

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Robert Musil and the (De)Colonization of “This True Inner Africa”

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in

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by

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2007



The Dissertation of Karen Dawn Stuart is approved, and it is acceptable  
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## DEDICATION

For giving me the inspiration to work on this project, for listening to my sighs and frustrations, for teaching me how to teach, for showing me how to write, for giving me countless hours of your time, and for always, always believing in me, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to you, Gerry.

You believed in me too, Grandma Paivio.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

SignaturePage.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
List of figures.....	vi
Acknowledgement.....	vii
Vita.....	viii
Abstract.....	ix
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Creation of “This True Inner Africa” in a German World Becoming Self Conscious.....	41
Chapter 2: Musil’s Nietzsche: Contending with the Rhetorical Empires of <i>Ressentiment</i> .....	97
Chapter 3: The <i>Fin-de-Siècle</i> Sexual Territories of the Ratioïd in <i>The Man without Qualities</i> (1930-1933).....	164
Chapter 4: The De-Colonizing Psychology of Ulrich and Agathe (1933-1941).....	234
Chapter 5: De-Colonizing the Audience: Toward a Psychology of Essayism.....	294
Bibliography.....	357

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.....	237
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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Twentieth-century psychologists lauded Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) as the discoverer and “conquistador of the unconscious.” However, as Ludger Lütkehaus argues in *“Dieses wahre innere Afrika”: Texte zur Entdeckung des Unbewussten vor Freud* (“This True Inner Africa”: Texts on the Discovery of the Unconscious before Freud, 1989), there were other explorers of such territories. Lütkehaus examines pre-Freudian psychologists, philosophers, and moralists, all of whom creatively approached the problem of the psyche. They also tended to embrace the racist and sexist commonsense of their times, as was the case when novelist Jean Paul called the unconscious a “true inner Africa,” comparing the unruly regions of the mind to the so-

called dark continent and its inhabitants. Lütkehaus positions Freud at the end of this history, characterizing him as a scientist who imposed techniques useful in the disciplining of the psyches of the inhabitants living within the metropole. As an alternative endpoint, my dissertation examines the work of Freud's contemporary, Robert Musil (1880-1942), and his "essayistic novel," *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (The Man without Qualities 1930, 33). I argue that Musil's novel satirizes the prejudices creating modern psychology in an effort to challenge epistemological forms of colonization occurring within Europe during his lifetime.

My dissertation analyzes "this true inner Africa" in the context of German attempts to achieve self consciousness and Friedrich Nietzsche's critique of the *ressentiment*. These chapters establish the pre-Freudian history informing approaches to knowledge of the human in 1913-1914 Vienna, the setting of *The Man without Qualities*. The chapters that follow analyze psychological practices in the novel. I explicate three themes in *The Man without Qualities*: (1) Musil's re-presentation of the vivisectioning of the psyche into moral and primitive territories; (2) his opposition to discourse privileging "superior" bourgeois Europeans as those able to master themselves and others; and (3) his experiment with a "psychology of feeling." The psychology of feeling exposed a complex picture of the world which binaries created by scientists, moralists, and doctors had typically simplified. Musil's experiment with the de-colonization of "this true inner Africa" re-exposes a little known history of psychology that has been overshadowed by Freud's "science."

## Introduction

[W]e restore order in the ego by detecting the material and urges which have forced their way in from the unconscious, and expose them to criticism by tracing them back to their origin. We serve the patient in various functions, as an authority and a substitute for his parents, as a teacher and educator; and we have done the best for him if, as analysts, we raise the mental processes in his ego to a normal level, transform what has become unconscious and repressed into preconscious material and thus return it once more to the possession of his ego.<sup>1</sup>

Sigmund Freud, *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1938)

The map is a technology of knowledge that professes to capture the truth about a place in pure, scientific form, operating under the guise of scientific exactitude and promising to retrieve and reproduce nature exactly as it is. As such, it is also a technology of possession, promising that those with the capacity to make such perfect representations must also have the right of territorial control.<sup>2</sup>

Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather* (1995)

Robert Musil (1880-1942) summarized his life in several curriculum vitae.<sup>3</sup>

He was born in Klagenfurt, Carinthia, in 1880. His father Alfred von Musil was an engineer and later a professor at the *Technische Hochschule* in Brno, Moravia. His mother Hermine Musil (née Bergauer) came from the Bohemian-German middle class. Notably, his maternal grandfather participated in the construction of the first trans-continental European railroad. At the age of twelve, Musil was sent to military school.

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1 Sigmund Freud, *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: W.W. Norton, 1989) 60-61.

2 Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 27-28.

3 I took the biography that follows from Musil's "Curriculum Vitae" found in Robert Musil, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Adolf Frisé, vol. 2 (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978) 948-951. All translations from the central German texts in this dissertation are mine unless otherwise stated, in which case I used the standard English translation.

He transferred before graduation to the *Technische Hochschule* in Brno, where he followed the path of his father and grandfather with his studies in mechanical engineering. By the beginning of the twentieth century, he had decided to change fields. In Berlin, he wrote his doctorate on physicist Ernst Mach, and studied under the Gestaltist, Carl Stumpf. During this time, he also invented a color gyroscope (*Farbkreisel*). As he completed his doctorate, he began writing fiction. Musil wrote his first novel in 1905, which he called *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törless* (*The Confusions of Young Törless*). This novel was based on his experiences at military school, but went further to explore an authoritarian nether world of sadistic sexuality. The novel was relatively successful, while the fiction that followed was not as well received. Critics dismissed his *Vereinigungen* (*Unions* 1911) as too psychological, perhaps because this novella explored the narrative structure of feeling in new ways.

Although Musil had poor luck professionally, he found success in his love life. In 1911, he married the Jewish artist and divorcée Martha Marcovaldi, who brought to their marriage two children from a previous marriage. Musil never had biological children, but did consider Martha's as his own, and called himself "Vater Rob."<sup>4</sup> The Catholic Robert and the Jewish Martha were not particularly religious. However, they converted to Protestantism as an expression of their union. Not much later war broke out. Musil joined the Habsburg army as an officer and was sent to the Italian front. By the end of the war, Musil had to contend with the human cost of the war as well as inflation and the loss of his family's entire estate and standing. Financial struggles

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Musil, *Briefe 1901-1942*, ed. Adolf Frisé, vol. 1. (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1981) 131. For example, in a letter about life, which Musil wrote to his stepdaughter Annina in 1917, he closes his letter by calling himself "dein weiser Vater Rob" (your wise father Rob).

defined his life thereafter. In the 1920s, he began *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (*The Man without Qualities* 1930 and 1933). He never finished the novel, but did publish the first two parts. He lived intermittently in Vienna and Berlin until 1938 when the Nazis annexed Austria, forcing him to go into exile with Martha. He died in Switzerland in 1942.

Musil lived in a period defined by German imperialism, war, nation-state formation, and the Third Reich.<sup>5</sup> Within this same historical context, the study of the human mind, or “psychology,” became a practice with the goal of stabilizing the inner German world in crisis. In early twentieth-century Vienna and Berlin, for example, psychology had become a therapy for the mentally ill, a method used by industrial capitalism to stimulate consumption and organize labor and people more effectively (i.e. through advertising, propaganda, or aptitude testing), and a method facilitating the moral reform of society. Musil used his novel *The Man without Qualities*, as well as his diaries and letters, to explore the textures of this historical context and the motivations creating modern psychological practice. I argue that there are connections between Musil’s novel, and a history of German-language discourse on the unconscious that—according to some—culminated in the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939).

Twentieth-century psychologists lauded Freud as the discoverer, explorer and “conquistador of the unconscious.” However, as Ludger Lütkehaus argues in “*Dieses wahre innere Afrika*”: *Texte zur Entdeckung des Unbewussten vor Freud* (“This True

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Musil, *Tagebücher*, ed., Adolf Frisé, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1976) 367. Heft 8: 1920.

Inner Africa”: Texts on the Discovery of the Unconscious before Freud, 1989), there were other explorers of such territories. Lütkehaus examines pre-Freudian psychologists, philosophers, and moralists, all of whom creatively approached the problem of the intangible psyche. They also tended to embrace the bourgeois commonsense of their times. This was perhaps most obviously the case when novelist Jean Paul called the unconscious a “true inner Africa,” comparing the unruly regions of the mind to the so-called civilized world’s dark continent. Lütkehaus positions Freud at the end of this history, characterizing him as a scientist who imposed techniques useful in the restraining and/or disciplining of the psyches of inhabitants living in the metropole. This means that Freud, and I would argue other practicing psychologists, successfully did for the metropolitan mind what colonial administrators did in the supposedly “savage” regions of the globe. This understudied history of psychology facilitates a new and valid reading of *The Man without Qualities*.<sup>6</sup> In my reading, Musil was trying to reverse a historical process culminating in the colonization of the psyche occurring in Europe during his lifetime.

My engagement with Lütkehaus’s history adds a new dimension to contemporary research investigating the German, and lesser known Austrian, imperialist imagination(s) disseminated through philosophy, literature, and science.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> I came to this history when I read David S. Luft’s *Eros and Inwardness in Vienna: Weininger, Musil, Doderer* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 2003) 6 and 184.

<sup>7</sup> Ludger Lütkehaus, ed., “*Dieses wahre innere Afrika*”: *Texte zur Entdeckung des Unbewussten vor Freud* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1989); Suzanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (Durham: Duke UP, 1997); Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop, ed., *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1998); Nina Berman, “K.u.K. Colonialism: Hofmannsthal in North Africa,” *New German Critique* 75 (Autumn, 1998): 3-27.

Long before actual colonial struggles, the German-speaking world was involved in an effort to colonize its inner territories. This bourgeois “imagination” raises several difficult questions: How did inventive theories concerning the mind end in colonial fantasy? How did psychology, as a historical approach to knowledge of the German psyche, participate in imperialistic endeavors? How did Africa become a territory of interest to Germans before imperialism proper? What is the psychology of imperialism? What makes the elite and masses alike accept life-negating stereotypes as truth? Is an approach to knowledge that promotes a comprehensive consciousness of the world, possible? This dissertation responds to these questions by investigating metaphorical references to the practice of psychology in *The Man without Qualities*. These practices relied on territorial maps of the psyche that facilitated socialization processes involved in securing German power and order within Europe itself.

### **The Epistemological Mapping of the Psyche**

Around 1905, Musil was contemplating the power of language to determine consciousness of oneself and the world. In his diaries, he claimed that disseminators of knowledge encouraged reductive modes of modern perception. However, we:

[S]hould not relinquish syntax to ossified professors. We do not make a period and semi-colon only because we learned to do it that way, but because we think in that way.--That is thereby the most dangerous. As long as one thinks in sentences with end points--allowing certain things to remain unsaid--one feels at the most only vaguely. On the other hand, it may be possible that one would learn to express oneself in such a way that certain illimitable perspectives, which still lie today on the threshold of the unconscious, become distinct and understandable.<sup>8</sup>

Musil does not entirely blame educators for a form of thinking that had become fused

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<sup>8</sup> TBI 53. Heft 3: 1899?-1905/6.

with grammar. Educators, set in their ways, nurtured a desire in students to privilege a socially pre-established “syntax,” or set of rules that appear to be true. For example, bourgeois students at that time fixated on exams because they assumed that scoring high on those exams would ensure their future success. In this particular scenario, when an individual focuses on a single goal, such as an exam or attaining a secured future professionally, in the process they repress consciousness of a comprehensive present condition. Musil imagined an alternative to overly punctuated thinking even at this early stage. He writes of a “threshold” of the unconscious, an energetic state between conditions engaging with present time.<sup>9</sup> Commas and coordinating conjunctions populate that threshold, symbolizing a continuous flow of and not an abrupt end to thought, metonymically implied by “semi-colons” and “periods.” Musil believed this was an important linguistic distinction to make because the latter type of thinking made it easier for individuals to accept false truths propagated by producers of “discourse” or disseminators of knowledge, such as his “ossified” professors.

I emphasize the term “discourse” in this context because it literally means a dialogue, or an exchange of ideas with the intent of expanding knowledge on a particular subject. In a letter to Paul Scheffer in 1911, Musil identified the limits and possibilities of initiating a dialogue with experience: “The dialogue is but a comparison multiplied; that which is to be described is only touched upon in one point, then endlessly in the next one and the next. The infinitesimal is inaccessible to the

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<sup>9</sup> Freud also acknowledged such a state before he re-confirmed the oppositional spheres of conscious and unconscious experience. See Sigmund Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Avon, 1965) 649.

dialogue, the dialogue remains always polygonal.”<sup>10</sup> Discourse reproduces pre-determined claims, warrants, and points, and oftentimes reinforces false assumptions making any resulting knowledge closed (polygonal) or delimited.<sup>11</sup> This was not a new concern. Over a century before, Immanuel Kant had recognized that colonization of knowledge was integral to its production.<sup>12</sup> In other words, to talk about knowledge, or how we know what we know, means forcing reality into abstractions that do not represent that reality adequately. Instead of focusing on the enclosed end result called “knowledge,” Musil imagined a self-reflective discourse or dialogue that would analyze the context producing knowledge—the dialogue itself. He invented the neologism, “the ratioïd,” to theorize what he conceived of as two different, but not mutually exclusive, ways to dialogue with the facts creating the empirical world.

Musil defined the ratioïd in the essay, “Sketches on What the Writer Knows” (1918). In this essay, he explains that he could find no other term relating two issues he believed needed to be connected in an obvious way. First, how do universal laws and rationalities deal with exceptions? Secondly, how do observable facts like color,

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10 BI 88.

11 Michel Foucault’s definition of discourse also identifies “enclosing” qualities. See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage, 1973) 43-44. There is German criticism that centers on the question of discourse, which Foucault raises, in Musil’s novel. See Walter Moser, “Diskursexperimente im Romantext zu Musils *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*,” *Robert Musil Untersuchungen*, ed. Uwe Baur and Elisabeth Castex (Königstein: Athenäum, 1980) 170-97; Ulf Eisele, “Ulrichs Mutter ist doch ein Tintenfaß. Zur Literaturproblematik in Musils *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*,” *Robert Musil*, ed. Renate von Heydebrand (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1982) 160-203; Gerhard Meisel, *Liebe im Zeitalter der Wissenschaften vom Menschen* (Opladen: Westdeutscher, 1991). Also, see Tim Mehigan’s *The Critical Response to Robert Musil’s The Man without Qualities* (New York: Camden, 2003) 92-93.

12 See Willi Goetschel, “‘Land of Truth—Enchanting Name!’ Kant’s Journey Home,” *The Imperialist Imagination* 321-336.

weight, physiognomy, genitalia, etc., support those generalizing laws?<sup>13</sup> Musil answered these questions by arguing that producers of discourse (scientists, dogmatic moralists) tend to examine only superficial commonalities between facts, instead of the many particular facts that contradict natural laws, social norms, empirical truths, dominant notions of goodness, or moral “character.” Physical facts repeat in nature, and therefore have the appearance of universal truth. For this reason, Musil defined “ratioïd territory” as “ruled over by the concept of the fixed, which excludes from view future deviations; a concept of the fixed as a fiction with a basis in fact.”<sup>14</sup> When producers of knowledge emphasize the lowest common denominator connecting people (e.g. skin color, gender), they privilege facts that conform to predetermined organizing fictions. In relation to character, they rely on facts that confirm stereotypes because stereotypes appeal to commonsense and therefore appear as “truth” to society as a whole. Although Musil questioned the limits to fixed conceptual models, he also clearly emphasized that these models served an important function in practice and offered hope that there could someday be solid ground on which to stand.<sup>15</sup>

For Musil, the non-ratioïd realm partly appears to be different from the ratioïd realm because the non-ratioïd approach to knowledge openly recognizes that natural law and dogmatic truth do not account for reality adequately. He valorized the non-ratioïd as the “writer’s home territory.” This is a territory that has “from the beginning no end of unknowns, equations, and possible solutions. The task is to discover always

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13 GWII 1026.

14 Ibid. 1027.

15 Ibid. 1051.

new solutions, connections, constellations, variables, to make prototypes of a course of events, enticing models of how a human can be, to *invent* the inner human.”<sup>16</sup> The non-ratioïd territory creates knowledge based on facts. However, the organizing fictions, which this approach creates, are always in flux; they rely on an application of intellect engaging with “the living word,” or the changing nature of experience.<sup>17</sup> This approach recognizes that the exception is the only rule appropriate for all situations. Attempts to metaphorically “map out” the psyche repressed such realities.

McClintock defines a “map” as a technology that claims to “capture the truth” about the world.<sup>18</sup> In the 1920s, psychological discourses in Germany and Austria similarly used science to capture the truth of the “soul” according to fixed moral and natural laws. In “[Psychology and Literature]” (around 1920), Musil identified the different contemporary approaches to psychological phenomena. There was

[A] philosophical-speculative psychology, an experimental-psychology; there is a psychiatric, a psychoanalytic psychology. In their methods and also partly in their goals they are all different, but what is common among them is that they basically want to attain knowledge. They establish phenomena by systematically returning to other phenomena, they seek the relatively general in the particular case.<sup>19</sup>

Musil did not bother with the *petit faits* or “the details” of these nuanced theories. This would appear contradictory, but this was the point. Musil wanted to highlight paradoxes and exceptions, which he believed his contemporaries wanted to ignore. He understood that each method increased knowledge of the psyche in a way that

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16 Ibid. 1029.

17 Ibid. 1051.

18 McClintock 27-28.

19 GWII 1346.

benefited some patients. What concerned him was the similar approach to knowledge they shared—each investigated unique psychological experiences in comparison to other unique cases (“a comparison multiplied”) in order to discover, not unique experiences, but rather the lowest common denominator uniting these phenomena. Based on such “discoveries,” they produced scientific laws.<sup>20</sup> Musil associated the practice of psychology with the ratioïd approach to knowledge despite the obvious inventive qualities and kinship with literature.<sup>21</sup> This was because psychology as a science ultimately also relied on a “generalizing” form of empiricism.

Psychologists concerned with mapping out the human psyche looked to the past for analogies consistent with bourgeois fantasies about the colonial world. In the nineteenth century, Jean Paul provided one such fiction. In *Selina* (1825), Jean Paul calls the unconscious (*Unbewusstsein*) “this true inner Africa,” or a dark continent expanding out beyond the supposedly known territory of the European ego.<sup>22</sup> Ludger Lütkehaus (1989) associates this “inner Africa” with Freud’s assertion a century later that he wanted to be the “conquistador of the unconscious.”<sup>23</sup> With this association, Lütkehaus underscores that Freud did more than color in the unconscious on the map of the psyche, which was already Jean Paul’s contribution; Freud attempted to decipher dreams to find the “source of the Nile” of consciousness, or the “sub-

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20 Sander Gilman also points out that scientific method requires fictions to explain facts. These fictions appeal to dominating assumptions and stereotypes to gain mass acceptance. See Sander Gilman, *Difference and Pathology* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985) 28.

21 GWII 1029.

22 Jean Paul, *Selina*, *Jean Paul Werke*, ed. Norbert Miller, vol. 6 (München [Munich]: Carl Hanser, 1963) 1183.

23 Lütkehaus 8.

Saharan” forces determining mental and emotional life.<sup>24</sup> In *The Question of Lay Analysis* (1926) he even contemplated penetrating into the female psyche, which had been a “dark continent” to him.<sup>25</sup> In other words, he was developing a method that would help him to excavate unconscious elements in his patients’ psyches.<sup>26</sup> In contrast, Musil considered the unconscious a non-topological condition, not a territory separate from consciousness.<sup>27</sup> As a condition rather than a “place,” the unconscious could not be civilized or primitive, ignorant or all-knowing; nor could anyone “conquer” emotional forces because emotion was entangled in consciousness. Musil concluded that the “unconscious” fantasies of writers who created a bifurcated psyche ironically suffered from a limited imagination.<sup>28</sup>

In fact, Freud called the unconscious “*the problem of psychology*” in *On the Interpretation of Dreams*.<sup>29</sup> To some extent, Musil thought that the tendency to perceive the unknown as a problem to overcome rather than as a new possibility to affirm was the actual “problem of psychology.” He acknowledged that Freud studied complex phenomena in revolutionary ways, but pointed out that Freud generalized his conclusions within an old moral logic: “Consciousness has been a moral concept;

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24 See Paul-Laurent Assoun, *Freud and Nietzsche*, trans. Richard L. Collier, Jr. (London: Athlone, 2000).

25 Freud, *The Question of Lay Analysis* 38.

26 Ibid.15.

27 See Musil’s essay “Literature and Literati” (1931), GWII 1214.

28 TBI 886. Heft 34: 17. Februar 1930-Frühsummer 1938. Musil questioned the discursive inventors of a separate unconscious territory that supposedly shaped consciousness. He claimed that the writer’s “dichtende Un- u. Unterbewußtsein scheint für den Mangel an Phantasie bezeichnend zu sein.“

29 Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams* 650.

'logical' consciousness. And has through Freud become that again; to make something conscious. Then there is the deviation, the minus-variant, that to which the wealth of conscious thought is inaccessible."<sup>30</sup> The historical moral logic had defined consciousness as a means to master instinct, while condemning the unconscious for providing a secret refuge for instinct. Freud's logic began with a basic fact: there are people who cannot control themselves. Based on this fact, he argued that desires originating in a pre-repressed time (before the patient had developed an ego or moral superego), disabled adult sublimation of desire into healthy outlets.<sup>31</sup> Freud theorized that desires motivating neurotic behaviors such as a woman's "frigid" attitude toward sex reveal themselves in unconscious forms of discourse. The analyst's interpretation of dreams, for example, exposed the secrets of the psyche to a doctor's criticism. This criticism putatively helped patients become aware of what had been inaccessible to them, and therefore better able to remaster their behavior. Freud interpreted unconscious wishes as sexual in nature, perhaps because in the nineteenth century, sexuality epitomized the negative primitive force appearing to distract a supposedly repressed bourgeois civilization. Musil questioned Freud's moral logic to suggest that there are too many possible causes affecting experience to make his map of the mind appropriate for all people at all times.<sup>32</sup> For this reason, he implied that a psychology focused on common facts like sexuality obviated real knowledge of human motivation, as well as the particularities of personal and social context.

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<sup>30</sup> TBI 782.

<sup>31</sup> Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams* 599-603.

<sup>32</sup> For example, Musil criticized psychoanalysis for seeing "in einem Brunnenrand die Vulva..." TBI 902. Heft 34.

Musil also argued that the ratioïd “need for unambiguous repetition a[nd] fixity is satisfied in the area of the soul through violence.”<sup>33</sup> Psychoanalysis superimposed an unambiguous imperialistic map of the world on the human psyche. By interpreting the unconscious negatively as a “minus-variant,” and as an omnipresent threat to the moral health of Europeans, Freud perpetuated stereotypes defining any person or class of people, whom Europeans superficially associated with the geography of the “primitive” world, as a potential threat requiring either discipline or containment. Frantz Fanon, a psychoanalyst from Martinique, exposed the danger of his profession’s racist logic. He states that for the supposedly more enlightened C.G. Jung, “the Negro—or, if one prefers, the color black—symbolizes evil, sin, wretchedness, death, war, famine.”<sup>34</sup> Jung associated blackness with the European unconscious. Fanon argues that the signification of people of African descent as embodying negative primitivity legitimized violence against that group and others, both within Europe and in the colonies. The pervasiveness of this violence caused both white and non-white others to reject their respective forms of “blackness” in order to identify with the power of the colonizers. The participation of orthodox psychologies in a ratioïd violence aimed at capturing the “soul” inspired Musil to devise his own life-affirming approach to psychology.

In “Helpless Europe” (1922), Musil defined his own approach to the psyche. He writes that his method has “its own goal, and this is not the clarification through

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33 GWII 1388.

34 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove, 1967) 190-191.

which ethos condenses into morality, or feeling into causal psychology; rather, it is an overview of the reasons, the associations, the limitations, the flowing meanings of human motives and actions—an explication (*Auslegung*) of life.”<sup>35</sup> His focus on “explication” recalls what Nietzsche argued was the way to read his aphorisms in the preface of *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887). Nietzsche asked readers to take into account aphorisms in relation to each other, and to his text as a whole, through explication (*Auslegung*).<sup>36</sup> For Musil, “explication” did not have an end goal or conserve old evaluative binaries. “Explication” signified the non-ratioïd method, or an investigation of the ever-changing nature of social and psychological contexts creating experience. For Musil, literature was a setting in which it was possible to experiment with a counter-discursive “explication of life,” because this setting did not demand the framework of “truth” required in laboratories or clinics. Shortly after this essay, Musil began writing *The Man without Qualities*. I see three interrelated themes involved in the explication of life he created through *The Man without Qualities*: (1) his ironic representation of the epistemological vivisection of the psyche into moral and primitive territories; (2) his opposition to discourse privileging “superior” bourgeois Europeans as those able to master themselves and others; and finally (3) his experiment with a psychology that could exceed, if not overcome, the hierarchical categories defining life created by scientists, moralists, and doctors.

*The Man without Qualities* is set in 1913-1914 *Kakania*, Musil’s pun

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35 GWII 1094.

36 See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral, Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Werke V*, ed. Giorgio Collier and Mazzino Montinari. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967) Preface: 8, p. 255-56.

emphasizing the messy end of the *kaiserlich-und-königlich* (king-and-emperor) Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>37</sup> In the novel, the Austro-Hungarian Empire is on the verge of a war stimulated by inner territories that had been revolting against the imperial order for decades, as well as an external struggle to redefine the old Empire as a modern imperialist power. As part of this prewar struggle, bourgeois characters launch a “Collateral Campaign” to create “Austria” by honoring the seventy-year reign of the nearly fossilized Franz Josef (he was close to death). Their planned ceremony parallels Germany’s celebration of the thirty-year reign of Emperor Wilhelm II. Both events are to be held in 1918, ironically the year both orders end and an anxious struggle to conserve the old logic of Empire takes over. If this were the only story present, Musil’s novel would be one of many contributing to the postwar mythos of the Habsburg Era.<sup>38</sup> The novel, however, de-mythologizes this era. Musil features Ulrich, a “man without qualities,” whom he positions in this context to address the dangers implicit in attempts to unambiguously determine the territory of the self.

Early in the novel, Ulrich identifies ten-plus qualities (*Charaktere*) creating the psychological self, exceeding the two or three separate territories typically defined by psychoanalysis and other practical psychologies. In the chapter titled “Kakania,” Ulrich clearly identifies nine: professional, national, state, class, geographical, gender, conscious, unconscious, and private.<sup>39</sup> The tenth one is open to change. Ulrich perpetually contradicts other characters and himself. In this aspect, he symbolizes the

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37 GWI 31-34. Franz Josef was king of Hungary and Emperor of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

38 See Claudio Magris, *Der habsburgische Mythos in der österreichischen Literatur* (Salzburg: Müller, 1966).

39 GWI 34.

quality of being “open to change” in the negative sense. Musil also emphasizes that he remains open in an affirmative way to a “masculine” consciousness as evidenced by his predatory sexual encounters and social activities. Ulrich ironically vacillates between these two poles instead of explicating his entire psychological context. He only frees himself from these vacillations when he becomes reacquainted with his sister Agathe and begins to experiment with a life-affirming ethics or “psychology of feeling.” Musil’s novel also gives full consideration to a bourgeois female genius condemned as insane (Clarisse), a salon feminist who educates women on Eros (Diotima), a Prussian capitalist and amateur psychologist (Arnheim), dictatorial psychiatrists (Friedenthal), anti-Semites seeking a pan-German racial order (Hans Sepp), an African in Europe (Soliman), Jews who can assimilate and those who cannot (Leo Fischel/Arnheim/Rachel), a murderer (Moosbrugger), a prostitute (Leona), and an aging aristocrat trying to conserve his power through *realpolitik* (Leinsdorf). By developing roughly twenty main characters, Musil’s novel exposes interrelationships among the psyche’s ten qualities within different life experiences. Simultaneously, the novel describes the social contexts out of which historical and contemporary theories on the psyche come into existence and begin to dominate social consciousness.

Musil’s character, Paul Arnheim (modeled on Freud and on the Prussian capitalist and statesman, Walter Rathenau), had activities that “spread out over the continents of the earth as well as those of knowledge.”<sup>40</sup> With Arnheim, Musil summarizes the relationship between German imperialist-capitalist endeavors seeking

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<sup>40</sup> For Musil’s claim that Rathenau was his main model for Arnheim, see TBII 172: Notebook 7, footnote 124. Ibid. 190: German: “Tätigkeit breitete sich über Kontinente der Erde wie des Wissens aus.”

to dominate the globe and methods seeking to penetrate into and dominate territories of knowledge within Europe. Edward Said's definition of imperialism proves useful in this consideration of the metaphorical colonization of psychology. Said writes: "[I]mperialism means thinking about, settling on, controlling land that you do not possess, that is distant, that is lived on and owned by others. For all kinds of reasons it attracts some people and often involves untold misery for others."<sup>41</sup> Lütkehaus's history confirms that German philosophers and scientists prior to this time desired control over unconscious territory categorized as something "distant" and *something* they could not possess. As a result of their inability to truly conquer the unconscious as they had created and defined it, seekers of psychological knowledge turned to stereotypes to explain their "discoveries." These stereotypes became the basis of methods which Freud's generation assumed would help them to reclaim "true" knowledge of the inner world and "conquer" pathologies in others.

Inventors of a divided psyche did not maliciously intend to control individuals in order to serve the interests of their class, or their egos.<sup>42</sup> The conflation of ratioïd psychologist and imperialist therefore requires qualification. Psychologists thought that they were benefiting humanity by bringing light to the darker regions of the self, and did in fact help many unhappy people. In *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1938), Freud summed up his humane mission in this darkened world: "[W]e assure the patient of the strictest discretion and place at his service our experience in interpreting material that has been influenced by the unconscious. Our knowledge is to make up

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41 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1994) 7.

42 Ibid. xxii.

for his ignorance and to give his ego back its mastery over lost provinces of his mental life.”<sup>43</sup> Regardless of intention, these practices in the twentieth century naturalized imperialist power and propagated superficial bourgeois stereotypes invented in previous centuries—only a “he” could truly master a “self.” Within this framework, a few privileged Europeans acted as the purveyors of conscious knowledge, while anyone not part of the white, middle-class norm represented the dangerous unknown to expel. This “fact” encouraged an exaggerated desire in individuals to be counted as belonging to the norm. We can understand this dominating psychology better through an analysis of the concept of “abjection” within the modern context.

### **Abjection in the Context of Modern Contradictions and Crises**

Abjection is the socializing process that results from a fear and hatred of difference. This process helps to maintain uneven modern power structures despite contradictions and crises within those structures. In works such as *Totem and Taboo* (1913) and *Civilization and its Discontents* (1931), Freud theorized that civilized individuals had to repress unconscious desires like “incest” through sublimation to become healthy adults. In *Imperial Leather* (1995), Anne McClintock provides a different definition of abjection: “Abjection (Latin, ab-jicere) means to expel, to cast out or away” anti-social qualities to become a social self.<sup>44</sup> According to McClintock, however, “these expelled elements can never be fully obliterated; they haunt the edges of the subject’s identity with the threat of disruption or even dissolution.”<sup>45</sup> Her

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<sup>43</sup> Freud, *Outline of Psycho-Analysis* 50.

<sup>44</sup> McClintock 71.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. 71.

theory originates in Julia Kristeva's work. In "An Essay on Abjection," Kristeva argues that this expelling activity is not caused by a need to overcome "dirty" desires to achieve a healthy, civilized adulthood, as Freud had claimed. She writes: "It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite[...]the killer who claims he is a savior....Any crime, because it draws attention to the fragility of law, is abject."<sup>46</sup> There are different ways an individual living within a modern state expunges knowledge of paradoxes that are "never fully obliterated." For instance, individuals might negate anything in themselves that reminds them that their identity does not conform to the dominant order and/or participate in marginalizing anyone who exposes contradictions that threaten their power within the social order. McClintock goes further than Kristeva to analyze the modern capitalist-imperialist context exploiting processes of abjection.

McClintock documents cases in Victorian England in which middle-class sexual partners mimicked in role-play what was more widely occurring in colonial Europe, and, I would add, in Musil's German world: the violent expulsion of and concomitant desire for the lower classes because of their so-called primitive, immoral bodies. McClintock defines these classes as "abject peoples."<sup>47</sup> She explains that "[a]bject peoples are those whom industrial imperialism rejects but cannot do without: slaves, prostitutes, the colonized, domestic workers, the insane, the unemployed, and

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<sup>46</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia UP, 1982) 4.

<sup>47</sup> McClintock 71. Colonialism had inextricable ties to the German nationalist project that created such groups of people. See "Introduction," *The Imperialist Imagination* 22-23, especially.

so on.”<sup>48</sup> In Musil’s time, these groups of people lived on the edges of society, in “threshold zones,” such as the *Vorstadt* of Vienna, the ghetto, the mental asylum, and the prison.<sup>49</sup> Comparatively, white, middle-class males signified the moral norm at the center of civilization. As McClintock argues, the norm’s tenuous self control and perpetual social crises made laws supporting bourgeois dominance fragile and in constant need of reinforcement. The bourgeoisie reinforced their power by marginalizing people representing the cause of crisis. Through ownership of cultural technologies such as the radio, newspaper, and film, they then had the power to appeal to the rest of society to do so as well.

But what is the relationship between abject people and industrial capitalism? In *Capital* (1867-94), Marx defined capitalism through the formula  $M—C—M'$ .<sup>50</sup>  $M$  represents the money required to produce commodities (inclusive of labor costs),  $C$  the commodities produced, and  $M'$  the profit resulting from the exchange of commodities for money. This process never ends. For this reason labor must remain “free,” or detached from land, so that workers can sell their labor for a wage set by market forces.<sup>51</sup> Workers then paradoxically become slaves to wages and to jobs that are undesirable to the classes in control of the means of production. With the advent of industrial capitalism, there was also a need for an “industrial reserve army” of the

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48 Ibid. 72.

49 Ibid. 72.

50 Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, ed. Frederick Engels, vol. 1 (Moscow: Foreign Languages, 1961) 155.

51 Ibid. 168. Marx argues that labor is a commodity or a value that is exchangeable for more value “only if, and so far as, its possessor, the individual whose labour-power it is, offers it for sale, or sells it, as a commodity. In order that he may be able to do this, he must have it at his disposal, must be the untrammelled owner of his capacity for labour, *i.e.*, of his person.”

unemployed. This pool of potential labor ensured that the cost of labor remained low. The vast, and therefore threatening, “army” was disciplined through marginalization. However, this only produced a false sense of security within the norm; the crises inherent to capitalism perpetually created the possibility that this army and people from other classes would revolt.

McClintock argues that the subsequent “precarious hold over the fluid and unkempt aspects of psyche and body” supported massive disciplining structures.<sup>52</sup>

Not all abject qualities or people were judged equally, however. There are differences:

[B]etween abject objects (the clitoris, domestic dirt, menstrual blood) and abject states (bulimia, the masturbatory imagination, hysteria), which are not the same as abject zones (the Israeli Occupied Territories, prisons, battered women’s shelters). Socially appointed agents of abjection (soldiers, domestic workers, nurses) are not the same as socially abject groups (prostitutes, Palestinians, lesbians). Psychic processes of abjection (fetishism, disavowal, the uncanny) are not the same as political processes of abjection (ethnic genocide, mass removals, prostitute “clean ups”).<sup>53</sup>

Everyone experiences the abject. Every “body” has dirty functions, which she or he hides from society. Guilt and disavowal ensures that these experiences remain in the dark, but these realities still threaten to reappear in the light of day. McClintock also emphasizes that the abject is not localized in sexuality or the unconscious, as Freud thought. She distinguishes between the abjection in which individuals privately participate, and abjection that involves reactions against groups of people in the interest of the dominating power structure. As Corrie Claiborne argues, the impact of

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<sup>52</sup> McClintock 71.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. 72.

this process on individuals who appear to embody several different categories of the abject, such as black women is severe.<sup>54</sup> Their gender, ethnicity, and in some cases poverty resulting from historical marginalization disables expression of identity or power, whereas many bourgeois white women, for example, have succeeded in gaining rights by participating in other processes of abjection (e.g. becoming corporate CEOs who use sweatshop labor). There are other levels of abjection: society shows concern for battered women but hides them away in shelters because they are reminders that patriarchal violence continues to exist. We respect soldiers our government sends to “defend us,” even though they kill. To legitimize the breaking of this commandment, we are told that they are fighting “evil” people who deserve death. McClintock’s point is that the marginal may be celebrated or hated, and commodified to sell products and ideas to the public, but marginalized people do not have sexy experiences and ultimately can become the scapegoats for a social order in crisis. This use of a “normal” socializing psychology requires rigorous understanding because it facilitates disavowal of imperializing forces inherent to modern industrial capitalism.

I believe that Musil anticipated these more nuanced theories of abjection. This becomes especially clear when we examine his essay, *The German as Symptom* (1923). In this essay, Musil argued that the need to reinforce scientific or moral law (the ratioïd) in modern states is reflective of an “old wrestling with unambiguous order, which already underlies soc[ial] axioms.”<sup>55</sup> The response to experiences contradicting

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54 Corrie Claiborne, “Leaving Abjection: Where ‘Black’ Meets Theory,” *Modern Language Studies* 26.4 Special Issue: Colorizing Literary Theory (Autumn 1996) 27-36.

55 WWII 1390. German: “alte Ringen nach eindeutiger Ordnung, das schon den soz. Axiomen zugrundeliegt.”

a dominant social logic is a violent struggle with no end. This struggle intensified during the post-World War I reorganization of Germany and Austria—when he was writing this essay and sketching *The Man without Qualities*. I will briefly summarize the economic and social crises of the 1920s that exposed the destructive side of capitalism and human desire to individuals within the society, and yet did not lead to a new order as Marx hoped. These crises led to new virulent forms of abjection.

As Detlev Peukert argues, the violence of World War I and socio-economic upheavals afterward left “a profound imprint on the German psyche.”<sup>56</sup> At the beginning of the Weimar Republic, inflation as a result of a devaluation of the Deutschmark allowed industries to expand markets while passing on high prices to consumers.<sup>57</sup> Increases in industrial production and exports led to economic growth until 1922, when growth topped off at 72% of the production reached by 1913.<sup>58</sup> But by 1923, the currency stabilized and exports failed to find new markets abroad, producing a downturn in domestic growth to 47%. To compensate for lack of growth, employers extended working hours.<sup>59</sup> They laid off workers contributing to mass unemployment that spiked to 14%, up from 2%, in that year.<sup>60</sup> The situation was worse in the Austrian First Republic, with unemployment reaching 20% in 1922 and inflation affecting the cost of living dramatically.<sup>61</sup> These were hard times, but Musil

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<sup>56</sup> Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity*, trans. Richard Deveson (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999) 64.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. 109.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. 120.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. 109.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. 118.

<sup>61</sup> See Rolf Steininger, “12. November 1918 bis 13. März 1938: Stationen auf dem Weg zum

did not become cynical like his generation, who felt caught in a situation “comparable to a madhouse.”<sup>62</sup> According to Musil, the madhouse did not result from failed progress or de-railed capitalism; it was the result of a new intensification of a struggle to search regressively for a unifying “ideology” or ordering of consciousness, while simultaneously supporting capitalist forces causing instabilities and fragmentation.<sup>63</sup>

Marx imagined that the proletariat would rise up against capital once the discrepancies between the liberal ideology of the free citizen and the general consciousness of the wage slave became evident.<sup>64</sup> He did not foresee how capital would adapt to these contradictions once the modern citizen became inextricably linked to a racial consciousness, especially in the German-speaking world. If we are to believe Musil in *The German as Symptom*, this may have happened because capitalism “is the most powerful and elastic form of organization which humans have as yet achieved.”<sup>65</sup> Musil further understood capitalism to be “ordered selfishness” or “self addiction” (*geordnete Ichsucht*). As a result of unsatisfactory living conditions, most people in the postwar period were thrust into survival mode. As such, they

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,Anschluss’, “*Österreich im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Rolf Steininger and Michael Gehler, vol. 1 (Wien: Bhlau, 1997) 110. Musil also lost his job as a psycho-technical expert for the Austrian military in this year. See also Meisel, *Liebe im Zeitalter der Wissenschaften vom Menschen* 20.

62 GWII 1357. This was a common postwar metaphor, as is evidenced by the film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, dir. Robert Wiene, Decla-Film, 1920.

63 Ibid. 1357. On GWII 1382, Musil emphasizes that this is a new situation, not a “failed solution.” He also argues that ideological fragmentation is partly a result of individuals identifying with their professions, see GWII 1381.

64 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology: Part One*, ed. C.J. Arthur (New York: International, 1988) 52. Musil connects the liberal ideal of “freedom” to the accompanying capitalist paradigm of free trade. See TBI 548. Heft 19: 1919-1921: “Der Liberlismus hat den Freihandel auf dem Gebiet der Meinung eingeführt. Er hat dadurch gefördert, aber wirkte zentrifugal./Das ist ein Hauptkonstituens der heutigen geistigen Situation.”

65 GWII 1387.

became evermore addicted (*Sucht*) to their own interests and obsessively sought (*suchen*) to conserve their own power within the state. By appealing to racism and the fear of being alone, discourses promoting a national “we” appealed to a false sense of power through the abjection of the “non-German,” seducing even the proletariat into a false consciousness of the material world.<sup>66</sup> The consciousness Marx assumed would lead the masses to revolution, then, actually helped to conserve a dehumanizing social order. Musil closely examined how social order worked on the level of psychology.

Musil recognized that aggressive self-interest had not disappeared from a repressed “moral” Europe, as Freud had imagined. This is because modern power depends on greed. This dependence reflects what Musil called “speculation *à-la-baisse*,” roughly translated as “investing low,” or in the worst in everyone.<sup>67</sup> People are unconscious of this reality because, for example, capitalism is “unspeakably cruel and has altruistic phrases in its mouth.”<sup>68</sup> Those benefiting most from greed, like Musil’s capitalist character, Paul Arnheim, condemn greed on the surface and have the ability to propagate false cures through dictums such as the one claiming people must “love their neighbor” to overcome selfishness.<sup>69</sup> As a result of the desire for power and fear of marginalization, individuals submit to this superficial moral order. Musil differed from Freud in claiming that modern society stimulates, but disavows, violence

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66 See especially “Nation as Ideal and Reality” (1921), GWII 1070. Musil identified “the nation” as one of the only ideologies capable of uniting his social world.

67 GWII 1389. Musil gave these characteristics to his character the capitalist Paul Arnheim.

68 Ibid. 1358. German: “Heute ist er unsagbar grausam und hat altruistische Phrasen im Mund.”

69 Marx defines those who create the dominating ideas of a society in *German Ideology* 65: “For instance, in an age and in a country where royal power, aristocracy and bourgeoisie are contending for mastery and where, therefore mastery is shared, the doctrine of the separation of powers proves to be the dominant idea and is expressed as an ‘eternal law’.”

and desire. However, he came to a similar conclusion regarding communism.<sup>70</sup> He did not think abolishing private property would eliminate selfishness. At the same time, he acknowledged that the excessive selfishness of the modern order was unnecessary. Such excess suggested that “civilization” was actually a monstrous version of what Freud considered to be a “primitive” state of aggression.

Musil interpreted the contemporary desire to define “the German” as a pre-capitalist race to be a direct reaction to the paradoxical or abject social condition. With this understanding of a fictionally homogeneous “Germanness,” he identified an old attempt to “squeeze oneself into a mold,” and thus create a stable identity based on socially acceptable normative categories.<sup>71</sup> His contemporaries wanted to classify themselves as a superior race reflecting the moral achievement of “white civilization” (*weisse Zivilisation*). In his diaries a few years earlier, Musil emphasized that “imperialistic Germany was not an expression of Germans.”<sup>72</sup> Instead, the centralizing forces of the imperialistic state helped to determine “the German.” He then writes in the same entry, “also the individual does not form the masses, on the contrary a very complex process forms them.” This “process” is something like abjection. In *The German as Symptom*, Musil contradicted the assumption that there was a superior German self that had created a unique nation. He argued that examination of German and non-German (African) experiences in comparative

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<sup>70</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1997) 78.

<sup>71</sup> GWII 1370.

<sup>72</sup> TBI 541. Heft 19. German: “imperialistische Deutschland war nicht ein Ausdruck des deutschen Menschen.” And: “auch nicht Einzelne formen die Masse, sondern ein sehr komplizierter Prozeß formt sie.”

psychologies challenged racist beliefs about German moral superiority.<sup>73</sup> Secondly, the postwar intensification of German nationalism was a reflection of an international effort among bourgeois powers to expel the specters of communism; “the German,” then, was a common bourgeois fiction created to stave off the threat of counter-bourgeois revolution, not a pure cultural expression. To distract from the false nature of self-consciousness, Germans blamed the postwar period itself for being a diseased time that produced the modernizing forces destroying the health and purity of the white race. Based on such assumptions, Musil argued that scientists, moralists and doctors identified and attempted to expel “decadences” in themselves and others to cure this diseased era (*Verfall heilen*) and regain a supposedly stable social order.<sup>74</sup>

Although *Verfall* denotes decline, dilapidation and decadence, Musil’s meaning also suggests “degeneration” (*Entartung*). The expulsion from paradise in the *Book of Genesis* represents what one might call an original degeneration. In 1857, Benedict Augustin Morel defined degeneration as “a moral and physical poison” destroying the health of society through psychological factors such as “alcoholism and the use of opium, by debilitating diseases like malaria, but also by the social environment, a nervous temperament, diseased moral faculties, or inherited bodily and mental weakness.”<sup>75</sup> Max Nordau broadened the meaning in 1892 to include any putative threat to German bodies, like Jewish sexuality. Freud was wary of the term, and employed the concept carefully. This is evident in his study on homosexuality, or

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73 GWII 1361 and 1366.

74 Ibid. 1381-82.

75 George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* (New York: Fertig, 1985) 35.

“inversion.”<sup>76</sup> He considered nervous disorders that caused multiple debilitations within a patient to be degenerative, but not the cases in which individuals were normal except for their sexual proclivities. These responses to an imagined “degeneration” of the moral German exemplified the abjection responding to contradictions pervading bourgeois morality. Musil agreed that the postwar condition was a “dejected mess” (*mutloses Durcheinander*), but only because everyone had become involved in a struggle to “squeeze” into identities consistent with the racist logic underwriting bourgeois order.<sup>77</sup> Living in a context in which an abject someone or something stimulated excitement but was also blamed for social contradiction, Musil thought it important to recognize the fictional borders separating self and other. He therefore confronted the dominant desire to define contradiction as a crisis to overcome rather than as an unconscious reality to understand.

Musil believed that to oppose an age of “speculation à la baisse,” in which anyone who reveals the fragility of social law becomes an object to attack or discipline, he needed to “determine the opposition correctly.”<sup>78</sup> This is the key to his “other condition” (*anderer Zustand*), a condition exceeding the limits of self-other dyads and thus lighting a path to more comprehensive realities. In a normal condition, individuals act as if they have developed into a finished product or that something within or without threatens their development. In this normal state “a thin line connects the human with his object and it latches onto himself only at a single point,

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<sup>76</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey (Perseus Books, 2000) 4.

<sup>77</sup> GWII 1377. This has also been translated as “abject confusion.” See *Precision and Soul* 172.

<sup>78</sup> GWII 1389.

while the whole rest of his being remains untouched by it.”<sup>79</sup> Individuals require identities to function in society, but they do not need to confuse social discourses with unambiguous truth. He argued that in the other condition “the border between the self (*Ich*) and non-self is less sharp than usual[...]While the self otherwise masters the world, in the other condition the world flows into the self or mixes with it or carries it.”<sup>80</sup> By facing and affirming ambiguous states of selfhood, it becomes more difficult to participate in the expulsion of anyone or anything not conforming to predetermined categories. In an “other condition” false cures lose their power to delude, making more comprehensive realities visible and thus new guiding principles imaginable.

Finally, Musil argues that in the other condition, “the opposition good-evil” becomes meaningless. “In its place” he writes we can “put the pair enhancement-diminution” (*Mehrung-Minderung*).<sup>81</sup> This is his new principle. Moral binaries guiding experience are still useful and unavoidable, but what appears bad today might be good tomorrow. This means that one recognizes that unconscious realities can be experiences that perpetually force a re-conceptualization of the material world. Therefore, the desire to mediate crisis through social “abjection” is tempered by affirming the unknown. Musil’s emphasis on this situational ethos was perhaps an implicit call to psychologists seduced by the promise of security and the fantasy of unambiguous order to tear up what were basically territorial maps of the abject psyche.

Appropriate to this point, McClintock implicates orthodox Marxism and

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79 Ibid. 1392.

80 Ibid. 1393.

81 Ibid. 1394.

traditional psychoanalysis in processes of abjection, because these methods exclude facts contradictory to their theories. McClintock gives weight to this recognition by reminding us that the birth of psychoanalysis occurred during the period of German imperialism proper (1884-1914).<sup>82</sup> She also refers to Freud's analysis of dreams concerning his nanny, Amme. Freud confused his nanny with his mother Amalie leading to a conclusion he would dismiss as "unpublishable."<sup>83</sup> To resolve contradictions to the oedipal sexual economy he was working out at the time, Freud excluded the social issue of class which would have complicated the appearance of the nanny's power within the middle-class household. Similarly, Marxist material histories often reject the unconscious or sexual desire in their analyses.<sup>84</sup>

McClintock pairs psychoanalysis with Marxism to compensate for their respective inadequacies. She calls for a "decolonizing of psychoanalysis and a psychoanalyzing of colonialism."<sup>85</sup> She returns to these methodologies because she is wary of theories advocating the in-betweens of self and other to counter-discursive imperialisms. I have argued that Musil advocated such explorations. McClintock's caution warrants consideration, however. She claims that if the goal of these theories "is to activate the uncertainties and in-betweens of discourse, well and good, but this could remain a formalist exercise unless one also undertakes the more demanding historical task of interrogating the social practices, economic conditions and

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82 McClintock 74.

83 Ibid. 90-91.

84 Ibid. 72. I believe this statement is overly reductive. For example, Herbert Marcuse focused on sexual and material economies in *Eros and Civilization* (1955), and Frederic Jameson examines the unconscious political subtext of literature in *The Political Unconscious* (1981).

85 Ibid. 74.

psychoanalytical dynamics that motivate and constrain human desire, action and power.”<sup>86</sup> I believe we do not have to decolonize *only* psychoanalysis or *psychoanalyze* a colonial logic to expose these dynamics. As my dissertation will show, Musil did what McClintock suggests—he interrogated the social-historical context producing the colonized psyche. I believe his novel exceeds a “formalist” challenge and therefore offers us an alternative de-colonizing lens.

### **The (De)Colonization of “This True Inner Africa” in the Context of Musil Criticism**

In the 1920s, Robert Müller praised Musil’s fiction for exhibiting a psychological realism that transgressed the boundaries of ordinary perception. He saw in Musil’s literature clear affinities with psychoanalysis. Müller invited psychoanalysts who seemed otherwise uninterested to read Musil.<sup>87</sup> In 1923, Hungarian Marxist Béla Balázs in his essay “Grenzen” (“Borders”) also recognized that Musil’s fiction went beyond the purely literary, penetrating as it did into psychological realms.<sup>88</sup> Balázs argued that Musil concerned himself more with Marxist alienation than with the secrets of the unconscious. These two thinkers discovered facts in Musil’s writing, but they viewed his psychology through a narrow political lens. Musil appreciated Freud’s investigations, but he was critical of the pretensions involved in proclaiming his mythology a “science.” He believed Marx was half right, but he did not privilege economic determinism or call for proletarian

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid. 73.

<sup>87</sup> Christian Rogowski, *Distinguished Outsider: Robert Musil and His Critics* (Columbia, SC: Camden, 1994) 10. Müller was an Austrian expressionist, who considered himself an anarchist. He died shortly after this evaluation of Musil.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. 12.

revolution. Musil's novel fit ambiguously between such methodologies. Musil sought to overcome the modern to some degree. However, his psychological modernism was more specifically an experiment with an ambiguous science, social criticism, and reality, and therefore was not a complete rejection of modernity.<sup>89</sup>

Criticism concerning the theme of psychology in *The Man without Qualities* has heeded Müller's call for a psychoanalytic interpretation. Ernst Kaiser and Eithne Wilkins in the 1950s argued that mysticism in the novel was an unconscious manifestation of Musil's neurotic oedipal impulses.<sup>90</sup> Karl Corino interprets Musil's novel as a discovery of male neuroses at the end of the Habsburg Empire.<sup>91</sup> Multiple critics attack Musil's criticism of psychoanalysis as evidence of his resentful distancing from a huge debt he owed Freud.<sup>92</sup> Recent scholars of Musil's novel cling

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89 Patrizia McBride has a recent study that does explicate this aspect of Musil's literature. See *The Void of Ethics: Robert Musil and the Experience of Modernity* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2006). Musil thought that his contemporaries who did seek the opposite of "modernity" were throwing the "baby out with the bathwater." See GWII 1385.

90 Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser, forward, *The Man Without Qualities*, trans. Wilkins and Kaiser. (New York: Perigee, 1953). Johannes Cremerius also made the claim in 1979 that the novel reflected Musil's own pathology in "Robert Musil: Das Dilemma eines Schriftstellers vom Typus poeta ductus nach Freud," *Psyche* 33.8: 733-72. See also Peter Henninger, "'Wissenschaft' und 'Dichtung' bei Musil und Freud," *Modern Notes* 94: 542-68. In his essay, Henninger examines the childhood issues that stimulated Musil's writing career.

91 Karl Corino, "Ödipus oder Orest? Robert Musil und die Psychoanalyse," *Vom "Törless" zum "Mann ohne Eigenschaften,"* ed. Uwe Bauer and Dietmar Goltschnigg (Munich: 1973). Also, Rogowski 10-12, 28.

92 Hans-Rudolf Schärer, *Narzißmus und Utopismus: Eine literaturpsychologische Untersuchung zu Musils "Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften"* (Munich: Fink, 1990). Schärer examines characters in the novel who exhibit a variety of pathologies such as narcissism, hysteria and psychosis. He interprets these pathologies as an indication of Musil's interest in Freudian analysis. He follows Cremerius who argued that Musil repressed his connection to Freud. See other works on the supposedly repressed Freudian psychology in Musil's novel: Harmut Böhme, *Der Buchstabe und der Geist: Unbewußte Determinierung im Schreiben Robert Musils* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1980); Dieter Heyd, *Musil-Lektüre, der Text, das Unbewußte: Psychosemologische Studien zu Robert Musils theoretischem Werk und zum Roman "Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften"* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1980); Jean-Pierre Cometti, "Psychoanalyse und Erzählung," *Robert Musil—Literatur, Philosophie, Psychologie*, ed. Josef Strutz and Johann Strutz (Munich: Fink,

to psychoanalytic paradigms even when considering Marxist theories of the subject. For example, Stefan Jonsson (2000) wrote *Subject Without Nation* to analyze Musil's response to the "divided subject" in Vienna's postwar historical period.<sup>93</sup> He bases his argument on Marxist Georg Lukács's invaluable contribution to the concept of reification, or the objectification of human and material relations through disconnected categories of identity or the commodity form itself.<sup>94</sup> For example, the commodity form is the end result of a complex history of production, which has been expunged from consciousness by the time someone buys it. Human relationships suffer the same erasure of production history. Jonsson ultimately privileges Lacanian subject theory instead of the more significant de-reifying potential in Musil's work, i.e. the explication of the context producing the discourse and motivations shaping the practice of psychology itself.

In contrast to Jonsson's problematic "postmodern" analysis of subjectivity in Musil's novel, Thomas Sebastian's recent work, *The Intersection of Science and Literature in Musil's The Man Without Qualities*, claims that Musil was firmly embedded within his modern-historical context. Sebastian examines Musil's education in experimental psychologies, such as the Gestalt, Kantian, and Freudian theories of pathology and/or emotional development. He relates this education to the thematic emphasis on alienation and social satire in the novel. Sebastian examines the

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1984) 153-65; Thomas Pekar, *Die Sprache der Liebe bei Robert Musil* (München: Fink, 1989).

<sup>93</sup> Stefan Jonsson, *Subject Without Nation: Robert Musil and the History of Modern Identity* (Durham: Duke UP, 2000). For more on the "subject," see Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1997) 5.

<sup>94</sup> Georg Lukács, "The Phenomenon of Reification," *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: MIT P, 1968) 83-109.

novel's narrative as an expression of Freudian *Nachträglichkeit* (deferment) and Kantian *Mutmassungen* (conjectures).<sup>95</sup> Sebastian argues that the novel articulates what society had deferred expressing: the trauma of World War I. According to this reading, the characters in Musil's novel represent the common feelings of people (*seinesgleichen*) living through a seemingly lawless period in Germany and Austria. Sebastian's psychoanalytic approach provides insight into the trauma causing metaphorical aphasia, perversion, and universal crisis, but does not fully appreciate Musil's skepticism concerning psychoanalytic diagnoses of crisis.

Going beyond the criticism focused on Freudian questions of identity or pathology, I believe that Musil explored a more general science and philosophy of psychology related to bourgeois domination and the problem of self-consciousness, of which Freud's science provides only one example. In the spirit of David S. Luft's *Eros and Inwardness* (2003), I investigate a wealth of thought buried under the weight and significance of Freud's theories.<sup>96</sup> Adding to this scholarship, I will investigate Musil's psychology of feeling as a clarification of the complex entanglements of emotional motivation, discourse, and the material world.<sup>97</sup> My dissertation unites social and epistemological concerns with psychological ones. Unifying these concerns

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<sup>95</sup> Thomas Sebastian, *The Intersection of Science and Literature in Musil's The Man Without Qualities* (New York: Camden, 2005) 94-97.

<sup>96</sup> See also Meisel's *Liebe im Zeitalter der Wissenschaften vom Menschen*. Meisel connects Musil's psychosexual components of the novel to thermodynamics, and sees Musil as a different but just as significant contributor to human understanding as Freud. Also, Louis A. Sass, *Madness and Modernism: Insanity in the Light of Modern Art, Literature, and Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1992); Ina Hartwig, *Sexuelle Poetik: Proust, Musil, Genet, Jelinek* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1999).

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Uwe M. Maier, *Sinn und Gefühl in der Moderne: Zu Robert Musils Gefühlstheorie und einer Soziologie der Emotionen* (Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 1999).

is possible through the groundbreaking work of Ludger Lütkehaus (1989).<sup>98</sup>

Lütkehaus includes Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, Jean Paul, Johann Friedrich Herbart, Arthur Schopenhauer, Carl Gustav Carus, Karl Fortlage, Gustav Theodor Fechner, Immanuel Hermann Fichte, Eduard von Hartmann, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Theodor Lipps, in his history. He notes that their philosophy, literature, and science all informed Freud's work. Freud's work is impressive for this reason. At the same time, as Lütkehaus points out, this long history of discourse on the unconscious has disappeared since Freud. With his brief reference to Musil's "man without qualities," Lütkehaus brings Musil into dialogue with a history of psychology informed by a colonial fantasy that later penetrated into the modern structures of power creating Germany and Austria. I argue that his work was equally impressive for this reason, but not because Musil followed Freud's interpretation of this history. Rather, Musil followed Nietzsche's.

In *The Gay Science* (1882), Nietzsche argued that philosophers who assume that self-consciousness can master contradiction tyrannize psychological knowledge with their pride:

One thinks [consciousness] is the kernel of the human; what is permanent, eternal, ultimate, and most authentic in him. One considers consciousness a definitive magnitude. This ridiculous overestimation and misunderstanding of consciousness has an extremely useful consequence in that an all too rapid development of consciousness has been prevented.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Luft refers briefly to Lütkehaus and his assertion that the unconscious has been colonized since Freud. See *Eros and Inwardness* 6.

<sup>99</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Fröhliche Wissenschaft, Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Werke III I:11*, p. 382-83.

This aphorism reminds us that the conscious self is an illusion, or what Marx called “false consciousness.” Absolute definitions of inner life destroy knowledge of experience. More importantly, they act as a “tyrannical” force that *hates* real consciousness. Nietzsche warned that mass consciousness in fact produced a dangerous herd mentality. This mentality could not be disentangled from modern views of scientific progress. He therefore did not advocate a conventional scientific approach to free consciousness from bourgeois fancies; he certainly did not advocate communist revolution. From an elitist perspective Musil did not share but also could not completely overcome, Nietzsche condemned socialism as degenerate, revealing his own limits.<sup>100</sup> Nietzsche encouraged a gifted few to become aware that the inner and outer worlds were not territories, which they could or should rule over. In the spirit of Nietzsche, Musil conceived of a consciousness that could engage with the entangled nature of experience and discursive illusion.

While a few scholars, such as Jonsson, undervalue the impact Nietzsche had on Musil’s work, many others have established this connection persuasively.<sup>101</sup> I will therefore position Musil’s novel at the end of Lütkehaus’s colonial history of the inner

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100 Nietzsche condemned the primitive “commune” in section 5 of the First Essay in *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Musil in contrast made a point of proclaiming political support for socialism, see GWII 1355.

101 See Charlotte Dresler-Brumme, *Nietzsches Philosophie in Musils Roman „Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften“* (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1987); Walter H. Sokel, “Dionysische Moral und ‘anderer Zustand’ in Robert Musils Roman *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*: Zum Nietzscheschen Kontext von Musils Text,” *Literatur im Kontext Robert Musil*, vol. 6., ed. Marie-Louise Roth and Pierre Béhar (Bern: Peter Lang, 1999) 127-140; Peter C. Pfeiffer, *Aphorismus und Romanstruktur: Zu Robert Musils „Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften“* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1990); Cary Henderson, “Zur Essayistik von Friedrich Nietzsche und Robert Musil,” *Focus on Literatur* 1.1 (1994) 9-22; and Hans-Joachim Pieper’s *Musils Philosophie: Essayismus und Dichtung im Spannungsfeld der Theorien Nietzsches und Machs* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2002).

world and in relation to Nietzsche's theory of the modern motivation called *ressentiment*. In addition, while this dissertation explores Musil's response to psychoanalysis in various contexts, my goal is not a comparative study. Musil did not offer a substitute therapy for Freud's psychoanalysis but rather a critical understanding of life-denying methods, seeking knowledge of the psyche and unintentionally feeding a violent social order. *The Man without Qualities* experiments with the contextual origins of psychological knowledge. Such experiments ironically have been overshadowed by Freud's science. My dissertation brings them to light once more.

In Chapter 1, I will examine psycho-civilizational discourses related to the history of "this true inner Africa," which I believe Musil personified ironically in his novel. I begin with this history because it most concretely presents the colonial logic guiding psychology. Bourgeois philosophers, novelists, and anthropologists defined an "Africa" both within and without to reconfirm their own moral superiority even when, or perhaps mainly because, experience suggested contradictions to European progress. This chapter also presents Musil's criticism of Oedipal myth and the theory of the "master of the house" (*Herr im Haus*) fundamental to psychoanalysis. His novel's fictional critique of these practical paradigms offers us an alternative to Lütkehaus's Freudian teleology. As I have already claimed, Musil was not critical of "the details" differentiating approaches to the psyche. His concern was with a logic that milled down experience to binaries, which I will argue are inextricably linked to white, middle-class, male hegemony.

I will add to the work of critics who see the influence of Nietzsche on Musil's work in Chapter 2 by investigating Nietzsche's concept of *ressentiment* and

(anti)colonial psychology, both of which re-appear in Musil's novel. Resentment is the emotional motivating force linked to the process of abjection, or the drive to identify and destroy others or one's own life forces because of the fear, pain and desire, which instability arouses. Nietzsche identified resentment in Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) and moral psychologists more broadly. I argue that he uses a ship metaphor both as a self-reflective tool to converse critically with their views and to launch his own fantastic consciousness that affirms the unknown. By providing an analysis of "this true inner Africa" and Nietzsche's response to the resentment dominating producers of knowledge, I will contextualize Musil's critical engagement with a pre-Freudian history of psychology. The chapters that follow go deeper into an analysis of the psychological practices resulting from this obscure history-turned-dominating epistemology, with which *The Man without Qualities* experiments.

Building on Luft's *Eros and Inwardness*, Chapter 3 explores Musil's depiction of sexuality as the concern of both metaphysical and clinical psychologies responding to the loss of faith in the rational ego especially around the *fin-de-siècle*—roughly 1890 to 1914.<sup>102</sup> In *The Man without Qualities*, Musil models his bourgeois characters on contemporaries from this period who participated in psychologies that had the goal of liberating inner territories, but ultimately became methods aimed at re-mastering the domestic space and the body. Musil uses gender as a metaphor for the ratioïd discourse propagated in the salon, the psychiatrist's office, newspapers, and what I call Europe's "heart of darkness," the asylum. The white, bourgeois female characters,

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<sup>102</sup> For more on the loss of faith in the rational ego, see Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1981).

Diotima and Clarisse, ironically help to redeem the imperialistic “masculine mind” they at first challenge by regurgitating bourgeois notions of love and by mimicking or valorizing the abjection of those living within the “threshold zones” of Vienna. These women nevertheless symbolize the potential for a life-affirming approach to knowledge. Musil depicts sexual discourse in 1913-1914 Vienna to satirize the colonizing power of ratioïd thinking, which facilitated catastrophes like World War I.

Chapter 4 focuses initially on the Nazi context in which Musil actually wrote and tried to publish the third part of the novel (1930s). These later and unpublished chapters feature the siblings Ulrich and Agathe. I argue that Musil uses these characters metaphorically to explore an ambiguous psychology of feeling that liberates thinking and feeling from domination by a moral-immoral logic. Going beyond the typical Gestalt reading of Musil’s psychology of feeling, I concentrate on analyzing specific contexts in which Musil de-mystifies emotional experience. I begin with Musil’s poem “Isis and Osiris” (1923). The androgynous Egyptian sibling-gods break down stereotypical divisions between male rationality and female feeling, to describe instead two dominating emotional conditions: the appetitive and the contemplative. Following this, Ulrich and Agathe create a conversational ethics that de-reifies the mythical-sexual emotion of “love,” re-appropriates dialogue from authoritarian therapies, and stimulates Ulrich’s essayistic theorization of a psychology that explicates the emotional context producing consciousness and mass psychology. Anticipating Frantz Fanon, Musil’s psychology of feeling had the goal of opening up method to contemplation and compassion. I call this his de-colonizing methodology.

Chapter 5 examines the dissemination of earlier versions of the psychology of

feeling. Musil had the goal of de-colonizing readers who normally accepted either/or ideologies propagated by the elite through technologies of culture. Musil thought that the exploratory qualities of the essay form encouraged readers to consider contradictory perspectives on a single subject. His essayistic novel, *The Man without Qualities*, did not promise readers *Bildung*, a concept with connotations suggesting the cultivation of a bourgeois “master of the house.” Musil did not demand that readers believe in and follow his knowledge, but wished instead to give them the tools to understand the complexities of their own experiences. Musil died in exile knowing that the Nazis had made his psychology irrelevant, at least until some future time.

Through various (de)colonizations of “this true inner Africa,” Musil sought to free knowledge from the lowest common denominator creating the epistemological psyche, e.g. negative generalizations, fear of ambiguity, and self-reinforcing laws. At the same time, the fact that the centrifugal force holding *The Man without Qualities* together is a white, male figure with privilege reveals Musil’s limits, which I will address throughout the dissertation. These limits left him pessimistic about a political movement that could act on a more life-affirming consciousness. His theories also could not help those who did not have the luxury to worry about psychology. Musil was aware of his limits but did not retreat into cynicism. He never stopped trying to reach a broader audience and hoped that one day his readers would have the insight necessary to create a de-colonizing politics. This hope is what I believe continues to make his work valuable. I will now turn to what Lütkehaus first outlined for us, the creation of “this true inner Africa” in a German world becoming self-conscious.

## Chapter 1: Creation of “This True Inner Africa” in a German World Becoming Self Conscious

The measurements we take of the ego’s expansive territory are however much too small or narrow whenever we leave out the monstrous (*ungeheure*) empire of the unconscious (*Unbewußten*), this true inner Africa.<sup>1</sup>

Jean Paul, *Selina* (1825)

We are accustomed to look upon the shackled form of a conquered monster, but there—there you could look at a thing monstrous and free. It was unearthly, and the men were—No, they were not inhuman. Well you know, that was the worst of it—this suspicion of their not being inhuman.<sup>2</sup>

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1902)

[C]omparative psychology yields more similarities [between Germans and Africans] than differences in the essential qualities that constitute mental achievement.<sup>3</sup>

Robert Musil, *The German as Symptom* (1923)

In Europe the Negro has one function: that of symbolizing the lower emotions, the baser inclinations, the dark side of the soul.<sup>4</sup>

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks* (1952)

Jean Paul used the phrase, “this true inner Africa,” to describe the unconscious.

He used the phrase in at least three of his works: *Kampaner Thal* (1792), *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (1804), and *Selina* (1825).<sup>5</sup> His description reflected a tendency among

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1 Jean Paul, *Selina*, *Jean Paul Werke*, ed. Norbert Miller, vol. 6 (München [Munich]: Carl Hanser, 1963) 1183. Also cited in Ludger Lütkehaus, ed., “*Dieses wahre innere Afrika*”: *Texte zur Entdeckung des Unbewussten vor Freud* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1989) 77.

2 Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (London: Penguin, 1995) 64.

3 Robert Musil, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Adolf Frisé, vol. 2 (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978) 1366.

4 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove, 1967) 190.

5 See also Nicholas T. Rand’s “The Hidden Soul: The Growth of the Unconscious in

early psychologists to conceive of the psychological zone of the unconscious through various referents to the real continent of Africa. In Europe at the time, Africa functioned as a metaphor for the West's own past, making it commonsense for intellectuals to imagine the unconscious as an atavistic region in the modern psyche that appeared to be populated by animal instincts and feelings. They assumed that if left unchecked this "darkness" might determine the behavior of inhabitants in supposedly more enlightened regions of the world. These original investigators of the psyche's "heart of darkness" took it for granted that Europeans had overcome instincts ascribed to their nether regions. Their goal, then, was to recreate an inner past to explain the path they had supposedly taken in their progress from nature to a state of relative enlightenment.

As I will show in this chapter and in my dissertation as a whole, German efforts to account for the non-rational were not successful because they could not overcome the pitfalls of excessive abstraction. For example, Carl Gustav Carus used a mathematical value, "x," to define the unfathomable qualities of the unconscious.<sup>6</sup> For Carus, and Kant, the "x" signified a zone within the psyche that was thoroughly unknowable. It represented the indefinable and therefore, in a sense, represented nothing at all. Ludger Lütkehaus claims in *"Dieses wahre innere Afrika": Texte zur Entdeckung des Unbewussten vor Freud* ("This true inner Africa": Texts on the Discovery of the Unconscious before Freud) that Carus's "x" created unnecessary

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Philosophy, Psychology, Medicine and Literature, 1750-1900," *American Imago* 61.3 (Fall 2004): 257-289. Rand also makes reference to the phrase in these three works.

6 Lütkehaus 16.

confusion and precipitated countless other meaningless terms such as *Unbewußtheit*, *Unbewußtsein*, *Unbewußten*, *Ungewußte*, *Bewußtlose*, and *das Nichtbewußte*.<sup>7</sup> The “un” or “nicht” prefix and “los” suffix are abstractions denoting absence, and do not really describe anything. Such language, then, inadequately explained the uncertain aspects of experienced reality. Inadequacies like these convinced middle-class psychologists, novelists, moralists, and scientists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to transform the emptiness of “x” into something more tangible.

In the introduction to his anthology, Lütkehaus cites Robert Musil’s *The Man without Qualities* (1930, 1933).<sup>8</sup> Specifically, he refers to the novel’s protagonist and “man without qualities,” Ulrich, in order to explain *how* German psychologists were able to transform the “x”-factor into a substantive form. As Lütkehaus points out, Ulrich appears to defy definition as he is “without qualities,” but he remains a “man” and coincidentally a mathematician. According to Musil, attempts to formulate that which is beyond formulation are inevitable failures, but modern “man” has succeeded in fooling himself into thinking that his formulas are a success. When this self deception is complete, a man becomes the “master of the house” (*Herr im Haus*).<sup>9</sup> In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the “house” signified the nuclear family.

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7 Ibid. 17.

8 Ibid. 14. Lütkehaus also refers to Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* on p. 40. See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. Robert Hurley, Marx Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: U of Minn P, 1998).

9 GWI 1178. Musil’s character, Professor Lindner, epitomizes this self deception. His deception began as a child: “[E]r erinnerte sich noch genau an die Vorliebe, die er als Knabe für die Geometrie besessen hatte, deren schöne, klug angelegte Beweise sich am Ende mit einem leisen Schnappen um die Wahrheit schlossen und ihm ein Vergnügen bereiteten, als hätte er einen Riesen in einer Mausefall gefangen.“ (GWI 1182) He believes that God spoke to him, giving him the special mission of “saving” his wayward family and others, such as the divorcing Agathe.

Implicit in Musil's work is the notion that the politics of family were mirrored in the ways in which men structured their mental and emotional lives. Moreover, it is important to recognize that the normative structure of the nuclear family, after the beginning of German imperialism in 1884, also resonated with the relationship between the metropole—as figuratively bourgeois male—and the colonial territories—as figuratively that male's wife, children, and servants.

On the level of psychology even before high imperialism, however, “male” rationality was in essence imperialistic. A man's “feminine” feelings were private and his unconscious instincts required disciplining, just as wayward adolescents and the savages of the colonies required the guidance of their paternal and colonial masters. Musil challenges this model through Ulrich, who implicitly reveals that it is the narcissistic paranoia of those in positions of uneasy authority, not their superior cognitive abilities, which makes bourgeois, white European males assume that they should be and are masters of themselves and others. Ulrich argues that “something unconscious emerges wherein one [only] *feels* himself a master of the house.”<sup>10</sup> With this, Musil undermined the symbol of natural order integral to psychology's familial and colonial fantasies—“paternal fathers ruling benignly over immature children” as a metaphor for dominating one's own unruly unconscious drives through abjection.<sup>11</sup>

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10 GWI 649. German: “unbewußt etwas entsteht, worin man sich Herr im Hause fühlt.”

11 Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. (New York: Rutledge, 1995) 45. The whole quotation reads: “Projecting the family image onto national and imperial progress enabled what was often murderously violent change to be legitimized as the progressive unfolding of natural decree. Imperial intervention could thus be figured as linear, nonrevolutionary progression that naturally contained hierarchy within unity: paternal fathers ruling benignly over immature children. The trope of the organic family became invaluable in its capacity to give state and imperial intervention the alibi of nature.”

