like Rhees in his perplexity about Wittgenstein’s analogy between games and language, Huizinga understands the profoundly disorientating implications of comparing academic activities to play. Huizinga manages to avert this ‘horrrifying’ possibility by claiming that science differs from play in three ways: science is not done for pleasure, whereas play is; science is empirical and therefore seeks a closer relationship to reality than play; the ‘rules’ of science ‘are not unchallengeable for all time’, rather they are ‘constantly being belied by experience and undergoing modification, whereas the rules of a game cannot be altered without spoiling the game itself.’²²² Although Huizinga acknowledges that some disciplines, such as philology, delight in play, play is something which such scholars ‘fall into’ or are ‘seduced’ to.²²³ Once scholars are seduced in this way, they no longer uphold the values of science, the ‘the strict demands of accuracy and veracity’.²²⁴ This is another way in which Huizinga’s use of the term ‘play’ is distinct from Wittgenstein’s ‘language-games’. Huizinga is aware that if we describe an activity as ‘play’, it may attract an association of childishness or self-indulgence to that activity. The connection between play, games and playfulness is something that Wittgenstein appears to have understated in his writing, in favour of speaking about rules as patterns of behaviour instead.

Huizinga’s attachment to the idea that games are timeless (because their rules must always remain the same) is not entirely true to life - if we think of chess, for example, it is a game with a long history, with certain rules being added

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid., p. 204.

²²⁴ Ibid.

over time (the ‘castle’ move has not always exited). This overgeneralisation about games is evidence for Huizinga’s tendency in *Homo Ludens* to idealise ‘play’ or ‘playfulness’ as a value by which to measure the culture of each period of human history. *Homo Ludens* is not a purely descriptive historical narrative. This critical attitude towards the decline in the playfulness of culture becomes most clear in the final chapter, in which Huizinga relates that ‘the sad conclusion forces itself upon us that the play-element in culture has been on the wane ever since the 18th century’.²²⁵ Apparently contemporary civilisation is no longer ‘played’, and the resulting cultural decline leads Huizinga to conclude that ‘real civilization cannot exist in the absence of a certain play-element’:

Civilization will, in a sense, always be played according to certain rules, and true civilization will always demand fair play. Fair play is nothing less than good faith expressed in play terms. Hence the cheat or the spoil-sport shatters civilization itself. To be a sound culture creating force this play-element must be pure. It must not consist in the darkening or debasing of standards set up by reason, faith or humanity. It must not be a false seeming, a masking of political purposes behind the illusion of genuine play-forms. True play knows no propaganda; its aim is in itself, and its familiar spirit is happy inspiration.²²⁶

Phrases such as ‘fair’, ‘pure’, ‘true’ play, introduce a normative dimension to Huizinga’s historical narrative. (If this were a Wittgensteinian descriptive narrative, there would be simply “different kinds” of play.) The ‘players’ of civilisation have a duty to ‘play by its rules’ - this betrays the author’s complacent faith in the fairness of these rules in the first place. The assumption that the rules of civilisation are ‘fair’ leads Huizinga to reason that the rise of populism and mass political movements might well ‘[yield] the illusion of a strongly developed play-factor’ but in fact are merely a ‘blend of adolescence and barbarity’, which he

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 206.

²²⁶ Huizinga, p. 211.

dubs 'Puerilism'. 'Puerilism' is effectively a 'false' form of play 'of the lowest order': 'yells or other signs of greeting, the wearing of badges and sundry items of political haberdashery, walking in marching order or at a special pace [...] the insatiable thirst for trivial recreation and crude sensationalism, the delight in mass-meetings, mass-demonstrations, parades, etc.'²²⁷ Huizinga, rightfully, was concerned about the rise in nationalism and the forming of nations 'into clubs', for these are 'hotbeds of sectarianism, intolerance, suspicion, superciliousness and quick to defend any illusion that flatters self-love or group-consciousness.'²²⁸ Nations who join such 'clubs' are in danger of 'losing every shred of honour, all sense of humour, the very idea of decency and fair play.'²²⁹

These terms, such as 'honour', 'decency', 'friendship', echo a wider malaise among European artists and intellectuals of the time who were concerned about the rise of political extremism. The malaise found various private and public forms of expression, from Wittgenstein's moody prefaces to the ultimately unsuccessful 1935 Paris the International Congress of Writers for the Defence of Culture. The Congress was, according to Boas, a 'genuine mobilization for the defence of culture' which unfortunately 'stranded on the bedrock of irreconcilable difference spanning the entire agenda'.²³⁰ On the final day, the Congress 'terminated with a flurry of high-minded, if toothless, resolutions.'²³¹ In their biography of Walter Benjamin, who was one of the attendees, Eiland and Jennings describe the

²²⁷ Ibid., p. 205.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Jacob Boas, *Writers' Block: The Paris Antifacist Congress of 1935* (Cambridge: Legenda, Modern Humanities Research Association (MHRA), 2017), p. 4.

²³¹ Ibid.

Congress as having advanced ‘what might be called an antifascist aesthetic’.²³² This was a large-scale conference, ‘attended by 230 writers serving as delegates from forty countries, with an audience of three thousand’.²³³ An invitation to the congress appeared in *Monde* in March 1935. The invitation ‘emphasized the role of the writer as a “defender of the cultural heritage of humanity” and played down all political conclusions.’²³⁴ It appears that any overtly political stance/agenda was to be avoided, on account of the extremely divisive nature of political discussion at that time. Both Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht, who attended the congress, were ‘deeply disappointed’: Brecht ‘objected to the “grand words” and “bygone concepts of love, freedom, dignity, and justice” and decried the suppression of such terms as “class” and “property relations”.’²³⁵ While neither Wittgenstein nor Hesse attended the Congress or its subsequent iterations (in London, Valencia, and Paris once more in 1938), the event is nevertheless significant for situating them in this moment of crisis during the 1930s.

The idea that ‘culture’ could be mobilized according to humanist values to fight against fascism was a well-meant but essentially idealist one. Huizinga’s view that populism is due to adolescent behaviour and barbarity is blind to the fact that the people following these movements are not merely neglecting the rules of civilisation out of immaturity or ignorance - like similar movements today, they are discontent with the “rules” of civilisation as they stand (capitalism and wealth inequality for example) and it is their intention to alter them through their own

²³² Howard Eiland and Michael William Jennings, *Walter Benjamin: A Critical Life* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), p. 504. Howard Eiland and Michael William Jennings, *Walter Benjamin: A Critical Life* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), p. 504.

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ Eiland and Jennings, p. 305.

“anti-establishment” ideology. Huizinga fails to observe that such movements have intellectual supporters too, and it is not merely the ‘half-educated masses’.²³⁶ For instance, Martin Heidegger was one of many German professors who signed the *Bekennnis der Professoren an den deutschen Universitäten und Hochschulen zu Adolf Hitler und dem nationalsozialistischen Staat* (11th November 1933). Huizinga does not name any names or specific movements in his book, claiming that it ‘is not the place to investigate the causes, growth and extent of this world-wide bastardization of culture’ and is simply content to interpret the rise of political turmoil as a decline in culture.²³⁷ The result is a stern rejection of populist movements, but also the reinforcing of a normative view of *Bildung* and the superiority of the *Gebildeten* over the flag-waving, ‘half-educated’ rabble.

Huizinga claims that the masses following the rules of their political doctrines are not at play, because ‘if our modern puerilism were genuine play we ought to see civilization returning to the great archaic forms of recreation where ritual, style and dignity are in perfect unison.’²³⁸ In this way, ‘play’ is used as a term which is not merely an anthropological tool for thinking about the conventions and customs that guide cultural activities. Instead, it is used to pass judgement on people, by distinguishing between a ‘genuine play’ and a false play. Sections of society can be judged on the degree to which they could be said to embody the genuine play element.

Like Wittgenstein, Huizinga feels out of place in his century. However, his nostalgia for the past is both misguided and unhelpful; realising this meant that Wittgenstein never employed his ‘game’ analogy to write a historical account of

²³⁶ Huizinga, p. 205.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid., p. 206.

culture. Tanghe explains why, despite its flaws, *Homo Ludens* has achieved success and popularity:

His ultimate and, granted, magnificently accomplished (humanist) aim was to esthetically express a romantic cultural pessimism and to eruditely ventilate all too warranted political worries. This may explain or help explain why so much praise was heaped upon a book that, as an explanatory theory about the role of play in cultures, was deeply unsatisfying: it struck a moral and esthetic nerve.²³⁹

Huizinga provides a helpful public expression of what Wittgenstein kept in his private notes: a widespread mood of profound disillusionment and cultural pessimism during the 1930s. The book is ultimately a failed attempt at achieving the kind of cultural commentary that Wittgenstein was edging towards in his draft preface - how one can speak of a 'cultural crisis' or the need for *Bildung* without sounding like a cultural elitist. Can the play paradigm still be useful for Hesse in demonstrating the value of *Bildung*, without falling into the same trap as *Homo Ludens*? i.e., the trap of proposing an elitist caste in retaliation against the perceived decline of *Kultur*?

Conclusion

Wittgenstein was sceptical of educational institutions and the intellectual establishment, for a variety reasons, despite his own traditional tastes and deep-seated notions of cultural value. Wittgenstein is however wary of succumbing to his cultural pessimism and withdrawing too much into his *Kulturkreis*. Unpublished and private, his first attempts at a 'preface' position him as part of a literal and metaphorical European intellectual diaspora in the years leading up to the start of the Second World War ("metaphorical" referring to those who felt alienated but

²³⁹ Koen B. Tanghe, 'Homo Ludens (1938) and the Crisis in the Humanities', *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 3.1 (2016), p. 6 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2016.1245087>>.

were not necessarily forced to move to seek asylum during this time). Wittgenstein felt alienated from contemporary culture, and effectively became an exile himself following the annexation of Austria in 1938. His 1930s preface gives the impression of being thrown out as a message in a bottle, rather than a rallying cry to fellow writers and thinkers.

Language-games are introduced as a kind of antidote to Spenglerian cultural pessimism, which is based on an overgeneralisation of “culture” as a single entity that experiences high and low points through the ages. By using games as a comparative tool, Wittgenstein enables himself and his students to talk about cultural activities in a way that does not suggest some activities are more worthwhile than others; only that there are “different kinds” of games. The fact that games are based on rules which guide - but do not necessarily *determine* - a player’s behaviour means that it is possible to make non-dogmatic statements about what is perceived as “good” or “bad”.

Given Wittgenstein’s general reticence on the topic of culture (remarks are mostly restricted to private notes), I introduced *Homo Ludens* as a way of establishing the connection between culture and games on a larger scale than Wittgenstein does in his lectures. Although apparently also using ‘play’ as a heuristic device to write a descriptive account of culture, it becomes clear that *Homo Ludens* conceives of the ‘play-element’ in a Spenglerian way as an *Urbild* for an ideal form of culture, rather than in a Wittgensteinian, pluralistic way. The ‘pure’ play-element is something that becomes a universal and timeless value for Huizinga. The cultural historian and critic constructs a Spenglerian decline narrative, where the ‘play-element’ in ancient times has faded from culture since

the 18th century, resulting in a contemporary *Kulturkrise*. Huizinga's combining of the game analogy with cultural activities results in an account prescribing a normative ideal of culture, rather than remaining purely descriptive.

By elevating the 'play-element' of human culture to an ideal or *Urbild*, Huizinga succumbs to his own cultural pessimism and the normative, Spenglerian view of culture. He provides a useful example of what Wittgenstein *could* have done with the game analogy, but did not do. *Homo Ludens* also provides a useful bridge between Wittgenstein and Hesse, as a contemporary text which made use of "games" with the best of intentions. Our study of *Homo Ludens* showed how Huizinga in fact mistook his *Urbild* for a pinnacle value (as playfulness), writing *Kulturkritik* from a position of assumed cultured superiority. He blames the political turmoil of the 1930s on a lack of or ignorance of the values of the 'play-element' in culture, rather than on socio-economic circumstances such as the financial pressures of an economic crisis. *Homo Ludens* shows us that Wittgenstein was right to be suspicious of cultural narratives, and that the figurative use of "games" could result in a normative rather than a descriptive view of culture (in contrast with its intentions). Huizinga's work sets the tone for similar attitudes towards culture in the 1930s in Hesse's first drafts of *GPS*. In the next chapter, we will explore how Hesse's use of the game analogy in his fictional work differs from Wittgenstein's and Huizinga's, and how he helps us as readers to better understand how Wittgenstein's diverse interests in teaching, training, an ascetic way of life, work on one's self, traditional/canonical 'culture' and games tie in together.

Chapter 2

The Beginnings of the Glass Bead Game

Introduction

As part of our investigation of Wittgenstein's and Hesse's figurative use of "games", we will now turn to the question: Under what circumstances did Hesse develop the "game" that became central to *GPS*? How did these circumstances resemble those that Wittgenstein was also responding to? And in what way did Hesse produce a "game" analogy that was distinct, but complementary to Wittgenstein's?

Although Wittgenstein and Hesse turn to "games" as an analogy for similar motivations, their use of "games" produces contrasting effects. Wittgenstein is interested in how games can bring us back from seeking an "Urbild" of culture to the *ordinary* and everyday, whereas Hesse is interested in the *extraordinary* dimension of games. In the following chapter I would like to show how Hesse turned to "game" as a metaphor for how institutional ideologies work, creating a game-world of rules and principles that has powerful fascination for its players. Language-games are "anthropological" because they are ways of observing language non-judgementally and leaving things "as they are". The Glass Bead Game is developed in the 1930s as a way of looking anthropologically at the "embattled intellectual", a state of mind that Wittgenstein and Hesse identified with. In the initial drafts of *GPS*, Hesse's "game" at first seems to be a rallying cry to this group, but eventually becomes a way of ironizing the social bubble that this group's practices and attitudes form. This reflects real practical tensions in Hesse's

literary life and career. On the one hand, Hesse regarded institutions sympathetically and identified strongly with traditional cultural values. He abhorred the commodification and political weaponization of culture, finding solace in writing for like-minded audiences, such as in the *Neue Rundschau*. On the other hand, he was sceptical about the effectiveness of literary institutions such as the Prussian Academy of Writers, which he decided to resign from in November 1930. In this chapter, I will show how the “game” Hesse invents for his novel should be seen in context with this tension between sympathy with and scepticism about traditional cultural institutions.

Hesse is wary of a form of cultural pessimism that views *Bildung* and *Kultur* as the utopian opposites to - and therefore a resistance against - fascism. When value systems are threatened, the impulse is to preserve and codify them - in the rules of a secret society, in dogma or doctrine, or in the ideology of an institution. By looking at the genesis of the Glass Bead Game in the 1930s, we can see how Hesse explores the “player psychology” of the *Kulturkreis* of embattled intellectuals, who Wittgenstein’s preface was seeking to address. The Glass Bead Game is a way of explaining the attractiveness of a “safe space” where the values at the heart of *Bildung* can form a new society. Looking at Hesse’s work on *MLF* and first drafts of *GPS*, we will see how his creation of the game-society of Castalia was in part motivated by a utopian impulse to create a better world. However, subsequent changes to the drafts show that Hesse was aware of the pitfalls of becoming too absorbed by this idealist vision, which is also the root of elitist institutions. In this chapter I will show Hesse’s growing awareness of the intellectual hubris of the utopian impulse to save *Bildung* and its values in a time

of political upheaval. In Wittgensteinian terms, he has an awareness that *Bildung* should not be treated as an *Urbild*.

Where do “games” fit into all this? To understand how the Glass Bead Game, as it is presented in the 1943 version of the novel, comes to represent the appeal and the dangers of cementing the values of *Bildung* within an institution, it is important to begin this chapter with an examination of what Hesse considered *Bildung* to be. We shall start by looking at the 1927 essay ‘Eine Bibliothek der Weltliteratur’ (hereafter referred to as *BW*), which sets out Hesse’s vision of a cultural education that blends traditionalist and humanist values. Secondly, we will look at the 1932 novel, *MLF*, which ultimately (and self-consciously) fails to reconcile tensions that arise in the 1927 essay. We see an ironic self-awareness developing in *MLF*, which is refined and perfected through subsequent drafts of *GPS*. In the third part of this chapter, we will compare *MLF* with the first drafts of *GPS*, which will help us understand why the “Glass Bead Game” metaphor was a necessary innovation to think critically about the ideals and practices of the embattled *Kulturkreise* of *MLF*. As I will demonstrate, *MLF* was an incomplete and imperfect response to a perceived crisis of culture, and many aspects of its narrative are revised in *GPS* in awareness of the futility of the mindset of the “embattled intellectual”. The two most important changes we will examine will be the altering of the frame narrative, and the introduction of the “Game”, as a way of conceiving of the culturally pessimistic echo chamber or *Kulturkreis* that Hesse found himself within. As *GPS*’s dedication ‘den Morgenlandfahren’ clearly indicates, the final version of the novel owes a great deal to its prequel in *MLF*. In the fourth and final part of this chapter, we will compare the first and third drafts

of the *Einleitung*, written in the spring and summer of 1932.²⁴⁰ By closely following Hesse's finetuning of the narrative framework and central analogy of *GPS* through *MLF* and the drafts of the *Einleitung*, I hope to identify and clarify the shared concerns, but different approach that Hesse took, compared with Wittgenstein.

Hesse's Concept of *Bildung* in 'Eine Bibliothek der Weltliteratur'

What is it that Hesse wants to rescue from these dark times, as he composes *MLF* in 1930-31, the prequel to *GPS*? To understand the pedagogical values that appealed to Hesse, I will begin with a reading of *BW*. The premise of the essay is to create a list of recommended works that would be good for someone to acquire for their own personal library. Hesse recommends various titles and translations from world literature, which in his opinion would enrich the reader. It is a statement about what Hesse considers to be the canonical works of world literature, yet it is not entirely an academic essay. It is pitched to a more general, almost like a practical shopping list for anyone looking for pointers to broaden their reading. It is also highly personal, listing several books in Asian languages that Hesse has read as a result of his own personal interest.

Hesse's views on *Bildung* are most clearly expressed in his essay, *BW*. On first reading, Hesse's essay is full of contradictions on what *Bildung* is for, who it is for, and what it consists of. These contradictions arise out of a tension between

²⁴⁰ Volker Michels notes that the second draft of the *Einleitung* is almost identical to the first (*Materialien zum Glasperlenspiel*, ed. Michels, p. 313). Hesse also mentions a fourth version written in 1934 in an attempt to pass *GPS* through German censorship, but this ultimately failed and was discarded. I will not be examining this fourth draft here, partly for reasons of space and simplicity, but also because I would like to examine the drafts that most closely reflected Hesse's attitudes to society, politics and culture at the time (and not a draft that attempted unsuccessfully to obscure these).

“Bildung” as conformity to pre-existing notions of what constitutes a ‘good’ cultural education (containing the ‘best’ works of literature throughout history), and “Bildung” as a highly individual engagement which extends its reading beyond the canon. The purpose of this individual engagement is not solely to be initiated into culture, but to transform oneself through the process of reading widely. These tensions are both held within the concept of *Bildung*, which Bollenbeck helpfully describes:

Wie „Kultur“, so kann auch das alte deutsche Wort „Bildung“ ein Resultat und einen Prozeß ausdrücken, so in der Bedeutung von „Gestalt“ (forma) oder in der Bedeutung von „Gestaltung“ (formatio). Für die letztere Bedeutung zeigen die Verben „bilden“ und „sich bilden“ zwei unterschiedliche Richtungen an: entweder die Hervorbringung bzw. Formgebung durch äußere Einwirkung oder die Orientierung der (selbst)bildenden Tätigkeit an Beispielen.²⁴¹

The contrasting modes of *bilden* and *sich bilden* come together in light of the activity of reading: one has the power to choose books for oneself; but there are also pre-conceived notions about what one should read.

‘Echte Bildung,’ according to Hesse’s opening lines, ‘ist nicht zu irgendeinem Zwecke, sondern sie hat, wie jedes Streben nach dem Vollkommenen, ihren Sinn in sich selbst.’²⁴² *Bildung* is also described as an open-ended and ongoing process, ‘ein beglückendes und stärkendes Erweitern unseres Bewusstseins’.²⁴³

Bildung is more than education; Hesse describes it as ‘Körperkultur’.²⁴⁴ In the space of a few lines, Hesse encapsulates a history of usages of the term *Bildung* described in Bollenbeck’s book, even extending right back to the 18th century meaning of “Kultur”, which was still used in terms of “growing” or “cultivating”.

²⁴¹ Bollenbeck, p. 103.

²⁴² Hermann Hesse, *BW*, in *Die Welt Der Bücher: Betrachtungen Und Aufsätze Zur Literatur*, ed. by Volker Michels, Suhrkamp-Taschenbuch; 415, 1. Aufl (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), p. 216.

²⁴³ Hesse, *BW*, p. 216.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Later, the term *Bildung* increasingly referred to ‘die Verpflichtung des Staates zur Hebung des allgemeinen Wohstands, [...] im Sinne einer umfassenden Pflege einzelner Bereiche’.²⁴⁵ (Wolff, 1724, quoted by Bollenbeck) On the one hand, by referring to *Bildung* as akin to caring for one’s body, Hesse is quite rightly humanising our engagement with cultural education. On the other hand, Hesse appears to take the abstract value of ‘echte Bildung’ so much for granted to the extent that he feels it requires no justification, it should just be done for its own sake.

By stating that *Bildung* does not have a ‘Zweck’, Hesse is *not* saying that *Bildung* serves no purpose whatsoever. Instead, this “purpose” is open-ended and personal, ‘Denn Bildung setzt etwas zu Bildendes voraus: einen Charakter nämlich, eine Persönlichkeit’. *Bildung* is not ends-driven, it is an open-ended ‘Erweitern’ and ‘Bereicherung’.²⁴⁶ Here we see some similarities with Wittgenstein’s idea of “work on oneself”. Yet Hesse’s version of *Bildung* is not - like Wittgenstein’s - restricted to the *personal* level. The goal of *Bildung* ‘ist nicht Steigerung *einzelner* Fähigkeiten und Leistungen, sondern sie hilft *uns, unsrem* Leben einen Sinn zu geben’ (my emphasis).²⁴⁷ *Bildung* is more than the effects it has on individual readers; it involves a stepping into a discourse with other readers, ‘die Vergangenheit zu deuten, der Zukunft in furchtloser Bereitschaft’.²⁴⁸ Hesse has

²⁴⁵ Bollenbeck, p. 62.

²⁴⁶ Hesse, *BW*, p. 216.

²⁴⁷ Hesse, *BW*, p. 216. B Venkat Mani’s translation provides an alternative reading: ‘Its purpose is not the enhancement of particular capabilities and achievements, but rather assistance in giving meaning to our life, in interpreting our past, and in staying open to the future with fearless readiness.’ Hermann Hesse and B. Venkat Mani, ‘A Library of World Literature’, *Journal of World Literature*, 3.4 (2018), 417-41 <<https://doi.org/10.1163/24056480-00304003>>.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

inherited and upholds the idea of *Bildung* being socially important when its benefits are achieved at a collective level.

Although Hesse seems to be touting an abstract, timeless ideal, he does not consider cultural values to be timeless. For Hesse, *Bildung* is undertaken by individuals through reading. It is both a personal and social activity. Even as he lists off ‘great authors’ one ‘should’ read, Hesse acknowledges that these his views are historically relative: ‘Das, was uns Heutigen aus der deutschen Dichtung der klassischen Zeit wichtig und lebendig zu sein scheint, ist keineswegs dasselbe, was ein guter Kenner dieser Literatur noch vor fünfundzwanzig Jahren als unvergänglich bezeichnet hätte.’²⁴⁹ And yet, Hesse *also* claims that the necessarily historical act of reading brings us all together in ‘ein Mitschwingen im Universum, ein Mitleben im Zeitlosen.’²⁵⁰ How can this idealistic terminology of ‘Universum’ and ‘Zeitlose’ be reconciled with the assertion that cultural value and literary tastes change throughout history? Returning to Bollenbeck, writing on ‘Der erste Bildungstheoretiker, Herder’ (whose canonical significance Hesse acknowledges in the essay) might help us:

Herder gebraucht “Bildung” um einen einheitlichen geschichtlichen Prozeß, um die organische Entwicklung von Natur, Gesellschaft und Mensch auszudrücken [...]. „Bildung“ bezieht sich so auf einen universalen Entwurf des Menschen und seiner Geschichte.²⁵¹

The necessarily historical nature of *Bildung* (and therefore of cultural value) means that it changes “organically” throughout time. If *Bildung* is something organic, then it can be a single universal concept that *also* changes in time. However, we might be suspicious of the “organic” nature of *Bildung*, which does not

²⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 236.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 216.

²⁵¹ Bollenbeck, p. 105.

acknowledge the active role of institutions in canon formation (canons do not create themselves). In this essay, Hesse does little to reflect on the power of institutions in determining cultural value and therefore shaping our education. However, he adopts a more nuanced point of view on the power that institutions have in *GPS*, as we shall see in Chapter 3.

The ‘organic’ conception of *Bildung*, although problematic, manages to reconcile the tensions between *bilden* and *sich bilden*, between institutions and individuals, between the personal process of reading and pre-conceived notions of the ‘best’ books one should read according to the canon. Something that is organic grows of its own accord, but is also shaped by its environment. What has made Hesse appealing as a cult figure to non-academic readers and suspect to academic readers is precisely this blending of conservative and liberal, traditional and open-minded notions of what a cultural education should constitute. On the one hand, Hesse’s ‘Bibliothek der Weltliteratur’ claims to open a way to ‘Lesen lernen in höreren Sinne’, but does not take its idea of a *bildende* literary canon the whole way, when he claims that rather than working through the ‘Bildungsprogramm,’ the list of ‘great’ authors, a reader should ‘dort beginnen, wo es ihm natürlich ist.’²⁵² The idea of works having “natural” appeal overlooks entirely any awareness that our cultural canons are shaped by those in seats of privilege and power. It is not hard to see why Hesse has fallen out of fashion in the academic community today - his “organic” approach to *Bildung* appears to lack both the necessary rigour and critical attitude that academics would expect of an author of his literary stature.

²⁵² Hesse, *BW*, p. 218.

Hesse's apparently lax approach is rooted in experience, however. During his time managing a library for prisoners of war (WWI), he learned for himself that people should begin reading titles they are drawn to. Although he had his own 'Bildungsprogramm' in mind with the best of German literature, he received requests repeatedly for more popular fiction, such as Karl May's novels.²⁵³ Hesse's traditional notions of *Bildung* were profoundly shaped by this experience, leading him to reflect in "Phantastische Bücher" (1919), 'Der Gebildete freilich kennt und hat Prinzipien, er achtet eine Menge von Dingen, die ihm im Grund wenig anziehen, und verzichtet auf andre, nach denen es ihn hinzöge, wenn eben die Bildung nicht Hemmungen geschaffen hätte.'²⁵⁴ Paradoxically, our traditional ideas about what *Bildung* should consist of (Goethe, Schiller, etc) can sometimes get in the way of a more genuine process of *Bildung*. *Bildung* can be fraught with 'Hemmungen' that hinder development if they stop people from reading books, because they feel they should only read the "right" books.

Finally, let's unpick Hesse's representation of canonical works as 'unserer idealen kleinen Bibliothek'.²⁵⁵ The use of the term 'Bibliothek' rather than 'Kanon' presents the possibility that individual choices can be made, in spite of the presence of the canon in our lives (i.e. we do have a choice about which books we bring home, even if we cannot influence what is on the syllabus). The canon, for Hesse, is not the ultimate or ideal reading list; he is wary of his 'Bibliothek' becoming 'zu ideal'.²⁵⁶ It is merely a guideline, that never will exist in its entirety on the shelves of any one person. Having agency in one's book choices is in fact a

²⁵³ Schickling, *Hermann Hesse als Literaturkritiker*, p. 213.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

²⁵⁵ Hesse, *BW*, pp. 236-37.

²⁵⁶ Hesse, *BW*, p. 238.

necessity: 'Irgendeine solche persönliche Prägung muß eine Bibliothek haben, die mir gefallen soll.'²⁵⁷ Without agency in the process of selecting books, what one reads will have little impact on one's development. The choice of the 'Bibliothek' as a metaphor is an effective way of visualising Bollenbeck's two processes simultaneously: *bilden* through a canon, and *sich bilden* through making reading choices and judgements of one's own.

The *Bibliothek* is described as 'ideal' and 'klein' - but *can* a *Bibliothek* be both? On the one hand, the *Bibliothek* is the canon incarnate; on the other, it is a library that exists on no one's shelves - it is 'allzu korrek[t], allzu neutral[l]' to be identified as anyone's personal collection.²⁵⁸ For Hesse, (as for Wittgenstein, and their mutual influence Schopenhauer) *Bildung* is something that must be undertaken at the most personal level beyond institutional structures - by collecting one's own library, one is taking on the necessary task of 'Arbeit an Einem Selbst.' Hesse would probably have agreed with Wittgenstein's comment on cake in Chapter 1 - a good literary diet is not thinned out raisins.

Hesse is both optimistic and pragmatic about what a cultural education can and should do. He explicitly thematises the learning process of *Bildung* in this essay, rather than viewing it as a static notion of cultural value, or the canon. It is not a lament of the lack of culture (though there are comments about young people), it is the description of how one's reading shapes oneself. Cultural value is perpetuated informally through reading habits and intergenerational inheritance, as well as formally in institutions. Trying to stick too closely to a formal, strict

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Hesse, *BW*, p. 238.

notion of the “best” books to read may in fact lead to a stilted *Bildung* which hinders rather than encourages personal development.

Bildung in crisis

Despite the optimism expressed in *BW*, there is evidence in the essay to suggest that Hesse is pessimistic about the state of *Bildung* in his time - that its values are somehow under threat. In this section, we will see how it is this sentiment that connects Hesse with other European intellectuals in the 1930s. These sentiments of being an outcast or exile in one’s own time are not unique to Hesse - for many German writers, this exile was also a literal one. This feeling, expressed by Hesse in his essays and *MLF*, is what I will call a “embattled intellectual” mindset, which Wittgenstein also experienced when he felt that it was hopeless to address anyone beyond his *Kulturkreis* (as we saw in Chapter 1). The mindset is explored most deeply by Hesse in *MLF* and subsequently motivated Hesse’s decision to draw an analogy between play and intellectual life. My next step is to explain which aspects of this mindset Hesse sympathises with, why this mindset is not unique to him alone, and why it is clear from his writing that Hesse regards the “embattled intellectual” with irony as well as sympathy.

A hint of cultural pessimism can be detected in *BW*, when Hesse comments toward the end that ‘Die heutige Welt neigt ein wenig zum Unterschätzen der Bücher.’²⁵⁹ The reference to ‘heutig’, and Hesse’s preference for writers of previous centuries in his ‘kleine, ideale Bibliothek’ suggest that Hesse’s cultural pessimism emerges from a feeling of disconnect with contemporary attitudes towards canonically valued works of literature, music and art. For example, he

²⁵⁹ Hesse, *BW*, p. 245.

deplores the fact that many young people, ‘statt lebendigen Lebens Bücher zu lieben’, turn to what Hesse regards as more trivial pursuits, ‘[sie] finden dennoch Zeit, sechsmal in der Woche viele Stunden bei Kaffeemusik und Tanz hinzubringen.’²⁶⁰

Hesse’s sense of alienation was compounded by a growing despair at the political events unfolding during the 1930s. The past is a kind of sanctuary for him, as becomes clear when he writes wistfully about cloistered life:

Und besonders anziehend war mir das mönchische Leben nicht wegen der asketischen Seite, sondern weil ich in der mönchischen Kunst und Dichtung wunderbare Schätze fand, und weil die Orden und Klöster mir als Freistätten eines fromm-beschaulichen Lebens beneidenswert, und als Stätten der Kultur und Bildung höchst vorbildlich erschienen.²⁶¹

Hesse displays a degree of self-awareness about his nostalgia, remarking that he is less interested in the monastic life for its ‘asketischen Seite’ than for its ‘Schätze’. He is aware that yearning for the culture of a bygone era comes across as anachronistic. The monks’ devotion, or the reverence of ‘eines fromm-beschaulichen Lebens’ is precisely what Hesse finds ‘beneidenswert’ and lacking in the present day. The fact that Hesse finds this form of life *envious* suggests that he himself is somehow not willing or not able to live that way. The monastic life Hesse admires is essentially ‘vorbildlich’. It is out of reach, rather than a real possibility in everyday contemporary life. The ‘Freistätten’ pre-empt the utopian academies in *GPS*. The continuing fascination with a cut-off way of life isolated and protected from the outside world is quite possibly a strong motivating factor for choosing a “game” to be at the centre of his 1943 novel.

²⁶⁰ Hesse, *BW*, p. 245.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 245-46.

Part of the embattled intellectual mindset emerging here, that Hesse clearly has strong sympathy with, is the idea that a spiritually fulfilling form of life - where one can engage in work on oneself through *Bildung* - is difficult to achieve in contemporary society. This is most clearly conceptualised in 'Bekenntnis des Dichters', a short essay written in the same year as *BW*:

In unsrer Zeit ist der Dichter, als reinsten Typus des beseelten Menschen, zwischen der Maschinenwelt und der Welt intellektueller Betriebsamkeit gleichsam in einen luftleeren Raum gedrängt und zum Ersticken verurteilt. Denn der Dichter ist ja Vertreter und Anwalt gerade jener Kräfte und Bedürfnisse des Menschen, denen unsere Zeit fanatisch den Krieg erklärt.²⁶²

The 'Dichter' is pictured here in quasi-religious terms as the purest embodiment of the ethical-pedagogical ideal of *Bildung*, the 'Typus des beseelten Menschen'. As in Hesse's other writing, there is an obvious anti-modernity stance (encapsulated in the perceived threat of the 'Maschinenwelt'). However, it is also important to note that the 'Dichter' is not merely in opposition to modernity, but also towards 'intellektueller Betriebsamkeit'. 'Betriebsamkeit' and 'Maschinenwelt', are both indicative of a saturated literary market based on mechanistic over-production and spiritually empty consumption.

