

**Counterfeit Magic and the Modern Novel. A Comparison of Thomas
Mann's *Der Zauberberg* and André Gide's *Les Faux-monnayeurs*.**

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I declare:

a) that this thesis has been composed by me, and

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Abstract

Soon after their appearance in the mid-1920s, Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* and André Gide's *Les Faux-monnayeurs* attracted considerable critical attention as significant contributions to innovative forms of novel-writing. Both works were discussed in the context of the "crisis of the novel" and seen as particularly convincing responses to the problems experienced by the genre. Mann's and Gide's novel were linked with each other on a number of occasions; in these discussions, however, the emphasis was normally placed on one aspect only, leaving the question of the breadth of their achievement in the context of the modern novel unanswered.

The comparative study of *Der Zauberberg* and *Les Faux-monnayeurs* undertaken in this thesis is designed to evaluate their many-faceted contributions to the development of new fictional forms. The discussion of the novels ensues with respect to five areas which have emerged as decisive in describing innovative trends in the novel genre in the 1920s and beyond. These are: the introduction of significant reflexive or self-reflexive elements; the subsequent weakening of the plot and changes in the handling of temporality; the yielding of an omniscient narratorial stance in favour of a more nuanced, ambivalent use of perspective; the increased rôle given to the reader in the elaboration of meaning; the appropriation of structures from other art forms, notably music, and the response to the ascendant medium film as offered by the two novels in question.

The discussion of the works themselves, in particular the examination of temporality, invites reflections on Mann's and Gide's concepts of history. The innovations in plot structure, which form one of the most striking aspects of both novels, are strongly determined by the experiences of the First World War and reveal themselves as reflections of an altered sense of history. Finally, an attempt is made to interpret *Der Zauberberg* and *Les Faux-monnayeurs* in the light of the challenge posed to the novel's traditional forms by the advent of the film.

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Introduction

In 1924 Thomas Mann sent André Gide a copy of *Der Zauberberg*, saying that the novel was so *German* and *problematic* he did not in the least expect him to read it: “je vous assure déjà aujourd’hui, que je ne m’attends pas le moins du monde à ce que vous le lisiez. C’est une chose tellement problématique et ‘allemande’ et de dimensions tellement monstrueuses, que je dois être persuadé de son impossibilité européenne”.¹ It did not take much, however, to persuade Mann of the exact opposite: less than three years later in 1927, in a letter to Félix Bertaux, Thomas Mann, having read a review of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* by E.R. Curtius,² in which Gide’s novel is linked with *Der Zauberberg* for the first time, claims that Curtius expresses an affinity between the two novels which he himself had always sensed. In this letter Mann refers back to an oyster breakfast he and Bertaux had enjoyed on the Champs Elysées on the last day of his visit to Paris in 1926, in the course of which he had expressed his strong interest in introducing *Der Zauberberg* to France because of its contemporary relevance, “das aktuelle, geistige und europäische Interesse” of the work. He then goes on to say that of all his books *Der Zauberberg* is, in fact, his most interesting for France:

Ich bin auch heute noch überzeugt, daß dieses Buch für Frankreich unter allen meinen Werken das interessanteste ist, und wurde in dieser Meinung noch kürzlich bestärkt durch einen deutschen Artikel, der die ‘Faux-monnayeurs’ von Gide mit dem ‘Zauberberg’ vergleicht und eine innere Verwandtschaft feststellt, von der ich selbst schon eine Ahnung gehabt hatte.³

Only a short period of time since the appearance of Thomas Mann’s *Der Zauberberg* (1924) and André Gide’s *Les Faux-monnayeurs* (1925) had elapsed when critics observed an affinity between the two novels, highlighting features common to both works, in particular the fusion of “epic” with “critical” elements. These were seen as contributing towards the shaping of the “modern novel” at the time of its flourishing in the

¹ Thomas Mann, letter to André Gide 22.8.1924 in: *Thomas Mann Selbstkommentare: Der Zauberberg* (henceforth *Selbstkommentare*), Frankfurt/Main 1993, p. 44.

² E.R. Curtius, “Les Faux-monnayeurs” in: *Die neue Rundschau* Jg. 37, H. 12, vol. 2 (Dec. 1926), 646-656.

³ Thomas Mann, letter to Félix Bertaux 7.2.1927 in: *Selbstkommentare*, p. 95.

1920s. Thomas Mann was extremely flattered by these comparisons, and saw Gide as kindred spirit. In a review of A. J. Guérard's monograph, *André Gide*, Mann sought to liken his own relationship to tradition and innovation with that of Gide:

Von den 'Falschmünzern', sagt Guérard, sie seien als Experiment viel weniger radikal als 'Ulysses' und dabei doch unrealistischer. Er nennt Gide, mit sehr gutem Wort, 'a cautious radical and a daring conservative' – und gerade diese Verfassung ist es, die mir das Eingeständnis brüderlicher Empfindungen entlockt.⁴

It seems that the authors of early comparisons of the two novels in question were particularly struck by the fusion of epic with reflexive or self-reflexive elements, seeing in this move away from "traditional storytelling" an important innovation. Curtius had rejected the popular comparison of Gide and Dostoevsky, linking *Les Faux-monnayeurs* with *Der Zauberberg* instead. He drew attention to the juxtaposition of "new" critical with more traditional "narrative" elements in both novels, proclaiming Mann and Gide to be "Künstler der Reflexion": "Beider Schaffen zeigt den alternierenden Rhythmus von kritischer Erörterung und epischen Bildern". Curtius goes on to articulate the threat this move poses to the traditional mimetic function of the novel: "Der Roman wird sich von der Beugung unter die Wirklichkeit lösen, um nur noch Ausdruck der geistigen Reflexion über das Leben zu werden".⁵ Instead of striving towards a reflection *of* reality, the novel will henceforth reflect *upon* that reality.

One year later, Edouard Korrodi, in a similar vein to Curtius, discussed *Der Zauberberg*, *Les Faux-monnayeurs* and Joyce's *Ulysses* as examples of "Der Kritizismus im europäischen Roman", evaluating, like Curtius, their reflexive tendencies in a positive light and defending the authors against the criticism being voiced in various quarters that the inclusion of reflexive elements was symptomatic of an inability to tell a tale in the old way. Korrodi refers to the Naphta/Settembrini conversations in *Der Zauberberg* as "schwere[r] Dialoge [...], die in ihrer Substanz Kultur- und Zeitkritik sind; Dialoge, die sich als Aufsätze entlarven", making it clear that these reflexive elements represent something

⁴ Thomas Mann, "André Gide von Albert J. Guérard", *Gesammelte Werke in 13 Bänden* (henceforth *GW*), X, Frankfurt/Main 1974, p. 809.

⁵ Curtius, "Les Faux-monnayeurs", p. 647.

which cannot easily be subsumed by the plot, and whose presence contribute to the controversy surrounding the “crisis of the novel”:

Es gibt doch eifernde Schriftgelehrte, die solche Abschweifungen und kritische Besinnlichkeiten als Mischungen und Trübungen des erzählenden Stiles verwerfen, ja die Verdächtigung murmeln, solche Epiker gingen auf Verwirrung und Täuschung aus, weil sie nicht mehr tatenhaft erzählen können.⁶

Kenneth Burke's comparison of the novels, whilst insightful, restricts the discussion primarily to a thematic level and makes little attempt to assess the significance of the formal innovations made by Thomas Mann and Gide. “To turn from *The Magic Mountain* to *The Counterfeiters* is to turn from brooding to shrewdness” Burke writes, summing up the differences, as he sees them, between the two works:

The reader of *The Magic Mountain* may have to deal with the fruits of complexity on the part of the author, but he receives them simply. The reader of *The Counterfeiters* finds complexity unresolved – he is not even at liberty to differentiate between the absurd and the beautiful. He is left fluctuant, in great tenuousness of moral values.⁷

In this rather enigmatic comment Burke points perhaps to a possible consideration of the rôle of the reader in the elaboration of meaning, yet refrains from further elucidation. Only considerably later, in the theoretical writings of Iser, Booth and Jauss is the rôle of the reader given the attention it deserves.

In 1931, Hermann Broch described the contemporary novel in terms of an expansion of its traditional ambit, which allowed for the introduction of reflexive elements. He mentioned the important precedents set by Mann, Gide, Joyce, Musil, and (to a lesser extent) Huxley and announced: “Die Zeit des polyhistorischen Romans ist angebrochen”. Reluctant to lump all “reflexive” authors together as the other commentators on the “modern novel” had done, Broch set Joyce apart and criticised the others for adopting only half-hearted measures:

So sehr Gide, Musil, der Zauberberg, in letzter Derivation Huxley als Symptome des kommenden polyhistorischen Romans auch zu werten sind, so sehr finden Sie bei allen diesen die fürchterliche Einrichtung der ‘gebildeten’ Rede, um den Polyhistorismus unterbringen zu können. Bei den meisten dieser Autoren steht die Wissenschaft, steht die

⁶ Edouard Korrodi, “Der Kritizismus im europäischen Roman” in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 6. 11. 1927 (Blatt 6), 9.11.1927 (Blatt 1) and 11.11. 1927 (Blatt 6).

⁷ Kenneth Burke, “Thomas Mann and André Gide” in: *Bookmann LXXI* (June 1930), 257-264.

Bildung wie ein kristallener Block neben ihrem eigentlichen Geschäft, und sie brechen einmal dieses Stückchen, ein andermal jenes Stückchen davon ab, um ihre Erzählung damit aufzuputzen.⁸

Broch criticises Gide, Musil, Mann and Huxley for failing to fully integrate the new, reflexive elements into their “proper business” of story-telling.

Hermann Weigand, in his 1933 analysis of *Der Zauberberg*⁹ extended his discussion of the novel’s “ironic temper”, i.e. its ability to reflect on issues outwith the traditional boundaries of the novel form, especially poetological matters, to include *Les Faux-monnayeurs*. For Weigand, Thomas Mann’s novel is *self-reflexive*, rather than reflexive. Having described Thomas Mann’s novel in terms of “Self-consciousness playing with its own content, reflecting it in a series of mirrors that make it sparkle on a succession of planes simultaneously,”¹⁰ Weigand adds in a footnote:

In the field of contemporary literature I can think of only one other novel that attempts anything of this sort. I have reference to André Gide’s *Les Faux-monnayeurs* – it also a dual entity, presenting at once the created product and the creative process by which it comes into being.¹¹

Reflection or self-reflection in the novel was of course nothing new, but an ideal espoused by the Romantics, as Weigand repeatedly points out: one need only think of Schlegel’s statement: “Kritik und Philosophie des Romans sollte mit dem Roman ganz verbunden seyn”,¹² or his concept of *Transzendentalpoesie* – literary discourse which openly displays the process of its own creation. In this respect, the reflexive or self-reflexive “modern novel” of the early twentieth century can be seen as bearing the fruits of an earlier revolution in fiction.

At the same time, reflexivity did not constitute the *only* innovative trait in modern fiction. A comparison of *Der Zauberberg* and *Les Faux-monnayeurs* which attempts to explore

⁸ Hermann Broch, letter to Willa Muir 3.8.1931. Quoted in: Hartmut Steinecke (ed.), *Theorie und Technik des Romans im 20. Jahrhundert*, Tübingen 1972, pp. 48-49.

⁹ Hermann Weigand, *Thomas Mann’s novel Der Zauberberg*, New York 1933.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 86.

¹¹ *ibid.*, footnote 64 from p. 86.

¹² F. Schlegel, *Literary Notebooks 1797-1801* (ed. H. Eichner), London 1957, fragment no. 1366, p. 142.

the contribution of these novels to the development of the “modern novel” will therefore have to take into account the existence of other features which have been seen as playing an important part in the shaping of new forms of fiction. A brief survey of the diverse writings in this field will help to establish a theoretical context in which the individual contributions of the two novels can be examined.

Indeed, not all those who sought to capture the essence of the modern novel were to place the emphasis on reflection or self-reflection. For Virginia Woolf, the erratic workings of the mind and the inner self were given priority above the by then outdated notions of plot and realism. In her 1925 essay “Modern Fiction” she denounced her contemporary novelists as “materialists” who, in their frantic attempts at faithfully reproducing the objects of our daily lives, effectively prevented any life from breathing out of their works.¹³ Woolf maintained that *Ulysses*, with its extended use of stream of consciousness, gave a more exact rendering of what life “is really like”, and urged her fellow-writers to “record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall”. She articulated the incongruity between the neatly woven, meticulously recorded patterns of events as described by Galsworthy, Bennett et al in their novels, and life as it was outside the novelistic world with its glaring gaps and unresolved tensions, saying: “life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end”.¹⁴ She saw the only way forward for the novel as lying in the abandonment of the plot, which she describes as a “powerful and unscrupulous tyrant”.¹⁵ Wolfgang Kayser, however, was to dispute the value of the stream-of-consciousness cause, as championed by Woolf, saying that her theories would lead to the death of the novel.¹⁶

In Woolf’s attack on the plot and call for its replacement by a reflection of the chaos of the human mind and of life itself, we hear another echo of the aesthetic maxims of the Romantics. Schlegel’s *Lucinde* (1799) was written as an anti-Bildungsroman, *against* the

¹³ Virginia Woolf, “Modern Fiction” in: Woolf, *The Common Reader*, London 1984.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 189.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 185.

¹⁶ Wolfgang Kayser, *Entstehung und Krise des modernen Romans*, Stuttgart 1968, p. 28.

tradition of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* in which the development of the hero is borne out by rigorous chronology. In Schlegel's subversive work the narrator's intention to create confusion, rather than clarity, is clearly stated:

Für mich und für diese Schrift, für meine Liebe zu ihr und für die Bildung in sich, ist aber kein Zweck zweckmäßiger als der, daß ich gleich anfangs auf das, was wir Ordnung nennen verzichte, weit von ihr entferne, und mir das Recht einer reizenden Verwirrung deutlich zueigne und durch die Tat behaupte.¹⁷

The abandonment of linear progression in his fiction provides, Schlegel maintains, the best means of serving his purpose, which is to portray "das schönste Chaos". This is also the maxim of his character, "die kleine Wilhelmine", who has a similarly unconventional approach: "Die Blüten aller Dinge jeglicher Art flicht Poesie in einen leichten Kranz und so nennt und reimt auch Wilhelmine Gegenden, Zeiten, Begebenheiten, Personen, Spielwerke und Speisen, alles durcheinander in romantischer Verwirrung".¹⁸ To refer once more to the Romantics, Novalis' stipulation – over a hundred years before Virginia Woolf – "Die Schreibart des Romans muß kein Continuum, – es muß ein in jeden Perioden gegliederter Bau seyn",¹⁹ also turns the prevailing belief in the necessity of a plot on its head. With the introduction of reflection, or in Woolf's case, the meanderings of the human psyche into the novel, the question arises of the effect this has on the other, more traditionally novelistic elements, i.e. to what extent the demands of the plot – itself dependent on linear chronology – can still be met, and to what extent novelists have to restructure their novels in order to accommodate the "new" reflexive elements.

Of major importance to the development of the "modern novel" in the 1920s is Robert Musil's sprawling work *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (started in the 1920s and worked on until Musil's death in 1942.) Musil, like Mann and Gide, was fascinated by the interplay of "epic" and "criticism" in the novel. He carried out extensive research prior to the writing of his novel, completing a series of essays relating to the cultural and political questions of the day. The essays gave expression to the diffuse nature of society following

¹⁷ F. Schlegel, *Lucinde* in: *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe* (ed. E. Behler), vol. 5, Munich, Paderborn & Vienna 1962, p. 9.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁹ quoted in: *Dichter über ihre Dichtungen. Novalis* (ed. Hans-Joachim Mähl), Passau 1976, p. 164.

the trauma of the First World War and the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, the boundary between narration and cultural reflection in essay form has been blurred to the extent that only the words “und Ulrich bemerkte” serve to remind the reader that he is following a “story” about a man without qualities. Musil’s preparatory essays suggest that the complicated nature of reality make storytelling of the “and then, and then” variety impossible.

Crucial to any discussion of the “modern novel” is Georg Lukács’ seminal work, *The Theory of the Novel*, written in 1914-15, when Lukács was familiarising himself with the ideas of Hegel, but still prior to his definitive conversion to Marxism. The status and importance which *The Theory of the Novel* was to achieve cannot be over-emphasised. Forty years after its appearance Adorno paid tribute to Lukács, saying: “Die ‘Theorie des Romans’ zumal hat durch Tiefe und Elan der Konzeption ebenso wie durch die nach damaligen Begriffen außerordentliche Dichte und Intensität der Darstellung einen Maßstab philosophischer Ästhetik aufgerichtet, der seitdem nicht wieder verloren ward”.²⁰ Lukács’ work pre-empted important developments in the novel form, in particular with reference to the function of time. The framework within which Lukács operates is that of ancient Greek civilisation as opposed to “modern culture” as he perceives it. Lukács depicts the Greeks in terms of an “integrated civilisation”, exclaiming rapturously: “happy are those ages when the starry sky is the map of all possible paths – ages whose paths are illuminated by the light of the stars”.²¹ Lukács’ sees the modern novel as an offshoot of the major rupture which has occurred between those halcyon days and his time of writing – the early twentieth century – leaving humanity in a state of deep-seated spiritual malaise.

Aesthetic modernity is described by Jürgen Habermas as being “characterized by attitudes which find a common focus in a changed consciousness of time”,²² and it is this issue which forms the hub of Lukács’ *Theory of the Novel*. The inclusion of time as a narrative element in the novel, which contrasts with its rather limited function in the epic, is the

²⁰ T. W. Adorno, “Erpreßte Versöhnung” in: Adorno, *Noten zur Literatur II*, Frankfurt/Main 1961, p. 152.

²¹ Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, London 1978, p. 29.

²² Jürgen Habermas, “Modernity versus Postmodernity” in: *New German Critique* 22 (Winter 1981), 3-14, p. 4.

factor which Lukács singles out as being characteristic of the “modern novel”. He links the hiatus between Man and a higher, direction-giving authority with the new rôle time plays in the novel: “only the novel, the literary form of the transcendent homelessness of the idea, includes real time – Bergson’s *durée* – among its constitutive principles”.²³

In 1928 Walter Benjamin decided to write a theory of the novel, hoping it would achieve the status of Lukács’ work. He used Döblin’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz* as the vehicle for an initial demonstration of his theory, and like Lukács, sets his discussion of the contemporary novel against the backdrop of the classical epic. Benjamin emphasises the indebtedness of the epic to the oral tradition, attributing the dying out of that tradition to the rise of the printed book and the novel. The novel, as Benjamin sees it, gives voice to the spiritual isolation of modern-day humanity:

Die Geburtskammer des Romans ist das Individuum in seiner Einsamkeit, das sich über seine wichtigsten Anliegen nicht mehr exemplarisch aussprechen kann, selbst unberaten ist und keinem Rat geben kann. Einen Roman schreiben heißt, in der Darstellung des menschlichen Daseins das Inkommensurable auf die Spitze treiben.²⁴

In a later essay “Der Erzähler. Betrachtungen zum Werk Nikolai Lesskows” (1936/7) Benjamin acknowledges his debt to Lukács for seeing in the novel the form of “transcendental homelessness” and for his insight that the inclusion of time as a constitutive element in the novel is a consequence of the radical break with the older, “integrated” world. In the same way that Lukács points out that humanity can no longer be directed by the “starry sky”, Benjamin highlights the predicament of the story-teller, who is at a loss when asked for guidance and advice. Humanity has lost the ability to exchange experience, a phenomenon which Benjamin describes in the language of economics: “es ist, als wenn ein Vermögen, das Gesichertste unter dem Sicherem, von uns genommen wurde. Nämlich das Vermögen, Erfahrungen auszutauschen ... die Erfahrung ist im Kurse gefallen. Und es sieht aus, als fiele sie weiter ins Bodenlose”.²⁵ The rise of the journalistic press is also targeted by Benjamin as being to blame for the increase in the

²³ Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, p. 121.

²⁴ Walter Benjamin, “Krisis des Romans. Zu Döblins ‘Berlin Alexanderplatz’” in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. III, Frankfurt/Main 1972, p. 230.

²⁵ Walter Benjamin, “Der Erzähler: Betrachtungen zum Werk Nikolai Lesskows” in: *ibid.*, p. 439.

demand for hard facts, bringing in its trail the loss of a sense of wonder – what Benjamin terms “das Außerordentliche, das Wunderbare”²⁶ – and which features so strongly in the writings of Lesskow.

The theories of the novel of both Lukács and Benjamin arose from their sensitivity to the impoverished spiritual and cultural climate before and after the First World War. In 1954 it was Benjamin’s friend Adorno, who in his influential article “Standort des Erzählers im zeitgenössischen Roman”, related the impossibility of story-telling in the “modern” novel to the aftermath of the Second World War: “die Stellung des Erzählers wird heute bezeichnet durch eine Paradoxie; es läßt sich nicht mehr erzählen, während die Form des Romans Erzählung verlangt”.²⁷ Adorno conjures up a disturbing image of an industrialised humanity, “die ihre menschlichen Eigenschaften in Schmieröl für den glatten Ablauf der Maschinerie verwandelt”, and, like Benjamin, sees the way ahead for the novel as lying in the depiction of humanity’s isolation, “die universale Entfremdung und Selbstentfremdung”.²⁸ Adorno transposed Lukács’ concept of a vague spiritual abandonment into the context of the harsh economic and political realities of the twentieth century.

The question of time was also at the centre of the theory of the novel of the English novelist and critic E. M. Forster. Yet unlike Lukács and Benjamin, Forster was not concerned with the question of time as arising from any socio-historical considerations, but purely as an element of fiction. Writing in 1926, at a time when the European novel was subject to much innovation, Forster held a series of lectures at Trinity College, Cambridge, entitled “Aspects of the Novel”. Concerned by the use and – as he saw it – abuse of time in contemporary fiction, Forster attempted to staunch the flow of experimentation coming from Europe and sought to reassure novelists that the backbone of a novel was the plot. This Forster defined as “a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence – dinner coming after breakfast, Tuesday after Monday, decay after death, and so on”.²⁹ Forster

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 439.

²⁷ in: Adorno, *Noten zur Literatur I*, Frankfurt/Main 1958, p. 61.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 64.

²⁹ E.M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, Harmondsworth 1974, p. 42.

tried to reinforce the importance of solid characters and a plot, based on the linear time-continuum.

Like Forster, Franz K. Stanzel, in his development of a subsequently much-discussed theory of the novel, *Die typischen Erzählsituationen im Roman* (1955), was unconcerned with any matters pertaining to the “external” world. But instead of placing the emphasis on time in fiction, Stanzel sought to categorise all novels according to their point-of-view. In a later reworking of his typology, *Typische Formen des Romans* (1964) he denounced Forster as belonging to the “Amateur-Tradition” of novelists and predicted that very few works of literary merit would come from that direction. Stanzel justified his own typology by suggesting that the theories of the novel, which had evolved in the previous hundred years or so, had shown that innovations in the novel form had occurred primarily on a formal, rather than a thematic level:

Denn eine Erkenntnis hat die neue Romantheorie ein für allemal und unwiderlegbar gesichert, daß die Möglichkeiten des Romans, auf seine ihm ganz eigene und einzigartige Weise Dichtung zu sein, nicht in der Darstellung eines besonderen Weltbezirks, eines besonderen Stoffes, sondern in der sprachlichen Formung und erzählerischen Gestaltung eines Stoffes liegen.³⁰

Consequently, the narratorial perspective of a given work could function as a yardstick for assessing its modernity.

Stanzel drew attention to the well-established fact that different types of narratorial perspective in novels have different effects on their reception: “Es ist ein Gemeinplatz der antiken Rhetorik, daß verschiedene Redestile oder Erzählweisen verschiedene Wirkungen auf den Zuhörer oder Leser ausüben”.³¹ The long-neglected rôle of the reader was to be at the core of the theories of Wolfgang Iser to which he provides a useful introduction in “Die Appellstruktur der Texte. Unbestimmtheit als Wirkungsbedingung literarischer Prosa” (1971). Central to these was the key concept of the *Leerstelle*, the blank space which the reader has to fill in order to elaborate the meaning of a text. By making the *Leerstelle* central to the aesthetic experience, Iser’s work marks a radical departure from

³⁰ Franz K. Stanzel, *Typische Formen des Romans*, Göttingen 1964, p. 5.

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 3.

other approaches which take their lead from the metaphysical qualities of a given text; as Rainer Warning sums up: “Die ästhetische Erfahrung verdankt sich nicht mehr einer von den metaphysischen Qualitäten ausgelösten Ursprungsemotionen, sondern den Leerstellen, die es dem Leser erlauben, die Fremderfahrung der Texte an die eigene Erfahrungsgeschichte anzuschließen”.³² Iser demonstrated his theory on authors as diverse as Fielding and Joyce, showing how both activate the reader in a way which sets them apart from more traditional writers whose works offer less leeway for interpretation.

This short survey of theoretical writings shows that the question of the modern novel cannot be resolved by following up only one of its aspects or approaching it from one perspective. An investigation of *Der Zauberberg* and *Les Faux-monnayeurs* as modern novels, the assessment also of their contribution towards the development of new fictional forms, requires a pluralistic approach reflecting the diversity of theories which have evolved. This is necessary for two reasons: firstly, the theories of both Lukács and Benjamin are in themselves very broad and touch on a range of issues. Secondly, this approach will not only ensure a more complete comparison of the two works, but will also allow for a more founded assessment of the domains in which *Der Zauberberg* and *Les Faux-monnayeurs* may be seen as having a more or less significant impact on the development of the modern novel.

³² Rainer Warning, “Rezeptionsästhetik als literaturwissenschaftliche Pragmatik” in: Warning (ed.), *Rezeptionsästhetik. Theorie und Praxis*, Munich 1975, 9-41, p. 31.

Chapter One

Epik und Kritik: Literary and Cultural Reflections

In an introduction to a reading from his 1925 essay "Goethe und Tolstoi", Thomas Mann pleaded for the merging of "Epik und Kritik" in the novel, citing Gide's *Les Faux-monnayeurs* as an example of the successful combination of these two elements:

Die Zeitbeobachtung spricht von einem 'Kritizismus im modernen Roman', womit der europäische Roman überhaupt, nicht etwa der deutsche gemeint ist; denn Zeitgenossenschaft ist übernational, die Brüderlichkeit, die in ihr beschlossen liegt, kennt keine Grenzen. Man hat also unter diesem Gesichtspunkt etwa zwei Bücher zusammengestellt wie die 'Fauxmonnayeurs' von André Gide und den 'Zauberberg' – sehr mit meinem Einverständnis, sehr zu meiner Genugtuung, wie ich hinzufügen darf. Da nun aber die eigentümliche Form des Romans ein solches Ineinander von Epik und Kritik ermöglicht, so ist es ein besonderes Zeichen der Zeit, wenn selbst außerhalb dieser Möglichkeit und neben ihr noch der Romancier, der schriftstellerische Dichter und dichterische Schriftsteller, sich der essayistischen Untersuchung, der Analyse, der klärenden Rede befließigt, wie es bei jenem Franzosen wie bei mir und anderen unser Leben lang der Fall war.³³

It is interesting to note how Thomas Mann refers not only to the special qualities of the novel form but also to the intellectual climate of the time, which he sees as favourable for the development of the genre beyond its already established limits.

In *Les Faux-monnayeurs* "criticism" does not entail a survey of the contemporary political, social or cultural climate. Instead, the object of the reflective function is the novel itself. References to novels and novelists abound. In Gide's novel the main character, Edouard, is a novelist, with what many see as an uncanny resemblance to Gide himself, and not only do we find Edouard's counterpart, the decadent novelist Robert de Passavant, but both Olivier and Bernard, who are making their literary débuts; further, a host of minor characters are also engaged in literary production. Yet this is not simply another novel dealing with the subject of novelistic and artistic production, such as Zola's *L'Œuvre*, nor is it comparable to works of a more obviously self-reflexive nature, such as Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or Proust's *A la Recherche du Temps*

³³ Quoted in: Paul Scherrer/Hans Wysling, *Quellenkritische Studien zum Werk Thomas Manns*, Bern & Munich 1967, pp. 149-150.

Perdu. Here, the layers of self-reflection are infinitely more complex. Edouard, who according to Bernard, writes “des espèces de roman”,³⁴ is working on a novel entitled *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, and there the confusion caused by the self-reflection starts, which was to earn Gide the criticism of not having produced a novel at all, but rather, “une gymnastique fatigante”,³⁵ or more positively, “un essai critique, déguisé en roman par la peinture brillante de thèmes pathétiques qui s’y trame et s’y grave”.³⁶

After only seven chapters of conventional, omniscient, third-person narration, the reader is then given increasing doses of extracts from Edouard’s diary which, amongst other things, charts the progress of his novel and includes many general reflections on the novel genre. Initially, the reader is given access to this diary via Bernard, who steals Edouard’s suitcase and reads it in one of the many acts of voyeurism featuring in the novel. As his own novel *Les Faux-monnayeurs* – the one we are reading – progresses, the narrator forges ahead, skillfully entwining the “main” narrative, centring on the developing love affair of Olivier and Edouard and the story of the counterfeiters (to name only two of many possible subjects of this narrative) with Edouard’s diary, leaving the reader mentally out of breath and disorientated, unsure as to whether he is in Gide’s novel or in Edouard’s diary, since the events covered by the narrator and Edouard converge. The “action” of the novel unfolds in the light of Edouard’s theories, bringing *Les Faux-monnayeurs* in line with Mann’s description of the “modern novel” as “das Ineinander von Epik und Kritik”.

In 1972 the critic G. Zeltner-Neukomm singled out a high degree of self-reflection as *the* vital element of the “modern novel”:

In der Zeit, da Gides Roman spielt, schreibt dieser Edouard selber an einem Roman gleichen Titels. Und schon sind wir damit bei einer eminent modernen Erfindung. Wenn auch fragmentarisch, nimmt Gide hier eine Verdoppelung oder Einschachtelung vorweg, die später, namentlich bei der französischen Spitzenautorin Nathalie Sarraute ‘Goldene Früchte’ tragen wird.³⁷

³⁴ André Gide, *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, Paris 1990, p. 40.

³⁵ Pierre Lafille, *André Gide, Romancier*, Paris 1954, p. 206.

³⁶ Jean-Joseph Goux, *Les monnayeurs du langage*, Paris 1984, p. 19.

³⁷ G. Zeltner-Neukomm, *Was ist ein moderner Roman? Versuch einer Standortsbestimmung*, Mainz 1972, pp. 3-4.

The integration of poetological elements in the novel itself makes Gide's novel "eine Station auf dem Weg zu einer Literatur, deren Basis die Konzentration auf Schreibtechnik und Methodik ist, und die gerade in den letzten Jahren sich oft auf eine Selbstreflexion zurückgezogen hat, die nicht mehr über ihren Bereich hinausgreift".³⁸ Zeltner-Neukomm hails the self-reflexive *Les Faux-monnayeurs* as a seminal work for the development of the *nouveau roman* of the fifties and sixties.

However, in *Der Zauberberg* the reflection – the ruminations on the nature of time by Hans Castorp and the narrator – would appear to be directed outwardly, towards an object in the world beyond the novelistic construct. Or is it? Time is also an integral element of the novel, as the narrator does not fail to emphasise: "so ist klar, daß die Zeit, *die das Element der Erzählung ist, auch zu ihrem Gegenstande werden kann*" (my italics).³⁹ With its many reflections on time, *Der Zauberberg* shows both reflexive and self-reflexive tendencies.

The criticisms of incompleteness and confusion levelled at *Les Faux-monnayeurs* stem largely from the high level of self-reflection which undermines the "main" narrative, thereby constantly drawing attention to the intrinsic artificiality of its construct. To complicate matters, not only does Edouard's diary merge with the narrator's plane in the story of the group of counterfeiters, but also, Edouard's expounding of his theories of the novel in the central Saas-Fée section repeats almost word for word those of Gide as elaborated in his *Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs*. This is the notebook kept by Gide in the six years he spent writing his novel, and which forms another layer of critical reflection which could theoretically have been integrated into the novel too. Many reflections on the novel expressed by Edouard are identical to those formulated by Gide: Edouard, for example, discusses the *lawless* nature of the novel, asking whether the very freedom of the form has, paradoxically, made it cling to the ideal of realism: "est-ce peut-être pour cela, par peur de cette liberté même [...] que le roman, toujours, s'est si craintivement

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁹ Thomas Mann, *Der Zauberberg*, Frankfurt/Main 1991, pp. 739-40.

cramponné à la réalité?”⁴⁰ This suspicion is mirrored in Gide’s espousment of the epic form : “seul, le ton de l’épopée ... peut sortir le roman de son ornière réaliste”⁴¹ – only one of countless examples of the reflected image.

The *Journal des Faux-monnayeurs* is dedicated “à mon ami Jacques de Lacretelle et à ceux que les questions de métier intéressent”, and in Gide’s novel poetological matters are given precedence over plot or characters. The space accorded to Edouard’s reflections suggests that the aim of Gide’s *Les Faux-monnayeurs* converges with that of Edouard’s, who reveals that he has not written a single line of his novel, but instead kept a diary detailing the *progression* of his novel:

sur un carnet, je note au jour le jour l’état de ce roman en mon esprit; [...] C’est à dire qu’au lieu de me contenter de résoudre, à mesure qu’elle se propose, chaque difficulté (et toute œuvre d’art n’est que la somme ou le produit des solutions d’une quantité de menues difficultés successives), chacune de ces difficultés, je l’expose, je l’étudie. Si vous voulez, ce carnet contient la critique de mon roman; ou mieux: du roman en général.⁴²

Gide’s novel anticipates the self-reflective works of Léon Bopp, such as his *Jacques Arnaut ou la somme romanesque* (1933) and *Esquisse d’un traité du roman* (1935), as well as the efforts of the *nouveaux romanciers* to exaggerate the formal aspects of the novel in order to make “reality” more palpable than through the means employed by the so-called Realist school. As Butor noted: “L’invention formelle dans le roman, bien loin de s’opposer au réalisme comme l’imagine trop souvent une critique à courte vue, est la condition *sine qua non* d’un réalisme plus poussé”.⁴³

Edouard’s theories on the novel and the comparisons he stimulates between his *Les Faux-monnayeurs* and the one we are reading leads to the emergence of a constant dialogue between Gide’s novel, – or indeed, *any* novel – and the theoretical apparatus surrounding it, in a way which had never hitherto been made explicit. D. Fokkema refers to *Les Faux-monnayeurs* as touching the “core of Modernist poetics”, saying that it is “the metalingual discussion of how a text took shape that appears to be of greater interest to Edouard than

⁴⁰ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, pp. 182-183.

⁴¹ André Gide, *Journal des Faux-monnayeurs* (henceforth *JFM*), Paris 1991, p. 54.

⁴² *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 186.

⁴³ Michel Butor, “Le roman comme recherche” in: Butor, *Essais sur le roman*, Paris 1960, p. 11.

the text or its subject matter. The various considerations preceding the solutions upon which the writer decides are of greater value than the particular solutions which result in the text".⁴⁴ With this emphasis on the artisan's tools, the process of deliberation, rather than the finished item, Gide paves the way for the emergence of Butor's concept of the novel as "le laboratoire du récit".

W. Kryszewski has summed up the research into Gide's literary successors, saying: "Il semble donc impossible de parler aujourd'hui de Gide sans penser à la *mise-en-abyme*".⁴⁵ Indeed, by far the majority of attempts to see in Gide a forerunner of the *nouveau roman* have been based on the use of the novel within the novel in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*. Much has been made of Gide's own "theory" of the *mise-en-abyme*, based on the following extract from his *Journal* in 1893 and which refers to a heraldic procedure discovered by Gide two years previously:

J'aime assez qu'en une œuvre d'art on retrouve ainsi transposé, à l'échelle des personnages, le sujet même de cette œuvre. Rien ne l'éclaire mieux et n'établit plus sûrement toutes les proportions de l'ensemble. Ainsi, dans tels tableaux de Memling ou de Quentin Metsys, un petit miroir convexe et sombre reflète, à son tour, l'intérieur de la pièce où se joue la scène peinte. Ainsi, dans le tableau des *Ménines* de Velasquez (mais un peu différemment). Enfin, en littérature, dans Hamlet, la scène de la comédie; et ailleurs dans bien d'autres pièces. Dans *Wilhelm Meister*, les scènes de marionnettes ou de fête au château. Dans la *Chute de la maison Usher*, la lecture que l'on fait à Roderick, etc. Aucun de ces exemples n'est absolument juste. Ce qui le serait beaucoup plus, ce qui dirait mieux ce que j'ai voulu dans mes *Cahiers*, dans mon *Narcisse* et dans la *Tentative*, c'est la comparaison avec ce procédé de blason qui consiste, dans le premier, à en mettre un second 'en abyme'.⁴⁶

Although it has since been shown that Gide's knowledge of heraldic procedures was inaccurate,⁴⁷ the diary extract clearly spells out the significance of the technique and its function, as understood by Gide. Gide claims to be continuing in a well-established tradition, and although his only reference to a similar example in German literature is to

⁴⁴ Douwe W. Fokkema, "A Semiotic Definition of Aesthetic Experience and the Period Code of Modernism: with reference to an interpretation of 'Les Faux-monnayeurs'" in: *Poetics Today* 3, 1 (Winter 1982), 61-79, p. 73.

⁴⁵ W. Kryszewski, "'Les Faux-monnayeurs' et le paradigme du roman européen autour de 1925" in: *André Gide 6, Revue des Lettres Modernes (RLM)* 1979, 233-263, p. 243.

⁴⁶ André Gide, *Journal 1889-1939*, Paris 1948, p. 41.

⁴⁷ cf. Graeme Watson, "Gide's Construction 'en abyme'" in: *Australian Journal of French Studies*, VII (Jan./Aug. 1970), 224-233.

Wilhelm Meister, he may well, given his vast reading, also have been familiar with Jean Paul's playful *mise-en-abyme* in the *Flegeljahre*, namely the "Wirtshaus zum Wirtshaus", the painted inn sign showing endless reflections of itself.⁴⁸ The real innovation of Gide's technique, however, lies in the fact that he is using the inserted mirror not to throw light on the events of his novel, but on the novelistic process itself. As far as *Les Faux-monnayeurs* is concerned, the idea of placing Edouard's diary *en abyme* was not, however, there from the start: Edouard's novel about the counterfeiters existed prior to that of the narrator. The same technique was to feature in *Paludes*, written shortly after the quoted diary extract in 1894. In *Paludes* the first-person narrative depicts the empty existence of a supremely lethargic writer, Tityre, who justifies his lack of activity by repeating, "J'écris *Paludes*".⁴⁹ We are not, however, presented with any text from his *Paludes*; yet at the end of this *sotie* Tityre indicates that he is about to start work on his next piece, *Polders*. The reader is left to speculate as to whether Tityre's *Paludes* also happens to be the *Paludes* he is in the process of reading. In contrast with *Les Faux-monnayeurs* with its infinite levels of reflection (Edouard's *Les Faux-monnayeurs* may well feature another novelist Edouard writing *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, and so on), the self-reflection in *Paludes* is closed and circular because of the first-person narrative.

In the same year as writing *Paludes*, Gide noted:

le roman doit prouver à présent qu'il peut être autre chose qu'un miroir promené le long du chemin, qu'il peut être supérieur et à priori – c'est-à-dire composé, c'est-à-dire déduit, c'est-à-dire œuvre d'art" [...] Il [le roman] montrera qu'il peut être œuvre d'art, composé de toutes pièces, d'un réalisme non des petits faits et contingents, mais supérieur – de l'idéoréalisme comme disait Maclair – qu'il soit plus réel, plus vrai que les choses de la soi-disant réalité, comme le triangle mathématique est plus réel et plus vrai que les triangles imparfaits des arpenteurs.⁵⁰

From these comments it is clear that the use of the *mise-en-abyme* is closely linked with Gide's desire to reinvigorate the genre by drawing attention to the artificiality of the novelistic construct and thus exposing the fraudulent nature of mimesis. The function of

⁴⁸ Jean Paul, *Flegeljahre* in: vol. III of *Jean Pauls Werke in 3 Bänden* (ed. Norbert Miller), Munich 1969, p. 63.

⁴⁹ André Gide, *Paludes* in: *Romans*, Paris 1958, p. 91 et al.

⁵⁰ unpublished extracts from *Journal* dating from late October 1894. Quoted in: Jean Delay, *La jeunesse d'André Gide*, vols. 1 & 2, Paris 1985, vol. 2 p. 666f.

the novel-within-the-novel is to mirror the business of producing a novel, instead of reflecting an external reality.

In the diary extracts in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, Edouard expounds his theories on the “roman pur” and the necessity of radically pruning the novel of its superfluous foliage: he clearly posits this “pure novel” as the antithesis of the detail-laden Realist novel and the only way forward for the genre. Only in reducing the novel to its essentials can real meaning emerge: “le roman s’est occupé des traverses du sort, de la fortune bonne ou mauvaise, des rapports sociaux, du conflit des passions, des caractères, mais point de l’essence de l’être”.⁵¹ Despite the reluctance of some of the *nouveaux romanciers* to acknowledge the legacy of Gide (Robbe-Grillet lumps him together with Balzac and Madame de La Fayette), he is in fact anticipating the theory and practice of nothing other than the *nouveau roman* which seeks to distance itself from the traditional novel through, amongst other things, the abandoning of a slavish attention to detailed description *and* a strong element of self-reflection. Indeed, the British critic John Sturrock has summed up the efforts of the “new novelists” in the following terms: “the property common to all *nouveaux romans* is that they embody the creative activity of the novelist – they display the novelist at work”.⁵²

The novelist Edouard is an ambiguous character, generally liked by all, but somewhat egotistical and prone to reacting to reality only in terms of what he can use for his novel. Following the shocking suicide of the schoolboy Boris, he merely notes: “je n’aime pas les ‘faits divers’. Ils ont quelque chose de péremptoire, d’indéniable, de brutal, d’outrageusement réel”,⁵³ and decides not to include the incident in his novel. For him, theory is of a higher value than fact. The discussion of his novel at Saas-Fée highlights the dangers of his preoccupation with ideas; as Bernard says, he will never write his “roman pur”, thereby agreeing with Gide who notes in his *Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs* of Edouard, “C’est un amateur, un raté”⁵⁴ and who ensures that by the end of *his* novel, his

⁵¹ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 125.

⁵² John Sturrock, *The French New Novel*, London 1969, p. 4.

⁵³ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 375.

⁵⁴ *JFM*, 1.11.1922, p. 59.

counterpart has only written a mere thirty pages, including some which have to be re-written as they fall below an acceptable standard. At Saas-Fée, Edouard's ideas are criticised as being impractical by both Bernard and the psychoanalyst Sophroniska. However, the narrator will in turn subject the principles of Bernard and Sophroniska to scrutiny and criticism, which in turn relativizes the validity of their condemnation of Edouard.

One of the major innovations of Gide's novel lies in the shift of emphasis from traditional subject matter, revolving around the events in the life of a central character, to reflection and the process of novelistic creation itself. Gide noted in the *Journal des Faux-monnayeurs* that the main subject of the novel was "d'une part, l'événement, le fait, la donnée extérieure; d'autre part, l'effort même du romancier pour faire un livre avec cela". This is to be "le centre nouveau qui désaxe le récit et l'entraîne vers l'imaginatif".⁵⁵

The narrator of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* draws frequent attention to Edouard's noting and jotting in his various notebooks, mirroring the activities of Gide himself in the work-diary: "J'inscris sur une feuille à part les premiers et informes linéaments de l'intrigue"⁵⁶ and "J'ai noté ailleurs (cahier gris) le cas du séducteur [...]"⁵⁷ This insistence on the act of writing and the various tools of the writer looks ahead in a general sense to Nathalie Sarraute's *Entre la vie et la mort* (1968), her description of a novel struggling to come to life, but more specifically, to Lawrence Durrell's supremely self-conscious *Alexandria Quartet* (1961) which features three novelists, countless diaries, notebooks, sketches, prefaces, epigraphs, as well as a host of mirrors.

L. Dällenbach has provided by far the most sophisticated terminology for handling "le récit spéculaire", dividing examples of *mise-en-abyme* narration into categories as defined by their *chronological relationship* to the text into which they have been placed: *mise-en-abyme prospective*; a mirror device which reflects in advance the story to come;

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, August 1921, p. 45.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, 17.6.1919, p. 14.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, 17.6.1919, p. 12.

rétrospective, which reflects on a story already related, and *rétro-prospective*, which encompasses both functions. For Dällenbach, one of the most important aspects of any type of “*récit spéculaire*” is the impact it has on the chronological flow of the primary narrative:

toute l'histoire dans l'histoire, en tant que réflexive, est nécessairement conduite à contester le déroulement chronologique qu'elle respecte en tant que segment narratif [...] empêchée par ses dimensions de marcher au même rythme que le récit, la seule possibilité qu'elle ait de l'équivaloir est d'en contracter la durée et d'offrir en un espace restreint la matière de tout un livre. Or, telle contraction ne va pas, répétons-le, sans mettre en cause l'ordre chronologique lui-même: incapable de dire la même chose en même temps qu'elle, l'analogon de la fiction, en le disant ailleurs, le dit à contretemps et sabote par là-même l'avancée successive du récit.⁵⁸

Dällenbach makes it clear that the inclusion of reflective elements in the novel will always impede chronological progression.

M. Klare has convincingly compared *Les Faux-monnayeurs* with Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus*, focussing on the laying bare of the process of novelistic creation in both works.⁵⁹ But what of *Der Zauberberg*? There is no novel-within-the-novel technique in *Der Zauberberg*, nor does it ever feature in Mann's work. Certainly, Settembrini is a writer, an advocate of the spoken and written word, but the narrator does not supply us with any extracts from his work. He is not working on a novel entitled *Der Zauberberg*. Thomas Mann did not wish to disclose the details of the composition and sources used for *Der Zauberberg* in any obvious way; it is presented as a hermetic entity; in this respect Mann's novel can be regarded as being traditional. In fact, rather than laying bare the production process, he tends to seek instead to perpetuate the myth of the parentless novel, the origins of which are to remain shrouded in mystery: the story of Hans Castorp is presented to us by the omniscient, impersonal narrator. The frequent musings on the nature of time throughout the novel reveal, however, a great deal about this aspect of the novel, and are already hinted at in the *Vorsatz*'s introduction to the narrator as “*der raunende Beschwörer des Imperfekts*”⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Lucien Dällenbach, *Le récit spéculaire: essai sur la mise en abyme*, Paris 1977, p. 82.

⁵⁹ Margaret Klare, “Eine literarische Reminiszenz? Thomas Mann's ‘Doktor Faustus’ und André Gide's ‘Les Faux-monnayeurs’” in: *Arcadia* 10, 1 (1975), 51-64.

⁶⁰ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 7.

As far as matters of composition are concerned, *Der Zauberberg* presents a break from tradition in a different way: here, the traditionally tightly-spun weave of the epic is pierced through with the reflections on time, which extend to the narrator's consideration of time within the novel, thus leaving gaping holes in the novelistic construct in a way not as systematically destructive as in Gide's novel, but nevertheless suggestive of a genre undergoing a crisis. In 1926 Mann, in his "Pariser Rechenschaft", made it clear that "simple storytelling" was no longer acceptable, calling for "eine Auflösung des Romans ins Geistige" and expressing doubts as to whether "der Roman alten Stils heute noch möglich ist".⁶¹ In doing so, he came under severe attack from the traditional storyteller Jakob Wassermann, who had noted the "Entfabelung des Romans" with considerable dismay. Despite Mann's comments on the subject of the crisis of the novel, it is significant that he continued to use the term "Roman" to refer to *Der Zauberberg*, something he clearly wished to avoid in the case of *Doktor Faustus* over twenty years later, described alternately as "[ein] Erzähl-Experiment", "der vielleicht unmögliche Unroman", or "ein Roman – oder wie man das Ding nun nennen will".⁶²

In particular, the verbal duels of Hans Castorp's spiritual mentors Naphta and Settembrini interfere with the unfolding of the narrative surrounding the young engineer. Described *in extenso*, they occupy the place which in the nineteenth-century novel would have been given over to the development of character and plot, or to detailed description. A considerable proportion of the dialogues is presented as direct speech, and it requires a sustained mental effort on the part of the reader not only to keep abreast of the conversation, but to distinguish between the speakers and the theories they are representing. In this way the reader experiences the confusion felt by Hans Castorp and by Mann himself, who expressed the bewildering complexity of the various ideological stances before and during the war years, saying: "Stimmen der Zeit ... sie vereinigen sich zum Lärm und nicht zur Musik, denn sie wissen nichts von einander. Man muß sie

⁶¹ Thomas Mann, "Pariser Rechenschaft", *GW* XI, p. 97.

⁶² cf. Lilian R. Furst, "Thomas Mann's Interest in James Joyce" in: *MLR* 64, 3 (1969), 605-613, p. 610.

trennen, muß sie gesondert hören, um klug aus ihnen zu werden".⁶³ These ideas acquire a seductive potency for Hans Castorp who, once on the Magic Mountain, rejects the material world of the *Flachland*, symbolised by the *Ocean Steamships* book he takes with him on his journey but soon abandons.

The discussions of Naphta and Settembrini reflect (albeit on a more general, abstract level) the questions preoccupying Germany in the aftermath of the First World War, struggling to come to terms with the beginnings of democracy and the upheavals which the end of the war and the end of imperialism brought in their wake. Thomas Mann frequently referred to himself as a product of the nineteenth century,⁶⁴ and as far as *Der Zauberberg* is concerned, made several references to the fact that he was continuing in the tradition of the *Bildungsroman*.⁶⁵ However, although he acknowledged the debt of his novel to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, he also made it clear that he had in mind a *modernisation* of the genre.⁶⁶ Indeed, Thomas Mann saw the way in which he imbued a historical model with contemporary relevance as the essence of his entire work; in the "Lebensabriß" he refers to "mein Verhältnis zur Tradition, das zugleich liebevoll und auflösend ist und meine schriftstellerische 'Sendung' bestimmt".⁶⁷ (This use of a historical genre as model has prompted H. Koopmann to label *Der Zauberberg* "klassisch-modern", along with Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* and Broch's *Die Schlafwandler*.⁶⁸)

⁶³ Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, Frankfurt/Main 1988, pp. 274-275.

⁶⁴ "Ich bin, im geistig Wesentlichen, ein rechtes Kind des Jahrhunderts, in das die ersten fünf und zwanzig Jahre meines Lebens fallen: des neunzehnten". *ibid.*, p. 13.

⁶⁵ e.g. Thomas Mann, letter to Arthur Schnitzler 4.9.1922: "Und was die Verliebtheit in den Gedanken der Humanität betrifft, die ich seit einiger Zeit bei mir feststelle, so mag sie mit dem Roman zusammenhängen, an dem ich schon allzu lange schreibe, einer Art von Bildungsgeschichte und Wilhelm Meisteriade, worin ein junger Mensch (vor dem Kriege) durch das Erlebnis der Krankheit und des Todes zur Idee des Menschen und des Staates geführt wird". In: *Selbstkommentare*, p. 33.

⁶⁶ "Schon vor dem Kriege hatte ich zwei Romane zu schreiben begonnen, von denen der eine, den ich jetzt, nach langen Unterbrechungen, zuerst zu beenden trachte, eine innerlich weitläufige Komposition mit politischen, philosophischen und pädagogischen Einschlügen und betitelt, 'Der Zauberberg', einen Versuch darstellt, den 'Bildungsroman' zu erneuern". Thomas Mann, letter to Félix Bertaux in: *ibid.*, p. 34.

⁶⁷ Thomas Mann, "Lebensabriß", *GW XI*, pp. 544-5.

⁶⁸ cf. Helmut Koopmann, *Der klassisch-moderne Roman in Deutschland*, Stuttgart 1983.

Thomas Mann uses the model of the *Bildungsroman* as a vehicle for an exploration of ideas, covering topics such as education, religion, death, the Middle Ages, the Enlightenment, the political questions of the day, to name a few. The importance attached to ideas, rather than events, is borne out by the chapter headings which point the reader in that direction: *Gedankenschärfe, Analyse, Zweifel und Erwägungen, Tischgespräche, Forschungen* etc. This brings *Der Zauberberg* close to Gide's concept of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* as "un carrefour, un rendez-vous de problèmes".⁶⁹ The predominance of reported dialogue in both novels points to a conception of the novel as a dialogic form, a forum of discussion, rather than a mere vehicle for storytelling.

One of the most striking features about life on the Magic Mountain is that nothing ever happens. Each day is highly regulated with fixed mealtimes, imposed relaxation and entertainment, and only the arrivals and departures of guests provide distraction from the overwhelming tedium of sanatorium life. And yet the narrator makes it very clear that Hans Castorp's stay on the Magic Mountain represents a *Steigerung*. (To what extent this *Steigerung* should be seen as a parody of an educational process has caused lively debate amongst critics. Especially since Hans Mayer's influential *Thomas Mann*, the view that Hans Castorp's progress is – like so many other phenomena on the Magic Mountain – circular in nature, has become widely adopted.)

Initially the narrator emphasises the educational gap between the unsophisticated Hans Castorp and his intellectual mentors: when Settembrini refers to the Lisbon earthquake for example, Castorp reacts with surprise, saying he hasn't had a chance to look at the newspapers. In time, however, Hans Castorp becomes increasingly competent at following the endless discussions of Naphta and Settembrini. The *Schnee* chapter, referred to by Mann as the "Herzstück" of the novel,⁷⁰ systematically re-introduces all the themes hitherto introduced and represents the apotheosis of Castorp's initiation, his emancipation from the teachings of Naphta and Settembrini in the discovery of his own philosophical maxim: "Der Mensch ist Herr der Gegensätze, sie sind durch ihn, und also ist er

⁶⁹ Gide, *Journal 1889-1939*, 17.6.1923, p. 760.

⁷⁰ Thomas Mann, letter to Hanns Kreuz (?) 18.4.1927 in: *Selbstkommentare*, p. 97.

vornehmer als sie”.⁷¹ The initiation process is itself described in great detail by Naphta, with reference to freemasonry, and by Hans Castorp himself who talks to Clawdia Chauchat of the transubstantiation of chemical substances. Mann not only sanctioned Weigand’s term “initiation story”, but that of a relatively unknown Harvard scholar, Howard Nemerov, who saw in *Der Zauberberg* an incarnation of the search of the medieval quester hero for the holy grail. The significance of Mann’s contribution to the development of the “modern novel” lies to a large extent in the development of his hero through a succession of intellectual hurdles rather than through the traditional feats of the epic. The seriousness of the debates between Naphta and Settembrini – and significance attached to the world of ideas – is emphasised in the fact that the two men feel that the differences between them can only be resolved in a duel. When Hans Castorp tries to avert this duel, he is reprimanded by Settembrini for underestimating the importance of ideas. After first of all correcting his pupil’s view that intellectual injuries cannot acquire a personal character, the Italian tells him:

Sie gehen jedoch vor allem fehl in Ihrer Einschätzung des Geistigen überhaupt, das Sie offenbar für zu schwach halten, um Konflikte und Leidenschaften zu zeitigen von der Härte derjenigen, die das reale Leben mit sich bringt und die keinen anderen Ausweg lassen als den des Waffenganges. All’incontro! Das Abstrakte, das Gereinigte, das Ideelle ist zugleich auch das Absolute, es ist damit das eigentlich Strenge, und es birgt viel tiefere und radikalere Möglichkeiten des Hasses, der unbedingten und unversöhnlichen Gegnerschaft, als das soziale Leben.⁷²

But even before Naphta arrives on the scene, Hans Castorp quickly becomes embroiled in heated debate with Settembrini on the subject of illness: whereas Hans Castorp sees the human body and physical illness as noble, worthy of veneration, Settembrini considers such thinking to be morbid and detrimental to human progress. Thus Hans Castorp preempts the stance adopted by Naphta, whose respect for human decay and death stems from the Middle Ages. The discussion of this subject between Hans Castorp and Settembrini is extended over a series of conversations, the erudition of the engineer surprising the “homo humanus”, who appropriately, after one such argument reminds the young patient that it is time for the “Liegekur”, saying: “Legen wir uns also, Ingenieur.

⁷¹ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 676.

⁷² *ibid.*, p. 958.

Beziehen wir unsere Stellungen".⁷³ Ideas have taken supremacy over character, the excitement and tensions resulting from the conflicting philosophies have replaced those of "real life" drama. As a result of living in an environment which is hermetically sealed off from the world of activity, the adventures of the patients are either pitifully trivial – the narrator describes, well in advance of *Die große Gereiztheit*, the various amorous entanglements or disputes, such as that between Frau Stöhr and Frau Iltis over the contribution towards Hofrat Behrens' Christmas present – or of a cerebral nature, as is initially the case with Hans Castorp. The vocabulary of combat is used to heighten the drama of the debates; Settembrini tells Joachim his cousin is "ein durchaus nicht ungefährlicher Gegner im Wortstreit",⁷⁴ and the narrator, when rendering Hans Castorp's thoughts during the debate with Settembrini in the chapter *Enzyklopädie*, tells us that the white of his blue eyes was flecked with red veins as he said to himself: "Es wird ungeheuerlich. Aber ich habe mich einmal auf Kriegsfuß mit ihm gestellt und werde ihm, so lange es irgend geht, das letzte Wort nicht lassen".⁷⁵ And after Settembrini's dramatic words at the end of the debate, to the effect that the principle of sickness is one of perversion, decay, salaciousness and scandal, the narrator tells us that they are said "fast ohne Ton und sehr rasch gesprochen, um fertig zu werden".⁷⁶ Luckily for Hans Castorp, Joachim appears on the scene at this point. The chapter finishes there, but the subject is by no means exhausted, and will be discussed at greater length and in greater detail in the "colloquium on sickness and health" with Naphta. In this way, Thomas Mann creates a kind of cliffhanger – with the suspense arising over which *idea* will finally triumph.

The "völlig unausgeglichene Gegensätze"⁷⁷ Musil refers to in his 1922 essay "Das hilflose Europa" will strike a chord with those familiar with *Der Zauberberg*. Indeed, the simple Hans Castorp, also, like Musil's Ulrich, more definable in terms of a *lack* of qualities than

⁷³ *ibid.*, p. 308.

⁷⁴ *ibid.*, p. 345.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p. 342.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p. 345.

⁷⁷ Robert Musil, "Das hilflose Europa oder Reise vom Hundertsten ins Tausendste" in: Musil, *Tagebücher, Aphorismen, Essays und Reden* (ed. A. Frisé), Hamburg 1955, p. 634.

anything else, finds himself extremely perplexed by the contradictory nature of the views expounded by his mentors:

so außerordentlich schwer war es zivilistischer Verantwortlichkeit gemacht, nicht allein, sich zwischen den Gegensätzen zu entscheiden, sondern auch nur, sie als Präparate gesondert-und sauberzuhalten, daß die Versuchung groß war, sich kopfüber in Naphta's 'sittlich ungeordnetes All' zu stürzen.⁷⁸

Der Zauberberg reflects the chaos of Naphta and Settembrini's theories, which are both too complex and too weighty to be subsumed into a tidy, linear plot structure.

Der Zauberberg is tailored along the lines of its cerebral digressions, conversations and essays, rather than made to fit around any events in a character's life. The *Walpurgisnacht* chapter most clearly throws into relief the focus on ideas, rather than actions, in the novel. Here the climax is the extended conversation between Hans Castorp and Clawdia Chauchat: whatever ensued falls outwith the narration – in the gap between chapters five and six. Indeed, Thomas Mann's disregard for a conventional plot is highlighted by the fact that Clawdia, on whom the hero's amorous intentions are focussed, departs for Russia immediately after the events on 29 February, only to return accompanied by Mynheer Peeperkorn, thus effectively unavailable for Hans Castorp. The fact that ideas are in the foreground of the novel is further compounded by the introduction of Naphta, who immediately fills the gap left by Clawdia, and who takes over her rôle as the adversary of Settembrini. Clawdia's departure and promise of return test Hans Castorp's staying power on the Magic Mountain, as does that of Joachim, who deserts the sanatorium for the army, only to return to die; likewise the attempt of Uncle James Tienappel to persuade his nephew to return to the *Flachland* with him. Undeniably the experience of Mynheer Peeperkorn is of great significance for Hans Castorp, but ends abruptly with the Dutchman's suicide. On the Magic Mountain, nothing seems to last; these important events for Hans Castorp take place against a background of the constant comings, goings and deaths of the patients, and their sudden passions for various activities which are just as quickly forgotten. The episodic nature of the events in the novel makes it impossible for

⁷⁸ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 638.

Thomas Mann to adopt a conventional plot structure, but rather one which reflects the haphazardness of the sanatorium world, and the contemplation this world induces.

Lengthy sections of the novel take the form of scientific essays, covering biology, physiology, anatomy, embryology, botany, poisonous substances etc. and constitute the self-education of Hans Castorp. The young engineer is encouraged in his studies by Hofrat Behrens' lengthy discourse on skin, the lymph glands, the composition of the human body and decay in the chapter *Humanoria*. In no way is the academic tone of these treatises modified for the reader, nor are they integrated in any way into the rest of the narrative. The same can be said of the account of the dispute between the Poles Japoll and Zutawski, which is presented as a lengthy legal report, with only the statement "Ferner las Hans Castorp" connecting the documents with the narrative. Yet the reading which Hans Castorp undertakes is not reflected to provide mere digressions, which in a more traditional novel might, at the most, serve to throw light on the main events, they *are* the main events of the novel, the "alchimistisch-hermetische Pädagogik" Hans Castorp undergoes forms the "Grundabenteuer seiner Seele"⁷⁹ and the focus of Thomas Mann's novel.

To what extent does the reflection in *Der Zauberberg* bring about a rupture in the flow of the "epic" narrative? Starting from R. Petsch's point of view: "daß ernstgemeinte, theoretische und moralische Erörterungen schon durch ihre 'sachgemäße' Ausdrucksform ... und durch die mangelnde Illusion das Gespinnst der Muse zu zerreißen drohen",⁸⁰ H. Meyer has examined the philosophical discourses on time, coming to the conclusion that they are not only thematically linked with the story of Hans Castorp, in that they provide further elucidation of his experience of temporality, but that they are also compositionally integrated through the relationship between *Erzählzeit* and *erzählte Zeit* and the chronological disorientation rendered tangible to the reader.⁸¹ Certainly Mann, for whom

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 971.

⁸⁰ Robert Petsch, *Wesen und Formen der Erzählkunst*, Halle 1942, p. 12.

⁸¹ Herman Meyer, "Die Kunst der epischen Integration" in: H. Koopmann, *Thomas Mann*, Darmstadt 1975, 43-63, p. 49.

“Beziehung” was so significant⁸² does not, in his introduction of reflection, create a gulf between text and reader in the way Joyce does. However, if not the ponderings on time, which remain reasonably concise and are, as Meyer suggests, relatively integrated, then certainly the Naphta/Settembrini dialogues and the scientific “essays” present a severe challenge to the reader who is only waiting for the “action” to resume.

In *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, Sarah, whilst having a drink with Bernard, begins to eat some crystals which are at the bottom of her glass: we read, “Mais ce n’est que du sucre candis, dit-elle un peu déçue. J’espérais que ce serait très fort”.⁸³ In Gide’s novel, many things are not what they initially appear to be and reveal themselves to be counterfeit. And just as the X-ray images of Hofrat Behrens illuminate the “real” nature of the patients’ illnesses and his assistant Krokowski seeks to bring to light their innermost secrets through analysis, *Der Zauberberg* reveals a series of interpretative layers. The carnival episode is peppered with allusions to the Walpurgisnacht from Goethe’s *Faust*; throughout the novel Mann draws analogies between the hermetic world of the sanatorium and the underworld Hades, and references to alchemy abound. As B. Kristiansen has suggested,⁸⁴ it is possible to regard the world of the Magic Mountain as being structured in accordance with Schopenhauer’s distinction between *Seinwelt* and *Scheinwelt*, with many of the external phenomena betraying a deeper, more “real”, significance. Hans Castorp soon discovers the dual nature of reality: Joachim Ziemßen’s healthy-looking suntan is really “Schneeverbrennung”, disguising terminal tuberculosis; many of the young patients at the sanatorium display a deceptive cheerfulness, and the sanatorium building itself gives the misleading impression that Dr. Krokowski’s analytical chamber and Behrens’ X-Ray room are below ground level. Even the word “neulich”, as Hans Castorp soon discovers, can have different meanings, depending on which time concept one adheres to. These references to the misleading nature of phenomena form another way of showing the impossibility of capturing reality in the way the Realist writers had tried to do. It would

⁸² “Ich liebe das Wort: Beziehungen. Mit diesem Begriff fällt mir der des Bedeutenden, so relativ er auch immer zu verstehen sei, durchaus zusammen”. Thomas Mann, “Lebensabriß”, pp. 545-546.

⁸³ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 286.

⁸⁴ cf. Børge Kristiansen, *Uniform - Form - Überform. Thomas Manns Zauberberg und Schopenhauers Metaphysik*, Bonn 1986.

appear that the entire novel discourages a reading on a purely “realist” level, of being taken solely at face value and read only in terms of plot and character.

Indeed, the early critic Edouard Korrodi inverts the traditional assumption that the plot is the mainstay of any novel, by pointing out that in *Der Zauberberg* it features merely as a structural necessity for the accommodation of reflection:

bei Thomas Mann aber ist wie bei Proust dem Erzähler die äußere Handlung nur das was ‘die Rippen des Regenschirms’ sind, eine Konstruktionsnotwendigkeit; er will die Wissenschaft vom Leben in den Roman einbauen, will mit Problemen der Zeit die geistige Luft des Romans schwängern.⁸⁵

Korrodi neatly expresses the subordination of plot and character to reflection.

Indeed, those elements which are traditionally associated with plot play an increasingly minor rôle in *Der Zauberberg*, once the stage has been set for the intellectual discussions. For example, the theme of Hans Castorp visiting his cousin gradually recedes, and the narrator uses what would normally have constituted the “love interest”, the relationship between Hans Castorp and Clawdia Chauchat, to illustrate the engineer’s increasing receptivity to illness, death and Asian time concepts, repeatedly stressing the fact that it is not a conventional affair. It is in view of the “educational” aspect of Hans Castorp’s love for Clawdia that the narrator is able to explain his lack of resentment when she returns to the sanatorium accompanied by Mynheer Peeperkorn. Developments in the plot are often not dwelt on as such, but instead used as springboards for intellectual debate, especially as the novel progresses: although a whole chapter, *Totentanz*, is devoted to Hans and Joachim’s visits to the dying patients, the “Moribunden”, the news of some of their deaths is mentioned *en passant*, when the narrator gives some brief background information to “das große Kolloquium über Gesundheit und Krankheit”, which extends over a large part of the chapter *Operationes spirituales*: “Eigentlich war der Disput von Karen Karstedt ausgegangen, der armen Karen mit den offenen Fingerspitzen, die neulich gestorben war”.⁸⁶ The narrator’s ensuing rendering of Settembrini’s scornful comments on each of

⁸⁵ Korrodi, “Der Kritizismus im europäischen Roman”, 9.11. 1927.

⁸⁶ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 613.

the patients has the function of re-introducing this theme, but this time the emphasis is on the *Kritik*, rather than the *Epik*.

