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The Male - Female Relationships in Keller's 'Novellen,' With Special Reference to 'Die Leute Von Seldwyla'.

Olin Everett Newton

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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THE MALF-FEMALE RELATIONSHIPS IN KÜBLER'S NOVELLIE,

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO

DIE LEUTE VON SELMELYA

A dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

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by

Olin Everett Lowtor

D.F.A., University of Georgia, 1950
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ABSTRACT

Although much has been written about Gottfried Keller himself as well as about certain phases of his works, there have been only sporadic and insufficient analyses of the important male-female relationships in his writings; indeed, many of the minor male-female relationships have been ignored altogether. One of the express purposes of this study is to investigate thoroughly this relatively unexplored area. The more important feminine characters in Keller's works have been treated frequently; however, a considerable number of the leading male characters have been noticeably neglected. One explanation of this phenomenon is that it results from the distinctly subordinate role to which the male figure has been relegated. That the role of the male is assuredly more important than one is usually led to believe, is another facet of Keller's prose works that this study seeks to point out. This dissertation also
purports to depict certain essential and repeatedly occurring characteristics involved in the male-female relationships that speak, by and large, to all time.

The major and minor relationships of the men and women in each of the ten Novellen comprising Die Leute von Seldwyla are discussed circumstantially. Special references are also made to other Keller Novellen. Prior to the exposition of the various relationships in each of the ten chapters, the plot is given in English. Immediately thereafter comes a succinct sketch of certain salient features of the works under investigation. Conclusions and pertinent comparisons of the relationships found in Keller’s stories are made at the end of each chapter.

In conclusion, it has been ascertained that not only the major but also the minor relationships in the Keller Novellen are worthy of careful examination. Both represent many of the fundamental traits found in man. Further, this study shows that the male is more important than is generally believed. He is, or quite often becomes, the dominant figure
in the Lovellen. His role as a type of Pantoffel- 
held and the female's role as a domineering figure 
have, in the past, been greatly overemphasized.

As a result of this investigation, we feel that the 
masculine and feminine roles in both the major and 
minor relationships have been brought into clearer 
focus.
Although one finds a great deal of literature written about Gottfried Keller per se, this is not the case with respect to analyses of his works. To be sure, there are many discussions of some of his more popular prose writings such as Der grüne Heinrich, Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe, Der Landvogt von Freienfels, and Regine. This does not hold true, however, regarding the preponderant number of Keller's Novellen. Consequently, since many of his prose works have not been examined in all their important aspects, it is the express purpose of this study to help fill one of the existing gaps. The little-explored area that I have chosen to discuss is that of the male-female relationships in Keller's Novellen, with special reference to Die Leute von Seldwyla.

Since a vast majority of Keller's Novellen were either written or conceived during his stay of almost six years in Berlin (1850-1855), it is
not at all surprising that there is virtually no evidence of even a gradual development in his attitude regarding the relationships of the two sexes.

It is true that scholars and critics have devoted considerable attention exclusively to the role of the woman in Keller's prose works. Fewer critics have dealt with the male role, perhaps, because of the acknowledged pre-eminence of the female in virtually all of the author's prose writings. It should be noted that the sterling qualities of Keller's mother, who bore the sole responsibility of his upbringing from the age of five, had no little effect on his splendid portrayal of the opposite sex; it is an established fact that she was often his guiding light in the depiction of many of his female characters.¹ No work has been written which treats the many relationships between the sexes in the Seldwyla Novellen.

Many of Keller's secondary figures in the Mo-

¹Hitschmann expresses the belief that the pre-dominant role played by the woman in many of Keller's works indicates that he had a mother-fixation. — Eduard Hitschmann, Gottfried Keller. Psychoanalyse des Dichters, seiner Gestalten und Motive. Internationale Psychoanalytische Bibliothek, Tl. (Zürich: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1919), pp. 81-92.
vellen under discussion, although extremely important, have often been dealt with cursorily, if at all. Thus, it is the intent of this work to treat the side male-female relationships in Die Leute von Seldwyla as well as the principal ones. Finally, it is also our hope that the importance of the male in the vellen will become more obvious as a result of this study.

Die Leute von Seldwyla is a cyclical form of composition. Trahm correctly states that the cyclical form is a favorite one of Keller, "weil in dieser Form sein Genius die gemasseste Entfaltung findet."

In the introduction to the first volume of Die Leute von Seldwyla, Keller describes in detail the setting of the town and its care-free, impractical people. He informs us that the incidents presented in the first volume are exceptional ones. And throughout these works we notice a definite tendency in the leading characters to resist the influence in their Seldwylan milieu. Those persons whose activities carry them far from the confines of Seldwyla seem always to return home. Further, those who are not

attuned to the fundamental, prosaic attitudes of the Seldwylans are almost invariably the most interesting and admirable personalities.

In the second volume the predilection of the leading characters to disavow any affinity with the people of Seldwyla is still prevalent. However, the activities and behavior of the characters in volume two have reached the point where they are difficult to differentiate from those of persons inhabiting the surrounding towns.

Finally, Keller makes it abundantly clear in his discussion of Seldwyla and its citizens that one should reject the undesirable characteristics of his communal environment while still integrating himself into the larger social unit of his particular area. As one analyzes the male-female relationships under investigation, it becomes increasingly more apparent that the leading characters tend to do this.

The style of the Seldwyla "novellen is indeed original. Keller uses a refreshing, new idiom and vocabulary to take the place of conventional phraseology and usage. His inventive powers are remarkable, and his humorous descriptions of the activities of the many unusual characters make for delightful reading. Despite the humor-
ous current running through his works, one often feels that this very humor makes certain characters appear all the more alive. In addition, his humor is usually consistent with love and respect, for it evolves from a sympathetic feeling for his fellow man. 3

Many persons have attempted to give an exact definition of the Novelle, the metre treated in this dissertation. This is indeed a difficult task, for the term meant one thing to Goethe, and something entirely different to a later writer such as Ludwig Tieck or H. T. A. Hoffmann. Nonetheless, certain fundamental attributes thereof are quite tangible. Obviously, a discussion of the development of the Novelle would overstep the bounds of this work.

The excellent definition of the Novelle as stated by Seibert should suffice for our needs:

The Novelle or short-story must have for its subject a plot which calls for treatment on the short-story scale. It is not a compressed or condensed novel, but a story of simple proportions though fully developed. It has unity of plot and, naturally, does not tolerate much episode or digression. The treatment ought to be concise and essential. One need not go beyond these obvious fundamentals. Too much

3Philipp Seibert, "Four masters of the modern German Novelle." Washington University Bulletin, p. 49.
theorizing or even legislation is out of place in any form of poetry, but most of all in this.\textsuperscript{4}

Keller, who never married but who had many contacts with members of the opposite sex throughout his life, had very decided ideas on the proper relationship between man and woman. He continually dealt with this problem in his works, and in a great variety of different situations. Most of his Novellen contained in \textit{Die Leute von Seldwyla} have male-female relationships as the central theme while in two of them the love-plot serves merely a subsidiary role (e. g., \textit{Spiegel, das Katzchen} and \textit{Der Schmied seines Glücks}).

\textit{Die Leute von Seldwyla} was begun during the fruitful years that Keller spent in Berlin. According to the original intention, \textit{Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe} and \textit{Der Schmied seines Glücks} were to appear in the first volume. However, it was necessary to leave these two Novellen out, for the publisher Vieweg felt that their inclusion in the first volume would make it unduly long. Vieweg wanted to include them in a second volume of \textit{Die Leute von Seldwyla}. Plans for an additional volume were in the making as early as 1854.

\textsuperscript{4}\textit{Weinrth, op. cit., p. 4f.}
It was not until December 1856 that Keller entered into a contract with Vieweg to write a second volume of *Die Leute von Seldwyla*. The author agreed that the Novellen needed for the second volume would be ready by April 1857. However, since Keller was an inveterate procrastinator, the Novellen were not finished by the date agreed upon; indeed, it was almost twenty years later before all ten Novellen were published.

It is generally believed that the first part of *Dietegen* was penned in Berlin at approximately the same time as was *Der Schmied seines Glückes*. It is certain that *Kleider machen Leute* and the first half of *Das verlorene Lachen* were written during the first half of the 1860's; Dietegen was also tentatively concluded during that time. At least, Mathilde Wesendonck is reported to have read Dietegen in manuscript form in March 1867.

Keller's election to the post of Secretary of the Cantor of Zürich in 1861 severely curtailed his literary endeavors for several years. On February 27, 1866, Keller wrote to Kettner that the second volume of *Die Leute von Seldwyla* was almost ready. This statement was obviously premature, for Keller was admonished by his publisher for not fulfilling his promise, a rather fre-
quent occurrence as we have already noticed. Meanwhile, however, he published Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe in 1865 in the Deutsche Reichszeitung. On September 10, 1871, Keller wrote that he intended to bring out the second volume in the same year. In May 1872 Keller announced that the book would appear shortly. In December, when the finished product was still being awaited, the author announced that the work would be completed in January or February 1873.

In March 1873 the almost twenty-year-old contract between Keller and Vieweg was dissolved. The money advanced for the continuation of the work was returned with interest. Keller then entered into a contract with Weibert for a collected edition in four volumes, not two as was originally planned. In May 1873 Weibert received Kleider machen Leute and Der Schmied seines Glückes for inclusion in the third volume. Dietegen, the first Novelle of the fourth volume, was revised and finished in September. Das verlorene Lachen, however, was not finished until the spring of 1874. Thus, the first three volumes, i.e. the five Novellen of the first collection, as well as three new ones, appeared at the end of 1873. The fourth volume containing Dietegen and Das verlorene Lachen appeared in 1874.
The summaries of the Novellen under investigation have been patterned after those given in the following work: Wilhelm Cibrich (ed.), Der Romanführer (Stuttgart: Hiersemann Verlag--Z.m.b.H., 1950)
CHAPTER II

PANKRAZ, DER SCHMOLLER

In Seldwyla a widow of extremely modest means lives with her two children. The girl Estherohen is quiet and well-adjusted, whereas the boy Pankraz, who is two years older, is a rather ordinary-looking youth. He shows disinclination toward work, pouts continuously, and is easily offended by his sister, who delights in tormenting him on occasion. One day she eats a sizable portion of his supper which the mother had saved for him. This is more than he can bear; as a result, he disappears from Seldwyla without leaving a trace of his whereabouts. Fifteen years later he suddenly returns and relates the events that have transpired during his absence to his mother and unmarried sister.

Upon leaving Seldwyla, Pankraz journeys to New York via Hamburg. Then he goes to India as a soldier in the English army. There he becomes the companion of his regimental commander. Pankraz serves the commander, unobtrusively doing both office work and gardening; he has the rank of sergeant-major. Eventually Pankraz falls in love with the colonel's capricious daughter Lydia. At first she appears to return his affection. However, when she finally entices the shy, reticent Pankraz into making a declaration of his love, she reveals herself as an extremely vain and unfeeling creature, a refined seductress. Pankraz rejoins the troops, ostensibly to fight against the Indian forces. He becomes a captain in the military and then governor of a newly-conquered district. After a few years a deep longing to see Lydia seizes him, and he returns to the governor's home, hoping that a marriage may still be possible. However, he quickly learns that her dastardly activities have increased rather than subsided; accordingly, he leaves the British service and goes to Paris. Here he enters the Franco-African army and rises to the rank of colonel. His affair with Lydia has made him a strict leader who pouts and speaks only when it is absolutely necessary.
One day Pankraz comes face to face with a ferocious lion that he has been tracking for some time. For many hours the unarmed hero must remain motionless in the hot sun until finally two of his soldiers rescue him. During these grueling hours when Pankraz is stalked by the lion, he undergoes a transformation: he changes from a stubborn pouter to a sociable, mature, and purged individual. Thus a different Pankraz returns home to Seldwyla. He, his mother, and his sister move to the capital of the Canton, where he proves himself experienced in the affairs of men. As a result of his capabilities and sincere friendliness, he is highly esteemed in the entire community in which he has settled.

With respect to form and inspiration, Pankraz, der Schmoller smacks of Der grüne Heinrich. In addition, both works are exceedingly subjective in nature. The fact that Pankraz was the first Novelle written after Der grüne Heinrich quite possibly explains the autobiographical similarity between the two works.

Keller's association with Betty Tendering in Berlin is reflected in the relationship between Pankraz and Lydia. The author depicts his sister Regula as Pankraz's sister Estherchen.

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3 Ibid., p. 355.
This Novelle has as its focal point the association between Pankraz and Lydia. However, the Pankraz--Mother, Pankraz--Estherchen, and Lydia--Father relationships will also be discussed.

Pankraz--Mother

Pankraz's mother is the epitome of motherhood: she is self-sacrificing with respect to her children, she is exceedingly industrious in the execution of her household duties, and she treats her two children with genuine kindness and understanding. Her gentle manner is in direct opposition to Pankraz's behavior: "Im Übrigen war er ein eigensinniger und zum Schmollen geneigter Junge, welcher nie lachte und auf Gottes lieber Welt nichts tat oder lernte." Since her husband is dead, she must try to be both father and mother to Pankraz. That she is unable to play the role successfully is evidenced by the fact that her son remains undisciplined and even scornful of her. Her chief fault is that she is indulgent with Pankraz, for she does not insist that he share any of the family responsibilities. Keller tells of his lying "des Morgens

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4 Gottfried Keller, Sämtliche Werke, ed. Jonas Fränkel (Zürich and München: Eugen Kentsch Verlag), VII, ll. All parenthetic numbers in the text refer to the volumes and pages of this edition.
The mother has compassion on him, "da er nichts lernen und es ihm wahrscheinlicherweise einmal recht schlecht ergehen konnte." (VII, 10) Despite the fact that Pankraz is obviously maladjusted and is discontented with himself, just as he is with others, one can hardly condone his complete unwillingness to help his struggling mother support the family. He is, after all, fourteen years old and could earn money doing odd jobs in the community. However, he does nothing of the kind: "Pankraz...tat und lernte fortwährend nichts als eine sehr ausgebildete und künstl-
liche Art zu schmollen, mit welcher er seine Mutter, seine Schwester und sich selbst quälte." (VII, 13)

Simone Pankraz's sister Estherchen is always able to obtain more than her share of the highly prized gravy, he invariably loses his self-control and begins to practice his most notable characteristic, namely pouting. His mother's response is an illustration of her indulgent spirit:

Alsdann warf er den Löffel weg, lamentierte und schmollte, bis die gute Mutter die Schüssel zur Seite neigte und ihre eigene Brühe voll in das Labyrinth der Kanäle und Dämme ihrer Kinder strömen liess. (VII, 13)
When Pankraz leaves home, Keller does not let us follow the youth in his travels but rather keeps us in Seldwyla, where we experience the effect of his departure on his saddened mother and sister. We notice the painful effect of his absence when Keller muses:

Wie lang wird nicht eine Woche, ja nur ein Tag, wenn man nicht weiss, wo diejenigen, die man liebt, jetzt stehn und gehn, wenn eine solche Stille darüber durch die Welt herrscht, dass all nirgends auch nur der leiseste Hauch von ihrem Namen ergeht, und man weiss doch, sie sind da und atmen irgendwo. (VII, 15)

The mother's abiding love for Pankraz reveals itself fifteen years after his leaving. On the day of his unexpected but long-hoped-for return home, an organ-grinder makes his appearance in Seldwyla. When he plays a sentimental song of a far-distant land, she immediately thinks of her son. Since he has been gone so long, one can easily understand her associating the distant land with the distance separating her from him:

Er spielte ein sehnsüchtiges Lied von der Ferne und ihren Dingen, welches die Leute über die Massen schon dünkten und besonders der Witwe Tränen entlochke, da sie ihres Pankráschens gedachte, das nun schon viele Jahre verschwunden war. (VII, 17-18)

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When on the same day a circus enters the village and a huge bear is paraded along the street, the mother is once again reminded of her lost son and gives vent to her emotions: "Die Mutter dagegen musste fortwährend weinen; denn der böse Bär erarmte sie, und sie musste wiederum ihres verschollenen Sohnes gedenken." (VI, 19)

When Pankraz finally returns home, both his mother and his sister perceive that he has changed not just in appearance, but that some of his basic character traits have been transformed. To their amazement he shows courtesy, greets them most amicably, smiles, and embraces them in an open display of affection. The effect on the mother is striking:

Hatte die Mutter erst vor dem martialischen und vermeintlich immer noch bösen Sohne son-
derbar gezittert, so zitterte sie jetzt erst recht in scheuer Seligkeit, da sie sich in den Armen dieses wiedergekehrten Sohnes fühlte, dessen achtungsvolles Mützenabnehmen und dessen aufleuchtende, nie gesehene Anmut, wie sie nur die Rührung und die Reue gibt, sie schon wie mit einem Zauberschlage berührt hatten. (VII, 21)

The reception given Pankraz's description of his activities in distant lands is quite warm. In a short time, however, the mother and sister become extremely sleepy, and their interest wanes accordingly. Nonetheless, Pankraz continues talking, seemingly completely oblivious to the fact that they are asleep:
Für die nachtragende Erzählung Pankraz, die auf die Schilderung seines Einsuges in Seldwyła und seines Empfanges durch Mutter, Schwester und Seldwyler folgt, findet Keller in technischer Beziehung sein Vorbild bei Goethe in Wilhelm Meisters langatmigem Bericht vor Mariane und Barbara über seine kindlichen Spiele und Liebhabereien, über das Erwachen und Wachsen seiner Theaterleidenschaft. Wie Wilhelm, so redet auch Pankras mehr für die Leser, als für seine Zuhörer; beide Erzähler verlieren diese so ausser acht, dass sie unbeherrschten der Überspannung zum Opfer fallen und einschläfen können.6

We learn that Pankraz's relationship with his mother and his sister improves only after two sobering experiences far from home, namely his contacts with Lydia and with the lion. As a result of these experiences, he and his family are able to establish a peaceful relationship. They leave the disturbing influences of Seldwyła in order to secure a more promising future.

Pankraz--Estherchen

Almost at the outset of the Novelle Keller graphically points out the essential differences in the personalities of Pankraz and his sister. He proves conclusively that these very differences have a direct bearing on the children's discordant relationship.

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6 Waldhausen, op. cit., p. 32.
Whereas Pankraz is abysmally negligent in his responsibilities, Estherohen helps the mother support the family. Keller aptly summarizes the dispositions of the brother and sister in this regard as follows:

Pankraz is not at all handsome in appearance; he is rather undistinguished looking. Estherohen, by contrast, is extremely pretty. Their temperaments are truly contrasting, for Estherohen is cheerful; whereas Pankraz is obstinate, capricious, and sullen.

As a rule, Estherohen is subservient to her older brother. There is, though, one daily activity in which she plays the role of the aggressor and successfully gains the upper hand, namely, during the noonday meal. This episode is alluded to apropos of the relationship between Pankraz and his mother. Estherohen's machinations regarding the means whereby she is able to obtain more than her share of the rich gravy in the mashed potatoes are quite ingenious. In truth, the brother has no defense against her ceaseless tunneling. Bennett
states that Keller shows wilful delight in the account of the brother and sister's pouring milk on their Kartoffelbrei and making subterranean passages for it to flow through. He further adds that this incident, although apparently inconsequential, nonetheless makes an indelible impression on the memory. 7

Pankraz frequently does things designed to disturb Estherchen and is successful on many occasions. Still, his success is but fragmentary, and she often gains the upper hand in the final analysis:

Estherchen...wurde dadurch zu reichlichem Weinen gebracht, durch welches aber die Sonne ihrer Heiterkeit schnell wieder hervorstrahlte. Diese Oberflächlichkeit ärzte und kränkte dann den Pankraz so, dass er immer längere Zeiträume hindurch schmolle und aus selbstgeschaffenem Ärger selbst heimlich weinte. (VII, 13-14)

The last episode between Pankraz and Estherchen before he leaves home is again an unpleasant one. Actually, Keller does not describe a single friendly relationship between the brother and sister during their formative years. Estherchen takes every opportunity to frustrate her brother, thereby gaining some measure of revenge for the various burdens she has to bear as a result of his indolent and contentious behavior.

Since she is a girl and is younger than he, it is often necessary for her to gain her objective by subterfuge. This she does with glee when the appropriate occasion presents itself. One day, when Pankraz arrives home late, he finds that his dinner has been "tampered" with. Since he has been humiliated during the day by someone whom he had intimidated, this untoward act of his sister is more than he can bear. That very night Pankraz runs away, and it is not until fifteen years later than he is able to take his place in society as a mature citizen.  

Lydia--Father

Lydia is unusually strongly attached to her father. This is evidenced by the fact that she spends most of her time with him rather than with her mother. A specific example of her devotion to him is the description of their chess playing. Keller states "dass sie nicht imstande war, eine überlegte Partie Schach spielen zu lernen, und dennoch mit der fröhlichsten Geduld am Brettte sassen, um sich von ihrem Vater unaufhörlich Überrumpeln zu lassen." (VII, 38-39)

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The governor and his daughter enjoy an extremely warm relationship. He is obviously the only man among her male contacts who is free from her abnormal yearning for conquest. He is well aware of Lydia's dastardly conduct and takes pleasure in it. This is clearly shown when Pankraz relates:

Ich merkte, dass er meine Affäre wohl kannte, überhaupt dieselbe von jeher beobachtet hatte und eine Art von schadenfrohem Spass darüber empfand. (VII, 66-67)

This statement signifies that the governor is not a well-adjusted person. It is indeed possible that Lydia's attitude toward her suitors stems from her father's maladjustment.

When Pankraz returns to the governor and to Lydia with the unrealistic hope of winning her heart, he observes that she is carrying on the same type of coquetry with other men that she previously had effected with him. The governor still has a loving attitude toward his daughter and does nothing to halt her deceitful maneuvers.
Pankraz--Lydia

Keller recounts Pankraz's painful and disheartening experience with Lydia, the daughter of his military superior, by means of a flashback. This relationship is one of the two significant experiences during his fifteen year absence from Seldwyla which cures him of his pouting and matures him immeasurably.

The incipient stages of Pankraz's relationship with Lydia are rather uneventful. In order to understand Lydia's exceedingly unorthodox reaction to Pankraz's declaration of love for her, one needs first to examine in some detail several of her more conspicuous character traits.

Lydia possesses an open, disarming manner which explains why Pankraz feels relaxed in her presence during the major part of their contact with each other. The fact that she gives the appearance of being capable of genuine emotional attachment proves to be his undoing. Reality and appearance or \Schein and \Schein\ are often diametrically opposed to each other, and this situation, as we shall later learn, is true in Lydia's case. Lydia's effect on Pankraz, even at the outset of their relationship, is obvious to him. He realizes that he
does many things to please her and that his unfavorable attitude toward women has undergone a noticeable change:

At this stage of their acquaintance, his feeling for Lydia is presumably purely platonic. However, the fact that he has increasingly less to do with the governor might well serve to illustrate that Pankraz is gradually falling in love with Lydia without realizing it himself. Her three appearances in the garden where he is working and her concomitant coquetry make him finally cognizant of his love for her. It appears entirely possible that Pankraz—from an unconscious standpoint—does not wish to reveal his true feelings for the governor's daughter. The later episode in the woods seems to bear out the conjecture that he unknowingly has been in love with her all along. Since he has an astounding recollection of their entire relationship, Pankraz does, in fact, realize, soon after he slays the wild boar, that he has been in love with Lydia almost from the day he met her.
Instead of rejoicing at the sudden realization of his love, Pankraz becomes sad; there is, to his dismay, a conflict between his emotions and his logic. Since he does feel completely unworthy of her affection, he finds it impossible to believe that such a genteel lady could love him. As a consequence, he ponders the thought that she is a licentious person who flirts with and instigates affairs with virtually any man who happens to be available. By reasoning in this fashion he hopes to find a solution, whereby there could be a favorable outcome to their relationship. The mere thought that she is not of noble character is almost more than he can bear. In reality, his reflection portends the bitter pill he has to swallow in his encounter with Lydia when he profusely expresses his love for her. The simile Keller employs to illustrate Pankraz's feeling of consternation over his ignoble thoughts about Lydia, occurs when he shoots the wild boar in a fit of anger:

...meine Kugel sass fast gleichzeitig und ebenso unvermutet und unwillkommen in seinem Gehirn wie jener niederdrächtige Gedanke in dem meinigen, und schon war mir zu Mute, als ob das wilde Tier noch zu beneiden wäre um seine Errungenschaft im Vergleich zu der meinigen. (VII, 46)

Sendlwald possesses a similar feeling of unworthiness for Hertrade. (Die Jungfrau als Ritter).
Pankraz's envy of the boar's death gives further evidence of his love for Lydia; it is extraordinarily painful for him to think of her as anything but a noble lady in the fullest sense.

As a result of his newly-realized love, Pankraz's behavior changes in a manner perceptible to Lydia, her father, and Pankraz himself. He no longer feels relaxed with Lydia, for he is afraid that he might allow his feelings to become obvious. Lydia, on the other hand, begins to converse ever more freely with him and to try more than ever to please him in various ways. In his nonplused state, Pankraz automatically reverts to his well-practiced habit of pouting, which, as we learn later by his own frank admission, is the primary cause of the unfortunate denouement of his relationship with Lydia. He also makes the reading of Shakespeare partially responsible for his humiliation and his painful lesson. Lydia is, in part, to blame, for she is the one who lends him the attractive volume containing the works of Shakespeare. Pankraz decides, after it is too late, that the women in Shakespeare's plays are not found in actual life; it is quite true that certain characteristics of his
heroines are found in various living women, but not all the traits of a Lady Macbeth or of a Desdemona are found in any one woman. Pankraz does not realize this truth until his relationship with Lydia reaches its unhappy conclusion. Thus his efforts to make Lydia closely resemble any given Shakespearean heroine lead him far astray. In any event, Pankraz does put Lydia on a pedestal; otherwise, he would have to think of her as a base character. Moreover, this very fact prevents him from attempting to court her in any way, for he firmly believes that she belongs to a class far above his own. With this in mind, we can readily understand why Lydia is unable to detect any evidence of his interest in her. Her ego can and will not permit her to remain in this quandary indefinitely. Keller uses a second simile when he has Pankraz express his reluctance to be in Lydia's presence, although he is extremely desirous thereof. He causes him to say:

Ich fürchtete mich vor dem kleinsten möglichen Ereignis, etwa wie ein guter Christ vor dem Tode, den er zahnd scheut, obgleich er durch selbigen in die ewige Seligkeit einzugehen gewiss ist. (VII, 53)

The situation finally becomes unbearable for Pankraz, who actually believes he will lose his mind. When he
announces that he has decided to leave in order to aid
the English in fighting the Indians, Lydia's mood
changes completely. She treats him with abject indif-
ference, not even deigning to converse with him any
more. Every indication is that she is deeply in love
with him. On one occasion he even notices that she
has been crying. All this evidence sets the scene for
the ill-fated occurrence in the garden.

Despite the fact that Pankraz, in relating his
affair with Lydia in retrospect, intimates several
times that Lydia is not the ideal woman that he longs
for her to be, we are hardly prepared for the unex-
pected caustic conversation in the garden. When she
actively pursues him on the premises, crying as if
her heart will break, we not only feel that she deep-
ly loves Pankraz, but we also take pity on her plight.
This feeling of sympathy for her is, to be sure, short-
lived, for after she finally succeeds in making Pankraz
reveal his long-concealed love for her, she displays
her true self. And it is repulsive! One can have
nothing but derision for a person who would reduce
love to a base emotion. This is indeed what she
does. She subordinates the deep love of Pankraz to
her own inordinate desire for conquest. In order to
feed her sick ego by gaining the feeling of being
desired, she makes a mockery of love, the most noble
and highly prized of all human emotions.

The heated discussion between the two only serves
to alienate them, for they have no common ground upon
which they can construct their logic. Neither understand
stands the viewpoint of the other, for their emotional
needs are obviously different. Lydia is unstable and
incapable of true love; she is willing to receive only
in her relationship with a suitor, never to give unless
by doing so she can better achieve her selfish objective.
Pankraz, on the contrary, wishes to give his love completely;
actually, he appears more willing to give than to
receive. Just before confessing his love to her, this
thought passes through his mind:

Wenn dies Wein dich liebt und du jemals mit
Ehren an ihre Hand gelangest, so sollst du
ihr auch dienen bis in den Tod, und wenn sie
der Teufel selbst wäre! (VII, 58)

He also makes the following remark just before the
avowal of his love and apropos of Lydia’s downcast
demeanor:

...ich hielt mich nicht wert, dass sie nur
eine schlimme Minute um meinetwillen erlei-
den sollte, der ich gern den Kopf unter ihre
Füsse gelegt hätte. (VII, 55)
That Lydia shows unmistakable evidence of psychopathic behavior admits of no doubt. The characteristics of our heroine are typically those of the psychopathic personality. Dr. Noyes states that one of the outstanding characteristics of the psychopath is his excess of demand. The psychopath is lacking in a sense of responsibility and demands the instant gratification of his desires with no concern as to the feelings and interests of others: he is selfish, ungrateful, narcissistic, exhibitionistic; he is egocentric, demanding much and giving little. The only environment to which the psychopath can adjust is the one which he can dominate. However, despite the fact that his conduct is so inadequate from a social standpoint, he is satisfied with it.10

It would be difficult to ascertain all the reasons for psychopathic behavior. It appears that within such personalities there is a force motivated from strong, unconscious inferiority patterns.

These traits are most probably acquired in childhood, and the individual is compelled to act them out in order to compensate for inner, unrecognized self-belittlement and inferiorities. It seems entirely possible that Lydia's emotional being was improperly developed largely because of her unstable family relationships. Her parents were explicitly unsuited to each other. Lydia was, in a very real sense, a victim of the incompatibility of this marriage.

What are some of the specific qualities of the psychopathic inferior which Lydia possesses? She proves in the violent scene with Fankraz that she is unable to form mature judgments. Further, she shows a blatant disregard of ethical and moral appreciation as well as a disregard of decency and the rights of others. In all, this is quite a severe indictment against her.

Despite Fankraz's emotionally painful experience in his relationship with Lydia, the soothing influence gained therefrom, in conjunction with his adventure with the lion, enables him to overcome some of his

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own thwarting behavioral characteristics. As a result, he becomes thereafter a more acceptable person in his later social contacts. Consequently, Pankraz truly gains far more than he loses from contact with Lydia. A parallel of Pankraz is Don Correa (Das Singgedicht). He is halted from his lethargy by the vile and calculating Donna Feniza.

Pankraz also has a great deal in common with John Mayes (Der Schmied seines Glückes), for both are self-centered individuals. However, both change and become productive members of society. Their sexually unfortunate experiences with members of the opposite sex are blessings in disguise; it is these very experiences that enable both to integrate themselves successfully into their communal environment. Furthermore, they finally learn the meaning of genuine consentment.

Lydia is one of Fuller's best examples of his contemptible women. Other such women discussed in this study are Zia Günzlin (Die drei gerechten Kammacher) and Lätter Amisch (Die misstrauchte Liebesbriefe). These women are totally incapable of doing good. Accordingly, they are static characters.
Moreover, they are noticeably unproductive with respect to their various communities. Although Lydia possesses extensive knowledge concerning academic matters, she uses her attainments not to help others in any way, but for self-gain.
Two farmers plow their fields in the vicinity of Seldwyla. Sali Manz, age seven, and Vrenchen Marti, age five, take food to their respective fathers and then play contentedly on the ownerless plot which is located between those belonging to Manz and Marti. The vacant plot is stony and is covered in weeds.

After plowing their own fields, the two farmers then plow a furrow of considerable proportions into the unpossessed land. Consequently, the ownerless field becomes ever narrower with the passing of years.

Finally, Manz purchases it at an auction. Shortly before Manz's transaction, Marti slices off a large triangle of the unsightly land. A bitter and senseless strife occurs between the two men, due to this diagonal piece of land. They enter lawsuit after lawsuit against each other with neither gaining the upper hand; their savings quickly diminish. Manz is forced to leave his farm and removes to Seldwyla where he becomes an innkeeper of a dilapidated tavern. Eventually, Vrenchen's father also loses his land.

