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## 5: From Haunting Visions to Revealing (Self-)Reflections: The Goethean Hero between Subject and Object

*Hellmut Ammerlahn*

*Wo Objekt und Subjekt sich berühren, da ist Leben.*

[Where object and subject meet, there is life.]

—Goethe to Gustav Parthey, 28 August 1827

AT THE VERY BEGINNING of the drama, a desperate and daring Faust conjures up the Earth Spirit, but he recoils under the impact of his haunting vision: “Schreckliches Gesicht! [. . .] Weh! ich ertrag dich nicht” (Appalling vision! Woe, I cannot bear your sight).<sup>1</sup> Ironized as an “Übermensch” (superman) and derided as “Ein furchtsam weggekrümmter Wurm” (A fear-filled cringing worm), Faust is dismissed by the vanishing spirit with the verdict: “Du gleichst dem Geist, den du begreifst, / Nicht mir!” (490, 498, 512–13; You resemble the spirit that you comprehend / Not me). As Faust realizes, subjective yearnings and visions, however powerful, do not suffice to grasp or to hold on to the desired object:

Hab’ ich die Kraft dich anzuziehn besessen,  
So hatt’ ich dich zu halten keine Kraft.

(624–25)

[Having possessed the strength to summon you,  
I had no strength to make you stay.]

The relationship between subject and object has changed completely, reflecting the protagonist’s transformed capabilities, when we learn about the results of Faust’s subsequent encounters with the Earth Spirit. An amazing expansion and reversal has occurred that is also reflected by the environment in which the protagonist finds himself. The scene “Nacht” (Night), dating back to *Urfaust*, forcefully expressed Faust’s desire to escape the “dungeon” of his “narrow, gothic” study. Biographically it

mirrors the young Goethe's discontent and frustration, his need to break the walls of his mental confinement. The daytime scene of "Wald und Höhle" (Forest and Cavern) situated in the high mountains, was composed more than a dozen years later after the author had made life-changing strides in his personal development and significant discoveries as a scientist, anthropologist, and artist during his study trip in Italy. The former haunting visions have given way to an experimentally, visually, and cognitively acquired understanding of both the "kingdom" of an outer and the "wonders" of the inner world. Reflection and self-reflection have led to an emotionally satisfying bond with something greater than the subject. Through Faust, Goethe here attributes this comprehension and discernment to the gifts from the Earth Spirit, in whom an approximation of the objective has taken form and whom he addresses as "du":

Erhabner Geist, du gabst mir, gabst mir alles,  
 Warum ich bat. Du hast mir nicht umsonst  
 Dein Angesicht im Feuer zugewendet.  
 Gabst mir die herrliche Natur zum Königreich,  
 Kraft sie zu fühlen, zu genießen.  
 [. . .]  
 zeigst  
 Mich dann mir selbst, und meiner eignen Brust  
 Geheime tiefe Wunder öffnen sich.

(3217–21, 3232–34)

[Sublime Spirit, you gave me, gave me all,  
 For which I asked. Not in vain did you  
 Turn in the fire your countenance toward me.  
 You gave me glorious Nature for my kingdom,  
 The power to feel, to relish her.  
 [. . .]  
 then  
 You show me to myself, and the profound mysterious wonders  
 Of my breast reveal themselves.]

The development from an all-too-human subjectivity that is haunted by illusions, fear, or despair to a state of maturation revealing insights with general or superior objective validity is found in many of Goethe's works. Less wide ranging and all encompassing than Faust's quest but life changing nevertheless, other Goethean heroes proceed on their journeys of discovery in a similar way. To give but three more examples: In *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, Orestes is almost seized by madness when he has the terrifying vision that the priestess, his loving sister, would be forced to make him a blood sacrifice to the goddess. After she has healed him, his eyes are opened to the deeper meaning of the oracle. It is not the statue

of Apollo's sister, Diana, that has to be taken from Tauris, but his own sister Iphigenie, the personified image of "reine Menschlichkeit" (pure humaneness) who will atone for the crimes of the House of Tantalus.<sup>2</sup> In *Torquato Tasso*, the eponymous poet even compresses into one telling image both the haunting specter of being forsaken by everyone, and the new recognition that his supposed enemy is offering him the help he needs. This symbolic image of a poet shipwrecked by an imagination gone astray and then saved through the grasp and acceptance of reality is found at the very end of the drama:

So klammert sich der Schiffer endlich noch  
Am Felsen fest, an dem er scheitern sollte.

