

SHORT ABSTRACT

ASPECTS OF PHILISTINISM IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY GERMAN
LITERATURE: EICHENDORFF, KELLER, FONTANE

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D. PHIL.

TRINITY 1990

The thesis aims to explore philistinism as a German literary topos, in the nineteenth century. It begins with an examination of the extra-literary metaphorical usage of key words like Philister and proceeds to a summary of its impact on writers in the period. By so doing, I have tried to present an image of the developing tradition of the literary depiction of philistines. The main part of the thesis is devoted to three writers - Eichendorff, Keller, Fontane - whose work presents us with contrasting responses to the problem of philistinism.

Unlike previous investigations, my approach is not only through explicit linguistic and visual markers, but also

implicit depictions of philistines in the work of the three writers. To achieve this, attention is focussed on tone and literary devices, comic mode, irony, metaphor. I aim thereby to show the function of philistinism in these writings, an analysis not previously attempted.

Eichendorff's work is shown to be imbued with a fundamental antithesis between the lives of Dichter and Philister, so comprehensive as to include eschatological implications. In Keller we notice a questioning of such a dichotomy, an unwillingness to acquiesce in its distinctions and an emphasis on society in determining the worth of his characters. Fontane's work represents the most radical re-assessment of the Romantic position and displays a clear shift from categorical thinking to a pervasive ambivalence. Whilst philistinism is an issue for all three writers, the differences in their approach and consequent portrayals are revealing: my Epilogue suggests that their different modes of presentation reflect changes of ethos from Romanticism to realism, which in turn reflect changes in social values over the course of the nineteenth century. The interest of the present thesis is its demonstration that such changes can, in German literary culture, be so precisely observed in the changing treatment of the topos of philistinism.

LONG ABSTRACT

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I consider philistinism in nineteenth-century literature written in German in order to establish that it represents a uniquely widespread and diverse phenomenon within the period. Philistinism as a cultural concept has a history stretching from the later eighteenth into the twentieth century in German letters. Indeed, by the time of the Romantics it has become a literary topos. My investigations have suggested that the topos proves a useful instrument with which to examine changes in social ethos on the path from idealism to realism, which is the ideological history of the nineteenth century.

In terms of method, I have first attempted to

establish a linguistic framework by investigating the range of words associated with philistinism in German, concentrating on Philister as the most common one, but researching the other words that were its synonyms or near-synonyms, for differing periods of time. Many of them, previously neutral or specialist in usage, come to enrich an expanding linguistic storehouse. The various dictionaries and other lexicographical works provide a further basis for exploration, in that they often illustrate their definitions with quotations from particular literary works. Through these sources, one begins to realize how ubiquitous the concern with philistinism appears to be in nineteenth-century literature, indeed that a tradition has come into being in the sense of a continuously developing literary topos.

Chapter One is an attempt to trace the origins and development of the metaphorical usage of Philister, beginning with the Sturm und Drang's emotive contrast between Genie and Philister, the influence of Goethe's Werther and the impact of the Xenien of 1796. From Weimar Classicism we move to the contribution made by the Romantics, particularly the encyclopaedic Der Philister vor, in und nach der Geschichte by Clemens Brentano. There follow the political connotations of philistinism by reference to Heine, Junges Deutschland and other writers including Marx and Herwegh. Close attention is paid to Friedrich Nietzsche's piece on 'David Strauss' from the Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen, since it delineates the Bildungsphilister. This section concludes with reference to

further developments in Wilhelm Raabe and Frank Wedekind.

The next three chapters are devoted to a study of the impact of philistinism on the work of three contrasting writers - Joseph von Eichendorff, Gottfried Keller and Theodor Fontane. Their creative lives span the entire century and overlap sufficiently for us to occasionally compare their reactions to similar events. They differ markedly in terms of social background and upbringing, their conception of the function of literature and their attitudes to a whole range of other issues, including philistinism. By treating each one individually in the extensive manner I have indicated I hoped to be able to make meaningful observations on their respective stances regarding philistinism, including trying to account for any differences that emerge in their literary depiction of the topos.

In Chapter Two I examine the works of Eichendorff, which stand in close relation to the application of the term Philister by students when referring to citizens, and he uses the word naturally and quite frequently in his writings. More decisively than even these explicit references indicate, his works are clearly organized so that distinctions between students or Dichter and philistines are metaphorically evident. There is a manifest and latent sympathy for the preoccupations of the former and an avowed distaste for the life-style of the latter. This is evoked by disparaging depictions of conventional attitudes to work and marriage. The Philister are also visually and aurally distinct, through

their speech, dress, movements and opinions. By means of a sample text, Krieg den Philistern, I aim to illustrate not only the themes that Eichendorff introduces regarding the Philister, but his underlying views and his literary presentation of them. I then investigate the extent to which philistinism is displayed in the opinions and attitudes of Philister towards certain key issues in Eichendorff's work - Nature, Religion, Politics and Poesie. The most common philistine responses involve materialism, utilitarianism and a false kind of Aufklärung rationalism. The attributes of the typical Eichendorff hero highlight the 'values' of the philistines by contrast: an authentic intensity is shown to typify their response to Poesie, as serious and all-consuming as the philistine's attitude is revealed as superficial and partial; they are seen in idealistic terms as vigorous, youthful crusaders against prevailing mediocrity. Eichendorff's stance is unashamedly combative and élitist. However, his comic depictions of philistinism without doubt contribute to the development of the topos as a lively and entertaining tradition i.e. the literary attractiveness of philistinism. He is part of the century-long practice of enhancing the drabness of philistine existence through an act of comic creativity, and in this respect he is a forerunner of Keller and Fontane. Also, his poetic talents aside, there is much of the conscientious philistine in Eichendorff's own life-style. Ideal heroes in an ideal, fictional landscape are needed to counter the constraints and frustrations of the

real world, where he had to compromise. In his writing he could present an uncompromising vision that the complexities of life rendered impossible. Thus, whilst I suggest that we also become aware of a muted ambivalence in Eichendorff's attitude, I conclude that he nonetheless sustains a remarkably forceful dichotomy between the poles of Philister and Dichter.

Chapter Three examines the work of Gottfried Keller. I explain why a pre-eminently Swiss writer seems to me to contribute to the German tradition of treating philistinism. His different socio-political awareness undoubtedly affects his attitudes to key issues of philistinism and the role of the artist. Moreover, since he projects the values of Poetic Realism, his sympathies are markedly different from Eichendorff's on a range of other matters. I discuss his work chronologically, in order to observe the effect on his view of philistinism of a life which displays some abrupt changes of attitude. Where Eichendorff had decried the Jungdeutsch writers and their expression of political opinions through poetry, Keller is a political activist. At the same time he displays an urgent interest in the literary education of his countrymen and begins to embark on literary works which are overtly educative. He thus shares with Eichendorff a disdain for popular, ephemeral literature and sets his sights on encouraging the appreciation of classical works. He shows none of the ideological purity of Eichendorff, and his fulsome praise of Hoffmann, whom

Eichendorff had sharply criticized, testifies to his uncertainty about how to reconcile his ideals with the values of the society of his time: he combines high literary values with a broad sympathy for his Swiss countrymen in their more prosaic pursuits. This is evident also in his early rejection of Eichendorff's prevalent sense of dualism regarding the Philister. Keller readily concedes that every human being is destined to succumb in some measure, sooner or later, to philistinism. This helps account for his tolerance of foibles that Eichendorff would have found unacceptable.

In the 1850s he is critical of the prevailing fashion of depicting philistinism and now states unequivocally, in contrast to the Jungdeutsch writers, that it is not a fit subject for poetry, which he feels is being degraded in the practice. By means of a sample text - Die drei gerechten Kammacher - I attempt to integrate the study of philistinism in a complete work, showing how Keller is still concerned implicitly with the same kind of issues raised by Eichendorff and others, particularly the pretentious display of knowledge and culture. He is, however, neither as convinced of the pre-eminence of literature as Eichendorff nor as assertive in his defence of it against all other human activities. His tendency is to be integrative rather than divisive, so that the categorical distinctions of the Romantics are less compelling. This sense of reciprocity continues noticeably in the 1860s before and after his appointment to a public position in Zürich. He is sharply critical of literary cults

and seems to caricature Romantic Dichter in figures such as Vigi Störteler in Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe.

This tendency to criticize delusions of literary ability continues in the 1870s and is heightened by his distaste for the new cultural arrogance that is an apparent consequence of the Franco-Prussian war. In the 1880s he is even more scathing about the combination of material unscrupulousness and cultural pretensions, particularly noticeable in Martin Salander. Generally, though, he is more optimistic about the potential within both humanity and society than was Eichendorff. He is also more normative, insisting that his characters conform to the demands of society. Elitism is extremely suspect in his more democratic system.

Like many other authors, he sometimes refers to other writers as Philister, notably Meyer, Stifter and Nietzsche. The latter he finds unappealing because of the arrogant, strident tone of his 'David Strauss' polemic. It reminds him of the Romantic dichotomy of values he has jettisoned. Aware of philistinism in himself, he finds Nietzsche's assumption of immunity intolerable. The uncompromisingly direct and negative nature of Nietzsche's remarks goes beyond the bounds of the benevolent irony that is Keller's hallmark as narrator. Whilst his novellas can be satirical, it is rare for them to be wittily destructive in the manner of Die drei gerechten Kammacher; more often, his comic technique involves humorous depictions of philistine pretensions, which he undercuts. He produces a more engaging comedy from the

foibles of the philistine than the more combative Eichendorff.

Chapter Four treats the works of Theodor Fontane, concentrating on the Berlin novels and demonstrating the manner in which he uses characters from different classes to depict a variety of responses to Bildung. We note a tendency to idealize certain classes, especially the landed aristocracy and its more eccentric representatives. With the aid of a sample text, Frau Jenny Treibel, I try to indicate how Fontane's conception of Philister has been transformed into a particular class attitude, that of the bourgeoisie. He uses them to focus attention on the ills of the age, in the aftermath of the Gründerjahre. As with Eichendorff and Keller, the primary critical emphasis is on materialism linked with certain literary and other idealist affectations.

I examine the role of speech in Fontane's works and show how acutely conscious he is that human qualities become evident in conversation unclouded by pedantry or rigid principle. In a section on religion and ethics I indicate the extent to which Fontane distrusts fanaticism or any other extreme attitudes. Even idealism is suspect to him because it is 'unnatural' and tends to harm human relationships, which are the supreme end in life. As a result of this absence of absolute criteria, the philistinism of the Romantic era which implied sharply differing attitudes to life, inevitable conflict, has been rejected. Fontane is less interested in

passing judgement on his philistines or their antitheses, and more concerned to show the value of natural human qualities. Differently from Eichendorff, he sides with members of the aristocracy who reveal a natural charm that contrasts with the inauthenticity of bourgeois poseurs.

In the section on provincialism and idylls I explore Fontane's reaction to the small-town version of philistinism, where he shows a mixture of stereotypical metropolitan superiority and a more balanced assessment. By reference to key conversations in certain works, I also show how a rural or more primitive realm has a delusive attractiveness for characters who have encountered problems with social conventions on marriage. When such idylls are the result of wishful thinking to circumvent social realities, Fontane shows how evasion is tantamount to philistinism and resignation the more appropriate course of action.

Fontane is insufficiently combative as a literary voice to use philistinism as a blunt instrument. He is more restrained about the role of the arts and reticent about his own importance as a writer. True, in his correspondence he is much more forthright and uses words like Philister and Bourgeois in utterly disparaging tones: but transforms the topos of the philistine almost beyond recognition in his literary work, where it functions at most as a negative aspect of personality. The overall impression is one of ambivalence towards his characters, whether they are viewed as essentially negative or essentially positive. His tone of

ironic amusement and his sceptical view of idealism mean that some of his most philistine characters such as Jenny Treibel herself, dominate the literary works in which they appear, in the same way in which they dominate society. Fontane's depiction is a reflection of new and harsh social realities - an empire controlled by philistines. His comic vision is that of a realist, for whom characterization replaces caricature.

In the Epilogue, I suggest that the stylistic changes from Eichendorff's polemical caricature through Keller's ambivalent fusion of witty satire and humorous connivance to Fontane's realist characterization reflects the changes of ethos from Romanticism through Poetic Realism to realism. These in turn, we know, reflect the social, economic and ideological transformation that occurred over the nineteenth century. It is peculiar to German literary culture that these transformations can be so precisely observed in the changing treatment of the topos of philistinism.

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TRINITY 1990 [ie. 1991]^{HT}

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AV Kellers Briefe in einem Band, edited by Peter Goldammer, Aufbau-Verlag (Berlin and Weimar, 1982)
- AV Theodor Fontane, Briefe, edited by Gotthart Erler, third edition, 2 vols, Aufbau-Verlag (Berlin and Weimar, 1989)
- FW Fontanes Werke in fünf Bänden, Aufbau-Verlag (Berlin and Weimar, 1977)
- GB Gottfried Keller, Gesammelte Briefe, edited by Carl Helbling, 4 vols (Bern, 1950-54)
- GLL German Life and Letters
- GQ Germanic Quarterly
- GRM Germanisch-Romanische-Monatsschrift
- HA Gottfried Keller, Sämtliche Werke und ausgewählte Briefe, edited by Clemens Heselhaus, 3 vols, Hanser Verlag (Munich, 1956-58; 1970)
- HA Theodor Fontane, Werke, Schriften und Briefe, edited by Walter Keitel and Helmut Nürnberger, second edition, Hanser Ausgabe (Munich, 1971-1980)
- MLR Modern Language Review
- OGS Oxford German Studies
- PV Theodor Fontane, Briefe, edited by Kurt Schreinert and Charlotte Jolles, 4 vols, Propyläen Verlag (Frankfurt-am-Main/Berlin, 1968-71)
- SW Gottfried Keller, Sämtliche Werke, edited by Jonas Fränkel and Carl Helbling, 24 vols (Bern/Erlenbach-Zürich, 1926-49)
- WA Joseph von Eichendorff, Werke, 4 vols, Winkler Verlag (Munich, 1971-)

INTRODUCTION

Words like Philister appear with relative frequency in literary surveys of the nineteenth century in German,¹ yet little seems to have been written at any length on the subject of philistinism. Dr E. Morgan has, in a series of articles, attempted to pinpoint how Goethe and, in particular, Romantic writers define and depict philistines in their works.² She does not write extensively on any one writer or any single work in this regard. From her articles, it is clear that Hoffmann and Heine use terms associated with philistinism very extensively, as do the Romantics in general. Dieter Arendt goes so far as to suggest that the Philister is a literary cliché in the Romantic period in Germany.³ He is equally convinced that it is a preoccupation peculiar to literature and that its development can best be traced there. E.V.K. Brill furthermore finds that 'the concept of Philistinism seems to be particularly current in German literature'.⁴ In common with other commentators, he points to the fragmented nature of pre-unification Germany as a determining factor i.e. the narrowly provincial attitudes which are seen as characteristic of philistinism were fostered by a political fact: 'Undoubtedly the system of Kleinstaaterei produced a soil in which Philistinism, particularly in social and political attitudes, could thrive'.⁵ With the unification of Germany under Bismarck and Prussia in 1871 we might expect to see a change in the nature

or status of this philistinism.

Yet another critic grants that philistinism is to be found among all peoples, but that it is more rampant in Germany:

Jedes Volk und jedes Land besitzt diese Gattung Menschen, aber unter allen Völkern ist bekanntermassen der Deutsche immer der grösste Philister gewesen; in Deutschland hat die Philisterhaftigkeit ihre vollendete Spezies ausgebildet, dank der steten Zerrissenheit.⁶

This is neither very easy to prove nor necessarily true.⁷

What is important is that certain Germans - usually 'serious' writers - are apparently more conscious of the phenomenon than their English, French or other European counterparts. It has further been suggested that this may result from the starker contrast between the ideals of these writers and the social and political conditions in which they lived.⁸ Perhaps, this line of argument continues, they were more demanding, more critical and loftier than their contemporaries elsewhere in Europe. German literature is moreover noted for its speculative, even philosophical, bent in its higher reaches: perhaps by aiming higher these writers were the more painfully aware of the baseness below. Whether or not social and political conditions in Germany in the nineteenth century were in fact worse than in other European countries, these German writers felt them to be so; and the philistine became an embodiment of their dissatisfactions with their own people and the evolution of their society. The forms taken by these dissatisfactions have generic

resemblances, but also, as other studies have shown, local variations.

A recurrent observation in studies of philistinism is that it almost wholly a middle-class mode of behaviour. Arendt emphasizes this when he remarks: 'Dem deutschen Bürger geht seine Karikatur wie ein Schatten zur Seite: der Philister'.⁹ E.V.K. Brill is equally convinced that: 'Philistinism seems to be essentially a middle-class phenomenon'.¹⁰ For Matthew Arnold, in Culture and Anarchy, the English middle classes consist almost entirely of 'Philistines'.¹¹ A writer of aristocratic origins could, no doubt, feel superior to the middle classes and despise them as Philister; but a middle-class writer with affinities for the leisured and aristocratic way of life might similarly denounce the less enlightened and vulgar elements of his own class. If the 'charges' brought are to include inadequate appreciation of the arts, hypertrophied materialism, narrow or hypocritical attitudes in religion and politics, self-satisfaction and vulgar showiness, then it does seem as though the middle classes must be the obvious target.¹² In nineteenth-century Germany, the working classes - impoverished agricultural or industrial labourers - could hardly become the objects of scorn but rather of empathy or pity. Aristocrats, by dint of inherited wealth and 'superior' breeding, could be lavish with money and fritter it away without seeming materialistic. Their impeccable manners could lend their most narrow-minded utterances charm or

naturalness. In all this, they captured the imagination of Matthew Arnold, among others. But in between the two classes, striving from material insecurity and lack of education of the workers to the lifestyle of the aristocrats, the middle classes could, in their ambition for social advancement, seem unsavoury. They were often in the vanguard of change, which they considered too uncritically as progress, and they could easily antagonize finer spirits - many of them distinguished writers of the time - who branded them philistines.

The more ephemeral writing in magazines of the day, the work of lesser talents (Trivialliteratur), does not so readily question the values of its middle-class readers. These writers tend to identify with the class they are largely depicting and present a flattering image of it. We notice this in the works of Freytag and Spielhagen. As Eda Sagarra remarks: 'Freytag presented middle-class society in the fifties and sixties as the middle class liked to see themselves'.¹³ By their refusal to present a critical view, these authors no doubt boosted the sales of their remarkably popular works. Such writers are by nature optimistic and view political and economic reforms as well as scientific discoveries with uncritical acclaim. They are epigones of the Enlightenment who are themselves so often the targets of more talented and more demanding writers. Middle-class periodicals such as the Gartenlaube, started by Ernst Keil in 1853, indeed had the express intention of projecting a rosy view of progress. Ernst Kohn-Bramstedt remarks: 'Keil's intention was

to produce a popular journal whose chief aim should be to popularize the achievements of science. In other words, the periodical wanted to be the organ of a middle-class, liberal enlightenment'.¹⁴ On this account, the journal often finds itself presenting the views of the so-called Bildungsphilister, the frequent butt of more discerning writers. These latter writers more often felt themselves at variance with the prevailing ethos of their times, and saw their function as trying to help mould or influence culture in society. One of their weapons was satire of philistinism, and, as Brill points out: 'its vehemence as an epithet of contempt increases in proportion to the extent to which the poet feels himself at variance with existing society'.¹⁵

The tradition of satire on philistinism shows interesting continuities. The Romantics found the figure of the Philister virtually indispensable in defining their views. Their inventive, speculative, high-flown art, the fervour with which they invested their interest in aesthetic, literary, religious and mystical pursuits forced them out of the everyday world, which they abandoned to the philistines. The artist in this context is a superior, isolated figure struggling with his role, and he has a somewhat exalted view of his position in the community at large. Clemens Brentano's classic compilation of philistine attitudes Der Philister vor, in und nach der Geschichte, is a work which contemporaries considered a storehouse of information on the topic. In the Biedermeier period we note a far closer

relationship between the writer and society so that the tensions which appear to give rise to depictions of philistinism do not surface. Sagarra sums up: 'In contrast with the preceding generation of Romantic writers, the difference between "art" and "popular culture" was in practice very slight'.¹⁶ This remains in some measure true up to the period of the Bismarckian Reich, when serious art and the tastes of society at large were, as in the early part of the century, widely divergent. Sagarra again: 'It was in these years [Gründerzeit] that there emerged in Germany a sense of dichotomy between serious art and that favoured by official and popular taste: this development was later given the name of Germany's two cultures'.¹⁷ Here Nietzsche's thoughts in the 'David Strauss' section of Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen bring out all the attributes of the Bildungsphilister as the public exponent of culture during the Second Empire.

The three writers I have chosen to map out these developments on the German cultural scene - Eichendorff, Keller and Fontane - have widely differing standpoints. Joseph von Eichendorff, a Romantic writer of the younger generation, produced his works from the early years of the century into the 1850s, but his writing belongs essentially to the Romantic period, when preoccupation with philistinism was so intense as to be obsessive. His work, of which no complete study from this perspective exists, provides a massive quarry for evidence of anti-philistinism. Gottfried

Keller, associated with the literary mode of Poetic Realism, is productive from the 1840s to the 1880s. The writers of Poetic Realism appear to share many values with the populace, and were unlikely to be quite so aggressive towards philistines as were the Romantics.¹⁸ This is particularly the case in Keller's German-Swiss homeland, where the increasing pervasiveness of middle-class material and moral values, was well in advance of similar developments in Germany. With his roots in German classical culture and its characteristic idealism, Keller offers us in sharp focus the essential picture of his age of transition between Romantic and realist attitudes. Theodor Fontane confronts the problem of values at a moment when the bourgeois ethos appears triumphant: whilst Romantic élitism is scarcely a possible attitude for him, an otherwise moribund aristocracy can appear to offer a humane alternative to the crassness of the rising bourgeoisie. Fontane's realism, however, makes for a more ambivalent approach to social values than we find in either Eichendorff or Keller, and so for a further re-definition of philistinism.

The first task is, however, to trace the history of the key term and how it came to develop the great range of associations that it has. It is, of course, not the only word that indicates the philistine in German. Others appear significant at particular periods. German is rich in the terminology of philistinism. To this end a range of dictionaries and articles produced over the past two hundred

years provides a starting point. We can discover here where lexicographers believe there to be common ground between terms, and we can to some extent discover when individual words become associated with the idea of philistinism. But the attention must then move to the literary contexts themselves, for the phenomenon of philistinism is predominantly not one found in spoken language or popular expression. The word Philister, as a word from the literary register, can even be thought to be somewhat esoteric and its exclusion from some nineteenth-century dictionaries forgivable on that ground. Thus, my second task is to demonstrate convincingly that a literary tradition begins to establish itself by the outset of the nineteenth century and is further developed during that century. It is into this framework that the works of Eichendorff, Keller and Fontane will be placed, with a view to assessing their specific contribution to the continuing tradition. This necessitates study of the terms they use, the explicit comments they or their characters make on the subject, and - most importantly - the implicit depictions of philistinism, where the individual writer's nuance is most felt. Hence the need to consider stylistic devices such as metaphor, symbol, irony, satire.

The topos of the philistine is, of course, not static in any of the three writers under consideration, and the chronological development in each will help to document the diversity manifested by the phenomenon.¹⁹ There is no single

and simple definition that sums up all the parts of the whole. Other critics have concentrated, circumspectly, on the explicit statements of literary philistinism, in particular: 'die Philister-Figur möglichst nur mit ihrem Namen auftreten zu lassen'.²⁰ They are wary of courting the evident danger, otherwise, of appearing to see philistinism everywhere: 'Die Umrisslinien der in der Literatur überall auftauchenden Schatten ins Unfassbare zu verflüchtigen'.²¹ Whilst I am convinced of the centrality of philistinism in German Literature I would not wish to assert its ubiquity. Without the exaggerated caution of Arendt I will proceed circumspectly. For example, one must be cautious about the visual caricature of the philistine in German literature. I am thinking of the image of the portly, middle-aged, sleepy-headed man complete with pipe and nightcap. Not all pipe-smokers or nightcap-wearers are philistines, and there are philistines who sport neither. Again Arendt: 'Der Philister bzw. der Spiessbürger ist nicht kenntlich an bestimmten äusseren Merkmalen - Pfeife und Punschglas sind nicht ausschliesslich seine Insignien, sondern schmücken auch die Vitrinen der Sonderlinge und sonstigen Menschen'. However, I disagree with Arendt when he adds: 'der Philister ist äusserlich durchaus unauffällig'.²² The authors with whom I am concerned do resort to visual caricature and the stock devices of visual comedy; and this is not merely in order to portray universal foibles but to delineate the nineteenth-century philistine, whether tolerantly, benevolently or

malevolently. I shall offer reasons for the particular standpoint.

To conclude, the concerns of the present thesis are threefold: to establish a literary tradition for the idea of the Philister, and how this can be accounted for in terms of 'idealism' and 'realism'; to examine the approach of three important writers for whom the topos has significance, revealing their intellectual and moral stance with respect to the philistine; to register differences in the attitude to the Philister expressed by these writers and thereby map changes in representative attitudes to philistinism through a century of social, economic and political evolution.

NOTES

1. See Günther Albrecht, Deutsches Schriftstellerlexikon: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart (Weimar, 1963).
2. See bibliography under Estelle Morgan or McIlvenna.
3. Dieter Arendt, 'Das Philistertum des 19. Jahrhunderts', Der Monat, H. 248 (1969), pp. 33-49 (p. 40).
4. E.V.K. Brill, 'The Philistine concept in German Literature', European Studies Review (1977), pp. 77-93 (p. 78).
5. *ibid.*, p. 79.
6. Edvard Fuchs, Die Karikatur der europäischen Völker, Zweiter Teil (Munich, 1921), pp. 209-219 (p. 209).
7. Vladimir Nabokov, 'Philistines and Philistinism', New York Review (September, 1981), pp. 52-53.
8. Brill, p. 90.
9. Arendt, p. 33.
10. Brill, p. 79.
11. Matthew Arnold, Culture and Anarchy (London, 1869), Section iii, pp. 93-141.
12. Peter Gay, Freud, Jews and other Germans: Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture (New York, 1978), p. 66.
13. Eda Sagarra, Tradition and Revolution: German Literature and Society 1830-1890 (Birkenhead, 1971), p. 213: 'Freitag and Spielhagen (...) had the highest sales amongst the nineteenth-century German novelists (...) Soll und Haben was probably the most widely-read novel of the century'.
14. Ernst Kohn-Bramstedt, Aristocracy and the middle classes in nineteenth century Germany (London, 1937), p. 204.
15. Brill, p. 90.
16. Sagarra, p. 79.
17. *op cit.*, p. 288.
18. Kohn-Bramstedt, p. 202.
19. My procedure here to some extent follows that of Herman Meyer's study of the 'Sonderling', a related theme - where the author eschews any attempt to define so elusive a quarry and strives to offer 'statt einer Definition (...) das Ganze der Untersuchung in seiner bunten Mannigfaltigkeit'.
Herman Meyer, Der Sonderling in der deutschen Dichtung (Munich, 1963), p. 17.
20. Arendt, p. 33.
21. *ibid.*
22. Dieter Arendt, 'Wilhelm Raabe und der "Romantische Schlachtruf: Krieg den Philistern!"', in Jahrbuch der Raabe-Gesellschaft (1981), pp. 55-83 (p. 73).

CHAPTER ONE

PHILISTINISM: THE GERMAN TRADITION

1. Sources - The Bible. Literal and metaphorical prototypes.

Despite the great confidence expressed in volume 2 of the Schulz/Basler dictionary, with regard to Philister:

Das 'Kern- und Schlagwort der Studentensprache', dessen Geschichte auch in ihren Auswirkungen bis in unseren Tag nun, nach fast fünfzigjähriger Forscherarbeit, aufgehellert ist.¹

there is a great deal that can still be learnt about the etymology and history of this word. Nevertheless, the broad lines of its development throughout the centuries are quite generally accepted, even though the interpretation of some of the details is still contentious.

The biblical Philistines, who were later called Philister in Luther's translation of the Bible (1534), do not appear in a very favourable light in the Old Testament. The treatment they receive at the hands of the Hebrew chroniclers makes it difficult to be objective about whether their poor reputation was deserved.² Recent excavations of the ancient city of Ekron are beginning to cast doubt on the imputation that they were uncultured. It has been discovered that 'the Philistines, whatever may have been said about them, were in fact one of the most highly civilized peoples of their time'.³

In the Books of Judges and Kings particularly they appear as warlike and powerful, overlords of the Hebrew people for many years. At the same time, they are noted for their devious methods - culminating in the treachery of Delilah - as well as their arrogance, personified in the gigantic braggadocio Goliath. This is naturally a one-sided depiction, but an influential one. As the enemies of the Hebrew race trying to establish itself in the area of Palestine they inevitably suffer from the emphases (distortions?) of the patriotic historian. They fall victim also to the lionizing of the great Jewish leaders, Samson and David, whose reputations rest largely on their ability to inflict great defeats on the Philistines. They invariably undermine the warlike reputation of the Philistines by their single-handed victories with unpromising weapons such as jawbones or slingshots.⁴

A number of later metaphorical uses of the term Philister have seized upon this original biblical context with its jaundiced view of those enemies of the 'chosen race'. The episodes in the Samson narrative in particular, in Judges chapters 13-16, are so familiar that they provide many German writers, among them Goethe and Schiller, with a storehouse of incident which they sometimes use to illustrate their more extended application of Philister. The biblical background then remains as a reference source for metaphorical elaboration, the details of literal incidents firing the imagination of writers with satirical intent.

Certain church leaders in the early Christian church who made exegeses of various parts of the Bible helped to accentuate the poor reputation the Philister already enjoyed by drawing metaphorical and indeed spiritual conclusions from their behaviour. An apparently simple incident involving Isaac and his enemies the Philistines provides an example of this:

For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth.⁵

Schoppe notes that Origen saw this as more than a simple act of calculated malice to create water problems, but considered it analogous to the sources (wells) of God's word being blocked by the Philistines, allies of the Devil.⁶ The Philister are therefore not only an uncircumcised race who worship a pagan idol, Dagon, but they are presented as veritable accomplices of the Evil One. Pope Gregory (born 590 AD) takes Origen's view further still, as Krüger notes, by comparing the very act of reading the Bible to the digging of wells - 'wenn wir in die verborgenen Tiefen der Schrift eindringen'.⁷ Rather than merely blocking wells with earth, the Philister are perceived as interfering in the acquisition of 'das Wasser der göttlichen Erkenntnis' by distracting the reader with 'irdische Gedanken'.⁸

In the Middle Ages, again according to Krüger, it seems that the famous writer Peter Abelard (born 1079 AD) echoes the thoughts of both Origen and Pope Gregory in his eighth letter to Héloïse, referring to the unsatisfactory attitudes

of lay monks in the monasteries:

Jene wollen mit uns nur in irdischem Handel und Wandel zu tun haben, nicht aber in geistlichem Verkehr mit uns stehen, und gleichen den Philistern, die den Isaak verfolgten, als er einen Brunnen graben wollte.⁹

The metaphorical interpretation of the passage must therefore have focussed on a conception of the Philistines that was becoming customary among the ranks of those who studied theology in the medieval universities. Krüger maintains that Abélard's view of the incident would have been disseminated among the thousands of students who attended his lectures over the years, so that the basis for a later metaphorical extension of the word Philister was already present among students of theology. The historical enemies of the 'chosen people' were transformed into the adversaries of a select band of students in an élite faculty who identify with the Israelites. Certainly by the twelfth century, as Karl Heisig demonstrates, degenerate and worldly attitudes, from whatever quarter - should it be among the students themselves - were considered characteristic of the 'Filistei' or latter-day philistines.¹⁰ Instead of the combatants of ancient Israel they have become, typologically, the enemies of the Christian Church, especially its self-appointed defenders among the students. Heisig, like many other commentators, sees the students of Jena University as chief protagonists in this respect:

Später betrachteten sich die Studenten der Theologie in Jena als 'das neue Gottesvolk' und übertrugen das Schmähwort 'Philister' auf die Stadtsoldaten, mit denen sie in ständiger Fehde lagen.¹¹

I shall return later to the idea of the town soldiers as the initial recipients of the students' wrath.

It was apparently very common indeed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for writers to refer to the arch-enemy of the Church, the Devil, as the arch-philistine : 'der Gottlose, der Feind Gottes, der Ketzer, der Urfeind Gottes, der Teufel'.¹² Ironically also, since Luther created the German word Philister, staunch Catholics referred to heretics as Philister in the sixteenth century.¹³ We note as early as this point in its evolution how flexible this word is. It is not the exclusive property of one particular group and can be invoked by any supposedly learned or enlightened section of society against a powerful enemy to whom they feel morally superior. The significant contrast is always between those who pursue a particular ideal which renders them morally superior and those who are considered to depart from it. The biblical context of the philistines as the dark forces who disrupt the lives of 'the chosen people' but who are under God's curse is still apparent in many of the extended senses in which we encounter the use of Philister. Those who apply the term to the enemy are very conscious of their own exclusivity.

Evil in the figure of the Devil as the most complete embodiment of the forces opposed to Man in the world, who

would hamper his uneasy quest for spiritual improvement by appealing to his baser nature, seems most suited to the epithet Philister. He can be seen as the externalization of the evil inherent in Man himself and represents that part of the familiar Christian dualism which mankind needs to struggle against (by not yielding to temptation) to make moral progress. It is indeed hardly surprising that some prominent early Christian writers very quickly re-formed the most implacable and prominent enemies of the Jews into the persistent opponents of Christian practices. Whether as plural or singular entities - a host of Philister or the ultimate source of opposition to Christian aspirations in the figure of Satan - they are evidence of an insistent moral/metaphysical concern. Ideals and ideal development are conceived as under threat from powerful forces which operate entirely at variance with the desired ends. We may begin to see here how, later, German Idealism tests its tenets against the Philister whom it shapes into the protean form of its enemy.

2. Sources - The universities. Real battles re-enacted.

As noted above, the prejudices of theologians against the Philister were perpetuated amongst their students who not only empathized with the Israelites but identified easily with the 'chosen race' aspect of their national self-awareness. They eagerly seized upon the notion of their own special status and used the familiar, colourful incidents in

the Bible to lend significance to their own inevitable conflicts with the non-student population of the university towns. This is not to imply that all German students of theology from a particular date suddenly decided to call the citizens of their respective university towns Philister. Such comprehensiveness is unlikely. The development is piecemeal and must leave many students unaffected by the new esoteric slogans. What is important is that the word Philister begins to be used not only in exegeses or works of theology but in the wider, though still restricted sphere, of interaction between students and townspeople. It enters the intense, fractious world of everyday contact between groups of markedly differing outlook and establishes itself against other epithets as an increasingly indispensable weapon of vocal assault in a war of words and scuffles. Precisely why it should have done so is beyond the scope of this work, although there are a number of contributory factors which I will consider later.

The seventeenth century was an interesting period for the wider usage of the word Philister in its metaphorical senses. Theology students began to identify closely with the biblical character Samson, the arch-enemy of the race of Philister. They chose to ignore, or perhaps to revel in, the weaknesses in his personality evident in the biblical accounts - especially his love of philistine women - and to idealize him instead as 'der Typus des homo spiritualis'.¹⁴ By identifying closely with this simplified version of Samson

they were in effect asserting that they themselves 'alle homines spirituales seien'.¹⁵ Conversely, the enemy - who are naturally the Philister - are considered spiritually deficient and therefore represent the exact opposite of their own rather flattering self-assessment. It only requires the addition of the adjective 'geistlich' to the noun Philister to virtually condemn all non-students to eternal damnation. Schoppe considers this collocation the most significant metaphorical addition to the usage of Philister at this time.¹⁶ Other scholars locate this important event in the university of Jena which stands pre-eminent among German universities for its contribution to the dissemination of the word Philister in its more extended sense.¹⁷

Whilst they may have identified themselves rather too readily with Samson, the students were no less frivolous in applying the nickname 'Goliath' to the rather imposing members of the town guard who might be called upon to restore order during town/gown confrontations: '"ist der Mann lang, so heizt man ihn einen Philister"'.¹⁸ By extension, it appears that any boastful, loudmouthed persons, including any members of the town militia, were often considered Philister since they seemed to resemble Goliath in this regard. Schoppe is confident that the connection between such soldiers and the term Philister is amply documented.¹⁹

The circumstances in which the town guard of Jena came to be called Philister are outlined by Estelle Morgan.²⁰ The militia were used to quell town and gown disturbances

which increasingly developed in the university towns as the number of students rose. The militia often intervened on behalf of the citizens and thus aroused the hatred of the undergraduates, who may thus have been confirmed in their decision to call the soldiers Philister. That the stigma of Philister should soon be transferred to the citizenry en masse, whom the students treated as accomplices of the militia, is hardly surprising. That a particular occasion involving a funeral oration for a student killed in clashes with townspeople should be accorded a prominent disseminating role in this new sense is more debatable. The incident in question occurred in Jena in 1689 when the General Superintendent Götze took as his text the phrase from the book of Judges 'Philister über dir, Simson!'.²¹ In its original it was, of course, part of Delilah's strategem to check that she had found the secret of Samson's strength. Here it was used as a rallying-cry or slogan for students to apply to the citizens, the common enemy. The Philister very soon became all non-students.

A further point of significance in this new development is the tone with which the epithet Philister was applied. We are not to assume an attitude of amused superiority of the educated student towards the citizens he thus wishes to patronize. The predominant tone was not one of condescension but of outright scorn which implies very strained relations indeed between the two groups. Instead of a grudging symbiosis we may imagine mutual antipathy. There was more

than a hint of arrogance on the part of the students who 'scorned all those who were not members of a university'.²² The generality of students in the university towns in Germany apparently despised the citizens, with the result that the expression Philister 'never shed the association with disdain and scorn'.²³

The student context spawned a large number of inventive compounds to refer to the various kinds of citizen they had dealings with, so that we can witness the development of a quite comprehensive jargon based on Philister. Despite the observations in the preceding paragraph, it is unlikely that these words were always used scornfully by all students on all occasions. They were surely often merely instances of the slang expressions so characteristic of all groups who recognize a common bond. Those citizens who sold them beer might be referred to as Bierphilister, those who gave them lodging as Hausphilister or those who hired them horses as Pferdephilister. Basler's dictionary²⁴ notes at least 20 compounds using Philister as a suffix and an even greater number - about 55 - where Philister is the prefix. Among the most interesting here are Philisterbourgeois, Philisterland, Philisterleben, Philisterseele, Philisterwelt and Philisterbürgertum. Not all of these originated in the student realm but were coined by writers in the nineteenth century particularly. What began as student slang was soon to gain much wider circulation in literature and other forms of writing and that development will principally concern us.

Within the rather narrow confines of the university towns in Germany, the forms of expression based on the word Philister, along with the many other student slang words, became a kind of private language which acted as a linguistic barrier or shibboleth. They helped identify the members of the student group against the citizen outsiders, as J. Vollmann concludes : 'Hiroglyphen für den Philister, Heimathgesang für den Eingeweihten'.²⁵ Vollmann is referring to the whole range of student language but it applies to compounds of Philister also which could have esoteric meanings, as evident from the following examples : 'Philisterkalb (ein Bürgersohn), Philisterlamm (eine Bürgerstochter), Philisterwumm (Bürgerbier)'.²⁶ It is notable how many of the compounds are simply such esoteric synonyms for commonly used words such as Mädchen, Junge or Bier. Clearly an entire way of life for numbers of university students was organised to take continuous account of the distinctions between students and citizens.

Students themselves, however, do not escape the title Philister, since apparently the more conscientious among them, who thus departed from the prevailing ethos, could be ostracized in this way:

Aber auch schon auf der Universität werden diejenigen Studenten, welche dem freien fröhlichen studentischen Geist und Treiben abhold sind, welche aus Pedanterie oder um des unaufhörlichen 'Büffelns' willen von den lustigen Trinkgelagen und andern freieren Vergnügungen sich fern halten, gern von den ächten Studenten Philister genannt.²⁷

Certainly, graduate students who were thus obliged to re-

enter the outside world might be referred to as Philister, so that immunity from the ascription was shortlived and the implication is that even former students must merit the name Philister most of their lives.²⁸ It may be, as Büchmann contends, that the student application of the word Philister is preserved at least into the second half of the nineteenth century : 'Einige studentische Verbindungen und Vereine nennen ihre Alten Herren noch heute "Philister", die im "Philisterium" leben'.²⁹

In these last two sections we have observed a series of interesting, and for the study of philistinism, characteristic developments. In the first place, we note how the literal, historical Philistines undergo a metaphorical transformation from the physical, robust enemies of the Jews into spiritualized entities who are anathema to Christian truths, as revealed through biblical exegesis. A race who are in physical opposition to God's 'chosen people' of the Old Testament become a metaphysical source of hostility to those entrusted with the new revelation of the New Testament - medieval scholars and theologians. The Devil is seen as the arch-philistine for his role as chief architect of plans opposed to God's will. By the seventeenth century we find a very serious theological perception current in Germany that the Philister are the ultimate enemy. The localized race of Philistines, mentioned as one of the many races with whom the Israelites had to contend in their troubled history, are now considered the primary focus of the hostilities of

theologians and theology students. We are therefore presented with a rather rarified expression which might have remained concealed for ever among the groves of Academe, but for a further extension of its range of reference.

It does not pass simply from one domain of knowledge to another and enter the vocabulary of novelists, poets, and dramatists as an esoteric but immediately respectable term they could make use of. Instead, through its use in real-life confrontations in the university towns between groups who were more in physical than metaphysical opposition, the word Philister and the perceptions associated with it, gained new vigour. Its usage was still relatively restricted, since not all Germans were students, and not all towns were university towns. However, many later writers were once students, since the exercise of this profession required some education and the majority of students had to eventually leave universities to enter a career. In its university context, however, the term Philister was once again thoroughly tangible and almost literal. Since all citizens, regardless of outlook, were simply termed Philister it hardly demanded much sophistication in its application. All aliens and outsiders were thus cursorily and rather coarsely dismissed as of no consequence by a student body intent on its own preservation. The hedonism of youth attempted to bracket all adult killjoys under the telling, almost cabalistic slang word Philister. Even before it enters 'literature' then, Philister and its connotations extend from a synonym for the Evil One amongst

serious Bible scholars to an almost frivolous term for non-students amongst the hedonistic youth of the universities. The sacred associations co-exist with the profane.

3. Literary emergence - First flowering

When some of the erstwhile students became writers they tended to use Philister in the more banal sense of townspeople. Generally though, such were the associations with student slang, there are only isolated examples of the word being used in works of literature. Some writers reserved it exclusively for the less formal context of letter-writing. Hamann, for instance, when writing to Herder in 1772, used the term to refer to his literary enemies.³⁰ It will soon become apparent that once enemies have been dubbed Philister in a very vague and generalized attempt to pour scorn on them, it is not long before attempts are made to render the attribution more specific and to indicate what one means by Philister. Increasing extension of the term to include particular deficiencies which render the Philister anathema, are to some extent indicative of personal feelings and subjective responses. Nevertheless, certain continuities between writers are discernible and these seem to point to a shared conviction about the social conditions for their writing. A sense of belonging to a literary style or movement with certain key values in common predisposes such writers to present the enemy as a more or less homogeneous entity with individual and localized colouring.

It was in the circle of young writers of the Sturm und Drang meeting in Strassburg - for the most part former students who had first encountered the word at university - that Philister 'first came to be used in the intellectual and moral sense which still prevails today'.³¹ It still denoted the citizens but it became a more markedly pejorative term which considered the ordinary business of the citizenry as unworthy of notice. The term was becoming not merely a working distinction but an essential demarcation. The context makes it clear that a group of young writers, who are in effect social rebels by not embarking upon the customary course of a bourgeois profession, are striking out at the adult world which refuses to accept their point of view. They present themselves as the purveyors of aesthetic ideals that the narrow, materialistic world does not value sufficiently. In order to strengthen their own sense of identity as a kind of misunderstood élite, these writers find it helpful to have a designated enemy. The Philister seems a ready-made receptacle into which they can pour an aggregate of all the negative qualities in their system of aesthetic ideals. In this way the citizen has truly become the Philister or 'the narrow bourgeois, lacking insight and wanting in appreciation of all the finer things of life'.³² As indicated, the earliest examples of the written usage of words like Philister comes primarily from correspondence in this period of the late eighteenth century. Estelle McIlvenna sums up :

This would seem to indicate that although the expression had by now become fashionable in the speech of the younger generation at Strassburg, it had not as yet reached the literary language.³³

The earliest, although by no means the most important literary occurrence of the word Philister seems to have been in Herder's fables of 1773.³⁴ The most significant date in the history of how the term eventually gained a wider literary usage and respectability was undoubtedly Goethe's Werther of 1774. Nevertheless, its influence did not immediately encourage other writers to use it more freely. Its wide popularity above all helped to disseminate a certain, if limited, notion of what a Philister actually was. Indeed, for about another twenty years, literary references to Philister are still extremely rare. The view seems to have been held - either expressly or implicitly - that it was simply unfit to be used in either works of literature or literary criticism. Some of the relatively rare instances that do occur are of interest in helping us to trace the continuing problem of whom to call Philister. I shall return to the Werther instance later.

A constant thread throughout this period of limited literary references to Philister is that the latter function as arbiters of literary taste. The discomfited writer terms his more destructive critics as Philister. Indeed the opinion is expressed that these critics have too much power and influence, to the detriment of young writers. The vehemence of their attitudes to this brand of Philister needs to be

understood as the cry of the struggling unknown writer whose prospects can be blighted by insensitive criticism. J.M.R. Lenz, in a fragment of a novel from 1775 called Der Poet writes in evident annoyance over personal slights from these quarters: 'Es ist das verdammte Philistergeschmeiss mit ihrem Lob und Tadel, das mich so klein macht'.³⁵ Lenz reiterates this sense of annoyance in letters, where he considers the Philister as obstacles hindering the progress of literary genius. The contrast between Philister and Genie is one of the favourite antitheses of the Sturm und Drang writers, with the assumption that they are the Genie. The mere adoption of the term Philister as part of a value-system is of course no guarantee of its rightness. The critics may not always be wrong.

In this cultural realm he now enters as perceived obstacle to the pursuit of certain ideals, the Philister is not devoid of culture. He is not seen as uneducated, but merely semi-educated and both self-confident and influential. He cannot therefore be the ordinary citizen who may well be oblivious to the offerings of culture. As a literary critic, the Philister may be considered a former student of a previous generation who now represents the establishment position. He has the authority to introduce the products of culture to a relatively unsophisticated public who may be dependent on his opinions for their 'taste'.

Another important sense in which some writers of this time use the word Philister is in its association with a

particular class - the settled middle classes or Bürger. This is of course an elaboration of the sense of antipathy between (largely aristocratic) students and the citizens of the university towns. This portion of society is enamoured of notions of respectability and convention and the Sturm und Drang writers consider the flouting of these norms as almost the guarantee of their status as geniuses. We note, for instance, how the hero of Klinger's Die falschen Spieler (1780) prefers his adventurous, unattached life-style to the (in his view) safer monotony of the middle-class norm of married life. The tone of comments about aspects of the Bürger's way of life among these writers is predominantly critical and dismissive. They use Philister as a pejorative term in an attempt to satirize the values of an entire class.

The scarcity of references to Philister of whatever kind in Sturm und Drang literature render it of only limited help in our attempt to trace the beginnings of a German literary tradition on the theme of the philistine. Goethe is of immensely greater interest from this point of view. His Werther of 1774 undeniably furnishes 'the first important use of the term in its moral and intellectual sense'.³⁶ The word Philister actually only occurs once here - in Werther's letter of 26 May 1771 - but its context is revealing enough to make it tempting to subsume all the forces opposing Werther into the ranks of the philistines. This is a very common approach to the passage. The person who advises the youth in Werther's account is characterized by traits which

are later frequently associated with Philister. The manner in which he is introduced makes his profession sound like part of a definition: 'Und da käme ein Philister, ein Mann, der in einem öffentlichen Amte steht'. His approach to relationships is rational in the most narrow sense and he is clearly at variance with Werther's own preferment of 'das Herz'. The orderly mind of the public official here appears out of place in what must be largely an affair of the heart. The Philister seems as unhelpful in love as he already has been in literature.

It is, of course, very difficult to state with certainty that this important prototype - important not least because of the sheer popularity of Goethe's work - actually represents Goethe's own opinion of what a Philister is. Indeed, as Arendt reminds us, the temptation to blur the lines between Goethe and Werther should be resisted since:

Die Philister-Karikatur also ist entworfen von einem kränklich-empfindsamen jungen Maler, und kann somit nicht gelten als das Bild des Dichters.³⁷

Whilst this caveat is undoubtedly apposite, we have no reason to conclude that Goethe did not find something objectionable in the misuse of reason. His later attitudes to literary critics focus on this very point.

After Werther, Goethe is generally more chary in his use of words like Philister in his literary works. 1774 did not open the floodgates for the literary usage of Philister! However, we do note certain motifs in his works of this period which allow them to be seen in the Sturm und Drang

context of the rejection of middle-class values. Perhaps the eponymous hero's fear of marriage in Clavigo should be read as a subconscious retreat from the 'bonds of Philistinism'.³⁸ In this respect at least, Goethe's own experiences lend a sort of credence to this kind of interpretation. There is yet paltry evidence that he shared the virtually wholesale dismissal of middle-class values under the heading 'philistine' which typifies the mainstream Sturm und Drang writers.

The Goethe of the 1770s - or indeed of any period - is not interested in any petty campaign against the Bürger. Particularly when literary pretensions are not in evidence the domestic arrangements of the Bürger and their contented, comfortable life-style are presented without any apparent attempt at irony. We can note this, for instance, in a letter to Charlotte von Stein of 1777. He refers here with apparent pleasure to the 'schöne Philisterei' of the house in Goslar where he is staying and goes on to applaud the kind of homely qualities which would not be out of place in writing of the Biedermeier period:

Da sind doch alle Tugenden beisammen. Beschränktheit, Genügsamkeit, grader Sinn, Treue, Freude über das leidlichste Gute, Harmlosigkeit, Dulden, Ausharren!³⁹

We encounter this rather more balanced assessment of the attributes of the middle class time and again in Goethe. It would certainly be wrong, therefore, to concentrate on the viewpoint of the hero in Werther and present it as Goethe's own. At most, this attitude should be considered part of the

self-projection of the young Goethe in a similar way to the notion that the writing of Werther was partially a self-exorcism. As a public official himself under Karl August, Goethe would surely not have us believe that all public officials are by definition Philister. We have no grounds for lending more weight to the specific nature of Goethe's Philister here simply because of the popularity of Werther.

The early Goethe then shares the conception of the Sturm und Drang writers that the Philister is typified by censorious attitudes which indicate an inflated sense of his own worth. This predisposes him to advice-giving and to a complacent sense of schadenfreude at the fate of others who do not proceed with such circumspection. Whilst he would not wish to identify with characters like Werther, he is scornful of the public response to suicide. The automatic moralizing generated by the rumoured (and later disproven) suicide of one his close friends in Wetzlar, August Friedrich von Goué, causes Goethe to couch his comments in a manner which appears to condone such deeds. His own extreme position may well have been activated by a desire to distance himself most emphatically from the censoriousness of the Philister he then berates. He writes to Kestner:

Ich ehre auch solche That, und bejammre die Menschheit und lass alle Scheiskerle von Philistern Tobacksrauchs Betrachtungen drüber machen, und sagen : 'da habt ihr's'.⁴⁰

For the Goethe of the 1770s there was a tendency to equate the philistine and the Pharisee, so that his use of Philister

and its compounds accentuates their petty-mindedness, sense of moral rectitude and evident delight in fault-finding. We will discover depictions of this kind of Philister in each of our three authors. In contrast to his later preoccupations, the Goethe of this period used Philister with 'more social and moral connotations than aesthetic ones'.⁴¹

For the fuller development of his objections to Philister on aesthetic grounds we must wait until 1796. In this year, in collaboration with Schiller for the latter's Musenalmanach, Goethe produced a series of Xenien on the classical model of Martial. These are the first attacks on a particular brand of literary philistinism which irritated Goethe throughout his life. In the very same year we have further confirmation of his regard for the Bürgertum when he began work on Hermann und Dorothea in September, after completing the Xenien in June. His view of the Philister was then certainly not expressed in a wholesale dismissal of the middle class. He always focussed on specific manifestations of philistinism and literary philistinism is his most constant and characteristic focus.

The publication of the Xenien represents an important milestone in the history of the literary treatment of the Philister, not least in that it at last gave a clear literary respectability to the term Philister. Unlike Werther, it opened the floodgates. From now on writers apparently felt emboldened to use it 'without fear of the least reprehension'.⁴² The Xenien are furthermore notable in

themselves as the first individual work in which the word is used with reasonable frequency.

Goethe and Schiller clearly intended that the Xenien should be provocative. They were out to destroy the newly-ripened literary offerings of some of their more mediocre contemporaries, whom they considered de facto literary philistines. They release their own literary firebrands with evident relish:

Fort! ins Land der Philister ihr Füchse, mit brennenden
Schwänzen, und verderbet der Herrn Philister reife
papierene Saat.⁴³

We note how they use a well-known incident from the Samson story in Judges 15 to indicate their destructive intentions. The Bible's accounts of the historical Philistines continue to provide striking images for a variety of attacks on modern Philister.

The overall intention of the Xenien is however more constructive than destructive, although it is a necessary purgative exercise to 'rid German literature of the stigma with which it had been not unfairly branded'.⁴⁴ The fervour of their attack is motivated by their concern over the literary quality of works produced by popular writers such as Friedrich Nicolai. It is at once a singling out of particular writers who most embody this version of philistinism and are personally anathema to Goethe and Schiller and an element of a concerted campaign to improve the status of the national culture. Their general assessment of the literary scene of the time is to endorse the

observation that 'Deutsch in Künsten gewöhnlich heisst mittelmässig'.⁴⁵

Another characteristic of the Philister which appears in the Xenien concerns their lack of appreciation of the beauty of nature. The 'Votiftafeln', which appeared in the Musenalmanach of 1797, also assert a connection between a failure in the perception of nature and a lack of originality in so many writers of the day. The alleged banality of the Philister's approach to nature is likewise criticised in later works of Goethe such as the poem 'Regen und Regenbogen' of 1813. Here it is an aesthetic shortcoming since the Philister cannot appreciate the beauty of the rainbow and merely regrets its lack of practical value.⁴⁶

At other times, for instance in their lively correspondence of the years 1795 to 1798, Goethe and Schiller analyse more fully the defects of the Philister's whole outlook, thereby helping to explain his inability to come to terms with Poesie. A key to this inability is lack of a sense of humour which is considered to affect the average German's literary sensibility:

Humor, selbst ohne poetisch zu sein, ist eine Art von Poesie und erhebt sich seiner Natur nach über den Gegenstand. Dafür hat der Deutsche so selten Sinn, weil ihn seine Philisterhaftigkeit jede Albernheit nur ästimieren lässt, die einen Schein von Empfindung oder Menschenverstand vor sich trägt.⁴⁷

What is significant here is how Goethe generalizes Germanness and philistinism as elements in an inadequate response to poetry. The national character of the (implied)

majority of his countrymen renders poetry which requires a receptiveness to humour completely inaccessible. Goethe simultaneously states that humour is, by its very nature, related to poetry since it tends to objectivity. The charge of philistinism he levels at the Germans seems to relate to innate rather than acquired failings. Humour is affirmed as something akin to poetry. In later definitions of the character of Philister, by various writers, it is remarkable how many of them pinpoint this same deficiency. Similarly, it is notable how often the Philister appear as the butt of the satirical humour of the writers. The relationship between humour and philistinism is a matter which must concern us further.