While “abjection,” or the process of expelling contradictory elements to create a homogeneous self, suggests a form of individuation occurring in all social beings, it is only a theory that historically has been relevant for the formation of a white, male self. In the process of becoming a “white” self, especially during and after the age of imperialism, bourgeois men confined heterogeneous collectivities to stereotypes such as the savage or sexual African, the hysterical woman, the sinister Jew, and/or the proletarian miscreant. Such abject peoples, and the primitive *unconscious*, were requisite to the definition of the conscious civilized male self.

The reference to Musil’s novel in conjunction with this still under-researched history of colonial fantasy enables us to see Musil’s novel as a critique of middle-class European intellectuals of his time. Musil implicitly criticized their conflation of abstraction and reality. He did not attack the details of *what* his contemporaries imagined, so much as *how* they limited their imaginations, which ultimately affected the content of what they thought. Their mode of thinking depended on overly simplistic stereotypes that had long functioned to legitimize the bourgeois power structure. Musil’s work suggests that such stereotypes were constantly contradicted by much more complex experiences. Instead of reformulating their representations of reality, psychologists attempted to reconfirm what they already supposedly knew. Lütkehaus ends his history with Freud’s desire to become the “conquistador of the unconscious,” suggesting that Freudian psychoanalysis was the *telos* of the history he describes.<sup>12</sup> The ending is a decidedly middle-class one. In contrast, *The Man without Qualities* offers an endpoint critical of middle-class consciousness. I borrow from

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<sup>12</sup> Lütkehaus 8. Nicholas Rand also makes Freud the endpoint of his history.

Frantz Fanon's concept of the "middle-class" to establish this counterpoint. As Fanon wrote:

What I call middle-class society is any society that becomes rigidified in predetermined forms, forbidding all evolution, all gains, all progress, all discovery. I call middle-class a closed society in which life has no taste, in which the air is tainted, in which ideas and men are corrupt. And I think that a man who takes a stand against this death is in a sense a revolutionary.<sup>13</sup>

While I would not call Musil revolutionary in the Marxist sense, he did challenge the kind of closed society Fanon described.

### **Oedipus or *The Man without Qualities*? Establishing a Counterpoint to Freud**

In Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex*, the protagonist kills his father and takes his mother as his wife without being conscious of his relationship to either of them. In my reading, Oedipus's unconscious act of replacing his father as a king and husband symbolizes a more general secret wish to seize the means of production and reproduction of the self. In other words, Oedipus's mother symbolizes the means of production in every sense. Oedipal desire allegorizes potential political and economic threats to social order. Freud argued that in modern "civilization" males learn to sublimate, or replace these wishes with desires satisfied through finding an exogamous wife and replicating the nuclear family. This naturalization of the bourgeois family had an origin in the infamous riddle, which the Sphinx posed to Oedipus.

The Sphinx was part woman, part animal, devouring all who could not answer her riddle. As Bruno Bettelheim argues, she represented the "mother" to Freud, a creature moved both by instinct and morality, thus potentially both loving and

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<sup>13</sup> Fanon 224-25.

threatening to the child.<sup>14</sup> I would add that Freud was constructing the “mother”-Sphinx as an “abject” object through which the male child defined himself. The Sphinx tells Oedipus her riddle: “[I]n the morning it goes on four feet, at noon on two, and in the evening on three.”<sup>15</sup> Oedipus answered—“Man’s” development from child to old man. Freud’s use of Oedipus likewise attempted to establish a universal developmental path for modern males. For example, after Oedipus becomes conscious of his transgressions, he blinds himself and lives out his life bearing this handicap. For Freud, the universal desire of the young to rebel against authority and recreate themselves and the world must be sublimated (blinded) in order for boys to grow into mentally healthy men. This theory of development signified the inevitable destiny of what Freud considered to be “civilization.”

Freud’s *Totem and Taboo* (1913) asserts that civilized individuals must repress disruptive desires, such as the desire to commit incest to become a social self—this was his version of abjection.<sup>16</sup> *Totem and Taboo* analyzes anthropological data on the incest taboo in Australian tribes to “show how severely such misdeeds are treated by savages who are otherwise far from being moral by our standards.”<sup>17</sup> The severity of this response to the breaking of taboo accordingly suggests to Freud that “primitives” do not repress desires inwardly. Freud supports this conclusion with another conclusion, namely that civilized people in their primitive stage as children learn to repress inappropriate desires in order to avoid punishment from authority

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14 Bruno Bettelheim, *Freud and Man’s Soul* (New York: Vintage, 1984) 16.

15 Ibid. 16.

16 See also McClintock 72.

17 Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989) 7.

figures such as their fathers. Freud believed that tabooed wishes among Europeans innocuously returned at night in dreams, in the feeling of the uncanny, and other sublimations.<sup>18</sup> *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930) later mourns the loss of pleasure which “Western” civilization demands. A guilty conscience serves the function of creating a safer society but denies the pleasure of aggression or sex, so much so that one day these forces return in a monstrous way. Freud thought that civilization created an unhappy situation that led to madness (e.g. hysteria, narcissism, Oedipal Complex).<sup>19</sup> He also remained resigned to the belief that repression was necessary to ensure the health of society; otherwise, Europe would descend into “savagery.”<sup>20</sup> The death of a “primal father” (*Urvater*), then, became the constituting feature of a civilization instead controlled through guilt and bad conscience.<sup>21</sup>

Musil was familiar with Freud’s theories on oedipal development and responded to them as they were beginning to become well known.<sup>22</sup> While Musil was working on *The Man without Qualities*, he wrote “posthumous papers.” He divided these papers into sections, and published them together in *Posthumous Papers of a Living Author* (1936). One section titled “Unfriendly Meditations,” reminiscent of

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18 Ibid. 29.

19 See p.129 of *Totem and Taboo* for Freud’s mention of the Oedipus-complex in relationship to the animal phobic “little Hans.” Freud translated Hans’s phobia for dogs into a problem with his father’s absence and desire for his mother’s attention. Because “little Hans” could not repress his desire for his mother, he was stuck in the oedipal stage.

20 Sigmund Freud, *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1997) 79. Freud argued that sexuality had to be repressed to maintain both the family and community. See p. 61.

21 Ibid. 94-95.

22 Musil read “An Introduction to On Narcissism.” The treatises related to the introduction were *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905) and *Totem and Taboo* (1913). Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* has inspired this reading of Musil.

Nietzsche's "Untimely Meditations," includes the short essay, "The Threatened Oedipus" (*Der Bedrohte Ödipus*, sometime between 1920 and 1926), a friendly criticism of Freud's model. Freud conceived of other less reductive models concerned with non-sexual forces of the libido and the death instinct. Musil's attack, though, was specifically aimed at Freud's naturalization of bourgeois civilization because that so-called "truth" ultimately discouraged critical and creative modes of thinking.

Musil began his "Threatened Oedipus" with a reference to his own bias: "Although malicious and one-sided, this critique does not advance a claim to scientific objectivity."<sup>23</sup> This statement attests to Musil's high degree of self-reflexivity. He does not offer a replacement for Freudian theory. He points out that while Freud's model presents one possible interpretation, Freud applies this in a "one-sided" (*einseitig*) way. For Musil, one-sidedness meant reducing the heterogeneity of experience to make it comprehensible in terms of overly homogenous pre-fabricated concepts. Freud himself broke Victorian modes of conceptualizing sexuality when he argued that a woman could only be healthy and happy if her sexuality effectively saw the light of day, or at least if it could be fully exposed on the well-lit surface of the psychoanalyst's proverbial and/or real sofa. Despite Freud's relatively more "enlightened" view of sexuality, Freudian theory has often resulted in over-generalizations concerning female (and male) bodies and souls.

Musil's description of Oedipus as "threatened" or "endangered" refers to Freud's developmental model as well as the inadequacy of Oedipal metaphors. Oedipus acts as a threat to the Father's order, but that order is always changing, as are

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23 Robert Musil, *Nachlass zu Lebzeiten* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1957) 99.

the responses to it. In Freud's scenario, the guilt of the original act, or the desire of children to act, prevents a real rebellion against patriarchy because the child desires instead to return to a womb—a wife's womb. Writing his commentary in the 1920s, Musil claims that the mother's lap (*Schoß*) may have a different location because clothing has changed since the war.<sup>24</sup> In other words, the womb may be difficult to find. Future generations may also yearn to return to a father's lap, forcing psychoanalysts to rename the resulting complex after Orestes. The problem with Freud's Oedipus was that “almost all phenomena (*Erscheinungen*) will be reduced to it, and I'm afraid that after one or two generations (*Menschenfolgen*) there will be no Oedipus!”<sup>25</sup> Musil's essay, then, underscores the loss of Freud's literary (i.e. creative) thinking once medical doctors replace the metaphor with more socially acceptable ones. He imagined that they would merely be putting a new “dress” on Freud's simplifying theories rather than present alternatives to those theories.

This chapter elaborates on the fundamental claim of this dissertation—there is value in shifting focus from Freud to his lesser-known Viennese contemporary, Robert Musil, to discover the homogenizing fantasies shaping psychological method. Building on the work of Lütkehaus and Nicholas Rand, who also has recently re-narrated the “surprising” history before Freud, I am re-presenting understudied theories based on the narrative of civilized progress and historical development, which inspired Musil to create a more joyful relationship with the world than the one typically associated with these psychologies. Summarizing this history runs the risk

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid. 102.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 101.

of oversimplification, mainly because these theories have nuances and complexities that do not neatly conform to any framework. At the same time, I would reiterate that Musil did not criticize details. However, he understood that even the most inventive or counter-epistemological approaches to psychology (those challenging the truth claims of the period) became stuck within binary thinking and a decidedly bourgeois imagination. I will similarly engage these complex theories in this way.

The first section of this chapter historicizes the conceptualization of “consciousness” that occurred during the period between the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment. During this period there was a shift from a religious concern focused on the soul, to a secular concern with an epistemology of acquisitive individualism. The resulting conceptualization of modern “consciousness” was related to the bourgeois concept of human progress, which defined the path from primitive religion to civilized thinking. I will also detail the main points of Jean Paul’s literary “true inner Africa,” and the extra-rational theories of Nietzsche, among others. This representative history based on Lütkehaus’s anthology, provides a background for understanding the mode of thinking filtering into anthropology and contributing to colonial fantasies during the era of German Imperialism.

Going beyond Lütkehaus’s work, I next refer to German anthropological studies on the non-West and specifically Africa. These studies tended to apply stereotypes associated with a metaphorical inner Africa to “the other without,” those whom anthropologists could contrast to a German “master race.”<sup>26</sup> This branch of

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<sup>26</sup> I am borrowing Michelle M. Wright’s phrase in “Others-From-Within From Without: Afro-German Subject Formation and the Challenge of a Counter-Discourse,” *Callaloo* 26.2 (2003): 296-

science—one which problematically straddled the line between the natural and human sciences—relied on the assumption that Europeans alone were endowed with the virtue of self-consciousness and were therefore superior to all others. Initially, a few German anthropologists designated those from Africa or Asia *Naturvölker* (natural peoples) and Europeans *Kulturvölker* (civilized peoples). At first rejecting more optimistic versions of social Darwinism, which focused on universal human evolution, those who conceptualized *Naturvölker* typically viewed them as frozen-in-time embodiments of the past coexisting with the modern present.<sup>27</sup> They were atavisms living on the periphery of the modern world or the more distant wild zones, and according to theories embraced by many scholars of the time they had no relationship to European races. Musil challenged the basic logic underwriting these notions by valorizing, with qualification, non-Eurocentric empiricists such as Leo Frobenius.

In the last section, I will analyze the *The Man without Qualities*. The novel takes place in 1913-1914 Vienna, as Europeans began to react against fundamental assumptions regarding the absolute value of the rational ego.<sup>28</sup> Affected by this shift, Musil's abject characters do not overthrow the imperialistic order; this order has become a "truth" infecting all Europeans. In other words, even the abject have come to believe in the power of "whiteness." They ironically desire to redeem Europe's "white" soul by cultivating their own version of an "inner Africa." The Jewish Prussian character Paul Arnheim is an expert in psychoanalysis (and all other

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<sup>27</sup> Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2001) 50.

<sup>28</sup> Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1981).

psychologies) but also an imperialist and “civilizer” of an African servant.<sup>29</sup> Musil depicts Viennese salon matron Ermelinda Tuzzi as attempting to civilize her Jewish servant Rachel to achieve a more general female *Aufhebung*. These are direct references to the theories of middle-class Europeans who sought to “raise” humanity. “The man without qualities,” Ulrich, is from this ruling class. However, he appears to be the only one who knows that there are grounds to call bourgeois commonsense into question. He de-reifies his own narcissistic, white, male self. The German obsession with a “true inner Africa” began with the modern conceptualization of the psyche.

### **I. Consciousness and the Unconscious: Breaking Down the German Imaginary**

In what follows, I highlight the origins of modern psychology in Germany as well as the theories of Kant and Hegel, to which Lütkehaus pays little attention. Kant’s philosophy of the conceptual “thing-in-itself” (*Ding an Sich*) and Hegel’s self recognition respectively were early attempts to account for the intangible object of psychological discourse. This object was the soul and/or the unconscious. Drawing on Lütkehaus’s study, I will next identify the relevant contributions to the history of the “unconscious” found in the work of Schelling, Jean Paul, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche.<sup>30</sup> Their literature and/or philosophies determined the vivisectioning of the

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29 GWI 214.

30 Musil cites these thinkers in his diaries. See Robert Musil, *Tagebücher*, ed. Adolf Frisé, vol. 1 (Rowohlt: Hamburg, 1976). Musil directly referred to Schelling, in connection to the question of the unconscious. He in fact first read about him in Ricarda Huch’s book surveying the impact of Romanticism on the early twentieth century. Her book traced this impact to Otto Weininger (TBI 139). Deciding that he did not know enough about Schelling, Musil took a particular interest in reading his work. He also knew some of Jean Paul’s other works, *Levana* and *Dämmerung*, and at least heard of *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (TBII 589). In the *Vorschule*, Jean Paul also refers to the “true inner Africa.” Musil refers to Schopenhauer’s asceticism as an attempt to redirect the motives of the will (TBI 661). Among the many intellectuals in Lütkehaus’s entire history, Nietzsche influenced Musil’s work the most significantly.

European psyche making it possible to imagine an all-encompassing secular consciousness. They hoped to come to know themselves by knowing their past, but in actuality could not know their own prejudice.

The word “psychology” first entered German as the Latin *psychologia* in the sixteenth century. Johannes Thomas Freigius, a German philosopher in Freiburg who fought his Catholic superiors for academic freedom after the Protestant Reformation, referred several times to *psychologia* when defining the soul in 1575.<sup>31</sup> This signaled the birth of modern psychology. It also reflected the shift from Catholic sensibilities to first Protestant and eventually more secular concerns. The Catholic Church had defined the soul as external to the profane body.<sup>32</sup> Catholic theologians in the lineage of the apostle Paul and St. Augustine connected original sin to this body. In order for a soul to be redeemed from sin, the sinner had to confess to a priest. Priests accepted responsibility for their parishioners’ sins; accordingly they had to abstain from bodily pleasures like sexual gratification to save the souls of the populace as a whole.

Martin Luther rejected basic Catholic doctrine. He nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of Wittenburg Cathedral in 1517 and Pope Leo X excommunicated him in 1521. Luther then founded his own Church, which embraced a novel understanding of the soul. What became Protestantism claimed that redemption came through an individual’s direct, moral experience with God. Salvation was achievable on earth through the economy of pleasure found in marriage. In marriage, the husband

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31 Gustav A. Ungerer and Wolfgang G. Bringmann, “Psichiologia, ψυχολογία, Psychology,” *A Pictorial History of Psychology*, ed. Wolfgang G. Bringmann, Helmut E. Lück, Rudolf Miller, Charles E. Early (Chicago: Quintessence, 1997) 15.

32 In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud also referred to the repression of dirty bodily functions as necessary for the creation of a social self.

was the “man of the house,” while women, who putatively existed in a childlike mental state, served as his helpmate.<sup>33</sup> Luther followed his own directive when he married the ex-Nun, Katharina von Bora, because he could find no husband for her.

In 1596, after a century of religious turmoil caused by the division of the Christian Church, Rudolph Goclenius theorized a non-religious definition of the soul. While at Marburg University he employed the term “psychology” using the Greek letters (*ψυχολογία*). With his Greek version, Goclenius invoked Aristotle’s *On the Soul*.<sup>34</sup> In making this connection to pre-Christian rationality, Goclenius secularized Protestant definitions of both body and soul. A revamped Aristotelian rationality encouraged modern individualism and salvation through self-empiricism.<sup>35</sup> In the seventeenth century, Descartes contributed to this effort with his goal of describing the rational mind. He conceptualized “thinking” as a process that led to a realization of the self, but not to a true realization of God. Because he did not promise a new understanding of God, he could define the soul without being accused of heresy by the Catholic Church.<sup>36</sup> Descartes argued that thinking was the only certainty in human

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33 This statement should be qualified. Luther’s early Reformation marriage sermons emphasized that women were the equivalent of children, requiring protection in marriage. However, as one study has convincingly shown, after years of marriage and epistolary exchanges with female activists involved in the Reformation, Luther began to see women as intellectually advanced beings. See Albrecht Classen; Tanya Amber Settle, “Women in Martin Luther’s Life and Theology,” *German Studies Review* 14.2 (May 1991): 231-260.

34 Ungerer and Bringmann 16. Goclenius specifically helped to define empirical psychology with his work on tears and taste. Later Goclenius would write essays on psychology but omit the term. His student Otto Casmann and Casmann’s student E. Neuhaus embraced the term again. They wished to develop an anthropological empiricism that could challenge the theological constraints placed upon investigations of the human.

35 Empiricism is the study of phenomena usually through observation.

36 N.E. Wetherick, “Theories of Psychology,” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E. Craig (London: Routledge, 1998). May 09, 2005

existence.

Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz insisted that there were moments when thinking could not entirely lead to self-knowledge. Leibniz argued that in states such as sleep, dreams, or in memories, individuals could grasp the possibility that there was a realm of the mind inaccessible to them. These “petit perceptions” as he called them “hold the body together in a prestabilized universe, a universe which binds the memory of a disappearing past to the present and the future and constitutes the ‘identical individual’ in sleep, dream and death.”<sup>37</sup> According to Leibniz, the natural force of life which was once a tangible experience for the individual was diminished in the rational self. The passions of the modern individual were all that remained of this nature. The suffering, which occurred in the process of individuation, re-appeared in spectral form or as a vague “memory” in sleep, dreams, and death, a point which Freud would of course develop in his arguably most important work, *On the Interpretation of Dreams* (1899). The conscious mind in this model was haunted by the problematic opposition of nature and rationality, past and present. Leibniz argued that remembering the forgotten universe within the body, and the pain of being cast out of mother nature’s arms, cast light on an individual’s historical progress. Through remembering this progress, Leibniz thought it was possible to harmonize the self. He called the harmonized universal and individual self, a “monad.”

In 1732, Leibniz’s student, Christian Freiherr von Wolff, defined his French

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<<http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/R021SECT1>>

37 Lütkehaus 20. German: “verbinden den Körper in prästablierter Universum, die dem Gedächtnis entschwindende Vergangenheit mit der Gegenwart und der Zukunft, und sie konstituieren das in Schlaf, Traum und Tod ‘identische Individuum.’”

*psychologie* as a rational study of the “soul.” At the basis of this Enlightenment study, Wolff differentiated sensual empiricism from abstract acquisition. Wolff identified a physical state of sensing or observing the world in the psyche, and a cognitive state exceeding visual representation. His understanding of perception had an origin in the eyes. While he believed that individuals could not trust perception, he also thought that individuals could learn to “see” the inner self on a less material level, and as a result become enlightened. A proponent of Enlightenment rationalism, he adapted Descartes’s claim to have proven the existence of the self through the *Cogito*. As J.J. Clarke argues, he also popularized much of Leibniz’s work, including Leibniz’s adaptation of the “Confucian” philosophy of harmonious pairs, fundamental to the theory of the monad.<sup>38</sup> Wolff’s student Ernst Plantner (who also was a teacher of the poet and novelist Jean Paul) was one of the first to use the term “unconsciousness” (*Unbewusstseyn*). He opposed his term to Wolff’s “consciousness” (*Bewusstseyn*).<sup>39</sup> The prehistory of rationality now had the name that dominates psychology to this day.

Immanuel Kant acknowledged the difficulty in deducing laws determining self-consciousness because the “soul” itself was not a material object. An empirical psychology could therefore only investigate the interactions between modes of

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38 The degree to which the European Enlightenment was indebted to the real and imaginary “Orient” is quite remarkable. For example, Voltaire frequently praised the “rationality” of “Confucianism.” See J.J. Clarke, *Oriental Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 1997) 47. He writes: Leibniz’s “interest in Chinese natural philosophy led him to an analysis of its characteristic organicist metaphysics and its concept of universal harmony based on the complementarity of opposites, and though there is some dispute about the extent of Leibniz’s indebtedness to Chinese philosophy, there are some remarkably close parallels between his theory of monads, in which all aspects of the universe mirror all others and act together harmoniously, and the Chinese system of correlative thinking in which all parts of nature cohere and co-operate spontaneously without external direction.”

39 See Lütkehaus 18 and Rand 260.

conceptualization, morality, and sense perception, or study human relationships and behavior, to develop laws of conscious motivation.<sup>40</sup> He theorized the “thing-in-itself” (*Ding an Sich*). Kant’s “thing-in-itself” refers to the pure abstract conceptualization of an object that exists, but remains beyond the material realm of perception. In his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1797), Kant refers to a man far off in a meadow whose features cannot be discerned. He argues that although we do not know the details of his features, we can still know he is a man. Kant concludes: “In man (and so in beasts too) there is an immense field of sensuous intuitions and sensations we are not conscious of, though we can conclude with certainty that we have them[...]our mind is like an immense map with only a few places illuminated.”<sup>41</sup> Kant was revolutionary in reasoning that individuals could never really *know* their world. However, he also argued that those who had the ability to create abstractions or “maps” were at least no longer at the complete mercy of nature.<sup>42</sup> He indicated that historical thinking allowed humans to create a civil society based on reason rather than on instincts. Kant was one of the first German philosophers to link racist psychology to an anthropological theory of development. His *Anthropology from a Pragmatic View* traced the historical development of humans from beings determined by

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40 Mary J. Gregor, introduction, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, by Immanuel Kant, trans. Mary J. Gregor (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974) ix-xxv.

41 Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* 16. Here we see Kant making implicit references to an early form of capitalism. A meadow appears as a sort of commons, which has come under the control of the gaze of the bourgeois ideologue—a symbolic enclosure. Kant’s reference to mapping further reveals the move toward enclosing land, or creating private property.

42 Ibid. 13. Kant conceives of abstraction as a sign of power. He writes that in turning away from an object through abstraction, individuals are “performing a real act of cognitive power by which one idea of which we are conscious is held apart from its connection with other ideas in one consciousness.”

instinctual need to beings who had the psychological freedom and wherewithal to transcend instinct through culture and “reasoning.”

In his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), Kant famously wrote that reason was like “an island” enclosed by “nature itself. It is the land of truth (an enticing name), surrounded by a vast and stormy ocean.” This mysterious island “disappoints the seafarer roaming about endlessly after discoveries with empty hopes, involves him in adventure from which he never desists and yet never can bring to an end.”<sup>43</sup> Kant’s island conflates nature with truth. Nature acts as a prehistoric shadow determining human progress. By imagining this island, an individual associates the memories of a collective past with an idealistic future (truth/reason) on the horizon, and the present search for knowledge. Kant later argued that cognitive power is fostered through the ability to unite all conditions within “a coherent experience, *what no longer exists* with *what does not yet exist* through what is present.”<sup>44</sup> Although individuals may be disappointed in their progress toward reason, they can look beyond the present disappointments to see a complete representation of their psychological power *in abstractio* and thus master some kind of critical developmental-history of the inner world. In his paradigm, only male explorers from a class that already had the freedom to explore the globe and form “civilized” societies could imagine there was even a “thing” to seek. Kant made it clear that non-civilized people remained stuck in nature and the pure present, and therefore supposedly did not have the power of either

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43 Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, ed. Wilhelm Weischedel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1995) 267-8. My translation. Also cited in Suzanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies* (Durham: Duke UP, 1997) 41-2. Zantop sees such philosophical literature as an early expression of German colonial fantasy.

44 Kant, *Anthropology* 57.

foresight or memory.<sup>45</sup> After Kant, philosophers similarly conceptualized consciousness as facilitating European progress out of a primitive state of mind.<sup>46</sup>

Schelling explained his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800) in an essay written in 1833. He argued that human consciousness contained “monuments” (*Denkmäler*) to an original self that was once indiscernable from the natural world. Accordingly, he claimed that beneath a self-imposed amnesia (*Amnese*) lay a memory of what the ego “has done and suffered in its universal (its pre-individualistic) being (*Seyn*).”<sup>47</sup> Schelling alluded to “coming to know oneself,” which Plato originally postulated in the *Dialogues*.<sup>48</sup> According to Schelling, through self-knowledge an individual heals unconscious suffering that threatens rational mastery over the world. Schelling’s “monuments” to a time prior to self-consciousness echo Hegel’s *Phenomenology of the Spirit* (1808). In Hegel’s famous chapter on the “Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage,” he argued that “recognizing” a self which is at once both a conscious actor and an object acted upon

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45 Kant gives the example on p. 60 of a Caribbean who sells his hammock and then wonders where he should sleep when it comes time for bed. With this example, Kant exposes his own racism by assuming that pre-civilized societies could not understand private property, or conceive of profit. He also participated in rendering the history of black intellectuals in Europe during the Enlightenment invisible.

46 It is important to note here that Musil identified this problem in Kant’s philosophy. However, he also warned his own contemporaries not to criticize Kant’s “entwicklungsgeschichtlich” (developmental-historical) analyses without understanding how it was and is a “Denk-Gewohnheit” (habit of thought) that plagues them as well. In fact, it is a habit that is “die unsichtbarsten und starrsten Schrank“ (the most invisible and rigid closet). See TBI 23. Heft 4: 1899?-1904 or later.

47 Lütkehaus 48. German: “in seinem allgemeinen (seinem vorindividuellen) Seyn gethan und gelitten hat.”

48 See also Musil, TBII 89: “die Erinnerung (Anamnesis) der Seele an Ideen in einem früheren Dasein, die sie an Hand der sinnlichen Erfahrungen wiedererkennt...Für Schelling ist Philosophie Wiedererinnerung des Ich an das, was es in seinem vorbewußten Sein gethan und mit seiner Bewußtwerdung vergessen hat.“

can lead to true self-consciousness. Self-consciousness occurs in the process of recognizing that consciousness is both an independent lord of the manor and a bondsman in thrall to that lord.<sup>49</sup> Hegel also refers to “monuments” in his *Philosophy of History* (1823). Monuments are superficial temporal signifiers that tell the story of a culture’s progress and struggle to achieve self-consciousness. Through such monuments, a so-called progressing *Volk* reflects on the path from nature to culture, thus confirming their position of relative advancement in terms of world-time.

According to Schelling, art could also provide individuals with a conceptual frame that would allow them to recognize the origin of their suffering in a dark, collective past. Through artistic endeavor, individuals achieved transcendence to a healed state (*Aufhebung*). In contradistinction to Kant, idealists like Hegel and Schelling proposed that individuals could *know* the “thing-in-itself.” To achieve *Aufhebung*, or this knowledge, a person had to have free will (thesis) that could oppose unconscious desires (antithesis). Through creating this opposition, an individual could supposedly free himself from the pain associated with the unknown by synthesizing or recognizing the two simultaneously. Schelling thought art facilitated this reasoning process because art required both creativity (unconscious inspiration) and conscious direction, which the contradictory forces of natural imperative and free

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49 G.W.F. Hegel, “Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage,” *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977) 115: “The lord is the consciousness that exists *for itself*; but no longer merely the Notion of such a consciousness. Rather, it is a consciousness existing *for itself* which is mediated with itself through another consciousness, i.e. through a consciousness whose nature it is to be bound up with an existence that is independent, or thinghood in general... The lord relates himself mediately to the bondsman through a being [a thing] that is independent, for it is just this which holds the bondsman in bondage; it is his chain...”

will had supposedly divided. This aesthetic overcoming of the embattled self was similar to Hegel's pure reason as a higher state of self-consciousness.

During the same period, Jean Paul converted the philosophical questions of his contemporaries concerning consciousness and transcendence into fiction, with his story, *Selina*. In *Selina*, Jean Paul is an "editor" (*Verfasser*) synthesizing the letters, theories, and ideas of different characters, including himself, into a story that debates the question of immortality and the soul. The story revolves around a group of young bourgeois-aristocratic characters enjoying themselves on rural estates, while a war against the "barbaric" Turks rages in Greece. Selina is the daughter of Gione, Jean Paul's friend who died a few years before. Jean Paul meets Selina for the first time while visiting with her father Wilhelmi and his friend Karlson. Karlson's family describe Selina as epitomizing the moral character of her mother. Using planetary metaphors to structure this story, Jean Paul describes her as the planet most visible and near to the brightest star of God. She is Venus—a monument to her mother's shining spirit. Selina is also in love with Karlson's son, Henrion, who is fighting against the Turks in Greece. As a representation of Mercury, Henrion believes the world is immortal because life never ends even when particular physical bodies do. His brother Alexander, who is secretly also in love with Selina, instead sees the world as a perpetual cycle of life and death—he is the Earth. Jean Paul spends much of the story attempting to convince the earthbound Alexander that the soul goes through symbolic reincarnations that help individuals progress toward universal consciousness.

Jean Paul, often referred to as "J.P.," is the most significant character in the work. He gives a speech on the transmigration of souls (*Seelenwanderung*) while on a

picnic with the two families.<sup>50</sup> Through this speech, directed toward Alexander, Jean Paul correlates the development of levels of consciousness with levels of evolution. For instance, in one minor point he refers to Erasmus Darwin, the author of *Zoonomia or the Laws of Organic Life* (1794-96).<sup>51</sup> Erasmus Darwin's work focused on intentional adaptation in animals, predating Lamarck's belief in the inheritance of acquired traits.<sup>52</sup> J.P. cites such thinkers to suggest that evolution happens through free will and a transformation of consciousness during one's life that can then be passed on to children, like Selina. He argues that Europeans (non-barbarians) have evolved to a position from which they can imagine freedom from material conditions. J.P. defines the pre-moral state within the psyche, which he imagined adult Europeans had overcome, with his phrase "this true inner Africa." For Jean Paul, this "state of nature" persisted within civilized Europe, but only on the level of the nervous system, which remained unconscious in comparison to higher cognitive processes. With this story, Jean Paul was one of the first to associate Europeans with an "African" nature.

Hegel dismissed Africa as not even worthy of study, although this declaration itself implicitly was necessary to assert European progress.<sup>53</sup> Jean Paul, in contrast, identified "Africa" as a place of importance to Europeans, at least symbolically and in

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50 Jean Paul, *Selina* 1148. Jean Paul developed these ideas at the end of his life, and significantly, after the death of his son.

51 Ibid.1183. Erasmus Darwin was the grandfather of Charles Darwin and Francis Galton.

52 One might also think of the relatively recent contemporary debate concerning intelligent design.

53 G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Prometheus, 1991) 99: "At this point we leave Africa, not to mention it again. For it is no historical part of the world; it has no movement or development to exhibit." Michelle Wright identifies this implicit importance of "Africa" in Hegel's thought on p. 297 in "Others-From-Within From Without."

relationship to their unknown past. This inclusion did not mean he saw “Africans,” and people from the “Orient,” worthy of consideration as complex human-beings who were on something like the level of Europeans. In his speech, J.P. in fact directly relegates such people to the conceptual realm of eternal childhood, mainly because of what he calls their “narrow” (*engeren Sinne*) Egyptian, Hindu and cabbalistic views on reincarnation.<sup>54</sup> J.P. argues that belief in reincarnation excludes them from having a deeper consciousness of their world because their beliefs supposedly preclude understanding of history as progress. From this perspective, it becomes obvious that Jean Paul assumed that non-European people were stuck on earth in an unchanging or repetitive present. In this regard, his J.P. mocks Jewish cabbala theology that proposes that angry male souls return in female bodies or adulterers return as rabbits. In addition, he calls Egyptians “grotesque” for believing that the body follows the soul into the next life. Finally, he disparages Hindu philosophy, criticizing Hinduism’s well-known doctrines of reincarnation. These judgments assume that a desire to remain on the earth hinders the consciousness of *Völker* believing in reincarnation, as well as the consciousness of Europeans such as the cynical Alexander.

As Lütkehaus points out, Jean Paul recognized that both “savages” and Leibniz have consciousness, but only Leibniz noticed every “ice floe” in the Arctic sea of humanity’s universal oneness. Lütkehaus adds, “above all else: Jean Paul unconditionally desires (*willen*) to know” such “ice floes.”<sup>55</sup> Jean Paul’s Africa symbolizes the desires that atavistically connote a “monstrous” or “enormous”

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54 Jean Paul, *Selina* 1149. The following points can all be found on this page.

55 Lütkehaus 16.

(*ungeheuer*) past world in Jean Paul himself. Narcissistically, perhaps, Jean Paul wished to overcome contradictions implicit in his own development toward a state of pure reason by recognizing his own true Africa, his own “other from within.”

In Jean Paul’s work, women also lack the mental wherewithal to become aware of the biological determinants of their own psychologies. Like Selina, they can nevertheless facilitate moral transcendence if they sublimate their desires into a heroic or tragic love. They are otherwise all-too-connected to nature and thereby the European inhabitants of a metaphorical “Africa.”<sup>56</sup> Jean Paul’s figure of Selina as the moral purifier for Henrion, who is involved in the political struggle to free civilized Greece from barbarism, reflects the prejudice that agreed with the gender stereotypes emerging in the context of the growing power of the bourgeoisie in the German principalities. A proper “Frau” had to defy the unbridled instinct of “Africa” in every area of her home except for the conjugal bedroom, where she transformed into a “Weib,” a man’s wife. In *Kampaner Thal* (1797), the story that serves as the background for *Selina*, Jean Paul characterizes brides as having “an unknown inner Africa,” or a virgin land into which a new husband had the privilege to penetrate. However, as he also suggests in this story, the bourgeois bride tends to be cold, not really “hot like Africa.”<sup>57</sup> The disciplining of this sexual will, hot or cold, through morality became requisite in the constitution of bourgeois self-consciousness.

In contrast to Hegelian portrayals of consciousness that masters instinct, Schopenhauer wrote *The World as Will and Representation* (1819) to explore how

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56 For more on Musil’s fictional explication of such warrants, see Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

57 Lütkehaus 28.

consciousness is actually determined by the moods of an irrational will (*der Wille*). For Schopenhauer, *Homo occidentalis* had not yet learned to control the machinations of his body. Despite the manifold pretensions of civilization, Europeans appeared to still be dominated by aggression and the desire to reproduce. In other words, sexuality was a dangerous distraction to men. Schopenhauer looked beyond Europe for an ethical program that would restrain this desiring selfish will. In 1814, the Orientalist Friedrich Majer gave Schopenhauer Duperron's translation of the Hindu *Upanishads*, a version loosely put together from fragments.<sup>58</sup> Influenced by this translation, Schopenhauer accused "the will" of perpetuating *maya*, or illusion. He believed that the unbridled will produced individualism, and this was an illusion that consumed all consciousness. It was also seemingly possible to transcend this painful delusion through asceticism. He associated this higher form of consciousness with a universal oneness related to what he characterized as Buddhist compassion. Schopenhauer saw his own interpretation of Indian philosophy as "its systematic completion and fulfillment, the uncovering of its true meaning."<sup>59</sup> He however also had the hubris to claim that he understood Hinduism/Buddhism better than Hindus and Buddhists.

Responding to such pessimistic visions of the unconscious, Nietzsche argued that individuals should affirm life forces unknown to consciousness. In relation to this argument, Lütkehaus points out that Nietzsche's theory of consciousness was de-centered on the "periphery of the 'inner Africa'" ("Randzonen des 'inneren Africas'"), a play on Nietzsche's claim in *Beyond Good and Evil* that Europe was a peninsula of a

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<sup>58</sup> Clarke 68-69.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. 68.

stereotypically contemplative Asia.<sup>60</sup> Nietzsche, then, was also not above using racist stereotypes to conceive of his “will.” Andrew Zimmerman points out that Nietzsche identified the blond race as embodying a strong will. As such, “‘the conqueror and master race, the Aryan,’” was not “an inferior race, which he characterized by its peculiar ‘coloring’ and ‘shortness of skull.’ On the basis of this distinction, Nietzsche suggested that socialism represented a primitive, pre-Aryan social form.”<sup>61</sup> Nietzsche adopted the view that some Europeans embodied what he considered to be the degeneration of instinct manifesting in a weak will. His “Aryan” psychology was in line with the physical anthropologies in support of the burgeoning racist-imperialist German order.

Nietzsche’s dislike for socialism, Christianity, democracy and morality has long dominated scholarly discussion. Limiting investigation of Nietzsche’s psychology to stereotypical instances of the “blond beast,” the inferiority of the “Weib” (woman), the socialist “Rasse” (race), the “Übermensch” (Overman), does suggest that Nietzsche’s understanding of unconscious instinct and will was racist and misogynistic.<sup>62</sup> However, he wrote much that contradicted the racist and civilizing fantasy of what he called “herd consciousness,” and this was what partly came to inspire Musil’s psychology. For instance, he condemned the philosopher’s prejudice inspiring truth claims about women, and non-Christian or non-Western people. He

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60 Lütkehaus 42. Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse, Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Werke V*, ed. Giorgio Colli andazzino Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967) III:52, p. 72.

61 Zimmerman 145.

62 On the race neutral meaning of Nietzsche’s famous “blond beast” see Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1950).

also wrote that psychology could be a “path to the fundamental issues” or a life-affirming ethics.<sup>63</sup> In this potential, Nietzsche valued psychology as a “queen” (*Herrin*) and not a king of all the sciences.<sup>64</sup> This “queen” did not command the suppression of others or a darker self, but instead encouraged the development of independent spirits that questioned self-consciousness. This independence demanded a science that affirmed the question mark—or the impossibility of knowing truth, and therefore a “true inner Africa.”

Nietzsche indirectly responded to Jean Paul’s depiction of “this true inner Africa.” First, Jean Paul’s conceptualization of the unconscious as “true” attested to a reality defined in accord with scientific empiricism and rationality. Nietzsche infamously proclaimed that “God is dead.” He also argued that a bad conscience concerning this death transformed rationality into a new faith. Secondly, a supposedly unknown and ghostly “inner empire” juxtaposed to an “ego” alluded to a faulty assumption: there was an “outer world,” a consciousness *a priori* capable of being known. Nietzsche addressed the problem of such assumptions by ridiculing the “sound methods” used by psychologists to gather knowledge.<sup>65</sup> Lastly, describing the unconscious as an “Africa” erroneously suggested that instinctual forces, stereotypically associated with that geographical area, were alien to Europeans once

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63 Nietzsche, *JvGB* I:23, p.38-9.

64 *Ibid.*39.

65 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Fröhliche Wissenschaft, Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Werke III*, V:355, p. 594. German: “Auch die Vorsichtigsten unter ihnen meinen, zum mindesten sei das Bekannte leichter erkennbar als das Fremde; es sei zum Beispiel methodisch geboten, von der ‘inneren Welt’, von den ‘Tatsachen des Bewußtseins’ auszugehen, weil sie die uns bekanntere Welt sei! Irrtum der Irrtümer!”

they became fully mature adults. Agreeing with Schopenhauer on this point, Nietzsche warned that these forces inspired modern consciousness, thus disproving claims that moderns had reached a higher state of existence. I will further examine Nietzsche's complex challenge to the philosophers of the psyche in the next Chapter.

While bourgeois philosophers and Romantic poets of the unconscious vivisected Europeans during most of the nineteenth century in order to master self-consciousness, early anthropologists and scientists were beginning to do their part to define "the civilized human." This human science often supported the belief in German superiority over the non-West and worked to eliminate the nagging suspicion that Europe had not progressed past its baser nature. These fears encouraged the reification of and violent reprisals against the more abject populations of the world.

## **II. Anthropological Development: *Naturvölker*, *Kulturvölker*, and Intuitive Cultures**

In the nineteenth century, scientists displayed half-naked Africans in the capitals of Europe. These scientists overcame Victorian censure by claiming that Africans were subhuman and therefore their bared bodies did not threaten moral human decency. Scientists and carnival managers presented "primitives" as legitimate objects of scientific study, as well as perfectly acceptable objects of entertainment. The nineteenth- and early twentieth-century convention of staging exhibitions of the peoples of the world allowed Europeans to gaze at "the other without" and define their own conscious self. Moreover, non-European people in exhibits represented living Hegelian "monuments" to a past, which Europeans had supposedly overcome.

For example, an Englishman named Hendrik Cezar exhibited Saartje Bartmann

(the “Venus Hottentot”) in London and other major cities in Europe.<sup>66</sup> Her exhibition name reveals how Cezar packaged her. She was both an exotic object of love and a racial curiosity. He transformed her from “Saartje” into a Hottentot—the European word for the *Khoekhoe* people of what became South Africa. In the process, Cezar expunged evidence of the imperialist relationship connecting Africa and the West. Bartmann’s abjection within Europe did not end when her life did. She died during the second decade of the nineteenth century. Scientists preserved and exhibited her body as an example of primitive sexuality in its purest form. In what can only be called an ultimate act of utter fetishization (in almost every sense of that word), they displayed her genitalia, reducing what was a complex human being to a body part divorced from every other aspect of reality. A museum in Paris housed her preserved body until 2002 when the French government freed “her” for burial in post-apartheid South Africa.<sup>67</sup> Saartje experienced the violent rationality of a European philosophy and “science” that was in the service of imperialism.

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66 Cezar was later indicted and put on trial for enslaving her, but was acquitted because his lawyers had proven her character immoral. Saartje Bartmann is a key example in Sander Gilman’s work, *Difference and Pathology* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985). Despite the prolific citation of her story, I believe it nevertheless deserves reiteration as evidence of this point. Also, Gilman did not have information on her situation that is now available. For example, Yvette Khib Omsis Hamamus Abrahams wrote a riveting paper titled “Identity and Development—Overcoming the Effects of Gender-based Violence for Peace and Prosperity: The Return and Burial of Sarah Bartmann May 3rd – August 9th, 2002.” The paper describes Bartmann’s capture and exhibition as well as her body’s return to South Africa. Abrahams gave the paper at the AMANITARE “African Women’s Sexual and Reproductive Health” Conference, Johannesburg, 4th to 7th February, 2003. As a member of the Khoekhoe herself, Abrahams wishes to bring historical complexity to Saartje’s life, to counter intellectuals who generally reduce Saartje to her sexuality. Please note that her paper is no longer available online. For information on the conference, see <http://www.rainbo.org/amanitare/African%20Women%27s%20Sexual%20&%20Reproductive%20Health%20&%20Rights%20Conference%20Papers.htm>

67 Abrahams refers to Law No. 2002-323 (March 6, 2002) which returned Saartje Baartman’s remains to South Africa.

By the end of the nineteenth century, German anthropology was also useful in terms of the post-1871 imperialist project. Early German anthropologists mapped out the human world by dividing it into two separate peoples: *Naturvölker* (natural peoples) and *Kulturvölker* (civilized peoples). “Natural peoples” were different from “primitives.” Zimmerman explains: “Whereas primitives were the earliest actors in a narrative that also included Europeans, *Naturvölker* were, by definition, excluded from the narrative of progress central to German self-understandings.”<sup>68</sup> However, I would reiterate that having a group of people “outside” of German self-definition was a way to support German self-definition. Musil valued Frobenius’s understanding of the ambiguities exceeding these categories. At the same time, he criticized Frobenius’s philosophical inspiration, Oswald Spengler, or in his own admission, “attacked” Spengler’s rejection of Western civilization for relying on an even more superficial abstraction called “intuition.” In order to contextualize Musil’s position on racist anthropologies, I will briefly detail the effort to define Africans in contrast to Germans.

According to Zimmerman, German anthropologists such as Adolf Bastian and Rudolf Virchow who shaped the discipline during the early Imperial period firmly rejected Darwin’s *The Descent of Man* (1871) calling it a “monkey doctrine” (*Affenlehre*), even though they embraced the premise that there were evolutionary differences among humans.<sup>69</sup> By the late-nineteenth century, anthropologists had begun to show interest in “natural peoples” as living embodiments of their own biological past who would never progress. Their interest blossomed with German

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<sup>68</sup> Zimmerman 50.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. 68-69.

imperialism. By the 1880s, the Wilhelmine Empire had expanded into Cameroon, Togo, Namibia, Tanzania, islands in Micronesia and Jiaozhou Bay in China, covering a combined area of 1,027,820 square miles.<sup>70</sup> Wilhelm I became the ruler of a combined indigenous population of 12,041,603. The Berlin anthropological society, headed by Virchow, worked with the Wilhelmine state to facilitate research on subject populations in the colonies. Virchow began using lay people armed with questionnaires to collect “useful” data in colonial areas.<sup>71</sup> Anyone traveling to the colonies with one of these questionnaires became an amateur anthropologist. Such amateurs took notes on the behavior and psychology of the people they encountered. Their involvement reveals the interests and perspectives within the colonial project mediating or informing anthropological discourse at home. These activities allied the imperialist German state with Virchow’s empiricism. The newly institutionalized discipline of anthropology dismissed so-called “savages” as irrelevant to processes of economic or social development, which in turn authorized the perpetual erasure of European exploitation of non-European land, resources and populations, which continues in some respects to have an effect on minorities in Germany today.<sup>72</sup>

German anthropologists like Virchow supported the colonial project at home through exhibitions that took place in major cities such as Vienna and Berlin. Musil

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<sup>70</sup> See Carol Aisha Blackshire-Belay’s “German Imperialism in Africa: The Distorted Images of Cameroon, Namibia, Tanzania, and Togo,” *Journal of Black Studies* 23.2 Special Issue: The Image of Africa in German Society (Dec. 1992) 235-246. Here p. 239.

<sup>71</sup> Zimmerman 54-55.

<sup>72</sup> For more on the contemporary Afro-German experience see Tina Campt, “Afro-German Cultural Identity and the Politics of Positionality: Contests and Contexts in the Formation of a German Ethnic Identity,” *New German Critique* 58 (Winter 1993): 109-126.

was familiar with these carnivalesque displays, as suggested by his placement of his African figure, Soliman, in a “dance troupe” performing in Italy prior to Arnheim’s “capture” of him.<sup>73</sup> The shows exhibiting “natural peoples” were, however, distinguishable from freak shows featuring Europeans, for example, with tails, hair all over their bodies, or conjoined twins. Anthropologists packaged “freaks” specifically as biological aberrations within civilized races, whereas they presented those from the colonies as evidencing a more pristine nature. These peoples were often considered “noble savages.” Sander Gilman has documented how scientists of this time exhibited Africans in the Vienna Prater next to so-called less desirable, pathological specimens from within the Austro-Hungarian Empire—the supposedly aberrant Eastern Jews.<sup>74</sup>

In 1896, German anthropologists displayed Africans at the Berlin Colonial Exhibition. They forced their “specimens” to wear loincloths to demonstrate their proximity to nature, even in cases when they had educations, spoke Western languages fluently, and wore Western clothing in their everyday lives.<sup>75</sup> In this context, it is significant that many of those displayed also found ways to resist this masquerade.<sup>76</sup> As Zimmerman notes, only 18% of the 103 performers would allow the anthropologist Felix von Luschan to photograph them without European clothing.<sup>77</sup> Like many other African participants, Bismarck Bell (Kwelle Ndumbe) had ulterior motives for agreeing to participate in these exhibitions. He wished to establish diplomatic ties

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73 GWI 221.

74 Gilman 110.

75 Zimmerman 35.

76 Ibid. 31.

77 Ibid. 260.

with the German Emperor as a member of the ruling Duala family of Cameroon.<sup>78</sup> Viennese anthropologist Rudolf Pöch recorded a Bushman from the Kalahari Desert encountering a phonograph for the first time in 1909, thus denying the notion that there was no part of Africa hermetically sealed off from European influence.<sup>79</sup> When we analyze these details, understanding “Africans” was not the absolute intention behind recording their “behavior.” The point was often to provide objective proof of German superiority and moral civilization, despite the fact that this “proof” was contradicted by the very participants who continued to define themselves as complex human beings.

Not all European and German anthropologists set out to present Africans as completely natural or disconnected from Europe, however. Inspired by his childhood memories of exhibits at the Berlin Zoological Gardens, Leo Frobenius became an anthropologist in order to study Africa.<sup>80</sup> He was significantly more sophisticated than others in his field. He used a developmental model of culture, however, which he had adopted from Oswald Spengler. Spengler’s model designated Africans (those untouched by imperialism) as at a youthful stage in human development, somewhere between childhood and adulthood.<sup>81</sup> For his part, Frobenius attacked Europeans for embracing an adulthood he considered pathological. Frobenius thought that the European “adult” tended to destroy rather than nurture the lesser-developed,

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid. 30-31.

<sup>79</sup> Assenka Oksiloff, *Picturing the Primitive: Visual Culture, Ethnography, and Early German Cinema* (New York: Palgrave, 2001) 43.

<sup>80</sup> Suzanne Marchand, “Leo Frobenius and the Revolt against the West,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 32.2 (April 1997): 153-170. Here p. 156.

<sup>81</sup> Oksiloff 105.

supposedly purer peoples of the world. He was one of the few intellectuals in Germany to actually travel to Africa. While in Africa between the years 1905 and 1915, he published an account of the lost civilization of Atlantis, the remnants of which he argued could be traced to the Yoruba of Nigeria.<sup>82</sup> He hoped to provide evidence to support the theory that African culture had early connections to the Mediterranean world. Returning to the philosophy of the unconscious from a century before, Frobenius claimed that Europeans should reject “adulthood” and recognize intuitive elements of African culture within themselves. He believed that this recognition would give Europeans a new level of self-consciousness associated with what he called *Negerheit*.<sup>83</sup>

Frobenius’s work on symbolic European *Negerheit* inspired French Africans like his student L. Senghor, later president of Senegal, to start the *Nègritude* movement in France, a movement based on early notions of a unifying African diaspora.<sup>84</sup> L. Senghor established himself as a rational master of his rich heritage. Students in the movement also participated in African struggles for independence after World War II. Suzanne Marchand recognizes in their efforts Frobenius’s challenge to Eurocentrism.<sup>85</sup> Frobenius opposed the destructive qualities of imperialism, even if he simultaneously condemned Westernized Africans, calling them “Negroes in

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82 Marchand 161. The search for Atlantis would later become the focus of Himmler’s *Ahnenerbe* research to discover the origin of the pure Aryan.

83 Ibid. 168.

84 Ibid. 165,168. For more on constructions of African diaspora see Tina Campt, “The Crowded Space of Diaspora: Intercultural Address and the Tensions of Diasporic Relation,” *Radical History Review* 83 (Spring 2002): 94-113.

85 Marchand 153.

frockcoats.”<sup>86</sup> In addition, he fought against what he perceived to be the deterioration of African culture, because to him Africans were a living document of an innocence all but lost to contemporary Europeans.<sup>87</sup> As Blackshire-Belay notes, Frobenius’s thinking was racist in this regard, perhaps as most evidenced by the ways in which he forced empirical research in Africa to conform to what had become Europe’s racial commonsense.<sup>88</sup>

In *The German as Symptom* (1923), Musil claims that in essence “the German” was not at all different from “the Negro.”<sup>89</sup> Ironically, he cites Frobenius in his argument against racial commonsense, and perhaps the caricatured depiction of “cannibals.” Musil first hypothesizes what would happen if a cannibal traded places with the poet Rainer Maria Rilke to question essentialist or ratioïd racial theories about non-European populations in and beyond Africa.<sup>90</sup> He comes to the conclusion that if a cannibal grew up in Europe he would be as refined as any European; similarly if Rilke had grown up on an island in the Pacific he would have done well as a cannibal. On the same page, he refers to Humboldt’s diary. He briefly tells the story of an encounter Humboldt had with a cannibal on his Orinoco journey, “who proved himself to be not only unusually intelligent and skillful in the maintenance of instruments, but also stood out in his gentle and pleasant behavior.”<sup>91</sup> Musil imagines that the

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86 Ibid. 159.

87 Ibid. 165.

88 Blackshire-Belay 244.

89 GWII 1365. Musil also wrote in “Geist und Erfahrung”(1921) GWII 1058: “Der Unterschied zwischen Großstadt und schwarzgeistigem Land ist größer als der zwischen Rassen.”

90 GWII 1372.

91 Ibid. 1372. German: “der sich nicht nur als ungewöhnlich klug und anständig bei Wartung

“cannibal” probably was the one with more refined tastes.

Finally, to link his counter-commonsense visions of non-Europeans to Africans, Musil directly cites his notes on a book Frobenius wrote about Africa. Musil recalls Frobenius’s comparison between cannibals in Africa who gently cared for kidnapped children they intended to sacrifice and “good” European peasants who cared for pigs they devoured in a similar way.<sup>92</sup> He also points out that many Europeans willingly participated in the Great War. For Musil, both situations reveal that humans, regardless of race, have paradoxical feelings and behaviors. He emphasizes this point: “In fact, cruel and tender, friendliness and caution, devotion and rejection, or a hundred elements of such pairs of feelings are, among us too, hardly to be clearly distinguished from each other.”<sup>93</sup> He ends his comparative psychology by referring to the entangled interactions among the world’s cultures as well.<sup>94</sup> In sum, complex environments shape humans more significantly than biology. Racial science, in his view, then, merely reproduced false stereotypes. The empiricism associated with self/other binaries did not increase knowledge about the human or European civilization. As he points out, racial theories expunged more comprehensive forms of psychological and anthropological research, leading to false understandings of individuals in both Europe and the non-West.

It is not clear whether or not Musil was as critical of the more questionable

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schwieriger Instrumente erwies, sondern auch durch sein sanftes und angenehmes Betragen auffiel.”

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. 1372.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. 1372. Translation from *Precision and Soul*, ed. and trans. Burton Pike and David S. Luft (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1990) 167.

<sup>94</sup> GWII 1373.

aspects of Frobenius's work. He did, however, criticize Spengler's model, and therefore at least part of the developmental foundation of Frobenius's research. In "Mind and Experience" (1921), Musil "attacks" Spengler's *Decline of the West* (1918-22) for defining culture prior to civilization as "still instinctive" or intuitive. Musil argues that Spengler replicated a false separation between instinct (intuitive culture) and rationality (civilization). In contrast, Musil defines civilization as "distinguished by a certain technical mastery over nature and a very complex system of social relations, one that requires a great amount of intelligence but also devours."<sup>95</sup> Even though Musil makes a distinction between culture and civilization that is problematic because of the implicit support of the belief in intellectual progress suggested by "technical mastery" and "complex systems," he points out that instincts related to "appetite" remain a necessary part of forming modern societies. He therefore ultimately criticizes twentieth-century efforts to apotheosize a falsely distant instinctual European past through the overused concept of intuition.

Musil fought against what he understood to be a commonsense tendency to react to the inadequacies of "rational" empiricism by facilely embracing some bourgeois fantasy regarding "intuitive" empiricism. He writes that "despite intuition, one does the same with comparisons and the combining of facts that the [rational] empiricist does, only worse, shooting with vapor instead of bullets."<sup>96</sup> To back up this image, Musil tests Spengler's theories by invoking a superficial "intuitive" connection

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95 Ibid. 1057. German: "ausgezeichnet durch die gewisse technische Beherrschung der Natur und ein sehr kompliziertes—sehr viel Intelligenz forderndes, aber auch schluckendes—System sozialer Beziehungen."

96 Ibid. 1055. German: "trotz Intuition beim Vergleichen und Kombinieren von Fakten das gleiche macht, was der Empirist macht, nur schlechter, nur mit Dunst statt der Kugel schießt."

between yellow butterflies and “yellow” Chinese.<sup>97</sup> He considers the implications of contemplating how both butterflies and Chinese were yellow and had qualities associated with sexual desire. Musil mocks Spengler by calling butterflies the “winged, middle-European, dwarfed Chinese” (*mitteleuropäische geflügelte Zwergchinese*). He notes that the only reason butterflies did not invent gun powder was because the Chinese happened to do so first. As his humor suggests, Musil appreciated both Spengler and Frobenius for their interrogation of naïve anthropologies. But he also valued experience over abstraction, which their superficial associations or “intuitions” could not fully accomplish.

Musil’s essay concludes that Spengler represented a problematic tendency that was endemic to the 1920s. Musil questioned Spengler’s “mathematics of association.” In relation to this math, he noted that Spengler’s details were not the problem. What he found inadequate was Spengler’s “kind of thinking” (*Art des Denkens*).<sup>98</sup> Spengler supposedly exemplified “a time that does not know how to use its understanding.” His post-World War I era was not one that “has too much understanding, as we say, but on the contrary, is one that does not have understanding in the right place (*am rechten Flecke*).”<sup>99</sup> Efforts to overcome the dead empiricism long ascribed to civilization simply replaced scientific method with a silly and ultimately meaningless moral logic such as the kind represented by the butterfly-Chinese comparison. Musil argues that

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97 Ibid. 1044. Patrizia McBride also acknowledges this good-natured attack on Spengler’s superficial intuitive associations. See *The Void of Ethics: Robert Musil and the Experience of Modernity* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2006) 80-81.

98 GWII 1044. German: “einer Zeit, die ihren Verstand nicht zu gebrauchen weiß.”

99 Ibid. 1058. German: “zuviel Verstand hat, wie es immer heißt, sondern den Verstand nicht am rechten Flecke.”

intellectuals like Spengler unfortunately only managed to “turn a dead horse into an Irish stew” (*aus einem gallus Mattiae einen Gallimathias*).<sup>100</sup> I would argue that replacing the abstraction “civilization” with the abstraction “intuition,” did not change the fact that one was still dining on the dead horse of vulgar empiricism.

In “Mind and Experience,” Musil identified the historical shift from the literary, philosophical, and Romantic approaches to the unconscious to psychological practices seeking to conquer the unconscious in others.<sup>101</sup> Even though intellectuals understood the danger of abstraction, their embrace of the historical description of the “primitive unconscious” prevented consciousness of the ambiguous realities involved in self-definition. For Musil, psychoanalysis typified this problem because Freud returned to pre-1848 metaphors of the *Herr im Haus* (master of the house) to define the unconscious as an “other within,” which a “master” must enslave in order to prevent revolts against self control. This definition suggests a serious problem—even those condemned as the abject other against which Germans defined themselves sought power through bourgeois self mastery. This paradox evidences the way that an imagination once on the margins of science came to dominate epistemological consciousness. Doctors, scientists, and moralists by the twentieth century were largely convinced that dark forces within the “family of Man” constituted a real threat to health and home, and required either cultivation or containment. *The Man without Qualities* satirizes the impact of this family narrative on psychological practice.

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100 Ibid. 1045. Translation from *Precision and Soul* 137.

101 Ibid. 1050.

### III. Who is the *Herr im Haus*? Musil's Critique of White Middle-Class Consciousness

Around 1824, Johann Friedrich Herbart argued that the unconscious was like the European proletariat, threatening to stage a revolution against the *Herr im Haus*.<sup>102</sup> After the revolutions of 1848, Herbart's description of the unconscious mirrored the very real threat against law and order represented by the proletariat. Ute Frevert argues that the resulting paranoia of bourgeois males in this context led to the solidification of the domestic realm with new forms of moral restriction.<sup>103</sup> The home permanently became the domain of what Virginia Woolf once famously called the "angel of the house." When the husband returned home, he had to resign himself to the illusion of her moral control. This suggested that the wife had great power; however, it was the husband who freely came and went without restraint, while the wife and pre-oedipal youth remained trapped within the home's nether regions. *The Man without Qualities* depicts psychologists who "benignly" seek to master servants (the proletariat of the household) whom the bourgeoisie conceptually related to the "inner Africa." As I will show, Musil revealed that this logic enslaved the bourgeoisie to a narcissistic system that supported a destructive authoritarian family structure and implicitly exposed a form of imperialism taking place within Europe itself.

Musil based Arnheim on the assassinated Jewish Prussian foreign minister and industrialist Walther Rathenau (1867-1922). Rathenau notably authored *Zur Mechanik des Geistes* (On the Mechanics of Spirit, 1913). For his part, Musil's

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<sup>102</sup> Lutkehaus 31.

<sup>103</sup> Ute Frevert, *Women in German History*, trans. Stuart McKinnon-Evans (Oxford: Berg, 1989) 65.

Arnheim wrote a similarly focused treatise on “psychoanalysis, individual psychology, experimental psychology, physiological psychology, social psychology.”<sup>104</sup> As the narrator describes it, Arnheim’s “activity spread out over the continents of the earth as well as those of knowledge.”<sup>105</sup> Musil directly relates Arnheim’s real imperialism to his search for knowledge of the human psyche. He underscores what it means for Arnheim, whom the narrator refers to as “the nabob,” to be a man of power with “all qualities” but also to be burdened with an abject ethnicity associated with unconscious darkness. The character responds to this by turning against his origins in the hopes of achieving the supposedly higher cultural identity of the white German. The centrality of Arnheim, much like the famous Freud who appears in different characters throughout the novel, conveys Musil’s concern with authoritarian therapies that deny the ambiguities of conscious life.<sup>106</sup> These practices claim to have the elevation of the human family as their mission. This mission often naturalized the white bourgeois power structure.

Arnheim argues that progress is the destiny of white civilization. He imagines that “we were on our way back, with all the superiority and ingenuity of the white race, to a Paradise Reformed, bringing a modern program, a rich variety of choices, to the rural backwardness of the Garden of Eden.”<sup>107</sup> In this passage, Arnheim associates himself with white Europe. He fantasizes about returning to the rurally backward

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104 GWI 214.

105 Ibid. 190. German: “Tätigkeit breitete sich über Kontinente der Erde wie des Wissens aus.”

106 Musil in addition makes references to Freud in the figures of a medical doctor named Siegmund and a clinical psychiatrist named Sigismund Friedenthaler.

107 GWI 409.

Eden, implying a return to Jewish origins, but with the full possession of the modernity typically associated with Christian Europe. Arnheim is doubly afflicted, with his “white man’s burden” being compounded by something of a “Jewish question.” As someone confronted with a situation between marginalization and acceptance in Europe, Arnheim is unfortunately all too willing to turn against the non-West to disavow his putative non-modernity from a Western perspective. In this way, Arnheim clearly represents a metropolitan manifestation of what Homi Bhaba and others have called a “mimic man.” In other words, he was “obliged to inhabit an uninhabitable zone of ambivalence,” mimicking the unattainable image of a condition much like a horizon that always recedes upon approach.<sup>108</sup> Arnheim overcompensates for his abject situation, or his persistent “almost but not quite” unstable white status, through his treatment of an even more despised figure, a Black African Muslim. He does this by declining to register the humanity of Soliman, reducing his servant to an uncultivated spirit in need of the West’s (and/or his) paternal guidance.

Arnheim takes in the sixteen-year-old African dancer whom he discovers in Italy, because “the strange wriggly little boy, with the melancholia of his monkey look,

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108 See McClintock 62-4 for a discussion of Bhaba’s appropriation of the term “mimic man” from Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and the implications of the term. On an apt set of criticisms of the inadequacies of what they call assimilationism see Christopher Newfield and Avery F. Gordon, “Multiculturalism’s Unfinished business” *Mapping Multiculturalism*, ed. Gordon and Newfield (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996) 80-3. The instance of “mimic men” in other than strictly colonized spaces has not been limited to the case of Central European Jews. For example post-WW II period modernization theory discourse on Japan has often portrayed the inhabitants of that nation-state as an entire country of mimickers of the West under US hegemony, and many Japanese have been more than happy to play along. Something very similar can be said about representations and experiences of Asian Americans as the “model minority” during much the same period. On this see T. Fujitani, “Go For Broke, the Movie: Japanese American Soldiers in the U.S. National, Military, and Racial Discourses,” *Perilous Memories*, ed. Fujitani et al. (Durham: Duke UP, 2001) 251-362.

had touched his heart, and the rich man decided to open up a better life to him.”<sup>109</sup> He then decides to take him into his care, heal his “depression,” and make him a master of his own life. Musil presents Arnheim’s white view of the African other. His first impression of the boy is stereotypical; he is a “monkey,” or not yet evolved into a human. He claims to have compassion for him, but is really raising himself to a superior level above this personage, who is pitiful from his perspective and nothing more than a patient or son in need of moral restraint. Arnheim then names him “Soliman” because he cannot pronounce his African name. Soliman recalls the wisdom of Solomon but also suggests a caricature of the putative Oriental inferiority of the Islamic world as Soliman is also a reference to the famous Ottoman ruler, Soliman the Magnificent. His name has another possible origin in the historical literature about the “Court Moor” Angelo Soliman (Mmadi Make), brought from Sicily to the Viennese court of Josef II in the eighteenth century.<sup>110</sup> By renaming his young African after court figures associated with the Orient, Arnheim as the capitalist *Herr im Haus* transforms Soliman into his own true “noble savage.”

Arnheim at first treats Soliman like an Angelo Soliman, doting on him and making him read Shakespeare and Dumas. Then, Soliman “was promoted from an indefinite creature of luxury to a servant of independent profession and small

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109 GWI 221. German: “der sonderbar zappelige Kleine, mit der Melancholie seines Affenblicks, hatte ihm ans Herz gegriffen, und der reiche Man beschloß ihm ein höheres Leben zu eröffnen.”

110 Wilhelm Bauer wrote about his life in 1922. He based his biography on the 1807 account by Caroline Pichler. See (Berlin: Edition Ost, 1993). I came across this book when reading a review of it by Donald D. Schilling. See Donald D. Schilling, rev. of *Angelo Soliman, der Hochfürstliche Mohr: Ein Exotisches Kapitel Alt-Wien*, by Wilhelm A. Bauer, ed. Monika Firla-Forkl, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 28.1 (1995): 198-200.

salary.”<sup>111</sup> The moment this so-called promotion into adult responsibility occurs, Musil gives depth to the character of Soliman; we learn of his feelings. The promotion, “caused devastation in Soliman’s heart, about which Arnheim understood (*ahnen*) nothing. Soliman had not understood the opportunities (*Eröffnungen*) Arnheim had created for him at all. He however had guessed what they were with his feelings quite consciously, and ever since the change was carried out, he hated his master.”<sup>112</sup> Musil includes Soliman’s response to what was actually a demotion from adopted child to servant, and further, to a servant who was paid horribly. He may lack the learned rationality of Arnheim because the “promotion” went over his head, but he has the ability to perceive the reality behind Arnheim’s false claim with his emotions. The knowledge he gleans from this process causes him to instigate a secret “slave revolt” against his “master”—a moral reaction against the cause of pain, which he calls “evil” thereafter. This is a reaction, which Nietzsche related to the *ressentiment* of slave morality.<sup>113</sup> Soliman then appears to express the bad instincts of the human will. Musil adopts the typecasting of “black instincts,” but only to serve a function. The more complex figure of Soliman is conscious of his feelings and of the reality that escapes the self-proclaimed master. Soliman contemplates the reality that he was not promoted; this is what causes his anger. Going against “type,” Musil connects his

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111 GWI 222. German: “von einem unbestimmten Luxusgeschöpf zum Diener mit freier Station und kleinem Salär befördert worden war.”

112 Ibid. 222. German: “richtete in Solimans Herzen eine Verwüstung an, von der Arnheim nichts ahnte. Soliman hatte die Eröffnungen, die ihm Arnheim machte, überhaupt nicht verstanden, wohl aber hatte er sie mit dem Gefühl erraten und haßte seinen Herrn seit die Veränderung, die mit ihm vollzogen worden war.”

113 Cf. Nietzsche, ZGdM I:10, p.270.

desire for revenge to the fact that he is very much like other young bourgeois males who at sixteen begin to revolt against their fathers' generation's contradictions. By including this observation, Musil underscores that Soliman's feelings in fact are not the result of instincts putatively embodied within the African unconscious.

This critical satire of the stereotypical "Moor" figure becomes more apparent when Musil characterizes him not as an African, but as the "ruined young Berliner, whom the women spoiled in a mysterious manner (*in einer Weise*)."<sup>114</sup> Soliman has just met Rachel, the Jewish maid working for Ermelinde Tuzzi. They meet in the back rooms of the Parallel Campaign (*Parallelaktion*), a committee planning a celebration for Emperor Franz Josef in 1918. Ermelinde, or "Diotima" as Ulrich calls her, had invited the Prussian industrialist-intellectual Arnheim and his page to the salon meeting. When the Jewish Rachel meets Soliman, her assumptions about "Moors" cloud her perception of him. Musil writes that she "had thought that she would have to speak with him in the language of the Moors, and the idea had simply not occurred to her, to attempt German."<sup>115</sup> Musil has her communicate with him through complex body language instead. As a result of this kindness, "Soliman asked, 'What is your name?'" In response she realizes, "he did speak German!" Musil thus allows Rachel to confront her own assumptions by revealing the ability of this African to speak not only correct German, but the polite form of German (*Wie heissen Sie?*). Thereafter,

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114 GWI 180. German: "verdorbener junger Berliner, den die Frauen in einer Weise verwöhnten."

115 Ibid. 181. German: "hatte gedacht, daß mit ihm in der Mohrensprache reden müsse, und war einfach nicht auf den Einfall gekommen, es deutsch zu versuchen." And: "Wie heissen Sie?" fragte Soliman; da sprach er deutsch!" Finally: "Der kleine Neger lächelte, und hinter den blauen Lippen schimmerte ein scharlachrotes Zahnfleisch."

she addresses him with “Sie,” a sign of respect, especially considering he is younger, and the familiar “du” is a more common address for a child.

On the same page, Musil writes: “The small Negro (*Neger*) smiled, and behind the blue lips scarlet red gums gleamed.” Musil then simplifies the complexity of the character again with the exaggerated emphasis on superficial racial features. Through presenting contradictory expressions of power, feeling and stereotypical references to race, I believe that Musil was engaging with the history of assumptions about African intelligence that had encouraged caricatured images of the actual people, especially those living within bourgeois Europe. Musil experimented with this history further, when he depicted the seemingly counter-patriarchal intentions of Diotima who saw in Rachel the idealism of the intuitive Jewish “Orient.”

Musil modeled his middle-class salon matron, Diotima, partly on the Swedish feminist, Ellen Key.<sup>116</sup> Ellen Key wrote a biography of the real life Jewish salon matron Rahel Varnhagen. Key considered Rahel’s development as paradigmatic of the kind of intellectual development that valorizes inner beauty, finding the primary locus of Rahel’s personality in her atavistic “Oriental” disposition.<sup>117</sup> For Key, Rahel became a genius and reached a kind of *Aufhebung*, synthesizing her teutonic intellect, which she had actively nurtured, with the femininity and sensuality of her more fundamental Oriental and Jewish essence.<sup>118</sup> Rahel coincidentally had a long-lasting

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116 TBI 152. Heft 11: 1905. I examine Diotima more closely in Chapter 3.

117 Ellen Key, *Rahel Varnhagen* (New York: Knickerbocker, 1913) 14. On this page, Key defines Rahel’s Oriental disposition as “passionate, rich blood[...]But the Oriental force of love appears in all her feelings: in family affection, in friendship, in her worship of her great masters, in her motherliness.”

118 Key identifies her understanding of the unconscious on Ibid. 47: “Rahel knew that the

epistolary friendship with Jean Paul who also longed to synthesize a “true inner Africa” into his supposedly transcendent self-consciousness.

It is unclear whether or not Musil read Key’s *Rahel Varnhagen*. He did however know of Rahel’s story, and was a reader of Key’s work. Similarly, Musil depicts his own Rachel’s kindness as something derived from her Oriental nature, the source of her passionate soul. This problematic association is meant to underscore the way that she has already shown herself to be a compassionate character in relation to Soliman and others. Diotima has a different view of what constitutes “raising one’s soul” in her household. Diotima wants to facilitate the evolution of Rachel’s “nature” into something supposedly free of the hedonistic pleasures associated with the lower classes. In a way reminiscent of Arnheim, Diotima attempts to civilize the Galician unwed mother, by first renaming her “Rachelle.” Her cultivation of Rachelle’s “inner Africa,” like this name change, is almost entirely superficial, but nevertheless functions to allow Diotima to define her own god-like Greek status as above Rachel’s within their quasi-familial dynamic.

Arnheim’s “white” identity, conceivable because he has political and economic power that gives him control over a household and actual colonial territory, also allows him to displace his marginality onto another. Rachel, in contrast, is poor and stuck in an abject body. This body, which gives birth to “illegitimate” children, symbolizes what nineteenth-century scientists categorized as the “white Negro.”<sup>119</sup> As

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unconscious is the source of strength in our nature. Thus she says, for instance: ‘In proper, deep sleep the soul goes home and bathes in God’s lake; otherwise it would not be able to endure.’”

119 Gilman, *Difference and Pathology* 31.

Corrie Claiborne has argued, a long history of stereotyping has prevented black women, and others doubly abject, from defining themselves.<sup>120</sup> By representing different kinds of Jewish experience within Europe, Musil demonstrates the exceptional realities informing abject experiences. He also complicates matters when he has Rachel and Soliman meet. When they first meet, Rachel reduces Soliman to exaggerated physical features. She sees him as an exotic body, and therefore mimics the racist feminism of her employer. Soliman likewise sees her as a sexual conquest, but it is Rachel who initiates intercourse because he is inexperienced. In the depths of the master's house, then, Musil creates a moment of passion and understanding between them.<sup>121</sup> His lesson with these marginalized "inner Africas" is finally double-edged; even as they break taboos and enter into a relationship, freeing themselves from their masters to some degree, their behavior makes it possible for their masters to crush their revolt. Musil then ultimately denies them any real resistance to the bourgeois master of the house, but they are also not simply his victims—they have learned to believe in bourgeois psychology and bourgeois abjection to some degree. Paradoxically, Ulrich will be the one to challenge the superiority-complex of the historically dominant "master of the house."

