Chapter: V

The Artistic Development of Joseph Knecht as Magister Ludi in Hermann Hesse’s *The Glass Bead Game*

“Stages”

As every flower fades and as all youth

Departs, so life at every stage,

So every virtue, so our grasp of truth,

Blooms in its day and may not last forever.

Since life may summon us at every age

Be ready, heart, for parting, new endeavor,

Be ready bravely and without remorse

To find new light that old ties cannot give.

In all beginnings dwells a magic force

For guarding us and helping us to live. (Hesse. 444)

The Glass Bead Game by Hermann Hesse, in 1943 it was first published in Switzerland, which is the last significant work of Hesse. It is Hesse’s account of the life of Magister Ludi Joseph Knecht. The novel is fundamentally a parody of biography as Hesse recounts the narrative of Joseph Knecht. Since Knecht was a young child, he has been fixated on acing the Glass Bead Game. Knecht is an individual from the scholarly elite and he at long last turns into a Master of the Game, or Magister Ludi, when he is a grown-up. Hesse recounts his story with the parody of humor in it.

Dedication and loyalty kept Knecht from discussing the situation with his superiors earlier. He predicted the changes that he saw coming and that the end of the Glass Bead Game was coming as the nation prepared for war. He didn’t want to be Magister when the Game deteriorated or was eliminated.
Knecht's dedication was also to learning and teaching and this way he wanted to tutor or teach in the real world when he left the Order. He isn't interested in money or in worldly possessions.

Allowing the mechanism for personal fulfillment, in most cases, is one of the reasons for the Order. Its members can study whatever they want. They are not forced into an occupation or an area of study. This is seen in the free study period that follows the end of curricula study. The student is free to study whatever area or areas he selects. He has to file a plan, but he chooses what is in it so he can study the subjects he is curious about or the areas that he finds the most rewarding.

The drive for self-fulfillment was also the reason for Knecht leaving the Order. He didn't find his work rewarding or fulfilling anymore. He did enough research to find out what was missing in his life and what he had to do to take steps toward self-fulfillment. This process took him several years, but he did it. He left the Order to find a more rewarding life in the outside world.

Whether or not Knecht would have found his position as a tutor and life in the outside world more rewarding will never be known because he died before he could find out. It is only conjecture that life in the outside world would have been more fulfilling for Knecht.

In many ways, this is what the Castalia is all about. Only the best students are admitted to its elite schools. They have the best academic advantages that the country has to offer. When they complete their curricula studies, they have an indeterminate number of years of free study. Students can study whatever they want, however broad or narrow the study, for as many years as they want. They can't be formally admitted to the Order until they specialize in an area.

The novel actually depicts, implicitly or explicitly, three visions of Castalia: the utopian spiritual realm portrayed in the introduction and only there; the Alexandrine republic of aestheticism, sharply attacked by Knecht and the narrator alike in the text of the novel; and finally a more balanced synthesis of life and spirit represented by the narrator himself. It is necessary to make sharp distinctions between these three stages. (Ziolkowski. 52)
Knecht fit in with this whole paradigm. He never stopped learning. When he was a student and confronted with Designori, he learned from him. When he was assigned to the monastery, he learned from Father Jacobus. Knecht was also active in the pursuit of knowledge. When he went as far as he thought he could go in the Order, he resigned. He was shielded by the body of knowledge available in the outside world, and he wanted a chance to learn about it. He took this chance when he resigned. He didn’t want a trial separation because he didn’t want the Order as a safety cushion to fall back on. He wanted to succeed on his own.

The language and meaning of the novel are both a little pompous. This style of writing contributes to the irony and parody of the situation: a dedicated monastic Order with an oath of poverty that is dedicated to the pursuit of learning. The members do not take part in religion or politics, and they eschew the study of world history. No one in the Order has any need or desire for money or possessions or contact with the outside world. They have an annual Game competition called the Glass Bead Game that is treated almost in the same respect as the Olympics. People come from all over to watch the games and players train for the Game. The whole infrastructure of the Order exists to protect its own existence.

Most of the language of the novel is straightforward, even if it is slightly flowery and pompous. One may require a dictionary to look up some of the words used in the book, but for the most part, the book is easy to follow and understand. In spite of the pompous, pretentious language and style of writing, the reader does not tire of it. There is still the anticipation of wanting to know what happens next in the story.

The twelve chapters of Knecht’s biography proceed chronologically, relating the outstanding periods in his life from his selection, at age twelve or thirteen, into Castalia as a pupil, to his defection from the pedagogic province some thirty-five years later. We see Knecht progress smoothly through his studies at Eschholz and Waldzell (the school for students who wish to devote themselves specifically to the Glass Bead Game). We witness his friendship with Plinio Designori, the “auditor” who returns to the outside world when his studies are ended; with Fritz Tegularius, the hyperintellectual who caricatures, by exaggeration, the principles and values of Castalia; the old Magister Musicae, who represents beatific bliss.
and harmony achieved in life itself; the Older Brother, a Castalian who has devoted himself so one-sidedly to oriental studies that he has become almost Chinese himself; and Thomas von der Trave (a subtle tribute to Thomas Mann), the polished and urbane Magister Ludi. For two chapters we follow Knecht to the Benedictine monastery of Mariafels, where, as an official emissary of Castalia, he establishes diplomatic relations between the two orders and, from Pater Jacobus, learns basic lessons in history. For eight years, after the death of Thomas von der Trave, Knecht is in office as Magister Ludi, a position in which he attains great renown. After five or six years, however, grave doubts begin to assail him, and they are intensified by conversations with his old friend Plinio Designori. Knecht decides to defect from his position. He sends a long letter of justification to the authorities and then goes to Plinio’s house, where he expects to take up a position as tutor to Plinio’s son, Tito. On the second day of his liberty Knecht accompanies his pupil to a mountain lodge where, unexpectedly, he drowns while following Tito in a swim across the icy lake at sunrise. (Ziolkowski. 42)

The novel is structured in the form of twelve chapters, which tell the story of the life of Joseph Knecht. After the twelve chapters, there is a section called Joseph Knecht’s Posthumous Writings. This section contains the poems and essays that Knecht wrote as a student. As students engaging in free study, they were often required to write an essay about a Life. They would select a time in history and write a story about their place in it. Hesse has three of these lives: The Rainmaker, The Father Confessor, and The Indian Life. This section doesn’t add anything to the action of the novel, but they are insights into the life and character of Joseph Knecht and to life within the Castalia.

The Parody of Biography

The Introductory section of the novel gives a few insights about the narrator and fundamental character, Joseph Knecht. It runs in opposition to custom to develop a sketch of the main character. Hesse writes the book with a seriousness that emphasizes the parody of the situation, from the way of life of the Order to the seriousness with which the Glass Bead Game is taken.
The reader has to appreciate the parody that results from the serious manner in which the book is written. The way that Hess achieved the parody was through his manner of writing. It is easy to laugh at some of the pomp of the Glass Bead Games that take place during the course of the novel.

For, after all, obliteration of individuality, the maximum integration of the individual into the hierarchy of the educators and scholars, has ever been one of our ruling principles. And in the course of our long tradition this principle has been observed with such thoroughness that today it is exceedingly difficult, and in many cases completely impossible, to obtain biographical and psychological information on various persons who have served the hierarchy in exemplary fashion. In very many cases it is no longer even possible to determine their original names. The hierarchic organization cherishes the ideal of anonymity, and comes very close to the realization of that ideal. (Hesse. 11-12)

Hesse does not believe that it is a form of disobedience to try to ascertain some of the details of Knecht’s life. Every aspect of the Glass Bead Game comes from the person who made the change, and that is Knecht. Most biographies are of people who have gone beyond the ordinary. Biographies are usually of people who have distinguished themselves in some way and the meaning of their personality has changed over the times. An individual is deserving of having his biography told if he has distinguished himself through education or intellect as an individual. He cannot be a rebel driven by passions and desires. The subject is usually someone who has performed service to the supra personal. They aren’t interested in his family history, his favorite books, or his likes or dislikes. They are interested in what distinguishes him, and this is their interest in Joseph Knecht, Master of the Glass Bead Game. Because of this, Hesse says, they have gathered everything they possibly could about him.

**Nature of the Glass Bead Game**

Hesse says his book isn’t just intended for people who play the Glass Bead Game, but is intended for anyone who has an interest in the game. Because of this, the book needs an introduction which it wouldn’t have required if it had been intended for players within the order. It does not serve the purpose of clarifying any questions that exist within the order itself. The introduction is not a history of the Glass Bead Game and it is in no
way tries to give the rules of the Glass Bead Game. There will never be any textbook for the game and the only way to learn it is by the experience of many years. The game draws upon knowledge from many different disciplines and is a way of playing with a totality of all of the values within the culture. There is no fast way to learn the game since it is based on all of knowledge. Adding anything like new language to the game is not up to the whims of the individual player, it is up to the directorate. There is no way to expand on the contents since they already contain all of knowledge. The player basically has the whole universe of knowledge available to him. This means that no two players experience the game in the same way, since different themes and information are used by different players.