For Thomas Mann it was clear that he did not want to overburden his novel with “realistic” detail in order to render his tale more believable: “Alles Detail ist langweilig, ohne ideelle Transparenz. Kunst ist Leben im Licht des Gedankens”.⁸⁷ Thus the nature and weather descriptions in *Der Zauberberg* no longer have the traditional function of setting the scene, or of lending the fiction greater credibility, but rather serve to reinforce one of the most important thematic concerns of the novel – the question of temporality. If the narrator describes snow, or the appearance of certain flowers and bushes, we can be sure it is to indicate the passing of time, the eternal recurrence of all phenomena which extends to the natural world:

Tal und Berge im Schnee seit sechs Monaten schon? Seit sieben! Die Zeit schreitet fort, während wir erzählen – unsere Zeit, die wir dieser Erzählung widmen, aber auch die tief vergangene Zeit Hans Castorps und seiner Schicksalsgenossen dort oben im Schnee, und sie zeitigt Veränderungen.⁸⁸

Plot and the development of character are no longer a priority. After all, does not the narrator warn us in the *Vorsatz* that he is not telling his tale for the sake of the hero: “die Geschichte wird nicht um seinetwillen erzählt, [...] sondern um der Geschichte willen, die uns in hohem Grade erzählenswert scheint”?⁸⁹ This is borne out by repeated references to the mediocrity of the hero. Indeed, he is little more than a gravitational centre for the ideas expounded; without him, as M. Swales has correctly insinuated, the ideological conflicts of the novel would not be able to come into play and interact in the way they do. Hans Castorp’s function as a melting-pot for ideas thus ascribes him a negative, rather than a positive capacity. As Swales suggests, this subordination of the central character brings *Der Zauberberg* further in line with *Wilhelm Meister*, in which Schiller saw the eponymous hero as “zwar die notwendigste, aber nicht die wichtigste Person”.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Thomas Mann, “Pariser Rechenschaft”, p. 35.

⁸⁸ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 475.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁹⁰ cf. Martin Swales, “The Story and the Hero. A Study of Thomas Mann’s ‘Der Zauberberg’” in: *DVjs* 46, 2 (1972), 359-376.

In *Les Faux-monnayeurs* there are very few descriptions of the weather or the places of the action; gone are the days of Balzac's *pension Vauquer*. Already in *Paludes*, Gide had parodied the exhaustive descriptive efforts of his Realist predecessors, by writing laconically: "Le jardin, naguère, était planté", and "Le temps fraîchit".⁹¹ A rare description of the Luxemburg Gardens in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* can be seen as reinforcing the characters' (and their author's) general lack of interest in their surroundings and preoccupation with their inner lives: so absorbed is Bernard in pondering over his future that he is completely oblivious to the unusual autumn scene around him (the spring-like atmosphere which even confuses the birds invites comparison with the descriptions of the deceptive weather conditions in *Der Zauberberg*):

L'air était presque tiède et l'azur lui riait à travers les rameaux déjà dépouillés des grands arbres. On doutait si vraiment on s'acheminait vers l'hiver; des oiseaux roucouleurs s'y trompaient. Mais Bernard ne regardait pas le jardin; il voyait devant lui l'océan de la vie s'étendre. On dit qu'il est des routes sur la mer; mais elles ne sont pas tracées, et Bernard ne savait quelle était la sienne.⁹²

In *Les Faux-monnayeurs* there is no "hero" as such either; Edouard is merely a character around whom various storylines can conveniently revolve, as well as a mouth-piece for Gide's aesthetics of the novel. The characters of Gide's novel are no longer constant and immutable, as they were in the novels of the Realist school: as D. Moutote has remarked, a Balzacian character such as Eugenie Grandet is depicted as being mean and remains mean until the very last page, his meanness having ramifications on all aspects of the plot.⁹³ Gide, instead, maintains in his work-diary that instead of moulding and manoeuvring his characters as the novelist traditionally does, he lets himself be guided by them. He even goes so far as to suggest that he is not responsible for their creation, but that they reveal themselves to him. He notes, for example, that the character of Profitendieu has to be re-drawn as he is much more interesting than he had initially assumed.⁹⁴ "Modern" novelists no longer perceive of characters in terms of solid, undividable blocks as their nineteenth-century counterparts had done. In *L'Ère du soupçon* Nathalie Sarraute had drawn

⁹¹ Gide, *Paludes*, p. 100.

⁹² *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, pp. 331-332.

⁹³ Daniel Moutote, *Réflexions sur Les Faux-monnayeurs*, Paris 1990, p. 186.

⁹⁴ *JFM*, 6.7.1924, p. 77.

attention to this fact, saying: “Les personnages, tels que les concevait le vieux roman [...] ne parviennent plus à contenir la réalité psychologique actuelle”.⁹⁵ Undoubtedly, Edouard’s major *raison d’être* is the fact that he is writing a novel: his part in Gide’s novel is primarily that of a convenient catalyst for reflections on the genre itself.

Having experimented with a variety of literary forms at the very beginning of his career, Thomas Mann used his 1908 essay “Versuch über das Theater” as a vehicle for expressing his views on the novel genre. (With the exception of the 1939 essay “Die Kunst des Romans” Thomas Mann’s comments on the novel were made *en passant*, rather than in the form of a manifesto.) In contrast to a 1903 statement whereby he had proclaimed: “man sollte als Künstler nichts über Anderes, nichts Allgemeines veröffentlichen. Man sollte nur durch Werke reden”,⁹⁶ the 1908 essay emphasises the suitability of the genre for combining critical with epic elements: “Der Roman ist genauer, vollständiger, wissender, gewissenhafter, tiefer als das Drama, in allem, was die Erkenntnis der Menschen als Leib und Charakter betrifft”.⁹⁷ Indeed, through the series of critical essays written from 1906 onwards, “Bilse und ich”, “Versuch über das Theater”, “Geist und Kunst”, Thomas Mann frequently refers to “der moderne Roman” or “der demokratische Roman”: the phrase “der intellektuale Roman” was coined by Mann himself in 1924, the year *Der Zauberberg* appeared.

Thomas Mann’s comments on the novel form show an increasing desire to take advantage of the uniqueness of the genre to reflect the questions of the day. In “Die Kunst des Romans” Mann praised the “Genius” of the novel genre:

Die erstaunliche Blüte des Romans in Europa während des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts, in England, in Frankreich, in Rußland, in Skandinavien – diese Blüte ist kein Zufall; sie hängt zusammen mit dem zeitgerechten Demokratismus des Romans, mit seiner natürlichen Eignung, modernem Leben zum Ausdruck zu dienen, mit seiner sozialen und psychologischen Passion, welche ihn zur repräsentativen Kunstform der Epoche und den Romandichter selbst mittleren Formats zum modernen literarischen Künstlertyp par excellence gemacht hat.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Nathalie Sarraute, *L’Ere du soupçon*, Paris 1956, pp. 70-71.

⁹⁶ Bibliographischer Nachweis 383, *GW* XIII, p. 884.

⁹⁷ Thomas Mann, “Versuch über das Theater”, *GW* X, p. 29.

⁹⁸ Thomas Mann, “Die Kunst des Romans”, *GW* X, pp. 358-359.

And yet the novel, as a literary genre, had not enjoyed a privileged status at the turn of the century: it was not considered to be a traditionally *German* genre, but instead was associated with the dangerous seeds of democracy blowing over from western Europe. However, as H. Steinecke notes,⁹⁹ the novels of Mann, Broch, Döblin and Musil, as well as their theoretical writings on the genre, helped to raise its profile. Thomas Mann himself commented on the fact that a *reflexive* novel was particularly un-German: “Nicht wahr, der Roman überhaupt, in seiner Gemischtheit aus synthetisch-plastischen und analytisch-kritischen Elementen ist eigentlich keine sehr deutsche Gattung. Er ist es am wenigsten, sofern er politisch, sofern er Gesellschaftskritik ist”.¹⁰⁰ Yet this statement of 1916 shows how for Thomas Mann reflection is an integral part of the novel form.

Not only do Thomas Mann’s poetological comments on the novel show an altering conception of the genre, towards that of a “sponge”, capable of soaking up everything, but his increased receptivity towards *Kritizismus* in the novel is also borne out by the works themselves, significantly, from *Der Zauberberg* onwards. It flattered Mann to be compared to other “modern” novelists such as Broch and Gide, and to be seen as fulfilling a representative function, at the forefront of modern thought by virtue of his accommodation of reflection in the novel.

Yet for Thomas Mann there remained a fine dividing-line between essayistic reflection and “storytelling”: reflection was certainly to be included in the novel, but could not be allowed to completely swamp the epic elements, hence Mann’s fondness for using the essay as a vehicle for the expression of his thoughts on a wide range of subjects. In 1942, in a preface to the English version of “Deutsche Hörer”, he described his essayistic work as “eine, wenn nicht tiefere, so doch heißere und heftigere Leidenschaft als der sorgsam-geduldigen Hingabe ans Weben epischer Musik”, and in accordance with his usual modest estimation of his own efforts, described his vocation as continuing in the tradition established by the

⁹⁹ H. Steinecke, “Die ‘repräsentative Kunstform der Epoche’. Bemerkungen zu Thomas Manns Romanverständnis” in: B. Bludau, H. Koopmann & E. Heftrich (eds.), *Thomas Mann 1875-1975: Vorträge in München, Zürich, Lübeck, Frankfurt/Main* 1977, 250-268.

¹⁰⁰ Thomas Mann, “Der autobiographische Roman”, *GW* XI, pp. 701-702.

prophets of Israel, who combined a sensitivity to the climate of the times with a gift for *poesis*.¹⁰¹

Thomas Mann made it clear that the inclusion of reflection in the novel was closely connected with the *crisis of the genre*: in a letter of 1930 to the Prussian Academy of the Arts' Poetry Section defending the advance of *Essayistik* into the novel, Mann cited Romain Rolland's *Jean-Christophe* as an example of a contemporary novel containing a significant proportion of essayistic reflection, as well as Gide's *Les Faux-monnayeurs*. He considered the latter to be "Meisterwerk und Merkzeichen zugleich für die Krisis, in der der moderne Roman sich fruchtbarer Weise befindet [...] ohne Zweifel ein hochintellektualistisches Kunstprodukt".¹⁰²

The impact of *Der Zauberberg* on the following generations of novelists in Germany is not easy to establish, not least because of the increasingly threatening political situation from the 1930s onwards which was to drive many writers into exile. When asked directly in 1975 what, if any, influence Thomas Mann's writings had had on their own work, the generation of novelists at that time replied overwhelmingly in the negative.¹⁰³ Yet it cannot be denied that Thomas Mann, through the priority he gives to the reflexive elements in *Der Zauberberg*, was instrumental in the shaping of the "discursive novel" such as Gottfried Benn's *Roman als Phänotyp* (1949), Günter Grass' *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* (1972), and in particular, Peter Weiss' monumental work, *Die Ästhetik des Widerstands* (1975-1981). Whilst still bearing the description "Roman", Weiss' work, especially in the first part, bears a greater affinity to an autobiographical essay with endless reflections on Art and Myth than to a novel. In contrast to Mann's presentation of the Naphta/Settembrini dialogues, which leave the reader in no real doubt as to the fact that these are the opinions of individual characters, the reflexive elements in *Die Ästhetik* are

¹⁰¹ Quoted in: André Gisselbrecht, "Essay und Roman bei Thomas Mann" in: Helmut Brandt, Hans Kaufmann (eds.) *Werk und Wirkung unserer Epoche: ein internationaler Dialog*, Berlin & Weimar 1978, 151-158, pp.156-157.

¹⁰² Quoted in: Scherrer & Wysling (eds.), *Quellenkritische Studien zum Werk Thomas Manns*, pp. 229-231.

¹⁰³ cf. Eckhard Heftrich, "Der gehäßte Kollege. Deutsche Schriftsteller über Thomas Mann" in: *Internationales Thomas-Mann-Kolloquium 1986 in Lübeck*, Bern 1987, 351-369.

completely merged with the narrative: the fictional framework which supports the reflections in *Der Zauberberg* has been finally eroded.

Gide explicitly expressed his desire that his “premier roman” should not be in the same vein as the novels of the Realist and Naturalist schools.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, many episodes in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* can be seen as pastiches of these traditions: for example, the description of Bernard Profitendieu leaving home and trying to behave as spontaneously as the character of an adventure novel, but being overcome by hunger and fatigue, or of him telling himself that ideally the drop of perspiration which falls from his brow onto his mother’s old love letters should be a tear. G. Idt refers to the “burlesque” nature of many of the scenes in the novel, including that in which the chair the desperate Laura is sitting in suddenly collapses.¹⁰⁵

Edouard refers to his diary and its function within the text, saying “C’est le miroir qu’avec moi je promène”,¹⁰⁶ thereby inverting Stendhal’s famous definition of the novel as “un miroir qui se promène le long d’un chemin”. The novel is no longer to be seen as a vessel for reflecting reality, as it is no longer possible to present a universally acceptable definition of that reality. Instead, as Edouard says, the reader is to be shown the author’s hand which is holding the mirror, taken “behind the scenes” to be shown the process of creating fiction. This constitutes a serious challenge to the request of the nineteenth century narrator to suspend disbelief and to his claim that *all is true*.

C-E. Magny has likened Gide’s technique of the novel-within-the-novel to the packets of Quaker Oats, where the image of a quaker holding a packet of Quaker Oats, which reproduces the same image, can be infinitely multiplied.¹⁰⁷ J. Hytier prefers to draw a parallel with a series of bottles with labels featuring the same labelled bottle,¹⁰⁸ and W.

¹⁰⁴ “[...] je ne serai content que si je parviens à m’écarter du réalisme plus encore”. Gide, *Journal 1889-1939*, 3.10.1921, p. 699.

¹⁰⁵ Geneviève Idt, *André Gide: Les Faux-monnayeurs*, Paris 1970, p. 65.

¹⁰⁶ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 155.

¹⁰⁷ Claude-Edmonde Magny, *Histoire du roman français depuis 1918*, Paris 1950, p. 245.

¹⁰⁸ Jean Hytier, *André Gide*, Paris 1945, p. 288.

Krysinski describes Edouard as “inhabiting the entrails of a Russian doll”.¹⁰⁹ However, the problem with these comparisons is that they suggest that the image or text *en abyme* is absolutely identical to the one into which it has been inserted, which does not hold for *Les Faux-monnayeurs*. Edouard’s novel, as we have already seen with respect to Boris’ suicide, is *not* the double of Gide’s. The slight disparities between the two *Les Faux-monnayeurs* invite further thought on the reader’s part on the content and structure of the novel form in general.

J. Delay in his “psycho-biography” of Gide¹¹⁰ has shown how the mirror technique was of existential importance to the adolescent Gide, who himself confessed to spending unnaturally long periods of time in front of a looking-glass; Gide describes one particular occasion, when, sitting at a writing-desk with a mirror, he glanced continuously at the mirror-image of himself writing.¹¹¹ For Gide, the looking-glass was the visual equivalent of the *Journal*, which he kept all his life: as Claudel said, “Gide est fasciné par les miroirs. Son *Journal* n’est qu’une série de poses devant lui-même”.¹¹² If we can assume that Gide was, as Delay suggests, of a neurotic and obsessional nature, suffering from the constant feeling that his personality was fluid and dispersed, then both the mirror and the diary represent a means of restoring the fractured self to a whole. As Edouard says: “la réalité ne prend pour moi d’existence réelle que quand je la vois reflétée”.¹¹³

With reference to the use of mirrors on an aesthetic level, Gide shows the impossibility of grasping “reality” through one single medium, i.e. one single mirror reflecting reality; the novel *en abyme* shows up the omissions and idiosyncrasies of the novel framing it and vice-versa. Gide prefers to show the novelistic world through a series of refractions in the hope that, combined, they will constitute a more convincing totality. Edouard’s diary,

¹⁰⁹ Krysinski, “‘Les Faux-monnayeurs’ et le paradigme du roman européen autour de 1925”, p. 258.

¹¹⁰ cf. footnote 50.

¹¹¹ “J’écris sur ce petit meuble d’Anna Schackleton qui, rue de Commailles, se trouvait dans ma chambre. C’était là que je travaillais; je l’aimais, parce que dans la double glace du secrétaire, au-dessus de la tablette où j’écrivais, je me voyais écrire; entre chaque phrase je me regardais; mon image me parlait, m’écoutait, me tenait compagnie, me maintenait en état de ferveur”. Gide, *Journal 1889-1939*, 18.10.1907, p. 252.

¹¹² Fragment of an interview with Paul Claudel by Dominique Arban 28.3.1947 in: *Paul Claudel et André Gide: Correspondance, 1899-1926* (ed. R. Mallet), Paris 1949, p. 250.

¹¹³ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 155.

through its reflective function and the level of distortion which any form of reflection necessarily entails, serves to undermine the ideal of nineteenth-century narration, i.e. to “reflect life”, and the references to his *Faux-monnayeurs* have the same effect as when the narrator of Nathalie Sarraute’s *Les Fruits d’Or* (1963) asks: “et *Les Fruits d’Or*, vous aimez ça?” Neither Gide’s *Les Faux-monnayeurs* nor Edouard’s diary, nor his *Les Faux-monnayeurs* are able to convey a sense of life-totality, in the way Lukács describes in the *Theory of the Novel*. By showing the discrepancies between the various reflections, and the fragmentary nature of each, Gide can be seen as displaying the *sincérité* he continually strove towards, namely by rejecting the inherent artificiality of the mimetic principle. In juxtaposing the epic with the poetological – the “main narrative” of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* with Edouard’s diary – Gide was possibly, as W.B. Coley has suggested,¹¹⁴ paying homage to Fielding’s *Tom Jones*. In the latter, the picaresque portrayal of the protagonist’s adventures is interrupted by two so-called digressions, the “Old Man of the Hill” and “King of the Gypsies” chapters. In these Fielding attempts what Coley describes as “a kind of poetics of the novel in the novel”.¹¹⁵ In *Tom Jones* this self-reflexive element, although parodying the novel genre to a certain extent, does not seriously challenge the epic mode. In Gide’s *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, however, the parodistical elements, the refractions of the writer and his work, are undermining the traditional prerogative of the novelist – that of telling a tale.

Gide playfully refers throughout *Les Faux-monnayeurs* to the self-reflexive elements which feature. Our first introduction to Boris, for example, is of him looking through a telescope at the mountains; Sarah says of the poet Armand: “Il a une espèce de besoin d’*abîmer* tout ce à quoi il tient le plus”(my italics);¹¹⁶ and finally, La Pérouse describes the images his wife receives in his mind as falsified, saying there is no device in her brain to rectify them: “chez elle, tout reste à l’envers”.¹¹⁷ Other than these ludic references to mirrors, another example of the *mise-en-abyme* is provided by the inclusion of the diary of Azais, in a subtle reflection of the theme of onanism.

¹¹⁴ W.B. Coley, “Gide and Fielding” in: *Comparative Literature* XI, I (Winter 1959), 1-15.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 7.

¹¹⁶ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 115.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 158.

B. Morrissette has carefully examined the question of Gide's legacy to future generations, in particular to the *nouveaux romanciers*, and has pointed to several examples of the *mise-en-abyme* concept in their works. It features for example, in Butor's *Emploi du Temps* (1956), where the detective novel *Meurtre de Bleston* throws light on the action in the primary narrative (and where another critic has also seen a parallel between the embarrassment of Burton as he discloses his professional credo and that of Edouard in the pivotal Saas-Fée scene¹¹⁸), as well as in Robbe-Grillet's *Les Gommages* (1953) and in his *Dans le labyrinthe* (1959). Morrissette also points out that some examples of *nouveau cinéma*, such as Resnais' *Hiroshima mon amour*, his *Letztes Jahr in Marienbad* and Fellini's *8½* feature a form of "duplication intérieure" as do the structural ideas of the theorist of the *nouveau roman*, Jean Ricardou, who provides a particularly tortuous example of the technique in his novel *La Prise de Constantine* (1965). Many *nouveaux romans* also contain a pictorial *mise-en-abyme*, in which a description of a painting, a map, a tapestry or even a stained glass window might bear a significant relation to the narrative into which it has been inserted. And with Bernard's two utterances, firstly to Edouard's stolen suitcase, "Maintenant, valise, à nous deux",¹¹⁹ and then to the Angel, "Alors, maintenant, à nous deux",¹²⁰ both parodying Rastignac's challenge to Paris at the end of *Le Père Goriot*, Gide certainly points forward to the debate on intertextuality.

In a particularly vertiginous example of the *mise-en-abyme* in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, Edouard seizes the opportunity of having been asked to warn young Georges Molinier of the dangers of theft and counterfeit to read to him an extract from his novel which mirrors precisely this same scenario. Edouard reads from his fragmentary work, not only in an attempt at admonishing Georges but also, as Georges himself correctly guesses, in the hope of finding a way of continuing his novel. Edouard's experiment fails spectacularly and he himself realises afterwards that the lines he read were "assez mauvaises"; what he

¹¹⁸ Bruce Morrissette, "Un héritage d'André Gide: la duplication intérieure" in: *Comparative Literature Studies* 2, 8 (June 1971), 125-142.

cf. E. Jongeneel, *Michel Butor: Le Pacte Romanesque*, Paris 1988, p. 70.

¹¹⁹ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 87.

¹²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 335.

learns from the exercise is that “tout ce chapitre est à récrire”.¹²¹ Whether the incident affects Georges’ behaviour or not is irrelevant: what is important is the process of exhibition, consideration, and if necessary, correction of what has been written. Like Gide’s novel, Edouard’s is presented as a work in progress, in a way which invites comparison with Butor’s more radical expression of the same process, *Intervalle* (1973), in which the changes made in style and punctuation by the narrator to the various fragments of text form constitutive elements of the narration.

The reflections between art and life are demonstrated in this scene with Georges Molinier *in extremis*. The episode is based on a real-life situation: in 1922 Gide played the same role vis-à-vis the young Yves Allégret that Edouard plays towards Georges. Having been asked by Yves’ mother to speak to her son concerning “de graves indélicatesses”, Gide read to him a fragment of *Les Faux-monnayeurs!* The fact that in Edouard’s *Les Faux-monnayeurs* Hildebrandt suggests to the novelist Audibert that he write down their suggestions for the benefit of the child Eudolfe, indicates that the reflections between life and art, and art and art, can be carried on indefinitely: the unusual choice of the characters’ names further underlines the artificiality of the scene. According to the critic Fokkema, this episode contains “a high degree of uncertainty tolerance”¹²² and presents an extreme challenge to the reader’s ability to “crack the code” of the text, which – according to Fokkema – justifies the categorisation of *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* as a modernist work, with only very astute readers being able to follow Gide’s intentions. (Fokkema notes further that the disorientation factor of Virginia Woolf’s *The Waves* will prove, in the long-term, to be too high, whereas *Der Zauberberg* will continue to attract readers.¹²³)

The inclusion of Edouard’s theories on the novel as an autonomous narrative element in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* shows a radical departure from the premises on which the Realist novel was constructed; further, Gide presents us with Vincent’s discourse on the stenohalyn and euryhalin fish. Vincent’s speech is of considerable length and its specialised

¹²¹ *ibid.*, p. 351.

¹²² Fokkema, “A Semiotic Definition of Aesthetic Experience”, p. 75.

¹²³ *ibid.*, p. 66.

vocabulary jars with that of the preceding narration; indeed, it is comparable to the scientific digressions which make up Hans Castorp's night-time reading. (Gide himself held a lifelong interest in natural history. Similarly, the exposition via the Polish doctor Sophroniska of Freud's theories of psychoanalysis and the particular case of the young Boris, were suggested to Gide by his meetings with the psychoanalyst Sokolnicka around 1921-1922).

Although the digressions of Vincent and Sophroniska remain relatively integrated with the narrative, with the narrator showing the reactions of those listening, as well as stepping in "personally" to elucidate or summarise, these two discourses provide no real thematic contribution towards the rest of the narrative, nor do they further the development of the plot or the characters, although some critics see in the fish exposition an extended metaphor for the savage laws operating in society at large.¹²⁴ In introducing these theoretical elements, Gide is again testing the waters for the inclusion of reflexive elements in the novel, as he is with the integration of Edouard's diary in the narrative. The reaction of his novelist friend, Roger Martin du Gard, with whom Gide engaged in many extended dialogues concerning the composition of the novel, was not positive. He referred to "l'introduction parasite de suppléments curieux auxquels on ne pourra prendre qu'un plaisir passager et cérébral".¹²⁵ And perhaps Gide himself was not entirely convinced of their place in the novel either. The implicit criticism of Edouard, who is condemned never to finish his overly theoretical novel, extends also to the psychoanalyst: Edouard says, "Je crois les méthodes d'éducation de Sophroniska excellentes en théorie, mais peut-être s'abuse-t-elle sur la résistance de ces enfants."¹²⁶ This is also borne out in practice: Sophroniska fails to treat Boris effectively, and in handing the child's cherished talisman to the sinister Strouvillou and then entrusting him to Edouard's care, who places him in the corrupt *pension* Vedel-Azaïs, can be seen as being indirectly responsible for his death at the hands of the school bullies. As for Vincent, Gide condemns him to exile in senility in

¹²⁴ cf. Raymond Mahieu, "Présence d'une absente ou *Les Faux-monnayeurs* et l'Histoire", in: *André Gide* 7, *RLM* (1984), 47-67.

¹²⁵ *Correspondance Gide - Martin du Gard*, Paris 1972, p. 177.

¹²⁶ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 190.

Africa. Gide's novel can be seen, therefore, as an extended dialogue on the novel form, an arena for the discussion of ideas and expression of the crisis of the genre in the 1920s.

The aesthetic counterpart to the theoretical Edouard is the realist Bernard. It is Bernard who is largely responsible for the development of the plot – or, at least one of the plots – by seizing the initiative on several occasions. It is Bernard who finds the real counterfeit coin and presents it to Edouard, who then rejects it saying that reality bothers him. Bernard clearly rebuts Edouard's ideas on the novel, saying: “Je trouve absurde cette méthode de travail qu'il nous exposait. Un bon roman s'écrit plus naïvement que cela. Et d'abord, il faut croire à ce que l'on raconte, ne pensez-vous pas? et raconter tout simplement”.¹²⁷ The self-reflexive element of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* is also constantly reinforced by other characters: by Sophroniska, for example, mentioning that it is always dangerous to present intellectuals in a novel as they bore the readers and talk nonsense, by her saying that a novel – such as Edouard's – based on the *Art of the Fugue* and scourged of all emotion would be arid, and by La Pérouse asking why old people rarely feature in literature.

The conflicting opinions on the way the poem by La Fontaine, on which Bernard is examined for the written part of his *baccalauréat*, should be interpreted, constitutes another paradigm of the self-reflexivity in Gide's novel. Olivier, in an attempt to “briller” in front of his friend, claims La Fontaine's poem is self-reflexive, and sees in the description of the butterfly a portrait of the artist. But of the last phrase of Olivier's little lecture, we read: “Cette dernière phrase, Olivier la tenait de Passavant, qui lui-même l'avait cueillie sur les lèvres de Paul-Ambroise, un jour que celui-ci discourait dans un salon”.¹²⁸ Edouard will also cite Paul-Ambroise to Bernard in a later discussion. Quotation is, in fact, one of the favourite activities of the characters of *Les Faux-monnayeurs*: there are quotations within Edouard's diary, and in his citation of Azaïs' diary, he even includes an extract featuring a quotation from the Bible, saying “Je crois que je cite exactement”.¹²⁹ We also find

¹²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 199.

¹²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 255.

¹²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 114.

quotations in letters, and in conversations: parodying the quotations from high-brow literary sources is Armand's reciting of the first line from his poem *Le Vase nocturne*, "Quiconque à quarante ans n'a pas d'hémorroïdes".¹³⁰ The narrator takes part in this game too; in fact, the Fénelon epigraph which opens chapter VII of part 3, "Il ne faut prendre, si je ne me trompe, que la fleur de chaque objet" reflects the last two lines of the contentious lines by La Fontaine: "Je suis chose légère et vole à tout sujet, Je vais de fleur en fleur et d'objet en objet".¹³¹ The extensiveness of quoted material destroys the illusion of reality, and reminds the reader that he is reading a *novel*, a work of the imagination, and which consists of nothing but a string of words. In *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, language draws attention to itself in a way which anticipates the theories of the TelQueliens: indeed, does not the meaninglessness of Boris' talisman (GAZ ... TELEPHONE ... CENT MILLE ROUBLES) parody the work of the novelist who juxtaposes words in the same way, hoping that a meaning will emerge?

In *Der Zauberberg* the characters are also very fond of quoting each other, a game the narrator becomes involved in too. Particularly frequently cited is Hofrat Behrens. For example, it is Behrens who originally refers to his institution as "kein Bagno und kein sibirisches Bergwerk",¹³² a phrase to be later repeated on several occasions by Hans Castorp. It is, of course, Behrens who initiates Hans Castorp into the mysteries of human biology, and the digressions on various aspects of medicine constitute a large part of *Der Zauberberg*. A possible reason for the repetition of so many of Behrens' sayings is the multiplicity of functions which the doctor fulfills. Not merely director of the sanatorium, the judge Rhadamanthys, dictating the number of months patients have to stay in his "care", he is also sexually linked with Clawdia Chauchat, and is a visual artist. On discussing his portrait-painting skills with the two cousins, Behrens suggests that the only way to achieve a lifelike similarity of Clawdia's eyes is through "Vexation, Täuschung [...] Sie müssen die Schiefheit und Geschlitztheit zuwege bringen, wie die Natur sie zuwege bringt, Illusion in der Illusion treiben,

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 276.

¹³¹ *ibid.*, p. 255.

¹³² *Der Zauberberg*, p. 247.

sozusagen”.¹³³ Behrens also insists on the artist possessing a wide scientific knowledge, an idea which prompts Hans Castorp to conclude that all branches of knowledge converge around one issue: that of humanity itself.

Through the repetition of Behrens’ words and ideas by the narrator and Hans Castorp, Thomas Mann may be indirectly using the character of the artist-cum-sanatorium director of dubious integrity as a means of pleading for the inclusion of reflection in the novel alongside traditional story-telling features. This is made particularly explicit in the important scene where Hans Castorp is examined by Behrens, who tells him his illness has cleared and that he is well enough to join his cousin in the *Flachland*. Behrens’ speech on the debauchery of his patients is punctuated by medical references as he examines Joachim, thus combining narrative with reflective elements to particularly comical effect:

‘Ja, ja, gentlemen, die verfluchte libido!’ sagte er. ‘Sie haben natürlich noch Ihr Vergnügen an der Chose, Ihnen kann’s recht sein. – Vesikulär. – Aber so ein Anstaltschef, der hat davon die Neese plein, das können Sie mir glauben. Kann ich dafür, daß die Phtise nun mal mit besonderer Konkupiszenz verbunden ist – leichte Rauhigkeit? [...]’¹³⁴

Certainly, like Behrens, Thomas Mann “treibt Illusion in der Illusion”. He does so consciously with the aim of reproducing a recognisable “reality”. But his art is not exclusively devoted to the implementation of the mimetic principle, and he seeks to broaden out the traditional scope of the novel by delving into a number of other areas of knowledge. Even the character of Mynheer Peeperkorn, described as “keinesweges der Mann, logische Verwirrung in die Welt zu tragen”¹³⁵ serves as a springboard for a lengthy digression on poisons. This digression, which explains the dual nature of poisonous plants, would initially appear to be unduly lengthy and disconnected from the rest of the chapter which charts the failing health of Peeperkorn and the impact of the Dutchman on the other characters. Yet this monologue fulfills an important function. When Peeperkorn indicates: “mit den Stoffen steht es so, daß alle Leben und

¹³³ *ibid.*, p. 254.

¹³⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 568-569.

¹³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 585.

Tod auf einmal bärigen: alle seien Ptisanen und Gifte zugleich”¹³⁶, we are reminded of Krokowski’s earlier lecture on the mushrooms which have both aphrodisiac and poisonous properties. Peeperkorn’s digression also serves, of course, to anticipate his own suicide by poisoning soon after this episode. Similarly, the ruminations on death and oxydation provide examples of Hans Castorp’s continuing education, yet at the same time point ahead to the death of Joachim and to his own. Likewise the legal document of the Polish duel anticipates the battle between Naphta and Settembrini. It is important to note how the reflective elements willfully destroy the narrative thread through a complete change of linguistic register, yet at the same time further the development of the “plot”.

Like *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, *Der Zauberberg* contains a great many literary quotations; yet whereas in Gide’s novel these are presented explicitly as quotations or are inserted by the narrator as epigraphs, Thomas Mann seeks to couch his references to other literary sources in the speeches of the characters themselves, notably Settembrini (Naphta and Behrens to a lesser extent.) By far the most frequently-cited work is *Faust*, with the quotations at their most dense in the *Walpurgisnacht* chapter, although much is lost on the “simple” Hans Castorp. However, as H. Meyer points out, even when Hans Castorp fails to identify the Italian’s words warning him of Clawdia, “Betrachte sie genau ... Lilith ist das”, as those of Mephistopheles, his question: “Wer?” allows for the dialogue to develop and to simulate that of the original.¹³⁷

The quotations in *Der Zauberberg* have a different function from those in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*. Whereas in Gide’s novel, they draw attention to the constructed, literary nature of the text we are reading, in Thomas Mann’s novel, they serve, as H. Meyer has shown, at least partly to outline the development of the plot. Meyer shows in detail how the word “brav”, first used by Clawdia Chauchat, in oblique reference to Joachim, will anticipate the latter’s death; it reappears in the heading *Als Soldat und brav* for the chapter describing Joachim’s death, a quotation from Valentin in *Faust*: “Ich gehe durch den

¹³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 791.

¹³⁷ Herman Meyer, *Das Zitat in der Erzählkunst*, Stuttgart 1961, pp. 216-217.

Todesschlaf, Zu Gott ein als Soldat und brav?'. The association between Joachim and Valentin is made more explicit in the chapter *Fülle des Wohllauts*, when Hans Castorp, listening to one of his "favourite records", Valentin's prayer from Gounod's opera *Faust*, links the character with his now dead cousin, and finally, he will have the piece played on the gramophone to good effect in the chapter *Fragwürdigstes*. The use of the literary quotation – extensive, self-conscious and pointing to a symbolic reading of the text, whilst fully assimilated into the realistic dialogue and development of the plot – is indicative of the key position *Der Zauberberg* occupies in twentieth-century fiction between the old and the new; the novel is, in Mann's own words: "ein vollkommen echter Ausdruck meines Wesens, namentlich insofern er den parodistischen Konservatismus bewahrt, durch welchen mein Künstlertum sich zwischen den Epochen in der Schwebel hält".¹³⁸

The tri-partite structure of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* reflects the desire to bring together both epic and critical elements, with the Paris chapters charting the development of the "plot", and the central Saas-Fée section providing the space for theoretical discussion (although Edouard's diary undermines the narrative flow in all three sections). The purity of the high mountains in Switzerland provides the opportunity for Edouard to expose his thoughts on the "roman pur", in the same way that the intellectual development of Hans Castorp in *Der Zauberberg* can only happen in a rarified environment, away from the material concerns of the *Flachland*.

At the very beginning of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* Bernard leaves home on discovering his illegitimacy, exposing Albert Profitendieu as a "false" father. Similarly, Edouard would like to break the umbilical cord tying the novel to the aesthetic maxims of the previous century by writing his "roman pur". This image is reinforced by Lilian's tale of the shipwrecked *Bourgogne* where, in a radical move, the hands of those clinging on to the raft, have to be cut off to enable those on board to survive. The novel is full of images of breaking ties, and forming new ones. Further, the act of voyeurism which Bernard initially commits

¹³⁸ Thomas Mann, letter to Ernst Fischer 25. 5. 1926 in: *Selbstkommentare*, p. 91.

when he reads his mother's letters can be seen, as Marie-Denise Boros-Azzi's stimulating study has shown, as yet another reflection of the novelistic process. Boros-Azzi writes:

[...] Ne pourrait-on y voir une réflexion spéculaire du travail du romancier? Ne s'agit-il pas pour lui de percer la surface de la réalité pour arriver à une vérité fondamentale? A l'instar de l'enquête menée par Molinier et Profitendieu pour découvrir les jeunes délinquants qui avaient passé de la fréquentation des maisons de prostitution au commerce de la fausse monnaie (faux amour, faux argent, nous ne sortons pas du système de la fausseté), le romancier mène une enquête lui aussi, afin de découvrir et de faire surgir les secrets enfouis dans les strates sous-jacentes de la réalité. Voyeur et détective, il ne cesse d'interroger la trame superficielle du réel.¹³⁹

J-J. Goux, in his provocative study, has drawn fascinating conclusions from the extended imagery of counterfeit money and references to economic matters which permeate *Les Faux-monnayeurs*.¹⁴⁰ The narrator, referring to the development of Edouard's novel tells us: "Les idées de change, de dévalorisation, d'inflation, peu à peu envahissaient son livre, comme les théories du vêtement le *Sartor Resartus* de Carlyle".¹⁴¹ Counterfeit notes and coins appear to have the same exchange value as the real thing, but are, of course, worthless. The secret of their success lies in the counterfeiter's skill in producing and circulating money which poses as real currency, *representing* a real value. The technique of the *mise-en-abyme*, Goux suggests, is used by Gide – nephew of the famous economist Charles Gide – to expose the falseness of traditional novelistic production, whereby a novel claims to *represent* reality. Since, however, there is increased consciousness of the fact that reality cannot be grasped, that claim must be regarded as bogus and the "traditional" novel as counterfeit. Underlining this situation in Gide's novel is the dubious character Strouvilhou who, in his exposé of his anarchistic views on art, describes the crisis of representation with terminology from the world of economics: "Comme l'on sait que 'la mauvaise monnaie chasse la bonne', celui qui offrirait au public de vraies pièces semblerait nous payer de mots. Dans un monde où chacun triche, c'est l'homme vrai qui fait figure de charlatan". He also talks of "l'inflation poétique", and wishes to "démonétiser tous les beaux sujets".¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Marie-Denise Boros Azzi, "L'incipit des *Faux-monnayeurs* d'André Gide: une mise en abyme de l'écriture romanesque" in: *Romanic Review* 80, 1 (Jan. 1989), 124-130, p. 127.

¹⁴⁰ cf. footnote 36.

¹⁴¹ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 188.

¹⁴² *ibid.*, p. 319.

The metaphor of the counterfeit money and the *mise-en-abyme* work together to undermine the principle of representation fundamental to the Realist novel. Interestingly, Goux points out that one of Quentin Metzys' most renowned paintings which, hanging in the Louvre, Gide undoubtedly knew, is that of *The Banker and His Wife* or *The Weigher of Gold*. This painting, with its inclusion of a convex mirror and its subject matter firmly within the realm of the world of finance, would appear to contain a critique of traditional representation in the same way as *Les Faux-monnayeurs* seeks to do. Edouard claims, when asked, that his novel has no subject, but that he wishes to expose "la rivalité du monde réel et de la représentation que nous nous en faisons".¹⁴³ Goux ventures that this crisis of representation forms the "sujet profond" of Gide's novel.

Gide worked on *Les Faux-monnayeurs* between 1919 and 1925, yet chose to set the "action" of his novel prior to the First World War. Although *Les Faux-monnayeurs* contains many anachronisms, it is generally agreed that the action takes place around 1906. The system of gold currency was at that time still in use in France, but was to disappear in the First World War. Goux sees Gide's novel as marked by the hiatus between representation and value, on both an economic and an aesthetic level, which was being felt even before the advent of the war: "Il ne fait aucun doute que le roman de Gide [...] est le symptôme d'un effondrement de certaines médiations idéologiques profondes entre la vie économique et la vie tout court".¹⁴⁴ Goux also refers to Arnheim in Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* who mourns the reduction of all aspects of life to a series of economic relationships.

Both *Der Zauberberg* and *Les Faux-monnayeurs* are strongly marked by the introduction of reflexive elements: in the case of Mann's novel, these are the cultural reflections of Naphta and Settembrini; in Gide's these are the reflections of the novelistic process itself. In both works, and in contrast with much nineteenth century fiction, Mann and Gide devote far less attention to the development of character and plot: indeed, they are happy

¹⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 201.

¹⁴⁴ Goux, *Les monnayeurs du langage*, p. 33.

to sacrifice the smooth unfolding of a plot, and a chronological progression for the sake of these reflections. E.M. Forster wrote of Gide's novel:

Gide has [also] published the diary he kept while he was writing the novel, and there is no reason why he should not publish in the future the impressions he had when re-reading both the diary and the novel, and in the future perfect a still more final synthesis in which the diary, the novel and his impressions of both will interact.¹⁴⁵

Whilst Forster humorously exaggerates Gide's approach, there can be no doubt that both *Les Faux-monnayeurs* and *Der Zauberberg* played a vital rôle in paving the way for the increased infiltration of ideas in the novel.

¹⁴⁵ Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, p. 95.

Chapter Two

Time and History in the Novel

It is known that a meeting of Georg Lukács and Thomas Mann took place in Vienna in 1922, an event which has given rise to much speculation as to the use of Lukács as the model for the radical Naphta in *Der Zauberberg*.¹⁴⁶ It is also possible that the discussion of time in *The Theory of the Novel* had a direct or indirect bearing on the author whose narrator seeks to portray time itself, asking the question: "Kann man die Zeit erzählen, diese selbst, als solche, an und für sich?"¹⁴⁷ and who gives the philosophical ruminations on the nature of time such a dominant place in his novel.

For Lukács, there is a direct correlation between the nature of a specific civilisation and the types of fiction which that civilisation produces: a literary work will reflect in its form the prevailing philosophy of the era in which it is created. Underpinning Lukács' discussion of the novel is the notion of a universal spiritual *rupture* having occurred. "There is no longer any totality of being", he writes of twentieth-century civilisation, man is in a state of "transcendental homelessness"¹⁴⁸ without any hope of gaining orientation or guidance from the external world. In the 1963 preface to the re-publication of *The Theory of the Novel*, Lukács admitted to the "subversive but utopian" nature of the views expressed in the work and to the fact that it was written "in a state of permanent despair over the world".¹⁴⁹

It would appear that the common experience of the war permeates the theory of the novel of Lukács, as well as Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg*. It was also at the core of the theory of the novel of Walter Benjamin. In "Der Erzähler: Betrachtungen zum Werk Nikolai Lesskows" Benjamin elaborates his views on the fading of the oral tradition and the emergence of the novel, which he describes as the form of expression for the

¹⁴⁶ cf. Judith Marcus-Tar, *Thomas Mann und Georg Lukács*, Cologne & Vienna 1982.

¹⁴⁷ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 738.

¹⁴⁸ Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, p. 121.

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 20.

disorientation of modern man. Benjamin sees the advent of sophisticated technology and the trauma of the First World War as being to blame for bringing about a depreciation of experience and a succession of changes with which man is unable to keep up:

eine Generation, die noch mit der Pferdebahn zur Schule gefahren war, stand unter freiem Himmel in einer Landschaft, in der nichts unverändert geblieben war als die Wolken und unter ihnen, in einem Kraftfeld zerstörender Strome und Explosionen, der winzige, gebrechliche Menschenkörper.¹⁵⁰

Benjamin conjures up a desolate image of humanity, alienated by the increasingly fast pace of historical change.

It is in the *Vorsatz* to *Der Zauberberg* that Thomas Mann indicates most explicitly that a major rupture has occurred and that times have irrevocably changed; here, the narrator situates the action of his tale, saying it takes place a long time ago: “diese Geschichte ist sehr lange her, sie ist sozusagen schon ganz mit historischem Edelrost überzogen und unbedingt in der Zeitform der tiefsten Vergangenheit vorzutragen”.¹⁵¹ However, the extreme pastness of the events is not measurable in terms of time: “sie ist viel älter als ihre Jahre, ihre Betagtheit ist nicht nach Tagen, das Alter, das auf ihr liegt nicht nach Sonnenumläufen zu berechnen; mit einem Wort, sie verdankt den Grad ihres Vergangenseins nicht eigentlich der Zeit [...]” The narrator then seeks to dispel this mystery by revealing that this pastness is due to the story’s taking place prior to an event of devastating proportion:

die hochgradige Verfllossenheit unserer Geschichte rührt daher, daß sie vor einer gewissen, Leben und Bewußtsein tief zerklüftenden Wende und Grenze spielt ... Sie spielt, oder, um jedes Präsens geflissentlich zu vermeiden, sie spielte und hat gespielt vormals, ehemals, in den alten Tagen, der Welt vor dem großen Kriege, mit dessen Beginn so vieles begann, was zu beginnen wohl kaum schon aufgehört hat.¹⁵²

The narrator indicates in the strongest terms that the war has created such a chasm between the past and the present that it will never be possible to reconcile the two in a historical continuum.

¹⁵⁰ Walter Benjamin, “Der Erzähler: Betrachtungen zum Werk Nikolai Lesskows”, p. 439.

¹⁵¹ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 7.

¹⁵² *ibid.*, p. 7.

In *The Theory of the Novel* Lukács suggests a correlation between the spiritual rootlessness of modern man and the novel's portrayal of time as a complex entity: "Time can become constitutive only when the bond with the transcendental home has been severed".¹⁵³ The major upheaval of the war referred to by the narrator in the *Vorsatz* to *Der Zauberberg* expresses itself in the "extreme pastness" of the *erzählte Zeit*, and the disturbed relationship to temporality of the novel's characters, including the narrator himself. The shock waves emanating from the experience of the war are made manifest in the problematic depiction of time, which is no longer seen as a unifying, progressive element. Instead, images of circularity recur in a repeated series of attempts to escape from linear, progressive history and return to an archaic vision of history as cyclical, eternally regenerating itself. Modern attempts to transcend history by luxuriating in a nostalgia for archaic forms are common, as Mircea Eliade has shown, when individuals struggle to make sense of particular historical events:

La réapparition des théories cycliques dans la pensée contemporaine est riche de sens. Tout à fait incompétents pour nous prononcer sur leur validité, nous nous contenterons d'observer que la formulation en termes modernes d'un mythe archaïque trahit tout au moins le désir de trouver un sens et une justification transhistorique aux événements historiques.¹⁵⁴

Hans Castorp's experience of time becomes confused soon after his arrival on the Magic Mountain: the first indication of this is during the first full day when he is unable to tell Settembrini his age. As he gets used to the daily routine of sanatorium life, his experience of temporality becomes that of "das stehende Nichts", the *nunc stans* of Schopenhauer. His impression that the five hearty meals in the sanatorium blur to form one continuous present, and observation that weather elements from all the seasons appear to be present at all times of the year, eventually lead him to conclude that time is "eine Eulenspiegel".¹⁵⁵ On the Magic Mountain, temporality becomes for Hans Castorp "die große Konfusion": as the narrator explains,

Was eigentlich vermengt und vermischt wurde bei dieser großen Konfusion, das waren die Gefühlsbegriffe oder die Bewußtseinslagen des 'Noch' und des 'Schon wieder', – eines der verwirrendsten, vertracktesten und verhextesten Erlebnisse überhaupt, und ein Erlebnis dabei, das zu kosten Hans Castorp gleich an seinem ersten Tage hier oben eine unmoralische Neigung verspürt hatte: nämlich bei den fünf übergewaltigen Mahlzeiten im lustig

¹⁵³ Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, p. 122.

¹⁵⁴ Mircea Eliade, *Le mythe de l'éternel retour*, Paris 1969, p. 165.

¹⁵⁵ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 507.



schablonierten Speisesaal, wo denn ein erster Schwindel dieser Art, vergleichsweise unschuldig noch, ihn angewandelt hatte.¹⁵⁶

Hans Castorp's sense of *Zeitaufhebung* is intensified by "der ewige Schnee", in which he seeks to lose himself, a sensation the narrator compares to that induced by long, hypnotic walks on the beach. This theme is further reflected in Peeperkorn's use of narcotics, Hans Castorp's own devotion to Maria Mancini and the narrator's references to the disturbed temporality of drug-users. It is frequently contrasted with measurable, "active" time as advocated by Settembrini.

Hans Castorp also observes on several occasions the disproportion of the quality of an experience to its objective temporal duration. The most pertinent example of this is the extraordinary richness of his snow vision with its return back in time to ancient civilisations, but which, to Hans Castorp's surprise, barely lasts a few minutes. As is the case with many of his observations on time, they are subsequently taken up by the narrator who relates them to the craft of fiction. He draws attention to the paradoxical nature of time in fiction:

Die Erzählung [...] hat zweierlei Zeit: ihre eigene erstens, die musikalisch-reale, die ihren Ablauf, ihre Erscheinung bedingt: zweitens [...] die ihres Inhalts, die perspektivisch ist, und zwar in so verschiedenem Maße, daß die imaginäre Zeit der Erzählung fast, ja völlig mit ihrer musikalischen zusammenfallen, sich aber auch sternenweit von ihr entfernen kann.¹⁵⁷

This observation pre-empts G. Müller's important distinction between *Erzählzeit* and *erzählte Zeit*. As J. Vogt suggests, Thomas Mann anticipates many of the important fictional "discoveries" made by the literary theorists of the fifties and sixties.¹⁵⁸

The narrator frequently articulates the difficulty of conveying the passage of time in fiction, of the need to fill "die reine Zeit" with events which suggest its passing:

Eine Erzählung, die ging: 'Die Zeit verfloß, sie verrann, es strömte die Zeit' und so immer fort, das könnte gesunden Sinnes wohl niemand eine Erzählung nennen. Es wäre,

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 742.

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 738.

¹⁵⁸ cf. Jochen Vogt, *Aspekte erzählender Prosa*, Opladen 1984, p. 99f.

als wollte man hirnverbrannterweise eine Stunde lang ein und denselben Ton oder Akkord aushalten und das – für Musik ausgeben.¹⁵⁹

Thomas Mann also draws attention to the necessary temporal *blancs* in fiction: since a narrator can never record every single particle of narrated time, he necessarily has to leap forward in his narration, and make certain omissions. Of the promises from Clawdia Chauchat to Hans Castorp that she will return from Dhagestan and which are not recorded in the text, we read that they occurred outside the narrator's narration:

Daß diese Abreise vorläufiger Art, nur eine Abreise für diesmal sein solle, daß Frau Chauchat wiederzukehren beabsichtigte, – unbestimmt wann, aber daß sie einmal wiederkommen wolle oder auch müsse, des besaß Hans Castorp Versicherungen, direkte und mündliche, die nicht in dem mitgeteilten fremdsprachigen Dialog gefallen waren, sondern folglich in die unsererseits wortlose Zwischenzeit, während welcher wir den zeitgebundenen Fluß unserer Erzählung unterbrochen und nur sie, die reine Zeit, haben walten lassen.¹⁶⁰

In the "Einführung in den Zauberberg" Mann pointed his reader towards a repeated reading of his novel;¹⁶¹ further, the narrator comments on how long he will need, saying neither the *seven* days of the week will be long enough, nor *seven* months, and that it is best not to think too much about how much time the reading will occupy.¹⁶² The narrator thus pre-empts Hans Castorp's insight that there is no correlation between the quality of an experience and its measurable duration. In *Der Zauberberg*, the early stages of Hans Castorp's visit to the sanatorium are described in great detail; from then on increasingly shorter stretches of narration are used to describe increasingly longer stretches of narrated time. In chapter 1, 21 pages are devoted to the arrival; chapter 2 (23 pages) fills in on Hans Castorp's life up to the point when the decision was taken to leave for Davos: chapter 3 has 114 pages and describes his first full day in the sanatorium: chapter 4, which has 124 pages, takes in the first three weeks of the stay, i.e. the time originally allocated for the "Stippvisite"; chapter 5 has 219 pages and covers the first seven months, until the significant *Walpurgisnacht*

¹⁵⁹ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 408.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 476.

¹⁶¹ "Was soll ich nun über das Buch selbst sagen und darüber, wie es etwa zu lesen sei? Der Beginn ist eine sehr arrogante Forderung, nämlich die, daß man es zweimal lesen soll". Thomas Mann, "Einführung in den Zauberberg", GW XI, p. 610.

¹⁶² *Der Zauberberg*, p. 7.

chapter; chapter 6, with 266 pages describes the following year and nine months; finally, chapter 7 with 243 pages fills in on the remaining four and a half years of Hans Castorp's stay. In this way, Hans Castorp's sensation – that time is disappearing, turning into timelessness, is reflected on a structural level. It is interesting to contrast the proportion of *Erzählzeit* to *erzählte Zeit* in *Der Zauberberg* with that in *Buddenbrooks* where it remains constant.

As U. Karthaus has pointed out, the troubled dream of Hans Castorp on his first night in the sanatorium, in which he sees his cousin being transported down the mountainside in a bobsleigh, provides an example of the theme of atemporality, and at the same time, on a structural level, shows a reluctance on behalf of the narrator to depict events in strict chronological order, but rather his desire to reflect the confusion his protagonist is experiencing.¹⁶³ The same could be said of the reappearance of the dead Joachim in the chapter *Okkulte Erlebnisse*, with his beard growing in bizarre contradiction to the laws of nature.

The narrator of *Der Zauberberg* is highly conscious of his inability to tell a story in the old-fashioned way. “Unsere Geschichte gerät ins Stocken”¹⁶⁴ he says: the flashbacks, digressions on time, Naphta/Settembrini dialogues, and his frequent retreats from the events to elaborate on the personality and psychology of Hans Castorp hamper linear progression and mirror his character's “holterdiepolter”¹⁶⁵ experience of time. The narrator is all too aware of the effect of the inclusion of reflective elements on the relating of his tale; he cuts himself short in a lengthy elaboration of Hans Castorp's feelings towards the young patient from Mannheim who also yearns for Clawdia Chauchat, saying: “Unmöglich, alles zu ergründen und auseinanderzuhalten, wenn wir von der Stelle kommen wollen”.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Ulrich Karthaus, “‘Der Zauberberg’ – ein Zeitroman (Zeit, Geschichte, Mythos)” in: *DVjs* 44 (1970), 269-305, p. 298.

¹⁶⁴ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 435.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 785.

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 280.

An inordinate amount of attention from critics has been focussed on the question of time in *Der Zauberberg*. Certainly, Thomas Mann himself suggested “daß das Mysterium der Zeit [...] den Kern des Zauberbergs, dies späte modernverzwickte, bewußte und auch wieder unbewußte Glied in einer großen Überlieferungsreihe bilde”.¹⁶⁷ Since the appearance of R. Thieberger’s *Der Begriff der Zeit bei Thomas Mann* in 1938 countless attempts have been made to link the time reflections with Bergson’s philosophy or Proust’s concept of the *mémoire volontaire*. Cerebrum, cerebral, as Peeperkorn would say? Thomas Mann was aware of neither Bergson nor Proust. His preoccupation with the problem of time is more easily linked with the *zeitgeist*, rather than with any direct literary influences, thus corroborating Lukács’ theory of the unique political and social climate of the early twentieth century as catalyst for the reflections.

Musil described the principle which guided him during the writing of his 1906 work *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß* as that of the straight line: “ein Prinzip der geraden Linie als der kürzesten Verbindung zwischen zwei Punkten [...] obwohl ich auf die Handlung keinen Wert legte, gab ich ihr instinktiv große Rechte. Ich unterwarf mich einer improvisierten – und wie der Erfolg zeigte, richtigen Vorstellung von dem, was Erzählen sei”.¹⁶⁸ Yet in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* we hear Ulrich ruminating on the naiveté of linear chronology, the “einfache Reihenfolge”:

das ist es, was sich der Roman künstlich zunutze gemacht hat: der Wanderer mag bei strömendem Regen die Landstraße reiten oder bei zwanzig Grad Kälte mit den Füßen im Schnee knirschen, dem Leser wird behaglich zumute, und das wäre schwer zu begreifen, wenn dieser ewige Kunstgriff der Epik, mit dem schon die Kinderfrauen ihre Kleinen beruhigen, diese bewährteste ‘perspektivische Verkürzung des Verstandes’ nicht schon zum Leben selbst gehörte.¹⁶⁹

Ulrich goes on to comment on the new, altered state of affairs: despite the fact that most people like to inject “ein wenig ‘weil’ und ‘damit’” when describing the events of their lives as it makes them feel more secure, the complexity of the modern world

¹⁶⁷ Thomas Mann, “Einführung in den Zauberberg”, p. 616.

¹⁶⁸ Robert Musil, “Vermächtnis II” in: Musil, *Tagebücher, Aphorismen, Essays und Reden*, pp. 804-805.

¹⁶⁹ Robert Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, Hamburg 1970, p. 650.

makes this simple linking of cause and effect seem inappropriate and misleading: “Ulrich bemerkte nun, daß ihm dieses primitive Epische abhanden gekommen sei, woran das private Leben noch festhält, obgleich öffentlich alles unerzählerisch geworden ist und nicht einem ‘Faden’ mehr folgt, sondern sich in einer unendlich verwobenen Fläche ausbreitet”.¹⁷⁰ Between *Törleß* and *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* we would appear to have the same loosening of the plot and troubled relationship to chronology as we have observed between Mann’s progression from *Buddenbrooks* to *Der Zauberberg*.

Of existential importance to the sanatorium patients is the celebration of the major festivals in the year; Christmas, Easter, Fasching etc., as well as the marking of Sunday as a special day in the week through wearing smarter clothes and going on excursions. These institutionalised events, together with the sanatorium’s own ways of attempting to impart a sense of structure to the *nunc stans* of time, such as the fortnightly concerts and Krokowski’s lectures, help the patients escape from the tedium of their everyday existence. The narrator tells us: “Solche Etappen im Jahreslauf, wie das Weihnachtsfest, schienen ihnen eben recht als Anhaltspunkte und Turngeräte, woran sich über leere Zwischenzeiten behende hinwegvoltage ließen”.¹⁷¹

The contemporary philosopher Odo Marquard, in singling out *celebration* (“das Fest”, which can include sleep!) and *war* as effective means of creating a “Moratorium des Alltags”, refers to *Der Zauberberg* and *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, both novels showing, in Marquard’s view, the ultimate celebration which was to be found in the war, the “Weltfest des Todes”: “Der Ausbruch des Krieges überholt dort den vergeblichen Versuch, dem bürgerlichen Alltag ins höhere Krankfeiern oder in einen ‘anderen Zustand’ zu entkommen”.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 650.

¹⁷¹ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 371.

¹⁷² Odo Marquard, “Moratorium des Alltags. Eine kleine Philosophie des Festes” in: Marquard, *Skepsis und Zustimmung. Philosophische Studien*, Stuttgart 1994, p. 62.

In the *Vorsatz* to *Der Zauberberg* the narrator states: “Der Roman [hat] das eine oder das andere mit dem Märchen zu tun”,¹⁷³ thus introducing the mythical connotations of the work, which, reinforced through the references (amongst others) to Krokowski and Behrens as Minos and Rhadamanthys, invite an analogy with Hades; there are also parallels between the *Zauberberg* and Wagner’s *Venusberg*. However, as Jauss notes, the uncertainty of Hans Castorp’s fate at the end of the novel gives an ironic twist to the traditional fairytale ending.¹⁷⁴ Jauss has also observed how the present tense of the end of the novel – in which the narrator gradually loses sight of his hero as he struggles across the battlefields – contrasts with the pastness of the events.¹⁷⁵ The *Donnerschlag* catapults Hans Castorp out of the cyclical time of the sanatorium and back into the progressive, linear chronology of the *Flachland*, and hence the end of the novel must – if only for temporal reasons – remain open.

Thomas Mann was extremely reluctant to admit publicly to any cracks in the polished surface of his existence and eager to present an image of constancy, continuity and balance. “Ich bin ein Mensch des Gleichgewichts. Ich lehne mich instinktiv nach links, wenn der Kahn rechts zu kentern droht, und umgekehrt”,¹⁷⁶ he maintained. It is the novelistic work itself which holds the key to Mann’s personal and political development. It is not difficult to discern the thinly-disguised autobiographical element in Mann’s early writings; in fact, his entire work can be seen in terms of “die geistig-sittliche Bemühung um ein problematisches Ich”.¹⁷⁷

It is helpful to look at the various composition stages of *Der Zauberberg* in order to appreciate the changes taking place within Mann himself. The novel was originally

¹⁷³ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 7.

¹⁷⁴ “Der Erzähler, der am Schluß das Präteritum geflissentlich vermeidet, läßt das weitere Schicksal seines ‘Helden’, der aus seinem Märchentraum in die brutale Wirklichkeit der Langemarckschlacht gestürzt ist, völlig im Ungewissen und gibt damit seinem ‘Märchen’ vom Zauberberg eine Schlußwendung, die den Sinn des alten Märchenausgangs – ‘und wenn sie nicht gestorben sind, so leben sie noch heute’ – ironisch verkehrt”. Hans Robert Jauss, *Zeit und Erinnerung in Marcel Prousts ‘A la recherche du temps perdu’*, Frankfurt/Main 1986, p. 49.

¹⁷⁵ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 7.

¹⁷⁶ Quoted in H. Wysling’s foreword to *Thomas Mann - Heinrich Mann: Briefwechsel 1900-1949*, Frankfurt/Main 1984, p. XLVIII.

¹⁷⁷ Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen*, p. 12.

planned, from 1912 onwards, as “eine Art von humoristischem Gegenstück zum T[od] i[n] V[enedig]”,¹⁷⁸ “ein Satyrspiel zu der novellistischen Tragödie”¹⁷⁹ and indeed, as T. J. Reed has shown, the final *Zauberberg* still retains some of the features of the 1912 novella. These include the themes of departure and the break from the world of productivity and restraint which leads to the unleashing of irrational, life-threatening elements, in other words, the move from Apollonian to Dionysian.¹⁸⁰ However, in *Der Tod in Venedig*, the focus is on the struggle of the *artist* with these conflicting forces, and despite Mann’s borrowing of elements from the life of the then contemporary composer Mahler for his portrayal of von Aschenbach, the questions discussed are of a timeless, universal nature.

Not so *Der Zauberberg*. In 1916 Mann saw himself, through the circumstances of the war, forced to abandon work on *Der Zauberberg* in order to write the *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, saying in a letter to Paul Amann: “weil infolge des Krieges der Roman sonst intellektuell unerträglich überlastet worden wäre”.¹⁸¹ This period, from 1916 to 1919, represents the longest break in Mann’s life from work on a composition, and his decision to come down from his Magic Mountain of pure aesthetic contemplation in order to attempt a confrontation of the questions of the *Flachland* was not so much a choice as a necessity, an extremely painful necessity: “wie vielleicht kein zweiter hatte ich den zeitlichen Zwang zum Übergang aus dem Metaphysisch-Individuellen ins Soziale unter heftigen Kämpfen am eigenen Leibe erfahren [...]”¹⁸²

The experience of the war, with the events of the “Räterepublik” unfolding themselves virtually on Mann’s doorstep in Munich, and putting an end to his habitual evening stroll through the Herzogpark, provoked considerable reflection about the novel genre. Although Thomas Mann notes in a letter written at the end of the war that he admired the

¹⁷⁸ Thomas Mann, letter to E. Bertram 24.7.1913 in: *Selbstkommentare*, p.7.

¹⁷⁹ Thomas Mann, “Lebensabriß”, p. 547.

¹⁸⁰ cf. T.J. Reed, “‘Der Zauberberg’. Zeitenwandel und Bedeutungswandel 1912-1924” in: Hermann Kurzke, *Stationen der Thomas-Mann-Forschung. Aufsätze seit 1970*, Würzburg 1985, 92-134, pp. 94-99.

¹⁸¹ Thomas Mann, letter to Paul Amann 25.3.1917 in: *Selbstkommentare*, p.15.

¹⁸² Thomas Mann, “Lebensabriß”, p. 558.

descriptive qualities of Stifter, sought inspiration for the description of a snowstorm in *Der Zauberberg* – presumably the *Schnee* chapter – from his *Aus dem bayrischen Walde* and bemoans the fact that no-one told stories in the way he did any more,¹⁸³ he feels at the same time that the circumstances of his time render such story-telling impossible. In an earlier letter to Amann he had written:

Und dabei geben die Zeitereignisse dem Kopf und dem Herzen so Unendliches zu arbeiten und zu bewältigen, daß ich in diesem Augenblick nicht weiß, ob ich weiterfabulieren darf und soll oder mich zu einer gewissenhaften und bekennend-persönlichen essayistischen Auseinandersetzung mit den brennenden Problemen zusammennehmen muß.¹⁸⁴

At no other point does Mann link so closely the events of his time with the need for a redrawing of the traditional boundaries of the novel form.

The *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* in which Thomas Mann aimed to show the continuity (as we have seen, for Mann a key concept) of the German spirit represent his first major attempt to reconcile two concepts, until then diametrically opposed for him: art and politics. Through a series of tortuous arguments and much play with antitheses, Mann attempts to demonstrate that they are, in reality, very close. The *Betrachtungen* also represent a thinly-veiled polemic against Heinrich Mann, the “Zivilisationsliterat” – so thinly-veiled, in fact, that Mann saw himself forced to modify the original text. The impact of the infamous “Bruderzwist” on Thomas Mann cannot be under-estimated. Differences in terms of both artistic vision and political views, Thomas remaining deeply conservative whilst Heinrich looked to France and its espousment of socialist and democratic ideals – as well as professional jealousy between the brothers – had led to a public confrontation and a deep rift, culminating in Heinrich’s famous attack on Thomas: “Sache derer, die früh vertrocknen sollen, ist es, schon zu Anfang ihrer zwanziger Jahre bewußt und weltgerecht hinzutreten”.¹⁸⁵ Here, Heinrich shows himself to be as skilled at veiling his invectives as his brother. The impact of the dispute on Thomas Mann’s aesthetic thinking can be seen from his “Einleitung zu einer Lesung aus Felix Krull” (1916), in which he calls his own work a

¹⁸³ Thomas Mann, letter to Ernst Bertram 6.8.18 in: *Selbstkommentare*, p.16.

¹⁸⁴ Thomas Mann, letter to Paul Amann 3.8.1915 in: *Briefe an Paul Amann 1915-1952* (ed. H. Wegener), Lübeck 1959, p. 29.

¹⁸⁵ Heinrich Mann, “Zola” in: *Die Weißen Blätter* 2 (Nov. 1915), 1312-1382; cf. Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen*, p. 182 for Thomas Mann’s response to this particular “offensive”.

novel of “intellektualistische Zersetzung” and prescribes exactly the type of novel for reflecting modern times – the socially aware, political satire – which Heinrich had been writing since 1910.¹⁸⁶

In *Buddenbrooks* Thomas Mann had dealt with a clearly-defined historical epoch, the years 1835-1877, and was extremely rigorous in his chronology, portraying the decline of a family *in time*. In *Der Zauberberg* Mann’s scope goes far beyond that of the mere depiction of a specific era: he was to emphasise that *Der Zauberberg* was

ein Zeitroman im doppelten Sinn: einmal historisch, indem er das innere Bild einer Epoche, der europäischen Vorkriegszeit zu entwerfen versucht, dann aber, weil die reine Zeit selbst sein Gegenstand ist, den er nicht nur als Erfahrung seines Helden, sondern auch in und durch sich selbst behandelt.¹⁸⁷

And although the reader can easily locate the start of the action in 1907, by counting back the seven years of Hans Castorp’s stay on the Magic Mountain from the beginning of the First World War, in the *Vorsatz* the narrator deliberately avoids precision and conjures up mythical, rather than “real” time. Thomas Mann’s novel thus portrays an identifiable period whilst at the same time expressing the constant desire to escape from history and dissolve time.

The experience of Germany at war acted as a “Donnerschlag” on Thomas Mann, projecting him out of his state of death-like aesthetic contemplation, the one Hans Castorp becomes so fond of adopting on the Magic Mountain, especially when listening to music. And like Castorp, Mann suddenly found himself in a state of extreme bewilderment: “verduzt sitzt er im Grase und reibt sich die Augen, wie ein Mann, der es trotz mancher Ermahnung versäumt hat, die Presse zu lesen”.¹⁸⁸

It is not only the *leitmotif* in *Der Zauberberg* which expresses circularity: the extensive hermetic imagery also suggests the impossibility of progress. Koopmann has drawn

¹⁸⁶ cf. Dietrich Scheunemann, *Romankrise: Die Entstehung der modernen Romanpoetik in Deutschland*, Heidelberg 1978, p. 109.

¹⁸⁷ Thomas Mann, “Einführung in den *Zauberberg*”, p. 611.