In 'Bekenntnis des Dichters', the figure of the 'Dichter' is apparently doomed to an isolated existence in their time:

... da es des Dichters einzige Aufgabe ist, Diener, Anwalt und Ritter der Seele zu sein, sieht er sich im jetzigen Welt-Augenblick zu einer Vereinsamung und einem Leiden verurteilt, welche nicht jedermanns Sache ist. Europa hat zur Zeit nur sehr wenige Dichter, und nicht einer von ihnen entbehrt eines Zuges von Tragik, ja von Don-Quichotterie.²⁶³

²⁶² Hermann Hesse, 'Bekenntnis Des Dichters', in *Die Welt Der Bücher: Betrachtungen Und Aufsätze Zur Literatur*, by Hermann Hesse, 1. Auflage (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), pp. 214-15 (p. 214).

²⁶³ Ibid.

Two things are happening here: firstly, cultural pessimism and a feeling of disconnect with one's time, is taken a step further towards cultural-moral crusade, which, though doomed to failure, resulting in a kind of heroic martyrdom. The 'Dichter', as 'Ritter der Seele', is pitted against what Hesse regards as the pervading values of the time. The defensive minoritarian mindset that there are 'nur sehr wenige Dichter', combines isolation with a sense of heightened destiny, 'wir nehmen dies Ersticken und Leiden an als unsern Teil am Weltgeschick, als unsere Sendung, als unsere Prüfung.'²⁶⁴ The description that Hesse uses to characterise the 'Dichter' here fits with the description that Hugo Ball uses to describe Hesse in his 1927 biography, as 'the last knight in the glorious cavalcade of Romanticism'.²⁶⁵ Hesse finds reassurance and strength in telling the story of this cavalcade, writing as an 'uns', a small minority who revere their hard destiny, 'welche nicht jedermanns Sache ist.'

Hesse finds solace in the idea of being part of a shared minority identity, in the passage above, as well as the description of monastic life. He writes, 'Bei diesen Dichtern ist meine Liebe, sie verehere und liebe ich, zu ihren Brüdern will ich gehören.'²⁶⁶ Francis Mulhern provides a helpful gloss of the 'critical minority'²⁶⁷ that numerous other intellectuals identified with. Mulhern argues that writing in this vein is part of a 'single discursive formation, best and most conveniently known as Kulturkritik.'²⁶⁸ Mulhern lists the 'thematic affinities' of the group, such as 'modernity as degeneration' and 'the decay or contamination of traditional,

²⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 214-15.

²⁶⁵ Hugo Ball, cited in Ziolkowski, p. 342.

²⁶⁶ Hesse, 'Bekenntnis Des Dichters', p. 214.

²⁶⁷ Mulhern, p. 20.

²⁶⁸ Mulhern, p. 18.

normally minoritarian values'.²⁶⁹ These shared concerns effectively form an echo chamber, because they are perceived as fact: 'These are their fixed perceptions, their standard narratives, their shared citations of the "obvious"'.²⁷⁰

The 'minoritarian' mindset is a term that I will continue to use, because it helpfully describes the attitude behind Hesse's (and Wittgenstein's) cultural pessimism, which becomes the nub around which a group identity forms. According to this worldview, is divided into the conscious intellectuals (who it is hard to view other than as an elite) and the unconscious masses, almost as if they were ego and id. Hesse's passage above provides an additional insight: that the minoritarian mindset is prompted by despair at the disintegration of values, as well as a need for a sense of belonging or solidarity.

Despite Hesse's quasi-religious language, there is a reminder that there is a tragi-comic dimension to the 'Dichter's existence: Hesse describes it as 'Don-Quichotterie'. This suggests that Hesse is aware of the flaws of his anachronisms and his romanticisation of the idea of the lone, heroic poet-martyr. Hesse concedes, 'Die Zeit deswegen anzuklagen, wäre töricht. Diese Zeit ist nicht besser und nicht schlechter als andere Zeiten.'²⁷¹ Just as in *BW*, Hesse adopts a self-aware and self-effacing attitude, acknowledging the historical contingency of his opinions about *Kultur* and *Bildung*.

²⁶⁹ Mulhern, pp. 18-19.

²⁷⁰ Mulhern, p. 19.

²⁷¹ Hesse, 'Bekenntnis Des Dichters', p. 214.

Hesse and Europe's intellectual diaspora

The embattled intellectual mindset, albeit Quixotic, was not unique to Hesse. As the title 'Bekenntnis des Dichters' suggests, he regarded himself as a channel for others at the time. The mindset expressed in that essay had already gained powerful momentum among other writers such as André Gide, Romain Rolland, Emmy Ball-Hemmings and Thomas Mann. Hesse could be considered as being a kind of node or point of connection between several different writers during this time. In contrast to Wittgenstein, he was an active participant within a *Kulturkreis* of writers and intellectuals that had a strong sense of identity based on shared humanist values. According to Schickling, 'Thanks to Hesse's interceding on their behalf, numerous intellectuals could make Switzerland the first stage of their exile. He also made it possible for many to reside there for a time because he vouched for their financial and moral stability.'²⁷² *MLF*, and Hesse's experimentations with the drafts of the first chapters of *GPS*, grow out of this social context. Therefore, as a background to these texts, I will provide further details of how Hesse related to his *Kulturkreis* and how this influenced his thoughts on *Bildung* and his developing literary works - including his version of the game analogy - in the 1930s.

There is substantial evidence to suggest that Hesse's writing, including *MLF* in 1932, struck a chord with many European intellectuals that shared the "embattled" or "minoritarian" mindset. Gide wrote to Hesse in 1933, expressing his admiration for Hesse's work and reassuring him that: 'Les admirateurs que vous

²⁷² Marco Schickling, 'Hermann Hesse's Politics', in *A Companion to the Works of Hermann Hesse*, ed. by Ingo Cornils, Studies in German Literature, Linguistics and Culture (Rochester, N.Y: Camden House, 2009), p. 316.

avez en France (et je vous en recrute sans cesse de nouveaux) ne sont peut-être nombreux, mais d'autant plus fervents.'²⁷³ Hesse was also invited by Mann in 1937 to join other émigré writers and become a contributor to a new journal, *Mass und Wert*. Hesse, despite refusing, acknowledges the value of this idea:

Ihr Brief hat mich sehr gefreut; daß eine Zeitschrift dieser Art entstehe, ist ganz gewiß ein Bedürfnis, und daß sie gewillt sei, nicht dem momentanen Entladungsbedürfnis sondern der Zukunft zu dienen und der Wiedervereinigung der deutschen Literatur und Geistigkeit, die jetzt in zwei Lager gespalten ist, das ist wohl nicht nur mein Wunsch, sondern der vieler.²⁷⁴

Hesse's refusal was apparently on the grounds of concern about endangering his relatives still living in Germany. However, his approval that Mann's journal would not be meeting an 'Entladungsbedürfnis' and instead have a more constructive outlook towards the future, suggests that he may have had other doubts that were factors in his refusal. Marco Schickling notes that, 'Hesse was skeptical about the émigrés' political activities because they were continually embroiled in internal disputes and thus unable to agree on actions in common against Nazi Germany.'²⁷⁵ Although Hesse's concerns about endangering his family and Peter Suhrkamp, his publisher, were very real, the letter to Mann suggests that Hesse may have considered a literary resistance by exiled writers short-sighted and ineffective if it focussed merely on dividing German writers along the lines of those who left Germany and those who remained, into camps of collaborators and adversaries of the regime.

²⁷³ André Gide to Hermann Hesse, 11 March 1933, DLA Marbach, A:Carlsson, Anni (HS000936441).

²⁷⁴ Hermann Hesse to Thomas Mann, 25 February 1937, DLA Marbach, D:Hesse, Hermann/Kopien (HS004143146).

²⁷⁵ Schickling, 'Hermann Hesse's Politics', p. 316.

Hesse's priority as a writer and literary critic in the 1930s was to offer hope and courage to anyone undertaking resistance *within* the regime, even as late as September 1939. He expresses a feeling of resignation in the face of events,

Ich kann sie nicht ändern. Ich kann aber allen denen ein wenig helfen, die gleich mir die ganze säuische Machtstreberei und Politik in ihrem ganzen Tun und Denken sabotieren und Inseln des Menschentums und der Liebe bilden inmitten von Teufeltum und Totschlag.²⁷⁶

Hesse's attitude here could be described as pragmatic - instead of railing against Hitler, he turns his energies to writing for a shrinking audience of Germans who remained within Nazi borders but who disagreed with the regime. By addressing these 'Inseln' Hesse directs his writing to an audience undertaking 'innere Emigration', a term coined by Frank Thiess in 1945 and defined by the *Oxford Companion to German Literature* as 'the state of mental reservation which those dissenting from National Socialism were obliged to impose upon themselves if they were unwilling to incur draconian penalties by expressing their disagreement.'²⁷⁷

In 1933, Peter Suhrkamp took over as editor of the *Neue Rundschau* and effectively recruited Hesse as part of his project to set up an intellectual resistance to the rise of Nazism. Gottfried Bermann Fischer summarised Suhrkamp's intentions for the *Neue Rundschau* thus: 'Gestützt auf einen kleinen Kreis Gleichgesinnter, glaubte er [Suhrkamp], diese einzige Bastion halten und als Organ für freie Meinungsäußerungen bewahren zu können.'²⁷⁸ It is precisely this idea of 'einen kleinen Kreis Gleichgesinnter' that underpins Hesse's writing at the

²⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 315.

²⁷⁷ 'Innere Emigration', ed. by Henry B. Garland and Mary Garland, *The Oxford Companion to German Literature* (Oxford [England]: Oxford University Press, 1997) <<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198158967.001.0001/acref-9780198158967-e-2539>> [accessed 21 October 2022].

²⁷⁸ Schickling, *Hermann Hesse als Literaturkritiker*, p. 130.

time, including *MLF* and the first drafts of the opening to *GPS*, and which struck a chord with Gide, Mann, Suhrkamp and other intellectuals of the time.

Suhrkamp maintained a continued respect for Hesse's work and sought his advice when he wanted to establish a series under the newly founded Suhrkamp Verlag after WWII. Siegfried Unseld, Suhrkamp's successor, recalls, 'Seinem gesamten Verlagsschaffen lag ein pädagogischer Impuls zugrunde'.²⁷⁹ Suhrkamp was interested in introducing young readers to contemporary works, having realised 'daß immer die leidenschaftliche Begegnung mit einer geistigen Figur der eigenen Zeit Keim oder Kern einer Bibliothek ist'.²⁸⁰ He set his mind to a new project, 'eine Sammlung von Briefen über Literatur' for 'literaturhungrige junge Leute'.²⁸¹ On the 13th November 1945, Suhrkamp informed Hesse of his intention to publish a series entitled 'Der Literaturbrief', which would consist of short summaries of contemporary works of literature.²⁸² Hesse's responded drily, 'Sie, lieber Praeceptor Germaniae. Statt das zu drucken, Was das Volk dringend nötig hat: Seelenspeise, alte und neue Dichter, machen Sie Serien von Bildungsbüchern'.²⁸³ In Hesse's opinion, Suhrkamp was overly keen on teaching people what he believed they ought to know about literature, rather than publishing the literature and letting people read it for themselves (favouring too much *bilden* over *sich bilden*). Hesse even joked, 'Wenn ein Zürcher vor zwei

²⁷⁹ Siegfried Unseld, 'Kleine Geschichte Der Bibliothek Suhrkamp' (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1989), p. 1

<https://media.suhrkamp.de/mediadelivery/asset/cb7dcf5f26bf48a0b093396709e7e377/Bibliothek_Suhrkamp?contentdisposition=inline> [accessed 15 December 2021]. Extract from: *Klassiker der Moderne - Ein Lesebuch*, zusammengestellt von Hans-Ulrich Müller Schwefe, Frankfurt am Main, 1989 pp.7-23. Citations of page numbers refer to the online PDF, rather than the print edition.

²⁸⁰ Suhrkamp quoted by Unseld, p. 2.

²⁸¹ Unseld, p. 1

²⁸² Unseld, p. 1

²⁸³ Hesse quoted by Unseld, p.1

Türen gestellt wird, auf deren einer steht "Paradies«, auf der andern »Vortrag über das Paradies«, dann geht der Zürcher in den Vortrag.'²⁸⁴

Following Hesse's advice, Suhrkamp instead chose to publish a series of select contemporary works, which became 'Bibliothek Suhrkamp' (in which Wittgenstein's works would be published several decades later). Unseld comments that, 'Diese Bibliothek wollte nicht etwa einer breiten Leserschicht eine mehr oder weniger charakteristische Auswahl aus der Weltliteratur bieten.'²⁸⁵ Rather, the new series was aimed at a more specific audience. According to Suhrkamp, 'Die ›Bibliothek Suhrkamp‹ wendet sich an Leser, denen die Literatur gemeinhin geläufig ist, die also für besondere Stunden eigens eine Bibliothek mit persönlicher Note suchen. Die ›Bibliothek Suhrkamp‹ will eine Liebhaberbibliothek für eine Leser-Elite sein.'²⁸⁶ The point was therefore not to convert people to the 'classics', but to provide options for avid readers to widen their experience.

The first title to appear in this series in 1951 was Hesse's *MLF*. Ingo Cornils notes that this was 'no accident', given Hesse's instrumental role in helping Suhrkamp develop the idea for the 'Bibliothek'.²⁸⁷ Unseld claims that *MLF* 'intoniert die Absicht' of the project,²⁸⁸ which Cornils suggests is the idea of the 'model European', with a Goethean outlook that valued world literature.²⁸⁹ The other works that appeared in the first volumes of the 'Bibliothek' are a mixture of literary fiction and non-fiction, by lesser-known authors such as Herbert Read and C. F. Ramuz, and by contemporary authors that had already gained acclaim such as

²⁸⁴ Hesse quoted by Unseld, p.1.

²⁸⁵ Unseld, p. 2.

²⁸⁶ Suhrkamp quoted in Unseld, p. 2.

²⁸⁷ Ingo Cornils, 'A Model European? Hermann Hesse's Influence on the Suhrkamp Verlag', *German Life and Letters*, 68.1 (2015), 54-65 (p. 64) <<https://doi.org/10.1111/gla.12068>>.

²⁸⁸ Unseld, p. 2.

²⁸⁹ Cornils, p. 59.

Brecht, Benjamin, Frisch, and Valéry. Interestingly, and perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the 10th volume to be brought out in 1952 was a bilingual edition of *Old Possoms Katzenbuch (Old Possom's Book of Practical Cats)* by T. S. Eliot.²⁹⁰ This choice contrasts the more “serious” works preceding it. Could this collection of light-hearted poems about cats really be intended for a ‘Leser-Elite’? Why was a more “serious” work by Eliot not chosen?

Hesse may have suggested if not approved the choice. Hesse was acquainted with Eliot and his work, and Cornils notes that ‘Hesse had a major influence on the initial list of titles published by the new Suhrkamp Verlag.’²⁹¹ Hesse and Suhrkamp did not want their readership to take themselves too seriously as a superior ‘Leser-Elite’. Cornils does not comment directly on the choice of volumes in the new series, but he does argue that (as cited in the Introduction), ‘Like Hesse’s, Suhrkamp’s outlook is ultimately ambivalent: he recognises the need for individualism, but equally the risk of intellectual hubris.’²⁹² The mission that Suhrkamp is trying to achieve is therefore ‘a new openness, a quality found in Hesse’s entire work.’²⁹³ The touch of humour in adding *Old Possoms Katzenbuch* to the series creates a healthy counterbalance to the utopian idea of supporting a ‘Leser-Elite’.

The idea of writing for a ‘Leser-Elite’ is understandable, just as Wittgenstein’s reticence in his preface was. Like Wittgenstein, Hesse and Suhrkamp were

²⁹⁰ The titles of ‘Bibliothek Suhrkamp’ can be found in the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek online catalogue.

T. S. Eliot, *Old Possoms Katzenbuch: Englisch u. Deutsch / T. S. Eliot. Übersetzer: Werner Peterich. Nachdichtungen: Erich Kästner [u.a.] Ill. von Nicolas Bentley*, 1.-10. Auflage (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1952) <<https://d-nb.info/451092465>> [accessed 20 October 2022].

²⁹¹ Cornils, p. 65.

²⁹² Cornils, p. 63.

²⁹³ Ibid.

targeting a small, self-selecting audience. According to Cornils, ‘intellectuals and writers engaged in a utopian discourse that was very much limited to the cultural and political elite.’²⁹⁴ However, Hesse took a wry, humorous view of Suhrkamp’s project. Writing to Suhrkamp in 1950 about founding the new publishing house, Hesse addresses him as ‘ein edler Don Quichote’,²⁹⁵ which echoes the language he used in ‘Bekenntnis des Dichters’. By referring to Suhrkamp as ‘Quichote’, Hesse wryly points out the ‘allzu enthusiastisch’ nature of Suhrkamp’s career,²⁹⁶ while sympathetically embracing his commitment to a utopian mission. The effect is not to stifle the utopian project, merely to mollify it.

Hesse did not exempt his own work from subtle ironies. His choice of illustrator for the first edition of *MLF* in 1932 is a case in point. *MLF* could be thought of as a utopian work if taken at face value. It is an account narrated in the first person by a character we only know as H.H. (almost certainly an allusion to the author). H.H. opens the novel by stating that he wishes to write a history of the ‘Morgenlandfahrt’. He explains that he was a member of a ‘Bund’ that was undertaking the journey, whose members are made up of like-minded people: artists, writers, musicians and so on. As we shall see later, it was not a literal journey that H.H. took part in. Peter Roberts explains, ‘the East was much more than a geographical location. It was an ideal toward which all who seek to know themselves must travel, each in their own way.’²⁹⁷

²⁹⁴ Cornils, p. 64.

²⁹⁵ Hesse quoted in Cornils, p. 60.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Peter Roberts, ‘From West to East and Back Again: Faith, Doubt and Education in Hermann Hesse’s Later Work’, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 42.2 (2008), 249-68 (p. 265) <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9752.2008.00617.x>>.

The illustrator for the title page of the first edition of *MLF* was Alfred Kubin, a Czech artist, most famous in the literary world for his fictional work *Die andere Seite*, published with forty-two of his own illustrations in 1909. The book was a strange mixture of dark satire, fantasy, dystopia and horror - elements which are reflected in Kubin's often surreal and sometimes grotesque drawings. Hesse praised *Die andere Seite* in a 1928 essay, 'Herbstlicher Regensonntag'. In 1928, Kubin wrote to Hesse to thank him, describing Hesse enthusiastically in words echoing Hugo Ball's biography: 'Wie ein einsamer Ritter kämpften Sie sich gegen die äußeren wie inneren Hemmungen durch'.²⁹⁸ Both men found comfort in one another's work as a response to the darkness of their time. Hesse wrote to Kubin with admiration for the illustrations in *Abenteuer einer Zeichenfeder* (1942):

Ähnlich wie viele meiner Gedichte entstanden sind: meist in schlafloser Nacht, die Mappe auf den Knien, mit kritzelnder spielender Hand dem Buchstabenmalen und Versemachen hingegeben wie ein Knabe seinem Spiel.²⁹⁹

The poignant contrast of sleepless nights and a boy devoted to play may explain the appeal that Hesse found in Kubin's art. Hesse adds that both their work could be thought of as spontaneous play, 'was man so nicht wollen und beabsichtigen kann, ein Spiel, so ernst, wie nur echtes Spiel sein kann, und ein Ernst, so spielerisch, dass die Schwere verschwindet und ein Schweben entsteht, wie bei einer Seifenblase.'³⁰⁰ The *combination* of playfulness and seriousness in Kubin's work is precisely what Hesse experiences in his own creative process, and we

²⁹⁸ 'Ausserhalb Des Tages Und Des Schwindels': Hermann Hesse--Alfred Kubin Briefwechsel 1928-1952, ed. by Volker Michels (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2008), p. 7.

²⁹⁹ Hermann Hesse, *Briefe, Gesammelte Werke*, Neue erweiterte Ausgabe (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1959), p. 200 <://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001030552>.

³⁰⁰ Hesse, *Briefe*, p. 200.

might assume (given the dates of these statements) that he experienced this same ironic tension between ‘Ernst’ and ‘Spiel’ while writing *MLF* and *GPS*.

Given this mutual admiration, it is no wonder that Kubin was commissioned to illustrate the cover and title page of *MLF* in 1932. However, it does seem odd that an artist known for his dystopian work would be chosen as illustrator for an ostensibly utopian book about finding spiritual enlightenment and personal fulfilment in the “East”.



Figure 1: Title page of the first edition of *Die Morgenlandfahrt* (1932, S. Fischer Verlag, Berlin). Image source: Wikimedia.³⁰¹

If we take a look at the title page of the first 1932 edition of *MLF*, we see a sketchy portrait of a figure, with face in shadow, mounting some stairs. Although

³⁰¹ Alfred Kubin, *Die Morgenlandfahrt - Titelblatt*, 1932
<https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Die_Morgenlandfahrt&oldid=221980775> [accessed 19 October 2022].

the figure is clearly heading up the stairs, we cannot tell how far he has to go, or where he is rising to, because the artist has left the top and bottom of the staircase out of the frame. The figure holds a standard with a long, voluptuous flag which, instead of unfurling gallantly in the wind, is folded over the figure's shoulder. The slightly scribbly, sketchy style of the drawing leaves the figure's expression and appearance obscure. Little about the drawing suggests that the book will be filled with utopian optimism - although it might perhaps suggest an unfulfilled or ongoing mission. The choice of illustrator for *MLF* is a potentially overlooked but important detail. Around 1930 Kubin had also, incidentally, completed a drawing of Don Quixote - perhaps there may be some affinity with the figure on the title page.³⁰² The utopian-sounding 'journey to the East' becomes subtly Quixotic in light of Kubin's sketchy, almost provisional vignette.

Using this context as a starting point, I would like to argue that *MLF* and its successor, *GPS*, should not be taken at face value as utopian or esoteric works, even though the characters appear to be part of an esoteric or closed society. Secondly, by bringing to light Hesse's curious mixture of serious and playful approaches to literature and cultural value more generally, I hope to begin the task of explaining why 'Spiel' finds its way into his first drafts of *GPS*.

³⁰² Alfred Kubin, *Don Quixote and Sancho Panza*, 1930, Provenance: private collection, Munich <<https://issuu.com/artsolution/docs/kubin-edited-web>> [accessed 21 October 2022]; published in *Alfred Kubin: Katalog zur Ausstellung 2014/15 der Galerie Wienerroither & Kohlbacher, Wien / Shepherd W & K Galleries, New York*, ed. by Peter Assmann (Wien: Kunsthandel Wienerroither & Kohlbacher, 2014) <<https://issuu.com/artsolution/docs/kubin-edited-web>> [accessed 21 October 2022].

Die Morgenlandfahrt

As we have seen in the previous section, Hesse regards the minoritarian view of culture as fundamentally Quixotic. Its insularity is both its defence and its weakness that leaves it open to ridicule. It is through this ironic, Quixotic lens that I would now like to read *MLF*, as a self-conscious attempt to come to terms with the insular player psychology behind the mindset that wishes to preserve *Bildung* by isolating its practice to the few. In *MLF*, we will see how what begins as a well-intentioned band of travellers with shared values becomes a forbidding and opaque institution. Through a close reading of the novel, I would like to demonstrate Hesse's insight that the idea that "culture is under threat" and "must be protected" underpins the formation of institutions. As we watch the formation unfold within the novel, 'Spiel' surfaces as a way of thinking about the artificiality and inward-facing nature of a form of life that is focussed on cultural ideals. This is what I will term the 'player psychology' of *Kulturkreise*, that Hesse treats with sympathy and irony. As *MLF* was published in 1932, a year after the first draft of the first chapter of *GPS* was completed in 1931, it provides important evidence for the genesis of *GPS* and the games analogy.

What is the 'Morgendlandfahrt', the 'Journey to the East'? This is not a straightforward question to answer, as it remains obscure, and even by the end of the novel, it is a fluid concept. Broadly speaking, it is a journey being undertaken by a group of travellers who each have their own different missions, but share the same values and thus find themselves travelling together. The 'East' is not meant literally as a destination to which they are headed, but rather a metaphor for the collected destinations of the travellers (we could think of the 'East' as meaning

the same thing as ‘Holy Grail’ that Berman referred to as the goal of *Bildung* in the Introduction to this thesis).

The narrator of *MLF*, who we know only as H.H., explains that he is attempting to write an account of something that has already disappeared, ‘deren Wunder damals wie ein Meteor aufstrahlte und die nachher so wunderbarlich rasch in Vergessenheit, ja in Verruf geriet’.³⁰³ H.H. relies on an imperfect memory, impaired by an ailing faith in the *Bund*: ‘infolge von Schicksalsschlägen und immer neuen Entmutigungen ist sowohl mein Gedächtnis selbst wie auch mein Vertrauen in dies früher so true Gedächtnis beschämend schwach geworden.’³⁰⁴ At the time of H.H. telling this story, he tells us that the *Bund* has been scattered; thus the task of preserving its story remains with him, ‘als einer der letzten Überlebenden unsrer Kameradschaft, etwas vom Andenken unsrer großen Sache [zu] retten.’³⁰⁵ He wishes to write the chronicle, ‘wenn auch seit Jahr und Tag der *Bund* keine sichtbare Existenz mehr zu haben scheint.’³⁰⁶ The obscurity that shrouds the mysterious ‘Bund’ and ‘Morgenlandfahrt’, along with the narrator’s self-professed unreliable memory, are important devices in the novel to cast doubt on the so-called “Journey to the East” from the reader’s first encounter with the idea in the opening pages.

At the outset of the novel, based on the narrator’s recollections, the ‘Morgenlandfahrt’ has no specific beginning or end. At the time H.H. joined during ‘die trübe, verzweifelte und doch so fruchtbare Zeit nach dem großem Kriege’,

³⁰³ *MLF*, p. 7.

³⁰⁴ *MLF*, pp. 7-8.

³⁰⁵ *MLF*, p. 43.

³⁰⁶ *MLF*, p. 8.

apparently referring to the First World War,³⁰⁷ the travellers grew to ‘ein Heerlager von Hundertern’³⁰⁸ - a critical mass, always on the move. ‘Der Zug verlief nicht in einer festen Ordnung,’ the narrator explains.³⁰⁹ ‘Vielmehr waren zahllose Gruppen gleichzeitig unterwegs, jede ihren Führen und ihren Sternen folgend, jeder stets bereit, sich in eine größere Einheit aufzulösen und eine Weile ihr anzugehören, aber nicht minder bereit, stets wieder vereinzelt weiterzuziehen.’³¹⁰ There is apparently no single doctrine or ideology that unites them, but nevertheless there is an intangible feeling of unity, because they are metaphorically “moving in the same direction”. The lack of doctrine lends the Journey an informal, light-hearted atmosphere that is powerfully combined with a strong sense of solidarity. We are left with the impression that the Journey is a mass movement of individuals who, of their own accord, are motivated by a common (though yet unknown) purpose to participate it in together.

This loose grouping of travellers is reminiscent of Wittgenstein’s anonymous *Organisation of Kultur* that we saw in the previous chapter, made up of individuals working separately, but unconsciously and collectively, towards their ‘privaten Zielen’. This is in fact expressed almost word for word in the narrator’s introduction to *MLF*,

Zu den Besonderheiten der Morgenlandfahrt gehörte unter andern auch diese, daß zwar der Bund mit dieser Reise ganz bestimmte, sehr hohe Ziele anstrebte (sie gehören der Zone des Geheimnisses an, sind also nicht mitteilbar), daß aber jeder einzelne Teilnehmer auch seinen privaten Reiseziele haben konnte, ja haben mußte, denn es wurde keiner mitgenommen, den nicht solche privaten Ziele antrieben, und jeder einzelne von uns, während er gemeinsamen Idealen und Zielen zu folgen und unter

³⁰⁷ *MLF*, p. 7.

³⁰⁸ *MLF*, p. 24.

³⁰⁹ *MLF*, p. 24.

³¹⁰ *MLF*, p. 24.

einer gemeinsamen Fahne zu kämpfen schien, trug als innerste Kraft und letzten Trost seinen eigenen, tönernen Kindertraum im Herzen mit sich.³¹¹

The possession of 'privaten Ziele' is a necessary prerequisite of joining the *Bund* of travellers. It means that each traveller has integrity, an 'innere Kraft' that pulls them in the same direction of their fellow comrades. There is a perfect balance between the 'privaten Reiseziele' and the 'gemeinsamen Ideale', resembling the balance between *sich bilden* and *bilden*, as there was between individual choice and the literary canon in the 'kleine, ideale Bibliothek'. The passage contains language that instils a sense of camaraderie between members of the *Bund* ('letzten Trost', 'im Herzen [tragen]') and that has the quality of a rallying cry - a peaceful but powerful show of strength in the face of 'Ahnungen des Weltendes'.³¹² However, the fact that there are 'hohe Ziele' that must remain a 'Geheimnis' has the effect of making readers feel excluded. We are not permitted to know the true aims of the *Bund*, and so the Journey can only be utopian for H.H., not the readers of the novel.

The language is strongly evocative of countless utopian manifestos that came before and after it, such as the Declaration of the Independence of the Mind in 1919 (which Hesse signed), and the 1935 Congress for the Defence of Culture. It is strange that such strongly worded language should be accompanied by the words 'tönernen Kindertraum', to describe the private missions of the travellers. The words suggest that H.H. may be reflecting from a jaded perspective on fond memories as a member of the *Bund*. This lightly disparaging comment creates a narrative irony, suggesting that the 'Morgenlandfahrer' are naïve occupants of a child's play-world. The narrative framework of H.H.'s historical account creates

³¹¹ *MLF*, p. 12.

³¹² *MLF*, p. 13.

temporal distance between ourselves and the Journey, which - combined with our exclusion from the *Bund*'s true aims - leave us feeling emotionally distanced and shut out from the utopia that is presented to us. Although presented as a utopian journey, it is hard for us to really *feel* that is the case. Such techniques foreshadow the use of a similar narrative framework in *GPS*, as well as a narrator who refuses to speak of the "rules" of the Glass Bead Game in detail. Hesse's experimentation with narrative frameworks that present a closed order or society, while also excluding the reader, make the transition into the "game" analogy seem like the obvious next step.

The Journey is also presented as profoundly fantastical, further casting its credulity in doubt. The narrator recounts, 'daß wir ja nicht nur durch Räume wanderten, sondern ganz ebenso durch Zeiten.'³¹³ There appears to be no fixed destination, not even to a geographical 'East': 'Wir zogen nach Morgenland, wie zogen aber auch ins Mittelalter oder ins goldne Zeitalter, wir streiften Italien oder die Schweiz, wir nächtigen aber auch zuweilen im zehnten Jahrhundert und wohnten bei den Patriarchen oder bei Feen.'³¹⁴ Paradoxically, the Journey seems simultaneously to progress towards the 'Morgenland', but equally to innumerable other destinations that might be considered part of the "West". The act of travelling together in a 'Zug' with like-minded individuals that unifies the *Bund*, over and above an actual geographical destination. The narrator describes the gratification that comes from this experience, saying 'Es erfüllte und beglückte uns mehr und mehr das Gefühl des gemeinsamen Zieles'.³¹⁵ Although so fantastical that

³¹³ *MLF*, p. 27.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ *MLF*, p. 16.

it to borders on delusion, the concept of a common goal in the 'East' is something that brings comfort to the narrator.

A further example of the extraordinary, dreamlike nature of the so-called 'Morgenland' emerges when the narrator describes his fellow travellers' 'privaten Ziele'. These are often legendary or quasi-mythical in scope, and clearly impossible or lacking a tangible destination/outcome. The narrator recalls, 'Einer zum Beispiel war Schatzsucher und hatte nichts andres im Sinn als die Gewinnung eines hohen Schatzes, den er »Tao« nannte, ein anderer aber hatte sich gar in den Kopf gesetzt, eine gewisse Schlange fangen zu wollen, welcher er Zauberkräfte zuschrieb und die er Kundalini nannte.'³¹⁶ The narrator appears naively ignorant of the spiritual and cultural significance of 'Tao' or 'Kundalini', from Daoism and Hinduism respectively. Anyone who is even vaguely familiar 'Tao' or 'Kundalini' will understand that, as a spiritual concept and a mythical being, they cannot possibly be 'found' in a literal sense, as the narrator seems to believe. Hesse of course *would* have understood this, and so deliberately casts his narrator H.H. as naively ignorant. The narrator is presented as having an eager fascination with, but imperfect knowledge of, the 'East', its cultures and religions. Given the initials H.H., Hesse may have intended the representation of the narrator to reflect his own naivety and well-documented fascination with the East, that fed into his work *Siddhartha*, published in 1922.

Aside from the fantastical way in which the Journey is represented, there are other more explicit instances when its credibility is brought into question. For example, there is a scene where H.H. visits an old school friend, who has written a

³¹⁶ *MLF*, pp. 12-13.

book about his experiences during the First World War. The friend is therefore a voice from the “real” world, with a darker, more cynical outlook on life. H.H.’s announcement that he has joined the ‘Morgenlandfahrt’ is met ‘mit freundlicher Ironie’ by his friend, who smiles and explains that amongst his circle the Journey is referred to as ‘den »Kinderkreuzzug«’.³¹⁷ Once again the reference to ‘Kind’ suggests that we ought not to take the dreamworld of the ‘Morgenlandfahrt’ as seriously as its narrator, H.H. Lukas goes on to say that he had been following the *Bund*’s movements, but that ‘Man habe in seinen Kreisen diese Bewegung nicht ganz ernst genommen’.³¹⁸ Through this conversation between the two characters, Hesse grounds the Journey to the East in the post-war years, as a “movement” that had social and political origins.

