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ECSTATIC EXPERIENCE, CRIME, AND CONVERSION IN ROBERT MUSIL'S
DER MANN OHNE EIGENSCHAFTEN

By
GENESE GRILL

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Germanic Languages and Literatures
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City
University of New York

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Ecstatic Experience, Crime, and Conversion in Robert Musil's Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften

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Preface and Apologia

On the Non-linear Nature of Brains (especially Robert Musil's), Experimental Modernism, and the Delightful and Exasperating Difficulties of Criticism

In a late note on his unfinished novel, Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften, Robert Musil wrote that the story of Agathe and Ulrich, the twentieth-century protagonists of his magnum opus, would have been better told as the history of Hasan Soumnoun, an obscure heretical Sufi mystic and poet of the Middle Ages.¹ This casual statement, beautiful in its virtual undoing of almost four decades of Musil's fierce fictional precision, originally captured my attention because it seemed to emphasize Musil's interest in Sufism, thus leading into my own interdisciplinary study of Musil's uses of various mysticisms. After four years (not four decades) of my own researching and writing, the words seem to hold a much more pregnant secret, a secret which revels in its mystery right before our eyes, much too fast and with such a magician's sleight of hand that it never fully reveals itself; it is of the nature of mysticism itself, and it seems to be a key to Musil's powerful intellectual and aesthetic force. That the story of two cosmopolitan agnostic modernists, a brother and sister struggling with the particular problems and pleasures of *Jahrhundertwende* Vienna, might be better (or just as well) told as the history of an

heretical Sufi poet of the Islamic Middle Ages requires a profound mystical collapsing of time and space; it tells of a literary indwelling in a spaceless, placeless realm, the realm Musil calls “*der andere Zustand*” (the other condition), the realm of mystical experience, madness, ethical fervor, love, and — here is where we move away from pure “mystics” in the historical sense into the more comprehensive literary cosmos—the realm of aesthetic creation and aesthetic experience. The creation of art, which is in Musil’s conception the creation of new and varied arrangements of the world, may occur only if that reality generally called “normalcy” has been temporarily suspended with a suspension of time, space, pre-judgment, and communal morality infinite in scope. It is something like a magical house which although small on the outside has an infinite number of rooms unfolding on the inside, or like the human brain itself which, although smaller in size than a crystal ball, holds an incalculably expandable amount of inter-related thoughts.

“*Der andere Zustand*” of experiencing—a condition which Musil relates to psychological and spiritual conditions throughout his fiction, his notebooks, and his essays—is thus not only *content*, i.e., subject matter of his works, but is actually the very *form*, the aesthetic function of his artistic outpouring. “The other condition” can be seen as a realm wherein Musil gathers and energetically cross-references his seemingly inexhaustible pieces of history, culture, mythology, science, and story; “the other condition” is a realm wherein “the other tradition” of learning mixes and melds in an eternally churning and re-aligning web-work, the realm of possibility, experimentation, and essay. The “story” is, in a sense, something more like an eternal question than a story; it is an ethical-aesthetic concern, an original theme. This “story” then could be told under the guise, mask, or costume of an infinite number of characters, countries, cultures, epochs, ideologies, disciplines, worlds, imaginations, or narratives; it is always, in a sense,

the same old story. This constant overlaying of story upon story may not seem like anything new; it may be ultimately the function of analogy itself. Yet for Musil, whose central character, the characterless “Mann ohne Eigenschaften,” moves through imaginary possibilities like a philosopher, a confidence man, a trickster, an actor, or an artist, such transubstantiations are the utterly serious games of modernist self-exploration, the primally vital work of the experimental artist and vivisecteur, of the “new man,” closer by far to the “Übermensch” whom Nietzsche, in sharp contradistinction to any National Socialist reading of the “blond beast,” had envisioned.

The realms and readings which Musil traverses—and which I, in this study, reread with him—are realms seen from an “other” perspective, and this reading, be it misreading or “reading into,” is a free and unattached reading (along the Taoist lines of attached non-attachment). It is not faithful to any one particular protagonist, plot, time, or place, but is rather a traveling tradition which shape-shifts, unifies and repulses, contradicts and dissects. It is, yes, the tradition of radical heretical mysticism, magic, and taboo, but these are just some of the favorite guises which it wears, which it tries on—essays (to use the literary term Musil favored for his essayistic experimentation within his novel). The essential fact is not a question of who or what, of Sufi, criminal, lover, twentieth-century physicist, psychologist, anthropologist, madman, murderer, medieval woman mystic, but rather of how, or rather if—or what if?

A good part of this study is devoted to Musil’s extraordinarily vast and eclectic readings (and much of the rest to a subsequently informed reading of Musil himself), and the reader may periodically wonder why, in a book about one of the founders of European Modernism, he or she has been reading page after page about medieval syneisactism or primitive burial rituals. The answer lies not only in the fact that Musil—and many of his

contemporaries—was indeed immersed in and influenced by such studies, but moreover in the need to redress what I found to be an overwhelming vagueness or confusion about why modernist artists were interested in such things. It seemed, in rereading the cultural history of mysticism, irrationality, and the primitive origin of art from Musil's precision-oriented standpoint (as vivisector and scientist), that the confusion has its source in an all too dualistic conception of the world of ideas. Musil points the way to a new reading of mysticism, a new evaluation of the "irrational" which does not fit into the strict dualistic categories of Enlightenment versus Dark Ages, or ethics versus aesthetics, or science versus religion. In the non-dualistic universe, science is not necessarily the ally of progress and modernism, but can be seen as the quietist ally of orthodox religion and dogma; mysticism, usually seen as the quietist ally of orthodox religion, can be reread as the ally of radical artistic experimentation and individual ethical consciousness, i.e., existentialism; crime can be seen as the work of the holy; goodness seen as the lukewarm sin of uninspired piety.

Musil's re-evaluation of values is a kinetic montage of reading which re-forms, over and over, the history of ideas into that "other tradition"—drawing webs of relation and tracing patterns of repetition where more narrow visions have only drawn timelines and two-columned charts. Musil's brain, and his writing, was tremendously non-linear; he seems to have been gifted with an universal access—from one synapse to another, from mathematics to ancient philosophy, from race horses to the psychology of sexuality, from the poetics of Eskimo song to the biography of a murderous Rosicrucian—in what must have been lightning speed, or perhaps no time (or place) at all.

This sort of personal non-system, an eternally interactive network, is naturally anathema to the categorizing urge of academicians, synthesizers, and pigeon-holders, which

explains, in part, why Musil's work has suffered (especially, tragically, during his lifetime) from proportionately surprising neglect. Not providing any simple answers, nor easily fitting into any group, school, or "ism," Musil's work seems sometimes to be awkwardly deadlocked between conflicting interpretation. Questions like "Why was a clear-thinking mathematician like Musil interested in mysticism," can only be answered when we begin to understand what Musil meant when he said that the man of the future would be both mathematician and mystic, when we begin to understand, as he would show us, how to employ more precision in mystical realms and more mysticism in realms of reason, illuminating the realm of what he called the "senti-mental".

As a critic, or as a critical reader of Musil one must refrain from making facile judgments, from drawing easy alignments, from taking sides; the work, try as we might to simplistically explicate, keeps us in puzzlement, unknowing. This necessary openness, the brave honesty in the face of a natural desire to come to conclusions, is the fundament of Musil's modernist attempt. It is the experimenter's "non-attachment" (a word borrowed from the realm of mystics) or "objectivity" (one borrowed from science and philosophy) which allows him to flit, or flirt, like a free bird through the bodies and minds of all manner of sources and stories without discarding the words of any person, with little regard for his personal estimate of the sources' character, talent, intelligence, or worthiness. Musil's notebooks suggest that he often re-read books he did not like, spent time understanding the philosophies of people whom he found egregious, analyzed at length the writing styles of people he considered poor craftsmen—and found sentences, ideas, fascinating problems, examples, case studies, facts, and details in most of them which contributed to the richly intricate cross-referencing of his remarkable brain. Scarcely a crumb falls on the floor.

It is equally significant that Musil rarely wrote with overt enthusiasm or love of anyone or anything; his stoicism as regards his influences is truly astonishing. One gleans, to be sure, that a handful of people are of central importance to him: Emerson, Nietzsche, and Dostoevsky are the three who are virtually above criticism. One mention of Emerson in Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften stands out as the only non-ironic example in all his writings that I have found where there is anything like an unequivocal affirmation of anyone (except his beloved wife, Martha) at all. Musil's anti-hero Ulrich (not to be confused with the author himself, but strongly enough related to reveal his creator's sympathies) quotes a line of Emerson in the novel, and Musil—not however mentioning the philosopher by name—has him say, “ein Mann, den ich liebe, hat das gesagt”.² Ulrich, it should be noted, expresses affection and affirmation as rarely as his author; for both this is a rare instance.

Discussing the faults in his own writing style, Musil writes “Dostojewsky tut so etwas nie!” and a few pages later: “Die vielleicht beste Art besteht aber darin die Figur aus dem Dunkeln herauszuarbeiten, wie es Dostojewski tut”.³ But even these rare, dry praises are extreme exceptions for Musil.

Returning to an earlier notebook entry on Nietzsche, where he had dared to criticize or analyze his master, Musil makes fun of his youthful arrogance, writing, “Wie drollig man als junger Mensch ist! Nietzsche gerade gut genug um einen Lausbuben als Stufe zu dienen!”⁴ Even the youthful criticism which Musil laughs about reveals the extent of Nietzsche's influence on his ideas. We read, in his critique of Nietzsche's “characteristic” fault, the germ of what Musil would later learn to treasure as “Möglichkeitssinn” (a sense of possibility): “Das Charakteristische liegt darin, daß er sagt: dies könnte so sein und jenes so. Und darauf könnte man dies und jenes bauen. Kurz:

er spricht von lauter Möglichkeiten. Lauter Combinationen, ohne eine einzige uns wirklich ausgeführt zu zeigen”.⁵ We find, all in all, few direct praises of Nietzsche, though his ideas, as this small excerpt suggests, run through Musil’s veins and color his ink always. The ironic “tribute” which Musil pays to Nietzsche in Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften warns, in a style which he can only have learned from Nietzsche himself (whom he refers to mostly in his notebooks simply as “N.,” so obvious it is to which “N.” this refers), against sticking too slavishly to any of one’s influences or masters: Clarisse, a character who becomes increasingly mentally imbalanced throughout the novel, reads her Nietzsche (which Ulrich had given to her as a sort of internally combustible wedding gift) like a radical bible of activism, each word burning for her with holy significance.

In another note, Musil comments on the absence of contemporaries among the writers whom he considers influential for him: “Das Verhältnis des Dichters zu seiner Zeit. Daß man nicht mitgeht, zurückbleibt, den Anschluß versäumt, nicht beiträgt...: Ich habe mich spezif[isch] dichterisch geöffnet: Dostojewski, Flaubert, Hamsum. D’Annunzio u[nter] a[nderen]: nicht ein Zeitgenosse ist darunter gewesen!”⁶

Still, he read everything, in virtually every field. Aside from Dostoevsky, Emerson, and Nietzsche, there is Novalis (from a distance), Rilke (sometimes), and Maeterlinck (for a time only); there are scores of historians (Heinrich Gomperz, Franz Cumont, Ernst Cassirer...) of ancient Greece and Rome, of Persia, of mystery religions, of medieval culture, of Kabbalah and customs which he read, not necessarily loved or hated, just used; there are philosophers he studied (the Stoics, the Epicureans, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes. Hume, Swedenborg, Schopenhauer...) on questions of ethics, aesthetics, metaphysics, and materiality; there are anthropologists and psychologists (Lucian Lévy-Bruhl, Ernst Jaensch, Erich von Hornbostel, C.J. Jung, Konstantin Oesterreich, Karl Girgensohn,

Gustav Landauer...) on primitive religion and rituals, on mysticism and mythology, on language, consciousness science, sense perception, madness, and creativity; there are physicists, mathematicians, and natural scientists (Ernst Mach, Erwin Schrödinger, Wilhelm Wundt...) on time and space, on probability theory, on the nature of reality and cosmos; there are mystics from all times and places (St. Paul, St. Augustine, Lao Tse, Nicholas of Cusa, Mechthild von Magdeburg, Meister Eckhart, Farid Ud-Din Attar, Ellen Key...) on timelessness, on experiences of alternate reality, on the language of subjective experience, on conversion, taboo, and crime; and there are his fellow literati (Jens Peter Jacobsen, Goethe, Flaubert, Stendhal, Tolstoy, Knut Hamsun, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Thomas Mann, Franz Kafka, Robert Walser, Gabriele d'Annunzio...); there are critics of literature and art, critics of society, cranks and statesmen, occultists and reasonable pedagogues, biographers of heroes and anti-heroes, newspaper journalists, lecturers he hears, and the constant round table talkers at the café "Stammtisch" which he frequented. And all of this personal research, from perception science to poetry, yields the same fruit for Musil, holds the same essential content (in infinite variation and form) of his aesthetic-ethical quest. It is probably significant that many of these thinkers do not fit comfortably in any of the categories in which I have placed them; they are all important to Musil because he reads them "interdisciplinarily," from and for the purpose of something larger than any limited field.

Musil's reading is not merely an absorption of facts and dates, taken down, memorized and utilized.⁷ His reading, as a primary example of the fiercely internalized reading which would be demanded by many modernist writers (a reading in flames, a reading which burns the eyes, ruthlessly examines the habits, unveils the hypocrisies of the reader and author), is an ongoing process of experience ("Erkenntnis"), a mixing and

filing down, a honing in and approaching, a hungry quest for a glimpse at the ineffable, fleeting... “truth,” that truth which was, as Kafka would later write, “the light on the shrinking, grimacing face”.

The problem of approaching such truths, similar to the problem explained by Heisenberg’s contemporaneous “Uncertainty Principle” (1929-whereby the observed phenomena is necessarily transformed by the presence of the observer), is the problem of an attempt at critical synthesis and analysis of modernist works of art. The difficulty, seen from an “other” perspective, provides the possibility of an open-ended immersion, a sort of “total involvement” which, in harmony with the impossibility of linear treatment, offers the possibility of an infinitely fruit-bearing criticism, a regenerative, never-ending process. After over four years and over three hundred pages I have only just begun to experiment with a handful of Musil’s themes and variations. A few which I have barely touched upon are probability science, mathematics, sense perception, psychology, physics, theatre, his interest in Descartes, the history of science—and these are just random examples. I continue to see Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften in new guises, yet underneath are the same concerns.

The most recent reading, one which came out of a re-reading of this study and the question (posed after the fact) of how one might best methodologically approach a work such as Musil’s, is another way of relating Musil’s mysticism, his interest in the timeless moment in particular, to the form of his novel. The mystical moment, out of time and out of place, is like an infinitely expanding “thought-moment”. Like one small digression (into, say, color theory or shamanism), it has the potential to expand into a whole book itself, or a whole library of books; but it can also be very small and shimmering, like one dot in an impressionist painting. This possibility dot shimmers side by side in a world of

dot-worlds, each one capable of the same infinite expansion into libraries of exegesis. Within any of these “thought-moments”—realms of influence, quotation, paraphrase, readings—there are, naturally, digressions upon digressions as well, digressions which bifurcate off into other digressions, linking up with the first level of “thought-moments” shimmering on the surface of the painting/novel/mind, as well as those which are never even evident.

This reflects on Musil’s idea of possibility, and the mystical consciousness wherein both the reality which we experience and the works of literature which come to fruition are only some potential versions of the world. Others, the “as-yet-unwritten experiments of God,” in Musil’s phrase, are perhaps not yet on paper or in the world, but are no less valuable and no less true. The work of art becomes a realm of fruitful essayism, where the thinker tries varied arrangements and combinations, proportions and emphases.

Such a mixing of infinite “thought-moments,” of shimmering dots on the surface of a novel which does, it is true, read from left to right on numbered pages, may seem like an impossibility, yet there is, I believe, no other way to read (or write about) Musil’s novel. There is furthermore no one epiphanous moment in Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften, not one lone shimmering other reality which rises up beyond all the rest, but rather an ocean of such moments, a mesh of cross-referencing which can not be mapped; it can not be stopped, it can not be limited by categories or previously-known or believed restrictions.

The “other tradition” of mystics reflects a similar challenge to the strict separation of subject and object, ideology and conversion, good and evil, past and future. The mystic, as individual seeker or heretical wanderer—Musil’s mystic—travels over boundaries and

orthodoxies, trampling, more often than not unintentionally, the sacred limits of separation, spreading seeds of confusion throughout the world, engendering strange hybrids and powerful new admixtures into being. A reader may do this as well, must, in fact, if he is to see beyond the received interpretations of history and literary theorizing. This is, above all, what Musil teaches us to do.

Introduction

“Gott Meinte die Welt Keineswegs Wörtlich”

When Friedrich Nietzsche pulled the veil from the face of Christendom, he simultaneously revealed the beautiful violence and ecstatic tarantism cults of ancient Greece. Debunking Ancient Greece's Romantic reputation as the symbol of “edle Einfalt und stille Größe” (noble simplicity and quiet grandeur), Nietzsche's Geburt der Tragödie (1886) celebrated a drunken, uncontrolled spirituality. Not only did he question Christianity's ideal of harmonious goodness, but he showed the prevailing nineteenth-century vision of pagan Greece to be itself tainted with this Christian ethic. It is no accident that Nietzsche's attack on Christianity is delivered in the same breath as his aesthetic discovery of the “other” Greece: it too, more than an attack on religion itself, is a criticism of the ideal of “noble simplicity and quiet grandeur,” a romantic ideal which denied the spiritual forces of violence and individual ecstatic experience in the service of an orderly institutionalization of meaning. Orthodox Christianity's monopoly on Absolute Truth, furthermore, an insistence on a narrow definition of reality, history and future, stood in direct contradistinction to Nietzsche's celebration of individual experimentation and rigorous transvaluation of values. Not Religiosity or God was dead, as Nietzsche stressed in an important aside “for those with ears fine enough to hear,” but the authoritarian Father God, the Absolute Truth God was dead.

In the atmosphere of early twentieth-century Vienna, wherein Robert Musil's novel Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften begins, this conflict could be sensed in all realms of

thought and culture. As an engineer, mathematician, physicist, behavioral psychologist, novelist, playwright and essayist, the scientific artist Musil was equipped with multiple vocabularies to grapple with questions of subjective and objective definitions of the "real". This thoroughly modern scientific man's surprising literary involvement with mysticisms should be seen in this same context. The Romantic reputation of mysticism, constructed of the same ethical aesthetic of simplicity and silence, of union and quietism as the nineteenth century's picture of Greece, was in need of refutation. The "other" mysticism, the heretical, active, peripheral, experimental mysticism which burns through the apochrypha of Judeo-Christianity and Islam like a flame of individual passion and reforming fanaticism, is, naturally, the mysticism of Musil.

An exploration of the workings of these "other" mysticisms, from "primitive" rituals to ancient mystery cults, to medieval visionaries, will help to explain the cosmopolitan fin-de-siècle fascination with the savage realm of the "irrational". Instead of separating, as most critics of Musil are wont to do, a given author's interest in mysticisms from his interest in physics or logic, or his interest in the supposedly "dark" Middle Ages or the hopelessly superstitious "primitive" from studies of the thoroughly "Enlightened" age of reason or the thoroughly scientific "civilized", we may begin to speak of the ways and degrees to which the rational and irrational exist in both "civilized" and "uncivilized" cultures.

Musil the engineer/physicist's notebooks are filled with transcriptions from and notes on Meister Eckhart, Farid Ud-din Attar, Mechthild von Magdeburg, St. Theresa of Avila, Nicholas of Cusa, Lao-Tse, Rumi, Ramakrishna, Novalis, Swedenborg, Maeterlinck, and countless other mystic thinkers, ancient, medieval and modern, Eastern and Western. His central source materials for much of his mystical texts were books by

contemporary psychologists of religion, Karl Girgensohn and Konstantin Oesterreich, who used mystical texts as case studies in altered consciousness. Musil also used Martin Buber's popular anthology, Ekstatische Konfessionen (1909) as a source book for extensive paraphrase and quotation in his novel. Vast readings on the occult, the Kabbalah, ancient mystery religions, the Rosicrucians and the Knights Templar mixed with Musil's studies of Eastern religions such as Buddhism and Taoism. His readings in Persian literature and history led him to the Sufis. Perhaps more importantly, his notebooks and his literary work also reveal wide reading in anthropological studies of primitive ritual and trance possession and its relation to the creation of art. These latter anthropological readings, which are increasingly present in Musil's later diaries, may be important keys to the use of varied mysticisms as realms of the so-called "irrational," "other," or "exotic" which were, paradoxically enough, present in the everyday consciousness of the presumably "rational," "scientific," and "civilized" European of the early twentieth century.

Experiments with form are furthermore, as I hope to show, related to Musil's studies of mystical writing and thought. Musil's novelistic use of early mystical texts and his readings in primitive ecstatic religion correspond quite clearly to his contemporary scientific interests in radical empiricism, gestalt psychology, and experimental art.

It is relatively easy to see the modernist movements of science, psychology, art, mysticism, social theory, and philosophy, as more or less expressive of related preoccupations with perception and reality- transformation, using, of course, differing metaphors. All were concerned, in one way or another, with redefining the increasingly undefinable world, with redrawing the individual's relationship to the dynamically transforming picture of what was just, moments before, static nineteenth-century

positivism. Replacing a literal narration or representation of historical event, a traditional link in the chain of influences, or a natural linear progression from discoveries and assumptions of the fathers in all fields, was a non-linear, non-narrative, a-historical emphasis on the present moment, a move from the time line to the timeless circle. The truly innovative definitions of reality stressed, for the most part, multiform meanings and warnings against rigid systematization.

Radical empiricists, like Ernst Mach (about whom Musil wrote his doctoral dissertation), spoke of the once firm self as a mere bundle of impressions, and of the reality which that vague self registered as nothing more than a momentary functional relationship. Any given object, person, moral or philosophical position was, one inferred, ultimately open to multiple interpretations. Visual artists experimented with impressionism, championing the expression of the subjectively-seen moment over narrative representations of shared cultural material. Instead of the defining line, impressionists used the dot. Cubism, with its simultaneous representation of multiple views of the same object, made manifest for the first time the great illusion of traditional picture space, making abstraction more true-to-life than so-called realism. Explorations of primitive art by visual and literary artists uncovered completely *other* perspectives of reality. Architects talked of the need to develop a modern style which expressed the feeling of the time instead of an historical homage to tradition, as they experimented with ephemeral buildings and movable walls which could be changed to fit the changing needs of the inhabitants. Sociologists and psychologists wrote about fleeting sense perception, mystic experiences and ecstatic trance possession, looking at madness to examine alternate visions of reality. The long-reigning Cartesian ideal of a strict separation between reason and feeling, intellect and eros — those two supposedly antithetical poles

of thought— was called into question by psychologists, consciousness scientists, and medical researchers. New physicists questioned the Newtonian paradigm of certainty and order, stressing the necessary interference of the observer's subjective impressionability on any given experiment. Language philosophers, immersed in mystical studies, developed skeptical theories which questioned whether words could express anything at all. Writers like Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Franz Kafka spoke also to the problem of the poverty of communal language in the face of the ineffable experience of the isolated individual, of the almost insurmountable challenge of communication in a society of such incongruent perception.

Why did many of these revolutionary thinkers look back to the religious Middle Ages or ancient mystery religions or to anthropological studies of primitive cultures for sources or symbols of their new ideas? Perhaps because those far-off cultures provided them with extreme examples of alternative states of consciousness. Perhaps because the early mystics' attempt to use language to describe their subjective visions seemed similar to the modern artists' problem of sharing their increasingly important inner world with an ever more fragmented outer world. If we add to this the topos of medieval mystic or prophet fighting against the rigid paternal orthodoxy of the Church for a right to his or her own unsystematic experience of alternate reality, we may be closer to an understanding of the modern innovator's interest in his or her far-off predecessors. Time and again we see the experimental artist comparing himself to the heretical religious thinker or quoting some medieval mystic's ecstatic confession. While each individual artist or theorist had his or her own reasons for utilizing mysticism, for Musil the stress was on the conflict between individual alternate realities of what he called "the Other Condition," and the authority of Absolute Truth.

Early twentieth-century critiques which stressed the distance between any given expression (word, image) and its traditional single meaning undermined conservative attempts to assign significance, moral teachings or simple information-sharing to works of art, religious scripture or philosophical tradition. The turn of the century witnessed a movement away from easy definitions and clear interpretations which parallels the medieval Christian period's development of a vernacular language of mysticism, a language which, through ambiguous use of images and analogies, threatened the Orthodox Latin control of metaphor.

The development of a mystical language was characterized by mixtures of dialects, translation of specialized vocabulary from language to language, 'high' and 'low' language, sacred and profane content, from varied professions and specializations (farmers, women, aristocratic daughters, ex-criminals, prostitutes), from travelers from different nations and faiths. The unity of a single scholastic voice was threatened by an infinitely expanding collage of unmonitorable expression and interpretation. Renaissance warnings against the continuation of this new language of mysticism read almost like early Modernist critiques of experimental writing. As Michel de Certeau explains in his Mystic Fable, "Pierre Bayle compared this 'extravagant' style of *mystics* to that of the 'speculative Chinese,' and according to Pierre Jurieu it was 'so obscure and peculiar that it is extremely difficult to make mystic science speak the language of men'...According to Bossuet, mystical usage continued to be characterized by an 'abuse of language,' by those 'profane novelties of language that Saint Paul forbids' and that resemble 'gibberish.'"8

Far from a mere literary critique, these conservative voices are part of a serious attempt to maintain ecclesiastical control of meaning, morality, and thereby power. De Certeau continues: "The established language seems to be an untouchable, the

hypersensitive skin of a body that is sick, unsure of itself. Throughout the sixteenth century, ecclesiastical institutions increased the number of warnings, treatments, or brutal therapeutics to defend their way of speaking (to save their necks?)...These words [the 'new' mystical language of the Middle Ages] were 'dangerous,' sometimes deadly. Why? What such words threatened, what *mystics* wounded and opened to question by its use of them, relates to a shift of the essential to the linguistic front and a hitherto unsuspected seriousness of the 'literary' issues'." ⁹

Although the orthodox and heterodox Muslim shared a common language, a similar conflict still existed in the Islamic Middle Ages between the strictly controlled and fiercely disputed *sunna*, or "Chain of Witnesses" and any innovative thought at all. The *sunna*, a complement to the Koran, was an elaborately complex time-line of doctrine, from the Prophet through his family and friends (the chain of witnesses), which passed infallible judgment upon all questions of behavior and belief. The development of Sufism in the early Middle Ages (from orthodox Muslim to radical fringe sects) threatened, by its very nature as a mystical mendicant chaotic (dis)"order," with its talk of timelessness and its circling, whirling dervishes, the linear order of the chain.

Christian mystics, often uneducated, unindoctrinated, usually ignorant of Latin, faced the double challenge of writing (in a very new literary language) and of expressing extremely subjective experiences of alternate reality in such a way that they might be understood by non-initiates. Both Islamic and Christian mystics faced this latter challenge, and both developed similar linguistic strategies to overcome the obstacles of subjectivity.

Although not transferring from one language to another, early twentieth-century experimental writers faced a similar challenge. The old language, it was agreed upon, had

to be revived, recreated, reinvested with meaning. The experimental writer was thus faced with the twofold task of making the old language new and expressing *his or her* subjective experiences of reality to a fragmented skeptical society. Musil spoke of the differences between “dead words” and “living words” and their relation to living or dead thought in his earliest novel, Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß, in his essays, notebooks, and in Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften. In his critique of Oswald Spengler’s Decline of the West, he writes:

Was man wie in der Schule lernen kann, Wissen, rationale Ordnung, begrifflich definierte Gegenstände und Beziehungen, kann man sich aneignen oder nicht, man kann es gegenwärtig haben oder vergessen, es kann wie ein wohlgekanteter, sauber abgeschliffener Würfel in uns hineingestellt werden oder wieder herausgenommen: solche Gedanken sind in gewissem Sinne tot; das ist die Kehrseite des Gefühls, daß sie unabhängig von uns gelten. Genauigkeit, Richtigkeit töten; was sich definieren läßt, Begriff ist, ist tot, Versteinerung, Skellet. [...] In Geistesgebieten aber... macht man diese Erfahrung bei jedem Schritt. Das Wort soll dort nichts fixiertes bezeichnen. Es ist das lebendige Wort, voll Bedeutung und intellektueller Beziehung im Augenblick, von Wille und Gefühl umflossen; eine Stunde später ist es nichtsagend, obwohl es alles sagt, was ein Begriff sagen kann. Ein solches Denken mag man wohl lebend nennen.¹⁰

Language is linked here to the central mystical question of how to “hold the moment” or how to understand the fleetingness of momentary ecstatic experience. The “living language” is mortal, and has to die; the word might shimmer for a moment with special meaning, but only for that moment. Dead language always contains the same informational content; living language, when it dies (or goes into a sort of intermittent sleep in between moments of living expression) becomes dead language and expresses whatever direct content it can; when dead, language becomes nothing but “Begriff”.

In Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften, a chapter entitled “Das Ende der Eintragung. Lebende Gedanken” begins by establishing an inevitable relationship between “Glück” (happiness, luck) and “Kürze” (fleetingness), saying that the two belong together like “Geschwister” (siblings).¹¹

The problem of “living language,” expressed by Musil’s Törleß epigraph from Maeterlinck wherein the sparkling gems and stones which seem so beautiful below the water appear dull and lusterless once brought up to the surface, becomes a central paradox for modernist artists. As Ernst Cassirer, Musil’s friend, would explain in his Sprache und Mythos (1922), “When speaks the soul, alas, the soul no longer speaks!”

From this point it is but a single step to the conclusion which the modern skeptical critics of language have drawn: the complete dissolution of any alleged truth content of language, and the realization that this content is nothing but a sort of phantasmagoria of the spirit. Moreover, from this standpoint, not only myth, art, and language, but even theoretical knowledge becomes a phantasmagoria... Consequently all schemata which science evolves in order to classify, organize, and summarize the phenomenon of the ordinary world turn out

to be nothing but arbitrary schemes—airy fabrics of the mind, which express not the name of things, but the nature of the mind.¹²

Despite some nihilistic voices of doom, language, knowledge, meaning were not necessarily dead, but rather the language, knowledge and meaning of the fathers, the bogey of *absolute communal* language, knowledge, and meaning was dead. Like Musil's protagonist Ulrich, who imagines, as a young boy in a scandal-provoking school essay, that God could just as easily have made the world differently, the experimental artist—if he or she is not to turn nihilist—would have to embrace what Musil called “Möglichkeitssinn” (the sense of possibility), a state of life and thought in the subjunctive tense. Young Ulrich had written, “daß ein ernster Vaterlandsfreund sein Vaterland niemals das beste finden dürfe... daß wahrscheinlich auch Gott von seiner Welt am liebsten in *conjunctivus potentialis* spreche (*hic dixerit quispiam*=hier könnte einer einwenden...), denn Gott macht die Welt und denkt dabei, es könnte ebensogut anders sein.”¹³ This sense of possibility is related to what Musil calls “the other condition” of reality. Detached from narrow definitions of self and world, *without qualities*, one is free to invent, to play. Held hostage, on the other hand, by objective standards of morality, aesthetics, or experience, the individual would not be able to act, create or communicate in a vital manner.

Like Schiller's aesthetic state of free play or Nietzsche's complex Dionysian loss of self, an alternate state of consciousness became the prerequisite for Musil's process of ethical and aesthetic invention. Just as it had been for Nietzsche, ecstatic religion was related in Musil's personal history of ideas with the creation of art. In his version of the history of the separation of art from religion, Musil calls Christianity to account for its

jealous guarding of Absolute Truth. "[W]enn ich nicht irre," he writes in his essay "Ansätze zu neuer Ästhetik," "liegt die Wurzel davon im Herrschaftsbeginn des Christentums, wo die Kunst unter der Eifersucht der Glaubenstrengen litt und von ihren Verteidigern gleichsam in ein Leben zweiten Ranges geflüchtet wurde...".¹⁴ Absolute Truth, or religious dogmatism, could not, it is implied, stand up to the living, breathing, ever-changing relationship of individual and art, art and religion, and forced art and mysticism thus into a second-class existence.

The dangerousness of art and ecstatic experience was so great, Musil contends, that their destructive power had to be denied in order to allow for their continued clandestine existence. Presented as harmless, disengaged, decorative, the artistic and mystic vision quietly undermined belief in absolute reality.

In his or her most dangerous form the ecstatic mystic, like the experimental artist, self-exiled from the contained society, becomes a sort of outsider-prophet or rebel-reformer, a Zarathustra who preaches disharmony, self-disgust, self-overcoming and rebirth. The artist then, in Musil's mind, is not simplistically pitted against "the religious," but rather the experimental artist is put in league with the innovative mystic against the orthodox defenders of absolute truth and static reality.

This surprising partnership is possibly parallel to the controversial anthropological groupings of magic, science, and religion in varying combinations of affinity. While some anthropologists, like Emil Durkheim, would see magic as a forerunner of science because of the empirical relation of cause and effect inherent in both systems, and others, like Tylor and Frazer, would see this relation and call magic a pseudo-science, placing religion, as a system beyond cause and effect, in a completely other camp, others, like Bronislaw Malinowski (who, like Musil, wrote his dissertation on Ernst Mach in the first

years of 1900) would group magic with religion as symbol systems with considerable linguistic reality, locating science firmly in the alien realm of "true-false propositions".¹⁵ The seemingly odd bedfellows, magic and science, rationality and religion, primitive magic and experimental modernist artist all effectively generate "other" systems and counter-systems of activity which, although not always conscious of their seeming inherent contradictions, tend to threaten received notions of clear dialectics.

The act of not taking part, non-participation in any one established, social, religious ideal, is itself tantamount to rebellion, as exemplified by the questionable ethical state of Musil's "man without qualities". Ulrich's childhood friend Walther finds Ulrich's non-committal stance, his non-attachment to any given opinion, career, or person, extremely threatening. His moral vagrancy, a natural result of his *Ausbildung* (education, cultural upbringing) in radical empiricist science and relativist Nietzschean ethics, makes him a man without qualities, a classic type of the turn-of-the-century drifter.

The Medieval church, despite metaphoric injunctions to "go to the desert," or to embark upon periodic crusades and hegiras, favored centralized worship over scattered wandering. Islam in particular, a religion founded as Church and State, worked best, it was thought, as a combination of centralized city- mosque, market and public bath.¹⁶ The nomadic Beduins, mendicant Sufis, *fahrende Leute*, vagrants, traveling story tellers, unattached to Church or land, were seen as threatening and damned by the orthodox Muslim. The greater hegira, in fact, second only to Mohammed's journey from El Medina to Mecca, was the individual believer's own movement from country to city, from decentralized to centralized.

Once we begin to look at the traditional relationship between religion, art, and reality, we realize that throughout the histories of both religion and art there is a conflict

between orthodoxy and innovation. This conflict may carry the same weight in both realms, for the outcome decides for a society on a description or definition of its world, a definition of its beliefs, its communal reality, and its natural and supranatural laws.

We can easily add to these realms the realm of science, which has its own history of innovation, orthodoxy and "Absolute Truth." It is especially relevant that in Musil's time the authority of objective scientific truth, like that of moral or spiritual or aesthetic truth, was greatly in question. The idealistic hope that there was an order to the seeming chaos was becoming, with the rise of empiricism, more and more quixotic. Archimede's boastful scientific battle cry, "Gebt mir einen festen Punkt, und ich hebe die Welt aus den Angeln," becomes as much a matter of faith as any religious prophecy in an age where there are no more fixed points at all.¹⁷

As science comes to doubt itself more, and morality is proven to be hopelessly relativistic, religiosity becomes, for the post-Nietzscheans, Musil, Kafka, Rilke, et al., a question of intensity, fierce vivisection of self and society, and most of all an attack on the lukewarm passivity of bourgeois self-satisfaction. Nietzsche's attack on Christianity, for example, may have come, as Colin Wilson points out in his book The Outsider, "from a feeling that Christendom was not religious enough."¹⁸ When the atheist becomes more religious than the religious, and (as Musil writes) anyone feels he or she has the right to have an opinion on any specialized subject, from ethics to physics, the hierarchy of knowledge breaks down. The layman's study of a physics book, like the mystics' direct vision of God, eliminates mediation and threatens the specialist social structure.

When Al-Hallaj declared in the year 922 that "I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I," he was ceremoniously executed for high heresy. His infamous doctrine of *hulul*, paralleled by Christian mysticism's "incarnationism" or neo-platonic "participation,"

would haunt orthodox church or mosque perennially. The mystic, who thinks he or she is God, associates herself with the creator or divine artist and is no longer subject in her mind to intermediary restrictions or doctrinal interpretations.

Polytheism, as a form of worship wherein the believer interprets God as filtered through the beings of numerous gods and goddesses——called by Christianity “Abgötterei” (or the worship of idols)—— is another form of mystical participation. Nietzsche, in Die fröhliche Wissenschaft, equates the threat of polytheism for Christianity with the more general threat of “free-thinking” for absolute morality:

Größter Nutzen des Polytheismus. Daß der Einzelne sich sein eignes Ideal ausstellte und aus ihm sein Gesetz, seine Freuden und seine Rechte ableite — das galt wohl bisher als die ungeheuerlichste aller menschlichen Beirrungen und als Abgötterei an sich[...]Die wundervolle Kunst und Kraft, Göttern zu schaffen — der Polytheismus — war es, in der dieser Trieb sich entladen durfte, in der er sich reinigte, vervollkommnete, veredelte[...]. Diesem Triebe zum eignen Ideal feind sein: das war eine Norm: “der Mensch” — und jedes Volk glaubte diese Eine und letzte Norm zu haben.

The idea of a single norm, or one normalcy, is threatened, Nietzsche continues, by the creation, on the model of polytheism, of other norms, of multiple norms.

Aber über sich und außer sich, in einer fernen Überwelt, durfte man eine Mehrzahl von Normen sehen[...] Hier erlaubte man sich zuerst Individuen,

hier ehrte man zuerst das Recht von Individuen. Die Erfindung von Göttern, Heroen, und Übermenschen aller Art, sowie von Neben- und Untermenschen, von Zwergen, Feen, Centauren, Satyrn Dämonen und Teufeln war die unsichtbare Vorübung zur Rechtfertigung der Selbstsucht und Selbstherrlichkeit des Einzelnen: die Freiheit, welche man dem Gotte gegen die anderen Göttern gewährte, gab man zuletzt sich selber gegen Gesetze und Sitten und Nachbarn. [...] Im Polytheismus lag die Freigeisterei und Vielgeisterei des Menschen vorgebildet: die Kraft, sich neue und eigene Augen zu schaffen und immer wieder neue und noch eigenere: so daß es für den Menschen allein unter allen Thieren keine ewigen Horizonte und Perspektiven giebt.¹⁹

The ability to create new and more and more individualized eyes, for the individual to see for himself in infinitely varied ways has its source, Nietzsche (and Musil after him) suggests, in experiences of “otherness”, as alternative versions of received truth. Here Nietzsche celebrates not only the “Übermenschen,” but also the “Untermenschen” (under-men) and the “Nebemenschen” (side-men), ultimately celebrating “otherness” itself. The free-thinking skeptic is born when he is able to read, with his own eyes, the “Word of God” or any particular injunction from above; the individual learns to “see for himself”. The modern citizen's skepticism in the face of science's admitted fallibility created, in the early twentieth century, a foundation for individual non-mediated theorizing and brave utopian envisioning. The Romantic artist had fancied himself a substitute for religious prophets in an age of shared values. The

twentieth-century experimental artist/mystic could play God with reality in an age of radical scientific empiricism.

It is perhaps alternately our modern prejudice against religion, or our Romantic prejudice against science which keeps us from a better understanding of Robert Musil's relation to the scientific age of twentieth-century materialism and the spiritual age of medieval mysticism. Musil prophesied however that the man of the *future* would be both a mathematician and a mystic, and called for more reason in the realm of the spirit, and more spirit in the realm of reason. Surely he knew that the mathematicians of the *past* had been mystics as well, without, at the time, any inherent contradiction.

The "philosophers" of early Greece— "cradle of modern science"— mixed ideas indiscriminately which we have since carefully separated into categories of rational science, religion, and the occult. Stanley Tambiah, in his Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality, writes:

Hippocratic doctors, herbalists, temple medicine priests practiced simultaneously, and there was a general belief in the efficacy of drugs, amulets, spells and prayers. Terms like 'purification' and 'cleansing' carried both 'natural' and 'moral' meanings, much as they do today in many parts of the world...We should also bear in mind that both pre- and post-Aristotelian science exhibited mystical aspects. For example, the Pythagorean sects cultivated esoteric doctrines and practices, including a mystical number theory and astrology. ²⁰

Nor was the "mystical" banished from the realm of science in the Middle Ages or the Renaissance:

For example, in 1617 Robert Fludd dedicated a work based on religious Hermetism to James I. And the Rosicrucians have been unveiled... as an underground seventeenth-century movement with Lutheran connections and the tendencies of Renaissance Hermetism.

Other examples of the continuing presence of Hermetic philosophy and magic can be pointed to. Perhaps the most dramatic is the case of Isaac Newton himself, who has been sanitized by the post-Enlightenment hagiographers as a model of scientific reason. But it seems that "one of Newton's motives in beginning his work in mathematics was to investigate whether judicial astrology had any claim to validity." The official eulogy of Newton composed by his successors ignored this evidence, because the occultist traditions, including alchemy, magic, divination, no longer demanded or evoked a serious interest. The point of this story is that although there is documentary evidence "that Newton attached equal, or greater importance to his alchemical studies than to his work in mathematics," modern science in its victorious march has "blotted out the immediate past," and one generation's conscious omissions become the next generation's genuine amnesia.²¹

The *idée reçue* which equates modernity with Enlightenment rationality furthermore, and relegates occult speculation, mysticism, and other forms of the irrational

to the "dark ages," and to the "primitive", crumbles, as Stephen Toulmin points out in his Cosmopolis: the Hidden Agenda of Modernity, under scrutiny. The Cartesian age of reason seems, in Toulmin's analysis, to have been actually a "counter-Renaissance" which featured a bloody and fanatical thirty-year's war over religious beliefs, extreme economic and social turmoil, and a general turn away from the skeptical inquiry of the more open (but certainly not secular) age of Rabelais, Montaigne, and Shakespeare. The attempt to ignore the validity and presence of the "irrational" in subsequent centuries — and, as both Toulmin and Tambiah point out from their disparate realms of cultural studies, literary and scientific history, and anthropology, is an attempt to write the irrational out of the history of science and cultural progression. Such a censored version of our cultural heritage leaves us in an extremely compromised position vis à vis a comprehensive picture of Western civilization.

As Musil wrote, "Das Unglück will, daß die Menschen, die heute für solche Fragen in Betracht kommen, wenig Verständnis für die Tugenden scharfen Denkens haben werden, daß hier alles wieder verlorenggeht, während die andern, die dieses Verständnis besäßen, meist keine Ahnung haben, was hier ein Griff in der Tiefe erfaßte, dem es auf dem Weg zur Oberfläche wieder entrann."²²

Continuing his social/literary criticism, Musil writes of the lack in German of a certain kind of book, a book which would combine the mystic and the rational intelligence: "Wir Deutschen haben —außer dem einen großen Versuch Nietzsches — keine Bücher über den Menschen, keine Systematiker und Organisatoren des Lebens. Künstlerisches und wissenschaftliches Denken berühren sich bei uns noch nicht. Die Fragen einer Mittelzone zwischen beiden bleiben ungelöst".²³ Musil's great novel, Der

Mann ohne Eigenschaften, written over the next twenty-five to thirty years, would satisfy the need for just such a book.

It is no accident that the science of twentieth-century Austria was Empiricism, the science which calls into question static reality and Absolute Truth, a sort of skepticism which eased the dualistic Romantic tension between science and religion, reason and imagination. Comparing the new-scientist's role with the old-style prophet's role, Robert Musil expatiates on the state of truth in turn-of-the-century Vienna as follows. His anti-hero Ulrich—soldier, engineer, mathematician—muses:

Wenn man statt wissenschaftlicher Anschauungen Lebensanschauung setzen würde, statt Hypothese Versuch und statt Wahrheit Tat, so gäbe es kein Lebenswerk eines ansehnlichen Naturforschers oder Mathematikers, das am Mut und Umsturzkraft nicht die größten Taten der Geschichte weit übertreffen würde. Der Mann war noch nie auf der Welt, der zu seinen Gläubigen hätte sagen können: stiehlt, mordet, treibt Unzucht—unsere Lehre ist so stark, daß sie aus der Jauche eurer Sünden schäumend helle Bergwässer macht; aber in der Wissenschaft kommt es alle paar Jahre vor, daß etwas, das bis dahin als Fehler galt, plötzlich alle Anschauungen umkehrt.²⁴

Although Musil writes that that man had not yet been born who could tell his followers that their sins will be turned into clear streams, he was certainly well aware that Nietzsche had already pointed out that just such transvaluations of values did in fact occur repeatedly throughout the history of morality. Jesus, as prophet of the God of Love and

Forgiveness is a mild version of the man Musil speaks of, the man who would promise to “transform the cesspool of your sins into clear, sparkling streams,” but the leaders of the Free Spirit Brotherhood (whom we will discuss later) did literally advise their followers to steal, kill, and fornicate in the interest of holiness. Musil's own consideration of questions of good and bad (the good-bad person/the bad-good person etc.), taboo-breaking and criminality within Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften are aesthetic ethical experimentations with just such radical value transformations. Where Nietzsche (the artist's philosopher) had argued for the necessity of experimenter-philosophers, “Versucher,” who tried, essayed, played with different ethical possibilities, Musil (the philosopher's artist), called for experimenter-artists, aesthetic-ethical vivisectionists even. The experimental nature of science could, Musil suggests here, be a model for a possible experimental ethics, if only people could learn to think “scientifically” about “unscientific” matters. Continuing the above discussion, Ulrich adds, “Die Menschen wissen das bloß nicht: sie haben keine Ahnung, wie man schon denken kann; wenn man sie neu denken lehren könnte, würden sie auch anders leben”.²⁵

While science was revealed to be just as uncertain as religion, religion, when reduced to orthodoxy, conformity or economics, was criticized by Musil for being just as narrowly rational as science. In an essay on Catholic Modernism and the religious spirit, Musil writes: “In der Tat ist es nicht aufzuzählen, wie sehr der Katholizismus heute von der bürgerlichen Vernünftigkeit durchsetzt ist; es braucht nur daran erinnert zu werden, wie selbst die Taufe—einst der stärkste Ausdruck des Gegensatz der Kirche gegen den Staat, ein Symbol des Eintritts in eine oppositionelle geistige Gemeinde, eine mystische Adoption, weniger eine Namensführung als das Geführtwerden durch einen Namen bei

den ersten Schritten des inneren Weges—heute mit dem bürgerlichen Kataster verbunden ist, mit dem Ausweispapier...”²⁶

The Church, originally itself a radical force in relation to a more powerful authority (the Roman state), has been, in other words, co-opted by the hierarchy which it fought against. The "inner way," of which Musil writes, is the tradition of mystical individuality, fostered by heretics (once beloved Church fathers) like Meister Eckhart. The mystical "inner way," Musil laments, can no longer, in the materialist conformity of the clerical bureaucracy, flourish.²⁷ Clearly this has implications for society in general and the creation of art in particular.

Looking at the first centuries of developing Christianity and Islam, we see a struggle between individual prophetic innovation and the increasing pressure of Church Fathers and dogmatists to limit the multiform experimentations of sects, cultists, and alternative living/worshipping communities of men and women into one strictly regulated Church each. Considering their own histories as religions begun by prophets who radically created new holy books and ideals, it is interesting to note how quickly any new prophets or visionaries are feared as heretics, yet it is important to remember that both Jesus and Mohammed experienced their own share of distrust and abuse. For our purposes, let us just note here the long difficult love/hate relationship between orthodox churches and mystical prophetic innovators. Jo Anne MacNamarra writes:

By the middle of the Third century, prophecy was no longer admitted as a valid means of creating orthodox doctrine...The Christian religion [however] was not predestined to develop into a single church. Indeed, like most religions then and now, it was far more likely that a

common faith would act as a loose net for a wide variety of sects. From the time of Paul forward, the episcopacy set itself to weld diverse communities into a single coherent legion committed to fight and die for one God, one faith, and one church. But the enterprise demanded constant negotiation...Prophets, syneisactic sects, and even, in some respects, martyrs represented a radical church increasingly balanced and restrained by a 'respectable' church'.²⁸

Plato's banishment of artists from his ideal Republic could be understood in this context as well, just as the utopians, as Albrecht Schöne points out in his essay on Musil, are the first to be thrown out of any utopia. Artists, utopians, prophetic innovators seem to represent one type of person,²⁹ a person with a vision of alternate reality which is threatening to any structure or group which would like to maintain its status quo.

The violence of utopian vision, the message of energetic chaos, to a world heaven-bent on being orderly, reasonable, and simply moral, is evident. Clearly such a message of experimentation is most immediately expressed in formal innovation. Pictures of the world, narratives of shared history, musical works, no longer, by the early Twentieth century, look, read, sound familiar. There is no comfort in experimental art for those last nostalgic inhabitants of the turn of the twentieth century, who search for some order in the growing chaos. The artist, as Hofmannsthal writes in his *Gespräche über Gedichte*, no longer fulfills his expected role as harmonizing synthesizer.

Formal innovations in the arts and religious doctrines, more often than introductions of mere thematic changes, tend to be viewed by conservative critics as most threatening, such as the National Socialist Degenerate Art Exhibitions of the 1930's or

reactions to shocking metaphor in medieval mystical texts. Ritual actions, like "black mass" backward readings of prayers or less radical interruptions of regulated worship patterns, are likewise viewed as highly heretical. In times of great spiritual banality however, as mystic tradition stresses, such formal deviations may be the only means of reinvesting old dried-up forms with new meaning.

Art and its earliest manifestation, ritual, may be seen as the most direct representation of reality we have. Primitive ritual enactments of historical narrative, mythical repetition, or of a favorable or cursed future (good crops, bountiful hunt, success in love) relate directly to everyday reality, while the Christian or Islamic prayer rituals, the correct office of the Eucharist or the elaborately regulated five-times-daily prostrations of the Muslim (salât) are considered by the Medieval orthodox to be absolutely necessary for social happiness in this and the other world (with a stress on the latter).

Art, if not considered as mere entertainment by the men and women of the early twentieth century, served more or less this same function. If nineteenth-century Realism had meant Caliban looking at his own face in the glass, it at least implied a certain ethical sympathy or criticism which the new experimental art could not claim to bring. The experimental re-visioning of all previously received knowledge, morals, tastes, meant learning to see anew. Such a new vision brought with it the very real threat that the time-honored and precious would, in its new light, look suddenly ugly, unethical, or worst of all, meaningless.

To look at the accepted communal vision of reality and reproduce that vision in a new way is to undermine the absolute stasis of reality, i.e., cubist multi-vision, surrealist re-vision and collage, individual mystic visions of revelation which contradict or displace

orthodox scripture. The experimental artist and the inspired mystic know this and aim, by a re-ordering of formal elements, at the magical re-creation of the "real" world.

It is thus not surprising, that Musil writes about the radical function of art. Defining art as abstraction, Musil calls this abstraction a "Zusammenfassung zu einem neuen Zusammenhang" ("summary leading to a new context"), in other words, a new possible arrangement of the world. The positing of this or any other new context contains within it a criticism of the normal, a negation of the stagnantly perceived real. Relating the effect of art to what the new psychiatry of his time called "Illusion," he defines this "Illusion" as "Eine 'Störung', bei der Elemente der Wirklichkeit zu einem unwirklichen Ganzen ergänzt werden, das Wirklichkeitswert usurpiert."³⁰ The writing of a novel, the creation of a summary leading to a new context – and in the case of Musil's novel an infinitely variable number of changeable summaries leading to an infinitely variable number of possible contexts – thus usurps the value of reality.

Ecstatic mystical experience is a realm of "Störung" (disturbance) that Musil also touches upon in his essay, equating the mystic disturbance with the effect of art's use of condensation, displacement, rhythm and monotony to create a mild hypnosis which transforms the individual's perception of reality. It is the radical nature of mysticism – and likewise of formal innovation in the arts – which interests Musil, its ability to transform the experiencer's vision of reality, thereby liberating the individual from the authoritarian control of dogma, secular morality or static reality into a realm of possibilitarian energy which has much in common with existentialism.

The belief in the potential active power of form in art goes back to ancient ideas about words, spells, rhythms, prayers, songs, magic images, etc.; originally the word for song (sung poem) was identical with the word for spell or chant (*carmen*), and non-literate

people are supposed to have taken the sound of rhyming verse for proof of the magical effect of poetry and song. The relation of art to ecstatic experience and ecstatic experience to conduct of life/transformation of life was once, and still is in many non-western cultures, naturally connected. In the Judeo-Christian-Islamic context, the Word is the mystical creator of the world. Images are either forbidden or worshipped, music either a form of celebration of God or a worldly sin.

In marginal religious sects or in the cosmos of individual mystic thinkers, the ritual reversal of normal or regulated forms of worship, or normal states of reality-consciousness is quite commonplace. Far from being "sacrilegious," experimentation with sacred forms of words, ritual actions or images, is a traditional activity for non-absolutist religion. The cult of Tarantism, for example, otherwise known as St. Vitus' Dance, consisted in the temporary ecstatic abandonment of all former societal roles: "Contemporary reports record how peasants left their ploughs, mechanics their workshops, house-wives their domestic duties, children their parents, servants their masters..." to take part in the non-stop traveling dance.³¹ The ecstatic experience, like an extreme role-playing game, gave particularly oppressed members of society a chance to act out other roles: "Dancers acted as swaggering captains, grandiose governors, muscle-flexing boxers, and hectoring public orators...the most wretched beggar could temporarily assume the graces of high society, and command respectful and sympathetic attention for his posturing".³²

The breaking of strict taboos and firm hierarchical structures present in ancient and primitive forms of fringe sects, even has its place in the medieval and renaissance Orthodox Church in the form of celebrations like The Feast of Fools or Carneval wherein all hierarchy is turned upon its head: the harlots at the altar, the priests in clown uniform, the men dressed as women. Fasting, furthermore, retreat to the desert, meditation,

chanting, prayer and self-immolation in orthodox religion, East and West, serve the purpose, consciously or not, of re-ordering the worshipper's vision towards an abnormal or alternate experience of reality. Nevertheless, such experimentations with reality, which provide the individual with a non-controlled experience of the divine or secular, remain, to this day, in questionable relation to dogmatic authority. Individual experimentation and extreme forms of self-immolation are traditionally discouraged by Church authorities in favor of pious obedience to moderate rules of order.

The imaginative nature of ecstatic role-playing and reality experimentation requires the primary Dionysian state of being without qualities, or non-attachment to specific definitions of self. In the crumbling caste system of turn-of-the-century Vienna, individuals experienced comparable social confusion within the neutral ground of the demi-monde. Musil's protagonist Ulrich's discussion of the inability "now-a-days" to tell by looking at anyone what or who he or she is or does, reflects this radical lack of qualities which is at once lamented and awe-inspiring. Ulrich's own inability to remain classified within any one of a number of different careers and social roles, his involvement with anarchists, counts, cabaret singers, bankers, painters and sex-murderers, as well as his incongruous middle-class residence in a small aristocratic "castle," all reflect the confusion of roles and breakdown of social barriers.

Although there were necessarily orthodox voices which insisted on the harmonious order of things and the continuation of such a thing as absolute truth, and nihilistic skeptical voices which saw the dissolution as the beginning of the decline and fall of culture, those voices were to be drowned out by the truly revolutionary movements of change. While inhabitants of the turn of the century might, as Musil pointed out, enjoy one last hurrah in the nostalgic nineteenth century, "wie [Menschen, die] in einem Haus gehen

ließen, aus dem man ohnehin auszieht".³³ (as one runs riot in a house one is moving out of); they would have to move into the new century, willingly or not. The overturning of the laws of the fathers, what Carl Schorske in his Fin de Siècle Vienna calls the "oedipal revolt," begun by Nietzsche and Darwin, continued by Freud and a whole generation of experimental artists, radical empiricist scientists, and utopian thinkers, and culminating in existentialism, was, for the most part, a revolt against rigidity of thought, linear tradition and outdated conceptions in favor of experimentation on all fronts.

Chapter One

Reality and Other Realities

Du kannst von dieser Minute, in der wir jetzt sprechen, zurückgehen, soweit du willst, Jahrtausende oder soweit die menschliche Erinnerung überhaupt reicht, so findest du immer wieder das Dasein einer anderen Welt beschrieben, die sich zuweilen wie ein tiefer Meeresboden emporhebt, wenn die unruhigen Fluten unseres gewöhnlichen Lebens davon zurückgetreten sind... Seltsam übereinstimmend sagen alle Beschreibungen aus,, daß es dann in der Welt weder Maß, noch Genauigkeit gibt, durch welche unsre Welt des Geistes doch groß geworden ist, weder Zweck, noch Ursache, weder Gut, noch Böses, keine Grenze, keine Habsucht und keine Vernichtungssucht, sondern nur eine unvergleichliche Erregtheit, und ein verändertes Denken und Wollen. Denn indem die Dinge und unsre Gefühle alle Begrenzungen verlieren, die wir ihnen sonst geben, fließen sie zu einem geheimnisvollen Schwellen und Ebben, einem alles ausfüllenden Glück, einer im wahren Sinn grenzenlosen, traumhaft einigen, und vielgestaltigen Erregung zusammen. Man darf vielleicht noch hinzusetzen, daß die gewöhnliche Welt mit ihren scheinbar so wirklichen Dingen und Menschen, die getrennt wie Burgen auf Felsen thronen, wenn man dann auf sie zurückblickt, samt allen ihren bösen und seelenarmen Beziehungen, nur als die Folge eines moralischen Fehlers erscheint, zu dem wir schon unsre Sinnesorgane erzogen haben. ³⁴

Robert Musil

From the beginning of time, individuals— from madmen to lovers to poets to saints—have periodically experienced moments of altered consciousness, moments wherein the familiar elements of their every day lives suddenly take on new and unfamiliar aspects, wherein normally separated entities appear to have strange and significant correspondences. In these extraordinary states, it is common for the individual to experience something referred to in mystical language as the "loss of self," but more commonly expressed by lay people as a sensation of being "outside of oneself" or "besides oneself". In any case, and to varying degrees, the individual may experience a certain alienation from what is normally perceived to be his or her individuality, personality, or "self".

Whether or not the individual enters then into a traditional mystic communion with a larger force (of universe, nature, love, will etc....) or merely experiences a sense of confusion or shift in perspective, he or she will have experienced a new version of reality. For the ancients, or for medieval mystics, or for contemporary "primitives," this sort of experience may be important as a reinforcement of already-learned beliefs, or perhaps as a new and radical prophetic experience of alternate truths. For the turn-of-the-century European mind, this sort of mystical experience was fascinating for its startling resemblance to scientific, psychological, and philosophical discoveries about the individual's relation to what was swiftly being defined as the changing, subjective nature of reality.

When Albert Einstein looked out of the back of a trolley a few years into the twentieth century he noticed, in a sudden shock of insight, that the clock which he read from the moving vehicle would still register the same time if the trolley were suddenly to speed up to the speed of light. Time, in other words, would stand still...a possibility which

had been, up until that moment, absolutely impossible. "What a brilliant insight," Robert Musil noted, perhaps ironically in his notebook, "that space and time change, that they are not dependable or measurable." ³⁵ Perhaps ironically, because what science had taken so long to discover had been understood for millennia. The fluid shape-shifting of shamanic ritual, clearly manifest in Eskimo masks depicting hybrid man-beast-bird-gods, takes place within a social context wherein the self or ego is consumed by the communal. Modern consciousness-researchers have suggested, furthermore, that ego consciousness itself is only a few thousand years old and that its birth is coeval with the death of the ancient gods who had, formerly, whispered or dreamed the voice and vision of decision (what we now call ego) into the minds of ancient man.

Ernst Mach, denying the existence of an ego to twentieth-century humanity, declared, not long prior to Einstein's discovery, that reality is nothing more than the momentary transient experience of the bundle of nerves we call the self; and Nietzsche had, by a series of brilliant associations, made it clear that truth was not at all dependable, reality not at all true, and morality neither true nor real.

Hugo von Hofmannsthal, in an essay called "Das Gespräch über Gedichte" of 1904 which discusses the nature of metaphor, its relation to ancient religious sacrifice, and the purpose of poetry, echoes both the scientific theorizing and mystical studies of his time, writing:

Wir besitzen unser Selbst nicht: von außen weht es uns an, es flieht
uns für lange und kehrt uns in einem Hauch zurück. Zwar – unser 'Selbst'!
Das Wort ist solch eine Metapher. Regungen kehren zurück, die schon
einmal früher hier genistet haben. Und sind es sie wirklich selber wieder?
Ist es nicht vielmehr ihre Brut, die von einem dunklen Heimatgefühl

hierher zurückgetrieben wird? Genug, etwas kehrt wieder. Und etwas begegnet sich in uns mit anderen. Wir sind nicht mehr als ein Taubenschlag.³⁶

What mystical visionaries, eccentric artists and madmen from all centuries had already repeatedly expressed about the changing nature of reality was suddenly scientifically and philosophically respectable.

This is the brave new whirlwind of Robert Musil's novel, Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften, a world without objectively-measurable time, space, truth, or self. The whole ordinary world, "with its apparently so real people and things that lord it over everything like fortresses on cliffs," in this modern vision of relative reality, now "appears only as the consequence of a moral error from which we have already withdrawn our organs of sense...".³⁷ The sibling heroes of Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften are philosophizing in the above passage about the ahistorical timeless experience of traditional mystical *ecstasis*, or removal from out of the normal self. They speak of a traditional timeless experience, but with the ethical nausea of precisely their own time.

What had begun in the nineteenth century as a dualistic battle between Reality and Fantasy, between the defenders of facts and the dwellers in fancy, was gradually, by the end of the twentieth century, stripped of its simplistic costumes as the two armies began, in the strange new light of empiricist science and psychology, to resemble each other more and more. Who indeed, in the wake of science's declaration of sensory subjectivity and art's attempt at exact re-creation or imitation of "realistic" experience, was speaking

the role of reason? and who the far-flung enthusiasm of beauty? And where, if anywhere, did religion belong?

If nothing was real, there could be no more hierarchy of reasonableness, no more simplistic braggadocio of science's victory over art, or religion's collapse under the rise of rationality. Nor could there be, in the realm of language and image, an insistence on narrow definitions or meanings. Suddenly everything was expected to look different, and take on unexpected shapes: like the multi-meaning interpretations of words and images, reality no longer had just one definition. These sharp dualisms discredited, one could begin to speak, by the turn of the twentieth century, of a middle zone between mystic and mathematics, rational and non-rational, reality and fantasy: an alchemical border region which was created by the meta-language communication between one realm and the other, between the elements of "reality" as society perceived them and the elements of "ideality" as the individual dreamed them.

While some people saw a widening gap between experience and communication, even going so far as to declare interpersonal verbal communication *passé*, others strove to uncover or create alternate ways of using language, primarily via metaphor, symbol, and form, to bridge the divide between conscious and unconscious, rational and non-rational, mathematical and mystical mind. Psychologists like C.J. Jung would call this border region the realm of symbols, declaring symbols to be the connecting link between the conscious (rational) and unconscious (spiritual) mind. ³⁸

The whole concept of normal reality-consciousness (itself a new field of study) was conceived to correspond to the scientific, psychological, aesthetic perceptions of modern man and woman, dubbing reality as uncertain, and alternate realities as potentially acceptable temporary definitions of the world. William James' discussion of the new

discoveries of field and subliminal consciousnesses in his Varieties of Religious Experience, laid a basis for a typology of the mystically sensitive personality. Certain people, he explained, had a more highly developed "ultra-marginal life," a tendency that facilitated what he describes as "'uprushes' into the ordinary consciousness of energies originating in the subliminal parts of the mind". "The most important consequences of having a strongly developed ultra-marginal life of this sort" explains James, "is that one's ordinary fields of consciousness are liable to incursions from it of which the subject does not guess the source, and which, therefore, take the form of unaccountable impulses to act, or inhibitions of action, of obsessive ideas, or even of hallucinations of sight or hearing." 39

Musil would posit the "sense of possibility" or the "utopia of the essay," and he would list thinkers (living and dead) who were particularly "mystically sensitive" and who operated within this border region of precision and soul. The essayistic thought process took place within an altered state of consciousness and was related thus to the detached free-mind of mysticism. In the essayistic experience of thought, wherein and "through which one understands all at once one's self and the world in a new and different way," one could find, wrote Musil, the "human(istic) branch of religion":

Dieses plötzliche Lebendigwerden eines Gedankens, diese blitzartige Umschmelzung eines großen sentimentalischen Komplexes (eindringlichst versinnlicht in der Pauluswerdung des Saulus) durch ihn, so das man mit einmal sich selbst und die Welt anders versteht: das ist die intuitive Erkenntnis im mystischen Sinn....Maeterlinck, Emerson, Nietzsche zum Teil Epikur, die Stoiker, unter Abstraktion vom Transzendenten die

Mystiker, aber auch Dilthey, Taine, die monothetische
Geschichtsforschung Schleiermachers, Schelling, Hegel, Lassale, gehören
in den Kreis des Essays. Hier liegt der menschliche Ast der Religion. ⁴⁰

Emerson's essay, "The Poet," contains the germ of Musil's idea of the essayistic, emphasizing the poetic mind's (for Musil, the essayistic mind's) ability to see multi-meanings in all things: "But the highest minds of the world," wrote Emerson, "have never ceased to explore the double meaning, or, shall I say, the quadruple, or the centuple, or much more manifold meaning, of every sensuous fact". ⁴¹

The dangerous history of religious hierarchies, Emerson continued, consisted in the error of a too literal reading of symbols. Emerson differentiates between "mystics" (he means those of the dogmatic type) and poets (among whom he also seems to include poetical mystics), explaining that the mystic "nails a symbol to one sense, which was a true sense for a moment, but soon becomes old and false," whereas the (mystical) poet, like Swedenborg, sees that all things have infinite aspects. Swedenborg's changing vision of reality, the children seeing the priests suddenly as dead horses, the transformation of figs into grapes in his mouth, raises the question to Emerson – and subsequently to Nietzsche and Musil – "whether these fishes under the bridge, yonder oxen in the pasture, those dogs in the yard, are immutably fishes, oxen, and dogs, or only so appear to me, and perchance appear to themselves as upright men; and whether I appear as a man to all eyes." ⁴²

It may well have been in Musil's reading of this very essay that he found the name for his "other condition," for Emerson states, referring to poets, mystics, and Brahmins, that they: "found or put themselves in certain conditions".⁴³

Emerson's and Nietzsche's philosophizing was, of course, subsequently supported by the scientific, sociological investigations of the early twentieth century. With the turn-of-the-century's transfer of scientific attention from the outer to the inner realms, from the surface to the depth, came a reordering of values and moral judgments in favor of individually-perceived feeling and against the time-honored communal laws. Historical and anthropological investigations of exotic customs and comparative intercultural values, already present in Nietzsche's wide historical vision, increasingly robbed the realms of social thought and law of their absolute power, heralding an age of ethical relativity to parallel Einstein's discovery of subjective experience of time and space.