¹⁸⁸ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 838.

attention to the multiple references to Hermes throughout the novel.¹⁸⁹ A further example to add to Koopmann's list is when Hans Castorp's mind, on hearing Naphta describe "magische Pädagogik"¹⁹⁰ and alchemical hermeticism, turns to the old family house in Hamburg and the jars used by the servant Schalleen for making preserves, thereby delivering the contents of the jars from the ravages of time. There are further echoes of this theme in Hans Castorp's reference to the box in which "Maria" perished, and in Anton Ferge's frozen provisions which accompanied him on his trips across Russia.

Images of circularity recur throughout the novel; Hofrat Behrens and Krokowski are seated at a different table for every meal, and move round the seven tables in turn. Hans Castorp, when he loses his way in the snow, finds himself walking in a circle and returning to the point of his departure. And as the pre-war tension builds up in the sanatorium, the patients develop bizarre crazes, the lawyer Paravant becoming obsessed with the mathematical problem of discovering the relationship between pi and the circle; it is not coincidental that Paravant often talks to Hans Castorp about this puzzle, "da er auf viel freundliches Verständnis, auf ein teilnehmendes Gefühl für das Geheimnis des Kreises stieß".¹⁹¹

As Jauss has highlighted, a second reading of *Der Zauberberg*, as suggested by Mann, and whereby one starts with the knowledge of the outbreak of the First World War, suggests a view of history that is circular and repetitive rather than linear and progressive. Indeed, this is compounded by the references to a mythical time, suggesting a probable recurrence of all events. The "Zivilisationsliterat" Settembrini preaches the gospel of democracy, humanism and progress, the high point of culture being for him the Age of Enlightenment. Naphta, on the other hand, has his spiritual home in the Middle Ages with its emphasis on totalitarianism and its preoccupation with sickness, death and decay. Although Settembrini is portrayed as being the more sympathetic character, he is also depicted as being slightly anachronistic and ridiculous, as reflected in his rather odd, old-fashioned appearance. His

¹⁸⁹ cf. Koopmann, "Die Kategorie des Hermetischen im *Zauberberg*" in: *Die Entwicklung des 'intellektuellen Romans' bei Thomas Mann*, Bonn 1962, p. 155f.

¹⁹⁰ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 696.

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*, p. 864.

clothes are not only slightly shabby, they are always the same and thus confirm Settembrini's rôle as a "Drehorgelmann" for the rhetoric of progressive ideals. The project he is involved with, the compiling of an "Enzyklopädie des Leidens" can only be seen as hopelessly idealistic. And although Settembrini's wit equals that of Naphta throughout a large part of the struggle for the control over the mind of their acolyte, Naphta's arguments – like his dress-sense – emerge ultimately as being somewhat sharper. Settembrini, who symbolically switches on the light in Hans Castorp's room during his illness, must give way to the "dunkler Terror" as preached by Naphta – an ominous foreshadowing of the fate of Germany. Light/dark imagery such as this has frequently been employed to contrast progressive with cyclical views of history.¹⁹²

In *Der Zauberberg* the traditional rôle of the narrator as timekeeper has been largely undermined. Despite his attempts to present a rigorous chronology, "da wir uns auf Hans Castorps Urteil und messenden Sinn unmöglich verlassen können",¹⁹³ not even he is able to provide reliable information on this matter. Time indicators, from being initially as precise as a Swiss watch, become shrouded in vagueness, for example: "Eines Tages, es mochten zehn oder zwölf vergangen sein, seit Hans Castorp bettlägrig geworden war [...]"¹⁹⁴ The narrator's progression in time, established in the first chapter, soon gives way to flashback (Hans Castorp's youth), resumes its initial linear character, but then jumps back in time again to relate the early years of Naphta. Indeed, the introduction of Naphta sees a further undermining of linear progression. In the chapter *Noch jemand* we witness a juxtaposition of time concepts. It is, of course not by chance, the summer solstice, the time of year "wenn das Jahr in sich selber läuft". Celebrations are being held "zu Ehren der Eulenspiegelerei des Kreises und der Ewigkeit ohne Richtungsdauer, in der alles wiederkehrt".¹⁹⁵ It is at this point that Settembrini confidently exposes his view of history to Naphta and the

¹⁹²cf. Jochen Schlobach, "Die klassisch-humanistische Zyklentheorie und ihre Anfechtung durch das Fortschrittsbewußtsein der französischen Frühaufklärung" in: Karl-Georg Faber and Christian Meier (eds.), *Historische Prozesse*, Munich 1978, 126-142.

¹⁹³ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 759.

¹⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 585.

¹⁹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 508.

cousins: “Sie wissen sehr wohl, und auch diese jungen Herren wissen es, daß es sich um einen als unendlich gedachten Fortschritt der Menschheit handelt” and urges the engineer “ Versteifen Sie sich denn aber auf die Mathematik, so führen Sie Ihren Kreislauf von Vollkommenheit zu Vollkommenheit und erquicken Sie sich an der Lehre unseres achtzehnten Jahrhunderts, daß der Mensch ursprünglich gut, glücklich und vollkommen war”[...]”¹⁹⁶ Linear and circular time-concepts are placed here side by side.

The Naphta/Settembrini dialogues represent a means of attempting a synthesis of the conflicting and confusing weltanschauungen of the time, as perceived by Thomas Mann. Naphta is portrayed as an alarmingly radical character, displaying an impossible combination of Jewishness, Jesuitism, Communism and Fascism. J. Lindsay suggests that the creation of Naphta shows Thomas Mann’s “außerordentliche Unsicherheit”¹⁹⁷ in his articulation of an alternative to the bourgeois liberalism of Settembrini. Even after his not entirely convincing conversion to democracy, “zum Lebensdienst” in 1922, Thomas Mann continued to view the political trends in the new republic in the broad terms espoused by his characters.

Naphta’s view of historical progress, which emerges in the course of the colloquium in the next chapter, *Vom Gottesstaat und von übler Erlösung*, is diametrically opposed to that of his Italian sparring-partner: his vision of a projected utopia based on equality is modelled on the medieval “Gottesstaat”: in other words, the future to Naphta is conceived in terms of a previous historical model. The association between the Middle Ages and atemporality is not only made through the character of Naphta, but also through Hans Castorp’s grandfather, who makes his grandson aware of the “repetitive, circular” nature of time by showing him the names of his ancestors on the baptismal bowl, when Hans Castorp has reached the significant age of seven. The young Castorp will later wear the medieval-style collar favoured by his grandfather to

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 523.

¹⁹⁷ Jack Lindsay, “Der Zeitbegriff im ‘Zauberberg’ in: *Sinn und Form, Sonderheft Thomas Mann* (1965), 144-157, p. 151.

counteract the nervous trembling of his chin. The grandfather's political orientation is clearly conservative. The association of conservative politics and atemporality may have been suggested to Thomas Mann from a reading of Hermann Graf Keyserling's *Deutschlands wahre politische Mission* in which conservatism is described as "eine Allegorie des Zeitlosen". In a letter to Keyserling, Thomas Mann expresses the affinity of their thought on this matter, in the strongest of terms.¹⁹⁸

The arrival of Naphta, as the prime exponent of the ideologies of the Middle Ages including that of conservative atemporality, would appear to wreak further havoc on the narrator's good intentions of progressing in linear fashion. Just as the narrator was forced to abandon his progress in time to describe the early years of Hans Castorp and the scenes with his grandfather, he must do the same with Naphta. Thus those characters, who are most intimately associated with temporal circularity exert a strong influence on the narrator's control of the time-flow, forcing him to step back in time in his narration.

Although the discussions between Naphta and Settembrini assume greater direct relevance to twentieth-century issues as the war becomes an increasing likelihood, Naphta's final monologue revolves around the concepts of "freedom" and "individualism" in German Romanticism. Significantly, both Naphta and Settembrini are terminally ill, condemned to the past and to theory rather than practice: Naphta's ill-health makes it impossible for him to teach, and Settembrini has to content himself with researching the *Enzyklopädie des Leidens*, as attending the conferences organised by the "Internationale Liga für Fortschritt" would over-strain his fragile constitution.

At the same time there co-exists the feeling that this particular war is bringing about a sea-change, that the thinking patterns of Naphta and Settembrini are irrevocably

¹⁹⁸ "Die Dankbarkeit, die ich bei Worten wie den Ihren empfinde [...] ist zu stürmisch, als daß ich an meinem Rechte auf sie den mindesten Zweifel hegen könnte". Thomas Mann, "Offener Brief an Hermann Grafen Keyserling", *GW* XII, p. 600.

rooted in the past, and that new ways of thinking must be found. Although critics have seen in Hans Castorp's step away from Death and towards Life in the chapter *Schnee* a fictionalisation of Thomas Mann's step towards the new republic, it is perhaps more realistic to replace here the traditional "Wandlung" with the more recently-developed concept of "flexible Kontinuität".¹⁹⁹ For looking towards a new Germany run along democratic lines did not come naturally: in a letter to Julius Bab, concerning the historical and social interpretation of *Der Zauberberg*, Thomas Mann admitted frankly that his opting for the novel form was not entirely free of irony:

Daß das Soziale meine schwache Seite ist, – ich bin mir dessen voll bewußt und weiß auch, daß ich mich damit in einem gewissen Widerspruch zu meiner Kunstform selbst, dem Roman, befinde, der das Soziale fordert und mit sich bringt. Aber der Reiz – ich drücke es ganz frivol aus – des Individuellen, Metaphysischen ist für mich nun einmal unvergleichlich größer.²⁰⁰

Mann's initially euphoric reaction to the outbreak of the First World War was not untypical: he refers ecstatically to "Die geistige Entwicklung, der Fortschritt in fortschrittlicher Richtung, in welchem Deutschland sich seit geraumer Zeit befindet, und der durch den Krieg mit höchster Wahrscheinlichkeit einen mächtigen Auftrieb erfahren wird".²⁰¹ But this unflinching belief in the possibility of progress was to be seriously undermined.

Indeed, there is much evidence in the *Betrachtungen* to suggest a caesura in the continuity of Mann's existence. When referring here to the interruption of the writing of *Der Zauberberg*, he maintains not only, as in the letter to Amann, that he was preventing the novel from being weighed down by theory, but that it had to be done for existential reasons:

dank nämlich den geistigen Zeitumständen, der Bewegtheit alles Ruhenden, der Erschütterung aller kulturellen Grundlagen, kraft eines künstlerisch heillosen Gedankentumultes, der nackten Unmöglichkeit, auf Grund eines Seins etwas zu machen, der Auflösung und Problematisierung dieses Seins selbst *durch die Zeit und ihre Krisis*, der Notwendigkeit, dies in Frage gestellte, in Not gebrachte und nicht mehr als Kulturgrund fest, selbstverständlich und unbewußt ruhende Sein zu begreifen, klarzustellen und zu verteidigen;

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Herbert Lehnert and Eva Wessell, *Nihilismus der Menschenfreundlichkeit: Thomas Manns 'Wandlung' und sein Essay 'Goethe und Tolstoi'*, Frankfurt/Main 1991.

²⁰⁰ Thomas Mann, letter to Julius Bab 23.4.1925 in: *Selbstkommentare*, p. 64.

²⁰¹ Thomas Mann, "Der autobiographische Roman", p. 702.

der Unabweisbarkeit also einer Revision aller Grundlagen dieses Künstlertums selbst, seiner Selbsterforschung und Selbstbehauptung, ohne welche seine Betätigung, Auswirkung und weitere Erfüllung, jedes Tun und Machen fortan als ein Ding der Unmöglichkeit erschien. (my italics)²⁰²

Here, Thomas Mann makes the explicit link between the chaotic state of the world and his own deep sense of personal insecurity.

The dismissive tone adopted by Hans Castorp and the narrator towards Settembrini's unwavering belief in humanity and "progressive" ideals is borne out by the course of history itself, the commencement of the "Weltfest des Todes". In *Buddenbrooks* we read about the devastating effect the reading of Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* had on Thomas Buddenbrooks, an incident inspired directly by the author's own life-changing discovery of the philosopher.²⁰³ As Hans Wißkirchen has pointed out, Thomas Mann's static concept of history, which was borrowed from Schopenhauer and encompassed a strict separation between inner and outer world, history and artistic creation, had accompanied him throughout twenty years of literary production, but was suddenly shattered by the brutal reality of the war.²⁰⁴

In the *Betrachtungen* Mann attempts to reconstruct German history in order to create an illusion of continuity and progress. When searching for the origins of the "bürgerlich-kultureller Typus", and attempting to visualise his historical predecessor, the references to the Middle Ages are explicit: he sees him "mit einem Antlitz von unvergleichlichem und unverwechselbarem nationalem Gepräge, irgendwie altertümlich holzschnitthaft, nürnbergisch-bürgerlich".²⁰⁵ Not only does Thomas Mann see in medieval times the purest expression of the German spirit, but also the roots of his own artistic being. In his reconstruction of German history, he skips blissfully over the Reformation, Absolutism and the Age of Enlightenment and picks up again with the resurgence of – as he sees it – medieval values in Romanticism, and from there into the Wilhelmine Reich, where he sees

²⁰² Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen*, p. 4.

²⁰³ Thomas Mann, "Lebensabriß", p. 533.

²⁰⁴ cf. Hans Wißkirchen, *Zeitgeschichte im Roman. Zu Thomas Manns 'Zauberberg' und 'Doktor Faustus'*, Bern 1986, p. 37f.

²⁰⁵ Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen*, p. 114.

the German spirit re-emerging once again. Further, Mann finds a convenient parallel to Germany's situation in 1914, by likening it to the Prussia of the 1740s with Frederick the Great ordering the invasion of neutral Saxony and, in Mann's view, acting "in bitterster Notwehr", as a result of an accumulation of pressure from her neighbours, thereby sparking off the Seven Year War.²⁰⁶ Could this historical parallel explain the preoccupation with the number seven in *Der Zauberberg*? At any rate, as W. Hellmann has shown, Thomas Mann repeatedly sought historical precedents for the events he experienced in his lifetime.²⁰⁷

In his 1922 speech "Von deutscher Republik" Thomas Mann was to express cautious enthusiasm for the new German republic, apparently distancing himself from the rather reactionary opinions voiced in the *Betrachtungen*. In the *Schnee* chapter of *Der Zauberberg* we see Hans Castorp taking the same step as his creator: "Die Liebe steht dem Tode entgegen, nur sie, nicht die Vernunft, ist stärker als er"²⁰⁸ he dreams and places a greater trust in the potential of humanity itself – but on a general, philosophical level, and by no means forgetting the lessons of his long-established "Sympathie mit dem Tod", and not in the systematic, rhetorical way put forward by Settembrini. This was very much Thomas Mann's own view, who for all public approval of republican ideals, privately remained deeply conservative: "[...]ich lasse mir nicht einreden, daß Fortschritt immer ein Fortschritt zum Glücklicheren und Besseren sei".²⁰⁹

Thomas Mann's 1925 call for "eine Auflösung des Romans ins Geistige"²¹⁰ and evocation of *Zeitaufhebung* in *Der Zauberberg* through the eternal, idealised character of Hans Castorp's vision in the snow, points to an affinity with Lukács in his quest for utopian timelessness and ahistoricity. We can only assume that such a longing to escape from time and history is symptomatic of a serious discontent with the realities of the present. B. Pinkerneil suggests that behind this pattern of cyclical thinking lies an attempt to

²⁰⁶ Thomas Mann, "Friedrich und die große Koalition", *GW* X, p. 117.

²⁰⁷ cf. Winfried Hellmann, *Das frühe Geschichtsdenken Thomas Manns*, Bonn 1968.

²⁰⁸ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 677.

²⁰⁹ Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen*, p. 158.

²¹⁰ cf. footnote 60.

escape from the reality of the present by conjuring up an image of happiness, i.e. what Walter Benjamin describes in the following terms: “ein Versuch, die beiden antinomischen Prinzipien des Glücks miteinander zu verbinden: nämlich das der Ewigkeit und das des: noch einmal. Die Idee der ewigen Wiederkunft zaubert aus der Misere der Zeit die spekulative Idee (oder die Phantasmagorie) des Glücks hervor”.²¹¹

As Vogt suggests, Benjamin’s distinction between two memory types is of particular relevance for the handling of time in the “modern novel”. Benjamin differentiates between “das epische Gedächtnis”, which has a collective function, spanning generations and showing the common roots of all stories: “das Eingedenken”, on the other hand, is a type of memory which halts the flow of time by endowing particular particles within it with unusual significance, and is especially useful for discussing the works of Thomas Mann, Musil, Proust, Joyce and Woolf.²¹² Indeed, Jauss has drawn attention to the explosion of new novel forms directly following the First World War, highlighting the *problem of time* as being common to all:

Die Wendung vom Aktualismus des alten Zeitromans (im einfachen, seit dem XIX. Jahrhundert geläufigen Sinne) zu dieser quasi phänomenologischen Intention des neuen Zeitromans ist insofern historisch denkwürdig, als dieser fast zum selben Zeitpunkt, unmittelbar nach dem Weltkrieg 1914-1918, und zugleich in der französischen, englischen und deutschen Literatur von Marcel Proust, James Joyce und Thomas Mann in drei großen Romanwerken – *A la recherche du temps perdu* (1918-1927), *Ulysses* (1922), *Der Zauberberg* (1924) – ausgeprägt worden ist.²¹³

Jauss then goes on to include the novels of Gide as part of this trend.

In *Der Zauberberg* the narrator indicates that we should not be over-severe in our judgement of Hans Castorp’s mediocrity and reluctance to make more effort in life. He points towards traces of biological decay: Hans Castorp’s father, “der nicht der Stärkste war”,²¹⁴ is outlived by his own father, and Hans Castorp himself is diagnosed from an early age as being anaemic. When Behrens finally diagnoses him as having tuberculosis, he

²¹¹ cf. B. Pinkerneil, “Ewigkeitssuppe contra schöpferisches Werden. Zum Thema Thomas Mann - Bergson” in: P. Pütz, *Thomas Mann und die Tradition*, Frankfurt/Main 1971, 250-281, p. 279.

²¹² Vogt, *Aspekte erzählender Prosa*, p. 212.

²¹³ Jauss, *Zeit und Erinnerung*, p. 11.

²¹⁴ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 30.

emphasises the fact that the “damp patch” on Hans Castorp’s lung represents a recurrence of an earlier illness. However, coupled with this Buddenbrooks-style explanation for Hans Castorp’s apathy, a new element is hinted at which could also be held responsible – the times in which Hans Castorp is living:

Dem einzelnen Menschen mögen mancherlei persönliche Ziele, Zwecke, Hoffnungen, Aussichten vor Auge schweben, aus denen er den Impuls zu hoher Anstrengung und Tätigkeit schöpft; wenn das Unpersönliche um ihn her, die Zeit selbst der Hoffnungen und Aussichten bei aller äußeren Regsamkeit im Grunde entbehrt, wenn sie sich ihm als hoffnungslos, aussichtslos und ratlos heimlich zu erkennen gibt und der bewußt oder unbewußt gestellten, aber doch irgendwie gestellten Frage nach einem letzten, mehr als persönlichen, unbedingten Sinn aller Anstrengungen und Tätigkeit ein hohles Schweigen entgegensetzt, so wird gerade in Fällen redlicheren Menschentums eine gewisse lähmende Wirkung solches Sachverhalts fast unausbleiblich sein, die sich auf dem Wege über das Seelisch-Sittliche geradezu auf das physische und organische Teil des Individuums erstrecken mag.²¹⁵

We have already mentioned the underlying model of the *Bildungsroman*, of which Thomas Mann planned to write a modern version. The narrator refers to Hans Castorp as “den jungen, im Leben noch wenig fest wurzelnden Menschen”²¹⁶ and from then on frequently to “unser Bildungsreisender” and to Naphta and Settembrini as his “Erzieher”: the references back to Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister* are unmistakable. Indeed, Hans Castorp’s medicinal pursuits can be seen as a parody of Wilhelm Meister’s later decision to become a “Wundarzt”, and J. Scharfschwerdt has pointed to an intertextual connection between the two *Bildungsromane*: when the narrator tells us, with reference to the relationship between Hans Castorp and his grandfather: “Kinder und Enkel schauen an, um zu bewundern, um zu lernen und auszubilden, was erblicherweise in ihnen vorgebildet liegt”²¹⁷ Scharfschwerdt suggests we are reminded of Wilhelm Meister’s pledge, “mich selbst, ganz wie ich da bin, auszubilden, das war dunkel von Jugend auf mein Wunsch und meine Absicht”²¹⁸.

However, *Der Zauberberg* does *not* present its hero as an individual whose education – in the widest sense of the word – leads to the taking up of a responsible position

²¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 48.

²¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 35.

²¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 37.

²¹⁸ Jürgen Scharfschwerdt, *Thomas Mann und der deutsche Bildungsroman*, Stuttgart 1967, p. 137.

within society, as is the case in *Wilhelm Meister*, with the protagonist's engagement to Natalie, assumption of paternal responsibility for his son Felix and acceptance of "eine reine und sichere Tätigkeit" in the "Turmgesellschaft" at the end of the novel. Instead, Hans Castorp is initiated into the realms of illness, death and the occult and pursues a love-affair with Clawdia Chauchat. Here, the narrator repeatedly draws attention to the utter hopelessness of his character's extreme passion for the ill patient, and the contrast this infatuation presents with a "normal" *Flachland* romance: "diesen Rausch phantastischer Genugtuung hätte Hans Castorp nicht erprobt bei dem Blick irgendeines gesunden Gänschens, dem er drunten im Flachlande erlaubter-, friedlicher- und aussichtsreicherweise, im Sinne jenes Liedchens, 'sein Herz geschenkt hätte'".²¹⁹ Certainly, Hans Castorp's education represents a *Steigerung* of sorts, but of what benefit will this be to him as he is plunged into the war, with the words of the *Lindenbaumlied* on his lips? E. Heller has suggested that if Hans Castorp survives the war, the only profession he will be able to assume is that of a writer, writing the novel *Der Zauberberg*.²²⁰ The narrator often refers to his character's *Steigerung* as if it represented real progress, and tells us that eventually Hans Castorp occupies Settembrini's former place at the dining table: his ironic stance serves to emphasise the ambivalent nature of his character's *Steigerung*. Indeed, Hans Castorp's "progress" would appear to be circular, rather than linear, thus commensurate with his experience of temporality on the Magic Mountain.

The narrator's reluctance to present his main character as the focus of the narration, and determination to highlight his lack of individuality, contrasts strongly with the optimism embodied in *Wilhelm Meister*, where the assumption prevails that the protagonist has within him the potential seeds for development, and that the conditions of the world are generally favourable to their germination. In the twentieth century, when all questions as to the purpose of existence are greeted by a "hohles Schweigen", it is only appropriate, as Thomas Mann has shown, to parody Goethe's

²¹⁹ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 194.

²²⁰ Erich Heller, *The Ironic German*, London 1958, p. 213.

Bildungsroman.²²¹ At any rate, Thomas Mann uses as his model for *Der Zauberberg* the well-known and well-loved genre of the educational novel in order to render tangible the discrepancies between his time of writing and a long-gone past, discrepancies which also provoke the troubled reflections on time. The narrator of *Der Zauberberg* seeks to draw attention to the caesura between Goethe's time and recent history, in which very different literary products emerge. In a 1921 essay on his *Gesang vom Kindchen*, which has as its historical model Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*, Thomas Mann defined parody as stemming from a loss of faith in the values of a past era and its literary products:

Kurz, der Mangel an eigentlicher Naivität äußert sich als Hang zum Parodischen –und so wäre aus diesem kleinen dichterischen Vorkommnis denn wenigstens das Gesetz oder die Bestimmung abzuziehen, daß Liebe zu einem Kunstgeist, an dessen Möglichkeit man nicht mehr glaubt, die Parodie zeitigt.²²²

The world in the twentieth century is no longer favourable to the "organic" development of the individual.

The climate of his time fails to provide sufficient stimulus for the young Hans Castorp, and although Gide in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* does not make the point so explicitly, he also suggests that there is no new focus to replace the disintegrating structures on which society had been built, for either the young criminals or the disorientated Bernard. They are all drifting aimlessly, changing careers, friends and lovers at the drop of a hat. The resulting preoccupation with inwardness which we witness in both novels does not appear to provide answers or solutions either: the psychoanalysis sessions in *Der Zauberberg*, performed by the sinister Krokowski, are implicated in the dubiousness of the séance which temporarily restores Joachim, and in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* Sophroniska's theories of psychoanalysis are shown to be empty. In the same way that Hans Castorp rejects the work ethos of the *Flachland*, seeking instead fulfilment in self-education, Edouard comes

²²¹ To what extent *Wilhelm Meister* itself already constitutes a parody of the *Bildungsroman* is, of course, another matter; further, one should not overlook the fact that a parody of *Wilhelm Meister* appeared soon after its publication, namely E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Kater Murr*, which Mann read just prior to writing *Doktor Faustus*.

²²² Thomas Mann, "Über den 'Gesang vom Kindchen'", *GW* XI, p. 589.

to similar conclusions for himself: his aim becomes “trouver cette règle en soi-même; d’avoir pour but le développement de soi”.²²³

To refer once again to *The Theory of the Novel*, Lukács describes Flaubert’s *L’Education Sentimentale* as the first novel not only to have included time as a constitutive element, but also the first to have freed itself from the compulsion to unify the disparate strands of the action; in Flaubert’s novel, a relaxing of the usual rules governing the plot has occurred:

Of all great works of this type, *L’Education Sentimentale* appears to be the least composed; no attempt is made here to counteract the disintegration of outside reality into heterogeneous, brittle and fragmentary parts by some process of unification [...] the separate fragments of reality lie before us in all their hardness, brokenness and isolation.²²⁴

Time in the novel is usually the principle which renders the individual actions and lives of the characters whole and meaningful:

Time brings order into the chaos of men’s lives and gives it the semblance of a spontaneously flowering, organic entity; [...] Beyond events, beyond psychology, time gives them the essential quality of their existence: however accidental the appearance of a character may be in pragmatic and psychological terms, it emerges from an existent, experienced continuity, and the atmosphere of thus being borne upon the unique and unrepeatable stream of life cancels out the accidental nature of their experiences and the isolated nature of the events recounted.²²⁵

Flaubert’s novel shows a conscious rejection of the deployment of time and plot as unifying principles.

Gide’s novel shows a similar contempt for conventional chronology, and Lukács’ words on *L’Education Sentimentale* could equally apply to *Les Faux-monnayeurs*. As we have seen, linear progression is no longer compatible with the introduction of (self-) reflexive elements, and like *Der Zauberberg*, *Les Faux-monnayeurs* points to “an altered consciousness of time”.

²²³ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 339.

²²⁴ Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, p. 124.

²²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 125.

E.M. Forster had expressed his disregard for the idea of a continuum of literary history, preferring to envisage novelists working together, “in a circular room”.²²⁶ In contrast with this original and unorthodox idea, Forster, stoically defended rigorous adherence to the plot in the face of tides of contempt for this notion from his fellow-novelists across the Channel. Seemingly unable to make head nor tail of *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, Forster denounced Gide’s work as “caboodle”, warning of the hidden pitfalls that would befall the novelist who tampered with the revered time-sequence: “the experiment is doomed to failure. The time-sequence cannot be destroyed without carrying in its ruin all that should have taken place: the novel that would express values only becomes unintelligible and therefore valueless”.²²⁷ Forster backed up his insistence on the inclusion of a plot and on linear chronology, saying “we are all like Schehezerade’s husband, in that we want to know what happens next. That is universal and that is why the backbone of a novel has to be a story”, although he conceded that this eternal desire for a story was “atavistic”.²²⁸ It is perhaps an over-simplification and a cliché, when discussing Forster, to evoke images of him safely ensconced in the ivory tower world of academia, but it must be said that his writings show an extraordinary lack of awareness of any events unfolding beyond the literary cosmos. Although he concedes that Gide’s novel is “interesting”, the implication is that, to Gide’s detriment, Forster does not see in him a French re-incarnation of the great story-teller Walter Scott. Forster refers to *Les Faux-monnayeurs* in terms of a “violent onslaught on the plot” and a “constructive attempt to put something in place of the plot”,²²⁹ as if Gide were thereby committing an act of high treason. But does the denial of chronological time in the novel necessarily, as Forster sees it, lead to “meaninglessness”?

Walter Benjamin reacted to Gide’s chronological experimenting in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* more positively, seeing in Gide’s “purely novelistic” style a polar opposite to the epic and a direct descendant of Flaubert:

Dort hat er’s mit erdenklichster Subtilität darauf angelegt, alle schlichte, geradlinig aneinanderreichende Erzählung (alle epischen Größen ersten Grades) zugunsten sinnreicher,

²²⁶ Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, p. 27.

²²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 53.

²²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 41.

²²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 95.

rein romanhafter (und das heißt hier zugleich auch romantischer) Verfahrensweisen beiseite zu setzen [...] er hält die Flaubertschen Positionen vielleicht zum letzten Male aufrecht.²³⁰

In the same way that the narrator of *Der Zauberberg* gives fewer and fewer indications of chronology as his tale progresses, or rather, digresses, thereby mirroring Hans Castorp's displaced sense of temporality (which is highlighted by the fact that he eventually abandons wearing a watch), so too does the narrator of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* become vague about dates and times, delegating increasing responsibility to Edouard for time-keeping. Edouard's diary exists prior to the events described in the main narrative and is the only *reliable* indicator of chronology; in fact, as N. David Keypour has shown, Edouard's diary provides information on chronology precisely when the main narration fails to do so.²³¹ Gide's narrator has thus relinquished what is generally regarded as one of his most fundamental tasks – that of ensuring the continuous flow of events.

In fact, Edouard's diary fulfills several functions. Not only does it contain reflections on the progress of his novel and on novel-writing in general, but also, Edouard's diary plays an increasingly large rôle in developing the "plot". Gide himself said of the diary: "Ce ne sont pas du tout des réflexions à côté du récit; c'est, la plupart du temps, un apport au récit lui-même, ce journal d'Edouard".²³² It is indeed through Edouard's diary that we discover some of the most significant developments in the plot.

But even Edouard becomes less meticulous in his time-keeping once his relationship with Olivier blossoms. Also, the novelist repeatedly maintains that he has not written a line of his novel, which then proves to be untrue, in the same way that Gide overrides traditional chronology in *Paludes* where it is virtually impossible to establish precisely when Tityre found the time to write *Paludes*. In both *Les Faux-monnayeurs* and *Der Zauberberg*, chronology is phased out once the main characters obtain the truth they were looking for; love, in the case of Edouard, and the completion of an "education" in the case of Hans

²³⁰ Benjamin, "Krisis des Romans", p. 232.

²³¹ N. David Keypour, *Ecriture et réversibilité dans 'Les Faux-monnayeurs'*, Montreal 1980, p. 154.

²³² André Gide, interviewed by Jean Amrouche 1949 in: E. Marty, *André Gide: Qui êtes-vous?*, Lyons 1987, p. 257.

Castorp. Gide's narrator rejects the traditional responsibility of organiser of the time-flow, and passes it on to Edouard, himself unreliable. At the same time, we cannot really blame Edouard for being lax in his chronology – after all, a diary is a notoriously *subjective* form, as indeed are the letters, notes and sketches which Gide inserts into his narrative. It is not surprising, with this abundance of highly subjective written sources, that the reader finds it difficult to fit the chronology of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* into a linear scheme. But does that necessarily render the novel meaningless?

On the contrary, both Mann and Gide show that the adhesion to a strict, linear chronology in the Realist novel fails to generate meaning. A problematic relationship towards linear chronology is symptomatic of a loss of faith in the long-held belief in the relationship between cause and effect. Time in the external world has become problematic and in the “modern” novel is no longer the central, unifying factor which functions as a divine force, lending meaning to all events: as Sartre noted in 1947, “la plupart des grands auteurs contemporains, Proust, Joyce, Dos Passos, Faulkner, Gide, Virginia Woolf, chacun à sa manière, ont tenté de mutiler le temps”.²³³

Especially in the first Paris section of *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, the action switches from one set of characters to another in quick-fire succession. The narrator first makes his presence felt towards the end of the second chapter; having portrayed the difficult scene between Charles Profitendieu and his father, he tells us: “Le père et le fils n’ont plus rien à se dire. Quittons-les. Il est bientôt onze heures. Laissons madame Profitendieu dans sa chambre assise sur une petite chaise droite peu confortable”.²³⁴ This is an example of what D. Walker calls the “co-optive nous”, and which recurs throughout, serving, as Walker correctly insinuates, to merge the reader’s time of reading with the author’s time of writing into an “intermediate zone”, thus creating an impression of freshness and spontaneity. And here Walker touches on an extremely important point: these summonses from the narrator to the reader (“Suivons-les”,²³⁵

²³³ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Situations I*, Paris 1947, p. 71.

²³⁴ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 31.

²³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 143.

“Passons”, “Retournons-y”²³⁶ have the function, in Walker’s words, of “blurring the distinction between the represented world and the world of the reading experience”.

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Particularly significant is the implication of these pleas from narrator to reader on the chronology of the novel. For often closely following such an invitation to follow him, the narrator gives us a reminder of the time, and the necessity of changing scenes: after the visit of Vincent to Passavant we read: “Laissons-le, tandis que le diable amusé le regarde glisser sans bruit la petite clef dans la serrure ... C’est l’heure où, dans une triste chambre d’hôtel, Laura, sa maîtresse d’hier, après avoir longtemps pleuré, longtemps gémi, va s’endormir”.²³⁸ In the same way that the narrator of *Der Zauberberg* draws attention to his function as organiser of the material, so too does the narrator here wish to indicate that he has the reader’s interests at heart by passing swiftly from one interesting scene to another, moving on whenever boring scenes threaten to appear. He seeks thus to create an impression of immediacy, of an on-the-spot report, live from the action, so to speak, which we are privileged to find taking place before our very eyes: “Il est temps de retrouver Bernard. Voici que dans le lit d’Olivier il s’éveille”.²³⁹

Although the narrator of *Der Zauberberg*, as we will see, uses the vocabulary of the theatre director to express his moving from one scene to another, and which indeed creates the illusion of the events unfolding as we read them, the entire novel is foreshadowed by the words in the *Vorsatz* emphasising the pastness of the events described, a pastness which can *never* be brought into line with the present of the reader. This becomes particularly striking in the second reading of *Der Zauberberg* where one starts with the knowledge of the outbreak of the war. *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, however, is not weighed down so much by the real events of the

²³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 117.

²³⁷ David Walker, “Continuity and Discontinuity in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*” in: *French Studies* 40, 4 (Oct. 1986), 413-426, p. 414.

²³⁸ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 60.

²³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 60.

twentieth century: although the action also takes place just prior to the First World War, there is no foreboding of the events to come. In spite of this, Gide expressed a concern that his novel should not remain too abstract, but should be clearly rooted in the era just prior to the war: as he noted in his work-diary: “Je ne puis prétendre à être tout à la fois précis et non situé. Si mon récit laisse douter si l’on est avant ou après la guerre, c’est que je serai demeuré trop abstrait”.²⁴⁰ And although Gide ultimately dropped his plan to divide his novel into two halves – before and after the war – he seemed to be, at least during this stage of the composition of his novel, acutely conscious of the cataclysmic changes brought about by the events of 1914-1918: “Par exemple, toute l’histoire des fausses pièces d’or ne peut se placer qu’avant la guerre, puisque, à présent, les pièces d’or sont exilées ... Aussi bien les pensées, les préoccupations ne sont plus les mêmes, et pour souhaiter l’intérêt plus général, je risque de perdre pied”.²⁴¹

The impression of freshness and spontaneity Gide seeks to give his novel (especially in the first third of the work), is further accentuated by the frequent use of present tense verbs, and through the way in which certain events which took place prior to the start of the novel proper (such as those which focus on Laura’s love-life) are merged with the present, causing a blurring of time-scales. We first become aware of this fusion of tenses when the narrator, rendering Profitendieu’s thoughts in the third person, and describing his dislike for having a bath on a full stomach, says: “Après tout, ce n’était peut-être là qu’un préjugé; mais les préjugés sont les pilotis de la civilisation”.²⁴² Then, describing the confusion Profitendieu experiences after reading Bernard’s note at the beginning of the novel, the narrator tells us: “De plus il ressentait un petit pincement au côté droit, là, sous les côtes”.²⁴³ The “là” only makes sense as part of Profitendieu’s interior monologue. Keypour refers to “[l]’extrême habilité” with

²⁴⁰ *JFM*, 30.7.1919, p. 23.

²⁴¹ *ibid.*, 30.7.1919, p. 23.

²⁴² *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 19.

²⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 26.

which Gide alternates between the historical narration and the direct reporting of the dialogues.²⁴⁴

Keypour also draws a parallel between the technique of the film and Gide's rapid succession of scenes "[qui] par leur nature même restreignent le champ de vision et agissent sur la conscience du lecteur comme autant de gros plans cinématographiques".²⁴⁵ As in the film, the "camera" of Gide's narration switches from one storyline to another in a way which anticipates the simultaneity of action in the novels of Jules Romains, and in Butor's *Passage de Milan* (1954). Similarly, in Butor's *La Modification* (1957) the linear description of the train journey of the main character is sabotaged by his flux of memories from the past and plans for the future. And in Robbe-Grillet's *La Jalousie* (1957) linearity has been destroyed altogether: the construction principle is that of the repetition of nearly-identical scenes, each time with a slight variation, and inviting a comparison with musical composition.

Many different time-scales are in operation in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*. The present of the first Paris section draws on a fairly remote past, in referring to the histories of Bernard's mother, Laura, Lilian and La Pérouse. These histories remain, however, vague and skeletal, unlike those of the young Hans Castorp and the young Naphta (or even the portrayal of Settembrini's grandfather) in *Der Zauberberg* which serve to explain key aspects of these character's personalities which have a bearing on the present tense of the narration. We are also referred to more recent events – barely six months prior to the narrative present – transmitted through Bernard's reading of Edouard's diary, and which describe the shift in Edouard's affections from Laura to Olivier. And of course, there is the present itself (we can assume the action starts sometime in early summer) – the counterfeit present of the narration, with its attempt to reproduce events which are clearly past, and the present tense of the narrator's writing as highlighted by his frequent intrusions. The Saas-Fée section covering the summer months is cloaked in a kind of timelessness

²⁴⁴ Keypour, *Écriture et réversibilité*, p. 130.

²⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 130.

commensurate with the spatial distance from Paris, whereas in the final Paris section- from 22 September until some time soon after “la rentrée”- there are no more flashbacks.

Yet in contrast with the difficulties one has in establishing the chronology throughout the rest of the novel – the narrator is lax, Edouard does not always date his diary, and the superimposition of several narrative voices further complicates this task – the timing of Boris’ suicide is very precise. Indeed, Boris’ suicide is scheduled for five to six exactly: “l’étude” starts at five, and we are made to feel the ticking of the clock as palpably as those participating in the drama.

The contrast between the temporal nebulosity throughout the novel and the accuracy in the timing of Boris’ death draws attention to the novelist’s handling of time in fiction, and to its use in lending weight and meaning to actions. The fact that Boris’ dies at five to six, or that La Pérouse plans to commit suicide on a certain Wednesday, is just as arbitrary as writing that the marquis went out at five o’clock.

In particular at the beginning of *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, Gide would appear to be doing his utmost to avoid setting the scene for the development of a single protagonist and a central plot *in time*. Instead, the opening chapters present the reader with a host of different characters and plot lines. No sooner have we been introduced to Bernard and his discovery of the old love letters, than we are allowed to eavesdrop on the conversation between Profitendieu and Molinier on the subject of the young counterfeiters; Bernard’s fleeing the family home takes him and the reader to the home of Olivier who describes the puzzling nocturnal activities of Vincent and mentions the arrival of his uncle Edouard; from there we observe Vincent’s entanglements with Passavant and Laura; all of this in five brief chapters.

The skipping from one scene to another in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* marks an important departure from the handling of time in the Realist novel, whereby characters and plots were given time to mature and develop. Since Gide is interested in neither of these, but

rather in the poetics of the novel, it is not surprising that he revels in the presentation of a discontinuous temporality which seems to look forward to the famous “gaps” in the chronology of the *nouveaux romans*, such as in *La Jalousie*. As Idt writes,

Comme l'espace, le temps, dans *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, est réduit à l'abstraction: on n'y ressent ni l'écoulement d'une durée, ni le poids affectif du passé, ni l'aspiration de l'avenir avec sa charge de rêves, d'espoirs et d'illusions [...] Gide, qui veut contrarier le lecteur, construit un univers temporel clos et discontinu, sur un rythme rapide, irrégulier et syncopé, avec des silences sur les temps forts.²⁴⁶

The handling of time in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* differs dramatically from that in the generational saga *Les Thibault* by Gide's friend Martin du Gard, where the weightiness of time is made tangible. Indeed, the emphasis in Gide's novel is on fragmentation rather than totality, interruption rather than progression, the infinite complexity of simultaneous action in the present rather than the slow, steady flow of historical time. In *Paludes* the writer Tityre attempts to demonstrate the validity of his life by engaging in meaningful activities, such as carefully completing his diary, setting aside time to “penser à l'individualité de Richard”, and “s'étonner de ne pas recevoir de lettre de Jules”.²⁴⁷ This early work of Gide's clearly satirises the traditional handling of temporality in fiction.

In *Der Zauberberg* Clawdia Chauchat incorporates a generous, “Asian” concept of time, as Settembrini explains warningly to the “Sorgenkind des Lebens”: “Diese Freigebigkeit, diese barbarische Großartigkeit im Zeitverbrauch ist asiatischer Stil, – das mag ein Grund sein, weshalb es den Kindern des Ostens an diesem Orte behagt”.²⁴⁸ Her approach is contrasted with that of the *Flachland* mentality, as exemplified by Joachim Ziemßen, to whom the “wasted” time on the Magic Mountain is a source of perpetual anxiety: “Ich muß hier stagnieren wie ein Wasserloch, – ja, ganz wie ein fauliger Tümpel, es ist gar kein krasser Vergleich”.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ Idt, *André Gide: Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 46.

²⁴⁷ Gide, *Paludes*, p. 96.

²⁴⁸ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 334.

²⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 25.

Circular images permeate Gide's *Paludes*. Angèle, Tityre's friend, tells her friend Hubert: "Un livre, mais un livre, Hubert, est clos, plein, lisse comme un œuf!"²⁵⁰ The characters of *Paludes* complain regularly of "étouffement", windows are thrown open in a vain attempt at escaping from the general claustrophobia, and the image of a circular ventilator looms largely throughout this short work. The suffocation described in the scene of Angèle's literary salon foreshadows that of the grotesquely asphyxiating Argonauts banquet scene, featuring Jarry, in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*. Claustrophobia is the spatial equivalent of temporal circularity ... *Paludes* seems to point forward to Claude Simon's *Le Palace* (1962), where the circular flights of the pigeons serve as a metaphor for the doomed process of history.

The *erzählte Zeit* of *Paludes* – the seven days of a week – itself an endlessly repeating cycle, with the narrator's interchangeable friend Gaspard coming to replace the equally replacable Hubert, and the work on *Polders* beginning after *Paludes* (which must have been started prior to *Paludes*), all extend the theme of circularity. *Paludes* was described by Barthes as "un grand livre moderne [...] qui, sans aucun doute, devrait être réévalué par la modernité"²⁵¹ and effectively illustrates the impotence and limitations of traditional narrative. Gide himself announced his *Paludes* in a letter to Valéry, saying: "Mon cher ami, j'écris un roman moderne".²⁵² Much of the innovation of *Paludes* foreshadows that which was to take place on a larger scale in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*.

It cannot be purely accidental that Gide chose to preface chapter 1 of the third section of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* with a quotation from Flaubert's *L'Education sentimentale*, which has time as its main subject, and is symbolised throughout by the flowing of the Seine. The quotation comments ironically on the events following Edouard's return from Switzerland: "Son retour à Paris ne lui causa point de plaisir".²⁵³ Gide re-read Flaubert's novel in 1925

²⁵⁰ Gide, *Paludes*, p. 110.

²⁵¹ R. Barthes, "Vingt mots-clé pour Roland Barthes" in: Barthes, *Le grain de la voix. Entretien* 1962-1980, Paris 1981, p. 214.

²⁵² André Gide, letter to Paul Valéry 28. 5. 1895 in: *Correspondance d' André Gide et de Paul Valéry 1890-1940*, Paris 1955 p. 204.

²⁵³ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 221.

and commented in a letter to Martin du Gard that it was “décidément une des pierres d’angle de notre roman français”.²⁵⁴

In stark contrast to the nineteenth-century novelist’s attempts to create a sense of historical depth and continuity, a selection of episodes is placed side by side in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, in a seemingly arbitrary fashion, producing a collage effect. To produce a fireworks display of significant “spots of time” in a continuous present was Gide’s intention: “ne pas établir la suite de mon roman dans le prolongement des lignes déjà tracées”,²⁵⁵ and yet this present is inconceivable without the past. It is not only the plight of Laura which takes the reader back to a time prior to the commencement of the action of the novel; indeed, the entire action of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* is prompted by Bernard’s discovery of his mother’s affair – he is at pains to establish that the letters are seventeen years old, “la date était péremptoire”²⁵⁶ – further, Boris’ predicament and penchant for the fateful talisman have their roots in the murky time of his childhood, to name but a few examples. Gide is at pains to show “ce spectre vengeur qui ressort du passé, ce cadavre que le flot ramène”.²⁵⁷ And just as the past is imbedded in the present, both are necessarily part of the future. The intermingling of the past with the present – and here we have a striking parallel with *Der Zauberberg* – can most successfully be conveyed through the rejection of a temporal continuum. In this respect, Gide can be seen as anticipating the theories of Butor, who was to articulate the artificiality of linear narration, saying:

toute narration se propose à nous comme un rythme de pleins et de rides, car non seulement il est impossible de raconter tous les événements dans une succession linéaire, mais à l’intérieure d’une séquence de donner toute la suite des faits. Nous ne vivons le temps comme continuité qu’à certains moments.²⁵⁸

Similarly, in Claude Simon’s *La Route des Flandres* (1960), the absence of punctuation suggests the temporal levelling of events when recalled in the memory, and in Robbe-

²⁵⁴ André Gide, letter to Martin du Gard April 1925 in: *Correspondance Gide - Martin du Gard*, p. 259.

²⁵⁵ *JFM*, 10.4.1924, p. 74.

²⁵⁶ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 13.

²⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 27.

²⁵⁸ Butor, “Recherches sur la technique du roman” in: Butor, *Essais*, p. 116.

Grillet's *Les Gommès*, many of the sections start with the word "Maintenant", thus creating the illusion of an eternal present.

P. Chartier sees in the interrupted narrative of *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, with its borrowing from a variety of different written sources, and collage of perspectives – which we will look at more fully in the next chapter – a concerted attempt on Gide's part to produce "une esthétique du discontinu, du contre-pied et de l'arbitraire".²⁵⁹ Certainly, Gide stressed that his aim was to circumvent the artificiality of a plot, "éviter tout ce qu'a d'artificiel une intrigue",²⁶⁰ yet at the same time seemed to be somehow compelled to braid together the various strings of the action, referring to the strangeness of his creation and asking himself:

Pourquoi, dès l'instant que j'accepte qu'il ne soit assimilable à rien d'autre (et il me plaît ainsi), pourquoi tant chercher une motivation, une suite, le groupement autour d'une intrigue centrale? Ne puis-je trouver le moyen, avec la forme que j'adopte, de faire indirectement la critique de tout cela: Lafcadio par exemple essaierait en vain de nouer les fils; il y aurait des personnages inutiles, des gestes inefficaces, des propos inopérants, et l'action ne s'engagerait pas.²⁶¹

He justified his distaste for the linking of the action of his novel by referring to the discrepancy between the coherence of such a plot and the fragmented nature of real life: "la vie nous présente de toutes parts quantités d'amorces de drames, mais il est rare que ceux-ci se poursuivent et se dessinent comme a coutume de les filer un romancier".²⁶²

However, although Gide infuses *Les Faux-monnayeurs* with temporal contradictions and chronological vagueness (such as the disparity between the times given for when Bernard is due to sit his *baccalauréat*, the impossibility of tracing the start of Laura's pregnancy), and despite his stated desire to avoid the contingency of a plot, but rather to create "un surgissement perpétuel",²⁶³ in practice most of the novel's strands become intertwined. A host of individual actions, starting with Bernard's discovery of his illegitimacy, are mechanically linked with each other and lead directly to the schoolboy suicide. As Magny

²⁵⁹ Pierre Chartier, *Les Faux-monnayeurs d'André Gide*, Paris 1991, p. 10.

²⁶⁰ *JFM*, 11. 7. 1919, p. 18.

²⁶¹ *ibid.*, 5. 8. 1920, p. 26.

²⁶² *ibid.*, 1.11.1924, p. 80.

²⁶³ *ibid.*, 10.4. 1924, p. 74.

says: “parce que Bernard, pour réparer une pendule a soulevé un dessus de commode et trouvé des lettres d’amour vieilles de dix-huit ans, le petit Boris se suicidera à la fin du livre”.²⁶⁴ After all, Gide composed the work in reverse, with the real newspaper *fait divers* of the suicide of the schoolboys in Clermont Ferrand (5 June 1909) and that of the anarchistic counterfeiter (7 and 8 August 1907) as his starting-points, wishing to “fondre cela dans une seule et même intrigue”.²⁶⁵ It is not surprising that virtually all other strands of the action lead to these events, and that reference has to be made to events increasingly further back in time in order to explain them:

C’est à l’envers que se développe, assez bizarrement, mon roman. C’est-à-dire que je découvre sans cesse que ceci ou cela, qui se passait auparavant, devrait être dit. Les chapitres, ainsi, s’ajoutent, non point les uns après les autres, mais repoussant toujours plus loin celui que je pensais d’abord devoir être le premier.²⁶⁶

It is possible to see Boris’ death as the necessary consequence of the “survival of the fittest” society as exemplified by Vincent’s tale of the parasite fish – as Gide noted in the work-diary, his innocence makes him an easy target for his corrupt schoolmates – but this is only one factor of many.²⁶⁷ It would appear that Boris *must* die because, as Magny suggests, Bernard wishes to repair a clock: the consequences of this purely mechanistic causal chain started off by Bernard’s in itself insignificant, but hugely symbolic action, underline the extent to which even the tiniest of acts can have far-reaching ramifications. Tracing the responsibility for Boris’ death is complex as the characters and events are so intricately interlaced: since this is the case, it is only fair to talk of a collective responsibility. As Edouard says of his own novel: “Tout se tient et je sens, entre tous les faits que m’offre la vie, des dépendances si subtiles qu’il me semble toujours qu’on n’en saurait changer un seul sans modifier tout l’ensemble”.²⁶⁸ In the first Paris section of the novel, the factors which will lead to Boris’ death are exposed, there is a temporary lull in the central Saas-Fée section, and in the final section the action is speeded up, as the events

²⁶⁴ Magny, *Histoire du roman français depuis 1918*, p. 73.

²⁶⁵ *JFM*, 15.7. 1919, p. 19.

²⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 11. 10. 1922, p. 56.

²⁶⁷ “Boris. Le pauvre enfant comprend qu’il n’y a pas une de ses qualités, pas une de ses vertus, qui ne puisse être tourné en défaut par ses camarades: sa chasteté en impuissance; sa sobriété en absence de gourmandise; son abstinence générale en couardise, sa sensibilité en faiblesse”. *JFM*, 27.7.1924, pp. 77-78.

²⁶⁸ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 93.

hasten towards their conclusion. But does the causal chain really only start with Bernard wanting to repair the clock? What prompted him to repair the clock, and what had caused the clock to be broken? Each act points to the existence of other acts, the complexity soon becomes overwhelming. As for Boris' suicide, we are at the end of the causal chain as far as the events described in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* are concerned, but Gide makes it clear that "beginning" and "end" are arbitrary concepts; we already get a glimpse of the catastrophe which the schoolboy suicide, in turn, provokes:

Il n'est pas d'acte, si absurde ou si préjudiciable, qui ne soit le résultat d'un concours de causes, conjonctions et concomitances; et sans doute est-il bien peu de crimes dont la responsabilité ne puisse être partagée, et pour la réussite desquels on ne se soit mis à plusieurs – fût-ce sans le vouloir ou le savoir. Les sources de nos moindres gestes sont aussi multiples et retirées que celle du Nil.²⁶⁹

Although Gide juggles with different time-scales in order to fill the reader in on events prior to those described, the scale and intricacy of any given events seriously overstretch the capacity of the novelistic form to do them justice.

The way in which Gide knots the strands of the action is so contrived and forced that *Les Faux-monnayeurs* can only be seen as a satire of traditional cause and effect linking, and here we touch upon one of the most "modern" aspects of Gide's novel. The reader seeking the psychological motivation of the characters is frustrated, as Gide simply provides him with the overwhelming complexity of the action; as K. Weinberg writes:

Der alle Erzählungskunst programmatisch bezweifelnde Lehrroman wird zum Labyrinth raffiniert diffuser Erzähltechniken und widerspruchsvoller Perspektiven, die sich gegenseitig aufzuheben drohen. Der irrend verwirrte Leser greift oft vergeblich nach dem ihm perfid dargebotenen Ariadnefaden: Dieser ist aus ironischen Anspielungen auf die Nichtigkeit der Bemühungen gewisser Protagonisten zusammengeknotet, die (wie Gide selber) sich auf die Gralssuche nach der "Reinheit" und "Authenzität" ihrer Persönlichkeit gegeben.²⁷⁰

Weinberg neatly expresses the confusion and complexity of Gide's novel, which constantly prevents the reader from latching onto one consistent narrative thread.

²⁶⁹ *JFM*, 27.5.1924, pp. 76-77.

²⁷⁰ Kurt Weinberg, "André Gide. Le Prométhée mal enchaîné" in: Walter Pabst, *Der moderne französische Roman. Interpretationen*, Berlin 1968, 77- 102, p. 79.

The theme of the counterfeiters, as heralded in the title, features only marginally. There is not *one* plot, to which all action is linked, but several unfolding simultaneously, as well as embryos of plots – such as that of the relationship between Vincent and Lilian – which are not allowed to develop. The sheer density of activity in this slim novel (especially compared to *Der Zauberberg!* It takes the critic Jean Hytier no less than twenty pages to summarize the action of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* ...) is something suspicious in itself. There are also incidents featuring in the “main” narration which have no bearing on any of the plots at all, such as the brief appearance of the sinister “répétiteur” at the boarding-house demanding his wages. And Laura’s eventful story of adultery and betrayal – ideal material for a Realist novel – is already over by the time Gide’s novel starts. The fact that individual actions are juxtaposed, rather than developed chronologically, shows a refusal to adopt the conventional belief that time bestows meaning on a series of events.

The link between the act of writing and the plot in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* is very strong. Bernard’s discovery of the truth about his parentage through the old love-letters kept inside the clock (a mere coincidence?) sets the mechanism of the plot in motion; Boris signs on a piece of paper to join the “Confrérie des Hommes Forts”, thereby sealing his fate, and Phiphi is saved from implication in the affair through a note he passed round prior to Boris’ suicide, asking his friends if they were sure that the gun for the stunt was not, in fact, loaded. By associating writing and plot in countless examples Gide is parodying one of the traditional functions of the novelist – namely to focus the reader’s interest on a central plot.

We have already raised the question of why Sophroniska gives Boris’ talisman, which holds the key to the understanding of the child’s psychological make-up, to Strouvilhou, a complete stranger and obviously sinister character. Why does he want the talisman anyway, and why does Strouvilhou then place the talisman in the hands of his cousin Ghéridanisol, fellow school-mate of Boris, thereby precipitating Boris’ fate? No motives or explanations are given, the characters behave as they please, regardless of others. In a letter to Bernard, Olivier re-tells a moral tale of Passavant’s which provides a further

example of a disturbing chain of events, in another highly intricate *mise-en-abyme* of *Les Faux-monnayeurs*:

“Vois-tu, mon petit, l’important, dans la vie, c’est de ne pas se laisser entraîner. Une chose en amène une autre et puis on ne sait plus où l’on va. Ainsi, j’ai connu un jeune homme très bien qui devait épouser la fille de ma cuisinière. Une nuit, il est entré par hasard chez un petit bijoutier. Il l’a tué. Et après, il a volé. Et après, il a dissimulé. Tu vois où ça mène. La dernière fois que je l’ai revu, il était devenu menteur”²⁷¹.

The message which emerges from this brief tale of crime is that, once started upon, nothing can be done to halt the flow of an ominous series of events.

We are presented with a succession of extraordinary coincidences in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, which Gide employs in a very self-conscious manner. In another example of the *mise-en-abyme* he makes Edouard, with regard to his novel, ponder over how he can make it appear plausible that the novelist-character could be very close to his sister, yet hardly know his nephews: precisely the narrator’s own predicament vis-à-vis Edouard and Pauline’s three sons.²⁷² Also by coincidence, Bernard, eager to establish contact with Edouard, is able to pick up his locker receipt, which happens to have blown away at St. Lazare station, and thus gain access to Edouard’s suitcase. It is also highly coincidental – if not downright improbable – that the young boy Edouard catches stealing a second-hand travel guide should turn out, in fact, to be his nephew. Not even Balzac contains so many twists of fate. As Walker has observed: “such a proliferation of coincidences can hardly be a ... coincidence”, concluding: “The important point about Gide’s use of coincidence is that it is an appropriate response to the problems of reconciling discontinuity in life to the continuity inherent in any narrative that seeks to depict it”²⁷³.

Many of the coincidences which lead to Boris’ death are coincidences of chronology; La Pérouse tells us that he would have committed suicide on one particular Wednesday if Edouard had not brought Boris along with him that same day, and retrospectively we wonder if Boris’ suicide could have been avoided altogether if Edouard had not returned

²⁷¹ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 210.

²⁷² *ibid.*, p. 93.

²⁷³ Walker, “Continuity and Discontinuity in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*”, pp. 422-423.

to Paris eight days earlier than planned. The fact that the novel starts with a clock and ends with another would appear to point to a parody of the traditional use of chronology in fiction. P. Masson has pointed out how significant events in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* happen at either 4 p.m. or 6 p.m.;²⁷⁴ an artificial structuring device inconceivable in the nineteenth-century novel. There would appear to be an anticipation of Boris' death, and its exact timing, in the description of Sophroniska's exposition of her young patient's personality: "Sophroniska étale au grand jour, démontés, les rouages les plus intimes de son organisme mental, comme un horloger les pièces de la pendule qu'il nettoie. Si, après cela, le petit ne sonne pas à l'heure, c'est à y perdre son latin".²⁷⁵ And when Edouard visits La Pérouse, having forgotten that he was supposed to have committed suicide by then, and is thus to all intents and purposes dead, we read: "La pendule a sonné quatre heures; alors, comme mû par un rouage d'horlogerie, il [La Pérouse] a tourné la tête lentement et d'une voix solennelle [...]"²⁷⁶ The linking of the two "suicides" to clocks and the world of temporality draws attention to the illusion conveyed by more traditional fiction that chronology in the novel makes sense of the actions described.

In *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, Gide would appear to be examining all aspects of causality; coincidence, contingency, discontinuity, the possibility of a higher force at play. The fact that the narrator himself is not solely responsible for the presentation of the facts, but alternates with Edouard, is indicative of an extreme reluctance on Gide's part to present the reader with a definitive version not only of "reality", but also of chronology and causality too. References to the devil abound, and La Pérouse provides one possible explanation for the arduousness of existence, namely the suggestion that man is a mere toy in the hands of God: "Il s'amuse avec nous, comme un chat avec la souris qu'il tourmente".²⁷⁷ The parallel with the author and his novelistic creation is obvious, and in his concerted attempt to avoid an omniscient, God-like narrator by granting his characters – however coquettishly – a certain degree of independence, Gide may well be showing the

²⁷⁴ Pierre Masson, *Lire Les Faux-monnayeurs*, Lyons 1990, p. 134.

²⁷⁵ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 202.

²⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p. 240.

²⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 377.

artificiality (and anachronism) of such a point of view as that of La Pérouse, wishing to show instead that the responsibility for one's actions lies ultimately with the individual.

The theme of causality is interiorized through the character of Armand, who exposes to Olivier his thoughts on the "le point-limite", stimulated by a newspaper article (presumably yet another *fait divers*!) in which the death of an electrician is reported. It was the perspiration on the electrician's body which had caused the man, in the process of repairing a cable, to be electrocuted. As Armand says, this would not have happened if the man's body had been drier, but what fascinates him is not simply the question of: what if ... but the notion that there would have been a "point-limite", where the body would have been wet, but still just dry enough to resist electrocution. As he says himself, he wants to go beyond simply thinking in terms of "si le nez de Cléopâtre eût été plus court", but wishes to know "plus court ... de combien? [...] Pour moi, je suis comme l'Arabe à travers le désert, qui va mourir de soif. J'atteins ce point précis, comprends-tu, où une goutte d'eau pourrait encore le sauver ... ou une larme".²⁷⁸ Armand's speech focuses our attention on the accumulation of tiny circumstances which lead to Boris' death, and which may have been averted if just one little thing along the line had turned out differently. However, the fact remains that Boris *does* die, and Armand's speech, whilst drawing attention to the causality of the "suicide" does not furnish us with a satisfactory explanation for Boris' death.

"De toutes les connaissances humaines, celle qui m'intéresse le moins c'est l'Histoire", wrote Gide in his *Journal* in 1942, following the discussion of a work on the emperor Tiberius. What had bothered Gide about this work was the seemingly random selection of a set of events and the attempt to string them together in a causal chain: "Dans cette touffe énorme du passé, pourquoi choisir ceci plutôt que cela? Le plus apparent sans cesse effusque le plus important. On cherche une suite, un enchaînement des faits, une causalité qui ne soit pas accidentelle ou illusoire".²⁷⁹ The dropped plan to divide the action of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* into *before* and *after* the war had been designed to show how the

²⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 279.

²⁷⁹ Gide, *Journal 1839-1949. Souvenirs*, Paris 1954, 10.10.1942, pp.137-138.

various ideological positions of the characters had been strengthened by the experience, “chacun trouvant dans la guerre argument, et ressortant de l'épreuve un peu plus enfoncé dans son sens. Les trois positions: socialiste, nationaliste, chrétienne, chacune instruite et fortifiée par l'événement”.²⁸⁰ Despite Gide's references during the composition period of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* to his wish for historical accuracy, the social reality of the outside world barely features in the finished novel, never mind any allusions to any historical events: apart from the central section in Saas-Fée, the action takes place in the affluent homes around the Jardin du Luxembourg in central Paris; there is only a brief reference to “les quartiers pauvres” and a passing mention of the drive for conscription in Bernard's adventure with the Angel. Certainly, *Les Faux-monnayeurs* portrays a society in which all time-honoured institutions – the family, the church, the education and legal systems – are crumbling and corrupt, but these are not Gide's prime considerations. And although there are sufficient indicators to enable us to situate the action in the pre-war period, we are not made aware of the abyss between the world prior to the First World War and the world afterwards, in the way Mann evokes in *Der Zauberberg*.

Despite the fact that some critics have seen in the mysterious wording of Boris' talisman an oblique reference to the material and financial preoccupations of the twentieth century, and in Phiphi's tearing out of a sheet from his history revision book a defiant stand against the course of history,²⁸¹ these themes are very much of secondary importance. After all, Gide's starting-point for the novel, as we have already mentioned, was his collection of *faits divers*, taken from local newspapers, rather than any historical events on a larger scale.

In spite of this, *Les Faux-monnayeurs* reflects a refusal to select and organise events and link cause and effect in the way the traditional novelist and the traditional historian had done. The movement Gide participates in – away from character and linear plot, and culminating in the preoccupation with language and objects of the *nouveaux romanciers* –

²⁸⁰ *JFM*, 30.7.1919, p. 23.

²⁸¹ cf. Alain Goulet, *Fiction et vie sociale dans l'œuvre d'André Gide*, Paris 1985, p. 13.

is symptomatic of a reluctance or inability to tackle the wider, more abstract issues of causality and history. Gide himself articulated his unwillingness to act as historian:

sans doute mon esprit ne s'incline pas volontiers devant ce que l'on appelle les enseignements de l'histoire: toute relation de n'importe quel événement comporte nécessairement une interprétation. Il reste quelque chose d'humain dans n'importe quel témoignage, et par conséquent de suspect [...] Voilà pourquoi je me fie plutôt au naturaliste qu'à l'historien.²⁸²

Because the events of history, as we know it, have been related and strung together by human beings, using sources which are notoriously unreliable and which necessarily involve a subjective interpretation of “reality”, Gide is mistrustful of the historian, and in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* he highlights the fallibility of the individual’s witnessing of an event through the use of multiple narrative sources. Gide was to subject the uniquely flexible form of the novel to experimentation on several fronts in order to show that outmoded narrative techniques could not do justice to the complexities of reality. As he noted in his *Journal* in 1931, referring to those parts of the novel which in his view comforted the reader: “J’y répugne, tout simplement, et ne me décide pas plus que Valéry à écrire: “La marquise sortit à cinq heures”.”²⁸³ We suspect, however, that the historian’s presentation of events in chronological fashion may also account for Gide’s reluctance to comment on the course of history. Indeed, *Les Faux-monnayeurs* suggests that portraying “reality” is a complicated enough business in itself, never mind the causal interlinking of various aspects of that reality.

Paul Veyne has convincingly suggested that the work of the historian bears a distinct resemblance to that of the novelist in that both start with a series of events and organise them in such a fashion so as to form a coherent plot: the historian then passes off this plot as an “explanation” of history. To cite Veyne, “Ce qu’on nomme explication n’est guère que la manière qu’a le récit de s’organiser en une intrigue compréhensible”.²⁸⁴ But as Veyne emphasises, the events in themselves are fashioned in a highly subjective way: “les événements ne sont pas des choses, des objets consistants, des substances; ils sont un découpage que nous opérons librement dans la réalité, un agrégat de processus où agissent

²⁸² unpublished fragment from the 1930s, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 79.

²⁸³ Gide, *Journal 1889-1939*, 1.8.1931, p. 1068.

²⁸⁴ Paul Veyne, *Comment on écrit l'histoire. Essai d'épistémologie*, Paris 1971, p. 111.

et pâtissent des substances en interaction, hommes et choses”.²⁸⁵ Veyne argues that a piece of historical writing may have as little bearing to “reality” as a work of fiction: the events are constructed and selected according to the type of plot the historian has in mind, rather than according to any intrinsic, objective value they may have. Conversely, in subordinating the events of his fiction to the demands of chronology, and stringing them together to form a plot, the novelist involuntarily presents a slice of history. *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, however, with its repeated pointers to its own inauthenticity through the high levels of self-reflection, and its refusal to endorse time as the generator of meaning, not only points to the inauthenticity of all fictional narrative, but also to the overriding subjectivity of attempts to “explain” history in a logical fashion.

Hans Castorp’s stay on the Magic Mountain represents a caesura with his life in the *Flachland*, one that after a while he no longer feels compelled to explain or justify; similarly, the characters in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* behave instinctively, and have no concept of having to defend their actions. This means that their actions often have no bearing on what comes before or after in their lives, a way of living which is reflected by Gide’s refusal to present their actions as consistent and logical. After Bernard, for example, has gone to bed with Sarah, he gets up, leaves her sleeping and continues to live his life as if nothing had happened: there is no continuity or development, least of all an explanation. The narrator asks:

Est-ce par insensibilité qu’il la quitte ainsi? Je ne sais. Il ne sait lui-même. Il s’efforce de ne point penser, gêné de devoir incorporer cette nuit sans précédents, aux précédents de son histoire. Non; c’est un appendice, une annexe, qui ne peut trouver place dans le corps du livre – livre où le récit de sa vie, comme si de rien n’était, va continuer, n’est-ce pas, va reprendre.²⁸⁶

Here, in another self-reflexive comment, the narrator makes an indirect criticism of the traditional novelist’s fondness for portraying life as continuous and progressive, for making it meaningful through time.

²⁸⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

²⁸⁶ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 296.