(HA 5, 3452–53)

[Thus at the very last the helmsman clings  
To the rock on which he almost foundered.]

Goethe's drama *Die natürliche Tochter* portrays the effects of destroying social structures and demolishing a "hohes Vorbild" (exemplary model) in times of chaos, as well as the means of keeping a unifying image actively alive, either in memory or in protective anonymity for a later restoration (HA 5, 1706). The Herzog (Duke) is devastated when falsely informed that his daughter Eugenie, the "Wohlgeborene" (high-born) whom he also calls "Meisterin" and "Heldin" (1384, 1387; champion, heroine), has fallen for a second time. Her body is maliciously reported as being "zerissen und zerschmettert und zerbrochen" (1507; being torn, shattered and broken). He rescues his memory of her nondismembered "köstliche Gestalt" (1495; delightful form) as an indestructible "Götterbild" (1535; divine image). An exemplary human being, the Amazon Eugenie displays many of the characteristics of Goethe's other Amazons, female symbolic personifications of an ideal actively engaged in reality.<sup>3</sup> The author also represents such a dynamic ideal approximating a form of perfection most comprehensively and elaborately in Faust's Helena as well as in Natalie, the main guiding figure for the hero in Goethe's classic novel, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. The Herzog, similar to Faust and Wilhelm Meister, in search of an objectifiable yet in his case a personally familiar image, says:

bleibe mir, du vielgeliebtes Bild,  
Vollkommen, ewig jung und ewig gleich!  
Laß deiner Augen klares Licht  
Mich immerfort umglänzen! Schwebte vor,  
Wohin ich wandle, zeige mir den Weg. [. . .]  
Du bist kein Traumbild, wie ich dich erblicke;  
Du warst, du bist. Die Gottheit hatte dich  
Vollendet einst gedacht und dargestellt.

So bist du teilhaft des Unendlichen,  
Des Ewigen, und bist auf ewig mein.

(1715–25)

[Stay with me, you dearly beloved image,  
Perfect, eternally young and always the same!  
May the clear light of your eyes at all time  
Surround me with splendor, take the lead,  
Wherever I go, show me the way.  
You are no vision of dreams; you were real,  
You are real as I perceive you. Once the godhead  
Had conceived and presented you as perfect.  
Thus you are part of the infinite, eternal,  
And you are mine eternally.]

These examples raise two fundamental questions:

1. What really is and what active role does the object of the quest, respectively an approximation of an objective reality that is more than a concept, play in the hero/heroine's emotional and cognitive growth?

2. What imagery and devices does the author choose to depict the various stages of progress or regression during this journey toward greater objectivity? Would Goethe's visualized "ideas" of metamorphosis and archetype be helpful here? Can human metamorphosis be understood with the help of his concept of "antwortende Gegenbilder" (responding counter-images) or by focusing on the figure of the "Doppelgänger" (double) who assumes a multitude of shapes in many of his works?

In her book *Ironie und Objektivität: Aufsätze zu Goethe*,<sup>4</sup> Jane Brown has dealt with issues related to the questions above, primarily the first one. She has moreover investigated the important role irony and parody play in the author's treatment of the dialectics of personal identity and growth. Proceeding from Goethe's goal in Italy of getting to know himself through purposeful and determined orientation, by directing a "reine[n] Blick auf die Gegenstände" (pure observation of the objects), Brown's analysis culminates for me in the statement: "Das Objekt ist nicht nur präsent, sondern auch selbständig aktiv, und zwar schon von Anfang an" (The object is not only present, but also independently active, and that right from the beginning).<sup>5</sup> One of the best proofs for the validity of this statement I see in Faust's grateful acknowledgment, quoted above, of an increasingly objective understanding of Nature's kingdom and the secrets of his inner self through an "active" Earth Spirit.