The intense animosity of the two ruined men continues unabatedly. Some years after the land dispute, they inadvertently encounter each other while fishing. They begin to fight violently on a narrow bridge. It is only through the intercessions efforts of Sali and Vrenchen, who happen to be present, that the bellicose men are separated. The girl and boy join hands briefly during the deplorable struggle between their fathers, and their hearts are set aglow. From their bitter plight the bliss of first love is awakened, which will not permit separation. The next day Sali visits Vrenchen surreptitiously. She greets her in front of her run-down home. They wander over the accursed land and are in ecstasy at being near each other. Their rapture is marred but little when they meet the black widdler. It is he whom the children's fathers cheated out of the disputed land. Suddenly Marti surprises the couple; he maltreats his daughter, causing Sali to fell Marti with a stone. When the
father recovers, it is evident to all that the blow on
the head has rendered him insane. Consequently, it be-
comes necessary for Vrenchen to place him in an insti-
tution. His last household belongings are sold, and
Vrenchen is forced to leave her home.

On the day of Vrenchen's departure, Sali appears
at her house. They plan to spend the following day
together as a day of celebration before Vrenchen seeks
work in another district. By selling his watch, Sali
obtains some cash and purchases a pair of fine shoes
for his beloved. Early Sunday morning he calls for
her just as Vrenchen's neighbor is engaged in having
the last piece of furniture moved. Dressed in their
Sunday best, they give every indication of being an
engaged couple as they eat their breakfast in a near-
by village inn. With a throng of people en route to
church, the couple strolls through the forest. In the
next village the lovers buy a huge gingerbread house
and heart with ingenious little sayings written on
them. Then, being recognized, they leave and walk to
an inn which is located on a lonely hillside; this
tavern caters to poor people who come primarily to
dance and sing. The Black Fiddler is present at this
establishment and plays for the group. He welcomes
the lovers into the society of the homeless and solem-
nizes their marriage. The wilder and more deafening
the celebration of the group becomes, the stronger
becomes the couple's attraction for each other. How-
ever, they feel, as children of former landed men,
very much out of place; thus they separate from the
gypsies and walk back toward their native village.

En route home, they are greatly enticed by the
river. They come upon a boat in dock which is loaded
with hay. Sali unmoors the craft. The two young
people climb upon the vessel and the hay serves as
their bridal bed as the boat slowly wends its way
downstream. At dawn the next morning it approaches
a city. Soon thereafter the bodies of the lovers,
closely entwined, are found.
The idea for *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe* was conceived by Keller after he had read a news item in the September 3, 1847 issue of the *Züricher Freitagszeitung*. The incident actually took place near Leipzig. The only important difference between the plot of Keller's rendition of the event and that contained in the newspaper occurs at the end of the account: the newspaper reported that the lovers committed suicide by shooting themselves, whereas Keller's hero and heroine drowned themselves. During the winter of 1848-1849, Keller wrote, in heavy quatrains, the beginning of what was intended to be an epic poem. However, he found the form unsatisfactory and soon abandoned this endeavor. As a result of Jeremias Gotthelf's influence, Keller finally wrote the work in prose.

The story has the love plot of Sali--Vrenchen as the central theme. The Sali--Mantz, Mant--Wife, and Vrenchen--Marti relationships are of sufficient importance to warrant their inclusion.

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Vrenchen--Father

The first mentioned encounter between Vrenchen and her father is a joyous one. Their relationship as Vrenchen brings the noonday meal to him has all the earmarks of being ideal, which it is during her early childhood. However, the strife between Manz and Marti changes the warm relationship between Vrenchen and her father.

Although the altercation between the two fathers is well underway, the children meet again and play in the untilled field. When Marti notices them playing together, he reproves Vrenchen and strikes her. Keller writes that Marti does this "ohne zu wissen warum..." (VII,101) It seems apparent that this untoward flare-up is little more than displaced animosity. Marti is unable to vent his full venom and frustration on his enemy Manz; as a consequence, his defenseless daughter must fall victim to his rancor. From the following account, it is understandable that Vrenchen suffers more at home than does Sali, "da seine Mutter tot und es einsam in einem wüsten Hause der Tyrannei eines verwilderten Vaters anheimgegeben war." (VII, 105)
Marti's intense hatred of the Manz family is seen at every turn. When he learns that the lovers are meeting secretly, he flies into a blind rage and physically punishes Vrenchen. This is her last punishment from her father, however, for he is rendered insane by the stone thrown by Sali. Showing devotion to her father, which is typical of the continually harassed Vrenchen, she shrieks: "O Gott, du lieber Gott! Es ist mein Vater! der arme Mann!" (VII, 138) Vrenchen shows the selfless spirit of Keller's admirable women as she, displaying no trace of a desire for revenge, dutifully endeavors to nurse her father back to health. Keller minces no words in making known his admiration for her womanly virtues: "denn es lebte beinahe von nichts, obgleich es Tag und Nacht wach sein musste und niemand ihm half." (VII, 139-140) Furthermore, when it becomes apparent to all that Marti is hopelessly insane, we have abundant evidence of Vrenchen's love for her father:

Das bleiche und abgehärmte Vrenchen hörte ihm geduldig zu, Tränen vergiessend über das türichte Wesen, welches die arme Tochter noch mehr angstigte als die frühere Bosheit... (VII, 140)
Vrenchen exhibits remarkable serenity as she accompanies her father to the insane asylum. Even the depressing remarks of the passers-by who periodically follow the cart fail to destroy her composure. Sorrow has been her constant companion for so long that she has learned how to combat it, outwardly at least. It is not easy to fathom the grief that must be Vrenchen's as she listens to her father's idiotic remarks and watches his child-like antics. She knows that the asylum represents a "lebendiges Begräbnis" for her father, a fate in many respects worse than death.

Manz—Wife

Manz and Marti suffer in many ways as a result of their imbecilic behavior over the contested field. Not the least of their misery is the change wrought in their wives by the unbearable state of affairs. Whereas Marti's wife dies, for her gentle disposition cannot withstand the rapid downfall of all she cherishes, Manz's wife becomes a veritable shrew. Keller carefully describes her degeneracy as a matter of course in view of the extenuating circumstances, stating that she has "nichts zu tun als einigen weiblichen Fehlern,
She squanders Manz's money on herself and on Sali, for this extravagant manner has become a habitual one in dealing with the constant problems that are gradually engulfing the whole family.

Open altercation breaks forth between Manz and his wife while they are operating the tavern. Her ludicrous attempts prove unbearable to her husband who exclaims, "Du alte Kuh! Was machst du denn?" (VII, 115) Frau Manz's rejoinder is filled with bitter frustration and is not at all unanticipated, "Störe mich nicht... du alter Tolpatsch! siehst du nicht, wie ich mir Mühe gebe und mit den Leuten umzugehen weiss? Das sind aber nur Lumpen von deinem Anhang!" (ibid.)

Curiously enough, Frau Manz undergoes a transformation in that she unexpectedly makes a concerted effort to cheer up her morose husband. She has only limited success, but her efforts do show that she still possesses at least one tangible quality that merits praise.

The misdirected Frau Manz does all in her power to ameliorate her lot and that of her family by aiding her
husband who has become a receiver of stolen goods.

Sali relates the following to Vrenchen:

"Die Mutter hilft dazu, aus bitterlicher Gier, nur etwas im Hause zu sehen, und glaubt den Unfug noch durch eine gewisse Aufsicht und Ordnung annehmlich und nützlich zu machen!" (VII, 143)

It would indeed redound to Frau Manx’s credit if she stayed with her husband although she were convinced of their hopeless financial situation. However, she does not appear to be of this opinion. Excepting one occasion, namely when she expresses the hope that Sali can find happiness in love, Frau Manx does not indicate that she, like her husband and even her son, regards their predicament as hopeless. This optimism, as mentioned earlier, is perhaps her only trait, other than her concern for Sali’s happiness, that is worthy of approbation.

Sali—a Mother

There is little mention of Sali’s contact with his mother until she has already fallen into the abyss of degeneration with her unfortunate husband (unfortunate because he had earlier been an upstanding citizen of his community). It is the mother’s deceit that serves to mollify somewhat the son’s sorrow at seeing the pitiable state of his father.
It does not speak well for Sali that he allows his mother to dress him in splendid attire in view of the destitution of the family.

Er liess sich dies gefallen ohne viel Dankbarkeit, da ihm die Mutter viel zu viel dazu schwatzte und log; und indem er so wenig Freude daran empfand, tat er lässig und gedankenlos, was ihm gefiel, ohne dass dies jedoch etwas Uebles war, weil er für jetzt noch unbeschädigt war von dem Beispielen der Alten und das jugendliche Bedürfnis fühlte, im ganzen einfach, ruhig und leidlich tüchtig zu sein. (VII, 107)

Notwithstanding the grievous faults of Frau Manz, it should not be overlooked that she does show genuine concern for Sali's future happiness. She realizes that she and her husband have not offered their son anything but misery during the last few years, nor does she feel that this situation will be altered in the future. In speculating on the possibility of her son's being in love, she says, "O wollte Gott! dass er vielleicht ein Glück machte! das tät es dem armen Buben gut!" (VII, 150)

In conclusion, we can ascertain that Sali bears his mother neither ill-will nor devotion. On the other hand, she, in typically motherly fashion, wants her son to have the best.
Sali--Vrenchen

The first scene between Sali and Vrenchen occurs when they are very young. Keller's descriptions of the two children's activities after they have brought the noonday meal to their respective fathers is worthy of close scrutiny. Their treatment of the doll is actually a foreshadowing of the future. Examining the destructive activities in sequence, we can notice a direct relationship between them and Marti's ultimate ruin. First, Sali knocks the doll from the stalk of a thistle with a stone. This in itself is symbolical of his hurling a stone at the outraged Marti years later. Then he asks Vrenchen to empty the head so that he can place a fly inside. After imprisoning the fly by stuffing the opening of the doll's head with grass, the two mischievous children bury the head with the fly still alive. The buzzing sound emanating from the head represents Marti's derangement after the tragic injury, while the burial of the live insect presages Marti's commitment to the insane asylum, which, in a poetic sense, is being buried alive. Accordingly, Keller has made of a perfectly normal childhood relationship one that portends heart-
ache and ultimate disaster. Regarding leitmotivs, Phelps has this to say:

Three times situation and object recur as leitmotivs: the play of Sali and Vrenchen in the grainfield, and the counting of her teeth (91-96) are repeated in the later idyll (132-37); so, too, is the adornment with poppies--at first of Vrenchen's doll (91), later of Vrenchen herself (134).®

Several years after the tragic altercation between their fathers, the children play together briefly. Their frolicsome manner of pushing each other down opposite sides of the stone heap appears highly significant for at least two reasons. First, the pushing symbolically portends the ultimate deaths of the hero and heroine. Second, and probably more important, the children's pushing could also be symbolical of the enmity existing between the two families and graphically portrayed on the bridge when the fathers fight.

The first vis-à-vis encounter of Sali and Vrenchen as young adults occurs at the bridge. Although unalterable animosity exists between the two fathers, love between their children is able to flower. Their mutual attraction for each other appears equally as strong as

the hatred of their fathers. Keller dramatically describes the dichotomy of the situation as he portrays the fathers' behavior:

...als die verwilderten Männer gleichzeitig auf die schmale, unter ihren Tritten schwan­kende Brücke stürzten, sich gegenseitig pack­ten und die Fäuste in die vor Zorn und aus­brechendem Kummer bleichen sitternden Gesicht­ter schlugen. (VII, 119)

and shortly thereafter the awakening love of Sali and Vrenchen:

...und Sali sah in dies ihm so wohlbekannte und doch so viel anders und schöner gewordene Ge­sicht. Vrenchen sah in diesem Augenblicke auch sein Erstaunen und es lächelte ganz kurz und geschwind mitten in seinem Schrecken und in seinen Tränen ihn an...ihre Kinder [...] ...gaben sich aber im Wegwenden und Trennen, ungeschoren von den Alten, schnell die Hände, welche vom Wasser und von den Fischen feucht und kühl waren. (VII, 120-121)

How interesting to note Keller's adroitness in strengthening this scene! It begins to thunder immediately before the old men start pummeling each other with their fists. Conversely, at the precise moment that Sali and Vrenchen come into close contact with each other, there occurs a rift in the clouds which emits a bright ray, illuminating the girl's face. Keller very cleverly uses this phenomenon of nature to emphasize the contrast between the feelings of the men and those of their children.
The actual awakening of Sali's and Vrenchen's love is both sudden and violent in its manifestation. As a result of the intense ill will existing between their fathers, they have had no real contact with each other since early childhood. There are several factors which serve to augment their great attraction for each other. Certainly, some of the more significant ones would be the following: they have been forbidden to see each other, whereby their desire to do that which is denied them is stimulated; they are both prisoners of the same miserable predicament, and, as innocent victims, could comfort each other by discussing the deplorable affair from both viewpoints (even though they are essentially the same); and they would be able to enjoy reminiscing about the childhood experiences that they shared. However, one of the strongest reasons for Sali's desire to be with Vrenchen is undoubtedly the fact that her beauty has dazzled him.

Keller continues to contrast love and hatred in Sali and his father, respectively, for some time after the incident on the bridge: the former is in ecstacy, and the latter is virtually consumed with bitterness.
Helmut Rehder gives insight into Sali's behavioral traits when he states the following:

As many a character of Keller's creative imagination, Sali is distinguished by an innate passivity and reticence, while a more aggressive energy is assigned to the female characters, as e.g. to his mother or even to Vrenchen herself. As he comes of age he is even in danger of developing into the same type of man as his father, ready to sulk or even to commit injustices if it were not for the pitiful care that he receives at times from his mother. But after he has seen Vrenchen, he rallies from hopeless lethargy, with his imagination fastened to one definite objective. 4

The die is cast, for the next day Sali feels compelled to see Vrenchen despite everything. Sali's question as he greets her, "...wollen wir nicht wieder gute Freunde sein?" (VII, 127) evokes the downcast reply from Vrenchen, "Und unsere Eltern?" (ibid.) Sali pleads, like Max Piccolomini in Schiller's Wallenstein, that they are not responsible for the sins of their parents. When he, almost in desperation echoes Shakespeare's Friar's hope that genuine love can remedy the situation, Vrenchen simply replies, "Es wird nie gut kommen...geh in Gottes Namen deiner Wege, Salil" (ibid.) 5

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There are subsequent occasions in the Novelle in which Vrenchen expresses herself similarly. The fact that at important junctures she initiates and leads the action is indeed one of the conditions upon which the tragedy is built.\(^6\)

Although Vrenchen tries to dissuade Sali from further visits, his love for her cannot be denied, nor does she wish it so. Her love, which is equal to that of Sali, quickly gains the upper hand as she arranges a rendez-vous with him in the field. They are so stunned by their attraction for each other that they keep asking the same question, "Und wie geht es dir auch?" (VII, 128), answering it each time solely by means of their eloquent eyes.

As the lovers walk blissfully through the corn fields, Keller uses the simile of the constellation descending over the hill's crest as a leitmotiv; it was first applied to Manz and Marti (VII, 87, 96)\(^7\). Erwin Ackerknecht refers to this figure of ill omen as a type of "vorzeigendes Motiv."\(^8\)

\(^6\)Silz, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 85
\(^7\)Phelps, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 46
As the couple revel in each other's company, there is but one incident to mar their bliss. They learn that the Black Fiddler's happiness, too, has been seriously affected by the contested piece of land, for it would be his if he but had a certificate of baptism or citizenship papers. Remarking that he will play for them later if they want to dance, the Fiddler hurriedly departs. The innately happy disposition of Vrenchen manifests itself when she contemplates the remarkable figure and nose of the Fiddler. The ability to find something humorous in even the most distressing situation is a trait of Vrenchen that is outstanding and ever present. The natures of Sali and Vrenchen actually interact:

"Sali's hopefuln ess and firm resolve give Vrenchen encouragement (128); her cheerful nature does much to raise his spirits after the episode with the Fiddler (132)."9 Since gaiety and optimism are exceedingly catching, it is not surprising that Sali's gloom soon disappears and a bewitching love scene follows. Keller portrays passionate love more

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9 Phelps, op. cit., p. 47
effectively in *Romeo und Julia* than in any of his other works. The number of kisses of Sali and Vrenohen symbolizes the extent of their passion.

When Vrenohen leads Sali out of doors, we read:

> Sie umhalsten sich und küsten sich unverweilt und so lange, bis sie einstweilen müde waren, oder wie man es nennen will, wenn das Küsen zweier Verliebter auf eine oder zwei Minuten sich selbst überlebt und die Vergänglichkeit alles Lebens mitten im Rausche der Blütezeit ahnen lässt. (VII, 135)

During the love tryst Sali tells Vrenohen that she is shrewder than she looks, to which she replies that he can gradually learn this later if his love for her is strong enough. At this point Sali suddenly interjects the question, "Wenn du einst meine Frau bist?" (VII, 136), which causes Vrenohen to regard their helpless situation in its true perspective. Sali perceives the sudden change in her countenance, and he, too, becomes cognizant of their sorry plight. Taking the initiative, as is so often the case with Keller's feminine figures, she resolutely exclaims, "Komm, ich muss nun gehen!" (VII, 137), and they start homeward.

Vrenohen shows how inextricably she and Sali are embroiled in their bourgeois milieu after Sali fells Marti with the stone. This feeling of hopelessness,
as a result of the rigid middle-class code, smacks unmistakably of Hebbel's *Maria Magdalene*. Silz finds that Keller has treated his ideals more admirably and the basic theme of his work more poetically than Hebbel has done with his. 10

After Marti has been committed to the insane asylum, Vrenchen tristfully confides to her lover:

"Ich werde...nicht aushalten ohne dich, und doch kann ich dich nie bekommen, auch wenn alles andere nicht wäre, bloss weil du meinen Vater geschlagen und um den Verstand gebracht hast! Dies würde immer ein schlechter Grundstein unserer Ehe sein und wir beiden nie sorge­los werden, nie!" (VII, 144)

Herein lies, undoubtedly, the most serious problem of their relationship: they cannot marry, nor can they live separated from each other.

When faced with the necessity of parting for a period of time, neither one of the lovers feels able to endure the separation. There is, however, a difference in their resolve: Vrenchen speaks in positive terms about going into service somewhere; Sali, on the contrary, is unable to make himself enlist as a soldier or hire out as a farm-hand in some distant community.

10 Silz, op. cit., p. 69.
Vrenohen sums up the crisis of their situation when she says, "Wir können nicht zusammen sein und doch kann ich nicht von dir lassen..." (VII, 175). If Sali were able to control himself better and accept a period of lengthy renunciation and probation, the tragedy possibly could be averted. It does indeed appear that they could eventually loose the bonds of their bourgeois culture, for Sali later calls on Vrenohen at her own house rather than waiting for her at the river. He says defiantly, "Was kümmern uns die Leute!...Niemand hilft uns und ich bin ehrlich und fürchte niemand!" (VII, 150)

Despite their desperate situation, Sali and Vrenohen maintain the highest integrity when making preparations for the dance. Apropos of their penurious state, Sali says, "Lass nur...ich will schon etwas mitbringen!" (VII, 146) Disturbed by this remark, for Vrenohen knows that Sali has no money, she replies, "Doch nicht von deinem Vater, von--von dem Gestohlenen?" (ibid.) Sali quickly calms her fears by retorting, "Nein, sei nur ruhig! Ich habe noch meine silberne Uhr bewahrt bis dahin, die will ich verkaufen!" (VII, 146) Vrenohen is satisfied with this proposal, and once again there are overtones of the approaching
tragedy, this time, however, from Sali's lips, "Es wäre das beste, wir beide könnten sterben!" (ibid.)

Before the couple leaves for the dance, Vrenchen gives unmistakable evidence of her love for Sali: she eats no breakfast so that she can later eat all the more. Further, by waiting she can not only enjoy eating with him, but she can also, in the meantime, have several hours to look forward to their noonday meal. It is apparent that she fervently strives to squeeze every conceivable bit of happiness from her and Sali's doleful predicament. Silz opines that the extremely passionate Vrenchen would be quite capable of infidelity (165, 178). For her, nothing is more important than the consummation of her love with Sali, and she constantly works toward this end, either directly or indirectly.11

The couple, particularly Vrenchen, endeavors to make up for years of deprivation and also to compensate for a dismal future that cannot be shared together. Vrenchen vicariously enjoys her imaginative yearnings to be a real lady with means as she converses with the

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11 Silz, op. cit., p. 85.
farmer's wife. She describes with telling effect the aristocratic life that she and Sali will lead after their forthcoming marriage. Keller quaintly depicts their success at shutting out the real world: "Das liebende Paar vergoss, was am Ende dieses Tages werden sollte, und gab sich einzig der hoch aufatmenden wortlosen Freude hin..." (VII, 158)

After all, they have to put a lifetime of pleasure into such a short space of time. And their efforts toward this end are eminently successful. As they eat in the tavern in the neighboring town, it is obvious that they are able to enjoy fully the delicious food primarily because they are together. It is clear that their love for each other is stronger than that for food or drink. Indeed, it ultimately proves stronger even than the desire for life itself. Vrenchen enjoys appearing to be Sali's bride-elect. She revels in the comments of the sensible woman as well as in those of the envious one at the inn.

The two continually strive to form a plan for spending their lives together. Vrenchen says, "Sali! warum sollen wir uns nicht haben und glücklich sein?" (VII, 165) to which he replies, "Ich weiss auch
nicht warum!" (ibid.) They both struggle valiantly to circumvent their fate. But their bourgeois feelings of honor will not allow them to solve their dilemma.

At the kermis Sali and Vrenchen exchange endearing gingerbread mottoes through which they express their all-encompassing love for each other. Vrenchen exclaims after the exchange:

"...du schenkst mir ein Haus! Ich habe dir auch eines und erst das wahre geschenkt; denn unser Herz ist jetzt unser Haus, darin wir wohnen, und wir tragen so unsere Wohnung mit uns, wie die Schnecken! Andere haben wir nicht!" (VII, 167-168)

Sali replies, "Dann sind wir aber zwei Schnecken, von denen jede das Häuschen der andern trägt!" (VII, 168)

Vrenchen's concluding remark that they should cling to each other as that is their only source of refuge, has singular significance. They do indeed cling to each other at the end of the Novelle, for there is no other sanctuary for either.

The lovers then make an effort to join their peers who are dancing. However, when they are rejected at the respectable inn, which caters to the bourgeois class of society, their only choice is to go to a lower-class
place, namely the Paradise Garden: "Wir wollen gehen, wo das arme Vok sich lustig macht, zu dem wir jetzt auch gehören, da werden sie uns nicht verachten..."

(VII, 170) The consuming irony of their fallen fortunes occurs when they welcome the patronage of the Fiddler whom their fathers had wronged and scorned (VII, 172, 173).\(^\text{12}\)

When he carefully describes the Fiddler, Keller displays his romantic tendencies much in the manner of Tieck or Eichendorff. The author is not only subjective at the end of Romeo und Julia, but he is also didactic at the same time. This latter tendency has trappings of his realistic compatriot, Gotthelf. It is also typical of the Swiss that Keller did not wish to extol the lovers.\(^\text{13}\)

There are a number of musical allusions during Sali and Vrenchen's last day together which give insight into their relationship. When they first begin their journey together on Sunday, they hear church bells, "...hier das harmonische tiefe Geläute einer reichen

\(^{12}\) Silz, op. cit., p. 90.

Ortschaft, dort die geschwätzigen zwei Bimmelglocklein eines kleinen armen Dörfchens." (VII, 166)

Consequently, we find the lovers all alone in the midst of indefinite space. At this point Keller adroitly compares their love for each other to bells and to music:

\[ \text{Jeder in der Sonntagsstille verhallende Ton oder} \]
\[ \text{ferne Ruf klang ihnen erschütternd durch die} \]
\[ \text{Seele; denn die Liebe ist eine Glocke, welche} \]
\[ \text{das Entlegenste und Gleichgültigste wiedertönt} \]
\[ \text{lässt und in eine besondere Musik verwandelt.} \]

(VII, 158)

As they travel along, they enjoy the pompous dance music at the Church Fair. However, it is not until they reach the Paradise Garden that they are completely captivated by music. The orchestra, with the Fiddler playing the dominant role, stirs the entire neighborhood into joyful activity. As the Fiddler leads the procession through the night, the grotesque unreality can be likened to that of the Dance of Death which has cast its paralyzing spell over the two lovers.

When the noise of the Blocksberg fades away and things become quiet again, a new musical theme, reminiscent of the tolling of the matin bells is heard: 14 "Die Stille

14 Rehder, op. cit., p. 430.
der Welt sang und musizierte ihnen durch die Seelen, man hörte nur den Fluss unten rauschen und lieblich rauschen im langsamen Ziehen." (VII, 182) Rehder attributes the following to the music:

But this music no longer comes from the human world; real or imaginary, from the water or from their own blood, it is the poetic image of the harmony which the lovers have found in the midst of chaos and which they prefer to the agony of separation.\(^\text{15}\)

As the lovers dance without cessation, they are not cognizant of the fact that they are inviting those forces to take revenge for the wrong previously inflicted upon patient Mother Earth. An orderless lust of life begins to stir their very souls; it is epitomized by the Fiddler's urging them to forget the world. This is, of course, tantamount to forgetting themselves.\(^\text{16}\)

It is interesting to observe the effect that dancing with other partners has on Sali and Vrenchen. She is delighted:

\begin{quote}
Sali machte ein trauriges und unmutiges Gesicht, wenn er mit einer Anderen tanzte, und drehte fortwährend das Gesicht nach Vrenchen hin, welches ihn nicht ansah, wenn es vorüberschwebte, glühte wie eine Purpurrose und überglücklich schien, mit wenn es auch tanzte. (VII, 175)
\end{quote}

\(^{15}\)Rehder, op. cit., p. 431.

\(^{16}\)Ibid., p. 430.
Vrenohen is content merely to know that Sali is near by and that she is desired by him; when such is the case, she feels that she has him in a very real sense. He, on the other hand, is not happy unless he has Vrenohen in his arms, thereby satisfying his persistent yearning to possess her. Again, though, they realize that they have reached an impasse with respect to their inexorable craving for each other.

Their honor is threatened by the madness of their situation. Keller is sympathetic with the honor which Sali and Vrenohen have preserved, although they lose everything else, even their lives. Still, their honor is not sufficient to enable them to surmount their stupendous obstacles. It is the clinging to their bourgeois feelings of honor that shows no abatement even after the decay of their families that ultimately brings about the ruin of the children. Had they not both possessed this inexorable feeling, they could make the necessary adjustments, thereby avoiding tragedy. They could marry despite Marti's injury. It is solely in their own minds that it would be disgraceful for them to marry after the accident. Neither their honor nor their passion can be denied indefinitely. 17 In this

17 Silz, op. cit., p. 91
regard, Silz makes the following pertinent comments:

The marvel is that to this very end, in the midst of their glowing passion and their wicked environment, the poet has kept his pair innocent and pure. He has thus made their fate deeply pathetic, yet genuinely tragic; they exemplify that maturest species of tragedy in which a character is ruined not by outward circumstances merely, but by his own mind and will, and not by his worse, but by his better nature.

That Salì and Vrenchen persist in clinging to their honor is clear: "Sie mochten so gern fröhlich und glücklich sein, aber nur auf einem guten Grund und Boden..." (VII, 177) Again, when they contemplate the unfaithful gypsy girl and this type of marriage and life as a possible solution, Vrenchen says, "Wo es aber so hergeht, möchte ich nicht sein, denn nie möchte ich dir untreu werden..." (VII, 178) Thus, the lovers eventually escape the maelstrom of the gypsy activities, whereby they find that now no alternative remains but union in death. They come upon a river and rejoice in its pleasant gurgling, for it supplies an answer to their unbearable dilemma. In truth, Vrenchen has known for a long time that only death

18Silz, op. cit., p. 91
can preserve the loyalty and honor between Sali and herself:

In the alternative between renunciation and indulgence, or—in its broader aspects—between order and "Verwilderung", it is chaos that wins out after it had been latent in the characters and enunciated in their situation.  

Sali thinks throughout the last day that life might be possible even after their separation. Finally, after the exchange of rings, he becomes aware of the hopelessness with which Vrenchen clings to the present and is filled with utmost despair:

Aber jetzt ging ihm endlich ein Licht auf und das weibliche Gefühl des jungen Mädchens ward in ihm auf der Stelle zu einem wilden und heissen Verlangen und eine glühende Klarheit erhellte ihm die Sinne. (VII, 183)

When Vrenchen notices this change in Sali, their chaotic state reaches its climax and establishes its insurmountable power over them.

As the resolute and resigned Sali unmoors the boat, Vrenchen is reminded of the laws of order and morality, "Wollen wir den Bauern ihr Heuschiff stehlen zu guter Letzt?" (VII, 185) Sali dispels her anxiety by astute rationalization, "Das soll die Aus-

19Rehder, op. cit., p. 428.
steuer sein, die sie uns geben, eine schwimmende Bett-
stelle und ein Bett, wie noch keine Braut gehabt!"
(VII, 185)

It is apparent from the last few words of the
Novelle that Sali and Vrenchen have violated the codes
of human society. The newspapers carry this account:

...die jungen Leute haben das Schiff entwendet,
um darauf ihre verzweifelte und gottverlassene
Hochzeit zu halten, abermals ein Zeichen von der
um sich greifenden Entsittlichung und Verwilderung der Leidenschaften. (VII, 187)

Rehder makes an interesting interpretation of the
significance of the above-mentioned expression:
The last word of the Novelle, "Verwilderung der
Leidenschaften", indicates more than just a fas-
cinating topic for a story. "Verwilderung", re-
duction to chaos, is the central motif from which
the dominating situations, as well as the at-
tendant circumstances, the character traits, and
indeed even the metaphors of poetic style receive
their unique justification.20

Sali and Vrenchen are guilty of violating the exist-
ing codes of their society. Their fate is sealed when
they become overpoweringly aware of each other during
the fishing episode. They are fully conscious of the
evil heritage bequeathed them by their fathers. Still,
they must ignore it to the extent of fulfilling the
inexorable need that each has for the other. Their

20 Rehder, op. cit., p. 419.
love serves to aid their consciences in the vain attempt to restore order in their lives; thus deep love succeeds in rendering them meaningful. Nonetheless, the lovers do, in a very real sense, offend against the established order just as their fathers before them had done. Since a lasting relationship between Sali and Vrenchen hinges on a successful marriage, their lot is a hopeless one. Consequently, it is understandable why their actions during the last day of their lives are reported in the newspapers as being perverse.

Even though the lovers violate the code of their middle-class society, they do succeed in fulfilling the basic needs of their own natures. Their fate then provides them with contrasts in their lives. Fate does, after all, shower both grief and bliss on mankind, and Keller does seek to attain a certain balance therein. As stated previously, he makes it quite evident that he, too, views their actions with a great deal of sympathy. By showing that those who judge the couple's behavior do so in a wholly inaccurate and stereotyped manner, Keller points out that the accusers are guilty of the same fault as Sali and Vrenchen, namely a lack of moderation. To be sure, the vestiges thereof are
dissimilar, but the basic acts of immoderation exemplified by the accusers and the accused are not.

The power of the story lies in the unbounded love of Sali and Vrenchen and the horrible dilemma which faces them as they valiantly—but vainly—struggle to find their place together in society.

Keller depicts the love plot in the Novelle with exceeding care. He uses premonitions and symbols to prepare us for the ultimate tragedy. In fact, the very title of the work presages an unhappy end:

Sali's mother is uneasy at his going; Sali feels moved to take special leave of his parents and home (149, 150); Vrenchen gathers the last flowers from her garden, and when death is near, they wither and die at her breast; she casts them on the stream that is soon to receive her body and her lover's (184f.). In dancing, she crushes the gingerbread house that childishly symbolized marital hopes which are never to be fulfilled (171f.).

Keller endeavors to portray the dilemma of Sali and Vrenchen through their feelings and their naive manner of seeking what little pleasure they can glean from their miserable existence. The only solution to their problem is death since they are unwilling to accept the disdainful life of the gypsies. Their

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21 Silz, op. cit., p. 85.
tragedy is not a result of outward circumstances only, but also of their own inner natures.
CHAPTER IV
FRAU REGEL AMRAIN UND IHR JÜNGSTER

Frau Regel Amrain, although originally not from Seldwyla, married a Seldwylan. Her husband purchases a quarry but goes bankrupt due to his indolence and dissolute habits. He then abandons Frau Regel and their three sons. The resourceful woman does not sell the quarry; rather, the thirty-year-old mother takes over the business with the intention of making the future of her three sons secure. At first she worries about Fritz, the youngest of her children. However, the five-year-old boy soon dispels her of this worry when he bravely defends her from the stormy advances of her foreman. She rears him predominantly by the example she herself sets for him, and he develops into an exceedingly capable manager of the quarry, the direction of which he takes over from the mother at the age of eighteen. In addition, he becomes a model citizen of Seldwyla.

