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C. M. Wieland's "Die Geschichte des Agathon"

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C. M. Wieland's Die Geschichte des Agathon

by

Geoffrey Schoolar

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Abstract

C. M. Wieland's Die Geschichte des Agathon

by

Geoffrey Schoolar

The first and third versions of Wieland's Die Geschichte des Agathon differ from each other in various ways. One observes differences in style, wording, chapter grouping, and other "superficial" changes. There are also major differences in content. Chief among these are the "Danae Geschichte" and the episode at Tarent, which are depicted in detail only in the third version. The respective endings of the two works are remarkably different, and one observes a development in Agathon's character more completely in the third version. Agathon's character development is central to the question whether or not Agathon is a "Bildungsroman".
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Introduction

Over the approximately thirty-year period that spanned the "Agathon project" from its inception (1765) to its third and final form (1794), Christoph Martin Wieland had become one of Germany's foremost men of letters and one of the most popular writers of fiction in Europe. His Die Geschichte des Agathon, published by Gessner in Zurich in 1766-1767, enjoyed immediate popular and commercial success, and fortified Wieland's place as a leading writer of his age. The critical reception of the novel, however, was and remains mixed. Lessing, who before Agathon had consistently judged Wieland's works harshly, called the novel "the first and only novel for the thinking person" (McCarthy 77), claiming it to be "indisputably one of the finest works of our century"; other critics condemned the work because of its often lascivious tone and perceived moral laxity (McCarthy 76-77).

Regardless, at the conclusion of the first version the author suggests the possibility of issuing a continuance of the novel at some future time—contingent, of course on public demand. The narrator suggests the reader might desire in the expanded edition "das System des weisen Archytas genauer zu kennen" or to know the thoughts and perceptions of an aged Agathon. The narrator postulates
that it would perhaps "auch nicht unangenehm sein, die Geschichte der schoenen Danae [ . . . ] in einer ausfuehrlichen Erzaehlung zu lesen" (l.v. 536). Thus the book's success moved Wieland to publish a second edition which appeared in 1773. This edition contained a new preface ("Ueber das Historische im Agathon"), as well as the promised "Geheime Geschichte der Danae", but the "conclusion of the novel caused Wieland so much difficulty that the work remained unfinished until 1794" (McCarthy 72). Only in this third and final version do we also get the Archytas episode promised in the first version.

There are various positions taken with regard to the sovereignty of each version. One wonders whether the first version is to be viewed as a "fragment" which then finds "completion" by stages in the second and third versions. Some scholars (Erich Gros, Gerd Matthe), emphasize the "Selbstaendigkeit" of each variant (Erhart 19). As a point of departure for the present study, I will withhold judgement on this issue and consider the third version of Agathon, while not necessarily the definitive literary solution to the "Agathon project", at least the final and definitive reissue as mentioned in the "Abdankung" of the first version.

A study of the third version vis-a-vis the first reveals superficial changes (i.e. rewording, regrouping of paragraphs, extra explanatory footnotes, etc.), as well as
additions which enhance or flesh out that which has been presented in the first version. Much of the new material— the "Danae" and "Archytas" scenes, for example—have a deeper impact on the work, as they raise literary-aesthetic, thematic, and philosophical questions. The purpose of the present study is to examine the differences and similarities of the first and last versions and to address the questions raised by the new material.

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1Names and page numbers following a quote or reference refer to works in the "Works Cited" section of the present work. The abbreviations "1.v." and "3.v." refer respectively to the first and third versions of Die Geschichte des Agathon.
I. Stylistic and Superficial Changes

Grouping-

Besides the addition of new material in the third version, there are other striking differences between the two versions that readily become apparent even after a quick perusal of the two books. Perhaps most conspicuous are the chapter groupings and the use of paragraphs. One finds in the first version the propensity for extremely long paragraphs. Often the relatively short chapters are made up of one or perhaps two long paragraphs, everything being grouped together in one paragraph, regardless of a change in speaker, train of thought, or subject. In the third version, paragraphs are used in the more modern way to mark divisions in thought, action, etc. Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 of Book I of the first version, for example, are each one paragraph long; thus the only breaks in phrasing come between chapters. One sees the third version as an aesthetic improvement in this regard due to its more logical grouping, or, if one prefers, a modernization. The more liberal use of paragraphs is in keeping with that kind of procedure to be found in other of Wieland's later novels.

In the third version Wieland also chose to regroup his chapters and Books. In the first version (Book I), for example, one finds the material grouped into chapters as
follows: "Eine Entdeckung", "Erzaehlung der Psyche", "Fortsetzung der Erzaehlung der Psyche", and "Psyche beschliesst ihre Erzaehlung". Each of these chapters is one paragraph in length. All of this material is grouped into one chapter in the third version under the title "Unverhoffte Zusammenkunft zweier Liebenden. Erzaehlung der Psyche", and the chapter is spaced into nine paragraphs. One does not see the need to divide the Erzaehlung into short one-paragraph chapters with subtitles announcing the different stages of the Erzaehlung to the reader. One sees in the first version the chapters functioning more as paragraphs than as chapters, especially in light of the alternative grouping in the third version.

Conversely, Wieland often regrouped the chapters so that one extremely long chapter of the first version was separated into several shorter chapters for the third version. The recent history of the court at Syracuse immediately before Agathon's arrival on the scene there, as well as his experiences at Dionysius' court serve as an example of this kind of regrouping. The chapter in the first version entitled "Philistus und Timokrates" (Chapter 4), contains the reader's introduction to these manipulators of Dionysius, their reason and plan for causing Plato to fall out of favor with Dionysius, the execution and results of the plan--that Plato is removed from Syracuse--, the introduction to Baccidon, and the new policy of having,
purely for effect, as many "philosophers" at court as possible so as to give Dionysius a learned and wise appearance. In the third version, we find this long section divided into four chapters, each with relevant subtitles: "Philistus und Timokrates", "Gemütsverfassung des Dionysius", "Kunstgriffe des Guenstlings Timokrates", and "Ein merkwürdiger Vortrag des Philistus". Thus the subdivision has an effect similar to the insertion of paragraphs: it provides for logical breaks when one scene or section is finished, and separates it from a new scene, so that each chapter has its own purpose.

Not only do these subdivisions constitute an organizational improvement, but they also greatly enhance the formal balance. Wieland has up until this point in the first version maintained a fairly steady rhythm with regard to the lengths of the chapters, and the reader has become accustomed to this pace: each chapter is on average three to ten pages long, the exceptionally long chapters being slightly longer. Suddenly one is confronted with two extremely long chapters in a row which seem to violate the established pacing and form for no apparent reason (1.v. Book X Chapter 4 has approximately 25 pages, Chapter 5 has 29 pages).

One last point should be made on the subject of regrouping. One notices that the chapters that end and begin Books in the first version are not always the same
ones that end and begin Books in the third version. To cite one example of many we go again to Book X and observe the transition from Book X to Book XI in both versions. In the first version the chapter entitled "Agathon wird der Guenstling des Dionysius" (Chapter 5), marks the end of Book IX, whereas in the third version this section marks the beginning of Book XI. Here again the reorganization of the material is an improvement. In the first version, the break after the chapter, while logical, does not mark the transition between large formal sections as well as is the case in the third version. In the first version, as we have seen, the fourth chapter gives us the background and situation which awaits Agathon. The next chapter (5), has his arrival and subsequent ingratiation with Dionysius. Further, the chapter ends with a discussion about Agathon's character, since he "schien nach und nach ein andaechtiger Schwaeerm, ein Platonist, ein Republikaner, ein Held, ein Stoiker, ein Wolluestling - und war keines von allem" (I.v. 420). Book X then opens with the chapter, "Von Haupt- und Staatsaktionen".

Whereas the first version has Agathon arriving and becoming involved in Syracuse at the end of a Book, the third version has all the background to his arrival at the end of one Book (X); his arrival and involvement begin another Book (XI), which is solely devoted to his situation in Syracuse. Thus the reader has the sense in the third
version that with the new Book XI there will be a "new chapter" in the life of Agathon and that the material we have just read (Book X) has been preparation for this new adventure. Thus the spacing creates a kind of crescendo effect that is lacking in the first version.

Phrasing and Literary References-

In addition to the grouping there are other "superficial" differences between the two versions that deserve a closer look. Among these are differences in word choice, wording, and "editorial intrusions" in the form of "name-dropping" and footnotes. Most of these changes have little effect on the text's meaning when compared to the original, and they constitute scarcely more than a preference for one word or phrase over another. There are hundreds of cases where Wieland edited the work slightly for the third version. In fact, there is scarcely a page in the whole of the third version where he did not make some change in punctuation, wording, spelling, etc. The following serve as typical examples of such.

Early in the story Agathon happens upon the "Bacchantinnen" and exclaims how "aehnlich ist alles dieses einem Traum" (1.v. 31). In the third version (47), "Traum" is expanded to the more expressive "Fiebertraum", which passes perhaps better with the rest of the sentence and its
evocation in both versions of "schwaermende Phantasie" and "betaeubte Seele".

Another more significant type of change is exemplified in a passage taken likewise from Book I. Hippias asks Agathon if he knows the works of the philosophers. Agathon replies "Nein, denn ich verstehe sie nicht" (1.v. 36). This rather non-enlightening and ignorant-sounding reply is replaced in the third version with the more meaningful, "Gut genung, um nichts darin zu verstehen" (50). Surely this answer fits Agathon's character much better than the previous one, since it implies knowledge and rejection of the philosophers, most of whom, like Hippias, he rejects as Sophists.

Small modifications of this kind are myriad. Citing even a fraction of them would require spending too much time on the "superficialities". Yet there are a few more tendencies which should be mentioned: the propensity in the first version, lacking somewhat in the third, toward citing other literary works and figures, and the more liberal use of footnotes in the third version.