While H.H. is cast in the role of naïve utopian, Lukas plays the role of cynical realist, from the ‘Standpunkt einer wohlwollenden Skepsis.’³¹⁹ H.H. tries to persuade Lukas with ‘korrigierende Auskünfte’,³²⁰ claiming ‘daß unser Bund keineswegs eine Erscheinung der Nachkriegsjahre ist’. Instead, the Journey to the East is timeless and universal, ‘durch die ganze Weltgeschichte in einer zwar manchmal unterirdischen, nie aber unterbrochenen Linie läuft’.³²¹ Fictional, spiritual and historical figures such as ‘Zoroaster, Lao Tse, Platon, Xenophon, Pythagoras, Albertus Magnus, Don Quixote, Tristram Shandy, Novalis, Baudelaire’ are named as ‘Mitbegründer und Brüder unseres Bundes’.³²² A narrative irony creeps in, as H.H. fails to distinguish between persons of fiction from real historical figures,

³¹⁷ *MLF*, p. 48.

³¹⁸ *MLF*, p. 48.

³¹⁹ *MLF*, p. 49.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

³²¹ *Ibid.*

³²² *Ibid.*

unquestioningly listing the names above as if they all were all part of the same history. This lengthy justification is met with an ironic smile, 'genau das Lächeln, das ich erwartet hatte.'³²³ By juxtaposing a 'Morgenlandfahrer' with a sceptical outsider, Hesse reveals to us how the narrator's involvement in the *Bund* is motivated by a psychological need to escape and transcend the present day, leaving behind the disappointment of contemporary society and politics by immersing himself in a universal, humanist vision.

MLF is not a didactic novel. However, such moments in the novel draw attention to the problematic nature of a movement that tries to exist in an ideal, purely abstract realm. The tendency to abstraction has other negative consequences - for example the 'East' is not only idealised but also fetishized. For example, H.H. recalls the time when he first joined the 'Bund', when he stated that his 'eigenes Reise- und Lebensziel' was 'die schöne Prinzessin Fatme zu sehen und womöglich ihre Liebe zu gewinnen.'³²⁴ H.H.'s desire to court Fatima, the daughter of the prophet Muhammad and founder of Islam, will appear impossible, ludicrous and even sacrilegious. During his travels the narrator later joins a group, where 'ich traf und liebte Ninon, als »die Ausländerin« bekannt'.³²⁵ A reader unfamiliar with Hesse's life might miss this allusion to Hesse's wife's maiden name, Ninon Ausländer. The Ninon of the novel was 'eifersüchtig auf Fatme, die Prinzessin meines Traumes, und war ja doch wahrscheinlich selber Fatme, ohne es zu wissen.'³²⁶ This is of course a humorous wink from Hesse to those readers who would have known that the two were married in 1931, but it also exposes the

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ *MLF*, p. 13.

³²⁵ *MLF*, p. 25.

³²⁶ Ibid.

misguided fascination the narrator has with Fatme and by extension the 'East'. It is one of the first admissions in the book by Hesse's narrator that the search for the 'Morgenland' was flawed. When read through an autobiographical lens, this moment in the novel is also an acknowledgement from Hesse to his readers that his attraction to the Orient was self-serving.

Hesse's own orientalism was (self-centredly) motivated by a strong, psychological need to establish a sense of self. Joseph Mileck calls Hesse's 'preoccupation with the East' a 'quest for confirmation'³²⁷ - that is to say, a kind of self-affirmation. In relation to *Siddhartha*, Mileck argues that 'Hesse's preoccupation with the East was motivated less by a religiophilosophical than by a literary-aesthetic attraction'. Rather than synthesising religious and philosophical ideas from 'the East' into a philosophy of his own, Mileck argues that Hesse was instead primarily intent upon finding 'comforting affirmation of his own evolving view of, and changing adjustment to life.'³²⁸ In his wry, oblique reference to his blind and misguided infatuation with 'Fatme' and by extension 'the East', Hesse's narrator is admitting to this fact.

The 'quest for confirmation' is not unique to Hesse, but a wide-spread European phenomenon which Edward Saïd refers to in *Orientalism* as the need to establish a 'surrogate self'. This concept is central to his book, which 'tries to show that European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self.'³²⁹ Through the

³²⁷ Joseph Mileck, *Hermann Hesse: Between the Perils of Politics and the Allure of the Orient*, Berkeley Insights in Linguistics and Semiotics (New York: P. Lang, 2003), p. 124..

³²⁸ Mileck, p. 124.

³²⁹ Edward W. Saïd, *Orientalism*, Penguin Modern Classics, Facsimile edition (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 3.

first-person narrator of *MLF*, Hesse explores the psychological urge for self-affirmation through a 'surrogate self' in the form of the 'Morgenland'. After the narrator becomes inexplicably separated from the *Bund*, he attempts to write the history of his involvement as a 'Morgenlandfahrer'. However, when a clear account of the Journey and its purpose eludes him, it leads to a disintegration of his sense of self. He reflects that,

Unsere Fahrt nach Morgenland und die ihr zugrunde liegende Gemeinschaft, unser Bund, ist das Wichtigste, das einzig Wichtige in meinem Leben gewesen, etwas, woneben meine eigene Person vollkommen nichtig erschien. Und jetzt, wo ich dies Wichtigste, oder doch etwas davon, aufzeichnen und festhalten will, ist alles nur eine auseinanderscherbende Masse von Bildern, und diese Etwas ist mein eigenes Ich, und dieses Ich, dieser Spiegel erweist sich überall, wo ich ihn befragen will, als ein Nichts, als die oberste Haut einer Glasfläche.³³⁰

The community of the travellers had once given structure and purpose to the narrator's life. Now that he is struggling to remember and piece together the history of the 'Morgendlandfahrt', his sense of self has become fragmented. He is literally and metaphorically direction-less without the 'Fahrt', resulting in a feeling of nihilism.

A similar feeling descends on the narrator at the end of the novel, when his own journey to the East, i.e. his quest for Fatme, comes to an end. Instead of finding a beautiful princess and winning her heart, he finds only her image stowed in an archive. He discovers 'ein Miniaturbildnis', 'ein entzückend schönes Prinzessinnenbildnis'. The medallion containing the image is wrapped in a 'spinnwebfeines violettes Seidentüchlein', which 'duftete unsäglich fern und zart traumhaft nach Prinzessin und Morgenland'.³³¹ By describing the scent as 'fern' as well as 'zart', Hesse indicates the nostalgic yet insubstantial nature of the

³³⁰ *MLF*, p. 45.

³³¹ *MLF*, p. 82.

narrator's imagined 'Morgenland'. The smell brings back nostalgic memories for H.H.: 'indem ich diesen fernen dünnen Zauberduft einatmete, überfiel mich plötzlich die Einsicht: in welchen holden Zauber gehüllt ich damals die Pilgerschaft nach dem Osten angetreten [war]'.³³² H.H.'s ending is ironic - he has found Fatme, but he has also not found Fatme. He realises that for him, Fatme was a merely a comforting illusion. 'Ach, heute, das fühlte ich, würde das Bild der arabischen Prinzessin nicht mehr genügen, mich gegen Welt und Hölle zu feien und zum Ritter und Kreuzfahrer zu machen, es würde heute anderer, stärkerer Zauber bedürfen.'³³³ Hesse's narrator acknowledges the role that Fatme and the idea of the East played in his psychology, steeling him against the world and creating the comforting illusion of himself as a crusader. The use of the chivalric words 'Ritter' and 'Kreuzfahrer' continue the motif of Don Quixote, as a representative figure of the 'Morgenlandfahrer' and Hesse's *Kulturkreis*, who seek comfort in grand narratives to maintain a sense of group identity and reassurance in a world undergoing extreme political and social upheaval in the 1930s.

For Hesse's narrator, the idea of the 'Morgenland' as a unifying destination is more important than any actual possibility of reaching the destination itself. H.H. writes about how the *idea* of the Morgenland unites people across different centuries: 'in höheren und eigentlichen Sinne war dieser Zug zum Morgenlande nicht bloß der meine und nicht bloß dieser gegenwärtige, sondern es strömte dieser Zug der Gläubigen und sich Hingebenden nach dem Osten, nach der Heimat des Lichts, unaufhörlich und ewig, er war immerdar durch alle Jahrhunderte unterwegs, dem Licht und dem Wunder entgegen'.³³⁴ Instead of referring to the

³³² Ibid.

³³³ *MLF*, pp. 82-83.

³³⁴ *MLF*, p. 15.

contemporary and concrete, the narrator repeatedly refers to the destination in highly abstract terms such as 'Licht'. The fetishization of the 'Osten' by H.H. as 'Heimat des Lichts' places it on a pedestal, making it Other. The use of religious language such as 'Gläubigen' and 'Hingebenden' suggests a cult-like following that is problematic. How does this orientalist zeal, which clearly belonged to a younger Hesse, relate to German Orientalism more widely?

Hesse's novel self-consciously situates itself within German Orientalism, by referring to 'Reisetagebuch des Grafen Keyserling'.³³⁵ Suzanne Marchand in her account of German Orientalism explains that Keyserling's most famous work, *Das Reisetagebuch eines Philosophen* (1919), was a 'set of philosophical ruminations on his prewar travels in India and China published in 1919 and sold nearly as well as Spengler' described by a contemporary as 'a lay Bible for the orientation of the modern spirit.'³³⁶ Marchand argues that because of this focus on 'the study of the ancient Orient'³³⁷, German Orientalism 'did not function exclusively to perpetuate Eurocentric views.'³³⁸ Instead, through its scholarship 'German orientalism helped to *destroy* Western self-satisfaction, and to provoke a momentous change in the culture of the West: the relinquishing of Christianity and classical antiquity as universal norms.'³³⁹

Keyserling was part of a generation that was sympathetic with Spengler's ideas about the decline of Western culture (as we saw Wittgenstein was in the previous chapter) but who regarded the East as having 'some prospect of

³³⁵ *MLF*, p. 8.

³³⁶ Suzanne Marchand, 'German Orientalism and the Decline of the West', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 145.4 (2001), 465-73 (p. 471).

³³⁷ Marchand, pp. 465-66.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

³³⁹ Marchand, p. 465.

revitalisation'.³⁴⁰ As Marchand notes, 'The image of the Orient had changed. Nineteenth-century platitudes invoking oriental stagnation were repeatedly challenged [...] It was now the West that was degenerate and idolatrous.'³⁴¹ In the years after the First World War, Keyserling founded the 'so-called Schule der Weisheit in Darmstadt, an organization that was, self-consciously, half Platonic academy and half Buddhist outreach program.' The 'school' brought together intellectuals such as Carl Jung and Walter Benjamin, who 'sought to reconstruct Western self-formation not by reviving Greek and Christian norms, but by juxtaposing German and oriental Geist.'³⁴² Marchand states that 'the now established association of the Orient with anti-bourgeois knowledge' meant that projects such as Keyserling's 'made Eastern wisdom an essential element in a new sort of *Bildung*.'³⁴³ This could potentially explain the fascination of other thinkers such as Wittgenstein with Eastern religion, thought and literature as something refreshingly different and educational. The breath of fresh air from the 'Orient' became part of 'a campaign to save both the East and West from spiritual, or even biological, death.'³⁴⁴ The 'Orient', perceived as an ancient and distant form of culture, was therefore culturally superior to the contemporary degradation of the West. The Orient had 'now been enrolled in a highly significant revision of German rhetoric about identity formation, both individual and cultural.'³⁴⁵ The most striking example of this cited by Marchand is in a 1928 letter to Spengler from Wilhelm II, the former Kaiser, 'in which Wilhelm had tried his best to convince the

³⁴⁰ Marchand, p. 452.

³⁴¹ Marchand, p. 472.

³⁴² Marchand, pp. 471-72.

³⁴³ Marchand, p. 472.

³⁴⁴ Marchand, pp. 472-73.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

herald of Western doom that “we are *orientals* [*Morgenländer*], and *not* westerners [*Abendländer*].”³⁴⁶

Where does Hesse and *MLF* fit into this search during the interwar years for Western revitalization in the Orient? Sofia Bach, in ‘Hermann Hesse’s Orient: Western Crisis and Eastern Redemption’, argues that ‘Hesse fits this mould very comfortably and, in his way, participated to shaping the German Orientalism of his time. This escapist tendency of leaving the grim reality of the Occident behind and finding rescue in the narrative Orient was a shared characteristic amongst his contemporaries.’³⁴⁷ Bach sees a synergy between Spengler, Keyserling and Hesse, all of whom ‘published influential works within a year of the end of the Great War.’³⁴⁸ After Ninon moved into Casa Camuzzi with Hesse, his life seemed to ‘return to stability’. Bach argues that this time at which Hesse became more settled in life manifested itself in ‘the diminishing role of India and Oriental patterns in Hesse’s later writings’. Subsequently, ‘The Orient was no longer necessary to solve the crisis within’ in the form of an ‘individual quest’, but could still be used to ‘help navigate the tensions of the external world’ in a wider, ‘collective’ quest.³⁴⁹ *MLF*, under Bach’s reading, was part of the collective quest for Western cultural redemption, and a new form of *Bildung*, that Hesse and his contemporaries found themselves on.

Such readings are valid, but do not take into account the irony that runs through the novel. Hesse peppers ironic, Quixotic, and incredulously fantastical language throughout the novel to craft a narrative that does not itself seek

³⁴⁶ Marchand, p. 472.

³⁴⁷ Bach, p. 122.

³⁴⁸ Bach, p. 66.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

redemption from the East, but instead reflexively and self-consciously tells the story of how he and his contemporaries undertook that search. *MLF* is therefore not an orientalist work, but a work *about* orientalism as a mindset, its motivations and its flaws. In fact, in contrast to Keyserling, the orientalism of *MLF* is pointed towards the *idea* of the so-called ‘East’ or ‘Orient’, rather than trying to engage with the East in a real sense. If we examine the comments that Hesse’s narrator makes about Keyserling in the opening pages of the novel, we will see that instead of identifying Keyserling as a fellow crusader on the Journey, H.H. states the opposite:

Seit dem Reisetagebuch des Grafen Keyserling sind mehrmals Bücher erschienen, deren Autoren teils unbewußt, teils aber auch mit Absicht den Anschein erweckten, als seien sie Bundesbrüder und hätten an der Morgenlandreise teilgenommen. Sogar die abenteuerlichen Reiseberichte von Ossendowski gerieten gelegentlich in diesen ehrenden Verdacht. Aber sie alle haben mit dem Bunde und mit unsrer Morgenlandfahrt nicht das mindeste zu tun, oder doch im besten Falle nicht mehr, als die Prediger kleiner pietistischer Sekten mit dem Heiland, den Aposteln und dem Heiligen Geiste zu tun haben [...].³⁵⁰

The narrator’s orientalism has effectively taken Keyserling’s version of Eastern spirituality and wisdom, and taken it to an even higher form of abstraction (comparing the ‘Bund’ with the ‘Heiligem Geiste’ in contrast to the ‘Aposteln’). H.H.’s strange logic seems to be that Keyserling was not in fact orientalist enough. H.H. argues that Keyserling’s *Reisetagebuch* is an inauthentic account of travelling to the East, because he travelled by modern means: ‘die banalen Hilfsmittel moderner Dutzendreisen, auf Eisenbahnen, Dampfschiffe, Telegraph, Auto, Flugzeug’.³⁵¹ This results in Keyserling’s failure, ‘wirklich ins Herorische und Magische zu stoßen’. By being dependent on modern transport, and being rooted in geographical exploration, ‘so waren ihre [Keyserlings und Ossendowskis] Reisen

³⁵⁰ *MLF*, pp. 8-9.

³⁵¹ *MLF*, p. 9.

doch keine Wunder und haben keine neuen Gebiete entdeckt'.³⁵² H.H.'s upside-down logic goes something like this: the *Bund*, by directing their travels to an abstract, metaphorical 'East' are in fact taking the more authentic path, whereas Keyserling, who actually travelled to the Orient, discovered 'keine neuen Gebiete' (in the spiritual, rather than the literal sense). The 'Morgenlandfahrt' is not just a journey but a pilgrimage for the narrator, and must therefore be made on foot, to demonstrate one's devotion to the collective spiritual quest. It is ironic, however, that he criticises Keyserling for inauthentic engagement with the 'Morgenland', given that the narrator himself never arrives there - literally or spiritually (his desire to meet Fatme is disappointed).

We must be careful to distinguish between H.H. the narrator and Hesse the author. Reading Hesse's letters and essays after the publication of *Siddhartha*, a work that exemplified his fascination with the East, reveals a developing awareness that it is futile to seek spiritual and cultural redemption in the Orient. In 1925, Hesse writes to Rudolf Schmidt that *Siddhartha* marked a turning point in his work: 'Siddhartha ist der Ausdruck meiner Befreiung vom indischen Denken.' In fact, Hesse tells Schmidt that this process was 'Der Weg meiner Befreiung aus jedem Dogma'.³⁵³ Several years later Hesse wrote 'Besuch aus Indien', published in 1939, which was 'prompted by a Hindu visitor whose acquaintance he had made at an international peace and freedom conference held in August/September

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ *Materialien zu Hermann Hesses Das Glasperlenspiel*, ed. by Volker Michels, Suhrkamp Taschenbuch (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), ERSTER BAND, p. 193.

1922'.³⁵⁴ In this short article, Hesse 'candidly acknowledges that his flight from Europe and his quest of India's wisdom has been abortive'.³⁵⁵ The essay begins,

Unreif gebrochenen Früchte nützten uns nichts. Mehr als die Hälfte meines Lebens war ich mit indischen und chinesischen Studien beschäftigt - ober, um nicht in den Ruf eines Gelehrten zu kommen - war ich gewohnt, den Duft indischer und chinesischer Dichtung und Frömmigkeit zu atmen.³⁵⁶

In a self-effacing disclaimer, Hesse makes no pretences about having a scholarly knowledge of the East - instead, it has a fascination for him, as a 'Duft'. In wording similar to that in the novel, Hesse emphasises here that was drawn to the East as an abstract ideal, rather than a real destination reachable by modern means. Gradually, Hesse recalls, this yearning departed:

Dann kam die Zeit, es ist noch nicht sehr lange her, da hatte ich keine Sehnsucht nach dem Palmenstrand von Ceylon und den Tempelstraßen von Benares mehr, und wünschte mir nicht mehr, ein Buddhist oder Taoist zu sein und einen Heiligen und Magier zum Lehrer zu haben. Dies alles war unwichtig geworden. Und auch der große Unterschied zwischen dem verehrten Osten und dem kranken, leidenden Westen, zwischen Wien und Europa, war mir nicht mehr eben wichtig, ich legte keinen Wert mehr auf das Eindringen in möglichst viel östliche Weisheiten und Kulte [...].³⁵⁷

Hesse is describing how he has progressed from a fascination with the idea of the Orient, which for him was a redemptive, surrogate self for the degenerate West, to an awareness that there is a 'geistig[e] Welt' in which the polarity of 'East' and 'West' do not dominate. His orientalist fascination with India and China becomes a humanist vision of a world, 'an welcher Europa und Wien, Veden und Bibel, Buddha und Goethe gleichen Teil hatten.' In this world, Hesse adds, there is no single destination of enlightenment, 'hier gibt es kein Ende des Lernens.'³⁵⁸ Hesse's

³⁵⁴ Which, coincidentally, Bertrand Russell also attended. While passing through Austria, he met with Wittgenstein, who was disapproving of Russell's 'lofty pacifism'.

³⁵⁵ *MGPS*, p. 154.

³⁵⁶ Hermann Hesse, 'Besuch Aus Indien', *Am Häuslichen Herd: Schweizerische Illustrierte Monatsschrift*, 1939, p. 328 <<https://doi.org/10.5169/SEALS-668907>>.

³⁵⁷ Hermann Hesse, 'Besuch Aus Indien', p. 328.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

acceptance that the Orient is based on a false polarity between East and West means that he can assume a humanist outlook that is humble and eternally curious.

Saïd himself recommends this outlook, which he defines as a form of ‘humanism’. He presents his version of humanism as an ‘alternative model that has been extremely important to me in my work’.³⁵⁹ He writes in his preface to 2003 edition that ‘I have called what I try to do “humanism”’.³⁶⁰ As an example of this, he cites ‘Goethe’s later ideas about *Weltliteratur*, the study of all the literatures of the world as a symphonic whole which could be apprehended theoretically as having preserved the individuality of each work without losing sight of the whole.’³⁶¹ The concept of ‘Weltliteratur’, as important to Hesse’s idea of *Bildung* in *BW* as it is for Saïd, entails an open-minded attitude. ‘Rather than alienation and hostility to another time and different culture, philology as applied to *Weltliteratur* involved a profoundly humanistic spirit deployed with generosity and, if I may use the word, hospitality. Thus the interpreter’s mind makes a place in it for a foreign Other.’³⁶²

In 2003, Saïd considers this ‘spirit’ to be just as much under threat as Hesse felt in 1927 and through the 1930s-40s (along with Gide, Mann, Suhrkamp etc). Saïd says, ‘The book culture based on archival research as well as general principles of mind that once sustained humanism as a historical discipline have almost disappeared. Instead of reading in the real sense of the word, our students today are often distracted by the fragmented knowledge available on the

³⁵⁹ Saïd, p. xviii.

³⁶⁰ Saïd, p. xvii.

³⁶¹ Saïd, p. xviii.

³⁶² Saïd, p. xix.

internet.’ Education is also ‘threatened by nationalist and religious orthodoxies’.³⁶³ Saïd’s words bear an uncanny resemblance to Hesse’s and Wittgenstein’s distaste for dogmatism and a culture that is designed to be consumed rather than transformative. Saïd sees this decline as having consequences, which are no less real than the rise of capitalism, Fascism, and communism in Europe in the 20th century: ‘humanism is the only, and, I would go so far as saying, the final, resistance we have against the inhuman practices and injustices that disfigure human history.’³⁶⁴ By this, Saïd is referring to the terrorist events that shook the world as it entered the 21st century. He continues by emphasising the importance of a dying form of humanist scholarship,

The world-wide protests before the war that began in Iraq would not have been possible were it not for the existence of alternative communities across the globe, informed by alternative news sources and keenly aware of the environmental, human rights, and libertarian impulses that bind us together in this tiny planet. The human, and humanistic, desire for enlightenment and emancipation is not easily deterred, despite the incredible strength of the opposition to it that comes from the Rumsfelds, Bin Ladens, Sharons, and Bushes of this world. I would like to believe that *Orientalism* has had a place in the long and often uninterrupted road to human freedom.³⁶⁵

The above passage bears a striking resemblance to the “embattled intellectual” language of Hesse’s narrator. Choices of phrase, such as ‘alternative communities’ and the ‘road to human freedom’ echo the utopian words associated with the ‘Bund’ of ‘Morgenlandfahrer’, evoking the sense of *Kulturkreise* under threat, but rallying round a common cause in a form of crusade against hate, prejudice and ignorance. Although delving this deep into *Orientalism* might seem like a bewildering diversion from Hesse, I would like to make the point clear: that the

³⁶³ Saïd, pp. xix-xx.

³⁶⁴ Saïd, p. xxii.

³⁶⁵ Saïd, pp. xxii-xxiii.

sense of loss, fear and hope that is embodied in the profound but Quixotic journey in *MLF* is not unique to Hesse or even to the interwar period.

Through our reading of *MLF* so far, it has become evident that it cannot be interpreted at face value. Hesse repeatedly draws attention to what Eugene Stelzig calls the ‘brittle metaphoricity’ of the ‘Morgenland’, thereby undermining an orientalist worldview. As Stelzig points out, the word *Morgenland* is itself a metaphor - the East is the land of the ‘morning’/‘rising sun’, ‘der Heimat des Lichts’ or even the land of ‘tomorrow’.³⁶⁶ It is fundamentally ironic - and Quixotic - that the Journeyers are heading for the *Morgenland*, although it also does not entirely exist, ‘denn unser Ziel war nicht nur das Morgenland, oder vielmehr: unser Morgenland war ja nicht nur ein Land und etwas Geographisches, sondern es war die Heimat und Jugend der Seele, es war das Überall und Nirgends’.³⁶⁷ There is something simultaneously uplifting and nihilistic about this statement, which sums up the whole paradoxical, tragi-comic, Quixotic Journey to the East.

Hesse's narrator admits the ‘brittle metaphoricity’ of the ‘Morgenland’. The fact that H.H.'s *Morgenland* is something of a fluid, fictional concept and a ‘brittle metaphor’, means that it is virtually impossible to narrate, and he begins to wonder whether his history is an artificially constructed one. H.H. asks himself, ‘Aber wie nur, durch welchen Kunstgriff wäre es zu ermöglichen, wie wäre die Geschichte unsrer Morgenlandfahrt irgend erzählbar zu machen? Ich weiß es nicht.’³⁶⁸ He imagines to himself that this may be the fate faced by all historians:

Ich kann mir denken, daß es jedem Geschichtsschreiber ähnlich geht, wenn er die Ereignisse irgendeines Zeitlaufs aufzuschreiben beginnt und der Ereignisse, ein

³⁶⁶ Eugene L. Stelzig, “Die Morgenlandfahrt”: Metaphoric Autobiography and Prolegomenon to “Das Glasperlenspiel”, *Monatshefte*, 79.4 (1987), 486-95 (p. 491).

³⁶⁷ *MLF*, p. 28.

³⁶⁸ *MLF*, p. 43.

Gemeinsames, etwas worauf sie sich beziehen und was sie zusammenhält? Damit etwas wie Kausalität, etwas wie Sinn entstehe, damit überhaupt irgend etwas auf Erden erzählbar werde, muß der Geschichtsschreiber Einheiten erfinden: einen Helden, ein Volk, eine Idee, und muß das, was in Wirklichkeit im Namenlosen passiert ist, im Namen dieser erfundenen Einheit geschehen lassen.³⁶⁹

The narrator draws attention to the act of narration and even 'erfinden' (invention) that occurs, in order to tell history in a way that makes sense. H.H.'s self-doubt in his ability to narrate the 'Morgenlandfahrt' means that the 'Morgenlandfahrt' itself is called into question. H.H. confesses, 'Dieser Zweifel stellt nicht nur die Frage: ist deine Geschichte denn erzählbar? Er stellt auch noch die Frage: War sie denn erlebbar?'³⁷⁰ In passages such as this, Hesse encourages us not to take his novel and the idea of the Morgenlandfahrt too seriously, by drawing attention to its fictionality. He also draws attention to the fact that there is an element of fictionality in cultural and historical narratives in general.

The desire for a grand narrative is described by H.H. as an interwar social phenomenon: 'Es war ja damals kurz nach dem Weltkriege, und namentlich für das Denken der besiegten Völker, ein außerordentlicher Zustand von Unwirklichkeit, von Bereitschaft für das Überwirkliche gegeben'.³⁷¹ There was an appetite for these narratives, as Hesse notes several years earlier in his 1926 essay, 'Moderne Versuche zu neuen Sinngebungen'. In the essay, Hesse reasons that we have an innate need to see meaning in our lives, i.e. 'durch eine höhere Sinngebung gerechtfertigt'. 'Dies religiöse oder metaphysische Bedürfnis,' Hesse continues, is 'so alt und so wichtig wie das Bedürfnis nach Essen, nach Liebe, nach Obdach'.³⁷² He explains how 'in ruhigen kulturell gesicherte Zeiten', this need was satisfied

³⁶⁹ *MLF*, p. 44.

³⁷⁰ *MLF*, p. 45.

³⁷¹ *MLF*, p. 9.

³⁷² Hermann Hesse, 'Moderne Versuche Zu Neuen Sinngebungen', in *Sämtliche Werke: Betrachtungen Und Berichte I 1899-1926*, 1. Auflage (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), BAND 13, 479-84 (p. 480).

‘durch die Kirchen und durch Systeme führender Denker’.³⁷³ In Hesse’s time, given the vacuum these fallen institutions have left behind, there was a ‘wildes Suchen nach neuen Deutungen des Menschlebens’.³⁷⁴ Such new interpretations have a therapeutic effect: ‘Sie helfen, alle diese Fiktionen, diese Religionsbildungen, diese neue Glaubenslehren, sie helfen den Menschen zu leben, sie helfen ihm, das schwere, fragwürdige Leben nicht nur ertragen, sondern hoch zu werten und zu heiligen’.³⁷⁵ The utopian characters in *MLF*, and its successor, *GPS*, can be regarded as attempting to undertake similar ‘Versuche zu neuen Sinngebungen’. These books could therefore be read as an attempt to understand how and why these fictions (such as the ‘Morgenland’) appeal so much to us.

To summarise, the ‘Morgenland’ is a metaphor for the unifying ideal that is sought by Hesse’s contemporary *Kulturkreise*, and the ‘Fahrt’ is the intellectual or spiritual journey they undertake to make that ideal their form of life. The novel is a playful, anthropological exploration of the player psychology of people like Hesse, who suffer from intellectual hubris or a craving for generality, of which orientalism is an example. *MLF* is also about the mood of the *Kulturkreise* of embattled intellectuals, a specific section of the ‘collective’ of Western society to which Bach refers. There are still questions left to answer, however - why is the self-absorption of *Kulturkreise* problematic? Why would this concern matter to Hesse to such a great extent that he would spend the best part of a decade working on it through *MLF* and *GPS*?

³⁷³ Hesse, BAND 13, pp. 480-81.

³⁷⁴ Hesse, BAND 13, p. 481.

³⁷⁵ Hesse, BAND 13, p. 483.

When *Kulturkreise* turn inward

There is a problem with the ‘embattled survivors’ mentality that becomes evident during the course of the novel. It is the same problem as with Wittgenstein and cultural pessimists. The problem is that the more embattled this group becomes, the more it retreats into itself, becoming isolated. In this section, we will examine how the Journey to the East undergoes a metamorphosis during the course of the novel. It appears that the utopian *Bund* transforms from an informal ‘Heerlager’ with no fixed location to a static institution, a ‘Kanzlei’ that Hesse describes in foreboding, consciously Kafkaesque language (as we will see, Hesse was an admirer of Kafka’s work and *Der Prozess* appears to have been highly influential on *MLF*’s ending). I will argue that the formation of the ‘Kanzlei’ may have been a self-protective mechanism, and that the Kafkaesque language paints the *Bund*’s institutionalised form in a sinister light. In the following paragraphs, we will examine how *MLF* explores the player psychology of embattled intellectuals who retreat defensively into institutions (a mindset which will be explored in *GPS* through games).

The tables turn on H.H. during the later stages of the novel. Having tried to piece together his account, he is unable to fully explain or recall why the *Bund* dissolved. He believes that the dissolution began sometime after a servant called Leo, who was travelling with the *Bund*, disappeared at the same time that the ‘Bundesbrief’ went missing (effectively the founding document or constitution of the *Bund*). H.H. feels that finding Leo may unlock some clues to help him complete his account of the Journey to the East, and so he goes in search of Leo.

After H.H. eventually meets Leo, he is told that Leo has been sent by the ‘Oberen’ and ‘Hohem Stuhl’ of the *Bund* to bring H.H. to them. There is a terrible irony that occurs to H.H. when he realises that ‘es gab noch einen »Bund«, von dem ich nichts mehr wußte, der ohne mich existierte und mich nicht mehr als zugehörig betrachtet hatte!’ The activities of the *Bund* have continued, even while he was ‘beschäftigt mit meinen Aufzeichnungen über den Bund und unsere Fahrt’, believing himself to be ‘sein letztes Überbleibsel’.³⁷⁶

Upon arriving at the headquarters of the *Bund* after receiving their summons, H.H. describes the building thus:

Schließlich zuoberst in dem unendlichen Gebäude kamen wir in ein Dachgeschoß, wo es nach Papier und Karton roch und wo die Wände entlang, viele Hunderte von Metern, Schranktüren, Bücherrücken und Aktenbündel starrten: ein riesiges Archiv, eine gewaltige Kanzlei.³⁷⁷

The first impression of this building is simultaneously over- and underwhelming. It is ‘riesig’ and ‘gewaltig’, yet occupied by nameless ‘Archiv- und Bibliotheksbeamte’, hurrying past, ‘lautlos, mit Katalogzetteln und Nummern in den Händen.’³⁷⁸ They seem to bear little resemblance to the illustrious *Bundesbrüder*, among whom were various colourful characters from history and fiction. From the outside, the ‘Kanzlei’ resembles ‘ein ausgedehntes Amtsgebäude oder Museum.’³⁷⁹ The similarities with Kafka’s ‘Gericht’ in *Der Prozess* are clear, with the exception being that Hesse wants to give the impression of a *cultural* institution (‘Museum’) as opposed to a legal one. The archive is a powerful resource for the historian narrator H.H., but ‘Im Kataloge blätternd, schauerte ich vor der Fülle dessen, was hier auf mich

³⁷⁶ *MLF*, pp. 72-73.

³⁷⁷ *MLF*, p. 74.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁹ *MLF*, p. 73.

wartete.³⁸⁰ A further irony occurs when H.H. manages to find what he has been looking for. He discovers the *Bundesbrief*, only to find it is written in Greek and he is unable to read it. It is tragic yet comically ironic that H.H. was not aware of this already. It appears that he had been blindly following the *Bund*, without having read the *Bundesbrief*, but implicitly trusting its authority.

Readers of the above passage will be struck by the resemblance to the ‘Kanzlei’ of Kafka’s *Der Process*. The protagonist, Josef K. (like H.H., also known by his initial) has been accused of a crime, although he is never told what it is, or who his accuser is. In order to find out, he goes to the Kanzlei to try to discover the truth. Instead, he is confronted by an enormous institution, and struggles to find anyone who is actually able to help provide clarity on his situation. Details such as the arrival in the ‘Dachgeschoß’ and the presence of ‘Beamte’ are also strikingly reminiscent of *Der Prozess*. The similarities are not lost on Hesse’s readers. Theodore Ziolkowski notes the resemblance to *Der Prozess*, describing the end of the novel as ‘more Kafkaesque than medieval in its setting’.³⁸¹ Stelzig notes that H.H.’s efforts to write a chronicle of the Journey to the East are filled with a ‘Kafkaesque sense of futility’.³⁸²

Despite the fleetingness of these observations, the similarities between *MLF* and *Der Prozess* are not merely coincidental. Hesse was in fact a great admirer of Kafka and reviewed his works favourably. On 9th September 1925, in an article entitled ‘Franz Kafkas Nachlaß’, Hesse expresses his gratitude that Kafka’s manuscripts, including *Der Prozess*, were preserved from destruction after his

³⁸⁰ MLF, p. 80.