Nowhere in his works, except perhaps in his autobiographies, has Goethe provided a more penetrating and comprehensive exploration of the various stages of human and artistic development from subjectivism to the approximation of objective truth than in his bildungsroman of the

artist, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. By first addressing the second question above, I shall investigate Goethe's use of "Ebenbild" (likeness) or "Doppelgänger" that, although it plays an intriguing role in many of his poetic works, pervades this novel throughout as a structural and psychological device.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast to the many negatively denoted doubles in world literature (e.g., the evil, apelike double in R. L. Stevenson's novel *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*), Goethe's doppelgängers have a different function. He is not interested in the criminal per se. Mephistopheles, who exhibits aspects of Faust's destructive tendencies among other roles he plays, also acts as a positive facilitator for Faust's endeavors. But let us start with the most obvious uses of the double in a few of Goethe's writings and then proceed to their major function as symbols and as structural devices. Goethe's biographical account in the eleventh book of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* is an example for the lexical definition of a doppelgänger as the "double of a living person." He describes how after a tearful farewell from Friederike Brion, he saw, "nicht mit den Augen des Leibes, sondern des Geistes, mich mir selbst, denselben Weg, zu Pferde wieder entgegen kommen, und zwar in einem Kleide, wie ich es nie getragen" (HA 9, 500; not with the eyes of the body, but of the mind, how on horseback I was riding toward myself again, taking the same path but dressed in a garment, that I had never worn). The young Goethe had a premonition of what in fact would happen eight years later, when in that envisioned dress, on horseback and on that same road, he paid Friederike one more visit.

In Goethe's early literary satire, *Der Triumph der Empfindsamkeit*, an artificially manufactured and obvious double serves several purposes—for example, to illustrate differentiation, substitution, and transposition. An incurable sick prince and fool, Oronaro—the anagram of his name, "O-o-o-Narr" (o-o-o-fool) says it all—substitutes a passive life-size straw puppet for a woman of flesh and blood who would be too real and overwhelming for him. He gives her the external semblance of King Andrason's wife and transposes her image from the theater of his fantasy onto the stage of a private place for adoration. The fabricated double, surrounded by props of an artificial nature, can be carried in boxes anywhere to mollify the yearnings of the prince's super-subjective heart. The cavity of her bosom contains prominent novels of the age of sentimentalism including the author's own *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*. Thus Goethe satirically distances himself from a former stage of his own life and from a literary period he regards as passé.

In *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* the most basic and obvious doppelgänger resemblance, with dire and at the same time hilarious consequences, occurs in book 3. The Count believes that he sees himself as a ghost, not realizing that it is Wilhelm who is wearing his night robe and cap. It causes this aristocrat, who relies on superficial similarities and is

driven by illusions of intellectual superiority, to take this vision as a foreboding of his early death. He thereby confirms Jarno's assessment of him as a "hollow nut." Far beyond these incidences, however, in which an obvious resemblance is apparent, Goethe expands the shape and function of the doppelgänger to reveal the intricacies and complexities of the hero's failings, his creativity, and eventual maturation. Goethe makes use of this device according to the principle that he later poetologically defines in a letter to Carl Jacob Ludwig Iken: "Seit langem [habe ich] das Mittel gewählt, durch einander gegenübergestellte und sich gleichsam ineinander abspiegelnde Gebilde den geheimen Sinn dem Aufmerkenden zu offenbaren" (For a long time now I have practiced the chosen method, to reveal the more secret meaning [of my works] to the observant reader by configurations in which entities are placed opposite each other and thereby mirror each other within each other).<sup>7</sup>

Considering the myriad mirrorings found in Goethe's bildungsroman of the artist, I intend to differentiate three major categories: Wilhelm Meister's (a) self-created, (b) opposite, and (c) complementary doppelgänger figures. Establishing such categories also makes it easier to understand the double perspective, that of narrator and of central character, which structures the novel as well as much of its symbolism. Given the space limitations here, a summarizing overview will have to do.<sup>8</sup>