Wieland's references to obscure literary or mythological figures found so often in the first version are dropped from the text of the third version with such regularity that anyone studying the two texts systematically comes to expect, and can often predict, their absence in the third version. One sees an example of this in the scene
where Danae and Agathon discover each other in Tarent. The narrator describes Agathon's emotional state as he is approaching Danae's chamber:

Waere hier die Rede von solchen phantasierten Charaktern wie diejenige, welche aus dem Gehirn der Verfasserin der "Geheimen Geschichte von Burgund" und der "Koenigin von Navarra" hervorgehoben sind, so wuerden wir uns kaum [. . .]. (l.v. 529-30)

The third version omits the reference to the "romanhaft Darstellung" by the French author Charlotte-Rose de Caumont de la Force (l.v. 561), and has merely, "Waere hier die Rede von phantasierten Charaktern, so wuerden wir uns kaum [. . . .]" (477). However, a few sentences after the passages in question, each version contains references to Brutus and Portia, and in a previous passage there is in both versions a reference to "Doktor Peter Rezio von Aguero" and the "Staathalter der Insel Barataria", characters from "Don Quixote" (l.v. 522; 3.v. 470). It is quite probable that the elder Wieland realized that "the plethora of allusions to characters and events of [, for example,] Greek antiquity" were often unduly confusing (McCarthy 72), so that he toned them down considerably in the third version while leaving such obvious names as Plutarch, Shakespeare, Cervantes, etc. intact.

Steven Miller sheds further light on this question in his section on "Der Erzaehler und seine rhetorischen
Mittel". He studies Wieland's earlier treatise "Theorie und Geschichte der Red-Kunst und Dicht-Kunst" (1757), and reports that this treatise "zeugt von einer fruhen und gruendlichen Beschaeftigung mit den Prinzipien der Rhetorik" (66). In the treatise, Wieland notes the importance of rhetoric when one strives to be convincing both as a speaker and as a poet: The qualities of a speaker "sind Qualitaeten, die einem Poeten eben so nothwending sind, als einem Redner" (Miller 67). Here is not the place to discuss all the rhetorical devices as they are expounded by Wieland in his treatise; suffice it to say, that Wieland felt that in literature, no less than in the art of rhetoric, one needs to bring in "Autoritaeten" (like Plutarch, Shakespeare, etc.), in order to give support to his position (Miller 84). This is particularly noteworthy in the case of Agathon, where often controversial standpoints are explored, so that "solche Authoritaeten kraft ihres Beispiels oder ihres Zeugnisses eine oft heikle oder freisinnige Ansicht des Erzaehlers bekraeftigen" (Miller 84).

At the same time, "Vermieden werden soll der Anschein, als diente ein solcher Katalog erlauchter Geister lediglich der Verzierung" (Miller 84). In the third version, Wieland probably intended to bring the two positions in harmony by avoiding obscure and confusing references while bolstering his work with well-chosen, authoritative ones. It is also possible that by the time of the third version he was
sufficiently confident in himself as an author and authority that he either no longer felt the need to display his erudition, or that his own authority as a leading author made the bolstering of his work by relative unknowns superfluous.

Presentation of Dialogue-

The physical layout of the texts differ considerably, as we have seen. Besides changing and modernizing the employment of paragraphs and Books, Wieland also took an interest in changing how the dialogue was presented on the printed page. Compare the two presentations of the Hippias--Danae dialogue from Book IV:
"Weisst du, dass ich meinem Liebhaber den Abschied gegeben habe?"

"Dem schoenen Hyacinthus?"

"Ihm selbst, und, was noch mehr ist, mit dem festen Entschluss, seine Stelle nimmer zu ersetzen."

"Eine tragische Entschiessung, schoene Danae!"

"Nicht so sehr als du denkest." (3.v. 116)
The first version has: "Weisst du, dass ich meinem Liebhaber den Abschied gegeben habe?" - "Dem schoenen Hiazinthus?" - "Ihm selbst, und was noch mehr ist [. . .]"
(1.v. 107). But Wieland is not consistent in his presentation of the dialogue. He sometimes employs the dash
(-), between speakers in the third version in the same manner illustrated in the first version above. And there is an interesting aberration in the first version, since only once in the first version does Wieland present the dialogue thus:

Hippias: "Du scheinst in Gedanken vertieft, Kallias?"
Agathon: "Ich glaubte allein zu sein."
Hippias: "Ein andrer an deiner Stelle wuerde sich die Freiheit Meines Hauses besser zunutze machen." (49).

This is basically the extent of the superficial changes made in the third version. While these are not as important as the treatment of the new material, the editing shows us that Wieland carefully went through each page, each line of the text in order to make even the slightest change or improvement. It reflects Wieland's great care given to even the smallest detail, and his tendency to write and rewrite until his finished product had been sufficiently refined. Moreover, the last version has a decidedly more modern approach in its distribution of paragraphs, and it achieves a better rhythm and balance by virtue of the above-mentioned regrouping of paragraphs, chapters, and dialogue.
II. Development of the Character Agathon

Agathon as Bildungsroman-

The fact that there is more than one version of Agathon means of course that criticism of the work in the form of value judgements must come to grips with the different solutions offered in each version. Also, because of Agathon's place in literary history, scholars often judge the work according to its perceived "function" in the development of the novel. Thus the question of genre plays a large role in interpretation and evaluation, since if one sees the novel to be a "Bildungsroman", one is tempted to consider it merely a "forerunner" of that genre. Sengle, for example, considers the first version of Agathon in its "literaturgeschichtliche Rolle" "'im Vakuum zwischen Barock und Klassik'" and maintains:

Als "Vorläufer" bleibt die unvollendete Erstfassung in ihrem Recht, als endgültige und zur Vollendung gebrachte Gestalt eines ersten "Bildungsromans" wurde [. . .] auch die dritte Fassung favorisiert. (Erhart 6-7)

He considers the first version to be a "Fragment"—as unfinished or with imperfections. Thus the reader must consider it to a certain extent uncompleted as far as a total conception of the work is concerned. The third
version, then, represents the "completed" work, a consummation of the previously begun project. What is more, Sengle views the "Agathon project" as a kind of early "Bildungsroman", implying a primitive or not fully developed representative of that genre.

The problem one has with Sengle's theory of the "Bildungsroman" is that he is looking at the work in its relationship to Wilhelm Meister. Viewing the work in such terms is questionable at best, since Wieland, obviously enough, was not thinking in these terms. Even if one does consider the work to be a "Vorläufer" of the German "Bildungs- or Entwicklungsroman", one has gained very little by this classification, for one cannot very well judge a work retroactively in light of a later genre to which the previous work does not belong. If one views Agathon retroactively as a forerunner to the "Bildungsroman", why not then call Simplicissimus a forerunner to Agathon or even to Wilhelm Meister?

As tempting as it is to assign Agathon to such a convenient literary-historical niche, one would do better to view the work in its own context—that is, to look at the work with respect to what each version of the work accomplishes, especially in light of what the reader has been lead to expect will be accomplished. That is not to say, however, that the work must be seen in isolation; there is much in the work that refers to previous literary
history, and many of these references alert the reader that the present work is different in scope from the "romans du jour" which the public of Wieland's day had become so accustomed to reading. One must view the work with respect to previous literary traditions for the simple reason that Agathon intends for us to do so.

Wieland's goals in writing Agathon were many and ambitious. Lessing, as we have seen, sees in the work the first novel for the thinking man. Wieland certainly intended it to be. The work reads as a multi-perspective study in human nature, philosophy, and psychology. There are also autobiographical elements in the work: Wieland relates to Zimmerman in the well-known letter that he was depicting himself in the novel as he would like to have been (Petermann/Seifert, III 61). He intended the work to be amusing and challenging, to exemplify moral character while not being moralizing. The work breaks with tradition, and the narrator takes pains to notify the reader of this, often through ironic invocation of that very tradition. Wieland wished to make the reader think about art by including him in the creative process.

One sees how considering Agathon a "Vorlaeufer" to the "Bildungsroman" does not do justice to the work and is inadequate; nor does such a classification enlighten the reader as to the character of Agathon; if anything it clouds the issue, as Gerd Hemmerich ably demonstrates.
Hemmerich makes a convincing case that Agathon is not a "Bildungs- or Entwicklungsroman", "zumal dann nicht, wenn dieser Gattungsterminus anzeigen soll, dass die Romanhandlung in Bezug auf den Protagonisten eine Art Bildungs- oder Entwicklungsprozess darstellt" (10). His case deserves to be studied, not because of a desire to show how one classification should be preferred over another, but to illustrate how fundamental misunderstandings arise through the application of this traditional classification. By studying the factors which dispel the "Bildungsroman" theory, our picture of Agathon as a character, and of what Wieland is illustrating through him, will be clearer. We shall then make a comparison of the two versions of Agathon, especially in light of the above-mentioned priorities.

Simply stated, Hemmerich's problem with the "Bildungsroman" theory is that he sees no "Entwicklungs- or Bildungsprozess" present in Agathon. Hemmerich wishes to establish,

dass mit "Bildung" und "Entwicklung" qua Charactergenese sowohl das gemeint [ist], was sich in moralischer Hinsicht aus einer gegebenen psychischen Characterverfassung machen laesst, als auch die Konstituierung einer bestimmten "Denkungsart" im kantischen Sinne des Wortes. (9-10)

Further, after establishing "Denkungsart" (way of thinking) basically to mean a "philosophical character" which
establishes maxims, according to which a person feels he must live in order to be a "sittlicher Mensch", he claims: "Ein anderer 'Bildungs- oder Entwicklungsprinzip' als der, den der Terminus Genesis des moralischen Charakters bezeichnet, ist im Text nicht zu finden, und es besteht auch kein Anlass, ihn hineinzulesen" (10). We shall pursue this matter in both versions of Agathon and see to what extent Hemmerich's claims are justified.

According to Hemmerich, any "Bildung" of Agathon's character has taken place long before the reader makes his acquaintance in Book I. The genesis of Agathon's spiritual and moral character (Hemmerich 8) took place in Agathon's childhood in Delphi; in Delphi began for Agathon the "Bildung des idealischen Schoenen" and the "Bildung des allgemeinen Modell [....] nach dem er urteilt und handelt" (8). One need only read Agathon's narrative to Danae concerning his upbringing at Delphi to corroborate Hemmerich's assertions. Agathon himself tells us that die Lehraetze des Orpheus und des Pythagoras von den Goettern, von der Natur, von unserer Seele, von der Tugend und von dem, was das hoechste Gut des Menschen ist, sich meines Gemuets so gaenzlich bemeisterten, dass alle meine Begriffe nach diesem Urbilde gemodelt, alle meine Reizungen davon beseelt und mein ganzes Betragen sowie alle meine Entwuerfe fuer die Zukunft mit dem Plan eines nach diesen Grundsaetzen
abgemessenen Lebens [. . .] uebereinstimmig waren.
(1.v. 195)

We see clearly enough that Agathon's "Denkweise" was already formed at Delphi. Agathon also tells us that any "Knabe von gefuehlvoller Art, der beinahe von der Wiegen an daselbst erzogen worden, unvermerkt eine Gemuetsbildung bekommen muss, welche ihn von den gewoehnlichen Menschen unterscheidet" (1.v. 190). It is also emphasized (here and elsewhere), that it was to a large extent the particular circumstances of his upbringing which caused him to develop his particular "idealisches Modell", since people brought up elsewhere develop quite different "idealische Modelle".