As Fritz passes through his formative years, Frau Regel sees the cliffs by which he must pass, and she is always successful at rescuing him in his moments of imminent peril. At a wedding celebration she very adroitly extricates her teen-age son from some of the voluptuous married women of Seldwyla. In her home town Fritz meets the girl whom he marries after a brief courtship. When Fritz turns his thoughts toward politics and begins to express his views in a manner typical of the light-headed and braggadocio Seldwylans, his mother gruffly forbids his incessant balderdash in her home. Contrary to her expectations, he takes part in an armed campaign of the Seldwylans against a neighboring Canton. It is thus that he is captured and incarcerated. Frau Regel calmly waits two weeks before responding to his request that she free him by paying the required ransom. Wearing a contented grin on her face as she effects his release, she nonchalantly fetches him.
Even when Fritz is presumably a mature man, he on one occasion falls a prey to his mother's instruction. When she learns that Fritz has no intention of taking part in the voting of the Canton, she becomes angry and proceeds to convince him that he should perform his duty at the polls. As it turns out, Fritz's influence does bring about a needed change in the administration of the Canton. Returning from the church where the voting has taken place, he finds his father, who has just returned from America. Under the influence of his wife and Fritz, Herr Amrain becomes a useful helper for Fritz in the quarry as well as a praiseworthy husband for Frau Regel.

This Novelle, like the previously discussed Pankraz, der Schmoller, is reminiscent of Der grüne Heinrich with respect to its content and manner of development. It is quite possible that Keller intended at one time to include these two works in a fifth volume of Der grüne Heinrich. It is abundantly clear that the respective heroes, Pankraz and Fritz, embody unmistakable characteristics of Keller himself. 1

The combined personalities of Keller's mother and his Tante Regula Scheuchzer are depicted in this prose tale as Frau Regel. Frau Keller's wisdom and energy as a pedagogue had been squelched somewhat while the youth was at home. However, her letters, replete with

1 Jakob Baechtold, Gottfried Kellers Leben (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1913), p. 133.
astute observations and admonitions, influenced him quite markedly during his studies abroad. These letters gave Keller a background for his portrayal of Frau Regel in her guidance of Fritz. ²

The scene in which Fritz takes part in a military escapade into a neighboring Catholic canton is actually a description of Keller's own activities of the time. He participated in the armed demonstrations of the Freischaren against the Jesuit program of Luzern. ³

At the conclusion of the first edition of Frau Regel Amrain, Keller wrote the following words concerning the titular heroine:

Das Beste an ihrem Charakter, von ihren Meinungen und Reden aber ist, dass dieselben durchaus nicht erfunden, sondern in einer wirklich lebendigen Frau begründet gewesen. ⁴

Thus it is apparent that the two leading characters in the story were taken from Keller's own family circle.

The primary relationship under discussion is that of Frau Amrain--Fritz. The Herr Amrain--Frau Amrain association will also be considered.


⁴ Ermatinger, op. cit., p. 355
Frau Amrain—Herr Amrain

Keller's description of Herr Amrain at the beginning of the Novelle shows that he is a product of the Seldwyla environment; "er war ein vollkommener Seldwyler bis auf die politische Veränderlichkeit, welche aber die Ursache seines zu frühen Falles wurde."

(VII, 132) He apparently had many good and promising qualities when Frau Regel married him, but her steady-influence was unable to overcome his years of exposure to the Seldwyla milieu.

The contrast between Herr and Frau Amrain can be explained quite succinctly: she, unlike her husband, is not from Seldwyla. Consequently, she possesses numerous admirable qualities; whereas one would be hard pressed to extol him prior to his return from America.

When Herr Amrain appears unexpectedly in Seldwyla after an absence of many years, he is graciously received into his own home. Frau Amrain instructs the bewildered Fritz as to how he should conduct himself upon seeing his unknown father face to face: "Nun, er soll uns nichts anhaben! Sei nur freundlich gegen ihn, wie es einem Kinde zukommt!" (VII, 251) This is indeed magnanimous of Frau Regel in view of the treatment
she received approximately twenty years earlier from her erring husband. That she is aware of his genuine repentance for his past behavior and is perfectly willing to forgive him is clear, for she exclaims to Fritz: "Er scheint irgend ein Glück gemacht und was erschamppt zu haben, und nun kommt er mit Gebärden dahergefahren, als ob er uns in Gnaden auffressen wollte!" (VII, 252) Frau Regel treats her husband in a manner befitting a devoted wife; it actually seems as though she resumes their relationship as if there had been no interim period of twenty years. The result of her warm devotion has a profound effect on Herr Amrain. Bewildered as a result of the many changes to which he must adjust, he ultimately finds true solace at the side of his splendid wife. As his dilemma reaches a crisis, the exemplary life and mother rises, as usual, to the occasion:

Sie sprach nicht mit ihm, blieb aber den übrigen Teil des Tages in der Kammer, ordnete erst dies und jenes zu seiner Bequemlichkeit und setzte sich endlich mit ihrem Strickzeug schweigend ans Fenster, indem sich erst nach und nach ein Gespräch zwischen den lange getrennten Eheleuten entwickelte. (VII, 256)

Finding at last the contentment for which he had long searched, Herr Amrain, with the steadying influence of his wife and son, fulfills the expectations that his wife had hoped for many years before.
Frau Amrain--Fritz

As the title suggest, in *Frau Regel Amrain und ihr Jüngster* the mother and her youngest son are the most important figures in the work. And by the same token, the mother's role is more important than that of the son, as is evidenced by the fact that her name is placed first. The story is indeed a portrait of Frau Amrain, a representation of her relationship to the world about her. Her youngest son Fritz occupies the most important position in the sphere of her activities.¹

Frau Amrain is quite different from Gottfried Keller's depiction of the mothers of Heinrich (der grüne Heinrich) and Pankraz (Pankraz, der Schmoller); she is much more resolute in actively guiding her son than are the latter two. As a matter of fact, she is quite probably the finest example of motherhood in Keller's works, the ideal type of instructive mother. Some of her chief attributes are the following: health, a robust strength of character, circumspection, frankness, far-sightedness, and an indestructible will.

which is reminiscent of Goethe's mother. As one might ascertain from the foregoing, the relationship between mother and son is often found in Keller's works. Küster writes: "Ein Thema, das den Dichter in Berlin besonders stark beschäftigte, und das den ganzen 'Grünen Heinrich' durchdringt, sind die Wechselbeziehungen von Mutter und Sohn."

Even when she married, Frau Amrain was already "eine sehr frische, grosse und handfeste Dame mit kräftigen schwarzen Haarflechten und einem festen dunklen Blick." (VII, 194)

In the Novelle, the first encounter between Frau Amrain and Fritz occurs when the mother's foreman at the quarry forcefully attempts to dishonor her. This scene in the home of Frau Amrain is significant for several reasons: first, Keller shows that Fritz's mother is a woman of high moral standards but that she is nonetheless human and subject to the passions of the flesh; second, the author reveals as the story progresses that Fritz, who saves his mother from almost

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7Albert Küster, Gottfried Keller, Sieben Vorlesungen (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner Verlag, 1923), p. 84.
certain degradation, is her all-consuming interest from this night forward; third, Keller describes pertinent facts about Fritz himself. Fritz has inherited the disposition and spirit of his mother but resembles his father in appearance. As a consequence, it is quite understandable that the mother feels an unusual affinity with her young and courageous son. Keller interjects:

...der Jüngste hatte sich als wachsam, feinführend und mutvoll erwiesen und schien das werden zu wollen, was der Alte eigentlich sein sollte und was sie einst auch hinter ihm gesucht. (VII, 206)

Succinctly stated, we have here a contrast between the idealized and the actual Herr Amrain. When young Fritz boldly enters the room to protect his mother from the advances of the foreman, she sees in him the still active image of her husband as she had hoped he would be.8

Keller carefully points out that the two older sons resemble the mother decisively. This similarity the author gives as one of the primary reasons why Frau Regel is not as strongly attached to them as she is to Fritz. Moreover, they sleep through her disquieting

8Howard, op. cit., pp. 245-247.
and dangerous struggle with the foreman. Keller reports: "Also schienen sie Nachtmützen zu sein, ob schon sie ihr selbst glichen..." (VII, 200)

The manner in which Frau Amrain rears Fritz produces the desired effect, as we shall see throughout the discussion of this Novelle. Keller makes it clear that it is the radiant goodness of her personality, not constant admonishing or lecturing or even a carefully thought-out system of child development, that has caused Fritz to develop into an extremely admirable citizen. Her whole concept of moulding Fritz's character can be summed up accordingly:

...denn sie erzog eigentlich so wenig als mBglich und das Werk bestand fast lediglich darin, dass das junge Blumchen, so vom gleichen Holze mit ihr war, eben in ihrer N Uhe wuchs und sich nach ihr richtete.... Im ganzen lief ihre Erziehungskunst darauf hinaus, dass sie das Söhnchen ohne Empfind- samkeit merken liess, wie sehr sie es liebte, und dadurch dessen Bedürfnis, ihr immer zu gefallen, erweckte und so erreichte, dass es bei jeder Ge- legenheit an sie dachte. Ohne dessen freie Be- wegungen einzeln zu hindern, hatte sie den Kleinen viel um s'ich, so dass er ihre Manieren und ihre Denkungsart annahm und bald von selbst nichts tat, was nicht im Geschmacke der Mutter lag. (VII, 201-2)

Frau Amrain's method of handling Fritz when he errs because of his immaturity or of some extenuating circum- stance is commendable: she merely informs him in brief as to the absurdity of his behavior and thenceforth
substantiates her assertion with incontrovertible logic. She administers corporal punishment only when Fritz behaves in a fashion depicting smallness of character. These insidious traits do not appear to her to be ephemeral. Consequently, it is her fervent desire to rid her son of any such manifestations before they have time to develop and become an integral part of his character. She, unlike most parents, is not so much appalled at momentary acts of childish emotions, such as stealing or telling an occasional lie. These deeds she regards as reprehensible but not as likely to permeate the entire being of a child as jealousy, sadism, or egoism can. This procedure of Frau Amrain is eminently successful and evokes the following comment from Keller: "Diese ganze Erziehung...beruhte allerdings mehr im Charakter der Frau Amrain als in einem vorbedachten oder gar angelesenen System." (VII, 205) As Howard points out, one can find a summary of Frau Amrain's pedagogical philosophy in the Bible:⁹ "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will

⁹Howard, op. cit., p. 247.
guide thee with mine eye." (Psalm XXXII, 8)

Keller graphically describes how young Fritz's mother astutely saves him from two imposing threats to his character. He is able to withstand the unpraiseworthy traits that are typical of the people of Seldwyla, for the example set by Frau Amrain undergirds him at virtually every turn. (Keller goes to great lengths to show that she is not from Seldwyla originally, for almost all laudable persons in Die Leute von Seldwyla are natives of another community.)

When occasional dangers appear in Fritz's path of development, Frau Regel is ever determined to help him overcome them. The first imminent danger that besets him as a teenager revolves around his awakening interest in the opposite sex. This normal development on the part of Fritz does not, of itself, unduly disturb his mother. It is rather the realization that Fritz might easily be enticed by some of the immoral women of Seldwyla. With this fear in mind, she resolves to act in her son's best interests should any woman of ill repute threaten the integrity of her young stalwart. And act she does when the occasion arises! Fritz wishes to attend a wedding celebration at
which he knows many of the voluptuous women of Seldwyla will be present. Many reports regarding gala affairs have reached his ears and excited his newly-acquired amorous tendencies. Giving his mother a plausible excuse for attending the celebration, he surreptitiously clothes himself in his mother's most stylish attire and goes to the festive event. While there he mingle with the group of wanton women who have captured his fancy. Frau Amrain, upon noticing her missing clothing, quickly realizes the course of action taken by her son and immediately prepares to rescue him. In her usual direct manner, she locates Fritz at the dance and reprimands him with an exceeding effectiveness. She does not upbraid him verbally before the group of women, nor does she create any type of open disturbance. The effectiveness of her intrusion is accomplished inwardly, not outwardly. The very presence of her noble and virtuous figure shames not only her son but also the pleasure-seeking women, for Frau Amrain's appearance serves to illuminate their nonvirtuous activities. She succeeds in accenting even more forcefully the behavior of her son who is, after all, more in tune with his
good conscience than are the others present. When she has fully accomplished her objective, the mother departs with her temporarily wayward son. She makes his shame all the more acute when she refuses to allow him to escort her home until he has changed into his own clothing. The full force of the dangerous situation in which Fritz was rapidly becoming enmeshed, strikes him with sudden and frightening force when he returns home to make the change. He realizes that his mother is now in the dangerous position in which he had been just minutes before. Keller reports Fritz's anxiety:

Als er aber, zu Hause angekommen, sich hastig umkleidete, fiel es ihm ein, dass nun die Mutter allein unter dem Volke auf dem Rathause sitze, und dieser Gedanke machte ihn plötzlich und sonderbarerweise so zornig und besorgt um ihre Ehre, dass er sich beeilte nur wieder hin­zukommen und sie abzuholen. (VII, 216-217)

Thus, we observe in this instance Fritz's second and final opportunity to aid his mother in the face of a possible moral crisis. And he clearly demonstrates that he is as interested in preserving her good character as she is in preserving his. The crowning blow of the entire episode occurs when the mother exclaims that she will never again wear the same dress and burns it:

"Wie werde ich...ein Kleid ferner tragen, in welchem
mein Sohn unter liederlichen Weibern gesessen hat,
selber einem gleichsehend?" (VII, 217)

With respect to Fritz's newly discovered interest in women, Frau Amrain learns that she has not yet solved her son's deeply-rooted needs for the fair sex. She is so convinced of the depravity of the people of Seldwyla that she promises Fritz she will procure for him the right kind of wife:

"Lieber Fritz! Sei mir jetzt nur noch zwei oder drei Jähröhen brav und gehorsam, und ich will dir das schönste und beste Frauen verschaffen aus meinem Ort, dass du dir was darauf einbilden kannst!" (VII, 218)

Fritz accepts this solution supplied by his mother and thenceforth pays little or no heed to the Seldwyla women. It should be added, perhaps, that Fritz, not his mother, eventually chooses a maiden of numerous good qualities from his mother's village. This serves to illustrate that Fritz, although he is directed in many facets of his daily development, is able and does make certain necessary decisions on his own volition.

We realize that Frau Amrain occupies the dominant role in the Novelle—justifiably so since she is the mother. Nonetheless, Fritz is unequivocally worthy of admiration as the hero in the work; he makes a success of the
quarry as none other had done except his mother; he
is a brave fighter or "Freischärler"; and, except in
one instance, he needs the attentive guidance of his
mother only during his formative years to become a man
in the fullest sense.

The time arrives when Fritz becomes interested in
politics. Since his mother and all the citizens of her
native city are decided liberal in their views, Fritz
also holds to similar leanings. Unfortunately, he does
not make a careful study of his espoused beliefs. Ac­
cordingly, his judgments are prone to be fallacious.
Therefore, when he and the other misguided men of Seld­
wyla congregate in taverns to discuss their erroneous
views, Frau Amrain feels the urgent need to correct her
son's nonconstructive activities. In short, she finally
becomes saturated with Fritz's constant babble about
politics. She observes that he actually believes that
the political affairs of Seldwyla should transpire ex­
actly according to his wishes. Reaching the end of her
patience, Frau Amrain finally chides Fritz so effective­
ly that she completely cures him of his propensity for
such worthless activity:

"Was ist denn das für ein ewiges Schwatzen und
Kanegiesern? Ich mag das nicht hören! Wenn
du es nicht lassen kannst, so geh auf die Gasse
oder ins Wirtshaus, hier in der Stube will ich
den Lärm nicht haben!" (VII, 223)
As is usually the case, Fritz is shamed by his mother's obvious displeasure. And this feeling of shame that she upon occasion invokes in him usually influences his amelioration more than any other emotion. Keller states that Fritz "von Stund an geheilt war und seine Politik mit weniger Worten und mehr Gedanken abzumachen sich gewöhnte." (VII, 223)

Fritz's ill-advised foray into a neighboring Catholic Canton causes Frau Regel to intervene again on her son's behalf. Just when she reaches the conclusion that Fritz has learned of his own accord that such rampages by the unpraiseworthy Seldwyla youths are senseless as well as extremely dangerous, he suddenly announces that he plans to join the attack on the Catholic community. To be sure, Frau Regel is disturbed by his unexpected action. She does, however, beam with intense satisfaction at his display of decisiveness. He is, after all, rapidly becoming a man, and one of whom she is justly proud.

The disturbing news of Fritz's capture by the enemy does not unduly frighten her. Surprisingly enough, the simple fact that some of the returning Seldwyla men paint gory pictures of the fate of those
captured is sufficient to assuage her fears considerably. Since the reports are utterly preposterous and since she places little or no credence in what the Seld-wylans say, one can understand how these rumors abet her in placing the situation in true focus. Had the rumors resounded with a more moderate and less omniscient ring, her fears would have known no bounds. She soon learns that Fritz is in prison, for he sends a letter requesting that she send ransom money. Carefully reflecting on the situation, she again proves that she has an answer for the dilemma. It should be pointed out that her dilemma is not the same as his. His consternation and frustration are caused by a lack of money, the only solution he knows that will enable him to return to his home. His mother, contrariwise, views the dilemma from an instructive standpoint; she considers how she can most effectively enable him to become aware of the error of his ways. With this in mind, she intentionally procrastinates eight days when she receives a second letter from her now forlorn son. After receiving the letter, she leisurely sets out to pay his bail. She is of the firm conviction that a few more days of confinement and additional meals of
oatmeal mush will accomplish far more than any amount of persuasiveness or rebuke from her. Even when his mother reaches the city of his imprisonment, Fritz's release is ironically delayed three extra days, for the opposition suddenly declares an amnesty. Consequently, the mother's rather carefully-contrived plan is aided by Fate itself. En route home Frau Amrain expresses her delight at the outcome of the situation for two reasons: First, Fritz saved a sizable sum of money by his long stay in prison since he lived there free of charge, and no bail was required for his release; and, second, he learned a maturing lesson. She has little else to add, and Fritz, although momentarily quite piqued, soon melts before her winsome personality. Keller deftly characterizes the reconciliation:

"Du hast mich am Ende absichtlich stecken lassen," ..."und hast mir in deinem mütterlichen Sinne das Gefängnis förmlich zuerkannt?" Hierauf antwortete sie nichts, sondern lachte laut und lustig in dem rollenden Wagen, wie er sie noch nie lachen gesehen. Als er hierauf nicht wusste, welches Gesicht er machen sollte, und seltsam die Nase rümpfte, umhalste sie ihn, noch lauter lachend, und gab ihm einen Kuss. Er sagte aber kein Wort mehr, und es zeigte sich von nun an, dass er in dem Gefängnis in der Tat etwas gelernt habe. (VII, 238)

As noted, we have only one evidence of Frau Amrain's actually interfering in her son's affairs after he is a
grown man with a family of his own. She vehemently
disapproves of his apathetic outlook on voting in the
local elections. He, in turn, feels that his vote is
of little consequence. Frau Amrain views this attitude
as a typically decadent Seldwyla trait. When Fritz's
wife is unable to persuade him to vote, Frau Amrain goes
to the quarry and confronts him there with cogent rea-
sions which are designed to point out his obligations to
vote. At the outset of the discussion, he is sarcastic
in his replies to her exhortations. For example, Fritz
retorts:

"Das fehlte auch noch,"..."jetzt abermals bei die-
sem Wetter in der langweiligen Kirche zu sitzen und
Stimmsettel umherzubieten. Natürlich wirst du dann
für den Nachmittag schon irgend ein Leichenbegän-
nis in Bereitschaft haben, wo ich wieder mithupeln
soll, damit der Tag ja ganz verschleudert werde!
dass ihr Weibelsleute unsereinen immer an Begräbnisse
und Kindertaufen hinspediziert, ist begreiflich; dass
ihr euch aber so sehr um die Politik bekümmert, ist
mir ganz etwas Neues!" (VII, 243)

Tögel is inclined to agree with Fritz on this point. 10
In fact, he is of the opinion that Keller should have
left this entire scene out of the Novelle and opines
thus:

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10 We, too, can readily agree with Tögel's assertion
that Frau Regel goes a little too far in this particular
instance, at least from the artistic standpoint. This
episode does, however, further reflect Keller's own
genuine concern with politics; he, like Fritz, was de-
voted to the "liberalism" of the time.
Die noch vom Dichter vorgebrachte Beeinflussung des jungen Bürgers bei der Wahl klingt ein wenig zu programmatisch und tendenziös, auch geht dabei die gute und sehr ehrenwerte Frau Amrain denn doch etwas über die Grenze, die ihrer Frauennatur gesetzt ist, hinaus, so dass dieses kleine Stück lange nicht so zwingend glaubhaft wirkt, wie das vorhergehende.  

When Fritz asserts that his vote is not needed, Frau Amrain accuses him of false modesty and contends that this is nothing more than superciliousness:

"Denn ihr glaubt wohl, dass ihr müsst dabei sein, wenn es irgend darauf ankäme, und nur weil ihr den gewohnten stillen Gang der Dinge verachtet, so haltet ihr euch für zu gut dabei zu sein!"  
(VII, 243-4)

When Fritz replies that he does not wish to appear ridiculous by being the only Seldwyler to vote, she responds with a classic reply: "Man kennt die Vögel an den Federn, so die Seldwyler an dem, was sie für hüerlich halten."  
(VII, 244) As is so often the case, Frau Amrain's advice to her son is crystal-clear, namely that he will be right consistently if he will but act in direct opposition to his townspeople. She ultimately convinces him that it is his duty to vote and that one half day every four years is no great sacrifice:

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Tögel, op. cit., p. 70
War nur da ist, wenn es ihm belustigt und seine Leidenschaft kitzelt, der wird einmal ausbleiben und sich eine Nase drehen lassen, gerade wenn er am wenigsten daran denkt. (VII, 245)

Her skillful reasoning proves to Fritz that the weal of the region is dependent upon the active support or disapproval of the elected officials, that it is largely a question of a sense of values. The Seldwylan men are admittedly extremely prompt in attending social functions where it is a question of being entertained or of lavishly gratifying the emotions.

Speaking to Fritz, but with the Seldwylans also in mind, Frau Hegel says; "ihr beneidet euch selbst um die Ruhe und um den Frieden..." (VII, 246) and finishes her didactic remarks by exclaiming, "Bäbisch ist aber dieses Verhalten und es ist gut, dass eure Macht nicht weiter reicht als eure lotterige Stadtmauer!" (ibid.) Completely defeated by the cogency of his mother's persuasiveness, Fritz departs for the church where the voting is to take place. Keller again leaves no doubt of the mother's sound judgment, for Fritz distinguishes himself by courageously effecting needed changes in the legislative body.

In regard to Frau Amrain's successful effort at persuading Fritz to vote, Rölli draws the following conclusions:
Als gut ersogener, tüchtiger Mann, der seine Pflicht der Öffentlichkeit gegenüber erfüllt hat, darf er nun auch ohne Sorgen dem intakten heimgekehrten Vater gegenüber treten; dieser kann seinen Sohn nicht mehr verderben, sondern wird durch dessen Beispiel noch zum Teil dem Seldwyler Schlundrian entrissen.  

Keller shows through Frau Amrain’s relationship with her son that learning in itself is a law of nature and that in the right environment children can obtain open-mindedness as an automatic way of thinking.  

One can observe that Pankraz, der Schmoller and Frau Hegel Amrain und ihr Jüngster are subjective; they are merely variations of the same didactic theme.  

In comparing the two mothers in the above-mentioned Novellen, we reach some rather interesting observations. Although both have the best interests of their sons at heart, Frau Hegel is in full control as she guides her offspring over the thorny path of his formative years and even later. She knows what is best for him and is fully capable of her role. Pankraz’s mother quite probably knows what would be best for her son when

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she sees pitfalls in his course of development. However (and here is indeed the essential difference between the two women), Pankras's mother is totally incapable of forcing her will on her son when the occasion demands forthright activity on her part. She exhibits a lack of resourcefulness outside the realm of guiding her son. We read, for example, that she has a passive attitude toward the overseer of the poor, despite the fact that he yearly delays bringing her the desperately needed widow's pension. He uses the money in his business during the procrastination period. This incident gives us a great deal of insight into her character:

Dieses Geld wurde immer mit Schmerzen erwartet, indem die ärmlichen Gewänder der Kinder gerade um jene verlängerten Wochen zu früh gänzlich schadhaft waren und der Buttertopf überall seinen Grund durchblicken liess. (VII, 10)

Needless to say, Frau Regel would not have allowed this unjust treatment from one in such a position.

In defense of Pankras's retiring mother, one wonders whether she is not—from a purely emotional point of view—more feminine and more easy-going than her feminine counterpart. Still, the incontrovertible fact remains that Frau Regel's diversified talents make her the finest mother creation in Die Leute von Seldwyla.
CHAPTER V

DIE DREI GERECHTEN KAMMACHER

There existed in Seldwyla a combmaker's establishment which changed hands every fifth or sixth year since the employers never did anything themselves. In fact, they quickly squandered the income earned by their journeymen. Three journeymen of a similar temperament are inadvertently joined together in this business house. Usually, new journeymen replace old ones in the spring. All three of the ones discussed in the story are of a righteous nature, i.e. they never do anything reproachable or forbidden. Furthermore, they do nothing whatsoever that brings either joy or sorrow to those in their community. They are always quiet and peaceable, and they save every possible cent. They work even on Sunday until late at night and sleep together in one bed as straight and composed as a lucifer match. Their goal is identical, namely to hoard money in order to purchase the business from the master, who is becoming ever richer and is growing constantly more accustomed to riotous living.

The Suabian Dietrich seeks his fortune by another means; he endeavors to win the hand of Züs Bünzlin, a twenty-eight-year-old maiden who possesses a mortgage in the amount of seven hundred Gulden; she also owns a lacquered chest replete with peculiar things. Züs, a thoroughly selfish, vacuous, and imperious person, is saturated with affected wisdom with which she lavishly regales the three combmakers. Soon all three are striving to gain her favor. An unexpected crisis arises when the master decides to let two of the workers go; the combmakers have flooded the market with their goods. The master suggests to his employees that they compete for the single job by racing. He continues by suggesting that they should choose a starting-point quite a distance from Seldwyla. The master finishes by informing them that the first one to reach his home gets the job. From this situation the utilitarian Züs determines that the victor in the race will become her husband. She is present when the three ready
themselves for the race and strives to encourage them with highflown discourses.

Jobst and Fridolin finally begin the race, pulling their knapsacks behind them. Covered with sweat and dust, the two exhausted combmakers reach the gate of the city where a crowd gathers. Jobst and Fridolin grapple with each other as each tries to gain the lead. Finally, they lose their composure completely and chase each other by the master's house; they run through the entire city and collapse on the other side of the gate. On the following day Jobst hangs himself, and Fridolin becomes a dissolute traveling artisan. The sly Suabian thus becomes the winner without participating in the race. He has remained behind with Züs whom he quickly seduces in a thicket. She is the one to initiate the action. As a consequence, Dietrich returns to the city with a fiancée. The engaged couple purchases the house and business of the master. Züs rules Dietrich with an iron hand and continues to consider herself as the source of all good.

According to C. F. Meyer, the starting point for the plot of this Novelle came from a description in Bayles dictionary: "Ein Staat von lauter Gerechten könnte nicht bestehen".¹

The life of the artisan was well-known to Keller even as a youth. His mother always had some workers in her rooming-house, and she reported in letters to her son about their doings and behavior. In the first draft the artisans were cabinet-makers. In the final edition, however, they are represented as combmakers.

Ermatinger states that the trade of combmaker depicts, in its monotonous regularity and lack of imagination, the "blutlose Gerechtigkeit" of these men. He elaborates further to the effect that the trade of combmaking accomplishes this to a greater degree than that of cabinet-making. 2

Since many of the activities of the three comb-makers are identical, there will first be a discussion of all three and their relationship to Züs Bünzlin. Subsequently, there will be a separate discussion of the association between Dietrich and Züs; this analysis treats essentially those actions of Dietrich which differ from those of Jobst and Fridolin.

Züs—Jobst, Fridolin, and Dietrich

Very early Keller portrays the three combmakers as unsympathetic characters. He shows his disdain for their self-righteousness before they appear in the Novelle itself. The opening sentence of the work reads thus:

Die Leute von Sellwyla haben bewiesen, dass eine ganze Stadt von Ungerechten oder Leichtsinnigen zur Not fortbestehen kann im Wechsel der Zeiten und des Verkehrs; die drei Kammacher aber, dass nicht drei Gerechte lang unter einem Dache leben

2Ermatinger, op. cit., p. 317.
That Keller does not commiserate with the combmakers can be observed throughout the Novelle. He even has them meet a horrible fate as a result of their "righteous" ways.  

The relationship between the combmakers and Züs, who is far more obnoxious than any of the combmakers, serves to delineate their foibles to the reader.

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It is significant that Keller goes to great lengths to describe the combmakers and Züs before we actually meet them or before they have contact with one another. He wants to make certain that we know their backgrounds and their traits exceedingly well; he continues to give us insight into their personalities throughout the story.

That Züs praises the activities of the combmakers even before she has met them, is one obvious indication that her values are as faulty as theirs:

Schon lange hatte sie das Leben der drei Kammacher gelobt und dieselben drei gerechte und verständige Männer genannt; denn sie hatte sie wohl beobachtet. (VII, 283)

Jobst begins his courtship of Züs not because of his interest in her or in any person of the opposite sex, for that matter; his fantastic motivation to save every farthing precludes any interest in marriage. It is only the startling discovery that the less prosperous Dietrich might get Züs's seven hundred florins and thereby acquire the master's business establishment that stirs him into immediate action and causes him to consider matrimony.

Fridolin, being the least intelligent of the three combmakers and possessing no originality, merely copies Jobst in all his actions. When Fridolin learns that
Jobst is courting Züs, he does likewise. In addition, the flowery speech which he directs at Züs smacks of Joost's own manner of wooing her. As a result, we have the ridiculous situation wherein three misers are vying for the hand of the despicable Züs. Her delight at having three suitors is boundless as is her ability to create the impression that she possesses all the virtuous qualities of a goddess come to earth. Her "noble" manner of deciding to whom she will eventually give her hand in marriage is quite basic: after each combmaker has confided to her his secret and his plans, "so entschloss sie sich auf der Stelle, denjenigen zu beglücken, welcher sein Ziel erreiche und Inhaber des Geschäftes würde." (VII, 285) Keller constantly informs the reader of Züs's shrewdness at flaunting her ego at the expense of her three suitors. Of course, they are so set on marrying her that they are not conscious of her Machiavellianism. As a matter of fact, only on one occasion do they express disbelief at her ceaseless babbling of high-blown knowledge. When she asserts that the unicorn supplies man with snow-white ivory and the

tortoise furnishes him with its transparent bones, all three echo simultaneously:

"Mit Verlaub"..."hierin irren Sie sich gewisslich, das Elfenbein wird aus den Elefantenzähnen gewonnen und die Schildpattkämme macht man aus der Schale und nicht aus den Knochen der Schildkröte!" (VII, 305)

She instantly squelches what strikes her as an affront to her "omniscience", and her didacticism then resumes its breakneck pace.

With the exception of Lydia, who seems to show penetrating knowledge, Keller's "bad" women do not appear extremely intelligent. However, Züs's ability to keep the combmakers' interest in her at a high pitch and to spur them on to great zeal show that she, like many of her counterparts, has uncanny power to gain her objective.

It is not difficult to understand that the combmakers begin to waste away under the stress of trying to outdo one another at work and in their courtship of Züs. In truth, it would seem that the prolonged strain of either would prove overpowering. Add to all this the fact that they get a minimum of sleep, and we obtain an even more vivid picture of the emotional, mental, and physical duress under which they live. To be sure, their
pent-up tension has to be relieved eventually, and this time comes when all three engage in a brawl in their room.

