

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

DAS VERLORENE LACHEN  
(GOTTFRIED KELLER)

A COMMENTARY ON THE QUESTION OF ECONOMIC  
ELEMENTS IN THE SHORT STORY

by

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## FOREWORD

In Gottfried Keller (1819 - 1890) we see a poet who uses the accepted literary forms of Gedicht, Roman and Novelle of the declining classical and romantic periods as a tool to do something different. He leaves the world of dream in order to face the reality of the active life.

Die Leute von Seldwyla are a way in which the poet addresses himself to an era of technology, science, urbanization, economic shifts, capitalistic overtones, new life styles and widening horizons. In these short stories, Keller speaks of and to the people who have to cope with these forces which appear in a revolutionary intensity.

With the stroke of the master story teller he creates an appropriate tension between the people of Seldwyla on the one side and the people of other communities which belong to the encroaching era on the other side.

In the short story "Das verlorene Lachen" the actual problem of a Seldwyla person is focused. Jukundus, the main character, eventually finds his place in the new society as a person who regains the gift of Lachen.



## DAS VERLORENE LACHEN

(Gottfried Keller)

### THE QUESTION OF ECONOMIC ELEMENTS IN THE SHORT STORY (A Commentary)

#### CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The literary critic, Friedrich Theodor Vischer, wrote that "Das verlorene Lachen", the last short story of Gottfried Keller's Die Leute von Seldwyla, Zweiter Teil (completed 1874) was too tendentious and local (see Keller's letter to Vischer dated June 29, 1875 ). In his reply the author does not deny the fact that his short story has a reformatory intent and that the people in the vicinity of Zürich would recognize elements of their time and social condition in the story in question. In fact, "Das verlorene Lachen" with its strong emphasis on the economic, political, social and religious elements, can be considered as a topical commentary on the time in which Keller lived.

"Das verlorene Lachen" enjoyed a wide appeal in the Zürich area. This is so because it is a well written story. However, in dealing with the appeal to an audience, Keller does more than just tell a story. He tells a story in which his reading audience is reflected.

In his correspondence with Ferdinand Weibert (Nov. 25, 1874), Keller assures his publisher that the book will sell better than the other of the four part series of the Seldwyla stories. "Das verlorene Lachen" was the final story in the fourth volume. His specific

reference to the local scene and the author's analysis of that scene for reformatory purposes will assure a wide reading audience.

The people who lived in the Zürich vicinity in the early 1870's had an opportunity to find themselves reflected in the short story. This is basic for an interest in the story and eventually for a good sale of the book.

Keller uses the basic Stoff of meeting, falling in love, marrying, separating and finding again. He introduces the element of Lachen, which, according to Fritz Martini is "die Sprache der gleichgewichtigen und ungebrochenen Lebensganzheit". (1) The combination of such age-old Stoff and the concept of Glück (symbolized by the Lachen) with the actual events of the time and place which were familiar to the author, give the master storyteller a unique medium by which he can communicate to the people of his time and to the following generations.

It appears obvious that first and foremost Keller had the immediate reading audience in mind. He provided them with a way of looking at themselves. On the other hand, it is possible to see that the short story, "Das verlorene Lachen", goes beyond the critic's evaluation of too tendentious and local. It deals with truth that has crossed the line from fact to fiction in the area of values and principles. This gives the short story universal appeal and as such an appropriate place in our time.

The intent of this paper is to deal, from one perspective, with the question of relevance. Keller had

something to say to the people of his time and to the people of all times. In order to speak to the Switzerland of the late nineteenth century, he makes unmistakable use of the events of his time and place.

By selecting the economic elements of "Das verlorene Lachen" and by using the case study approach, I would like to show how Keller paints a panoramic view of the society in which he lived. It is a picture of relationships among people and between people and things and between people and power and change. The dynamic forces that operate on the plane of relationships are the value systems of the various people. The obvious intent on the part of the author is to be didactic. Keller allows Jukundus to survive in the new world of the nineteenth century.

I would also like to point out that Keller had made a change in "Das verlorene Lachen". He added a Mittelstück. In his correspondence with Weibert, (the publisher) the question of remuneration based on quantity plays an important role. In Keller's correspondence with the literary critics of his time (Exner, Vischer and Kuh) he deals with the quality of the short story. The first version of "Das verlorene Lachen" had didactic intentions, but, according to the author, the main character, Jukundus, was too ludicrous or farcical or comical. In the final version, Jukundus becomes a symbol or representation of an important idea that Keller wants to communicate.

This change in "Das verlorene Lachen" was made in order to make it an effective tool for the purpose

of dealing with principles. Keller wanted to speak to his time at the level of principles. Because he does this, rather than simply promoting a narrow cause, Keller's short story also has appeal to an audience of the times following the late nineteenth century.

## Chapter II: THE ECONOMIC ELEMENTS IN "DAS VERLORENE LACHEN"

### A. FRAMEWORK

The reason for choosing the economic elements as a point of departure for a commentary on "Das verlorene Lachen" is that I believe these elements are determining factors that give directions to the plot. There are also such elements as religion, politics, tradition and customs. I also believe that Keller uses this aspect of life very well to deal with the didactic nature of his short story.

It is necessary to propose a definition of economic elements. One of the elements is obviously the goods which have a factor of utility and usefulness and the power to satisfy human wants. In this context these economic goods have moral implications which the economist may or may not consider. In this paper these implications will have a place because I would like to deal with the relationship of these goods and the people.

The concept of economic goods must be expanded to immaterial things (services) and they must also be understood in terms of consumer and producer goods. As such, and also in the context of moral implications, economic goods are converted into power in the hands of those who manipulate them.

In this respect, the paper will deal with another economic element, and that is power. In the nineteenth century laissez faire economy (complete freedom of private enterprise), we become aware of the meaning of power provided by the economic goods. One aspect of the commentary on "Das verlorene Lachen" must therefore point out the differences in amount of power of the

various types of people. The prime distinction will be seen in the social classification which we find when we look at the factory workers, the people of Seldwyla and the Glor family.

A third aspect of economic elements must be the nature of change. The laissez faire economy provided a climate of change. The period of the industrial revolutions combined with the type of economy which was not under control of any system of planning, developed all kinds of abuses and inefficiencies. In this climate the aspect of change can go rampant. A look at "Das verlorene Lachen" should therefore reveal that third economic element, the element of change.

#### B. CASE STUDIES

In an attempt to deal with the economic elements in the primary source, I would like to suggest the structure of case study. Each case study will consist of a summary description, an analysis and commentary that relates to the question of economic elements as outlined in the introduction to the chapter.

Following are the proposed case studies:

1. Jukundus
2. The Glor Family Business
3. Factory Workers
4. Home Industry
5. Sideline Occupation

This approach, it is hoped, will help to deal with the economic condition as portrayed in the short story in such a way that we will gain insight into it from at least two points of view:

- a. Social Stratification
- b. Economic Resources (human, produced, and natural resources)

## 1. JUKUNDUS MEYENTHAL

### a. DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

In Jukundus we have perhaps the most complex case. He is a product of Seldwyla. This adds to the complexity of producing a description of economic conditions. Beside that, there is the matter of character. Sons of the Glor family simply continued in the family tradition. Jukundus, when the pressure was applied to be caught up in the upward movement in the hierarchy of social order, tries a number of avenues before he finds a place to become established.

The following note outlines clearly the lack of a definite vocational direction to be pursued:

"Bei einem bestimmten Berufe war er noch nicht geblieben. Zuerst hatte es geschienen, daß er für technisches Wesen Neigung zeige, und er war deshalb eine Zeitlang auf die Bureau eines Ingenieurs gegangen. Dann änderte sich aber diese Stimmung zugunsten des Kaufmannsstandes, und er trat in ein Geschäft ein, welches bald darauf aus Mißgeschick sich auflöste, ohne daß er viel einbüßte; jetzt war er gerade in der Richtung, sich dem Militärwesen zu widmen, indem er sich zu einem Unterrichts- und Stabsoffizier ausbildete. Da er hiebei den größten Teil des Jahres auf den Waffenplätzen zuzubringen hatte und Sold empfing, so gewährte das für einstweilen ein stattliches Dasein, ohne daß es bei seiner mäßigen Lebensweise großen Zuschuß eigener Mittel erforderte." (2)

Jukundus was not caught up in a family tradition as far as his economic position was concerned. In a laissez

faire type of economic climate advocated at the time by Adam Smith in which government exercised little control and new revolutionary inventions played all kinds of tricks on the economic resources of labour and raw materials and on the economic elements of production, distribution, interchange and consumption of goods, in this climate it is possible for a Seldwyla person to go into all kinds of directions. Opportunities are many. However, as in most cases, the direction and the final destiny are determined also by character.