We shall not make the mistake of some readers who wrote to Hesse that they had invented the Glass Bead Game long before he described it in his novel. (In Hesse’s letters one can read his amusing answers to some of these humorless aficionados.) It is fruitless to attempt any description of the rules and techniques of the game, for nowhere is it outlined in detail. By way of analogy: Thomas Mann never intended Adrian Leverkuhn’s compositions, which he describes with such professional detail and precision in Doctor Faustus, to be performed. The modern novelist is not satisfied to state merely that his hero wrote a book, composed a symphony, constructed a perfect game; he wants to depict the act of writing, composing, constructing; and to do this he must describe the work with persuasive realism. But it would be as futile to attempt to set up a game as it would be to reconstruct the score of Leverkuhn’s Apocalipsis cum figuris. As a matter of fact, it would be a decided artistic flaw if the game were described with such precision that a table of rules could be drawn up. Though there are many examples, the Glass Bead Game is intended to rely as a symbol, and any symbol must transcend its specific application or else it degenerates into allegory. In the novel the Glass Bead Game symbolizes the universal longing for what Hesse calls the “unio mystica of all disparate elements of the Universitas Litterarum.” It is “a refined, symbolic form of the search for perfection, a sublime alchemy, an approach to the spirit that is unified in itself above all images and quantities, an approach to God.” (Ziolkowski. 44)
Hesse next looks at the age of the Glass Bead Game and says that it can find itself in the days of Pythagoras and ancient Greece or ancient China. The age given to the game is almost a matter of personal choice for the player. He also places various players of the Glass Bead Game throughout history. He also says that the Glass Bead Game is tied up with music. The actual beginning of Glass Bead Game goes back to the beginning of the intellectual movement. Hesse places it with Plinium Ziegenhalss, who he calls the historian of literature.

Hesse next looks at the development of intellectual life in Europe and concludes that it is based on two things. First was the separation of thought and belief from authority. People basically began to think for themselves and some had to try to justify these phenomena in order for it to be a legitimate endeavor. It is easy to fit periods of time into history but it is difficult for people to see their own role in the events of the time and how they fit into history. Music comes about from harmony.

As to the origins of Glass Bead Game—Hesse seems to feel that the game began simultaneously in Germany and England as an exercise by musicians. It began as a memory improvement exercise. Musician Bastian Perrot of Calw of the Musical Academy of Cologne is said to have constructed an abacus-type contraption with glass beads strung on wires. The wires represented the musical staff and the beads represented the notes. This was used for memory improvement. The game became popular and was soon called the Glass Bead Game. The game soon made the move to mathematics and was used for formulas. It gradually spread to other disciplines as a form of mental exercise, and each discipline had its own rules and language for the game.

The Glass Bead Game can be played alone or in groups of two or more. Sometimes the rules are written down, sometimes they aren’t. Eventually, the game became a form of public ceremony. These games are officiated over by ceremonial Masters. A game can be started with any theme. The game eventually came to acquire the status of a public institution with a Game Commissioner in each of the different countries. The supreme head of the game was known as the Ludi Magister, and he officiated at official matches.
The Artistic Development of Joseph Knecht as Magister Ludi

“Wisdom is not communicable. One can find it, live it, do wonders through it, but one cannot communicate and teach it.”

— Hermann Hesse

Joseph Knecht an Orphan Child

Hesse asserts that there is no information of the inceptions of Knecht. They expect that he was an orphan or lived in foster care. Knecht, accordingly, did not encounter the contention amongst home and elite school that others have confronted. Knecht appears to have been bound for Castalia and the Board of Educators. Knecht isn’t an aficionado and he effectively procures his fate. Dissimilar to Mozart and Bach, Knecht does not leave any innovative works him. It is the later piece of Knecht’s life that turns into a legend. Regardless of whether the legend is genuine isn’t imperative. His life is accounted for regarding stages and it is in this soul that the legend is acknowledged. He moves toward becoming Magister Ludi and is the model for each one of the individuals who pursue him. In this part, he upgrades the social legacy. When he accomplishes the title of Master, he moves into a past dimension what is already known. Hesse says he will report on Knecht’s life in a historical context.

Knecht’s School Life in Berolfsingen

Knecht is twelve or thirteen years old and a student at the Latin school in the small town of Berolfsingen. His teachers recommended him for admission to an elite school but he was not told this, only that he must practice for a visit from the Music Master. He is very talented in music, playing the violin and the lute. On the appointed day, he is summoned by the music teacher and introduced to the Music Master, who wants him to play from memory. The Music Master plays a few notes and Knecht plays the rest of the work from memory. The Music Master has Knecht play the tune several times. Lost in their music, the student and the master play and sing together.

The experience makes an impression on Knecht. He views the world differently. He has received his calling to his vocation. Based on this encounter, his name is placed in the golden book, also known as the climbers list. This is the list of names of those recommended for admission to an elite school. But Knecht does not know any of this. The boy’s education continues and he realizes that his teachers are treating him
differently, almost as if he were a colleague, rather than a student. As he grows and develops, his way of life in Berolfsingen does not seem appropriate. The faculty eventually informs him of his admission to an elite school.

**The Elite Schools and Social Order**

The boy’s life is different with his admission into the elite. He now has a sense of vocation as he is headed to a school of Castalia. Knecht does not have any family ties to sever when he goes to boarding school. The schools of Castalia are for the extraordinary gifted students. Students gain entry through their teachers, not through examinations. The elite schools then admit the student on probation. The staff is on the Board of Educators, which controls all of education in the country. The Ludi Magister, the director of the Glass Bead Game, is a member of this Board. The successful student is admitted to the Order when he graduates at the age of twenty-one or twenty-two. At this point, all of the educational and research facilities are open to the graduate as are all the facilities of the Glass Bead Game. The student specializes in what he is good at and most become teachers. Once they have left Castalia, they are life-long members of the Order. This means poverty and bachelorhood. They cannot become professionals unless they leave the Order. They are called the Mandarins by the common people. The Mandarins lead the life of the intellectual. They can study for their entire lives if they so choose, drawing a pension from the authorities. Their scholarly works are published and studied by others. They basically renounce wealth and live simple, monastic lives.

**Knecht on the Way to the Eschholz School**

Knecht leaves Berolfsingen with his music teacher seeing him off at the train station. He is on his way to the Eschholz school, the largest school in Castalia.

The education system described in The Glass Bead Game is deeply hierarchical. There are several levels in the school system, from ‘ordinary’ schools in the students’ home towns to the various ‘elite’ schools in Castalia. Knecht’s talents are noticed early in his life and he is selected for the elite school of Eschholz. Prior to this, he had distinguished himself from his fellow students and begun to be accepted by his teachers more as a colleague than a student. Near the end of his time at his earlier school, he had felt increasingly out of place. His fellow students were no longer his equals, and this had attracted a mixture of admiration, envy and
distrust. At Eschholz, as his understanding of his own abilities grows, he experiences moments of both quiet joy and suffering. (Roberts. 46)

There is no town in the area. He is met by a schoolmate, Oscar, when he arrives and shown around. He shares a room with two other boys. His years at Eschholz are uneventful. Most of the school records have been burned by a fire but enough remains to show that Joseph excels in Latin and music, and that he is average in math and Greek. Most of what is known of his days there is from his lectures on the Glass Bead Game, which were in the form of notes taken by a student. He talks of finding a volume of Schubert music that he borrowed from his music teacher.

Knecht Chosen by the Music Master

The Music Master appears at Eschholz every few months, and these are always rewarding visits for Knecht. The Music Master considers Knecht to be one of the chosen and a friend of his. Knecht is sent to the next level when he finishes his studies at Eschholz. The principal’s graduation speech addresses the fact that there are free professions which aren't available to those who would be admitted to the Order. Knecht asks the Music Master what that means. He explains that a free profession means that the student chooses the profession himself. The student then follows a rigid, narrow program at a university and must pass examinations. If he passes, he works at his profession for money. The elite, on the other hand, can study what they want. He is not a slave to a curriculum or to money. The Music Master tells him that the word free is more or less used in a humorous sense.