Apart from the general literary philistinism ascribed to the Germans as a nation or the alleged mediocrity of most German writers, Goethe and Schiller typify the flawed response to poetry by highlighting the mentality of shopkeepers and tradesmen - the petit bourgeois or Kleinbürger. It is evident how a class which was flourishing in Germany at this time and consequently enjoying the fruits of affluence could be imagined to undervalue literature. They are used as exemplars of a widespread malaise; like Philister they are a useful vehicle to express dissatisfaction with cultural practices. Other writers focus their wrath on this or other portions of the middle class which, since they are most likely to have dealings with culture in the broadest sense, can therefore be arraigned when the ideal is not

achieved. The writers who complain of philistinism are naturally idealists of varying hue and intensity who blame the Philister when 'reality' once again seems inadequate.

Goethe's own campaign against literary philistinism is lifelong and he continues it in his letters, conversations and literary writings. He repeatedly emphasizes the inaccessibility of literature to those who have the mentality of the Philister, as in the famous image in 'Gedichte'. Poetry, like stained glass windows, cannot be appreciated from the outside: 'Da ist alles dunkel und düster. | Und so sieht's auch der Herr Philister'.⁴⁸ This particular failing he at another time ascribes to most German literary critics: 'Ferner ist es eine rechte deutsche Art, zu einem Gedicht oder sonstigen Werke den Eingang überall, nur nicht durch die Türe zu suchen'.⁴⁹ The implied diligence and inventiveness of the critics' approach is seen as so misguided as to be perverse. Much later in his life Goethe is forced to admit to Eckermann that philistinism in Germany remains an intractable problem, since 'die Deutschen können die Philisterei nicht loswerden'.⁵⁰

For Goethe, the Philister are not only the Germans as some kind of amorphous whole, they are also very much his personal literary opponents. The Zahme Xenien (1820-1827) are largely a series of satirical attacks on such opponents which are vigorous and highly individualistic. He introduces his personal views as they develop and clearly uses the idea of the Philister to identify his current bugbears. For instance,

he had begun to find the idle reading of newspapers a rather suspect activity (although he did not stop reading them until 1830). There is, therefore, an element of self-censure or self-admonition in the following remarks from the Zahme Xenien: 'Denn genau besehen ist es von Privatleuten doch nur eine Philisterei, wenn wir demjenigen zuviel Anteil schenken, was uns nicht angeht'.⁵¹ Philistinism is applied to the reading of newspapers in order to present it as an undesirable activity that he ought to relinquish. There is no public admission of being implicated in philistinism but the internal mechanism for combating one of its particular forms has been set in motion. The Philister are for Goethe and many writers in the nineteenth century the enemy who must be disowned, even when they are the enemy within.

Notwithstanding the merit of some of the insights gained by scrutinizing those limited portions of Goethe's writings where the Philister and his practice are verbally i.e. explicitly present, it is to Faust that we must turn for the fullest treatment of the issue of philistinism. Nietzsche's remarks in the Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen are a useful starting point: 'Wenn der Deutsche aufhört, Faust zu sein, ist keine Gefahr grösser als die, dass er ein Philister werde und dem Teufel verfalle'.⁵² We note, firstly, the connection that suggests itself to the observations of the theologians such as Origen. There, the Devil had already been considered the source of all philistinism, the opponent of spiritual enlightenment. In Faust, of course, it is Mephistopheles who

attempts to frustrate all laudable human intentions as 'der Geist, der stets verneint'(l. 1340). The Philister then are the damned who succumb to the Devil, with or without a pact.

Secondly, it is noteworthy how Nietzsche sets up Faust and the Philister as two extremes, two potential embodiments of the German soul. The latter is the fallen version of the former and therefore worthless. Rapid shifts between high achievement and abject mediocrity are identified as aspects of the German psyche which produce Philister. The implication is that if so many did not try so hard to emulate Faust and not succeed, then the Philister would be less numerous. Perhaps greater self-knowledge would prevent a host of fruitless attempts. By striving for unrealistic goals the Germans merely become a nation of Streber, like Wagner. Nietzsche helps account for the preponderance of literary philistines that Goethe embodies in literature.

Wagner is a Philister because he is learned but dilettante, more readily content with the quantity of his Bildung - 'Zwar weiss ich viel, doch möcht ich alles wissen.'(l. 601), less willing to see it as a process of development, more as a social acquisition. Faust's nature, of course, impels him to reject the sense of achievement that book-learning provides and to move on to a first-hand experience of Nature and the workings of the world. It is Faust's dynamism that ultimately redeems him, despite his pact with the devil, and impels him to pursue his quest. His character, for all its faults, renders him the very opposite

of a Philister since he is endlessly striving and it is this aspect of his character which saves him from the Devil's clutches 'Wer immer strebend sich bemüht| Den können wir erlösen' (l. 11936).

Whilst Faust is obviously the 'hero' of the drama, there is no concerted attempt by Goethe to denigrate all the lesser beings who do not measure up to his standards. Even Wagner, despite being a Philister, is able to produce the Homunculus figure who is so important for Faust's entry into the classical world of Part 2. Goethe implies that the Philister is not always destructive of genius but may actually assist its development - a far cry from the essential opposition of Philister and Genie among the Sturm und Drang writers!

The lives of ordinary Bürger like Gretchen herself are not presented negatively. Faust is indeed openly envious of the circumscribed contentment of Gretchen's life-style: 'Wie atmet rings Gefühl der Stille,| Der Ordnung, der Zufriedenheit!| In dieser Armut welche Fülle!| In diesem Kerker welche Seligkeit!' (l. 2692). Goethe, as we noted earlier in his letter to Frau von Stein, presents the paradox of such middle-class life - despite its limitations (or because of them) it can bring contentment and it possesses its own worth. This is not an isolated instance in Goethe. It provides evidence that the antithesis Philister/Dichter is neither absolute nor all-important. Goethe is more interested in human-beings than categories which have only provisional use. His humanism saves him from triumphalism.

Goethe is indeed delighted by evidence of individuals who have overcome the restrictions, the philistinism of their environment. The conditions regain value once they have been superseded:

Ergötzlich ist es zu sehen, wie ein Mann, in dem bürgerlichen Wesen selbst befangen, sich durch geniale Betrachtung darüber erhebt und dasjenige, was wir sonst als Philisterei, Bocksbeutel, Schlendrian und alberne Stockung zu verachten pflegen, in seiner natürlichen, anmutigen Notwendigkeit sehen lässt und uns solche beschränkte Zustände dulden, schätzen und lieben lernt.⁵³

We notice Goethe's manifest delight ('ergötzlich') at the transcendence of middle-class norms which causes him to retract the charge of Philisterei and the disdain it implies. Instead of something disdainful we are presented with what now appears as natural, graceful and necessary. This only occurs through the act of rising above them. Goethe's comments end in an effective recreation of his growing enthusiasm for what was previously merely philistine and contemptible. At first he suggests merely 'dulden', then 'schätzen' and finally 'lieben'. By the device of Steigerung he has shown his own progressive regard for the erstwhile limitations of the Bürger when they themselves progress beyond them. Goethe's choice of words and the rhythm of this final phrase almost re-enact the very escape from the closed conditions he initially referred to. Philistinism, as an aspect of middle-class behaviour is not negated in this context but lovingly affirmed.

From the point of view of more strenuous opponents of

the middle classes, this rather more sophisticated stance of Goethe's has caused him to be considered something of a Philister himself. This is unfortunate. He sees very clearly that it is in the cultural context that philistinism can be so malignant and where it needs to be fiercely opposed. He is always harsh towards those writers of lesser ability than himself who would mislead the public in their response to literature. His vehemence, aided by Schiller, is immediate when literary standards and literary taste are at stake. Philistinism for Goethe is not simply middle-class attitudes but specifically middle-class cultural attitudes. As with so much else, Goethe shows himself again to be 'the centre of German literature'.⁵⁴ Our attention is drawn to him when we consider the theme of philistinism in German literature. It is a central feature of his work, as our observations on Faust testify. As this section develops it will become clear that the Philister are a central topos in German literature of this period.

4. A Romantic obsession.

The satire on the philistine launched by Goethe and Schiller in the Xenien was a favourite topic of the Romantics. Each of the older Romantic writers approached it from a different angle, emphasizing that particular aspect of philistinism which to him personally was the most objectionable.⁵⁵ The seminal influence of Goethe and Schiller - notably through Werther and the Xenien - in bringing the

word Philister and the ideas associated with it into public debate is undisputed. Compared with the attitudes of many Romantic writers, however, their interest can easily appear intense but intermittent. We can discuss the works of Goethe and Schiller perfectly well for the most part without once referring to Philister. When we turn our attention to those writers called Romantics, this is often no longer possible. The Philister becomes such an integral part of their literary work and ideas that our understanding of them is impoverished when we do not take this into account.

What allowed the Philister to become such an obsession for Romantic writers was primarily that they chose to consider him as the very antithesis of all that they stood for. Indeed, as Thomas Mann remarked in his Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen (1917): 'Der Philister ist der wesentlich unromantische Mensch'.⁵⁶ The areas where the Philister is often seen to be deficient, from a Romantic point of view, are in his conception of love, Nature and Poesie. For the poet, these three elements represent a means of access to what is divine. For the Philister on the other hand Poesie is an area either of superficial understanding or downright incomprehension. Nature also is either ignored or only considered from an unimaginative, practical standpoint. Love likewise exists only in the prosaic, domestic variety that seems a distortion of it.

In addition to this, the Romantics subject the whole standpoint of the Philister to critical and, indeed,

satirical scrutiny. The most common themes include a contrast between the philistine's love of a routine, settled material existence and the Romantic hero's search for new experience in a more adventurous spirit. The Romantics are above all idealists who enthuse about matters of the mind that interest them. The Philister, by contrast, are seen as incorrigibly practically-minded, devoid of enthusiasm or originality.

In the Romantic period then, we encounter the most extreme clash of opposites due to the almost fanatical zeal with which these writers present their aesthetic ideals. The Philister then becomes in a more intensified form than even the Sturm und Drang writers could conceive, not merely the embodiment of particular failings, but the veritable personification of all the social, aesthetic or spiritual ills they can identify. The Romantics' obsession with literature and the attributes of the Dichter raises the poet to such unprecedented heights that the Philister is caused to plummet even further into outer darkness. Ordinary lives and occupations that Goethe might affirm in appropriate circumstances are seen more uncompromisingly as both limited and limiting. The Romantics, then, are so intent upon transcending the everyday world that even its most harmless aspects are seen as the manifestations of Philister.

The most important single work to be published on the subject of the philistine by a Romantic writer was undoubtedly Clemens Brentano's Der Philister vor, in und nach der Geschichte (1811). This was a reworked version of an

earlier Naturgeschichte des Philisters which he had read to the circle of Romantic writers in Jena in 1799. When he next read it to the members of the Christlich-deutsche Tischgesellschaft of Berlin in March 1811 its reception was nothing short of rapturous. It was 'der grösste Triumph den er je erlebt hat'.⁵⁷ At the same time it was in such popular demand that it was decided to publish it. For this purpose Brentano enlarged it once again so that it became Der Philister vor, in und nach der Geschichte. The sections on the 'Musterphilister' and the 'Philistersymptome' were added largely for the Berlin occasion. Brentano was congratulated on his success by - among others - Wilhelm Grimm, who wrote to him to remark: 'Ihre Abhandlung über Philister ist vortrefflich, ich habe sie mit grossem Vergnügen gelesen'.⁵⁸ Ludwig Tieck later mentions it as one of Brentano's best works, using the same word 'vortrefflich'.⁵⁹

His influence on other writers in this respect was, like Goethe's, substantial. Eichendorff, Hoffmann and Heine certainly learnt from his wide-ranging remarks. The treatise became an indispensable source of reference for all aspects of philistinism to his Romantic contemporaries. For these reasons it is important to scrutinise it more closely, since its very comprehensiveness allows it to encompass a great deal of relevant information about the Philister of the Romantic period.

In terms of Brentano's self-perception and his intentions in writing this treatise, we can emphasize two

main points. Firstly, he fully recognizes Goethe's exalted standing in the battle against philistinism - as a Nichtphilister par excellence: 'Goethe scheint mir bis jetzt unter den Bekannten der zu sein, dessen ideelle Erscheinung ich am ersten eine solche nennen möchte'.⁶⁰ Secondly, at least part of his motivation in writing it was genuine concern at the effect of philistinism at large i.e. he was 'alarmed by the danger of creeping philistinism to the national culture'.⁶¹ At least one commentator believes that the Brentano treatise was a consciously political act - to purge philistinism from society and usher in a new age:

Die Philister-Abhandlung Brentanos steht in einer Reihe mit Fichtes Reden, Schleiermachers Predigten, Arndts und Körners Liedern. Sie war ebenso wie das 'Wunderhorn' eine politische Tat. Nur wenn der Philister im Menschen ertötet, sein tieferes seelisches Leben freigemacht, das Jahrhundert der Aufklärung überwunden war, könnte eine Geschichtsperiode anbrechen.⁶²

Whether or not Brentano expected such great things from his work, there are certain much more down-to-earth factors influencing his writing, some of which are distinctly disturbing. The most controversial in this respect is the undeniable aspect of anti-Semitism that has entered into the reworked Naturgeschichte. Brentano is known to have been anti-Semitic, the Christlich-deutsche Tischgesellschaft also. The fact that he indulged these prejudices in the treatise is one of its less palatable aspects. He begins by reminding us of the enmity between the historical Jews and the Philister of the Bible - 'Juden und Philister sind entgegengesetzte Pole' (p. 963). The treatment of Christ by the Jews then

makes them merit the same disapprobation that is accorded to the Philister. He sums up the effect of this event when writing about the Philister in the section 'Der Philister in der Geschichte':

Ihr Charakter in der Geschichte ist Stolz und Hoffart und Hass gegen das Volk Gottes, gegen das Volk der Verheissung, bis diese endlich den verhiessenen Erlöser, den Sohn Gottes, kreuzigten und so, mit den Philistern den Streit aufhebend, nach den entgegengesetzten Punkten die beiden Pole des Verkehrten darstellen. (p. 976)

At the time, these elements caused 'much hostility in Jewish circles'.⁶³ It was principally its anti-Semitism which led to the work being banned by the police shortly after publication and may have contributed to Brentano's own embarrassment about it. Despite the enthusiasm with which it was first received, the harshness of the satire led to Brentano himself rejecting it in later life: 'when there was a question of a new edition of his works in 1828, [Brentano] did not want it included as he thought it might hurt and annoy people'.⁶⁴

Some modern critics have apparently been so offended by Brentano's treatise as to miss its seminal importance in articulating many ideas about the Philister that had become current. It is therefore rather unhelpful of E.V.K. Brill to simply to call it a 'malicious satire'.⁶⁵ Beneath the malice, the anti-Semitism, the word-play and the sheer self-indulgence of his style, Brentano is dealing with a topic which has serious implications. Despite his obvious desire to entertain his circle of like-minded friends, he shows that he

is genuinely concerned about particular issues, which he develops as manifestations of philistinism. He does admit his dual intent at the start - to provide the reader or listener with 'einige Freude und einigen Ernst' (p. 962). Beneath all the self-consciously clever formulations, we can note his real anxiety about the recent legalization of prostitution, about the parlous state of the theatre, about the activities of the Spracheiniger led by J.H.Voss. These are only the most important contemporary issues that inform his treatise.

In the introductory sections of this work, before he settles down to delineate the philistine 'vor, in und nach der Geschichte' Brentano gives two very telling definitions of Philister from his point of view as a Romantic poet. The Philister are so rigid and inflexible in outlook as to be only partially or apparently alive:

Ein Philister ist ein steifstelliger, steifleinener, oder auch lederner, scheinlebendiger Kerl, der nicht weiss, dass er gestorben ist, und ganz unnötigerweise sich länger auf der Welt aufhält. (p. 967)

This attitude reads almost like a precondition for their universal antagonism to all original products of the human mind. Secondly, they are presented as inveterate opponents of Genius and any form of enthusiasm whatsoever: 'ein Philister ist der ausgeborne Feind aller Idee, aller Begeisterung, alles Genies und aller freien göttlichen Schöpfung'(ibid.). Much of what he later goes on to specify as typically philistine follows from these early statements.

His first main section which relates to the title, 'Der

'Philister vor der Geschichte', introduces a metaphysical account of philistinism which is unique to Brentano. We have of course seen examples of the metaphysical approach which Brentano takes in this section. The extensive elaboration he gives to the subject from this angle is yet unprecedented. After reviewing the accepted origins of the term he indulges in a pre-lapsarian cosmology which locates Lucifer as the original Philister and the source of all sin and evil. He develops in argument what Goethe had presented in literature in the person of Mephistopheles, who represents:

das ausgeborene ewige Nein, der Feind der Idee als ewiger Einheit, das bloss sich selbst bedeuten Wollende, der Satan und in seinen weitem Ausgeburten die Sünde, der Philister.(p. 971)

Various events up to the time of Noah are then interpreted from this perspective.

The second main section, 'Der Philister in der Geschichte', concentrates on the historical race of the Philistines resident in the area of Palestine and longtime opponents of the Jews. Despite criticism of his love-life with Philistine women, Samson comes in for much praise for his impressive single-handed victories over the Philistines. In the course of narrating one of these incidents, Brentano takes issue with another aspect of latter-day philistines - the stolid insensitivity towards the supernatural of those 'welche aus angeborener Nüchternheit kein Wunder leiden können und alles gerne aus ihrer miserablen Philisternatur erklären möchten' (p. 978). We can see how Hoffmann, for instance,

highlights the consequences of this in works such as Der goldne Topf.

The third main section, 'Der Philister nach der Geschichte', takes as its starting point the opposition between students and Philister that we have already mentioned as an important stage in the development of the metaphorical usage of Philister. He expands the very notion of the student metaphorically to make it represent the opposite of everything philistine. He therefore idealizes students to achieve his effect. The ordinary university student becomes 'im weitern Sinne eines Studierenden, eines Erkenntnisbegierigen (...) eines Anbetenden der Idee' (p. 983). He now sets up a significant contrast between those metaphorical students who 'worship' ideas and the Philister as the enemy of ideas. This is no mere dichotomy between intellectuals and the rest but a very particular distinction between those who are interested in what is transcendent and infinite - 'der in der Erforschung des Ewigen, der Wissenschaft oder Gottes, begriffen' (p. 983) - and those who are not. The students' receptiveness to a wide range of experience and knowledge is in stark contrast to the restricted receptiveness of Philister

Brentano moves on - in this same section - to aesthetic considerations, in a passage where Goethe is the supreme ideal and those who are less original, often also imitative and rule-bound, are dubbed Nachdichter or Philister. Other main points in this section include a reference a general

kind of passive philistinism which focusses on lethargy and inertia: 'Dieses passive Philistertum nun ist das philistrische Leiden, Ertragen, Dulden, Schweigen, Gutseinlassen, Fristsuchen, cras, cras, ja, ja, so gehts in der Welt' (p. 985). Seeds of the political philistinism other writers comment on at greater length are contained in these remarks. Finally, he returns to the notion of aesthetic philistinism and highlights the superficiality of many Philister in artistic matters, their apparent interest in but evident inability to cope adequately with the arts:

So kann gerade einer mit allen entgegengesetzten Zeichen ein Philister sein, es kann einer aus Philisterei das Trefflichste vorgeben und verteidigen, aber immer durchaus abschliessend und absprechend. (p. 986)

What were later to be termed Bildungsphilister - particularly by Nietzsche, but initially by Brentano's sister Bettina - are identified here also.

The section on the 'Musterphilister' develops more mundane aspects of the philistine's life-style and domestic habits. His sleep, for instance, is always dreamless. He dresses in his 'weisse, baumwollne Schlafmütze' (p. 987) for the purpose and is completely immobile in bed - 'denn ein Philister rührt sich nicht im Schlaf' (ibid.). In dealings with his children he is openly hypocritical, indeed cynical regarding religion, fond of pipe-smoking and enamoured of clichés in his daily conversation. His wooing methods resemble those of the Philister in Goethe's Werther - likewise resident in Wetzlar - for he seems incapable of

genuine emotion. His entire behaviour lacks all spontaneity and he has to learn everything from books.

The final section entitled 'Philistersymptome' deals more with the attitudes and tastes of the Philister. Generally, they are extremely opinionated, with very rigid views: 'Sie nennen die Natur, was in ihren Gesichtskreis oder vielmehr in ihr Gesichtsviereck fällt' (p. 990). In addition they are supercilious and supremely self-confident: 'Sie halten sich für etwas Apartes' (ibid.), unappreciative of wit and humour - 'halten allen Scherz für Dummheit' (ibid.) and are still doing homage to the notions of the Aufklärung. This aspect of the topic of philistinism is an extremely prevalent one which must concern us further. Brentano presents the Philister of this kind as incorrigibly sober-minded, with an interest exclusively in what is practical. They are the ultimate realists whose egotism renders them incapable of understanding altruism and idealism in any form: 'Alle Begeisterten nennen sie verrückte Schwärmer, alle Märtyrer Narren' (p. 992).

The artistic taste of the Philister is naturally extremely suspect, so that they are apt to be very critical of any 'original' work of art, but end up by copying it: 'Sie können kein ursprüngliches Dichterwerk begreifen, verspotten und parodieren es und schreiben dann doch wässerige Nachahmungen' (p. 1000). In music they prefer 'platte, tändelnde oder bocksteife Musik' and consider Beethoven 'ganz verrückt' (p. 998). In architecture they cannot appreciate

the achievement in the building of the great medieval cathedrals which, to their mediocre taste, are merely 'gotische barbarische Ausgeburten der Geschmacklosigkeit' (p. 998).

As critics of Prussia they are suspect since they show no clear idea of the reasons behind the rather unfocussed patriotism they are so fond of referring to (p. 998). In fact, even after the French defeat of the Prussians at Jena in 1806, they still continue to put French culture on a pedestal. The national humiliation of the defeat does not register with them; they remain almost as Francophile as ever: 'Sie würden gar nichts gegen die Franzosen haben, wenn ihnen nur die Einquartierung nicht so viel kostete' (p. 991).

The most important points of Brentano's treatise are therefore:

1. He returns to the historical Philister and turns literal battles into more significant, figurative encounters.
2. He expands the historical confrontations between students and townspeople into a wider difference of spirit between the enthusiastic lovers of ideas and the prosaic, practical-minded citizens who are their sworn enemies.
3. He attempts to locate the Philister metaphysically as the origins of sin and evil. He accounts for them pseudo-philosophically as the universal negative principle.
4. He underlines their aesthetic deficiencies - they are at once imitative, passive rather than creative, lacking in taste and above all devoid of authenticity and often

hypocrites.

5. He attacks popular Aufklärung attitudes that Philister reject all 'irrational' phenomena. Consequently, they are inflexible, incapable of feeling or spontaneity.

6. He emphasizes their complete self-satisfaction and lack of capacity for humour.

7. He hints that they are incomplete as human beings because of their rigidity of outlook and are but half-alive.

8. This very rigidity which reduces all their actions to mere habits makes them appear comic; yet their hypocrisy makes them a serious problem.

9. He questions their patriotism, asserting that they are devoid of national feeling. As Francophiles they are indifferent to German culture.

The tone of Brentano's has worried many commentators and has been considered too harsh. For all its attempt at humour it is arrogant and pharisaical. The smugness with which Brentano asserts the rightness of his opinions and mocks those of the Philister can at times be disturbing. There is certainly a sense in which his 'scorn for the Philistine could easily slide into an anti-Philistine smugness that was itself Philistine'.⁶⁶ The Xenien likewise betrayed an arrogance of spirit which only appears justifiable since it comes from the pens of Goethe and Schiller. From the outset, attacks on Philister display a tendency to overstep the usual constraints of good taste. The medium of literature affords more opportunity to couch criticisms more indirectly through

the use of irony and the distance that a narrative can establish. Whilst we are grateful for the clarity of pieces like Brentano's treatise it is always in the works of literature that the more complex and interesting presentations of Philister occur. Brentano's outspokenness will, nevertheless, help us to approach subtler literary treatments of philistinism with greater understanding.

The comprehensiveness of Brentano's presentation of the Romantic view of the Philister render it unnecessary to consider each of the Romantic writers in turn. However, one further Romantic writer merits our special attention, for the way in which so many of his literary works are so obsessed with probing the differences between the Philister and the artist. The complexities which are brought forth by his literary investigations of the 'problem' of these two competing attitudes to life - for so they are perceived - are a fascinating enrichment to Brentano's remarks.

E.T.A. Hoffmann is commonly grouped with writers such as Eichendorff and Brentano, the so-called 'younger' Romantics. They are often distinguished from Tieck, Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis as the older group. With regard to their respective treatments of philistinism, we can say in general that the older group tended to concentrate on particular attributes of the Philister whereas the younger group were generally much more wide-ranging in their criticism and

'directed their hostility against the Philistine as the arch-enemy of poetry and idealism'.⁶⁷ Just as the older Romantics had learnt in particular from the Xenien, to help them focus their response to the Philister, so the younger group learnt much from Brentano.

Hoffmann's is the first major literary contribution to the theme of the Philister and he explores it in a manner which breathes 'life into the tart phrases of his predecessors'.⁶⁸ What makes his explorations so interesting is that they are created in tension and are not simply one-sided critiques of philistinism in a variety of forms. Instead, they reveal the facets of an inner conflict that is all the more intense since he seems to be grappling with the philistinism of his own nature. Whereas Goethe's response to the middle classes is balanced and often affirmative, Hoffmann displays a characteristic ambivalence.

One of the ideas which Hoffmann develops and which he may have taken over from Brentano is the inability of the Philister to grasp the supernatural. Characters such as Konrektor Paulmann and Registrar Heerbrand in Der goldne Topf reject anything that they cannot account for by their reason. Similarly, musicians such as Kapellmeister Kreisler are artist-figures who are obliged to live amongst unsympathetic and uncomprehending philistines. The most memorable philistine type that Hoffmann depicts is the Bildungsphilister exemplified by the eponymous feline in Lebensansichten des Katers Murr. This is Hoffmann's most

extended and interesting exploration of the theme of the Philister. It is also the one work where he uses the word Philister itself repeatedly to make his intentions clear. Hoffmann is at pains to contrast the rather humorous but humdrum life of the philistine with that of the musician Kreisler who exhibits all the 'hypersensitivity, loneliness, exhilarations and suffering of a genius'.⁶⁹ He brings together the Brentano descriptions of Philister into a form which is fascinating.

In the writings of Hoffmann and those of the other members of the 'younger' group we find generally a much more subjective antipathy to the Philister than was previously the case with the older Romantics. They discuss his foibles more extensively and in greater detail and use the word Philister more often. Major complete, rather than fragmentary utterances are devoted to the topic of the Philister so that we can state with certainty that these later Romantics treat the notion of the Philister as an obsession. They become fascinated by the idea of the Philister the more they attempt to define the place of Poesie in the scheme of things.

5. An apolitical animal?

In none of the foregoing has the Philister been considered extensively in relation to politics. It was not a primary interest of the Romantics to locate philistinism within the realm of political activity. If we look more

closely at some of the literature they produce we can certainly detect occasional comments to this effect. Their main attentions were directed either inwardly to Poesie or backward to glorious, poeticised past eras. The world of everyday politics and the minutiae of political change are of less interest to them. They find it more difficult to combine the very different worlds of poetry and politics without sullyng the former. Philister, since they reflect their main concerns, are portrayed as creatures with moral and aesthetic failings, rather than principally political ones. Heinrich Heine and a number of other writers during the 1830s and 1840s give more weight to the political aspect of the Philister, as befits their interests. They add political failings to the list of shortcomings the Philister is now expected to personify and thereby extend the sense of philistinism in a significant fashion.

Heinrich Heine's prominence in the discussion about philistinism that is carried on in the nineteenth century has long been recognized. He makes a unique and important contribution to the whole debate and evidently found the term Philister and its derivatives extremely useful as a means to focus his discontent on a range of matters. Many of his prose works are concerned with baiting the philistine in the various forms in which he encounters him. Much of the framework for his attack on philistinism was inherited from the Romantics - particularly Novalis, Brentano and Eichendorff. He certainly mocked the Philister's attitude to

the higher things in life in much the same way as they did. They and he were the primary forces in the campaign instigated by Goethe and Schiller - a fact which Matthew Arnold overlooks when he acclaims Heine alone for carrying on the battle against the philistines in Goethe's vigorous spirit. Even if they have many differences in approach and literary ideals, Heine is linked to the Romantics, not least by their common hostility to the philistine.

His attitude to the so-called Bildungsphilister is very similar to that displayed by Novalis, Brentano and Hoffmann - as exemplified by the Harzreise of 1826. There he pours scorn on the feeble attempts at poetry which appear in the visitors' book on the Brocken. In his own poetry, Heine's characteristic romantic irony introduces an abrupt change of mood at the end of his poems by letting a philistine 'intrude into the atmosphere of poetry and intervene with some banal remark which brings writer and reader back to earth.'⁷⁰ He therefore demonstrates without the need of further comment the inaccessibility of poetry to the Philister that Goethe had mentioned. At the same time he preserves the reader from wallowing in the mood of the poem.

Heine does not share the intense Romantic veneration for the role of the poet so that his response to the Philister is perhaps more subjective than theirs. He sees them more as personal foes than as the enemies of poetry. He indulges in swift caricatures of various types of Philister, without the extended analysis one finds in Hoffmann. By

tapping the comic potential of philistinism in this way he masks the serious problem they pose. The Romantics always support their witty intents by serious statements about the impoverishment that the philistine life-style represents to Poesie. This seriousness is lacking in Heine's literary works. His own approach to the philistines alleged lack of humour is yet perfectly within Brentano's conception: 'Die Philister, die Beschränkten, | Diese geistig Eingeengten | Darf man nie und nimmer necken.'⁷¹ Unlike the Romantics who generally accorded students a privileged status regarding philistinism, Heine has no such qualms, as his description of Göttingen from the Harzreise testifies: 'Im allgemeinen werden die Bewohner Göttingens eingeteilt in Studenten, Professoren, Philister und Vieh, welche vier Stände doch nichts weniger als streng geschieden sind'.⁷² His own experiences as a student there had deeply coloured this dismissive description. He clearly does not share the idealism of other Romantics who considered the universities the veritable strongholds of anti-philistinism.

Heine's most significant contribution to the notion of philistinism undoubtedly lies in his observations on political developments in Germany which made him despair of any real action at home. He soon begins, with the Young Germans, to identify as Philister all people who stand in the way of political progress and freedom. Since the modern spirit of progress appeared at that time to reside in France, Heine's enthusiasm embraced the 1830 Revolution. He soon

after left Germany for the promised land of France: 'Paris ist das neue Jerusalem und der Rhein der Jordan, der das geweihte Land der Freiheit trennt von dem Lande der Philister'.⁷³

At the news of the July 1830 Revolution in Paris, Heine writes of his own excitement and of how he dreamt of waking up his German compatriots to tell them. He imagines them to respond with typical lethargy:

Manche dicke Philister, die allzu widerwärtig schnarchten, stiess ich bedeutungsvoll in die Rippen, und gähnend frugen sie: 'Wieviel Uhr ist es denn?' In Paris, lieben Freunde, hat der Hahn gekräht; das ist alles, was ich weiss.⁷⁴

In 1848 when he encounters German refugees at Le Havre Heine can show some pity: 'selbst mit seinen Krähwinkeleien war ich ausgesöhnt'.⁷⁵ Heine uses 'Krähwinkeleien' to imply the provincial nature of German philistinism. It is a sense which seems to continue to the present day, as one dictionary states: 'abwertend Atmosphäre des Krähwinkels, Ausdruck spiessbürgerlicher Gesinnung'.⁷⁶

After his removal to France in 1831 Heine's satire was directed against the figure of the German Michel. Der deutsche Michel becomes for him and other writers at this time and after the failure of the 1848 Revolution in Germany, a lamentable figure who shared many of the characteristics of the Philister. The nightcap, as for the Philister, is his customary headgear and he is apparently a member of the lower middle classes. A modern dictionary focusses entirely on the undoubted pejorative connotations of the phrase when it remarks: 'der deutsche M.- Sinnbild für den biedereren,

ehrliehen, aber politisch schlafmützigem deutschen Kleinbürger'.⁷⁷ Heine certainly aggregates his ideas of German national deficiencies - apathy and servility - either to the figure of the Philister or to that of the Michel.

His enthusiastic embrace of French political ideas was doomed to end in disappointment since the reality was so very much different from the promise. The France of Louis Philippe seemed to him as bad as any political regime anywhere. It was not devoid of materialism and corruption. His disillusionment with them comes across in Deutschland, ein Wintermärchen:

Sie sind die alten Franzosen nicht mehr -
 Sie philosophieren und sprechen jetzt
 Von Kant, von Fichte und Hegel,
 Sie rauchen Tabak, sie trinken Bier,
 Und manche schieben auch Kegel
 Sie werden Philister ganz wie wir.⁷⁸

We notice how an interest in the great idealistic philosophers of the Aufklärung has become so commonplace that it is a betraying trait of Philister. The other activities are merely the usual interests of the German Kleinbürger.

Despite the decline among the French, it is Germany that Heine considers the headquarters of philistinism. On his travels he is therefore pleased at the relative absence of it; or at least that its non-German forms are more innocuous. Heine's ambitions though extended beyond Germany to 'free the world from the meshes of Philistinism'.⁷⁹ Whilst Goethe and Schiller had introduced a national element into their criticism of literary philistinism, Heine's attacks on national failings are less restrained and more continuous.

Only occasionally are they softened by a kind of pity of the ordinary German in his incorrigible servility. Heine, however, in his last poem entitled Der Scheidende admits that the Philister, in all their mediocrity, may at least be happier:

Der kleinste, lebendige Philister
 Zu Stukkert am Neckar,
 Viel glücklicher ist er,
 Als ich, der Pelide, der tote Held,
 Der Schattenfürst in der Unterwelt.⁸⁰

Heine's prominence in the debate over either the conventional literary philistinism or the political philistinism I have referred to is undoubted. This should not blind us to the fact that there were a relatively large number of German writers in the 1830s and 1840s who were availing themselves of terms like Philister to comment on the political tenor of the age. In mid-century indeed, there are numerous writers of German origin who produce lyrics or prose works which attack German political philistinism. It developed particularly with the Young Germans of the 1830s. There was indeed a 'great upsurge of anti-bourgeois feeling amongst Heine's fellow-writers in Paris (...) and they were quick to make us of the handy expression "Philistine" for the enemy'.⁸¹ Their contribution to the idea of the political philistine is important also.

It was not exclusively German conditions though that merited the association with philistinism. Wherever political progress or developments do not meet the standards of these writers, the whole policy can be dubbed philistine, whether

native or foreign. Such, for example, is Börne's comment on the constitutional changes in France after the 1830 Revolution. It echoes Heine's disillusionment with what happened in France:

Die neueste französische Konstitution hat die alte Torheit, die alte Ungerechtigkeit, die alte, erbärmliche Philister-Politik beibehalten, das Wahlrecht an den Besitz gebunden und die Besitzlosen auch ehrlos gemacht.⁸²

Even more energetic and provocative attempts to accuse the Philister of impeding political progress are made in the 1840s. Prominent among such writers are Arnold Ruge and Karl Marx. Writing in 1842, the former takes issue with the political indifference of Philister who prefer their own comforts to political matters: 'Es erscheint als das bequemste, wenn es im Staate keine ausgesprochenen Gegensätze, sondern nur einen bewusstlosen, indifferenten Haufen gibt, die Philisterwelt, die nur leben will'.⁸³ He goes on to use this word Philisterwelt three times within fifteen lines in the same scathing terms. Philister are the sine qua non of Reaction:

Die Praxis unsrer Zeit, unsrer deutschen Zeit (...) ist das gedanken- und willenslose Philistertum, und der Polizeistaat hat einen Willen, nämlich den, diesen glücklichen, gottseligen Zustand zu erhalten.⁸⁴

Here we see philistinism as part of a propaganda process, an aspect of its usage from the outset. By stigmatizing the ordinary apolitical citizens as Philister the writer is leading into a statement of the ideas and principles that inform his own views. Philister then is a label of

convenience to indicate the potential opposition to the propagation of a set of ideas. In aesthetic, moral or political terms the Philister are the anti-ideal who must be identified before the ideals can be stated. Without a source of insufficiency in the present reality, the writer has no foundation for his passionate pleading for the attainment of particular ideals.

Ruge seems to be extremely fond of attributing all the evils hindering his view of political progress to the actions of Philister. His acquaintance Karl Marx may well have been influenced by Ruge's predilection for words like Philister, in the political context. In a letter to Ruge in 1843, Marx develops some of the latter's formulations in extenso. Firstly, he admits that the Philister hold political sway as the representatives of the Old Order or ancien régime: 'Es ist wahr, die alte Welt gehört dem Philister'.⁸⁵ Secondly, he sees it as his task (propaganda purpose?) to awaken the consciousness of these Philister in a particular direction: 'Das Selbstgefühl des Menschen, die Freiheit wäre in der Brust dieser Menschen erst wieder zu erwecken'.⁸⁶ Thirdly, Marx attempts to undermine existing forms of political organization by emphasizing that philistinism in the political realm manifests itself in a dehumanizing fashion. The comparison with animals is clearly an attempt to degrade these political forms. Marx fits the idea of Philister into his own idea of a society which has progressively dehumanized its members, politically and otherwise. Philisterwelt serves

was the only word in circulation at this time to typify the failings of a particular social grouping. The French loan-word bourgeois is used as a virtual synonym for Philister in these decades, although with a more economic aspect to it. The writers of the Junges Deutschland found the word in pejorative use in France among the followers of Saint-Simon to signify the 'haves' as opposed to the 'have-nots'. It soon becomes a slogan, favoured by writers of socialist persuasion, to apply to the prosperous and influential members of the middle classes who were also politically conservative. Karl Marx makes frequent use of it in disparaging comments in Das Manifest der kommunistischen Partei (1848) when he refers to 'Bourgeois-Theologen' and 'Bourgeois-Sozialismus'. Modern dictionaries agree that in German the word Bourgeois is mainly pejorative and implies a prosperous philistine or 'wohlhabender Spiesser'.⁹¹

By the 1840s the range of opponents to whom the term Philister can be applied has been extended as particular writers believe they see appropriate occasions to use Philister as a weapon in their verbal battles with the more powerful forces in society. Growing frustration with the pace of political change in Germany conjures forth the spectre of a social grouping bent on frustrating all change. Brentano had emphasized the inflexibility of the Philister and once again this is seen as the basic problem. The forces of conservatism, whether literary or political, make it extremely difficult for those who would propose radical

political programmes. Much of the writing is deliberately forceful and polemical since it expresses both the frustration and the passion of the sentiments. The difficulty when attacking forms of philistinism is how to present satirical comments as the outcome of righteous anger. Many of the outbursts against philistinism are disturbing for this very reason that they appear to enjoy the invective so much that they become negative forces themselves. Unless the reader fully shares the point of view of the writer, the one-sidedness of comments about Philister he makes become unconvincing, despite its usefulness for aggregating the negative qualities of one's opponents.

6. Friedrich Nietzsche - Renewed concern about culture.

There is a relatively long period of time between the publication of Brentano's Der Philister vor, in und nach der Geschichte (1811) and Nietzsche's Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen (1873), but the attitudes they enshrine towards literary philistinism are broadly similar. Nietzsche makes it appear by using Bildungsphilister that he is attacking a different opponent than the word Philister implies. This is not the case. Leaving aside the effects of the expansion of the Prussian education system and a transformation in attitudes towards French culture among the German populace there is remarkable continuity in the two works. Of course, Nietzsche concentrates on the cultural shortcomings of his Bildungsphilister and neglects the metaphysical, moral or the

political aspects. However, we do not so much have a new Philister to contend with as a renewed emphasis on his aesthetic failings, which are among his gravest faults and of obvious concern to writers. Like other writers before him he is aware of being a minority voice in a morass of unanimity.

Nietzsche's claim to invention of the compound word Bildungsphilister has been shown to be unfounded. By tracing its origins elsewhere, as Herman Meyer⁹² has done, we can yet underline the kindred spirit that links Nietzsche and Brentano. Meyer has identified the similar compound Bildungsphilisterei in the letters of Brentano's sister Bettina. Not only formally, but also semantically, there is a close resemblance between Nietzsche's use of Bildungsphilister and Bettina Brentano's ideas when writing to her brother. Like Clemens Brentano's treatise, Nietzsche's work provides us with a useful, explicit discussion of philistinism, albeit in a more particular form.

What is immediately noticeable about Nietzsche's remarks is that they have an exclusively cultural and aesthetic focus. This is demonstrably not an attempt to define the Philister in numerous facets of his world and attitudes, as Brentano and other Romantics had done, but a single-minded explanation of a perceived cultural malaise. By taking the widespread cultural attitudes in the new Bismarckian Reich to task, Nietzsche attributes all that appears most unsatisfactory about these to the influence of the Bildungsphilister, whom he goes on to define and exemplify.

In the process, he issues a particularly heart-felt and spirited denunciation of all retarding factors in his essentially dynamic view of culture.

In the first place, he wishes to denounce the delusive view that the military victory over France somehow implies a cultural supremacy also. In this, he is as dismissive as Goethe in his criticism of the state of the indigenous culture. In fact, like Goethe and Brentano, he emphasizes its actual cultural dependency on France. This is in stark contrast, however, to Brentano's view of the nationalities problem at his time. Then, it was common practice among the Philister to overlook or even undermine German culture in favour of the French version in a way which he considered unpatriotic. The reverse position is now rampant, with a greatly exaggerated estimation of German culture after a resounding German victory. Nietzsche, despite the achievements of Goethe, Schiller and many other writers is insistent that German culture is derivative and philistine 'weil die französische Kultur fortbesteht wie vorher, und wir von ihr abhängen wie vorher'.⁹³ His summing up of the cultural malaise in Germany is to contrast an ideal Bildung or 'eine wirklich echte deutsche Bildung' (p. 138) with a prevalent and much more superficial 'Gebildetheit'. Once again we find a writer seeking hard-won authenticity, whilst the Philister is deemed to content himself with a shallow imitation.

Nietzsche now goes on to identify the social groups

most responsible for the malaise. He presents two groups who are so perfectly satisfied with the cultural situation in Germany that they inhibit an appreciation of its dubious value. The first group consist of 'Zeitungsschreiber und Roman-, Tragödien-, Lied- und Historienfabrikanten' (p. 139) - the producers of what passes for culture. The second group are the academic commentators and critics who help to bolster up the reputation of the first group. It is they above all whom Nietzsche finds intolerably complacent in their sense of their own cultural worth:

Dazu sind ihre Mitglieder mit dem höchsten Grade von Sicherheit überzeugt, dass ihre eigene Bildung die reifste und schönste Frucht der Zeit, ja aller Zeiten sei. (p. 139)

This latter group in particular are seen as obstacles in the way of the eventual development of a worthwhile national culture. It is with great anguish and regret that Nietzsche longs for this condition: 'denn bis jetzt gibt es keine deutsche originale Kultur' (p. 141). This oligarchy of Bildungsphilister, among whom David Strauss plays a leading role, are a sizeable group within society and they in turn are made to represent the state's educational and cultural apparatus. Never before has the problem of philistinism been presented so insistently as the powerful interest group Nietzsche depicts who inhabit 'alle öffentlichen Institutionen, Schul-, Bildungs-, und Kunstanstalten' (p. 142). They are accorded control over every aspect of the national cultural life, so that mediocrity has been

institutionalized into 'ein System der Nicht-Kultur' (p. 143). Nietzsche's whole-scale attack on the public presentation of culture within Germany is unparalleled in its assumptions. Whilst Brentano could flatter like-minded souls that they were presumably free from the taint of philistinism, Nietzsche has no contemporary allies. His lone crusade is not so much poignant as disturbing in its high estimation of his own views on the matter.

Nietzsche's work is both a confirmation of some of the insights gained by the Romantics and a distancing from them. In both groups the view is central that the Philister are the forces of stagnation and stasis who would oppose the dynamic development of culture: 'die ausdorrende Sandwüste des suchenden und nach neuem Leben lechzenden deutschen Geistes' (p. 143). Nietzsche's own idealism allows him to posit the existence of a genuine desire for new cultural life which is being hindered. A key word in Nietzsche's sense of a necessary view of culture is contained in his use of 'Suchende' (p. 144), the equivalent of Brentano's extended sense of the student and corresponding to Matthew Arnold's notion of a 'still-unsatisfied seeker' in his Culture and Anarchy.

In order to provide some kind of historical framework to his remarks, Nietzsche takes the Romantics to task for bringing this key notion of 'Suchen' into disrepute by their literary experiments which introduced 'ein so mannigfaches und verwirrendes Suchen' (p. 145). Their extravagance and

excess in this regard, in his view, then brought about the Counter-Revolution of the Biedermeier period (as it is often known), whereby the restless spirit peculiar to art was tamed, paving the way for the literary attitudes he criticizes in the Second Empire:

Aus all dem wilden Experimentieren rettete er sich ins Idyllische und setzte dem unruhig schaffenden Trieb des Künstlers ein gewisses Behagen entgegen, ein Behagen an der eigenen Enge, der eigenen Ungestörtheit, ja an der eigenen Beschränktheit' (ibid.)

In a similar way to which Brentano and others had criticized the underestimation of culture by the Philister, as merely a leisure-time activity of secondary importance, so Nietzsche is incensed by the contrast he believes the Bildungsphilister make between 'den Ernst des Lebens' (p. 146), their career and home life and the 'Spas' which concerns 'ungefähr alles, was die Kultur betrifft'(ibid.). Nietzsche therefore accuses the philistines of a lack of seriousness in their overall approach, something which he believes to be manifest in their writing as superficiality, lack of thoroughness and casualness. With heavy irony Nietzsche contrasts the classical ease of a Strauss with the breathless efforts of Beethoven: 'Er, der klassische Schreibekünstler, schiebt seine Last leicht und spielend, während sie Beethoven ausser Atem einherwälzt' (p. 160).

As indicated above, Strauss's importance in this piece is not because of his singularity, but by virtue of his exemplary philistinism. He focusses his attack on Strauss's book Der alte und der neue Glaube, whose influence has made

him into the 'Philisterhäuptling'. The book merely articulates what many other philistines believe, thus rendering it 'das Strausssche Hand-Orakel des deutschen Philisters' (p. 173). It merits attention only as the distillation of commonly-held notions within a wider community of Philister.

Nietzsche then proceeds to demonstrate, through Strauss, his charge that the current clique of Bildungsphilister are flawed at their very core - in their assumption of academic rigour. Strauss's methods are impugned from the outset, his professional competence openly questioned: 'dass er sich nicht als wissenschaftlicher, streng ordnender und systematisierender Gelehrter benommen hat' (p. 184). The focus is then narrowed to details of Strauss's written style which shows flaws in phrasing, figurative language, punctuation and syntax. The attack is relentless and the denunciation is clearly aimed at completely discrediting Strauss, whose academic credentials are in doubt because of 'unklares Denken' and 'Mangel an Sprachgefühl' (p. 197). Once again, however, Nietzsche broadens what could appear an individual attack, more common among the Romantics or Goethe, into a socio-cultural criticism. Strauss's efforts are a symptom of a more generally disquieting situation, a linguistic decline: 'jene grenzenlose Dilapidation der deutschen Sprache der "Jetztzeit"' (p. 190).

The most significant continuity between Nietzsche and the Goethezeit is the attempt to come to terms with the

legacy of the Aufklärung. There is no disguising this aspect of Nietzsche's approach. Strauss is also 'der Häuptling der Aufklärer'. This is made doubly evident in Strauss's case by his desire to identify himself with Voltaire or Lessing, the French or the German representatives of the Enlightenment. Voltaire perhaps particularly because of his enmity to organized religion, Lessing for his tolerance and clear style.

Nietzsche, despite the congruences we have noted between his ideas and those of the Romantics on the subject of culture and the Philister, was generally unfavourable in his reaction to the Romantic period: 'der junge Nietzsche äussert sich über die deutsche Romantik durchweg in streng aburteilendem Sinn'.⁹⁴ Whilst he prefers the classical poise of Goethe and Schiller, he is as concerned as all of them about the fate of culture. With his David Strauss piece he has in effect attempted an updating of the Romantic Philisterkritik, the elements of which he is at least superficially aware. Allowing for different social and political conditions, the similarities in the depictions of philistinism are at least as striking as the extensions to its sense which occur during the century. The eternal verities are re-stated in every age, perhaps with different examples or another emphasis.

7. Metamorphoses and reincarnations.

'Tradition', understood as the continuous preoccupation with a set of attitudes and archetypes which are reworked, is an apposite term in the context of philistinism. The choice of the term Philister to betoken these reworkings of the concept of Bürger and Mensch is neither arbitrary nor frivolous. We have seen something of the extent to which a previously arcane idea grew in acceptability from the 1770s onwards. The Romantic era firmly implanted philistinism in the arena of debate about human potential and the checks that it faced. It remains a body of ideas of compelling fascination for many who are writing in German throughout the course of the nineteenth century. Brentano and Nietzsche notably produce large statements probing its implications but many other writers show that it is a meaningful set of references for them also. The Philister do not disappear soon after the Romantic era has passed and we find them reappearing in different guise as the century progresses. As social conditions change, so the precise characteristics of the Philister also; aspects of their nature survive as almost a deliberate anachronism which point us the more strongly to a literary tradition of philistinism which survives within literature. Each writer is consciously resuscitating a theme of acknowledged resonance for which he can introduce another variation.

We should not be blinded by the apparent differences in

terminology that occur, along with other changes to the topos of the Philister. Some writers may prefer other terms in redefining what I consider philistinism. We have noted particularly the use of Bourgeois. To this must certainly be added the term Bürger which fulfils the function for the Expressionist writers more frequently than Philister:

Der Ausdruck 'Philister' spielt in der Kulturkritik des Expressionismus kaum eine Rolle und ist durch den des 'Bürgers' ersetzt. Im Inhalt sind beide Begriffe fast identisch.⁹⁵

What is most convincing, however, are the many instances of the use of Philister itself in the works or correspondence of some of the most famous writers writing in German during the nineteenth century. We will discover this when we look more closely at our three writers in the chapters to follow. A notable passage in Wilhelm Raabe's Abu Telfan (1867) furnishes what has been termed 'eine klassische Definition des deutschen Philisters'.⁹⁶ The value-judgements are clearly not those of the Romantics, or Nietzsche, or the Expressionists, but nevertheless articulate to some extent a more affirmative attitude to philistinism and its purpose which we had begun to see in Goethe. No other German writer has acknowledged a debt to philistinism so magnanimously, nor attempted to reconcile the apparently conflicting forces of German culture so openly as Raabe. Here we find idealism and realism as reciprocal entities:

Wohin wir blicken, zieht stets und überall der germanische Genius ein Drittel seiner Kraft aus dem Philistertum und wird von dem alten Riesen, dem Gedanken, mit welchem er ringt, in den Lüften schwebend erdrückt, wenn es ihm nicht gelingt, zur rechten Zeit wieder den Boden, aus dem er erwuchs, zu berühren.⁹⁷

Most unlike Goethe is the frank admission that philistinism is not something to transcend but rather a vital and necessary ingredient to counteract the unhelpful reign of Thought. It is therefore given an important and meaningful role as an effective counterbalance to intellectual tendencies. The soaring flight of the idealist which would otherwise be oppressive is sustained by timely sojourns on the terra firma of reality. An antagonism has been transformed into an accommodation.

This precarious balance can be upset at any moment by a writer with a less conciliatory approach to philistinism and its contribution to culture. Nietzsche's David Strauss piece, only six years later than Raabe's Abu Telfan is a very sharp reminder of this fact. There are certain periods during the nineteenth century in Germany when the attitudes to philistinism by writers are either more critical or more conciliatory. In very broad terms, the first fifty years or so are marked by a predominance of more critical responses, corresponding to the literary periods of Romanticism, Classicism and the Young Germans. A prominent exception to these conclusions would be the whole period known as Biedermeier. From the 1850s to the end of the 1870s, with some prominent exceptions, there is something of a lull in

antagonism towards the Philister. This is more than compensated for in the remaining decades of the century, when the overall approach of Naturalism and Expressionism is one of extreme opposition and complete lack of sympathy.

The strident tone of some of Wedekind's work in this regard is more reminiscent of the Sturm und Drang writers than any other intervening example, excepting perhaps Nietzsche. The conventional terminology of philistinism undergoes something of a resurgence under him also, with the usage of the term Philisterseelen. The latter are identified as an inferior breed to be treated with the utmost disdain, their attitudes proclaiming an easy contentment in the 'real' world, whilst the poet strives for the 'ideal' which he recommends to his son in Meinem lieben Oskar

Verachte, was der Philister liebt
 Ein stilles, beschauliches Leben!
 Du weisst, dass es höhere Ziele gibt,
 Dem klaren Geist zu erstreben.
 Vor deinen Augen das Ideal,
 Es soll dich schützen und lenken -
 Der Menschen Treiben ist matt und schal.⁹⁸

We can have some sense therefore of how the response to philistinism changes from writer to writer, from one literary period to another and from one literary movement to another. The latter are of course very fluid and controversial categories and the simplifications they entail must be qualified from writer to writer. Significantly also, it must be borne in mind that the patterns we are striving to trace apply only to literature of a 'higher' or more serious intent, rather than the so-called Trivialliteratur that

exists primarily because of its popular value. Its very popularity implies that there will not be that evident gulf between the ideals espoused by the writer and the common preoccupations and prejudices of the mass readership. I will now investigate the response to the topos of philistinism in the works of three prominent nineteenth-century writers.