Another important consideration is Jukundus' Seldwyla background. While he has shown efforts in the area of vocational choice, he is nevertheless a person from Seldwyla, "aus dem Ort, in welchem noch nie einer auf einen grünen Zweig gekommen sei und wo niemand etwas besitze". (3) This statement has to be qualified because it is a subjective value judgement by Jukundus' future mother-in-law who wishes her daughter to follow the tradition of the family.

In order to qualify this statement we must move to Seldwyla and look more objectively into Jukundus' life. His father had passed away earlier. The family was in possession of one of the better houses in the area. The house had been built by someone who had become rich outside of Switzerland and who planned to use his wealth and invest it in his home town. Although the house was built in the previous century and was not quite finished, the Meyenthal family had made substantial improvements and could be considered to be better than what had been said of the people of Seldwyla in the previous quote.

After the marriage to Justine, Jukundus gave up his military vocation and went into the lumber supply industry.

Um sich aber dafür einen ehrbaren Erwerb und eine geordnete Tätigkeit zu sichern, hatte er ein Handelsgeschäft errichtet, welches sich auf den Holzreichtum der Stadtgemeinde und der umgebenden Landschaft gründete. Zu den großen Almenden, die von der alemannischen Bodenteilung herrührten, waren später noch die Waldungen von Burg und Stift gekommen, an deren Mauern die Stadt sich angebaut hatte. (4)

The business was not without its profit. Jukundus had a good market in his home town among the people who bought from him rather than from the strange businessmen who were responsible for the rapid depletion of natural resources (forests).

Out of an understanding and feeling for ecological systems, Jukundus makes another change in business. Since the forests disappear due to uncontrolled use of the natural resources, Jukundus makes two important moves. He buys the oak tree at an exorbitant price and he changes from the lumber and firewood business to a building supply business that will not do any more harm to the forests.

Aus Widerwillen gegen die Baumschlächtereirei änderte Jukundus nach und nach, aber so rasch als möglich, sein Geschäft, indem er den Holzhandel verließ und dafür sich auf den Verkehr mit jenen Schätzen warf, welche aus dem Schoße der Erde kommen und das Holz ersetzen. Er errichtete Magazine von Stein- und Braunkohlen, führte Ton- und Eisenrohre ein, um die hölzernen Wasserleitungen zu verdrängen, Backsteine zu leichteren Baulichkeiten, die

man sonst von Holz zu erstellen pflegte, Zement für allerlei Behälter und verleitete einen reichen Bauern, sich ein gewaltiges, festes und kühles Mostfaß aus Zement errichten zu lassen. Als dies gelang, sah er im Geiste schon statt der hölzernen Fässer in jedem Keller solche Vorratsgefäße, gleich den großen in der Erde ruhenden Weinkrügen der Alten, und das gute Eichenholz gespart. Auch kaufte er Massen von ausgedienten Eisenbahnschienen, welche in hundert Fällen einen Holzbalken vertreten. (5)

This last step, however, only made him a nonparticipant in the destruction of the natural resource but it did not stop others whose principles were rooted in the world of competition. The absence of self-interest as the motive to rise in status brings about Jukundus' bankruptcy in Seldwyla.

Jukundus sagte immer die Wahrheit und glaubte dafür auch alles, was man ihm sagte. Er eröffnete stets im Anfang seine ganze Meinung und was er tun und halten konnte und nahm als richtig an, was ihm der andere von seinen Kaufs- und Verkaufsbedingungen und von der Beschaffenheit der Ware mitteilte, erst in der Meinung, daß jener schon sich bemühen werde, der Sache näher auf den Grund zu kommen, später, als das nicht geschah, gleich mit dem kecken Vorsatz der Täuschung. Und alle Erfahrung half hier nichts, und jede Ermahnung der Frauen, nicht so leichtgläubig zu sein, war fruchtlos. Denn gleich das nächste Mal glaubte er wieder, weil er nicht anders konnte, oder es war ihm zu widerwärtig und verächtlich, lange zu zanken und zu feilschen. Dazu kam, daß er nichts weniger als ein geschickter Finanzmann war, der Geld und Kredit zu wenden

wußte, und so fügte es sich, daß eines Tages seine Mittel erschöpft waren und das Ende herangekommen. Es geschah dies plötzlich, weil er nicht lange von einem Nagel an den andern gehängt und keinen Scheinverkehr getrieben hatte. (6)

The basic reason for this step is not, as before, a matter of principle in the area of ecology but a matter of principle in the related area of ethics - ethics that belongs to a higher order than those of a business profession. These same ethics reap him the fruits of ridicule and rejection at a later time.

Jukundus gets another opportunity to try his hand in the competitive world of business. But before we look into that, we must consider the main turning point in his life, the cutting down of the oak tree.

Keller makes quite a story of this incident and closes it with the remarks, " Die Seldwyler aber lebten an jenem Abend eher betrübt als lustig, da der Baum und der Jukundi nicht mehr da waren". (7)

The obvious question is about symbolism. One can see the parallel between Jukundus and the tree, both of which had their roots in the land of the blessed (the word Seldwyla carries that kind of meaning). At this moment both are uprooted and placed into a world that is foreign to them. The natural disposition of Jukundus makes him a stranger in the new world of the factory system of the Glor Family in Schwanau.

It takes only half a year in that competitive business until Jukundus is ruined. The reasons are to be found in his basically honest personality which is taken advantage of by buyers and workers. This cost the Glor business a setback which could not be

tolerated by a type of people who are opportunists in the sense that they take advantage of the conditions of the time to move from a simple Volksfamilie to one that belongs to the upper bracket in society.

Keller describes this period of Jukundus' life as follows:

"Den Mäklern und Zwischenhändlern glaubte er gegen alle gefaßten Vorsätze immer wieder aufs Wort und genehmigte alle ihre Angebote schon, wenn die andern erst begannen, ihnen halbwegs zuzuhören und Antwort zu geben. In diese Ungeschicklichkeit arbeitete er sich recht eigentlich noch hinein, mehr als in seinem Wesen bedingt war; eine Art unnatürlicher Dummheit legte sich auf seine Seele und umschleierte seine Gedanken, sobald es sich um Geschäfte handelte, und ehe ein halbes Jahr vorüber war, hatte er wie ein verborgener Marder einen merklichen Schaden in Gestalt eines Mindergewinns angerichtet, welchem nachgespürt wurde." (8)

Jukundus must change again; in the world of competition he cannot survive. Religion, another basic element, enters the life of the young couple and causes a separation. Justine remains with her family and Jukundus and his mother go to the big city.

After the death of his mother, Jukundus finds an appropriate position. Keller describes it as follows:

"....., er wäre gerade der Mann, den er suche, um in seinem ausgebreiteten Handels- und Unternehmungswesen eine bestimmte Lücke auszufüllen. Er suche einen zuverlässigen ruhigen Mann, von dem er wisse, daß er seine Obliegenheiten kurzweg und pünktlich erfülle,

nicht nach rechts oder links schaue,  
ohne die Wachsamkeit zu verlieren,  
und hauptsächlich keine eigenen  
Spekulationen betreibe." (9)

" Die ihm angewiesene Tätigkeit war der  
Art, daß er weder selbst zu täuschen und zu  
lügen noch die Lügen anderer zu glauben  
brauchte. Er hatte nicht nötig, zu  
überfordern oder zu unterbieten, zu  
feilschen oder zu überlisten und  
Überlistungen abzuwehren." (10)

In this business Jukundus could be successful. Eventually he lost his Leichtgläubigkeit without becoming unwahr und trügerisch .

It is rather irritating at this point in the story of Jukundus to be left guessing what type of job he actually finds. The lack of clarity could be due to the fact that Keller had made alterations in the basic story.

Since I wish to deal with the economic elements in the life of Jukundus at this point, the lack of explicitness is a handicap. And yet, perhaps one should dare to move in the direction of interpretation. Keller may have left this ambiguity for a purpose. If Jukundus must become a representative of a definite notion on the part of the author, then a measure of ambiguity gives room for interpretation.