Kandinsky, in his cry of "spiritual Revolution," writes:

Here and there are people with eyes which can see, minds which can correlate. They say to themselves: 'If the science of the day before yesterday is rejected by the people of yesterday, and that of yesterday by us of today, is it not possible that that which we call science now will be rejected by the men of tomorrow?' And the bravest of them answer, 'It is possible'.... There are philosophers of Aesthetic who write profound books about an art which was yesterday condemned as nonsense. In writing these books they remove barriers over which art has most recently stepped and set up new ones which are to remain for ever in the places they have chosen. They do not notice that they are busy erecting barriers, not in front of art, but behind it.⁴⁴

Wilhelm Dilthey dated the breakdown of absolute values much earlier: "[T]he system of religious beliefs of the modern European nations and the dogmatic part of their philosophies was (as far as their claim to universality was concerned) seriously undermined from the moment that, at the court of the Hohenstaufen Frederik the Second, Mohammedans and Christians compared their convictions, and the philosophies of Averroes and Aristotle entered upon the horizon of scholastic thinkers."⁴⁵

Certainly the universality of individual political, religious and philosophical dogma was threatened in the Middle Ages, resulting in the complex and subtle rebellion of revolutionaries, heretics and mystics. The more comprehensive vacuum of values at the turn of the last century was however, in its scope and depth, unprecedented. It is, moreover, Dilthey's particularly turn-of-the-century post-Nietzschean perspective which made his sort of philosophical-historical theorizing possible. His conclusions are a typical example of the particular early twentieth-century reading of medieval material, and represent a growing twentieth-century interest in the history, development, and contemporary science of alternate reality-perception.

While ahistorical comparisons, especially of mystical material, do demonstrate overwhelming correspondence (or even evidence of a "collective unconscious") between ancient, medieval, baroque, romantic, modern, and post-modern subjective experiences of reality from a wide variety of cultures, we can still emphasize the particular interest for Robert Musil and his early twentieth-century contemporaries in the phenomena of altered-consciousness states. It was in fact the study of these many and varied types of reality states (taken in the broadest possible definition of such states) which preoccupied, to a greater degree than almost any other topic, the minds and pens of early modernist thinkers. When taken together with the modernist preoccupation with language, an interest

in alternate reality states becomes an interest in metaphor, symbolism, art. "Literal" interpretations of reality (or art) are increasingly viewed as unenlightened. "God" in Musil's modern interpretation of reality, "hadn't meant the world literally at all". And it is precisely this vision of the symbiotic relation between the nature of reality and the use and interpretation of the Word which links the modern experimental artist/philosopher with the medieval mystic/theologian.

Explorations and definitions of alternate reality states around the *Jahrhundertwende* were not limited to variations on traditional Eastern or Western mystical experience, although many such philosophical/theological developments were indeed present and popular. The period demonstrated rather an inordinately "modern" variegated interest. While many scholars catalogued ancient, medieval or contemporary folk rituals of *ecstasis*, and others translated or annotated traditional mystical texts from the Ancients, Oriental mystery religions, the Judeo-Christian, Islamic, Hindu, or Buddhist traditions, or analyzed these texts as case studies in psychology alongside cases of possession, hysteria, multiple personality disorder, and the dream state, still others invented new systems or anti-systems to describe the phenomena.

Sociologists, philosophers, psychologists and artists invented new names and particular peculiar forms or definitions of alternate consciousness states such as: Max Scheler's "*Einsfühlung*," Ludwig Klages' "kosmogonischer Eros," Dilthey's "Religious, poetic, and metaphysical mind," Jung's union of conscious and unconscious mind, Lucien Lévy Bruhl's "*participation mystique*," Martin Buber's "I-Thou" realm," Gustav Landauer's and Fritz Mauthner's silence, Rudolf Steiner's holistic Anthroposophy,⁴⁶ popular Spiritism, Madame Blavatsky's Theosophy, Rilke's Orphism, Kandinsky's "Geistige", Bauhaus' Mazdaznan mysticism, Bruno Taut's colored-glass ecstasy,

expressionist millenarianism, and Musil's own "other condition," with its accompanying constructs of "essayism," the "non-ratioid realm" and the "Utopia" of (variably) "the inductive sensibility," of "the ecstatic society," of "the motivated life," of "exactness," of "the millennium," of "non-rational life," and the mystic-mathematical "*Grenzerlebnisse*" (*boundary experience*).

Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf, in her book about the visionary aesthetic of twentieth-century German literature writes that abstraction in the visual arts, "mit seinem implizierten Verzicht auf die Lokalisierungs- und Benennungsfunktion der Farbe, auf Mischfarben und Formvielfalt, die Hierarchie der Formen, das Figur/Grund-Verhältnis, auf Form und Farbe überhaupt, auf Statik und Materialität" went hand in hand with a mysticism which stressed expression of an "innere Notwendigkeit... etwas unverfälscht aus dem Inneren des Menschens," something which "entzieht rationalen Zugriff".⁴⁷

Artists such as Kandinsky, Frantisek Kupka, Piet Mondrian, Kasimir Malewitsch, and Max Beckmann studied the theosophical and anthroposophical works of Madame Blavatsky and Rudolph Steiner.⁴⁸

The Mazdaznan sect founded by Dr. Ottoman Hanish made its mark on the Bauhaus style and pedagogical methods mainly through Johannes Itten, a self-styled mystagogue with shaved head and monk's robe who taught and worked at the Bauhaus school from approximately 1916 to 1922.

During his Vienna period he [Itten] read Indian philosophy and grew interested in theosophical teachings to which Gropius' first wife, Alma Mahler, is said to have introduced him. In 1918 he noted that he found 'Thought-Forms' (1905) by Annie Besant and Charles W. Leadbeater

in a theosophical bookstore, and after comparing their charts with his paintings he was impressed by their color equations...After Itten and [George] Muche attended a Mazdaznan congress in Leipzig, Itten tried to convert much of the school to the dietary and meditative principles of this esoteric group. [Oskar] Schlemmer wrote that the congress had convinced Itten that 'despite his previous doubts and hesitations, this doctrine and its impressive adherents constituted the one and only truth' and that Itten created a crisis at Bauhaus with his insistence on following these principles" ⁴⁹

Perception scientists studied the mind in its many states of consciousness, testing effects of light, color, sound and pain. Painters, musicians, and scientists had a common interest in the effects of color, light and sound on the brain. This was often linked to mysterious, pseudo-scientific speculation. Kandinsky, for one, "Had called for the study of occult sciences and supersensory experiments to reinforce research on the interrelationships of color, sounds, and smells."⁵⁰ The precise measurement of the "subjective responses of different individuals to an identical, precisely measured color-stimulus" (carried out at Stumpf's Institute in Berlin while Musil was a student there) is just representative of the sort of subjective/scientific sense perception studies of the times.⁵¹ Still others experimented personally with a variety of reality-transforming methods and lifestyles.

Robert Musil, as a thorough cataloguer of contemporary and ancient culture, utilized many different models for the development of his particular type of altered-consciousness experience "the other condition," models contemporary and historical,

anthropological, psychological, scientific, and artistic. Descriptions of this state, in his essays, notes and his novel Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften, as well as all instances of altered consciousness-behavior within the novel, can be traced back to Musil's wide readings and to his own personal experiences with alternate reality. In a typically comprehensive self-contradictory mode, Musil, the manically learned reader, researcher, vivisector suggests that anyone can know what mysticism is merely by lying down in the grass on a sunny day and gazing up at the sky.⁵²

The instantaneous wordless knowledge of ecstasis to be gained by lying in the grass in spring, the universally understood "Liebesglut" (rapture of love),⁵³ the "Grenzerlebnisse" (border experiences) of heightened consciousness, the flashes of insight into another state, the "other" ways of seeing, odd and varied, known and repetitive, were the subject of Musil's tireless scholarly investigation. His notes reveal years of deep comparative reading, thinking and accumulation of all possible examples of all contemporary scientific explanations of such states, all aesthetic explorations, psychological speculations, literary manifestations, anthropological discoveries, historical uncoverings and sociological theorizing of alternate-consciousness states.

The states catalogued are often recorded by Musil and his contemporaries as if they were greatly similar to each other, with little regard for cultural or doctrinal differentiations. For Musil, the usually extremely precise vivisector, all that really matters here is that these experiences all have in common the power to remove the individual from what is conceived of as "normal consciousness" into another realm of seeing which transforms the relationship between fluid individual ideal and static societal real. Although Musil will make an occasional note on the differences between psychosis and religious ecstasy, he rarely differentiates between the ecstasy of a Christian saint and a

member of the Mithraic mystery cult. His habit of conflating traditions is, in effect, part and parcel of an experiment with scandalous metaphoric union; when heresy illuminates orthodoxy, an entirely fresh experience is born.

The ecstatic journey from individuated self to selfless visionary is characterized by a heightened sensation of correspondences between "symbols" and their manifold significances which herald, to the early modernist experimental artist, a magical and powerful relationship between formal innovation in the arts and actual worldly activity. "The ritual is not representation (*Darstellung*), but rather creation/production (*Herstellung*) of the happening." ⁵⁴ The work of art, in other words, is thought to not merely imitate or reproduce nature, but rather to invent it; the "artist as creator", yes, but moreover, the artist as creator of sometimes extremely personal and non-communicable worlds and visions is born, the artist as potentially delusional or solipsistic, the artist as madman. Yet as the world itself becomes increasingly ruled by subjective perspective, by the impressions of the often alienated interior, such *visionaries* or shall we say *enthusiasts* ("Schwärmer")⁵⁵ become the most objective mouthpieces of a culture without qualities.

Fritz Mauthner and Gustav Landauer, whose lengthy books on language and mysticism expressed a radical skepticism of the relation between reality and language, are important background for Musil's ideas. The "reification" of abstract terms such as "Beautiful", "Good", "Ideal", and "Evil" disturbed Mauthner; the implication was that such "ideas" were not at all firmly related to actual communal realities, but served rather to hopelessly frustrate essential communication; such terms did not, suggested Mauthner, actually denote anything at all; the beautiful, the good, the evil, did not, in effect, exist outside of language itself. What Mauthner, in his Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache (1901), called the "Tyrannei der Sprache" would be, in his view, best replaced by the

silence of what his 1922 book, Der Atheismus und seine Geschichte im Abendlande, dubbed "gottlose Mystik". Landauer's Skepsis und Mystik (1903), in harmony with Mauthner's language skepticism, proposed the artistic, i.e., mystical-metaphorical use of language as the only possible chance for communication. Through "herumsprechen", "näher", and "spielen", one might approach meaning.⁵⁶ This sort of mysticism was, however, potentially vague beyond grasping, possibly gobbledygook or "Schleudermystik".

Max Nordau, in his popular Entartung (189-), also diagnosed *Jahrhundertwende* artists (including pre-Raphaelites, symbolists, decadents, realists) as laboring under the *delusion* that symbols (words, images, art) actually have a relation to reality, but with an even more dire prognosis than the language philosophers. Book Two of Nordau's timely attack on fin-de-siècle experimentation is entitled "Mysticism" and concerns itself with the modern *disease* in which:

[T]he subject imagines that he perceives or divines unknown and inexplicable relations amongst phenomena, discerns in things hints at mysteries, and regards them as symbols, by which a dark power seeks to unveil or, at least, to indicate all sorts of marvels which he endeavors to guess, though generally in vain... The simplest word uttered before the [mystic] appears to him an allusion to something mysteriously occult; in the most commonplace and natural movements he sees hidden signs. All things for him have deep backgrounds; far-reaching shadows are thrown by them over adjacent tracts: they send out wide-spreading roots into remote substrata. Every image that rises up in his mind points with

mysterious silence, though with significant look and finger, to other images distinct and shadowy, and induces him to set up relations between ideas, where other people recognize no connection.⁵⁷

Although one might indeed recognize the psychotic and delusional in Nordau's account, one need only look for Nordau's true subject — the artist— to discover that he has, despite himself, actually described the earnest function of the work of art proper, which, if it be made with consummate care, comprises a grouping of individual images which conceals or reveals deeper meanings and relevancies. The art critic, furthermore, in an attempt to read these images or symbols arranged by the artist, may find himself in a similar position to a "degenerate" from a clinic in Magnan whose case Nordau cites: "A child asks drink of him at a public fountain. He finds this unnatural. The child follows him. This fills him with astonishment. Another time he sees a woman sitting on a curbstone. He asks himself what that could possibly mean".⁵⁸ The reader or critic, presuming there is a difference between reading and "reading-into," between interpretation of signs, *Traumdeutung* and pure psychotic correspondences, necessarily looks for meanings in every superficial artistic sign. While Nordau's debunking of the well-known sort of "emperor's new clothes" art criticism (which has, it's true, progressed beyond even his wildest nightmares), he clumsily manages to throw out the brilliant with the banal because he has failed to understand that modernism consists precisely in such an interpretation of non-linear signs. Nordau's critique therefore stumbles blindly into the very heart of the experimental quest: to express the inexpressible subjective experiences through "mystical," that is non-rational, aesthetic, or sensory means.

Even Nordau is not immune to the general fin-de-siècle fascination with consciousness-altering sensory impressions — his whole fanatical diatribe of a book attests to that in the same way that the National Socialist *Entartete Kunst* (degenerate art) exhibitions reveal a suspicious interest in the "depraved" — and his initial attack on mysticism is followed by what seems to be a pseudo-scientific exploration of the neural functions (and malfunctions) of the exhausted brain of the poor degenerated modern artist and his unfortunate decline into mysticism. This decline seems to be, on the whole, a result of a neurasthenic inability to receive stimulus in the clear, robust manner of a healthy, wholesome old-fashioned German— like Goethe, for instance (avoiding, naturally, any reference to the latter's more decadent leanings— that "other" Goethe of the Venetian Epigrams and the Ost-westlicher Diwan). The National Socialist appropriation of the excommunicated Meister Eckhart as "Father of German Mysticism"⁵⁹ belongs in this complex chain of affiliations as well; who is sick and who is healthy, who is rational and who irrational, depends, it seems, on a given ideologue's momentary needs. As Musil muses in his review of Rathenaus' Zur Mechanik des Geistes, the exceptional, i.e., the artist with some extraordinary leaning, proves the rule.

[S]o liegt der Fall anders und es stürmt in die Erinnerung: daß Dostojewski ein Epileptiker war, daß Flaubert es war und das in tiefen Momenten ihres Daseins ihr Benehmen nicht "Sicherheit und heitere Freiheit des Lebens" gewesen sein dürfte. Daß Horaz aus der Schlacht davonlief. Daß Schopenhauer eine Gallspritze war. Nietzsche, Hölderlin Narren. Wilde ein Zuchthäusler. Verlaine ein Trinker, Daß van Gogh sich eine Kugel in den Bauch schoß. Sind das Ausnahmen, so möchte

man die Regel sehn, aber das frühe Griechentum, das Rathenau dafür anruft, hat neben dem Achilleus den Odysseus geliebt, Nietzsche lehrte von dem apollinischen den dionysischen Typus zu scheiden und selbst die Überlieferung von dem vermeintlich größten aller Apolliniker, Goethe ist —wie Bahr in einer älteren Arbeit gezeigt hat —eine Legende.⁶⁰

Nietzsche had, without Nordau's pious or nationalistic moralizing, detected something suspect and even "diseased" in the music of Wagner (Nordau devotes a chapter to the "Wagner Cult"), an odor of conscious obfuscation or "mystification" which a perhaps overly sensitive Thomas Mann obsessively washes off of himself; the artist is naturally relegated to the realm of the "sick" even by his own. The "cult" of Stefan George, with its hyper-aesthetic air of holiness and worship, need be evoked here as well. Musil's association of the "Georgischen Ideologie"⁶¹ with Nazism suggests the dual tendencies of "mystification": mysticism (as obfuscation or breakthrough) may be either "fascist" (with its accompanying constructs of "wholesome," "Germanic," "Romantic," and "*Völkisch*") or revolutionary (as in "heretical," "international," anti-establishment," and "individualistic").

Musil also would refer to a "geheimnisvolle Zeitkrankheit" (a mysterious illness of the times), an illness which, although it extended to all classes and kinds, was particularly prevalent in that less-than-robust demi-monde of the "artistic". The simple health of a progressive businessman and polymath like Musil's Arnheim is paradoxically proven by the fact that neither his career as writer nor his involvement with questions of mysticism encumber his material or social success. Ulrich's friend Walther, on the other hand, a painter who rigorously celebrates wholesomeness and "family values," is inundated with

illness from all sides; his wife's madness, the infiltration of perversion, his best friend's lack of conviction, the prophet Meingast's questionable dark sides, are all more "productive" than his earnest striving. On an individual level, as portrayed in Musil's novel, and in the realm of art and scholarship, the study of "mysticism," in conjunction with the suspect scientific and pseudo-scientific and philosophical explorations of the day, i.e., sense-perception, psychology, etc., was certainly under scrutiny— from both conservative and progressive critics— as a potentially "degenerate" tendency. On the whole however, *Deutsch zu reden*, that is, to speak clearly and simply, was, increasingly associated by the modernist artist class with a sort of stuffy conservatism, a general blindness to the sur- or ir-real nature of reality, an inability to see that all was vague, shimmering, without qualities, without absolute definition. Like the beautiful pearl which is born only in those oysters who are diseased, it is understood that art, especially to the decadent, is a form of illness; "Kunst," writes Musil in one diary entry, "ist eine Krankheitsform," (Art is a form of illness).⁶² Quoting Nietzsche some pages later, Musil makes an important distinction, "die Krankheit selbst kann ein Stimulans des Lebens sein, nur muß man gesund genug für dieses Stimulans sein" (illness itself may be a stimulus to life, granted one is healthy enough for this stimulus).⁶³

The recurring philosophical/theological questions of all religions which ponder the existence of an individual soul/self/ego or of the nature of material reality are transformed in the modern age into psychological/scientific questions. It is easy to see how Mach's declaration of the self as a bundle of nerves could relate to the ancient idea of Democritus and many Indian schools of thought that the world and all its elements and beings are made up of fluid interchanging atoms. The Buddhistic reduction of reality to a living combination of infra-atomic essences (Dharmas) sounds a great deal like modern physics.

Whether the soul or self exists or the individual is merely a vessel through which outer forces flow, whether the material world of objects is dead or alive, these questions and others which had preoccupied theologians from the beginning of all cultures, were suddenly of immediate importance to the psychologizing turn-of-the-century artist. Clearly reality was changeable, personality mutable, and the world of "dead" objects sometimes seemed to come alive. A mystic awakening of sorts, seen by Nordau and others as mass psychosis, degeneracy, or the beginning of the end of culture, was on the rise. This "new age" of mysticism and technology at the turn of the last century is still called "new" today at the turn of a new millennium. Some traditional forms or names of "other conditions" and esoteric mystical traditions with altered-state teachings which were explored in psychological, philosophical, aesthetic works of the period from 1880-1940 include the "Tao" of Lao Tse, the tradition of Stoic "inner freedom," the I Ching, the teachings of the Tibetan Book of the Dead, examples of Sufic "*fana*" (loss of self), Bacchic drunkenness or worship of the "Gods of Intoxication" (*Rauschgötter: mänadische Raserei*, dionysian states), ancient mystery-cult *ecstasis*, primitive spiritism, ancient Upanishadic detachment, Orphism, the dancing of the dervishes, the Indian cult of Kali, the bloody *Geißler* festivals, the sacrifices of the Assassins, Kabala and cultish alchemy, group folk ecstasies (St. Vitus dance etc.), pagan nature rituals, and medieval Christian "detachment" (*Abgeschiedenheit*).

A massive outpouring of academic and popular works on traditional Judeo-Christian and Eastern mystics is documented around this period by Wagner-Egelhaaf. She mentions, in a representative sample of editions from 1890-1936, at least 15 popular Eckhart editions.⁶⁴ Editions of the mystics Johannes Tauler and Jacob Böhme, the Sufi poets, Lao Tse's Tao, The Tibetan Book of the Dead, The Upanishads etc., were likewise on the

rise during this period. One book in particular, the 1929 edition of Das Geheimnis der goldenen Blüte, an ancient orally-transmitted syncretistic Tao-based text, with an introduction and commentary by Carl Jung and Richard Wilhelm, was of particular importance to Musil because of Jung's discussion of the Western uses of Eastern religion. This book, a mixed-up, anachronistic jumble of traditions, is typical of the period's disregard for differentiations between cultures of mysticism. The religion of the "Golden Flower" is vaguely "Eastern" enough for Jung's comparative "Western" purposes. "Die religiösen Dogmen," writes Wagner Egelhaaf, "deutet Jung als empirische Entsprechungen der Archetypen des Unbewußten: Christus beispielweise ist Symbol des 'Selbst', Zentrums der Gesamtheit von Bewußtsein und Unbewußtsein, während das 'Ich' nur das Bewußtseinszentrum meint. Das Selbst verbindet einmaliges mit Ewigen, das Einzelne mit dem Allgemeinseinsten".⁶⁵ As "archetypes" for the individual's interior psychic search for union, objectifications like "God" or "Other", regardless of their traditional ethnographic source, are simply outward projections of the soul's inner activities.

Another important contemporary source for traditional mystical works was Martin Buber's popular anthology, Ekstatische Konfessionen (1909) which, in the description of the unnamed book in Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften, was "christliche, jüdische, indische und chinesische Zeugnisse; zwischen einzelnen von ihnen liegt mehr als ein Jahrtausend. Trotzdem erkennt man in allen den gleichen vom gewöhnlichen abweichenden, aber in sich einheitlichen Aufbau der inneren Bewegung"⁶⁶ and which included excerpts from Farid din Attar, Mechthild von Magdeburg, Rama Krisna, Christina Mirabilis, etc.. The lack of cultural distinction which both Buber and Musil are prone to here is explained by Musil's supra-dogmatic definition of the mystical experience. The mystic is an

independent thinker, in the Emersonian sense, who functions outside of doctrine. It is clear, however, that the mystic experience of "otherness" demands, at least, some sort of original state of normalcy, a "protective roof" (schützendes Dach), from which to turn away.

Sie unterschieden sich von einander fast genau nur um das, was von der Verbindung mit einem Lehrgebäude der Theologie und Himmelsweisheit herrührt, unter dessen schützendes Dach sie sich begeben haben. Wir dürfen also einen bestimmten zweiten und ungewöhnlichen Zustand von großer Wichtigkeit voraussetzen, dessen der Mensch fähig ist und der ursprünglicher ist als die Religionen.

Anderseits haben die Kirchen...das heißt die zivilisierten Gemeinschaften religiöser Menschen, diesen Zustand stets mit einem ähnlichen Mißtrauen behandelt, wie es ein Bürokrat der privaten Unternehmungen entgegenbringt. ⁶⁷

Buber himself had made extensive studies of Eckhart, Böhme, and the Kabala. Another most important historical book for Musil in his study of traditional alternate reality states was Heinrich Gomperz' Lebensauffassung der griechischen Philosophen und das Ideal der inneren Freiheit, which examined the ancient Greek Stoics, as well as the medieval German mystics.

Lists of titles on widely varied topics are to be found in Musil's notes. Which he read and which he just intended to read is sometimes unclear. Some entries are accompanied by lengthy transcriptions and paraphrases; the influence of other books

appears more cryptically in the form of a term or phrase accompanied by a bibliographical citation, or the author's name noted down repeatedly as *Stichwort* next to an important idea. Whether he read them or not, his lists give us an idea of the sort of new books being published and passed around in the very small hyper-intellectual circles of Vienna in the early twentieth century. A characteristic list, with the heading "Sources of the history of religion" (*Quellen der Religionsgeschichte*), includes books on Roman Paganism (1911), Buddhism (1914), Eastern religion (1909), the Vedas (1894), Ignatius Loyola (1905), the history of American religion (1911),⁶⁸ and ancient mystery cults.⁶⁹

Richard Wilhelm's introduction to the German edition of the "Secret of the Golden Flower" (1929), gives an overview of Chinese forms of esoteric interests in 1920's Peking, which reflects, in mirror image, the sort of exotic practices which fascinated his contemporary Europeans : "The methods used are magical writing, prayers, sacrifice, etc., and, in addition to these, widely prevalent mediumistic séances...Experiments are also made with the *planchette*, the flying spirit pencil as the Chinese call it... [in addition to these] the esoteric movement...psychological method, that is meditation, yoga practice...".⁷⁰

Experimental movements traditionally look to other cultures and times for inspiration in creating their new philosophies, the further away from the tradition of their fathers the better. Thus turn-of-the-century Europeans delved deeply into civilizations which they thought were fundamentally distanced from their own (a tradition which, in itself, was paradoxically in keeping with the multi-cultural research methods of their nineteenth-century fathers).

In the ancient mystery cults, modernists found exciting alternative religions which satisfied their need for mystification, magic, and savagery in a way the watered-

down form of contemporary orthodox Christianity no longer could. Anthropological studies of "natural man" (Naturvölker) also whetted the hyper-sophisticated Westerners' appetite for exoticism and otherness. The fluid reality-sense present in most art and ritual of primitive shamanism is a rich model for modern mystic surrealism. Dorothy-Jean Ray, in her book on Eskimo masks, art and ceremony writes: "The shaman was burned alive, thrown into the sea beneath the ice, bound hand and foot, or speared through the stomach. They not only survived the tests, but emerged without a mark –no singed hair, wet clothing, or hole in the stomach. The shaman could also change into an animal. He could kill another shaman merely by staring at him."⁷¹

Medieval Christian mystical visionaries recorded similar shape-changing and miraculous trials of fire and water which take on, in the light of an expanded anthropological knowledge of "primitive" culture, new dimensions. The ancient mystery religions and the still extant "primitive-culture" use of ritual and magical symbolism seemed to many to have more to do with the modernist creation of art than the strictly controlled Christian code of images and sacraments. Yet studies in ancient and primitive blood sacrifice and theophagy, for example, and their influence on developing Christianity, could give new meaning to the Christian ritual of Eucharist, reviving the potential for belief in theatrical enactments. The study of ancient mystery religions was thus an investigation of ways to reinvest the making and experiencing of art (words and images) with belief, meaning, purpose.

The Eskimo shaman's bucket, wherein he sees (as in a crystal ball) other places and worlds and people walking around, and wherein he himself takes "journeys" from life to death or merely from this or that side of the earth to the other, is a good formal metaphor for the bucket-container of a work of art, a novel, for example, for an artistically

limited realm wherein the author and reader can journey to other realms, other lives and deaths. The shaman, like the artist, needs a bucket, or a particularly choreographed and costumed dance – a specifically formal element – in order to take his audience on the journey from life to death and back again. This bucket, from within the experience of an altered-reality state, could even be more loosely conceived of as the human mind, with its individual sense perception and interpretation of visions.

Ludwig Klages' Vom kosmogonischen Eros (1922), reputed to be one of the best read books of the twenties⁷² and an important model for Musil's "Other Condition," describes an altered-reality state based upon the ancient mystery cult of Eros. Although commonly taken to be the basis of the satirized prophet figure Meingast in Musil's novel, Klages' ideas were actually seriously considered by Musil in his notes, and contribute greatly to the ideas expressed by Ulrich and Agathe in the novel as well. Musil never threw anyone's ideas out completely — no matter how much he may have disliked an individual personally, or how much his or her ideas seemed to be tainted with something suspect — before taking from them whatever he could use for his own purposes.

Klages, in the tradition of Nietzschean re-definition and new-appropriation of mythos, reclaims Eros from Plato, Christianity, Romantic Love, and Sexus, from out of the sweetness and light of Idealism, for the daemonic nature-realm of intensity, contradiction, chaos and violence. Klages' Eros is emphatically not the winged boy-god, nor is it the love of ideal forms or Reason, nor is it Christian Karitas, nor is it Sexus, with its desiring and fulfillment. Klages' Eros god takes his place next to the more well-known ancient gods: Adonis, Dionysus, Osiris, Bacchus; and goddesses Astarte, Aphrodite, Isis and Demeter. The cult of Eros, subsumed by Platonic rationality (what Nietzsche, writes Klages, called "präexistantes Christentum" (pre-existent Christianity) was the source of

Klages' definition of the erotic state of ecstasy. Eros can, without a doubt, Klages writes, be compared to Nietzsche's description of the dionysian, although the dionysian may not be called strictly an erotic state. Both states are generally alike in that there exists in each as prerequisite that essential "Überwallen" which breaks through, "...mit einer Wendung Nietzsches aus Schopenhauer...die Schränke der 'Individuation'" (Overflowing...to use Nietzsche's paraphrase of Schopenhauer...the boundaries of 'individuation').⁷³ The state of cosmic Eros is characterized by a traditional separation from self (Entselbstung), by a dissolution of boundaries between the "furthest souls," the transformation of space and time into an element of "ocean," and the synthesis of the "poles of the world." In this state, the inner world becomes—for a moment—the outer world and "apparent reality."⁷⁴ Although this may sound like union, Klages makes sure to clarify that his state is not akin to the ideal of that "Platonist Aristophanes" who promises the lovers that one will be made out of two.

"Die erotische Verknüpfung" writes Klages, in words that anticipate Musil's ideas about Agathe and Ulrich's mystic love, ist nicht Vermischung: sie verbindet die Pole, ohne sie aufzuheben" (The erotic connection is not mixing: it binds the poles without removing them).⁷⁵ The erotic condition is not a drive (*Trieb*) or striving (*Streben*), but a complete condition in itself. It is, like most of the states discussed here, free from desire, goals, motives. Klages is careful to separate it thus from Sexus, Love or Feeling. Eros, Klages continues, can not contain the character of a satisfaction of wish or drive. Satisfaction of desire is only a momentary state from "not-yet-possessing" to "possessing-followed-by-emptiness". Eros on the other hand, is a timeless experience of non-attached fulfillment, similar in many ways to the Eastern model of "detachment". ("A[ga]the sagte: im a.Z. will man nicht besitzen. Sie will ihn aber besitzen.").⁷⁶

Detachment from the world of appearances, a concept common to Christian, Buddhist, Taoist and Muslim sources, is a communing with a higher force or spirit which subsumes the individual, with all his or her qualities, quandaries, specificities. Mircea Eliade writes: "In other words, the Buddha state, the condition of one who is free of all relativity, is symbolized by the Light the Guatama perceived at the moment of his illumination. This Light is described as "clear", "pure", that is to say not only without spot or shadow, but also colorless, and *without qualities*. For this reason it is called "the universal void," since the term void (*sunya*) exactly signifies that it is free of all attributes, of all differentiation: it is the *Urgrund*, the ultimate reality".⁷⁷

Chinese mystical thought, with its philosophy of selfless *wu wei* (doing nothing), offered a radical counterpoint to Western philosophy's development into a philosophy of individual will. The entire Western value scale is called into question under the influence of Eastern thought, with the weight taken from outward success and placed upon inner control and peace. This "re-evaluation" (*Umwertung*) is present in contemporary psychological injunctions to inward looking. The difference however, between a Freudian analysis and a Buddhist meditation is that the place wherein one looks is, on the one hand, one's own detailed personal memory and history, and on the other, the "World-All," "Nothingness," the "Void". Eastern detachment, expressed by way of the Vedas in India and the Tao in China, provided a contrary model to Western activism and the push-push of the industrial bourgeois progress ideal. Psychology also seemed to threaten the continuation of the myth of progress and social harmony. By pulling the rug out from under the scandal-laden society drawing room and exposing the secret desires and thoughts of men and women at the turn of the century, Freudian analysis knocked down, in its own way, the Viennese "Potemkin village".⁷⁸ Suffering, alienation, and uncertainty

came out of the *armoire*; happiness, as a realistic ideal, seemed a myth of the repressed. Beginning much earlier with Schopenhauer (versed in the Upanishads as well as ancient Stoic thought) in the nineteenth century, German philosophical thought had flirted with its anti-self of spiritual quietism. The Schopenhauerian idea of man eternally caught in a world of suffering—which he might only escape by relinquishing his will—seeped, despite Nietzsche's disavowal, into the twentieth century. The possibility of a momentary release from suffering through art is very relevant to Musil's studies of momentary aesthetic and mystical states.

In Musil's notes for the development of his character Ulrich, one passage in particular makes a strong impression. A sketch of Ulrich's education, it marks the epic-making moments in his life as the reading of "Emerson, Nietzsche, und ... der Tao";⁷⁹ they constitute three major influences on his development of the concept of essayistic thought. The Tao comes up again and again in Musil's notes as a *Stichwort* for a certain kind of thought, place, condition and tradition. The cryptic question of what Musil means when he refers in his late notes for the novel to Ulrich's "Auseinandersetzung mit Laotse" (Ulrich's "consideration of [or argument with] Lao Tse") is a suggestive one. At first glance one would have to assume he is talking here about the fruitful tension between language and silence, attachment and detachment.

The influence of the Tao can be seen in other thinkers from this period as well, particularly Mauthner and Jung and perhaps most importantly Ludwig Wittgenstein. The Tao's importance for early twentieth-century Western thought may lie in the problem of language expressed within the mystical context of wordless experience. From Lao Tse's (551-479 B.C.E.) first pronouncement: "The Tao which can be spoken is not the true Tao," through Nietzsche's "Of what is great one must either be silent or speak with

greatness," to Wittgenstein's "... wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muß man schweigen" ("about that which one can not speak one must be silent"), seems but a small step. In the tradition of Nicolas of Cusa's early Renaissance break from Scholasticism's literal readings, which introduced a new way, a metaphoric way of reading, Wittgenstein favored "showing" over "telling". Just the same, the philosopher admitted readily that words are the only tools we have. Wittgenstein's koan-like pronouncement that those readers who had followed him thus far up his ladder of language should promptly throw down the ladder which brought them there, expresses poignantly the mystical difficulty. Using the tools of philosophical systems, we are to overthrow the systems.

The Western modern's retreat into silence is a complex reaction to centuries of literature, philosophy and invention in the service of positivist progress. Jung's commentary to The Secret of the Golden Flower warns against naive imitation of Eastern ways. All collective unconscious aside, Jung stresses the fundamental difference in the progression of Eastern and Western culture as a difference in emphasis on conscious or unconscious mind.

For the Western mind, all too entangled in hyper-consciousness, the Eastern unconscious should be used as a counterbalance. Modern neuroses, writes the psychologist, are caused by the Westerner's ignorance of his or her unconscious side, in other words: the mythic, feminine, animus, or yin. The one-sided hyper-consciousness leads to modern scenarios such as this one described by Jung, reminiscent of Thomas Mann's story of the bourgeois Thomas Buddenbrook's reading of Schopenhauer: a businessman rises to wealth and power by use of his conscious will. At the height of his career he breaks down, due to repression of the unconscious, into neuroses and self-destruction.⁸⁰ This is where the Western mind's use of Eastern philosophy comes in.

The "Tao," Jung explains, is the perfect balance between the unconscious and the conscious mind, between the "fantasy activity" of the collective unconscious and the individual's rational scaffold of conscious mind. Here Jung quotes Nietzsche: "frei im liebevollsten Muß" (in most loving bondage, free).⁸¹

The Tao as an alternate-reality state is a realm of detachment but not of inaction. Lao Tse advises his readers to act, but without interest in the outcome. This non-attached action is certainly a model for Musil's man without qualities who involves himself more or less in the activities of the world without actual spiritual or ethical engagement. This is for Musil, as we shall see, both an admirable and potentially deplorable characteristic. Ulrich and Agathe's "Traumzustand der Moral" (dream condition of morality), a mystical state wherein all one's actions flow in a natural "goodness" beyond good and evil, is related to the Taoist concept of detached action. Ulrich and Agathe speak of a detachment from ordinary models of morality, from ordinary consciousness, a detachment which is, in another sense, deeply involved, aware, and alive in every moment. It is a dream condition which engenders the birth of fresh ethical correspondences in every moment.

The tradition of ethical unchangingness, the sense of a central strength or spiritual place which cannot be touched by the vagaries of circumstance, passion, or incident, which is at the core of stoic thought and is naturally related to the mystic state of selflessness, which will be developed by Eckhart and other Christian and non-Christian thinkers into an ethic of existentialism, begins here. The stoic, unmoved by outer opinion, does not act in accordance to custom, nor should he act in fear of retribution or in hopes of reward.

The true stoic, in understanding of the natural vicissitudes of life, in acceptance of the existence of both pain and pleasure, good and bad, strives for a state of absence of

pain or at the most contentment. This state, in its separation from feeling and stern dependence upon a rational accounting of loss and gain seems at first glance to be the polar opposite of any sort of ecstatic state. On closer examination, one may see within the stoic ideal of inner freedom an important philosophical spiritual precedent for the development of mystic thought and an early example of ecstatic experience.

In so far as ecstasy means a separation or exit from self, and stoicism implies a separation from the needs and desires of the material world or physical self, we see the stoic as a form of mystic. Heinrich Gomperz' book (a favorite of Musil's) Die Lebensauffassung der griechischen Philosophen und das Ideal der inneren Freiheit (1904), rewrites the history of early Greek thought in the tradition of Nietzsche, telling a tale not of perfect harmony and grace, but rather celebrating the more difficult and complex ideal of *Amor fati* – the "love of fate": "Kehren wir nun zum Ideal der inneren Freiheit zurück! Es sollte das Glück des Menschen unabhängig machen von seiner äußeren Lage. Dies heißt, wie wir jetzt wissen: es enthält die Forderung, wir sollten in allen Lagen die Welt als Ganzes zum Gegenstand unserer Wunschbejahung machen, mit ihr als Ganzem zufrieden sein, keinen ihrer Teile als Übel anerkennen."⁸²

Thus stoicism, in its radical detachment, could actually be a means to the ultimate free embrace, the brave "yea-saying" of Nietzsche.

The problem with detachment, for Musil, and within the history and philosophy of mystic thought on the whole, is this conflict between contemplation and action. The act: ritualistic, theatrical, or more comprehensively, as an extreme change in one's way of life, is paradoxically the lesser known core of the mystic "way".

Quoting from the Sufi poet Farid al din Attar's Conference of the Birds, Musil titles a chapter which deals with the committing of a crime, "Wirf alles, was du hast, ins

Feuer, bis zu den Schuhen" (Cast all thou hast into the fire, even unto thy shoes). This is a casting off of even one's morality in the interest of coming closer to the bottom line of nothingness. For Attar, and in Sufi philosophy in general, the mystical experience of nothingness must be followed by action. Quoted in Buber's Ecstatic Confessions is this passage from the Conference of the Birds:

To Love one must have no mental reservations; one must be prepared to throw a hundred worlds into the fire; one must know neither belief nor unbelief, harbor neither doubt nor confidence. Upon this way there is no difference between good and evil; where there is Love, good and evil have vanished...Be still, leave all this and act.....now it is time to act, instead of remaining in uncertainty or frivolity; get up, then, and traverse the toilsome valley, having renounced your mind and heart.⁸³

In that late note on his still unfinished novel Musil makes the interesting remark⁸⁴ that the story of Ulrich and Agathe, the central protagonists of his novel, two thoroughly modern and more or less secular cosmopolitans in turn-of-the-century Vienna, aware of all the strands of new science, psychology, and empiricism, would have been better told as the story of Abdul Hasan Summum and the Sufis of the Middle Ages. He appears not to be referring to that Hasan the Assassin leader, reputed mystic and scholar of Ismailism and Sufism, who declared in 1164 that the Chains of the Law had been broken, and that the Millennium or Qiyamat had arrived, speaking the famous lines (quoted by Nietzsche and, later, William Burroughs) : "Nichts ist wahr, alles ist erlaubt" (Nothing is true, every thing is permitted).⁸⁵ Musil refers to another heretic Sufi poet; yet the Assassins would

also have been familiar to him through his reading of Nietzsche as well as Persian history. Peter Lamborn Wilson, in his book, Scandal: Essays in Islamic Heresy, has this to say about the breaking of the Chains of the Law:

The Law in question is not only religious Law but what might be called the Law of the Ordinary. The Shaman knows that freedom is upside-down and inside-out. To realize it, against the sluggish tide of the ordinary, necessitates a spiritual path of reversed polarities, outrageous trickery and unseemly behavior. Tribal society preserves a sense of the 'sacredness' of such reversals. Civilization and outward religion gradually suppress them or evolve a theological mysticism which explains and allegorizes them away.⁸⁶

In a 1926 interview about the progress of his novel (at that time entitled "Die Zwillingschwester" — The Twin Sister), Musil said about his interest in the criminal act, "Die Welt kann nicht ohne das Böse bestehen, es bringt Bewegung in die Welt. Das Gute allein bewirkt Starre".⁸⁷

And the third book of the novel is teeming with speculation around the question of Good and Evil and whether or not these terms, in a time without qualities or values, still carried any meaning. To Ulrich and Agathe, the notion that some nominally evil or immoral act, if carried out with the true intensity of a seeker for the Good, might be the sole means to the creation of new forms of authentic morality is of more than abstract interest. This quandary leads them to speak, more or less earnestly, about the good-bad person and the bad-good person as new character definitions, and to deliberate at length

about their own ethical responsibility to act. This conversation is quite close to the more general existentialist mood to be picked up in "crime" novels of the period by Gide, Sartre, Camus et al. The idea of the need to commit some kind of act, gratuitous or intentioned, in the interest of liberating society from its malaise, becomes increasingly strong.

And Ulrich, beginning his discourse with his sister on what will become one of their favorite topics, quotes a "Mann, den ich liebe"— Emerson: saying to Agathe, "Die Tugenden der Gesellschaft sind Laster für den Heiligen"⁸⁸ Whereupon his sister begins her relentless questioning, a challenging questioning which will force Ulrich's abstract philosophizing into the physical realm of action. Her question runs as follows: "Du würdest also einen, der aus Gewohnheit ehrlich ist, kaum gut nennen? Aber einen Dieb, der zum erstenmal stiehlt, während ihm fast das Herz aus der Brust springt, nennst du gut?!"⁸⁹

Similarly an early Sufi, Junayd of Bagdad, listing the prerequisites for enlightenment, wrote: "hunger and taking leave of the world and breaking familiar ties and renouncing what men deem good." Oesterreich, in his discussion of the consequences of conversion, uses similar words. Musil notes: "Break with the past, profession, family, etc."⁹⁰ Musil was certainly thinking, with this paraphrased notation from Oesterreich, of his characters Ulrich and Agathe. Ulrich, abandoning, without going hungry, three possible successful careers and an important role in Viennese politics, and Agathe, abandoning her husband and former life, are set free to explore the "Other Condition" only after the death of their father. Their spiritual and ethical explorations necessarily demand the last prerequisite of Junayd of Bagdad: "renouncing what men deem good." This renunciation, more than just a turning away, or passive aggression against social

interaction, must, for Ulrich and Agathe, take the form of an act of social transgression against static morality.

In one of his more famous sermons, Meister Eckhart talks about a biblical passage wherein Jesus enters a fortress town and is welcomed by a virgin, who is also a childbearing woman. In explaining the metaphors Virgin and Woman, Eckhart illustrates the relationship between *vita contemplativa* and *vita activa*, or the combination, which can exist within one person, of emptiness and fruitfulness. Which is more fruitful, a contemplative or an active life? The answer, for both Musil and Eckhart, seems to be both.

Eckhart's imagery corresponds strikingly to Musil's central idea that the experience of the "Other Condition" results in something called "moral fruitfulness," a birth of new values out of the annihilation of the old. The Virgin, Eckhart explains, that is someone who is empty of all foreign images, who is single and free. This is good and necessary, he says. Yet "Nun gebt acht und seht genau zu! Wenn nun der Mensch immerfort Jungfrau wäre, so käme keine Frucht von ihm. Soll er fruchtbar werden, so ist es notwendig, daß er *Weib sei*. 'Weib' ist der edelste Name, den man der Seele zulegen kann".⁹¹ And Eckhart carries this metaphor further, to speak of single persons and married ones, chastising those people who marry themselves to any single idea, goal, person or hope, even if this idea be one of holiness, union or an image of God itself. It was perhaps this ambivalent relation to even Holiness or Goodness which, along with charges of pantheism, caused the most trouble for Eckhart.⁹² The Sufis called this lack of qualities the "doctrine of annihilation of individual consciousness" (*fana*). Emerson, who translated Hafiz and read Sufi literature, called it "self-reliance," writing, "Every thought is a prison; every heaven's also

a prison." ⁹³ Nietzsche, who was well versed in Emerson, wrote, echoing the American, of the necessity of the soul's independence:

Nicht an einer Person hängen bleiben: und sei sie die geliebteste —
jede Person ist ein Gefängnis, auch ein Winkel. Nicht an einem Vaterlande
hängen bleiben: und sei es das leidenste und hilfsbedürftigste —es ist
schon weniger schwer, sein Herz von einem siegreichen Vaterlande
loszubinden....Nicht an seiner eigenen Loslösung hängen bleiben: an jener
wollüstigen Ferne und Fremde des Vogels, der immer weiter in die Höhe
flieht, um immer mehr unter sich zu sehen — die Gefahr der Fliegenden.

— And finally, Nietzsche reminds the independent individual not to become too attached to his or her independence either, a defense against a too unidirectional movement away from the world: "Nicht an seiner eigenen Loslösung hängen bleiben: an jener wollüstigen Ferne und Fremde des Vogels, der immer weiter in die Höhe flieht, um immer mehr unter sich zu sehen— die Gefahr der fliegenden."⁹⁴ Musil is well aware that every person, idea or heaven is potentially a prison, and writes, "Idealen sind die ärgsten Feinde des Idealismus! Ideale sind toter Idealismus."⁹⁵

Eckhart's revolutionary mysticism of emptiness begins thus with a collapse of normal reality consciousness. Everything which once was known, understood, accepted is, in the mystic consciousness of "breakthrough" suddenly devoid of meaning. In mystical terms this breakdown of the qualities, habits and constructions of normal existence, leads to the lack of qualities which is referred to in the title of Musil's novel.

The traditional mystical phrase, "âne eigenschaft," ⁹⁶ translated best as a combination of without possessions/without qualities/ without the things which are one's own, was

transformed by Meister Eckhart in the thirteenth century. More than just a release from material possessions it came to include a release from spiritual possessions or attachments in the form of beliefs, habits, preconceptions or hopes, is an extreme state of spiritual , material and moral vagabondage.

It is easy to see how this state of lacking qualities, otherwise termed as a state of “Ledigkeit” (singleness) or “Abgeschiedenheit” (separated non-attachment) could be related to the early modernist vision of relative values. Transforming the negative vacuum of valuelessness into a potentially fruitful realm of new ideas, visions and ethics, Eckhart's state of free thought provided the twentieth-century seekers a positive model of experimentation and interpretation. Openness need not be then a bankruptcy of meaning, but may be, instead, a well of multiple meanings.

The elaborate interpretations of visions and scriptural images by Meister Eckhart and visionaries like Hildegard von Bingen is a precedent for reading varied meanings into single images. While Hildegard, a relatively canonical mystic who stayed very much on the right side of the church authorities (who was herself actually the church authority), wrote extraordinarily dogmatic exegeses of her wildly individualized visions—neutralizing by her control of meaning the very chaos which her subconscious had released—others, like Mechthild von Magdeburg, were more free with their images, allowing them to grow, spread and vine, like wisteria on the stronger edifice of the Church.

Eckhart's exegesis of scripture, with his charming “this word means” and “by this we are to understand....”, while guiding the uninformed one way or the other, yet took liberties with the sacred texts which were tragically unacceptable to the authorities. In any case, whether closely controlled or more freely insidious, the very act of interpreting

images opened the door to the mystical understanding or individual combining of conceivably unintended meanings. The use of vernacular in many mystic texts made this game more dangerous.

What de Certeau calls the "lie" refers to the mystic metaphoric use of language which assumes that all language is more or less separated from truth.

To reiterate, the lie is no longer that which, were it to be eliminated, would allow for a system of truth or an order of thought. It is the field in which the effects of utterance will be produced. Mystic discourse does not expel the demons of deception. Just as, in the past, monks would depart for the Egyptian desert to be, through their bodies, the operators of the Spirit on earth and the very tongue of the Deceiver, so this discourse is a spiritual practice of 'the diabolical'.⁹⁷

Secret occult meanings could be couched in seemingly harmless texts, a practice made much of by the turn-of-the-century researchers of ancient esoterica. That formal tricks or arrangements of words and numbers could impart information beyond and even in contradiction to the supposed content of the text, gave experimental artists courage to attempt alternate methodologies of meaning. Parodying this trend in modern art, Nordau prophesies its furthest extreme. In the future (if his contemporaries will not listen to his warnings):

Books such as those of the present day have not been in fashion for a very long time. Printing is now only on black, blue, or gold paper; on another color are single incoherent words, often nothing but syllables, nay,

even letters or numbers only, but which have a symbolic significance which is meant to be guesses by the color and print of the paper and form of the book, the size and nature of the characters. Authors soliciting popularity make comprehension easy by adding to the text symbolical arabesques, and impregnating the paper with a definite perfume. But this is considered vulgar by the refined and connoisseurs, and is but little esteemed. Some poets who publish no more than isolated letters of the alphabet, or whose works are colored pages on which is absolutely nothing, elicit the greatest admiration.⁹⁸

Nordau's prophecies make one think of Mallarmé's celebration of the empty page, Antonin Artaud's half-mad antics, or of the minimalist paintings of the ensuing century, or, in our day, John Cage's silent music. Things were, in fact, tending this way, perhaps more than Nordau ever really imagined. Whether or not one sees the significance of the artists' signs or not is, naturally, a question of degree of communal legibility versus individual hallucination. The question of personal language and artistic expression is raised earlier still in Gottfried Keller's novel Der Grüne Heinrich (1855) when Heinrich, who had struggled with the dichotomy between his personal, metaphoric understanding of words like "cloud", "God", and "white" (which made him think of things like a girl's white dress or the glowing gold of a weather vane), becomes an "abstract" painter in the days before such a thing even really existed. Keller's Heinrich, in the midst of a nervous breakdown, paints finally with his own vocabulary, but it is illegible to others.

Turn-of-the-century studies of occult Kabbalistic forms of mysticism, or letter- and number-mysticism, including an interest in anagrams, palindromes and other secret codes

of formal magic, relate to the early twentieth-century interest in art as ritual and the intensely spiritual exploration of formal experimentation (abstraction, cubism, dada, surrealism) as sacred work. A representative sampling of titles on this topic listed in Musil's notes includes: Rosenkreuz u Bafomet, Versuch der Lösung zweier altermagischer Quadrate (1932), Das Alphabet in Mystik (1922), Die Kabbala (1910), Entwicklung u[nd] Untergang des Tempelherrordens (1887), and Preisendanz' classic, Papyri Graecae Magicae (1928). Not only did these studies contribute to Musil's overall conception of form in art, they were certainly part of the source material for scenes in his novel. Clarisse's magical conception of repeating, changing, and doubling words, for example; or Ulrich and Agathe's childhood game of burying slips of paper with secret messages inscribed; or, in general, the siblings' holy/heretical "Knights Templar" aura, which makes them feel like priestly soldiers of ecstatic law-breaking.

Musil noted that ecstasy, in Klages' conception, was related to the creation of art: "Gibt Teil am schöpferischen Geschehen"(takes part in creative activity).⁹⁹ Ecstatic experience is credited by Klages as the origin of art. The original primal experience of ecstasy in the pre-Greek, Pelagian period, was the source of all human creation. The ecstatic experience, which was characterized by inner pictures, visions, imaginings, moved the visionary to the creation of "bildnerischen Bemühungen" (artistic images).¹⁰⁰ The dream visions of the ecstatic, furthermore, are seen as more real than the world of "Tatsachen" (facts). "Wer die Form des Personenseins in der Ekstase zersprengt," writes Klages, "für den geht in dem selben Augenblick die Welt der Tatsachen unter, und es aufersteht ihm mit alles verdrängender Wirklichkeitsmacht die Welt der Bilder."¹⁰¹

These images, the beginning of art, are called by Klages "Urbilder" and represent the multiple possibilities of reality. A particular momentary vision of a wood, for

example, "einmal, während er flammt in Glut der Abendsonne" (once, as it flames in the blaze of the evening sun)¹⁰² can be enough to tear the Self from itself and afford the soul an alternate vision of reality; an *Urvision* of the wood, which is only one of many possible "Urbilder" can never, so writes Klages, be completely categorized into "sagbare Eigenschaften" (speakable qualities). The momentary experiences of reality create many-layered metaphoric relations between the experiencer and reality. Yet Klages is careful to note: these are not "Gleichnisse," not, in other words, "*just* metaphors".

The ecstasies' visions, like the songs of the runic bards, create, with their words, images, their particular chameleon-like ways of seeing, new magical relations to reality, new realities. Thus the ancient Chinese poem which describes the king's bride as a tree in silk foliage dress, or the Indian tale which calls the half-unclothed hero a flame of beauty surrounded by smoke, or the German Romantic author who tells his love that her image has become a star to him, all are speaking from out of an ecstatic experience of reality wherein forms have changed their shapes, wherein reality has transformed itself. Klages gives examples of Russian and Finnish runic bards whose poems speak of the magical power of singing itself. The visionary experience thus inspires the creative expression, and the created image in turn magically works upon reality.

Klages' "Urbilder" may correspond vaguely to Jung's "collective unconscious" as a series of images, accessible to the individual in a state of altered consciousness, which unite him or her with original energies. Although Jung's primary concern is the curing of neuroses, his method is, in part, the creation of art. Through his practice of "fantasy activity," wherein the patient is instructed to allow his or her unconscious mind free reign, certain recognizable visual features are repeated. In these features Jung finds the inter-cultural creation of mandalas—or magic circles usually representing a central figure

surrounded by four outer figures—from Indian to Chinese, to early Christian to the Pueblo Indians to ancient pagan fairy circles, to the sun wheel of Rhodesia, to the naive drawings of his turn-of-the-century European patients.

For Jung, it is not the creation of art, but the healthful re-ordering of his patients' inner psychic state which is benefited by these reconnections with the "ur-images". Thus for him,

Magical practices are nothing but the projections of psychic events, which, in cases like these, exert a counter-influence on the soul, and act like a kind of enchantment of one's personality. That is to say, by means of these concrete performances, the attention, or better said, the interest, is brought back to an inner, sacred domain, which is the source and goal of the soul...the unity of life and consciousness which, though once possessed, has been lost, and must now be found again.¹⁰³

Magical practices represent, in any case, a transformation of reality—inner or outer as the case may be. And the creation of art, raised to the level of sacred activity, is primary to the process of self knowledge and recreation of world. In Musil's notes on Kosmogonischer Eros he stresses Klages' "Hauptkriterium" (main criterium) as: "die ständige Verwandelbarkeit des Gegebenen" (the constant changeability of the given), and adds his own interpretation: "Die Straße wird Kanal u[nd] s[o] w[eiter]. So auch in Märchen. Die Vielgestaltigkeit indischer Dämonen u[nd] Götter ist dannach nicht bloß metaphorisch gemeint."¹⁰⁴ In a diary entry entitled "Aus dem stilisierten Jahrhundert," dating from somewhere between 1899 and 1904, Musil has sketched a modern Viennese

clash of personality types, the " $2 \times 2 = 4$ Menschen" vs. the *Hellseher* or *Hellsehender*, which champions the ancient wisdom of *Verwandelbarkeit*. The word "Hellseher"—while containing within it the possible connotations of "one who sees clearly, i.e., "hellsichtig"—carries the primary meaning of "clairvoyant", a word which later would come to be associated for Musil with Jaensch's work on the extraordinary optical imagery seen by eidetics.

Das kommt von der zweimalzwei ist vier Logik. Ja aber 2×2 ist doch 4! Gewiß, wir sagen es und weiter geht die Sache niemanden an...Fragen Sie einen von diesen [$2 \times 2 = 4$ Menschen]: "Bitte was ist eine Straße, so erhalten Sie die Antwort: "Straße, Schluß, bitte stören Sie mich nicht weiter"...Nach einiger Zeit finden Sie: "Aha Straße, etwas Gerades, Taghelles, dient um sich fortzubewegen." Und Sie empfinden plötzlich ein kolossales Überlegenheitsgefühl, wie ein Hellsehender unter Blinden. Sie sagen sich: Ich weiß ganz bestimmt, daß eine Straße nichts Gerades, Taghelles ist, sondern das sie vergleichsweise ebensogut etwas Vielverzweigtes, Geheimnis- und Rätselvolles ist (sein kann), mit Fallgruben und unterirdischen Gängen, versteckten Kerkern und vergrabenen Kirchen." ¹⁰⁵

The "seer" (*Hellseher*) is distinguished from the $2 \times 2 = 4$ people by his ability to see other possible shapes, colorations and definitions of something as seemingly "known" as the street. The intensity of Musil's vivisection of the "known" world is typical of the early

modernist existential attempt, subsumed under Rilke's phrase from Malte Laurids Brigge: "Sehen lernen" — "learning to see", by which we must understand: learning to see anew. While this new-seeing was a part of the early modernist agenda, it clearly had roots in the mystic traditions of shape- and form-shifting which were the original basis for the development of a culture of art making. And these roots were uncovered at the turn of the century just as experimental artists were becoming more concerned with the radical effects of form on consciousness.

A lengthy entry in Musil's notes covers a lecture by Musil's friend Erich von Hornbostel on the poetry of the ancient "Kulturvölker" (folk cultures). Musil is clearly excited about Hornbostel's anthropological defense of form as the basis of poetry and religion. Hornbostel (a gestalt psychologist and musicologist), notes Musil under the heading "Eskimotanzeln," speaks of the strict formal structure of ritual songs as proof of their magical powers. The meaning of ritual, Musil writes, is a renewal of the "Naturgeschehen" (process of nature). It is thus "Vorbildzauber" (imitative magic). Reality, in other words, is not *represented* by the ritual, but actually *created* by the ritual. Reality is created "durch die Tat und durch das Wort" (through the act and through the Word), a relation which raises the stakes of artistic representation to the highest possible level: "Formfehler sind Sachfehler und darum gefährlich." Just as Klages had asserted in his discussion of ancient mystery religions: "Römische Opferregel: Sciendum in sacris simultae pro veris accipi/Vorgetäushtes ist für wahr zu halten"... his theatrical reality concept can be seen in Christianity as well: "in der Hostie Brot u[nd] Wein ist Gott," notes Musil, "Bilder aus Kuchenteig udgl."¹⁰⁶

Hofmannsthal's discussion of ritual sacrificial death (Opfertod) and poetic symbolism similarly aims to restore art to its ancient position as reality-relevant. To do

this he removes from the objects of reality their absolute qualities, simultaneously stripping them of their solid casings and infusing them with many-layered mystic qualities. When Clemens, one of the interlocutors of Hofmannsthal's "Gespräche" attempts to explain what exactly it is that swans *mean*, Gabriel interrupts him urgently:

Laß mich dich unterbrechen. Ja, sie bedeuten, aber sprich es nicht aus, was sie bedeuten: was immer du sagen wolltest, es wäre unrichtig. .die Tiere sind die eigentlichen Hieroglyphen, sind die lebendige geheimnisvolle Chiffren, mit denen Gott unaussprechliche Dinge in die Welt geschrieben hat...Es sind Chiffren, welche aufzulösen die Sprache unmächtig ist.¹⁰⁷

In a traditional metaphor of early Christianity, Hofmannsthal has made the world God's book, and the things of the world into teachers or interpreters of the unspeakable messages. These things, seen "mit den Augen der Poesie" (with the eyes of poetry), despite their roles as translators, are not to be understood simply, concretely or literally. The moment one defines the images, or in the language of Maeterlinck, brings the sparkling gems up from the deep waters, they are meaningless, lusterless, dull stones.

The mystic moment, however ultimately untranslatable, is for Hofmannsthal the source and magic of poetry. Imagining the very first ritual sacrifice, Gabriel makes the connection between ritual action and art. The sacrificed animal dies for the man, just as the audience member watching a play lives—in the mystic moment of loss of self—the enacted life of the actor on the stage:

Und einen Augenblick lang muß er geglaubt haben, es sei sein eigenes Blut; einen Augenblick lang, während ein Laut des wollüstigen Triumphes aus seiner Kehle sich mit dem ersterbenden Stöhnen des Tieres mischte, muß er die Wollust gesteigerten Daseins für die erste Zuckung des Todes genommen haben: er muß, einen Augenblick lang, in dem Tier gestorben sein, nur so konnte das Tier für ihn sterben. Daß das Tier für ihn sterben konnte, wurde ein großes Mysterium, eine große geheimnisvolle Wahrheit. Das Tier starb hinfort den symbolischen Opfertod. Aber alles ruht darauf, daß auch er in dem Tier gestorben war, einen Augenblick lang. Daß sich sein Dasein, für die Dauer eines Atemzuges, in dem fremden Dasein aufgelöst hatte—Das ist die Wurzel aller Poesie...¹⁰⁸

Hofmannsthal must have been doing his own early research on ancient mystery religions and the meaning of ritual. Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's influential book, much cited by Musil, had only appeared in German as Das Denken der Naturvölker in 1926 (in English as How Natives Think). Hofmannsthal wrote that when one speaks of symbols one must speak to children, pious people or poets. Here he is mapping out a sort of anthropological study along Lévy-Bruhl's lines: how poets think. Lévy-Bruhl explains: "As soon as we realize how primitives view entities, we see that they view reproductions in exactly the same way."¹⁰⁹

It is a well-known fact that primitives...regard artificial likenesses, whether painted or carved, or sculptural, as real, as well as the individual they depict. 'To the Chinese,' says De Groot, 'association of

images with beings actually becomes identification, both materially and psychically. An image, especially if pictorial or sculptural, and thus approaching close to the reality, is an alter ego of the living reality, an abode of the soul, nay it is that reality itself...A young woman has a child by a clay statue of her husband; portraits are endued with life; a wooden dog starts running; paper animals, horses, for instance, act exactly like living animals....¹¹⁰

This fluidity between reality and representation is strongly reminiscent of the sorts of conscious formal games played by modernist experimental writers, particularly Robert Walser, Musil and Kafka, to break down the narrative barriers between material, form, fantasy and idea. Such formal tricks are present in cubist works and surrealist paintings, collages, or performance pieces of the period as well. The new science of Gestalt psychology, founded by Christian von Ehrenfels — a student of Ernst Mach's Beiträge zur Analyse der Empfindungen — seemed perfectly suited to support artistic emphasis on the "inner necessity" of form. Musil, whose friends Johannes von Allesch and Erich von Hornbostel were gestalt psychologists, also directly occupied himself with the new philosophy/science while working in his teacher Carl Stumpf's "Institut für Experimentalpsychologie" in Berlin. A 1930 article by Hornbostel (which Musil took with him into his Swiss exile) entitled "Gestaltpsychologie zur Stilkritik" speaks of the all important formal relation of the parts to the whole. Just as one could no longer read a text literally, or linearly, picking out the individual words and adding up their separate meanings, so one could not expect any work of art to be merely the sum of its parts: "Das Musikstück ist nicht die Summe der herausanalysierbaren Merkmale—es kommt nicht

allein, ja nicht einmal in erster Linie darauf an, daß diese und diese Merkmale beisammen sind, vielmehr darauf, wie sie zusammenwirken, wie sie zueinander und im Ganzen stehen." ¹¹¹ "Franz Blei zitierend," writes Marie Louise Roth, "gibt Musil eine treffende Begriffsbestimmung der künstlerischen Gestalt, die eine 'seelische Funktion' ist."¹¹² "Blei aber zeigt," Roth continues, "daß der innerste geistige Gehalt eines Gedichts nur in der einen Weise, eben seine Verse ausgedrückt werden kann, und nichts anderes ist für ihn, was an einem Menschen Form, haltung, Lebensart, das in keine Sprache Übersetzbare des bloßen Daseins bedeutet: ein letzter, unzerlegbarer Ausdruck des Geistigen."

Musil's interest in the "Gestalt" was, not surprisingly, considering the interdisciplinary studies of Hornbostel and others, directly related to his anthropological readings. Lévy-Bruhl's groundbreaking 1925 study, stresses the importance of form in "primitive" culture. In order to maintain the status quo and not suffer natural disasters, accidents, etc., it is necessary to stick slavishly to the formal details of the past. Innovations of the slightest kind are seen as the cause of calamity. "It is the direct result of active belief in the mystic properties of the things, properties connected with their shape, and which can be controlled through this, but which would be beyond the power of man to regulate, if there were the slightest change in form. The most apparently trifling innovation may lead to danger, liberate hostile forces, and finally bring about the ruin of its instigator and all dependent upon him."¹¹³

Such innovations are thus to be avoided in the realms of craft and art, building, clothing, ritual, and all other parts of life if a society desires to maintain its traditions and present state of good fortune. If, on the other hand, a society or individual wished, like the modernist seekers, to transform itself radically, even at the risk of danger, would it not

follow that the most expedient methodology would be radical formal innovation? Turn-of-the century experimenters reading Lévy-Bruhl must have been thinking along these lines.

Absinthe-tinted bohemianism, as a celebration of alternate lifestyles and underworlds, itself constitutes a form of alternate reality, or realities, "temporary autonomous zones"¹¹⁴ which act as frictional countercultures to the norm. Bohemianism around the turn of the century embraced countless forms of reality experimentation made manifest in celebrations of exotic otherness. Studies of bizarre and far-flung customs, rituals, costumes, and dances broadened the worldview, coloring the traditional rituals and social mores of the cosmopolitan Viennese or Berliner into an entirely new subjective context. Moral standards, ways of life, from home decorations to sexual experimentation, became suddenly wide open to possibility: Biedermeier, Bauhaus, Persian, Adolf-Loosian, Chinese, bohemian, stark, cluttered Victorian, Wiener Werkstätte, syneisactism, pederasty, homosexuality, bisexuality, cross-dressing, orgies, fetishisms, sadism, masochism or celibacy? Who or what or how was one, and how was a person of that sort supposed to behave, dress, talk anyway? In a man without qualities this glut of possible realities leads to day-dreaming:

Von der stilreinen Rekonstruktion bis zur vollkommenen Rücksichtslosigkeit standen ihm dafür alle Grundsätze zur Verfügung, und ebenso boten sich seinem Geist alle Stile, von den Assyrem bis zum Kubismus an. Was sollte er wählen? ... Es hatte damals eine neue Zeit begonnen (denn das tut sie in jedem Augenblick) und eine neue Zeit braucht einen neuen Stil. ... Nach eingehender Beschäftigung... kam er zu der Entscheidung, daß er den Ausbau seiner Persönlichkeit doch lieber

selbst in die Hand nehmen wolle, und begann seine zukünftigen Möbel
eigenhändig zu entwerfen. Aber wenn er sich soeben eine wichtige
Zweckform setzen könnte, und wenn er sich soeben eine wichtige
Eindrucksform ausgedacht hatte, fiel ihm ein, daß man an ihre Stelle doch
ebensogut eine technisch-schmalkräftige Zweckform setzen könnte, und
wenn er eine von Kraft ausgezehrte Eisenbetonform entwarf, erinnerte er
sich die märzhaft mageren Formen eines dreizehnjährigen Mädchens und
begann zu träumen, statt sich zu entschließen.¹¹⁵

People went on celebrated travels to foreign lands, and of course inner travels by
way of exotic drugs or intoxicating techniques of breathing. Experts advised peculiar diets
and exercise systems. Young people experimented with wandering, dropping out,
communal living, cults, and new religions. Elegant ladies and serious reasonable authors
like Thomas Mann toyed with spiritism, tapping on tables and calling back the spirits in
dark velvet-covered rooms. An African tribe on "display" in Vienna caught the attention of
Peter Altenberg, arch bohemian ladies' man, who fell in love with a number of the ladies,
took them out on the town, and dubbed them "the unforgettable people from paradise".¹¹⁶

All are evidence of a wide-spread desire among artists to remove themselves from their
"normal" states of consciousness— "Anywhere out of this world," as Baudelaire had sung
decades before. A many-faceted anti-reality movement was in swing, including, but not
limited to the more generally known aestheticism of the turn of the century. Early works
of Hofmannsthal, Mann, Leopold von Andrian, Schnitzler, and Musil, like the works of
French and English decadents from the same period, all depict that intensely unworldly
aestheticized un-life which is called "Schein" (appearance) in contrast to the other

wholesome life called "Wirklichkeit" (reality). Paintings of Klimt, Schiele, Kokoschka and others consistently play with the contrast between "Traum und Wirklichkeit" (dream and reality) so much so that it has become a catch phrase for the period. These distinctions, *Schein*, *Traum*, *Phantasie*, *Rausch*, *Wahn*, *Ekstase*, etc., are put forth as supposed opposites of an entity called *Wirklichkeit*, without so much as asking the question of whether or not there ever was such a thing as reality at all.

This changes the traditional (mis)understanding of mysticism as a movement from normalcy to ecstasy, from this world to that world, to a completely chaotic relation wherein one can move only from relative consistency to relative inconsistency, or seeming commonality to seeming alienation to seeming cosmic union. When the status quo is indeterminate, where does altered consciousness begin and end?