Knecht is seventeen when he leaves Eschholz. Since Knecht has a few days' vacation before going on to the next stage, he is invited to spend the time as a guest of the Music Master. While there, the Music Master asks him which school he would like to enter, and he answers Waldzell, because that is where the skillful Glass Bead Game players come from. They discuss the Glass Bead Game and the Music Master tells Knecht to strive for perfection in himself. There will be many conflicts along the way. The Music Master tells Knecht to write him a yearly letter with progress of his studies. Knecht gets his assignment to Waldzell.
Knecht in Waldzell

Waldzell is the place the best Glass Bead Game players originate from and it is Waldzell that is the following stage in Knecht’s evolution. It is additionally the school that is most committed to arts.

In other words, though at different schools a specific branch of grant was unmistakably prevailing, for example, established philologue in Keuperheim, Aristotelian and Scholastic logic in Porta, arithmetic in Planvaste, Waldzell customarily developed an inclination toward all-inclusiveness and toward a union amongst scholarship and arts. The most elevated image of these inclinations was the Glass Bead Game. Indeed, even here, as at all alternate schools, the Game was in no way, shape or form instructed formally and as an obligatory subject. However, Waldzell understudies dedicated their private examinations only to it. Of course, the town of Waldzell was after all the seat of the official Glass Bead Game and its establishments. Game and its institutions. The famous Game Hall for the ceremonial games was located here, as was the enormous Game Archives, with its officialdom and its libraries. Here, too, was the residence of the Ludi Magister. (Hesse. 86-87)

The Waldzell school is host to the most elite of the scholars: there are only sixty of them. It also produces most of the Masters and the Glass Bead Game players. Many people think that Waldzell graduates are good for nothing but the Glass Bead Game. Knecht is captivated by the place as he explores the area. The school itself is just an extension of his days at Eschholz, with the only difference being meditation exercises. Knecht spends his early years there more interested in music than in the Glass Bead Game. He devotes so much time to music that it earns him a meeting with the headmaster, who says he is neglecting his other studies, including the Glass Bead Game. This phase continues for the first one and one half years of his studies. He tells the headmaster that it is his right to devote his time to music. He becomes friends with two students, Carlo Ferremonte and Plinio Designori. Designori is a hospitant, or a guest student, who has no intention of entering the Order.
Designori Raises Doubts in Knecht

Knecht joins other students listening to Designori, who is quite vociferous about returning to the world and not wanting admission to the Order. He attacks everything that is held sacred in Castalia. Designori’s talks raise doubts in Knecht, and he confides this fact to Ferremonte, who feels that Designori is not worth the time spent listening to him. Knecht feels that he can’t discuss the situation with headmaster Zbinden because of his falling out with him over the time he had devoted to music. As the conflict within Knecht grows, he finally writes to the Music Master, telling him of his dilemma. He knows that if he is converted to Designori’s way of thinking, he is ruined in the Castalia. Knecht has no family to return to if he leaves the Castalia. He confesses to the Music Master that some of what he hears from Designori makes sense to him. The Castalians analyze but don’t produce. They don’t earn their own keep. He tells the Music Master that he needs advice.

Knecht’s inner doubts are first stirred during his years at the school in Waldzell, when he engages regularly in debates with Plinio Designori. (It was these early misgivings that ostensibly produced the poems appended to the biography.) In these debates Plinio advocates the role of Life as opposed to pure, disengaged intellect. “I have to remind you again and again,” He argues, “how daring, dangerous and, in the last analysis, unfruitful a life is if it is directed exclusively toward the mind.” Though Knecht distinguishes himself by a skillful justification of Castalia and its form of existence, he is persuaded inwardly that his own realm does not embrace all life, as he had supposed before. “The whole of life, physical as well as mental, is a dynamic phenomenon, of which the Glass Bead Game encompasses only the aesthetic aspect.” Already here the keynote is sounded: the Glass Bead Game and Castalia are identified as aesthetic views of life rather than as points of view that can be totally satisfying and all-embracing. (Ziolkowski. 61)

The Music Master arrives at Waldzell soon after receiving Knecht’s letter. He is there for exams, but he spends a lot of time with Knecht. He decides that the headmaster was right about the time Knecht spent on music and re-establishes the relationship between Knecht and the headmaster. The Music Master also orders Knecht to defend the
Castalia when it is attacked by Designori. Knecht has to spend time learning about the Castalia in order to defend it, and he becomes very good at it, good enough for Designori to understand that there is something in the Castalia that he didn't understand. Their debates become well-listened to at Waldzell, and they each come to respect the position of the other. Knecht feels that he belongs in the Castalia. Most people do not live the kind of life that he lives because they are outside of the Castalia. But it is the world of Castalia that serves the outside world. The Music Master tells Knecht that he also went through periods of doubt.

**Designori Predicts that Knecht will become a Magister**

Knecht completes his introductory lessons in the Glass Bead Game and begins doing his own games. He finds the game to be relaxing and pleasurable, and feels refreshed and strengthened by the game. He also begins to write poetry. The only poems that survive are the ones that Ferremonte keeps. Designori tells him that he won a struggle with his father to stay with the Castalia if he decided that was what he wants. He says that remaining with the Castalia would be an escape, which is why he will return to the outside world, but he will take many of the Castalia principles with him. Knecht is invited to vacation with Designori's home. Leaving the Pedagogic Province is not usually allowed, and the Board of Educators refuses the request. Before leaving Waldzell, Designori tells Knecht that he thinks that Knecht will become a Magister. Knecht now spends his free time with the Glass Bead Game, keeping copious notes.

**Knecht in the Years of Free Study**

Knecht is twenty-four years of age when his schooldays end with his graduation from Waldzell. He is presently in his times of free study and he feels that these are the most joyful days of his life. He could now ponder what he needs so as to grow his own particular personality without the structure of an educational programs. He has no questions about himself or his devotion right now. Students have considerably more learned opportunity in light of the accessibility of assets. There are no confinements of any sort on the free studies, and the greater part of the common perils and enticements are truant. It is uncommon for a student to merry and leave the Order. The main limitation on the student is that he should introduce a plan of study every semester. He just needs to document a yearly report on what lectures he attended, what books he read, and what research he performed, unless he is working at music or the Glass Bead Game—then he
has to pass examinations. They are allowed to explore whatever areas they want, but they
don't gain admittance to the Order until they specialize.

**The Castilians’ Belief of Multiple Existences**

Students occasionally have to compose an essay called a Life. They write a
biography of themselves in whatever period they choose. This is basically a carry-over of
the Asian doctrine of reincarnation and transmigration of souls. All Castilians believe
that they have had other existences. It is a way of learning of other time periods and
cultures. The Lives give insight into the authors. Knecht writes three Lives during this
time—at least three were preserved. Knecht basically withdraws from public life at this
time. He even stops writing to Designori. He also more or less neglects the Glass Bead
Game at this time, even though he had studied the game so much during his years at
Waldzell.

**Knecht focuses on music rather than the Glass Bead Game**

Knecht decides to concentrate on music instead of the Glass Bead Game and he
writes to the Music Master about his decision. The Music Master is not comfortable with
his decision. Most of his correspondence with Ferremonte focuses on music. Knecht
basically refuses to study the higher levels of the Glass Bead Game at this time, even
though everyone feels that it is his destiny. Even so, he also keeps a copy of the Game he
had worked on in his earlier courses. This is the Game he always comes back to.

**Knecht Interest in Chinese Studies**

During this time, he spends time at Monteport. Sometimes he is there as a guest
of the Music Master, other times he goes to attend seminars. He also spends time at
Hirsland, which is the headquarters of the Order. He is there for the days of fasting and
meditation. He studies Chinese during this time. Knecht studies the I Ching and wants to
study with Elder Brother, but is not able to, as it is not an area of study that the Order
encourages strongly. He does go to see him at the Bamboo Grove, which is in the southern
part of the country. He tells Elder Brother that he wants to stay and study with him. He
remains there for several months, learning to manipulate yarrow sticks. He learns to do
many things in the Chinese way, but Elder Brother will not discuss the Glass Bead Game
or how to incorporate the I Ching into the game.
Afterward Joseph Knecht described the months he lived in the Bamboo Grove as an unusually happy time. He also frequently referred to it as the ‘beginning of my awakening’ and in fact from that period on the image of ‘awakening’ turns up more and more often in his remarks, with a meaning similar to although not quite the same as that he had formerly attributed to the image of vocation. It could be assumed that the ‘awakening’ signified knowledge of himself and of the place he occupied within the Castalian and the general human order of things; but it seems to us that the accent increasingly shifts toward self-knowledge in the sense that from the ‘beginning of his awakening’ Knecht came close and close to a sense of his special, unique position and destiny, while at the same time the concepts and categories of the tradition hierarchy of the world and of the special Castalian hierarchy became for him and more relative matters. (Hesse. 132)

Knecht continues his Chinese studies when he leaves the Bamboo Grove. He also overcomes his resistance to returning to Waldzell. He attends some of the advanced classes on the Glass Bead Game and becomes one of the best players. All of his studies now focus on the Game. One day, while walking through the Player’s Village, he runs into Designori. His old friend is now a government official who is taking a short vacation by taking a class on the Glass Bead Game. Knecht finds that Designori has studied law and is engaged to get married. Designori has traveled a great deal and tells that there is trouble in the world and that Knecht might find his way of life at Castalia coming under attack in the future. Castalia is expensive for the country to maintain.