The "man without qualities," Ulrich, is a narcissistic, white upper-class mathematician—in part, a satirical symbol of the imperialist mentality focused on the formulaic ratioed approach to the unconscious (e.g. Carus's). This becomes clear when Ulrich describes Rachel's eyes as similar to those of a "black butterfly"

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120 Claiborne, "Leaving Abjection" 29.

121 Chapter 3 of this dissertation looks more closely into their sexual relationship.

(*schwarzer Schmetterling*), that “descended through the dark like black snowflakes. Something Arabic- or Algerian-Jewish, a representation which he had not taken in clearly, was so unnoticeably sweet and little girlish (*Kleine*), that Ulrich had forgotten to have a good look at the girl.”<sup>122</sup> Ulrich perceives Rachel as an exotic object of intuitive power, recalling Spengler’s mathematical associations and Musil’s own ridiculous example of a Chinese-butterfly comparison. Rachel, from this white, narcissistic perspective could be from any place signifying Ulrich’s Orient, i.e. from the Middle East or North Africa. This suggests a conflation of Eastern Jews and Africans, making a place like Galicia (the Eastern outskirts of Europe), the Austro-Hungarian Empire’s version of the Orient. While Ulrich focuses his gaze on her exotic eyes and abject physique, he admits to not truly perceiving her. Ironically, then, Ulrich calls attention to the fact that his self-consciousness actually limits knowledge.

Because he is ultimately also “without qualities,” Ulrich undermines the narcissistic fiction of the master of the house, which he at first appears to represent. He claims that he is “a character, even if he didn’t have one.”<sup>123</sup> Ulrich does not exist as a “self” except in a fictional narrative. A few pages later and lost in himself again, Ulrich contemplates “two Ulrichs,” but only for a moment when he considers the social roles he has performed (*spielen*) in the past. Neither “Ulrich” is clearly distinguishable from the other and both desire to revolt against order. For example, one Ulrich smiles at the desire to tell everyone to go to hell (*Möge euch alle der Teufel*

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122 GWI 95. German: “sanken sie durch das Dunkel wie schwarze Schneeflocken. Etwas Arabisch- oder Algerisch-Jüdisches, eine Vorstellung, die er nicht deutlich in sich aufgenommen hatte, war so unbeachtet lieblich und Kleine, daß Ulrich auch jetzt vergaß, sich das Mädchen genau anzusehen.”

123 Ibid. 150. German: “ein Charakter sei, auch ohne einen zu haben.”

*holen!*) without saying it, while the other Ulrich cannot find the words because “words jump like the monkeys from tree to tree”—they are constantly changing in their meaning to a point where they cause aphasia.<sup>124</sup> This aphasia, which Musil relates to a non-European zone where monkeys exist, reflects the *normal* impossibility of defining true unconscious motivation through language, a technique which psychoanalysis advocated. For Musil, the living quality of language itself encouraged play with more hopeful modes of thinking. By exaggerating, and thus ridiculing, commonsense associations between the unconscious and the exotic, he ironically was contradicting a definitive separation between natural and civilized worlds, even while including stereotypes, which, if taken literally, could validate the binary. It is also clear where Musil stands. He accused Europeans of being the real monkeys in the world—fighting each other for power in their homelands.<sup>125</sup>

In light of the history I have summarized and then unearthed in Musil’s novel, we cannot forget the accusation of racism levied against his characterizations. This is especially important when considering the inescapable plight of marginalized people in his novel. In the 1930s, critics attacked the depiction of Jewish figures like Arnheim (the nabob), and Leo Fischel (the assimilated banker), by declaring Musil anti-Semitic.<sup>126</sup> Musil addressed this accusation when Else Meidner, wife of Ludwig

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124 Ibid. 155.

125 TBI 728. Heft 30: Etwa März 1929-November 1941 or later. Musil proposes in a letter to Arne Laurin written on April 23, 1921 that „Statt der Konstitutionen Europas in rivalisierenden Bestialstaaten muß eine Form der Vereinigung der in sich geeinten Völker untereinander gefunden werden, überstaatlich und möglichst unstaatlich.“ Cf. *Briefe 1901-1942*, ed. Adolf Frisé, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1981) 202.

126 BI 563. Written on March 3, 1933.

Marcuse, showed concern in a letter in 1933.<sup>127</sup> He first responded by assuring her that he did not support any form of racism. He explained that he “merely wanted to have the freedom to dispose of the Jewish figures in a way similar to the others, thus far from *ressentiment* and out of a feeling that whatever would be right for Leinsdorf would also be appropriate for Fischel.”<sup>128</sup> Musil did not wish to omit any perspective, especially those that are of the basest nature, just because the times were especially anti-Semitic. To do so would allow them to continue to dominate unconsciously and without critical response. In this letter, he also reminds Else that his character Rachel is the “only warmly tinted figure” (*einzig warmgetönte Figur*) for a reason. This letter, then, explains Musil’s inclusion of uncomfortable stereotypes found in even those most oppressed by racism to remind readers dominated by binaries of self and other that power and hatred are not reducible to a single “Question.”

Nobody at the time raised questions about the portrayal of Soliman, who is a problematic figure. Musil makes him “a child,” thus repeating old stereotypes in psychoanalysis about “primitive” development.<sup>129</sup> Soliman’s childish nature, however, seems to be caused in part by the detrimental influence of young white Germans in Berlin. Nevertheless, his sexuality could reconfirm the assumption that the African male was always on the prowl, that is, if the reader ignored the fact that Soliman is timid during what is his first encounter with a woman, for whom he also feels Romantic love. Assumptions about black sexuality were almost as deadly for African-

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127 BI 563.

128 Leinsdorf is an old Habsburg aristocrat. I will explore Musil’s anti-*ressentiment* philosophy by analyzing Nietzsche’s work closely in Chapter 2.

129 See Fanon 27.

Germans living in the Third Reich as they were for Jews. African-Germans were sterilized because of dominating assumptions about their promiscuity threatening to “pollute” Aryan blood. With reservation, then, I would point out that Musil’s racially abject characters actually attempted to confront these stereotypes dominating in psychology and his society.

As Wilhelm Reich observed in 1930, the Nazis depended on mass acceptance of a family structure that supported the power of the father-“Führer.”<sup>130</sup> Freud’s post-oedipal “man of the house,” which Nazism continued to valorize as an ideal authority figure facilitating the mastery of the nation, represents a culmination of a modern effort to master the “self” and the psyche as symbolized by the bourgeois family. This is particularly poignant considering that Freud himself experienced the effects of racist psychology and the Nazis. When read in complex ways, Musil’s characters reveal the great human cost for *all* who are slaves to the oedipal tragedy of white civilization.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The Freudian psychoanalyst Frantz Fanon also developed a counter-hegemonic view of the history I have summarized in this chapter. In *Black Skin White Masks* (1952), Fanon identified a reason why Africans might feel vengeful toward their so-called civilizers, which we can perhaps relate to Soliman. It is the “indifference, this automatic manner of classifying him, imprisoning him, primitivizing him, decivilizing him, that makes him angry.”<sup>131</sup> “Indifference” suggests a lack of concern for the

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<sup>130</sup> See Wilhelm Reich, *Massenpsychologie des Faschismus* (Köln: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1986).

<sup>131</sup> Fanon 32.

entirety of a person, and her or his humanity. According to Fanon, this indifference penetrated into psychoanalysis. Fanon argued that Jung defined the unconscious as “an expression of the bad instincts, of the darkness inherent in every ego, of the uncivilized savage, the Negro who slumbers in every white man.”<sup>132</sup> Jung thought that white people had savagery within themselves. However, Jung, like many of his predecessors, made the mistake of primarily associating this savagery with Africa. Fanon accepted many of Freud’s theories, but he directly maligned Jungian assumptions that Africans lived in a society entirely disconnected from Europe—a belief which Freud may have shared as *Totem and Taboo* makes clear.<sup>133</sup>

Fanon appealed to those dominated by racist stereotypes not to adopt the cynical attitude that the only way to gain power is through mimicry or by closing the door on the “unconscious” other within. At the end of his work, he writes:

I should constantly remind myself that the real *leap* consists in introducing invention into existence. In the world through which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself...Superiority? Inferiority? Why not the quite simple attempt to touch the other, to feel the other, to explain the other to myself? Was my freedom not given to me then in order to build the world of the *You*? At the conclusion of this study, I want the world to recognize, with me, the open door of every consciousness.<sup>134</sup>

Fanon questioned whiteness as the only signifier of self. He believed that such signification overwhelmed other possibilities for consciousness among blacks, whites, Jews, and those who did not conform clearly to any racial category. This destructive signifier affected everyone in that “[t]he black man wants to be white. The white man

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132 Ibid. 187.

133 Fanon was also problematic in his Freudian understandings of female sexuality.

134 Ibid. 231-232.

slaves to reach a human level.”<sup>135</sup> Fanon argued that consciousness is a construction that should not end with the proclamation of a definitive self—this is in fact the psychology of the conqueror, to which Freud was not immune. For example, Freud had more than a passing interest in the psyches of abject and marginalized populations, including the “savage” objects of anthropological discourse.<sup>136</sup> As such, perhaps Freud had much in common with Musil’s “mimic man” Arnheim. In other words, we might make the case that Freud was guilty of what one writer has described as a tendency among certain “model minorities” to overcompensate for their difference, and to hyperidentify with those most often in power, in Freud’s case with non-Jewish, bourgeois European males.<sup>137</sup>

Not all was hopeless. Fanon referred to Nietzsche’s *Will to Power* to challenge this system dominated by turning against the “other” both within oneself or in groups of abject people.<sup>138</sup> Fanon thought that the imperialist system fostered narcissism and played upon an individual’s desire to attain social power. In contrast to this destructive process motivated by what Nietzsche called the “will to resentment,” Fanon believed that identity could be creative and open to change, which the affirmation of “invention” suggests. This is the self-consciousness he wished to nurture in his patients. The creation of an “open door in every consciousness” was a life-affirming psychology that resembled Musil’s own. Through Musil’s fiction and

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135 Ibid. 9.

136 Freud, *Totem and Taboo* 36-37. He compared the psychology of “obsessional” European women and the taboo-conscious Maoris of New Zealand in *Totem and Taboo*. He relied on anthropological texts better described as fiction, such as *The Golden Bough*.

137 See Fujitani, especially 251-362, on “overcompensation and hyperidentification.”

138 Fanon 222.

other post-Freudian efforts to de-colonize psychological discourse, we can see that Freud in fact did not colonize the unconscious completely, as Lütkehaus claims.

As a student of Nietzsche's thought, an astute observer of modern life, and a trained scientist, Musil was aware of the slippage between the abstraction that makes science possible and a tendency to reduce experience to the lowest common denominator connecting humans, like skin color and gender. In his own words, he wanted to approach psychology with "precision and soul." Musil refused to valorize scientific descriptions of the psyche, or jettison rationality altogether to cultivate a "pre-civilization," which one might "rediscover" in a place like "Africa." To shed light on the fear of the unknown dominating psychological discourse was for Musil the first step in the invention of another purpose for psychology. Like Fanon, he found inspiration for this enterprise in Nietzsche. The hope Nietzsche had for psychology becomes evident in the questions with which he begins *Beyond Good and Evil*: "[W]ho of us here is Oedipus? Who the Sphinx?"<sup>139</sup> Simply put: Who is a slave to truth? Who is a (female) master of riddles? Freud answered Nietzsche by proclaiming that the psychoanalyst is the Sphinx of knowledge, or the *Kenner* of unconscious riddles. Musil had a different answer.

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139 Nietzsche, JvGB I:1, p. 15. German: "Wer von uns ist hier Oedipus? Wer Sphinx?"

## Chapter 2: Musil's Nietzsche: Contending with the Rhetorical Empires of *Ressentiment*

Even the most cautious among [psychologists] suppose that what is familiar is at least more easily knowable than what is strange, and that, for example, sound method demands that we start from the 'inner world,' from the 'facts of consciousness,' because this world is more familiar to us. Error of Errors!<sup>1</sup>

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (1882)

But that word "fear"—a fluid haze, an elusive clamminess—no sooner has it cropped up than it shades off like a mirage and permeates all words of the language with non-existence, with a hallucinatory, ghostly glimmer. Thus, fear having been bracketed, discourse will seem tenable only if it ceaselessly confronts that otherness, a burden both repellent and repelled, a deep well of memory that is unapproachable and intimate: the abject.<sup>2</sup>

Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1982)

In Chapter 1, I argued that nineteenth-century philosophers, scientists, and medical doctors created the unconscious as an enduring realm of primitivity within the civilized psyche. They believed that their supposedly superior Western consciousness had overcome this realm. The unconscious signified the strange or the unknowable; their "facts of consciousness" reflected what was familiar or knowable. But this separation did not match their experience, causing what Thomas Sebastian calls "dissonance."<sup>3</sup> In reaction to this dissonance, investigators of the mind created new

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1 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Fröhliche Wissenschaft, Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Werke III*, ed. Giorgio Collier and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967) V:355, p. 594. German: "Auch die Vorsichtigsten unter ihnen meinen, zum mindesten sei das Bekannte leichter erkennbar als das Fremde; es sei zum Beispiel methodisch geboten, von der 'inneren Welt', von den 'Tatsachen des Bewußtseins' auszugehen, weil sie die uns bekanntere Welt sei! Irrtum der Irrtümer!"

2 Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia UP, 1982) 6.

3 Thomas Sebastian, *The Intersection of Science and Literature in Musil's The Man Without Qualities* (New York: Camden, 2005) 8.

abstractions, new abject qualities or people through which they reconfirmed their old dichotomies, and thereby seemingly resolved any disturbing contradictions threatening to overthrow their claims of self mastery. This chapter more closely investigates the fear driving these discursive confrontations with “otherness.” As Julia Kristeva notes, fear of the abject and ambiguity haunted Western discourse. This fear stimulated what Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) first argued was a will to *ressentiment*, or a desire to react in violent and destructive ways to the uncertainties that threaten general values or cause pain. Nietzsche explored resentment extensively in his reply to nineteenth-century representations of the psyche.<sup>4</sup>

Nietzsche theorized that a particularly base “will” (*der Wille*) motivated what he called “prejudiced philosophers” in their struggle against their own inner natures. Their bodies appeared to represent a natural anachronism within the civilized human which could be tamed through reason or morality. He argued that these seekers of truth in actuality feared that their moral progress was only illusion, which of course it was. They were not cultivating a higher rationality, but simply punishing themselves and others. In the second essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), Nietzsche concludes that punishing the body means “the increase of fear, the intensification of cleverness, the mastering of the desires: with this the punishments tame the human, but do not make him ‘better’—one might be more right to assert the opposite.”<sup>5</sup>

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4 I will use the English “resentment” when referring to Nietzsche’s concept, except when emphasizing the term or referring to secondary sources.

5 *Zur Genealogie der Moral, Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Werke V*, II:15, p. 321. German: “ist die Vermehrung der Furcht, die Verschärfung der Klugheit, die Bemeisterung der Begierden: damit zähmt die Strafe den Menschen, aber sie macht ihn nicht ‘besser’,--man dürfte mit mehr Recht noch das Gegentheil behaupten.”

Civilizing the mind does not accomplish a higher stage of humanity. Nietzsche emphasizes this by calling the desire to improve the human through punishment, the “oldest psychology on earth” (*allerältesten Psychologie auf Erden*).<sup>6</sup> The “oldest psychology” is the psychology of resentment.

According to Nietzsche, the psychology of resentment dominated every aspect of the modern world. For example, in a letter to his long-time friend in Rome, Malwida von Meysenberg (September 24, 1886), Nietzsche classifies Richard Wagner’s popularity in Germany as a symptom of this modern condition. Nietzsche wrote to Meysenberg that the embrace of Wagner’s music was like “an unconscious advance on Rome, which does the same from within that Bismarck does from without.”<sup>7</sup> Nietzsche was commenting specifically on the recent death of Hungarian-French composer Franz Liszt in Bayreuth. Liszt’s daughter Cosima had married Nietzsche’s former friend/teacher, Richard Wagner. When Liszt died, he was remembered only for his connection to Wagner. Wagner’s “unconscious advance” (*Annäherung*), then, on one level, was his unknowing contribution to the elimination of other musical perspectives in Germany in the 1880s. On another level, the “advance” refers to Wagner’s infectious anti-Semitism. Nietzsche defined anti-Semitism as a particularly virulent form of resentment.<sup>8</sup> Wagner’s anti-Semitism in Germany appeared to reflect a modern European move toward a strictly “religious”

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6 ZGdM II:3, p. 295.

7 *Nietzsche Briefwechsel III*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1982) 256. Musil excerpted parts of Nietzsche’s *Der Fall Wagner* having to do with defining modernity as a period in which contradictory values reign. See Robert Musil, *Tagebücher*, ed. Adolf Frisé, vol. 2 (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1976) esp. 29-30.

8 ZGdM III:14 and II:11.

collectivization of the contents of inner life. This, Nietzsche argues, parallels external political realities. For example, while Bismarck unified the German state, Wagner unified the spiritual lives of Germans, into “the nation.”<sup>9</sup> Rome in this analogy symbolizes the last bastion of anti-rational ethos that ultimately was destroyed by a Protestant and increasingly atheist modernity.<sup>10</sup> According to Hegel, the extreme expression of what became a stultifying rationalism was the state, something that Nietzsche’s Zarathustra called “the coldest of cold monsters” (*das kälteste aller kalten Ungeheuer*).<sup>11</sup> The Wagnerian spirit functioned to create a uniform psychology of hatred and xenophobia within the mind of this growing modern monster.

This letter to Meysenberg also addresses the resentment dominating morality. From Nietzsche’s perspective, at least in the letter, the Wagner obsession betrayed the fact that modern individuals no longer believed in the immanence of divine forces, but instead only believed in ahistorical “laws” and discipline. As he writes, an “*ecclesia militans*” resulting from this desperate modern turn toward abstract truth “requires intolerance; any deep peace or security of belief allows for skepticism, mildness toward others and [the possibility of cognitive] alternatives (*Anderes*)...”.<sup>12</sup> The death of God means that belief in scientific laws and moral dogma must be regulated more

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9 As I pointed out in the previous chapter, Bismarck’s deputy called European Jews the “white negroes of Europe.” While Nietzsche was clearly racist in many ways, he did not condemn the Jews as a separate race.

10 FW II:83, p.439. Nietzsche mourns the destruction of what he calls the strong conscience of the Romanum Imperium.

11 See Hegel, *Philosophy of History* (1823). Also *Sprach Zarathustra*, *Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Werke IV* 61. Musil called the state, “eine alle inneren Teile durch und durch wuchernde Schutzkapsel.” See also Musil’s “The Nation as Ideal and Reality,” GWII 1066.

12 *Nietzsche Briefwechsel III* 257.

vigilantly than church laws ever were because no one has faith in stable notions of the universe anymore. With the incipient modern episteme, as Nietzsche criticizes it, there is little space for creativity, meaning critical thinking; “mildness” toward those who voice unorthodoxy for the most part is not permitted. They must be punished as evil. Nietzsche criticized this turn against skepticism. He would not, however, remain the only “psychologist” to be concerned with a fear-driven will beginning to dominate psychological discourse during the age of imperialism.

This chapter first explores Robert Musil’s critical reading of Nietzsche, which led to his explicit concern with the fear and hatred shaping moral or psychological “truth” in the twentieth century. In his essay, “Toward a New Aesthetic” (1925), Musil writes that morality, “in its gestalt as rule, norm, command, threat, law and quantifiable weighing of good as well as evil reveals the shaping influence of the metric, calculating, mistrusting, annihilating will of the spirit.”<sup>13</sup> Musil thought that modern anxieties and not some higher embrace of godly truth determined the Manichean values that supposedly gave meaning to existence. Bourgeois moderns had not overcome the spiritual poverty concomitant with science and rationality by regressively searching for spirit in “pre-modern” moralities. Morality itself was a calculating rationality. The embrace of morality in reaction to the instability of modern life merely reaffirmed the domination of resentment, as this life-negating spirit sought out ever new clever ways to discipline life. In what follows, I will establish the importance of Nietzsche’s critique of moral values and resentment in

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13 GWII 1144. German: “schon ihre Gestalt als Regel, Norm, Befehl, Drohung, Gesetz und Gut wie Böse quantifizierende Abwägung zeigt den formenden Einfluß des metrischen, rechnenden, mißtrauischen, vernichtungswilligen Geistes.”

Musil's work, culminating in *The Man without Qualities* (1930, 33). I will show how both Nietzsche and Musil narrowed their focus on resentment because, as Sarah Kofman writes, “[f]ictions born from *ressentiment* are inverted and evanescent shadows, able only to depreciate [life].”<sup>14</sup> These thinkers, in contrast, wished to reinvent the fiction of the psyche in ways that would appreciate the ambiguous qualities of life.

In what follows, I will clarify the concept of *ressentiment* in Nietzsche's later work, namely *The Gay Science* (1882), *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1882-88). I pay particular attention to Nietzsche's presentation of the development of resentment in language. Language had an obvious foundational role in nineteenth-century psychology because the “mind” itself was almost entirely imaginary. It had not yet gained widespread acceptance as an object of study in the natural sciences. Psychologists therefore shaped their “facts” about the mind by drawing upon what appeared to be human truths—moral law, stereotypes, or general values. These values tempered the “otherness” of their object of study. Nietzsche thought the moral divisions within the psyche reflected the psychologist's fear of life, his desire to punish the body, and his disavowal of the fact that these were creative illusions, not truths. He repeatedly questioned Schopenhauer's turn to Indian philosophy because he thought the embrace

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14 Sarah Kofman, “Baubô: Theological Perversion and Fetishism,” *Nietzsche's New Seas*, ed. Michael Allen Gillespie and Tracy Strong, trans. Tracy Strong (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988) 181. See also David S. Luft, introduction, *Precision and Soul*, ed. and trans. Burton Pike and David S. Luft (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1990) xxvii. Luft summarizes Musil's concern with compressing experience into abstraction in that “the narrowing of the mind to fixed preconceptions is as much a danger for the feelings as for the intellect.”

of “exotic” asceticism reflected Schopenhauer’s unwillingness to completely reject Christian self pity in favor of more joyful interactions with life. Moreover, Nietzsche found moral psychologies particularly egregious; he associated these psychologies with a narrow utilitarian view concerned only with the rules of conduct. He revealed his own desire to punish life with his philosophical discourse by unfairly attacking his former friend, Dr. Paul Rée (1849-1901), as the quintessential moral psychologist.

In order to illuminate Nietzsche’s vision of a life-affirming psychological discourse, I will also focus on his ironic use of a ship metaphor. Nietzsche’s ship faces off against the force he saw dominating psychology at the time—e.g. Jean Paul’s supposedly divided inner world or Kant’s seafarers searching for truth—by appropriating these fictions for his own very different use. His ironic symbol of colonial power offers a “transvaluation of values” or a critical reinvention of a psychology not poisoned by resentment.<sup>15</sup> He developed this transvaluation further with his concept of “noble sailors.” Nietzsche hoped to inspire a noble consciousness in the readers of his aphorisms, specifically in those capable of rising above the masses to become something like “radical aristocrats” who would not fear their own independent thinking.<sup>16</sup> Musil’s novel follows his injunction to present a complex “explication of life” and consciousness, revealing the motives, limitations, and possibilities of modern experience.

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15 By transvaluation of values, I am referring to Nietzsche’s word “Umwertung alle Werthe” which actually means revaluation. However, because Nietzsche was attempting to change the understanding and assumptions in regards to the human, I translate this as *transvaluation*.

16 See p. 1 of “Introduction,” *Nietzsche, Godfather of Fascism? On the Uses and Abuses of a Philosophy*, ed. Jacob Golomb and Robert S. Wistrich (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2002). The editors suggest that Nietzsche was often called a “radical aristocrat.”

Musil understood how Nietzsche's aphorisms encouraged both Nazi appropriation and his own very different one. This does not mean that Musil reified Nietzsche as a "godfather of fascism," a distinction which the recent study *Nietzsche, Godfather of Fascism?* debates. In the introduction to this study, the editors argue that "Nietzsche was more a herald and prophet of the crisis of values out of which Nazism emerged" than responsible for Nazism.<sup>17</sup> Musil similarly thought of Nietzsche as a complex interpreter of modern crises. To question Nietzsche's responsibility regarding fascism then is not the purpose of this chapter, even though there are valid arguments on both sides: Nietzsche made Nazi ideology possible with his destruction of Enlightenment humanism, anti-Semitic aphorisms and the imperialist aspirations of the Overman (*Übermensch*); Nietzsche was anti-nationalistic and *anti-anti-Semitic*, and therefore not culpable for Nazi appropriation. I argue that we need to think of a Nietzsche prior to the Nazis to discover the inspiration for Musil's psychology, a psychology that emphasized the limits and possibilities of perspectivism and did not completely dismiss the project of the Enlightenment—the idea of creating a better world through a "gay science." I am expanding on *Nietzsche's New Seas* (1988), *Nietzsche and Depth Psychology* (1999) and Robert C. Holub's essay considering Nietzsche's imperialism in *The Imperialist Imagination* (1998).<sup>18</sup> If we examine Nietzsche's concept of *ressentiment*, we see that his philosophy was elitist, certainly.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 4.

<sup>18</sup> See *Nietzsche and Depth Psychology*, ed. Jacob Golomb, Weaver Santaniello, and Ronald Lehrer (Albany: State U of New York P, 1999); Robert C. Holub, "Nietzsche's Colonial Imagination: Nueva Germania, Good Europeanism, and Great Politics," *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy*, ed. Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1998).

But it was also a clear indictment of the hatred, fear, and desire to master abject life that came to dominate psychology in Musil's twentieth century.

### I. Musil Reading Nietzsche

It is difficult to speak of influence, but Nietzsche's significance in Musil's work is clear. As Hans-Joachim Pieper reminds us, Nietzsche ranks third behind Goethe and Musil's wife Martha with a total of 128 entries in the index of names found in Musil's diaries, notes and appendix.<sup>19</sup> In addition, Wilfried Berghahn argues that Nietzsche's work was fundamental to Musil's conceptualization of a "psychology of feeling," or a psychology that explicitly studies the ambiguous qualities of emotional experience.<sup>20</sup> Charlotte Dresler-Brumme confronts Friedrich Wallner's position that it is best to avoid an analysis of the Nietzsche-Musil connection altogether.<sup>21</sup> She sees their connection as remaining important to analyze. Her book details Nietzsche's influence on *The Man without Qualities*. Agreeing with Dresler-Brumme, I argue that addressing the relationship between Nietzsche and Musil remains fruitful. Musil did not reify, vilify, or completely overcome Nietzsche. He adopted Nietzsche's critique of general values that reduce the world to simplistic evaluative binaries and in the process disable skepticism. Musil did not leave us with

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19 Hans-Joachim Pieper, *Musils Philosophie: Essayismus und Dichtung im Spannungsfeld der Theorien Nietzsches und Machs* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2002) 10. In comparison, Pieper points out in a footnote on that page that Kant occurred 44 times and Schopenhauer 38. In his letters, Musil mentions Nietzsche more than Schopenhauer or Plato. Musil himself admits to the "influence" of Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil* and *On the Genealogy of Morals* in a letter to Roy Temple House in August 1938, see *Briefe 1901-1942*, ed. Adolf Frisé, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1981) 837.

20 Wilfried Berghahn, *Robert Musil in Selbstzeugnissen* (Hamburg: 1973) 40.

21 Charlotte Dresler-Brumme, *Nietzsches Philosophie in Musils Roman „Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften“* (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1987) 24.

many direct references to resentment, although the prolific emotional reactions of his characters do suggest a comprehensive understanding of this “will.” As we will see in this section, when he did refer directly to the term, it becomes clear that this was a serious concern. Very few critics address resentment in Musil’s work, or the connection between resentment and abjection. Abjection in Nietzschean terms demonstrates the consequences of the desire to expunge the dirtiness of the inner world because of the fear and pain of contradictory realities.

Stefan Jonsson’s (2000) study continues to understate Musil’s connection to Nietzsche. He reduces Nietzsche’s philosophy to what he calls “expressivist subjectivity,” which he denotes as evidence of the distance between the two thinkers.<sup>22</sup> Jonsson argues that Nietzsche diagnosed a problem at the forefront of bourgeois civilization—the inability to express “true” experience. He claims that in response to this failure, Nietzsche dreamed of a superhuman who would “resurrect authentic, expressive subjectivity” or ultimately bridge the gulf between life and representation. In his argument, Jonsson privileges Nietzsche’s utopian ideal of the Overman, as well as his earlier works, such as the second of his *Untimely Meditations, Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben* (1873).<sup>23</sup> He concludes that Musil completely broke free from this expressivist ideal. Musil was instead a precursor to Lacanian theory, which supposedly no longer attempted to reconcile subjective and objective experience but instead diagnosed an irresolvable lack that leaves only symbolic or

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<sup>22</sup> Stefan Jonsson, *Subject Without Nation: Robert Musil and the History of Modern Identity* (Durham: Duke UP, 2000) 25.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. 46.

social identity possible.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps Jonsson's reading of Musil is valid when we consider only the Overman or Nietzsche's earlier works. I would remind the reader, however, there are many Nietzsches, one of whom did not see a way to overcome the divided subject, and yet understood that this subject was also not truly divided; the individual was a complex mess of thoughts, will, and ideology. In other words, abstraction was always a part of experience even if it could not fully capture that experience. This Nietzsche, emerging out of his mature works (1882-1888), encouraged a very few gifted thinkers to play with discourse in life-affirming ways. This was Musil's Nietzsche and Musil's project.

Much of Musil's autobiographical work and published essays provide evidence of his early interest in *The Gay Science* (1882), *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) and *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887).<sup>25</sup> He wrote that *The Gay Science* "means concentration, self-examination and all sorts of positive possibilities."<sup>26</sup> Musil cites a section from aphorism 84, "On the origins of Poetry" (*Vom Ursprung der Poesie*), to note Nietzsche's valorization of poetry as a genre originally serving the function of expressing the irrational: "[T]he rhythm pressed into the words as a force, which newly orders all the atoms of the sentence, decides the words to choose and newly colors the thoughts and makes them darker, stranger, more distant."<sup>27</sup> Nietzsche is

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24 Ibid. 158-59.

25 TBII 21, Anmerkung 120. Musil read the standard edition of Nietzsche's work, which he found in the Franzensmuseum in Brunn. The only edition available with all three works was the "Grossoktav-Ausgabe."

26 TBI 19. Heft 4: 1899?-1904 or later.

27 Ibid. 21. German: "...der Rythmus drang in die Rede als eine Gewalt, die alle Atome des Satzes neu ordnet, die Worte wählen heißt und den Gedanken neu färbt und dunkler, fremder, ferner macht." Musil did not cite it verbatim but did not really change the meaning. Compare with

referring here to the possibilities of using language to open the mind to the strange qualities of the world. He reminds individuals that they can choose words and put sentences together in many different ways. This aphorism also implicitly criticizes utilitarian moderns for reducing modern language to general values. Musil's reference to Nietzsche's nostalgia for poetic language betrays his own early desire to create psychological fictions not motivated by an overly reductive or object-oriented syntax.

After reading *The Gay Science*, Musil moved on to *Beyond Good and Evil* and then read *On the Genealogy of Morals* a month later. He was initially disappointed with these controversial texts. In his notebook, however, Musil explains his disappointment. He writes:

[W]e are accustomed to evaluations that we hold to be generally valid. And precisely the reason for this is that in envy, greed, etc. there is certainly (also) always a moment that goes against our liking—and justifiably so. And this impression is always the first at hand and makes our sloth easier so that we remain silent in the face of general judgment.—In fact, today I was shocked when I came upon a place when reading *Beyond Good and Evil* ('Jenseits...') where N[ietzsche] propagated the above qualities—and I found myself repelled by this and first required careful reflection before admitting N[ietzsche] was right.<sup>28</sup>

This statement presents Musil's strong reaction to Nietzsche's undermining of the values he acquired growing up in the Catholic world of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

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Nietzsche's text FW II:84, p.440: "...den Rythmus in die Rede dringen liess, jene Gewalt die alle Atome des Satzes neu ordnet, die Worte wählen heisst und den Gedanken neu färbt und dunkler, fremder, ferner macht: freilich eine abergläubische Nützlichkeit!"

28 Ibid. 53. German: "[W]ir sind an die allgemein gültigen Schätzungen gewöhnt. Und zwar deshalb, weil im Neid, in der Habsucht etc. gewiß (auch) stets ein Moment zu finden ist, das auch uns gegen den Geschmack geht, --und mit Recht. Und dieser Eindruck ist immer zunächst bei der Hand und erleichtert es unserer Trägheit zu dem allgemeinen Urtheil zu schweigen.—Tatsächlich bin ich heute erschrocken als ich bei Lectüre von ‚Jenseits...‘ auf eine Stelle stieß, wo N. obige Eigenschaften propagierte,--und ich mich dadurch abgestoßen fühlte und erst der Überlegung bedurfte, um N. Recht zu geben."

By his own concession, he did not want to accept the proposition that abstract emotions like “envy” might not be evil or worthy of censure. Censuring “greed” especially would appear appropriate in Musil’s burgeoning capitalist world. After reflecting on his initial repulsion, however, he accepted the importance of Nietzsche’s critique. In this critique, values themselves were not Nietzsche’s concern. Rather, the social demand that individuals hate their “vices” for all time and in all cases without questioning the complexities of the “vice” were for him a real danger. For example, a young boy at the dinner table might take more than his share because of an intense hunger. His parents tell him his greed is evil, even though it could also be possible that they did not feed him enough to satisfy his body’s needs. After this, he considers all similar needs as potentially evil and feels guilty for them even though he cannot avoid feeling them. Through Nietzsche, Musil learned to be wary of moral abstractions encouraging self hatred or guilt for normal bodily desires and began to critically reflect upon his own assumptions, values, and feelings of guilt.

In a review of Franz Kafka’s “The Stoker” (1913), Musil values Kafka’s story for characterizing an individual’s potential freedom from resentment. He writes:

An initial drive for goodness shapes itself in Kafka’s story, no *ressentiment*, but something of the overwhelming passion for the good of childhood...The demand of what one is supposed to do is presented here from a conscience that is not driven by ethical principles, but from a fine, urgent irritability, which continuously discovers small questions with great meaning and questions that make visible strange convolutions, which for others are only a smooth, indifferent bolder.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Robert Musil, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Adolf Frisé, vol. 2 (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978) 1468-1469. German: “Es gestaltet sich in Kafkas Erzählung ein ursprünglicher Trieb zur Güte aus, kein Ressentiment, sondern etwas von der verschütteten Leidenschaft des Kindesalters für das Gute...Die Forderungen an das, was man tun soll, werden hier von einem Gewissen gestellt, das nicht von ethischen Grundsätzen getrieben wird, sondern von einer feinen, eindringlichen Reizbarkeit, welche fortwährend kleine Fragen von großer Bedeutung entdeckt und an Fragen, die

Musil interprets this life-embracing drive, which affirms the rough edges of experience, as represented in the childhood innocence of Karl. In this story, sixteen-year-old Karl is on a ship anchored off of New York harbor. His parents exiled him from Prague because he impregnated a maid servant. More in line with Kafka's text, the 30-year-old maid servant *got herself* pregnant by Karl. Immediately in the story, then, he remains free from guilt for his actions. This allows him to remain open to experience, and literally travel to new shores, but also underscores the problematic potential of guiltlessness—the maid servant remains behind to accept the guilt for him and face the wrath of a condemning social system.<sup>30</sup> Musil does not really consider this problem of disavowal. He emphasizes instead the symbolic curiosity about the world as it drives Karl to learn. Musil imagines this innocent questioning as freed of “principles.” He calls these principles “ethical” but I would argue that what he is referring to are the general values of “good and evil.” Karl's innocent conscience comes to the fore with his interactions with the ship's stoker.

While on the ship, Karl finds a stoker in a storage room; the German stoker is dissatisfied with his position beneath his Romanian commanding officer, Schubal. Karl innocently asks the stoker to denounce his superior to the captain. He is not yet a cynical adult and therefore does not realize that the objections of a subordinate stoker might only reinforce the captain's negative judgment of him. Karl blindly hopes that the stoker's expression of an independent spirit might lead to change, which of course

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für andre nur ein glatter, gleichgültiger Block sind, merkwürdige Faltungen sichtbar macht.”

<sup>30</sup> This plot detail seems uncannily close to the Soliman-Rachel relationship in Musil's novel. Although a comparison between Kafka and Musil is beyond the frame of this dissertation, such parallels deserve further research.

it does not. After this challenge to authority fails, Karl must leave the ship and the stoker behind, but not before he shows his love and compassion for the man. In fact, they develop an intimate relationship that confounds the difference between homosexuality and childish affection.<sup>31</sup> For Musil, the shipboard experience represents a position in-between two worlds, and moralities, or an experience not determined by social truths defining certain people and actions as either evil or good. He valorizes Kafka's narrative because it invites readers to have values open to change, even though this openness means uncertainty and possible condemnation by society. In other words, Musil values the possibilities in Kafka's story to embrace life even though there is no definitive truth to discover or predictable future to secure.

In his notes on his novel written years later (1930s), Musil admitted that resentment was a global concern in *The Man without Qualities*. When he began work on his second volume, he wrote: "For a start, connections converging with the ideas from the first volume. For the moment, from those connections only: basic *ressentiment*. No one finds meaning."<sup>32</sup> The novel experiments with bourgeois and aristocratic characters in 1913-1914 Vienna, many of whom desperately seek values that will give new meaning to life after they have lost faith in the rational ego. As I argued in Chapter 1, a few characters such as Arnheim hate their own inadequacies, but redirect this hatred toward abject characters, who, in different states of illness or criminality, symbolize "martyrs" to natural life forces. This middle-class, post-

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31 The story is in *Franz Kafka Erzählungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1999) 61-95. There is an especially intimate goodbye scene on p. 92. Karl "zog dessen rechte Hand aus dem Gürtel und hielt sie spielend in seinen."

32 GWI 1867. German: "Als Anfang einige Beziehungen zu den Ideen von Bd. I. Daraus vorderhand nur: Grundressentiment: Niemand findet den Sinn."

Christian fantasy betrays the fact that “God is dead.” This perverse version of religion manifests most prominently in the response to “Christian” Moosbrugger—an ambiguous prostitute-murderer I will analyze in the next chapter. The obsession with “Moosbrugger” is a reaction to the desire to reconnect to supposedly authentic life forces expunged from an over-rationalized world. Reacting to a loss of faith, then, they pity Moosbrugger’s moral weakness in order to conserve their fragile fantasy about their own superiority. Weaver Santaniello argues that Nietzsche understands that “pity” (*Mitleid*) “is based on the plain fact that every act of pity requires another person (or group) who suffers.”<sup>33</sup> Santaniello claims that Nietzsche made a distinction between expressing and having pity, perhaps a contestable statement considering Nietzsche’s condemnation of “compassion,” in the *Genealogy of Morals*.<sup>34</sup>

Musil’s fictional depiction of the resentful search for truth also informed the creation of the main character of the novel, Ulrich. Ulrich wanders through “all the names of history” in a Nietzschean sense, but does not seek a definitive meaning to life.<sup>35</sup> He remains a slave to his masculine identity and power, but, as a “noble” figure, he also does not become poisoned by resentment or pity for abject people like Moosbrugger.<sup>36</sup> Musil’s character does, however, exhibit the complex expression of

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33 Weaver Santaniello, “Nietzsche’s Psychogenealogy of Religion and Racism,” *Nietzsche and Depth Psychology* 94.

34 ZGdM Preface: 5, p.6. Nietzsche associates pity (*Mitleid*) with sentimentality and as he says in section 6, “ich bin ein Gegner der schändlichen modernen Gefühlsverweichlichung...”

35 Gilles Deleuze, “Nomad Thought,” *The New Nietzsche*, ed. David B. Allison (Cambridge: MIT P, 1988) 146. The quotation is “I am all the names of history.”

36 Musil establishes Ulrich’s conception of morality both in its connection to disciplining and/or regulatory mechanisms and as an active ethical path. In GWI 1028 he writes: “Morality for him was neither dominion, nor conceptual wisdom, but the never-ending entirety of possibility to live.” See Chapter 3.

pity that Santaniello identifies. For example, he sees Moosbrugger's criminality as a problem created by society, leading him to empathize with the killer's situation for a few chapters. Ulrich then loses interest in the killer. Musil contrasts Ulrich's response with the response of the *Zarathustra*-worshipper Clarisse, who becomes obsessed with the criminal, which then poisons her critical consciousness.

Ulrich's skepticism, moreover, threatens those who remain interested in finding meaning in their bourgeois world even though they have lost faith in it. For example, Ulrich visits his childhood friends, the married couple Clarisse and Walter. In conversation with Clarisse, Walter calls Ulrich, "a man without qualities" out of his intense jealousy over the fact that Ulrich influences his wife with his Nietzschean ways. This reaction would be fine, but then Walter justifies his name for Ulrich by rationalizing that "perhaps we also at one time thought similarly. But one is allowed only to see a preliminary stage within such thought! Such a human is surely no human!"<sup>37</sup> Walter rhetorically attempts to rein in Ulrich's Nietzschean threat by labeling him "non-human." Walter himself conforms to the bourgeois law determining one possible path for a man—to develop into a "master of the house" who becomes a bread-winner, father and husband. By comparing himself to someone who does not embrace the destiny of oedipal development, Walter reinforces his superiority and gives meaning to the fact that he accepted bourgeois rationality. This comparison with and condemnation of Ulrich further suggests that Walter fears there were other possible paths for his life, but he was too weak to follow them. Walter turns to his

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<sup>37</sup> GWI 65. German: "'Ach,' sagte Walter 'so ähnlich haben wir vielleicht früher auch gedacht. Aber man darf darin doch nicht mehr als eine Vorstufe sehen! So ein Mensch ist doch kein Mensch!'"

piano and Wagner to express a most virulent resentment, revolting against his own bourgeois nature. Musil's novel then presents the insecurity stimulating the bourgeois search for moral truth, especially through psychological discourse, signified here by an obsession with overcoming the oedipal stage of development.

Musil wanted to create a psychology not dominated by a desperate need for "meaning." In "Helpless Europe" (1922), he devised his Nietzschean "explication of life." Musil associated this explication with moral experimentation, not a search for moral truth. In "The Writer and His Time" (1921/22), Musil claims that "morality is the abstraction of the act, art a laboratory of morals; new analyses a[nd] summaries will be tested there in their individual cases."<sup>38</sup> *The Man without Qualities* would become his moral laboratory in that the characters would express the entangled nature of resentment and moral psychological discourse—this was his "gay science." Musil thought that such a science could experiment with extraordinary situations and thus light a path to an extraordinary practice of psychology. In a diary entry before the war, he thought: "Humans who are capable of extraordinary feelings, create the same kind of situations."<sup>39</sup> This was his hope for his audience—to inspire them to create practices that could de-colonize an ordinary psychology dominated by resentment.

Toward the end of his life, Musil adopted Nietzsche's aphoristic form in his last attempt to stimulate in his European audience a psychology that did not reinforce stereotypes, or succumb to Nazi hatred. He never published these and so this hope to

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38 GWII 1351. German: "Moral ist das Abstraktum des Handelns, Kunst ein Morallaboritorium, an einzelnen Fällen werden hier neue Analysen u. Zusammenfassungen probiert."

39 TBI 237. Heft 5: 8. August 1910-14. Oktober 1911 or later.

liberate individuals from a resentful search for truth never came to fruition.<sup>40</sup> Musil also did not valorize Nietzsche's aphoristic ethics. He noted that Nietzsche was a philosopher who "opened up a hundred new possibilities and carried out none."<sup>41</sup> In other words, Nietzsche failed to offer a clear psychological practice for the twentieth century. As Musil wrote, "Nietzsche is like a park that is given over to public use—but no one goes into it!"<sup>42</sup> Gardens were a common metaphor for the renewal of modernity around the *fin-de-siècle*, as Carl Schorske has shown.<sup>43</sup> Musil ironically uses this metaphor to argue that intellectuals attempting a Nietzschean renewal or "transvaluation of all values" did so without a rigorous consideration of his work. Such renewals ultimately were life-negating. Nietzsche himself desired a cure for resentment, but never found a way to accomplish this.<sup>44</sup> Understanding Musil's experiment with a Nietzschean practice therefore requires a rigorous reading of Nietzsche's work. We must examine the concept of *ressentiment* to understand both the possibilities and limits haunting any challenge to the oldest psychology.

## II. What is *Ressentiment*?

In the first essay of the *Genealogy of Morals* (1886), Nietzsche first conceptualizes *ressentiment*. He begins his definition by referring to a historical "slave revolt" against "masters." This revolt was a reaction to the pain and suffering

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<sup>40</sup> I will explore this more closely in Chapter 5, when I investigate the psychology of Musil's essayistic form.

<sup>41</sup> TBI 50.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 50.

<sup>43</sup> See Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (New York: Vintage, 1981) 279-321.

<sup>44</sup> See Karsten Harries, "The Philosopher at Sea," *Nietzsche's New Seas* 26-27.

caused by a horrible material plight, a plight the masters did not experience because they had the wealth to be free of material want. The so-called “slaves” hated the master’s freedom and in response developed a morality that called their meek existence “good” and the masters’ rule over them “evil.” Nietzsche claims that “from the very beginning the slave morality says No to an ‘outside,’ to an ‘Other,’ to a ‘not self.’”<sup>45</sup> Nietzsche suggests in the same section that a master morality experiments with the fiction of self definition, creating new values rather than conforming to the opposition of “good” and “evil.” Nietzsche’s depiction of the historical “slave” revolt, which repeats Herbart’s fear of the proletariat unconscious, could easily be seen as evidence of his elitist thinking about the lower classes. However, Nietzsche more significantly uses this terminology to describe bourgeois Europeans who have adopted absolute binaries as truth. They represent modern slaves to the resentment motivating a “will to truth” (*Wille zur Wahrheit*).

Following the progression of essays in the *Genealogy of Morals*, Michel Haar defines Nietzsche’s modern resentment-drive in three stages.<sup>46</sup> First, the desire to seek revenge for his or her pain encourages a person to label other life forces “evil.” Anti-Semitism is an extreme expression of this desire. Secondly, hatred that cannot be expressed toward others expresses itself as a bad conscience inwardly. Thirdly, the extreme expression of the bad conscience is the desire to destroy one’s own life through ascetic nihilism. Nietzsche conveys this last point most forcefully in the third

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<sup>45</sup> ZGdM I:10, p.270. German: “sagt die Sklaven-Moral von vornherein Nein zu einem ‘Ausserhalb’, zu einem ‘Anders’, zu einem ‘Nicht-selbst...’”

<sup>46</sup> Michael Haar, “Nietzsche and Metaphysical language,” *The New Nietzsche* 22-23.

essay of the *Genealogy*: “Because an ascetic life is a self contradiction: here there reigns a *ressentiment* par excellence, one that would like to become the master of insatiable instinct and power in the will, not over something in life but over life itself...”.<sup>47</sup> This asceticism manifests itself in a “will to truth” or the desire to capture “life itself” in discourse. One result of this will to truth is the use of Manichaean abstractions to destroy the exceptional qualities of life—something is either right or wrong, with us or against us, and so on. Nietzsche had long been concerned with a will to truth in relation to what he ironically imagined were two competing “wills.”

Nietzsche writes at the beginning of *Beyond Good and Evil* that the “‘un-free will’ is a mythology: in actual life it is a matter of strong and weak wills.”<sup>48</sup> In “Active and Reactive,” Gilles Deleuze defines these two forces of will using Nietzsche’s own terminology—the *Aktiv* and *Reaktiv*. For Deleuze, reactive forces exercise their power “in securing means and ends, in serving the conditions of life and the functions and tasks of conservation, adaptation, and utility.”<sup>49</sup> What this means is that forces of reaction revel in the security of rules, laws, and regulations, and are necessary for self-preservation. However, Nietzsche believed that these forces come

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47 ZGdM III:11, p. 363. German: “Denn ein asketisches Leben ist ein Selbstwiderspruch: hier herrscht ein Ressentiment sonder Gleichen, das eines ungesättigten Instinktes und Machtwillens, der Herr werden möchte, nicht über Etwas am Leben, sondern über das Leben selbst...”

48 JvGB I: 21, p. 36. German: “Der ‘unfreie Wille’ ist Mythologie: im wirklichen Leben handelt es um starken und schwachen Willen.” In the first aphorism of *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche reinforces the interpretive problems of a will to power. A full investigation of “will to power” is beyond the scope of this analysis. I focus mainly on Nietzsche’s concept of resentment.

49 Gilles Deleuze, “Active and Reactive,” *The New Nietzsche* 81. This was the Nietzsche that Frantz Fanon also valued in his *Black Skin White Masks* (1952). Nietzsche refers to reactive and active wills in ZGdM II: 11, p. 311.

to dominate the modern world in unnecessary ways.<sup>50</sup> They cause individuals to feel resentment toward any person or personal quality that threatens self control. Active forces, on the other hand, support the power in individuals to create their own truths, hunt for life and protect their own life forces without permanently hating that which appears to threaten them. A reactionary will to truth motivates the creation of scientific or philosophical discourse, which in modern times has created “elite” producers of knowledge who are enslaved to herd truth. To understand Nietzsche’s attempt to dethrone the weak will to truth, I will examine the idea of resentment and the overcoming of the weak will, which Nietzsche made part of Zarathustra’s mission.

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-1888), Zarathustra seeks to create a spirit not poisoned by “the tarantula’s bite,” the bourgeois “motley cow,” or the “spirit of revenge,” a few of the many ways Nietzsche refers to modern resentment. In the second essay of the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche similarly defines resentment as “the judging eye” (*das richtende Auge*).<sup>51</sup> Through these metaphors, resentment signifies a reaction to pain that poisons consciousness (a bite), a reaction to the instability of life that inspires formation of a larger herd (a cow), a desire to punish anyone who appears to cause pain or threaten life (revenge), or enslavement to truth driven by a hatred for what one cannot see. Nietzsche’s Zarathustra tries to overcome these forms of resentment, but fails to do so permanently. Perhaps Nietzsche’s lesson in the development of his quest is that moderns can only temporarily manage but not

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<sup>50</sup> Conway translates this into Nietzsche’s hatred of decadence in “The Birth of the Soul,” *Nietzsche’s Depth Psychology* 60.

<sup>51</sup> ZGdM II:11, p. 311.

ultimately overcome resentment. This means that it is possible to affirm life with a “yes” (*Ja*), or a “freer eye” (*freiere Auge*), but the “judging eye” always returns to destroy what has just been affirmed. Examining one of Zarathustra’s parables briefly will illustrate the difficulty of freeing perception from the bonds of resentment.

Zarathustra recites the parable “On the Three Transformations” (*Von der Dreien Verwandlungen*), which is about the transformation of a pack animal (who I argue is a metaphor for a resentful and weak will) into a hunter, and then a free spirit who openly embraces the unknown world: “Three transformations of the spirit I name to you as the spirit becomes a camel, and the camel a lion, and finally the lion a child[...]the child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a wheel that rolls out of itself, a first movement, a holy affirmation.”<sup>52</sup> Zarathustra refers to a camel as a kind of animal that has evolved to store water in the desert because water is not readily available. This camel represents modern individuals who carry around the fantasy of a return to a Garden of Eden because of their intense earthly suffering. These individuals assign the power to redeem and preserve themselves to forces beyond their control like their bodies, and then hate their inner natures for having the power they do not. Zarathustra suggests that what surrounds “camels” may not even really be a desert. They may actually live in something more like a rain forest or an African savanna filled with the wondrous forces of life.

Through the transformation of a camel’s spirit into a lion’s, Zarathustra’s

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<sup>52</sup> Z 29-31. German: “Drei Verwandlungen nenne ich euch des Geistes: wie der Geist zum Kamele wird, und zum Löwen das Kamel, und zum Kinde zuletzt der Löwe...Unschuld ist das Kind und Vergessen, ein Neubeginnen, ein Spiel, ein aus sich rollendes Rad, eine erste Bewegung, ein heiliges Jasagen.”

parable asks individuals to affirm their inner natures, or the will-to-live. The lion hunts down prey to kill for food but does not leave any food in store, nor does he hate the prey, nor his need to kill the prey. The lion is a force of self-preservation, but is free of the burden of guilt associated with that preservation. He also has no direction or guidance except for his own hunger and desire for domination. For this reason, Zarathustra transforms the lion into a child to propose a guide for spirits who do not fear the violent realities of life. A child represents a lack of cynicism that condemns adults to a desert of ascetic fantasy. As we saw with Kafka's Karl, the life-affirming force of innocence inspires a curiosity toward the changing nature of the world.

Zarathustra's reference to a "lion," however, reinforces the racist assumptions of anthropological discourse. In the first essay of the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche laments that teutonic Europe, which was invaded from the East by a warrior class called the *Arya*, his "blond beast" (*blonde Bestie*), had degenerated into a weak herd of pack animals.<sup>53</sup> Virchow's anthropology classified Aryan biology as superior in the "family tree of Man," and Nietzsche read Virchow.<sup>54</sup> Complicating this perspective is the fact that Nietzsche did not conflate national "Germans" with "Aryans"; nor did he support anti-Semitism. In Zarathustra's desert, the lion could represent the strong will in every individual that desires the hunt for new life and new values.

Daniel Conway, however, argues that Nietzsche's racial aspirations reveal "the

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53 ZGdM I:5.

54 Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2001) 145.

continuity of his philosophy with the primal impulses that also gave rise to fascism.”<sup>55</sup> Conway is referring to Nietzsche’s admiration for the Roman Empire (*Imperium Romanum*) and putative animosity toward Jews. In disagreement with this reading of Nietzsche, Santaniello points us toward a passage on *ressentiment* in the second essay of the *Genealogy of Morals*, in which Nietzsche writes, “To the psychologist who would like to study *ressentiment* close up for once, I would say: this plant blooms best today among anarchists and anti-semites—where it has always bloomed.”<sup>56</sup> Based on Nietzsche’s multiple attacks on Germans, anti-Semites and Christianity evident throughout *Beyond Good and Evil* and *On the Genealogy of Morals*, he does appear relatively consistent in his criticism of the origins of the Christian era, and not modern Judaism. Nietzsche’s view of vengeance, the desire to punish, and the essential characteristics of resentment, actually works against the condemnation of others as “evil,” and therefore the ideological support of fascism.

Nietzsche traced the penetration of a dominating will to resentment, or the desire to capture and control unstable “life itself,” into modern language—what psychologists uncritically conflated with “truth.” At the same time, as he discovered, overcoming resentment is not possible. An individual may only resist the desire to create a self and other out of what are much more complex discursive forces.

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<sup>55</sup> Conway, “Ecce Caesar: Nietzsche’s Imperial Aspirations,” *Nietzsche, Godfather of Facism?* 174.

<sup>56</sup> Weaver Santaniello, “Nietzsche’s Psychogenealogy of Religion and Racism,” *Nietzsche’s Depth Psychology* 95. See Nietzsche ZGdM 2:11.

### III. Condemning the “Other” and the “Self”: The Attempt to Capture Life through Language

Nietzsche defines language as a tool of herd consciousness, although language also has other creative or critical uses. For Nietzsche, the modern social “herd” is made up of slaves who have evolved to privilege the basest of wills—the will to capture life within evaluative binaries. In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche defines herd consciousness:

[M]y thought is, as you see, that consciousness doesn't belong to the individual existence of humans but rather to whatever within them is social and herd nature...our thoughts themselves become generalized continuously through the character of consciousness—through commands of the ‘genius of the species’ within it—as if carried by the majority and translated back into herd perspective.<sup>57</sup>

In this aphorism, Nietzsche indicates that language has a basic social function. It is a means of communication and therefore always also a means to facilitate “herd” thinking. Nietzsche describes the process through which individuals destroy the particularities of thought in order to conform to general values. These general values only give the illusion of being a safeguard against pain or instability. Nietzsche argues that in order to conceal the inadequacies of general values in civilization, such as moral restraint, the European herd of his lifetime perpetually provided a negative rhetorical stand-in to blame—an “other” that appeared to signify a threat to the mastered self. Nietzsche studied the hatred and fear determining the definition of the modern herd through the rhetorical negation of the non-herd. Nietzsche traced this

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<sup>57</sup> FW V:354, p. 592. German: “Mein Gedanke ist, wie man sieht: dass das Bewusstsein nicht eigentlich zur Individual-Existenz des Menschen gehört, vielmehr zu dem, was an ihm Gemeinschafts- und Heerden-Natur ist[...]dass unsere Gedanke selbst fortwährend durch den Charakter des Bewusstseins—durch den in ihm gebietenden ‚Genius der Gattung‘—gleichsam majorisirt und in die Heerden-Perspektive zurück-übersetzt wird.”

epistemological will to capture or discipline life back to the beginnings of modern herd consciousness.

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche argues that philosophers enslaved by prejudice, and suffering from the death of God, began to worship the herd instead of a strong will. Once the desire to create the herd historically began to dominate, the individual within the herd “will at best stigmatize (*brandmarken*) and calumniate [strong] drives.” As a result, any “higher independent spirituality, the will to stand alone, the magnificence of reason would automatically be perceived as a danger; whatever raises the individual above the herd and causes the neighbor fear is called from now on *evil*.”<sup>58</sup> The key in this text is in the definition of “neighbor” and “evil.” Nietzsche’s reference to “neighbor” connects to the commandment *love thy neighbor*. This dictum supposedly fundamental to Western civilization, if we are to believe Freud, is not about love in any good sense.<sup>59</sup> Instead what a member of the herd is to love is how well “neighbors” conform to a mutually agreed upon definition of neighbor. Neighbors are those who abandon individual *ethics* or an “independent spirit” (*unabhängige Geistigkeit*) in order to live in a supposedly more secure neighborhood. Under these conditions, if individuals do not relinquish the will to determine value for themselves, the fearful voice of the herd will disseminate an *ad*

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58 *Jenseits von Gut und Böse, Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Werke V*, V:201, p. 123. German: “folglich wird man gerade diese Triebe am besten brandmarken und verleumden. Die hohe unabhängige Geistigkeit, der Wille zum Alleinstehn, die grosse Vernunft schon werden als Gefahr empfunden; Alles, was den Einzelnen über die Heerde hinaushebt und dem Nächsten Furcht macht, heisst von nun an böse...”

59 Sigmund Freud also made this argument in *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1997) 79. Freud repeated Nietzsche’s own condemnation of „Nächstenliebe,“ especially as Zarathustra defines it in the parable „Von der Nächstenliebe.“ See Z 77-79.

*hominem* appeal to its members to condemn this person as an “enemy.” He or she represents a putative threat to order and stability. According to Nietzsche’s logic, these enemies of the herd are “loved” in a negative sense, i.e. as a means through which the herd reconfirms belief in stability. Real “enemies” are those who threaten to expose the ambiguities in fragile laws such as Christian love.

Members of this modern Christian herd did not only define themselves by negating an “other without.” They defined self-consciousness by negating “evil” vices: envy, sloth, greed, guilt, incest, the unconscious and so on. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche traces this subject-object inner relationship back to the beginnings of philosophical rationality. He argues that Plato, Spinoza, Descartes, Kant and Schopenhauer, propagated a false assumption, i.e. that the subject “I” is stable and separate from the rest of the grammatical sentence. Philosophers such as Descartes conceptualized thought as the agent defining the subject in “cogito ergo sum.” In aphorism 17, Nietzsche contests Schopenhauer’s negation of this cognitive actor by noting Schopenhauer’s continuing faith in grammar. For instance, Schopenhauer’s phrase “I will” as a replacement for “I think,” still assumes “that there is an ‘I,’” something that has not been adequately established.<sup>60</sup> According to Nietzsche, Schopenhauer switched the subject and predicate around, so that the object (the will represented by the body and sexuality) changed into the “I.” For Nietzsche, this inversion did not overcome the will to capture life in discourse.

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<sup>60</sup> JvGB I:16-17, p. 29-31. See p. 5 of Arthur Schopenhauer’s *World as Will and Representation*, trans. E.F. J. Payne, vol. 1 (New York: Dover, 1966). He writes: “That which knows all things and is known by none is the subject. It is accordingly the supporter of the world, the universal condition of all that appears, of all objects, and it is always presupposed.”

In a response to this grammatical subject found in the second essay of the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche analyzes an analogy defining the stable self. According to this analogy, the self is a caging mechanism, imprisoning any animal desires or instincts that might challenge the simplicity of the subject. He compares Europeans to caged animals, invoking what Jonsson calls the “divided subject,” or a subject who experiences a gap between instinct and expression.<sup>61</sup> Nietzsche argues that this subject forms through “a declaration of war against the old instincts, upon which its strength, pleasure, and formidability previously depended.”<sup>62</sup> The violent separation of the “old” (read: strong) instincts from the modern self creates the image of a psyche in which the “animal” within clearly has nothing in common with the cold self-containing grammatical subject. The subject therefore emerges in modern Europe through the conceptualization of “life” forces as the primordial other. By suggesting that the subject is a lifeless cage, Nietzsche clearly mourns the loss involved in what is merely a rhetorical separation of life from consciousness. He nevertheless argues that despite denying life through language, discourse cannot break free of what he considers to be the weak will.

In this same section, Nietzsche emphasizes that a “civilizing” grammar assumes the inevitability of a perpetual battle against the “evil” will as it continues to remain on the edges of consciousness, threatening what McClintock called the

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61 Rainer Marie Rilke, important to Musil as a contemporary, would take this metaphor further in his poem “The Panther” (1902), as would Max Weber with his *Iron Cage of Reason*.

62 ZGdM II:16, p. 323. German: “als die Folge einer gewaltsamen Abtrennung von der thierischen Vergangenheit, eines Sprunges und Sturzes gleichsam in neue Lagen und Daseins-Bedingungen, einer Kriegserklärung gegen die alten Instinkte, auf denen bis dahin seine Kraft, Lust und Furchtbarkeit beruhte.”

“subject’s dissolution.” As a result of this perpetual war, “civilized” moderns become both the surgeons and victims of their own discursive “vivisections.” The bite of conscience (*Gewissensbiß*) and interiorization (*Verinnerlichung*) of moral dichotomies create a way to discipline individual desires so that they do not threaten general values.<sup>63</sup> In Nietzsche’s world, this repressive subject “I” signified the basic law establishing “civilization,” a determination Freud later explicitly made.<sup>64</sup> Bourgeois philosophers and moralists, who benefited from the herd’s acceptance of this repressive law, further defined the emotional verb in their mental syntax as an object worthy of fear. According to this “law,” motivating forces signified by the verb “to want” appeared to threaten to invert the sentence structure and become the subject. These forces could not be fully contained in the predicate. I would argue that the bourgeois herd took this one step further; they created alternative abstractions for any member who could not vivisect themselves and thus temper their strong wills. For example, modern law made “criminals” into real animals that required real cages.

The dominating economic mode of production also facilitated the bourgeois dissociation from material desires and realities signified by “wants.” In the second essay of the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche compares the original relationship between self and conscience to a “creditor”-“debtor” (*Gläubiger und Schuldner*) relationship. I argue that we can therefore understand Nietzsche’s definition of the grammatical self as the result of a bourgeois economizing of consciousness. Nietzsche

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63 Ibid. II:24.

64 See Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989) 29.

claims that this relationship goes back to the determination of the citizen (*Rechtssubjekt*), who was necessary for “buying, selling, exchange, and trade in general.”<sup>65</sup> In this relationship, to receive the benefits of a society based on specific moral and national values (credit-payment) an individual must negate forces not linguistically determinable within those static frames (debt). Repayment occurs when the ego experiences the pain of the resentment-driven conscience. The ultimate payoff for the “ego,” subsumed under these painful values of the herd, is the illusion of safety. The payoff often leads to lazy thinking, or the right not to have to confront the more ambiguous and complex aspects of human commerce. Following the Marxist definition of use-value in this economic metaphor, the debt more personally results in a loss of pleasure which was thought to be the consequence of unmediated expressions of desire.

This psychological economy served a function in the context of capitalism, as the Marxist notion of commodity fetishism suggests. Capital markets reduce commodities to exchange-value at the sacrifice of the enjoyment of their use.<sup>66</sup> The emphasis on exchange-value produces lazy thinking (sloth) in consumers who do not interrogate the history of production which includes, for example, the workers who produce commodities but do not enjoy their use. Marx located commodity fetishism in “the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world.”<sup>67</sup> He argued that the foggy

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid. II:4. German: “Kauf, Verkauf, Tausch, Handel und Wandel...”

<sup>66</sup> Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class*, trans. of Etienne Balibar by Chris Tucker (London: Verso, 1996) 31.

<sup>67</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, ed. Frederick Engels, vol. 1 (Moscow: Foreign Languages, 1961) 72.

consciousness surrounding commodities is sustained by the need to believe that commodities and self-consciousness are always already finished products. Processes of exchange under capitalism, then, parallel relationships between subjects and objects in psychology. Modern epistemology defines subjects and objects as stable forms having little to do with each other or their own history of production. This mystifying process naturalized the illusion of the middle-class self.

Nietzsche addressed bourgeois scientists and philosophers who also mystified knowledge. *The Gay Science* emphasizes the European herd's fear of knowledge that contradicts what is supposedly the most familiar or known. Nietzsche asks: "What do the people actually understand by knowledge? What do they want when they want 'knowledge'? Nothing more than this: something strange should be reduced to something familiar."<sup>68</sup> By referring directly to a general category of "people," Nietzsche identifies this problem as one preoccupying the herd. In this aphorism, he directs his question toward seekers of knowledge like psychologists who create facts about the psyche from general values, abstractions and stereotypes. The "familiar" then is an evaluative reduction of reality, suggesting the knowledge seeker's desire to sustain moral order rather than learn from the complexities of a perpetually new world of experience. This desire encouraged the epistemological attachment to stereotypes.

As my previous chapter argued, modern psychological discourse characterized the unconscious as "strange," "foreign," "dark," or "evil." Such evaluations obfuscated the possibility that what scientists had perceived as natural (or civilized)

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<sup>68</sup> FW V:355, p. 593-94. German: "was versteht eigentlich das Volk unter Erkenntnis? was will es, wenn es ‚Erkenntnis‘ will? Nichts weiter als dies: etwas Fremdes soll auf etwas Bekanntes zurückgeführt werden."

was nothing more than a pragmatic reduction of reality or “the strange.” Nietzsche also claims that such “enlightened” thinkers employed the metaphor of “sunshine” (*Sonnenschein*) to describe the process of making the world familiar, but they only experienced the “shine” of superficiality.<sup>69</sup> Superficiality was all any investigator of the mind could know. For Nietzsche this was nothing to bemoan because recognizing the fiction of discourse meant also allowing for the possibility of transforming social values or a herd mentality: Africa might be “dark” today and “bright” tomorrow, or might be something totally different. The unconscious could become a source of joyous strangeness. This attitude is in opposition to the project of clinical psychology or psychoanalysis in important ways; the medical model condemns the “unconscious” and anyone supposedly exhibiting strange behavior associated with unconscious desires. Psychologists define pathological “cases” in much the same way that a court of law establishes guilt. With the implication of guilt, the psychologist condemns schizophrenics, sexual deviants, addicts, and so on, to otherness. Nietzsche himself condemns the “judging eye” which forces the strange into the all-to-familiar other.

Philosophers and scientists interested in the inner world, Nietzsche argued, feared creating values for themselves, which caused them to anxiously hold on to their self-aggrandizing truths. In “On the Self-Overcoming” Zarathustra warns “the wise” who have faith in this “will to truth,” or what he sees as a “will to conceivability”:

“[Y]ou first want to *make* all Being conceivable because you doubt with a good mistrust whether or not it is already conceivable. But it directs and bends you! Your

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<sup>69</sup> See especially aphorism 54 in FW: “The Consciousness of Appearance” (Schein). In addition, at the end of section 3 of JvGB, Nietzsche establishes the regulatory importance of values, but questions the reliance on the truth of them rather than our construction of them.

will wants it so. It should become smooth and subject to the spirit, as its mirror and reflection.”<sup>70</sup> Through Zarathustra’s mockery of the wise, Nietzsche identifies what he concluded in *Beyond Good and Evil* was the prejudice of philosophers. The epistemological insecurity of philosophers, according to Nietzsche, drives them to find ever new ways to reinforce the unchanging qualities of their image of *Being*—an ontological noun created from the root “to be,” a non-active verb. The idea that existence somehow becomes “smooth” through this process really is an indicator of the destruction philosophers encourage as a result of their will to truth; it is a world in which rough edges or ambiguities have been filed down to a polished reflection of the philosopher’s own perceptions. Nietzsche suggests that no one can overcome abstraction; we may however temper the fear of inconceivability, and shift attention from *Being* to the always changing qualities of *Becoming*.

In contrast to a psychology dominated by the need to reconfirm *Being* as truth, Nietzsche’s *Gay Science* imagines both the limits and possibilities of conceivability. Language then does not simply deny life forces, which is inevitable because it is always an inadequate expression of reality; the untruth of language can also remind philosophers that there is a world of life yet to imagine.

The entirety of life would [still] be possible without life having the ability to see itself as though in the mirror [of language]: because the nearly dominating part of life for us certainly plays out continuously in reality without this mirroring [in words]—and further, as insulting as this may sound to an older philosopher, so does our thinking, feeling, desiring of life.<sup>71</sup>

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70 Z 146. German: “Alles Seiende wollt ihr erst denkbar machen: denn ihr zweifelt mit gutem Misstrauen, ob es schon denkbar ist. Aber es soll sich euch fügen und biegen! So will’s euer Wille. Glatt soll es werden und dem Geiste unterthan, als sein Spiegel und Widerbild.”

71 FW V:354, p. 590. German: “Das gaze Leben wäre möglich, ohne dass es sich gleichsam im

Nietzsche argues that older philosophers needed to explain feeling and thinking, and therefore required a separation between object and subject. The life these qualities were supposed to express continues to exist. The resulting abstractions cannot, however, offer a true reflection of this life. In fact, they often reflect the prejudices of philosophers who adamantly wish to hold on to their epistemological truths at all costs. According to Nietzsche's celebratory concept of "life," linguistic categories are not required for existence, even though we only conceive of life through such categories. The fact that life is too complex to find expression in language is furthermore nothing to lament. In fact, it is this impossibility that translates into the illimitable alternatives to the specific "genius" of herd-preservation driving the search for knowledge.

In sum, the philosophical project, which Nietzsche detested, was what I would call a "civilizing mission." This mission proselytized the coming of an age in which all human relationships would be familiar, cold, boring, and painful. As Sander Gilman points out, such discourses invented, disseminated and sustained stereotypes defining Africans, women, the poor, the sexually promiscuous, and anyone who was not (but also including) a white, European, heterosexual, middle-class male.<sup>72</sup> With Nietzsche's analysis of the resentment penetrating into the herd's language, we can see his own implicit concern with life-negating stereotypes, which spread beyond philosophical discourse to feed frightened and resentful masses. However, he was not as interested in "the masses" as he was in the resentful explorers of the psyche.

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Spiegel sähe: wie ja thatsächlich auch jetzt noch bei uns der bei weitem überwiegende Theil dieses Lebens sich ohne diese Spiegelung abspielt--, und zwar auch unsres denkenden, fühlenden, wollenden Lebens, so beleidigend dies einem älteren Philosophen klingen mag."

<sup>72</sup> Sander Gilman, *Difference and Pathology* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985) 24.

Nietzsche therefore also interrogated the fears and hatreds driving his contemporaries to attempt to overcome the so-called inner animal threatening their peace.

#### **IV. Schopenhauer and Moral Psychologists Shipwrecked on a Will to Resentment**

In *The World as Will and Representation* (1819), Schopenhauer defined asceticism as the denial of the “will-to-live.” He believed this denial ultimately led to self-annihilation and nothingness, but more importantly facilitated a purification of the psyche that led to peace.<sup>73</sup> He writes: “By the expression asceticism, which I have already used so often, I understand in the narrower sense this deliberate breaking of the will by refusing the agreeable and looking for the disagreeable, the voluntarily chosen way of life of penance and self-chastisement, for the constant mortification of the will.”<sup>74</sup> The body is the phenomenon of the will, and therefore “complete chastity is the first step” in its mortification.<sup>75</sup> He added that the inevitable suffering which asceticism has to offer might destroy what he repeatedly called the veil of maya, or the illusion of individuality, and thus create universal consciousness. The self-negating ethics of the Christian, Hindu and Buddhist traditions informed his asceticism.

Nietzsche sympathized with the effort to dispel the illusion of the moral psyche in Schopenhauer’s work, but criticized his resignation to a psychology driven by herd values. In reaction to a lack of power over will, Schopenhauer reinforced Christian self-abnegation in the form of Buddhist-Hindu metaphysics. Nietzsche argued that “morality” itself was a strange world that needed exploring because pessimism and

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<sup>73</sup> *The World as Will and Representation* 392.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* 392.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* 380. On the Indian “veil of maya” see especially p. 352.

prejudice determined moral-psychological theories. He believed that the assumptions implicit in the moral prescriptions of Schopenhauer and moral psychologists more broadly truncated their abilities to affirm life and stimulate critical thinking. Nietzsche pronounced their moral psychologies “shipwrecked” on the language of resentment. In the process, however, he also brought his own resentment to light.

In 1865, while studying in Leipzig, Nietzsche happened upon *The World as Will and Representation* and later claimed to have read through the work in one night. Evidence of his indebtedness to Schopenhauer culminated in 1874 in the third of his *Untimely Meditations*, entitled “Schopenhauer as Educator.” With Nietzsche’s later works, beginning with *Human, All Too Human* (1878), he began to turn against his teacher to discover what he termed Schopenhauer’s “will to resentment.” Nietzsche recognized Schopenhauer’s goal of turning against the will.<sup>76</sup> While Nietzsche embraced his own version of his “educator’s” concept, his examination of resentment especially after 1882 ultimately condemned Schopenhauer’s nihilism.

Nietzsche specifically challenged Schopenhauer’s Indian asceticism. Indian philosophy appeared to offer an alternative to the death of God, and an alternative to a faith in rationality. In the third essay of the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche cites the “expert in Indian philosophy Paul Deussen.”<sup>77</sup> Nietzsche referred to Deussen’s claim

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<sup>76</sup> Schopenhauer, Arthur. *Aphorisms and Essays*, trans. R.J.Hollingdale (New York: Penguin, 1970). See the “Introduction” by R.J. Hollingdale, 22-23. Hollingdale suggests that Schopenhauer’s ethics encompasses “the realization that the perceived universe – the ‘world as idea’ – is as nothing, the conscious acceptance of the need for annihilation as the only true cure for the sickness of life, and finally the acceptance of annihilation itself.”