The selection of incidents in the development of Jukundus' life, from the point of view of economy, has already imposed a type of analysis of economic elements. His principles with respect to the natural resources and the relationship with others are basic for his failure in business. Wherever these principles are not challenged, Jukundus can be a type of success.

I would recognize three such incidents: in the military career, in the lumber industry where he has no competition and in his new job in a large city of Switzerland. The dilemma arises in a context of competition.

Here is a man who does not categorize life into compartments. The principles he adheres to are moral principles of high order; the principle of conservation of life of the forest and the principle of conservation of relationship of trust. I would consider Jukundus to be unique in this respect. The rest of the people in Keller's short story live by at least two sets of principles. The lumber people would not want to destroy all forests. The businessman would not harm his client. On the other hand they also live according to the principle of speculation. They are like the Glor Family - simple people who want to rise in society. This principle makes their dealings in a world of competition and speculation professionally correct but ethically questionable.

In this respect the others who live by these two sets of principles are people who follow the economic law - the law of cause and effect. A given cause under certain conditions will produce a certain effect. Man becomes impelled to live by the motive of economic self interest.

Jukundus is still free from this type of categorization for purpose of self interest. The primary or main principles regulate his life. He is not the Economic Man who lives by self interest. Physiocrats, the students of political and economic science, devised a doctrine (in the 18th century ) based

on the supremacy of natural order. The powers of nature were thought to be the source of wealth, prosperity and public revenue. The Economic Man, one who lived by self interest, was one of the links in the natural order of things. Obviously Keller portrays Jukundus as one who lived above the level of the Economic Man.

## 2. THE GLOR FAMILY BUSINESS

The Glor Family had risen from a simple type of country people to the upper class factory owners. They had accumulated substantial wealth in terms of land, buildings, machines and they were rather powerful in their position as reiche Arbeitsherren<sup>1</sup>. The class differences between them and the people of Seldwyla, for example, were clearly marked. At first there was little possibility for anyone to cross that clearly defined class difference.

Several elements lead to the exception to this rule. Keller uses the meeting of the two mothers, Mrs. Meyenthal and Mrs. Glor, in the Kurort in order to make this untraditional move possible. Primary among these elements is the natural gift. Jukundus and Justine are meant for each other; their physical appearance and the natural gift of Lachen make them the ideal couple in the eyes of those who see them. They are attracted to each other and easily sure of love for one another. The problem is one of economic difference. The Glor Family is so much above the Meyenthal Family. There is only one way to overcome this and that is to win the mother. The appearance of

the drunk Rudolf Glor and the fact that Jukundus saves him from sure death in a duell raise the Seldwyla intruder to a position worthy of the hand of Justine.

The Glor Family was in possession of a silk factory. Their wealth was reflected in the buildings, the gardens and landscaping. Even Goethe had remarked about this area "bei einem Besuch in dieser Gegend .... der Ort gebe von der schönsten und höchsten Kultur einen reizenden und idealen Begriff". (11)

The following passage pictures the Glor business at its height:

"Der Ankauf der rohen Seide, die Vorbereitung derselben durch die verschiedenen Stadien, die Beaufsichtigung und Beurteilung der Arbeit, der Verkauf der gehäuften Vorräte, der Ausblick in den allgemeinen Verkehr und die Berechnung des richtigen Augenblickes für jede Geschäftshandlung, endlich die vorteilhafteste Verwendung der eingehenden Wertsummen, alles dies bedingte eine unaufhörliche, rasch laufende Tätigkeit und eine Reihe ineinandergreifender Erfahrungen." (12)

The business extended beyond the boundaries of Switzerland. Buyers and sellers from all parts of the world appeared at the Glor complex. Silk dresses were made for the Bürgersfrau as well as the Weiber der kalifornischen oder australischen Abenteurer. The business also had another dimension; it was not limited to weaving only. The art of dyeing was practiced also.

As members of the upper class the Glor Family held an important position in the community. Justine, for example, counted as one of the better supporters in the local church. This was of course in terms of her devotion but her financial support was not to be neg-

lected. The entire Glor Family attended church regularly because their position in the community demanded it.

This great family business came to a point of near collapse due to instabilities on the world market.

Große Warenmassen lagen jenseits der Meere entwertet, alle Forderungen waren so gut wie verloren, und das angesammelte Vermögen schwand von Stunde zu Stunde mit den hochprozentigen Papieren, in welchen es angelegt war, sodaß zuletzt nur noch der Grundbesitz und einiges in alten Landestiteln bestehende Stammvermögen vorhanden war. (13)

The position of the Glor Family business became so grim that the grandparents relinquished their investments, that Justine made all types of plans to earn some spending money and that some workers like Agatchen gave up their job in the factory because they knew the business could not afford their labor.

At this point the Glor Family decides to save their name. They used their investments to cover the losses in the world market and products they kept overseas. The business was continued even though the family was as poor as they could get.

An interesting direction in the analysis of the Glor Family business would be a comparison of the value systems. I have already pointed out that Jukundus, after Keller had redrawn his character, adhered to a higher order of values. For the sake of simple differentiation, may I suggest that the value system of the Glor Family is more egocentric or self-oriented than that of Jukundus. His value system is more dis-

interested. In business he wants to be honest and trusting. As a person who handles economic goods (like the trees in his lumber industry), his thing values follow the principles of ecology. This position prevents him from rising on the social ladder. He has characteristics of a typical person from Seldwyla, "aus dem Orte, in welchem noch nie einer auf einen grünen Zweig gekommen sei und wo niemand etwas besitze". (14)

In comparison, the Glor Family adheres more to the ego-centric values. Values function as constraints and stimuli. The behavior resulting from this set of values may, under certain conditions, not be diabolically opposed to that of people with Jukundus' value system. The Glor Family's moral, social, aesthetic, religious, material and physical values manifested themselves in professional honesty, a type of charitableness and courtesy toward the workers (Ursula and Agathchen respected the Glor Family), a sense of beauty and symmetry in their property, a kind of piety and clearness of conscience in their dealings with the church, and comfort and physical security in their handling of economic goods. The basic difference is the nature of the value system. The Glor Family needed to rise in the social stratification and when they had acquired a name (prestige), they had to save it when business went down.

In their hands the economic goods are converted into power that would raise them above their original status and set them apart from the rest of the people. In this respect they are more egocentric than a Jukundus type.

In this comparison, I think Keller likes to show that the Jukundus type is not the losing type. Whereas he earns the respect of the reader at the end, the Glor Family is dismissed after their loss in business.

Another economic element mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the element of change, becomes very obvious in the Glor Family business. Their position is controlled by the security or insecurity of the external economic condition. We notice the instability of the people who rely totally on the egocentric type of value system. Had it not been for the grandparents, the Glor Family business would have experienced bankruptcy and their name could not have been saved. The grandparents, although they too had spent much of their life living by an egocentric type of value system, offer some stability which, at this point must be recognized as coming from a disinterested type of orientation, a value system that reaches out to others even though it is only to the members of the family. This provides us with a picture of unique blend of the two value systems which I believe is found in the grandparents.

### 3. FACTORY WORKERS

Very brief mention is made of the factory workers of the time in the short story "Das verlorene Lachen". I suppose Keller was not concerned all that much in this story with the group of people that belongs to the factory workers. However, he permits us to get a brief glimpse of their place in society.

In order to deal with the economic elements of "Das verlorene Lachen", especially where reflection is in terms of social classification, the worker must make his inroads into the total picture. We meet the Arbeiter once in a description of Jukundus' failure in the Glor business. "Die Arbeiter betrogen ihn um die anvertraute Seide, indem sie das Gewebe zu leicht und locker machten und ihn über die Ursache belogen". (15) From this passage one can only speculate about the relationship between the worker and factory owner. Keller states further that "Andere wußten ihm Geschäftsgeheimnisse abzuschwatzen, um auf eigene Faust eine schädliche Konkurrenz zu eröffnen". (16)

We can infer that the relationship between factory owner and factory workers was strained. The need to cheat wherever possible and the opportunity to compete whenever one can steal a business secret or patent give us some idea about remuneration for work and about working conditions. It also permits us to conclude that the laissez faire economy of the time made it possible for the rapid upward movement of a few speculative minded people from the lower classes to which the factory workers belonged.