**Knecht Becomes a Member of the Order**

Thomas von der Trave, the Grand Ludi, sends for Knecht and asks him to come to his home every day for half of an hour. He shows Knecht a proposal he received from an organist that he wants Knecht to work on. Knecht helps the Magister Ludi organize the suggestions, and then realizes that the Master is using this as a form of examination for him. He tells Knecht that he should apply for admission to the Order, and that there will be no problems with his admission. He also warns Knecht against using the Glass Bead Game for philosophizing. The Game is a discipline in its own right.
Knecht is admitted to the Order, with the Music Master performing the ceremony of admission for him. The Music Master, who is ailing, tells him that he is resigning his position. Knecht returns to Waldzell as a full member of the Order. Knecht’s years of freedom have come to an end. He is being sent to the Benedictine monastery of Mariafels to teach the Glass Bead Game.

**Knecht as a Teacher of the Glass Bead Game and His Assistant Fritz Tegularius**

Knecht, a member from the internal hoven of Glass Bead Game players, is presently going to educate the game. His companion, and later right hand, Fritz Tegularius, is additionally a decent Game player, and Knecht feels that he would make a decent educator. He is great at breaking down recreations and at discovering blunders in them. When they were in their twenties, Tegularius let Knecht take a gander at a few papers and correlations that he had on the Glass Bead Game, and Knecht said they were great. Knecht discovered them so great that he acquired them to contemplate them. He prescribes Tegularius as an advisor, yet not as a teacher. Tegularius is genuinely upbeat for Knecht in his task in the wake of being acknowledged by the Order.

Knecht can’t leave for Mariafels until the point when the bureaucratic formality is finished. He must be cleared by cleared by the Political Department of the Board of Educators and instructed in the rules for being in the outside world. Dubois, of the Political Department, tells Knecht that he wants to be informed of any political discussions that the Benedictine monks have. They have many sources, so they are not dependent on him alone for information. Finally, Knecht is allowed to leave.

Knecht has mixed feelings about leaving Tegularius, even though he doesn’t show much emotion. He is concerned about Tegularius. Knecht has spent the last year living in the Glass Bead Game village, where he either taught high level classes or helped the Magister or Archivist. Tegularius is not as much a part of this group as Knecht is. Knecht is popular with the superiors because he is not ambitious. He was fated to be a member of the elite and to move in high circles. He would always be moving to the top through no doing of his own even though he prefers the contemplative life of study.
Knecht in the Monastery at Mariafels

The monastery at Mariafels has all the markings of its past greatness, including a huge library of medieval theology. It is famous for its music. Knecht is received with politeness at the monastery. He is the first Glass Bead Game player of high caliber to be sent there. He is there as a representative of the Castalia, not as a private individual, and he is expected to act accordingly. He spends his first few days exploring the grounds. When he requests more precise directions about how he should act, he is told to be himself and spend the time learning and not to force himself or be impatient with the people there. One day, he mentions the I Ching, and much to his delight, finds the Abbot to be well versed in the book. This common ground gives them new material for discussion.

Knecht’s Discussion with Father Jacobus

One evening, Knecht hears music. He knocks on a door and finds Father Jacobus playing the piano. They begin to talk. Knecht finds that Jacobus isn’t very interested in the Castalia and thinks it is an imitation of Christian orders, except that there is no religion. Knecht tells him that it doesn’t detract from their intentions or their goal of the life of the mind. They also discuss the Glass Bead Game. Their discussion leads to a mutual understanding and a friendship of sorts. Each understands the other a little better, and they have many discussions during Knecht’s time there.

Hesse’s use of the name “Knecht” to describe his protagonist and of “Castalia” to describe the pedagogical province is relevant to all understanding of the impact of Pietism on the novel. The German Knecht means something like “servant,” and Joseph leaves Castalia in response to the needs of another the young Tito, who desperately needs some guidance to become a simple teacher. Knecht’s “awakening” is a central theme of the novel and entails bringing together the active and contemplative lives; he may be Master of the Glass Bead Game, but he is the master who is a servant a purely aesthetic/spiritual world is incomplete without some commitment to the social world and the lives of others. Similarly, the notion very much in keeping with Castalia. Beneath them are guild members and the town folk, who are classified either as Freie (those who can think on their own and seldom imitate) and Krzechte (the imitators). Beneath these is a still lower class, the rabble (Pobel), to which Klopstock
most frequently appends the modifier “depraved” (verdorben). Given Hesse’s depth of knowledge of Romantic thought and culture, it is reasonable to assume he may have had such associations in mind in choosing the name for his pedagogical province and for his hero. Knecht is both master and servant; he is the creative genius who added to the inventions of the Glass Bead Game, but he also affirms and embodies the model of the humble servant. Knecht spent so much time at Mariafels that the other players wondered to what extent he became a Christian. The narrator concludes that this realm is closed to our research; in other words, the question of Knecht’s (and Hesse’s) Christianity can’t be answered because the answer depends very much on the definition given to the key term. But, he continues, “Knecht had a kind of inner reverence which we would scarcely be wrong to call pious.” “Piety,” we read, “is faithful service and loyalty up to the point of sacrificing one’s life.” (Stephenson. 212-213)

The Castalia receive good reports about Knecht from the Abbot, who he is teaching Chinese to. It is assumed that Knecht dabbles in Christianity while he is at the monastery, but there is no record of it.

**Knecht Returns to Waldzell**

Knecht puts in two years at Mariafels on his first visit. He is thirty-seven at the time, and is one day was called into the Abbot’s office. The Abbot discloses to Knecht that he has a commission for him. He is additionally asked for to come back to Waldzell, yet he will be permitted to come back to the monastery sooner or later. He doesn’t need to remain to complete the course he is instructing unless the Abbot so asks. Since he is leaving Mariafels, he understands that he has become joined to the place and the people there. Be that as it may, the nonattendance of Castalia had influenced his heart to become fonder. Knecht leaves for Waldzell.

He stays at Monteport to meet the Music Master. They talks about Knecht’s stay at Mariafels. The Music Master is more intrigued by the organ and the music than he is in Knecht’s work there. He doesn’t ask about the Glass Bead Game. Knecht goes on to Waldzell, and it suddenly seems to be the most beautiful place in the world when he sees it. He enjoys the time he spends at Waldzell. He is back with the elite at the Vicus
Lusorum, and has an audience with the Glass Bead Game Master. He is interested in Father Jacobus. Dubois has succeeded Zbinden and the Magister invites them all to dinner. Two members of the Supreme Board arrive and join them. One is the new Music Master and the other is the Archivist of the Order. Knecht is taken aside and spoken to, which means he is being considered for high office.

Knecht has a vacation of four weeks without any official duties being assigned to him. During this time, he becomes known to the Board of the Order and with most of the Masters and directors. He tries to keep his visits to a minimum so he can devote his time to the Glass Bead Game. The new Music Master has Ferremonte on his staff, and Knecht is able to visit with him several times. Tegularius has attended seminars by the Magister on the Glass Bead Game for two semesters, and lets Knecht go over his notes.

The Magister’s New Assignment for Knecht

The Magister discusses Knecht’s next assignment with him. They are considering the possibility of having a representative at the Holy See. Knecht gets the feeling that if they send him to Rome, it will be a permanent assignment. The groundwork is laid with his stay at Mariafels. He won the confidence of his superiors and was not returning to Mariafels with broader powers. He is to gain the support of Father Jacobus for their plans for Rome even if it takes him several years to do so. Knecht accepts the assignment, but asks for frequent visits to Waldzell and radio contact so he can keep up on the Glass Bead Game. His request is granted. He also says he doesn’t want to be assigned to the Holy See or any other diplomatic mission. The Magister tells him it is too early to discuss that.

Knecht’s Spirit of Learning

Knecht returns to Mariafels and is treated as a high ranking official of the Castalia. Rather than spend time on teaching the Glass Bead Game or spending time on music, he spends his time with Father Jacobus. Even though they are close and Jacobus eventually agrees to support rapprochement, he is still slightly distrustful of Knecht because of the lack of religion in the Castalia. Knecht tries to learn as much as he can from Father Jacobus. Jacobus tells him that he is different since he returned from his vacation, that he knows why he is there. He has a diplomatic assignment and wants Knecht to tell him about it. Knecht tells him.
Knecht is still learning from the Abbot. He learns methods of historical knowledge and how to use historical research. Knecht also picks up Father Jacobus’s political views, even though they don’t actively discuss them. Those in Castalia are more or less ignorant of politics and have little interest in the subject. Knecht acquires an interest in the subject from his discussion with Father Jacobus.