NOTES

1. Hans Schulz and Otto Basler, Deutsches Fremdwörterbuch, 6 vols (Berlin, 1942). Completion of work begun by Schulz in 1942 (II, 495).
2. Hermann Schrader, Der Bilderschmuck der deutschen Sprache in tausend volkstümlichen Redensarten (Weimar, 1893), p. 491:
'Im allgemeinen erscheinen sie als ein tapferes und kriegerisches Volk, und in ihrem Wesen hat es nicht gelegen, dass ihr Name jetzt die verächtliche Bedeutung hat'.
3. Time, 29 August 1988, p. 42.
4. Samson's exploits with an ass's jawbone are narrated in Judges 15. David's familiar defeat of Goliath occurs in 1 Samuel 17.
5. Genesis 26.15. Quotation is from the King James Version.
6. Georg Schoppe, 'Philister. Eine Wortgeschichte', GRM, 10 (1922), 193-203 (p. 196).
7. Gustav Krüger, 'Philister: über den Ursprung des bildlichen Gebrauchs dieses Namens', GRM (1911), 116-117 (p. 117).
8. *ibid.*
9. *ibid.*
10. Karl Heisig, 'Dt. Philister = Spiessbürger', Zeitschrift für die deutsche Philologie, 83 (1964), 345-350 (p. 346).
11. *op. cit.*, p. 348.
12. Schoppe, p. 197.
13. *op. cit.*, p. 196.
14. *op. cit.*, p. 198.
15. *op. cit.*, p. 199.
16. *op. cit.*, p. 198.
17. Friedrich Kluge, Die deutsche Studentensprache (Strasburg, 1895), p. 13: 'Die Bezeichnung Philister hat sich seit 1700 und - wie es scheint von Jena aus - verbreitet'. See also Estelle Morgan, 'Students and Philistines', MLR, LI, 2 (1956), 231-234 (p. 234).
18. From the Satyros Etymologicus of Johann Prætorius (1672) as cited by Schoppe (p. 194)
19. *ibid.*
A dissenting and rather contentious view on this matter is taken by the lexicographer J.C. Adelung who sees neither the biblical connection nor the student context as convincing. He instead regards Philister as a corrupted form of the Latin word 'Balistarii' to denote soldiers armed with 'Ballistis' or crossbows. For this reason, and not through contact with students, the town militia in Vienna are 'sehr gewöhnlich Philister genannt'. The pejorative sense was apparently gained when advances in weaponry rendered the crossbow obsolete, yet some citizens who were members of the militia continued to wield them and thereby appeared somewhat ridiculous. It then gradually became a synonym for Bürger: 'Bei Veränderung der Kriegsart ist der Name im gemeinen Leben

- geblieben, und in verächtlicher Bedeutung auf alle Bürger ausgedehnt worden'. Whilst interesting, this view is by no means as convincing as the orthodox position I support. Quotations are from the Adelung dictionary referred to in the bibliography (III, 1075).
20. Morgan, 'Students and Philistines'.
 21. Judges 16.9. In the King James Version it reads: 'the Philistines be upon thee, Samson'.
 22. Morgan, 'Students and Philistines', p. 233.
 23. *ibid.*
 24. Note 1 above.
 25. Burschicoses Wörterbuch (Graz, 1969). Facsimile of 1849 edition, p. viii.
 26. *op. cit.*, p. 366.
 27. Schrader, p. 487.
 28. Schoppe, p. 194: 'der Student, der nach abgelaufener Universitätszeit ins Leben, in den Beruf tritt'.
 29. Georg Büchmann, Geflügelte Worte: Der Zitatenschatz des deutschen Volkes (Berlin, 1864). Reference to the 1961 edition edited by Werner Rust and Günther Haupt (p. 22).
 30. See Estelle McIlvenna, 'The "Philistine" in Sturm und Drang', MLR, XXXIII, No. 1 (January 1938), 31-39 (p. 31)
 31. *ibid.*
 32. *ibid.*
 33. *op. cit.*, p. 32.
 34. *ibid.*
 35. *op. cit.*, p. 37.
 36. *op. cit.*, p. 33.
 37. Dieter Arendt, 'Das Philistertum des 19. Jahrhunderts', Der Monat, H. 248 (1969), 33-49 (p. 34).
 38. McIlvenna, p. 35.
 39. *op. cit.*, p. 36.
 40. Colin Walker, 'Werther, the good Samaritan and the Pharisees', GLL, 4 July 1988, 393-401 (p. 395).
 41. *op. cit.*, p. 396.
 42. Estelle Morgan, 'Goethe and the Philistine', MLR, LIII, No. 3 (July 1958), 374-379 (p. 374).
 43. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 'Xenien' (1796), in Schriften der Goethe-Gesellschaft (Weimar, 1893), VI, No. 9.
 44. Morgan, 'Goethe and the Philistine', p. 374.
 45. Xenion No. 256 in Goethe über die Deutschen by Hans J. Weitz (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1978), p. 16.
 46. Morgan, 'Goethe and the Philistine', p. 375.
 47. *ibid.*
 48. *op. cit.*, p. 376.
 49. Weitz, p. 48, letter of 14 April 1816.
 50. *op. cit.*, p. 79.
 51. Morgan, 'Goethe and the Philistine', p. 379.
 52. Friedrich Nietzsche, 'David Strauss: Der Bekenner und der Schriftsteller', Erstes Stück, 'Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen', in Werke, edited by Karl Schlechta (Munich, 1969), I, 316.
 53. Morgan, 'Goethe and the Philistine', p. 377.
 54. T.J. Reed, The Classical Centre: Goethe and Weimar 1775-

- 1832 (London, 1980), p. 11.
55. Estelle Morgan, 'E.T.A. Hoffmann and the Philistine', MLR, XLIII, No. 4 (December 1961), 140-144 (p.140).
 56. E.V.K. Brill, 'The Philistine concept in German Literature', European Studies Review (1977), 77-93 (p. 84).
 57. Estelle Morgan, '"Angebrentano" in Berlin', GLL (New Series), XXXVII (April 1975), No. 3, 314-326 (p. 324).
 58. *ibid.*
 59. *op. cit.*, p. 325.
 60. Clemens Brentano, 'Der Philister vor, in und nach der Geschichte', in Werke, edited by Friedhelm Kemp (Munich, 1973), III, 984. All subsequent references in text.
 61. Peter Bruning, 'E.T.A. Hoffmann and the Philistine', GQ, XXVIII (1955), 111-121 (p. 111).
 62. Morgan, 'Angebrentano in Berlin', p. 316.
 63. *op. cit.*, p. 324.
 64. *ibid.*
 65. E.V.K. Brill, p. 84.
 66. Morgan, 'Angebrentano in Berlin', p. 325.
 67. Morgan, 'E.T.A. Hoffmann and the Philistine', p. 140.
 68. Bruning, p. 111.
 69. *op. cit.*, p. 118.
 70. Estelle Morgan, 'Heine and the Philistine', GLL, IV (October 1939), No. 1, 56-64 (p. 57).
 71. *ibid.*
 72. Werke, edited by Helmut Holtzhauer (Berlin and Weimar, 1978), II, 212.
 73. Morgan, 'Heine and the Philistine', p. 62.
 74. Jost Hermand, Das junge Deutschland: Texte und Dokumente (Stuttgart, 1967), p. 11.
 75. *op. cit.*, p. 321.
 76. Ruth Klappenbach and Wolfgang Steinitz, Wörterbuch der deutschen Gegenwartssprache, 6 vols (Berlin, 1964-1977), III, 2215.
 77. *op. cit.*, p. 2500.
 78. Morgan, 'Heine and the Philistine', p. 62.
 79. *op. cit.*, p. 64.
 80. *ibid.*
 81. Estelle Morgan, 'Bourgeois and Philistine', MLR, LVII, No. 1 (1962), 69-72 (p. 70).
 82. Jost Hermand, Das junge Deutschland, p. 280.
 83. Jost Hermand, Der deutsche Vormärz: Texte und Dokumente (Stuttgart, 1967), p. 31.
 84. *op. cit.*, p. 33.
 85. Dieter Arendt, 'Das Philistertum des 19. Jahrhunderts', p. 46.
 86. *ibid.*
 87. *ibid.*
 88. Jost Hermand, Der deutsche Vormärz, p. 90.
 89. *op. cit.*, p. 106.
 90. *op. cit.*, p. 292.
 91. Klappenbach-Steinitz, I, 656.
 92. 'Der Bildungsphilister', in Zarte Empirie: Studien zur

- Literaturgeschichte (Stuttgart, 1963), 179-220 (p. 181).
93. Since all quotations are from volume 1 of the Karl Schlechta edition, all subsequent references will appear in the text with page numbers only. Here: p. 138.
 94. Meyer, 'Der Bildungsphilister', p. 200.
 95. Peter Uwe Hohendahl, Das Bild der bürgerlichen Welt im expressionistischen Drama (Heidelberg, 1967), p. 106.
 96. Dieter Arendt, 'Wilhelm Raabe und "der Romantische Schlachtruf:Krieg den Philistern!"', in Jahrbuch der Raabe-Gesellschaft (1981), 55-83 (p. 71).
 97. In Werke, 5 vols, Aufbau-Verlag (Berlin and Weimar, 1976), III, 368.
 98. In Gesammelte Werke, 8 vols (Munich and Leipzig, 1912-24), VIII, 28.

CHAPTER TWO

JOSEPH VON EICHENDORFF - PHILISTER AND ANTIPHILISTER

Eichendorff became associated with the mainstream Romantic movement shortly after he had completed his university education, first at the university of Halle (1805-1806) and then at Heidelberg (1807-1808). He journeyed with his brother Wilhelm to Berlin in the autumn where they made the acquaintance of Clemens Brentano, Achim von Arnim, Adam Müller and Heinrich von Kleist. The following year they travelled to Vienna to take examinations for state employment and here they were friendly with Friedrich and Dorothea Schlegel. The most significant friendship at this time was with Adam Müller, who gave them Brentano's work Der Philister vor, in und nach der Geschichte in August 1811. Among a wide range of other books, Eichendorff read some of the works of Jean Paul, Ludwig Tieck, Goethe and Novalis. Work on his Taugenichts had already begun by 1817 and was complete by 1821. Whilst he was still producing works, with varying regularity, up to the year of his death in 1857, his most extended observations on the nature of poetry, as well as his most celebrated works were youthful creations, begun or completed before he had much experience of the drudgery of State service. Poetry and youth, freedom to travel and freedom to write as he pleases became a pleasure which the

demands of his profession would increasingly deny him. His poetic creations pulsate, therefore, with the idealism of youth and his view of Philister, gained in his early twenties, invests his work with a sense of nostalgia. One can recognize his Romantic obsession with philistinism in a number of motifs and themes.

1. Town/gown - The primary dichotomy.

I have already mentioned the origins of the more extended use of Philister in the student context, as an eventual synonym for Bürger in the private language of students. Eichendorff's own earliest extant writings - his diaries - make this sense of Philister clear. For him also, as a student at Halle, the ordinary citizens were quite naturally referred to as Philister. We may presume that he got to know the word Philister for the first time in this student meaning in 1805:

Schon auf der Hälfte des Weges hatten wir in einem Wirthshause, wo wir ein wenig ausstiegen, Gelegenheit, den Respect der Haller Bürger (Philister) vor einem Burschen kennen zu lernen.¹

The respect that Eichendorff refers to here was no natural expression of high regard, but an enforced subordination which tyrannical students, conscious of their superiority, demanded of the ordinary citizens, whom they constantly baited under the title of Philister. Stöcklein sums up the atmosphere of Halle at this time:

Die Studenten in Halle bildeten einen eigenen 'Staat' und hatten die ganze Stadt, es waren für sie ja nur 'Philister', auf eine famose Weise terrorisiert, so dass selbst die Professoren die Studenten zuerst zu grüssen pflegten.²

Other occasions when he uses Philister in the sense of citizen betray more than a hint of student disdain for the persons and values of the citizenry.³ It is not surprising that we find similar usages in Ahnung und Gegenwart which was composed so shortly after Eichendorff's own departure from the student world. Here Graf Friedrich is admonished by a student on leave-taking to separate himself from the prevailing practice of the outer world, which is peopled by philistines: 'werde nicht wie alle andere, werde niemals ein trauriger, vornehmer, schmunzelnder, bequemer Philister!' (WA II, 12). The series of adjectives attempt to patronize Philister as members of a rather pathetic breed, respectable yet supercilious, the well-off and the well-to-do.

This is not a minor aspect of Eichendorff's view of philistinism. He very clearly wants to give the impression that student days represent something of a pervading ideal for him. Much that mattered to him for the rest of his life occurred during this brief period of years that he spent at Halle and then Heidelberg. It was then that he undertook a number of hikes (Wanderungen) in the local countryside which strengthened his love of nature. In Heidelberg, he befriended Joseph Görres, who was instrumental in re-activating Eichendorff's Catholicism and came under the influence of Graf Loeben, who promoted his literary talent. The sense of

loss he felt when he eventually left Heidelberg on 13 May 1808 is rendered the more intense for us in that he never returned there. All this, coupled with the hedonistic atmosphere of the universities of the time, particularly for those of aristocratic origin, gave this period in his life an understandable mythic potency. Graf Friedrich's obvious regret as he moves from one sphere of life to another is no mere episode, quickly forgotten, but a deep rift that Eichendorff shares in full measure:

Er war seit mehreren Jahren diese Lebensweise gewohnt, und das Herz war ihm jedesmal aufgegangen, wie diese freie Jugend ihm so keck und mutig ins Gesicht sah. Nun, da er von dem allem auf immer Abschied nehmen sollte, war ihm wie einem, der von einem lustigen Maskenballe auf die Gasse hinaustritt, wo sich alles nüchtern fortbewegt wie vorher. (WA II, 10)

The conflicts between students and townspeople that were part of the university scene at this time lend Eichendorff a ready-made combative attitude that is apparent in the student greetings in the much later Dichter und ihre Gesellen (1834): 'Salve! Herr Doktor oder Magister!| Bin ein alter Bursch und hass die Philister' (WA II, 310). Compulsively and repeatedly Eichendorff returned in later years to conjure up the imagined spirit of his student days. By doing so, he consciously perpetuated the distinction between Studenten and Philister, but here raised to the almost mythical proportions that we have encountered in Brentano's treatise. His own frustrated existence as a bureaucrat, his sense of a degeneration of poetry in the service of political ends, cause him to invent a student body that is equal to the task

of uprooting the evil of philistinism. Unfortunately the order of knights errant, as the students perceive themselves to be, has long since been dispersed and submerged in the society of philistines: 'Das Fräulein ist alt geworden, | Und unter Philistern umher | Zerstreut ist der Ritterorden, | Kennt keiner den andern mehr' (WA I, 177). There is a melancholy awareness in this poem 'Bei Halle' of 1840 that it is impossible to recapture the spirit of youth that might address the problems of the present with appropriate vigour.

Even more explicitly than in his poetry, Eichendorff's autobiographical reminiscences, probably written in 1857 and entitled Erlebtes, bear ample testimony to his intense preoccupation with the spirit of his student years, even in this last year of his life. He explains how the students placed themselves in an imagined medieval setting, in which they functioned as the knights who opposed the Philister. Poesie, here referred to as 'die Muse' is imaginatively transformed into the Lady who needs to be rescued from the clutches of the philistine dragon. True, Eichendorff is not uncritical of the universities of the time and his comments on the students are not always reverential, but he finds the overall spirit invigorating:

Der durchgreifende Grundgedanke war dennoch ein kerngesunder: der Gegensatz von Ritter und Philister. Stets schlagfertige Tapferkeit war die Kardinaltugend des Studenten, die Muse, die er oft gar nicht kannte, war seine Dame, der Philister der tausendköpfige Drache, der sie schmäählich gebunden hielt und gegen den er daher (...) beständig zu Felde lag. (WA I, 922)

He then goes on to describe how this original spirit was

dissipated to some degree by the march of events, but the symbolic force of the small, rural university towns - Halle and Heidelberg - remains potent for Eichendorff late in life. The period after his university years is viewed negatively as the 'capture' of students by the philistinism around them, an image which continues the combative metaphors of knights and dragons and underlines the reluctance of the assimilation into the values of the world that is implied by: 'die Studenten werden immer mehr in das allgemeine Philisterium eingefangen' (WA I, 950). His last paragraph in Erlebtes becomes virtually rhapsodic, as it identifies students and young people as the source of Poesie itself: 'Die Jugend ist die Poesie des Lebens' (ibid.).

There is of course an element of resignation and melancholy in such nostalgic re-creations - youthfulness and student life are only phases in human existence, brief and poignant. But they are idealized in retrospect, as the repositories of a more vigorous anti-philistinism than Eichendorff seemed capable of re-enacting in later life. He has been forced to compromise with the philistinism of his age to earn a living rather than devote himself entirely to Poesie, as an eternal student of independent means might have done. This ideal of the student, the youth, the poet stands in constant tension, in Eichendorff's work, with the reality of life. Like Brentano, he clearly sees the student in a wider sense that does not restrict him to a brief time at university, but preserves a student's view of the world,

ideally allowing the attitude to last a lifetime.

2. Depictions of Philistia.

The principal means whereby student days most clearly come to an end in Eichendorff is through marriage and the ties and domestic cares that thereby ensue. Eichendorff's heroes, by contrast, are generally young, unmarried and consequently free to devote themselves to Poesie. We find examples of this at both ends of Eichendorff's literary career, in Ahnung und Gegenwart, completed a number of years before his own marriage and Die Glücksritter, published in 1841. Both of them are still very much imbued with the student spirit and its determined bachelorhood, since marriage represents the threshold of the adult world. Leontin, in Ahnung und Gegenwart is almost aggressively determined to remain unattached. Therefore, after overhearing Herr von A. and his sister discussing his eligibility as a spouse for Julie, Leontin remarks with evident irritation: "Rückt mir nicht auf den Hals mit eurem soliden, häuslichen, langweiligen Glück, mit eurer abgestandenen Tugend im Schlafrock!" (WA II, 98). His objections are to marriage in general, but particularly to the arranged marriage that Herr von A's sister would wish to see brought about. She specifically voices her hopes that marriage would integrate him into the normal activities of his social equals, that he will 'seine überspannten Ideen fahrenlassen und werden wie alle andern' (ibid.). His final

response to such unwelcome demands is to flee Herr von A.'s castle secretly, leaving behind a warning to Graf Friedrich not to succumb to the Philister. It ends with the line from Judges that had become a rallying cry for students in town/gown confrontations. It is perhaps more appropriate in this context in that, in view of Leontin's reasons for a hurried departure, the original biblical context gains in significance: the wife (Delilah) was involved in a conspiracy to hand Samson over to the Philister; Leontin is escaping before any attempt is made by Philister to hand him over to a wife:

'Herr Friedrich, der schläft in der Ruhe Schoss,
 Ich wünsch ihm viel Unglück, dass er sich erbos,
 Ins Horn, zum Schwert, frisch dran und drauf!
 Philister über dir, wach, Simson, wach auf!'
 (WA II, 104)

Domestication for Eichendorff's heroes has a negative image which reveals it as a facet of philistinism. For Klarinett in Die Glücksritter marriage is a real temptation which he has to face. The narrator presents the problem as a form of internal debate, with imaginary future conversations, as he thinks of his approaching engagement. We note how his internal voice admonishes him not to throw away the material benefits of marriage, whilst the negative aspects loom larger, especially the jarring images of child-bearing and the conventional, empty expressions of interest in the well-being of his wife and children which he imagines expressed in an unappealing explosion of dissonance. The very forces of nature seem to ridicule his intentions:

Sei kein Narr, sei kein Narr, sagte er hastig zu sich selbst, ein Schloss, drei Weiler, vier Teiche und fette Karpfen und Untertanen und Himmelbett - und was macht die Frau Liebste? - danke für höfliche Nachfrag, sie wiegt - ach und die lieben Kleinen? - sie schrein und die Wiegen rumpeln - und derweil rauscht der Wald draussen und schilt mich, und die Rehe gucken durch den Gartenzaun und lachen mich aus. (WA II, 902)

Paradoxically, although not surprisingly, Eichendorff did not live out the ideals that his heroes project. He was, in fact, happily married and is unlikely to have considered his own marriage a source of frustration, an obstacle to his poetic activity. This role was filled by his profession as bureaucrat. He had married Luise in 1815, greatly to the dissatisfaction of his parents, who clearly would have preferred 'eine glänzendere und reichere Partie'.⁴ Eichendorff's marriage was a love-match which, if anything, inspired his poetic activity. The poem he wrote to his wife in 1816 begins with the words: 'Ich wollt' in Liedern oft dich preisen' and ends with 'Ach, wen Gott lieb hat, gab er solche Fraue!'.⁵ His reflections on the congruence of philistinism and the marriage state are therefore more likely based on his awareness of many less well-matched marriages in the society of his time, often undertaken for convenience - such as the maximum material and social benefit - with the virtual exclusion of love. His criticism of marriage in his fiction is then conditioned by the need to proclaim ideals by focussing on certain abuses of the time. Marriage is not philistine in essence, but its most frequent manifestations seem to be so. Eichendorff's continuing literary efforts

after his own marriage represent the bulk of his output and his most characteristic creations, including Der Taugenichts. However, his form of youthful poetic idealism required unmarried literary heroes to single-mindedly pursue poetic goals. His symbolic points were made more clearly by means of such concentration.

In the same way that the Philister's suggestions about regulated wooing in Goethe's Werther do not devalue all wooing, so Werther's own frustrations with the bourgeois institution of marriage are fuelled by personal experiences that do not invalidate marriage. Eichendorff remarks with regard to Werther: 'die Ehe färbt sich ihm unwillkürlich ins Pedantisch-Philiströse, da sie ihn von seiner geliebten Lotte trennt'.⁶ Similarly, Eichendorff's literary presentation of marriage and domesticity as negative, indeed philistine aspects of life, is surely motivated by his observation of how the youthful, poetic spark of his contemporaries became extinguished after the ceremony.

For Eichendorff's itinerant poets and musicians, the primary danger in domestication is, then, the inevitable silencing of the muse. Everyday reality and the concerns of ordinary life are perceived as a threat to the continuance of Poesie. On the one hand, this discrepancy with respect to Eichendorff's actual life occurs because he is constrained by motifs such as leave-taking, the wandering musician-poet and other substance from the Volkslied. To him this all presents a poetic territory with its own rules and conventions, an

ideal social setting that he does not wish to relate to the reality of his own life. On the other hand, he is reacting against the common popular idealization of family life as the highest achievable aim, the 'Spiesserehe'⁷ which represents a threat to Poesie. Since Eichendorff reserved the accolade for the practice of poetry, the extinguishing of the poetic spark after the marriage ceremony seemed a real danger. Thus, 'Der wandernde Musikant' contains the observation to the young lady: 'Wenn wir zwei zusammen wären, | Möcht mein Singen mir vergehn.' (WA I, 50). A similar sentiment is expressed in 'Sommerschwüle' : 'Die Nachtigall schweigt, sie hat ihr Nest gefunden' (WA I, 122). Even though as husband and father he was aware that this was not the only possibility, Eichendorff locates philistinism within a form of marriage which as poet he finds objectionable.

From the point of view of his itinerant musicians or poets, Eichendorff takes delight in depicting domestic philistinism in a characteristic manner which makes use of certain stock comic devices. He identifies Philister quite often by what they wear and allows their clothing to reflect the focus of their interest. The phrase 'Kleider machen Leute' could be applied here as an explanation of his tendency to present the domesticated appearance of largely middle-class characters stereotypically. This tendency is so frequent as to merit comparison with the actual visual caricatures of Wilhelm Busch, who satirizes the Philister as a cartoon character. Dressing-gowns and night-caps become

the potent symbols of a mental attitude which is manifestly content to seek its pleasures within the sanctity of a comfortable home. Even whilst engaged in their regular employment, characters such as the Taugenichts' father are in the widest sense sleepy-headed - apparently working but not with their full powers, mechanically alienated from tasks which do not fully awaken their mental capacities. Therefore, the Taugenichts' father works away in his mill 'die Schlafmütze schief auf dem Kopfe' (WA II, 565). We are later made aware of changes in the mental state of the Taugenichts himself when he adopts the dress of his predecessor as Zolleinnehmer, which is comically brightly-coloured: 'unter andern einen prächtigen roten Schlafrock mit gelben Punkten, grüne Pantoffeln, eine Schlafmütze und einige Pfeifen mit langen Röhren' (WA II, 574). The pipes are optional extras, but they can form part of the domestic ease of the Philister.

From a sociological point of view, it would appear that it is especially the lower middle classes who are depicted as philistines in this comically visual fashion. We seem there to enter a larger tradition stretching back notably to Shakespeare, who generally allowed the moments of high drama in his histories and tragedies to be punctuated by scenes of lower middle-class comedy. Eichendorff seems to uphold this topos which accords with the later tradition of the Deutscher Michel, who is generally a Kleinbürger. It is a satirical attitude which extends to the imagined figure of his audience in Viel Lärmen um nichts (1832) when Herr Publikum leans out

of his window 'eine schneeweisse Schlafmütze auf dem Kopf' (WA II, 665). The watchman on the battlements of the Philisterstadt in Krieg den Philistern is made to appear both a complete Philister and a not very watchful watchman by his appearance alone: 'Ein alter Mann, mit langem weissen Bart, in damastenenem Schlafrock und Nachthaube, mit einer langen Tabakspfeife' (WA I, 501). His subsequent conversation with the Narr bears out this impression.

Authority figures in Eichendorff can appear as Philister of a different social class, no less ridiculous by their appearance, which is generally meant to be imposing and grandiose but fails through the exaggerated nature of their finery and their pompous bearing. The Portier in Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts who seems to be in charge of the entrance hall and doorway of the Schloss is clearly obsessed with his role and its visual impact:

da steht ein grosser Herr in Staatskleidern, ein breites Bandelier von Gold und Seide bis an die Hüften übergehängt, mit einem oben versilberten Stabe in der Hand, und einer ausserordentlich langen gebogenen kurfürstlichen Nase im Gesicht, breit und prächtig wie ein aufgeblasener Puter. (WA II, 567)

Like the farmer who is so uncivil to the Taugenichts when the latter asks for directions to Italy, these characters combine an elegance of appearance with an abruptness of manner which could be described as role-fixation, a form of alienation of the Philister from his fellow human-beings. That clothing has symbolic value for Eichendorff is made doubly clear in the scene from Die Glücksritter, where Klarinett's resolve to

depart from his impending engagement and all that would follow from it, is expressed simply by his change of clothes. Here 'Schlafrock' and 'Wanderkleid' are key words for mutually exclusive life-styles: 'Aber Klarinett hatte schon den Schlafrock abgeworfen, er fühlt' sich auf einmal so leicht in dem alten Wanderkleid' (WA II, 903). The visual aspect of philistinism is integral to Eichendorff's literary depiction of philistinism and, incidentally, part of his debt to Brentano.

Eichendorff is not content to make his philistines clearly distinguishable in terms of their appearance and dress. He may combine this means with other devices, or substitute some other unambiguous signal that Philister are present. In addition to appearance and dress, we should consider such features as movement, speech, habitual activity and other evidence of behaviour and attitudes. These are part of Eichendorff's repertoire of insignia of what has come to be called alienation. Brentano again may have been the model, above all in ascribing mechanical behaviour and rigidity in thought-patterns and attitudes to Philister, but Hoffmann and other Romantic writers operate within a similar system.

When prominent philistines move about in Eichendorff's works, their gait is naturally the reverse of exuberance and spontaneity. They develop a mechanical form of movement which makes them barely distinguishable from automata.⁸ One of Eichendorff's favourite images in such contexts is the

pendulum. We note the continuation of the description of the Portier by the incredulous Taugenichts, who had:

noch immer die Augen von der Seite auf die unheimliche Gestalt gerichtet, die immerfort wie der Perpendikel einer Turmuhr in der Halle auf und ab wandelte, und eben wieder majestätisch und schauerlich aus dem Hintergrunde heraufgezogen kam. (WA II, 568)

The activity has ceased to be natural and thus loses its meaning. Through stylization of movement to this extent human beings lose something of their humanity and become automata or marionettes. Eichendorff is fond of unmasking such ridiculous aspects of human behaviour through the role of the onlooker: the effects of philistinism on a figure's movement may be comic, but they are also eerie ('schauerlich') or strange ('sonderbar'). The latter aspect is illustrated in this excerpt from Ahnung und Gegenwart:

'es ist doch ein sonderbares Gefühl', erwiderte Friedrich nach einer Weile, 'so draussen aus der weiten, stillen Einsamkeit auf einmal in die bunte Lust der Menschen hineinzusehen, ohne ihren inneren Zusammenhang zu kennen; wie sie sich, gleich Marionetten, voreinander verneigen und beugen, lachen und Lippen bewegen, ohne dass wir hören, was sie sprechen.' (WA II, 60)

When it is possible to hear what people say in Eichendorff's works, the philistines also have their own recognizable idiom. Its content and phrasing is that of the Volkskalender which Eichendorff later takes to task in his literary criticism of the 1840s. They offer 'lange sentimentale Geschichten und kneten Historie und Moral in einen ästhetischweichlichen Brei zusammen' (WA III, 160). They would not be so dangerous if did not appear so regularly

(annually) and were not so 'wohlfeil, handlich und zudringlich' (WA III, 162). The spirit of their pronouncements is that of the Aufklärung with a desire for 'Volkserziehung' (WA III, 160). It is popular wisdom couched in proverbial expression to which the Taugenichts in particular is constantly subjected. The process is ridiculed by the mechanical manner in which the pieces of advice are generated, at one point like the voice of an inner philistine mentor in the guise of the Portier. A meeting with a pretty girl at the inn in the wood brings forth immediate thoughts of matrimony which the Taugenichts resists: '"Greif zu, Einnehmer, greif zu! jung gefreit hat niemand gereut, wer's Glück hat, führt die Braut heim, bleibe im Lande und nähre dich tüchtig"' (WA II, 590). The preposterousness of the mental attitude that could consider such a series of proverbs serious guidelines for behaviour is underlined by the Taugenichts-narrator's next remark which is naively-ironic: 'In solchen philosophischen Gedanken setzte ich mich' (ibid.). Earlier, the Taugenichts' own cliché-ridden meditations, shortly after he had been engaged to help the gardener in the Schloss, emphasize that he is at that point extremely vulnerable to the allurements of philistinism. His 'meditations' consist entirely of such proverbial statements:

Es wird keinem an der Wiege gesungen, was künftig aus ihm wird, eine blinde Henne findet manchmal auch ein Korn, wer zuletzt lacht, lacht am besten, unverhofft kommt oft, der Mensch denkt und Gott lenkt. (WA II, 569)

On this occasion, the Taugenichts is able to remedy the

decline into what is in effect the thought-process of the Philister by closer communion with God and nature in the early morning. Eichendorff is making the point in these sections that this mechanical form of moralizing, rather than indicating the powers of human reason, shows how Philister merely masquerade as human beings but reveal themselves to be parrots of trite phrases. The Taugenichts at one point forgets that a parrot is, significantly, only 'eine unvernünftige Bestie' (WA II, 620) and has a heated exchange of oaths with it. That the speech of Philister is like so much 'parroting' is made comically evident in this most philistine of birds, as it struts about 'in seinem vergoldeten Gebauer mit allerlei Grimassen' (ibid.). Romantic continuity is such that we could be in a Hoffmann tale rather than an Eichendorff Märchen.

Underlying the main objections of the settled world to the Taugenichts' mode of life is a conception of work which views labour primarily as the means to finance comfortable domesticity and as a necessary prelude to self-indulgence. The Taugenichts is continually advised to settle down by philistines who wish to integrate him into the normal duties of an adult. They direct their 'wisdom' at him in the hope that he will conform. In doing so they they are expounding the familiar middle-class values to which the Taugenichts is instinctively resistant. Whatever 'useful' work he is admonished to take on, he does so only half-heartedly, sparing his energy for his music-making and his travels.

Certain forms of work or profession are treated critically in Eichendorff, especially in the Taugenichts, whose good-for-nothing hero is an immediate affront to traditional middle-class notions of usefulness. Instead of the prosaic diligence of many other characters in the novella, the Taugenichts engages our attention because of his naive exuberance and delight in laziness. The Philister on the other hand are those very dispensers of proverbs and maxims we have already encountered, for whom work has a very narrow and unattractive definition.

Gardeners come in for satirical scrutiny in Eichendorff since their view of Nature is so circumscribed. Here, above all, we see personality itself reduced to the level of a sermon on their conception of the work ethic. When the Taugenichts is employed to help the gardener, the only conversation between them is in the form of the latter's implied condemnation of the Taugenichts' preferred way of life so far. The conception of usefulness is paramount, so that the arts are without value and the admonition to a steady, settled diligence as the chief goal of life is the key tone:

wie ich nur fein nüchtern und arbeitsam sein, nicht in der Welt herumvagieren, keine brotlosen Künste und unnützes Zeug treiben sollte, da könnt ich es mit der Zeit auch einmal zu was Rechtem bringen.- Es waren noch mehr sehr hübsche, gutgesetzte, nützliche Lehren, ich habe nur seitdem fast alles wieder vergessen.

(WA II, 568)

In addition to gardeners it is bureaucrats who are subjected to a satirical treatment most often by Eichendorff

both for the kind of work they do and the manner in which they approach it. This leads to comic images such as the description of the official (Amtmann) who announces to the Taugenichts that he has just been successfully appointed as a Tax Collector. The former is ensconced 'hinter einem ungeheuren Dintenfasse und Stössen von Papier und Büchern (...) wie die Eule aus ihrem Nest' (WA II, 573). In his behaviour, however, the sense of comic pathos is dispelled by his clipped and impersonal treatment of the Taugenichts. He is so imbued with his professional function that his personality is the mere expression of his public role. Like all of the Philister in Eichendorff, he is therefore alienated from his essential humanity by the role he is fulfilling. The impulse here is not the 'usefulness' which so obsesses the gardeners but the similarly suspect motivation of bureaucrats. Fortunat's remarks in Dichter und ihre Gesellen (1834) are activated by concern at the actual personality changes he observes in his friend Walter whom he knew as a student:

Ja, ich habe schon oft nachgedacht über den Grund dieser zärtlichen Liebe so vieler zum Staatsdienst. Hunger ist es nicht immer, noch seltener Durst nach Nützlichkeit. Ich fürchte, es ist bei den meisten der Reiz der Bequemlichkeit, ohne Ideen und sonderliche Anstrengung gewaltig und mit grossem Spektakel zu arbeiten.
(WA II, 296)

Attitudes to work are therefore important in any discussion of philistinism in Eichendorff. He deliberately presents the workaday world as drab and conducive to alienation precisely because it overvalues particular forms

of work and undervalues others. In the diligent lives of the middle classes of his time it is the earning potential of work that predominates. This 'work ethic' implies a certain attitude to the arts which we encounter repeatedly in depictions of philistinism - any activity without apparent and immediate market value is scorned since it is not a 'breadwinning' activity. In one sense, of course, his refusal to stay and work is irresponsible since it leaves others to do that work; in another, it is a call for a re-evaluation of the approach to the value of work. The Taugenichts is only good-for-nothing in the conventional sense. His efforts, however, give immense pleasure to all those he meets, once he starts to play his violin. Before he does so he often ironizes society's estimation of him with the phrase 'ich, nicht zu faul' (WA II, 631). Above all in this tale Eichendorff is attempting to enlarge the concept of 'work' so beloved of middle-class Philistia to embrace activities that are perhaps not useful but substantially enhance human existence.

From his personal point of view, unlike his own experience of marriage, Eichendorff suffered much under the burden of a career which he often found frustrating and unfulfilling. Operating as a bureaucrat in various ministries up until his premature retirement due to ill health in 1844, he had ample opportunity to observe at first hand all the conceit that this kind of employment could induce. He is acutely aware of the arrogance that positions of authority

can generate and vents his satirical ire against such persons in his writings. In his semi-autobiographical fragment Unstern he hints that this satirical bent, which rendered him unable to sustain the obsequiousness evidently required for career advancement, made him ever critical of the ridiculous aspects of human behaviour. He mentions there a presumably fatal encounter with a superior who was 'höchst pedantisch, ein grossmäuliger Beamten-Aristokrat' (WA II, 657).

Furthermore, Eichendorff was, albeit conscientious, misplaced in his career. He was not fulfilled in the work that he was doing and never achieved the promotions he felt were his due: 'He was profoundly dissatisfied with his public occupation'.⁹ He would have much preferred a career in teaching, but never obtained a post. He lived as if among philistines in a state of exile from his dearest desires - to be back in Lubowitz, to recapture the enthusiasm of his student years, to discover the career that he really wanted. It must have been particularly galling for him to experience the utter complacency and self-satisfaction of philistines in their mundane, undemanding tasks and then to have to recognize his own apparent failure. A letter to Loeben about his experiences in 1813 and 1814 shows the beginning of his lifelong sense of frustration: 'Ich weiss nicht, soll ich mich ärgern über das hartnäckige, fast beispiellose Misslingen aller meiner Pläne und heissesten Wünsche'.¹⁰ Eichendorff only reluctantly enters the Civil Service, because no other alternatives present themselves. Not finding his ideal

vocation as the one to support his family, his poetic pursuits are necessarily restricted to leisure hours. The cleft between the workaday philistine world and an ideal realm which can keep alive his enthusiasm is accentuated by his own experiences.

The congenial sounds produced by the Taugenichts as a vagrant violinist are contrasted in this work with the much less pleasant sounds which emanate from the work of the lower middle-class characters in Eichendorff's fictions. The noise generated by the mills are especially noteworthy in this regard since they are an instance of dissonant money-making equipment which disrupts the more harmonious sounds of nature, otherwise to be heard in the agricultural communities. In Taugenichts especially these represent not merely one of the unfortunate aspects of the rural life-style, but they are invariably associated with prominent Philister as a kind of leitmotiv. Thus the Taugenichts's father had 'schon seit Tagesanbruch in der Mühle rumort' (WA II, 565) at the start of the tale. Later, having fallen asleep one Sunday on his way to Italy, the hero has a nightmare in which all the unpleasant sounds associated with Philister he has met - his father's mill, the Portier's bassoon-playing, unite to herald the arrival of yet another Philister: 'aber was so brauste und rumorte, war weder die Mühle noch der Portier, sondern derselbe Bauer, der mir vorhin den Weg nach Italien nicht zeigen wollte' (WA II, 586). On these and other occasions Eichendorff

contrasts the jarring sounds the Philister make with the pleasant music the Taugenichts produces. At times it is as if 'rumoren' was the natural manner in which the Philister make their mark in the world.¹¹ Ugly, unmusical and loud noise emphasizes the alienation of Philister from Nature, beauty, Poesie. The Taugenichts, as 'Naturmensch' is integrated with all three.

3. A sample text - Krieg den Philistern.

The interplay between Eichendorff's attitude to philistinism and his presentation of it can be studied with particular profit in Krieg den Philistern. The title is, in fact, somewhat deceptive. For rather than unleashing a satirical diatribe against philistines à la Brentano, the author gives us a series of essentially comic incidents in a sophisticated and ironic manner, and we sense his awareness that an outright campaign against Philister by some self-appointed champions of culture could prove a very dubious enterprise. There are no 'heroes' in the play, not even the Poetischen - who demonstrate all the worst aspects of egotists masquerading as poets. Their arrogant declaration of war is simply the prelude to internecine strife - a phoney war between philistines of different hue.

Whilst it had no theatrical success whatsoever in the poor dramatic conditions of the time, the play did find a resonance amongst Eichendorff's friends. It is referred to relatively frequently in his correspondence, giving the

impression that he and kindred souls considered it a successful statement of ideas they shared about the problem of philistinism. Eichendorff himself was able to see its potential to treat the actual political events of 1849, if their utter seriousness did not preclude comic treatment:

Die Sache ... gäbe oft das köstlichste Thema zu einem neuen Philisterkriege, wenn ... der Kampf nicht zu tragisch wäre zum Spass.¹²

The Narr, who turns out later to be the author's alter ego, is the true critical voice throughout the play and many of his comments can be taken as Eichendorff's own. It is he, for instance, who voices criticism of industrial development and the associated noise from mills which banish all thoughts (WA I, 476) and who comments on the incessant cry of the Beamten for more paper with critical observations on the age of journalism and pamphleteering which Eichendorff shared: 'Die Zeit braucht viel Papier, Papier braucht Lumpen, o lumpige Zeit!' (WA I, 477).

A marvellously revealing dialogue in the second Act involves the Narr and a watchman in the battlements of the philistine town. Eichendorff gives him not only the attitudes of a Philister but the visual insignia: 'Ein alter Mann mit langem weissen Bart, in damastenenem Schlafrock und Nachthaube, mit einer langen Tabakspfeife' (WA I, 501). The Narr then elicits a series of rationalisations from him by describing the night scene in a style perhaps reminiscent of Goethe (Faust) or Shakespeare (Hamlet/Macbeth) with echoes of Hoffmann (the 'grünlich goldne Schlangen' of Der goldne

Topf). Eventually the watchman's prosaic explanations become unbearable and permit Eichendorff to deliver a harsher criticism of the general effect of the deadening hand of philistinism:

Längst überreif, faul, breit gemächlich sitzt du
 Inmitten auf dem Lebensbaum und spürst nicht,
 Wie er in Frühlingschauern treibt und rauscht.
 (WA I, 502)

We can detect here an instance of that harsher tone we encounter in Eichendorff's literary criticism but which - always excepting a number of poems - is usually more amused than annoyed in his literary creations.

The Narr is constantly explaining the play to the audience or readers and his information is often vital. We learn, for instance, that the ontological relationship between the Philister and the Poetischen is a much closer one than the latter's arrogance would permit. He wittily reminds us that it is all a question of outward appearance, that they are essentially the same:

Es sind leibhaftig unsre Doppelgänger,
 Fideles Volk, nur mit 'nem Überwurf
 Noch von anständiger Philisterei.
 Wir andern haben vom damastnen Schlafpelz,
 Mit dem wir alle uns elendig schleppen,
 Das alte Zeuch nach innen umgewandt
 Und's Rauche rausgekehrt.-So oder so,
 's ist alles einerlei, 's bleibt doch ein Schlafpelz!
 (WA I, 510)

Eichendorff of course makes great play of this notion of the doppelgänger at various points in the play and does so in a half-comic, half-serious fashion. He allows it to highlight those aspects of personality that are hidden by the demands

of public image, as in the case of the mayor. His doppelgänger claims to be his 'eigentliches Ich' (WA I, 494) and spends his time irreverently imitating the mayor's expressions and gestures. He thereby draws attention to the posing that his position involves by more open and honest pretence. The Narr himself, on the other hand, admits to being 'der Doppelgänger aller menschlichen Torheiten' (WA I, 495), a role which his parodies of various professions and styles of speaking fulfil. In addition, he represents a facet of the personality of the author Eichendorff who, in mock horror, recognizes him as such at the end of the play: 'Du bist mein leibhaftiger Doppelgänger!' (WA I, 558). Ironic and amusing, yes, but as the author's acknowledged representative his comments carry weight and merit attention.

More pointed, however, are the observations the Narr makes on the nature of philistinism. He attempts to define a Philister for Angela as follows:

Das ist dir so' In Vieh illustre,
 Gar nichts versteht er und viel liest er,
 Spottwenig trinkt er und viel isst er,
 Kurz: so ein schofler, fahler, trister. (WA I, 533)

This first part of the illustration emphasizes the bestiality of Philister, they are like cattle. It underlines the link between strenuous self-cultivation and stupidity. Finally, it refers to their physical appetite and their generally shabby, lamentable character. The fable about the 'Engel' and 'Bengel' is more extended and more serious. It illustrates the essential differences in ontological terms between the

two types of being. The 'Bengel' (rascal; here Philister) settle very comfortably into their terrestrial existence after they have been deposited and appear to feel very much at home. They are both proud of their own mental powers and ashamed of their angelic origins. They are socially very respectable and acceptable as 'ansehnliche Leute' (WA I, 534). In the eschatological muster of angels to return to heaven they find they are now unable to fly, through neglect of their wings. Soberly, therefore, the Philister are aligned with the damned in the final judgement. An amused commentary on the foibles of philistinism has become a very serious metaphysical statement.

The 'Engel', as one might expect, represent the 'true' poetic figures and heroes who never feel at home in the world. To them it is not an opportunity but a temporary banishment and they never lose sight of their divine origins and their heavenly destination. Eichendorff's very Christian conception of the poet's task - the poet as the exemplary Christian - informs this counter-image of the earthbound Philister. Unlike them, they have cherished the divine connection and, whilst unhappy in exile on earth they experience the joys of reunion in heaven. Familiar christian sentiments, yes, but transformed in a poetic and moving manner to illustrate the more serious aspects of philistinism.

The commander of the Poetischen - the Regent - is the embodiment of another of Eichendorff's pet hates, the

Aufklärung rationalist. He upbraids the wind for blowing 'ohne alle Intelligenz!' (WA I, 477) and self-confidently wants to impose his Aufklärung thinking on the people who are resistant to his insistent prescriptions for happiness: 'Glücklich müsst und sollt ihr sein, | Wandelnd in dem ew'gen Urlicht' (WA I, 478). The leader of the poetic contingent is therefore clearly a philistine in Eichendorff's view. His authoritarian attempt to impose a certain solution on society contravenes Eichendorff's fervent belief that only organic, not manufactured development, is laudable.

Praising the achievements of the Aufklärung and human reason is not restricted to the leading characters such as the Regent. Eichendorff takes great delight in showing the distorted way that an understanding of the Enlightenment has reached the lower orders. For one woman it merely confirms her genteel prejudices:

Es ist wahr, die Aufklärung erstreckt sich doch schon bis auf die unteren Volksklassen; man kann jetzt dreist an alle öffentlichen Orte gehen, ohne befürchten zu dürfen, ein unanständiges Lied zu hören. (WA I, 483)

Similarly, the limits of new knowledge and experience are very firmly circumscribed by the Bürger who enjoys the role of spectator of inventions, discoveries and revolutions but would be a most unwilling active participant. The philistine, ever cautious, is a specialist in vicarious involvement (WA I, 487).

The criticism of the Aufklärung is evident also in satirical swipes at the contemporary penchant for the highly

organised gardens of the French type (Versailles). Pastinak, for instance, would like to transform the 'Urwald' by similar rational procedures: 'Ihr müsst Alleen aushauen, ordentliche Haue anlegen' (WA I, 530). The Narr more cynically woos Amaryllis by pretending interest in the products of French literary Classicism (WA I, 537).

Goethe had underlined the close kinship between philistines and Pharisees, in the context of public reaction to Werther and Eichendorff seems to pick up the resemblances in his play. The young man, whose soliloquy we are offered in the second Act (Abenteuer) is a prime example of the philistine as Pharisee (WA I, 486). He exhibits complacency, a desire even in leisure to seek out what may be useful to him, a disdain of those who are devoted to literature and an estimation of its value as an aid to leisure alone. He is above all a careerist who even chooses his wife to further enhance his career prospects. The character he reveals in his monologue of course generates an amused response through the satire, but Eichendorff also succeeds in delineating a particularly calculating young man whose egotism we find disturbing. But he also means to provoke, and perhaps his success here helps explain why his play was not a great stage success at the time. It came too close to the mark.

Language used in a variety of high-flown and pompous ways is a notable focus of Eichendorff's satire here. The leaders like Hugo are enamoured of the pretentious poetic speechifying which gives this group the title of the

Poetischen. Eichendorff's principal satirical device to reveal the insubstantiality of the claims the Poetischen are making is to parody their use of language. We are always conscious that the language used by those characters with more high-flown ideas is borrowed and therefore without substance or meaning - whether the imitation is of Schiller or merely bureaucratic jargon. Both the attitudes expressed and the language used reveal the philistinism of the speakers, who therefore condemn themselves.

The satirical approach to the Aufklärung as one of the chief repositories of philistine attitudes appears in the parodies which poke fun at various kinds of inflated language - various dialects of philistinism. Therefore, we find an amusing parody of officialese in the Narr's address to the Volk (WA I, 479) and of philosophical language, notably of Fichte (WA I, 480). These extended set-pieces achieve their comic effect by deliberate exaggeration and contrived obfuscation. They reveal how such language often loses its intention of precision and becomes ridiculous, devoid of meaning, a form of self-indulgence, complicated linguistic acrobatics to little effect. At other times, characters besides the Narr - practically everyone else - speak in some exaggerated fashion, yet deliberately and seriously, without the Narr's satirical intent yet to clear satirical effect, since they are therefore seen to be the philistines. Eichendorff, long before Nietzsche, points to the cheapening of language once it develops a proverbial and thus automatic

character. Authentic expression and thought are too often replaced by borrowed phrasing and ideas which cast doubt on any notion of authentic statement. Furthermore, far from indicating a laudable level of allusive cultivation, the exaggerated language serves to stifle individuality. If everyone uses the same linguistic camouflage, then language becomes normative. Philistines are of course masters of normative language since it saves them the trouble of feeling and thinking for themselves.

The second Abenteuer, which is set in the Philisterstadt, serves as a convenient repository of many typically philistine remarks and attitudes. The mayor's speech, for example, is a model of rhetorical devices and longwinded euphuism which says nothing and yet earns the approval of the other councillors. It is an amusing demonstration in the play of how Eichendorff unmasks the essentially bombastic nature of much language use. In the context of philistinism it is a performance which has no further purpose than to win approval, a massaging of the ego.

The exaggerated language comes over, furthermore, in the response of certain philistines to nature. They attempt a serious parody of Romantic rhapsodies on the beneficial effect of nature (WA I, 482). Others, as so often throughout the nineteenth century, borrow the language of Schiller when they wish to speak in an exalted fashion. 'Schillerese' becomes virtually a new language register for the expression of anything relating to the emotions. The philistines do, of

course, enjoy the social prestige of thus expressing themselves, but it is also often merely a mask for less exalted feelings or drives. A lover at one point clearly uses Schiller's poetry as a prompt, without which he would be rendered speechless (WA I, 487). Later, the messenger attempts to save his own skin by the invention of a Schiller quotation: 'Ihr grosser Schiller sagt ja selbst:"Auch die Toten sollen leben!"' (WA I, 543).

One of the most interesting aspects of the play is how the Philister are shown to react to Poesie. It is highly contagious and requires immediate counter-measures, like a plague. What is felt to be most objectionable is, ironically, its assault on decorum and the civilized existence of the town. If it is the genteel attribute to which the young man does not mind devoting some of his leisure hours, or something the lover can plunder for Schiller quotations with which to impress his young woman, it is for the Philister even more an unsettling agent, nay a threat to the very ordered existence of the State. Hence it needs to be kept in place as a purely subordinate activity, not allowed to roam abroad and wreak havoc with the social order, built on the exercise of reason. It is hard to see how the counterfeit Poesie imported by the Poetischen could have such a dynamic effect, but Eichendorff is thinking primarily of his own poetry and its instinctual life. Its natural vitality is the more vigorous variety on which the mayor declares war:

Sollen wir leben wie die Hottentotten,
 So in die konfuse Natur hinein? -
 Wir müssen die Poesie ganz ausrotten! (WA I, 497)

The elements of Poesie that the Schulrat isolates for special attention are indeed the key aspects of Eichendorff's own poetic voice. The primary cause of the problem is deemed to be Spring as an enabling agent. The most characteristic products of nature are the familiar Eichendorff larks and Waldesrauschen. Counter suggestions of how they can be put to more practical use are readily made; the wind is to confine itself to driving the blades of windmills, those highly suspect devices in Eichendorff's literary landscape. Throughout these suggestions we note the supreme confidence of the Philister that they actually possess a laudable form of culture: 'Wir nun, als das gebildete Jahrhundert' (WA I, 498). The disturbing influence of nature is to be reduced to something more manageable - a recipe for the general philistine treatment of Poesie to transform it into Kultur (WA I, 499). A characteristic tactical weapon against the Poetischen is 'Langerweile' (sic), available here in epidemic proportions.

Eichendorff introduces not only parodies of language peculiar to particular professions who thus display their philistine credentials, but he also parodies second-rate literature produced in his age. The ever popular Schicksalsdramen, which he takes more extensively to task in Meierbeths Glück und Ende are parodied at various times in Krieg den Philistern but more particularly in the

Hausknecht's speech (WA I, 500). There are echoes also of Schiller, as in his poem 'Resignation'. Even Eichendorff's orchestration of the audience's response to this section - 'Publikum klatsch unmässig' (WA I, 501) renders the frequent approval of such theatrical offerings highly dubious. Philistine dramaturges are in league with a philistine public to promote only very limited theatrical fare. The popular sentimental plays of writers such as Iffland or the Trivialliteratur of Biedermeier figures like August Lafontaine, whom Eichendorff later criticizes in his Geschichte des Dramas, are parodied through the character Lina at the end of this act (p. 505f.)

What effect did Eichendorff wish to create with this play? It contains some comments which serve as a basis for our response to his intentions. When the giant Grobianus starts to get out of control, he is upbraided by the author who appears on stage and accuses him of introducing too tragic effects into an amusing play, meant only to stimulate 'höchstens leichte Rührung' (WA I, 555). We can largely accept this as Eichendorff's own main intention with the play that he calls a 'Dramatisches Märchen'. He is not really waging war himself, merely indulging in a few satirical cuts. He is also careful to avoid the label 'tragedy'. It is a very amusing ironic commentary on contemporary taste that Eichendorff has the audience react to his predominantly comic play as if it were indeed yet another Schicksalstragödie. As becomes abundantly clear in his much later literary reviews,

Eichendorff was very dubious indeed about the quality of public literary taste, especially in the theatre.

The play is well attuned to its age and critical of its less worthy aspects. The Narr's final address to the audience underlines its connection with reality, as a mirror, albeit a distorting one, of social behaviour:

Und treiben's nun zu Hause ruhig weiter
 In andern Kleidern nur, und etwas breiter.
 Ihr seid so gut wohl, tut dasselb zu Haus,
 So spielet fort das Stück und spielt nie aus.
 (WA I, 558)

4. Imagery: metaphors and metaphysics.

It will have become clear that, whilst there is a literal aspect to the descriptions of the appearance, movement and speech of the Philister, these are to be understood as more characteristically metaphorical. One way in which Eichendorff chooses to emphasize what is unattractive about the habits of philistines is by means of temporal metaphors: repetition of events or phenomena and an awareness of boredom (Langeweile).

Eichendorff inserts adjectives and adverbs which indicate monotony with significant regularity. One of his most favoured words of this kind is einförmig. In this way the potential for workaday monotony through the operation of agricultural machinery, such as threshing machines or the noisy mills we encounter in his work, is clearly stated. His metaphors serve to introduce his criticism of innovations otherwise perceived as of benefit to those employed in the

countryside. At the same time he is suggesting a more widespread critique of rural existence, its sights and sounds, which continue with unreflective monotony. We notice this in the rather inauspicious setting for the Landadel in Der Adel und die Revolution which includes the phrase 'immerfort der Lärm der Sperlinge' (WA I, 903). The monotonous existence of this first group of aristocrats - incidentally the most positive of the three groups described - is indicated not by larks soaring into the heavens, but by tamer, more raucous birds such as sparrows and domesticated turkeys. The use of 'immerfort' helps to undercut any sense that this might be a rural idyll. As the remainder of the paragraph indicates, Eichendorff is satirizing the limited perceptions of a landed aristocracy who are rendered deaf to the signs of the impending revolution, because they are so absorbed in all the frenetic activity of farming. Their perceptions of more harmonious sounds in nature are dulled primarily because they are not attuned to the rhythms of nature which are invigorating each spring, not least because they have insulated themselves from nature by a routine. The substitution of natural rhythm by rural routine has left them oblivious to tell-tale signs of an impending disruption. The unreflective recurrence of their activities is not merely a regrettable, unavoidable aspect of their rural existence, it indicates a failure in consciousness. Their contentment is a metaphor for a philistine consciousness.