Erich Gruner, in his book Die Arbeiter in der Schweiz im 19. Jahrhundert concludes that the factory worker was paid very little. Eduart Sieber who writes a book report on Gruner's volumous work in the Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte summarizes the factory worker's income as follows:

"Man darf wohl festhalten, daß trotz Erhöhung der Löhne und geringer Belastung durch Steuern ein Arbeiter in dieser Zeit bei bescheidener und einseitiger Ernährung kaum imstande war, allein eine Familie

zu ernähren, daß er nur allzuoft mit dem Verdienst von Frau und Kindern rechnen mußte. Auch die Wohnungsverhältnisse blieben prekär." (17)

This condition obviously resulted in a wider differentiation between the employer and employee in terms of economic goods and the implications the amount of such goods had on the position in society.

The factory owner exercised his power over his employees by keeping them dependent. Gruner, in his first part of the book, writes about the "rechtliche und soziale Stellung des Arbeiters im Fabrikbetrieb". He concludes that the quality of education (Erziehung), which in my opinion is conditioning, of the factory in terms of punctuality, cleanliness and love for order, is to be regarded as highly as the education provided by the schools at the time.

In a specific case Keller also shows us the other aspect of the employer - employee relationship. Whereas the situation described above hints at being strained, we also find a genuine and warm understanding between a member of the Glor Family and Ursula and Agathchen. The author goes into considerable detail, describing the life story of Ursula and her daughter. Agathchen had worked at the Glor silk factory.

This description is necessary to build up toward the reunion of Justine and Jukundus. Justine goes to these two women (who had left Schwanau for Zürich) in order to find in their company some kind of comfort after a number of disappointments. Jukundus goes to the same house in order to meet the Ölweib for the purpose of uncovering some irregularities in the social-political conditions of Zürich. The meeting in

the home of Ursula and Agathchen again has some religious overtones. However, what is important for the purpose of this paper, is the fact that the employer - employee relationship was a healthy one in this case.

Justine, who is by no means extremely wealthy after the decline of the Glor Family business, brings some goods to these two women who live near the poverty line. Agathchen had given up her work at the Glor factory because she realized that it was a hardship for the factory owners to pay wages at this time. Her stay would make certain financial demands on the Glor family. This she could not justify. Keller describes the situation as follows:

"Um diese Zeit kam das große Unglück über das Haus Glor, wo die zahlreichen Arbeiter über Bedürfnis und Vermögen hinaus fortbeschäftigt wurden. Während nun manche solcher Arbeiter, die Haus und Hof besaßen und von der Sachlage wohl stille Kenntnis hatten, ihren Verdienst ruhig weiterbezogen und die Ärmeren vollends ihr Auskommen wie eine Schuldigkeit nach wie vor forderten, machte sich das arme schwache Agathchen allein ein Gewissen daraus." (18)

The introduction of this incident into the total story raises the question of probability. Is such an incident representative or just an imagination of the author who wants to get to a certain point in the plot? The same question will be asked about Jukundus.

We have to consider the intent of the author. He wants to teach or be didactic. This may force him to introduce something probable but not likely into the plot. That is his choice as a poet. On the other hand,

the story of Ursula and Agathchen blends quite well into the picture of nineteenth century Switzerland.

In an attempt to apply similar techniques of commenting as in the previous case study, I find here a very unique blend of value systems. Justine, who is a member of the Glor Family finds it helpful to relate to the factory worker type at this point. Agathchen and her mother, who have been at the low end of the economic scale, have no difficulty relating to their superiors. The other-oriented value system seems to dominate in this case. Both need something and have something to offer.

I suppose this positive relationship between the upper and lower class as an isolated incident (in this case it involves the employer figure and the employee figure) is one of the more positive reflections of the 19th century economic conditions. The religious overtones might be mentioned as responsible factors for this bright spot in the otherwise strained relationship.

At this point again we must realize that even though this paper deals with the economic elements, it is difficult to divorce them completely from the other factors in life.

Thus, in a very small measure, Keller gives us a picture of this type of economic conditions of his time in terms of a strained and a positive employer - employee relationship.

#### 4. HOME INDUSTRY

Another minor consideration of economic elements in "Das verlorene Lachen" is the mention of the home

industry. Keller brings this important aspect of the Swiss economy into his short story rather sparingly. However, it is there and forms a part of the entire economic picture. Gruner states that the factories did find their workers primarily among the home industry proletariat.

Prior to the industrial revolution in any particular country many products were turned out at the home industry level. The time that Keller describes is that of the shift from home industry to factory. Although elements of home industry will always remain in one form or another until long after the dominance of the factory system, in the case of our short story we must ascribe considerable emphasis to the home industry.

The major incident of home industry that Keller writes about is in connection with Justine and later her mother after the decline of the family business. This type of industry had not died. It provided specialized (and handmade) goods for certain people, most likely the upper class. Widows who could not leave the home to work in a factory are mentioned by the author. They also carry on a home industry. Justine goes into this type of work in order to earn some money for extras and to keep her mind off her problems. Unknowingly she creates a hardship for those who depend on this kind of income.

Her mother is opposed to this occupation (in this case it is some kind of needlework) at first. When her pride was overcome and the remunerations helped die Nebenausgaben zu bestreiten (to cover extra expenses), then the mother joined the daughter. The entire operation

was later discouraged by the men of the family. The reason seems to be a combination of pride and necessity. Keller quotes them as saying in effect that they did not want to be considered as people, "die nicht mehr vermöchten, ein paar Weiber zu erhalten, und fanden es ungehörig, daß diese selber um Hausarbeit ausgingen, indessen arme Arbeiterinnen solche im Hause suchten und fanden." (19)

Justine was disappointed and looked for other means to become independent. She made plans to take on a teaching job. These plans did not materialize.

An extension of this kind of home industry could be the type of work that Ursula was involved in. She had joined a number of women who went to various homes of the upper class on washdays to do the laundry.

Erich Gruner makes frequent mention of home industry in his account of the life of the 19th century worker.

Bechtle führt den angeblichen  
gewerkschaftlichen Rückstand der  
Schweiz auf die besonderen wirt-  
schaftlichen und kulturellen Ver-  
hältnisse zurück. Den Hauptgrund  
dafür sieht er in der weitverbrei-  
teten ländlichen Hausindustrie,  
welche beim Arbeiter kaum ein klassen-  
mäßiges Solidaritätsgefühl aufkommen  
lasse. (20)

He verifies the claims made in "Das verlorene Lachen" that this occupation was held primarily by those who could not hold a full job in a factory, or by those who needed an additional income. In his discussion of the beginnings of labour unions in Switzerland, he agrees that the home industry is rather prominent and hinders the formation of strong unions.

The vital aspect of information that we have here is the conflict element that sheds some light on the economic conditions of the time. Home industry helps people supplement their meagre income. As such it is important for the low class person who has not formed a strong enough voice to improve income and working conditions. This is one aspect of the dilemma.

This avenue of material resource is jeopardized by the fact that people from the upper class in crisis situations seek income opportunities in this area.

The conflict element is focused further by the fact that this same industry which eases the problems of poverty is in the way of gaining a strong voice from labour to press for reforms in the labour world.

With this short account in "Das verlorene Lachen" of the home industry, Keller adds to make a rather complete picture of the economic conditions of the time.

## 5. SIDELINE OCCUPATION

The last case study for the purpose of this paper is a look at a side-line occupation. Some aspects of the home industry would fit into this part of the discussion. But, since I have dealt with that in the case of Justine and her mother, I would like to restrict this topic to the pastor mentioned in "Das verlorene Lachen".

The reference is a confession the pastor makes to Justine:

"Ich habe reich werden wollen und habe daher im Umgange mit den Ihrigen, in Ihrem Hause, gelauscht und mir gemerkt, auf welcherlei Weise die Vermögenssummen dort verwendet werden; ich habe mir die Handelspapiere aufgeschrieben, von welchen

der größte Gewinn erwartet wurde, und ich habe die Operationen, die ich machen sah, im geheimen nachgeäfft mit dem mäßigen Vermögen meiner Frau, und als ich ahnte, daß das Haus Glor erschüttert war, wußte ich zugleich, daß ich selbst alles verloren und das Erbe meiner Gattin und ihrer Kinder vergeudet und verspielt hatte. Sie weiß es noch nicht, und ich darf es niemandem sagen, wenn ich nicht meinen Stand verunehren will. Aber Ihnen gegenüber, da Sie mir so unversehens erscheinen, drängt es mich zur Offenheit!" (21)

In the laissez faire (free enterprise) economy even the pastor is tempted to speculate. Keller probably has his reasons for choosing in particular a pastor who gets involved in this type of business. He makes him change occupations at the end. In a masterful stroke Keller summarizes the major relationships at the end of the short story. He concludes it with the clause, "denn er, der Pfarrer, glaubte nicht leicht was ihm einer vorgab." (22)

This makes it a rather unique case study which, aside from the consideration for a discussion of economic elements, would be an interesting topic in itself. For the purpose of this paper it is important to look at the pastor as a person who takes advantage of the opportunity for speculation.