**Knecht Builds Up the Glass Bead Game at Waldzell**

Knecht still keeps up with the Glass Bead Game at Waldzell. He is involved in the competition that requires Games based on three or four themes. They could use new symbols and vocabulary for the competition. Knecht builds his Game for the competition. He uses what is called the psychological method of Game construction. Controversy and discussion are two different opposing concepts in the Game. There are two game types: formal and psychological. Knecht prefers the latter. If the Game is formal, the player uses mathematics, linguistic, musical and other elements to form the objective content of the Game. The object of the psychological Game is to form unity and harmony through meditation. The player is steered toward perfection. Tegularius has to do the paper work in the archives for Knecht, and receives permission to visit the monastery to work on the task.

Knecht has Father Jacobus write a letter saying that he will support their diplomatic mission and asking that Knecht remain at the monastery a little longer. Knecht is afraid that he will be permanently assigned away from Waldzell, and he doesn’t want this. He confides this to Father Jacobus.

Knecht is surprised when he wins first prize for the Glass Bead Game competition. Tegularius wins second prize. He writes to the former Music Master that he is happy at winning the competition and that he doesn’t want to be sent to the diplomatic service. He wants to return to Waldzell and the Glass Bead Game. Both Knecht and Jacobus are sad knowing that Knecht will soon be leaving.

**Knecht - The Magister Ludi**

Knecht chooses to stay at the monastery until spring. He needs to be in Waldzell in time for the general public Glass Bead Games. They generally keep going for ten to fourteen days. Knecht’s ask for to come back to the Vicus Lusorum is endorsed and he
knows he will get another task. Knecht needs Father Jacobus to come to Waldzell for the Games.

At that point he cleared out, feeling some pity at separating from a place he had become attached to and from a phase in his life he was currently abandoning, yet in addition in a disposition of merry suspicion, for in spite of the fact that he needed direction and allies, he had, all alone activity, circumspectly attempted the entire arrangement of reflection practice endorsed as arrangements for the celebration Games. (Hesse. 205)

**Illness and Death of the Old Magister**

Knecht comes before the Games start. He is welcomed by the deputy to the Magister Ludi. The Magister is ill and Knecht is to go to Hirsland to report his return. It is possible that the Magister will not be able to conduct the Games. Knecht had been looking forward to talking with the Magister, who would have reinstalled him in the community of Glass Bead Game players, but that is not to be now. He is well greeted at Hirsland and is told that he could devote himself to the Games for the present time. He and Tegularius spend the rest of the week in preparation.

Knecht explains that the deputy, called the Shadow, is a position that is selected by the Magister itself. It is not an appointment from the Order. It is basically a dead-end position in that the deputy never moves into the position of Magister. The Magister is responsible for all of the actions of the deputy, so the deputy is never blamed officially for any of his actions. Bertram is the Shadow for Master Thomas von der Trave. He is not looked upon favorably by many in the Castalia, and as such, he is protected by his Magister. As a result of his Magister’s illness, Bertram is now in charge of the Vicus Lusorum, and it is a very trying experience for him because of the lack of support for him within the community.

The day before the games are to begin they make the announcement that the Magister is ill and would not be running the Game. There is concern about the festival and the Magister’s health, and people come to Waldzell for the Games. The opening ceremonies take place the night before the Games, with Bertram presiding. As the week goes on, Bertram looks worse, and there are rumors that the Magister is dying and that he had dictated his will and named his successor. This casts a pallor over the Games. The Magister dies the day before the end of the Games. The elite and Game players are not
allowed to mourn his passing while the Games are in progress. Knecht had tried to shield himself from this by not receiving any news of the Magister’s condition. This is his way of trying to concentrate on the Games. The post-Game celebrations for the students and players are canceled due to the Magister’s death, which is announced at the end of the festival. The period of mourning began.

**Knecht Elected as the Magister Ludi**

A debate ensues as to who should succeed the Magister. The Board usually does not allow the office to be vacant for more than three weeks. Bertram goes off into the hills and is gone from the community. They later find that he has fallen off a cliff and is dead. Tegularius tells Knecht that Bertram’s sacrifice was necessary. He, Knecht, did not know what was going on during his long absence from Waldzell. Members of the community are questioned about the situation.

Knecht learns from Tegularious that there are rumors that Knecht will be elected as Master of the Glass Bead Game. The strongest candidate, the director of the Achieves, had been eliminated from consideration the previous day. Knecht, Tegularious tells him, has the support of three members of the conclave. Knecht is cautious when he hears the news, which stuns Tegularious.

Several days later, Knecht is summoned by the directors of the Order and informed of his appointment as Magister Ludi. His official swearing in ceremony will be the day after next. The next day would be devoted to meditation and preparation for the investiture. Not all in the community are happy about Knecht’s appointment. He has his rivals and those who did not like him for whatever reason. The investiture ceremony is not public, but much to Knecht’s delight, the former Music Master is there.

Knecht already knows most of the functions of the office because he had assisted the previous Magister on numerous occasions. Providing the Game courses is the most important function. Even though Knecht would have preferred some time to study various situations, he assumes the duties of Magister Ludi. He also knows he must pay some attention to the elite to prove himself to them, which he does.

**Knecht’s Speech on the Glass Bead Game**

Knecht’s advancement to the position of Magister is a strain on him. All things considered, it brings him new perceptions and encounters.
The best of these, now that the fight was won, was his joint effort with the elite based on shared trust and kind disposition. He deliberated with his Shadow. He worked with Fritz Tegularius, whom he experimented with as an aide on his correspondence. He steadily contemplated, looked at, and supplemented the reports and different notes on students and associates which his antecedent had cleared out. What’s more, throughout this work Knecht acquainted himself, with expanding fondness, with this elite whom he had envisioned he knew so well. (Hesse. 232-233)

He doesn’t feel himself to be a close piece of the community as he had before in light of the fact that he now is the leader of the community. At the conclusion of a course for teachers of beginners, Knecht tells them that the Game must always remain at the apex of their cultural existence and they must work to further develop the Game and to keep it interesting. They don’t want to allow a deterioration of the Game. He says that the Game Archive is the core of the whole apparatus and it is used daily by players of all levels. The Castalia selects the elite of the country for education, and they become the players of the Game. The best Glass Bead Game players are the elite of the elite.

The Game must also be protected from abuse. Playing the Game can lead to vanity, power seeking, and abuse of that power. This is the diabolus contained in the Glass Bead Game just as there is a diabolus in every branch of knowledge. This speech firmly establishes Knecht in the office of Magister. He is a good teacher of the Game, and once he establishes himself with the elite, he turns to the Archives. He wants them to know that he is friendly.

**Knecht’s Preparation for the Next Glass Bead Game with Chinese Theme**

In the course of his duties, Knecht learns about some of the secret functions of the Order. His residence has a garden and he now tries to spend at least fifteen minutes a day in it for relaxation. He also finds a note in his daily calendar that he should begin thinking about the next Game competition even though it is almost a year away. The note is from one of the Magister Ludis of previous generations. The calendar is handed down from generation to generation.

He decides on the theme he would use for the Game, one he had thought about for years. He would use a Confucian pattern for the construction of a Chinese house. All of the parts would be based on the different parts of the house and their relationships and
coordination and symbolism. He assigns the background work to Tegularius, who accepts the assignment. Knecht suggests that he go to the Far Eastern College and that he consult with Elder Brother. Elder Brother writes that he can’t make the trip to Waldzell, so Tegularius is sent to the Bamboo Grove. Tegularius makes the trip, but finds that the information he obtains is useless. He did better at the Far Eastern College finding all of the information that he needed.

Knecht makes the trip to Montepor and the old Music Master is very happy to see him. Knecht notices the difference in the old man. After greeting Knecht, the old man basically just stares instead of answering questions or engaging in conversation. When Knecht returns to Waldzell, he discusses the old Music Master’s condition with Ferromonte.

**The Chinese House Game**

The first Game competition put on by Knecht ends up noticeably known as the Chinese House Game. It is gotten extremely well and influences the Board to feel defended in choosing Knecht as Magister Ludi. The issue, directed by the most youthful ever Magister Ludi, is all around went to and exceedingly effective.