## Self-Created Doubles

In book 2 of the novel, the figures of Mignon, the "genius child," and the Harpist as the tragic bard make their first appearance. According to Goethe's epistemology, the meandering indecisiveness of Wilhelm, the talented hero, is the sign of a vacillating and not yet disciplined but nevertheless creative and productive imagination. This becomes most evident through his tragic doppelgängers, Mignon and the Harpist. Wilhelm creates them out of the painful memories from his past, the initial childhood loss of his beloved marionettes, and the abandonment of his lover Mariane. After the false assumption of Mariane's unfaithfulness Wilhelm falls sick in body and soul. His broken heart, as the two tragic companions prove even more than Wilhelm's explicit statements in books 5 and 7, takes years to heal. Mignon exhibits the external form of a marionette until Wilhelm transforms her into a child of his heart. Like the itinerant Harpist, this "little Mary" figure comes from Italy, which for Goethe stands as the land in which the arts permeate daily life and have reached pinnacles of perfection.

Both Mignon and the Harpist on a symbolic level reveal themselves as creations of Wilhelm's heart and imagination. This is also evidenced by the fact that they display more erratic than organic metamorphoses. At first, the changes in their lives are analogous to the central character's

own development. Later, when Wilhelm begins to overcome his extreme inwardness and subjectivity, they move in the opposite direction. Embodying the hero's emotions of longing and guilt, they express the inner relief music and poetry can bring to a tortured heart. A detailed structural and thematic analysis of Mignon's and the Harpist's songs reveals that these songs originate from Wilhelm himself. Just as his lively imagination has transformed the traumatic experiences of his past into the images of these singers, so do they become the medium for expressing his lyrical poetry: this in itself is one of Goethe's extraordinary artistic achievements that needs to be recognized! In the novel itself, the author as narrator repeatedly and directly points to the fact that Wilhelm writes poems, plays, and even projects the plot of a novel in his imagination.<sup>9</sup> Wilhelm's songs are also sung in the later sequel, his *Wanderjahre*.

### Doubles of an Initially Opposite Character

As a contrast to Mignon's and the Harper's introverted nature, Goethe introduces the extraverted Philine and Laertes likewise in book 2. They belong to the group of doubles who reflect Wilhelm's increasing ability to overcome his tragic outlook and affirm life with its possibilities and challenges. Through their mediation the hero learns to master several difficulties he is confronted with, occasional failure notwithstanding. Mirroring certain developing traits in the central character, Philine and Laertes furthermore exhibit typical functions of the doppelgänger, merging past events with outer resemblances. Philine possesses and reminds Wilhelm of Mariane's blond hair and sensuality and in book 5 performs an essential step in healing the suffering hero's trauma. Through her night visit after the *Hamlet* premiere, she causes him in fact to abandon his prior oath to repulse all intimate encounters with the beautiful sex. Similarly, Wilhelm's self-torturing attachment to his past love "tragedy" with Mariane is satirized and thus deprived of its exclusive control over him when reflected in the grotesque events of Laertes's love "burlesque," a distorting mirror, indeed, and a mocking shot for Johann Christoph Gottsched's insistence on the twenty-four-hour time limit in drama. "Stellen Sie sich vor," Philine exclaims about Laertes, "binnen vierundzwanzig Stunden war er Liebhaber, Bräutigam, Ehemann, Hahnrei, Patient und Witwer! Ich wüßte nicht, wie man's einem ärger machen wollte" (HA 7:219; Just imagine, within twenty-four hours he was a lover, a bridegroom, a husband, a cuckold, a patient, and a widower! I would not know how one could treat anyone more abominably). Laertes furthermore functions in stimulating Wilhelm's potential for appreciating the world around him, for becoming more knowledgeable about facts of reality, qualifications he needs to develop in conjunction with others as a budding poet and future healer.



Step by step, Wilhelm sheds his tragic perspective on life, as embodied in the self-created and in the literary doppelgangers, the Harpist and Hamlet respectively. By interpreting and adapting the text of Shakespeare's drama and by playing the title role, Wilhelm succeeds in distancing himself from his earlier identification with Hamlet, the melancholic sick prince. He realizes that they share neither the same fate nor a similar psychological identity.