<sup>77</sup> See also *Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Werke XV 24*. Other than Paul Deussen’s texts, Nietzsche read *Die Religion des Buddha and ihre Entstehung* (1857) by K.F. Köppen. Musil also explored European metaphysical readings of Indian philosophies such as Buddhism and Hinduism, and their influence on meta-psychologies. He in fact read Nietzsche’s friend Deussen’s later book.

that it was possible to achieve redemption (*Erlösung*) through asceticism or the denial of desire, a goal Nietzsche saw in Schopenhauer's theories as well. With ascetic thought, which might be beautiful with "Oriental exaggeration, the only value expressed is the one which is the same as the clear and cool, Hellenic and suffering Epicurean: the hypnotic feeling of nothingness, the peace of the deepest sleep, in sum the freedom from pain..."<sup>78</sup> In this essay, Nietzsche maligns a dominating European desire for will-lessness. By assigning an "oriental" quality to Hellenic thinking, Nietzsche suggests that current theories of asceticism have taken idealistic Western discourse to an extreme. Calling asceticism "exaggerated" is his code word for decadence, i.e. not what people conventionally mean by it. In this instance we can also see that he colludes with the Orientalism of ascetic philosophies, which he paradoxically criticized. He therefore reveals to us, consciously or not, the deep penetration of herd thinking into his own psychological discourse.

Nietzsche conflates the European use of Indian philosophy with Indian religions in general, a conflation that more comprehensive scholarship on the religions would reveal to be overly reductive. For example, the European interpretation of ascetic Buddhism, which developed in the nineteenth century, drew its philosophy mainly from an early, and extremely "pessimistic," version, which Orientalist scholars judged to be the original Buddhism.<sup>79</sup> The Buddhism of the Christian West, however,

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See TBI 491. Heft 10 1918-1921: *Deussen, Über die Philosophie des Vedânta in ihrem Verhältnis zu den metaphysischen Lehren des Westens*. 1895.

<sup>78</sup> ZGdM III:17, 381-382. German: "orientalischer Übertreibung, nur die gleiche Schätzung ausgedrückt ist, welche die des klaren, kühlen, griechisch-kühlen, aber leidenden Epikur war: das hypnotische Nichts-Gefühl, die Ruhe des tiefsten Schlafes, Leidlosigkeit kurzum..."

<sup>79</sup> Buddhism came to Europe in the nineteenth century mainly through, among others, the

expunged the long history of the religion as it was actually practiced by human beings. Their versions narrowed focus on redemption through nirvana and nothingness, or an existence without pain. Although Nietzsche condemned Oriental decadence based on these Orientalist versions of religion, he was also challenging a post-Christian European pessimism that sees asceticism as the only way to overcome misery.

In the preface of the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche begins his attack on asceticism by claiming that Schopenhauer was reacting to what he hated most: the selfish will. According to Nietzsche, this hatred “had to do with the particularity of the value of the ‘unselfish’—the pitying, self-denying, self-sacrificing instinct, which Schopenhauer had in a direct way gilded, apotheosized, made otherworldly, until finally it remained only as ‘values in themselves,’ upon whose grounds he said No to life, and also to himself.”<sup>80</sup> Nietzsche reveals here that this nihilism is evidence of Schopenhauer’s fear that there would never be a consciousness free of the will; this fear results in self pity. Nietzsche worried that by creating a new god (*vergöttlichen*) out of self pity, Schopenhauer made possible a broader dissemination of his life-negating technique. This technique could become infectious to others who wished to

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German religious studies scholar Max Müller (1823-1900), the pioneering British scholar of Buddhism Thomas Rhys Davids (1843-1922), and the epic poet Edwin Arnold (1832-1904). Arnold called Buddhism “an Asiatic Christianity” in *The Light of Asia* (1879), the material for which came from Müller’s translation of the Dhammapada, an early Buddhist (Pali) text. Rhys Davids saw the Pali canon as a true Buddhism. For more information see Charles Allen, *The Buddha and the Sahibs: The men who discovered India’s lost religion* (London: John Murray, 2002) 241-42.

<sup>80</sup> ZGdM, Preface: 5, p. 252. German: “Es handelt sich in Sonderheit um den Werth des ‘Unegoistischen’, der Mitleids-, Selbstverleugnungs-, Selbstopferungs- Instinkte, welche gerade Schopenhauer so lange vergoldet, vergöttlicht und verjenseitigt hatte, bis sie ihm schliesslich als die ‘Werthe an sich’ übrig blieben, auf Grund deren er zum Leben, auch zu sich selbst, Nein sagte.”

deny their pain-causing life, even if it meant suicide, a problem which Schopenhauer consciously opposed.<sup>81</sup> Nietzsche's aphorism on unselfishness exposes Schopenhauer's adoption of Christian self-abnegation as a pessimism revealing the loss of faith in the possibility that there could be new moralities. This pessimism polishes down existence to a negative discourse that turns against living referents to reify values in themselves (*Werthe an Sich*) to overcome the will once and for all. Nietzsche thought Schopenhauer's reduction of life to "values in themselves" was motivated by a very selfish will.

In aphorism 47 of *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche characterizes Schopenhauer's asceticism as dependent on a faulty presupposition, namely that it is possible for an ascetic consciousness to free itself from selfish desire. Schopenhauer privileged questions related to this disavowal, which supposedly betrays his overly obsessive self concern. Nietzsche comments:

[I]n the background of the latest philosophy—the Schopenhauerian—this ghastly question mark of religious crisis and awakening is situated almost as the problem itself. How is the negation of the will *possible*? How is the holy possible?—that appears really to have been the question at which Schopenhauer became a philosopher and began.<sup>82</sup>

Nietzsche's questions indicate two levels of mediation in the production of knowledge.

First, his actual questions mimic Schopenhauer's initial critical approach to Western

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81 See Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* 398, for the distinction between suicide and the denial of the "will-to-live." Cosima Wagner writes in her diaries, that as early as 1870, Nietzsche saw a problem in Schopenhauer's pessimism and the hopelessness it propagates among young people. See *Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Werke XV* 21.

82 JvGB I:47, p. 68. German: "Noch im Hintergrunde der letztgekommenen Philosophie, der Schopenhauerischen, steht, beinahe als das Problem an sich, dieses schauerliche Fragezeichen der religiösen Krisis und Erweckung. Wie ist Willensverneinung möglich? Wie ist der Heilige möglich?—das scheint wirklich die Frage gewesen zu sein, bei der Schopenhauer zum Philosophen wurde und anfieng."

morality and attempt to raise consciousness. Secondly, Nietzsche's writing out of "question mark" (*Fragezeichen*) underscores what he saw as Schopenhauer's error, the fact that he tried to find an answer to the contradictions implicit in the attempt to control an all-controlling will. Nietzsche questions what he sees as the "ghastly" direction Schopenhauer's psychological investigation took—narrowing focus on old issues like self-negation and holiness instead of examining new problems and new questions. Nietzsche seems uncannily aware of the ways in which Schopenhauer used Buddhism as an apparently exotic religion to make his "enlightenment" appear to be something contrary to the scientific positivism of Western Enlightenment.<sup>83</sup> In fact, his religion of self-negation reproduced this methodology by offering specific empirical answers to the problem of the self.

Further into this section, Nietzsche argues that philosophers like Schopenhauer had a problem accepting contradictions involved in their attempts to attain psychological enlightenment. They "suffered shipwreck at this point: wasn't it mainly because they had set [psychology] up under the rule of morality, because they *believed* in the opposition of moral values themselves, and saw, read and *interpreted* these oppositions into the text *and* into fact?"<sup>84</sup> Nietzsche presents a possible answer to the question of why ascetic psychologies fail to truly explore the values shaping their own discourses. He gives his answer in the form of a question, however, which suggests

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83 In *Buddha and the Sahibs*, Allen writes on p. 241 that this Westernized Buddhism "was a rationalist explication that Protestant Britain—to say nothing of Protestant Germany and a large section of the United States of America—could understand and identify with."

84 JvGB 47, p. 69. German: "Die bisherige Psychologie litt an dieser Stelle Schiffbruch: sollte es nicht vornehmlich darum geschehen sein, weil sie sich hunter die Herrschaft der Moral gestellt hatte, weil sie an die moralischen Werth-Gegensätze selbst glaubte, und diese Gegensätze in den Text und Thatbestand hineinsah, hineinlas, hinein deutete?"

that he is not ending his own investigation, but raising new concerns. In a sentence in which he directly accuses philosophers of clinging to their own predetermined moral answers, his own rigorous and continuous questioning prevents ascertaining his own general values and making them into “fact.” Schopenhauer in contrast crashes against the limits of his own moral thinking, even though he was fearless enough to set off on an adventure in the first place. He washes up on land out of a desire to have solid answers again. A new faith in “values in themselves” directed his psychology into regions occupied by morality. Nietzsche argues that philosophers like Schopenhauer reified the textual foundation of moral evaluations in order to define psychology as a method able to suppress the will-to-live—sexual desire in itself.

Nietzsche concludes that an intense hatred for sex dominated Schopenhauer’s values, exemplifying the obsessive desire to support his new faith in disembodied “values in themselves.” In the third essay in the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche writes: “We especially should not underestimate it that Schopenhauer, who has treated sexuality (including the instrument, the woman (*Weib*), this ‘*instrumentum diaboli*’) in reality as a personal enemy, required enemies in order to remain in good spirits.”<sup>85</sup> Not only did Schopenhauer consider life in general to be a threat to enlightenment, but women in particular became an objectified “tool” representative of that diabolical threat of life. Schopenhauer personified “nature” as a woman. Nature, he writes, “the inner being of which is the will-to-live itself, with all her force impels both man and

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<sup>85</sup> ZGdM III:7, p. 349. German: “Unterschätzen wir es namentlich nicht, dass Schopenhauer, der die Geschlechtlichkeit in der That als persönlichen Feind behandelt hat (einbegriffen deren Werkzeug, das Weib, dieses ‚instrumentum diaboli‘), Feinde nöthig hatte, um guter Dinge zu bleiben.”

animal to propagate.”<sup>86</sup> According to Nietzsche’s assessment, Schopenhauer’s hatred of *women* limited the potential for his ethics. His philosophy produced the opposite of what he claimed to be producing—a satiation of pleasure. Nietzsche moreover suggests that Schopenhauer needed to identify his number-one enemy—woman—in order to cure his own unhappiness and even gain pleasure, or be in “good spirits.” As we learn in the next section of Nietzsche’s essay, however, “sensuality is not overcome with the introduction of the aesthetic condition as Schopenhauer believes, but is only transfigured and does not enter into consciousness any more as a sexual stimulus.”<sup>87</sup> The will to inflict pain against one’s own body is the only pleasure left to the ascetic; this is the last stage of the dominating will to resentment.<sup>88</sup>

Nietzsche was not above misogyny himself. Feminists and critics have rightly criticized his philosophy for including disparaging remarks on “women.” While these are important concerns, what is often elided when we emphasize *only* his misogyny is his equally frequent attack on patriarchal morality. In her recent essay investigating the complexity of Nietzsche’s depiction of women, Rochelle L. Millen analyzes “Will and Docility,” aphorism 68 in *The Gay Science*, as evidence of Nietzsche’s unconcealed ambivalence toward women.<sup>89</sup> Nietzsche begins the aphorism:

Someone brought a youth to a wise man and said: “See, this is one who is corrupted by women (*Weiber*)!” The wise man shook his head and

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<sup>86</sup> *World as Will and Representation* 330.

<sup>87</sup> ZGdM III:8, p. 356. German: “Sinnlichkeit beim Eintritt des ästhetischen Zustandes nicht aufgehoben ist, wie Schopenhauer glaubte, sondern sich nur transfigurirt und nicht als Geschlechtsreiz mehr in’s Bewusstsein tritt.”

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* III:11, p.362.

<sup>89</sup> Rochelle L. Millen, “The Garden of Innocence? Nietzsche’s Psychology of Woman,” *Nietzsche’s Depth Psychology* 74.

smiled. “The men are the ones, he called out, who corrupt the women: and everything the women lack is supposed to be expiated and improved by men, because the man has made the image of the woman, and the woman forms herself (*sich bilden*) after this image (*Bild*).”<sup>90</sup>

As Millen argues, this aphorism presents Nietzsche’s literal interrogation of the patriarchal prejudice that assigns a diabolical nature to women as the supposed instigators of the original fall. The aphorism also adopts the infantilizing counter-stereotype that women are innocent. A woman’s only guilt, then, is in imagining herself through a negative image created by men. I would add that this aphorism reflects Nietzsche’s direct response to Schopenhauer’s designation of woman as the embodiment of the will more than anything else or the biological corrupting forces driving men to propagate. Schopenhauer blames Adam only for “the satisfaction of sexual passion,” or being seduced by the wiles of Eve.<sup>91</sup> The verb Nietzsche uses to describe the power of women is “bilden,” which means to shape or represent. This challenges Schopenhauer’s relegation of women to nature, as it ascribes to them the power of abstract thinking and the ability to create their own veils of maya. A woman falters in thinking only when she accepts male ideals (*Bilder*) as truth.

Millen is fully correct to point out that this inversion of blame betrays Nietzsche’s failure to acknowledge women as fully able to act from *strong* wills.<sup>92</sup> At the same time, she reminds us that Nietzsche valued the strength of women he

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90 FW II:68. German: “Man brachte einen Jüngling zu einem weisen Manne und sagte: „Siehe, das ist Einer, der durch die Weiber verdorben wird!“ Der weise Mann schüttelte den Kopf und lächelte. „Die Männer sind es, rief er, welche die Weiber verderben: und Alles, was die Weiber fehlen, soll an den Männern gebüsst und gebessert werden, --denn der Mann macht sich das Bild des Weibes, und das Weib bildet sich nach diesem Bilde.”

91 *World as Will and Representation* 328.

92 Millen 74.

personally knew, especially Malwida von Meysenberg, Lou von Andreas-Salomé, and even his sister Elisabeth, who would in fact exploit Nietzsche's fame for her own benefit after his collapse into mental illness and death.<sup>93</sup> Following Millen's reading, my reading of "Will and Docility" reaffirms that Nietzsche's work is an intentionally contradictory enterprise that needs careful study, something I argue Musil himself encouraged. We see this most clearly in Nietzsche's criticism of moral psychology.

Throughout his mature works, Nietzsche frequently shifted from an open attack on Schopenhauer to "moral psychologists" in general. These moral psychologists supposedly regarded Schopenhauer's will as evil because of what it represented to them: the cause of a socially destructive egoism. Nietzsche projected his disgust for moral prejudice onto his onetime friend Dr. Paul Rée. In 1873, Nietzsche met the German moralist in Basel, Switzerland, and was at first intrigued by his examination of morality. Some scholars argue that Nietzsche wrote *Human-all-too-Human* (1878) after being influenced by Rée's *Origin of Moral Sentiments* (1877).<sup>94</sup> By this time, Nietzsche had developed a close friendship with Rée. He praised Rée's work in *The Gay Science*. Years later, Nietzsche began to disparage Rée's work. The change in Nietzsche's attitude coincided with his relationship to Lou von Andreas-Salomé, a Russian woman who met Rée in 1880 and shortly thereafter made the acquaintance of Nietzsche. Both men had romantic inclinations toward her, which

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid. 75.

<sup>94</sup> See Robert C. Holub, "The Birth of Psychoanalysis from the Spirit of Enmity," *Nietzsche and Depth Psychology* 161, for more on their intellectual relationship and split. Nietzsche also refused to write a preface to Rée's book *Origin of the Conscience* (*Entstehung des Gewissens*, 1885). *Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Werke XV* 134.

eventually drove the two friends apart.<sup>95</sup> From another perspective, Nietzsche in at least one instance responded to their triangle with humor. We need only think of the photographs featuring Rée in the role of a pack animal carrying a cart, being whipped by Salomé, while Nietzsche smiles at the camera.<sup>96</sup>

Nietzsche's personal feelings about Rée and Salomé may have influenced the criticism of his erstwhile friend. All we know for sure is that after their fallout, Nietzsche vociferously condemned Rée for becoming too "English," or moving toward the metaphysical and atomizing tendencies of English moralists. He thought that with these English psychologists, "punishment is viewed in terms of its social utility; conscience arises through education and traditions, reinforcing values that are socially useful as well."<sup>97</sup> In other words, the "English" conceive of the domination of a will to resentment as a positive and necessary human psychology.

In the preface of the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche argues that the English adherence to utilitarian forms of morality supposedly betrayed their fear of revolutionary, or at least independent, thinking. Nietzsche himself refers to the hope which he had had for Rée's history of morality; this hope was now gone. He writes that his own project in contrast is:

[T]o travel through the immense, distant and completely hidden land of

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95 For more on the development of the friendship between the three, see Ernst Pfeiffer, ed., *Friedrich Nietzsche, Paul Rée, Lou von Salomé: Die Dokumente ihrer Begegnung* (Frankfurt: Insel, 1970). All three were planning to live together in Vienna in the fall of 1882. Nietzsche and Salomé especially thought this would happen. See *Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Werke XV* 123. Consequently, Salomé was later a student of Freud's, one of the psychoanalysts Musil would distinguish from himself.

96 There are others as well with both of them pulling the cart, but this photograph symbolizes the point most forcefully.

97 Holub, "The Birth of Psychoanalysis," *Nietzsche's Depth Psychology* 161.

morality—a morality that actually existed, that actually has been lived—with quite new questions and with new eyes as it were; and therefore doesn't this mean almost as much to *discover* this land first?...It was my wish in any case to give the very sharp and disinterested eye a better direction, the direction toward the actual *History of Morality* and to warn him in time of such random hypotheses of the English kind.<sup>98</sup>

Nietzsche argued that the science of psychology should explore morality even though investigators may not “discover” its truth in the firm sense of the word. Rée’s work could have also had this aim, from Nietzsche’s perspective, producing a new or unconventional kind of history. Nietzsche affirmed Rée’s “disinterested eye,” which once opposed the “judging eye” of resentment, but later thought that Rée’s moral prejudices stunted his methodology as he refocused his vision toward the wrong psychological questions—the positive utility of conscience. Nietzsche’s text evinces a frustrated tone in relation to this shift, for example, when he claims Rée supposedly fails to scrutinize morality from a more genealogical perspective. Nietzsche then condemned Rée for not conforming to his (Nietzsche’s) thinking. This judgment compressed Rée’s psychology, which had also influenced Nietzsche’s own critique of morality, into English morality, thus overlooking Rée’s nuance, which he had once praised. In a paradoxical embrace of negation, Nietzsche turned against one kind of psychology in order to establish his own. From a different perspective, Nietzsche also acknowledged that there *were* positive qualities in Rée’s independent (i.e. creative)

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<sup>98</sup> ZGdM Preface:7, p. 254. German: “Es gilt, das ungeheure, ferne und so versteckte Land der Moral—der wirklich dagewesenen, wirklich gelebten Moral—mit lauter neuen Fragen und gleichsam mit neuen Augen zu bereisen: und heist dies nicht beinahe so viel als dieses Land erst zu entdecken?...Wenn ich dabei, unter Anderen, auch an den genannten Dr. Ree dachte, so geschah es, weil ich gar nicht zweifelte, dass er von der Natur seiner Fragen, selbst auf eine richtigere Methodik, um zu Antworten zu gelangen, gedrängt werden würde. Habe ich mich darin betrogen? Mein Wunsch war es jedenfalls, einem so scharfen und unbetheiligten Auge eine bessere Richtung, die Richtung zur wirklichen Historie der Moral zu geben und ihn vor solchem englischen Hypothesenwesen in’s Blaue noch zur rechten Zeit zu warnen.”

thinking. He merely perhaps lamented that Rée did not continue to explore morality and in fact returned to the safety of moral law. From Nietzsche's resentment-colored rearview mirror, Rée's faith in British-style investigations into the psyche doomed him to crash against his own moral limits. Nietzsche's intense break with Rée signifies the beginnings of Nietzsche's own mental shipwreck. At the same time, he had begun his attack on moral psychology long before his break with Rée.

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche argues that moral psychologists suffer from their prejudice "as if from a seasickness. And still this hypothesis is also not nearly the most distressing and most strange in this immense (*ungeheuren*), almost new, empire of dangerous insights—and there are as a matter of fact, a hundred good reasons why each person stays far [away] from it, whoever—*can!*"<sup>99</sup> This aphorism establishes the fear or distress driving moral psychologists to deny knowledge of their own empire of life-destroying moralities. Nietzsche uses language reminiscent of Jean Paul ("ungeheuren...Reiche"). He inverts Jean Paul's depiction of the unconscious as a hidden empire opposed to the familiar ego. Nietzsche portrays the psychologist's moral ego not as a knowable realm separate from strange desires, but rather as an instrument that unknowingly turns against its own creative genealogy. The "ego" is therefore the empire that actually requires comprehensive understanding. The moral psychologist becomes "seasick" because he fears exploring contradictory realities. With this ironic play with Jean Paul's world, Nietzsche perhaps is sending a message to explorers of the mind who crash against the "unconscious." Their limited focus on the unconscious serves a utility; it allows them to avoid what Nietzsche would

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99 JvGB I:23, p. 38.

consider harder questions that would dislodge the illusion of the moral psyche. Here Nietzsche re-validates Schopenhauer's concern with a "veil of maya."

Nietzsche appropriately questioned the personal fear that shaped depictions of the unconscious as a land distant from the moral controls of civilized Europe. The unconscious signifies a rhetorical space populated with dangerous "dark bodies" (*dunkle Körper*) and desires requiring moral laws that would civilize them.<sup>100</sup> What this strongly suggests is that the European fear of non-European others guided the moralist in his understanding of the inner world. Nietzsche asks whether or not "with the moralists, there is a hate aimed against the primordial forest and against the tropics? And that the 'tropical human' must be discredited at any cost, be it as a sickness and degeneration (*Entartung*) of humans, be it as one's own hell and self-martyrdom?"<sup>101</sup> Nietzsche questions these moralists because they define their instincts as "primordial," or as the remnants of a time diametrically opposed to the supposedly higher stages of European civilization. Such signifiers support the assumption that modern Europeans have progressed beyond their natural origins. However, Nietzsche claims that their separation from, and judgment of, "tropical humans" really only discloses their hatred for what only *appears* to be the natural past always threatening to become visible in "Western" civilization.

By placing "tropical humans" in quotation marks, Nietzsche problematizes colonial stereotypes dominating moral-psychological discourse—perhaps even those

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100 ZGdM Preface: 6. Nietzsche establishes the necessity of a new critique that might investigate the moral impositions of discourse on the construction of the unconscious will-to-live.

101 JvGB V:197.

dominating in his own work. According to Nietzsche, psychologists “discredit” anything not conforming to their unacknowledged biases. This is because the existence of “dark bodies” in their modern world reminds moral psychologists of their own unconscious desires and therefore threatens the abstract superiority of moral civilization. Nietzsche underscores this by suggesting that as these psychologists explored the fertile ground of life they transplanted that ground into their definition of “hell,” forever condemning that life because they see in it the cause of their suffering. Nietzsche mocks this belief and instead valorizes “Africans” as those able to withstand the pain causing resentment—a laudatory statement that nevertheless reveals his own negation of complex African experiences.<sup>102</sup>

Nietzsche thought that Schopenhauer and other moral psychologists were humans afflicted with the darkest of instincts: the need to appear superior to others or their own inner natures because of the fear that their superiority was really illusion. Posing new questions would have allowed them to interrogate these fears and their own moralities. Nietzsche himself embraced this questioning process. His discursive questioning was an attempt to create new psychological imaginaries filled with self irony and thus free discourse so that it would be able to express new values. But even such imaginaries were not totally disengaged from the resentment of the psychologist.

### **V. Sailing a Ship to the Edges of Resentment: Toward an Ironic Anti-Colonial Psychology**

Nietzsche reinvented the inner world to inspire a gifted few to let go of their general moral values that had become entangled with resentment, or the desire to

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<sup>102</sup> See ZGdM II:7.

capture and/or discipline life through discourse. With his “ship” analogy, which he developed in *Gay Science* in 1882, he intended to foster an (anti)colonial frame of mind. His ship seeks alternative moralities, alternative values, and alternative ways of organizing a psychological self. Nietzsche developed his ship aphorisms further in his next book, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-1888), a work he commences at the end of Book 4 of *The Gay Science*. As a metaphor embedded within a history of insanity and colonial fantasy, the “ship” also has imperialist connotations.<sup>103</sup> These connotations become more apparent when we consider that Nietzsche equated his search for a new psychology with Columbus, the discoverer who made possible the life-annihilating colonization of the Americas.<sup>104</sup> The unintentional aftereffect of colonial “discovery” suggests that psychologies may “invent the inner human” on the one hand, and dominate life on the other.<sup>105</sup> For this reason, I argue that Nietzsche’s ship highlights the importance of critically navigating between these two possibilities.

Aphorism 279 of *The Gay Science*, “Star Friendship,” refers to sailing. Sailing suggests an exploratory activity without a specific goal, or without the intention of traveling to a specific new land or new truth. For example, Nietzsche addresses other

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103 For more on this connection, see *Nietzsche’s New Seas*. For the *Ship of Fools* reference see Michel Foucault’s *Madness and Civilization*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage, 1988)14-15, originally published in French in 1961 as *Historie de la Folie*. David Harvey criticizes Foucault’s embrace of the ship a utopian “heterotopia par excellence.” See p. 183 in *Spaces of Hope* (Berkeley: U of California P, 2000). Paul Gilroy points to the use of the ship both as a transport for slaves and as a transport for ideas. He notes the way trans-Atlantic crossings nurtured the expansion of ideas, opening up new fields of intellectual possibility. On the other hand, shipboard travel was also the means through which imperial powers dominated the globe and exploited those considered inferior to white Europeans. See *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993).

104 Aphorisms in *The Gay Science* that allude to Columbus are 124, 283, 289 and 291.

105 See GWII 1029.

philosophers whose ideas converge with his own in their explorations of the mind. He warns them that “the omnipotent might of our proposition tears us apart again into different seas and sunny areas and perhaps we won’t see each other ever again—perhaps we’ll see each other after all, but won’t recognize each other again: the different seas and suns have changed us!”<sup>106</sup> Friends “being torn apart” may be a reference to Nietzsche’s falling out with Wagner, Rée, or Schopenhauer, his “magnificent teacher.”<sup>107</sup> Initially then, Nietzsche creates a guiding philosophy which commands his new philosopher to affirm his divergence from contemporaries and predecessors. Such a philosopher does not dwell on theories nor does *he* allow his divergence from his intellectual family dominate the path his psychology takes. Tellingly, the aphorism begins: we “were friends and have become strange to one another.” A new psychology begins by confronting the assumption that “the strange” must become something “familiar.” Nietzsche’s philosophers transform their desire for the familiar into a desire for the strange. Affirming unknown life forces nurtures ever new possible perspectives, and for Nietzsche this encouraged skepticism. In his play with these categories, Nietzsche also reminds his potential fellow sailors that language is the only site in which a new psychology can come into existence.

By signifying multiple and infinitely changing temporalities, Nietzsche further imagines a philosophy not stunted by morality or unambiguous laws. In the aphorism quoted above, the grammar contains both past and future tenses simultaneously

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106 FW IV:279.

107 Even though this aphorism dealt directly with Wagner, Salomé claimed it was about Rée. See notes in Pfeiffer, bottom of p. 365. ZGdM Preface: 5.

defying the prison of time. “We were friends” parallels “we must become strange,” but the former is in the past tense and the latter is a modal construction which defines a change of perspectives in the future. The juxtaposition of the two suggests that there was once a moment of temporal synchronicity, but this moment has had a definite ending. The next line emphasizes this quality of Nietzsche’s thought: “That we must become strange to each other is the law over us: even so, we should also become more venerable through it!” The idea that there is a “law” at first suggests a metaphysical inescapability, and indeed language is just that. However, the law here is one emerging from differences in wills, or the constant drive to grow. What this implies is that even though there are laws, which his sailors cannot avoid, they can let go of the resentments that desire the illusion of permanency and shipwreck future explorations.

In the aphorism “Onto the Ships!,” Nietzsche defines who his anti-colonial sailors may be. His philosophers come from a position of privilege as Columbus did, again revealing Nietzsche’s elitism. The aphorism implores his few gifted philosophers to overcome the insecurity caused by the “death of God.” He furthermore calls on them to break free of the shadow of “God” that manifested in the ideals of asceticism and the Rousseauian figure of “man” as inherently good.<sup>108</sup> Nietzsche begins the aphorism: “We have left the land and have gone to the ship! We have the bridges behind us—still more, we have broken off from the land behind us!” All these verbs, “left” (verlassen), “gone” (gegangen), and “broken off” (abgebrochen) suggest that a certain amount of destruction is necessary to break free of a bad conscience and other products of resentment, and to be able to create an endless array

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108 FW IV: 289.

of alternative modes of existence. In this light, the “we” implies a plurality that repudiates the stable subject defined against a threatening empire of the unconscious. “We” also implies possible conformity to herd consciousness, albeit the elite’s herd consciousness. As Nietzsche’s language stresses, even among his elite sailors there cannot be a true overcoming of resentment or what is herd within them, but they must remain vigilant in redirecting this will. Nietzsche therefore warns against the seductive qualities of new modes of thought that promise liberation and nourishment, but instead become mere idol worship.

In “On the Poets,” for example, a frustrated Zarathustra complains: “Alas! I threw my net happily into [the] seas [of poets] and wanted to catch good fish; but I always pulled out a head of an old god.”<sup>109</sup> The parable implies that writers have the potential to nourish skepticism in readers and themselves (i.e. through “good fish”), but do not. In addition, in section 28 of “From old and new Tablets,” Zarathustra first mentions ramifications for the kinds of truth that are grounded in morality. He alludes to an unconventional attitude with respect to truth: “The Good teach you false coasts and false security.” Nietzsche then goes on to denounce their “fatherland,” writing “Our rudder wants to go to there, where our childland is! Out there, stormier than the sea, our enormous desire rages!”<sup>110</sup> Zarathustra’s proclamation links patriotism, symbolized by the “fatherland,” to the idea of “false coasts.” Nietzsche is emphasizing the need to perpetually break free from one’s home, where the “good” herd teaches moral truth. He moreover implies the need to conquer the fear of

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109 Z 165.

110 Ibid. 267-68.

“stormy” desires that demand ever new experiences, because that fear prevents new explorations of consciousness. Embracing the strange, even though it may be unpredictable, nourishes curiosity and therefore an affirmation of life, as signified by the “childland.” The alternative naiveté represented by the child is something, which I argue, socialization tends to train the middle classes to repress or ignore.

Rather than annihilating a “sick” will with a metaphysical ethics as Schopenhauer would, Nietzsche’s philosophers welcome the strong part of the will that leads to the creation of ever new worlds. In this sense, creating and discovering become one. For example, in an aphorism that is in the form of a dialogue, Nietzsche directly indicates how he differs from a natural scientist who seeks only to discover the world: “I want more, I am no searcher. I want to create a particular sun for myself.”<sup>111</sup> Later he writes that what is hopeful for him is that “life could be an experiment of the knowledge-seekers—and not a duty, not destiny, not deceitfulness!”<sup>112</sup> Nietzsche’s psychology creates new values, rather than conserving the old errors of general values. These experiments create “a world of dangers and battles, in which the heroic feelings also have their places to dance and play.” Such a heroic attitude stimulates the new psychologist to battle for a human who could “dance and play,” or joyfully embrace uncertainty and not try to master life. This can also be an affirmation of racism if we consider Nietzsche’s associations of heroic individual strength with mythological races, such as the Arya tribe of warriors. But we must also remember that Nietzsche’s warriors were not supposed to create an empire of the

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111 FW 320.

112 Ibid. 324.

fatherland. It is nevertheless clear that heroic experimentation and atheism might become nothing more than nihilism, a point he makes himself in Book V of *The Gay Science*, a book he wrote later than the others in 1886.<sup>113</sup>

Nietzsche's ship ironically navigates through the colonial imaginations dominating psychological discourse in his time. But this ship is only a metaphor through which a new psychology can be discursively imagined. This formalist enterprise does not give us a way to translate such an imagination into specific modes of practice, which underscores both the possibilities and the dangers of his amoral psychology. What is from one reader's perspective a metaphorical adventure, is from another perspective, the one which the Nazis adopted, an alibi for imperialist domination. For example, *The Gay Science* asks the seekers of knowledge to become conquerors and not necessarily the liberators of the colonial and instinctual worlds: "Build your cities on Vesuvius! Send your ships into unexplored seas! Live in war with your kind and with your self! Be robbers and conquerors, as long as you're capable of not being rulers and owners, you seekers of knowledge!"<sup>114</sup> Living on the side of a volcano requires courage to face an unknown future. This existence means accepting a constant antagonism with potentially destructive forces, and, as we have seen, heroism provides a model for a way to live which is not dominated by fear. The fact that Nietzsche warns his heroic psychologists against ruling these dangerous lands suggests that this model should not create a new colonial situation of the strong over the weak. He imagines that the strong might only battle with their own truths or

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113 Ibid. 346.

114 FW 283.

strong and weak wills, as well as those produced by others of their “kind,” to create ever new kinds of knowledge. Although his sailors must not create an empire of truth, over which they rule, they must replicate imperial struggles for power. This leads to the possibility of reconfirming the colonial paradigm.

Nietzsche’s reproduction of the imperial struggle has potential consequences for the populated places that would be “robbed” or “conquered”—those not of “your kind.” Even if Nietzsche does not imply colonial peoples here, the language allows readers to make this interpretation. In addition, the fact that many who figuratively live on the edges of a Vesuvius do not do so voluntarily does not even emerge as a problem. Those historically confined to colonies or those who have negative categories imposed upon them have their horizons limited. Nietzsche’s utopian psychology then would be of little consequence to them; they become the casualties of his heroes’ discursive battles. Thus, even as Nietzsche dismantles a science based in many ways upon the construction of a colonial “inner Africa,” he perpetuates abstractions that mask realities and further destroy life. Naturalizing colonialism by invoking ship travel could have ultimately helped to shipwreck Nietzsche’s irony.

As Holub asserts, Nietzsche is anti-imperialist in the sense that he attacks the nationalist project, but does not offer much in his philosophical work that is directly useful to counteract material oppression.<sup>115</sup> I argue that Nietzsche repeatedly acknowledged his own limits and saw the potential in his philosophy among his future readers. For example, many of Nietzsche’s ship aphorisms fall in the fourth book of

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<sup>115</sup> Holub, “Nietzsche’s Colonial Imagination: Nueva Germania, Good Europeanism, and Great Politics,” *The Imperialist Imagination* 49.

*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. This book begins with a poem about *Sanctus Januarius*, the beginning of a new year. The first aphorism in this section has the title, “Towards the New Year.” The book closes with Zarathustra’s “going down” (*Untergang*).

*Untergang* can also mean destruction and failure, implying that heroic souls will their own destruction. This suggests that Nietzsche realized to a certain degree that his new psychology would be “untimely”—he was more interested in the ways his ideas could be used in the future: “Only the day after tomorrow belongs to me. Some will be born posthumously.”<sup>116</sup> The new philosophers Nietzsche envisioned were those who would be capable of dispelling, without completely overcoming, the will to resentment. Musil’s Nietzschean project was such an attempt. Musil was aware of the dangers and possibilities in such a psychology. To guide a life-affirming psychology required the creation of what Nietzsche called an ethical or noble consciousness.

## **VI. Transvaluations of a Noble Sailor: Nietzsche’s Noble and Aphoristic Ethics**

In the first four books of *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche optimistically proposes that for the few who may learn to live ethically, their will to resentment might not dominate value creation.<sup>117</sup> This does not mean that individuals may completely overcome resentment, but they can temper control over resentful reactions. Those few who could accomplish this would be “noble” (*vornehme*). They are those “whose distinguishing mark will always be to have no fear of oneself, to expect nothing abusive from oneself, to fly without hesitation wherever it moves us—us freely born

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116 “Vorwort,” *Der Antichrist*, *Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Werke* VI 167.

117 Book V in *The Gay Science*, which was written five years after the first four books, retreats from this optimism.

birds! Wherever we also may go it will always be free and sunlight will be around us.”<sup>118</sup> The new ennobling philosophy, inspired by a marked lack of fear, is not a philosophy or psychology in the traditional sense of an academic or clinical discipline. The title of his book describes what Nietzsche has in mind: it should be a “joyous science” (*fröhliche Wissenschaft*). In the Italian it becomes an openly “gay science” (*la scienza gay*), creating an awareness of the potentialities of consciousness and will. The shift in pronouns one finds in his work from the first person “I” to the collective “we” symbolizes the constant but noble struggle between individual and communal mentalities. But what is Nietzsche’s “noble” literally?

As I have already argued, Nietzsche envisioned that his “gay science” would be practicable only by a privileged few—in his time this meant perhaps just him, and in a future time it would be a special new kind of philosopher, perhaps even a “noble.” Nietzsche’s concept of “nobility” (*Vornehmheit*) does not necessarily preclude people who have no material power, or vice versa. This is to say that from a properly Nietzschean perspective, the historical aristocracy was not necessarily *noble*, and neither was the bourgeoisie of Nietzsche’s day. For example, the aristocracy emerged from a divinely ordained status quo that gave their power historical legitimacy. In other words, their power emerged from a never-changing moral truth, which they did not want to change. Being superior to others is, however, a feature of Nietzsche’s noble. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, he writes that nobles “feel themselves to be value-determining, they do not need to call themselves good, they judge ‘what is harmful to me, is harmful in itself’; they know themselves to be that which mainly renders honor

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118 FW IV:294.

to things, they are value-creating.”<sup>119</sup> A noble individual makes judgments about life based on ever-changing internal or external experiences, and not mainly according to a resentful will to power. A noble spirit for Nietzsche in short is, as Musil put it, never quite able to become a “master of the house” (*Herr im Haus*) at least in the conventional sense.<sup>120</sup> The noble is more of an architect who designs but never finishes the blueprints for his own house.

In the same section in which he defines resentment for the first time in the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche argues that by always remaining open to change it is possible for the noble to diminish the power of resentment. The noble designates whatever might give rise to his or her own resentment as either “good” or “bad.” Nietzsche writes that “[t]he *ressentiment* of the noble humans themselves, whenever it appears to them, is effected and exhausts itself, namely in an immediate reaction. It therefore does not *poison*.”<sup>121</sup> According to Nietzsche, the noble soul experiences reactions to particular situations and translates these emotional reactions into action. However, such responses are fleeting, meaning the noble resists whatever temptation there may be to label anything or anybody for all time “good” and/or “evil.” What we might call the “right” of noble spirits to react in an immediate sense to negative or “bad” events that do them harm, would however appear to remain an ethical problem for many, a problem which Nietzsche’s gay science does not adequately address. A noble person for instance could kill the person bothering her or him in such a moment.

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119 JvGB VIX:260, p.209.

120 GWI 649.

121 ZGdM I:10.

In a notebook that covers the years 1918-21 (1929, 1939), Musil reflected on Nietzsche's attempt to overcome the poison of prejudice, especially in aphorism 632 of *Human all too Human*. Musil writes: "Anyone who remains stuck in belief, in whose web he initially catches himself, is suspicious. He does not grasp that there must be other opinions..."<sup>122</sup> In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche emphasized the importance of breaking free of this "web." He writes that it is best "not to hang onto one person, even should they be the most beloved—every person is a prison, also a cul-de-sac. Not to hang onto one fatherland, even should it be the most suffering and most in need of help—it is already less difficult to detach one's heart from a victorious fatherland."<sup>123</sup> The idea that every person is a "prison" recalls the modern disciplining structures that limit individuality; it also foreshadows the caged animal in the second essay of the *Genealogy of Morals*. Nietzsche's further reference to a "cul-de-sac" suggests that it is possible to overcome the prison of resentment but apparently only by having the power to control self definition.<sup>124</sup>

Even though he did not regularly follow German politics, living in Switzerland and Italy during a great part of his productive life, he often referred to Bismarck. He was aware of the German imperialist state and the passions supporting the definition of the German nation. He imagined his noble would at least overcome that herd mentality. Thus his hope for a noble world in which it is perpetually possible to

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122 TBI 477. German: "Jeder der in dem Glauben hängen bleibt, in dessen Netz er sich zuerst verfangt, ist verdächtig. Er begreift nicht, daß es andere Meinungen geben müsse..."

123 JvGB II:41, p.59.

124 Nietzsche emphasizes the potential in meeting a person who may interact with another like in a "cul-de-sac," always moving on, much like he did in his love relationship to Lou von Salomé, his once "beloved."

redefine the spirit does propose a de-colonizing kind of ethics—but only if there could be masses of readers who could read Nietzsche in this way. Would Nietzsche also will the destruction of elitism itself? The answer was unfortunately, no. Nietzsche did not desire to challenge elitism. Due to the elitist qualities of Nietzsche’s practice, the only potential creation of a noble consciousness in a broader audience would be to encourage more people to embrace an *Auslegung* (exegesis) of his work, which Nietzsche himself made possible through his aphoristic form.

The “aphorism” first emerged as a method of writing in pre-Socratic Greece, when Hippocrates used it in conjunction with medical rules. Franz H. Mautner asserts that Hippocrates’ use of the aphorism included “Health-, diagnostic rules and rules for treatment in the form of short, disconnected sentences.”<sup>125</sup> Sir Francis Bacon also used the aphorism in a systematic way. Gerhard Neumann suggests that the aphorism for Sir Francis Bacon was “to leave intact the facts in their present unmistakably particular meanings and in spite of this to settle on (*ansiedeln*) an order that is changeable and constantly open to new facts.”<sup>126</sup> According to this definition, an aphorism could stand on its own, or contain an independent meaning outside of a particular grouping. The term “ansiedeln” also denotes the verb “to colonize,” which suggests that to relate aphorisms together within one text requires an order that could also support a pre-determined interpretation. Neumann points out that Bacon “placed

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125 Franz H. Mautner, “Der Aphorismus als literarische Gattung” *Der Aphorismus*, ed. Gerhard Neumann (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976) 23. German: “Gesundheits-, diagnostischen und Behandlungsregeln in Form kurzer, unverbundener Sätze.”

126 Ibid. 6-7, Gerhard Neumann, “Einleitung.” German: “die Fakten in ihrer unverwechselbaren sinnlichen Eigenheit gegenwärtig zu halten und trotzdem in einer beweglichen, stets für neue Fakten offenen Ordnung anzusiedeln.”

aphoristic knowledge (*Erkennen*) under the characteristics of a ‘discovery’ (*Novum Organum* I, 129), conceived of the aphorism as a ‘Columbus’ so to speak among the possibilities of human understanding.”<sup>127</sup> Although Nietzsche himself valorizes the idea of a Columbus, Nietzsche’s aphorisms would serve a different function: to create and not “discover” values.

In the preface of the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche refers to the genealogy of the aphorism as a tool to discover hidden truth. He identifies his untimely use of the aphorism, which modern understanding has abused: “[I]n order to practice reading as an art in such a manner, one thing above all is important, what today more than ever would be best unlearned,” that is, I would argue, to find an alternative to the self-contained aphoristic structure.<sup>128</sup> His readers must ruminate on his aphorisms like cows, a way of transforming what is herd within them into a noble spirit. This is because rumination would be more than interpretation or analysis; it is “Auslegung,” or the laying out of thought, explication, or with ironic religious connotations, exegesis, which Musil himself appropriated. Nietzsche indicates that it is important not to negate all science and philosophy, or even the disturbing qualities of racism. Instead, readers should do as Musil later suggested, i.e. “weigh” various perspectives always in relative position to each other and within the social context shaping herd consciousness. In *Scherz, List und Rache*, Aphorism 23 in *The Gay Science* entitled “Interpretation,” Nietzsche creates a poetic author “I” in relationship to an implicit

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127 Ibid. 13. German: “das aphoristische Erkennen unter den Aspekt des ‚Entdeckens‘ stellte (*Novum Organum* I, 129), den Aphorismus gewissermassen als ‚Columbus‘ unter den GWiGlichkeiten menschlichen Verstehens begriff.”

128 ZGdM Preface: 8. German: “um dergestalt das Lesen als Kunst zu üben, Eins vor Allem noth, was heutzutage gerade am Besten verlernt worden ist.”

reader of his aphorisms. He writes: “I put myself out there, therefore I put myself in a corner:/I cannot become my own interpreter./Yet whoever simply ascends up into his own direction,/Also carries my image up into bright illumination.”<sup>129</sup> The boundaries between author and reader break down as the reader “carries” the writer along his or her own path of interpretation. This process encourages a kind of critical thinking and value creation that guides a non-resentful interaction among people.<sup>130</sup>

Nietzsche’s noble aphorisms had the goal of inspiring a few gifted readers to break free from false beliefs such as the one claiming that evil desires should be blamed and punished for the pain of life. He wanted his nobles to become masters of their own mental processes within their own territories, or at least keep their fears and hatreds from driving a hopeless effort to replace God with discourse. He envisioned his new noble as an individual endlessly open to experiences contradicting social expectation. At the same time, in the content of his aphorisms, Nietzsche did not attempt to free the whole herd or real slaves. For this reason, the content of *The Gay Science*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* reveals Nietzsche’s own racism, elitism and pessimism that resentment could ever be fully overcome. I would argue that this was in some ways his point. To challenge a discourse that expunged ambiguity in the service of social fears and hatreds, Nietzsche could not erase his own contradictory will. Unfortunately, in Musil’s twentieth century, he would not be widely read in this aphoristic way.

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129 FW I:23. German: “Leg ich mich aus, so leg ich mich hinein:/Ich kann nicht selbst mein Interprete sein./Doch wer nur steigt auf seiner eignen Bahn,/Traegt auch mein Bild zu hellerem Licht hinan.”

130 Ibid.I:11.

## VII. Conclusion—Toward a Caricatured Nietzsche

As I have shown in this chapter, Nietzsche was a self-proclaimed Columbus of the mind. He also had an opportunity to travel to the colonial areas of the world but did not. His sister Elisabeth Förster lived in South America with her anti-Semitic husband Bernhard Förster, whom Nietzsche detested.<sup>131</sup> Nietzsche could not visit them due to illness, and because of his hatred of Förster. As a result, the only imperial zone he claimed to master was his own room, located in Italy between Portofino and Zoagli.<sup>132</sup> In this small empire he believed that he could rule over his own person or conquer the life-denying forces of resentment within himself. From 1889 until his death in 1900, however, these life forces turned inward, quelling his will-to-live. What we are left with is a catatonic image of Nietzsche. This Nietzsche, popular in Musil's twentieth century, was the one greatly determined by a sister who embraced the Nazi party and invited visitors to witness Nietzsche's declining state. The Nietzsche ironically challenging psychological resentment and anti-Semitism, including his own, was lost.

David B. Allison rightly points out that conventional interpretations of Nietzsche have all too often consisted of a "pointless series of oversimplifications, biographical anecdotes, or convenient summaries."<sup>133</sup> Allison's volume represents an attempt to counter this tradition with his introduction to continental perspectives on Nietzsche for a British and North American audience. Notably many of the authors in

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<sup>131</sup> Letter to Franz Overbeck October 6, 1885 in *Nietzsche Briefwechsel III* 96-99.

<sup>132</sup> From a letter to Franz Overbeck on Nov. 23, 1882. *Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Werke XV* 132.

<sup>133</sup> David B. Allison, preface, *The New Nietzsche* x.

Alison's volume are more or less mistakenly associated with what is often called "poststructuralism" or the "linguistic turn." The efforts of Alison and like-minded individuals have been largely to no avail—even those scholars writing in English who acknowledge the influence of famous "poststructuralists" such as Deleuze and Foucault often neglect the Nietzschean heritage of these figures' innovative modes of thought. Looking back on Nietzsche from the perspective of a post-Hitler world to see complicity with the Nazis in his work further indicates the problem embedded within his thought. I believe this reductive way of approaching Nietzsche ironically exhibits what he himself would call *ressentiment*—the will to find a cause for crisis and violence in those who do not conform to herd morality.

As Gilman details, in turn-of-the-century Vienna, one defense lawyer argued that his murderer-client had read Nietzsche's words and therefore he must be considered crazy.<sup>134</sup> Others adopted the perspective that Nietzsche's Overman would come through revolution or war, and saw the First World War as the ultimate transvaluation of all values—in other words, as a violent means to a utopian end. During the war, soldiers carried copies of *Zarathustra* into the trenches with them.<sup>135</sup> The failure of these individuals to see the war also as a materially-driven capitalist venture, for example, attests to the importance of analyzing the relationship of any philosophy of possibility with a material practice of that philosophy. Even more important was the prolific use of the phrase "will to power." The phrase was taken out

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<sup>134</sup> Gilman devotes chapter 2 to this in *Difference and Pathology* 59-75.

<sup>135</sup> Steven E. Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany 1890-1990* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1992) 140.

of context and became a slogan for the Nazis. Questions therefore haunt Nietzsche's intellectual progeny: Is it possible to have a gay science that does not slip into resentful practice? If so, can any person, of any class, gender, or race be a gay scientist? Musil experimented with answers to these questions in both the negative and the affirmative.

In Chapter 3, I will analyze Musil's metaphor of sexuality, which became the focus of his truth-obsessed contemporaries. "Sexuality" represented the life forces that psychological practices sought to capture. Sexual theories propagated by his characters actively try to transplant abject others onto the colonial zones of a self-hating moral order. The Empire of the ratioïd within Europe and the German-speaking world would colonize the thinking of even the peoples most disastrously affected by prejudice because of their own desires to find meaning for their boring, over-rationalized, or dehumanizing existence. The resulting herd consciousness would answer the failure to find answers with The Great War.

### Chapter 3: The *Fin-de-Siècle* Sexual Territories of the Ratioïd in *The Man without Qualities* (1930-33)

Supposing truth is a woman (*Weib*)—what then? Was the suspicion not founded that philosophers, provided that they were dogmatists, had a poor understanding of women?<sup>1</sup>

Friedrich Nietzsche, Preface from *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886)

[T]here is certainly no woman without all the instincts of a prostitute...<sup>2</sup>

Otto Weininger, *Gender and Character* (1903)

Prostitutes—as the metropolitan analogue of African promiscuity—were marked as especially atavistic and regressive. Inhabiting, as they did, the threshold of marriage and market, private and public, prostitutes flagrantly demanded money for services middle-class men expected for free.<sup>3</sup>

Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather* (1995)

According to Nietzsche, German philosophers approached knowledge as they would the mysteries of “woman.” Truth was a beguiling, virginal territory hidden beneath impenetrable layers of perception. Kant described truth as an island of nature seducing explorers into impossible voyages to discover and penetrate into *her*, and Schopenhauer accused the *instrumentum diaboli* (woman) of trapping men in the evil of her sexual determining nature.<sup>4</sup> In 1819, Schopenhauer defined the body as the “will-to-live,” or the origin of desires that function to sustain individual human life.

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1 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse, Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Werke V*, ed. Giorgio Collier and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967) Vorrede, p. 11.

2 Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter* (München: Matthies & Seitz, 1980) 287.

3 Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 56.

4 See Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, ed. Wilhelm Weischedel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1995) 267-8. Arthur Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Representation*, trans. E.F. J. Payne, vol. 1 (New York: Dover, 1966) 330. Also, Suzanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies* (Durham: Duke UP, 1997) 41-2.

Defying conventional thought, he argued that these desires had an unconscious hold over the European soul (*Geist*). The man affirming this hold “goes so far as to deny the will that appears in other individuals[...]their existence is wholly foreign to him, separated from his by a wide gulf.”<sup>5</sup> Schopenhauer answered this problem by suggesting that men should create chasms between themselves and their objects of desire, women, who were at “a kind of intermediate stage between child and the man who is the actual human being, ‘man’.”<sup>6</sup> Schopenhauer prescribed abstinence, or an economizing of coital pleasures.<sup>7</sup> Around the *fin-de-siècle* (1890-1914), European doctors and reformers took such prescriptions to new levels as they launched campaigns to elevate the psychological health of society by mastering sexuality—the physical embodiment of a “true inner Africa.”<sup>8</sup> Robert Musil shared their interest in making psychology a practice. However, he recognized that the attempts to strip down the philosopher’s truth to the scientist’s naked facts could become a dangerous herd consciousness.

In *The Man without Qualities* (1930, 1933), Musil revisits pre-World War I discourses in Vienna that identified some aspects of the desiring body as the cause of the European failure to realize the ideals of civilization and rationality. This failure requires a brief historical explanation. For example, from about 1890 to 1914, the

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5 *The World as Will and Representation* 363.

6 Arthur Schopenhauer, “On Women,” *Aphorisms and Essays*, trans. R.J.Hollingdale (New York: Penguin, 1970) 81.

7 On p. 386 of *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer describes the first stages of an effective asceticism or denial of the will-to-live as “resistance to the sexual impulse, even complete if possible for us.”

8 See Sander Gilman, *Difference and Pathology* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985) 39-58.

Austro-Hungarian Empire lost territory on the Eastern and Southern borderlands to ethnic nationalists struggling for sovereignty. In addition, growing urban areas such as Vienna had created a mass society that threatened the old territories ruled over by the white, bourgeois or aristocratic male. Bourgeois women began to fight against their husbands' power within the domestic and public spheres; a growing army of poor and unemployed fomented in their "threshold zones" on the edges of major cities; and a "pre-modern" racist morality opposed to "rationality" seemed to be a more appropriate imperial master for the mental house.<sup>9</sup> In all of these situations, the patriarchal order struggled to maintain power by regaining epistemological control over the territory of the physical body. To control the physical "lay of the land" meant regaining control over the domestic space, the urban area, and the mind itself.

In *The Man without Qualities*, Musil models the bourgeois characters Clarisse and salon metaphysician Diotima (Ermelinde Tuzzi) on the historical Platonic feminist Ellen Key (1849-1926). Clarisse and her husband Walter express theories of gender ambiguity that recall the work of Otto Weininger (1880-1903). As I have already argued, Paul Arnheim represented Walter Rathenau. Musil also included implicit references to Freud's sexology and other sciences theorizing how to control biological motivation. These disparate discourses together signify the episteme of turn-of-the-century Vienna. Foucault defines an "episteme" as the apparatus of social belief determining the truth of knowledge in a particular epoch.<sup>10</sup> Musil recognized that in

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<sup>9</sup> David S. Luft's *Eros and Inwardness* elaborates on the male intellectual response to the Woman's movement in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. See *Eros and Inwardness in Vienna* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2003) 36-42, especially. I am truly indebted to Luft's work in this chapter.

<sup>10</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage, 1973) xxii.

his prewar episteme, sexuality had ceased to be a private bourgeois matter, or Schopenhauer's personal enemy; it was now an enticing abject subject, among intellectuals and the masses alike, requiring perpetual attention and explanation. The episteme localized the cause of the failure to find meaning and a stable moral order within various embodiments of the "will-to-live" (e.g. coitus, immoral women, racial atavism). These discourses all had two things in common—they were bourgeois in origin and they identified narrow causes and cures for social ills and mental illnesses. Musil explained the appeal of "truths" focused on the lowest common denominator through his neologism, the "ratioïd."

Musil first coined "the ratioïd" after the war, in "A Sketch of What the Writer Knows" (1918). With this term, he described an approach to knowledge that privileged empirical "facts" confirming natural or moral law. These investigations persuaded even the most condemned within their individual frameworks to accept their "truth." This is because "[t]he territory of the ratioïd—roughly defined—spans all that can be scientifically systematized, summarized in laws and rules, therefore above all physical nature."<sup>11</sup> Physical facts such as gravity, or skin color and genitalia repeat in the natural world with minor variations. These facts, then, represent the lowest common denominator creating the appearance of universal experience. For example, women play an important role in propagating the species. Their common organs further provided a basis for the medical theory of hysteria. The term *Hysterie* in German derives from the Greek "hister," meaning "womb," and was originally a

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<sup>11</sup> Robert Musil, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Adolf Frisé, vol. 2 (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978) 1026-27. German: "Dieses ratioïde Gebiet umfaßt—roh umgrenzt—alles wissenschaftlich Systematisierbare, in Gesetze und Regeln zusammenfaßbare, vor allem also die physische Natur."

disease thought to originate in the uterus. Richard Freiherr von Krafft-Ebing and Jean-Martin Charcot used the term “hysteria” in the nineteenth century to explain a normal female’s displeasure during sex. In disagreement, Freud claimed that a frigid response was abnormal. In any case, both referred to physical motivations to explain the causes of female mental disturbances, obscuring other facts affecting the women concerned. Their theories were accepted by the bourgeois community, at least eventually, because their theories gave the impression of empirical objectivity and supported patriarchal power. In “Mind and Experience” (1921), Musil refers to Spengler’s point: “[W]hatever can be defined, or is a concept, is dead—fossil, skeleton.”<sup>12</sup> Summaries refer to superficial facts to explain common experiences out of context. This capturing of life creates a “dead” version of the experience.

In *The Man without Qualities*, Musil’s character Agathe offers a female perspective on her own middle-class marriage to Professor Hagauer—a “fossil.” She remarks that she “could just as well take the dance masks of an African tribe (*Negerstamm*) seriously as the mask of love, which the European man puts on.”<sup>13</sup> The masks of Agathe’s Africans are external forms of denial put on to manage profane displays of the body during sacred ritual. Repeating Nietzsche’s prejudice, she implies that Africans do not internalize feelings of resentment, but experience them in performative moments.<sup>14</sup> In contrast, European men wear internalized masks. Their love is a wooden emotion, or “hard,” to manage un-mastered moments with women.

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12 GWII 1051.

13 GWI 728, and 725.

14 See *Zur Genealogie der Moral, Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Werke* V II:7. Also see my Chapter 2.

Hardness also suggests a symptom consistent with Freud's theory of hysteria.<sup>15</sup> In unconscious disagreement with Freud, Agathe is implying that normal delusions of moral superiority are what make European men frigid—an alternative reason why bourgeois women react coldly to marital sex. She also generalizes the experiences of Africans and European men. Musil argued that such contradictions could be exposed through non-ratioïd approaches to knowledge, or the investigation of exceptions that confound rules and laws.<sup>16</sup> In non-ratioïd fictions, empirical “facts” must be considered in relationship to particular contexts and to other facts.

As Musil began sketching the novel in 1920, he also reevaluated the concept of *coitus*, or genital intercourse, to de-solidify the basis for physical explanations of motivation. He wrote:

*Coitus*: The break of the eye (*das Brechen des Auges*), the convulsive leaving of one's body, the broken open lips between which the breath creeps away, this entire imitation (*Mimus*) is related to the catastrophe. That is one of the most disturbing stimulations in this process. Similar to the change that occurs when a human stands there healthy, strong, arrogant, and in the next moment has a bullet in his body, and belongs to the dust, in which he writhes.<sup>17</sup>

By only implying genital stimulation, Musil refocuses attention on the physical/non-physical threshold zone of the *petit mord*, or little death of orgasm. The difficulty in rationalizing the pleasures accompanying this death suggests that “men” who imagine

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15 Sigmund Freud, *Dora: An Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* (New York: Collier, 1963) 157.

16 GWII 1028.

17 Robert Musil, *Tagebücher*, ed., Adolf Frisé, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1976) 408. German: “Das Brechen des Auges, das zuckende Sichlassen des Körpers, die aufgebrochenen Lippen, zwischen denen sich der Atem fortschleicht, dieser ganze Mimus ist verwandt mit dem der Katastrophe. Das ist einer der beunruhigenden Reize des Vorgangs. Ähnlich der Veränderung wie wenn ein Mensch gesund, stark, hochmütig dasteht und im nächsten Augenblick eine Kugel im Leib hat und zum Staub gehört, in dem er sich windet.”

themselves as economic in their sexuality are merely “arrogant.” Musil also invokes Nietzsche’s second essay in the *Genealogy of Morals*, which portrays conscience as “imitating” (*mimus*) a war to annihilate the supposedly caged inner animal.<sup>18</sup> Based on this implicit reference, it would appear that during orgasm the illusion of a “cage” disappears; the “eye” of moral conscience is instead tamed like an animal, while the body frees its “soul” from the ascetic language of *ressentiment*. Defining intercourse by referring to physical sensation did not explain these experiences. By the 1920s, Freud also realized the inadequacies in a “pleasure principle” and proposed a second drive motivated by a death instinct.<sup>19</sup> Musil argues that after war-like release, an individual “writhes” like a snake; however, writhing could also be a response to the excitement resulting from an affirmation of, rather than a war against, life. He makes it clear that feelings themselves represent an entanglement of ambiguous motivations that are never fully repressed. Through his reevaluation of coitus, Musil underscored the ways that ontological principles explaining sexual pathology and economy distracted from ambiguous life forces. In fact, I would suggest that focusing on physical drives meant privileging the dominating motivations of an increasingly violent patriarchal order.

This chapter argues that the sexual references in *The Man without Qualities* depict the practical consequences of *fin-de-siècle* psychological cures and reforms

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18 See ZGdM II:9, p. 308.

19 Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton, 1961) 8-9.

seeking to discipline the body in order to re-master “man’s soul.”<sup>20</sup> Musil’s novel reveals that these ideas, once rationalized in an episteme based on moral-scientific truths, garnered support in the masses through popular stereotypes about physical nature. My reading disagrees with criticism interpreting Musil’s sexual allusions as evidence of a Freudian concern with personal identity.<sup>21</sup> For example, Hans-Rudolf Schärer (1990) argues that Musil’s attention to narcissism exemplifies his unconscious debt to Freud, which he vociferously denied. Stefan Jonsson (2000) claims that Ulrich is fascinated by the prostitute-killer Moosbrugger and the hysteric Clarisse because they are “monstrosities” according to dominant ideology, referring back to Karl Corino’s (1982) Freudian emphasis on criminality and pathology.<sup>22</sup> In Jonsson’s reading, Ulrich valorizes these figures to create a post-psychoanalytic fragmented subject through a process of negation and reification. I instead explore Musil’s symbolic use of “sexuality” to explicate epistemic thinking, which, in this context was

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20 See Bruno Bettelheim, *Freud and Man’s Soul* (New York: Vintage, 1984).

21 Karl Corino. “Ödipus oder Orest? Robert Musil und die Psychoanalyse” in *Vom “Törless” zum “Mann ohne Eigenschaften,”* ed. Uwe Bauer and Dietmar Goltschnigg (Munich: 1973) and “Ein Mörder macht Literaturgeschichte,” *Robert Musil und die kulturellen Tendenzen seiner Zeit,* ed. Josef Strutz (Klagenfurt: Wilhelm Fink, 1982); Hans-Rudolf Schärer, *Narzißmus und Utopismus: Eine literaturpsychologische Untersuchung zu Musils “Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften”* (Munich: Fink, 1990); Stefan Jonsson, *Subject Without Nation: Robert Musil and the History of Modern Identity* (Durham: Duke UP, 2000); and Thomas Sebastian, *The Intersection of Science and Literature in Musil’s The Man Without Qualities* (New York: Camden, 2005). Susan Erickson analyzes Musil’s representation of perverse acts against a female body and particularly the mother’s body in his essay “Das Unanständige und Kranke in der Kunst” (1911). She claims that Musil’s detailed “metaphor” of sexual violence reflects his own inability to overcome desires for his mother, which alienation from his own masculine thinking had rendered inexpressible. See “Essay/Body/Fiction: The Repression of an Interpretive Context in an Essay of Robert Musil,” *German Quarterly* 56.4 (1983): 580-93. Sebastian follows Erickson and sees an inexpressibility causing perversion in Musil’s novel. See Sebastian, p. 117, for his argument that the sexual crimes taking place in the red light district in the novel are caused by an aphasia that prevents “men” from expressing their postwar traumas.

22 Jonsson 196.

linked to patriarchal domination.

Gerhard Meisel (1992) similarly proposes that Musil had an interest in the human and physical sciences of the early twentieth century that revolutionized the definition of the human. Meisel emphasizes Foucault's designation of Freud as a "Diskursbegründer," or the first persuasive knowledge producer who made sexuality a shamelessly omnipresent subject of human studies.<sup>23</sup> Meisel proposes that Musil's own ethical-scientific approach to the human psyche was as important as Freud's. I would add that Freud rendered social particulars invisible to support his sexual truth (intentional or not), whereas Musil exposed the context over-determining any sexual act *and* discourse, revealing an infinite number of truths. The novel depicts the interactions of a number of discourses to situate them within particular contexts of experience and thus work out the realities of their practices. Meisel reconstructs Musil's staging of theory through Ulrich, Diotima, Moosbrugger, and Clarisse, but privileges psychoanalysis.<sup>24</sup> I mainly, but not exclusively, analyze Musil's extra-Freudian experiments with these characters.

This chapter also expands on David S. Luft's *Eros and Inwardness in Vienna* (2003). Luft's work brings to light extra-Freudian perspectives on gender and sexuality in Vienna during the first half of the twentieth century. Luft identifies a uniquely Viennese interest in both the philosophical irrationalism of Nietzsche and

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<sup>23</sup> Gerhard Meisel, *Liebe im Zeitalter der Wissenschaften vom Menschen* (Darmstadt: Westdeutscher, 1992) 16. In *Die Sprache der Liebe bei Robert Musil* (München: Fink, 1989), Thomas Pekar applies the system theory of sociologist Niklas Luhmann to define love in the novel as a discourse linking social context and personal experience. He explains these links through literal categories of androgyny, narcissism and ecstasy.

<sup>24</sup> Meisel 131-201 especially.

Schopenhauer, and scientific materialism. This double concern affected the work of Freud, Otto Weininger, Musil, and Hermito von Doderer.<sup>25</sup> Luft moreover argues that Musil's erotica is a metaphor representing his attempt to balance two approaches to knowledge—the ratioïd (moral-scientific) and non-ratioïd (ethical) applications of intellect. He concludes that Musil's epistemology culminated in the pseudo-incestuous siblings, Ulrich and Agathe. These characters integrate gendered stereotypes of thought and feeling into an ethics that resists ideologies defining them as separate conditions of psychological life. I explore their psychology in the next chapter. In this chapter, I examine characters other than the siblings who invent Platonic ideals and medical cures that also attempt to integrate science with ethical concerns. However, to transform their ideas into a repeatable practice, they return to the ratioïd focus on the physical. These characters ultimately participate in a violent war against abject bodies, which they see as threatening dissolution of their truths.

The subtext of the novel suggests that Musil was concerned with twentieth-century attempts to free the "soul" by disciplining the body. He imagined that the soul hovered above the body, i.e. in the realm of fantasy. Therefore what was required was not liberation but new thinking. Following historical contextualization of this analysis of *fin-de-siècle* psychological practice, this chapter analyzes the bourgeois wives Diotima and Clarisse, both of whom justifiably demand that their husbands recognize their souls as opposed to their sexual bodies. The territorial male order does not submit to their ideals, but rather contains them within the salon or the sanitizing space of the clinic. Both women function as ironic commentators, exposing the patriarchal

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<sup>25</sup> David S. Luft, *Eros and Inwardness* 9.

violence integral to attempts to nail down the mysteries of sexual truth. Furthermore, as members of the bourgeoisie, they adopt a body-centric view of their own gender and therefore fail to break free of epistemic stereotypes. Despite their problematic idealisms, these characters evidence Musil's validation of women who explored their own ideals after war revealed a danger in "male" ways of thinking, and yet could not change anything because the episteme remained focused on the physical.<sup>26</sup> By linking erotic ideal to medical empire, I argue more broadly that Musil presaged the human catastrophes resulting from the growing social acceptance of what he called the ratioïd and a will to racial truth that created the unifying spirit of the nation-state.

### **I. Characterizing *Fin-de-Siècle* Psycho-Sexual Discourse: From Erotic Ideal to the Clinic**

This chapter considers psychologies and medical theories produced in salons, psychiatric offices, newspapers, and the clinic, the last of which was what McClintock called an "abject space."<sup>27</sup> Prior to World War I, discourses produced in these areas of knowledge production responded to the apparent failures of science and rationality to nourish the human soul. These discourses varied. For example, many proposed Platonic unions to overcome the coldness and cruelty of modern science, etiologies to cure psychological dilemmas caused by sexuality, and methods to diagnose and discipline the atavisms of criminality. As seemingly different as these efforts were, they relied on a fundamental warrant—civilization was diseased and needed to be

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<sup>26</sup> GWII 1198, "The Woman of Yesterday and Tomorrow" (1929). Also cited in Brenda Kreiser, "The 'Süßes Mädel' in *Fin-de-Siècle* and Modern Vienna," *Commodities of Desire*, ed. Christiane Schönfeld (New York: Camden, 2000) 72.

<sup>27</sup> McClintock 72.

cured. As Sander Gilman writes: “The old ‘platonic’ idea of disease as a corporeal invasion of the self, a ‘thing’ lying outside the self that enters to corrupt it, has not been shaken off by modern medicine.”<sup>28</sup> In human sciences from the ideal to the clinical, a physical “other” was to blame for modern contradictions. Although there were nuances distinguishing these complex theories, it was the commonly practiced imprecise evaluation of the causes of a disintegrating Europe that Musil found problematic. Musil’s characters were modeled on these prewar efforts. Therefore, summarizing their theories and practices facilitates an understanding of the epistemic herd consciousness which *The Man without Qualities* satirizes.

Early bourgeois ethicists dreamed of various forms of utopia, or conditions in which ideal laws become practice. They conceived of their utopia as some form of return to a “pure” pre-civilized experience. For example, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), whose work both Musil and Nietzsche read prolifically, had an interest in Hindu texts translated into both German and English. From these texts he developed a post-Christian religiosity centering on what he eventually named the oversoul.<sup>29</sup> Emerson was also a proponent of American transcendentalism in New England, disseminating his thoughts in *The Dial*, a journal he co-founded with feminist Margaret Fuller. Fuller later participated in the European salons of feminists familiar to Musil and Ellen Key—Madame de Staël and George Sand. These feminists transgressed bourgeois stereotypes of domesticity by traveling, participating

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28 Gilman 24. See also Nietzsche, section 191 in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*: “And since Plato, all theologians and philosophers are on the same track—that is, in moral matters it has so far been... ‘the herd,’ as I put it, that has triumphed.” Translation by Walter Kaufmann, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (New York: Modern Library, 1968) 294.

29 J.J. Clarke, *Oriental Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 1997) 86.

in revolutions, and disseminating dangerous ideals of social utopianism to American or European audiences during the 1840s. They nevertheless remained firmly concerned with middle-class issues like intellectual equality between the sexes. Their endeavors later encouraged a reengagement with Western morality and a renewed interest among intellectuals in Plato's Eros at the *fin-de-siècle*.

Luft has documented the importance of Eros in Vienna after the *fin-de-siècle*.<sup>30</sup> Eros represented a union of body and soul that transcended the pleasures of the body. In Greek mythology, Eros in his manifestation as Aphrodite's son, Amor, fought to marry Psyche (also Greek for "soul") which suggested a struggle to unify the body with the soul-mind. In intellectual circles throughout Europe, ethicists argued that it was best to follow Plato to re-unify these divided human forces, which meant remembering or coming to terms with the primordial suffering caused by original separation from the universe. Western thinkers came to this tradition by reading Plato's *Symposium*. In the *Symposium*, most of the speeches approach love as a duality that can be re-synthesized: there is earthly love related to sex, and ideal love related to intellectual exchange. Phaedrus, for example, argues that a homosexual union between older lover and younger "darling" exemplifies a reconciliation of ideal and sexual love if the union is pursued for intellectual reasons.<sup>31</sup>

The most famous speech in the *Symposium* is Aristophanes' delineation of the

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<sup>30</sup> See Luft 57-58.

<sup>31</sup> Plato, *The Symposium, Plato's Erotic Dialogues*, trans., William S. Cobb (New York: State U of New York P, 1993) 25.

origin of desire and love.<sup>32</sup> As Aristophanes asserts, originally there were three humans: a man, a woman and a hermaphrodite. Zeus decided to cut them in half to increase their numbers and thereby dilute their desire to revolt against the gods by distracting them through the desire to reunify.<sup>33</sup> The man became two men, the woman two women and the hermaphrodite a man and a woman. Their separation created Eros. After that day, men and women who came from the original hermaphrodite forever desired their other half and in the meantime participated in heterosexual relations to perpetuate the human race, making sex the most important form of love for them. In addition, the vivisected woman forever searched for other women, just as the man searched for other men. The Platonic myth that individuals achieve a spiritual unity by finding their complementary souls became the basis for methods striving to reunite discordant Europeans.

Adopting Platonic ideals, Ellen Key instructed twentieth-century women on how to overcome restrictive middle-class marriages. Her Platonic ideals appear throughout the plot of Musil's novel, but mainly come to the fore in the salon feminist Ermelinde Tuzzi, a.k.a. Diotima. With Diotima's name, Musil was also referring to Plato's *Symposium*. In that work, Diotima is the only female character allowed to give a speech on ideal love in the presence of Socrates. Plato's Diotima tells Socrates: "If someone who has a decent soul is not very attractive, [his lover] will be content to love him, to take care of him, and with him to search out and give birth to the sort of conversations that make young men better. As a result, he will be compelled to study

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid. 30. Also Luft 58.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 29.

the beauty in practical endeavors.”<sup>34</sup> Diotima educates Socrates on the differences between physical pregnancy resulting from physical desire and pregnancy of the soul resulting from discourse between two like-minded souls. According to Plato’s text, this potential goes against heterosexual Eros that stimulates a man’s desire for immortality through having children, leading to impregnating a woman. In contrast, Plato’s Diotima argues that the boy who can embrace spiritual forms of beauty will instead reproduce the soul itself.

While Plato’s Diotima remains embedded within the patriarchal concerns of Greek antiquity, Musil’s Diotima recalls Ellen Key’s reforms to harmonize female lives. Musil was first introduced to Key’s feminism in her essay “The Deployment of the Soul through the Art of Life” (*Neue Rundschau*, June 1905). She also wrote a famous treatise called *The Century of the Child* (1900). Musil quoted her prolifically in his diaries of this time.<sup>35</sup> In the essay, with which Musil was most familiar, Key claims that the female soul benefits from the management of uncontrollable passion through reason. She thought that by mastering their physical desires, women would ignite a higher desire to develop their soul. Most of Key’s work consistently considers the role of marriage, children, and ethics in evolutions of the female spirit.