Not for a long time had the annual Game been such an occasion as it was this time, with the most youthful and most-talked about Magister in Castalian history showing up and indicating what he could do. Also, Waldzell was resolved to compensate for the disappointment and disfavor of the earlier year. This time nobody lay sick, no cowed deputy anticipated the considerable ceremony or function with fear, coldly ringed by the noxious doubt of the elite, reliably yet languidly bolstered by apprehensive authorities. (Hesse. 262)

Knecht arranges the ceremonies or functions in grandeur, writing the characters on his tablet so they are magnified on a giant board behind him for all to see. When he finishes with the summary formula, he takes his seat for meditation. The Game is so impressive that it wins many new converts. In spite of his brilliance, his tenure in office comes to a scandalous end when it ended. Hesse points out that their purpose is to show that it had nothing to do with Knecht’s achievements while he was in office. Knecht was always aware of the history and the glory of the Castalia and his part in it. He felt his own place in the history of the Order and the glory of the Games.
Knecht's Way to Learn Outside World

The Castalia choose the best students to educate and groom for the Order. Sometimes they make bad choices and a student has to be dismissed. This is considered very serious, and a grave misfortune to serious students like Knecht. The way of life of the outside world is contrary to the Castalia and everything that it stands for. This is sin to the Castalian point of view. Knecht is a representative of the Order. In some ways, he is placed in the situation of confronting the outside world with Designori and Father Jacobus, and defending the Order. He learns from both of them and they both respect his views. This is how Knecht learns of the outside world, and this makes him more receptive to the outside world than most of his contemporaries.

Knecht's Friendship with Tegularius

Underlying everything is the concept of friendship. Knecht does not need friends for companionship. His friendship with Tegularius is based on Tegularius’ admiration for Knecht. Tegularius irritates any of his superiors and they always assign meditation. Even Knecht does this at times. He prefers to maintain his constant student status and freedom. Tegularius represents what Castalia might become unless it is rejuvenated, and Knecht realizes this. Measures have to be instituted to keep Castalia from being populated by people like Tegularius. A little more deterioration in Castalia, and most of its population would be like Tegularius. Knecht tries to keep Tegularius in line. Knecht reaches many of his conclusions after a study of the history of the Castalia.

Knecht receives news of the death of the old Music Master. The old man had died peacefully in his sleep.

The Highest Level of the Order at an Early Age

Knecht has achieved the highest level of the Order at an early age, despite the fact that he was not goal-oriented. He had not looked for the Magister Ludi position and would have been more joyful driving the free existence of a researcher. He doesn’t care for the greater part of the obligations his position requires, particularly those including the political issues of the Order. A significant number of the elements of his position, even the preparation of Glass Bead Game players, are a burden to him. He enjoys teaching.

We have gone to that point in our study when we should concentrate altogether upon the exceptional change obviously which involved the most
recent years of the master’s life and prompted his farewell to his office and
the Province, his intersection into an alternate circle of life, and his demise.
In spite of the fact that he managed his office with exemplary faithfulness
up to the moment of his departure, and to his last day enjoyed the
affectionate confidence of his pupils and colleagues, we shall not continue
our description of his conduct of the office now that we see him already
weary of it in his innermost soul, and turning toward other aims. He had
already explored all the possibilities the office provided for the utilization
of his energies and had reached the point at which great men must leave
the path of tradition and obedient subordination and, trusting to supreme,
indefinable powers, strike out on new, trackless courses where experience
is no guide. (Heese. 286)

Knecht’s decisions causes a rift in the Castalia. He becomes highly critical of his
own work and in life within the Province. Many of the events surrounding his last days
are the result of rumors and conjecture. He is looking for a way out of the situation he is
in because he is finding it confining and stifling.

Reunion with Designori

The way comes in the form of Plinio Designori, his former classmate, who is now
a member of the Chapter of Deputies and a political writer. Designori is also a member
of the commission that decides the budget for the Castalia, and meets Knecht at a meeting
of the directorate.

Knecht studies Designori at the meeting and decides that the man has changed.
For some reason, he seems sad and not as lively as he used to be. He seems to have the
appearance of worldly suffering as many men in the outside world do. Designori seems
to shun Knecht, who works to regain his trust. Several months after the meeting,
Designori accepts an invitation to visit Knecht at Waldzell. On this day-long visit, the
two men spend time together talking. Knecht seems to try to explain his life and lifestyle
to Designori. This is important to him for some reason.

Designori tells him that Knecht has his life within the Order but he has no family
or concept of family, and this gives them a different set of values. Designori tells Knecht
that speaking to him is like speaking to a foreigner and he wouldn’t understand him if he
hadn’t been at student at Waldzell. But, he says, Knecht doesn’t understand him when
they do speak. They speak different languages with different meanings behind the words. Knecht responds that this doesn't mean that they shouldn't try to communicate.

Yet an outstanding magister Ludi of the era, Joseph Knecht, breaks with several of these rules. During his mission at the Benedictine monastery, he is involuntarily drawn into politics; from Father Jacobus, he learns to respect the importance of history; and in conversations with Plinio Designori, he becomes concerned for Castalia's fate and conscious of the temporal dimension of its endeavor Knecht knowingly breaks with the Order's customary reserve by speaking of his awakening experiences.

When he decides that he must leave his position and the Province to become a simple teacher or tutor, he does not make up glib and acceptable excuses but justifies his conviction with the urge to heed his inner voice an admission that seems so out of place in the Castalian atmosphere as to prompt the embarrassed President to attribute it to an excessive sense of your own person. (Bruhn .213)

Designori tells him of a conflict within himself that began when he left the Castalia and that continues to the present time. The ways of the Order had shielded him from the outside world, and he had a problem with not being accepted the way he had expected to be. His days at the university were a contrast to his days of study at Waldzell.

He never found the life that he wanted or expected from his days in the Castalia. The Castalia and the motherland are alienated from each other and exist as separate entities with little in common. Designori says he tried to function as a mediator between the two but failed. He tried to live a life consistent with the rules of Castalia when he was in the real world of the university. He found he could not reconcile the two worlds. He gradually abandoned the ways of the life in Castalia and adopted those of the real world. Whenever he returned to Waldzell for vacation courses in the Glass Bead Game, he realized how far he had grown from the life at Waldzell. He goes on to relate his experiences with the former classmates and how he was treated. The two men discuss their feeling about the evening they spent together many years ago. Knecht spent an evening with him, but it was strained and the experience ended Designori's illusions. They led different lives with different values and goals and the two worlds cannot mesh. Knecht agrees with Designori's comments about the evening, and says that they should laugh at it now.
Knecht tells Designori’s his impressions of that evening and agrees that they had grown apart at that time.

Knecht tries to impress Designori that what happened that evening is behind them now and that he wants to renew their friendship. Designori is Knecht’s link with and way into the outside world, and Knecht tells him that he needs the contact with the outside world. Knecht tells Designori that he wants them to put the past behind them. Designori, he says, has a love-hate relationship with the Castalia and their way of life. He wants to help his friend with his problem and he wants to explain his own life and problems in future discussions.

**Psychotherapists of Each other**

Knecht and Designori maintain their frequent visits and discussions as they learn about each other’s lives and problems. Designori learns that Knecht’s life is one of loneliness, in spite of all of his achievements. He understands Knecht’s desire to be out of the public life and to teach children. They each play the role of psychotherapist to the other. It is from Designori that Knecht learns the details of life in the real world. Designori does not understand why Knecht spends so much time trying to help him, but figures that it is just Knecht’s nature to try to help someone who is as miserable as he is.

**Knecht Plans to Resign as Magister Ludi**

In the course of their discussions, Knecht reveals his plan to resign as Magister Ludi and leave the Order. In some ways, Designori questions Knecht’s intentions, but in other ways, he believes that Knecht needs him and relies on his advice and confidence. Designori benefits from the discussions. He returns to the practice of meditation and some of the Castalian practices. Designori is a happier man because of the time Knecht spends with him.

After eight years as a Magister, Knecht finally visits Designori at his home. He meets his wife and his son, Tito. Knecht comes to view Designori in a different light in his own home. He is not as calm and serene as he is when he visits Waldzell. After this visit, Knecht sends a meditation coach to Designori’s home to try to help him. Knecht makes subsequent visits to the Designori home. He talks to them about educating Tito in the Castalia.
By the time Knecht tells Tegularius of his plans, his decision to leave has been firmly made. He has discussed his views of the future of the Castalia with him and of the problems it faces. Surprisingly, Tegularius accepts Knecht’s decision. Tegularius becomes Knecht’s collaborator and works on the petition to the Board. The petition has to explain his reasons and views and document them.

Tegularius likes to see authority challenged, so he is excited by the assignment. Knecht does not derive any pleasure from it. He just wants to be free of the constraints of the Order so he can do what he wants to do. Knecht writes Designori that he is keeping Tegularius occupied while he is carrying out his plan. He suspects he will receive a mild reprimand from the Board, not a release and assignment to the outside world. He asks Designori to find him a place to live and a job, perhaps as a music teacher. Designori says he can live at his house as long as he likes, but Knecht declines the offer.