The story of the Taugenichts is in effect an elaboration

of this basic perception. He rejects any participation in the regular work routines of his father and friends and is rejected in turn by them because he refuses to capitulate to the accepted notions about work. His sense of superiority as he sets off is based not merely on triumphant work-shyness but on a fervent desire to escape a routine existence which seems oblivious to the dynamic rhythm of nature on the return of spring. Work itself is not devalued, as we have already concluded, but the state of mind it induces which renders the worker unresponsive to anything else, in other words which leaves him alienated by an all-consuming activity. The Taugenichts' Wandern is merely the most extreme consequence of the obsessive concentration on work that characterizes his peers: 'alle meine alten Bekannten und Kameraden rechts und links, wie gestern und vorgestern und immerdar, zur Arbeit hinausziehen' (WA II, 565). Eichendorff is therefore using temporal adverbs to call into question lives which are dominated by the rhythms of work and not by, say, the rhythms of nature. Their attitude to work is a symptom of their attitude to life, so that routine repetition becomes a metaphor for a failure to be stimulated by the natural world, in fact to be alienated from it. It is a Romantic commonplace that alienation from nature is the principal source of man's spiritual impoverishment and a prime condition of philistinism.

Another way of expressing the Taugenichts' desire to leave home is by asserting that he is bored, that he suffers

from Langeweile. Once again, Eichendorff has invested this psychological state with urgent metaphorical meaning. It is another distinguishing mark to separate the Philister from other characters. Those who are painfully conscious of it are given hero status, those who contribute to it or who are oblivious to its effects are assigned to the philistine camp. It becomes almost a negative epithet in itself, even exuded by dubious characters such as the courtiers in Die Entführung (1839). On one occasion Graf Gaston notices the effect of the removal of masks which reveal 'überwachte, nüchterne Gesichter, durch die Säle zwischen den wenigen noch wankenden Gestalten strich die Langeweile unsichtbar wie ein böser Luftzug' (WA II, 845). The connection with repetition and monotony is obvious, since Langeweile is the psychological condition that results from a consciousness of stasis. This can also be political stasis, as in the comments on the restoration of order after the capture of Frau Libertas in Libertas und ihre Freier (1849):

Alles schämte sich pflichtschuldigst der augenblicklichen Verführung und Verwilderung; in der schillernden Mittagsschwüle plätscherten die Wasserkünste wieder wie blödsinnig immerfort in endloser Einförmigkeit (...) es war zum Sterben langweilig. (WA II, 932)

Eichendorff makes the connection between Philister and Langeweile seem so natural that he renders it one of their attributes, in fact something they can draw on when in trouble. Thus we notice how, in the hostilities between the Philisterstadt and the Poetischen in Krieg den Philistern, it

becomes a tactical weapon, bearing in mind the antipathy of non-philistines to it: 'Und die Poetischen draussen, wir hungern sie aus| Mit Langerweile - sie stehn und stehn' (WA I, 499).

The notion of Langeweile is of course important to the Romantic period in general and is not a unique insight of Eichendorff's. Many Romantic writers complain about it in their works, letters and diaries. It is a kind of existential boredom which partially motivates their very creation of literary works: 'die Langeweile des alltäglichen Daseins'.¹³ Strangely, the apparent slowness in the movement of time, when the mind is unable to find sustenance in some absorbing activity, yet creates a sense of the swiftness of time passing. Retrospectively, the Philister's entire life seems to consist of one monotonous episode of swiftly-moving time. It lacks the fullness or variety to give a sense of solidity to his life, but he has no ability to comprehend what he lacks.

On the other hand, Eichendorff's Romantic heroes have, at significant intervals, a sense of time ticking away without really achieving forward progression, often indicated by their perception of the loud, monotonous ticking of clocks. For the passing of time to become so conspicuous in this way underlines their ability to recognize an environment or profession that contains a threat to them from philistine sources. The louder the ticking of the clock, the more vacuous the existence in that locality. Eichendorff again

uses the metaphorical component to make his points about philistinism clear. Only his heroes, in moments of lull between activities, make references to clocks ticking in monotonous fashion. Thus Graf Friedrich in Ahnung und Gegenwart notices how 'die Wanduhr pickte einförmig immer fort' (WA II, 54). Likewise the Taugenichts returns from his whirlwind round of activities in Italy and looks in at the Einnehmerhaus where he had temporarily been content and notices particularly that 'die Wanduhr pickte noch immer ruhig fort' (WA II, 640). His other observations indicate a certain bemusement that nothing has changed since he was last there.

Constantly recurring sameness then induces Langeweile, a source of frustration for the heroes and yet another symptom of philistinism. In its most developed forms it leads to a sense of stagnation, a pathological condition that is typified by an impression that the clocks are no longer even audible but have stopped.¹⁴ Again, only those who are unaffected are aware of the condition. Thus the Narr's first words on entering the Philisterstadt in Krieg den Philistern are 'Ist's doch, als stände Uhr und Welt und Zeit' (WA I, 503). More telling, is how the Regent describes the atmosphere in the Philisterstadt:

Vergriffen, abgenutzt sind die Gedanken,
 Die alles trieben, schnurrend stockt das Werk,
 Es steht die Zeit auf einmal furchtbar still,
 Rings an der eigenen Langweiligkeit
 Verstirbt das Volk - und mir fällt doch nichts ein!
 (WA I, 548)

Apart from the revealing comment at the end about his own dubious credentials in feeling superior to the Philister, we note especially here how thoughts are conceived of as the motive force behind time itself. When they fail, the mechanism falters. At one point in the play the field doctor diagnoses Langeweile in one of the soldiers and points also to its gestation in the absence of thoughts: 'Seht, das kommt daher, Freund, wenn die Gedanken zu kurz sind, und die Zeit sehr lang' (WA I, 547). However jocular any of these definitions may seem, they represent part of Eichendorff's own value-system, which he takes very seriously indeed: philistinism thrives because thoughts falter. The thoughts in mind are the creative kind, the product perhaps of lateral thinking and not the arid reasoning he elsewhere so disparages.

Eichendorff then, like other Romantics, is deeply disturbed by the apparent inability of many people to realize that their lives are drab and uninteresting, that they are experiencing Langeweile. In the context of Krieg den Philistern it is primarily the older settled citizens of the Philisterstadt who are unknowingly immersed in Langeweile and only some of the younger generation who are uncomfortably conscious of its presence. Once again Eichendorff is making a point about the need to preserve youthful attitudes in later life, among them a watchful attentiveness to the onset of Langeweile. The majority of adults, it seems, soon become inured to it and end up as philistines.

Mere activity or apparent business may of course operate as a shield to mask a sense of boredom. The Philister's world is perceived as empty in the midst of apparent activity, his diligence often a frantic attempt to give substance to a vacant existence. Conversely, the Romantic artist's flights of imagination are a kind of symptom of his frenzied desire to escape from the conventional consciousness with its numbed unawareness of boredom. His life is then more restless than the philistine's since he is constantly seeking, whilst seldom content. The philistine's 'contentment', however, does not imply happiness; he is quite often melancholy but is unable or unwilling to wrench himself from his own state of stagnation. Some of the methods chosen by Eichendorff's heroes to avoid Langeweile and thus stagnation strike us as exaggerated. Graf Gaston in Die Entführung is of the opinion that 'Der Mensch verlange immer etwas Ausserordentliches, und wenn es das Entsetzlichste wäre, um nur dem unerträglichsten Übel, der Langeweile, zu entkommen' (WA II, 833). In his case he has resorted to brigandage.

Clearly Eichendorff, with customary Romantic zeal, is eager to confront Langeweile, in the comprehensive Romantic sense of taedium vitae. In seeking to direct our attention to aspects of people's lives in the nineteenth century that he believes in need of reform, he makes an issue out of Langeweile, which he expands metaphorically to encompass an attitude to life and not simply a common enough, temporary state of mind. His idealism, buoyed up by a need to transcend

a reality that saddens him, creates the necessity for a mood of exaltation, of exuberance. His fictitious world presents a realm where he can explore his enthusiasms and sustain them in a manner which would otherwise be impossible. Literature itself becomes a vehicle for the transcendence of Langeweile.

As with temporal metaphors, it can be demonstrated that Eichendorff uses spatial awareness to create a sense of dichotomy between the lives of those he would designate as Philister and his own literary heroes. The differences are made most explicit with respect to spatial constriction. Metaphors become part of an ideological statement.

In the first place, Eichendorff's heroes seem to suffer from a sense of spatial constriction to which, as with the sense of temporal stagnation, the Philister are oblivious. The essential differences between heroes such as the Taugenichts or Graf Friedrich and the others are differences of consciousness. Again, it is a psychological state which exists independently of any close physical oppressiveness. Eichendorff's characters do not feel suffocated in small rooms in small towns, but experience constriction in the open field. Tangible barriers, such as the glass jars in Hoffmann's Der goldne Topf - themselves of course metaphors - are unnecessary. Leontin, one of the heroes in Ahnung und Gegenwart, has a feeling of increasing encapsulation, of the narrowing of the horizon:

Aber wie über ihm die Gräser zwischen dem unaufhörlichen, einförmigen Gesumme der Bienen sich hin und wieder neigten (...) die ganze Welt enge und immer enger einzuschliessen schienen. (WA II, 97)

Again, as with temporal metaphors, Eichendorff links the ageing process with the process of progressive philistinism. Maturity in Eichendorff brings not the increasing expansion of horizons, but a retreat to the sense of a contracting world, accompanied by a steady degeneration in the capacity to perceive the world with a transforming enthusiasm. At a later point in Ahnung und Gegenwart, Graf Friedrich makes this very point to his brother Rudolf: 'Ich habe dich immer geliebt. Und als ich dann grösser wurde und die Welt immer kleiner und enger, und alles so wunderlos und zahm, wie oft hab ich da an dich zurückgedacht' (WA II, 250).

Eichendorff's Romantic temperament - he is often described as the poet of 'Sehnsucht in die Ferne' - renders immediate concerns, prosaic, physical reality, the subject of disparagement. It is partially a psychological defence mechanism to ward off the customary immersion in the everyday world and its concerns which he sees practised by the bureaucrats, merchants, artisans of his day. This is all part of what he would refer to as 'Gegenwart', whilst his ideals lead him to seek beyond that for higher, poetic values, to 'Ahnung'. Only a few years after completing the work that bears these title words he makes clear the connection between the uncomfortable proximity of the work he performs and the greater distance required for the appropriate appreciation of

great art:

Da mir nunmehr die Gegenwart in tausend verdriesslichen und eigentlich für alle Welt unersprießlichen Geschäften in eine fast lächerliche Nähe gerückt ist, gleichwie man ein grosses Freskogemälde nur aus einiger Entfernung betrachten muss, wenn man nicht vor den einzelnen groben Strichen erschrecken soll.
(Kosch, 21)

5. Certain common philistine reactions.

Whilst the very dimensions of Eichendorff's imaginative world - particularly time and space - serve to draw our attention to his continuous, if not constant, sifting out of 'philistine' and less 'philistine' approaches to life, there are also certain subjects of prime importance in his work - nature, religion and Poesie - which help us to focus on the presentation of philistinism by Eichendorff. It is well-known that these three elements are fused, all but inextricably, at the centre of his poetic writings. If in analysis it is necessary to disentangle them, we must ultimately recognize their interdependence.

Even a superficial reading of Eichendorff's poetry will reveal how potent a source of creativity nature is for his work. He develops the Romantic view of nature as the highest realm of divine revelation on earth, anchoring the subjective pantheism of Schelling in the Catholicism of his own upbringing. The poet is instinctively attuned to the rhythms of nature, which are an expression of the Divine. In a period which the Romantics often see as increasingly alienated from the natural world, exploitation of, or indifference to,

nature are the principal reactions of the Philister, as we have already seen in Krieg den Philistern.

Another important aspect of the general attitude to nature, as attributed to Philister, is their imitative mode. We have referred to this aspect in Krieg den Philistern, but it is not restricted to that work. Eichendorff is serious about his high regard for the natural world and characteristically resents what appear to be the lame echoes of Schillerian lyricism. He is at pains to contrast the authentic voice of nature-enthusiasm with the mere display that others indulge in. Ahnung und Gegenwart provides us with one of many deliberate juxtapositions which serve to highlight the contrast between the genuine and the bogus. This is a Romantic defending himself against those who degrade feeling for nature through sentimentality, who enjoy the Romantic pose but lack their seriousness. Leontin, one of Eichendorff's heroes, is visibly transported as he surveys the scene before him: 'Junge, grüne Zweige und wildbunte Blumen beugten sich überall (...) es war, als sei die Natur hier rüstiger und lebendiger' (WA II, 173). He feels the enthusiasm welling up within him and passionately exclaims '"Wo ein Begeisterter steht, ist der Gipfel der Welt"' (op. cit.).

The young man who then appears on the scene feels obliged to state his own veneration for nature, but in phrases borrowed from Schiller's Don Carlos, which contains many examples of passionate utterances in blank verse. Here

it comes across as inappropriate, bombastic and ostentatious. Whilst Leontin's remarks were the expression of his mood at the time, the young man indulges in a manufactured pathos which discredits his comments entirely. Whereas Leontin vigorously tries to play down the significance of his own comment, the stranger is intent on raising his own prestige. He caps his criticism by referring to the copy of Don Carlos the person drops as 'Noten' or a musical score "'weil Euch die ganze Natur nur der Text dazu ist, den Ihr nach den Dingern da aborgelt"' (WA II, 174).

This musical metaphor is a common one for Eichendorff to employ. He uses it to distinguish between the unimaginative, mechanical musicianship of the majority - more a social accomplishment than an expression of emotional states - and the inspired exuberance of the naturally gifted. The Romantic artist, having annexed the realms of Poesie (for Eichendorff musical Poesie) and nature, is sufficiently confident to banish others from them. By discrediting the élitist tendencies of others he maintains the exclusivity of his own élite band of 'true' Dichter. The views of the majority are almost by definition those of the outsiders, since the self-esteem of all élites is nourished by their minority, but privileged, status. Eichendorff, like many of his contemporaries, is enamoured of this sense of embattled initiates. That it represents also a potent aspect of both Old and New Testament religious thinking - a chosen race of 12 tribes or a chosen group of 12 disciples - helps account

for his affection for it. He chooses devout, student-poets or Dichter to defend a worthy cause, rendered all the worthier by the atheistic (or at least hypocritical), adult philistines who oppose it. Since his Catholic christianity is immersed in the idea of a fallen world under the sway of evil forces, he readily transfers these religious ideas to define a world temporarily consigned to philistine dominance. Since it is human society in its most developed forms which can appear most oblivious to the claims of religion - substituting its own value-systems or codes of acceptable behaviour - the natural world appears at the least remove from God and therefore the surest revelation of him. Attitudes to nature become a kind of litmus test of moral soundness in Eichendorff. The greater the indifference or the apparent insincerity of an individual's attitude to it, the more ingrained is his philistinism. This, above all, is why all Eichendorff's heroes are so closely identified with nature, since thereby their moral credentials are assured.

The topical aspect of Eichendorff's ideas on nature is concerned above all with his objection to any purely practical exploitation of it, as in the steady expansion of industry and agriculture. He groups together all such attempts to develop nature for the use of man as Nützlichkeit which he consistently, and rather unhelpfully, berates as a universally wrong practice. It becomes as much a synonym for Philisterei as the one-sided depiction of the Aufklärung that he presents. Here, as elsewhere, Eichendorff is so obsessed

with polarizing two discernible attitudes to nature that he must needs overlook the merits of the practical viewpoint. Thus the Taugenichts objects strongly to the replacement of his flower-beds by potatoes, ignoring the necessity of food production (WA II, 640). Also, in a remarkable and characteristic early poem entitled 'Rettung' (WA I, 88), employing many of the images later familiar in his work, Eichendorff sets out the narrative of how the lyrical Ich eventually escapes from the clutches of Nützlichkeit and returns to the bosom of nature. Here Natur and Nützlichkeit are mutually antagonistic elements. The child's dreamlike sense of belonging to nature on the verge of spring is shattered when it is kidnapped and brought to partake of a world that appears as unattractive, paternalistic and exclusively utilitarian in approach. The old man who brings him there smugly assures him that this is the only proper attitude: "das ist die Nützlichkeit! | Die haben wir so zum gemeinen Besten erfunden. | Das betrachte hübsch fleissig und sei gescheit" (ibid.). The admonition in the final sentence underlines what is so objectionable in the view of nature expounded - its onesided practicality. Where the exclusively practical case is put, Eichendorff feels obliged to counter with a determinedly unpractical stance. Blinkered philistinism is most combatively countered with blinkered anti-philistinism.

We have already seen, in Krieg den Philistern, how Eichendorff sees nature as one of the issues at the heart of

the conflict between the Philister and the Poetischen. The utilitarianism is taken to extremes there, to superb comic effect, as an attempt to control the more wayward aspects of nature, particularly Eichendorff's own leitmotifs such as Waldesrauschen. He is elsewhere even more scathing of attempts by mankind to subdue and control nature, which the poet delights in presenting as superior to all such efforts: witness his Romantic distaste for the formality of the Versailles-type gardens so beloved of the 'Exklusiven, Präventiösen' group of aristocrats in Der Adel und die Revolution. He is eager to portray this formalization as just as misplaced an exercise of reason as the utilitarian approach. Both are delimitations by the unimaginative and the philistine of the burgeoning and often disturbing realm of nature.

The formal garden was an expression of an age which, glorifying the power of man's reason, approached nature also with the plumb-line and set-square, insisting that this help maintain 'die zudringlich störende Natur durch hohe Laubwände und Bogengänge in einer gewissen ehrerbietigen Form' (WA I, 906). Reason though was allied to convention and public taste to create what was generally acceptable. If man's mind was given such high regard, then what was not subject to reason - religion above all - would sink in esteem. As a devout Catholic, Eichendorff wanted his sense of religion to inform all his other concerns and interests. His moral objections to Philister are only understandable when we

grasp his profoundly orthodox faith which underpinned his adult opinions on all matters of importance to him, including literature and politics. For Eichendorff religion was essentially a matter for the heart and not the head, so that as with rationalism in nature, he felt the exercise of human reason to be both wrongheaded and egotistical.

The mind of the child, in its freshness and enthusiasm of approach, is his model for the truly religious response, without the arrogant interference of the intellect. He supports this view in his discussion of the German novel of the eighteenth century, where he refers to the initial indifference of the Romans to the message of Christ. In these Philister the heart, symbol of the feelings, is a shrivelled organ (cf. Werther), all but incapable of religious feeling:

Da trat ein Kind mitten unter die Altklugen und sagte:
'Wenn ihr nicht werdet wie die Kinder, so könnt ihr
nicht in das Himmelreich eingehen!' Aber den
klassischen Philistern kam das eben kindisch vor,
sie hatten kein Herz für den Himmel wie für die Erde.
(WA III, 175)

From his earliest large-scale work, Ahnung und Gegenwart, onwards Eichendorff takes issue with religious practices of which he disapproves. He allows his hero Graf Friedrich to criticize certain forms of 'Religionsnarren' he has encountered. Among them are some who publicly proclaim a kind of post-Enlightenment rationalism with regard to religion and yet who secretly attend church to pray fervently (WA II, 182). His criticism there is aimed at the fashionable aspect of certain opinions and the unprincipled stance of

those who will not stand up against the prevailing tide of opinion. He mentions the heartfelt aspect of religious feeling in the same novel in the comments of another of his heroes, Leontin, who uses the term Philisterin to typify the prevailing European Zeitgeist that he finds so objectionable. He blames the French Revolution as the catalyst for this unwelcome development. By so doing, Eichendorff demonstrates early in his writing career how he views the progress of history in essentially moral and religious terms and equates decline with the unhindered sway of human reason:

'Die Jungfrau Europa, die so hochherzig mit ihren ausgebreiteten Armen dastand, als wolle sie die ganze Welt umspannen, hat die alten, sinnreichen, frommen, schönen Sitten abgelegt und ist eine Metze geworden. Sie buhlt frei mit dem gesunden Menschenverstande, dem Unglauben, Gewalt und Verrat, und ihr Herz ist dabei besonders eingeschrumpft - Pfui, ich habe keine Lust mehr an der Philisterin!' (WA II, 278)

We note the nostalgic enumeration of positive adjectives before the word 'Sitten' which contrast with the series of abstract nouns sarcastically associated with 'healthy common sense'. This is an impassioned rebuke to contemporary attitudes which builds up to a climax of exasperation on the word Philisterin. These are matters of the deepest importance for Eichendorff and his response - indirectly through his hero Leontin - is unequivocal.

At the very end of Eichendorff's life, in more direct fashion in his treatise on the aristocracy, Der Adel und die Revolution, we find him as convinced as ever that religious faith and free-thinking are at the heart of the political

conflicts focussed in the French Revolution. He describes the struggle between the two as 'das eigentlich bewegende Grundprinzip' (WA I, 912), in line with his thesis that 'die Veränderungen der religiösen Weltansicht machen überall die Geschichte' (ibid.). In a manner which shows his debt to Brentano's treatise on the Philister, he identifies his distaste for the belief in the power of human reason, by dismissing it as yet another manifestation of egotism, self-reliant and anthropocentric. The sin of Lucifer, according to Brentano, was 'Eigenheit', the selfish centre from whence all human woes issued. The attendant horrors of the French Revolution are the unfortunate consequences of 'eine Religion des Egoismus' (WA I, 913). Brentano also stated that Lucifer, for his revolt and motives, was the first Philister. Eichendorff scrutinizes all political events from this lofty viewpoint and is inalienably opposed to political ideas and their propagators appearing to esteem Reason whilst neglecting religion.

This is not to imply that Eichendorff's view of the French Revolution was unitary. He could applaud its initial effect of disturbing the moribund and corrupt state of society that had made it inevitable. It had value as a shock treatment for the profound complacency and shortsightedness of the existing order, for those aristocrats who were not fulfilling their function effectively. He notes in Der Adel und die Revolution the sense of shock as 'der plötzliche Knalleffekt durch das ganze Philisterium verbreitete, als nun

die Mine in Frankreich wirklich explodierte' (WA I, 911). In general terms though, he disclaims some of the much-vaunted slogans of the Revolution - liberté, égalité - as in practice merely a recipe for the chaos of competing egos or the sterile conformity of an egalitarian ethic that is dogmatic and prescriptive: 'Diese barbarische Gleichmacherei, dieses Verschneiden des frischen Lebensbaumes nach einem eingebildeten Masse war die grösste Sklaverei' (WA I, 915). Note how he scathingly undermines égalité as 'Gleichmacherei' and liberté, paradoxically, as 'Sklaverei'. To his mind the Revolution has in practice produced the antithesis of its own ideals because of its worship of Man and his reason. Indeed, both revolution and reaction are simplifications of the political scene, and Eichendorff is loath to condone either as a complete solution. Their tendency was to propose political models that human reason had worked out and insisted on developing. To him they are the flawed prescriptions of Philister, sharing what Pikulik has called 'die normative Gesinnung'.¹⁵

The spirit of the arch-reactionary, so precisely evoked in Das Schloss Dürande makes its impact through the metaphors employed, some of which we have noted earlier as characteristic of Philister. Time stands still, for instance, in Schloss Dürande and not only because of an echo of the conventional folk-tale motif of the enchanted castle:

Währenddes schnurrten im Schloss Dürande die Gewichte der Turmuhr ruhig fort, aber die Uhr schlug nicht, und der verrostete Weiser rückte nicht mehr von der Stelle, als wäre die Zeit eingeschlafen auf dem alten Hofe.

(WA II, 816)

It becomes increasingly clear that these are metaphors for the dogged reactionary attitudes of the old Graf who disdainfully closes his eyes to signs of change and attempts to banish the threatening political developments simply by ignoring them: 'niemand durfte, bei seiner Ungnade, der neuen Ereignisse erwähnen, die er verächtlich ignorierte' (WA II, 817).

The reactionary powers are shown not only to feed on somnolence and lethargy, but to use them as weapons, just as Philister might use Langeweile. Thus, in Libertas und ihre Freier, Baron Pinkus is portrayed as a necromancer inducing docility and lassitude for his reactionary interests (WA II, 909). He does not have to work very hard to do this since the populace are not enthused by the great political ideals of the French Revolution and, like true Philister, value their own domestic peace and material well-being above all things. Political upheaval is congenial to them only as a topic of conversation, as Eichendorff notes in Der Adel und Revolution:

allein die Nachbarn, da ihre Häuser und Krämerbuden noch ganz unversehrt standen, lachten darüber, den guten Leuten im 'Faust' vergleichbar, die beim Glase Bier vom fernen Kriege, weit draussen in der Türkei behaglich diskurrieren. (WA I, 910)

In contrast to Goethe, as Wolfgang Frühwald¹⁶ reminds us, Eichendorff has qualms about both the revolutionary and the

reactionary positions.

Eichendorff had no first hand experience of the first revolution in France, since he was born in 1788. His childhood and youth were yet marked by the upheaval of the Napoleonic wars, in which he played a soldier's part as a Lützower Jäger. He was directly affected by the Revolution in Berlin of March 1848, when he fled to Dresden like many aristocrats and upper middle class. Whilst sympathizing with many of the demands, he objected strongly to the violent methods and put his faith in a more gradual change of attitude. He objected above all to the mechanistic aspect of any attempt to impose a constitution and retained his dislike for any over-reliance on the power of human reason to effect change. His political ideas are summarized as follows by Angers Hillach:

Die wirklichen Gegensätze sieht Eichendorff nicht zwischen Feudalismus und Liberalismus, sondern zwischen einer romantisch-organischen Natur- und Staatsauffassung und dem sich ausbreitenden rationalistisch-pragmatischen Denken, das von Eichendorff mit 'Aufklärung' in eins gesetzt wird.
(WA I, 18)

Additionally, he holds an aristocrat's dislike of 'mass' ideas and is instinctively resistant to change from this source. He places his trust instead in an élite group of aristocrats who will lead society in the right paths. This sense of an oligarchy who are fit to guide others informs his view of poets and students. The élitist strand in his thinking makes it natural that he should find the categories of Philister and Antiphilister so self-evident in many

contexts and that he should constantly transpose the conflict between them into wider spheres. Despite his apparent even-handedness, his literary heroes are always idealized and he makes no excuse for their rather too glittering credentials.

In political life, he is impressed by what he considers the unpretentious naturalness of the Landadel and their apparent affinity with their vassals. They are rooted in their surroundings: 'sie waren selbst noch Naturprodukte' (WA I, 902); even their very modest cultural accomplishments are affirmed for their authenticity: 'Denn diese Edelleute standen in der Bildung nur wenig über ihren "Untertanen", sie verstanden daher noch das Volk und wurden vom Volke wieder begriffen' (WA I, 903). The underlying implication is that, with the lines of communication open, abrupt and cataclysmic change - dangerous and destructive - is avoidable. The ravages of revolution, the results of unleashed self-interest are, in Eichendorff's view, best held in check by a social élite which in effect preserves the old chivalrous virtues in times of chaos. The following section from Der Adel und die Revolution sums up his attitudes to the political role of an aristocracy succinctly:

In jedem Stadium der Zivilisation wird es, gleichviel unter welchen Namen und Formen, immer wieder Aristokraten geben, d.h. eine bevorzugte Klasse, die sich über die Massen erhebt, um sie zu lenken. Denn der Adel (...) ist seiner unvergänglichen Natur nach das ideale Element der Gesellschaft; er hat die Aufgabe, alles Grosse, Edle und Schöne, wie und wo es auch im Volke auftauchen mag, ritterlich zu wahren, das ewig wandelbare Neue mit dem ewig Bestehenden zu vermitteln und somit erst wirklich lebensfähig zu machen.

(WA I, 918)

These are the remarks of an idealist who believes that there are eternal values to be transmitted but also of an élitist who is absolutely convinced that the aristocracy, of which he is an impoverished member, have a special and higher purpose in guiding society. It is a model which implies a mistrust of the views of the majority, who represent the Philister trying to subvert the rightful supremacy of the chosen race. Taken with his attitude to the Landadel it is a recognition that there are those who are the 'natural' leaders and that they guarantee some kind of moral ascendancy. Whilst his idealism would place the aristocracy on a pedestal, his sense of realism is painfully aware of how they have not fulfilled their role in the recent past. He sees them, ideally, as the guardians of values they have not always demonstrated.

A number of Eichendorff's phrases in the above excerpt - 'ewig wandelbar' for example - point the way to the more explicitly religious ideas he expresses elsewhere. Fundamentally, he considers all human behaviour from a religious point of view. Indeed, as he quotes the words of Friedrich Schlegel with approval, there is an unavoidable religious component to all ideals: 'Auch ist das Verhältnis des wahren Künstlers und Menschen zu seinem Ideale durchaus Religion' (WA III, 31). Novalis and Schlegel seem to have been the great models for Eichendorff's own view of the make-up of the State. He read the former's Die Christenheit oder Europa with evident approval for its enthusiastic vision of a medieval, Catholic Europe and makes his own summary of the

latter's views of the Christian State:

Gegen die tote Regel des mechanischen Gleichgewichtes im Vertretungsstaate erbaut er auf historischen und religiösen Grundlagen den auf Glaube und Liebe beruhenden christlichen Staat. (WA III, 32)

Eichendorff uses his literary criticism to distribute moral judgements wherever he senses moral ambivalence or hypocrisy in the writers under review. He is swift to lambaste, as forms of philistinism, any deviations from the norm he would prefer. For instance, his criticism of the work of Voss is an attack on its ethos of provincial respectability: 'jene fanatische Intoleranz, welche eine blosse spiessbürgerliche Ehrbarkeit als alleinseligmachende Religion proklamiert' (WA III, 13). Wieland, on the other hand, is pilloried for the suspect ethics of Agathon: 'Dieses ganze Schaukelsystem ist aber, genau betrachtet, eigentliche Philisterei' (WA III, 285). On numerous similar occasions Eichendorff - in these most lively and outspoken reviews - readily defines any moral insufficiency as an expression of philistinism. Since he holds such strong opinions himself, he is most scathing of any hint of shifting or liberalized values. By insisting on eternal verities, as we noted above, he sees the progressive Catholicism of the 1840s as but a further manifestation of the philistine spirit. As Frühwald remarks, Eichendorff regarded such attempts to establish a more scientific faith as 'Spuren des klassisch-romantischen Philisterbegriffes'.¹⁷

Politics and religion are therefore two important areas

for the identification of Eichendorff's views on what constitutes the Philister. As we have seen also, they are essentially connected since his preferred model for the State is as a religio-political entity. The twin pillars of this edifice are the aristocracy and the Catholic Church, deemed to operate as intermediaries, reconciling the conflicting forces within society and guiding it on a very particular path. These fundamental beliefs colour his response to political happenings and religious attitudes, often regarded as evidence of philistinism where they contrast with or dilute his ideals. Eichendorff remains remarkably faithful to his background and upbringing in all of this and his commitment to the Romantics' sense of messianic exclusivity in an indifferent world peopled largely by Philister is forceful and lifelong.

When we turn our attention to Eichendorff's depiction of poets and his ideas on the role of writers within society, we are scarcely surprised that here again he strikes a very high moral tone. Alongside his attempts to define the meaning and purpose of a form of poetic activity he would espouse, there are dismissive remarks about much of the literary activity of his own age. It is interesting to note how he praises the former for its combative assault on literary philistinism and identifies the latter as often the very unfortunate object of this attack. Eichendorff's own literary ideals may be discerned in his writings on literature and, more obliquely, in the utterances of his

heroes in his own works.

Ahnung und Gegenwart is full of comments on the nature of poetry and is clearly Eichendorff's first attempt to lay down his own poetic values. He establishes that the poetic temperament, in its ideal state, is very akin to the religious temperament. Friedrich discovers such a talent in the boy Erwin, when instructing him in religion. He was 'weit empfänglicher für das Verständnis des Wunderbaren als des Alltäglichen und Gewöhnlichen' (WA II, 74). Since the everyday world is the domain of the Philister, where his prosaic talents are most successful, we meet the by now familiar dichotomy between the normal, palpable and finite world and the supernormal, elusive and infinite world to which poetry and religion give access. Eichendorff is here, once again, unashamedly élitist. Only a select band of readers is accorded the ability to enter imaginatively and intensely into a work of literature and thereby help to continue the poetic process: 'Und das sind die rechten Leser, die mit und über dem Buche dichten. Denn kein Dichter gibt einen fertigen Himmel' (WA II, 94). To assure ourselves that these are Eichendorff's own opinions, we have only to read the very similar comments in his literary criticism over 40 years later. He has been writing about Achim von Arnim, one of his great literary heroes:

Kein Dichter gibt einen fertigen Himmel; er stellt nur die Himmelsleiter auf von der schönen Erde (...) ein Leser, der nicht selber mit und über dem Buche nachzudichten vermag, täte besser, an ein löbliches Handwerk zu gehen. (WA III, 36)

In Eichendorff's view, it is as if lack of literary success almost guarantees that writers like Arnim are on the right lines. He is suspicious of conventional, mass tastes and applauds Arnim's disregard for them: 'So verschmähte er selbst allen konventionellen Schmuck seiner Poesie, die denn auch freilich dem massenhaften Publikum ziemlich fremd und unerhört blieb' (WA III, 34).

Ultimately, whilst his work can often be very amusing, there is a seriousness of approach to the writing of literature by Eichendorff which is both pious and combative. Both approaches are complementary and are part of the weaponry to be used against 'alle schlechte Literatur' (WA III, 108) and which are Poesie themselves. He writes firstly of 'eine Poesie der Wahrheit gegen die Poesie der Lüge' (ibid.) and secondly of 'ein heiteres Spiel mit und über den Dingen, das die aufgeblasenen Narrheiten der Welt zu Tode lacht' (WA III, 109). In other words, the creation of a 'true' poetry to stand beside its counterfeit and a concomitant attack on philistinism in truly witty and satirical fashion.

Eichendorff constantly harps on the distinction between the paltry values of the mass readership who are captivated by transient values and who possess a superficial, indeed indiscriminating taste in literary matters. He uses the following extended metaphor to make his point:

Schon Görres bemerkte irgendwo, das grosse Publikum gebärde sich wie das Mammut in den Urwäldern der Poesie, es bricht und spaltet sich unersättlich Rinde und ganze Stämme zum Frass und schnuppert im Vorüberstapfen kaum an dem Blumenstrauss, den ihm die Muse schüchtern und von fern zu reichen versucht. (WA III, 78)

So intent is this mammoth on cutting a swathe through poetry to satisfy a large and coarse appetite that it is portrayed as overlooking the less obvious but more precious bouquet that is proffered, admittedly in an undemonstrative fashion. This indelicate foray into the realms of literature is the dominant attitude in what Eichendorff calls 'die Zeit der Massen' (WA III, 87). The modern age of literary consumption is depicted as that of the omnivore. Eichendorff's ideal poetic age is a tenacious anachronism, that of the medieval Minnesang which he calls 'die zarteste Blume der Poesie' (WA III, 186). It is hardly fortuitous that it was produced by knightly aristocrats such as Wolfram von Eschenbach, Hartmann von Aue and Walther von der Vogelweide. Perhaps partly in reaction to prevailing mediocrity, Eichendorff's literary ideals are determinedly élitist. He sees this as the only way of raising and maintaining standards. Not only receptively, but also productively, he considers poetry a minority accomplishment: 'denn die Dichtkunst ist eben eine Kunst, die (...) jederzeit der ernstesten Pflege der wenigen vorzüglich Befähigten bedarf' (WA III, 184).

These chosen few are admonished to nurture a genuinely Christian faith to fit them for their task of transcending the demands of the moment, the transient concerns of the

world in favour of religion. It is so important as to rank above literature and the arts, as Friedrich's experience in Ahnung und Gegenwart testifies:

Jetzt hatte er alle seine Pläne, Talentchen, Künste und Wissenschaften unten zurückgelassen, und las wieder die Bibel, wie er schon einmal als Kind angefangen. Da fand er Trost über die Verwirrung der Zeit. (WA II, 274)

Religion is then at the apex of the pyramid, also composed of Poesie and nature and is the ultimate source of solace for Eichendorff's heroes.

So convinced is Eichendorff of this triad of values that he approaches his criticism of literature from what can appear as an eccentric and limited standpoint. Literary values are to be judged in line with religious ones, as these are evident in the works of literature under review. Eichendorff states this on the first page of his Zur Geschichte der neuern romantischen Poesie in Deutschland: 'es kann daher die Literatur eines Volkes nur gewürdigt und verstanden werden im Zusammenhange mit dem jedesmaligen religiösen Standpunkt derselben' (WA III, 9). The disturbing impression remains that Eichendorff will be more intent on ascertaining the moral stature of his writers than assessing their literary value. When reading his literary criticism one is aware that he has already made up his mind about the literary worth of a writer. He uses the religious argument to confirm either the faults or the strengths of a particular writer. Literary mediocrity is then often explained as evidence of religious failings. The converse also applies.

Eichendorff's poets have, then, a serious, priest-like function as links with God. He explains this in 'An die Dichter':

Drum hat ihm Gott das Wort gegeben,
 Das kühn das Dunkelste benennt,
 Den frommen Ernst im reichen Leben,
 Die Freudigkeit, die keiner kennt (WA I, 131).

Their other more vigorous role is as combative defenders of Christian values. In this they are portrayed unequivocally, like the students, as knights engaged in a battle against philistinism. With clear allusions to St George and the Dragon (representing evil) we find the conflict over literary values transformed by Eichendorff into a theological contest. Alban Stolz, editor of the Kalender für Zeit und Ewigkeit is the subject of this eulogy:

Diese wenigen Züge dürften hinreichen, Panier und Wappen des ritterlichen Streiters zu bezeichnen, der zwischen den ungeheuren Staubwirbeln die geweihte Lanze gegen den Lindwurm der modernen Philisterei in Gottes Namen eingelegt. (WA III, 166)

As the title of Stolz's publication indicates, Eichendorff would prefer writers who can stand against the spirit of their own age and write with an eye on posterity, not those who merely wish to entertain by reflecting the interests and foibles of their time, particularly those who contribute to the immensely popular Volkskalender. He questions the ultimate value of any literature that is confined by its own age: 'Was wäre auch eine Poesie, die von wechselnden Launen der Menge abhängig, nicht höher hinaus wollte als ihre Zeit'!' (WA III, 169). Where, then, does Eichendorff find

this kind of shallow Poesie?

Whilst he has a reverential conception of the role of the Dichter, Eichendorff is swift to distance himself from those who appear obsessed with the notion that they are Genies. Ostentation and narcissism are identified as masks for the mediocre. The low quality of the poetic offerings is a confirmation of megalomania of such poseurs as der Schmachttende in Ahnung und Gegenwart:

Alle hatten einen einzigen, bis ins Unendliche breit
auseinandergeschlagenen Gedanken, sie bezogen sich
alle auf den Beruf des Dichters und die Göttlichkeit
der Poesie, aber die Poesie selber, das ursprüngliche,
freie, tüchtige Leben, das uns ergreift, ehe wir darüber
sprechen, kam nicht zum Vorschein. (WA II, 128)

The aridity and parodistic self-congratulation of all such behaviour is characteristic of the Philister claiming to be a Genie.¹⁸

Eichendorff underlines the utter incompatibility between philistinism and Poesie on frequent occasions. For this reason, in Dichter und ihre Gesellen, Friedrich urges Walter to test the seriousness of Otto's commitment to Poesie and to persuade him to relinquish it if his commitment should prove insufficient:

'so versuche dich denn an ihm. Ist der junge Mensch ein halber Philister, so hilf ihm völlig aus dem tollen Poetenmantel heraus, und ist es rechter Ernst mit seinem Talent, so muss er ja doch weiter.' (WA II, 318)

From a more comical point of view, as in Krieg den Philistern, the complete philistine is so unsuited to the delights of poetic euphoria that the merest sip of its alluring nectar unsettles his prosaic brain to the point of

incapacitation. The Narr makes satirical capital out of just such an occurrence, poking fun at the Philister's much-vaunted reason: 'ist das bisschen Verstand ersoffen, so ist an so einem Philister gar nichts mehr dran' (WA I, 526).

The presence of Philister within the realm of poetry is always treated with disdain by Eichendorff. To him they are an alien and unsympathetic presence, intent on asserting control as a kind of occupying power. Eichendorff uses this very metaphor in a poem of 1839 to vent some vicarious spleen against the sway of the philistines, who are very much in control. In 'Der Wegelagerer' the poetic persona announces: 'Es ist ein Land, wo die Philister thronen, | Die Krämer fahren und das Grün verstauben' (WA I, 128). From a forest enclave, still free and untainted by the Philister, he intends to make raids on those who are in effect desecrating beauty, by their cheapening of Poesie: 'Dort will ich nächtlich auf die Krämer lauern | Und kühn zerhaun der armen Schönheit Bande, | Die sie als niedre Magd zu Markte führen' (ibid.). It seems to be one of the prime motives of the philistines to destroy poetry and all its trappings, perhaps by trivializing it. The poem heralds a combative desire to counter the public presentation of Poesie by releasing it to fulfil its role unfettered. We remember that Eichendorff had portrayed the citizens of Philistia as intent on the outright extirpation of Poesie, since it was too unsettling. There the Bürgermeister had declared: 'Wir müssen die Poesie ganz ausrotten!' (WA I, 497). When they are not intent on the

destruction of higher forms of Poesie, Eichendorff is clearly convinced that the philistines spend their time trying to undermine its value in more insidious fashion. In his literary criticism he constantly cites examples of how philistinism has infiltrated the hallowed ranks of 'true' poetry and 'true' poets. He describes how mediocrity is encouraged by a philistine readership. It is society itself which is prepared to nurture the lesser talents of Iffland and Kotzebue and in effect establish their reputations: 'Auch Iffland und Kotzebue hatten jenes Philister-Weltbürgertum nicht geschaffen, sondern wurden von ihm getragen' (WA III, 484). What Eichendorff appears to object to in these two playwrights is the former's sentimental moralizing with its middle-class appeal and the latter's unprincipled satire. Both are accused of pandering to the suspect tastes of their audiences in the Rührspiel or Verstandesdichtung tradition. His general response to the state of the German theatre is to echo the thoughts of Lanzknecht on its inalienable philistinism. Its obsession with the concerns of the bourgeoisie 'dient wohl zu einem der stärksten Belege deutscher Spiessbürgerlichkeit' (WA III, 117).

Most vehemently of all, Eichendorff heaps scorn on aspects of an Aufklärung mentality, which he sometimes clarifies as 'falsche Aufklärung' defined as 'wo sie daher in vermeintlicher Konsequenz selber das Licht machen und alles Licht ausser ihr verneinen will - da ist es eine falsche Aufklärung' (WA III, 226). The writers he principally has in

mind for these attitudes are Friedrich Nicolai, Johann Sulzer and Johann Heinrich Voss. The first-mentioned was of course mocked by Goethe and Schiller in the Xenien, where he was berated for his inflexible dullness and resistance to change. Even though he died in 1811, Eichendorff feels his spirit to be living in the literary scene of 1851. For this reason it would be appropriate: 'ihn (...) von neuem auf seinem Philisterthron zu installieren' (WA III, 266). Eichendorff clearly disagreed with the practical common-sense approach of men like Nicolai. He in fact accuses both Sulzer and Voss of cherishing a 'Nützlichkeitstheorie', wishing to improve the lot of people by education. He finds the emphases of both of them too concerned with the terrestrial existence and a vague morality. The result for Sulzer, he contends, was that: 'Solcher Philister aber wusste denn freilich mit der Poesie ebensowenig anzufangen als die Poesie mit ihm' (WA III, 12). In Voss's case he is equally disparaging of his rural idylls which hastened his dubious development 'zum eigentlichen Kleinstädter unserer Literatur' (WA III, 13).

Eichendorff essentially distinguishes two types of literature - 'Unterhaltungsliteratur' and 'vornehme Literatur' (WA III, 102). In the latter category he places the writings of, among others, Schiller, Goethe, Lessing, Herder, Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis and, implicitly, himself. The vast majority of popular writers, including the ones already mentioned, he would disparage as the equivalent of Trivialliteratur, the second-rate alternative to 'serious

literature'. Another term which is very useful in this discussion is undoubtedly 'Dilettant', which he uses almost wholly in a pejorative sense as synonymous with Philister. Frühwald is convinced that the two concepts need to be considered analogous: 'Das Thema "Dilettantismus" gibt sich bei Eichendorff als ein integraler Bestandteil romantischer Philisterkritik zu erkennen'.¹⁹

Initially it appears that Eichendorff had tried to distinguish between productive dilettantes and 'rezipierende Kunstliebhaber, das heisst Philister',²⁰ but that the two tended to coalesce. Artists and their public again combine to foster the mediocrity already described.²¹ Conspicuous examples of the philistine as productive dilettante include the figure of Herr Publikum in Viel Lärmen um nichts (1832) who shows himself to be 'ein eifriger Dilettant in allen schönen Künsten' (WA II, 675) and the second group of aristocrats in Der Adel und die Revolution who show ostentatious but arid interest: 'Im Innern des Schlosses schillerte ein blendender Dilettantismus in allen Künsten und Farben (...) und alle taten eigentlich gar nichts' (WA I, 907). Other philistines/dilettantes are content to be passive and receptive and to avail themselves of culture in their leisure-time. In both cases it is seen as mere entertainment or 'Unterhaltung'. Thus the highly utilitarian young man in Krieg den Philistern roundly declares: 'ich verschmäh es auch nicht, nach erfüllter Berufspflicht zur Erholung manchmal einen guten klassischen Dichter zur Hand zu

nehmen' (WA I, 486). Such attitudes are condemned as whims, subject to the changing demands of fashion and entirely lacking in all seriousness of approach. Another of Eichendorff's scathing terms for undemanding literature is 'Modeliteratur'.²²

Worst of all, in Eichendorff's eyes, are the poets who debase Poesie by prostituting it in the service of their political ideas. In Krieg den Philistern, the Poetischen are more than faintly ridiculous in their sense of exalted cultural evangelism. They make high-flown claims about their own élite status and their mission. The great effort of self-improvement they have undertaken seems to have been accompanied by an equal growth in conceit. Hugo sums up their conception of their role: 'entnommen | Dem niedern Treiben, kräftig mitzuweben| In göttlicher Gewerbefreiheit hier| Am Webstuhl der riesengrossen Zeit?' (WA I, 473). Eichendorff elsewhere gives a rather less flattering description of the effect of the injudicious mixing of poetry and politics: 'Auch die Poesie erliegt allmählich dieser allgemeinen Lähmung. Sie geht bei den Philistern zu Gaste und wird mit ihnen ganz und gar politisch'.²³

6. Definitions.

As presented in Eichendorff's writings, the Philister is enamoured of norms, conventions and established patterns of behaviour. Pikulik has convincingly demonstrated how the Philister is virtually incapable of spontaneity or

improvisation. He is most at home when rule-bound; unlike the Romantic artist who feels restricted by them: 'Sage mir, wie du es mit dem Normalen hältst, und ich sage dir, was du bist, ein Künstler oder ein Philister'.²⁴ The Philister indeed appear as the very incarnation of normality and mediocrity and, as such, readily develop into the object of the Romantics' scorn, since they are seeking to transcend normality.²⁵

In another sense, the Philister are the mass of the ordinary populace, held together by collective lassitude, ensconced in repetitive habits and inevitably irritated by the artists. Sham artists, as in Krieg den Philistern even attempt enforced, patronising invigoration of this large group which is so attached to habit as to be 'gewöhnheitsselig' (WA I, 476). The Philister are seen as such a stable and unreflective majority that their habits and normal practices quickly petrify into forms of 'Konvention', a social constraint on individuality and source of the artist's discontent. Meaning is sacrificed for appearances.²⁶ Such is the compelling force of his own nature, that the Philister seems incapable of transcending his own baseness, despite his tendency to role-play and imitation. The mask slips at inopportune moments. Thus the behaviour of some sentimental lovers in Ahnung und Gegenwart oscillates between the rhapsodic and the lecherous, when addressing a young girl:

'So rein, wie der Mond dort oben, ist unsere Liebe!'
 Währenddessen fing er an, heftig an dem Busenbande des
 Mädchens zu arbeiten, die sich nur wenig sträubte.
 'Nun', sagte Leontin, 'sind sie in ihre eigentliche
 Natur zurückgefallen, der Teufel hat die Poesie geholt.'
 (WA II, 62)

More often than not, Eichendorff draws our attention to philistine behaviour by showing the incongruity between the words and actions of certain characters, as the 'true' nature reasserts itself.

The mediocrity of the philistines's life-style not only renders him incapable of self-transcendence, it effectively isolates him from the vibrant activity of the world, of nature around him. These are symptoms of the alienation I have referred to. In one case, images of automatism may draw attention to this, as Zimorski reminds us: 'Die automatenhafte Erstarrung und arretierte Monotonie bedeutet die Isolation des Philisters vom Leben, von der Natur, von der Poesie'.²⁷ In another, alienation may be largely effected through excessive pretensions under the guise of good taste. There is thus a very physical sense of severance between the 'Prätentiösen' in Der Adel und die Revolution, and their neighbours and subjects: 'Am isoliertesten standen wohl die Prätentiösen durch ihre ausserordentliche Langweiligkeit, die sie aller Welt als guten Geschmack aufdringen wollten' (WA I, 909). Eichendorff may be not entirely convinced that such self-alienation, or indeed self-imposed bondage is irreversible, but there are important reasons for his increasing sense of despair at hopes of improvement through

human agency.²⁸

Chief stumbling block to the philistine's conversion or rehabilitation is his immense egotism, amounting to a form of self-idolatry which displaces the true divinity. For Eichendorff it is so central a motivation as to impel him to build a definition around it; the Philister has topsy-turvy values:

ein Philister ist, wer mit nichts geheimnisvoll und wichtig tut, wer die hohen Dinge materialistisch und also gemein ansieht, wer sich selbst als goldenes Kalb in die Mitte der Welt setzt und es ehrfurchtsvoll anbetend umtanzt. (WA III, 151)

The tone of this complaint is satirical yet deeply serious. It seems to sum up a life-time of frustration, of watching the apparent growth of philistine power in all areas of life. It is a denunciation of apostasy and of a decline in ethical standards. The reversal of values it upbraids is at source motivated by a narcissism seeking 'Bequemlichkeit'.²⁹ On such a basis, decay is inevitable. Ideals are replaced by the utilitarianism of the hedonist, idealism by opportunism. The search for momentary physical comfort is seen as overriding any other obligations, so that the Philister seems easily to attain a state of contentment. This deceptive but easy comfort is denied Eichendorff's heroes who are pursuing loftier goals. The latter do not normally react with envy. Thus the agitated and hungry Rudolf, as often happens in Eichendorff, does no more than peer in at philistines enjoying themselves in facile fashion:

Ich ging eilig durch die Gassen und blickte rechts und links in die erleuchteten Fenster hinein, wie da einige soeben ruhig und vollauf zu Abend schmausten, dort andere ein l'hombrechen spielten, anderswo wieder lustige Paare sich drehten und jubelten, und allen so philisterhaft wohl war. (WA II, 265)

Similarly, in Krieg den Philistern, physical appetites and a desire for self-preservation are so characteristically philistine that recent recruits to the Poetischen would readily defect for these reasons.³⁰

It is clear that whilst such intense interest in matters culinary and domestic can be a source of frustration for Eichendorff and his heroes, particularly when all-pervasive, such traits are ideally suited to generate comedy. The Philister was readily established as the butt of the Romantics' humour - no doubt for partly cathartic reasons - and Eichendorff shares this delight in having fun at their expense. At the same time he was concerned to present his own alternatives and this he provides in the heroes of his literary works, which help us to understand the topos of the Philister by introducing characters carefully devised as their most direct antitheses.

7. The anti-philistine heroes.

If the Philister are condemned for a superficial and imitative approach, Eichendorff is eager to demonstrate that his heroes have a striking intensity and individuality of character, whilst avoiding egotism. Like Viktor, in Ahnung und Gegenwart, they can be irritated by the blandness of

others: 'Es war aber eben die Tiefe seines Wesens, dass er sich niemals zu dem ordentlichen, immer gleichförmigen Spiele der andern an der Oberfläche bequemen konnte' (WA II, 95). On a personal level, Eichendorff has a liking for personalities which possess an invigorating dynamism. As opposed to the conventionality of Philister he praises the Originale who frequented the residences of the Landadel in his youth. In this description from Der Adel und die Revolution he refers to their activities as a veritable antidote to the philistinism otherwise a feature of the life-style of these rural aristocrats:

Es war zugleich der eigentliche Tummelplatz der jetzt völlig ausgestorbenen Originale, jener halb eigensinnigen, halb humoristischen Ausnahmenaturen, die den stagnierenden Strom des alltäglichen Philisteriums mit grossem Geräusch in Bewegung setzten. (WA I, 903)

The factors which force the exceptional beings in Eichendorff's own plays, novellas and other works to transcend the achievements of other characters are presented as fundamental and all-pervasive. If the Philister suffer from a numbing of consciousness and a dulling of perceptions through their work and domestic predicament, it is scarcely to be wondered at. The lower middle-class artisans who are the principal object of scorn are hardly in a position to compete with the educated aristocrats whose personalities and achievements are held up for emulation. The scorn in which students can indulge towards Philister is as much a luxury as are the life-styles of the young poet-heroes who can travel where they wish and follow their whims. The worries

and concerns of the ordinary people to whom they feel superior are stigmatized, as the literary works are produced with latent sympathy for certain types of heroes. Eichendorff carries the ballast of his student's - and indeed aristocrat's - sense of superiority into his works, notably Ahnung und Gegenwart. It is carried with such passion and conviction that we are unwarily drawn into the value-system. In Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts, such is the engaging personality of the eponymous hero, that this tendency is even more pronounced. Ultimately, it is Eichendorff's own strong personality and satirical mode, directly evident in his literary critiques, that most disposes the reader to accept his categories.

This occurs because, more than any other Romantic writer, he attempts to create a value-system which is characterised by enthusiasm - an intense and passionate interest, but also, etymologically, an attitude inspired by God. Naturally, it reflects his own personality, but it is also a deliberate attempt to counter pedestrian, controlled expression - the result of the prudent exercise of reason - with a more emotional, less self-conscious, more impulsive and perhaps more natural response. It is compelling as a literary mode but it is precisely that. Eichendorff's position is necessarily exaggerated, as it is sustained by metaphorical coherence. Literature is also suited to express ideas which are difficult to uphold in life, but which he tenaciously projects. For in his public life Eichendorff had

to restrain his spontaneity and the satire to which he might well give free reign as a student, especially in the rather special circumstances of Halle. That he makes enthusiasm into a creed for life, evident in his predilection for youthful heroes, long after his own youth has receded, reveals that the student myth appeals to him to the end of his days. It is also clear in certain observations on reading, made by Friedrich in Ahnung und Gegenwart. Poesie in this quotation is not so much a form of literature as a Weltanschauung:

Die Poesie liegt vielmehr in einer fortwährend begeisterten Anschauung und Betrachtung der Welt und der menschlichen Dinge, sie liegt ebenso sehr in der Gesinnung als in den lieblichen Talenten. (WA II, 136)

Enthusiasm exists in a poetic territory which has its own rules and where the cautious deliberations of Philister are not allowed to intrude. Wandern is a key term here and represents an openness to all experiences and digressions i.e. in stark contrast to the wholly utilitarian travel to which everyone else - namely the Philister - are obliged to restrict themselves. The differences between the two modes of travel are, thus, metaphorical and stand for two attitudes to life. The majority travel through life concerned about their material well-being, whilst the poetic types explore the glories of nature as they travel onwards to heaven, like the Taugenichts, at God's directing.