In detailed accounts of the perversions of symbolists, decadents and synaesthetes, Nordau describes the flight of the artist and his public from "reality" and the escape into esoteric and mystical themes:

The book that would be fashionable must, above all, be obscure...Ghost stories are very popular, but they must come on in scientific disguise, as hypnotism, telepathy, somnambulism...So are esoteric novels, in which the author hints that he could say a great deal about magic, kabala, fakirism, astrology and other white and black arts if he only chose. Readers intoxicate themselves in the hazy word-sequences of symbolic poetry...Novel sensations alone can satisfy. It demands more intense stimulus, and hopes for it in spectacles, where different arts strive in new combinations to affect all the senses at once...Even the nose,

hitherto basely ignored by the fine arts, attracts the pioneers, and is by them invited to take part in aesthetic delights. A hose is set up in the theatre, by which the spectators are sprayed with perfume.¹¹⁷

Not only in art and literature, but also into the realm of everyday life this fin-de-siècle disease spread. Nordau reports, with horror, the eclectic fashions of women:

[A] huge heavy felt hat, an obvious imitation, in its brim turned up at the back, and its trimming of heavy plush bells, of the sombrero of the Spanish bull-fighters...another...has stuck on her hair the emerald-green or ruby-red biretta of the medieval traveling student. the costume is in keeping with the bizarre coiffure...Next to the stiff monumental trim of Catherine de Medicis, and the high ruff of Mary, Queen of Scotts, goes the flowing white raiment of the angel of the Annunciation in Memling's pictures, and by way of antithesis, that caricature of masculine array, the fitting cloth coat, with widely opened lapels, waistcoat, stiffened shirtfront, small stand-up collar, and necktie.¹¹⁸

What particularly bothers Nordau about these fashion statements is the way in which they contradict the organic "nature" of the person, his or her actual hair-color, sex, nationality, place in time. Nordau would have an Austrian be an Austrian, a woman a woman, a mortal a mortal, yet decidedly not that a turn-of-the-century Viennese be a turn-of-the century Viennese, with all of the necessary accompanying perverse variations. Proven,

paradoxical enough, by Nordau's tirade, to be "unnatural" seems to have been precisely the natural thing to do, or at least one of many possibilities for turn-of-the-century behavior. Musil's own description of the Viennese world he called "Kakania" stresses the simultaneous contradictions:

Es wurde der Übermensch geliebt, und es wurde der Untermensch geliebt; es wurden die Gesundheit und die Sonne angebetet, und es wurde sie Zärtlichkeit brustkranker Mädchen angebetet; man begeistert sich für das Heldenglaubensbekenntnis und für das soziale Allemannsglaubensbekenntnis; man war gläubig und skeptisch, naturalistisch und preziös, robust und morbid; man träumt von alten Schloßalleen, herbstlichen Gärten, gläsernen Weihern, Edelsteinen, Haschisch, Krankheit, Dämonie, aber auch von Prärien, gewaltigen Horizonten, von Schmiede- und Walzwerken, nackten Kämpfern, Aufständler Arbeitskluen, menschlichen Urpaaren und Zertrümmerung der Gesellschaft. ¹¹⁹

The flood of possibilities and qualities neutralizes, necessarily, the effect of any given individual choice, leaving a culture whose primary quality is a peculiar lack of qualities, or, in more positive terms, a quality of infinite possibility which longs for infinite variety, consciousness transformation, novelty, travel, exoticism, experimentation, and crime.

An interest in altered-consciousness states included, of course, an interest in drug-induced weirdness, either through individual experimentation (hearkening back to De

Quincey and Baudelaire, Klaus Mann, for example, wrote about his experiences with opiates) or through anthropological studies of other cultures wherein "intoxicants" (Rauschmittel) were an integral part of the mystic ritual. Aldous Huxley's ground-breaking Doors of Perception would come a bit later, after Musil's death, but Ludwig Klages had already written: "Es gab niemals noch einen echten Ekstatiker, der nicht gelegentlich auch Narkotiker war; und nicht aus Zufall heften sich bis in die späteste Zeit orgiastische Bräuche an das Fest der Traubenlese."¹²⁰ Klages calls for a study of intoxicants (*Berausungsmittel*) as a necessary complement to all studies of ecstatic experience and lists opium, hashish, cocaine, alcohol, ether oils, incense, nicotine, caffeine, and other substances as traditional tools of visionaries and "echte Dichter" (true artists) in their longing for "Entselbstung" (loss of self).¹²¹ Musil himself was an avid chain smoker and coffee drinker, and both he and his wife had a history —often explored in his writings— of sexual experimentation.

An interest in the criminal act, as an extreme form of rebellion against "reality", is present in countless artistic productions from this period, including Musil's portrayal of Moosbrugger the "Lustmörder" and Ulrich and Agathe in Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften. Mixed with the turn-of-the-century study of primitive religion and mysticism, the criminal act (as an *acte gratuit*) takes on a spiritual dimension, a ritual significance. Hofmannsthal, in an essay about the fin-de-siècle attitude, wrote of two representative works: one, a novel by Paul Bourget, Le Disciple, which deals with the amoral experimentations of a student of the philosophy of the psychologist Adrien Sixte, and the other Oscar Wilde's essay, "Pen, Pencil and Poison," about the critic Thomas Griffeths Wainewright who was (with no detriment to his prose) a poisoner and counterfeiter.¹²² Hofmannsthal finds in these two works examples of the "Experimentiertrieb" (drive

toward experimentation) of his time. Dostoevsky, whom Hofmannsthal does not mention in this essay, is in this regard extremely important for Musil and his contemporaries. Musil considered writing a character into his novel whose "Spezialität [ist die] wissenschaftl[iche] Bearbeitung des patholog[ischen] Verbrechens".¹²³ His review of Scipio Sighele's sociological study, *Le crime à deux* (1910), entitled "Das Verbrecherische Liebespaar" (the criminalistic lovers), shows Musil the novelist gathering material for future literary use. The criminal is hiding in all of us: "Alle Verbrecher loslassen, die man in sich hat. Die Wut Moosbruggers, mit einem krummen Messer in den Bauch zu fahren verständlich, wenn man diese aufgestutzten Gebilde vorüberwandeln sieht," writes Musil in his notebooks.¹²⁴ "Wenn die Menschheit als Ganzes träumen könnte" he continues in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, "müßte Moosbrugger entstehen".¹²⁵

While most of these fin-de-siècle movements were colored with the rouge of the counter-culture demi-monde or the "degenerate" artist, there is a fine line between such musings and another strain of alterity, that occultist strain which laid the ground work for National Socialist mythologies. That individuals and organizations could utilize "magic" for both oppression and liberation, for reaction and revolution, should already be clear. Surely the lines are never clearly drawn between the inquisition and the witches, the prophets and the heretics, until the fatal moment when those in power decide that one or another "visionary" is either too subversive to be allowed to speak or, on the other hand, is conversely, just the dictator they'd been waiting for to initiate the burning of non-conformists.

Guido von List (1848-1919), one of the early mystagogues of Nazi ideology, utilized a mixture of Hindu cosmology, Western astrology, ancient Nordic legends such as the *Fimbulwinter* and the *Götterdämmerung*,¹²⁶ and the writings of Madame Blavatsky, as

foundation for his messianic predictions of apocalypse and subsequent Aryan-national supremacy. Nicholas Goodrick-Clark writes: "The tribulations of the modern age and the sufferings unleashed by the First World War were regarded as manifestations of those cosmic equinoctial gales before the onset of the sidereal spring...[List and others] welcomed war as the onset of a millenarian struggle which would usher in the new age."¹²⁷

A messianic figure named Tarnhari, who claimed to be a descendent or reincarnation of the ancient Wölsungen tribe of prehistoric Germany, popularized List's ideas and influenced Dietrich Eckhart who would become Hitler's mentor in matters of the occult. List, in true messianic style, had predicted a "Stärke von oben" (strength from above), but even more remarkably, "He favored the year 1932 as the time when a divine force would possess the collective unconscious of the German people. This generation of resurrected revolutionaries will become sensitive to the divine force and constitute a fanatic league which will usher in a new age. Order, national revenge, and fervor would then transform modern pluralistic society into a monolithic, eternal, and incorruptible state. This totalitarian vision was List's blueprint for the future Greater German Reich. In his anticipation of Nazi Germany, his calculation was only one year out."¹²⁸

Musil's diary entry for March of 1933 describes what he calls the "Beginn des Ameisenmenschen" (coming of the ant-people). He is horrified at how little his fellow men and women seem to care about the calculated removal of all their basic intellectual freedoms. Only a free-thinker, a heretic, a mystic would sense the danger of the tightening stronghold on thought and belief. Friedrich Bringazi¹²⁹ has discovered that Musil repeatedly links the idea of "Geist" (spirit, intellect, intellectual, mind) with the idea of "Jude" (Jew), both representing, time and again, the homeless outsider, threat to —and

threatened by— the conforming masses. "[Geist] und Jude" writes Musil, "haben die Staatenlosigkeit gemeinsam; daß sie nirgends in der Welt 'ihr' Land haben".¹³⁰ And again, in a letter to Curt Glaser in 1939, Musil writes "Daß für mich die moralische Verpflichtung gegen die Verfolgung der Juden ein Fixpunkt ist wie sonst nur die Mißhandlung des Geistes".¹³¹ What Musil calls the "Exterritorialität des geistigen Menschen" (extraterritoriality of the intellectual person), the freedom to remain unattached to any one mode of life, thought, belief, system — especially in a time of arch-experimentation of alternate realities, was, as is well known, threatened by the rising supremacy of one particular ideological party — " in dieser Blut-, Boden-, Rasse-, Masse, Führer- und Heimatzeit"—;¹³² the "Geist" (Musil himself)— and its sister the "Jude" (Musil's Jewish wife Martha?) is endangered: but no one seems to notice, because they never cared much for opinions in the first place:

Freiheit der Presse, der Äußerung überhaupt, Gewissensfreiheit, persönliche Würde, Geisterfreiheit usw., alle die liberalen Grundrechte sind jetzt beseitigt, ohne daß es auch nur einen einzigen zum äußersten empört, ja im Ganzen, ohne daß es die Leute überhaupt Stark berührt. Man nimmt es wie ein grobes Wetter hin. Der Durch-Schnitts-Einzelne fühlt sich noch nicht getroffen. Man könnte darüber aufs tiefste enttäuscht sein, aber richtiger ist der Schluß, daß alle die hier abgeschafften Dinge die Menschen nicht mehr viel angingen. Und so war es auch. Hat der Mensch z.B. von seiner gewissensfreiheit Gebrauch gemacht? Er hatte gar keine Gelegenheit dazu! [...] Die Zeitung tat es für ihn, und alles, was die Zeitung tat, ertrug er mit einem gewissen Unbehagen, obwohl es ihm scheinbar

unentbehrlich war. So verstanden ist die Disziplin des Faschio überhaupt eine masseninstinktischere Schöpfung. Und von da das heutige bündische Wesen: der will geführt, angelehnt, zusammengefaßt, einbezogen werden.¹³³

The *heretical other* is simply blotted out, without as much as a whimper.

While Musil felt the rights and voice of the individual, especially as the “other,” threatened by political mass movements and a general trend towards social conformity, commodification, and sameness, he is also touched by that mystical longing for union and “Entselbstung” (loss of self), that Dionysian release from the alienated consciousness of alterity. Two visions of a similar release from selfhood are present in Musil’s world: one is a longing for union of other with other, a crossing of boundaries wherein the divisions of self are (momentarily) lifted, remembering however, that the individual part (as in the trinity’s father, son, and holy spirit) is always both itself and the other, never wholly not-self; the other vision, as a sort of warped fun-house mirror of the first, shows a complete relinquishment of individual will, ethics, and responsibility to a monstrous moving and violent mob, Nietzsche’s contemptible “herd”.

And just as the Aryan supremacists had their messianic tales of a new world which would rise up after the time of cataclysm, Musil too spoke of his own version of the ancient dream of another world, a second coming, a paradisiacal realm where all is returned to its original harmonious state. Musil calls his “das tausendjährige Reich” (the millennium) in Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften, and imagines it, always half ironically, as a long-term version of Ulrich and Agathe’s mystical moments, as, in other words, a mystical moment which paradoxically *lasts*. Traditionally imagined as a period of one thousand

years of Heaven on earth which would follow Christ's return but precede the Last Judgment, the "tausendjähriges Reich" was supposed to arrive after a period of devastations, wars, and general depravation of morals. The "righteous" would be saved and the "corrupt" would perish. Hitler's "drittes Reich" contained an echo of this religious tradition, particularly the idea of a world inhabited only by the "pure". Yet every sect, mystic, and prophet, as we shall see in the next chapter, had their own idea of who indeed were the righteous and who the corrupt.

Musil's idea, which his sibling criminals flirt with throughout their lengthy "Heilige Gespräche" (holy conversations), becomes the goal of their experiments with taboo union, crime, and mystical isolation. The opposite of a frozen Utopia (wherein new ideas, people, visions are feared and banned as threatening), Musil's idea is of a *utopian mode of thinking* which is always shimmering with the possibility of alternate realities or truths. For Ulrich and Agathe this is the "Zustand der moralischen Fruchtbarkeit" (the condition of moral fruitfulness)—called by Musil other names as well, wherein conviction flows and one can do no wrong. The conflict between frozen perfection and melting transformation, between living and dead words, thoughts, or morals, becomes increasingly complex for Ulrich and Agathe as they approach "paradise" and for their author as the narrative continues, moment to moment, into a sea of moments. Musil's alternate interpretation of mysticism is especially relevant here as we hover on the fine line between authoritatively controlled purity (fascist utopia) and individually-transformative longing for union (life in the utopian mode).

Chapter Two

Heavens and Earths: Interpretations and Heresies in the Middle Ages

Robert Musil's discussion of the possible duration of the mystical moment leads us to consider the relationship between mysticism and utopia. A glimpse of an "other" reality, no matter how fleeting, has the power to disrupt an individual's belief in the sole existence of one objective reality. The mere idea of any other possible world or experience of a world is enough to stimulate dreaming, scheming, manifestation, and other forms of half-action towards the creation or re-creation of that briefly glimpsed but probably now lost world. As in the viewer's or reader's temporary immersion in a fictional world, in a painting or a story, the mystic glimpses, for a timeless, spaceless eternity, an extremely desirable *elsewhere*. No matter how desirable this glimpse is, its existential force lies not in its supposed beauty, harmony, or perfection, but merely in its "otherness," in the realization that other realms, worlds, perspectives, opinions, temperatures, modes of seeing, believing, acting, are possible. Whether this glimpse is seen through the eyes of the body, the "eyes of the spirit," or through a purely cumulative active imagination, such a vision may function as the beginning of social criticism, non-conformist behavior, revolutionary (or reactionary) movements, and the creation of new forms of art. These creations, in turn, may function as new forms or visions of alternate realities which serve to spur on future reactions. New interpretations or versions of traditional narratives, scripture, apocrypha may likewise potentially be viewed as heretical.

These questions of utopian experimentation, visionary possibility, and the potential effect of formal variation on the “real,” were all of central importance in Robert Musil. Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften, although set in 1913, resonates with deep reading in medieval mysticisms, heresies, and the complex interpretation of mystical (and artistic) metaphor. Musil’s characters, struggling with a lack of qualities, are holy sinners whose intense detachment or detached intensity seems often to be directly modeled on the mystical heretics Musil studied. The period of turn-of-the-century Vienna may have had, furthermore, some strange similarities to the turn of the thirteenth century. Much like the experimental European turn of the century, with its radical loss of faith and ensuing transvaluation of values, the late Middle Ages was a time of crisis and breakdown. Joseph Quint describes the results of the “terrible” and “king-less” time of the “Interregnum” (1256-1273) when the two powers of crown and church engaged in lengthy and brutal battles of banns and interdicts as fertile breeding grounds for heretical sects and a general breakdown and confusion of belief and fidelity.¹³⁴

These social uncertainties in the realms of authority, writes Quint, led directly to the development, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, of a mystical movement toward unmediated personal experience of an immanent (not a transcendent) God. Lack of faith in the traditional authorities in other words, resulted in the proliferation of those “sektiererische and ketzerische Bewegungen” (sectarian and heretical movements) which were, by their very nature, threatening to the absolute power of Church and State. In a time when kings are kidnapped and popes are challenged by anti-popes, virtually anything goes— or anyone might be the Messiah himself.

Quint’s historical introduction to Meister Eckhart’s Deutsche Predigten und Traktate reads, in places, like a description of turn-of-the-century Europe. Quint was, of

course, writing (in the 1930s and 40s) about the late Middle Ages from his own attitude towards that early modernist breakdown of objective truth. Quint notes a transformation from the Scholastic model of general abstract truth towards a more skeptical belief in individual experience and “hands-on” learning.¹³⁵ Skepticism of Scholasticism's regimented “Realism,”—a system which attempted to strictly categorize reality—went hand in hand with a rising tendency towards empirical experimentation. If what had always been believed to be true suddenly no longer was certain, a whole world of possibilities would open, a world of possibilities which would rupture the once hermetically-sealed bubble of belief and duty.

Gradual explosions in population, migration to the expanding new cities, the break down of primogeniture, along with a series of devastating plagues and floods, slowly introduced new vistas, mores and lifestyles to a European populace long accustomed to hereditary traditional values and habits. This explosion of new landscapes and inscapes to a populace which, for hundreds of years had gone to bed and woken up in the same house to look upon the same field (changed only by the seasons), must have inspired many dreamers to believe that greater, even more unimaginable changes were imminent. Norman Cohn, in his Pursuit of the Millennium, notes that the new possibility of radically altering one's economic and social situation (through successful business schemes) along with the new social structures created by artisan guilds and marketplace, encouraged peasant farmers to immigrate to the cities and try their luck. Many were however disappointed and frustrated, living on the margins of an over-populated, semi-industrialized society “in a state of chronic insecurity”.¹³⁶

This insecurity, mixed with a general sense of possibility, created an atmosphere of fantastical speculation and desperate endeavors. The almost inconceivable mass of

crusaders who left everything to march towards the Holy Land; the millions who would be burned rather than undergo baptism or conversion; children's crusades of ragged, parched, starved, and eventually drowning devotees; the apocalyptic visions of countless common folk, all took place within a context of extreme belief coupled with sudden conversion, within a dialectic of absolute truth and subjective possibility.

Bernd Hüppauf, in his book on Musil's mysticism, discussing the fourteenth century's similarities to the nineteenth century, writes of new inventions (such as the spinning wheel), inflation, large separation between the rich and the poor, rise in vagabondage, crime, hunger, natural disasters and war, all following upon a comparatively peaceful period of stability and general prosperity. The two epochs, notes Hüppauf, are remarkable for their "krassen Bruch mit dem Vergangenen, durch geistige Offenheit und intensive Suche nach neuen Lebens- und Ausdrucksformen...".¹³⁷ Specifically focusing on the fourteenth century, he writes:

Diese chaotische Verwirrung der gesellschaftlichen und staatlichen Ordnung erschüttert die gesamte geistige Welt und geht Hand in Hand mit einer Krise des Denkens und Empfindens. Die Einheit von christlich-philosophischer Systembildung ist zerstört...die Autorität der Kirche bleibt nicht länger unbefragt, Franziskaner und Dominikaner nehmen die Verurteilung katholischer Glaubenssätze auf, und der Ausgleich, zwischen christlichem Dogma und persönlichem Weg zum Heil zerbricht.

Das geistige Unbehagen an der Tradition führt zu neuen Glaubensformen und zur Mystik. Die Flagellanten und Geißler—

umherziehende Fanatiker mit mystischem Einschlag—sind sicher eine unmittelbare Folge der sozialen Mißstände und der Arbeitslosigkeit.¹³⁸

Hüppauf fails however to see these new mystical movements as revolutionary, attributing all supposed "quietistic" elements of Musil's thought to narrowly- envisioned mystical and medieval influences and all his ethical striving to an antithetical Enlightenment position. Denying in effect the radical influence of alterations of consciousness, states-of-mind, the dangerous message of the Word—or art itself—Hüppauf ends by declaring Musil's "mysticism" as "failed", with the implication being that it has been vanquished by his "enlightenment". The "ethical" in Musil, Hüppauf attributes solely to Musil's readings in enlightenment thought; the "mystical" (are we to understand here also the suspicious "aesthetic"?) parts of Musil derive solely from the quietistic, apolitical, irrational "dark ages". In reality, the "mystic" Meister Eckhart's emphasis on individual discipline, conduct of life, and rigorous personal scrutiny may actually be an important source for our modern concept of individuality, ethical conscience, and activist responsibility. There is, in any case, clearly a line of influence to be drawn from medieval mysticism through enlightenment philosophy, to modern ethics. This line (between the lines) was traced by Musil; it is the indirect route he favors. Musil understood, that the so-called "wandering fanatics" might spread the Word of enlightenment through sometimes darkly-clouded language; the speakers in new and strange tongues, the prophets of alternate and exotic truths storm the heavily bolted door of absolute righteousness, revealing a potentially broader-minded "Enlightenment". Musil's mystic is the independent thinker, not the escapist reactionary; his vision of the "other condition" of

mysticism is one of active transformative energies liberated by glimpses of other realities and possible worlds.

The controversial millennial movements of the Middle Ages, for example, seem to have been spurred on, in part, by a glimpse, by the long static serf, at new socio-economic possibilities in the developing urban market place, by rising expectations of other life styles, by tales of prosperity never before dreamed of. From here, the vision of the physical eye is internalized to the spiritual eye, which, suddenly frustrated or excited by the nearness of social change, eagerly grasps at the tales of Earthly Paradise brought to town by a wandering prophet, charlatan, renegade priest, pretender or reluctantly recruited messiah.

Preaching a new world wherein the poor will be rich and the corrupt oppressors punished, many millennial messiahs of the late Middle Ages condemned the papacy, priestcraft and statecraft, foreshadowing the reformist ecclesiastic politics of Martin Luther. Here more than ever the virtues of society are the vices of Saints. The good-seeming may be more bad than the bad-seeming. The criminals, as Musil (following Dostoevsky's lead) would posit, might be the holy liberators.

In an upside-down world, the Pope was seen by many as the antichrist, the Church as the Whore of Babylon—that woman drunken with the blood of the saints—the clergy as a many-headed beast which served the antichrist and carried the whore on its back. Cohn writes:

The clergy as the Beast of the Apocalypse: what image could be more convincing to enthusiastic millenarians in whose eyes the life of the

clergy was indeed nothing but bestiality, the *vita animalis*, an existence utterly given over to the World and the Flesh?" ¹³⁹

Priest-killing was even regarded by some holy crusaders as particularly praiseworthy. One roving sect, the *Pastureaux*, led by a Hungarian renegade monk, dressed as shepherds and were rumored to plot the eventual massacre of: first all priests and monks, then all knights and nobles, and when all authority had been overthrown, to spread their teaching throughout the world. ¹⁴⁰ Such anti-establishment sects, in more or less radical forms, wandered about fourteenth-century Europe performing their own sacraments, looting churches, and throwing Eucharistic wafers (despoiled by the corrupt hands of the clergy) into the streets to cheering crowds.

On a less sensational scale, mystic nuns like Hildegard of Bingen, and beguines like Mechthild of Magdeburg gently criticized corrupt ways in their writings—with the understanding that their remarks came from a higher authority. Mechthild, after asking God for advice about the canon of Magdeburg, received this reply:

He should clothe himself more modestly than he now does; moreover, he shall wear a hair shirt next his skin to guard against the softness he has accepted in the flesh...He shall sleep on a straw pallet...He shall also keep two rods beside his bed to discipline himself when he awakes...He shall hold himself always like a mouse that sits in a trap and awaits its death...when he eats he shall eat sparingly; when he sleeps he shall be chaste and alone with me. ¹⁴¹

"Not surprisingly," writes Frances Beer, "the burning of Mechthild's uncomfortably honest book was sought."¹⁴² But Mechthild was consoled by the voice of God again, who told her, "The Truth may no man burn."¹⁴³

These holy and heretical women are the fore-mothers of Musil's fictional women. Agathe, Clarisse, and Diotima are *all* modern-day mystics with ethical programs. Agathe, a rebel raised in a convent who finds "religion" through testament forgery and incest; Clarisse, who has visions of sex-murderer-saviors; Diotima, who bathes her beautiful soul in adulterous Neo-Platonic flirtation and a tutorial on sexuality with a nymphomaniac, are all involved in a biting critique of society. The people around them, mostly men (fathers, husbands, teachers, brothers, lovers, writers of books), although they had tried to teach them certain morals, standards, and priorities, seem ultimately—when the women look at the men's actions— luke-warm, wishy-washy, hypocritical, and unconvincing. It is their feminine lot to reveal this passive resistance and rouse the men (with varying degrees of success) to action. The dichotomy between received ideas of morality and these characters' individual forms of holiness is foreshadowed in a comment Musil makes about his wife Martha (herself a member or model of this strange spiritual sisterhood): "Sonderbar, M[artha] sagt, sie könnte stehlen, u[nd] ist geistig bezaubernd ehrlich."¹⁴⁴

Such behavior escapes the normal bounds of categorization, such women are unpredictable and indefinable, dangerous thus, not only in their potential actions, but in their inherent undoing of systems.

While fin-de-siècle women had indeed come a long way from their medieval sisters in terms of independence and emancipation, Musil would show the many ways in which the "new woman" was still quite trapped within severely limited roles, roles directed by her male authority figures, brothers, fathers, husbands, lovers, and teachers.

Women in Vienna did not, in fact, get the vote until 1918 (four years after the fictional time of Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften), nor had they been allowed access to higher education until about 1897, an access which was, albeit legal, most definitely frowned upon by most. The turn of the century was however a time of change for women, but one which finally drew attention to the relative lack of rights they enjoyed. Women campaigned for maternity leave, the financial protection of illegitimate children, the acceptance of free love and liberation from "marital slavery," better wages, and equal access to education. Like Musil's idealist heroine, Diotima, who, although married, enters into a "spiritual" relationship with another man, the "new woman" of turn-of-the-century Vienna experimented with the creation of a new set of moral codes. The "hysterical" woman of the turn of the century, dissatisfied with her limited position and expressing these feelings "from her womb" is a far off echo of the medieval mystical women who refused marriage, had visions, wept endlessly, complained of interminable and indistinct physical ailments, fasted madly, went into "eucharistic frenzies" wherein they (so the legend goes) would eat nothing but the holy host for months or years on end. Many of these women (medieval and modern) dared, furthermore, to criticize society and interfere (with the voice of God or a "higher ideal" at their backs) with the world that man had so carefully and logically organized.

That this sort of "interference" is often labeled as insane, criminal, or overly idealistic should come as no surprise: women mystics were traditionally told not to write, not to cry so much, not to think for themselves or perform sacraments.

MacNamara, in her book Sisters in Arms, points out that

[M]ale aversion to the cura monialium often meant that nuns had no priest to provide them with [sacramental] services. Ordained monks celebrated as many as 3 masses daily, a practice that must have enhanced their growing disdain for women, who could neither say mass nor even hear it with out assistance...visitors rebuked them for failure to fulfil the Easter duty. They had to suffer priests who were often ill-trained and sometimes immoral. The archbishop of Rouen relieved one debt-ridden house of the burden of a pension for a chaplain but made no alternate provision. Elsewhere he ordered the replacement of an incontinent confessor but did not send a new confessor for 8 years.

Negligence on the part of the clergy, mistrust and disgust on the part of powerless religious and lay-people alike, led thus to the creation of personal spiritual solutions. Such solutions, not sanctioned or easily censored by Church authorities, had the potential to be seedbeds of heresy, overgrown gardens of individual vision. MacNamara continues:

Women were driven to go over the heads of the clergy. Adelheid von Trochau at Engelthal had a mystical encounter with the souls of unbaptized children who warned her that her own baptism lacked some element of correctness...the saints relented and corrected the priest's error with a miraculous baptism, a stream of water that poured over her when she was chanting in choir. Mechthild of Magdeburg was transported to a heavenly ritual in which John the Baptist read the mass. Clerical critics complained that, as a layman, he had no right to do so. ¹⁴⁵

Such visions, grounded in theological tradition to be sure, depended upon accompanying orthodox interpretations. Hildegard von Bingen's visions were carefully deconstructed by the abbess in a process (conscious or not?) which took the edge off her own creative energy and her own role as spokeswoman by narrowly categorizing each personal image into an acceptable scriptural significance. A seemingly simple vision, interpreted freely, could, on the other hand, be damning.

Perhaps the mystic, man or woman, slipped between the cracks of orthodox interpretation of meaning. Yet these layers were, more or less, strictly defined by Church authorities; anagogic, allegorical, teleological, or literal, any number of given interpretations were possible, but only those sanctioned by the authorities were considered to be true. Still, heresy was rampant, and many mystics managed to escape the almost inevitable burning, hanging, or milder excommunication through numerous editions of their works, the performance of sermons, and the subversive traveling word of wanderers long enough to plant the bad seeds of their own particular independent visions.

To someone living in the European Middle Ages, "reality" was many-layered and probably easily shifting. A hierarchy of values from "this world" to "the other world" marked the layers as more or less important, depending upon one's religious orientation. Within these layers any given individual might be prone to personal realms of consciousness-altering experience, visions or dreams, more worthy of mention than a modern's fancy precisely because the society in which they were dreamed gave them credence. A popular belief in magic, wood spirits, fairies and demons, peopled the fields with unknown forces and secret caves, enchanted groves and magical bogs. Still the

common man and woman had to be woken up to dream. In Ibn Arabi's Fusus al-hikam, he writes:

The only reason God placed sleep in the animate world was so that everyone might witness the Presence of Imagination and know that there is another world similar to the sensory world. Through the speed of the transmutation of the imaginal form He calls the attention of intelligent dreamers to the fact that in the sensory world of fixed engendered existence there are transmutations at every instant, even though the eyes and senses do not perceive them, except in speech and movement.¹⁴⁶

To the “enlightened,” the waking vision of “reality” is as full of signs and messages as the interpreted dream vision. This sort of metaphorization of the waking world is a theme for both Christian and Islamic mystics. Walking and waking in a constant state of mysticism, the objects of the world all speak to the visionary of God, and are to be read as “God’s Book.” Thus the world is broken up into more realms than merely this world and the other. Within this world alone there are any number of layerings of meaning for the studious religious to decipher. Consider Eckhart’s series of metaphors: the lover of God should wear God always *like* the tight-fitting cap upon his head, or experience the longing for God always *as* a physical thirst in the mouth, or *like* the longing of a lover for his beloved. The similes are to be taken both literally and metaphorically, for the lover of God experiences the world *as if* it were a very significant dream, a prophecy, a message to be understood.

Yet this personal world is to be understood in at least two ways: as dream and not dream, reality and not reality, true and not true. Ibn Arabi continues, "The truth of affairs is that you should say concerning everything that you see or perceive, through whatever faculty perception takes place, 'He/not He,' just as God said, 'You did not throw when you threw.' You do not doubt in the state of dreaming that the form you see is identical with what it is said to be; and you do not doubt in the interpretation (ta'bir) when you wake that it was not it. You will not doubt in the sound rational consideration that the situation is 'He/not He'." ¹⁴⁷

Yet it is precisely this sort of multiple interpretation of signs which sets the mystic up for heretical thinking. Julius Weinberg, in his history of medieval philosophy, explains that while orthodox Christian theologians would themselves use interpretation to explain away seeming inconsistencies in scripture, and Averroes (Ibn Rushd) would combat the Mutakallimun doctrine of the "double truth" for philosophy and theology by explaining that "The Law admits of an interpretation according to the canons of interpreting the Arabic tongue." and that "such an interpretation sometimes involves passing from the literal to the metaphorical or figurative use of an expression..." ¹⁴⁸ such interpretations could venture only so far without raising the ire of the various organs of orthodoxy.

Strangely enough, it was the tenth-century Asharite school of orthodox Mutakallimun, those who insisted on the literal interpretation of the Koran, who also developed the important "Maxim of Admissibility," "according to which 'everything conceived by the imagination is admitted by the intellect as possible.' This means that whatever is free from contradiction must be admitted as possible for God to accomplish; hence ordinary routines in the natural world, the order of various parts of the universe, and the like are only the result of God's customary way of acting. Without any absurdity

resulting there from, God could change his custom or habit and the universe would be different.”¹⁴⁹

Whatever was considered to be “free from contradiction” (a seemingly vague conception) might be imagined to be possible, yet only by the will of God, certainly not by the will of man. Rather than empowering the individual for implementing change, such a pronouncement might have enforced a sense of helplessness in view of a completely irrational world. Even so, the conflict is present already in the early Middle Ages: did the world have to be the way it was? Or could everything drastically change? Certainly since the advent of Christianity, the Latin West had waited, especially around the year 1000, for the end of the world as they knew it. Yet how would such a change occur, now that the year 1000 had come and gone, and what part, if any, would individual visions, works and crusades take in its successful coming?

For Musil's twentieth-century searchers, Ulrich and Agathe, the shadowy notion of the millennium— “the thousand year Reich” (tausendjähriges Reich)¹⁵⁰ looms large, yet vague, on their horizon, and is, in fact, subconscious impetus for their crimes against/for society. Ulrich's suggestion, in jest yet seemingly not in jest, that the siblings live like syneisactic hermits preparing for this thousand years of heaven on earth, this world which is no longer the world as we know it, but another similar yet better world, has its historical precedent. While Musil's studies may have led him to investigations of contemporary millennial utopias, especially in America, there is no direct reference to these in his discussions of the millennium's approach. But another example was more directly in Musil's eye: men and women in the Middle Ages, prophesying the imminent coming of this other reality, left their worldly occupations, turned towards the study of spiritual questions, and, what is most significant for our study, abandoned the relations of husband

and wife to live together as "brother" and "sister". The latter scandalous co-habitation of couples who were not, before this period of spiritual earnestness, married to each other at all, included religious people as well as lay people, nuns and monks supposedly living together without gender identity. Fearing that medieval women might lose their gender identities and become "as man," Bernard de Clairvaux, in his famous exegesis of the "Song of Songs," invented the concept of the "bride of Christ". De Clairvaux's idea ensured that women religious, who had been cutting off their hair, dressing in men's clothing, and refusing to take men as husbands, would at least be somebody's wife, subordinated to the will of some man. The fin-de-siècle debates on feminism reveal a similar concern. Would the "new woman" lose her gender identity, cease to be mother, wife, and mistress? This fear was naturally exacerbated by the growing visibility of the virago, the lesbian, and the stylish cross-dresser. While modernist feminists were often concerned with such progressive ideals as free love and reproductive rights, the discourse of the movement is often couched in the language of religious mystical rebellion. The feminists were preparing themselves for a new world, for a utopia where all people would live as equals in peace, harmony, and mutual productivity, as "brothers and sisters".

Medieval syneisactism", referred to repeatedly in Musil's notes on medieval history, was just one of the ways in which some religious people prepared themselves, as Ulrich and Agathe would do, for what they perceived (in varying forms and following disparate traditions) to be the coming of a great transformation. Musil's siblings mimic the behavior of these medieval hermits and mystics, hiding away together as brother and sister complete with religious books, "heilige Gespräche," and intense introspection and disciplined attempts to resist temptations. They are following, albeit always with a good dose of irony, the tradition of utopian dreamers, religious dreamers, and idealists.

There were many mythologies to choose from, to mix and match, varieties of imaginal worlds, of personal mind-travel in the form of various versions of Parousia dreams: the New Jerusalem, the Second Coming, the return to original grace, one thousand years of Heaven on Earth:

The Golden Age, the Millennium, and Utopia are all different aspects of the Earthly Paradise. The Earthly Paradise was a real myth; it was conceived to be something quite different from the ordinary world and yet part of this world. Sometimes it was an island beyond the seas, sometimes a land situated underground, sometimes a country in the mountains; but wherever it was supposed to be, it was believed to be actually there and was traceable on mediaeval maps. Men went in search of it: imaginary travelers like Mandeville wrote about it...Even explorers like Columbus firmly believed in it....¹⁵¹

Such terrestrial dreams of perfect worlds were dreamed alongside of celestial dreams and nightmares of Heaven and Hell, dreams which came in infinite versions, visions, visits. There were of course orthodox versions and less orthodox versions, but even within the accepted tradition there were alternate realities, self-contradicting, ever-changing, confused.

In both Heaven on earth and Heaven in the sky there were unsolved questions: would there be bodies, would we need food, would we be naked or dressed in beautiful garments to show off our class and caste, would every one be equal? Would our bodies be, as Augustine said, "spiritual bodies" in a perfected ideal form? Would the martyrs keep

their scars? Would there be marriage in Heaven? (Jesus said there would not.) Was Heaven pure light? or an actual place? Was Heaven a garden, a cathedral, or a beautiful city paved with precious gems? Would lovers be reunited or would they gaze on God alone?

Such debates circled the ultimate question: were the many mythical, biblical, Koranic, prophetic accounts of these other realms to be taken literally or metaphorically? Or in both ways? Returning to this same question of the nature of images and their meanings: beyond even this world or that other, what in each realm was truly to be taken as the “really real?”

While theologians argued, poets imagined and people feared and hoped, mystics often made short visits to places which seemed like ephemeral glimpses, or foretastes of future eternity. Others, like Hildegard von Bingen, regularly saw realms of reality radically out of character with every day life, including flaming mountains, people dressed in gowns covered in eyes, giant cathedrals which were also somehow women with hordes of people rushing in and out of their doors, mouths, entrances, exits. Mechthild von Magdeburg traveled to lovely groves where water, fire and air spirits conversed with her about her relations with that sexy consort (Jesus), with whom she lay down, à la Walther von der Vogelweide, to make an impression in the grass. Countless virgins saw Jesus come to them in human form, detailing his features and gestures. Others, like Christina Mirabilis, went to Heaven and back, spoke to God, went through fire and endless tortures without showing any bodily scars, saved the dead from purgatory, perched atop tall trees like birds, went for weeks, even years without eating, heard the Word of God, or others, listened to the lost music of the spheres, smelled sweet perfumes, tasted honey on their tongues, and had no trouble deciding what was “real” and what was not.

While some modern researchers have suggested that the eucharistic wafers were fermented, the peasants' rye bread gone funny by mistake (ergot), others have documented wide-spread peasant rituals and scientific alchemical researches with hallucinogenic herbal salves which produced the sensation of flying, time-travel and shape-shifting. The medieval phenomenon of werewolves might be explained (not explained away) as a shamanic transformation from civilized to savage, a *participation mystique* with other forms of life, with those wild animals close and threatening to most medieval dwellers.

Whether induced by mind-altering substances, or merely a product of the social milieu, medieval men and women slipped, more easily, in and out of multiple worlds, without damaging too deeply their fundamental value system. Questions about the "reality" or "truth" of such experiences miss the point that such experiences are themselves responsible for a total collapse of reality, that alternate truths, once experienced, provide the subject with an entirely new construct of "truth," a construct which, in the modern age of proofs and measures, is particularly disconcerting. The living world of spirits, voices and visions, the ability to travel through space and time, to communicate with one's deceased ancestors, to look into the future by way of dreams, oracles, signs in the heavens, or weather changes, brings the medieval Western world much closer to the realm of Lévy-Bruhl's "primitive" non-Western culture than one might imagine. As Richard Gerber writes in his study of utopian literature, "The Earthly Paradise was a myth that fitted into a more primitive world-picture than ours; it was not consciously invented, but imagination and belief coincided in it. For in primitive man's ideas about the cosmos the line between the barely conceivable and the flatly impossible has not yet been drawn with any sharpness".¹⁵²

The medieval man or woman, in an attempt to escape the carefully structured social hierarchy, had a scant number of alternatives to marriage, convent and monastery. What broader alternatives did a thoroughly "modern" woman like Musil's character Agathe actually have? The scant alternatives are at once physical places and abstract conditions of mind. Let us begin, utilizing whatever historical and philosophical tools we have at our disposal, with the mind.

The imagination, as a free realm of vision, is then the first "place" we need to establish: in this abstract infinite space, symbolically envisioned to be somewhere between the left and right ear inside the human head, all which ever was, could have been, might and will be is "housed." This is our first paradox as we wonder, along with Plotinus, how such a large picture, say a mountain landscape, can fit into such a small opening as the eye, or how so much memory, knowledge, imagery can possibly fit into the small space of the brain.

An interweaving of Western philosophical thought, Judeo-Christian-Islamic traditions and individual antinomian mystical strands and primitive ideas of consciousness will reveal different constructs which interact with each other in more or less conscious dimensions depending upon the learning and insight of the various thinkers. We must remember that for the non-Western brain the mind or self/ego may be located in another place altogether, in the god or gods, in the river, in the atomic flow, in the collective. In his introduction to Case Studies in Spirit Possession, Vincent Crapanzano writes, "Much of what is articulated in the West as within the individual may be articulated outside the individual in those societies in which the spirit idiom is current[...] It is well to remember Lichtenberg's observation [...]: 'As we do not know exactly the location of our thought, we can place it where we want.'"¹⁵³

Within the Judeo-Christian-Islamic idiomata, such displacements of ego are also reported by mystics who claim to speak, not their own words, but the words of God. The entire will/will-lessness question furthermore, is one which presupposes the possibility of somehow emptying the mind of individual will in order to allow God's will to enter. Yet the place where the will/word visits or lives, despite Christian mystic recognitions of spiritually animated rocks and trees or Islamic Asharite theories of atomically-charged matter, is still, for the most part, spoken of as the individual human head.

Explanations are many in the millennia before modern consciousness science, yet Plato's idea of an abstract realm of ideal forms which corresponds to the material world of concrete imperfect objects is probably the most pervasive. Both the Christian West and the Islamic East received their Plato and Aristotle in fragmented and confused form. The Timaeus, in a Neo-Platonically influenced translation, transmitted however Plato's basic ideas of perfected patterns or forms, his idea of the necessity of cause, and the pre-existence of the soul. But little was known of Aristotle in the West before the thirteenth century when translations of the Physics, Metaphysics and other works appeared.

Though Arabic philosophers are often classed as Aristotelians, this is, says Weinberg, a misnomer. Better to call them Neo-Platonists, for those works which went under the name of Aristotle in Medieval Islam were either deeply tinged by Neo-Platonic Greek translators, or were actually works of Neo-Platonists like Plotinus or Proclus, falsely attributed to Aristotle. A much read epitome of Plotinus' Enneads, for example, had been given the title "The Theology of Aristotle".¹⁵⁴

Yet Aristotle's rejections of Plato's world of Ideal forms, his celebration of sense perception as the better measure of knowledge, his denial of the pre-existent soul surely reached the Judeo-Christian-Islamic world, albeit in semi-garbled form. Plato's

transformation, through the Neo-Platonist translations and commentary, into a philosopher more or less acceptable to most Medieval Christians is just as much a story of a philosophical "telephone" game. Philosophers and theologians from East and West who were friendly to philosophy actually spent a great deal of time trying to "reconcile" Aristotle and Plato in an attempt to honor the two great masters without contradicting themselves.

The greater amount of time, as suggested above, was spent in trying to reconcile philosophy and reason to scripture and correct belief. While some theologians ruthlessly condemned philosophy as the enemy of theology, other more liberal theologians like Augustine maintained man's right to try to understand as far as possible, by way of reason, the rightness of scriptural truth. Hadn't he, after all, come to right thinking himself through a series of studies and forays in heretical religions, ecstatic experiences and scriptural reading?

Arabic philosophers were divided on the right reconciliation between philosophy and religion; Some, like Al-Farabi, Ibn Al-Arabi and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) believed in the doctrine of "double truth", which asserted that one thing can be true in philosophy while not being true in theology or that, vice versa, something can be true in theology and, at the same time, not in philosophy. This doctrine contained the social loophole which explained that most ordinary, i.e. non-scholarly, people, could not be expected to understand the higher philosophical truths so must be spoon-fed and "instructed in concrete and picturesque language. Thus the 'lurid eschatology' [of the Koran] was treated by many enlightened Muslims as figurative language suited to the uncultivated nomads to whom Mohammed brought the Revelation."¹⁵⁵

Others believed firmly in the literal truth of all of the images in the Koran: the Throne of God, the Pool of the Prophet where the believers drink, the beatific vision, all were to be taken as literally real.

Once again language, and the language of metaphor, is precisely the point of contention and the point of escape. The question of language is the question of forms and realities, so let us return to the doctrines of Plato and the Neo-Platonists.

As interpreted by Plotinus, Plato's doctrine of the Ideal forms becomes a conception of the One, the Good, the Pure. This One, as a most high container of the Many, is for Plotinus the purified form of the lower multiplications of lesser purities. This One is somewhere removed from the finite mind, yet possibly accessible (for Plotinus by ecstatic experience) and this abstract is seen as being far more valuable, important, beautiful, "really real" than the world of matter. All motion is upward, towards the light, towards the pure, the One. The concrete imperfections of the everyday world are, in other words, merely poor imitations of the gloriously proportioned forms of the ideal. In Plato's Symposium we see a less mystical, more secularized version of Plotinus' glowing light. As Socrates' instructress in Love explains, Love is really the love of Beauty, and true Beauty is: "[A] beauty which if you once beheld, you would see not to be after the measure of gold, and garments, and fair boys and youths, whose presence now entrances you; and you and many a one would be content to live seeing them only and conversing with them without meat or drink if that were possible—you want only to look at them and to be with them. But what if man had eyes to see the true beauty...". Diotima continued, "—the divine beauty, I mean pure and clear and unalloyed, not clogged with the pollutions of mortality, and all the other colors and vanities of human life—thither looking, and holding converse with the true beauty simple and divine? Remember how in that

communion only, beholding beauty with the eye of the mind, we will be enabled to bring forth, not images of beauty, but realities..”.¹⁵⁶

A discussion of the nature of Love, like all philosophical discussions, returns to the question of the nature of reality and rests on the conclusion that the Ideal—in this case the perfect form of goodness and virtue which is called by Diotima beauty—is actually the “really real.” “Pure, clear and unalloyed...not images of beauty, but realities...”. It is furthermore only by beholding beauty “with the eye of the mind,” not with the physical eye, that such realities can be seen. To live thus in a realm of the abstract imagination, in other words, the one pure clear truth shining far above the many pollutions, colors and vanities of human life, is, according to Diotima, the noblest and best use of life.

Musil's Idealist character Diotima, named after Socrates' instructress (“nach jener berühmten Dozentin der Liebe”),¹⁵⁷ embodies to an extreme the contradictions inherent in any material attempt at Platonic interaction. On Ulrich's first meeting with “Diotima” Musil discusses the discrepancies between their physical bodies and their souls. Diotima's hand “war fett und gewichtlos...die spitzen Nägel wie Flügeldecken, schienen imstande zu sein, mit ihr jeden Augenblick ins Unwahrscheinliche davon zu fliegen”. Her hand is “eines im Grunde ziemlich schamlos menschlichen Organs, das wie eine Hundeschnauze alles betastet, aber offensichtlich der Sitz von Treue, Adel, und Zartheit ist”. She looks at Ulrich and he can tell that, although she is impressed with his physical appearance, she sees through it to the really pitiful state of his soul: “Diotima aber wehrte sich dagegen, indem sie ihn geistig bemitleidete. Ulrich konnte beobachten, daß sie dauernd seine Erscheinung betrachtete und offenbar nicht ungefällige Gefühle dabei hatte, während sie sich vielleicht sagte, daß die edlen Eigenschaften, die er so sinnfällig zu besitzen schien, durch ein schlechtes Leben unterdrückt sein mußten und gerettet werden

konnten.”¹⁵⁸ When she tells him of her plans for the success of the so-called “Parallel Campaign” (a farcical social-political celebration to honor the Kaiser’s anniversary year), her plans “eine ganze große Idee [zu] verwirklichen,” he mocks her by asking, “Denken Sie an etwas Bestimmtes?” —which is, Musil tells us, exactly what someone of her nature can not do, for: “Niemand, der vom Größten und Wichtigsten der Welt spricht, meint, daß es das wirklich gebe... Macht man jedoch jemand, der gerade vom Wichtigsten und Größten sprechen will, darauf aufmerksam, so faßt er das Mißtrauen, es mit einem gefühllosen und unidealistischen Menschen zu tun zu haben.”¹⁵⁹ Without connection to the world of the “real,” Diotima’s ideals, her abstract words like “soul,” and “love,” threaten to become vague yearnings. Yet Musil sympathizes, to some extent, with Diotima’s desires for wholeness, while demanding the addition of gravity’s physical pull. The mystic way, in other words, is only of interest to him insofar as a truck could drive upon it.

This realm of the Ideal, as opposed to the other realm of the Real, was celebrated by neo-Platonists like Proclus and Plotinus, and, under a thinly veiled guise, by Christianity as the Infinite, the indescribable and impossibly exalted world of God. On the other side of the Christian duality, the “Real” is called the “finite”, the earthly world of names, this abysmal valley of tears. And this must be what Nietzsche meant by calling Plato “pre-existing Christianity,” for it is just this distinction between the “Real” and the “Ideal” which disturbed him, as a Romantic escapism which was, all in all, a negation of *this* world.

Yet Nietzsche too celebrated the free realm of the mind, the abstract imagination which, freeing itself from the bounds of earthly conflicts, soars above what is to explore what could be. He had even defined Nihilism as a metaphysician’s quest for

honor which would rather have a handful of certainties than a whole wagon full of beautiful possibilities.

It is this confusing conflict and reconciliation which makes up the foundation of a philosophical tradition of something like an "empiricist idealism," a sort of hybrid of opposite tendencies which produces, ultimately, a new sort of utopian thought. A connecting link, delineated by Musil, between vision and reality, or ideal and real, redefines true idealism as bridging that gap. Idealism would only be considered true idealism if there were a bridge to action. This is, of course, a sort of existentialism, which demands of the individual a physical realization of subjective imaginative convictions, the categorical imperative. Musil's notebooks contain a short sketch of the history of philosophy, happily reconciling in one paragraph Plato with Aristotle and the Ideal with the Real:

Plato widerlegt die skeptisch- sensualistische Relativierung der Sophisten u[nd] dem Materialismus u[nd] Mechanismus der Atomisten (Leukipp, Demokrit lehren streng mechanische Notwendigkeit der Wirklichkeit, die sie aus den Atomen aufbauen) Platon dagegen: die Empfindung ist die Quelle des Irrtums, das Wahre nur im Denken gegeben, insofern es völlig unabhängig von Sinnen ist, Und nicht die materiellen Elemente sind die Ursachen der Dinge, sondern die Idee. Gegen ihn nun wieder Epikur: die sinnliche Gewisheit ist die Grundlage unserer Erkenntnis, der Intellekt ist völlig von den Empfindungen abhängig. Arist[oteles] hat den Platonismus vollendet...u[nd] den Dualismus der Ideenlehre überwunden...und gezeigt hat, daß die Idee kein Abstraktum,

sondern ein Lebensprinzip ist, ferner die Idee mit der Seele identifizierte u[nd] so die Einheit von Leib u[nd] Seele, Wirkl[ichkeit] u[nd] Idee begreiflich machte. ¹⁶⁰

Theologians and mystic philosophers would write volumes about the possibility or impossibility of bridging this gap between the finite and infinite. Nicholas of Cusa, for one, spoke in his treatise de docta ignorantia (on learned ignorance) about the mystic and mathematical overcoming of the impossibly large ocean between the finite and the infinite, the one and the many. The difference between the two was so vast that he, following Dionysius the Areopagite's influential dictum from "On the Divine Names", concluded that God could not be really known or named or measured using the scholastic system of knowledge, language or inductive thought, nor by the language of practical mathematics. A new language needed to be invented, a new way of reading, seeing, experiencing the divine, and this new language, the language of approaching, circling, approximating, was the language of metaphor. Metaphor was mystical and its purpose was to miraculously bridge the gap, if only for one shimmering slippery moment of ecstasy, between the finite and the infinite, the real and the ideal, man and God.

Robert Lerner, in an article entitled "Ecstatic Dissent," suggests that new interpreters of scripture in the twelfth and thirteenth century, condemned as heretical and threatened with censorship, excommunication or worse, developed what he calls "the ecstasy defense". Discussing the case of Robert of Liege (Rupert of Deutz), Lerner writes:

Later in his career (shortly after May 1126), recognizing that whenever he brought out a new work his enemies combed through it

looking for faults, Robert came forth with an autobiographical apologia in the form of a book within his commentary on Matthew. Addressing the question why he wrote 'so copiously' even though 'so many catholic and most renowned Holy Fathers [had already] filled the shelves of the Church with their books,' he explained that a succession of miraculous experiences had been granted to him in the years before his priestly ordination. Gripped by doubts as to whether he was fit for his calling, he began to experience visions. Particularly explicit was one wherein three persons, whom he later understood to be the Trinity, raised him on top of a large open book, God the father then pointing to reliquaries of the saints and saying: "hence you will be better than they." This experience was so vivid that 'he did not know whether he was in the body or out of the body.'¹⁶¹

This is a typical example of a mystic's call to write and clearly points out the intense relation between language, ecstasy and innovation. The power and threat of novel interpretations, the excuse or scandal of ecstasy, all revolve around the mystical potential of form and language and are intrinsically wound up with the development and deployment of social power structures throughout the history of religious and social hierarchies

Thus art, or the artistic use of language or image which is metaphor, becomes the means to bridging the impossible gap which theologians and philosophers look down upon from their towers of scholastic Babel. The infinite space between what is and what could be is to be bridged by visions and imaginings, approximations and rearrangements of real and unreal. Individual and social myths of other worlds, Earthly Paradises, Millennia, are

thus attempts to find the way from *is* to *might be* and from *was* to *difference*. These lingual constructs all take place within that *Mundus Imaginalis*, in conflict with the concrete world of belief.

Now we will proceed to examine some other places or social situations wherein particular mystics, heretics, beguines and escapee wanderers attempted to un-map the prescribed road to paradise and lose themselves.

Mechthild von Magdeburg, author of the much read and much translated low-German book, The Flowing Light of the Godhead, was born into an aristocratic court family around 1207, and enjoyed a refined upbringing which included a great familiarity with courtly lyric poetry and themes. At the age of twelve she experienced her first vision, followed by another, presumably stronger, ecstatic experience at the age of twenty-three, where her soul was taken by God "to a secret place where [He] will play with it...thus God and the soul soar further to a blissful place of which neither can nor will say much."¹⁶²

We do not know what the precise circumstances surrounding her conversion were. Perhaps she was swept up in the general Dominican and Franciscan reformist fervor of her period. Her brother became a mendicant Dominican at about this time. As a consequence of the high death toll of crusading knights, many noble ladies were left widowed and fatherless in the second half of the thirteenth century, and Mechthild had numerous models of self-sacrificing women: Elizabeth of Thuringia, for one, who was the crusade-widow of Ludwig IV and renounced all her property to join the Franciscans; Jutta, Mechthild's friend who had been married and had borne children before the crusades left her a widow. Jutta renounced her riches, put her children in religious houses, and cared for lepers.

The mendicant orders of St. Dominic and St. Francis, with their emphasis on going barefoot, renouncing all earthly goods, and living from begging, were at a glorious high point; they "stood in sharp contrast to the idleness and indifference of the clergy at large, as their profound compassion for the suffering of every one, no matter how poor and lowly, was a welcome contrast to the elitism of the ecclesiastical establishment with its undisguised preference for the wealthy and well-born."¹⁶³

Mechthild explained that God sent "two new children," the Dominicans and the Franciscans, to assist him in salvaging wayward humanity: "When the people recognize this holy life, they will be so edified [they] will wash the hardened feet of the brethren with fervor."¹⁶⁴ Although male mendicant orders were more or less sanctioned by ecclesiastical authorities in the 1300's and 1400's, women wanderers, in the tradition of Paul's wayward friend Thekla (who baptized herself in a puddle, disregarding the ban against women performing sacraments), were severely frowned upon.

The Jesuits in the 1600's, seen by the orthodox powers as dangerous "reform mystics," may have served a similar purpose in the later ecclesiastical landscape. and their case, de Certeau remarks, can teach us much about the less-sung successes of failed revolutionary movements. The Jesuit emphasis on prayer as a return to an inner spirituality, he writes, prompted a

[S]eries of marginalizing procedures that induced the 'prophets' to toe the line, keep a low profile, or get out... They represented within it [the Order] a mystic 'resistance,' the social expression of which could not be reduced to a denomination, nor even to a pressure group, and the failure of which would not prevent the development of a literary and spiritual

posterity. Their lineage was born of their defeat. Within the society they had no more power than the 'idiot woman' in her convent at Tismenai...but they did introduce a difference into it...This particular case should allow us to see how that 'difference' manifests itself socially, and also how it sallies forth from its repression to go elsewhere—like those revolutionary chants that survive the failure of historical realization and carry a spirit further....¹⁶⁵

"Heresies," Peter Lamborn Wilson writes, "are often the means for transfer of ideas and art-forms from one culture to another." Crossing from the aristocratic and courtly to the impoverished and spiritual, from an intensely systematic social structure to a largely independent self-actualizing life as authoress and worker, Mechthild manifests a cultural mixing.

Although presumably possessed of the necessary means to have her parents offer a dowry along with their daughter — as per the usual convent entry procedures— Mechthild refused to do so, offering herself sans parents, sans dowry, knowing, perhaps, that she would be rejected. Her first step into the spiritual society could be interpreted thus as a subtle criticism of the corrupted tradition, revealing, writes Frances Beer, "an unequivocal preference for the imitation of Christ, here through poverty, and her rejection of the social ease and material comfort to which she had been born."¹⁶⁶

Later she would spell this out, writing that the Holy Church's crown was "[D]immed in the filth of evil desires...thy purity is burned up in the consuming fire of greed; thy humility is sunk in the swamp of thy flesh...! Alas! for the fallen crown of priesthood!...vengeance will come upon thee...For thus saith the Lord: 'My sheep from

Jerusalem have become wolves and murderers: for before my eyes they slay the white lambs".¹⁶⁷

Instead of entering a cloistered convent, Mechthild—the former courtly lady—joined a Beguine community in Magdeburg, giving up her worldly possessions and probably supporting herself by either tending to the sick and leprous, manual labor, or begging.

Beguinages, wide-spread in Germany and Flanders, were communities of women living under no official monastic rule, without direct ecclesiastical control, and not officially sanctioned by ecclesiastic authorities. Women from the upper or lower classes worked out in the world, were often widows or still married, practiced infrequent or irregular sacraments, took no vows, and traveled about more or less freely, sharing ideas. Frequently viewed with suspicion and accused of heresies, Beguinages were officially banned by the Bull of Pius IV in 1368.

Mechthild's Flowing Light of the Godhead, dictated or channeled through her from God, is known for its eccentric passion and courtly style. "The Soul," Mechthild's , is the protagonist of this book, and it travels to places it is warned against, always stretching the bounds of propriety to reach its lover, Jesus. Although Mechthild did not travel physically in her life, the dangerous journeys of her fictional "Soul" are the theme of her book, as "the Soul" strives, again and again, to reach union with a divine which seems to many—as she is repeatedly warned—to be too hot, too strong, too huge, too tall for her.

In a dialogue between Mechthild and her Senses, the senses speak together, advising her to seek cooling spiritual refreshment in the customary ways, in the chastity of the virgin, in the blood of the martyrs, in the wisdom of the apostles, in mortification of the flesh, and finally in contemplation of the baby Jesus and his mother. For all of these

suggestions, Mechthild responds like someone who has already exhausted the normal means to God. So many days has she been martyred, she says, that she could no longer be cooled by the martyrs. Her own wisdom is closer to her than that of the apostles.

Mortification cannot work (though she would be happy to do it) because her love of God would render all pain meaningless. Contemplation of the baby Jesus is, she says, love for children, or "Kinderliebe". She is a "vollerwachsene Braut," and insists, despite the fear-mongering of her own senses, on going directly to her beloved, Jesus.

Mechthild's Senses, however, warn her of the certain destruction which will ensue if she goes directly to the Godhead. The self cannot possibly withstand the overpowering nature of God:

O Herrin, kommt Ihr so einher,
 Müssen wir erblinden sehr.
 Denn die Gottheit ist ein heißer Brand
 Wie es dir ja gut bekannt.
 Alle die Feuer und alle die Gluten,
 Die Himmel und Heilige durchfluten
 Und das große Brennen
 Ist alles ausgeflossen
 Aus seinem göttlichen Atem
 Und aus seinem menschlichen Munde
 Nach dem Rate des Heiligen Geistes;
 Wer kann da verbleiben nur eine Stunde?

Mechthild's response is that she, "the Soul," can not possibly be hurt by something of which she is already a part .

Der Fisch kann im Wasser nicht ertrinken,
 Der Vogel in den Lüften nicht versinken,
 Das Gold ist im Feuer nie vergangen,
 Denn es wird dort Klarheit und leuchtenden Glanz empfangen
 Gott hat alle Kreaturen das gegeben,
 Daß sie ihrer Natur gemäß leben.
 Wie könnte ich denn meiner Natur widerstehn?¹⁶⁸

Mechthild suggests herein that nothing she might do in her attempt to reach God could possibly be wrong, that God has made each creature in such a way that he or she will necessarily live in accordance to his or her nature. "One law," in the words of a much later mystic, "for the lion and the ox is oppression." Mechthild's claim is probably heretical. It boasts of a mortal soul on equal footing with the Godhead, a mortal soul whose special position puts it beyond the sacraments of most people.

More than anything else, it seems to have been Mechthild's words which endangered her. She was, she tells us, "vor diesem buoche gewarnet, und wart von menschen also gesagt: woelte man es nit bewaren, da muehte ein brant uber varen".¹⁶⁹ Mechthild's response to this threat, a prayer that God will protect her book from "ill-willed interpretation, which comes from Hell," is just another example of the powerful and dangerous game of language, metaphor and interpretations.

At the age of sixty, after living out in the world for almost forty years, after her book—still not finished—had been passed around and translated throughout the European mystic community, possibly coming into the hands of a young Meister Eckhart,¹⁷⁰ Mechthild was driven by fear into the Convent of Helfta, that famous home of mystically inclined sisters. Although she was well admired within the walled cloister, Mechthild's idiosyncratic passions did not exactly meld with the conformist needs of the community. MacNamara writes:

The eccentricities and excesses of devotion that might sanctify women working out their vocations in the world were poisonous to community life. Mechthild of Magdeburg...needed divine reassurance to survive the constraints of cloistered life, even though she had entered seeking shelter from the harassment and threats of heresy charges that pressed mystics in the outside world.¹⁷¹

Meister Eckhart, born around 1260 in Thuringia also to a family of courtly descent, began his ecclesiastical career in the bosom of the Church authorities. Showing great promise, the young preacher was a favorite and was sent first to Köln, and later to Paris, to study in the spiritual metropolises of his time. It seems unlikely that the beloved mystic suffered much material want during these years of favor. And it is perhaps due to such a lack of material want that he was able to develop a philosophy of *spiritual* poverty. In one of the earliest works to bear his name, the Reden der Unterweisen, a sort of pre-Luther "Table Talk" transcribed and collected at the end of the thirteenth century by the novices with whom he regularly spoke, ate, and lived in Erfurt, the Prior Eckhart explains

that material poverty—and material wealth as well— is not enough, is, in fact, besides the point:

Die Leute, die da Frieden suchen in äußeren Dinge, sei's an Stätten oder in Weisen, bei Leuten oder in Werken, in der Fremde oder in Armut oder in Erniedrigung—wie eindrucksvoll oder was es auch sei, das ist dennoch alles nichts und gibt keinen Frieden. Sie suchen völlig verkehrt, die so suchen...Aber, was soll er denn tun? Er soll zuerst sich selbst lassen, dann hat er alles gelassen. Fürwahr, ließe ein Mensch ein Königreich oder die ganze Welt, behielte aber sich selbst, so hätte er nichts gelassen.¹⁷²

Eckhart means that it doesn't much matter how much one has of this or that, but rather what one's attachment is to this, that, and especially the self. Neither pilgrimages, nor humiliation, not torture, nor good works are the way to peace, but the simple and challenging sacrifice of the self as one knows, cherishes and nurses it. That self, the known, social, set self, much like the mask of turn-of-the-century social critiques, is to be given up to allow for the greater spiritual adventure of possibilities.

Where the Tao says that one should do earthly things, but not with expectations or attachments, Eckhart says, in an emphasis which would be picked up later to his disadvantage by the Free Spirit Brotherhood, that it's not what you do, it's the way that you do it:

Die Leute brauchten nicht soviel nachzudenken, was sie tun sollten; sie sollten vielmehr bedenken, was sie wären. Wären nun aber die Leute gut und ihre Weise, so könnten ihre Werke hell leuchten. Bist du gerecht, so sind auch deine Werke gerecht. Nicht gedenke man Heiligkeit zu gründen auf ein Tun; man soll Heiligkeit vielmehr gründen auf ein Sein, denn die Werke heiligen uns nicht, sondern wir sollen die Werke heiligen.¹⁷³

Eckhart's writings are now often compared to the philosophies of Buddhism and Taoism, and were then called, especially by his contemporary inquisitors, pantheistic. He probably merely meant however, in his own way, to be a practicing Dominican.

Although Pelagianism—the sin of believing that one can gain salvation through works alone—is itself highly heretical, the opposite danger lies in a total abandonment of propriety. The obvious heretical tendency of such spirituality is that it leads to an independent spiritual practice which needs neither sacrament nor priestly authority. The Free Spirit Brotherhood, basing many of their beliefs on Eckhart's writings, were accused by the inquisitors of all manner of impropriety, criminal activity and profligacy (much in the same way that the Romans had talked about the strange ways of the early Christians).

The problem of interpretation, intention, and "will" further complicates the heresy question. If Eckhart's *words*, as the 1326 inquisition trial against him pointedly suggested, led to the heretical *deeds* of the beghards, beguines and especially the Free Spirit Brotherhood, who then was at fault? Eckhart asked his inquisitors why—in fact—such close-minded readers as they had not found even more objectionable matter in his writings than the 49 Latin and 59 German passages. Of course they misunderstood his metaphoric language, but he was not, he maintained, a heretic—for heresy was a question, not of

deed, but of will. This very explanation, which aims to clear the act by virtue of the actor's intention, was itself treading on dangerous ground. In the radical tradition of St. Paul, Eckhart implied it was not the law, but the spirit of the law that mattered. But what of the Word? The Word, it is clear from all of Eckhart's writings, is mystically significant and should be used as if it were the will's ambassador.

In one sermon, *Quasi stella matutina in medio nebulae...*,¹⁷⁴ Eckhart elaborates the mystical meaning of metaphor and simile, an explanation which touches upon timelessness and linearity. The immediate experience of God's creation requires that one understand the creation to be *still going on now*. This is to be understood in the same way that an image in scripture is understood to be at once the image it is and the other thing or things it is said to represent. An historical event, if fully experienced in the present is virtually happening in the present; thus God gives birth to his son over and over and over, without end or beginning. In the same way, the multiple things of this world, the creatures and objects, separated by Time from their source in Oneness, are, without the experience of Time, one with their source, God, are, in effect, not separated.¹⁷⁵

All of Eckhart's sermons concern themselves with the multiple meanings of particular words. Taking a particular sentence from scripture, Eckhart translates from the literal to the metaphysical meaning. Asking questions like: "What is virgin? What is the temple? What is God?" he answers that the virgin is the soul free of received images, the temple is Reason, the abode of God; God is the one who gives most of himself, the virgin and the woman at once.

Words are tools for teaching. Jesus is, himself, the most famous metaphor for the process of metaphor itself in Christian theology. Sent down by his Father to elucidate God's Book, Jesus is a metaphor to help mankind understand what is too difficult to look

at in its essence. "Er ist ein Wort des Vaters. In diesem nämlichen Worte spricht der Vater sich selbst und die ganze göttliche Natur und alles, was Gott ist...Diese Weise seines Sprechens ist die, daß er sich selbst und alles, was der Vater in ihm gesprochen hat, offenbart in der Weise, wie der Geist empfänglich ist..."¹⁷⁶

God is that which gives most of itself, by way of participation in many levels of meaning. The enlightened spirit will be most receptive to the Word and its complex meanings. This understanding of the Word, and the individual's relation to the Word, is Eckhart's most important message: "Ich richte mein Augenmerk nun auf das Wörtlein 'quasi', das heißt 'gleichwie'; das nennen die Kinder in der Schule ein 'Beiwort'. Dies ist es, auf das ich's in allen meinen Predigten abgesehen habe. Das Allereigentlichste, was man von Gott aussagen kann, das ist 'Wort' und 'Wahrheit'. Gott nannte sich selbst ein 'Wort'. Sankt Johannes sprach: 'Im Anfang war das Wort' (Joh. I, I) und er deutet damit (zugleich) an, das man bei diesem Worte ein 'Beiwort' sein solle."¹⁷⁷

Man should be a 'Beiwort' to the Word of God, an adjective towards the description of God's essence. That something is "like" something else, or approximately comparable to something else, is thus part of the serious game of approaching understanding. Comparison, Nicolas of Cusa would explain later, is the best way to understand the nature of something, and is, as well, a participation in the mystical journey through meanings and realities.