When Designori and Knecht meet, Designori tells him that he knows of the problems in his home, especially with his son Tito. He asks Knecht to come into their home and be the boy’s tutor. Knecht agrees, but says Designori must have the consent of his wife and must place Tito completely in his hands. When Designori’s wife agrees, Knecht talks with Tito. He spends some time explaining Designori to his son. Another time he plays the piano for the boy in a way that impresses the boy with the art form and the artist who is practicing the art form.

Knecht keeps performing his duties as Magister, even though he feels himself growing away from them. Waldzell seems to be in the past already to him. He knows he could resign his position using conscience as the reason. He could also resign from the Order. His loyalty makes this a difficult task for him. He does not believe that the Order would let him go.

**The Resignation Letter**

Despite the fact that Knecht and Tegularius invest a lot of energy and time dealing with the report, Knecht does not have much confidence in its success. After Tegularius turns out to be excessively engaged with the task and invests such a great amount of time in an appeal to that Knecht never again has faith in, he can’t pull back and simply leave. He expresses gratitude toward Tegularius when he exhibits the composition to him and he has perused it out loud to him consistently for a half hour in the garden. Knecht writes
his own letter to the Board, and the content is exhibited in the section alongside the Board’s reaction.

We are moving toward the end of our story. As we have just shown, our insight into the end is fragmentary, preferably more in the nature of a legend than of an historical account. We might need to be content with that. We therefore take all the more pleasure in being able to fill out this next-to-last chapter of Knecht’s life with an authentic document, namely with that voluminous memorandum in which the Glass Bead Game Master himself presents the authorities with the reasons for his decision and asks them to release him from his office. (Hesse. 344)

Knecht refers to his letter as a circular letter. He says he is required to report anything that imperils his functioning in his position and that that is the reason for his letter. The Castalian exist apart from the real world. They exist as a form of nobility supported by the real world. Most have contempt for men outside of their Order. The Order itself is filled with smugness. The teachers who they send into the world are the ones that repay society for the debt of Castalia. Members of the order do not regard the real world with the same respect that they regard their own little world inside the Province. The outside world isn’t important to them. He is basically saying that the members inside the Province do not earn their own way or in any way repay society for their privileges.

The Castalia could not exist without the financial support of the nation and that could end at any time. This he sees as a danger to the Order. He criticizes the Order for their lack of attention to world history, mainly because they view it as a struggle for land and economic power. Their views cut off their potential for growth and change as they strive for intellectual perfection within themselves. Knecht discusses the various wars that have occurred, many of which were in a religious context, and religion is something that the Order ignores. He points out that the Castalia was formed due to the quest for truth and order and all of its institutions came from this. Now the Order doesn’t want to know anything about these foundations upon which it was built. Knecht says he sees the Order on a downward progression that will lead to its end, and the reason is its relationship with the outside world. He sees a war coming that will result in a shift from spending on the Castalia to spending on war supplies. These changes may occur after their tenure in office,
but Knecht feels they will occur. He says he would prefer not to perform the duties of his office given this situation, since his views imperil his performance. The Game will be eliminated in the future, especially as the nation prepares for war, and he describes the Glass Bead Game as the most vulnerable part of the Castalia. To him, the Game is a lost cause that will just deteriorate with time. Teachers are more important and necessary than Glass Bead Game players in the world that is coming and it is teachers that the Order should be placing its emphasis on. He asks the Board to relieve him of his duties and assign him to a teaching position in the outside world.

Knecht sends the letter to the Board and awaits their response, which soon comes in the form of a letter from Hirsland. In the letter the Board says that they appreciate his views and concerns, but do not necessarily agree with or approve of them. They reiterate that the Order does not take part in politics and does not try to influence events in peace or war. Because of this, Knecht’s calls for change are rejected. The Board feels that his warnings of impending doom are much too pessimistic and that Knecht can discuss his views with them in person, and he is criticized for not taking this approach. His requests for relief from his duties and reassignment to a school are refused.

**Knecht’s Meeting with The President**

Knecht goes to Hirsland, where he had been requested to appear in person. He brings along a box that contains the insignia to the office of Magister Ludi, the seal, and the keys. He is shown to a guest cell as the President of the Order has to clear a spot in his schedule in order to see him. Knecht studies the rules of the Order while he is waiting.

It is late afternoon before he is admitted to the President’s office. When asked if the response of the Board was disappointing, Knecht replies that it was what he had expected. He had not expected a favorable reply. The President, Alexander, says he understands that Knecht is tired of his office and the Castalia and wants to have a life in the outside world. Knecht replies that he came to Hirsland to discuss the situation with him, and presents the contents of the box. Alexander says he cannot accept a resignation alone, that it requires one third of the Board, even though Knecht told him he wanted to officially resign. He tells him they will talk again the next day.

Alexander decides not to use official channels. The next morning, the two meet again. Alexander offers to allow Knecht to try a trial separation from the Order. Knecht tells him if they had accepted his petition, he would have remained in the Order. Knecht
does not accept Alexander’s proposition that his position is the result of an awakening caused by God or demons. His position is the result of his association with Designori and Father Jacobus and goes back many years.

I am not here to salvage something for myself, or even to win the Board’s approval of my action. I counted on being regarded by my colleagues henceforth as a dubious phenomenon, and am prepared for that. But I don’t want to be regarded as a traitor or madman; that is a verdict I cannot accept. I have done something you must disapprove of, but I have done it because I had to, because it was incumbent upon me, because that is my destiny, which I believe in and which I assume with good will. If you cannot concede this much, then I have been defeated and have spoken with you in vain. (Hesse. 403)

The President accepts Knecht’s withdrawal from the Order and says he will notify the Board. He also tells Knecht that he does not approve of the situation. Knecht leaves and does not take the car when he leaves Hirsland. He does not allow himself to think of this meeting with Alexander. That was a decision he made before coming to Hirsland. He left all of his writing and belongings at Waldzell.

**The Disappearance and Death of the Magister Ludi**

Knecht walks to Designori’s home, where he is warmly greeted. He is ready to assume his duties as Tito’s tutor. Designori tells him that he and Tito can live at Belpunt, the family’s cottage in the mountains.

While they are awaiting the arrival of Tito, Mrs. Designori arrives and tells them that he has disappeared. Knecht tells them not to worry, that the boy will appear. They find a note from Tito saying that he went ahead to Belpunt to await Knecht’s arrival. Knecht says he will go to Belpunt in the morning. They spend the rest of the day talking, with Knecht telling Designori of his discussions with Alexander.

We must not forget that the narrator, who according to Hesse’s fiction is living some years after Knecht’s death, has profited from Knecht’s experience. His Castalia has benefited from Knecht’s defection and death. Some readers have tended to interpret the ending of the novel solely from the viewpoint of Tito, the young boy whose tutor Knecht becomes after
his departure from Castalia. The narrator repeatedly makes it clear, however, that Knecht’s sacrifice had profound implications for Castalia itself, which underwent a revaluation of its principles after the abrupt defection of the renowned Magister Ludi. At one point the narrator interjects a personal remark to condone Knecht, who recognized “long before the rest of us that the complicated and sensitive apparatus of our republic was an aging organism that was in need of rejuvenation in certain respects.” (Ziolkowski. 51)

The next morning, Knecht travels to the cottage. He is greeted by Tito when he arrives. Knecht is very tired, and he notices his fatigue increases as the evening goes on. The fatigue continues and he attributes it to the altitude. If it doesn’t abate, they will have to return to the city. He is thinking of this and his plans for his work with Tito as he tries to sleep. He arises early and finds Tito going to the lake for a swim. He joins Tito for a swim to the other shore. Tito loses sight of him and frantically searches for him.

Oh! He thought in grief and horror, now I am guilty of his death. And only now, when there was no longer need to save his pride or offer resistance, he felt, in shock and sorrow, how dear this man had already become to him. And since in spite of all rational objections he felt responsible for the Master’s death, there came over him, with a premonitory shudder of awe, a sense that his guilt would utterly change him and his life, and would demand much greater things of him that he had ever demanded of himself. (Hesse. 425)

Joseph Knecht’s Posthumous Writings

Knecht’s poems seem to reveal the tensions in his life and the fact that he is searching for something that will make him happy. His poems seem to reveal that so many things in life are temporary: they appear and disappear. He also expresses his views as books being a source of knowledge that the reader can get lost in. They are a way of transmitting knowledge from one generation to another.