³⁸¹ Ziolkowski, p. 260.

³⁸² Stelzig, p. 489.

death (as had been Kafka's wish) and brought to publication. Of *Der Prozess*, he says, 'Es ist, wie alle Werke dieses Dichters, ein Gespinst aus zartesten Traumfäden' which has been 'hergestellt mit so reinlicher Technik'.³⁸³ Hesse emphasises the dreamlike qualities of *Der Prozess*, which is experienced by its readers as a sort of 'Alptraum', because it is these qualities that Hesse also admired in Kubin (a mutual acquaintance of Kafka and Hesse), and which manifest themselves in the multidimensional Journey to the East. Hesse concludes by declaring his long-standing admiration for Kafka, as a 'Träumer' and as a 'heimlicher Meister und König der deutschen Sprache'.³⁸⁴ A letter from Max Brod, Kafka's literary executor, to Hesse on 1st December 1926 suggests that the admiration was mutual:

Verehrter Herr Hesse,

ich weiß nicht, ob ich Ihnen schon mitgeteilt habe, daß Franz Kafka Ihre Werke stets geliebt hat und daß eine Ihrer Kritiken ihm, der sonst für Kritik unempfindlich war, als eine der letzten Freuden an sein Sterbebett in Kierling (bei Wien) kam. Ich war dort, und er zeigte mir den von seiner Mutter eingesandten Ausschnitt. Wie dankbar war ich Ihnen damals, - damals und oft!³⁸⁵

There is also evidence in Ninon Hesse's notes on *MLF*, recorded during its conception, which acknowledge the close affinity between Hesse's and Kafka's works: '[*Die Morgenlandfahrt*] gleicht Kafka - im Geheimnisvollen (aber viel klarer)'. On another page, Ninon writes 'Auch K.s [Kafkas] Figuren leben ihr blutiges schweres Leben in der Irrealität, aber es ist eine harte strenge Welt, eine Welt voll Spitzen und Kanten.'³⁸⁶ The angular sharpness of Kafka's world appears to

³⁸³ Hermann Hesse, 'Franz Kafkas Nachlaß', *Berliner Tagesblatt Und Handels-Zeitung* (Berlin, 9 September 1925), Abend Ausgabe (427) edition, p. 4, DFG-Viewer, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

³⁸⁴ Hermann Hesse, 'Franz Kafkas Nachlaß'.

³⁸⁵ *Über Hermann Hesse*, ed. by Volker Michels, Suhrkamp Taschenbuch; 331-332, 1. Aufl (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976), Bd. 1, p. 417.

³⁸⁶ Ninon Hesse, 'Notizen Zu "Morgenlandfahrt"', DLA Marbach, A:Hesse, Ninon (HS010294360).

have inspired the above description of the transformation of the *Bund* from an informal 'Heerlager' into a forbidding institution.

Ninon does not specifically mention *Der Prozess* in her notes, but it becomes clear during the late stages of *MLF* that H.H. is Hesse's self-consciously formulated version of K., Kafka's narrator. Upon reaching the 'Kanzlei', H.H. is informed that he is a deserter of the *Bund* - an 'Abtrünnige'. In a strange, ironic twist, as H.H. had in fact been searching for the *Bund*, and had not knowingly deserted it. He gradually realises that it was not the *Bund* that deserted him, but rather it was he who left them (albeit unintentionally, given that he cannot recall doing this). His case, like K.'s, is thrust on him even though it is not entirely clear what he is guilty of. He is put on trial for desertion, his case described as 'Selbstanklage eines entlaufenen Bundesbruders'.³⁸⁷ Even though he is addressed as 'Selbstankläger' at several points, this is sometimes switched for 'Angeklagter', or even both simultaneously.³⁸⁸ 'Selbstankläger' is not how he refers to himself, but how the 'Oberen' refer to him; he is spoken to at length over the course of several pages about his shortcomings.³⁸⁹ In fact, he barely speaks at all. He is only able to quietly acquiesce to the accusations, '»Ja«, sagte ich mit leiser Stimme, »ja.«'³⁹⁰ H.H. is powerless in face of this institution, almost forced into confessing and internalising the principles of the *Bund* by becoming a 'Selbstankläger'.

After being *told* he is a 'Selbstankläger', H.H. eventually *becomes* one, in another ironic twist. He comes to discover and admit of his own accord the failings that have already been levied against him by the *Oberen*. This confession comes

³⁸⁷ *MLF*, p. 76.

³⁸⁸ *MLF*, pp. 88, 92, 93.

³⁸⁹ *MLF*, pp. 88-90.

³⁹⁰ *MLF*, p. 91.

about after the *Oberen* allow him to spend time in the Order's enormous archive to work on his history of the *Bund*. Confronted by 'die unendliche Raamtiefe des Archivs',³⁹¹ the realisation that writing such a history is futile strikes H.H. like 'ein neuer Schmerz' or 'ein Blitzstrahl':

Die Geschichte dieses Bundes hatte ich Einfältiger schreiben wollen, ich, der ich von diesen Millionen Schriften, Büchern, Bildern, Zeichen des Archivs kein Tausendtel zu entziffern oder gar zu begreifen vermochte! Vernichtet, namenlos töricht, namenlos lächerlich, mich selber nicht begreifend, zu einem Stäubchen eingedorrt, sah ich mich inmitten dieser Dinge stehen, mit welchen man mir ein wenig zu spielen erlaubt hatte, um mich fühlen zu lassen, was der Bund sei, und was ich selbst.³⁹²

Having been permitted 'ein wenig zu spielen', the narrator experiences a moment of acute, painful insight - that his mission to preserve the *Bund* has been hopeless - its purpose and existence is too enormous to be encapsulated in a single account. The idea of awakening from a child-like state of 'spielen' is used in a derogatory sense here, insofar as he has been playing a 'mere' game - this is something that will change in Hesse's next novel, *GPS*, in which 'spielen' becomes an activity that is *both* childlike/naïve *and* something to be taken seriously. Here, 'spielen' has a negative connotation, insofar as it pertains to H.H.'s ignorance and hubris in attempting to write the history of the *Bund*. In the face of the massive archive, this task feels futile ('töricht', 'lächerlich'). Hesse's use of the word *spielen* and related terms in *MLF* (and later in *GPS*) are distinct from Wittgenstein's *Sprachspiele*, because the latter do not carry the same perjorative associations (that what is being played is a "mere" or frivolous game).

³⁹¹ *MLF*, p. 83.

³⁹² *MLF*, p. 83.

After this ‘playtime’ is over, H.H. comes to a serious realisation. The moment that H.H. realises that he is incapable of writing the history of the *Bund*, he also begins to look at himself more critically:

[...] daß der Bund vollkommen unerschüttert und mächtig wie je bestehe, daß nicht Leo und nicht der Bund es war, die mich verlassen und enttäuscht hatten, sondern daß nur ich so schwach und so töricht gewesen war, meine eigenen Erlebnisse mißdeutend, am Bund zu zweifeln, die Fahrt ins Morgenland als mißglückt zu betrachten und mich für den Überlebenden und Chronisten einer erledigten und im Sande verronnenen Geschichte zu halten, während ich nichts war als ein Davongelaufener, untreu Gewordener, ein Deserteur.³⁹³

Although the narrator’s hubris has been dissolved by his encounter with the archive, he still thinks of the ‘Fahrt’ in terms of a religion or crusade, which he blames himself for forsaking and deserting. The *Morgenlandfahrt* therefore remains an all-consuming cult, even for the person who feels that they have lost faith in it. The *Oberen* chastise H.H. for his self-deception, ‘wie wunderlich und blasphemisch seine Absicht war, die Geschichte einer Fahrt zu schreiben, der er nicht gewachsen war und dem er untreu geworden war.’³⁹⁴ The martial vocabulary (‘Deserteur’, ‘Fahnenflucht’³⁹⁵) makes it sound as if the *Bund* is an organisation on the defensive, which captures the wider sentiment about culture during the 1930s (if we recall for example the 1935 Congress of Writers for the Defence of Culture, or similar works such as *Le trahison des clercs* by Julien Benda, which denounced scholars who were turning to nationalism and racism).³⁹⁶

Why is it important that Hesse put H.H. through this experience, in which he finally understands the great irony of his situation? Why is irony important? In a preface to the French translation of *MLF*, Gide comments that irony is the best

³⁹³ *MLF*, pp. 85-86.

³⁹⁴ *MLF*, p. 84.

³⁹⁵ *MLF*, pp. 76, 86.

³⁹⁶ Cf. Julien Benda, *La Trahison Des Clercs*, Cahiers Verts; Sér. 2, No. 6 (Paris: Grasset, 1927).

feature of Hesse's work because it enables 'se juger sans complaisance'.³⁹⁷ As an example of Hesse's irony, Gide cites the laughter of the Immortals in *Der Steppenwolf*, which has close parallels with H.H.'s sentencing by the *Oberen*. The *Oberen* judge him for his blasphemous, hubristic 'wunderlichen Ehrgeiz', 'zum Geschichtschreiber des Bundes werden zu wollen'. But this 'Schuld' is dismissed as 'Novizendummheiten' and 'Kindereien', hence Leo, 'der Oberste der Obern' decrees, 'Sie [die »Dummheiten«] erledigen sich dadurch, daß wir über sie lächeln.' Just as Harry Haller does not entirely let go of his former self following his encounter with the Immortals, so H.H. is relieved and bewildered by his sentence. But to the reader of H.H.'s story, we realise that in the grand scheme of the *Bund's* history, H.H.'s supposedly grand mission is in fact little more than a drop in the ocean (a single manuscript in the vast archive). Irony shows us that the rallying cry of *MLF* is not necessarily founded in truth. H.H.'s attempt to preserve the *Bund* is proven useless by the *Oberen*, and dubious to the novel's readers.

To summarise this section, the significance of the transformation of the *Bund* into a vast institution that resembles a 'Kanzlei' or museum is that a museum or an archive is set up to *preserve* or *conserve* something. Due to the restricted point of view of the narrator, who deserts the *Bund* without even realising it, it is hard to tell whether the *Bund* transformed from camp to archive over the course of the narrative, or whether the two existed simultaneously without H.H.'s knowledge. Perhaps even one or both were an illusion. The superimposition of the 'Kanzlei' over the *Bund's* earlier appearance as a happier, looser collective is reminiscent of the use of the word 'Bibliothek' in *BW*. A library symbolises the seat of power of

³⁹⁷ André Gide, 'Préface à une traduction française du "Morgenlandfahrt" de Hesse', DLA Marbach, A:Hesse, Hermann (HS006833610). My own approximate translation: to judge oneself without complacency.

long-lived institutions and cultural values, as well as one's own personal 'library', which is not a building at all but a collection of books in one place. The personal dimension of *Bildung* is lost or even actively rejected by the *Bund*, in favour of protecting a collective value system - or what in Wittgensteinian terms we could call a form of life. The *Bund* resembles a language-game community, that resorts to stern punishment as a way of protecting its values. The troubling aspects of the institutionalisation of *Bildung* will be explored further in the next chapter.

Having established that Hesse was experimenting with ironic narrative devices to acknowledge and frame the Quixotic tendencies of his fellow "embattled intellectuals", I would like to turn to the question: what was it about games that convinced Hesse to replace *MLF*'s central metaphor (the Journey) with the Glass Bead Game, as an analogy for the player psychology of *Kulturkreise*? The clue is in the emphasis Hesse laid on satire and irony in *MLF*, and the fact that a game can be taken as both serious and mere "Spielerei".

In the next section, we will read the initial drafts of *GPS*'s first chapter (titled the 'Einleitung'), in which an anonymous Castalian narrator describes how the Glass Bead Game originated from a bourgeois card game invented around 1935 by a well-educated middle-class man, Klaiber. The *Einleitung* in its first drafts (1932-34) resembles the final version in many aspects, except for the removal of specific dates and caustic political criticism, and for changes in the Glass Bead Game's origins. In the following section, I will explore the significance of each of these changes, in order to help us understand what Hesse was trying to achieve with his Game. I would like to show how the adjustments he made to *GPS* turn the Game from a utopian blueprint for a better society into a device that helps us to better

understand how academic communities - *Kulturkreise* - can become out of touch, minoritarian or even elitist. My reading of Hesse's development of the 'Game' as a framing device will be based on my conviction that, in Wittgensteinian terms, he wanted to acknowledge and make transparent the "language-game" of his *Kulturkreis*. I will primarily be referencing the first and the third drafts.

From 'Kartenspiel' to 'Glasperlenspiel'

In the first draft of the *Einleitung* in 1932, the Glass Bead Game begins as a popular card game among the educated middle class, before becoming a more intellectually rigorous exercise played with glass beads, culminating in the abstract form of the Castalians' Glass Bead Game that uses only a symbolic language. By contrast, in the final version of the novel's first chapter (finished in 1934), the first stage of the Game's genesis (the card game) is removed. The Game has more esoteric origins, beginning as a game played amongst the small group of 'Morgendlandfahrer' before maturing into its final abstract Castalian form.

How do changes made to the *Einleitung* in 1932-34 offer evidence about what Hesse was trying to achieve with the analogy? In the early drafts of the *Einleitung*, the Glass Bead Game appears to have a similar function to the *Bund* or the *Morgenlandfahrt*, insofar as it is introduced to preserve, protect or champion values of *Bildung* that have somehow been neglected. Klaiber invents the game with the intention of providing his wife with a more edifying pastime than bridge. He believes his wife is lacking in sophistication, because she takes great pleasure in playing bridge instead of other activities that he considers to be more culturally enriching, such as reading Greek. Klaiber finds the 'bloßes Kartenspiel' a waste of

time, 'ungereimt und geschmackslos'.³⁹⁸ He decides to invent a 'Gesellschaftsspiel für wahrhaft Gebildete' based on a card game called 'Dichter-Quartett', 'um seiner Frau das Bridge zu ersetzen'.³⁹⁹ Klaiber's original intention for the game was therefore a pedagogical one, based on the idea of *Bildung* as self-improvement through engagement with culture.

Klaiber's game consisted of a large deck of cards, each with the name of a famous figure or work of culture (such as Goethe, Bach, etc.) Hesse's narrator describes in great detail what the cards looked like: how the names and birth/death dates were written in coloured ink; that in the top right corner of each figure's card was a letter denoting his profession (e.g. 'K- bedeutete Komponist, D- Dichter,' etc.⁴⁰⁰); how the figure's major works were also listed on the card, underlined in red, and for each of these works there was a corresponding card in the deck; each of the cards was typewritten and contained in a box, so that the final product looked 'äußerst sauber und geordnet aus'.⁴⁰¹ This self-satisfied tone, combine with the detailed material description of the cards, and the absence of any description of what is learned through the act of playing with them, suggest that the game was rather superficial.

The original 'Kartenspiel' is framed in parochial terms. Klaiber's original card game, at the time of narration several centuries later, is kept on display in the 'Frankfurter Stadtmuseum'.⁴⁰² Klaiber's *Kartenspiel* was a novelty and a commodity. The focussed attention paid to the details of its material qualities,

³⁹⁸ *MGPS*, p. 307.

³⁹⁹ *MGPS*, p. 307.

⁴⁰⁰ *MGPS*, p. 307.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰² *MGPS*, p. 308.

which to the present day are preserved, presents a contrast to the ascetic principles governing the Glass Bead Game in its most mature form as ‘Inbegriff des Geistigen’.⁴⁰³ This *Kartenspiel* is markedly unlike its abstract successor, the Glass Bead Game, which ‘auch schon seit Jahrzehnten nicht mehr mit Glasperlen gespielt wurde’.⁴⁰⁴ The fact that the game is preserved in a ‘Stadtmuseum’ rather than at the centre of Castalian life is evidence of how the narrator’s contemporaries (several centuries later) perceived the *Kartenspiel* as representing “Volkstümlichkeit”.⁴⁰⁵ Its provinciality is a remnant of the petty self-importance of the bourgeois *Gebildeten* in contrast to a civilisation ‘zur Zeit seiner höchsten Blüte’.⁴⁰⁶ The card game, according to the retrospective point of view of the Castalian narrator, is a relic from a past. The Glass Bead Game in its Castalian form is believed to have reached the pinnacle of perfection, risen from its parochial beginnings. In the final version, there is no *Kartenspiel*, and the Glass Bead Game’s origins are shrouded in mystery. As we shall see in Chapter 3, the Game becomes so abstract in the novel that it is considered timeless by its players.

In Hesse’s first drafts of the *Einleitung* there is an ironic twist. Klaiber’s game becomes just as superficial as the games of bridge that it was meant to replace. The narrator describes how, despite Klaiber’s aspirations to create a culturally edifying game, the card game becomes a mere ‘Bildungskartenspielchen’,⁴⁰⁷ for ‘Abendbelustigung’ played in ‘bürgerlichen Salons’.⁴⁰⁸ It becomes a popular game to supply the demands of a middle class

⁴⁰³ *MGPS*, p. 131.

⁴⁰⁴ *MGPS*, p. 305.

⁴⁰⁵ *MGPS*, p. 309.

⁴⁰⁶ *MGPS*, p. 305.

⁴⁰⁷ *MGPS*, p. 310.

⁴⁰⁸ *MGPS*, p. 313.

market, not a *Bildung* that transforms its participants. The narrator describes how, ‘Eben diesem »feuilletonistischen« Zeitalter nun entsprach das Klaibersche Bildungskartenspielchen in hohem Maße.’⁴⁰⁹ Despite its pedagogical intention, ‘den »gebildeten« Schichten die Augen zu öffnen für die Schatzkammern der Vergangenheit’,⁴¹⁰ Klaiber’s game ultimately becomes a commodity in a middle-class market.

Klaiber’s game becomes popular as a way for its players to assimilate themselves into “civilised” circles. Klaiber’s wife was ‘bestrebt, in diesem mit Bildung gesättigten Kreise ebenbürtig zu erscheinen’.⁴¹¹ The ‘Bildungskartenspielchen’ enables the Klaiber family to create a comfortable atmosphere of cultured civility, and also as a way to reassure themselves and others of their social standing and sophistication. As the narrator progresses in his account, it becomes clear that Klaiber’s game is a metonym for the problem that *Bildung* has become more about learning to ‘play by the rules’, undertaken for no higher purpose other than maintaining the *appearance* of cultivation. As the card game became more popular and spreads throughout bourgeois society, it became a ‘Wahrzeichen’ that a person belonged to a certain class, for ‘Wer das Bildungsquartett spielte, gehörte zu einer Partei, zu den Gebildeten, den Altmodischen, den Trägern und Verteidigern der »Kultur«, der heiligen Tradition.’⁴¹² The Castalian narrator’s scepticism about the integrity of the *Kartenspiel* is evidenced in the use of quotation marks around ‘Kultur’. His stance

⁴⁰⁹ *MGPS*, p. 310.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹¹ *MGPS*, p. 306.

⁴¹² *MGPS*, p. 308.

towards players of the card game is underpinned by a sense of superiority, i.e. that the players of the past did not truly understand 'Kultur'.

Hesse uses supercilious language to make clear his narrator's lack of regard for the card game. The anonymous narrator describes it as no more than 'etwas Hübsches.'⁴¹³ 'Spiel' has a negative or frivolous association with it whenever it is associated with Klaiber's *Kartenspiel*, associated with the diminutive '-chen' as we saw above (the narrator never refers to a 'Glasperlenspielchen'). Reflecting on Klaiber's game, we might recall Heidegger's words from the Introduction, that *Bildung* had become the 'Besitz einer Klasse'.

Why build a process of historical evolution into the novel? We could speculate that Hesse's abstraction of the game - from cards, to glass beads, to a symbolic notation - represents this desire to achieve something 'Höheres und mehr Innerliches'. once the Game transcends into a spiritual dimension, 'zum sublimen Kult und Dienst'.⁴¹⁴ Card games have associations with parlour games and polite conversation. Perhaps there is something purer in the appearance of 'Glasperlen' that is absent from an illustrated deck of cards that appealed to Hesse. Eventually, however, all the material elements of play (both the cards and the beads) become defunct. The material aspects of the 'Allerwelts-Bildungs-Kartenspiel' are emphasised in the players' exchanges, during which their aim is to acquire a complete set: 'Bitte, haben Sie Schuberts Forellenquintett?' or 'Können Sie mir vielleicht den Palazzo Barberini von Bernini geben?'. The narrator scoffs at this 'Spielerei', reflecting on the 'halb lächerlich, halb rührend' origins of the Glass

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ *MGPS*, p. 313.

Bead Game.⁴¹⁵ From the narrator's perspective, the Glass Bead Game is a move towards a kind of play to be taken more seriously, an 'ernstliche Verfeinerung des Spieles',⁴¹⁶ and a move away from 'Spielerei'.

Taking *Bildung* more seriously: restoring the pedagogic value to *Kultur*

To improve upon the 'Spielerei' of Klaiber's game, numerous innovations are introduced during the course of the *Einleitung*, with the aim of transforming it into some of greater potential for *Bildung*. In this section, we will follow the narrator's account of the evolution of the Glass Bead Game from Klaiber's card game, examining each of the changes described, as well as the revisions Hesse implemented in subsequent drafts, to understand which elements of "games" he was most interested in using.

The narrator in the first draft of the *Einleitung* refers to the *Kartenspiel* as being 'seichtig',⁴¹⁷ and describes its transformation into the 'Glasperlenspiel' as 'ernstliche Verfeinerung'.⁴¹⁸ Few details are given about why the cards were replaced with beads, or similar practical changes to the game's mechanics. Instead, the narrator describes a change in attitude and behaviour in the *players*. Students who wanted to become players of the newly developed Glass Bead Game must tread an 'engen und steilen Weg'.⁴¹⁹ They had to undergo rigorous training through 'Mathematik' and 'aristotelisch-scholastischen Übungen, ihr Denkvermögen

⁴¹⁵ *MGPS*, p. 312.

⁴¹⁶ *MGPS*, p. 311.

⁴¹⁷ *MGPS*, p. 310.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁹ *MGPS*, p. 312.

reinigen und steigern.’ They must lead a strictly ascetic life, ‘auf all die Güter vollkommen verzichten lernen, welche vor ihnen für eine Reihe von Gelehrterengenerationen als die erstrebenswertesten: auf raschen und leichten Gelderwerb, auf Ruhm und Ehrungen in der Öffentlichkeit, [...] auf Behagen und Luxus im materiellen Leben.’⁴²⁰ Ascetic rigour and seriousness are introduced to overcome the materialist and frivolous nature of Klaiber’s card game.

The Castalian narrator views material wealth both as a cause and symptom for *geistige* corruption; it is the ‘»Dichter« mit den hohen Einkünften und hübschen Villen,’ the ‘Philosophen mit den hohen Buchauflagen und den hinreißenden Vorträgen in überfullten Sälen mit Blumengaben und Applaus’, all of these figures and their professions ‘hatten in der Welt Bankrott gemacht’.⁴²¹ Here, we might be reminded again of Wittgenstein and his outlook on what intellectual life should be. His hermit-like retreats from academic life in Cambridge to Norway and Ireland (along with numerous comments from *Vermischte Bemerkungen*) are evidence of his belief in the value of an ascetic lifestyle, in order to cultivate what Citron refers to as the “philosophical virtues” (such as courage, humility, honesty and self-knowledge). The interest in asceticism is most probably drawn Schopenhauer, whose writing was a significant influence on both Hesse and Wittgenstein (and who was in turn influenced by Eastern sources). Foucault’s version of ‘askesis’, which he describes as ‘an exercise of oneself in the activity of thought’,⁴²² is also another way of understanding Wittgenstein’s ‘work on oneself’. The Glass Bead Game players appear to represent a form of life that could be lived according to these

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

⁴²¹ Ibid.

⁴²² Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 2: The Use of Pleasure*, trans. by Robert Hurley, Reissue edition (New York: Vintage, 1990), p. 8.

virtues. Take at face value, this the history of a utopian vision being built, by a narrator living in that society a few centuries into the future.

The next major transformation of the Glass Bead Game is its ‘Spezialisierung’.⁴²³ The game is no longer one of the ‘Massenspiele’, but for a few knowledgeable specialists playing with one another on the subject of a specific topic, such as ‘Deutsche Kammermusik des 17. Jahrhunderts’.⁴²⁴ This specialisation of the *Glasperlenspiel* transcends the shallow dilettantism of *Bildung* epitomised in Klaiber’s card game. The Glass Bead Game is then taken on by mathematicians, under whom it takes on the characteristics of a ‘Wissenschaft’.⁴²⁵ The game is transformed from a pastime into a serious field of study - therefore, further away from what we could conventionally understand as a playful “game”.

The increased rigour through specialisation, and the concentration of the Game into groups of skilled individuals, means that its practice becomes necessarily minoritarian. Through ‘die Entstehung einer neuen geistigen Zucht von mönchischer Strenge’ the Castalians effectively become a cloistered culture.⁴²⁶ Combined with the ascetic lifestyle, the *Einleitung* leaves us with a minoritarian view of culture, in which a select educated elite forms, whose training and expertise lends itself to a more highly educated/cultivated life and the ability to teach new generations of players. *Bildung*, it appears, has been restored to its ideal form. Huizinga’s narrative of the decline of the ‘play-element’ in culture has been reversed. The players of the new Game effectively form a new social class, resembling what historian Fritz Ringer terms the German ‘Mandarins’ (in reference

⁴²³ MGPS, p. 311.

⁴²⁴ MGPS, p. 308.

⁴²⁵ MGPS, p. 311.

⁴²⁶ MGPS, p. 312.

to Confucian scholars). In *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933*, Ringer claims that so-called Mandarins were committed to a 'morally meaningful knowledge, knowledge which could create a spiritual nobility through an integral cultivation of the personality.'⁴²⁷ According to Ringer's account, this German 'academic community' dissipates around 1933, interestingly at the time of the conception of the 'Morgenlandfahrer' and the proto-Castalians with their Glass Bead Game. Far from being an idiosyncratic society that exists only in fiction, Hesse's Castalians and their predecessors are born out of a sea change in real cultural and intellectual life during 1930s, to meet the perceived need to defend its principles from demise.

With the third innovation in the Glass Bead Game, the introduction of 'Formel-Dialoge', the goal of playing to acquire cards (or beads) disappears. Instead, the game is for players to advance their studies:

[...] die Spieler bedienten einander, sie gegenseitig entwickelnd, mit den abstrakten Formeln, spielten einander Entwicklungsreihen und Möglichkeiten ihrer Wissenschaft vor, und niemand dachte mehr daran, ein Quartett abzulegen und Glasperlen zu gewinnen.⁴²⁸

Collaboration is encouraged over competition, to broaden the horizons of different branches of human knowledge. It is around this time that the Game 'verlor seinen ursprünglichen Charakter eines Spieles um des Gewinnens willen und einer leeren Bildungsparade'.⁴²⁹ The Game can no longer be thought of as a "game" in the ordinary sense of the word. The Glass Bead Game has become a way of life - or in Wittgensteinian terms, a shared form of life. The fact that the rules now govern the players' personal and intellectual development means that we see the Glass

⁴²⁷ Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 281.

⁴²⁸ *MGPS*, p. 311.

⁴²⁹ *MGPS*, p. 311.

Bead Game no so much as a game, but a language-game. The Formel-Dialoge seem to be the point at which a player community is formed - one which could be intended to bring together the diaspora of writers, intellectuals, artists, and academics scattered across Europe during the 1930s. Dialogue and collaboration with others means that culture can once again grow - in contrast to the cycle of demand and supply that was fed by Klaiber's *Kartenspiel*. Playing 'correctly' by the 'rules' is no longer sufficient; playing the Glass Bead Game properly entails a level of discipline, personal commitment and development in order for "true" *Bildung* to take place.

The point of these changes to the Game (asceticism, specialisation into an expert activity, and the dialogic turn) was for its players to re-introduce the transformative effect - and therefore the pedagogical value and self-cultivation - of *Bildung* on/to its 'players'. Its pedagogical value was lost when it is consumed as a commodity that meets a demand to *appear* cultured, rather than to be *cultivated*. What we have seen so far appears to be an utopian reversal of the narrative of cultural decline. Some questions remain, however: why would Hesse choose to reverse this narrative through a game? Wouldn't the presence of disciplined study, intellectual elites, and interdisciplinary dialogues alone be sufficient to restore cultural life to the ideal that Spengler and Huizinga believed had been lost? Why would Hesse write about this reversal being achieved through a game - especially when, the more the game develops into a form of authentic *Bildung*, the further away it gets from the usual understanding of the word "game"?

Taking *Bildung* too seriously: the use of irony in the frame narrative

To finish this study of the early drafts of *GPS*, I would like to argue that Hesse uses irony and deliberately chose a “game” to represent an ideal yet isolated academic form of life. Within a game, the ‘normal’ rules of reality do not necessarily apply - its rules create a fictional space, a game world. In order to completely preserve a way of life devoted to the principles of *Bildung*, it is necessary for Hesse’s fictional society to become secluded or exclusive. However, what happens when this class becomes too withdrawn into its game world? What is at stake if they become too protective of their language-game, if they take it (and themselves as players) “too seriously”?

We can begin answering this question if we draw a comparison between the fictional character Klaiber and Huizinga. Klaiber took issue with his wife playing bridge, and Huizinga has a similar distaste for the game:

Proficiency at bridge is a sterile excellence, sharpening the mental faculties very one-sidedly without enriching the soul in any way, fixing and consuming a quantity of intellectual energy that might have been better applied. The most we can say, I think, is that it might have been applied worse.⁴³⁰

In Huizinga’s view, play should be edifying and the widespread playing of bridge is symptomatic of a decline in culture. It is somewhat ironic that Huizinga is so caught up in his ideal conception of what play *should* be in its purest form that he takes a disparaging view of real games. This is of course identical to Klaiber’s motivation for inventing the ‘Bildungskartenspielchen’, evidencing Hesse’s astute characterisation of his *Kulturkreis* in the novel. There is something ridiculous in Huizinga’s pomposity and Klaiber’s censoring of his wife’s play. ‘True play’ becomes

⁴³⁰ J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture.*, 1951, p. 199 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2087716?origin=crossref>> [accessed 12 June 2019].

a short-hand for high-brow cultural values, and is divorced from reality because it scorns the ordinary understanding of play and games. Both Huizinga and Klaiber are victims of their own intellectual hubris, because they apparently fail to see the irony of their worldview.

Hesse eventually decided to remove Klaiber and his opinions on bridge from the final version of the *Einleitung*. However, the irony of taking a game too seriously remained in the final draft of the *Einleitung* and is even augmented. The narrator evidences the state of the mid-20th century cultural decline with the example of the proliferation of crossword puzzles. Speaking from the perspective of the future, the narrator describes how ‘Kreuzworträtsel’ allowed readers to apply their ‘Überfütterung mit Wissensstoff’.⁴³¹ These ‘Kinder-Rätselspielen’ are clearly an alien concept to the narrator and his Castalian readership, because he delivers a detailed description:

Es saßen damals Tausende und Tausende von Menschen, welche zum größeren Teil schwere Arbeit taten und ein schweres Leben lebten, in ihren Freistunden über Quadrate und Kreuze aus Buchstaben gebückt, deren Lücken sie nach gewissen Spielregeln ausfüllten.

The narrator takes an anthropological (if slightly incredulous) view of these games and draws a connection between the puzzles and the ‘schweres Leben’ lead by the people of the past. Crossword puzzles were ‘kleine Bildungsspiele’ which point to ‘einem tiefen Bedürfnis, die Augen zu schließen und sich vor ungelösten Problemen und angstvollen Untergangssahnungen in eine möglichst harmlose Scheinwelt zu flüchten.’⁴³² The mixture of fascination, disdain, and incredulity with which the narrator explains this ‘wunderbares Thema «Kreuzworträtsel»’⁴³³ parodies a

⁴³¹ *GPS*, p. 19.

⁴³² *GPS*, p. 20.

⁴³³ *GPS*, p. 19.

patronising cultural snobbishness and apocalyptic alarmism about the loss of “culture”. The Castalian narrator, focussing his attention on the ‘lächerlichen und verrückten Aspekt’⁴³⁴ of crossword-puzzle escapism, fails to see that he has exaggerated the cultural and historical significance of an innocent pastime. His judgement of a past age is therefore poorly evidenced and flawed.

The whole narrative framework also increases the effect of the dramatic irony of the ‘Kreuzwortratsel’ comment. As readers born in the 20th/21st centuries, we are familiar with crossword puzzles and do not necessarily attach much importance to them, and so we can smile to ourselves at the narrator’s misguided cultural criticism. The narration has also become more impersonal, shifting from the perspective of an ‘ich’ in *MLF* to a ‘wir’ in *GPS*. The initials H.H., which signal the autobiographical nature of *MLF*, are not used in *GPS* - instead, the narrator is entirely anonymous. The task of this new narrator is to provide a history of the Game, not from his personal perspective (as it was with H.H.’s account), but as a historical account. The narrator’s account in *GPS* is *biographical* - it tells the life story of Josef Knecht, also known as Magister Ludi and one of the greatest players and teachers of the Glass Bead Game. Compared to *MLF*, *GPS* has a reserved, academic tone (‘Wenn auch... übrigens auch schon... so müssen wir doch...’⁴³⁵). The effect of the authoritative ‘wir’ is that it appears to be a Castalian institution that is narrating the history of its Magister Ludi.⁴³⁶ The condescending attitude of the narrator to anything other than the purest form of *Bildung* is shared by an entire

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

⁴³⁵ *MGPS*, p. 305.

⁴³⁶ *MGPS*, p. 313.

institution that he represents, bringing us to the realisation that intellectual hubris, when scaled up, takes on the form of a culturally conservative ideology.