When the combmakers seek Züs's advice as to what they should do with respect to the master's odious plan, they find little comfort in their reception. She feels that she still can marry the next owner of the business and begins to plan accordingly. In her usual haphazard way of obtaining knowledge, she fortuitously proves that the master's plan is a most effective one; she uses an isolated piece of writing to substantiate the wisdom of the plan. Her hypocritical approach to virtually everything she does and says is much in evidence when she opines with her accustomed judicial air:

"Wisset, meine Freunde, dass nichts ohne Bedeutung geschieht, und so merkwürdig und ungewöhnlich die Zumutung eures Meisters ist, so müssen wir sie doch als eine Fügung ansehen und uns mit einer höheren Weisheit...dieser jähen Entscheidung unterwerfen." (VII, 290)

When she vaingloriously tells the combmakers that she herself "will euch hinausbegleiten...wenn ihr den Prüfungslauf antretet, damit ihr einen fröhlichen Mut fasset..." (VII, 290-291), we realize, if we have not done
so already, that her self-righteousness and deception are absolutely limitless. Her display of garbled knowledge seldom subsides.

Keller's description of Züs's attire for the race is worthy of comment, for it thoroughly bespeaks the spuriousness of her character. The author clearly reveals her warped traits in a number of passages in the story. The detailed account of the motley group of jumbled trinkets contained in her little "treasure-box" is of signal importance in this regard. Moreover, the dried fruit that Züs brings to refresh the contestants immediately before the race begins can be construed as a symbol of her barren soul. Apropos of Keller's eminently successful rendering of the odious and often simultaneously hilarious facets of Züs's character, Richter comments: "Selbst an kleinen Einzelheiten zeigt sich also die ungewöhnliche Schärfe der Kellerschen Satire..." 6

Züs's feigned concern for the welfare of the combmakers as they prepare for the race is particularly ludicrous, for she has them place their knap-

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sacks on wheels and pull their loads in order to save their strength. That she could be concerned for their welfare, even remotely—except as it applies to her own selfish gain—is inconceivable. The simple truth is that her sense of values is wholly out of tune with those which we normally hold to be correct. This same false sense of values also applies, of course, to the "righteous" combmakers. At one point Züs espouses the belief that she and her "friends" possess the following virtues: economy, peaceableness, and dutiful friendship. Examining these qualities to the extent that they apply to the group under discussion, we are able to reach some definitive conclusions. First, their economy is a vice, not a virtue, for their money serves neither their fellow man nor themselves. Second, they are, in the final analysis, bellicose, not peaceful, when their situations become precarious. Third, the comb-makers demonstrate enmity, not dutiful friendship, for one another. As may be readily observed, Züs's fallacious statements and analogies are almost legion in number.

Züs's exalted opinion of herself is, without a doubt, one of her most nauseating characteristics.
That she has to praise herself continually, demonstrates that she has an extremely low ego." Had Keller told us more about her early years of development, we should be in a much better position to analyze the reasons for her behavior during her adult years.

Züs's attempt to have the combmakers shower her with tender phrases is an outstanding commentary on her total misconception of love. She wants them not only to compliment her great "virtues"—and she does not hesitate to aid their efforts when their expressiveness falters—but also to praise her in a bombastic style. In reality, she appears far more concerned about the tawdry style than about the genuineness of the words uttered. The combmakers, for their part, are chiefly interested in gaining her "favor"; their only other conceivable interest in her is a physical one. With absolutely no understanding shown by Züs or the combmakers for the real meaning of love, they appear extremely ridiculous in the scene preceding the race.

"Züs's contact with the bookbinder lends credence to this assertion. We observe that Züs instantly gainsays the bookbinder's excellent observations and that she finds displeasure in his beautifully rendered sentences. Keller also states that Züs rarely admits to the bookbinder that he is right, deeming it wiser thus to urge him on to continually higher endeavors in his search for a perfect agreement of mind with his idol, namely her."
Let us note in passing the similarity between the concepts of love held by Zūs and Lydia (in Pankraz). To begin with, neither is capable of requiting the love of a suitor. They both seek love for their own selfish satisfaction and do not concern themselves with the feelings of those who perhaps think highly enough of them to entertain ideas of marriage. Consequently, we observe that Zūs, like Lydia, is psychopathic. However, Zūs, unlike Lydia, lacks the characteristics of a full-blown psychopath, for she is a moral being. She obviously has a great lack of self-esteem, which is manifested by her seemingly limitless need to elevate her image in the eyes of others. Admittedly, one of the most gratifying experiences for a young lady is to have suitors boost her own feeling of self-importance. The devices whereby Zūs achieves this goal are thoroughly puerile in nature: she deceives her three admirers with false hopes, she makes an ostentatious show of her various types of acquisitions, and she brags incessantly.

Keller skillfully informs the reader as to what a loathsome person Zūs really is. Her tainted character unfolds quite normally before our eyes, and it is not
long until we have a penetrating sketch of her distasteful personality. Zūs herself has absolutely no insight into her own feelings of inferiority; nor does she realize that her groping efforts at gratification of her ego are in reality symptoms of her acute maladjustment to life.

There are times when the combmakers veer from their obsequious role and give full vent to their pride. After they have had a surfeit of Zūs's self-adulation, each of the combmakers in turn begins to sing his own praises; their individual egos are threatened because of their loss of esteem causing them to elaborate on their own "praiseworthy" traits.

Just when it appears that the combmakers have succeeded in salvaging some of their own self-respect, they receive an unexpected jolt. Zūs, having listened to all three glorify their own virtues, grows jealous at relinquishing her role as the center of attraction and loosens her venom on them. She unabashedly begins a tirade that leaves the others dumbfounded. The only thing that diminishes her gait is the ill-advised challenging of the veracity of her statements concerning the unicorn and the tortoise. As mentioned
earlier, she takes umbrage at their intrepidity and sharply upbraids them on this occasion.

Züs's ability to keep the interest of each of her suitors at a high pitch can be observed throughout her contacts with them. Immediately before she makes the announcement that they should start the race, she toys with them as follows:

Züs liess dem Schwaben die eine Hand, gab Jobsten die andere und berührte mit den Füssen Fridolins Stiefelsohlen, während sie mit dem Angesicht einen nach dem andern der Reihe nach anlächelte. (VII, 308)

Whereas it is difficult, if not impossible, for us to have a feeling of sympathy for Züs, this is not entirely the case with the combmakers. The fact that they realize that they are making fools of themselves but are powerless to do otherwise, makes it possible for the reader to have compassion on them. With Züs, however, there is not a tinge of humility or self-effacement in her makeup. Jobst and Fridolin, completely abashed at their predicament, lament:

"Sollen wir denn wirklich das Torenwerk beginnen?" sagte Jobst und wischte sich die Augen, welche anfangen zu träufeln. "Ja," versetzte der Bayer, "sollen wir wirklich laufen und springen?" und begann zu weinen. (VII, 309, 310)

Keller's ironic treatment of Züs's professed knowledge in this episode is delightful. When she feigns sympathy
for the dilemma of the combmakers by lamenting that
"mir geziemt zu schweigen, zu leiden und zuzusehen!"
(VII, 310), the cunning Dietrich replies: "Aber dann
nachher, Jungfer Züs?" (ibid.) Keller then shows his
utter disdain for her distorted knowledge by having
her falsely render a phrase contained in Schiller's
Wallenstein. She asks whether he knows that "der Zug
des Schicksals ist des Herzens Stimme?" (ibid.) The
passage, properly rendered, reads thus: "Der Zug des
Herzens ist des Schicksals Stimme". As Richter aptly
points out, Züs's clumsy handling of Thekla's statement
speaks volumes with respect to the spinster's reprehensible character; she gives unmistakable evidence here
that even the sacredness of love should be sacrificed
to expediency. Finally, with a trite expression and
tears of "compassion", she urges the forlorn artisans
on their way.

Dietrich—Züs

Dietrich's inability to compete financially with
the other two combmakers makes him resort to a shrewd

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8Friedrich Schiller, Gesammelte Werke (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1939), III, 405.
9Richter, op. cit., p. 164.
course of action. Since all three combmakers have an avid interest in the acquisition of the combmaking business and need a considerable amount of money to realize this dream, Dietrich must somehow compensate for his disadvantage. Being intelligent as well as an enterprising person by nature, he of necessity concocts the plan of marrying the well-to-do Züs. Keller leaves no doubt that Dietrich's intentions are materialistic, although the author adds that Dietrich "erfand...den Gedanken, sich zu verlieben und um die Hand einer Person zu werben, welche ungefähr so viel besass als der Sachse und der Bayer unter den Fliesen..." (VII, 274)

Once Dietrich learns in conversation with some old women that Züs possesses a mortgage of seven hundred florins, he begins his courtship in earnest. To his dismay, he is unable to conceal his "find" from his companions. When he surreptitiously begins to behave toward his fellow combmakers as though he had invented the perpetuum mobile, his rivals become suspicious of some devised plan. And they are neither long in discovering nor slow about reacting to the Suabian's plot.

Dietrich shows more foresight than the other two combmakers as all three ready themselves for the
arduous race. Although parsimonious like his companions, he proves that he is able to break the inveterate habit of hoarding every cent by bringing a flask of cherry brandy with which to refresh himself. Therefore, it seems safe to conclude that Dietrich is not a veritable prisoner of his miserliness as are the other two, at least not to such an exaggerated degree. In addition, he shows his astuteness when he presses his suit with Züs by offering her some of the wine.

The battle of wits between Züs and Dietrich, as they attempt to gain their respective selfish goals, is deserving of close scrutiny. Züs's tactic is to prevent Dietrich from entering the race; his insufficient savings preclude any interest in him. Her efforts in this regard are eminently successful although her task is made quite difficult by the stimulating effect of the wine on Dietrich. Keller recounts that "am ehesten schien sich noch der Schwabe zu trauen und mit den Füssen sogar leise zu scharren und dieselben ungeduldig zu heben." (VII, 309) However, by means of various machinations, virtually all of which are coquettish in nature, she delays Dietrich long enough to insure victory for either Jobst or Fridolin.
Dietrich is not easily dissuaded from his task, for even such seductive statements as "ich fühle mich oft recht einsam!" (VII, 312) and "lassen Sie mich jetzt nicht allein, ich vertraue auf Sie, stützen Sie mich!" (ibid.) have no immediate effect. When she, in desperation, exclaims that she is becoming ill, he is not swayed from his fervent desire to enter and to win the race. He frees himself from her grasp, shouting that he must leave, "Übel oder nicht Übel!" (ibid.)

When Dietrich realizes that the others now have too large a lead to overcome and when Züs beckons to him from the entrance to a shady retreat, he changes his tactics. He demonstrates that he is resourceful enough to try another way to achieve success. Of course, his victory is destined to be short-lived as we later learn. Her rhetorical fireworks have no cooling effect on his ardor; rather his lavish praise of her bodily and mental charms proves her undoing. Keller shows clearly that this very weakness that he violently detests, namely her inordinate longing to be extolled, is the ultimate cause of her seduction. Keller also adds that Züs does not lose her composure as a result of being lovesick, "sondern weil sie als
Dietrich is not at all portrayed as one strongly attracted to the fair sex until he is enticed by the full fury of Züs's flirtatious efforts, and once aroused, his passion knows no bounds. Nonetheless, he controls his impulses quite well until he concludes that he has no other recourse than to seduce the maiden. As soon as his emotions are no longer in conflict with his newly-acquired goal, his sole objective is to obtain Züs's promise to marry him, whereby he will acquire her seven hundred florins as well.

Since it is common knowledge that the master combmaker cannot continue in business much longer, Züs's cunning mind conceives the plan of buying his establishment on a cash basis. The "virtuous" lady knows that her interest-bearing mortgage, in conjunction with Dietrich's meager savings, would enable them to outbid the other two combmakers. It is important to notice that Züs, not Dietrich, becomes the lawful owner of the firm and that her husband becomes merely the tenant in the house in which the business is being conducted. As a result of this transaction, we learn,
it is Züs who gains the final and most important victory, for Dietrich is placed in a decidedly subordinate position regarding financial matters.

Married life has no appreciable effect on the incorrigible Züs's actions and thoughts. Keller concludes the story most appropriately: "Züs ließ ihm gar nicht den Ruhm, regierte und untermürzte ihn und betrachtete sich selbst als die alleinige Quelle alles Guten." (VIII, 319) Anna Fierz voices the opinion that the fate assigned Dietrich by Keller is unduly harsh.10 We are in full accord with this judgment. Dietrich is not totally self-centered and self-righteous like Züs and is, therefore, less repulsive than she. Furthermore, the fact that his rather meager savings contribute to her power over him does, to a degree at least, cause the reader to have a feeling of sympathy for his plight.

The subservience of the man to the woman in Keller's works signifies a retarded development of the male. Dietrich's relationship to Züs is a classic example of the above. The two Hyazinth boys (Eugenia) parallel Dietrich

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in that they are mastered by the desires and dictates of their female counterpart, Eugenia.
CHAPTER VI

SPIEGEL, DAS KÄTZCHEN

In Seldwyla there is an old legend concerning the origin of the proverb, "He has bought the fat off the cat." This expression means that one has made a bad bargain.

The present legend has to do with a cat named Spiegel (Mirror). He is a handsome, well-mannered tomcat. This full-grown cat lives in the house of an elderly lady. When she dies suddenly one day, Spiegel is left homeless and has to go hungry. He loses weight, his mien suffers, and his acumen and character degenerate in direct proportion to his plight. In fact, he would have soon died had he not encountered the Town Sorcerer, Herr Pineiss. The magician is greatly in need of the fat of a cat for his sorcery. Spiegel agrees to give Pineiss his fat at the next full moon in return for food lodging and all the delectable food he can eat.

Pineiss demonstrates an inventive nature as he contrives fascinating devices for tantalizing Spiegel's appetite. With his very life hanging in the balance, Spiegel's astuteness returns as the fattening process enables him to regain his strength. Accordingly, he once again seeks simple nourishment and contents himself with a normal pattern of life. In addition, he wages successful battles for the favors of a white tabby cat; as a result, he remains slim, even bony. Herr Pineiss becomes angry at the existing state of affairs and accuses Spiegel of not conforming to the contract. Then Herr Pineiss exclaims that Spiegel is fully ready and begins to sharpen the butcher knife. At this moment Spiegel succeeds in saving his life by telling the sorcerer a story of ten thousand guilders. According to Spiegel, his deceased mistress had thrown this vast sum of money into a well. She
had, as an overly-suspicious young maiden, received money from a suitor who later fell in the battle of Pavia. The bereaved maiden entrusted Spiegel with her estate and instructed him to give the money only to a sensible and handsome man who desired a maiden because of her beauty.

After hearing the story, Pineiss gives Spiegel his freedom so that the cat can procure both the maid and the gold for him. Spiegel keeps his word. He, in collusion with an owl that is held prisoner by an apparently pious Beguine (really a witch), makes plans to put Pineiss in his place. Spiegel and the owl succeed in catching the Beguine with a net as she leaves her house by the chimney. Thereupon Spiegel compels her to marry Pineiss, who never has a pleasant day thereafter; his wife, the witch, never allows him the slightest freedom. And, he has to work magic from morning till night.

In a letter written to Friedrich Theodor Vischer on June 29, 1875, Keller related that Spiegel was a freely invented fairy tale and was based entirely on the proverb, "Der Katze den Schmeer abkaufen". Keller said that his mother used this expression when she made a bad purchase. Neither he nor his mother had any idea as to where the saying originated.¹

Since the leading character of this Novelle is a cat rather than a human being, there is not a great deal to discuss regarding male-female relationships. However, the activities of the merchant and Spiegel's

former mistress are interesting and meaningful. Consequently, this association will receive thorough treatment.

**Merchant--Spiegel's mistress**

The proverb which states that the love of money is the root of all evil can, in a derivative sense, be construed as the central theme of this relationship. It is not the direct interest in money that destroys this budding relationship; rather it is the young lady's suspicion of prospective mates' being interested in her wealth that portends destruction. This unnatural feeling of apprehension makes her union even with an apparently ideal suitor impossible. In other words, she destroys her chance for happiness because of an unhealthy fear of losing her wealth.

Keller does not tell us the cause of the mistress's suspicious nature. Whether this is one of her innate traits or whether it is a result of her being disappointed by someone dear to her, is an academic question. The simple fact is evident from Keller's lucid account that the young lady would have many opportunities to marry well, were she not well-to-do. She has beauty, charm, and also intelligence, for we
read that "sie verwaltete ihr Gut mit trefflicher Umsicht und Klugheit..." (VII, 345) Perhaps the saddest thing of all is that she actually wants very much to marry.

As Keller relates, the young lady lays an undue amount of stress on money. Unfortunately, in her relationship with the young man, whose love for her is genuine, even her deep feelings for him are not sufficient to subdue her seemingly pathological condition, namely her abnormally suspicious nature. She would appear to need psychiatric help in an era when it is, of course, non-existent.

The dashing young man has virtues similar to those we have already assigned to the young lady. However, the lovers stand at opposite poles in one important respect: she is, as mentioned above, hopelessly suspicious, whereas he is completely trusting. 2 Their fate rests on this vital difference in their personalities, and their virtues, as far as

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2Washington contends that the merchant's weakness is found in his abysmal innocence and limitless sincerity. He expects others to express their sentiments as he himself always does. In the most important relationship of his life this expectation fails to materialize, and he cannot make a satisfactory adjustment.—Lawrence Moore Washington, Gottfried Keller's Literary Theory and Portrayal of Men (Doctoral dissertation, Brown University, 1958), p. 157.
their relationship is concerned, count for nought.

We have a foreshadowing of the eventual doom of the young man. Keller informs us at the time when the courtier confesses his love for the maiden that the young man would make his proposal but once, for "bei ihm galt es gleich auf Tod und Leben, auf Ja oder Nein, Schlag um Schlag." (VII, 351) Prior to the merchant's proposal, the young lady revels in his obvious love for her and in her own amorous attachment to him. However, the suspiciousness of the damsel returns with full force when she receives his proposal, and she rejects his suit.

Unfortunately, the young lady, even if she could admit the genuineness of the merchant's love, is still plagued by the thought that perhaps her beauty and her gold make his love for her flourish. The unselfish nature of the young suitor manifests itself abundantly throughout the relationship. When she tells the crest-fallen young man of her fictitious sweetheart's financial plight, he comes to her aid. He tells her not to despair and expresses words to comfort her (even though his whole world has been shattered) and goes immediately to obtain the needed money. Keller depicts the profound
love and self-ivining of the young merchant with
these words:

...[er] entfernte sich von ihr, ohne dass er sie
anzusehen wagte; so sehr fühlte er sich betroffen
und beschäm't, dass er sein Auge auf eine Dame ge-
worfen, die so treu und leidenschaftlich einen
Anderen liebte. (VII, 353)

Why does the damsel not confess the ruse when the
merchant unequivocally demonstrates his love for her
by returning six hours later with the requested money?
We submit that her course of action, or lack thereof,
is due to an inveterate suspiciousness, a deeply im-
planted malady that will not permit her to accept his
proposal even when his abiding love for her can no longer
be in question. Consequently, the damsel's deep love for
the merchant is unable in this tragic relationship to
surmount her unrelenting suspicion. She is, literally,
a veritable prisoner of her subconscious self.

In Der Landrogt von Breilensee, Keller gives us
an example of a lover testing the devotion of his sweet-
heart. After Salomon has proposed marriage to Distel-
link, he decides to test her love by sending her a letter
telling of his uncles' wayward habits and of his fears
that he is following in their footsteps. Contrary to
the reaction of the young merchant mentioned above,
Distel:ink fails to show undying love for Salomon.
Instead, she, with the encouragement of her parents, breaks off her relationship with him and soon becomes betrothed to a "respectable" gentleman.

Later, Salomon demonstrates devotion to the damsel whom he fondly calls Kapitän similar to that exemplified by the merchant for Spiegel's mistress. He anonymously arranges to pay her debts, even though it entails sacrifice on his own part.
A journeyman tailor by the name of Wenzel Strapinski walks along the highway toward Goldach. He has just left the community of Seldwyla where he has lost his job; he is destitute, hungry, and without hope. As he walks through the bitter cold, he actually gives the appearance of belonging to the aristocracy; he has long, black hair, a well-trimmed moustache, and regular, pale features. Over his Sunday coat, he wears a wide, dark-gray circular cloak lined with black velvet and a Polish fur-lined cap. On the way he meets an elegant traveling carriage. It has just begun to rain; therefore, the coachman invites Strapinski to ride in the vehicle. The tailor accepts and is taken to the inn at Goldach. Here he is inadvertently ushered into the tavern by the curious innkeeper and the quickly-assembled townspeople.

Once in the dining hall, Strapinski is treated in a most deferential manner; the innkeeper sets before him a sumptuous feast and has the best room in the inn made ready for him. The coachman, quite irate at the unexpected proceedings, relates to those within range that Strapinski is a Polish count. The most astute businessmen of Goldach gather at the inn shortly and begin to play cards and drink with Strapinski. After a time they invite him to sample wine with them at the home of the senior judge of Goldach. The newcomer accepts and falls in love with the judge's daughter, who requites his love. The couple is soon betrothed, and to celebrate the engagement a party is arranged at an inn exactly halfway between Seldwyla and Goldach. Meanwhile, Melchior Böhn, Strapinski's rival for Nettchen's hand in marriage, has revealed Strapinski's true identity to a number of the inhabitants of Seldwyla who make plans to unmask the impostor at the country inn. Wearing tailor masks,

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A Seldwyler group arrives at the tavern concurrently with the party from Goldach. The Seldwyler guests invite those from Goldach to a play in pantomime, at which time Strapinski's former employer exposes the journeyman publicly.

As a consequence of the startling disclosure, the two groups dissolve, and the happy celebration comes to a sudden and dismal end. Robbed of his senses by the cataclysmic turn of events, Strapinski staggers aimlessly from the room and wanders out into the bitter cold toward Seldwyla. He eventually lies down beside the road in the snow and goes to sleep.

In the meantime, Nettohen recovers sufficiently to get into her carriage in order to locate her presumed count and speak briefly with him. She finds him half frozen in the snow, revives him, and takes him to the home of one of her father's tenant farmers. Here Wenzel gives a summary of his life and of the various fortuitous events which place him in the role of a count. Completely satisfied with his explanations and fully cognizant now of his sterling qualities, Nettohen expresses her abiding love for Strapinski and vows that she will become his wife, come what may. She returns to Seldwyla with him as his fiancée. She adamantly rejects her father's plea that she save her honor by marrying Böhni. With cogent arguments and firm resolve, she withstands all efforts to dissuade her from becoming the tailor's wife. Aided by the efforts of the citizens of Goldach as well as those of an astute lawyer, the father's protestations are overcome, and the couple is soon married. By means of money which Nettohen has inherited from her mother, Strapinski is able to open a tailor shop in Seldwyla. His business thrives during the ensuing ten or twelve years. Then, with many children, he and Nettohen move to Goldach where he continues to prosper in every respect.

Apparently, several sources furnished Keller the inspiration for this novella. An actual occurrence that is recounted in Arnold Ruge's Gesammelte Schriften probably influenced Keller in his writing of Kleider machen
Leute. In Ruge's rendition the story takes place in Wädensweil on Lake Zürich. In 1845 a young man and his mother appeared in Wädensweil; they were presumed to be son and mother and were accepted as a count and countess. Actually, the count was merely a tailor, but his regal appearance made a deep impression on the young ladies whom he wooed.¹

Keller was familiar with two other literary works that may have contributed certain features. The first is an anecdote by Friedrich Wassali, entitled "Der Schneidergeselle, welcher den Herrn spielt", which appeared in the Bündner Kalender in 1847.² The second source for Kleider machen Leute, mentioned by Keller himself, was Frederick Marryat's novel, Peter Simple.³

Ermatinger surmises that the stimulus for Keller's work came from Polish refugees in Switzerland after the 1830-31 Revolution.³

Kleider machen Leute centers around the happenings between Strapinski and Nettchen. There will also be discussions of the Strapinski--Mother, Nettchen--Father, and Nettchen--Bühni relationship.

²Ibid.
³Ibid.
Nettchen--Father

Nettchen's father, the chief magistrate of Goltzach, is extremely devoted to his daughter. It is with pride that he introduces her to "Count" Strapinski and invites him to share supper with them. Subsequently, when Nettchen informs her father that she plans to marry Wenzel, the magistrate is somewhat grimly amused that his beloved daughter is to be a countess: "Nun, was würde die selige Mutter für ein Entzücken geniessen, wenn sie noch erlebt hätte, dass das verzogene Kind eine Gräfin geworden ist!" (VIII, 38)

Later, after the magistrate has learned of Strapinski's true identity, he is not in favor of the marriage. Not understanding the full magnitude of Nettchen's love or of Strapinski's inherently good qualities, the father makes every effort to dissuade Nettchen from her plan to marry the poor tailor. The father's intent to save his daughter from what he avowedly considers folly is much in evidence:

Der Amtsrat ging etwas schweren Herzens zu seiner Tochter hinauf, Überlegend, auf welche Weise er das desperate Kind am besten aus der Verirrung zurückführe, und war auf ein verzweifeltes Gebaren gefasst. (VIII, 64)

The father is not at all convinced by Nettchen's cogent argument on Strapinski's behalf. He is so greatly
concerned that her honor not be sullied that he urgently requests that she marry Bühni. One should state in defense of his actions that he has neither recovered from the sudden deplorable turn of events nor has he had the opportunity to become convinced of Strapinski's good intentions. That he is emotionally overwrought at the time and incapable of analyzing the entire matter objectively, is apparent.

Nettchen is grateful to her father for all his love and kindness. However, she does not intend to let him run her life. She knows what she wants and proceeds to tell her father precisely what she intends to do:

...erstens sie wolle nach dem Vorgefallenen nicht mehr in Goldach leben, wenigstens nicht die nächsten Jahre; zweitens wünsehe sie ihr bedeutendes mütterliches Erbe an sich zu nehmen, welches der Vater ja schon lange für den Fall ihrer Verheiratung bereit gehalten; drittens wolle sie den Wenzel Strapinski heiraten, woran vorallem nichts zu ändern sei; viertens wolle sie mit ihm in Soldwyla wohnen und ihm da ein tüchtiges Geschäft gründen helfen, und fünftens und letztens werde alles gut werden; denn sie habe sich überzeugt, dass er ein guter Mensch sei und sie glücklich machen werde. (VIII, 64)

This declaration⁴ depicts Nettchen as being independent;

⁴Cf. E. K. Bennett, A History of the German Novelle (Cambridge: The University Press, 1961), p. 182: "The lingering over detail, however inimical it may be to the economy of the composition as a whole, is one of the great charms of all Keller's work."
she is not a person who can be forced to do what she does not want to do.

Nettchen ultimately carries out her intention of marrying Strapinski in open defiance of her father; his objections eventually subside. After the couple is married, the enterprising judge and tailor make a number of successful joint speculations. This would indicate not only that the judge and his son-in-law had become completely reconciled, but also that Nettchen's father is a fair-minded person who is not inclined to hold dogmatically to previously held views. It appears that he has decided either that he made an error in judgment concerning Strapinski, or that it is prudent to "join" the couple. He undoubtedly realizes that his only other choice would be that of separation. His profound love for his daughter will not allow him to become estranged from her.

Bühni-Nettchen

Nettchen and Melchior Bühni have very little contact with each other in the Novelle. Consequently, it is necessary first to examine his attitudes and actions regarding Strapinski in order to understand fully why she finds his character and personality utterly repulsive.
Böhni first begins to suspect the authenticity of the count during the card game at the magistrate's estate. He is, as a matter of fact, the only person who does not wholeheartedly believe that Strapinski is a count. Delighting in the prospect of a scandal, he gleefully rubs his hands and says to himself:

Ich sehe es kommen, dass es wieder einen Goldacher Putsch gibt, ja, er ist gewissermassen schon da! Es war aber auch Zeit, denn schon sinds zwei Jahre seit dem letzten! Der Mann dort hat mir so wunderlich zerstochene Finger, vielleicht von Praga oder Ostrolenka her! Nun, ich werde mich hüten den Verlauf zu stören! (VIII, 22)

One can readily ascertain from the foregoing that Böhni is extremely observant—the others present apparently fail to notice that Strapinski has the hands of a worker. As the game proceeds and Böhni notices that Strapinski does not even possess a gold coin, he is even more convinced that Strapinski is not of the nobility. But he decides to wait patiently to see how matters will develop.

As the plot unfolds, the reader learns that Böhni has tried to pay Nettchen court and has been rebuffed. This makes his relationship to Strapinski even more important as it becomes obvious that the two men are rivals for Nettchen's affection.
It is apparently no mere coincidence that Böhni takes a business trip to Seldwyla only a few days before the Goldach celebration and that the Seldwyla group plans a party to be held at the same time and place as that of the couples from Goldach:

Die durch den misstrauischen Buc. Melchior Böhni... inzwischen aufgeklärten Seldwylern führen mit den maskierten Schautanz "Kleider machen Leute" die Entlarvung des Schneidergrafen Wenzel Strapinski herbei.5

Keller further exemplifies Böhni's position by describing him in the sleigh en route to the celebration as "still und vergnügt." (VIII, 40)

Immediately after Strapinski's employer has revealed that the "count" is an impostor, Böhni, showing his despisicable character, quickly clarifies the exposé rendered in pantomime. He now feels that the time is ripe for pressing his case with Nettchen. Consequently, he offers to take her home. After such a startling turning-point, one might expect her to accept his offer. But this is not what transpires. She once more thwarts his efforts to court her.

Böhni is not one to give up easily; he remains

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persistent and unabashed to the very end. With Nettchen's father now on his side, Böhni is perfectly willing to obtain Nettchen by legal means. But Nettchen and Wenzel steadfastly withstand all opposition to their marriage, and Böhni's hopes of obtaining Nettchen are completely dashed.

Strapinski--Mother

Information regarding Strapinski's relationship with his mother is gleaned from a flashback told by him to Nettchen while in the farmhouse. The tale that he relates shows that his mother did much to develop the boy's tastes, for she strove to clothe herself and her son in a manner commensurate with that of persons belonging to a higher social class. This ingrained trait is essential to the development of the Novelle, for without his splendid attire, Strapinski could hardly be mistaken for a count. Further, the time spent with his mother at the estate of the noblewoman enabled him to acquire the social graces normally practiced only by members of the aristocracy.

The recount also shows that the mother's love for her son was a selfish love. She longed for him to have the opportunity offered by the noblewoman; but she was
willing to sacrifice Wenzel’s future so that he could be with her. She could not bear the thought of his absence.

Strapinski, in contrast to his mother, is depicted as a person of complete unselfishness. Despite his disappointment at his mother’s insistence that he remain with her, he yields to her desire. Yet, he is fully cognizant of the fact that by so doing, he is denying himself a marvelous opportunity that will never again be his. When she tearfully insists that he become apprenticed to the local tailor, he again does as she asks, although it is against his wishes.

Keller no doubt had good reason for using the flashback regarding Strapinski’s mother. Wenzel is pictured here as being a man of genuine virtue. The flashback occurs just at the point in the Novelle when Nettchen is seeking, above all else, to learn of the true character of this man whom she loves but who has deceived her. The story that Wenzel relates to her does, indeed, convince her of the true worthiness of his character.

Nettchen-Strapinski

Wenzel Strapinski’s destiny is influenced quite decisively when he first encounters Nettchen, the
daughter of the local magistrate in Goldach. As the hero of the Novelle attempts for the third time to escape the embarrassing situation in which he has inadvertently found himself, he meets Nettchen. Thus, his future is now influenced even more forcefully: "Denn eine neue Wendung war eingetreten, ein Fräulein beschritt den Schauplatz der Ereignisse." (VIII, 25)

From this moment forward, the Novelle proceeds inevitably toward its climax. As will be shown later, Strapinski does make two more attempts to flee the embroilment in which he finds himself immersed; but Nettchen's appearance in each case severely hinders his rational desire to leave.

The demeanor of both Wenzel and Nettchen, when they are introduced by her father, leaves little doubt as to their strong attraction to each other. It is interesting to notice how Keller describes the mutual attraction without either of the young people's uttering as much as a single word. Wenzel's display of exaggerated respect as well as undue bashfulness does not have an adverse effect on Nettchen. Quite the contrary! His mannerisms are greatly to her liking, for she finds them in stark contrast to the characteristics of the
young men in Goldach;

Da sieht man, fuhr es ihr durch den Sinn, je nobler, desto bescheiden und unverdorben; merkt es euch, ihr Herren Wildflüge von Goldach, die ihr vor jungen Mädchen kaum mehr den Hut berührt! (VIII, 25)

Strapinski evidences his strong attraction to Nettchen simply by his awkward behavior in her presence. One can almost see the blood rushing to his cheeks as he timidly exchanges amenities with the judge's lovely daughter.