Hemmerich maintains that Agathon's character, having thus been shaped at Delphi, does not thereafter "develop". The main reasons for his assertion are that "Danaes Versuch, Agathons Character umzubilden, nicht gelingt" and that "[es geht] nicht wie bei Herder um die Ausbildung aller jeweils gegebenen Anlagen oder wie bei Schiller und dann vor allem in den "Lehrjahren" um die Genese der Person als voll entfalteter Individualitaet" (7). He maintains further that even Agathon's "Bildungsreise" at the end does not constitute a development since what he learns of the world simply reaffirms what he already knew, namely that "'die Menschen, im Durchschnitt genommen, ueberall so sind, wie Hippias sie schilderte, wiewohl sie so sein sollten, wie Archytas durch sein Beispiel lehrte'" (Hemmerich 10). In
short, Hemmerich sees no "Bildungs- oder Entwicklungsprozess" and must conclude: "In allen Situationen, die seine eigentliche 'Geschichte' ausmachen, handelt Agathon also moralisch wie ein fertiger Charakter" (10-11).

Agathon as Schwaermer-

We must concede Hemmerich's point that Agathon's moral and psychological character has already been established by the time we meet him. The clashes between Agathon and Hippias (he remains for the reader "Agathon" despite the new name given him by Hippias) in Smyrna serve as an expose of Agathon's character, since in these "debates" we have a clear presentation both of his virtuous basic principles and his psychological characteristics, i.e. his "schwaermende Phantasie" and "empfindliche Natur". In one of the debates, Hippias has argued in essence that some laws are made for the public good but which nonetheless allow for certain exceptions if "der Geist und die Absicht des Gesetzes nicht verletzt wird" (1.v. 99). Agathon's "Schwaermerei" becomes apparent when he replies in such an exaggerated manner,

"Was hindert die Kinder, sich wider ihre Eltern zu verschwoeren? Was hindert die Mutter, sich selbst und ihre Tochter dem Meistbietenden preiszugeben? Was hindert mich, wenn ich dadurch gewinnen kann, den Dolch
in die Brust meines Feindes zu stossen, die Tempel der
Goetter zu berauben [. . .]? (1.v.99)
Blinded to a great extent by his own way of thinking,
Agathon blows Hippias' position completely out of
proportion; he is unable to see that Hippias' fundamental
principles, grounded as they are in the reality of his
experience, have little or nothing to do with the kind of
complete contempt for any moral standard so feared by
Agathon in his reply.

Let us consider a second example. The episode with
Cyane, Hippias' charming servant, demonstrates his Platonic
attitude toward women and his desire for spiritual rather
than physical pleasure. But here Agathon also confirms,
"dass ich das Schoene liebe, dass ich gegen den Reiz des
Vergnuegens nicht unempfindlich bin" (1.v. 58-59). Hippias
asks Agathon with respect to Cyane, "Warum quaelst du dich
dann, dir ein Vergnuegen zu versagen, das in deiner Gewalt
ist?" To which Agathon replies that he would get more
pleasure doing a good deed, since he feels a larger pleasure
"das Glueck meiner Nebengeschoepfe befoerdern [zu koennen]"
(1.v. 97). Agathon really does derive more satisfaction
from spiritual than from physical pleasures.

As Agathon progresses, we see that his basic
principles, though temporarily anesthetized, are
reconfirmed. He leaves Danae, ashamed

eine so lange Zeit ohne irgendeine lobenswuerdige Tat,
verloren fuer seinen Geist, verloren fuer die Tugend [. . . ] in untaetigem Muessiggang und, was noch schlimmer war, in der veraechtlichen Bestrebung, den wohllustigen Geschmack einer Danae zu belustigen [. . . ] unruehmlich verschwendet zu haben. (l.v. 305)

Again blowing everything out of proportion, his perception of Danae changes so completely that he "sah nun in diesem vermeinten Urbild einer jeden idealen Vollkommenheit nichts mehr als eine schlaue Buhlerin" (l.v. 305); and, berating himself but not changing his own tendency to idealize, he proceeds to adore Psyche as the embodiment of all perfection and goodness he had once seen Danae to be. Thus, aside from the aberration with Danae, we see no development in his character. After his failure at Syracuse, however, we start to see some interesting developments in this respect.

Both versions, of course, have Agathon finding Danae in her isolated country estate in Tarent. But the first version ends abruptly thereafter, whereas the third version continues with much new material. I submit that the later episodes in both versions show significant changes in Agathon's character. The first version reveals an indecisive, unresolved change in character—a change which starts to develop in Syracuse, and which leaves his character undefined, to a certain extent, at the end of the work. The third version also reveals a change, but the development is a slower, less abrupt process and shows a
resolution of the conflict within Agathon to a much greater degree than we see in the first version.

Schwaermerei and Skepticism-

Let us first consider the first version after the Syracuse episode. In the chapters entitled "Moralischer Zustand unsers Helden" and "Apologie des griechischen Autors", we see the changes in Agathon's attitude toward mankind and towards himself clearly discussed. We have already noticed significant changes in his dealings with people like Baccidon in Syracuse. His attitude in Syracuse betrays a willingness to compromise on his principles in order to achieve his grandiose goals. The narrator reflects on the "Veraenderungen, welche [nachteilige Einfluesse] verstohlenenerweise in seiner Seele verursachten", and he attributes

die Progressen, welche die schon zu Smyrna angefangene Revolution in seiner Seele wahrend seinem Aufenthalt zu Syrakus machte, ohne das mindeste Misstrauen in sie zu setzen, ganz allein den neuen oder bestaetigten Erfahrungen [in Syrakus]. (l.v. 478)

In light of the sum of his experiences, Agathon feels his previous view of mankind to have been wrong. He says the "Menschen sind nicht, wofuer ich sie hielt, da ich sie nach mir selbst und mich selbst nach den jugendlichen
Empfindungen eines gefuehlvollen Herzens und nach einer noch ungeprueften Unschuld beurteilte" (1.v. 481). He further says in respect to his earlier belief in the "angeborenen Schoenheit und Wuerde dieser menschlichen Natur", that "alles, was der goettliche Plato Erhabenes und Herrliches davon gesagt und geschrieben hatte" was simply "Maerchen aus einer andern Welt" (1.v. 480). Agathon finds himself insecure, unsure of his formerly rock-solid beliefs. This stands in contrast to a character whose virtue and principles previously had had "keinen anderen Sachwalter noetig als sein eigenes Herz" (1.v. 482).

Still, the narrator explains:

Die Begriffe des wesentlichen Unterschieds zwischen Recht und Unrecht und die Ideen des sittlichen Schoenen hatten zu tiefe Wurzeln in seiner Seele gefasst [. . .] als dass es moglich gewesen waere, dass irgendeine zufaellige Ursache [. . .] sie haette ausreuten koennen. (1.v. 482)

The narrator paints a picture of doubt and conflict, showing Agathon to be unsure of his "Ideen des sittlichen Schoenen", yet still in possession of them. He shows Agathon to have lost much of the "Feuer der grossmuetigen Schwaermerei" that kindles a strong love of virtue and principle (1.v. 484). Having painted such a picture, the narrator offers the rather non-committal remark,

"Zu gutem Glueck sehen wir ihn im Begriff, zu Leuten
zu kommen, welche ihn mit der Menschheit wieder
aussoehnen und seinem schon erkaltenden Herzen diese
beseelende Waerme wieder mitteilen werden, ohne welche
die Tugend eine blosse Spekulation ist [. . .]. (1.v.
492)
The narrator thus offers hope that Agathon can yet achieve
within himself a harmony between wisdom and virtue.

Although his life in Tarent is peaceful, and his
association with Archytas satisfying, Agathon does not come
completely out of his doldrums. His reunion with Danae
gives further cause for unrest, as his feelings for her have
not changed and their relationship remains "unsettled". He
is overwhelmed with emotion and exclaims, "Grossmuetige,
goettliche Danae!" She immediately holds him in check:
"Keine Beiworter, Agathon [. . .]. Keine Schwaermerei! Du
bist zu sehr geruehrt, beruhige dich [. . .]" (1.v. 532).
In such a state of unrest for Agathon, the first version
ends scarcely four pages after this chastisement from Danae.
In the remaining pages we see a dispirited Agathon who
resigns himself grudgingly to accept Danae's terms for
reconciliation: a Platonic relationship. The narrator again
will not take a definitive position with respect to
Agathon's state of mind or happiness, saying merely that he
leaves it up to the reader "zu erraten, was er tat, oder
auszumachen, was er haette tun sollen" (1.v. 535).

The "schon zu Smyrna angefangene Revolution in seiner
Seele" and his present doubts, while not leaving him completely disillusioned with respect to mankind and his own values, certainly show us that Agathon is not the same idealistic, self-confident character the reader had seen him to be before the Danae episode. His "idealische Schoene" remains what it had been, but he lacks the conviction to be as confident in it as he once was. He no longer has faith in the "Orphische Philosophie" "welche alle unsre Fragen beantwortet, alle Raetsel erlaert, alle Aufgaben aufloest", a philosophy which had been "eine reichere Quelle von ruhiger Freude und ein festerer Grund der Selbstzufriedenheit [. . .]" (1.v. 194-95).

While there is no development in his moral character, one sees considerable development in his psychological and emotional character. His tendency toward "Schwaermerei" has been toned down considerably. His drive to do great things for the benefit of mankind has also been greatly lessened. While he is by no means completely broken in spirit, he nonetheless cuts a very dispirited figure, since he has neither the satisfaction he once derived from his firm belief in his basic principles, nor the happiness that might have come from a union with Danae. Agathon is so effected by this latter consideration, "dass Psyche endlich selbst Mitleiden mit ihm zu haben anfing" (1.v. 534-35).