Das Leben der meisten ist eine immerwährende Geschäftsreise vom Buttermarkt zum Käsemarkt; das Leben der Poetischen dagegen ein freies, unendliches Reisen nach dem Himmelreich. (WA II, 37)

Even when prominent Antiphilister such as Graf Friedrich in

the same novel had originally conceived a 'Reiseplan', the natural burgeoning life within him had overturned it and found new ways.³¹ Since planning seems to be taken to extremes in the world of the ordinary populace, the Romantic hero finds himself rejecting it out of hand. As with any of these contrasts, the alternatives he proposes are hardly practicable, but certainly poetic alternatives. In their ideal existence the heroes can jettison all unwelcome, repetitive and burdensome aspects of 'normal' existence. This applies to journeying also, for, naturally, even the most interesting of travels can have its ennui, can become oppressive if the journeying itself is felt to be establishing a routine. Fortunat certainly sees this danger with disquiet in Dichter und ihre Gesellen: 'da nun das bisherige fröhliche Reiseleben plötzlich zum förmlichen Metier werden sollte' (WA II, 340). When reality interferes with the ideals they wish to project, Romantic writers such as Eichendorff grandly retreat from the world, dubbing it the domain of the Philister and pursue their wish-fulfillments in a poetic world which suspends all the criteria of 'reason' through poetic licence.

The descriptions of the travels of the poetic heroes are often undeniably captivating, since they are imbued with Eichendorff's own enthusiasms and therefore strongly suggest the lives of his principal characters are inevitably more attractive than those of others. The sense of exuberant movement through a range of experiences, landscapes and

situations is certainly felt by the Taugenichts to be liberating. As he expresses it, in characteristic imagery, it is an aspect of the continuing release from the 'cages' of everyday reality, social responsibility and the cares of the normal life: "ein Vogel, der aus jedem Käfig ausreißt, sobald er nur kann, und lustig singt, wenn er wieder in der Freiheit ist" (WA II, 637). Others, like Walter in Dichter und ihre Gesellen, too long ensconced in the routine of a settled existence, can temporarily experience the thrill of release in similar terms.³² The tension between a sense of constriction in a particular life-setting and the ability to roam widely, is summed up by Herman Meyer as 'der Gegensatz zwischen Enge und Weite, Philisterium und in die Ferne schweifen'.³³ Fired by his own perceptions of the attractiveness of distant prospects - as much a journey for the imagination as the body - the poetic hero can forlornly hope that the countless hordes imprisoned in a philistine rut can be inspired to forsake it.³⁴

In addition to the revitalising effect of wandern Eichendorff's heroes show themselves receptive in very positive ways to the rhythms of the natural world at its most vigorous and renewing. Unlike the dubious attitudes of the Philister, these characters seem to possess an affinity with nature which amounts to an identification. They find nature a source of encouragement for their own activities, their own rhythms, which appear sympathetic to Nature, particularly on a calm, bright morning or in springtime. Times and seasons

have a potent metaphorical significance for Eichendorff's heroes. Thus the Taugenichts, not relishing the development of a rather lethargic, contented, indeed philistine mentality in himself, aims to counteract it by getting up especially early. Then he experiences nature in a pristine, sparkling and harmonious state when it appears as a sanctuary for God: 'da war es noch so still, kühl und andächtig, wie in einer Kirche' (WA II, 570). His task in life is to retain the spirit of reverence and exuberance the early hour engenders, just as he is generally capable of sustaining a Sunday temperament: 'Mir war es wie ein ewiger Sonntag im Gemüte' (WA II, 565) - a genuine blithe-hearted trust in divine direction unsullied by mundane worries.³⁵

Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts is not only Eichendorff's most characteristic and irresistible creation, it is also the fullest expression of his ideals and fears. Spring - the seasonal recurrence of vigour and youth - motivates the hero's escape from the boring routine in his father's mill. He can rejoice because 'der Frühling ist vor der Tür' (WA II, 565) and is then drawn irresistibly into its beguiling mood.³⁶ Spring indeed takes on metaphorical importance as the repository of hope, youthfulness and renewal, the supreme antidote to all philistine tendencies. Poets are compelled to seek it, like the Spielmann in Dichter und ihre Gesellen: 'Ich aber muss wandern und suchen, | Wo der ewige Frühling sei' (WA II, 501). Life restarts with playful vigour each spring, yet only those, like the Taugenichts, who

can respond to its call intuitively and without delay are suitably attuned to its rhythms. It is the secret of eternal youthfulness, accorded naturally to a select few. Willibald in Viel Lärmen um nichts is convinced of the absolute distinction between Philister and those who are not: "Ich aber bilde mir ein, aus jungen Philistern werden alte Philister, und wer dagegen einmal wahrhaft jung gewesen, der bleibt's zeitlebens" (WA II, 700).

Most conclusively, however, whereas the attitude of the philistines to nature was seen to be one of repression or only superficial regard, true Eichendorff heroes are immersed in nature to the point of identification. The Taugenichts is again the prime example. He is, as Zimorski reminds us 'der natürliche Mensch' par excellence.³⁷ His inclusion in nature is to be seen most directly in his self-depiction as a bird, in repeated similes.³⁸ Eichendorff's idealized self-identification with the Taugenichts is made clear in a letter to Jegor von Sivers on 14 November 1853, when he comments on the essentially rural nature of his muse: 'überhaupt kann ein Dichter wohl vom Glücke sagen, wenn er eine ländliche Heimat hat, ich kann mir nicht einmal recht denken, wie einem reinen Stadtvogel zumute ist' (Kosch XII, 156). Nature, poetry and youthful exuberance interlock in productive harmony for him.

8. Ambivalence?

It would certainly appear from the foregoing that Eichendorff tended to view Philister and Antiphilister as

completely separate forms of existence, with different needs, expectations and tastes. To some extent this is true and is reflected in the titles of works such as Ahnung und Gegenwart or in the distinction drawn in Krieg den Philistern between Poetischen and Philister and 'Engel' and 'Bengel'. Eichendorff indeed, in a letter to Theodor von Schön in 1833, flatters him with the exclusive term Antiphilister implying that he is a member of a higher species:

Von einem Fremdwerden zwischen Ew. Exzellenz und mir kann daher - das fühle ich innerlichst - eigentlich gar nicht die Rede sein, ebensowenig, als Ew. Exzellenz jemals ein Philister werden können, gleichwie ein Vogel nimmermehr ein Fisch werden kann. Ew. Exzellenz sind offenbar grade von Gott recht zum Antiphilister geschaffen. (Kosch XII, 42)

We have indeed noted many instances in Eichendorff's writings - literary or otherwise - where such apparently exclusive distinctions are drawn. However, the works add a further dimension of complexity, of contradictions and ambivalences which are absent when Eichendorff makes such categorical statements.

Eichendorff's heroes, it is well to remind ourselves, inhabit a world which is not without its charms. Many of them are at least momentarily attracted to what at other times they would dismiss as facile philistine pleasures. There is, for instance, almost a note of envy in Friedrich's reflections on the contented idyllic life-style of Herr von A. and his family in Ahnung und Gegenwart: 'im ewig gleichen Wechsel einförmiger Tage frisch und arbeitsam Gott loben und glücklich sind' (WA II, 185). His natural poetic faculties in

their restless striving yet render this impossible. It permits only momentary respite in the ease which the philistines habitually enjoy. Both Leontin and Friedrich had experienced the peace of Herr von A's life-style for themselves: 'empfanden sie die Wohltat des stillen, gleichförmigen, häuslichen Lebens' (WA II, 71). There are even apparently philistine traits to the Taugenichts; these incidents serve more as parodies of what philistines enjoy. Besides meeting Philister on his travels he clearly enjoys fulfilling the role of one for a while - as Zolleinnehmer - and relishes the accoutrements of his state. They were something he had always wanted to possess: 'Das alles hatte ich mir schon einmal gewünscht, als ich noch zu Hause war' (WA II, 574). For a time it even seems as if he will settle down and become a philistine entirely. He decides: 'alles Reisen zu lassen, auch Geld zu sparen wie die andern, und es mit der Zeit gewiss zu etwas Grossem in der Welt zu bringen' (WA II, 574). However, he is soon 'redeemed' by his sensitivity to Langeweile, to which regular Philister are inured.

These and other instances serve to remind us that distinctions drawn between Philister and Antiphilister are relevant only in ideal terms. In life and art the lines of divergence can be blurred. The giant Grobianus is certainly indiscriminating in his destruction at the end of Krieg den Philistern and 'haut Philister und Poetische ohne Unterschied nieder' (WA I, 556). However, we have noted how dubious these

particular defenders of poetry are, so that they deserve their fate.

Frühwald very plausibly suggests that Eichendorff's tactics in writing novellas such as Viel Lärmen um nichts - where he appears together with some of his heroes and where the narrator comments on his narration - is to evaluate aspects of his own consciousness and concludes: 'Eichendorff berichtet demnach von der eigenen Gefährdung durch Dilettantismus, egozentrisches Philistertum und Ich-Verfangenheit'.³⁹ It is nevertheless an association with philistinism which he does not care to stress: the necessary combative posture to prevent immersion in philistinism tends to develop exclusive distinctions. If these cannot be fully upheld on honest introspection, if the apparent absolutes of ideal and ordinary lives are relativized to some degree in the literary works, this can be taken to reflect Eichendorff's painful realization of the difficulties associated with asserting his ideal as a plausible way of life in the context of his time.

Conclusions.

The Philister is evidently an important figure to consider when approaching the work of Joseph von Eichendorff, as with many other writers of the Romantic school. It is a matter of such interest that it causes him to produce a play which deals with the subject-matter explicitly - Krieg den Philistern - ; also some poems which treat the problem

directly such as 'Der Wegelagerer'; and, above all, to make numerous references to them in diaries, letters and literary criticism. Chronologically, the sense of Philister changes from the early diary entries, written when at university in Halle in 1805-6, where the Philister is still seen through student eyes as the ordinary citizen who is not a member of the university. Under the influence of Brentano's Philisterabhandlung, which he receives in 1811, combined with his reading of contemporary works by Novalis, Tieck, Goethe and others, he steadily develops a sense of a society divided rather unevenly between the mediocre masses of Philister, with materialistic tastes and a select band of Dichter carrying on a worthy poetic tradition which stretches back to the Minnesang. They are increasingly portrayed as an embattled minority who aim chivalrously to preserve a higher poetic standard against a vulgarization of literature in society at large. He reaches his literary peak with the publication of Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts in 1821 and the completion of Krieg den Philistern in 1822. His poetic productions are thereafter sparse. With early retirement from public service in 1844 he embarks on an interesting series of surveys of literary periods which are full of comments on philistinism in literature. He colours all literature he finds unappealing as the work of Philister. In the very year of his death, 1857, he works on his memoirs and reinvokes the vigorous spirit of a determined onslaught on philistinism which he had learnt as a student. The Philister are therefore

a lifelong preoccupation, although not continuously so.

It is more difficult to account for Eichendorff's lifelong interest in philistinism than to outline it. In one sense he is, of course, picking up on a literary fashion, indeed near-obsession of the Romantic age. He spends his student days and young manhood, before marriage in 1815, in the company of those who share the same perceptions about the need to protect literary standards and who conceive of worthwhile literature in religious terms. These friendships are formative, as are his readings of Novalis, Goethe and Des Knaben Wunderhorn, compiled by Arnim and Brentano. His aristocratic birth is not insignificant. In socio-political terms he was always a child of his class. He has a clear predilection for aristocratic heroes and aristocratic solutions. In literary terms he admires the scholarly knights of the Minnesang, pursuing their craft oblivious to the demands of popular taste. He venerates the exponents of hohe minne whose poetry works within the constraints of idealized wooing and unfulfilled desire. He shares the religious zeal of the writers of crusading lyrics, launching forth to defend a cause higher than themselves. He has a lifelong suspicion of the tastes and morality of the middle classes, on the way to becoming the dominant social class in the nineteenth century by dint of hard work and education. His depiction of what I have called philistinism is also predominantly a depiction of the middle classes, as they continue their encroachment on the previously aristocratic preserves of

literature and politics. Finally, Eichendorff's response to events in politics and to questions of literary value are fundamentally imbued with an open, unapologetically Roman Catholic conception of human life. This informs his view of the Philister, taking Brentano's metaphysical observations seriously and incorporating the Philister within the traditional Christian eschatology. Morality becomes the lodestone of all his value-judgements. The Philister appear as unredeemed mankind, content with terrestrial concerns.

Eichendorff shares a great deal with other Romantic writers in the matter of philistinism. In spirit, he remains closest to Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel or the so-called 'early' Romantics. In his literary review of Romanticism, written in the mid-1840s, Zur Geschichte der neuern romantischen Poesie in Deutschland, he clearly expresses praise for the combative and ethical approach of the earlier writers. As a programmatic attack on philistinism in various forms he applauds it. He certainly sees opposition to philistines as part of the motivation for the Einsiedlerzeitung, established by Arnim and Brentano, which was: 'einerseits die Kriegserklärung an das philisterhafte Publikum' (WA I, 934). He furthermore defends what he conceives as the robust nature of this early Romanticism against any charges that had been levelled against it: 'Die Romantik war vielmehr durchaus kriegerisch, sie hat die Philister geschlagen und dann den Befreiungskrieg gerüstet' (WA III, 504). In other places he is grateful that the

Romantics instituted an attack on what he terms 'Rationalismus' (WA III, 39). These are but alternative titles for the same phenomenon that we have also met as 'falsche Aufklärung'. Since Romanticism began to explore many irrational areas of human experience - dreams, mysticism, religion - it is hardly surprising that they, including Eichendorff, should investigate the Philister as the representatives of the prevailing spirit of their Post-Enlightenment age. The Philister become characters in a literary campaign to ridicule the conventional opinions of the age. The Romantics, again including Eichendorff, are self-consciously an avant-garde who are attempting to invigorate a rather too complacent public attitude to culture by striking deliberately 'nonconformist' positions against a prevalent conformity. At least this is how they saw it. As Pikulik remarks, they render 'conformity' of certain kinds morally dubious: 'Immerhin kann die Romantik für sich beanspruchen, konformes Verhalten in der Gestalt des Philisters zu einem Epochenproblem gemacht zu haben'.⁴⁰

Whilst Eichendorff's views on Philister are very close to those of Novalis, as expressed in Blüthenstaub, which emphasize the prosaic aspects of their dependence on reason and the egotistical folly this leads them to, he has also learnt from Brentano, notably ideas regarding their mechanical, conventional behaviour, their attitude to the arts, their metaphysical but also comical role. His ideas on politics and religion, and how these are affected by

philistinism, bear closest resemblance to Novalis. The later characteristics of Romanticism, particularly the Zerrissenheit of E.T.A. Hoffmann or the development of Romantic irony, which seems to cast doubt on the possibility of any objective certainties, he finds unconvincing. To him they are a denial of the essence of Romanticism as he perceives it - partisanship: 'die Romantik, diese Todfeindin aller Neutralität' (WA III, 38). He considers these developments as aesthetic diversions from what should be the primary ethical function of literature. As evidence of a loss of faith in Poesie they amount to an act of sacrilege, as in Heine's well-known Stimmungsbrechung at the end of a poem (WA III, 44). Eichendorff finds this effect completely unjustified and reads it as a sign of decline. A perfect model for 'true' Poesie, Eichendorff believes he detects in the work of Adalbert Stifter: 'Nicht eine Spur von moderner Zerrissenheit, von selbstgefälliger Frivolität oder moralisch experimentierender Selbstquälerei ist in dieser gesunden Poesie' (WA III, 47).

Most definitively, Eichendorff's response to the notion of philistinism is determined by his inalienable idealism. Since he conceives of Poesie and Dichter as factors in human society which attempt to transcend the age they live in, searching for Truth and Beauty in a world which would settle for less, such activities inevitably become a minority concern. Since his intention is not merely to entertain through literature but to educate and help form the

personality and the soul - as his piece on Stifter indicates - he therefore finds himself in a constant battle against the trends of the world. He significantly wishes Stifter well in his 'siegreichen Feldzug gegen die gegenwärtige Modeliteratur' (WA III, 49). He would indeed question the value of any Poesie which restricted itself to reflecting the preoccupations of its own age, without attempting to guide future generations: 'Was wäre auch eine Poesie, die von den wechselnden Launen der Menge abhängig, nicht höher hinaus wollte als ihre Zeit!' (WA III, 169). To read Eichendorff's work is to realize that the concept of philistinism - as the unwholesome reality that needs changing - became elaborated out of a need to define certain ideals. The perception that the reality of the early 1800s in Germany fell lamentably short of these ideals led to the irresistible Romantic habit of ascribing the malaise to a species of Philister. Contemporary events seemed to confirm the diagnosis and so to strengthen the habit of mind. The attitude is then: in an age of increasing materialism the more disembodied the ideals, the greater the temptation to regard the Philister as the embodiment of their antithesis.

NOTES

1. Diary entry of 30 April 1805. This and subsequent references are to the Winkler Ausgabe of Eichendorff's Werke (Munich, 1970) which will be referred to in the text as WA, along with volume number (Roman numerals) and page number (Arabic). Here: (WA IV, 474). Letters are quoted in the as yet uncompleted historical-critical edition of Kosch and Sauer, especially Volume XII by Wilhelm Kosch (Regensburg, 1910), abbreviated in the text to Kosch.
2. Paul Stöcklein, Joseph von Eichendorff in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten (Reinbek, 1971), p. 56.
3. See entry of 29 June 1805: 'Auch hatten wir hier Gelegenheit, die Armseeligkeit der hiesigen Studenten zu bedauern, deren akademische Freyheit, uneingedenk ihrer eignen Kraft, in dem Meere von Schwengeln u. anderen Philistern versinkt' (WA IV, 479). Napoleon's entry into Halle brings Eichendorff to comment on the behaviour of the citizens in less than glowing terms. Their patriotism seemed less affronted than their dislike of the impending loss of revenue from the departing students: 'Leztere [Studenten] wanderten denn auch in Haufen von 3-400 auf einmal, alle zu Fuss u. sans Spiess aus, begleitet von dem Jammergeschrey der Hallischen Philister, die bey ihrem Ausmarsche mehr weinten, als bey dem Einmarsche der Franzosen' (11 November 1806; WA IV, 542).
4. Stöcklein, p. 132.
5. op. cit., p. 116.
6. Kosch VIII, Part 2, 80.
7. Stöcklein, p. 134.
8. The monotonous regularity of some occupations, especially that of doorkeepers, is similarly referred to in Das Schloss Dürande, where Gabriele's dream-Märchen, closely mirroring her own situation, concerns a princess shut up in a magic Schloss, whose one door is guarded by a giant who sleeps and who 'ging nur immer Tag und Nacht vor dem Tore auf und nieder wie der Perpendikel einer Turmuhr' (WA II, 801).
9. Egon Schwarz, Joseph von Eichendorff (1972), p. 22.
10. Stöcklein, p. 127.
11. Mills are excessive producers of noise in the opinion of Narr in Krieg den Philistern: 'sooft ich in eine Mühle trat, dachte ich immer: wieviel Lärmens um das liebe Brot!' (WA I, 476).
12. Letter to Theodor von Schön, 24 January 1850 (WA I, 1004).
13. Lothar Pikulik, Romantik als Ungenügen an der Normalität Am Beispiel Tiecks, Hoffmanns, Eichendorffs (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1979), p. 23.
14. In political terms, the Metternich system and its stringencies, as portrayed symbolically in Libertas und

- ihre Freier result in the regression of time, again registered in most significant fashion: 'Über dem Schlossportal befand sich eine überaus künstliche Uhr, die mit grossem Geknarre Stunden, Minuten und Sekunden genau angab, aber aus Versehen rückwärts fortrückte und daher jetzt beinah schon um fünfzig Jahre zu spät ging' (WA II, 907).
15. Pikulik, p. 512.
 16. In a parody of the discussions among the Bürger in the 'Vor dem Tor' section of Faust, Eichendorff's double-handed accusation is directed both against revolutionaries and those who too readily succour their sense of security with tales of upheaval on foreign shores: 'Dabei ist es für die zunehmende Denunzierung des Sicherheitsdenkens charakteristisch, dass Eichendorff, der hier das Bürgergespräch aus Goethes Faust parodiert, im Gegensatz zu seiner Vorlage, nicht nur die Revolution mit einbezieht, sondern auch die Ordnungsposition mit jenen von Goethe noch positiv interpretierten Begriffen der "Ruhe" und "Sicherheit" als philiströses Securitätsdenken ironisch abwertet.' (Wolfgang Frühwald, Ruhe und Ordnung, Reihe Hanser 204 (Munich/Vienna, 1976), p. 114.
The passage referred to in Krieg den Philistern reads as follows: '"Ich lese erstaunlich gern so was von neuen Erfindungen, Revolutionen, neuen Entdeckungen und Scharmützeln, wo es recht drunter und drüber geht, man fühlt sich dann immer noch eins so wohl, dass man, Gott sei Dank, so ruhig und sicher daheim sitzen kann."' (WA I, 487)
 17. Wolfgang Frühwald, 'Der Philister als Dilettant: zu den satirischen Texten Joseph von Eichendorffs', Aurora, 36 (1976), pp. 7-26 (p. 15).
 18. Cf. Ahnung und Gegenwart. We note the ridiculous figure of the stranger whose high-flown descriptions abound in clichés. Any kind of original genius is singularly missing: 'der Donner, den er nicht anders als rollend nannte, schien ihn mit einem neuen Anfalle von Genialität aufzublähen.' (WA II, 174). Leontin sums up the impression such a character makes in '"Es ist doch nichts lächerlicher (...) als eine aus der Mode gekommene Genialität"' (ibid.)
In his critical writings, Eichendorff writes disparagingly of tendencies to 'einer aristokratischen Selbstvergötterung des Geniekultus' (WA III, 39).
 19. 'Philister als Dilettant', p. 8.
 20. op. cit., p. 9.
 21. Frühwald is of the opinion that, certainly by the time of Krieg den Philistern, Eichendorff's outlook is that 'Kunstproduktion und -rezeption in einer so unauflösbaren Interdependenz stehen, dass das dilettantische Publikum den dichtenden Dilettanten bedingt und umgekehrt' (p. 9).
 22. In Der Adel und die Revolution he objects to the frivolous literary interests of the second group:

- 'obgleich sie in der Regel nichts weniger als Literaten waren, so konnten sie doch nicht umhin, den Geist der jedesmaligen Literatur wenigstens äusserlich, als Mode, in ihrem Luxus abzuspiegeln' (WA I, 904).
 Contemporary developments in painting are condemned for the wrong emphasis, turning 'von der stillen Erbauung des Volkes an die modisch wechselnden Gelüste der Weltleute und Dilettanten' (WA III, 29).
23. Letter to Theodor von Schön, 10 January 1834 (Kosch, 45).
 24. Pikulik p. 19 (Note 13 above).
 25. op. cit., p. 141: 'Der Philister ist die menschliche Inkarnation der Normalität und darum - wie Lebensform, Weltbild, Umwelt und abgestumpfte Erfüllung - sowohl Gegenstand romantischer Normalitätserfahrung wie -Kritik.
 26. Leontin in Ahnung und Gegenwart cries out against the lamentable vacuity of a merely conventional life-style. He uses a musical metaphor to make his point: '"Aber die meisten fingern wirklich ganz ernsthaft auf Hölzchen ohne Saiten, weil es einmal so hergebracht ist und das vorliegende Blatt heruntergespielt werden muss; aber das, was das ganze Hantieren eigentlich vorstellen soll, die Musik selbst und Bedeutung des Lebens, haben die närrisch gewordenen Musikanten darüber vergessen und verloren"' (WA II, 61).
 27. Walter Zimorski, 'Eichendorffs Taugenichts: eine Apologie des Antiphilisters?', Aurora, 39 (1979), pp. 155-175 (p. 167).
 28. Angers Hillach, in the introduction to volume one of the Winkler edition, writes of Eichendorff's never quite extinguished optimism that philistinism can be rooted out: 'Wenn Eichendorff auch der Glaube an die geschichtliche Kraft der Poesie mehr und mehr abhanden kam und er die Endzeit eschatologisch fasste, so bedeutet das nicht einen Verzicht auf geschichtliche Wirkung; die philiströse Selbstversklavung der Menschen seiner Tage, hat er niemals als endgültig angesehen' (WA I, 17).
 29. Cf. Pikulik p. 145.
 30. Godofred remarks: '"Nein, sagt, was Ihr wollt, aber ich war doch wohler in meiner Haut, als ich noch Gottfried schlechtweg hiess und zu Hause hinter meinem Webstuhl sass und meinen warmen Ofen hatte und mein Glas Bier und zu essen vollauf. Was soll denn nun am Ende der ganze Spektakel hier? warum wollen wir denn eigentlich die Philister mit Krieg überziehen? Mir haben sie mein Lebtag nichts Böses angetan"' (WA I, 473).
 31. 'Es rührte ihn, wie da alle Wege so genau vorausbestimmt waren, und wie nachher alles anders gekommen war, wie das innere Leben überall durchdringt und, sich an keine vorberechneten Pläne kehrend, gleich einem Baume aus freier, geheimnisvoller Werkstatt seine Äste nach allen Richtungen hinstreckt und treibt, und erst als Ganzes einen Plan und Ordnung erweist' (WA II, 120).
 32. 'Walter fühlte sich recht wie ein Vogel, der aus dem

- Käfig entflohen' (WA II, 300).
33. Herman Meyer, Der Sonderling in der deutschen Dichtung (Munich, 1963), p. 143.
 34. 'Allgemeines Wandern'. Third strophe: 'Und die im Tal verderben| In trüber Sorgen Haft, | Er möcht sie alle werben| Zu dieser Wanderschaft' (WA I, 48).
 35. As the day progresses from morning to afternoon, so it becomes increasingly difficult to sustain the attitude of exaltation. Furthermore, a melancholy, not unlike the habitual spiritual lethargy of the Philister, afflicts the Taugenichts as the afternoon becomes hotter and 'schwül' replaces 'kühl' (WA II, 568). Eichendorff sees the progression through the day as a model for progress through life, from the exuberance and hope of youth to the problems of adulthood.
 36. The unsettling experience can be more pleasant but equally intense for poets viz. Dryander in Dichter und ihre Gesellen who is overwhelmed by the advent of spring: 'Es kann ein Mensch lange Zeit in den besten Grundsätzen wie ein Schneemann eingefroren sitzen, aber die lustigen Frühlingsbäche unterwaschen schon heimlich plaudernd und neckend den Sitz unter ihm' (WA II, 381).
 37. Zimorski, p. 163
 38. 'wie einem Vogel, dem die Flügel begossen worden sind' (WA II, 568); 'wie eine Rohrdommel im Schilf eines einsamen Weihers im Garten' (WA II, 571).
 39. Frühwald, p. 12.
 40. Pikulik, p. 151.

CHAPTER THREE

GOTTFRIED KELLER - STREBER AND BÜRGER

In pursuing the development of concern with philistinism beyond the Romantic period, we find good reasons to alight on Keller as a representative figure. A comment by Ernst Kohn-Bramstedt helps explain:

Whilst literature of the classical and romantic periods sharply underlines the contrast between genius and philistine, between the aristocracy of culture and the conventional respectability of the family, both the higher and lower literature of poetical realism after 1830 emphasize unceasingly the virtues of the middle-class family.¹

Keller, a pillar of what literary historians have commonly called Poetic Realism, is in so many respects an apologist of middle-class values as virtually to appear to defend Philistertum. It is a function of the present chapter to reveal to what extent this is a problem faced in Keller's writings rather than uncritically affirmed.

Secondly, the fact that Keller is Swiss is no obstacle to his consideration in a study devoted to a nineteenth-century issue in German culture. Keller, at least in the 1880s, objected strongly to being treated 'als eine spezifisch schweizerische Literatursache,'² seeing himself as having allegiance to the larger entity of German-speaking lands:

Denn bei allem Patriotismus verstehe ich hierin keinen Spass und bin der Meinung, wenn etwas herauskommen soll, so habe sich jed³er an das grosse Sprachgebiet zu halten, dem er angehört.³

Keller was, in fact, a lifelong admirer of German literature produced on German soil. In 1849 he readily concedes : 'denn wenn die Deutschen immer noch Esel sind in ihrer Politik, so bekommen mir ihre literarischen Elemente um so besser'.⁴ Indeed, the common literary language apart, Keller sees himself as part of the German literary tradition: he has a conscious affinity with Weimar Classicism in particular. Furthermore, defining his own position with respect to German culture against the cultural attraction of Bismarck's Reich for a certain kind of Swiss becomes a concern of the later Keller.

However, and this must be stressed, his Swiss origins and experiences are by no means irrelevant to our study, since these add a further dimension to the definition of philistinism in German-speaking Europe. In this period, philistinism continues to be perceived as a middle-class phenomenon, and the Swiss society that Keller inhabited and depicted was a profoundly middle-class one. Derek van Abbé contrasts a late medieval Germany still tied together by the mesh of feudal relationships with 'the rapid development of a commercial civilization' in the same period in Switzerland,⁵ whose relatively untroubled commercial and political development had, as early as the fifteenth century generated a sense of 'positive cultural and political value'.⁶

Consequently, it had long since preceded Germany along the road to 'the modern middle-class state'.⁷ Keller's whole attention is therefore focussed on the middle class, whose positive values he comes to share and whose relatively homogeneous condition and restrained conduct of affairs appear to take the sting out of the modish word Philister. Yet Keller uses the word and its cognates. It is the purpose of this chapter to discover in what senses.

Switzerland is, then, in its intensely middle-class ethos a kind of burning glass of developments in Germany itself. With the mid-century rise of bürgerlich values, which, as we shall see, create a different sense of philistinism compared to that of the Romantics, it will become clear that Keller can be construed as a Poetic (bürgerlich) Realist counterpart of Eichendorff as Romantic.

1. Early Keller - The 1840s.

Keller's view of philistinism underwent abrupt and marked changes at various times in his life, and so a sense of chronology is important. For this reason, let us begin with his earliest comments in letters and diaries. Whilst still in Munich, developing his abilities as a painter, Keller sent a letter to a friend, Johann Salomon Hegi, back home in Switzerland. In it he uses the word Philister in a context which harks back to the student application of it to any citizen with whom students had dealings, here, landlord:

'Deine Kiste ist, fest vernagelt, noch bei Deinem alten Philister'.⁸ On this simple level of student slang Keller instinctively and unselfconsciously uses the term Philister in a particular sense, yet without adding any emotive or metaphorical ingredients to play up the contrast between students and townspeople. At no point in his work do we witness any tendency to emulate Eichendorff in this regard. His education was, of course, unconventional and, after his expulsion from school in 1834, hardly idyllic. The years that he spent investigating his talent as a painter thereafter, including two years in Munich from 1840 to 1842, were ones of frustration. When he attended the University of Heidelberg as a mature student from 1848 to 1850, the Romantic spirit of the first decade of the century that had so inspired Eichendorff had long been dissipated. Feuerbach's sceptical views on Christianity, as expressed in Das Wesen des Christentums (1841) gained his enthusiastic endorsement. The religious and aesthetic idealism of the Romantics who had flourished in Heidelberg a generation before was replaced in Keller's mind by a philosophy that was rooted in 'reality' as perceived by the senses. The profound effect of this encounter with the teachings of Feuerbach was of lasting influence in Keller's life.

Despite the Feuerbach experience, student life has no metaphorical value for him. It does not become an evocative experience for him in itself. He does not attempt to idealize it in comradely terms, since it was but another stage in his

rather solitary pursuit of self-knowledge, of artistic vocation. Keller, who did not take up steady public employment until 1861, at the age of 42 - when he became clerk to the canton of Zürich - views the relationship between the artist and his society in markedly different terms from Eichendorff. His experience of the harsh reality of trying to subsist and thrive whilst pursuing his artistic interests make Eichendorff's comments seem naive. The years of dependence on handouts from the State or his mother left him with a lifelong sense of guilt and indebtedness. The freedom to write that he enjoyed, especially in the Berlin period of 1850-1855, did not inspire him to depict the poetic life-style in glowing terms. The reverse is often the case.

In order to understand the position of philistinism in Keller's system of values, we must scrutinise his views on the role of the poet or man of literature. After his return home from Munich in 1842, Keller started work on a volume of poetry, published in 1846 as Gedichte and which are characteristic of his attitudes at this time. Only one of them seems to use the word Philister in the older student application. In the one entitled 'In der alten braunen Stube' (1843) he pictures a Bursch (student) sitting drinking alone in an inn, accosted at intervals by his peers or by those citizens to whom he is in debt:

Dann und wann kommt ein Philister,
 Mahnend an die alte Schuld,
 Doch der Bursche trinkt und lächelt
 Und der Mann geht mit Geduld. (HA III, 11)

He rarely uses any of the words we would recognize as associated with philistinism in his published literature of any period. It occurs only once more in this early volume of poetry, in the poem called 'Epilog' in the section 'Sonette'. It seems to be an address to his critics whom he refers to as 'Philistertross'. In it, he consciously invokes the biblical context of David and the historical Philistines, hinting by implication that such critics are incapable of responding appropriately to works such as his. He in effect rather arrogantly dismisses their judgement as of no consequence: 'Sie würden durch dein Lob um so viel schaler!' (HA III, 77).

Most importantly, at this period of his life, Keller was very keen to put his poetic talents at the service of a political cause. In the political turmoil of the 1840s, as demands increased for properly elected, democratic governments, Keller was carried along by the fervour of the time. At this period it becomes a necessity for the poet to involve himself actively in the problems of the people. These problems are thought to be his special province, almost a justification of his existence. Keller confides to his diary on 14 July 1843:

Besonders aber muss sich nun der Dichter mit den grossen Welt- Fort oder Rückschritten beschäftigen, mit den ernstesten Lebensfragen, die die Menschheit bewegen.
 (HA III, 858)

Whilst Eichendorff saw the danger of the use of poetry for

political ends and labelled Vormärz writers as Philister for their attempt to invade the territory of poetry with political concerns, Keller saw political commitment as the most significant aspect of his poetry at this time. He states this self-image in a letter to Rudolf Leemann of 16 September 1845: 'Du musst wissen, dass ich ein erzradikaler Poet bin und Freud und Leid mit meiner Partei und meiner Zeit teile' (AV, 21). As a statement of poetic stance it is overstated, eager to convince not only his reader but perhaps also himself. It has all the histrionics of commitment of one his own creations in the later Leute von Seldwyla, a kind of reverse Viggi Storteler, intent on proving that he is engagé. In poems like 'Ça ira' (1845) he indeed takes on the role of poetic stimulator of the people in their strivings for political change. In 'Sommer', for instance, he anticipates the struggle to effect such change with evident relish, in the manner of Freiligrath or Herwegh, whom he admired:

Ich sehne mich nach Gewitternacht,
Nach Sturm und Regen und Donnerschlag!
Nach einer tüchtigen Freiheitsschlacht
Und einem entscheidenden Völkertag! (HA III, 55)

When the Liberals take power in Switzerland in September 1847, Keller very quickly shows that he prefers reform to revolution and writes in his Traumbuch in a tone of conversion, indeed gratitude:

Ich bin ganz im geheimen diesen Männern viel Dank
schuldig. Aus einem vagen Revolutionär und Freischärler
à tout prix habe ich mich an ihnen zu einem bewussten
und besonnenen Menschen herangebildet. (HA III, 884)

At the same time he consciously and deliberately refers to

those elements of society that are resistant to all progress as Philister. In his essay on Ludwig Börne of 1848, he shares the latter's annoyance with the philistinism of the 1820s and its current manifestation: 'man ärgert sich mit ihm über die Philister'.⁹ When the revolution in Paris failed, Keller presented the likely schadenfreude of the Philister in a diary entry of 1 May 1848: 'Jeder Philister weist grinsend nach Frankreich hin, wo sich das liebe Volk unbesonnen in Not und Sorge gestürzt hat' (HA III, 892). In his identification of philistinism with particular political attitudes in the 1840s, Keller does not seem very different from Heine, Herwegh, Fallersleben and many other writers we have noted addressing the problems of the age as in part the legacy of the Philister.

In this same decade, however, there is another very strong strand in his opinions that informs his conception of philistinism. It is a very intense concern about the state of culture and its contribution to society. In Vermischte Gedanken über die Schweiz (1841), his criticism of the Swiss aristocracy is wholly in aesthetic terms:

Die jetzigen Überreste und Anhänger der Patrizier (...) sind oft in der stupidesten Spiessbürgerei versunken und ermangeln ganz jener feinern Bildung und höhern Kultur des Geistes, welche sonst die Aristokraten anderer Republiken so sehr auszeichnete. (HA III, 1026)

We note how he expects the aristocracy in Switzerland to display an exemplary attitude to culture and thus implies that they are not fulfilling their leading role. Therefore, unlike Eichendorff, he cannot depend on them to safeguard the

values of an embattled culture in times of upheaval. His concern for literature in the early 1840s causes him to offer drastic solutions for an improvement in the cultural standards of the people after the hoped-for revolution. His approach is at times aggressive, paternalistic, didactic and arrogant, but he does seem to be genuinely eager to address the problem with appropriate vigour. His diary entry of 14 August 1843:

Aller Schund von namenlosen oder sonst schlechten Romanen und Dramaschreibern würde total zerstört und lauter gute Nahrung angeschafft. Ich würde das Volk zwingen, entweder etwas Gutes, Belehrendes oder gar nichts zu lesen. Ich würde auch eine Zensur einführen, aber nur für geistlose und mittelmässige Bücher (...). Ebenso würde ichs mit dem Theater halten. Alle Ritterschauspiele, alle Kotzebubereien, alle erbärmlichen Lustspiele abgeschafft. Lauter klassische Stücke dürften gegeben werden; entweder müsste das liebe Publikum zu Hause bleiben oder etwas Gutes anhören und endlich angewöhnen und verstehen! (HA III, 869)

There is youthful impatience as well as self-confidence in these comments. The tone indicates a writer who feels strongly about his subject and who proposes radical solutions. He writes in a forceful manner and makes good use of comic exaggeration at the mention of a censorship working against the lighter theatrical fare which only entertains the public. His belief that he knows what is good for them ('gute Nahrung'; 'etwas Gutes') and that this corresponds to what is either instructive or classical, marks Keller from the outset as a didactic author. Public taste is in need of guidance and he will get on with the job if he gets the opportunity. In the meantime, poets need to work to help

create the political conditions when such an education of the populace can take place.

A number of his poems from the first collection of 1846 make it clearer what he considers 'good' literature to be. Foremost among this is the classical heritage, especially of Goethe, which only needs to be preserved intact during the troubled times, to be rediscovered afterwards: 'Und Goethe ist ein Kleinod, das im Kriege | Man scheu vergräbt im sichersten Gewölbe, | Es bergend vor der rohen Feindeshand' (HA III, 79). In this period of great stress, when trying to find his own poetic voice, he also sees inner conflict as the emblem of the poets with whom he can most readily identify. Lacking the religious faith of Eichendorff, who lambasted all such Zerrissenheit, Keller is proud to associate himself with the likes of Platen, Herder, Schiller, Chamisso, Tasso and even Byron in his 'Lied der Zerrissenen' of 1844. He distances himself more notably still from Eichendorff when he writes of Hoffmann in terms of the highest praise, even referring to him as a Genie. Eichendorff had certainly stated that he mistrusted Hoffmann's apparent versatility in a number of the arts. Keller, touchy on the subject of his own talents as a painter at this time, treats any suggestion that Hoffmann should have concentrated his abilities on writing, as an indication of a narrowmindedness which is a form of philistinism: 'Von Hoffmann zu verlangen, dass er die Malerei aufgeben und alle seine Kräfte der Dichtkunst zuwenden solle,

wäre eine Philisterei gewesen' (HA III, 855).

2. The 1850s - A reassessment.

As is well known, the story of the maturation of Fritz Amrain in one of the Novellen from Die Leute von Seldwyla, written in Berlin in the early 1850s, Frau Regel Amrain und ihr Jüngster, closely parallels the developments in Keller's own ideals at this time. From now on the convinced liberal portrays revolutionary behaviour, participation in coups and involvement in the political problems of neighbouring towns as frivolous. Keller's own experiences in the 1840s cause him now to devalue aspects of his own behaviour at the time which, in retrospect, he considers an aberration. The coordinates of his approval and disapproval, including what he sees as philistine, therefore shift as his own opinions are moulded in the light of events. He makes haste to present his new-found ideals to the reader in the moralizing manner of such Novellen. From a poet espousing violent social change, it is as if Keller quickly reverts to his conservative instincts. Whilst he had previously portrayed the contented citizens who did not share his radical views as the Philister, he begins to retreat from using this terminology which such confidence. More often than not now, those characters who use words like Philister of others, in a disparaging manner, are shown to cherish a false sense of their own superiority. We notice this change in the depiction of the wrongheadedness of Fritz Amrain's lack of interest in

the elections to the Landrat. He is misled by the restrained conduct of these elections to conclude that they are not worthy of his participation: 'wenn man es recht betrachtete, schien sogar ein Anflug von philisterhafter Lächerlichkeit zu kleben an den diesjährigen Wahlen' (HA II, 162). What the narrator, and thus Keller, would have us consider as in fact ridiculous and philistine on this occasion is the very apathy that infects the Seldwyler and which Frau Regel manages to persuade her son to transcend.

The reformers whom he himself espouses from 1847 onwards thus are given moral superiority over all other political positions in Keller's writing of this period. Having abandoned the revolutionary stance he for a time adopted, he goes out of his way to undermine both the revolutionary position and the arch-conservative one. Liberalism is then endowed with an aura of righteousness in Frau Regel Amrain und ihr Jüngster which renders it secure from the taint of Philistinism and frivolity:

Wer freisinnig ist, traut sich und der Welt etwas Gutes zu und weiss mannhaft von nichts anderm, als dass man hiefür einzustehen vermöge, während der Unfreisinn oder der Konservatismus auf Zaghaftheit und Beschränktheit gegründet ist. (HA II, 148)

The political activism which had fired him for a time was thus relativized by Keller after the events of 1847-48. His political attitudes now become more representative of the Poetic Realism, to which he is generally ascribed. He shares a sense of disillusionment with political activism which we can note in Fritz Amrain's experiences.

There is certainly evidence in his letters that Keller began to doubt the suitability of contemporary politics as a topic for poetry and other literature. There is a real sense in which he considers the events of the time as simply unworthy for literary purposes. This is to be understood against the background of intense satirical interest in the shortcomings of those Germans who had failed to sustain the revolutionary momentum of 1848. Works by Adolf Glassbrenner, Leopold Feldmann and Albert Hopf were taking the figure of Der deutsche Michel to task.¹⁰ In a letter to Ferdinand Freiligrath on 22 September 1850, Keller clearly distances himself from his own earlier poetic personality and from the popular subject matter of the Philister:

Die Weihe der Poesie wird von wahren Dichtern, welche den Willen und das Bedürfnis des Volkes darzustellen imstande sein werden, gebracht werden und sicher nicht ausbleiben, wenn der tüchtige Inhalt durch die Geschichte verschafft wird. Gegenwärtig reitet man immer auf dem Philister und seiner Misere herum, welches eben kein poetischer Stoff, und auf den Erbärmlichkeiten der jetzigen Politik, insofern die Polizei es erlaubt.
(AV, 77)

We notice also how Keller cherishes a notion of 'true' poets that we have seen in Eichendorff and how he is referring to a higher kind of literature by using words like 'Weihe' (solemnity/consecration). Conversely, we note how he views Poesie as necessarily dependent on the people, reflecting their needs and aspirations; there is none of the aloofness of the Romantic Dichter here. Nevertheless, there is an apparent frustration with a too frequent preoccupation of other writers, namely the Philister. By stressing its

unsuitability as the theme of a poetic work, Keller seems to be implicitly criticizing those works of Brentano, Hoffmann and indeed Eichendorff which we have discussed. By extension, are we then to expect a conscious exclusion of such material from his own literary works? Partly, yes. No single work of his is devoted explicitly to the theme of the Philister. We will need to consider, however, whether the Philister actually do appear in his literary work, disguised or transformed, to take account of his obvious objections.

3. Die drei gerechten Kammacher - Philister?

Written in the early years of the 1850s, this novella does not deal overtly with the theme of philistinism. However, there are evident similarities between some of the characters Keller portrays in this story and those who appear in certain works of the Romantic period that are explicitly concerned with philistines. Let us dwell on some of the principal characteristics of the Kammacher. They are described as hardworking, materialistic and as outsiders in the community. They are indifferent to the claims of the community upon them and thus lead lives which are entirely absorbed by a bloodless righteousness: 'welche niemandem zuleid lebt, aber auch niemandem zu Gefallen' (HA II, 173). Their work ethic is a doggedly utilitarian one. Thus far we note resemblances in their attitude to work and their prosaic materialism to attitudes of minor characters in Taugenichts, whom we have identified as Philister. The issue

of relationship to the wider community has not surfaced in such a form before. The Romantic Dichter were visionary outsiders dealing in special knowledge, inaccessible to the wider community of philistines. The Kammacher are something of a caricature of that position.

The various other traits ascribed to the Kammacher would - in a different context - identify them as manifest Philister. We need only note the more prominent ones. They lack imagination in the work they produce, with no ability or attempt to transcend the narrow range of prescribed patterns. The work is therefore imitative rather than creative: 'nüchtern und phantasielos' (HA II, 175). In everyday communication with other citizens Jobst possesses an immense capacity for that quality so abhorred by the Romantics and typical attribute of their Philister - boredom. Like Brentano's 'Musterphilister' he is the slave of habit and routine and is interested only in what is 'zweckmässig'. Material advancement is his primary motivation, to which all his actions are directed. The single-minded accumulation of money to enable him to run his own comb business is not presented as laudable self-sacrifice and industry. Prosaic virtues, like those of the Philister of many Romantic depictions, are seen negatively. The extent to which the pursuit of wealth dominates the lives of the main characters in this novella - the Kammacher and Züs Bünzlin - marks this out as a pressing concern of Keller's. Higher literature of any age has perhaps always found materialism unsavoury since

it inevitably undermines the purpose of that literature. Keller adds it as a disfiguring element in a particularly vicious satire of failed Menschen and Bürger. In one sense he displays the results of alienation from these twin possibilities in the characters of the four main protagonists.

Repeatedly throughout this novella, Keller wants the reader to understand that the objects of his satire are failed human beings and inhuman in almost every imaginable way. Jobst's plan to take over the business is defined as 'inhuman' itself: 'das Unmenschliche an diesem so stillen und friedfertigen Plane war nur, dass Jobst ihn überhaupt gefasst hatte' (HA II, 177). Furthermore, the well-known comparisons between the Kammacher and various animals help to emphasize the difficulty of identifying the essentially human aspects of their behaviour. Jobst, for instance, even works 'wie ein Tierlein' (HA II, 174). Much later in the novella, we read Züs Bünzlin's smug comments on the faults of other creatures and we are reminded of the criticisms of the irrational behaviour of natural forces made by the Philister in Krieg den Philistern: 'es sind unwissende und geistlose Geschöpfe, unbeseelt und vernunftlos vergeuden sie ihre Zeit' (HA II, 199). In the context of course, the implied rational behaviour she is thereby extolling has been discredited by the mechanical, unimaginative, pretentious actions of both Züs and the Kammacher. If reason distinguishes between Man from the animal world, it hardly seems an invigorating

quality here.

In addition to the comparisons with various animals, Keller makes effective use of the comic device of duplication, indeed triplication. Since one of the key points about human beings is their uniqueness, their individuality, the very sameness of the Kammacher renders them even more inhuman. In ironic variation on the Romantic idea of the mysterious doppelgänger or alter ego, Fridolin is described as Jobst's doppelgänger and Diedrich is likewise merely a carbon copy of the other two. At a stroke the narrator undermines the arrogance of their sense of superiority and exclusivity. Far from being exceptional beings, they are almost infinitely repeatable.

A further important aspect of Keller's desire to withdraw certain human attributes from particular characters - and this continues right up to Martin Salander - is seen in the fact that his more negative creations are devoid of feelings. We are reminded notably of Werther's emphasis on the role of the heart and the general predominance of the head over the heart in many Romantic depictions of Philister. Jobst is certainly all but incapable of an emotional response. His character showed 'die merkwürdigste Mischung von wahrhaft heroischer Weisheit und Ausdauer und von sanfter schnöder Herz- und Gefühllosigkeit' (HA II, 179). The personality of Züs Bünzlin also notably lacks any real feelings. Her wooing game with the Kammacher is but the continuation of a practice she has followed for years - of

ruthlessly exploiting her suitors. Keller makes it clear that she is incapable of love and that she is heartless. This is most evident in her misquotation from Schiller's Wallenstein (Picc. iii, 8, 1840). Instead of 'der Zug des Herzens ist des Schicksals Stimme' she substitutes 'der Zug des Schicksals ist des Herzens Stimme?' (HA II, 207), thereby rendering the heart a mere servant of fate. Virtue without feeling smacks of hypocrisy or at least the merely conventional. Like other literary types who are Philister, the major characters in this novella, attempt to disguise their emotional bankruptcy by a flow of pious utterances, whilst intent on making their fortune.

Another topic which Keller subjects to the most searching satire in this novella is the conventionally philistine one of culture misapplied, of book-learning stifling the intuitive response. Züs Bünzlin is obviously a veritable blue-stocking as well as a heartless and unwholesome character. She is neither 'lustig' nor 'hübsch' and specializes in a dubious form of respectability identified by the adjective 'tugendhaft'. Keller is here attacking a peculiar manifestation of middle-class behaviour which sets itself above the wider community in various forms of pretension. It condemns itself by the actual mediocrity of its taste, the rigidity of its outlook and its superficiality. For all the apparent discipline of her approach to life she cuts herself off from it by rules and routine e.g. 'Goldene Lebensregeln für die Jungfrau als

Braut, Gattin und Mutter' (HA II, 184) and by the barrier of her rote-learning from school text-books. Revealingly, she reads the Kalender but otherwise takes no part in the affairs of the world. She has been dazzled by the light of that false Aufklärung we have met in Eichendorff so that she has become 'eine gelehrte Blinde' (HA II, 187). Like Philister, she has a distinct penchant for sentimentality which replaces her absent capacity for real sentiment. We have already seen her attempt to purloin Schiller to strike an attitude. In the catalogue of her reading matter, there is the Philister's obligatory baggage of a Schiller play, in this case Die Räuber. We observe how biblical references here display the conventional piety which mask the very materialistic and selfish nature of the wooing competition between the three Kammacher to gain the ironic goal of Züs as 'ein himmlisches Jerusalem' (HA II, 192). Religious formulations underline the starkness of Keller's satirical intentions in this novella. Züs makes speech after speech of the most transparently pious hypocrisy in her dealings with the Kammacher. Her longest speech of encouragement to them is a pastiche of lyrical utterances and school-learning, fragmented and at times incongruous and indeed nonsensical. In its incoherence, it underlines the superficiality of her culture, her misquotations are often revealingly apt. There is no value in knowledge applied and displayed in this way. Like her essays, her conversation is at base that of the dilettante, an excuse for meretricious persiflage.

Apart from human qualities, Keller is characteristically interested in the social commitment of his creations. The poetic antitypes to the Philister in works by the Romantics certainly did not need to display social credentials. In fact, their special status as poets, visionaries, artists and suchlike, meant that separation from the wider community was almost a condition for their insights. Even figures such as the Taugenichts can only remain engaging by their refusal to be integrated into society as useful and responsible members. The society in question is seen, very negatively, as the headquarters of philistinism and as such best avoided. Its common values of industry, family life, a settled routine are regarded as tokens of mediocrity, as distractions from a worthier existence.

As early as this novella, Keller is attempting to reassess the value of lives focussed on the community. He seems to be trying to remove the stigma the Romantics had attached to society, or else to de-romanticize the value of lives deliberately oblivious to the concerns of other citizens or Bürger. The fact that the Kammacher are outsiders who arrive in Seldwyla to settle and take no interest in the region whatsoever appears as a negative quality. They never become Bürger because they are so self-absorbed that nothing is important to them beyond their little projects. With such indifference they 'gleichen daher weniger dem freien Menschen als jenen niederen Organismen, wunderlichen Tierchen und Pflanzensamen, die durch Luft und Wasser an die zufällige

Stätte ihres Gedeihens getragen worden' (HA II, 178). The lack of interest Jobst shows in Seldwyla politics of any form is symptomatic of his narrowly materialistic concerns, which exclude even patriotism: 'Wo es mir wohl geht, da ist mein Vaterland!' (HA II, 177).

Not that the society of Seldwyla is presented as a paragon of perfection at any stage in the novellas in this collection. Indeed, as has been observed by J. M. Ellis,¹¹ this novella itself does not merely contrast the congeniality of the Seldwyler with the heartlessness of the Kammacher. The former become rather heartless themselves in their treatment of the three unfortunates as the novella progresses. At the same time there is growing sympathy for the three combmakers, as examples of suffering humanity. Nevertheless, the faults of the three and of Züs also are compounded by their sense of superiority over others which verges on arrogance. Keller is sabotaging at every turn an attempt to portray an élite status. His is a more egalitarian society than either the Romantics or Goethe and Schiller could have conceived. In the absence of an élite which is sure of its own value it is much more difficult to define who the Philister are.

Keller had attempted to make his peace with Swiss society after the Liberals came to power in 1847 so that both politically and philosophically he found it difficult to align himself with the notion of the Philister, as it was so comprehensively developed by the Romantics. As a political poet in the 1840s he had deliberately adopted the stance of

the engagé writer. Whilst working towards the attainment of democratic institutions, he simultaneously felt the need to broaden the appeal of his literary endeavours. In doing so, he was certainly didactic in intention and was strenuously resisting the idea of an oligarchy of excellence. Certainly, the public's taste needs to be schooled but he never - unlike Eichendorff - seriously considers the alternative of writing literature for a limited number of like-minded souls. The very notion of a literary clique or movement nourishing itself without regard to the wider world becomes anathema to him. In this way, he has little use for the idea of a Philister to constitute all the shoddy ideas and perceptions of the majority. Indeed, as we have seen, the majority are more likely to be right more of the time in his work. What we encounter in Die drei gerechten Kammacher is a shifting of the balance from the worth of particular individuals to society at large. Yet neither component is deemed to possess a monopoly of correct behaviour. The emphasis is now on reciprocity, interaction and not introspection. Philistines do not then suddenly disappear from Keller's literary landscape, but their usefulness as repositories of attitudes is altered once they are perceived as a minority and not a ubiquitous horde.

4. The writer assimilated.

In the first set of Seldwyla tales we have, Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe, which originally ended with a harsh

criticism of declining morals in the higher reaches of the middle classes, particularly an apparent increase in divorce. This was devised, partly, to place the suicide of Sali and Vrenchen in a better light, in the context of contemporary 'frivolity'. As an attack on the implied emptiness of the social convention of marriage, contrasting with true but unsanctioned love, it has been termed a 'Degenparade gegen die Philister'. The harsh and unremitting tone in which he thus condemned a large portion of the society of his time he quickly construed as an aberration and promised his critics to remove it at the first opportunity.¹² The hasty retraction indicates how eager Keller was to avoid direct confrontation with his readership on matters that concerned him. He thus eschewed the highly-charged, subjective attacks on standards within society that had marked much of the existing literature dealing with philistinism. For writers like Brentano, Heine and the Jungdeutschen, such a lapse into vitriol or polemic would have been considered a token of authenticity. Keller here seems to have rescinded the writer's entitlement to polemic as a kind of droit de seigneur. For him, in a democratic society, the opinions of any self-appointed aristocrats or moralists are tantamount to presumption or megalomania.