This seems to fit very neatly into a picture of the economic conditions of the time. Here is another type of person who finds out about investment possibilities in a somewhat underhanded way. He uses his wife's assets secretly and invests them. The obvious conclusion that Keller would come to, in this case, is

to have this speculator exposed. At the same time when the Glor Family business experiences a collapse, the pastor loses his investments because he had put the money into the same market where the Glor Family had made profits before.

An analysis of the value systems that are operative in this case study would be rather revealing. A pastor is expected to adhere to an other-oriented value system. He is called upon to be like a shepherd to look after the needs of his flock. In time of crisis, Justine hopes to find guidance and understanding when she goes to the pastor. She is disappointed, because the pastor has tried to live according to another, the egocentric, value system, in private. When he is unable to help he can no longer hide behind a facade. After a period of pretense, he finally shows true color. The pastor makes business and speculation his vocation.

I suppose this case is not an isolated one in the type of economic climate that forms part of the background of "Das verlorene Lachen". Where free enterprise is at home, this change of occupation from professional to business or from people orientation to thing orientation is not uncommon because of the opportunity of greater monetary remunerations.

In the introduction the three economic elements (goods, power and change) were mentioned as basic points to which the case study shall make reference. The approach of identifying the value system was used in some case studies to establish relationships between these economic elements and the style of life. In the case of the pastor, where we have a member of

the bourgeois (as a professional he had more power than the average man), we meet a person who is involved in a lateral shift within the same class (upper middle class). His desire is to have power of the same order as the wealthy. He wants to go back to material goods to accumulate power and to rise in status within the class of the bourgeois by means of these goods.

Keller shows us yet another side of the whole network of the economic condition of the time. Here and there are other hints that would complete the picture. There is, for example, the incident of the man and his wife to which Justine refers when Jukundus suggests that he would rather cut lumber than leave Seldwyla. There are also the workers in Jukundus' business who lost their employment. All this belongs to the total picture that Keller paints for the purpose of background to the story line, a picture that gives us an opportunity to look into the social stratifications and the economic resources (human and natural) which were operative in the relationships that make up the story.

### C. THE CASE STUDIES IN REVIEW

The case studies give enough evidence of the claim made that Keller portrays his time even though they deal only with one element in particular, the economic element.

Jukundus takes a special position in the portrayal of the time to which Keller speaks. Through him Keller polarizes two sets of principles. His reading audience becomes easily aware of the favorable position given to

the other-oriented value system. In the economic world that consists of goods, power and change, only such principles will prevail.

In the case studies I have tried to put these principles into a context in order to begin to focus them. They are concentrated most in the main character. Although Jukundus might have made a lot of mistakes, he is the key character who lives or tries to live by these principles.

Jukundus, and I have tried to show this, is by no means the only one in possession of that desire to live by such a value system. By systematic analysis (this would go beyond the scope of my paper), it would be possible to find all characters of the short story somewhere between the two poles of egocentrics on one side and the other-oriented on the opposite side. Some are closer to one and some closer to the other pole. The basic position, as I have tried to hint at in the case studies, is dependent on how the characters related to the economic elements of goods, power and change.

If I may come to a tentative conclusion at this time, I would recognize in "Das verlorene Lachen" a piece of literature (eine Novelle) in form of a short story which has some difficulties being accepted as such by the literary critics because its material is of the magnitude of a novel (Roman). But, the area in which it makes its mark in particular is the area of relevance to the time in which the poet lives. Keller captures a picture of his changing society. Mundane life becomes the stuff for his writings. His characters come from all strata of society. They are clearly delineated and

as such, they carry the author's intent also in his attempt to be didactic.

Keller does not pick up narrow causes with respect to which he must declare his position. His reformatory function is seen primarily in the area of principles as opposed to narrow causes.

His main message is carried by Jukundus. It centres around business ethics. Jukundus fails in the area of speculation, but he regains the gift of Lachen, "die Sprache der gleichgewichtigen und ungebrochenen Lebensganzheit" (Martini) while involved in the business world at a level where honesty and trust do not have to be forfeited.

### CHAPTER III: CONCLUSIONS

#### A. CONCERNING THE AUTHOR AND HIS SHORT STORY

The basic question asked in this paper concerns the poet and his time. The changes and crises of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in all facets of life came upon the people with revolutionary intensity. The economic climate of the time is full of new elements that made their contributions to a feeling of flux and insecurity on the one side and to a rising opportunity on the other. Some people were locked into a way of poverty, others rose to become wealthy factory owners.

The poet, Keller, uses these events. He selects some, creates a story with and around them, and as a person with obligations to speak to these events, he evaluates them for reformatory purposes.

The area in which the reader might wish to find some more fruit of such obligation is a greater concern on the part of the author for the workers and peasants and a clearer position with respect to some of the irregular undercurrents in society. Keller makes his point in the areas of ecology and work and business ethics. However, he is not all that clear about the need to deal with material poverty and the movement represented by the Verleumdungskampagne (defamation campagne) in which Jukundus participated just prior to meeting Justine again.

If the claim is made, that the author speaks to and of his time for purpose of betterment, then one should be able to find a strong position related to such important questions as poverty and defamation. Ecology and work and business ethics emphasize the man-to-thing type of relationship. The two cases where Keller is not so clear, lean more toward the man-to-man relationship.

Poverty seems to be dealt with only in terms of work ethics and the fact that, for example, Justine and her mother should not interfere with the poor who might make a living by the highly specialized home industry.

The defamation movement, in my estimation, receives very little direction in terms of value judgement. The pages devoted to it identify this movement and place it into the plot primarily for purpose of picking up the connections with the story line; and this in a strained way. The few inferences triggered by introducing the landscape of Switzerland on the wall paper and the song sung some time ago by Jukundus at the song festival are not enough of an excuse for having dealt with the question of defamation on the level of principles.

In order to deal with the part where I feel Keller discharges his obligation, I would like to refer to the October 21, 1962 address by Dr. Albert Hauser to the Herbstbott of the Gottfried Keller-Gesellschaft.

Hauser claims that Keller spoke to his time and that he declared his position with the intent to influence his time. For the purpose of staying within the limits of this paper, I shall relate only the relevant

material from the address to the topic of economic elements.

Very much related to his feeling about the economy of his time is his understanding of ecology. Keller loved the trees. He had also experienced hardship in his youth. His work ethics are truly in tune with the very traditional attitudes toward hard work; work is a virtue of high rank. Out of this position Keller speaks to his time about industry, punctuality and conscientiousness. With these qualities it is possible for a small nation to be competitive and to shift from a shepherd people to an industrial nation. He recognizes also the complementary character of tradition and progress and wishes that the positive qualities of each side be retained.

His interest in the business world of buying, of trends, of risks and speculation give him much power and expertise which he can use when he writes. He can ask the question with some authority whether or not the pure and gentle nature of his country is capable of survival in a world of competition. In order to give an affirmative answer to that question he creates a character like Jukundus:

"Dieser Tor findet nach vielen Mühsalen und Enttäuschungen eine Arbeit bei welcher er nicht zu täuschen und zu lügen, weder zu überfordern noch zu unterbieten oder zu überlisten braucht. Er verliert seine Leichtgläubigkeit ohne deswegen unwahr und betrügerisch zu werden. Das Gewissen wird sein Teilhaber, ohne den die innere Ruhe nicht einkehrt."

(23)

Aside from allowing his characters to speak and communicate his feelings, Keller has come out rather bluntly to demand ethical guidelines for the economic efforts of his people. Hauser believes that Keller demands the following standards:

1. The strong should not take advantage of the weak.
2. Wealth and the good life (Wohlfahrt) are not the highest objectives.

Eigentliches Glück findet nur der  
opferbereite, Familie und Gemein-  
schaft verpflichtete, zu innerer  
Freiheit bereite Mensch. (24)

"Das verlorene Lachen" reflects this ethical position of the poet. He believes in it and creates the relationships in his short story in such a way that we know what Keller wants his audience to know and to follow.