Finally, when the two young people begin to converse, it is again obvious that their attraction for each other is great. She speaks far more rapidly than is her custom, and Strapinski begins to assume the role that has been fortuitously foisted on him; he, in contrast to Nettchen, begins to speak extremely slowly, occasionally inserting Polish words and phrases: "...das Schneiderblütchen fing in der Nähe des Frauenzimmers an, seine Sprünge zu machen und seinen Reiter davonzutragen." (VIII, 25)

When the supposed count, Nettchen, her father, and the others are sharing supper, the new-found attraction on the part of both Nettchen and Wenzel shows no sign of abatement; rather it appears to grow ever stronger.
Es war in der Tat keine Kleinigkeit, eine Hand nebene sich glänzen zu sehen, die von drei oder vier Armbändern kliirte, und bei einem flüchtigen Seitenblick jedesmal einen abenteuerlich und reizend frisierten Kopf, ein holde Erröten, einen vollen Augenaufschlag zu sehen. (VIII, 26)

In view of the foregoing, one could easily reach the conclusion that what is transpiring between the two central figures of the Novelle is a case of first love for both. Their shy reserve appears to indicate a novel awakening of something thrilling and captivating. At the table, Nettochen construes Wenzel's awkwardness as being remarkably natural. One notices a change in her attitude, for she has heretofore made extensive use of similar blunders as topics of conversation in various gatherings with other young ladies of the town. Therefore, it seems a safe assumption that the heroine is either deeply infatuated or in love with the tailor. She is quite blind to his inadequacies or faults; indeed she is exceedingly successful in turning them into virtues.

The occasion of Strapinski's singing a Polish folksong depicts Keller's rich sense of humor. In keeping with the hero's unbelievably good luck, he is able to recall a coarse Polish peasant's song that he had learned as a laborer in Poland: "Also
sang er mit edlem Wesen, mehr zaghaft als laut und mit einer Stimme, welche wie von einem geheimen Kummer leise zitterte..." (VIII, 26) All those present are impressed by and delighted at his rendition.

Nettohen's single comment is not only humorous but also quite in keeping with her newly acquired interest in Strapinski: "Ach, das Nationale ist immer so schön!" (VIII, 27)

Upon returning to the inn, Wenzel's attitude shows a marked change. He is tired, and, in an unusual display of directness, asks to be shown to his room. Moreover, he fails to show any feeling of awe whatsoever at the magnificence of his room:

Der Wirt selbst führte ihn auf seine Zimmer, deren Stattlichkeit er kaum mehr beachtete, obgleich er nur gewohnt war in dürftigen Herbergskammern zu schlafen. (VIII, 27)

One of two things can be deduced from this change of attitude. First, Wenzel has become accustomed to his new and vastly more elevated station in life; second, the emotional impact of his encounter with Nettohen has done much to supplant his thoughts about the unaccustomed milieu in which he finds himself. The second deduction appears to be more likely.
The next day as Wenzel strolls through the streets of Goldach, his conscience begins to taunt him once again. Finding himself on the outskirts of the town, he views the distant fields that, in marked contrast to his life in Goldach, represent work, privation, and obscurity. Despite these unappetizing prospects, he realizes, nonetheless, that his departure would enable him to free his troubled conscience. Consequently, he is on the verge of making the decision to leave Goldach immediately. However, once again Fate in the form of Nettohen appears to thwart his resolve:

Im gleichen Augenblick rollte ein rasches Fuhrwerk heran; es war das Fräulein von gestern, welches mit wehendem blauem Schleier ganz allein in einem schmucken leichten Fuhrwerk sass, ein schönes Pferd regierte und nach der Stadt fuhr. (VIII, 52, 33)

Nettohen does not remain on the scene very long. When the young man tips his hat to her, she blushes, bows graciously, and hurries on her way. The effect of this brief encounter is profound, for Strapinski immediately turns his steps involuntarily toward Goldach. He feels comforted, and he wishes to carry out his role as Count Strapinski, at least during the immediate future. His proclivity for such a role is indeed obvious;
Mit jedem Tage wandelte er sich, gleich einem Regenbogen... Er lernte in Stunden, in Augenblicken, was andere nicht in Jahren, da es in ihm gesteckt hatte, wie das Farbenwesen im Regentropfen. (VIII, 33)

When Strapinski announces his intention at a dance to go on a journey for business reasons, the effect of this on Nettchen is immediately apparent. Although he does not indicate verbally that he intends to leave Goldach forever or even that his absence will be of long duration, it appears from Nettchen's subsequent behavior that she possibly has a presentiment of his true intention. It seems more likely, of course, that she finds the mere thought of Wenzel's being away, even for a few days, unbearable. She behaves in a manner not entirely unbefitting a young lady deeply in love, for she, fearful of openly displaying her true feelings toward him, has nothing to do with him during the festivities; she even refuses his invitation to dance:

In zehn Minuten war die Nachricht der ganzen Versammlung bekannt, und Nettchen, deren Anblick Strapinski suchte, schien, wie erstarrt, seinen Blicken auszuweichen, bald rot, bald blass werdend. Dann tanzte sie mehrmals hintereinander mit jungen Herren, setzte sich zerstreut und schnell atmend und schlug eine Einladung des Polen, der endlich herangetreten war, mit einer kurzen Verbeugung aus, ohne ihn anzusehen. (VIII, 36)

Being deeply disturbed by Nettchen's apparent indifference, Wenzel leaves the ballroom and goes into
the garden. He now becomes fully cognizant of her effect on him:

Es wurde ihm nun klar, dass er eigentlich nur dieses Wesens halber so lange dageblieben sei, dass die unbestimmte Hoffnung, doch wieder in ihre Nähe zu kommen, ihn unbewusst belebte, dass aber der ganze Handel eben eine Unmöglichkeit darstelle von der verzweifeltsten Art. (VIII, 36)

Apparently Nettchen notices Wenzel's exit, for it is not long thereafter when she, too, goes into the garden. She passes by him and pretends to be looking for her coach, which is actually parked on the opposite side of the house. She soon retraces her steps. This time he is standing in her way, and he makes his first open display of affection for her. She reciprocates in kind:

 Dann kam sie wieder zurück, und da er jetzt mit klopfendem Herzen ihr im Wege stand und bittend die Hände nach ihr ausstreckte, fiel sie ihm ohne weiteres um den Hals und fing jämmerlich an zu weinen. (VIII, 37)

Strapinski's determination to leave the premises of Goldach is once again of no avail. He is merely a victim of chance and does not possess the strength of purpose that would be necessary for him to escape this fate. The people of Goldach encourage him to be deceptive. In this regard he forms quite a contrast to John Kabys, the hero of Der Schmied seines Glücks, who assumes
the manner of a gentleman on his own volition.  

The father's remarks at the time of Strapinski's request for Nettchen's hand in marriage are significant, for they clearly prove that destiny is an exceedingly important factor in Nettchen's life as well as in Strapinski's. Until this point the idea of fate has been restricted almost entirely to the personage of the tailor. The father reveals the following about his daughter's steadfast ideas on marriage:

So hat sich denn das Schicksal und der Wille dieses törichten Mädchens erfüllt! Schon als Schulkind behauptete sie fortwährend, nur einen Italiener oder einen Polen, einen grossen Pianisten oder einen Räuberhauptmann mit schönen Locken heiraten zu wollen, und nun haben wir die Beschwerung! (VIII, 37, 38)

At the time when Strapinski is unmasked and his true identity is made known to the people from Goldach, the two persons most profoundly effected are, of course, Nettchen and Strapinski:

Nettchen, weiss wie ein Marmor, wendete das Gesicht langsam nach ihrem Bräutigam und sah ihn seltsam von der Seite an. Da stand er langsam auf und ging mit schweren Schritten hinweg, die Augen auf den Boden gerichtet, während grosse Tränen aus denselben fielen. (VIII, 46)

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With a beclouded mind Strapinski leaves the inn knowing nothing about his destination except that it will not be Goldach. Some time later Nettchen partially recovers from her stupor, rises, puts on her wraps, and leaves the inn. She climbs into her sleigh and drives toward Seldwyla, not Goldach. The narrator, who in most cases is all-knowing, is not in this event. The effect of this is the emphasis of the view that "in human actions there is sometimes an element of indeterminacy, of chance..."\(^7\)

For the first time, Fate directs Nettchen along the right pathway—literally and figuratively. She drives directly past Wenzel, who has intentionally gone to sleep in the snow. In his remorseful state he no longer wishes to live. Espying him, Nettchen halts the horses. As she gazes briefly at his form, clearly delineated by the moonlight, the lucid realization that clothes do make the man strikes her with full force:

Ja, er war es. Der dunkelgrüne Samt seines Rockes nahm sich selbst auf dem nächtlichen Schnee schön und edel aus; der schlanke Leib und die geschmeidigen Glieder, wohl geschmärt und bekleidet, alles sagte noch in der Erstarung, am Rande des Unterganges, im Verlorensein; Kleider machen Leute! (VIII, 52)

\(^7\)Rowley, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15
Showing that she is a woman of action and decision when the occasion demands—the women in Keller's Novel-len are characteristically enormously resourceful—she gently tends to Strapinski's needs and cleverly revives him. Instead of forgiving or condemning Wenzel for the role he has played as Count Strapinski, Nettchen shows in this scene—and its aftermath—that she can successfully play the role of the aggressor if need be. She is outwardly calm and, as one learns later, wishes to base her choice of words and ultimate judgment on facts. That she is unequivocally determined to disinter all the facts concerned with the exposé is obvious. Her only comment to his plea for forgiveness is the terse remark: "Komm, fremder Mensch!... ich werde mit dir sprechen und dich fort-schaffen!" (VIII, 53)

Still in control of the situation, Nettchen takes the reins as they get into her carriage. She goes directly to the farmhouse of the widow of one of her father's former tenants, thus choosing a place far removed from her father and the disturbance and gossip of the townspeople. She astutely arranges with the widow to be with Wenzel in comfort and privacy:
"Lasst uns jetzt eine Viertelstunde allein, legt Euch aufs Bett, liebe Frau, wir haben uns ein bisschen geruht und müssen uns heute noch aussprechen, da hier gute Gelegenheit ist!" (VIII, 55)

Left alone, Nettchen orders him to drink some black coffee, which he does more as a result of her forceful manner than from a deeply felt need for the beverage. Her questions: "Wer sind Sie? Was wollen Sie mit mir?" (VIII, 55) strongly indicate her pique at being toyed with, as it were. They show a genuine curiosity as to the past of this man of mystery, also an intrinsic love for him. Wenzel's retort to her two questions is in keeping with his ever present desire—at least from the standpoint of conscience—to clarify his role as an impostor. Thanks to Nettchen's help, Strapinski is able to find his true and genuine nature. He freely confesses his ruse and evidences true repentance.  

"Ich bin nicht ganz so, wie ich scheine!" erwiderte er traurig, "ich bin ein armer Narr, aber ich werde alles gut machen und Ihnen Genugtuung geben und nicht lange mehr am Leben sein!" (VIII, 55)

Nettchen, in a most objective fashion, reiterates her desire to know the pertinent facts about his background and his intentions. At last Wenzel relates his

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8 Walther Hahn, "Themen und Motive in Gottfried Kellers Prosawerken" (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Texas, 1956), p. 25
past, expressing himself with a contrite heart and with such humility that Nettochen realizes the soundness of his character; thus she decides to marry him in spite of all. Strapinski changes from a negative to a positive character, from Schein to Sein. He tells how he became a cultured gentleman. He also relates his experiences with a childhood girl friend who, as a matter of fact, had been the only "other" girl in his life.

At this moment he makes a startling discovery:

Although he did not consciously realize it at the time, the resemblance between this young girl and Nettchen had possibly been the reason for his immediate attraction to Nettchen at their first meeting.

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9Hahn, op. cit., p. 25
With Wenzel's account of his past finished, Nettchen, in an excited and exhilarated state of mind, arises and faces him squarely. Then, with a paucity of words quite in keeping with her intense desire to ferret out all the facts of the case, she makes the final pronouncement: "Ich will dich nicht verlassen! Du bist mein, und ich will mit dir gehen trotz aller Welt!" (VIII, 62)

Nettchen is still very much in charge of the situation, for she refuses to flee the area, stating that they should go directly to Seldwyla. Her fecund mind has already devised a basic course of action, and her whole concept of a solution to the awkward status quo is adequately summed up when she says:

Keine Romane mehr! Wie du bist, ein armer Wandersmann, will ich mich zu dir bekennen und in meiner Heimat allen diesen Stolzen und Spöttern zum Trotze dein Weib sein! Wir wollen nach Seldwyla gehen und dort durch Tätigkeit und Klugheit die Menschen, die uns verhöhnt haben, von uns abhängig machen!" (VIII, 62)

Wenzel acquiesces in this resolve, and the lovers depart. For the first time since his unmasking, he is in the driver's seat, literally and figuratively. Since he has been restored to her good graces, Nettchen can and does assume the natural role of her sex: "Wenzel führte jetzt die Zügel, Nettchen lehnte sich so zufrieden an ihn, als ob er eine Kirchensäule wäre." (VIII, 63)
In Seldwyla Wezel takes Nettchen to an inn and finds another for himself. When Nettchen's father arrives in Seldwyla and insists that she marry Böhni, both Nettchen and Wezel hold their ground and ultimately remove all obstacles to their marriage.

The closing sentence in Kiefer macher. Leute sententiously summarizes the ten years following the wedding:

...er wurde von Jahr zu Jahr geschäftserfahrener und gewandter und wusste in Verbindung mit seinem bald versöhnten Schwiegersohn, dem Amtsrath, so gute Spekulationen zu machen, dass sich sein Vermögen verdoppelte und er nach zehn oder zwölf Jahren mit ebenso vielen Kindern, die inzwischen Nettchen, die Strapinska, geboren hatte, und mit letzterer nach Goldach übersiedelte und dorthin ein angesessener Mann werd. (VIII, 66-69)

Paula Ritzler makes an interesting conjecture about Wezel after he and his family removed from Seldwyla to Goldach:

Traut Keller seinem Strapinski nicht zu, von jetzt an ohne Anfechtungen, aber auch ohne Verkürcherung durchs Leben zu gehen, dass er nicht eingehender von dieser Zeit spricht? Das muss wohl sein. Die Gefahr, in die Starrheit des Spießbürgertums zu verfallen, lauert ja schon in diesem Schlussatz.  


11 Ibid., p. 381.
Until the action reaches the party where Wenzel is defrocked, he frequently displays the desire to become something which he is not. It is, in truth, this vanity that almost leads him to destruction. The Novelle is actually a representation of the struggle between his simple but true nature and the vain attempt to appear aristocratic and elegant. His innate vanity is clearly depicted when it is said of him that "Solcher Habitus war ihm zum Bedürfnis geworden, ohne dass er etwas Schlimmes oder Betrügerisches dabei im Schilde führte..." (VIII, 8)

Still, the basic, good qualities of the tailor prevail even in his critical hour; namely, when his former employer reveals his true identity in a premeditated manner. Subsequent events point out the fact that the tailor is of genuine mettle and that those whom he has inadvertently deceived are not.

Although Nettchen has been blinded by Strapinski's title, she proves that she, too, is a sterling character. Despite the deep disappointment she suffers at learning

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12 Hahn, op. cit., p. 22.

his true identity, she does not desert him. She marries him at the time of his greatest crisis. She loves him as a person, not because he is apparently a member of the nobility. And her love is steadfast and abiding.\textsuperscript{14} She recognizes "that Wenzel, if less than a count, is more than a tailor; though not a nobleman, he is a noble man."\textsuperscript{15}

It is interesting to contrast Nettchen with Vrenchen in Keller's \textit{Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe}. Both heroines reject the possibility of romantically escaping or solving their dilemmas. Nettchen insists that she and Wenzel return to Seldwyla, and Vrenchen will not consent to a life among the gypsies. However, there is a positive solution for Nettchen's problem, whereas there is none for Vrenchen's. The lack of a secure social standing and Sali's violent act, which results in the irreparable damage to Marti's father, prevents a successful solution to her problem. It should be noted that \textit{Romeo und Julia} is an exception in this respect, for Keller almost always reintegrates his characters into society. Strapinski's faults are

\textsuperscript{14}Fritz Lockemann, \textit{Gestalt und Wandlungen der deutschen Novelle} (Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1957), p. 185

\textsuperscript{15}Rowley, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 32
serious, but they are quite human and spring from embarrassment and love, not from calculation. In this regard, Wüst makes the following analysis:

Und wo Keller irgend ein Unwesen mit einem so dünnen goldenen Bündchen noch an die Menschlichkeit gebunden findet, da rettet er es in diese hinüber kraft seiner dichterischen Machtvollkommenheit...

It is undeniable that Stravinski's fate is determined by Nettchen's persevering love for him in the face of all obstacles. The deep feelings of the lovers are manifested quite similarly in one important respect: Stravinski's emotions constrain him from leaving Goldach when he knows he should; Nettchen's love prevents her from letting him depart when her reason doubtlessly indicates otherwise.

Stravinski and John Kahys (Der Schmied seines Glückes) show a certain similarity in the final scenes. Both gain happiness and a feeling of accomplishment from their chosen trades; they also become solid citizens in their communities. Since Keller ultimately permits Stravinski to have a family, it appears that

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16 Rowley, op. cit., p. 33.

Kabys, as a hardworking nailsmith, has by the end of the narrative reached the point where he might be allowed to do likewise. It is characteristic of Keller that he frequently permits his characters who overcome distasteful traits (vanity in Strapinski's case) to have children.
CHAPTER VIII

der geschmied seines glückes

John Kabys, a Seldwylan of approximately forty years, subscribes to the belief that everyone forges his own fortune or happiness. The first master stroke that he executes to this end is the changing of his name. He alters his surname, which is Kabis or cabbage in English translation, to John Kabys. Since this proves insufficient with respect to the realization of his espoused objective, he seeks to acquire a more euphonious name. He makes the acquaintance of a widow and her daughter who have recently moved to Seldwyla and finds their surname much to his liking. Meanwhile, he procures some valuable "attributes". He feels that these glittering articles will aid him in his efforts to gain both happiness and fortune. The contents are placed in a cigar-holder made of meerschaum, which has a mazeppa on a wild horse.

John Kabys learns to his chagrin that he cannot marry the widow Oliva's daughter, for the mother had the child out of wedlock. And Oliva's maiden name is Huptle, a name which John finds repulsive.

Kabys continues to live alone and to work as a barber. One day he hears by chance that a rich old man by the name of Litumlei lives in Augsburg. Further, Litumlei's mother's maiden name had been Kabys, and she had been born in Seldwyla. At present Litumlei is looking for relatives in Seldwyla.

The next morning Kabys sets out for Augsburg. Due to his bearing and his "attributes", Kabys quickly wins the trust of the wealthy Litumlei. In order to establish an orderly and proper family tree, Litumlei makes John his illegitimate heir (a product of his wild youth). The two men write an odd, though ingenious, work about the infamous history of the whole affair.
John now has both the wealth and happiness that he has long desired. However, the extremely clever young man makes the mistake of becoming intimate with Litumlei's young wife. John accepts the offer of Litumlei to make a long trip for the purpose of studying educational methods for the youth. In Seldwyla Kabys angers his former townsman by his arrogant manner. Upon returning to Augsburg, he learns that Frau Litumlei has born a son. And all these years Herr Litumlei had believed himself sterile! When John tells the boasting Litumlei that it is quite possibly another, not Litumlei, who is the father of the newborn infant, the old man becomes enraged and has the "pretender" forcefully evicted from the house.

Quickly consuming his remaining money, John purchases a small nailshop in Seldwyla and ultimately learns that one's happiness results from his own honest labor.

The source material for this Novelle stems from two stories: Mandragola by Niccolò Machiavelli and Die Elixiere des Teufels by E.T.A. Hoffmann.1

In his witty comedy Mandragola, Machiavelli treats the theme of an old man and his young wife. The elderly husband succeeds in obtaining an heir through the efforts of his wife's young lover, Callimaco.2

Hoffmann's Die Elixiere des Teufels tells of a count who adopts a foundling and rears him as his own. When the boy Francesco reaches the age of twenty-five, the


2Ibid., pp. 494-495.
count marries a beautiful young lady. The foster-son is beset by a lecherous desire to possess the young wife. Although she is virtuous, Francesco finally gains his objective by dastardly means. As a consequence, the adopted son repays the kindness of his foster-father by betraying him. The two children, whom the elderly Filippo cherishes as his own, are the fruit of the clandestine relationship.

John Kapys and Adam Litumlei are the main personages in Der Schmied. The relationship between Kapys and Litumlei's wife has a direct bearing on the denouement of the work.

John Kapys—Frau Litumlei

Despite the fact that there is no dialogue between John and Frau Litumlei in this work, their contact is of great importance. After all, John's carefully laid plans are completely dashed as a result of this relationship.

The liaison between John and Frau Litumlei is spurred on by two factors. First and foremost, John thinks that he can make his happiness complete by

Schmatinger, op. cit., pp. 494-495.
having an affair with Herr Litumlei's wife. He exclaims to himself: "Wie konnte ich nur diese wichtige Partie so lange aus den Augen setzen! Gut ist gut, aber besser ist besser!" (VIII, 101) Second, John and Frau Litumlei are both young and obviously not averse to the enticements of the opposite sex. Moreover, Keller makes it unmistakably clear that Herr Litumlei could hardly be a successful sex partner, a fact which renders John's amorous advances all the more consequential as far as Frau Litumlei is concerned.

John's contact with Frau Litumlei establishes the tone of their clandestine affair from beginning to end. When he first espies her lying on the sofa, we read that "höchst gespannt zog er sich zurück und stieg weiter hinauf, sachte und vorsichtig." (VIII, 83) He feels that he has stepped into a "verzaubertes Schloss", and he most assuredly has. He has entered a dream world of riches, a fairyland compared with his previous existence.

Frau Litumlei, for her part, leads an inactive and monotonous life. Thus we see why she welcomes John's advances, once he stirs her emotional being into life. She is struck by John's appearance when
she first sees him, and she is not opposed to his visit. We read that she opens her sleepy eyes wide when introduced to him, "neugierig und vergnüglich, wie es schien, über die unerwartete Begebenheit." (VIII, 87)

John soon finds himself securely entrenched in his newly-found happiness. Apparently, the only thing that causes him some concern is Frau Litumlei's behavior toward him; he feels that she is either discontented with or suspicious of him. It appears quite likely to us that her demeanor is nothing more than a reflection of her distaste for John's ostensible lack of masculine aggressiveness. Of course, he does not waste a great deal of time in disabusing her of such thoughts. One might add that, from all outward appearances, she is a totally passive creature throughout the story, and an active relationship between John and her would seem to depend entirely on his aggressiveness.

John must make a concerted effort to initiate an affair with Herr Litumlei's wife, which he does. The humor contained in his first visit to her room after the departure of the old man is worthy of note:
Er trat vorsichtig hinein und sah sie wieder schlummernd da liegen, ein halb aufgegessenes Himbeertörtchen in der Hand. Ohne recht zu wissen, was eigentlich beginnen, ging er endlich auf den Zehen hin, ergriff ihre runde Hand und küsste sie ehrerbietig. Sie regte sich nicht im mindesten; doch öffnete sie die Augen zur Hälfte und sah ihn, ohne den Mund zu verziehen, mit einem höchst seltsamen Blick an, solang er dastand. Verblüfft und stotternd zog er sich endlich zurück und lief in sein Zimmer. (VIII, 102)

Keller, however, leaves no doubt that John's persistent efforts to woo Herr Litumlei's wife are eminently successful. Immediately thereafter occurs the statement: "Es verging nun kaum ein Tag, wo die zwei Leute sich nicht zusammenzutun und den Alten zu hintergehen wussten..." (VIII, 102)

The distinct possibility that John is deceived by Frau Litumlei should not be overlooked. She knows that she might be separated from her husband's riches like the previous two wives if she fails to bear him a child. Consequently, it is not far-fetched to assume that she is cleverly thinking of her own predicament when she has a liaison with John. To be sure, Keller gives very little insight into her thoughts.
After the affair between John and Frau Litumlei has been going on for quite some time, we read that she engages her husband in a conversation, after which he leaves in an ecstatic frame of mind. Whether she actually informs her husband that she is with child, is an academic question, for Keller does not tell us what they say to each other. However, we feel that he does intend the reader to assume as much. There can be little doubt that he has a distinct purpose in inserting this episode. Otherwise there would be no need for the inclusion of this brief scene in the No-
velle. In addition, since Herr Litmlei craves a child so desperately, what else could bring him so much joy!

Reflecting on John's activities, we are led to make the following assumptions. Had John not attempted to press his luck to the limit by suggesting to Herr Litumlei that his wife was unfaithful, he could have remained in the Litumlei household indefinitely. And he possibly could have continued his clandestine affair with Frau Litumlei. However, since she had succeeded in bearing her husband a child, she might not have been receptive to John's subsequent advances.
Keller attributes to John definite traits that are prevalent in some of the author's other characters. John's unresponsiveness to beauty and kindness as well as his materialistic aggressiveness toward women can be found in the personalities of Gebizo (Die Jungfrau und der Teufel) and in all three of the combmakers (Die drei gerechten Kammerer).

In certain ways Frau Litumlei bears a close resemblance to Kätter (Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe). The former wishes to sleep as much as possible, and, as will be noted later, the latter has an inordinate desire to eat. In addition, neither gives any evidence whatsoever of a maternal instinct. As stated earlier, Frau Litumlei has a child not as a result of a compelling maternal desire but quite probably for the purpose of remaining married to her wealthy husband. Taking the matter a step further, it is highly questionable whether she will make a decent mother. For his part, John gives no indication either that he is capable of being a praiseworthy father until the close of the Novelle, when he establishes himself as a successful nailsmith in Seldwyla.
CHAPTER IX

DI. MISSBRAUCHTE: LIEBESBRIEFE

Viggi Störteler manages a successful business. His wife Gritli is a lovely, gentle creature who has brought a considerable amount of money into their marriage. However, the businessman has literary ambitions which absorb his thoughts more than anything else. Using the pen name "Kurt vom Walde", he contributes to the sphere of German literature in a voluminous fashion. With his drinking companions, whose literary aims and writings are equally as insipid and platitudinous as his own, Viggi wants to revolutionize the art of writing. Since every great literary figure needs a Muse for his noble inspiration, Viggi decides to educate his splendid wife to the end that she will become a poetess of love. During a rather extensive business trip, he coerces her into exchanging high-flown letters with him daily.

Gritli is at a total loss as to what she should do to satisfy the unjust demands of her husband. In her desperation she ultimately decides to have her backdoor neighbor, the schoolteacher Wilhelm, answer Viggi's letters. This she does with remarkable success for a time. Wilhelm is enamored of her from the outset. Moreover, as a result of the exchange of letters, she gradually falls in love with him. Viggi is extremely well pleased with "Gritli's" letters. However, as he returns home unexpectedly, he fortuitously comes upon Wilhelm; the schoolteacher absconds in great haste. Viggi discovers Wilhelm's wallet, which the latter has left behind. In the pocketbook, the merchant locates his own letters, and later he finds the answered letters in Gritli's worktable. Enraged, he locks his wife in the cellar, and the following day he roughly ejects her from the house. She goes to live with an old relative in the locality, where she remains sheltered and withdrawn from the townspeople until it beomes time for the divorce proceedings. At the trial she defends herself
brilliantly, and Viggi is compelled by the court to return the money she brought into their marriage.

Viggi is rejected by everyone in the community except Kätter Ambach, a thirty-eight-year-old spinster, who is homely and poor. Further, she affects interest in things of a literary nature and is thoroughly despicable. In short order she succeeds in completely beguiling the conceited Viggi, who marries her. His lot goes from bad to worse with respect to his writing, his finances, and his business. The people of Seldwyla enjoy his and Kätter's failures immensely.

Wilhelm loses his school-teaching position as result of the exposé during the divorce proceedings. However, he soon finds a great deal of contentment and satisfaction in the country where he works for a Seldwylan landed proprietor. Here Wilhelm lives an isolated, withdrawn life where he proves himself a highly competent farmer. He matures greatly and becomes a beloved adviser to many in the area who have perplexing problems of an exceedingly varied scope.

Gritli's love for Wilhelm manifests itself with increasing intensity during their separation from each other. Moreover, she feels repentant about the injustice caused him as a result of her candid statements in court. After a visit to his humble but tastefully-arranged dwelling and after she has satisfied herself as to Wilhelm's deep love for her, nothing remains to prevent their union in marriage.

Not much is known about the origin of this satirical Novelle other than the fact that it had its inception during the years Keller spent in Berlin.¹

We find several major male-female relationships in Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe. The three most

important ones are: (1) Viggi--Gritli; (2) Wilhelm--Gritli; and (3) Viggi--Küttler. The Wilhelm--Ännchen relationship is highly significant with respect to Wilhelm and Gritli's ultimate marriage.

Viggi--Gritli

Keller prepares us most effectively for Gritli's unenviable role as the wife of Viggi Störtelcr. During the first thirteen pages of the Novelle, we learn a great deal about Viggi and his activities, all of which are none too pleasing. When Gritli finally appears in the work, we are immediately aware that they have been mismatched. We observe "wie anmutig Gritli in ihrem Nüchtern am Spinnradchen sass, mit rosigem Munde, mit stillbewegtem Busen und mit zierlichem Fuss..." (VIII, 129), and our sympathies are henceforth with her. Harry Maync's utterance regarding Keller's ability to glorify women appears exceedingly apropos regarding Gritli:

Dieser unansehnliche und ungehobelte Naturburbsche, dem doch die feinste Kultur des Herzens und der Seele eignete, wie unver-leichlich hat er der Schönheit gehuldigt und das Weib verherrlicht.

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2Harry Maync, Gottfried Keller, sein Leben und seine Werke, ein Abliss, Festvortrag bei der Keller Hundertjahrfeier (Bern: n.p., 1919), p. 41
Emil Kuh goes even further when he characterizes Gritli as "das anmutigste Weib, das in der Poesie nach Goethe geschaffen worden." The skillful manner in which Keller prepares us for Gritli's entrance into the story is reminiscent of Molière's Tartuffe, although the circumstances are totally different. Whereas we are prepared to expect the worst from Tartuffe when his related entrance occurs in Act III, Scene I, we are, in a real sense, prepared to attribute to Viggi's wife the most noble traits before she utters a single word.

Viggi's decision to make Gritli his Muse initiates the action which eventually leads to the dissolution of their marriage:

Wenn er [Viggi] Gritli durch seine minderwertigen Bücher zu seiner "Muse" heranbildet und "erhöhen" will, so versucht er dadurch gleichsam mit Gewalt die schöne Harmonie von Sinnlichkeit und Geist, die sie zum weiblichen Individuum bestimmen, zu zerstören. In order that Gritli may be able to fulfil the role of his Muse effectively, Viggi first gives her a book on anthropology to read. It is indeed amusing to ob-

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serve that Viggi, certainly not his wife, needs to study carefully the contents of the book, "weil sie selbst die Verkörperung des schönen Menschentums ist und edle Menschlichkeit aus den sicheren Tiefen ihres weiblich-mütterlichen Wesens im Leben übt." She is of course, unable to discuss the contents of the book on anthropology. Since she apparently does not attempt to read the book of poems given her as a second assignment, it seems safe to conclude that she made little or no effort to read from the anthropology book. She is unable to make any comments at all regarding the contents of the book of poetry "weil sie den ganzen Nachmittag im Garten ge­essen und mit grosser Behaglichkeit grüne Kräubsen aus­gehüst hatte." (VIII, 132) She is, after all, ideally suited for a homemaker. Her interests, motivations, environment, and womanliness pull her unabatedly in the opposite direction. Keller proves this point at various places throughout the Novelle.

Despairing at his efforts to have Gritli read material that he thinks necessary for her "intellect­ual" growth, Viggi hits upon a new plan of attack.

5 Gründel, op. cit., p. 115.
He constrains his already distraught wife to listen to some platitudinous notes that he has just made. Gründl aptly describes his jumbled writing thus:

"Nur das Äussere, das grob Sinnennäfte zeichnet er auf, während wie ein Kaufmann. Viggi’s success as a businessman is apparent, for he is a thoroughgoing materialist. However, he has none of the qualities necessary for an artist or creative writer. We are struck by Viggi’s complete lack of judgment and Gritti’s deep dilemma when he lectures:


Gritti’s reply to her husband’s harangue is revealing: "mich dunkt, ein rechter Dichter soll seine Kunst verstehen ohne eine solche 'inblaserin!'" (ibid.) Viggi’s outpourings are obviously contrived, and in no way do they establish rapport with any of nature’s

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Gründl, op. cit., p. 114.
offerings. By the same token, Viggi and Gritli are unable to establish communication, for the former is a materialist and a sensualist, whereas the latter's entire being and activity is inextricably bound to natural phenomena.