The tendency right from these early novellas is towards the integration of the individual as a useful member of society. The Kammacher and Züs are perhaps beyond the point where a transformation in this direction is possible. In

other places - as with Pankraz and Fritz Amrain - we witness a rapid or more gradual moulding of personality to the stage where each individual is best disposed to serve society with his talents. Certainly Pankraz progresses until he is able 'mit seinen Erfahrungen und Kenntnissen ein dem Lande nützlicher Mann zu sein und zu bleiben' (HA II, 60) and Fritz, under his mother's tutelage becomes so exemplary that he is able to guide his prodigal father in appropriate behaviour. Under such a regime of perfectibility, indeed such an insistent pedagogy, there is much to reform and little that merely needs preserving. Eichendorff, by contrast, writes of the need to preserve particular attitudes. Philistinism comes about largely by degeneration or an inherited taint - students who are assimilated or Bürger who are doomed from birth. For Eichendorff the worthiest students blossom into Dichter, for Keller the worthiest artists (Dichter is too grand a term) blossom into citizens. Significantly, those artist-figures in Keller who fail to establish a working relationship with their society are condemned both as bogus artists and limited human beings. Involvement with literature - albeit at an exalted level - was a virtual guarantee for the avoidance of philistinism for the Romantic writers. For Keller, such is the decline in the status of the isolated, subjective artist, that the latter is now most susceptible to a psychological condition recognizable as philistinism.

This need not be so surprising. Having struggled for

many years to develop his own proclivities as painter and then as writer, Keller cherished guilt feelings towards the society that had nurtured his personal quest so patiently. He approved of the political changes that had taken place in Switzerland and felt the need to make reparations for the bounty extended to him. His youthful inclinations had perhaps been rather more narcissistic and experience taught him the pleasure of involvement in shared tasks like political improvement. He was a keen Swiss patriot and increasingly saw his task as a kind of cultural mentor. It was a role he clearly relished after the introspection of his early poetry and of Der grüne Heinrich. The latter work, however, makes some telling points about the whole relationship between art and society that will allow us to see how Keller's attitude to the Philister inevitably changed, as his view of the artist's place in society developed.

First of all, it is well to remind ourselves of the extent to which this work can be considered autobiographical and to what extent it is an extrapolation of its author's situation. He writes to Hermann Hettner on 4 March 1851:

Nur noch einige Worte über den Henri Vert. Ich habe bei diesem Unglücklichen das gewagte Manöver gemacht, dass ich meine eigene Jugendgeschichte zum Inhalt des ersten Teiles machte, um dann darauf den weiteren Verlauf des Romanes zu gründen, und zwar so, wie er mir selbst hätte passieren können, wenn ich mich nicht zusammengenommen hätte. (AV, 78)

In this first version of the novel, Heinrich assumes all the blame for his mother's death, having neglected her to pursue his own artistic inclinations. His attacks of conscience

cause his own death. The ending of the first version is natural in terms of the extremely subjective, rather Romantic personality of its protagonist. His inability to come to terms with society, to compromise in any way, makes his end as inevitable as that of Werther. Both novels represent the fate of the Romantic hero in extremis. Ideals are never tempered by reality since the latter appears as the domain of the enemy, sometimes called the Philister.

Keller's position on the relationship between the artist, or the person of artistic sensibility, and the society of his time, clearly changed or matured. Perhaps as he became more certain of his own powers, he sought more practical models for the symbiosis of these two human entities than the extreme position of the Romantic hero would allow. The Goethe of Wilhelm Meister or the Schiller of Wilhelm Tell may have served as models. The marked change of emphasis for the second version of Der grüne Heinrich was, of course, occasioned particularly by his own acceptance of public service as Staatsschreiber of Zürich from 1861. He regarded this as by no means a surrender to Philistia, unlike Eichendorff's sense of a reluctant exile from a poetic milieu during his state service. In changing the ending of his novel for the 1879 version, by replacing Heinrich's death by his service as a government official, we can recognise Keller's new attitude to society and the possibilities they can present for talents like his and Heinrich's. Imaginative creation that has no social dimension now appears both barren

and self-indulgent. We note how the new Heinrich comes to the significant conclusion:

als ob eine solche fortgesetzte und fleissige Tätigkeit in lebendigem Menschenstoffe doch etwas ganz anderes wäre als das abgeschlossene Phantasieren auf Papier und Leinwand. (HA I, 677)

Like many of Keller's other protagonists in the novellas - Fritz Amrain, Pankraz, Wenzel Strapinski - Heinrich now decides on a life which is of immediate use to society i.e. 'unter den Menschen etwas wirke und nütze!' (HA I, 683). The erstwhile problem that seemed to create the conditions for confrontation between Bürger and Künstler has now been neutralized. Since a suitable modus vivendi has been worked out, there is little need of Philister who tend to loom large when a writer feels most at odds with his society.

5. The 1860s and 1870s - Bürger and Streber.

Whilst I have anticipated to some extent the tenor of these years, when Keller was engaged in government service and unable to be so productive in literature, there is a great deal of potential in this period for considerations of interest to our theme. Since Keller produced no new works of literature, it is a useful period to review comments in his correspondence on matters such as the relationship between work and leisure, the value of money, the individual and society, the role of culture. The large number of works that then appeared in the later 1870s will allow us to focus again on issues such as the presentation of the artist and the

philistine. The central historical fact of the unification of Germany in 1871 and the cultural consequences of that which concerned Nietzsche, will present another ready focus.

A diary entry from much earlier - 8 July 1843 - when Keller had recently failed in his quest to become a painter in Munich will help place his epistolary comments of this decade in an interesting context. At that stage he seemed openly critical of those who were engaged in regular employment and who therefore took a certain comfortable delight in complete relaxation on Sundays. There is a hint of superior disdain for the ostentatious business ('Emsigkeit') of such people and a suggestion that their work is not of the highest quality ('schlampen'). The tone of these comments is then not unlike that we have met in Eichendorff, especially Ahnung und Gegenwart. As in the Romantic writers, work that does not require the whole man is devalued by comparison with the strenuous pursuit of the artist, striving for the unattainable. For the Romantics, and at this point probably also Keller, such working patterns (e.g. Kammacher) were typical of Philister:

welche mit der unerträglichsten, selbstzufriednen Emsigkeit die Werkel- und Schmutztage hindurch fuseln und schlampen und am Sonntage mit fetter Behaglichkeit nichts tun, nichts denken, nichts sehen. (HA III, 851)

A few months before he applied for the job of Town Clerk, on the 10 May 1861, he wrote to the publisher Georg von Cotta with the suggestion that the latter might publish some of his literary essays on recent literature and, indeed

enter into a contract with him. Rather startlingly, he indicates that he needs such a solid constant commitment to further his poetic activity. The contrast with his earlier self is stark enough:

Ich fange nämlich an, den Mangel eines Amtes oder einer bestimmten bindenden und sicherstellenden Tätigkeit zu fühlen, welche dem poetischen Schaffen eine ruhige Grundlage gäbe. (AV, 157)

His more detailed presentation of a possible arrangement to Cotta included the admission that he would quite happily pursue his own literary work as a form of relaxation: 'Ich würde die poetische Arbeit dabei als Erholung vom Hauptgeschäft betrachten und dabei vielleicht weiter kommen als bisher' (AV, 158). When he then has to write back to Georg von Cotta to cancel his suggestion, upon the offer of the government post, he again makes clear that in accepting the post 'der Poet und Schriftsteller dabei nicht verlorengelasse, sondern im Gegenteil dadurch einen festeren Halt im Leben gewinne'.¹³

His conception of the manner in which literary work can be produced is, of course, somewhat optimistic. At the age of 42 he had clearly tired of the irregular nature of his income and was prepared to consider a change in lifestyle. There is a marked difference between his affirmation of a bourgeois profession and the practice of literature and the impression that many Romantic writers give of the utter incompatibility of the two activities. What was previously the despised domain of all the 'normal' citizens and Philister is no

longer perceived as a dreaded hindrance but as a positive help. His further statement that poetic work can be relaxation was anathema to Eichendorff and others. Such attitudes were again only expected of philistines. The implication that the writer (we note the avoidance of the term Dichter) would welcome a firmer hold on life would have been distinctly suspect to writers in the Romantic period. Whilst bearing in mind the intent of the letters in which these statements occur - to convince a man of business that he is to be taken seriously, perhaps by playing to his prejudices - Keller's views on the practice of literature as a more down-to-earth, manageable affair is a crucial departure from the Romantic idea of the exalted, mystical Dichter. He has invalidated this notion as a literary model and is clearly at pains to emphasize the relative normality, respectability, of the writer. He has in effect rendered the opposition of Genie or Künstler and Philister and Bürger meaningless.

Where artist figures do appear in Keller's works they are generally treated satirically. The most extended critique of literary endeavours of a dubious type occurs in Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe, which appear in 1874. The material for this and other of these novellas goes back further, in this case to his sojourn in Berlin in the early 1850s. At that time he frequented a number of literary salons and made the acquaintance of various men and women of letters. He seems not to have found this a gratifying

experience. He resented the ubiquity and the assertiveness of the literary-minded, as he had remarked to Ferdinand Freiligrath on 22 September 1850: 'Auch Dichter gibt's eine Menge, an jedem Tisch einen, welche überlaut vom Handwerk sprechen' (AV, 71). Some of the writers to whom he was referring on this occasion were Fanny Lewald, Varnhagen von Ense, Gräfin Hahn-Hahn and Adolf Stahr. Viggi Störteler and his associates represent Keller's scapegoats to lambaste the literary cliques of those years in Berlin. In this novella, where Keller treats manifestly second-rate writers, we come closest to some kind of continuation of the Romantic tradition of the Philister.

They have the pretensions and arrogance of other Philister we have met. Theirs is a cult of genius, a pale reflection of the Sturm und Drang period they wish to recreate for the alleged ushering in of a new age of Classicism. The contrast between their grandiose plans and their actual imitative, derivative mediocrity is striking. The narrator implies that their literary taste is both suspect and blinkered by self-esteem: 'diese Herren, welche ein gutes Buch jahrzehntelang ungelesen liessen, verschlangen alles, was von ihresgleichen kam' (HA II, 326). Their speciality is made to appear contemporary Trivialliteratur, since they show knowledge of 'den täglich auftauchenden Erscheinungen leichterer Art' (ibid.). They are made to appear as a mutually supportive group of literary swindlers. The clever pastiche of literary styles produced by the waiter

at the inn easily dupes their superficial judgement.

Viggi's comments read like a continuing caricature of a writer in the Romantic mould. Keller presents a parody of that position to render its claims absurd, to subject such writers to ridicule. Thus, whilst upbraiding his wife for her lack of support for his literary activities, Viggi self-consciously declares: '"Du weisst, dass ich die dornenvolle Laufbahn eines Dichters betreten habe"' (HA II, 335). Keller, as a writer who so valued the qualities of the responsible citizen acting with true humanity, renders Viggi incapable of human relationships. The collapse of his marriage because of his absurd literary activities only finds him 'voll von Ärger und Kummer über die verletzte Eitelkeit und Eigenliebe' (HA II, 350). He does, of course, now find himself entangled with the grotesque Kätter Ambach, who foists herself upon him and knows how to flatter his wounded ego. He is thus encouraged to continue his pretensions by a new wife who calls him a Genie but is simultaneously leading him to financial ruin by her insatiable appetite. The great plans that Viggi had previously had for the production of great works only lead to 'eine wilde und schülerhafte Literatur' (HA II, 363).

In a letter written in the same year as the publication of the second series of Seldwyla novellas - to Emil Kuh on 6 December 1874 - Keller reflects on the consequences of the Franco-Prussian War for cultural attitudes in Germany. He uses the word 'Strebertum', as so frequently in these two

decades of his life, to refer to that kind of assertive behaviour which he had early encountered among the literary cliques of Berlin and which he found so uncomfortable. In the literary sphere it is his equivalent of what Nietzsche terms Bildungsphilisterei. For a life-long admirer of German literature the sight was the more appalling:

Das dagegen ist richtig, das sich die deutsche Literatur oder Poesie, wie sie sich in dem jetztigen Strebertum darstellt, viel alberner und unfähiger herausgestellt und benommen hat und noch benimmt nach dem grossen Krieg, als man je hätte ahnen können. (AV, 193)

Viggi was certainly a Streber of the most incorrigible sort. The opening pages of Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe make it clear that he and his friends are over-ambitious in a pretentious way. The narrator comments 'so übernahmen sie sich' (HA II, 324), among other things by reading 'die schwersten Bücher' (ibid.). In the Züricher Novellen which he published from 1878, it is Herr Jacques, in the framework novella who engages our attention from this perspective for the same reason.

The personalities of both these characters are very closely related and similar to the conventional character traits of Philister. An inflated self-regard is the seedbed in which a host of pretensions, foolishness or delusions are grown. Their blithe arrogance, untrammelled by any self-irony which would enable them to gain a sense of perspective, renders them ridiculous to narrator, readers and their fellow-citizens, to whom they always feel superior. As an adolescent philistine or Streber, Herr Jacques never quite

manages to carry out his grandiose plans regarding such projects as 'der neue Ovid'. He is equally inept in matters of feeling, even wooing a potential bride in a manner which recalls philistines in Eichendorff 'mit der Ruhe und Gemessenheit einer guten Wanduhr' (WA II, 621). Above all, both of them show a highly developed materialism, so often associated with Philister and now given added significance in the Gründerjahre.

Herr Jacques and Viggi, for all their high-brow hopes, are incorrigibly utilitarian and commercially-minded. The former, whilst out ruminating on his mission as an Original cannot resist the temptation to perform business calculations. He is visibly proud of his skill in working out, as the river flows past him, laden with wood 'die ziemlich wahrscheinliche Summe (...) für welche die Stadt während zweier Tage Brennholz einfuhrte' (HA II, 614). The narrator is also at pains to emphasize Viggi Störteler's business acumen. He was very successful and well-regarded until he started assuming airs about his literary abilities. At the start his writings merely represented 'eine gebildete Erholung' (HA II, 325). The commercial competence serves to highlight in both cases the foolishness of the literary projects each of them adopt. The narrator makes it clear that they should have remained with their business activities, to which they are more suited. For this ability to deal with money they are already Philister. Keller entitled chapter fourteen of the second version of Der grüne Heinrich - in

which Heinrich Lee is financially exploited by his friend Meierlein - 'Prahler, Schulden, Philister unter den Kindern'. Similarly, writing to Emil Kuh about his financial expectations from the 1876 edition of Die Leute von Seldwyla, he changes the subject with the words : 'Doch genug von diesem Philisterzeug' (GB III, i, 204).

If we reflect briefly on the change of status of men of commerce within a literary work between, say, Novalis' Heinrich von Ofterdingen (1802) and Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe (1874) we can appreciate what Keller is doing here to the notion of the Philister. Novalis saw all worldly concerns, including business, as of infinitely less value than the activity of the Dichter. His hero Heinrich contrasts markedly with both his father and other merchants who live matter-of-fact lives filled with business dealings. In the novel they appear limited and prosaic for this emphasis. Keller, on the other hand, does not diminish or ridicule the business sense of Viggi Störteler, but applauds it. It is only when he goes too far in his own feeling of an 'Anlage zum Dichter' that the narrator's satire begins in earnest. The combination of commerce and culture, a highly suspect indication of philistinism among the Romantics, becomes the principal focus of his discontent, perhaps under another term than Philister. The associations between money-making and philistinism remain, but are insufficient in themselves to warrant disapproval. As a sign of a citizen's competence in making an honest living, business sense is

often affirmed in Keller. It is one of the valuable practical assets that characters like Wenzel Strapinski need to acquire. Keller is clearly less concerned to condemn Philister - at its most innocuous it is only a synonym for Bürger - than to subject a Streber or Literat to scorn.

Keller presents portraits of failed artists and writers much more often than he depicts successful or laudable ones. He clearly is not interested in the Romantics' obsession with the practice of Poesie. Instead we find the protagonist of Der grüne Heinrich either despairing after numerous vicissitudes in version one, or changing to a more socially useful vocation in the revised version. In the Seldwyla cycles the descriptions of the literary-minded are generally satirical. A notable exception are the older generation in Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe who meet to hold genial discussions on the literature of past ages, including the works of Jean Paul, Rabelais, Tieck, Cervantes, Sterne and Goethe. The narrator certainly compares them favourably with Viggi and friends: 'So fügte es sich, dass in diesem Gasthofe die täglichen Stammgäste samt dem Kellner mehr Bildung und Schule besaßen als der kleine Schriftstellerkongress' (HA II, 331). As he promised to Berthold Auerbach on 25 June 1860, the cycle to be known as Züricher Novellen would contain 'mehr positives Leben' (AV, 150). The majority of these positive portraits are not literary figures in any sense. Apart from Herr Jacques, who at last relinquishes his plan to become a productive artist himself and is content to

hold tyrannical sway over the lives of other artists, we have only the figure of Hadlaub in the novella of that name.

He is certainly positive because of his unpretentious personality and the social dimension to his task of collating the Manesse Codex, as a Minnesänger. Keller presents his literary and cultural ideals carefully. Repeatedly, he looks for value in the achievements of past ages and contrasts the worth of 'classical' works with the decidedly ephemeral offerings of his own age. There is a strong sense of a generation of epigones running through his works, denoting derivative writers in the shadow of illustrious predecessors. This is not monumentalizing, but a certain reticence to measure either himself or contemporaries against the canon. As we have seen, he shows that attempts to do so by Viggi and Herr Jacques are confirmations of their mediocrity. For Keller, involvement with culture, in whatever form, requires a conscious social dimension to be affirmed. Whilst the Romantic artist sought a kind of mystical harmony within his own person, outside human society, Keller's heroes in this regard achieve a more practical synthesis. If Heinrich's father attained this acme for a short time, this was again an achievement of an earlier generation which it is becoming increasingly difficult to emulate:

Mit seinem Bildungsstreben, seinen künstlerischen Neigungen, seinem staatsbürgerlichen und sozialen Zugriff erscheint der Vater Lee als Synthese von Bourgeois und Citoyen, Ökonom, Berufspraktiker und Künstler.¹⁴

As we noted earlier, since Keller shares many of the

values of the society of his time he is much more tolerant of ordinariness and is not constantly attempting to transcend the limitations of the lives of the Bürger. He demands no apology for lives lived in hardworking, thrifty obscurity, oblivious to the pleasures of culture. Indeed, he sees no reason for and only danger in an élite monopolizing culture. He is both sceptical of the existence of such an élite and optimistic as to the educability of the populace. Unlike Eichendorff, he does not lament that the wider dispersal of cultural goods will automatically lead to their degeneration. His anti-élitism and his strong sense of community render the Romantic campaign against the Philister as Bürger irrelevant. The artist has become suspect, not the citizen and Philister is now the term not for the middle classes in a negative sense, but for all persons pretentious enough to consider themselves as a superior social caste. The tables have been turned in the relationship between the artist and his society. Gerhard Kaiser sums up this point:

So fehlt bei Heinrich - und bei Keller - völlig die für viele Künstler seit dem Ausgang des 18. Jahrhunderts charakteristische Attitüde des :*épatez le Bourgeois*; des bohemienhaften Auftrumpfens gegen bürgerliche Gewöhnlichkeit; der Verschanzung in der Position des verkannten Genies (...) Nicht der Bürger, der Künstler steht bei Keller unter Rechtfertigungsdruck.¹⁵

This is then a major shift of emphasis which helps account for Keller's attitude to philistinism. Far from needing enhancement or transformation the normal citizens are allowed to be quietly competent, so long as they fulfil his criteria for the demonstration of human values and participate in the

political process. This sense of the Bürger in his work is stronger in the Züricher Novellen than it had been before. Keller informs the notion of the Bürger with new value and significance so that, like the concept of the Dichter for the Romantics, it is his criterion of acceptability and excellence. An excerpt from one of Keller's Bettagsmandate, of 1871, will exemplify his high estimation of the potential of the citizen:

Trennen wie daher nicht den Staatsbürger, der sich oft an erfüllter Form genügen lässt, vom vollen und ganzen Menschen, welcher, mitten in der Gemeinschaft, einsam und verantwortlich der göttlichen Weltordnung gegenübersteht. (HA III, 1041)

6. The 1880s - the uses of culture.

The two works of Keller's last decade - Das Sinngedicht (1881) and Martin Salander (1886) - are markedly different in tone but concerned, among other things, with the question of culture. In the earlier work there is a demonstration of a more positive version of culture, seen in the personality and achievements of Lucie, coupled with a more negative example of misguided action in the story of Erwin Altenauer's attempt to ennoble his wife through education. Lucie's taste in literature is notably unpretentious and appears natural, as a survey of her reading matter reveals:

Nicht eines tat ein Haschen nach unnötigen, nur Staat machenden Kenntnissen kund (...) manche gute Schrift aus verschiedener Zeit, die nicht gerade an der grossen Leserstrasse lag, neben edlen Meisterwerken auch ehrliche Dummheiten und Sachlichkeiten. (HA II, 956)

Value has here been discerned against the shifting dictates

of fashion. Keller uses contemporary fascination with the Venus de Milo statue as a theme in this work. He observes in a letter to Wilhelm Petersen, on 25 June 1878:

Ich habe beobachtet, wie überall von Philistern und Unberufenen jetzt mit Vorliebe die arme Frau von Milo aufgepflanzt wird, um Bildung und Schönheitssinn zu beurkunden, weil sie hören und sehen, dass die Figur so hoch gehalten wird. (GB III, i, 362)

Keller makes the fashionable interest in this statue the motive for the collapse of Erwin Altenauer's marriage to his wife Regine. Just as in Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe, Keller means to show just how destructive ill-advised dabbling in cultural matters can be. We note in this quotation his clear identification between philistines and those who use cultural artefacts to bolster their social prestige. It is not that Keller is indifferent to culture in preference to more practical pursuits; he is simply very aware that it is open to abuse. In the story of Regine in Das Sinngedicht he has, in fact, presented the effect of such abuse as more destructive, even when it occurs for apparently laudable reasons.

As is well-known, Martin Salander is Keller's most radical and concerted attempt to come to terms with the materialist spirit of these final decades. His letter to Theodor Storm of 16 August 1881 indicates that he hardly expected it to gain much popularity. He calls his procedure here 'logisch' and 'modern' and suggests (referring to Seldwyla etc) 'dass man die kleinen Spässen vielleicht zurückwünscht' (AV, 305). The society he portrays here is a

distinctly unattractive one, extremely competitive and intent on material and social progress. Martin spends a lot of time abroad trying to make his fortune, rather than remaining content with his modest success. There are portraits of the scheming types who combined commercial ruthlessness with a veneer of culture. Louis Wohlwend is the most devious of these. He explains to Martin 'ich werfe mich auf Wissenschaft und Kunst' (HA III, 548) when the latter comes about his business affairs that Wohlwend has deliberately neglected. Such calculating and ruthless business acumen is a far cry from the mental habits of a Viggi or Herr Jacques. His personality not only exploits others but also value-systems including religion and culture. Neither Streber nor Philister seems adequate to encompass his particular blend of lyrical statement and malevolent action.

The Weidelich brothers, who end up marrying Martin's daughters, are another unseemly product of this apparently most cynical age. Human attributes are denied them: 'Es ist nichts mit ihnen! Sie haben keine Seelen!' (HA III, 681) and Isidor Weidelich is termed 'Der schlaue junge Streber' (HA III, 683). If neither of those descriptions should prove adequate, their own mother lets drop the word Philister, in its most pejorative resonance: 'das werde mit der Zeit ein paar recht takt- und gefühllose Philister abgeben' (HA III, 689). That certainly proves to be the case in terms of the financial malpractice they indulge in and their cynical, opportunistic actions in politics. They are

exemplary only in the most ironic sense and clearly meant to be representative of the 'modern' and egotistical spirit to which Keller refers. This novel is quite clearly his most direct attack on changes in his society that disturbed him. The shifting tone, alternately of tolerance and censure, that we so often note in his works and which makes the identification of philistines and philistinism so difficult, is here suspended. The judgement of certain characters occurs within the text itself and is supported by the narration.

We are not left entirely without hope though, even in this novel. Here, it is not the past that can provide a model for behaviour any longer, except in the sense that Arnold Salander is an historian, but the future - as it will be lived by Arnold and his friends. Martin himself realizes that they at least possess the appropriate credentials : 'Sie sind keine Streber, möchte ich beschwören' (HA III, 789). Part of the solution rests with a limitation of desire to within the reasonable expectations of the Bürger, as opposed to the heady fortune-hunting of the new spirit. Once again it is the community which is evoked as an antidote to pretensions of grandeur: 'es steht also uns beiden besser, wenn wir in schlicht bürgerlichen Verhältnissen und Gewohnheiten bleiben' (HA III, 780). Class suspicions therefore at no point enter into Keller's value-system. If the Romantics could see the Bürger as the repository of dubious values and habits and conceive of an aristocracy in various guises to counter them or social outsiders of certain kinds, Keller seems to need no

such prescription. He maintains a resilient and optimistic faith in the abilities of the Bürger as sufficient to the task. He sees it as his task to remind them of their potential, not to suggest alternatives.

7. The Swiss as Krähwinkler.

Keller's patriotism does not lead him into uncritical affirmation of Swiss society, but he is fundamentally well-disposed towards it. From the perspective of Germany it had not always seemed so wholesome to other writers. Actual contact with the reality of Swiss conditions by youthful German writers in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century does not give them the impression that it is a model state. Quite the reverse. To Goethe, writing in 1775, they appear to exude the very smugness and complacency of philistines:

sie hätten sich einmal frei gemacht und wären frei geblieben; und nun sitzen sie hinter ihren Mauern, eingefangen von ihren Gewohnheiten und Gesetzen, ihren Fraubasereien und Philistereien.¹⁶

Other commentators, such as Ludwig Börne, went so far as to consider the Swiss national hero himself - Wilhelm Tell - as the very epitome of a philistine, at least in Schiller's representation of him: 'Es tut mir leid um den guten Tell, aber er ist ein guter Philister'.¹⁷ Heinrich Lee even defends Tell against such a charge, in the course of the open air production of the play, as narrated in Der grüne Heinrich.¹⁸ Earlier in the same novel, in the generation of Heinrich

Lee's father, we are informed that any such latent tendencies were purged, at least temporarily, by participation in the Greek Wars of Independence of 1821-1827:

Die Teilnahme an den hellenischen Betätigungen verlieh auch den nicht philologischen Genossen zu ihrer übrigen Begeisterung einen edlen kosmopolitischen Schwung und benahm den hellgesinnten Gewerbsleuten den letzten Anflug von Spiess- und Pfahlbürgertum. (HA I, 58)

The implication behind the critical comments by Goethe and others is that Switzerland is like an enlarged small town ensconced behind its protective mountain walls and tending to behave like so many Kleinstädter, or Krähwinkler. This latter term occurs first in Keller's Der grüne Heinrich: the name Krähwinkel, the typical small town had been popularised by Johann Nestroy in his Freiheit in Krähwinkel of 1848.¹⁹ The Nestroy play and its precursors poked fun at the foibles and prejudices of the inhabitants of a small town. Keller obviously does not do this unequivocally in the Seldwyla series, although we have notable instances of this form of philistinism in Kleider machen Leute, in the obsequious attitude to Wenzel Strapinski in Goldach or the character of the people of Ruechenstein in Dietegen. Even bearing in mind the rather more sombre introduction to the second collection of Seldwyla stories, Keller's satire is directed at specific types of individuals, not at a typical society. The contexts in Keller's work indicate that derivatives of Krähwinkel are used exclusively to imply political incompetence or individual worthlessness. In Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe we find critical comment on the eventual condition of those

who prefer to fritter their time away in the local inn, who thus: 'zur schönsten Krähwinkelei gedeihen' (HA II, 370). Keller, then, in his novellas merely pokes fun at a kind of Swiss Krähwinkel, which he calls Seldwyla. On balance, he is more affirmative than critical to life, or at least the potential for life, in such small communities.

At times Keller uses the word Philister in a neutral sense, simply as a synonym for the middle classes, the most numerous class in Switzerland. He refers in Am Mythenstein to the 'ehrsame Philisterleute' (HA III, 969) who appreciate Schiller's Wilhelm Tell as an expression of their patriotic feelings. In the same place he uses Philister as one of a number of classes within society: 'alle Stände, Bauern, Philister, Weltstädter und Hofleute' (HA III, 983). Likewise, in a letter to Paul Heyse on 24 January 1872, he jocularly refers to the latter's praise of his work as a possible influence in his relationship with the Philister i.e. Bürger of Zürich:

Das scharlachfarbene Schmeichellob, mit welchem Sie meiner Nichtswürden gedacht haben, will ich nur mit der Bemerkung berühren, dass solche Ungerechtigkeit nur Feinde machte und mir z.B. bei den Philistern Zürichs, wenn ich zur Zeit Schulden hätte, unzweifelhaft die Kündigung derselben zugezogen haben würde.

(GB III, i, 20)

At times we might feel that Keller is actually celebrating the much-maligned and rather protean philistine as the good citizen. At least one critic feels that Keller's work is indelibly stamped by the middle-classness of his origins: 'Keller's sense of the dignity and amplitude of middle-class

life is matched almost nowhere in modern German literature'.²⁰ If Keller found life in Switzerland, particularly after regular employment as town clerk of Zürich, rather comfortable, it did not blind him to problems within that society after 1871. In his literary writing, the introduction to Die Leute von Seldwyla, Part Two, and Martin Salander especially make that clear. His attitude to his middle-class countrymen is admittedly benevolent but it is not starry-eyed. He stands out among his contemporaries regarding the middle classes not because he is indulgent towards philistinism but above all because his Swiss background - as well as his personality - gave him a 'generally positive attitude to man where most German writers were pessimistic'.²¹

8. Sonderlinge, Goethephilister and Schillerverehrer.

How then do Keller's views regarding the Philister compare with those of his illustrious predecessors? We can highlight some crucial differences with Romanticism by comparing the presentation of the Sonderling, a related topos.²² The definition of the Sonderling that we find in Grimm's dictionary will serve as a reminder:

gewöhnlich aber ist die bedeutung eingeschränkt (vgl. sonderlichkeit) auf einen der sich in urtheil, meinung, geschmack, lebenshaltung in wunderlicher, lächeln oder gar spott²³erregender weise von den mitlebenden absondert.

When we think of Keller, such a description would seem to apply most pertinently to the likes of Viggi Störteler, who

deliberately set about transcending their fellow citizens and earned their mockery in return. In Romantic works on the other hand it is the essentially positive and exalted figures of the artists and Dichter who gain the smirks of the Philister, the stalwart members of the community. In the differing literary traditions the artist or artist figure would appear as the Sonderling. The crucial difference is that the genuine Romantic artist or Sonderling is presented as the reverse of the Philister. In Keller's work, such is the higher status of the community and its judgements of individuals, that the Sonderling in this sense is nearly always a negative figure. Whereas conformity and normality were essentially suspect qualities for Romantic writers and tended to betoken the Philister, the absence of them in Keller's writings often indicates a foolish individual who may even be a source of harm. A range of terms, including Streber and Philister is used to refer to them.

In this vital regard, Keller's philistine Sonderlinge have affinities with the image of the Sonderling in the Biedermeier ethos. So fierce is the regard for the integrity of the community and its values that the Philister or Sonderling, far from appearing the preferred alternative to the Bürger, is seen negatively as an anti-Bürger who cuts himself off from the rest of the community by his pretentious self-regard and grandiose plans. Heinrich Lee, Pankraz, Viggi Störteler and John Kabys are the ones who spring most readily to mind in this connection. Keller's pragmatic spirit and

ethical pedagogy, however, are pleased to introduce escape-routes for those Philister or Sonderlinge who have gone astray and are ready to return to the fold. Among the Romantics, Philister and Sonderling are opposite poles who do not attract. The possibilities for reconciliation are limited, so that the relationship is generally uneasy. Both Philister and Sonderling therefore, as literary topoi, are employed by the Romantics as significant contrasts, reflecting a bias towards the artist and to the detriment of society. In Keller the negative aspects in this relationship have been displaced in favour of society.

In any case there is a clear movement in the alignment of Keller's literary values which tends quickly to adopt the tenets of Classicism: 'insgesamt zeigt Kellers Werk die Umorientierung seines literarischen Bezugssystems von der Romantik zur Klassik'.²⁴ We may notice this even in the fervour with which Heinrich Lee devours the complete works of Goethe in 40 days and in the prominence given, especially in the second version of Der grüne Heinrich, to Goethe's work, especially Faust. Even the style of this latter version is more controlled, objective and 'classical' than the more subjective and rambling nature of the first version. Late poems like 'Ein Goethe-Philister' address the issue of the philistine's incapacity to appreciate poetry, which Goethe himself had noted. There is a very close affinity between Keller and Goethe in the sentiments expressed in these lines:

Den mit trocknen Erbsen angefüllten Schädel
 Taucht er jauchzend in des klaren Meeres Wellen,
 Das man Goethe nennt; nun schauet achtsam
 Wie die Nähte platzen, wenn die Erbsen schwellen!
 (HA III, 385)

In a letter, dated 11 March 1884, to Ludwig Geiger, editor of the Goethe-Jahrbuch, he has occasion to explain the motivation behind this poem and also what he means by the term Philister. In essence it is a protest against the monumentalizing of Goethe which even causes Keller to decline the invitation to contribute to the Jahrbuch himself, whereby even he might succumb to the 'leeren Wortkultus':

Es existiert eine Art Muckertum im Goethekultus, das nicht von Produzierenden, sondern von wirklichen Philistern vulgo Laien betrieben wird. Jedes Gespräch wird durch den geweihten Namen beherrscht, jede neue Publikation über Goethe beklatscht - er selbst aber nicht mehr gelesen, weshalb man die Werke nicht mehr kennt, die Kenntnis nicht mehr fortbildet.
 (AV, 346)

The 'real' Philister in this explanation is then not the person who productively contributes to culture but that portion of the populace who applaud from the sidelines, captivated by the reputation of Goethe but unable or unwilling to appreciate him directly, by penetrating beneath the charisma. For a writer who is so conscious of the importance of the community, he is alert to the mindless tyranny of fashionable writers, whose names are invoked for other causes. Attracted to Goethe himself, he is aware of his fatal attraction for the philistines of Bismarck's Reich who regard him as the symbol of German cultural supremacy.

Keller's work is perhaps even more infused by a

realization of the value of Schiller. This is clear in the attitude to Schiller's Wilhelm Tell that we observe in Der grüne Heinrich. The sense of identification with the character of Tell carries over to a direct appreciation of Schiller:

Seine [Schiller's] gleichmässige Glut und Reinheit des Gedankens und der Sprache war mehr der Ausdruck für ihr schlichtes, bescheidenes Treiben als für das Wesen mancher Schillerverehrer der vornehmen heutigen Welt.
(HA I, 59)

The sense of affinity was strongest though in the generation of Heinrich Lee's father, whereby, without pretension, they were able to achieve the classical balance between 'beauty' and 'utility' that this work represented and that also informed Herr Lee's approach as Baumeister: 'Dabei war er immer bestrebt, das Schöne mit dem Nützlichen zu verbinden' (HA I, 56).

It is interesting to note the various stages in Keller's own appreciation of Schiller, since this casts light on his own development as a writer. During the 1840s Schiller is the model of the politically involved writer, whom he can emulate, as much as Herwegh and others. He sees him as a champion of freedom and progress. It is not long before he considers him a source of discouragement; by virtue of his great achievements he makes it more difficult for young writers to find their way. Thereafter, he begins to see the development of Schiller's talents and approach as exemplary once more - in the process of maturation evident since Die Räuber.²⁵ Like many writers in the nineteenth century he is

forced to comment on the reception of Schiller's work, since perhaps more than Goethe, the former comes to stand for the voice of idealism in literature and his work is plundered for its fund of resonant quotations. In 1859, the hundredth anniversary celebrations of Schiller's birth, Keller shares his disquiet at the treatment the writer receives from Swiss philistines in a letter to Paul Heyse:

Der Schiller macht uns hier ordentlichen Kummer, weil das Heer der Philister sich in zwei Lager geschieden hat, in einen feindlichen Muckerhaufen und einen hohlen Enthusiastenhaufen. (GB III, i, 11)

Therefore, both Goethe and Schiller are considered to suffer from the treatment of philistines. He demonstrates that for Schiller the problem is one of hypocritical misuse. The learning of a Schiller ballad becomes a social feat for the likes of Louis Wohlwend in Martin Salander. It highlights both the superficiality and hypocrisy of an approach that could mouth ineffectually the words of Schiller's Die Bürgschaft. Its twenty stanzas deal with an exemplary friendship in which each person was prepared to lay down his life for the other. It relates most closely to the plot of Keller's novel, for Martin Salander had once stood surety for Louis Wohlwend, who had failed to honour his obligations to him. The recitation of a ballad on a subject that the reciter had flagrantly distorted, only creates dissonance: 'Er wusste das Gedicht zu meiner Verwunderung auswendig (...) aber mit durchgehend so falscher Betonung, dass die Wirkung mehr verdriesslich als lächerlich war' (HA III, 523).

Such dissonance, occasioned by a cynical abuse of Schiller's ballad, was clearly a matter of great concern to Keller. The wrong emphases lay ~~bear~~^{bare} the fragile nature of Wohlwend's bond with Schiller. The values that are expressed in the ballad and in much of the pronouncements of both Schiller and Goethe represent what Keller fervently believes himself. Poetic Realism, of which he is a notable exponent, was attempting to combine the insights and literary values of Weimar Classicism with a more realistic depiction and style. It was a Classicism though that was to be made accessible to the people, and no longer to be understood as the preserve of an élite: 'er [Realism] versuchte, das ästhetische und esoterische Ideal der Klassik dem ganzen Volke zugänglich zu machen'.²⁶ The insights were to be made more readily available by a steady process of education. It was therefore unashamedly didactic, partially also because Keller and others saw themselves as intermediaries, opening up the world of the Classics. Any dilution of that task by others who were considered to provide a disservice in this regard, led to their being termed Philister.

9. Literary opponents and the enemy within.

There are notable instances in his correspondence when Keller is seen to continue the combative practice of Goethe and Schiller, regarding philistinism. He has recourse to the powerful invective Philister, which they had used with such gusto in the Xenien to refer to literary opponents. We note

such a primary usage in Keller's attitude to his countryman Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, whom he calls 'ein gewaltiger Philister' in a letter to Julius Rosenberg of 31 July 1879 (AV, 256). Earlier in the same decade he had no hesitation about making the same criticism of Adalbert Stifter (whom Eichendorff, conversely, had found so congenial), when commenting to Emil Kuh about the latter's reviews of Grillparzer and Stifter, 28 July 1872:

Wenn Sie auch Grillparzer fast etwas zu drücken, Stifter dagegen etwas über sich hinaus zu heben scheinen (seine Schranke lag wohl in dem Stück Philister, das in ihm war, vide auch sein Porträt), so ist doch alles, was Sie sagen, anregend und lehrreich. (GB III, i, 164).

These isolated instances do not reveal much about why Keller considered such terms appropriate for these writers. They indicate that his antipathy to Meyer - momentary or protracted - was more entrenched than his admission of the effect of a more partial philistinism in Stifter. Of much greater significance is another letter Keller wrote to Kuh a year later which includes his response to the publication of Nietzsche's diatribe against David Strauss in Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen. Before considering the tone and phrasing of his comments on that work it should be remembered that Keller had been a passionate exponent of the work of Strauss, after the publication of Das Leben Jesu (1836). Whilst attacking Nietzsche he was also deliberately defending Strauss. In this instance, however, he is not merely expressing personal antagonisms but demonstrating his objections to Nietzsche's overall approach to philistinism.

He tries to imply that the work is a product of Nietzsche's immaturity, a feat of youthful hubris from a professor who is only 26 years old and has written 'Das knäbische Pamphlet' (AV, 191). Secondly, he suggests that it may be part of an attempt to enhance his career by creating a deliberate public sensation with the work. Thirdly, he objects strongly to the pervasive negative tone in Nietzsche's remarks which makes it difficult for him to persevere in reading the work because of its 'gar zu monotonen Schimpfstiles' (ibid.). Finally, as a summary of his attitude to Nietzsche he uses the term Philister to describe him:

Ich halte den Mann für einen Erz- und Kardinalphilister; denn nur solche pflegen in der Jugend so mit den Hufen auszuschlagen und sich für etwas anderes als für Philister zu halten. (AV, 191)

We note how Keller uses intensifying prefixes ('Erz-/Kardinal') which relate to the realm of organized religion. In view of his often critical response to the representatives of the religious hierarchy, the choice of these compounds is not only to turn the tables on Nietzsche, who had described Strauss as a leading philistine, but to doubly condemn him by association with the establishment of a body he already found dubious. Keller's primary objection is therefore to the tone of Nietzsche's published remarks. The latter's arrogance and unrestrained invective are unacceptable to him. His own work shows no examples of this kind of sustained annihilation of an opponent. Nietzsche's personality and literary style are

anathema to him and thus provoke his own use of Philister here.

Yet Keller's own personality is of more interest here than his criticism of Nietzsche. As befitted his 'herbe Gemütsart',²⁷ he was often irritable and difficult in private relationships and could be scathing in his correspondence. In a letter to Wilhelm Baumgartner, September 1851, Keller admits these traits in his own make-up and regards them as the product of experiences. Rather than regret them, however, he considers them to be essential to productive work and veritable antidotes to an intellectual philistinism that would otherwise assail him. Unlike Nietzsche, he therefore readily admits that he is by no means immune to philistinism, but needs to combat it:

Wer keine bitteren Erfahrungen und kein Leid kennt, der hat keine Malice, und wer keine Malice hat, bekommt nicht den Teufel in den Leib, und wer diesen nicht hat, der kann nichts Kernhaftes arbeiten. An sonstigen leidenschaftlichen Erregungen hat es mir auch nicht gefehlt, und dies alles hat mich vor dem geistigen Philistertum bewahrt, welches manchem näher sitzt, als er glaubt, und mich wenigstens schon ganz artig umspinnen hat. (AV, 84)

Instead of assuming that philistinism is only the fate of lesser mortals and that some sort of neat demarcation into those who are susceptible and those who possess immunity is possible, he presents a model in which Philistertum is a state of mind to which it is all too easy to succumb. The terminology retains its validity but he has modified the context. It is both a more widespread and less fatal condition than the Romantics feared.

Even the radical Keller of the 1840s realized that the impression given by other writers of the Philister as a lesser being who served as both the butt of satire and a spur to poetic activity, was wrongheaded. The implied immunity of a privileged élite of Dichter, an aristocracy of sensibility and intellect, is jettisoned for the notion of a democratic society where writers can still instruct and lead but where they no longer have a monopoly of desirable virtues. Philistinism is also seen to exist in a wider variety of forms, some more intense than others. The Romantic idea that certain individuals could ward off the onset of philistinism is considered delusory. Like death, he sees it as a universal inevitability but one which can be forcefully resisted as long as possible:

denn jeder Mensch wird am Ende Philister, nur mit dem Unterschiede, dass es der eine innerlich, der andere äusserlich, der dritte aber traurigerweise total wird.²⁸

This sense of participation in society, struggling with everyone else against the burden that philistinism imposes in terms of unrealized potential but yet not abhorring its less harmful manifestations, makes for an ambivalence in Keller's portrayal of philistinism. This has been noted especially in the introductions to the two Seldwyla cycles and has been termed 'insecurity of tone'.²⁹ Such insecurity arises because he sees elements in the character of the Seldwyler which he would affirm, particularly their blithe and open spirit: 'Und sie leben sehr lustig und guter Dinge' (HA II, 9). Their sense of humour is an endearing quality which he habitually

denies to more complete philistines. However, their very contentment has the limitation of the too easily satisfied. Whilst he is on balance more favourably disposed towards them in the introduction to the first group of Novellen, Keller later became more forthright in his criticism. He can no longer find much that he can celebrate in a society that seems to have succumbed to the all-embracing philistinism referred to earlier.

As we noted in our analysis of Die drei gerechten Kammacher, Keller's balance of sympathy is rarely accorded when his characters are virtuous in a rather bloodless manner. He quickly exposes the Pharisees to ridicule but is inclined to be tolerant when, like Wenzel Strapinski, they act out of a natural goodheartedness. Those who refuse to learn from their experiences - the incorrigible Viggi Störteler - are left to their fate. Such judgements though are rare in his work. His intention is fundamentally didactic and integrative. He relies on corrective experiences to rid his characters of the kind of faults that might condemn them to an unproductive life outside society. The wider community remains the final arbiter on the worth of his creations. It helps to expose all Philister and Streber to ridicule.

This calls for a difference in literary method, a specific use of the comic mode which is already an essential component of his literary voice. Satire, which is particularly suited to the novella form, since it exaggerates faults and heightens virtues by comparison, is used to great

effect in early works such as Die drei gerechten Kammacher and, notably, in the later Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe. Folly is ruthlessly exposed in both novellas and the satire is at its most direct in the treatment of literary pretensions. The depictions of Züs Bünzlin and Viggi Störteler are unrelieved by any hint of tolerance on the part of the narrator. The gentler irony we encounter in the descriptions of Wenzel Strapinski in Kleider machen Leute or Reinhardt in Das Sinngedicht marks them as delightful comic creations, amiable eccentrics. When the eccentricities are based on literary or cultural pretensions, including the figure of Herr Jacques in the Züricher Novellen, the satire has more serious intent and the tone is more critical. In these instances, when caricature is more evident, we are more justified in referring to Philister in Keller's work.

Conclusion.

Poetry and poets under the grander terms Dichtung and Dichter were the sources of all hope and value in Eichendorff and other Romantics. In the Poetic Realist Keller, such idealism is nostalgic, residing properly only in Goethe, Schiller and a few others. Indeed, literary idealism of any form is very suspect now, the province of mountebanks and charletans. Keller could not share the Romantic view that Dichtung was pre-eminent and that all other activities were secondary, the preserve of Philister. The realities of life entered into his poetry very pungently in the 1840s under the

guise of politics and most fundamentally later in that decade under the influence of Feuerbach. The tradition of speculative and idealistic German philosophy - Kant, Hegel, Fichte, Schelling - was replaced by 'eine Philosophie der Erfahrung'.³⁰ The writer is now accountable to the populace and has descended from the ivory tower to live amongst the Philister. The necessary separation from the world that fuelled the speculations of the idealists is now counterbalanced by the force of social integration, the most powerful impetus in Keller:

Diese Wendung zur sozialen Funktion des Menschen (...) ist ein Grundzug in Kellers Werk, der eigentliche Impuls seines Schaffens, der Schlüssel zum Verständnis seiner Schriften.³¹

Now that the artist is compelled to participation, not merely reflection, the previous antagonism between him and the Bürger is invalidated, the neat distinctions of idealism are tempered by a reality that has gained in value. Art has still a high value and culture matters, but they have been relativized and are no longer the sine qua non of a meaningful existence.

There is, then, a clear and discernible shift of emphasis regarding the topos of the Philister in Keller's work compared with Eichendorff and other Romantics. The latter, whilst wholly preoccupied with a definition of Dichtung and its role, found the Philister useful as the antithesis of their ideals. Radical in their demands, they pressed home the notion of a dichotomy of values that meant a

divided society. In one sense this was the literary consequence of a social division that already existed between intellectuals, often of aristocratic origins or sympathies, and a still developing mercantile middle-class. Keller matured in a Swiss society that was much more homogeneous and profoundly middle-class. His youthful 'aberrations' in pursuit of art strengthened a highly-developed sense of affinity with this society which removed any sense of a great cleft between himself and the rest of the populace, which his countryman C.F. Meyer retained. Instead of the conflict of values that generated the division into Dichter and Philister, Keller shared many of the values of his society and thought it better to admonish as a pedagogue rather than condemn it as a judge where he found it lacking. Philistines and philistinism are still referred to by Keller and he still depicts a limited number of characters who are identifiable Philister. His criteria are, however, markedly different from those of Eichendorff. His main distinction is now between the responsible citizen and the philistine as outsider, most often a Streber. When not used in the tone of invective, moreover, Keller sees philistinism as a more innocuous and universal condition, a burden that the writer shares with his society rather than as a stigma to be shunned.

NOTES

1. Ernst Kohn-Bramstedt, Aristocracy and the middle classes in nineteenth-century Germany (London, 1937), p. 202.
2. References to Keller's works are to the following editions:
 - (a) Sämtliche Werke und ausgewählte Briefe, edited by Clemens Heselhaus, Hanser Verlag (Munich, 1956-58; 1970). This will be referred to in the text as HA, with volume and page numbers.
 - (b) Sämtliche Werke, edited by Jonas Fränkel and Carl Helbling (Bern/Zürich, 1926-1949). This will appear in the text as SW, with volume and page numbers.
 - (c) Gesammelte Briefe, edited by Carl Helbling (Bern, 1950-1954). This will appear in the text as GB, with volume and page numbers.
 - (d) Kellers Briefe in einem Band, edited by Peter Goldammer (Berlin and Weimar, 1982). Aufbau-Verlag. This will appear in the text as AV.
 The current reference is from a letter to Ida Freiligrath, 20 December 1880 (AV, 277).
3. *ibid.*
4. Letter to Eduard Dössekell, 8 February 1849 (AV, 43).
5. Derek van Abbé, 'The Swiss in German Literary History: Notes towards the definition of a culture', GLL, NS 9 (1955/6), pp. 100-109 (p. 100).
6. *op. cit.*, p. 102.
7. *op. cit.*, p. 105.
8. Letter of 23 April 1841 (AV, 11).
9. In Aufsätze zur Literatur, Kunst und Politik. He refers especially to Börne's letters of 1824-29 (HA III, 915).
10. See Der deutsche Michel: Revolutionskomödien der achtundvierziger, edited by Horst Denkler (Stuttgart, 1971)
11. J.M. Ellis, 'Die drei gerechten Kammacher', in Narration in the German Novelle (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 136-154.
12. Letter to Ludmilla Assing, 21 April 1856 (AV, 126).
13. Letter of 25 September 1861 (AV, 160).
14. Gerhard Kaiser, Gottfried Keller. Das Gedichtete Leben (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1981), p. 121.
15. *op. cit.*, p. 214.
16. Briefe aus der Schweiz. Appended to 1808 edition of Werther. See Goethe's Werke, Berliner Ausgabe, Aufbau-Verlag (Berlin, 1972-78) XII, 478-93 (p. 479).
17. See Börne's essay 'Über den Charakter des Wilhelm Tell in Schillers Drama in, Ludwig Börne, Sämtliche Schriften, edited by Inge and Peter Rippmann (Düsseldorf, 1964), II, 397-403.
18. '"wenn Börne darin ein selbstsüchtiges und philiströses Ungeheuer finden konnte, so scheint mir dies ein Beweis zu sein, wie wenig die krankhafte Empfindsamkeit der Unterdrückten geeignet ist, die Art und Weise unabhängiger Männer zu begreifen"' (SW XVII, 230).
19. Trübner, Deutsches Wörterbuch (Berlin, 1943), IV, 25:

- 'Den Krähwinkler hat Gottfried Keller geschafft'.
20. Derek van Abbé, p. 107.
 21. Eda Sagarra, Tradition and Revolution (Birkenhead, 1971), p. 242.
 22. Herman Meyer, Der Sonderling in der deutschen Dichtung (Munich, 1963) is the classic study, to which my remarks are indebted.
 23. Deutsches Wörterbuch, X, Abt. i, 1583 (Leipzig, 1905).
 24. Gerhard Kaiser, p. 645.
 25. Kaspar T. Locher, 'Das Schillerbild Gottfried Kellers', GQ 48 (1975), pp. 315-31 (p. 323).
 26. Comments by Clemens Heselhaus in the 'Nachwort' to volume 3 of the Hanser edition (HA III, 1320).
 27. H.R. Klieneberger, The novel in England and Germany (London, 1981), p. 98.
 28. Diary entry of 8 July 1843, (HA III, 851).
 29. Margaret Jacobs, 'Gottfried Keller: Aspects of his style', OGS (Oxford, 1980), pp. 68-75.
 30. Gerhard Kaiser, p. 159.
 31. Clemens Heselhaus, 'Nachwort', (HA III, 1322).

CHAPTER FOUR

THEODOR FONTANE: THE PHILISTER AS BOURGEOIS

Whilst he is of the same generation as Keller, Fontane was only beginning his career as a novelist when Keller had reached his apogee with the publication of Das Sinngedicht (1881). The majority of Keller's works had been conceived, at least in nucleus, during his years in Berlin in the early 1850s. Fontane's creative work takes us more extensively into the period of the Second Empire, established by Bismarck in 1871. His domicile in Berlin was an excellent vantage point from which to observe the attitudes and social behaviour of the various classes in the new Prussia-Germany. Since we have already made reference to Nietzsche's criticism of cultural attitudes in the Empire, Fontane's imaginative reconstructions provide the opportunity of testing Nietzsche's ideas about Bildungsphilister. Moreover, the social breadth of Fontane's canvas of contemporary German society, allows us to investigate more fully the extent to which philistinism is seen to be differentiated by social class.

In socio-economic terms there had been significant changes in Germany since Eichendorff was commenting on it in the first half of the century. Indeed, the period from about 1850 to 1873 was characterized by an unparalleled industrial

expansion and the consequent rise of a plutocracy (Besitzbürgertum), who became a more prominent feature of the social landscape and a principal focus of Fontane's criticism. The lower ranks of the middle classes or the Kleinbürger are chiefly represented by the retainers and servants of the nobility or the nouveaux riches. The ordinary workers or so-called Fourth Estate appear more rarely in his work but receive mention in letters. The remaining two classes of importance are the Bildungsbürger and the nobility. The former covers academics in university and grammar school as well as a variety of the liberal professions, such as doctors or lawyers. The latter includes the various ranks of the nobility, including the landed aristocracy (Landadel) that Eichendorff sprang from and those nobles who pursued careers in the civil or diplomatic service. Whilst Fontane's depictions of all of these groups are never naively generalized, but show range and individual exceptions, he often gives them a generic treatment and his letters support an overall sense of class-based representative attitudes. I shall begin by describing the main features of the social classes mentioned, as they appear in Fontane's writings and as they relate to the notion of philistinism.