The economic elements that have been mentioned and dealt with in this paper are shown as a strong force in the relationships among people. They reflect the behavior of people and dominate quite frequently a formation and manifestation of value systems.

#### B. CONCERNING JUKUNDUS, THE GRANDPARENTS AND DAS LACHEN

A more detailed look at the three basic symbols of "Das verlorene Lachen", Jukundus, the grandparents and das Lachen, is necessary for the purpose of drawing a conclusion about the short story.

Jukundus is a creation of the imagination of the author; more so than any other of the characters in the

short story. The other characters could have been taken (more or less) from the actual time and place which the story line represents.

Jukundus, however, becomes more than any other character a representation of Keller's notions. At the level of the story, Jukundus represents the people of Seldwyla. They represent the people of an era that is not yet caught up in the forces that accompany the technology and ideology of the nineteenth century industrial revolution in Switzerland. About these people Keller says the following:

"So ungerregelt und müßig sie sonst  
lebten, so sehr hielten sie auf  
Ordnung, Fleiß und gute Haltung  
bei solchen Anlässen (musical festival). (25)

Considering the standard of life of the people of Schwanau, Jukundus has not made a mark in life; in Seldwyla nobody has risen to their level.

Justine Glor von Schwanau is the one who also possesses the gift of Lachen, but she belongs to the other camp. Through marriage Jukundus must make the transition from an exemplary member of the Seldwyla people to a member of the Schwanau camp.

In this transition, the objective is to retain as long as possible, and if lost, to regain the gift of Lachen. Both, Jukundus and Justine affected their respective community with the said quality of life. Both lost it for a rather lengthy period and then regained it in the process of adjusting to a new world and to a new image of self.

One of the influential factors, as mentioned before, was the economic sphere in which Jukundus was placed in order to be an active participant. As such,

Jukundus is a representative of an important characteristic segment of the Swiss people of the time. Switzerland had to experience a transition which, in embryonic dimension, is characterized by Jukundus' life; the shepherd country changed into an industrial nation in spite of the lack of control over basic raw materials for its industries and control over the necessary waterways that would put it in a strategic position for a world market.

Keller maintains, as Dr. A. Hauser in his address to the G. Keller - Gesellschaft on October 21, 1962 seems to assert,

"Kleine Nationen, .... können sich nur durch Fleiß und Klugheit behaupten." (26)

This is a point to which one can easily agree. The aspect that seems to pose a considerable problem is not the resources or lack of them; nor is it the access to the world market or lack of access that will make the difference in the case of an industrious and clever people. The problem lies in the principles by which one lives as a member of the business community.

At this point I would like to ask the question whether or not Jukundus does represent Switzerland. In the world of Konkurrenzwirtschaft it is a question of survival for a little country like Switzerland. Added to that is the nature of moral principles upon which transactions in such a world are based. Keller portrays, in Jukundus, a person who seems to be doomed in this world. But he permits him to be successful. Obviously Keller hopes to teach at this point and his lesson is clear even though it is hidden in the portrayal of his main characters.

As a victim of his own character and the fast pace at which the natural resources for his lumber industry are exhausted, Jukundus is forced to switch camp from Seldwyla to Schwanau. Justine, already convinced that Jukundus cannot succeed (in the Schwanau sense) in the type of business that is possible in the Seldwyla era, becomes a very strong influence toward that shift. In fact, marriage adds the inevitable force that draws him away from his original environment into another.

In the other environment, Jukundus becomes a failure at first. The failure is a direct result of character. Jukundus does not fit into the competitive environment with its special "excellences" that make it win - a world in which one wins by taking advantage even though one has to use devious means. He prefers to succeed in this new environment by remaining true to his character that is marked by honesty and trust.

The transition from Seldwyla to Schwanau to Zürich is accompanied by the loss of Lachen. Jukundus' relationship with the people at Schwanau deteriorated; his mother eventually died because her son failed to relate to her on her terms; the marriage broke up. Jukundus moved to the city to find a job where he can be successful.

This insignificant somebody in the multitude of city dwellers, this simple honest man from Seldwyla among the shrewd and gainconscious new generation, finally makes his mark. The deteriorating and broken relationships are repaired and, even though his mother remains dead and there is no return for what she represents, the Lachen does return.

There is one other factor that needs to be taken into account. Jukundus meets the grandparents of Justine. They live somewhat apart from the rest of the Schwanau family. Jukundus likes to be with them and they take to him easily. He is with them before he enters the business in Justine's family, he retreats to them during his work in the business and he is reunited with Justine where both regain the gift of Lachen in the vicinity of the grandparents' home. As such they provide a stabilizing factor for a person like Jukundus who is in the process of venturing into a new life.

Fritz Martini calls the grandparents the Hüter der Erinnerungen. (27) For Keller the past and the present, and related to that, traditions and progress are complementary. The creation of a character like Jukundus offers therefore no exception. He represents much of what Keller sees in himself and the Swiss.

This brings me to the basic question of representation. It is obvious that Keller is primarily a story teller in "Das verlorene Lachen". He also is didactic in the way he draws the character of Jukundus and how such a character is able to survive in spite of an unconventional trait; the rest of the business people are different. The question is therefore one of representation. Does Jukundus represent the Swiss minority in the world of industrials? Does he represent the type of person that Keller hopes the Swiss will be? Does he become, in a kind of prophetic way, the Switzerland that Keller thinks Switzerland will be in the coming decades of the nineteenth century? I would like to guard against any forced interpretation. On the other hand I think a writer like Keller who stands with both feet on the ground

and who relates well to his time and people, is bound to have his observations reflected in his writings. In that sense Jukundus represents something that Keller sees and likes to see in his time. He makes him one who overcomes the obstacles of the tyrannies of an industrial revolution; one who has found independence and freedom to unfold in spite of the masses that go the way of speculation.

Related to the question of life is the quality of life for which Keller employs his symbol of Lachen. I would like to consider this concept in greater detail. Fritz Martini defines das Lachen as " die Sprache der gleichgewichtigen und ungebrochenen Lebensganzheit". (28)

In the short story the two main characters are in possession of this quality of life. The pattern prescribed by this quality, as one traces it through the story, seems to follow a recognized pattern of a complete cycle. Both Jukundus and Justine are seen at first with that gift of Lachen. There seems to be perfect equilibrium of person and environment. Eventually the Lachen disappears. The two characters move into a state of disequilibrium. At the end of the story we find both again in possession of the gift of Lachen. The cycle is complete; a type of equilibrium is achieved. Obviously the second equilibrium is of a different order because the people involved have moved through a process of experience and consequently a measure of naivete has been lost.

The important feature for the purpose of this paper is naturally the relationship between the changing presence of the quality of Lachen and the economic elements. It would be a study in itself to deal with the concept of happiness in Keller's short story. I would like

to make a rather brief commentary on the relationship mentioned above.

The first important observation is that this quality of life is found among the people of Seldwyla as well as among those in Schwanau. In both cases it involves young people. The fact that this gift returns after being lost for some time and after they have experienced fundamental changes in life, causes me to believe that it is not the gift of youth or of naivete, but a gift of a higher order; any one could possess it, whether he is from Seldwyla or from Schwanau. It also seems possible to regain this gift after certain factors have caused it to be lost.

Another important observation is that the gift of Lachen is lost completely and later regained after the two who possessed the gift matured in their relationship to the material and ideological environment in which they lived. There are again a number of factors affecting the presence of Lachen and also the degree to which this quality of life is shown. My interest is only in the economic factors that bear upon the presence of that quality of life.

On only six occasions does Keller refer to the Lachen. The first two are in the introduction to the two young people, Jukundus and Justine. We meet them at the music festival and we get the impression that they are the perfect couple. It is this gift that seems to make them belong to each other.

The question of social classification based on economic means is what has to be overcome before Jukundus and Justine are permitted to marry.

The third time Keller returns to the idea of Lachen is at the point when Jukundus leaves the lumber supply industry.