The change to a 'wir' narrator also emphasises the increasing insularity of the society the narrator is part of: 'Heute spielen es [das Glasperlenspiel], unter andächtigem Horchen der Eingeladenen, die paar Dutzend auserwählten Geister der Erde'.⁴³⁷ Only a select few are invited to witness and participate in the Glass Bead Game. The Game makes an excellent replacement for the metaphor of the Journey, as a *closed* circle of activity with its initiates and its own rules that operates within its own sphere, unlike the journey and its 'Heerlager'. The transition between *MLF* and *GPS* allows what Roberts describes as 'a probing reconsideration of some of the elitist and egocentric assumptions underpinning journeys of the kind undertaken by H.H. in *The Journey to the East*.'⁴³⁸

Conclusion

Hesse develops the Glass Bead Game and his Castalian characters as a way of representing a particular attitude or "player psychology" that pervaded his own *Kulturkreis*. *MLF* is evidence of Hesse's sympathy with the idea that *Bildung* and its values are in decline and must be protected. However, the novel also explores how the desire to conserve can translate into a conservative ideology of cultural superiority, that can undermine the principles of individual growth, interpersonal development and open mindedness developed through *Bildung*.

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

⁴³⁸ Roberts (2008), p. 265.

Through the drafts of the *Einleitung*, Hesse experiments with the premise of a society based on the principles (or “rules”) of a game, as a way of exploring how to ironically represent the ‘player psychology’ described above. ‘Game’ is an analogy that is well suited to this, as it is composed of rules that guide players’ behaviour. The rules scaffold interpersonal exchanges, but they can also be exclusive or restrictive (only those who are permitted to learn the rules can enter into the game; when scaled up, the Game becomes an artificial sphere of activity separate to everyday life as lived by the majority of the population). Hesse’s Glass Bead Game comes to represent a whole way of life or language-game, that appeals to other European artists, writers and intellectuals of the time because it imagined a way of living according to their in stark contrast to the commodification, politicisation and censorship of contemporary literature.

By choosing to represent this form of life as a *game*, however, Hesse draws attention to the artificiality and insularity of this utopian vision. The early drafts of the *Einleitung* portray the Glass Bead Game as the epitome of *Bildung* perfected over many centuries; however, subsequent revisions that Hesse makes to the *Einleitung* demonstrate that he is more concerned with facilitating better critical self-awareness (‘se juger sans complaisance’), than in appearing to criticise parts of society for their lack of *Bildung*. He realises from the outset the irony of taking a game too seriously, and hence of taking one’s own form of life within a *Kulturkreis* too seriously. The Castalian narrator lacks the necessary degree of humility (which Wittgenstein so adamantly supports) to see the flaws in their highly critical outlook. Hesse constructs a narrative framework that emotionally distances us from the Game and the society built around it, so that we can see this more clearly.

Building on the connection between language-games, *Bildung*, and institutions I would like to turn to *PU*, to investigate how his language-games are helpful tools to identify conventions and patterns of thinking, to develop a self-critical attitude in his readers. Finally, turning to Hesse's *GPS*, I will then consider how the novel presents the *absence* of this attitude within an institution, and therefore why it is important to cultivate self-awareness and intellectual humility within academic communities. Using *PU*, I would like to show how *GPS* can help us to understand what is lost from educational institutions when the communities practising within them become too absorbed in their language-games.

Chapter 3

The relationship between games and learning in *Das Glasperlenspiel* and *Philosophische Untersuchungen*

Introduction

The main questions which we will aim to answer in this chapter are: How are games represented in *PU* and *GPS*? And why are games so important in these works for contributing to our understanding of education, particularly within an institutional context?

I will begin by arguing that Wittgenstein establishes an important analogy between play and learning. “Sprachspiele” (language-games) are developed through a series of thought experiments as a way of describing the non-rigid “rules” of language use. However, Wittgenstein’s text is specifically addressed to an individual. Therefore, the pedagogical outcomes of reading *PU* are only intended to remain at a personal level. Hesse’s novel, set in a pedagogical province called Castalia with an academy of Glass Bead Game players at its head, brings Wittgenstein’s language-game analogy into an institutional context. Having begun the chapter with *PU*, we will be able to see how Hesse’s *Glass Bead Game* works as a language-game, that is to say a heuristic framing device that exposes the player psychology in institutions. To achieve this, Hesse picks up on certain semantic associations of “Spiel” that Wittgenstein apparently overlooks. While ordinariness and everydayness are central to the ‘Sprachspiele’, extraordinariness and fascination are central to the ‘Glasperlenspiel’.

In reading both *PU* and *GPS*, we will explore what clues they might have for achieving a balanced form of *Bildung*, whether in a personal or institutional context. But ‘play’ is also a powerful metaphor because it leads us to the question - what is the *purpose* of our learning? Play is purposeful, but not necessarily end-orientated (much like *Bildung*). To say that learning is ‘play’ may even undermine its perceived value. The value of the humanities is of course a longstanding debate now. But in terms of university funding, it is becoming an increasingly practical concern. To say that this education has a value ‘in itself’ is akin to the argument made in *Homo Ludens* examined in Chapter 2, i.e. that play is ‘mere play’ and that it ‘has no purpose’ - it occupies a rarefied vacuum. This is a dangerous way of thinking for the humanities and the institutions that teach it, because it leads scholars to believe they occupy a vacuum-space, a safe play-world. This culture creates an institution that becomes complacent and insular, withdrawing into itself. We will see this process unfolding in *GPS*, through the frame of language-games.

Linking play and pedagogy

Beginning first with *PU*, I will explain how play and learning are linked through Wittgenstein’s language games. In *PU*, Wittgenstein first uses the term ‘Sprachspiele’ in §7 to describe the interchanges between young children learning words and their teacher in school: ‘der Schüler spricht die Worte nach, die der Lehrer ihm vorsagt’.⁴³⁹ Wittgenstein connects this scenario with another in §2, where builder A calls out words to builder B to request materials to be brought to

⁴³⁹ *PU*, §7, p. 241.

him ('»Würfel«, »Säule«, »Platte«, »Balken«'⁴⁴⁰). In §7, Wittgenstein speculates 'daß der ganze Vorgang des Gebrauchs der Worte in (2) eines jener Spiele ist, mittels welcher Kinder ihre Muttersprache lernen. The repetitive nature of the 'Vorgänge des Benennens' and 'des Nachsprechens des vorgesagten Wortes' reinforce the words being learned in the pupil's memory. Wittgenstein likens this process of memorisation to the kind of word games and nursery rhymes that children recite: 'Denke an manchen Gebrauch, der von Worten in Reigenspielen gemacht wird.'⁴⁴¹ The use of the imperative to an informal 'du' is used by the author throughout *PU*, in an effort not just to describe the connection between games and language, but to encourage readers to actively consider it. Examples include formulations such as 'Denke dir', 'Nimm an'.⁴⁴² Wittgenstein clearly expects the invitation to join him in his thought experiments to be met with some scepticism, as he is constantly anticipating objections from the 'du' addressed by *PU*'s narrative 'ich': 'Willst du sagen... so frage dich, ob...'.⁴⁴³ The use of the informal 'du', and the fact that these objections are written into the various hypothetical scenarios that Wittgenstein invents, means that the whole text has a discursive, dialogic tone. The imperative to the second person is not only informal, it is a *personal* and *direct* appeal to participation in a thought-provoking conversation about what language is and how it is learned. Finally, the use of 'du' also suggests that the addressee is someone already familiar to the 'ich' - suggesting that Wittgenstein is not necessarily pitching this text at a general

⁴⁴⁰ *PU*, §2, p. 238.

⁴⁴¹ *PU*, §7, p. 241.

⁴⁴² *PU*, pp. 244-45.

⁴⁴³ *PU*, §18, p.245.

audience, but rather at those in intellectual circles who are already wrestling with philosophical questions related to language.

In the classroom scenario, language is acquired through play, and it is in this scenario that Wittgenstein first sets up the analogy between language and games: ‘Ich werde auch das Ganze: der Sprache und der Tätigkeiten, mit denen sie verwoben ist, das »Sprachspiel« nennen.’⁴⁴⁴ The fact that the first explicit mention of ‘Sprachspiel’ is in connection with learning, and particularly an activity which Wittgenstein had invested a great deal of time and effort into (even compiling his own spelling dictionary with his pupils⁴⁴⁵) is highly significant. It suggests that the choice of ‘game’ as an analogy was not merely coincidental - particularly as Wittgenstein uses the scenario in §7 as a way of setting up the term ‘Sprachspiel’ for the rest of the text.

For example, in §77, Wittgenstein introduces a hypothetical scenario: ‘denk dir, du solltest zu einem verschwommenen Bild ein ihm »entsprechendes« scharfes entwerfen.’ It is a difficult task: ‘Wenn aber im Original die Farben ohne die Spur einer Grenze ineinanderfließen, - wird es dann nicht eine hoffnungslos Aufgabe werden, ein dem verschwommenen entsprechendes scharfes Bild zu zeichnen?’ This situation is compared to thinkers who try to find sharper definitions in philosophy, ‘Und in dieser Lage befindet sich z.B. der, der in der Aesthetik oder Ethik nach Definitionen sucht, die unseren Begriffen entsprechen.’⁴⁴⁶ For those finding themselves in such a situation, Wittgenstein offers advice: For example:

⁴⁴⁴ *PU*, §7, p.241.

⁴⁴⁵ ‘Wittgenstein Source Facsimile Edition of “Wörterbuch Für Volksschulen” Materials’, 2019, Bergin: WAB <http://www.wittgensteinsource.org/box_view_url_shortener?u=nV> [accessed 3 October 2023].

⁴⁴⁶ *PU*, §77, p. 283.

Frage dich in dieser Schwierigkeit immer: Wie haben wir denn die Bedeutung dieses Wortes (»gut« z.B.) *gelernt*? An was für Beispielen; in welchen Sprachspielen?⁴⁴⁷

Through a fortuitous pun, Wittgenstein connects ‘Sprachspiele’ with the ‘Beispiele’ which can be used to learn the meaning of words. Words are learned through such activities or language-games, and the meaning of a word cannot be separated from those activities where we learn what it means through examples of its usage. The point is that children (and adults) can learn the meaning of words without this process being codified by a set of rules for its use; learning the contexts in which the word is used is equivalent to learning its meaning. ‘Die Bedeutung eines Wortes ist sein Gebrauch in der Sprache.’⁴⁴⁸ Once again, it is the ‘du’ (presumably the text’s readers) who is encouraged to actively undertake the exercise of asking themselves the question “How would I explain to someone else how this word is used?” instead of “What is the meaning or definition of this word?”

To further explain why ‘Spiele’ is an apt analogy for the activities and contexts within which we learn the words of our language, I would like to draw on Jerome Bruner’s *Child’s Talk*. Bruner writes about child language acquisition by drawing on Wittgenstein. According to Bruner, play creates a space where children can ‘explore without serious consequences’ by operating within ‘a limited area of combinatorial activity’.⁴⁴⁹ This is what I have previously referred to as a ‘self-contained safe space’.⁴⁵⁰ Within play, there is both freedom to develop but also constraint, providing structure to grow and assimilate within society and culture. The combination of freedom and constraint in play can help a child to learn

⁴⁴⁷ *PU*, §77, p. 283.

⁴⁴⁸ *PU*, §43, p. 262.

⁴⁴⁹ Jerome S. Bruner, *Child’s Talk: Learning to Use Language* (New York ; London: WWNorton, 1985), p. 46. *PU*, §19, p. 246.

⁴⁵⁰ Georgina Edwards, ‘Language Games in the Ivory Tower: Comparing the Philosophical Investigations with Hermann Hesse’s *The Glass Bead Game*’, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 53.4 (2019), pp. 669-87 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12389>>.

constructively within a microcosm of the society they will eventually assimilate to. For Bruner therefore, ‘entry into language is an entry into discourse’, echoing Wittgenstein’s statement that ‘eine Sprache vorstellen heißt, sich eine Lebensform vorstellen.’⁴⁵¹ Bruner’s extension of Wittgenstein’s sketches of child language acquisition helps us see how language-games can be thought of as a way of describing the conventions or ‘rules’ that guide our behaviour within our cultures and societies, therefore the initiation into a language’s rules also involves an initiation into a culture (just as learning the rules of a game can open up a world of play).⁴⁵²

If we treat *PU* as a philosophical text, it might be tempting to say that *Sprachspiele* is the *concept* which Wittgenstein has contributed to this discussion, rather than as a *metaphor* or *analogy*. However, Wittgenstein explicitly refers to what he is doing as drawing an analogy: ‘Steckt uns da nicht die Analogie der Sprache mit dem Spiel ein Licht auf?’⁴⁵³ Wittgenstein asks us to imagine ourselves asking philosophical questions of games in the same way we would of language. For instance, Wittgenstein states, ‘Die Frage »Was ist eigentlich ein Wort?« ist analog der »Was ist eine Schachfigur?«’.⁴⁵⁴ Wittgenstein emphasises the importance of not viewing ‘Sprachspiele’ as a specialised form of philosophical inquiry or intervention to improve our use of language. As Wittgenstein writes in §130, ‘Unsere klaren und einfachen Sprachspiele sind nicht Vorstudien zu einer künftigen Reglementierung der Sprache, - gleichsam erste Annäherungen’. Instead, ‘Vielmehr stehen die Sprachspiele da als *Vergleichsobjekte*, die durch Ähnlichkeit und Unähnlichkeit ein

⁴⁵¹ Bruner, p. 38.

⁴⁵² Bruner, p. 55.

⁴⁵³ *PU*, §83, p. 287.

⁴⁵⁴ *PU*, §108, p. 298.

Licht in die Verhältnisse unsrer Sprache werfen sollen.’⁴⁵⁵ Language games should therefore not be regarded as the building blocks of an ideal language; instead, they are useful ways of drawing comparisons.

However, the fact that Wittgenstein insists on using ‘Spiel’ as an analogy in a series of aphorisms/scenarios, rather than setting out ‘Sprachspiele’ as a new philosophical concept at the centre of a treatise, means that *PU* is a text without a clear direction. Wittgenstein introduces the term *Sprachspiele* in quite a vague way, and thereafter peppering the term in sentences. He imagines the reader’s complaints at about 39 pages in at §65,

Hier stoßen wir auf die große Frage, die hinter allen diesen Betrachtungen steht. - Denn man könnte mir einwenden: »Du machst dir’s leicht! Du redest von allen möglichen Sprachspielen, hast aber nirgends gesagt, was denn das Wesentliche des Sprachspiels, und also der Sprache, ist. Was allen diesen Vorgängen gemeinsam ist und sie zur Sprache, oder zu Teilen der Sprache macht.⁴⁵⁶

The reader’s expectations have risen to the fore - that the philosophical work should lead them to a conclusion to what is ‘gemeinsam’ to all of Wittgenstein’s examples, a general theory or statement of what language *is*. Wittgenstein’s apparently fragmented, anecdotal style frustrates this expectation or ‘craving’. He writes in short paragraphs, jumping from one example to another, asking us to picture analogies or imagine scenarios, without telling us *why* or *what all these exercises have in common*. It is the same frustration a pupil might have of a teacher who sets tasks without stating the learning objectives. But must we always have an objective in order to learn?

⁴⁵⁵ *PU*, §130, p.304.

⁴⁵⁶ *PU*, §65, p. 276.

Wittgenstein admits that the reader is right, 'das ist wahr',⁴⁵⁷ he has not stated what a *Sprachspiel* definitively is or how this relates to language more generally, nor what is behind all his examples and *Sprachspiele*, the answer to the 'große Frage'. Wittgenstein proposes that, 'statt etwas anzugeben, was allem, was wir Sprache nennen, gemeinsam ist, sage ich, es ist diesen Erscheinungen garnicht Eines gemeinsam, weswegen wir für alle das gleiche Wort verwenden, - sondern sie sind miteinander in vielen verschiedenen Weisen *verwandt*. Und dieser Verwandtschaft wegen nennen wir sie alle »Sprachen«.'⁴⁵⁸ Here we see emerging Wittgenstein's idea of a pluralistic way of defining a concept: '*Familienähnlichkeiten*', his adaptation of Spengler that arose in the 1930s. The need to correct the reactionary falling-back by *Kulturkritiker* to a reassuring *Urbild* of *Kultur* becomes here a conversation about our craving for generality, the apparent need for exhaustive definitions and complete theories.

Wittgenstein tries to explain in §66 why he prefers to pluralistic definitions, rather than a single, universal definition of 'Spiel':

Betrachte z.B. einmal die Vorgänge, die wir »Spiele« nennen. Ich meine Brettspiele, Kartenspiele, Ballspiel, Kampfspiele, usw. Was ist allen diesen gemeinsam? - Sag nicht: »Es *muß* ihnen etwas gemeinsam sein, sonst hießen sie nicht »Spiele« - sondern *schau*, ob ihnen allen etwas gemeinsam ist. [...] Sind sie alle »*unterhaltend*«? Vergleiche Schach mit dem Mühlfahren. Oder gibt es überall ein Gewinnen und Verlieren, oder eine Konkurrenz der Spielenden? Denk an die Patienen. In den Ballspielen gibt es Gewinnen und Verlieren; aber wenn ein Kind den Ball an die Wand wirft und wieder auffängt, so ist dieser Zug verschwunden.[...] Und so können wir durch die vielen, vielen anderen Gruppen von Spielen gehen. Ähnlichkeiten auftauchen und verschwinden sehen.

Und das Ergebnis dieser Betrachtung lautet nun: Wir sehen ein kompliziertes Netz von Ähnlichkeiten, die einander übergreifen und kreuzen.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁷ *PU*, §65, p. 277.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁹ *PU*, §66, p.277.

As readers, we're being invited by the questioning voice of this passage to test the adequacy of a definition based on a generalisation, a Platonic abstraction from multiple manifestations. Is it an adequate way of defining something, or even a realistic expectation? Every time a criterium is proposed, an example can be found that is the exception to the rule. The assumption Wittgenstein is trying to debunk here is that we need a Platonic definition, that is to say an abstraction drawn from all instances of the concept in question (here, games). However, Wittgenstein shows that for every criterion of a definition there is always an exception. We are left with similarities, connections, resemblances - in the plural, but no one general one. We could imagine undergoing a similar process for the question, "What is a language?" We might say that all languages are spoken and/or written; but what about sign language? We might say that all languages have a grammar and a lexicon; but do gesture and body-language not count as language at all under this definition?

Wittgenstein deconstructs the idea of a singular, universal definition of Language with a capital 'L'. Posing the question, 'Was heißt es: Wissen, was ein Spiel ist?'⁴⁶⁰ Wittgenstein attempts to answer it with another: 'Wie würden wir denn jemandem erklären, was ein Spiel ist? Ich glaube, wir werden ihm *Spiele* beschreiben, und wir könnten der Beschreibung hinzufügen: »das, und Ähnliches, nennt man ›Spiele‹.«.⁴⁶¹ When we explain what a "game" is to someone, we tend to list examples collected from our own personal experience. Thus, it becomes clear that Wittgenstein is *not* saying that games (and by extension, language) are

⁴⁶⁰ *PU*, §74, p.282.

⁴⁶¹ *PU*, §69, p.279.

indefinable. Not being able to give an explicit, exhaustive definition in answer to the question is 'nicht Unwissenheit':⁴⁶²

Können wir etwa nur dem Andern nicht genau sagen, was ein Spiel ist? - Aber das ist nicht Unwissenheit. Wir kennen die Grenzen nicht, weil keine gezogen sind. Wie gesagt, wir können - für einen besonderen Zweck - eine Grenze ziehen. Machen wir dadurch den Begriff erst brauchbar? Durchaus nicht! Es sei denn, für diesen besonderen Zweck. So wenig, wie das Längenmaß ›1 Schritt‹ brauchbar macht, der die Definition gab: 1 Schritt = 75 cm.⁴⁶³

If someone were to ask us to take a step forward, would we be unable to do so, until we knew the precise measurement of a step? The answer is of course, no. Here, Wittgenstein introduces yet another scenario or analogy to enable us to question what we mean by precise definitions. We often proceed almost unconsciously without any need of precise philosophical definitions - and this goes not only for everyday activities, such as inviting someone to play a game, but also for 'larger' concepts like 'language'. Precise definitions can be useful - 'für einen besonderen Zweck' - so for example measuring a precise length is much more important when constructing a building than when planting potatoes in a row. Precise definitions have a time and a place - but they are not always needed in all contexts. So for example, if I tell you I've taken up learning a language recently, you do not then ask, 'But what *precisely* is a language?' (But you might ask me, 'Which language?')

So what is the point of re-framing of the way in which we ask and answer philosophical questions? 'Die eigentliche Entdeckung', Wittgenstein writes, 'ist die, die mich fähig macht, das Philosophieren abubrechen, wenn ich will. Die die Philosophie zur Ruhe bringt, so daß sie nicht mehr von Fragen gepeitscht wird, die

⁴⁶² Ibid.

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

sie selbst in Frage stellen.’⁴⁶⁴ Although ‘zur Ruhe bringen’ may echo Wittgenstein’s Tractarian statement of having solved all philosophical questions through the single problem of language,⁴⁶⁵ in *PU* Wittgenstein intends the ending of philosophy to be a personal (perhaps even temporary) resolution, rather than the dissolution of all philosophical problems and therefore all philosophical work. Wittgenstein writes always in the plural: ‘Es werden Probleme gelöst (Schwierigkeiten beseitigt), nicht *ein* Problem. Es gibt nicht *eine* Methode der Philosophie, wohl aber gibt es Methoden, gleichsam verschiedene Therapien.’⁴⁶⁶ Even the apparent solution to philosophical problems is not posited as a single cure, but rather as multiple ‘Therapien’. Bearing in mind Wittgenstein’s references in *PU* to the flaws of the *Tractatus* (for example in §23, §97 and §114), we can assume that the above statement is aimed as much at himself as at his readers. What Wittgenstein proposes is a therapeutic learning curve that he himself has taken, which will bring about a relieving of the craving for generality, so that we are no longer ‘gepeitscht’ by questions.

What is wrong with these questions that plague us? The language that Wittgenstein uses to describe philosophical problems suggests that they are in fact *not* philosophical problems in a real sense. He uses the words ‘Mißverständnisse’ in §91, ‘Aberglaube (nicht Irrtum!)’ in §110, and ‘Beunruhigungen’ in §111. Philosophical problems are not ‘real’ problems in the philosophical sense, but have a psychological root and can therefore not be resolved through philosophical means. That is why Wittgenstein is quick to point out that such superstitions are not mistakes. Being misguided does not render these problems frivolous,

⁴⁶⁴ *PU*, §133, p. 305.

⁴⁶⁵ ‘Ich bin also der Meinung, die Probleme im Wesentlichen entgültig gelöst zu haben.’ *TLP*, p. 10.

⁴⁶⁶ *PU*, §133, p. 305.

superficial, or easily discarded: 'Die Probleme, die durch ein Mißdeuten unserer Sprachformen entstehen, haben den Charakter der *Tiefe*. Es sind tiefe Beunruhigungen; sie wurzeln so tief in uns wie die Formen unserer Sprache, und ihre Bedeutung ist so groß wie die Wichtigkeit unserer Sprache.'⁴⁶⁷ Acknowledging the difficulty of rooting out these feelings is in itself an empathetic, therapeutic approach.

These problems have their roots in a mismatch between our expectations of language, the thought that »Die Sprache (oder das Denken) ist etwas Einzigartiges«⁴⁶⁸. 'Wenn wir glauben, jene Ordnung, das Ideal, in der wirklichen Sprache finden zu müssen, werden wir nun mit dem unzufrieden, was man nun im gewöhnlichen Leben »Satz«, »Wort«, »Zeichen« nennt.'⁴⁶⁹ As philosophers (or even academics more generally, I might suggest, when we come to Hesse), we might tend to question what a word is or what a word means outside of its everyday context. 'Wenn die Philosophen ein Wort gebrauchen - »Wissen«, »Sein«, »Gegenstand«, »Ich«, »Satz«, »Name« - und *das Wesen* des Dings zu erfassen trachten, muß man sich immer fragen: Wird denn dieses Wort in der Sprache, in der es seine Heimat hat, je tatsächlich so gebraucht?'⁴⁷⁰ The misguided questioning after the '*Wesen*' leads us to become dissatisfied with the word, whereas otherwise it serves its function perfectly well. Through Wittgenstein's numerous questions and analogies, we are prompted to see that we might be the source of our philosophical problems in expecting an ideal. Our task in *PU* is to *look*, to observe what we already understand and know in an ordinary context. The

⁴⁶⁷ *PU*, §111, p. 299.

⁴⁶⁸ *PU*, §110, p. 299.

⁴⁶⁹ *PU*, §105, p. 297.

⁴⁷⁰ *PU*, §116, p.300.

therapeutic method could be summarised in the following sentence: '*Wir* führen die Wörter von ihrer metaphysischen, wieder auf ihre alltägliche Verwendung zurück.'⁴⁷¹ 'Wir' in the text is in italics to emphasise the distinction between the narrative voice and the 'Philosophen' who take words out of their everyday meaning.

But what is at stake here if the therapy is not undertaken, apart from our own freedom from a Faustian dissatisfaction with words as they are? So what if we (or a small number of philosophers) decide to devote ourselves to finding a sharp, definitive logical representation what precisely what language is? Connecting back to what we said about the continuity between Wittgenstein's adaptation of Spengler's *Kulturkritik* and the development of *Familienähnlichkeiten*, we might find a clue. The passage below shows the clearest overlap with the comments in VB on Spengler. Wittgenstein explains that the 'Sprachspiele' are not being used as 'Vorstudien zu einer künftigen Reglementierung der Sprache',

Vielmehr stehen die Sprachspiele da als *Vergleichsobjekte*, die durch Ähnlichkeit und Unähnlichkeit ein Licht in die Verhältnisse unsrer Sprache werfen sollen.

131. Nur so nämlich können wir der Ungerechtigkeit, oder Leere unserer Behauptungen entgehen, indem wir das Vorbild als das, was es ist, als Vergleichsobjekt - sozusagen als Maßstab hinstellen; und nicht als Vorurteil, dem die Wirklichkeit entsprechen *müsse*. (Der Dogmatismus, in den wir beim Philosophieren so leicht verfallen.)⁴⁷²

Two things are of note here: first, Spengler is no longer mentioned. Instead, it is dogmatism that is presented as something to which 'wir' - including the narrative voice, its interlocutors and the readers - can fall victim. Wittgenstein has carried through the awareness of his *Kulturkreis* into *PU*, by redressing this passage as

⁴⁷¹ *PU*, §116, p. 300.

⁴⁷² *PU*, §130-§131, p. 304.

reappraisal of ourselves, rather than someone else. The second important thing to note here is that dogmatism is referred to as an ‘Ungerechtigkeit’. Wittgenstein appears to imply that it is also ethically wrong. But in what way is it ethically ‘wrong’? Wittgenstein does not say. *GPS* may help us to elaborate on why dogmatism - and over-confidence in one’s understanding of how a discipline should be taught and studied - can be ‘ungegrecht’. We might say that *PU* performs an ethical function insofar as it works against hubris - against the idea that one can have a superior understanding of the ‘Wesen’ of something.

Other than the reference to ‘Ungerechtigkeit’, there is little evidence that Wittgenstein expects anything more than a therapeutic effect at an individual level. For instance, most of the consequences of a dogmatic approach to philosophy seem personal:

Ein philosophisches Problem hat die Form: »Ich kenne mich nicht aus.«⁴⁷³

Das Ideal, in unsern Gedanken, sitzt unverrückbar fest. [...] Die Idee sitzt gleichsam als Brille auf unsrer Nase, und was wir ansehen, sehen wir durch sie.⁴⁷⁴

Die Ergebnisse der Philosophie sind die Entdeckung irgendeines schlichten Unsinn und Beulen, die sich der Verstand beim Anrennen an die Grenze der Sprache geholt hat. Sie, die Beulen, lassen uns den Wert jener Entdeckung erkennen.⁴⁷⁵

By talking about the ‘Form’ of a problem or the ‘Ergebnisse’ of philosophy, Wittgenstein enters into our expectations, but disarms them by casting them in the light of ‘non-philosophical’ problems - not being aware of glasses on my nose, not being able to find my way around. These problems are inherently personal because they are expressed in the first person (‘Ich kenne mich...’) and are connected to

⁴⁷³ *PU*, §123, p. 302.

⁴⁷⁴ *PU*, §103, p. 296.

⁴⁷⁵ *PU*, §119, p. 301.

our person (the nose, bruises, etc.). The existential import has been taken out of these problems that had once seemed so important.

Taking care not to cause ourselves further harm ('Beulen') would certainly provide a therapeutic solution - does *PU* serve a pedagogical, ethical function in a sense that goes beyond the personal relief it strives to bring about for its readers? In the above examples, the only person seeming to be disadvantaged is the philosopher themselves, the wearer of the glasses, the recipient of the bruises. It is hard to connect these consequences to something like how people are taught within educational institutions, or the practice of philosophy within one. The very idea of therapy is necessarily personal; although people undergoing therapy could be said to "learn" something about themselves, it is a non-judgemental kind of teaching and is not as programmatic as education, which *can* serve a moral function by bringing about a transformation in our way of seeing ourselves, others and our environment.

Lehren without *Lehre* - Wittgenstein's anti-dogmatism

Wittgenstein remains fundamentally quiet on the benefits of his therapeutic method of relieving the craving for generality (indeed, he doesn't even refer to what he is doing explicitly as a "method"). Why does Wittgenstein refrain from taking the step from a therapeutic transformation of the self to a form of *Bildung*? Why is he sceptical about the idea of expanding his ideas to an institutionalised level? (i.e. he does not want to found a school - in the sense of a school of thought). A close reader of the *Untersuchungen* will not be surprised when they read Wittgenstein's private remarks about teaching, his methods of teaching in Austrian schools, his rationale behind the dictionary he compiled for school

children, or his lecturing methods. None of these will come as a surprise because Wittgenstein's principles are latently there in the text (as I hope will become clearer and clearer throughout the course of this chapter). However, Wittgenstein remains quiet on the topic of pedagogy, as he presents no explicit programme for good teaching, nor does he discuss the application of his principles in an institutional setting (that is to say, a setting larger than the interaction between individuals). Wittgenstein's silence on the topic is not a flaw; it is a deliberate withdrawal from dogma and therefore avoidance of hypocrisy. The awareness that Wittgenstein has carried over from his first draft of the preface to *Philosophische Bemerkungen* in the 1930s, namely that he is addressing his own *Kulturkreis*, means that he is wary of making any grand statements about the application beyond individual readers. The references to *Kulturkreis* have perhaps been taken out to avoid sounding Spenglerian, as if he is concerned with an exclusive, privileged readership. Wittgenstein's references to his contemporaries (Russell in §46 and §79, and Ramsey in §81), along with his apparent reluctance to release his remarks for publication ('Ich übergebe sie mit zweifelhaften Gefühlen der Öffentlichkeit'⁴⁷⁶) suggest that Wittgenstein doubted he would have a wider readership beyond a limited circle of people working within the field of philosophy.

Apart from humility, it could also be that Wittgenstein remains quiet about pedagogical theories because he does not want to do this thinking for his readers: 'Ich möchte nicht mit meiner Schrift Andern das Denken ersparen. Sondern, wenn es möglich wäre, jemand zu eigenen Gedanken anregen.'⁴⁷⁷ This is related to what

⁴⁷⁶ PU, p. 232.

⁴⁷⁷ PU, p. 233.

Oskari Kuusela describes as Wittgenstein's 'anti-dogmatism'.⁴⁷⁸ We can see the tension between wanting to provoke thoughts in others (teaching) and wanting to avoid placing thoughts in others (indoctrination), in the different ways in which the German word 'Lehre' can be translated. 'Lehre' can be translated into English as 'teaching', or 'doctrine'. For instance, in *VB* Wittgenstein contemplates whether teaching people that there such a thing as hell (i.e. the possibility of eternal punishment in the afterlife) would be the best form of ethical training. Compare the German and English versions below:

Diese Lehre könnte keine ethische Erziehung sein. Und wen man ethisch erziehen & dennoch so lehren wollte, dem müßte man die Lehre, *nach* der ethischen Erziehung, als eine Art unbegreiflichen Geheimnisses darstellen.

Teaching this could not be an ethical training. And if you wanted to train anyone ethically & yet teach him like this, you would have to teach the doctrine *after* the ethical training, and represent it as a sort of incomprehensible mystery.⁴⁷⁹

Wittgenstein does not support a religious doctrine that relies on fear to 'teach' people to lead an ethical life, or a doctrine which claims God determines from birth who goes to heaven or hell after life. We can see that 'Lehre' is translated as both 'teaching' and 'doctrine' (we will discuss the English translation of 'Lehre' in *GPS* as 'doctrine' later in the chapter). The translator has deliberately made use of both possible translations of the word 'Lehre', perhaps because they believed that Wittgenstein himself wanted to make the point that from seeking a teacher, or teaching, it is a slippery slope to dogma and doctrine. It is also important to see that Wittgenstein is not anti-religion - but he may well be against "*doctrines*",

⁴⁷⁸ See Oskari Kuusela, *The Struggle against Dogmatism: Wittgenstein and the Concept of Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008)..

⁴⁷⁹ *VB*, pp. 91-92.

which might codify ethics rather than encourage a form of 'Erziehung' which takes place as we make moral decisions in our day-to-day lives.

How is it that we slide down the slippery slope from teaching to doctrine? We are led to doctrine by our craving for generality, for a complete set of rules (or even a single rule) that will explain everything. For Wittgenstein, this craving took the form of the following question: 'Das große Problem, um welches alles dreht, was ich schreibe, ist: Ist, a priori, eine Ordnung in der Welt, und wenn ja, worin besteht sie?'⁴⁸⁰ Monk describes how 'Almost against his will, he was forced to the conclusion that there was such an order'.⁴⁸¹ Reflecting on this craving later in life in *PU*, Wittgenstein characterises this fascination as being like the same fascination we have with 'Kristall'.