If we transfer Matthew Arnold's ideas about the English aristocracy into the Prussian realm this is the class which we might least expect to be tainted with philistinism. As

Culture and Anarchy (1869) demonstrates, English society was divided into an aristocracy who are termed 'Barbarians', in a positive sense, the masses who are referred to as 'Populace' and, in a negative sense, the middle classes whom he classifies as 'Philistines'. Arnold was captivated by what he calls the 'very naturalness and charm' of the aristocracy, whom he criticises very slightly for their lack of soul.¹ He sees their indulgence in robust physical activities as appealing, unlike the striving for wealth among the middle classes or philistines. Materialism allied with narrow religious views and an indifference to culture combine for Arnold to create what seem to be largely aesthetic objections. Responses to materialism and culture - or the more comprehensive German term Bildung,² which is closer to education - will occur frequently in our analysis of Fontane's works.³

Fontane's affection for the landed aristocracy he had encountered as he gathered information for his Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg - the first two volumes of which appeared in 1862-3 - had struck some readers as excessive, and forced Fontane to defend his stance: 'Ich habe überall liebevoll geschildert, aber nirgends glorifiziert'.⁴ Certainly, the most prominent aristocratic figures in his works are presented as exemplary in a way that would seem to insulate them for ever against charges of philistinism. Far from being presented with cool objectivity, the narration is well-disposed to endear them to the reader. He idealizes

particular representatives of the Adel as much as Arnold idealizes the entire class. Pastor Lorenzen's funeral oration for Dubslav von Stechlin in Der Stechlin, emphasizes ethical qualities which hinge on individuality and an indifference to wealth:

'Er war kein Programmedelmann, kein Edelmann nach der Schablone, wohl aber ein Edelmann nach jenem alles Beste umschliessenden Etwas, das Gesinnung heisst (...)
Das Goldene Kalb anbeten, war nicht seine Sache.'
(HA V, 377)

In short, he was not only a nobleman but a noble man. He is thus exceptional among his fellow aristocrats and not fully representative of them. The early pages of the same novel make it clear that he nevertheless represents an aristocratic type - 'der Typus eines Märkischen von Adel' (HA V, 9) - , that he is not unique. Fontane the writer, as before him Eichendorff and Keller, found Originale interesting subjects for a literary work because of their eccentricity. Their own personalities enliven their respective milieux. Stechlin is here described as 'eines jener erquicklichen Originale' (ibid.). They generate humour, whereas the most that the reputed drabness of the philistines can produce is potential for comic denigration.

Both ethically and aesthetically, Fontane readily accorded the Junker class his toleration. Whilst his comments in letters about this group, as about so much else, are complex and contradictory, he admitted to Friedlaender in 1894 that he found them irresistible as the raw material for his literary work. The frequent occurrence of aristocratic

figures in his works is thus explained by virtue of their intrinsic interest as strongly-defined characters who lend themselves well to literary treatment 'wie alles Scharfausgeprägte'.⁵ His adulation went so far, in a letter of 10 June 1884, as to convince himself that he was a member of the class - Matthew Arnold had stopped short of such a bold claim - but asserted that he could easily have adjusted had it been the case: 'Schliesslich gehör ich doch diesen Leuten zu'.⁶ Wish-fulfilment was a strong force for this apothecary's son.

To underline the complexity of his response to this class, however, we have only to draw attention to a letter to his wife, two years previously, on 12 August 1882. On that occasion he had seemed to give the opposite impression, by distancing himself from the Markadel, not identifying with them: 'Sie sind eingebildet (man weiss nicht recht worauf), beschränkt und im Ganzen genommen ruppig' (AV II, 67). Furthermore, in the very same novel in which he had presented such an endearing portrait of Dubslav von Stechlin, this same narrowness of outlook rendered his sister Adelheid unattractive: 'die tiefe Prosa ihrer Natur, das märkisch' Enge, das Misstrauen gegen alles, was die Welt der Schönheit oder gar Freiheit auch nur streifte' (HA V, 82). Like Therese Poggenpuhl in Die Poggenpuhls, an arrogance which has grown out of an intense class consciousness has limited her horizon and restricted her sympathies. Similarly, whilst he confided to Friedlaender his predilection for the Junker as literary

material, he wrote to him a few years earlier to lament their lack of Bildung i.e. they are uneducated and uncultivated: 'die feineren Dinge des Lebens betreffenden Beschränktheit in den oberen Gesellschafts- und Regierungskreisen'.⁷ In a letter to the same correspondent a few years after this he sums up the problem with the words 'Der Prozentsatz der Ungebildeten unter ihnen ist zu gross'.⁸

What rescued certain individual aristocratic figures from the criticism we have witnessed was also their manifest lack of pretension with regard to Bildung. Perhaps it is because they are not dependent on it to compete with the middle classes, unless, like Geert von Innstetten in Effi Briest, they wish to make a career in the higher reaches of the Civil Service. In this case, the ambitious careerist makes mistakes which affect his happiness and his marriage. The boredom that Effi suffered during their honeymoon in Italy, as Innstetten made earnest visits to all the cultural shrines, was but a foretaste of the neglect that she would inevitably endure as he climbed the career ladder. The competitive examinations introduced for entry into the Prussian Civil Service in 1834 appear to have indirectly affected the life of a person of aristocratic origins. The misguided deterioration of Bildung to a social accomplishment has taken its toll of human happiness. The ability to withstand the social pressures to compete for the trappings of wealth and education is only possible for the truly exceptional personalities who are 'entzückende

Einzelexemplare'.⁹ They become not only exemplary members of their class but, like Dubslav von Stechlin, exemplary human beings. Werner Oberle is convinced that Stechlin is here 'Symbol des Menschen'.¹⁰

It is the privileged social position of the Junker class that Fontane is celebrating. They are most laudable to him when they do not need to become entangled in the strenuous concern with money and status that afflicts other classes, especially the middle classes. The very fact of their social superiority is affirmed and their natural charm readily admitted. Fortunately, they possess the means to avoid the pitfalls of social striving that can produce philistinism, in others: 'Sie brauchen nichts aus sich zu machen, weil sie durch Geburt, Erziehung, Mittel, von vornherein etwas sind'.¹¹ Members of other classes need to work much harder to further themselves, to overcome inherited disadvantages. That they choose to do this through the medium of Bildung particularly does not provide much solace for the middle classes, of whatever hue. Fontane seems to be as prejudiced against them as he is in favour of the Adel:

Ich werde immer demokratischer und lasse höchstens noch einen richtigen Adel gelten. Was dazwischenliegt: Spiessbürger, Bourgeois, Beamter und 'schlechtweg Gebildeter', kann mich wenig erquicken.¹²

Before investigating the merits and demerits of these classes which demonstrably failed to stimulate the sympathies of Fontane, I shall turn briefly to the one other social class that excited his approval. They are the so-called

vierter Stand or working classes. We note the reasons for his admiration of them, which he cites in a letter to his father of 19 October 1856. It refers to the poor of London: 'sie sind nichts, sie haben nichts, aber sie wollen auch nichts scheinen' (PV I, 8). Whilst the Markadel had the advantage of being something, the poor have the paradoxical advantage of being nothing! This is construed as an asset since it relieves them of the temptations to social display and pretension that the classes involved in acquisition are presumably subject to. That they thus lack the desire to appear as anything other than they are, is a token of authenticity, of naturalness, that he detects in the best examples of the aristocracy. Where possessions and education are traded to acquire positions in the social hierarchy, Fontane is critical, because he construes this as vulgar and ostentatious. Inherited poverty, like inherited wealth, is applauded, since 'having' or 'not having' appear not to affect 'being' which is integral to both. Movement from one social state to another, since it implies that one must acquire something, is more problematical. The upwardly mobile are more conscious of 'image', as they wish eventually to be taken for something else, so that 'seeming' can become more important than 'being'. The working classes possess laudable human qualities almost by virtue of their economic and educational conditions. Such generalizations may be unhelpful, but they are the inevitable consequences of Fontane's insistence on the perils attendant on the middle

classes. A clear-sighted criticism of attitudes there has led to an idealization of the qualities reposing at the opposite extremes of the social continuum.

Fontane's favourable response to the vierter Stand was one which was increasingly felt by intellectuals in Germany, especially in the 1890s. He does not become a champion of their social and political rights but contents himself with a distinct preference for the refreshing simplicity of their values. This is a regard voiced by Botho von Rienäcker in Irrungen, Wirrungen about Lene Nimptsch: "Alles, was sie sagte, hatte Charakter und Tiefe des Gemüts. Arme Bildung, wie weit bleibst du dahinter zurück" (HA II, 455). The relative merits of Nature and Nurture, are taken up again. The former gains the laurels because it does not attempt to conceal the truth of what it is. For a writer who constantly dissects the hypocrisy of speech, the charms of a character, indeed a whole class that makes no claims for itself, is irresistible. The rightfulness of his assertions of the prevailing characteristics of either the Adel or the vierter Stand are more difficult to determine and do not concern us. To understand the value-system that informs his literary works we must recognize at least the direction of his sympathies before investigating more fully the substance of his criticism. I shall now try to show the extent to which Kleinbürger, Bildungsbürger and Besitzbürger might merit the Matthew Arnold description of philistines. My criteria will be found in our discoveries so far about the presumed nature

of philistinism and Fontane's own comments in letters.

As we observe in the description of widow Pittelkow in Stine, Fontane continues to reveal much about his characters by means of their response to Bildung. Denied access to the educational establishments where they could acquire the knowledge which is so important to other classes, the petite bourgeoisie is yet shown to share the esteem for works of culture and learning. They are not rendered philistines by this interest but the narrator's approach to them signals an ironic amusement which the reader can share at their expense. Thus we find the tokens of learning of the widow consigned, probably unread, to a bookcase which is to make its own statement about her modest pretensions. Resplendent beside copies of her usual reading matter of the Berliner Pfennigmagazin are the impressive volumes of Hume's History of England and the Oeuvres posthumes de Frédéric le Grand. The latter had been deliberately acquired by her father to show the world '"wer Pauline Pittelkow eigentlich sei"' (HA II, 490). They fulfil this role, of course, only in the ironic sense of revealing her modest pretensions. Combined with the narrator's earlier comment about her character as a 'im Grunde genommen ganz auf Wirtschaftlichkeit und Ordnung gestellten Natur' (HA II, 489), the reader is invited to warm to her personality which is presented in an essentially humorous way. The treatment of Bildung in this instance is therefore an innocuous one.

With Mathilde Möhring we have reached a more disturbing portrayal of the petit-bourgeois use of Bildung than in Stine, where Fontane's ironic method tends to create amusement. Energetic, vigorous vulgarity is the primary impression to be gained from the narrator's comments in the first pages of the text: 'sie war sauber, gut gekleidet und von energischem Ausdruck, aber ganz ohne Reiz' (HA IV, 579). Her conception of Bildung, as it emerges in the course of the novel is a limited and rather unappealing one, but in perfect accord with her lowly social position and her desire for advancement. Her approach to literature is incorrigibly utilitarian. She can readily appreciate the value of Bildung as represented by Hugo Grossmann's legal studies and presses him to pursue them diligently. Only when he has eventually been successful in his legal examinations does she allow him access to the literature he likes to read, such as Schiller's Don Carlos or Calderón's Das Leben ein Traum. In the circumstances, her behaviour may seem perfectly understandable, were it not for the calculating way she uses Grossmann to hasten her own social advancement. Her care of him in his illness is not without ulterior motives and does not merit the praise showered on her and her mother by the attending physician: 'so "gute Menschen", in deren ganzem Verhalten sich die einzig wahre Bildung ausspräche, die Herzensbildung' (HA IV, 608). She is certainly respectable and has proved herself adept at displaying a good profile. Metaphorically also, the outline appearance of her behaviour

- this very respectability - has convinced the doctor, as also it convinces her landlord, that she is '"ein sehr gebildetes Mädchen"' (HA IV, 578). In social intercourse she has thus shown the triumph of the phrase she borrows from aesthetics: '"In der Kunst entscheidet die Reinheit der Linie"' (HA IV, 579). Although prosaic, Mathilde is proficient in her manipulation of a variety of forms of Bildung and very much a survivor. Her view of literature may be limited, but she does not place any claims on it. She has a vague sense of the social value of theatre-going when she remarks '"Theater bildet"' (HA IV, 602) but her visits are too rare to indicate either interest or pretensions. Her faults and virtues do not merit limitation by any label such as philistine. In aesthetic terms she may be unattractive, but in her own terms she is not ineffective.

Fontane objected very strongly to the emphasis placed on Bildung as education and learning by the Prussian State. He is inclined to be more critical as he grows older. It is this exaggerated desire for academic credentials which he considers counter-productive in the search for talent. Herman Meyer¹³ has noted a tendency in Fontane's letters from about 1878 onwards for the word Bildung to have become so pejorative that he no longer uses it except in ironizing quotation marks. In a letter to James Morris on 13 July 1897 he gives an indictment of the Prussian system of education which supports what Nietzsche had written in 1873 - the

proliferation of Bildung does not guard against the development of Bildungsphilister:

Die Leute [in Mecklenburg] sind...weniger 'gebildet', aber auch weniger 'verbildet', was sich darin zeigt, dass aus kaum einem andern deutschen Landesteile so viele Talente hervorgehen. In Berlin sind die Menschen infolge des ewigen Lernens und Examinierertwerdens am talentlosesten - eine Beamtendrillmaschine.¹⁴

This particular usage of Bildung for social credentials is criticised also in Der Stechlin. On one occasion Hauptmann Czako is clearly Fontane's mouthpiece when he contradicts Rex's assertions that Prussia possessed 'das Höhere': "Alles, was mit Grammatik und Examen zusammenhängt, ist nie das Höhere" (HA V, 206). Professor Cujacius in the same novel is typical of the arrogance and pedantry engendered by such academics, whose prestige is enhanced by the education system. It is not difficult to consider Nietzsche's thoughts on plodding academics echoed by Fontane. With the notable exception of Schmidt in Frau Jenny Treibel, academics in Fontane's works are presented as full of their own importance and dismissive of the contributions of those who have not trodden the officially sanctioned path to recognition. We can certainly note the reserve with which the art teacher Friedeberg is generally treated by Schmidt's colleagues among the 'Sieben Waisen Griechenlands' in the same novel. They are equally suspicious of the epoch-making Trojan discoveries by the autodidact Heinrich Schliemann. In this regard we must remember that Fontane was a self-taught writer who had trained as an apothecary. Furthermore, that he chose to

distance himself from literary officialdom in 1876, when he resigned the post of Erster Sekretär der königlichen Akademie der Künste after a few months. Hans-Heinrich Reuter comments on this decision: 'Unvereinbar mit den Pflichten eines preussischen Beamten erschien ihm sein Beruf als Schriftsteller'.¹⁵ Fontane thus extracts himself from the constraints of officialdom before embarking on his career as a serious novelist.

One of the points Nietzsche had emphasized in 'David Strauss' was the lamentable state of affairs after the Prussian victory over France in 1871. The success of the army was apparently taken to confirm the value of Prussian education, which had somehow been validated by the events. Many years later, in the year of his death 1898, Fontane writes to Gustav Keyssner and again makes it clear that, in his opinion, such an attitude is wrong. The malaise does not not affect only the Bildungsbürger but is seen as more universal:

Dynastie, Regierung, Adel, Armee, Gelehrtentum, alle sind ganz aufrichtig davon überzeugt, dass speziell wir Deutsche eine hohe Kultur repräsentieren; ich bestreite das. (AV II, 427)

The class which is dependent on Bildung is thus wider than the term 'academic' might imply and the ravages of a characteristic form of philistinism are understood and regretted.

1. Besitzbürgertum: Frau Jenny Treibel

The person that Fontane chose to help focus his misgivings about the bourgeoisie was selected from his own close family circle, his sister Jenny Sommerfeldt, so that he knew in reality what she represented. He makes a number of revealing comments in letters which must inevitably guide our reflections. First of all, he makes it amply clear that he means this to be a satire of the bourgeoisie. He writes to Paul Schlenther on 26 April 1888: "'Frau Commerzienrätin oder Wo sich Herz zum Herzen find't", eine humoristische Verhöhnung unserer Bourgeoisie mit ihrer Redensartlichkeit auf jedem Gebiet' (HA IV, 775). It is to mock the language of this class, especially its use of high-sounding phrases. Writing a few weeks later to his son Theo, on 9 May, he spells it out even more clearly:

Zweck der Geschichte: das Hohle, Phrasenhafte, Lügnerische, Hochmütige, Hartherzige des Bourgeoisstandpunktes zu zeigen, der von Schiller spricht und Gerson meint. (AV II, 185)

The intention is therefore revelatory, to probe beneath what is said to what is meant, to unmask the living lie of a particular section of society. The contrast between Schiller - the prime representative of poetic idealism - and the select Berlin fashion-house of Gerson is a discrepancy that highlights a very common form of hypocrisy: the assertion of noble sentiments expressed in high art to camouflage crass materialism. We have already seen it in the writings of Keller and Eichendorff. Fontane presents it as an

illustration of prevalent attitudes among the bourgeoisie of his age.

Jenny asserts allegiance to a particular set of values - the world of Bildung and learning represented by her friend Wilibald Schmidt - but in practice is more captivated by the world of the moneyed industrialists she has married into. Her continuing fascination with the realm of ideas, which she had appeared to reject when she preferred to marry Treibel rather than Schmidt, is yet not presented as crass hypocrisy. It is as much a form of self-indulgence and self-delusion that she continues her interest in poetry and ideas. Secure in her material comforts and social position, she is also attempting to camouflage the rather prosaic nature of her claims to social esteem by cannibalizing the culture of the respected Bildungsbürger. This is her attempt to enjoy the best of both worlds. Whilst her interest in poetry is revealed as superficial, she is not aware of this and genuinely believes her allegiance to values she contravenes at every turn. Her lack of introspection is one of her strengths as much as it is one of her weaknesses:

'Es ist eine gefährliche Person, und umso gefährlicher, als sie's selbst nicht recht weiss und sich aufrichtig einbildet, ein gefühlvolles Herz und vor allem ein Herz "für das Höhere" zu haben. Aber sie hat nur ein Herz für das Ponderable, für alles, was ins Gewicht fällt und Zins trägt. (HA IV, 369)

This sobering assessment by Professor Schmidt, her jilted suitor, is tinged with bitterness since he witnessed the allure that materialist values have for her. Human

relationships are subordinate to monetary gain.

Try as she might to claim that her primary interest is in 'das Höhere', Jenny is the victim of her baser affections. The effect we witness most often is one of constant ironic revision of her stated preferences which leave the reader in no doubt as to how she is to be perceived. It strikes us as a combination of the utmost audacity or blindness when Jenny makes statements like the following, which ring hollow because they are so clearly contradicted: '"Alles ist nichtig; am nichtigsten aber ist das, wonach alle Welt so begehrllich drängt: äusserlicher Besitz, Vermögen, Geld"' (HA IV, 319). This is of course most evident in her desire to see that her younger son Leopold marries appropriately i.e. not where his affections direct him but where her social ambitions dictate. An exquisitely revealing comic exchange with a teasing Corinna Schmidt show how deep her prejudices run. They well up almost involuntarily when she finds herself threatened. Corinna makes various suggestions of suitable brides for Leopold, partly to prod Jenny into a response to her own designs on him:

'vielleicht eine Schauspielerin...'
 'Ich bin nicht für Schauspielerinnen ...'
 'Oder eine Malerin, oder eine Pastors- oder eine
 Professorentochter.'
 Die Kommerzienrätin stutzte bei diesem letzten Worte.
 (HA IV, 304)

That the normally voluble Jenny Treibel - especially when effusive about her 'ideals' - should be momentarily speechless at this point, in conversation with a

Professorentochter, underlines her value-system: ideals must not be allowed to obstruct material realities. It is an eloquent silence.

Jenny's self-delusion is evident in her sentimentality, in her gush of feelings and her frequent attempts to give these feelings poetic expression. From the bastion of her achieved social prestige she tries to convince a very sceptical Corinna Schmidt of the advantages of youth and small means. The latter cannot quite believe her nostalgia for a time of innocence and purity - 'Die reinen Gefühle' (HA IV, 300). In any case she sabotages her own depiction by some of the details that she remembers from those times - how she had learnt to deal with money in her father's shop and the colour of her poetry book. Materialism and externals reigned then as they do now. She still shows her mastery of 'Die Welt der Formen' (HA IV, 308). Her constant invocation of the world of poetry and ideas does not bring her any closer to it, but serves to underline her alienation from it.

In moments of crisis Jenny shows herself extremely adept at contradicting these verbal mannerisms and of responding in unmistakably materialistic terms. When threatened, it is as if she quite instinctively reverts to an entirely different register - virtually a form of schizoid behaviour not uncommon for philistines. She has set her heart on a prestigious match for her remaining son Leopold; it must be someone with impeccable social credentials who could give the seal of approval to the parvenu Treibels i.e. "eine richtige

Geheimratstochter oder die Tochter eines Oberhofpredigers"' (HA IV, 412). When Wilibald Schmidt mentions the rumour that Leopold is to marry Hildegard, we witness an abrupt change of Jenny's tone. The fantasy realm which nurtures her sentimentality has been exchanged for the world of real decisions: "'Wer sagt das?" fuhr jetzt Jenny heraus, plötzlich aus dem sentimental Schwärmerischen in den Ton ausgesprochenster Wirklichkeit verfallend (HA IV, 411).

There are, however, other references in the text to Jenny's sentimentality which vary in tone. It is in any case not so much the sentimentality itself which is disturbing, even though Schmidt is taken aback at times by its sheer force, but her more usual and completely unsentimental approach and her fatuous claims to literary sensibility. This is of course most obvious in her spirited espousal of the Schmidt song 'Wo sich Herz zum Herzen find't'. Through it she would imply that only the affections should govern relationships: she denies this particular course to her son Leopold. Corinna Schmidt, more clear-sighted than ever after her decision to favour Marcell Wedderkopp over Leopold, defines the strange nature of Jenny's personality: "'aber wenn Geld alles ist und Herz und Sinn verengt und zum Überfluss Hand in Hand geht mit Sentimentalität und Tränen"' (HA IV, 471).

The effect that Jenny's sentimentality and materialism have on her view of Bildung is a distinctly unhealthy one. There is a very real sense in which she regards poetry, like

money, as something to be amassed. The quantity she can consume is more important to her than the quality of her response: '"Ich habe mich an Gedichten herangebildet, und wenn man viele davon auswendig weiss, so weiss man doch manches"' (HA IV, 301). Her self-esteem has been so elevated by the level of culture she assumes she has reached by her efforts, that it differs only in scale from, say, the proclamations of Wagner in Faust¹⁶ '"Mit Eifer hab ich mich der Studien beflissen;| Zwar weiss ich viel, doch möcht ich alles wissen"' (l. 600) or Hoffmann's Kater Murr¹⁷ - '"Nichts verstört meine Bildung (...) mit Riesenschritten gehe ich der Vollkommenheit entgegen"'. Both the latter are manifest Bildungsphilister. Jenny's efforts are yet on a much more modest level, so that she hardly merits the term reserved for the professional scholar or writer who is mediocre. Among the authors Jenny had read in her youth was Schiller, including ballads such as 'Der Taucher' and 'Der Gang nach dem Eisenhammer' which she had learnt by heart. As Fontane's letter had stated, this attempted allegiance to Schiller continues, perhaps even more strenuously, in the midst of social ambitions. The very song that Schmidt had written for Jenny recalled the last line of Schiller's poem 'Die Glocke' in its title, although with a notable change of emphasis. The Schiller version - 'Ob sich Herz zu Herzen findet' - is rather more tentative about the possibility of heart-felt attachments. The use of 'wo' in Jenny's song is testament to a more assured approach which treats the matter as a truism

and thus trivializes it. Schiller is exploited to create an image which the reader knows to be a false one.

The works of Schiller are quoted many times in this Fontane text and the effect is not always as we find with Jenny. In all there are 13 references to Schiller in the text, four each from Wilhelm Tell and Wallenstein, two from his ballads and one each from Maria Stuart, Kabale und Liebe and Die Braut von Messina. The majority of these quotations come from Wilibald Schmidt and Herr Treibel. Goethe, Heine, Herwegh and Keller get brief mentions also. They are usually used by the individual characters to humorous effect, offering pithy observations on the situation, and not to project any image of superior culture, nor to imply allegiance to particular ideals. Quotations or near-quotations from Schiller by each of the two gentlemen mentioned help their depiction as jovial characters, emphasise their bonhomie. Thus, for example, Schmidt responds to Marcell Wedderkopp's reply to the question "'Hummer oder Krebs'" with a modified snippet from Wallensteins Tod - "'Schon fertig ist die Jugend mit dem Wort'" (HA IV, 362). In the Schiller original 'schnell' is the correct word, in place of 'schon'. Treibel uses a near quotation from the same play himself a little later - "'Ich kenne meinen Pappenheimer'" (HA IV, 394) for "'Daran erkenn ich meine Pappenheimer'". The other examples of quotation are generally of this casual, entertaining variety. If they were accurate the quotations might descend into the pedantry of the philistines.

Furthermore, the assertion that Schmidt is 'in wesentlichen Zügen ein Selbstportrait Fontanes'¹⁸ is borne out by a similarity in Fontane's own entertaining use of quotations in his letters.¹⁹ Literature used in this way is both innocuous and amusing; a far cry from the affectation or pedantry of the Philister. In either case, Fontane characterizes his speakers very deliberately by their use of literature in conversation.

Schmidt manages to avoid the worst aspects of the pedantic philistinism of his colleagues, both by his more vital interest in new developments and by his habitual self-irony. The other members of his social circle of academics take themselves very seriously whilst he seems fully aware of his own shortcomings and of the absurdity of any pretensions. Although he is very critical of Jenny and her love of money, he is not arrogantly superior: "'Geld ist Unsinn, Wissenschaft ist Unsinn, alles ist Unsinn. Professor auch'" (HA IV, 477). Nevertheless, his insight into her failings runs deep and is grounded in long acquaintance, just like Fontane's knowledge of his sister Jenny Sommerfeldt, her model. Much earlier in the novel, in less negative vein, he had affirmed the value of authentic interest in the world of ideas and poetry. He endows it with pre-eminence: "'Das Poetische - vorausgesetzt, dass man etwas anderes darunter versteht als meine Freundin Jenny Treibel -, das Poetische hat immer recht'" (HA IV, 360). One example of this is Marcell Wedderkopp's appointment as an assistant to Heinrich

Schliemann in evaluating the excavations of Troy. He is keen to endorse solid and serious occupation with Bildung in this form, whilst he constantly underlines the superficiality of Jenny's cultivation: 'beinah gebildet, oder doch, was man so gebildet zu nennen pflegt' (HA IV, 305). There is a hint of 'justified' arrogance and a criticism of Jenny's culture which extends to contemporary society and its judgements in these remarks. Whilst she is hardly a Bildungsphilister in Nietzsche's sense, Schmidt is clearly irritated by Jenny's approach and wishes to draw attention to its obvious deficiencies. His closeness to Fontane is underlined by his penchant for 'das Nebensächliche' and 'das eigentlich Menschliche' (HA IV, 360). His veneration for poetry is not a Romantic, élitist obsession with high art. Fontane, like Keller, has no sympathy for such airs.

Ezechiël van der Straaten in L'Adultera is a member of the Besitzbürgertum also, but his attitude to Bildung, whilst no less reprehensible, is markedly different from Jenny Treibel's. He is her male alter ego. In his case, sentimentality has been replaced by mock-sentimentality, for he is 'eine sentimental-humoristische Natur' (HA II, 8) and this fact stamps the nature of his philistinism. It demands that, in stark contrast to Jenny's approach, he undermines any higher impulse by a sentimentality which is both mocking and self-indulgent. Lines from the poet Emanuel Geibel serve to support this complacent edifice:

Er zög' es deshalb vor, alles beim alten zu belassen.
 Und wenn er so gesprochen, sah er sich selbstzufrieden
 um und schloss, behaglich und gebildet: 'O rühret, rühret
 nicht daran.' (ibid.)

By using snippets of literature in this way, to bolster up an impression of cleverness and to disarm entirely any nobler impulses or the workings of conscience, Van der Straaten displays what Herman Meyer calls a 'dünkelhafte und respektlose Halbbildung'.²⁰

By his own admission, Van der Straaten is a bourgeois, a term he would prefer to the alternative of Spiessbürger, which he attributes to those people who are narrow-minded. More honest than Jenny Treibel, he realizes that this title implies that he does not have very much of a share in the world of ideals. He is intent merely on making a social distinction between himself and the petty bourgeoisie. His self-revelation is welcoming, but tainted by snobbery:

'Lass uns nicht spiessbürgerlich sein, Lanni. Sie sagen, ich wär' ein Bourgeois, und es mag sein. Aber ein Spiessbürger bin ich nicht. Und wenn ich die Dinge des Lebens nicht sehr gross und nicht sehr ideal nehme, so nehm' ich sie doch auch nicht klein und eng.'
 (HA II, 98)

Normally in Fontane, the term Bourgeois is used by the characters in his novels, and especially Jenny Treibel, in the most negative manner. When one takes his own letters into account, it is Fontane's own most evocative and frequently used equivalent of what other writers refer to as Philister. It is the most suitable word he finds to denote all that is least commendable in the Second Empire. Even as a supposedly neutral sociological term, the word has never quite escaped

the ironic colouring it gained through the supporters of Saint-Simon or Marx. It is most often pejorative. Leo Poggenpuhl, for instance, is very careful to distinguish between the use of Bourgeois and bürgerlich. Referring to his aunt, he remarks to his mother: "sie ist bloss angeheiratet und war eine "Bourgeoise", was immer schlimm ist; du bist doch wenigstens eine "Bürgerliche"' (HA IV, 502). There is no mistaking the peculiarly representative nature of Jenny Treibel's behaviour, for Wilibald has summed her up as "'ein Musterstück von einer Bourgeoise"' (HA IV, 305). He later confides to Marcell Wedderkopp that Jenny is "'der Typus einer Bourgeoise"' (HA IV, 368). Even Herr Treibel, despite all his good humour and 'grosse Herzensgüte' (HA IV, 397) is infected by the faults of his class: 'der Bourgeois steckte ihm (...) tief im Geblüt' (HA IV, 439). His change of mind over his son Leopold's projected marriage to Corinna Schmidt exemplifies this trait. Even when ennobled, like the von Gundermanns in Der Stechlin, Fontane's more positive characters like Pastor Lorenzen distribute criticism of them that is damning: "'Gundermann ist ein Bourgeois und ein Parvenu, also so ziemlich das Schlechteste, was einer sein kann"' (HA V, 176).

Another prominent social grouping, if not class, who often were considered by Fontane to display bourgeois credentials in a most ostentatious fashion, were the Jews. Writing to his wife on 26 March 1880, he lambastes their showy use of their wealth:

Ich glaube, Glück existirt nur noch bei Juden und Bourgeois, bei Leuten, die Geld haben und niedrig genug stehn, in einem blossen sich Zierenkönnen ihre Befriedigung zu finden. (HA III, 71)

The image of the Jews is, of course, complicated by the fact that they were among the most sophisticated and constant admirers of Fontane's own work. His correspondence with the Jew Georg Friedlaender bears out the contrary impression that they represent a veritable bastion for a benighted German culture: 'weil sie - auch die, die einem durchaus missfallen - doch immer noch Kulturträger sind'.²¹ It may sound a grudging admission, but there is no doubt of the excellent conversational companionship that certain Jews gave to Fontane - from Wilhelm Wolfsohn to Georg Friedlaender. The anti-Semitism that Brentano had included in his treatise on the Philister is here balanced by the contradictory notion that they contain both the most complete bourgeois characters and the most ideal preservers of culture. Such ambivalence is hardly extended to Jenny Treibel and more obvious exponents of the bourgeois ideology.

It is important now to complicate the picture further. Fontane did not restrict his criticism to those members of the middle class who normally merit the term bourgeois. He was clear that the attitudes it implied crossed all boundaries of class and education. He had already made this point in a letter to his wife on the 11 June 1879 i.e. before delineating the attributes of Jenny Treibel. The mental habits he here restricts to one class are vigorously

presented as having wider application:

Man spricht immer von Bourgeoisium; unsre Bourgeois sind lange nicht mehr die schlimmsten; der niedrige Geist des Bourgeoisiums steckt jetzt in der Militär- und Oberbeamtenschaft. (AV II, 8)

In other words, even the aristocracy are not immune from a spirit that has come to pervade them, but has its origins elsewhere. Bourgeois, much more than Philister - although the latter does not disappear - is defined as the dominant attitude of a society with which he feels at odds. The bourgeois is the authentic embodiment of all the factors that previously were ascribed to Philister. They merely possess greater wealth than any of the previous manifestations of the materialist spirit which other writers have isolated. They are more dangerous because they are now beginning to overshadow the aristocracy, with whom they are competing for power and influence.

Fontane's novel met with great success at the time, and had gone through five editions by 1899. To what should we attribute this success and how should we react to the tone of Fontane's depiction of Jenny Treibel? We may consider its success either as an endorsement of the truth of his depiction or as an indictment of his method. He had made the novel too innocuous. Rather than approaching a phenomenon which obviously disturbed him deeply with a more concerted and serious satire, he had produced, in his own words 'eine humoristische Verhöhnung'. Reuter yet claims that this is Fontane's most openly critical novel 'In keinem anderen Werke

ist Fontane so weit gegangen'.²² If such is the case - and the open way in which Jenny's character is dissected by the Schmidts and ironically revealed in her own actions, gives this view considerable credence - has he gone far enough? There is certainly, as often, little resemblance between the tone of Fontane's epistolary comments on the bourgeois and the overall impression we have from the novel. What do we conclude about the depiction of philistinism in Fontane's novel?

Fontane, like Keller, is not Nietzsche. Within his own terms, he could have only gone further by depicting Jenny's demise or failure. He could not tolerate this since it would not have been objectively true. However much he may have wished there were fewer like Jenny Treibel and more like Wilibald Schmidt in society, the reverse is the case. The Philister as bourgeois are not only ubiquitous they are also virtually indomitable. This is surely part of his point - society is organized in such a way that success for persons of this type is all but guaranteed. It is the survival of the more vigorous. Thomas Mann was to make this point even more clearly with his novella Tristan (1903), where Klöterjahn's material robustness triumphs over a debilitated aesthetic spirit nurtured by Detlev Spinell. We can witness a similar triumph for energetic assiduity in Mathilde Möhring. The Jenny Treibel that Fontane depicts is exceptionally capable within her own sphere, as the narration testifies. At her soirée, she is an impressive hostess. We note 'die

sichere Ruhe, womit sie zwischen ihren Gästen thronte' (HA IV, 316). On such occasions she is clearly in her element: 'In ihrem Sicherheitsgefühl war sie zugleich die Liebenswürdigkeit selbst' (ibid.). Only when she steps into the sphere of Bildung do the contradictions begin to jar. However, even here we must remember Wilibald Schmidt's little remark to Herr Treibel after Krola's rendition of 'Wo sich Herz zum Herzen find't': 'Treibel, unsere Jenny hat doch recht. Es ist was damit, es ist was drin' (HA IV, 477). Jenny's denial of the sentiments in practice does not invalidate them as a model for behaviour.

Fontane therefore eschews the temptation to turn Jenny Treibel into a caricature of the bourgeoisie but presents a more balanced portrait, depicting faults and strengths. This undoubtedly makes the result more complex, although the criticisms remain. He realizes also that philistinism and bourgeois attitudes are very close and states as much a few years later, in a letter to Martha Fontane of 10 March 1892. In it he rejects the idea of writing a complementary novel which would concentrate on the average male philistine:

Wäre ich 10 oder 15 Jahre jünger, so könnte ich noch ein Seitenstück zu Jenny Treibel schreiben, in dem ich den anspruchsvollen, und eingebildeten Durchschnittsphilister unter die Lupe nehmen würde.
(HA II, 779)

We note that Fontane's own metaphor for his literary method is that of the magnifying glass, not the distorting mirror. The faults of characters become more visible in his scrutiny, rather like a scientist examining the behaviour patterns of a

species; except that, as a writer, he has a satirical purpose for his researches.

Jenny's competence saves her from the caricature meted out to another character, Lieutenant Vogelsang. He descends into caricature because he cannot be taken seriously by the author. He is more like the kind of figure we have often seen treated as a Philister, in the Romantics and in Keller also. Fontane reduces him to the role of a minor comic character who might not be out of place in Hoffmann. He is deliberately dehumanized: 'Alles gab sich mehr oder weniger automatenhaft' (HA IV, 312). This mechanical impression is accentuated by the telling manner of his utterances. He does not even speak like a human being, but possesses what Herr Treibel calls 'einen Sprechanismus' (HA IV, 308). The real threat to society in Fontane's eyes is not this rather dated figure, but the ruthlessly formidable bourgeois. Whilst critical, he seems resigned to their dominance.

2. Speech.

In Frau Jenny Treibel we noted Fontane's ability to present his different characters through variations in their manner of speech, including their use of literary quotations, the hollowness of Jenny's phrase-making, the entertaining flow of talk from Professor Schmidt, the mechanical utterances of Lieutenant Vogelsang. Fontane's literary method is here a precise instrument for focussing his criticism about various social groups or types. Speech is his primary

criterion for identifying potential philistinism. As a writer of novels, Fontane allows his characters to speak and the reader to infer. Brentano, with greater tendentious assurance, barely lets the Philister utter a sentence in his treatise. Fontane's more objective method is no less effective in guiding our sympathies.

Reuter summarizes the impact of Fontane's precise use of language: 'Bildungskritik wird in ihm durch Gesellschaftskritik, Gesellschaftskritik durch Sprachkritik geübt' (HA IV, 771). The implications for our theme are immense. Perhaps for more than any other prose writer, our response to his characters is guided largely by what they say and how they say it. The speech patterns, choice of vocabulary, fluency, method of literary allusion, all assume great importance. Fontane's ear for the range of linguistic registers and styles within society and the distinctive, personal nature of utterance is exceptionally keen.

Conversation is one of the supreme testing grounds for the human qualities he espouses. He makes this clear through a number of remarks by his own characters in a variety of works. Dubslav von Stechlin, for instance, remarks: '"Also wer am meisten red't, ist der reinste Mensch"' (HA V, 23). The princess in Unwiederbringlich makes a similar point at greater length, without yet specifying the kind of speech that would satisfy her. For the moment, the emphasis is placed on quantity of speech as a prime precondition for human qualities:

'wer (...) immer nur schweigt, der ist nicht bloss langweilig, der ist auch gefährlich. Es liegt etwas Unmenschliches darin, denn das Menschlichste, was wir haben, ist doch die Sprache, und wir haben sie, um zu sprechen.' (HA II, 654)

The ability to speak well, with humour, fluency and versatility quite clearly distinguishes those characters who are most like Fontane himself, his partial mouthpieces - old Briest, Professor Schmidt and Dubslav von Stechlin.

The language of certain characters, however, fails to meet these exacting criteria. Their language is stilted and impersonal, lacking spontaneity and variety. Pedantry and repetitiveness in conversation are particularly unwelcome since they diminish the scope for the pleasurable exchange of ideas, the exciting flow of creative dialogue. Those who cannot converse in this fashion appear either comical or irritating in Fontane's work i.e. their linguistic failings point to larger faults, perhaps to philistinism. Koseleger's description of Herr von Gundermann in Der Stechlin lays bare the latter's bourgeois faults in his restricted range of utterance: "Ein Mann von drei Redensarten, von denen die zwei besten aus der Wassermüllersphäre genommen sind" (HA V, 175). Lieutenant Vogelsang's delivery, as we have seen, was a most prominent factor in his unappealing personality.

The use of clichés and proverbial remarks are some of the other linguistic signals which alert us to the possible presence of Philister. This is certainly a common charge against the philistines, notable for instance in Brentano.

For Fontane, class considerations are again important. When Hulda Niemeyer dispenses proverbs in Effi Briest or when Sophie Poggenpuhl shows a penchant for platitudes, the impression conveyed to the reader is naturally rather negative. Their rigidity in utterance and outlook is in stark contrast to the speech of other characters around them, such as Leo Poggenpuhl or Effi Briest. On the other hand, when members of the lower orders, like Frau Dörr in Irrungen, Wirrungen use proverbs to express moral censure, our response is most often one of benevolent amusement. Such language is reflective of their lowly social position, testifying to their level of Bildung, and not simply their narrowmindedness. When the aristocracy or bourgeoisie express such views, however, they appear absurdly conservative and unnecessarily petty. More liberal views and a wider expressive repertoire are expected of the higher social orders. Philistines here in effect disrupt the tone and register of social intercourse at their level.

I have already touched on characters' use of literary quotations in a revelatory manner. The publication of Georg Büchmann's Geflügelte Worte in 1864 had made it much easier for members of the bourgeoisie to pretend to be acquainted with the works of a particular writer. It became very popular to do so. Schiller is the main source of the quotations that we find in Fontane's work, and Frau Jenny Treibel is a good illustration. A complete list of all such allusions in Fontane's would inevitably be a very large one.²³ Büchmann

made it easy for people who had not much time to spend with literature to appear nobler or more educated than they were. Fontane at times expressed great annoyance at the prevalent but superficial use of Schiller quotations, notably in: 'Wann wird die Welt einsehen, dass diese Schillerphrasen eine schillernde Seifenblase sind?'.²⁴ We can attempt to identify the philistine by scrutinizing the ends to which these quotations serve.

One means of escaping censure is to emulate the apparent casualness of the aristocracy. Whilst we have noted Fontane's reservations about the lack of education among aristocrats, he presents this casualness quite affirmatively in his novels. Quotations here are inserted primarily for amusement and not to strike a pose. This is often achieved by a self-effacing vagueness about the wording and derivation of any quotations they do use. Woldemar von Stechlin makes a point in favour of this approach regarding Schiller: '"Solche verwechselte Schillerstelle tut einem immer wohl"' (HA V, 214). His father unselfconsciously misquotes Shakespeare also in a manner which disarms any impression of an obligatory display of cultural credentials, generally considered necessary among the bourgeoisie. His self-effacing quotation from Julius Caesar is as follows: '"Lasst mich dicke Leute sehn", oder so ähnlich' (HA V, 68). Leo Poggenpuhl similarly indicates his unpretentious acquaintance with Faust by almost deliberate vagueness: '"man möchte rasend werden, sagt Mephisto irgendwo"' (HA IV, 497). In the midst of the

'"Geflügelte Worte"-Bildung',²⁵ of the middle classes, such attempts are refreshing in their honesty. Leo Poggenpuhl, in a letter to his sister Manon, makes the additional point that quotations are almost invariably wrong anyway. Such a forthright admission would not accord well with the self-image of the bourgeoisie. The allusion here is to Shakespeare's Hamlet: '"Nymphe, bete für mich." Es wird wohl falsch zitiert sein; die meisten Zitate sind falsch' (HA IV, 550).

In a wider sense, of course, Bildung is the bourgeois philistine's road to salvation, his attempt to save his soul. Jenny Treibel demonstrates the insistence of this desire. Even though her social position owes nothing to Bildung and everything to her opportunism, she wishes to compensate for the prosaic origins of this wealth by erecting poetic camouflage. Not all bourgeois wish to do this. Ezechiel van der Straaten does not and indulges in his scornful, flippant attitude to Bildung. After all, as one of his acquaintances sums up, with the blithe assurance of the determinedly uncultured: '"Wer gar nichts hat, der ist gebildet. Wer aber so viel hat wie van der Straaten, der braucht all die Dummheiten nicht"' (HA II, 39). Whether the attitude be sentimentalization or arrogant dismissal, they are typical philistine responses. The alternative to these - and incidentally the pedantry of the Bildungsbürger - is the self-irony we have already encountered with Professor Schmidt. The more positive aristocrats adopt this method

also. They counter all temptation to self-importance through Bildung by an apparent scepticism which is the mask for a modest, authentic interest. Botho Rienäcker, for instance, in Irrungen, Wirrungen, is undemonstrative in his enthusiasm for the painter Achenbach to the extent of appearing opposed to any form of Bildung. Lene Nimptsch penetrates his defences 'Der spöttelte freilich über Wissen und Bildung, aber sie war klug genug, um zu fühlen, was von diesem Spotte zu halten war' (HA II, 386). Understatement is the best antidote to grandiose pretensions since it often conceals a more authentic regard.

Certain representatives of the Adel are particularly open about the literary works they do not understand. They readily admit not only ignorance, but also incomprehension. On the other hand, their approval of particular works displays their sense of affinity with them and is therefore a worthy, if unsophisticated response. Uncle Eberhard in Die Poggenpuhls shows a detailed knowledge of Schiller's Wilhelm Tell but is at a loss to place Byron's Manfred, whose principal character he genuinely mistakes for Don Manuel in Schiller's Die Braut von Messina. Moderate but authentic interest, an honesty mistaken for boorishness, is infinitely preferable to the superficiality of the bourgeois. Herman Meyer sums up the attitude of these aristocratic characters to Bildung: 'die echte Geisteskultur dieser Adligen (...) gibt sich lässig, sie setzt sich nicht in Positur und begegnet sturem Bildungsstolz mit lächelnder Skepsis'.²⁶ The

attitudes betrayed in the fabric of speech, so carefully modulated by Fontane, are crucial and revealing. The range of Bildung displayed and its differentiation along class lines, show that Fontane isolates the bourgeoisie for special censure and presents the model aristocrats as exemplars of how to solve the problem of Bildung. He is eager to counter the delusion of the age that the middle classes possessed a monopoly of culture. The ersatz version they possess is but yet another of the philistine's treasured, but worthless, possessions.

3. Religion and ethics.

In much that has been discussed so far, the question of the dubious ethics e.g. complacency, hypocrisy of the philistine and bourgeois has been an essential problem. In the realm of culture, we have noted how a lack of assertiveness about cultural values has been a vital distinguishing mark between attractive and unattractive characters. Those who really pursue ideals do so undemonstratively, the ostentation belongs to the Philister. In the field of religious belief and behaviour, the conclusions may be similar. In a letter of 27 April 1894, to J. von Widmann, Fontane makes certain observations on what he regards as the hypocrisy masquerading as public prudery that delayed the publication of L'Adultera:

Die Philister und Tugendwächter, deren Tugend darin besteht, dass sie die Tugend nicht bewachen, sondern sie nur immer weiter behaupten, auch wenn sie längst weg ist. (AV II, 338)

Even more characteristically, as revealed in both his letters and in his literary works, Fontane refuses to accept the need for fanaticism which is narrow-minded and dogmatic. Those characters who are obsessed by particular ideas and principles, to the extent that the proclamation of these damages their social relationships come across as impoverished individuals. Even with Gräfin Holk in Unwiederbringlich, where her strict views are in the context of a serious and well-meaning personality, who is particularly respected and loved by her children, the authoritarian aspect of her religious opinions is unsavoury. Her self-righteous and dismissive attitude to other beliefs is unfortunate: "Irrgläubig ist so ziemlich alles, was nicht altlutherisch oder pietistisch oder herrnhutisch ist" (HA II, 593). This attitude of superiority sours her relationships, especially that with her easy-going husband. The starkness of these religious views is accentuated by her melancholy approach to human life and hopes, and by a preoccupation with death which is obsessive and morbid. As a solitary stance it would be more understandable, but her extreme attitudes make life uncomfortable for others also. Her assertive dogmatism gives her a bleak, uncompromising strength which her amiable, vacillating husband can never emulate. Significantly, the only occasion when she displays a

sense of humour is when she gloats over the 'foolishness' of those who do not share her opinions in matters of religion and ethics. As a Pharisee she is also an undoubted religious philistine.

There are yet important qualifications to make here. Gräfin Holk is in general at least profoundly sincere. Her views are genuine, if rather limited and unappealing. She has also much more to commend her personally than, say, Dubslav von Stechlin's sister Domina Adelheid, whose limitations are more obvious. She pursues ardent anti-Catholicism with as much intensity as her aristocratic chauvinism and shows the supreme arrogance of those who will accept no opinions other than their own. Old Graf Barby was surely thinking of her type when he remarked on the irritation caused by the assertion of restrictive religious views and thereby condemned:

'Alle beschränkten und aufgesteiften Individuen, alle, die eine bornierte Vorstellung vom Christentum haben - das richtige sieht ganz anders aus -, alle Pharisäer und Gernegross, alle Selbstgerechten und Eiteln.'
(HA V, 287)

Fontane objects personally to those who succumb to the allure of particular sets of principles which claim universal validity. His view is that human life is much too complex to allow for any absolute system of ethics. The true mark of humanity is to interpret and apply general truths as guidelines for individual behaviour. Such, clearly, is Fontane's response to the 'Sermon on the Mount' which he considers the truest statement of the Christian disposition

and only potentially philistine if understood too literally and apprehended too complacently:

Ich habe noch nicht gesehen, dass ein Dollbregen, oder auch nur Prinzipienreiter heil durchs Leben gekommen ist. All' den grossen Sätzen in der Bergpredigt haftet zwar 'was Philiströses an, aber wenn ihre Weisheit richtig geübt wird, d.h. nicht in Feigheit, sondern in stillem Mut, so sind sie doch das einzig Wahre und die ganze Grösse des Christentums steckt in jenen paar Ausdrücken.²⁷

As often with Fontane, class considerations are of interest here also. When moral censure, not doctrinally defined, is discovered in the lower echelons of society - especially among servant-women and old retainers - it loses its stigma of over-pious rigidity. On such occasions Fontane more generally elicits a comic response from the reader. In this sense, old Rieschen's outrage at Widow Pittelkow's somewhat unorthodox manner of cleaning the windows with her skirt tucked up, appears both natural and amusing: "als ob alles Mannsvolk nach ihr raufkucken soll; 'ne Sünd und 'ne Schand'" (Stine, HA II, 477). This is the comic version of the moral rectitude which Fontane also sees in the vierter Stand or petite bourgeoisie, where he considers it both more appropriate and more positive, as the product of a more restricted experience and upbringing. Furthermore, as in Irrungen, Wirrungen, it is but one component in the personalities of Lene Nimptsch and Gideon Franke. They are practical-minded, unassuming and deeply sincere, yet full of life and humour. Within this setting, as an aspect of character, rather than as an all-consuming obsession for

certain members of the aristocracy or as an indication of petty-mindedness among the petty bourgeoisie, firm moral precepts are by no means disparaged and are not to be associated with philistinism.

On the other hand, when Mathilde Möhring sets out to woo Hugo Grossmann, she deliberately conceals her habitual petit bourgeois moral conformism. This makes her more attractive to Hugo at the crucial moment, since she therefore more easily fits in with his bourgeois expectations. It is an exercise of restraint and concealment:

so hatte sie jetzt das Gefühl, dass man den Bogen der Sittlichkeit und den Eindruck des Engen und Kleinlichen, was immer eng und kleinlich und spiessbürgerlich wirkte, nicht überspannen dürfe. (HA IV, 609)

The wooing successfully completed, she can retreat to the deeply-held desire for respectability that ultimately informs her actions: "Ich bin fürs Ernste, für hergebrachte Formen und auch für Religion" (HA IV, 612). Her narrow sense of religion is proscriptive and rigid; conformity is paramount.

The most appealing of Fontane's characters are presented not as religious in a particular and narrow sense, but ethical in an undefined way. Thus Dubslav von Stechlin can admit that he is 'eigentlich kirchlich' (HA V, 23). Rex raises him even higher by underlining his innate ethical character: "Stechlin ist auch eine sittliche Natur. Sittlichkeit ist ihm angeboren" (HA V, 74). This makes him of rare esteem in Fontane's system of values which tends to concentrate on the assertion of a character's tendency to

goodness, whilst not requiring specific actions to demonstrate it. In a society riven by hypocrisy or stultified by self-righteousness, Fontane prefers to emphasize a spontaneous predisposition to goodness which is reminiscent of Fielding. This is not invalidated by a character's faults, quite the reverse. Conspicuous virtue is regarded as artificial, inhuman and even oppressive, as with Christine Holk. As he remarks to his wife, in a letter of 9 August 1882, what he treasures above all is authenticity: 'Personen die wahrheitsvoll sind, und das Herz, ein gutes und wohlwollendes Herz, auf dem rechten Flecke haben, sind dünn gesäet' (PV I, 171). Instinct, as indicated by his use of words like 'wahrheitsvoll' is to be the individual's ethical yardstick, otherwise referred to as the conscience. The shifting mores of society are not to dominate since they are only temporary and imperfect guidelines or 'Hilfskonstruktionen', although they must be taken into account.

Eager as he is to emphasize the value of what is supposedly natural and authentic, Fontane is suspicious of the strenuously pious and the fanatically religious. As in any other sphere, extremism is anathema to him in religious and ethical matters also. Fontane's expressed preference for the Silesian aristocracy, which he mentions in a letter to Colmar Grünhagen, on 10 October 1895 contains a famous passage which is worth citing here for its ethical position:

Es sind keine Tugendmeier, was immer wohltut. Ich war nie ein Lebemann, aber ich freue mich, wenn andere leben, Männlein wie Fräulein. Der natürliche Mensch will leben, will weder fromm noch keusch noch sittlich sein, lauter Kunstprodukte von einem gewissen, aber immer zweifelhaft bleibenden Wert, weil es an Echtheit und Natürlichkeit fehlt. Dies Natürliche hat es mir seit lange angetan, ich lege nur darauf Gewicht, fühle mich nur dadurch angezogen, und dies ist wohl der Grund, warum meine Frauengestalten alle einen Knacks weghaben. Gerade dadurch sind sie mir lieb, ich verliebe mich in sie, nicht um ihrer Tugenden, sondern um ihrer Menschlichkeiten, d.h. um ihrer Schwächen und Sünden willen. (AV II, 373)

We note his connection between piety and artificiality. Saintliness is rendered dubious in Fontane's essentially sceptical approach. His predilection for (female) characters with conspicuous faults is in the cause of authenticity and naturalness. As a novelist he is temperamentally suspicious of virtue, so that he generally shows it to be uncongenial and harmful to normal human relations. Our criteria for identifying possible sources of philistinism must therefore be alert to any signs of puritanical zeal, however well-meaning.

Fontane is not impressed by characters who claim to possess a monopoly of any virtue. He sees fanaticism as a form of egotism and regards balance or Mass as the supreme good. Human beings must be able to keep all matters in perspective, including themselves. Humanity is diminished by the vigorous espousal of particular ideals. Any assertiveness which seeks to convince others of the exclusive rightness of the ideas being propounded is abhorrent to him. There are no absolute, only relative and individual, truths. Obsessive

personalities are shown to carry within themselves the means to disrupt the lives of others. Thus Streber and Fanatiker are presented negatively in his works and are as dubious as the bourgeoisie. Innstetten's schoolmasterly ways represent an obsession with destructive potential. This does not mean he is a Philister, but his faults in this regard could be regarded as forms of philistinism. There are, of course, many positive points to his personality which must not be ignored, especially his capacity for reform. By contrast, Lieutenant Vogelsang is not only a social embarrassment and an annoyance in any company, but a veritable embodiment of the philistine as fanatic. In the words of Herr Treibel, Vogelsang is not enriched by his fanaticism. On the contrary, he is an impoverished individual by so restricting himself to an idea; and is also the true danger to society:

Wer an einen Weg und eine Sache glaubt, ist allemal ein Poveretto, und ist seine Glaubenssache zugleich er selbst, so ist er gemeingefährlich und eigentlich reif für Dalldorf. (HA IV, 309)

Balance in ideas and opinions is valued more highly than fanaticism and tenacity. It is a notion which Fontane returns to repeatedly in his theatre reviews. He values a sense of proportion in dramatic works which made him reject some of Ibsen, whom he otherwise greatly valued. The words of Arne in Unwiederbringlich articulate a sense of classical balance, which Fontane would have echoed: "Jedes Zuviel ist vom Übel. Es hat mir, solange ich den Satz kenne, den grössten Eindruck gemacht, dass die Alten nichts so schätzten wie das Mass der

Dinge"' (HA II, 619).