There are also poems about the Glass Bead Game. The Last Glass Bead Game Player talks about playing the Game with glass beads. When the player is in his prime, he is the center of attention and respect. Eventually, as he ages, his popularity also fades, and in the end he has only colored pieces of glass with no meaning. The Glass Bead Game
poem is more concerned with the construction of the Game and what goes into it. He also talks about his experiences at Mariafels in A Dream. He writes of his experiences in the library and the books that he has read and how they held the key to knowledge. Books are a way of transmitting information from one generation to the next. Soap Bubbles also has this theme of getting lost in books.

For several years, however, nothing was done about Joseph Knecht. He is mentioned from time to time in letters and poems, but not until 1938 did Hesse actually begin writing the chapters of his biography. During the intervening years he was concerned with the poems and the “Lives” which were published separately in Die 1zeue Ru1zdschau as they were completed: in 1934 “The Rainmaker”; in 1936 “The Father Confessor”; and in 1937 “An Indian Life.” In the final version of the novel these stories are introduced as fictitious autobiographies that Knecht wrote as part of his studies-exercises in projecting oneself into the Historical past as were required of all students in Castalia. In the novel the narrator also speaks of a fourth “Life” that Knecht never wrote: one dealing with Pietism in eighteenth-century Swabia. There is some indication that Hesse wrote at least a preliminary version of that story, which he did not include in the final work. (Ziolkowski. 47)

The three Lives that Knecht wrote as a student are also reproduced. These were situations where the student had to place himself in another place in history and write about his life. The three Lives are The Rainmaker, The Father Confessor, and The Indian Life.

**The Rainmaker**

The Rainmaker discusses life in a tribe thousands of years ago. He describes the tribal traditions and way of life. Knecht is a boy in the tribe, and is with Ada, the daughter of the Rainmaker, Turu. They listen to the tribe’s women telling stories. Turu knows that Knecht wants to learn the art of rainmaking. There is no written knowledge at this time, so everything has to be passed through the elders of the tribe. Knecht is always following Turu, hoping to be assigned some tasks. Turu finally takes the boy as his apprentice, which means that Knecht would become Rainmaker someday. The knowledge of the Rainmaker is passed on to the boy.
The Rainmaker teaches him the knowledge of the moon and tells him that Ada will become his wife when the old man dies. Knecht adjusts to the life as an apprentice and learns as much as he can from the old man. He becomes the Rainmaker’s assistant when the man gives his daughter as Knecht’s wife. During his tenure as Rainmaker, Knecht and the village survive the catastrophe of drought. Knecht, the Rainmaker, could not make rain, and many villages perish. After the drought, Knecht’s luck changes and the rains come. Years go by, and Knecht finds he has a boy following him, just as he had followed Turu, and he reacts in the same way as Turu did. He trains two apprentices, one of whom is his son, Turu.

One night, while studying the stars, he decides that they are predicting doom. The falling stars are causing madness among the villagers. They think the end has come, even though the usual stars are in their usual places. Knecht finds there is no reasoning with them. The meteor shower eventually ends, but it is talked about for months. Knecht feels that they had averted disaster by prayers. The weather is bad again the next spring. Knecht tells his son to assume his office if he dies. Many people become ill and are dying of dysentery. Knecht offers himself as a sacrifice. He is killed and his son becomes Rainmaker.

The Father Confessor

The second life is The Father Confessor, and it takes place in the city of Gaza. He is a man named Josephus Famulus in this story, and one day he gives away his worldly goods and leaves to become a penitent. He has renounced the life of the pagan. People come to him with their problems and confessions. He always has them recite The Lord’s Prayer at the end of their confession. He does not believe in ordering punishments. He decides that his work at redemption is not good enough and flees the area. He spends the night at a water hole. The people tell him about a holy man living in the area and they recommend that he goes to see the man.

The second “Life” has fewer outstanding parallels. It deals with two patristic fathers, Josephus Famulus and Dion Pugil, both of whom have devoted their lives to service of the spirit as personified-in the context of the story-by the Christian God. At an advanced age, however, both of them are overtaken by doubts as to the validity of their function as confessors. The story relates how each, by his example, comforts the other and leads
him back into service of the spiritual ideal. In both cases we have a temporary impulsive doubt, but it leads back to a renewed and intensified devotion to the spirit—not, like Joseph Knecht’s defection, out of the spiritual realm and into the world. (Ziolkowski. 49)

They talk about holy men and he tells them about the one names Josephus. He listens to the way they talk about him and laugh. He decides to see the one named Dion. He introduces himself and finds that Dion knows of him. Josephus stays and helps Dion with his daily confessions and learns from him. After several years, Dion’s health begins to fail. Dion shows him where he wants to be buried and has Josephus dig a little every day. Dion tells him that he knew who he was when he first met him. Dion says that he too was once like Josephus, and decided that taking Josephus in would help them both. Now he looks upon him as a son. The old man dies in his sleep that night. Josephus buries him and plants the palm tree as he requested. It grows and he eats its fruit.

**The Indian Life**

The last essay is entitled The Indian Life, where Knecht is among the Indian gods. Ravenna, who was an avatar of Vishnu, has a son, Dasa, whose mother dies. He remarries and has another son, Nala, whose mother wants her son to inherit the throne. One day, Dasa wanders off with a group of shepherds. He is taken into the hills where he lives with them. Years later, they learn that Nala is assuming the throne because of his father’s illness. Dasa is assigned to deliver supplies to the city for the festivities.

“An Indian Life,” finally, focuses even more sharply on the life of the spirit than the other two. Although Dasa undergoes what appear to be highly sensual adventures in the world of the flesh—a logical inconsistency, by the way, when the inexperienced and unworldly scholar Knecht is later purported to be the author of these “Lives”—these events are subsequently revealed to have been nothing but an illusion, the veil of Maya. Dasa ends his days in the forests in the company of an aged yogin, forsaking the temptations of the world. Again the ideal of service is a theme, but it is service specifically isolated from the realm of life and consecrated to the eternal spirit. (Ziolkowski. 49)

Dasa eventually marries Pravati, the daughter of a tenant farmer. One day, he comes home and finds her missing, and finds that she is living with the Rajah Nala. Dasa
finds their tent and slays Nala. He runs off and spends several years wandering, and he still dreams of his wife. Dasa avoidees people. He comes to a peaceful region that reminds him of the years he spent with the shepherds, and meets a yogi as he had in his youth. He stays with the yogi. He wants to become a yogi so he imitates the old man. One day, the yogi speaks to him and Dasa tells him of his past history. The Yogi seems to laugh at him. Dasa decides to leave the next day.

When he tells the old man that he plans to leave, the yogi sends him for water. At the spring, he hears the voice of Pravati. He forgets about the water for the yogi and spends his time with his wife. Dasa had been proclaimed prince. He follows her back to her camp and a messenger is sent to the city to tell them that Dasa has been found. In the city, he is greeted as royalty and is shown to his home. He assumes his official duties.

One day, a hostile rajah raids Dasa’s lands and Dasa sets off with a party to avenge the act. This begins a period of raids and reprisals by each side, which doesn’t make sense to Dasa. Dasa’s court is split into two camps, one favoring peace and the other favoring war. Dasa sometimes remembers the old yogi and thinks about him, wondering about consulting him. He finally realizes that Pravati likes leading the royal life and has helped to find him because she can’t live in the palace any other way. He is far from the peaceful life he had wanted with the yogi. He left it behind when he followed Pravata to the camp. Dasa’s enemy attacks and surrounds the palace when Dasa is absent. His son and wife are in the palace. Dasa is captured and taken inside and finds his wife holding the dead body of their son.

He wakes up from his dream with the water spilling on him at the spring. He fills the gourd with water and returns to the yogi. He has had his awakening. He is now accepted by the yogi. He remains in the forest for the rest of his life.

_The Glass Bead Game_, so its author stressed, is not a work of philosophy, but only one of the literary imagination (Dichtung). Yet what he also called his “Platonic dream” is a novel of ideas that in its reflection on the problematic role of mind in human history and culture is concerned with some broadly philosophic issues. In fact, all four non-Castalian lives (“The Rainmaker,” “The Father Confessor,” “The Indian Life,” and the unfinished eighteenth-century life) are variations on the basic theme of service to the Mind (Dienst am Geist). And not surprisingly, the student-
teacher relationship, which represents the oldest and most traditionally human way of transmitting the cultural heritage from one generation to the next, is central to all of Knecht’s incarnations. Moreover, as preludes to Knecht’s Castalian career, the appended biographies develop significant parallels and contrasts with that career. (Mileck. 269)

In each of these stories, Knecht places himself in a different religious framework, first with the tribal worship, then Christianity, and finally Hinduism. The Order did not follow any religious beliefs, and this is something that Knecht seems to find lacking in his life in the Order and makes up for in his three lives. In each case, there is also a mentor of some kind, just as the Music Master was his mentor.
Work Cited


**Articles Referred**