Viggi's despair at not evoking the desired "literary" responses is short-lived. He soon contrives a study plan whereby the sorely-tormented Gritli is required to read a goodly number of books so that she can become his longed-for literary companion. Again in this episode we observe the sterling qualities of Gritli. She makes a heroic attempt to do her husband's bidding, but, since their natures are antithetical, her efforts are doomed to failure. It becomes apparent to Viggi after a time "dass sie immer noch keine bereisternde Anregung von sich ausgehen liess..." (VIII, 135)

Being possessed with unmitigated obduracy concerning his ill-chosen literary ventures, Viggi is still not defeated in purpose. He has yet another plan. One wonders just how many failures Viggi would have tolerated and how many schemes he could have devised in order to "school" his wife properly. There appears to be no dearth of schemes. At least his mind is
fecund in this respect as well as in the number of trivial items about which he is able to write.

Viggi's last attempt at coercion brings out unforeshadowed resourcefulness on the part of Gritli. As it happens with so many of Keller's feminine figures, Gritli is able to rise to the occasion when a crisis approaches. Upon leaving the house, Viggi gives her final instructions regarding their correspondence and then adds: "Bedenke, dass von dieser letzten Probe der Frieden und das Glück unserer Zukunft abhängen!" (VIII, 136) Not wishing to expose her husband's ridiculous plan by seeking advice in the matter, she hits upon an idea that is designed to shame herself, not Viggi. Again and again we observe how Keller reiterates the heroine's magnanimity despite her own deep suffering and humiliation. By having Wilhelm reply to the vacuous letters of her husband, Gritli indicates, although tacitly, that she is the writer of them and that she does indeed have feelings of remorse concerning the deplorable state of affairs.

Viggi is openly pleased with the first letter he receives from his wife, not because he is able to appreciate it on the basis of artistic merit, but
because he, an intrinsic sensualist, is able to feel
the fervor in the lines. He writes: "Ich bin ordentl-
lich stolz darauf, dass ich nun endlich das richtige
Verfahren eingeschlagen; denn, ohne Schmeichelei, Du
hast Dich vortrefflich gehalten!" (VIII, 145) To be
sure, the glowing ardor displayed by Wilhelm for Grit-
li should not be confused with the fervor that Viggi
exemplifies by his innane pursuit of trivia. Viggi's
passion for writing is vacuous and leads him into a
cul-de-sac, whereas Wilhelm's amorous feelings for
Gritli have possibilities of flowering into something
noble and lasting.

Gritli finds herself hopelessly ensnared by her
husband's correspondence plan, and, despite her effort
to desist from having Wilhelm as her ghost writer, she
is forced to realize that she has no alternative; any
other procedure appears even bleaker to her than the
one already chosen.

On the sheet of paper prescribed for household
and business affairs, Gritli comments on "her" en-
closed letter to Viggi: "er hat mich ziemliche
Anstrengung gekostet, jedoch nicht allzu grosse, und
ich merke, dass das Ding schon gehen kann." (VIII, 145)
With this bit of veiled deception, Gritli shows that she is indeed a worthy opponent in a game of wits. Her account of the Schorenhans incident has virtues of which Viggi's writings are totally lacking. Such qualities as humor, entertainment, warmth, optimism, legitimate message, and splendid moral abound in Gritli's description of the Schorenhans tale, while they are totally lacking in Viggi's writings. Viggi's comments on the related anecdote lead us to the following conclusions. First, he is an incorrigible materialist, for he niggardly begrudges the extra postage required for the inclusion of the Schorenhans narrative. Second, he is wholly out of touch with humanity, for he fails utterly to comprehend the message contained therein. Even when Viggi shows favor with his wife's charitable inclinations, he is not admirable. He indicates that charity is unacceptable as an edifying topic. He then asserts that he makes donations to the poor and is aware of the true value of charity. Notwithstanding, there can be no doubt that he has no feeling of empathy for the underprivileged. His writings and his treatment of Gritli bear this out.
Gritli's sense of humor often shines through her adversity as Viggi increases the required daily quota of letters. Keller writes that frequently she has to "bald lachen, bald weinen" (VIII, 149) as she contemplates the fiasco in which she is unavoidably the central figure. Her unflagging determination to please Viggi can be observed by her signing of "Alwine" at the end of each letter; this is the name that Viggi had earlier chosen for his Muse.

An amusing incident occurs when Viggi mistakes one of Gritli's tear-stained letters as indicative either of passionate outpourings or of a cold. At this point, we realize fully, if we have not already, that Viggi is only capable of self-love, not love for another. Concerning the underlying reason for the tears, he considers:

Aber gleichviel, ich trage mich jetzt mit dem Gedanken, ob solche Tränen zwischen den Zeilen bei einer allfälligen Herausgabe im Druck nicht durch einen zarten Tondruck könnten angedeutet werden? (VIII, 150)

Viggi's quest for glory is not to be denied, even to the extent of sacrificing the inherent feelings of his laudable wife. Gründl says that he "entwürdigt... die leibseelische Gemeinschaft der..."
Sinnengenuss, der unter dem Schilde eines geistigen Zusammenlebens verbirgt... 8

Gritli lets us know by means of seemingly insignificant incidents that she does not love Viggi. She revises the bombastic salutations of the letters written by her husband before passing them on to Wilhelm. In this manner Keller informs us that Gritli's interest in Wilhelm is growing steadily; she herself is unaware of this fact. She changes such pompous salutations as "Teurer Freund meiner Seele" to "mein liebes Männchen" or "mein gutes Kind." (VIII, 151)

Then she becomes repentant, "während sie die grossen, hohlen Worte in den Briefen an den Mann grossartig stehen liess." (ibid.)

Keller describes the last two weeks of the correspondence with an exceedingly humorous, although pathetic, commentary. Gritli, he relates, "musste schreiben wie ein Kanzlist; und der Schulmeister magerte ganz ab und wusste nicht mehr, wo ihm der Kopf stand..." (VIII, 152) What we have during these final two weeks of furious exchanges of letters is,

8Gründl, op. cit., p. 115.
plainly stated, a "three-ring circus" from beginning to end.

Until this point, we have said nothing in support of Viggi's actions, nor is there anything legitimate that one can advance in his behalf. As a backhanded compliment, one might point out that Viggi is at least a facile writer. We do not know just how many letters he writes daily. Keller does tell us, though, that the correspondence was so furious, "dass die Federn flogen." (VIII, 151-152) In addition, we know that he has certain business affairs to attend to and that he, while out of town, attends festive affairs each evening with different ladies. Viggi has dates with these women, for he was accustomed "nach der Art mancher Leute, seine Geschäftsreisen als Ausnahmezustand zu betrachten und sich von aller häuslichen Ordnung zu erholen." (VIII, 152) These acts of infidelity once again accent an all-important difference in the beliefs of Viggi and Gritli. As we have noticed thus far and shall observe in greater detail upon examining Gritli's relationship with Wilhelm, she is the personification of virtue. It is true that Keller does not imply that Viggi actually has affairs with some of
the women he escorts to various places of amusement; still, when we ponder his character about which Keller has quite clearly informed us, the above possibility can hardly be precluded.

Another outstanding example of Viggi's reprehensible character is given shortly after he finds the letters left by the fleeing Wilhelm. Although Viggi is convinced that Griiti's guilt is incontrovertible, he should be civil enough to confront her with the evidence at hand and give her the opportunity to explain. Instead, he gruffly locks her in the cellar. Yet, this initial action is forgivable, at least in part, for it is done during the heat of the moment. What is unpardonable is his subsequent behavior. He leaves her locked in the cellar during the night, but not to punish her; rather, he forgets about her predicament in his self-pitying anger and in the debauchery of the evening. Of real significance is Keller's assertion: "Die Hauptsache, die verlorene Liebe seiner Frau, schien ihm nicht viel Beschwerde zu machen..." (VIII, 157)

Viggi's thoughts are never far removed from his literary endeavors. When he makes the startling dis-
coverry of his wife's apparently clandestine affairs with Wilhelm, his mind ponders the idea of using this experience in his writings. Realizing that he himself would be directly involved should he have the bizarre account published, he quickly forgets the entire idea. The rhetorical question as to why Viggi is enraged at his wife's presumed infidelity when he has not been true to her might be posed at this point in the story. However, this question presumes that Viggi is both an objective thinker and a man who does not believe in the double standard. As a matter of fact, his thought processes leave much to be desired, and he never shows any genuine respect for Gritli as an individual in her own right.

It is astonishing that Viggi does not think of his incarcerated wife when he awakes the next morning. Only when he thinks about the key to the cellar, does her whereabouts enter his mind.

When Viggi finally takes it upon himself to free his wife, we observe, perhaps more vividly than anywhere else in the story, the full measure of Viggi's and Gritli's contrasting natures; his behavior is inhuman and hers is divine. Even though Viggi has
long treated her with opprobrium and has had the effrontery to imprison her like a common criminal, Gritli shows magnanimity toward him. She is about to explain the matter to him but does not when she notices the servants in the background. That she could wish to spare him embarrassment in such a situation is almost beyond comprehension. Keller indicates that her efforts to clarify the previous events would not have succeeded even had the servants been absent:

...Überdies nahm er sie sofort beim Arme und führte sie unsanft mit den Worten auf die Gasse hinaus: "Hiemit [sic] verstosse und verjage ich dich, verbrecherisches Weib! und nie mehr wirst du diese Schwelle betreten!" (VIII, 159)

Gritli's humiliation is complete, but, like Nettchen in Kleider machen Leute, she possesses that admirable quality, namely courage, that is frequently evident in Keller's women. Instead of cowering in the face of her adversities, she takes the offensive and thus becomes a hitherto unknown Gritli. When Viggi goes to the pastor with the feigned intention of beginning the divorce proceedings, the minister, instead of seeking to effect a reconciliation as Viggi had hoped, makes the surprising announcement that Gritli has already initiated the divorce proceedings.
It is during the trial that Gritli exposes her husband's despicable ways and worthless writings that she had previously sought to conceal. She discloses his faults with such effectiveness and unpretentiousness that he becomes the laughing-stock of the community. In this connection, Ritzler makes a fitting comment: "Was in der Person eines Viggi Störteler die Welt gefährdet, ist nicht das Ausserordentliche, sondern das Ausgefallene." 9

At the trial, Gritli first points out that she had married Viggi as a merchant and that he had accepted her at the time of their marriage as a simple village maid. Furthermore, she asserts that he is the one who changed, thereby causing havooc in their marriage. She convincingly implicates Viggi on several issues. Finally, she exclaims that there can be no future relationship between Viggi and her. She relates:

Zuletzt aber habe er das Unmögliche von ihr verlangt, nämlich ihre Frauengefühle in einer geschraubten und unnatürlichen Sprache und in langen Briefen für die Öffentlichkeit aufzuschreiben und, statt ihrem häuslichen Leben nachzugehen,

9 P. Ritzler, "Das Aussergewöhnliche und das Bestehende in G. Kellers Novellen," Deutsche Vierteljahreschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte, XXVIII (1954), 375
die schöne Zeit mit einer ihr fremden und widerwärtigen, nutzlosen Tätigkeit zu verbringen.
(VIII, 169)

Baldenaperger's intimation that Viggi is not an altogether obnoxious character is one that can be disputed. He voices this opinion:

Viggi Stoertler est un petit négociant de Seld-wyla, qui marié à une gentille et simple femme et faisant d'honnêtes affaires, serait tout à fait heureux si le démon de la littérature ne le tentait.

Such an assumption appears highly unlikely to us in view of Viggi's intrinsically selfish and debased character. Since, as we have observed, he is wholly incapable of loving anyone or thinking of anyone but himself, how could he possibly obtain inner contentment, not to mention bring happiness to his wife under any circumstances?

Gritli confesses that she erred in her correspondence activities but cogently proves that she complied with her husband's ridiculous whims, hoping that they would eventually terminate. Gritli also states at the trial that the horrendous experience with the letters has made her cognizant of the fact that genuine love between Viggi and her never existed at all.

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Her biting remark that the case should be tried before a literary court rather than before a divorce court is indeed appropriate. After all, she should not be on trial, for she is not guilty of unfaithfulness; rather, as she argues, Viggi's misguided literary attempts should be on trial. Still, she maintains that the dispute is not being tried in the wrong court of law, and she agrees to the trial in its present form "weil das Geschehene ein unvermutetes Licht über den innern Zustand dieser the aufgesteckt habe." (VIII, 170)

It is not surprising that Gritli's expose of her maltreatment leaves Viggi in a depressed state. As if this were not enough, he has to listen to jeering remarks en route to his home. Not only does Viggi lose a priceless wife, but he also loses his reputation in the community and soon becomes a helpless prey to a woman whose character is equally as distasteful as his own. Still, it might be presumed that Viggi's relationship with Kätter is, in a sense, more satisfying than his marriage to Gritli has been. At least, Kätter is adept at feeding his hungry ego continually.

Gritli's freedom from the domination of a husband she neither admires nor loves must bring with it an
unbounded tranquility after the concomitant emotional problems have subsided.

**Viggi--Kätter**

The Viggi--Kätter relationship is unique among those in *Die Leute von Seldwyla*, for nowhere else in these *Novellen* can be found a description of the activities of a divorced man and his second wife.

By way of paraphrasing an age-old idiom, if Viggi thought that he was in the "frying pan" with Gritli, he eventually learns that Kätter personifies the proverbial "fire". She literally eats away all his savings and earnings. Gründl finds that the physical reality and the spiritual ideal which unite in nature to form a well-integrated personality are diametrically opposed to each other in the makeup of Kätter Ambach's character.\textsuperscript{11} She pursues nothing that could be construed as being ennobling; in fact, she cannot be classed as a dilettante, for she does not even have a desultory knowledge of anything artistic or spiritual. She is incapable of appreciating anything of a strictly non-utilitarian nature.

\textsuperscript{11}Gründl, *op. cit.*, p. 244.
Kätter and Züls Bünzlin (Kleider machen Leute) have much in common, for both are opportunists and both are incapable of loving another. Kätter is so greedy that she hardly leaves her own mother sufficient food to eat. The spinster’s avowed interest in aiding Viggi to overcome his ill-fortune is ludicrous; she is only interested in self-gain.

It seems quite fitting that Kätter should make her entrance upon the scene by means of a condoling letter written to Viggi. In this pompous letter Keller lucidly demonstrates that Kätter’s thought processes, like Viggi’s, are able to produce nothing but verbiage. Since she glowingly expresses her deep sympathy for his misunderstood genius, we are led to suspect that a match between the two contemptible persons is a distinct possibility. Keller’s humorous and disdainful description of Kätter’s grotesque mien and brazen manner is masterful, leaving little doubt that the two outcasts of Seldwylan society are well suited as far as character traits, or a lack thereof, are concerned.

Viggi would probably not have fallen a prey to Kätter’s Machiavellian allusions to false modesty,
had he not been in such a perplexing situation. After all, he is well acquainted with Kätter's unsavory reputation. He has seen evidence of his unpopularity in Seldwyla, especially after the court proceedings, but he feels that the snide remarks made about him are, in a sense, flattering; his townsmen are simply not capable of appreciating his "genius". Accordingly, Viggi succumbs to Kätter's aggressiveness, for she is adept at satisfying his craving for praise of his literary endeavors.

Although Kätter gives little or no evidence of being highly intelligent, she is cunning enough to devise a course of conquest. That she possesses a great deal of intuition is quite apparent. At all events, she proves herself very adept at pretending to be vitally interested in Viggi's personal welfare:

Sie besuchte täglich zweimal sein Haus und gab sich in der ganzen Stadt das Ansehen, als ob sie aus reiner Aufopferung den Mann aus den traurigsten Zuständen...erretten müsste. (VIII, 166)

and her successful display of interest in Viggi's heavy literary output is ludicrous to the reader:

... [sie] schleppete...lernbegierig von seinen Büchern nach Hause, was sie unter den Arm fassen konnte, las aber dort nur die kurzweiligsten Sachen daraus, wie Kinder, welche die Rosinen aus dem Kuchen klauben. (VIII, 167)
That Katäter is the opposite of Gritli can be observed in a number of respects. First, she is ugly, whereas Keller's admirable women, like Gritli, are extremely attractive. Second, she is aggressive in her relationship with Viggi and in her bungling methods of running the household. Third, she is a glutton not only regarding food and drink but also in other spheres of activity. Fourth, she is not above making slanderous remarks about Gritli. For example, we read that Katäter describes "wo sie hinkam, die von Gritli hinterlassene Ordnung als die schlimmste..." (VIII, 166)

After Viggi's humiliating experience in court, he falls a victim to Katäter's intuitiveness, for she is on the scene at the opportune time. Her "witchcraft" --she gives the vivid impression of being some sort of witch--is noticed by the maid, but the servant's reaction is totally different from that of her employer: "sie [Katäter und Viggi] trieben ein solches Karessieren, dass die Magd, welche der früheren Frau anhing, sich schämte." (VIII, 172)

Viggi's life after the wedding brims with activity, for Katäter is not one to stay at home and tend to her
household duties. Perhaps this is a blessing, for as a homemaker, her every move appears to create a fiasco. The torrid social activity initiated by Viggi's new wife does not disturb him in the least. He revels in the luxuriant praise she constantly bestows on him in public gatherings and in the overly indulgent manner in which she looks after her "genius". Their relationship furnishes the merry-making Seldwylans with material for hilarious amusement over a long period of time.

Perhaps the following statement by Viggi summarizes his attitude toward his literary creations as well as toward the role in the community in which he realizes he has been cast. He confides to his wife: "Wie glücklich ist man doch zu preisen..., wenn man über solche Kindereien hinweg ist und etwas Höheres kennt!" (VIII, 175) With Viggi's blind passion for devoting time to writing rather than to carrying out his business affairs and with Kätter's ability literally to eat up their savings, it is little wonder that they are doomed to dire financial straits.

The situation whereby the misdirected Viggi feels that Kätter gives him the needed inspiration for accom-
plishing his "high calling" is ridiculous. Keller pointedly shows what he thinks of Viggi's presumed noble strivings:

A uf diesem Höheren fuhr er nun mit vollen Segeln dahin, aufgeblasen durch der gewaltigen O dem seiner Frau. Und er fuhr so trefflich, dass er zinnen Jahr und Tag mit Kätters Hilfe da landete, wo es den meisten Saldwylern zu landen bestimmt ist, besonders da sein Kapital mit Gritlis Vermögen aus dem Geschäft geschieden war. (Y IV, 175)

Kätter und Viggi, as incredible as it appears, are of the opinion that their marriage represents the paragon of wedded life in spiritual love. However, this word love is the weak link in their armor which dooms their relationship to utter failure, for neither is capable of loving the other. As a consequence, it follows that their marriage is bleak and meaningless. Succinctly put, Kätter is a sensualist—witness her inordinate eating habits—and Viggi is a materialist who has absolutely no interest in his fellow man. Neither his daily acts nor his empty writings contribute anything to the betterment of any one person, let alone society. Moreover, Viggi's nature is not in harmony with his surroundings. In fact, it is as distorted as the notes he takes on the touch-tree, intending to use them later for his literary "gems".
Wilhelm--Aennchen

The characterization of Aennchen shows Keller at his humorous best. She adds real zest to the Wilhelm--Gritli relationship because of her coquettish mannerisms and because she is such a contrast to the retiring Gritli. According to Ermatinger, the women in Keller's works can be divided into two groups, namely the heartless, clever coquettes on the one hand and the devoted, spiritual ones on the other.12 Aennchen certainly could not be classed in the latter group. Yet, neither could she be placed in the former group of heartless women along with Züs Bünzlin, Pankraz's Lydia, or even Kätter. She is the exception among Keller's women in Die Leute von Seldwyla and, as such, is in a class by herself.

When Gritli and Aennchen decide to visit Wilhelm at his country cottage, it is undoubtedly Aennchen who suggests the rather daring plan. Keller does not state that Aennchen initiates the action; however, when one has become familiar with her character traits, such a conclusion seems credible. The fact that the two friends disguise themselves tawdrily, bespeaks the

12 Ermatinger, op. cit., p. 250.
carefree character of Aennchen. She is effervescent and roguish.

When Wilhelm answers Aennchen's knock at his door, we become immediately aware that she is the only full-fledged extrovert present and that she is pert enough to tackle virtually any daring task. With gibberish that seems almost endless, she succeeds admirably in keeping the oppressed Wilhelm off balance. Keller relates the one-sided conversation, as follows:

Dies alles, Stroh, Zeitkuh, Hafer, Blei, Kaffee- mühle, Kobold, Federn und Heirat, warf sie so be- hend und verworren untereinander, dass kein Mensch darauf antworten konnte, und wenn Wilhelm den Mund auf tat, unterbrach sie ihn sogleich, widersprach ihm, sie habe nicht das, sondern jenes gemeint, und machte den ergötzlichsten Auftritt. (VIII, 194)

Aennchen accomplishes her purpose, namely to permit Grit- li a closer look at Wilhelm and his management of affairs without being recognized. That her antics are successful admits of no doubt. She plays her role so effectively that Wilhelm "keinen Verdacht schöpfte und ein tolles Weibsstück zu sehen glaubte..." (VIII, 195)

Although Wilhelm is by nature quite reserved, he finally reaches the end of his patience and tells her frankly that her questions are foolish and bluntly requests that she and her reticent companion leave
him in peace. Were this the only incident of curious women bringing their problems for him to solve, Wilhelm would probably not have reacted this way. Before moving to the country, he would probably have been more patient. However, since leaving Seldwyla, his patience has been tried on repeated occasions by inquisitive women seeking his learned advice. As a result, his longing to lead a withdrawn existence has made him extremely unsympathetic to ridiculous intrusions on his privacy.

Before leaving, Aennchen, always in control of the situation, nonchalantly gives Wilhelm a greeting from a lady in Seldwyla; Aennchen pretends not to know the lady's name but quite adroitly gives Gritli's address. In this fashion, Aennchen sets the wheels of romance in motion. Other installments must come later. And indeed they do!

It is not difficult to prove that Aennchen is an enticing personality nor that the unwary Gritli has chosen a most dangerous accomplice. Returning from their confrontation with Wilhelm, Aennchen murmurs to Gritli: "Hüre, wenn ich nicht schon einen Mann hätte, so würde ich dir den wegfangen!" (VIII, 197)
At this point in the unfolding of the second Gritli-Wilhelm involvement, we are not unduly suspicious of Aennchen as a go-between, nor should we be despite her obvious delight in coquetry. She is, to be sure, one of Gritli's closest friends. This very fact leads us quite normally to expect Aennchen to have basically the same moral code as Gritli. However, it should also be pointed out that Gritli's judgment of character is by no means infallible; she did not have to marry a scoundrel like Viggi. Admittedly, Gritli did not know of Viggi's Philistine tendencies toward writing. But it seems safe to assume that she did fail to observe some of his other objectionable traits, which are numerous. Consequently, her judgment of character does warrant considerable scrutiny.

At all events, Aennchen reveals her true self immediately after her first solo visit to Wilhelm's rustic dwelling on Gritli's behalf. We shall examine this incident and its implications presently.

The occasion of Aennchen's first visit alone with Wilhelm is worthy of comment. Just as she, dressed in her voluptuous best, is ready to visit Wilhelm and
subject him to the agreed-upon test, Gritli begins to sob. Her behavior exemplifies two emotions: love and fear. She is filled with a genuine love for Wilhelm, and she is deathly afraid that he will succumb to the charms of her friend. Nonetheless, Gritli knows that she must now gamble everything if she wishes to gain genuine happiness in love and marriage. Aennchen's first visit without Gritli is quite similar to the previous one made by the two friends; Aennchen keeps Wilhelm completely off balance with her ingenious gibberish and concludes by having him teach her some basic elements of mathematics. However, she is now laying the foundation of her attempt to lead him astray. On the way home, Aennchen's actions make it clear that she, like Viggi, is not so well understood by Gritli as she should be. Keller implies in this scene that Aennchen is not entirely satisfied with her husband. Upon looking at her reflection in the water: "Sie kam sich fast zu schön vor für ihren eigen- en teilnahmlosen Mann..." (VIII, 204) Furthermore, it soon becomes apparent that she is deeply attracted to Wilhelm and has no objections to an affair with him should their relationship so develop. She has certain
compunctions about initiating or even permitting an affair with Wilhelm; but she appears quite capable of overcoming them. She exhibits her flippant character while deciding on her future action in the matter:

...sie stellte die Entscheidung endlich auf ein welkes Blatt, das in der Wasserstille langsam kreiste und einen Ausweg suchte. Legte es sich ans rechte bord, so wollte sie der Freundin dienen, wenn ans linke, für sich selbst sorgen! Allein das Blatt schwamm plötzlich abwärts und ins Weite, und sie beschloss, der Sache den Lauf zu lassen, wie es gehen möge. (VIII, 204)

As Aennchen's relationship with Wilhelm unfolds, it becomes evident that she is, in actuality, a "temptress" tempted.

During Aennchen's subsequent and final visit with Wilhelm, she changes her tactics by acting shyly rather than brazenly, thereby causing him to be confused even further. She quickly creates the atmosphere for a love scene when she proves herself to be as dexterous with figures as Wilhelm. When he finally realizes that her smooth, white hands could not be those of one living on a farm, Aennchen cleverly directs the conversation toward a confession of her love for him. At this moment the full force of temptation strikes Wilhelm, although he is sufficiently in control of his faculties.
to realize that the entire matter has a false ring about it. The age-old contest between the mind and the emotions brings the struggling Wilhelm to the hour of decision. They begin to caress each other, and just when Gritli's happiness appears hopelessly lost, Wilhelm suddenly realizes that Gritli, and only she, can bring him true happiness. Passionate embraces with Aennchen, whom he does not love, appear empty and totally lacking in that certain inner satisfaction which can be realized only when mutual love and respect, as well as attraction, are present. Gritli's recent appearance before his cottage makes him firmly cognizant of this fact. Consequently, he realizes that only Gritli can reconcile the conflict between his mind and passions, thereby uniting them into a harmonious whole and an intrinsically meaningful experience.

Aennchen responds to Wilhelm's resolute action by quickly hurrying to tell Gritli that her yearning for Wilhelm's love is not in vain.

**Wilhelm—Gritli**

The rather lengthy and unusual acquaintance of Wilhelm and Gritli before their ultimate marriage
smacks unmistakably of Keller. In this relationship we see how the two young people develop and mature through their sufferings and the ripening process of nature, especially the gullible Wilhelm.

A genuine feeling of love develops between Wilhelm and Gritli long before the latter is fully aware of it herself. To bear this statement out, we might mention several signposts. First, when Gritli copies Wilhelm's first letter in order to dispatch it in her own handwriting to Viggi, we read that her heart beats curiously "als sie gar wohl die Wärme fühlte, welche in Wilhelms Worten rührte, und sie dieselben so bedächtig abschrieb..." (VIII, 144)

Second, the occurrence of the next exchange of letters between Gritli and Wilhelm describes the fervor of Wilhelm's feelings written with intense emotional impact "welche an Schwung und Lärtlichkeit Viggis Kunstwerk weit hinter sich ließ." (VIII, 146) Gritli's inner emotional response to Wilhelm's genuine outpourings of desire for her effect her with an immediate and telling response:

Als Gritli dies abschrieb, fühlte sie sich tief bewegt und es fielen ihr sogar einige Tränen auf das Papier, denn dergleichen hatte ihr noch niemand gesagt. Fast wollte es sie bedürfen, wenn sie an einen Menschen wie Wilhelm zu schreiben hätte, so würde ihr das Werk leichter, aber an Viggi?" (VIII, 146)
Thus we observe how Keller lets us know quite clearly not only that Wilhelm is very much enamored of Gritli, but also that Gritli feels a definite attraction, though veiled, for Wilhelm. It is not until later in the story that she is sufficiently aware of this attraction and is also able to translate her feelings into words.

Third, as the letters circulated by Gritli become almost legion in number, the manner in which Gritli signs her name to them causes her to make the remark, as follows: "sie unterschrieb die Briefe an Vigili mit Alwine, diejenigen an Wilhelm mit Gritli, wobei sie dachte: der ist wenigstens zufrieden mit meinem armen Namen!" (VIII, 143)

It is apparent from the foregoing examples that Gritli's heart is favorably touched by the letters received from Wilhelm, for she has never experienced true love from her own partner in marriage; she has been nothing more than a housekeeper to him.

Gritli's reasons for choosing Wilhelm to aid her in her dilemma should not be overlooked. She desperately needs someone to help her, and she needs someone who can write. Keller uses Wilhelm in order to form a contrast between the insipid writings of Vigili.
and the genuine, artistic ones of Wilhelm. Thus, Gritli is saved, though temporarily, from one of her tormenting problems, and Keller has the opportunity to present his reader with a glaring exposé of Viggi's worthless writings. Gritli knows, moreover, that Wilhelm is attracted to her. Finally, she is of the opinion that Wilhelm possesses the vital quality of being able to keep a secret. Upon further examining Gritli's effect on Wilhelm, we read that she looks at Wilhelm with a "ganz seltsam sonnigen Blick..." (VIII, 141)

Gritli's first letter has a palpable effect on the entire attitude of Wilhelm. His expressive being is in ecstasy as he quickly concludes that Gritli loves him. Keller descriptively tells us that Wilhelm "zerküsste...das Papier..." (ibid.) upon which the letter was written. Next, the love-starved young man exclaims in unbounded exhilaration "versteht sich, gibt es einen Gott! Versteht sich, natürlich!" (VIII, 142) Here Keller shows, as he is often wont to do, that the power of real love is capable of surmounting many obstacles. In this instance it appears that Wilhelm has suddenly found a reason for living, that he firmly believes that there is a God who has at last
seen fit to manifest his presence to him in the form of Gritli, bzw. love. After all, Wilhelm realizes that the bliss he enjoys must come from the ethereal realm, for he has neither seen nor experienced any sign that such perfect joy could be a product of his imperfect environment. No matter what the reason for or the possible complications of a future relationship with Gritli, Wilhelm is too deliriously happy to concern himself with any problems that might arise. He could hardly care less!

As we shall soon learn, the trial constitutes a turning point in the life of Wilhelm. (This could, of course, be said for Viggi, Gritli, and Kätter, as well.) There is little contact between Wilhelm and Gritli—only the passing of the letters back and forth—prior to Viggi's return home; subsequent to the trial, there is none, excepting one exchange of letters. In Wilhelm's letter to her, we are able to gain additional insight into his character. It is clear that he is an unselfish person and that he wishes to aid Gritli as best he can in her intolerable predicament. That he can offer her his help in view of his own emotional turmoil, certainly redounds to his admirable character.
Wilhelm relates how the letters were discovered by Viggi, making no attempt to conceal his own responsibility for Viggi's fortuitous discovery of the letters. Apropos of Gritli, her reply to Wilhelm's letter is a testimony to her praiseworthy character: "Er solle sich ganz ruhig verhalten, bis er gerichtlich befragt würde; dann solle er sagen, was er wüsste, nicht mehr und nicht weniger..." (VIII, 166) From this reply it is evident that Gritli's character is beyond reproach. She refuses even to see Wilhelm, so strict is her code of honor. She is, after all, still married to Viggi, and she desires simply to have the truth regarding the "missbrauchten Liebesbriefe" brought out in court. Of course, Keller does not tell us that Gritli is deeply affected by the sincerity of Wilhelm's letter and his obvious love for her. We learn later by her actions that this is indeed the case.