Both Effi Briest and Unwiederbringlich are studies in marital incompatibility. They can also be considered as investigations of philistinism i.e. the harm done to relationships by the reverse of his cherished notion of Mass. The cultural obsession of Innstetten and the religious mania of Christine Holk cannot be isolated from their context merely as 'demonstrations' of particular kinds of philistinism. We need to bear in mind the personalities of Graf Holk and of Effi Briest, their upbringing and situation, to see how the mechanism of philistinism could be said to work here. Fontane shows how individuals are largely imprisoned by their personalities and can only act in accordance with all the factors that constitute these. Those characters who are most easily reducible to a prevalent notion that dominates their behaviour and colours their relationship with others can be portrayed ambivalently - like the Holks - with a sense of regret at the limitations exacted, or more satirically and ironically, as with Lieutenant Vogelsang and Jenny Treibel. The more obvious the satire, the more manifest the philistine and the judgement.

Fontane concentrates on showing how 'unbalanced' or philistine personalities can be reformed by the possession of certain 'humanizing' attributes. These very qualities keep philistinism in check, if not at bay. We have already noted the importance of a 'Herz' in this regard and also the quality of self-irony that Professor Schmidt possesses. The

'grosse Herzensgüte' that Treibel commands, complicates any simplistic view of his bourgeois nature. Dubslav von Stechlin has all the qualities, allied with a sense of humanity, which make him so commendable: 'eine Tiefe, so recht aus dem Herzen kommende Humanität' (HA V, 9). Schmidt, moreover, is actually accorded a conspicuously 'balanced' approach to all matters. He shows an equal interest in past and contemporary culture and he calls into question the grandiose interests of his colleagues by a preference for 'das Nebensächliche'. He is, of course, also able to keep himself in perspective by his capacity for self-irony. Whilst a description of a personality, this is also an illustration of Fontane's literary method of showing his moral approval.

4. Provincialism and idylls.

We have made reference to Fontane's investigation of differences in cultural and religious attitudes of Prussian society. We have also attempted to show how the reader's judgement of his characters is complicated by his aversion to the creation of ideal heroes. Our negative examples have all been inhabitants of the Berlin that he depicts as his most characteristic milieu. The Holks and the Danish setting of Unwiederbringlich are a notable exception, as is the extremely positive figure of the rural aristocrat Dubslav von Stechlin. Much of Effi Briest takes place in other places than Berlin, whether on country estates like Hohen-Cremmen or in provincial towns like Kessin. But what influence does

Fontane ascribe to small-town or rural settings, bearing in mind that German provincialism has been accused of causing so much of the philistinism that writers depict? Does Fontane continue the topos of philistinism as more obvious in this setting? Moreover, what are the attitudes of the characters in his novels to the provincial setting? To what extent do they invest it with a misplaced sense of superiority or delusive idealism?

The imputation of narrow-mindedness that seems almost of necessity to accompany residence in the small town - its restricted milieu and social structure - is the primary component in the depiction of philistinism in much of the nineteenth century. The small town is the primal setting, the Urheim of all forms of philistine behaviour. The special attitudes which the encircling walls of the provincial town and their nearest rural environs both reflect and foster is potentially different in kind from that which occurs in larger urban settlements. In Meine Kinderjahre (1894) Fontane simply repeats this perception, although he comments that Swinemünde was better than the norm of the 'von engsten Philisteranschauungen beherrschten kleinen Städten'.²⁸ It was able to be this by virtue of foreign immigration which helped broaden the horizon of its citizens and make them immune to philistinism in the process:

Dass die Bewohnerschaft allem Spiessbürgertum so durchaus fremd war, hatte sicher in manchem seinen Grund, vorwiegend aber wohl darin, dass die gesamte Bevölkerung von ausgesprochen internationalem Charakter war. (FW I, 125)

Fontane suffered from clear prejudices in this regard, as a life-long inhabitant of Berlin. Despite having been born in the small town of Ruppin and having spent the first eight years of his life there, followed by another six years in Swinemünde before going to school in Berlin in 1833, he writes at times with the arrogance of the life-long city-dweller. Such, for instance are his patronizing comments on Gottfried Keller and Wilhelm Raabe: 'Manche Menschen gedeihen in der Einschränkung besser - ich kann mir z.B. nicht denken, dass Gottfried Keller oder Wilhelm Raabe in Berlin gut gediehen wären (...) aber die meisten kriegen doch was vom Knieholz'.²⁹ He goes on to attribute Keller's alleged premature intellectual exhaustion by the time of Der Landvogt von Greifensee (1878) to his Swiss habitat 'wo die geistige Zufuhr geringer ist'.³⁰ Similarly Theodor Storm's alleged self-cocoonment in the provinces is dismissed as 'Provinzialsimpelei'.³¹ Finally, when writing to his wife on 21 July 1883, he comments on the debilitating effect of a small-town habitat on his own close acquaintances: 'Natürlich kommt der Hinketuss der kleinen Stadt und der kleinen Verhältnisse überall zum Vorschein' (HA II, 272). It appears that we might normally expect philistines in every small town. Appearances can be deceptive. Only a few weeks before this letter to his wife, on the 25 June 1883, he admitted as

much. There are no essential differences between the inhabitants of either large or small towns: 'Dabei sind die Menschen keineswegs besser, im Gegenteil. Nur das 'Dekorun' spielt eine grosse Rolle' (AV II, 107). Even more confusingly, Fontane's most characteristic creation, Dubslav von Stechlin, refers to Berlin itself as a 'Philisternest' (HA V, 307). There is no concerted policy by Fontane to continue a prejudice against the alleged philistinism of smaller towns, as the exclusive birthplace of the phenomenon. He is as contradictory in this regard as he is in many others.

In his literary works, unusually, he perpetuates a more negative view of provincial life than the contradictory image that appears in his correspondence. These are not necessarily Fontane's own prejudices, of course, but his depiction of them as typical of some of his characters. Condescension towards the provinces is presented as practically an obligatory social occupation of his city-dwelling aristocrats in Effi Briest and Unwiederbringlich. The inhabitants of Kessin, for instance, are moralistic, puritanical and self-righteous and are unappealing to Effi, Gieshübler and Innstetten. The latter comments: '"halb sind es Philister und halb Pfiffici, nicht sehr nach meinem Geschmack"' (HA IV, 240). The narration also supports the unappealing impression they give by reference to their almost bourgeois obsession with social conventions in their 'Sinn für Äusserliches' (HA IV, 65). With the blithe self-assurance of

Pharisees, they criticize Pastor Lindequist for alleged lukewarmness in his religious views.

It is not only the aristocracy, though, who are unattractive in this obscure provincial outpost. The bourgeoisie and petite bourgeoisie of the town of Kessin display the most hidebound attitudes to the prospect of some hussars being garrisoned in the vicinity. It is remarked that most small towns invite such a prospect, but not Kessin. Instead, its inhabitants are portrayed as narrowminded and deeply suspicious of the whole business. Pfefferküchler Michelsen, for instance, claims that 'es verderbe die Sitten der Stadt' (HA IV, 169). Their half-hearted response to the proposal results in its eventual retraction. This outcome serves to depress virtually everyone in the town except, notably, Gieshübler who is pleased at this defeat their philistinism has brought about: 'Gieshübler, weil er der Philisterei seiner Kollegen eine Niederlage gönnte, triumphierte' (HA IV, 173).

In a different context, Christine Holk in Unwiederbringlich has firm religious views, which yet cannot be facilely attributed to her environment. They are more a feature of her personality. Her husband is the subject of the patronizing superiority of the social set in Copenhagen, whenever he goes there to take up his duties as Kammerherr. Even the narrator seems to take delight in underlining his discomfiture amid the social whirl of the big city. He succumbs to an almost philistine concern for his health:

'Holk aber, an grossstädtisches Leben nicht gewöhnt und immer beflissen, sich in beinah philiströser Weise bei guter Gesundheit zu halten (HA II, 675). His fears and reactions appeal to the sense of superiority of the city-dwellers, just as the comedy exacted at the expense of small-town dwellers throughout the century - from Keller to Kotzebue - presented amusement for the alleged urban sophisticates. The princess also in this novel shows an undisguised delight in the recounting of small-town anecdotes: 'kleinstädtische Vorgänge seien eigentlich immer das Interessanteste, man müsse so herzlich darüber lachen' (HA II, 708). It is a potent source of entertainment for Effi Briest and her husband, producing a kind of catharsis, by keeping their unpleasant experiences in Kessin at a comic distance. Hence their delight in listening to Wüllersdorf regaling them with 'kleinstädtische Geschichten in Hülle und Fülle' (HA IV, 221).

Small-town philistinism, what other writers might term Krähwinkelei or Kleinstädtereie is not a dominant or overriding concern in Fontane's novels. For his characters who are normally resident in Berlin it is alternately a source of annoyance or amusement. It becomes a source of entertainment especially when the characters return to their normal sphere. Fontane's letters, as we have seen, either indulge in the generalization that provincial living automatically produces less cultured, more narrow-minded characters or else they qualify this by citing exceptional towns or exceptional individuals. In the majority of

instances, however, he does give the impression that it is important where one lives and that it requires a mental effort to resist the philistinism of a small-town environment in particular. In his literary depiction he is perhaps pandering to the prejudices of his Berlin readership. In exoneration, we must remember that his literary work has a resonance that carries it beyond the alleged provinciality of German literature in the nineteenth century. Georg Lukács makes such a claim for him: 'Er ist einer der ersten, die die deutsche Literatur der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts aus ihrer provinziellen Enge herausheben'.³²

On the other hand, despite his urban prejudices, Fontane is adept at the creation of rural idylls, notably in Effi Briest and Der Stechlin, which succeed in providing a focus for the lives of his most positive characters. He has a residual affection for the idea of a landed aristocracy, living on its estates. The opening scenes of both novels emphasize the value of worlds which are far removed from the bustle of urban life. The Rondell is the 'stille Mitte' of Effi Briest's life, as it stands at the centre of her parents' garden at Hohen-Cremmen. It is a source of solace and a symbol of the security of her family life before the arrival of Innstetten adds fuel to her own love of adventure. Fontane is deliberately creating a sense of organic connection between these aristocrats and their locale, which can be described as idyllic. In Effi's case it has all the poignancy of an idyll that is disrupted by the outside world,

which represents a threat to its continuance. The intimacy of the connection between Effi and nature is an issue in the novel. Her death is followed by her burial beside the Rondell that was the natural centre of her universe. She is deliberately, and unironically, referred to as a 'Naturkind' (HA IV, 294), but not in a mystical sense. The novel portrays the contrast between the a calm idyll of nature and a society full of conventions that are problematic and contentious. It is not an idyllic novel, however, but explores the two realms of the private and public worlds and the adjustments that the latter imposes on the former.

Der Stechlin similarly takes up the theme of how to retreat from the world, yet continue to be involved. After his defeat in local elections, Dubslav von Stechlin withdraws to his country estate which contains a remarkable body of water, the See Stechlin, capable of registering seismographically even minor perturbations in the larger, natural world. At one remove from an uncongenial society, yet not isolated from its major events, the possibility of serenity is explored. The remarkable features of the landscape and Stechlin's own personality save this idyll from the suffocation of self-indulgence. It is a withdrawal, not an escape. The pitfalls of deliberate restriction can be avoided, as Pastor Lorenzen remarks: "Es heisst freilich "im engen Kreis verengenget sich der Sinn", und in den meisten Fällen mag es zutreffen. Aber doch nicht immer, und jedenfalls hat das Weltfremde bestimmte grosse Vorzüge" (HA V, 29). The

ability to retreat to country estates when society is unappealing is not the least of the advantages of the Landadel; yet in this idyll, a narrow sphere need not imply a narrow mind, need not indicate the philistine. Here, objectivity towards the outer world can be developed.

At other times in Fontane's work, a desire to retreat from society is not presented as a positive decision and tends to underline the weakness of particular characters who are merely trying to escape from difficult social situations. Such a person is young Graf Woldemar in Stine who has a confrontation with his uncle about his desire to marry the eponymous heroine, a member of the lower classes. His first impulse is to escape the censure of his peers by fleeing to the American backwoods and becoming a "Hinterwäldler" (HA II, 536). His uncle is certainly not impressed by this decision, considering it a flight from social responsibilities. When Stine, too, rejects him he escapes all further problems by committing suicide. The fact that Hinterwäldler also has a pejorative sense in German and is seen by Dornseiff as a synonym for Philister or Kleinstädter under the heading 'Enger Geist',³³ serves as an ironic reminder of the perils Fontane depicts in decisions which involve an evasion of social difficulties. His characters are enjoined to be resigned to their fate, neither to fight nor flee but to endure. Other writers will inevitably find such resignation abhorrent and tantamount to philistinism.

Irrungen, Wirrungen provides a very interesting example of an attempt to come to terms with mésalliance. In this example, Rexin proposes a 'solution' to the problem which does not involve an escape to an idealized American backwoods, but to an even more abstract realm, which he conceives, paradoxically, as the domain of the Philister:

'und wenn ich mich eben einen Nihilisten nannte, so kann ich mich mit noch grösserem Recht einen Philister nennen. Ich sehne mich nach einfachen Formen, nach einer stillen, natürlichen Lebensweise, wo Herz zum Herzen spricht und wo man das Beste hat, was man haben kann, Ehrlichkeit, Liebe, Freiheit.' (HA II, 461)

In none of the material we have covered so far has there ever been the suggestion that the qualities listed here should be associated with the Philister. The preference for Philister instead of Nihilist is justified, at least insofar as he then goes on to adumbrate an alternative society to the one he is criticizing for its strictures and conventions. In doing so, he retreats from the world of reality, where decisions have to be made, to the realm of fantasy. The vague, idealistic formulations of a simpler, calmer, more natural life-style based on certain qualities is unconvincing to Botho Rienäcker, who advises him to reject the idea as but a half-measure. The invocation of heart-felt affections is reminiscent of Jenny Treibel's espousal of them, the sentimentality no less delusory. Perhaps Fontane wishes to indicate, through Rexin's choice of word, the extent of his muddled thinking, that he can ascribe all these ideal qualities to the philistines. If so, it remains an

idiosyncratic usage, but one which has implications for other Fontane characters who prefer to evade social problems, to circumvent rather than face reality.

It is from this perspective that we can usefully examine what has been described as 'die grösste Sprechszene des deutschen Romanes',³⁴ the famous exchange between Innstetten and Wüllersdorf in chapter thirty-five of Effi Briest. It is interesting to consider the various stages in their discussion as attempts to evaluate potential solutions which turn out to be just these kinds of philistine evasion. In long overdue introspection, Innstetten looks back on his career and ambitions, after receiving the news of his further promotion. There has already been a transformation in his manner of thinking since the whole débâcle with Crampas, so that 'Er mass seitdem mit anderem Masse, sah alles anders an' (HA IV, 285). This causes him to welcome the news of his promotion with mixed feelings, since he now sees the limitations of career ambitions. He is already through to a more modest conception of human happiness, which is not dependent on the grandiose compensations of high public office.

The arrival of Roswitha's simple letter depresses him, since it inevitably reminds him of Effi and the harm that he had caused, not least by his desire to educate Effi in very particular ways i.e. his 'Schulmeistertum'. His first suggestion to Wüllersdorf is that he might make amends by putting this offending aspect of his own nature to public

use:

'ich müsste mit all den Strebungen und Eitelkeiten überhaupt nichts mehr zu tun haben und mein Schulmeistertum, was ja wohl mein Eigentlichstes ist, als ein höherer Sittendirektor verwenden können.'
(HA IV, 287)

He, however, rejects this notion as impracticable in view of his own sense of guilt about Crampas. He would in effect be attempting to legislate on the morals of others without the benefit of a clear conscience, which, he is now sufficiently self-critical to realize, would be hypocrisy. His rejection of this solution is therefore a promising sign of his ability to transcend his own worst self, his philistinism masquerading as moral rectitude.

He now broaches the possibility of escape from his problems, in a manner similar to Rexin in Irrungen, Wirrungen - to flee society to more primitive climes where he will no longer be subject to its demands: "weg von hier, weg und hin unter lauter pechschwarze Kerle, die von Kultur und Ehre nichts wissen. Diese Glücklichen" (HA IV, 288). Since his pursuit of Kultur has harmed his relationship with Effi and his sense of Ehre had led to the death of Crampas, he realizes that his actions have been dictated by his adherence to the codes that underpin Prussian society. His motivation is to escape by blaming that society, as if he had no choice but to obey its laws. Wüllersdorf is naturally not pleased with this idyllic view that a more primitive society is necessarily preferable: "Es ist eine Torheit mit dem Im-Urwald-Umherkriechen" (HA IV, 288). Nevertheless, this is

only a momentary lapse into weakness for Innstetten, who soon conquers this form of philistinism by accepting Wüllersdorf's view that he should stay and make the best of the situation: 'Einfach hierbleiben und Resignation üben' (ibid). Moreover, he can now attempt to reorientate his values and discover delight in less grandiose compensations for the ego, to get closer to the smaller things that matter. A rediscovery of essential humanity can proceed alongside a greater alertness to the rhythms of the natural world. By these procedures, the varieties of philistinism that are engendered by society can find a vigorous counterbalance which represents the best solution: 'im kleinen und kleinsten so viel herausschlagen wie möglich und ein Auge dafür haben, wenn die Veilchen blühen' (ibid.).

5. Readership, writers, Philister.

The Prussian society that Fontane depicts is more diversified than that which Eichendorff knew. The middle classes have become a more powerful element and the bourgeoisie especially appear as a force to be reckoned with, if not to be affirmed. Whilst not an aristocrat himself, Fontane shows a disproportionate interest in characters from this class, even if to some extent for aesthetic reasons. They are anything but the aristocratic Dichter of Eichendorff's major works; their concerns are more mundane, their achievement lies not in lofty aspirations but in lively, self-critical humanity. Amusement rather than

elevation is their aim. In fact, for the most positive among them, commitment to abstractions of any kind, including religion, is uncongenial. Their principal virtues have become common sense and an ability to converse. Relationships are what matter. Larger issues become, ideally, not a means to divide characters into competing groups with entrenched opinions, but as the theme for an entertaining discourse. The enthusiastic devotees of particular causes - Streber and Fanatiker - are shown as prey to self-absorption, becoming self-opinionated or self-righteous. This makes them less pleasant socially. The Bildungsbürger cannot generally avoid these pitfalls and are presented negatively, so that they do appear as Bildungsphilister. However, since their depiction is not frequent in Fontane, our attention is drawn to the use other sections of society make of Bildung. Here it is the bourgeoisie who present the most negative models and the unconvincing combination of materialism and superficial culture is illustrated in the figure of Jenny Treibel. The bourgeoisie are vigorous but vulgar and - as Fontane's letters especially testify - are setting the tone of society. Their strength is indicated in Frau Jenny Treibel but Fontane prefers not to address the problem so intensively afterwards. Having once shown at length the unacceptable face of contemporary philistinism, he resumed his investigations of humanity among the aristocracy.

But what of his readership? Fontane was not as popular during his lifetime as Heyse, Spielhagen or Freytag, perhaps

because he did not reinforce the prejudices of the largely middle-class readership quite so readily. He could have capitalized on the success of Frau Jenny Treibel, which was seen to portray the dominant social class so positively, but he preferred to set his own agenda. Unlike the more popular writers, he was not so attuned to his readers' prejudices. Free from all ideological designs, he neither dissociated himself from his age nor identified with it. This very objectivity means that he finds it difficult to generate a sense of antagonism towards the values of his society, but neither can he masquerade as some kind of visionary or literary pedagogue. So balanced and unassuming an approach does not operate with sharp contrasts between 'ideal' and ethically dubious behaviour. Restraint and understatement make Fontane's handling of Philister extremely subtle.

Like Keller, Fontane is suspicious of those authors who wish to assert some special status for the writer. What he principally objects to are the exaggerations to which such an attitude can lead. In a letter to his wife on 29 June 1883 he appears to distance himself from artists, and voices his distaste for those who seem intent on flouting social conventions. Display of this kind is to be avoided

Man muss den Künstlern gegenüber, wenn es wirkliche Künstler sind, Verzeihung üben und fünf gerade sein lassen, aber ihre Mischung von Blödsinn, Sittenfrechheit und Arroganz auch noch zu feiern, ist mir widerwärtig.
(HA III, 266)

Not only is he critical of those writers who are pretentious, or those who are allegedly provincial, but he is sufficiently

dismissive in one letter to imply that they are mostly Philister. He does this by conjuring up the visual caricature of the Philister that we have noted as part of the tradition. Writing to his wife, on 8 September 1885, he remarks: 'den meisten deutschen Schriftstellern merkt man den Schlafrock und die Tabackspfeife an' (HA III, 415). Unlike Keller, he did participate in literary gatherings, at least in his youth, particularly the Berlin 'Tunnel über der Spree'.³⁵ He was also anything but a literary loner until his main creative period, from the late 1870s. Self-confidence he did possess, an exalted sense of his own importance qua writer he did not. Significantly, ruminations on the nature of the artist or the purpose of poetry do not enter his literary work. He proceeds with his craft almost matter-of-factly. Such reticence would not only have been blasphemy to many Romantic authors, it would have served to identify him as a kind of philistine. Indeed, it is not a name he would have consciously resisted, according to Thomas Mann: 'Man hat ihn einen Philister gescholten, und er selbst hat sich gelegentlich so genannt'.³⁶ Writing was hard work and self-criticism, not divine inspiration. Eichendorff would have been scandalized.

However, some urgent qualification is required. Fontane did not belittle his craft nor give the impression that anyone could have pursued it. In Die gesellschaftliche Stellung der Schriftsteller he regrets the poor social status of writers: 'die Stellung eines Schriftstellers ist miserabel'

(AV I, 344) and seems to lament the fact that writing is not considered an art - 'wird nicht als Kunst betrachtet' (AV I, 347). Furthermore, when we recall the remarks by Professor Schmidt in Frau Jenny Treibel about the pre-eminence of 'das Poetische' we realize that the difficulty is all about presentation. Where self-irony is lacking, all proclamations immediately start to lose value. It is significant that in the same novel it is the caricatured philistine, Lieutenant Vogelsang, who is also so openly dismissive of the function of literature. He is critical of the work of Georg Herwegh, whom Fontane had admired in the 1840s particularly. His triumphant declaration that 'Der Prosa gehört die Welt' (HA IV, 319) merely serves to emphasize how prosaic he himself is, intensely comical in his seriousness. Fontane indeed focusses on the smug and disparaging way in which various military figures react to Bildung, notably the young officers in Irrungen, Wirrungen who confidently declare about works of scholarship: '"Alles Bibliotheks- und Abschreibesache. Wer nur ein bisschen findig ist, kann Bücher leisten wie Humboldt oder Ranke"' (HA II, 359). The self-confidence of the Prussian military machine, having forcibly established the empire in 1871, knows no bounds. For Fontane, writers have a duty to understate their own importance; only philistines, who know nothing of their task, can underestimate them with such effrontery.

Disparagement is the usual function of words like

Philister and we have noted the range of senses in which it and other words were applied in Fontane. We have already noted Van der Straaten's reluctance to be considered a Spiessbürger: the reasons for this are grounded in social snobbery, since it is also a pejorative synonym for the lower middle classes. It hints at an inferiority to be associated with a less exalted social grouping than the speakers themselves belong to. For aristocratic characters like Effi Briest, there is a sense of ordinariness, unattractiveness in her use of 'spiessbürgerlich' when reacting to the story of the chinaman: 'Es klingt erst spiessbürgerlich und ist doch hinterher ganz apart' (HA IV, 47). What was prosaic has become exotic. In a significant number of other contexts in Fontane we see that these words seem to be used in a casual, jocular fashion, but in these instances also Fontane's irony is revealing the snobbery of the persons who use them. On these humorous occasions also, the literary tradition of referring to Philister is still evident, even though the tone of the comments is rather light-hearted. Thus, when Hugo Grossmann's friend in Mathilde Möhring wishes to poke fun at the former's choice of drink, he does so lightheartedly in this way: '"Sodawasser. Das trinkt doch bloss ein Philister"' (HA IV, 595). Similarly, the selection of an inn in Der Stechlin is expressed in the following terms:

'Ach, Siechen. Siechen ist für Philister.'
 'Nun denn also, beim "schweren Wagner".'
 'Noch philiströser. Ich bin für Weihenstephan.'
 (HA V, 298)

When characters refer to others as Philister in Eichendorff, they are often articulating the author's views. In Fontane, they more generally reveal their own philistinism by means of such hasty judgements.

What remains then of the literary tradition of philistinism that we have been so carefully tracing? It has been transformed almost beyond recognition. Even more radically than in Keller, where the demands of his chosen genres, notably the novella, create the appropriate satirical conditions for the occasional creation of Philister, Fontane has all but subverted the categories which inform the work of the Romantics. Philistinism is now above all varieties of snobbery, whether between classes, or city-dwellers referring to those who inhabit the provinces. It is most clearly shown in attitudes to culture, whether in the pedantry of Bildungsbürger or in the relentless acquisitiveness of the Besitzbürger. The latter are the foremost exponents of a new, brasher spirit which is associated with a society ever more dominated by wealth. The bourgeoisie set the tone of this society and the bourgeois spirit, the dominant force in the new empire, is philistinism reincarnated. It is the most virulent form among several older strains. Under its more traditional title, Fontane can affectionately observe it as one of the constituents in his son's personality. He writes to his wife on 14 September 1887: 'Es ist rührend, wie sich Tugend, Philisterium und Forscheté in ihm bekämpfen und durchdringen' (PV I, 336). A few years earlier, he can even

scold his wife in a letter of 23 July 1883 for not suppressing her own traces of philistinism on certain social occasions, when she allegedly became 'kleinstädtisch und spiessbürgerlich' (AV II, 115). Philistinism has been assimilated, the more prosaic aspects of the human character openly acknowledged, if not affirmed.

Fontane is swift to counter any impression that philistines and philistinism are simple and unproblematic notions, easily detectable and assignable. There are striking instances in his work where we are made to expect a philistine by the narrator's introduction of him, but then this initial impression is dispelled when we get to know more about his personality. The philistinism that operates on hasty judgements and visual information would be at a loss with Gideon Franke in Irrungen, Wirrungen. At first sight he appears a model petit bourgeois philistine, his excessively fastidious appearance creating expectations of an exemplary narrowness of outlook:

Er trug einen bis oben hin zugeknöpften schwarzbraunen Rock, übermässig blanke Stiefel und blankes schwarzes Haar, das an beiden Schläfen dicht anlag. Dazu schwarze Handschuh und hohe Vaternörder von untadliger Weisse.
(HA II, 440)

Furthermore, he expresses himself in almost comical categories and a somewhat mechanical, repetitive fashion: "Herr Baron, auf die Proppertät kommt es an und auf die Honnetität kommt es an und auf die Reellität" (HA II, 444). Despite the poor impression given by his appearance and his speech, the narrator leaves us in no doubt as to the

excellence of his sentiments, signalled now by a positive use of 'untadelig': 'trotz seines spiessbürgerlichen Aufzuges ein Mann von Freimut und untadeliger Gesinnung' (HA II, 441). We soon learn of his concern for practical social projects such as schools, canals and gasworks, but also that he is an entertaining conversationalist, Fontane's ultimate redemption. First impressions have proved to be superficial and a more complex image has emerged. Tolerance comes with greater knowledge, the designation philistine can be prejudice.

When we compare Fontane's literary works with his letters, we are often beset by contradictions. This very 'contradictoriness', a product of different moods as well as different expressions of a complex attitude built up over many years, helps contribute to a productive ambivalence. As Charlotte Jolles remarks 'das Wort "Ambivalenz" ist fast zum Stichwort in der Fontane-Forschung geworden'.³⁷ Thus one utterance taken in isolation is virtually meaningless unless placed in the context of a series of remarks on the same subject, some of them expressing a contrary opinion. We can, for instance, find many forthright denunciations of debased Bildung in his letters, which should not lead to the mistaken impression that Bildung in any form is anathema to him. What sound like all-inclusive generalizations invariably admit of exceptions and qualifications. Nevertheless, there is an undeniable difference in tone between his literary work and his letters, which is not uncommon among writers, but which

is particularly marked in Fontane's case. Whilst Fontane's letter-writing 'voice' frequently makes him sound more direct in his criticism of philistinism, his literary work tends to objectify his outrage, to turn what could be satire into irony, what smacks of caricature into characterization. This does not prevent his work from presenting persons who are to a large degree 'typical' of a particular social class - Jenny Treibel as bourgeoisie - but who are not simply objects of derision. Philistine character traits are associated with particular characters, but this may not be their whole personality - Innstetten - or it does not rule out that we are simultaneously rather impressed by them - Jenny Treibel and Mathilde Möhring.

In the process of writing imaginative works indignation is therefore modified by Fontane into a more benign amusement at human foibles. He has no patent solutions to human problems nor any precise ideas for improving the situations he depicts so objectively. He controls his frustration so that the final impression - steeped in irony - is more differentiated and more accurate. We actually learn more about philistinism by reading his works than we can obtain from the deceptive directness of his correspondence.

In his letters Fontane is not reluctant to commit himself to apparently categorical statements. One reason for this, aside from the obvious distinctions between 'literature' and letter-writing, is that he considers his letters as components of an interrupted dialogue, a

substitute in tone and liveliness for the real conversations he is deprived of. This vouches both for their readability and their tendency to delight or disturb. He allows his shifting moods to play on the subject-matter in a manner which accords with some of the prime conditions of unbridled discourse - where the need to both amuse and provoke is paramount and where overstatement and exaggeration serve these ends. These very energies which are channelled and orchestrated to create his art, are here unleashed in a kind of compensatory abundance. The immediacy of caricature is for Fontane inappropriate to the work of art, but essential in less formal contexts. Pusch's remarks on the need to create an effect through exaggeration apply to Fontane's letters as well as conversation:

'Wenn man etwas der Art sagt, übertreibt man immer. Wer ängstlich abwägt, sagt gar nichts. Nur die scharfe Zeichnung, die schon die Karikatur streift, macht eine Wirkung.' (HA V, 301)

Hyperbole has greater impact than a more carefully phrased opinion.

Conversation and letters thus achieve a dual purpose with regard to philistinism - they permit the cathartic expression of outrage and can contribute to the entertainment of a suitably attuned correspondent or partner in a dialogue. The writer's or speaker's own amusement may not be immediately apparent and may indeed only be possible for him much later, when he comes to transform some of these feelings and observations into literature. Like the princess in

Unwiederbringlich he and his readers may then find pleasure in the literary depiction of philistinism which is impossible in real life. Referring to Shakespeare's presentation of Justice Shallow and friends in Henry IV, Part 2, she is reported as follows: 'eine vollendete Darstellung des Philisteriums habe sie von jeher mehr entzückt als alles andere' (HA II, 685). The literary form that Jenny Treibel's philistinism takes, the ironic method which reveals the contradictions ingrained in her personality and mental habits, does not endear her to the reader. It is not some pathetically harmless character we are observing, but someone who is adept at manipulating others to achieve her ends. Fontane, perhaps since Jenny's model was his own sister, finds the odd mixture of hardheadedness and sentimentality, so typical of Jenny, so incongruous as to be amusing. At the same time it is a form of self-deception which awakens a kind of pity for someone who is enslaved by this mentality and a sense of disquiet at the social harm caused by a proliferation of such attitudes. The problem is so disquieting that it brings forth a complex reaction. The scattered, immediate reactions that express his varying moods in letter form tend to present a categorical stance that is complemented by his ambivalence in the literary mode. Both modes reveal philistinism as an essential problem, an area in which Fontane's aesthetic and moral sensibilities are engaged. Both modes are entertaining, whether as vituperative caricature in letters or as comic characterization in

literary works. They differ in the moral stance they project: indignation in the letters and a more humane assessment in the novels. His works are more subtle in their treatment of philistinism because they eschew a categorical approach and are not content with the simplifications which it produces.

What then has become of idealism, that precondition for the effective attack on philistinism? It has been so vocally and comprehensively claimed by philistines that it is a worthless banner to rally under. Lieutenant Vogelsang talks about his pursuit of an idea with such comic dignity and Jenny Treibel chatters on about the value of ideals until Professor Schmidt can bear it no longer. Ideals such as poetry have not been abandoned but they are under such threat that they must be harboured by reticence, shielded by self-irony. Such tactics can allow the genuine to be distinguished from the bogus, allowing it to exist on its own merits, without dubious support from those who are in fact masters of reality. Fontane's work is not without ideals, but they are presented in a deliberately modest manner as an implied criticism of the showy way they are claimed by Philister. If poetry were Jenny's ideal it would result in different behaviour. Since it does not, she is merely the spokeswoman for resonant platitudes, as her husband ironically indicates when he remarks: 'das Ideal ist die Hauptsache, soviel weiss ich nachgerade von meiner Frau' (HA IV, 334). His absolute statement is relativized here by the bathos of admitting that his wife told him. The irony resides in his awareness of the

fictitious relationship between his wife and her ideals.

Rendered increasingly circumspect, if not sceptical, by a long life observing humanity, seriously or more superficially pursuing certain ideals, Fontane notes the toll that this can take on human relationships, if not kept in perspective. He is also aware that Philister are insubstantial creations, nebulous products of a manner of thinking. In real life there is not such an obvious dichotomy between types of human beings. What remains as a worthwhile insight are not the aggregated faults of the Philister as a kind of scapegoat, but the detection of different varieties of philistinism in everyone. Where the idealist needs the Philister to make his point more vigorously, Fontane's honest realism has incorporated philistinism within an historically specific caste. Insofar as Fontane presents negative depiction, the bourgeois is a Spiessbürger, Besitzbürger or Bildungsphilister. The Spiessbürger is part of an old snobbish category, the other two are part of new realities. Newest of all is Fontane's incapacity morally to reject the new class outright, whilst resenting its modern, materialist mentality i.e. unlike Keller he does not feel essentially at one with the ethos of his age or society. A more thoroughgoing realist than Keller he is emotionally and aesthetically attracted to the humane possibilities of a dying class - the aristocracy - but rationally aware of the potential of the bourgeoisie who are gaining the ascendancy.

The unattractiveness of this potential shows the Bourgeois to be the formidable heir to the somewhat pathetic Philister.

NOTES

1. Culture and Anarchy (London, 1869), p. 99.
2. See Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte, edited by Hans-Georg Gadamer, Joachim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer, XII, H. 1 (Bonn, 1968). The following excerpts from the entry on 'Bildung':
 - (a) As understood by Goethe and Schiller: 'In der Gemeinschaft mit Schiller wird Bildung neben Persönlichkeit zur ethischen Kategorie. Auch als Idee im Wilhelm Meister aber meint Bildung (...) Ausformung der Individualität zur reifen Persönlichkeit in tätigem Weltumgang' (p. 11).
 - (b) Afterwards: 'Seit 1820 bzw. 1837 wird ein konventionell-enzklopädischer Begriff der Allgemeinbildung auf durch Staatsprüfungen privilegiertes, aber äusserlich bleibendes Bildungswissen bezogen, zu einem bürgerlichen Statussymbol' (p. 16).
3. See Walter Müller-Seidel, Theodor Fontane: Soziale Romankunst in Deutschland (Stuttgart, 1975), chapter 6, pp. 285-300.
4. Letter to his wife, 12 August 1882. Reference to the Hanser edition, edited by Walter Keitel and Helmut Nürnberger, Werke, Schriften und Briefe, second edition (Munich, 1971-1980), referred to in the text as HA (Hanser Ausgabe). Letters are in Abteilung 4 of this edition when cited. Here: (HA III, 198)
5. Briefe an Friedlaender, edited by Kurt Schreinert (Heidelberg, 1954), p. 244.
6. Briefe, edited by Gotthart Erler, third edition, 2 vols, Aufbau-Verlag (Berlin and Weimar, 1989). References in text to AV (Aufbau-Verlag). Here: (AV II, 427).
7. op. cit., 14 September 1889, p. 114.
8. op. cit., 12 October 1892, p. 191.
9. op. cit., 14 May 1894, p. 244.
10. Der adlige Mensch in der Dichtung: Eichendorff, Gotthelf, Stifter, Fontane (Basel, 1950), p. 103.
11. Letter to his wife, 24 July 1880, in Briefe, edited by Kurt Schreinert and Charlotte Jolles, 4 vols, Propyläen Verlag (Frankfurt-am-Main/Berlin, 1968-1971). Subsequent references in text in the form PV (Propyläen Verlag). Here: (PV I, 136).
12. Quoted by Georg Lukács, 'Der alte Fontane', in Theodor Fontane, Wege der Forschung series, edited by Wolfgang Preisendanz (Darmstadt, 1973). This is a reprint of an article that first appeared in Sinn und Form, 3. Jg., 1951, H.2. I shall refer to a number of essays in this compilation by Preisendanz. Here : p. 40.
13. 'Theodor Fontane :L'Adultera und der Stechlin', op. cit., p. 219. This is a reprint of an article in, Wirkendes Wort 10 (1960), pp. 221-238 under the title, 'Das Zitat als Gesprächselement in Theodor Fontanes Romanen'.
14. op. cit., p. 220.

15. Hans-Heinrich Reuter, Einleitung, Fontanes Werke in fünf Bänden, Aufbau-Verlag (Berlin and Weimar, 1977), vol. I, p. xxxiii.
16. At least his efforts lead to the creation of the Homunculus figure, so important for Faust's entry to the classical world of Part Two.
17. E.T.A. Hoffmann, 'Lebensansichten des Katers Murr', Werke, 5 vols, edited by Gisela Spiekerkötter (Zürich, 1965), III, 150.
18. An opinion of Fontane's editors of the Hanser edition: (HA IV, 770).
19. The most striking example is where Treibel responds to Krola's singing with Gretchen's words from Faust: "'Meine Ruh' ist hin'" (HA IV, 334). Fontane had written the same lines in a letter to his wife a few years before, when complaining of noisy neighbours: 27 June 1883 (PV I, 212).
20. Preisendanz, p. 219.
21. Letter to Friedrich Paulsen in Briefe an Friedrich Paulsen: in 500 gezählten Faksimiledrucken, Karl Dürr Verlag (Bern, 1949), p. 312.
22. Reuter, p. Lii (note 15 above).
23. Cf. Marx's reactions to the misuse of Schiller quotations in Karl Marx and world Literature, by S.S. Praver (Oxford, 1976), pp. 360-361.
24. Quoted by Hans-Heinrich Reuter in 'Entwicklung und Grundzüge der Literaturkritik Theodor Fontanes', Preisendanz, p. 133. A reprint of an article in Weimarer Beiträge (No. 5, 1959), pp. 183-223.
25. Herman Meyer, Preisendanz p. 218.
26. op. cit., p. 221.
27. Quoted by Richard Brinkmann in 'Allerlei Glück, allerlei Moral', Preisendanz, p. 446. Reprint from Theodor Fontane: Über die Verbindlichkeit des Unverbindlichen (1967), pp. 84-115.
28. In Fontanes Werke in fünf Bänden, Aufbau-Verlag (Berlin and Weimar, 1977), I. Referred to in text as FW. Here: (FW I, 125).
29. Quoted by Reuter, Preisendanz, p. 158.
30. op. cit., p. 163.
31. op. cit., p. 157.
32. 'Der alte Fontane', Preisendanz, p. 62.
33. Franz Dornseiff, Der deutsche Wortschatz nach Sachgruppen, third edition (Berlin, 1943), p. 508.
34. Charlotte Jolles, Theodor Fontane, Sammlung Metzler, second edition (Stuttgart, 1976), p. 84.
35. According to Reuter, he reacted 'mit unverhohlenen Ausdrücken des Spottes und der Verachtung' (AV I, p. xvii).
36. 'der alte Fontane', Preisendanz, p. 7. Reprint of article, in Die Zukunft (Berlin, 1910), H. 1.
37. Charlotte Jolles, p. 111.

EPILOGUE

I believe it must now be clear that a German literary tradition of depicting philistinism does indeed exist and that the topos undergoes noticeable changes in the nineteenth century. This is evident not by a proliferation of texts using varieties of the word Philister in their title - for there are few of them - but by the fact that there is a significant number of writers who at least mention, depict and comment on philistines, often using explicit visual or verbal identification. The tradition is uniquely German in the explicitness of its remarks on the phenomenon and the thoroughgoing manner in which it is explored. It would be difficult to think of a foreign equivalent to the sheer intensity and comprehensiveness of the Brentano or Nietzsche works we have considered. Conversely, it is easy to select foreign authors of the period who deal with many similar aspects of human behaviour - Flaubert, Gogol, Dickens - yet without using a specific linguistic label for the human types they are depicting.

If the forms of behaviour are truly international,¹ the fact that it develops into a tradition in Germany is due in no small measure to the standing of some of the writers who entered the fray early. Both Goethe and Schiller have been of seminal influence and their prestige undoubtedly helped other writers to commit themselves. Precisely why it should have attracted such interest remains difficult to

determine. We might speculate that the end of the eighteenth century was a particularly turbulent period for Germany, and that the turmoil was not expressed in overt political acts such as the revolution in France, but in attempts to assert a national identity. A sense of a fragmented country, with no single centre to focus intellectual and cultural activities - unlike France or England - nor any great age of literary excellence to point to, led to the kind of self-analysis that needed scapegoats: Germany was in the political and intellectual doldrums because of its people. A national re-awakening was required if it was to take a respectable position in the modern world. As we have seen with Brentano, the intention of his critique of philistinism was not only entertainment but catharsis. An extreme situation required outrage, biting satire and polemics in an attempt to alert others to the danger. Momentum was needed to wrest the country from its stagnation. Whether or not matters were actually as bad as portrayals of the philistine's behaviour suggest, writers did consider that somnolent mediocrity needed a spirited and combative riposte.

Retrospect knows that this was a period of great literary achievement in Germany. With Goethe and Schiller, and the Romantics, it entered its Golden Age, somewhat later than in England or France, who had had their Shakespeare and their Molière. The figure of the Philister was then partly a consequence of the heart-searching that was the preliminary to great achievements. Despite its lack of political unity,

Germany became an intellectual centre of European significance between about 1770 and 1830.² Such were the intellectual heights achieved in philosophy, in music, in literary theory and literature that these seemed increasingly at variance with pedestrian advances in political and social matters. There had, after all, been no revolution in Germany and Napoleon's wars of liberation had turned into conquest. The only liberation, as Eichendorff has noted, occurred in the mind and was instigated by Romanticism.

However, since it was an intellectual and aesthetic movement, requiring devotees who were cultivated enough to appreciate its esoteric notions, it could never be anything but élitist. The dichotomy to which philistinism bears witness was a social one. A small group of gifted and privileged young intellectuals took it upon themselves to be the prophets of national revival. The philistines - as the visual caricature indicates - were perceived as the settled members of the previous generation, in whom a vigorous new youth has lost faith.

In the early years of the nineteenth century, the idea of the Philister becomes the fashionable way to express this father-son conflict. It becomes a literary topos because young intellectuals in Germany seek to rejuvenate their nation through its literature. Their targets are prevailing attitudes to any matter of concern, especially the arts; their solutions are unconventional, and so the Philister are identified with conventions. Thus we see that the Romantics'

vehemence was compounded of their high-minded goal of a national revival, their élitist onslaught on the mundane existence of an inferior social class, and their attack on the conventionality of the older generation

Romanticism, as a literary movement, sought to liberate and rejuvenate the human spirit in its own idiosyncratic fashion. In contrast to the essentially optimistic rationalism of the Aufklärung, it sought to subvert the primacy of human reason by an emphasis on the intuitive and the irrational. It required great vigour and self-assurance on its part to counteract the staunch regard for reason, to which the rising middle classes gave impetus. 'Enlightenment' very soon became virtually identical with 'advancement', since the exercise of reason inevitably led to a questioning of the social and political status quo. Popular writers and middle-class periodicals propagated Enlightenment notions in diluted form and thus became ready targets for more discerning minds. Romanticism is, in part, an attempted check on the relentless advance of reason or its trivialized manifestation among the mercantile middle classes. The philistines are representatives of the negative tendencies within a major intellectual movement that has such foremost exponents as Kant and Lessing and - in modified form - Goethe and Schiller,³ albeit these last were held in especial esteem because of the aim of Classicism to merge Beauty and Truth with the exigencies of practical living.

As Eichendorff stands within Romanticism, so Keller

within the hybrid idealism of Poetic Realism and Fontane to the ethos of realism. In their differing attitudes to the Philister they nonetheless all converge in their literary attempt to sift out what they detect as bogus from what they present as genuine. Sometimes this is expressed as a contrast between what is natural and what is artificial. The philistine is the negative in each case. The process points to an ethical concern in each of them and posits certain ideals which they wish to proclaim. They are therefore principled writers, with varying degrees of urgency attached to their principles, who project values in their writing. At times, they all represent the philistines as obstacles to the attainment of these values, even though they disagree on a number of points. We are dealing with personal ethics, so that the Philister they create are personal creations, not standard models. This is evident in the manner in which all three identify their literary opponents, at times, as Philister. They naturally differ in whom they choose to call Philister, but they use the terminology to settle old scores, just as Goethe and Schiller had done in the Xenien. This should remind us of the need to be alert to the persuasive appeal of any writer's presentation of philistinism, since the subjective and rhetorical aspect of the tradition is always distinctive.

They agree also in their identification of language as a frequent symptom of the philistinism they depict. In this regard, they are displaying a natural interest in their

medium as writers, decrying the slipshod and conventional means of expression in various sectors of society. In addition, since they are intimately involved in the pursuit of literature, they are intensely aware of how other writers and literary works are treated in that society. We have noted Schiller in particular. They are all seeking to be arbiters of taste and reveal how literary taste is manipulated in their own time, whilst wishing to enrich the literary sensibilities of their reading public. They do this, either more directly, as in Eichendorff and Keller, by openly criticizing certain forms of writing, or more unobtrusively, in Fontane, by registering a range of literary responses among their characters. Their critique of cultural attitudes is at least an implicit rejection of the prevailing and popular writing in Kalender or Gartenlaube. Without exception, they are advocates of a higher, more demanding literature, with more lasting, but less immediate compensations. More ephemeral fare is philistine fodder.

Whilst none of the three was essentially a popular writer nor enjoyed a consistently large readership, each was yet alive to contemporary happenings and their works contain critical commentaries on issues of the time. This sense of unease about the values of the age each lives in is of crucial importance for our theme. Eichendorff has the most profound reservations; Keller and Fontane show only intermittent signs of this, but both increasingly distance themselves from the Zeitgeist during the last decade of their

lives. In the 1880s and the 1890s they are most blunt in their preference to be 'unzeitgemäss'. Their satirical response becomes more pronounced as the situation is seen to worsen.

We have seen how they ridicule aspects of reality both when it transparently conflicts with their ideals and when it apparently affirms them. At no point is there an uncritical acceptance of the rightness of the contemporary scene. The most consistent concerns of their criticism are materialism and utilitarianism, cardinal creeds of the expanding middle class. This same class is simply the most convenient target for these criticisms since its very survival depends upon adherence to the practical pursuit of wealth. To despise them for doing so is common enough, especially among the Romantics.

In terms of literary mode, the comic seems most natural for the depiction of philistinism by each of these writers. Eichendorff is attracted to polemical caricature, Keller alternates between witty satire (the Kammacher) and humorous connivance (Strapinski), and Fontane, even in his comic writing, attains to realist characterization (Jenny Treibel). All, even the last, are subsumed by the comic mode.

We can approach an understanding of the divergence in the positions of Eichendorff, Keller and Fontane by reviewing their different attitudes to the artist. Two central points emerge. Firstly, that the figure of the artist, so ubiquitous and positive in Eichendorff, is less frequent and generally

dubious in Keller and has virtually disappeared in Fontane. The idea of the fundamental importance of Poesie that pervades Eichendorff and largely motivates the creation of Philister as anti-heroes, has not been completely jettisoned but is stated more circumspectly, shorn of its quasi-religious and universal claims: in Keller, the artist gains in significance through society; in Fontane all special claims are suspect. In the latter's work writers are not more commendable than ordinary human beings and must commend themselves as human beings, in a special sense. The distinction set up between Künstler and Philister in the Romantic period is now an irritating anachronism. Fontane set out his objections in a section of his memoirs concentrating on Theodor Storm, begun in 1888. In these he criticizes Storm's public behaviour in that it seemed to imply the retention of the old dichotomy:

mit einer kolossal hohen Selbsteinschätzung (nur nicht im Geldpunkt) zusammen mit einer gleichzeitigen Unterschätzung des Alltagsmenschen, des Philisters, des Nichtdichters oder Nichtkünstlers. (AV I, 327)

He refers to Eichendorff's poem 'Engel und Bengel' to make his point, asserting that Storm was upholding the distinction but that he, Fontane, disapproved of it. His concluding remarks are a mixture of relief that writers generally no longer hold to such an idea 'Das ist nun Gott sei Dank überwunden' (ibid.), but that its occasional occurrence only invites ridicule. The virtual disappearance of the Philister in the Romantic sense in Fontane's work is intimately linked

to the disappearance of the artist as a subject of literary inquiry.

Where Eichendorff is combative and partisan, because he is operating within a real sense of dualism, both Keller and Fontane have no such assurance. Society may be dubious but so is the artist, particularly when he claims special status. Whilst Eichendorff had affirmed the Dichter as enthusiastic devotees of a strenuous calling, those who are visibly obsessed with some abstract notion are criticized as Fanatiker and Streber. There is now no single calling of compelling value. Literary and aesthetic ideals are divisive when too high-flown and both writers are interested in social accord, not discord. Where Eichendorff is committed to individuals with exceptional talent who scorn society and Keller insists on integration and harmony through society, Fontane sees individuals managing to survive despite society. The movement from Eichendorff to Fontane is one of increasing detachment by the writer, an increasing scepticism about absolute values and a move from a relatively clear-cut approach to a more pervasive ambivalence. In the final stage the artist is no longer integral part of a Weltanschauung and the idea of Philistertum has another ethical meaning.

The question of social class has engaged our interest on a number of occasions and it is integral to an understanding of philistinism. With so much else to divide them, it is remarkable that Eichendorff and Fontane see possibilities among the aristocracy for the transcendence of unwelcome

attitudes, to be located among the middle classes. Whilst it is not surprising that an aristocrat like Eichendorff should be so partial to his class, the phenomenon of middle-class self-criticism is one of the facts of literary history. Schiller had established the necessity of finding a class that would be capable of appreciating Poesie fully and had outlined the constraints operating upon certain classes:

So müssen wir uns, um sie auslegen zu lassen, nach einer Klasse von Menschen umsehen, welche, ohne zu arbeiten, thätig ist und idealisieren kann, ohne zu schwärmen; welche alle Realitäten des Lebens mit den wenigstmöglichen Schranken desselben in sich vereinigt und vom Strome der Begebenheiten getragen wird, ohne der Raub desselben zu werden.⁴

He had already described the alienating effect of work which required the sole exercise of a fragment of man's powers, notably in number six of the Aesthetische Briefe and his striving was towards the adumbration of an ideal yet to be realized. In this sense, it seems excessive of writers to accuse the middle classes - often their own class - when they are but the victims of social circumstances. Yet the most innovative ideas and the harshest criticism of the middle classes have generally come from writers who share their origins. This trend becomes even more noticeable from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards. The writer is then an alien within his own class and society, commenting on behaviour he has been able to observe at close quarters. Ignorance is undoubtedly a feature of their response to other classes: they simply have not sufficient first-hand experience of them to criticize effectively. The

disadvantaged social position of the working classes and the fact that they are likely to appear less articulate in a conventional middle-class sense, make it difficult to subject them to satire. Unlike the bourgeoisie, ripe for satire or judgemental realism, they are the more natural subjects of idealization or pathos.

Each of these writers posits a different solution to the problem of how best to develop human potential. We have seen how they each project ideal versions of the humanity their art is exploring, from Eichendorff's Dichter, through Keller's Bürger to Fontane's Mensch. The word Mensch is of course central to all three but the contexts are markedly different, so that the word has a slightly different meaning in each one. For Eichendorff, the criteria for humanity are contained in the notion of the Dichter, a high expectation indeed and not easily attainable. It leads him into a sense of dualism which is untenable for Keller and Fontane, who are both more reconciled to the philistinism of human nature and more ambivalent in their assessment of literature. They each seek an accommodation between the claims of literature and the claims of society, not a confrontation. Keller achieves this in a public context, Fontane in a more personal and private one. To an Eichendorff their approach could only seem a compromise. In Keller, the social dimension of his model and a less high-flown ideal allow a readier reconciliation between ideal and reality. In Fontane, the charm of conviviality is a symptom of the abandonment of

stifling ideals for the invigorating contributions of individuality. Whilst Eichendorff's and Keller's social optimism implied the submergence of the individual by a higher principle, Fontane rejoices in flawed humanity as the highest principle. Once flaws are cherished, the whole idea of the Philister as flawed examples of human potential has been radically re-assessed.

Thus we really see a change in the nature or status of traditional philistinism in the last third of the century. Keller and Fontane, as well as Nietzsche, note the harmful effect of the Franco-Prussian war in this regard. Provincialism also does not disappear overnight simply because an Empire is proclaimed in Versailles; if anything it becomes more entrenched also as nationalism and xenophobia develop. Political unification intensifies the self-confidence of Philister and allows popular culture to gain official status, hence disseminating philistinism in Germany more decisively than ever before. As a result the traditional culture of the middle classes is debased and we can note what Sagarra has called 'growing separation between the artist and the general public in the last decades of the century'.⁵

The topos of the Philister in German literature is therefore a consequence of a particular manner of thinking. As an eminently literary creation, it achieves a form of life only when particular writers infuse it with their frustrations regarding the reality of their day. It becomes a natural topos of writers whose work contains both a

satirical depiction of their society and an attempt to suggest an ethical alternative. German idealism, in the special conditions of the late eighteenth century, avails itself of a student slang-word and thereby launches a tradition of literary philistinism which continues into the present century. The Philister is always in some sense a consequence of intense speculative strivings failing to attain their ideal. As Nietzsche put it: 'Wenn der Deutsche aufhört, Faust zu sein, ist keine Gefahr grösser als die, dass er ein Philister werde und dem Teufel verfalle'.⁶ Eichendorff's eschatology is replicated here; Keller's pedagogic, utilitarian idealism lacks such spiritual concerns; Fontane's realist humanity, without sacrificing ethical distinctions, accepts our fallen (philistine) nature.

NOTES

1. Vladimir Nabokov, 'Philistines and Philistinism', New York Review (September 1981), p. 52.
2. Hans Kohn, The mind of Germany (New York, 1960), p. 23.
3. *op. cit.*, p. 42.
4. 'Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung', Schillers Werke, Nationalausgabe (Weimar, 1962), edited by Benno von Wiese, Erster Teil, XX, 490.
5. Eda Sagarra, Tradition and Revolution: German Literature and Society 1830-1890 (Birkenhead, 1971), p. 259.
6. Werke, edited by Karl Schlechta (Munich, 1969), I, 316.

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