Historians such as Ute Frevert have labeled Key an advocate for “free love,” or indiscriminate sex, which is only partly the case.<sup>36</sup> Her reforms did not encourage

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<sup>34</sup> *The Symposium* 47.

<sup>35</sup> TBI 152. Heft 11: 2. April 1905-1908 or later, ca. 1918/19. See also Karl Corino, *Robert Musil* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2003) 857.

<sup>36</sup> Ute Frevert, *Women in German History*, trans. Stuart McKinnon-Evans (Oxford: Berg, 1989) 131.

“Bohemian” promiscuity, nor did they promote a Schopenhauerian asceticism.<sup>37</sup> Rather, the goal of her ethics was to foster an emotional union with a soul-mate. Sexuality and children could be an expression of that union, but never duty. She also understood that society would have to change to facilitate such endeavors because convention valued women only in their capacity to reproduce legitimate heirs, or satisfy men. In *The Morality of Women* (1911), Key warned that “social convention sanctions prostitution alongside monogamy, and vouchsafes to the seducer but not to the seduced, social esteem, calling the unmarried woman ruined who in love has become a mother, but the married woman respectable who without love gives children to the man who has bought her!”<sup>38</sup> In response to this social situation, Key advocated Nietzsche’s “transvaluation of values,” re-valuing the prestige given to a loveless marriage, into a prestige discoverable through a soul-mate. This was a wonderfully ironic appropriation when we consider Nietzsche’s ambivalence toward bourgeois women and his own acceptance of the herd misogyny. However, Key’s reforms had their own ironic limits. As was the case with salon feminists a generation earlier, she intended to reform marriage and foster intellectual equality between the sexes; her reforms, then, were not relevant for the classes of women for whom marriage or intellectual endeavor was not an essential concern. Musil nevertheless appreciated Key’s attempts to practice a Nietzschean feminism.

Around the same time, Otto Weininger wrote *Gender and Character* (1903), a

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<sup>37</sup> Ellen Key, *The Morality of Woman*, trans. Mamahbouton Borthwick (Chicago: Ralph Fletcher Seymour, 1911) 11-12.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. 10-11.

book widely read prior to Freud's work. Luft argues that this book presents the subject of Eros in both biological and ideal terms.<sup>39</sup> Weininger ascertained that there were male and female essences within every human, as evidence he analyzed from the animal kingdom appeared to suggest. He argued that individuals had different proportions of those essences indicating their psychological gender. Ambiguous people or "intermediate forms" (*Zwischenformen*) desired those who represented their inverse proportion. This means that if a biological male had 60% male essence and 40% female essence, he would look for a biological female who had 40% male essence and 60% female essence. Biological females however could never be "psychological men" (*psychisch Männer*), while men could be "psychologically women" (*psychologisch Weiber*), as was the case with homosexuals.<sup>40</sup> Although Weininger proved a critic of absolute differences between men and women, this last assumption re-affirmed a sexist bourgeois assumption: women could never achieve genius because genius required a male-dominated psychology. Weininger, then, both preserved feminine-masculine binaries as natural law to rigidify gender ambiguities, and contributed to revolutionary definitions of bisexuality and homosexuality. Freud acknowledged the latter contribution in his "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality" (1905).<sup>41</sup> Musil's novel highlights the prejudices in theories like Weininger's that

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39 Luft 54-65. Musil read about Weininger's theories in a book by Ricarda Huch. See TBI 138. Heft 11: 2. April 1905-1908 or later, ca. 1918/19.

40 Weininger 242. He defines genius as universal understanding and consciousness. He could come to this conclusion because the dominant belief was that in cases of a "pure woman," there was no "Ich" or center for consciousness. He also explains away lesbianism. Weininger was extremely contradictory.

41 Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey (Perseus Books, 2000). See footnote on p. 9. Edward Carpenter, who also cited Weininger, went further

attempted to “prove” the existence of mental bisexuality while privileging biology and patriarchal stereotypes regarding the intellectual limits of women.

In the same year in which Weininger published his work, Ludwig Klages began to hold seminars in Munich with the purpose of integrating biology with psychology. Klages, who became the model for Musil’s bisexual character Dr. Meingast, argued that physical appearance was a veneer for a fundamental cosmic order. In relation to his psychology, Klages invented characterology in 1910. Characterology proposed that personality types could be linked to particular forms of behavior.<sup>42</sup> Klages later advocated an erotic metaphysics in his famous treatise, *Of Cosmogonic Eros (Vom Kosmogonischen Eros, 1922)*. Beginning with an epigram from Novalis, Klages sums up his theory: “Outer appearance is an elevation of the secretive inner condition.”<sup>43</sup> Musil valued Klages’s belief that “lust limited to the sexual is a constriction. Lust is also in victory, in triumph, in the act of cruelty.”<sup>44</sup> In seeing the erotic as a rapture that exposed individuals to the universe and not simply as a sexual drive as Freud would argue, Klages appeared to challenge modern rationalities. But he ultimately reinforced the claim that biology traceable to Eros

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and defined a “Uranian temperament” in his essay “The Intermediate Sex” (London: Mitchell Kennerly, 1912) 12. Carpenter argued that “Urnings” were representatives of a next evolutionary stage, as they supposedly embraced a higher sentimental love. On p. 20, he also refers to K.H. Ulrichs who was the first to define the term “Urning,” from Uranos meaning “heaven.”

<sup>42</sup> Klages later went deeper into characterology in the 1920s. See Ulfried Geuter, *The Professionalization of Psychology in Nazi Germany*, trans. Richard J. Holmes (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992) 101.

<sup>43</sup> Ludwig Klages, *Vom Kosmogonischen Eros* (Jena: E. Dietrichs, 1930). “Das Äussere ist ein in Geheimniszustand erhobenes Innere.”

<sup>44</sup> TBI 613. Heft 21: 1920-1926. German: “Wollust auf das Sexuelle beschränkt, ist eine Verengung. Wollust ist auch im Sieg, im Triumph, in der Grausamkeit.”

reflected a true expression of universal life. Musil was not immune to these theories. He referred back to Klages's work to define his own "other condition" (*Anderer Zustand*) as a condition celebrating the unfathomable depths of experience.<sup>45</sup> Musil's novel, however, qualifies his appropriation by showing that Klages's metaphysics could become a means of authoritarian control over Eros and thus life.

The Prussian statesman Walter Rathenau became a model for Dr. Paul Arnheim, the German-Jewish capitalist and moralist who is Diotima's extramarital other half, at least for a time. Rathenau published *On the Mechanics of Spirit* in 1913 which Musil read in 1914.<sup>46</sup> Musil reviewed this book in the essay, "Commentary on Metaphysics" (1914). As he understood it, Rathenau endeavored to define "intuition" to discover the mysterious origins of knowledge. In fact, "already the Greeks named such a condition with one word of love, the great simple-ness (*Einfalt*)."<sup>47</sup> The effort to recreate an essential, mystical world that unified spirit with discourse could, I would argue, change into the other meaning of "Einfalt"—simple-mindedness. In Rathenau's Greek "love" of intuition, Musil appreciated an attempt to write from what he later called the "other condition," breathing life into what had become the image of dead rationality. However, he also thought that despite Rathenau's attempts to redress modern rationality, Rathenau himself separated reason from feeling, and failed to see

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45 Ibid. 613.

46 Ibid. 295. Heft 7: 30. März 1913-11. Januar 1914. Musil's review is in GWII 1015-1019. See also Corino, *Robert Musil* 870.

47 GWII 1018. German: "schon die Griechen nannten solchen Zustand mit einem Wort der Liebe die große Einfalt."

that intuition was itself an abstraction.<sup>48</sup>

While Platonic idealists transformed their erotic particulars (*non-ratioïd*) into universal psychologies and social reforms (*ratioïd*), doctors envisioned cures for what they defined as psycho-physical degeneracies and/or pathologies in their patients. Contrary to the belief that rationality easily regulated behavior, these clinicians, in line with Schopenhauer, imagined sexuality to be an almost demonic master of experience. This dangerous master could however be dethroned and that is what their therapies generally attempted to do. In *Psychopathia sexualis* (1886), the reputable “father” of sexology, Krafft-Ebing, re-fortified bourgeois morality by claiming that moral shame produced a normal frigidity that healthfully mastered pleasure. He argued that enjoying sex indicated psychological degeneration—masturbation caused insanity and homosexuality in males, and orgasms caused illness in females. To be fair to his work, he later suggested that homosexuality was normal, and even supported the 1897 homosexual rights movement in Berlin, the brainchild of Magnus Hirschfield.<sup>49</sup> Women did not fare as well in his sexist theories.

Prostitutes and women from the lower classes, or those whom middle-class males approached for their first socially condoned sexual encounters, epitomized the female body consumed by degenerate impulses.<sup>50</sup> Doctors who endorsed such theories relegated sex workers and the lower-class “sweet girl” (*süßes Mädchen*) to the category of seductress, proclaiming that women who sold themselves or willingly

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48 Ibid. 1019.

49 Harry Oosterhuis, “Medical Science and the Modernisation of Sexuality,” *Sexual Cultures in Europe*, ed. Franz X. Eder, Lesley A. Hall, Gert Hekma (New York: Manchester UP 1999) 235.

50 Gilman 43.

submitted to the sexual advances of middle-class men did so because of pathology, or alternatively, out of a need to satiate their sexual desires. Prostitution did not just occur in the streets of the *Vorstadt* or red light district. There were cases of lower-class women who had to supplement their income by occasionally selling themselves, suggesting that they only wanted to satiate their need for survival.<sup>51</sup> Regardless of these material motivations, concerns with disease caused by sexual gratification dominated the medical theory that Freud inherited.

Diverging from Krafft-Ebing, Freud argued that heterosexual gratification was normal and necessary, especially for women.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, he attempted to cure his patients using theories from the field of sexology and evolutionary thought. Such theories were typically indebted to Darwin's notion that reproduction was fundamental to processes of evolutionary development. While Freud later went "beyond the pleasure principle" with his theorization of the death instinct and libido, his continuing emphasis on sexuality inspired Musil to criticize psychoanalysts in the late 1930s for seeing "the vulva in a fountain rim."<sup>53</sup> He thought that orthodox psychoanalysts failed to account for important forces beyond the sexual that not only determined behavior, but affected the lives of individuals in significant ways. Freud first focused on sexuality with his work on hysteria, which became the foundation of psychoanalysis.

In the early 1890s, Freud had come to the conclusion that women who had

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51 See Christiane Schönfeld, "Introduction," *Commodities of Desire* 13. On p. 11, Schönfeld argues that the overly simplified and largely male diagnosis for prostitution stimulated a female-run abolitionist movement to help prostitutes condemned by the state and moral police.

52 Frevert 133.

53 TBI 902. German: "In einem Brunnenrand die Vulva zu sehen."

been raped or sexually exploited at an early age would develop neuroses as adults because the abuse continued to plague them throughout their lives. He abandoned this theory when it began to appear to be an endemic problem among the middle classes, not just among the working classes he had studied in France.<sup>54</sup> His most famous case of hysteria was the case of Dora (1905). It was also a failure in the sense that she broke off treatment with him in 1900; he nevertheless published her case study. One partisan of Freud, Philip Rieff, argued that it was Dora's inability to understand the issues causing her bisexuality that motivated her to blame Freud and leave. This proved that "[h]is truth was, therefore, superior to Dora's."<sup>55</sup> Judith Herman, M.D., who neither praises Freud nor participates in "an *ad hominem* attack," sees Dora as evidence of Freud's first retreat from a complex understanding of female trauma.<sup>56</sup> According to Herman, Freud thereafter began to render female exploitation invisible, focusing instead on the excitement women supposedly felt during the abuse. Freud concluded that women were predisposed to sexual pathology from childhood on and this was what actually haunted them.

Many middle-class women and feminists also benefited from Freud's investigations into female sexuality. To some degree, Freud challenged resignation to cold, bourgeois marriage which caused pathological expressions of female pleasure.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Judith Herman, M.D., *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic, 1992) 14. See also Gilman 56.

<sup>55</sup> Philip Rieff, introduction, *Dora: An Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* by Sigmund Freud (New York: Collier, 1963) 12.

<sup>56</sup> Herman 14.

<sup>57</sup> See also Lisa Appignanesi and John Forrester's "Freud on Trial," *Freud's Women* (New York: Basic, 1992) 1-10.

He likewise challenged Victorian definitions of humanity by openly arguing that sexuality was a fundamental motivation in moral Europeans. In this regard his science was somewhat revolutionary. He could not, however, contradict patriarchal attitudes, which he himself accepted as truth. By the 1920s, Freud's theories were beginning to gain acceptance among the bourgeoisie worldwide. As Freud exported his ideas all over the world, his model for the mind came to overshadow other psychologies. This motivated Musil to claim by the 1930s, with a little resentment himself, that psychoanalysis had "involved itself in everything human."<sup>58</sup> Perhaps for this reason, Freud's theories in the novel at times appear to be entangled in other discourses.

Beyond theories concerned with the sexual lives of individuals, Musil investigated the production of discourse that had the goal of creating and satisfying middle-class fantasies about violent sex. He identified the seductive appeal of stories about murder published in Viennese newspapers.<sup>59</sup> From these stories, he created the sexual murderer Christian Moosbrugger. Karl Corino documents how Musil used the 1898 murder of a Viennese prostitute by Florian Großrubatscher to sketch Moosbrugger, but later cites other models.<sup>60</sup> Corino understands this interest in Großrubatscher to be evidence of Musil's concern with the criminal mind and his own experimental psychology. I would argue that Musil also had an interest in the violence of a "normal" herd psychology that found abject pleasure in crime.

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58 GWI 1219.

59 TBI 230. Heft 5: December, 1911.

60 Corino 130-147. See also Corino, *Robert Musil* 881. For more on the connection between Moosbrugger and Musil's exploration of psychology see Louis A. Sass, *Madness and Modernism: Insanity in the Light of Modern Art, Literature, and Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1992). Thomas Sebastian also looks closely at Moosbrugger.

Both prewar newspapers and the Weimar pulp fiction of the 1920s frequently ran stories of mass murderers who committed *Lustmord* (murder of passion), a term which in itself reflects both the violence of sex and the pleasures of violence.<sup>61</sup> For example, in 1931 Berlin, a child's song entwined the diabolical with the innocent. The words to the hit song were "Just wait a while, be patient, and happiness will come to you too.'" Children sang a different version:

Wait, wait just a little while,  
 Soon Haarmann will come to you.  
 With a small butcher knife  
 He'll make mince meat out of you.<sup>62</sup>

Georg Haarmann went to train stations to pick up poor young boys coming to the city for work and took them home. Once at home he would tie them up, sexually molest and then cannibalize them.<sup>63</sup> The song omits references to the economic depression which made meat expensive and everyone hungry for flesh. Musil's Moosbrugger may exist within 1913 Viennese sensational culture, but Musil could have been writing about any murderer in the first part of the twentieth century who dismembered his victim and felt the pangs of unsatisfied hunger. Such murderers committed their crimes for complex reasons but newspapers excluded these reasons to reify the act itself. Moosbrugger's own insistence that he did not commit *Lustmord* suggests that Musil's real aim was to understand possible reasons why a fin-de-siècle and postwar

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<sup>61</sup> See Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1996). For an interesting examination of the mass murderers sensationalized after the war, and the connection to Hitler's fascism, see Otto Friedrich's book on Weimar Berlin, *Before the Deluge* (New York: Harper, 1995).

<sup>62</sup> Qtd. in Friedrich 337.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. 335. Musil was aware of the famous Georg Haarmann. See GWI 1818.

audience would understand these crimes as motivated by passion, not by desperate social realities.

Musil's interest in criminal anthropology as a popular social discourse also informed his depiction of a Viennese asylum. In 1913, Musil visited an anthropological institute in Rome, which he detailed in his diaries, emphasizing the dismembered bodies of non-Europeans.<sup>64</sup> He visited the asylum *Sergio im Manicomio*, which was situated between a river and a church.<sup>65</sup> This visit is significant because, before the war, Italy had also become a center for international work on criminal anthropology largely due to Cesare Lombroso, who wrote *The Female Criminal: the Prostitute and the Normal Woman* in 1893.<sup>66</sup> Lombroso made a clear division between "whore" and "Madonna," while Weininger claimed that women have a dual nature, i.e. as both a "whore" and "mother."<sup>67</sup> In Lombroso's understanding "degenerates," such as prostitutes, exhibiting unrestrained desire could not be cured through clinical rehabilitation.

In *Crime: Its Causes and Remedies* (1899), Lombroso ascribed to the lower classes a predilection to murder, thief, and prostitute.<sup>68</sup> They were "throwbacks" to a pre-civilized time. He believed in physiognomic theories correlating brain capacity

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64 TBI 276. Heft 7: 1913-14.

65 Ibid. 279.

66 *La donna delinquente: La prostituta e la donna normale*, by Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero, was translated into German in 1894 as *Das Weib als Verbrecherin und Prostituierte* and was popular among intellectuals like Weininger. See Schönfeld 10 and Gilman 55 for more on this.

67 Weininger 285.

68 Cesare Lombroso, *Crime its Causes and Remedies*, trans. M.A. Henry P. Horton (New Jersey: Patterson Smith, 1968).

and criminality, as well as notions “proving” a relationship among criminal acts, climate, and race. Empirical evidence, which Lombroso derived by measuring the sizes and shapes of human heads, allowed him to conclude that Jews and gypsies, along with Europe’s own working classes and prostitutes, were closer to animals than to (bourgeois, male European) human beings. His theory of born criminals was not simply a theory on the lunatic fringe—something that eventually had much in common with Nazi racism. As Gould demonstrates in *Ever Since Darwin*, Lombroso’s ideas were shared by respectable orthodox members of the scientific community.<sup>69</sup> Musil anticipated Gould’s claim when he argued that physiognomic theories were the result of an overly reductive and conventional scientific thinking.<sup>70</sup>

In his diaries, Musil also cites texts associating sexuality with non-Western cultural arts, like the trance dances of Bali and Java.<sup>71</sup> In this art form, he imagined a life-affirming erotic experience that would lead to an “other condition” (*Anderer Zustand*). These associations also remind us that Musil accepted the Orientalist episteme dominating in his European world, i.e. the stereotypes connected to the geographical areas of Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East, which represented the “Orient.” Musil, however, rejected the assumption that Europe was morally or racially superior to non-Western cultures. By linking Eros and exotic dancing he more

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<sup>69</sup> Stephen Jay Gould, “The Criminal as Nature’s Mistake: or, The Ape in Some of Us,” *Ever Since Darwin* (New York: Norton, 1977) 222-230.

<sup>70</sup> Musil criticizes theories focused on physiological criminality in *The German as Symptom*, GWII 1368. He refers to the theory that “der diebische Mensch hat in seinem Cerebrum ein physiologisches Substrat des Diebstahls und der ehrliche Mensch einen Organteil der Ehrlichkeit.”

<sup>71</sup> TBI 786. Heft 30: Etwa März 1929-November 1941 or later. His cousin Alois Musil was actually a famous Orientalist and lived many years in the Middle East, receiving the dubious title of “sheik” among many other titles, see TBI 141.

generally was attempting to conceive of a way to define his “other condition.” When his stepdaughter Annina described the mystical experience of dancing in a letter in March 1923, he wrote back that this was the other condition.<sup>72</sup> If we consider Agathe’s African masks as well, Musil’s concern becomes clear. He was searching for a counter imagination that could dethrone the dominating ratioïd consciousness that corrupted inventive approaches to knowledge; he was not validating the assumption that non-Europeans epitomized sexual primitiveness.

Musil enjoyed theories seeking utopian conditions and curative therapies. He simultaneously was concerned with an aggressive focus on the lowest common denominator which could transform these ideas into life-denying practices. In what follows, I will analyze this aggressiveness in *The Man without Qualities*. In the story, Diotima hopes to facilitate new expressions of the female soul. Contradictions pervading her reforms motivate her gradually to advocate the self-annihilation of promiscuous females instead. Her bourgeois ideals reappear in Clarisse, who develops her own genius resistant to her husband Walter’s sexual rule. In response to her ambiguously gendered spirit, Walter, philosophers and doctors all define her as ill. She colludes with their discourse when she embraces the violent male voyeurism facilitated by sensational stories of crime. In particular, newspapers sensationalize the bodies of Moosbrugger and the prostitute Hedwig to incite the bourgeois audience to redeem their patriarchal order by re-mastering the abject female body in fantasy. Finally, this fantasy motivates Clarisse herself to travel willingly into Moosbrugger’s asylum to master patriarchal truth. With his depiction of what I call Vienna’s “heart

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<sup>72</sup> Robert Musil, *Briefe 1901-1942*, ed. Adolf Frisé, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1981) 286.

of darkness,” the asylum, Musil reveals that it is not sexuality at the heart of motivation, but rather a bourgeois desire to conserve moral truths or a ratioïd consciousness through any means possible, even if it means war. This struggle to capture the naked truth, seducing even those degraded by the physically-oriented colonial-patriarchal order, ironically begins in the ideal realm of discourse—the salon.

## II. The Sexual Campaign of Diotima’s Salon

Musil’s salon belongs to Ermelinde Tuzzi. Ermelinde has the power to experiment with her idealism because she has social power within that space. Most significantly, she inspires the Collateral Campaign to honor the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Franz Josef’s reign with the creation of the Idea of an “Austria.” In her salon she meets Ulrich, who recognizes in her the divine qualities of the Greek Diotima. Ulrich however defines the arm Diotima places on his own as “a fatty petal” (*ein dickes Blütenblatt*).<sup>73</sup> She is a “flower,” a metaphor for female virginity common to old bourgeois moral codes. By adopting this fossilized metaphor, Ulrich draws attention to Diotima’s super-sexual countenance but then fetishizes the fleshiness of her body. This leads us to the paradox also defining Diotima’s discourse. She embodies the Diotima of the *Symposium* who had a rare opportunity to assert a voice within a male-dominated space and Ellen Key who wished to liberate the female spirit from conventional marriage. Diotima however only has this power because, as Ermelinde, she has a socially advantageous marriage with Section Chief Tuzzi who also sees her as a sexual object. This motivates her extramarital attempt to make a harmonious union with Dr. Paul Arnheim. These soul-mates both seek to “raise” their racially

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73 GWI 93.

abject servant-pupils through moral instruction. Their failures motivate them to embrace stronger measures. When interpreting their relationship, however, it is clear that Musil affirmed Key's desire to free females from the belief that women were meant either to reproduce or to satisfy male desires. Simultaneously, he suggested that a bourgeois feminism that privileged physical commonalities over contextual differences could not reform a dehumanizing social order.

Early in the novel, Musil indicates that Diotima's marriage includes regular and violent sexual intercourse, signifying the predatory nature of the "master of the house." Musil writes:

Like all men whose fantasy is not damaged by the erotic, Tuzzi was in his bachelor days...a peaceful visitor to the brothel and carried over the regularity of breath of this habit also into marriage. Diotima came to know love therefore as something violent, like an abrupt attack that was unleashed from a still stronger violent force only once a week.<sup>74</sup>

In this quotation, Musil conveys the herd consciousness of bourgeois males who imagine sex to be related to their physical health, and who implicitly accept Krafft-Ebing's assumption that normal women need not experience sexual pleasure. An erotic or equalizing "fantasy" could threaten a husband's conjugal habits and ever important peace. There is a performative violence in the bedroom that facilitates the bourgeois husband's peace. We see this when Diotima compares sex to an "attack" on her body. Later, Tuzzi's violence becomes clear as he "pounced on her like an animal."<sup>75</sup> The male violence also extends beyond the bedroom. Bourgeois men "release" themselves by appointment, first with a prostitute and then a wife. In

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid. 105.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. 333. Musil included a prolific number of passages depicting male sexuality as predatory.

accordance with Key, this parallel suggests a prostitution-matrimony paradox; some women sell their bodies many times to bourgeois men and are condemned by society, while others sell their bodies once and are condemned to a loveless marriage. Musil's inclusion of Diotima and Tuzzi's sex life thus exposes how a man's sexual habit destroys the spirit of the wife who married for convenience, just as it destroys her predecessor—the prostitute who had sex for survival.

Significantly, Musil does not leave the upper-class Diotima helpless. In “Diotima's Metamorphoses,” she demands that Tuzzi see her soul, not her body. From Tuzzi's perspective, her demands threaten the marriage which the herd has structured in his favor. Musil writes:

What should he do then, when Diotima in one moment embraced him, and in the next irritably claimed that by his side a human full of soul would never be able to find the freedom to elevate herself to her true essence? What could he say in reply to demands that he think more of her oceanic depths of inner beauty than preoccupy himself with her body? All of a sudden he was supposed to realize the difference between an Erotic experience (*Erotiker*), in which the spirit of love unburdened by covetous desires freely hovers, and a mechanical sex act (*Sexualiker*). It was all of course wisdom she had got from reading, which might even be laughable; but when a woman who is undressing at the same time as she lectures a man—and with such instructions coming from her lips!—Tuzzi thought—it becomes downright offensive...So Section Chief Tuzzi was now no longer free, when he thought the time had come, to liberate himself from the dealings of those important matters of state inaccessible to the private sphere, and find a release of tension in the lap (*Schoß*) of his own household...<sup>76</sup>

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76 Ibid. 333-334. German: “Was sollte er also tun, wenn Diotima bald ihn umarmte, bald gereizt behauptete, daß an seiner Seite ein Seelenvoller Mensch nicht die Freiheit finde, sich zu seinem wahren Wesen zu erheben? Was war auf Forderungen zu erwidern wie diese, mehr an die Tiefen des inneren Schönheitsmeeres zu denken, als sich mit ihrem Körper zu beschäftigen? Er sollte sich plötzlich den Unterschied zwischen einem Erotiker, in dem der Geist der Liebe, unbelastet von Begehrlichkeit, frei schwebt, und einem Sexualiker klarmachen. Es waren das nun freilich Leseklugheiten, über die man lachen könnte; wenn sie aber von einer Frau vorgetragen werden, die sich dabei entkleidet, --mit solchen Belehrungen auf den Lippen!—dachte Tuzzi, so werden sie zu Kränkungen[...]Sektionschef Tuzzi sollte also nicht mehr, wenn er die Zeit für

By separating Diotima's desire for affection from her demands for expression, Tuzzi makes the case that she does not know what she wants. His rigid separation, however, betrays his own intellectual limits because he cannot see that his wife is clear that affection should be mutual. She, however, fails in communicating this herself when she refers to the "beauty" and "ocean" of her soul instead of being particular about what that might mean in her case. Because these are abstract terms that were buzz words of the time, Tuzzi dismisses her words as a comical parroting of masculine philosophies about Eros. He thus fails to understand that these words are a result of her rational contemplations. With this prejudice, Musil characterizes Tuzzi himself as parroting Weininger's bias against female genius. Turned around, his reaction could suggest that Weininger's theory of female psychology was an epistemic belief much more dangerous than any personal misogyny. Moreover, a few of the books to which Tuzzi refers were written by Dr. Paul Arnheim. From Tuzzi's perspective, Arnheim is responsible for this situation. His "male" discourse has trespassed on Tuzzi's property. Tuzzi's thoughts, then, negate Diotima's desire for a life-affirming love by concluding that it is the unsatisfactory consequence of her exposure to the public realm. His effort to prove her "infection" from the outside satirizes the effort to preserve patriarchal ratioïd truths about women especially once feminists began to question them.

Tuzzi moreover sees Diotima's demands as damaging to his physical territory of true authority, his own conquered "Africa." She was once the "womb" or "lap"—the *Schoß*—of his home. He equates the home space with her physical body, a body

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gekommen hielt, aus dem Umgang mit wichtigen, dem Privaten unzugänglichen Staatsgeschäften sich loslösen und die Entspannung im Schoß des Hauses finden..."

which he had previously had the right to penetrate at whim.<sup>77</sup> His continuing desire for this freedom emphasizes what the separate spheres ideology masks. In this ideology the private space is the wife's moral zone, while the public sphere is the husband's. However, a bourgeois man also has absolute rule over the home to compensate for the stress-producing responsibilities of work and the lack of absolute power in the public realm. Diotima's salon makes Tuzzi's power tenuous as it brings the public sphere into his carefully guarded territory. Tuzzi's obsessive territorialism then makes Key's erotic evolution through intellectual union initially appear to be a positive liberation for women so obviously objectified. That liberation crystallizes in the moment Diotima meets Arnheim.

Arnheim and Diotima's relationship begins in a letter of introduction prior to their meeting in her salon. The memory of their subsequent first impressions exemplifies Key's ideal of a harmonious marriage between complementary souls, or intellect and feeling. Musil writes:

Diotima felt herself honored like a writer who is translated into the language of a foreign land for the first time, when she learned from [the letter of a mutual friend] that this famous foreigner knew the reputation of her mind. She noticed that he did not look the least bit Jewish, but on the contrary was a noble-looking, circumspect man of the classical Phoenician type. But Arnheim was also delighted when he found in Diotima a woman who not only had read his books, but as she was slightly corpulent and dressed like a classical antiquity, she also corresponded to his ideal Hellenic beauty with a bit more flesh so that her classical lines were not so rigid. It did not go unnoticed to Diotima that the impression which she was able to make on a man with real world connections in a conversation lasting a total of twenty minutes thoroughly allayed all the doubts through which her own husband,

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<sup>77</sup> McClintock documents the conflation of the female body and territory by bourgeois men, which was "from the outset, a strategy of violent containment...it also betrays acute paranoia and a profound, if not pathological, sense of male anxiety and boundary loss." See *Imperial Leather* 24.

biased as he was on antiquated diplomatic methods, had insulted her importance.<sup>78</sup>

Diotima remembers the joy she felt imagining that she would soon meet a compatible partner: she would now be a European intellectual, perhaps like a Rahel Varnhagen, Madame de Staël, or Margaret Fuller, all of whom developed new respect in a foreign land. This recognition frees her from discourse defining her as her husband's possession, as well as from his patronizing behavior.

After they meet, Diotima embraces Arnheim's wish to integrate soul with business, perhaps because she has felt the soullessness of the economic foundations of her marriage. They have other compatible qualities. For example, both have power in Vienna and Berlin respectively because of their "business" deals. At the same time, their socially damaging physical qualities detract from that power. Diotima is a sexual object to men, including Ulrich, General von Stumm and even Arnheim. Arnheim emphasizes her fleshiness, which betrays the fact that "the body" returns as a prominent focus for explorers of Eros as soon as they conceive of their spiritual ideals. Persuasive physical facts distract Diotima's thoughts as well. Arnheim is Jewish in an increasingly anti-Semitic time, which she presents as a problem in her implicit association of Jewish identity with an undesirable physique. Their mutual acceptance

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78 GWI 108-09. German: "Diotima fühlte sich ausgezeichnet wie ein Schriftsteller, der zum erstenmal in die Sprache eines fremden Landes übersetzt wird, als sie daraus entnahm, daß dieser berühmte Ausländer den Ruf ihres Geistes kannte. Sie bemerkte, daß er nicht im geringsten jüdisch aussah, sondern ein vornehm bedachter Mann von phönikisch-antikem Typus war. Aber auch Arnheim wurde entzückt, als er in Diotima eine Frau antraf, die nicht nur seine Bücher gelesen hatte, sondern al seine von leichter Korpulenz bekleidete Antike auch seinem Schönheitsideal entsprach, das hellenisch war, mit einem bißchen mehr Fleisch, damit das Klassische nicht so starr ist. Es blieb Diotima bald nicht verborgen, daß der Eindruck, den sie in einem Gespräch von zwanzig Minuten Dauer auf einen Mann mit wirklichen Weltbeziehungen zu machen imstande war, gründlich alle Zweifel zerstreute, durch die ihr eigener, doch wohl in etwas veralteten diplomatischen Methoden befangener Mann ihre Bedeutung beleidigte."

of the primacy of stereotypical physical qualities, which also hints at Klages's Eros manifested in biology, prevents them from seeing anything but a dirty body to overcome. They use their ideal discourse then to purify their infected parts. Diotima becomes "Hellenic" and Arnheim "noble-looking."

With the initial meeting between Diotima and Arnheim, Musil also marries the reforms of the historical Rathenau and Key. Rathenau integrated the soul into economic relations typically associated with the male sphere of power by invoking female-associated intuition as a complementary force. Key's hope that managing the spirit could soothe the disharmony of patriarchal marriage encouraged her to conceive of a rational guiding principle for the eternal feminine. These philosophies covered both public and private spheres, suggesting harmonious resolution of all bourgeois male-female relationships.<sup>79</sup> Musil however presents Diotima and Arnheim's harmonious union in the past tense. We miss their moment of love. It is a memory, therefore underscoring that the harmony, which they experienced, has become a dead event. Their fossilized ethics motivates a ratioïd practice that will not fully recognize the experience of others, whom they hypocritically try to help reach a similar harmony. The most compelling evidence that their reforms are not repeatable in their purest incarnations is that they use their servants, whose bodies according to the episteme are atavistic throwbacks, to test out their ethics.

The character Soliman is an African, captured and brought to Europe to be in a dance troupe (Musil's allusion to life-affirming coitus and the "other condition") when

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79 Ibid. 330. Diotima establishes that they both want "Geist in Machtsphären zu tragen."

Arnheim purchases him.<sup>80</sup> At first, Arnheim does not see him as a slave or servant, but as a stereotypical noble savage with a “melancholic monkey face” who could practice the mechanics Arnheim has devised if trained. Arnheim’s mechanics affirm important exceptions to theories propagated by anthropologists like Lombroso, who would dismiss both Arnheim *and* Soliman as irredeemable. Arnheim promises Soliman that if he learns this spiritual mechanics “you will surely also go down the path of a merchant, because it is our task, to bring the world not only commodities, but also a better form of life.”<sup>81</sup> What Arnheim omits from this promise is his own role as a kind of native informant who forces those like himself to submit to the dominant colonial power. He offers one path to Soliman, the disciplined path of assimilation he himself followed. This is however impractical. Soliman cannot assimilate into a Europe dominated by Lombroso’s science. By 1913, Germans had also long attacked the hard-won right of Jews to assimilate, inspiring political thinkers like Theodor Herzl to develop Zionism, the movement to create an extra-European Jewish state.<sup>82</sup> In reaction to the failure of assimilation, Arnheim begins to objectify Soliman as an animal different from himself.<sup>83</sup> Arnheim’s mechanics become cruel in practice, reflecting civilizing missions that mask the violence of economic forms of imperialism.

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80 Ibid. 221. See also discussions on the significance of the relationship of the African to Arnheim in Chapter 1. In this chapter, I refer to them only to set the scene for the sexual revolt of Soliman and Rachel.

81 Ibid. 544.

82 Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1981) 147. Arnheim recognizes the limits to being Jewish and concludes that that is why he embraces the irrational—he associates it with the aristocracy and military, those things which were inaccessible to assimilating Jews. See GWI 543.

83 GWI 222.

Similarly, Diotima's morality overwhelms the Polish Jew, Rachel, whom Diotima believes inhabits the realm of the dark, eternal feminine and thus requires guidance to manage her Oriental biology. Rachel however feels oppressed by the clothes that Diotima has bought her: "[I]n them it seemed that she was imprisoned and felt the yoke of morality on her naked body."<sup>84</sup> Rachel's clothes represent an invisible but powerful Foucaultian prison of the mind trapping the renamed "Rachelle" in Diotima's moral signification.<sup>85</sup> The "yoke" reminds us that Diotima keeps her in an animal-like slavery similar to Soliman's, at least as long as the clothing remains on her body. This clothing, then, is a metaphor exploring the need to reform the social conditions placing limits on people (i.e. the ability to buy clothes) as well as intellectual understandings of experience (i.e. the decision to have on clothes picked out by others).

In the abject freedom of Diotima's private, non-marital bedroom, Rachel and Soliman discard the moral clothing of their employers. They reach out to each other to satisfy an urge to affirm their own experiences. Instead of liberating themselves through their employers' love that is now discursive and dead, they focus on the trance-like liberation of coitus. At first Rachel and Soliman do not know how to free each other from their mental bonds. They then collide with each other, and begin their revolt. Musil explains this harmonious moment: "[T]hrough the darkness the oscillating storm of love blew."<sup>86</sup> This is not a love masking conquest, although Musil

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84 Ibid. 603.

85 Ibid. 163.

86 Ibid. 603.

does imply they have the impulse to conquer. Their “storm” is the result of two “soul-mates” expressing Eros. They represent a love unifying the oppressed, or those dehumanized by employers, and who manage to create in their unity a moment of power and life affirmation. However, Musil does not promote their relationship as a cure for oppression as perhaps Foucault would with his revolution of “bodies and pleasure.”<sup>87</sup> They are giving credence to their employers’ morality by reacting to it out of resentment. More significantly, when their union is over they must return to an everyday order which will condemn these racially mixed “soul-mates.”

Through these characters, Musil emphasizes negative social consequences for physical-emotional unions between oppressed classes within bourgeois Europe. Rachel thinks she might be pregnant with Soliman’s baby, who, if born would be proof of their act of miscegenation, and therefore a supposed threat to the purity of Europe. She “was pregnant, and nobody knew it except for Soliman, who, without understanding the reality of the disaster, responded to this situation with romantic and silly plans.”<sup>88</sup> In regards to his love for her, Soliman has adopted the bad habits of young European men.<sup>89</sup> His inadequate response to this crisis, then, has an origin in social conditioning, and not in racial biology. In any case, his expectation of reenacting a moment of passion, and idealizing the physical embodiment of that moment, makes him unable to consider the matter precisely. In other words, he

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<sup>87</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Part I*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990) 157.

<sup>88</sup> GWI 1027. German: “war schwanger, und niemand wußte es außer Soliman, der ohne Verständnis für die Wirklichkeit des Unheils mit romantischen und läppischen Plänen darauf antwortete.”

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. 337-38.

forgets the conditions under which they exist, and especially the rigorous punishment for racial transgression. But he is a teenager, much like Kafka's Karl Rossmann, full of hope and innocently obvious resentments. Rachel in contrast has had the experience to know that her baby would serve a paradoxical function: it would be a new manifestation of life as well as a physical "fact" the bourgeois order could use to reassert control over two transgressors. A baby makes them doubly abject, racially and sexually, and thus subject to the severest of discipline. Their hopeless situation reveals a bourgeois pessimism in Musil's experiments, but also suggests the incredibly elitist limits preventing realization of Key's social reforms based on Eros.

Soliman appears marginally important to Musil and disappears after this event, thus reinforcing stereotypes of immature African sexuality and mental inferiority. In contrast, Musil thoroughly considers Rachel's situation in his posthumously published *Nachlass*.<sup>90</sup> We learn in his notes that Diotima throws Rachel out after she discovers Rachel's pregnancy, paralleling the response of Rachel's family, who in Galicia threw her out after she became pregnant with a previous lover's child. In this ironic expulsion of a female who has a child out of love, Diotima mimics patriarchal authority. She eliminates the evidence that she could not control the "womb" (*Schoß*) of her home, or free Rachele's spirit from a supposedly hedonistic body. With Clarisse's help, though, Ulrich finds Rachel a place to live. In a new place she lives with Moosbrugger whom Clarisse has helped to escape the asylum. Rachel and Moosbrugger thereafter pose as husband and wife.<sup>91</sup> Rachel's fate therefore appears to

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90 Ibid. 1577-1597.

91 Ibid. 1582. Moosbrugger is not drinking anymore so he acts rationally as he treats Rachel

underscore the dilemma facing certain women Musil identifies who affirmed their exceptional life forces: they had to capitulate to patriarchal gender categories at some point. Rachel performs the role of wife for a real murderer; Diotima will resign herself to her spiritual murderer.

Diotima's union with Arnheim dissipates toward the end of the published novel. Arnheim shows little or no interest in presenting himself as a real marital alternative to Tuzzi and even begins to show more interest in Galician oilfields and weaponry than in Diotima.<sup>92</sup> Diotima then begins to educate women who are not limited by a lower-class body on how to make marital sexuality harmonious or spiritual. Her pursuit of harmony, once in the realm of Key's idealism, now resembles *Sexualwissenschaft*, or the *scientia sexualis* of Krafft-Ebing or Freud—a technique of discipline.<sup>93</sup> Diotima's campaign seeks out upper-class women who have committed adultery. In "Bonadea or the Relapse," Diotima lectures Ulrich's ex-lover Bonadea who is a Greek "good goddess," i.e. someone like her. Bonadea repeats the lecture to Ulrich with enthusiasm: "It's about the best education and management of her sexual drive[...]She supports the conviction that the path to a speedy and harmonious eroticism must go through the toughest self-education."<sup>94</sup> Bonadea adopts Diotima's self-annihilating prescription for improving marriage through erotic discipline.

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like his wife. His alcoholism feeding his murderous rages however returns. He leaves their "home" to drink and Musil implies that the police catch him after he commits another murder. See GWI 1596.

92 See GWI 404. Arnheim owns oil fields on the edges of the Austrian Empire, but he also owns "a weapons- and armor-plate factory."

93 Ibid. 104-05.

94 Ibid. 883.

Diotima's campaign thus persuades adulterous women to return to their "ratioïd" husbands.

Musil appreciated Key's ethics, which demanded that the bourgeois order create a space for female exploration exceeding conventional definitions of female atavism.<sup>95</sup> The fact that patriarchal social structures in the novel do not allow the unions to blossom in any sense suggests that Musil valued Key's point that society must also evolve. At the very least, he lamented that his society could not handle a real challenge to male-centered thinking. As his novel rightfully reminds us, however, spiritual fulfillment is not just a concern in marriage, and not all women had the power to express genius or negate their abject physical qualities. The territory of the salon, while exploring feminism, had borders which the bourgeoisie policed rigorously. Lower-level bourgeois wives, likewise attempting to act on their intellectual desires and challenge male rule, faced a psychiatric discourse defining them as "frigid."

### **III. Chasing Clarisse—(En)Gendered Resentment**

Musil began to sketch Clarisse in his notebooks before the war, making her a prominent prewar conception.<sup>96</sup> At the time, he was concerned with the American transplant, Alice, who had married his childhood friend, Gustl. He partly modeled Clarisse and Walter on his personal relationship with Gustl and Alice. While Musil was writing about his friends, he was also beginning to think about feminism. It is in the nascent construction of Clarisse that Musil first connected Key's intellectual-erotic ideals to his novel. Unlike Diotima, who only faces the annoyance of a husband and

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95 See TBI 157. Heft 11: 2. April 1905-1908 or later, ca. 1918/19.

96 See TBI 85 for all the following associations.

frustrations with a servant and lover, Musil's Clarisse faces the condemnation of a husband and doctors who want to control her idealism by categorizing her body and psyche as diseased. This is because Clarisse envisions the world as Alice did. Alice saw the open fields, not the fences enclosing those fields.<sup>97</sup> Clarisse similarly defines her gender as ambiguous rather than as enclosed within a female body. In the process of exploring her own intellectual ambiguities, however, she becomes obsessed with "men" who appear to reject bourgeois morality or patriarchal categories of gender: Ulrich, Nietzsche, the prostitute murderer Moosbrugger, and the homosexual Dr. Meingast. By focusing on the ratioïd fact connecting them, i.e. their negative masculinity, Clarisse ultimately succumbs to the physical truths she is attempting challenge. Male psychiatrists eventually condemn her as a "hysteric."

Clarisse and Walter at first represent Weininger's bisexual psychology based on inverse mathematical proportions.<sup>98</sup> Walter has a small frame and passion for music, especially Wagner. Clarisse is boyish and an amateur philosopher. She is biologically a woman, but exhibits stereotypical male characteristics. Walter is biologically a man, but exhibits stereotypical feminine characteristics. Moreover, Walter is heterosexual, meaning his male essence dominates and ideally Clarisse's dominating essence should submit to his. However, Clarisse desires to realize her genius, threatening their complementary balance and Weininger's discourse on the superiority of male psychology. Clarisse's recognition of her genius occurs as she considers how to reach the heights of spiritual power by mastering the game of love.

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97 Ibid. 85.

98 Weininger 55.

She keeps this game a secret from their friend Ulrich, because as a mathematician, he “knew nothing of the monstrousness of a game of love (*Liebesspiel*) on the Himalayas, composed of love, contempt, fear, and the obligations of the heights.”<sup>99</sup> At this point, Clarisse wants to play (*spielen*) her game with Walter because, unlike Ulrich, he at first appears as the stereotypical Wagnerian musical genius also seeking the irrational sublime. Shortly after her intention becomes clear to Walter, her game of love actually begins to haunt him. He fears her and grows to hate her attempts to disrupt the hierarchy that privileges his psychological bisexuality, although this is implicit.

In “The Effect of a Man without Qualities on a Man with Qualities,” Walter expresses the anxiety he feels when Clarisse plays the piano. Instead of seeing the spiritual rationale motivating her music, he believes her playing is “hard and colorless, yielding to a law of excitement foreign to him[...].Something unidentifiable tore itself free in her and threatened to fly away with her spirit. It came from a secret cavity in her being that one anxiously had to keep tightly closed up.”<sup>100</sup> Walter identifies in Clarisse a nether world of experience associated with what Freud considered to be pathological pleasure, or a female “excitement,” over which he has no control. Walter understands this excitement to be a threat, because it is evidence of a desire to usurp the sexual dominance, which bourgeois marriage affords him. On the same page, he admits to “the need to do something decisive against it, something he could not do

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99 GWI 53. German: “von diesem Ungeheuren eines Liebesspiels wie auf dem Himalaja, aufgebaut aus Liebe, Verachtung, Angst und den Pflichten der Höhe, wußte Ulrich nichts.”

100 Ibid. 62. German: “hart und farblos, einem ihm fremden Gesetz der Erregung gehorchend[...].Etwas unbestimmbares riß sich dann los in ihr und drohte mit ihrem Geist davonzufliegen. Es kam aus einem geheimen Hohlraum in ihrem Wesen, den man ängstlich verschlossen halten mußte.” dem Bedürfnis, etwas Entscheidendes dagegen zu tun, was er nicht vermochte, denn niemand außer ihm bemerkte etwas davon.”

because nobody noticed anything except for him.” In order to close up the secret will he sees determining her spirit, he implicitly acknowledges that he requires a consensus from the male herd to define Clarisse’s deviance as the reference to “nobody noticed anything” suggests. Walter’s reaction at this point also makes Clarisse aware that the apparent marriage of souls she originally believed she had had with him had been an illusion—perhaps a warning for Diotima who apotheosizes her own discovery of a “soul-mate.” She thereafter turns to Ulrich, a figure beyond her husband’s territory who understands her unspoken secrets, contrary even to her own initial assumptions.

Ulrich directly addresses the ambiguities of Clarisse’s gender which have come to inspire fear in Walter. Ulrich himself had “always taken her body to be hard and boyish, but now, with its soft swaying on legs closed together, Clarisse all at once appeared to him as a Javanese dancer. And suddenly he thought that it would not surprise him if she fell into a trance. Or was he in a trance himself?”<sup>101</sup> First, Ulrich focuses on Clarisse’s body, just as he does with Diotima, and appears to support the idea that she complements Walter. However, he quickly recognizes that she is sensual like a Javanese dancer, not a *Mann-Weib*, or the frigid woman Freud described.<sup>102</sup> As I have argued, Musil associated Indonesian trance-dances with the erotic other condition. As such, Ulrich reconfigures Clarisse both as an exotic sexual object of his male gaze, and as a manifestation of mystical experience. Through Ulrich’s perspective, Musil ultimately draws attention to the seductive prejudices influencing

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101 Ibid. 354. German: “ihren Körper immer für hart und knabenhaft gehalten, aber jetzt, in dieser weichen Bewegtheit auf geschlossenen Beinen kam ihm Clarisse mit einemmal wie eine javanische Tänzerin vor. Und plötzlich dachte er, es würde ihn nicht wundern, wenn sie in Trance fiel. Oder war er selbst in Trance?”

102 Frevert 132.

the definition of her gender or that of any female—the definer is the one in a trance. Ulrich exposes the polarizing patriarchal discourses that define women as either frigid (Krafft-Ebing, Freud) or as simple-minded (Weininger), in order to ironically deflate them both. After this deflation, he converses with Clarisse in a way that acknowledges her particular experiences.

Ulrich tells Clarisse that he understands her “game.” Expressing sympathy for her erotic effort, he warns her that she will not be able to achieve the results she wants because “ideas never survive the state in which they are their strongest; they are comparable to any substance that once exposed to the air immediately transforms into another longer lasting, but corrupted, form. You have been through this often enough yourself. Because you are an idea: an idea in a particular state.”<sup>103</sup> Here Ulrich puts into words what becomes apparent in Diotima and Arnheim’s relationship: their reforms become corrupted through practice or through an attempt to conserve their ethics with ratioïd laws aimed at “raising” physically abject others. More significantly, by defining Clarisse as an “idea” Musil self-referentially draws attention to her identity as discourse. In other words, Clarisse comes to embody the inventive thinking of Weininger, Freud, Klages and Key. Their thinking, however, ultimately privileged biological stereotypes that tended to support bourgeois moralities. Similarly exposed to the corrupting forces of a male-dominated world, Clarisse’s desire to attain the heights of love will turn into a ratioïd embrace of deviance.

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103 GWI 354. German: “Ideen niemals in dem Zustand, wo sie am stärksten sind, erhalten; sie gleichen jenen Stoffen, die sich sofort an der Luft in eine dauerhaftere andere, aber verdorbene Form umsetzen. Das hast du oft mitgemacht. Denn eine Idee: das bist du; in einem bestimmten Zustand.”

Clarisse's corrupted idealism begins to come to the fore as she discovers the pleasure of rejecting her husband while still accepting his Weiningerian definition of psychology. For example, Walter wants Clarisse to satiate his desire for immortality with children, and she adamantly refuses. Later, in Chapter 123, appropriately titled "The Reversal" (*Die Umkehrung*) for many reasons, she desires to have Ulrich father her baby.<sup>104</sup> In this moment, she desires to be both a mother and adulteress. This appears to be an ambiguous blend similar to the one Weininger ascribed to all women.<sup>105</sup> In place of her husband, Clarisse aggressively tries to create bonds with men appearing to be the negative of bourgeois Walter. She in fact comes to worship Ulrich, Nietzsche, Moosbrugger, the homosexual Meingast, and gets excited by a man peeping through her bedroom window and later by the over-sexualized inmates in an asylum. Ulrich is the first important figure in this list. He gives her Nietzsche's work as a wedding gift, a gift that initially stimulates her search for like-minded geniuses and spiritual mastery.<sup>106</sup> Ulrich also becomes involved in conversations involving the above figures. However, because of his gender and upper middle-class financial security, the only repercussion for Ulrich is Walter's weak attempt to ostracize him by naming him a "man without qualities." Clarisse will not be so lucky because she is a woman attempting to negate Walter's bourgeois security.

After receiving Ulrich's gift, Clarisse reads Nietzsche and begins to valorize the transvaluation of good and evil. Throughout the novel, she repeats his aphorisms

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104 Ibid. 657.

105 Weininger, "Mutterschaft und Prostitution," *Geschlecht und Charakter* 280-313.

106 GWI 609. Weininger also suggested that geniuses would recognize and be attracted to other geniuses.

out of context, meaning she is only able to approach the edge of her Nietzschean park, but not go in, as Musil would say.<sup>107</sup> In “So Kill Him!,” she writes a letter to the head of the Collateral Campaign, Count Leinsdorf, “with the demand of a Nietzsche year and simultaneously the release of the murderer of women and perhaps his public exhibition in memoriam of the passionate paths of those who must unite in themselves the dispersed sins of all.”<sup>108</sup> Musil emphasizes Clarisse’s misdirected activism for “passionate paths,” which murderers in general and Nietzsche in particular embodied for the fin-de-siècle world.<sup>109</sup> A “Nietzsche-year” reduces the philosopher to a fossilized image and time, presenting him ironically as a syphilitic icon or, perhaps, a Hegelian “monument.” A desire to worship demonic forces moves her further to apotheosize a killer’s act against women. Without considering the paradox that she is validating misogynistic bourgeois fantasy, Clarisse continues to pursue her crusade to free Moosbrugger and thus finally begins to appear ill to other males, who had been biding their time waiting for her stereotypical “symptoms.” Significantly, then, she is not a helpless victim, e.g. her ratioïd thinking in some ways makes it possible for psychiatric discourses to facilitate Walter’s reassertion of power over her.

Toward the end of the published novel, Clarisse becomes preoccupied with Dr. Meingast, who is similar to Alice’s “Greek homosexual.”<sup>110</sup> Alice ran off with the

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107 TBI 50. Heft 3: 1899?-1905/06. Musil later writes in his diaries that Alice “lives by the word of Nietzsche’s personal discoveries and prescriptions.” See TBI 251. Heft 6: 29. November 1911-7. März 1912 or later.

108 GWI 442.

109 For more on the Nietzsche legacy in the early part of the twentieth century, see Steven Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany 1890-1990* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1992) 140. Gilman 59-75.

110 TBI 50. In Musil’s unpublished notes sketching Clarisse’s experience in a clinic in Rome,

Greek, but was summarily forced to return to her domestic realm. In the chapter titled “What’s New with Walter and Clarisse,” Musil introduces us to Meingast, who symbolizes both Clarisse’s escape from and return to bourgeois gender discourse.<sup>111</sup> Meingast moves in with the couple to have a metamorphosis in thought, but then causes a further divide between husband and wife. His philosophy is liberating to Key-Clarisse because, through it, she explores her own Eros. His erotic theories also connect him to Ludwig Klages. Klages was coincidentally a friend of Gustl and Alice.<sup>112</sup> Along this line of reference, Meingast’s personality reflects the secret cosmic order of Eros. As a homosexual, Meingast embodies the *Symposium*’s and Weininger’s ideal of gay harmony, not Freud’s definition, which characterizes homosexuality as an abnormal pathology related to narcissism.<sup>113</sup> The pleasurable violent force of his homosexual Eros, however, limits Meingast’s understanding of Clarisse. Her body seems to express an Eros that should ideally match Walter’s.

Clarisse tries to discuss her gender identity with her old friend. Meingast listens to Clarisse’s reference to her “dual-being” (*Doppelwesen*) but hears only his own recent, “Man-philosophy” (*Männer-Philosophie*). The guiding principle of this philosophy is “to attract young men, who are somewhat more than students.”<sup>114</sup> When Clarisse speaks of her doubling it is in fact a direct expression of a complex erotic

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we learn that Clarisse will also meet a Greek with whom she would like to escape. See GWI 1758-1764.

111 GWI 781.

112 TBI 228. Heft 5: 14. September 1910.

113 See Sigmund Freud, *On Narcissism: An Introduction* (1914).

114 GWI 922.

genius, a commonality she shares with Meingast. Perhaps, she even imagines herself to be like one of his male “students.” Meingast, however, ignores her version of Eros because of the authoritarian force of his own patriarchal prejudices. In ironic agreement with Freud, Musil shows Meingast to be somewhat narcissistic. The cause of his narcissism is not sexuality, though. It is the result of his conventional Freudian thinking which appears to temper his Klagian rapture. Meingast concludes that bisexuality causes a frigid response that prevents Clarisse from finding pleasure in Walter’s arms.<sup>115</sup> Meingast’s diagnosis has a basis in fact. Clarisse informs Ulrich in an earlier chapter that her father visited her bed one night, initially mistaking her for her friend, Lucy.<sup>116</sup> Even after he realized she is not Lucy, he continued to touch her. She explains to Ulrich that her silence during this incest created a fear in her that her father had mistaken her silence for an approval of his advances. At the end of the story of molestation, she tells Ulrich that when her father touched her birth mark, it became a physical barrier that stopped her father’s advances and made him leave. In this story, she prefers to give her “body” the agency or power preventing her father’s assault. She narrows consciousness of the experience to the physical, thus expunging her feelings that were affected by the trauma. Meingast is also a predator from her childhood. He therefore has an interest in believing that she enjoyed this abuse and this is what makes her frigid now. Clarisse is not really frigid, though, as her attempt to seduce Ulrich suggests—she simply associates pleasure with intellectual attraction. Clarisse’s inability to communicate her complex traumatic past and Meingast’s

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115 Ibid. 920.

116 Ibid. 294-95.

prejudice inspire a medical diagnosis of her genius.

Clarisse's psychiatrist brother Siegmund is an overt allusion to Freud. He claims that sending mentally ill people away is necessary because "[n]ervous people require a firm guidance; it is for their own good."<sup>117</sup> Responding to this statement on the same page, Walter questions the intrusion of medicine into marriage. He tells Siegmund: "This medical overvaluation of the ordered sexual life is totally from yesterday! [...] Only, it should be said, that perhaps nowhere today does the conception of a private life have a justification! Not even in marriage!" At this point, Walter has a deeper interest in the supposedly "true" Eros of mass movements that annihilate bourgeois individualism. He no longer is interested in the sexual release that Freud prescribed. Perhaps this is also the end result of Walter's obsession with Wagner and implicitly Schopenhauer. He briefly leaves Clarisse to participate in a Pan-German protest of the Collateral Campaign.<sup>118</sup> Afterward, he considers national fervor a superior passion to the one found in marriage. For Walter, then, confining Clarisse would mean the freedom to embrace the growing mass hysteria. Siegmund thus convinces Walter to begin to accept medical interference. His initial solution, as he tells Walter, is to "show her that you're a man," or force her to submit.<sup>119</sup> Clarisse then has two unsatisfactory options: to submit to Walter and give up on her ideals, or to face confinement. Like many others, she will follow her ideals to their very life-denying ends.

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid. 929. German: "Nervöse Menschen brauchen eine gewisse Führung, es ist zu ihrem eigenen Vorteil." The allusion to Freud is on p. 713.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. 607-08.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. 929.

With few exceptions, middle-class women able to express the complexities of their intellect had little means to experiment with that expression without being condemned as hysterical. Gustl placed Alice in a sanitarium, where the American could be “sanitized” and returned to him. Musil identified the power psychiatrists had over her. However, “[i]t does not escape her *that* the doctors insist, or *why* they insist, on bringing her and Gustl back together again.”<sup>120</sup> In other words, she knew they wanted to heal the unhappiness she felt living in a foreign land in order to save or conserve her bourgeois marriage. Clarisse’s problem, in contrast, is that she confines herself within her own preconceived ideas. She obsesses over Moosbrugger and sexual deviance, preventing consciousness of the ways her actions serve her husband’s order. Once this paradox manifests in her, the medical community will come to see Clarisse as a “threatening” *Mann-Weib*—a candidate for sanitation. Before exploring her expedition into the asylum we must therefore examine the fantasy confining her genius first.

#### **IV. Newspaper Vultures Feeding on Lower-Class Bodies**

A newspaper describes Moosbrugger in detail to satisfy a lust for crime among the “vultures of sensationalist news” (*Sensationsgeier der Zeitung*). As Musil writes, “Moosbrugger was a carpenter, a large, broad-shouldered human without excessive fat, with a head of hair like brown lamb fur and good-natured, strong paws.”<sup>121</sup>

Moosbrugger’s first name is Christian, an obvious reference to Christ. Moosbrugger’s profession and his physical appearance as a “lamb” moreover allude to the basic tenet

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120 TBI 229. Heft 5: 8. August 1910-14. Oktober 1911 or later. My emphasis.

121 GWI 67.

of Christianity, namely that God sent Jesus to be sacrificed for the sins of humanity. The “lamb”-Moosbrugger is presented as a redeemer of bourgeois men. As Musil suggests, however, these men become vultures, who out of hatred feed on dead discourse that no longer reflects the living context that produces it. Nietzsche’s first essay in *On the Genealogy of Morals* has another perspective on birds who feed on “lambs.” Birds of prey do not hate their prey nor wish its death. In other words, they represent non-resentful wills. As they say, “we are not at all aggrieved at them, these good lambs, we even love them: nothing is tastier than a tender lamb.”<sup>122</sup> In making Moosbrugger paradoxically (i.e. the expression of Kristeva’s “abject”) both a “lamb” and “bird of prey,” the newspaper attempts to thoroughly satisfy the bourgeois order’s hungry resentment. Musil satirizes the “weak willed” vultures who desire to have a “strong will” embodied by Moosbrugger kill for them in order to find meaning in life. The novel also implies that the audience consumes Moosbrugger to re-master in fantasy that for which the newspaper also whets their appetites, i.e. the woman threatening a loss of male control. In a counter-discourse, Musil provides us with the particulars that resurrect the life destroyed by the dead discourses masking the growing violence of a social order in crisis mode.

The vultures awake from their boredom when Moosbrugger’s act becomes “finally something interesting.”<sup>123</sup> Musil lists demographics for the vultures. They are housewives, teenagers, bureaucrats, anyone enjoying news of crime from a

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122 ZGdM I:13, p.279.

123 GWI 69. See also Maria Tartar, *Lustmord* (Princeton, Princeton Univ. Press: 1995) 9: “We may be repulsed by images and descriptions of bodily violations, yet we also feel irresistably drawn to gape, ogle and stare—to take a good, hard look or to make sure that we do not miss a word.”

position of illusory class stability and leisure.<sup>124</sup> In Musil's novel these demographics would include for example Ulrich, Tuzzi (a bureaucrat), *and* Clarisse. Shortly after this list, the narrator refers to a couple acting out a "Moosbrugger-Prostitute" scenario in bed, and presents a reader's potential question to his wife: "What would you do now, if I were a Moosbrugger?" The questioner is important here. A husband first wishes to act out his murderous fantasy. We could almost imagine that it is Tuzzi or Walter. Moosbrugger's story thus incites a man's desire to regain control over a female body. At the same time, these vultures soon lose interest in specific scenarios and dream of other "Moosbruggers."<sup>125</sup> They are then hoping murder will occur. This suggests that newspapers are perpetually stimulating desires in the audience to repeat murderous fantasies as well as to disavow the social realities causing crimes in the first place. The prostitute played an important role in this fantasy-disavowal complex.

The prostitute interrupted marital monotony and satisfied male fantasies of domination on two levels. First, as we saw with Tuzzi's sexual education, the prostitute provided men with an already colonized female body to conquer, facilitating the process of becoming an imperial lord of the marital manor. This reality shadowed the conjugal bedroom. Secondly, the prostitute in print was a voyeuristic image that could symbolically reaffirm male mastery. As Anne McClintock points out, the prostitute serves the "logic of the pornographic imagination" which "is founded originally in loss of control. The pleasure arises from mastering in fantasy a situation

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124 Ibid. 69.

125 Ibid. 76.

that is fundamentally dangerous and threatening.”<sup>126</sup> The only remnant of Ulrich’s father’s life left after his death is pornographic material, which Ulrich finds in his desk, suggesting the importance of immediate but secret access to such texts just a generation before.<sup>127</sup> Musil’s newspaper exposes the transformation of the “secret” patriarchal imperative producing public shame into a public spectacle inciting society to re-master order by mastering sex. In other words, the stereotypical imagery of a sexual murder makes it easier for a bourgeois audience to imagine the violence endemic to the modern world as centralized within abject people, whom they have marginalized to the seeming safety of the outskirts of their urban territories in Europe. This fantasy becomes pleasurable, i.e. a form of pornography, because it denies the realities of the material world threatening their power structure.

The public pornographic imagination finds a direct object in the autopsy of the murdered Hedwig. In Musil’s story, Hedwig had “a neck wound reaching from the larynx to the nape of the neck, just as [the story] described the two stabs in the breast, which penetrated the heart, the two on the left side of the back and the amputation of the breasts, which one could almost remove.”<sup>128</sup> The precise description of Hedwig’s dismembered and mutilated body exaggerates her lack of soul or life, and emphasizes the attack on her larynx—the organ containing the vocal chords that produce speech. The writer of the autopsy makes a point of listing this first, appealing to a seemingly immediate need to destroy female expression. Next, the autopsy describes the

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126 McClintock 129.

127 GWI 769.

128 Ibid. 68.

penetration of her heart. The word “penetrated” has sexual connotations, reminding middle-class males of their experience with the demands of wives who want them to make love to their soul/heart, and not just their bodies. The final image satisfies aggression in the bourgeois audience most of all: there is a hint that it is possible to remove her breasts, Freud’s metonym for the mother’s power. This would suggest a post-oedipal, female castration. Moosbrugger acts out or expresses what bourgeois husbands and lovers threatened by independent women fantasize about doing. In disagreement with Thomas Sebastian’s (2005) understanding that this ambivalence toward murder reflects a universal aphasia, I argue that Moosbrugger’s significance is not in his castration of a woman who expresses sexuality.<sup>129</sup> Rather, Moosbrugger functions as a pornographic redeemer of patriarchal power. He is a stand-in for males who *openly* dream of exercising a deadly force against demanding women.

Although the newspaper commodifies the bodies of the sexual criminals, Musil is careful to include other facts that lead to consciousness of the social forces overdetermining their tragedy. The prostitute and the impoverished in general live in a context in which they must perpetually worry about physical survival. In Musil’s time, their survival instincts detached from that context became proof for Lombroso and others that they were primitive throwbacks. In the novel, the middle-class audience adopting these beliefs also sees Hedwig as responsible for her own death. It is even not clear whether or not the “scissors” in Hedwig’s pocket are the murder weapon.<sup>130</sup> Musil’s inclusion of “scissors” here could also be a reference to her occupation as a

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129 See Sebastian 117.

130 GWI 74.

seamstress. If we accept this as a possible allusion to the complex nature of prostitution, i.e. that there were women who sold themselves to supplement a non-living wage, Hedwig becomes more than Moosbrugger's victim.

Hedwig's tragedy begins with the inequalities overwhelming the economic order, which in fact, explain why she is persistent in her pursuit of Moosbrugger. Her limited characterization however reveals Musil's own participation in a culture of exploitation. Musil normalizes Ulrich's fetishizing of women, adventures with prostitutes like the "cabaret singer" Leona, and desire to rape Gerda—the daughter of banker Leo Fischel—after she seduces him and changes her mind. Ulrich hesitates in the last action because he feels tenderness toward Gerda. In addition, he empathizes with a prostitute who comes up to him on the way back from his father's funeral.<sup>131</sup> By presenting prostitution in various contexts in which compassion is a central theme, Musil makes it clear that prostitutes should not be reduced to the pleasurable figures of deviance so popular to *fin-de-siècle* Vienna; they are in fact souls suffering from complex material realities and the violent desires of predatory men.

Ulrich also de-mystifies Moosbrugger's background. Moosbrugger comes from a small provincial town and is a carpenter's apprentice. This does suggest the Jesus story. Beyond these facts, the response of the social order to Moosbrugger is one of apathy. The public does not embrace him as a messiah in his pre-crime period. This is because by the time he murders Hedwig, he is dangerously unemployed. He has little money to approach women as a "normal" man would. Musil writes that as a result "what one so naturally longs for like bread and water, one may only ever see.

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131 Ibid. 651-52.

After a time, one desires it unnaturally.”<sup>132</sup> Later, the poverty compounding his lack of physical satisfaction becomes clear: “One has no money for a meal, so one must drink schnapps until two candles glow behind the eyes and the body walks on alone.”<sup>133</sup> Instead of suggesting with Gerhard Meisel that Moosbrugger’s pathological urges have an origin in what Freud diagnosed as a late oedipal phase, I believe Musil points to causes social, basic and adult.<sup>134</sup> In addition, Musil contradicts arguments like Lombroso’s, defining criminals as “born killers.” He presents various facts which could have led to Moosbrugger’s act, including the poverty and hopelessness compelling him to drink and walk the streets with no restraint. The fact that alcohol is cheaper than food actually indicts the bourgeois order for making mind-numbing intoxicants available to the unemployed to contain any desire for revolution within the *Vorstadt*. Cheap alcohol, then, represents a corrupted version of the loaves and fishes, which Jesus offered the poor.

Musil also includes the fact that Moosbrugger tries to satisfy his sexual needs in normal ways when he does have a job and money. Moosbrugger tells the wife of his employer: “‘Mistress,’ he said, ‘I would like to give you some love...’ They were alone, there she looked him in the eyes and must have read something in them and responded: ‘Just get yourself out of the kitchen!’”<sup>135</sup> Moosbrugger attempts to conquer a “süßes Mädel” as a middle-class man would. The kitchen was located in

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132 Ibid. 69.

133 Ibid. 70.

134 See Meisel 161-62.

135 GWI 237. Meisel sees this as an obscene act, but also as a break down in Moosbrugger’s symbolic or discursive order.

the hinterland of the bourgeois home, which was typically occupied by lower-class servants, or the petty bourgeois wife, i.e. those who were often a “süßes Mädel.” When Moosbrugger desires to “do some love” (*Liebes tun*) to the craftsman’s wife, his request corresponds to his desire for something to eat. Understandably, the wife rejects his request, but not by saying no to sex. She summarily denies him access to the all-important kitchen. Initially, she appears to be interpreting his intentions, and takes the time to look into his eyes. Perhaps she sees the honesty of what male “love” masks and as a result banishes him from a petty bourgeois job and life, preparing the lamb, which the excessively “cannibalistic” bourgeois order will consume. These facts lead to the possibility that Hedwig may have endured his wrath because he could not pay for food, let alone for her. He may have carved her like a piece of meat, then, as a result of his own epistemic conflation of hunger with sex. Musil’s warning is that epistemic “truths” can pervade the consciousness of the most impoverished and condemned by them. The bourgeois audience continues to disavow these ambiguities. They have an interest only in seeing tender, castrated beasts, which their newspapers sensationalize to sell papers and they want to mimic more openly every day.

As a member of the readership consuming sensationalized cases of sexual crime, Clarisse valorizes the voyeuristic martyr images of Moosbrugger and the prostitute, and not their complex experiences discoverable through deeper explication of their histories or particulars. She is a person seeking to master in fantasy what appears to be a threat to her control—the patriarchal discursive realm of power. For this reason, she desires to penetrate Moosbrugger’s “heart of darkness” in order to re-master her non-ratioïd ideals and genius. She journeys into his asylum. As with a

Europe hungry for real rapture *and* unambiguous order, Clarisse will be consumed by her own epistemic truths.

### V. Journey into the Dark Heart of the Asylum

According to his diaries, Musil read Joseph Conrad.<sup>136</sup> The main character of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902) is Marlow, whose movement up the Congo resembles a shamanic journey. It also resembles Clarisse's movement into the inner reaches of Moosbrugger's asylum; I will therefore briefly flesh out this allusion. In Conrad's story, Africa becomes a stage far from moral Europe in which a struggle between multi-national ivory traders and imperial administrators takes place. They blame the trader Kurtz for the loss of ivory to warring tribes, because he "turned native." The Company sends Marlow to find him. After Marlow witnesses Kurtz's death, he returns to Belgium to inform Kurtz's fiancée. Marlow tells the Intended, who is draped in black in a darkened room, that Kurtz's last words were her name, not what they really were, "the horror, the horror."<sup>137</sup> This scene implies that the Victorian domestic space representing moral Europe had inextricable ties to the violence of imperialism. Marlow more importantly falsifies knowledge to erase the horrors committed in the name of civilization. The Intended accepts this falsehood as truth. With this word game, then, Conrad reveals that savagery does not exist only in Africa; it is in the "civilizing mission" itself. I propose that Musil's asylum has a similar point.

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<sup>136</sup> See reference to Conrad in the TBI 864. Heft 34: 17. Februar 1930-Frühsummer 1938.

<sup>137</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (London: Penguin, 1995) 123. This reading developed from personal communications with Dr. Gerald Iguchi, a Japanese historian.

Musil's first suggestion that the sanitizing discourse of the asylum may represent Europe's "darkness" is in a letter Clarisse writes to Ulrich about a possible visit to the asylum. She tells Ulrich that the assistant medical officer of the clinic, Dr. Sigismund Friedenthal, also a reference to Freud, is the manager of a "demon" circus (*Dämonenzirkus-Direktor*).<sup>138</sup> The man of science has created a territory within Europe that manages un-mastered forces of life supposedly defying the moral restraints of European civilization. Clarisse also informs Ulrich that Dr. Friedenthal is under the impression that she is a foreign writer. He wants her to obtain a letter of introduction from her embassy before her visit, suggesting that the asylum is a foreign place within Europe. The inmates represent "foreign bodies" invading the moral order of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This point may also have an origin in Diotima's feeling of being singled out as a writer in a foreign land, or in Musil's visit to the asylum in Rome. This section argues that efforts to control life through modern techniques of power such as the madhouse produced a violence contradicting the civilizing missions conceived of in the territory of the morally elevated salon.

The madhouse (*Irrenhaus*) is literally a place where doctors re-direct those who have lost their way or have "erred" (*irren*). Foucault points out that the clinic is a space within the state regulating the enclosed inmates through centralized surveillance—or, a voyeurism par excellence.<sup>139</sup> Clarisse's reference to the "demon circus" has new meaning here. The asylum-circus becomes a pleasurable form of

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138 GWI 715.

139 For more on Foucault's analysis of the clinic, see *The Birth of the Clinic*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage, 1973); *Madness and Civilization*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage, 1965).

entertainment that centralizes the bourgeois pornographic imagination. The actual director of Musil's asylum is a "famous doctor," whom Musil never allows us to meet. With his absence, Musil could be underscoring that there is an invisible power over the minds of those within the space functioning like Bentham's panopticon, which Foucault cites to explain the authority no one sees but everyone knows is watching.<sup>140</sup> It is also no coincidence that Musil's asylum occupies the stone structure of a former cloister, a sepulcher to God not unlike the "whited sepulcher" of Antwerp in Conrad's story.<sup>141</sup> In this structure, a faith in God has been fossilized in the power of the medical doctor. The ratioïd focus on the physical, then, reflects a broader effort in Europe at the time to find meaning in the claims of modernized priests such as Freud. Such efforts betray bourgeois Europe's secret: it has not mastered life at all. The medical doctor representing authority will even arrange events so that General von Stumm, representing authoritarian order, will accompany Clarisse's expedition.

According to the title of the chapter, General von Stumm "takes" Ulrich and Clarisse to the asylum. The General mysteriously arrives to escort them because the director of the clinic had by mistake (*Irrtum*), or perhaps intentionally, placed Stumm's name on the list of visitors. The famous medical director looks forward to meeting him "with great pleasure," but is suddenly called away.<sup>142</sup> The doctor's assistant, Dr. Friedenthal, instead serves as their guide. Stumm is annoyed at first

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140 For more on the "panopticon," read Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1977) 195-230. Musil argued that the modern state controls people through an "invisible spiritual penetration." See "Das Geistliche, der Modernismus und die Metaphysik" (1912), GWII 988.