The suicide of Boris makes this particularly explicit: the direct causes can be traced in a way which might satisfy the detective, but they singularly fail to explain the incident in philosophical or religious terms. Of course, there is a difference in scale between the death of a schoolboy and a full-scale war, but the process of seeking causes is in both cases the same. Both defy explanation; in the same way that the savage reality of the First World War in *Der Zauberberg* renders all theoretical debate immediately invalid, Boris' suicide irrevocably changes the lives of those around him. The hardened ringleader of those responsible for his death, Georges, repents and returns to the fold of his alienated family (in a parallel action to Bernard); the future of the *pension* is no longer assured, and Edouard – paralleling Gide – expresses the futility of the attempt to provide explanations: “Sans prétendre précisément rien expliquer, je voudrais n’offrir aucun fait sans une motivation suffisante. C’est pourquoi je ne me servirai pas pour mes *Faux-monnayeurs* du suicide du petit Boris; j’ai déjà trop de mal à le comprendre”.²⁸⁷ Throughout the entire novel, but in particular through the death of Boris, Gide highlights the artificiality of historical narration. In a comment in his 1920 essay “Dada”, Gide makes explicit the link between the suffering of the First World War and the impossibility of picking up the narrative thread afterwards, as if nothing had happened: “Et ce ne serait vraiment pas la peine d’avoir combattu durant cinq ans, d’avoir tant de fois supporté la mort des autres et vu remettre tout en question, pour se rasseoir ensuite devant la table à écrire et renouer le fil du vieux discours interrompu”.²⁸⁸ Although Gide then goes on to emphasise that the Dadaists will take care to reflect the “ruin” of society through their art, the handling of time in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* makes the same point about the disparate nature of existence in the post-war years, albeit in a less anarchic guise.

Perhaps we can see a later echo of Gide’s wariness of “explaining” history in Claude Simon’s *Route des Flandres*, which describes the debacle of the French army in 1940. Appropriately, this account of social and military breakdown turns traditional chronology on its head, with its extremely hesitant attempts at reconstructing the events, and its spatial rather than temporal structure.

²⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 375.

²⁸⁸ Gide, “Dada”, *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. X, Paris 1936, p. 19.

Walker has provided some interesting facts concerning Gide's life-long preoccupation with *faits divers*;²⁸⁹ he tells us that he collected newspapers cuttings assiduously, had a network of friends who were involved in tracking them down for him, and frequently used them for his fiction. Walker also mentions that Gide interrupted the writing of *Les Caves du Vatican* for two weeks in 1912 to serve as a juror at the Assize Court in Rouen, an experience which led directly to the *Souvenirs de la Cour d'Assises* (1914); further, in 1919, during the writing of *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, he obtained special permission to carry out his own investigations into criminal reporting in the library of the Paris Law Courts. Walker points out that during his work as a juror, Gide commented repeatedly on the parallels between legal procedure and narrative discourse, remarking on the fact that very often a case was primarily judged on the success or otherwise of the defence in constructing a convincing and coherent narrative from the bare facts.

Interestingly, Gide in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* starts with the real *faits divers*, yet by no means sets out to elaborate on the characters and events, to make them into a "good story" and convince the reader of the authenticity of the tales, but rather exposes the mechanisms common to both legal reporting and traditional fiction, whereby individual actions are linked accorded to the principle of cause and effect, and thereby "explained". The artificiality of the traditional linear plot is further accentuated by the allusions to the *roman policier* and to the principle underlying that genre – the "explanation" of a crime, the contrived plot *par excellence*. In this respect, Gide – who at one point considered writing a novel in collaboration with Simenon – looks ahead to the *nouveaux romanciers'* fondness for parodying the detective novel as a means of exposing the absurdity of the plot, described by Paul Ricœur as "un dynamisme intégrateur qui tire une histoire une et complète d'un divers d'incidents, autant dire transforme ce divers en une histoire une et complète".²⁹⁰ Certainly, as Ricœur concedes, this is the most formal description of a plot, but it clearly shows to what extent the concept of plot is reducible to that of a convenient mechanism.

²⁸⁹ cf. David H. Walker, *André Gide*, London 1981, p. 161 f.

²⁹⁰ Paul Ricœur, *Temps et récit II. La configuration dans le récit de fiction*, Paris 1984, p. 18.

Both *Der Zauberberg* and *Les Faux-monnayeurs* show a troubled relationship to temporality. In Thomas Mann's novel, the philosophical reflections on time and the juxtaposition of linear with cyclical time concepts clearly reflect the fragmentary nature of existence in the early twentieth century, and suggest the ambivalence of the concepts of time and history. In the case of *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, the chronological inconsistencies, the refusal to develop characters or plot lines in time, together with the many examinations of causality, all conspire to throw light on the dubious use of time in the traditional novel as the unifying principle which lends meaning to events. This exploration of the links between fictional time and historical time undoubtedly represents one of the most significant contributions by Thomas Mann and André Gide to the shaping of the "modern novel" in the 1920s and in the following generations.

Chapter Three

Perspectives on Perspective: the Narratorial Function

G. Zeltner-Neukomm refers to *Der Zauberberg* as “Erzählen alten Stils”²⁹¹ in view of the (in her view) less than innovative narrative stance: this aspect of the novel provides the next focus for assessing the “modernity” of Mann’s and Gide’s works. This question has assumed increased significance in the twentieth century which has seen a proliferation of alternatives to the third-person, omniscient narration popular in the previous century, which featured in the works of novelists such as Flaubert, Dickens, Balzac and Zola.

In the 1950s Franz Stanzel set out to devise a typology of the novel, using the narrative stance as the main criterion for each novel type. The resulting work, *Die typischen Erzählsituationen im Roman* (1955), still represents for many a standard source of reference. We have already referred to Thomas Mann’s view of the novel as constituting the literary medium most suited for reflecting life in the modern era, and his definition of the task of the modern novelist as lying in the combination of *Epik* and *Kritik*. In a letter of 1925 to Ponten, he refers to *Der Zauberberg* in terms of “eine gewisse harmonische Durchdringung von Plastik und Kritik”,²⁹² obviously pleased with the modernity of his achievement. Yet Zeltner-Neukomm’s condemnation of *Der Zauberberg* as “Erzählen alten Stils” raises the question of Thomas Mann’s use of narratorial perspective and to what extent he is innovative, or tradition-bound in the way he chose to narrate his novel.

The tale of Hans Castorp’s seven years on the Magic Mountain is mediated and commented on by an omniscient narrator who is fully informed about the events of his character’s life, his innermost thoughts and motives, and in particular, is convinced of his character’s unsuitability for taking charge of the narration himself. In the *Vorsatz* he tells us: “der Leser wird einen einfachen, wenn auch ansprechenden jungen

²⁹¹ Zeltner-Neukomm, *Was ist ein moderner Roman?*, p. 6.

²⁹² Thomas Mann, letter to Ponten 31. 12. 1924 in: *Selbstkommentare*, p. 50.

Menschen in ihm kennenlernen”²⁹³ and makes a concerted effort henceforth to underline Hans Castorp’s mediocrity. This often occasions humorously ironic touches at the expense of his character; for example, when Settembrini first introduces the important theme of progress, the narrator tells us: “unter dem letzteren hatte Hans Castorp bisher so etwas verstanden wie die Entwicklung des Hebezeug-Wesens im 19. Jahrhundert”.²⁹⁴ There can be no doubt whatsoever that the narrator of *Der Zauberberg* is anything other than an *auktorialer Erzähler*, to use Stanzel’s terminology. In contrast to the *Ich-Roman* or the *personaler Roman*, the *auktoriale Erzählsituation* distinguishes itself through the presence of an omniscient narrator who is a fictitious personification and dramatisation of the narrative function: “Das auszeichnende Merkmal dieser Erzählsituation ist die Anwesenheit eines persönlichen, sich in Einmischung und Kommentaren zum Erzählten kundgebenden Erzählers”.²⁹⁵ Thomas Mann chooses for *Der Zauberberg*, and indeed all his novels (with the exception of the *Ich-Roman Felix Krull*) the most favoured narrative instance of nineteenth-century fiction.

In the opening chapters of *Der Zauberberg*, the narrator seeks to build up a portrait of his character in all his averageness. In describing him as a product of a well-heeled, almost over-refined social group, the narrator does not refrain from employing irony at his character’s expense:

Hans Castorp entzog seine Tabakvorräte den schädlichen Einflüssen der Dampfheizung, indem er sie im Keller aufbewahrte, wohin er jeden Morgen hinabstieg, um seinem Etui dem Tagesbedarf einzuverleiben. Nur widerstrebend hätte er Butter gegessen, die ihm in einem Stück und nicht vielmehr in Form geriefelter Kügelchen vorgesetzt worden wäre.²⁹⁶

His academic progress is described as being unspectacular, with the exception of a talent for mathematics which the narrator presents as “hübsch[e], wenn auch leidenschaftlos[e]”.²⁹⁷ Hans Castorp’s overpowering mediocrity and ordinariness

²⁹³ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 7.

²⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 214.

²⁹⁵ Stanzel, *Typische Formen des Romans*, Göttingen 1964, p. 16.

²⁹⁶ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 47.

²⁹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 48.

disqualify him from the lofty position of story-teller. That is the special preserve of the narrator: his character, as Thomas Mann frequently pointed out, could hardly cope with his own *Steigerung*, never mind the added enlightenment of the reader through any narratorial responsibility.²⁹⁸ And despite the narrator's stated intentions to present Hans Castorp "as he really is", it becomes clear that he is far from objective and impartial vis-à-vis the actions of his character. His attitude veers between a tone of paternal affection towards "unser junger Freund", and that of unremitting condescension. Referring to the increasingly demonstrative behaviour of Settembrini towards Hans Castorp in the final phases of the novel, the narrator tells us:

In den Tagen der ersten Mobilisationen, der ersten Kriegserklärung, hatte er [Settembrini] eine Gewohnheit angenommen, dem Besucher beide Hände entgegenzustrecken und ihm die seinen zu drücken, daß es dem Tölpel zu Herzen ging, wenn auch nicht recht zu Kopfe.²⁹⁹

Here we are reminded of Goethe's designation of his Wilhelm Meister as "ein armer Hund"³⁰⁰ or indeed, the narrator of *Tom Jones*, who refers to his character as "our youth" or "little Jones" and states that his aim is to "flatter no man, but to guide our pen throughout by the directions of truth".³⁰¹ As is commensurate with a *Bildungsroman*, the narrator of *Der Zauberberg* leaves no doubt as to his own superiority over his protagonist.

The narrator of *Der Zauberberg* not only commands authority on a range of diverse subjects, but rarely misses an opportunity to display his supreme control over the narration, drawing attention to his skills of selection and the parallel between his task and that of the theatre director: "Während also die Lippen Hans Castorps und Frau Chauchats sich im russischen Kusse befinden, verdunkeln wir unser kleines Theater zum Szenenwechsel".³⁰² This analogy had already been pre-empted by the "stage direction" following Joachim's death: "Wir lassen den Vorhang fallen, zum vorletzten

²⁹⁸ Hans Castorp [ist] "überhaupt seinen gesteigerten Gedanken persönlich nicht gewachsen". *Briefe 1889-1936* (ed. Erika Mann), Frankfurt/Main 1961, p. 232.

²⁹⁹ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 974.

³⁰⁰ Conversation with Kanzler von Müller 22. 1. 1821 in: *Kanzler von Müller: Unterhaltungen mit Goethe* (ed. E. Grunach), Weimar 1959, p. 39.

³⁰¹ Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones*, Harmondsworth 1966, p. 123.

³⁰² *Der Zauberberg*, p. 821.

Mal. Doch während er niederrauscht, wollen wir im Geiste mit dem auf seiner Höhe zurückgebliebenen Hans Castorp fern-hinab in einen feuchten Kreuzesgarten des Flachlandes spähen”.³⁰³ The “Geist der Erzählung” is displaying the omniscient narrator’s privilege of ubiquity, and his knowledge of the duration of the events and their outcome. Self-consciousness in fiction is, of course, nothing new, and Thomas Mann’s narrator owes much to his eighteenth-century predecessors.

Although the narrator painstakingly renders the finer details of Hans Castorp’s character and habits, including his bedtime personal hygiene routine, there are repeated references to his *unexceptional* nature. This coincides with the statement in the *Vorsatz* that the story is being told for its own sake, and not because of Hans Castorp, words repeated by the narrator as he draws his tale to a conclusion: “[...] sie war weder kurzweilig noch langweilig, es war eine hermetische Geschichte. Wir haben sie erzählt um ihretwillen, nicht deinethalben, denn du warst simpel”.³⁰⁴ This omniscient narrator thus consciously avoids overstressing the value of his protagonist and his tale – neutrally referred to as “hermetic” – those areas which, traditionally, would have presented the greatest interest to the reader. Certainly, the narrator presents his protagonist as the product of a specific social class and geographic area at a precise point in history, yet makes it clear that he wishes to ascribe to his character a certain impersonal quality, saying that his very mediocrity recommends him as a representative product of his time:

Hans Castorp war weder ein Genie noch ein Dummkopf, und wenn wir das Wort ‘mittelmäßig’ zu seiner Kennzeichnung vermeiden, so geschieht es aus Gründen, die nicht mit seiner Intelligenz und kaum etwas mit seiner schlichten Person überhaupt zu tun haben, nämlich aus Achtung vor seinem Schicksal, dem wir eine gewisse überpersönliche Bedeutung zuzuschreiben geneigt sind.³⁰⁵

Indeed, individuality, as is shown by the example of Hans Castorp, is a luxury which the advent of the war will render unaffordable. At the end of the novel, the narrator has difficulty in distinguishing his protagonist who has been swallowed up by the body

³⁰³ *ibid.*, p. 737.

³⁰⁴ *ibid.*, p. 980.

³⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p. 47.

of soldiers, part of “eines wimmelnden Verbands” which from a distance resembles “farblose Schwärme [...] die laufen, fallen und springen”.³⁰⁶ A narratorial perspective which homes in on one individual is swept away by the anarchy of the war.

Throughout the novel, the narrator suggests we adopt a sympathetic attitude towards his character, calling him “unser Bekannter”³⁰⁷ and even “unser Freund”.³⁰⁸ However, on several occasions he also insists on presenting his hero in a neutral light: “wir haben oft versichert, daß wir ihn nicht besser, aber auch nicht schlechter zu machen wünschen, als er war”.³⁰⁹ One could assume that the narrator was hereby attempting to present an “objective” view of his character, as he really is (granted, of course, that he only exists in the pages of *Der Zauberberg*), so that the reader can form his own opinions, free from any authorial prejudice. However, if this was genuinely the narrator’s aim, would it not have made more sense to allow Hans Castorp to tell his own tale, either in the form of an *Ich-Roman* (although this would hardly be compatible with the question over his survival on the battlefields) or to allow the reader access to his consciousness in a *personaler Roman*? Alternately, Mann could have introduced an unreliable narrator, such as that in *Tom Jones* – a narrative instance too nuanced to fit into Stanzel’s rather crude *auktorialer Roman* category.

In *Der Zauberberg* the narrator gradually emerges as an avuncular and pedantic figure, convinced of his character’s ineptness and of his own superior knowledge on all matters. His tone always appears to be authoritative; after describing Settembrini’s discomfort at seeing Hans Castorp succumb to yet another, in his view “dangerous” influence, Naphta, he tells us: “So sind die Erzieher. Sich selber gönnen sie das Interessante, indem sie sich ihm ‘gewachsen’ nennen: der Jugend aber verbieten sie es und verlangen, daß sie sich dem Interessanten nicht ‘gewachsen’ fühle”.³¹⁰

³⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p. 976.

³⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p. 979.

³⁰⁸ *ibid.*, p. 931.

³⁰⁹ *ibid.*, p. 743.

³¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 532.

Yet the narrator's own intentions are no less educational than those of Naphta and Settembrini. He soon distances himself from Hans Castorp's adventures and adopts a moral stance closely resembling, if not identical to, that of the Italian man of rhetoric. His admonishing comments intensify as Hans Castorp becomes an increasingly lost cause, delves into the realm of the occult, loses all sense of temporality, lets his beard grow, abandons Maria Mancini for Rütlichschwur and eventually, as M. Walser points out, finds a worthwhile occupation – as keeper of the sanatorium's record collection.³¹¹ In relating the erotic dreams of Hans Castorp as he lies on his balcony, the narrator describes

das transparente Bild des Menschenleibes, Rippenwerk, Herzfigur, Zwerchfellbogen und Lungengebläse, dazu das Schlüssel- und Oberarmgebein, umgeben dies alles von blaß-dunstiger Hülle, dem Fleische, von dem Hans Castorp in der Faschingwoche vernunftwidrigerweise gekostet hatte.³¹²

The spiritualist séances, which are amongst “die sonderbarsten Stunden, die unseres Helden junges Leben bis dahin aufzuweisen hatte”³¹³ are described as “laut und abgeschmackt”,³¹⁴ Ellen Brand's bringing forth of the spirit Holger is referred to as “die skandalöse Niederkunft”.³¹⁵ The narrator himself confirms the correctness of the Italian's stance towards his character:

Wir können einem Manne wie Herrn Settembrini nur dankbar sein, wenn er dem jungen Menschen, dessen Schicksal uns beschäftigt, und den er bei Gelegenheit sehr fein als ein ‘Sorgenkind des Lebens’ angesprochen hatte, die Metaphysik mit pädagogischer Entschiedenheit als ‘Das Böse’ kennzeichnete.³¹⁶

In the final scenes of the novel, Hans Castorp has become “de[r] Sünder”,³¹⁷ “des Lebens treuherziges Sorgenkind”.³¹⁸

³¹¹ cf. Martin Walser, “Ironie als höchstes Lebensmittel oder: Lebensmittel der Höchsten” in: Heinz Ludwig Arnold (ed.), *Thomas Mann*, Munich 1976, 5-26, p. 14.

³¹² *Der Zauberberg*, p. 532.

³¹³ *ibid.*, p. 927.

³¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 928.

³¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 930.

³¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 747.

³¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 975.

³¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 980.

Similarly to Settembrini, the narrator has a somewhat contradictory nature: just as Hans Castorp is astonished to see the man of reason flirting with a young girl from the village, the narrator too is not impervious to the attractions of the female sex. And despite his sense of moral outrage over the dabblings in the occult, the narrator says of Ellen Brand: "Da ihre jungfräuliche Brust sich so weich und ungefesselt darunter abzeichnete, schien es, daß sie unter diesem Gewande wenig trage".³¹⁹ Although one might argue that this comment could be attributed to Hans Castorp himself, since, as R. Pascal has shown, the "Geist der Erzählung" presents the young man's adventures in a way which suggests he is standing (or hovering) somewhere very close to Hans Castorp himself,³²⁰ the narrator could have chosen to omit this observation on moral grounds.

Usually the narrator draws attention to the fact that the predominant point of view is indeed Hans Castorp's: when rendering his character's thoughts, he tends to add "wir geben mit alledem die Eindrücke Hans Castorps wieder",³²¹ or words to that effect. Comments of this type serve to underline the young engineer's inability to tell the tale himself and to reinforce the authority of the *auktorialer Erzähler*. Indeed, after describing in great detail Behrens' portrait of Clawdia Chauchat, and the lifelikeness of the skin, the narrator explains the acuteness of Hans Castorp's aesthetic sensitivity by hinting at his weakness for the Russian woman and seizes the opportunity to present his own point of view as authoritative in this matter: "aber wenn er [Castorp] besonders bereit war, solche Eindrücke zu empfangen, so ist doch sachlich festzustellen, daß Frau Chauchats Dekolleté das bei weitem bemerkenswerteste Stück Malerei in diesen Zimmern war".³²² Throughout, the narrator emphasises the thoroughness with which he is performing his task. He prefaces his list of Hans Castorp's favourite records with the words: "Wir mögen nicht unterlassen, sie

³¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 921.

³²⁰ Roy Pascal, "The Magic Mountain and Adorno's critique of the traditional novel" in K. Bullivant (ed.), *Culture and Society in the Weimar Republic*, Manchester 1977, 1-23.

³²¹ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 355.

³²² *ibid.*, p. 355.

anzuführen”.³²³ And yet, the “Geist der Erzählung” seems to have been offended by the love-making scene between Hans Castorp and Clawdia Chauchat and to have hastened away. The scene is simply omitted, although alluded to frequently thereafter; the narrator tells us, for example, when Ferdinand Wehsal presses Hans Castorp for details of the intimacy with his lover:

so sei mitgeteilt, [...] daß Hans Castorp ihm mit ruhiger Güte willfahrte, ohne daß, wie der Leser glauben mag, dieser gedämpften Szene irgend etwas niedrig Leichtfertiges angehaftet hätte. Dennoch haben wir Gründe, ihn und uns davon auszuschließen und fügen nur noch an, daß Wehsal danach mit verdoppelter Hingabe den Paletot des freundlichen Hans Castorp trug.³²⁴

Here, the narrator is clearly teasing and arousing the curiosity of the reader.

In Thomas Mann’s *Der Erwählte* (1939) reference is also made to an invisible, mystical force, another “Geist der Erzählung” which descends and settles on the monk Clemens on whom it is then incumbent to tell the tale. The “Geist der Erzählung” in *Der Zauberberg*, as we have seen, remains in spirit form, but shows the prejudices of an older person, and discloses its gender, which comes as no great surprise, in a comment comparing the séance with the act of childbirth: “Man versteht schon, daß wir von unserer Gatten- und Vaterschaft sprechen, vom Akt der Geburt, dem Elly’s Ringen tatsächlich so unzweideutig und unverwechselbar glich”.³²⁵

If this type of omniscient narration would appear to be appropriate for depicting the adventures of an undeveloped personality in a parodistical *Bildungsroman*, it would also seem to be commensurate with the emphasised time-gap between the narrator’s present and the time of the narration. We are never told how the narrator acquires Hans Castorp’s story, or precisely what his relationship to him and the events related is, but his advanced age vouches for the authenticity of the sentiments expressing the end of one era and the dawn of the next. In fact, Pascal notes how the narrator consciously exaggerates the pastness of the narrated time; for example, the comments in the first chapter: “Von Hamburg bis dort hinauf, das ist aber eine weite Reise”³²⁶

³²³ *ibid.*, p. 881.

³²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 583.

³²⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 927-928.

³²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 9.

and “jetzt aber geht es auf wilder, drangvoller Felsenstraße allen Ernstes ins Hochgebirge”³²⁷ exaggerate the length and difficulty of Hans Castorp’s journey to Davos, given the advances in transport by the year 1907, when the tale begins. Pascal suggests that the comment that the train passes “durch mehrerer Herren Länder, bergauf und bergab”³²⁸ is a “deliberate anachronism”,³²⁹ as Germany had long been unified. Although Pascal may be overstating his case, it cannot be denied that the narrator seeks to establish his authority right from the start, as well as his distance from Hans Castorp.

This distance, however, between the *auktorialer Erzähler* and his character does not remain constant throughout the novel. As Hans Castorp’s education gets underway, the narrator’s patronising attitude becomes more difficult to justify and he has to concede the progress his character has made in not only understanding the ideas thrown at him by his mentors, but in acquiring a critical distance from them. After one of Settembrini’s speeches, only seven (!) weeks into his stay, urging his protégé to return to the *Flachland*, the narrator tells us:

Wirklich waren des Italieners Worte von der Art derer, die noch vor sieben Wochen im Tieflande für Hans Castorp nur Schall gewesen wären, für deren Bedeutung aber der Aufenthalt hier oben seinen Geist empfänglich gemacht hatte: empfänglich im Sinne intellektuellen Verständnisses, nicht ohne weiteres auch in dem der Sympathie.³³⁰

We are then given access to Hans Castorp’s sophisticated musings on irony, and although the narrator seeks to relativise his character’s progress by drawing attention to the limitations of youth in general and Hans Castorp in particular (“So undankbar ist Jugend, die sich bildet. Sie läßt sich beschenken, um dann das Geschenk zu bemäkeln. Seine Widersetzlichkeit in Worte zu fassen, wäre ihm immerhin zu abenteuerlich erschienen”)³³¹ the narrator cannot deny the evolution of his character’s thought. Eventually, Hans Castorp’s rôle of passive recipient will be taken over by the

³²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 9.

³²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 9.

³²⁹ Pascal, “The Magic Mountain and Adorno’s critique of the traditional novel”, p. 15.

³³⁰ *Der Zauberberg*, pp. 304-305.

³³¹ *ibid.*, p. 305.

simple A.K. Ferge, “dem alles Höhere völlig fremd war”.³³² Indeed, despite the increasingly moralistic comments from the narrator, his initial steady grip on the narratorial controls lessens in a way which reflects the *Steigerung* (albeit ambiguous) of Hans Castorp’s education.

One reflection of this progress is in the narrator’s presentation of an increasing proportion of the Naphta/Settembrini dialogues in indirect speech. Although the proportion of indirect to direct speech remains small, the rendering of the hotly-debated concepts in this style suggests that they have successfully entered Hans Castorp’s consciousness. The narrator also serves up increasingly generous portions of his character’s own thoughts, culminating in the *Schnee* chapter with Hans Castorp’s ruminations on “Des Homo Dei Stand”, ruminations which the narrator describes as “waghalsige Gedanken” from the “hochverirrten Sorgenkind”.³³³ These comments indicate moral disapproval, but no intellectual gap.

Further, we are also introduced to Mynheer Peeperkorn as seen through Hans Castorp’s eyes – a major concession, given the importance of the character. The narrator says of his character, not without a certain amount of coquettishness: “Es ist ihm überlassen geblieben, von der Figur des neuen, unerwarteten Gastes ein ungefähres Bild zu zeichnen, und er hat seine Sache nicht schlecht gemacht,- wir hätten sie auch nicht wesentlich besser machen können”.³³⁴ At this point in the narration, Hans Castorp has reached the peak of his “education”. The narrator gives us access to his conversations with Peeperkorn in considerable detail, and these suggest considerable progress from his previously inadequate comments during the Naphta/Settembrini dialogues, his former tendency to ask questions rather than provide information, and his silences following Settembrini’s command “sich lieber rezeptiv zu verhalten”.³³⁵ And despite the narrator’s suggestion that Hans Castorp

³³² *ibid.*, p. 811.

³³³ *ibid.*, pp. 678-679.

³³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 751.

³³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 619.

speaks somewhat “confusedly” to the majestic Dutchman, he is forced to concede, after a particularly virtuoso speech by his allegedly simple character:

Ein Schlingel, dieser Hans Castorp. Oder, wie Herr Settembrini es mit schriftstellerischer Feinheit ausgedrückt hatte, ein ‘Schalk’. Unvorsichtig und selbst frech im Verkehr mit Persönlichkeiten – und geschickt dann auch wieder, wenn es galt, sich aus der Patsche zu ziehen.³³⁶

However, following the suicide of Peeperkorn, who provides Hans Castorp with his last educational experience, the narrator no longer entrusts his character with any narratorial responsibility. He resumes control, and as T. Ziolkowski has pointed out, thrusts himself increasingly to the fore in the final stages of the novel. Ziolkowski suggests that the narrator does so in an attempt to hold together the disintegrating “action” through the sheer force of his personality.³³⁷ However, as we have seen, there are no indications that a plot-led structure was ever a priority for Thomas Mann, who frequently emphasised the necessity of the inclusion of reflexive elements and defended Musil’s abandonment of the plot in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, talking disparagingly of works “mit einer rechten Intrige und fortlaufender Handlung, daß man gespannt sein könne, wie Hans und ob er die Grete kriegt” and which masqueraded as novels.³³⁸ The narrator of *Der Zauberberg* does indeed offer increasing amounts of extradiegetical comment on the development of the events as the novel progresses, but does so in response to the worsening conditions in the “outside” world as reflected in the microcosm of the sanatorium. We have already referred to the legal document concerning the Polish dispute as constituting a lengthy and non-integrated reflexive element. The narrator’s presentation of it serves also to illustrate *his* own new interest in disagreements of this type, an interest now shared by Naphta and Settembrini, in contrast with their previous lofty disregard for such petty incidents: by this stage in the events these trivialities have acquired an alarmingly symbolic character.

³³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 777.

³³⁷ Theodore Ziolkowski, *Dimensions of the Modern Novel*, Princeton 1969, pp. 96-97.

³³⁸ Thomas Mann, “Robert Musil: ‘Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften’ ”, *GW* XI, pp. 783.

We have seen how the “Geist der Erzählung” is not as immune from infection from his narration as he supposes himself to be at the outset; how he assumes the moral attitudes and rhetoric of Settembrini, despite a desire to portray his character objectively, and like the Italian, becomes increasingly affected by the pre-war tensions. And despite his often-proclaimed superiority over his character, he soon takes on board Hans Castorp’s ruminations on time. Indeed, the narrator’s own reflections on the question of temporality begin to parallel those made by his protagonist.

Hans Castorp first expresses his bewilderment concerning time to his cousin. His impression is that his arrival on the Magic Mountain *seems* much further back in time than it actually is: “Mit Messen und überhaupt mit dem Verstand hat das ja absolut nichts zu tun, es ist eine reine Gefühlssache” ,³³⁹ a sentiment which will be repeated in the previously-cited comment by the narrator on the subjective and objective durations of fiction and music.

At the beginning of the chapter *Ewigkeitssuppe und plötzliche Klarheit* the narrator tells us that he may well have to initiate the reader into a series of mysteries relating to time as his tale progresses:

Für jetzt genügt es, daß jedermann sich erinnert, wie rasch eine Reihe, ja eine ‘lange’ Reihe von Tagen vergeht, die man als Kranker im Bette verbringt: es ist immer derselbe Tag, der sich wiederholt; aber da es immer derselbe ist, so ist es im Grunde wenig korrekt, von ‘Wiederholung’ zu sprechen; es sollte von Einerleiheit, von einem stehenden Jetzt oder von der Ewigkeit die Rede sein.³⁴⁰

This is, of course, precisely the discovery Hans Castorp will make, and the imagery of the ill patient is by no means chosen at random but selected to anticipate the fate of the protagonist. On the question of time, there would appear to be a mutual influence between narrator and character. Hans Castorp’s sense of time becomes so perturbed that after initially questioning Joachim’s use of the word “neulich” to refer to events which took place two months previously, he will eventually use it himself to situate the time of the Chaldaeans. The narrator himself will also use the word to surprising

³³⁹ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 97.

³⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 253.

effect – on the subject of Settembrini’s political affiliations he tells us: “Neulich, zwei oder anderthalb Jährchen zurück, hatte das diplomatische Zusammenwirken seines Landes mit Österreich in Albanien sein Gespräch beunruhigt [...]”³⁴¹

Francis Bulhof’s research brought to light the extent of the *situational* and *textual* repetitions in *Der Zauberberg*, of which the above is just one example.³⁴² Not only does the unlikely, seemingly hermetic figure of the narrator follow his character in his musings on time, but the “soldierly appearance” Joachim does too. He makes observations on the nature of time and music which, as the narrator points out, “von einer gewissen alchimistischen *Steigerung* seines Wesens zeugt, da solche Bemerkungen eigentlich nicht in seiner braven Natur lagen”.³⁴³

As Bulhof has shown, the same ideas are repeated, often literally, by several characters, even the most unlikely ones. In fact, Bulhof goes as far as to suggest that some of the characters, in view of this similarity of their views and mannerisms, are interchangeable. He suggests that the “moribund” Karin Karstedt returns in the person of Ellen Brand and draws attention to several physical similarities and the same Scandinavian origins. Certainly, as Hans Castorp gets into position for enticing spirit Holger to emerge from Ellen, we are told: “So ungefähr, fiel ihm ein, hatte Karen Karstedt gelächelt, als er mit Joachim und ihr an der noch unaufgemachten Bettstatt des Friedhofs von ‘Dorf’ gestanden hatte”.³⁴⁴ Even the “lirische Improvisation” [sic] of spirit Holger reiterates the theme of the deathly timelessness of the sea, referring to the zodiac and the Chaldaeans, subjects which also fascinated Hans Castorp.

The narrator contrives to support the concept of the “eternal recurrence” by explicitly drawing attention to this phenomenon. When Hans Castorp informs Behrens that he has made the acquaintance of Clawdia Chauchat, we read: “ ‘Was Sie sagen!’

³⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 973.

³⁴² Francis Bulhof, *Transpersonalismus und Synchronizität*, Groningen 1966.

³⁴³ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 740.

³⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 910.

erwiderte der Hofrat, – ebenso, wenn die Rückbeziehung erlaubt ist, wie er erwidert hatte, als Hans Castorp ihm vor seiner ersten Untersuchung mitgeteilt, daß er übrigens auch etwas Fieber habe”.³⁴⁵ Of greater importance than individual characters in Mann’s novel is the fact that individual *situations* and *ideas* recur. As Bulhof says: “Dieses Phänomen, das als Transpersonalismus bezeichnet worden ist, hängt engstens zusammen mit dem Phänomen der Depersonalisierung – der Unterordnung der Personen unter die Erzählung”.³⁴⁶ Bulhof points out that there are many occasions in which the narrator anticipates or refers back to identical occurrences. In the same way that the *leitmotif* and the dreams conspire to simulate the *Aufhebung der Zeit*, so too do the narratorial comments contribute towards the creation of a structural reflection of cyclical, repetitive time. It is not, as R. Baumgart suggests of the *leitmotif*, indicative of “ein Mangel an Erfindungsgabe” on the part of the author.³⁴⁷

As is the case with the *leitmotifs*, the construction of the novel is such that the *situational* and *textual* repetitions only become apparent in the second reading. Yet co-existing with this “circular” function of the narrator is his desire to stimulate the linear “plot” through the use of anticipatory devices. After describing “Valentins Gebet” from Gounods *Faust* as one of Hans Castorp’s favourite records he tells us: “Weiter war es nichts mit dieser Platte. Wir glaubten, kurz von ihr reden zu sollen, weil Hans Castorp sie so ausnehmend gern hatte, dann aber auch, weil sie bei späterer, seltsamer Gelegenheit noch eine gewisse Rolle spielte”.³⁴⁸ Here, the narrator is clearly extending a narrative carrot towards the reader.

Towards the end of the novel it becomes clear that the narrator is struggling to fulfill his task of rendering the events faithfully. He becomes overwhelmed by the increasing complexity of the world he has set out to describe; in the chapter *Der große Stumpfsinn*, for example, he indicates that the prevailing mood of pent-up tension

³⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 482.

³⁴⁶ Bulhof, *Transpersonalismus und Synchronizität*, p. 107.

³⁴⁷ Reinhard Baumgart, *Das Ironische und die Ironie in den Werken Thomas Manns*, Munich 1964, p. 56.

³⁴⁸ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 891.

cannot be summed up in a few lines: “es ist mehr zu sagen”.³⁴⁹ And in *Die große Gereiztheit* the narrator follows up his depiction of the clash between Naphta and Settembrini saying: “Wir haben da nur auf gut Glück aus dem Uferlosen ein Beispiel herausgegriffen dafür, wie er [Naphta] es darauf anlegte, die Vernunft zu stören”.³⁵⁰ Of course, the narrator (siding again with Settembrini) is also reinforcing his privileged stance through false modesty: there is no question of this example having *really* been selected at random as he suggests. But events in the *external* world, by this point in the narration, have undoubtedly become overwhelming and confusing. Bulhof indicates how this is rendered tangible through the *leitmotif* of newspapers: whereas Settembrini follows the political developments by the reading the press on a regular basis, Hans Castorp, like many of the other patients, fails to make an effort and sinks into apathy. However, as the war approaches and the rumble of thunder can be heard in the distance, the narrator tells us: “Die wüsten Zeitungen drangen nun unmittelbar aus der Tiefe zu seiner Balkonloge empor, durchzuckten das Haus, erfüllten mit ihrem die Brust beklemmenden Schwefelgeruch den Speisesaal und selbst die Zimmer der Schweren und Moribunden”.³⁵¹ The narrator reflects the complexity of the outside world by simulating an inability to organise his fiction: “Wir greifen im Unerschöpflichen hin und her nach Proben von Naphta’s Feindseligkeit [...]”³⁵²

The coquettish, overbearingly confident tone of the narrator gives way to one of alarm and disquiet as Hans Castorp is gradually pulled into the vortex of aggression which is Europe at the outbreak of the First World War. As H. Kurzke suggests, the material of a large part of *Der Zauberberg* provides ample opportunities for allusions to death through allegorisations, quotations and ambiguities; it is, in Kurzke’s words, “ein idealer Tummelplatz der Ironie”.³⁵³ However, when death is literally present at the end of the novel, and no longer merely hinted at, irony becomes obsolete. The narrator finds his own presence almost an embarrassment: “O Scham unserer

³⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 859.

³⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 947.

³⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 974.

³⁵² *ibid.*, p. 949.

³⁵³ Hermann Kurzke, *Thomas Mann: Epoche-Werk-Wirkung*, Munich 1985, p. 209.

Schattensicherheit! Hinweg! Wir erzählen das nicht!”³⁵⁴ In the last four pages of the novel, the narrator’s tone alters considerably. Playfulness gives way to a serious attempt at conveying the horrors of the battlefields. The vantage point of the narrator has also changed. It has moved from being very close to Hans Castorp to among the marching soldiers: “wir schauenden Schatten am Wege sind mitten unter ihnen”.³⁵⁵ The narrator focuses on the swarm of soldiers, before picking out Hans Castorp. And despite his ostensibly privileged position as *auktorialer Erzähler*, it is not possible to give immediate information on what is happening: first of all, he expresses surprise, “Was denn, er singt!” and then makes an error of judgement: “Er stürzt. Nein, er hat sich platt hingeworfen [...]”³⁵⁶ The particular conditions of the war have hijacked the sovereignty of the omniscient point of view, and it is debatable whether a narrator who does not know the fate of his hero at the end of his tale can still be described as *auktorial*.

Ziolkowski, with reference to the composition of the novel, suggests that Thomas Mann attempts to create a rigorous organisational structure in order to counterbalance the ideological chaos in the “real” world.³⁵⁷ However, we have just seen that this order, or semblance of order, disintegrates with the advent of the war. It is more likely, as Kurzke suggests, that the brutal reality of war makes aesthetic order anathema:

Hier endet der Spaß. Der Krieg ist kein gewöhnlicher Lebensstoff, aus dem der Künstler in ‘spielender und gelassener Überlegenheit’ das ästhetische Gebilde zusammensetzen könnte. Die Worte haben über ihn keine Macht. Der Krieg ist eine schlechthin gegebene Faktizität, über die es nichts mehr zu diskutieren gibt.³⁵⁸

Ziolkowski states that the narrator “does not tell us all that he knows, but does not know everything”.³⁵⁹ Bulhof, on the other hand, maintains he is omniscient, but

³⁵⁴ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 980.

³⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 978.

³⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 979.

³⁵⁷ Ziolkowski, *Dimensions of the Modern Novel*, p. 73.

³⁵⁸ Kurzke, *Thomas Mann: Epoche-Werk-Wirkung*, p. 209.

³⁵⁹ Ziolkowski, *Dimensions of the Modern Novel*, p. 94.

claims: “ganz selten betont der Erzähler seine Allwissenheit”.³⁶⁰ There are, however, only two instances, apart from in the final pages, when the narrator does not appear to know what is going on. The first is when he hazards a guess as to what the dying Joachim may be dreaming about: “Flachländisch-Militärisches also, nehmen wir an”.³⁶¹ And yet the tone here is not altogether convincing: although it is conceivable that even the boundaries of omniscient narration may (or should?) be drawn at entering the mind of a dying person, the “nehmen wir an” contrasts strongly with the narrator’s usual ability to transcend spatial and temporal barriers (as when, at the end of this chapter, he switches the focus of his vision to the scene of Joachim’s military funeral in the *Flachland*.) The second instance of his alleged failing omniscience is when he offers a few suggestions of topics possibly under discussion in Krokowski’s “analytisches Kabinett”, saying “von deren Seite dies alles nur Vorschläge und Vermutungen sind, wenn die Frage aufgeworfen wird, was Dr. Krokowski und der junge Hans Castorp miteinander zu plaudern hatten!”³⁶² But this comment rings false after a very precise indication of what these topics might be! These feigned suppositions serve rather to reinforce the narrator’s omniscience and suggest his desire, in the case of the moribund Joachim, to broach the subject of death in the same hushed, reverential tones of Hans Castorp (another example of “transpersonalism”?) In the case of the soul-baring in the cabinet, we sense a keenness on the part of the narrator to indicate his moral distaste for such unmanly goings on, a distaste shared only initially by his character, who soon becomes an habitu  of Krokowski’s couch.

It would appear, then, that the *auktorialer Erz hler* of *Der Zauberberg* does not maintain a constant distance to his protagonist, but modifies his viewpoint in order to reflect the various stages of his *Steigerung*, and is able to conveniently switch his omniscience on and off, thus creating what E.M. Forster termed a “shifting viewpoint”.³⁶³ Further, as Bulhof and Kurzke have demonstrated, he is not impervious

³⁶⁰ Bulhof, *Transpersonalismus und Synchronizit t*, p. 182.

³⁶¹ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 636.

³⁶² *ibid.*, p. 502.

³⁶³ Forster saw the shifting viewpoint, “this power to expand and contract perception”, as “one of the great advantages of the novel-form”, saying “it has a parallel in our perception of life. We are

to moods and changes in his characters as well as in the outside world. Given these facts, Thomas Mann's *auktoriale Erzählsituation* is, in reality, less rigid and tradition-bound than it might initially appear.

Another modification and modernisation of the *auktoriale Erzählsituation* lies in the way the narrator presents the discussions of the ideologues Naphta and Settembrini, and the contrast this presents with his mediation of other ideas. The digressions on the various scientific subjects which constitute Hans Castorp's night-time reading are presented by the narrator himself on behalf of his charge and clearly indicate their authorship through the register. For example, it would be very difficult to find a textbook which described the phenomenon of human life in the following terms:

ein heimlich-fühlsames Sichregen in der keuschen Kälte des Alls, eine wollüstig-verstohlene Unsauberkeit von Nährsaugung und Ausscheidung, ein exkretorischer Atemhauch von Kohlensäure und üblen Stoffen verborgener Herkunft und Beschaffenheit.³⁶⁴

– hardly the latest medical volumes which, as we know, Hans Castorp has brought to him from the *Flachland*: this is clearly the language of the narrator. Because of the educational gap between himself and his character, the narrator has no option but to act as mouthpiece for Hans Castorp, as well as for the inarticulate Peeperkorn whose elaborations on poisonous substances would be somewhat trying on the reader if he were allowed to speak for himself.

In the case of these digressions which form part of Hans Castorp's education, including the reflections on time, Thomas Mann can safely draw on his vast preparatory reading and own thoughts, and express these via his narrator. The Naphta/Settembrini dialogues, on the other hand, are presented primarily in *direct speech* and are granted very generous narrative time. Page after page, the two men clash repeatedly on a vast range of topics relating to cultural history, displaying their

stupider at some times than others, aren't we: we can enter into other people's minds occasionally, but not always, because our own minds get tired, and this intermittence lends in the long run variety and colour to the experiences we receive". *Aspects of the Novel*, pp. 186-187.

³⁶⁴ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 379.

differing views on religion and the rôle of the church, the Jesuits, freemasonry, forms of government, the state, democracy and the monarchy, education, law, philosophy, morality, the nature of knowledge, war, sickness and health, death ... both Naphta and Settembrini plunge deep into their vast cultural knowledge to illustrate their arguments. The result, however, is “Wirrwarr und Waffenlärm”,³⁶⁵ rather than clarity, especially when it emerges that in some respects, the two men’s views are closer than they care to admit. During the “colloquium on sickness and health”, the opposing views do not remain distinct, but seem to merge:

‘Die Gestalt!’ sagte er [Settembrini], und Naphta sagte hochtrabenderweise: ‘Der Logos!’ Aber der, welcher vom Logos nichts wissen wollte, sagte ‘Die Vernunft’, während der Mann des Logos ‘die Passion’ verfocht. Das war konfus. ‘Das Objekt!’ sagte der eine, und der andere: ‘Das Ich!’ Schließlich war sogar von ‘Kunst’ auf der einen und ‘Kritik’ auf der anderen Seite die Rede und jedenfalls immer wieder von ‘Natur’ und ‘Geist’ und davon, was das Vornehmere sei, vom ‘aristokratischen Problem’. Aber dabei war keine Ordnung und Klärung, nicht einmal eine zweiseitliche und militante; denn alles ging nicht nur gegeneinander, sondern auch durcheinander, und nicht nur wechselseitig widersprachen sich die Disputanten, sondern sie lagen in Widerspruch auch mit sich selbst.³⁶⁶

The final confrontation of Naphta and Settembrini before their duel is not, however, presented unmediated. This dispute is presented in indirect speech as a monologue by Naphta, rather than as a dialogue, and the dramatic effect of Settembrini’s words: “Darf ich mir die Erkundigung erlauben, ob Sie mit Ihren Schlüpfrigkeiten bald zu Rande zu kommen gedenken?”³⁶⁷ – the words which spark off Naphta’s demand for “Satisfaktion” – is heightened considerably through the contrast between direct and indirect speech.

But by and large, the narrator presents the Naphta/Settembrini disputes unmediated, and uncharacteristically, refrains from commenting on them. Not only is this not necessary in view of the characters’ more than adequate rhetorical skills, but, more significantly, the range and complexity of the issues under discussion and their relevance to the rapidly-changing political situation at the time of writing make it

³⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 639.

³⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 635.

³⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 953.

impossible for Thomas Mann to summarize and repeat the information in the ironic tones of the narrator. It is apparent that throughout the Naphta/Settembrini dialogues the narrator no longer feels in control, hence the withdrawal of his authorial stance.

The bewildered narrator also suggests strongly that the disputes could be extended indefinitely, and that he, as organiser of the material, must draw the line somewhere. On Naphta's appearance in the novel, the narrator reproduces a substantial part of this uncompromising man's first altercation with Settembrini, but then presents the reader with increasingly smaller portions of their dialogues: soon the reader is familiar enough with the positions the two men represent to be able to imagine the course the ensuing conversations, which are not recorded, took. Just as the narrator described at length the first full day of Hans Castorp at the sanatorium, and from then on was able to refer to the recurrence of specific events in the day without going into detail, and thus convey an impression of the *mundane*, so too can the reader imagine the endless conflicts between Naphta and Settembrini. The narrator thus tailors his presentation of the mentors' debates to evoke the phenomenon of eternal recurrence, and by doing so also indicates the distressing complexity and volume of the discussions. To reproduce these "Bildungsgespräche" in their entirety would threaten to swamp the rest of the narrative, hence Thomas Mann's decision to divert a large part of his war-time ruminations into the *Betrachtungen*. As the narrator says:

jene Widersacher im Geiste lieferten ihre unaufhörlichen Duelle, bei deren Vorführung wir irgendwelche Vollständigkeit nicht anstreben könnten, ohne uns ebenso ins Desperat-Unendliche zu verlieren, wie sie es täglich taten, vor einem stattlichen Publikum, wenn auch Hans Castorp seine arme Seele als Hauptgegenstand ihres dialektischen Wettstreites betrachten wollte.³⁶⁸

Similarly to Gide's narrator in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, the narrator of *Der Zauberberg* presents his tale with a minimal amount of psychological explanation and the *leitmotifs* allow him to sprinkle clues as to Hans Castorp's psyche in a way which is considerably more nuanced than direct authorial intervention. At the same time the *leitmotifs* incite the reader towards a greater level of participation in unearthing this

³⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p. 691.

hidden psychological layer. The constellations of meaning created by the *leitmotifs* thus create a narratorial stance which is not restricted by the laws of time, space and causality. This is in stark contrast to the *auktorialer Erzähler* whose question at the end of the novel – asking whether love will *ever* arise i.e. in the future – suggests his adherence to a linear time continuum. P. Forrsbohm – continuing Kristiansen’s Schopenhauerian interpretation of the novel – has drawn attention to the *leitmotif* of the hands as one example of this. In his description of Hans Castorp washing himself, the narrator tells us: “Seine Hände, obgleich nicht sonderlich aristokratisch in der Form, waren gepflegt und frisch von Haut, mit einem Kettenring aus Platin und dem großväterlichen Erbsiegelring geschmückt”.³⁶⁹ Hans Castorp, as a product of his society’s devotion to “Form” carries a latent weakness for its opposite, “Unform”, and which will find expression in his attraction to the Russian patient. Clawdia’s hands are not well looked-after, have roughly-cut fingernails and, although she is married, she wears no ring. It is left to us to surmise from contrasting *leitmotifs* such as these that it is the early encounters of the young engineer with death and its accompanying pomp (“Überform”), which prompt him to be attracted to Pribislav Hippe, and then to Clawdia Chauchat (“Unform”). This predisposition is at odds with the world of work, activity and convention (“Form”) from which Hans Castorp gladly escapes by smoking his cigars or listening to music. Thus, the narrator of *Der Zauberberg* distances himself from his nineteenth-century counterparts by refusing to present a complete psychological portrait of his character, but rather, drops hints through the *leitmotif* technique. Of course, the *leitmotifs* are communicated via the narrator, who is the sole narrative voice; in the juxtaposition of the linear *auktorialer Erzähler* and the cyclical *leitmotif*, however, Thomas Mann is able to further reflect contrasting concepts of temporality, this time on the level of the narrative planes.

It cannot fail to escape the reader’s attention that in some of his interventions the narrator is disputing the usage of some of Hans Castorp’s words and phrases. For example, in the rendering of his character’s elaboration on the maintaining of customs

³⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 46.

in extraordinary circumstances we read: “Auf der anderen Seite aber involviere (‘involviere!’) der Luxus an Bord doch auch einen großen Triumph des Menschengeistes”.³⁷⁰ These authorial interpolations are in keeping with the ironic stance adopted towards his character, but also reveal a narrator highly conscious of his *own* use of language. For describing the state of mind Hans Castorp finds himself in vis-à-vis Clawdia Chauchat, he has to make do with the rather ordinary word “Verliebtheit”, saying with regret that it might lead the reader into assuming the love-affair was equally ordinary: “das Wort habe statt, obgleich es ein Wort von ‘unten’, ein Wort der Ebene ist und die Vorstellung erwecken könnte, als sei das Liedchen ‘Wie berührt mich wundersam’ hier irgendwie anwendbar gewesen”.³⁷¹ In this context, P. Pütz points towards Nietzsche’s belief in the impossibility of “ein[e] adäquat[e] Ausdrucksweise”, postulating an affinity of spirit between the two men on this score.³⁷² Certainly, the consciousness of the inadequate and misleading nature of language has assumed especial significance in the twentieth century, raising its head in Hofmannsthal’s *Chandos-Brief* of 1902 and culminating in the paradox of Derrida’s writings which express in language the idea that nothing can be expressed in language. And an awareness of the shortcomings of language, which is by nature dependent on a fixed relation to the reality it seeks to represent, is usually heightened when that reality can no longer be universally grasped. But is Thomas Mann really pointing to the slippery nature of language? V. Lange sees in Thomas Mann’s œuvre, in particular in *Doktor Faustus*, an *acknowledgement* of this crisis, but an acknowledgement which is still imbedded in the classical language of narrative.³⁷³

H.-M. Gauger has convincingly described *Der Zauberberg* as “ein linguistischer Roman”, pointing to the self-conscious, metalinguistic use of language of the narrator, as well as the characterisation of Behrens in terms of language, and elaborating on the

³⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 488.

³⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 284.

³⁷² Peter Pütz, “Thomas Mann und Nietzsche” in: Pütz (ed.), *Thomas Mann und die Tradition*, 225-249, p. 245.

³⁷³ cf. Victor Lange, “Thomas Mann: Tradition und Experiment” in: B. Bludau, H. Koopmann & E. Heftrich (eds.), *Thomas Mann 1875-1975 Vorträge in München, Zürich, Lübeck*, 566-585.

functions of the various foreign languages strewn throughout.³⁷⁴ Unfortunately, Gauger fails to draw any wider conclusions from his findings. Yet whereas it might be tempting to pursue this line of thought and see in Thomas Mann's novels an early echo of *écriture*, to do so would be to overestimate the modernity of his writing. In *Der Zauberberg*, language is still employed primarily as a means of presenting a recognisable reality; no serious attempt is made to alienate the reader, instead the narrator revels in the luxuriousness of the linguistic medium, with what Lange refers to as "eine[r] Lust am sinnlichen Reiz, die Thomas Manns Romanen eben jenes Moment des Kulinarischen verleiht, das in der modernen Kunst eher abgelehnt wird".³⁷⁵ The comments of the narrator on specific examples of usage do not serve to point to a chasm between language and reality, but rather, these self-conscious quibblings over the appropriateness or otherwise of certain turns of phrase draw attention to the author's search for the right expression and are typical of an *auktorialer Erzähler*.

Of greater import to Thomas Mann than Nietzsche's words on the bluntness of the linguistic tool, is the term "doppelte Optik", which the philosopher originally used to denote the appeal of Richard Wagner's music to both highbrow and popular audiences, and which Thomas Mann then appropriated to denote the ambivalence of Nietzsche's own writings. "Doppelte Optik", in the sense Thomas Mann gives the term, denotes a way of presenting phenomena which rules out a one-sided perspective, but instead necessarily implies the possibility of contemplating them from the opposite perspective. Koopmann has listed some historical and literary figures portrayed by Thomas Mann in this way, who are presented in the light of seemingly irreconcilable opposites.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁴ Hans-Martin Gauger, "Der Zauberberg – ein linguistischer Roman" in: *Neue Rundschau* 86, 2 (1975), 217-245.

³⁷⁵ Lange, "Thomas Mann: Tradition und Experiment", p. 572.

³⁷⁶ cf. H. Koopmann, "Zum Begriff der doppelten Optik" in: Koopmann, *Die Entwicklung des 'intellektuellen Romans' bei Thomas Mann*, p. 28f.

Many of the characters in *Der Zauberberg* are portrayed under “doppelte Optik”. Hans Castorp is surprised to discover that Settembrini is a Freemason, and Naphta a Jesuit; he is also surprised to discover sensuous traits in these men who appear to be paragons of cerebrality: Settembrini whistles at the pretty girls in Davos, and Naphta partakes in activities simply, but unambiguously, described as “wollüstig”. Mynheer Peeperkorn would also appear to combine conflicting traits, and to unite elements from radically different traditions. He makes large, incomprehensible gestures with his hands, “wie zu heidnischem Gebet”, yet when several of his friends doze off during a night of celebration, he rouses them from their sleep, saying: “Gethsemane! ‘Und nahm zu sich Petrum und die zween Söhne Zebedei. Und sprach zu ihnen: Bleibt hie und wachet mit mir’. Sie erinnern sich? ‘Und kam zu ihnen und fand sie schlafend und sprach zu Petro: Könnet ihr denn nicht eine Stunde mit mir wachen?’”³⁷⁷ Peeperkorn would appear to reconcile elements of Paganism and Christianity. His physique is similarly seen under “doppelte Optik”. As the narrator tells us, he is “robust und spärlich; mit diesen Eigenschaftswörtern muß man ihn meiner Meinung nach kennzeichnen, obgleich sie gewöhnlich nicht für vereinbar gelten”.³⁷⁸ And Hans Castorp is astonished, when he visits the ill Peeperkorn in bed, to discover that he is wearing a woollen, collarless vest, which creates an impression which is “teils volkstümlich-arbeitermäßiges, teils verewigt-büstenartiges Gepräge”.³⁷⁹

The entire structure of *Der Zauberberg*, with its surface realism and underlying mythological layer provides a further illustration of “doppelte Optik”. At the same time, it extends to a large number of seemingly trivial phenomena: even a dessert, the “omelette surprise” which features in the menu of one of the “gewaltige Mahlzeiten”, combines a hot exterior with an ice-cream filling. “Doppelte Optik” is, however, only applied to phenomena on the Magic Mountain: in the *Flachland*, as the name suggests, people and things are flat and one-dimensional. Joachim Ziemßen is a military type, and nothing else. In fact, as Hans Castorp is dimly aware, it is at the

³⁷⁷ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 778.

³⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 750.

³⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 788.

precise point when he sees his cousin engaged in uncharacteristically frivolous behaviour with the “hochbusige” Marusja, that Joachim is condemned to the realm of death: he has become two-dimensional.³⁸⁰

One of the manifestations of the *Steigerung* Hans Castorp experiences on the Magic Mountain is his love for Clawdia Chauchat. This love is itself described as being two-dimensional: after emphasising once again that his character’s all-consuming passion bears no resemblance to a *Flachland* love affair, the narrator tells us:

Vielmehr war das eine ziemlich riskierte und unbehauste Abart dieser Betörung, aus Frost und Hitze gemischt wie das Befinden eines Febrilen oder wie ein Oktobertag in oberen Sphären; und was fehlte, war eben ein gemüthafes Mittel, das ihre extremen Bestandteile verbunden hätte.³⁸¹

The dual nature of time, with its subjective and objective durations, can also be related to “doppelte Optik”. Hans Castorp was not aware of this paradox in the *Flachland*; only after his consciousness has been subjected to alchemical transformation does it begin to preoccupy him. It would appear that almost everything Hans Castorp encounters on the Magic Mountain cannot be taken at face value, and it is with the utmost irony that the narrator tells us he wishes to avoid introducing paradoxes in conjunction with his young and simple hero.³⁸²

We witness a tension, therefore, between the pedagogical realism of the omniscient narrator and the “doppelte Optik” technique which bestows on the characters and events of the Magic Mountain world an aura of ambiguity running counter to this realism. In the words of Koopmann: “Polyperspektivisch ist der Roman Thomas Manns und mit ihm der klassischen Moderne vor allem in dem Sinne, daß einem erzählten Geschehen, einem Vordergrund als Substrat eine exegetische Schicht zugrunde liegt”.³⁸³ The “doppelte Optik” undermines to a certain extent the

³⁸⁰ cf. also Kristiansen, *Thomas Manns Zauberberg und Schopenhauers Metaphysik*, p. 234f.

Kristiansen sees this point in Joachim’s life as the dissolution of “Form” into “Unform”.

³⁸¹ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 316.

³⁸² “Mit Bezug auf die Ewigkeit aber von Langerweile zu sprechen, wäre sehr paradox; und Paradoxie wollen wir meiden, besonders im Zusammenleben mit diesem Helden”. *ibid.*, p. 254.

³⁸³ Koopmann, *Der klassisch-moderne Roman in Deutschland*, p. 28.

omniscient stance, by inviting the reader to take into consideration the corollary of all described phenomena.

The “doppelte Optik” technique features heavily in Thomas Mann’s essayistic writings. The *Betrachtungen* in particular show a relentless attempt at reconciling polar opposites. For example, in his definition of aestheticism, Thomas Mann asks: “Ehrfurcht und Zweifel, letzte Gewissenhaftigkeit und letzte Ungebundenheit – gibt es diese Verbindung? Doch, es gibt sie, denn sie macht das Wesen der ästhetizistischen Weltanschauung aus”.³⁸⁴ As is borne out by the attempt to synthesise so many antitheses in both *Der Zauberberg* and the *Betrachtungen*, Thomas Mann was himself throughout the war years extremely perplexed by the political debate on Germany’s future and the blurring of distinct positions: “Ich versage mir nicht, hier wiederum auf die Verschränkung und Kreuzung der Willensrichtungen, auf die unlösbare Verflochtenheit und Relativität alles geistig-sittlichen Lebens aufmerksam zu machen”.³⁸⁵

Profoundly disturbed by the events of 1914, seeing in them “ein grundstürzendes Ereignis”,³⁸⁶ and by the notoriously bitter dispute with his brother Heinrich, Thomas Mann makes a desperate bid in his *Betrachtungen* to justify his own position following Heinrich’s suggestion that he was “behind the times”. Defending his nationalistic stance becomes a matter of existential importance – after saying “der Literat (i.e. Heinrich) *ist* nicht, er urteilt nur”, Thomas Mann insists:

Man kann aber rückständig sein und doch eben *mehr* sein, oder um ein Wörtchen hinzuzufügen und den Ton darauf zu legen, mehr *wert* sein als manch ein urteilend an der tête Marschierende [...] Große Menschen, Menschen, die viel *waren*, die durch Bindungen, solide Gewichte ihres Seins gehindert wurden, in ein neues Meinen der Zeit hemmungslos und frisch-fromm-fröhlich sich zu stürzen, haben es *schwer* gehabt, sich mit solchem Neuen auseinanderzusetzen und zum Frieden damit zu gelangen.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁴ Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen*, p. 222.

³⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p. 287.

³⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 207.

³⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 482.

Trying desperately to dispel the equation of “Rückständigkeit” with inferiority, and seeking to form new syntheses, provide the impetus for the rhetorical pattern in this polemical work, as well as in *Der Zauberberg*.

Written, thus, with great passion and displaying “die Hemmungslosigkeit privat-brieflicher Mitteilung”,³⁸⁸ the *Betrachtungen* must necessarily be considered alongside *Der Zauberberg*. It is not surprising that Naphta and Settembrini, the literary objectivizations of Thomas Mann’s own muddled position, – he once described himself as standing “mit einem Fuß etwa im Mittelalter und mit dem anderen in der Renaissance”³⁸⁹ – are allowed to talk at length and cause confusion, when their positions emerge as being contradictory in themselves and appear to overlap with their adversary’s. In the novel, however, some restraint must be exercised, and here the narrator steps in from time to time to shift the perspective away from their endless rhetoric and back to Hans Castorp’s tale, rounding off their debates with phrases such as “et cetera”.³⁹⁰ But apart than curtailing their debates, the narrator simply presents the discussions of Naphta and Settembrini in all their confusion, and there are none of the traditional indicators of which view the narrator would wish his reader to adopt.

“Doppelte Optik” is, of course, another way of describing irony. Defining Thomas Mann’s understanding of irony in exact terms is not a straightforward task, but an important one: Walter Benjamin described irony as Thomas Mann’s most substantial *leitmotiv*.³⁹¹ It is not simply the rhetorical device to which Settembrini refers as “ein gerades und klassisches Mittel der Redekunst”,³⁹² but rather the implication that both viewpoints on any given subject should be taken into account. It owes a great deal to Romantic irony, which bears a greater resemblance to a philosophical stance than to a

³⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 10.

³⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 411.

³⁹⁰ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 716.

³⁹¹ Walter Benjamin, review of Ronald Peacock’s *Das Leitmotiv bei Thomas Mann* in: “Neues zur Literaturgeschichte”, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. III, p. 425.

³⁹² *Der Zauberberg*, p. 304.

tool of rhetoric. In his “Goethe und Tolstoi” essay of 1921/1922 Thomas Mann defines the ironic game in terms of

jene nach beiden Seiten gerichtete Ironie, welche verschlagen und unverbindlich, wenn auch nicht ohne Herzlichkeit, zwischen den Gegensätzen spielt und es mit Parteinahme und Entscheidung nicht sonderlich eilig hat: voll der Vermutung, daß in großen Dingen, in Dingen des Menschen, jede Entscheidung als vorschnell und vorgütlig sich erweisen möchte, daß nicht Entscheidung das Ziel ist, sondern der Einklang.³⁹³

In *Der Zauberberg* Hans Castorp, referred to on several occasions as “verschlagen”, clearly fulfills this *mediating* function his creator ascribes to irony: less crucial than a conclusion is the portrayal of the various viewpoints. Referring to the apparent self-contradiction of the *Betrachtungen*, Mann claimed: “höchstens ihn [den Selbstwiderspruch] darzustellen, nicht ihn zu lösen maßt es sich an”.³⁹⁴ And as he said of himself in the *Betrachtungen*: “Dieses Ja-und-doch-Nein ist mein Fall”.³⁹⁵

D. Meakin sees irony at work in *Der Zauberberg* in the presentation of the theme of initiation. He refers to the “playfully ironic tone of the work, its simultaneous presentation of a sense of initiation *and* mockery”.³⁹⁶ Interestingly, Meakin in his highly stimulating study, chooses to describe the narrative stance of *Der Zauberberg* in Bakhtinian terms: he refers to Mann’s “characteristic use of free indirect style, allowing two interpretative perspectives, the character’s and the critical narrator’s, to coexist dialogically in the same discourse”.³⁹⁷ It may, however, be more appropriate to see the narrative technique in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* as Bakhtinian, in view of the more sophisticated blending of narrative voices which features there.

However, if as Thomas Mann says, irony is erotic,³⁹⁸ and Eros is associated with Thanatos, as is shown by Aschenbach’s fall in *Der Tod in Venedig*, and through the character of Clawdia Chauchat, then irony is also an expression of nihilism and death. As P.-A. Alt comments, the ironic position, by instantly evoking the opposite stance

³⁹³ Thomas Mann, “Goethe und Tolstoi”, *GW* IX, p. 170.

³⁹⁴ Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen*, p. 256.

³⁹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 256.

³⁹⁶ David Meakin, *Hermetic Fictions. Alchemy and Irony in the Modern Novel*, Keele 1995, p. 101.

³⁹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 101.

³⁹⁸ e.g. “Immer war Eros ein Ironiker. Und Ironie ist Erotik”. *Betrachtungen*, p. 560.

to that which is expressed, frees itself from a linear time continuum; it is one which brings together two distinct elements simultaneously and is beyond time, i.e. timeless.³⁹⁹ Hans Castorp is to discover that timelessness equals death. What if the conflicting viewpoints presented should cancel each other out? The price Thomas Mann pays for avoiding one-sidedness and partiality is ambiguity, and a blurred ethical stance. In constantly avoiding having to come down on either side of the debate and in presenting a permanently vacillating display of contradictory opinions, only to show that they are really very closely related, as for example in the formulation: "Ironie ist eine Form des Intellektualismus, und ironischer Konservatismus ist intellektualistischer Konservatismus"⁴⁰⁰ the danger is, as E. Heller has suggested, that "the constant suspicion that *anything* may be important will in the end persuade us that *nothing* is. Irony? It is the irony of 'everything' on the verge of 'nothing', and of art on the verge of its own impossibility".⁴⁰¹ The idea that "Kunst wird Kritik" was to form, of course, the core of *Doktor Faustus*.

The identity of the omniscient narrator in *Der Zauberberg* and his relationship to the events described remains a closely-guarded secret, in contrast with the personalised narrators, the monk Clemens in *Der Erwählte* and Serenus Zeitblom in *Doktor Faustus*. Lange, however, has a clear idea of who he may be: "Kein Zweifel, dieser eindringliche, ja zudringliche Sprecher ist prinzipiell keine fiktiv figurierte Erzählgestalt, sondern in jedem Fall Thomas Mann selbst".⁴⁰² The meddling narrator of *Der Zauberberg* (who bears a strong affinity with that of the *Joseph* tetralogy, also prone to discussing temporality in fiction at length) is also a direct descendant of the narrator of *Tom Jones*. Thomas Mann, who was familiar with and enthusiastic about Fielding's novels may well have used *Tom Jones*, with its self-conscious narrator and constellation of the young hero flanked by his two mentors, Thwackum and Square, as a model for *Der Zauberberg*. On the publication of the latter, a contemporary

³⁹⁹ Peter-André Alt, *Ironie und Krise: Ironisches Erzählen als Form ästhetischer Wahrnehmung in Thomas Manns 'Der Zauberberg'*, Frankfurt/Main 1985, p. 28.

⁴⁰⁰ Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen*, p. 398.

⁴⁰¹ Heller, *The Ironic German*, p. 173.

⁴⁰² Lange, "Thomas Mann: Tradition und Experiment", p. 572.

critic, Oskar Walzel, welcomed the reappearance of the *auktorialer Erzähler*.⁴⁰³ Certainly, given the advances in the development of stream-of-consciousness and multiple perspectives which characterise innovation in narrative technique in the first half of the twentieth century, the resurrection of the omniscient narrator might be seen as a somewhat conservative choice. Consciously going against the grain of contemporary developments with his *auktorialer Erzähler*, who is one of the very few in “modern fiction”, can only be, as V. Zmegac says, “ein bewußt eingeschlagener Weg”⁴⁰⁴ on the part of Thomas Mann.