'Kristall', as a way of describing our fascination with order, is first used by Wittgenstein in *VB*:

Der Mathematiker (Pascal) der die Schönheit eines Theorems der Zahlentheorie bewundert; er bewundert gleichsam eine Naturschönheit. Es ist wunderbar, sagt er, welche herrliche Eigenschaften die Zahlen haben. Es ist als bewunderte er die Gesetzmäßigkeit eines Kristalls.⁴⁸²

In the idea of a crystal is captured the idea of purity and form, beauty and structure, perfection in 'Gesetzmäßigkeit'. Wittgenstein does not necessarily pass judgement on the mathematician here in the remark from 1942, but he characterises precisely the Faustian figure who becomes entrapped by a fascination. 'Kristall' appears again and again as a metaphor for fascination with 'Ordnung' in *PU*:

⁴⁸⁰ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tagebücher 1914-1918*, Werkausgabe, Band 1, 22. Auflage (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006), p. 145. (1. 6. 15.)

⁴⁸¹ Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein*, p. 129.

⁴⁸² *VB*, p. 47.

Das Denken ist mit einem Nimbus umgeben. - Sein Wesen, die Logik, stellt eine Ordnung dar, und zwar die Ordnung a priori der Welt, d. i. die Ordnung der *Möglichkeiten*, die Welt und Denken gemeinsam sein muß. Diese Ordnung aber, scheint es, muß *höchst einfach* sein. [...] Sie muß vielmehr vom reinsten Kristall sein. Dieser Kristall aber erscheint nicht als eine Abstraktion; sondern als etwas Konkretes, ja als das Konkreteste, gleichsam *Härteste*. (*Log. Phil. Abh.* No. 5.5563)⁴⁸³

Wittgenstein quotes the *Tractatus* here, as a self-diagnosis of his own fascination with 'Kristallreinheit'. In contrast to the passage critiquing Spengler in *VB*, and the passage above with Pascal, Wittgenstein has now made himself (the author of 'Log. Phil. Abh.') the object of critique. The ghost of Heidegger the Faustian philosopher looms in the word 'konkret'. This is a coincidental similarity with a sentence from *Sein und Zeit*. Heidegger urges his readers to consider when the *Seinsfrage* ('die Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein') is the result of 'einer freischwebenden Spekulation über allgemeinste Allgemeinheiten', or whether it is in '*die prinzipiellste und konkreteste Frage*' (Heidegger's emphasis).⁴⁸⁴ As we will see later in this chapter, Hesse's Castalians are a collectivisation of this fascination; in *PU*, Wittgenstein reserves his critical examination for himself.

Why 'Kristall', why something hard, pure and concrete? It is important for the admirers of logic that it is not seen as an abstraction, but the most concrete thing possible - and this relates to the mathematician's admiration of a number theorem as if it were a naturally occurring geological phenomenon. Both believe that they have discovered some *real*, as if it were hidden from view. 'Die stengen und klaren Regeln des logischen Satzbaues erscheinen uns als etwas im Hintergrund, - im Medium des Verstehens versteckt.'⁴⁸⁵ An abstraction is a pulling

⁴⁸³ *PU*, §97, p. 294. The corresponding passage from the *Tractatus* referenced above is: '(Unsere Problem sind nicht abstract, sondern vielliecht die konkretsten, die es gibt.)'. *TLP*, p. 66.

⁴⁸⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006), p. 9.

⁴⁸⁵ *PU*, §102, p. 296.

away from reality, whereas they desire to reach the ultimate ‘truth’ of reality, the ‘Ordnung a priori der Welt’.

The admiration of *Kristall* is not specific to mathematicians, but is something Wittgenstein has discovered in himself. He is now consciously trying to move away from his *Tracterian* standpoint, that if ordinary language makes sense, then it must be structured in a completely logical, ordered way. The fact that Wittgenstein has seen this in *himself* is important; it means that the narrative voice of *PU* is not teaching from an authoritative, morally superior point of view, but from one of self-awareness and continuing self-observation and reflection. It is as if Wittgenstein is fulfilling his own peculiar version of *Bildung* which we discussed in Chapter 1, ‘Arbeit an einem Selbst.’ It is important that Wittgenstein does not consider himself superior, so that he does not simply become a dispensator of teaching/doctrine; sometimes, real change can only come about in oneself when you have really been motivated to look at yourself. This is a matter of experience, and cannot simply be taught.

The Tracterian point of view is that ‘Ordnung’ can be found everywhere, if only we can see the world aright. Wittgenstein paraphrases this point of view in §98 ‘Wo Sinn ist, muß vollkommene Ordnung sein. - Also muß die vollkommene Ordnung auch im vagsten Satze stecken.’⁴⁸⁶ Wittgenstein connects the idea with this obsession with the omnipresence of order with a fixation on rules as what is definitive of play. He imagines an exchange on this topic with his interlocutor:

»Es ist doch kein Spiel, wenn es eine Vagheit in den Regeln gibt.« Aber *ist* es dann kein Spiel? - »Ja, vielleicht wirst du es Spiel nennen, aber es ist doch jedenfalls kein vollkommenes Spiel.« D.h.: es ist doch dann verunreinigt, und ich interessiere mich nun für dasjenige, was hier verunreinigt wurde. - Aber ich will sagen: Wir

⁴⁸⁶ *PU*, §98, p. 295.

mißverstehen die Rolle, die das Ideal in unserer Ausdrucksweise spielt. D.h.: auch wir würden es ein Spiel nennen, nur sind wir vom Ideal geblendet und sehen daher nicht deutlich die wirkliche Anwendung des Wortes »Spiel«. ⁴⁸⁷

The intolerance for vagueness in the rules of a game is similar to an intolerance for vagueness in language, and a fixation on logic as a superior, ideal (crystalline) form of expression. Those who feel the need for exact, explicit definitions with an exhaustive list of criteria are those who would think that rules (rather than, for instance, pleasure) is the most important feature of games. They base their assumptions on what a game *is* on a Platonic idea of a game, mistaking their *Urbild* or *Ideal* for anything more than a prototype that does not necessarily measure up to all real manifestations of the concept. We falsely believe, ‘das Ideal ›müsse‹ sich in der Realität finden.’⁴⁸⁸ We misunderstand that an ideal does not dictate the real; and we are blinded by our fascination of the beauty of the crystal. And this is the point that we begin to lose touch with our ordinary, everyday lives in an unhealthy, Faustian-Heideggerian way - ‘Wenn wir glauben, jene Ordnung, das Ideal, in der wirklichen Sprache finden zu müssen, werden wir nun mit dem unzufrieden, was man im gewöhnlichen Leben »Satz«, Wort, Zeichen nennt.’⁴⁸⁹ We are mistaken in believing that the ‘Kristallreinheit’ of logic, rules of order is a natural feature to be discovered; in fact, we project this expectation onto what we see. ‘Je genauer wir die tatsächliche Sprache betrachten, desto stärker wird der Widerstreit zwischen ihr und unsrer Forderung. (Die Kristallreinheit der Logik hatte sich mir ja nicht *ergeben*; sondern sie war eine Forderung.)’⁴⁹⁰ ‘Forderung’

⁴⁸⁷ *PU*, §100, pp. 295-96.

⁴⁸⁸ *PU*, §101, p. 296.

⁴⁸⁹ *PU*, §105, p. 297.

⁴⁹⁰ *PU*, §107, p. 297.

suggests that the ‘Kristallreinheit’ is not merely an illusion, but a result of a subconscious need, urge or desire on our part.

The challenge we face, then, is to work against ourselves. The main challenge that prevents us from doing this is what Wittgenstein calls ‘Das *Vorurteil* der Kristallreinheit’. What can be done about it? Seeing our philosophical investigations as a game could be a way of changing our perspective, or removing the glasses from our face:

Das *Vorurteil* der Kristallreinheit kann nur so beseitigt werden, daß wir unsere ganze Betrachtung drehen. [...] Wir reden von dem räumlichen und zeitlichen Phänomen der Sprache; [...] Aber wir reden von ihr so, wie von den Figuren des Schachspiels, indem wir Spielregeln für sie angeben, nicht ihre physikalischen Eigenschaften beschreiben.⁴⁹¹

Describing the ‘physikalischen Eigenschaften’, what it is like as a natural phenomenon, would not help to answer our philosophical problems such as “What is language?” or “What is a word?”. But if we were to think of a word as a chess piece - how would we describe it? If I were to describe a King chess piece to someone, I would not describe its physical qualities - that it is carved in a particular shape, out of wood, for instance. The material or even shape of a King is somewhat arbitrary to its use in the game. The King might be glass, wood, metal, stone or plastic. It might be the figure of a man, it might be a crown perched on a cylindrical shaped figure, or something more abstract (look up a Bauhaus design for a chess set, for example). If someone were to ask me what the King is, an answer ‘»Das ist der Schachkönig«’ and pointing to the figure in question might be the beginning of an answer, but not a useable description of how the King is used in the Game (‘so erklärt man ihm dadurch nicht den Gebrauch dieser Figur’). Instead, an

⁴⁹¹ *PU*, §108, P. 298.

explanation might go something like, ‘»Das ist der König. Er kann so und so ziehen. etc. etc.«’.⁴⁹² The physical features of the King piece are mostly irrelevant; *how it is used* is much more important to the meaning of a chess piece. This is why Wittgenstein encourages us to see philosophical conversations about language as a game; not because they were ‘only’ a game and entirely ‘made-up’; but because the *context of usage* is the most significant aspect of this conversation, not any reference to some ‘deeper’ or ‘hidden’ reality.

What does Wittgenstein mean when he refers to ‘Regeln’ when he writes about games? Anticipating this question from his readers, Wittgenstein writes in §54 ‘Denken wir doch daran, in was für Fällen wir sagen, ein Spiel werde nach einer bestimmten Regel gespielt!’ He considers everyday situations when we might use ‘Regel’:

Die Regel kann ein Behelf des Unterrichts im Spiel sein. Sie wird dem Lernenden mitgeteilt und ihre Anwendung eingeübt. - Oder sie ist ein Werkzeug des Spieles selbst. - Oder: eine Regel findet weder im Unterricht noch im Spiel selbst Verwendung; noch ist sie in einem Regelverzeichnis niedergelegt. Man lernt das Spiel, indem man zusieht, wie Andere es spielen. Aber wir sagen, es wird nach den und den Regeln gespielt, weil ein Beobachter diese Regeln aus der Praxis des Spiels ablesen kann, - wie ein Naturgesetz, dem die Spielhandlungen folgen - Wie aber unterscheidet der Beobachter zwischen einem Fehler der Spielenden und einer richtigen Spielhandlung? - Es gibt dafür Merkmale im Benehmen der Spieler. Denke an das charakteristische Benehmen dessen, der ein Versprechen korrigiert.⁴⁹³

A rule bears a family resemblance to a law, convention, or a pattern of behaviour: it is ‘ein Behelf des Unterrichts’, ‘ein Werkzeug’, a ‘Regelverzeichnis’, a ‘Praxis’, ‘ein Naturgesetz’ or simply nowhere to be found at all. Once again, when thinking about “what a rule is”, Wittgenstein draws us back to the everyday, the concrete examples of when we would use the word “rule”. Because a rule is learned in

⁴⁹² PU, §31, p. 255.

⁴⁹³ PU, §54, pp. 270-71.

practice or is a description or even a pattern of behaviour, it is elusive- both omnipresent and intangible. The elusiveness of what exactly can be defined as a rule is reflected in the practice of Wittgenstein's writing - instead of offering a clear answer, he offers only a series of questions, and it is up to us to puzzle through them.

The elusiveness of the 'Regel' might also form part of its intellectual attraction. 'Ablesen' indicates the intellectual interest here in rules - the 'Beobachter' *reads* a rule *out of* the players' practices - a rule is derived from the play. The elusiveness of the "essence" of a rule per se is not a problem to the player, who is nevertheless able to learn the game. The elusiveness of a rule, and what counts as a rule, is more interesting to the (intellectual) observer. The nature of a rule is slippery - it is something that seemingly dictates the behaviour of the players, 'wie ein Naturgesetz', and yet it can only be understood 'aus der Praxis' or the 'Benehmen' of the players.

During the course of the passages examined above, Wittgenstein is trying to change 'unsere ganze Betrachtung' (§108). The pedagogical aim of the test is to direct our attention towards how language is used, rather than what language is - and this inevitably points us towards conventions of usage and "rules". But Wittgenstein does not want us to become too fixated with the idea that rules are integral to what language is (or what a game is) either. 'Ich sagte von der Anwendung eines Wortes: sie sei nicht überall begrenzt. Aber wie schaut denn ein Spiel aus, das überall von Regeln begrenzt ist? Dessen Regeln keinen Zweifel eindringen lassen; ihm alle Löcher verstopfen.'⁴⁹⁴ Rules are not completely perfect

⁴⁹⁴ PU, §84.

or “airtight”. As an example of how rules might not always completely determine the players’ behaviour within a game, Wittgenstein offers the following scenario:

Wir können uns denken, daß sich Menschen auf einer Wiese damit unterhalten, mit einem Ball zu spielen, so zwar, daß sie verschiedene bestehende Spiele anfangen, manche nicht zu Ende spielten, dazwischen den Ball planlos in der Höhe werfen, einander im Scherz mit dem Ball nachjagen und bewerfen, etc. Und nun sagt Einer: Die ganze Zeit hindurch spielen die Leute ein Ballspiel, und richten sich daher bei jedem Wurf nach bestimmten Regeln.

Und gibt es nicht auch den Fall, wo wir spielen und - >make up the rules as we go along? Ja, auch den, in welchem wir sie abändern - as we go long.⁴⁹⁵

It is as if the observer cannot accept that without stating explicit, strict rules, he cannot call what he says a game, or even play. Here we see the ambiguity of the German word *Spiel* playing out - how it can be a game, or the looser activity of play. Is there no such “game” as “a game of kickabout”, for instance? The playful switching between English and German in the above passage suggests that the concept of a ‘Regel’ or ‘Spiel’ can and should be taken lightly.

Rules, therefore, can be helpful learning tools, but Wittgenstein’s various dialogues help us to learn the limitation of the view that rules are the foundation of everything. Rules are more like guidelines: ‘Eine Regel steht da, wie ein Wegweiser. Läßt er keinen Zweifel offen über den Weg, den ich zu gehen habe?’⁴⁹⁶ Here, Wittgenstein has stepped from the realms of philosophical speculation into what must simply be learned from life experience: ‘Und dies ist nun kein philosophischer Satz mehr, sondern ein Erfahrungssatz.’⁴⁹⁷ This perhaps is Wittgenstein’s own peculiar brand of *Bildung* - to acknowledge and be at peace

⁴⁹⁵ *PU*, §83, p. 287.

⁴⁹⁶ *PU*, §85, p. 288.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

with our ordinary language as it is, to view rules as helpful guidelines rather than prescriptive or deterministic in any strict sense.

To sum up, in this section we discussed how *PU*'s pedagogical aim was to provide a form of therapy for the craving for generality. Wittgenstein drew an analogy between the question "What is language?" and "What is a game?". The latter sheds light on the generalising tendencies of the former to look for a logical, crystalline structure within language that can explain it in a complete way. We might be tempted to believe this is possible because language appears to operate according to rules through grammar. However, when we turn to games - another rule-based activity - we realise that the idea that an unchanging set of rules underlies and defines the activities of the players is not always accurate or helpful. In games, rules are more like conventions or patterns of behaviour, rather than natural laws that the philosopher must set out to discover. We can still talk about games even without clearly defined rules - people playing kickabout, for example, are still able to play perfectly well even if the rules are vague. Wittgenstein's game analogy helps us to see how language and culture are activities that follow patterns, but the rules that guide these patterns are necessarily not fixed, ontological structures. The Wittgensteinian picture of language as games is a constellation of activities that are guided but not defined by "rules".

Games for Wittgenstein are more of a *personal* form of therapy, and we must bear this in mind when we talk about the "pedagogical aims" of *PU*. Wittgenstein did not set out a theory of education because he wanted to avoid providing what philosophers sometimes crave - a clearly defined set of rules for pedagogical

practice that might be replicated within a “school” and become a kind of doctrine. As *PU* is not intended to save us the task for thinking for ourselves, Wittgenstein avoids any mention of how his games-therapy could be applied within the context of educational institutions. This is why bringing *GPS* into comparison with *PU* is helpful, to bring out the relevance of Wittgenstein’s method more explicitly to academia, and more specifically his game analogy.

Das Glasperlenspiel

Wittgenstein’s work may provide insights as to what constitutes learning within individuals as a way of instilling the values of humility and honesty, but he does not consider how to do this within an institutional context. In this section I will now move to Hesse’s novel, to see how it can build on the connection between games and learning in *PU*. I would like to demonstrate why the novel’s game analogy is apt for thinking critically about the dissemination of cultural values and learning practices within institutions. Framing the Glass Bead Game as a Wittgensteinian language-game, I will foreground the significance of Hesse’s choice of “game” as an analogy, reading it as a device that acknowledges yet critically frames institutional forms of life.

In the following analysis, I will be building on Swales’ reading of *GPS*, as a novel that is situated within the tradition of the *Bildungsroman*. Swales definition of the genre is unique, insofar as it foregrounds the importance of irony. The *Bildungsroman* is ‘a novel form that is shot through with irony, with narratively intimated unease’.⁴⁹⁸ It is easy to take *GPS* at face value as a utopian rather than

⁴⁹⁸ Swales, p. 157.

an ironic novel. As I argued in Chapter 2, irony is an important underlying feature in Hesse's work, and something he was increasingly threading into his writing in *MLF* and the first drafts of *GPS*. I will argue that the decision to frame institutionalised *Bildung* as a *game* sharpens the narrative irony of *GPS* as a finished work, enabling us as academics to see our own language-games and 'se juger sans complaisance' (see Gide, Chapter 2).

First, I will lay out the common ground that *PU* and *GPS* share, in terms of their joint concern for the craving for generality and the danger of intellectual hubris. Secondly, I will investigate how Hesse's approach in *GPS* differs from *PU*. I will argue that through the game analogy, Hesse seeks not only to treat but also to understand the causes and consequences of the craving for generality. Thirdly, I will turn to how the novel shows us why it is important to avoid intellectual hubris within academic institutions. Having understood why the craving for generality comes about, why should we care whether a select group of academics end up suffering from intellectual hubris? I would argue that intellectual hubris not only affects us as individuals, but also students through our teaching. Fourthly and finally, I will consider how the literary form of the novel manages to encourage a self-reflective, critical stance in its readers towards their own institutions, in the spirit of Wittgenstein's 'work on oneself' or 'change in attitude'. The layers of irony, resulting from the narrative framework of the novel and the framing of intellectual life as a "Game", play a key role in bringing about this change in attitude towards academic institutions, from seeing them as rule-based structures to mutable, convention-guided player communities.

Crystal clear - the appeal of the Glass Bead Game and its rules

There are some striking parallels between *PU* and *GPS*, in terms of how the fascination with rules is described. In the first chapter of Hesse's novel, the narrator sets out an 'Einleitung' to the Glass Bead Game. From the way he describes the Game, it clearly appeals to those who find beauty in order, and order in beauty. The ideal player of the Game, if educated correctly, will embody both order and creativity, 'er würde im Glasperlenspiel die kristallenste Logik ausstrahlen lassen und in der Grammatik die schöpferischste Phantasie.'⁴⁹⁹ The choice of the word 'kristall' echoes the very same way in which Wittgenstein describes a philosopher's or mathematician's fascination with the 'Kristallreinheit' of logic. A crystal is simultaneously a beautiful object and a structure. The idea of rules appeals to those who see a connection between mathematics and music, logic and beauty, order and creativity. What is interesting and different about Hesse's novel is that it expands on this fascination that game rules can have for its players. The Game's rules have become a 'Grammatik', a form of ideal language that gives expression to the Castalians' pursuit of knowledge, beauty and order in their utopian society. The 'Spiel der Spiele' is described as a 'Universalsprache' by the narrator, 'durch welche die Spieler in sinnvollen Zeichen Werte auszudrücken und zueinander in Beziehung zu setzen befähigt waren.'⁵⁰⁰ The Game is a utopian, intellectual dream, because it unites scholars across disciplines and, like an ideal language, allows all possible intellectual truths to be expressed. It is no coincidence that Hesse, in contrast to Wittgenstein's 'Sprachspiele', writes about a Game in the singular. It is the Game's oneness, its power to unite diverse

⁴⁹⁹ *GPS*, p. 84.

⁵⁰⁰ *GPS*, p. 39.

disciplines engaged in the pursuit of knowledge, that is at the centre of its powerful, utopian appeal as ‘eine Art Weltsprache der Geistigen’.⁵⁰¹

According to the narrator, the *Glasperlenspieler* and their predecessors are united in their common striving towards the universal, ‘das geistige Universum in konzentrische Systeme einzufangen und die lebendige Schönheit des Geistigen und der Kunst mit der magischen Formulierungskraft der exakten Disziplinen zu vereinigen.’⁵⁰² In his description of the Game, the narrator likens it to ‘Kunst’, ‘spekulativen Philosophie’ ‘Universalsprache’, ‘eine sublime Alchemie’, ‘Gottesdienst’ and ‘Musizieren’.⁵⁰³ Religion, science, the arts and the mystical blur in the pursuit of this Game. Here we see another motivation for Hesse choosing to the Game as the central Castalian discipline - it embodies the craving for generality in *all* disciplines, not just philosophy.

For Hesse’s Castalians, the Glass Bead Game is not “just” a game. Picking up on the extraordinary fascination which games can have, Hesse saturates the Castalian narrator’s language with the vocabulary of fascination. Hesse’s use of language achieves something that Wittgenstein’s doesn’t - an insight into the fascination of games/rules and the way that this fascination can shape a worldview.

The words ‘Alchemie’ and ‘magisch’ quoted above imply that the Game, for some, has transformed into a kind of Faustian experiment or obsession - precisely what Wittgenstein was determined to teach philosophy students to avoid. We may recall the remark from Wittgenstein in *VB* that, ‘Alles rituelle (quasi

⁵⁰¹ *GPS*, p. 43.

⁵⁰² *GPS*, p. 13.

⁵⁰³ *GPS*, pp. 37, 39, 40, 41, 43.

Hohepriesterliche) ist streng zu vermeiden weil es sofort fault.⁵⁰⁴ Magical vocabulary is always used in a derogatory way in Wittgenstein's *PU*, and he does not connect it with games. The aim of philosophy (and perhaps too of the analogy of language-games), according to Wittgenstein, is to *de-mystify*: 'Die Philosophie ist ein Kampf gegen die Verhexung unseres Verstandes durch die Mittel unserer Sprache.'⁵⁰⁵ 'Verhexung' has connotations of deception. Recalling his point about how the word 'dieses' cannot be explained by pointing to any deeper or hidden meaning other than its use, he imagines how a philosopher might search over and over again for a way of explaining *why* 'dieses' means what it does. Wittgenstein describes a philosopher at work, 'mit der Auffassung des Benennens als eines, sozusagen, okkulten Vorgangs':

Das Benennen erscheint als eine *seltsame* Verbindung eines Wortes mit einem Gegenstand. - Und so eine seltsame Verbindung hat wirklich statt, wenn nämlich der Philosoph, um herauszubringen, was *die* Beziehung zwischen Namen und Benanntem ist, auf einen Gegenstand vor sich starrt und dabei unzählige Male einen Namen wiederholt, oder auch das Wort »dieses«.⁵⁰⁶

The philosopher, fixating on such a simple, ordinary word such as 'dieses', as if uttering an incantation to access some deep mystery, appears almost comically absurd. Wittgenstein is primarily concerned with ridding us of the idea that an act of speaking a word is 'irgend ein merkwürdiger Akt'.⁵⁰⁷ The resulting "occult" practice is present 'nur beim Philosophieren'.⁵⁰⁸ The philosopher's fixation on the idea that there is an invisible connection between the spoken word and the object leads him to his superstitious belief that the word must have extraordinary properties.

⁵⁰⁴ *VB*, p. 10.

⁵⁰⁵ *PU*, §109, p.299.

⁵⁰⁶ *PU*, §38, p. 260.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

Whereas Wittgenstein's 'games' take place in everyday situations, the Glass Bead Game is elevated to an ideal language for its players: 'Diese Regeln, die Zeichensprache und Grammatik des Spieles, stellen eine Art von hochentwickelter Geheimsprache vor.'⁵⁰⁹ The narrator's explanation of the Game is full of admiration for its sophistication. The secrecy of the 'Geheimsprache' does not appear to trouble Hesse's narrator - in fact, he seems to revel in describing the esoteric nature of the Game. The mystery surrounding the Game's language makes it that it is not accessible to all, despite being presented as an ideal universal language. Instead, it is a cherished activity practiced by a privileged few. By emphasising the 'occult' fascination that the Castalians have for their Game, Hesse mimics the fascination that Wittgenstein's Faustian philosopher has for 'dieses'. The novel therefore gives us an insight into this fascination up as a powerful, all-consuming ideology or "player psychology" within academic institutions. By giving expression to the fascination with rules and the 'magic circle' that the realm of play creates, Hesse is able to offer insights on the 'relationship between language and power' within institutions that Toril Moi noted was a fundamental gap in Wittgenstein's philosophy.⁵¹⁰

Through *Sprachspiele* Wittgenstein hoped to mollify that fascination that rules have been drawing on the analogy between language and games. The 'Verhexung' is a kind of condition that requires therapy to treat it and lessen its symptoms. However, Hesse is keen to explore how and why players might end up taking their game "too seriously". In his preparatory notes for the novel, Hesse

⁵⁰⁹ *GPS*, p. 12.

⁵¹⁰ Toril Moi, *Revolution of the Ordinary: Literary Studies after Wittgenstein, Austin, and Cavell*, University Press Scholarship Online (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018), p. 159.

writes down some reflections on the meaning of “Spiel” that he attributes to Knecht,

Knecht erklärt u.a.: ‘Spielen’ hat mehrere Bedeutungen, vor allem aber bedeutet es etwas, was der damit Beschäftigte ganz besonders wichtig und ernst nimmt. Das Spiel des Kindes wird mit größtem Ernst gespielt. Das Spiel der Musiker wird wie Gottesdienst zelebriert. Jedes Karten- oder Gesellschaftsspiel noch zeichnet sich dadurch aus, daß man es zwar als minder ernsthaft vom ‘Leben’ unterscheidet, daß es aber ganz feste Regeln hat, und daß jeder Spieler dieser Regeln viel genauer einhält und sich ihrem Sinn viel mehr unterwirft als die meisten Menschen im ‘wirklichen’ Leben es mit den Regeln der Vernunft, der Hygiene, der Sozialität etc. tun. Darum ist jedes Spiel eine gute Schule des Gehorsams, des Dienens, des Ernstnehmens, und das wird dadurch nicht entwertet sondern erhöht, daß die wachsten und klügsten Spieler genau darum wissen, daß ihr Spiel sei bloß Bild, Gleichnis, eben Spiel.⁵¹¹

Hesse takes his interpretation of games in a similar but distinctly different direction to Wittgenstein. Players may take the idea of rules seriously, but the best players do not get above themselves. They retain a self-awareness that their game is precisely that, ‘eben Spiel’. Hesse here seems to share Wittgenstein’s concern about avoiding intellectual hubris, as exemplified by ‘die klügsten Spieler’. For those players who are self-aware, it performs benefits through its figurative function as ‘Gleichnis’. Alongside not taking the game too seriously, there is also the ‘Ernst’ with which rules can be followed. The seriousness of rule-following creates a world within a world, one that is separated from “‘wirklickhen” Leben’.

Hesse includes characters that provide external perspectives on Castalia, to present its utopian “play-world” in a more critical light. In the words of Plinio Designori, an exchange student from outside Castalia and Knecht’s school-friend, the Castalians are ‘künstlich in einer ewigen Kindheit Zurückgehaltene’, where they dwell ‘künstlich und kindisch in [ihrer] leidenschaftslosen, sauber umzäunten,

⁵¹¹ MGPS, p. 315

wohlaufgeräumten Spiel- und Kindergartenwelt'.⁵¹² What we see in Castalia is a children's play-world in the adult setting of higher education and academic institutions - which has an ironic effect. The Castalians' form of life is not merely a language game in the Wittgensteinian sense of a 'Lebensform', but is in fact "Spielerei" and divorced from reality. Unlike people in the wider world, Castalian scholars lead a protected life 'ohne Nahrungsorgen und ohne viel lästige Pflichten'.⁵¹³

The Castalians have stayed too long in Bruner's child's safe space. And yet, a safe space delineated from the strains of everyday life - the need to earn money for food and basic needs - is precisely what is needed for scholars pursuing learning to the highest degree. Huizinga, in *Homo Ludens*, affirms this idea that play is no ordinary activity: 'Playing is no "doing" in the ordinary sense; you do not "do" a game as you "do" or "go" fishing, or hunting, or Morris-dancing, or woodwork - you "play" it.'⁵¹⁴ In order for play to occur, a space wherein certain rules apply must be created. As we saw in Chapter 1 in our reading of *Homo Ludens*, the sphere of activity, demarcated by game rules, could be thought of as a 'magic circle'. This term and the language that Huizinga used to describe the 'play-ground' ('ritual', 'hallowed', 'special' and 'ideal') all point to the fascinating appeal of rules that Wittgenstein diagnoses in the philosopher above. Hesse threads the 'occult' vocabulary of fascination through the narrator's descriptions of the Glass Bead Game: 'Das Spiel war nicht bloß Übung [...] er war konzentriertes Selbstgefühl einer Geistesucht.'⁵¹⁵ When experienced collectively, this becomes a ritualistic

⁵¹² *GPS*, p. 341.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁴ Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, p. 37.

⁵¹⁵ *GPS*, pp. 32-33.

form of life, a ‘sublimen Kult’,⁵¹⁶ ‘nahezu gleichbedeutend mit Gottesdienst’,⁵¹⁷ which is headed by the Magister Ludi. ‘Für die eigentlichen Spieler und Liebhaber,’ the narrator explains in an almost conspiratorial tone, ‘ist der Ludi Magister ein Fürst oder Hohepriester, beinahe eine Gottheit.’⁵¹⁸ Hesse’s Game, therefore, represents everything that Wittgenstein was *against*, insofar as it is generally perceived by Castalians to be *extraordinary*.

By thinking of the Glass Bead Game as a language-game, we can see that what Hesse does is to imagine a form of life (that in fact already exists within real academic institutions, elite schools, societies etc.). The Game becomes a way of demonstrating what happens when the craving for generality becomes an institutional ideology, to the extent that it is so widespread that it becomes a culture, verging on a cult.

***Bildung*, the Wittgensteinian way**

The connection between institutional doctrine, rules and teaching practices is made most clearly in a scene when the protagonist Knecht, still in the early stages of his life, is trying to decide on a discipline to commit himself to studying, research and finally teaching. Early in the novel, he is trying to decide between the study of music and the Glass Bead Game. The choice of discipline will affect the school he chooses, because each school in Castalia specialises in a different discipline. The intellectually ambitious protagonist is drawn to the Glass Bead Game precisely for its meta-disciplinary properties, believing it may lead to a

⁵¹⁶ *GPS*, p. 37.

⁵¹⁷ *GPS*, p. 41.

⁵¹⁸ *GPS*, p. 43.

higher, purer form of truth or knowledge. He seeks advice from his mentor, the 'Musikmeister'.

The *Musikmeister* is cautious about recommending the Game on the grounds that it is the 'highest' discipline or holds the key to understanding all other fields of learning. He points out that its value is disputed: 'Die Künstlernaturen sind in dies Spiel verliebt, weil man darin phantasieren kann; die strengen Fachwissenschaftler verachten es - und auch manche Musiker tun es -, weil ihm jener Grad der Strenge in der Disziplin fehle, den die Einzelwissenschaften erreichen können.'⁵¹⁹ While artistically minded Castalians enjoy the plasticity of the Game, and its capacity to synthesise diverse themes in one medium, those Castalians who value the expertise specific to their discipline are sceptical about whether aspirations to make the Game a universal language result in a lack of rigour. The debate around the value of the Game, even among Castalians, is important to note and something which might be overlooked in utopian readings of the novel. Hesse's inclusion of dissent among Castalians demonstrates that the Game is *not* unanimously considered a utopian invention or an ideal language. The author's inclusion of these moments of debate and discussion also demonstrate that, although his novel is *about* a utopian project, the novel *itself* is not a utopian project. Instead, it offers a valuable invitation to critically reflect on the language-games within institutions - utopian or otherwise.

There is no straightforward answer to the question of where Knecht should take his studies. The *Musikmeister's* words assure the young protagonist that there

⁵¹⁹ *GPS*, p. 83.

is no single discipline that can be ranked above the others. This bothers Knecht, who wants to strive for knowledge in its highest, purest form. Knecht exclaims:

«Ach, wenn man doch wissend werden könnte!» rief Knecht. «Wenn es doch eine Lehre gäbe, etwas, woran man glauben kann! Alles widerspricht einander, alles läuft aneinander vorbei, nirgends ist Gewißheit. Alles läßt sich so deuten und läßt sich auch wieder umgekehrt deuten. Man kann die ganze Weltgeschichte als Entwicklung und Fortschritt auslegen, und kann ebensowohl nichts als Verfall und Unsinn in ihr sehen. Gibt es den keine Wahrheit? Gibt es keine echte und gültige Lehre?»⁵²⁰

Knecht expresses frustration with his search for knowledge. Instead of seeing diversity, he sees ‘Unsinn’ and comes to the nihilistic conclusion that there must be ‘keine Wahrheit’. The *Musikmeister* diagnoses this Faustian state of mind in Knecht, and warns him against being misguided by his passion for finding a metadiscipline in the form of the Game, in the hope of attaining ‘Wahrheit’. He advises Knecht that, ‘Was du Leidenschaft nennst, ist nicht Seelenkraft, sondern Reibung zwischen Seele und Außenwelt.’⁵²¹ This ‘Reibung’ between Knecht’s metaphysical expectations and what can actually be achieved within study will lead to disappointment. Knecht’s ‘Leidenschaftlichkeit’ is misguided, as it is ‘auf eine vereinzelt und falsches Ziel gerichtet’.⁵²² The *Musikmeister*’s words are reminiscent of Wittgenstein’s own warning against a craving for generality in *PU* §107 (Cited above: ‘Je genauer wir die tatsächliche Sprache betrachten, desto stärker wird der Widerstreit zwischen ihr und unsrer Forderung.’)⁵²³

The Wittgensteinian advice of the *Musikmeister* to temper one’s expectations of what teaching can achieve is not an admonishment. But the idea of an ultimate ‘Lehre’ can be misleading:

⁵²⁰ *GPS*, p. 85.