Now language itself, especially scriptural language, or language about God, takes on this same mystical dimension as a bridge between the unknown and the known, as a miraculous connection between the wordless and the comprehensible, part of the trinity, elucidated by Nicolas of Cusa in his de docta ignorantia as 1) that which understands, 2) that which is understandable, and 3) the understanding itself. A distinct part of this triad

is useless without its two partners—only the three together make up one. Cusa's original question, how can the finite be united with the infinite (how can we understand the infinite by means of the finite word, image, number, reality) is echoed by the mystery of the Trinity: how can that which understands be united with that which is understandable? The Trinity is made up of 1) Oneness, 2) Otherness (Sameness) and 3) Union of the two (Verbindung, Vereinigung). That which understands will be united with that which is understandable by understanding itself.¹⁷⁸

For Musil, this question would relate to a wide-reaching discourse on oneness, union, twinship, and sameness—a discourse with relevancies for sociological and aesthetic concerns. Musil enumerates, with this tradition in mind, a trinity of Ulrich, Agathe, and the other condition”. Musil speaks of “die drei Schwestern Süße” which he breaks down as : 1) Ulrich, 2) Agathe, and 3) the world. Ulrich muses:

Ich habe gesagt, wir sind Schwestern. Du hast nichts dagegen, daß ich die Welt liebe, aber ich muß sie lieben wie eine Schwester, nicht wie einen Mann, oder wie ein Mann eine Frau. Ein wenig empfindsam; du u[nd] sie und ich machen einander Geschenke. Ich nehme nichts fort von der Zärtlichkeit, die ich dir schenke, wenn ich auch der Welt schenke, im Gegenteil, jede Verschwendung vermehrt unseren Reichtum. Wir wissen, daß wir jeder unsere getrennten Beziehungen zueinander haben, die man nicht einmal ganz offenbaren könnte, wenn man wollte, aber diese Geheimnisse erregen keine Eifersucht. Eifersucht setzt voraus, daß man aus der Liebe einen Besitz machen will. Aber ich darf im Gras liegen, an den

Schoß der Erde gepreßt, u[nd] du wirst die Süße di-eses Augenblicks
mitempfinden.¹⁷⁹

The “one” might be conceived, in Musil’s sense, as the state of the alienated individual; the “two” would be seen as “the other”; the third part of the trinity might be understood as the “union” of the individual and the other. This unifying third might, furthermore, be seen as language itself, as the Word again, in its role as potential bridge between the first and second parts of the triad. Musil’s two siblings (an individual and his other) would be a static dualistic system without the active third of their union (in its approach, perfection, destruction, dissolution, and departure). The relationship of the three parts is a cycle of rigid individuation and melting, a recurring cycle which needs change to remain “alive”.

Love, Musil says elsewhere,¹⁸⁰ cannot exist between two people alone, but demands the presence, real or imaginary, of a third, as observer, envious, desired, or desiring. The third is the active energy of the trinity, the bridge which binds and breaks the connection between the one and the other. The third, the Holy spirit, the breath, the world, or the Word, is the living opening, a beginning, a constant creating and re-creating of the world, always new, never static. Not a repository of old dusty laws, not a locked reliquary of rigid meanings. Such living words function within the mind and imagination as creators of realities. Eckhart writes:

Eine weitere Kraft ist in der Seele, mit der sie denkt. Diese Kraft
stellt in sich die Dinge vor, die nicht gegenwärtig sind, so daß ich diese
Dinge ebensogut erkenne, als ob ich sie mit den Augen sähe, ja, noch

besser—ich kann mir eine Rose sehr wohl (auch) im Winter denkend vorstellen—, und mit dieser Kraft wirkt die Seele im Nichtsein und folgt darin Gott, der im Nichtsein wirkt.¹⁸¹

And Eckhart's rose can be changed by language instantly into a rock or a lock, still containing in the lingering impressions of the mind, the residue of rose-ness. Poetry, prayer, word associations, even dada, all stem in part from this open-ended connection between consciousness and language. So Hildegard von Bingen, describing one of her visions, can write "a soft shadow, actually a wing," and the wing will never lose, in the mind of the reader, its "shadow-ness," will always be many-layered. Likewise, a negation expressed in language, such as Hildegard's "it was no human form," leaves the reader, in an echo of negative theology, still looking for that human form which is "not." Once opened, the mind is closed only with difficulty.

Eckhart's words—and through them his free spirit—were in fact more dangerous to the closed system of the Church than any action or alternate lifestyle could have been. Called by Johann XXII—his most adamant accuser—"Dornen und Unkraut...schädliche Disteln und giftige Dornsträucher...die den wahren Glauben in vielen Herzen vernebeln....," Eckhart's words alone, spoken and written, did unfortunately rob him of his position and place, but went on to wander, with all the other possible renegade truths, through history and into the future. Eckhart the man himself is lost track of during the years of his last trials, is presumed dead, yet never officially buried in historical document.

It is significant for our study that the most pernicious crimes of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance were crimes of language. Recanting, or taking back the words,

becomes the only acceptable way to salvation—and the only impossibility for those true believers who understand the combined power of word and belief. Yet the word is only the beginning.

There is a twofold consideration: one maintains that it is not the things one *does* which matter, but the *way one is*...the other maintains that to feel a certain way is not enough without making the supreme transformation of changing one's life. Unraveling these seeming contradictions we reach the bottom of existentialism: the true fount of reality begins in the mind; the true realization of the mind's imaginings is to be worked out in the world.

We are talking, writes de Certeau, "about an inner lift-off, a 'detachment'." "Eckhart speaks of a 'liberation'...it is 'all decided'...'I say you must form the desire all at once, but the execution takes place little by little.' In that moment, which has the lightness of a departure, the two aspects of a decision, the ecstatic (to exit) and the ascetic (to lose), coincide."¹⁸²

The ecstatic experience, coming suddenly as an altered vision of reality, is, without a corresponding life transformation, of little value for Eckhart, just as a life time of good works without the corresponding inner liberation would be better off left undone. The actual experience of reading (or hearing) Eckhart's sermons or "table talk" is, he reminds us, pointless without a true commitment. "Wer diese Rede nicht versteht, der bekümmere sein Herz nicht damit. Denn solange der Mensch dieser Wahrheit nicht gleicht, solange wird er diese Rede nicht verstehen."¹⁸³

Like a Nietzschean admonitory foreword (this book is for all and none etc....) Eckhart's friendly warning is in all earnestness. "Eckhart's Predigt verstehen," writes Malte Fues (echoing Rilke), "heißt sein Leben ändern".¹⁸⁴

De Certeau discusses this "condition" of engagement, this "volo" as a "modus loquendi" for mystic utterances:

A will constituted the a priori knowledge could no longer supply. It had to be present (no past decision or knowledge could make up for it), practical (it was an act), concrete (here and now, it committed the 'I'), and absolute (without restrictions). Without it there was no spiritual communication...The volo provides the opening for every spoken word.

This presupposition defined the addressee required by the discourse ("I am speaking only to those who..."). From John of the Cross who addressed "souls already engaged in the path of virtue," to Surin, that "convention" was in all cases required. It defined a category. It set apart a way of using language that consisted in casting all of one's desire into it..."instructions for use" were spelled out, distinct from other usages, and a tacit understanding was established.¹⁸⁵

Quoting Malaval, a seventeenth-century mystic, de Certeau, shows the legacy of Eckhart: "I write only for persons capable of inner things, those who have been fully mortified with respect to the external senses and all passion, fully drawn to God by his pure love and fully detached from all that has been created carrying out an action'. Eckhart had already stressed this point. It was not a matter of carrying out an action but of being resolved to bet one's entire being on God."

The reception of Eckhart in the Romantic period seems to have focused on this mystical origin of Kant's categorical imperative, stressing the link between individual

inner experience and social interaction towards creating the world. Baader, writes Malte-Fues, understood Eckhart's "Divine birth in the soul" as the categorical imperative, and Friedrich Schlegel, in an essay on philosophy in the Ätheneum, added the following: "Doch daucht mir—ist ein gewisser gesetzlich organisierter Wechsel zwischen Individualität und Universalität der eigentlichste Pulsschlag des höheren Lebens und die erste Bedingung der sittlichen Gesundheit".¹⁸⁶

And this exchange between the individual and society, the "true pulse of the higher life," is, it seems, often lived on the edge of acceptable morality. A vivid experience, a living inspired pulsation is, suggests Eckhart, more important than the orthodoxy or "goodness" of the exchange. Ulrich and Agathe, Musil's twentieth century ethical explorers, will circle around some very similar conclusions. A few incriminating passages from Eckhart's final inquisition papers read as follows:

"Wer jemand mit einer Schmähung lästert, lobt Gott durch eben diese Sünde der Schmähung; und je mehr er schmäht und je schwerer er sündigt, um so kräftiger lobt er Gott."

" Wer Gott selbst lästert, lobt Gott."

" Der gute Mensch soll seinen Willen so dem göttlichen Willen angleichen, daß er selber alles will, was Gott will: weil nun Gott in gewisser Weise will, das ich gesündigt habe, so wollte ich nicht, daß ich keine Sünden begangen hätte, und das ist wahre Buße."

"Wennn ein Mensch tausend Todsünden begangen hätte, und es wäre ein solcher Mensch in rechter Verfassung, so dürfte er nicht wünschen, er hätte sie nicht begangen." ¹⁸⁷

These and other pronouncements, taken out of context by his accusers, were easily inculpatory. Other statements, about God not being good, or man being as important to God as God is to man, all came, like the above selections, directly from a tried and true theological tradition of negative theology on the one hand and radical Jesusian shock tactics on the other. Any number of Jesus' comments, interpreted ungenerously by an inquisitor could have, and did, lead to his crucifixion by the socio-religious group in power. Eckhart's popularity, hardly comparable to Jesus', was threatening enough to the powers that were to necessitate the attempted squelching of his message of liberation.

When Eckhart finishes up his sermon on the world as God's book, for example, he says that he who knows how to read it well has no need for sermons, he need only be a 'Beiwort' to God's 'Wort': "Wer weiter nichts als die Kreaturen erkennen würde, der brauchte an keine Predigt zu denken, denn jegliche Kreatur ist Gottes voll und ist ein Buch." ¹⁸⁸

This suggests, along with Eckhart's other heretical pronouncements, the possibility of a spiritual state beyond good and evil, a level of enlightenment which no longer need follow the law. His disdain for his inquisitors' simplicity reveals a conception of a hierarchy of religious thinking found in most mystical systems which keeps concealed at the top a completely free realm of thought, action and ritual inaccessible to the literal thinker.

In Musil's notes on Emerson, we find an important quote and commentary which later finds its way into Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften in abridged form: "'Es gibt keine Tugenden, die endgültig wären; alle sind (Dyn. Moral.) Versuche und Proben. Die Tugenden der Gesellschaft sind Laster für den Heiligen... Bemerkt: Die Kehrseite der Auffassung, daß es nichts absolut Gutes gebe, sei die, daß es auch nichts 'unbedingt Böses' gibt.'" ¹⁸⁹

The novel's sibling philosophers often discuss this question of good/bad deeds and their relation to good/bad people. They are themselves wavering on the fine line between heretical thought and heretical act, the existential Dostoevskian question of the reality or necessity of letting the axe fall. Agathe draws Ulrich towards an Eckhartian statement. Just as Eckhart had explained that it is not the good works of a person that matter, but his or her essence of goodness, Ulrich declares the good criminal to be potentially better than the bad do-gooder:

"Du erinnerst dich doch—"rief sie aus und nannte einige berühmte Beispiele der Literatur: "Du hast mir nicht gesagt, ob du einen Dieb entschuldigen kannst; aber diese Mörder würdest du doch gut finden?!"

"Natürlich!" schrie Ulrich zurück. "Das heißt—nein, warte doch: vielleicht sind das nur Menschen von guter Anlage, wertvolle Menschen. Das bleibt ihnen auch später als Verbrecher. Aber gut bleiben sie nicht!"

"Aber warum liebst du sie dann noch nach ihrer Untat?! Doch gewiß nicht nur wegen ihrer früheren guten Anlage, sondern deshalb, weil sie dir noch immer gefallen!"

"So ist es ja immer" sagte Ulrich. "Der Mensch gibt der Tat den Charakter, und nicht umgekehrt geschieht es! Wir trennen Gut und Böses, aber in uns wissen wir, daß sie ein Ganzes sind!"¹⁹⁰

Looking further back past the Middle Ages to the time of the ancient Stoics and the Indian Vedas, Musil comments in his notes on the special allowances granted the Wise in matters of morals and the relation of this free morality to the aesthetic realm of play:

Zur Spiel u[nd]Schein Ästhetik: vgl. Gomperz s.213 Fußnote.
Ariston v. Chios—nach ihm der Höhepunkt der Stoa u[nd] des griechischen Ideals der inneren Freiheit—u[nd] übereinstimmend mit Ariston: Cankara (Deussen, Die Sutras des vedanta s. 438) lehren: es gibt kein den "Weisen" verpflichtendes Sittengesetz...Innerlich frei handeln, heißt "tun was einem einfällt" (das darf aber nur der Weise). Cankara: Gott handelt nur zum Spiel. Ariston: Der Weise gleicht einem guten Schauspieler, der jede Rolle gleich gut durchführt. Bei Einwand der Unwürdigkeit gegen Spiel= Ästhetik also Vorsicht! (Bezieht auf Schiller usw. darauf oder handelt es sich um eine unbewußt gewordene Tradition?)¹⁹¹

This "unbewußt gewordene Tradition" travels as well to Sufism where one finds this realm where the "perfected being" dwells in liberation from received ideas of good or evil. As Javad Nurbakhsh writes in his book In the Tavern of Ruin, "Mohammed said, 'The faith of a believer is not perfect unless one thousand sincere people give witness to his 'infidelity'.' He meant that the divine knowledge of a perfect believer is beyond the

level of thinking of most people. Those who hear a perfect being speak, since they can not perceive the truth of what he is saying, will call him an unbeliever."¹⁹²

Before reaching this realm of perfection, it is usually necessary to travel the path of orthodoxy. But once one has reached it, one is "beyond definition," in the "Tavern of Ruin". The first step towards Sufic perfection, as in most forms of the mystic way, is the "self-having-passed-away-in-God" (fāna) and a corresponding naming of the divine names. This naming of the divine names, a rite to lead the individual from his or her individual self towards the multiplicity of God's attributes, has its counterpart in Christian mysticism (cf. Dionysius the Aereopagite). The Sufi, literally and symbolically, leaves everything behind, throws everything into the fire. Like Eckhart's king who leaves his kingdom and all its riches, the Sufi is required to go even further, and leave off expectations, habits, preconceptions etc.. To the Sufi, even afterlife must be abandoned : "[B]elievers must leave the domain of the self, and pass beyond desire for both this world and the next."¹⁹³ Nurbakhsh writes:

It is said that Bayazid Bastami was once walking along a road with his disciples when they came upon a severed head lying by the way. Upon its forehead was written, "He loseth both the world and the hereafter." (Qur'an)

Bayazid picked up the head and kissed it. When his disciples asked who the man was, he answered, "this is the head of a dervish who gave up both worlds for God." ¹⁹⁴

There can be thus, for the true believer, no hopes of salvation or reward, no certainty of ritual or scriptural correctness, only a drunkenness of love which, in its necessary passion, defiles the very temple of its worship. Beginning from a hierarchy of truths and falsehoods, narrowly defined and interpreted, the seeker proceeds to a free realm of non-defined, non-mediated, non-limited experience.

The question of being beyond definition, a salient one for experimental art or abstraction, is central to the mystical attempt to "know". Higher knowledge itself seems to rest in the abandonment of definition:

The disciple, through these stages of purification, travels the inner way, the Spiritual Path (*Tariqat*). But he or she can do so only by following the duties and obligations of Islam (*Shariat*). Having traveled this path, the disciple becomes a perfect being and arrives at the threshold of Truth (*Haqiqat*)...One could liken the journey within the *Haqiqat*, within the Truth, to training in a divine university, the "Tavern of Ruin" (*kharabat*). In this true center for higher education there are no professors, one's only guide being Absolute Love, and one's being in Love.

Before a perfect being enters this university, he or she can be defined. However, upon entering the Truth, one is indefinable, beyond the realm of words.¹⁹⁵

Where some mystics will affirm this realm "beyond words," it will become important to use words in a non-linear manner to come to certain understandings. Let us qualify the realm beyond words as a realm beyond limited definitions of words, a realm of

poetic speech. The openness of definition, of separation between real and literal, becomes the element in which the perfect being swims, even so an element made up largely of words.

The great Sufi martyr, Hussein Ibn Mansur el-Hallaj (d.922), set the radical mystical tone for subsequent centuries of Sufism with the utterance of a few words. By claiming he was above the law, and saying that he was, himself "the Truth," or "the Real," he was executed and dismembered. This famous and scandalous utterance becomes a doctrine of incarnationism, the doctrine of *ana'l-haqq* ("I am the Real"), which destroys the carefully constructed hierarchy of an exoteric definition of reality. In his last public prayer, he said "Divine mysteries which are unlawful to others have become thus lawful to me".¹⁹⁶

He held secret meetings at his house, and became very powerful through his teaching and by performing miracles. He was, in short, a political threat. He taught that Sufism was the internal truth of all religion, and because he emphasized the importance of Jesus as a Sufi teacher, he was accused by fanatics as being a secret Christian. One of the counts against him was that he had a number of books, wonderfully embellished and decorated. His assertion that the Mecca pilgrimage could be performed anywhere, by making suitable dedications and preparations, was considered impossibly heretical.¹⁹⁷

Books and words and their power to create imaginal worlds are, once again, the source of the mystic's crime. To claim that the Mecca pilgrimage could be performed

anywhere is to imp~~l~~ode space and time, clearly affirming the possibility of ritual reenactment or exper~~i~~encing realities far away and long ago or even in the future within the present conscio~~u~~sness. Peter Lamborn Wilson writes:

Such sayings are known as "ecstatic utterances" which shatter the bound~~s~~ of language and must be interpreted, not taken literally. "I am the Real~", without such qualification, is a scandal, a ripping open of veils upon veils, a revealing of something which cannot be spoken. Even the Prophet him~~s~~elf mentions certain secret moments of revelation, saying, "If the Mos~~l~~lems knew of them, they would stone me." 198

That concea~~l~~ed reality, however, *can* indeed be spoken—in a creative act of speech—but not without shattering irrevocably the carefully articulated structure of another, defensive rea~~a~~lity. Thus Hallaj is a great hero of the Ismailis or Assassins, that famous radical sect ~which broke, by way of a few words, the chains of the law.

Here it need only be pointed out that for the Ismailis, this doctrine [*ana'~haqq*] signals the abrogation of outer Islam, the dissolving of all exote~~r~~ic Law. Those who experience this truth, like Hallaj, are freed of all concea~~l~~ment, all the chains of duality. They reside in the *baten*, the esote~~r~~ic. 199

The whole structure of Islam appeared to them as a shell; to get at its kernel of meaning the shell must be penetrated by *ta'wil* [return to the deep source], and in fact broken open completely.²⁰⁰

Although orthodox Islam relies upon strict concealment and regulation, the mystical rites of the Shiites call for the revelation of the deepest mysteries, even, or especially, by means of desecration.

Nietzsche wrote of the Assassins in his Genealogie der Moral, equating the Qiyamat with his stringent ideal of freedom from absolute truth, and holding their radicalism up as an extreme to be compared to more insipid versions of "free thought":

Diese Verneinenden und Abseitigen von heute, diese Unbedingten in einem, im Anspruch auf intellektuelle Sauberkeit, diese harten, strengen, enthaltsamen, heroischen Geister, welche die Ehre unsrer Zeit ausmachen, all diese blassen Atheisten, Antichristen, Immoralisten, Nihilisten, diese Skeptiker, Ephektiker, *Hektiker* des Geistes (letzteres sind sie samt und sonders in irgendeinem Sinne), diese letzten Idealisten der Erkenntnis, in denen allein heute das intellektuelle Gewissen wohnt und leibhaft ward — sie glauben sich in der Tat so losgelöst als möglich vom asketischen Ideale, diese 'freien, *sehr* freien Geister"...Das sind noch lange keine *freien* Geister: *denn sie glauben noch an die Wahrheit*...Als die christlichen Kreuzfahrer im Orient auf jenen unbesiegbaren Assassinen-Orden stießen, jenen Freigeister-Orden *par excellence*, dessen unterste Grade in einem Gehorsame lebten, wie einen gleichen kein Mönchsorden erreicht hat, da

bekamen sie auf irgendwelchem Wege auch einen Wink über jenes Symbol und Kerbholz-Wort, das nur den obersten Graden, als deren *secretum*, vorbehalten war: "Nichts ist wahr, alles ist erlaubt"... Wohlan, *das* war *Freiheit* des Geistes, *damit* war die Wahrheit selbst der Glaube *gekündigt*....²⁰¹

Hasan II, Imam of the Ismaili Assassins, declared in the middle of the Ramadan fasting of 1164 the arrival of the Resurrection, "broke the fast forever and proclaimed perpetual holiday".²⁰² This proclamation of freedom from the law, although not unlike Jesus' inauguration of the God and book of love, is remarkable for its communal aspect. In contrast to stories of individual conversion experiences this political announcement affirmed the right of an entire community of individuals to discover its own way.

The legend of the paradisal garden at Alamut where the hours, cupbearers, wine and hashish of paradise were enjoyed by the Assassins in the flesh, may stem from a folk memory of the Qiyamat. Or it may even be literally true. For the realized consciousness this world is no other than paradise, and its bliss and pleasures are all permitted...With the proclamation of the Resurrection, the teachings of Ismailism were forever expanded beyond the borders imposed on them by any historical event. The Qiyamat remains as a state of consciousness which anyone can adhere to or enter, a garden without walls, a sect without a church, a lost moment of Islamic history that refuses to be forgotten, standing outside time, a

reproach or challenge to all legalism or moralism, to all the cruelty of the exoteric. An invitation to paradise.²⁰³

A verbal declaration, such as "the chains of the law have been broken," carries as much power as consciousness will lend it, just as any imaginary reality, Eckhart's rose for example, or the Ismaili paradise garden, can, in certain states of consciousness, become just as real or unreal as the present physical world.

In a journal entry on the Rosicrucians, the Kabbala, and the Knights Templar, Musil writes about magical palindrome squares which are found in countless church mosaics, on sacramental vessels, inscribed in books, on amulets etc..²⁰⁴ Taking apart literal meaning to an even more obscure level, Musil explains that the etymological meaning of the magic word is not as important as the letters of each word themselves, their symbolic content, their meaning as abbreviations and their place in the symmetrical design of the cube. Varying levels of occult correspondences—understood by the initiated alone—were imbedded within the cube. One example of such a palindrome cube might, writes Musil, have been found as a mosaic in the entry hall to a church, the place up to where even the excommunicated were allowed entry (perhaps put there by the Masons, that secret society of church builders):

S	A	T	O	R
A	R	E	P	O
T	E	N	E	T
O	P	E	R	A
R	O	T	A	*

One solution to this secret formula is: "Petro er reo patet rosa sarona," or: "Auch Petrus, dem der Verleumdung des Herrn schuldigen, steht die gnadenreiche Liebe offen../Oder : Und ob du auch den Herrn verleugnet des Heilands Liebe steht dir immer offen."²⁰⁵ Similar to Eckhart's heretical passages, this secret message relieves the sinner or the excommunicated who has denied God of the curse of eternal damnation. Not stopping at one interpretation, Musil notes: "Man konnte immer mehr herauslesen (zumal je eingeweihter man war)."²⁰⁶ After some notes on the history and meaning of the Rosicrucian symbol, Musil gives another example of a magic palindrome cube:

S	A	T	A	N
A	D	A	M	A
T	A	B	A	T
A	M	A	D	A
N	A	T	A	*

Within this combination of letters, the initiate can find information about the original relation between God and Satan. The highly heretical idea, prevalent amongst dualist sects such as the Zoroastrians and Manicheans as well as numerous lesser-known cults, that God and Satan were a unity at the time of creation and only later separated into qualities of Good and Evil, Light and Dark, is, Musil writes, "mit erstaunlicher Deutlichkeit durch fünf Buchstaben ausgedrückt...Auch daß steckt in den Buchstaben".

A Sufi devotional rite uses the human body to make the shapes of letters and words. By spelling out LA ILLAHA ILL ALLAH with his or her body, the worshipper enacts his or her belief.

The Sufi sits either cross-legged or on his heels, with the right hand placed on the left thigh and the left hand over the right wrist. In these positions one's hands and legs form a √ LA (the negative particle in Arabic), symbolizing the nonexistence of the Sufi before the Beloved. In this state, the Sufi must relinquish attention to and belief in this world, the hereafter, and himself.

The √ of one's arms begins at one's navel and continues up to one's neck. It is a scissors which symbolizes the cutting away of the head of one's self, and the surrendering of the belief in and attachment to one's own limited existence.²⁰⁷

The description continues with positions for the subsequent words of the saying LA ILLAHA ILL ALLAH (There is no god, but God), each body position and word corresponding to its spiritual meaning. The y-shape of the first word LA, which will negate the first part of the sentence (there is no god), is not only a letter and a word meaning negation, but also a scissors which symbolize that cutting away of the self. The ritual enactment, the spelling of words, the relation of the words' shapes to their philosophical meaning, all contribute to the many-layered metaphoric experience of reality. "Since words are but manifestations of objects, concepts, and truths," writes Nurbakhsh following this explanation, "the Sufi feels that by continuous and complete

attention to the meaning and reality of his remembrance of God, he becomes the true manifestation of that remembrance."²⁰⁸ "Speech is magic," says the Sufi poem, "and we are the enchanters":

On the Logos

Speech
 is the preface
 to the Book of Love,
 treasury
 of the King
 of Love,
 the bounty you seek
 from the heart.
 What have I said?
 Whatever you say
 is LOGOS,
 ocean-fountain
 pearl hoard
 incisive proof
 of the Intellect
 whose cutting edge
 is but the blade of the tongue
 which reveals the hidden fires
 which sears the universe

with the heart's candle flame.

If the Word
 were not painted on
 the cosmic page
 there would be no sign
 of Adam or the world
 no talk of past or future.

Who
 could have kindled
 mercy in the heart
 of the thief
 of hearts?

Who
 could have made
 Muslims out of infidels?
 or made the minstrels rejoice
 or sparked a thousand flames
 with a single breath?

LOGOS is Revelation
 and we are the High Throne;
 speech is magic
 and we are the enchanters.

Life
 flows from eloquent speech:

where is there room for the miracles of Jesus?

for with this breath

we enliven a whole universe

and render it everlasting.

This chapter's hegira into some of Musil's medieval sources is just a taste, only a sampling of the multiple worlds, versions, or alternate "norms" wherein he found the primary material he sought to paint, again and again and in many different ways, the picture of his "other condition". These explorations of "ecstatic confessions" and individual transvaluations of values are related to Musil's history of the "origin of art" and to his personal aesthetic practice as a writer. He researched the mystical properties of the Word not only within the mystical traditions of Judeo-Christianity, but within the realm of "early"- or "primitive man" as well. Once having established the magical properties of the Word as such, Musil went on to explore the significance of its formal arrangement (in charms, spells, rituals, and narratives). The idea of Word as both mimesis and model of/for reality brings Musil to the question of metaphoric magic and the possible ritual power of artistic variations; the union and separation of the one and its other, of real and imagined worlds, of the moment and its possible duration, endlessly revolve, creating living ideas out of dead and dead ideas out of ones that were living but moments before; Musil's paradoxically impossible artistic and philosophical task is to open up a crack in the metaphysical mind which leads the soul to the real world and to drive, as he writes, on the mystic way with something as real as a physical truck.

Chapter Three

The Tantric Ritual of Reading: Lévy-Bruhl's "participation mystique" and Musil's Metaphoric Morality

This radical conflict of principle between magic and religion sufficiently explains the relentless hostility with which in history the priest has often pursued the magician. The haughty self-sufficiency of the magician, his arrogant demeanor towards the higher powers, and his unabashed claim to exercise a sway like theirs could not but revolt the priest, to whom, with his awful sense of the divine majesty, and his humble prostration in presence of it, such claims and such a demeanor must have appeared an impious and blasphemous usurpation of prerogatives that belong to God alone. And sometimes, we may suspect, lower motives concurred to whet the edge of the priest's hostility. He professed to be the proper medium, the true intercessor between God and man, and no doubt his interests as well as his feelings were often injured by a rival practitioner, who preached a surer and smoother road to fortune...

Sir James Frazer

Selbst in jeder Analogie steckt ein Rest des Zaubers, gleich und nicht gleich zu sein.

Robert Musil

The remains of some ancient magic, the magic of being like and unlike at once, is hiding, suggests Robert Musil, in language. A word is and is not like its meaning; a novel is and is not like its author's life; a brother is and is not like his sister. Whosoever dares to unite these lovers and strangers, *Doppelgänger* and opposites, enacts a metaphoric ritual of displacement which upsets the static world and lets it fall in new arrangement. That the world is not static, after all, only serves to prove that such rituals are taking place in every hour. Paul Ricoeur, in his history of metaphor, reminds us of the original "deviant" transgressive function of giving common, familiar entities new names, "borrowed" from other realms, genera or species. Metaphor is more than just a "substitution" of one word for another, imparting no new information. *Living* metaphor is made up of a mixture of reality and invention. *Mimesis* as well, as a translation of one entity into another medium, is thus much more than mere "imitation" of reality; it is, rather, a purveyor of new information. "Reality", writes Ricoeur, "remains a reference, without ever becoming a restriction".²⁰⁹ Relieved of extrinsic interference, the work of art exists in a realm free of political or moral considerations, free from what he calls "the burdensome ontological concern for *fitting the appearance to the real*."

Distinct from an art for art's sake disinterestedness (if such a phenomenon actually exists), this independence of the *real* is akin to Musil's realm of possibility, that realm where new ideas may be born. Metaphor however, as a personal expression of alternate meaning, only remains deviant as long as it is not frozen into a closed system of definitions or known formulas, into the normal, the harmless, the same.

As we have seen in the previous chapters, a similar tension has always existed between the energy of fresh prophecy and the stranglehold of religious dogma, a tension which drew many turn-of-the-century experimental artists to the study of various forms of mysticism. Some saw mysticism as a fitting framework for their nihilism – a distrust of language and truths which led, ultimately, to silence, and others studied the ecstasies of visionaries as food for their "otherworldly" idealisms. Robert Musil, perhaps the most subversive metaphorist of his century, neither followed the pessimistic language philosophers nor the band of chest-heaving romantics who celebrated that brand of mysticism which he called "Schleudermystik." For Musil, mysticism was interesting insofar as its ecstasies were experiences of alternate reality states, experiences akin to fiction – states which, by virtue of their otherness, had the power to break down belief in normal mono-reality, replacing it with infinite living metaphors.

His study of traditional Judeo-Christian, Islamic, Vedantic, and Taoist mysticisms was, as we have seen, complemented by more esoteric studies in ancient mystery religions, goddess-worshipping Germanics, heretical early Christian sects, and the ritual totemic mystical religions of the people known in his time alternately as "primitives," "original-, primal-, natural-, or ur-man," "heathens," or even "savages". These more esoteric studies, as keys to the magical sources of even mainstream mysticisms, are significant in that they generally involve ritual action as a primary component of their communal practice, a fact which did not escape Musil's notice in his search for the religious origin of art.

Dances which make the rain come, paintings which insure a good hunt, theatrical enactments and ritual slaughters which protect the warriors on their way into battle, are all examples of what Sir James Frazer would call "imitative magic". Yet "imitative" was not

really quite the right word—as Musil's friend, the ethnologist, musicologist, and gestalt-psychologist Erich von Hornbostel was later to point out—because ritual action, like art, does not *imitate*, but rather *creates* nature. Nature, in another twist on the proverb, imitates ritual.

Another of Frazer's terms for the "primitive" conception of magical cause and effect relations was "*sympathetic magic*," known also, in a word borrowed from the realm of metaphor, as "*synecdochism*". Under the heading of sympathetic magic, Frazer lists two types, imitative, or homeopathic magic, and contagious magic. The former is that law of similarity discussed above wherein, it is believed, "like produces like". The latter, a law of contagion, assumes that things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act upon each other at a distance, even after the physical contact has been severed. This physical synecdoche, wherein a symbolic part of a person, an animal, or a piece of Christ's "true cross", carries the magical essence of the whole, and can be used by an individual, tribe, or church to either protect themselves or harm others, is a function of mystical metaphor, and lends insight into the possible worldly significance of symbolic works of art.

Young Musil had read Nietzsche's early anthropological speculations about the relation of ancient poetry and religion and had noted these in his diaries. With the academic development of anthropology at the turn of the century, studies of ancient beliefs mixed in Musil's consciousness with studies of extant primitive cultures. We recall the lengthy entry in Musil's diaries covering Hornbostel's lecture on the poetry of ancient "Kulturvölker": the meaning of ritual, Musil noted, is a renewal of the process of nature ("Naturgeschehen"). It is thus "Vorbildzauber," magic by example. Reality is created

"Durch die Tat und durch das Wort"; "Formfehler sind Sachfehler und darum gefährlich".

Later Musil notes:

Rückblick: Ethnologen sagen, daß die paleolithischen Felszeichnungen magische Zwecke hatten, daß heute noch Neger am Abend vor der Jagd ähnliche anfertigen. Die Kunst wäre also religiös-zauberischen Ursprungs. Das gleiche, was mein verstorbener Gefährte auf kurzem Wegstück v. H[ornbostel] von der Dichtung nachgewiesen hat und was ich schon in dem Aufsatz [Literat und Literatur] benutzt habe...Also Kunst und Religion sind verwandt (darum auch Konkurrenten)...²¹⁰

In Musil's essay "Literat und Literatur," he had written about the original purpose of art, the desire to maintain the balance of nature, to influence the gods, and the primally close correlation between that "what" (the desired effect) and the "how" (the technique and form) of all magical art. Musil maintains that the basis of modern lyric has been virtually the same from "Urzeiten," i.e.: the habit of separating the poem into strophes and lines, the symmetrical structure, the refrain and rhyme, the use of repetition, the use of pleonasm as a hypnotic device, the sprinkling of secret, magical words, syllables, etc.. "Und bekanntlich," he writes, "werden Formfehler von den Primitiven heute noch wegen ihrer vermeintlichen Folgen ängstlich gescheut". ²¹¹

Musil's conception of this religious-magical origin of art is based, in part, on his anthropological studies of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, whose 1923 book , Les fonctions mentales des sociétés primitives (in German, Das Denken der Naturvölker) introduced him to the concept of "*participation mystique*". Musil seems, although this is not entirely conclusive,

to have received his Frazer only second-hand by way of Lévy-Bruhl, Durkeim, and Jaensch. In his essay, "Ansätze zu neuer Ästhetik," Musil writes:

Liest man die genialen Beschreibungen, welche Lévy-Bruhl in seinem Buch *Les fonctions mentales des sociétés inférieures* vom Denken der Naturvölker gegeben hat, namentlich die Kennzeichnung jenes besonderen Verhaltens zu den Dingen, das er Partizipation nennt, so wird der Zusammenhang mit der Kunsterlebnis an vielen Stellen derart fühlbar, daß man glauben kann, in diesem eine späte Entwicklungsform jener Frühwelt vor sich zu haben...

That "Frühwelt" which Musil relates to Lévy-Bruhl's contemporary description of modern day primitives is presumably the world of those "alte Kulturzustände," the ancient Grecian and Egyptian mystery religions, early Druidic and Orphic sun and moon worshippers, for whom art and religion were one. Comparing the artistic techniques of ancient cultures to Lévy-Bruhl's primitives, Musil mentions repetition, rhythm, and hypnosis again, all techniques which have the effect of displacing the observer's self and disturbing the normal experience of reality:

[D]iese Mittel in sehr alten Kulturzuständen und insgesamt bedeuten eine außerbegriffliche Korrespondenz des Menschen mit der Welt und abnormale Mitbewegungen, deren man übrigens in jedem Augenblick inne werden kann, wenn man, vertieft in ein Kunstwerk, plötzlich kontrollierendes Normalbewußtsein einschaltet.

The extraordinary experience of being absorbed so thoroughly in a work of art that the controls of normal consciousness are switched off, is related by Musil to the collective sociological constant which Lévy-Bruhl describes. Musil has related *participation mystique* with his "other condition" of aesthetic experience.

Briefly defined, Lévy-Bruhl's mystical participation is, in his own words, a Law by which "objects, beings, phenomena can be, though in a way incomprehensible to us, both themselves and something other than themselves." ²¹²

The Bororo tribe of Northern Brazil, he explains, are reputed to boast that they *are* red araras (parakeets). That they can be both humans and araras at the same time, without sensing any contradiction, is, explains Lévy-Bruhl, symptomatic of the totemic understanding of reality.²¹³ That the native experiences a photograph, drawing or sculpture, furthermore, as if it were as real as the person it depicted, does not derive, explains Lévy-Bruhl, from some deficient ability of perception, but because the so-called "original" is itself nothing more than one form or container of the essence or soul or spirit which may manifest itself in many different forms.

Anthropologists of the English school, like Sir James Frazer (1854-1941) in his encyclopedic work The Golden Bough (first published in 1922), and Sir Edward Tylor in his Primitive Culture (1871), called such identification "erroneous" and "superstitious", and Lévy-Bruhl's entire work is a rebuttal of Frazer's perspective. If the distinction between magic and religion was somewhat blurred by the medieval Church, the Protestant reformation served to mark clear distinctions, labeling even Catholic rites like transubstantiation as "sacramental magic".²¹⁴ This Protestant legacy was adopted by the Victorian anthropologists, creating an evolutionary explanation of the civilizing

development from spell to prayer. It was thus generally understood that magic, with its (however erroneous) cause-effect relationship was the precursor (or bastard sister) of science, and that religion was the belief in an higher, extraneous source of universal transformation. Lévy-Bruhl did not, however entertain any thesis of continuous development from primitive to modern or magic to science. Primitive mentality was not, in his opinion, "logic gone astray," but rather an "other" form of logic. The primitive, it was conceded, actually showed evidence of possessing both forms of logic seemingly at once, without any inherent contradiction. Still, Lévy-Bruhl insisted that what he called the "pre-logical" or "mystical" thinking of the "primitive" was so remote from our Western tradition as to be practically incomprehensible. His indiscriminate grouping of cultures as diverse as the Chinese, African, and North American Indian under the heading "primitive," and his equally dualistic comparison of this "primitive" mysticism with the unconditionally "rational" European, ignored the fact that European culture has, itself, a rich and complex history of mysticism and superstition. This inability to put the two realms, mysticism and ratio, together, to admit, even, that they might exist side by side in one culture, was, of course, a central sociological concern of Musil's. Musil therefore transposed Lévy-Bruhl's findings into the realm of twentieth-century Europe himself, comparing them all the while with his studies of more familiar forms of mysticisms. What Sir James Frazer, on the other hand, in the words of another heretical master of mystical metaphor, Robert Graves had been "saying-not-saying was that Christian legend, dogma and ritual are the refinement of a great body of primitive and even barbarous beliefs..."²¹⁵

Where Victorian anthropologists like Frazer, Tylor, and others were ambivalent about the presence of irrational strands in Western civilization and consciousness, a

handful of outspoken turn-of-the-century thinkers did not hesitate to expose those murky realms of the 'unconscious' which were alluded to early on by Nietzsche and defined as a new "science" by Freud.

Studies of child psychology, followed by Musil,²¹⁶ were related to anthropological studies of the "primitive" mentality. Some theorists, like Tyler, opined that ontogeny (the history of individual development from infant to adult) recapitulated phylogeny (the "racial" development of mankind from primitive to civilized). Such a conception, along the lines of the evolutionary anthropological scheme with which Lévy-Bruhl took issue, assumed that the adult European somehow outgrew his or her "primitive" experience of reality.²¹⁷

Musil was interested in E. R. Jaensch's work, especially an article entitled "Eine interessante psychologische Studie" (1923) which examined the "eidetic" predisposition or capability of children, primitives, and some artists. Eidetic sensitivity, an abnormal experience of optical imagery (hallucination, clairvoyance, perception of a "secondary reality"), was, according to Jaensch, extremely rare past pubescence in Europeans, but common in the adult primitive. In a similar vein, William Stern, whose "Psychologie der frühen Kindheit" (1927) Musil had read, compared the imaginative capacities of children and artists, outlining in both a "selbstzwecklichen Spieltrieb" which facilitated a merger of individual and fantasy object akin to the primitive's identification with images, idols, and symbols. "Die Bilder der inneren Anschauung werden durch den äußeren bildlichen Darstellungen angeregt und gefördert. Wunsch und Wirklichkeit verschmelzen."²¹⁸

According to Freud and others, the adult European was in fact considerably influenced by irrational sources of behavior such as projection, identification, and displacement. Freud's idea, expressed in Traumdeutung, of a primary and a secondary process of mental function

should be compared to Lévy-Bruhl's; the primary function is that of the unconscious, the non-discursive, iconic, that function ignorant of space and time; the secondary function is the function of conscious, logical and causal thinking. Closer to Musil than Freud however was Ernst Kretschmer, whose Medizinische Psychologie (1922) compared mystical experience and madness. A chapter on *Der Traum* outlines a "Sphäre" on the periphery of consciousness which is the source of all creative thought:

Die Peripherie des Bewußtseinsfeldes bezeichnen wir als 'die Sphäre'. Unter sphärischen Seelenvorgängen verstehen wir nun eben die, die vor sich gehen. Die Traumvorgänge lassen uns vieles von dem ahnen, was sich auch in unserem Tagdenken, in der Sphäre, am Rande unseres Bewußtseins abspielt, d]as] h[eißt] in jenem dunklen, wogenden Regionen, von wo alles Denken überhaupt, vor allem aber das intuitive, produktive und künstlerische Denken entquillt. Die Traumvorgänge zeigen uns die Stufe des unfertigen Denkens, das dem fertigen, abstrakten und syntaktischen in die festen logischen Kategorien gesammelten Denken vorausgeht, das ihm die Elemente liefert, ohne die es überhaupt nicht zustande kommen könnte. ²¹⁹

The conception that another zone of consciousness existed, analogous to the collective consciousness of the primitive, to the psychology of the child, or to the disturbed delusions of the mentally ill, entered into the philosophical vocabulary of the modern age. The ability to access this "other" zone, state, or condition would be increasingly spoken of as a positive attribute. In a discussion of the two modes of thinking,

Musil touches upon what he sees as the necessary synthesis of the rational and the nicht-rational:

Es gibt ein Denken, das Wahrheit schafft; klar wie eine Nähmaschine setzt es Stich neben Stich. Und es gibt ein Denken, das glücklich macht. Das ungeduldig in dich hineinfährt, so daß die Beine zittern; das in Flug und Sturm Erkenntnisse vor die auftürmt, an die zu glauben dein Seelenleben in den nächsten Jahren ausfüllen wird, und: von denen du doch nie wissen wirst, ob sie richtig sind. Seien wir ehrlich: es reißt dich plötzlich einen Berg hinauf, von wo du deine innere Zukunft mit seliger Weite und Gewißheit siehst wie — seien wir ehrlich, wie ein zirkulärer Irrer, ein Manisch-Depressiver im Vorstadium der Manie. Du schreist nicht und du machst keinen Unsinn, aber du denkst locker und gigantisch wie mit Wolken, während das gesunde Denken Fug auf Fug wie in Ziegelsteinen denkt und wie äußerstes Bedürfnis hat, jeden einzelnen Griff immer wieder an den Tatsachen zu prüfen. Es verarmt dich, Einzelnen, indem es dich nicht über die Antworten auf ein paar Fragen hinausläßt, von denen deine Seele selbstverständlich nicht leben kann. Es macht dich unfruchtbar. Aber du mußt dein Denken von Zeit zu Zeit immer wieder auf dieses zurückschrauben, muß es daran prüfen, muß es ihm unterwerfen, darfst dich nie zuweit davon entfernen, wenn du nicht ins Maßlose und das ist zugleich ins Bedeutungslose geraten willst.²²⁰

Marie-Louise Roth, after quoting this passage in a chapter on some of these psychological influences on Musil, elucidates the connection Musil makes between illness and artistic creation. The artistic differentiates itself from the pathological by a necessary “Rückübersetzung” (return transference) with the “Normalzustand” (normal condition). The essential process, Roth explains, is characterized specifically by the “Sphärenberührung” (touching of spheres) of the two oppositional poles (ratio and mystic), by what Musil calls a “Grenzerlebniss” (boundary experience).²²¹

In conjunction therefore with Lévy-Bruhl's "discovery" of a mystical consciousness in the primitive, the psychologically-minded contemporaries of Musil began to locate this "non-rational" realm in the European (in the child, the insane, and the artistic) as well. Later on in life, following Evans-Pritchard's criticism of his too simplistic "double selection," even Lévy-Bruhl would revise his theory to admit that the mystical mentality existed (albeit in smaller proportion) together with the rational mentality in European minds as well.²²² The mystical mentality was, he conceded, the source of poetry, art, metaphysics, and scientific invention.²²³

Musil's extensive readings on early Christian mystery religions and early Christian heresies, in books such as Franz Cumont's Mysterien des Mythra (1914), Gustave Flaubert's Temptation of St. Anthony, and Kuno von Hardenburg's Rosenkreuz und Bafomet (1932), would have made the connection between Lévy-Bruhl's "primitive" examples and the secret sources of the Western tradition clear. Because of his deep reading in the traditions of Western and Eastern mysticisms, Musil knew that there was actually a close intellectual correspondence between the "mysterious" thought processes of these "exotic" peoples and the mystical ancestors of Western philosophy. "*Participation mystique*," Lévy-Bruhl's concept (used to describe the communal philosophical system of

cultures as varied as Africa, China, India, Australian Aboriginal, North American Indian) is indirectly related, not only to Christian eucharistic and Trinitarian concepts of union, but also to fundamentally pertinent ideas about symbols, language, and the reception of art in Western culture. Attempting to define this *mystique*, which, in his own words, "Scarcely enters the ordinary framework of our thought, " Lévy-Bruhl writes:

I should be inclined to say that in collective representations of primitive mentality, objects, beings, phenomena can be, though in a way incomprehensible to us, both themselves and something other than themselves. In a fashion which is no less incomprehensible, they give forth and they receive mystic powers, virtues, qualities, influences, which make themselves felt outside, without ceasing to remain where they are.

In other words, the opposition between the one and the many, the same and another, and so forth, does not impose upon this mentality the necessity of affirming one of the terms if the other be denied, or vice versa.²²⁴

Describing the association of corn, plumes, hikuli (a fermented corn drink), and deer by the Huichol Indians of Mexico, he could almost be describing the nature of poetic metaphor. Clouds, Lévy-Bruhl explains, cotton wool, the white tail of the deer, and the deer itself are considered to be plumes, presumably by virtue of the visual and tactile relation of feathers and the deer's tail. This relation extends further, beyond the visually and sensually comprehensible. The next step is a function of the dual metaphorical

process of synecdoche, whereby a whole is called by its part, or a part by its whole : the deer himself is considered a plume, and his antlers as well, all by virtue of participation.

Such "primitive" associations are echoed in the fictional descriptions of Ulrich's childhood friend, Clarisse, who, in the advanced stages of her developing disassociation from reality (madness), descends (ascends) into a sort of cosmic word-play, a glossolalic free association common to mystic and psychedelic experiences. In an attempt to free words from their received meanings, Clarisse played serious games:

Cl[arisse]legt zum Beispiel A[nders, i.e., Ulrich]²²⁵drei Worte vor und bat ihn, sie zu lesen, in welcher Reihenfolge er wolle. War es Gott — rot — und fährt, so las er Gott fährt rot oder Gott, rot, fährt, das heißt sein Gehirn griff sie gleich als Satz auf oder trennte sie durch Beistriche, um zu betonen, daß es dies nicht tue. Cl[arisse] nannte es die Chemie der Worte, daß sie sich immer zu Gruppen zusammenschließen, und gab Gegenmaßregeln an. Ihre Lieblingsauskunft war, daß sie mit Ausrufungszeichen oder Unterstreichungen arbeite. Gott!! rot!!! fährt! Solche Pfähle halten auf und das Wort staut sich an ihnen zu seinem vollen Sinn. Auch unterstrich sie die Worte ein bis zehnmal und solch eine von ihr geschriebene Seite sah bisweilen aus wie eine geheimnisvolle Notenschrift. Ein anderes Mittel, das sie aber weniger geläufig anwandte, war die Wiederholung; durch sie wurde das Gewicht des wiederholten Worts größer als die Kraft der syntaktischen Bindung, und das Wort begann ohne Ende zu sinken. Got fährt grün grün grün grün. Es war ein unerhört

schwieriges Problem, die Zahl der Wiederholungen so richtig zu bemessen, daß sie genau das ausdrückte, was gemeint war. ²²⁶

The serious implications of such verbal incantations, called by Clarisse "poems," is the reconstruction of the world. Speaking of "...poems that tear words out of nature in order to slowly make it barren," Clarisse tells her own myth of the recurring creation and apocalypse by the hand of the poet, the recurring birth and death of the world through the word:

Feuerflocken aus dem Vulkan des Wahnsinns wurden von den Dichtern geraubt; irgendwann in Urzeiten und später, so oft ein Genie wiederkehrte; diese lodernden, noch nicht zu bestimmten Bedeutungen eingeeengten Wortverbindungen wurden in die Erde der gewöhnlichen Sprache gepflanzt und bilden deren Fruchtbarkeit. "Die ja bekanntlich von ihrem vulkanischen Ursprung kommt". Aber— so schloß Cl[arisse] — daraus folgt, daß der Geist immer wieder zu Urelementen zerfallen muß, damit das Leben fruchtbar bleibt. Damit war die Verantwortung einer ungeheuren Verantwortungslosigkeit in die Hände Cl[arissen]s gelegt; sie wußte, das sie eigentlich ungebildet war, aber es erfüllte sie nun eine heroische Respektlosigkeit gegenüber allem, was vor ihr geschaffen worden war. ²²⁷

Musil lets the mad woman's fantasy relate to the "healthy" speculations of philosophers (like himself or his protagonist Ulrich), as well as consciousness researchers, and the experiments of modern artists:

Soweit vermochte A[nders/Ulrich] den Spielen Cl[arissen]s zu folgen, und die Respektlosigkeit der Jugend erleichterte es ihm, in den zertrümmerten Geist die neuen Gebilde hineinzuträumen, die sich daraus formen ließen; ein Vorgang, der sich unter uns mehrmals wiederholt hat, sowohl um 1900 als man das Andeutende und Skizzenhafte liebte, wie nach 1910 wo man in der Kunst dem Reiz der einfachsten konstruktiven Element unterlag u[nd] die Geheimnisse der sichtbaren Welt anklingen hieß, indem man eine Art optisches Alphabet auf sagte.²²⁸

Clearly, the artist Musil was sympathetic to a worldview which granted the non-rational a magical potency; while mildly chastising anyone who thought such mysticism meant the artist could be lazily "suggestive and sketchy". Musil the vivesecteur cut with a ritual sanctity which implied that the Word might have powers beyond the didactically descriptive. Discussing Ulrich and Agathe's mystical conversations in his notes, he writes:

Das Sprechen besaß für sie einen großen Grad von Wirklichkeit. Die Dinge werden erst in den Worten fertig...Ag[athe] hatte noch den ursprünglichen Glauben an die Zaubermacht (belebende Macht) des Worts...Zusammenhang in der Entwicklung: Im Anfang war das Wort—

Die Welt sollte aus dem Wort entstanden sein, aber sie entsteht immer noch aus ihm . . . Logos; Besprechen; Wer das Wort hat, hat die Sache. ²²⁹

The realm of the primitive is a border-free zone which provides the modernist experimenters with a model of fruitful metaphoric association. But Lévy-Bruhl's discovery in the "exotic" has its traditional Western counterpart in Neo-Platonism and early Christian mysticism. Plotinus had discussed "participation" in his Enneads, as a function whereby each level of reality "participates" in the one above it, ultimately striving towards unity, or ecstatic *henosis*, with the One. Augustine had affirmed that all that exists is at least *in part* good. If he had not breathed in this fairly common theological idea elsewhere, Musil most certainly read this passage in Buber's Ekstatische Konfessionen wherein Symeon the New Theologian (ca. 970-1040) paraphrases Dionysius the Areopagite's famous metaphor of metaphors which is usually referred to as "the lamps of Dionysius". Symeon writes

Something whole is appearing, as I believe and not with its own being, but through participation. For you may light a fire from fire, and you receive a whole fire, yet the fire remains undiminished and undivided as before. Nevertheless what is transmitted separates itself from the first, and as something physical it goes into several lights. But this is something spiritual, immeasurable, inseparable, and inexhaustible.²³⁰

Dionysius the Areopagite's discussion of symbols in On the Divine Names, a treatise wherein is explained the theory by which God may manifest infinite positive and

negative attributes at once, calls this phenomenon "participation," the unfolding of the enfolding of the One Divine name into virtues and vices, beauties and uglinesses, good and evil. The Pagan's heretical vision of multiple gods is, according to this Christian theory of participation, nothing more than a misreading of symbols, an inability to see past the finite forms and characteristics of Mars, Venus and Jupiter to the One Godhead. Yet certain syncretist understandings of pagan religion do indeed see the many manifestations and names of gods and goddesses as nothing more than multiple manifestations of the same one "White Goddess" (Alphito, Diana, Ceres, Isis, Cardea) – her male counterpart (Zeus, Tantalus, Jupiter, Telamon, Hercules) himself merely another part of her original oneness. Apuleius, in his Golden Ass, puts these words into the oddly monotheistic sounding pagan goddess' mouth:

My name, my divinity is adored throughout the world, in divers manners, in variable customs, and by many names...I am she that is the mother of all things, mistress and governess of the elements, the initial progeny of worlds, chief of the powers divine, queen of all that are in Hell, the principle of them that dwells in heaven, manifested alone and under one form of all the gods and goddesses...

Many goddesses and gods may be conceived thus as multiple manifestations or metaphors for a single or dual deity. It is common in religions East and West to isolate a principle male and female pair as the mother and father, lover and beloved creators, and to encourage the male and female members of a religious group or social community to metaphorically enact the creation ritual via "tantric" union. Frazer's lengthy excursus on

"sacred prostitution" – the widespread ritual practice of symbolic love-making between a woman (representing the goddess) and a man (representing the god) in the interest of insuring seasonal regeneration of the crops – raises the question of the precise symbolic nature of later Christian embraces. If ancient mystery religions, Pagan cults, and heretical early Christian sects practiced physically the symbolic union of man and woman, in imitation of what was generally believed to have been the primary creative union of god and goddess, might not the later medieval "metaphoric" language of physical love be, in part at least, leftover from this earlier ritually enacted metaphoric magic? Frazer writes:

We may conclude that a great Mother Goddess, the personification of all the reproductive energies of nature, was worshipped under different names [Aphrodite, Astarte, Ma, etc..] but with a substantial similarity of myth and ritual by many peoples of Western Asia, that associated with her was a lover, or rather series of lovers, divine yet mortal, with whom she mated year by year, their commerce being deemed essential to the propagation of animals and plants, each in their several kind; and further, that the fabulous union of the divine pair was simulated and, as it were, multiplied on earth by the real, though temporary, union of the human sexes at the sanctuary of the goddess for the sake of thereby ensuring the fruitfulness of the ground and the increase of man and beast.²³¹

Frazer tells of cults wherein "sacred prostitutes" were allowed to engage in intercourse with strangers only, of towns in which all women (married or not) were required to spend a portion of time doing service to the goddess, and of the gradual

transformation of this conscription citizenry base into a selective professionalism.

Eventually, women, Frazer writes, "resorted to various expedients for evading in practice the obligation which they still acknowledged in theory...a woman offering her hair to the goddess in place of her person...the substitute of an obscene symbol for the obscene act...then, instead of all women participating in communal prostitution, only a small group – sacred women – dedicated their lives, or a term of years, to the service of religion...".²³²

The transformation from a society wherein all women (and sometimes men) participated in "sacred prostitution" to this limited careerism was, Frazer writes, a product of the increasing importance of marriage (a relatively late product of an extremely sophisticated culture – a culture wherein paternity was, for a surprisingly long time, of little importance). In typically symbolic form, the career prostitutes could ritually perform the act of union, by proxy, as it were, for all the men and women of the city, insuring, thereby the successful regeneration of nature.

The title of "virgins" for such career prostitutes refers, of course, to the chaste manner in which such women would live for the larger part of the year, indulging in sacred acts of union only at particularly holy times, a religious construct familiar to all theologies and mysticisms in particular, wherein that which is criminal most of the time is extremely spiritual at other particularly holy moments. Here, literally, the virgin becomes the whore, without, at the time, any inherent contradiction. The word "virgin" moreover actually had little to do with sexuality, and referred rather to a woman's singleness, her freedom from the bounds of marriage.

More Judeo-Christian mystical unions – from the dark beloved of Solomon's song to Mechthild von Magdeburg's courtly lover, Jesus, pass muster with the censor mostly on the grounds of reverse literal reading. The concept of "just a metaphor" is of course a

boggling misinterpretation, a grotesquerie which whitewashes hundreds of years of symbolic union of opposites. Metaphor is endless: it moves from world to world, from matter to essence, from real to unimagined faster than the inquisition can squint. It is a sly shape-shifter, yet radically earnest. The tradition makes it clear that there is ultimately no difference between physical and spiritual; all of it, in a sense, is a dream, a fiction rampant with living, changing meaning. The gap between Christian unions and Pagan or Eastern Tantric unions is not that one is physical and the other spiritual, but rather that one involves a union between two divine beings (god and goddess) and the other is, at least officially, a union between a mere mortal (lifted up to be miraculously one with the Godhead) and an absolute (male) authority. This subtle role transformation obviously signifies a major change of perspective, yet we find monotheistic mystical unions (always hovering for this reason on the verge of heresy) straining towards the former sort of union – flaunting or disguising their mystic *deificatio*, the mortal becoming even arrogantly divine, making demands on the lover/Godhead, smashing through walls of propriety, denying their mortality, longing even for death as an end to the bonds of humanness.

In perhaps the most racy scene of Mechthild's Flowing Light of the Godhead, quoted in full in Buber's Konfessionen, The Soul goes to the bed and alcove of love to meet her lover, God, and he makes a strange request of her:

(Seele:) Was gebietest Du, Herr?

(Gott:) Ihr sollt nackt sein!

(Seele:) Herr, wie soll mir dann geschehen?

(Gott:) Frau Seele, Ihr seid so sehr in mein Wesen gehoben

Daß zwischen Euch und mir nichts sein kann.

...Darum sollt Ihr von Euch legen

Beides, Furcht und Scham

Und alle äußeren Tugenden...

(Seele:) Herr, nun bin ich eine nackte Seele,

Und Du in Dir selber ein reichgeschmückter Gott.

Unser zweier Gemeinschaft

ist ewiges Leben ohne Tod.

Da geschieht eine selige Stille

und es wird ihrer beider Wille.

Er gibt sich ihr, und sie gibt sich ihm.

Was ihr nun geschieht, das weiß sie,

Und damit tröste ich mich...²³³

Certainly the Lord is still King and he is the one giving the orders, yet he tells her that she is so lifted up into his own being and his own nature that there can be nothing more between them. He gives himself to her first, then she gives herself to him. Their will is done. Grete Lüers, in her wonderful book, Die Sprache der deutschen Mystik im Werke der Mechthild von Magdeburg, traces the origins and meanings of mystical metaphor to mystery religions, the Song of Solomon, and especially to the world of the medieval court. The "soul", according to her findings, is often signified as a "Königin" to the Divine King:

Die Seele muß aber rechtlich, gesetzlich als Frau Königin dem höchsten Könige anvertraut sein, sie darf nicht seine Knechtin sein, und wenn sie ist, leidet sie Qualen und Not: 'wie sere hast du verkebtet din elich küniginne' (M. 70, 15). Sie ist dann nur eine 'elende havendirne', ein 'kuchenbuebli', wie Seuse so gern sagt. Sie ist 'gebiursch' und eine 'dürperinne'. Ist sie aber die wahre Königin, so soll man sie setzen auf den 'stuel des ewigen gemaches' (M.209, 22).²³⁴

And Lüers' interpretations, over all, are in tune with her contemporaries Martin Buber (whose anthology she cites in her bibliography) and Ludwig Klages (whose Vom kosmogonischen Eros she alludes to repeatedly without naming) The mystical experience – in a sweeping cross-cultural hurricane – is a high verbal eroticism. The mystic, Lüers reiterates, is the true "erotischer Mensch":

Das Geistigste, Sublimste wird durch das Niedrigste, Sinnlichste ausgedrückt; dadurch zeichnet sich die Metaphorik des Mystikers ganz besonders aus, daß sie diese beiden Sphären zu überbrücken scheint, daß sie ihm nicht widersprechliche Gegenpole zu bedeuten scheinen...Der Mystiker besitzt die Fähigkeit der In-Eins-Setzung der polaren Gegensätze, weil er alles sub specie aeterni, prägnanter formuliert: in aeterno sieht. Er ist in diesem Sinne der wahrhaft erotische Mensch; denn Eros bedeutet im wertesten Sinne Ineinsetzung von Sinnlichem und Geistlichem durch Bezogenheit auf das Unendliche.²³⁵

The "geistige Ehe," otherwise known as "syneisactism," an early Christian commonplace, was, notes Musil, damned and banned by a resolution of the Church in the later middle ages. It consisted of the "Enges Zusammenleben männlicher u[nd] weiblicher Kleriker, [das] von der einfachen Keuschheitsprobe bis zu seltsamen asketischen Ausschreitungen u[nd] einem tief religiösen Verhältnis der Geschlechter [ging]." ²³⁶

This scandalous communion of masculine and feminine was, writes MacNamara, not merely condemned out of concern for the propriety of such a living situation, but because of a general dangerous trend of religious women to lose their gender identities, wear asexual habits, cut off their hair, enact their own sacraments, write books, making them, in their own minds at least, equal to the male religious.

Ulrich and Agathe's co-habitation begins on the model of syneisactism, but develops, quite quickly, into a union of the other sort. The remarkable thing about Ulrich and Agathe's union is that it is modeled after the union of mortal and God which the siblings find in the mystical writings before them. This is however quite commonplace in Tantric religion wherein the man and the woman are said to lose their individual identities and take on the roles of masculine and feminine energies. The physical ritual enactment of Tantric sexuality signals, in fact, nothing more than another mode of interpretation of the same symbolism we find in Christian mysticism—whether it takes place in a poem or in reality is, from a certain symbolist perspective, hardly relevant. The poetry of love and union which flows throughout Sufi literature is, similarly, based upon physical love. Various sects, many heretical, of Sufism see this textual union as more or less literal or symbolic, depending upon the interpretation. Peter Lamborn Wilson, in his Scandal, Essays in Islamic Heresy, explains how the Sufi idea of "the gaze" is interpreted differently by different sects, some which include the physical presence of a beautiful

young boy (upon whom the worshipper is to gaze adoringly) at their rituals, and others who would find such a literal interpretation worthy of the most violent excommunication possible.

If the mono-meaning mongers of the Middle Ages struggled to control the mixing of such powerful potions, mystical visionaries continued the syncretic translations (seeping in from wandering Pagans, crusading Persians, exogamic mystery cults, and travelers from the Far East) between worldly and divine. On order from a higher authority even than Church or State, the mystic continued to speak and write the direct Word of God in the vernacular. The bridging of opposite poles – finite/infinite, flesh/spirit, material world/spiritual world, truth/fiction – is a function of *participation mystique*, the dangerous magic act of both metaphor making and metaphor reading.

Early Christian heresies and fringe sects of all sorts, documented in Musil's notes in an alphabetical list (from *Adamiten* to *Zirkumzellion*) culled from an appendix to the German edition of Flaubert's La Tentation de St. Antoine, were known for their scandalous interpretations of the nature of mystical participation. High heresy consisted, more often than not, precisely in an alternate understanding of the literal or mystical meaning of religious metaphor: Whether, for example, God, the "father", was really, i.e., literally to be understood to be Jesus, the "son" in the miraculous union of trinity; or was Jesus, "the Word," really supposed to have come down in the physical body to inscribe his life in God's "book"?; and how was this book to be "read"? The elaborate metaphorical sacrament of the Eucharist, with its supposition that the bread *is* the body of Christ, that the wine *is* the blood, represents for example, a perfectly "primitive" enactment of *participation mystique*, no stranger than any theophagic ritual described by Lévy-Bruhl.

The cannibalistic rituals of early Greek mystery religions as well correspond to the Christian Eucharist: the actual bodies of kings and queens were in fact torn apart at regular intervals by the worshiping populace and ritually eaten. In a symbolic substitution – one step in between the Christian Eucharist and the actual eating of kings and queens – sometimes children were sacrificed in place of royal leaders, granting the rulers a period of seven or eight years respite, postponing the inevitable final ritual. Later, animals came to replace the human victims more and more. In the tradition of Mithraic mysteries—a religion Musil was well versed in thanks to two books by Franz Cumont—a bull was sacrificed and placed upon a grate; then the worshipper would lay under the grate so that the blood of the bull (representing Mithras himself, the sun-god of this cult) would drip onto him. Baptism, with water or blood, served the dual purpose of purification and participation. Cumont describes:

This was really a magic rite, because bodily purity acted sympathetically upon the soul, or else it was a real spiritual disinfection with the water driving out the evil spirits that had caused pollution. The votary, again, might drink or besprinkle himself with the blood of a slaughtered victim or of the priests themselves, in which case the prevailing idea was that the liquid circulating in the veins was a vivifying principle capable of imparting new existence. These and similar rites were supposed to regenerate the initiated person and to restore him to an immaculate and incorruptible life.²³⁷

Mystically speaking, these different sacrifices, despite their very real physical difference, are little more than various interpretations, or more or less literal readings, of reality. As Robert Graves writes:

What, for early church councils, seemed the most diabolical and unpardonable heresy of all was the identification of the Hercules-Dionysos-Mithras bull, whose living flesh the Orphic ascetics tore and ate in their initiation ceremony, with Jesus Christ whose living flesh was symbolically torn and eaten in Holy communion. With this heresy, which was second-century Egyptian, went another, the identification of the Virgin Mary with the triple Goddess. The Copts even ventured to combine "the three Maries" who were spectators of the Crucifixion into a single character, with Mary Cleopas as a type of "Blodeuwed," the Virgin as "Arianrhod," and Mary Magdalen as the third person of the ancient trinity, who appears in Celtic legend as Morgan le Faye, King Arthur's sister.²³⁸

Inevitable admixtures of Christian saints and Druidic, Orphic, Sun and Moon Gods and Goddesses (sometimes translations from one religion, culture, or language to another, sometimes borrowings, substitutions, metaphors) were tolerated at first by the early Christian missionaries, who "conducted themselves with scrupulous courtesy towards the devotees of the pagan Sun-cult, with whom they had much mystical doctrine in common," but later came to be viewed, with the rise of orthodoxy's stronghold on truth, language, and interpretation, as increasingly scandalous. Graves continues:

Wherever these heresies survived in medieval Europe the Church visited them with such terrible penalties that British or Irish poets who played with them must have derived a dangerous joy from wrapping them up [...] in riddling disguises. One can sympathize with the poets, in so far as their predecessors had accepted Jesus Christ without compulsion and had reserved the right to interpret Christianity without interference. They saw Jesus as the latest theophany of the same suffering sacred king whom they had worshipped under various names from time immemorial. As soon as the big stick of Orthodoxy was waved at them from Rome or Canterbury they felt a pardonable resentment.... "Is it reasonable?" they may have exclaimed. "The Pope, though he permits our typifying Jesus as a Fish, as the Sun, as Bread, as the Vine, as a Lamb, as a shepherd, as a Rock, as a Conquering Hero, even as a Winged Serpent, yet threatens us with Hell Fire if we ever dare to celebrate Him in terms of the venerable gods whom He has superceded and from whose ritual every one of these symbols has been derived."²³⁹

Much of Christianity's displeasure with Pagan polytheism has been explained politically, and Cumont explains how Mithraism —itself a more-or-less monotheistic religion—paved the way for Christianity's sole rule. He tells an amazing story of how at one moment in history Mithraism could have triumphed over early Christianity, rendering Christianity an all-but-forgotten early heresy, and how Mithraism introduced hordes of followers to ideas (similar to Christianity's) about expiation, retribution in after-life, and self-abnegation. He makes a political connection here which mirrors the coeval Christian

development of a monotheistic, mono-ethical, mono-aesthetic culture. Cumont attributes Mithraism's novel idea of the Sun as the only God in part to a political agenda to "establish in the heavens a monotheism in imitation of the monarchy that ruled on earth. Macrobius (400AD) in his Saturnalia, has learnedly set forth that the gods were ultimately reducible to a single Being considered under different aspects, and that the multiple names by which they were worshipped were the equivalent of Helios (the Sun)".²⁴⁰

It is telling that Lévy-Bruhl needed to look so far afield to non-Western "primitive" culture to find a phenomenon which actually plays a central role in Western mysticism and philosophy. Clearly, in the frightening and relatively lawless interregnum between Christian morality and National Socialism wherein Lévy-Bruhl labored, the specter of a familiar but occult "other world" of undefined, rampantly self-propagating images was more easily approachable through the portal of "the exotic".