Another most significant doppelganger motif is introduced at the end of book 1 with the *Bild vom kranken Königssohn* (Painting of the sick prince), most likely inspired by a painting of Antonio Belucci. Belonging to the sold art collection of Wilhelm's grandfather, it continues to live in Wilhelm's imagination until it becomes a truly understood and appreciated object of his inheritance again with his marriage to Natalie. This prominent painting functions as a leitmotif throughout the novel, reflecting the trajectory of Wilhelm's life from sickness of body and soul toward healing and happiness, when its ultimate symbolic implications are revealed. Skillfully Goethe juxtaposes the picture with Wilhelm's role playing of Hamlet. In addition, this painting anchors *Lehrjahre* also in the realm of the fine arts that, through discourse and examples, assumes increasing importance in the novel's last three books. Interestingly enough, no mention of this picture is found in *Wilhelm Meisters theatralische Sendung*, the novel's fragmentary first version, which traditional scholarship has considered Goethe's only artist novel. Being familiar with Plutarch's story on which the picture is based, Wilhelm recognizes the potential for a happy transformation in the relationships it depicts and finds in it an omen for his own nontragic future. Thus "our hero" abandons his tragic dramatic double, Hamlet, and embraces the eventually healed prince of the picture. Wilhelm, who continues to carry the first name (in German) of his (and Goethe's) literary father figure, William Shakespeare, is himself that healed prince at the end of his bildungsroman of the artist.<sup>10</sup>

## Complementary Doubles

These, often foreshadowing the hero's future insights and/or the integration of developing character talents, may initially appear as enigmatic or annoying. Examples are the so-called "emissaries" of the Tower whose configurations and function Wilhelm does not recognize until books 7 and 8. Among them are the Abbé and Jarno. Until the maturing hero recognizes and accepts in the Abbé the personification of what for Goethe is the archetype of wisdom and "höhere Vernunft" (higher reasoning), Wilhelm perceives only its various ectypal manifestations. These appear as well-informed individuals who puzzle him with their perspicacious remarks, such as the art connoisseur in book 1, the Lutheran country parson in book 2 and the pseudocatholic priest at the beginning of book 7.

Jarno, to whose judgment the hero owes his introduction to Shakespeare's works, functions as a corrective mirror to Wilhelm's escapades at the Count's court in book 3. As a complementary double, he often irritates him with his critical reasoning, until Wilhelm learns to use this inborn human faculty himself, a much-needed counterweight to his lively imagination. Other insightful figures such as Lothario and Therese become less enigmatic for the hero after he has largely developed the capabilities they represent. Wilhelm's initiation into the formerly secret Tower Society, an "aristocracy of the mind and purposeful activity," confirms that most of what they stand for on the "Real-" and "Symbolebene" (on the factual and symbolic level) is now familiar and available to him, even if he more than occasionally reacts overly emotional to events and misunderstandings and forgets to use the developed faculties he possesses appropriately.

Why does Goethe hide this function of the doubles, why indeed does he hide Wilhelm under the "minimizing mask" of a seemingly "passive" hero, even after his initiation? One reason is found in Goethe's sad discovery, "daß das Publikum [. . .] sehr selten aber [weiß], wie es mit dem Dichter dran ist" (that the public very seldom knows, what to make of the writer). He admits furthermore what we also know from innumerable incidences in his private life—namely, that "es mir von jeher Spaß gemacht hat, Versteckens zu spielen" (I have always had fun playing hide and seek).<sup>11</sup> Another reason is found in his wish to challenge the "productive" reader.<sup>12</sup> The author wants him or her to discover the "offenbare Geheimnisse" (the open secrets) that he has hidden in the work.<sup>13</sup> Jane in her investigation of Goethe's usage of "verkleinernde Parodie" (diminishing parody) provides several examples for this and points to their relevance for the history of German literature.<sup>14</sup>

Doubles in the form of twins and apparent look-alikes symbolize Wilhelm's growing ability to differentiate, to gain a more conscious assessment of himself and the world around him. Thus the Abbé has a twin brother who most likely plays the ghost of Hamlet's father in the premiere, and Felix splits into identical twins in the hero's dream. It takes him furthermore quite some time to differentiate three blood-related women who initially look very much alike and to assess their unique impacts on his life. Natalie, Wilhelm's inner guide, healer, and future wife, resembles both her sister, the beautiful Countess, and her aunt, the Beautiful Soul. Natalie combines their separate talents, natural as well as artistic beauty and spirituality, and enhances them to become the novel's figure of light, a "worldly saint."