..... er erschien sich als ein Feind  
und Verwüster aller grünen Zier und  
Freude, wurde unlustig und oft  
traurig und vertraute sich seiner  
Frau an, da sie sein frohes Lächeln,  
das zu dem ihrigen wie ein  
Zwillingsgeschwister war, fast  
seltener werden sah und ihn  
ängstlich befragte. (29)

There is a very decided connection between the Lachen in Jukundus' understanding of the ecology, and the intrusion of business into this understanding, a business that converts everything into commodities and consumer goods, create a conflict and lead to a state of disequilibrium. Jukundus is not able to project what Martini says "die Sprache der gleichgewichtigen und ungebrochenen Lebensganzheit". (30)

Keller mentions the Lachen (with Justine) again when the young couple is in company of the grandparents up on the hillside and removed from the businessworld. Otherwise there is evidence that this quality of life is decreasing. Jukundus' inability to survive in a competitive business world estranges him from his partners and also from his wife. The occasion that brought about the final separation between Jukundus and Justine has some religious overtones. However, the basic reason, as Justine intimates, is Jukundus' inability to rise in business.

Kaum war er aber hier angelangt, so  
schwieg sie nicht länger; die rauhe  
Ursprünglichkeit der emporgekommenen  
Volksfamilie, welche die Männer zu-  
weilen überfiel, brach mit aller  
Herbigkeit auch bei ihr unversehens  
zutage. Leidenschaftlich und rück-  
sichtslos und ebenso unbesonnen

rief sie, er möge gehen, wohin er wolle, sie werde ihm nicht folgen, wenn er in ihrem Hause nicht zu gedeihen vermöge, wo es ihm an nichts und an keinem Entgegenkommen gemangelt habe. Weder den Ihrigen noch ihr selbst fiel es ein, noch das geringste Opfer an ein solch verlorenes Leben zu wagen und das Geld einem solchen ... nachzuwerfen. (31)

Following this, Keller makes another reference to the Lachen:

Von diesem Augenblicke an war aus dem Gesichte der beiden Ehegatten jenes anmutige und glückliche Lachen verschwunden, so vollständig, als ob es niemals darin gewohnt hätte. (32)

In the following paragraphs there is a reference to the Lachen by Jukundus and also by Justine. Jukundus reduces this quality of life to a mere art of the facial muscles. An external cut makes it disappear. Justine looks into the mirror and tries to force a Lachen, really only a smile. But her mouth and cheeks remained unmoved like marble. The two people and their world enter a state of disequilibrium. They have lost the essence of life and are estranged (entfremdet) from each other and their environment. It is a world where everything must be reduced to the material. This is the case in the Glor business and I am convinced also in the church setting where the argument started. It ended in the final rift between Jukundus and Justine.

The disappearance of the Lachen seems to be proportionate with the appearance of materialism. It was also the growth of materialism that caused religion to lose its soul.

Following this state of disequilibrium in the lives of Jukundus and Justine, there is a time when both learn to be what is appropriate for them. The economic conditions of the time (instability in the world market) cause the Glor business to decline. Justine learns to face life more realistically. Jukundus finds his appropriate place in the business world. When they meet again - and this time there are also some religious overtones - they are reunited. Keller says,

Sobald sie einander gewahrten, kehrte  
das verloren gewesene Lachen in ihre  
Gesichter zurück, und sie umarmten  
und küßten sich herzlich. (33)

Very significant for the total integration of the symbols is the scene into which the couple retreats. It is a forest but not in its natural form; the trees are planted in rows and everything looks like a garden of an important person.

The cycle is complete. Jukundus and Justine regain an equilibrium of a much more regulated and formal sort. Das Lachen has returned and is passed on to their children. They also return to the grandparents where the couple stays for some time after their first meeting when they were reunited. This, the new state of equilibrium, combines the old that symbolizes tradition and the new that symbolizes progress. The harmony between the two is a setting in which the Lachen can again assert itself.

Thus Keller uses the time and the place in which he lives as a mirror in which his audience can see objectively. He uses the story line for the purpose of analysis and synthesis. His symbols of the tree, the

main character, the grandparents and the gift of Lachen in particular become the vehicles of his notions.

With all this he carries a message that deals with value systems and principles that stand above ideologies, denominationalism and man's materialistic view of his environment.

#### APPENDIX: NINETEENTH CENTURY BACKGROUND

For the purpose of outlining some of the historical background related to the material of "Das verlorene Lachen", I shall make references to a number of secondary sources including some historical texts. It is rather difficult to find material because most of the emphasis in this area has focused its attention on countries that played a more decisive role in the economic development of Europe at the time.

My first reference will be a lecture by Dr. Albert Hauser given at the Herbstbott der Gottfried Keller - Gesellschaft October 21, 1962. His address was "Über das wirtschaftliche und soziale Denken Gottfried Kellers".

Concerning that time, he writes that the industrial revolution exerts an increased influence on the life style in society. It is a time of crises and changes. It lacks uniformity and clear direction. These aspects are captured by Keller especially in the life of Jukundus who is forced to move along in the change without being able to be master of these forces.

With the advance of industry, it is interesting to observe from a distance the reactions of people. Hauser believes that man trusted blindly the evolutionary force of science, economy and technology. I suppose man had little choice when these forces were always several steps ahead of the developments in the sociological, ppsychological, ethical and moral spheres. The conservative position would hardly survive in this time. Hauser speaks of a shift to liberalism and a new phase

of enlightenment which was less tolerable than the enlightenment of the eighteenth century. The railway was the symbol of progress, the machine received ready acceptance and work became one of the highest virtues.

Hauser continues to deal with the advance of the factory system. Here we are thoroughly at home with Keller's short story which finds much material in the various aspects of that system. The Glor Family business, the factory workers like Agathchen and those who cheated Jukundus, the crisis in the silk factory, all make reference to this aspect of the nineteenth century.

In relation to the factory system that took over the bulk of the textile and other industry in Switzerland, there are side effects in the economic world. Among them Hauser mentions the establishment of banks, insurance and export, the exploitation of natural resources (forests are mentioned in "Das verlorene Lachen"), the monetary reform of 1848, the first federal law on factories of 1877 (after the writing of "Das verlorene Lachen"), the emancipation of the Bürgertum and factory workers and the change in the standard of living. In 1830 it took two hours for the worker to earn one pound of bread, in 1880 it required only one hour to earn that.

In his diary Keller writes about this time:

"Die Zeit ergreift mich mit eisernen Armen. Es tobt und gärt in mir wie in einem Vulkan. Ich werfe mich dem Kampfe für völlige Unabhängigkeit und Freiheit des Geistes und der religiösen Ansichten in die Arme; aber die Vergangenheit reißt sich nur blutend von mir los." (34)

It is very significant to see how the poet is involved in his time. The important aspect of this for the purpose of my paper is the two directional natures of the involvement. Keller was influenced by what is happening. That is the one side. But he also influences his time. As an author he uses his position to speak to the time and to point out the directions he believes Switzerland should take. The didactic nature of his short story has been mentioned earlier in the paper. In the conclusion I have returned to the question of the poet and his place in society.

For the second reference I would like to use Georg Lukács' Deutsche Literatur in zwei Jahrhunderten.

Lukács relates part of the economic developments, that Keller uses as material for his short story, to the developments in Germany which followed somewhat later than the revolutionary changes of the more western nations. The great changes of the time are the decline of the revolutionary-democratic developments and the great up-surge of the German capitalism. The second movement is the one of interest to this discussion. It involved the basic change from the patriarchal climate to the capitalistic one which resulted in the formation of a new differentiation in the social stratification. The masses were impoverished.

While the western countries went through a period of political revolution, which was as concrete as could be, we find that such revolutionary elements are considerably less pronounced in the German speaking world. Instead, these revolutionary elements are finding their place in the literature and philosophy of the time.

Keller's position in respect to what happens in Germany is one of an observer. Whereas he was enthusiastic in his early life about the revolutionary elements, he tends to have his hand on the pulse of both, firstly the progressive elements of the reactionaries to the 1848 revolution who were not able to come out victoriously and secondly the more traditional elements of the Swiss Democracy.

Since the capitalistic movements became strong in Switzerland much later than in Germany, we find that Keller can only touch on the early beginnings of this movement in his writings. It should also be noticed that the capitalistic movements in Switzerland during Keller's time failed to be as negatively pronounced among the middle class as in Germany. Since we have in Keller a poet whose writings reflect the time, we find that he is nevertheless isolated among those same kind of poets of the nineteenth century. He writes about the Züricher Demokratie and the conditions of that time and place. Since the reactionary movements are not as strong as in other parts of the German speaking world, and since the separation of his area from the main German speaking territory becomes quite pronounced at this time, Keller becomes uniquely Swiss in his literary and economical-political position. Lukács considers him an achtundvierziger radikalen Demokraten.