Yet Musil, never one to shy away from scandal, makes the connection which Lévy-Bruhl and Frazer scrupulously avoided in their work, the connection between primitive religion, heretical Western mysticism, and the occult powers of living metaphor, in his essay on Bela Balazs' philosophy of film. In his discussion of the nature of art, Musil uses examples from Lévy-Bruhl: animal-people, hybrid animals, dream images and hallucinations wherein two or more people appear as one, referring to the "magical role of hair, fingernails, shadows, mirror images," as if his readers would readily understand his obscure reference.²⁴¹ The two-way metaphorical identification of synecdoche, whereby parts are symbolically expressed by wholes and wholes by parts, is enacted as part of the religious practice of a culture of *participation mystique*, "wherein all objects, their parts, their totems, and their shades are all equally alive and ever-changing.

The mystical-metaphorical ritual of art, which unites, for one moment, one meaning or reality with another, to create more than the sum of the two parts, is, apparently, a taboo akin to incest, a criminal union of like and almost like, which disorders the separated lingual structure of mono-meaning and mono-morality.

Any non-controlled, non-mediated union at all, be it woman to God, man to man , sister to brother, word to metaphor, author to reader, is perhaps taboo in our culture. Personal communion with “the other” may be a transgression against the obligatory prostration before a distant idea of social good. Musil, in a draft letter to Matthias di Gaspero, a disapproving friend of his father's, suggests this reading of Ulrich and Agathe's incestuous union in his Mann ohne Eigenschaften. Musil posits the possibility of a man who only loves metaphors, and for whom incest too is a metaphor.²⁴² In the incestuous metaphor of brother and sister “twins”, neither coming first or second, there is, in effect, no primary meaning and no secondary substitute. This union defies, much more than the more linear father/son/holy ghost union, any idea of linear narrative. The real world of acts, matter and events kaleidoscopes back and forth into the world of forms, images and ideas, dissolving, in dizzying timelessness, any conception of beginning or end, thus becoming a state of uncertainty which may constitute a truly mystical understanding of symbols, one which recognizes no real or unreal, no earthly and ideal, no father, no son, no you, no I.

Metaphor as deviance, a new way of naming, seeing, reading the world, slipped through the cracks of the Latin Scholastic stronghold precisely by way of language, with the development of vernacular expressions for an individual's experience of a personal God, creating a living, breathing, changing discourse: international, inter-denominational, virtually classless and genderless —a discourse dangerous enough to precipitate

excommunication, book burning, martyrdom, and other machinations of thought-police attempting to breed out the insidious offspring of non-mediated unions, aesthetic, social, or religious, from the European Middle Ages up to the present.

Art, as a ritual which both "imitates" and "creates" reality, is itself a metaphoric deviance; more, again, than a mere "substitution" of one reality level for another, but actually a replacement, or displacement rather, which provides new information, suggests new possibilities, creates new realities. The creative, as Musil notes in his diaries, consists precisely in "der Verwendung dieser Elemente der wirklichen Erlebnisse, in der Fähigkeit, sie aus ihren ursprünglichen Verbänden zu lösen und ständig wechselnde, immer ausgedehntere neue Gestalten aus ihnen zu bilden, so daß dann die Phantasievorstellung und deren Verkettung, als Ganzes betrachtet, dennoch etwas darstellt, was sich nie und nirgends hat begeben!"²⁴³

Musil's creative union requires the mixture of the real (as reference) and the not yet real, much like the living metaphor of Ricoeur, who writes of the tendency of metaphor to fall into a closed rhetorical system of known phrases and proverbs, and Musil writes of "kitsch" in art as a product of repeated formulations, known analogies etc., or which, in a parallel to Musil's idea of living ethics, or moral fruitfulness, is in constant conflict with stale rhetoric or received morality. Musil cites the "feindlicher Unterschied zwischen den schöpferischen Quellen und ihrer moralischen Normierung," using the example of the "Verbrecher als guter Mensch in der Literatur nach Dostojewski," and compares this hostile tension between the creative and the morality of normalcy to that "feindlicher Unterschied" which had always existed between personal religious experience and orthodoxy.²⁴⁴

The use the of incongruent metaphor in mystical writing – such as erotic imagery for Christian spiritual union, language of wine and intoxication in Islamic spiritual verse – is practiced by Musil as well. He uses technical scientific language, for example, to describe traditionally romantic, mystical, and poetic subjects in an attempt at revitalization, a conscious metaphoric shock technique which raises the reader's consciousness of reality levels. Musil's mixture of disciplines, his comparative union of diverse and often contradictory readings on probability science coupled in his mind with readings on the Tao, encourages the metaphoric marriage of divers and unusually disparate sources.

The verbal union of the sacred and the profane, a language crime, only scarcely exculpated by centuries of exegesis which insisted that "wine really means blood," or that "physical embrace really means spiritual embrace," continues to ritually transform reality and perception. In heretical sects of the East and West, wine really does mean wine, and embrace really does mean embrace, while the earthly wine and physical embrace are nevertheless themselves living metaphors of the spiritual. As Peter Lamborn Wilson noted: "...[S]omeone who uses intoxicants for spiritual purposes can rightly be called not just a sinner but a heretic..."²⁴⁵ a consideration which throws light upon Ulrich and Agathe's mystical experiment with crime in Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften.

Supposing ritual enactments of words and deeds were indeed responsible for certain effects in the "real" world, what then might be the real world effects of a work of art? As Robert Musil questions within his novel the relationship of thought and action, the unspoken question remains: what is the relationship between literary reality and physical reality? Still another layer of metaphoric structure lies between the reading of the world as God's book and the reading of a book as the artist's world. Clearly, as seen above, an

individual mystic's or artist's words may threaten, by their rearrangement of reality and varied interpretations of language, signs, and narratives, any controlled definition of morality/reality. Yet what does it mean when one character in a novel (Agathe), referring back to a character in another novel (Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov), asks another character in a novel (her brother Ulrich), whether or not he could "really," that is, not just literarily, but in "real life," sanction a transgression against everyday morality, in this case, murder?

When two characters in a novel embark upon an experiment wherein abstract philosophical ideals are tested in "real life" action, we must pause a moment to reflect: even though Musil's sibling protagonists do not murder in his novel, they do commit forgery and incest. The murdering in the novel is done by a less central character, a character however, with whom the others identify. Symbolically, one might venture this strange equation: the supposedly virtuous and shocked reader is to the siblings as the siblings are to Moosbrugger, yet each part of this trinity participates, mystically, in the crimes of the others.

Ulrich Schelling, in an article entitled "Das Analogische Denken bei Robert Musil" outlines what he calls Musil's "konstruktive Ironie" as a "System der Spiegelungen und ironischen Brechungen" wherein there exists "kein wichtiger Gedanke in diesem Roman, der nicht bei mehreren Figuren sein klares oder undeutlich fernes Echo findet; keine Figur, die nicht, in welcher Verkehrung, in welcher Ahnungslosigkeit immer, an den Hauptideen teilhat".²⁴⁶

Beginning with the physical, he cites the shared androgynous traits of Clarisse and Agathe, Bonodea's and Diotima's voluptuousness, Diotima's "von leichter korpulenz bekleidete Antike" and Arnheim's "phönikisch-antiken Typus," and Hagauer and Lindner's "wülstige Lippen" and beards. He groups the characters by their literary affiliations as

well, noting echoes of Maeterlinck in Ulrich, Diotima, and Arnheim, and differing relations to Nietzsche in Walther, Clarisse, and Ulrich. Speaking of a "Chemie der Figuren," ²⁴⁷ Schelling notes that Musil rules over a "Reich von Möglichkeiten" which allows him "nahezu beliebig irgendeine Figur irgendwann irgendeine Wendung vollziehen zu lassen".²⁴⁸

Und immer ist es wieder der Zauberstab der Analogie, der bewirkt, daß Ulrich ausgerechnet Sekretär der verfehlten Parallelaktion wird; daß er von Tuzzi stets 'Vetter' genannt wird und selber tiefes 'Einverständnis' mit ihm empfindet; daß ihm Moosbrugger näher angeht 'als sein eigenes Leben, das er führte'; daß er sich mit den Christ-Germanen einläßt und 'mancherlei für die wunderlichen Freunde Gerdas' übrig hat; daß die Aussprüche der verrückten Clarisse seinen eigenen 'bedenklich ähnlich' sind und sogar Lindner zuweilen wie Ulrich spricht. Daß auch Musil diese Konfigurationen und partiellen Übereinstimmungen als Analogien verstanden hat, bezeugt schließlich folgende Stelle ganz direkt: 'Alles, was wir tun, ist nur Gleichnis. Das heißt: Analogie. Wenn ich, Ulrich, mich für Moosbrugger einsetzte, so ist das nur teilweise zu nehmen, nicht voll. Ebenso wenn ich mit Clarisse die Ehe breche; ich schließe sie ja nicht. Unsere ganze Existenz ist nur eine Analogie.'²⁴⁹

The question of a relation between the events in the novel and the real world is itself begged by the philosophical quandary of the novel itself. Is the realm of art the only realm for experimentation? Or does the novelistic question of the best way in which to live have any real bearing on the life of our author or his readers?

It is perhaps only from out of a mystical or primitive world view that such a question can have any meaning: where one level of reality is no more real than another. Compare, for example, a voice coming out of the sky and speaking to Abraham, telling him, against all natural feeling and moral law, to kill his most beloved son, with a primitive's ritual burning of his enemy's picture in lieu of the physical body itself. The belief intrinsic to both of these events, that there is no distinction between the material and spiritual (real/unreal) worlds, tips the Western value scale away from the physical, making dream visions, wishes, ritual enactments, novels, and other-worldly "commandments" just as "real" as waking experience, physical matter and written law.

In Musil's notebooks we find evidence of research on just such transference between reality levels. The child's experience is similar to what Musil knew about primitive reactions to images; When Musil refers to "Anschauungsbilder" here he is referring, most probably, to the eidetic imagery studied by Jaensch in children and primitives.

Ein Kind sieht ein großes Madonnenbild u[nd] will dem Jesuskind ein Hemdchen überstreifen. Ein anderes sieht einen Adler, der sich auf ein Lämmchen stürzt u[nd] legt die Händchen schützend auf das Bild. Nach E.Jaensch sind die Urzellen der Auffassung der Außenwelt Anschauungsbilder, in welchen Wahrnehmung u[nd] Vorstellung noch ungeschieden ist.²⁵⁰

Without a belief in magic, however, it is clear that most Westerners, along the lines of Johnson's reaction to Bishop Berkely, would much rather have a photograph of

themselves burned than have their chairs (or shins) kicked by metaphysical philosophers. Yet it is Musil's express intention to restore art/ritual— and with this the earth-bound but skyward ideal of the fruitful imagination— to its original dangerous place. Ulrich and Agathe's "Heilige Gespräche" tend towards this end as well, plumbing the depths of symbolism and its powers. Does twentieth century Ulrich really believe the things he tells Agathe? She is desperate to know, and his answer, much to her frustration, is "Yes, and no."

In the third part of the novel, Musil's sibling protagonists, each perhaps a metaphoric symbol of the other, engage in a series of taboo-breaking rituals, which are based, in part, on the principles of sympathetic magic. Agathe, who may be to her brother nothing more and nothing less than "eine traumhafte Wiederholung und Veränderung seiner selbst," is the agent of these acts. While the man Musil, like his "friend" Ulrich (Musil often refers to an earlier fictional character "Achilles" as his "friend" whose story he, the narrator, is telling), may be hesitant to try out his theories in reality, he is free to experiment literarily, through the twice removed mirror-image of Ulrich's feminine twin, Agathe, with all sorts of taboo possibilities. If Ulrich is not —despite his many biographical similarities to our author—Robert Musil, then Agathe— despite her many similarities to her brother— is even less so. This raises the mischievously naive question of whether or not Agathe even exists at all in the "real" realm of Musil's semi-fictional "Kakania"; perhaps she is nothing more than a dream projection of Ulrich's, his alter ego with which he must merge to achieve wholeness. And Musil, of course, raises this possibility in the reader's mind himself. This "forgotten sister," who appears suddenly in the third book of the long novel, wrapped in a mystical light, is a wish fulfillment right out of Plato's Symposium. She is to be his long-lost half: "Böse Gedanken hatte jeder von

ihnen, das war sicher, und jeder unterdrückte sie, und niemand nahm sie sich allzu übel: aber keiner hatte diese Gedanken außer sich, in einem Menschen, der ihnen die bezaubernde Unzugänglichkeit eines geträumten Erlebnisses gibt.”²⁵¹

She also represents *otherness* for Ulrich, the sort of otherness which is close enough for him to merge with without repulsion. Since they are made of the same flesh and blood they can unite in the same way that a "child of God" can unite with God. Musil has taken—in part—the Judeo-Christian rhetoric of a mortal's mystical union with God and transferred it to a discussion of man's union with woman. This transference, as we have seen, is not entirely arbitrary, but stems, rather, from a very long and serious mystical tradition. The rhetoric of union, familiar from early medieval romantic poetry as well as early mystical writing serves Musil as one model. In Musil's "Grenzerlebnisse" notes, his collection of mystical quotations from Buber's Ekstatische Konfessionen, we find this quotation or paraphrase, under the heading "Begegnung," referring, most likely, to the meeting of the two siblings:

Du warst ich, und ich wußte es nicht...Es war eine andere Art des Gewahrens, ein Hinaustreten und Einfachwerden und sich Weggeben und ein Verlangen nach Berührung und eine Ruhe und ein Sinnen auf Vereinigung.

Das Geschaute aber - wenn man von diesen, dem Schauenden und dem Geschauten, als von zweien zu reden hat und nicht vielmehr von beiden als von einem, was freilich eine kühne Rede wäre -schaut der Schauende dann nicht und scheidet nicht und empfindet nicht Zweiheit,

sondern er ist gleichsam ein anderer geworden und ist nicht mehr er selber und gehört sich dort selber nicht mehr.

Controversy over the worldly or spiritual meaning of similar poetic expression, the first anonymous poem in Das Minnesangsfrühling for example which begins, "ich bin dîn, du bist mîn," ²⁵² or the sensual language of the "Song of Songs," with its "dilectus meus mihi et ego illi,"²⁵³ only illustrates the absurdity of the problem. As Grete Lüers so definitively explains, "Die scheinbare Aufhebung der Polarität von Geistigkeit und Sinnlichkeit charakterisiert gerade den Mystiker des dreizehnten und vierzehnten Jahrhunderts, so daß Geistiges anstatt des Sinnlichen, Sinnliches anstatt des Geistigen gesetzt werden kann, und das ist der Sinn aller Metaphorik".²⁵⁴

Agathe may —on one plane of reality— actually *symbolize* Ulrich, appearing, in other words, as another level or interpretation of his own consciousness. The question of the siblings' union, is perhaps best understood in the context of this understanding of symbolism.

Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf, in her Mystik der Moderne, writes at length about the traditional mystical relationship of the "unähnliche Ähnlichkeit," a constellation with direct bearing upon our "ungetrennte und nichtvereinte" siblings. The one knows itself through the mirror of the other; the reflection is same yet not-same:

Die ontologische Dynamik zwischen Vater und Sohn, Urbild und Bild, Wort und Beiwort wird in der Mystik gerne in der Metapher des Spiegels zum Ausdruck gebracht, die ein traditionelles Medium der Gottes, Nächsten- und Selbsterkenntnis darstellt. Plotin sieht im Sohn den Spiegel

des Vaters. Nach Gregor von Nyssa kann die Seele ebensowenig wie die Augen sich selbst wahrnehmen; sie benötigt daher einen Spiegel.

Namentlich bei Jakob Böhme treten Spiegel- und Augenmetapher in enger Verbindung auf: die Geburt des Sohnes als Spiegelung des Auges.²⁵⁵

While the Christian union stresses a miraculous overcoming of a bridge between the finite and the infinite, or the "coincidence of opposites" of Nicolas Cusanus, our sibling's union is, more or less, a union of equals, both mortals. They are, to be sure, different genders, and their symbolic representations as such — in terms of Musil's readings of, say Jung on anima or feminine and masculine symbology, or Otto Weininger on 'Geschlecht und Charakter' — would certainly make an interesting study. One might moreover infer from the shifted paradigm that the problem of otherness for Musil is closer at hand than the distance between mortal and God; he need not look to the supernatural to find an insurmountable bridge between human and his brother/sister/other. The socio-political question of assimilation and national or racial difference, alluded to in a number of relationships within the novel, seems never far off.

Ulrich and Agathe discuss their likeness to Plato's separated lovers, and add to this the mythical stories of Isis and Osiris (the sibling husband and wife of Egyptian mythology), the Hermaphrodite (created, according to Ovid, in answer to the prayers of the nymph Salmais that she and her beloved never be separated), and Pygmalion (that famous artist who loved his creation so intensely that it came to life).

Dieses Verlangen nach einem Doppelgänger im anderen Geschlecht ist uralte. Es will die Liebe eines Wesens, das uns völlig gleichen, aber doch

ein anderes als wir sein soll, eine Zaubergestalt, die wir sind, die aber doch eben auch eine Zaubergestalt bleibt und vor allem, was wir uns bloß ausdenken, den Atem der Selbständigkeit und Unabhängigkeit voraussetzt. Unzählige Male ist dieser Traum vom Fluidum der Liebe, das sich unabhängig von den Beschränkungen der Körperwelt, in zwei gleichverschiedenen Gestalten begegnet, schon in einsamer Alchimie den Retorten der menschlichen Köpfe entstiegen.²⁵⁶

And Agathe adds that the world of sleep engenders similar *Doppelgänger* for the dreamer: "Aber im Schlaf ist es trotzdem so! Da sieht man sich doch manchmal auch in etwas anderes verwandelt. Oder begegnet sich als ein Mann...".

Clarisse, as an extreme *Doppelgängerin* of the sibling *Doppelgänger*, seems to contain within herself the male-female consciousness, and feels that this "transformation" from woman into man, girl into boy, knight, *Knecht*, soldier, and back again, this constant fluid hermaphroditism is surely a sign that she is rapidly getting closer to that moment of cosmic import to which all of her previous life had been leading. Clarisse, exclaiming triumphantly, "Ich bin der große Hermaphrodit!" is almost a grotesque of Ulrich and Agathe's mythic quest.

Discussing his poem "Isis-Osiris," Musil delineates the fuzzy line between mythos and madness: "An Isis-Osiris-Gedicht erinnert. Es enthält in nucleo den Roman. Man hat dem Roman Perversität vorgeworfen: Entgegen: Das Archaische und das Schizophrene äußern sich künstlerisch übereinstimmend, trotzdem sind sie total-verschieden. Ebenso kann das Geschwistergefühl pervers und es kann Mythos sein".²⁵⁷

Musil's extraordinary poem about the sibling lovers Isis and Osiris contains, he writes, the novel *in nucleo*. The Isis/Osiris myth, like many of the metaphoric religious mysteries discussed above, is related to the death and resurrection of nature. Osiris, the corn-god gives his rejuvenated body to the people to eat. Frazer writes:

We can now fully understand why at the great festival of sowing in the month of Khoiak the priests used to bury effigies of Osiris made of earth and corn. When these effigies were taken up again at the end of the year or of a shorter interval, the corn would be found to have sprouted from the body of Osiris, this sprouting of the grain would be hailed as an omen, or rather as the cause, of the growth of the crops. The corn-god produced the corn from himself: he gave his own body to feed the people: he died that they might live.²⁵⁸

This sort of symbolic metaphor cycle should be familiar to us by now: the effigy of the corn-god-king becomes itself the food which the people/worshippers eat, thus becoming, themselves, one with the god through ingesting his body. The tragic love story of Isis and Osiris, wherein Osiris is slain by his brother, cut into fourteen pieces, mourned and sought after by Isis, and then put back together and resurrected, became a central rite of annual rejuvenation enacted by the priests and priestesses of Egyptian mystery religions. The concept of bodily resurrection after death—a well-known feature of Egyptian burial practices—has its source in the re-assemblage of Osiris' scattered parts: "thus every dead Egyptian was identified with Osiris and bore his name".²⁵⁹ The myth, as told by Plutarch and discussed by Frazer, states that all of Osiris' parts except his genitals

were recovered by Isis: his penis was eaten by the fishes. Thus Isis, a true daughter of magical symbolism, fashioned an image of her husband's genitals out of wax, which image "is used by the Egyptians at their festivals to this day".²⁶⁰ This waxen effigy, a symbol of fertility and resurrection, is inextricably linked to the eternally sprouting corn of Osiris. The god's penis is to be eaten by the people in a ritual of seasonal rejuvenation. Musil's interpretation of the Isis-Osiris myth adds an element to the history: his poem imagines the ultimate union of the sibling lovers through an erotic theophagic exchange. The god and goddess eat each other:

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.²⁶¹

The siblings have exchanged organs; they have become each other by enacting the ritual, but the implication is that they will enact this ritual over and over indefinitely, "wenn Mond und Sonne wechseln" as the last stanza says, "Und er isst ihr Herz, und sie das seine". As a mythological description of the incestuous sex act, Musil's revival of the Isis-Osiris myth in the novel is an invocation of the mystic power of regenerative metaphor mixing. The siblings' ritual crimes represent a violent and tender appetite for this lost archaic god-eating. The hermaphroditic union can be read as a symbol of metaphor itself, and thereby speaks to a larger question of symbolic readings and the

difficult merger of opposites, to the conflict of desire for archaic Dionysian loss-of- self, on the one hand, and the hyper- civilized sensation of disgust in the face of communing with any other alien being, the attempt, in Musil's words "einen anderen Mensch"—or even "ein Scheusal" — "zu lieben". To approach the subject even, to begin to speak about this shameful desire and this barely bridgeable repulsion is, in effect, an attempt to imagine utopia, to begin to allow one's self to dream, along with centuries of madmen and women, the dream of the millennium. The artist offers up his body, his book, to his readers; their ingestion guarantees the fertility of the Word.

The siblings' first ritual concerns their deceased father's last wish that his children substitute the "real" medals on his uniform for the "imitation" medals he had made up for this purpose, after, not before, his coffin has been closed. This "man *with* qualities," eminently rational, who had always done as he was expected (at least publicly), who never (at least in the consciousness of his rebellious children) broke any law, moral or otherwise, demonstrates, in one of his last wishes, a "stummer Protest gegen die Vorschrift, den er nicht anders aussprechen wollte".²⁶² Ulrich and Agathe's father has made copies of his medals, because the "real" ones were supposed to be returned upon his death to the "kaiserliche Kabinettskanzlei. His "stummer Protest," however, requires that his children switch the real ones and the fake ones only after his coffin has been closed. Now this wish, aside from what it suggests about the transfer of real and ritual objects, and imitative, homeopathic magic, is fascinating in that it reveals, indirectly, a detailed concern, even in the mind of this most rational of men, for questions of symbolic power. For the medals— real or fake—are, in his mind, representative of man's "überpersönlichen Zweck, seine Güte und Gerechtigkeit; allein sei er nichts, und darum bedeute der Monarch ein geistiges Symbol: und kurz und gut, der Mensch muß bei seinem Tod sozusagen in

seine Orden einwickeln, wie man einen gestorbenen Seeman in die Flagge gewickelt ins Meer versenkt! ". ²⁶³ It is, of course ironic, that their father, understanding symbols thus far, does not make the connection that the duplicates of the symbol/medals are just as much symbols as the real medals themselves.

Lévy-Bruhl's discussion of primitive burial rituals throws an interesting light upon the old man's wishes. Primitive societies, he explains, consider everything which belonged to the deceased to be part of him – and a part of the tribal inheritance as well. While the objects which belonged to him will be burned or buried with him, often much to the material discomfort of his family, the fingernail clippings and hair of a man, particularly of a king or tribal leader, are sometimes preserved with the utmost care. The Ba-Ronga people, for example, create a sacred amulet or talisman made of the hair and fingernail clippings of their dead kings. Mixed with oxen manure, these clippings are made into a pellet which is made larger with the death of each king, and which is kept in a special temple made for this purpose and watched over by a high priest whose only office is to guard the pellet, and thereby the safety of the tribe, from harm. ²⁶⁴

Although the association of the siblings' father with such "barbarous" forms of *participation mystique* is not explicit in Musil's narrative, it will become clear that Musil was indeed thinking of Lévy-Bruhl throughout the writing of these chapters.

But before we continue on to the sibling's ritual exchange of the medals, let us look back, with Ulrich, on a childhood memory, brought to his mind by philosophical musings upon the "Doppelgesicht der Natur," and the nature of the masculine and the feminine. While wavering between thought and action, imagination and crime, Ulrich and Agathe recall a number of early experiences with symbolic effigies. First let us examine—remembering Musil's studies of Jaensch, Stern and Kretschmer on child psychology,

madness, and artistic temperament— young Ulrich's obsession with the cardboard images upon a circus poster.

Unlike his father, Ulrich is not concerned with substituting the paper animals for real ones. His childhood longing for merger with these replicas, however, against the backdrop of his adult philosophical questioning, suggests a connection, however obscure, between symbolic action and the mystical union of opposites.

Denn zu jener Zeit waren in der Stadt die Ankündigungen eines Zirkus angeschlagen gewesen, worauf nicht nur Pferde, sondern auch Löwen, Tiger ebenso wie große prächtige, in Freundschaft mit ihnen lebende Hunde vorkamen, und schon lange hatte er diese Anschläge angestarrt, als es ihm gelang, sich eines dieser bunten Papiere zu verschaffen und die Tiere auszuschneiden, denen er nun mit kleinen Holzständern Steife und Halt gab. Was sich sodann begab, läßt sich aber nur mit einem Trinken vergleichen, das den Durst nicht zu Ende löscht, auch wenn man es noch so lange fortsetzt; denn es hatte weder einen Halt, noch ergab es in wochenlanger Ausbreitung einen Fortschritt, und war ein dauerndes Hinübergezogenwerden in diese bewunderten Geschöpfe, die zu besitzen er mit dem unsäglichen Glück des einsamen Kindes jetzt ebenso stark vermeinte, wenn er sie ansah, wie er fühlte, daß daran etwas Letztes fehle, das durch nichts zu erfüllen war, wovon dann gerade das Verlangen das maßlos durch den Körper Strahlende erhielt.²⁶⁵

It is, first of all, interesting that young Ulrich's desire is not to go to the circus and actually see these animals in the flesh, nor to own the real animals himself, but rather to obtain a colored picture of them, which he in turn, as theatre director, will make real. This is the only form of possession which occurs to young Ulrich — the missing element was "durch nichts zu erfüllen" —. He is, like the children, pious people, and poets who, as Hofmannsthal contends, are the only ones to whom one can talk about symbolism, after something even more distant than the physical animals themselves. Another prominent literary instance of an autobiographical/fictional puppet show, from Goethe's Dichtung und Wahrheit and Wilhelm Meister²⁶⁶ should be examined in relation to this one; for Goethe too was a scientist who understood the nature of symbols, mysticism, and art.²⁶⁷ A passage in Lévy-Bruhl about the primitive relation to images in conjunction with what Musil knew about anthropological and psychological studies which compared child and primitive behavior (not to mention an experience, recorded in his notebooks, from his own childhood) may have been an impetus for Musil's description:

It is a well-known fact that primitives...regard artificial likenesses, whether painted or carved, or sculptural, as real, as well as the individual they depict. "To the Chinese," says De Groot, "association of images with beings actually becomes identification, both materially and physically. An image, especially if pictorial or sculptural, and thus approaching close to the reality, is an alter ego of the living reality, an abode of the soul, nay it is that reality itself... A young woman has a child by a clay statue of her husband, portraits are endued with life; a wooden dog starts running; paper animals, horses, for instance, act exactly like living animals..."²⁶⁸

Ulrich's longing for the "etwas Letztes" which is lacking, is expressed, not surprisingly, in the language which Meister Eckhart used to describe the constant longing for God, which one should understand as a thirst which is always with one, no matter how much one drinks, and no matter if one's thoughts roam elsewhere for a while. Ulrich's constant "Hinübergezogenwerden in diese wundersamen Tiere," is like a drink which always leaves him thirsting.

Ulrich's childhood attempts at overcoming the physical boundaries of cardboard and creaturehood, these taboo mergers, are akin to the dangerous union of man and God, are, in one sense, refusals to be limited by the literal boundaries of divided symbols. A return to the Edenic, prelapsarian unity would require the union of all that was once divided into categories, opposites, and qualities, into one whole. Thus the mystic adventurer, trained in or ignorant of the traditions and sacraments of any given religion or socio-moral construct, may find, once she has "lost her self", her ego, an utterly *other* conviction of good and evil. Giving herself up to "God", or a lover, or a mass movement (as in the Dionysian ecstasy or, obversely, the ecstasy of fascism), or any particularly intense form of belief, the individual becomes one with that otherness, and loses, for a moment at least, a sense of defined self. This loss of self may inaugurate a concomitant loss of socialized morality or habit, or may make way for the reign of some other Word or commandment.

Musil's sources repeatedly provide examples of experiences wherein the normal veil of morality is lifted to reveal a shimmering correspondence of individual and world, world and God – a correspondence which invariably turns all pre-judgments on their heads.

Ulrich describes his own experience to Agathe in words borrowed, in part, from these sources:

Er hatte die Farben der Straßenbahn, der Wagen, Auslagen, Tore, die Formen der Kirchtürme, Gesichter und Hausfronten gesehen, und ob sie auch die allgemeine europäische Ähnlichkeit zeigten, flog doch der Blick über sie hin wie ein Insekt, das sich über ein Feld mit fremden Lockfarben verirrt hat und sich nicht niederlassen kann, obschon er das tun möchte. Dieses Gehn ohne Ziel und deutliche Bestimmung in einer lebhaft mit sich selbst beschäftigten Stadt, diese gesteigerte Anspannung des Erlebens bei gesteigerter Fremdheit, die nach durch die Überzeugung verstärkt wird, daß es auf einen nicht ankomme, sondern nur auf diese Summen von Gesichtern, diese vom Körper gerissenen, untereinander zu Armeen von Armen, Beinen oder Zähnen zusammengefaßten Bewegungen, denen die Zukunft gehört....²⁶⁹

Clearly this loss of self is a desideratum and a fear for the fiercely individuated skeptic, who longs for union and is repulsed by his fellow man. The idea that the "Millennium" might begin with the union of just two people (Ulrich and Agathe) and eventually lead to a more complete era of "brotherly love" is one gauge of just how much seems to be riding on this attempt to love (or even tolerate) *the other*. Ulrich, comparing the touch of his "sister human" to the touch of his "enemy," Arnheim, ponders this universal mystery:

Ulrich wurde davon wunderbar an den Augenblick erinnert, wo sein Feind Arnheim den Arm um ihn geschlungen hatte und die ungeregelt strömende Berührung eines anderen Wesens wie durch eine Bresche in ihn gedrungen war. Aber diesmal drängte seine eigene Natur nicht die Fremde zurück, sondern es drängte ihr etwas entgegen, das unter dem Geröll von Mißtrauen und Abneigungen begraben gewesen war, mit dem sich das Herz eines Menschen füllt, der längere Zeit gelebt hat.²⁷⁰

While some might see Musil's depiction of Arnheim, the rich Jew, as an anti-Semitic rendering of Walther Rathenau, a closer examination of the details shows a much more subtle exploration of the difficult problems of union and otherness, individuality and assimilation. Arnheim is not only other because he is Jewish, he is other because he is German — much is made of his Prussian affiliation— and because he is a successful man, a "Großschriftsteller".²⁷¹ He is, in other words, a man with qualities. Although Ulrich calls Arnheim his *Feind* in this passage wherein he is remembering the incident, the actual event is depicted in a much more ambivalent fashion. Ulrich is drawn to Arnheim; he *almost* embraces him; he *almost* gives himself up to Arnheim's charms. Arnheim offers Ulrich a position "an meiner Seite", hoping, "diesen Mann zu verführen und in seine Macht zu bringen".²⁷² He is placed by Musil at the beginning of this "Aussprache" (the title of this chapter) "Brust an Brust"²⁷³ (breast to breast) with Ulrich and the erotics of this encounter are unavoidable; Arnheim, a "großer Herr,"²⁷⁴ puts himself at the mercy of a young man without qualities who is, perhaps, "nichts als ein Abenteurer". "Noch nie glaubte Arnheim so stark wie in diesem Augenblick die Sicherheit der westlichen Kultur empfunden zu haben, die ein wundervolles Geflecht von Kräften und Hemmungen ist!"²⁷⁵

But when Arnheim puts his arm around Ulrich, initial disgust turns to a complex of feelings which include "Aufregung" (excitement) and "Verlangen"(longing):

Dieser Arm auf seinen Schulter machte Ulrich unsicher. Es war eine lächerliche und unangenehme Empfindung, sich umarmt zu fühlen, ja man konnte sie geradezu jämmerlich nennen; aber Ulrich hatte lange Zeit keinen Freund besessen, und vielleicht war es darum auch ein wenig verwirrend. Er würde diesen Arm gern abgestreift haben, und unwillkürlich bemühte er sich darum; aber Arnheim nahm die kleinen Zeichen von Unwillkommenheit wahr und mußte sich anstrengen, um das nicht merken zu lassen, und aus Höflichkeit, weil er Arnheims schwierige Lage mitfühlte, hielt Ulrich still und ertrug die Berührung, die nun immer sonderbarer auf ihn zu wirken begann, wie ein schweres Gewicht, das in einen locker aufgeschütteten Damm einsinkt und ihn entzweireißt. Diesen Wall von Einsamkeit hatte Ulrich, ohne daß er es wollte, um sich aufgerichtet, und nun drang durch eine Bresche das Leben ein, der Puls eines anderen Menschen, und es war ein dummes Gefühl, lächerlich, aber doch ein wenig aufregend.²⁷⁶

Then, in the midst of this union of repulsion and attraction, Ulrich thinks of Gerda Fischel, and then of the desire to be in unbridled harmony with another person which his (now mainly despised) childhood friend Walther once inspired in him. The thought of Gerda at precisely this moment is clearly a reference to his own arm thrown ambivalently around her shoulder some twenty-five pages earlier,²⁷⁷ an "Umarmung" filled with the

same overwhelming taste of "Feindseligkeit" and "Unahngenehme" as the one between the two men, but one which leads, directly, to Ulrich's bedroom where an "hysterischer Anlaß" (hysterical attack) of Gerda's turns Ulrich's thoughts momentarily to rape. Instead of the "menschliche Zusammenfindung" she desires, an absurd scene ensues which educes even deeper alienation. Ulrich not only thinks of Gerda when Arnheim embraces him, he thinks of Arnheim when Gerda embraces him. The two are linked, in both scenes by a discussion of Arnheim's betrayal of Diotima (the ostensible reason for Gerda's visit to Ulrich on the day of the seduction and the direct impetus for Arnheim's sudden intimacy with Ulrich). The incestuous and complex "love" triangles (or hexagons or octagons) in the novel are analogous to the complex relations within each individual character. After Ulrich's tête-à-tête with Arnheim, he sees himself as two-colored, "zur Hälfte hell, zur Hälfte schwarz"; Ulrich, it is suggested, contains Arnheim—or "the other"—within himself. It appears thus that it is Arnheim's *likeness* (and here we cannot avoid the homoerotic allusions), and not his "otherness" per se, which disturbs and excites Ulrich. At the end of the "Aussprache" Ulrich looks at the man "der ihm aus nicht sehr durchsichtigen Gründen angetragen hatte, sein *Freund* zu werden"; in his memory of the scene one hundred and eight pages later, Ulrich calls him his "*Feind* Arnheim".

Thus Musil's depiction of Arnheim is complex to say the least. It is significant that the person Musil loved most in the world—in some people's estimation the only person he was ever able to get close to—was his Jewish wife; a series of oppositional pairs is evident: perhaps the taboo of sibling union is a foil for the taboo union of man and man, Jew and German, of Musil and his wife, of a country and its others.

Musil's repetition in his notebooks and letters of the idea-pair "Juden und Geist" discussed above, whereby the Jew and the intellectual/free-spirit are both defined as

persons without homelands, persons who are continually "the other," underlines this constellation of opposition within his novel. The prickly difficulty remains: how to merge with a person or a group which identifies itself by virtue of its "otherness"? The male, the female, the Jew, the German, the intellectual, the man-of-the-world, the materialist, the spiritualist, all bump up against each other in Musil's novel, and sometimes miraculous unions occur. The Fischel family, made up of a Jewish father, a non-Jewish mother, a Jewish/non-Jewish daughter and her radically anti-Semitic boyfriend, Hans Sepp, is a tragi-comic example of this sort of bizarre social admixture; Arnheim and Diotima is another; Rachel the Jewish serving maid and the Moorish prince/houseboy Soliman are another. Suddenly Musil's whole novel seems to revolve around the axis of mixed unions, of unions of opposites, of mystical participation.²⁷⁸

Ulrich's childhood thirst to merge with the paper animals, an early form perhaps of a mystical desire to overcome physical boundaries brought on by an overflowing sensation of love, recalls to him another childhood memory, this one involving Agathe.

One evening in his childhood when Agathe, dressed in dark velvet, with her hair hanging down in waves of bright velvet upon her dress, and he himself, dressed in a knight's costume, were about to go to a children's party, Ulrich's vision of his sister created in the young boy the longing, "ganz in der gleichen unsagbaren Weise wie nach den Tieren auf die Ankündigungen des Zirkus danach sehnte, ein Mädchen zu sein."²⁷⁹ Without imagining that this transformation might be possible, Ulrich experienced, in a momentary dissolution of boundaries, a merger with his sister. The sensation, "wenn er heute einen Ausdruck dafür suchte, etwa dem Zustand entspricht:"

[E]r taste im Dunkeln nach einer Tür, stoße auf einen blutwarmen oder warmsüßen Widerstand und presse sich immer wieder an ihn, der seinem Verlangen hindurchzudringen zärtlich entgegenkommt, ohne ihm Platz zu machen. Vielleicht glich es auch einer harmlosen Art vampyrischer Leidenschaft, die das ersehnte Wesen in sich einsog, doch wollte dieser kleine Mann jene kleine Frau nicht an sich ziehen, sondern sich ganz an ihre Stelle, und das geschah mit jener blendenden Zärtlichkeit, die nur den Früherlebnissen des Geschlechts zu eigen ist.²⁸⁰

The tenderness, Musil writes, is only known in early sexual experiences, yet his description of warm sweetness, loss of individual boundaries and merger with a beloved other is reminiscent of the tender confessions of mystics as well.²⁸¹ In Ulrich and Agathe's execution of their father's last wishes — in the changing of the medals introduced before this lengthy digression — we will see how the author's use of such language, associated with mystical as well as sexual union, signals the interplay of questions of masculine-feminine merger and the symbolic understanding of form and ritual. In everything which the siblings carry out together, there are particular roles which each plays. The implication, stated in many ways repeatedly, is that neither could do these things without the other. Their union is a primary dissolution of boundaries, opening the door into that "anderer Zustand" of action.

Ulrich and Agathe resolve for practical reasons, against their father's wishes, to replace the medals before - not after - his coffin has been closed. The incorrect execution of this burial ritual worries Agathe, but Ulrich, speaking from his rational side, tells her, "Er weiß es ja nicht mehr." To which she answers, opening the door to uncertainty and

mystery: "Bist du dessen sicher?" But, agreeing more or less that they are certain of nothing, and that furthermore they never could please their father in any way while he was alive either, they decide to do as they had planned, formally altering their father's burial ritual. Their father's wish to keep the real medals on his breast until the coffin is closed, although seemingly harmless, is itself a transgression against the social order, is itself a planned ritual of displacement. The word for "medals" in German, "Orden," is, coincidentally — or not so coincidentally — very close to the word-group surrounding "order": "*Ordnung*," "*Ordentlich*," et cetera. Another meaning of the German word "Orden" is a religious "order" or organization. Subconsciously, at least, Agathe and Ulrich — and their father — are engaged in a ritual to change the order of "order," or "*Orden*". The siblings do not carry out his ritual; instead they do it their own way. "So machten sich die Geschwister also daran, dem letzten Willen ihres Vaters entgegen zu handeln." ²⁸²

Remembering that in the rituals of primitive, Judeo-Christian, and Islamic religion, any deviation from the strictly delineated traditional form is thought to bring dire consequences on individual and society alike, we wonder what significance the siblings' seemingly small transgression against their father's seemingly small transgression may have in the novel. Perhaps their action effects an undoing of their father's proposed ritual, effectively canceling it out?

This ritual transgression against their father is described in such a way as to emphasize its heightened mystical intensity for the siblings. Agathe already appears to be functioning within that "Traumzustand der Moral" wherein right actions flow from one, a sort of Taoist detachment from the act, which enables its unhindered yet conscious execution. Ulrich, on the other hand, is paralyzed by some sort of mixture of taboo and fear. As usual

Agathe führte es aus. An Ulrich zeigte sich eine Scheu, den hilflos daliegenden Alten zu berühren, aber Agathe hatte eine Art, Unrecht zu tun, die den Gedanken an Unrecht nicht aufkommen ließ. Die Bewegungen ihres Blicks und ihrer Hände ähnelten dabei denen einer Frau, die einen Kranken versorgt, und zuweilen hatten sie auch das urwüchsige Rührende junger Tiere, die in ihrem Spiel einhalten, um sich zu vergewissern, ob ihnen der Herr zusehe. Dieser nahm die abgelösten Orden in Empfang und reichte die Ersatzstücke. Er fühlte sich an den Dieb erinnert, dem das Herz aus der Brust springt.²⁸³

The suspense has been intensely heightened by the slow approach. Up until this point the act is only half carried out. Ulrich feels like a thief whose heart is about to spring out of his breast. And although Ulrich had answered his sister's question earlier, "Kümmerst du dich nie um das, was man von dir verlangt," with revolutionary bravado about the death of the fathers and their ceremonies, about the death of their morals, he is the one, not Agathe, who hesitates to transgress against these "dead" symbols. They are not yet, apparently, dead. The siblings are, in effect, with their ritual actions, in the very portentous existential process of killing them off. Ulrich realizes, perhaps, the significance of their acts, and trembles before them. Agathe has the aspect of someone tending the sick, or an animal at play. The first image, displacing the vision of someone committing a crime with that of someone "doing good," is clearly a measure of cultural relativism. The latter image is more interesting, for it suggests the Stoic tradition of free play, re-introduced by Schiller in his Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen. For

Schiller, this realm of free play (transformed in Musil's day to a psychological category by William Stern in his Psychologie der frühen Kindheit) is to be found in art, a realm of disinterested experimentation, a realm of novelty. As a source for Musil's "Utopia of the Essay," this realm of "play" is extremely important. Here Agathe's action, "da keine Absicht darin zu erkennen war"—Stern's "selbstzwecklicher Spieltrieb"²⁸⁴—is infused with the experimental possibility of the combined qualities of brother and sister. This is, however, a form of tampering, a dangerous game which turns forms and values upside down. Agathe is a magician, playing with spells, charms, shining crosses and stars - "magical things":

Und wenn er dabei den Eindruck hatte, daß die Sterne und Kreuze in der Hand seiner Schwester lebhafter leuchteten als in der seinen, ja geradewegs zu Zauberdingen würden, so konnte das in dem schwarzgrünen, von vielen Reflexen großer Blattpflanzen erfüllten Zimmer wirklich so sein, es mochte aber auch davon herrühren, daß er den zögernd führenden Willen seiner Schwester spürte, der den seinen jugendlichen ergriff; und da keine Absicht darin zu erkennen war, entstand in diesen Augenblicken einer mit nichts vermischten Berührung wieder ein beinahe ausdehnungsloses und darum ganz unbeschaffen starkes Gefühl von ihrer beider Dasein.²⁸⁵

This ritual engenders another, one too shocking for Ulrich to take part in. Agathe wants to write "something nice" on a piece of paper and stick it into their father's pocket, but she ends by silently removing her warm garter from her leg and putting it where the

note would have gone. The episode is an extension of two childhood rituals enacted by the siblings, both of which Ulrich remembers in vivid detail. As we have seen, Musil was well versed in such primitive practices as taking fingernail clippings, bits of hair, and clothing from people in order to create effigies of them with which to cast spells, do them injury, or influence them in questions of love. In his notes, he makes reference to this tradition under the heading "Szene mit Strumpfband". When the two young siblings come up with the idea to take their own fingernail clippings and a bit of Agathe's hair and bury them in the garden, we are faced with a really remarkable bit of narrative. Musil tells us, foreshadowing the proclivities of the siblings in later life, that while both of them enjoyed gothic and tragic stories, "Agathe aber neigte schon damals dazu, solche Geschichten auch auszuführen, während Ulrich bloß in den männlicheren Unternehmungen führte, die verwegen und herzlos waren." Whatever Musil may mean here with "männlichere Unternehmungen," it is clear that Agathe's field of interest led them to this particular venture. While Ulrich is proud that he will, through this action, survive into posterity, that someone far in the future might find his leavings, Agathe has a more mystical feeling for the ritual, a psychological and symbolic use: "der kleinen Agathe dagegen kam es mehr auf das Vergraben als solches an, sie hatte das Gefühl, einen Teil von sich zu verstecken und dauernd der Aufsicht einer Welt zu entziehen, von deren pädagogischen Forderungen sie sich eingeschüchtert fühlte, ohne viel von ihnen zu halten".

While the better part of her was oppressed, at least a symbolic paring and clipping of her was free. The very execution of the act itself, by its great distance from any rational purposeful deed, serves a rebellious purpose to begin with. While Ulrich explains his part, however feebly, with a reason taken from the values of his fathers (fame, posterity,

immortality), thus creating a "rational" purpose where there really is none, Agathe's act is in harmony with her aim: the disordering of the constructed world of Reason.

The children's next ritual act is, especially because of Ulrich's reaction to it, perhaps even more revealing. They had decided to write "wundervolle Verse" on two pieces of paper which would also state "wer sie seien". These little notes were then to be placed in the foundation of a house being built on their property. They were not able, despite their intentions, to think up any wonderful verses, thus Agathe finally wrote a sentence from her math book, and Ulrich wrote "Ich bin —" followed by his name. Although one could attempt to interpret Agathe's note along the lines of the earlier ritual, by saying, for example, that she was trying to bury a piece of her despised schooling, an extract from the authority structure from which she interiorly fled, it is, in this case, Ulrich's note which is more suggestive.

Musil would have read, in Lévy-Bruhl and elsewhere, that the name, in primitive religion, was a sacred and powerful essence. To speak or write a person's name in certain circumstances, particularly within ritual ceremonies, was to endanger the person to whom it belonged. In some cultures, people were given second names (to be used instead of their real ones) in order to protect the individual from certain forces. Alternately the giving of a name, or changing of a name, could have positive consequences as well, bestowing power and good qualities upon an individual. When hunting, some tribes would avoid saying the name of the animal which they sought, calling it by another name in order to trick its protecting spirits.

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the giving or changing of a name could also carry significance. Consider, for example, the "Pauluswerden Sauls" which so interested

Musil. The Hebraic injunction against saying or writing the Lord's name is also to be considered here.

And finally, for a man without qualities, Ulrich's inability to complete the written affirmation of identity which the ritual entails is — however subconscious in the small child—significant as a literary analogy. Naming however, is not only an affirmation of identity, but possibly a limitation, a definition of something or someone which precludes its further development. It is interesting that the adult Ulrich is constantly giving names to both his new theories (i.e., the morality of the dream state, the morality of the next step, the utopia of the inductive) and to people that he meets (Bonadea, Diotima, etc.) . This naming and categorizing, while part of his attempt to get closer to an understanding of mysticism and a natural result of Ulrich's logical mind, is often mildly humorous, as if the masculine rational part of his mind cannot help but quickly stow everything away in its proper category, even though it is fully aware that none of the ideas are really finished being thought, that none of them are "dead" yet.

Much later on, in the garden of Ulrich and Agathe's "anderer Zustand", Ulrich experiences this magical power of naming in conjunction with the overwhelming feelings produced in him by the sight of little unnamed flowers. As soon as he discovers their names, by asking the gardener or Agathe, or by remembering them himself, he feels more comfortable with what was, prior to the naming, an uncomfortable sensation of mystery:

Wenn Ulrich eine Blüte betrachtete — was nicht gerade eine alte Gewohnheit des einstmals Ungeduldigen war—, so fand er jetzt manchmal des Ansehens kein Ende und, um alles zu sagen, auch keinen Anfang. Wußte er zufällig den Namen zu nennen, so war es Rettung aus dem Meere

der Unendlichkeit. Dann bedeuteten die goldenen Sternchen auf einer nackten Gerte "Goldbecher", und jene frühreifen Blätter und Dolden waren "Flieder". Kannte er den Namen aber nicht, so rief er wohl auch den Gärtner herbei, denn dann nannte dieser alte Mann einen unbekannten Namen, und alles kam wieder in Ordnung, und der uralte Zauber, daß der Besitz des richtigen Wortes Schutz vor der ungezähmten Wildheit der Dinge gewährt, erwies seine beruhigende Macht wie vor zehntausenden Jahren.²⁸⁶

Young Ulrich's fear and paralysis when called upon to actually complete his childhood self-naming ritual by placing the confession/affirmation into the rising foundation, is probably too much to ascribe to the mere fear of being discovered by the builders while doing something he could not explain. His experience, we may assume, is rather a response to the daunting power of the "uralte Zauber" which the possession of the right word still held, even after ten thousand years. The extraordinary sensations (mixtures of fear, shame, excitement) which he experiences when finally Agathe, the braver of the two, drops his note in for him, clearly approximate an ecstatic experience:

Sie ging jetzt als arglose Spaziergängerin damit vor, besichtigte am äußeren Ende einer soeben gelegten Reihe einen Ziegel, lüpfte ihn und hatte Ulrichs Namen schon in die Mauer geschoben, ehe sie einer wegweisen konnte, während ihr Ulrich selbst zögernd folgte und im Augenblick der Tat fühlte, wie sich die Beklemmung, die ihn schrecklich einzwängte, in ein Rad mit scharfen Messer verwandelte, das sich so rasch

in seiner Brust drehte, daß im nächsten Augenblick eine spritzende Sonne daraus wurde, wie man sie beim Feuerwerk abbrennt.²⁸⁷

One can't help but wonder, playing Musil's own game of the *subjunctive*, what might have happened had Ulrich, instead of Agathe, placed the paper bearing his identity in the building himself. Later, when the siblings meet again, their "conversion experience" is marked not by the taking on of new names in the traditional sense of Saul/Paul, nor in the way that multiple personalities give their alternative selves other names, but in the dissolution, perhaps, of border between Agathe and Ulrich, so that each becomes the other to some extent; they become together no longer their old individual selves, but any number of new designations, i.e., the "siamesische Zwillinge," the "Ungetrennten und Nichtvereinten," et cetera.

Ulrich does not complete his personal naming ritual without the help of Agathe, nor can he condone the execution of any sort of similar ritual with their father: "denn ein solches Spiel mit dem Toten zu wiederholen, kam ihm doch unerlaubt vor".²⁸⁸

Watching Agathe give "dem frostigen Toten ein Strumpfband ... das von dem Bein seiner Tochter warm war," produces in Ulrich an effect not dissimilar to his childhood experience of fear, shame and amazement, it "schloß ihm von innen die Kehle und richtete in seinem Gehirn allerhand Unordnung an". In a sense, this ritual reverses Agathe's first ritual of the fingernail clippings. While the latter allowed a small fragment from the world of order to escape into a secret realm of freedom, the former, enacted by a parentless woman about to leave her "father-figure" husband, introduces a powerfully hot drop of silky disorder into the realm of control, a drop which makes Ulrich's head swim.

The enactment then of formal patterns—either following correct ritual offices (right worship, good socialized behavior) or consciously or inadvertently disregarding or breaking those structures (taboo, ethical experimentation)—may effect events or outcomes in the “real” world. But “not-doing” “glüht” just as much as “doing,” as Ulrich says to himself when he refrains from writing Agathe a letter to persuade her not to falsify their father’s will. Variations on societal, religious, or aesthetic norms, no matter how minuscule and seemingly significant, may have enormous potential to shock, undo, reverse, or break down the status quo. Crimes against formal norms may cull their impact from the aesthetic force of narrative suspense-building. A foundation of normalcy, in other words, a life-long, centuries long, or chapters long space of doing things a particular way, of changelessness or expected regularity is suddenly interrupted by the smallest abnormality and this surprising change, more surprising by force of its rarity, its newness, carries all the power of a volcanic conversion. In the next chapter we will explore the psychology of conversion, crime, and newness.

Chapter Four

The Form of Crime: Narrative, Conversion, and the Taboo of the New in Part II of Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften

Die stärksten und bösesten Geister haben bis jetzt die Menschheit am meisten vorwärts gebracht: sie entzündeten immer wieder die einschlafenden Leidenschaften— alle geordnete Gesellschaft schläfert ein—, sie weckten immer wieder den Sinn der Vergleichung, des Widerspruchs, der Lust am Neuen, Gewagten, Unerprobten, sie zwangen die Menschen, Meinungen gegen Meinungen, Musterbilder gegen Musterbilder zu stellen. Mit den Waffen, mit Umsturz der Grenzsteine, durch Verletzung der Pietäten zumeist: aber auch durch neue Religionen und Moralen! Dieselbe "Bosheit " ist in jedem Lehrer und Prediger des Neuen ...Das Neue ist aber unter allen Umständen das Böse, als das, was erobern, die alten Grenzsteine und die alten Pietäten umwerfen will; und das Alte ist das Gute! Die guten Menschen jeder Zeit sind die, welche die alten Gedanken in die Tiefe graben und mit ihnen Frucht tragen, die Ackerbauer des Geistes. Aber jenes Land wird endlich ausgenützt, und immer wieder muß die Pflugschar des Bösen kommen.

Nietzsche

So konnte nach der Logik, in die sich Ulrich zu schicken suchte, bloß etwas anderes gutgemacht werden als der Schaden, und er war nicht einen Augenblick im Zweifel, daß dies sein und seiner Schwester ganzes Leben sein sollte. "Anmaßend gesprochen." dachte er "heißt das: Saulus hat nicht jede einzelne Folge seiner früheren Sünden gutgemacht, sondern er ist Paulus geworden"

Musil

More than just a decadent hankering after the next *nouveau frisson*, the heretic has a weakness for the stunning beauty of formal arrangement. Beginning his vita with a suspended stretch of lukewarm conformity, syncopated only by increasing signs of irritation, the heretic's world opens only in small escapes into timeless moments by visions of possible other truths. He awakens one day with the sensation of the forbidden, the taboo looming, and then, the sudden shocking break comes, the decisive impossible act, the step into crime, scandal, new belief. The heretic, as transformative type, may be a subconscious novelist, is, often, a prime subject of narrative fiction. The theological context of belief, doubt, despair, and conviction, is naturally a psychological model for other sorts of fictional denouement. The protagonist as iconoclast or anti-hero, who struggles with or against socialization, is a familiar literary character.

The mythic narrative of millennial cataclysm is itself a beautiful example of a well-plotted literary narrative: beginning with a lengthy period of status quo, thousands of years of waiting and suffering, the mythic tale continues with a period of disasters, signs of doom, plagues, hurricanes, horrors, and is followed by a sudden rapturous transformation which changes, in one fell swoop, all that was, which corrects, with a "Stärke von oben" all of the injustices of the lengthy past. History itself, in a number of

the more popular narrative systems of both Eastern and Western theological thought is broken up into a series of three chapters, leading, ultimately to the apocalyptic convulsion of a third age. The extremely influential Joachite tradition based on Joachim of Fiore's twelfth century writings, delineates a first, second, and third age of history. The third age, always seen by the millennial prophets of whatever age as taking place "now," is recognized by a chronologically ordered series of signs. Beginning with a period of moral and physical degradation, the third age is known by the proliferation of prophecies of much worse disasters, i.e., violent climactic changes, droughts, earthquakes, fires, wars, plagues, etc.. These increasing messianic woes are accompanied by the appearance of a divine warrior-leader, usually a holy peasant prophet (Frederick Barbarossa, or another mysteriously unaccounted for popular hero, come out of the mountains) who suddenly intervenes to liberate his chosen people from affliction, by the bloody destruction of the evil oppressor (Church, aristocracy, corruption) and establishes a new golden age, the millennium, a thousand years of heaven on earth. We will discuss this idea at greater length in the final chapter, but for now let us leave it hovering in our peripheral consciousness as an alternate narrative of moral conversion/cataclysm which calls into question all strict definitions of good and evil, holy and heretic. With this ethical relativity in mind we can see a relationship between the formal, temporal, dynamic order of a work of art as a whole and its individual parts. The "Gestalt," writes Marie-Louise Roth, if it is to be the product of "innere Notwendigkeit," has to be "eine konstante im Gleichgewicht sich haltende Spannung, eine schöpferische, stets fließende, aber dennoch stationäre Bewegung".²⁸⁹ A narrative's power can thus function as an electric spark set off by the friction between *was* and *could be*, *could be* and *is*, by the divine/authorial (auctorial) displacement or rearrangement of a given normalcy. So Ulrich, responding to his sister's

confusion in the face of her youthful rebellion against a structured morality, delineates an aesthetics of belief:

"Weißt du, was das beweist?" rief Ulrich aus. "Doch nichts anderes, als daß die Kraft zum Guten, die auf irgendeine Weise wohl in uns vorhanden ist, sogleich die Wände durchfrißt, wenn man sie in eine feste Form einschließt, und durch das Loch sofort zum Bösen flieht! [...]"²⁹⁰

Traditional morality too is a formal construct, and the mystic or moral adventurer who sees other forms and other realities, no matter how socially impotent he or she may be, has the power to threaten that formal structure of society merely by wearing his hat tilted at a particularly steep cant, or, like Lichtenberg, by wearing his shoe buckle in a new way. The modern individual, as Yeats lamented, is at his worst "full of passionate intensity" and at his best lacking "all conviction". He is caught between idealized passion for old forms, alienated nihilism, and a third realm of "the new" which often has about it an air of occult criminality. But "Glaube," as Ulrich says to his sister in a moment of profound realization, "darf nicht eine Stunde alt sein! Das ist es".

In order to truly experiment morally, one has to put on, temporarily at least, another "I". This loss of self comes easily to a modern man or woman without qualities. Such a loss of self may correspond to a certain stage in conversion experiences as noted by Konstantin Oesterreich, William James, and others, and demonstrated by many examples in Buber's Ekstatische Konfessionen: the stage wherein the subject abandons all particular striving towards salvation or understanding and gives up his or her will entirely. Thus Musil answers the question "why crime?" as follows:

[W]ie ein schlechter Mensch mit fremdem Geld kühner spekuliert als mit eigenem, will ich meinen Gedanken auch über die Grenze dessen nachhängen, was ich unter allen Umständen verantworten könnte; das nenne ich Essay, Versuch. Und da alles Gute Regeln hat, aber das Böse noch kein System besitzt, als Ausnahme behandelt wird und somit stets persönlich bleibt, kann ich, der ich weder Gelehrter, noch ein Charakter bin noch in diesem Fall Dichter sein will, meinen Gedanken persönlichen Ich-Zusammenhang geben; so will es die Sache, nicht ich..²⁹¹

Yet that essayistic "I" is, Musil insists, decidedly not he himself; it is an I which is decidedly a not-I. The not-I's experiments, if they are to be truly experimental, must avoid the realm of the already regulated as much as possible, which leads our essayist to evil. The drive towards evil comes from the formal necessity for change; it is, in a world of rules, the only possible escape (aside from a hardly imaginable extreme embrace of the good) from the world as it is. Ulrich explains it to Agathe as follows:

"Das Gute ist beinahe schon seiner Natur nach Gemeinplatz, das Böse bleibt Kritik! Das Unmoralische gewinnt sein himmlisches Recht als eine drastische Kritik des Moralischen! Es zeigt uns, daß das Leben auch anders geht. . . Du selbst wärest in einer Gesellschaft von Testamentfälschern ganz gewiß für die Unantastbarkeit der rechtlichen Bestimmungen; bloß in einer Gesellschaft von Gerechten verwischt und

verkehrt sich das. Ja, du würdest sogar, wenn Hagauer ein Lump wäre,
glühend gerecht sein" ²⁹²

In further discussions about the potentially good or bad effect of certain good or bad acts, it becomes clear that while morality is static and impersonal, and therefore unnatural, ethics are fluid and individual.

Looking back to Eckhart's heretical statements, we find the notion, taken up by Musil, that the goodness of an act is defined by the goodness of the person, and not vice versa. For Musil, this would fit into an entire condition of goodness, that mood or state wherein nothing one does could be wrong. In Buber's Ekstatische Konfessionen we find a passage from a text called "Sister Katrei" attributed to Eckhart. This passage, actually a classic of Free Spirit literature, has more recently been attributed to Margarete Porete, a Beguine mystic who was burned in 1310, known now for her book, Le mirouer des simples âmes. The link between the more orthodox Eckhart and the radical libertine Free Spirits is illuminated by this misattribution. The Free Spirit Brethren, whose heresy was grounded in a *deificatio* so powerful that they not only were made one with God, but felt themselves become God permanently or even become greater than God, actually gave themselves license to kill, steal, lie, and commit adultery, all in the interest of holiness. "The women of Schweidnitz," writes Cohn, "claimed that their souls had by their own efforts attained a perfection greater than they had possessed when they first emanated from God, and greater than God ever intended them to possess. They claimed to have such command over the Holy Trinity that they could 'ride it as in a saddle'".²⁹³ Due also to a belief that private property (especially the riches of the Church and aristocracy) was criminal, and that all property (including, in some cases, wives) should be held in

common, the Free Spirits believed that theft was not only lawful but pious. "Whatever the eye sees and covets," preaches one text, "let the hand grasp it." ²⁹⁴

This transvaluation of values was part of a preparation for a millenarian revolution wherein the rich and the clerical would be slain in bloody retribution and the holy poor would rise up to enjoy the return of the Golden Age. Therefore the crimes were all also justified as proper fulfillment of prophecy and the progression of the mythical historical narrative.

Different from the traditional Christian trinity of virtue-sin-repentance, this concept seems to break out of the triangle: instead of creating a closure by returning to make good the sin or crime by somehow undoing it or repaying the wrongs done, Ulrich and Agathe, like the Free Spirit revolutionaries, go forward, changing not the things they have done, but their lives. This change, as in the example of Paul, is implemented via the magic of the Word, by re-naming:

So konnte nach der Logik, in die sich Ulrich zu schicken suchte, bloß etwas anderes gutgemacht werden als der Schaden, und er war nicht einen Augenblick im Zweifel, daß dies sein und seiner Schwester ganzes Leben sein sollte. "Anmaßend gesprochen.," dachte er "heißt das: Saulus hat nicht jede einzelne Folge seiner früheren Sünden gutgemacht, sondern er ist Paulus geworden"! ²⁹⁵

This constitutes a circular motion, not a straight progression. In what is potentially a critique of Musil's own "Moral der nächsten Schritt," this transformation mystically convolutes time, swallowing the past into the present, containing the present in the future.

It is a magical cubism of sorts which sees the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in the same image, a polymoral/morphous subversion of the idea of dialectical progress, or of the traditional narrative of sin- repentance- forgiveness. Yet within that traditional narrative structure there seems to have always existed a dangerous seed of dissent...the Blakean energy of evil which makes things move.

The definition of an "act," discussed by Kenneth Burke in his Rhetoric of Religion, is bound by this radical agent. An act is a "free act," an act which is not a product of "compulsive motion". This act must also be, in the tradition of God's fiat, created out of nothing; it must be completely novel, never before done.

St. Augustine's conversion experience, for example, is constructed as a similar formal system: first there is a law, then there is a breaking of the law, and finally there is a truly personal understanding of the law. This trinity of law, crime, and contrition, suggests that the law itself is responsible for the crime. "Denn solange sich eine Moral —und das gilt ebenso für den Geist der Nächstenliebe wie für den einer Hunnenschar —im Aufstieg befindet," thinks Ulrich to himself, "ist das 'Tu nicht!' nur die Kehrseite und natürliche Folge des 'Tu!'"²⁹⁶ Kenneth Burke says as much in his book on logology: "The extra rejoicing that comes with the finding of the lost sheep is related to the general dialectic principle that the intensity of a pleasure is proportionate to the pain that precedes it (*ubique maius gaudium molestia maiore praeceditur*)".²⁹⁷ There is, furthermore, in the nature of the taboo construct itself, a tension between the holy and the forbidden, an intrinsic relation between that which is secretly desired and that which is considered the most undesirable of social acts. Taboo, writes Christel Balle,

[B]ezeichnet ursprünglich alles Heilige, Geweihte – in Verbindung mit Gott – und davon abgeleitet alles mystisch unberührbare, Gefährliche, Unreine. [...] Diesem ambivalenten Charakter des Tabu betont auch Freud, indem er Tabu und Neurose vergleicht.[...] Demzufolge ist die Grundlage des Tabus ein Verbotenes Tun, zu dem eine starke Neigung im Unbewußtsein besteht. Das Verbotene reizt. Wo eine Tabu vorliegt, muß ein Begehren dahinterstehen.²⁹⁸

This is, Burke would have us understand, a question of language and its form. The very setting up of a covenant begs the question of its breaking; the stating of the law is the first necessary step to the breaking of the law. And without language, there can be no crime:

All was permissive in Eden but the eating of one forbidden fruit, the single negative that set the condition for the Fall (since, St. Paul pointed out, only law can make sin, as Bentham was later to point out that only the law can make crime)... Eliminate language from nature, and there can be no disobedience. In this sense, moral disobedience is 'doctrinal.' Like faith, it is grounded in language...²⁹⁹

And not only in language, but in the form which language takes, the narrative of suspense and desire, fear and satisfaction, disappointment and surprise. St. Augustine asks, almost naively, "Oh Loving God, what is it in men that makes them rejoice more for the salvation of a soul that was despaired of or one delivered from a major peril, than if

there had always been hope or the peril had been less?...There is no pleasure in eating and drinking unless the discomfort of hunger and thirst come before...". And he continues with a metaphor taken from the realm of art (harmony and discord in music): "What does it mean that this part of creation thus alternates between need felt and need met, between discord and harmony?" ³⁰⁰

For Augustine, this "discord" is a temporary separation from the Good, or from God. It is related thus to a sensation of freedom from authority, albeit, in the mind of this Church Father, an altogether illusory freedom. Speaking of his own experience with crime, he addresses God: "Perhaps it was the thrill of acting against Your law – at least in appearance, since I had no power to do so in fact, the delight a prisoner might have in making some small gesture of liberty – getting a deceptive sense of omnipotence from doing something forbidden without immediate punishment." ³⁰¹

Members of the Free Spirit Brotherhood would mock Augustine's idea of punishment, sure as they were that their pure souls could garner no stain of sin, no matter what crimes they might care to commit. Sexual profligacy, as well as murder, and theft (especially of Church property), were practically sacraments to certain particularly blasphemous sects.