Based on Goethe's morphological studies, she represents an "Urbild— an archetypal form," and the ideal of balance in nature and society. She symbolizes Wilhelm's longed-for objective, his goal as a future healer and poet. She stands as the principal "antwortendes Gegenbild" in Wilhelm's

quest.<sup>15</sup> For the sagacious Therese, the images of Wilhelm and Natalie converge because of their inherent “similarity.” She claims that Wilhelm has from Natalie “das edle [. . .] Streben nach dem Bessern, wodurch wir das Gute [. . .] selbst hervorbringen” (HA 7:531–32; the noble pursuit of that which is better, whereby we ourselves create the Good). No wonder that Wilhelm expresses, as Faust does to the Earth Spirit, his deep gratitude to Natalie for being “guided by her” (see 537).

Numerous “concealed” and yet revealed analogies exist between Wilhelm Meister and Goethe’s dramatic hero Faust. The latter’s ardent quest to win Helena in acts 1 to 3 of the drama’s second part resembles Wilhelm’s search and love for Natalie. Here, as in *Lehrjahre*, the protagonist is personified as a creative poet. Their form of poetological “doubling” is confirmed among many other correspondences by the identical wording with which the author describes the ultimate goal of the knowledgeable poet. Even though the objective realm of activity of Wilhelm’s Natalie is primarily Nature and Society, while that of Faust’s Helena can be summarized as Beauty, Art, and History, Goethe calls them both: “Gestalt aller Gestalten—the form of all forms.”<sup>16</sup>

After reading a penetrating description of his life story in the novel’s last book and thus seeing “sein Bild außer sich” (his portrait from the outside), which was written by a “denkender Geist,”—the “thinking person” of the author, of course!—Wilhelm becomes conscious that he is also “ein anderes Selbst” (505; another self), a doppelgänger, but of whom? The latter term, coined by Jean Paul in 1797, is absent from the novel. However, in a letter, Goethe himself called Wilhelm Meister, who originally was conceived as being on a “theatrical mission,” his “geliebtes dramatisches Ebenbild,” his “beloved dramatic likeness.”<sup>17</sup> The German Shakespearean “William Master” thus reveals himself as the ironically disguised doppelgänger of the author, who in this novel, his “inner autobiography,” presents a lasting account of the errors and detours he experienced as well as the skills, knowledge, and understanding he acquired during his own “Lehrjahre” (apprenticeship).

## Notes

Epigraph: Goethe to Gustav Parthey, 28 August 1827. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Gedenkausgabe der Werke, Briefe und Gespräche*, ed. Ernst Beutler (Zurich: Artemis, 1948–54), 23:492.

<sup>1</sup> Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Faust. Eine Tragödie. Werke. Hamburger Ausgabe in 14 Bänden*, ed. Erich Trunz, 16th edition (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1996), 3, lines 482 and 485. Further citations from *Faust* will be cited by line number according to this edition, indicated by HA. All translations are mine.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe’s poem, “Was der Dichter diesem Bande,” dedicated to the actor Krüger who played the role of Orestes in a performance of *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, ends

with the lines: “Alle menschliche Gebrechen / Sühnet reine Menschlichkeit” (HA 5, 406; All human frailties are expiated by pure humaneness).

<sup>3</sup> In Jane Brown’s definition Goethe’s ideal includes the absolute as well as a synthesis with the real. It stands in opposition to the world of reality and at the same time subsumes it. See note 25 in her essay “The Tyranny of the Ideal: The Dialectics of Art in Goethe’s ‘Novelle,’” *Studies in Romanticism* 19 (1980): 217–31.