⁵²¹ *GPS*, p. 84.

⁵²² *Ibid.*

⁵²³ *PU*, §107, p. 297.

«Es gibt die Wahrheit, mein Lieber! Aber die 'Lehre', die du begehrt, die absolute, vollkommen und allein weise machende, die gibt es nicht. Du sollst dich auch gar nicht nach einer vollkommenen Lehre sehnen, Freund, sondern nach Vervollkommnung deiner selbst. Die Gottheit ist in dir, nicht in den Begriffen und Büchern. Die Wahrheit wird gelebt, nicht doziert. Mache dich auf Kämpfe bereit, Josef Knecht, ich sehe wohl, sie haben schon begonnen.»⁵²⁴

Just as with Wittgenstein, the *Musikmeister* does not see truth as absolutely relative and therefore non-existent. The study of a discipline is a pursuit of this 'truth' - we are as academics all joined by intellectual endeavour - but the *result* of these endeavours is not an ultimate, overarching truth. Knecht's search for absolute truth is directed externally, in wanting to find a *Lehre* that will answer his questions. The *Musikmeister* here is reminding Knecht of the ethical value of *Bildung* - that learning involves ongoing work on oneself. The ethical value of Wittgenstein's repeated warnings against the fascination of the 'Kristallreinheit' of logic is starting to make sense. His idea that the meaning is found in a word's use, that we learn our language-games through practice, is also reflected in the idea that 'Die Wahrheit wird gelebt, nicht doziert'. This explains Wittgenstein's quietism about educational theory - *Bildung* is necessarily a personal *experience*, so it is difficult to teach it as in a lecture. The *Musikmeister* acknowledges that Knecht will need to learn this truth for himself - his journey is 'schon begonnen' and cannot be precluded by his mentor's advice.

The almost spiritual and deeply personal problem Knecht faces as a youth is not worked through until much later in his career. Knecht's change in attitude occurs when he becomes aware that the Glass Bead Game players and Castalia's institutions have succumbed to intellectual hubris. Having decided to leave Castalia for this reason, Knecht sits reminiscing with his friend, Tegularius, before

⁵²⁴ *GPS*, p. 85.

his departure. Together they read a poem that Knecht wrote, 'als Student'.⁵²⁵

Looking at the 'Urhandschrift', the original title of the poem is still visible,

although he chose to change it at a later stage in his life:

Mit großen Buchstaben in stürmischer Handschrift war sie hingesezt und lautete:

«Transzendieren!»

Später erst, zu einer anderen Zeit, in anderer Stimmung und Lebenslage, war diese Überschrift samt dem Ausrufzeichen gestrichen und war in kleineren, dünneren bescheideneren Schriftzeichen dafür eine andere hingeschrieben worden. Sie hieß: «Stufen.»⁵²⁶

Knecht recalls how he felt when he wrote the poem 'als einen Zuruf und Befehl, eine Mahnung an sich selbst, als einen neu formulierten und bekräftigten Vorsatz, sein Tun und Leben unter dies Zeichen zu stellen.'⁵²⁷ However, it is evident from the change in title, the removal of the explanation mark, and even the 'bescheideneren Schriftzeichen', that his attitude as to what constitutes *Bildung* has changed. Instead of a bright and bold, courageous call to strive for a metaphysical 'transcendence', the change in title reflects a more modest and pragmatic attitude towards learning, that accepts that a life is a journey of stages, without necessarily having a clear destination. Through his continued self-reflection and conversations with other characters such as the *Musikmeister*, Knecht has effectively undergone a form of Wittgensteinian therapy. It has taken Knecht several years of researching and practicing the Game before he could realise that learning is necessarily about *ongoing* development (note: 'Stufen' is in the plural). He has acknowledged his craving for generality, which can be summed up in the command, 'Transzendieren!'

⁵²⁵ *GPS*, p. 410.

⁵²⁶ *GPS*, p. 411.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*

Shortly after becoming Magister Ludi, the narrator records a speech about the dangers of intellectual hubris made by Knecht 'am Schluß eines Kurses zur Ausbildung von Spiellehren für Anfänger'.⁵²⁸ Knecht reminds them, 'daß die Hingabe an eine Wissenschaft einen Mann nicht unbedingt vor Eigennutz, Laster und Lächerlichkeit zu schützen vermag, die Geschichte ist voll von Beispielen, die Figur des Doktor Faust ist die literarische Popularisierung dieser Gefahr.' The 'Gefahr' is clearly a form of intellectual hubris, but it is also a will to power as exemplified by the fable of Faust. Knecht continues by explaining, 'Nun, ihr wisset so gut wie ich, daß das Glasperlenspiel seinen Diabolus in sich stecken hat, daß es zur leeren Virtuosität, zum Selbstgenuß künstlerhafter Eitelkeit, zur Streberei, zum Erwerb von Macht über andere und damit zum Mißbrauch dieser Macht führen kann.'⁵²⁹ Knecht is warning Glass Bead Game players against a desire for mastery in their discipline, if that desire is to be able to prove their superiority over others. What Hesse is doing here is drawing a subtle connection between language, the Game, institutions, and power. As yet, his protagonist is unaware of his own hubris about the Game. Knecht begins the speech by claiming that, although small, Castalia is an 'alte und stolze Republik', equal in stature to its sister states. However, he argues that Castalia is exceptional: 'Denn wir sind ja durch die Aufgabe ausgezeichnet, das eigentliche Heiligtum Kastaliens, sein einzigartiges Geheimnis und Symbol, zu hüten, das Glasperlenspiel.'⁵³⁰ At the novel progresses, Knecht becomes party to the inner workings of the institutions he teaches for, and gradually realises that their mission to preserve and protect the Game is precisely

⁵²⁸ *GPS*, p. 251.

⁵²⁹ *GPS*, p. 256.

⁵³⁰ *GPS*, p. 252.

what leads them to an insular mindset with detrimental consequences for their reputation beyond the province.

Returning to Knecht's desire for 'Lehre', I would like to dwell momentarily on the English translation of the word. Earlier in this chapter, we noted how in the English translation of Wittgenstein's *Vermischte Bemerkungen* there was a slippage in the English translation between *Lehre* as 'doctrine' and *Lehre* as 'teaching'. This slippage is not a flaw in the translation, but it does reveal the ambiguity of the German word. If we compare the German text of Knecht's question with Richard and Clare Winston's translation of *GPS*, we can see how the concepts of teaching and doctrine can become blurred:

Gibt es also keine Wahrheit? Gibt es keine echte und gültige Lehre?⁵³¹

Isn't there any truth? Is there no real and valid doctrine?⁵³²

The translators have perceived that Knecht's desire for knowledge is connected to a deep-seated need to find security and certainty within a belief system. There is an almost existential *need* on Knecht's part to find a doctrine which can guide him, a set of rules that are true and valid in all cases. Perhaps this is why the Game is attractive to him. A search for knowledge can lead to a search for teaching, and perhaps even a teaching that will explain everything and make clear the rules for our forms of life - a doctrine.

⁵³¹ *GPS*, p. 85.

⁵³² Hermann Hesse, *The Glass Bead Game*, trans. by Clara Winston and Richard Winston (London: Vintage, 2000), p. 73.

Doctrine as a way of preserving a form of life within institutions

Arguably, it is unsurprising to find doctrine within Castalia's institutions, as it is the most powerful way of communicating a set of shared values to followers and future generations passing between its walls. An institution's most significant role is to *preserve* a form of life, a set of principles or values, a way of learning. The desire and need to preserve a particular language-game is what I call 'player psychology', which I read *GPS* as exploring. Hesse's novel explores how institutions *necessarily* involve a shared set of rules. In an essay on 'Gelehrtenrepubliken', which features *GPS*, Götz Müller points out the 'die utopische Struktur der Isolation' necessarily relies on the idea of social isolation: 'In der klassischen Utopie diene die insulare Isolation der autonomen Entwicklung eines Gemeinwesens unter Ausschluß jeder Fremdbeeinflussung.'⁵³³ The utopian desire to preserve the values of *Bildung*, that we explored in Chapter 2, necessarily relies on isolation as a defence mechanism. Therefore, the utopian impulse to preserve arguably leads inevitably to a conservative institution. That is not to say that rules in themselves are problematic: they are helpful when teaching large numbers of students to establish reading lists, best practice, etc. Rules provide much needed structure and guidance through learning processes, as we saw with language-games and *Child's Talk*.

Through his narrator and the medium of writing a history of a fictional pedagogical province, Hesse tries to offer a view of institution formation that is true to life. By way of introduction to Castalia's institutions, the narrator

⁵³³ Götz Müller, 'Gelehrtenrepubliken', in *Gegenwelten: Die Utopie in Der Deutschen Literatur* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1989), p. 121.

comments, 'Betrachtet man das Spiel als eine Art Weltsprache der Geistigen, so sind die Spielkommissionen der Länder unter Leitung ihrer Magister in ihrer Gesamtheit die Akademie, welche den Bestand, die Fortbildung, die Reinhaltung dieser Sprache überwacht.'⁵³⁴ Hesse lays before us the details of an institutional structure, in a way that adds depth to his fictional society. When we consider the existence of similar institutions, such as the Académie Française, Castalia is no longer a strange province existing several centuries in the future. It could, in fact, be emblematic of institutions today. The fictional institutions in the book are not utopian models for how 20th century society might be improved. Hesse himself makes it very clear that he does not consider his book a work of utopian philosophy. In February 1944, he writes to a friend,

[...] das Buch ist ja keineswegs eine Abhandlung, noch weniger eine Philosophie, es ist eine Erzählung und ein Bekenntnis, und Aufbau, Tonfall und Farbe sind nicht weniger daran beteiligt als die Gedanken. Das mit der »Utopia«, das heißt dem Verlegen in die Zukunft, ist natürlich nur ein Behelf. In Wirklichkeit ist Kastalien, Orden, meditative Gelehrsamkeit etc. weder ein Zukunftstraum noch ein Postulat, sondern eine ewige, platonistische in diversen Graden der Verwirklichung schon oft auf Erden sichtbar gewordene Idee.⁵³⁵

What Hesse means by a 'Platonic vision' which has gone through 'various degrees of realisation' is essentially this - that there is a utopian drive 'schon' (already) in the world, for knowledge, self-knowledge, beauty, or to build a better world. Rather than creating a blueprint for a better society, what Hesse wanted to do was to give this Platonic utopian drive - a.k.a. the craving for generality - a form in his novel.

The institutions responsible for the preservation of the Glass Bead Game resemble real-life institutions in many ways. The narrator describes how the

⁵³⁴ *GPS*, p. 43.

⁵³⁵ *MGPS*, p. 241.

Game's archives have the power to decide what can and cannot be considered acceptable within the Game's rules: 'Jede Landkommission ist im Besitz des Spielarchives, das heißt sämtlicher bis anher geprüften und zugelassenen Zeichen und Schlüssel'.⁵³⁶ The Game archives are a necessary way of ensuring rigour and quality is maintained in the practice of the game, and a way of recording and preserving what is best of it - but they are also essentially self-governing. The archives are effectively the gatekeepers and custodians of Castalian culture, as they are of course today. The archives' decisions about what to preserve has consequences for Castalia's cultural history and what is "culturally valuable", i.e. worthy of passing down to future generations. As with the example of the Academy above, this process is of course exactly what happens in real archives - material that is considered culturally significant and valuable is preserved for future study. Only by imagining archives that are devoted entirely to the preservation of a Game do we cease to take the fact of cultural value for granted. The Game archives and the 'Spielkommissionen' are not so much a utopia, but a way of looking at our own institutions.

However, the minoritarian instinct to protect *Geist* and *Bildung* is confronted critically by the voice of Knecht. He argues that attempts to situate Castalia outside of *Weltgeschichte* and therefore politics 'wird vergeblich sein'.⁵³⁷ In his letter to the Behörde, he calls for Castalian society to open up, to allow its students and teachers to travel beyond its borders and become teachers in the wider world. Knecht recognises the institution's need to preserve its values:

Es entstand ein ungeheures Bedürfnis nach Wahrheit und Recht, nach Vernunft, nach Überwindung des Chaos. Dieses Vakuum am Ende einer gewalttätigen und ganz nach

⁵³⁶ *GPS*, p. 43.

⁵³⁷ *GPS*, p. 391.

außen gerichteten Epoche, diese unsäglich dringend und flehentlich gewordene Sehnsucht aller nach einem Neubeginn und einer Ordnung ist es gewesen, der wir unser Kastalien und unser Dasein verdanken.⁵³⁸

Knecht acknowledges that Castalia's institutions were founded on essentially good intentions, but this statement makes it clear that the Game's origins were in fact rooted in *Weltgeschichte*, in an 'Epoche' following the violent decades of the mid-20th century. Castalian institutions and the Glass Bead Game did not begin from a desire for doctrine and to indoctrinate, but from the 'Sehnsucht aller einem Neubeginn'. They grew 'ganz von unten auf', and began 'wieder eine Geistigkeit, einen Unterricht, eine Forschung, eine Bildung aufzubauen'.⁵³⁹ The process of ossification was gradual, even inevitable, as the institution settled into a more solid, permanent state. Knecht writes,

Der Bau ist gelungen, er ist aus seinen ärmlich-heldischen Anfängen langsam zu einem Prachtbau gewachsen, hat in einer Reihe von Generationen den Orden, die Erziehungsbehörde, die Eliteschulen, die Archive und Sammlungen, die Fachschulen und Seminare, das Glasperlenspiel geschaffen, und wir sind es, die heute als Erben und Nutznießer in dem beinahe allzu prachtvollen Gebäude wohnen.⁵⁴⁰

The act of 'aufbauen' becomes static, 'der Bau', or even a looming 'Prachtbau' (a process that we saw the *Bund* undergoing in *MLF* in Chapter 2). *Sich bilden* and *bilden* have now become *Bildung*. The grassroots individuals who built the institution, 'die winzig kleine, tapfere, halbverhungerte, aber unbeugsam gebliebene Schar der wahrhaft Geistigen' have ceased to become agents now that the Game has become an institution. Hesse uses a passive construction, the 'Prachtbau ist gewachsen', as if by its own agency. Knecht writes that the Castalians that now dwell within the buildings of the institution have become 'ziemlich ahnungslose und ziemlich bequem gewordene Gäste'. This is the point at

⁵³⁸ *GPS*, p. 390.

⁵³⁹ *Ibid*

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid*.

which complacency about one's own language-game sets in - the rules no longer are perceived as rules, but instead have become a way of life.

The change in Knecht's perspective as evidenced in this letter happens within Castalia, while he is still officially the Magister Ludi. There is therefore a tension playing out between the Castalian characters, between preserving a form of life (encapsulated in the Game) and adapting that form of life to the needs of the present. As we have seen in this section, Hesse offers us a sympathetic yet critical view of the process of formation undertaken by educational institutions, and how they come to adopt conservative ideologies. The development of institutions is driven by a need to preserve and conserve best practice and values in teaching and learning. We can think of the Glass Bead Game as a language game that is considered precious and valuable enough to be preserved, and taught to subsequent generations. However, when these values become taken for granted and preserved for their own sake, then the institution undergoes a process of stultification, and increasingly becomes absorbed in its own player-psychology. It cannot see beyond its own language-game, even when that language-game is itself a mere 'game'. There is an irony to this that Hesse deliberately intends us to perceive - that a game can be taken so seriously.

Why should we care about institutions becoming exclusive?

If the Castalians were merely guilty of complacency, their 'Prachtbau' and 'Behörde' might not be a concern. As an institution, however, Castalia is openly elitist precisely because its aim is to preserve what is 'best' in culture, and this requires the training of an 'elite' - both in the sense of an established hierarchy of skill, and in being systematically exclusive. Early in his career, Knecht believes that

it is the selection of a skilled elite that keeps Castalia, its Game and the principles it embodies, alive. In a speech shortly after ‘die Übernahme des Magisteramtes’, ‘am Schluß eines Kurses zur Ausbildung von Spiellehren für Anfänger’,⁵⁴¹ he makes the following statement: ‘Das Beste und Lebendigste an unserm Institut ist das alte kastalische Prinzip der Auswahl der Besten, der Elite.’⁵⁴² The idea is that only a small number of people can achieve an expert level of skill, and therefore it is logical that institutions will be exclusive. But such a view is naïve and overlooks sociological factors - such as access to education opportunities. The borders of Castalia are closed to outsiders, so only inhabitants of the province are permitted to learn the Game. Furthermore, no women are allowed into Castalia’s schools.

The *Eliteschulen* are initially seen as unproblematic by a rather naïve Knecht, because it seems only right that the ‘best’, ‘mit Liebe zum Spiel Begabten’, should be the ones responsible for its ‘Weiterentwicklung’.⁵⁴³ Knecht also praises the way in which the Game has been spared from ‘Bildungseitelkeit’, for ‘hier in unserer Elite ist [das Spiel] Selbstzweck und heiliger Dienst’.⁵⁴⁴ What Knecht means here is that the pursuit of perfection in the Game has its own value; not as a form of intellectual self-flattery or sophistry. ‘Selbstzweck’ epitomises the free act of play, free from all utilitarianism - it could therefore epitomise *Bildung*, a form of education that is not ends-driven.

Despite his earlier admiration for the *Eliteschulen* of Castalia, he writes about the need to overcome this minoritarian mindset of education. Knecht realises that the focus on preservation of values, and conservative ideas of purity by closing off

⁵⁴¹ Hesse, *The Glass Bead Game*, p. 251.

⁵⁴² *GPS*, p. 254.

⁵⁴³ *GPS*, p. 255.

⁵⁴⁴ *GPS*, p. 254.

Castalian institutions from outside influence, has led to institutions that are no longer fulfilling their pedagogical purpose. In a 'Rundschreiben' addressed to the 'Behörde' of the Order, Knecht requests to leave his office: 'Ich bitte mich hiermit die Behörde, mich des Amtes als Magister Ludi zu entheben und mir draußen im Lande eine gewöhnliche Schule anzuvertrauen.' He further requests permission to be accompanied by 'Ordensbrüdern', so that they may join him 'als Lehrer [...] daß sie mir treulich helfen werden, unsre Grundsätze in jungen Weltmenschen zu Fleisch und Blut werden zu lassen.'⁵⁴⁵ Knecht has become aware that Castalia's institutions will lose their value if they continue to be inward-looking. He is not calling for the toppling of Castalia's institutional hierarchies, but he is asking those institutions to acknowledge that they can and should be relevant to a wider public.

This realisation has been brought sharply into focus for Knecht, because outside of Castalia's borders, a political crisis is brewing and the threat of war is rumbling in the background. As a young man, near the completion of his studies and making his way up through the ranks of the Order, he is tasked with a diplomatic mission. The existing 'Glasperlenspielmeister' (who Knecht will eventually take over from as Magister Ludi) summons Knecht, to offer a 'besondere Mission'. The narrator records the Magister's request:

Es handelt sich um folgenden Auftrag: das Benediktinerkloster Mariafels, eine der ältesten Bildungsstätten des Landes, das mit Kastalien freundschaftliche Beziehungen unterhielt und namentlich seit Jahrzehnten dem Glasperlenspiel zugetan war, hatte gebeten, ihm für einige Zeit einen Jungen Lehrer zur Einführung in das Spiel wie auch zur Anregung der paar fortgeschrittenern Spieler des Klosters zu lassen.⁵⁴⁶

This apparently innocent mission does in fact have political ulterior motives.

Before Knecht is permitted to depart, he is first required to undergo training in

⁵⁴⁵ *GPS*, p. 399.

⁵⁴⁶ *GPS*, p. 152.

‘die Verhaltensmaßregeln für Ordensbrüder beim Aufenthalt in der Welt draußen’. The training lasts for weeks and has less to do with teaching the Game than how to behave in the outside world: ‘er wurde zuerst drei Wochen in die «Polizei» gesteckt. So hieß unter den Studenten jene kleine Abteilung im Apparat der Erziehungsbehörde, welche man etwa ihr Außenministerium nennen könnte.’⁵⁴⁷ Herr Dubois, his tutor and ‘einer der wenigen «Politiker» Kastaliens’,⁵⁴⁸ advises Knecht to relay back any information that may be ‘von Nutzen’ to the province, such as ‘wenn ein Staatsmann im Kloster einkehrt, oder der Papst für krank gilt, oder neue Anwärter auf die Liste der künftige Kardinäle kommen.’⁵⁴⁹ Such events would undoubtedly have political significance for Castalia, as they might bring about changes in leadership of the Church, and therefore affect the good relations and unofficial alliance it shares with Castalia. On Knecht’s return, the Magister Ludi (as that time the young scholar’s predecessor), explains the strategic importance of forming an alliance with the Church and that Castalia desires ‘eine Überbrückung der alten Kluft zwischen Rom und dem Orden, in etwaigen künftigen Gefahren würden sie ganz ohne Zweifel gemeinsame Feinde haben’. Knecht is sent back a second time to the monastery on the pretext of holding ‘einen harmlosen Glasperlenspielkurs’, although his actual mission would be to befriend Pater Jakobus in order to gain ‘seine Befürwortung unseres Vorhabens in Rom.’⁵⁵⁰

This entry into the reality of Castalia’s position within world politics is a highly formative moment for Knecht. Knecht’s own naivety is also indicative of a

⁵⁴⁷ *GPS*, p. 157.

⁵⁴⁸ *GPS*, p. 158.

⁵⁴⁹ *GPS*, p. 160.

⁵⁵⁰ *GPS*, p. 197.

wider complacency shared by everyday Castalians about their privileged position in the context of the wider world:

Die allermeisten Kastalier, die Beamten nicht minder als die Gelehrten und Studierenden, lebten in ihrer pädagogischen Provinz und ihrem Orden als in einer stabilen, ewigen und sich von selbst verstehenden Welt, von welcher sie freilich wußten, daß sie nicht immer dagewesen, daß sie einmal entstanden, und zwar in Zeiten tiefster Not langsam und unter bitteren Kämpfen entstanden war, entstanden am Ende der kriegerischen Epoche ebensowohl aus einer asketisch-heroischen Selbstbesinnung und Anstrengung der Geistigen wie aus einem tiefen Bedürfnis der erschöpften, verbluteten und verwahrlosten Völker nach Ordnung, Norm, Vernunft, Gesetz und Maß.⁵⁵¹

Members of wider Castalian society have some awareness of the origins of their society, as detailed by the narrator in his 'Einleitung'. The long, detailed sentence structure used by Hesse's narrator, filled with vocabulary suggesting sacrifice in the name of intellectual virtues, is suggestive of the confidence Castalians have in their origin story. However, despite having knowledge of Castalia's beginnings, they are comfortable in the belief that their society and culture is 'stabil' and 'ewig'. The belief that their world is a timeless utopia is clearly part of an ideology that pervades every part of Castalian life.

The consequence of this collective ignorance is widespread complacency, the narrator continues:

Daß aber diese Ordnung der Dinge sich keineswegs von selbst verstehe, daß sie eine gewisse Harmonie zwischen Welt und Geist voraussetze, deren Störung immer wieder möglich war, daß die Weltgeschichte, alles in allem genommen, das Wünschenswerte, Vernünftige und Schöne keineswegs anstrebe und begünstige, sondern höchstens je und je als Ausnahme dulde, dies wußten sie nicht, und die heimliche Problematik ihrer kastalischen Existenz wurde von fast allen Kastaliern im Grunde nicht wahrgenommen, sondern eben jenen wenigen politischen Köpfen überlassen, deren der Vorstand Dubois war.⁵⁵²

⁵⁵¹ *GPS*, p. 158.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*

There is a dramatic irony in this passage, whereby the narrator knows that the status quo, as perceived by Castalians at the time, was based on false assumptions. As the author of Knecht's historical biography, the narrator has the benefit of hindsight and access to knowledge that the average Castalian would not have had, such as information relating to the external political situation. The narrator's perspective, which is retrospective, casts the whole utopian vision of a pedagogical province in an ironic light.

Through his conversations with the outsider, Plinio Designori, and his travels outside of the province, Knecht becomes acutely aware of the enormous financial privilege that the Castalians have. In a pointed question to the *Behörde* in his *Rundschreiben*, he challenges Castalian complacency: 'ahnt er [der Kastalier] etwas von den Opfern, die das Volk ihm bringt, indem es ihn ernährt und kleidet und ihm seine Schulung und seine mannifachen Studien ermöglicht?'⁵⁵³ Knecht has matured, intellectually as well as politically and morally. Thus, his experiences, travels and conversations with a wide range of people within and without the province have brought about a form of *Bildung* which is more profound than that undertaken by 'Der Durchschnittskastalier', who regards 'den Weltmann und Ungelehrten vielleicht ohne Verachtung, ohne Neid, ohne Gehässigkeit, aber er betrachtet ihn nicht als Bruder, er sieht in ihm nicht seinen Brotgeber, noch fühlt er sich im geringsten mitverantwortlich für das, was da draußen in der Welt geschieht.'⁵⁵⁴ Rather, Knecht continues, 'Zweck seines Leben scheint ihm die Pflege der Wissenschaften um ihrer selbst willen oder auch das genußvolle Spaziergehen im Garten einer Bildung, die sich gern als eine universale

⁵⁵³ *GPS*, p. 383.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

gebärdet, ohne es doch so ganz zu sein.’⁵⁵⁵ Here, Knecht points out the hypocrisy of a utopian society based on the ideal of a universal form of *Bildung*, which is realised in its purest form in the Glass Bead Game, but which is not equally accessible to all.

The systematic preservation of the Game comes at a social cost. Although not explicitly discriminatory or hateful towards “worldly” people outside the borders of the province, Castalians constitute their own class or caste, which suffers from ‘die charakteristische Adelskrankheit, die Hybris’.⁵⁵⁶ Hesse’s Castalia is therefore a study of what intellectual hubris, and a tendency towards generality, might look like on a social scale. Although Knecht has engaged in a Wittgensteinian form of *Bildung*, by questioning his own assumptions and beliefs and getting some perspective on the rules of his own language-game, this is an atypical experience for Castalians. Thus, through reading *GPS*, we understand the ethical consequences of intellectual hubris if it permeates educational institutions, particularly if it becomes a subliminal ideology of self-importance and self-preservation.

If this privilege can no longer be considered justifiable in a time of crisis (and Hesse’s use of the term ‘aristocrat’ suggests that this privilege was inherited, not earned), then it must be given up. ‘Je höher die Bildung eines Menschen, je größer die Privilegien, die er genoß, desto größer sollen im Fall der Not die Opfer sein, die er bringt’.⁵⁵⁷ Just as monarchies and privileged classes are called into question at times of revolution or dire need, Knecht informs the Erziehungsbehörde that Castalia’s time is almost up: ‘Wir sind geschichtlich, glaube ich, reif zum Abbau’.⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁵⁵ *GPS*, p. 383.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁷ *GPS*, p. 395.

⁵⁵⁸ *GPS*, p. 391.

This is not an empty prophecy, because Knecht is aware that outside of Castalia's borders, a political crisis is brewing and the threat of war is rumbling in the background. 'Schon jetzt sprechen manche unsrer Parlamentarier gelegentlich recht deutlich davon, daß Kastalien ein etwas teurer Luxus für unser Land sei.'⁵⁵⁹

The Glass Bead Game, *as a game*, epitomises the privileged realm or play-world that the Castalians occupy. As a game, it may also seem divorced from the 'real world', frivolous and superficial to non-players, who do not share the deep knowledge of and fascination with its rules and inner workings. Knecht observes that 'das Glasperlenspiel' is 'unse[r] weltfremdeste Disziplin'.⁵⁶⁰ He argues that the Glass Bead Game will be the first discipline to have its funding cut, 'weil es für die Laien ohne Zweifel das entbehrlichste Stück von Kastalien ist.'⁵⁶¹ The Glass Bead Game will not be the only discipline affected, however. Other disciplines and parts of the educational system of Castalia will follow:

[...] so wird man die Eliteschulen einschränken, die Fonds zur Erhaltung und Vermehrung der Bibliotheken und Sammlungen kürzen und schließlich streichen, unsere Mahlzeiten reduzieren, unsre Kleidung nicht mehr erneuern, aber man wird sämtliche Hauptdisziplinen unsrer Universitas Litterarum fortbestehen lassen, nur nicht das Glasperlenspiel.⁵⁶²

Knecht adds, drily, 'Mathematik braucht man auch, um neue Schutzwaffen zu erfinden', whereas the Glass Bead Game will have no equivalent use.⁵⁶³ The 'Abbau' of educational institutions may be somewhat inevitably triggered, but not necessarily by forces for good.

⁵⁵⁹ *GPS*, p. 391.

⁵⁶⁰ *GPS*, p. 397.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*

Despite the apocalyptic outlook of Knecht's letter to the *Behörde*, Castalia and its humanist ideals are not entirely lost within the enormous 'Prachtbau' of its institutions. Indeed, Knecht argues that now is the time, 'das Streben nach der Wahrheit als unsern obersten Glaubenssatz zu retten.'⁵⁶⁴ Castalians are individuals who have tirelessly devoted themselves to improving themselves within their disciplines. They must now step forward as defenders of the truth against 'Lügen und Fälschungen', at times when 'im Kampf der Interessen und Schlagworte die Wahrheit in Gefahr kommt'.⁵⁶⁵ Although his language sounds idealist, there is very much a need for non-partisan, knowledgeable, informed opinions from experts today - particularly when we consider the political bias of most news media outlets. *The Conversation*, an online news platform launched in 2011, could be regarded as operating within the spirit of the Castalians that Knecht describes above. According to their mission statement:

The Conversation is an independent source of news and views, sourced from the academic and research community and delivered direct to the public.

Our team of professional editors work with university and research institute experts to unlock their knowledge for use by the wider public.

Access to independent, high quality, authenticated, explanatory journalism underpins a functioning democracy. Our aim is to allow for better understanding of current affairs and complex issues. And hopefully allow for a better quality of public discourse and conversations.⁵⁶⁶

The Conversation is a product of a time when there is growing disillusionment with politicians and with media bias: 'We aim to help rebuild trust in journalism.'⁵⁶⁷ Its mission is not a million light-years away from Knecht's vision for what Castalia should stand for.

⁵⁶⁴ *GPS*, p. 395.

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁶ 'About The Conversation' <<https://theconversation.com/uk/who-we-are>> [accessed 17 June 2021].

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

However, Castalia is ultimately a closed society. It operates a closed border policy, even resembles a 'police state'.⁵⁶⁸ For example, when Knecht's defection is suspected by the *Behörde*, they send a 'Späher' to observe Knecht's lectures, 'um festzustellen, wie es im Spielerdorf stehe, ob Vernachlässigung zu spüren sei'.⁵⁶⁹ The *Erziehungsbehörde* refuse to accept the grim truths that Knecht lays at their door. Instead, they argue that strict rule-following is necessary for the institution's survival: 'Was würde aus unsrer Hierarchie, wenn es nicht mehr der Orden und der Auftrag der Behörde wäre, der jeden an seinen Platz stellt!'⁵⁷⁰ The player-psychology of the Order's institutional supporters tightens defensively. They decide not to heed Knecht's recommendation that the Order should grant him leave to take Castalian teachers into schools beyond the province. This suggestion is too novel and 'eigenartig' for the *Behörde* to tolerate, and they consider it 'selbstverständlich' to refuse Knecht's request.⁵⁷¹ In their institutional rigidity, their self-absorbed player-psychology, they condemn their form of life to becoming obsolete.

Why should we care if Castalia perishes? Hesse makes clear the ethical consequences of the insular mentality that the *Behörde* upholds. Knecht makes it clear in the *Rundschreiben* that, as an educational establishment, Castalia's institutions have neglected their responsibility to act in the public good. Knecht points out:

Wir müssen den demütigen, an Verantwortung schweren Dienst an den Schulen, den weltlichen Schulen, immer mehr als den wichtigsten und ehrenvollsten Teil unserer Aufgabe erkennen und ausbauen.⁵⁷²

⁵⁶⁸ Durrani, 'Hermann Hesse's Castalia: Republic of Scholars or Police State?'

⁵⁶⁹ *GPS*, 406.

⁵⁷⁰ *GPS*, p. 405.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷² *GPS*, p. 399.

‘Verantwortung’ is of course quite far removed from the child-like, player mentality of the Castalians within the safe space of their game-world. Knecht asserts that the Castalian institutions have an ethical obligation to fulfil, in return for the privilege of their *Bildung*: ‘Lehrer brauchen wir nötiger als alles andre, Männer, die der Jugend die Fähigkeit des Messens und Urteilens beibringen und ihr Vorbilder sind in der Ehrfurcht der Wahrheit.’⁵⁷³ The insular player-psychology of the Castalians within their institutions does not only hurt themselves, but also ‘die weltlichen Schulen draußen, wo die Bürger und Bauern, die Handwerker und Soldaten, die Politiker, Offiziere und Herrscher erzogen und gebildet werden, solange sie noch Kinder und bildsam sind.’⁵⁷⁴

What can we do about intellectual hubris?

The protagonist Knecht offers us a potential model for the *Bildung* of a teacher, that unfolds through his conversations with other characters within and beyond the institutions of Castalia. These formative dialogues can happen in any institution that permits debate and dissent. However, Knecht eventually comes up against a wall when he tries to change the institution he finds himself within. The ending of the novel is not a happy one, either - having undergone a personal development and awakening to the privilege and complacency of Castalian life, Knecht hardly spends any time at all beyond its walls. He ends up drowning in a lake soon after his departure, in an attempt to bond with his new pupil, Tito, through a swimming match. Hence, we need to look beyond the events of the protagonist’s life in order

⁵⁷³ *GPS*, p. 398.