The *Homines intelligentiae* called the [sex] act 'the delight of paradise' and the 'acclivity' (which was the term used for the ascent into mystical ecstasy): and the Thuringian 'Blood Friends' of 1550 regarded it as a sacrament, which they called 'christerie'. For all alike adultery possessed a symbolic value as an affirmation of emancipation. ³⁰²

Holier-than -thou libertines, the Free Spirits inhabited a strange unsurveyed region of ethical space, one which would only later be mapped out philosophically by existentialist philosophers. With the gradual "death of God," and the difficult birth of Individualism, what Augustine called "the arrogance of sham liberty" is raised up to an existentialist duty. Thus Jean Paul Sartre's irreverent hagiography of Jean Genet, another saintly thief, "actor" and "martyr," recognizes the same electric friction between law, liberty, and formal experimentation. According to Sartre, Genet is *made a thief* through a powerful conversion experience, but also by force of society's need for a scapegoat. Evil is an invention by good people, a projection of their own desires. They hate in the evil-doer that half of themselves which they reject. The evil-doer becomes the quintessential "other".³⁰³ Balle writes: "Der Tabubruch, die Tat, erweckt den Neid der Gruppe/Gesellschaft....[...] Tabu bedeutet Macht: Wer es einsetzt oder bricht, hat die Macht in der Hand".³⁰⁴

And Genet's stealing, writes Sartre, more than just a practical function of poverty and need, becomes a sacred act of transgression against the society which spurned him. Stealing is both entrapment and liberation, is Genet's wretched fate and holy joy. He is acting out the repressed desires of the whole society, and thereby his is an act of destruction/creation, a divine act of transubstantiation: "An object goes up in smoke, a piece of fruit melts in his mouth, his pleasure blossoms and fades, it is going to die..."³⁰⁵ Stealing is acting, is art: "In short, his operation clearly falls into the category of poetic acts: it is the systematic pursuit of the impossible...His imagination is a corrosive operation which is practiced on the real, an operation aimed not at evading but at transcending reality, and as we have seen, at dematerializing it...Reality is worn so thin that one can see the light through it."³⁰⁶

What Augustine had ridiculed as the "delight a prisoner might have in making some small gesture of liberty," Sartre has rendered heroic; any small gesture, even one which appears purely negative, has the irrefutable force of a "corrosive operation"; it transforms reality irreversibly.

Emerging from nothingness for the purpose of supporting nothingness, this freedom knows that it will return to nothingness and is glad that it will. It can thus set up against history, which rejects it, a kind of negative eternity which is its own lot. Though rejected by all the forces of the world, crushed and finally annihilated, it did exist, and there is nothing the universe can do about it. It directs its negation against the universe; it shelves the universe. Stranded in failure, error and impotence, it decides, all by itself, against the world. Genet has felt this. and that is his greatness: he has willed his solitude, his exile and his nothingness....³⁰⁷

For man to attempt this is, in a theological context, blasphemous— like Ulrich's idea that God could have made the world differently. While certain acts, even of murder or destruction, have always been sanctioned and even fostered by society, these acts are decidedly communally committed. He who takes the law into his own hands, however, commits high blasphemy against the social order, breaks the most silent of taboos, and, perhaps— though who would dare to suggest this but Agathe and Ulrich? — invigorates in one fell swoop "the inner life of thousands." Agathe, inquiring after the workings of the "Moral der nächsten Schritt", asks Ulrich: "Suppose you've killed someone: what can you do next?". And Ulrich thinks to himself, but dares not say aloud:

"Ich könnte ja vielleicht dadurch befähigt werden, ein Gedicht zu schreiben, das Tausenden das innere Leben gibt, oder auch eine große Erfindung zu machen!" Aber er hielt an sich. "Nie würde das geschehen!" fiel ihm ein. "Nur ein Geisteskranker könnte es sich einbilden. Oder ein achtzehnjähriger Ästhet. Das sind, weiß Gott, warum, Gedanken, die den Gesetzen der Natur widersprechen. Übrigens —" verbesserte er sich "beim Urmenschen ist es doch so gewesen; er hat getötet, weil das Menschenopfer ein großes religiöses Gedicht war!" ³⁰⁸

The great religious poem of human sacrifice consists in the miraculous event of actually changing, by an act of will, the nature of the universe.

Thus Ulrich and Agathe's "Traumzustand der Moral" would have little force were it not in contrast with the constricting realm of normal morality. Once any part of it became "co-opted" into normal reality, its powers would be null. The supra-moral state, a dream state wherein one can do no wrong, loses its ritual potential the moment it begins to create its own sets of rules and regulations, prejudices and habits.

The so-called "mystic" experience, in other words, is valuable to Musil precisely through its contrast with the no-longer essential pseudo-experience of everyday objective reality. As a breaking away from and radical exposure to other possible visions and values, the experience of alternate consciousness is impetus and response to new modes of unexpected action and re-action. It is, thus not so very important that the given act is a "crime"—which would be a social definition—but rather that it is new, and thereby seen

as a "crime" precisely because it dares to propose a different reality, a different interpretation or translation.

While Nicholas of Cusa had written in the sixteenth century that all knowledge is a knowledge of comparison, that we can only know a thing by comparing it to another, it took the psychologizing spirit of the twentieth century to analyze mystic experience in terms of the science of cognition. Konstantin Oesterreich, in his books, Die Religiöse Erfahrung als philosophisches Problem (1915) and Das Phänomenologie des Ichs in seinen Grundproblemen, provided Musil with case studies of sudden conversions, trance possessions, multiple personalities, and other radical changes of consciousness. In his notes on Oesterreich's books, Musil, under the heading "Bekehrung" writes in abbreviated shorthand: "(Cl[arisse]): (ev[entuel] auch Ag[athe])," suggesting that the following notes were to be used in the development of Clarisse and Agathe's characters within the novel.

Deutlicher Unterschied bemerkbar gegen allmähliche
Überzeugungsänderungen, die sie an sich kennen gelernt hat.
Ohne Überlegung u[nd] für u[nd] Wider. Passive Revolution, ungeheure
Veränderung, der man wie ein Zuschauer gegenüber steht. Es geschieht. Es
ist wie ein göttlicher oder dämonischer Eingriff. Nach Oe[sterreich]
gewöhnlich moralische Depression vorangegangen, und nun Rausch von
Glück und Jubel mit einem starken Bewußtsein unmittelbarer Gegenwart
Gottes.

Bruch mit der Vergangenheit, Beruf, Familie udgl.³⁰⁹

The cases show a "passive revolution," an extreme transformation which the person experiences as an outside observer. Disassociated from the known self, the person experiences a "new objectivity". In Musil's notes on Oesterreich we find repeated discussion of the phenomenon of a sort of double consciousness. St. Theresa, for example, speaks of a state wherein the Soul is both "Martha and Mary at once", wherein:

Verstand u[nd] Gedächtnis behalten hinreichend Freiheit, um sich mit Dingen der Barmherzigkeit zu können, während die Seele klar u[nd] tief sieht, daß die Wille mit Gott verbunden ist. Häufig u[nd] erstaunlich nennt sie diese Vereinigung. Dieser Zustand ist verschieden von dem 'Gebet der Ruhe', wo sich die Seele während der Vereinigung weder bewegen noch rühren mag (h[eilige] Muße der Maria). Vielmehr ist die Seele hier tätig und beschaulich. Sie kann sogar lesen. Doch ist man seiner selbst nicht völlig mächtig u[nd] merkt wohl, daß der beste Teil der Seele anderswo ist.³¹⁰

St. John of the Cross, too, Musil notes here, "spricht von einem höheren und einem unterm Seelenteil, die dann von einem 'ungeheuren Zwischenraum' getrennt sind". The implication is that a second, or marginal consciousness interrupts the primary consciousness, or even exists alongside of the primary consciousness, sometimes resulting in a conversion experience.

In this set of notes we find a list of some of Oesterreich's sources, including the German version of William James' Varieties of Religious Experience (Die religiöse Erfahrung in ihrer Mannigfaltigkeit, 2.Aufl., 1914), which Musil apparently had jotted

down to look up later. James had made the correlation between conversion experiences and a type of personality with a highly developed marginal – or subliminal – consciousness. The subject's "[P]ossession of a developed subliminal self, and of a leaky or pervious margin," James wrote, "is thus a condition sine qua non of the subject's becoming converted in the instantaneous way".³¹¹ But what might stimulate the leaky margin to open?

Delineating a typical narrative of conversion, William James shows, in numerous conversion case studies, the pattern:

1. subject suffers from sadness, indifference, lack of faith.
2. strives for release, becomes frustrated, reaches despair.
3. subject finally gives up hope, gives up personal will towards salvation.
4. loss of self, giving up to a greater will., objective sense of watching oneself from outside.
5. sudden conversion.

Giving up is understood to be a prerequisite for sudden conversion, "[G]etting so exhausted with the struggle that we have to stop, – so we drop down, give up, and don't care any longer...lapse into temporary apathy."³¹² But other emotional excitement or "perturbation of the senses" can also contribute to create a situation wherein "a complete division is established in the twinkling of an eye between the old life and the new".³¹³ Conversion narratives, as well as mythologies of total and sudden millennial transformation, create positive experiential models for lost souls or societies on the

brink, and may, in themselves, encourage the subliminal *imitatio* of such ecstatic convulsions.

Ulrich and Agathe, reading passages from mystical confessions to each other, recognize their own modern empirical experiences described in the words of ancient heretics. It is a narrative of spiritual dissatisfaction, despair, and final illumination. "Die Heiligen, " begins Ulrich, "beschreiben es so":

Während dieser Tage war ich überaus unruhig. Bald saß ich ein wenig, bald wandelte ich hin und wieder durchs Haus. Es war wie eine Pein und dennoch mehr eine Süßigkeit als eine Pein zu nennen, denn es war kein Verdruß dabei, sondern eine seltsame, ganz übernatürliche Annehmlichkeit .[...] Da hörte ich ohne Laut, da sah ich ohne Licht. Dann wurde mein Herz grundlos, mein Geist formlos und meine Natur wesenslos". Es kam ihnen beiden vor, daß diese Worte Ähnlichkeit mit der Unruhe hätten, von der sie selbst durch Haus und Garten getrieben wurden....³¹⁴

Then Agathe asks her brother, "Aber was geht da vor sich?" and he begins a short aesthetic treatise on the relation of form and consciousness. To discover the ways of extraordinary vision, one must first make clear "was das Gewöhnliche ist". And "das Gewöhnliche" constitutes a state of blatant disregard of the very real essence of things.

Describing a scene of a herd of cattle, with its accompanying sky, clouds, and fence, Ulrich demonstrates to Agathe how easy it is not to really see the details of such a common picture, how easy it is to complacently disregard the molecular vividness of all

that is there depicted. The picture does not say anything new to the viewer. The viewer creates, from the swarm of sensations, free-associations, worries and pre-occupations of his mind, nothing more than the "paper" on which the herd of cows is grazing. But the viewer does not realize that there even is a piece of paper, or that there is, in other words, a particular formal orientation by which he or she is visually limited. The scene is described without reference to its reality level (is it a memory, photograph, material presence?), until, at the very end of his description, Ulrich mentions the paper (or the mind-scape) upon which the viewer has sub-consciously placed his vision, telescoping whatever "real," three-dimensional image the reader might have had instantly down to a two-dimensional abstraction. As he continues, the description, which may have once been of something in the real world, becomes more and more certainly a picture upon a picture surface.

How is the reader introduced to this papery quality of the given image? In the same way in which a reader of a narrative is interrupted from the psychic displacement of reality which constitutes a fully immersed experience of fictional absorption: the paper, as Agathe puts it, tears, or the author emerges with a "dear reader" perhaps, or some other convention, to remind us that the situation he or she has so vividly painted, is, in fact, only one possible level of reality. Musil uses this technique himself constantly in the novel, pulling the reader up from descriptions of memories, wandering thoughts, inner conversations up to present "pieces of paper" which, until the moment of their "tearing", are invisible.

Before even mentioning the paper, Ulrich refers obliquely to the surrealist technique of collage when he says that the only way to make someone really notice the herd would be to erect an electrical clock or an apartment building in its place.

Dislocation by juxtaposition is a recurrent device in Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften. This sort of formal jolt, waking the viewer or reader up to a consciousness of various reality levels, is present of course outside of the realm of art as well, and constitutes a sort of everyday "mystical" experience particularly common to experiences in a modern metropolis. The paper tears, or, as Ulrich then elaborates, "Ja. Daß heißt: irgendeine gewohnheitsmäßige Verwebung in uns zerreißt,"³¹⁵ creating, for at least a moment, the possibility of seeing reality in a different way.

In many ways turn-of-the-century experimental writers played with reality as their contemporaries the collagist/montagists did, combining the "real" (newspaper clippings, photographs, scientific data or diagrams, historical detail) with incongruently glued cuttings from "fiction" (imagined distortions, shape-shifting combinations, anachronisms, absurdities), in such a way as to highlight the artist's particular power to alter perception of the so-called real world. By moving back and forth, in and out of the two realities, the writer/artist reminded his or her audience of the lazy assumptions, habits and prejudices which other one-layered representations of reality had engendered.

The *monteur* John Heartfield, for example, reiterates the avant-garde collagists' modernist critique of mediated truth:

The main thing is that I saw both what was being said and not being said in the newspapers...I found out how you can fool people with photos, really fool them...You can lie and tell the truth by putting the wrong title or wrong captions under them, and that's roughly what was being done. Photos of the war were being used to support the policy to hold out when the war had long since been settled on the Marne and the German

army had already been beaten...I was a soldier from very early on. Then we pasted, I pasted and quickly cut out a photo and then put one under another. Of course that produced another counterpoint, a contradiction that expressed something different.³¹⁶

Through two world wars artists experienced the empiricist devaluation of truth as a result of the onslaught of untrustworthy media images. But the collagists manipulated this power of the press by exploiting the "truth" value of the relatively new widespread use of photo-journalism:

Now that all sorts of things and people, irrespective of time and place, size and state, could be brought together into the living room in the form of illustrated newspapers, not only was a suggestive and seductive collection of images created, but also a new opportunity for the satirist to debunk illusion; for he now had a pile of images lying before him that put the whole world in equally large photos at his scissor's disposal [...] He now only needed to cut out from his material the things that, when combined, revealed the reality behind them: he had before him the material for their reconstruction...³¹⁷

Musil's interest in the "realistic" value of the new cinema in the thirties would stem, in part, from this new proximity between theater and documentation,³¹⁸ but the influence of *Dada monteur* on writers of this period was a natural progression: the text is

ripped open; it is pasted together with the seams still showing; it is not hidden from the reader that any given adhesion is only one possible composition.

Kaja Antonowicz' rich analysis of Robert Walser's technique of literary assemblage in his story of a romance between a glass of champagne (really a girl from Champagne personified by the girl on the champagne bottle's label) and a nose (actually an intellectual with a particularly sensitive nose) exemplifies the sort of bizarre miscegenation between levels of reality that was rampant in early modernist texts. Walser, like Musil, had an enormous body of unpublished work: fantasies, fanatically systematized cross-references, and a multitude of texts written in tiny letters which are called "microscripts" in the Walser literature. Of these latter Antonowicz writes:

The sheet of paper, and especially the sheet with the microscripts, has obvious utopian connotations for Walser in this period. It is in fact a virtual world where, with each change of the protagonists' concrete plastic qualities, there is an analogous change in the textual environment, and where each of the protagonists, however grotesque he or she is, can count on competent assistance from the author, or even a solution of his or her formal problem.

It is precisely because the sheet of paper and the "prose piece" are flat that they permit diverse relationships with the three-dimensional environment...What we can observe through this text is a spatial montage, almost like the "bachelor's machines" which Duchamp and other artists from the period constructed—a spatial installation consisting of a nose, a glass of champagne, a bottle and a sheet of microscripts, an assemblage

which incessantly produces all sorts of energies, attractions, and
inebriations.³¹⁹

The assumption is that one could vitalize the narrative surface by calling attention to its papery quality via the "tearing" of consciousness levels. This is accomplished by creating a sort of textual world wherein "all sorts of energies, attractions, and inebriations" are incessantly produced, canceling each other out and giving birth to each other. Whereas a psychologized *reading* of a pre-modernist text would undoubtedly uncover myriad subversive confusions leaking out of the carefully contained moral narrative, the modernist text is a self-psychologizing entity (like Duchamp's self-generative "bachelor machine") which reads itself both earnestly and mockingly at once, ripping up ideals, realities, and idylls with the fervor of a conservationist who, like Musil's Ulrich, proclaims: "Ich spotte nur, weil ich es liebe".³²⁰

The mockery foils (only slightly) the serious project of opening up the readers' vision to the possibility of a living, breathing, moving picture space wherein he or she may momentarily lose his or her sense of limitation and definition. As if Ulrich were transforming a Constable painting into a van Gogh before our very eyes, his description of the once commonplace scene of grazing animals is suddenly charged with the atomic energy of objects. Everything is connected, and there is no I, no separation of observer and image. The "egoism" of things, i.e., their identity as separate elements, has dissolved, the boundaries, in other words, between things, have disintegrated. The concept of a picture surface itself has disappeared:

Was auf der Bildfläche bleibt, könnte man am ehesten ein Gewoge von Empfindungen nennen, das sich hebt und senkt oder atmet and gleißt, als ob es ohne Umrisse das ganze Gesichtsfeld ausfüllte. Natürlich sind darin auch noch unzählige einzelne Wahrnehmungen enthalten, Farben, Hörner, Bewegungen, Gerüche und alles, was zur Wirklichkeit gehört: aber das wird bereits nicht mehr anerkannt, wenn es auch noch erkannt werden sollte. Ich möchte sagen: die Einzelheiten besitzen nicht mehr ihren Egoismus, durch den sie unsere Aufmerksamkeit in Anspruch nehmen, sondern sie sind geschwisterlich und im wörtlichen Sinn "innig" untereinander verbunden. Und natürlich ist auch keine "Bildfläche" mehr da, sondern irgendwie geht alles grenzenlos in dich über.³²¹

This "Gewoge von Empfindungen," this rising and sinking, overflowing and breathing is reminiscent of the accounts collected by Musil of mystics of all periods and doctrines. It is also similar to psychological accounts of psychotic experiences of "ecstasy" wherein correspondences are found between things which to the "normal" person are not visible. The tear in the paper is a formal impetus to conversion. Such tears come in multiple forms. Musil's notes on van Gogh's diaries and letters show that he looked for clues about sudden alterations of consciousness in the "madness" and exceptional vision of one individual. After a description of van Gogh's relatively successful early life working happily in the family business, Musil notes Vincent's unhappy love affair, followed by the words: "Sein Charakter verändert sich". From this point on he begins to show signs of melancholy strangeness, and simultaneously increases

his interest in art and spirituality. Although the outward possibilities for worldly success existed,

die innere Möglichkeit, diese zu benutzen, erstirbt in ihm. Er gehört zu dem schlechthin Unorganisierbaren in einer Welt der Organisation. Was bedeutet das Religiöse in ihm? Es ist ein Vorwand, eine Maske der Kraft, ein seinem späteren Lebensgefühl verwandtes Vorgefühl. Die Demut beginnt bald darin zu dominieren. Falls im Religiösen das Hauptmotiv der Anschluß, die Einordnung ist, ist er nicht religiös. so wenig wie Christus oder Buddha. Er ist religionsbildnerisch. Später fällt das religiöse ganz aus in seinem Leben. ³²²

As if he were gathering material for a psychological case study, Musil studiously marks down the characteristics of van Gogh's transformation, noting the books he reads (the Bible, for one) and the turns in his life. Comparing him to other visionaries, like Christ and Buddha, the behavioral psychologist comes closer to the development of the author's characters. Van Gogh, like St. Christina of Avila, or a possessed Eskimo Shaman, or a mental patient with multiple personality disorder, becomes a model for the creation of Musil's characters. Their statements, marked down in quotations and paraphrases in Musil's notebooks, are transformed, directly and indirectly, into the "holy discourse" of Ulrich and Agathe.

The idea of a state of grace wherein one can do no wrong is found, not only in such places as Eckhart's sermons, Farid din Attar's Conference of the Birds, Nietzsche, and Mechthild von Magdeburg, but in van Gogh's letters. This time it is an aesthetic

state, a state reminiscent of Schiller; but at the same time it is very definitely a "moral" state, a state of "goodness". "Die Maler begreifen die Natur und haben sie lieb und lehren uns sehen. Und dann gibt es noch Maler, die nichts anders als Gutes machen, die nichts Schlechtes machen können, ebenso es auch einfache Menschen gibt, die nichts tun können ohne das es gut ist."

Musil quotes van Gogh's quotation of Renan, tracing the mystic and moral education of another: "Pour agir dans le monde il faut mourir à soi même, le peuple = qui se fait le missionnaire d'une pensée religieuse n'a plus d'autre patrie que cette pensée. L'homme n'est pas ici-bas seulement pour être heureux. Il y est pour réaliser de grandes choses par la société, pour arriver à la noblesse et dépasser la vulgarité ou se traîne l'existence de presque tous les individus."³²³ And tracing the simultaneity of van Gogh's religious sense with his aesthetic sense, Musil comments repeatedly on the development from a "literal vision" of the world to a vision filled with meanings. In a section entitled "Dokumente seiner Religiosität," Musil notes van Gogh's developing synthesis between nature, art, spirituality and seeing. Van Gogh describes his ecstatic feelings for the beauty of nature and God; Musil notes that the same can be said about one's feelings for art.³²⁴

The last section of Musil's chronology of van Gogh is entitled, "Die Periode der Religiosität bis zum Erkenntnis des Lebenswegs". It begins with van Gogh's retreat from the world of normalcy and ends with an ecstatic description of landscape. The paper of van Gogh's vision is torn by an ecstatic conversion experience; he sees in a new way:

Bei aller Unklarheit liegt hier die Entscheidung; er entsagt den
Lockungen der Welt und folgt seiner Seele. Im Zeitpunkt, wo er ins
Ungewisse geht. Der Vater kann ihn nicht mehr unterstützen.

Die Wehmut des Abschieds ist groß, dennoch scheint schon auf der Reise etwas aufgetan. Die Welt gehört jetzt ihm. Er scheint sie einzutunken, wenn man die knappen aber straffenden Notizen über die Reiseeindrücke liest.

"Am nächsten Morgen in der Bahn von Harwich nach London war es schön, in der Morgendämmerung die schwarzen Acker u[nd] grünen Wiesen mit Schafen u[nd] Lämmern u[nd] hier u[nd] da einer Dornenhecke u[nd] einzelnen großen Eichen, mit graubemoosten Stämmen u[nd] dunklen Ästen zu sehen. In der dämmernden blauen Luft blinkten noch einzelne Sterne u[nd] eine Bank grauer Wolken lag am Horizont. Schon bevor die Sonne aufging, hörte ich eine Lerche.

Als wir an die letzte Station vor London kamen, ging die Sonne auf. Die Bank grauer Wolken war verschwunden u[nd] da war die Sonne so einfach u[nd] groß wir nur möglich, eine rechte Ostersonne." 17. April 76.

Musil ends his notations here, and the implication is that van Gogh, in his resurrection Easter vision of the world sunrise, his new dawning into his new life, has become an artist.

Tracing the gradual development of a visionary, Musil looks for clues about how radical changes in consciousness might occur. Are they sudden? Or are they a product of many small spiritual experiences, books, miseries, influences? The answer seems to lie, in part, in the surrealist combination of elements, in the juxtaposition of the electric clock, the apartment building, and the herd of cows which Ulrich speaks of above. The herd of cows, in other words, does not command our attention unless something makes "the paper" of our experience of them "rip".

For Musil the decisive tear came in the form of a near-death experience on the battlefield while serving in the Austrian army in World War I. "Dort war nicht dein Tod," wrote the young veteran of his wartime experience with a nearly fatal aerial dart, "sondern der Einsturz einer Wand".³²⁵ Adapted later into a series of diary drafts and a short story, Musil's brush with death had the staggering force of a conversion experience. In one hissing, rushing, timeless breath the dart, headed directly towards him, revealed the possibility of another world, another ending, of an "other condition" of experiencing. The former atheist soldier speaks of a "Feuer Taufe" (a baptism by fire), and says that he was initiated into the "unsichtbare Kirche" (invisible church): "Ich glaube:" he writes, "wie ein Mädchen, das der Herr angesehen hat... Schluß dieser wenigen Augenblicke war eine neue Vorstellung in meinem Leib, die nie zuvor beherbergt hatte: Gott".³²⁶

For Musil's fictional "friend" Ulrich, it is his father's death and his return to his old home town which provide a preliminary shift of consciousness (which is not to say that other, earlier events, moments, or memories in the novel did not contain the beginnings of such consciousness). The last pages of Book One describe a powerful first taste of that "anderes Verhalten" to life which Book Two will explore in greater depth. Ulrich "sees" a multitude of pictures of the world through a haze of half-sleep which almost move him to tears:

Der Anblick einer Wiese am frühen Morgen. Das von der Eisenbahn gesehene, von dicken Abendnebeln erfüllte Bild eines langen gewundenen Flußtals. Am anderen Ende Europas ein Ort, wo er sich von seiner Geliebten getrennt hatte; das Bild der Geliebten war vergessen, jenes der erdigen Straßen und schilfgedeckten Häuser frisch wie gestern. Das

Achselhaar einer anderen Geliebten, einzig und allein übrig geblieben von ihr. Einzelne Teile von Melodien.

They are pictures of the world; but "welche Welt?" dachte er. 'Es gibt ja gar keine!'. The reader will immediately recognize in these images the raw material of literature and possibly make the connection between Musil's melting "mystical" consciousness and a more familiar sort of aesthetic experience. The images rise up in the artist's mind; he is filled to the brim with "feelings"; he can hardly put them into words; if he is successful, they arrange themselves into coherence; something mysterious seems to have happened; the morning after the writer may not know whence his new words have sprung; he stands outside of them now: they are objects.

Returning after many years, now fatherless, to his old home, Ulrich sees anew. The strangeness of death, the objective distance of time, the disorientation of exhaustion and travel all may contribute to an increased awareness of that "mystically" sensitive part of the brain, James's marginal consciousness. Musil begins the first chapter of Book Two with a chaotic jumble of noises. Overheard voices ring in Ulrich's ears as the crowds pour out of the train and push him along with them. This chaos changes — suddenly — to "eine ungewohnte Ruhe". "[N]un stand er im Saugraun der Stille, die auf den Lärm folgt. Und zugleich mit der Unruhe seines Gehörs, die dadurch hervorgerufen wurde, fiel ihm eine ungewohnte Ruhe vor den Augen auf."

Next Ulrich begins to see "alles Sichtbare" as "stärker als sonst". Before we attribute this to mere exhaustion or romantic emotion, Musil uses an almost self-consciously styled Christian image: "Alles Sichtbare war darin stärker als sonst, und wenn er über den Platz blickte, so standen auf der anderen Seite ganz gewöhnliche Fensterkreuze so schwarz im

Abendlicht auf bleichen Glasglanz, als wären sie die Kreuze von Golgatha."³²⁷ What are we to make of this image? That he would be capable of even thinking such a thing from one moment to the next is a sign that something — certainly not something Christian in any technical sense of the word — extra-ordinary is about to unravel. That this something has to do with Ulrich's long-lost and mostly forgotten sister suggests the next major tear in the paper of Ulrich's reality.

"Wie mag sie jetzt aussehen" Ulrich thinks suddenly to himself, and muses on his father's strange "Eigentümlichkeit" which led him to keep the two siblings— "in zartem Alter" — away from each other, "so daß er seine Schwester eigentlich schon seit ihrer Kindheit, wo sie sich allerdings sehr geliebt hatten, nicht mehr recht wiedergesehen hatte...".³²⁸ Was Musil aware of Freud's exegesis in Totem und Tabu which elaborated the strange "Eigentümlichkeit" of "primitive" societies to keep sisters and brothers, fathers and daughters, mothers and sons strictly separated once the children reached the "zarter Alter" of puberty, in an extreme case of protection against the threat of incestuous activity? If not, the psychologizing narrator in him would understand implicitly the built-up suspense which such an extreme state of separation would engender: the siblings are kept apart for most of their adult lives; they are about to meet; Ulrich, coming out of an ecstatic vision of his home town, wonders what his sister will look like. Is this not the first of a series of romantic questions? Later Ulrich will attribute the strange mystical feelings which he experienced the night before his journey home to a "presentiment" about the significance of the siblings' "Begegnung".

The description of Agathe's train journey away from her old life and towards her brother is an even more striking conversion narrative. It all happens in an "Augenblick" and we find this word repeated throughout Agathe's reminiscence, beginning with an

absolutely marvelous passage: "In dem Augenblick, wo Agathe den Zug bestiegen hatte [...] war etwas geschehen, das mit einem überraschenden *Zerreißen* alle Ähnlichkeit hatte, und die beiden Stücke, in die der Augenblick der Abreise zerbarst, schnellten so weit auseinander, als hätten sie niemals zusammengehört." ³²⁹

Something "happened," something which had every likeness to a surprising "tearing apart". From the next sentence, which describes Agathe's husband lifting his "steifen, runden, schwarzen, zusehends kleiner werdenden Hut" while Agathe rode away, it is clear that the "two pieces" which are being ripped apart are the once artificially unified bodies of a husband and a wife. It seemed to Agathe that the train platform rolled as quickly backwards as the train rode forwards, a sensation which we all may know from experience, but which here emphasizes the original metaphor of "Zerreißen" and "Zerbarsten" while perhaps nodding at the same time to Einstein's contemporary findings on Space-time and relativity. Agathe seems to be blasting off into the wider and wider new world while Hagauer is shrinking at exponentially swifter intervals into the rigidly formalized past.

By the third sentence we are still in the same "Augenblick," but everything has changed, for "In diesem Augenblick...nahm sie sich vor, nicht mehr zurückzukehren, und ihr Bewußtsein wurde unruhig wie ein Herz, das sich auf einmal einer Gefahr entronnen sieht, von der es nichts gewußt hat". ³³⁰

Like a heart which sees itself just escaped from a danger of which it hadn't even known, Agathe's consciousness *suddenly* alights upon the impossibility of her life. This is clearly the type of a conversion experience. The transformation of consciousness is so complete that Agathe's hardest challenge is in trying to explain to her brother how it was possible for her to have lived her former life at all, even for one moment. Later it seems to

become clear that she thought of her marriage to Hagauer as some sort of penance for her crimes of infidelity against her deceased first love, a sort of modern-day version of going into a cloister or self-flagellation: "Kein Europäer geißelt sich," she thinks to herself, "beschmiert sich mit Asche, schneidet sich die Zunge ab, gibt sich wirklich hin oder zieht sich auch nur von allen Menschen zurück, vergeht von Leidenschaften, rädert oder spießt heute noch; aber jeder hat zuweilen das Bedürfnis danach..."³³¹

Agathe, who was raised in a convent, relates the sensation of her "conversion experience" to a "wunderliche Krankheit" which she underwent when still a young girl. (Agathe's illness seems actually to be similar to a mysterious and lengthy "Gehirn und Nerven Krankheit" suffered by Musil himself when he was a boy.) That mystical women's vitae are riddled with similar stories of unexplained and lengthy illnesses should be a sign to us that Agathe's violent break with the authority figure Hagauer, on the eve of her father's death, has something to do with her personal ascent into a heretical spirituality.³³²

When Agathe remembers her strange illness, she remembers most of all a strong sense of pride that the "Ordnung der Großen keine Macht über sie hatte".³³³ Agathe suffered a fever for over a year which the worthy experts of science and medicine, her father's colleagues and associates, could neither understand nor cure. She "fühlte sich in einem überirdischen oder zumindest außergewöhnlichen Zustand, während von ihr immer weniger übrig blieb". She experiences the classic case of a heightened condition of spiritual otherworldliness coupled with an increasing diminishment of the body. Like the grown woman on the train, the little girl feels herself transported irretrievably away from her normal life and the reasons and rules which control it.

The medieval visionary Julian of Norwich, describing a revelation wherein she is allowed to experience Christ's suffering on the cross, given to her as a result of her

sickness, tells also of a loss of body accompanied by an intimate association (without intermediary of outside authority figure) between herself and God. Julian's *imitation Christi* elevates her from the position of an impotent and ailing mortal woman to one who is, at least momentarily, like unto Christ himself. Agathe's illness delivers her also into a realm beyond the mortal authority of rational intercessor or medical mediator. This sense of inexplicable momentum is thrilling to Agathe, for even if she herself is not in control, at least no one else is either.

But here Musil the collagist narrator rips the paper of Agathe's consciousness by a sudden reality transfer: from one sentence to the next we find that throughout Agathe's reminiscences we have been riding with her in a noisy carriage next to her brother. We have traveled from Agathe's train ride away from Hagauer to her childhood illness and are suddenly in the "present" moment woken from our reverie by the bumps of the taxi. Musil writes: "Die Stöße des Taxis... [we think: "what taxi?"] das durch schlecht gepflasterte Gassen fuhr, verhinderten ein Gespräch.....[we think: "with whom?"]" and we remember the title of the chapter: "Agathe wenn sie nicht mit Ulrich sprechen kann". ³³⁴ Agathe returns almost immediately to her musings, leaving her brother and the carriage again. But the author has destroyed the illusion of mono-reality and we will never be the same. Her thoughts bring her gradually up to the present and fill in a bit of the narrative which had been left out. She reviews in her mind her husband's visit with horror; it is so alien to her as to strike her as something out of some one else's life. Although she had been thinking over the history, *her* history, with the objectivity distance brings, "ein unendlicher Schreck" suddenly overtakes her, "ohne daß ein besonderer Anlaß dazu vorhanden gewesen wäre [...] Hagauer war ja doch leibhaftig bei ihr gewesen!" ³³⁵ As in her earlier conversion experience on the train, a total *other* consciousness overtakes her.

She dips into the repulsive memory of her husband's visit and comes up for air by turning her eyes away from her brother and looking out the window. Once again the reader is surprised: "Agathe wandte ihr Gesicht von Ulrich ab, den sie bisher betrachtet hatte, und sah zum Fenster hinaus".³³⁶ For we did not know she was looking at him in the first place.

When she looks out the window we are faced with a projection: she sees the world in the colors and manners of her own inner state: "es waren die Eindrücke einer häßlichen Öde, die vorüberrollten, und sie hielten ihr die Einöde des Lebens vor, in die sie sich durch ihre Nachlässigkeit geraten fühlte." But the word "Einöde," which seems often to accompany Agathe, is also a mystical term of some import, for both Mechthild von Magdeburg and Meister Eckhart after her. It is a term denoting the spiritual desert which the subject must pass through in order to attain union. Desert imagery (*einnöde*, *wüstenunge*) has its roots for the mystics in Jesus' fasting in the desert as well as the tradition of the desert Fathers who fled the enticements of the world, and Mechthild, in particular refers to the tradition of Mary Magdalene spending her last years in the desert.³³⁷ But for Mechthild the desert becomes the personal state of emptiness in the soul when it becomes ready to receive God. As Frank Tobin writes of Mechthild, "One lives in the 'true desert', she affirms, if one loves *das niht* (*das Nicht*, the not) and flees *das iht* (*das Ich*, the I). One should stand alone, go to no one, keep busy, be free of all things, console others but have no consolation oneself."³³⁸

For Eckhart, the desert becomes not the soul, but "the vast empty space of divinity" or the "divine spark of the creature". The *vunke* (*der Funke*, the spark) enters the desert, the ground and silent solitude (*stille wüste*) of God. It is a metaphysical location. Eckhart makes the verbal connection in a spiritual pun on *einöde* and *einunge* (desert and

oneness): the way to oneness is through the desert. What keeps a soul from the desert? Corporeality, multiplicity, temporality, qualities.

As Agathe looks out on the desert of her soul/world she begins to lose all of these things. Her body —as it had during her childhood illness—seems to disappear. At the same time she feels a lack of corresponding "seelischer Inhalt"; she is empty, her body is nothing more than an ephemeral casing :

Sie saß jetzt nicht mehr aufrecht, sondern hatte sich in die nach Alter riechenden Polster der Droschke etwas hinabgleiten lassen, um bequemer durch das Fenster sehen zu können, und änderte diese unschöne Haltung nicht mehr, in der sie von den Stößen des Wagens grob am Bauch gepackt und geschüttelt wurde. Dieser Körper verursachte ihr ein unheimliches Gefühl, wie er gleich einem Fetzen gebeutelt wurde, denn er war das einzige, was sie besaß....Männer waren eine Ergänzung und Vervollständigung des eigenen Körpers, aber kein seelischer Inhalt; man nahm sie, wie sie einen nahmen. Ihr Körper sagte ihr, daß er schon in wenigen Jahren beginnen werde, seine Schönheit zu verlieren: also die Gefühle zu verlieren, die sich, unmittelbar aus seiner Selbstgewißheit kommend, nur zu einem geringen Teil durch Worte oder Gedanken ausdrücken ließen. Dann wär alles vorbei, ohne daß etwas dagewesen wäre.³³⁹

Something about this emptiness leads us away from Christian mysticism and towards Pagan stoicism as the siblings make their approach to the "Ziel ihrer Wanderung",

the "Schwedenschanze". Here we see how Musil can mix two disparate traditions and philosophies within the same metaphor. The *Einöde* becomes a symbol for something heroic and stoic; there is no hope for salvation here, no afterlife; only the beauty of harsh reality, Nietzsche's *amor fati*: an echo of *memento mori*, to match the locale of the thirty years war, a taste of the mixture of religiosity and stoicism in the midst of baroque war and plagues. Ulrich thinks of old proverbial expressions like "Gevatter Tod" or "Ich habe mein Sach auf nichts gestellt". He however experiences therein a sort of momentary aesthetic liberation: "Die Schwere des Lebens —,"Ulrich explains," dieser heimlich auf uns lastende Mißmut, daß wir alle sterben müssen, daß alles so kurz ist und wahrscheinlich so vergeblich! —hebt sich eigentlich nur in solchen Augenblicken von uns! ". But Agathe, as usual, wants to know precisely : "in welchen Augenblicken?"³⁴⁰ Frustrated by her brother's reveries, she continues to think despairingly on death, yet the sympathy of the landscape does give her a sort of solace:

Sie...sah eine ernste, kahle Landschaft vor sich, deren Traurigkeit mit ihrer eigenen übereinstimmte. Als sie sich umwandte, sagte sie: "Es ist eine Umgebung, sich zu töten"und lächelte; "die Leere meines Kopfes würde unendlich sanft in die Leere dieses Anblicks aufgelöst werden!"..."Sag mir endlich, in welchen Augenblicken erscheint uns etwas im Leben notwendig?!"³⁴¹

And Ulrich's only partially ironic answer returns us to the mystics of form and the narrative of sudden conversion: "Wenn man sich im Bett umdreht!". Ulrich elaborates then on the difficulty of making a change, of actually changing one's position. Finally, he

says, one gives up (the prerequisite for conversion) and "mit einemmal hat man sich umgedreht! Eigentlich, müßte man sagen, *man ist umgedreht worden*." ³⁴²

Why can one not decide for oneself to move? Because, in a man without qualities there is an overwhelming lack of conviction, a reverse conviction, in other words, that any action is empty of a justifiably fitting meaning. The discrepancy of "Tatkraft ohne Tatsinn"³⁴³ haunts Ulrich. He longs for action, but cannot decide to roll over in bed. He must be "umgedreht" — as in Oesterreich's "passive Revolution"—by some outside force as a result of his own hopelessness. This force must be Agathe. He looks at her and draws strength to act. It is a creator impulse, an impulse towards crime as divine act, towards *Zauber*:

"Als ich dich vorhin stehen sah," fuhr er halblaut fort "dort auf der Schanze, ich weiß nicht warum, hatte ich ein wildes Bedürfnis, plötzlich etwas zu tun. Ich habe ja früher manchmal wirklich etwas Unüberlegtes getan; der Zauber besteht darin: wenn es geschehen war, so war, neben mir, noch etwas da. Manchmal kann ich mir denken, daß ein Mensch sogar durch ein Verbrechen glücklich wird, weil es ihm einen gewissen Ballast gibt, und dadurch vielleicht eine stetigere Fahrt." ³⁴⁴

Thus General Stumm von Bordwehr's *faux pas* upon greeting the newly returned Ulrich ("Du bist nicht der richtige Tatmensch")³⁴⁵ seems to rouse Ulrich's bravado like a juvenile dare. The narrator has alluded to "something" which Ulrich does not want to think about yet ("Doch da wandte sich Ulrich, ehe er "gestern" zu denken vermochte, hastig und so handgreiflich geweckt von seinen Erinnerungen ab, als wäre er an eine

Kante gestoßen; da gab es *etwas*, woran er noch nicht denken wollte!")³⁴⁶ and the reader does not yet know —and does not find out for a number of chapters still— just how on the mark the general's teasing is. Musil's narrative diversion is a function of Ulrich's denial; only after gossiping about the *Parallelaktion* with the General, and after an intensely disturbing visit to Clarisse and Walther which features, among other things, a lengthy excursus on the visiting prophet/fraud Meingast and a group observation of an exhibitionist below Clarisse's window, is Ulrich ready to consider the incident which he euphemistically calls the "Zwischenfall" ("mit welchem Wort er mildernd das bezeichnet, was sich in den letzten Stunden seines Beisamenseins mit Agathe und wenigen Tage nach dem großen Gespräch ereignet hatte.").³⁴⁷ This little "Zwischenfall" is, as the reader will shortly discover, the matter of Agathe's criminal forgery of their father's will.

Once again the present time narrative is broken by another parallel consciousness of reality. All the while Ulrich has visited with General Stumm von Bordwehr and his old friends Clarisse and Walther, his subconscious has undoubtedly been thinking about Agathe and the crime which she (and he too, by association) has most likely committed in the meantime. And this "meantime" is precisely the narrative space wherein Ulrich has precisely not done anything to stop her.

Ulrich finds himself unable — despite a lengthy interior argument — to hinder Agathe's act. It seems, instead, that her forgery of their father's will mysteriously satisfies Ulrich's longing for "evil" without demanding his actual physical complicity. However, when he wavers and hesitates to write Agathe the letter or telegram discouraging her from her intentions, he is well aware that his "not doing" is as criminal as her "doing". "Das Tun und Lassen," he thinks to himself, "glüht." It is equally understood by him that his ideas and words are responsible for Agathe's actions, in a parallel to Eckhart's influence on the

heretical deeds of the Free Spirit Brotherhood. Everything logical in Ulrich strives against Agathe's act, but her act— carried out within a "righteousness of flames instead of logic" is much more powerful than any outmoded set of rules or morals. It holds Ulrich in its sway.

In Chapter Eighteen, "Schwierigkeiten eines Moralisten beim Schreiben eines Briefs," Musil shows Ulrich putting off the writing of a letter of warning to his sister by philosophizing about his favorite questions. While his logical thoughts favor, to some extent, Agathe's actions, he is in no way rationally prepared to bridge the gap between thought and action. Ulrich understands, philosophically, that morality has become a morality of *Verbot*, a negative morality, while most positive forms of morality, i.e., "die volle Hingabe des Schenkens oder die Lust, das Irdische abzutöten ... fast schon verlorengegangen [sind], und wo sie noch ausgeübt werden, sind sie das Geschäft von Narren und Grillenfängern oder bleichhäutigen Tugendbolden".³⁴⁸

Ulrich understands, from his own experience, that modern man finds himself in a decidedly lukewarm intellectual, emotional, spiritual ("geistige") place while behaving "morally" (as in paying taxes), whereas passion and fantasy are the companions of "evil". This he explains by the formal relationship of the immoral act to its surrounding morality. In opposition there is power:

[D]enn in Geschehnisse, die sie in Gegensatz zu ihrer Umgebung bringen, entfalten all ihre Kräfte, während sie sich dort, wo sie nur ihre Schuldigkeit tun, begreiflicherweise nicht anders verhalten, als beim Steuerzahlen; woraus es sich ergibt, daß alles Böse mit mehr oder weniger

Phantasie und Leidenschaft vollbracht wird, wogegen sich das Gute durch eine unverkennbare Affektarmut und Kläglichkeit auszeichnet...

This said, Ulrich still tries to write to Agathe dissuading her from her action. His philosophical theorizing and his diagnosis of Agathe's mixed morality as a phenomena of the times is, the astute psychologizing narrator tells us— in case we had not noticed it ourselves— only a "Vorwand..."

um sich vor einer Aussicht zu schützen, die ihn weit mehr erschreckte.
Denn merkwürdigerweise übte ja das Verhalten seiner Schwester, das man tadeln mußte, wenn man es bewußt untersuchte, eine betörende Lockung aus, sobald man es miträumte; denn dann entschwand alles Strittige und Geteilte, und es bildete sich der Eindruck einer leidenschaftlichen, bejahenden zum Handeln drängenden Güte, die ganz leicht neben ihren entkräfteten alltäglichen Formen wie ein uraltes Laster aussehen mochte.³⁴⁹

Ulrich eventually sees through his philosophizing himself, and "schämte sich sogar ein wenig . . . daß er überhaupt moralisierte, dieses Denken nach theoretischer Art," and in that moment the thought of his sister "streams" through him.

He realizes that Agathe is the one whose hand reaches out across the bridge between idea and action: "Sie war der Mensch, der die Hand ausstreckt". Interrupted by a phone call from his old friend Walther, asking him for assistance in Clarisse's wildly irrational project of the "Erlösung" of Moosbrugger the sex murderer, Ulrich takes the

paper upon which he had attempted repeatedly to write to his sister, and - with a smile, no less! - tears it slowly into small pieces.

Ulrich's visions of Agathe are often marked by the sort of mystical vocabulary found in the confessions of ecstasies, with words like "floating", "glowing," "hovering". Her actions, as we have seen, are often associated by Ulrich with magical rituals: "Durch die offene Tür fiel künstliches Licht in das zitterige Grau des frühen Vormittags, und die schwarze Erscheinung mit dem blonden Haar schien in einer Grotte aus Luft zu stehen, durch die strahlender Glanz floß."

And again, later,

Angezogen davon, war er nahegekommen und hinter sie getreten. Da lagen nun in Haufen die Blätter, auf denen die Hand seines Vaters gelebt hatte, deren Bewegung man beinahe noch nachführen konnte, und dort zauberte Agathe wie in schauspielerische Nachahmung fast das gleiche hervor. Es war seltsam, dem zuzusehen. Der Zweck, zu dem das geschah, der Gedanke, daß es einer Fälschung diene, verschwand. Und in Wahrheit hatte sich das Agathe auch gar nicht überlegt. Es schwebte eine Gerechtigkeit mit Flammen statt mit Logik um sie. Es kam ihr vor, es wären Recht und Unrecht nicht mehr allgemeine Begriffe und ein für Millionen von Menschen angerichtetes Kompromiß, sondern zauberhafte Begegnung von Mir und Dir, Irrsinn erster, noch mit nichts vergleichlicher und an keinem Maß zu messender Schöpfung.

Agathe "zaubert," she enacts a "schauspielerische Nachahmung," a "Gerechtigkeit mit Flammen" "schwebt" around her. She is no longer bound by the "allgemeine Begriffe" of "Recht und Unrecht," but they have become, instead, "zauberhafte Begegnung von Mir und Dir". And as will be the case on many similar occasions in the novel, her actions are connected, in some mysterious way, with the union of the siblings, a variation perhaps of Buber's "Ich und Du", a "Begegnung von Mir und Dir." Agathe and Ulrich are enacting a ritual, a ritual of "Schöpfung".

This "creation", in keeping with Burke's definition of an act, cannot be compared to anything else, nor can it be measured by any tool. Musil has raised what under ordinary circumstances would be considered a base crime to an act of holy creation. This may be compared to the experimental artist's "entartet" task of deranging and re-arranging the senses and the order of the world through novel arrangements of image and word.

Both siblings have forgotten, it seems, the material reasons for Agathe's action. Ulrich even tries to tell himself, in the next moment, that this practice in forgery is just a game, that Agathe will not really use it for anything. Yet without the actual consciousness of crime, without the overcoming of "allgemeine Begriffe", the act would have no power. And both siblings know this. Yet the "theatrical imitation" might even be enough to effect the magical change, the ritual enactment of crime. Or even the literary description of it. For that is the nature of ritual; it is a symbolic imitation, a "theatrical" enactment, a verbal description, or a visual reproduction of one aspect of reality, which creates, via this double-image, another aspect of reality.

And what is it that Agathe has proposed to do? She is about to commit a verbal crime; she is creating a fiction; she is changing words; she is changing the world with

words. Since the more common word for what we call a "will" and sometimes a "last will and testament" is simply "Testament" in German, we are struck rather suddenly with a heretical pun: Ulrich and Agathe are rewriting the Testament —. Taking this analogy further, we might note the strange way in which Ulrich's words *sound*, or even *resound* in Agathe's memory almost like the voice of God; she then, like every good mystic or prophet before her, interprets best she can and transmutes the words into action. It is almost as if Agathe were *channeling* God's words through her brother.

Despite everything Ulrich has told his sister about the "Traumzustand der Moral," about the death of the old morality, about his mystical desire to act, even criminally act, he is as shocked as any bourgeois when Agathe tells him of her plans. He is of course ashamed of his "straight" response, but moreover he can not deny a rushing sensation of something one might describe as beauty, ecstasy, adventure, rebellion, or righteousness if these words were not too laden with moral associations of all sorts. Musil uses a series of mystical oxymorons to describe Ulrich's feelings about Agathe's actions. Her "wildsanfte Entschlossenheit" ("gently fierce determination") for example, is made up of an indistinguishable admixture of "Reinheit" and "Verbrechen" (purity and crime). ³⁵⁰ This mixture of opposites, once again a hermaphroditic union, is echoed in their separate roles. The realm of myth, the "Traumzustand der Moral" wherein even the criminal may become holy, is enacted via a mystic exchange between brother and sister. Ulrich's ideas are made visible through Agathe's actions; he feels as if they have gone from him to her and back to him again. This taboo union, an overcoming of the boundaries between two individuals, releases all of the energies of the new, of freedom:

Sie führte das so aus, wie sie seinerzeit die Orden aus seiner zögernden Hand genommen hatte, um sie zu vertauschen, und in diesem Augenblick liebte er sie unerachtet ihrer Gewissenslosigkeit mit dem merkwürdigen Gefühl, daß es seine eigenen Gedanken seien, die von ihm zu ihr gegangen wären und nun von ihr wieder zu ihm zurückkehrten, ärmer an Überlegung geworden, aber wie ein Wildwesen balsamisch nach Freiheit duftend.³⁵¹

Our search for the impetus which tears the paper, for the cause of sudden conversion, might do well to pause here a moment and reflect on a possible transformative agent, that standard bearer of mystical magic with which we have been dwelling and breathing: the creating metaphor itself, the conversion of opposites which flames at the moment of crisis and sends the verbal criminals off into the as-of-yet unwritten experimental chapters of "God" (or the author).

Chapter Five

A Thousand Years of Heaven on Earth?

Or

The Endless Novel

Es gibt eine Weissagung, daß für die Götter ein Jahrtausend nicht mehr als ein Öffnen und Schließen ihres Auges sei!

Musil

But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day.

2 Peter 3:8

In wiefern erreichen wir das Ideal nie? Insofern es sich selbst vernichten würde...[F]olglich kann das Ich in gewisser Rücksicht nie absolut erhoben seyn — denn sonst würde seine Wirksamkeit, sein Genuß, i.e. sein Sieg —kurz das Ich selbst würde aufhören

Novalis

In his "Rede zur Rilkefeier" (1927), a memorial talk given on the occasion of Rilke's death, Musil expounded upon three essential characteristics of his late countryman's verse. One is a use of metaphor wherein a blanket is like a November day

and, at the same time, the November day is like the blanket. "Niemals," ³⁵² he writes, "wird etwas mit einem anderen Verglichen —als zwei andere und Getrennte, die sie dabei bleiben —; denn selbst wenn das irgendwo geschieht und gesagt wird, irgendeines sei wie das andere, so scheint es schon im gleichen Augenblick seit Urzeiten das andere gewesen zu sein".³⁵³ The poetic transubstantiation of signifier and signified, in other words, liquefies the boundaries of each to each, affirming a "blanketness" and "Novemberness," an Eckhartian "is-ness," which — without dissolving the psychedelic details— contains an always moving dynamic of same and not-same within the vessel of poetic form.

Another characteristic is the absolute inseparable relationship between form and content. This is that "innere Notwendigkeit" of the *Gestalt* which consistently concerned Musil. Of Rilke's mastery he writes, "Nicht nur sinkt kaum ein Gedicht, kaum eine Zeile oder ein Wort sinken aus der Reihe der übrigen herab, und man hat das gleiche Erlebnis durch die ganze Reihe seiner Bücher".³⁵⁴ Every poem, line, word, and book, resonates in its place, and that formal placement, and the interaction between the parts, creates, as much as any disembodied meaning, the force of the work.

The third characteristic, which is, in effect, a result of the first two, is what Musil calls an "edelsteinklare Stille in der niemals anhaltenden Bewegung". Rilke's poetry, he continues, has "etwas breit Geöffnetes," and what is more pertinent to Musil's particular quest, "sein Zustand dauert wie ein gehobenes Anhalten".³⁵⁵ The "Metaphorische" which "wird hier im hohen Grade Ernst" shimmers with a "jewel like stillness within a movement that never pauses"³⁵⁶ and the impossible occurs: this momentary "condition" seems to endure, like a hovering hesitation. Musil, although ostensibly speaking of Rilke and of poetry, is really ruminating on an essential aesthetic, mystical, and ethical concern

of his own prose work. It is the central question of the possible *duration* of ecstatic, aesthetic, and momentary experiences which gnaws at Musil.

Ulrich and Agathe's ideal of the "tausendjähriges Reich" as a "thousand years of heaven on earth" is an almost literal interpretation of just this question. Mystics often speak of their moments of ecstasy as fleeting glimpses of the heaven that is to come, sneak previews, if you will, of the real thing; the earthly millennium would thus spread out such momentary glimpses to a thousand years—or, if we slip into the timelessness which such a blink of an eye (*Augenblick*) implies, the thousand year moment becomes eternal. The terrible question however, which is raised by Musil's novel (and suggested by Mechthild von Magdeburg, Meister Eckhart, and others after them) is whether such a lasting ecstasy could hold any charms for a mystic lover so attached to his or her longing. As Wagner-Egelhaaf writes, "So spricht Eckhart davon, daß das Nichtwissen die Seele dem nachjagen lasse, von dem sie nicht wisse, wie und was es sei, während sie sehr bald der Dinge müde werde, die sie erkannt habe, nur das nichterkennende Erkennen halte die Seele bei einem Gegenstand." ³⁵⁷

The desire for fresh forms of reality is sprung from this traditional mystic consciousness of ecstasy's fleetingness; instead of mourning the loss of any one heightened experience of otherness, of love, or of utopia, a "day bright" mystic would, theoretically, move forward toward still other realities, loves, societies, formal arrangements and narrative endings. That "disconfirmation" of apocalyptic prophecies tends not to dissuade believers in any one "failed" prophecy against belief in any new revelation only serves to illustrate the cyclical nature of doubt and belief. Translated into the more familiar literary vocabulary of love — repulsion-desire-repulsion-new desire —

the entire process calls the reality of Time (not the reality of Love, or God, or union with the Other) into question.

The fictional love story—remembering that Agathe emphatically denies that her relationship with Ulrich is a mere love story— like a narrative with its own artificial beginning and end, may be, alas, no more than the same old story with more or less convincing actors in the roles. It is perhaps this narrative necessity which makes it impossible for Musil's siblings to engage, blindly, in just another romantic delusion, for even Romeo had to suffer the embarrassment of having expressed his undying passion for another woman — before his next undying passion for Juliet obliterated any memory of that first "unforgettable" Rosalyn. Timing is all...and we are wise — but sober — if we take this to heart, and assume that had the famous couple lived through a lengthy narrative of consummation, marriage, children, and boredom , we might have, instead of a tragic end, a painfully insignificant, no longer even heart-rending, non-ending — or, at best, a worldly comedy inclusive of adulterous peripeteia.

As Alpha asks, in Musil's farce, Vinzenz und die Freundin bedeutender Männer, why must there be only one ending, when an infinite number of possible endings exist?³⁵⁸ Perhaps to satisfy the reader? To render a false sense of purpose? Henry James, revealing the author's sleight of hand, writes, "Really, universally, relations stop nowhere, and the exquisite problem of the artist is eternally to draw, by a geometry of his own, the circle in which they shall *appear* to do so." ³⁵⁹ Rejecting such illusions, modernist artists tended to emphasize, not the false harmonies, but the real inconsistencies. "Die Zeit," wrote Hofmannsthal, "kommt um ihre Synthese". ³⁶⁰ "Der Dichter," he admits, no longer satisfies his traditional role as artificial harmonizer of the disparate elements in the world. Addressing the reading public, he paraphrases their complaint:

Den zersplitterten Zustand dieser Welt wollten Sie fliehen und fanden wieder Zersplittertes. Sie fanden alle Elemente des Daseins bloßgelegt: den Mechanismus des Geistes, körperliche Zustände, die zweideutigen Verhältnisse der Existenz, alles wüst daliegend wie den Materialhaufen zu einem Hausbau. Sie fanden in diesen Büchern die gleiche Atomisierung, Zersetzung des Menschlichen in seine Elemente, Disintegration dessen, was zusammen den hohen Menschen bildet, und Sie wollten doch in den Zauberspiegel sehen, aus dem Ihnen das Wüste als ein Gebautes, das Tote als ein Lebendiges, das Zerfallene als ein Ewigblühendes entgegenblicken sollte. ³⁶¹

Yet, he continues, books in modern times have a new purpose; books have become "Dämonen"; "Gedichtetes" is "ein Ringen, ein Chaos, das sich gebären will in denen, die sich gierigen Auges auf die Bücher niederbeugen, wie in denen, die die Bücher hervorgebracht haben." ³⁶² This celebration of "chaos," a rejection of the false ideal of harmony and happy endings, signals also an aesthetic rejection of traditional narrative and a turn towards the ecstatic experience of timelessness.

The time line has, once again, become a point. "Nun ist da ein Mittelpunkt," wrote Musil, "und ringsherum bilden sich auch lauter Mittelpunkte"³⁶³ The future is already with us, in other words, breast to breast against the past. Frank Kermode wrote of the chaotic tendency of "modernism," "It is not that we are connoisseurs of chaos, but that we are surrounded by it, and equipped for coexistence with it only by our fictive powers....[T]he rate of change implies revolution or schism, and that this is a perpetual requirement; that

the stage of transition, like the whole of time in an earlier revolution, has become endless.”³⁶⁴

By quickening the whole of time into a moment, Kermode is reiterating the momentary timelessness always present, even within the historical theological narratives of the Middle Ages. While the millenarians of the Middle Ages had thought of their own time, in the tradition of Joachim of Fiore's prophecy, as the fatal instant of imminent cataclysm, and perhaps the final end, Kermode suggests that our age stays trembling eternally on the precipice of transition itself: “This is the modern apotheosis of Joachism: the belief that one's own age is transitional between two major periods turns into a belief that the transition itself has become an age, a saeculum. We strip the three and a half years of the Beast, which was the original Joachannine period glossed by Joachim, of all its 'primitive' number associations, and we are left with eternal transition, perpetual crisis.”³⁶⁵

Certainly the "modern age" is an age of "crisis", and it seems just as certain that our sense of time is speeding up, mocking space with lasers and cybernetics, connecting the archaic with the futuristic, the 'primitive' with the hyper-'civilized', the individual with the mass, and physics with the divine. We are getting closer to a time when humans may not have to die, yet this is nothing new for literary-minded mankind, who have been voluptuously playing — as Agathe plays the game of opening and closing her eyelids in the siblings' garden — with the pleasure of timelessness and the sure misery of ecstasy's fleetingness from the birth of fiction and fantasy.

By opening and closing her eyelids, Agathe stretches and speeds up the "Gefühl der Zeit": “dieses fließende Band, die rollende Treppe mit ihrer unheimlichen Nebenbeziehung zum Tod schien in manchen Augenblicken stillzustehen, und in manchen floß sie ohne Verbindung dahin. Während eines einzigen äußeren Augenblicks konnte sie

innen verschwunden sein, ohne eine Spur davon, ob sie eine Stunde oder eine Minute ausgesetzt habe.”³⁶⁶

This phenomenon, explained by empiricist science as the subjective experience of time, is described repeatedly throughout the posthumous unfinished sketches of Musil's great novel; the tension between endless time and that time which is always rushing towards death and end is intrinsically bound to the author's suspicion of and longing for conclusion. Where a moment may be equal to a thousand years — or a thousand pages — and that thousand years is really a metaphor for eternity, what matter if the other less laden moments appear flat, stale and unprofitable? What matter if the morning after is gray with doubt? The mystics' longing is made up a lifetime of emptiness and, if he is lucky, an eternal moment of belief. Still, man strives to hold that moment: *Verweile doch, verweile doch*, *verweile doch* says the broken record, the endlessly repeating tape loop, stopping for an *almost* palpable instant the Faustian "vorwärts".

For the mystic experience, although but a moment in time, contains an endlessly expanding drop of eternity; it is, itself, timeless and endless, eluding measure. In one of those moments of insight wherein the thinker imagines that he has hit upon the long-sought-after answer to life's great mystery, only to realize, with the fizzling out of the initial excitement, that he has only managed to add another paradox to the heap, Ulrich says to himself: "Ich muß Agathe einprägen: Moral ist Zuordnung jedes Augenblickszustandes unseres Lebens zu einem Dauerzustand!"³⁶⁷

Thus Ulrich, in the first timeless days of his burgeoning love for Agathe, discovers "the first mystery of day-bright mysticism" when he senses that the fruit which he already tastes in his mouth remains, miraculously, on the branch.³⁶⁸ This is an unbroken rhapsody of appetite, a seduction which lasts (from first embrace to final

consummation) five-hundred and seventy-two pages. The lovers, ever conscious of their destructive yet fateful initiation, pull down the fruits, ripping timelessness towards a necessarily frustrated literary interruptus. The timelessness is torn, but is not replaced by any artificial or premature temporal closure. Robert Musil, initiated into the mysteries of mystic longing and romantic disillusionment, leaves his sibling lovers without a solution, leaves his text rent, ravaged by desire, disillusionment and self-mockery, still with the possibility of further conversion, self-overcoming, and alternate drafts.

The elastic moment, which stretches and shrinks in the mind of the experiencer, is at odds with the continuation of the narrative. Its state of heightened experience corresponds to Musil's idea of the millennium as a state wherein one "nichts der Seele Gleichgültiges mehr tun" can, and thereby links time and morality. Since "belief" cannot be "an hour old", the experience of "Überzeugung" is necessarily temporary. This connects the dream of eternally self-propagating perfection with the nightmare of eternally destroying doubt; the smashing of the frozen-fluid surface of the mirror, picture plane, or fable is not merely the ending of the absolute image, i.e., the One, but also simultaneously the beginning of the multifarious possible variations, i.e., the many. The mirror fragments multiply their reflections endlessly: Osiris' body is cut into more and more pieces; and the seeker, reader, lover, sister, wife, other must gather them and gather them in a repeating ritual of concord.

Ulrich sees, with a horror mixed with fascination, that the one must be broken, again and again, into the many, and that this necessity means the recurrent destruction of unity. He tells Agathe, his "self-love," in a moment of searing honesty,

[D]aß unsre Begierde nicht verlangt, ein Mensch aus zweien zu werden, sondern im Gegenteil, unsrem Gefängnis , unsrer Einheit zu entrinnen, zwei zu werden in einer Vereinigung, aber lieber noch zwölf, tausend, unzählbare Viele, wie im Traum uns zu entschlüpfen, das Leben hundertgrädig gebraut zu trinken, uns entführt zu werden oder wie immer, denn ich vermag es nicht gut auszudrücken, dann enthält ja die Welt soviel Wollust wie Fremdheit, ebensoviel Zärtlichkeit wie Aktivität , ist keine Opiumwolke, sondern eher ein Blutausch, ein Orgasmus der Schlacht, und der einzige Fehler, den wir begehen könnten, wäre, daß wir die (wollüstige Berührung der) Wollust der Fremdheit verlernt hätten und uns einbilden, wunder was zu tun, wenn wir den Orkan der Liebe in dünne Bächlein teilen, die zwischen zwei Menschen hin-und her fließen.³⁶⁹

Speaking of fictions of the end, apocalypse, parousia, the arrival of the millennium, we may admit to a deep longing for absolute solutions; but then again, are not these concord fantasies made up of equal parts of destruction and chaos? If we admit that our enjoyment of peripeteia, the erotics of suspense, surprise twists, and the satisfying irritation of disappointed expectations makes up at least a good part of our enjoyment of literature (i.e., the postponement of a thousand and one nights) does this not throw a suspicious light on our ultimate desire for "concord fictions," for "happy endings"?

"Meine Liebe," says Ulrich to his sister, after an eternity in paradise, "alle Bewegung im Leben kommt vom Bösen und Rohen; das Gute schläft ein. Ist ein Tropfen eines Duftes; aber jede Stunde ist das gleiche Loch und gährende Kind des Todes, das mit schwerem Schotter ausgeführt werden muß".³⁷⁰ More like a combination of Baroque

memento mori, Samuel Beckett, and existentialist despair than what one would expect to hear as the final words between two parting lovers, Ulrich's statement somehow mirrors the exiled Musil's war-torn reality: the "Good," were it even a possibility, is too much against human nature, is, furthermore, as endlessly boring as an eternity by the sea. Man craves conversion, craves the other.

Does this mean, Musil almost meekly wonders in his notes, that one should love the war? Love savagery because it is "natural"? In this context, the "other" is synonymous with a certain *horror*.

The National Socialist savagery of World War Two, as a chaos in the service of a program of order, was a final solution which aimed to obliterate "the other" and any last scraps of discord, difference, or turmoil. Ulrich and Agathe's attempt to love "the other" is a radical alternative to this National Socialist utopia of homogeneity; Musil's non-closure, too, may be, like Ulrich and Agathe's taboo love, "eine Protest gegen die Welt". The siblings themselves, and their author as well, sometimes seem to forget that their mysticism is not a rhapsody of union and universal harmony, but a daemonic experience of alterity. The moments when they remember, however — those fleeting moments of insight which syncopate the endless texts with shocks— are our true subject. In the later period of Agathe and Ulrich's love, in the time when the "Augenblick" still "hielt an," the siblings experience remarkable sensations of unity. Not only is Agathe at one with Ulrich, but the very stars too are nigh:

Und da gelang den Körpern das Wunder. A[nders/Ulrich] war mit
einemmal in Ag[atthe] oder sie in ihm. Ag[atthe] sah erschreckt auf. Sie
suchte A[nders/Ulrich] außerhalb, aber fand ihn in der Mitte ihres Herzens.

Sie sah wohl seine Gestalt außen in der Nacht lehnen, eingehüllt in
Sternenlicht, aber das war nicht seine Gestalt, sondern deren leuchtende,
leichte Hülse: und sie sah die Sterne und die Schatten, ohne zu begreifen,
daß sie weit waren.³⁷¹

This sensation is described with increasing frequency throughout these late chapters; an earlier image of Agathe lying in Ulrich's place in his bed ³⁷² is even repeated later in mirror image, in a dream of Agathe's in which she leaves her body and looks down to find that it is not her body at all but the body of her brother. This dream vision, which is a foretaste of the transformational scene which begins "eine Reihe wundersamer Erlebnisse" has its source in Musil's *Grenzerlebnisse* notes, his collection of quotations and paraphrases from mystical texts. The "Er" in the following notation probably refers to God and the "sie" to the desirous mystical soul.