Thus Agathon has developed a somewhat skeptical and even cynical attitude toward his own principles and toward
mankind in general. His idealistic character has changed drastically, and so it follows that his previous aspiration of living life with a grand purpose has been altered. The first version ends in the state of confusion and unrest just described.

Archytas-

The third version offers a considerably different treatment of Agathon after his failure at Syracuse. Whereas the first version closes in confusion upon the reconciliation of Agathon and Danae, the third has much additional material (Books XIV, XV, and XVI), and does much to develop Agathon's psychological and emotional character. This new material develops Agathon's character to the extent that much of the conflict seen within Agathon at the close of the first version is resolved by the end of the third.

The main reason for the change within Agathon is his association with Archytas; but only a few pages are dedicated to Archytas in the first version. The reader recognizes him as a role model for Agathon and sees in him a kind of refined and purified Agathon. In the "Vorbericht", the narrator relates, that "nach unserem Plan der Character unsers Helden auf verschiedene Proben gestellt werden sollte, durch welche seine Denkungsart und seine Tugend erlaeutert und dasjenige, was darin uebertrieben und unecht
war, nach und nach abgesondert wuerde [. . .]" (1.v. 11).
As we have seen, this "refinement" of Agathon is only partly successful in the first version--that is, the refinement remains incomplete. However, one sees in Archytas, even from the few pages devoted to him in the first version, someone who can serve as a role model for Agathon and, if possible, help him in the "refinement" process. That role, which is merely suggested in the first version, is fleshed out somewhat in the third version.

Gerd Hemmerich, in his chapter "Der weise Archytas", attempts to argue, not very convincingly, that Archytas is not a satisfactory model figure for Agathon. He argues that if the ability to live correctly (like Archytas), is contingent upon one's temperament, and is dependent on a "Zusammenfluss eben so gluecklicher Umstaende", that is, den besonderen Bedingungen, unter denen er aufwuchs, [. . .] dann ist nicht einzusehen, wie ein armer Sterblicher, der nicht so gluecklich veranlagt ist, und der etwa das Missgeschick hatte, von betruegerischen Priestern erzogen worden zu sein, durch imitatio in den Besitz der Tugend und Weisheit eines solchen Vorbildes gelangen koennen soll. (83)

He argues further:

Die Vorstellung, die moralisch richtige Lebensfuehrung sei durch Nachahmung zu erlernen, setzt ja die Annahme voraus, dass nicht schon Unterschiede der individuellen
psychischen Konstitution und der jeweils besonderen empirischen Lebensbedingungen unüberwindliche Hindernisse darstellen. (83)

Differences in upbringing and their effect on one's morality is, to be sure, an important theme in Agathon. However, a few points need to be made with respect to Hemmerich's position. First and foremost, Archytas' function as a character is as a role model for Agathon, regardless of whether Hemmerich thinks he is convincing in this role or not. Agathon certainly sees Archytas in this way. Second, I do not understand the Archytas episode to be an illustration of how "die moralisch richtige Lebensführung sei durch Nachahmung zu erlernen". Instead, Archytas as a model shows what can be accomplished or produced by further "refinement". The strength of these assertions lies on the conviction that there is relatively little emulation required of Agathon, since Archytas, more than just being a "Vorbild", serves as an example of a more or less perfect product of Agathon's own school of philosophy. Hemmerich's point (that it is questionable whether one can learn to live correctly by following the example of someone from a wholly different background), might in and of itself be conceded. But the point is actually moot, since Archytas' and Agathon's basic philosophies and principles are identical. Thus Archytas' main function is to confirm Agathon's own basic principles, the validity of which Agathon has long
since begun to doubt.

When one considers the similarities in the backgrounds and philosophies between Agathon and Archytas, one sees how Archytas confirms Agathon's principles by acting as an example of a "more refined Agathon". He relates to Agathon, "Meine erste Jugend [. . .] hat dies mit der deinigen gemein, dass ich in den Grundbegriffen und Maximen der Pythagorischen Philosophie, die in der Hauptsache von der Orphischen wenig unterschieden ist, erzogen wurde" (3.v. 557).

Archytas' life story as related in the chapter "Darstellung der Lebensweisheit des Archytas", corresponds strikingly to Agathon's own story up to this point in the work (excepting, of course, the love affairs). Archytas grew up with the same sort of philosophy and unshakable, uncompromising regard for truth that characterizes Agathon; like Agathon he incurred the disdain of others on account of his values; like Agathon he distinguished himself in public service and became the object of envy and jealousy; like Agathon he displayed a distinct dislike "gegen alles, was nach Sophisterei schmeckte" (3.v. 560); and like Agathon he went out into the world, so to speak, and often found his unequivocally accepted beliefs greeted with scorn and derision by people like Hippias.

Archytas is well respected, and Agathon looks up to him even before he learns of their similar backgrounds. Thus
Archytas serves as a model for Agathon, but even more than that, he is a support for him: he confirms Agathon's basic principles and shows by his (authoritative) example that one can--that even an Archytas can--live by Agathon's own principles and still be fulfilled. He is an example of one who has added wisdom to virtue, and he endeavors to instruct Agathon and impart to him his wisdom. Most importantly, he is guiding Agathon down a path already begun by Agathon, not attempting to teach an imitation of Archytas' own principles. He teaches Agathon to recognize the value of the principles they already have in common. He asks Agathon, "Aber warum solltest du suchen, was du bereits gefunden hast?" (3.v. 566). Archytas asks further:

wie solltest du [. . . .] eine bessere Norm deiner ganzen innern Verfassung, einen sicherern Leitfaden durch den Labyrinth des Lebens, ein edleres Ziel deines Daseins, mehr Aufmunterung und Kraft zur Tugend, und einen festern Grund guter Hoffnungen finden koennen, als in den Grundlehren eben dieser erhabenen Weisheit, in welcher du erzogen wurdest? (3.v. 566)

There are further laudatory references to "Orphische Theologie" (the theology in which Agathon was raised at Delphi), to a "Glaube einer Verknuepfung unsers Geistes mit der unsichtbaren Welt und dem allgemeinen System der Dinge" (3.v. 570), and to a general desire to do good on behalf of others, regardless of whether recognition or condemnation
results from the good deed. But none of these are new principles which Agathon is supposed to emulate if he is to live correctly; these are references made to confirm Agathon's own values which he has begun to doubt. Archytas is confirming Agathon's own basic principles and is acting as an authority figure whose wisdom helps Agathon develop the ability to continue down the road Agathon has already begun. Furthermore, Archytas's stature as a person of respect lends credence to his espousal of Agathon's philosophy. Archytas is a living example of someone honorable who has achieved what Agathon up to now has not been able to achieve. He helps Agathon continue to develop—not morally, but psychologically and emotionally.

With respect to his earlier experiences, Agathon relates to Archytas, "Mein Herz blieb zwar noch immer mein einziger Fuehrer [ . . . ]" (3.v. 554). Agathon weighs his and Archytas' respective characters and realizes that they share the same basic principles and philosophies, "mit dem grossen Unterschied zwischen uns, dass bei dir Weisheit ist, was bei mir schwerlich fuer etwas besseres als schoene Schwaermerei gelten koennte" (3.v. 554). Archytas serves as Agathon's much-needed guide. Being the voice of wisdom and reason, he teaches Agathon, who normally exaggerates everything, not to feel he must right all of humanity's wrongs, or that he must understand all the secrets of nature. Archytas teaches him, "nichts ist gewisser,
Agathon, als dass den heiligen Schleier, der das Geheimnis der Natur verhüllt, kein Sterblicher aufzudecken vermag, und dass es [. . .] toerichte Vermessenheit waere, es versuchen zu wollen" (3.v. 555). He steadies Agathon by referring to "Schwaermerei" as a sickness which can be cured by finding one's place in an ordered society:

Die Schwaermerei, die sich im Schatten seiner unbeschaeftigten Einsamkeit mit sinnlich-geistigen Phantomen und Gefuehlen naehrt, [. . .] nimmt Traume fuer Erscheinungen, Schattenbilder fuer Wesen, Wuesche einer gluehenden Phantasie fuer Genuss [. . .]. Gegen diese Krankheit der Seele ist Erfuellung unsrer Pflichten im buergerlichen und haeuslichen Leben das sicherste Verwahrungsmittel [. . .]. (3.v. 571)

Archytas is showing Agathon a different perspective of the fulfillment of ones duties in relation to psychological and emotional satisfaction. As witness his colossal aspirations in Athens and again in Syracuse, Agathon's undertakings, which he had perceived to be his "buergerliche Pflicht", had been a product of his "Schwaermerei", not at all a safeguard "gegen diese Krankheit". Archytas is teaching Agathon the value of fulfilling his duties "im buergerlichen und haeuslichen Leben" as opposed to prevailing in a grandiose manner. The emphasis is put on the small scale, that is, putting one's own house in order while acknowledging one's duty as a part of society, not as one who lives outside or
even above society.

Perhaps most important for Agathon's way of thinking, Archytas teaches him that a virtuous existence is not a "state", which one can "attain" like, for example, a state of "Nirvana". This is because such an existence, such a state of perfection "ist ein Ziel, das wir nie ergreifen werden, wiewohl wir ihm ewig naehern" (3.v. 557). This sort of wisdom is vital for an enthusiast like Agathon, as it helps him to put his goals and expectations into perspective.

Another very important "revelation" to Agathon is that one can indeed live peacefully with conflicting emotions and conflicting drives. Although Agathon always recognized the different kinds of human nature, those represented by "the Hippiases" and by "the Agathons", for example, he did not understand how one individual could possess both kinds of human nature at the same time. He had previously been inclined not to acknowledge the "tierischen Teil" of his own nature. Thus when reflecting on Danae, before his longing for her at Tarent became so powerful, he saw not his own overwhelming desire for Danae, but rather her deceit and cunning as the reason for his blindness in allowing himself to be taken in by her. Archytas teaches Agathon that both kinds of human nature are invariably to be found dwelling within one and the same breast.