Despite his claims to have written the *Joseph* tetralogy “mit modernen Mitteln, mit allen modernen Mitteln, den geistigen und technischen”,⁴⁰⁵ Thomas Mann seems to have been alone in situating his novels at the vanguard of modernity. In a survey of his influence on contemporary writers conducted in the 1970s, it was precisely his *auktoriale Erzählhaltung* which the younger generation objected to. Reinhard Lettau referred, for example, to the arrogance of this stance and described it as “[ein] gottgleiches Thronen des Erzählers über der Handlung, die er verwaltet wie eine preußische Postdirektion”.⁴⁰⁶ Yet, always eager for his works to be regarded by the outside world as modern, Thomas Mann adds the comment to the famous study on Joyce by Harry Levin, namely at the point where Levin concludes that “Joyce’s technique passes beyond the limits of realistic fiction” and that *Ulysses* is the novel to end all novels: “das trifft wohl auf den *Zauberberg*, den *Joseph* und *Doktor Faustus* nicht weniger zu”.⁴⁰⁷ However, a more realistic appraisal of the extent of his own

⁴⁰³ Referring to the narrator’s circumstantial and authoritative introduction to chapter 5: “Vor kurzem hätte man über einen solchen Kapiteleingang gezetert. Daß Mann ihn wagt, daß er Ähnliches jetzt mehrfach bringt, zuweilen in noch gesteigertem Maße, bezeugt unwiderleglich den Abschluß eines lange herrschenden, fast geheiligten Erzählerbrauchs. Man lernt wieder so erzählen, wie mündlich erzählt wird und wie alte gute Erzählkunst erzählt hatte, auch Goethe, gegen dessen Theorien der Theoretiker Spielhagen und dessen Gefolge gern Vorwürfe erhoben”. Oskar Walzel, *Das Wortkunstwerk. Mittel seiner Erforschung*, Leipzig 1926, pp. 201-202.

⁴⁰⁴ V. Zmegac: “Konvention, Modernismus und Parodie. Bemerkungen zum Erzählstil Thomas Manns” in: Pütz (ed.), *Thomas Mann und die Tradition*, 1-13, p. 7.

⁴⁰⁵ Thomas Mann, “Joseph und seine Brüder”, *GW XI*, p. 654.

⁴⁰⁶ Quoted in: “Deutsche Schriftsteller über Thomas Mann” in: Pütz (ed.), *Thomas Mann und die Tradition*, 161-203, p. 185.

⁴⁰⁷ Thomas Mann, “Die Entstehung des Doktor Faustus”, *GW XI*, p. 205.

innovation compared with that of Joyce is to be found in a letter to Agnes Meyer of 5 April 1944: "Ich ahne eine Verwandtschaft, möchte sie aber lieber nicht wahrhaben, weil, wenn sie vorhanden wäre, Joyce alles viel besser, kühner, großartiger gemacht hätte". Mann adds, but perhaps not without his idiosyncratic coquettishness, that compared to Joyce's works his own "Schreiberei" appears like "der flaueste Traditionalismus".⁴⁰⁸ Certainly, Thomas Mann shows considerably less innovation than Joyce in his use of narratorial perspective. Interestingly however, Stanzel, with reference to Bulhof's concept of "transpersonalism", sees an affinity between *Der Zauberberg* and *Ulysses* in the shift from *auktorialer* to *personaler Roman*.⁴⁰⁹

In the *Vorsatz* and opening chapters of *Der Zauberberg*, the narrator establishes his omniscience and the distance between himself and Hans Castorp, who is presented with the same ironic condescension as Wilhelm Meister in Goethe's *Bildungsroman*. But the narrative technique in Thomas Mann's novel is considerably more nuanced and more "modern" than in many novels which could also be described as *auktorial*. Thomas Mann progressively yields his narrator's omniscience by shifting the distance between narrator and hero, and by showing the narrator's susceptibility to influence from within his own narration. Further, the unmediated presentation of the "guazzabuglio" of the Naphta/Settembrini dialogues marks an important, highly revealing limitation to the narrator's omniscience, and, finally, his presentation of many phenomena under "doppelte Optik" indicates a willingness to embrace a diversity of viewpoints. These concessions to modernity not only highlight the oversimplification of Stanzel's category of *auktorialer Roman*, but make it impossible to support Zeltner-Neukomm's view of *Der Zauberberg* as "Erzählen alten Stils".

⁴⁰⁸ Thomas Mann, *Briefe 1937-1947*, p. 382.

⁴⁰⁹ In his discussion of "transpersonalism" in *Ulysses* and *Der Zauberberg* Stanzel finds a comparison of the two utterly different works from this aspect 'nicht ganz sinnlos': "Es wird nämlich dabei sichtbar, daß in beiden Werken ein Phänomen auftaucht, für das sich zwei entgegengesetzte Erklärungen anbieten. Transpersonalismus im *Zauberberg* und Personalisierung der Erzählerfigur im *Ulysses* können einmal erklärt werden als Ausdruck für eine Auflösung der Bewußtseinsgrenzen zwischen den Individualcharakteren und für ihr Eintauchen in ein transpersonales, überindividuelles oder kollektives Bewußtsein". Stanzel, *Theorie des Erzählens*, Göttingen 1979, pp. 232-3.

It is largely due to the self-reflexive element common to both novels that critics have seen *Der Zauberberg* and *Les Faux-monnayeurs* in an analogous light. Yet as far as the question of narratorial perspective is concerned, the novels have more in common than one might initially assume.

But whereas the question of point of view did not greatly preoccupy Thomas Mann, it seems to have been at the forefront of Gide's conception of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* right from the start, and to be inextricably linked with the uniqueness of the novel form. Even as early as 1914, in his "Projet de préface à Isabelle", Gide expresses his interest in presenting a multiplicity of perspectives:

Le roman, tel que je le reconnais ou l'imagine, comporte une diversité de points de vue, soumise à la diversité des personnages qu'il met en scène; c'est par essence une œuvre déconcentrée. Il m'importe du reste beaucoup moins d'en formuler la théorie que d'en écrire.⁴¹⁰

In the years following the war, Gide expresses growing dissatisfaction with the *récit*, until then his favoured form, but one which by nature could only express points of view one by one and successively. The *sotie Les Caves du Vatican* (1914) had allowed for greater possibilities in this respect, with its wide range of different characters, but, as G. Brée points out, the "diversity of points of view" remains on the level of these characters: "Elle [la sotie] intégrait dans un ensemble des personnages différents mais qui n'ont pas des points de vue différents, qui incarnent des points de vue différents, points de vue limités, simplifiés, qui portent sur une réalité générale, abstraite et schématisée".⁴¹¹ As Brée also points out, the plans sketched out in the "préface" to *Isabelle* are very abstract: no indication of what subject the "diversity of points of view" is to converge on, no hint of any story to be told. Important is the theoretical foundation.

The *Journal des Faux-monnayeurs* shows that Gide originally wanted to describe the events of his novel through a character called Lafcadio: "J'hésite depuis deux jours si je ne ferai pas Lafcadio raconter mon roman. Ce serait un récit d'événements qu'il

⁴¹⁰ Gide, "Projet de préface à Isabelle", *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. VI, pp. 361-362.

⁴¹¹ Germaine Brée, *André Gide, l'insaisissable Protée*, Paris 1953, p. 259.

découvrirait peu à peu et auxquels il prendrait part en curieux, en oisif et en perversisseur”.⁴¹² The fact that Lafcadio’s point of view will be severely restricted emerges clearly from the early notes in the work diary: Gide plans to make the Jardin du Luxembourg the place of the action for the traffic in counterfeit money, and Edouard will be charged with telling Lafcadio about the goings on, reprimanding him with the words: “Mon petit ami, vous ne savez pas observer; voilà ce qui se passait d’important”.⁴¹³ As M. Raimond suggests,⁴¹⁴ the very person responsible for discovering the major events of the novel, i.e. this Lafcadio, will fail to fulfill his ascribed function. On 11 July 1919 Gide states that he would like the events to be grouped independently of Lafcadio, taking place “à son insu”.⁴¹⁵ At this early stage in the novel’s conception, Gide is making it clear that he wishes to set boundaries to the omniscience of his principal mediator. However, here he is confronted with a problem: how can he achieve this without resorting to the artificial construct of a plot?

On 26 July 1919 Gide begins to express doubts about presenting his material through Lafcadio, and questions his original decision to “éviter à tout prix le simple récit impersonnel”.⁴¹⁶ By 28 July, Gide has persuaded himself to drop Lafcadio as the principal narrative voice: what he desires instead are “des truchements successifs” – the notes of Lafcadio in the first part of the novel, Edouard’s notes in the second followed by a lawyer’s file in the third.⁴¹⁷ Whereas in the 1914 “Préface” Gide had not known what topic was to be subjected to the diversity of points of view, by 1919 it was clear that his collection of newspaper cuttings, dating back to 1906 and relating the stories of the young counterfeiters and the schoolboy suicide, were to provide the material upon which his theory could be demonstrated. And by 21 November 1919 Gide was able to articulate in full what he wanted for his novel: “Je voudrais que les

⁴¹² *JFM*, 17.6.1919, p. 11.

⁴¹³ *ibid.*, 6.7.1919, p. 17.

⁴¹⁴ Raimond, *La crise du roman*, p. 343f.

⁴¹⁵ *JFM*, p. 18.

⁴¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 22.

⁴¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

événements ne fussent jamais racontés directement par l’auteur, mais plutôt exposés (et plusieurs fois, sous des angles divers) par ceux des acteurs sur qui ces événements auront eu quelque influence”.⁴¹⁸ For Gide, what counts here is a series of reflections of reality, related from several points of view, rather than one dominating narrative perspective, as demonstrated by his eventual decision to axe Lafcadio. One point of view cannot possibly do justice to the complexity of the world represented, and through the *mise-en-abyme* of Edouard’s diary Gide fleshes this belief out further.

The text of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* consists of a variety of written sources – the novel written by André Gide comprises third-person narration, Edouard’s diary, letters and notebooks. We are given access to all these sources by an anonymous narrator who has assembled the material and arranged it for us, and whom Keypour aptly refers to as “une conscience organisatrice”.⁴¹⁹ This narrator has an omniscient point of view over the events described. However, he strives to pretend that this is not the case and that he is being swept along by the action as it unfolds; we are strongly reminded of the way in which the narrator of Hoffmann’s *Kater Murr* presents the biography of Kreisler.

Again, the narrative voice in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* constitutes an *auktoriale Erzählsituation* in Stanzel’s scheme: the narrator is not merely an invisible force, “silently paring his fingernails”, but comments actively on the events of his narration; he “tells” rather than “shows”, to use the terminology of Wayne C. Booth. Like the narrator of *Der Zauberberg*, he does not disclose his identity, the sources of his information or his relation to the characters. However, unlike in Thomas Mann’s novel, there is no formal introduction to this voice and his narration; instead we are plunged straight into the action, with Bernard’s discovery of his mother’s old love letters.

⁴¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 28.

⁴¹⁹ Keypour, *Écriture et réversibilité*, p. 109.

Occasionally, like Mann's narrator, the narrator of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* renders the thoughts of his characters through his *own* voice, i.e. in *style indirect libre*. After describing Edouard's excitement as he waits for Olivier's train, we read:

Le train s'arrête. Vite, un porteur! Non, sa valise n'est pas si lourde, et la consigne n'est pas si loin ... A supposer qu'il soit là sauront-ils, seulement, dans la foule, se reconnaître? Ils se sont si peu vus. Pourvu qu'il n'ait pas trop changé! ... Ah! juste ciel! serait-ce lui?⁴²⁰

Not only does this technique render the action more immediate, but the narrator is also inducing a sense of excitement in his reader and urging him to read on. We witness a contradiction here between Gide's desire to lure the reader into following the developments of a plot, and his concept of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* (inspired by Stendhal), in which "jamais une phrase n'appelle la suivante, ni ne naît de la précédente".⁴²¹

The *auktorialer Erzähler* did not enter the scene until relatively late in the composition, long after Gide's stated intention to subject the material of his novel to a diversity of points of view. It was not until 14 February 1924 that Gide articulated the need to introduce him, a move which seems to have been directly inspired by the reading of a (very bad) translation of Fielding's *Tom Jones*, the same novel which had possibly served to some extent as a model for *Der Zauberberg*. On this day Gide, notes: "Je me retrouve en face de mes Faux-monnayeurs; mais cette courte plongée dans Fielding m'éclaire sur les insuffisances de mon livre. Je doute si je ne devrais pas élargir le texte, intervenir (malgré ce que me dit Martin du Gard), commenter. J'ai perdu prise".⁴²² Gide clearly felt that the introduction of an *auktorialer Erzähler* would exert an organising influence on the material which was growing increasingly out of control.

His creation of a narrator in the mould of Fielding's does not, however, present a contradiction to the desire to reflect as many points of view as possible: in fact, the

⁴²⁰ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 80.

⁴²¹ *JFM*, 1.11.1922, p. 59.

⁴²² *ibid.*, 14. 2. 1924, p. 72.

narratorial interventions in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* provide a *further* perspective to be taken into consideration. The narrator's comments on Edouard, for example, usually of a critical nature, undermine any authority the writer-character may have: when pressed to reveal the subject of the novel he is writing, Edouard says it is the conflict between reality and the attempt of the novelist to reproduce this reality. The narrator immediately comments on this, saying: "L'illogisme de son propos était flagrant, sautait aux yeux d'une manière pénible. Il apparaissait clairement que, sous son crâne, Edouard abritait deux exigences inconciliables, et qu'il s'usait à les vouloir accorder".⁴²³ Edouard's project corresponds, however, with precisely that which Gide has undertaken for himself; the majority of comments made by Edouard and which are subsequently denigrated by the narrator have been penned by Gide himself at some point – his plans for the *roman pur* are one prime example of this.

The narrator thus provides an important critical perspective in the light of which theories can be taken on board or rejected. The same can be said of Gide's drawing on Edouard's diary as a significant narrative instance. As Gide himself said of the theories relating to the *roman pur*: "Je crois qu'il faut mettre tout cela dans la bouche d'Edouard – ce qui me permettrait d'ajouter que je ne lui accorde pas tous ces points, si judicieuses que soient ses remarques".⁴²⁴ In this way Gide ascribes the *auktorialer Erzähler* a new function: rather than elucidating and informing, he stimulates reflection; and rather than furnishing answers, he engages his reader in a game of reflective ping-pong with the material of his narration. As Walter Jens writes:

Der Romanschreiber Gide kommentiert den Romancier Edouard; Edouard wiederum, mit einer Arbeit über die Falschmünzer beschäftigt, kommentiert die Taten der wirklichen Falschmünzerbande; die wirklichen Falschmünzer schließlich kommentieren Edouards Romankonzeption und damit die ihres Autors. Der Kommentar wird zum Kommentar des Kommentars, 'die Darstellungstechnik zum Inhalt der Darstellung' (Broch).⁴²⁵

⁴²³ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 80.

⁴²⁴ *JFM*, 1. 11. 1922, p. 59.

⁴²⁵ Walter Jens, *Statt einer Literaturgeschichte*, Pfullingen 1957, p. 31.

Jens' comments do not, however, capture the full complexity of the narrative stance in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*. Indeed, the focus of the action is rotated from one character, or grouping of characters, to another: alongside his "omniscient" narrator Gide creates a highly complex web of autonomous narrators each presenting a point of view to be taken into account. The narrator's pursuit of a variety of characters and plot-lines, and refusal to present a "definitive" version of the events described, allows for a multiplication of perspectives to flourish.

This is further complicated through the insertion of a number of personal letters into the "main narrative" of the narrator, who reproduces them as and when they are received by his characters, as part of his unfolding of the events. Written by the characters within the novel, often expressing an opinion on the other characters, presenting yet another version of events already related in dialogue form by another character, and crucial to the development of the plot, these letters are transformed into narrative stances in their own right. In plot terms this is made possible by the fact that the majority of Gide's characters have little concept of confidentiality, are constantly prying into each other's correspondence, diaries and notebooks, and passing them onto others to be read. Thus Bernard, through stealing Edouard's suitcase, not only gains access to the novelist's diary, but also to the desperate letter from Laura begging Edouard for help: the letter just happened to have been inserted into the pages of Edouard's diary. Ingeniously meshed into the fabric of the novel, the letters constitute another narrative dimension, as do the various jottings and notes, such as that from Georges blackmailing Edouard following his being caught stealing ... a book. What else?

Bernard would appear to be extolling the merits of this type of narrative stance when he describes to Laura the type of novel he would like to write:

Je voudrais écrire l'histoire de quelqu'un qui d'abord écoute chacun, et qui va, consultant chacun, à la manière de Panurge, avant de décider quoi que ce soit; après avoir éprouvé que les opinions des uns et des autres, sur chaque point, se contredisent, il prendrait le parti de n'écouter plus rien que lui, et du coup deviendrait très fort.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁶ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 192.

Through his allowing of each character's words, and of each written source to function as an independent, authoritative instance, Gide inserts elements of the *personaler Roman* into an *auktorial* structure.

This does not imply, however, that the narrator's voice is more dominant than Edouard's, or anyone else's, or that he is more reliable: reliable he certainly is not. As Goulet has observed, the narrator informs us three times that Strouvillhou is the cousin of Ghéridanisol, whereas both Passavant and Armand maintain he is his uncle!⁴²⁷ (This would be unthinkable in *Der Zauberberg*. No doubt there that Joachim was ever anything other than Hans Castorp's cousin!) As Goulet suggests,⁴²⁸ Gide's narrator is an infuriating combination of omniscience and pseudo-ignorance – no sooner has he told us of Bernard: “Je ne sais trop où il dîna ce soir, ni même s'il dîna du tout”⁴²⁹ than he tells us with apparent authority: “hier soir il n'a pas dîné”⁴³⁰.

In contrast to the weighty seriousness of Thomas Mann's narrator, Gide's frequently waters down the importance of his own comments; for example, after a lengthy elaboration of Bernard's emotions on reading Edouard's diary, he urges us to move on, saying: “Passons. Tout ce que j'ai dit ci-dessus n'est que pour mettre un peu d'air entre les pages de ce journal. A présent que Bernard a bien respiré, retournons-y”⁴³¹. Further, as G. Prince has suggested, the arbitrary nature of the written sources which Gide uses as either narrative instances or vital perpetrators of the plot – mysterious initials, a magic talisman, stolen letters, a personal diary stumbled upon by chance – serves to challenge the concept of a single, authoritative narrative voice.⁴³²

⁴²⁷ A. Goulet, *Les Faux-monnayeurs. Mode d'Emploi*, Paris 1991, p. 181.

⁴²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 136.

⁴²⁹ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 32.

⁴³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 62.

⁴³¹ *ibid.*, p. 117.

⁴³² Gerald Prince, “Lecteurs et Lectures dans *Les Faux-monnayeurs*” in: *Neophilologus* 57 (1973), 16-23, p. 22.

Goulet also claims that “la position idéologique du narrateur est particulièrement ambiguë et perverse”.⁴³³ Indeed, it would appear that in his approval or condemnation of stances adopted by the characters, there is no consistent ethical line, unlike in *Der Zauberberg*, where the narrator clearly distances himself from the “Lasterträume der Opiumraucher” of some of his characters: Gide’s narrator is wilfully fickle and subjects the reader to a range of opinions and beliefs, some pernicious, without any words of warning. In *Les Faux-monnayeurs* there is a plurality of points of view, which is reflected in the diversity of characters which are continually played against each other: old against young, establishment figures against anarchists, heterosexuals against homosexuals, to name a few, and which are grouped together in endlessly shifting constellations. It would, however, be challenging, if not impossible, to argue that Gide presents all of these possibilities with the aim of showing them *all* in an equally favourable light, and wrong to assume that the presentation of diversity equals the tolerance of and support for all points of view. The narrator may well present us – seemingly neutrally – with a wealth of characters and beliefs, but the strongly didactic nudges and winks as to which of these are to be seen as positive, and which negative, are undeniably there.

The fact that Gide published his work-diary, which allows us to trace the development of his aesthetic concerns, and to see how virtually all of his ideas for his novel mirror those of Edouard, have undeniably made it more difficult for critics to maintain Booth’s groundbreaking distinction between the real author and the “implied author”. This is in spite of condemnations of Edouard from both within the novel and in the work-diary, which suggest an attempt on Gide’s part to distance himself from the novelist character. Booth maintains that “[the] implied author is always distinct from the ‘real man’ – whatever we may take him to be – who creates a superior version of himself, a ‘second self’ as he creates his work”.⁴³⁴ In *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, the relationship between the fictional Edouard and the real André Gide is in typically Gidean ludic fashion reflected in the scene at Saas-Fée where Edouard reveals that the

⁴³³ Goulet, *Les Faux-monnayeurs. Mode d’Emploi*, p. 150.

⁴³⁴ Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Chicago & London 1961, p. 151.

central character in his novel is to be a novelist, prompting Laura to say: “C’est cela: tout le monde vous y reconnaîtra”.⁴³⁵ Indeed, critics were to latch on to the more negative aspects of Edouard in attempting to prove that *Les Faux-monnayeurs* was a failed novel.⁴³⁶ To what extent the fictional Edouard and the real André Gide overlap is, however, beside the point. What is important is the way in which Gide’s introduction of Edouard, alongside the unreliable narrator, and as a fragmented mirror-image of the real author, challenges established practice and opens the floodgates for new narrative possibilities.

During the composition of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* Gide studied the novels of Dostoievsky and presented a series of six lectures on his work at the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier, Paris, in April 1924. It is possible that his reading of the Russian novelist stimulated his preoccupation with the *lighting* of his novel, closely linked with the question of narratorial perspective. Keypour refers to Gide’s appreciation of the technique of Dostoievsky, “qui consiste à en respecter et à en protéger les ténèbres, ou à en éclairer les contradictions par un jeu de clair-obscur intense comme dans un tableau de Rembrandt”.⁴³⁷ The question of lighting had, however, preoccupied Gide prior to his contact with Russian literature; on the subject of his *récit L’Immoraliste*, Gide, as in the preface to *Isabelle*, had underlined the significance of the perspective: “Je n’ai cherché de rien prouver, mais de bien peindre et d’éclairer bien ma peinture”.⁴³⁸ Here, the emphasis is clearly on the method of production, rather than the desire for representation or the communication of a message. And it is indicative of Gide’s innovative approach to the novel that he not only draws on musical structures – Bach’s fugue – for his concept of the *roman pur*, but on the techniques of the visual arts for his use of perspective.

⁴³⁵ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 185.

⁴³⁶ cf. W. Wolfgang Holdheim, *Theory and Practice of the Novel. A Study on André Gide*, Geneva 1968, p. 245 f.

⁴³⁷ Keypour, “Fictions gidiennes: romans à thèse ou romans d’idées” in: *BAAG* 76 (Oct. 1987), 27-36, p. 34.

⁴³⁸ Quoted from *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. VI, pp. 361-362 by Y. Davet in: Gide, *Romans*, p. 1361.

Gide expressed in his work diary the resolution: “admettre qu’un personnage qui s’en va puisse n’être vu que de dos”.⁴³⁹ In this respect, he was most probably influenced by Stendhal as well as Dostoievsky, who was also highly sensitive to the intricacies of perspective and the different aspects the same object can acquire when viewed from so many different angles. The subject of perspective was frequently touched upon in the conversations between Gide and Martin du Gard. In the latter’s work, Gide criticised the directness of the presentation, the fact that all events were subjected to lighting from the same angle, and of the same intensity:

Chez vous, rien n’est jamais présenté de biais, de façon imprévu, anachronique. Tout baigne dans la même clarté, directe, sans surprise. Vous vous privez de ressources précieuses! ... Pensez à Rembrandt, à ses touches de lumière, puis à la profondeur secrète de ses ombres. Il y a une science subtile des éclairages; les varier à l’infini, c’est tout un art.⁴⁴⁰

Martin du Gard notes how Gide illuminated this particular point with a torch which was conveniently at hand. He illustrated Martin du Gard’s method by projecting the torch slowly from one end of a line he had drawn on a piece of paper to the other. To demonstrate his own technique, Gide drew a semi-circle on the other side of the paper, and whilst holding the torch in one position flashed its light erratically across the surface of the semi-circle. Summing up the differences between the two approaches, Gide told his friend: “Vous, vous exposez les faits en historiographe, dans leur succession chronologique. C’est comme un panorama, qui se déroule devant le lecteur. Vous ne racontez jamais un événement présent, ou à travers un personnage qui n’y est pas acteur”.⁴⁴¹

Gide was here revealing his own plans for *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, where the circumstances surrounding Laura’s past and present are revealed only progressively and through several characters. In chapter II, Olivier tells Bernard that he has noticed Vincent going out very late on several occasions and that the previous night he heard the voice of a woman pleading with him in the street in a highly dramatic way. In the

⁴³⁹ *JFM*, 2.1.1920, p. 30.

⁴⁴⁰ Roger Martin du Gard, *Notes sur André Gide*, Paris 1963, p. 45.

⁴⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 45.

next chapter the narrator tells us: “La raison secrète de Robert, nous tâcherons de la découvrir par la suite, quant à celle de Vincent, la voici”; despite this build-up, we are only given access to Vincent’s thoughts as communicated by the narrator:

Lorsqu’on a le cœur bien en place, et qu’une saine éducation vous a inculqué de bonne heure le sens des responsabilités, on ne fait un enfant à une femme sans se sentir quelque peu engagé vis-à-vis d’elle, surtout lorsque cette femme a quitté son mari pour vous suivre.⁴⁴²

The precise details surrounding Laura, the fact that she is pregnant after a brief affair in a sanatorium where both she and Vincent were considered to be terminally ill (strange things are known to happen in sanatoriums!) are not disclosed until the fifth chapter, when Lilian relates them to Vincent. But is Lilian herself to be trusted? Passavant has just accused her of being in love with Vincent, she may not be the most objective or reliable source of information. Although Vincent clearly wishes to get Laura off his hands as quickly as possible, and is bewitched by Lilian, Laura is labouring under the misapprehension that he is abandoning her with a heavy heart – we read in her letter to Edouard: “Je vois bien qu’il souffre de m’abandonner et qu’il ne peut pas faire autrement”⁴⁴³.

As for Vincent, he eventually disappears with Lilian, and it is through a letter from Lilian to Passavant, which he in turn gives to Edouard to read, that we discover that the two of them are on a yacht near Casamance, and that their love has turned into hatred. There is no further mention of the couple until we read a letter from Alexandre Vedel, Armand’s elder brother, which he gives to Olivier to read, and in which Alexandre, who has set up business in Casamance, talks of “un singulier individu”⁴⁴⁴ who recently stumbled across his path and whom he has taken into his home: this is unmistakably Vincent. This is just one example how Gide systematically avoids the direct presentation of character and events. Raimond has noted how Edouard’s arrival is presented in a similarly indirect fashion: “L’arrivée d’Edouard est

⁴⁴² *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 44.

⁴⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 73.

⁴⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 161.

provoquée par Laura, annoncée par Olivier, vécue par Edouard, par Olivier, par Bernard. Il n'est pas de meilleur exemple des modulations du point de vue".⁴⁴⁵

Edouard has similar plans for his novel. On the subject of the schoolboy counterfeiter, he also wishes to avoid a direct presentation of the facts: "cette aventure (j'entends celle de ses larcins) je ne la présentais pas directement. On ne faisait que l'entrevoir, et ses suites, à travers des conversations".⁴⁴⁶ Gide himself described the very different narrative technique of *Martin du Gard* in the following terms:

se promenant ainsi tout le long des années, sa lanterne de romancier éclaire toujours de face les événements qu'il considère, chacun de ceux-ci vient à son tour au premier plan; jamais leurs lignes ne se mêlent et, pas plus qu'il n'y a d'ombre, il n'y a pas de perspective. C'est déjà ce qui me gêne chez Tolstoï. Ils peignent des panoramas; l'art est de faire un tableau. Etudier d'abord le point où doit affluer la lumière; toutes les ombres en dépendent. Chaque figure repose et s'appuie sur son ombre.⁴⁴⁷

Gide makes it explicit here that *Martin du Gard*'s "direct" handling of perspective will necessarily create a composition with a linear progression.

In *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, however, the characters are all ingeniously embroiled with each other, in a way which threatens to overstretch our credibility, as if Gide wanted to avoid at all costs the presentation of one character at a time on the centre of the stage. The fact that they all write letters to each other, read each other's letters, meet up with each other, introduce their friends to each other and go to bed with each other allows, however, for precisely the lighting effect plans which Gide so wished for his novel, to be materialised. Through the various media of letter, diary or reported dialogue, the reader gains insight into each character or event by piecing together the various snippets of information, detective-fashion. By showing the relativity of individual points of view, Gide is distancing his narrative stance from that of the traditional *auktoriale Erzählhaltung* and, in the words of Zeltner-Neukomm, distancing his concept of the novel from that of his predecessors: "Wie Proust hat er,

⁴⁴⁵ Raimond, *La crise du roman*, p. 362.

⁴⁴⁶ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 347.

⁴⁴⁷ *JFM*, 27.5.1924, p. 76.

den Realisten und Naturalisten zum Trotz, erkannt, daß es in der Welt ebenso viele Realitäten wie Augenpaare gibt".⁴⁴⁸ Gide's desire to present both characters and events from several different angles may have arisen from his considerable experience of the law courts, where conflicting versions of the same "story" are presented in turn, and where it is left to the judge and jury to piece together the evidence in an attempt to re-establish what may really have happened. In this context, it is also worth drawing attention to Gide's great appreciation of Browning's epic poem, *The Ring and the Book*, in which a *cause célèbre* is presented from the point of view of each party in turn.

Gide's narrative technique in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* has often been linked to that of the cinematographer, presenting several scenes at the same time.⁴⁴⁹ It has even been suggested that Gide developed this technique in order to attract the attention of his lover, the film director Marc Allégret, for whom the novel was written.⁴⁵⁰ There is no evidence on Gide's part to support this last theory, interesting as it is. *Les Faux-monnayeurs* can, however, be seen as paving the way for Robbe-Grillet's explorations of the media novel and film, such as *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* (1961), *Immortelle* (1963) and, especially, *La Maison de Rendez-vous* (1965) which presents a multiplicity of narrative stances and a succession of "scènes", clearly mirroring the composition of film.

There are countless cases of misguidedness and self-delusion in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*: Laura's overly positive view of Vincent's behaviour towards herself, Azaïs' conviction that the yellow ribbon he sees Georges Molinier and his friends of dubious integrity wearing is a symbol of moral worth ... as well as straightforward blindness: Pauline's unawareness of her husband's philandering, Edouard's belief that the pension Vedel-Azaïs is the right place for the sensitive Boris. Through his

⁴⁴⁸ Zeltner-Neukomm, *Was ist ein moderner Roman?*, p. 5.

⁴⁴⁹ cf. Raimond, *Le roman*, Paris 1988, p. 127f.; Magny, *Histoire du roman français depuis 1918*, p. 211.

⁴⁵⁰ Jacques Greshoff, "La structure des *Faux-monnayeurs*" in: *Neophilologus* 47 (1963), 169-186, p. 183.

characters, Gide is showing us the inability of human beings to read human nature and suggesting a parallel with the way the written word presents a minefield for misreadings and misinterpretations. And as Raimond suggests, themes such as embarrassment – of which there are many examples in Gide’s novel – cannot be successfully conveyed via a privileged narratorial stance, but rather by one which allows the reader to switch back and forth between one situation and another, and register the discrepancies in communication.⁴⁵¹ The use of the limited point of view serves to reinforce these thematic concerns.

By revealing character only in the light of other characters’ perception, Gide is denouncing the authority of the omniscient narrator vis-à-vis his characters as an artificial construct. Instead of presenting us with a narrator who orders ready-made characters around the stage, Gide would have us believe that the characters are developing as he writes the novel: “Le mauvais romancier construit ses personnages; il les dirige et les fait parler. Le vrai romancier les écoute et les regarde agir; il les entend parler dès avant que de les connaître, et c’est d’après ce qu’il leur entend dire qu’il comprend peu à peu *qui* ils sont”.⁴⁵² Gide would have us believe that his own knowledge of the characters of his creation is as limited as that of the other characters’ knowledge of them, that they reveal themselves as slowly to him as they do to each other!

With the disempowering of the omniscient narrator and the multiplication of perspectives, not only does the concept of “character” become less clear-cut, but also that of the “event”. In the same way that Veyne emphasises that in the writing of history, the reporting of the “event” will vary greatly according to the eye-witness, the implication in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* is that any important actions, such as Olivier’s suicide, or the adultery of Bernard’s mother, defy a direct presentation, whereby the narrator would also attempt to present the psychology of the protagonists, but rather can only be perceived negatively, i.e. in terms of their effect

⁴⁵¹ Raimond, *La crise du roman*, p. 353.

⁴⁵² *JFM*, 27.5. 1924, p. 76.

on other characters. Indeed, rather than being given ringside seats for the dramatic actions themselves, we are shown those characters affected by the acts of *others* in the process of trying to come to terms with them, and are left to form our own conceptions of these acts. Gide makes this possible by distancing the narrative voices reporting the “events” in either space or time from the scenes of these events: Edouard sleeps in another room whilst Olivier attempts to end his life, discovering him only later; Mme. Profitendieu’s act of infidelity took place in Paris, we assume, but long before the start of the action; the affair between Laura and Vincent took place in Pau and is also over by the time the action starts; Vincent’s insanity and his murder of Lilian take place in Africa, far from the focus of the narration. With the exception of Boris’ suicide, which is presented in an unrelentingly harsh light, the dramatic events of the novel do not feature directly in the novel itself. In this respect, *Les Faux-monnayeurs* marks an important departure from the nineteenth-century novel’s relentless emphasis on the depiction of a single dramatic event, or series of dramatic events.

In showing us his characters unable to understand each other, Gide legitimizes his own practice of keeping his narrator’s psychological analysis to an absolute minimum, a stance reflected by Edouard. Unable to understand why his sister married Molinier, the novelist exclaims: “Hélas! la plus lamentable carence, celle du caractère, est cachée, et ne se révèle qu’à l’usage”.⁴⁵³ In drawing an analogy between character and a false coin, Edouard adds to the extensive imagery of the false money, suggesting a parallel between counterfeit money and the traditional novelist who presents character as something tangible and constant. Edouard sees Pauline, like everyone else, as a product of her environment, an environment which is often simply omitted in character presentations: “Les romanciers nous abusent lorsqu’ils développent l’individu sans tenir compte des compressions d’alentour. La forêt façonne l’arbre”.⁴⁵⁴ He gives repeated expression to the fact that he is barely conscious of his own character, never mind in a position to describe that of others. His personality adapts to

⁴⁵³ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 268.

⁴⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 216.

fit the situations he finds himself in and he notes how feelings are often triggered by a consciousness of what that feeling should be: “L’analyse psychologique a perdu pour moi tout intérêt du jour où je me suis avisé que l’homme éprouve ce qu’il imagine éprouver. De là à penser qu’il s’imagine éprouver ce qu’il éprouve ...”⁴⁵⁵ He sees a confirmation of this belief in the character of Douviers, who allegedly only feels jealous of Laura’s affair with Vincent once he has deduced that this is how he is supposed to feel. In *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, the indirect presentation of the events, and the conspicuous absence of psychological analysis point to a rejection of the nineteenth-century novel’s commitment to plot and character.

In the middle of Gide’s novel, the narrator halts the pace of narration, frenetic until then, to reflect on the characters: “Profitons de ce temps d’été qui disperse nos personnages, pour les examiner à loisir”. Much criticism is levelled at them, in particular at the novelist: “Edouard m’a plus d’une fois irrité (lorsqu’il parle de Douviers, par exemple), indigné même; j’espère ne l’avoir trop laissé voir; mais je puis bien le dire à présent. Sa façon de se comporter avec Laura, si généreuse parfois, m’a paru parfois révoltante”.⁴⁵⁶ As a possible strategy to distance himself from a novelist-character who was threatening to assume a very strong resemblance to André Gide, and to further underline the inconsequentiality of character, it is also with a certain amount of coquettishness that the narrator says he hopes his irritation with his character has not been overly apparent. More important in statements of this type, however, is Gide’s open defiance of the realist and Naturalist stances which frown upon any narratorial intervention. In this way, like Thomas Mann, Gide pushes the way forward for the novel whilst at the same time referring back to the tradition of self-conscious narration in the eighteenth-century novel.

The narrator compulsively draws attention to the artificiality of his construct by repeatedly waving to the reader through the weave of his narration, as it were. His listing of the five stages of Vincent’s behaviour towards Laura, “pour l’édification du

⁴⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 76.

⁴⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 216.

lecteur” is one very notable example of this. The clinical jottings: “La période du bon motif. Probité. Consciencieux besoin de réparer une faute commise”⁴⁵⁷ jar with the flowing, classically literary style in which the narrator has just presented precisely this evolution. As Raimond points out, the narratorial interventions have the same effect as when the narrator in Stendhal’s *Le Rouge et le Noir*, having described the behaviour of Julien Sorel adds: “c’est selon moi l’un des plus beaux traits de son caractère”.⁴⁵⁸ However, Gide takes things one step further than Stendhal, by not merely commenting on his characters, but by professing to not know what actions they will take next: here, both the constitution and the fates of the individual characters are at risk; “l’auteur imprévoyant s’arrête un instant, reprend souffle, et se demande avec inquiétude où va le mener son récit”.⁴⁵⁹ No longer are we being chauffeured through the narrative labyrinth by a reliable narrator, on whom we can rely to know the road, and to deliver us safely to our destination. Admittedly, our narrator *does* how long the journey takes, he tells us: “Ainsi bien sommes-nous à ce point médian de notre histoire, où son allure se ralentit et semble prendre un élan neuf pour bientôt précipiter son cours”.⁴⁶⁰ However, this fact would be rather difficult to conceal from the reader who can see exactly how many pages are left.⁴⁶¹

Each of the main characters is considered in turn in this central section of *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, with the narrator expressing his hopes and fears for their fates in the remaining half of the work. He reproaches Bernard for having demonstrated “un geste aussi excessif”⁴⁶² at the beginning of the novel: yet what would our narrator have to tell us, if Bernard had not left home and stolen Edouard’s suitcase, thus thrusting himself into the action? And once again, this particular point of view will be subjected

⁴⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 142.

⁴⁵⁸ Raimond, *Le Roman*, pp. 115-116.

⁴⁵⁹ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 215.

⁴⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 216.

⁴⁶¹ This difference between the novel and the film is made palpable in an ingenious way at the end of David Lodge’s *Changing Places*. In the ending of Lodge’s parody of academia, written as a film script, Philip’s last speech, in which he draws attention to the “tell-tale compression of the pages” of the novel, ends abruptly with the direction that “the camera stops, freezing him in mid-gesture”. Harmondsworth 1975, p. 251.

⁴⁶² *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 216.

to another perspective: these notes on Bernard had been, so the narrator tells us later on, jotted down hastily in a notebook, and he now reconsiders them in a fairer light: “ceci me paraît déjà plus très juste. Je crois qu’il faut lui faire encore *crédit*”⁴⁶³ (my italics. Note how the narrator takes on board the financial vocabulary of his characters: more transpersonalism?) Once again, the written word is subjected to reappraisal, seen from a new perspective: Gide is demonstrating the impossibility of setting anything down in writing, in permanent form, for writing presents as monocentric a point of view as that of an omniscient narrator. Only through the collage of a variety of forms of writing, a juxtaposition of different testimonies, can a totality emerge.

The symbol of the counterfeit coin serves to warn of the dangers of one dominant perspective; as Bernard says, before presenting the false coin to Edouard and Sophroniska: “imaginez une pièce d’or de dix francs qui soit fausse. Elle ne vaut en réalité que deux sous. Elle vaudra dix francs tant qu’on ne reconnaîtra pas qu’elle est fausse”.⁴⁶⁴ The value of the coin, as Bernard correctly points out, is entirely dependent on individual perceptions: until revealed as counterfeit, it will have the same value as legal currency. It is important, Gide insinuates, that we examine clearly the nature of the world around us, and learn to differentiate between the genuine and the counterfeit in all areas of human activity, including that of writing, which has great potential for portraying misleading, one-sided views of “reality”. Until challenged, until other points of view are brought into the discussion, monoperspectivist writing can, was and will be regarded as legal tender. The counterfeit coin is only counterfeit because we have a universally agreed set of values concerning valid currency. If, however, our values are threatened and destabilised, the boundary between valid and counterfeit money will blur. As Goux says:

L’échange des activités vitales, sous la domination du principe de l’équivalent général circulant, entraîne la coïncidence possible du point de vue subjectif et du point de vue universel, en une même représentation. Dès lors, il n’est pas surprenant que ce soit

⁴⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 216.

⁴⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 189.

aussi au même moment qu'apparaissent la crise des équivalents généraux et la crise de la représentation perspectiviste.⁴⁶⁵

A reality which has become difficult to seize can only be reconstituted through the abandonment of one single perspective.

“Laura, Douviers, La Pérouse, Azais ... que faire avec tous ces gens-là? Je ne les cherchais point; c'est en suivant Bernard et Olivier que je les ai trouvés sur ma route”.⁴⁶⁶ Having introduced and described these characters in the first half of the novel, the narrator then shows himself yawning at the mere thought of them. This has the effect, as Magny points out, of “une douche froide” for the reader, who is beginning to take an interest in their fates.⁴⁶⁷ Once again, Gide is stressing the fictional character of his – and all – novelistic creation.

The narrator draws a parallel between the novelist and the traveller at the beginning of the same chapter:

le voyageur, parvenu au haut de la colline, s'assied, et regarde avant de reprendre sa marche, à présent déclinante; il cherche à distinguer où le conduit enfin ce chemin sinueux qu'il a pris, qui lui semble se perdre dans l'ombre et, car le soir tombe, dans la nuit.⁴⁶⁸

Whilst suggesting spontaneity and openness to adventure, there is also the implication that the journey, once started upon, must be followed through to the end. So although he has run into a host of (in his view) less than scintillating characters in his pursuit of Bernard and Olivier, the narrator tells us he has no option but to follow their paths too: “tant pis pour moi, désormais, je me dois à eux”.⁴⁶⁹ But why is this the case? The narrator-director has shown us the materials with which he has created his puppets, only to tell us that these puppets have now seized control and are directing him. He

⁴⁶⁵ Goux further elaborates the link between the imagery of counterfeit money and the question of perspectivism: “*Les Faux-monnayeurs* sont à la fois le roman de la ‘diversité de point de vue’ et le roman qui enregistre à partir de la métaphore monétaire, l'ébranlement du système échangiste fondé sur une certaine modalité de l'équivalent universel”. *Les monnayeurs du langage*, p. 113.

⁴⁶⁶ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 218.

⁴⁶⁷ Magny, *Histoire du roman français depuis 1918*, p. 217.

⁴⁶⁸ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 215.

⁴⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 217.

would appear to be emphasising the underlying causality of his tale: once set in motion, the events must run their course. The narrator could easily avert the impending catastrophe of the schoolboy suicide, instead he makes all his narrative strands lead to it.

However, he would have us believe that he is at the mercy of both the characters and the plot. He voices his disquiet in a tone of resignation: “Je crains qu’en confiant le petit Boris aux Azaïs, Edouard ne commette une imprudence. Comment l’en empêcher? Chacun être agît selon sa loi, et celle d’Edouard le porte à expérimenter sans cesse”.⁴⁷⁰ Indeed, Edouard and Hans Castorp would appear to have the *placet experiri* in common, and in both cases the narrator can only reflect the consequences of such “lawlessness” (incidentally, Gide’s word for the novel genre), regardless of any moral consideration. In *Der Zauberberg*, the “Geist der Erzählung” can only shake his head at the exploits of Hans Castorp and which he, as narrator, is committed to relating. Here, the narrator expresses his anxiety at what he fears may happen, but can only voice his dismay and ultimate helplessness. Referring to Bernard he tells us: “Je ne puis point me consoler de la passade qui lui a fait prendre la place d’Olivier près d’Edouard. Les événements se sont mal arrangés. C’est Olivier qu’aimait Edouard”⁴⁷¹ – and then expresses his fear that Passavant will corrupt Olivier, and that by the time Edouard recaptures him, it will be too late.

These narratorial comments in the central section of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* fulfill two important functions: by suggesting that the characters and events of his novel are dictating to him the course the rest of the novel should take, the narrator is paradoxically drawing attention to the fictionality of the work. Of course, he is everything other than an “auteur imprévoyant”, and the extracts from Edouard’s diary which point to the production process of the novel reinforce this aspect. The very fact that the narrator is having a break in the middle of the novel from the portrayal of the events highlights the fact – well-hidden from the nineteenth-century reader – that the

⁴⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 215.

⁴⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 217.

narrator is at leisure to control the time-flow of his narration as he so desires. In the first third of the novel the narrator's attention is focussed on creating the impression of contemporaneity and simultaneity, which is then destroyed by his questions in the middle section concerning the course of the rest of the novel. As the narrator says, he takes advantage of the summer break to examine his characters. This coincides with the visit to Saas-Fée in Switzerland by Bernard and Edouard, who meet up with Sophroniska and where, high in the mountains, physically removed from the "real world", each of the protagonists expose their theories to each other. (Switzerland was clearly associated with critical reflection in the novelistic mind of the mid 1920s ...)

This constitutes a very different strategy altogether from the narrator of *Der Zauberberg* who prides himself on his ability to extricate his story from the clutches of the past. In contrast to Gide's narrator, he makes no attempt to pretend that his tale is simultaneously unfolding before the reader, but rather insists on its irremedial pastness, in a way which is reminiscent of Jean Paul. R. Baumgart says of the narrator's relationship to the past in Thomas Mann's later works:

Wenn im Spätwerk, der Joseph-Tetralogie, dem *Doktor Faustus*, dem *Erwählten*, von vornherein kein Zweifel darüber besteht, daß die Erzählung nur ein Wieder-ins Gedächtnis-Rufen einer abgeschlossenen, in allen ihren Einzelheiten vorgegebenen Geschichte sein soll, weiß Th. Mann auch früher schon durch seine erzählerische Gestik durchscheinen zu lassen, daß er eine Geschichte nicht erfinden, sondern berichten will, schon Geschehenes in seinen Bezügen ausleuchten, seinem Symbolgehalt steigern, erkenntnismäßig durchdringen möchte.⁴⁷²

The first function, then, of these authorial interventions in the middle of Gide's novel is to reinforce the work's fictional character: the narrator makes no attempts to disguise the fact that *Les Faux-monnayeurs* is entirely a product of his imagination. As he says himself in this section: "Si jamais il m'arrive d'inventer encore une histoire, je ne la laisserai plus habiter que par des caractères trempés, que la vie, loin d'émousser, aiguise".⁴⁷³

⁴⁷² R. Baumgart, *Das Ironische und die Ironie in den Werken Thomas Manns*, p. 56.

⁴⁷³ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 217.

The second function runs counter to the first and consists in stimulating an interest in the various plot lines he has been sketching, and in creating the impression that the events will *necessarily* unfold in a certain fashion; the comment that the story is having a brief rest, but will soon start again with renewed vigour is a signal to the reader that the characters are enjoying a temporary respite from the events which will soon, however, draw them into the vortex again. And is it not a way of inciting the reader to read on, as if both characters and plot were real? Referring to Edouard's decision to send Boris to the pension Vedel-Azaïs, the narrator tells us: "Il connaît la pension Azaïs, il sait l'air empesté qu'on y respire, sous l'étouffant couvert de la morale et de la religion. Il connaît Boris, sa tendresse, sa fragilité. Il devrait prévoir à quels froissements il l'expose".⁴⁷⁴ This is a fairly standard way of stimulating interest in the "plot". The narrator also withholds his knowledge of Boris' death until the event itself, which is described with great intensity: if the novel were filmed, the standard ominous music of thrillers preceding a climax would not be out of place. And although the narrator warns us – correctly – that Edouard is committing an error of judgement by committing Boris to the *pension*, his prediction that Olivier and Edouard will not find each other turns out to be wrong. Thus the discovery of the narrator's unreliability further incites the reader to read on in order to verify his statements and predictions. On the subject of Lilian he tells us:

J'espère ne pas revoir Lady Griffith d'ici longtemps. Je regrette qu'elle nous ait enlevé Vincent, qui, lui, m'intéressait davantage, mais qui se banalise à la fréquenter; roulé par elle, il perd ses angles. C'est dommage: il en avait d'assez beaux.⁴⁷⁵

Again, this comment both destroys the illusion of reality, and awakens a desire in the reader to discover the fate of Vincent. After all, the narrator had devoted considerable attention to portraying him and to creating a sympathetic impression. However, he and Lilian are banished to Africa: the narrator quite ruthlessly cuts the strands of their "story" at an exciting point, and the reader has his knuckles rapped for developing an interest in this exotic couple.

⁴⁷⁴ *ibid.*, p. 215.

⁴⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p. 217.

Walker has pointed to the extended play around the theme of containment in the novel, such as banknotes in wallets in cases in hotel rooms, and the “elaborate semantic and phonetic game” revolving around Edouard’s case, which leads to numerous repetitions of the words *clef*, *serrure*, *porte*, *portefeuille*, *portefaix* etc.; that is to say, the concretizations of the concept of the novel within the novel within the novel.⁴⁷⁶ Not only, however, does the *mise-en-abyme* find its equivalent on the level of the imagery, but the “lighting” of the text, the underlying principle for the narratorial perspective, is alluded to – for the observant reader – through a variety of visual images, which are dwelt on in a way which goes beyond any desire to lend “realist” substance to the novel. For example, at the end of the scene at Passavant’s in which Vincent announces his gambling success, and where Lilian, by passing him the key to her flat makes it clear that her interests lie with him rather than with Passavant, Lilian then asks a servant to light the way for the two men so that they can leave. We read: “l’escalier était sombre; où il eût été simple, sans doute, de faire jouer l’électricité; mais Lilian tenait à ce qu’un domestique, toujours, vît sortir ses hôtes”.⁴⁷⁷ Under the cover of this seemingly innocent statement, Gide may well be insinuating that whereas it was undoubtedly easier for the Naturalists and realists to flood their novels with light, he is showing us, in his novel, the merits of an alternative, more differentiated perspective.

There is a very similar scene at the end of chapter X of the third section, where Bernard and Sarah, having decided to discover the pleasures of the flesh with each other, return from the “Banquet des Argonauts” to the unlit *pension* and strike matches. Armand, carrying a torch, meets them on the stairs: “Prends la lampe, dit-il à Bernard (ils se tutoyaient depuis la veille.) Éclaire Sarah; il n’y a pas de bougie dans sa chambre ... Et passe-moi tes allumettes, que j’allume la mienne”.⁴⁷⁸ Having just shown the couple into the room, Armand blows out the lamp and then *locks* the couple inside. In this scene, Gide is undoubtedly highlighting the sexual libertinage of

⁴⁷⁶ Walker, “Continuity and Discontinuity in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*”, p. 416.

⁴⁷⁷ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 59.

⁴⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 294.

the two young people, their behaviour being determined by a very limited perception of themselves and of each other, as in the previously cited example with Lilian and Vincent, which similarly juxtaposed play on light and dark imagery with the mention of a key. Gide is also, however, gleefully handing the reader a counterfeit coin: the imagery here passes for realistic description, whilst at the same time articulating the theoretical principles governing the work as a whole: the *mise-en-abyme* and the nuanced use of “lighting”, or perspective.

In the scene in which the young Gontran Passavant watches over his dead father, we read about the old maid Séraphine: “elle s’approche d’une table où une lampe à huile d’ancien modèle éclaire imparfaitement la pièce; la lampe a besoin d’être remontée. Un abat-jour ramène la clarté sur le livre que lit le jeune Gontran ...”⁴⁷⁹ Deathbed scenes belonging to the repertoire of the traditional novel, Gide presents this one as a pastiche. After all, it has no function in terms of plot; the death of Passavant *père* is without any consequence whatsoever, a fact which in itself parodies the function of this type of scene and serves to distance Gide’s novel from its nineteenth-century counterpart. Indeed, Gontran experiences a spectacular *absence* of emotion: “Il voudrait, en ce moment solennel, éprouver je ne sais quoi de sublime et de rare, écouter une communication de l’au-delà, lancer sa pensée dans des régions éthérées, suprasensibles – mais elle reste accrochée, sa pensée, au ras du sol”.⁴⁸⁰ The fact that Gontran’s attempt to make the hands of the stiff corpse hold the crucifix ends in failure when he recoils in horror at the contact with cold flesh, and that he prefers to read his novel than continue his wake, lends the scene touches of black humour and heightens its parodistical aspect, in a way comparable to, but more radical than, Thomas Mann’s parody of *Wilhelm Meister*. It is not coincidental that Gide chooses to preface this scene with a reference to lighting – one of the major ways in which his novel attempts to meet the new challenge of leaving realism behind. In his descriptions of how certain scenes are lit, Gide cites a variety of older and newer methods: matches and candles, a torch, an old-style lamp and the most recent invention –

⁴⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 49.

⁴⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p. 50.

electricity. One is tempted to see in this survey a reference to the older and more recent ways in which novelists have attempted to illuminate their works. As Goulet says: “la spécificité du roman gidien tient donc d’abord aux modalités de l’éclairage”.⁴⁸¹

The narrator certainly seems to be preoccupied with informing us as to the peculiarities of the lighting in certain scenes, in a way which is too circumstantial to be merely descriptive. In this respect Gide’s novel comes close to Mann’s where seemingly arbitrary details form part of a complex and highly-structured whole, whilst simultaneously satisfying the demands of realist description. The pencils, thermometers and cigars of *Der Zauberberg* interrelate in a way which underlines the latent eroticism of Hans Castorp’s sanatorium experience. In *Les Faux-monnayeurs* we have a similar, if not quite so stringent, array of seemingly “innocent” descriptive items. Yet whereas in Mann’s novel these items reinforce the major thematic concerns, in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* they serve to augment the novel’s self-reflexivity by alluding to its theoretical foundations.

As has frequently been pointed out, the presentation of the events through a succession of limited points of view is the most apt for the *roman policier*, where the reader’s knowledge of the events is ostensibly as limited as the narrator’s. And whilst the obtrusive voice of the narrator in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* frequently halts the momentum of the work and dispels the impression of “reality”, his frequent claims of ignorance and his unreliability forestall an omniscience which would run counter to the detective novel genre, and create instead what Mahieu describes as “une économie distributive de l’information conçue à manière à solliciter du destinataire du roman une importante activité de décryptage et de réorganisation”.⁴⁸² The narrator is maliciously whimsical in his divulging of information; when introducing Passavant, for example, he tells us: “Je ne sais trop comment Vincent et lui se sont connus”.⁴⁸³ Yet in the same chapter, he insists we dwell on Gontran, saying: “précisément parce que

⁴⁸¹ Goulet, *Les Faux-monnayeurs. Mode d’Emploi*, p. 123.

⁴⁸² R. Mahieu, “*Les Faux-monnayeurs*: un dossier à rouvrir” in: *BAAG* 13, 68 (1985), 34-46, p. 39.

⁴⁸³ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 43.

nous ne devons plus le revoir, je le contemple longuement”.⁴⁸⁴ And, as we have already seen, he deliberately creates a sense of mystery surrounding the development of the plot: after describing how Georges cons the old Azaïs on the subject of the yellow ribbon he and his partners in crime wear, the narrator asks: “Mais comment Georges eût-il pu répondre différemment? ... Nous tâcherons de tirer cela au clair”.⁴⁸⁵ Given the fact that the narrator knows we will not encounter Gontran again, it is also likely that he would also know about Georges’ association, as well as about other intriguing aspects of the plot. It would appear that the narrator’s omniscience can be conveniently switched on and off for the purpose of enclinking the events in mystery, and works together with the limited perspectives in creating a detective novel for intellectuals.

Although for Thomas Mann the question of perspective was less of a priority, *Der Zauberberg* also shows the limitations of individual viewpoints, albeit in a way which is very different from Gide’s novel. Admittedly, Mann’s narrator is omniscient, but as we have seen, he restricts his portrayal of the events largely to the viewpoint of Hans Castorp and does not give us much insight into the minds of the other characters. The perception we as readers have of the characters Hans Castorp encounters is identical to his: there is nothing to indicate that Hans Castorp’s impressions are in any way inaccurate; the other characters corroborate his views, and the narrator does not contradict him. In this respect, the narrative stance can be seen as traditional, since it does not provide a diversity of points of view, although there is clearly a distance between the narrator and his character. What Thomas Mann does show, however, is the limited viewpoint of each character in terms of their individual beliefs and opinions. Particularly in the case of Naphta and Settembrini, he illustrates how their ideological rigidity – if not blindness – ensures that they will never be able to see the other person’s point of view.

⁴⁸⁴ *ibid.*, p. 49.

⁴⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p. 111.

It is partly Hans Castorp's youth which enables him to flirt with a variety of conflicting ideas and maintain an ironic stance. Yet whereas the Hans Castorp at the end of the seven years on the Magic Mountain is very different from the one who arrives, the presentation of him remains constant and direct. In *Les Faux-monnayeurs* it would appear that the depiction of young people at various stages in their development necessitates an indirect presentation. As Edouard notes: "Rien n'est plus difficile à observer que les êtres en formation. Il faudrait pouvoir ne les regarder de biais, de profil".⁴⁸⁶ Gide's novel provides ample acknowledgement of the fact that young people are prone to sometimes radical and unexpected transformations. Whilst Thomas Mann's narrator uses his protagonist's youth as a reason for disqualifying him from presenting his tale himself, *Les Faux-monnayeurs* supports precisely the opposite idea – that the points of view of young people have to be considered in order to present a more complete version of "reality". For example, after recounting the episode in which he catches Georges stealing a travel guide, Edouard expresses the desire to alter this chapter, saying it is too long and detailed. He adds: "Je crois du reste qu'il y aurait intérêt à faire raconter tout cela par l'enfant, son point de vue est plus significatif que le mien".⁴⁸⁷

In his critique of Martin du Gard's "direct" presentation of events, Gide had touched upon the important question of time in the novel. As Gide points out, the presentation of characters and events one by one necessarily entails a linear depiction. This Gide wanted to avoid. Yet here he is faced with an old problem: how to convey a simultaneity of events through language, a linear medium. Of course, as Vogt has shown, authors such as Kleist had attempted to convey simultaneity through a fast narrative pace and a range of places of action. However, as Vogt says, this issue became more acute in the rapidly-evolving twentieth century:

Die Problematik der Simultaneität im linearen Medium der Erzählrede radikalisiert sich jedoch in der modernen Romanprosa. Es geht nicht mehr um handwerkliche Verknüpfungstechniken, sondern viel grundsätzlicher darum, ob die Prosa eine ihrerseits dynamischer, vielfältiger und komplexer gewordene Welt noch adäquat reflektieren kann. Die moderne, industriell, technisch und großstädtisch geprägte

⁴⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 111.

⁴⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 151.

Massengesellschaft, die sich im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert in Europa und Amerika etabliert, bringt auch ein neues, bisweilen bedrohliches Bewußtsein von der unendlichen Vielfältigkeit des Weltgeschehens mit sich. Neue Transport- und Kommunikationsmedien übermitteln bzw. produzieren eine kaum noch überschaubare Informationsfülle. Das führt [...] die traditionellen Formen des Erzählens in eine Krise, spielt ihnen aber auch wieder Mittel der Erneuerung zu.⁴⁸⁸

Vogt, like Lukács and Benjamin, sees the rapidly changing pace of life in early twentieth-century society as instrumental in bringing about the “crisis of the novel”, and reflects on the new possibilities these changes opened up for the novelist.

Gide’s narrator shows – as does the narrator of *Der Zauberberg* – that he is in control of several threads of the action at once. Both use what Vogt refers to as “handwerkliche Verknüpfungstechniken” to move from one scene to another. In *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, for example, the narrator leads us to a lively conversation between Georges and two of his schoolfriends, saying: “Pour les écouter, quittons un instant Olivier et Bernard”.⁴⁸⁹ However, the innovation of Gide’s approach lies in the way the multiplicity of perspectives presented creates a more convincing impression of temporal simultaneity, often referred to as a “kaleidoscopic” effect. This results in there being no fixed character portrayal or omniscient presentation of facts at any given point in time. Instead, the reader is presented with several pieces of conflicting information at once, and his/her opinions are constantly subjected to challenge and revision. There are no individual dramatic actions or authoritative descriptions which can be neatly sliced off and held separate from the rest of the novelistic cake: instead we witness a bewildering entanglement of strands. For reality *cannot* be grasped definitively at any given moment. As Edouard says: “ ‘Une tranche de vie’ disait l’école naturaliste. Le grand défaut de cette école, c’est de couper sa tranche toujours dans le même sens; dans le sens du temps, en longueur. Pourquoi pas en largeur? Ou en profondeur?’ ”⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁸ Vogt, *Aspekte erzählender Prosa*, pp. 135-136.

⁴⁸⁹ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 258.

⁴⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 184.

As Klare in her comparison of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* with *Doktor Faustus* has observed, both novels feature an extended discourse on fish. In Thomas Mann's novel of 1947, the composer Adrian Leverkühn develops an obsessional interest in marine life, and vividly imagines exploring the depths of the oceans in a glass cage with a certain Mr. Capercaillie. The fish he encounters at the bottom of the ocean bear a striking similarity to those described by Vincent, in their ability to project light.

Vincent's lecture on fish is of central importance in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*. There, what Vincent describes as the characteristics of these tropical creatures can easily be related to human beings as they are seen to behave in the novel. Passavant himself draws such a parallel, saying: "Des poissons comme nous, mon vieux Vincent, agonisent dans les eaux calmes".⁴⁹¹ Not only do the small *sténohalins* become the prey of the large and calculating *euryhalins*, who deliberately swim in areas where salt is less dense, knowing that the *sténohalins* languish there, but, according to Vincent, it has recently been discovered that the fish, for a long time considered to be blind, do indeed have eyes. As he tells us: "Et voici qu'on découvre enfin que chacun de ses animaux, que d'abord on voulait obscurs, émet et projette devant soi, sa lumière. Chacun d'eux éclaire, illumine, irradie".⁴⁹² The characters in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* also project a light in front of them, but as Gide shows, the projection of this light is limited to a very small area surrounding the individual projecting it; human perception is severely restricted.

Klare also points to the presence of the devil in both novels. We have seen how the narrator in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* deliberately withholds his knowledge of Boris' death – a devilish act especially since, as narrator-editor, he has clearly had access to all the information and has presented it for us in neat chapters, even adding epigraphs to some of them. Later, however, he expresses his horror at the events surrounding Boris and his talisman: with reference to the friendship which Georges fakes towards Boris, he says: "Et c'est peut-être là, dans cette abominable histoire, ce qui me paraît

⁴⁹¹ *ibid.*, p. 151.

⁴⁹² *ibid.*, p. 151.

le plus monstrueux: cette comédie d'amitié que Georges consentit à jouer".⁴⁹³ The blindness of Boris, in failing to detect this counterfeit friendship, is only one of many examples of the characters' inability to read situations properly, which accumulate and lead to his tragic death. The narratorial technique renders the search for the causes of the schoolboy suicide more complicated: there is not one dominating authorial voice to point the reader in the right direction – that would constitute precisely the kind of guidance and causal linking which Gide wanted to avoid.

One of the reasons why the characters are so consistently blind to each other and to the consequences of their actions may lie in the lurking presence of the devil, to which the narrator points on several occasions. As early as 13 January 1921 Gide determines the rôle the devil is to play in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*: "Je voudrais un (le diable) qui circulerait incognito à travers tout le livre et dont la réalité s'affirmerait d'autant plus qu'on croirait moins en lui".⁴⁹⁴ The devil gradually becomes associated with the character of Vincent; in the scene after Vincent's success in gambling, and in which he is deliberating over what to do with the large sum he has won, we read: "C'était l'heure douteuse, où s'achève la nuit, et où le diable fait ses comptes".⁴⁹⁵ The devil will win over Vincent: in a letter from Lilian on their travels, she refers to the driving force of their journey as "le démon de l'aventure".⁴⁹⁶ Lilian herself clearly represents a demonic force: B. Stolfus has even suggested that her name is "an extension of Lilith, the she-devil of Talmudic lore".⁴⁹⁷ And then we read in Alexandre Vedel's letter that the bizarre person he encounters in Africa believes himself to be possessed by the devil, or indeed, *is* the devil himself. This presence of the devil in Gide's novel is perhaps as surprising as the appearance of Bernard's Angel. On the one hand, however, his lurking justifies the subversive rôle the narrator plays – originally intended for Lafcadio – and which allows him to infiltrate a variety of characters and

⁴⁹³ *ibid.*, p. 367.

⁴⁹⁴ *JFM*, 13.1.1921, p. 32.

⁴⁹⁵ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 59.

⁴⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 314.

⁴⁹⁷ Ben Stolfus, *Gide's Eagles*, Illinois 1969, p. 128. Quoted in: Michael Tilby, *Gide: Les Faux-monnayeurs*, London 1981, p. 83.

places. To quote Goulet: “Notre narrateur-diable boîteux s’est donc métamorphosé en narrateur omniscient, puisqu’il coule alors à l’intérieur de la conscience de son héros grâce à la technique du monologue intérieur”.⁴⁹⁸

At the same time, the presence of the devil may account for the blindness of the characters and the higher force behind the shocking events.⁴⁹⁹ Walker points to the proliferation of conditional tenses on which the final catastrophe of Boris’ suicide hinges, and at which Armand possibly hints in his elaboration on causality; this is certainly the case, but even so, it seems from the outset that the innocent Boris is an easy victim and will necessarily fall prey to the devil’s clutches. Indeed, the narrator implies that the devil influences Edouard’s decision to hand over Boris to the pension Azaïs, despite his awareness of the poisonous atmosphere there: “A quels sophismes prête-t-il l’oreille? Le diable assurément les lui souffle, car il ne les écouterait pas, venus d’autrui”.⁵⁰⁰ The suggestion of a higher causal force is, of course, at counterpoint to the impression of randomness and inconsequentiality the narrator strives to create – a tension which has been frequently emphasised. It is difficult to establish whether the Angel and the devil were introduced into the novel as convenient forces of good and evil: at any rate, they bring about another hiatus with the illusion of reality, the reason why Martin du Gard reacted so vehemently to Bernard’s encounter.

The omniscient narrator in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* differs considerably from his counterpart in *Der Zauberberg*. Whereas the latter continues in the established German tradition of commenting on the action and providing moral guidance for the reader, Gide’s counterfeit narrator has shrugged off all didactic responsibility. It is therefore somewhat surprising to read interpretations of Gide’s novel as an

⁴⁹⁸ Goulet, *Les Faux-monnayeurs. Mode d’Emploi*, pp. 136-137.

⁴⁹⁹ This is the view espoused by Keypour: “tous les aveuglements dramatiques des personnages peuvent bien trouver leur explication dans la puissance invisible du Diable”. *Écriture et réversibilité*, p. 132.

⁵⁰⁰ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 215.

educational novel.⁵⁰¹ Unlike Thomas Mann's narrator he provides no clear pedagogical vision or recommended morality (yet here it is particularly important to distinguish between the *narrator's* view of an education through death, illness and dabblings in the occult from that of the *real* Thomas Mann, who had attended the séances of Schreck-Notzing: as Stanzel points out, narrators are traditionally more conservative than their heroes).⁵⁰² Perhaps the introduction of the devil and Bernard's Angel are an attempt at conveying some moral values. In the relentlessly corrupt world in which the characters move, it is difficult to point to any values which are conveyed in a positive light: the so-called pillars of society – justice, the family and religion – are shown to be outdated concepts; only the relationship between Edouard and Olivier, and the friendship between the ill-fated Boris and Bronja seem to have the purity so spectacularly missing elsewhere. The critic Lafille sees the educational value of Gide's novel as lying in the sheer volume of ideas it presents:

Les Faux-monnayeurs sont, en effet, en partie, un roman 'd'idées', du genre même que réclamait Edouard: non pas illustration, non pas démonstration d'idées ou de thèses prétablies, mais réservoir de suggestions et de questions, sans solutions imposées.⁵⁰³

Lafille seems to be suggesting that the lack of narratorial guidance in Gide's novel may, paradoxically, enhance its pedagogical merit.