⁵⁷⁴ *GPS*, p. 399.

to understand the true significance of the novel for changing our attitude towards the institutions that we find ourselves within.

This looking at ourselves and our own institutions is encouraged by the novel's self-reflexive framework. Pitched as a non-fictional, historical overview of a discipline and a biography of one of its greatest scholars, written by a representative of the institution that considers itself the preserver and gatekeeper to that discipline, we can observe the institution writing its own history. This is what I shall be referring to as "narrative irony": we view the world from the narrator's perspective, but we are removed from his ideological fascination, and see his insular language-game for what it is, precisely because it is a game that fascinates his society. Through identifying the narrator's ideological bias, we can begin to train ourselves to look in a similarly critical way at the workings of our own institutions. A critical outlook on the institutional 'forms of life' we occupy can help us to avoid intellectual hubris in our own lives, and not take the value of our work for granted. My reading builds on other readers, such as Ziolkowski, Gide and Mann, who see irony and humour as one of the best features of Hesse's writing. My addition to the ironic reading of *GPS* is to demonstrate how this irony is sharpened and intensified by the game analogy. Reading the Game as a heuristic device, similar to Wittgenstein's language-games, we can see the novel as a framework for an anthropological exploration of the language-games within institutions. Hesse's Game, and the framework of narrative irony that he sets it within, do not only open a window onto a future world, but also act as a mirror for us to examine ourselves and our institutions.

Observing the state of play in institutional language games

The *Einleitung* that the narrator sets before the biography is given the title, ‘Das Glasperlenspiel: Versuch einer allgemeinverständlichen Einführung in seine Geschichte’. ‘Allgemeinverständlich’ can be read as helpful in tone, but as we begin reading the introduction it becomes evident that the narrator considers making an understanding of the Game accessible to non-players difficult. The narrator admits that this introduction is not aimed at the initiated, at the ‘Mitgliedern des Ordens’ and ‘den Glasperlenspielern’ - ‘Für jenen engeren Kreis bedürfte unser Buch keiner Einleitung’.⁵⁷⁵ However, the narrator does (perhaps reluctantly) consider it necessary to provide an introduction to the Game to make the book accessible to a wider readership: ‘Da wir jedoch dem Leben und den Schriften unsres Helden auch außerhalb des Ordens Leser wünschen, fällt uns die schwere Aufgabe zu, für jene weniger vorgebildeten Leser eine kleine volkstümliche Einführung in den Sinn und in die Geschichte des Glasperlenspieles dem Buch voranzuschicken.’⁵⁷⁶ Superficially, the narrator (and by extension the Order he represents) has taken on board Knecht’s outward looking attitude, as he is trying to make his book accessible to a wider readership beyond Castalia’s elite institutions. This is the view put forward by Ziolkowski, who believes that the Castalian narrator is ‘the living voice of a Castalia that has achieved what Knecht was striving to achieve’, that is a ‘new and ideal Castalia’.⁵⁷⁷

However, looking more closely, we can detect a hint of condescension.

“Volkstümlich” could imply something along the lines that those outside the

⁵⁷⁵ *GPS*, p. 11.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁷ Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 329.

Game's 'engeren Kreis' are quaint or provincial - it does not occur to the narrator that perhaps it is Castalia that could be considered 'provincial' in the sense that it could be considered a small-minded, closed society. Is this a 'general' introduction for beginners, or an introduction for 'commoners'? For the narrator, wholly given over to player psychology, the 'Game' and its 'Kreis' is at the centre of everything he knows, and it is only logical that readers beyond that circle are considered provincial. He openly admits the unreliability of his account, 'Wir betonen, daß diese Einleitung eine volkstümliche ist und sein will und keinerlei Anspruch darauf erhebt, die innerhalb des Ordens selbst diskutierten Fragen über Probleme des Spieles und seiner Geschichte zu klären. Für eine objective Darstellung dieses Themas ist die Zeit längst noch nicht gekommen.'⁵⁷⁸ The narrator is trying to emphasise that this introduction should not be taken as a 'serious' but rather as a 'popular' one - this could be seen as rightfully humble, but also as deliberately evasive to maintain the Order's air of mystery and prestige. The parody of academic language makes the narrator seem somewhat affected, informative yet standoffish, and drily condescending.

The narrator's supercilious condescension is ironic, given that he is writing a biography about a person who tried to bring about greater humility among Castalians. Hesse's *Alterswerk* is admired by Thomas Mann not for the *Ritterlichkeit* that Ball sees in Hesse's earlier work, but for its irony:

... Thomas Mann, the "Ironic German" par excellence (in Erich Heller's well-known phrase), was captivated by the same quality in *The Glass Bead Game*: "While reading it I felt very strongly how helpful this parodistic element is - the fiction and persiflage of a biography working with learned conjectures - in keeping a late-work like this, which runs the danger of progressive intellectualisation, within manageable limits, in preserving its sense of play [*Spielfähigkeit*]."⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁸ GPS, p. 11.

⁵⁷⁹ Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 65.

The irony that Mann admires in the novel is made possible by the narrative framework - the fact that there are so many textual layers, that are fascinating, frustrating and amusing. It is a novel written by Hermann Hesse, but we are told it is 'herausgegeben' by Hermann Hesse. It is a novel that is also not a novel - it is an academic essay, biography, and collection of poetry and short stories. It is a biography about a Castalian and written in the ostensibly impartial tones of an academic historian, who is careful to state his sources. However, as Durrani points out, the narrator also freely admits that his knowledge of events is incomplete, because 'he does not enjoy free access to all sources of information about his subject'. Durrani comments that the narrator's 'exaggerated claims, especially in support of Castalia and her institutions' mean that his 'credentials are open to question'.⁵⁸⁰ Hesse presents us with a biased, unreliable narrator who openly idolizes the Castalian Order, its culture, its Game and its ideology. Durrani suggests that the narrator's open bias is a red herring. According to Durrani's interpretation, for the narrator, as an inhabitant of Castalia and 'an admirer of the legendary rebel [Knecht],' it is 'virtually essential' for the narrator 'to adopt a position of ironical detachment, if his biography is to be allowed to circulate within the province of whose faults he is so painfully aware.'⁵⁸¹ Durrani's argument is that the overt praise of Castalia values and ideology is a cover for an ironic critique of Castalia's police state.

This interpretation has merit, and it is clear that Hesse's narrator is intentionally ambivalent. However, what is lacking from this reading is why a

⁵⁸⁰ Osman Durrani, "'Cosmic Laughter' or the Importance of Being Ironical: Reflections on the Narrator of Hermann Hesse's *Glasperlenspiel*", *German Life and Letters*, 34.4 (1981), 398-408 (pp. 399-400) <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0483.1981.tb00234.x>>.

⁵⁸¹ Durrani, "'Cosmic Laughter' or the Importance of Being Ironical: Reflections on the Narrator of Hermann Hesse's *Glasperlenspiel*", p. 406.

“Game” should be made the centre of Castalian society. Castalia regarded as a police state is certainly sinister. But Castalia, as a police state that desires to preserve its “Game”, is simultaneously sinister and inconsequential, even ridiculous (it leaves us wondering whether its institutions are truly dangerous or just delusional). There’s an irony in taking a game so seriously. As readers, our sceptical perception of the narrator’s views (and therefore Castalian culture) is made possible by the historical distance between us and the Castalian world/form of life. This historical distance in turn is made possible by the form of the novel - the academic introduction, with its caveats, quotations, and dry tone. It is further ironic that the utopian society set in the future that claims to be timeless is rendered a historical event in historical documents. The form of the novel and resulting irony frame the utopian form of life that has a craving for generality at its centre. It also frames the intellectual hubris of claiming that the principles that one lives by are timeless. So, in a very real sense, this novel is ironizing the ambition to preserve a form of life completely and timelessly within an institution that *will* age, but that denies its historicity - because it believes and perpetuates the ideology that it will last forever, that its form of life is *the* form of life to be aspired to.

A further layer of irony in the novel’s narrative framework derives from the fact that it is a historical account, which is set in the future. *GPS* is speculative fiction: What if the idealistic mission that the ‘Morgenlandfahrer’ desired (the ‘Reinhaltung dieser Sprache’) was achieved? If they did win this ‘Kampf’, they would write history as the narrator does in his *Einleitung*: ‘Wir Heutigen’ looking back on those terrible ‘Unsicherheit and Unechtheit des geistigen Lebens jener Zeit’, looking back with pity on the ‘scheinbaren Siegens und Gedeihens’ and

‘Periode politischer und kriegerischer Gewitter’.⁵⁸² The narrator is very good at describing the relativity of the cultural values of the *Bildungsbürger*, recounting how ‘die von Bürger geliebte Bildung, die von ihm geliebte Kunst keine echte Bildung und keine echte Kunst mehr sein sollte’.⁵⁸³ But the narrator is not so good at acknowledging the relativity of his own cultural values. The narrator is constantly emphasising the temporal difference between the past culture and his own culture - ‘wir Heutigen’, ‘wir, Erben’, ‘wir Nachfahren’⁵⁸⁴. A continuity is drawn (‘Erben’, ‘Nachfahren’) in connection with the proto-Castalians, but a distance is established with the earlier ‘feuilletonistische Zeit’, as if from a point of ‘progress’ in an enlightened future.

The collective ‘we’ seems very self-assured that their civilisation represents progress: ‘Wir glauben ... das Bild jener Kultur, deren Erben wir sind, reiner und richtiger zu sehen.’⁵⁸⁵ The sense of superiority (therefore hubris) is undeniable here. Castalia has taken a step forward in this *Einleitung* by writing its own history, the narrator acknowledges ‘die Quellen, [...] aus welchen unser heutiger Kulturbegriff entstand’.⁵⁸⁶ But it does not use that history to acknowledge with humility the origins of its ‘Bildung’ in a materialistic *Bildungsbürgertum*; instead Castalia is now using the narrative of its history (the conception of the Game by the ‘Morgenlandfahrer’) to support the pedigree and continuation of its ideology. They still believe themselves superior to past culture, they still subscribe to the Spenglerian idea of cultural “progress”/decline, and therefore to a general concept of Culture with a capital ‘c’. If we think of an institution that, for

⁵⁸² *GPS*, p. 21.

⁵⁸³ *GPS*, p. 22.

⁵⁸⁴ *GPS*, p. 21, p. 25.

⁵⁸⁵ *GPS*, p. 26.

⁵⁸⁶ *GPS*, p. 25.

example, acknowledges its dependence on colonialism for its foundation, but then denies that those origins have a lasting relevance to 'wir Heutigen', then we have a problem with intellectual hubris - the idea that our principles and study of Culture are timeless, uncorrupted, and pure.

As speculative fiction, written by a future narrator looking back with pity mingled with wry contempt for the past, we may reflect on how we would write the history of our own institutions. Would we be able to write about those values, which we uphold through our institutional language-games, without also drawing lines between 'us' and 'them', 'then' and 'now', the 'players' and the 'non-players'? Without assuming a hubristic superiority? The choice to set the novel in the future, which we observed in Chapter 2 as a decision taken after successive drafts of the *Einleitung*, is important. The implication of this future setting is that, even if some extraordinary character like Knecht (or Wittgenstein?) were to shatter the foundations of present-day institutions, institutions will continue find the act of self-criticism difficult, even centuries later. This is the inevitable result of conservational efforts on the part of players to preserve their language-games. The conservative attitude cannot be changed once and for all, but will require constant vigilance, whatever century we find ourselves in. The work of an institution's work on itself does not end.

The novel's ironic scaffolding presents a gateway into discussion about humanistic attempts to establish educational programmes, such as the Steiner Schools (named after Rudolf Steiner), where Michael Bell claims that Goethe's 'brand of holism was to become a distinctly minority expression'.⁵⁸⁷ Martin Swales

⁵⁸⁷ Michael Bell, *Open Secrets: Literature, Education, and Authority from J-J. Rousseau to J. M. Coetzee* (Oxford, UNITED KINGDOM: Oxford University Press USA - OSO, 2007), p. 106

describes how Hesse's work also resonates in light of Meinecke's proposal of 'Goethe communities' in *The Great Catastrophe* (1946), which would be small, locally-run communities that would meet in a church to discuss the great works of literature of the past, as a way of rebuilding German cultural life after the disastrous years of the Nazi regime.⁵⁸⁸ In Hesse's speculative fiction, facilitated by the idea of an artificial "game", we see what might happen if these humanist projects got their own way; the flourishing of a cultivated way of life and the minoritarian direction they could be taken in. By seeing an educational institution as a Game, we are encouraged not to take it too seriously, to avoid an attitude like Meinecke's, which Swales describes as an 'unreflective reinstatement of the ideal of *Bildung*'.⁵⁸⁹

Conclusion

How has our reading of these texts been enriched by the comparison? Reading *GPS* through the lens of Wittgenstein's *Sprachspiele* helps us to see why Hesse chose "Spiel" as Castalia's central discipline as a way of framing and acknowledging the craving for generality. By beginning with Wittgenstein, we're able to see Hesse's Glass Bead Game as a language-game, framed with irony. This ironic reading adds another layer to a "face value" reading of the novel as inventing the Game as the foundation for a utopian society and blueprint for a better world.

By comparing Wittgenstein with Hesse, we can see more clearly what is at stake if we don't frame our craving for generality. *PU* introduces *Sprachspiele* as a

<<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/oxford/detail.action?docID=415608>> [accessed 9 May 2019].

⁵⁸⁸ Swales, pp. 143-44.

⁵⁸⁹ Swales, p. 144.

way of getting us to change our attitude from a generalising, theoretical one to one that looks at the everyday and the practical. The pedagogical purpose of the book is to help us to work through our intellectual hubris. On an individual level, hubris might hinder us from a critical self-awareness of our own deeply held but flawed assumptions; but on an institutional level, particularly within an educational institution like Hesse's Castalian order, intellectual hubris can be disastrous. The rules of play can be a constructive aid to learning, but remaining entirely within the 'safe place' that games provide for learning can be damaging in the long-term. It can lead to hubris on a collective level, and therefore an increasingly closed community, a fly-bottle echo chamber in place of an institution that should have been providing a public service. The novel's game analogy does not provide a solution, but it helps to clarify how and why tensions exist within institutions - the fine line between elitism based on skill alone and systematic exclusion; between being aided by teaching and being governed by doctrine; between preserving a practice and performing a ritual ceremony that has become hollow. All of this may be implicit in Wittgenstein's book, and in his body of work as a whole, but it is difficult to tease out. *GPS* helps us make the leap from the personal consequences of reading *PU* to the institutional consequences.

An important aspect of the novel is not only the undermining of intellectual hubris, but also an exploration of how this hubris and the need to preserve culture and values through tradition and institutions comes about. In an effort to preserve the pedagogical (and therefore ethical) value of *Bildung*, the proto-Castalians practiced what they believed was 'best' in culture. The Game began as an incidental way to practice this. As its popularity increased and it spread to other disciplines, it eventually came to be the epitome of everything that Castalia

valued - the devotion to the search for 'truth' and the pursuit of knowledge. Their commitment to their ideals is relatable, perhaps even admirable, but it means that they view themselves above practical questions - for example, why should the state fund their activities with public money? Being above such questions is another manifestation of intellectual hubris.

Once the Game becomes incorporated and conserved within an institution, it is almost inevitable that it will lead to a culturally conservative attitude among its players (in a similar way to how the institutionalisation of *Bildung* has). Cultural conservatism (the belief in a thing such as 'true' culture, which is found in particular texts) can lead to educational elitism (the belief that only a few are able to access this culture). It is one thing to say that a deep knowledge of a game requires dedicated practice over a number of years, and that only a few people reach this status. Under this definition of elitism, there is 'nothing wrong' with it because theoretically, anyone can learn to play the game. It is quite another thing to exclude people based on where they are born, and their gender (in Castalia, only male children born within the province can access its educational institutions).

Reading Hesse in a Wittgensteinian way helps us to see what is in the novel all along, and to answer some of the questions which *PU* leaves unanswered for students and educators alike. If we see institutions as a form of life, or forms of life, or as a Game, as a language-game - then we can see that the rules guide our behaviour but they are not binding; that when we follow a rule, we are perfectly within our rights to ask why we follow that particular rule; that just like games, our forms of life are not determined but can and will change. Self-honesty and

self-criticism is not just desirable in an institution - it is necessary for its survival and longevity. An institution needs to work on itself, and this is possible because an institution is not just a structure of rules and ideology - it is also a community, it is iterations of lived practices. To quote Dewey: 'For any theory and set of practices is dogmatic which is not based upon critical examination of its own underlying principles.'⁵⁹⁰

It is all very well to *say* this; and I'm sure my reader would not have thought this statement any less true if I had put it at the beginning of my chapter than at the end. But the *experience* of reading Wittgenstein and Hesse, the coming to terms with our own craving for generality and how it plays out within an institutional context, and connecting the personal and the institutional with the analogy of games, deepened my conviction that what Dewey says is true. This chapter is therefore a deepening of what may already be known through the experience of reading of these texts together.

⁵⁹⁰ Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 10.

Thesis Conclusion

In the first two chapters, we saw how Hesse's and Wittgenstein's interest in pedagogy arose independently from their cultural pessimism. On the one hand, they felt that *Kultur* was in decline and lacking in pedagogical value. They believed that the ethical, transformative value of learning and reading (what I denote as *Bildung* in philosophy and in literature) was no longer present, in the general reading public or even universities, which might have been considered strongholds of cultural education. On the other hand, neither of them allowed their cultural pessimism to steer their writing into *Kulturkritik*. They wanted to avoid this direction in their writing, because they realised that a) their tastes were traditional, based mostly in previous centuries, and an assertion of it would be reactionary and unproductive; b) secondly, even as they criticise the state of culture, they realise that their ideal version of culture - not for consumption or self-flattery but for bettering ourselves (*Bildung*) - cannot be easily replicated on a large scale. If they push for this version of *Kultur* in their writings, they may fall into the trap of condoning an elite - their own *Kulturkreis*. Wittgenstein's draft preface and Hesse's editorial changes to the first drafts of *GPS* showed that they wanted to acknowledge the limitations of their own *Kreis*, to frame the echo chamber of those who have too much complacency in their own views on cultural value and what a 'good' education entailed.

"Games" emerged in Chapter 1 as a way of thinking about how we learn within a set of pre-existing "rules" or social conventions. The idea of objective

cultural value is not done away with *entirely*, but as a way of seeing that these “rules” are not set in stone, or the equivalent of natural laws. For Wittgenstein in the 1930s, *Sprachspiele* start out as a descriptive and comparative frame within which to think of our linguistic activities (and therefore cultural activities more generally) as rule-guided activities, for which there is not necessarily a metaphysical justification or explanation. In his lectures on aesthetics, for instance, we were able to think of playing music or reading poetry aloud as a skilled activity, without needing to fall back on high-minded conceptions or definitions of what aesthetic value is. Instead of trying to define abstract concepts like Beauty, Good Art or Culture, Wittgenstein adopted a descriptive or “anthropological” view of culture as rule- or convention-guided *activities*. *Sprachspiele* became a way of talking about the multiplicity of these activities, and as such are a complementary analogy to *Familienähnlichkeiten*, as a correction and adaptation of Spengler. *Sprachspiele* were effectively a disarming device to dismiss the ‘craving for generality’, i.e. the urge to explain the conventions by which we operate - “why is art beautiful?” for instance. This does not entail a suppression of curiosity, but encourages us to replace vague questions with specific ones relating to lived, everyday experience, e.g. “In what circumstances would I say that a painting is ‘beautiful’”?

In *PU*, we saw how the boundaries between actual games (such as chess) and language-games (such as counting in the classroom) become blurred. “Spiel” is no longer merely an analogy, as it was in the *Blue Book*, to help us see our behaviours as simplified rule-following. Rather, the nebulosity of the term “Spiel” itself is explored in far greater depth in *PU*, leading us to also consider how we cope with the analogously nebulous concept ‘language’. The learning process

we go through in *PU* is essentially a therapeutic one, because Wittgenstein acknowledges and *eases* our craving for generality; rather than confronting it impatiently and dismissively as a “pseudo-problem” as he might have in the early 1930s. Language-game scenarios are introduced which call into question the very idea that play is *always* an activity with *clear* rules. These are accompanied by other analogies, metaphors, examples, aphorisms, imaginative exercises, and thought-experiments which guide the reader tacitly through a learning process - to sharpen our observation, particularly of our own assumptions, and to ease our craving for a theory of everything, a craving for generality (e.g., to replicate the rules of our language in perfect symbolic logic). *PU* thus encourages the reader to deepen their self-knowledge and honesty with themselves, to *sich bilden*.

We even saw how the author-narrator of *PU* reflected on their own *Bildung*, for instance when they reflect on the flaws of *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*. *PU* shows the influence of Wittgenstein’s years of teaching, insofar as it is written in a dialogic style. The process of transforming ourselves is an experience we go through with the author-narrator as we read. Instead of teaching from the authoritative standpoint of someone who has already completed the learning process, Wittgenstein invites us into an open-ended process of questioning and reflection which, like play, does not necessarily have an end-goal or fixed purpose. *PU* presents *sich bilden* as an *ongoing* process that is not individualistic (it doesn’t occur within a vacuum; it emphasises the importance on context and one’s position within an interpersonal context). Rather than an individualistic form of *Bildung*, Wittgenstein’s is an understated, *personal* one - much unlike the process we usually think of as *Bildung* (the 19th century idealism of the transformation of the

self, the notions about what is culturally valuable for our transformational learning, our assimilation to and orientation around a canon).

In fact, the humility of Wittgenstein's approach is such that the text can be interpreted as quietist or culturally conservative. Wittgenstein chooses to remain silent whereof he cannot speak, acknowledging his situation within a specific *Kulturkreis* and his own deeply held Spenglerian assumptions about what "good" culture is. The therapeutic approach of *PU* has become necessarily personal. The easing of the craving for generality in *PU* is humbling for anyone who thinks they might be able to crown philosophy the discipline of all disciplines, and logic the key to unlocking the secrets of the structure of reality. It is humbling for those who believe that by pursuing a super- or meta-discipline in this way, they might reach the lofty heights of intellectual superiority. What is at stake here though, other than the odd eccentric Faustian professor getting too absorbed in their philosophy or becoming out of touch? Through comparison with *GPS* we can get a clearer idea of what is at stake for education and institutions if we do not curb our craving for generality.

Through our analysis of *PU*, we identified a gap - what is the point of undergoing therapy for our intellectual hubris by means of Wittgenstein's language-games? Hesse's novel has helped to address this gap. As a novel which draws on similar analogies between play and learning, I have used it to extend Wittgenstein's figurative use of *Sprachspiele* to an institutional context. *Institutional* education is something that is absent from the picture in Wittgenstein's work. Hesse shares Wittgenstein's conviction that education is necessarily personal (i.e. 'Arbeit an Einem Selbst' or *sich bilden*). Hesse also shares

Wittgenstein's concerns about a craving for generality (in *GPS*, this is what motivates the Castalian characters to build their civilisation, and what ultimately leads to Castalian society becoming an ivory tower). At first glance, the "Glass Bead Game" seems to embody the craving for generality that Wittgenstein disliked in the logical positivists, that he wanted to discourage in his students and that he even criticises his former work (the *Tractatus*) for having fallen under the spell of. In its early drafts during the 1930s, this may have even been one plausible reading of *GPS*. As a follow-on from *MLF*, it appealed to members of a disillusioned and disinherited European intellectual diaspora in Hesse's *Kulturkreis*, who were troubled by the rise of political extremes into the mainstream; an apparent loss of respect for humanist values; a 'decline' in 'culture' through its popularisation, commodification and politicisation. Huizinga, the author of *Homo Ludens*, was one example of this attitude, held by members of Hesse's literary acquaintances and Wittgenstein himself.

However, a closer reading of *MLF*, as well as an examination of changes to subsequent drafts of *GPS* in the early 1930s, revealed that Hesse's sympathy with a culturally pessimistic frame of mind was coupled with a healthy dose of irony. By presenting an insular intellectual community as a "Game" and its players, who take their game so seriously that they are unable to conceive of anything more important, shows us how intellectual hubris can lead to an exclusive, minoritarian culture within institutions and a complacency about the value of the academic work undertaken within them. This complacency endangers the cultural values that the institutions were set up to defend. The novel shows how ideals can become ideologies when institutional communities become too inward-facing. This movement may be a defensive reaction from economic or political pressures on the

institution, but it is nevertheless damaging to the institution that claims to produce public goods.

The “Game” is a key device for bringing about this realisation. If we think of it as a *Sprachspiel*, it becomes easier to see it not as a utopian innovation but rather as a sympathetic yet satirising framing device. Hesse’s own version of a language-game brings into focus the player-psychology of cultural institutions, particularly when they come under threat in times of political turmoil. This is exemplified in other ways in the novel’s form, e.g. when the narrator does not only omit an explanation of the Game’s rules, he *refuses* to explain the rules - claiming that they would not make sense if unaccompanied by long years of experience and practice in the discipline of the Game. Although a justifiable explanation of the necessity of expertise in truly understanding a certain practice, the attitude that refuses the rules to the reader means that, to them, the Game seems even more exclusive, because its inner workings are hidden from view. In this respect, Hesse takes Wittgenstein’s interest in rule-following a step further, showing how language-game players might self-consciously assert the exclusiveness of their form of life.

GPS therefore uses the game analogy to call into question the deep-seated complacency in our institutions’ cultural values and what constitutes a good education - but it *also* reveals the deep difficulties of preserving educational and cultural values from economic/political pressures. It reveals the difficulty of maintaining a balance between preserving what is really important for future generations, while also remaining relevant to the here and now, being aware of one’s place in the world and one’s responsibility to the taxpayer who funds higher

education and research. Through Hesse's novel, we come to understand institutions not only as structures, sets of dogmatic rules - but also as communities, groups of players. The communities, the players, are the way in which the Game (and the institutions it represents) can develop and adapt.

When read side by side, *PU* and *GPS* give us a fuller understanding of each other. For Wittgenstein, 'games' are analogous to everyday cultural activities because they are played according to rules/conventions, even though the foundation of these rules cannot be explained by reference to a higher purpose; that is just 'the way the game is played'. This allows Wittgenstein to use "games" as a heuristic device for students of philosophy, to curb what he calls their 'craving for generality', their desire to generalise and make abstract claims about the 'purpose' of art, 'good' poetry etc. Hesse's use of 'games' is quite different - he imagines a single fictional game and investigates player psychology 'from within' the players' circle. The question of why it is necessary to take games seriously (or to not take them seriously) is much more important for Hesse than for Wittgenstein. While Wittgenstein uses 'games' as a way of disabling questions about the higher purpose of engaging with culture through art, literature etc., Hesse tries to consider the question of why this is significant that people take their 'play' with culture (too) seriously. Wittgenstein's language-game analogy (particularly in the 1930s, but not so much later in the final version of *PU*) relies heavily on the aspect of rule-following to represent everyday activities. Hesse too is interested in rule-following, but also the way in which 'play' can act as a counter-culture and something *separate* from the status-quo. Play is an aid to learning through Wittgenstein's 'language games' devices, whereas play exceeds any figurative role as an analogy or metaphor in Hesse's novel; it *becomes* an

alternative form of learning for Hesse's Castalian narrator and his proto-Castalian characters, the *Morgenlandfahrer*. What unites Hesse's and Wittgenstein's writing is the 'spirit' of *Bildung* in which they are written. Each in their own way, Hesse and Wittgenstein use 'games' in an attempt to revive in their readers the spirit of *Bildung* - to encourage them to engage with convention ('what makes a good poem', 'what makes good art') in such a way that does not merely conform to it, but can become genuinely transformed by it.

We are no longer just talking about *Bildung* here - this is a problem that extends beyond the German tradition. A note here about the meaning of "elite": "elite" can mean an exclusive system or group of people, or it can also mean "highly skilled", in the sense of "elite chess players". I mean both of these meanings when I am talking about elite educational institutions. This is because both are found in "elite" circles - the world of elite chess players, for example, appears to be a rarefied world to those who are less skilled at the game. There are of course elites who relish their aloofness. This kind of vanity is also a kind of intellectual hubris that some Castalians are guilty of. The consequence of reading Wittgenstein is to conclude that "elite" play is not really so rarefied, it is just practiced skill. (This realisation helps both those who aspire to the rarefied plane and undermines those who parade their membership of the elite.) The consequence of reading Hesse is to realise that intellectual hubris has more serious consequences for institutions, other than being guilty of the sin of vanity. When a skilled elite becomes a systematically exclusive elite, the public value of the of the institution will decrease. Eventually, public funding will be withdrawn, and the elite will lose their 'play-ground' - and so the conditions of having the financial security, time and space to practice their disciplines is removed.

By thinking about the differences between Wittgenstein's ordinary language games and Hesse's extraordinary Glass Bead Game, we can visualise two different ways of understanding the term "elite". Firstly, an "elite" can mean a select group of people who have become "highly skilled", in the sense of "elite chess players". Here, the idea of an elite is not systematically unjust, but instead is the result of a process of increasing commitment to and refinement of a certain skill. However, we can conceive of "elites" (and indeed games) in a second, exclusive way. This would be where there were systematic barriers in place that perpetuate the elite's position as if they are a kind of aristocracy and entitled to their position. In the example of Hesse's pedagogical province, the Glass Bead Game players might be regarded as an elite who have devoted their lives to the practice and study of a game. However, Castalia is not a society where everyone is entitled to the same opportunities. There are no women in its education systems, and there is an implied but absent working class who produce the clothing and food for the Castalian scholars. The fictional province therefore exemplifies *both* forms of elitism, whereas the "players" of Wittgenstein's language-games are not situated in a hierarchy. In the "language-game view", no one game takes prestige over others.

Reading these works together may help practising scholars navigate current debates about the value of the humanities and higher education institutions more generally. Specifically, there are a number of tensions which could be usefully investigated within the frame of "games". In *Critical Elitism*, Alfred Moore summarises the conundrum facing academic institutions:

The conceptual and institutional separation of expertise from politics seems to some democrats as a threat, and to others as a promise. On the one hand, only

from outside politics, and with insulation from the logic of political struggle, can expertise deliver the kinds of goods that are expected of it: informing political and public deliberation, empowering collective will and telling truth to power. Expertise has the potential to operate as a constraint on politics, as a rationalising, stabilising counterweight against ignorance and expediency among both publics and elites. Expertise is seen as a potential nourishment for processes of communication and opinion-formation, and as an indispensable aspect of the collective power to act. The politicisation of expertise seems to erode its capacity to deliver these goods. On the other hand, conceiving expertise as outside politics seems to grant a form of unaccountable power, and seems to endanger the democratic good of inclusion. The cloak of political neutrality may simply mask the operation of unaccountable interests.⁵⁹¹

Although written in the context of increasing scepticism in the UK about “experts” regarding political decision-making (for example about climate change), what Moore describes here is reminiscent of the dilemmas Hesse’s novel was grappling with in 1943. The novel is therefore relevant beyond the 20th century context it was responding to, namely the rise of the National Socialists in Germany and the perceived decline in *Bildung* more generally. The novel is testimony to a fictional subsection of society that managed to deal with these problems, at the expense of an inclusive education system and equality. The idea of requiring a skilled elite of “experts” to set up educational institutions is at odds with the democratic education systems that can ‘produce citizens in and for a health democracy’, as Martha Nussbaum argues for in *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*.

Indeed, by saturating an entire institution with the language-games of *Bildung*, Hesse shows us what Russell Berman says, when he explains that ‘*Bildung* itself, with its emphatic insistence on privatistic and non-political constructions of individuality, could be found to be fundamentally premodern, a relic of old Germany, incongruous in a twentieth-century democracy.’ The *Bildung* cherished

⁵⁹¹ Alfred Moore, *Critical Elitism: Deliberation, Democracy, and the Problem of Expertise*, 1st edn (Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 57 <<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108159906>>.

by the Castalians is in fact *not* a universal ideal, but a language-game rooted in ‘predemocratic political structures’ and relied on the ‘economic basis of the German middle class’.⁵⁹² Berman tries to recover *Bildung* as a timeless concept, by arguing that ‘*The Magic Mountain* preserves education as a universal human potential, not merely as a bourgeois privilege.’⁵⁹³ However, as Hesse’s novel demonstrates, it is difficult to prevent an ideal from becoming an ideology once it is formalised in the rules of a mass education system.

There is so much more to say about the value of the humanities or higher education institutions more generally, if we were to think of them as communities of players undertaking language-games. I will leave that work to others. Instead, I hope that this thesis has achieved the smaller aim of those people who have read Wittgenstein but not Hesse to read Hesse, and those who have read Hesse to read (or re-read!) him with Wittgenstein. Using this comparison, my ambition has been to draw a connection between two kinds of *Bildung*: between the work we do on ourselves, and the work we can do within and on our institutions. I hope that the reading of these two books will provide a way into seeing and making use of that connection for working teachers and researchers.

For both Hesse and Wittgenstein, the work on oneself and within institutions has to be ongoing. For myself, and combined with my own experience, this led to the realisation that to be a good teacher at a university also necessitates being a researcher, and to be a good researcher at a university also necessitates teaching. To be a good teacher you yourself need to remain constantly curious, constantly searching and questioning. To develop this in oneself means having the time,

⁵⁹² Berman, p. 91.

⁵⁹³ Berman, pp. 91-92.

space, and financial means to undertake research. Wittgenstein himself, and Hesse's protagonist, are models of a good teacher in this sense, because they did not regard themselves as having attained knowledge and as being at the end of the learning process, imparting knowledge to their students. As Wittgenstein's dialogic lectures and writing style, and Hesse's *Bildungsroman* demonstrate, there is much that can be learned from talking to one's students and getting their perspective. Each new generation of students provides a fresh perspective on the same texts that are studied year after year. Devoting oneself to research without teaching puts oneself in danger of closing oneself off from interactions with others and seeing one's research in perspective; of seeing it through the eyes of others. Perhaps reading these two books might be similarly useful for someone else, and I hope this thesis recommends it to them.

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