141 GWI 715. Conrad 24.

142 Ibid. 974.

because he assumes the clinic will be a chaotic, disordered zone. When he arrives, however, he is surprised by its orderliness, suggesting this place is not unlike a military installation within the Habsburg Empire. Along these lines, the names of both Friedenthal and Stumm have significance. Friedenthal's name literally translates as "peaceful valley." Stumm means "silent" or "dumb." In contrast to claims of peace, the asylum reveals a different, deadly reality. Clinical cures silently act as military campaigns to crush people and experiences that embody instability. I argue that Musil linked the absent medical director (as the absent God, father, or Franz Josef), Stumm, and Friedenthal intentionally in this historical context to emphasize the military mobilization occurring out of the growing desire to reassert control over the Austro-Hungarian Empire in loud and violent ways. The prolific claims of peace in 1914 Vienna masked this reality. As Stumm tells Ulrich, "something's in the air."<sup>143</sup> Thereafter, they enter the clinic with Clarisse and Siegmund.

Before beginning the journey deep into the heart of the clinic, the whole group must put on lab coats so as not to excite the patients in a way that distracts them from the invisible force of authority. With the coat, Clarisse superficially achieves a power she only fantasizes about when she supports Moosbrugger's martyrdom. She becomes "a small doctor[...]. She saw herself as very masculine and very white."<sup>144</sup> The lab coat allows Clarisse to imagine that she is one with the white, male authority because in it she can freely watch over the inhabitants of this colonized zone. In other words, she covers her body, which is normally the object of a male gaze, and becomes a voyeur

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143 Ibid. 975.

144 Ibid. 979.

herself. She self-admittedly has the qualities of a man, recalling Marlow's Westernized African guide—a hybrid man. Like the guide, she at first appears to have authority through “passing,” but she is really putting on the clothes of a hybrid woman. This represents the “*masking of ambiguity: difference as identity.*”<sup>145</sup> The ratioïd as an approach that interprets facts in relation to laws does not suddenly collapse when faced with exceptions or “difference.” Exceptions can themselves function to “prove” the rule instead of truly work against the norm. In this context, Clarisse's “difference” does not challenge gender norms, but instead actually reconfirms the stereotype of the New Woman, which Musil also appears to reinforce.<sup>146</sup> Musil emphasizes her superficiality, suggesting that her real collusion is in accepting the truth of physical appearance instead of imagining a new approach to her own empirical facts. When she accepts the doctor's clothing, she also accepts the ordering discourse of the doctor. This begins to annihilate her rebellion, which Musil himself set out to valorize. Her taste for the power to pass and define other life forces as inferior to herself seduces her deeper into the asylum.

As the expedition approaches the hinterland of the asylum, the unified white authority confronts patients who display excessive sexualities. What we can call the

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145 McClintock 65.

146 The “Mann-Weib” was also a stereotype for the New Woman—a male fiction of women who worked outside the home or appeared to encroach on conventional male territory. For more on the New Woman, see Elisabeth Boa, “Modernity and Its Discontents,” *Kafka: Gender, Class, and Race in the Letters and Fictions* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996). Edward Carpenter (1912) has a more affirmative response to the “New Woman.” He suggests that “she” is a sign of a “rapprochement between the sexes.” See p. 16. Musil himself valorizes the “New Woman” in the essay “Women of Yesterday and Tomorrow” (1929), GWII 1193. After the war, Musil thought that women had realized the danger of masculine power and therefore turned to their own female particular ideals.

first “tribe” happens to be all female, a ward of hysterics representing Clarisse’s life force that has torn itself free, as Walter feared, and has come here to rest. One woman pulls her dress over her head and exposes herself. Next, the expedition discovers the disturbed ward. Clarisse stops when a patient inspires her to embrace him. In response he begins to “masturbate like a monkey in captivity.”<sup>147</sup> Her temptation to embrace this abject man could mean that Clarisse has not completely destroyed her compassion for those who represent unstable life forces like her own. She could be Musil’s female doctor who develops a new approach to the world by simply facing the realities of life without fantasies about control.<sup>148</sup> However, when Siegmund teases a criminally insane patient, Clarisse accuses him of harassing a caged animal in a zoo (*Tierpark*).<sup>149</sup> She then regurgitates Lombroso’s discourse on criminality. She fails to affirm a “female” counter-consciousness. The sexually performing but highly supervised humans also refer to the exhibits of “sexual deviants” and “noble savages” in the zoological gardens of Vienna.<sup>150</sup> With these allusions, Musil refers to the increasing public acceptance of medical definitions of the ill as subhuman, or as the embodiment of primordial forces of life unable to manage their own behavior. At this point, we begin to see the medical conflation of sexuality, disease and race to which Clarisse is also not immune.

Dr. Friedenthal divides his patients into different “races.” He “named the illnesses: paralysis, paranoia, dementia praecox, and others were the races to which

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147 Ibid. 988.

148 Ibid. 251.

149 Ibid. 991.

150 Gilman 110.

these foreign (*fremd*) birds belonged.”<sup>151</sup> Friedenthal classifies patients only by what is most superficially common among them: their illness. Mental disease becomes race. To emphasize the difference between their biology and that of the “morally restrained” bourgeoisie, Friedenthal characterizes them as “foreign” or “strange birds.” The narrator writes of the patients: “Many sat free, and many were fastened to the bed frame with restraints, which allowed little free play.”<sup>152</sup> The birds are “strange” because usually birds fly around, but these birds are not allowed to fly. If they did choose to fly, they would literalize Nietzsche’s metaphor for the noble spirit, or “free bird” (*freier Vogel*) affirming the unknown.<sup>153</sup> The image in the asylum instead suggests that Nietzsche’s ideal has degraded from noble spirit into the iconographic, insane Nietzsche himself. Only those who “play” the role of deviant well or accept the medical authority remain unrestrained. Clarisse currently does not need restraint because she accepts the clothing of ratioïd morality. In addition, the “bed” is where middle-class men re-master flying female spirits who are not morally restrained. For Musil, these men are “vultures” waiting for medical discourse to destroy female life to feed their fantasies of power. These “vultures” beyond the clinic were the really dangerous birds, and were growing in numbers.

Dr. Friedenthal leads the group through rooms that are filled with foreign birds. Musil writes: “The Führer Friedenthal however also saw into the dark, and pointed to

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151 GWI 987. Musil recorded this exact classification of illness in his diary after he visited the Italian anthropological institute. See TBI 279, Heft 7: 30. März 1913-11. Januar 1914.

152 GWI 987.

153 FW IV:294. See my Chapter 2.

different beds. He explained: “That is idiocy, and this here is cretinism.”<sup>154</sup> The doctor has complete power over racial definition, which Musil highlights with his simple summations. Dr. Friedenthal moreover diminishes the lives he identifies by objectifying them as a “this” and a “that.” A new emphasis on the title “Führer” further reaffirms his dictatorship over both knowledge and human life, but also refers to Hitler, one of the darkest authorities in German history. As Musil wrote these final published chapters, the Nazis were gaining power in Germany. In this context, he was beginning to engage in a critique of psychologies he connected to his distaste for Nazism.<sup>155</sup> Musil wrote that the veneration of the qualities of the dictator prior to actual dictators could be found in the psychologies of figures such as Freud, Adler, Jung and Klages.<sup>156</sup> Musil’s caricature of the petty dictators of psychoanalysis and meta-psychologies in general with the figure of Dr. Friedenthal highlights his interest in liberating the forces of life from forms of authoritarianism taking root through sexual discourse before the war, and through politics afterward. With Dr. Friedenthal’s racism, Musil presents a ratioïd path from ideals that in many ways had the goal of liberating humanity to a valorization of the dictator that helped to support Nazi ideology.

After Musil’s brief but explicit depiction of the sanitizing asylum shadowing

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154 GWI 984.

155 Often Musil’s evaluation of psychoanalysis ironically became reductive. I would suggest that this was because he saw in psychological practices like psychoanalysis the potential to educate others. He believed they failed partly because of an inability to overcome the fear of non-conformity to truly educate.

156 TBI 896. Heft 34: 17. Februar 1930-Frühsummer 1938. Musil however saw these theories as potentially hopeful endeavors to understand humanity as opposed to Nazism, which he considered to be without any redeeming quality.

the Habsburg Empire that was heading to imperialist war, he returns to Clarisse and the purpose of her visit—Moosbrugger. He however only does so to cut the journey short. Dr. Friedenthal has another “case” that is more pressing, perhaps the business of the Empire that also may have called the medical director away. If we consider the fact that General von Stumm takes off his lab coat revealing his military uniform and leaves satisfied with the organized format of the institution, it might be that he has learned a way to organize his own chaotic world—turning the asylum inside-out. Clarisse herself is disappointed, but escapes the seductive hold of the asylum and its ratioïd darkness—at least for the time being. She remains entranced by the invisible authority of Moosbrugger. Presumably around 1936, Musil wrote the unpublished “Visit in the Asylum” to give her an opportunity to meet her demonic priest, Moosbrugger.<sup>157</sup> In this episode, Clarisse meets him, but also has a long dialogue with Dr. Friedenthal. Musil also intended that Walter would condemn her to an asylum in Rome. I see these two events as connected. Clarisse repeats her attempt to act as an equal to doctors who do not see her as a “man.” Ratioïd truth, which depends on the physical facts that repeat, allows them to diagnose her as ill. The order allows Walter to liberate himself from his *instrumentum diaboli*, and mass hysteria seizes power.

A few chapters before Ulrich goes into the asylum with Clarisse, he warns his sister Agathe of the dangers of mistaking discourse—or the ratioïd—for truth. In “Holy Conversations: Part I,” he explains that attempts to grasp spirit in moral terms should be prevented, “otherwise the world will become a madhouse!”<sup>158</sup> Twenty

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157 GWI 1357-1371.

158 Ibid. 749.

pages later, Ulrich finds the pornography that represents his father's life. He then tells Agathe what he believes in: "[A]ll our moral prescriptions are a concession to being a society of savages."<sup>159</sup> An epistemic herd-desire to colonize sexual truth suggests that the civilizing mission represented by salons and even clinical psychologies mask the actual pleasurable acts against life taking place within the modern state. The ratioïd search for truth escalates once the society at large begins to accept the authority of the clinical forces priming for an imperialist war within Europe. With this last "territory" of discourse production before military mobilization at the end of the published novel, Musil concludes that everyone must begin to value non-epistemic forms of knowledge in order to prevent "uncivilized" human catastrophes.

#### **V. Conclusion: Opening up Non-Ratioïd Territories of Gender and Method**

The female idealist does not succeed in Musil's novel partly because the male order, as we have seen, aggressively prevents her from doing so and partly because she herself accepts the one-sided view of her own gender. For example, Clarisse challenges epistemic truths with her exploration of spirit, but gradually participates in reinforcing those truths. The sparetime that Musil devoted to Diotima, Rachel, and Clarisse, nevertheless suggests to me that he imagined life-affirming organizing truths as emerging from their counter-imperialistic female agency. The potential of that agency, however, disappeared within a world ruled over by the territories of ratioïd knowledge. Musil's novel thus portrays these practices critically because without a broader social consciousness of practice they can ultimately recreate what they intended to overcome, i.e. a soulless bourgeois *humanity* primed for war.

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159 Ibid. 769.

As we learn from Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*, the bourgeoisie transformed sex into discourse to create an organizing fiction that could rival the authority of aristocratic blood right.<sup>160</sup> They claimed that their morality helped to repress socially destructive physical desires. In actuality, the theory of repression masked an "incitement to discourse" on all levels of society, persuading growing populations that sex caused modern instabilities. As Foucault writes:

From the singular imperialism that compels everyone to transform their sexuality into a perpetual discourse, to the manifold mechanisms which, in the areas of economy, pedagogy, medicine, and justice, incite, extract, distribute, and institutionalize the sexual discourse, an immense verbosity is what our civilization has required and organized.<sup>161</sup>

The civilization to which Foucault refers here is integral to the postwar redefinition of German territory. In this context, I define the Austrian nation-state as formed only through unification of imaginary racial consciousness and the state apparatus.<sup>162</sup>

These two aspects worked together to identify the abject other within and without that facilitated acceptance of the national order.<sup>163</sup> Bourgeois "experts" on humanity used techniques of power to define and distribute the knowledge of what or who qualified as a sexual enemy. Foucault associates these techniques with institutions such as

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160 Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 146. Cf. Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire* (Durham: Duke UP, 1995) 53. She explains Foucault's point: "[S]ex' would come to define the distinction of the bourgeoisie, as blood had for the nobility; it would legitimate its moral highground, its claims to supremacy, and the healthy vigor of bourgeois rule."

161 Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 33.

162 I have based my definition of the nation-state partly on Musil's definition in "The 'Nation' as Ideal and as Reality" (1921), GWII 1063.

163 On p. 52 of *Race, Education and Desire*, Stoler points out that rejected groups were considered "the 'enemy within,' those who might transgress the 'interior frontiers' of the nation-state." For more on the use of sexual discourse in the creation of German nationalism see George Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* (New York: Fertig, 1985). For more on the intersection of sex and war, see Klaus Theleweit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. 1 (Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 1987).

education, marriage, the press, the clinic, and the prison, all of which made moral prescriptions impossible to reject as they penetrated into every facet of life. In the pre-World War I setting of Musil's novel there is no proper "nation-state" as yet. It is my contention that Musil depicted aggressive discourses within these prewar Viennese realms of knowledge production because producers in these realms were also involved in a search for unambiguous truth that ended with war and the colonization of spiritual territory within the nation-state.<sup>164</sup> The sexual ratioïd in this setting made colonizing one's own will in perpetuum a matter of commonsense—a commonsense the Nazis understood all too well.

In a letter to Else Meidner dated from 1933, Musil wrote that "both individual and social behaviors are in my opinion less conditioned by inheritance (*erbmäÙig*) than by nurturing and circumstance."<sup>165</sup> By the time Musil wrote this, *erben*, meaning "to inherit," had biological and racial connotations, which the Nazis converted into juridical law. Musil later recorded in 1937 that the Nazi state had given the ratioïd view of life an extremely violent prescription: "Propagation with the goal of strength in war[...]one breeds in order to kill."<sup>166</sup> For Musil, these new hygiene laws represented the logical end of a prewar episteme that attempted to master sexuality without success. In the novel, erotic reforms and medical fantasies increasingly pave the way for the violent catastrophe suggested in this principle for propagation—war.

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164 See *The Imperialist Imagination* for more on the shift in the German-speaking world from ruling over colonial territories external to Europe, to seeking out domestic or "inner" forms of imperialism, including those tied to nationalism. "Introduction," 16.

165 BI 563.

166 TBI 892. Heft 34: 17. Februar 1930-Frñhsommer 1938.

Musil was not arguing that his truth-seeking colleagues were Nazis. In fact he sympathized with their attempts to liberate humanity's soul from earthly uncertainty. For this reason, he investigated where, when, and why their practices failed. Musil's sexual discourse also shows us that there are infinite experiences exceeding the hegemony of the ratioïd and we should learn from them.

Representations of life “have no fixed meaning, but are more or less individual experiences, which one may only understand in so far as one recalls a similar experience. They must be experienced again in the moment, be re-experienced only in partial ways and in no sense understood once and for all.”<sup>167</sup> In his analysis of experience, Musil proposed a different methodology that would approach the territory of the non-ratioïd in a more life-affirming way. As I will explore in Chapter 4, Musil staged an affirmative interaction between discourse and “the other condition.” We see this other story in the ambiguously incestuous conversations of Ulrich and Agathe. Through their discussions they invent a psychology that does not separate female-associated feeling from male-associated intellect. I argue that Musil's psychology of feeling represents a possible de-colonizing science as it challenges the domination of the ratioïd way of thinking, which facilitated social exploitation and would also support the biological truth claims of one of the darkest orders in German history—the Nazi “Order.”

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<sup>167</sup> GWII 1049. German: “keine feste Bedeutung haben, sondern mehr oder minder individuelle Erlebnisse sind, die man nur soweit versteht, als man sich ähnlicher erinnert. Sie müssen jeweils wiedererlebt werden, werden immer nur teilweise wiedererlebt und keineswegs ein für allemal verstanden.”

#### Chapter 4: The De-Colonizing Psychology of Feeling of Ulrich and Agathe (1933-1942)

Feelings must either serve a function or belong to an infinitely extensive and in no way describable condition that is huge like a coast-less sea. Should one call it an idea or a yearning (*Sehnsucht*)? Ulrich had to let this question rest, because in the moment when the name of his sister occurred to him, her shadow darkened his thoughts.<sup>1</sup>

Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities* (1933)

Why not the quite simple attempt to touch the other, to feel the other, to explain the other to myself?...I want the world to recognize, with me, the open door of every consciousness.<sup>2</sup>

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks* (1952)

While Robert Musil was writing the later drafts of *The Man without Qualities* (1933-1941), he realized that the novel was becoming outdated, set as it was in 1913-1914 Vienna. In Part III, Musil shifted the plot from his satirical portrayal of the pre-World War I sexual episteme to the ethical conversations of upper-class brother and sister, Ulrich and Agathe. In the chapter, “Agathe Finds Ulrich’s Diaries,” their conversations subside and Agathe secretly begins to read Ulrich’s notes theorizing a “psychology of feeling” (*Gefühlpsychologie*). Musil later admitted that this psychology of feeling was anachronistic because it introduced theories and issues from

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1 Robert Musil, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Adolf Frisé, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978) 869-870. German: “Gefühle müssen entweder dienen oder einem bis ins Letzte reichenden, noch keineswegs beschriebenen Zustand angehören, der groß wie das küstenlose Meer ist. Sollte man das eine Idee, sollte man es eine Sehnsucht nennen? Ulrich mußte es auf sich beruhen lassen, denn in dem Augenblick, wo ihm der Name seiner Schwester eingefallen war, verdunkelte ihr Schatten seine Gedanken.”

2 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove, 1967) 231-232.

the interwar period.<sup>3</sup> In his notes, Ulrich argues that emotions “halt” (*halten*) in consciousness, or disengage from a larger context to serve a specific social function.<sup>4</sup> For example, the idealistic love a wife such as Diotima has for a “man of the house” facilitates his mastery over her but also secures her position in society. In contrast, formless “moods” (*Stimmungen*) exist on the shadowy edges of consciousness. Musil imagined that “moods” were sensitive to surrounding circumstances, which emotions obfuscated. With these two interacting forms of consciousness, Musil intended to create a more precise “description of the world” (*Weltbeschreibung*).<sup>5</sup> By “world” he meant a gestalt of forces producing experience. Musil’s psychology exceeded simplifying binaries of self and other, and the physical focus of the ratiooid, which fed the colonial fantasies shaping Europe’s epistemological consciousness. This chapter explicates Musil’s psychology to expose his under-researched approach to feeling.

German scholars who have analyzed Musil’s psychology of emotion mainly have researched the references to Gestalt philosophy integrated into Ulrich’s notes.<sup>6</sup>

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3 GWI 1942.

4 Ibid. 1129.

5 Ibid. 1941. For his interest in creating this gestalt, see GWI 1942.

6 See Kevin Mulligan, “Musil’s Analyse des Gefühls,” *Hommage à Musil : Genfer Kolloquium zum 50. Todestag von Robert Musil*, ed. Bernard Böschstein und Marie-Louise Roth (Bern: Peter Lang, 1995) 87-110; Silvia Bonacchi, *Die Gestalt der Dichtung. Der Einfluß der Gestalttheorie auf das Werk Robert Musils* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1998); Sabine Döring, *Ästhetische Erfahrung als Erkenntnis des Ethischen: Die Kunsttheorie Robert Musils und die analytische Philosophie* (Paderborn: Mentis, 1999); Uwe Maier, *Sinn und Gefühl in der Moderne: Zu Robert Musils Gefühlstheorie und einer Soziologie der Emotionen* (Aachen: Shaker, 1999). While Mulligan was one of the first scholars to explicate Musil’s notebook chapters (1986), he did not link Ulrich and Agathe to the science of emotion. Bonacchi provided a much needed comprehensive analysis of Gestalt theory, but of Musil’s tome as a whole. Döring argued that the psychology of emotion reflected Musil’s new aesthetic theory, not scientific method. Maier went in a different direction; he claimed that Musil’s Gestalt theories were consistent with sociological perspectives on subjectivity and behavior.

Their arguments typically begin with Musil's dissertation on Viennese physicist Ernst Mach. In the 1860s, Mach was one of the first to have a "philosophy of science," or a methodology guiding lab experiments. Based on his experiments with physiological sensations, Mach concluded that when individuals see illuminated objects they perceive blurred bands of light along the borders of those objects. This phenomenon thereafter became known as "Mach's bands." However, Mach also theorized that people perceive those same objects in distinct ways. After reading Christian von Ehrenfels, Musil thought Mach's approach to perception did not go far enough.<sup>7</sup>

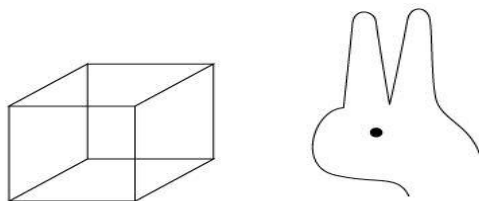
In 1890, Ehrenfels claimed that Mach did not consider the social influences creating specific patterns of perception because he privileged physiological cognition. Ehrenfels coined the term "Gestalt psychology," Gestalt meaning "shape," "structure" or "character."<sup>8</sup> Max Wertheimer, Franz Brentano, Eduard Husserl, Alexius Meinong, and Musil's mentor Carl Stumpf, all developed theories related to this philosophy. In the laboratory, the Gestaltist asked patients to describe patterns they perceived in ambiguous multi-dimensional images (see Figure 1). They analyzed patient response to evaluate emotional and social contexts shaping perception. These experiments later encouraged the creation of testing paradigms for measuring intelligence (IQ) and identifying disabilities. While these tests aided middle-class patients, they excluded non-quantifiable particulars. These exclusions led to reductive conclusions about intelligence and perception. Musil chose to remain outside the Gestalt laboratory once

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<sup>7</sup> Mulligan 88.

<sup>8</sup> Barry Smith (1998). "Gestalt psychology," *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E. Craig (London: Routledge, 1998). May 09, 2005  
<<http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/W014SECT1>>

he concluded his studies because he wished to experiment in more open-ended ways with perception, i.e. through fiction.



**Figure 1: “Gestaltist-Ambiguity” in the  
*Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*  
The Cube Pointing Up or Down  
and the Rabbit-Duck**

Further investigation into the Gestalt theories operating in Musil’s novel continues to have value as few scholars in English have considered this aspect of his psychology of feeling chapters in detail. In what follows, however, I will only briefly mention Gestalt technique and theory because the psychology of emotion, which Musil explicated in minute ways through the relationship between Ulrich and Agathe, did not simply emerge from Gestalt concerns. The brother and sister in fact suggest that Nietzsche’s philosophy and ethics inspired their psychology more.<sup>9</sup> This chapter also contextualizes this interpretation of the siblings within the interwar period to offer insight into what I call Musil’s “de-colonizing” method—an approach to knowledge seeking to liberate thought from domination by socially favored emotions. Through precise description of those “herd” emotions, *The Man without Qualities* reveals the ways that discourse can persuade individuals to accept dominating prejudices as truth. To understand the significance of Musil’s counter-epistemology, it is first necessary to

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<sup>9</sup> Robert C. Solomon argues that Nietzsche also had a kind of de-mystifying psychology of emotion. See his “Nietzsche and the Emotions” *Nietzsche and Depth Psychology*, ed. Jacob Golomb, Weaver Santaniello, and Ronald Lehrer (Albany: U of New York P, 1999) 127-148.

identify the historical changes in the 1930s that made a more precise approach to feeling increasingly important to him.

In 1933, Musil was in Berlin for several reasons. Friends and admirers of his work were setting up the Musil Society (*Musil-Gesellschaft*), a foundation to fund his writing. He was completing Part III of *The Man without Qualities* for Rowohlt Publishing House. 1933 was also the year that Hitler seized power. After the regime change, Musil and his wife Martha left Berlin and returned to Vienna.<sup>10</sup> They did not escape these modern forces since Austria was becoming polarized as well. The chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss and his Austrian Fascist Party (1932-1934) had made Austria into a satellite of Mussolini's Italy. In response to a general strike in 1934 instigated by the paramilitary wings of the Social Democratic Party, Dollfuss passed laws that created a new constitution in support of his dictatorship.<sup>11</sup> Dollfuss fought a two-front civil war against the then illegal Austrian Nazis and the Social Democrats. The civil war ended later that year when Austrian Nazis succeeded in assassinating him. This was a historic occasion for Musil because the Nazis had gained a foothold that would lead to Austria's *Anschluss* in 1938. It was during this inauspicious time that "psychology" officially became a degree program at universities, mainly because

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10 Robert Musil, *Briefe 1901-1942*, ed. Adolf Frisé, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1981) 573. In a 1933 letter to his friend Ziebolz, Musil wrote: "Als Einzelner bin ich bisher von den Ereignissen verschont geblieben; aber ob Exilant oder nicht, wenn die Verhältnisse so bleiben, wie sie jetzt noch sind, wird es keine Möglichkeit geben, dass ich mich im neuen Deutschland am Leben erhalte."

11 See Wolfgang Maderthaner, "12. Februar 1934: Sozialdemokratie und Bürgerkrieg," and Gerhard Jagschitz, "25. Juli 1934: Die Nationalsozialisten in Österreich," *Österreich im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Rolf Steininger and Michael Gehler, vol. 1 (Vienna: Böhlau, 1997) 123-202, 268-273.

of its potential practical applications.<sup>12</sup>

Once the Nazis seized power, they passed the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service Law (1933) and Nuremberg Racial Laws (1935). These laws purged Jewish psychoanalysts and Gestaltists from the university faculties of medicine and philosophy.<sup>13</sup> Many psychologists from these fields who met race requirements remained in Germany to eventually create a department of “psychology” at German universities. These new departments focused on industrial psychologies used in advertising, propaganda, and criminal profiling, but experimental psychologists like Musil’s friend Johannes von Allesch continued to have a presence as well.<sup>14</sup> By and large psychologists like Allesch were not NSDAP members, nor did they agree with Nazi policies, but their theories were often frighteningly consistent with Nazi ideology. For example, Swiss national Carl Gustav Jung was befriended by the Indologist and Nazi, Jakob Wilhelm Hauer. Hauer initiated a pagan movement in Germany that adopted Jung’s unconscious, animal archetypes.<sup>15</sup> The Nazis also adopted animistic

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12 See Ulfried Geuter, *The Professionalization of Psychology in Nazi Germany*, trans. Richard J. Holmes (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992).

13 Ibid.52-55. In the “Historikerstreit” of the 1980s concerning the Nazi past, historians questioned the responsibility of everyday citizens and women in the Third Reich. The debate expanded to include the participation of psychology and psychologists. For more on these “debates,” see K. Fallend, B. Handlbauer, W. Kienreich, ed., *Beiträge zum Symposium der Werkstatt für Gesellschafts- und Psychoanalyse in Salzburg am 27./28. Mai 1988; Der Einmarsch in die Psyche: Psychoanalyse, Psychologie, Psychiatrie im Nationalsozialismus* (Wien: Junius, 1989). Musil understood this complex history. He argued that psychologists like Jung, Freud and Klages could be implicated in the modern authoritarian imagination. See Robert Musil *Tagebücher*, ed. Adolf Frisé, vol. 1 (Rowohlt: Hamburg, 1976) 896.

14 Geuter 72.

15 Petteri Pietikainen, “The Volk and its Unconscious: Jung, Hauer, and the ‘German Revolution,’” *Journal of Contemporary History* 35.4 (October 2000): 523-539. This was also a Gestalt theme. Allesch also found a place in Nazi Germany. He became the chair of psychology in Halle in 1938, the year Musil went into exile. See Geuter 65 for a list of chairs throughout Germany.

mythologies to shape their “Volksgemeinschaft,” or community unified through the belief that each member had the same ancient Aryan blood.<sup>16</sup> While Orientalist Nazis like Hauer and Himmler looked for Aryan origins, others recognized the regime’s dependence on modern technology and industry. Goebbels used contemporary psycho-technologies to convince many to accept the suspension of rights and what became the Holocaust.

In the early 1930s, many in Germany, including Musil, did not yet imagine the Holocaust. There is evidence that Musil did recognize that humanity-affirming psychological principles seeking to capture the so-called “irrational” could be used in dystopian efforts to control forms of consciousness. For example, in his notebooks Musil identified the significance of the Reichstag fire, a catalytic event in part facilitating the Nazi seizure of power and the Nazi mass manipulation of German “affect” (*Affekt*).<sup>17</sup> An “affect” is a sudden, violent emotional reaction to an external event.<sup>18</sup> Musil argued that propaganda techniques provided Goebbels with the methodological tools to address immediate affects like fear or hatred and thus persuade the German masses as a whole to accept Hitler’s dictatorship.

As a result of Goebbels’s success, Musil wrote: “A man has conquered a people! (Christ with radio, automobile, community unions).”<sup>19</sup> Characters at the end

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16 Pietikainen 527.

17 TBI 726. Musil writes on p. 725: “H: a person who has become affect, a speaking affect. Excites the wills without purpose.”

18 See GWI 1145.

19 TBI 726. I will later discuss Ulrich’s thoughts on the power of suggestion (playing on fear and hatred) that came to the fore while he was writing the notebooks on a “psychology of emotion.” Cf. GWI 1190-91.

of *The Man without Qualities* identify the effectiveness of propaganda. General

Stumm von Bordwehr claims:

“What they [the masses] really allow themselves to be guided by once and for all is suggestion! If you give me control over the newspapers, the radio waves, the cinematographic industry and perhaps a few other technologies of culture (*Kulturmittel*), I promise that in a couple of years—as my friend Ulrich has once said—I could make man-eaters out of men!”<sup>20</sup>

As this quotation implies, Musil was concerned with all experiments with propaganda, including those supporting the power of bourgeois moralists, the Christian right, industrial capitalists, and communists. These groups used technologies to guide the urban masses in the German-speaking world in both critical and uncritical ways.<sup>21</sup> In General Stumm’s statement, a mere “suggestion” broadcast to the public could transform Europeans into destroyers of men. Musil thought this reality suggested that Europeans were “less refined in their tastes” than those typically categorized as “cannibals” because they had an insatiable appetite for the rationalizing forces that appealed to the oldest motivation—resentment.<sup>22</sup> Under the Nazis, technologies of culture and psychology were in the hands of a leadership who accomplished what General Stumm only prognosticated. Musil wanted his method to *suggest* a complex description of the world and explore a way to counter passivity, which I argue, was

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20 GWI 1020. German: “Wovon sie [die Masse] sich wirklich leiten läßt, das ist einzig und allein die Suggestion! Wenn Sie mir die Zeitungen, den Rundfunk, die Lichtspielindustrie und vielleicht noch ein paar andere Kulturmittel überantworten, so verpflichte ich mich, in ein paar Jahren—wie mein Freund Ulrich einmal gesagt hat—aus den Menschen Menschenfresser zu machen!”

21 Cultural technologies always have that ambiguous potential. See Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 1968) 217-254.

22 Musil did not see European morality as superior to the morality of non-Europeans. See TBI 540.

preyed upon by imperialistic forms of propaganda.

To begin this study of Musil's psychology of emotion, I will first answer the question dominating scholarship on the infamous sibling pair: Do Ulrich and Agathe represent incestuous pathology or an ethical method? Next, I look closely at Musil's description of the contexts creating emotions like "love." Musil de-reifies "love" through his poem "Isis and Osiris" (1923) and the sibling chapters in Part III of the novel. I then analyze the "Holy Conversations" (*Heilige Gespräche*) between brother and sister. Musil argued that such ethical dialogues produced a psychology of feeling resistant to "herd" consciousness. Finally, I summarize Ulrich's "psychology of emotion" in the unpublished chapters (1933-1938). I will show that these territories of feeling in *The Man without Qualities* describe Musil's attempt to open consciousness to the realities that contradicted imperial forms of knowledge and power.

### **Incestuous Couple or Ethical Science of Feeling?**

Countless critics have claimed that Ulrich and Agathe represent either pathological identity or utopian love. Thomas Pekar (1989) argues that they are Musil's experiment with a discourse on love, which he claims emerges through their narcissistic-erotic conversations, incestuous-hermaphroditic union, and Dionysian ecstasies.<sup>23</sup> Pekar concludes that Musil attempted to resolve these opposing impulses to create a utopian humanity, but failed. Hans-Rudolf Schärer (1990) claims that the siblings reflect Musil's psychoanalytic explication of the narcissistic personality

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<sup>23</sup> Thomas Pekar, *Sprache und Liebe bei Robert Musil* (München: Fink, 1989) 303-8 especially. My chapter also examines the emotion integral to these categories, but I argue that they are entangled forces which Musil intended to make irresolvable and inextricably linked to the reductive aspects of social discourse.

according to the theories of Heinz Kohut, in that Agathe appears to be significant only as a mirror image to Ulrich.<sup>24</sup> Such descriptions of Agathe obscure her independent agency, through which she counteracts rather than encourages Ulrich's narcissism. Stefan Jonsson (2000) proposes that Ulrich and Agathe mirror other historical "monsters in love" or sexual deviants of their time, rebelling against modern ideologies and rational discourse. Their transgression suggests Musil's valorization of a post-psychoanalytic fragmented subject.<sup>25</sup>

Gerhard Meisel (1999) asserts that Musil depicted Ulrich and Agathe's *unio mystico* in three parts: the family of two, the Siamese twins, and the unseparated/not united. He argues that these categories signify Musil's metaphor representing entropy as defined by the second law of thermodynamics—the hypothesis that diminution of energy occurs with the passage of time.<sup>26</sup> David S. Luft (2003) similarly analyzes the scientific import of the siblings. Luft explains that their gender functions as a metaphor for Musil's attempt to reintegrate what contemporaries had forced into opposing categories: masculine science (*ratioïd*) and feminine ethics (*non-ratioïd*).<sup>27</sup> Musil's lifelong embrace of science led Patrizia McBride (2006) to conclude that

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24 Hans-Rudolf Schärer, "Geschwisterbeziehung und Narzissmus in den Romanen Robert Musils und Italo Svevos," *Genauigkeit und Seele: Zur österreichischen Literatur seit dem Fin de siècle*, ed. Josef Strutz and Endre Kiss (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1990). Also see his *Narzissmus und Utopismus* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1990). Heinz Kohut was a psychoanalyst who specialized in the so-called mirror stage.

25 Stefan Jonsson, *Subject Without Nation: Robert Musil and the History of Modern Identity* (Durham: Duke UP, 2000) 175-216.

26 Gerhard Meisel, "'Während einer Zeit, für die es kein Maß gibt': Zur Zeitproblematik im Mann ohne Eigenschaften," *Neue Ansätze zur Robert-Musil-Forschung*, ed. Marie-Louise Roth (Wien: Peter Lang, 1999) 48. For more on the scientific context related to Musil's love metaphors, see Meisel, *Liebe im Zeitalter der Wissenschaften: Das Prosawerk von Robert Musils* (Opladen: Westdeutscher, 1991).

27 David S. Luft, *Eros and Inwardness in Vienna* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2003).

Musil's pair could not be an incestuous rejection of modernity.<sup>28</sup> Unlike Jonsson, she argues that they represent Musil's modern ethics. Building on the latter positions emphasizing his experiments with scientific and ethical thought rather than the former arguments positing his interest in psychoanalytic subject formation, I argue that Musil used Ulrich and Agathe to work through an approach to knowledge that recognized feeling as an important part of scientific endeavor.

In the 1920s, Musil sketched a scene titled "Journey into Paradise" (*Reise ins Paradies*). In this draft, Ulrich (as Anders then) and Agathe check into an Italian hotel as husband and wife. By 1933, Musil no longer thought it important to depict this incestuous escape from Europe. He understood, however, that the question of incest would still be an issue for readers. By bringing Ulrich and Agathe close to intercourse, Musil was able to show that he had other intentions for the pair. For example, Ulrich sees half-naked Agathe with legs like "arrows" (*Pfeile*). He then:

[B]it into one of these arrows with gentle savageness, during which his arm wrapped around the sister. Then Ulrich's teeth let the ambushed one go also with care; the right hand had grasped her knee, and while he pressed her body to his with his left arm he swept her up with his suddenly rising sinewy legs. Agathe screamed out in fright.<sup>29</sup>

Musil describes Ulrich's attack in stereotypical terms; he is acting like an animal in his attempt to satisfy his hunger, a hunger which has created in many middle-class men an all-consuming obsession with domination. Ulrich's predation of Agathe comes across

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<sup>28</sup> Patrizia McBride, *The Void of Ethics: Robert Musil and the Experience of Modernity* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2006).

<sup>29</sup> GWI 1082. German: "mit sanfter Wildheit in einen dieser Pfeile biß, wobei sein Arm die Schwester umschlang. Dann ließen Ulrichs Zähne ebenso vorsichtig die Überfallene los; die rechte Hand hatte ihr Knie umfaßt, und während er mit dem linken Arm ihren Körper an seinen drückte, riß er sie auf emporschnellenden Beinsehnen mit sich in die Höhe. Agathe schrie dabei erschrocken auf."

as exaggerated, suggesting a satirically decadent incest common to the literature of Musil's time. Ulrich transforms into a mindless body as he adopts the stereotypical stance. During his ambush of Agathe, his body acts on its own—his hand, teeth, and arm are each the subject of a sentence. In this context, a “man without qualities” is still a man who blindly obeys a socially supported biological appetite. Yet, his activities differ slightly from the typical patriarchal pounce. He is tender and careful with Agathe. His care for Agathe represents a consciousness that tempers violent feelings that would cause others pain. Ulrich's act frightens Agathe, but his tenderness endears him to her. In this almost incestuous scene, Musil is actually revealing that knowledge of feeling helps to temper dominating motivations.

Ulrich and Agathe appear to be headed toward sexual transgression, but Musil quickly transforms their activity into another condition. In this condition, “every prohibition would now be a matter of indifference to them[...]and they united in fantasy, as the storm whipped forth a veil of foam on their waves: but an even bigger desire offered them peace, and they were unable to touch each other again.”<sup>30</sup> Whereas Rachel and Soliman's “storm” precipitates a sexual conclusion, the siblings' “storm” that could have broken any number of social taboos creates a new perception of experience instead. Their storm helps free their consciousness from domination by single-minded goals like sexual satisfaction. Around 1939, Musil explained Ulrich and Agathe's so-called “trance” experience: “The trance belongs to the magical

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30 GWI 1083. German: “jedes Verbot ihnen nun gleichgültig wäre...und sie schon in der Einbildung vereinten, wie der Sturm einen Schaumschleier den Wellen voranpeitscht: aber ein noch größeres Verlangen gebot ihnen Ruhe, und sie vermochten nicht, noch einmal aneinander zu rühren.”

impressions of the real world. So it is logical that Ag[at]he] a[nd] U[rich] do not want coit[us]. The contemplative[...]however is something other than the trance, moreover it is less of a surrogate for behavior overall. It is a European experiment without a forfeiture of consciousness.”<sup>31</sup> Ulrich and Agathe traverse a dreamlike “other condition” (*Anderer Zustand*) to experiment with consciousness, not with sexual transgression.

Musil characterized the “other condition” as an expression of rapture similar to the ecstatic feelings experienced in trance dances versus contemplation. The other condition as a part of “dancing” suggests a reality that does not normally enter consciousness. That is why such ecstasies appear as a magical offshoot of reality. This offshoot extends into the emotional realms of the “Dionysian-contemplative,” which Musil defined in *The German as Symptom* (1923).<sup>32</sup> Religious “contemplation” connotes will-lessness, facilitating a communion with God. Musil emphasized a secular form of contemplation. He defined it as a “presentiment for thinking” (*ahnende Denken*), or a cognitive process that senses rather than defines experience. He describes this sensing as vague or calm, and as always interacting with emotions associated with the Nietzschean Greek god of wine, music, and theater—Dionysius. Dionysius represents an expression of the “appetitive feelings” (*Appetithaften*), or object-oriented motivating forces. These creative-destructive forces devour consciousness. For example, emotions like love or fear are appetitive because they

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31 TBI 786.

32 For more on Musil’s “other condition” as reality, see Volker Altmann, *Totalität und Perspektive: Zum Wirklichkeitsbegriff Robert Musils im “Mann ohne Eigenschaften”* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1992).

come into existence as sudden “affects” stimulated by external events and hungry for action, as we saw with Ulrich’s appetite.<sup>33</sup> The involuntary desire to act out dominates activity. A contemplative attitude, in contrast, maintains consciousness of moods such as tenderness or anxiety, which contextualize the goal-oriented emotions of love or fear, creating a more comprehensive mode of perception.

The contemplative attitude acknowledges the ambiguities of both reality and rationality. This relates to Musil’s non-ratioïd approach to knowledge.<sup>34</sup> “Mind and Experience” (1921) claims that in the non-ratioïd approach a “pulsating idea replaces the rigid concept, analogies appear in place of equations, probability in place of truth: the essential construction is no longer systematic, but creative.”<sup>35</sup> With this approach, Musil communicates the view that any explanation of experience should change with the context in which it is produced. In calling attention to this method, Musil also wanted to “substantiate (*begründen*) the realm (*Reich*) of the non-ratioïd; to show the scope, importance; we can call it soul without supposing that there is a soul.”<sup>36</sup> His use of “realm” (*Reich*) to describe the intangible “soul” as a form of consciousness emphasizes the necessity of definition in any method determining knowledge. Musil was also positioning his method in dialectical relationship to the historical psychologies that described the soul through colonial metaphors and called those

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33 Cf. Mulligan 95. Mulligan bases his descriptions of these attitudes on Ulrich’s “two worlds of emotion,” GWI 1239. I will discuss Ulrich’s theory in the last section.

34 TBI 652.

35 Robert Musil, *Precision and Soul*, ed. and trans. Burton Pike and David S. Luft (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1990) 141.

36 TBI 409: “Reich des Nicht-Ratioïd begründen; Umfang, Wichtigkeit zeigen; Nennen wir es Seele, ohne vorauszusetzen, daß es eine Seele gibt.”

fantasies human truth. His non-ratioïd “realm” is a “territory” that ironically de-colonizes itself. In relation to this, Musil argued that “do not kill” is a law that serves a function but is not a “truth.”<sup>37</sup> In reality, there are only exceptions to this maxim, e.g. in war, executions, self defense, and the slaughtering of animals. Therefore, the maxim should not be portrayed as a true law for behavior. This problem of discourse motivated Musil to explore an ethos that would instead guide thinking. He later admitted that his concern with a contemplative ethos constituted a shift from theorizing the non-ratioïd method in essays to experimenting with feeling and truth (*Gefühl und Wahrheit*) in *The Man without Qualities*.<sup>38</sup>

Ulrich points out that an ethics differs from moralities that masquerade as natural laws, in that ethical “truths” only provide direction for thought, not a permanent guide for behavior. Ulrich defines ethos as a “Richtbild” that embodies “eternal truths that are neither true nor eternal, but on the contrary are valid only for a time so that they can serve as some kind of guide (*richten*) for people to follow. It is a philosophical and sociological expression seldom used.”<sup>39</sup> The ethos particular to Musil literally produces “pictures” that offer snapshots of experience but do not command belief in one interpretation of those experiences for all time. In other words, ethical truths do not reveal irrefutable forms of knowledge that mask exceptional realities and resolve contradiction. The fact that philosophers and sociologists created

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<sup>37</sup> *Precision and Soul* 63.

<sup>38</sup> TBI 929.

<sup>39</sup> GWI 1004. German: “Ewige Wahrheiten, die weder wahr noch ewig sind, sondern für eine Zeit gelten, damit sie sich nach etwas richten kann. Das ist ein philosophischer und soziologischer Ausdruck und wird selten gebraucht.”

such “eternal truths,” which few people used, suggests that the human sciences of the early twentieth century had the tools to open up their methods to ambiguous forms of knowledge, as we saw in the previous chapter, but avoided this revolution in theory because such knowledge threatened the good/evil binaries supporting bourgeois moral order. Such fear-driven thinking penetrating into science, manifesting itself in what Musil called a “masculine head” (*Männlicher Kopf*), or a mind that desires to recognize only the facts that reconfirm preconceived truths rather than describe real life.

Ulrich has a “masculine head” without expressing a *true* “masculinity.” This means that he sometimes is “not sensitive to other humans and has seldom put himself in their place, except in order to get to know them for his own purposes.”<sup>40</sup> Musil characterizes him early in the novel as a narcissistic mathematician, or a satirical reflection of his scientific and patriarchal world. Ulrich does not remain stuck in this representation, however; he is after all “without qualities.” After he meets his sister for the first time in years, the shadow of her name affects his thoughts; he becomes “sensitive” to her presence.<sup>41</sup> Ulrich then discovers in Agathe a guide to consciousness that directs his closed up scientific mind to feelings open to the “other” reality. He concludes that “the attitude of indefinite feelings toward the world has something magical in it and—God help me!—in comparison to the specific feelings,

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40 Ibid. 151. German: “nicht empfindsam für andere Menschen und hat sich selten in sie hinein versetzt, außer um sie für seine Zwecke kennen zu lernen.”

41 Ibid. 869-70.

something feminine!”<sup>42</sup> By “specific,” Musil means “appetitive” feelings that focus on devouring only the facts in support of “masculine” notions. In contrast, “feminine” attitudes encourage more complete understandings of the world. Although Musil adopts the thinking of his time, using gender to differentiate emotional thought processes, he does not re-confirm patriarchal assumptions. He is in fact qualifying his ethos here by acknowledging the unavoidable intrusion of social language and stereotypes into intellectual endeavors. His invocation of two kinds of emotional thinking moreover functions to disrupt binaries of male intellect and female feeling widely accepted in this historical period. Ulrich’s self-reflexive recognition of a “feminine” attitude, then, symbolizes Musil’s challenge to descriptions of the psyche and abject groups (e.g. women) produced through applications of a “masculine mind.”

Gilles Deleuze also recognizes the ethical possibilities in Musil’s siblings. He makes a connection between their story and Herman Melville’s *Pierre, The Ambiguities*. In both stories, the male protagonist is in a process of what Deleuze and Guattari call “becoming woman.” Deleuze writes in his *Clinical Essays*: “The incestuous couple, Ulrich-Agathe is like the return of the Pierre-Isabelle couple; in both cases, the silent sister, unknown or forgotten, is not a substitute for the mother, but on the contrary the abolition of sexual difference as particularity, in favor of an androgynous relationship in which both Pierre and Ulrich are or become woman.”<sup>43</sup>

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42 Ibid. 1198. German: “[D]as Verhalten des unbestimmten Gefühls zur Welt hat etwas Magisches an sich und—Gott helfe mir!—im Vergleich mit dem bestimmten etwas Weibliches!”

43 Gilles Deleuze. “Bartleby; or, The Formula,” *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London: Verso, 1998) 74. For Melville’s text, see Herman Melville, *Pierre, The Ambiguities*, Harper & Brothers 1852 *Literature Online* 18 May 2007 <<http://gateway.proquest.com>>. Melville’s story centers on a middle-class New York heir, Pierre,

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari define “becoming woman” as liberation from the orthodox structures of “man.”<sup>44</sup> To be “man” metaphorically means privileging Logos (the word as truth), the imperialist, or goal-oriented appetitive feelings as Musil would say. “Becoming woman” means breaking free from dominating monoliths, without completely overcoming them. In the context of the novel, Ulrich fantasizes as a boy about becoming a girl. He later tells Agathe that he “would want to be a woman, if women did not love men!”<sup>45</sup> Ulrich does not seek actual gender reassignment, but rather a way to imagine liberating his intellect from a love for unambiguous forms of knowledge. He also chooses not to mimic actual bourgeois women, because they may also have love for “masculine” truths. Becoming woman then is not a call to become the mystical other, but a call to recognize the

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whose mother forces him into an engagement with Lucy Tartan. He then meets a young woman who claims to be his illegitimate half-sister, Isabel. He thereafter decides to revolt against convention and tells his mother that Isabel is his wife. His mother forces them to leave. They begin a real and spiritual journey, during which they meet a “fallen woman” who joins them. They live with artists and Pierre becomes a writer. Lucy comes to live with them at the Church of the Apostles. In the end, Pierre murders Lucy’s ex-fiance, and they all commit suicide. Pierre “becomes woman” because he leaves the role of “master of the house” to begin a journey that has an origin in the “incestuous” relations with his half-sister.

44 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi. (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2000) 277. Originally published in 1970 in French. See Astrid Zingel’s *Ulrich u. Agathe: Das Thema der Geschwisterliebe in Robert Musils Romanprojekt “Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften.”* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 1999). Zingel argues that Agathe challenges Ulrich to break free of his masculine, scientific thinking, making it possible for them to create a sort of male-female utopia or new kind of society. In addition see Agata Schwartz’s *Utopie, Utopismus und Dystopie in “Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften.”* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997). Schwartz reads the interplay of masculine and feminine in the siblings as a response to the loss of meaning in language. Influenced by Peter Sloterdijk (a philosopher of Orientalist thought), she identifies “Taoist elements” in Musil’s siblings, derived from the philosophy of “yin-yang,” which symbolize a balance of the dystopian male perspective and utopian female perspective open to change. She calls this the bisexuality of cognition. In contrast to both arguments, I see the siblings’ process of liberation as an on-going experiment that does not end in union or utopia, but in a non-ratioïd method.

45 GWI 690, 740. German: “würde eine Frau sein wollen, wenn nicht—die Frauen die Männer liebten!”

stimuli that contest rigid forms of thinking, which Musil associated with gender stereotypes and thus prejudicial epistemologies. That is why in the novel, Ulrich tells Agathe that they are “sisters” who must recognize an “other condition”—or a third sister.<sup>46</sup> Both must continuously de-center their fixed or biased thinking.

In short, Musil’s novel is an experiment with perceiving “all thinking and desire as one.”<sup>47</sup> By “one” he did not mean a union of two disparate forces; he argued that thought and feeling appear to have distinct patterns but are entangled in complex ways. For this reason, the *love* between Ulrich and Agathe cannot culminate in union. Instead, their psychology of feeling will “hide the reality of the sibling love (*Geschwisterliebe*) in an adventurous structure of thought (*Gedankengebäude*).”<sup>48</sup> In order to understand this reality substantiating his ethical theory, we must return to the “sibling love,” which has so preoccupied Musil scholars. The “sibling love” demands constant reexamination. By describing the process of reexamination, Musil attempted to disempower the exaggerated moral and social value his contemporaries had assigned to “halted” or goal-oriented emotions like love.

### **I. Isis and Osiris and Agathe and Ulrich: A Complex Description of the Emotion “Love”**

Ulrich defines love as “originally a simple drive to get close to someone (*Annäherungstrieb*) and an instinct to seize (*Greifinstinkt*). They both have been

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46 See „Die Drei Schwestern,“ GWI 1429-1435.

47 *Precision and Soul* 185.

48 GWI 1313. German: “die Wirklichkeit der Geschwisterliebe in einem abenteuerlichen Gedankengebäude zu verstecken.”

reduced to the poles of lord and lady (*Herr und Dame*).”<sup>49</sup> The first drive has become attached to the stereotypically feminine, the second to the stereotypically masculine, or the “master (*Herr*) of the house.” Musil is arguing that moderns have forgotten the complex interactions of these feelings within each person because of the power of social consciousness. Ulrich questions this disabling of consciousness in the modern experience of love. He asks, “[w]hat in the ordinary life then truly still differentiates the most primitive love affect from simple sexual desire? In the desire to rape there is an added timidity and tenderness, one might almost say, in the masculine something feminine. And so it is with all feelings; they are strangely cored of their seeds a[nd] enlarged (*entkernt und vergrößert*).”<sup>50</sup> In the context of love, modern individuals learn to extract from their psychological context the seed of reality, leaving only goal-oriented emotions that end in action. Social consciousness favors or enlarges these hulled “appetitive” emotions because they tend to support the goals of normative gender construction and modern discipline. Musil’s “Isis and Osiris” and Ulrich and Agathe describe the cored context out of which the enlarged emotion of “love” emerges in order to de-mystify an emotion favored by psychological practice.

To dissect “love” in the early twentieth century required confronting the popularity of Platonic myth, which I have shown Musil accomplished by satirizing the

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49 Ibid. 940. German: “ursprünglich ein einfacher Annäherungstrieb und Greifinstinkt. Man hat sie in die Pole Herr und Dame zerlegt.”

50 Ibid. 1525. German: “Was unterscheidet denn eigentlich im gewöhnlichen Leben noch den primitivsten Liebesaffect vom nur sexuellen Begehren? Dem Vergewaltigenwollen ist ein Scheuen, ist Zartheit beigemischt, fast möchte man sagen, dem Maskulinen etwas Feminines. Und so ist es mit allen Gefühlen; sie sind eigenartig entkernt u vergrößert.”

erotic ethics of the *fin-de-siècle*.<sup>51</sup> Instead of Platonic versions of Eros or other goal-oriented Greek myths of sexual-spiritual union, Musil was drawn to the North African sibling gods, Isis and Osiris. Musil wrote the poem “Isis and Osiris” for the *Prager Presse* and *Die Neue Rundschau* (April/May 1923). In 1941, he claimed that this poem was *The Man without Qualities* “in nucleo,” as it predated the androgynous love of Ulrich and Agathe, which he called “perverse and mythical.”<sup>52</sup> Musil’s poetic Isis and Osiris are also androgynous, perverse and mythical. “Androgyny” has two basic meanings: (1) gender is unspecified or vague; or (2) the body exhibits the traits of both genders.<sup>53</sup> The androgynous Isis and Osiris create a poetic dreamscape to show the contemplative and appetitive feelings flowing between the rigidified poles of gender-specific modern love. Even though Musil de-reifies love in this poem, the poem itself was part of the German Orientalist imagination. As I will show, Musil invoked his atypical “Orient” to de-center the European male self as the pre-destined “master of the house” or civilizing force unifying feminine emotion and masculine intellect.

The myth of Isis and Osiris had been passed down in the West from the mystery cults of Egypt to the Greek philosopher, Plutarch. Plutarch differentiated what he considered to be the barbaric Egyptian cult of Isis from the “true” myth of Isis

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51 See Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

52 TBI 847. Heft 34: 1931. See Jacques Perronnet, “Isis und Osiris,” *Beiträge zur Musil-Kritik*, ed. Gudrun Brokoph-Mauch (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1983) and Arno Roßegger, “‘Isis und Osiris’: Zur Metafiktionalität in Musils Ästhetik-Theorie,” *Sprachkunst* 19 (Wien: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988). Perronnet claims the poem should be considered separately from the novel while Roßegger argues Musil’s poem was a pre-novel aesthetic experiment with the ratioïd and non-ratioïd method.

53 Cf. Perronnet 284-286. Perronnet has an extensive analysis of the poem inspiring my own.

and Osiris that supposedly originated during the Greek colonization of Egypt.<sup>54</sup> In his basic narrative, Isis, Osiris, Seth, and Nethys, are sibling gods. Gods in ancient Egypt could only marry other gods. Isis and Osiris married, while Seth and Nethys married. Seth was envious of Osiris's rule over Egypt and wanted to destroy him. He convinced seventy people to conspire to kill Osiris. Seth took Osiris's body measurements and constructed a trunk that would contain him. He threw a party and claimed that whoever could fit in the trunk could have it. Osiris got into the trunk and Seth nailed it shut. Osiris then died from suffocation. In order to keep Isis from avenging his death, Seth sent the trunk away. Isis continued to search for Osiris until she found him and brought his body back for burial. Seth discovered what Isis intended to do, and cut up Osiris's body into little pieces, dispersing those parts all over the Mediterranean region. On a barge, Isis searched for his body parts and finally buried each at a local temple. The last part she found was Osiris's penis, which was in the belly of a fish. Isis finally breathed new life into her brother-husband, who was able to rule in the afterworld until their son Horus conquered Seth.

Musil's poem alters Plutarch's "civilized" myth in order to expose the appetitive qualities integral to modern love. I have included the entire poem with my translation.<sup>55</sup> Musil writes:

Auf den Blättern der Sterne lag der Knabe  
Mond in silberner Ruh,  
Und des Sonnenrades Nabe

On the leaves of the stars lay the boy  
Moon in silvery peace,  
And of the sun's wheels the nave

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid. 273. For more on Plutarch's attempt to discover the Greek "logos" in his version of the myth, see Daniel S. Richter, "Plutarch on Isis and Osiris: Text, Cult, and Cultural Appropriation" *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 131 (2001): 191-216. Richter argues that "Osiris" has a Greek etymology.

<sup>55</sup> GWII 465.

Drehte sich und sah ihm zu.  
 Von der Wüste blies der rote Wind,  
 Und die Küsten leer von Segeln sind.

Revolved and watched him sleep.  
 From the desert the red wind blew,  
 And empty of sails are the coasts too.

Und die Schwester löste von dem Schläfer  
 Leise das Geschlecht und aß es auf.  
 Und sie gab ihr weiches Herz, das rote,  
 Ihm dafür und legte es ihm auf.  
 Und die Wunde wuchs im Traum zurecht.  
 Und sie aß das liebliche Geschlecht.

And from the sleeper the sister undid  
 The sexual organ gently and ate it whole.  
 And she offered her soft heart, that was red  
 For him, and placed it on the hole.  
 And in a dream the wound healed new.  
 And she ate the sweet gender anew.

Sieh, da donnerte die Sonne,  
 Als der Schläfer aus dem Schlafe schrak,  
 Sterne schwankten, so wie Boote  
 Bäumen, die an Ketten sind,  
 Wenn der große Sturm beginnt.

Look, there the sun thundered,  
 As the sleeper was startled out of sleep,  
 Stars swayed, just like the boats  
 Trees, that are kept on chains,  
 Whenever a magnificent storm begins.

Sieh, da stürmten seine Brüder  
 Hinter holdem Räuber drein,  
 Und er warf den Bogen über,  
 Und der blaue Raum brach ein,  
 Wald brach unter ihrem Tritt,  
 Und die Sterne liefen ängstlich mit.  
 Doch die Zarte mit den Vogelschultern  
 Holte keiner ein, so weit er lief.

Look, there his brothers stormed  
 Therein behind the lovely robber,  
 And he threw on the bow,  
 And the blackened air invaded,  
 Forest crushed beneath their tow,  
 And fearfully the stars ran along.  
 But the soft one with birdlike shoulders  
 No one overtook, as far as he did run.

Nur der Knabe, den sie in den Nächten rief,  
 Findet sie, wenn Mond und Sonne wechseln,  
 Aller hundert Brüder dieser eine,  
 Und er ißt ihr Herz, und sie das seine.

Only the boy, whom she in the nights called,  
 Finds her, whenever moon and sun change,  
 Of all the hundred brothers the only one  
 And he ate her heart, and she ate his.

Musil does not name Isis or Osiris, except in his title. They only represent a starting point that leads to a modernity freed from Greek myths of pre-destined love and the gendered psyche. The poem de-stabilizes knowledge of nature, as the “leaves of the stars,” “the sun thunders” and “the stars sway” underscore. These images convey exceptional expressions of nature not conforming to natural law and in fact implicitly refer to a consciousness of feeling that is simultaneously passive, destructive, and creative. Musil explained that these “disintegrated elements of reality

bring into association relationships between feelings.”<sup>56</sup> For example, the destructive qualities assigned to the sun dissolve the putative symbol of conscious truth. The calmly moving qualities of the stars transform symbols of fate into a temporary direction. Together they signify a “Richtbild.” In other words, Musil is dissolving ordinary “reality” to describe unexamined interactions between appetitive and contemplative feelings that only briefly manifest in enlarged emotions like love.

Once the poem defies the laws of nature, Musil’s sibling gods challenge what had by the twentieth century become Freud’s “law” of psychology, namely that a logical “male” consciousness masters the psyche. The poem contains aspects of the apocryphal Isis cult, which Plutarch condemned as a perversion of the “true” Greek myth that emphasized the patriarchal “Greek” ruler-god, Osiris.<sup>57</sup> In Musil’s version, Isis is the dominant force. Instead of finding his penis in the belly of a fish, Isis cannibalizes Osiris’s manhood—a signifier of rational, male Law. A Freudian reading might suggest that she is satisfying a secret wish to castrate a phallus and achieve male power. I believe this is not the point. Their bodies are metonyms for gendered binaries of thought and feeling. With the removal of her “heart,” however, Isis makes them both sexually unspecified to represent the ambiguities of psychology and love. In addition, she tempers her appetite by thinking of Osiris; her castration is “gentle” or “quiet” (*leise*), implying contemplative entanglement with affect. In contrast, Osiris remains unconscious most of the time, signifying a mood that passively submits to life

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<sup>56</sup> TBI 1238. German: “aufgelösten Elemente der Realität nach Gefühlszusammenhängen verbindet.” Also cited in Rosegger 2.

<sup>57</sup> See Richter 200.

until reappearing in an “afterworld,” symbolized by his waking up and their separation. He thereafter represents the goal-oriented or “ruling” emotion that is enlarged after a logical coring of reality. His rule is tempered by the fact that he remains a boy.

After these two emotive entities are separated by a herd of brothers, perhaps an implicit reference to the men currently dominating the episteme, Isis struggles to bring Osiris back to the earth. As a bird, however, she is unfettered by this goal. Osiris mysteriously returns with an appetite (goal-oriented emotion). Then, Musil writes: “Of all the hundred brothers only the one,/And he ate her heart, and she ate his.” Musil’s emphasis on an equal cannibalization of “heart” satirizes the cliché that two halves or parts of the psyche unite through an appetitive emotion like love. The pair devours the same part in each other; they do not unite in a complementary way. Yet, their exchange exceeds this reading as well, because they consume the reality of their heart rather than the cliché enlarged as love. Finally, Musil’s reemphasis on the “other brothers” at the end suggests the exceptional qualities defining any person’s psychology, regardless of gender. These qualities create “extraordinary situations.”<sup>58</sup>

Musil exaggerated the pervasive appeal of a falsely unifying “love” through the relationship between Ulrich and Agathe. After many years apart, Ulrich and Agathe meet again in the house of their deceased father. They first appear to each other in the often cited Pierrot pajamas.<sup>59</sup> The coincidence in dressing, implying a superficial commonality, stimulates “affects” in each that manifest as attraction. Agathe expresses this attraction in her exclamation that they are “twins,” which I

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<sup>58</sup> See TBI 237. Heft 5: 8. August 1910-14. Oktober 1911 or later.

<sup>59</sup> GWI 675-676. Pierrot was a harlequin or clown.

believe reflects an attraction to the *idea* of love and the hope that one need not be isolated from humanity. They then discuss Agathe's intention to leave her husband, Hagauer. Ulrich wonders if she has another "love." This is the first time he mentions the word "love" to her. Thereafter, "Ulrich regretted that he had used the word love so commonly, as though he considered the importance of the social institution, which it signifies, as unassailable."<sup>60</sup> The emotion is a hackneyed concept that orders life rather than describes experience. This ordering is about effecting heterosexual unions between men and women that favor an imperious "master of the house." After addressing the most superficial but powerful function of love, Ulrich considers the appetitive underbelly related to the bourgeois power hierarchy. His "masculine" thinking hardens as he recalls his own approach to women. To summarize, he admits that he could not share his feelings with the lovers he had before becoming reacquainted with Agathe. To him, they were animals falling "under the love spear of the man."<sup>61</sup> Ulrich's patriarchal platitude about the "weakness in woman" suggests the prejudice and misogyny supporting the emotion of "love."

After the brief confrontation with social versions of "love," and left alone, Agathe drifts away from Ulrich in a contemplative mood. She "glanced through the darkening room over to the well lit curtains, which had by then completely emerged in the twilight, billowing like sails against the windows, and she felt that she was traveling through the gently caressing space into the hard corona of the light of her

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60 Ibid. 683. German: "Ulrich bedauerte, daß er das Wort Liebe so gewöhnlich gebraucht hatte, als hielte er die Wichtigkeit der gesellschaftlichen Einrichtung, die es bezeichnet für unverbrüchlich."

61 Ibid. 684. German: "Wild ist, das unter dem Liebesspeer des Mannes zusammenbricht."

lamp and had come to a stop there. This was just how she was discovered by her brother.”<sup>62</sup> Plutarch’s Isis sailed on a barge to gather Osiris’s parts, while Agathe sails around to gather the parts and emotions making up her own life. Instead of having the goal of finding her brother or an object of abstract “love,” in this moment she explores a world of vague feelings much more like Musil’s Isis did. It is Ulrich who finds her. In this scene, the siblings represent a specific instance of Ulrich’s mindless action running into Agathe’s contemplative forces and “halting” in consciousness. The siblings parallel Isis and Osiris in their desire to devour and embrace one another, but they also embody Nietzsche’s noble sailors sailing on a “sea of possibilities,” meeting and casting off again in different directions. As such, they exist in the “twilight” of meaning between dark and light, or feeling and the rationality of sun-Truth, the corona of which in this moment is weakened but strong enough for Agathe to see her world clearly if only for a short time. This is Musil’s point—to create a description of feeling that is comprehensive but also open to encounters with new contexts and new relationships.

The formless mood expressed in the above paragraph has an ambiguous relationship to consciousness. Ulrich later explains this relationship as contemplation: “It is like a slight split in consciousness (*Bewußtseinsspaltung*). One feels himself embraced, enclosed and penetrated to the heart by a will-less, pleasant dependence;

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid. 718. German: “blickte sie durch das dunkelnde Zimmer zu den hellen Vorhängen, die sich, schon ganz in Zwielight getaucht, wie Segel an den Fenstern bauschten, und fühlte sich dabei, als reise sie in dem harten Strahlenkranz ihrer Lampe durch den streif-zarten Raum und habe soeben angehalten. So war sie von ihrem Bruder gefunden worden.”

but on the other hand one remains awake and capable of critical taste.”<sup>63</sup> Agathe’s consideration of her emotional environment is at once both will-less and precise. Musil’s emphasis on “slight” indicates that contemplative feelings exist in every person and can stimulate critical thinking and/or passive submission to appetitive feelings. Ulrich and Agathe reveal that the negotiation of that fissure is a constant process that never halts permanently. After this discussion, the siblings contemplate the feelings, which the other inspires. Agathe feels “unusual pleasure” in their conversations, and Ulrich feels “pure and simple fondness” for Agathe.<sup>64</sup> These descriptions reflect the slightly separate attitudes of the past—Agathe’s moods and Ulrich’s object-appetite. These differences dissolve comprehensive consciousness. Ulrich returns to Vienna and awaits Agathe who will join him there later.

Just prior to the chapter “Siamese Twins,” Ulrich and Agathe reunite in Vienna. The memory of their affection causes Agathe to anticipate disappointment. Her reaction to Ulrich’s home sheds light on the significance of environment or context in the shaping of emotion. She looks around his room: “There was something apathetic in the indifferent mood with which things were piled up in this house and that scared her.”<sup>65</sup> The room symbolizes Ulrich’s “masculine mind,” ruling the house prior to Agathe’s arrival. There are monuments to this past that Agathe must now face. As I have argued, before Agathe reenters his life, Ulrich does not value love or his lovers.

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63 Ibid. 723. German: “Es ist wie eine leichte Bewußtseinsspaltung. Man fühlt sich umarmt, umschlossen und bis ans Herz von einer willenlos angenehmen Unselbständig durchdrungen; aber andererseits bleibt man wach und der Geschmackskritik fähig.”

64 Ibid. 724.

65 Ibid. 893. German: “Es war etwas teilnahmslos, in gleichgültigen Launen Angehäuftes in diesem Haus, das sie erschreckte.”

In fact, except for his infatuation with a major's wife in his youth, the narrator states that he only takes women whom he hates as lovers. This nihilistic history suggests to Agathe that Ulrich does not affirm life. When Agathe enters this destructive inner space, she must overthrow his "masculine" resentment. Within hours he tells her, "[y]ou are my self-love!"<sup>66</sup> Ulrich later explains: "Whoever does not love himself in the right way, also cannot love others."<sup>67</sup> Agathe represents the stimulus transforming Ulrich's nihilism into an affirmation of all life, including his own. His recognition of life allows Agathe to find pleasure in him again.

According to Schärer, the twin metaphor and Ulrich's declaration of "self-love" could also be a reference to Narcissus, who found self-love in the form of a twin sister-qua-substitute mother.<sup>68</sup> Musil was conscious of this myth adopted by psychoanalysis, but when we consider his criticism of contemporaries who took myths out of context to naturalize current moralities rather than to explore exceptional qualities of modern experience, there is no compelling evidence that Musil would privilege this myth. In fact, after Ulrich's declaration that his narcissism has transformed into an "other" form of self-love, Musil has him interrogate as simplistic psychoanalytic theories of "normal" development that suggest that a child leaves behind his narcissistic self once he recognizes his primitive-incest love for mother.<sup>69</sup>

In the chapter "Siamese Twins," the siblings address the binary limits of

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66 Ibid. 899.

67 Ibid. 1317. German: "Wer sich selbst nicht auf die rechte Art liebt, kann auch andere nicht lieben."

68 Schärer, "Geschwisterbeziehung und Narzissmus" 115-116.

69 See Freud's *Introduction to On Narcissism* for more on this resolution of narcissism.

psychoanalytic descriptions of self-love, and in the process create a new consciousness of feeling. The “mirror stage,” when a child sees her or his reflection as a desiring subject and becomes aware that she or he is a female or male self separate from the world, is the cornerstone of the Freudian system.<sup>70</sup> Ulrich rejects these theories because they confuse myths of love in stories like Narcissus or Oedipus with a kind of general human truth. Ulrich explains that such subject-object fantasies do not create consciousness because “you love or are sad and you see that it is you. In a complete sense neither the carriage, nor your sadness, nor your love, nor are you yourself totally there[...]One surely cannot assert, that a child experiences wholly differently than a man!”<sup>71</sup> Children have feelings undifferentiated from the world. Ulrich proposes that adults also have such feelings. To be an “adult,” then, means losing, not achieving, a certain kind of consciousness. Ulrich has a negative reaction to these theories and rejects them. He tells Agathe that “for a long time I have answered [these narratives] in such a way, that I have lost the love for this kind of Ego-being (*Ichsein*) and this kind of world.”<sup>72</sup> Agathe transforms this hatred in Ulrich into affirming all aspects of life so that he no longer throws the proverbial baby out with the bathwater and is open again to the ambiguities of life and the creative possibilities of discourse. Musil here counters the assumption that a reifying “love” between a definitive self and other is inevitable or desirable in the development of consciousness.

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<sup>70</sup> See Sigmund Freud, *Abriß der Psychoanalyse* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1990). Begun in 1938. Freud asserts that by 5 years old, there is an important division from the world that takes place within the child, pp. 59-60.

<sup>71</sup> GWI 902.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. 903.

Questioning the original separation of self from world moreover inspires Ulrich and Agathe to confront love myths dependent on idealized separations of self and other. Agathe tells Ulrich: “Just like the myth of humans, who are separated, we can also think of Pygmalion, of the hermaphrodites or of Isis and Osiris[...]This demand for a doppelganger in the other gender is ancient.”<sup>73</sup> Implicitly, they recognize that myths of ideal heterosexual love are bound to be contradicted because finding and keeping an “other” proves impossible. According to Musil, the resulting failure to satisfy a demand for utopian love leads to the pessimism that pre-Agathe Ulrich feels. Similarly, in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Pygmalion is a sculptor who creates a statue of his female ideal. He prays to Venus to give her life. Musil thus implicitly refers to the fantasy with which “masculine” logic creates feminized “others” whose destiny it is to purify the male “self,” and facilitate his transcendence to a higher state. In reality, this state dissipates. For example, in Leopold von Sacher-Masoch’s *Venus in Furs* (1888), the nobleman Severin asks Wanda to become his Venus, and degrade him like a slave so that both can overcome bourgeois categories of gender.<sup>74</sup> His goal is to escape the cold reality of modern rationalities. In the end, however, Severin re-embraces his privileged life and Wanda returns to her lower station. Musil’s Isis and Osiris, in contrast, create a reality-affirming experience that resonates in Ulrich and Agathe.

This discussion of myth inspires Agathe to recommend that they re-imagine

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid. 905.

<sup>74</sup> Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, *Venus in Furs*, trans. Uwe Moeller (New York: Blast, 1989). Originally published in German in 1888. See Musil’s reference to Sacher-Masoch, GWII 541.

themselves as “Siamese twins” because the concept “twins” inadequately expresses their current closeness. Ulrich at first submits to her term “Siamese.” This is not a representation of love free from “Western” prejudice, however. Agathe has excised the term from its context in an effort to conceptualize their feelings. In the process, she excludes the very real fact that conjoined twins were exhibited in freak shows. These shows supported imperialist ideologies and stereotypes apotheosizing the “white race” as superior to all other humans.<sup>75</sup> By excluding such contexts, Musil’s Agathe helps to reify non-Western experience. At the same time, Ulrich questions their abstractions: “[I]n all of these kinds of approaches of which we have spoken—in the dream, in myth, poem, childhood and within love itself—is it that the larger share of feeling is purchased through a lack of clarity, and that means a lack of reality?”<sup>76</sup> Ulrich identifies the need for a precise description of feeling that has a basis in reality to ensure that any counter-discourse that follows from it does not recreate limits to consciousness and ultimately annihilate understanding.

Ulrich then imagines their shared organs and blood and determines that “conjoined” still might be a useful pedagogical tool to stimulate thinking. Such analogies provide “pictures” that direct consciousness toward new knowledge of what it means to love humanity. “Siamese twins” signify an experience in which “every excitation of the soul would be felt (*mitgeföhlt*) by the other, while the prominent part

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<sup>75</sup> “Siamese twins” came in to use in the nineteenth-century. The pair, for whom the term was named, was the nineteenth-century Siamese twins, Eng and Cheng. Eng and Cheng were exhibited in the United States in a traveling freak show. See John Kuo Wei Tchen, “Edifying Curiosities,” *New York Before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture, 1776-1882* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1999) 97-130. Considering Musil’s context, his use of “Siamese” to describe conjoined twins was perhaps unavoidable.

<sup>76</sup> GWI 906.

of this process would discharge itself within a body that is not one's own for the most part."<sup>77</sup> In this description, resentment, or the fear-driven concern with one's own body and soul, no longer dominates. The result is an awareness of the *Mitleid* (shared suffering) emerging from pain that motivates bourgeois searches for human or communal love. In contrast, "excitations" or *Mitfreude* (shared joy) affirm exceptional feelings related to constant interaction with new experiences and "bodies." With this distinction, Musil was pointing out that pity as a moral commandment was a rule that masked human misery. He valued the "excitations" that instead came into existence through shared joy in the ambiguous territories of self and world, stimulated by critical understanding of a more comprehensive reality.