This aspect of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* is, however, secondary to the aesthetic questions with which Gide is preoccupied. The vocabulary of alchemy and experimentation with which the narrator of *Der Zauberberg* presents his young hero's *Steigerung* is employed by Edouard with respect to his own creation of a novel. He says:

Je suis devant la réalité comme le peintre avec son modèle, qui lui dit: donnez-moi tel geste, prenez telle expression qui me convient [...] C'est en romancier que me tourmente le besoin d'intervenir, d'opérer sur leur destinée. Si j'avais plus d'imagination, j'affabulerais des intrigues: je les provoque, observe les acteurs, puis travaille sous leur dictée.⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰¹ Moutote, for example, sees *Les Faux-monnayeurs* in this light, and as thereby differing from the novels of Dostoevsky: "Gide vise non seulement la distraction, mais l'édification du lecteur pour l'existence". *Réflexions*, p. 67.

⁵⁰² Stanzel, *Typische Formen des Romans*, p. 22.

⁵⁰³ Lafille, *André Gide, Romancier*, pp. 257-258.

⁵⁰⁴ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, pp. 116-117.

A desire to reproduce reality has been replaced by the desire to *experiment* with reality; according to Edouard, novels are to be fabricated in scientific fashion in literary laboratories. And as Edouard adds, the results this experimentation can lead to are of an infinite variety:

Il reste ceci: que la réalité m'intéresse comme une matière plastique: et j'ai plus de regard pour ce qui pourrait être, infiniment plus que pour ce qui a été. Je me penche vertigineusement sur les possibilités de chaque être et pleure tout ce que le couvercle des mœurs atrophie.⁵⁰⁵

This fondness for experimentation was, however, to earn Gide the criticism of having produced “un roman manqué” and the reproach of a lack of belief in *any* of the views expressed.⁵⁰⁶ In this respect, Gide’s novel comes close to *Der Zauberberg*, which, through its ironic overtones, similarly acknowledges the plethora of co-existing opinions, without committing itself to any. Irony pervades *Les Faux-monnayeurs*; in fact Gide saw all of his works as ironic compositions,⁵⁰⁷ and noted, during the composition of *Les Faux-monnayeurs*:

Ils cherchent à savoir mon opinion. Mon opinion, je n'en ai cure, je ne suis plus quelqu'un, mais plusieurs, – d'où ce reproche que l'on me fait d'inquiétude, d'instabilité, de versatilité, d'inconstance [...] de même dans la vie, c'est la pensée, l'émotion d'autrui qui m'habite; mon cœur ne bat que par sympathie. C'est ce qui me rend toute discussion si difficile. J'abandonne aussitôt *mon* point de vue.⁵⁰⁸

As Meakin’s study shows, the irony in *Der Zauberberg* serves to infinitely relativize certain thematic concerns, such as love and sickness, the erotic and the medical,⁵⁰⁹ in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, the very existence of the novel itself is at stake. Weinberg, who also sees alchemical overtones in Gide’s novel, writes:

⁵⁰⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 116-117.

⁵⁰⁶ e.g. Maurice Nadeau: “Là où nous attendions des points de fusion de la matière romanesque nous sommes jetés sur des îlots de glace: auprès de Laura Bernard paraît gentiment ridicule et dans ses débats d’une nuit avec Sarah presque obscène. L’auteur trop visiblement expérimente, il ne croit pas à la nécessité de ce qu’il dit”. “Un romancier contre le roman” in: M. Raimond (ed.), *Les critiques de notre temps et Gide*, Paris 1971, 64-74, p. 71.

⁵⁰⁷ “Je n’ai à présent écrit que des livres *ironiques* ou; critiques, si vous préférez [...]”. Gide, *Journal 1889-1939*, 12.7.1912, p. 437.

⁵⁰⁸ *JFM*, 15.11.1923, p. 68.

⁵⁰⁹ Meakin, *Hermetic Fictions*, p. 97.

Es ist wie ein alchemistisches Laboratorium, wo angeblich das große Reinigungswerk vollzogen wird: ein Experiment, das, bei der ständigen Weigerung des Romanciers, von seinem 'Elan' zu profitieren [...], immer wieder mißlingt und sich fast in jedem Fall als geistige und künstlerische Falschmünzerei entlarven läßt.⁵¹⁰

Weinberg sees *Les Faux-monnayeurs* as an experiment gone badly wrong, as counterfeit itself as those things it claims to show up as false. Zeltner-Neukomm points out that the concept of the *roman expérimental* had already been introduced by Zola, but that before Gide no-one had dared to make the experimentation an integral part of the novel itself: she sees in the esoteric texts of the structuralists writing in *Tel Quel* – Philippe Sollers, Jean Ricardou and Jean Thibaudeau to name a few – the direct descendants of Gide's experimentation with experimentation.⁵¹¹

In the same way that the lighting effects Gide wishes to create in his novel are hinted at in comments by the characters, his practice of alternating the points of view also constitutes a conversational *leitmotif*, which the careful reader will detect. Further, as far as the plot developments are concerned, the whole action of the novel hinges on Bernard's altered view of Profitendieu: the discovery of his illegitimacy prompts him to reject his "false father". Bernard himself says of the accidental discovery of his origins and his changed perspective:

Bah! L'important c'était que j'en fusse instruit. Tout le monde ne peut pas se payer, comme Hamlet, le luxe d'un spectre révélateur. Hamlet! C'est curieux comme le point de vue diffère, suivant qu'on est le fruit du crime ou de la légitimité.⁵¹²

In reality, nothing has changed: only his *perception* of his father's rôle, as he will later realise. As with the counterfeit coin Bernard acquires, which can pass as legal until its "real" nature is revealed, its validity or otherwise being dependent on non-absolute criteria, Bernard's changing perceptions of his father throughout the novel further demonstrate the subjectivity of individual points of view and the need to reflect this on a formal level.

⁵¹⁰ Weinberg, "André Gide. Le Prométhée mal enchaîné", p. 79.

⁵¹¹ Zeltner-Neukomm, *Was ist ein moderner Roman?*, p. 7.

⁵¹² *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 63.

If much of the tragedy in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* stems from blindness and an inability to see “reality”, many of the developments also arise from the characters realising that their initial perception of a situation or of a person may have been false. Bernard realises that he behaved irresponsibly towards his family by leaving home, and that he is temperamentally unsuited to being Edouard’s secretary; also, his view of Olivier changes when he reads his friend’s letter describing his adventures with Passavant: Olivier, in turn, eventually perceives the shallowness of Passavant and turns to Edouard instead. Gide shows us, however, that changing one’s initial view is by no means an easy task.

The fact that the narrator does not (at least not consciously) suggest what the right and wrong paths of action for his characters may be, but instead presents the letters, notes and diary extracts which they themselves read and on which they base their decisions, highlights this difficulty and makes it tangible for the reader. As Zeltner-Neukomm says:

Der Autoritätsverzicht des Erzählers geht nicht nur so weit, einen anderen Erzähler neben sich einzuführen; alles sieht vielmehr so aus, als könnte er sich gar nicht darin tun, die Mühe und Verantwortung des Berichtens auf seine eigenen Figuren abzuwälzen [...] Die Beleuchtung dieser Ereignisse hängt allemal von der Mentalität der erzählenden Figur ab; und indem zuweilen das gleich von verschiedener Seite berichtet wird, ergeben sich Abweichungen und auch andere Interpretationen. Ideen oder Informationen werden also in Funktion zum speziellen Berichterstatter formuliert, wenn nicht sogar auch in Funktion zu dessen Adressaten.⁵¹³

In *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, the juxtaposition of the conflicting viewpoints draws attention to the subjectivity of each one and relativises them all. Gide’s technique undoubtedly paved the way for the extreme limitation of the point of view in the novels of the *nouveaux romanciers*: in Butor’s *L’Emploi du Temps*, for example, the reader only has access to the mind of the hero, and to what he perceives. Similarly, Sarraute in *Portrait d’un Inconnu* (1947) restricts the viewpoint to that of the narrator attempting to reconstruct the events he was involved in.

⁵¹³ Zeltner-Neukomm, *Was ist ein moderner Roman?*, p. 5.

It has frequently been suggested that the multiplicity of narrative sources used in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* shakes the reader's faith in the authority of the written word. Goulet, for example, writes: "le kaléidoscope des points de vue conduit le lecteur à une crise de confiance, ce qui est grave puisque cela va déjà à l'encontre des conventions implicites du genre romanesque".⁵¹⁴ The proliferation of narrative instances in Gide's novel would appear to cast a strong shadow of doubt on the viability of the individual written testimony, which is the foundation of the novel genre. And yet at the same time, the narrator presents us with a work which celebrates the richness and diversity of written communication, with a good number of the chapters pre-faced by a literary epigraph providing further illumination – again in the written form – of the events about to be described.⁵¹⁵ Indeed, the epigraph from Sainte-Beuve introducing Edouard's diary extract in which he describes his conversation with Sophroniska is much more likely to have been inserted by the narrator (who has prefaced several other chapters, in the "main" narration) than by Edouard, given the informal, private (at least in intention) nature of what he is writing. This testifies once again to the paradoxical nature of the narrator: eager to highlight the misleading nature of language and written communication, but couching his comments in a highly sophisticated written form. For each epigraph provides a thematic link with the chapter it prefaces, thus ensuring a continuity of plot development, as well as yet another perspective on the events described. The impression of arbitrariness Gide wishes to convey is thus dispelled by the polished nature of his narrator's presentation of the material, and his highly-developed editing skills.

With regard to the epigraph from La Rochefoucauld prefacing Olivier's letter to Bernard, "Il y a de certains défauts qui, bien mis en œuvre, brillent plus que la vertu

⁵¹⁴ Goulet, *Les Faux-monnayeurs. Mode d'Emploi*, p. 136.

⁵¹⁵ Keypour does not see the epigraphs as interfering with the narrative flow: "ces interférences qui sont autant d'infractions à la logique du récit, autant 'd'empreintes digitales' laissées dans l'ordre de la narration, échappent à l'attention, du fait que tout roman est donné comme un objet où l'oral, l'écrit et le pensé, de quelque instance qu'ils proviennent, sont mis sur le même plan parce que tous sont communiqués par des mots imprimés, et en caractères indifférenciés". *Ecriture et réversibilité*, p. 157.

même”,⁵¹⁶ Gide is here teasing the reader with some more play with mirrors, for La Rochefoucauld had been discussed in some detail just two pages previously by Sophroniska and Edouard. And Edouard has his own thoughts about epigraphs too – in chapter XII we find the following notes in his diary:

“Epigraphe pour un chapitre des *Faux-monnayeurs*”:

“La famille ... cette cellule sociale”. (Paul Bourget, *passim*).

“Titre du chapitre: LE REGIME CELLULAIRE”.⁵¹⁷

More *mise-en-abyme*, certainly. But the literary epigraphs, frequent references to novels and writers, intertextual allusions, parodistic and burlesque touches previously referred to (Gontran at his father’s deathbed, Laura collapsing on a chair, much of the narration relating to Bernard) are symptomatic of a self-begetting novel, to use Kellmann’s terminology, which, having exhausted the old literary arsenal, onanises to draw attention to the need for renewal.⁵¹⁸

In *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, the traditional link between the narrative voice and the transmission of a reality has been eroded through the introduction of a subversive narrator and a multiplication of perspectives. According to Erich Auerbach, it is precisely this altered function of the narrative stance which links Gide’s novel with *Der Zauberberg*. Describing the different ways in which novelists in the 1920s sought to present “reality” Auerbach writes:

so etwa Thomas Mann, der seit dem *Zauberberg*, ohne im mindesten seine Tonlage aufzugeben (in der der erzählende, kommentierende, objektivierende, sich an den Leser wendende Schriftsteller stets anwesend ist), sich immer mehr mit *Zeitenperspektive* und *symbolischer Jederzeitlichkeit* des Geschehens einläßt; oder, ganz anders, wie André Gide, der in den *Faux-monnayeurs* den Standort, von dem die in sich schon vielschichtigen Vorgänge erblickt werden ständig wechselt, ja darin so weit geht, daß auf eine romantische ironische Art Roman und Entstehungsgeschichte des Romans miteinander verstrickt werden.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁶ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 207.

⁵¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 115.

⁵¹⁸ Stephen Kellmann, *The Self-Begetting Novel*, London 1980.

⁵¹⁹ Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur*, Bern 1946, p. 506.

Auerbach stresses the very different ways in which Mann and Gide use the narrative stance of their novels to reflect their own troubled relationship to the mimetic function.

Whereas *Der Zauberberg* is clearly an *auktorialer Roman*, albeit with heavily ironic overtones, *Les Faux-monnayeurs* refuses to fit so well into Stanzel's scheme. The presence of the narrator who claims ignorance at repeated intervals, but in reality is as obtrusive and authoritative as Thomas Mann's, hardly makes Gide's novel a likely candidate for the *personaler Roman* category, which Stanzel describes as "ein erzählerloser Roman in dem Sinn, daß der Leser hier nirgends persönliche Züge eines Erzählers ausmachen kann und daher auch gar nicht den Eindruck bekommt, als werde erzählt".⁵²⁰ However, the fast rotation of the various points of view and the consequences this has on the continuity of the action undoubtedly contribute to the development of what Lämmert sees as the essential characteristics of the *personaler Roman*, namely: "die Aufsplitterung der Geschichte in kaleidoskopartige Bildfolgen, die Segmentierung von Handlungsabläufen in zusammenhanglos dargestellten Bruchstücken".⁵²¹

As Scheunemann has pointed out, the use of multiple perspectives in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* is markedly different from that in other novels in that it excludes the notions of psychological portrayal or a causal explanation for the action:

Konstruiert und artifizuell wirkt die Schachtelung des Romans aus Tagebuchnotizen und Notizbucheintragungen, aus Briefen, Gesprächen und Erzählpassagen. Kausaler Ereignisbegründung aber oder einem psychologischen Porträt dient der fortlaufende Perspektivwechsel – im Unterschied zu vergleichbaren Techniken in den Romanen Henry James' oder noch Virginia Woolfs – nicht.⁵²²

W. Sypher has examined the question of perspective in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* and likened *Les Faux-monnayeurs* to the works of the Cubist painters:

⁵²⁰ Stanzel, *Typische Formen des Romans*, p. 40.

⁵²¹ Quoted in: *ibid.*, p. 60.

⁵²² D. Scheunemann, "Ästhetische Modelle für den modernen Roman. Vom Austausch zwischen den Künsten". In: E. Lämmert & D. Scheunemann (eds.), *Regelkram und Grenzgänge. Von poetischen Gattungen*, Munich 1988, 121-135, p. 129.

Gide's perspective is cubist because it is simultaneous instead of temporal or 'literary'. Gide's displacements are minute and analytic, and often consist simply in shifting the point of view or suspending the frame of reference. Then every configuration becomes possible, and the situation appears in its complexity of relationships as presentation, not as reality.⁵²³

Sypher emphasises that the multiplication of perspectives in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* heightens the tendency of the novel to parade its constructed, artificial nature. It invites the study of, in Sypher's words, "the innumerable transitions between the object and the conception", as in Picasso's *L'Arlésienne* and the works of other early Cubist painters "who analysed the world then formally composed it again to compete with actuality, to raise the tension between the material and its representation".⁵²⁴

Although Thomas Mann's novel appears to have a more traditional narrative stance than Gide's, irony, as we have seen, allows the narrator to point to the simultaneous cohabitation of conflicting viewpoints and perspectives, which in turn deroutes the novel from the pursuit of mimesis and brings it close to the practice adopted in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*.

⁵²³ Wylie Sypher, "Gide's Cubist Novel" in: *The Kenyon Review* 11 (1949), 291-309, p. 309.

⁵²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 309.

Chapter Four

Der Leser als erweiterter Autor: the New Rôle of the Reader

It is possible to form broad categories for the characteristics of the "modern novel". Along with the shift away from the *auktorialer Erzähler* towards more stringently demarcated narratorial stances and a multiplicity of perspectives, the infiltration of essay and scientific discourse into "epic" narration, experimentation with structure and a sabotaging of linear chronology, one further development must be taken into consideration in any survey of the field: that of the altered rôle of the reader. This altered rôle has not arisen in a vacuum, but as a necessary consequence of some or all of the other departures from established practice: it is, however, perhaps most intimately associated with the question of narratorial comment and perspective.

An omniscient perspective will necessarily influence the reader's absorption of the material in a way which allows for few variants, and the narrator of the "traditional novel" always took care in the presentation of the events, through the establishment of causal links between his characters' actions and the consequences of these actions, to steer the reader towards the forming of certain conclusions. These conclusions were often reinforced by authorial comments of a moralising, pedagogical nature, and the material tailored in such a way as to hoodwink the reader into assuming that only certain courses of action were possible in any given situation, or that only certain

lessons could be drawn from this same situation. The establishment of the narrator as a thoroughly reliable and authoritative instance, and the creation of a trusting three-way relationship between narrator, material of the narration and the “postulated reader”,⁵²⁵ the epic triangle which forms the basis of traditional narrative,⁵²⁶ hermetically sealed off the world of the narration and contrived to rule out the possibility of any thoughts on the narration entering the reader’s mind other than those put forward by the narrator himself.

The “modern novel” put an end to this conspiracy by, amongst other things, gradually weaning the reader off the narrator’s milk. With reference to the changing status of the reader as brought about by trends in twentieth-century fiction, J. H. Petersen defines the developments in terms of “ein Rezeptionsästhetischer Paradigmawechsel”.⁵²⁷

As Petersen points out, the “traditional novel” contained many oblique as well as overt indications as to how the reader’s reception should be. Not only explicit comments on the part of the narrator, but a highly-structured plot with meaningful climaxes, comments made by the characters themselves, discursive elements, descriptions of mood and setting, as well as symbolism, could all contribute to the mediation of one or several messages, subtly conveyed to the reader during the reading process. As Petersen says, the gradual abandonment of these techniques shifted the creation of meaning away from the narrator and onto the reader:

Soll dies nun nicht mehr geschehen, soll der Rezipient wirklich frei sein, damit er alle Möglichkeiten des Verstehens besitzt und behält, so hat an die Stelle der gelenkten die freie Rezeption zu treten, und der Roman muß so geartet sein, daß er die freie Rezeption zuläßt bzw. erzwingt.⁵²⁸

⁵²⁵ Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, p. 157.

⁵²⁶ cf. W. Kayser, *Das sprachliche Kunstwerk. Eine Einführung in die Literaturwissenschaft*, Bern 1948, p. 201. Quoted in Jürgen H. Petersen, *Der deutsche Roman der Moderne*, Stuttgart 1967, p. 62.

⁵²⁷ Petersen, *Der deutsche Roman der Moderne*, p. 62.

⁵²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 63.

The roots of this movement towards the reader's emancipation are to be found in the Romantic movement. Schlegel, as we have already seen, postulated the inclusion of non-novelistic elements in the novel, a step which in itself prevented the reader from becoming too engrossed in the developments of a plot line, and went some way towards the destruction of the illusion of "reality". However, as Petersen points out, amongst the Romantics it was really Novalis who provided the most radical expression of the changing rôle of the reader towards that of co-author. Novalis wrote:

Der wahre Leser muß der erweiterte Autor sein. Er ist die höhere Instanz, die die Sache von der niederen Instanz schon vorgearbeitet erhält. Das Gefühl, vermittelt dessen der Autor die Materialien seiner Schrift geschieden hat, scheidet beim Lesen wieder das Rohe und Gebildete des Buchs – und wenn der Leser das Buch nach seiner Idee bearbeiten würde, so würde ein zweiter Leser noch mehr läutern, und so wird dadurch, daß die bearbeitete Masse immer wieder in frischtätige Gefäße kömmt die Masse endlich wesentlicher Bestandteil – Glied des wirksamen Geistes.⁵²⁹

It cannot be denied that the Romantics paved the way for the so-called free reception of the modern novel, and were undoubtedly more progressive in this domain than their nineteenth-century counterparts. The "modern" self-consciousness of their works, direct addresses to the "geneigter Leser" and stretching of credibility beyond the realms of the plausible (such as the introduction of a tom-cat as narrator) strongly discourage the reader from taking the fictional world at face value.

Yet the predominance of the omniscient narrative stance in much of the fiction of the nineteenth century, the pursuit of the ideal of a mimetic reproduction of "reality" and the portrayal of characters with whom one can easily identify, or whose psychological motivation can be clearly understood, do not allow the reader much leeway for alternative readings of the material presented. Here, the linking of cause and effect and interweaving of the various narrative threads in a historical context or within the framework of an individual existence has already been done by the narrator: the fictional world and its inhabitants are described with painstaking exactitude, the

⁵²⁹ *Novalis' Werke* (ed. G. Schulz), Munich 1981, p. 535. Quoted in: Petersen, *Der deutsche Roman der Moderne*, p. 70.

clocks in the novelistic world tick comfortably to the same rhythm as the timepieces in the reader's own world; characters are born, live and die, always in that order.

Should, however, the reader be confronted with a fictional reality which has substituted some or all of these reassuring messages for signals which jar with his experience, notwithstanding his willingness to encounter a certain amount of deviation from the norm in any work of fiction, then he has no option, in the face of this *Leerstelle*, to use W. Iser's terminology, but to take over the creation of meaning which had been done for him in the "traditional novel". Indeed, with his description of the gaps in meaning which any literary text presents, and his underlining of the structural significance of the *Leerstelle*, Iser's revolutionary work represents an important contribution to our understanding of the act of reading:

so ist die Struktur der Leerstelle ein zentraler Konstitutionsmodus des Textes im Lesevorgang. Dadurch erweist sich die von der Leerstelle ausgelöste Aktivität zugleich als die Lenkung dieser Aktivität. So ermöglicht die Leerstelle die Beteiligung des Lesers am Vollzug des Textgeschehens.⁵³⁰

As Iser points out, *all* literary texts depend for their effect on the reader dealing with these *Leerstellen*; a text with too few of them threatens to bore the reader. Conversely, novels which show a noticeable departure from the pursuit of mimesis and which display ambiguous causality, a subsersive narrative stance and linguistic obscurities, i.e. a high level of *Leerstellen*, which are difficult to "fill in", as Iser says, and "overcome", often result in that novel being rejected altogether by the reader.⁵³¹

In an *auktorialer Roman* such as *Der Zauberberg*, one might initially assume that the reader would be consciously steered towards a specific reception of the material. Indeed, as we have already seen, the narrator presents Hans Castorp in largely positive terms, but through the repeated emphasis on his character's mediocrity, prevents the reader from adopting too sympathetic an attitude towards him, and encourages at the same time the reader's perception of Hans Castorp not only as a

⁵³⁰ Wolfgang Iser, *Der Akt des Lesens*, Munich 1976, p. 314 .

⁵³¹ cf. Iser, "Die Appellstruktur der Texte. Unbestimmtheit als Wirkungsbedingung literarischer Prosa" in: Warning (ed.), *Rezeptionsästhetik*, 228-252.

representative of his generation, but also as a symbol of Germany as mediator between East and West, at the crossroads between conflicting ideologies.

The same applies to all of the other main characters in the novel: infused with enough life and described with sufficient detail to make them “real” and plausible to the reader, it is also possible to view them as representatives of and symbols for the countries of their birth, forming a microcosm of international relations prior to the First World War. This double function of the characters is reflected in the structure of the novel as a whole and is fully commensurate with Thomas Mann’s intentions; as he says of his characters:

sie sind lauter Exponenten, Repräsentanten und Sendboten geistiger Bezirke, Prinzipien und Welten. Ich hoffe, sie sind deswegen keine Schatten und wandelnde Allegorien. Im Gegenteil bin ich durch die Erfahrung beruhigt, daß der Leser diese Personen, Joachim, Clawdia Chauchat, Peeperkorn, Settembrini und wie sie heißen, als wirkliche Menschen erlebt, deren er sich wie wirklich gemachter Bekanntschaften erinnert.⁵³²

Thomas Mann need not have worried about making these exponents of ideas appear “real” – the immediate identification of Peeperkorn with Gerhart Hauptmann was surely enough to convince him of his success on this front!

The reception of the characters as “representatives” is also suggested to the reader by the characters themselves. Hans Castorp, for example, tells Settembrini: “Du bist nicht irgendein Mensch mit einem Namen, du bist ein Vertreter, Herr Settembrini, ein Vertreter hierorts und an meiner Seite”.⁵³³ Indeed, the reader cannot fail to see Settembrini as the voice of reason. This symbolic function of the characters is further underlined by Clawdia Chauchat. In the encounter between herself and Hans Castorp at *Fasching*, the Russian patient provides an interesting alternative to the romantic preludes of the traditional novel – her conversational foreplay consists of an in-depth discussion of the German race, of which she sees a typical example in front of her; after first describing Joachim in terms of “un jeune homme très étroit, très honnête,

⁵³² Thomas Mann, “Einführung in den Zauberberg”, p. 612.

⁵³³ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 451.

très allemand”, she then includes Hans Castorp in her cameo: “c’est vrai, ihr seid ein wenig bourgeois. Vous aimez l’ordre mieux que la liberté, tout l’Europe le sait”.⁵³⁴

The reader – or rather Thomas Mann’s ideal reader in 1924 – was able to readily identify the issues Hans Castorp is confronted with during his stay in the sanatorium as those preoccupying Germany’s middle classes; as the author himself said:

Die Probleme des ‘Zauberbergs’ waren von Natur nicht massengerecht, aber sie brannten der gebildeten Masse auf den Nägeln, und die allgemeine Not hatte die Rezeptivität des breiten Publikums genau jene alchimistische ‘Steigerung’ erfahren lassen, die das eigentliche Abenteuer des kleinen Hans Castorp ausgemacht hatte. Ja, gewiß, der deutsche Leser erkannte sich wieder in dem schlichten aber ‘verschmutzten’ Helden des Romans; er konnte und mochte ihm folgen.⁵³⁵

Thomas Mann linked what he saw as Hans Castorp’s appeal to a large cross-section of society with the particularly tense climate of the times.

It would appear, then, that the reader’s reception of the characters is fixed by the narrator and the characters themselves, with little scope for variation. However, their actions or lack of actions easily bewilder the reader who approaches *Der Zauberberg* with a receptive apparatus tuned to the workings of the “traditional novel”. In the first third of Mann’s novel, the narrator is at pains to create an atmosphere of suspense and mystery, of things not being quite the way they appear to be on the surface; of Hans Castorp’s journey to Davos the narrator tells us:

Er hatte nicht beabsichtigt, diese Reise sonderlich wichtig zu nehmen, sich innerlich auf sie einzulassen. Seine Meinung vielmehr war gewesen, sie rasch abzutun, weil sie abgetan werden mußte, ganz als derselbe zurückzukehren, als der er abgefahren war, und sein Leben genau dort wieder aufzunehmen, wo er es für einen Augenblick hatte liegenlassen müssen.⁵³⁶

The narrator’s emphasis on his character’s plans to get his trip to Davos over and done with as quickly as possible, and to return to Hamburg unchanged by the experience, is clearly designed to intimate the exact opposite happening.

⁵³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 460.

⁵³⁵ Thomas Mann, “Einführung in den Zauberberg”, p. 610.

⁵³⁶ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 10.

Indeed, as Hans Castorp approaches his destination, a feeling of anxiety overcomes him: “Dieses Emporgehobenwerden in Regionen, wo er noch nie geatmet und wo, wie er wußte, völlig ungewohnte, eigentümlich dünne und spärliche Lebensbedingungen herrschten, – es fing an, ihn zu erregen, ihn mit einer gewissen Ängstlichkeit zu erfüllen”.⁵³⁷ The description of the journey undertaken by Hans Castorp into previously unexplored territory serves as a metaphor for his whole Magic Mountain experience, as he leaves familiar ground (“Heimat und Ordnung”) behind and enters the realm of the unknown: “Schwebend zwischen ihnen und dem Unbekannten fragte er sich, wie es ihm dort oben ergehen werde”.⁵³⁸

In this first chapter the narrator can also be seen as inciting the *reader* to join his character in a new venture, and to leave familiar concepts of the *novel* behind. Joachim Ziemßen, who comes to meet his cousin at the station, warns Hans Castorp: “Du wirst hier mancherlei Neues sehen, paß auf”, and, introducing the theme of temporality for the first time, after Hans Castorp speaks of his three-week stay as if it constituted a lengthy period of time, the frustrated soldier tells him: “Die springen hier um mit der menschlichen Zeit, das glaubst du gar nicht. Drei Wochen sind wie ein Tag vor ihnen [...]Man ändert hier seine Begriffe”.⁵³⁹ The reader, too, will in due course be challenged to revise his perceptions of what constitutes a novel, as an initially engaging storyline and fairly conventional narrative progressively give way to discourse and reflection, thereby stimulating the reader into a higher level of mental activity. Unlike the reader of the traditional novel, the reader of *Der Zauberberg* is to focus on reflection, rather than individual events. As Petersen points out, Thomas Mann’s novel is not devoid of “action” altogether, but:

gemessen an dem, was der traditionelle Roman an Aktivitäten geschildert hatte, begründet der *Zauberberg* einen neuen Typus der Großerzählung, übrigens ohne daß Thomas Mann sich und dem Leser über diese Neuartigkeit Rechenschaft abgelegt hätte. Schon das Verfahren, alles der Wirklichkeit zu entrücken, dient dem Ziel, den Leser aus der Welt der Aktivitäten in die der Kontemplation zu versetzen.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 11.

⁵³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 11.

⁵³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 14.

⁵⁴⁰ Petersen, *Der deutsche Roman der Moderne*, p. 185.

The closeness of the narratorial perspective to Hans Castorp allows the reader to discover the world of the Magic Mountain through *his* eyes to a large extent, and successfully communicates his initial sense of unease: Joachim's repeated use of the phrase "wir hier oben" will strike the reader, as it does Hans Castorp, as somewhat unusual in its seemingly exaggerated accentuation of the differences between the way of life on the mountain and that in the *Flachland*. Further, the generous *Erzählzeit* lavished on Hans Castorp's first day in the sanatorium, which brings the character's present in line with that of the reader, fully allows the reader to approach the rest of the novel with certain preconceptions – which will then be systematically frustrated.

One of Joachim's first welcoming phrases to his cousin is the communication of the fact that the patients' corpses are removed "per Bobbahn", and that Dr. Krokowski's activities are advertised in the sanatorium brochure as being in the field of "Seelenzergliederung". As Hans Castorp discovers, death is very much alive in his new environment. His own room, number 34, has just been conveniently vacated through the death of an American lady; as Joachim, with due respect for the dead, says: "Vorgestern abend hatte die Amerikanerin noch zwei Blutstürze ersten Ranges, und damit war Schluß".⁵⁴¹ Soon afterwards, Hans Castorp's ears are treated to a new acoustic experience:

[...]im ersten Stockwerk blieb Hans Castorp plötzlich stehen, festgebannt von einem vollkommen gräßlichen Geräusch, das in geringer Entfernung hinter einer Biegung des Korridors vernehmlich wurde, einem Geräusch, nicht laut, aber so ausgemacht abscheulicher Art, daß Hans Castorp eine Grimasse schnitt und seinen Vetter mit erweiterten Augen ansah.⁵⁴²

Here the narrator continues to create an atmosphere of suspense: the curiosity of the reader as to the source of the noise is also aroused. It is a cough, but one which resembles no cough Hans Castorp has ever heard before, and one which will not be heard for much longer.

⁵⁴¹ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 20.

⁵⁴² *ibid.*, p. 21.

At the end of the first day, as he drifts into sleep, Hans Castorp attempts to reassure himself by telling himself that his bed is “ein Totenbett, ein gewöhnliches Totenbett”.⁵⁴³ It is not surprising that his wild dreams that night include Joachim being transported down the mountainside “per Bobbahn”.

The narrator, then, does not waste much time in unsettling both Hans Castorp and his reader through repeated intimations of Death, in much the same way that the narrator of a conventional mystery novel would do. The reader would not be entirely to blame for expecting Hans Castorp, in the remainder of the novel, to find himself wrapped up in a mysterious intrigue, and to experience more wondrous goings on of the sort hinted at in the opening chapter.

Hans Castorp’s time on the Magic Mountain will by no means be short of adventures, but the adventures are of an intellectual nature, with Death featuring as a cerebral force which Hans Castorp will have to reckon with, along with other “educational” experiences, rather than as the pivot of the traditional mystery or detective novel. As Thomas Mann said of his hero: “er durchläuft in diesen Jahren, die er als Kranker unter Kranken verbringt, eine Reihe von geistigen und sinnlichen Abenteuern, die erzieherisch auf den jungen Menschen wirken [...]”⁵⁴⁴ In reality, *Der Zauberberg* bears as little resemblance to the novel the first chapter suggests it will develop into, as Hans Castorp’s later reading material on a range of erudite subjects to the *Ocean Steamships* he has brought with him. The abandoned *Ocean Steamships* becomes a symbol of Hans Castorp’s increasing distance from his former self; as the narrator tells us, soon after his arrival at the sanatorium he had ordered more books from home on the subjects of ship-building and engineering, but quickly abandoned them: “Diese Bände lagen aber vernachlässigt zugunsten anderer, einer ganz verschiedenen Sparte und Fakultät angehöriger Lehrwerke [...]”⁵⁴⁵ *Ocean Steamships* also becomes a symbol for the traditional, plot-orientated novel, from which *Der Zauberberg*, as it

⁵⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 28.

⁵⁴⁴ Thomas Mann, letter to Max Rychner 7. 8. 22 in: *Selbstkommentare*, p. 32.

⁵⁴⁵ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 376.

progresses, increasingly departs; Thomas Mann's novel of ideas masquerades, at least initially, as belonging to a different genre, i.e. the mystery novel or adventure novel with sinister overtones. In the same way, *Les Faux-monnayeurs* can on one level pass as a detective novel. This thwarting of traditional expectations in *Der Zauberberg* constitutes in itself a considerable challenge to the reader.

The "Geist der Erzählung" of *Der Zauberberg* cannot, however, be accused of leading the reader up the garden path. After all, does he not, at the outset, warn the reader of a difficult journey ahead? In the *Vorsatz* he says of his tale:

Wir werden sie ausführlich erzählen, genau und gründlich, – denn wann wäre je die Kurz- oder Langweiligkeit einer Geschichte abhängig gewesen von dem Raum und der Zeit, die sie in Anspruch nahm? Ohne Furcht vor dem Odium der Peinlichkeit, neigen wir vielmehr der Ansicht zu, daß nur das Gründliche wahrhaft unterhaltend sei.⁵⁴⁶

All readers with prior knowledge of Thomas Mann's novelistic pace will not realistically expect the story to be told "im Handumdrehen", a fact the narrator does not withhold from the reader. But even those readers, however, who were familiar with the 1901 *Buddenbrooks* could not have been prepared for the extent to which epic storytelling has been swamped by reflexive elements in *Der Zauberberg*. *Buddenbrooks* had, whilst conforming with the realist principles of Scandinavian family sagas, which provided the direct inspiration, simultaneously charted the progressive degeneration of robust Hanseatic merchants into death-bound artists, a theme which by nature could only be portrayed with adherence to temporal continuity, and the novel easily absorbs Thomas Buddenbrook's discovery of Schopenhauer into its epic framework. The subtitle *Verfall einer Familie*, clearly prescribes the way in which the novel is to be read.

Through the rejection of linear progression as a result of the inclusion of reflexive elements, and especially through the *leitmotifs*, the reader of *Der Zauberberg* is able to emulate the *nunc stans* experience of Hans Castorp himself. The fact that the narrator *does* adopt a linear continuum for the description of Hans Castorp's journey

⁵⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 8.

to Davos, and for his portrayals of the early years of his hero and of Naphta – i.e. those events which take place outwith the sphere of the Magic Mountain – reinforces the special and unique relationship of the sanatorium world to temporality. It is clear that the reader is to experience the same temporal confusion Hans Castorp suffers from (or rather, enjoys) and which is also reflected in the narrator's increasingly unsteady chronological progress: after quoting some phrases used by the meanwhile deceased Joachim the narrator refers to his "längst verklungene Worte, – wir wissen nicht, ob sich der Leser noch ganz im klaren darüber ist, wie lange verklungen".⁵⁴⁷

But more than this, Thomas Mann handles time in *Der Zauberberg* in such a way as to stimulate the reader into assuming a greater responsibility for the engendering of meaning. As W. Kudzus in his perceptive article "Understanding Media: Zur Kritik dualistischer Humanität im 'Zauberberg'" – one of the very few pieces of research in which the rôle of the reader in *Der Zauberberg* has been tackled – observes:

Besonders [...] in der Verschiebung im Verhältnis von Erzählzeit und erzählter Zeit zeigt sich, daß dieser Roman seine eigenen Grenzen erkundet und zugleich den Leser aktiviert. Der Desorientiertheit, die mit dem Verlust der chronologisch geordneten Zeit eintritt, wirkt eine Imagination entgegen, die sich von der Emanzipation der Erzählzeit stimuliert sieht.⁵⁴⁸

As Kudzus suggests, the extreme disparity between the *Erzählzeit* and the *erzählte Zeit*, as well as the abandonment of chronological progression, have the effect of stimulating the reader's imagination in order to compensate for the narrator's limited functions.

The parallel between his hero and the reader is reinforced when the narrator says of his character's increasingly lax attitude towards time:

Niemand bestreitet nun freilich, daß Hans Castorp, wenn er gewollt hätte, ohne wirkliche Schwierigkeit aus dem Ungewissen sich rechnerisch hätte ins klare setzen können, ebenso, wie das der Leser mit leichter Mühe zu tun vermöchte, falls das Verschwommene und Versponnene seinem gesunden Sinn widerstehen sollte.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 738.

⁵⁴⁸ In: Heinz Sauereißig, *Besichtigung des Zauberbergs*, Biberach an der Riss 1974, 55-80, p. 60.

⁵⁴⁹ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 741.

The reader is reminded at this point that his own sense of time has become confused; he is not, however, urged in very strong terms by the narrator to take it upon himself to restore linear progression. In fact, Kudzus convincingly suggests that there are advantages for the reader in remaining temporally confused: he insists that the narrator's comments on time act as a signal to the reader, urging him not to feel constrained by the limitations of narrative techniques:

Doch bringt dieser Mangel an Übersicht auch die Möglichkeit einer intensiveren Leseerfahrung mit sich. In der Reflexion des Erzählers auf das Verhältnis von Erzählzeit und erzählter Zeit tritt keineswegs nur Sinnlosigkeit und hilflose Stagnation zutage. Im Zerfall der erzählten Zeit und der Emanzipation der Erzählzeit liegt vielmehr die Möglichkeit, die Grenzen des Normalbewußtseins zu sprengen und sogar 'die Grenze aller menschlichen' Zeiterfahrung zu überschreiten.⁵⁵⁰

The narrator explicitly states his intention to initiate the reader into the mysterious workings of time, and not without a certain coquettish tone of protectiveness vis-à-vis the latter; at the beginning of the chapter *Ewigkeitssuppe und plötzliche Klarheit* he tells us:

Hier steht eine Erscheinung bevor, über die der Erzähler sich selbst zu wundern gut tut, damit nicht der Leser auf eigene Hand sich allzusehr darüber wundere. Während nämlich unser Rechenschaftsbericht über die ersten drei Wochen von Hans Castorps Aufenthalt bei Denen hier oben [...] Räume und Zeitmengen verschlungen hat, deren Ausdehnung unseren halb eingestandenen Erwartungen nur zu sehr entspricht, – wird die Bewältigung der nächsten drei Wochen seines Besuches an diesem Orte kaum so viele Zeilen, ja Worte und Augenblicke erfordern, als jener Seiten, Bogen, Stunden und Tagewerke gekostet hat: im Nu, das sehen wir kommen, werden diese drei Wochen hinter uns gebracht und beigesetzt sein.⁵⁵¹

The "implied reader"⁵⁵² is introduced to the metaphysical ruminations on time gently, as if he were as naive and simple as the hero of the narration himself; the narrator continues: "es mag nützlich sein, den Leser in Ansehung des Zeitgeheimnisses auf noch ganz andere Wunder und Phänomene, als das hier auffallende, vorzubereiten, die uns in seiner Gesellschaft zustoßen werden".⁵⁵³ The narrator then introduces the theme of "Ewigkeitssuppe", the sensation Hans Castorp has as he lies ill in bed, by

⁵⁵⁰ Kudzus, "Understanding Media", p. 59.

⁵⁵¹ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 253.

⁵⁵² cf. Iser, *Der implizite Leser*, Munich 1972.

⁵⁵³ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 253.

drawing on the reader's own experience of this phenomenon, but with due pedagogical caution.

The reader is thus to be initiated progressively into the mysterious workings of time; through a series of comments from the narrator which invite complicity with himself and his material ("unser Held", "unsere Geschichte" etc.), he is engaged in the tale, but addressed in the same tone of paternal concern as Hans Castorp. In other words, it becomes clear that the reader is to make the same *Steigerung* as the hero he is reading about. Indeed, only four chapters later the narrator no longer deems it necessary to warn the reader of forthcoming ruminations on time, but rather plunges him straight into the question: "Was ist die Zeit?"⁵⁵⁴ As Scharfschwerdt says:

Der Leser soll [...] unter der Regie des Erzählers die Entwicklung fortsetzen, die Hans Castorp begonnen hat [...] dem Erzählvorgang ist eine 'Steigerung' immanent, die auf der Intention gründet, den Leser zu einem relativ ausdrücklich vorgegebenen Ziel zu führen.⁵⁵⁵

In this respect, *Der Zauberberg* can be seen as representing a "modernisation of the Bildungsroman" through its allowing the *reader*, as well as the main character, to be subjected to a succession of pedagogical influences. However, as Scharfschwerdt emphasises, the fact that mechanisms are in place to guide the reader towards completing the *Steigerung* of Hans Castorp hardly allows for a free, "modern" reception.

Thomas Mann's narrator owes a great deal to his forefathers of the eighteenth century, but the analogy with Fielding does not end there. In his analysis of the rôle of the reader in *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, Iser draws attention to the structuring function accorded to the use of contrasts, and to Fielding's claim to be the first writer to implement it. The dubious accuracy of Fielding's statement notwithstanding, Iser emphasises the centrality of this technique in *Tom Jones*, and sees Fielding's theoretical discourse on the contrast (chapter V, I) as an important clue to the reader as to possible receptions of the novel.

⁵⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 472.

⁵⁵⁵ Jürgen Scharfschwerdt, *Thomas Mann und der deutsche Bildungsroman*, Stuttgart 1967, p. 156.

According to Iser, a given phenomenon can only be fully grasped in its entirety if its “negative pole” is simultaneously presented. Moreover, the contrast principle in Iser’s view does not merely allow the reader to understand something, but constitutes an important means by which the author can mould the reader’s reception. Through the narrator’s defining of the outer limits within which his reception is allowed to roam, the reader is encouraged to reflect critically upon the text he is reading – but at the same time strongly advised to remain within these prescribed boundaries.⁵⁵⁶

Der Zauberberg is constructed in terms of a series of oppositional pairs; Thomas Mann imparts a structure to his novel which challenges the demands of the Naturalists and the realists for verisimilitude. Comparable to the way in which the contrasting mentors Thwackum and Square in *Tom Jones* encourage this kind of dynamic to come into play, is the way Thomas Mann’s narrator throws Hans Castorp into the fray between the conflicting forces of Naphta and Settembrini. Not only do the views of the “mentors” provide a comprehensive ideological framework within which their novice begins to evaluate all phenomena, but their attempts at educating Hans Castorp also provide a clear model for the reader’s own activation and involvement with the questions at stake. Despite the inadequacies of his own *Steigerung*, the responses of Hans Castorp to the extreme positions occupied by Naphta and Settembrini strongly suggest to the reader which view he himself is to adopt:

Alles stellten sie auf die Spitze, diese zwei, wie es wohl nötig war, wenn man streiten wollte, und haderten erbittert um äußerste Wahlfälle, während ihm doch schien, als ob irgendwo inmitten zwischen den strittigen Unleidlichkeiten, zwischen rednerischem Humanismus und analphabetischer Barbarei das gelegen sein müsse, was man als das Menschliche oder Humane versöhnlich ansprechen durfte.⁵⁵⁷

The Naphta/Settembrini dialogues therefore both stimulate and control the reader’s critical reflection. Either Fielding was very progressive or Thomas Mann very traditional! Whereas at the beginning of *Der Zauberberg* Hans Castorp’s wholly

⁵⁵⁶ Iser, “Die Leserrolle in Fieldings Joseph Andrews und Tom Jones” in: Warning (ed.), *Rezeptionsästhetik*, 435-466.

⁵⁵⁷ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 715.

inappropriate, or non-existent responses to their pedagogical endeavours create *Leerstellen*, these are progressively filled for the reader as the narrator goes on to describe Hans Castorp's taking up of a stance – that of the ironist.

Yet the narrator of *Der Zauberberg* by no means fills in all the *Leerstellen* for the reader. One example of this is provided in the chapter *Hippe*, where Hans Castorp takes a walk to a nearby waterfall, before attending the first of Dr. Krokowski's lectures, and in the course of which his nose starts to bleed. As Hans Castorp is not obviously ill, the reader most probably looks for psychological causes. The closeness of the narrator's perspective to his character allows the reader access to Hans Castorp's thoughts which have taken him back in time to the significant scene in the schoolyard with Pribislav Hippe. Here, the link between Hippe and Clawdia Chauchat emerges for the first time: "Wie merkwürdig ähnlich er ihr sah, – dieser hier oben! Darum also interessiere ich mich so für sie? Oder vielleicht auch: habe ich mich darum so für ihn interessiert?"⁵⁵⁸ These thoughts are presented as those of someone in a confused state: "er riß die Augen auf, verwirrt von der Tiefe seiner Entrücktheit"⁵⁵⁹ and do not allow the reader to fully grasp Hans Castorp's predicament.

In the *Fasching* scene the connection will be made slightly more explicit, as Hans Castorp reenacts the scene of his schooldays by lending Clawdia a pencil, and where "die Gestalt des 'Kirigisen'" is more intimately linked with the Russian woman with clearly boyish traits whose eyes are described in an almost identical fashion to Hippe's. Again, in this scene, Hans Castorp acts as if in a dream, and it is up to the reader to make the link between the significance of this association and his earlier nosebleed. And it is not until the chapter *Schnee*, through the description of Hans Castorp lying in the mountains in an unconscious state, that the reader will be able to exploit the full associative potential of the chapter *Hippe*:

So blieb er liegen, als endlich das Blut versiegte – lag still, die Hände hinter dem Kopf verschränkt, mit hochgezogenen Knien, die Augen geschlossen, die Ohren erfüllt vom Rauschen, nicht unwohl, eher besänftigt vom reichlichen Aderlaß und in einem

⁵⁵⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 170-171.

⁵⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 170.

Zustände sonderbar herabgesetzter Lebenstätigkeit; denn wenn er ausgeatmet hatte, fühlte er lange kein Bedürfnis, neue Luft einzuholen, sonder ließ mit stillgestelltem Leibe ruhig sein Herz eine Reihe von Schlägen tun, bis er spät und träge wieder einen oberflächlichen Atemzug aufnahm.⁵⁶⁰

Here, the state of the protagonist's consciousness refers the reader back to the trance of *Walpurgisnacht* and the nosebleed of the *Hippe* chapters, and yet there are no clear signals in the text to indicate the *precise* nature of the connections between Clawdia, Hippe and this death-like state. Instead, Thomas Mann offers the reader a range of constellar possibilities, which point to the infinite complexity of the human psyche – an area the narrator does not see fit to comment on. The task of disentangling and reconstructing the *leitmotifs* thus gives the reader considerable interpretative leeway. As Kudzus emphasises, the very economy of the *leitmotif* activates the reader into making the necessary connections,⁵⁶¹ in a way which presents an alternative to the obvious linking done by the narrator in more traditional novels.

When the reader's sense of time is brought in line with that of Hans Castorp by the steady reduction of the *Erzählzeit* for increasingly large stretches of *erzählte Zeit* – an attempt to reproduce the *nunc stans* – the narrator assures the reader that this move is fully commensurate with the laws of narration: “Dies also könnte wundernehmen; und doch ist es in der Ordnung und entspricht den Gesetzen des Erzählens und Zuhörens”.⁵⁶² We are reminded of Fielding's direct addresses to the reader on the handling of time in *Tom Jones* and once again, Thomas Mann would appear to be fully versed in the rules of narrative. But is he? Jauss believes that this attempt to merge the reader's time experience with that of Hans Castorp fails because the omniscient narrator has retained the perspective of the *Flachland* and tells his tale focusing on its “rich and interesting contents”. This makes the passing of time seem

⁵⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 165.

⁵⁶¹ “Das Leitmotiv ist wesentlich auf Ergänzung und Vervollständigung von seiten des Lesers und nicht auf dessen kulinarische Passivität oder gar auf eine naive Identifikation mit der heraufbeschworenen Zeitlosigkeit angelegt. Vielmehr ist diese Zeitlosigkeit aufs engste mit der Aktivität eines Lesers verknüpft, der in der ‘unendlichen’ Vielfalt der Assoziationen die Möglichkeiten entdeckt, sich selbst ins Spiel zu bringen, ohne dem ‘Nacheinander’ eines von vorneherein festgelegten Zeitmaßes zu unterwerfen”. Kudzus, “Understanding Media”, p. 61.

⁵⁶² *Der Zauberberg*, p. 253.

long for the reader, whereas for Hans Castorp the seven years on the Magic Mountain are shortened “bis zur Nichtigkeit”.⁵⁶³ Jauss’ comments highlight to what extent the desire to allow the reader to experience “die reine Zeit” would appear to be incompatible with omniscient narration and linear progression – the mainstays of the traditional novel – and raise the fascinating question of what form a novel would take, which truly allowed the reader to experience timelessness. (Would anyone read it? Some might argue that the reflexive elements in *Der Zauberberg* do their bit towards the creation of an impression of timelessness ...)

The narrator consciously draws on the reader’s experiences when describing Hans Castorp’s sense of an eternal present, saying it reminds him of a sensation he once had when walking along a beach. He tells us: “Wir vertrauen, daß auch Erfahrung und Erinnerung des Lesers uns nicht im Stiche lassen werden, wenn wir auf diese wundersame Verlorenheit Bezug nehmen”.⁵⁶⁴ Bulhof has suggested that it is the intention of the narrator to create “eine festgefügte Gesellschaft” between himself, his characters and the reader,⁵⁶⁵ as when, for example, he tells us that some of the patients feel a certain satisfaction in seeing the dying Joachim returning to the sanatorium and becoming one of “us” again, after his brief but unsuccessful return to the *Flachland*: “Wir haben niemanden persönlich im Auge, glauben aber an eine gewisse Genugtuung, die mancher darüber empfand, daß Joachim in seiner Properkeit nun wieder einer der Unsrigen sein würde”.⁵⁶⁶

It would appear that on one hand the narrator wishes to avoid ambiguity, or *Unbestimmtheit*, to use Ingarden’s terminology. Yet at the same time he incites the reader to abandon pre-established concepts and, for example, trade in traditional

⁵⁶³ “Der Erzähler, der sich für seine Darstellung die Perspektive des ‘Flachlands’ reserviert hat, macht von allen traditionellen Vorrechten seiner Allwissenheit Gebrauch, um das Gleichgewicht seiner ‘Geschichte’ zu retten; darum kann auch der Normaltag des Zauberbergs in seiner feststehenden Einförmigkeit in der Zeitgestalt der Erzählung nicht unmittelbar anschaulich werden und muß sich die fortschreitende Zeitentrückung seines ‘Helden’ als ein objektiver Prozeß darstellen, der dem Leser anders erscheint, als ihn Castorp selbst erfährt”. Jauss, *Zeit und Erinnerung*, p. 45.

⁵⁶⁴ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 745.

⁵⁶⁵ Bulhof, *Transpersonalismus und Synchronizität*, p. 181.

⁵⁶⁶ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 684.

linguistic tools for new ones, if he wishes to fully appreciate the experiences of his character. After telling us that Hans Castorp, having devoured one sanatorium meal, looks forward to the next, the narrator then questions the appropriateness of the verb “sich freuen”, saying it would be scorned by Hans Castorp too:

Möglicherweise ist der Leser geneigt, nur solche Ausdrücke, nämlich vergnügte und gewöhnliche, in bezug auf Hans Castorps Person und sein Innenleben als passend und zulässig zu erachten; aber wir erinnern daran, daß er sich als ein junger Mann von Vernunft und Gewissen auf den Anblick und die Nähe Frau Chauchats nicht einfach ‘freuen’ konnte, und da wir es wissen müssen, stellen wir fest, daß er dies Wort, wenn man es ihm angeboten hätte, achselzuckend verworfen haben würde.⁵⁶⁷

Conventional phrases must be dropped, as they do not fit the special circumstances of the sanatorium world. Meyer sees authorial intrusions such as this one as bids for the reader’s collaboration: “Der Sinn solcher Einmischung ist, daß der Leser die fortschreitende begriffliche Präzisierung eines Tatbestandes [...] aktiv mitmacht”.⁵⁶⁸ However, it is important to emphasise that the reader’s participation, or the changes in his perception, are politely requested by the narrator, and not forced upon him by an abrupt change of linguistic register in the text itself.

Through the frequent direct addresses to the reader, encouraging him to draw on his experiences in order to fully comprehend the events being described, yet at the same time urging him to think in unconventional categories, the reader is being gently but steadily steered towards a certain reception of the material: the *auktoriale Erzählsituation* constantly reinforces the reader’s position as recipient of material which the narrator has taken upon himself to narrate. At no point is this consciousness of the three-way relationship in fiction between narrator, narration and recipient as clearly articulated as when the narrator, setting the scene in the chapter *Vingt et un* for the evening gathering with Mynheer Peeperkorn and describing the whereabouts of certain guests, tells us:

Sehen wir uns unter diesen Verhältnissen nach Hans Castorp um, so finden wir ihn im Schreib- und Lesezimmer, jenem Gesellschaftsraum, wo ihm einst (dies Einst ist vage; Erzähler, Held und Leser sind nicht mehr ganz im klaren über seinen

⁵⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 193.

⁵⁶⁸ Meyer, “Zum Problem der epischen Integration”, p. 55.

Vergangenheitsgrad) gewichtige Eröffnungen über die Organisation des Menschheitsfortschritts zuteil geworden.⁵⁶⁹

The narrator repeatedly exploits the traditional expectations of the reader by referring to events to be described later, thereby constantly kindling an interest in his tale. This is particularly explicit at the beginning of the chapter *Mynheer Peeperkorn (des weiteren)* where he articulates the questions the reader, who is eager to discover the fate of Peeperkorn, will be forming:

Mynheer Peeperkorn blieb im Haus 'Berghof' während dieses ganzen Winters – soviel davon noch übrig war – und bis ins Frühjahr hinein, so daß es zuletzt noch zu einem recht denkwürdigen gemeinsamen Ausflug (auch Settembrini und Naphta waren dabei) ins Flüelatal und zum dortigen Wasserfall kam ... Zuletzt noch? Und danach blieb er also nicht länger? – Nein, länger nicht. – Er reiste ab? – Ja und nein. – Ja und nein? Bitte keine Geheimniskrämerei!⁵⁷⁰

In this way, the narrator consciously heightens the suspense of his tale yet pleads for patience on the part of the reader: “[...] wozu die Ungeduld? Daß nicht alles auf einmal da ist, bleibt als Bedingung des Lebens und der Erzählung zu achten, und man wird sich doch wohl gegen die gottgegebenen Formen menschlicher Erkenntnis nicht auflehnen wollen!”⁵⁷¹ This comment is, of course, ironic, and only of relevance in the first reading: indeed, the special “circular” structure of the novel which emerges in the second reading shows the idea expressed here – i.e. that fictional narration must emulate life in its linear progression – to be hollow. These comments, and others from the narrator, which in the first reading would appear to be a plea for patience and respect for the laws of narration, are revealed as deliberately misleading in the course of the second reading, bathed in the same ambiguous light as so many of the phenomena on the Magic Mountain. Through the novel’s “musical” structure and the invitation to read it several times, the reader is elevated to a position which allows him to evaluate the theoretical comments of the omniscient narrator in the light of the fiction itself.

⁵⁶⁹ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 760.

⁵⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 785.

⁵⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 785.

Like many critics, U. Reidel-Schrewe has pointed to the conscious drawing in of the reader's perspective in the novel. Interestingly, she also suggests a dual function of the narrator's use of "wir" in both encouraging a certain reception on the part of the reader, and in disguising the subjectivity of the narrator, a personal tone he goes to even greater lengths to stifle in his reflections in time through his use of the more objective "man".⁵⁷² However, when Reidel-Schrewe suggests that the narrator's allowing of Hans Castorp to portray Peeperkorn in his own words shows a willingness to accept his character as his equal, it is more difficult to subscribe to this view. To quote Reidel-Schrewe:

an dieser Stelle kommentiert der Erzähler nun den Beitrag seiner Figur als dem seinen ebenbürtig, d. h., daß Castorp auf der Diskursebene des Erzählers anerkannt wird. Diese Einbeziehung Castorps in den Erzählvorgang geht soweit, daß es heißen kann: 'übrigens kommt dieser Ausdruck auf unsere Rechnung oder allenfalls die Hans Castorps'.⁵⁷³

Reidel-Schrewe's interpretation overlooks the irony with which such comments are made and glosses over the deliberate distance which the narrator is at pains to maintain between himself and his simple hero, and which encourages the *reader* to complete the educational process which Hans Castorp fails to make.

For the relationship between narrator, Hans Castorp and reader is *not* one of three-way equality. In the chapter *Schnee* Hans Castorp dreams his vision of humanity; this vision, however, occurs to him as he lies asleep in the snow; and the ultimate lesson, "Der Mensch soll um der Güte und Liebe willen dem Tode keine Herrschaft einräumen über seine Gedanken",⁵⁷⁴ (now adorning many a gravestone), is not one which is reached by a series of logical conclusions and serious reflection in a fully conscious state. Moreover, it is completely erased from his memory the next morning. Here it is the *reader* who is able to learn the lesson which Hans Castorp is unable to retain. Indeed, Koopmann's conclusions on the "message" of the *Schnee* chapter, i.e. that it consists of nothing but a few empty phrases, may be perceptive, but do not take

⁵⁷² Ursula Reidel-Schrewe, *Die Raumstruktur des narrativen Textes*, Würzburg 1992, p. 77.

⁵⁷³ *ibid.*, p. 78.

⁵⁷⁴ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 677.

into account the fact that the entire chapter constitutes a *Leerstelle* for the reader to complete.⁵⁷⁵ It is admittedly difficult to establish what the precise message of the snow vision is, but the absence of narratorial intervention suggests a desire to allow the reader to reach his own conclusions, and it is in this chapter that, in terms of educational progress, the reader takes over from the dazed Hans Castorp who from then on will fall increasingly prey to the numbing influences of the sanatorium world. Once a novice himself, he has by this stage fulfilled his function as initiator of the reader into the world of reflection. From this point onwards, the increasingly dismayed tone of the narrator as he charts his character's submission acts as a signal to the *lector in fabula* to remain alert.

“Nicht nur der Erzähler, auch seine Geschöpfe können Ironiker sein. So Hans Castorp”, writes Karthaus.⁵⁷⁶ If anything, the *Schnee* vision shows to what extent Hans Castorp acquires an ironic distance from his mentors Naphta and Settembrini: “Die beiden Pädagogen! Ihr Streit und ihre Gegensätze sind selber nur ein guazzabuglio und ein verworrener Schlachtenlärm, wovon sich niemand betäuben läßt, der nur ein bißchen frei im Kopfe ist und fromm im Herzen”.⁵⁷⁷ Ironic freedom also characterises the shipping engineer's relationship to Clawdia Chauchat, with whom he engages in French conversation, saying “parler français, c'est parler sans parler, en quelque manière – sans responsabilité, ou comme nous parlons en rêve”.⁵⁷⁸ In the same way, Thomas Mann's creation of what B. Allemann has termed “ein ironischer Spielraum”⁵⁷⁹ in his narration encourages the reader to adopt a similarly circumspect attitude towards the phenomena he encounters, and makes it clear that there is no necessity for the reader to commit himself to *any* of the views depicted.

⁵⁷⁵ “Wenn wir ehrlich sind, müßten wir uns eingestehen, daß es Worte sind, nichts als Worte, in ihrem Abstraktionsgrad so verräterisch wie in ihrer Ungenauigkeit [...] Der Roman hat keine Lehren anzubieten, und er ist nichts anderes als Zeugnis eines rhetorisch wohlorganisierten, aber eigentümlich ergebnislosen Suchens nach etwas, was allenfalls *verbaliter* existiert”. H. Koopmann, “Die Lehren des Zauberbergs” in: *Das 'Zauberberg'-Symposium 1994 in Davos, Frankfurt/Main 1995*, 59-80 p. 71.

⁵⁷⁶ Karthaus, “Zu Thomas Manns Ironie. Für Odo Marquard zum 26. 11. 1988” in: *Thomas Mann Jahrbuch* 1, 1 (1988), 80-98, p. 82.

⁵⁷⁷ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 676.

⁵⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 462.

⁵⁷⁹ Beda Allemann, *Ironie und Dichtung*, Pfullingen 1956, p. 20.

It is interesting to note that Karthaus sees the ironic stance of *Der Zauberberg* as providing a useful tool for depicting the complex nature of “reality”. He maintains that through irony, which allows seemingly disparate elements to coalesce (Karthaus refers, for example, to the description of Hans Castorp’s tears following the death of Joachim and which are described by the narrator in terms of their biochemical components), thus causing several temporal planes to co-exist simultaneously, Thomas Mann is suggesting the complexity and chaos of reality, in a way which the nineteenth-century novel with its exhaustive descriptions failed to achieve. As Karthaus says:

Wirklichkeit, ironisch betrachtet, ist immer mehr als das Faktische. Sie enthält Vergangenheit und Zukunft, Geschichte und Möglichkeiten. Biographische Erinnerungen, poetische Sentimentalität, naturwissenschaftliche Erkenntnisse sind im ironischen Bewußtsein gleichzeitig präsent.⁵⁸⁰

Irony allows these elements to exist side by side by conjuring them up *in the imagination of the reader*: it is the reader who is able to fully accommodate what Karthaus refers to as “[die] Koexistenz mehrerer Bewußtseinslagen”.⁵⁸¹ In this respect, *Der Zauberberg* shows not only a very modern realisation of the limits of the written word to fully capture reality, but also the desire to stimulate the reader into taking over the responsibility for the generation of meaning. Furthermore, an “ironischer Spielraum” had been conspicuous through its absence in the *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*: by turning the “Zivilisationsliterat” of the war polemic into Settembrini and showing his position as relative to that of Naptha, and indeed to all positions tenable, Thomas Mann demonstrates a desire to present the reader of his *novel* with an infinitely more differentiated scope for interpretation.

The freedom granted to the reader through irony represents a major development in Thomas Mann’s work: certainly, the narrator of *Buddenbrooks* does not refrain from adding ironic touches, but in the family saga the irony is directed at the characters themselves and does not invite the reader to draw his or her own conclusions. Instead,

⁵⁸⁰ Karthaus, “Zu Thomas Manns Ironie”, p. 83.

⁵⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 84.

Buddenbrooks presents him with a high proportion of what Ingarden refers to as “schematisierte Ansichten” or ready-made conclusions.

Hans Castorp’s tale may well, as Walzel proposed, be presented by an antiquated *auktorialer Erzähler*, but the stance of the reader is at least equally privileged. On several occasions, the reader is provided with information which allows him to have greater insight into a certain situation than the characters themselves, often including Hans Castorp. One example of this, to which Heftrich has drawn attention, is when the young engineer, during the séance, asks spirit Holger how long he will have to stay on the Magic Mountain. To his reply, “er solle quer durch sein Zimmer gehen”, we read: “Quer durch sein Zimmer? Quer durch Nummer 34? Was sollte nun das? Während man saß und beriet und die Köpfe schüttelte, geschah auf einmal ein schwerer Faustschlag gegen die Tür”.⁵⁸² As Heftrich points out, the reader reading the novel the second time will know that 3 and 4 added together form a total of seven years on the Magic Mountain, and that the abrupt “Faustschlag” is really the “Donnerschlag” of the First World War.⁵⁸³ Even the reader reading the novel for the first time, after so much play on the number seven, might guess that spirit Holger is playing this game too. But here the code can only be deciphered by the reader; the characters, who are unaware of the significance of number seven, remain literally and metaphorically in the dark, including he who had originally asked the question.

The keys for the understanding of the deeper layers of the novel are provided to a large extent by the wide-ranging literary and mythological associations, many of which are lost on Hans Castorp, who confuses Rhadamanthys with Radames: they are directed towards the “postulated reader”. When during the course of the *Fasching* celebrations Settembrini quotes to Frau Stöhr “Die alte Baubo kommt allein”, knowledge of the continuation of the rhyme – “und reitet auf einem Mutterschwein” – is assumed on the part of the reader: we are simply told “[Settembrini] fügte auch den

⁵⁸² *Der Zauberberg*, p. 911.

⁵⁸³ Heftrich, *Zauberbergmusik*, pp. 43-44.

Reimvers hinzu, klar und plastisch”.⁵⁸⁴ Knowing that Settembrini’s quotation is lifted from *Faust II*, and being able to see the events of the Magic Mountain in the light of Goethe’s work, is vital for the reader’s full appreciation of Thomas Mann’s novel.

Indeed, the ideal reader of *Der Zauberberg* is one who is prepared to bring his or her own knowledge and cultural understanding to the text, make the associations and if necessary, carry out research should his own resources prove insufficient. Many of the references are instantly understandable, but they feature with such density that the demands on even the most highly educated reader are virtually impossible to meet: the extent of scholarly research into establishing the possible significance of some of these allusions (such as the parallels between the chapters *Walpurgisnacht* and *Fragwürdigstes* suggested by extensive quotation from *Faust II*), is proof of this point.⁵⁸⁵

But do almost excessive demands on the cultural capacities of the reader represent innovation? A scholar as the ideal reader, is, of course nothing new: Dante’s *Inferno* could hardly qualify as a “modern novel” through this claim alone. In *Der Zauberberg*, however, an understanding of the allusions is essential for the deeper understanding of the text, in a way which begins to approach the enormous cultural baggage required for the decoding of Joyce’s later works; further, the references and allusions are not mere ornaments, but are systematically arranged in such a way – analogous to music – that they draw attention to themselves as elements of a composition and to their function within that composition. As Lange has perceptively observed, making huge educational demands on the reader is not in itself a “modern” aim: “Freilich zeigt sich auch in der Bindung des Thomas Mannschen Erzählens an einen strukturell genau einkalkulierten Leser die unzeitgemäße Eigentümlichkeit seines Vorhabens”.⁵⁸⁶ But as Lange also notes, Thomas Mann wishes to draw the

⁵⁸⁴ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 448.

⁵⁸⁵ cf. Heftrich, *Zauberbergmusik*, p. 129f.

⁵⁸⁶ Lange, “Thomas Mann: Tradition und Experiment”, p. 576.

reader's attention to the *function* of the allusions as elements forming part of a greater whole:

Diesem Leser, der geneigt ist, Bildung als Verfügung über Formen eher als Inhalte zu verstehen, kommen in Thomas Manns Werk systematisierte Varianten von historisch vorgeformten erzählerischen Mustern entgegen, Varianten der überlieferten Gattungsordnungen und der rhetorischen Kategorien, etwa der Anspielung, der Analogie, der *Simulatio* oder Wiederholung.⁵⁸⁷

The insistence with which allusions are employed in *Der Zauberberg* not only heightens the novel's interpretative potential, but also draws the reader's attention to the work's participation in a long-established fictional tradition.