Hemmerich's contention that there is no kind of Bildung
beside "eine moralische" and that there is no "Entwicklung- or Bildungsprozess", is, when seen from the psychological or emotional perspective, I conclude, quite suspect. The Agathon at the end of the third version, unlike that of the first, is seen finally to possess both virtue and wisdom. He is also a man who has learned to live peacefully among mankind, whereas previously he inevitably came into conflict with his fellow man, since his strict views always caused problems and resentment within society. To be sure, his basic principles have not changed much from what they were when he adopted them at Delphi, but Agathon himself has certainly changed in many respects. The Agathon at the end of the third version is now steady and wise enough to actually lead the people of Tarent. Could we say the same of the Agathon we meet in Delphi, Smyrna, and Syracuse? Could we say the same of the Agathon at the end of the first version?
III. Danae

A large portion of the new material in the third version of Agathon is given to Danae's "Geheime Geschichte". Her story is important to the work as a whole as it completes the character Danae and thereby gives Agathon and the reader a broader and clearer picture of her. Her "Geheime Geschichte" underscores the theme previously treated in the work which deals with the all-important circumstances of one's upbringing and its effect on one's morality and way of thinking. Her story also puts Agathon's treatment and assessment of Danae into a different light, since neither he nor the reader can know the "real" Danae until he has heard the "Geheime Geschichte". Thus the "Geheime Geschichte" adds other dimensions to the work as a whole, in that Danae becomes an important, thought-provoking character in her own right. Her story demands a reassessment (by Agathon and by the reader), of Danae, and it reflects onto Agathon's own temporary loss of identity, being seen, as it is, in light of her own.

Danae and Agathon at Smyrna-

In the first version, Danae exists primarily for the purpose of leading Agathon astray. She is one of the "Proben" mentioned in the "Vorbericht" which Agathon will
have to withstand if he is to remain with his virtue intact. The "Danae episode" in Smyrna shows us how capable Agathon is of self-deception. After all, his affair with Danae constitutes basically an acting out of the "theoretical" positions taken in the Agathon-Hippias debate, and this certainly confirms Hippias' own position rather than Agathon's. He deceives himself in that he seems to be able to accept a life given completely over to the purely sensual, which goes against his basic principles. The self-deception also lies in his inability to accept the sensual part of his nature; he can not accept this because he has always viewed himself as being motivated solely by higher, spiritual drives.

As the narrator points out, "die Szene ist bei einer solchen Erzählung (und überhaupt bei welcher Art von Handlung es immer sein mag), niemals gleichgültig" (3.v. 486). The idyllic setting for the Danae episode, Danae's estate, is a retreat from the world and its conventions--from reality itself, in many ways. The episode is so characterized by an unreal, other-worldly quality that it is not surprising that Agathon, the supreme "Schwaermer", would become so entranced that Hippias would remark, "Dachte ich nicht, Kallias [...] dass ein Monat unter den Augen der schoenen Danae dich von den Vorurteilen heilen wuerde, womit du gegen Grundsaetze eingenommen warest, die du bereits so meisterhaft auszuueben gelernt hast" (1.v. 173).
Hemmerich sees the other-worldly, magical quality of their life together on Danae's estate from the allegorical perspective, noting that neither Danae nor Agathon uses his correct name. The name "Danae", as she herself tells us, was given to her by Alcibiades because her beauty was such that she could have passed for the "real" goddess Danae, whom she was portraying for Alcibiades' sculptor.  

Hemmerich comments that Agathon's name "Kallias" (meaning "the beautiful"), was given to him, "[um] als schoener Rezitator Homers, also in ausgesprochen kuenstlerischer Funktion, dem Sophisten seine Dienste zu leisten." Further, "Die Namen Kallias und Danae haben nun dies miteinander gemein, dass sie ihren Traegern von 'Kunstkennern' gegeben wurden, und zwar in der offenkundigen Absicht, ihre aesthetische Schoenheit im sinnlichen Wortverstand herauszustellen" (61).

Agathon, of course, resorts back to his own name (which means "the good"), upon breaking with Danae; this is symbolic of his having rediscovered his true self.

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2 Hemmerich is wrong, however, when he writes on page 61: "Danaes wirklicher Name, Chariklea, wird erst viel spater in ihrer "Geheime Geschichte" offenbart[]." Her "Geheime Geschichte" makes clear that her real name is Myris; she chooses the name Chariklea only after her affair with Agathon as a symbolic gesture emphasizing her reversion back to her true virtuous nature after her many years as Danae. Chariclea, a priestess at Delphi, is a character from Heliodorus' Ethiopica, whose virtue is always threatened, but who remains virtuous to the end.
Danae wins her way into Agathon's heart by playing in pantomime her role in "Apollo and Daphne" as Agathon would have wished it to be played (i.e. displaying purity, innocence, and no erotic tendency). Because he sees her basically acting out his own "schoenes Ideal", he believes Danae to be a realization of that perfect ideal—the unification of the beautiful and sensual with the spiritual and the pure (Hemmerich 62). Thus she becomes for him a "sittliche Venus mit allen ihren geistigen Grazien" (1.v. 126). Danae becomes irresistible to him since she has projected herself—through art—as the realization, the embodiment of an ideal out of Agathon's own imagination.

The line between reality and phantasy (through art) becomes more and more blurred as pantomimes, concerts, and "kleine Schauspiele", such as the one Agathon has performed for Danae, are experienced. His "Schauspiel" takes place in a garden, "in welchem nach persischem Geschmack grosse Blumenstucke, Spaziergaenge von hohen Baeumen, kleine Weiher, kuenstliche Wildnisse, Lauben und Grotten in anmutiger Unordnung untereinander geworfen schienen" (1.v. 170). The garden is designed as though it were a setting for theater—a setting "an welchen die Kunst keine Hand angelegt zu haben schien [. . .]" (1.v. 170). The Garden itself creates the illusion of a mythical phantasy-world. Here Agathon performs his "verstecktes Konzert, welches alle Arten von Singvoegel nachahmte" (1.v. 170). Hippias, Agathon, and Danae are walking through the
Garden, when unversehens eine Anzahl von kleinen Liebesgottern und Faunen aus dem Hain hervorhupfte; jene von flatterndem Silberflor, der mit nachgeahmten Rosen durchwuerkt war, leicht bedeckt; diese nackend, ausser dass ein Efeukranz, mit gelben Rosen durchflochten, ihre milchweissen Hueften schuerzte und um die kleinen verguldeten Hoernern sich schlang, die aus ihren schwarzen kurzlockichten Haaren hervorstachen. (1.v. 171)

Danae and Agathon prepare a succession of such dramas, pantomimes, and operas, which draw them deeper and deeper into the world of the unreal, into the illusory world of art and mythology. In an opera given by Danae for Agathon, Agathon is so moved that he exclaims, "In solchen Toenen [. . .] ganz gewiss in keinen anderen, druekken die Unsterblichen einander aus, was sie empfinden; nur eine solche Sprache ist der Goettern wuerdig" (1.v. 145). Hemmerich remarks, "Der Zauber der Kunst hat, wie man sieht, die Liebenden in ein goettlich-poetisches Paar verwandelt" (64).

These happy lovers "brauchen, um, ihrer Empfindung nach, den Goettern an Wonne gleich zu sein, nichts als ihre Liebe" (1.v. 160). This is especially so since they see their love, their dream-like existence, everywhere reflected in art, nature, in the gods themselves. Their phantasies,
seemingly coming to life through art, allow them to escape from reality, so that Danae is for Agathon "eine sittliche Venus mit allen ihrer geistigen Grazien" (Hemmerich 63). The Greek author knows this can not last. He exclaims 
"'Welch ein Zustand, wenn er dauern koennte!'" (v. 161). This confirms the reader's assumption that Agathon is merely deceiving himself when he considers their idyllic life to be congruous with his true nature.

When one sees the Danae episode in this light, one sees how complete Agathon's self-deception is and how unfairly he treats Danae when he later sees "in diesem vermeinten Urbild einer jeden idealen Vollkommenheit nichts mehr als eine schlaue Buhlerin, welche von einer grossen Fertigkeit in der Kunst, die Herzen zu bestricken, den Vorteil ueber seine Unschuld erhalten hatte!" (v. 305).

When upbraiding himself, "dass er toericht genug haette sein koennen, in ein so sichtbares, so handgreifliches Netz sich verwickeln zu lassen" (v. 305), Agathon begins to compare Danae to Psyche, who, of course, is herself a reflection of Agathon's ideal of purity, innocence, and spirituality. He compares Danae to Psyche:

Diese Gestalt der Liebesgoettin, bei deren Anschauen seine entzueckte Seele in Wollust zerflossen war, sank jetzt, mit der jungfraeulichen Geschmeidigkeit der jungen Psyche verglichen, in einer gramsuechtigen Einbildung zu der ueppigen Schoenheit einer Bacchantin
herab [. . .]. (1.v.306) The narrator, however, comes to Danae's defense, saying that though she is not above reproach for her part in the whole affair, "so war es doch unbillig, sie zu verurteilen, weil sie keine Psyche war oder, um bestimmter zu reden, weil sie in aehnlichen Umstaenden sich nicht vollkommen so wie Psyche betragen hatte" (1.v. 307). He invokes here the difference in circumstances, noting that Psyche had the advantage of having been raised at Delphi and that "sich die ersten Empfindungen ihres jugendlichen Herzens fuer einen Alkibiades und nicht fuer einen Agathon entfalteten[.]" (1.v. 307).

Danae is thus briefly defended from unwarranted comparisons to Psyche. In the final analysis, however, the comparisons are indeed made, as Danae must be seen as one who adheres to Hippias' philosophy. In this respect Agathon feels fully justified in rejecting her as he does Hippias, and he thus sees no injustice in comparing her to Psyche.

Danae must then be seen in the first version principally as a temptress and in contrast to Psyche. Matthew Bach writes that it is one of Wieland's favorite themes "to cure the fanatical enthusiast by bringing him into contact with life" and with temptresses like Danae or Musarion, who have a sobering influence upon the heroes and make them "better men and more useful members of society" (50). Moreover, Danae's chief importance as a character
lies in her function as a "Probe" for Agathon. Though his reasoning in leaving her is suspect, the fact that he has seemingly left Hippias and Danae behind him once and for all is seen as a relative victory for Agathon.