Gritli, ever mindful of the truth, proceeds with unerring objectivity, and tells the court precisely why she sought Wilhelm's help during her perplexity. She minces no words in telling, among other things, that "Wilhelm ein...verliebter...Mensch sei, mit welchem man zur Not einen unschuldigen Scherz ausführen..."
(VIII, 170) Thus, we observe that Gritli feels compelled to bring out the truth, no matter what the consequences. That the results are unfavorable for the school teacher can be ascertained from the manner in which the Sel-dwylans treat him after the trial:

As stated above, the trial proved the turning point in Wilhelm's life. The primary reason for this is that the proceedings in court—chiefly Gritli's revealing remarks—enable Wilhelm to see his unhealthy sentimentalism toward women in its true perspective. Consequently, he is humbled by her revealing statements and is thereby more subject to the maturing influence of his later existence in the country where his Schwärmeri for women is transformed into a veneration for nature.13 Actually, Gritli's exposé of Wilhelm has an immediate impact on him: "Also ging er in sich, liess alle Narrheit

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13 Gründl, op. cit., p. 117.
fahren und wandte sich mit Fleiss und Liebe seinen Schulkindern zu." (VIII, 177)

During Wilhelm's maturing stay in the country, we receive now and then subtle, although perfectly obvious evidence, that he is capable of love and that he is a genuine person. In this connection, Baldensperger surmises:

...Wilhelm, toujours amoureux de Gritli, s'organise une existence intelligente et active, près de la nature dont il tâme à épier les humbles secrets; et Keller s'est plu à décrire l'influence qu'exerce sur une ame docile l'amoinsance des choses...14

That Wilhelm exhibits genuine concern for the welfare of others (even members of the animal kingdom), is all-important. It is precisely the lack of this trait that is a primary cause of Vigi's failure as a husband. Another example that clearly demonstrates the effect that Wilhelm's secluded life has on his development into an ideal mate for Gritli can be gleaned from Keller's following remark:

...[Wilhelm] erfuhr...wie das grüne Erdreich Trost und Kurzweil hat für den Verlassenen und die Einsamkeit eine gesegnete Schule ist für jeden, der nicht ganz roh und leer. (VIII, 185)

14Baldensperger, op. cit., p. 185.
Wilhelm's love for Gritli manifests itself while he resides in the country, for he has recurring flashes of her in his memory. These thoughts are often painful, for they serve to augment his loss. When she finally makes her first appearance at his dwelling, he is so perplexed that he hurriedly retreats in order to escape her vision. (Interestingly enough, he has no difficulty at all in confronting various other women who curiously seek him out.) Because of Wilhelm's deep love for Gritli, he is so emotionally excited that he does not return home until many hours later. This by no means signifies that he does not wish to see Gritli. He wants nothing more than to be with her. As yet, however, he does not have any idea that she has amorous leanings toward him or even that she regards him as anything more than a silly young man. Wilhelm, in a manner rather fitting for one deeply in love, subsequently approaches his dwelling stealthily, fearing that Gritli might seek him out again. In addition he begins to dress with greater care after espying Gritli at his doorstep.

Of all the reports about Wilhelm that attract Gritli most, before she visits him with Aennchen,
are the raving accounts she hears about his interest in and successful way with children. This trait is certainly one that she did not find in Viggi. And what could interest a magnificent creature like Gritli more than having a family!

When Gritli visits Wilhelm accompanied by Aennchen, Keller shows us unmistakably that we have here the meeting of two beings who are in close communion with all that which is best in nature. In the Viggi-Gritli relationship, Gritli's nearness to nature is discussed. Here we learn, through Keller's portrayal of her impressions of Wilhelm's home, that he, too, has intimate contact with nature. Comparing Viggi's unnaturalness with Wilhelm's naturalness, Gründl relates:

Die künstlichen und geschraubten Erzeugnisse seines [Viggis] Geistes bleiben ihrem Verständnis verschlossen, während sie für die malerische Stube Wilhelms mit den herrlichen Eisgebilden auf den gotischen Rundscheiben seines Empfinden zeigt, weil es als wahre Kunst innig mit der Natur verbunden ist.15

Gritli, like Wilhelm, feels shy and ill-at-ease when she and Aennchen visit him. Admittedly she fears

discovery. Nonetheless, this does not detract from the fact that she is frightened in Wilhelm's presence because she does not know whether destiny will bring them together. And the mere contemplation of this possibility in the presence of the man she loves, makes her tingle with excitement.

Later, when Aennchen is about to test Wilhelm's resistance to her charms, Britli becomes visibly shaken when she realizes that the school teacher may not be able to withstand her friend's allurements. But she is capable of being strictly objective; her defense in her own behalf at the trial makes this fact evident. Consequently, she keeps her emotions under control and in the end obtains a husband worthy of her. Wilhelm for his part, is able to resist the enticements of Aennchen by virtue of two things: his recently-gained maturity and his unshakable love for Britli.

The same reticence demonstrated by Wilhelm and

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16 Wilhelm's maturity, which later enables him to glean a full measure of happiness in his marriage to Britli, is gained as a result of the severe test given him by the trial. Another outstanding example of a similar maturing process occurs in Der schlamm-heilige Vitalis. In this Legende, the self-discipline displayed by Vitalis has a direct bearing on the development of his maturity and plays a role in preparing him to become an ideal husband for Iole.
Gritli is in evidence when they finally meet, each now knowing the identity of the other. The dichotomy of the situation is that they want desperately to see each other and learn whether each returns the other's love; yet the fear that their love might be unrequited makes them attempt to avoid each other for a short time. But their strong mutual attraction soon triumphs, and their long separation comes to an end. It is significant that they escape the perverse tendencies of their Seldwylan milieu and become exemplary parents and pillars in their newly adopted district.

This work contains two characters who are conceited, i.e., they do not develop properly because they are stymied by false feelings of superiority. As if this were not enough, they are wholly incapable of recognizing the relative merits of others. Vigi and Mütter never attain rapport with their surroundings; as far as they are concerned, the world is out of step, not they. By the same token, Lydia's father (Pankraz, der Schmoller) has this same attitude of superiority, for he keeps Pankraz in his service for his orderly. Moreover, the commander is self-satisfied and is in complete accord with Lydia's actions, although they are despicable.
Britti's persistent efforts before the divorce proceedings to keep Virgi from becoming the laughing-stock of the entire community are commendable. Regine (in the Novelle of that title) goes to even greater lengths to protect her husband's name. She commits suicide, feeling that this is her only choice if she is to prevent disgrace from being brought upon her spouse and his family. Of course, Regine is convinced that Erwin is a truly admirable person, whereas Britti is keenly aware of Virgi's opprobrious traits.

Interesting and gripping as one finds Die missbrauchten Liebestriefe, the artistic perfection of some of Keller's other Novellen seems to be lacking here. In this work the author deals with not one, but several main plots. Moreover, since he attempts to characterize five persons, the story lacks the concentration of his more highly regarded Novellen. Nevertheless it should be stated that Keller's portrayal of the several male-female relationships in Liebestriefe are masterfully done and frequently trimming with humor.
CHAPTER X
DIETEGEN

Around the year fifteen hundred the citizens of the city of Ruechenstein, which is located not very far from Selawyla, developed an especially lively type of jurisdiction. They enjoyed staging hangings, beheadings, and burnings at the stake. As a result of their penchant for such grotesque acts, the severe Ruechensteiner often warred with the more light-hearted Soldwylans.

Once, after most of the citizens in the two communities have agreed to a reconciliation, the Soldwylans are invited to visit the Ruechensteiner as guests of honor. During the visit the hanging of Dietegen, a twelve-year-old orphan, takes place. He has been deceived by a Jew into exchanging a silver vinegar tankard, which belonged to his cruel guardian, for a crossbow. The Jew accuses Dietegen of thievery and the latter is hanged as a result. As the Soldwylans begin their home-ward journey, they come upon the coffin. Küngolt, the seven-year-old daughter of the head forester of Selawyla, boldly advances to the coffin and throws off the covering. Dietegen is still alive. The Selawyla women in the group request him as a gift from the Ruechensteiner. Still wearing the shift, he departs with the Soldwylans and is awarded to the forester's keepin. Thus, Dietegen grows up alongside Küngolt.

The quiet, gentle wife of the forester regards him as a son, and the defiant Küngolt insists that he belongs to her. Dietegen, for his part, submits himself willingly to the multifarious moods of the lass. The forester's wife observes with genuine pleasure the strong ties that exist between the two children. She entrusts to Dietegen the care and protection of her daughter. Not long thereafter
the young mother dies suddenly. With great cunning a cousin of the forester, named Violande, works her way into his household. She is a decidedly dangerous and deceitful person who has one goal in mind, namely to become the forester's wife. She succeeds in bringing Kūngolt into the company of young people of doubtful reputation. In addition, Violande awakens in Kūngolt a strong penchant for coquetry. Dietegen sadly perceives the change in Kūngolt; he turns away from her and becomes an excellent hunter. Also, he becomes adept at defending himself most skillfully with various weapons. As some Seldwylan women prepare a celebration of their own on St. John's day while their men are away, a group of Ruechensteiner youths enter Seldwyla. They pass by the forester's home where they find the women, Violande and Kūngolt included. The young men are led by the mayor's son and are accompanied by the deformed town clerk, Hans Schafürli. Kūngolt, who is soon beset by an insatiable desire to gain the veneration of all the young men present, pours wine for each of them. Into this wine she pours a love potion that she has stolen from Violande. Finally, a fight ensues between the young men, and in the fracas the hunchback stabs the mayor's son to death. When Schafürli is apprehended and incarcerated, he accuses Kūngolt of witchcraft. She confesses her guilt and is sentenced to prison for one year; she serves her sentence at the home of the grave digger.

Meanwhile, the Swiss go to war against Charles the Bold. The forester falls in battle at Grandson during the conflict, whereas Dietegen survives and becomes a skilled soldier. After the battle at Murten, he goes to Geneva where he lives rather recklessly for a time. One day Dietegen appears in uniform at the forester's home. While there he greets Kūngolt with a cold, wild smile, but he has little else to do with her during his short visit.

On one occasion when Kūngolt sits on a boundary-stone so that her feet are on Ruechensteiner soil, the revengeful Schafürli has her captured and taken to his city. In short order she is sentenced to be executed.
At this critical juncture in Küngolt's life, a repentant Violande hurries to Dietegen and implores him to free Küngolt. According to an old kuechensteiner statute, a woman condemned to death can be saved by a man who desires her as his wife and will, moreover, marry her immediately. Küngolt stands before the hangman, awaiting her fate when Dietegen suddenly leaps upon the scaffold. The beheading does not take place as a result of Dietegen's action and persuasion, and the couple is married on the scaffold. In the bright morning sunshine, Dietegen takes his bride home; she is still wearing the shift. Their love for each other is quickly rekindled, and their happiness appears complete. Küngolt is highly esteemed in the entire area as a soldier and knight until he is eventually killed in battle. Küngolt dies, like her mother, after contracting a cold. The couple does, however, leave some capable descendants.

In this story Keller seeks to reawaken a period of history. In Berlin he read Melchior Schuler's Die Taten und Sitten der alten Siedgenossen, an account rich in historical material and colorful description, from which he obtained many of his ideas for Dietegen.

In a letter to Emil Kuh, Keller stressed the importance of symmetry for the Novelle in question:

Die Symmetrie im "Dietegen" ist ja der Keim der ganzen kleinen Geschichte, da das Einanderreifen der beiden alten Rechtsgebrauche des Lebenschenkens die Idee hergab.

This work revolves mainly around the relationship between Dietegen and Küngolt. The three minor associations


2 Emil Ermatinger, Gottfried Kellers Briefe (Stuttgart and Berlin: Cotta, 1920-25), pp. 105-106.
treated are the following: Dietegen—Küngolt's Mother, Dietegen—Violande, and Küngolt's Father—Violande.

**Dietegen—Küngolt's Mother**

Dietegen's acceptance by Küngolt's mother into her household is complete. This noble lady, who is indeed worthy to be listed among Keller's finest feminine creations, treats the orphaned Dietegen from the outset as if he were her own son. Putting the two children to bed, "sie...konnte sich nicht enthalten, beide zu küssen, so dass nun Dietegen herrlicher aufgehoben war als er...je in seinem Leben geträumt hätte."

(VIII, 238) Later, the mother dresses Dietegen in the clothes of her deceased son.

The reasons why Küngolt's mother regards Dietegen as truly a son are threefold: she longs to have someone replace the painful loss of her own son, she finds Dietegen greatly to her liking, and she is overjoyed at Dietegen's indulgence of Küngolt.

The forester's wife protects Dietegen from the various deceptive acts of her daughter; otherwise the devoted lad would be left entirely to the
frequently merciless treatment administered him by the volatile girl. The mother also allays the youth's fears on occasion. For example, when he is momentarily tortured by the thought that he must return home, she comforts him until he feels secure in the bosom of the family.

Education by example and imperceptible guidance is Küngolt's mother's method of rearing Dietegen. This smacks of Frau Hegel's manner of steering her son Fritz throughout his formative years. That Küngolt's mother regards Dietegen as her daughter's good angel, is implied and actually stated on several occasions. Even when Küngolt wrathfully attempts to stab Dietegen with a pair of scissors, the mother has him exert his healing influence on the girl. The mother pleads: "Geh, versönne dich mir ihr und mach den Trotzkopf wieder gut!" (VIII, 248)

At the dance arranged by the forester, we notice the stark contrast between the Seldwyla und Kuechenstein temperaments. Dietegen, as a well-regulated Ruechensteiner, refuses to allow Küngolt to display her unrestrained affection openly. He also refuses the mother's aggressive efforts to aid her daughter
in this Seldwylan display of emotion. This is perhaps the only time that one might find fault with the foster mother's treatment of Dietegen. The distraught youth's utterance to Königolt, "Du bist noch zu jung zu diesem! Das schickt sich nicht für dich!" (VIII, 256) is a castigation of the mother as well as of the daughter.

Notwithstanding her compliance with her daughter's unseemly emotional display, the forester's wife redeems herself in Dietegen's eyes. In her last remark to him before her untimely death, she addresses Dietegen, as follows:

"Ei du bist ja ein gar gestrenger Gespan! Aber umso treuer wirst du um mein Kind sorgen! Versprich mir, es nie zu verlassen! Sieh, wir sind alle ein lustiges Völklein und es mag sein, dass wir zu wenig an die Zukunft denken!" (VIII, 256)

And her final pronouncement to Dietegen makes her appear clairvoyant: "Komm! versöhne dich mit ihr und lass dich diesmal noch küssen! Nachher sollst du auch deinen Willen haben und ihr Vorgesetzter sein in solchen Sachen!" (VIII, 257)

The forester's wife gives Dietegen understanding as well as love which is perhaps as important as anything a mother can give a child. The forester, too
loves Dietegen like a son and trains him in the many arts necessary for his development into a worthwhile citizen of the community. Nonetheless, it is the mother who gently cares for the youth's basic emotional needs. He, in turn, meets every responsibility concerning Kängolt's difficulties with a stout heart, ever mindful of the debt he owes his foster mother as well as the promise he made never to desert Kängolt. The relationship between Dietegen and the girl's mother could hardly be more fruitful, for there is simple self-giving on both sides.

Dietegen-Violande

Keller makes it abundantly clear that Violande is plotting to separate Kängolt and Dietegen permanently:

Denn sie dachte richtig, dass Dietegen, wenn er das Mädchen zur Frau bekäme, als des Forstmeisters Nachfolger im Hause bleiben und dieser, bei seiner Anhänglichkeit, an seine tote Frau, dann nicht mehr heiraten würde, was dagegen leichter geschehen dürfte, wenn beide Kinder fortkamen und er sich in seinem Hause vereinsamt sähe. (VIII, 262-263)

Her chosen method for accomplishing a breach between the two is perhaps not really ingenious; it does, however, obviate the possibility of her motive's being discovered. She simply plots to have Kängolt
marry one of her many suitors, and she decides that the mayor's son is the best prospect.

Although Küngolt does not marry, Violande gains her objective; Dietegen reaches the point where he can no longer tolerate the giddy atmosphere at the forester's home. Consequently, he takes a job that keeps him occupied elsewhere most of the time.

That Dietegen dislikes the coquettishness in the forester's home and has lost faith in Küngolt, is implied when he decides to avoid her presence by attending fencing school. It is apparent that he realizes that Violande is a party to, or perhaps the instigator of, the sudden wave of frivolity.

Upon viewing Violande and the forester in each other's arms, he demonstrates his unmistakable disfavor:

...er schaute in höchster Betroffenheit, was er da vor sich sah. Verschämt und errötend zog er sich so still als möglich zurück und umring das Haus, um die hintere Tür zu gewinnen. (VIII, 273)

When Violande earnestly seeks to rescue Küngolt from execution, we are totally unprepared for, though pleased with, her change of heart. She, unlike Lydia (Pankraz, der Schmoller) and Züs (Die drei gerechten
Kammacher), but rather like Kängolt and Justine (Das verlorene Lachen), proves that she is of fine mettle after all. Why does this transformation occur in Violande? Perhaps it results from a composite of reasons. Keller mentions one of them when he states: "Sie hatte in der späteren Verlobung mit dem Forstmeister und seinem Tode doch noch etwas Rechtes erlebt und einigen Halt daran genommen." (VIII, 289) In addition, the sudden jolt she receives at learning of the forester's death undoubtedly has a profound effect on her. Finally, the additional shock of coming face to face with Kängolt's impending execution contributes to the transformation.

At first Violande's imploring does not move Dietegen to act on Kängolt's behalf. However, her persuasiveness, carefully nourished over a period of many years, prevails, thus making possible Kängolt's rescue from the jaws of death.

It redounds to Dietegen's credit that he is magnanimous enough to forgive Violande of her previous false and wicked ways. That he can do this without spending any appreciable time in reflection after the sordid account of her misdeeds does indeed speak
well for him. Again we notice that Dietegen does not express himself completely by word of mouth; rather, it is his actions that bespeak many of his thoughts. As a case in point, he does not verbally tell Violande that he forgives her past transgressions, but his actions certainly indicate as much when he gives the exhausted woman money for food and lodging. His faith in her "conversion" is rewarded, for she, as a nun, becomes a valuable counselor and a true friend to Dietegen, his wife, and their progeny.

Küngolt's Father—Violande

The forester falls an easy prey to the chicanery of Violande after his wife's death. Violande is extremely adept at intrigue and eventually proves too wily for the lonesome widower to resist.

Although Violande does not directly cause the bereaved forester sorrow, she does so indirectly as a result of her dealings with Küngolt and Dietegen. In fact, she apparently provides him with real solace when he finds himself virtually all alone. Since he never learns of her underhanded methods to achieve her selfish goals, he is at least spared the heartache of knowing her true character. Her timely appearance
when the forester's wife lies gravely ill is reminiscent of another opportunist, namely Kätter (Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe) who arrives on the scene ostensibly to console Viggi in his hour of need but actually to learn if she might wrangle a proposal from him. Violande's restlessness and rearrangement of the household goods can also be compared with Kätter's activities in Viggi's home.

It is during the forester's proposal to her that Violande makes a straightforward statement to him, perhaps the only time this ever happens and certainly the only record we have of such an occurrence: "Gefall ich Euch endlich und so spät? Wenn Ihr wüssetet, wie gern ich Euch schon gesehen habe, als ich noch ein Kind war!" (VIII, 272) In view of the fact that this confession could hardly serve to impede her cherished hope--indeed it is doubtlessly calculated to render her even more fetching--, we find it quite in keeping with her stealthy tactics. At this juncture Keller shows us his obvious displeasure at the proceedings, for he relates that the elated but beguiled forester believes "den Stein der Weisen gefunden zu haben." (VIII, 272)
It is fortunate that the trusting forester never learns of his betrothed's intrigues. He might well have been unable to bear the strain of an additional travail. It is unfortunate that the forester is killed in battle in the prime of life. Violande's remarkable transformation into a conscience-stricken woman indicates quite lucidly that she would have made a loving wife and much-needed companion had he but survived the war. It stands to reason that the fair-minded forester would have completely forgiven the contrite Violande her transgressions, had he not been killed in battle and had he learned of them.

Dietegen--Küngolt

The circumstance which brings Dietegen and Küngolt together, namely Küngolt's rescue of the supposedly dead Dietegen, begins the relationship between the two which leads to their ultimate marriage. Since Dietegen is a person of high principle, one who would never allow a debt to remain outstanding, not even the subsequent frivolous and odious acts of Küngolt can deter his resolve to stand by her.

Küngolt's deep consternation at seeing Dietegen being led away to the burial ground is worthy of
comment. She exhibits a genuine concern for him by weeping when she sees the boy's coffin. In fact, she is more distraught over what is transpiring, it appears, than any other person present. She, in truth, becomes so disturbed while viewing the gruesome activities that she uncontrollably rushes to the coffin and throws off the lid. Thus, we learn at the outset that there is much of innate value in this young girl of seven. This point seems particularly important to the extent that her subsequent actions throughout much of the Novelle are often loathsome.3

Künzolt's jealous and possessive attachment to Dietegen manifests itself even before the Seldwylans leave Ruechenstein:

3Anna Fierz makes the following assertion regarding the types of women found in Keller's prose works: "Zwischen Gut und böse liegen im Werke Kellers unzählige Spielarten weiblicher Erscheinung."—"Die Frau in der Epik und Lyrik C. Kellers," Jahrbuch der Schweizer Frauen, V (1919), 61. We are inclined to disagree with this opinion and to concur basically with Ernatinger who states that Keller's female characters can be divided into two groups, namely the sensuous or materialistic women and the spiritual ones.—Ernatinger, Gottfried Kellers Leben, p. 250. To be sure, there are some who in the beginning could be classified in the former group but who through heartache and maturity eventually become members of the latter category. As we shall see, Künzolt is a classic example of this transformation.
...jenes kleine Mädchen... trat jetzt plötzlich aus der Menge hervor und stellte sich zornig zwischen den Knaben und die Frau, welche ihn eben küssen wollte; es nahm ihn eifrig bei der Hand, um ihn in den Kreis der Kinder zu führen... 

(VIII, 236)

When the bystanders chorus, "wie gut das Männchen zu ihr passt!" (ibid.), we have every reason to suspect that the relationship between the two children will be a lasting one. Küngolt's offer to let Dietegen share her bed after their return to her home presages their later marriage.

Throughout the early years of the two children, Küngolt is the uncontested leader. This is not at all unusual in the Seldwyla Novellen, for the initial dominance of the female can be noted in varying degrees in several of these stories. However, it should be added that the male usually attains the role of leadership before the conclusion of these Novellen. Strapinski (Kleider machen Leute) and Jukundus (Das verlorene Lachen) are two cases in point.

Küngolt has no fear of Dietegen, although most of the servants tremble before one they consider to be resurrected from the dead. Her bravery and her boldness throughout the story admit of no doubt, even when she is on the verge of being beheaded.
Küngolt's compassion, observed both before and after Dietegen's hanging, is much in evidence during a brief period after the lad's arrival in Seldwylia. She prays for Dietegen, who has apparently not learned to pray, and she shows tender concern when he complains of pains in his neck. Further, she seeks to please him when he expresses an interest in archery by stating that she will make her father's armory available to him. However curtailed this display of Küngolt's virtues might be, it, at least, indicates that she has the latent qualities necessary to become a noble wife for Dietegen.

Intermingled with Küngolt's compassion toward Dietegen is always her insatiable desire to possess him. And he regards her overbearing manner as a matter of course: "Du musst mein Mann werden, wenn wir gross sind, du gehörst mein! Willst du freiwillig?" (VIII, 240) to which the lad replies: "Ja freiwillig..." (ibid.) Her intrepid and devilish inclinations as a young girl are very much in keeping with her later coquettish desire to have the visiting youths from Rüchenstein fall at her feet in adoration. This latter act, by the way, can be compared with Lydia's
craving to have many young men worship her, thereby
giving her a feeling of self-importance. Kängolt
shows her mischievous nature soon after Dietegen's
arrival at the forester's home:

Kängoltchen...hatte unverhohlen das abgelegte
Galgenhemd erwischt und aus Mutwillen sich
über den Kopf gezogen, so dass sie jetzt dar-
in herumspazierte und es auf dem Boden nach-
schleppte. (VIII, 241)

Both Dietegen and the mother are vehemently opposed to
this distasteful prank. This episode might be inter-
preted as portending her near execution; she is wearing
a shift at the time Dietegen rescues her from the scaffold.

Kängolt's maltreatment of Dietegen begins in earnest
when the two children go to school. The young girl has
had advantages offered by the milieu in which she has
been reared; whereas Dietegen's opportunities from
this standpoint have been virtually nil. As a result
of this existing situation, Kängolt takes great delight
in beguiling Dietegen with her knowledge. She taunts
him with misinformation and then has the audacity to
insult his credulity. All of this demonstrates that
Dietegen is willing to endure much from his rescuer;
he certainly will not permit similar ridicule from
others. Since she must always have the upper hand, she begins to tyrannize her faithful friend when he learns to combat her ruses successfully. Her behavior during these formative years might be compared to that of a lioness that is in need of taming. It is obvious throughout these early years that Königolt has not been able to find herself, as if it were. She is discontented with herself, and her ego appears to be at a dangerously low level, as demonstrated by her desperate urge to possess Dietegen.

Königolt's unrelenting desire to own Dietegen does not subside when she becomes a young lady in her teens. She reiterates: "Er gehört niemand als mir, und das schon lange!" (VIII, 254) As might be expected, she behaves herself in a rather unbridled manner toward the young men in her circle. Dietegen, conversely, is reserved and quite withdrawn in mixed groups. His inner composure and contentment are visibly disturbed only by Königolt's behavior toward him and others. Since Keller relates that Dietegen is now in love with Königolt, there is an added reason for Dietegen's concern for her actions.
Dietegen follows a strict moral code and is deeply concerned at Küngolt's apparent moral laxity at a party attended by a group of young couples. Since he loves her, it is exceedingly difficult for him to withstand her caresses, especially since she is abetted by her mother in this endeavor. Nonetheless, his moral fiber stands the test, and, resisting Küngolt's intent to shower him with kisses, he adamantly proclaims: "Du bist noch zu jung zu diesem! Das schickt sich nicht für dich!" (VIII, 256) In view of the young man's capabilities as a forester and his sagacious manner of conducting himself at all times, it comes as no surprise when he later becomes a praiseworthy master of his own home. Küngolt's father is his unfailing guide, and Keller does not let us lose sight of this fact.

It is at the above-mentioned party that Dietegen first lets Küngolt know that he is in the process, at least, of asserting his masculinity:

"Höre, du Kind! Ich lasse nicht mit mir spielen! Von heut an bist du so gut mein Eigentum wie ich das deiner, und kein anderer Mann soll dich lebendig bekommen!" (VIII, 257)

As Küngolt's coquetry blossoms under Violandé's tutelage, Dietegen, in disgust, finds activity that keeps him away
from home during the greater portion of his working hours. In fact, it is likely that he would have left home and sought employment in another town, had it not been for Kängolt’s crime and subsequent incarceration. Surely there would have been little reason for him to remain at the forester’s dwelling after viewing the love scene between the forester and Violande. With Violande as mistress of the home, it would be an unbearable place for Dietegen. Gründl makes the following observation with respect to Dietegen’s withdrawal from the activities in the forester’s home:

So zieht er sich als echter Mann Kellers, wie schon der Grüne Heinrich und Pankraz "in linkischem Schmöllen und Trotz" und in einer die Vereinigung mit der Geliebten immer wieder hindern den Selbstüberheblichkeit zurück.5

It is apparent throughout the Novelle that the forester is a man of virtues. As the story progresses, it comes to mind that Dietegen is even more admirable than his foster father. Of course, we know that the forester erred as a youth, whereas Dietegen does not.

4Ermatinger reasons that the death of the forester’s wife coupled with Violande’s arrival on the scene results in an intense emotional turmoil in the lives of the main characters in the Novelle.—E. Ermatinger, Gottfried Kellers Leben, p. 460.

Further, the forester leads a life of debauchery after his beloved wife's death. Excluding this fact entirely, the following discourse between the two men apropos of Kängolt's confinement indicates that Dietegen is of stronger mettle. The forester confesses: "es sei ein saurer Tanz für ihn, aufs Rathaus zu gehen und bei dem Kind zu wachen..." (VIII, 275) Dietegen quickly retorts, "Ich will es schon tun..." (VIII, 275-276) to which the father gratefully replies, "Tus...du sollst Dank dafür haben!" (VIII, 276) Since the father's love for Kängolt is certainly no stronger than Dietegen's, it hardly seems farfetched to conclude that Dietegen is a more successful self-disciplinarian than is his foster father. It might be added in further support of this assertion that the forester asks Violande to marry him, although Keller at one time opines that the forester "sich nicht viel aus der Fase machte und sie für eine schnurrige Person hielt." (VIII, 262) In short, Dietegen is more inclined to be objective in his actions than is Kängolt's father.

Dietegen's forceful actions throughout the remainder of the Novelle leave no doubt that he has
reached the full stature of manhood. He completely takes over when Kängolt is auctioned, making certain that she is given into the custody of the best possible family. Were it not for his efforts in her behalf, her lot could easily have been one almost too dreadful to contemplate. That he is utterly disillusioned and disgusted with her and that she is ready to submit to his masculine leadership becomes increasingly more evident during the proceedings:

Sie hatte ihn überrascht angeblickt und sah noch mit einem schmerzlichen Lächeln nach ihm zurück; allein er schaute scheinbar ruhig und streng über sie hinweg. (VIII, 276)

Dietegen's deep-rooted intent to perform his avowed duty by looking after Kängolt is demonstrated perhaps most forcefully during her period of imprisonment. Although he is still doubtlessly deeply in love with her, his objective manner of thinking and strong moral code do not fail to unveil her misdoings. Keller makes this clear, and he also states that Dietegen's inexperience of real life prevents him from making a correct judgment; at this juncture in the story, he is simply incapable of recognizing her unusually good qualities:

"Dietegen aber hielt sie nach seinen jugendlich sprö­den Begriffen und in seiner Unerfahrenheit für ein bö­
gewordenes Wesen, das nicht recht tun könne..."
(VIII, 280) In any event, Dietegen's constant vigilance at her place of confinement is excruciatingly taxing, for he has no suitable place to sleep. In fact, it appears that he sleeps very little, if at all, at night. Keller relates that Königolt likes to sleep during the day and to gaze at her faithful sentinel during the night, "während er sie schlafend wählte." (VIII, 281)

Küngolt's period of imprisonment has a marked effect on her. She matures immeasurably through her suffering and humiliation, and she has time to ponder her wrongdoings and to reflect on Dietegen. As mentioned earlier, we find that Keller quite often leads some of his most notable characters through a period of suffering in order to make them upstanding citizens and worthy mates. Ursula (in the Novelle of that title), whose period of suffering was temporary insanity, can be cited as an outstanding example.

Only once during Königolt's imprisonment does Dietegen give us an obvious sign of his deep feeling for her. And his display of emotion—jealousy more than anything else—at first escapes her. This
occurs when he, full of desire to see her, brings her some dainties from home and finds the chaplain caressing her hand. Unfortunately, Dietegen does not realize that this act is meaningless, for she has absolutely no romantic leanings for anyone except him. We are inclined to have compassion on Königolt in this scene, for she has already given us abundant evidence of a contrite heart and of an almost boundless love for Dietegen. When he exclaims "Bin ist hin!" (VIII, 285), Königolt suddenly realizes the impact of these words and the genuineness of his previous devotion. We have the following description of her overwhelming shock: "Sie sank erbleichend an den Ofen hin und die Leutchen gingen betreten auseinander..." (ibid.)

After the forester falls in battle, Dietegen's mastery of the household is uncontested, for "Dietegen hatte angeordnet, dass sie in das Forsthaus kommen solle, um dort mit Violan den vorderhand zu hausen..." (VIII, 289)

As one would expect, Dietegen rises to the occasion in Königolt's hour of greatest need--just as she had in his--and takes her as his wife.
This act is extremely commendable. Even after Violande's eloquent plea and full confession of her evil influence on Kängolt, Dietegen is not at all convinced that Kängolt will make a good wife. He expresses his deep concern about this matter thus: "Bitte Gott mir und ihr dann weiter helfen, wenn sie nicht mehr recht tun kann!"

(VIII, 294)

Mention should be made of the courageous manner in which Kängolt faces death. Knowing that Dietegen believes that he owes his life to her, she feels "durch dieses Erinnern getröstet, so selbstlos und gut war ihr Herz geworden."

(VIII, 294) Her transformation into a truly unselfish being—like Dietegen and Keller's other admirable characters—is now complete. Accordingly, as one who is acquainted with Keller's prose works might expect, the couple's trial period is over, and they can settle down to a successful marriage.