To conclude, the reception of the reader would appear to be carefully steered towards an identification with Hans Castorp, albeit a limited one: the engineer is portrayed as ordinary enough to appeal to a wide readership, but with enough irony to delineate his intellectual contours. This partial identification with the hero, the objectively presented and non-integrated "Bildungsgespräche" of Naphta and Settembrini, together with the direct addresses to the reader in the mould of Fielding, incite the reader to experience a *Steigerung* which goes beyond that of the protagonist, yet which is carefully steered towards his adoption of a similarly ironic stance.

However, given the fact that the reception of the reader is systematically guided away from traditional plot elements and towards discourse, and that Thomas Mann rejects linear progression and introduces the *leitmotif*, *Der Zauberberg* can be seen as a "cool medium", to quote McLuhan, inviting a high level of participation from the reader, and paving the way for the emergence of novels which generate a freer reception and stimulate a greater flexibility of interpretation. One example of this development is the work of Wolfgang Koeppen: in his novels *Tauben im Grass* (1951) or *Tod in Rom* (1954), contradictory points of view and ways of behaviour are mediated in the absence of a reliable narrator, thus truly permitting the reader to draw his own conclusions.

⁵⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 576.

Our first glimpse of Hans Castorp is of the young man on the slow, winding train to Davos, his *Ocean Steamships* beside him. Our first encounter with his counterpart, Gide's Edouard, is on the "le rapide" from Dieppe to Paris, as he reads Passavant's *La Barre Fixe*. Differences in methods of transport apart, the "main characters" of both *Der Zauberberg* and *Les Faux-monnayeurs* are first portrayed as readers.

In *Der Zauberberg*, as we have seen, the abandoned *Ocean Steamships* symbolizes Hans Castorp's increasing distance from his former *Flachland* self; further, his developing taste for more demanding works contrasts sharply with the frenzied consumption of erotic literature that grips the inhabitants of the sanatorium as they indulge in increasingly trivial pursuits. Indirectly, then, Thomas Mann equates serious, independent reading with the acquisition of an (albeit dubious) education. This was certainly true for himself: having had to repeat two years of the Katharineum in Lübeck and finally managing to leave that institution when he was, in his own words, "so alt wie der Westerwald",⁵⁸⁸ his own vast auto-didactic education arose from a lifetime of assiduous reading. Indeed, he lets his reader smile at his naïve young hero's words to his cousin on the subject of literature: "Siehst du wohl, daß es in der Literatur auf die schönen Worte ankommt? Ich habe es gleich gemerkt".⁵⁸⁹ Through the thematisation of the act of reading, the reader of *Der Zauberberg* is encouraged to read critically.

Edouard in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* is clearly scathing towards Passavant's *La Barre fixe*, and consoles himself over his rival's critical and commercial success by telling himself that at least his own novels are not sold at railway stations. Reading is one of the central activities in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*: whether it is the critical appraisal of novels, or the trespassing onto the letters and diaries written by and intended for other people, seldom has a novel been written in which the act of reading features so heavily. Our first glimpse of many of the characters is of them engaged in reading:

⁵⁸⁸ Quoted in: Hans Mayer, *Thomas Mann*, Frankfurt/Main 1980, p. 375.

⁵⁸⁹ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 220.

Gontran Passavant, growing impatient with watching over his dead father “va se rasseoir et se replonge dans sa lecture”,⁵⁹⁰ our first view of Dhurmer is of him clutching a book; there are countless examples. As Prince has pointed out, there are as many different readers in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* as there are ways of reading, and even the narrator himself indicates his own responses to earlier notes on Bernard, as well as his reaction to a letter from Olivier to Bernard, thereby highlighting the importance of critical reading. Both Mann and Gide differentiate between the reading of popular works, and the reading of serious literature, but what Gide articulates more clearly is the *way* in which one is to read, a concept which is at the core of his plans for *Les Faux-monnayeurs*. Indeed, the realisations of these plans sets Gide’s novel apart from that of its predecessors.

As we have seen, Gide’s novel already displays a consciousness of the potentially misleading nature of language, of a world where signifier no longer denotes a universally valid signified. This is not only expressed at great length by Strouvillou and by several other characters, but also by the narrator himself, who stresses the temporary nature of what he is writing. After describing the initial awkwardness between Edouard and Olivier as “inexplicable”, he adds: “Je n’aime pas ce mot ‘inexplicable’, et ne l’écris ici que par insuffisance provisoire”.⁵⁹¹ Because of the insufficiencies of language, the reader is required to read all the more carefully. In the letter from Olivier to Bernard about his stay in Italy with Passavant, the only authentic element – the sentences expressing his affection for Edouard – have been scored over and have to be deciphered for us: we as readers are also incited to “read between the lines” throughout. Masson has suggested the novel be termed “un roman à clef” because of the frequency with which Gide refers to real keys:⁵⁹² when, for example, Georges Molinier is asked how he obtained access to his father’s love letters, he produces a huge set of keys, saying: “Il y en a pour tous les tiroirs”.⁵⁹³ Indeed, the reader must read with extreme care in order to find the key which unlocks the meaning held in each text. In *Les Faux-monnayeurs* Gide is searching for a reader who will actively

⁵⁹⁰ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 51.

⁵⁹¹ *ibid.*, p. 211.

⁵⁹² Masson, *Lire Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 154.

⁵⁹³ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 262.

participate in the shaping of the text, an innovation which looks ahead to Barthes' statement: "lire, c'est vraiment écrire ... j'écris ou je réécris le texte que je lis, mieux et plus loin que son auteur ne l'a fait".⁵⁹⁴

With so many examples of characters reading and references to the act of reading, Gide constructs an interesting variation of the much-loved *mise-en-abyme* whereby this time not the actions of the novel itself are reflected, but the activity of the real reader reading the novel. And again, this *mise-en-abyme* draws the reader's attention away from the characters and the plot – the stuff of "traditional" narration – and towards the artificiality of the construct which is fiction. As Prince says:

En fin de compte, la multiplication des lecteurs et des lectures dans *Les Faux-monnayeurs* semble être par dessus tout un procédé gidien pour insister sur l'arbitraire de toute œuvre romanesque et pour créer un roman à la n-ième puissance, une œuvre indéfiniment ouverte sur elle-même, pareilles à celles qu'ont créés plus récemment un Robbe-Grillet ou un Philippe Sollers.⁵⁹⁵

In contrast to the novelists of the realist and Naturalist schools, Gide keeps descriptions of people and places to an absolute minimum with the intention of stimulating greater activity in the imagination of the reader. But does it work? In the first chapter, in his discussion of a book he has just read, Dhurmer says that the absence of physical description has allowed him to see nothing at all. We read:

'Qu'est-ce que tu veux, disait-il en s'adressant plus particulièrement à l'un des autres, mais manifestement heureux d'être écouté par tous. J'ai poussé jusqu'à la page trente sans trouver une seule couleur, un seul mot qui peigne. Il parle d'une femme; je ne sais même pas si sa robe était rouge ou bleue. Moi, quand il n'y a pas de couleurs, c'est bien simple, je ne vois rien.' – Et par besoin d'exagérer, d'autant plus qu'il se sentait moins pris au sérieux, il insistait: 'Absolument rien'.⁵⁹⁶

Gide certainly presents us with virtually no indications of his characters' appearances in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, and would seem to be continuing in the tradition of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, where Emma's eyes are described first as blue and then as black.⁵⁹⁷ Dhurmer's comments – regardless of whether he is really able to imagine

⁵⁹⁴ R. Barthes, "Roland Barthes contres les idées reçues", interview in *Le Figaro Littéraire* 27.6.1974.

⁵⁹⁵ Prince, "Lecteurs et lectures dans *Les Faux-monnayeurs*", p. 23.

⁵⁹⁶ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 15.

⁵⁹⁷ cf. the chapter "Emma Bovary's Eyes" in: Julian Barnes, *Flaubert's Parrot*, London 1984.

anything or not – imply that the value attached to physical descriptions has depreciated. This is certainly the opinion of Edouard, who has similar plans for the character descriptions in his novel. Having read a letter from Laura, Edouard ponders over this question:

Il se demande s'il aurait deviné, à la seule lecture de la lettre de Laura, qu'elle a les cheveux noirs? Il se dit que les romanciers, par la description trop exacte de leurs personnages, gênent plutôt l'imagination du lecteur qu'ils ne la servent et qu'ils devraient laisser chaque lecteur se représenter chacun de ceux-ci comme il lui plaît.⁵⁹⁸

In *Les Faux-monnayeurs* the reader is free to imagine the physical appearances of the characters as he pleases. Their creator does not seem to have a very sharp image of them in his mind's eye; it is largely the *aural* impression he has of them which he seeks to convey. As Gide tells us:

pour moi, c'est plutôt le langage que le geste qui renseigne, et je crois que je perdrais moins, perdant la vue, que perdant l'ouïe. Pourtant je vois mes personnages; mais non point tant leurs détails que leur masse, et plutôt encore leurs gestes, leur allure, le rythme de leurs mouvements. Je ne souffre point de ce que les verres de mes lunettes ne me les présentent pas tout à fait 'au point'; tandis que les moindres inflexions de leur voix, je les perçois avec la netteté la plus vive.⁵⁹⁹

If we think back to *Der Zauberberg*, do we *really* know what Hans Castorp or Clawdia Chauchat look like? Thomas Mann is similarly economical with his character descriptions: only a handful of phrases are employed, admittedly at regular intervals, to characterise Clawdia Chauchat – her fondness for slamming glass doors, the slouching, cat-like walk, with one hand in the pocket of her pullover, the other negligently in her hair – and, rather than providing a complete *physical* description, the *leitmotif* instead allows the reader to identify her with the concept of timelessness and to contrast her with the time-conscious Settembrini.⁶⁰⁰ Similarly, the attention of Gide's reader is not channelled towards any aspects of his characters which would make them appear more lifelike, but towards their representational functions. This is, however, less systematic than in *Der Zauberberg*.

⁵⁹⁸ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 78.

⁵⁹⁹ *JFM*, 27.5.1924, p. 76.

⁶⁰⁰ cf. Kudzus, "Understanding Media", p. 62.

Not only is the reader unable to latch onto any physical descriptions of the characters in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, but he also struggles to compose an image of their “personalities”: Gide impishly thwarts the reader’s attempts to build up any associations with the characters, thus making it virtually impossible for him to anticipate how these characters will react in certain situations: the reader’s expectations are systematically frustrated. Gide achieves this firstly – as we have seen – by avoiding the direct presentation of character. He does this, however, in a way which differs considerably from the way Thomas Mann “fixes” character through direct descriptions from the narrator (e.g. his insistence on Hans Castorp’s simple nature), and through the *leitmotif*, which, though infinitely extendable, triggers off a more rigid and schematic image of the character in the mind of the reader, enabling him to a certain extent to foresee possible conflicts in certain character constellations. Thus whenever Naphta and Settembrini are brought together, the reader is trained to expect confrontation. In *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, however, the individual characters do not appear to “exist” independently as established entities, but rather to only come into being when propelled into certain circumstances: for example, Bernard, who as far as we know had been perfectly content in the bosom of his family, suddenly develops a loathing for Profitendieu as soon as he discovers he is not his real father. His ensuing attempts at emancipating himself from his family are, however, described with heavy irony. After allowing us to read Bernard’s thoughts, “Si je pouvais me quitter un peu, sûrement, je ferais des vers”, the narrator tells us: “Étendu sur le banc, il se quitta si bien qu’il dormit”.⁶⁰¹ Perhaps Gide’s characters are not quite as spontaneous as they would like to think they are.

Further, the many unexpected plot turns in Gide’s novel, whereby characters behave in a way contrary to how the reader might expect, and for no apparent reason, teach the reader, if anything, to expect the unexpected and reject the notion that there is such a thing as consequentiality of character or of action. Olivier, for example, attempts to commit suicide having just told his new lover Edouard: “Près de toi je suis

⁶⁰¹ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 64.

trop heureux pour dormir”⁶⁰² and according to Bernard, wishes to die because he is so happy. Sophroniska hands over her charge, Boris, to a complete stranger, Edouard, who does not even record the same child’s death in his diary, the apparently virtuous Vincent abandons the angelic Laura for the demonic Lilian and starts gambling. As the narrator says, with feigned despair, of the decadent young characters of his narration: “Ils ne se sentent peser sur eux aucun passé, aucune astreinte; ils sont sans lois, sans maîtres, sans scrupules; libres et spontanés, ils font le désespoir du romancier, qui n’obtient d’eux que des réactions sans valeur”.⁶⁰³ In *Les Faux-monnayeurs* it would appear that character is formed by situation, rather than vice-versa, and, rather than being a fixed entity, is fluid and continually creates itself anew. Gide seems to be suggesting that it precisely his characters’ *unpredictability* which lends them greater plausibility in comparison with their more solid counterparts in the traditional novel; as Edouard notes in his diary:

Inconséquence des caractères. Les personnages qui, d’un bout à l’autre du roman ou du drame, agissent exactement comme on aurait pu le prévoir ... On propose à notre admiration cette constance, à quoi je reconnais au contraire qu’ils sont artificiels et construits.⁶⁰⁴

This poetological reflection which breaks through the narrative serves at the same time, however, to reinforce the fact to the reader that the whole of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* is “artificiel et construit”. Once again, we observe a tension between a desire on Gide’s part to create verisimilitude in his novel (in this case through plausibly spontaneous characters) and the compulsion to draw his reader’s attention to the artifice of his creation. Perhaps the reader, prompted by the minimalist descriptions in the novel, will flesh the characters out more fully in his imagination, or perhaps, like Dhurmer, he will continue to see “absolument rien”.

Whatever happens, the reader of *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, through the relentless articulation of the reader’s function, is constantly made to reflect on his own reading experience, in a way which is more radical than in *Der Zauberberg*. There, Thomas

⁶⁰² *ibid.*, p. 310.

⁶⁰³ *ibid.*, p. 217.

⁶⁰⁴ *ibid.*, p. 323.

Mann expects his reader to forsake the simple pleasures of a good story for the more cerebral rewards of cultural reflection, but Gide goes further in denying his reader one of his most fundamental gratifications – that of being able to link cause and effect. Not only are his characters highly “unstable” and incapable of foreseeing the trajectory of their own actions, but the entire fictional world of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* is so densely polluted with evil that the reader is at a loss to explain the series of major tragedies – Lilian’s murder by Vincent, himself so full of promise but by the end of the novel demented, the death of the child Bronja, and, of course, Boris’ “false” suicide. The quick-fire presentation of the various “plot lines” further suggests to the reader that no undue importance should be attached to any of them: as Holdheim says, “the kaleidoscopic flux has something irremediably inconsequential”.⁶⁰⁵ Thus the reader is never allowed to relax into the undulations of the plot, the “tapis roulant”⁶⁰⁶ as Gide called it, and has to draw on his own resources when seeking an explanation for the unfairness of the world he reads about, in which cause has been severed from effect, and into which he has been cast afloat, without so much as a reassuring wink from the narrator. As Booth says:

when we see a causal chain started, we demand – and demand in a way that is only indirectly related to mere curiosity – to see the result. Emma meddles, Tess is seduced, Huck runs away – and we demand certain consequences [...] our desire for causal completion is one of the strongest of interests available to the author.⁶⁰⁷

Gide’s reader cannot satisfy his “desire for causal completion”.

Whereas the narrator of *Der Zauberberg* actively seeks his reader’s interest in and concern for the fate of the “Sorgenkind des Lebens”, Hans Castorp, the narrator of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* further alienates his characters from his reader’s norms by giving them rather odd names. Sarraute points out in *L’Ère du soupçon* that “Gide évite pour ses personnages les noms patronymiques qui risquent de les planter d’emblée solidement dans un univers trop semblable à celui du lecteur”, and refers to

⁶⁰⁵ Holdheim, *Theory and Practice of the Novel*, p. 236.

⁶⁰⁶ “Ce que cherche, d’ordinaire, le lecteur, c’est une sorte de tapis roulant qui l’entraîne”. Gide, *Journal 1889-1939*, 17.6.1923, p. 760.

⁶⁰⁷ Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, p. 126.

comparable tactics in Kafka, Joyce and Faulkner.⁶⁰⁸ Certainly, Passavant can be construed as “Pass-avant” or “Pas-savant”, Caloub as an anagram of “Boucla” – he, if anyone, points to the circularity of the work, being introduced at the beginning and then not mentioned again until Edouard expresses an interest in getting to know him right at the end. The name Profitendieu requires no explanation, and both Ghéridanisol and Passavant can be seen as being self-consciously literary in origin; Ghéridanisol is perhaps an allusion to Radiguet, the prodigal novelist; Passavant has been identified as the ancestral cry of Proust’s Baron Charlus.⁶⁰⁹ Laura may be a play on the theme of counterfeiting, “L’or a”, and Strouvilhou’s name has even been seen as an anagram of that of the casino owner, Pierre de Brouville.⁶¹⁰ Thomas Mann, too, may well have been sending his reader cryptic messages through his choice of names: Chauchat has been read as the French for hot cat, a double reference to her sensuality, and her frequently mentioned cat-like walk; in the last syllable of Peeperkorn’s name we find the name of his favourite beverage, and through the description of his hands as “Kapitänshände”, an oblique reference to the translation of “captain” as Hauptmann. Similarly, Leo Naptha’s name is not dissimilar from that of Georg Lukács, a further hint being provided by the name Lukacek, the tailor in whose house he resides.

In *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, as we have seen, there is no one central figure; not even Edouard, despite his unifying function, can be compared with the hero of the traditional novel, or even with Hans Castorp. And the instigator of the counterfeiting ring, Strouvilhou – whom one might, judging from the title of Gide’s novel, assume to play a large part – features only briefly at the end *in person*: before that we had read his name on a visiting card at Passavant’s, on the hotel register at Saas-Fée, and had overheard it mentioned several times in conversation.

⁶⁰⁸ Sarraute, *L’Ere du soupçon*, p. 72, cf. also on the subjects of names Tilby, *Gide: Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 83f.

⁶⁰⁹ cf. George Painter, *André Gide*, London 1968, footnote 2, p. 152. On 1st March 1923 Martin du Gard encloses a newspaper cutting about Radiguet’s phenomenal success in a letter to Gide.

⁶¹⁰ cf. Roger Cahn, *Der diegetische Romancier im Werke von André Gide*, Zürich 1979, pp. 86-92.

Further, unlike Mann, Gide consciously avoids steering his reader towards a perception of the characters as “good” or “bad”: instead he presents him with a selection of judgements, then leaves the reader to make up his mind – or to conclude that, in reality, people are rarely uniformly positive or negative beings. The reader seeking to categorise Edouard, for example, has a difficult time; we first hear him described by Olivier as “quelqu’un de très bien”,⁶¹¹ but later the narrator tells us that he finds him irritating and that his behaviour towards Laura is particularly offensive.⁶¹² Is Edouard genuinely sincere, or is he guilty of counterfeiting too? *Les Faux-monnayeurs* highlights the impossibility – and obsolescence – of such a question, as there is no longer any continuity of self: as Laura says of Edouard, “C’est Protée”.⁶¹³ Curtius articulates the pointlessness in attributing fixed characteristics to Edouard:

Für Edouard hat das Wort ‘Aufrichtigkeit’ seinen Sinn verloren, weil sein Ich beständig variiert. Es kann ihm geschehen, daß er abends das Wesen nicht wiedererkennt, das er am Morgen war. Wenn es keine Kontinuität der Person gibt, gibt es auch keine Aufrichtigkeit. Um sich selbst treu zu sein, muß man sich untreu werden. Flugsand der Seele! Nichts ist beständig als der Wechsel.⁶¹⁴

However, Edouard is not unusually unpredictable – perhaps not more so than any other human being. The difference is that Gide is refreshingly honest, and innovative, in presenting a major character in his novel whose essence is so elusive to the reader.

Yet this is not only true of Edouard. In the opening sequence of the novel, for example, the reader can certainly sympathise with Bernard on discovering his illegitimate origins. But then he is presented with his father’s perspective, who is tired, has had a hard day at work, discovers Bernard’s spiteful letter and is genuinely distressed, as is the entire Profitendieu family: the reader’s sympathy shifts towards the rest of the family. Bernard’s situation is now shrouded in ambiguity; the convergence of perspectives forms a difficult *Leerstelle* for the reader to fill, and there no guiding authorial interventions.

⁶¹¹ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 40.

⁶¹² cf. footnote 456.

⁶¹³ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 198.

⁶¹⁴ Curtius, “Les Faux-monnayeurs”, p. 652.

A similar process occurs on the metafictional level of *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, with discrepancies emerging between the narrator's formulations on the novel, Edouard's theories and the reality of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* itself: these poetological *Leerstellen* stimulate the reader into reflecting deeply on the novel genre as such. One striking example of this is when the narrator presents Edouard's thoughts on his novel, saying:

Il songe au roman qu'il prépare, qui ne doit ressembler à rien de ce qu'il a écrit jusqu'alors. Il n'est pas assuré que *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* soit un bon titre. Il a eu tort de l'annoncer. Absurde, cette coutume d'indiquer les 'en préparation' afin d'allécher les lecteurs. Cela n'allèche personne et cela vous lie ... Il n'est pas assuré non plus que le sujet soit très bon.⁶¹⁵

Although the narrator is apparently presenting Edouard's views impartially, it is difficult to distinguish between Edouard's voice and his own. The reader cannot fail to make the link between Edouard's novel and that which he is reading, and to reflect critically upon the latter.

By this stage in the "action", Edouard has not yet revealed the "subject" of his novel, and so the reader's curiosity is aroused. He is eventually forced to disclose it to Bernard and Sophroniska in Saas Fée, saying: "Il n'en a pas [...] et c'est là ce qu'il a de plus étonnant peut-être. Mon roman n'a pas de sujet. Oui, je sais bien; ça a l'air stupide ce que je dis là".⁶¹⁶ When pushed, Edouard confesses that what he wants is: "présenter d'une part la réalité, présenter d'autre part cet effort pour la styliser",⁶¹⁷ and the reader cannot help noticing that this project coincides entirely with Gide's novel which he is reading, yet has to take into account the narrator's previously-expressed doubts as to whether Edouard's choice of subject is a good one. To complicate matters further, these theories are themselves inconsistent. Whereas in Saas-Fée Edouard maintains that all he experiences finds expression in his novel, "Depuis plus d'un an que j'y travaille, il ne m'arrive rien que je n'y verse, et que je n'y veuille faire entrer: ce que je vois, ce que je sais, tout ce que m'apprend la vie des autres et la mienne",⁶¹⁸ we later read in his *Journal*: "Il m'arrive rarement de tirer un

⁶¹⁵ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 78.

⁶¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 184.

⁶¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 184.

⁶¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 184.

parti direct de ce que m'apporte la vie",⁶¹⁹ and he goes on to say he is making an exception by describing Georges' counterfeiting activities. The fact that Edouard chooses to not describe the suicide of Boris – who had been entrusted into his care – would certainly support this view, but the contradiction is there, as it is in Gide's own work diary when he talks alternately of his wish for a *roman pur* and of his own recycling of life experiences in order to make the novel as full as possible.⁶²⁰ These inconsistencies gnaw at the reader, and ensure that he subjects his opinions about all aspects of the novel to continual revision. As Theile says:

Die beschriebenen inneren Widersprüche haben nicht nur eine wichtige wirkungsästhetische Signalfunktion, sie aktivieren auch den Leser [...] Wirkung und Leserproduktivität sind demnach als unerläßliche Funktionen von Gide in die Entstehung und Vermittlung der 'Faux-monnayeurs' eingeplant.⁶²¹

The emancipation of the reader's imagination is to be the direct result of the scourging of the novel of excessive baggage; the overzealous attention to detail in the realist novel has blurred the communication of the essential and deadened the reader's creative powers. The characters themselves are portrayed in the act of communicating only the most important facts about a given situation, and in pruning their own writings. When Armand shows Olivier the letter in which it transpires that Vincent has gone mad in Africa, he tells him: "pas la peine que tu lises tout. Commence ici".⁶²² Likewise, Edouard grasps the essentials in Lilian's lengthy letter from Africa without ploughing his way through all of it. And following his account of the incident in which he catches Georges stealing, the novelist comments: "Nécessaire d'abréger beaucoup cet épisode. La précision ne doit pas être obtenue par le détail du récit, mais bien, dans l'imagination du lecteur, par deux ou trois traits, exactement à la bonne place".⁶²³

⁶¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 347.

⁶²⁰ *JFM*, 21. 11. 1920, p. 28.

⁶²¹ Wolfgang Theile, "André Gide - Les Faux-monnayeurs" in: Klaus Heitmann, *Der französische Roman*, vol. 2, Düsseldorf 1975, 136-154, p. 147.

⁶²² *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 361.

⁶²³ *ibid.*, p. 92.

The stripping of the novel to its bare essentials is a recurrent theme in Gide's work diary: "Purger le roman de tous les éléments qui n'appartiennent pas spécifiquement au roman"⁶²⁴; a purely *novelistic* form is aimed at and Gide draws on historical models for his own concept: "La tragédie et la comédie, au XVIIe siècle, sont parvenus à une grande pureté (la *pureté*, en art comme partout, c'est cela qui importe) – et du reste, à peu près tous les genres, grands ou petits, fables, caractères, maximes, sermons, mémoires, lettres"⁶²⁵. The critical layer of reflection, however, which Gide wedges into the "realist" narrative through the introduction of Edouard's diary may not lead to what one might necessarily term a "pure" artistic genre and constitutes yet another paradox in this systematically paradoxical novel.

In the same way that Thomas Mann harks back in *Der Zauberberg* to the eighteenth-century tradition of self-conscious narration, Gide sees the novelists of eighteenth-century England as attaining the high level of "purity" he so wishes for *Les Faux-monnayeurs*: "Il est à remarquer que les Anglais, dont le drame n'a jamais su parfaitement se *purifier* (au sens où est purifié la tragédie de Racine), sont parvenus d'emblée à une beaucoup plus grande pureté dans le roman de De Foë, Fielding, et même de Richardson"⁶²⁶. Gide skips over the entire nineteenth century, with the notable exception of Stendhal, in his rooting of his "roman pur" concept: "Et ce *pur* roman, nul ne l'a non plus donné plus tard; non, pas même l'admirable Stendhal, qui, de tous les romanciers, est peut-être celui qui en approche le plus"⁶²⁷. Novelistic purity represents, in Gide's view, the opposite pole to the overloaded Balzacian novel, and although he does not make the point explicitly, a pure novel – at least in theory – activates the reader to a greater extent. However, as Holdheim has correctly pointed out, Gide's own theories on the *roman pur* are self-contradictory, indecisive and vague, often presenting a list of things the novel should *not* be, rather than making positive suggestions.⁶²⁸ However, despite his criticism of Gide's quest for novelistic

⁶²⁴ *JFM*, 1.11.1922, p. 57.

⁶²⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

⁶²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 59.

⁶²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 58.

⁶²⁸ Holdheim, *Theory and Practice of the Novel*, p. 137.

purity, Holdheim was one of the first critics to stress the importance of the theoretical impetus of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* in paving the way for the “veritable reduction cure”⁶²⁹ to which the *nouveaux romanciers* subjected the novel.

Central to Gide’s achievement must surely be the primacy he accords to the rôle of the reader, and which he saw as an important new development in the novel form. Gide had correctly recognised that, with the exception of Dostoievsky, the novel was a genre in which the reader’s expectations were normally met. For in the traditional novel, as Gide saw it, choosing Balzac as his paradigm, there was necessarily a lot of padding in order to create a sense of *durée*; not wishing to follow suit, he expressed his doubts as to his suitability for the novel genre in the following terms:

Je ne suis pas fait pour le roman. Je n’y crois plus guère. Les critiques qui ont tant crié contre *Les Faux-monnayeurs* n’avaient peut-être pas tout à fait tort. Je tends vers le journal. Je me refuse à dire ce que le lecteur attend. Je ne peux rien écrire de banal. Et, dans le roman, il y a une grande part d’adipeux. C’est nécessaire pour donner l’impression de durée ... Regardez Balzac, on sait toujours ce que ses personnages vont dire ... Le lecteur est content ...⁶³⁰

Sarraute, who places this rôle at the core of her analysis of modern fiction, *L’Ere du soupçon*, gives Gide credit for stimulating the reader’s imagination, rather than giving him the impression of reliving something he has already experienced.⁶³¹ And during the discussion of Gide’s modernity at the 1964 conference *Gide et le nouveau roman* in Cérisy-la-Salle, Jean Ricardou articulated the connection between the use of the *mise-en-abyme* and new ways of approaching a text, saying:

si nous multiplions les mises en abyme, nous aurons une lecture qui ne sera plus de type [...] traditionnel, courant horizontalement le long des lignes, lâchant la proie pour l’ombre – mais une lecture nouvelle, comme verticale.⁶³²

This new, “vertical” way of tackling a text will, according to Ricardou, result in a more profound reading experience, “une lecture comportant des points d’arrêt à partir desquels on s’enfonce plus profondément, à partir desquels s’exercent certains mécanismes de

⁶²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 138.

⁶³⁰ Quoted in: “Le Journal de Robert Levesque” in: *BAAG* 11, 59 (July 1983), 295-362, p. 337.

⁶³¹ Sarraute, *L’Ere du soupçon*, p. 117.

⁶³² Claude Martin, “Gide et le ‘nouveau roman’” in: M. Arland & J. Mouton, *Entretiens sur André Gide*, Paris & The Hague 1967, 217-242.

fascination”.⁶³³ Indeed, Gide’s frequent emphasis on “la *collaboration du lecteur*”⁶³⁴ can be seen as anticipating the highly explicit thematization of the rôle of the reader in modern fiction, such as in Butor’s *Degrés* where the “pacte de lecture” between the writer-narrator Vernier and his nephew Eller falls apart when Vernier seeks to impose a hierarchical, teacher-pupil structure on the relationship – a move which also leads to the death of the narrator.

The ruptured text of *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, with its seemingly haphazard juxtaposition of various written forms creates an unsettling experience for the reader, more confusing than the reading of *Der Zauberberg*, where the boundaries between “main narrative” and reflexive discourse are clearer. We have already mentioned that although in Gide’s novel the reader is informed on several occasions that Edouard has problems with the writing of his novel, of which only thirty pages exist, the fact that the novelist and the “principal” narrator are covering the same events, and using the same titles for their works, is bound to cause giddiness in the reader as he attempts to disentangle the various fictional planes. This giddiness – comparable to the confusion over the chronology of the events in *Der Zauberberg* – is carefully devised to stimulate the reader into a higher level of mental activity in seeking to re-establish the facts. As Gide notes: “Je voudrais que, dans le récit qu’ils en feront, ces événements apparaissent légèrement déformés; une sorte d’intérêt vient, pour le lecteur, de ce seul fait qu’il ait à rétablir. L’histoire requiert sa collaboration pour se bien dessiner”.⁶³⁵ However, more important than Gide’s encouraging of the reader to pedantically sift through and reconstruct the details of the “real events”, is the fact that the disparities between his *Faux-monnayeurs* and Edouard’s lead to the creation of a *virtual* novel which begins to take shape in the reader’s imagination. According to Maurice Blanchot, this constitutes the true measure of a novel’s worth.⁶³⁶

⁶³³ *ibid.*, p. 229.

⁶³⁴ Gide, *Journal 1889-1939*, 23.6.1930, p. 991.

⁶³⁵ *JFM*, 21.11. 1920, p. 28.

⁶³⁶ “Les livres ne valent que par le livre supérieur qu’ils nous conduisent à imaginer”. Maurice Blanchot, *Faux pas*, Paris 1943, p. 220.

In Gide's *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, counterfeiters do indeed feature, but only as a side-line. Legitimately the reader may ask himself why Edouard's novel bears the same title when he makes it clear that "l'histoire de l'œuvre, de sa gestation [...] serait plus intéressant que l'œuvre elle-même".⁶³⁷ Here Gide seems to be teasing the reader in the same way that Robbe-Grillet was later to do, in calling his 1957 novel *La Jalousie*: the *nouveau romancier* was not referring to that well-known and frequently depicted emotion, but rather to the blinds of a window which attracts our gaze.

Since Edouard's novel is, as Sophroniska and Bernard correctly point out, clearly unwriteable, what light does this throw on Gide's which we have in our hands? Given its very marginal appearance in Gide's novel (and presumably also that of Edouard), the reader correctly surmises that the activity of counterfeiting is to be regarded in a metaphorical light, rather than just as the subject of the *fait divers* which Gide cut out from the newspaper. Gide conveniently allows the counterfeit coins to advance as far as Saas-Fée so that Bernard can produce an authentic fake (one of the few authentic things in the novel is, paradoxically, the counterfeit coin) to prove to Edouard that he is not interested in reality: in this moment, the real and the metaphorical functions of the coin overlap, the counterfeiting plot line of the novel and its self-reflexive axis converge. The reader is left on his own to speculate on the "real" counterfeiting activities and deduce that Strouvilhou is the ringmaster, as well as to put his imagination into play in working out the ramifications of the symbolic function of the false coin. As Moutote says, the elliptic, almost poetical presentation of the events in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* incites the reader to participate more actively in the elaboration of meaning:

D'autant plus que la réalité des faits n'est pas donnée dans son inertie brute, mais d'une manière allusive, et que comme en poésie, selon ce qu'avancait Mallarmé, l'effort pour rétablir la vérité fait le plaisir du lecteur. Car c'est là le plus grand intérêt de la présentation indirecte. Son caractère fragmentaire sollicite chaque fois l'intervention du lecteur.⁶³⁸

⁶³⁷ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 186.

⁶³⁸ Moutote, *Réflexions*, p. 141.

Through his relativist presentation of the individual points of view, Gide suggests that the activities of an omniscient narrator, who would present the “facts” neatly for his reader and provide solutions, rather than raise the questions and leave them for the reader to ponder over, would be as counterfeit as those undertaken by the schoolboys in the novel. Gide acknowledges that the modern reader can no longer be fooled by ready-made answers to the problems of an increasingly complex world:

Ce n'est point tant en apportant la solution de certains problèmes, que je puis rendre un réel service au lecteur; mais bien en le forçant à réfléchir lui-même sur ces problèmes dont je n'admets guère qu'il puisse y avoir d'autre solution que particulière et personnelle.⁶³⁹

Moutote has suggested that Edouard's response to Georges' question of how to interpret the chapter he has just read out to him, “cela dépend de toi”, acts as a signal to the reader that the interpretation of Gide's novel lies in his own imagination.⁶⁴⁰ Plausible as Moutote's comment may sound, the dramatised style of Edouard's chapter, the ludicrous names Eudolphe, Audibert, Hildebrant and the narrator's previous condemnation of Edouard and of anything penned by him, may all serve to warn the reader against taking this statement at face value. But as we know, the narrator himself is not a reliable source – Bernard's decisive actions in propelling himself into the action of the novel, for example, blatantly contradict the narrator's prediction that he is “assurément beaucoup trop jeune pour prendre la direction d'une intrigue”.⁶⁴¹ In fact, it is difficult for the reader to establish what, if anything, *can* be taken at face value: all statements and phenomena are bathed in the same ironic light that permeates *Der Zauberberg*, creating what Petersen, with reference to Mann's *Felix Krull*, calls: “[jenen ironischen] Schwebezustand, der alles *Definitive* von sich weist”.⁶⁴²

Il sied, tout au contraire de Meredith ou de James, de laisser le lecteur prendre barre sur moi – de s'y prendre de manière à lui permettre de croire qu'il est plus intelligent que l'auteur, plus moral, plus perspicace et qu'il découvre dans les personnages maintes choses, et dans le cours du récit maintes vérités, malgré l'auteur et pour ainsi dire à son insu.⁶⁴³

⁶³⁹ *JFM*, 30. 7. 1919, p. 24.

⁶⁴⁰ Moutote, *Réflexions*, p. 194.

⁶⁴¹ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 216.

⁶⁴² Petersen, *Der deutsche Roman der Moderne*, p. 174.

⁶⁴³ *JFM*, 23.2.1923, p. 64.

The elevation of the reader's status runs as a *leitmotif* through Gide's work diary. *Les Faux-monnayeurs* represents a milestone on the road to the fiction of the *nouveaux romanciers* in that the text functions as a springboard for a range of interpretative possibilities; the "meaning" is not presented to the reader on a fictional plate, but can only emerge through the act of serious reading. However, this, and other statements in the work diary indicate that the reader's reception, whilst undeniably released from the constraints of realist description, wooden characters and foreseeable plots, is still by no means free to roam in a loosely associative way, but is to focus on certain issues which the novel raises and which appear consistently enough for the reader to recognise them as "themes". Indeed, Gide's novel is still traditional enough to "discuss" clearly discernible issues, ranging from the function of institutions in society to homosexuality, and perhaps even to steer the reader towards receiving certain messages about these issues. There can be no doubt, for example, that the reader is to see Olivier and Edouard as glowing examples of a happy gay couple, who contrast sharply with the inauthentic and miserable heterosexuals. Certainly, C. Thomazeau does not see Gide as granting his reader much interpretative freedom at all, but (somewhat unfairly) accuses him of forcefeeding his reader with specific, pre-determined messages whilst dangling the promise of freedom in front of him: "En effet, tout en nous donnant l'illusion d'une expérimentation de l'esthétique romanesque, où le lecteur aurait apparemment un contrôle sur le texte, André Gide manipule constamment son lecteur".⁶⁴⁴

The idea that the novel is there to provide the reader with ready-made solutions is proposed in all earnestness by Pauline, who insists on a strict separation between life and fiction. When asked by Edouard if there have been any further developments since she unearthed a pile of letters from her husband's mistress – a variation on the theme of marital infidelity already introduced via the Profitendieu family – she exclaims:

Mais, mon ami, vous savez bien qu'il n'y a rien de tel pour s'éterniser, que les situations fausses. C'est affaire à vous, romanciers, de chercher à les résoudre. Dans la

⁶⁴⁴ Caroline Thomazeau, "Les Faux-monnayeurs: remise en question d'un nouveau roman" in: *Chimères* 18, 1 (Fall 1985), 15-39, p. 32.

vie, rien ne se résout; tout continue. On demeure dans l'incertitude; et on restera jusqu'à la fin sans savoir à quoi s'en tenir; en attendant, la vie continue, tout comme si de rien n'était.⁶⁴⁵

Here, Pauline touches on one of the essential differences between life and fiction, and which Gide seeks to expose in his novel; at the end of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* there is no neat tying up of strings, no ready-made solutions, but rather Edouard's well-known statement that he would like to get to know Caloub. Indeed, Gide had said in the work diary:

celui-ci s'achèvera brusquement, non point par épuisement du sujet, qui doit donner l'impression de l'inépuisable, mais au contraire, par son élargissement et par une sorte d'évasion de son contour. Il ne doit pas se boucler, mais s'éparpiller, se défaire.⁶⁴⁶

The ending of *Der Zauberberg* is similarly open and genuinely invites a response from the reader in a way which adds a new dimension to the *auktoriale Erzählhaltung*.

Gide's novel does not end on a question as such, but leaves a host of questions unanswered. What will the consequences be of Boris' death? Will the love affair between Edouard and Olivier continue to blossom? What will come of Edouard's getting to know Caloub? Gide clearly does not see it as his responsibility to furnish answers, and has no qualms about leaving his reader with a mass of troubling questions:

Mon livre achevé, je tire la barre, et laisse au lecteur le soin de l'opération; addition, soustraction, peu importe: j'estime que ce n'est pas à moi de la faire. Tant pis pour le lecteur paresseux: j'en veux d'autres. Inquiéter, tel est mon rôle. Le public préfère toujours qu'on le rassure. Il en est dont c'est le métier. Il n'en est que trop.⁶⁴⁷

The imagery of the counterfeit coin can be extended to the act of reading, as well as to that of writing.⁶⁴⁸ A "counterfeit" novel will necessarily entail a "counterfeit" reading. In the traditional novel, the reader had little choice but to become an accomplice in the act of generating counterfeit meanings, and to accept the narrator's

⁶⁴⁵ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, pp. 308-309.

⁶⁴⁶ *JFM*, 8. 3. 1925, p. 84.

⁶⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 29. 3. 1925, p. 85.

⁶⁴⁸ As Goux notes: "Gide [...] donne à tout son roman un noyau cristallin qui retentit sur la lecture naïve de la composition. La constante interrogation sur l'écriture vient fausser la lecture réaliste". *Les monnayeurs du langage*, p. 19.

“guiding comments”, *single* perspective on “reality”, fixed character descriptions and causal linking of events as legal tender. As Strouvillou says:

Nous vivons sur des sentiments admis et que le lecteur s’imagine éprouver, parce qu’il croit tout ce qu’on imprime; l’auteur spéculé là-dessus comme sur des conventions qu’il croit les bases de son art. Ces sentiments sonnent faux comme des jetons, mais ils ont cours.⁶⁴⁹

Les Faux-monnayeurs ends where it starts, with Bernard Profitendieu back in the bosom of his family, and with the reference to Caloub who had only previously featured – very briefly – in the first chapter. But as we have seen, these “plot” lines exist amongst many others and by no means suggest a closed structure. Indeed, a closed structure would hardly be compatible with Gide’s emphatic words: “Je n’écris que pour être relu”.⁶⁵⁰ In the same way that Edouard wishes his own novel to end on a note of “pourrait être continué”,⁶⁵¹ Gide wants the reader’s imagination to tick over beyond the final page, as the total complexity of the world cannot possibly be captured in the novel itself. And by subordinating the character and plot interest to self-reflexion, Gide suggests that whereas individual characters may pop up, linger for a while then disappear, the fundamental issues of humanity remain, and stretch far beyond the portrayal of the life of an individual hero. Thus by attaching greater importance to the ideas of their novels, rather than to the characters expounding these ideas, both *Les Faux-monnayeurs* and *Der Zauberberg* stimulate new approaches to the act of reading, encouraging *re-reading*.

Despite Hans Castorp’s frequently-stated plans to limit himself to a “Stippvisite” to the Magic Mountain, and the apparent absence of activity there, the reader realises with hindsight that Hans Castorp’s stay was to expand to a monumental seven years and that a major event would indeed trouble the calm waters – the war. Retrospectively the reader is able to trace the inevitability of the final catastrophe right back to the narrator’s opening comments in which he warns the reader that the novel will keep him busy for a substantial period of time:

⁶⁴⁹ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 319.

⁶⁵⁰ *JFM*, 7.12.1920, p. 41.

⁶⁵¹ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 322.

Die sieben Tage einer Woche werden dazu nicht reichen, und auch sieben Monate nicht. Am besten ist es, er macht sich im voraus nicht klar, wieviel Erdenzeit ihm verstreichen wird, während sie ihn umspinnen hält. Es werden, in Gottes Namen, ja nicht geradezu sieben Jahre sein!⁶⁵²

Thus from the beginning of Mann's novel, clues as to the final development of Hans Castorp's tale are – seemingly casually – dropped for the reader who cares to pick them up; in terms of plot development, the reader is more privileged than the characters themselves.

The same is true of *Les Faux-monnayeurs*. Being placed in a position which allows him to access the various points of view simultaneously, only the reader is capable of detecting the warning signals and foreseeing the catastrophic chain of events which will lead to Boris' death: the traditional omniscience of the narrator has been devolved to the reader. Gide hopes he will be infinitely more perspicacious than his characters who are blindly pursuing their destinies. As Brée says of Gide's novel:

Chaque personnage engagé dans l'action suit son itinéraire et, comme une boule lancée sur un étroit billard, heurte en passant et met en mouvement d'autres boules dont la rencontre agit sur sa propre direction. Les péripéties de l'intrigue sont ainsi, à proprement parler, des diversions [...] Mais à travers les événements en apparence séparés et parallèles que suit le lecteur au cours de la première partie du roman, une destinée se décide, par hasard et invisiblement, la destinée de Boris. Seul le lecteur, rétrospectivement, s'en rend compte.⁶⁵³

In both novels, however, these keys to the final dénouement of the action are subtly concealed: there for the careful reader, but otherwise not leaping out of the text at him. In *Der Zauberberg*, for example, there is the extended play around the number seven, in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* the brief glimpses of the sinister Strouvilhou, and the unreliable narrator's low-key warning: "Je crains qu'en confiant le petit Boris aux Azaïs, Edouard ne commette une imprudence".⁶⁵⁴ Further, Gide's narrator introduces the motif of the yellow rosette early and, with the help of a few hints, allows the reader to not only deduce its full significance as the emblem of bravado for the schoolboy delinquents, but also to link their activities with those of the counterfeiters.

⁶⁵² *Der Zauberberg*, p. 8.

⁶⁵³ Brée, *L'insaisissable Protée*, p. 300.

⁶⁵⁴ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 215.

In doing so, the reader simulates the work of the detectives on the trail of the counterfeiters he is in the process of reading about. It would appear, however, that both Mann and Gide wished to disguise the plot lines of their narrations, making their traces perceptible to the careful reader only on a *second* reading.

The more frequently both novels are read, the more apparent their careful constructions become. The reader will see the ensemble of characters and events of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* as calculatingly composed, and the plots depending to a great extent on coincidence, in a way which cannot possibly be seen as reflecting “real life”. The more conscious the reader becomes of the schematised structures of a work, the more likely he is to see that that work is composed to a considerable extent of *interchangeable* elements, and that the reader, in parallel to the narrator creating the work, is free to improvise with these as he pleases. In the same way that in *Der Zauberberg* the narrator’s rounding off of the Naphta/Settembrini dialogues with “etc”. or more explicitly, “So ging das weiter, wir kennen das Spiel, Hans Castorp kannte es”,⁶⁵⁵ acts as a signal to the reader that their length and complexity exceed the confines of the novel, Edouard’s last words at the end of Gide’s novel to the effect that he would like to get to know Caloub point to the next novel, the offspring of *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, and to an endless cycle of reproduction: the genes have been provided, it is up to the reader to engineer them as he wishes. The nineteenth-century novel, for all its bulk of realistic detail, was still not realistic. Acutely aware of the impasse which the excesses of realism had led to, Edouard exclaims:

je voudrais un roman qui serait à la fois aussi vrai, et aussi éloigné de la réalité, aussi particulier et aussi général à la fois, aussi humain et aussi fictif qu’*Athalie*, que *Tartuffe* ou que *Cinna*.⁶⁵⁶

Gide suggests that the activation of the reader is a vital component in the regeneration of the novel.

Quoting Thibaudet in his work diary, Gide notes:

⁶⁵⁵ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 806.

⁶⁵⁶ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 184.

Il est rare qu'un auteur qui s'expose dans un roman, fasse de lui un individu ressemblant, je veux dire vivant ... Le romancier authentique crée ses personnages avec les directions infinies de sa vie possible; le romancier factice les crée avec la ligne unique de sa vie réelle. Le génie du roman fait vivre le possible; il ne fait pas revivre le réel.⁶⁵⁷

The self-consciously constructed nature of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* makes it clear to the reader that it represents only *one possible way* of capturing reality, and that an infinite number of other combinations of novelistic elements are possible. By constantly letting the reader see “behind the scenes” Gide debunks the myth of novelistic creation and creates what Theile has referred to as “eine Ästhetik des Möglichen”.⁶⁵⁸ Significantly, Theile sees *Les Faux-monnayeurs* as an embodiment of Lukács’ theory that the epic’s portrayal of a totality can only occur in the fragmented form of the modern novel by inciting the reader to complete the portrayal of “reality”.⁶⁵⁹

Indeed, Theile sees the chapter in Saas-Fée in which Edouard exposes his theories for his novel to a critical audience composed of Sophroniska, Laura and Edouard, as a metaphor for the development of a new type of novel which stimulates its reader into a collaborative effort and where meaning emerges through the act of reading:

Edouards Reaktion auf diese Begegnung mit einem höchst aktiven und kritischen Publikum sowie die Folgen dieser Szene für die Produktivität des Romanschriftstellers bedeuten einen wichtigen Schritt auf dem Wege des zeitgenössischen Romans, der nicht nur dahin führt, den rechthaberischen auktorialen Erzähler in Frage zu stellen, sondern auch dazu, den Leser als aktiven, zur Selbstreflexion stimulierenden Partner zu empfehlen.⁶⁶⁰

Certainly, *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, without actually featuring any direct addresses to the reader as a reader (unlike Mann’s!) can be seen as anticipating the most radical articulation of the reader’s rôle in modern fiction, Butor’s famous “vous” form in *La Modification*, as well as Butor’s concept of a literary work as a “question” – an appeal for the participation of the virtual reader in the creation of meaning. A similar

⁶⁵⁷ *JFM*, May 1925, p. 86.

⁶⁵⁸ Theile, “Gide - Les Faux-monnayeurs”, p. 143.

⁶⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 143.

⁶⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 141.

expression of the rôle of the reader is to be found in Uwe Johnson's *Drittes Buch über Achim* (1961), which expresses the communication between narrator and reader as a dialogue between "ich" and "du" and features the provocative question to the reader: "Frag mich was anderes".

In emphasising the new, collaborative rôle of the reader in the re-establishment of events and the time-sequence, Gide is anticipating and paving the way for the chronological experiments of the *nouveaux romanciers*: Butor's *Mobile* (1962), for example, conveys an extremely fragmented picture of the United States, communicated through quotations, descriptions, catalogues and commentaries, all presented in a variety of typographic scripts. Linearity has been replaced by a mobile structure with interchangeable parts. In Cortázar's *Rayuela* (1977) various reading paths are suggested, upon which the reader can hopscotch through the work (at one point he is invited to turn back to chapter 123), and his active participation is sought by the novelist character Morelli in the chronological reconstruction of the work. More recently, Georges Perec's *La vie: mode d'emploi* (1978), which bears the description "Romans" invites the reader to visit the flats in the block where the writer Serge Valène lives, as and when he pleases. (Perec's reference to a certain Monsieur de Cuverville would appear to further emphasise an indebtedness to Gide.)

However, the underlying causal progression in both *Der Zauberberg* and *Les Faux-monnayeurs* makes it impossible for the reader to adopt various "reading paths" through the novel in the way Butor, Cortázar and Perec invite him to do. *Der Zauberberg* and *Les Faux-monnayeurs* are *not* truly mobile constructions with interchangeable parts: their effects still depend to too great an extent on a linear plot development to allow the reader to skip through randomly. The novels are certainly to be re-read, but each reading is to be linear. In this respect, the two novels can be situated exactly half-way between the nineteenth-century novel, and their more radically experimental counterparts of the twentieth century.

Both novels go through the motions of presenting *Leerstellen* to be completed, but many of the information *blancs* do not present serious challenges to the reader: in *Der Zauberberg*, the omitted *Fasching* activities between Hans Castorp and Clawdia Chauchat can be easily surmised, and in Gide's novel the "singulier individu" referred to in the letter from Alexandre to Armand can be easily identified as Vincent. And for those readers who – like Olivier, reading the letter – fail to make the association, the narrator spells it out for him.⁶⁶¹ Indeed, Holdheim feels, with reference to *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, that "instead of unduly straining the reader, the book does not strain him enough", although he admits that this is "only half the story", and points to the stimulation of the reader's intellect through the self-reflexive elements.⁶⁶²

There can, however, be no doubt that both Mann and Gide stimulate the reader's imagination and critical faculties through keeping descriptions to a minimum, alternating plot developments with (self-) reflexive passages, and creating *Leerstellen* for the reader through innovations in structure. These undoubtedly pre-empt the more extreme attempts of the 50s and 60s to devolve responsibility for the generation of meaning. However, through Gide's sketchy and highly ambivalent portrayal of his characters, the systematic fragmentation of his narrative, and the categorical refusal of his narrator to assist the reader with the completion of the *Leerstellen*, we can regard the contribution of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* to the process of the "democratization of the reader" as more substantial than that of *Der Zauberberg*.

⁶⁶¹ "Olivier rendit la lettre sans rien dire. Il ne lui vint pas à l'esprit que l'assassin dont il était parlé fût son frère". *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 363.

⁶⁶² Holdheim, *Theory and Practice of the Novel*, pp. 236-237.

Chapter Five

Interacting with other Arts

In his article “Zum Problem der epischen Integration”, Herman Meyer has examined the impact which the increased influx of reflexive elements into the novel has had on the survival of the “epic form”, a problem which has become particularly acute with the advent of the “modern novel”. Meyer contrasts Homeric epic, in which content and form were happily integrated, with its very distant descendants:

Der moderne europäische Roman [...], sobald er über den reintatsächlichen Bericht hinaus auch weltanschauliche Gehalte zu bieten beansprucht, d.h. mindestens seit Cervantes, hat mit dem schwierigen Problem zu ringen, wie jene außerzeitlichen Gehalte in die zeiträumliche epische Struktur hineingestellt werden können.⁶⁶³

Meyer gives various examples of how novelists since Cervantes have sought to overcome this problem, referring to the “special methods” they have employed:

Erst dann wird die Frage nach der das Epische integrierenden Leistung der ideellen Gehalte dringlich, weil erst dann ein Sprung in einen ganz anderen Aggregatzustand stattfinden muß. Der Dichter muß besondere Mittel anwenden, um diesen Sprung gelingen zu lassen.⁶⁶⁴

Although it is extremely debatable whether Mann or Gide shared Herman Meyer’s precise concerns, they were, however, deeply preoccupied by the question of how to accommodate the bulk of ideas they wished to express in the novel form. And since the traditional linear structure of the novel had proved to be incommensurate with these concerns, they turned to other art forms in their search for alternative structures. This fact in itself would appear to repudiate Meyer’s theory that the “modern novel” seeks to hold on to the epic form.

Throughout his life, Thomas Mann never ceased to comment on the parallels between the writer (usually meaning himself) and the musician, an association which found its ultimate expression in *Doktor Faustus*, where the discussion of the crisis of modern music is clearly

⁶⁶³ Herman Meyer, “Zum Problem der epischen Integration”, p. 48.

⁶⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 48.

extendable to the realm of literature, and indeed to all the arts.⁶⁶⁵ It is therefore not very surprising that Mann was to turn to music, in particular to Richard Wagner, as a means of expressing his thoughts on the subject of time in an effective way, i.e. by transposing the *leitmotif* into a technique of the *literary* medium.

Mann explained his “intimate” association with Wagner by referring, paradoxically, to the “epic” qualities of the latter’s *theatre*:

Was überdies meinem Verhältnis zu ihm etwas Unmittelbares und Intimes verlieh, war der Umstand, daß ich heimlich stets, dem Theater zum Trotz, einen großen Epiker in ihm sah und liebte. Das Motiv, das Selbstzitat, die symbolische Formel, die wörtliche und bedeutsame Rückbeziehung über weite Strecken hin, – das waren epische Mittel nach meinem Empfinden, bezaubernd für mich eben als solche.⁶⁶⁶

Mann makes it clear that he is less drawn to the notion of the interaction of previously separated art forms, implicit in the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, than to the *leitmotif* technique. Indeed, the *leitmotif* brings into play specific thematic concerns through the establishing of a type of code with which they become identified, albeit subject to modification (hence Proust’s description of it as “neuralgia”) or expansion. By operating on the basis of repetition, and thus enabling a number of themes to be invoked whenever the author wishes, regardless of any concerns for linear narration, the *leitmotif* defies the traditional chronology of the novel. Mann calls the *leitmotif* “die vor- und zurückdeutende magische Formel, die der musikalisch-ideellen Gesamtwelt [...] in jedem Augenblick volle Präsenz zu verleihen und ein magisches ‘nunc stans’ herzustellen vermag”.⁶⁶⁷ Mann’s use of the *leitmotif* would appear to be fully in accordance with Wagner himself, who also saw it as a means of transcending the limitations of time and space.⁶⁶⁸ In their exploitation of the

⁶⁶⁵ Heftrich has even suggested that, in view of what he sees as a comparable relationship to traditional forms and to experiment, Thomas Mann’s works can best be compared with those of Richard Strauss. cf. his article “Thomas Manns Modernität” in: *Neophilologus* 61 (1977), 265-275. It is doubtful whether Mann himself would have been flattered by the analogy: in a diary note following a performance of *Salome*, he asks himself: “Ist nicht dieser Strauss, dies naive Gewächs des Kaiserreichs, viel unzeitgemäßer geworden als ich?” Quoted in M. Reich-Ranicki, *Thomas Mann und die Seinen*, Frankfurt/Main 1990, p. 40.

⁶⁶⁶ Thomas Mann, “Über die Kunst Richard Wagners”, *GW* X, p. 840.

⁶⁶⁷ Thomas Mann, “Einführung in den Zauberberg”, p. 603.

⁶⁶⁸ cf. Agnes Schlee, *Wandlungen musikalischer Strukturen im Werke Thomas Manns*, Frankfurt/Main & Bern, 1981. For a full discussion of to what extent Mann’s use of the *leitmotif* diverges from Wagner’s see: R. Peacock, *Das Leitmotiv bei Thomas Mann*, Bern 1934 and H. Koopmann, *Die Entwicklung des ‘intellektuellen Romans’ bei Thomas Mann*, p. 45f.

leitmotif structure, both Wagner, and following in his footsteps, Mann, exhibit their allegiance to Schopenhauer. In *Der Zauberberg*, repeated reference is made to the fact that *chronological* progress is common to both narration and music.⁶⁶⁹ Clearly, what had attracted Thomas Mann to Wagner's *leitmotif* was its "magic" property – its ability to do something which music, like the literary medium, is not normally able to do, namely, to dissolve temporality and convey an eternal present.

Indeed, plot and character description in *Der Zauberberg* are subordinated to the evocation of "eternal recurrence". Joachim's reappearance at the séance wearing a steel helmet of the type used in the First World War can be seen as an anticipatory device, and I. Diersen suggests we are to conclude that if Joachim had not died of tuberculosis, he would certainly have fallen victim to the enemy fire.⁶⁷⁰ It is also significant, and not accidental, that the first person to attract Hans Castorp's attention on his arrival at Davos is a war veteran. At the beginning of the novel there are still traces of the previous war with France, and the "hermetische Geschichte" of Hans Castorp ends, of course, in the First World War. A novel which stresses the "migration of the soul" through an almost rhythmic repetition of characters and events is one which challenges the traditional primacy of the narrator and his characters. As Bulhof says: "In der Wiederholung der Leitmotive ereignet sich eine gewisse Desintegration des Erzählers und der Personen".⁶⁷¹ Not only the repetition of characters and situations, but also the repetition of specific themes through the *leitmotif* contributes to the creation of a circular structure and the emasculation of linear temporality. In this way, the structure of the novel is in harmony with its content: Thomas Mann refers to his novel's "Ehrgeiz [...], Inhalt und Form, Wesen und

⁶⁶⁹ "Die Zeit ist das Element der Erzählung, wie sie das Element des Lebens ist,- unlösbar damit verbunden, wie mit den Körpern im Raum. Sie ist auch das Element der Musik, als welche die Zeit mißt und gliedert, sie kurzweilig und kostbar auf einmal macht: verwandt hierin, wie gesagt, der Erzählung, die ebenfalls (und anders als das auf einmal leuchtend gegenwärtige und nur als Körper an die Zeit gebundene Werk der bildenden Kunst) nur als ein Nacheinander, nicht anders denn als ein Ablaufendes sich zu geben weiß, und selbst, wenn sie versuchen sollte, in jedem Augenblick ganz da zu sein, der Zeit zu ihrer Erscheinung bedarf". *Der Zauberberg*, p. 738.

⁶⁷⁰ Inge Diersen, *Thomas Mann: Episches Werk, Weltanschauung, Leben*, Berlin & Weimar 1975, p. 139.

⁶⁷¹ Bulhof, *Transpersonalismus und Synchronizität*, p. 175.

Erscheinung zu voller Kongruenz zu bringen und immer zugleich das zu sein, wovon es handelt und spricht”.⁶⁷²

The *leitmotif* of the cigar is perhaps one of the most significant and extensive in *Der Zauberberg*. Hans Castorp’s inability to appreciate his beloved Maria Mancini during the first few days of his stay in the sanatorium is symptomatic of his difficulties in acclimatising, but as he begins to feel more at ease on the Magic Mountain his appreciation of the fine cigar returns. His devotion to “Maria” from Bremen initially constitutes a link with the *Flachland*, is then further described in terms of his fascination with death and reluctance to obey the “Aktivitätskommando” of the *Flachland*: as he explains to Joachim,

Siehst du [...] man hat eine gute Zigarre, dann ist man eigentlich geborgen, es kann einem buchstäblich nichts geschehen. Es ist genau, wie wenn man an der See liegt, dann liegt man eben an der See, nicht wahr, und braucht nichts weiter, weder Arbeit noch Unterhaltung.⁶⁷³

Thus the cigar soon becomes associated with two interrelated experiences for Hans Castorp on the Magic Mountain, those of timelessness and death, to which that of illness is added, when Behrens describes the thermometer as “eine Quecksilberzigarre”. Indeed, the discussion of cigars with Behrens, just prior to the viewing of Clawdia’s portrait, further extends the cigar *leitmotif* to encompass eroticism. Here the cigars are described as

diese schlanken Körper, die mit den schräg gleichlaufenden Rippen ihrer erhöhten, hie und da etwas gelüfteten Wickelränder, ihrem aufliegenden Geäder, das zu pulsen schien, den kleinen Unebenheiten ihrer Haut, dem Spiel des Lichtes auf ihren Flächen und Kanten etwas organisch Lebendiges hatten.⁶⁷⁴

Behrens asks Hans Castorp about his “bräunliche Schöne” and says of his own brand, “Die hat Rasse [...] Temperament, wissen Sie, Saft und Kraft”, which encourages Hans Castorp to describe a failed attempt to keep his cigars in an airtight box, resulting in “lauter ledrige Leichen”.⁶⁷⁵ The associations of the cigar *leitmotif* are further borne out by the

⁶⁷² Thomas Mann, “Einführung in den Zauberberg”, p. 612.

⁶⁷³ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 69.

⁶⁷⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 348-349.

⁶⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p. 349. For a very complete description of the cigar *leitmotif* cf. Paul Forssbohm, *Formen des Offenen. Thomas Manns Zauberberg, die “Oxen of the Sun”- Episode in James Joyces Ulysses und Julio Cortázers Rayuela*, Frankfurt/Main 1988; also Werner Fritzen, “Die ‘bräunliche Schöne’. Über Zigarren und Verwandtes in Thomas Manns ‘Zauberberg’ ” in: *DVjs* 55, 1 (March 1981), 107-118.

characters who smoke (Hans Castorp, Behrens, Clawdia), against those who don't (Joachim, Settembrini).

The schematization which the cigar, and the other *leitmotifs* suggest, is well couched, however, in "realist" narration: Hans Castorp's attachment to a fine cigar from Bremen is fully commensurate with the other details we are given about him: the fact that the young ladies of Hamburg whose company he normally enjoys have better table manners than Clawdia Chauchat, that he is partial to the good things in life, places particular emphasis on a fashionable, immaculate appearance, enjoys "free time" rather than work, etc. Thomas Mann also drew attention to this aspect of his novel, saying, "Die Geschichte arbeitet wohl mit den Mitteln des realistischen Romanes, aber sie ist kein solcher, sie geht beständig über das Realistische hinaus, indem sie es symbolisch steigert und transparent macht für das Geistige und Ideelle".⁶⁷⁶

As Jauss has indicated, the culmination of the *leitmotif* technique is to be found in the *Walpurgisnacht* chapter. Here, Hans Castorp and Clawdia Chauchat take advantage of the Karneval's being celebrated on 29 February – which does not feature in the calendar – to use the informal "du" form of address and become more intimate.⁶⁷⁷ On this occasion, Hans Castorp's question to Clawdia, "Hast du vielleicht einen Bleistift?" simulates the scene in the schoolyard with Pribislav Hippe, when he found himself looking for a suitable excuse to establish contact with his boyhood idol. He explains the significance of the scene to his new lover, using the French language as a means of maintaining his characteristically ironic stance:

[...] oui, c'est vrai, je t'ai déjà connue, anciennement, toi et tes yeux merveilleusement obliques et ta bouche et ta voix, avec laquelle tu parles, – une fois déjà, lorsque j'étais collégien, je t'ai demandé ton crayon, pour faire enfin ta connaissance mondaine, parce que je t'aimais irraisonnablement, et c'est de là, sans doute, c'est de mon ancien amour pour toi que ces marques me restent que Behrens a trouvés dans mon corps, et qui indiquent que jadis aussi j'étais malade ...⁶⁷⁸

⁶⁷⁶ Thomas Mann, "Einführung in den Zauberberg", p. 612.

⁶⁷⁷ Jauss, *Zeit und Erinnerung*, p. 47.

⁶⁷⁸ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 469.

In Clawdia's response to Hans' request, the past seems to be restored in the present: "allenfalls war in ihrem Lächeln und ihrer Stimme etwas von der Erregung, die auftritt, wenn nach langem, stummen Verhältnis die erste Anrede fällt, – einer listigen Erregung, die alles Vorgegangene in den Augenblick einbezieht".⁶⁷⁹ As Thomas Mann himself indicated, the *leitmotif* also points forward, with the conversation between the lovers drawing in future events – the death of Joachim as a result of his attempt to assume his military career, Hans Castorp's waiting for Clawdia to return, and his own return to the *Flachland*. Finally, his words to Clawdia in the same scene, when he tries to express his feelings: "Je veux dire: c'est un rêve bien connu, rêvé de tout temps, long, éternel, oui, être assis près de toi comme à présent, voilà l'éternité"⁶⁸⁰ suggest a stagnation of temporality, whereby all actions recall actions previously undertaken and where the impression of change and progression is merely illusory. Jauss stresses the musicality of Mann's composition and describes the *Walpurgisnacht* chapter in terms of "[die] Engführung einer vielstimmigen Fuge".⁶⁸¹

Thomas Mann's use of the *leitmotif* in *Der Zauberberg* shows a conscious refinement of its function from that in *Buddenbrooks*. In the 1901 chronicle the *leitmotif* is used to refer to the essence of a character through the highlighting of certain idiosyncratic features, which then recur. This early adaptation of Wagner's device does nothing to suggest the possibility of a continuous present, but rather is a means of character description. Mann pointed out that the idealised, musical *leitmotif* of *Der Zauberberg* had its origins in the 1903 novella *Tonio Kröger*: "Vor allem war darin das sprachliche 'Leitmotiv' nicht mehr, wie noch in 'Buddenbrooks', bloß physiognomisch-naturalistisch gehandhabt, sondern hatte eine ideelle Gefühlstransparenz gewonnen, die es entmechanisierte und ins Musikalische hob".⁶⁸² In this highly sophisticated system, each *leitmotif* has a distinct symbolic function within the greater whole, comparable to that of the individual notes of serial music described in *Doktor Faustus*. To refer to the cigar *leitmotif* once again, it is not only a complex structure itself, but forms part of an even greater structure

⁶⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 457.

⁶⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p. 462.

⁶⁸¹ Jauss, *Zeit und Erinnerung*, p. 47.

⁶⁸² Thomas Mann, "Lebensabriß", p. 538.

which encompasses other *leitmotifs*, namely those of the similarly-shaped objects, the pencil and the thermometer. This succession of superimposed intricate structures would appear to be hinted at in the reference to the complex structure of human cells, and again in the similar description of the snowflakes in the *Schnee* chapter.

But Thomas Mann's borrowing from the realm of music was not limited to his use of the *leitmotif*.