Er schmiegte sich so liebeich und gütig an sie, daß er ganz mit ihr
und sie mit ihm vereint wurde. Sie schaute sich selbst und ihn in sich. Der
Leib wird leicht und behend... Ich werde von ihm wie eine Feder, die alle
Schwere der Kräfte entbehrt und im Winde fliegt, getragen. Schwimmend
in ihm wie ein Fisch im Wasser oder ein Vogel in der Luft...³⁷³

Observe how Musil has transformed this couple into Ulrich and Agathe. Agathe lifts Ulrich up and they become one: "Der Körper ihres Bruders schmiegte sich so liebeich und gütig an sie, daß sie in ihm ruhte; wie er in ihr; nichts bewegte sich in ihr, auch die schöne Begierde nicht mehr." ³⁷⁴

Agathe's "nicht beendete[r] Traum, der scheinbar kein Ende haben wollte"³⁷⁵ must end in reality. Once the siblings have crossed the boundary into union, the soul desires nothing more than disunity: "Mit einem Mal erschreck A[nders/Ulrich] und glaubte in großer Helligkeit zu sehen, daß gerade dies das Geheimnis der Liebe sei, daß man nicht eins ist."³⁷⁶

"Das tausendjährige Reich" is to be the "Reich der Liebe," a thousand years of heaven on earth, a lasting moment of harmony, brotherly love, and absence of pain. Ulrich explains it to Agathe:

"Weißt du... das wir in das Tausendjährige Reich einziehn?"

"Was ist das?"

"Wir haben schon so viel von jener Liebe gesprochen, die nicht wie ein Bach zu seinem Ziel fließt, sondern wie das Meer einen Zustand bildet! Sei nun ehrlich: Wenn man dir in der Schule erzählt hat, die Engel im Paradies täten nichts, als im Angesicht des Herrn zu verweilen und ihn zu lobpreisen, hast du dir dieses selige Nichtstun und Nichtsdenken vorstellen können?"

"Ich habe es mir immer etwas langweilig vorgestellt, was gewiß an meiner Unvollkommenheit liegt" war die Antwort Agathes.³⁷⁷

The difference between a stream which flows towards its goal and an ocean which constitutes a condition is Musil's metaphor for the difference between an ordered eschaton and a non-linear experiment, the difference, likewise, between narrative time and timeless time. The ocean, although less active in the sense of directional pull, is also not beholden

to any particular goal, is filled with incomparably scintillating possibilities. Ulrich continues with a secret of mystical activism: the motionlessness of this ocean is paradoxically filled with a constant shimmering activity. Musil uses almost the same image to describe this phenomenon as he uses to describe Rilke's poetry; the "edelsteinklare Stille in der niemals anhaltende Bewegung" is a close sibling to the "immerwährend kristallisch reinen Begebenheit": "Aber nach allem, worüber wir uns verständigt haben," erklärte Ulrich "mußt du dir jetzt vorstellen, daß dieses Meer eine Reglosigkeit und Abgeschiedenheit ist, die von immerwährenden kristallisch reinen Begebenheiten erfüllt wird."

In retrospect, Agathe's confession that she had always imagined an eternity of paradise as rather boring, combined with Ulrich's incessant ocean metaphors, is prescient; for the ocean, as we shall see, will later become the symbol of boredom, will become Ulrich and Agathe's greatest test in the paradise of their Italian idyll. While at first the criminals endeavor to discover whether or not such a *Reich* could possibly exist, later, after they have, in effect, made a successful journey (a draft, i.e., possible journey) "ins Paradies," the question takes a more subtle turn: is such a *Reich* desirable, or even bearable? Duration and its enemy, the exhaustibility of desire, are the players in this game of celestial and earthly love: one begs to be spared; the other delights in strangling the beloved of whom he has grown tired. In the realm of no-time, in the time out of time or the time between times, duration wins.

What is this "Reglosigkeit" which is paradoxically filled with "immerwährenden kristallisch reinen Begebenheiten"? Is it a "time out of time"? Or a "time between the times"? Ulrich's choice of an epigraph for his treatise on feeling, a passage from Swedenborg about the time-sense of angels, serves as proof that the question

of "another world" is for him very much bound up with the question of subjective experience of time. Angels, explains Swedenborg, do not experience time; when they hear the humans speak of it, they understand it to be a *Zustand*. Time, more specifically, is for angels an "innerer Zustand" and space is an "äußerer Zustand": "Und da die Engel sich keinen Begriff von der Zeit machen können, so haben sie auch eine andere Vorstellung von der Ewigkeit als die irdischen Menschen; sie verstehen darunter einen unendlichen Zustand, nicht eine unendliche Zeit."³⁷⁸

Swedenborg's idea of angel-time as a condition or state is most likely related to Aquinas' idea of *aevum*, which Frank Kermode discusses— without making the connection to Musil— in its relation to book-time.³⁷⁹ Aquinas, it seems, in an attempt to explain the differential hierarchy between men, angels, and God, declared that angels, being neither eternal (like God) nor of time (like man), exist in a third state of duration. This special state was adopted by Augustine to describe certain exceptional states of human experience, the "moments of the soul's attentiveness," characterized by the "integration of past, present, and future which defies successive time".³⁸⁰

He was anticipating what we know of the relation between books and St. Thomas' third order of duration — for in the kind of time known by books a moment has endless perspectives of reality. We feel, in Thomas Mann's words, that 'in their beginning exists their middle and their end, their past invades the present, and even the most extreme attention to the present is invaded by a concern for the future.'...*Aevum*, you might say, is the time-order of novels. Characters in novels are independent of time and succession, but may and usually do seem to act in time and succession; the

aeuum co-exists with temporal events in the moment of occurrence, being, it was said, like a stick in a river. ³⁸¹

If all characters in all novels exist, more or less, in the *aeuum*, then who more consciously than our sibling angel/criminals Ulrich and Agathe in their experiments with the "other condition" of experiencing? Before venturing further, however, I would like to give warning: Kermode's discussion of book-time, and Thomas Mann's description of a certain sort of timelessness, seem still to be too much "in time" for our mystical adventurers, still too much bound to beginnings and ends, to preconceptions of success and failure, to truly feel the nearness of timelessness. Around the meridian of angel-time and reality a rarefied irrational ether may hover.

What if, for example, the end of Musil's novel were not implicit in its beginning? What if it were, not unfinished, but actually— in the mystery of that thousand-year-eternal moment — endless? And while we are in this state of mind, let us imagine that "das tausendjährige Reich" of which Ulrich and Agathe dream is actually — without in any way diminishing its power —a momentary *Reich*, a one-moment-*Reich*. How might this change our understanding of its ultimate reality? Its final "success" or "failure"? The paradox of attempting to describe a momentary experience in a two-thousand page book (see also Proust's luxuriant variations on the moment and Joyce's micro/macro-scopic day) is perfectly parallel, of course, to the absurdity of trying to make that moment last. It is also akin to the relation between the one and the many, the metaphoric mysticism of which we have spoken at length. Suffice it to say that the expansion and contraction of time is happening in conjunction with the expansion and contraction of space.

Ulrich and Agathe, for example, see the "tausendjähriges Reich," in other words "das Reich der Liebe," as: "vielleicht... nichts als das Anschwellen dieser Kraft, die sich anfänglich nur zu zweien zeigt, bis zu einer brausenden Gemeinschaft aller".³⁸² This expansion of the one to two and the two to many is, of course, akin to the paradoxical desire for a lasting moment; it shimmers and seduces, it opens and closes, it promises and promises nothing.

Although spoken of in a mixture of ironic jesting and almost whispered earnest embarrassment, this vague hope for the arrival and/or duration of the millennium is, in fact, the point of their experiment. The micro-cosmic test of their folie à deux, which will perhaps lead "zu einer brausenden Gemeinschaft aller" sometimes seems to be their last hope; Agathe in fact vows she will kill herself if this last attempt at a meaningful life fails. It seems impossible to imagine a "happy ending" to this story; Ulrich and Agathe's discovery of the millennium consists instead in a suspension of ending, in a consciousness out of space and out of time, in the gleaning beginnings of an end to linearity. Their experiments signal a shift, a difficult shift without sufficient precedent, into a new/old endlessness which seems to eschew satisfaction. Satisfaction is a sort of death, a sort of mono-ideological simple-mindedness, a story-line with only one possible ending.

Gradually, Musil's serious interest in Novalis begins to make sense. Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften seems, suddenly, to be a strange sort of continuation of Heinrich von Ofterdingen, with its circular timelessness and difficult search for the source and purpose of Poesy. That Novalis did not finish his slim novel either, but left notes pointing towards the *tausendjähriges Reich* as well, should signal a spiritual affinity. While the first part of Heinrich von Ofterdingen is titled "Die Erwartung," the second unfinished part was called "Die Erfüllung". Although Novalis' "goldenes Zeitalter" has its source in the Pagan past

and Musil's "tausendjähriges Reich" is a child of the Christian future, both are visions of paradise on earth; the Christian Millennium, moreover, is conceived of as a return to the pre-fall paradise, and Novalis' Golden Age as well is to be a second coming of sorts. Both legends operate within a two-way temporality; both move forwards and backwards in time; both signify the suspension of that very time wherein they move.

Novalis planned to create a fiction of great circular concord: an unending ending wherein time and space would be conflated, solving the problem of death and love's betrayal by declaring all Heinrich's beloveds to be, actually, the same woman in different temporal and physical forms. He is said to have conceived of a similar fiction of concord for his own romantic life, recognizing the soul of his first deceased true love in the body of another woman.

In Tieck's notes on Novalis' "planned ending," we read of the ultimate merging of fable and reality, of Christian and Pagan, of past and future. The child born of Heinrich and his three lovers (who are really one by virtue of timelessness) is, in Novalis' own words: "die Urwelt, die goldne Zeit am Ende"³⁸³ Not only is the child both archaic memory and future fulfillment, but each of the characters is at once himself/herself and the ghost or presentiment of another past/future self. Fable within fable, dream within dream, journey within journey, all are as one. In the "end" each person would metamorphize into another, into the selfsame, through the magic of Poesy, through ritual self-sacrifice:

Heinrich pflückt die blaue Blume und erlöst Mathilden von ihrem
Zauber, aber sie geht ihm wieder verloren, er erstarrt im Schmerz und wird
ein Stein. "Edda" (die blaue Blume, die Morgenländerin, Mathilde) opfert

sich an dem Stein, er verwandelte sich in einen klingenden Baum. Cyane
haut den Baum um und verbrennt sich mit ihm, er wird wieder ein
Mensch..." 384

The only problem, Tieck explains, is the separation which still remains between the seasons, the times of the year, and the times of life. Winter and Summer, old age and youth must be joined, and once this is done, Novalis' fable would be finished, or rather begun. In Musil's fragment "Atemzüge eines Sommertages," we find Ulrich and Agathe living in such a moment of seasonal convergence. The "Blütenschnee" (snow fall of lusterless blossoms) streams through the sunshine in a combination of "Begräbniszug" (funeral procession) and "Naturfest" (celebration of nature). "Frühling und Herbst, Sprache und Schweigen der Natur, Lebens- und Todeszauber mischten sich in dem Bild; die Herzen schienen stillzustehen, aus der Brust genommen zu sein, sich dem schweigenden Zug durch die Luft anzuschließen."³⁸⁵

Novalis' Heinrich von Ofterdingen may have been Musil's only literary model for the idea of the tausendjähriges Reich. In his notebooks from the years 1905-1908 we find Musil reading Heinrich von Ofterdingen. He cites Novalis' musing "...läßt sich Musik denn dem Tauben erklären?" which stands in the text in the middle of a philosophical discussion about the possible perfection of the world. "Wann wird es doch," asks Heinrich, "gar keinen Schrecken, keiner Schmerzen, keiner Not und keines Übels mehr im Weltall bedürfen?" This innocent sounding question, which one could hardly imagine Musil the vivisecteur or any of his modernist contemporaries asking, is, nevertheless, asked in Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften. It is the question of whether or not it is possible to "love one's neighbor as oneself?" or to even love oneself; it is the question of whether or not one

really is doomed to alienation. In Chapter fifty-one, "Liebe deinen Nächsten wie dich selbst," Agathe, after much difficulty, manages to attain a temporary sense of oneness with the world outside their garden gate, to love her fellow man.

Agathe brauchte bloß ihren Blick ein wenig zu lösen, so konnte sie, von Sonnenschein umgeben, das Gefühl empfangen, in einen übernatürlichen Bereich geraten zu sein; es fiel ihr dann für eine kleinste Weile ganz leicht, zu glauben, sie habe sich mit einer höheren Wahrheit und Wirklichkeit berührt oder sei zumindest an eine Seite des Daseins geraten, wo ein hinterirdisches Pförtchen heimlich aus dem Erdgarten ins Überirdische weist. Wenn sie aber ihrem Blick wieder die gewöhnliche Spannung gab und das Leben prall hineinströmen ließ, so sah sie, was gerade da sein mochte...Und alles das war von etwas übergossen, das mit Liebe Verwandtschaft hatte; auch schienen alle Menschen bereit zu sein, sich mehr als sonst diesem Gefühl zu öffnen: aber zu glauben, nun sei wirklich das Reich der Liebe da, sagte schließlich Ulrich, das wäre doch wohl ebenso schwer wie sich einzubilden, daß in solchen Augenblick kein Hund beißen und kein Mensch Böses tun könne! ³⁸⁶

Perhaps, as suggested above, one must learn to love the world inclusive of biting dogs and "evil" people (Nietzsche's *amor fati*). Is that not, moreover, the mystical paradox of the siblings' *Moral der Traumzustand*, of the "good-bad" and "bad-good" person? Novalis' answer to this ethical quandary, which spreads out over the next few pages of Heinrich von Ofterdingen, the first and last pages of the unfinished second part, the

unfulfilled "Erfüllung", has everything to do with the making of literature and with something which the discussants in the novel call "Gewissen". This "Gewissen" connects, in a marvelous romantic fashion, the strands of metaphor, loss-of-self, alternative consciousness experience, and existential decision-making.

Heinrich and the wise gardener Sylvester are talking about reality and fable, narrative time and timelessness. They are trying to discover the nature of "Gewissen" and therein the path towards the elusive "Golden Age":

Das Weltall zerfällt in unendliche, immer von größern Welten wieder befaßte Welten. Alle Sinne sind am Ende *ein* Sinn. *Ein* Sinn führt wie *eine* Welt allmählich zu allen Welten...Ich weiß nur so viel, daß für mich die Fabel Gesamtwerkzeug meiner gegenwärtigen Welt ist. Selbst das Gewissen, diese Sinn und Welten erzeugende Macht, dieser Keim aller Persönlichkeit, erscheint mir wie der Geist des Weltgedichts, wie der Zufall der ewigen romantischen Zusammenkunft, des unendlich veränderlichen Gesamtlebens.[....] Das Gewissen ist der Menschen eigenstes Wesen in voller Verklärung, der himmlische Urmensch. Er ist nicht dies und jenes, es gebietet nicht in allgemeinen Sprüchen, es besteht nicht in einzelnen Tugenden. Es gibt nur *eine* Tugend — den reinen, ernsten Willen, der im Augenblick der Entscheidung unmittelbar bewohnt es und beseelt es, das zärtliche Sinnbild des menschlichen Körpers und vermag alle geistigen Gliedmaßen in die wahrhafteste Tätigkeit zu versetzen.³⁸⁷

Novalis' "Gewissen," as differentiated from communal morality, is decidedly something similar to Musil's "moralische Fruchtbarkeit"; it is the creator of meaning and of worlds, it is the seed of all personality, it is the pure, earnest Will, which stimulates the spiritual limbs of the human body (a tender symbol) to the most genuine of activities. This "conscience" (akin to a certain sort of "consciousness" or cognitive state) is unrelated to systems of "Tugenden," not being either "dies" or "jenes," but something new and individuated, yet somehow tied to a sort of Ur-Ideal, or "Urmensch". And this complex of ideas, encompassing a strange mystical union of individual will and communal oneness, of infinite variations and perfected truth echoes throughout Musil, albeit in ironic whisperings. The relation between Novalis' "Augenblick der Entscheidung" and Musil's "Traumzustand der Moral" should be clear; both are born in the union of fable and reality, in that moral, mystical condition wherein one can "nichts der Seele Gleichgültiges tun". Such freshness of experience is, as we have discovered, integrally bound to formal variation, to an eternally regenerative cycle of oppositional moments. So Ulrich muses:

Das Leben ist eine dauernde Oszillation zw[ischen] Verlangen
u[nd] Überdruß... Hat man eine Weile etwas getan, so will man sein
Gegenteil. (So muß es auch ... heißen: Gefühle verlangen Dogmatisierung
u[nd] vertragen keine.) Das gilt von den Trieben, aber auch von den
höheren Beschäftigungen... [G]ibt es ein bleibendes Verhalten?
Anscheinend kann nur der a[ndere]Z[ustand] der Periodik von Aufbau
u[nd] Zerstören Einhalt tun... (Bemerkenswerterweise ist Aufbau—
Zerstören dasselbe, was Ag[athe] U[rich] vorwirft.)³⁸⁸

This enduring oscillation between desire and disgust is a self-engendering choreography and, at the same time, the very miserable cycle which Schopenhauer tells us we can momentarily escape from through immersion in other formal choreographies, through art. The artistic experience, as alternate consciousness and loss-of-will/self, may release the individual from time and petty specificity, but must not the experience itself, if it is to be compelling and cathartic, contain the very oscillation from which one flees? Musil's emphasis on the psychology of form suggests that a release from the Schopenhauerian prison of recurring illusion/delusion might really be possible not merely through art, but precisely through an art which is open-ended and self-generative.

Musil's work, despite its open-ended form and essence, is adamantly *authored*. Its form, although consciously intersected with cross-references, sub- and "hyper-texts", variable endings, beginnings, and possibilities, consistently functions from out of its own "innere Notwendigkeit", its own self-generating *Gestalt*.

A novelist, a preacher, a general, or a particularly Machiavellian lover will know how to manipulate the longing, suspense, and expectations of his or her readers, flock, enemies, or lovers, protracting the "fatal instant" (which conflates both satisfaction and disappointment, creation and destruction — *Aufbau und Zerstören*) in as artful a way as possible. Musil masterfully manipulates our experience of time while showing how his angels/criminals themselves flit in and out of *aevum* and reality, mystical moment and historical narrative.

Chapter Twenty-two, for example, "Von der Koniatowski'schen Kritik des Danielli'schen Satzes zum Sündenfall. Vom Sündenfall zum Gefühlsrätsel der Schwester,"³⁸⁹ takes up fifteen pages and describes — in clock time— forty-five minutes. It is more than just an illusion; it appears, actually, to be a deception on the part of the

author, or a miracle of some sort. Ulrich leaves Leinsdorf's palace in a "Zustand" similar to "dem nüchternen Gefühl des Hungers"; he wanders about the streets, wondering whether the words of advertisements which "an allen Ecken und Enden der Stadt wiederholen, einen Erkenntniswert haben." ³⁹⁰ It is a commonplace of mystical experience that random words or images tend to take on significance, that they become "signs". Ulrich ironically wonders if this is happening to him, but "Haben Sie schon etwas so Angenehmes und Praktisches getragen wie den Topinam-Seidenstrumpf?" leaves him as unmoved as the "signs" in the bookstore for the newest work "des großen Dichters".³⁹¹

His inner monologue moves him along through space unconsciously. He is actually unconscious of the movement which must have brought him from the bookstore to the streetcar stop. It is only when Dr. Strastil, an astronomer acquaintance, speaks to him that he realizes he is no longer in front of the bookstore, but, to all appearances, waiting for a streetcar. This is not, of course, an unfamiliar experience, which is probably the reason why Musil uses it as an easy introduction into the nature of the time-space continuum. Dr. Strastil, despite her career as astronomer, is as far removed from such cosmic questions as can be. She is going "ins Gebirge [sich] aus[zuspannen" (into the mountains..to 'relax'), which does not preclude a small conversation about the "Koniowski'schen Kritik des Daniell'schen Satzes," which, we are given to believe by Ulrich's lack of interest, is equally as far removed from cosmology. Ulrich gets on the streetcar with her: "[Er] wußte nicht warum. Vielleicht weil ihr die Kritik Koniowski's an Knepler so wichtig vorkam. Vielleicht wollte er mit ihr über schöne Literatur sprechen, von der sie nichts verstand."³⁹² "Schöne Literatur," on the other hand, does have something to do with Ulrich's cosmology and the time warp of this chapter, whether or not Dr.Strastil (or even Ulrich) understands.

We are only two pages in; can anyone calculate how many minutes of the forty-five have been used up? Just as the page turns, Ulrich "vorschützte, schon zwei Haltestellen zu weit gefahren zu sein" and exits the streetcar. How far have they gone? How much space has been crossed? How close are we to the fullness of time?

Now he must get back. While he waits for a streetcar going in the opposite direction he wonders what he really was after with this question about literature, which "schließlich ging ihn...nichts mehr an," since the days of his youth when he used to write poems secretly. The answer to this question is perhaps never fully answered in the novel, only suggested by Ulrich's secret notebooks on "Gefühl" and by Musil's later notations which point to three choices for Ulrich: "Buch schreiben, also Selbstmord, also in Krieg Gehn."³⁹³ The next page of the fifteen is taken up with an excursus on feeling, literature, and the experience of time:

Dabei kam ihm augenblicklich in den Sinn, daß man am besten und ohne Umschweife das, worauf er es abgesehen hatte, als die vergebliche Aktualität oder ewige Augenblicklichkeit der Literatur bezeichnen könnte. Hat sie denn ein Ergebnis? Entweder ist sie ein ungeheurer Umweg vom Erleben zum Erleben und läuft in sich selbst zurück, oder sie ist ein Inbegriff von Reizzuständen, aus dem in keiner Weise etwas Bestimmtes hervorgeht. "Eine Pfütze" dachte er nun, "hat schon jedem unwillkürlich viel öfter und stärker den Eindruck der Tiefe gemacht als der Ozean, und aus dem einfachen Grund, weil man mehr Gelegenheit hat, Pfützen zu erleben, als Ozeane"....³⁹⁴

As a puddle is more familiar to us than an ocean, so is a moment more familiar than eternity; the equation illustrates the distance and sameness of the "vergebliche Aktualität oder ewige Augenblicklichkeit der Literatur". Shortly after this he feels himself lifted into the streetcar and —just as will-lessly— the central paradoxical thought *comes to him* (cf. Goethe's "es denkt in mir") that morality is the expansion of a momentary condition into a "Dauerzustand".

Looking out onto the street he sees the disintegration and the persistence of time and history. He is moving through space in a "mit Reißschiene und Zirkel geschaffenen Linien der rollenden Örtlichkeit" ³⁹⁵ which stops from time to time at stations of history. From the "Leib des modernen Verkehrsmittels" he sees "eine Steinsäule...die seit der Zeit des Barock am Straßenrand stand".

Die Wirkung dieses optischen Zusammenstoßes war eine ungemein heftige Bestätigung der Gedanken, denen sich Ulrich soeben noch hatte entziehen wollen...Ohne für das Jetzt oder das Einst geschmacksweise Partei zu nehmen, wie es bei solchen Gegenüberstellungen gewöhnlich ist, zögerte sein Geist nicht einen Augenblick, sich ebensowohl von der neuen wie von der alten Zeit allein gelassen zu fühlen...Darum schien ihm auch das, was man Wechsel oder gar Fortschritt der Zeiten nennt, nur ein Wort dafür zu sein, daß kein Versuch bis dorthin kommt, wo sich alle vereinen müßten, auf den Weg zu einer das Ganze umfassende Überzeugung, und damit erst zu der Möglichkeit steter Entwicklung, dauernden Genusses und jenen Ernstes der

großen Schönheit, von dem heute kaum mehr als zeitweilig ein Schatten
ins Leben fällt.³⁹⁶

The very density of this passage, ignoring for a moment its condensing content, defies the reasonable scope of a musing, streetcar traveling mind. Musil seems to condense the whole of history into a paragraph (eternity into a moment) rendering for his readers a vision of the forest where usually one can only see a few trees. This comprehensive vision approximates the mystery of timelessness; it seems to be relevant that Ulrich is being carried along in space by a streetcar just as Einstein was when he "discovered" the relativity of time.

Ulrich's experience of the city after he exits the streetcar is nothing less than psychedelic. Like most mystical experiences, it begins with a dramatic change in mood: "Es dünkte ihn, daß er aus einem Keller käme."³⁹⁷ The streets "kreischten von Vergnügen," everything was "mitteilsam," sunny, sweet, colorful. Looking in the shop windows of civilization he is astonished at the endless invention, at the delicate genius, at the necessary "Beziehungen und Erfindungen, ehe eine Ziegenhaut über eine Damenhand gezogen wird". "Hell und schmal flog die Aufmerksamkeit über einen Blumengarten aus Früchten, Edelsteinen, Stoffen, Formen und Verlockungen, deren sanft-eindringliche Augen in allen Farben aufgeschlagen waren." ³⁹⁸ "[Von]dem matt goldenen Bier [ist er] entzückt" and by the gleaming white tablecloths. In what probably is a matter of moments and the promenade of one block or so, Ulrich sees an infinity of objects and makes an inordinate number of correspondences. In the next moment his experience of ecstasy has already called up its opposite "gegnerischer früherer Zustand". The world has been

miraculously flooded with meaning; the world has been just as suddenly drained of meaning.

Ulrich thinks of his promise of "das tausendjährige Reich" and considers the possibility that there actually was once something like a "fall from grace," a fatal after-effect from man's eating of the "Apfel des Erkenntnis" loosely similar to "wie wenn ein Verliebter nüchtern wird".³⁹⁹ That "Erkenntnis" leads to "Nüchternheit" is no small discovery in the realm of longing; it is the form of literary seduction as well as spiritual devotion. Ulrich wonders, with his usual mixture of irony and "Sehnsucht," whether or not it might be possible for mankind to return to that original paradise where truth is whole. For the next page and a half Ulrich philosophizes about the meaning of this parousia, about his love for his sister, about the possibility of loving "the other," until, at last, he oversteps the "Höhepunkt" of his thinking by trying to grasp the "ihn unklar erfüllenden Licht in ein irdisches Lämpchen".

The next two pages find him following a strange woman on the street who appears to him like a great white fish which he wants "männlich zu harpunieren und zappeln sehen zu können, und es lag darin ebensoviel Abneigung wie Verlangen".⁴⁰⁰ From the sexual and violent he moves on to its supposed opposites of "seraphic" and non-sexual love, to what he calls "die Schwesterliebe einer Zeit...die für Bruderliebe keinen Platz habe...."⁴⁰¹

When another woman appears before him, "in der er Bonodea erkannte," Ulrich looks at a clock: "[E]r war nur eine Viertelstunde spazieren gegangen, und seit er das Leindorfsche Palais verlassen hatte, waren es keine fünfundvierzig Minuten. Bonadea sagte: 'ich bin heute nicht frei.' Ulrich dachte: 'Wie lang ist da erst ein ganzer Tag, ein Jahr, und gar ein Vorsatz fürs Leben!' Es war nicht zu ermessen."⁴⁰²

As Musil's puddle is to the immense ocean, immeasurable likewise the relation of this one chapter, which contains in microcosm all of the questions and concerns of not only Musil's whole oeuvre, but, seemingly, a whole millennium of conflict and concord, to the other chapters (written and unwritten) of the endless novel with which it is surrounded. I have described this one chapter in such detail because it contains "in nucleo" the whole novel; Is this not true of all the chapters? All the paragraphs? All the sentences? This is the mystery of the relation of the *Augenblickzustand* and the *Dauerzustand*, and the product of Musil's small temporally shifting chapterlets. Each finite chapter corresponds to the infinite whole and vice versa. One is reminded of Musil's praise of Rilke's work: "Nicht nur sinkt kaum ein Gedicht, kaum eine Zeile oder ein Wort sinken aus der Reihe der übrigen herab, und man hat das gleiche Erlebnis durch die ganze Reihe seiner Bücher".

As Nicholas of Cusa explained in his *de docta ignorantia*, the finite contains within it the essence, "Grund," or *basis* of the infinite, contains, in effect, the possibility of the infinite. Thus any measurable fragment of a finite worldly line is a metaphor for the immeasurable infinity of line itself, for the essence of line, for the ideal line. The "infinite," writes Cusa, "is actually those things which are present in the potency of the finite."⁴⁰³

At the end of the next chapter, after Ulrich tells Bonadea that he will not be able to see her again because his sister is coming, she innocently asks "wie lange?" to which Ulrich, who is not so innocent of the mysteries of mystical time, answers "dauernd" (perpetually, continually).

This "dauernd," different from "immer" (always), is a state in angel time, not strictly a temporal division; Agathe will be with Ulrich "dauernd"; and was, perhaps, in

the way that some theologians view the eternity of God's creation, always with him, despite their history of childhood separation, in the same way in which they are twins despite their disparate ages. Ulrich and Agathe's "dauernd" is, in part, the story of postponement of consummation, of a lengthy, aching, breathless desire.

Rather than a denial of desire, the chapters become a prolongation and stoking of the fire. As Carolyn Walker Bynum says in Holy Feast, Holy Fast, her book about nuns' fasting and Eucharistic frenzy, "Abstinence was seen less as self-control...than as a never-sated physical hunger that mirrors and recapitulates in bodily agony both Christ's suffering on the cross and the soul's unquenchable thirst for bodily union".⁴⁰⁴ The latter, the "soul's thirst for bodily union," is, of course, a prime model for Ulrich and Agathe's longing.

The suspicious relationship between sexual longing and religious feeling is described in a curious scene in which Agathe's pious friend Lindner attempts to repress his lust for her. While the postponement of bliss in the interest of higher physical pleasure is not foreign to tantric sexuality, wherein the lovers are trained to draw their coitus out (into a state not unlike Ulrich's shimmering ocean) for hours on end, such a correspondence between the spiritual, the sexual, and time comes as an embarrassing confusion for a traditional man of God like Lindner. Lindner tries to count to ward off his excitement, only to find that when his excitement runs from one central point out into his whole body that its interior glowing is reminiscent of nothing less than his first experience of God:

Aber der Erfolg war ein merkwürdiger, je mehr er dadurch seine Erregung von der Stelle vertrieb, wo sie ausbrechen wollte, desto mehr Erregung sammelte sich in seinem ganzen Leib, u[nd] sein Leib schien mitunter innerlich zu leuchten... Und mit einer erschreckenden

Deutlichkeit, für die man keine Worte finden kann, wurde er darum an jenes fürchterlich erhebendes Erlebnis erinnert, das ihn in seiner Jünglingszeit ein für alle Mal vor der Macht des Gefühls gewarnt hätte. L[indner] fühlte sich von bitterer Verachtung für sich gestraft, wenn er bedenken sollte, daß das, was sich damals mit teuflischer Tücke in der Erscheinung Gottes gekleidet hatte, nun in reifen Jahren als gemeine Fleischeslust hervorkam...⁴⁰⁵

What Lindner is forced to view as "gemeine Fleischeslust" is, from another perspective, a description of the shimmering stillness which flows from a middle point ("von ihrem angemachten Angriffspunkt") out to all edges of the moment. It is like the "still lifes" which Ulrich and Agathe discuss, and their "erregendes, undeutliches, unendliches Echo". Something beyond their surface subject is expressed, "nämlich die geheimnisvolle Dämonie des gemalten Lebens". Again the ocean and its endlessness is a metaphor for the "other condition," this time as an explanation of the effect of the still life, which, in turn, is an explanation of Ulrich and Agathe's state of prolonged desire. The phrase "Einöde des Meers," the desert of the sea, combines moreover two metaphors for mystical nothingness:

Irgendwie fühlte man sich am Strand. Kleine Insekten summen. Die Luft bringt hunderte Wiesengerüche mit sich. Gedanke und Gefühl wandern geschäftig selbender. Aber vor den Augen ist die nicht antwortende Einöde des Meers, und was am Ufer Bedeutung hat, verliert sich an die eintönige Regung des unendlichen Anblicks. Sie dachte daran,

daß alle wahren Stilleben diese glückliche unersättliche Traurigkeit
erregen können, Je länger man sie ansieht, desto deutlicher wird es, daß die
von ihnen dargestellten Dinge am bunten Ufer des Lebens zu stehen
scheinen, das Auge voll Ungeheurem, und die Zunge gelähmt. ⁴⁰⁶

Ulrich and Agathe stare into the still life which mirrors back silently the secret
of their physical/spiritual longing, they talk while they stare; their conversation is endless
and circular like the flowing river of their eyes. "Das Schweigen," thinks Agathe, about
the pregnant pauses in between the words, "machte nach kürzester Zeit den Eindruck, daß
es schon Stunden wäre". ⁴⁰⁷

Niemals schien das letzte Wort gesprochen werden zu können,
denn jedes Ende war ein Anfang und jedes letzte Ergebnis das erste einer
neuen Eröffnung, so daß jede Sekunde wie die aufgehende Sonne strahlte,
aber zugleich die friedevolle Vergänglichkeit der untergehenden mit sich
brachte. ⁴⁰⁸

We do not know how many days or weeks or months go by before the "Beginn
einer Reihe wundersamer Erlebnisse" opens up the longing. But Musil's novel takes place
within the nominal limitations of one year. He also takes the trouble to tell the reader, a
few pages before the end of Book One and one day before Ulrich and Agathe's reunion,
that "Von dem Jahr, das er sich vorgesetzt hatte, war die eine Hälfte fast schon
verstrichen...". ⁴⁰⁹ The "dauernde" angel time of the siblings' experiment takes place
therefore within an endlessly expanding and contracting vessel of approximately one half

year. It takes however 419 pages of this half year for the "wundersame Erlebnisse" to begin, and another 572 until their first consummation—991 pages, in other words, of erotic, aesthetic, and mystical postponement.

The "Beginn" consists in what modern mystical literature would call an out-of-body experience, extraordinary here because it is experienced by two people at once. Moreover, this experience of weightlessness and bodylessness is, in the tradition of mystical paradox, actually a very physical experience, an experience of physical merger. Ulrich and Agathe unite like the mystical soul unites with God.

This *unio mystica* experience is characterized by an overcoming of space, time, and gravity. The boundaries between person and person, person and thing, body and air, are lifted. Although it consists, in a sense, in the release from the physical, it is impressive precisely because of the new physical orientation implied; the ecstatic, leaving his or her body, place in space and time, et cetera, is conscious of the exiting because his or her physical relations have been changed. The ecstatic experience is thus, from the standpoint of perception, an experience of altered physicality.

The experience begins with Ulrich looking at Agathe like a "Bild", in a *tableau vivant* depicting a woman bent over in the process of pulling on her stocking. The frame around the picture, the boundary which holds the stillness and which separates person from person is suddenly burst:

Er sah ihren Kopf, den Hals, die Schulter und diesen beinahe
nackten Rücken; der Körper bog sich über dem emporgezogenen Knie ein
wenig zur Seite, und am Hals rundete die Spannung des Vorgangs drei
Falten, die schlank und lustig durch die klare Haut eilten wie drei Pfeile:

die liebliche Körperlichkeit dieses Bilds, der sich augenblicks
 ausbreitenden Stille entsprungen, schien ihren Rahmen verloren zu haben
 und ging so unvermittelt in den Körper Ulrichs über, daß dieser seinen
 Platz verließ und, nicht ganz so bewußtlos, wie ein Fahnentuch vom Wind
 entrollt wird, aber auch nicht mit bewußter Überlegung, auf den Fußspitzen
 näher schlich, die Gebeugte überraschte und mit sanfter Wildheit in einen
 dieser Pfeile biß, wobei sein Arm die Schwester umschlang. ⁴¹⁰

"Die sich augenblicks ausbreitende Stille," from whence the "picture" of Agathe has sprung, is one of those stillnesses where time is frozen or at least excruciatingly slowed down. This one sentence, and the following wherein Ulrich loosens the grip of his teeth only to embrace his sister more closely with his other arm and lift her into the air, describes in slow-motion the extrasensory detail of perhaps a moment's experience. These two sentences include seventeen verbs, an astonishing amount of action to overflow from one moment of stillness. The next sentence operates in a similar vein. Twenty-one action words describe the movement and experience of falling:

Aber als Agathe ihr Erschrecken überwand und sich nicht sowohl
 durch die Luft fliegen als vielmehr in dieser ruhen fühlte, von aller
 Schwere plötzlich entbunden und an deren Stelle von dem sanften Zwang
 der allmählich langsamer werdenden Bewegung gelenkt, bewirkte es einer
 jener Zufälle, die niemand in seiner Macht hat, daß sie sich in diesem
 Zustand wundersam besänftigt vorkam, ja aller irdischen Unruhe entrückt;
 mit einer das Gleichgewicht ihres Körpers verändernden Bewegung, die

sich niemals hätte wiederholen können, striefte sie auch noch den letzten Seidenfaden von Zwang ab, wandte sich fallend ihrem Bruder zu, setzte gleichsam noch im Fall das Steigen fort, und lag, niedersinkend als eine Wolke von Glück in seinen Armen.⁴¹¹

These three paragraphs are rife with oxymorons and oxymoronic expressions like "sanfte Wildheit," "sanfter Zwang," "ruhen" in "fliegen," "Fall" in "Steigen". The tension of gravity and defiance of gravity, expressed through the language medium of movement within stasis, using many verbs which slow down, rather than speed up the theoretically very quick occurrence, approximate the sensation of timelessness. What actually has happened? Ulrich has bitten his sister, lifted her into the air and let her down to rest in his arms. After he bites her and lifts her up, there is still the possibility, according to the narrator, that the siblings might not make too much of this little event. This one relatively sober sentence is stuck in between the two breathless paragraphs:

Bis dahin hatte sich alles ebenso übermütig und scherzhaft abgespielt wie vieles zuvor, und mochte es auch in den Farben der Liebe gestreift sein, so doch nur mit der eigentlich schüchternen Absicht, deren gefährlichere ungewöhnliche Natur unter solchem heiter vertraulichen Kleid zu bergen.⁴¹²

But the continuation of the floating, lifting, resting and falling makes any such denial impossible. Their shared experience is like a "Bild" "das für die Hand, die es von außen ergreift, nichts als eine lächerliche, angestrichene Fläche ist".⁴¹³ But this familiar

image from Musil's studies of 'primitive' magic and child psychology is a reminder of that "other world," "eine zweite Natur, die äußerst zart alle Gliedmaßen lähmte und zugleich mit einer unsagbaren Empfindlichkeit umstrickte".⁴¹⁴

Ulrich and Agathe "glaubten...doch zu wissen, daß sie sich soeben unversehens einen Augenblick inmitten dieses gemeinsamen Zustandes befunden hätten, an dessen Grenze sie schon so lange gezögert, den sie einander schon so oft beschrieben und den sie doch immer nur von außen geschaut hatten". Like the "Gartengitter" which separates the siblings from their fellow man, this "Grenze" is a spatial boundary which describes a temporal hesitation. Musil's "Grenzerlebnisse" notebook, with its quotations and paraphrases of mystical writings, suggests another dimension beyond time and space, a realm of in-between, of movement from one belief to another. The "Grenze" can only be inhabited on the way from one space to another and in the moment of passage from one moment to another. This in-between space, this moment-between-moments, is of the utmost importance. For Ulrich and Agathe in this scene, the "Augenblick" does not fade, even after Ulrich makes contact with the outside world via telephone ("Der technische Beiklang seiner Stimme im Gerät und die Verbindung mit der Welt, die sich herstellte, hatten Ulrich nicht im geringsten ernüchtert").⁴¹⁵ The "Augenblick" continues to shimmer, through conversations about moon nights, Pierrots, and doubt. The siblings, though they have crossed a "Grenze," feel themselves held back by an even more powerful warning "die mit den Geboten der Sitte nichts zu tun hatte."⁴¹⁶ The siblings, in the "Augenblick" of Beginning already have a presentiment of the End. On the other side of timelessness is ephemera; on the other side of ecstasy is emptiness. So Agathe "atmete tief aus": "Das mochte heißen, was es wolle; und wahrscheinlich hieß es: warum weißt du aber nicht auch einen Zauber dagegen, daß es uns im letzten Augenblick trennt?"⁴¹⁷

And Ulrich's head is filled suddenly with strange visions of separation: "Agathe hinter Gittern. Oder sie, aus wachsender Entfernung ihm ängstlich winkend, von der trennenden Gewalt fremder Fäuste fortgerissen". These may be, Ulrich thinks, "ewige Bilder des Liebeszweifels".⁴¹⁸

"Du wirst in dieser Nacht so ungeduldig schlafen wie vor dem Ausbruch zu einem großen Ausflug"⁴¹⁹ says Ulrich. And the night before the morning after lasts, through days and days and days, five-hundred and seventy-two more pages.

The "Warnung," "die mit den Geboten der Sitte nichts zu tun hatte" which keeps Ulrich and Agathe from consummating their love, is a fear of time's ravages, the consciousness of ecstasy's fleetingness. When the game is the sweetest, as Mechthild von Magdeburg reminds us, it is almost at an end. "Glück" and "Kürze," Musil adds, belong together like "Geschwister".⁴²⁰ So Musil postpones the happiness with sweet suffering.

The verbal seduction draws out the lovers and the readers, but it is not merely a superficial game; the author/magician is also surreptitiously looking — amongst millions of words— for that one magic word (like the participants in the Parallel Campaign look for the one saving idea) which will save him from the "Meer der Unendlichkeit" (sea of infinity). As long as he cannot find this word, all objects, persons, and landscapes are experienced as a "von nichts unterbrochenem Kreis unendlicher Abwechslung" (a circle of infinite diversion that nothing could interrupt).⁴²¹

This separation from the perfect word, manifest novelistically by the separation of the lovers, and by the constant irritation of the interruptus of chapters depicting parallel universes wherein dwell Clarisse, Meingast, General Stumm von Bordwehr, the Fischel family, Moosbrugger, Leinsdorf, Hans Sepp, "der Tu-Gut" and "der Tu-Nicht-Gut," and others, is an abstinence which works on the lovers like Lindner's "countdown". The "Lust

ohne Ausweg" coursed through the lovers' bodies, "sank," in Musil's words, "wieder in den Körper zurück," and "machte auf die freiwilligen Zwillingsgeschwister den Eindruck, daß sie durch ihre Erwartung und ihre Askese empfindlich geworden seien für alle unausgeträumten Zuneigungen der Welt".⁴²²

Lost in a frightening timelessness of her brother's eyes, Agathe thinks of Ulrich's watch with its "idiotic second hand," bringing the reader back an eternity to the second chapter of the novel, to a time when Agathe was not even with us. In this earlier scene Ulrich stands at his window attempting to count with his watch the number of "Autos, die Wagen, die Trambahnen und die von der Entfernung ausgewaschenen Gesichter der Fußgänger, die das Netz des Blicks mit quirlender Eile füllten [...]"⁴²³ Although Ulrich laughs and puts the watch away in his pocket, realizing "daß er Unsinn betrieben hat," and that the "Anstrengungen" which a person would have to make in order to measure "die Sprünge der Aufmerksamkeit [...], die Leistungen der Augenmuskeln, die Pendelbewegungen der Seele" are ultimately unmeasurable, Agathe, 1387 pages later, thinks again, helplessly—regardless of the patent irrationality—of the little second hand with "welcher Sehnsucht nach Rettung".

Das Auge konnte sich in süßer Qual nicht vom Bild zurückziehen.
Es versank im Dasein wie in einer Blumenwand. Es sank immer tiefer und
immer langsamer. Es kam auf keinen Grund; es konnte nicht umkehren!
"Was mochten jetzt die Uhren machen?" — dachte Agathe; der kleine
idiotische Sekundenzeiger, an den sie sich erinnerte, mit seinem genauen
Vorrücken, den kleinen Kreis entlang: mit welcher Sehnsucht nach
Rettung dachte sie jetzt an ihn!⁴²⁴

The relation of the latter romantic passage to the former passage exposes Musil's "higher" metaphysical concern. This is not a mere love story, as Agathe says to herself: "Er will nicht, daß es bloß eine Liebesgeschichte werden soll!" dachte sie; und fügte hinzu: 'Das ist auch mein Geschmack.' Und gleich darauf dachte sie: 'Er wird keine andre Frau nach mir lieben, dann dies ist keine Liebesgeschichte mehr; das ist überhaupt die letzte Liebesgeschichte, die es geben kann!'" 425

A similar idea is expressed in Musil's farce Vinzenz. Vinzenz, explaining to Alpha that they can not possibly live happily ever after and be, at the same time, true to the real circumstances of the world, exclaims: "Aber Liebe zwischen zwei Menschen von Bedeutung ist doch keine Privatangelegenheit —sondern ihr Gesamtverhältnis zur Welt!"⁴²⁶ Like Vinzenz and Alpha, who separated at the height of their youthful love because, as Vinzenz says, when one reaches such conditions, "Man kann schließlich kein Stücklein Brot mehr essen, sondern kaut daran wie eine Gebetsmühle," Ulrich and Agathe have more important concerns than romantic love. Thus their longing—understood as more than just a longing for physical or romantic consummation, as, rather, a longing for the impossible duration of ecstasy—must be fulfilled in order to proceed, in Ulrich's frustratingly vague explanation, with "das...was wir vorhaben": "Im Vergleich mit der ungeheuren Spannung vorher war es nichts...Und im Augenblick, wo die Widerstände schwankten u[nd] schmolzen, hatte U[rich] gesagt: Es ist auch das Vernünftigste, wenn wir nicht widerstehen; wir müssen das hinter uns haben, damit nicht diese Spannung das verfälscht, was wir vorhaben." 427

So the consummation is simply "gotten out of the way" with surprisingly little fanfare. In comparison with the tremendous suspense before it was "nichts"! The longing

fills a much larger space-time interval than the consummation, and the moment of union cannot last — but lasts. In the dream-like sequence in "Reise ins Paradeis," the sibling lovers, standing on a spiritual abyss, plunge into the cosmic emptiness: "[Sie] standen jetzt wie auf einem hohen Balkon, ineinander und in das Unsagbare verflochten gleich zwei Liebenden, die sich im nächsten Augenblick in die Leere stürzen werden. Stürztten. Und die Leere trug sie. Der Augenblick hielt an; sank nicht und stieg nicht." ⁴²⁸

Yet this is not the end of the book, for the fuller exploration of "das...was wir vorhaben" demands the death and disillusionment of love and belief, followed by apocalypse and its inherent imminent parousia.

Ulrich and Agathe have found what seems to be — if only they wish it—an eternity in paradise. The only problem is that, like all humans, once they have it they no longer want it. It's simple, says Ulrich, sounding much like Meister Eckhart: "Es ist ja ganz einfach [...] Die Phantasie wird nur von dem erregt, was man noch nicht oder nicht mehr besitzt [...] Und wie dumm wären alle unsere Ideale, da doch jedes, wenn man es ernst nimmt, einem andren widerspricht [...] wenn ihr Sinn nicht gerade in Undurchführbaren läge, wodurch sie die Seele entzünden!" ⁴²⁹

Once again we return to the aesthetic requirements of ecstasy: the soul demands oscillation. Musil begins to equate beauty with a certain sort of Buddhistic negativity, with what sounds a great deal like Schopenhauer's state of will-lessness. Such quietude is not, however, an ideal for Musil; an urge to destroy it, disturb it, transform it — through violence, absurdity, necessity— seems rather to be the natural force of energy which makes the world move.

"Man muß...etwas beschränkt sein, um Freude an Natur zu finden" admits Agathe, speaking of the sort of orderly nineteenth-century nature and an ideal of harmonious

beauty. Staring at the ocean and the sky with all their concomitant silence, nothingness, endlessness, Ulrich becomes impatient with beauty's eternity, and longs —taking his insight from the realm of sexual dominance—to crush it. This daemonic urge is, however, as Musil's reading of Nietzsche will have told him, utterly natural itself. His Dionysian impulse engenders a new sort of beauty:

Wenn diese Unendlichkeit des Wassers und Himmels
erbarmungslos offen ist? Dann glaubt man fast, daß Schönheit etwas im
geheimen Verneinendes ist, etwas Unvollendetes und Unvollendbares, ein
Glück ohne Zweck, ohne Sinn. Aber womit, wenn es ohne alles ist? Dann
ist Schönheit eine Pein, zum lachen und weinen, ein Kitzel, um sich im
Sand zu wälzen, mit dem Pfeil Apoll's in der Flanke.

(Haß gegen die Schönheit. Sinn des drängenden Sexualbegehrens: sie zu
zerstören). ⁴³⁰

The destruction like the "petit mort" of the sexual act, is a prerequisite for creation. Blasphemy of love, in the petty form of desire for the chambermaid in the hotel, or relief in the tedious company of their fellow hotel guest, a pompous art historian, is a blasphemous act of regeneration for the lovers. For "Zwischen zwei einzelnen Menschen gibt es keine Liebe!" The form of love demands a third part "der uns zuschaut, beneidet oder Vorwürfe macht".⁴³¹ Ulrich's attraction for the chambermaid is spiritually justified, for "jede List ist der Seele recht, um sich fruchtbar zu halten".⁴³² The requirement "sich

fruchtbar zu halten" the spiritual equivalent of "wesentlich leben," and thus the first requisite in a realm "jenseits der Gute und Böse" in the realm of vital love.

Emptiness which is both awesome and pitiable, escape from emptiness which is both blasphemy and holiness: the cycles of love, the aesthetic requirements of form, the ethical honesty of individual "Gewissen," all seem to require the puncturing of mortality. Eternity must be punctuated with infinite illusory finalities. Beyond the dimensions of a mere love story, Musil's "erotica" speaks the language of ritual sacrifice and renewal:

Fürchterliche Gewalt der Wiederholung, fürchterliche Gottheit!
Anziehung der Leere, die wie der Trichter eines Wirbels immer tiefer
hineinzieht, dessen Wände ausweichen. Küsse mich, und ich beiße leicht
und immer härter und immer wilder, immer trunkener, blutgieriger, auf den
Schrei um Schonung lauschender in deine Lippen, die Schlucht des
Schmerzes hinabkletternd, bis wir zum Schluß in der senkrechten Wand
hängen und uns vor uns selbst fürchten.⁴³³

Comparing the faces of lovers with the facial expressions of the dying, Ulrich speaks of the movement from moment to eternity, of the

[A]uf wenige Minuten konzentrierter Flug durch Seligkeit und Tod,
endend, erneut, die Körper schwingen wie heulende Glocken. Aber am
Schluß weiß man doch: war es doch nur tiefer Sündenfall in eine Welt, in
der es auf hundert Stufen der Wiederholung schwebend abwärts geht.
Ag[athe] stöhnte: "Du wirst mich verlassen!"⁴³⁴

"Endend, erneut," the life-long flight from bliss to death, is ritualized, concentrated into a few minutes — is an analogy for the historical cycle of empire, decadence, and renovation. And despite their mutual vow to either find the entry into paradise or kill themselves, the lovers go on. Even this morbid "Entschluß" is no more valid. In a moment of deep bitterness and doubt, "mit einer Gehässigkeit, durch die er sich selbst quälte," Ulrich blasphemes even their longing: "Es ist eine Sehnsucht, ein Fehlendes: die Form ist da, nur die Materie fehlt. Dann kommt ein Bankbeamter oder ein Professor, und dieses Tierchen füllt langsam die Leere aus, die wie ein Abendhimmel gespannt war..." ⁴³⁵ And although Musil ostensibly considered the idea of Agathe's suicide, and suggests its possibility, the more horrific reality is an anti-climactic non-ending, the probability, prophesied by Ulrich, of love after love, of a new illusory and necessarily temporary "Überzeugung".

The inconclusivity of many of Musil's "finished" works is a touchstone for the probability of there having been any one conclusive ending to this greater "unfinished" one. In notes for the completion of the novel, a parallel to the unsatisfying ending— in a realm of "so many endings"— of Vinzenz is drawn. Vinzenz, who is now spy, now confidence trickster, now mathematician, now gambler, and who finally takes up a career as a "servant," is another version of the ever-shifting man without qualities. His "end" is a tragi-comic foretaste of Ulrich's potentiality. Although Vinzenz becomes a servant in the last scene of the play, it is utterly uncertain how long he will remain in this role; Alpha herself, on the brink of arranging in this last scene a new role for herself as wife of a very rich man, seems to be considering what her *next* role might be: will she take up as a servant as well? Vinzenz discourages her, if she does indeed decide to follow his lead,

from accepting a position in the same house he is in: they are too much alike, he says. An early version of Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften was entitled "Der Spion". Musil's notes read : "Man müßte eigentlich Falschmünzer (Sp[ion]) werden; wenn man dazu nicht die praktische Energie (Anlage) hat, geht man eben in den Krieg".⁴³⁶

War is the last resort of the man who hasn't enough energy to be a counterfeiter or a spy; war is another role to play, the ultimate subjugation of the individual will to the spurious interests of the "Ameisenmenschen". But war also means "der andere Zustand"; it is a group mystical experience of otherness— for Musil personally, in association with his mystical near-death experience, and for "everyman"; for the soldier, like the servant, is faceless, without qualities. The soldier's loss of self is an abandonment of personal will to the larger mass morality; the soldier kills or is killed, exchanges the body of his enemy for his own, sacrifices and is sacrificed. "Krieg ist das gleiche wie a[ndere]Z[ustand]; aber (lebensfähig) gemischt mit dem Bösen."⁴³⁷ "Letzte Zuflucht Sex[ualität] und Krieg: Aber Sex[ualität] dauert 1 Nacht [,] der Krieg immerhin wahrscheinlich 1 Monat."⁴³⁸

Musil's pitiful worldly circumstances at the time of his death left him leaning more steeply towards bitterness in the scale of death and transfiguration. In the midst of that apocalyptic era it may have been difficult to imagine a rebirth of faith. He speaks of the "anderer Zustand" of "Sexualität und Krieg" however in the familiar context of its possible duration. If sexuality lasts a night and war a month, they will both, sooner or later, end. Both are temporary extra-ordinary circumstances, both strong enough to transport one out of time and place, beyond hope or disillusionment. Although one would not want to confuse Musil's life situation with his work, it might be more appropriate to say that Musil is writing, in part, a sociological biography, not of himself, but of his times, with their mysterious "Zeitkrankheit" and consistently self-contradicting impulses. As a

chronicle of consciousness and culture, Musil's work was seriously engaged in the complex developments and degradations of its author's contemporaries, which is not to deny that as an artist, and a man, he kept himself necessarily separate from any slogan-screaming crowd. As much as he may have kept his work—a life-long project envisioned throughout the changing aspects of his surrounding world— separate from his personal life, the miserable atmosphere of the thirties and forties cannot have helped but seep in. Indeed, exiled, banned in Germany and Austria, all but ignored by the European literati, witness to the increasing attacks on freedom of expression, press, religion, and the mass genocide of the "other," and the rise of the "Ameisenmenschen," Musil died in the midst of an extreme "other condition". Artistically, philosophically, ethically (and one hopes personally), Musil expected—and left open the possibility in his text for—an end to this—and all other— conditions.

Ulrich, for example, in one draft chapter, may, despite Agathe's prophecy, have another lover after her : ⁴³⁹ he spends a perverse night of sado-masochism with a cross-dressed Diotima and may, as well, in another draft, sleep with the sometimes refreshingly psychotic Clarisse. In the latter draft, his relations with Clarisse provide the reason for the dissolution of the siblings' affair. In this version, Agathe leaves an unfinished note and disappears: "U[lrich] ist verzweifelt [...]. Aber er fühlt, daß Ag[at]he die richtige Entscheidung gewählt u[nd] dem Unvermeidlichen vorgegriffen hat." ⁴⁴⁰

It is this "Unvermeidliche" (unavoidable) with which we have to do: the unavoidable, death, cataclysm, war. "Alle Linien," writes Musil, "münden in Krieg"; ⁴⁴¹ but even wars, like mystical experiences or love affairs, have ends. The advent of World War I, discussed only in Musil's notes for the novel, provides the illusion of purpose, the temporary "Überzeugung" which is needed. Ulrich does not believe in it fully, yet Musil

seems to have planned to send his "friend" off to war (as the better alternative to suicide or writing books). There is more than a touch of irony in affirmations such as these :

“Endlich wird das Leben wesentlich, bejahend, es fehlt ihm nichts, man nimmt sich ernst, das Leben mündet nicht ins Leere, man hat eine Überzeugung, einen Glauben — — “⁴⁴²

The double face of fiction and reality must reflect the circumstantial time-warp: Musil, who had served in World War I, where he had a powerful transformative mystical experience,⁴⁴³ is writing about that earlier, comparatively more innocent and simple war in the midst of World War II. There is literally no way to remove an immanent anachronistic overlay, nor did Musil intend to; In fact he uses the time overlay.

Interestingly, the two other great novels of modernism, Proust's Remembrance of Things Past and Joyce's Ulysses are set twenty-some years before their completion; all three are concerned with time and its subjective experience, both formally and in their content. In his notes for a "Nachwort (und Zwischensvorwort)" Musil writes:

Dieses Buch ist unter der Arbeit u[nd] unter der Hand ein historischer Roman geworden, er spielt vor 25 Jahren! Es ist immer ein aus der Vergangenheit entwickelter Gegenwartsroman gewesen, jetzt aber ist die Spanne u[nd] Spannung sehr groß, aber das unter der Oberfläche Gelegene, das hauptsächlich eins seiner Darstellungsobjekte gewesen ist, braucht noch immer nicht wesentlich tiefer gelegt zu werden.⁴⁴⁴

The momentary optimism of Musil's hopes for the sympathies of a future German youth, or for the ultimate surfacing of that which he had left just under the "Oberfläche" of his novel, is another example of that "dauernde Oszillation" between hope and despair.

For the most part Musil's notes for forewords and afterwords (all in all a strange collection made up of impotent confessional, frustrated resentment towards the times and those who did not appreciate him fully, and explanations and justifications for his work), prophesy non-closure. There is a marvelous sense of timelessness in this oscillation between foreword and afterward, between "pre" and "post". It seems to bespeak the transition from linearity to the quickening conflation of history.

"Ich kann nicht weiter"⁴⁴⁵ writes Musil in one of these attempts, and one can hardly help but hear Beckett responding: "I'll go on...". In another sketch for an afterword, one of a number which he entitled "Vermächtnis," Musil writes another version of his "last words": "Daß ich inmitten einer Arbeit, die mit diesem Band ja nicht beendet ist, ein Nachwort schreibe und es Vermächtnis nenne, ist kein Zufall, sondern bedeutet die Erwartung deren Namen ich ihm geben muß. Denn sollte sich nicht etwas Unerwartetes ereignen, so werde ich nicht imstande sein, dieses Werk fertig zu machen."⁴⁴⁶

Yet there are more words, words which come tumbling after the first negation, affirming mischievously the infinite fountain which endlessly circulates the not-even-yet-written back into the shimmering basin of possibility. Musil follows his prophecy of non-closure with an explanation of his work methods, an explanation which questions the very notion of finality. "Dieser R.M.." he explains about himself, "[...] dieser Schriftsteller ist von großer Gleichgültigkeit gegen seine Stoffe."

Es gibt Schriftsteller, die von einem Stoff gepackt werden. Sie fühlen: mit diesem oder keinem; es ist wie die Liebe auf den ersten Blick. Das Verhältnis des R[obert] M[usil]s zu seinen Stoffen ist ein zögerndes. Er hat mehrere gleichzeitig u[nd] behält sie bei sich, nachdem die Stunden

der ersten Liebe vorbei sind oder auch ohne daß sie dagewesen sind. Er tauscht Teile von ihnen willkürlich aus. Manche Teilthemen wandern u[nd] kommen in keinem Buch zum Ausdruck. Er hält offenbar das Äußere mehr od[er] weniger für gleichgültig.⁴⁴⁷

An echo of the previously discussed mystical injunction "an nichts hängen," Musil uses the language of romance to talk about his non-attachment to themes, characters, particulars. He has many intrigues in the form of unfinished sketches, plots, plays, and notions; mistresses whom he once loved or never even pretended to love. In the wandering meeting of possible plots, persons, and themes, the mendicant "Teilthemen" which never even came "zum Ausdruck" seem no less important than those which have. The "not-yet actualized experiments of God" are, in the realm of Musil's "Möglichkeitssinn," related thus to the forms of neo-Platonism, to the inexhaustible.

As the other bookend for his "Eine Art Einleitung" which begins the novel, Musil proposes "Eine Art Ende," either substituted by or followed by an afterword: "U[Ulrich]'s Nachwort, Schlußwort".⁴⁴⁸ This afterword would show an elderly Ulrich "von heute, der den zweiten Krieg miterlebt und auf Grund dieser erfahrungen seine Geschichte, und mein Buch epilogisiert". Looking already into the future, two years past even his own death, to a post-war period he can only imagine, Musil seems to presage the unending novel. Were Musil immortal, the afterwords could be written eternally, from war to peace to war to peace, ad infinitum. But this is hardly necessary, if the whole is contained "in nucleo" in the fleeting moment of one chapter.

Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften, begun, Musil says in this *Vermächtnis*, just as he finished his first book Törleß, was supposed to have been his second novel. Instead the

themes wandered for 25 years, traversed the deserts of the East and the cosmopolitan cities of the West, spent eternities on mountain tops and whole lifetimes in scientific laboratories, centuries reading newspapers and millennia deciphering magic palindrome squares. The power of Musil's genius, is, in Emerson's sense, "inexhaustible," and only limited by the bounds of form. These bounds however, like the shimmering outlines of a vessel in a still-life, are in fact the stifling embrace which engenders the desire for creative escape. The confines of form beg to be burst. The artist strains to fill and overflow his own vessel. The space within the vessel is, however, as paradoxically endless as the space inside the small human head. The subjective sensorium of time and space, this brain, this novel, holds an eternity, and lets it all go.

December 31, 1999

ins tausendjährige Reich

Notes

1 Musil, Robert The Man Without Qualities, trans. Sophie Wilkens and Burton Pike, ed. Burton Pike (New York: Knopf, 1995) 1770.

2 Musil Gesammelte Werke 3: Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978) 696. "...a man whom I love said it". The MwQ 756.

3 Musil Tagebücher I 172-173. "Dostoevsky never does something like that!" "Perhaps the best method consists in drawing the character out from out of the darkness, as Dostoevsky does it." Translation mine.

4 Musil TB I 19. "How comical one is as a young person! Nietzsche just good enough to serve as a step stool for a little scamp!" Translation mine.

5 Musil TB I 19. "The characteristic essence consists in this: that he says: this could be this way and that could be that way. And one could build this or that upon it. In short, he speaks of pure possibilities, pure combinations, without actually showing us a single one worked out." Translation mine.

6 Musil TB I 930. "The relation of a writer to his times. That one doesn't go along, that one stays behind, avoids the contact, doesn't participate, etc.: I have opened myself up literarily in a limited way: Dostoevsky, Flaubert, Hamsum, d'Annunzio et al: not a contemporary among them!" Translation mine.

7 An interesting comparison might be made between Musil's use of sources and Thomas Mann's (as the latter was well known to paraphrase and quote at length from a wide variety of source material ranging from newspapers to medical texts to musicology tracts).

8 De Certeau, Michel, The Mystic Fable (Chicago: U of Chicago, 1992) 108-110.

9 De Certeau 108.

10 Musil GW 8: Essays und Reden (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978) 1051. "What we can learn as if we were in school—knowledge, rational order, conceptually defined objects and relations—we may assimilate or not; we can remember it or forget. This knowledge can be placed in us like a true, smoothly polished die, or taken out again: such thoughts are, in a certain sense, dead. This is the reverse of the feeling that they are valid quite apart from us. Precision and correctness kill; what can be defined—concept, fossil, skeleton—is dead...But in intellectual fields...one has this experience at every step. Here the word does not signify anything fixed; it is the living word, full of meaning and intellectual relation in the moment, bathed in will and feeling. An hour later it says nothing, although it says everything that a concept can say. We may well call such a way of thinking dynamic, alive." Precision and Soul, trans. David Luft & Burton Pike (New York: U of Chicago P, 1990) 142.

11 Musil GW 4: MoE . 1424.

12 Cassirer, Ernst, Language and Myth (New York: Harper, 1946) 2.

13 Musil GW1: MoE 19.

14 Musil GW 8: Essays und Reden (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978) 1140. "If I am not mistaken, the root of this lies in the beginning of the reign of Christianity, when art suffered from the jealousy of true believers and was allowed by its defenders to escape, as it were, into a second-class existence." Precision and Soul 196.

15 see Tambiah, Stanley Jeyaraja. Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1990).

16 von Grunebaum, Gustav, Medieval Islam (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1946) 174.

17 Musil GW 8: Essays und Reden 1027. "Give me a fixed place to stand and I will move the world!" Precision and Soul 63.

18 Wilson, Colin, The Outsider (London: Gollanz, 1978) 122.

19 Nietzsche, Friedrich. Die fröhliche Wissenschaft, aphorism 143. " The greatest utility of Polytheism: For the individual to set up his own ideal and derive from it his pleasures and rights—that has perhaps been hitherto regarded as the most monstrous of all human aberrations, and as idolatry itself; in fact, the few who have ventured to do this have always needed to apologize to themselves, usually in this wise: 'Not I! Not I! But a God, through my instrumentality!' It was in the marvelous art and capacity for creating Gods—in polytheism—that this impulse was permitted to discharge itself, it was here that it became purified, perfected, and ennobled; for it was originally a commonplace and unimportant impulse, akin to stubbornness, disobedience and envy. To be hostile to this impulse towards the individual ideal, —that was formerly the law of every morality. There was then only one norm, 'the man'—and every people believed that it had this one and ultimate norm. But above himself, and outside himself, in a distant over-world, a person could see a multitude of norms: the one God was not the denial or blasphemy of the other Gods! It was here that the right of individuals was first respected. The inventing of Gods, heroes, and supermen of all kinds, as well as co-ordinate men and undermen—dwarfs, fairies, centaurs, satyrs, demons, devils—was the inestimable preliminary to the justification of the selfishness and sovereignty of the individual: the freedom which was granted to one God in respect to other Gods, was at last given to the individual himself in respect to laws, customs, and neighbors. Monotheism, on the contrary, the rigid consequence of the doctrine of one normal human being—consequently the belief in a normal God, beside whom there are only false, spurious Gods—has perhaps been the greatest danger of mankind in the past; man was then threatened by that premature state of inertia, which, so far as we can see, most of the other species of animals reached long ago, as creatures who all believed in one normal animal and ideal in their species, and definitely translated their morality of custom into flesh and blood. In polytheism man's free-thinking and many-sided thinking had a prototype set up: the power to create for himself new individual eyes, always newer and more individualized; so that it is for man alone, of all the animals, that there are no eternal horizons and perspectives." The Joyful Wisdom. The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, trans. Thomas Common (New York: Russel & Russel, 1964).

20 Tambiah 10-11.

21 Tambiah 28, quoting Frances Yates' article "Fear of the Occult", NY Review of Books, vol. 26, no.18, Nov. 22, 1979.

22 Musil GW 8: Essays und Reden 1019 "The misfortune is that people who are concerned with such questions today [of mysticism] have little understanding of the virtues of clear thinking...while others, who would have such an understanding, have for the most part no intimation that there is something here that has been grasped at great depth but been lost again on the way back to the surface." Precision and Soul, 57-8.

23 Musil GW 8 1019 "Aside from the one great attempt by Nietzsche, we Germans have no books about people, no systematizers and organizers of life. With us artistic and scientific thinking do not yet come into contact with each other. The problems of a middles zone between the two remain unsolved." Precision and Soul, 58.

24 Musil GW 1: MoE 40. "If we translate 'scientific outlook' into 'view of life,' 'hypothesis' into 'attempt,' and 'truth' into 'action,' then there would be no notable scientist or mathematician whose life's work, in courage and revolutionary impact, did not far outmatch the greatest deeds in history. The man has not yet been born who could say to his followers: 'You may steal, kill, fornicate—our teaching is so strong that it will transform the cesspool of your sins into clear, sparkling mountain streams.' But in science it happens every few years that something till then held to be in error suddenly revolutionizes the field." The Man without Qualities, trans. Burton Pike and Sophie Wilkins, ed. Burton Pike (New York: Knopf, 1995) 37.