Danae's "Geheime Geschichte"—

The "Geheime Geschichte der Danae" in the third version expands Danae's role considerably and develops her as an important character in her own right. As such she is not seen exclusively in the light of her effect on Agathon. In fact, the "Geheime Geschichte" shows Danae as an independent character and how she is in turn effected by her "Agathon episode".

The "Geheime Geschichte" has a great effect on the work as a whole. Obviously, the reader must see Danae in a different light after her story, since only then does her true identity as a character become clear. Her story introduces again the theme of the importance of environment and background. Previously this theme of the circumstances of one's upbringing had been introduced in the form of theoretical or hypothetical observations. Agathon hypothesizes, as we have seen, that he might have developed a completely different way of thinking if he had not been brought up in the temple at Delphi, and the narrator voices similar concerns with respect to Danae and Psyche. The
"Geheime Geschichte" proves the narrator right in his hypothesis, as her story dramatizes this theory quite explicitly.

The "Geheime Geschichte" comes after Agathon and the reader have already formed a somewhat negative opinion of the hetaira. This "negative" assessment is the intended one, and the reader is lead to this view in several ways: through the chorus-like commentary of the narrator, through Danae's association with Hippias, and, of course, through her inevitable comparison to Psyche. Since Danae has already been "judged", her story illustrates all the more vividly how her true character has not been recognized. Obviously, there is a lesson in "judgement" to be learned from all this, a lesson from which the reader is not exempt. Of course, Agathon is the only one who has to face up to Danae, and he is made to feel extremely embarrased time and time again throughout her story for having judged her too harshly and without really having known her.

The chapter "Erste Jugend der Danae bis zu ihrer Bekanntschaft mit dem Alcibiades" reveals a character altogether different from the Danae we know from the earlier episodes. We find that the name "Danae", which has come to have a symbolic meaning in the mind of the reader, is not her name at all. Nor does the "Denkweise" of the young Myris, Danae's given name, correspond to that of Danae as seen in Smyrna. In the "Erste Jugend" Danae relates,

Myris' youth shows striking similarities to Agathon's own. Her character, like Agathon's, was shaped by a bond with nature, by an "Idee goettlicher Vollkommenheit" which was nurtured by images of the Gods and the Graces. And like Agathon she "felt" these things more than she understood them or could put them into words. Concerning her feeling for the "Idee des Schoenen" she says, "noch sah ich sie bloss durch einen Nebel; aber auch das Wenige, was ich davon erblickte, tat seine Wirkung" (3.v. 489). And with respect to the Graces she tells Agathon,

Ich konnte mir selbst nicht entwickeln, was ich dabei fuehlte; aber ich schwor den Grazien einen heiligen Schwur, sie in allem meinem Tun zu meinen Fuehrerinenn zu erwahlen. Wie du siehest, Agathon, hatte die junge Myris einen feinen Ansatz zu eben dieser schoenen

Danae's "Geheime Geschichte" then proceeds to relate how it came about that her character and way of thinking underwent so radical a change. In so doing, her "Geschichte" brings the life of the hetaira to the fore. It is often pointed out that the heroines of Wieland's novels are predominantly of the hetaira type. This is, of course, the case in Agathon, although it is mainly due to her "Geheime Geschichte" that she becomes the heroine of the work. Without her story she must remain a temptress for Agathon, a "Probe" instead of a Heroine. Her story stirs the interest of the reader in Danae as a "complete" character and provides enough material so that the reader has made an intellectual investment in her. She thus gives rise to new themes and conflicts.

The Danae of the first version is portrayed as a hetaira who eventually undergoes an improbable change in character by devoting herself in the end to virtue. The narrator realizes how incredible this seems: "Das ist unwahrscheinlich, werden die Kenner sagen. Unwahrscheinlich, antworte ich, aber moglich" (1.v. 534). Danae is in the first version basically a one-dimensional
character who is "made" by the author to change into another character. "Verdiente Danae nicht in allen Betrachtungen das Schicksal der Aspasia?" asks the narrator (1.v. 535). But the narrator's own statement--that her change is improbable yet possible--seems to answer this question in the negative. Her character in the first version has not been shown to have "verdient" das "Schicksal der Aspasia". Only the "Geheime Geschichte" can show this.

The "Geheime Geschichte" does not fundamentally change the conception of Danae as a hetaira, since it unfolds for us in detail how it was that she indeed became one. But her story does ennoble Danae as a true "schoene Seele", and in so doing it also elevates the stature of the hetaira.

There are many reasons why Wieland made such extensive use of the hetaira. Perhaps most important is simply his desire for a more realistic, human type of character, one with what he considered to be a completely natural human sensuality. Obviously, Wieland was much more sympathetic to Henry Fielding than to Samuel Richardson. But more than a sensuous, flesh and blood type of woman, the hetaira represented for Wieland a woman of culture and refinement.

Paul Groschwald, as Matthew Bach reports, sees Wieland's use of the hetaira as a means of "preserving the Greek atmosphere as far as was possible", since "the Greek married woman was entirely confined to the duties of her household and therefore paid little attention to her
intellectual development" (50). He notes further that there was little social intercourse between husband and wife in the Greek family. Therefore, men sought diversion outside the home "in the company of hetairas, who besides their external charms, possessed also an unusual amount of refinement and culture" . (50) He concludes that Wieland chooses the hetaira for interaction with his hero because only she had the intellectual capacity to exert an influence on his cultural development (Bach 50).

Women in Society; The Hetaira-

The "Geheime Geschichte" shows the culture and refinement of the hetaira, albeit in an equivocal way; obviously, the hetaira is not Wieland's ideal of womanhood. Moreover, Danae's story illustrates vividly how a woman of talents, intellect, and charm--a woman possessing "die Grazien"--is limited by social convention in her cultural and intellectual development. Danae, like her mentor Aspasia, must accept the role of hetaira if she wishes to rise above the traditional station of women in society. Only in her role as hetaira can she have influence on men and thus on society and politics in general. Only as a hetaira can she cultivate an appreciation of the arts, history, and intellectual pursuits. Aspasia teaches this to Danae, but not before Danae herself has already had some
experience in these matters.

As a young child, the beautiful and talented Myris is made by the heartless "alte Krobyle", "welche so ziemlich die Miene eines Drachen hatte", to ply her charms on the male members of society for money. Myris consents, though not without grave misgivings, partly because of threats made by the "wirtschaftliche" Krobyle, partly because she is enjoying for the first time a life without want. Though her oath to the Graces is not totally forgotten, Myris continues in this unsettled state until she meets Alcibiades and Aspasia. Aspasia, one of the most important women of antiquity (I.v. 545), is the supreme hetaira. She was the lover and later wife of Perikles, whom she manipulated to a large degree through her charms and intellect; she thus became a rather powerful and influential figure. Of course, she has done basically the same thing in Athens with respect to Alcibiades.

Aspasia realizes how the talents and potential of women are not allowed to develop in a society dominated by men. She says to Myris in her polemic,

"es ist [den Maennern] gelungen uns zu unterjochen [. . .]. Alles was uns also uebrig bleibt, ist, dass jede, so gut sie kann, fuer sich selbst sorge: und wenn sie gluecklich genug gewesen ist, es so weit als Aspasia zu bringen; warum sollte sie nicht geneigt sein, jungen Personen ihres Geschlechts, die durch vorzuegliche

What Aspasia advocates for women, then, is to seize the only opportunity open to them if they wish to play any sort of meaningful role in society. She argues,

Eine Person unsers Geschlechts, die sich mit dem zweideutigen Vorzüge begabt sieht, durch einen mehr als gewöhnlichen Grad von Liebenswürdigkeit die Augen der Männer auf sich zu heften, hat alle ihre Sorgen und Bemühungen auf den gedoppelten Zweck zu richten - sich selbst von diesen Herren der Schöpfung unabhaengig zu erhalten, und so viel Gewalt über sie zu bekommen, als nur immer möglich ist. (3.v. 517)

Myris accepts this point of view, as her adventures with Alcibiades and Cyrus show. Moreover, Aspasia grooms Danae, as she has become, for this role, teaching her to exploit her charms and men's desires for her own furtherance. So it is that she becomes the Danae whom Agathon meets at Smyrna.

Matthew Bach points out that Wieland had a great interest in the situation of women in his own society. One sees these concerns reflected in the "Geheime Geschichte" and in Aspasia's harangue on the subject of the limitations placed on women by a male-dominated society. Wieland maintained that women were the intellectual equals of men,
and rued the low standard of feminine culture as the result of their subjugation by men. He had the highest regard for women and advocated "her right to a free development of character" (Bach ff 50).

Bach notes that Wieland chose hetairas as his heroines because they displayed culture and refinement, "the very virtues and accomplishments which were sadly lacking at [Wieland's] time and which he tried eagerly to spread among his contemporaries" (Bach 50). However, one must also point out that the hetaira was not Wieland's ideal of woman, as some critics have claimed. Wieland very much believed that strong families are the key to a strong and healthy society. Thus he "extols married life, motherhood, and domestic bliss as the only source of human happiness and sees in them the very basis of national life and progress" (Bach 94-95). But in his conception of the family, Wieland does not care for the "one-sided domestic relationship" where the wife is merely the "drudge of the household". In his rather modern conception of the family, the wife should be "a real partner with the man of her choice in everything that touches their mutual interest" (Bach 94).

Danae at Tarent-

The question arises as to why Wieland does not bring Danae and Agathon together in connubial bliss at the end of
either version of the novel. The narrator tells us that Agathon, having been unexpectedly reunited with Danae at Tarent, is so moved by love for her,

dass es nur von Danae abhing, alles aus ihm zu machen, was sie wollte. Dies vorausgesetzt, werden vielleicht wenige sein, welche nicht erwarten sollten, dass sie ihre wieder erlangte Gewalt dazu angewendet haben werde, einen Gemahl aus ihm zu machen. (3.v. 481)

Bach notes the fact that the two are not brought together as husband and wife, and interprets this as a need on the part of Danae to atone for her past transgressions. Noting Wielands feelings on the importance of the family, he writes that Danae does not achieve the happiness that is in store for the heroines who followed the course that nature has outlined for their sex. While connubial bliss and happiness are the reward for the latter, the former have to atone for their transgressions against the moral law of nature (93).