This position is reflected not so much in the choice of his material, even though it too can be considered to be local (as Vischer had indicated), but it is reflected in the didactic quality of his works. In this phase of his writings the demokratische

Grundlage des deutschen Humanismus becomes very obvious.

A decided new orientation in Keller's position with respect to capitalism can be seen in "Das verlorene Lachen". In the earlier short stories of Die Leute von Seldwyla his position is favoring the gesunde urwüchsige Demokratie. In the short story under discussion here, we have Jukundus, the recognized figure of Seldwyla, move to Schwanau and later into the businessworld of Zürich. A decided shift in the economic climate of the time, a move toward capitalism, has therefore been reflected in the material for the last short story of the Seldwyla Zyklus.

This is a very significant consideration because Keller reflects the economic climate and he speaks to it as he creates the main character who possessed the gift of Lachen in Seldwyla and regains it in the new Zürich in which the shift in the economic condition is documented.

Another significant aspect of the short story is the fact that Jukundus does not return to Seldwyla at the end. If Seldwyla represents the more traditional element and Zürich the newer element that has some capitalistic overtones, then it becomes very obvious that Keller's position is very realistic. It does not reflect provincial limitations nor estrangements from the average middle class person because of onesidedness that leans toward the more revolutionary trends of his time.

The background that Lukács provides for the purpose of this discussion, is related to the economic climate that changes toward a milder form of capitalism than seen in Germany at this time. In terms of social

stratification due to the economic tendencies we see the formation of a new elite in the Glor Family, a new bourgeois in the Seldwyla people and a new proletariat in the masses of factory workers some of whom came from the shepherd people of the earlier era. The important element from this source is the position Keller takes with respect to his counterparts in Germany where these economic shifts have moved in a somewhat different direction due to a stronger reaction toward revolutionary movements of 1848.

In order to provide a more specific background for the material of "Das verlorene Lachen", it is necessary to deal with references that offer no commentary on the literature aspect of the time.

Georg Thürer in his book Free and Swiss, a very general history of Switzerland, claims that the constitutional reform promoted industrial and commercial advances in that the barriers between the cantons were somewhat lifted and Switzerland moved into a direction of more independence (in the economic field) from the stronger and bigger neighbours.

The basic factors dictating the economic course of Switzerland are the increased population, the position at the Gotthard pass, and the lack of some basic mineral resources. Raw materials had to be brought in and good market relationships had to be established with the rest of the world.

Weavers, spinners, and watchmakers adapted to the factory production system and the demands of world wide commerce.

Switzerland had two basic resources: water power

and people. Factories were established in all parts of the country due to the widespread location of the source of water power. This scattering of factories avoided problems of heavy drain on human resource in any one area. Home industry, agriculture and specialized production could exist side by side with the factory system for added and supplementary income. Various areas specialized. Zürich and Basel developed the silks and textile industry, Geneva and Jura the watch making industry, and St. Gallen the linen, cottons and embroidery industry.

By 1872 Switzerland had two million spindles working. In 1864 Glarus employed 6000 workers in one factory complex. This industrialization together with urbanization in the nineteenth century brought about the social changes mentioned earlier.

During and shortly after Keller's time the working class was affected greatly by the economic climate, a climate of great changes. They consolidated to demand basic reforms. In 1866 Keller spoke out against the mill owners who made children work thirteen hours a day. In 1877 the Factory Act was passed decreasing the workday to eleven hours and prohibiting child labor. Thirteen years later (1890) the state offered aid to workers and in 1911 the Sickness and Accident Insurance Act was passed.

In order to deal more specifically with the economic elements mentioned in "Das verlorene Lachen", I would like to make reference to Erich Gruner's book, Die Arbeiter in der Schweiz im 19. Jahrhundert and the book report made on this volume by Eduard Sieber.

Gruner's prime concern is the proletariat. He explains

how, after the early signs of the industrial revolution, the old social order and stratification decays and how, as a result of increased population and urbanization, masses of the proletariat became materially impoverished.

Factory workers came primarily from the previously widespread home industry and some from the farming population. An aggravation to the shortage of income are the people who came to work in Swiss factories from neighbouring countries. The less skilled and capable were left without work. Gruner speaks of a large group of beggars in the Bern Canton around the middle of the 19. century. Among the ones that did not and could not work there are a number that left Switzerland especially in the 1880's after the world economic crisis which caused more and more factory workers to be laid off. It could be possible that Keller had that crisis in mind when he speaks about the decline of the Glor Family business.

The successes of the labor movements are somewhat later than the writing of "Das verlorene Lachen" although concerns about conditions find expression in the description of the forces underway among the reactionaries with whom Jukundus comes in contact at the end of the story prior to going to the Ölweib.

Gruner studies the rise of the awareness of social stratification in part V of his book. In spite of the politically democratic approaches, which were intended to create a feeling of equality and to form a new society of average means, there are here and there outbursts of quarrels among hierarchical strata of society as well as classes of various trades. It took decades (and here again we talk about a time that is

later than "Das verlorene Lachen") until the labor movements consolidated into a united force.

Of specific interest, in my opinion, would be the silk industry of the Glor Family and also some reference to the lumber industry found in the earlier parts of the short story.

According to Gruner we have the silk industry in the Zürich area. He traces its beginnings to the 17th century. It begins as a home industry and in 1825 develops into a factory system whereby several families become well established. The number of employees rises from 4000 and 5000 in 1820 to 12000 and 13000 in the 1830's and to 16000 in 1848. The American crisis of 1857 and from 1865 to the 1880's causes a decline in the silk industry and a boost to the home industry.

This historic account is part of the local material which Keller uses in his portrait of his time.

Gruner also explains to some extent the reason for the poor employer-employee relationship. Competition among factory owners in the laissez faire free enterprise system exerted pressure on quantity and quality of production. This pressure was passed down to the worker. It came in form of working hours, piece work salaries, working conditions and discipline. The reaction to this climate is seen in the way Jukundus is treated by the workers when he takes over as one who trusts and expects trust on the part of the worker. He is cheated. In this connection Gruner talks about Fabrikordnung, Erziehungsarbeit, Herrschaftssystem and Herrschaftsmittel. For example,

he quotes a penalty for lack of punctuality.

"Wenige Minuten Verspätung haben  
Bußen von 10-20% des Taglohnes zur  
Folge, das gänzliche Ausbleiben  
noch eine Buße in der Höhe eines  
Taglohnes zum Lohnverlust hinzu." (35)

Another aspect of the employer-employee relationship would be a look at the ability to support oneself from the income as a worker in the factory. From a detailed analysis Gruner explains that in the 1840's a family of 5 persons required a yearly income of 925 Francs. It was necessary in such a family that at least four people had to work in the factory in order to pay the expenses. Father earned 400 Fr., mother 225 Fr. and two children (150 Francs each) 300 Fr. In 1870 an income of 1225 Fr. was required to support a family of five. Improvements were such that three workers could support such a family.

The obvious difficulties arising out of such conditions are reflected in Keller's account of the time when he describes the way some workers are willing to cheat Jukundus and the personality that is required of a factory owner in order to survive in a competitive business.

Concerning the lumber industry, Gruner explains that forests became private property in some cases after the last remnants of the Feudal System were revised in 1846. This permits free enterprise in the lumber industry. Out of this context grows the ecological concern we find in Keller's Jukundus.

Gruner deals in substantial detail with the worker in this type of the Swiss economy. His income is somewhat higher than that of the textile factory

worker. In the 1840's however, there is a sharp decline in the income of workers in the lumber and wood supply industry.

The resource material in Gruner's book offers a great deal of interesting facts that can be related to Keller's "Das verlorene Lachen". The importance is that the relationship between fact and fiction is clearly visible.

These rather poor conditions for the proletariat seem to be no exception in Switzerland. Peter N. Stearns speaks of similar conditions throughout Europe in his book European Society in Upheaval (Social History since 1800). What makes Keller's picture of Switzerland so interesting is the strictly local atmosphere which made ripples among the Züricher people when his book was printed and read. Added to that is his strong reformatory or didactic note in the short story. This and the fact that it is fiction makes "Das verlorene Lachen" so powerful at the time and so useful today.



## FOOTNOTES

Note: The system of footnotes and bibliography is adopted from The Preparation of Term Essays by Dorothy Blakey formerly Associate Professor, Department of English and A. C. Cooke, Professor, Department of History, the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B. C. 1957.

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