Musil used Isis and Osiris and Ulrich and Agathe to re-contextualize enlarged emotions like "love." The siblings explore the stereotypes of masculine and feminine, feeling and thought, self and world in relation to particular manifestations of love. At the same time, the coast along their imaginary Mediterranean is empty of ships. In other words, brother and sister symbolize the few who have either the leisure or the ability to explore androgynous emotions in a de-centered territory of feeling.<sup>78</sup> Musil hoped to reach more people. It is no coincidence, then, that Musil's experiment with the realities structuring love paralleled his attempt to create conversations between the siblings that would not support the "enlargement" of feeling, but instead might represent a method to free "discourse" from domination by herd consciousness.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid. 908-909.

<sup>78</sup> Musil acknowledged this elitism. See GWI 1940.

## II. “Holy Conversations”: A Critical Method of Discourse and Feeling

Musil first assessed the technique of “conversation” when he published his novella *Unions (Vereinigungen)*, 1911). While writing *Unions*, he classified conversation along with self-analysis as one of the only possible “expression[s] for feeling.” In 1911, he wrote in his diaries that conversation “irradiate[s] with the desired feeling,” meaning that discussion can expose which emotion is currently dominating in consciousness.<sup>79</sup> Similar to Freud in this instance, Musil thought identifying these emotions would be the first step in the process of dethroning them. Whether in self-analysis or discourse-analysis, the first question “a person asks himself [is] which feelings? And in which situations he succeeds with them, what are the situations which he seeks with them...?” In contrast to critics like Pekar who argue that the erotic nature of the sibling conversations represents the sublimation of incestuous impulses into a discourse on love akin to “intellectual coitus,” I argue that their conversations convey a method of psychological investigation intended to resist authoritarian diagnoses and moralities. Nietzsche emphasized a “question mark” in any exploratory approach to moralizing psychologies. Musil similarly advocated a perpetual dialogue with the feelings that “halt” in consciousness and discourse itself.

Dialogues between thought and feeling provide the structure of the novel’s narrative. For example, the siblings discuss why women are interested in Ulrich even though for much of the novel he is an appetitive “man without qualities.” He explains their motivation: “Essentially it’s a protest against the world!” They desire an escape from reality. Ulrich has nihilistic fantasies as well, but once he converses with Agathe

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<sup>79</sup> TBI 237.

his fantasies begin to change. Ulrich realizes this change and tries to rationalize his feelings through conversation with himself and with her. Musil writes:

And he thought: “As soon as I succeed in not having the need for selfish or egocentric feelings toward Agathe, not even a feeling of hateful indifference, she pulls all the qualities out of me like a magnetic mountain does a ship’s nails! Morally, I dissolve into a primary atomic condition, where I’m neither I, nor she! Perhaps it’s happiness?!”

But he just said: “It’s so much fun to look at you!”

Agathe turned dark red and said: “Why is it ‘fun’?”

“Oh, I don’t know. You feel ashamed in my presence,” Ulrich supposed.<sup>80</sup>

Musil underscores that Ulrich’s thoughts, feelings, opinions, and statements regarding Agathe are interrelated processes and conditions. The emphasis on coordinating conjunctions recalls his youthful assertion that conjunctions signify a liminal experience on the edges of consciousness.<sup>81</sup> In this example, liminal feelings take form in Ulrich’s interpretation of his current experience with Agathe. His “excitement” manifests itself in thought as an exclamation mark and emphatic questioning. Musil dissolves that punctuated thinking with Ulrich’s inner contemplation of the relationship he has to Agathe. He associates the transformative process she inspires in him with an analogy: his partner is a magnetic mountain stimulating his heightened reality. She helps him to counter the colonial logic substantiating his narcissism. Becoming his “heart of darkness,” she penetrates into his ship, pulling his rivets out and therefore him apart.<sup>82</sup> This liberation from the colonial self is not complete; he is still using an “Agathe” as an object through which

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<sup>80</sup> GWI 940.

<sup>81</sup> TBI 53. Heft 3: 1899?-1905/6.

<sup>82</sup> This image recalls Marlow’s ship in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* that begins to fall apart the further it travels up the river in the Congo.

he dismantles *his* own ego. His analogy for Agathe supports his narcissistic desire for nihilism. Coming at the end of his inner dialogue, Ulrich's statements "It's so much fun to look at you," and then "you feel ashamed in my presence," appear inadequate and awkward because they voice vague, self-concerned feelings. This perhaps suggests that inner analysis alone does not nurture a better society and that analysis should be a group activity, not an activity determined by a dialogue between a supposedly "knowledgeable" doctor and "ignorant" patient, which was what Freud advocated.<sup>83</sup> The ethical dialogues between Ulrich and Agathe function to support this activity, and in fact inspire the siblings to make their discourse a more adequate description of reality. This effort culminates in their "holy conversations."

In the first "Holy Conversations" Chapter, Musil characterizes the siblings' different approaches to self-questioning. Agathe has a "feeling, lawless, nature" or a non-ratioïd approach to experience and Ulrich converses in a way that is formulaic and generalizing as he proposes answers to these questions. His, then, is a ratioïd approach. The narrator explains:

Typically she [Agathe] posed a definitive and personal question at the beginning of such conversations, of which the inner form was "may I or may I not?" The lawlessness of her essence had until then had the sad and tiresome form of the conviction that "I am allowed to do everything, but I do not want to," and in the meantime his young sister's questions made a similar impression on Ulrich, and not unjustifiably so, because they had to do with the questions of a child that are warm like the tiny hands of this helpless creature.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> See especially Sigmund Freud, *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. James Strachey (London: W.W. Norton, 1989) 60-61.

<sup>84</sup> GWI 746. German: "Gewöhnlich stellte sie im Beginn solcher Gespräche eine bestimmte und persönliche Frage, deren innere Form ‚darf ich oder darf ich nicht?‘ war. Die Gesetzlosigkeit ihres Wesens hatte bis dahin die traurige und ermüdete Gestalt der Überzeugung gehabt: ‚Ich darf alles, aber ich will ohnehin nicht,‘ und so machten die Fragen seiner jungen Schwester nicht

The two siblings begin their conversations by first questioning their own motivations, as Ulrich's inner narration in the previous paragraph exemplifies. Their goals are different. Agathe's goals are childlike and precise, which in Musil's Nietzschean understanding means she has an ability to remain unaffected by normative logic while being cognizant of the need to ask questions. She poses moral questions relating to the transitory "other condition," or the ethical experience of reality normally excluded from thought. The description of her childish method also confirms Ulrich's assumption that her language has the definitive force of a primordial mountain, tearing down barriers between self and other. In contrast, he always wants to "answer" their moral questions, at times motivated by apathy. His interpretation of Agathe changes a little during their first serious discussion on human motivation; he realizes that he can discuss his complex thoughts with her because in reality she is a mature, cognizant woman and not a child. As they begin to question the emotions guiding their own assumptions, then, they also jettison their ordinary oppositional methods in favor of an open exchange with their sister "other condition."

In this chapter, Ulrich and Agathe discuss modern religion and the attempt to capture in principles the feeling of oneness with the world and God supposedly experienced in centuries past. They begin their discussion by questioning contemporary faith in abstract values. Agathe asks: "Is it then not good to be good?"<sup>85</sup> To Ulrich this question reflects a childish interest in questions of goodness, but then he

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unberechtigterweise zuweilen auf Ulrich einen ähnlichen Eindruck, wie es die Fragen eines Kindes tun, die so warm sind wie die kleinen Hände dieses hilflosen Wesens."

85 Ibid. 747.

answers Agathe by claiming that adults also wish to be “good,” meaning they require a moral binary that supports the illusion of order and stability. To feel “good” as an adult means feeling the security of language, as it is language that makes social order imaginable. The siblings then discuss a Nietzschean perspective on morality. Ulrich explains that the words “good” and “evil” are functional terms that temporarily have tangible meaning and therefore are only sometimes really “good.” Unfortunately, by attempting to force reality into permanent moral values, their society has created a “madhouse.”<sup>86</sup> This statement is significant because it conveys Musil’s point that a colonizing fear of uncertainty has motivated his contemporaries to cling to delusions of truth in fanatical and catastrophic ways.

At this point, then, Ulrich recommends to Agathe that a functional morality or flexible ethics should remain open to the ambiguities of feeling, which Musil loosely called the “other condition.” Ulrich envisions a poetic recognition of boundless flexibility:

“You swim like the fish in water or the bird in the sky, but there is no bank there and no branch (*Ast*) and nothing but this swimming!” Ulrich happily composed his poetry; yet the fire and the firmness of his language contrasted with its delicate and hovering metallic content. He appeared to have thrown off his circumspect nature, which he otherwise controlled, and Agathe looked at him astounded, but also with restless delight.<sup>87</sup>

Musil here exemplifies a form of communication that momentarily captures the

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86 Ibid. 749.

87 Ibid. 751. German: “Ihr schwimmt wie der Fisch im Wasser oder der Vogel in der Luft, aber es ist kein Ufer da und kein Ast und nichts als dieses Schwimmen!” Ulrich dichtete wohl; doch das Feuer und die Festigkeit seiner Sprache hoben sich von ihrem zarten und schwebenden Inhalt metallen ab. Er schien eine Vorsicht abgeworfen zu haben, die ihn sonst beherrschte, und Agathe sah ihn erstaunt an, aber auch mit unruhiger Freude.”

magical offshoot of reality. Such realities in fact translate into poetry, as we see in Musil's earlier attempt, "Isis and Osiris." At this point, Ulrich is no longer imprisoned in his formulaic thinking; he forges a new language out of his old firm language. In this ambiguous description of experience, Musil emphasizes that Ulrich is not without support or "a branch," despite his claim. His analogies provide an anchor of meaning in that they can describe his specific experience. This description is simply not absolute. As poetry, it retains the openness of interpretation. For example, a "bird" signifies a real animal to some and Nietzsche's "free spirit" to others. Furthermore, Ulrich's poetic dialogue with Agathe frees her from preconceived notions she has about him as well. As a result, Agathe recognizes her own feelings of "uneasiness" stemming from this contradiction to her own assumptions, which then transforms into unexpected joy at discovering something new.

In the next chapter, "Holy Conversations: Ever-changing Progress," Musil has the siblings end their discussion on morality with the narrator's speculation that the early mystics of Christianity were the first to rigidify rapturous relationships with the world by explaining their ecstasies through a subject-object relationship to God. As Ulrich says, they enlighten others by claiming that "they are caught by God, devoured, blinded, robbed, raped, or their souls broaden to him, penetrate into him, are tasted by him, embrace him with love and hear him speak."<sup>88</sup> In these explanations, according to Musil, mystics represented their feelings through appetitive and sexual language, because those metaphors signified subject-object "rapture" in general. This was how

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid. 754. German: "sie werden von Gott gefangen, verschlungen, geblendet, geraubt, vergewaltigt, oder ihre Seele weitert sich zu ihm, dringt in ihn ein, kostet von ihm, umfaßt ihn mit Liebe und hört ihn sprechen."

moral experience translated into what Nietzsche called the “herd perspective.” Ulrich suggests that a scientist, perhaps he himself, should report on such feelings instead. The result may be a description formed through “precision and soul.” This proposition will instead move Agathe to contemplate with precision the complex trauma that has “destroyed her feelings.”<sup>89</sup>

Musil characterizes Agathe, not Ulrich, as the person capable of the proposed analysis of rapturous feeling. Agathe remembers her first love as the one who freed her from the isolation of her teenage convent experience.<sup>90</sup> He died from typhus on their honeymoon. As she recollects, the non-romantic and painful ending to love caused her to hate herself. Her marriage to the old fossil, professor Hagauer, is the culmination of these years of ecstatic self hatred. She now wishes to leave Hagauer, seeking liberation from the dominating feeling of resentment that has encouraged her to punish herself for the pain which love cost her. Looking back on her love from a perspective ten years later, she understands that the object of her affection has become much too young for her. He is now just a haunting illusion that keeps her from fully embracing others. After pages of her contemplations, Musil frees her mind from her love’s image. She and Ulrich then begin to converse again. This time the topic is perception itself.

Employing Gestalt technique, Ulrich asks Agathe to imagine a picture of cattle grazing in the fields. He proposes that people would most likely focus on the cattle, dominated as they are by hungry thoughts of self-preservation. Similarly, when

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89 Ibid. 756.

90 Her contemplation of what follows lasts six pages, GWI 755-761.

individuals perceive such realities that relate to self-preservation, they exclude from consciousness questions like how far the fields go, whether the cattle are bothered by flies, on what kind of paper the picture exists, or even who drew it and why. Agathe adds an important perspective that disrupts his calm lecture:

“And suddenly the paper tears to pieces!”  
Then Ulrich adds,  
“Yes. That means some kind of habitual web tears apart within us[...]I would like to say: the particularities no longer possess their egoism, through which they can claim our attention, but they are sisterly and in the literal sense ‘intimately’ linked with each other. And naturally there is also no more ‘perspective plane’ there, but somehow everything boundlessly passes over into you.”<sup>91</sup>

There are two ways this subject matter creates a gestalt of feeling, social discourse, and interpretive method. Ulrich’s paradigmatic picture emphasizes a “herd,” which recalls Nietzsche’s herd perspective once again. Ulrich could have described anything, but he chooses to use cattle as his example, which underscores how difficult it is to overcome one’s appetite. Musil then makes it clear that this difficulty disables critical thinking, making individuals susceptible to the blind acceptance of social discourse. We can infer from Agathe’s exclamation expressing her new revolutionary mood leading to the desire to rip apart the mundane picture that Musil wanted to create a method that questioned its own metaphysical project and revolution. Inspired by Agathe’s affective response, Ulrich articulates what a self-critical revolution in consciousness would look like if such a “web” tore within people. Once this web tears, critical thinkers could potentially unite in a temporary sisterhood, or a community not ruled over by a “masculine” herd consciousness.

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid. 762.

Musil returns to the herd analogy later in the chapter to emphasize the dangers of desiring a permanently torn-up world, or, what Ulrich himself attempted to do, taking a “vacation from life.” Ironically, then, Ulrich warns Agathe that turning away from reality has dangerous consequences. He says: “‘Imagine, while you have turned your heart away from the world, a mad steer finds itself among the herd!’”<sup>92</sup> Musil thought that a complete rejection of reality or compassion for others, metaphorically implied by the “heart,” made authoritarian societies and wars possible. At the end of this chapter, Ulrich admits to Agathe that he must therefore “believe” in something: “I believe that all of our moral regulations are an admission to being a society of savages (*Wilden*).”<sup>93</sup> Ulrich proceeds to list other beliefs, creating a never-ending litany of truths, or *Richtbilder*. He thus articulates the purpose of their conversations—to create a dialogue with reality without being bullied into the herd’s version of experience.

After brother and sister leave their ideal conversational mode behind and move to Vienna, their old methods begin to dominate their approaches to one another again. They no longer communicate with one another in a way that fosters critical thinking. For example, Agathe is decimated by the difficulty she is having trying to divorce Hagauer. In response, Ulrich asks her to face her “duty” (*Pflicht*). Then, “Agathe entered a very affected state, and therefore he began to speak.”<sup>94</sup> Ulrich changes suddenly into a Freudian “priest” of sorts, using his discourse to tell her how to work

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92 Ibid. 768. German: “Stell dir vor, unter der Herde befände sich, während sich dein Herz von der Welt abgewandt hat, ein böser Stier!” In fact, this is what happened in Germany after the Reichstag fire in 1933.

93 Ibid. 769.

94 Ibid. 958. German: “Agathe sehr in Mitleidenschaft gezogen war, und deshalb fing er zu sprechen an.”

through her unhappiness. His resulting “sermon” emphasizing the problem of “duty” motivates Agathe to contemplate his conversational approach to her:

Ulrich’s conversations with their jests and their apparently impartial superiority made an impression on her like scorn. She admired this superiority and all of the spiritual needs that go with it. However, she did not understand why all his ideas should be valid for all people! In her shame she required personal comfort and not common instruction! She did not want to be brave (*tapfer*)!!<sup>95</sup>

Ulrich’s discourse almost mimics a psychoanalyst seeking to discover Agathe’s “dark continent” or the origin of her painful emotions, but he is detached from consciousness of what she is actually trying to convey to him. Although Agathe here validates Ulrich’s method as far as it is relevant for his own situation, she rationalizes that he is conversing in a way that infantilizes rather than empathizes with her feelings, as indicated by the fact that he wants her to be “brave” like a good child. This painful realization about their relationship and her disappointment in Ulrich’s “sermon” results in her desire to destroy herself. Ulrich’s inability to hear her unique trauma drives her to the last stage of Nietzsche’s resentment, namely suicide. Their conversation ends in her tears. Oblivious, Ulrich leaves. Agathe also leaves his house, seeking death. With this dramatic conversation, which stimulates extreme resentment, Musil is conveying the reality that even the most critical consciousness must face the annihilating power of a dominating mood or feelings of resentment.

Instead of killing herself, however, Agathe runs into a man who wants to

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid. 963. German: “Ulrichs Gespräche mit ihren Scherzen und ihrer scheinbar unparteiischen Überlegenheit wirkten wie ein Hohn darauf. Sie bewunderte diese Überlegenheit und alle die geistigen Bedürfnisse, die über die ihren hinausgingen. Aber sie sah nicht ein, warum alle Gedanken immer gleich für alle Menschen gelten sollten! Sie verlangte in ihrer Beschämung persönlichen Trost und nicht allgemeine Belehrung! Sie wollte nicht tapfer sein!!”

“cure” or “master” her desire to divorce Hagauer. We later discover that the stranger whom Agathe meets is Professor Lindner, but initially he appears as a nameless Freudian figure with a fear of the supposedly “dangerous mists of the female psyche.”<sup>96</sup> After hearing her story, Lindner commands Agathe not to leave her marriage, because marriage and duty help keep chaotic feelings and desires in check. He tells her that without self-mastery, humanity’s soul would degenerate into chaos. Agathe responds by saying that his ideas “sound like a war regulation for archangels” and tells him that she does not agree.<sup>97</sup> After meeting someone who *believes* in duty and commandments that declare war on inner realms of life, Agathe can compare Ulrich’s warning about the power of “duty” with a closed-minded person representing that power who also paradoxically claims to have compassion for her. This conversation helps her to see that Ulrich’s point, while not conveyed well, was to present a perspective, which she necessarily must face if she breaks the social code of “duty.” Musil moreover makes Agathe question her own assumptions that cause her to hate her life, especially the belief that Ulrich is seeking truth for all people. She now understands that he is not just a caricature of patriarchy; he is also an ever-changing reality. Through critical thinking stimulated by her debate with a stranger representing the herd perspective, Agathe finds joy again. She returns to Ulrich to begin new conversations about ethical experience. Agathe’s empiricism suggests that a complex understanding of social realities can dissolve dominating ecstasies.

In one of the alternate drafts of the galley chapters dating to Musil’s death, “It

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96 Ibid. 971.

97 Ibid. 972.

is not Easy to Love,” brother and sister sit in lounge chairs discussing their love. With their intimate but rational discussion, Musil shows that their type of “conversation” allows for an exploration of emotional context without turning into what Schopenhauer and Professor Lindner advocated—a war against life. Musil writes:

One of course cannot assume that the chairs stood there because the siblings...may have had the intention in Schopenhauerian-Indian fashion of exchanging their opinion concerning the illusory essence of love and defending themselves against the insane enticement of the drive to procreate through mental dissection (*Zergliederung*); but what had commanded the [seating] choice of the half-shadowed, the protected, and curiously withdrawn could be more easily explained. The topic of the conversation was so constituted that in the unending experience itself, through which the concept of love first becomes intelligible (*deutlich*), the various lines of communication were made noticeable, from one question to another.<sup>98</sup>

Musil’s omniscient narrator acknowledges their “conversation” as an erotic discourse that at first appears to mirror Schopenhauer’s asceticism. The goal of ascetic discourse is to overcome the illusion of love and thus negate the will. The narrator dismisses this possible interpretation with a “but.” The purpose of their emotionally charged yet disciplined conversation about love is to consider the “line of questioning” producing it or the gestalt of the discussion as a whole. In other words, they address the illusory manifestations of ideas and emotions by recognizing that any process translating ethical feeling into language is “never-ending” and requires open-ended description. In this anti-metadiscourse, Musil confirms that language is not an expression of the sexual drive. Rather, emotions are part of thinking, with entangled internal and external stimuli. He also does not apotheosize his sibling conversations. The isolated nature of their experiment suggests the narcissistic limits of their dialogue.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid. 1223.

The fact that Musil places them in a garden is however significant. They are themselves like plants. This plant metaphor proffers what Musil himself envisioned—their discussions might grow into dialogues with people in the larger society, who are also isolated for the most part, or at the very least part of the intellectual elite.

I have argued that Musil’s “holy conversations” explore a critical discourse that is both ambiguous and empirically precise. These combined qualities create knowledge that guides consciousness only for a time. The ethical conversations, which Ulrich and Agathe attempt on a personal level, encouraged Musil to finally theorize his “psychology of emotion.” Ulrich’s science will attempt to converse with theorists who help to shape social consciousness. The audience learns of his counter-epistemology through the ethical guide, Agathe, who peruses Ulrich’s notes for us but with few interpretive comments, i.e. without telling us *what* to think.

### **III. The Unseparated and Not United: Theorizing the Psychology of Emotion**

Ulrich’s diaries theorizing a psychology of emotion can be found in galley Chapters 50, 52, 54, 55, 57, and 58 of what would have been Part IV of the novel. These chapters precede the unpublished final conversations between the siblings prior to the implicit outbreak of World War I. In their potential ending scenes, Ulrich and Agathe contemplate the world beyond their garden. They watch people beyond the railing and think that “just as this railing both separated them from as well as connected them to the world, and thus, just as it offered something compassionate to every person and yet still remained a cage (*Käfig*), it reminded them of the basic

qualities of human love.”<sup>99</sup> Ulrich defines their experience as “unseparated and not united.” With this metaphor, Musil more broadly describes consciousness of human love that is both a kind of prison (*Gefängnis*) and a cul-de-sac (*Winkel*).<sup>100</sup> This means that the feeling “halts” in the “prison” of abstraction, but this prison has “railings” through which interactions occur so that the original feeling always changes.<sup>101</sup>

Ulrich argues that ordinary modern empiricism does not investigate the exceptional forces escaping definitive understandings of reality. For Ulrich, the desire to create secure prisons that will hold life is itself an expression of an animal-Man who is imprisoned only by his fear of uncertainty. Ulrich writes in his notebooks: “[W]ithout a doubt we search for the firm in life as urgently as a land animal that has fallen in water. Because of this we overestimate the importance of knowing, of justice, of reason as well as the necessity of compulsion and violence.”<sup>102</sup> The sibling conversations in contrast become “great hunts” for knowledge, as Nietzsche proposed.<sup>103</sup> The “unseparated and not united” in this context is also a metaphor for the hunt for the realities shaping emotional experience. The experiments Ulrich conducts with Agathe (i.e. their conversations) are the basis for his description of the psyche. This description acknowledges contexts that are not disentangled from the

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99 Ibid. 1337.

100 See Chapter 2 for further explanation of Nietzsche’s terms.

101 The “iron cage” is integral to theories concerning the modern imprisonment of subjectivity explored by Nietzsche, Max Weber, and Rainer Marie Rilke. These thinkers theorized that animal-instinct interacts with moral principles. Compare with his poem titled “The Panther” (Paris 1903). See also TBI 680.

102 GWI 1128.

103 For more on Nietzsche’s psychology as a “great hunt” see James P. Cadello, “Psychology as the ‘Great Hunt’,” *Nietzsche and Depth Psychology*, ed. Jacob Golomb, Weaver Santaniello, and Ronald Lehrer (Albany: State U of New York P, 1999) 23-36.

social-historical forces creating the world. Ulrich presents this theoretical framework in his notes beginning with Chapter 50, “Agathe Finds Ulrich’s Diaries.”

Chapter 50 consists mainly of Ulrich’s notes on his “love” experiments with Agathe. From these experiments, Ulrich concludes that “love” does not signify “one feeling” (*ein Gefühl*). His argument theorizing why this might be the case is the starting point for his “psychology of emotion.” Ulrich writes that “the emotion is truly the least of what love is! If it is merely observed as one, it would hardly be so intense and powerful and in any case less meaningful than a toothache.”<sup>104</sup> He follows up this conclusion with a summary of examples of love in various contexts that convey incongruent realities of feeling. For example, the word “love” can signify a variety of feelings which individuals experience in relation to God, a wife, a nation, or a dog. In each case, the feeling involved does not emit the same intensity, nor does it serve the same function. As Musil’s experiments with Ulrich and Agathe reveal, the emotion “love” goes through a process of “hulling and enlargement.” Feelings are, moreover, always changing or passing through different emotions—love changes into irritation, which then hardens into hatred. Thus, any attempt to de-contextualize feelings and magnify a single, goal-oriented “emotion,” ends in the exaggerated mythologizing of what are merely initial physical sensations that are linked to affect.

In Chapter 52, Agathe begins to wonder why Ulrich’s notes do not refer to psychoanalytic theory, as she has heard that Freud and his theories are synonymous

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104 GWI 1123. German: “das Gefühl ist wahrhaftig das wenigste an der Liebe! Bloß als solches betrachtet, ist sie—kaum so heftig und mächtig und jedenfalls weniger deutlich als ein Zahnschmerz.”

with psychology.<sup>105</sup> Ulrich anticipates the questions that an audience dominated by Freud's theories might also have, when he explains in his notes that his exclusion is not mean-spirited. He points out that psychoanalysis perpetuates the empiricism which he is contesting by seeking human truths in physiological processes. The goal of psychoanalysis is to explain sex or death drives, thus focusing on the origin of feeling in affective responses to sensation or as Ulrich says, in "toothaches."<sup>106</sup> For this reason, he does not think that psychoanalysis explains the more complex context producing feeling. He chooses to substantiate his theories instead by recognizing a history of theories that attempted to describe intangible "emotions" and the "soul," but also failed to do so in comprehensive or adequate ways.

Ulrich's notes then summarize a history of theories that have come before his. These theories have tended to limit the investigation of feeling to the question of whether emotion is a "state" or a "process."<sup>107</sup> He identifies antiquity's emphasis on "Lust" and "Unlust," both of which were not "emotions" but rather experiences of pleasure or displeasure. Spinoza and Kant concentrated on disembodied "sensation" or "reason" as a state of abstract consciousness. Investigators of feeling in the nineteenth century, the foremost being Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, theorized that emotional processes were expressions of unknowable "intuition," "will," and "instinct," the last of which Freud appropriated. Finally, contemporary Gestalt theories point out that physiological sensations interact with external shaping forces to

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105 Ibid. 1138.

106 Ibid. 1145.

107 Ibid. 1140-1141.

create ambiguous “amphibian” feelings. Ulrich finds each approach too limiting, but together they offer a more elaborate or thorough account of feeling. Also, none of these theorists, with the exception of Nietzsche, investigated the context shaping particular life experiences, including the emotional context informing epistemological searches for truth. Ulrich includes his own context by referring to his discussions with Agathe and by offering a detailed genealogy of his ideas. In what follows, he will describe the environmental conditions structuring life, the origin of emotions, the emotional domination of consciousness, the “arrangement and hardening” (*Ausgestaltung und Verfestigung*) of feeling, and dangerous social ecstasies.

Ulrich establishes the social origin of goal-oriented emotional experiences. As Agathe reads, feelings become “halted” in consciousness as a result of an entangled context in which personal psychology and social prescriptions for identity or behavior collide. Emotional consciousness is shaped by:

[T]emperament, character, age, upbringing; the predispositions, principles, previous experiences, and existing excitements can of course be considered as well, although these conditions have no clear limits and become lost in the character of a person and their fate. But also the external environment, yes and even the knowledge is, or merely its silent assumption, can suppress or favor an emotion, and social life exposes countless examples of this, because in every situation there are feelings that are proper and not proper; also which group of feelings in public and in one’s own life predominate (*vorherrschen*), or will be favored, and which will be suppressed, changes with the place and time. In fact it is often the case that times essentially lacking in feeling replace times sensitive to feeling.<sup>108</sup>

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108 Ibid. 1156. German: “[T]emperament, Character, Alter, Erziehung, von den Anlagen, Grundsätzen, vorangegangenen Erlebnissen und vorhandenen Spannungen, gilt das wohl als selbstverständlich, obwohl diese Bedingungen keine genaue Grenze haben und sich in das Wesen der Person und ihres Schicksals verlieren. Aber auch die äußere Umgebung, ja schon ein Wissen von ihr oder bloß ihre stillschweigende Voraussetzung können ein Gefühl unterdrücken oder begünstigen, und das gesellige Leben bietet unzählige Beispiele dafür dar, denn in jeder Lage gibt es Gefühle, die sich schicken oder nicht schicken, auch wechselt es mit den Landstrichen und der

In an “ordinary” condition, individuals disregard the factors creating psychological situations, privileging instead the feelings most valued as “good” in relationship to their position in society. As the siblings have shown, these singular “emotions” are seeded versions of an emotive morass that spreads out and dominates consciousness. However, “that an emotion spreads out does not mean only a magnification of its power, but at the same time also a relaxation of the needs from which it gives rise or makes use.”<sup>109</sup> For example, the need for father ending in the hulled out emotion of love disappears once the father favors emotions such as “shame” and not the emotion “love.” The vague aftereffect of the need colors new feelings, creating, for example, a love for “fatherland.” Musil clearly emphasizes the ways that social consciousness favors intense emotions that have dissipated since the initial affect. I believe this implies that Musil was considering the ways that propagandists like Goebbels could manipulate affective memories in individuals, transforming the pain involved in the earlier suppression of needs into a vague but imperious hatred for anyone not part of the fatherland. Perhaps this was the era poor in emotional understanding that replaced an episteme sensitive to “the soul.” This entry in Ulrich’s notebook, which Musil wrote after 1933, highlights the novel’s concerns with psychologies that used knowledge of affect to shape herd emotions in irresponsible and disastrous ways.

Ulrich then asks the unknown reader (Agathe) to question the composing

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Zeit, welche Gefühlsgruppen im öffentlichen und im Eigenleben vorherrschen, oder doch begünstigt werden, und welche unterdrückt werden, ja sogar schlechthin gefühlvolle und gefühlarme Zeiten haben einander schon abgelöst.”

109 Ibid. 1158. German: “daß es um sich greift, bedeutet nicht nur eine Vergrößerung seiner Macht, sondern zugleich auch eine Entspannung der Bedürfnisse, denen es entspringt oder deren es sich bedient.”

forces creating emotional response. Such questioning provides the foundation for a science of experience (*Erfahrungswissenschaft*) that not only accounts for goal-oriented emotions but also the social context shaping the feelings that flow between self and world. Ulrich asks:

Does the becoming and being of a feeling discharge itself ‘within’ us or against and with us? Thus I come back to my own description once more[...]My feeling forms within me and outside of me; it changes inwardly and outwardly...and although it may contradict our prejudice, it is thus equally both inside and outside, or at the very least both are so entangled with each other that the question of what would be inside and outside in respect to feeling and what thereof would be the self and what would be the world loses almost all meaning (*Sinn*).<sup>110</sup>

Ulrich argues that feelings interact with the world like the notes of a melody. In such melodies, each emotive note creates a sound that is unique but also inextricably linked to an entire context of production. These notes represent the being and becoming of “ideas, movements, sensations, intentions and wordless forces all of which unite in [feelings].”<sup>111</sup> This sensitive melody does not materialize in the psyche *ex nihilo*; it appears as a result of the composing forces in individuals and in society. Feelings surface with an interpretation of reality that is filtered through prejudice. Ulrich calls this composing process, “arrangement and hardening.”<sup>112</sup> In other words, an individual’s context rearranges ambiguous feelings into socially acceptable hierarchies. The hardened end of this process suppresses the ways in which individuals interact with external and internal stimuli. By raising questions about this process, Ulrich also

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110 Ibid. 1161.

111 Ibid. 1164. German: “Gedanken, Bewegungen, Empfindungen, Absichten und stummen Kräften, die sich in ihm vereinen.”

112 Ibid. 1165.

challenges dominant “prejudices” and underscores the inadequacies of categories like self and world reified by doctors, such as Freud. These hardened categories simplify the melody of experience down to just two notes: inside and outside. Ulrich is pointing out that, when these binaries do *not* have unconscious power over thought, it is possible to acknowledge the composing forces shaping consciousness.

At the beginning of Chapter 57, “The Reality and the Ecstasy,” Agathe hears Ulrich return from his social engagement with General Stumm von Bordwehr and returns the notebooks to the secret drawer. She then disappears. Musil shifts to a contemplative Ulrich, who begins to think about what he has defined as ecstatic emotions. He perhaps is motivated by Stumm’s excited description of propaganda, the nationalistic marches flooding the streets of Vienna, and what Stumm believes is a growing need to use “iron logic” to guide mass ecstasies.<sup>113</sup> Ulrich looks at his notebooks and realizes that he was right—holding onto a single, intense emotion like hate or fear for an extended period of time produces a kind of ecstasy that makes consciousness pliable to the rhetoric of hate-mongering leaders:

An attitude that remains completely under the rule of a single feeling, like he had sometimes spoken of, was certainly of the ecstatic kind. To be consumed by rage or fear is an ecstasy. The world before the eyes of an individual who sees only red or only threats, certainly does not last long; one can imagine with this not the world, but sudden impulses and deceptions; if however the masses should succumb to it, hallucinations result that are of terrible power and duration.<sup>114</sup>

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113 Ibid. 1154-1155 especially.

114 Ibid. 1190-1191. German: “Ein Verhalten, das ganz unter der Herrschaft eines einzelnen Gefühls stand, wie er es gelegentlich erwähnt hatte, war doch wohl schon ein ekstatisches. Dem Zorn oder der Angst Verfallensein ist eine Ekstase. Die Welt vor den Augen eines einzelnen, der nur Rot oder nur Bedrohung sieht, hält freilich nicht lange vor, man spricht darum auch nicht von einer Welt, sondern nur von Eingebungen und Täuschungen; wenn aber Massen ihr erliegen, entstehen Halluzinationen von furchtbarer Kraft und Ausdehnung.”

Ulrich seems to be sensing a future fervor for war and the Nazis—again, Musil wrote this after 1933. This possibility indicates the political import of Ulrich's psychology of emotion. Without understanding the context in which emotions rise and fall, we do not realize that our leaders use our intense reactions to life events like 9/11 (the Reichstag fire in 1933) to manipulate us into complying with their wills. Because of this ignorance, we blindly follow leaders who promise to destroy the "evil" they blame for the event, whether or not that "evil" was truly responsible. This was one concern with what Nietzsche called the herd mentality. "Hallucinations" mask realities that help to temper feelings colored by "relaxed affects," or emotions that no longer are connected to their original stimuli. These hallucinations lose power once people see the part which they play in creating their own consciousness. Musil's theory of ecstatic shaping discourse qualifies Marxist theories that claim material conditions give the masses real consciousness. Marx's critique of false bourgeois consciousness, while valid, did not consider the power of modern technology and individual affect to make elitist "illusions" appear to be true. As I have shown, Ulrich agrees that material position determines how a person thinks and feels. However, his Nietzschean interpretation of the masses suggests that social discourse also stimulates delusions that can distract the people most affected by the suffering concomitant with material inequalities. After contemplating these mass ecstasies, Ulrich considers how to describe his ethical "psychology of feeling." He begins to formulate his final theory, the theory of the "two worlds of emotion."

In Chapter 58, "Two Worlds of Emotion," Musil, via Ulrich, establishes his own counter-epistemological "map" of the inner world. This map does not define true

territories, but rather accounts for the fleeting nature of emotion as well as the facile embrace of dominating ideas. Ulrich contemplates “two worlds of emotion,” explicitly theorizing what Musil had considered for years—the non-appetitive and appetitive attitudes. Ulrich defines these territories as ruled over either by a specific emotion or a vague mood. He argues that “one can differentiate between feeling and mood; therefore it is easy to see that the ‘fixed emotion’ is something that applies any time, springs from a life event, and has a goal.” In contrast to goal-oriented feelings like “love, anger, mistrust” (*Liebe, Zorn, Mißtrauen*), a mood “is comprehensive, without goal, spread out, inactive, and with all clarity contains something vague and is prepared to pour itself out on every object without something happening and without being altered by it.”<sup>115</sup> Examples of moods are “being well-disposed, tenderness, irritation, suspicion,” (*Wohlgesinntheit, Zärtlichkeit, Gereiztheit, Argwohn*). Ulrich makes it clear, though, that this is an inadequate separation. He understands that these moods are entangled with emotions and therefore any distinction between “worlds” functions only as a pedagogical device (a *Richtbild*). Explicating the “moods” that contextualize the emotions devouring life nevertheless offers a way to perpetually disable ecstatic or hardened thinking. At the end of this last of the posthumously published Part IV galley chapters, Ulrich begins to write down his new theories.

In an alternate draft of Chapter 52, “Breath of a Summer Day,” written between 1940 and 1942, Ulrich further considers his own binary description of emotion in relationship to dominant stereotypes (*Modeworte*). There is supposedly:

“Occidental, Western, Faustian feeling” as it was called in the language

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115 GWI 1197.

of books, in contrast to everything that, according to the same self-fertilizing language, was supposed to be “Oriental” or “Asiatic.” He recalled these patronizing vogue words. But it was not his or his sister’s intention, nor would it have been in keeping with their habits, to give a misleading significance to an experience that moved them deeply by employing such adventitious, poorly grounded notions...<sup>116</sup>

Ulrich has distaste for the simplifying stereotypes depicting his two attitudes as geographically distant from one another. He suggests that his contemporaries associated European “feeling” with the tragic destiny of Goethe’s Faust who sublimated his spirit into a passion for science and “progress.” In contrast, “Oriental” feelings would then appear to symbolize a primitive static spirituality, a prejudice Nietzsche also perpetuated.<sup>117</sup> Psychologists conserving stereotypes of Occident and Orient occluded real interactions occurring between these emotive and geographical worlds. In Musil’s understanding, the stereotypically imagined “appetitive-contemplative” and “masculine-feminine” attitudes also were inadequate summaries of feeling. He thought that such inadequacies meant psychologists (himself included) perpetually needed to acknowledge the limits of discourse. These limits reveal the temporary nature of any description they might “arrange and harden,” thus hopefully preventing the conflation of prejudice and truth.

Finally, in order to theorize two different kinds of “humans” related to these two worlds of feeling in this same Chapter, Ulrich returns to the stereotypical categories dividing emotion. There are people who are active or dominated by the

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116 GWI 1238. Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, trans. Burton Pike, vol. 2 (New York: Vintage, 1996) 1333. I used the official English translation because it appeared better than my own.

117 Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse, Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Werke V III:52*, p. 72.

appetitive emotions (e.g. a “man with qualities”), and people who are passive or dominated by “Asiatic feeling”—what Ulrich calls “the contemplative” (e.g. a “man without qualities”).<sup>118</sup> If Musil’s fictional explication of the two kinds of emotional humans ended here, it would appear that he supported an Orientalist conception of psychology. However, he has Ulrich rationalize that he and Agathe represent an ambiguous mixture of both kinds of people. They act when it counts, and remain passive when they need to consider more comprehensive realities. They not only confound two emotional worlds, then, they challenge the primacy of physical nature. With this description, I believe Musil expressed what he really valued in the “psychology of feeling” he was devising toward the end of his life—a potential ethical activism that would result after a careful analysis of both individual and social emotional contexts. In other words, he believed that navigating between appetitive and contemplative behaviors would overthrow any dominating ecstasies that made consciousness pliable to leaders as well as the hardened prejudices of the ratioïd.

In his notebooks, Ulrich conceives of a psychology of emotion that will converse with producers of knowledge through the ethical filter of the symbolic “feminine” attitude—Agathe. Ulrich asks unknown readers, also like Agathe, to consider a description of the psyche that counters the colonization of emotion stimulating hatred and fear in intellectuals who have the power to favor the same emotions in the masses. I believe that Ulrich’s quasi-essay notebooks presented Musil’s proposal for a method that would transform “masculine” science into an ethical psychology of life. At the same time, we must recognize that Ulrich’s

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118 GWI 1239.

essayism, and Musil's novel itself, were bourgeois forms of discourse that would not be able to effectively compete with the technologies of mass persuasion.

#### **IV. Conclusion—Is the Dissemination of a Psychology of Feeling Realizable?**

Many psychologists since Musil's time have tried to convert theoretically open-ended psychologies into practice. For example, psychiatrist R.D. Laing theorized a "politics of experience" in his therapy, while Deleuze and Guattari advocated a "schizoanalysis" and a "becoming animal" or "becoming woman." Frantz Fanon asked us to "feel the other" and thus see the "open door in every consciousness." Each psychologist hoped to convey to the public that there was a way to resist colonial fantasies supporting generalizing principles. They, however, could not reach a public beyond the middle class, with the exception of Fanon who has since inspired many throughout the world to fight against colonial governments in all their complex manifestations. Musil also experienced this problem in the process of attempting to integrate his earlier forms of the psychology of feeling into an aesthetic theory that would counter herd imagination.

In "Toward a New Aesthetic" (1925), Musil referred to the brilliance of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's book *Les fonctions mentales des sociétés primitives*. This text problematically argued that modern art valorizes pathological states that are referents to the "primitive" culture still existing in civilization. In a footnote to the idea that "primitive" emotions are related to psychopathology, Musil cites Ernst Kretschmer's book *Medizinische Psychologie* as offering "valuable suggestions toward a

psychology of feelings,” which psychoanalysis has treated too one-sidedly.<sup>119</sup> Kretschmer theorized two kinds of bodies: the Pyknic type of body and the Schizophrenic.<sup>120</sup> For Musil, the Pyknic body (a person with a belly) symbolized appetitive emotions. The Schizophrenic body (thin) symbolized a contemplative attitude. Ulrich and Agathe as a metaphor exposing the interaction of these “two emotional worlds,” however, would exceed Kretschmer’s binary. As this chapter has shown, Musil’s descriptive method advocated a gestalt of the world that challenged gender stereotypes, while paradoxically perpetuating their reproduction. Consuming these contradictions promoted critical understanding in some, but could also confirm the prejudiced thinking of others, especially when we consider that this was the context in which the Nazis appropriated Nietzsche’s racist and sexist aphorisms.

Musil was aware of the limits to his experiments but did not know how, nor did he have the means or explicit intention, to aggressively counter the emotional appeals of propaganda. We can see the potential practice of his psychology of feeling, then, not within the content of the novel, which depicts privileged elites who have the luxury to explore science and ethos, but within a potential audience, which he recognized might exist only in the future. He wanted his readership to resist what he oversimplified as the “masculine” emotions dominating their social consciousness. Agathe, and Musil’s wife Martha (his “favorite reader”), embodied the “feminizing” reader who would take what he wrote and create a counter-imagination.

I will conclude this study of Robert Musil and the (de)colonization of “this true

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119 *Precision and Soul* 197.

120 Musil refers to these in TBI 597.

inner Africa” by examining the aesthetic form that enabled Musil to disseminate his psychology of feeling to a future audience. Before World War I, Musil thought the ethos of the essay form stimulated critical thinking. His “essayism” culminated in Ulrich’s notes on the “psychology of emotion,” and in his own unpublished aphorisms, both of which constituted Musil’s last attempts to cultivate an ethical readership before his death in 1942. To understand the broader conversations with contemporary and posthumous readers Musil envisioned it is important to return to his first experiments with an aesthetic that would resist the modern colonizing of interiority. His lifelong efforts to reach an audience were confounded by material conditions and his reliance on the novel form. Musil’s experiments nevertheless make it possible to contemplate what creating a counter-imperialist imagination might entail.

## Chapter 5: De-Colonizing the Audience—Toward a Psychology of Essayism

For me, ethics and aesthetics are connected to the word essay.<sup>1</sup>

Robert Musil, “On the Essay” (1914?)

The first people able to find their way out of the blind alley of national imperialism to a new possibility of world order... will soon have the leadership of the world and be able to realize its legitimate wishes. Today no one can foresee in detail the road that leads to this; it is a matter of creating convictions leading in that direction.<sup>2</sup>

Robert Musil, “The Nation as Ideal and Reality” (1921)

I consider it more important to write a book than to rule an Empire. And also more difficult.<sup>3</sup>

Robert Musil, Notebook 34 (1937-1941)

Sabine Döring (1999) argues that Ulrich’s psychology of feeling at the end of *The Man without Qualities* (1933-1938) represents the clearest expression of Robert Musil’s experiment with aesthetics. She distinguishes his aesthetic project from science, however.<sup>4</sup> As I argued in Chapter 4, Ulrich’s notebooks in fact used the essay form to present an ethical *and* scientific psychology of feeling.<sup>5</sup> In the end, the psychology of feeling, as embodied by Ulrich and Agathe, signified a practice that

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1 Robert Musil, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Adolf Frisé, vol. 2 (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978).

2 WWII 1075. Translation from *Precision and Soul*, ed. and trans. Burton Pike and David S. Luft. (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1990) 115-116.

3 Robert Musil, *Tagebücher*, 2 vols., ed. Adolf Frisé, vol. 1 (Rowohlt: Hamburg, 1976) 960. German: “Ich halte es für wichtiger ein Buch zu schreiben als ein Reich zu regieren. Und auch für schwieriger.” Heft 33: 1937-etwa Ende 1941.

4 Sabine Döring, *Ästhetische Erfahrung als Erkenntnis des Ethischen: Die Kunsttheorie Robert Musils und die analytische Philosophie* (Paderborn: Mentis, 1999) 16-17.

5 See also David S. Luft, *Eros and Inwardness in Vienna* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2003) and Patrizia McBride, *The Void of Ethics: Robert Musil and the Experience of Modernity* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2006).

navigated between the poles of activism and contemplation. This chapter returns to essays predating the *Nachlass* chapters of *The Man without Qualities* to investigate Musil's integration of ethics and science in the "Richtbild," or temporary picture of the world. The "Richtbild" functioned as a guide for what I call a de-colonizing practice. Musil did not value "Richtbilder" for their artistic beauty; nor did he seek to reproduce the "true" empirical world. Rather, he sought a gestalt of form and content, which would help readers organize and evaluate ever-changing relationships among their emotions, thoughts, epistemologies, and environments within their own specific social contexts.<sup>6</sup> This chapter proposes that Musil's essayism was an "experiment" (*Versuch*) with the dissemination of a "proto-psychology of feeling," encouraging contemporary and posthumous readers to understand and then confront the imperializing forces organizing inner Europe.<sup>7</sup> These early efforts are important because they reveal the extent to which Musil addressed different historical audiences facing different forms of cultural propaganda.

Few scholars have examined Musil's analysis of emotion within the context of essayism.<sup>8</sup> This chapter therefore highlights a new perspective on essayism. In addition, some scholars have defined Musil's aesthetic project as an effort to negate

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6 See "Literati and Literature" (1931), GWII 1218.

7 He discussed these forces in "Nation as Ideal and Reality" (1921), GWII 1059-1075. See the quotation on p. 1075, with which I began this chapter.

8 Many have, however, connected Musil's essayism to philosophy. See David S. Luft, *Robert Musil and the Crisis of European Culture: 1880-1942* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1980); Peter C. Pfeiffer, *Aphorismus und Romanstruktur: Zu Robert Musils "Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften"* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1990); Cary Henderson, "Zur Essayistik von Friedrich Nietzsche und Robert Musil" *Focus on Literatur* 1.1 (1994): 9-22; Hans-Joachim Pieper, *Musils Philosophie: Essayismus und Dichtung im Spannungsfeld der Theorien Nietzsches und Machs* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2002).

reality and affirm psychological fragmentation.<sup>9</sup> This reading recalls Georg Lukács's summation of Musil's work. Lukács explained that for bourgeois modernists like Joyce, Kafka, and Musil, "psychopathology became the goal, the terminus ad quem, of their artistic intention."<sup>10</sup> Lukács confuses Ulrich's pre-Agathe rejection of reality, or "vacation from life," with Musil's goals. In his diaries, Musil did connect the fat and "schizophrenic" body types of Ernst Kretschmer's *Medical Psychology* to the appetitive emotions and passive "moods" (*Stimmungen*), which Ulrich and Agathe exhibit at different points throughout the novel.<sup>11</sup> These body types however symbolize extremes, which individuals actually only experience in gradations. By reducing Musil's project to pathology, Lukács failed to recognize that his scientific-ethical modernism stressed the danger in valorizing flights from the modern "Midas existence," in which everything "turned if not into money then reinforced concrete."<sup>12</sup> Patrizia McBride (2000) adds to this claim by arguing that Musil sought a discursive space that would be critically distant from existing political ideologies and therefore could encourage a more critical guide for political change.<sup>13</sup>

As with Nietzsche's aphorisms, Musil's essayism also ran the risk of

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9 Cf. Stefan Jonsson, *Subject Without Nation: Robert Musil and the History of Modern Identity*. (Durham: Duke UP, 2000). Jonsson argues that Musil saw his new "other condition" aesthetic as a negation of reality and valorizes Ulrich as an expression of this negative condition. I will show that he differentiated such notions of the other condition from his own life-affirming explication of an aesthetic-scientific practice of the psychology of feeling.

10 Georg Lukács, "The Ideology of Modernism," *Marxist Literary Theory*, ed. Terry Eagleton and Drew Milne (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) 150. First published in 1957.

11 TBI 597.

12 GWII 1145. German: "wenn nicht zu Geld, so zu Eisenbeton wurde."

13 Patrizia McBride, "On the Utility of Art for Politics: Musil's 'Armed Truce of Ideas'" *The German Quarterly* 73.4 (Autumn, 2000): 366-386.

reconfirming epistemological truths within readers. In the preface of *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1886), Nietzsche argued that his readers should chew on his contradictory perspectives, and thus actively participate in an exegesis (*Auslegung*) of his work as a whole.<sup>14</sup> After his death, groups obsessed with Nietzsche tended to “enlarge” the aphorisms that supported their own ideological interests. To counter the mining of his own work, Musil repeatedly asked his readers to consider the emotional ethos embedded within discourse, including his own. He also made an effort in “Toward a New Aesthetic” (1925) to de-mystify the aesthetic “other condition” (*Anderer Zustand*) and included essay chapters to guide the reading of *The Man without Qualities* (1930). Musil conceptualized the essay as a supplementary discourse that could help an audience consuming culture become more conscious of prejudices shaping their interpretations, such as the prejudice defining the opposition between natural and cultural realms of experience.<sup>15</sup> Based on this opposition, for example, many concluded that “primitive” art facilitated communion with nature, while “civilized” art destroyed life through abstraction. Musil’s essays emphasized the entangled nature of these experiences. His message became much more urgent after the Nazis seized the means of literary production.

In May of 1933, the Nazis burned books written by Sigmund Freud, Heinrich Mann, Erich Maria Remarque, Kurt Tucholsky, and Arnold Zweig at German

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14 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral, Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Werke V*, ed. Giorgio Collier and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967) Preface: 8.

15 For more on the de-reification of the categories of “culture” and “nature” in Musil’s essayism, see Mark M. Freed, “Latour, Musil, and the Discourse of Non Modernity” *Symploke* 11.1-2 (2003): 194. Interestingly, scholars have also investigated the “essayism” of African short stories. See P.T. Mtuze, “Essayism in Siwisa’s short stories” *South African Journal of African Languages* 10.4 (November 1990): 324-328.

universities.<sup>16</sup> A consequence of widespread censorship was a decrease in reading. Few individuals checked out books over the next twelve years.<sup>17</sup> In October 20, 1938, Musil learned from the nazified Bermann Fischer publisher, Thomas Hahn, that his novel had also been banned within the boundaries of the German Empire.<sup>18</sup> However, some bourgeois writers, such as the colonial writer Hans Grimm, remained important during the Nazi regime.<sup>19</sup> Grimm's *Volk ohne Raum* (1926) contained colonial-racist discourses and stereotypes of African promiscuity that supported fear of miscegenation going back to Hegel and racist paranoia regarding non-white "others" living in the Third Reich.<sup>20</sup> Partly as a result of these unfounded but socially favored fears, Nazi doctors sterilized Germans of African descent without public outcry.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, when we consider the essay form disseminating Musil's analysis of feeling prior to and in this context, we must question Musil's aphorism claiming that "to write a book is more important than to rule an Empire."<sup>22</sup> For the people affected in significant ways by a ruler's decisions, ruling an Empire *was* more important than

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16 Robert Musil, *Briefe 1901-1942*, ed. Adolf Frisé, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1981) 577.

17 Detlev Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life*, trans. Richard Deveson (New Haven: Yale UP, 1987) 24.

18 BI 859-860.

19 For more on the reception of *Volk ohne Raum*, see Gerd Koch, "Dichtertage bei Hans Grimm, Autor des Romans *Volk ohne Raum*, in Lippoldberg an der Weser," *Literarisches Leben, Exil und Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Gerd Koch (Frankfurt a.M.: Brandes & Apsel, 1996) 93-151. Musil mentions Grimm in aphorisms 167-168 of his Notebook 33, 1937-41. (See TBI 956-958)

20 For more on colonial literature and "miscegenation" see Joachim Warmbold, "If Only She Didn't Have Negro Blood in Her Veins: The Concept of Metissage in German Colonial Literature" *Journal of Black Studies* 23.2 The Image of Africa in German Society (Dec 1992): 200-209.

21 See Tina Camppt, "Chapter 2: Confronting Racial Danger, Neutralizing Racial Pollution," *Other Germans: Black Germans and the Politics of Race, Gender, and Memory in the Third Reich* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2004) 63-80.

22 TBI 960.

writing a book. However, Musil's claim is not irrelevant. To write a book that could challenge propaganda would indeed be much more difficult than sustaining an Empire.

For Musil, the Nazi Reich represented a dystopian finale to the bourgeois effort to conserve patriarchal domination.<sup>23</sup> Examining the novel form briefly reveals the extent to which propagandistic literature facilitated this effort. Joseph Goebbels himself wrote a male-centered novella, *Michael*, to depict the development of one man into a member of the racial *Volksgemeinschaft*, who then had to sacrifice his own life for the "volk."<sup>24</sup> As Masao Miyoshi has argued, the novel form, born in the age of colonialism, had long circumscribed the reader's interiority by mirroring bourgeois struggles of self-discovery; it was "a colonial utopian space in which the subject meets the objects in a struggle for mastery."<sup>25</sup> Bourgeois narratives tended to emphasize the *bildung* (education or moral development) of a man, like Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Crusoe initially is an abject figure who leaves England to explore the globe. He is shipwrecked on an island, and thereafter struggles to master his morals and the untamed nature of the island, including his indigenous servant, Friday.<sup>26</sup> In presenting

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23 He called the Nazi expression of patriarchal violence, "kriegerische Männlichkeit" (warring masculinity). See TBI 960.

24 Joseph Goebbels, *Michael: Ein deutsches Schicksal in Tagebuchblättern* (Munich: Franz Eher, 1942). Original Edition in 1929. See also Gerhart Mayer, "Der Held im Dienst einer nationalistischen Ideologie: Joseph Goebbels' Roman *Michael*." *Literatur im Kontext—Literature in Context*, ed. Joachim Schwend, Susanne Hagemann and Hermann Völkel (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1992).

25 Masao Miyoshi, *Off Center: Power and Culture Relations between Japan and the United States* (Cambridge, Harvard UP, 1991) 57.

26 Joachim Heinrich Campe adapted Defoe's novel in German serials, which he eventually called *Der Jüngere Robinson: Ein Lesebuch für Kinder* (1740-1770). Suzanne Zantop points out that these serials "educated whole generations of Germans in colonizing skills." See Zantop's *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (Durham: Duke UP, 1997) 13.

one figure's mastery over his mental and real "house," or what Freud identified as the resolution of the rebellious Oedipal stage, such novels forced readers to follow the path to bourgeois adulthood. Musil's novel, in contrast, sought to de-colonize readers through the essayistic arguments of the "man without qualities," Ulrich. Although imperious when consumed by his masculine attitude, Ulrich does not develop into a "master of the house." Rather, he functions as a critical commentator disrupting male perspectives expressed through other characters. Ulrich's critical resistance to enclosed forms of knowledge and interiority represents the culmination of Musil's effort to disseminate his proto-psychology of feeling as a practical guide for readers.

This chapter first investigates Musil's "On the Essay" (1914?) as an early attempt to integrate an analysis of feeling into the essay form. Essays have the potential of dissolving barriers separating art from science and author from reader, while supporting a reader's critical consciousness. Secondly, Musil's review of Hungarian Marxist Béla Balázs's film theory in "Toward a New Aesthetic" became the basis for his investigation into an aesthetic that would guide an audience through the border territories between abstraction and rapture, or what he called the "other condition" (*anderer Zustand*). I have argued that the other condition exposes the realities normally expunged from consciousness. In this crucial essay, Musil also demystified contemporary artistic attempts to engage with the other condition. Finally, Musil wrote the utopian essay Chapters 61 and 62 in *The Man without Qualities*. These essay "interruptions," in a Brechtian sense, appealed to readers to reengage with

reality, their ambiguous feelings, and their wills.<sup>27</sup> Although not accessible to a non-bourgeois audience, Musil's essayism was an attempt to motivate the convictions of those who could and would one day reach the masses.

### I. "On the Essay" (1914): The Essay as a Gestalt of Science and Ethos

Conventional essays present claims and rely on factual or rhetorical support to persuade readers that the argument, which the writer presents, has validity. The acceptance of validity depends on assumptions the audience shares with the writer (i.e. herd consciousness). The writer therefore appeals to what she or he anticipates the assumptions will be within a prospective audience. Musil envisioned another purpose for the "essay." In "On the Essay," he explains that "essay" *also* means to "experiment" (*Versuch*), and to "weigh" different perspectives on a single subject.<sup>28</sup> In other words, essays can present contradictory "truths" positioned in relation to one another in order to question, rather than validate, a reader's assumptions. The ethos exuding from the inclusion of these perspectives de-mystifies the godlike power of an author to convey truth. As a research writing guide puts it, when "acknowledging [the reader's] views and differences, you foster their desire to work with you in developing and testing new ideas."<sup>29</sup> This is the aspect of the essay Musil emphasized. His essay represented "the strictest [form] available in an area in which one cannot work

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27 Bertolt Brecht thought that interrupting the action of an actor would call attention to gestic elements of his or her body. See Brigid Doherty, "Test and Gestus in Brecht and Benjamin" *MLN* 115 (2000) 474. Walter Benjamin also conceived of this "interrupting" of action as a *Haltung*—a pause in walking. Doherty 472.

28 GWII 1334.

29 Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 2nd edition (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2003) 122.

precisely.”<sup>30</sup> Although Musil was referring to imprecise spheres of life and morality, I believe he also identified the essay form as not absolutely precise partly because of the uncertain nature of emotional appeals. Musil demanded that his essay consist of precise argumentation, emotive subject matter, and an explication of the context in which both are produced in order to work with the audience to create an order that would weigh different perspectives on life. This section explicates the gestalt of Musil’s essay form in his posthumously published fragment “On the Essay.”

In “On the Essay,” Musil first identifies the conventional division of methodology into epistemology (the science of knowledge) and life as art (ethical experience).<sup>31</sup> This bifurcation was a fundamental error from Musil’s perspective because such methods were in actuality entangled in one another. Claims to a purely non-rational art, for example, rendered the rationalities involved in creating artistic fantasy invisible. In contrast, Musil’s essay signifies a more precise approach to life experience. This approach begins with a clear delineation of the limits to conventional forms of scientific knowledge. Knowledge, Musil argues, cannot be detached from prejudice, or what he calls “subjectivity.” Science nevertheless works from the epistemological assumption that it is possible to convey unbiased truths.

As Musil wrote this essay that began to question “epistemology,” or a search for true knowledge, he was also in the process of freeing himself from the Gestalt

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30 GWII 1334. German: “das Strengste des Erreichbaren auf einem Gebiet, wo man eben nicht genau arbeiten kann.”

31 Ibid. 1334.

laboratory to experiment in the “moral laboratory” of literature.<sup>32</sup> It is not surprising, then, that Musil articulates the limits of moral representation in bourgeois novels, or the discursive realms in which it is possible to experiment with life. He refers to his own novel, *The Confusions of Young Törless* (1905) to explain this issue. The protagonist, Törless, recollects his experiences in a military institute. He represents the circumscribed interiority, which Miyoshi associates with the bourgeois novel form. The narrator relates his story in the past tense, meaning that Törless’s moral development is over even before we begin reading. A stimulus for this development occurs within the boarding school when Törless befriends Beineberg, the son of an officer in India who claims to have privileged access to Orientalist knowledge and the esoteric teachings of Buddhism.<sup>33</sup> Beineberg demands that Törless follow his path to Nirvana by engaging in physical cruelty. Together they torture another classmate, the weakly constituted, Basini. This torture leads to rape, and then a homosexual relationship between Törless and Basini. The ambiguous rape-love relationship between Törless and Basini sets the stage for Törless’s development into a decadent figure who fails to overcome the so-called crisis in rationality by engaging in irrational sexuality.<sup>34</sup>

As a conventional form of closed narration, *The Confusions of Young Törless* does not include an indication of how to read the moral ambiguities Törless expresses. In “On the Essay,” Musil writes: “The question whether Törless is right or not right to

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid. 1351.

<sup>33</sup> *Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törless*, GWII 18-19.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 1351. Musil was revolutionary in suggesting this in 1905, when “sexuality” was gaining more attention as an alternative aesthetic to boring, dead rationality. See my Chapter 3.

torment Basini, or whether his indifference toward this question is furthermore a sign of right or wrong, is not answerable.”<sup>35</sup> As a result of this lack of an answer to the moral questions the character raises, the emotional-social context of isolated readers dominates the interpretation of meaning. For example, if herd consciousness favors defining a “self” through the subjection of abject “others” like Basini, then the reader might feel that Törless’s actions were “good.” On the other hand, if the herd favors civilized repression or the sublimation of sexual and aggressive instincts vis-à-vis Freud, then the reader might judge Törless’s actions as “evil” and the possible cause of his decadent adulthood. In either case, readers are lulled into a moral judgment that privileges dominant stereotypes of “good” and “evil” as they have no other interpretive guide to help them evaluate the surrounding circumstances, or grey areas, in which people actually exist. Musil concludes that essays can in fact weigh the depictions of “good” and “evil” and therefore might provide what I would call a counter-herd ethical method through which to answer questions about life.

In relation to the ethical potential of the essay, Musil considers the feeling involved in a process of reading that stimulates critical consciousness. When an individual reads poetry, for example, the fantasy that it stimulates disrupts thoughts concerned with mundane living, if only for a moment. The resulting knowledge of another experiential reality is “almost only discernible through feelings that quickly subside—something similar can be said of experiences that we undergo in unusual moments like those of love, of a rage out of the ordinary, a[nd] in any unfamiliar

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<sup>35</sup> GWII 1335. German: “Die Frage, ob Törless recht oder unrecht hat, Basini zu quälen, ob seine Indifferenz gegen diese Frage weiterhin Zeichen eines Rechts oder Unrechts ist, läßt sich gar nicht beantworten.”

relationship to humans and things.”<sup>36</sup> Musil points out that social consciousness (e.g. the compelling feeling of duty) favors emotions like shame or fear. There are, however, also feelings that overthrow these emotions, for example, when a person first meets a lover and experiences an explosion of affect in the pit of the stomach. During that moment, which also exists in the evocative reception of poetry, everyday concerns cease to dominate and individuals experience a kind of ecstasy, but not one based on rage or anger. But what is more significant to Musil is that such disruptions, or the sensing of a different reality hidden beneath the everyday one, while not lasting long, can light the path to more comprehensive realities. This idea constitutes Musil’s early formulation of a “contemplative attitude,” or a dialectically ecstatic and open-ended consciousness.

Musil argues that the essay is a form of discourse that takes its method or structure from science and its matter from art and emotive descriptions of the world; an essay lies “between both areas.” As such it is most able to integrate ethos into language (*Richtbild*) to guide readers in precise ways without dominating their interpretative faculties. He writes that his essay:

[S]eeks to create an order. It (*er*) presents no characters, but rather a relationship between thoughts, and therefore a logic, a[nd] like the natural sciences it takes as its starting point facts, which it places in relation to one another. Only these facts are not generally observable and their connection is in many cases only a singularity. It offers no total solutions, but only a series of particular ones. But it presents evidence and investigates.<sup>37</sup>

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36 Ibid. 1335. German: “fast nur gefühlshaft festhalten läßt u. sich rasch verliert—Etwas ähnliches läßt sich von den Erlebnissen sagen die wir in ungewöhnlichen Augenblicken wie denen der Liebe, eines nicht alltäglichen Zorns u. jeder ungewohnten Beziehung zu Menschen u. Dingen erleiden.”

37 Ibid. 1335. German: “sucht eine Ordnung zu schaffen. Er gibt keine Figuren, sondern eine

The definite article for “Essay” (*der*) suggests that a male agent “seeks” order. The remaining nouns in the quotation are either plurals or feminine. Together they signify Musil’s perhaps unconscious gender metaphor theorizing an ethical *Richtbild*. In my reading, while the essay is “male,” or scientific, “he” has a female “order” (*Ordnung*), or an organization that engages with the particularities of facts and emotions. By 1918, Musil had developed this approach to knowledge in his definition of the “ratioïd” (scientific law) and the “non-ratioïd” (ethos-feeling), which, according to David S. Luft, Musil then attempted to metaphorically integrate through Ulrich and Agathe.<sup>38</sup> Musil may have been beginning this gender experiment as early as this essay. Going further, Musil’s essay also reemphasizes the context of facts. As a result, his essay more carefully investigates the facts that scientists and moralists typically force into general laws for practical reasons. The essay mediating between science and art exposes contradictory ideas, even while recognizing that order is necessary to prevent intellectual inertia. This potential investigative order functions to stimulate critical thinking in passive readers who normally submit to the “total solutions” of writers. Musil, in contrast, offered readers partial solutions, or “pictures” (*Bilder*) of life that must be revised when they are no longer adequate guides.

To give his readers a historical precedent for his method, Musil refers to Maurice Maeterlinck’s “three good probabilities,” later to be embodied by Musil’s metaphorical “three sisters” (Ulrich, Agathe, and the other condition). These

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Gedankenverknüpfung also eine logische u. geht von Tatsachen aus, wie die Naturwissenschaft, die er in Beziehung setzt. Nur sind diese Tatsachen nicht allgemein beobachtbar und auch ihre Verknüpfung ist in vielen Fällen nur eine singuläre. Er gibt keine Totallösung, sondern nur eine Reihe von partikularen. Aber er sagt aus und untersucht.”

38 See *Eros and Inwardness*, 126-129 especially.

perspectives were the scientific, ethical-emotional, and aesthetic. In *Wisdom and Destiny* (1898), Maeterlinck explains that in his essay-book “it will be in vain to seek for any rigorous method. For indeed it is but composed of oft-interrupted thoughts that entwine themselves with more or less system around two or three subjects. Its object is not to convince; there is nothing it professes to prove.”<sup>39</sup> For Musil, an aesthetic form not dependent on herd assumption could explore scientific, emotive, and its own aesthetic concerns. Musil differentiates his essayism from Maeterlinck’s, however. He claims that his own emphasis on rapturous emotions such as love or hate is not to be confused with a Romantic view of intuition, to which Maeterlinck remained tethered to some extent.<sup>40</sup> Musil points out that “intuition” itself is a kind of thinking. Therefore, any opposition between ethos and science more correctly represents the most hardened versions of two cognitive processes that appear polarized in language. These different approaches to experience are not disengaged from one another. In addition, Musil does not focus on three different subjects; he instead values three different, but clear, perspectives on a single subject. He thought that this approach facilitated a more precise interpretation of life.

Musil’s conclusion that readers must “weigh” three basic perspectives again leads to the question of how a reader might respond to his argument. Musil describes the context in which the reader’s “rapturous feeling” frees her or his consciousness for a brief time before hardening into abstract views on experience. This is “an uninvestigated area” involving “what one has called the temperament, reactivity

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<sup>39</sup> Maurice Maeterlinck, *Wisdom and Destiny*, trans. Alfred Sutro (New York: 1898) 22.

<sup>40</sup> GWII 1336.

(*Reagibilität*), excitability (*Reizsamkeit*).”<sup>41</sup> Discourse propagated on all levels of society shapes an individual’s response to external or internal events. According to Musil, this shaping also occurs on a personal level, i.e. when a person has an extreme emotional experience or a dominating mood. In such cases, the experience is “stored in a sum of complexes interwoven with courses of thought (*Gedankengängen*). Melancholia is admittedly a so-called emotional illness (*Gemütskrankheit*), but it consolidates its rule with the help of related ideas which it colors.”<sup>42</sup> In both cases, the emotional state is “interwoven” into thought. Musil is asking the reader to investigate the emotions guiding their reception of ideas propagated either by discourses in the external world or by thoughts dominating within themselves. In addition, he may be specifically addressing a prewar audience privy to the debates concerning censorship and perverse art occurring at the time. In this context, it is probable that he could be suggesting it might be a more productive activity to question the opposition between “pathology” and moral “thinking.”<sup>43</sup>

Following this examination of the intellectual incorporation of affect or pathology into thought, Musil explicates language itself. Language is an abstraction, or not truly representative of the reality it signifies. However, the process of translating experience into ideas or words suggests a living quality that cannot be disengaged from the modalities of feeling supporting a specific discursive order.

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41 Ibid. 1336. German: “was man das Temperament genannt hat, die Reagibilität, Reizsamkeit”

42 Ibid. 1336. German: “aufbewahrt in einer Summe von Komplexen, durcheinandergewirkt mit Gedankengängen. Die Melancholie ist zwar eine sogen. Gemütskrankheit, aber sie festigt ihre Herrschaft mit Hilfe der durch sie gefärbten Gedankengängen.”

43 Musil wrote “The Obscene and Pathological in Art” in 1911 to explicate a much more disturbing vision of psychology—pathology entangled with morality. See GWII 977-982.

When an idea emerges it first appears as a sudden coming alive of language, which Musil describes as “lightening.” He refers to Saul becoming Paul as an analogy for this process.<sup>44</sup> Using Musil’s analogy, “Saul” succumbs to ecstatic feelings, which God as author stimulates, but then re-forms as a result of his baptism and becomes the apostle “Paul”—a symbol for his will-lessness, or complete submission to God.<sup>45</sup>

As I argued in the previous chapter, Musil contemplated the ways in which early Christian mystics translated their ecstasies into subject-object relations. Paul reconfirmed his subject in relation to others (not “God”) by becoming a proselytizer of this will-lessness. Musil relates the ecstasy-hardening process to essay reading:

In a smaller degree it is the continuous movement of essayistic thinking. Feelings, thoughts, complexes of will are part of this. These are not exceptional functions, but on the contrary normal ones. But the thread of a thought tears the others out of their position and their—if in itself only virtual—rearrangement conditions the understanding, the sound, the second dimension of a thought.<sup>46</sup>

An essay can test ideas that make readers experience an extreme shift in consciousness. By “second dimension,” Musil implies that this shift affects reading even after ideas solidify in language. If an author does not offer ideas that contradict resulting “rearrangements” of reality, the reader might apotheosize the “tears” that destroy their old truths. There is danger in such explosions of general truths because readers can

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44 Ibid. 1336.

45 See *The Bible*, Acts 22-23, for the switch after “baptism” from Saul to Paul. King James Version. May 22, 2007 <<http://www.biblegateway.com>>

46 Ibid. 1337. German: “In kleinerem Maße ist es die ständige Bewegung des essayistischen Denkens. Gefühle, Gedanken, Willenskomplexe sind daran beteiligt. Es sind keine Ausnahmefunktionen, sondern die normalen. Aber der Faden eines Gedankens reißt die andren aus ihrer Lage und ihre—wenn selbst nur virtuellen—Umlagerungen bedingen das Verständnis, das Klingen, die zweite Dimension des Gedankens.”

translate the exploded reality into a new permanent truth. To guide the reader away from ending the reading process at that point, Musil emphasizes the importance of the ensuing moments of insight into other dimensions connected to that insight. At the end of “On the Essay,” Musil identifies Maeterlinck, Emerson and Nietzsche as the masters of this educational essayism. All three thinkers “rearranged” moral ideas in different constellations within the structure of their philosophical prose to encourage a flexible consciousness and to break down the binary of author-reader by appealing to readers to actively participate in complex interpretations. The key for Musil was to provide an order that clarifies this ethical activity to avoid the danger evident in the reading of, for example, Nietzsche’s aphorisms. Along with such clarifications, Musil did not separate his perspectives from one another, but took the reader through nuances overlapping what they might assume are hard truths.

At the end of the essay, Musil presents a contradictory perspective to prevent the reification of his essayistic ethics—the essay form may also stimulate a non-critical ethos. His theory must then be considered in contrast to imprecise essays on intuition written by Walter Rathenau, writers in newspapers like Karl Kraus, and even philosophers like Maeterlinck who were overly Romantic in their mysticism.<sup>47</sup> For Musil, the essay was an ethical form *only* if it appealed to emotional motivations in an audience that stimulated critical thinking. These experiences could not be extricated from the reader’s situatedness within the political or social world. Acknowledging this context was fundamental to Musil’s de-colonizing essayism. However, we must keep in mind that he never published this essay fragment. He did succeed in

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid. 1337.

incorporating this “treatise,” or the ideas which it weighs, into other published works.

The same year in which Musil delineated his theory of the essay, World War I struck like “lightning.” Musil was caught up in the rapturous ecstasy of “finally something interesting.” Intoxicated by the spring of 1914, he went off to war. After the reality of war became evident, however, he became more cautious about apotheosizing expressions of “lightning,” while many artists and writers attempted to capture this destructive force and valorize a supposedly pre-logical, pre-civilized, mythical past. As Musil argued in “Toward a New Aesthetic” (1925), the next essay I will examine, such movements tended to be nihilistic. I would argue, however, that he shared with many politically-minded artists the goal of inspiring an audience of passive consumers to question psycho-cultural technologies of power.<sup>48</sup>

## **II. “Toward a New Aesthetic” (1925): Psycho-Technologies and the Other Condition**

During and after the war, the German and Austrian states adopted Taylorism, a management model that isolates “jobs” into basic components to make production more efficient. The new science of “psycho-technics” facilitated this process. In 1912, at the behest of insurance companies, Hugo Münsterberg first devised psycho-technics to test the skills of Boston streetcar drivers. Münsterberg pioneered the notion that there was a discoverable relationship between personality and job skills.<sup>49</sup> Psycho-technology on a basic level evaluates test subjects in order to determine the right

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<sup>48</sup> As I revealed in Chapter 4, Musil’s character General von Stumm suggested how easy it would be to manipulate the masses in 1914 through cultural technologies. Musil definitely saw this as a problem. “Toward a New Aesthetic” touches upon these issues.