Bach thus sees the matter in question as a direct reflection of Wieland's personal views. However, Wieland as a rule does not insist on atonement for transgressions in affairs of the heart. Indeed, *Die Geschichte des Agathon* can be seen as a testimonial against strict judgmental practices. He does not demand or depict moral perfection in the
Richardsonian manner. He often dismisses as "Schwachheiten" transgressions that result from confusion or from the sensual side of human nature. He shows much leniency and understanding with regard to transgressions of this type, as opposed to those, "an denen die Ueberlegung mehr Anteil hatte" (3.v. 541).

Seeing Danae's rejection of the marital solution as an atonement for not having followed the Wielandian ideal of marriage is thus questionable. This would mean in effect that Danae must not "follow the course that nature has outlined for their sex" for the curious reason that she had previously not elected to do so. This goes completely against Wieland's rather lenient views in such matters. Bach himself points out elsewhere that marriage is given as a solution in many other of Wieland's works where circumstances seem far more likely to preclude such a union. Besides, the idea of atonement has no place in Agathon; Agathon himself never atones for any of his transgressions.

Also to be considered is Bach's view that Danae's abnegation of a marriage with Agathon, which he thinks is an atonement, is a source of her unhappiness. I must take issue with this assertion, as I do not in any way see unhappiness resulting from Danae's not wishing to marry Agathon. Indeed, the decision "nicht mehr Danae fuer ihren Freund zu sein" allows her to achieve the inner peace which she feels as a result of her being once again true to her
nature. "Danae" was never her true nature, and she rejects the character symbolized by that name by becoming "Chariclea":

Lass deine Freundin unter dem Namen Chariclea [. . .] sich des Glueckes wuerdig machen, die Schuelerin eines Archytas und die Gespielin einer Psyche zu sein. Und wenn du sie liebest, so freue dich mit ihr, dass sie dieses Glueck in einem Alter gefunden hat, wo die Opfer, die sie der Tugend bringt, noch verdienstlich sind. (3.v. 342)

The narrator speaks of "die Zufriedenheit", die "aus ihren schoenen Augen leuchtete", as she speaks these words. The tone, then, is not one of resignation or atonement; Danae is quite enthusiastic about her decision.

As regards her mention of "die Opfer, die sie der Tugend bringt", one might be tempted to see this in light of the atonement spoken of by Bach. However, I believe this reference to her Platonic relationship with Agathon as being an "Opfer" to virtue is not meant literally. This is a very subtle example of Wieland's genius. When one takes into account the persuasive characteristics of the last few paragraphs of the "Geheime Geschichte", plus the fact that Agathon is at this point still quite unsteady emotionally, one sees the invocation of a "sacrifice to virtue" as a means of persuading Agathon to happily accept her decision. In the immediately preceding paragraph, Danae, speaking of
the frankness of the "Geschichte" she has just related to Agathon, says, "Lass es genug sein, bester Agathon! Unterwirf dich mit mir einem gemeinschaftlichen Schicksal [... . .]" (3.v. 542). Danae realizes that Agathon is still to a large degree a "Schwaermer", at least as far as his feelings for her are concerned. During her "Geschichte", he talks of Danae as "das liebenswuerdigste unter allen Geschoepfen" and asks: "Brauchte es mehr als nur Eine Danae an jedem Orte wo Menschen wohnen, um die Erde in ein Elysium zu verwandeln?" (3.v. 538). Danae, for her part, must keep Agathon in check, saying "in diesem Augenblicke betruegt dich wohl deine Phantasie sichtbarlich!" She corrects him at another point by beginning her sentence with, "Die Freundschaft macht dich vergessen" (3.v. 539).

There are further examples of Danae skillfully walking the thin line between "explaining" and "convincing" the still-passionate Agathon to accept her already firmly made decision. When Danae is speaking about the temple to the Graces which she had built at Smyrna, Agathon sighs, saying, "O was fuer Erinnerungen!" Danae, "welche keinen Erinnerungen Platz lassen wollte, die ihren Entschluss haetten erschuettern koennen", speaks up bravely and frankly: "Aber - lass uns der Wahrheit dies Opfer bringen! - die Grazien, zu deren Priesterin sie [Danae] sich weihete, waren nicht die Grazien des Pindarus [... . .] nicht die keuschen Goettinnen, denen deine Psyche als Jungfrau [... . .]
diente" (3.v. 538-39). Obviously, her use of the word "Opfer" here is a figure of speech. One can see a similar use of the aforementioned "Opfer", "die sie der Tugend bringt".

Given that one of the purposes of her story is to make Agathon happily accept her decision, it is entirely logical that she would talk of a sacrifice to virtue—a combination of concepts sure to stir Agathon's heart. It is important to note that Danae puts emphasis on the hope that Agathon will not merely accept her decision, but that he might take pleasure in doing so. When saying that had it not been for Agathon she would still be the old "Danae", she asks, "Aber was haelfe ihr das Glueck dich gekannt zu haben, wenn du nicht grossmuetig genug waerest, deine Wohltat zu vollenden". She then enjoins him, "so freue dich mit ihr dass sie dieses Glueck [. . .] gefunden hat". Her discourse has the desired effect. Agathon "glaubte die Stimme einer Gottheit zu hoeren". He

warf sich zu ihren Fuessen [. . .]. "Ja", rief er, "bei dieser Hand schwoer ich es, Chariklea! der Tugend, der du dich geweiht hast, und die in diesem entscheidendem Augenblicke aus deinem Munde zu mir spricht, ewig getreu zu bleiben!" (3.v. 542-43)

The narrator can now write, "Sie hatte nun ihren Zweck erreicht", and that "so angenehm ihrem mitempfindenden Herzen das schoene Feuer war, welches sie in dem Busen ihres
Freundes angezündet hatte, fand doch nicht fuer gut, es in
diesem Augenblicke zu unterhalten" (3.v. 543). Thus the
idea of the "Opfer", though Danae herself invokes the term,
is not used in its literal meaning, nor does it imply
atonement. She is subtly, though not insincerely,
influencing Agathon through a well-chosen reference which
she knows will effect him in the desired way. The narrator
takes care that the reader does not merely see this as a
trick or low deception. He tells us, "dass ihr Betragen
gegen unsern Helden wirklich ohne alle eigennuetzige
Absichten gewesen sei" (3.v. 543). The reader scarcely
needs to be told this, since it is clear that her
"Geschichte" is truthful. Danae does not omit the truth
even when it is quite painful for her to admit it.

Seen in the light of her desire above all else to cease
to be "Danae" and to follow her own path to happiness,
Danae/Chariklea must be seen at the end of her story as
doing what she feels necessary to hold fast to her decision,
while at the same time bringing Agathon to accept that
decision whole-heartedly. Of course, Danae/Chariklea could
merely have informed Agathon of the future course of their
relationship and left him to come to terms with the
situation as best he might. This is, moreover, basically
what she does in the first version, and there, as we have
seen, Agathon only sullenly resigns himself to his fate,
rather than embracing it as he does here.
When the narrator, then, remarks that her behavior toward Agathon "wirklich ohne alle eigennuetzige Absichten gewesen sei", the "ohne eigennuetzige Absichten" refers to the fact that she wishes Agathon to be happy in accepting her decision. The word "wirklich", to be sure, is ambiguous. It could mean "truly". But I believe "wirklich" here conveys the idea "in reality", that is, "despite indications to the contrary". After all, Danae does have "eigennuetzige Absichten", since she is determining how she might live happily and according to her own nature. In a general way the passage means simply that Chariklea is doing a genuinely good thing in following through on her decision, and in "persuading" Agathon to be happy in accepting it.

Wieland felt that an intelligent woman "with a sufficient amount of tact and cleverness could always manage her husband without his knowing it" (Bach 88). This view is seen reflected here in Agathon. Agathon is still sufficiently "schwaermerisch" that Chariklea sees a life with him as incongruous with her own resolutions. Wieland does not bring the two together in the end, and this shows Danae's independence as a character, and, in many ways, her superiority over Agathon. Also, Wieland is remaining true to his promise that his characters not be

"wirklich und bloss nach der Phantasie oder den Absichten des Verfassers gebildet, sondern aus dem unerschoepflichen Vorrat der Natur hergenommen; in der
Entwicklung derselben sowohl die innere als die relative Möglichkeit, die Beschaffenheit des menschlichen Herzens, die Natur einer jeden Leidenschaft, mit allen den besonderen Farben und Schattierungen, welche die durch den Individualcharakter und die Umstände einer jeden Person bekommen, aufs genaueste beibehalten[.]

(1.v. 7)
Conclusion

Now that most of the new material in the third version has been discussed, we may turn our attention to the work's conclusion and some of the general aesthetic considerations that arise, especially when one compares the two endings. Questions of an aesthetical nature often arise with respect to the ending of a work due to the special weight and importance this part of a work often carries. It is a work's ending that produces a feeling of resolution or a conspicuous or relative lack thereof. After all, irreconcilable conflicts may be introduced and developed in the body of the work almost at will; it is then a matter for the ending to resolve these conflicts satisfactorily, or to leave them satisfactorily unresolved.

The Prefaces-

There are such seemingly irreconcilable conflicts with regard to positions and objectives introduced in Agathon, and the endings of the two versions display different attitudes toward the resolution of these conflicts. Before considering the different endings, however, we would do well to first compare the two Prefaces, since there the objectives of the author are explicitly stated.

Although the "Vorbericht" of the first version, and the
Preface "Ueber das Historische im Agathon" of the third version announce similar intentions, there is a striking difference between them. Both prefaces alert the reader that the ensuing work will depict a hero confronted with tests of his moral character. What is more, this depiction will not be "willkuerlich und bloss nach der Phantasie oder den Absichten des Verfassers gebildet, sondern aus dem unerschoepflichen Vorrat der Natur selbst hergenommen" (l.v. 7). And Agathon, we are told, will not exist as a paragon of virtue or a model of perfection; rather, he will be a realistic, fallible, and thoroughly human hero.