As is the case with several of the Novellen discussed herein, we observe again that love, trust, and confidence play a significant role in the Dietegen-Kängolt relationship. Although Dietegen finds
fault with Küngolt's unbecoming behavior, he bears up under her unsavory acts and ultimately marries her. Dietegen certainly demonstrates trust in Küngolt's conversion although he does not appear fully convinced therein when he leaves to save her from being beheaded. This act, of course, shows that Dietegen's love for Küngolt is not dead, but that it merely needs to be rekindled. As will be observed in the case of Das verlorene Lachen, too, the devotion of the lovers is dormant, not dead; indeed their maturity does much to increase the strength and meaning of their love.
CHAPTER XI
DAS VERLORENNE LACHEN

At a song festival held on the shore of the lake the Seldwyla singing group wins the first prize. The handsome Seldwylan, Jukundus Meyenthal, receives the victor's wreath from the hands of the lovely Justine Glor. During the august ceremony both display the same type of unusual laugh. Their attraction for each other is apparent. However, as the Seldwylans are being entertained by Justine's parents just before returning home, a distinct contrast in their backgrounds becomes evident: Justine has been reared in wealth, and Jukundus is the son of a widow of modest means. Despite this difference in their backgrounds, Frau Meyenthal succeeds in overcoming the objections of the Glor family, and the couple's engagement is announced. After the wedding, they settle in Seldwyla, where Jukundus opens a business selling wood, coal, iron, and cement. The venture fares badly, however, since Jukundus always insists on telling the truth to his customers and invariably believes what they tell him. Eventually his business fails completely, and, cajoled by his wife, he enters the employment of the Glor family. Jukundus exhibits the same unbusinesslike characteristics which were prevalent in his own defunct business, and he fails utterly in his work for the Glor factory.

Justine's religious activity increases under the influence of a vain minister. Jukundus, on the other hand, is repelled by the formulated religion practiced by his wife. When he requests her to help him make a fresh start at earning their livelihood elsewhere, Justine speaks contumaciously to him. As a consequence, Jukundus separates from her. Their unique manner of laughing disappears at this time. Justine repents of her hasty and reproachful action but makes no overture toward a reconciliation, due to the restraining influence of her family.
Eventually the Glor business goes bankrupt, whereby the entire family is left in a destitute condition. In conjunction with this crisis, many of Justine's deep-seated religious beliefs are shattered, largely as a result of the failings of the aforementioned pastor. She goes to him to seek consolation and learns to her consternation that he has become an inveterate speculator who has gambled away his and his wife's money without even telling her about their penurious state. Justine learns further that the minister has even been unable to give consolation to his dying parishioners, so weak is his personal religious conviction.

Desperately in need of spiritual help, Justine visits two extremely poor pietistic women who formerly worked for her family. At the home of these pious women, Justine inadvertently encounters Jukundus. The two are reconciled; they move to the capital city of the Canton, where they and their offspring live fruitful lives. The laugh returns to both Jukundus and Justine, and it is inherited by their children.

After having first planned a simple tale *Das Sängerfest*, Keller later renamed it and inserted an extensive middle section dealing with the political and religious controversies in Switzerland during the eighteen sixties. Because of this insertion, *Das verlorene Lachen* became perhaps the most significant story in the entire group of Seldwyla II *Novellen*. As the final work in the cycle, it serves to bridge the change from the bright past of Seldwyla into the more serious and sedate present. Keller's account of the historical situation is quite accurate.
although he did not slavishly adhere to all the
details involved.\footnote{Hans Max Kriesi, Gottfried Keller als Politiker (Leipzig: Huber Verlag, 1918), p. 193.}

This work created a furor in Zürich because
of its political implications, but even more because
of its position regarding the church. Keller was
sorely disappointed that very little was said about
the poetic or literary value of the Novelle.\footnote{Ibid., p. 199.}

The major relationship in Das verlorene Lachen
is, of course, that of Jukundus and Justine. The
Jukundus--Frau Meyenthal relationship will also be
discussed.

Jukundus--Mother

The relationship between Jukundus and Frau Meyen-
thal is quite similar to the one between Fritz and
Frau Hegel Amrain. Both mothers have been left in
the lurch by their husbands, although the manner in
which this happens is different.\footnote{John L. McHale, Die Form der Novellen Die Leute von Seldwyla von Gottfried Keller und der Schwarzwald-Dorfgeschichten von B. Auerbach (Bern: F. Haupt, 1957), p. 49.} Moreover, both
praiseworthy mothers do all in their power to aid their respective sons whenever and wherever possible; this they do in an aggressive manner so typical of the women in Keller's prose works. Of signal importance is the fact that the two women are not natives of Seldwyla.

In this novelle Jukundus's mother plays an active role in only one phase of her son's life, namely his courtship with and marriage to Justine. When Jukundus tells his mother about the comely Justine, he does not indicate that he intends to pursue his advantage further, for she is in a higher class of society than he. Keller informs us that Frau Meyenthal merely listens and perceives her son's deep-seated attraction. She says "vorderhand nichts mehr" (VI, 316) to that which he has just recounted to her.

Faldensperger gives the following reason for Frau Meyenthal's decision to visit the health resort: "Celle-ci Frau Meyenthal se met en campagne pour tout arranger, car elle est entreprenante et habile, comme les mères dont Keller munit d'ordinaire ses
hérois préférés..."4 At the opportune time Frau Seyenthal confidently tells Frau Glor that she feels compelled "ihre Freude darüber zu äussern, dass sie eine solche wahrhafte Stauffacherinnengestalt kenne-gelernt habe!" (VIII, 317) Gathering momentum when she learns that Justine possesses the same rare laugh as her son, Frau Seyenthal writes him at the first opportunity to come visit her at the resort for a few days. Originally, she had instructed him merely to come for her when she was ready to return home. Her wily plan unfolds quickly after Jukundus arrives, for she nonchalantly takes him to the known locality of the Glor women. The success of this maneuver is instantaneous, for Keller relates that the unbounded happiness of Jukundus and Justine "hinzu so über alle Vorstellung und zwartung selbst derutter Seyenthal..." (VIII, 320)

Frau Seyenthal's joy at finding a girl who she feels would be an ideal wife for her son is mingled with apprehension resulting from the distinct difference in the social classes of the two families. Therefore, her concern as to "wie das nun enden

"würde" (VIII, 320) is perfectly understandable. Notwithstanding the differences in the family backgrounds of the two young people, Frau Meyenthal's subsequent contact with Frau Glor admits of no doubt of her desire to have Justine as a daughter-in-law. When Frau Glor insinuates that Jukundus is of necessity a product of the reproachable Seldwyla milieu, his mother retorts with a forthright explanation:

Allein es komme alles auf die Umstände an. Auch sie habe von aussen her sich da eingehirratet und sei eine gute Partie geheissen worden, und es sei...nicht Übel gegangen, so dass, wie sie glaube, der Sohn gut geraten und für ein gutes und ehrbares Leben empfänglich sei... (VIII, 328)

That this discussion is instrumental in making possible the removal of all obstacles to the marriage is abundantly clear: the engagement of Jukundus and Justine is announced a few months later.

After the marriage, Frau Meyenthal remains, for the most part, in the background. The few times when she does play an active role in the development of the story are for the sole purpose of keeping Jukundus and Justine's marriage intact.

She is influential in persuading her son to return with his wife to the Glor estate after his business
adventures have met with consistent failure. Keller writes that "sie fürchtete die Armut wie ein geschliffenes Schwert." (VIII, 338)

Interestingly enough, both Frau Meyenthal and Justine have a deep fear of poverty. However, the basic reasons for their fears are dissimilar. Jukundus's mother dreads poverty because she has been dangerously close to it, or has perhaps even experienced it. Conversely, Justine displays on several occasions a genuine disdain for indigence, not because she has ever had a taste of it, but for the simple reason that she has seen many others mired in it. Keller informs us that the most significant reason for Frau Meyenthal's abetting the marriage between her son and Justine is her anxiety about Jukundus's future financial security. To be sure, Frau Meyenthal also places great importance upon the suitability of Justine as a wife for her son.

Later, when Jukundus fails in his endeavors as a businessman for the Clor firm, his mother again makes good use of her persuasive art. She assuages Justine's fears about Jukundus's failures and obvious incompetence as a businessman by imploring her daugh-
ter-in-law to be patient: "Jukundus sei gewiss kein dummer Kerl, er werde sich schon noch bewähren u.s.w." (VIII, 352)

The last association between Jukundus and his mother to which Keller refers, occurs under heart-breaking circumstances, namely the time of Jukundus and Justine's separation. The fact that Keller has Frau Meyenthal say nothing when informed of her son's decision, indicates that her hopes for his future have vanished forever. This supposition appears all the more logical when we learn that Jukundus has the sorrowful task of burying his mother soon after their removal to the capital city of the Canton. It seems a pity that Frau Meyenthal does not live long enough to learn that her unmitigated efforts to make his future secure and happy do eventually pay rich dividends. After all, his unrelenting stand against materialism and formulized religion does prevail. In addition, he has a great measure of financial security when he is reunited with Justine. And this security, as stated earlier, is precisely what Frau Meyenthal longed to see him have.
Das verlorene Lachen is unique among the Seldwyla Novellen in that it is imbued with theological content.\(^5\) Keller has Justine and the minister represent the highly organized and fundamental concepts to which he himself was so violently opposed.

The occasion of Jukundus and Justine's first meeting is indeed quite like a fairy tale: the hero is pictured as a handsome young man with the finest voice in the singing society of which he is a member.

and Justine is decidedly the most fetching of all the young ladies chosen to present the various orizes at the singing contest. Keller remarks that "Sie sah... aus wie eine Muse..." (VIII, 308)

At the presentation we learn that Jukundus and Justine are not only unusually good-looking, but also they have been blessed with a charming manner of laughing. Their laugh (flourishing when their relationship is close and disappearing when communications between them break down) plays a significant role throughout the work.

Justine presents Jukundus with a wreath much in the manner that a princess would favor a handsome young man who through great skill or physical prowess had defeated all other competitors in some type of contest.

That the couple is attracted to each other is much in evidence in this first encounter, for they blush throughout the ceremony, "nicht ohne sich wiederholt anzublicken..." (VIII, 309) Not long after this first vis-à-vis meeting between the hero and the heroine, Jukundus espies Justine while he, marching in a procession, exchanges a long-range greeting with her.
In this work, as in many of the Seldayla Novellen, Fate plays a vital role. At the banquet commemorating the gala activities of the singing festival, Jukundus finds himself seated across the table from Justine. It is interesting to compare this scene with the one in Kleider machen Leute in which Strapinski is seated next to Nettchen. In both novellen the dining episodes give real impetus to the development of the relationships between the couples involved. After they have conversed at length while eating, their mutual attraction is stimulated to the extent that they are extremely desirous of continuing their associations.

Justine shows unmistakable interest in Jukundus on the following day when the entire group takes a cruise on a steamship. Keller relates:

\textit{Als...Jukundus wieder in ihre Nähe kam, winkte sie ihm und teilte ihm mit, dass ihre Eltern ...die ganze Gesellschaft auf den Abend in ihre Gärten einladen...und dass sie hoffe, er werde auch so lange dabei bleiben. (VIII,310)}

Those who learn of this confiding invitation realize immediately that the lovely young lady has more than a merely passing interest in Jukundus.

Despite the entertaining activities at the Glor estate, Jukundus reveals by his apparent loneliness
when he is not near Justine, that he is falling more and more in love with her. Beside the basic religious differences of the lovers, which were mentioned earlier, there also exists another impediment regarding a happy relationship between the two, namely their home backgrounds. Jukundus is in an unfavorable position in this regard, for not only does he come from a lower class of society, but he is also a Seldwylan. The Flor family is well aware of the shiftlessness of the inhabitants of this town. When Justine appears and introduces Jukundus to her father and two brothers, Jukundus immediately senses their air of condescension. Nonetheless, he, largely through his mother's aid, is able to surmount the problem of class distinction.

At the time of Jukundus's introduction to her father and two brothers, Justine shows that she is not so narrow-minded as they with respect to class distinction. She endeavors to compensate for her family's rather indifferent treatment of the Seldwyla youth. Upon sensing Jukundus's feelings of embarrassment, she changes the entire mood by conducting him on a tour of the estate. She is doubtlessly also acutely aware of the differences in
their respective backgrounds. Further, she has a fierce pride in her own ancestry. However, she is enamored of Jukundus; thus the class distinction appears less important to her, for the time being at least, than it does to her father and brothers; they unequivocally desire that she marry within her own social group.

After the wedding, the couple settles in Seldwyla, and Justine adjusts well to her new role as homemaker. The fact that the perspicacious Frau Meyenthal is highly pleased with the marriage also attests to its initial success. Jukundus is not a hard-nosed businessman like the men in Justine's family. He is quite obviously far more interested in those things that enrich the soul rather than those that make for material gain. This trait manifests itself when he becomes unwilling to fell the magnificent trees in his vicinity even when his livelihood is dependent upon the profit therefrom. Keller describes the deep concern of the young man thus: "er erschien sich als ein Feind und Verwüster aller grünen Zier und Freude, wurde unlustig und oft traurig...." (VIII, 331) As a result of his
implacable honesty and gullibility, he fails as a businessman, and his wife and mother prevail upon him to begin working in the Glor factory. This is the beginning of the breakdown in Jukundus and Justine's relationship. He is again victimized by the customers because of his unbusiness-like traits, and he loses his self-respect, since he realizes that the Glor family is "carrying" him along.

Rölli makes an interesting comparison of the couple's philosophy of life. He observes:

Jukundus, der zwar ein leichter Idealist, aber innerlich gesund ist, fühlt diese Gefahr [Materialismus]. Er findet bei Justine kein Verständnis für seine Bedürfnisse. Ihre Gesinnung ist zwar ebenfalls ehrenhaft, doch sie überschätzt die Bedeutung der finanziellen Sicherheit, da sie die Armut wie die Pest verabscheut. Sie ist eine echte Tochter ihrer Familie, in der das Wert eines Menschen in erster Linie an seiner wirtschaftlichen Tüchtigkeit gemessen wird...

When Justine surreptitiously informs herself of her husband's bankrupt condition, it is apparent that she is a product of the practical-minded Glor dynasty. She then joyfully makes plans for their removal to her home. At this point we learn that she plays an

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aggressive role in his life as does his mother. Furthermore, it is obvious that Justine is more closely bound to her family than she should be. In her extreme anxiety about a secure financial state for herself and her husband, she loses sight of the concomitant problems that will confront Jukundus when they move to her home. Basically, she is not a selfish person as this scene might lead one to believe, for Keller shows us later that her inability to cement a solid relationship with Jukundus is largely due to immaturity and inexperience. At all events, the lack of confidence shown by the entire Glor family in Jukundus's capabilities is much in evidence, as in the following:

Schon bei der Einwilligung zu dieser Heirat war in dem stolzen Sinne der reichen Leute der Fall vorausgesessen und im geheimen festgesetzt worden, dass die jungen Leute nach Schwanaus kommen sollten, wenn es... in Seldwyla nicht ginge. (VIII, 336)

The simple fact that Justine delights in the prospect of returning home shows that her attitude is not a proper one. Jukundus's clearly stated wish not to move to the Glor estate only serves to strengthen his wife's determination to return home. He comments: "Da würde meine Freiheit und mein Selbst-
bewusstsein dahin sein!") (VIII, 337) She is not yet capable of understanding his plight. To her, other problems are irrelevant if they obviate the possibility of maintaining a substantial bank account.

Possibly the most glaring example of Justine's inability to understand her husband's position occurs during the move. At this juncture her own personal happiness and feeling of security reign supreme:

...bald war sie in Schwanau, um dort die Wohnung einzurichten, bald wieder in Seldwyla, um hier die Dinge zu besorgen, war reichlich mit Geldmitteln versehen und vergess in ihrem frischen Alter günstlich, daran zu denken, ob auch Jukundus noch etwas bedürfe oder in der Hand habe. (VII, 339)

Jukundus and his wife enjoy a pleasant relationship when they first settle in Schwanau, for he is able to perform various duties while spending much of his time with Justine's understanding grandparents. It is at the grandparents' home that the religious conflict between Jukundus and Justine becomes apparent. That Keller is not in accord with Justine's stereotyped religion can be gleaned from the following passage: "...denn sie selbst hing der unbestimmten Zeitreligion an und war darin umso eifriger, je gestaltloser ihre Vorstellungen waren." (VIII, 344)
She also makes it obvious that she regards regular church attendance as indispensable for a Christian. Jukundus, by way of contrast, goes up onto the mountain where he finds the atmosphere more conducive to worship than in the "lauten, aber eintönigen Gesellschaftslärm, welchen die viel sprechenden Leute bei ihren Zusammentünften unten erhoben." (VIII, 343)

In short, Keller seeks to prove that Justine and the minister, who are regarded in the community as paragons of Christianity, are not the ones with true religious perspective, but rather the non-conformist and supposedly indifferent Jukundus: "Ja, die stärksten Glaubenseiferer und Fanatiker haben gewöhnlich gar keine Gottesfurcht, sonst würden sie nicht so leben und handeln, wie sie wirklich tun." (VIII, 346)

The fact that Justine with her smug beliefs cannot accord Jukundus the privilege of choosing his own path toward his Creator leads to dissension and contributes to their eventual separation. And it is only when Justine is able to realize that there is genuine substance to her husband's search to establish rapport with God that a fruitful reconciliation can be effected.

As stated earlier, Justine attaches undue importance to her husband's success as a businessman.
Since Jukundus, while working under the tutelage of the Glor family, even fails in this endeavor, she is crestfallen. She and her family recognize no other mode of success. Consequently, when Jukundus expresses a desire to seek employment in the city, Justine's entire world seems to fall apart.

This announcement, coupled with Jukundus's vitriolic religious discussion with the minister, causes Justine to lose her composure completely, and the separation is inevitable. He agrees with Kölli who remarks that "Die Hauptlippe der Justine wird die Bewerbs- und Bewusstsein." The religious conflict is deep at this point in the story; however, it is a contributing factor, not one that would of itself cause a complete breakdown in the young couple's relationship. Keller recounts the altercation:

Sie brauchte dabei einen Ausdruck, den sie kaum je im Munde geführt und welchen, ohne dass es gerade ein eigentliches Schimpfwort war, doch kein rechter Mann von Seite seiner Frau erträgt. (VII, 36b)

From this moment to the reconciliation, the couple is no longer capable of producing their renowned laughs.

Justine obviously realizes that she is at fault.

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"Kölli, op. cit., p. 73."
Keller writes:

...er [Jukundus] erwartete vergeblich ein Zeichen von ihr, dass sie die geschehene Beleidigung bereue und zurückzunehmen wünsche, während sie hieran von den Ihrigen verhindert wurde...(VIII, 373)

Ironically enough, it is the actions and confession of Justine's supposedly consecrated pastor that are instrumental in helping her to see how she has erred in her relationship with Jukundus. It should be borne in mind that the minister has been the epitome of Christianity to Justine until his astounding confession. When the theologian remorsefully admits that he has squandered his wife's money on unsuccessful speculations and that it is Jukundus, not he, who has the right approach to religion, a successful reconciliation between the estranged couple becomes

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8 The figure of the pastor in Das verlorene Lachen is based on a certain Pastor Lang in Zürich, but in the portrayal Keller was typifying the liberal nineteenth century Protestant clergyman who attempted to combine man-of-the-world living, polite culture, and the literary culture of the time with religion; Keller treats through this character the shallow and grandiloquent religious modernism."—Lawrence Washington, Gottfried Keller's Literary Theory and Portrayal of Men (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Brown University, 1958), p. 68.
possible. She must conclude that Jukundus's position regarding religion and his unmaterialistic attitude are far more tenable than her own. And these two attitudes have been the primary causes of the breakdown of communication as well as of the separation of the couple. Justine's subsequent disappointment in the rote type of Christianity practiced by the Pietists Ursula und Agathchen further contributes to her break with formulized, religious worship.

In the final scene between Justine and Jukundus, when they meet at Justine's grandparents', we learn that a complete reconciliation is pending:

"Sobald sie einander gewahrten, kehrte das verloren gewesene Lachen in ihre Gesichter zurück, und sie umarmten und küsssten sich herzlich."

(VIII, 426)

9Köster makes the following pertinent observation apropos of the manner in which Jukundus and Justine are reunited: "...um unter dem Zwang der allgemeinen Zeitbestrebungen die beiden, die das Lachen verloren haben, schliesslich zusammenzuführen, muss der Dichter den seltsamen Zufall zu Hilfe nehmen, nämlich dass das Gellweib mit Ursula und Agathchen in demselben Hause wohnt und nun am gleichen Tage Jukundus die eine, Justine die beiden andern besucht und sich auf diese Weise die getrennten Taten finden."—Albert Köster, Gottfried Keller, Sieben Vorlesungen (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner Verlag, 1923), p. 115.
With the return of their "verlorenes Lachen", the leitmotiv of this Novelle, Keller shows us that the obstacles preventing a compatible relationship between the couple are a thing of the past. It should be noted, however, that their successful reconciliation results not so much from their own efforts as from external influences such as prevailing conditions and actions of others.  

As they stroll together in the forest, there is still one aggravating problem troubling Justine: she has not yet resolved the question of what role religion should play in her life; she knows only that a formulized type of religion is totally inadequate for her spiritual needs. She is quite obviously in a quandary over this unresolved problem. Finally, she asks Jukundus for advice regarding what they should do with respect to their future religious activities, to which he replies with a resounding "Nichts". He has given a good indication of his approach to religion in the caustic scene with the pastor; now however, he lucidly expresses

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his views on the matter. He finds his Creator in the great out-of-doors and wishes to worship Him not in a church among a group of communicants whose mannerisms he finds obnoxious. He continues:

Ich bin des aufdringlichen Wesens und der Platt- 
heiten aller dieser Unberufenen müde, die auch nichts wissen und mich doch immer behirten wollen. Wenn die persönlichen Gestalten aus einer Religion hinweggezogen sind, so verfallen ihre Tempel und der Rest ist Schweigen. Aber die gewonnene Stille und Ruhe ist nicht der Tod, sondern das Leben, das fortblüht und leuchtet...

(VIII, 429)

Saldensperger gives this penetrating commentary on the significance of Jukundus's, and therewith Keller's religious belief:

...Jukundus, en quelques paroles catégoriques proclame le droit qu'ont les hommes de bonne volonté et de franche conscience, de recuser l'enseignement des sens qui pretendent leur imposer, comme les fondements indispensables de la vie morale, des hypothèses incertaines, dont ils ne sont pas sûr eux-mêmes.  

It is apparent that Justine is now greatly pleased by her husband's adamant stand; earlier she had felt humiliated when Jukundus made a similar declaration to the pastor. She realizes now that "sie ihn längst so offen hätte zu ihr sprechen hören können, wenn sie

11 Saldensperger, op. cit., p. 193
sich eher ihm anvertraut hatte als einem Kirchen-
manne. (VIII, 430) In fact, she now is desirous
of having him express his views in copious detail,
for she, at long last, senses that she, too, can
find solace in the same religious conviction that
her husband expresses. 12

Keller lucidly portrays the lasting relations-
ship between Jukundus and Justine. He names the
couple's two children, Justus and Jukunde. Ermation-
ger observes that Keller thus assigns "dem Knaben das
Leicht, dem Mädchen die Stärke..." 13

Keller also apprises us that both children in-
herit the infectious laughter of their parents. It
is significant that the ability to smile and laugh
has genuine symptomatic significance in this Novelle
as well as in Das Singnöjdicht.

This Novelle bears a close resemblance to Die-
tegen in that the heroines of both works feel that
they have a claim on their male counterparts. Beh-
rend draws the following analysis:

12 Ursula (in the Novelle of that title) makes a
similar change in her religious beliefs which enables
her to marry Hanali Tyr and to accept his way of life.

13 Erminger, op. cit., p. 513.
Both of the women involved are eventually disabused of their preconceived roles of authority and leadership. Only after this change takes place does Keller permit an amicable relationship to exist in which both young women can fulfill their roles as wives and mothers.

CHAPTER XII
CONCLUSION

This investigation has attempted to discover in Keller's Novellen, with special reference to Die Leute von Seldwyla, significant as well as recurring relationships which furnish information with respect to the author's "poetic personality". The objective has been to uncover hitherto unexpressed ideas pertaining to the major and minor relationships found in Keller's works. Furthermore, it has been our intent to show that the nature role in these writings is a decidedly positive character; this fact has received far too little emphasis.

Our study has shown that the male-female relationships in Keller's stories are concerned with successful and unsuccessful courtship. There are marriages both of a happy and an unhappy variety. The mother-son relationship occurs several times in the narratives. There are brother-sister and father-daughter relationships of secondary importance. Platonic friendships play no role in the works under discussion. Only in
the case of John Kabys and Frau Litumlei (Der Schmied seines Glücks) do we find an irrefutably clandestine affair.

Generally, the woman is the more dominant figure in the male-female relationships in Keller's Novellen. Yet, there are numerous instances where the converse is true. In Pankraz, der Schmoller we find that the hero of the same name is an unruly youth who causes his mother and sister to conform to his whims. Viggi (Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe) dominates his gentle wife, Gritli, until he coerces her to leave him.

Dietesen (in the Novelle of that title) is subservient to Kungolt throughout much of the story. We know by his and her demeanor as the work progresses that he is gradually but surely assuming the role of ascendancy. And, of course, he is in complete charge at the conclusion of the narrative. Don Correa (in the Novelle of that title) appears quite docile in his relationship with Laura Veniza until he returns home after a presumed business trip and finds not only that his directives have gone unheeded but that his wife is guilty of infidelity. He then divorces her and subsequently has her hanged. Sebizo (Die Jungfrau und der Teufel) rules his priceless wife even
to the extent of forcing her to begin a journey that she knows presages evil.

A relationship rather similar to that in *Dietegen* exists between Jukundus and Justine (*Das verlorene Lachen*). Justine influences Jukundus against his will to work for the Glor family; however, in the final analysis, he wins her over to his own way of earning a living as well as to his own concept of religion. Ursula (in the *Novelle* of that title) is similarly influenced by Hansli Gyr, for she eventually rejects the fundamental beliefs held by her parents and, after coming to her senses, embraces the religious tenets held by Hansli. Strapinski (*Kleider machen Leute*) does not occupy the role of leadership in his relationship with Bettchen until she decides that he is worthy of her love; then she gives him the reins, literally and figuratively. As a consequence, we observe that the male is, or quite often becomes, the dominant figure in the male-female relationships in Keller's *Novellen*. It appears to us that both the weak-kneed role of the male in these works and the dominant role of the female have frequently been over-emphasized. Indeed, in a Kellerian sense, many of the men in
these works should not be regarded as negative figures. Since a rather large number of these frequently-termed negative characters become successfully integrated and productive members of society, they should most assuredly be viewed as positive individuals, not negative ones.

Of the important males who can be considered passive in their relations with members of the fair sex are Fritz (Frau Regal Amrain und ihr Jüngster), Jobst, Fridolin, and Dietrich (Die drei gerechten Kammacher), Pineiss and the Beguine (Spiegel, das Katzen), Viggi and Kätter (Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe), and the two "iyazinta boys (Eugenia). It is also interesting to notice that Keller does not allow distasteful persons to have children, with the notable exception of John Kalyx and Frau Litzuelli. Perhaps the most obvious example of this occurs in Viggi and Kätter's marriage. The characters whose attitudes and actions are unequivocally frowned upon by Keller at various stages, but who eventually develop into sterling personalities, are permitted to enjoy a happy marriage with children. Noteworthy examples of this type are Fritz (Frau Regal), Stratinski (Kleider machen Leute), Wilhelm (Liebesbriefe), Künzelt (Dieteren), and Ursula (in the Novelle of that
title). We observe that no mention is made that reworkable couples such as Viggi and Kätter (Liebesbriefe) and Liz and Dietrich (Kammerscher) have any children.

The didactic element is found frequently in different types of male-female relationships. There is the mother-son variety, as conspicuously found in Frau Regal's careful, though tacit, rearing of Fritz (Frau Regal), and in the relationship between Dietegen and Kungolt's mother (Dietegen). There is the instructive relationship between lovers, as exemplified by Dietegen's sooting influence on Kungolt, and between a married couple, as exhibited by Jukundus' manner of guiding Justine. Instruction of a non-moral nature occurs when Salomon Der Landvogt von Treffensee) teaches Grassmuck how to paint a riding horse.

Trust, or a lack thereof, plays its role in certain contacts. That quality is much in evidence in the following relationships: (1) Frau Regel-Siritz (Frau Regel); (2) Sali-Vrenchen (Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe); (3) Strupinski-Nettchen (Kleider nach Leute); (4) Forster-Wife (Dietegen); and Eugenia-the Hyazinth Boys (Eugenia). Don Correa (in the Novelle of that
title) believes that he has a faithful wife in Donna Feniza until he returns from a trip and suddenly learns of her vileness. In contrast to Don Correa, Erwin Altenauer (Regine) is unable to believe that his devoted wife is faithful to him. As a result of his lack of faith and Regine's intense desire not to besmirch his name, she takes her own life.

Possessiveness is shown by Frau Regel toward Fritz (Frau Regel), by both Sali and Wrenchen (Romeo and Julia), by Züs (Kammacher) in her relationship with her three suitors, in the Regine as she completely dominates Pinciss (Kätzchen), and by Küngolt's treatment of Dieteren (in the story thus entitled). The related emotion of jealousy is not a trait found often in the Novellen. Excepting Söhn (Kleider machen Leute), Küngolt (Dieteren), and perhaps Adam Litunlei (Der Schmied seines Glückes), it is difficult to find persons in Keller's works who exhibit this characteristic markedly.

Our study has further shown that the love which characterizes many of Keller's figures often results in one person's subordinating all personal interests to the goal of helping another. This self-subordination does not generally take the form of stupendous
sacrifice or risk of one's personal safety. Parkraz's mother and sister spin all the more furiously because of the youth's selfish ways. Frau Regel avows, after Fritz saves her from the advances of the foreman, that she will devote her energies henceforth to caring for her youngest son's developmental needs. Pettchen, upon learning of Strapinski's true worth, is willing to make the sacrifices necessary to become his wife and to do all in her power to render him a successful citizen. Petzki (Liebesbriefe) takes shame upon herself in order to prevent Vigna from becoming the laughingstock of the community. Distegan (in the Novelle by the same name) seeks to serve Funroli as best he can since she saved his life, and Jukundus's mother makes every necessary effort for the purpose of obtaining a financially-secure and happy marriage for her son. Ursula (in the Novelle of the same name), who does risk her own life, ventures onto the battlefield in order to be with and to care for her sweetheart, Marsli.

Keller, as a magnificent writer, does not concern himself with identical problems, nor does he create identical relationships in his Novellen. Still, we have noticed a number of recurrent underlying ideas
in them which reflect his philosophy of life, his
code of ethics, and his inveterately optimistic
nature, which is frequently tempered by his delight-
fully humorous depictions of character and descrip-
tions of settings. As one would expect of a great
Novellendichter, both the plots and the situations
which Keller evolves are unique.

By carefully examining many of Keller's major
and minor male-female relationships, we have attained
a fuller understanding of the individual associations.
Keller's penetrating and subtle manner of mirroring
numerous facets of people's basic natures is of in-
estimable value in that it gives us intrinsic insight
into our own relationships, as well as into those of
others.
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VITA

Olin Everett Newton was born in Fayette, Alabama, the son of Aileen and Olin Everett Newton, M.D. After graduating from Calvin Coolidge High School, Washington, D.C., in 1946, he entered the University of Georgia in Athens, where in 1950 he received the degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts with a major in piano. From 1950 to 1952 he was a member of the Armed Forces. He attended North Texas State University from 1952 to 1954, where he earned a Master of Arts degree with a major in musicology. In 1954 he married Dianne Rogers of Denton, Texas. During the academic year 1954-55 he studied German literature at Würzburg University, Würzburg, Germany. He spent the year 1955-56 studying German at The University of Texas. From 1956 to 1961, he was employed by Arlington State College as instructor in German and French. During the summers of 1957 and 1958, he studied at the Laval University French Summer School, Québec, Canada. In the summer of
1959 he participated in a Fulbright Seminar at the University of Munich, Germany, and during the academic year 1959-60, he taught at the Graf-Anton-Günther Gymnasium, Oldenburg, i.O., Germany, as a Fulbright Exchange Teacher. He spent the summer of 1960 studying at the University of Dijon, France. From the summer of 1961 through the summer of 1962, he was a graduate student in German and French at Louisiana State University. Since the fall of 1962, he has held the position of Assistant Professor of German and French at Stephen F. Austin State College.
Candidate: Clin Everett Newton

Major Field: German Literature

Title of Thesis: The Male-Female Relationships in the Novellen of Gottfried Keller, with Special Reference to Die Leute von Seldwyla

Approved:

Carl Hammer, Jr.
Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Charles E. Kaiser

Margaret Kober Merzbach

Elliott D. Kelly

Date of Examination:

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