Musik, Komposition – ich habe schon anlässlich meiner früheren Arbeiten davon gesprochen, daß der Roman, die Erzählung, mir immer eine Symphonie, ein Werk der Kontrapunktik, ein Themengewebe gewesen war, worin die Ideen die Rolle musikalischer Motive spielen. Diese Technik ist im 'Zauberberg' auf die komplizierteste und alles durchdringende Art angewandt [...]⁶⁸³

For Thomas Mann, the novel form lends itself to the expression, combination and juxtaposition of ideas, in the same way that a composer introduces, blends and contrasts themes in a work of music. The structuring of a novel according to musical patterns, rather than to the demands of character development and plot, marks an important departure from the linear progression of the realists. At the same time, an awareness of the novel's innate musicality was hardly a momentous discovery. It is clear from his critique of the *Bildungsroman* that Schlegel recognised the potential of music for counteracting realism, and, as B. Naumann has shown, was highly conscious of the rhythmic qualities which constitute the inner structure of the novel. Naumann quotes Schlegel's fragment of 1799: "Die innerste Form des Romans ist mathematisch, rhetorisch, musikalisch. Das Potenziren, Progressive, Irrationale; ferner die rhetorischen Figuren. Mit der Musik versteht sich von selbst". Naumann goes as far as suggesting that Schlegel's many and manifold reflections on "das Musikalische" and the novel form can, in fact, be seen as an expression of a lack of appropriate terminology for discussing the literary medium itself.⁶⁸⁴ It would appear, then, that over a hundred years later, Thomas Mann, in developing the *leitmotif* as a tool of the *literary* medium, is reviving a significant aspect of the Romantics' heritage, and that, like Schlegel, he sees musical structures as a means of transcending realism.

⁶⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 611.

⁶⁸⁴ Barbara Naumann, " 'Mit der Musik versteht sich von selbst'. Friedrich Schlegels Reflexion des Musikalischen im Kontext der Gattungspoetik" in: Lämmert & Scheunemann (eds.), *Regelkram und Grenzgänge*, 72-94.

Thomas Mann, in response to a criticism of *Der Zauberberg* as “kompositionslos”, reacted in the strongest of terms, even suggesting that his novel did not only *have* a composition, but that it *was* a composition:

Habe ich dafür all die Jahre dagesessen wie ein orientalischer Teppichmacher und geknüpft, damit man nun sagt, von einer Komposition könne hier nicht gut die Rede sein? [...] Sagen Sie mir über die Sprache so Liebes Sie wollen: nicht sie macht die Musik, sondern die (in der klaren Einsicht, daß unter Deutschen immer nur das verstanden wird, das auf irgendeine Weise Musik macht) der Musik so weit wie möglich angenäherte Kompositionstechnik. Der Roman hat nicht Komposition, er ist eine – halten zu Gnaden!⁶⁸⁵

In his reflections on the novel, Schlegel had linked music with mathematics, and this constitutes another area of Romantic theory which Thomas Mann resurrects. Alongside the *leitmotif*, Mann seeks to impose a numerical structure on *Der Zauberberg* through the repeated use of the number seven, of which many examples can be found in the text: there are *seven* tables at mealtimes, Hans Castorp’s stay on the Magic Mountain lasts *seven* years, he is referred to as *der Siebenschläfer*, and his experience with Clawdia Chauchat at Fasching takes place *seven* months into his stay, to list just a few examples. Is it coincidental that so many of the names in the novel – Castorp, Ziemßen, Behrens, Chauchat, Berghof contain seven letters? Further, Hans Castorp’s room number is 34, Clawdia’s 7. “Zahlenmystik ist nicht meine Sache,” says Serenus Zeitblom in *Doktor Faustus*. However, as David Meakin says, “mystic numbers are *very much* in Thomas Mann’s line”,⁶⁸⁶ and this is increasingly the case from *Der Zauberberg* onwards.

U. Eisele even suggests that the structure of *Der Zauberberg* not only owes a great deal to the number seven, but that Mann develops a series of situations throughout the novel, in which the numbers seven and six are juxtaposed in a meaningful fashion, six denoting a “normal” situation, seven an unusual one, this implicit code highlighting – in Eisele’s view – Hans Castorp’s repeated failure to assume his vocation of becoming an artist.⁶⁸⁷ Whilst many of Eisele’s finds are stimulating and convincing, the overall interpretation, like many

⁶⁸⁵ Thomas Mann, letter to Ida Boy-Ed 9. 10. 1926 in: *Selbstkommentare*, p. 93.

⁶⁸⁶ Meakin, *Hermetic Fictions*, p. 97.

⁶⁸⁷ Ulf Eisele, *Die Struktur des modernen deutschen Romans*, Tübingen 1984, p. 154f.

others of this type, verges on the schematic. The play around the number seven in *Der Zauberberg* has certainly given rise to much speculation – from relating to the thirty-four of the magic square in Dürer's *Melancholia*, which featured in *Doktor Faustus*, to being an oblique reference to Snow White and her dwarfs ... whatever the significance of the number seven, Thomas Mann's employment of it as a recurrent theme *and* as a structuring device – for the novel is also divided into seven chapters – undoubtedly points to a desire for self-conscious stylisation, and the wish to expose the artificiality of the novelistic construct, a step which brings *Der Zauberberg* very much in line with *Les Faux-monnayeurs*. The “mythisch-malerischer Zeitkörper”⁶⁸⁸ number seven forms part of the mythical world of the Magic Mountain in a new, geometrically-structured novel, which makes a clean break with the attempts of the nineteenth-century novelists to faithfully reproduce reality, and with their rigid adherence to chronology. For was this not as artificial and constructed an undertaking as making everything revolve around the number seven?

Echoes of this fascination with mathematical models can perhaps be heard in the early works of Raymond Queneau, who composed his novels according to numerical combinations which happened to take his fancy,⁶⁸⁹ or in the novels of Calvino; in his *The Castle of Crossed Destinies* (1976) he seeks to introduce the game principle into his novel by constructing it on the basis of tarot cards, thus showing the same fascination with aleatory structuring devices as is apparent in his comments on the use of computers for this purpose. And the number seven was to hold the same fatal fascination for Milan Kundera as it did for Thomas Mann; as J-Y. Tadié tells us, the Czech writer felt compelled to structure a large number of his novels according to that mysterious number.⁶⁹⁰

Wagner, together with Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, forms for Thomas Mann, a “magic” grouping: in the *Betrachtungen*, he describes the two philosophers as his most significant

⁶⁸⁸ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 967.

⁶⁸⁹ In an interview with G. Charbonnier in 1962, Queneau admitted to being “un peu arithmomane”. *Entretiens avec Georges Charbonnier*, Paris 1962, p. 48.

⁶⁹⁰ For a more detailed discussion of aleatory structuring devices cf. J-Y. Tadié, *Le Roman au XXe siècle*, Paris 1990, pp. 115-120.

influences, saying they are musicians, rather than writers, and extending the analogy to include himself. For Mann Wagner, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche are all symbols of the German cultural tradition, which is musical in essence and the antithesis of French civilization, which finds its most apt expression in the written word.

For Gide, Wagner could not act as a rôle model, neither with regard to the *leitmotif*, nor to the *Gesamtkunstwerk*; in the *Journal des Faux-monnayeurs* he expresses his loathing for the Bayreuth composer and states that his ideal of the “roman pur” is to represent the exact opposite of the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*: “J’ai toujours eu horreur de ce que l’on a appelé ‘la synthèse des arts’, qui devait, suivant Wagner, se réaliser sur le théâtre. Et cela m’a donné l’horreur du théâtre – et de Wagner”.⁶⁹¹ But this does not mean that Gide did not have his own ideas about applying musical structures to the novel. In the non-published part of Gide’s *Journal*, we can see that at an early stage of the work on *Les Faux-monnayeurs* he had in mind a constructivist plan for his novel, later abandoned.⁶⁹² From 1919 onwards, however, the year Gide began the composition of *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, he compared himself to a musician, “qui cherche à juxtaposer et à imbriquer, à la manière de César Franck, un motif d’andante et un motif d’allegro”.⁶⁹³ Gide talks of “idées abandonnées presque aussitôt lancées” and which recur “après les avoir perdues de vue quelque temps comme un premier motif dans certaines fugues de Bach”.⁶⁹⁴

Edouard states explicitly that his novel should achieve the purity of Bach’s *Art of the Fugue* (the piece of music which Gide, an accomplished pianist, was practising at the time of starting work on the novel ...), adding that he does not see why this model should only be possible in music and not in literature: “Ce que je voudrais faire, comprenez-moi, c’est quelque chose qui serait comme *l’Art de la fugue*. Et je ne vois pas pourquoi ce qui fut possible en musique serait impossible en littérature ...”.⁶⁹⁵ Laura, on the other hand, feels that this step would effectively banish all humanity from literature, as music is a

⁶⁹¹ *JFM*, 1.11.1922, p. 57.

⁶⁹² cf. Delay, *La jeunesse d’André Gide*, vol. 2, p. 666.

⁶⁹³ *JFM*, 17.6.1919, p. 11.

⁶⁹⁴ Gide, *Journal 1889-1939*, 3.10.1924, p. 790.

⁶⁹⁵ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 187.

mathematical art; in her view Bach succeeded in creating nothing more than a rarified temple of tedium: “à n’en considérer exceptionnellement plus que le chiffre, à en bannir le pathos et l’humanité, Bach avait réussi le chef-d’œuvre abstrait de l’ennui, une sorte de temple astronomique, où ne pouvaient pénétrer que de rares initiés”.⁶⁹⁶ Laura’s words on Bach eerily foreshadow much of the criticism which was to be directed at Gide’s novel itself, and although Edouard repeats his admiration for what he sees as Bach’s greatest achievement, this discussion clearly suggests that Gide was himself wrestling with conflicting aesthetic concerns, a predicament Edouard frequently finds himself in when elaborating his theories of the novel.

It is, of course, highly debatable whether *Les Faux-monnayeurs* achieves the purity Gide wished for it; after all, he also states that he wishes to pour *everything* into it, “pour l’enrichissement de sa touffe”.⁶⁹⁷ Further, he wished to give his novel an impression of spontaneity, as if nothing had been planned in advance:

Ne pas établir la suite de mon roman dans le prolongement des lignes déjà tracées; voilà la difficulté. Un surgissement perpétuel; chaque nouveau chapitre doit poser un nouveau problème, être une ouverture, une direction, une impulsion, une jetée en avant – de l’esprit du lecteur.⁶⁹⁸

It was to have the same *improvised* feel as the music of Chopin, which he admired so much. But instead Gide used a structuring model of great mathematical precision: indeed, the fugue technique, where parallel themes are repeated and overlaid, emerges as the dominant model of composition in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*. Right from the beginning of his novel, Gide introduces a multitude of themes, which he then abandons, only to systematically re-introduce later on: the theme of Bernard’s illegitimacy, for example, the very first in the novel, is echoed in the controversy surrounding Laura’s child, as well as in the note Edouard makes in his diary following a conversation overheard (voyeurism once again!) on a train: “L’avenir appartient aux bâtards. – Quelle signification dans ce mot: ‘Un enfant naturel!’ Seul le bâtard a droit au naturel”.⁶⁹⁹ The root of Bernard’s

⁶⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 187.

⁶⁹⁷ *JFM*, 21.11.1920, p. 28.

⁶⁹⁸ *ibid.*, 10.4.1924, p. 74.

⁶⁹⁹ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 116.

illegitimacy, the infidelity of Mme Profitendieu, finds its exact counterpart – considerably later in the novel – in the description of M. Molinier and his mistress, and is further reflected in Vincent’s abandoning of Laura. It also transpires that Boris himself was born out of wedlock, when his father, the son of the La Pérouse couple, had a mistress at the age of twenty (just like Vincent). As a result of the death of *his* father, a theme itself reflected in the description of the death of Passavant *père*, Boris starts to “practise magic” and shows an unusual attachment to his talisman with its mysterious wording, in the same way that La Pérouse’s fate becomes linked with an envelope marked “A OUVRIER APRES MA MORT”. And so each theme introduced finds its resonance, as if played in a different key, by a different instrument.

Comparable to the *Schnee* chapter in *Der Zauberberg*, with its blending of all previously-heralded motifs, is the central section in Saas-Fée (incidentally referred to by Masson as “cette fausse montagne magique”⁷⁰⁰), which brings together the main themes introduced hitherto – those of counterfeiting and of the poetics of the novel – and unites them in Edouard’s elaboration of his plans for his *Les Faux-monnayeurs*. For it is apparent from the way Edouard discusses his plans for his ground-breaking, “pure” novel, that the works of his literary predecessors are to be considered as false as the counterfeit coins in circulation. What he would like to write is a novel genuinely alive with *ideas*:

A cause des maladroits qui s’y sont fourvoyés, devons-nous condamner le roman d’idées? En guise de romans d’idées, on ne nous a servi jusqu’à présent que d’exécrables romans à thèses. Mais il ne s’agit pas de cela, vous pensez bien. Les idées ..., les idées, je vous l’avoue, m’intéressent plus que les hommes; m’intéressent par-dessus tout.⁷⁰¹

The fugue technique is reproduced on a linguistic level too. On close inspection, *Les Faux-monnayeurs* reveals a high number of clusters of nearly-identical words or phrases following in quick succession, often used by one character and then by another, or by the narrator himself. For example, Edouard expresses great surprise at hearing La Pérouse state that it is precisely because he has a sensitive throat that he refuses to wear a scarf: “J’ai toujours lutté contre moi-même”⁷⁰² he says. A short time later, we find Edouard

⁷⁰⁰ Masson, *Lire Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 111.

⁷⁰¹ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 187.

⁷⁰² *ibid.*, p. 121.

expressing the same sentiment, saying that he is leaving Paris precisely because he wants to stay: “Un certain amour de l’ardu, et l’horreur de la complaisance [...], c’est peut-être, de ma première éducation puritaine, ce dont j’ai le plus de mal à me nettoyer”.⁷⁰³ Further, Bernard refers to the crop of new pupils at the pension Vedel-Azaïs as “des ruminants, des pachidermes, des mollusques et d’autres invertébrés” in a bizarre echo of Vincent’s discourse on natural history.⁷⁰⁴ Not only does this repetition point to the “constructed” nature of the novel and to the hand of the author at work, but it also heightens the analogy with musical composition. However, if it can be assumed that the “musical” composition of the *nouveau roman* shows at least some indebtedness to Gide’s entire œuvre, not only to *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, it must also be borne in mind that the *nouveaux romanciers* may have used musicality in a way which diverges from Gide. According to Claude Ollier, speaking at the 1964 conference on the question of Gide’s legacy to the *nouveaux romanciers*, the difference lies in the register, the tonality, the rhythm and the distribution of silences. Ollier maintained that for Gide “musicality” remained a means of evoking reality more tangibly, whereas an author such as Robbe-Grillet used it in order to draw attention to the musical nature of language itself.⁷⁰⁵

Music runs as a minor theme (or as a theme in a minor key?) throughout *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, the dwindling number of private lessons given by the piano teacher La Pérouse serving to illustrate his gradual demise. In a heated discussion with his former teacher on the portrayal of passion in art, Edouard compares *Hernani* by Victor Hugo, the play which had caused the old man so much moral distress, with a blast of brass instruments in the middle of a symphony:

La discussion continua ainsi quelque temps; et comme je comparais alors cet événement pathétique à tel déchaînement des instruments de cuivre dans un orchestre: ‘Par exemple, à cette entrée de trombones, que vous admirez dans telle symphonie de Beethoven ...’⁷⁰⁶

To Edouard’s surprise La Pérouse replies indignantly, saying that he does not like this entrance of trombones at all, and goes on to express his extreme disapproval of modern

⁷⁰³ *ibid.*, p. 126.

⁷⁰⁴ *ibid.*, p. 252.

⁷⁰⁵ cf. Martin, “Gide et le ‘nouveau roman’”, p. 242.

⁷⁰⁶ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 162.

music: “Avez-vous remarqué, que tout l’effort de la musique moderne est de rendre supportables, agréables même, certains accords que nous tenions d’abord pour discordants?”⁷⁰⁷ Yet Edouard’s postulation of the reduction of everything to harmony only further incenses La Pérouse, prompting Edouard to ask: “ ‘Vous ne prétendez pourtant pas restreindre la musique à la seule expression de la sérénité? Dans ce cas, un seul accord suffirait: un accord parfait continu’ ”. This is, however, precisely what La Pérouse wishes, “ ‘Un accord parfait continu; oui, c’est cela: un accord parfait continu ... Mais tout notre univers est en proie à la discordance’ ”.⁷⁰⁸ Edouard’s discussion of the Victor Hugo play with terminology borrowed from the musical sphere points to the relevance of music to the discussion, and creation, of the literary medium and to his own stated desire for a novel as pure as the Bach fugue. But it would appear that the harmonious musical structure which Edouard wishes for his novel, and which Gide imparts to *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, is in direct conflict with the violent discordance of the world portrayed.

The musical structure of Gide’s novel was to inspire Huxley’s *Point Counterpoint* as well as some works of the *nouveaux romanciers*. Raimond has commented, for example, that Butor’s *La Modification* is constructed along rigorous lines, which are reminiscent of *Les Faux-monnayeurs*.⁷⁰⁹ In Butor’s novel, the opposition of two mistresses, two towns, two series of stays – in Paris and Rome – is skilfully put into play. Butor himself emphasised the parallels between music and the novelistic world:

A partir d’un certain niveau de réflexion, on est obligé de s’apercevoir que la plupart des problèmes musicaux ont des correspondants dans l’ordre romanesque, que les structures musicales ont des applications romanesques ... musique et roman s’éclairent mutuellement.⁷¹⁰

And like Gide, Butor used the classical canon as a model for his *L’Emploi du Temps*, where different time-scales are evoked and overlapped in accordance with a musical, rather than a so-called realist structure.

⁷⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p. 163.

⁷⁰⁸ *ibid.*, p. 163.

⁷⁰⁹ Raimond, *Le roman*, p. 109.

⁷¹⁰ Butor “L’Espace du Roman” in: Butor *Essais*, p. 48.

In turning to music for a new model for the modern novel, Mann's and Gide's borrowing from Wagner and Bach suggests divergence, rather than affinity within this common goal. Yet Mann claimed that the Bach fugue incorporated his ideal of artistic creation:

Die Kunst als tönende Ethik, als fuga und punctum contra punctum, als eine heitere und ernste Frömmigkeit, als ein Gebäude von nicht profaner Bestimmung, wo eines ins andere greift, sinnig, verständig und ohne Mörtel verbunden und gehalten 'von Gottes Hand', – dieses l'art pour l'art ist wahrhaftig mein Ideal von Kunst.⁷¹¹

His looking to Bach remains, however, on the level of an inspirational credo for his writings.

In addition to Mann's and Gide's appropriation of structures from Wagner and Bach, elements of harmony and dissonance further determine the structuring of their novels. In *Der Zauberberg* Thomas Mann shifts his characters around to suggest harmonious or discordant chords of the philosophies they represent. Hans Castorp stands for the "Idee der Mitte", which Thomas Mann saw as being the German idea *per se*. As he wrote in his 1925 speech "Lübeck als geistige Lebensform": "Das ist die deutsche Idee, denn ist nicht deutsches Wesen die Mitte, das Mittlere und Vermittelnde und der Deutsche der mittlere Mensch im großen Stile? Wer Deutschtum sagt, der sagt Mitte".⁷¹² As I. Fradkin points out, Hans Castorp finds himself in a succession of mediating positions;⁷¹³ not only between the "pedagogical extremes" Naphta and Settembrini, but through his attachment to Clawdia Chauchat – and hence to the Asian principles – he comes into further conflict with Settembrini. For Joachim, Hans Castorp also mediates between the starkly contrasting worlds of the *Flachland* and the Magic Mountain, and when Clawdia Chauchat returns with Mynheer Peeperkorn, he is thrust between the two lovers. Thus through the shifting character constellations, every idea introduced is painstakingly paired with its counterpart, the various combinations forming chords or discords.

⁷¹¹ Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen*, p. 311.

⁷¹² Thomas Mann, "Lübeck als geistige Lebensform", *GW* XI, p. 393.

⁷¹³ Ilja Fradkin, " 'Der Zauberberg' und die Geburt des modernen intellektuellen Romans" in: *Sinn und Form, Sonderheft Thomas Mann* (1965), 76-84, p. 79.

We have seen how Thomas Mann's vision of the novel was that of "ein Themengewebe, ein Werk der Kontrapunktik" and, indeed, the structuring of *Der Zauberberg* appears to owe a great deal to the counterpoint tradition: as Meakin, in his exploration of alchemical resonances, says of Thomas Mann's *magnum opus*:

Its symbolism and even its play involve a great deal of rationality, even pedantry, a quasi-scholastic meticulousness in matching antithesis with thesis and in logically exhausting every subject that arises. Everything is exposed and expiated (and the dialectical structure – two antithetical mentors, two antithetical doctors – facilitates this); little is occulted.⁷¹⁴

Interestingly, Meakin sees the *Schnee* chapter, with its summarizing and anticipatory functions (Castorp's awakening in the snow foreshadowing that of his more rude awakening as a result of the *Donnerschlag*), as a *mise-en-abyme* of the whole novel, and as a highly modern technique: "The novel contains, in true modernist fashion, its own microcosms".⁷¹⁵ Further, the chapter *Abgewiesener Angriff* which describes the failed attempt of James Tienappel to bring his nephew down from the Magic Mountain, is a replica of the very first chapter describing Hans Castorp's own arrival: the description of James' arrival at the station, his meal in the restaurant and hysteria as a result of acclimatisation difficulties and alcohol, duplicates step by step that of his nephew's own experiences.

As well as the harmonious repetition and echoing of identical themes in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, there is also much dissonance in the presentation of contrasting motifs: the age of La Pérouse contrasts with the youth of the schoolboy counterfeiters, the purity of Rachel Vedel with the reckless abandon of her sister Sarah; the spontaneity of the relationship between Edouard and Olivier is opposed to the many stale and weary marriages depicted. On a thematic level, the "realism" of Bernard's approach to literature (we are not surprised to discover at the end of the novel that he has decided to become a journalist) represents the polar opposite of the abstraction of Edouard's theories. Even within an apparent "pairing" of themes, such as the false suicide of La Pérouse and the equally false attempt by Olivier to end his life, the principle of contrast is apparent: whereas La Pérouse's decision is determined by despair, Olivier, inspired by the *Brothers*

⁷¹⁴ Meakin, *Hermetic Fictions*, pp. 101-102.

⁷¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 100.

Karamazov, is prompted to kill himself in a moment of intense happiness. *Les Faux-monnayeurs* would appear to be constructed to the same extent as *Der Zauberberg* on the principles of harmony and dissonance: perhaps Gide was inspired to introduce the latter into his novel by his friend Darius Milhaud, part of the group of the “Six” whose hallmark was a reaction against Wagner and an experimentation with dissonance.

If music was to provide a major source of inspiration for Mann and Gide, it was primarily to the visual arts that the *nouveaux romanciers* were to look for ideas on composition and structure. Referring to his novel *Degrés*, Butor described the compositional process – during which he had been fascinated by Mondrian – in terms of “une organisation de cubes, ce sont des cubes posés les uns sur les autres”.⁷¹⁶ Indeed, Butor’s presentations of texts are often directly inspired by a work of visual art. Claude Simon refers to both visual and musical structures in his comment on the organisation of his novel *La Route des Flandres*, saying that a particular emotion or sensation “provoque des harmoniques ou [...] des couleurs complémentaires”.⁷¹⁷ Simon had apparently struggled to achieve an effect of simultaneity in his novel, until he hit upon the idea of using colour pencils, attributing a different colour to each character and theme, and was thus able to compose his work in the same way as he would have done a painting.

The critic Masson sees the clock at the very beginning of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* as a well-disguised symbol of the tri-partite, symmetrical structure of the novel itself.⁷¹⁸ It is unlikely that the clock, which is flanked by two crystal candlesticks, provided the original inspiration for the structure of the novel, but using an item of furniture as a compositional model is not as obscure as one might initially assume: indeed, we have seen how Thomas Mann describes himself as a weaver of Oriental carpets! Calvino’s *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveller* (1979) contains eleven novels which open up on each other like a system of drawers and Butor’s *Passage de Milan* is constructed like a block of flats, with one temporal plane piled on top of another. Proust had, of course, before Mann and Gide,

⁷¹⁶ cf. Raimond, *Le Roman*, p. 109.

⁷¹⁷ Also quoted in: *ibid.*, p. 109.

⁷¹⁸ Masson, *Lire Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 125; cf also Goulet, “Lire *Les Faux-monnayeurs*” in: *André Gide 5, RLM* (1975), 9-28, p. 15f.

borrowed certain concepts from the world of architecture and used the model of a cathedral for the construction of *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, referring to individual parts of his structure as *colonnes, voûtes, porches* and *vitraux de l'abside*.⁷¹⁹

Gide imparts an innovative structure to *Les Faux-monnayeurs* by creating myriad novels within his novel, a move directly inspired by the portrayals of the artists in the act of creation, notably in the paintings of Memling and Metzys, and in Velázquez' *Las Meninas*. In turn, his novel has inspired comparison with the visual art forms. Whereas Sypher likens Gide's innovation in perspective to the works of the Cubists, Moutote is inspired by the richness and lightness of the structure to compare it to a mobile: "Des *Faux-monnayeurs*, l'un des romans les plus riches de pensée critique de notre temps, les dialogues font un roman aéré et aérien, comme un mobile de Calder, qui enchante et fait penser, sans rien qui pèse ou qui pose".⁷²⁰

Further, *Les Faux-monnayeurs* conveys some of the excitement surrounding the developments in the contemporary cultural scene. As Idt suggests, through the cameos of Jarry in the "Argonauts' Banquet" scene, Valéry in the guise of Paul-Ambroise, and Cocteau as Passavant, Gide reviews the lively cultural scene of the 1920s, "comme un chansonnier". Further, she suggests that the reference to the Mona Lisa with a moustache is that of Duchamp/Picabia's "revue 391", and that "Le fer à repasser" is the object exhibited by Man Ray under the title *Cadeau*. Idt also draws attention to the conversation between Edouard and La Pérouse on musical developments.⁷²¹ Although such developments are less transparent in the "hermetic" world of *Der Zauberberg*, a careful reading of the novel suggests that the advent of new, competing media forces Thomas Mann to reappraise the rôle of the printed medium in the light of these changes, and to re-examine the boundaries between the various art forms.

⁷¹⁹ Marcel Proust, letter to Comte Jean de Gaigneron in: *Correspondance XVIII*, Paris 1990, p. 359.

⁷²⁰ Moutote, *Réflexions*, p. 126.

⁷²¹ Idt, *André Gide: Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 10.

In *Der Zauberberg* we read of an outing to the local cinema, the “Bioskop-Theater” which brings together the two cousins, Settembrini, the “moribund” Karin Karstedt and Frau Stöhr. The narrator makes his personal stance towards the popular new medium clear, showing us the gulf of opinion separating the Italian man of reason and the vulgar manufacturer’s wife from Mannheim; Hans Castorp, he tells us, assumes Settembrini will disapprove of “den Mißbrauch der Technik zur Belebung so menschenverächterischer Vorstellungen”, whereas the face of Frau Stöhr is “im Genusse verzerrt”.⁷²² Indeed, the tempestuous love and adventure story of the film portrays humanity at its crudest, engaged in a series of highly dramatic actions – tailor-made, as we are told in heavily ironic tones, for its intended audience:

Es war eine aufgeregte Liebes- und Mordgeschichte, die sie sahen, stumm sich abhaspelnd am Hofe eines orientalischen Despoten, gejagte Vorgänge voll Pracht und Nacktheit, voll Herrscherbrunst und religiöser Wut der Unterwürfigkeit, voll Grausamkeit, Begierde, tödlicher Lust und von verweilender Anschaulichkeit, wenn es die Muskulatur von Henkersarmen zu besichtigen galt, – kurz, hergestellt aus sympathetischer Vertrautheit mit den geheimen Wünschen der zuschauenden internationalen Zivilisation.⁷²³

The most remarkable aspect of the new medium film is its ability to transcend spatial and temporal barriers. Events from as far afield as India and Borneo are, as if by magic, relayed to Davos, past events restored to life: “Man war zugegen bei alldem; der Raum war vernichtet, die Zeit zurückgestellt, das Dort und Damals in ein huschendes, gaukelndes, von Musik umspieltes Hier und Jetzt verwandelt”.⁷²⁴ Here, both art forms – the film and music – coincide to suggest a continuous present. Through the advances in technology, past events are revived in a present tense simultaneous to that of the spectator, the very artificiality of which induces a sense of pleasurable indecency. After the end of a showing, we read: “Man rieb sich die Augen, stierte vor sich hin, schämte sich der Helligkeit und verlangte zurück ins Dunkel, um wieder zu schauen, um Dinge, die ihre Zeit gehabt, in frische Zeit verpflanzt und aufgeschminkt mit Musik, wieder begeben zu sehen”.⁷²⁵ The film’s

⁷²² *Der Zauberberg*, p. 435.

⁷²³ *ibid.*, p. 435.

⁷²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 436.

⁷²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 435.

simulation of the freshness of irretrievably past events is described with the same tone of distaste, mixed with fascination, as the old dandy made up to look like a youth in *Der Tod in Venedig*, whom von Aschenbach spots on the boat to Venice in ironic anticipation of his own fate.

The narrator describes the end of the film in the following terms:

Dann verschwand das Phantom. Leere Helligkeit überzog die Tafel, das Wort 'Ende' ward darauf geworfen, der Zyklus der Darbietungen hatte sich geschlossen, und stumm räumte man das Theater, während von außen neues Publikum hereindrängte, das eine Wiederholung des Ablaufs zu genießen begehrte.⁷²⁶

His ironic tone conveys distaste for the cyclical, repetitive capacity of the film. Yet this *hermetic* property of the new medium – its controversial ability to stop the flow of time – is no more exaggerated than that of the printed medium: they are both storers of information and can be accessed at any time. *Der Zauberberg* itself, as we have seen, invites several re-readings, thereby also resurrecting past events in each new reading indefinitely. And with the alchemical ending “Finis Operis”, Thomas Mann draws attention once again to his novel’s hermetic nature. The implication is, however, that the new visual and aural effects of the ascendant medium film render the capacity of a storage medium for preserving time more tangible, and more disturbing. Yet at the same time, the “phantom” film undeniably forms part of the magic of the Magic Mountain.

The séance sessions, initiated and conducted by Krokowski with all the seriousness of a scientific experiment, appear to function in much the same way as the film. As B. Dotzler has suggested, the séance which temporarily restores the deceased Joachim is described in terms of a hybrid between a whorehouse and the film medium:

Unzweideutig macht die Schilderung der Begleitumstände dieses letzten Experiments Castorps deutlich, wie sehr es aufgeht in der Zweideutigkeit zwischen Bordell und Kino, diesen beiden Lieblingsthemen aller um 1900 auftretenden Kulturphilosophie von Reproduzierbarkeit und Warencharakter.⁷²⁷

⁷²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 436.

⁷²⁷ Bernhard J. Dotzler, *Der Hochstapler: Thomas Mann und die Simulakren der Literatur*, Munich 1991, p. 99.

Indeed, the spectators await titillation in a darkened room, and the musical accompaniment – in the form of the heavily allusive “Valentin’s Prayer” from Gounod’s *Faust* – seems to persuade Joachim to appear, real but not real, just like a character from a silent film. Further, the séance shows the same time-preserving function as the film, but this time to even more distressing effect. Even the morbidly curious Hans Castorp feels compelled to switch on the light, in a clearly symbolic act which mirrors that of Settembrini in the chapter *Ewigkeitssuppe und plötzliche Klarheit*.

However, as Dotzler interestingly points out, the experiment of the séance only works after the human voice of the record has fallen silent. Only the scratching of the needle is audible as it goes round and round on the central disc of the record. It would appear that technology is threatening to take over from the word – whether printed, spoken or sung. As Dotzler suggests (quoting Kittler): “Das letzte Experiment des Zauberbergs beweist, daß das neue Medium – ob Elly oder Film – ‘all das Phantastische oder Imaginäre, das ein Jahrhundert lang Dichtung geheißen hat’ übernehmen kann”.⁷²⁸ Dotzler, however, may well be placing too great an emphasis on Kittler’s theories on the perceived threat of the film. At no point does Thomas Mann directly, or through his works, indicate anything approaching an anxiety that the written word may be under siege from the new medium.

The film and the séance, the new media, are portrayed as appealing to humanity’s most basic instincts, indulged in by a bourgeoisie devising ever more trivial and ever more dubious pursuits as it teeters towards the abyss of war. Certainly, in his essays and in his description of the film in *Der Zauberberg*, Mann expresses his reserve and alienation vis-à-vis the technological (and the spiritual!) medium, and, idiosyncratically, failed to recognise in the film its revolutionary creative potential, but rather chose to see in it the return of an earlier, oral tool of moral instruction. In a note of 1924 concerning his manuscript for a cinematic version of Wagner’s *Tristan*

⁷²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 100.

und *Isolde*, he refers to the film as “eine durchaus populäre Macht und Einrichtung von großen pädagogischen Möglichkeiten – die technisch und stofflich entwickelte Wiederkehr der alten Moritat vom Jahrmarkt”.⁷²⁹ This does not mean to say, however, that the new technology did not hold a fascination for Thomas Mann, who acknowledged a great desire for his works to be filmed. The description of the “Bioskop-Theater” in *Der Zauberberg*, for all its prudishness and scepticism, suggests in particular a profound attraction to the new medium’s capacity to dissolve temporality. It would appear that both Mann’s borrowing from Wagnerian opera, and his portrayal of the film – an art form he viewed with far greater ambivalence – were bound up with his desire to portray the *munc stans* in *Der Zauberberg*.

It is not altogether surprising that Hans Castorp the qualified engineer, “der Vertreter einer ganzen Welt der Arbeit und des praktischen Genies”,⁷³⁰ should be so excited by the arrival at the sanatorium of a new piece of technology, the gramophone. The narrator is at pains to stress the modernity and sophistication of this particular model: before revealing the nature of the new acquisition, he teasingly asks: “Ein sinnreiches Spielzeug also von der Art des stereoskopischen Guckkastens, des fernrohrförmigen Kaleidoskops und der kinematographischen Trommel?”, before finally revealing: “Es war ein strömendes Füllhorn heiteren und seelenschweren künstlerischen Genusses. Es war ein Musikapparat. Es war ein Grammophon”.⁷³¹

The gramophone, “diese[r] gestutzt[e] klein[e] Sarg aus Geigenholz”,⁷³² also has the “magic” capacity to convey the atemporality of death, just like the “Fantom” film. As in the case of the cinematic medium, attention is drawn to the hermetic properties of the gramophone; it masterfully preserves live human performances, in a way which pays no heed to temporal or spatial barriers:

Die Sänger und Sängerinnen, die er [Hans Castorp] hörte, er sah sie nicht, ihre Menschlichkeit weilte in Amerika, in Mailand, in Wien, in Sankt Petersburg,– sie

⁷²⁹ Thomas Mann, “Über das Filmmanuskript ‘Tristan und Isolde’”, *GW* XIII, p. 18.

⁷³⁰ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 83.

⁷³¹ *ibid.*, pp. 871-872.

⁷³² *ibid.*, p. 880.

mochte dort immerhin weilen, denn was er von ihnen hatte, war ihr Bestes, war ihre Stimme, und er schätzte diese Reinigung oder Abstraktion [...] ⁷³³

Consequently, we read of the inspired thoughts which Hans Castorp has when listening to the music: “sie gingen höher, als sein Verstand reichte, es waren alchimistisch gesteigerte Gedanken”. ⁷³⁴

The experiences of the séance and the gramophone are the final two attempts – orchestrated by Krokowski and Behrens respectively – to distract the increasingly restless and argumentative sanatorium inhabitants, who, having failed to derive genuine satisfaction from human relationships, intellectual debate and literature (even the books on the diverse learned subjects lose their appeal for Hans Castorp; similarly *Die Kunst, zu verführen* which was eagerly passed round by the patients was very soon replaced by another fad), resort to artificial means of stimulation.

As Dotzler has pointed out, the description of the gramophone is couched in the terminology of the printed medium: Behrens refers to the collection of records as “Literatur”, and on the request of the patients takes out a record, “ein Beispiel der stummen Zirkelgraphik”, ⁷³⁵ from one of the albums, the “stumm-gehaltvollen Zauberbücher”. ⁷³⁶ Hans Castorp agonises when the same mistake recurs in a frequently-played recording: “er litt auch und biß sich auf die Lippen vor Scham, wenn Unvollkommenheiten der technischen Wiedergabe mit unterliefen, saß wie auf Kohlen, wenn im Lauf einer oft *zitierten* Platte ein Gesangston scharf oder grölend verlautete (my italics).” ⁷³⁷ Conversely, it is not so much the abstract properties of the music which make certain items from the collection his favourites, but rather their *thematic* and *narrative* properties, which are merely enhanced by the musical settings: Debussy’s *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faun* describes an idyll, Bizet’s *Carmen*, Verdi’s *Aida* and Gounod’s *Faust* all depict highly dramatic events, which the

⁷³³ *ibid.*, p. 880.

⁷³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 895.

⁷³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 877.

⁷³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 873.

⁷³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 881.

narrator relates in considerable detail in his elaboration of their appeal to his protégé. Likewise Schubert's *Das Lindenbaumlied*, from the musical transposition of Müller's poem cycle *Die Winterreise*, strikes a particular chord with Hans Castorp because of its expression of death. As the narrator tells us, after a highly technical description of the music from *Aida*: "Doch wäre er in das Lautliche weniger verliebt gewesen ohne die zum Grunde liegende Situation, die sein Gemüt für die daraus erwachsende Süße erst recht empfänglich machte".⁷³⁸ It cannot be denied that electronic music – the technology of the gramophone – is still, to a certain extent, dependent on the word for its effect.

Hans Castorp's last two educational experiences, the discovery of the "Musiksarg" and the séance, see him turning to increasingly synthetic means of stimulation. The narrator himself points to a parallel between the "Musiksarg" and the Peeperkorn experiences, telling us that after his first contact with the new piece of machinery, "[Hans Castorp] ging mit heißem Kopfe zu ähnlich vorgerückter Stunde schlafen wie nach dem ersten Gelage mit Pieter Peeperkorn majestätisch-duzbrüderlichen Angedenkens und träumte von zwei bis sieben von dem Zauberkasten".⁷³⁹ What the two seem to have in common is a certain devaluation of the spoken word and rhetoric, and the overwhelming appeal of the emotional or the physical. This is particularly acute in the scene at the waterfall, where the noise of the water renders Peeperkorn's already incomprehensible speech completely inaudible; in all his mute grandeur he dwarfs the "Verfechter am Wort", Naphta and Settembrini, who have now been reduced to "Schwätzerchen". Further, in a significant conversation between Hans Castorp and Peeperkorn, the Dutchman incoherently underlines the impotence of the former's words: "'Eine sehr angenehme,' erwiderte Peeperkorn, 'Ich lausche mit unwillkürlichem Vergnügen auf Ihr behendes, kleines Wort, junger Mann. Es springt über Stock und Stein und rundet die Dinge zur Annehmlichkeit. Allein befriedigend, –nein.'"⁷⁴⁰

⁷³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 884.

⁷³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 878.

⁷⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 878.

Peeperkorn, in spite of, or because of, his majestic mumblings, irresistibly draws to him the patients of the Magic Mountain, male and female alike, in a way no-one can explain in rational terms. He casts a powerful spell on those who cross his path. As for the gramophone, a similar aura of magic seems to envelope the technology which is able to reproduce “living” sound: indeed, the description of the new acquisition as “ein Zauberkasten”, and of the record albums as “Zauberbücher” underline Hans Castorp’s (or rather, his creator’s?) inability to come to terms with the advances of technology in rational terms, and imply the tendency to see their hermetic properties as belonging to the realm of the irrational, comparable to the experience of the séance. But like everything else on the Magic Mountain, the film and the gramophone are characterised by ambiguity; their magic seems to be streaked with more than a hint of the demonic.

The placement of Hans Castorp’s discovery of the modern media at the *end* of his *Steigerung*, and within the historical context of the spreading decadence as the First World War approaches, suggests a perception of the new technology as a symptom of a rapidly-degenerating society. Indeed, the equation of technological advance with a moral decline had already been hinted at in the description of the tanning-machine which is enjoyed by both sexes at the sanatorium; the narrator describes in the most disparaging terms the increase in libidinous behaviour which this “Sinnentzug” leads to.⁷⁴¹ The electronic recording of *Das Lindenbaumlied* – its transposition into a simulacrum – represents a particularly poignant embodiment of the controversial hermetic function of the gramophone, referred to appropriately by Behrens as “das treusinnig Musikalische in neuzeitlich-mechanischer Gestalt. Die deutsche Seele up to

⁷⁴¹ “Ein neuer Apparat für ‘künstliche Höhensonne’ wurde angeschafft, da die beiden schon vorhandenen der Nachfrage derer nicht genügten, die sich auf elektrischem Wege braun brennen lassen wollten, was die jungen Mädchen und Frauen gut kleidete und der Männerwelt trotz horizontaler Lebensweise ein prächtig sportliches und erobererhaftes Ansehen verlieh. Ja, dies Ansehen trug Früchte im Wirklichen; die Frauen, obwohl völlig im klaren über die technisch-kosmetische Herkunft dieser Männlichkeit, waren dumm oder ausgepicht genug, auf Sinnentzug hinlänglich versessen, um sich von der Illusion berauschen und weiblich hinnehmen zu lassen”. *ibid.*, pp. 639-640.

date”.⁷⁴² Here Thomas Mann communicates a deep sense of unease at this flourishing of mechanical inventions which seem to pervert the laws of nature.

Indeed, the preserving of the German soul, as symbolised by Schubert’s song, via *synthetic* means is referred to by the narrator in his projection of a materialistic society: he conjures up sterile kingdoms which lack all sense of the past, these are “irdisch-allzu-irdische Reiche, sehr derb und fortschrittsfroh und eigentlich gar nicht heimwehkrank, – in welchen das Lied zur elektrischen Grammophonmusik verdarb”.⁷⁴³ V. Hansen has cited a statement from Thomas Mann’s 1950 essay “Meine Zeit” which he feels provides the key to the demonic portrayal of scientific and technological advances in *Doktor Faustus*; it also finds resonance in *Der Zauberberg*. For Mann sums up the “modern era”, i.e. Germany from the 1830s onwards, as “Die Epoche der Technik, des Fortschritts und der Massen, diese Epoche, die in unseren gängstigen Tagen, im Laufe von hundertzwanzig Jahren, auf ihren schwindelnden und absolut abenteuerlichen Gipfel gelangt ist”.⁷⁴⁴ And although K-J. Müller does not elaborate on the critique of technology implicit in the discussion of Schubert, he also sees the inclusion of the *Winterreise* as a stab at modernity:

Im ‘künstlichen’ Volkslied treffen Sprache und Musik aufeinander und vermischen sich. Die Gedichte von Wilhelm Müller und Rückert lassen sich als Ausdruck des Unbehagens an den Beschränkungen der modernen Welt verstehen, deren Enge das lyrische Ich flieht, doch muß diese Flucht mißlingen.⁷⁴⁵

The recording of Schubert’s *Winterreise* is strongly contrasted with the playing of music in Hans Castorp’s dream of the idyll, which is inspired by listening to *L’après-midi d’un faun*. In this utopic vision Hans Castorp himself is the faun, naïvely producing music: “Seine Hände fingerten, nur zu seinem eigenen Vergnügen, da die Einsamkeit über der Wiese vollkommen war, an einem kleinen Holzgebläse, das er im Munde hielt, einer Klarinette oder Schalmey, der er friedlich-nasale Töne

⁷⁴² *ibid.*, p. 873.

⁷⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 859.

⁷⁴⁴ Thomas Mann, “Meine Zeit”, *GW* XI, p. 304. Quoted in Volkmar Hansen, “Die Kritik der Modernität bei Thomas Mann” in: *Thomas Mann Jahrbuch* 1, 1 (1988), 145-160, p. 157.

⁷⁴⁵ Karl-Josef Müller, “‘die Leidenschaft als zweifelnde Liebe’. Schuberts *Winterreise* in Thomas Manns *Zauberberg*” in: *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 44, 2 (1994), 191-204, p. 199.

entlockte”.⁷⁴⁶ The “music” he plays is “sorglose[s] Genäsel”; the narrator refers to “sein beschauliches und unverantwortlich-halbmelodisches Dudeln”, and the “naive Eintönigkeit seines Spiels”.⁷⁴⁷ As the narrator tells us, Hans Castorp’s dream is of a world without responsibility: “Hier herrschte das Vergessen selbst, der selige Stillstand, die Unschuld der Zeitlosigkeit: Es war die Liederlichkeit mit bestem Gewissen, die wunschbildhafte Apotheose all und jener Verneinung des abendländischen Aktivitätskommandos [...]”.⁷⁴⁸

The modern media which Hans Castorp encounters characterise, in their ability to preserve that which should rightfully be committed to the past, the degenerate face of European society just prior to the First World War. The hermetic functions of the gramophone and the cinema/séance are intrinsically artificial and are portrayed as symptomatic of a society which has lost sight of its original values, its “soul”. This moral aspect does not, however, prevent those who encounter these technologies from being entranced by their “magic” capacity for transcending temporality. And, as both Dotzler and Kudzus have observed, the thematization of the new media in *Der Zauberberg* also suggests a serious questioning of the function of the literary medium, and the desire to reconsider the traditional boundaries between the arts in the light of the technological advances.⁷⁴⁹ At no point, however, does literature appear, as Dotzler claims, to be under serious threat from technology: the discussion of the gramophone in particular makes this explicit.

In *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, Edouard’s quest for the *roman pur* is not only motivated by a desire to purge the novel of the excesses of the nineteenth-century novel, but is a necessary consequence of his redrawing of the boundaries between the arts following the arrival of the film. As the novelist says:

De même que la photographie, naguère, débarrassa la peinture du souci de certaines exactitudes, le phonographe nettoiera sans doute demain le roman de ses dialogues rapportés, dont le réaliste souvent se fait gloire. Les événements extérieurs, les

⁷⁴⁶ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 885.

⁷⁴⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 885-886.

⁷⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 886.

⁷⁴⁹ cf. Kudzus, “Understanding Media”, p. 70f.

accidents, les traumatismes, appartiennent au cinéma; il sied que le roman les lui laisse.⁷⁵⁰

Edouard draws a parallel with the advent of photography which liberated painting from the pursuit of mimesis and allowed it to follow more experimental paths. He anticipates an identical development in the realm of literature and hopes that the film will take over from the novel its “realist” functions – the reporting of dialogues and the portrayal of dramatic events – thus leaving the novel free to concentrate on existential questions.

Further, the anarchic Strouvilhou refers to the progress made in the visual arts, in the abandonment of the attempt to depict a “subject”, long before a parallel development in literature:

Je me suis souvent demandé par quel prodige la peinture était en avance, et comment il se faisait que la littérature se soit ainsi laissé distancer? Dans quel discrédit, aujourd’hui, tombe ce que l’on avait coutume de considérer, en peinture comme ‘le motif’. Un beau sujet! cela fait rire. Les peintres n’osent même plus risquer un portrait, qu’à condition d’éluder toute ressemblance.⁷⁵¹

Strouvilhou’s words do not only echo those of Edouard in his search for a *roman pur*, but allude to *Les Faux-monnayeurs* itself, with its flat refusal to present *one* subject, but rather a montage of a vast array of subjects; it displays, as Moutote says, “une surface réfringente aux mille facettes qui resplendit avec un pouvoir suggestif exceptionnel dans la conscience lectrice”.⁷⁵² At the same time, the loose aesthetic theories of Edouard and Strouvilhou seem to go beyond Gide’s own creation in anticipating the total disappearance of *all* recognisable subject matter, an increased attention to formal considerations, and finally, the advent of abstraction itself. With the film taking care of the portrayal of events, the novel, so Edouard hopes, will finally be able to catch up with the innovation displayed in the visual arts; indeed, novelists *must* be prepared to explore new territory and take risks:

J’ai souvent pensé, interrompt Edouard, qu’en art, et en littérature en particulier, ceux-là seuls comptent qui se lancent vers l’inconnu. On ne découvre pas de terre nouvelle

⁷⁵⁰ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 78.

⁷⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 320.

⁷⁵² Moutote, *Réflexions*, p. 65.

sans consentir à perdre de vue, d'abord et longtemps, tout rivage. Mais nos écrivains craignent le large; ce ne sont que des côtoyeurs.⁷⁵³

As in *Der Zauberberg*, the implication in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* is that the film is to be accorded the function of presenting “action”, depicting subjects and aping reality, whereas the novel is to engage in critical reflection. Indeed, in words which sound like a paraphrase of those spoken by Edouard, Sarraute describes the relationship of the “modern novel” to the other arts in the following terms:

Ainsi, par un mouvement analogue à celui de la peinture, le roman [...] laisse à d'autres arts – et notamment au cinéma – ce que ne lui appartient pas en propre. Comme la photographie occupe et fait fructifier les terres qu'a délaissées la peinture, le cinéma recueille et perfectionne ce que lui abandonne le roman.⁷⁵⁴

Since “modern novels” – amongst which we can rank *Der Zauberberg* and *Les Faux-monnayeurs* – make increasing demands on the reader, so Sarraute argues, the cinema can concentrate instead on providing him with entertainment: “Le lecteur, au lieu de demander au roman ce que tout bon roman lui a plus souvent refusé, d'être un délassément facile, peut satisfaire au cinéma, sans effort et sans perte de temps inutile, son goût des personnages ‘vivants’ et des histoires”.⁷⁵⁵ Both Mann and Gide would have wholeheartedly agreed with Sarraute's diagnosis.

Gide's highly *literary* novel – as Benjamin called it, “der reine Schreibroman”⁷⁵⁶ – and Thomas Mann's discussion of new technologies suggest that the “crisis of the novel” did not occur in isolation, but as a reaction to competing media. Yet although both authors suggest their dissatisfaction with traditional literary forms by borrowing musical structures, they are equally at a loss when faced with the challenge of the film. *Der Zauberberg* suggests a profound fascination with the film, indeed, Thomas Mann admitted it was “ein[e] heiter[e] Passion” for him, but his sporadic comments on the medium highlight his great insecurity vis-à-vis the new technology: he never fails to make it clear that, although he admires its epic qualities, the film is not to be confused

⁷⁵³ *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, p. 338.

⁷⁵⁴ Sarraute, *L'Ere du soupçon*, p. 75.

⁷⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 75.

⁷⁵⁶ Benjamin, “Krisis des Romans”, p. 232.

with “real art”, or even discussed in those terms. In his 1928 essay “Über den Film” he makes it clear where the boundary between film and literature lies for him: “Ich sprach von einer ‘Lebenserscheinung’ – denn mit Kunst hat, glaube ich, verzeihen Sie mir, der Film nicht viel zu schaffen, und ich halte es für verfehlt, mit der Sphäre der Kunst entnommenen Kriterien an ihn heranzutreten”.⁷⁵⁷ Thomas Mann’s attitude towards the film could not be farther removed from that of his contemporary, Döblin, whose *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929) displayed a genuine openness towards the “new, epic possibilities” of the technological medium.

As Benjamin correctly recognised, Gide’s novel is also the polar opposite of Döblin’s. Its persistent self-reflexion makes it the literary novel *per se*, and Edouard’s crucial speech on the cinema make it clear where he (and his creator) redraw the boundaries of the arts in the face of the challenge from the film. The rôle Edouard ascribes to the film – the portrayal of action, and of “reality” – will allow the novel to develop towards higher goals. Like Mann, Gide abhors what he perceives as the “crudeness” of the cinematic medium: reviewing in 1942 a series of films he had recently seen, he notes the temperature of the cinema (a life-long obsession) then adds that the films are intended for “un public qui, pour comprendre, a besoin qu’on lui épelle les sentiments et ne sait lire que les majuscules. Tout est surindiqué, l’action, le texte des dialogues et le jeu des acteurs. C’est proprement intolérable”.⁷⁵⁸

Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis had developed an understanding of the novel as a Romantic book, “combining and interweaving all forms of genres”.⁷⁵⁹ And Schlegel, in particular, placed the poetic process under the guidance of music, as B. Naumann has shown.⁷⁶⁰ One may see the combination of poetic and musical craft in Thomas Mann’s work as a feature that corresponds to the contemporary combinations of

⁷⁵⁷ Thomas Mann, “Über den Film”, *GW* X, p. 899.

⁷⁵⁸ Gide, *1939-1949 Journal. Souvenirs*, 5.4.42, p. 106.

⁷⁵⁹ “Der Begriff des *Romans*, wie Boccaccio und Cervantes ihn aufstellen, ist der eines *romantischen Buches*, einer romantischen Komposition, wo alle Formen und Gattungen vermischt und verschlungen sind”. *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe* (ed. E. Behler), vol. 11, p. 159. Quoted in: E. Lämmert (ed.), *Romantheorie 1620-1880*, Frankfurt/Main 1988, p. 218.

⁷⁶⁰ cf. footnote 684.

various art forms in the European avantgarde where, in the Expressionist, Futurist, Dadaist and Surrealist manifestations, the arts developed a lively exchange of aesthetic principles and working methods. But Thomas Mann needs reassurance from “old masters”, from the Romantics and Wagner, to guide him on his way.

Gide, too, shows a receptiveness to musical structures and to an exchange between the arts. By incorporating the principles of Cubist painting in the multiple perspectivism of his novel, he comes closer to the experiments of the avant-garde than Thomas Mann. But more clearly than in Thomas Mann’s case, Gide is hampered in his task by traditional concepts of art. The concept of the *roman pur* encompasses classical notions of the purity of the genre, as well as Mallarmé’s *poésie pure*. These clash formidably with Gide’s attempt to modernise the novel by borrowing from music and Cubist painting.

Conclusion

In 1954, after two decades of cultural barbarism in Germany, Adorno's essay "Standort des Erzählers im zeitgenössischen Roman" heralded the start of a new period of innovation in novel-writing. In this essay Adorno articulates and elaborates on the difficulties novelists were faced with, namely the impossibility of meeting the "traditional demand of the novel for story-telling". The erosion of humanity's experience of the world as progressive and meaningful, which had formed the mainstay of the traditional novel, is at the root of this dilemma, and Adorno makes it clear that this in turn is a direct result of the war: "Zerfallen ist die Identität der Erfahrung, das in sich kontinuierliche und artikuliert Leben, das die Haltung des Erzählers einzig gestattet. Man braucht nur die Unmöglichkeit sich zu vergegenwärtigen, daß irgendeiner, der am Krieg teilnahm, von ihm so erzählte, wie früher einer von seinen Abenteuern erzählen mochte".⁷⁶¹

Yet Adorno by no means suggests that this situation has only recently become acute; indeed, the first novel, *Don Quixote*, liberates itself of the epic pretence, it reflects "die Erfahrungen von der entzauberten Welt".⁷⁶² He does suggest, however, that the impossibility of "realist" narration has become accelerated in the twentieth century. To try to keep "story-telling" alive in the modern world represents, indeed, a form of extreme deception – as Adorno says of the novelist who tries to "tell a good story" and faithfully reflect the world around him: "Er macht der Lüge sich schuldig, der Welt mit einer Liebe sich zu überlassen, die voraussetzt, daß die Welt sinnvoll ist, und endet beim unerträglichen Kitsch vom Schlage der Heimatkunst".⁷⁶³ If the novelist wants to portray things "as they really are", then, Adorno maintains, he must forsake realism: "Will der Roman seinem realistischen Erbe treu bleiben und sagen, wie es

⁷⁶¹ Adorno, "Standort des Erzählers im zeitgenössischen Roman", p. 62.

⁷⁶² *ibid.*, p. 61.

⁷⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 61.

wirklich ist, so muß er auf einen Realismus verzichten, der, indem er die Fassade reproduziert, nur dieser bei ihrem Täuschungsgeschäfte hilft".⁷⁶⁴

Adorno draws attention to the significance of the reflection in Gide's *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, in the later novels by Thomas Mann and in Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, emphasising its radical departure from pre-Flaubertian reflection: the difference, as Adorno sees it, lies in the way in which these novelists of the 1920s use reflection to expose the fundamental deceptiveness of the narrator's traditional stance:

Solche Reflexion hat kaum mehr als den Namen mit der vorflaubertschen gemein. Diese war moralisch: Parteinahme für oder gegen Romanfiguren. Die neue ist Parteinahme gegen die Lüge der Darstellung, eigentlich gegen den Erzähler selbst, der als überwachter Kommentator der Vorgänge seinen unvermeidlichen Ansatz zu berichtigen trachtet.⁷⁶⁵

Thus Adorno refers back to the achievements of Mann and Gide thirty years previously, as outstanding examples of innovation in the novel form, and encourages the younger generation of writers to tackle the challenge arising from the developments in *all* the arts; like Gide's Edouard, he defines the novel's new tasks in relation to parallel movements in the visual arts:

Wie der Malerei von ihren traditionellen Aufgaben vieles entzogen wurde durch die Photographie, so dem Roman durch die Reportage und die Medien der Kulturindustrie, zumal den Film. Der Roman müßte sich auf das konzentrieren, was nicht durch den Bericht abzugelten ist.⁷⁶⁶

The advent of the film has taken over the novel's function of portraying "reality".

Reinhard Baumgart, writing in 1967, and dedicating his work to Adorno, was also concerned with the future of the "modern novel". Indeed, he takes up many of Adorno's ideas concerning the levelling and standardisation of life in the modern world, saying "Erfahrung nämlich, individuelle Erfahrung, die herkömmliche Erzählungen trug, wird ratlos in der von Informationen eher verdeckten Welt".⁷⁶⁷ The

⁷⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 64.

⁷⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 62.

⁷⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 62.

⁷⁶⁷ Reinhard Baumgart, *Aussichten des Romans oder Hat Literatur Zukunft?*, Neuwied & Berlin, 1968, p. 61.

gulf separating the experiences of the individual and the reality of the outside, media-obsessed world has become so great that those forms of novel-writing which claim to portray universal experiences can no longer be seen as meaningful: “So gründlich haben sich objektive Welt und private Erfahrung auseinandergelebt, daß sich das isolierte Ich schon wieder als fensterlose Monade empfindet, beklagt oder feiert”.⁷⁶⁸

Also like Adorno, Baumgart predicts that a new type of novel, should there be one, would “einsetzen mit einer Entzauberung, der vergleichbar, die im ‘Don Quijote’ den neueren Roman eröffnet hat”.⁷⁶⁹ He traces the start of this more recent “Entzauberung” back to *Der Zauberberg*, to Hans Castorp’s description of his tears at Joachim’s death: “dies alkalisch-salzige Drüsenprodukt, das die Nervenerschütterung durchdringenden Schmerzes, physischen wie seelischen Schmerzes, unserem Körper entpreßt. Er wußte, es sei auch etwas Muzin und Eiweiß drin”.⁷⁷⁰ Since novel-writing can no longer continue in the deceptive practice of presenting to the reader a meaningful, coherent world, Baumgart maintains that the only way it can move forward is for narrators to be honest about the fundamentally deceptive nature of “realist” writing:

Doch sobald, wie in der möglicherweise nun beginnenden Literatur, die Fassade Fassade genannt wird und nicht etwa für das Ganze steht, wenn Sprache nicht mehr als Instrument zur Errichtung erzählter Fiktionen gebraucht wird, sondern sich selbst, ihren und der Zeit Zustand ausspricht, dann täuscht sie nicht mehr, dann demonstriert sie, was ist.⁷⁷¹

Although Baumgart’s attention is focussed primarily on Thomas Mann, his words on the need for the novelistic façade to point to itself as a façade and nothing else, can easily be applied to *Les Faux-monnayeurs* as well.

Similarly, whilst Baumgart does not refer to Gide or to *Les Faux-monnayeurs* directly in his comments on the emergence of the anti-hero in post-war literature, the novelist

⁷⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p. 62.

⁷⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 60.

⁷⁷⁰ *Der Zauberberg*, p. 734.

⁷⁷¹ Baumgart, *Aussichten des Romans*, p. 67.

Edouard certainly anticipates the arrival of the latter, as indeed does Hans Castorp. As Baumgart writes of the featureless heroes of much modern fiction:

Solche Figuren repräsentieren freilich nicht mehr wie früher beispielhafte Literatur-Individuen, Werther oder Sorel oder Stechlin, das Progressive einer Gesellschaft oder Klasse oder gar ihre utopische Dimension. Ihre Bedeutung kann sich keineswegs darauf berufen, daß sie als Elite voraus wären, sondern im Gegenteil nur darauf, daß sie grau für den Durchschnitt stehen.⁷⁷²

Neither Hans Castorp nor Edouard can be ranked amongst the great literary heroes, such as those listed by Baumgart.

In his 1957 essay “Sur quelques notions périmées”, the *nouveau romancier* Alain Robbe-Grillet also highlighted the disappearance of the hero as one of the most significant trends in modern fiction. As Robbe-Grillet suggests, the significance of the hero for the “traditional novel” had been immense, and had to satisfy many criteria:

Ce n'est pas un *il* quelconque, anonyme et translucide, simple sujet de l'action exprimée par le verbe. Un personnage doit avoir un nom propre, double si possible: nom de famille et prénom. Il doit avoir des parents, une hérédité. Il doit avoir une profession. S'il a des biens, cela n'en vaudra que mieux. Enfin il doit posséder un 'caractère', un visage qui le reflète, un passé qui a modelé celui-ci et celui-là.⁷⁷³

In the *Journal des Faux-monnayeurs*, Gide noted: “Les personnages demeurent inexistants aussi longtemps qu'ils ne sont pas baptisés”.⁷⁷⁴ Yet although the names of the characters in Gide's novel are of some significance, the characters themselves can hardly claim to be “true novelistic characters” in the sense described by Robbe-Grillet and Baumgart. Robbe-Grillet cites examples of twentieth-century novelists who have devalued the hero in ways more radical than either Gide or Thomas Mann: Beckett's changing of the name and nature of the hero in the same novel, Faulkner's giving of the same name to two different characters, Kafka's K. There can be no doubt, however, that the “amateurish” Edouard and the “mediocre” Hans Castorp pave the way for the emergence of the anti-hero in later fiction, and that their blandness is symptomatic of the changing society Robbe-Grillet alludes to when he writes: “Le

⁷⁷² *ibid.*, p. 60-61.

⁷⁷³ Alain Robbe-Grillet, “Sur quelques notions périmées” in: Robbe-Grillet, *Pour un nouveau roman*, Paris 1963, p. 27.

⁷⁷⁴ *JFM*, 17.6.1919, p. 14.

roman de personnages appartient bel et bien au passé, il caractérise une époque: celle qui marqua l'apogée de l'individu".⁷⁷⁵ Robbe-Grillet refers to the crisis which the disappearance of the hero has brought about, and expresses his hope that the novel will be able to turn this crisis to its advantage, and be able to make new discoveries:

Le roman paraît chanceler, ayant perdu son meilleur soutien d'autrefois, le héros. S'il ne parvient pas à s'en remettre, c'est que sa vie était liée à celle d'une société maintenant révolue. S'il y parvient, au contraire, une nouvelle voie s'ouvre pour lui, avec la promesse de nouvelles découvertes.⁷⁷⁶

In the same essay, Robbe-Grillet also draws attention to another significant change in the novel: the disappearance of the plot. Indeed, Robbe-Grillet points out that, for a long time, the quality of a novelist was measured by his ability to tell a good story, and that the writing functioned merely as a vehicle for allowing this story to unfold:

De l'écriture il ne sera jamais question. On louera seulement le romancier de s'exprimer en langage correct, de façon correct, de façon agréable, colorée, évocatrice ... Ainsi l'écriture ne serait plus qu'un moyen, une manière; le fond du roman, sa raison d'être, ce qu'il y a dedans, serait simplement l'histoire qu'il raconte.⁷⁷⁷

Not only was a novel judged by the strength of its plot, but the narrator also had to convince the reader that he was reading a true account, a deception the reader seemed only too happy to go along with.

Undoubtedly both Gide and Mann play a sizeable part in exposing this fraudulence, both through the introduction of significant (self-) reflective elements, and through the refusal of their narrators to allow this sort of complicity with the reader to develop. Robbe-Grillet notes "Raconter est devenu proprement impossible".⁷⁷⁸ With examples from his own works, however, he points out that the "modern novel" is not as devoid of plot elements as it is often claimed to be, even predicting a time in the future when readers will have to search so hard for a plot that they will hold up the novels from the 1950s as examples of good story-telling! Indeed, for all their innovation, *Der Zauberberg* and *Les Faux-monnayeurs* must be seen as part of this historical

⁷⁷⁵ Robbe-Grillet, "Sur quelques notions périmées", p. 28.

⁷⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p. 28.

⁷⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 29.

⁷⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 31.

progression Robbe-Grillet alludes to, their achievements also being relative to the norms which preceded them.

Robbe-Grillet's fellow *nouveau romancier*, Michel Butor, highlighted another aspect of novel-writing. In his essay "Recherches sur la technique du roman", Butor pointed to the significance of the question of *time* for the modern novel. Underlining the difficulties of presenting a simultaneity of events in the essentially linear medium of the novel, Butor describes the diary technique used in Kierkegaard's autobiography, and the possibilities this technique – which involves the overlaying of several temporal planes – opened up for conveying an accurate sense of temporality in the novel. If this technique were further complicated with the adding of more narrators, and more planes, Butor argues, this could truly capture the complexity of our perception of time, which is anything but linear; on the contrary, it is characterised by the confusion of planes which forms the essence of music:

Parallélismes, renversements, reprises, l'étude de l'art musical montre qu'il s'agit là de données élémentaires de notre conscience du temps. Chaque événement apparaît comme pouvant être le point d'origine et de convergence de plusieurs suites narratives, comme un foyer dont la puissance est plus ou moins grande par rapport à ce qui l'entoure. La narration n'est plus qu'une ligne, mais une surface dans laquelle nous isolons un certain nombre de lignes, de points, ou de groupements remarquables.⁷⁷⁹

Robbe-Grillet had emphasised that all elements of the plot in the traditional novel had contrived to suggest a fundamentally stable world, "un univers stable, cohérent, continu, univoque, entièrement déchiffrable",⁷⁸⁰ a cohesion which had begun to crumble since Flaubert. Butor describes the efforts of modern novelists to reflect this loss of harmony on a temporal level, by making palpable the discontinuity of experience which has become more accentuated in the modern world, although he also expresses some criticism of the apparent haphazardness of these attempts. "Comme la vie contemporaine a prodigieusement accentué la brutalité de ce discontinu, bien des auteurs se sont mis à procéder par blocs juxtaposés, voulant nous faire bien sentir les ruptures".⁷⁸¹

⁷⁷⁹ Butor, "Recherches sur la technique du roman", p. 115.

⁷⁸⁰ Robbe-Grillet, "Sur quelques notions périmées", p. 31.

⁷⁸¹ Butor, "Recherches sur la technique du roman", p. 116.

Undeniably *Der Zauberberg* and *Les Faux-monnayeurs* make a very significant contribution to the handling of time in the modern novel, and to the highly modern reflection of time not as a “string of pearls”, but rather as a mosaic. As Butor writes of the portrayal of time in the modern novel:

Le temps est alors saisi dans son jalonnement essentiel. Non seulement chaque événement va être l'origine d'une enquête sur ce qui l'a précédé et ce qui l'a suivi, va, peut le suivre, de proche en proche, mais il va éveiller des échos, allumer des lueurs dans toutes ces régions du temps qui par avance lui répondent: la veille ou le lendemain, la semaine d'avant ou celle d'après, tout ce qui peut donner un sens précis: la fois précédente ou la fois suivante. Chaque date propose ainsi tout un spectre de dates harmoniques.⁷⁸²

In the light of the comments of Adorno, Baumgart, Robbe-Grillet and Butor on the “modern novel”, the contributions of *Der Zauberberg* and *Les Faux-monnayeurs* towards the stimulating of new fictional forms emerge as significant, their innovations anticipating many of those of the *nouveaux romanciers*, who were to give them more radical expression. The spell cast by the traditional novel has been broken, Mann and Gide lead us knowingly into worlds of counterfeit magic.

⁷⁸² *ibid.*, p. 117.

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