<sup>4</sup> Jane Brown, *Ironie und Objektivität: Aufsätze zu Goethe* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Brown, *Ironie und Objektivität*, 34, 39.

<sup>6</sup> Known as a literary motif since antiquity, “the double” constitutes the subject matter for comedies such as Plautus’s *Menaechmi* and Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*, where identical twins or look-alikes cause hilarious confusions.

<sup>7</sup> To Carl Jacob Ludwig Iken, 27 September 1927. *Goethes Briefe. Hamburger Ausgabe in 4 Bänden*, ed. Karl Robert Mandelkow (Hamburg: Christian Wegner, 1967), 4:250 (henceforth: HA-Br).

<sup>8</sup> A detailed interpretation of the characters of the novel and their symbolic inter-relationships is found in Hellmut Ammerlahn, *Imagination und Wahrheit. Goethes Künstler-Bildungsroman “Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre”: Struktur, Symbolik, Poetologie* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003). The book does not include the results of the present study. It does not focus on the doppelgänger motif with its distinctly different categories, nor does it broach the theme of subject and object in other Goethean works as analyzed here.

<sup>9</sup> E.g.: “Ein ganzer Roman [. . .] entwickelte sich in seiner Seele” (HA 7:55; An entire novel developed in his soul), and “er komponierte aus dem Reichtum seines lebendigen Bildervorrats sogleich ein ganzes Schauspiel mir allen seinen Akten, Szenen, Charakteren und Verwicklungen” (HA 123–24; He at once composed a complete drama with all its acts, scenes, characters, and entanglements out of the abundance of his lively reservoir of images).

<sup>10</sup> For a brief historical overview of this novel’s scholarly reception since 1953 and an investigation of Goethe’s morphological and poetological principles determining its new paradigmatic genre, see Hellmut Ammerlahn, “The Marriage of Artist Novel and Bildungsroman. Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister*: A Paradigm in Disguise,” *German Life and Letters* 59, no. 1 (2006): 25–46.

<sup>11</sup> Letter to Carl Friedrich von Reinhardt, 22 June 1808, HA-Br 3:79.

<sup>12</sup> In a letter to Schiller, Goethe demands, “daß sich der Leser produktiv verhalten muß, wenn er an irgendeiner Produktion teilnehmen will” (19 November 1796, HA-Br 2:245; that the reader must be productively engaged if he wants to take part in any production).

<sup>13</sup> See e.g. his letters to his long-time friend Carl Friedrich Zelter dated 1 June and 26 August 1809. The following statement, here in reference to *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, is valid for all works of his maturity and the readers Goethe expects to find: “Ich bin überzeugt, daß Sie der durchsichtige und undurchsichtige Schleier nicht verhindern wird bis auf die eigentlich intentionierte Gestalt hineinzusehen” (HA-Br 3:107; I am convinced that the transparent and

nontransparent veil will not prevent you from penetrating to the intentionally designed form).

<sup>14</sup> Jane Brown, *Ironie und Objektivität*, 12. See also the chapter “Schiller und die Ironie von *Hermann und Dorothea*,” 164–79.

<sup>15</sup> See the statement in Goethe’s Winckelmann essay written a few years after the completion of *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*: “Findet sich hingegen in besonders begabten Menschen jenes gemeinsame Bedürfnis, eifrig zu allem, was die Natur in sie gelegt hat, auch in der äußeren Welt die *antwortenden Gegenbilder* zu suchen und dadurch das Innere völlig zum Ganzen und Gewissen zu steigern, so kann man versichert sein, daß auch so ein für die Welt und Nachwelt höchst erfreuliches Dasein sich ausbilden werde” (HA 12:97, italics added; If, however, in particularly talented people that shared desire is found to eagerly search for everything that nature has placed in them, also the *responding counter-images* in the outer world, and thus enhance the inner [world] to what is whole and certain, then one can be assured that such an existence, most gratifying for the world and posterity, will develop).

<sup>16</sup> *Lehrjahre*, HA 7:445; *Faust II*, 8907.

<sup>17</sup> To Charlotte von Stein, 24 June 1782, HA-Br 1:399.