While both prefaces emphasize the aspect of realistic depiction, the approach to this realism is different in each case. The "Vorbericht" makes a claim, albeit an ironic one, to being an actual history, one taken from an ancient Greek manuscript. The Editor tempers this claim to authenticity, however, by saying that everything in the "Geschichte" will be so truthfully constructed, "dass kein hinlaenglicher Grund angegeben werden koenne, warum es nicht eben so, wie es erzaehlt wird, haette geschehen koennen, oder noch einmal wirklich geschehen werde" (l.v. 8). What is more, the narrator states his objective, which is to show at the end of the work that Agathon, "ein ebenso weiser als tugendhafter Mann sein wird und (was uns hiebei das beste zu sein deucht) dass unsre Leser begreifen werden, wie und warum er es ist" (l.v. 12).
The preface to the third version takes a different approach to the same objective. The third version makes no claim to being an authentic historical account. Instead, comparisons are immediately made between the present work of fiction and *Tom Jones* and works of Xenophon. The narrator then goes through each of the characters in *Agathon* and shows that they are indeed historical figures, but that historically they did not play a role in the life of the real Agathon. The narrator frankly admits that not much is known of the historical Agathon other than the fact that he was a playwright mentioned in one of Plato's writings, and that "der Dichter Agathon einen guten Tisch gefuehrt habe". Further, the "eigentliche Modell" for the character Agathon was taken from *Ion* by Euripides (3.v. 23-24). The preface to the third version, then, places the emphasis on the fictionality of the work, whereas the preface to the first version emphasizes the contention that the work is a true history. Both prefaces, of course, emphasize the realistic and true-to-life depiction of the characters, and both share the pedagogical/didactic objective of showing in a realistic manner how and why Agathon becomes a wise and virtuous man in the end.

Idealism and Realism-

Jan-Dirk Mueller and Gerd Hemmerich, among others, see
these as incongruous objectives. Mueller, for example, notes that Wieland can not be as realistic as he has claimed to be, since the question remains, "ob eine Versöhnung von individuellem Ethos mit der augenblicklichen Gesellschaft möglich sei" (84). He sees that such a "Versöhnung" is only possible in Tarent, not in the "real" world. This makes Tarent into a kind of Utopia which then goes completely against the author's stated wish to be realistic, to be, as far as possible, a "Geschichtsschreiber" as opposed to a "Romanschreiber". However, Mueller does not call Tarent a "Utopia", rather, a "Verwirklichung des gesuchten Ideals" which is introduced into the story so that Agathon, in keeping with the stated objective, might be able to live virtuously and wisely within society. The "gesuchte Ideal" is, according to Mueller, a situation in which the individual can be reconciled with society, that is, within a society where virtue is rewarded and vice is punished (84). Thus the question arises as to whether this ideal can be realized in a work which claims to be realistic and true to nature; the realist would point out that in society virtue is not always rewarded, nor vice always punished.

Whereas Mueller speaks of the "Verwirrung" of the work in this respect, Hemmerich speaks of a "Misslingen des Romanes" (95). He also takes up the question of the "moralpedagogische Wirksamkeit" of the novel, which he believes is minimal as a result of the "unaufhöerlichen
Kontroverse" between the "konkurrierenden Ansprueche von Poesie und Geschichte" (34). Like Mueller, Hemmerich notes the dilemma inherent in Wieland's desire to have his lofty poetic/pedagogical ideals realized in a novel that is supposed to depict the real world. Hemmerich is somewhat irritatingly unrelenting in his insistence on the "Misslingen des Romanes" and the above-mentioned "unaufloeslicher Widerspruch" (33). He writes, "Wie Don Quijote muss Agathon also entweder sein 'Ideal' fahren lassen oder dahin gehen, ohne aus der Welt klug geworden zu sein" (34). He sees this as an impossibility, since according to "Ueber das Historische im Agathon" , "Agathon soll durch 'Erfahrung' nicht etwa 'klug' werden, wie es die Geschichtsschreibung will, sondern 'gut' und 'weise', also vollkommen, denn Weisheit und Guete sind die Attribute des vollkommenen Helden" (33). Hemmerich uses the idea of the "konkurrierenden Ansprueche von Poesie und Geschichte" to add depth to that claim, explaining that "[Poesie] verspricht dem Adepten, der nachahmend ihren Beispielen folgt, die Inkarnationen des platonischen Ideals sind, ein Leben in Schoenheit, Weisheit und Guete; [Geschichte] verheisst, ihn durch Erfahrung weiltklug zu machen" (34).

There are several points to be made with regard to this statement. First, Die Geschichte des Agathon is a work of fiction, and the narrator's claim that the work is a true history is purely ironic. Thus one can not fruitfully
discuss the conflict between "Poesie und Geschichte" without bearing this prominently in mind. Hemmerich seems not to have taken the irony of the claim to authenticity into account. The Narrator makes untold ironic references in both versions to the work's authenticity. Chief among the reasons for his doing so is, ironically, to emphasize the very fictionality of the work! The following, taken from the last Book of the first version, is a perfect example of this. The narrator writes:

Ein heftiger Sturm ist ein sehr unglücklicher Zufall für Leute, die sich mitten auf der offenen See nur durch die Dicke eines Brettes von einem feuchten Tod geschieden finden; aber für die Geschichtschreiber der Helden und Heldinnen ist es beinahe der glücklichste unter allen Zufällen, welche man herbeibringen kann, um sich aus einer Schwierigkeit herauszuhelfen. Es war also ein Sturm (und Sie haben sich nicht darüberg zu beschweren, meine Herren, denn es ist, unser Wissens, der erste in dieser Geschichte), der die liebenswürdige Psyche aus der forchterlichen Gewalt eines verliebten Seeräubers rettete. (l.v. 514-15)

The reader is well aware of the liberties Wieland is taking with his "authentic" history. There are also many instances where the narrator humorously invokes his being strictly a historian, as opposed to a Romancier. Often this is done in order to call attention to the creative process,
or to create a personal relationship between reader and narrator (see Miller). The narrator often uses his role as historian as simply a means by which he can avoid making "final" judgements or pronouncements on behalf of the reader. To hold Wieland to the very letter of his goal of writing a true-to-life story is to be exceedingly punctilious. His objective was to develop more realistic characters--characters who have weaknesses and faults, as opposed to Richardsonian models of virtue. In this respect he even gives Hippias his due; he shows that for all their faults, people like Hippias do have there positive qualities, and that they are not as bad as Plato had depicted (3.v. 27 ff). Thus one should not expect Wieland to engage in pure, unadulterated realism.

Hemmerich demonstrates how completely he has misconceived the novel when he states that, according to "Ueber das Historische im Agathon", "Agathon soll durch 'Erfahrung' nicht etwa 'klug' werden [. . .] sondern 'gut' und 'weise', also vollkommen, denn Weisheit und Güte sind die Attribute des vollkommenen Helden" (33). He maintains that Agathon's "Erfahrung" can logically only make him a "Weltmann", that is, it can make him "klug" but not "weise" or "gut", and that he thus can not become a "vollkommener Held". The problem with this assertion is that the overriding concern of the author is precisely not to depict Agathon as a perfect hero. One reads in "Ueber das
Historische", that "die Absicht des Verfassers der
Geschichte des Agathon" was not so much
in seinem Helden ein Bild sittlicher Vollkommenheit zu
entwerfen, als ihn so zu schildern, wie, vermoege der
Gesetze der menschlichen Natur, ein Mann von seiner
Sinnesart gewesen waere, wenn er unter den
vorausgesetzten Umstaenden wirklich gelebt haette
(3.v. 193).
One must proceed with caution when considering Hemmerich's
assessment of the "Misslingen des Romanes" which is based on
such reasoning.

With regard to the ending at Tarent, Walter Erhart
speaks of the "Dialektik der Aufklaerung":
Die Erweiterung der spaeten Fassungen, Agathons
Verzicht auf Danae und die Philosophie des Archytas
dokumentieren den Umschlag von der Emanzipation des
Individuums in die Herrschaft einer zweckrationalen
Vernunft. Der "Agathon"-Roman findet seine
"plausibleste" Vollendung in der "Selbstunterwerfung"
des seiner Natur beraubten "restringierten
Individuums", in der "Ueberwachung der dem Individuum
eigenen Unbestaendigkeit und Unberechenbarkeit" oder in
der "moralischen Anstalt" einer fiktiven buergerlichen
Republik. (9)
Although one can not, as Erhart does, speak of "Agathons
Verzicht auf Danae", since it is Danae who unmistakably makes the decision with regard to their ending their relationship, the "Umschlag von der Emanzipation des Individuums in die Herrschaft einer zweckrationalen Vernunft" is certainly relevant.

Although Agathon remains true to his ideals, he nevertheless learns to be less dogmatic in order to live in society. His grandiose plans, attempted in Syracuse and Athens, are only able to be actually realized on a smaller scale in Tarent. In the first version even this relative victory is not granted him; this version ends with a highly skeptical Agathon having lost faith in his ideals to a considerable degree, and the prospect of his ruling at Tarent is not even raised, much less successfully realized as it is in the third version. Agathon's inability to reconcile his own ideals with the ways of society (die Dialektik der Aufklärung), is detailed throughout the work, and the ending of the first version shows that his individuality remains incongruous with the realities of society. Tarent is, to be sure, more tolerant and enlightened than Syracuse, Smyrna, and Athens, but in the first version the city does not represent for Agathon a place where his ideals can be realized. Instead, Tarent serves more as a haven for Agathon, a place where he can live quietly, a place where he will have no more adventures or "Proben" to test his morality. His ideals remain
personal, and one has the impression he no longer has the strength of conviction to defend them so vociferously and emotionally as he had once done against Hippias.

The third version, of course, has Agathon becoming, along with Kritolaos, the leader of the people of Tarent. This shows a more complete reconciliation of his ideals with society, and shows Tarent to be a place where this can be done. His travels at the end of the third version, and the fact that he can become a useful leader at Tarent demonstrate that Agathon has indeed learned to subordinate himself to the realities of society.

In the first version, this question remains unanswered, and that is one of the main reasons that so many critics see the work as a Fragment. This view is justified, especially since the later versions, as far as the content is concerned, keep the material already given in the first version and expand this given material with the later "additions". And only this new material in the third version gives a final conclusion to Agathon's adventures and emotional trials. The best textual evidence for the first version being a Fragment is given in the "Abdankung" of that version. Here the narrator expresses his intention of writing a continuation of the work so that one may learn Danae's story and Agathon's later life. However, the third version is not a sequel to the earlier work; it is really a reworking and completing of the original. Thus the first version may be viewed as a Fragment.
Works Cited


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