<sup>49</sup> Ulfried Geuter, *The Professionalization of Psychology in Nazi Germany*, trans. Richard J. Holmes (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992) 87.

occupation for them. In Münsterberg's tests, workers were categorized according to their ability to think quickly, work well with others, and lead. Their emotional states were also evaluated. While working on the majority of his essays during the postwar economic depression, Musil found himself in need of a job. He was hired by the Austrian military for two years to assist in demobilization and the reorganization of labor according to the Taylorist model.<sup>50</sup> His psycho-technical job was to place "der rechte Mann am rechten Platz" ("the right man in the right place") by identifying qualities in each that were compatible with the new social order.<sup>51</sup> By the 1920s, psycho-technologies also facilitated advertising, propaganda, and cultural production. In "Toward a New Aesthetic" (1925), published in *Der Neue Merkur*, Musil "weighed" psycho-technologies his contemporaries applied to audiences in the 1920s—the test subjects for new modes of artistic expression and emotional appeals.

Musil's interest in cultural technologies increased once he met and befriended Béla Balázs, a film director, writer and critic who analyzed the mystical "other condition" supposedly perceivable within film. In the essay, Musil uses his review of Balázs's film book *Visible Man* (*Der Sichtbare Mensch*, 1924) as the basis for investigating how audiences might interpret the other condition. The possibilities and limits of film—even the character General Stumm von Bordwehr connected film to cultural propaganda—motivated Musil to define his own aesthetic other condition.

Before discussing Musil's first detailed investigation into and description of

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50 BI 278.

51 Doherty 442. This is Benjamin's phrase. Musil himself was forced to take job based on his "general" psychology skills. I was inspired to make this association by Doherty's analysis of the influence of psycho-technics on Brecht and Benjamin.

the other condition in this essay, it is important to identify theories prior to Balázs's that defined the psychology of the cinema spectator. Assenka Oksiloff has done extensive work in this area, mainly in relationship to anthropological paradigms determining the supposedly "primitive" qualities of early German cinema.<sup>52</sup> Oksiloff cites two early responses to the newly created film audience—bourgeois didactic films and Georg Lukács's "Thoughts on an Aesthetic for the Cinema" (1913). Oksiloff explains that the American-made *Uncle Josh* depicted an uneducated moviegoer from the country who lacked adult reasoning that would tell him the film was not real.<sup>53</sup> Uncle Josh reacts to images on the screen, becoming excited and running through the theater when he sees a train coming toward him. According to Oksiloff, the purpose of this film was to show the audience the value of repressing childish fantasy and behaving in "civilized" ways. In 1913, Lukács also proposed that the new medium had the potential to free spectators from rationality. In this aspect, his early theory of the cinema paralleled Uncle Josh, but affirmed counter-bourgeois visual stimulation. As Oksiloff notes, Lukács thought that "[a] model of the silent film viewer as existing in a pre-linguistic state of the 'childlike, exciting or grotesque' seems liberating, freeing from the strictures of dominant sign systems."<sup>54</sup> At this early point in his career, Lukács imagined a utopian quality in film that encouraged viewers to participate in a revolution in consciousness.

In both cases, Oksiloff argues that the assumptions involved in evaluating

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<sup>52</sup> Assenka Oksiloff, *Picturing the Primitive: Visual Culture, Ethnography, and Early German Cinema* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. 120.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. 127.

“uneducated” audience responses to film were consistent with the ethnocentric theories of the anthropologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, who wrote *How Natives Think*. *How Natives Think* (Das Denken der Naturvölker) was a study Musil called “brilliant” in “Toward a New Aesthetic.”<sup>55</sup> Oksiloff explains that Lévy-Bruhl “attempt[s] to maintain a strict boundary between a primitive state of mind and a rationally educated one. At the beginning of his study, Lévy-Bruhl notes that his work stems from a belief in the opposition between the primitive and the ‘Mediterranean’ civilization in which rationalistic philosophy and positivistic sciences have developed.”<sup>56</sup> Musil did not accept such rigid bifurcations within the psyche, especially when conflated with geographical stereotypes. What he considered “brilliant” in Lévy-Bruhl’s theory was the emphasis on non-linguistic discourse (e.g. totems, cave art, dress, gesture, etc.), or the visual forms of communication evoking a different kind of reality.<sup>57</sup> Balázs himself adopted this theory to claim that, rather than liberating the audience from rationality, film could critically educate viewers to see the realities which modernity relegated to the edges of consciousness. Musil valued his attempt to isolate such experiences and his proposal to recreate them through film technology. Oksiloff rightfully takes Balázs to task for his primitivism and argues Musil was complicit in his epistemic understanding of the primitive.<sup>58</sup> At the same time, she admits that Musil went beyond stereotypical thinking to investigate art in critical ways. The “primitive” other condition was only one problematic perspective Musil would weigh

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55 GWII 1141.

56 Oksiloff 121.

57 Ibid. 145.

58 Ibid. 157-8.

in the context of his review of Balázs.

First of all, Balázs thought it was the place of intellectuals to create a theory that could steer audiences through the new filmic waters of cultural experience. Musil begins “Toward a New Aesthetic” with a quotation from the beginning of *Visible Man* in which Balázs explains to the reader: “I know that theory[...]is a map for the explorers of art that shows all of the paths and possibilities, and it exposes whatever appears to be compelling necessity as one coincidental path among a hundred others. Theory is that which gives courage for voyages of Columbus and makes every step into an act of free will.”<sup>59</sup> Theory as a metaphorical map reminds artists and audiences alike of the context of artistic production. This production begins when a Columbus-artist lets go of the fear of the unknown and ventures into new seas of experience that seek “other” conditions and worlds. Like Nietzsche’s noble sailors, artists experimenting with aesthetics in revolutionary ways could use their “wills” either to liberate their audience or persuade them that their artistic vision represents truth.<sup>60</sup> Ideally, then, “art” requires a critical discourse that accompanies these explorations, reminding artists that the path reflected in their art was “coincidental” and not the end result of any god-like access to truth. Musil presents this statement as containing “excellent words of introduction” for his own examination of art as a map

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59 Béla Balázs, *Sichtbarer Mensch*, qtd. in GWII 1137. German: “Ich weiß, daß die Theorie[...]ist die Landkarte für den Wanderer der Kunst, die alle Wege und Möglichkeiten zeigt, und was zwingende Notwendigkeit zu sein schien, als einen zufälligen Weg unter hundert anderen entlarvt. Die Theorie ist es, die den Mut zu Kolumbusfahrten gibt und jeden Schritt zu einem Akt freier Wahl macht.”

60 For more on Nietzsche’s noble sailors, see Karsten Harries, “The Philosopher at Sea,” *Nietzsche’s New Seas: Explorations in Philosophy, Aesthetics, and Politics*, ed. Michael Allen Gillespie and Tracy B. Strong. (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988) 21-44.

to new possibilities. Musil claims that Balázs's book engages in ethical explorations, giving it "a meaning that reaches far beyond film."<sup>61</sup>

Balázs's book integrates his experience watching films with a systematic interpretation of those experiences.<sup>62</sup> Musil praises this essayistic bridging of life and analysis. He describes the films that Balázs analyzes as "herds" (*Rudeln*) passing through the cinema.<sup>63</sup> Balázs, a "hunter" (*Jäger*), thins out the "herds" to find films with meaty projections of reality that feed counter-herd thinking, or an ethical consciousness. This analogy, recalling Nietzsche's invocation of psychology as a "great hunt," reminds the essay reader that film normally reconfirms a detachment from total consciousness as it uses technology to create emotional situations to which viewers can passively submit in brief escapes from life.<sup>64</sup> Post-oedipal spectators (adults) consume these films religiously. From Musil's perspective, the cinema had replaced Christianity as a pseudo-church, becoming a shadowy version of Nietzsche's dead God. Unfortunately, Balázs limits his hunt to this shadowy realm. The purpose of Musil's essay is to add to this approach by investigating the ways in which film and literature overlap. His essay begins by implicitly acknowledging the contemporary bourgeois debate among writers, critics, and journalists concerning the artistic

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61 GWII 1138.

62 Oksiloff cites Sabine Hake who claims this makes his theory difficult to read, Oksiloff 136.

63 GWII 1138.

64 James P. Cadello, "Psychology as the 'Great Hunt'," *Nietzsche and Depth Psychology*, ed. Jacob Golomb, Weaver Santaniello, and Ronald Lehrer (Albany: State U of New York P, 1999) 23-36. See also Siegfried Krakauer; Thomas Y. Levin. "The Cult of Distraction: On Berlin's Picture Houses" *New German Critique* 40 Special Issue: Weimar Film Theory (Winter 1987): 91-96. This article was published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* a year after Musil's essay in 1926.

encroachment of film onto the territory of literature.<sup>65</sup>

In the 1920s, critics debated whether or not film was “art.” From the beginning of the essay, Musil makes the case that film *can* become a critical art form. Art, however, is not an aesthetic tied to European culture, but a form of abstraction inspiring new perspectives on life whatever the context of creation.<sup>66</sup> He points out that Balázs thinks art should be “autonomous.” Balázs was a Marxist, but valorized artistic autonomy as a mode of representation independent of the material world.<sup>67</sup> His emphasis on autonomy made his communism suspect to Marxists, such as his former friend, Georg Lukács.<sup>68</sup> Balázs’s screenplays did not help his situation. Only one of his films came close to representing a Marxist critique of capitalism—*Die Abenteuer eines Zehnmarkscheines* (1926).<sup>69</sup> The plot of this largely forgotten film follows a 10-mark bill as it travels all over a city through perpetual exchange. While the concept of artistic autonomy later became the topic of a heated Marxist debate between Lukács and Adorno, at this point, decades before that debate, “autonomy” for Balázs meant the potential of film technology to stimulate critical thinking, even without overcoming the capitalist mode of production or valorizing social realism.

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65 For more on the debate and the function of literature in the new film era, see Anton Kaes; David J. Levin, “The Debate about Cinema: Charting a Controversy (1909-1929)” *New German Critique* 40 Special Issue: Weimar Film Theory (Winter, 1987).

66 GWII 1138.

67 Oksiloff 136. Oksiloff identifies this as a contradictory element in Balázs’s work: his promotion of film as a Marxist critique of ideology and as an autonomous aesthetic. Decades later, Adorno would for the most part also argue for artistic autonomy in his debate with Lukács over art. See McBride “On the Utility of Art for Politics” 366.

68 Gertrud Koch; Miriam Hansen, “Bela Balázs: The Physiognomy of Things” *New German Critique* 40 Special Issue: Weimar Film Theory (Winter, 1987) 167.

69 Bruce Murray, *Film and the German Left in the Weimar Republic: From Caligari to Kuhle Wampe* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1990) 127.

Musil agreed with Balázs that a kind of “autonomous” method not limited by ideological goals might encourage audiences to reconsider their social realities and politics.<sup>70</sup> In an interview with a Soviet paper years later, however, Musil referred to artistic autonomy as merely “wünschenswert” (desirable) but not practical because market forces so pervasively determined the form and content of culture.<sup>71</sup>

In “Toward a New Aesthetic,” Musil locates the critical potential of art in the psychological experiences of “condensation and displacement” (*Verdichtung und Verschiebung*). “Condensation” refers to a form of perception through which “heterogenous images become condensed together under stimulation by the same affect into a conglomeration, to which the sum of the affect adheres to it to a certain extent.”<sup>72</sup> One example of these emotive masses stimulated by a single affect is the totem or “animal people” that appear as a singular entity. “Displacement” occurs when “a single image (part) appears as representative of a complex whole.”<sup>73</sup> Musil cites “the magical role of hair” as an example. In the first case, art that replicates condensation might inspire audiences to consider ambiguous gestalts of experience; in the second case, displacement might reconfirm reified versions of reality, which audiences adopt through socialization. Musil follows this psychology of art with a

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70 McBride makes a point of emphasizing the dialectical nature of art and politics of Musil’s aesthetics. In “On the Utility of Art for Politics,” she argues that he fits somewhere between Lukács, who argued that art should be part of a “political narrative,” and Theodor Adorno, who argued that “high art” could exist beyond capitalistic forces (366). In Musil’s work, politics and art “mutually support one another” (367).

71 BI 472. The newspaper was “Nowy Mir.” For the reproduced article, see BI 473-474.

72 GWII 1139. German: “heterogene, aber unter gleichem Affekt stehende Bilder zu Konglomeraten zusammengeballt werden, an denen gewissermaßen die Affektsumme haftet.”

73 Ibid. 1139. German: “ein einzelnes Bild (Teil) als Repräsentant eines Komplexes auftritt.”

definition of abstraction. Abstraction (*abstrahieren*) means “ignoring something or neglecting every other perspective on a thing except for one.”<sup>74</sup> Although Musil warns against privileging commonalities over experience, he points out that “abstraction in art” may be a “summary leading to a new context” (*Zusammenfassung zu einem neuen Zusammenhang*).<sup>75</sup> By “context” or “connection” (*Zusammenhang*), he means the complex production of experience. Film can offer a close-up view of experience, making it possible for an audience to reconsider their own context and establish a new relationship to their world. Musil also saw limits to film in that, “silent like a fish and with the paleness of the underworld, film swims in the pond of the only-visible.” Musil thought that Balázs overemphasized the realm of the “only-visible.”

Balázs argued that the technology of the camera captured the magic of condensation, or the repressed heterogeneity of consciousness. He called this the “physiognomy” of film. Musil excerpts Balázs’s definition of physiognomy to explain what he meant: “In the shared silence, objects become almost homogeneous with humans, and achieve through that commonality a kind of liveliness and meaning.”<sup>76</sup> For example, through a camera lens, a house with two windows and a door can appear as a menacing face—something like the house in “The Amityville Horror.” Gertrud Koch argues that in his understanding of “emotion, the dominance of facial expression, nature as *état d’âme*, as physiognomic landscape,” Balázs drew upon his work with the

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74 Ibid. 1139. German: “absehen von etwas oder auch alles andere Vernachlässigen bis auf eine Seite der Sache.”

75 Ibid. 1139.

76 Balázs, *Sichtbarer Mensch*, qtd. in GWII 1142. German: “In der gemeinsamen Stummheit werden sie mit dem Menschen fast homogen und gewinnen dadurch an Lebendigkeit und Bedeutung.”

Gestalt philosopher, Georg Simmel.<sup>77</sup> While Musil valued Gestalt theory, he resisted apotheosizing the “faces” of inanimate objects (*Gesicht der Dinge*) as a path to his psychology of feeling.<sup>78</sup> In fact, he satirizes the “face” of film by referring to it as a herd or as fish. He associates the visibility of physiognomy with the approach to knowledge privileging superficial, physical commonalities (*ratioïd*) over exceptions (*non-ratioïd*).<sup>79</sup> Still, Musil thought that physiognomic abstractions could be summaries leading to a “transformation of consciousness.”<sup>80</sup> This “transformation” can either negate or affirm life. For Musil, the reification of emotional depth betrayed the problematic “Romanticism” of film. Musil’s qualified understanding of physiognomy in the end is a summary leading into his next section, which has the important function of exposing the dangers involved in reifying transformative consciousness, or the other condition in itself.

Musil’s next section begins with the historical understanding of the seemingly opposed normal and other conditions. As Musil writes, this divisive situation “has unfortunately never been pursued or depicted without prejudice—whether by the quibblers of rationality, or the addicts of faith.”<sup>81</sup> Musil interrogates modern efforts to mystify “transformative consciousness” as a means of transcending the realities of the

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77 Koch 120.

78 GWII 1141.

79 For the connection between physiognomy and Nietzsche see Robert C. Solomon, “Nietzsche and the Emotions,” *Nietzsche’s Depth Psychology* 128. Solomon identifies Nietzsche’s understanding of emotions as surface impressions rather than the “Freudian subterranean images” of an emotional life that borders on the romantic.

80 GWII 1143.

81 Ibid. 1143. German: “ist leider noch niemals frei von Vorurteilen—sei es von vernünfteln, sei es von glaubenssüchtigen—verfolgt und dargestellt worden.”

earth, either through a Faustian scientific mastery over “nature” or through the religious mysticism he associates with a limited understanding of the other condition. Musil adapts Maeterlinck’s three probable perspectives here to define these two positions as well as a third signifying the signpost for a more comprehensive reality. First, he defines the normal feelings that produce the progressive consciousness of civilization, then artistic attempts to capture mystical ecstasies or moods, and finally the dialectical explication of both—his own contemplative aesthetic.

According to Musil’s essay, normal, goal-oriented thinking was part of the evolutionary struggle to survive. This attitude has come to dominate in humans who built their “civilization” out of ruthlessness, a desire to hunt, “lust for war,” or, as Nietzsche argued, the fear and hatred motivating definition of the herd, i.e. the will to resentment. Musil points out that we now consider object-oriented appetitive emotions to be “vices,” even though they dominate structures of power accepted by society, like imperialism, capitalist exploitation, or dogmatic moralities, and “what is more difficult to change—they also penetrate into the heart of the spiritual attitude of the people in our civilization.”<sup>82</sup> The word “penetrate” (*durchdringen*) connotes sexual encounter, but also suggests the colonial trope of entering territory. Musil is implicitly calling attention to imperializing forces within the modern nation-state that rely on an individual’s acceptance of moral truth or normative law to maintain order. Musil anticipates readers who might argue that this is the “evil” of rationality and must be disciplined. He suggests that attempts to free psychology from thinking and

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid. 1143. German: “was viel schwerer zu ändern ist—sie durchdringen auch die geistige Haltung des Menschen unserer Zivilisation bis ins letzte.”

instead embrace love or altruism only lead to an annihilation of spirit because such “virtues” merely function to mask continuing structures of violence. Implicitly, he is pointing out that spiritual “moods” can support a dehumanizing situation.

Musil then highlights popular definitions of spiritual moods with which the reader would be familiar, and his own third form of consciousness evident in those definitions. He defines the other condition as the experience “of contemplation, of the gaze, of closeness to God, of rapture, of will-lessness, of communion with one’s soul; the many different sides of the basic experience that recurs in religion, mysticism, and ethics of all historical people who are in agreement as to what it is, strangely enough, remains unchanged.”<sup>83</sup> Because the other condition remains on the edges of a psyche dominated by an appetitive attitude that obscures reality, contemporary Europeans do not understand that they are not challenging “rationality” by invoking either “rapture” or “will-lessness.” Musil proposes an alternative understanding of the other condition. The other condition is the experience leading to what becomes hardened dogmatic mysticism, or the perpetual negotiation of the “fissure” separating rapture from will-lessness.<sup>84</sup> Attitudes summarizing the other condition, while misleading, do light the path to these under-researched areas of knowledge. To get to this knowledge, Musil argues that it is important to isolate a specific aspect of the world and recreate the different forces involved in its creation.

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83 Ibid. 1144. German: “Kontemplation, des Schauens, der Annäherung an Gott, der Entrückung, der Willenlosigkeit, der Einkehr und vieler anderer Seiten eines Grunderlebnisses, das in Religion, Mystik und Ethik aller historischen Völker ebenso übereinstimmend wiederkehrt, wie es merkwürdig geblieben ist.”

84 See my Chapter 4 for more on this aspect of what Musil earlier called the “contemplative-Dionysian” in *The German as Symptom* (1923).

The essay next asserts that there are already accounts of such gestalts in mystical literature. Adapting physiognomy to his argumentation again, this time to test its pedagogical function as a *Richtbild*, Musil asks his readers to “imagine” the “symbolic face” of an inanimate ocean. In the process of imagining this image, another world emerges:

[L]ike a solid sea-floor, from which the restless tides of ordinary life have retreated, and in the image of this world, there is neither measure nor precision, neither purpose nor cause, good and evil simply fall away, without having to lift the self up to a higher position, and in place of all these relations enters a mysterious swelling and ebbing, a coming together of our being, as with things and other people.<sup>85</sup>

In this close-up picture of affect stimulating a heterogenous condensation of the world, Musil assigns the human quality of “restlessness” to waves. The personified tides reconfigure geological forces, normally categorized as separate from human culture, within a more entangled reality. They become appetitive emotions that have a goal and push forward unassailable until achieving satisfaction, and then pull back. These emotions mask a hidden world, the “solid” foundation of which individuals normally only sense is there. A condition of consciousness temporarily freed from appetitive domination perceives the enhancement and diminution of self and world prior to hardening into the poles of modern experience. In this in-between mood, “my” existence changes into “our” experience. The shift in pronoun suggests that the other condition is not without an author (“self”) who pulls the ocean back to reveal to

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85 Ibid. 1144. German: “wie ein fester Meeresboden, von dem die unruhigen Fluten der gewöhnlichen zurückgetreten sind, und im Bilde dieser Welt gibt es weder Maß noch Genauigkeit, weder Zweck noch Ursache, gut und böse fallen einfach weg, ohne daß man sich ihrer zu überheben brauchte, und an Stelle aller dieser Beziehungen tritt ein geheimnisvoll schwellendes und ebbendes Zusammenfließen unseres Wesen mit dem der Dinge und anderen Menschen.”

readers and himself (“our being”) a ground on which to stand together within the flowing movement of the contemplative attitude, symbolized by the water. Musil experiments with more than a description of a secretly animate world existing within abstraction; he is breaking down the distinction between author and audience. As such he is asking readers to create their own ethics without a superior-inferior hierarchy. These ethics require the critical faculty of reason to explore the ambiguous realities between “good and evil.” Musil valued educational *Richtbilder* such as this ocean analogy as they do not “explode the normal totality of experience” even though they “explode” binaries of good and evil, author and reader, self and other. In Musil’s view, readers must perpetually navigate between ecstatic feeling and critical thinking.

At this point in the essay, Musil finds it necessary to reiterate his reservations about reducing the other condition to a reified explosion of “totality.” I see this admonition as reflective of his concern that an aesthetic intended to liberate a so-called “primitive” soul connected to immediate experience transformed more often than not into an art attempting to disempower critical “reason” in the audience. Musil explains that this attempt:

[A]pparently distant from our topic, touches upon the dangerous field of the widely disseminated false doctrines of today; it is the experimental field of contemporary efforts in dance, on the stage, and through non-representational painting, sculpture, lyrics, to liberate (*befrein*) the human spirit from reason through intuitive thinking, education of the senses, religious renaissance and much of the same, in order to place the spirit again in an unmediated relationship with creation.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid. 1145. German: “scheinbar weit abliegend, berührt ein gefährliches Feld von heute allgemein verbreiteten Irrlehren; es ist das Versuchsfeld der zeitgenössischen Anstrengungen, im Tanz, auf der Bühne, durch Gegenstandsfreiheit der Darstellung in Malerei, Skulptur, Lyrik, durch intuitives Besinnen, Erziehung der Sinne, religiöse Renaissance und dergleichen mehr den Geist des Menschen vom Verstand zu befreien und wieder in ein unmittelbares Verhältnis zur Schöpfung einzusetzen.”

On this same page, Musil places the “other condition” in quotation marks for the first time. Quotation marks function to question the truth of or set aside a technical term. Musil was conscious of his own appeal to affirm “unmediated” experiences. He therefore qualifies his appeal by stating that the other condition “which, in its different forms as church, art, ethics, and the erotic, towers above our existence with immense power, but has become completely confused and corrupt.”<sup>87</sup> This confused state makes him wary of apotheosizing and thus corrupting the ethical potential of the work of philosophers he counts as foundational to his essayism and psychology of feeling, namely Emerson and Maeterlinck. We could add Nietzsche to this list. Musil is also concerned with confusing art with a more authentic expression of life. A positive message about recuperating a non-alienated connection to other humans and nature through art could become a dogmatic attack on critical faculties—an obvious danger in a post-World War I German democracy suffering from ideological paralysis. Musil invokes the problematic uses of displaced or abstract interpretations of the “other condition” to familiarize the reader with aesthetic practices that may seek to seduce them into intellectual passivity as well.

Musil follows his general warning about art movements that promote uncritical other conditions, by clarifying his definition of intellect. He argues that “not only our understanding, but also our senses (*Sinne*) are ‘intellectual.’”<sup>88</sup> The contemporary

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87 Ibid. 1145. German: “der, in seinen Abformen als Kirche, Kunst, Ethik, Erotik mit ungeheurer Mächtigkeit in unser Dasein hereinragt, aber völlig verworren und korrupt geworden ist.” See Jonsson, *The Subject as Nation* 45. Here I disagree with Jonsson, who argues that Musil in this essay promotes a “negation of the world” through the other condition. Jonsson does not consider Musil’s lengthy argument against such aesthetic attempts.

88 Ibid. 1146. German: “nicht nur unser Verstand, sondern auch schon unsere Sinne

assumption that “understanding,” or conceptual fixity, and emotion are separate spheres has led to the misunderstanding that thinking represses rather than expresses emotional experience. As Musil points out, efforts to overcome the false rationality-sensuality antithesis unintentionally facilitate a negation of life. For example, “purposeless movement” in dance, which Musil earlier related to the trance-rapture aspect of the other condition, denies consciousness by submitting to uncritical thinking. Disengaging from an analysis of reality functions to support rather than overcome alienation from experience. At this point, Musil reminds the reader that liberation is not something we should seek because it produces another form of unambiguous thinking that is susceptible to the propagandistic applications of psycho-technologies.

After Musil’s interrogation of contemporary aesthetics, against which he is attempting to arm the audience, he proposes a new “culture of the senses.” A new “culture of the senses” emerges within an audience if they have a guiding theory for art that explicates the entanglement of thoughts and feelings involved in their own consumption of culture. Musil returns to film. He writes:

When looking at the visibility of film (Balázs has exemplary cases of this), that visibility opens up the entire infinity and inexpressibility which everything in existence has—as if set under a glass by the fact that one only sees it; in making connections and relationships between impressions, in contrast, it is apparently more strongly chained than any other art to the cheapest rationality and typecasting.<sup>89</sup>

Here Musil qualifies the sensual liberation involved in film by arguing that the filmic

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‘intellektuell’ sind.”

89 Ibid. 1148. German: “In der Schau entfaltet der Film (mustergültige Beispiele dafür bei Balazs) die ganze Unendlichkeit und Unausdrückbarkeit, welche alles Daseiende hat—gleichsam unter Glas gesetzt dadurch, daß man es sieht; in der Verbindung und Verarbeitung der Eindrücke dagegen ist er scheinbar stärker als jede andere Kunst an die billigste Rationalität und Typik gekettet.”

emphasis on visible relations continues to perpetuate reductive interpretations of experience. He gives the example of “rolling the eyes” as a symbol for anger, or a “displacement” that artificially emphasizes an abstract appetitive emotion. There are, however, moments in film that evoke immediate or comprehensive psychological experiences (“condensation”). The only way to make film into a critical art form, then, is to experiment with the interaction of these two filmic modes of representation as one would do with literature—or, to experiment with literature as one would experiment with the animate-inanimate technologies of film.

Musil’s psychological testing of aesthetic questions shared by different art-forms leads him to conclude that the overlapping territories of film and literature, and other cultural texts, or the shared concern with the “process of reading” itself, could stimulate a new “culture of the senses.” At the end of his essay, Musil imagines that the process of performing ambiguous “readings” in art could be an expression of this culture. He explains:

At the pinnacle of comprehension, meaning, discernible sensuous gestalt, and emotional excitement all mix together; in the aftereffects of this mixing, the experience is in part conceptually assimilated and fixed, and in part leaves behind a vague, usually unconscious disposition, which in later life situations comes to life again, but also exercises an imperceptible but lasting influence.<sup>90</sup>

The lightning occurring in the moment we first comprehend a new reality becomes fossilized in predetermined discourses shaping our consciousness, but there remains an

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid. 1150. German: “[A]m Höhepunkt mischen sich erkannte Bedeutung, wahrgenommene sinnliche Gestalt und Gefühlserregung; in der Nachwirkung wird das Erlebnis teils begrifflich assimiliert und fixiert, teils hinterläßt es eine vage, gewöhnlich unbewußte Disposition, die in irgendeiner späteren Lebenssituation plötzlich wieder lebendig werden, aber auch einen unmerklichen Dauereinfluß ausüben kann.”

afterglow of the experience that shapes future interpretations. By highlighting this process, Musil emphasizes a kind of prose in which “an excitement” comes across to the reader just before she or he assigns meaning to the words. This was literally how he defined his contemplative attitude, or a “presentiment for thinking” (*ahnendes Denken*). Moreover, one possible form that may bridge the normally abstract readings of experience with “the realm of the imaginary” is the novel.<sup>91</sup> This was the aesthetic with which he would next experiment. Musil assumed that literature integrated with the essay form would expose the “border between two worlds” without disengaging from ordinary realities or valorizing visibility. I believe that by uniting different genres inspiring uncommon feelings in the audience, Musil hoped his resulting hybrid art might eventually stimulate contemplation in all social classes. Unfortunately, his novel was too wedded to bourgeois theory to reach “the masses” during his lifetime.

While Musil’s “new aesthetic” theoretically challenged colonizing technologies of culture, he ironically valorized the category of the “primitive.” For example, he associates his hybrid literary art with the art of “children and savages,” which supposedly expresses the totality of life.<sup>92</sup> He makes this association, however, because he believes that such art creates *Richtbilder* that guide audiences toward an understanding of their own contexts. In this way, Musil also goes against the grain by associating so-called primitive art with a critical form of reasoning, and one could argue, a critical form of empiricism. Therefore, while recognizing his stereotypical primitivism as Oksiloff does, I believe it is significant that Musil did not reduce his

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91 Ibid. 1154.

92 Ibid. 1151.

“other condition” to pathology or pre-cognitive spirituality as Lévy-Bruhl or Freud did; in fact his other condition was a catalyst stimulating flexible thinking in any human. In short, “Toward a New Aesthetic” investigates psycho-technologies of the “other condition” to weigh the potentialities of stimulating both the emotions that favor commonsense and the powers-that-be and the feelings producing a new “culture of the senses.” Musil ultimately warns audiences not to negate consciousness to conform to the psycho-technical “truths” broadcast to them. In his nuanced criticism of art in “the age of mechanical reproduction,” Musil was ahead of his time.<sup>93</sup>

In the 1930s, Walter Benjamin also experimented with psycho-technics, a science that had by this time become familiar to the job-seeking masses. He wanted his radio audience to change from passive test subjects to experts of their own habits and social psychologies. Benjamin invited listeners to take over the radio and disarm the mode of dissemination propagating the manipulative “suggestions” of the elite.<sup>94</sup> Brigid Doherty argues that his attempt to reappropriate psycho-technology from bourgeois or Nazi propagandists can be traced to Brecht’s concept of *Umfunktionierung*. *Umfunktionierung* means “altering” the normal function of an apparatus like radio, film, theater, or literature.<sup>95</sup> Doherty analyzes Brecht’s use of *Gestus* in the play *Mann=Mann* (1931) to alter the function of the theater and relates this effort to Benjamin’s use of psycho-technical testing to alter the function of the radio. *Gestus* means “the embeddedness of a particular gestic element of speech or

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<sup>93</sup> See Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 1968) 217-254.

<sup>94</sup> Doherty 447.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.* 447.

posture in a complex of social relations and processes.”<sup>96</sup> For example, the main character Galy Gay, a “packer” in colonial India, is tricked by companions into disassembling his identity in order to adopt the preexisting identity of the soldier Jeraiah Jip.<sup>97</sup> During his militaristic training, Galy Gay imitates the habits of soldiers, including standing at attention and calling out his new name repetitively. This emphasis on the body’s movement and speech appeals to the audience to analyze their own acquired behaviors and emotions within the context of colonization. By isolating gestic details learned in the process of conforming to occupational categories of identity, Brecht and Benjamin sought to inspire audiences to become critics of this dangerous function of aesthetics.

In 1925, Musil also began to test an aesthetic that would free the passive audience of “Oedipuses,” as Brecht called them, from mass hypnosis caused by cultural technologies.<sup>98</sup> Like Brecht, he thought this would be possible through the hybridization of different aesthetic forms. Brecht included projections with commentaries in *Mann=Mann* to “literarize the theater.” According to Doherty’s reading, his projections “compel the spectator to assess the various episodes in relation to one another by establishing not the continuity but the interruption of action and character, and with that the necessity of testing one scene against another, a mode of viewing Brecht likens to reading.”<sup>99</sup> Musil similarly included what I would call essayistic “interruptions” in *The Man without Qualities*. These “interruptions” united

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96 Ibid. 457.

97 Ibid. 456.

98 Ibid. 452.

99 Ibid. 453. Brecht recognized the effect of technology on novelists (see Doherty 473-474).

the precise world of the essay with the potential world of the imaginary in order to explicate the practical potential of the *Richtbild* to guide a critical art of reading life.

### III. Essayistic Literature: The Utopia of Contemplative Reading

In the 1930s, the period in which Musil was initially beginning to theorize an explicit “psychology of feeling,” Musil wrote in his notes that:

The chief effect of a novel ought to be directed at the emotions. Ideas are not to be included in a novel for their own sake. And, a particular difficulty, they cannot be developed in the novel the way a thinker would develop them; they are components of a gestalt. And if this book succeeds, it will be a gestalt...The wealth of ideas is a part of the wealth of emotions.<sup>100</sup>

Even though Musil’s comment came years after he wrote Chapters 61 and 62 on the utopia of essayism in Part II of the first Volume of *The Man without Qualities*, I believe it is important to return to these chapters to see how Musil was first theorizing the basic notion of the *Richtbild*. Musil’s utopian *Richtbild*, I would argue, is Ulrich’s initial questioning of his own “masculine” scientific attitude, making it possible to begin the process of becoming a conscious reader of emotion and the fiction of his own epistemological truth. After these chapters, Ulrich begins the “research” that will eventually become his psychology of emotion—a psychology Musil had already begun to explicitly contemplate in “Toward a New Aesthetic.”<sup>101</sup> Agathe, the *future* reader of Ulrich’s psychology excluded from this argument because she is not yet with Ulrich, represents the potential future audience who might critically receive this precise art of living. I investigate how these chapters integrating characterization and

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<sup>100</sup> GWI 1942. Translation from *The Man without Qualities*, trans. Burton Pike, vol. 2 (New York: Vintage, 1996) 1767.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. 1141.

essay “interruptions” advocated the utopian process of contemplative reading as the first step in altering the function of orthodox psychology in practice.

The title of chapter 61, “Das Ideal der drei Abhandlungen oder die Utopie des exakten Lebens” (“The ideal of three treatises or the utopia of the exact life”), works out a sense of what Musil means by his reading utopia. The narrator of this chapter imagines this utopia as “coming from three treatises,” and “three poems or actions.”<sup>102</sup> A treatise contains methodical argumentation and conclusions, a poem evokes contemplative feeling, and an action signifies practical change. In this gestalt of theory and practice lies the potential to develop an ethics communicable to others. The “three treatises” suggest Nietzsche’s *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887) and Maeterlinck’s three perspectives. Musil thus relates his vision of utopia to the dissemination of *Richtbilder* he had tested throughout his life in his essays, including “On the Essay” (1914) and “Toward a New Aesthetic” (1925).

Chapter 61 begins with the killer of women, Moosbrugger, and an explanation of his complex “mental condition.” Ulrich interprets Moosbrugger’s condition to be a “disheartening mixture of cruelty and suffering.”<sup>103</sup> He is not good or evil, but has allowed his pain to dominate his mind; he represents the extreme expression of an emotionally ambiguous modern psychology dominated by resentment. Musil gives the audience direction in their interpretation of Moosbrugger partly in order to prevent

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102 Ibid. 245.

103 Ibid. 244. German: “entmüdigende Mischung von Grausamkeit und Erleiden.” In his notes on this issue in the novel, Musil thought that the question of free will, which the law used to determine guilt, was ridiculous. Musil instead understood that executing mass murderers like Georg Haarmann was more about satisfying a need to find someone to blame for crises—a “witch hunt” (*Hexenprozess*). He suggests this is the reality we should be questioning. See GWI 1818.

them from seeing in Moosbrugger a sensationalized news story about a murderer.<sup>104</sup>

Audiences in the 1920s and 1930s consumed these stories without a complex understanding of the context producing the material suffering that motivated acts of violence.<sup>105</sup> In Moosbrugger's case, his violence is shaped by a social context that is not supportive of his basic needs. The narrator highlights the failure of the law to know what to do with people, who, in their exaggerated material-psychological states, expose the paradoxes that society expels to maintain the façade of progress and order.

Ulrich admits that because of his ambiguous mental state, Moosbrugger does not really belong in either a prison or in a hospital, but also should not be allowed to run loose in society. The only clean way to resolve this issue appears to be to kill him. Musil anticipates readers who might rightfully find this argument morally disturbing when Ulrich implies that they participate in these destructive rationalizations: "It might be callous behavior to resign oneself to this, but speeding vehicles claim more victims than all the tigers of India, and still, the ruthless, unscrupulous and careless state of mind with which we bear this fact is what also enables us on the other hand to achieve our undeniable successes."<sup>106</sup> The appetitive condition characteristic of scientific progress and civilization makes people blind to the total picture; they disconnect from reality as a whole. Through an extreme answer to the problem of a Moosbrugger, Musil appeals to his readers to reconnect to their reality, which ratioïd

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<sup>104</sup> Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1996).

<sup>105</sup> See Chapter 3 of this dissertation for a deeper explication of this problem.

<sup>106</sup> GWI 245. German: "Es mag ein rohes Verhalten sein, sich damit abzufinden, aber auch die schnellen Verkehrsmittel fordern mehr Opfer als alle Tiger Indiens, und offenbar befähigt uns die rücksichtslose, gewissenlose und fahrlässige Gesinnung, in der wir das ertragen, auf der anderen Seite zu den Erfolgen, die uns nicht abzusprechen sind."

epistemologies expunge from consciousness or displace onto distant geographical territories, such as India. He makes it clear that any blindness regarding the comprehensive reality creating the so-called civilized world has horrifying consequences.

The essay-chapter next articulates the potential examination of reality vis-à-vis three treatises. When we read the chapter as a whole, Musil appears to be presenting three ways to “read” the historical world: through the appetitive delusions of scientific progress, through a passive submission to a historical mood, and through a precise ethics or other condition that bridges those perspectives. The narrator first calls attention to the scientific understanding of progress by summarizing the teleology that spans “wearing animal fur to humans flying” (*Fellkleidung zum Menschenflug*).<sup>107</sup> From this teleology, Musil’s contemporary and even posthumous readers might infer that pre-civilized people are dominated by violence, hunger and nature, as signified by the “animal fur” worn externally. In comparison, flight represents progress or culture because through flying machines humans are no longer bound to the earth, or, metaphorically, their baser natures. Either assumption elides the fact that cultures producing flying machines merely relinquish consciousness of the gravity of technological destruction, like the aforementioned traffic fatalities, and do not escape their appetitive natures. Musil explains that what we know about progress would only fill a “reference library” because it is an abridged version, whereas events “conducted not with the feather, but with the sword and chains” would fill the world. In other words, the complex reality of war and slavery concomitant with empire building are

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107 Ibid. 245.

normally edited out of the book of progress. The entire world does not contain enough space on which to write down the details of this reality. As Nietzsche argued, details only mask the problem, which is that producers of knowledge always seem to want to force “strange” experiences into “familiar” categories.<sup>108</sup> Musil relates these methods to the mood of a historical period. Within the current mood, individuals accept as truth the belief that “civilization” means moral progress.

Musil offers an example of how this moral interpretation of civilization is faulty. He writes: “that the large amount of soap sales testifies to a great cleanliness need not count for morality, where the recent belief is more correct, that a pronounced compulsion to wash points to ambiguously clean inner conditions.”<sup>109</sup> In response to the assumption that the moral repression of civilization causes the over-consumption of “soap,” Musil implies that people use soap excessively because they *feel* morally impure. Perhaps this is because newspapers and other technologies of discourse production bombard them with moral values until they feel like cleansing themselves, expunging their abject qualities ad nauseum. In relation to Musil’s argument, individuals living in places dominated by industrial capitalism buy soap because advertisers have made it into a commodity that appears to be a moral purifier. An advertising campaign conceived of through psycho-technics, and not a repressive inner condition, “testifies” to the popularity of soap. Musil proposes an alternative moral discourse disconnected from commodity fetishism, or being moral only when it counts

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108 GWII 1150. See also Nietzsche, FW V:355, p. 593-594.

109 GWI 246. German: “daß der große Umsatz an Seife von großer Reinlichkeit zeugt, braucht nicht für die Moral zu gelten, wo der neuere Satz richtiger ist, daß ein ausgeprägter Waschwang auf nicht ganz saubere innere Verhältnisse hindeutet.” For more on the symbolic nature of “soap,” see McClintock, “Soft-Soaping Empire,” *Imperial Leather* 207-231.

most—when deciding upon an action within a specific context. In our analogy this means washing our hands when they are coated with dangerous materials that may cause harm to ourselves and others, not when we want to prove we have a clean soul. Musil concludes that if we approach morality in this way “from every ton of morality, a milligram of essence would remain, a millionth of which gives way to an enchanting happiness.”<sup>110</sup> This point conveys the importance of producing more critical pictures of life that will combat the colonizing will to resentment and free enslaved consumers of moral advertising to imagine more joyful experiences.

As in an essay appealing to ethos, Musil anticipates assumptions in readers regarding the ethical lab experiment connected to a precise reading of the social-historical context. His claim appears to be just another example of utopian thinking, or an attempt to improve modernity. Musil acknowledges: “Certainly it is.” His intention with this utopian thinking, however, is to seek a “precise” analysis of life rather than a way to overcome paradox:

Utopia is the experiment in which the possible transformation of an element is observed together with the effects of such a transformation on a composite phenomenon (*Erscheinung*) we call life. If, then, the observed element is precision (*Exaktheit*) itself, one draws it out and allows it to develop, considering it as intellectual habit and a life path allowing its exemplary force to take effect on everything. The result of this is a human in whom a paradoxical interaction between precision and vagueness takes place.<sup>111</sup>

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110 Ibid. 246. German: “Mit einem Wort, es würde von jedern Zentner Moral ein Milligramm einer Essenz übrigbleiben, die noch in einem Millionstelgramm zauberhaft beglückend ist.”

111 Ibid. 246. German: “Utopie bedeutet das Experiment, worin die mögliche Veränderung eines Elements und die Wirkungen beobachtet werden, die sie in jener zusammengesetzten Erscheinung hervorrufen würde, die wir Leben nennen. Ist nun das beobachtete Element die Exaktheit selbst, hebt man es heraus und läßt es sich entwickeln, betrachtet man es als Denkgewohnheit und Lebenshaltung und läßt es seine beispielgebende Kraft auf alles auswirken, was mit ihm in Berührung kommt, so wird man zu einem Menschen geführt, in dem eine paradoxe Verbindung von Genauigkeit und Unbestimmtheit stattfindet.”

In this description of “utopia,” Musil advocates analyzing the context leading to particular forms of transformative consciousness. In other words, he describes a utopian thesis for life that analyzes the moods or appetites interwoven with the shaping discourses forming consciousness. A disastrous chemical reaction occurs when either emotion submits to the other or becomes ecstatic. To manufacture an ethical chemical reaction means testing “precision” as a guiding concept related to particular contexts of experience. In a “precise” attitude, placed under the microscope as it were, paradox is just another fact to affirm and contextualize as part of a larger gestalt, e.g. when a person smokes but then eats vegetarian food for her or his health. This is a counter-epistemological utopia, emphasizing experimentation with the production of consciousness rather than with an ideal endpoint somewhere on the ever-receding horizon.

Musil ends this first essay-chapter with a contradictory understanding of utopian precision, which the reader must also consider. Another name for an ideal state of precision is “the ratioïd.” Scientists, businessmen, administrators all seek ratioïd knowledge that is free of bias and intended for practical use. These men of precision, however, “loathe nothing so much as the idea of thoroughly understanding oneself.”<sup>112</sup> In other words, they are not precise about their knowledge of how precision itself works because such knowledge would expose the prejudicial forces (internal and external) motivating their own objective searches for order and truth. Musil returns to Ulrich as a symbolic “face of things.” He is a mathematician and a

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid. 247. German: “verabscheut nichts so sehr wie die Idee, sich selbst gründlich zu nehmen.”

“man” meaning he is a metaphor for the ratioïd. Through him, Musil offers bourgeois readers a picture of what it requires for them as well to break free from their own non-reflective attitude and contemplate different forms of precision. In fact, Ulrich directly questions whether or not the ratioïd should rule over consciousness. He “has been quite alone” in raising these questions thus far, as few of his contemporaries want to thoroughly investigate the total picture of their own psychology and social context. Ulrich, then, symbolizes a counter-epistemology attempting a precise reading of life by de-mystifying the function of precision in practice. The function of Ulrich suggests that Musil chose to write this novel to directly challenge the bourgeois class creating epistemologies that participate in the solidification of interiority. *His* novel then becomes an unmediated challenge to the colonizing tool (discourse) that facilitates creation of the herd, as Musil argued in “Toward a New Aesthetic.”<sup>113</sup>

Musil emphasizes Ulrich’s lone position among the bourgeois elite in questioning his use of precision in the title of Chapter 62: “Even the earth, but particularly Ulrich, pays homage to the utopia of essayism.” Whereas the previous chapter focused on stimulating utopian precision in readings of the social-historical context, this chapter weighs the different practices disseminating precision. In this chapter, the narrator-essayist makes it clear from the beginning that there are two kinds of precision informing practice in modern society—there is an “imaginary precision (which does not yet exist in reality), but also a pedantic precision.”<sup>114</sup> The

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113 GWII 1152.

114 GWI 247. German: “phantastische Genauigkeit (die es in Wirklichkeit noch gar nicht gibt), sondern auch eine pedantische.”

“imaginary” relates to contemplation, or a “presentiment for thinking.” This *presentiment* anticipates the possibility of exceptional facts that contradict laws. The “pedantic” privileges facts that support preconceived frameworks of knowledge. Both forms expose the problematic applications of theory in practice.

Musil returns in Chapter 62 to the reaction of the justice system to “a Moosbrugger” to describe how the pedantic functions in the context of modern power structures. The court ignores Moosbrugger’s history when determining his guilt through the Empire’s “two-thousand-year-old judicial concepts” (*zweitausendjährigen Rechtsbegriffen*). When the court cannot determine Moosbrugger’s guilt because he has an exceptional mental condition, they transfer him to another pedantic arena—the clinic. Because the psychiatrists have preconceived truths about mental disease and health into which Moosbrugger does not neatly fit, they condemn him as the exception that supports their rule. They conclude that he cannot be helped and then transfer his case back to the “jurists,” who will not seek to determine the health of his mind. They have the simple goal of determining his guilt and punishment based on the act itself. There is no question that he murdered women, therefore he will be found guilty and sentenced to death. At each point in this expunging of Moosbrugger from spheres in which social discourse is produced and practiced, those judging him avoid facts that do not support their existing knowledge. Moosbrugger’s execution, then, is the result of a social system that condemns forms of knowledge that do not conform to the epistemological truths upon which the power of the pedantic elite depends.

Epistemologies tied to outdated conceptions of life have a relationship to the Hegelian notion of historical progress—the action-reaction dialectic leading to

*Aufhebung*, or synthesis and overcoming. Musil suggests that Enlightenment rationality and science came to represent “precision” in itself. The general reaction against this displaced “precision” prevented other ways to conceive of precision. He concludes: “So with the first fantasies of precision the attempt in no way followed to realize them.”<sup>115</sup> In other words, the reaction against “positivism” and science occurring at the time of the novel’s setting (1913-1914) hindered other forms of scientific practice. Ulrich contemplates how the metaphysical efforts of writers, artists, and “women,” perhaps one of them Ellen Key, attempted to create practices that would overcome the rationality-irrationality binary to attain a higher state of spirit. In fact, “they demanded a new belief in humanity, return to inner primal values, spiritual uplifting and all sorts of things of that nature.”<sup>116</sup> As I have shown, their stereotypes of “primal values” only reified life further, making a life-affirming practice unrealizable. Instead of raising the soul, Musil’s contemporaries created the “the unfocused type of human, who rules the present.” This reflection mirrors the warning in *The Confusions of Young Törless* and “Toward a New Aesthetic” that positive efforts to liberate the soul could end in the metaphorical and real annihilation of life. In the setting of the novel, the “end” is World War I. In Musil’s time, the “end” was the total destruction of German democratic experiments. Musil is appealing to a readership embracing the “primal” ideologies of the period, to consider the consequences of this passive submission to false truths.

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115 Ibid. 249. German: “So folgte auch auf die ersten Phantasien der Exaktheit keineswegs der Versuch, sie zu verwirklichen.”

116 Ibid. 249. German: “sie verlangten einen neuen Menschheitsglauben, Rückkehr zu den inneren Urtümern, geistigen Aufschwung und allerlei von solcher Art.”

In contrast to dominating social moods that end in destructive actions or attempts to overcome a falsely perceived dialectic separating rationality from spirit, Ulrich employs a more “precise” dialectical consciousness guiding a way to live. Early in his life Ulrich came up with a “thesis” for “living hypothetically.”<sup>117</sup> By this he meant, at least initially, the ability to live in a state of perpetual self-questioning. He defines this hypothetical order through contemplation (*ahnendes Denken*). Ulrich “surmises (*ahnt*) that this order is not as fixed as it would portray itself to be. No thing, no ego, no form, no principle is safe; everything is engaged in an invisible but never-ending transformation. In the unstable there is more of the future than in the stable, and the present is nothing but a hypothesis out of which one has not emerged.”<sup>118</sup> Unlike the hero in a bourgeois novel who seeks colonial mastery over interiority (the conscious-unconscious-*Aufhebung* model), the narrator characterizes Ulrich as adopting a hypothesis that is never realizable. Ulrich’s hypothesis does however emit a passionate heat (*Glut*) “whose light makes the earth look different.”<sup>119</sup> But this is also an inadequate solution. Insight occurs through the emotional “lightening” implied by the word *Glut*, which Musil imagined in “On the Essay” as tearing apart old truths and rearranging them in a new way. Ulrich’s hypothesis valorizes the “tearing,” leading to his ambivalence or preoccupation with its vague afterglow. Such glows distract from future truths or *Richtbilder*. After considering the limits to his

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117 Ibid. 249.

118 Ibid. 250. German: “Er ahnt: diese Ordnung ist nicht so fest, wie sie sich gibt; kein Ding, kein Ich, keine Form, kein Grundsatz sind sicher, alles ist in einer unsichtbaren, aber niemals ruhenden Wandlung begriffen, im Unfesten liegt mehr von der Zukunft als im Festen, und die Gegenwart ist nichts als eine Hypothese, über die man noch nicht hinausgekommen ist.”

119 Ibid. 250. German: “deren Leuchten die Erde anders aussehen macht.“

mood and “hypothesis,” Ulrich re-conceptualizes his guiding principle. He devises an ethics that will not be completely antithetical to a hypothesis, and thus will not attempt to overcome the contradictions embodied by his character. He imagines how to realize a practice based on his complex understanding of precision. His new *Richtbild* becomes the “essay.” An essay begins with a hypothesis but incorporates an order to facilitate critical consciousness and critical dissemination to others.

Continuing to mine his “On the Essay” for an ethical guide, Musil explicitly iterates that the “essay” is an “experiment” that “weighs” perspectives or truths. According to Ulrich, “[t]he value of an action or a quality, and even its disposition and nature, seemed to him to be dependent upon the surrounding circumstances, upon the goals which they serve; in a word, upon the whole to which they belong, conditioned now one way, and now another.”<sup>120</sup> This is precisely the feature of a *Richtbild* that summarizes experience and stimulates comprehension of new contexts and *gestalts* of the world. The narrator tells us that the essay provides perspectives, “which at more opportune times are elevated to truth...an essay is the unique and unalterable shape which the inner life of a human assumes in a decisive thought.”<sup>121</sup> This essayistic experience emerges symbolically within consciousness. By referring to condensation symbolism, Musil returns to the pedagogical function of physiognomy. As if presenting a non-superficial physiognomic close-up here, Musil describes thought

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120 Ibid. 250. German: “Der Wert einer Handlung oder einer Eigenschaft, ja sogar deren Wesen und Natur erschienen ihm abhängig von den Umständen, die sie umgaben, von den Zielen, denen sie dienten, mit einem Wort, von dem bald so, bald anders beschaffenen Ganzen, dem sie angehörten.”

121 Ibid. 253. German: “die bei besserer Gelegenheit zur Wahrheit erhoben...ein Essay ist die einmalige und unabänderliche Gestalt, die das innere Leben eines Menschen in einem entscheidenden Gedanken annimmt.”

processes that take form for a moment in a complex picture of life. In that transitory moment, a “milligram of morality” is sufficient to determine behavior. The essay is also not a unifying theory, but rather a metaphor for individuals who approach consciousness with precise inner argumentation that remains open to future deviations.

Chapters 61 and 62 together reflect a meta-discursive investigation of the essay as a metaphor for the application of imaginary precision (*phantastische Genauigkeit*) to ethical practices. Ulrich proposes that “a conscious human essayism roughly would have the important task of transforming this careless condition of world consciousness into a will.”<sup>122</sup> Appealing to contemporary and future readers who might be the “unfocused type of human,” Musil argues that the essay’s structure and content translated into consciousness would give them the power or “will” to de-colonize their inner worlds without forfeiting comprehensive thinking. This “will” could direct a life-affirming political change. Musil associates this practical will with a future female doctor who, he imagines, can temporarily overcome social shaping forces like gender stereotypes to carefully analyze the “shit” (*Kot*) of reality.<sup>123</sup> The female doctor tempers appetitive emotions like disgust or fear. In the asylum, Clarisse tried to become this doctor superficially and thus unsuccessfully—but she had the will. Musil hoped that others would unite such wills with his version of precision. In the context of the historical novel, however, this does not appear to be possible anytime soon. For example, according to the narrator-essayist, psychiatry currently condemns

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122 Ibid. 251. German: “ein bewußter menschlicher Essayismus ungefähr die Aufgabe vorfände, diesen fahrlässigen Bewußtseinszustand der Welt in einen Willen zu verwandeln.”

123 Ibid. 251. This doctor in fact places “feces” under the microscope.

the feminized other condition as a disease.<sup>124</sup> This epistemic reduction of the other condition to pathology encouraged the widespread and unfocused expunging of experiences that could have changed the “face” of the world. Musil saw the other condition as an experience that lights the way to an alternative modernity even if the social conditions nurturing the ideal “she” had not yet come to pass.<sup>125</sup>

After considering an affirmative scientific approach to the other condition, Ulrich contemplates how this approach might work in the context of morality. He gives the example “thou shalt not kill”—an example lifted from Musil’s essay defining the ratioïd and non-ratioïd in “Sketch of What the Writer Knows” (1918). In practice, “we in many ways strictly hold to [moral commandments], on the other hand there are certain and numerous, yet precisely predetermined, exceptions allowed.”<sup>126</sup> For example, we kill in war, when someone commits murder, because we need to eat, and so on. Musil implies that individuals are not actually motivated by moral commandments; they follow their appetitive feelings emerging from paradoxical affects like “abhorrence” and “temptation” (*Abscheu und Verlockung*). These emotions, also integral to abjection, support two unsatisfactory responses to contradiction: either “nailed shut obedience” (*vernageltem Gehorchen*) or “thoughtlessly splashing about in waves full of possibilities.”<sup>127</sup> These two choices expose the belief that we restrain emotion through “moral law” as a fiction itself. One

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124 Ibid. 252.

125 By 1933, Musil did think of his wife Martha, as the “second author” of *The Man without Qualities* was close to this ideal.

126 GWI 254. German: “wir uns in mancher Hinsicht streng an ihn halten, in anderer Hinsicht sind gewisse und sehr zahlreiche, jedoch genau begrenzte Ausnahmen zulassen.”

127 Ibid. 254-255. German: “gedankenlosem Plätschen in einer Woge voll Möglichkeiten.”

reaction to the paradox of moral control is to obey laws rigidly without comprehensive consciousness of exceptions; the other is to reject laws outright and exist without any purpose or without compassion. Both reactions can actually work together to prevent consciousness. A psychology of essayism instead mediates these too extreme poles. At this point in the narrative, Ulrich is still dominated by a purposeless mood that passively submits to his wooden masculine psyche. As Musil tells us, he waits for new lightening to strike that will expose the other world to him again.

In the last paragraph of this chapter, Musil emphasizes Ulrich's inertia preventing the expression of the psychology of feeling, which I argued in Chapter 4 comes about only after Ulrich learns to temper his symbolic male psyche by conversing with Agathe. Returning to physiognomy, Musil relates this psyche to Ulrich's house. If "in the night, we look through the lighted windows into the room, we see that the thoughts, after they have been used, sit around like clients in the waiting room of a lawyer, with whom they are not satisfied."<sup>128</sup> Ulrich goes outside his wooden structure filled with resentful thoughts momentarily to experience the expansive other condition symbolized by the garden and trees, because "he wanted to feel the cold in his hair." Hair symbolizes the abstract magical condition, which Balázs valued. Ulrich cannot quite get beyond this physiognomic abstraction, however, as "the darkness rising up between the treetops suddenly reminded him of the giant gestalt of Moosbrugger, and the naked trees appeared to him to be strangely

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128 Ibid. 257. German: "in der Nacht die erhellten Fensterscheiben ins Zimmer schauen, und die Gedanken, nachdem sie gebraucht sind, herumsitzen wie die Klienten im Vorzimmer eines Anwalts, mit dem sie nicht zufrieden sind."

corporeal.”<sup>129</sup> Ulrich returns to negative interpretations of emotional ambiguity; the dark unknown embodies the physical features of the prostitute killer consumed by an insatiable appetite for the equally abject female body. Musil ends the chapter as he does his essays, with a warning about passively imitating the protagonist in a novel instead of questioning his morality. Ulrich is not a figure to emulate as he continues to accept dominating truths. He has nevertheless begun the process of ethical transformation in the act of attempting to leave his wooden psyche through contemplation of what lies beyond the “used up thoughts” that populate the territory of his house. This is the only realizable utopian practice—to perpetually fight against the emotional appeals of the ratioïd without rejecting “emotion” altogether.

Toward the end of the first Book of the novel, just before Ulrich meets Agathe, Musil includes a chapter that literally connects reading to practice in Chapter 114, “Ulrich fantasizes about the possibility of living as one reads.” At this point in the novel, Ulrich begins his pre-Agathe experiments with a communicative essayism. In other words, Ulrich appeals to other characters (women) to begin the process of creating a different human society even though ideal conditions do not exist. The way to begin is by “living as one reads.” With this renewed emphasis on the dissemination of a critical way to read life, Musil returns to the essay’s function of “weighing” perspectives. He has Ulrich employ Gestalt technique with Diotima, a woman who might be the female critical thinker who will help guide the world toward a new understanding of the unpleasant realities of life. Unfortunately, she applies her

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129 Ibid. 257. German: “erinnerte ihn die zwischen den Baumkronen emporragende Dunkelheit plötzlich phantastisch an die riesige Gestalt Moosbruggers, und die nackten Bäume kamen ihm merkwürdig körperlich vor.”

idealism, which is the product of her prolific reading, toward a repressive science of sexuality instead. At this point, however, she remains open to ethics and thus represents a hypothetical “Agathe.”

As he later does with Agathe, Ulrich asks Diotima to consider the importance of questioning words themselves, because they are tied to herd mentalities. If a reader precisely considers the context producing a *word* as a *gestalt*, or condensation of reality, that word can light a path to de-reified living. He gives the example of the word “diamond.” The “diamond” signifies any stone created out of carbon:

But one stone is from Africa and the other from Asia. An African (*Neger*) digs the one out of the earth, an Asian the other. Perhaps this difference is so important that it can invalidate what is common in both? In the equation ‘diamond plus circumstances equals diamond’ the intrinsic value of the diamond is so huge that the value of the circumstances disappears next to it.<sup>130</sup>

Aside from the fact that Musil’s text refers directly to the commodity fetishism of the diamond and implicitly recognizes the appetitive exploitation of diamond mining, this quotation questions the formulaic thinking tied to imperialistic endeavors overall. In proposing a mathematical equation and then suggesting what it occludes, Musil presents his audience with a way to define the world and still contemplate deeper connections between objects and their origins. More specifically, he suggests that Diotima look at the “circumstances” producing experience to discover what hides within the reduction of life. It is important, according to Ulrich, not to get lost in

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<sup>130</sup> GWI 572. German: “Aber der eine Stein ist aus Afrika und der andere aus Asien. Den einen gräbt ein Neger aus der Erde, den anderen ein Asiate. Vielleicht ist dieser Unterschied so wichtig, daß er das Gemeinsame aufheben kann? In der Gleichung ‚Diamant plus Umstände bleibt Diamant‘ ist der Gebrauchswert des Diamanten so groß, daß der der Umstände daneben verschwindet.”

formulas or theories. After 1930, Musil reminded himself to avoid this: “Danger for me: to be stuck in theory. Always return to that which has directed me to this theoretical aid for investigations in the first place!”<sup>131</sup> Re-establishing the context producing facts or ideas that normally relate only through the lowest common denominator creates a new “culture of the senses.” The modern audience needs to contextualize their words to see the processes shaping their lives. Musil thought such knowledge might stimulate a new mass will, new action, and a new critical politics.<sup>132</sup>

Ulrich follows the deconstruction of the word “diamond” with a hypothetical answer to what might happen if individuals realize that “personality” is one such word that has been reified beyond belief in psychology. He tells Diotima that “if the false significance which we attribute to personality disappears we may enter a new kind of [significance] as if into the most glorious adventure.”<sup>133</sup> Becoming cognizant of false summaries in psychology can steer the explorer of consciousness and the psychologist herself toward a new context, and a new world. Musil concludes with Ulrich’s understanding that European readers should examine their own experiences as they would the words or characters on a given page, read as metaphors or analogies that serve different functions within different contexts.<sup>134</sup> To “live as one reads,” then, means contextualizing experiences and recognizing that methods creating knowledge about life are problematically shaped by the prejudices of an author and the

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131 TBI 864. German: “Gefahr für mich: in der Theorie stecken zu bleiben. Dringe immer wieder zurück zu dem, was dich auf diese theoretischen Hilfsuntersuchungen geführt hat!”

132 See “Nation as Ideal and Reality,” GWII 1075.

133 GWI 572. German: “wenn die falsche Bedeutung, die wir der Persönlichkeit geben, verschwindet, in eine neue ein wie in das herrlichste Abenteuer.”

134 Ibid. 574.

interpretations of a reader.

In Ulrich's appendix to his notebooks, which Musil wrote in the late 1930s, Musil develops the idea of "reading" one's own emotions as if they were the words on a page.<sup>135</sup> Ulrich focuses on the characterization of "love," which Agathe and he had also explored in their conversations and relationship.<sup>136</sup> Ulrich writes that there are many different kinds of love.<sup>137</sup> People may love different kinds of people, animals, or abstract things like "truth." In each particular case the "love" serves a different function. At the same time, there is a drive to be close to or seize life that unites all of these disparate kinds of love. Fundamental to his "psychology," Ulrich is pointing out that abstract emotions are inadequate ways to describe reality. He therefore suggests unraveling all the different functions of an emotion to understand the context producing experience—this means also seeing the violence or "hatred" integral to some forms of "love," as was the case with Ulrich and his lovers.<sup>138</sup>

Musil's essayism, and Ulrich's notebook chapters within this novel, conveys the ways that having a precise *Richtbild* to guide life might also facilitate a method of de-reified living, a consciousness which Marxists such as Georg Lukács, Walter Benjamin, and Bertolt Brecht also valued. As I argued in Chapter 4, Ulrich's later notebooks questioned words like "love," "hate," and the singular nature of "emotion" that contributes to mass delusions. The essayistic reading of emotions and moods was Musil's temporary antidote for a public becoming more and more seduced by modern

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135 Ibid. 1172.

136 See also my Chapter 4.

137 See especially GWI 1173.

138 Musil explains that ambiguity is what Ulrich means by "living as one reads," GWI 1936.

techniques of cultural propaganda, which the Nazis had appropriated for their own purposes. In the earlier chapters, which I focused on in this Chapter, Musil was training readers to question the consciousness the elite favored most. In 1941, Martha Musil wrote to Barbara Church, “my daughter is in Philadelphia, my son is in Rome, and my husband is in utopia.”<sup>139</sup> Musil’s utopia of contemplative reading was never realized during his lifetime. Musil could not reach a broader audience because of the “high art” of his novel, which encouraged reading only among small groups of intellectuals, and because of the material and political hardships he experienced. Musil, however, never gave up the “political” will to reach people with essayistic ethics. In a letter to Hermann Broch, Musil states this fate clearly: “I am, as you know, very incapable of writing anything other than the *Man without Qualities*, or the essayistic...”.<sup>140</sup> His work leaves the readers of the future with a remaining question: Is it possible for a culture of essayism to guide a de-colonizing politics?

#### **IV. A Sort of Conclusion—Political Significance of Essayism**

In an interview with a Moscow newspaper concerning *The Man without Qualities* in July 1930, Musil claimed that he wanted his novel to critically disclose the power of bourgeois ideologies. The Russian interviewer asked Musil: How did the October Revolution influence western culture? In response, he recognized that “the revolution is a huge spiritual support for all of us who hope that something good can

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139 BI 1285. Brecht also admitted to attempting a utopian method of critical thinking (See Doherty 448).

140 BI 1245. German: “Ich bin, wie Sie wissen, sehr unfähig, etwas anders als den Mann o. E. zu schreiben; oder etwas Essayistisches...”

still come from the human, at least in some regard.”<sup>141</sup> The “in some regard” conveys the interest Musil had in creating a better world, an interest he shared with Marxists, although he was not one. In fact, his criticisms of Stalinism and Hitlerism suggest that he saw the Soviet Union as a corrupted version of this hopeful spiritual promise.<sup>142</sup> His interview reveals that he thought it was important to free art from the fluctuating determining forces of the economic market. According to Musil, the market and political one-sidedness debilitated the potential of art to disseminate critical forms of knowledge—in this way, he was qualifying his valorization of artistic “autonomy.” In another interview with a Soviet paper Musil disclosed his pessimistic prognosis for culture under capitalism. He thought that real change would come about only through open-minded approaches to knowledge and a more precise transformation of material conditions. He realized that as a writer he had the ability to affect the content and methodology of cultural dissemination in an open-ended way.

Musil gave lectures and speeches throughout the 1930s in an effort to inspire a new cultural consciousness.<sup>143</sup> He was asked to give a speech at the International Writers Congress for the Defense of Culture in Paris in July 1935. This speech became famous when participants accused Musil of dismissing the danger of Nazism in his attempt to free cultural endeavor from the political.<sup>144</sup> In fact, Musil claimed

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141 BI 472. German: “die Revolution eine große geistige Stütze ist für uns alle, die da hoffen, daß aus dem Menschen, wenigstens in irgendeiner Hinsicht, noch etwas Gutes werden kann.”

142 BI 542.

143 While finishing *The Man without Qualities*, Musil gave a reading in a public high school Vienna-Ottakring. He chose a few of the easier chapters, which the students really enjoyed at least according to Martha Musil. (BI 459)

144 For a deeper investigation of the response of the Congress audience to Musil see McBride, “On the Utility of Art for Politics” 377.

that he had not been aware that the purpose of the Congress was to define a political counter-culture to fascism, and organize the left against the Nazis. He had prepared his speech based on the assumption that the Congress was concerned with culture as an aesthetic issue. After the Congress on August 24, 1935, he admitted to Bernard Guillemin that he was dissatisfied with his presentation because he had to improvise once he learned the real purpose of the conference.<sup>145</sup> Ironically, the writer who tells us to embrace both precision *and* soul could not improvise a lecture. In a letter to Harry Goldschmidt, Musil lamented that he was misunderstood because he did assert in his speech that social conditions play an important role in the shaping of culture. He felt the audience ignored this, but he could also understand that his speech was inappropriate.<sup>146</sup> This misunderstanding and attack from the Congress audience affected Musil deeply. Many critics have since labeled Musil apolitical because of his confluences of Stalinism and Hitlerism. I instead argue that Musil was a dialectical thinker whose irony represented a politically relevant form of social criticism. Like many intellectuals, including Marxists, he unfortunately presented his theories too one-sidedly at events such as these, thus tempering the power of his social critique—especially within the historical context of Nazi imperialism.

In addition to his lectures on culture in the mid-1930s, Musil tried to develop his essay pedagogy further in Ulrich's fragmented notebooks on a "psychology of feeling." Musil planned on connecting these chapters that contained an aphoristic

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145 BI 654-655.

146 Ibid. 659.

appendix to the aphorisms he was writing down in his own notebooks.<sup>147</sup> Most of his planned aphorisms were contained in Notebooks 33 and 32 (1937-End 1941), which he planned to call the *Rapial*. In particular, he thought of the aphorism as a form that could weigh various opinions concerning life, art, and culture, in relation to one another. He realized that the place to publish such a book would not be in Germany but in England or the US, because his work was banned in Germany. Musil thought he would be able to sell the aphorisms to an American audience who was already familiar with Emerson.<sup>148</sup>

Musil's unpublished aphoristic project, which warrants further investigation, would have been his clearest departure from the closed bourgeois novel form and clearest expression of the psychology of feeling. To summarize briefly, Notebook 33 consisted of commentaries on his own development and family, and was largely autobiographical. For example, Musil mentions his love for himself and others. He includes his unhappiness at realizing his father was mortal and his great passion for Martha, the psychological origins of *The Confusions of Young Törless* in his family situation, the failure and hope he had in *The Enthusiasts*, the critique of ideology in *The Man without Qualities*, a memory of a girl who would become the character Agathe, various references to Nietzsche, and the aphorism about Empire with which I began this chapter. In dialectical relationship to these psycho-biographical aphorisms, Notebook 32 was concerned with the political power of writing (*Dichtung*). In these

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147 Perhaps because of his interest in the aphoristic form, Musil referred to Nietzsche frequently in the letters of this period. See BI 595, 681, 928, 974, 988.

148 BI 1259. He even imagined writing essays in broken form instead of aphorisms. See BI 1037.

aphorisms, Musil refers to the Nazis, Austrian history, and his publishing history. Through a comprehensive exegesis of the aphorisms in Notebook 33 and 32 in relation to his novel and tome as a whole, Musil hoped to encourage audiences to envision a relationship between *Geist* (spirit) and *Politik*. He proposed that *Geist* was a theoretical expression of “imaginary precision” while *Politik* signified the practical application of that imagination. Musil apparently had the intention of using his aphorisms to guide readers toward an ethical-political transformation of the world.

Unfortunately, Musil died in 1942 before he reached an “Agathe” (other than his wife Martha) who could propagate an ethics based on his psychology of feeling. *The Man without Qualities* and his aphoristic project were never finished. His attempt to disseminate a new cultural consciousness became inconsequential once Europe went to war and the world became consumed by imperialist struggle for domination. Musil had planned for this; his writing would be a legacy which he passed on to posthumous readers. Martha Musil made sure of that.<sup>149</sup> What we can then take from his final writing experiments is his *will* not to give up the practice of an emotional essayism as a guide for political change. Musil had rightly observed that explicating only the ways in which material conditions dictate experience expels knowledge of the mass psychology making it possible for those marginalized most within the nation to participate in imperialistic endeavors. I propose that the essayistic psychology of feeling does provide a guide to politics that remains open to the complexities of these experiences, while not forfeiting strategic moments of precise language and action

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<sup>149</sup> Martha was largely responsible for making sure Musil’s letters, diaries, and posthumous notes were published.

necessary in any de-colonizing transformation of social order. The political potential of essayism would, however, only become truly feasible decades after Musil had died.

As he suggested throughout his life, Musil wrote for readers not yet born—those capable of a revolution in attitude. Ingeborg Bachmann, an Austrian feminist in the post-1945 period, valorized Musil’s experiment with de-reified consciousness. She dedicated radio essays to *The Man without Qualities*, and valued Ulrich and Agathe as symbols of the transformation of violent gender relationships into an ethical condition.<sup>150</sup> While she “feminized” the postwar mood that denied the violent past and present, Bachmann did not break free of old stereotypes about Africa. The desire to escape from fossilized gender relationships symbolized by her heroine’s tragic journey to Egypt in *Der Fall Franza* ironically reproduced the “other” psychological continent of Africa.<sup>151</sup> In the 1980s, a movement began in Germany that would begin to challenge all imperialistic binaries dominating in German society. “Afro-German” feminists combined essays, autobiographies, and poetry into an anthology called *Farbe Bekennen* (1986). Hybrid essay texts like *Farbe Bekennen* expose the realities between personal and political continents of experience. This anthology made the presence of assertive people of color within German history visible and freed feelings that had long been silenced by patriarchal culture. Activists have since proposed creating communities united through shared experiences rather than the lowest

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150 One Radio-Essay is titled, “Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften, Unvollständig.“ See *Ingeborg Bachmann Werke*, ed. Christine Koschel, Inge von Weidenbaum, und Clemens Münster, vol. 4 (München: Piper, 1978).

151 See Sara Lennox, “White Ladies and Dark Continents in Ingeborg Bachmann’s Todesarten,” *The Imperialist Imagination*, ed. Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1998) 247-263.

common denominator (i.e. resentment, skin color, genitalia).<sup>152</sup> Such projects are summaries that light paths to mass consciousness of other global problems entangling people, nature, culture, and modes of production. This possibility suggests that an artistic essayism, whether Musil's or not, could potentially train audiences to de-colonize their own consciousness in order to create a new political will.

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152 See for example, Fatima El-Tayeb, "If You Can't Pronounce My Name, You Can Just Call Me Pride': Afro-German Activism, Gender and Hip Hop," *Dialogues of Dispersal: Gender Sexuality and African Diasporas*, ed. Sandra Gunning, Tera W. Hunter, and Michele Mitchell. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004) 64-90.

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