25 Musil GW 1: MoE 41. "People simply don't realize it, they have no idea how much thinking can be done already; if they could be taught to think a new way, they would change their lives." MwQ 37.

26 Musil GW 8: Essays und Reden 988. Indeed, it is impossible to enumerate how thoroughly Catholicism today is saturated by middle-class reasonableness; one need only recall how even baptism—once the most powerful expression of the church's opposition to the state, a symbol of entry into a spiritual countercommunity, a mystical adoption, less the bearing of a name than being led by means of a name on the first steps of one's inner way—is today bound up with middle class record-keeping: with the identity-card...", Precision and Soul 21-2.

27 See also Tambiah's discussion (12-14) of Max Weber's The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism on the relation of political power agenda's and religious beliefs.

28 MacNamara, Jo Anne, Sisters in Arms (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1998) 35.

29 Schöne, Albrecht, "Zum Gebrauch des Konjunktivs bei Robert Musil." Euphorion, (1961).

30 Musil GW 8: Essays und Reden 1140. "disturbance in which elements of reality are reconstituted as an unreal whole that usurps the value of reality." Precision and Soul 196.

31 Lewis, I.M., Ecstatic Religion (New York: Routledge, 1971) 42.

32 Lewis 100-101.

33 Musil GW 1: MoE 55.

34 Musil GW 5: MoE 1642. "You can go back as far as you like from this moment in which we are now talking, millennia or as far as human memory can reach, and you will always find described the existence of another world that at times rises up like a deep sea floor when the restless floods of our ordinary life have receded from it...All the descriptions state, in odd agreement, that in that condition there is in the world neither measure or precision, which have made our world of the intellect great, neither purpose nor cause, neither good nor bad, no limit, no greed, and no desire to kill, but only an incomparable excitement and an altered thinking and willing. For as objects and our emotions lose all the limitations that we otherwise impose upon them, they flow together in a mysterious swelling and ebbing, a happiness that fills everything, an agitation that is in the true sense boundless, one and multiple in shape as in a dream. One might perhaps add that the ordinary world, with its apparently so real people and things that lord it over everything like fortresses on cliffs, if one looks back at it, together with all its evil and impoverished relationships, appears only as the consequence of a moral error from which we have already withdrawn our organs of sense."

35 Musil Robert Musil : der literarische Nachlaß 5/01/038 ^Sch zu Korr II .

36 Hofmannsthal, Hugo von, Prosa II (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1951) 97. "We do not possess our self: it waits to us from outside, it flees from us for a long while and returns to us in one breath. Indeed – our "self!" The word is such a metaphor. Feelings which once nested here in the past return to us. And are they really the same ones again? Or is it not really only their brood, driven back to us by a mysterious homesickness? Enough, something returns. And something meets inside us with others. We are nothing more than a dovecote." Translation mine.

37 Musil MwQ 1444-45.

38 Jung, C.J., Commentary to The Secret of the Golden Flower, transl. and ed. Richard Wilhelm (New York: Harcourt, 1932) 105.

39 James, William, Varieties of Religious Experience (New York, Longmans, 1928) 223.

40 Musil Nachlaß: 4/01/006 ^ NN 48^ A 53 "Über den Essay".
 "This sudden coming alive of an idea, this lightning like reforging of a great complex of feeling (most penetratingly imaged in Saul's becoming Paul) by means of an idea, so that one suddenly understands the world and oneself differently: this is intuitive knowledge in the mystical sense. ... Maeterlinck, Emerson, Nietzsche, in part Epicurus, the Stoics: leaving aside the transcendental, the mystics, but also Dilthey, Taine, and nomothetic historical research, all belong in the circle of the essay. Here lies the human branch of religion." Precision and Soul, 50-51.

41 Emerson, Ralph Waldo. Essays, Second Series, (Cambridge, Mass, 1892) 58.

42 Emerson 35.

43 Emerson 37.

44 Kandinsky, Wassily. Concerning the Spiritual in Art, trans. M.T.H. Sadler (New York: Dover, 1977) 11-12.

45 Dilthey, Wilhelm, Philosophy of Existence, trans. William Kluback & Martin Weinbaum (New York: Bookman, 1957) 18.

46 "Es bestehen Verwandschaftsbande mit Theosophie, Anthroposophie und Spiritismus. Auch die Theosophie ist antidogmatisch u. intuitiv. Steiner verwendet sehr häufig das Wort 'Geisteswissenschaft'." Nachlaß: HE-8/22; 1920; "Die Zwanzig Werke I", 27.

47 Wagner-Egelhaaf, Martina. Mystik der Moderne: die visionäre Ästhetik der deutschen Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts, (Stuttgart: Metzler 1989) 57-8. "an inner necessity...something unfalsified from out of the man's interior... eludes the grasp of the rational". Translation mine

48 Wagner-Egelhaaf 57-8. "with its implied renunciation of color's traditional localizing and naming role, of blended colors and multiple forms, the hierarchy of the Figure/ground relationship, of form and color on the whole, of stasis and materiality..." Translation mine.

49 Long, Rose Carol Washton. "Expressionism, Abstraction, and the Search for Utopia in Germany." The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1983, (New York: Abbeville, 1986) 211-12.

50 Long 214.

51 cf. Musil's TB Heft 25: 1921-1923, 646: "Ein Rot von $\chi\mu\mu$ ist subjektiv gewiß verschieden, aber es ist fixiert...."/ "one cannot assert that sense experiences are transferable, but they can be fixed. A red of $\chi\mu\mu$ is certainly different subjectively, but it is fixed." Diaries. Transl. Philip Payne (New York: Basic Books, 1999) 313 and ff 6 Diaries 528: "Among the experiments carried out in Stumpf's Institute in Berlin during Musil's time as a student were those that involved investigating the subjective responses of different individuals to an identical, precisely measured color stimulus; it turned out that these responses varied considerably."

52 GW 5: MoE 1939 "Mystik: Man kann nur jedem Leser raten: leg dich an einem schönen oder auch an einem windigen Tag in den Wald, dann weißt du alles selbst. Es darf nicht angenommen werden, daß ich nie im Wald gelegen bin."

53 Musil GW 8: Essays und Reden 1154. /Precision and Soul, 208.

54 Musil quotes Hornbostel's lecture on "Gedichte der antiken Kulturvölker."

55 Musil's play "Die Schwärmer" carries this ambiguity in its German title: translated simply as "The Enthusiasts," the English version loses the positive attribute of the word, which includes "Visionaries"—the inherent dual-reference (in the play and the word itself) to the conflict between "mere" hallucination (the emperor's new clothes) and vision or insight.

56 Wagner-Egelhaaf 33.

57 Nordau, Max. Degeneration, (New York, 1895) 43.

58 Nordau 46.

59 Cf. Peters, Ursula, Religiöse Erfahrung als literarisches Faktum: zur Vorgeschichte und Genese frauenmystischer Texte des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1988).

60 Musil TB I 726. "[T]hen this is a different matter, and memories crowd in: that Dostoevsky was an epileptic, that Flaubert was one too, and that at profound moments in their lives their conduct could not have been 'assured and serene freedom of life.' Horace ran from battle. Schopenhauer spewed venom.. Nietzsche and Hölderlin went insane. Wilde was a convict. Verlaine an alcoholic. Van Gogh put a bullet in his gut. If those are exceptions, one would like to see the rule. But the early Greeks, to whom Rathenau appeals for the rule, loved Odysseus as well as Achilles; Nietzsche taught us to distinguish between the Apollonian and the Dionysian types, and even the tradition of the supposedly greatest of all Apollonian types, Goethe, is – as Bahr showed in a good, older work – a legend." Precision & Soul 55.

62 Musil TB I 17.

63 Musil TB I 28, quoted from Nietzsche's Der Fall Wagner.

64 1907: Heinrich Seuse, Deutsche Schriften, ed. Karl Bihlmeyer, Stuttgart.

1910: Die Predigten Taulers, ed. Ferdinand Vetter, Berlin.

ECKHART EDITIONS

1857: Meister Eckhart, Predigten, Traktate. Franz Pfeiffer, Leipzig.

1895: Meister Eckhart and seine Jünger: Ungedruckte Texte zur Geschichte der dt. Mystik, Franz Jostes, Freiburg.

1926: ME: Das System seiner religiösen Lehre und Lebensweisheit, Textbuch aus den gedruckten and ungedruckten Quellen mit Einführung von Otto Karrer, München.

1889: ME: Ausgewählte Predigten und verwandte Schriftstücke, Wilhelm Schöpff, Leipzig.

1903(neu bearbeitet and hrsg. von Buber, Berlin, 1920) : Meister Eckhart: mystische Schriften in unsere Sprache Übertragen von Gust. Landauer, Berlin.

1910: MEs Buch der göttlichen Tröstung and Von dem edlen Menschen, hrsg. von Philipp Strauch, Bonn.

1913: Reden der Unterscheidung, Ernst Diederichs, Bonn.

1922: Reden der Unterweisung, übertrag. von Joseph Bernhart, München.

1914: ME, ausgew. and übers. Joseph Bernhart, Kempten and München.

1923: ME: Schau and Werk: Aussprüche, ausgelesen und in heutigem Deutsch, Wilhelm Willige, Rudolstadt.

1927: ME deutsche Predigten and Traktate, ausg, übertr, Friedrich Schulze-Maizer, Leipzig.

1927: MEs Rechtfertigungsschrift vom Jahre 1326, Einl, übers., and Anm. von Otto Karrer and Herma Piesch, Erfurt.

1909: MEs Schriften and Predigten, aus dem mhd über., Hermann Büttner, Jena/erstaussgabe 1903, formed popular Eckhartbild: "Büttner feiert in ihm "Schöpfer einer dt. Prosa im höheren Sinn" "Die Eigenart, das Besondere, das Herausfallen aus den Systemen wies hier zum spezifischen Wesensmerkmal des Mystikers, das für die Mystikaufnahme im 20.JH von nicht zu überschätzendem Identifikationswert war. Das Ideal philosophischer Begabung sieht Büttner in der Anwendung and Ableitung aller Gedanken aus einem Grundgedanken, wie nach mittelalterlichem Schriftverständnis jede Zeile der Heiligen Schrift alle Wahrheit enthalte. Um die eine Wahrheit auszudrücken, bediente sich Eck—wichtig ist hier der visuell-visionäre Akzente—einer 'impressionistischen Technik', indem er unvermischte Farben hart nebeneinandersetzte und es dem Auge des Betrachters überlasse, vom rechten Punkt höherer Einheit...." -Wagner-Egelhaaf 29.
1936: ME Die dt. and Lt. Werke, Josef Quint, Stuttgart, Berlin.

65 Wagner-Egelhaaf 55. "Jung defines religious dogmas as empirical manifestations of the unconscious archetypes: Christ for example is a symbol of 'the self, center of the totality of the conscious and unconscious, while the I refers only to the center of consciousness. The self connects the individual with the eternal, the one with the most communal". Translation mine.

66 Musil GW 3: MoE 766. "Testimony, Christian, Judaic, Indian, Chinese, some separated by more than a thousand years. Yet one recognizes in all of them the same uniform structure of inner movement, divergent from the ordinary." MwQ 832.

67 Musil GW 3: MoE 766. "Almost the only way they differ from each other comes from the various didactic superstructures of theology and cosmic wisdom under whose protective roof they have taken shelter. We therefore may assume the existence of a certain alternative and uncommon condition of great importance, which man is capable of achieving and which has deeper origins than religions. On the other hand, the churches, that is, civilized communities of religious people, have always treated this condition with the kind of mistrust a bureaucrat feels for the spirit of private enterprise. They've never accepted this riotous experience without reservations; on the contrary, they've directed great and apparently justified efforts toward replacing it with a properly regulated and intelligible morality." MwQ 832.

68 Deisman, Adolf, Licht vom Osten, 3 Aufl. Tübingen, 1909.

Cumont, Franz, Die oriental. Religion im römischen Heidentum, Die Mysterien des Mithras.

Oldenburg, Herman., Buddha, 6 Aufl. Stuttgart, 1914.

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James, W., Die religiöse Erfahrung in ihrer Mannigfaltigkeit, 2. Auflage, Leipzig, 1914.

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Holl, Karl, Die geistliche Übungen des Ignatius Loyola, Tübingen, 1905.

Müller, Wilh., Das religiöse Leben in Amerika, Jena, 1911.

69 Otto Gruppe, Die griechischen Kulte u Mythen in ihre Beziehung zu den Orient . (Nachlaß: Crst, He-21/108; 1920-26, "Die 20 Werke III).

70 Wilhelm, Richard, The Secret of the Golden Flower, (New York: Harcourt, 1932) 4.

71 Ray, Dorothy-Jean. Eskimo Masks: Art and Ceremony (Toronto: McClelland, 1967) 7-8.

72 Wagner-Egelhaaf 40.

73 Klages, Ludwig, Vom Kosmogonischen Eros (Bonn: Bouvier, 1963) 56.

74 Klages 56.

75 Klages 86.

76 Musil Nachlaß: FrSW, 2/01/274 ^ Ü-65. (A said: in o.c. [other condition] one doesn't want to possess. But she wants to possess him).

77 Eliade, Mircea. The Two and the One, (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992).

78 After Grigori Potemkin (d.1791), a Russian statesman who erected false villages along the route where Catherine the Great was expected to travel.

79 Musil Nachlaß: 7/17/1140 ^Sua-33

80 Jung, C.G., commentary to The Secret of the Golden Flower, 85.

81 Jung 132.

82 Gomperz, Heinrich. Die Lebensauffassung der griechischen Philosophen und das Ideal der inneren Freiheit (Berlin, 1904) 8. "Let us return to the ideal of inner freedom! It was supposed to make man's happiness independent of his external circumstances. This means, as we now know: it contains the expectation that in all circumstances we should make the world as a whole the object of our affirmative wishing, that we should be satisfied with it as a whole, and should not acknowledge any of its parts to be ill." Translation mine.

83 Attar, Farid Ud-din, The Conference of the Birds (New York: Weiser, 1984) 22-27.

84 cf. the preface of this work.

85 Nietzsche, Friedrich. Werke in Drei Bänden, (Münich: [publ.?], 1954) Vol. II, 889.

86 Wilson, Peter Lamborn, Scandal: Essays in Islamic Heresy (New York: Autonomedia, 1988) 63.

87 Musil GW 7: Kleine Prosa, Aphorismen, Autobiographisches 940. "The world can not exist without evil, it brings movement in to the world. Goodness alone creates rigidity". Translation mine.

88 Musil GW 3: MoE 696. "Society's virtues are vices to the saints." MwQ 756.

89 Musil GW 3: MoE 696. "So you would hardly call a man who is honest out of habit a good man? But a thief who steals for the first time with his heart pounding, you'll call a good man?" MwQ 756.

90 Nachlaß 2/1/079 "Oesterreich".

91 Eckhart, Meister, Meister Eckhart: Deutsche Predigten, transl. Quint, Joseph, (Zurich: Diogenes, 1961) 282. "Pay attention! If man were always maid, no fruit would come of him. If he will be fruitful, he must become woman, and woman is the noblest name that one can give to the soul, and it is much nobler than virgin." Translation mine.

92 Eckhart Appendix I. "Bulle Johannes XXII. vom 27. März 1329, in welcher 28 Sätze Meister Eckharts verdammt werden,, No. 4: In jedem Werk, auch im Bösen, im Übel der Strafe ebenso sehr wie im Übel der Schuld, offenbart sich und estrahlt gleichermaßen Gottes Herrlichkeit....No.5: Desgleichen: Wer Gott selbst lästert, lobt Gott....No.8: Die nach nichts trachten, weder nach Ehren noch nach Nutzen noch nach innerer Hingabe noch nach Heiligkeit noch nach Belohnung noch nach Himmelreich, sondern auf dieses alles verzichtet haben, auch auf das, was das Ihrige ist—in solchen Menschen wird Gott geehrt."

93 Emerson 38.

94 Nietzsche, Friedrich. Jenseits. 604. "Not to become stuck to a person — not even the most loved — every person is a prison, also a corner. Not to remain stuck to a fatherland — not even if it suffers most and needs help most — it is less difficult to sever one's heart from a victorious fatherland...Not to remain stuck to one's own detachment, to that voluptuous remoteness and strangeness of the bird who flees ever higher to see ever more below him — the danger of the flier." The Basic Writings of Nietzsche: Beyond Good and Evil, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1968) 242.

95 Musil "Die Schwärmer" in GW 6: Prosa und Stücke 313. "Ideals are the arch-enemy of Idealism! Ideals are dead Idealism!" The Enthusiasts, trans. Andrea Simon (New York: Performing Arts Journal, 1983) 18.

96 See Schmidt, Jochen, Ohne Eigenschaften (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1975) for discussion of Musil's appropriation of Eckhart's phrase.

97 De Certeau 176.

98 Nordau 539.

99 Klages 56. The original phrase, paraphrased by Musil, is: "Teilhaberschaft an schöpferischen Geschehen".

100 Klages 100.

101 Klages 101-2 "He who bursts out of the human form in ecstasy, for him the world of facts disappears in that same moment, and the world of images rises toward him with all the suppressed power of reality." Translation mine.

102 Klages 111.

103 Jung 100.

104 Musil, Robert. TB I 9. "The street becomes a canal, et cet. As it is in fairy tales. The multiple shapes of Indian demons and Gods is thus not meant merely metaphorically." Translation mine.

105 Musil TB I 8-10. "Do you know what a street looks like? Yes?! Who told you that a street is only that which you think it is? You can't imagine that it could be something else? That comes from the two-times-two is four logic. Yes, but 2×2 is 4! Certainly, we say that and the question doesn't bother anyone further...Just ask one of these [$2 \times 2 = 4$ people]: "Excuse me, what is a street, and you will get the answer: "Street, and that's final, please don't disturb me any more"...After a little time you find out: "Aha, street, something straight, day-bright, serves one in moving forward." And you suddenly experience a colossal feeling of superiority, like a seer among the blind. You say to yourself, I know quite well that a street is not something straight or day-bright, but that it is (can be) just as easily something multi-branching, secretive and full of mysteries, with trap doors and underground passage ways, secret dungeons and buried churches." Translation mine.

106 Musil Nachlaß. "Mistakes of form are mistakes of content and as such they are dangerous." Roman rule of sacrifice: *Sciendum in sacris simultae pro veris accipi*/that which is simulated should be taken for truth...Bread and wine are God in the host... Images out of dough, etc."

107 Hofmannsthal, Hugo von, Prosa II (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1950-51)101-2. "Let me interrupt you. Yes, they mean, but do not utter it, what they mean: no matter what you would say it would be incorrect... animals are the true hieroglyphs, they are the living, secret codes with which

God has written unutterable things into the world...they are codes which language is powerless to unravel." Translation mine.

108 Hofmannsthal 102. "And for one moment he must have believed that it was his own blood; for one moment, as the sound of voluptuous triumph from his throat mixed with the dying animal's groans, he must have taken the pleasure of his heightened experience for the first spasm of death; for one moment, he must have died in the animal, only in this way can the animal have died for him. That the animal could die for him became a great mystery, a great mysterious truth. From that point on, the animal died a symbolic sacrificial death. But everything rest on this: that he died in the animal too, for one moment. That his being, for the duration of one intake of breath, dissolved into the alien being — that is the root of all poetry." Translation mine.

109 Lévy-Bruhl, Lucien. How Natives Think, trans. Lilian Clare. (New York: Knopf, 1926) 50.

110 Lévy-Bruhl 47.

111 Quoted in Roth, Marie Louise, Robert Musil: Ethik und Ästhetik (Münich: List, 1972) 211. "A piece of music is not the sum of those signs which one picks out and analyzes— it doesn't only depend, it isn't even the first priority, whether these or those signs are together, but rather how they work together, how they relate to each other and on the whole." Translation mine.

112 Roth 211. "But Blei shows that the most internal spiritual content of a poem can only be expressed in the one way, in its verse alone, and there is nothing else, in a human's form, or bearing, or conduct of life, in that which is not translatable in any language, which expresses the true being: that last, irreducible expression of the spiritual." Translation mine.

112 Roth 211. "Quoting Franz Blei, Musil gives a fitting definition of the artistic gestalt which is a 'function of the soul.'" Translation mine.

113 Lévy-Bruhl 42.

114 cf. Bey, Hakim. Temporary Autonomous Zones (New York: Autonomedia, 1993).

115 Musil GW I: MoE 19-20. "He was free to follow any principle, from stylistically pure to total recklessness. Free to choose any style from the Assyrian to cubism. What should he choose? Modern man is born in a hospital and dies in a hospital, so he should make his home like a clinic. So claimed a leading architect of the moment; and another reformer of interior decoration advocated movable partitions in homes instead of fixed walls so that people would learn to trust their housemates instead of shutting themselves off from one another. Time was making a fresh start just then (it does so all the time), and a new time needs a new style. Luckily for Ulrich, the little chateau already had three styles superimposed on one another, setting limits on what he could do to meet all these new demands. Yet he felt quite shaken by the responsibility of having the opportunity to renovate a house, what with the threat hovering over his head of "Show me how you live and I will tell you who you are!—which he had read repeatedly in art magazines. After intensive study of these periodicals he decided that he had best take the extension of his personality into his own hands, and began to design his future furniture himself. But no sooner had he come up with an impressive massive form than it occurred to him that something spare, and strictly functional could just as easily be put in its place; and when he had sketched a form of reinforced concrete that looked emaciated by its own strength, he was reminded of the thin, vernal lines of a thirteen-year-old girl's body and drifted off into a reverie instead of making up his mind." MwQ 15.

116 Barker, Andrew, "'Unforgettable People from Paradise!' The Ashanti Visit to Vienna in 1896-97". Research in African Literatures, 22, no.2 (SUM 1991) 57-70.

117 Nordau 13-14.

118 Nordau 8.

119 Musil GW 1: MoE 58. "No one knew exactly what was in the making, nobody could have said whether it was to be a new art, a new humanity, a new morality, or perhaps a reshuffling of society...There were those who loved the overman and those who loved the underman; there were health cults and sun cults and the cults of consumptive maidens; there was enthusiasm for the hero worshipers and for the believers in the Common Man; people were devout and skeptical, naturalistic and mannered, robust and morbid; they dreamed of old tree-lined avenues in palace parks, autumnal gardens, glassy ponds, gems, hashish, disease, and demonism, but also of prairies, immense horizons, forges and rolling mills, naked wrestlers, slave uprisings, early man, and the smashing of society." MwQ 53.

120 Klages 68. "There was never a true ecstatic who wasn't also occasionally a narcotics user; and it is no accident that orgiastic practices are bound to the grape harvest festival." Translation mine.

121 Klages 69.

122 Hofmannsthal, "Wiener Neue Frei Presse," 1902.

123 Musil TB I 405. "specialty [is] the scientific analysis of the pathological crime." Translation mine.

124 Musil TB I 400. "To release all the criminals one has within one. The fury of Moosbrugger understandable, to go at the stomach with a crooked knife, when you see this propped-up [dolled-up?] thing wander by." Translation mine.

125 Musil GW 1: MoE 76. "If mankind could dream as a whole, that dream would be Moosbrugger." MwQ 77.

126 Goodrick-Clarke, Nicholas. The Occult Roots of Nazism, (New York: NY UP, 1992) 79."List's references to the Fimbulwinter and the Götterdämmerung suggest he was familiar with the Pagan legends, according to which there came a mighty winter after which the whole earth was consumed by fire and flood before rising anew, 'fertile, green and fair as never before, cleansed of all its sufferings and evil'".

127 Goodrick-Clark, 85.

128 Goodrick-Clark, 91.

129 Bringazi, Friedrich. Robert Musil und die Mythen der Nation, (Frankfurt am Main: [publ.?], 1998).

130 Musil TB 907. "...have statelessness in common; that they don't have, anywhere in the world, 'their' land." Translation mine.

131 Musil Briefe (1901-1942). Ed. Adolf Frisé (Reinbeck bei Hamburg, 1981) 959. "That for me the moral obligation against the persecution of the Jews is a fixed point comparable only to the maltreatment of the intellectual." Translation mine.

132 Musil TB I 905. "in this time of blood, soil, race, mass, leader, and homeland." Translation mine.

133 Musil TB I 723. "Freedom of the press, of any kind, freedom of conscience, personal dignity, intellectual freedom, etc., all the liberal fundamental rights have now been set aside without one single person feeling utterly outraged, indeed by and large without people being strongly affected at all. It is seen as a spell of bad weather. The average individual does not yet feel under attack. One might feel most profoundly disappointed over this but it is more correct to draw the conclusion that all the things that have been abolished here are no longer of great concern to people. This was indeed so. Did a person make use of his freedom of conscience for example? He had no opportunity whatever to do so! [...] The newspaper did this for him and everything that the newspaper did he accepted with a degree of unease, even though it was seemingly indispensable to him. Seen in this way the discipline of the "fascio" is indeed a creation that goes unerringly to the core of man's instincts. From this is derived the present tendency to form organizations; the individual is beginning to recognize himself and wants to be led, to take a lead from someone, to be brought together with others, included and enveloped." Diaries 379.

134 Quint 9: Es ist eine Zeit des Umbruchs und der Krise, da die beiden mächtigen Gewalten des Papsttums und des Kaisertums nach dem Sieg der großen Päpste Innozenz III. und Gregors IX. über den letzten großen und machtvollen Staufer Friedrich II. (1212-1250) und nach der kaiserlosen, der "schrecklichen" Zeit des Interregnums (1256-1273) einen zersetzenden Endkampf miteinander führen, voll von Wirren und Wechselfällen, von Bann und Interdikt, wobei die Schwächung und Erschütterung auch der päpstlichen Macht in der sogenannten Babylonischen Gefangenschaft der Päpste in Avignon (1309-1377) nur zu deutlich sichtbar wird. Der machtvolle, hierarchisch gegliederte Bau der Kirche ist bedroht von Schäden und Rissen, von sektiererischen und ketzerischen Bewegungen und Bestrebungen, die immer stärker und unüberhörbarer nach einer Reform an Haupt und Gliedern

135 Quint 9. "Neben dem die Hochscholastik tragenden und beherrschenden Realismus, für den das wahre und echte Sein der Dinge in ihrem Allgemeinen, Gattungsmäßigen steckt und dem menschlichen Denken in seinen Gattungsbegriffen faßbar wird, hatte der Nominalismus immer mehr an Boden gewonnen. Bei seiner starken Skepsis gegenüber der Gültigkeit und Rechtweite menschlichen Erkennens hatte er die menschlichen Allgemeinbegriffe als bloße 'flatus', als bloßen Hauch, als reine 'nomina' bezeichnet, denen keinerlei ontisches Sein in den Dingen entsprach. Das Sein war nur in den Individualdingen zu finden und nicht durch abstrakt-logisches Denken und Schlußfolgen, sondern nur auf Grund von Beobachtung, durch Messen und Wägen der Qualitäten und Verhaltensweisen der Individualdinge" "Next to that realism— clearly steeped in High Scholasticism — for which the true and genuine essence of things resides in the generic and typological, and for which human thought was understandable by its generic definition, nominalism had gained considerable ground. With its strong skepticism about the validity and possible reach of human knowledge, nominalism had labeled human generic definitions as mere "flatus", as mere breath, as pure "nomina", which corresponded to no ontological being in things whatsoever. Being could only be found in individual things and not through abstract-logical thinking and conclusions, but rather on the basis of observation, through measuring and weighing of qualities and modes of behavior of individual things." Translation mine.

136 Cohn, Norman. The Pursuit of the Millennium (New Jersey: Essential Books, 1957) 58. A penniless immigrant with a flair for business might always end up a rich merchant. And even among the artisans, those who produced for the local market developed, in the craft guilds, associations

which fulfilled the functions which the village community and the kinship group had fulfilled for peasants... There were however many who merely acquired new wants without being able to satisfy them; and in them the spectacle of a wealth undreamt-of in earlier centuries provoked a bitter sense of frustration. In all the over-populated, relatively industrialized areas there were many people living on the margin of society, in a state of chronic insecurity.

137 Hüppauf. 104. "...flagrant break with the past, for spiritual openness and intensive searching for new forms of life and expression...". Translation mine.

138 Hüppauf 101. "This chaotic confusion of societal and governmental order shakes the entire spiritual world and goes hand in hand with a crisis of thinking and feeling. The unity of the Christian-philosophical thought system is destroyed...the authority of the Church no longer remains unquestioned, Franciscans and Dominicans condemn Catholic doctrines, and the balance between Christian dogma and the personal path to salvation breaks down. This spiritual discontent with the tradition leads to new forms of belief and to mysticism. The Flagellates — wandering fanatics with a mystical streak—are definitely a direct consequence of the deplorable social situation and of unemployment." Translation mine.

139 Hüppauf 66.

140 Hüppauf 84.

141 Mechthild von Magdeburg, Das fließende Licht der Gottheit, trans. Margot Schmidt (Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Benziger, 1955) 6,2.

142 Beer, Francis, Women and Mystical Experience in the Middle Ages (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell, 1983) 83.

143 von Magdeburg 2, 26.

144 Musil TBI 923. "It's strange, M.[artha] says she could steal, a[nd]. is spiritually bewitchingly honest." Translation mine.

145 MacNamara, Jo Ann, Sisters in Arms (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1996) 346.

146 Wilson P. L. "Shower of Stars" 119.

147 Wilson, P.L. "Shower of Stars" 46-7 (Ibn Arabi's Futuhat).

148 Weinberg, Julius. Short History of Medieval Philosophy (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1974)131.

149 Weinberg 98.

150 The German word for "millennium," "das tausendjährige Reich" (the thousand-year reich) is more resonant in its immediate relation to the infamous "Third Reich" than "millennium" would express.

151 Gerber, Richard. Utopian Fantasy (London: Routledge, 1973) 3-4.

152 Gerber 4, quoting Huizinga's Homo Ludens.

153 Crapanzano, Vincent, Case Studies in Spirit Possession, (New York: Wiley, 1977) 12.

154 Weinberg 95.

155 Weinberg 105.

156 Plato, The Dialogues of Plato, trans. B. Jowett (New York: Random House, 1937) 203-214.

157 Musil GW 1: MoE 93. "I see—a high-minded beauty," Ulrich concluded, "a second Diotima." And from that day forth that was what he called her in his thoughts, after the celebrated female teacher of love." MwQ 93.

158 Musil GW 1: MoE 93-94. "The hand she gave him was plump and weightless...its pointed nails, like beetle wings, seemed poised to fly off with her at any moment into the improbable...basically a rather shameless human organ that, like a dog's muzzle, will touch anything and yet is publicly considered the seat of fidelity, nobility, and tenderness." "Diotima resisted this impression by deciding to feel compassion for him. Ulrich could see that she was constantly studying his appearance and, obviously not moved by unfavorable feelings, was probably telling herself that the noble qualities he so palpably seemed to possess must be suffocated by a vicious life and could be saved." / "Do you have anything specific in mind?" / "No one who speaks of the greatest and most important thing in the world means anything that really exists." MwQ 94 – 95.

159 Musil GW 1: MoE 94. "But if you point this out to someone who happens at that very moment to be speaking of the greatest and most important thing in the world, that person will suspect that she is dealing with an individual devoid of feelings and ideals." MwQ 95-96.

160 Nachlaß He-30/78; 1929-1941 "Sch. Heft steif", emphasis mine. "Plato overturned the skeptical sensual relativism of the Sophists and against the materialism and mechanism of the Atomists (Leukipp, Democritus teach the strict mechanical necessity of reality, which they develop from atoms) Plato answers: experience is the source of error, the True is present in thought alone, insofar as it is free from the senses. And it is not material elements which are the cause of things but the Idea. Against him again Epicurus: sensory certainty is the basis of our knowing, the intellect is fully dependent on feeling...Arist. Perfected Platonism...and overcame the dualism of the Idealistic teaching...and showed that the idea is not an abstraction but a life principle, and further he identified the Idea with the soul and thus made the unity of body and soul, reality and Idea clear." Translation mine.

161 Lerner, Robert "Ecstatic Dissent" . Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies. No.1 (1992 Jan): 33-57.

162 Von Magdeburg (1,2; 4,2).

163 Beer 82.

164 von Magdeburg 4,27.

165 de Certeau 247.

166 Beer 80.

167 "Das fließende Licht der Gottheit" translated/quoted by Beer.

168 von Magdeburg 79-80. "O lady, if you go there, then we must go blind altogether. For the Godhead is so fiery hot, as you yourself well know, that all the fire and all the heat that shines and burns through heaven and all the saints, all of it flowed out of his divine breath and from his human mouth, by the will of the Holy Spirit. How could you remain there even for an hour? The Soul: "The fish in water cannot drown, nor the bird in the air sink down. Gold cannot perish in the fire where its pure shining is acquired. God has given to every creature to live according to its nature. How, then, can I resist my nature?" Ecstatic Confessions, ed. Martin Buber/English edition ed. Paul Mendes-Flohr, trans. Esther Cameron (New York: Harper & Row, 1985) 56-57.

169 She was "warned about this book, and was told by people: if we did not look out, a fire would engulf it" 26, 2-3.

170 Tobin, Frank. "Mechthild von Magdeburg and Meister Eckhart: Points of Comparison". Meister Eckhart and the Beguine Mystics, ed. Bernard, McGinn (New York: Continuum, 1997) 6.

171 MacNamara 333.

172 Eckhart 56. "Those people who seek peace in outward things. Whether it be in pilgrimages or mannerisms, with people or in works, in foreign lands, in poverty or humiliation—no matter how impressive or whatever it may be, these are all nothing and provide no peace. They search utterly the wrong way who seek thus....but what shall he do? First he must leave himself, then he will have left everything. Forsooth, even if a man gives up a kingdom or the whole world, if he has held onto himself he has given up nothing." Translation mine.

173 Eckhart 57. "People shouldn't think so much about what they should do; they should rather consider what they are. If the people and their way were only good, their works would glow brightly. If you are righteous then your works are righteous. One shouldn't try to base holiness on an act' holiness should be based on being. For the works do not make us holy, but rather we should make the works holy." Translation mine.

174 Eckhart 50.

175 See Quint's introduction to Meister Eckhart: Deutsche Predigten 199-200.

176 Eckhart 157. "Intravit Jesus in templum et coepit eicere vendentes et ementes".

177 Eckhart 199. "quasi stella matutina in medio nebulae".

178 Nicolas of Cusa: On Learned Ignorance, transl. Hopkins, Jasper, Minneapolis, 1981, 61.

179 Musil GW 5: MoE 1524. "I said we are sisters. You have nothing against it that I love the world but I must love her like a sister, not like a man, or not like a man loves a woman. A little sensitive: you and she and I give each other gifts. I don't take anything away from the tenderness I give you if I also give to the world; on the contrary, each squandering enriches our wealth. We know that we each have our separate relations to each other which we couldn't even fully revealed if we tried, but these secrets do not inspire jealousy (this is the way sisters live together). Jealousy

demands that one wants to make an ownership of love. But I may lie in the grass, pressed upon the lap of the earth and you will feel the sweetness of this moment with me." Translation mine.

180 Musil GW 5: MoE 1673.

181 Eckhart 198. "quasi stella matutina...". "An additional power is in the soul, with which it thinks. This power images the things to itself which are not present so that I recognize these things as well as if I saw them with my eyes, yes, even better—I can imagine a rose very well (also) in the winter—, and the soul works with this power in non-being and follows God in this, who works in non-being."

182 de Certeau 167.

183 epigraph, Quint's introduction. "Whosoever does not understand this talk should not trouble his heart with it. For so long as a man does not become like unto this truth he will not understand it." Translation mine.

184 Malte-Fues, Wolfram. Mystik als Erkenntnis? Kritische Studien zur Meister Eckhart Forschung (Bonn: Bouvier, 1981) 18. "To understand Eckhart's sermon is to change one's life". Translation mine.

185 de Certeau 166.

186 Malte-Fues 39-40. "Indeed it seems to me that a certain law-bound interchange between individuality and universality is the essential pulse beat of the higher life and the first requirement of ethical health." Translation mine.

187 Eckhart 452. "He who burdens another with calumny praises god through this calumny; and the more he calumniates the more powerfully he praises God"
 "Even he who calumniates God praises God."
 "The good man should make his will like to God's will so that he wants everything that God wants: because God wants, in a certain sense, that I have sinned I did not wish not to have committed these sins, an that is true repentance."
 "Even if a man had committed a thousand deadly sins, if he were of proper disposition he would not wish he had not committed them." Translation mine.

188 Eckhart 200. He who would no nothing more than the creatures doesn't need to think of any sermons, for every creature is full of God and is a book." Translation mine.

189 Musil Nachlaß: 7/11/111 ^E-6^ Emerson Kreise Belegstellen. :There are no virtues that are absolute. All are (dynam. Morality) attempts and tests. The virtues of society are vices to the holy. Noted: the opposite side of this concept that there is no absolute Good is that there is also no absolute Evil." Translation mine.

190 Musil GW 3: MoE 733-34. "'You surely remember....,' she exclaimed, and named several well-known instances from literature: 'You didn't tell me whether you could forgive a thief, but do you mean you'd regard these murderers as good people?'"

‘Of course!’ Ulrich shouted back. ‘No—wait. Perhaps they’re just potentially good people, valuable people. They still are, even afterward, as criminals. But they don’t stay good!’

‘Then why do you still like them after their crime? Surely not because of their earlier potentiality but because you still find them attractive?’

‘But that’s always the way it is,’ Ulrich said. ‘It’s the person who gives character to the deed; it doesn’t happen the other way round. We separate good and evil, but in our hearts we know they are a whole!’” MwQ 797.

191 Nachlaß: He-10/49; 1918-1921 ^"Hohes Notizbuch". "on the aesthetic of play and appearance, compare Gomperz p.213 footnote Ariston vs. Chios—according to him the highpoint of the stoics and the Greek ideal of inner freedom— and in agreement with Ariston: Cankara (Deussen *The =Sutras of the Vedanta* p.428) teach: there is no morally binding law for the “wise man”. To act according to inner freedom is to “do what occurs to one” (but only the wise may do this). Cankara: God acts only as a game. Ariston: the wise man is like an actor who performs every role equally well. So beware of the argument of the unworthiness of play=aesthetic! (Does this refer to Schiller or is this a no longer known tradition?)” Translation mine.

192 Nurbakhsh, Javed, In the Tavern of Ruin (New York: Khamiqalli-Nimatulla, 1978) 10.

193 Nurbakhsh 14.

194 Nurbakhsh 15.

195 Nurbakhsh 11.

196 Shah, Idries. The Sufis (Chicago: Kazi, 1996) 425.

197 Shah 424-5.

198 Wilson, Peter Lamborn. Scandal: Essays in Islamic Heresy (New York: Autonomedia, 1987) 8.

199 Wilson Scandal 9.

200 Wilson Scandal 38.

201 Nietzsche, Friedrich. Nietzsches Werke II (Leipzig: Kröner, 1923) 888. “These Nay-sayers and outsiders of today who are unconditional on one point—their insistence on intellectual cleanliness, these hard, severe, abstinent, heroic spirits who constitute the honor of our age; all these pale atheists, anti-Christians, immoralists, nihilists; these skeptics, ephectics, hectics of the spirit (they are all hectics in some sense or other); these last idealists of knowledge in whom alone the intellectual conscience dwells and is incarnate today—they certainly believe they are completely liberated from the ascetic ideal as possible, these ‘Free, very free spirits’ ... They are far from being free spirits; *for they still have faith in truth.*

When the Christian crusaders in the orient encountered the invincible order of the Assassins, that order of free spirits par excellence, whose lowest ranks followed a rule of obedience the like of which no order of monks ever attained, they obtained in some way the highest ranks alone as their *secretum*: ‘Nothing is true, everything is permitted.’ —Very well, *that was freedom of spirit*; in that way the faith in truth itself was *abrogated*.” Basic Writings of Nietzsche, ed. & trans. Walther Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1968) 584-586.

202 Wilson Scandal, 39.

203 Wilson Scandal 42.

204 Following section from Nachlaß: He/30/90; 1929-1941; "Sch. Heft Steif".

205 "The forgiving love is open even to Peter who is guilty of denying the Lord...or/even if you deny the Lord the love of the savior is open to you." Translation mine.

206 "One could always read more into it [out of it] (the more initiated one was)." Translation mine.

207 Nurbakhsh 8.

208 Nurbakhsh 8.

209 Ricoeur, Paul. The Rule of the Metaphor (New York: U of Toronto P, 1977) 42.

210 Musil TB I 387. "Looking back: ethnologists say that the Paleolithic cave drawings had magical purposes, that today the Negro makes similar ones the night before the hunt. Art then would be of religious-magical origin. Just as my late companion v. Hornbostel has shown about poetry and what I already utilized in the essay [Literati and Literature]. Thus art and religion are related (and therefore also in competition)." Translation mine.

211 Musil GW 8: Essays und Reden 1141. "...and it is well known even today that primitive people anxiously avoid mistakes in form because of the presumed consequences." Precision and Soul 89.

212 Lévy-Bruhl 76.

213 Lévy-Bruhl 77.

214 Tambiah, Stanley Jeyaraja, Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1990) 18.

215 Graves, Robert, The White Goddess: a Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth (New York: Octagon, 1972) 241.

216 cf. Musil's mentions of Jaensch, particularly his "Eine interessante psychologische Studie" (1923), and William Stern's "Psychologie in der frühen Kindheit" (1927), in his notebooks.

217 Musil explores this connection of the childlike and the primitive in his own autobiographical memories and in his novel describing, for example, his own childlike/primitive impressions of paper circus animals, or experiences of merger with objects or persons.

218 Roth 203. A "drive towards play which is an end in itself".... "The pictures of the inner vision are inspired and encouraged by the outward depictions of images. Wish and reality merge." Translation mine.

219 Kretschmer, Ernst, Medizinische Psychologie 66, quoted in Roth 423. "We call the periphery of the consciousness field "the sphere". Under activities of the sphere we mean those first

thoughts. The dream activities help us to presume something about what goes on in our daytime thought in this sphere which plays at the edge of our consciousness and is in the dark region wherefrom all thought springs but especially that intuitive, productive, artistic thought that precedes the finished, abstract, and syntactical thought arranged in strict logical categories, that provides it with the elements without which it could not even come into being." Translation mine.

220 Musil "Politisches Bekenntnis eines jungen Mannes. Ein Fragment" (1913), quoted in Roth 204 (from "Die weissen Blätter", Nov. 1913 also in Musil GW 8 : Essays und Reden 1009-15.) "There is a thinking that creates truth as clearly as a sewing machine, stitch by stitch. And there is a kind of thinking that makes us happy. It gets into you so impatiently that your knees shake; it piles up insights before you in flight and storm, believing in which will absorb the life of your soul for years to come, and —you will never know if they are true. Let's be honest: you are suddenly transported up a mountain from which you can see your inner future with blissful breadth and certainty, like —let's be honest, like a periodic madman, a manic-depressive in the early stages of mania. You don't cry out or do anything foolish, but your thinking is unencumbered and gigantic as if with clouds, while the healthy mind fits thoughts together snugly like bricks and has the overriding need to test every single step again and again against the facts. The healthy way of thinking impoverishes you, solitary one, because it never allows you to get beyond the answers to a few questions, which your soul obviously cannot on. It makes you unfruitful. But from time to time you must repeatedly force your intuitive way of thinking back to this healthy thinking, must test it against it, must submit to it, must not allow yourself to wander too far from it if you don't want to fall into extravagance, which is the same as meaninglessness." Precision and Soul 31-2.

221 Roth 204. "Already in this text we have the connection with psychopathology, but also the difference between the sick condition and the artistic, that is, the necessity of 'returning back,' of the connecting surface with the 'normal condition'. The artistic experience is a spiritual 'Being' which is known by its 'expansion and contraction,' a spiritual condition. Therein lies the specific essence of this process; it differentiates itself thus from the loose, irrational experience, from unconscious dream thought on the one hand and from scientific, logical, rational thought on the other. It is the experience of a touching of spheres, a boundary experience which moves between ratio and irratio that is characterized by precisely this union of both realms." Translation mine.

222 Tambiah 91: Lévy-Bruhl's Carnets (1931).

223 Tambiah 91.

224 Lévy-Bruhl 77.

225 In many of Musil's drafts for the novel an earlier choice of his main protagonist's name, "Anders," is used for the character who would later become "Ulrich".

226 Musil GW 5: MoE 1753. "For example, Clarisse gave Ulrich three words and asked him to read them in any order he chose. If they were 'God,' 'red,' and 'goes,' he read 'God goes red,' or 'God, red, goes'—that is, his brain immediately either understood them as a sentence or separated them by commas in order to underline that it was *not* making them into a sentence. Clarisse called this the chemistry of words, that they always cohere in groups, and showed how to counter this. Her favorite bit of information was that she worked with exclamation points or underlining. God!! Red!!! Goes! Such accumulations slow one down, and the word dams up behind them to its full meaning. She also underlined words from one to ten times, and at times a page she had written that way looked like a cryptic musical score. Another means, but one which she used less frequently, was repetition; through it the weight of the repeated word became greater than the power of the syntactic bond, and the word began to sink without end. God goes green green green green. It was

an incredibly difficult problem to ascertain correctly the number of repetitions so that they would express exactly what was meant." MwQ 1564.

227 Musil GW 5: MoE 1753. "Flakes of fire were stolen by poets from the volcano of madness: at some point in primeval times and later, every time a genius revisited earth; these glowing connections of words, not yet constricted to specific meanings, were planted in the soil of ordinary language to form its fertility, 'which as we know comes from its volcanic origins.' But—so Clarisse concluded— it follows from this that the mind must decay to primal elements again and again in order for life to remain fruitful. This placed in Clarisse's hands the responsibility for a monstrous irresponsibility; she knew that she was really uneducated, but now she was filled with a heroic lack of respect for everything that had been created before her." MwQ 1565.

228 Musil GW 5: MoE 1753-4 "Ulrich was able to follow Clarisse's games this far, and youth's lack of respect made it easier for him to dream into the shattered mind these new structures that could be formed: a process that has repeated itself among us several times around 1900, when people loved the suggestive and sketchy, as after 1910, where in painting people succumbed to the charm of the simplest constructive elements and bid the secrets of the visible world echo by reciting a kind of optical alphabet." MwQ 1565.

229 Musil Nachlaß. 2/04/088^AE- 20 "Moral in II". "Speech possessed for them a high level of reality. Things became real in words first...Ag. still believed in the original magical power (enlivening power) of the Word—the world was said to have been created from the Word, but it continued to be created by it...logos; discuss; he who possesses the Word possesses the thing." Translation mine.

230 Buber 37.

231 Frazer, Sir James, Adonis, Attis, Osiris (New York: University Books, 1961) 39.

232 Frazer 43.

233 von Magdeburg 80. "The Soul: 'What is your command, Lord?'

God: 'You must get undressed.'

The Soul: "Lord, how an that be?"

God: 'Dame Soul, you are so natured in me, that nothing must come between us. There was never an angel, however high, to whom was given for an hour that which is given you for eternity. Therefore you shall put fear and shame from you and all outward virtues. You should wish to find in eternity only the virtue that you bear within yourself by nature, that is, your noble longing and your unfathomable desire. These I will fill eternally with my infinite riches.'

The Soul: 'Lord, now I am a naked soul, and you in yourself a glorious God. Our companionship is eternal bliss without death.'

And now his will and her will both are blissfully fulfilled. He gives himself to her and she gives herself to him. What happens to her then, she knows, and I am content with that." Ecstatic Confessions, 57.

234 Lüers, Grete, Die Sprache der deutschen Mystik des Mittelalters im Werke der Mechthild von Magdeburg (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966) 64. "But the soul must really, legally, be bound to the king, as the lady queen, she can not be his concubine, and if she is she suffers misery and desperation 'how much you have made a concubine of your honest queen' 9M. 70, 15). Then she is only a 'suffering low girl,' 'a kitchen maid,' as Seusse liked to say. She is

[gebiirsch?], a 'girl of the town.' But if she is the true queen, she should be placed on the 'throne of the eternal chamber' (M. 209.22)." Translation mine.

235 Lüers 18. "The most spiritual, the most sublime is expressed by the lowest and most sensual; the mystic's metaphor is distinguished by this, that it appears to bridge both spheres, that they are not contradictory opposite poles to him. The mystic has the ability to formulate everything *sub specie aeterni*, more pregnantly expressed, to see everything *in aeterno*. He is in this sense the true erotic person; for Eros in its most valuable sense means the unification of the most sensual and the most spiritual through a connection with the eternal." Translation mine.

236 Musil Nachlaß: 8/140; 1920; "Die 20 Werke I". 19. Musil's notes on Die geistliche Ehe in der alten Kirche, Adolf Jölicher. "...the close cohabitation of masculine and feminine clerics...went from the simple test of chastity to extreme ascetic excesses and a deep religious relationship of the sexes." Translation mine.

237 Cumont, Franz, The Mysteries of Mithra (Chicago: Open Court, 1903) 40.

238 Graves 117.

239 Graves 117-118.

240 Cumont 187.

241 Musil GW 8 : Essays und Reden 1139.

242 Musil Nachlaß 5444 4/03/441 ^A-90 "Brief an Matthias di Gaspero 1907".

243 Musil TB I.

244 Musil GW 8: Essays und Reden 1153 "the hostile difference between the sources of creativity and the attempt at moral normalcy...the criminal as good person in the literature after Dostoevsky". Translation mine.

245 cf. Wilson Scandal.

246 Schelling, Ulrich. "Das analogische Denken bei Robert Musil", RM: Studien zu seinem Werk (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1970) 72-3.

247 Schelling 178. "constructive irony" .." a system of mirroring and ironic breaks..[there exists] not one important thought in this novel that doesn't have its clear or unclear far off echo in numerous characters; not one character who does not, no matter in what reversal or how inadvertently, take part in the major themes." Translation mine.

248 Schelling 179. "Diotima's "ancient type, lightly clothed in corpulence," Arnheim's "Phoenician, ancient type" and Hagauer's and Lindner's "thick lips"... "A chemistry of figure"... "A realm of possibilities" which allows him "whenever he wants to let any character complete anytime any idea." Translation mine.

249 Schelling 179. "And it is always the magic wand of analogy that works: that Ulrich is the one who is the secretary of the failed 'parallel action'; that Tuzzi calls him his 'cousin' and that he feels himself a deep 'sympathy for Tuzzi; that Moosbrugger is more important to him 'than his own life that he leads'; that he spends time with the Christian Germanic Nationalist and has 'a taste for Gerda's strange friends'; that the expressions of the crazy Clarisse are 'considerably similar' to his own and that even Lindner sometimes speaks like Ulrich. That Musil understood these configuration and partial harmonies as analogies too is proven directly by the following: 'Everything that we do is only metaphor. That is: analogy. If I substitute myself, Ulrich, for Moosbrugger, that can only be understood as partial, not full. Like if I break her marriage with Clarisse, I don't fix it too. Our whole existence is only analogy.'" Translation mine.

250 Musil Nachlaß 2/08/022 ^ "Stern Psych d. frühen Kindheit" . "A child sees a large picture of the Madonna and wants to put a shirt on the baby Jesus. Another one sees an eagle who is attacking a little lamb and puts his hand protectively over the picture. According to E. Jaensch the primordial cells of the experience of the exterior world are images in which perception and imagination are still unseparated." Translation mine.

251 Musil GW 3: MoE 890. "Every one of them had evil thoughts, of course, and every one suppressed them, and nobody blamed himself overmuch; but no one else had these thoughts outside himself, in another person, who would give them the enchanting inaccessibility of an experience in a dream." MwQ 945.

252 Lüers 27.

253 Lüers 29.

254 Lüers 20. "The apparent lifting of the polarity between spirituality and sensuality is just what characterizes the mystics of the thirteenth and fourteenth century, so that the spiritual can be substituted for the sensual and the sensual can substitute for the spiritual, and that is the meaning of all metaphor."

255 Wagner-Egelhaaf 16. "The ontological dynamic between Father and Son, primal image and image, word and adjective is expressed often in mysticism by the metaphor of a mirror. It is a traditional medium for the knowledge of God, the other and the self. Plotinus sees the Son as the mirror of the Father. According to Gregory of Nyssa the soul can see itself as little as the eyes can; it needs thus a mirror . In Jakob Böhme as well mirror and eye metaphors occur often together: the birth of the Son as the mirroring of the eye." Translation mine.

256 Musil GW 3: MoE 905. "It's the ancient longing for a doppelgänger of the opposite sex, for a lover who will be the same as yourself and yet someone else, a magical figure that is oneself and yet remains magical, with the advantage over something we merely imagine of having the breath of autonomy and independence. This dream of a quintessential love, unhampered by the body's limitations, coming face-to-face in two identical yet different forms, has been concocted countless times in solitary alchemy in the alembic of the human skull..." MwQ 982.

257 Musil TB I 847. "Reminded of the Isis-Osiris poem. It contains the novel in nucleo. People accuse the novel of perversity: in defense: the archaic and the schizophrenic may have the same artistic appearance, they are however totally different. In any case the sibling feeling can be perverse and it can be myth." Translation mine.

258 Frazer 90.

259 Frazer 16.

260 Frazer 10.

261 Musil GW 6: Prosa und Stücke. 465.

262 Musil GW 3: MoE 695. "...his silent protest against the regulations, which he couldn't express any other way." MwQ 755.

263 Musil GW 3: MoE 695. "... transcends the merely personal, a sense of value and justice. Alone he is nothing, which is why the monarch personifies a spiritual symbol. In short, when a man dies he should wrap himself in his decorations as a dead sailor is wrapped in the flag when his body is consigned to the sea!" MwQ 755.

264 Lévy-Bruhl 254-6.

265 Musil GW 3: MoE 689. "For at that time the town was placarded with circus posters showing not only horses but lions and tigers too, and huge splendid dogs that lived on good terms with the wild beasts. He had stared at these posters for a long time before he managed to get one of the richly colored pieces of paper for himself, cut the animals out, and stiffen them with little wooden supports so they could stand up. What happened next can only be compared to drinking that never quenches one's thirst no matter how long one drinks, for there was no end to it, nor, stretching on for weeks, did it get anywhere; he was constantly being drawn to and into these adored creatures with the unutterable joy of the lonely child, who had the feeling every time he looked at them that he owned them, with the same intensity that he felt something ultimate was missing, some unattainable fulfillment the very lack of which gave his yearning the boundless radiance that seemed to flood his whole being." MwQ 749.

266 Musil mentions in his notebook, TB I 971(possibly from 1941?) that he was reading Wilhelm Meister. Would this correspond to the period when he was working on this chapter?

267 Musil GW 3: MoE 689. Musil's fictional retelling of an autobiographical incident.

268 Lévy-Bruhl 47.

269 Musil GW 3: MoE 723. "He noticed the colors of the streetcars, the automobiles, shop windows, and archways, the shapes of church towers, the faces and the facades, and even though they all had the usual European resemblances, his gaze flew over them like an insect that has strayed into a field bright with unfamiliar colors and cannot, try as it will, find a place to settle on. Such aimless, purposeless strolling through a town vitally absorbed in itself, the keenness of perception increasing in proportion as the strangeness of the surroundings intensifies, heightened still further by the connection that it is not oneself that matters but only this mass of faces, these movements wrenched loose from the body to become armies of arms, legs, or teeth, to all of which the future belongs—." MwQ 785.

270 Musil GW 3: MoE 751. "Ulrich was strangely reminded of the moment when his enemy Arnheim had thrown an arm around him and the unregulated current of physical contact with

another being had invaded him as though through a breach. But this time his own nature did not repel the alien one; on the contrary, something in him advanced toward her, something that had been buried under the rubble of mistrust and resentment that fills the heart of a man who has lived a fairly long time." MwQ 815.

271 cf. Musil's discussion of the "Großschriftsteller in MoE, chapters 95 and 96, and in his notebooks TB I 693, 766, and 802: "Der Großschriftsteller ist kein großer Schriftsteller". TB I 802.

272 Musil GW 2: MoE 641. "the need to charm Ulrich and get him into his power" MwQ 699.

273 Musil GW 2: MoE 634-5.

274 Musil GW 2: MoE 641.

275 Musil GW 2: MoE 641. "Arnheim had never felt as intensely as he did at this moment the permanence of Western civilization, that marvelous network of forces and disciplines." MwQ 699.

276 Musil GW 2: MoE 643-4. "This arm on his shoulder made Ulrich unsure of himself. To stand there in this quasi embrace was ridiculous and unpleasant, a miserable feeling, in fact. Still, it was a long time since Ulrich had known a friend, and perhaps this added an element of bewilderment. He would have liked to shake off the arm and he instinctively tried to do so, even while Arnheim, for his part, noticed these signals of Ulrich's restiveness and did his utmost to ignore them. Ulrich, realizing the awkwardness of Arnheim's position, was too polite to move away and forced himself to put up with this physical contact, which felt increasingly like a heavy weight sinking into a loosely mounded dam and breaking it apart. Without meaning to, Ulrich had built up a wall of loneliness around himself, and now life, by way of another man's pulse beat, came pouring in through the breach in that wall, and silly as it was ridiculous, really, he felt a touch of excitement." MwQ 702.

277 Musil GW 2: MoE 644. "Er dachte an Gerda". MwQ 679. Also see chapter 119, "Kontertermine und Verführung," especially pp. 618-620: [Ulrich] "Daß du mich liebst!" [Gerda] "Nein, daß dein Freund Arnheim deine Kusine betrügt".

278 cf. Musil's exploration of union of opposites in his Törleß, Die Vereinigungen, Drei Frauen, and other works.

279 Musil GW 3: MoE 690. "...filled him, in the same indescribable way as he had longed for the animals on the circus posters, with the longing to be a girl." MwQ 750.

280 Musil GW 3: MoE 690. "...it had been as if he were groping in darkness for a door and suddenly came up against some blood-warm or warmly sweet resistance, pressing against it time and again as it yielded tenderly to his urge to penetrate it without actually giving way. Perhaps it also resembled some harmless form of vampire passion, which sucks the desired being into itself, except this infant male did not want to draw that infant female into himself but wanted to take her place entirely, and this happened with that dazzling tenderness present only in the first intimations of sexuality." MwQ 750.

281 Musil GW 3: MoE 875. Under the influence of Agathe's charm, "Ulrich fühlte einen Duft von Abgeschlossenheit und Süße an sich, der seinem Geschmack immer mehr widerstrebte".

282 Musil GW 3: MoE 705. "And so the brother and sister set about acting in defiance of their father's last will." MwQ 766.

283 Musil GW 3: MoE. 705-6.

284 Roth 202.

285 Musil GW 3: MoE 706. "And if he had the impression that the stars and crosses shone more brightly in his sister's hand than in his own, indeed as if they would turn into magical objects, it might really have been true in the greenish darkness in the room, filled with glimmerings of light reflected off the leaves of the big potted plants; or it might have been that he felt his sister's will, hesitantly taking the lead and youthfully seizing his. But since no conscious motive was to be recognized in this, there again arose in these moments of unalloyed contact an almost dimensionless and therefore intangibly powerful sense of their joint existence." MwQ 767.

286 Musil GW 4: MoE 1088. "When Ulrich looked at a blossom—which was not exactly an ingrained habit of this once-impatient man—he now sometimes found no end to contemplation and, to say it all, no beginning either. If by chance he could name it, it was redemption from the sea of infinity. Then the little golden star became 'forsythia,' and those early leaves and umbels 'lilacs.' But if he did not know the name he would call the gardener over, for then this old man would name an unknown name and everything was all right again, and the primordial magic by which possession of the correct name bestows protection from the untamed wildness of things demonstrated its calming power as it had ten thousand years ago." MwQ 1183.

287 Musil GW 3: MoE 707. "She then sauntered along with it innocently, inspected a brick at the end of a freshly laid row, lifted it and slipped Ulrich's name into the wall before anyone could turn her away. Ulrich himself had hesitantly followed her and felt at the moment she did it the vise in which in his fright he had been gripped turning into a wheel of sharp knives whirling so rapidly in his chest that it threw off sparks like a flaming Catherine wheel." MwQ 768.

288 Musil GW 3: MoE 707. "For repeating such a game with the dead man seemed taboo to him." MwQ 768.

289 Roth 212.

290 Musil GW 3: MoE 755. "'Do you know what that proves?' Ulrich exclaimed. 'Just that the power for good which is somehow present in us eats its way instantly through the walls if it gets locked into solid form, and immediately uses that as a bolt hole to evil!'" MwQ 820.

291 Musil TB I 643-4. "Just as a bad person gambles more recklessly with someone else's money than with his own. I would like to stretch my thoughts out beyond the border of that which I could justify under any conditions; I call this essay, attempt. And as all goodness has rules, but evil still has no system, is treated as an exception and therefore always remains personal, I am able, as I am neither scholar, nor a character, nor in this case do I even want to be a writer, I can give my thoughts a personal relation to my 'I'; the situation demands this, not I." Translation mine.

292 Musil GW 3: MoE 959. "'Good has become a cliché almost by its very own nature, while evil remains criticism. The immoral achieves its divine right by being a drastic critique of the moral! It shows us that life has other possibilities. It shows us up for liars... In a company of will-forgers you

would certainly stand up for the inviolability of the legal regulations; it's only in the company of the righteous that it all gets blurred and perverted. If only Hagauer were a rogue, you would be flamingly just; it's too bad he's such a decent fellow!" MwQ 1040-41.

293 Cohn 175.

294 Cohn 183.

295 Musil GW 3: MoE 871. "Keeping within the framework of this logic that Ulrich was trying to adapt to, all that could ever be made good was something other than the damage done, and he did not doubt for an instant that this would have to be his and his sister's whole life.

'Putting it presumptuously,' he thought, 'this means: Saul did not make good each single consequence of his previous sins; he turned into Paul!'" MwQ 945-6.

296 Musil GW 3: MoE 823. "For as long as a particular morality is in the ascendant—and this is just as valid for the spirit of 'Love thy neighbor' as it is for a horde of vandals—'Don't!' is still only the negative corollary of 'Do!'" MwQ 894.

297 Burke, Kenneth. The Rhetoric of Religion (Boston: Beacon, 1961) 108.

298 Balle, Christel Tabus in der Sprache (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1990) 17. "...describes originally everything holy, sacred—in connection to God—and deriving therefrom everything mystically untouchable, dangerous, impure...Freud stresses also this ambivalent character of taboo, in that he compares taboo with neuroses...Furthermore the basis of taboo is a forbidden action towards which a strong leaning in the subconscious exists. The forbidden excites. Wherever a taboo exists, a desire must stand behind it." Translation mine.

299 Burke 186-7.

300 St. Augustine, Confessions of Saint Augustine (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1959) 161-2.

301 St. Augustine 35.

302 Cohn 180.

303 Sartre, Jean Paul. Saint Genet: Actor and Martyr, (New York: Braziller, 1963) 28.

304 Balle 17. "The breaking of a taboo awakens the envy of the group/society...Taboo indicates power: Whoever creates it or breaks it has the power in his hands." Translation mine.

305 Sartre 3.

306 Sartre 13.

307 Sartre 69.

308 Musil GW 3: MoE 735. "'It might enable me to write a poem that would enrich the inner life of thousands of people, or to come up with a great invention!' But he checked himself. 'That would never happen,' he thought. 'Only a lunatic could imagine it. Or an eighteen-year-old aesthete. God knows why, but those are ideas that contradict the laws of nature. On the other hand,' he conceded,

'it did work that way for primitive man. He killed because human sacrifice was a great religious poem!'" MwQ 799

309 Musil Nachlaß: 2/01/08. "Clear differentiation from gradual changes of convictions which they are accustomed to. Without deliberation and for and against. Passive revolution, gigantic transformations, which one watches like an observer. It happens. It is like a demonic or divine intervention. According to Oe[sterreich] usual preceded by moral depression, and then a drunkenness of happiness and joy with a strong consciousness of the immediate presence of God. Break with the past, career, family, et cet." Translation mine.

310 Musil Nachlaß: 2/01/08.

311 James, William, The Varieties of Religious Experience (New York: Longmans, 1928) 242.

312 James 212.

313 James 217.

314 Musil GW 3: MoE 752. "'This is how the saints describe it,' ...During those days I was exceedingly restless. Now I sat awhile, now I wandered back and forth through the house. It was like a torment, and yet it can be called more a sweetness than a torment, for there was no vexation in it, only a strange, quite supernatural contentment. I had transcended all my faculties and reached the obscure power. There I heard without sound, there I saw without light. And my heart became bottomless, my spirit formless, and my nature immaterial'

It seemed to them both that this description resembled the restlessness with which they themselves had been driven through house and garden..." MwQ 816-17.

315 Musil GW 3: MoE 762.. "'Right. That is, some tissue of habit in us tears." MwQ 827.

316 Heartfield, John, John Heartfield, ed. Pachnicke, Peter (New York: Abrams, 1992) 14.

317 Heartfield 41.

318 See Musil's treatment of film, farce and fiction in his play "Vinzenz und die Freundin Bedeutender Männer" and my afterword "That was not a farce, that was the Collapse of a Wall", Grill, Genese, Fiction (New York, 1999).

319 Antonowicz, Kaja. "'When a Nose Meets a Glass of Champagne': Odd Love Stories from the Microscripts of Robert Walser", Robert Walser and the Visual Arts, ed. Tamara S. Evans (New York: CUNY, pro-helvetia, 1996) 96.

320 Musil GW 3: MoE 752. "I only make fun of it because I love it." MwQ 817.

321 Musil GW 3: MoE 762. "What is left on the pictorial plane might best be called an ocean swell of sensations that rises and falls, breathes and shimmers, as though it filled your whole field of view without a horizon. Of course, there are still countless individual perceptions contained within it: colors, horns, movements, smells, and all the details of reality; but none of them are acknowledged any longer, even if they should still be recognized. Let me put it this way: the details no longer have any egoism, which they use to capture our attention, but they're all linked with each other in a

familiar, literally 'inward' way. And of course the 'pictorial plane' is no longer there either; but everything somehow flows over into you, all boundaries gone." MwQ 827.

322 Musil Nachlaß: 4/03/255^van Gogh Aus der Biographie. "Painters understand nature and love her and teach us to see. And then there are painters who can do nothing that is not good, they can make nothing bad, just as there are simple people who can do nothing which is not good." Translation mine.

323 Musil Nachlaß: 4/03/259 ^ A 143 ^van Gogh..

324 "Gefühl, selbst feines Gefühl für die Schönheiten in der Natur, ist nicht dasselbe wie ein gläubiges Gefühl; gleichwohl glaube ich, daß diese beiden miteinander in naher Verbindung stehen. Beinahe ein jeder hat Gefühl für Natur, der eine mehr, der andere minder; aber es gibt wenige, die da fühlen: Gott ist ein Geist u. die ihn anbeten, müssen ihn im Geist u. in der Wahrheit anbeten.... du weißt, daß geschrieben steht: die Welt vergehet u. all ihre Herrlichkeit, u. daß da hingegen auch gesprochen wird von einem Teil, der nicht weggenommen werden soll von einem Bronn lebenden Wassers, sprudelnd bis in das ewige Leben. Laß uns auch bitten, daß wir mögen reich werden in Gott. Denke aber nicht zu tief nach über diese Dinge, die dir von selbst immer deutlicher werden, und tue nur, was ich dir geraten habe. Fußnote: Dasselbe ist der Fall mit dem Gefühl für die Kunst." "Feeling, even fine feeling for the beauties of nature is not the same as a feeling of belief; at the same time I believe that they are both closely related. Almost anyone has a feeling for nature, one more, another less, but there are few who feel therein: God is a spirit and who worship him, who must worship him in spirit and truth.... You know that it is written: the world passes away and all its beauties, and that it is also said that there is a part that will not be taken away from a fountain of living water, overflowing into eternal life. Let us also ask that we will become rich in God. Do not think too deeply about these things which become clearer to you by themselves, and only do what I have advised you.' Footnote: it is the same thing with a feeling for art. "

325 Musil TB II 999. "That was not your death, but the collapse of a wall." Transl. mine.

326 Musil TB II 998. "I believe: like a virgin whom the lord has looked upon...at the end of those few moments there was a new presentiment in my body, one which had never found a home there before: God." Translation mine.

327 Musil GW 3: MoE 671. "Everything visible was more intensely so than usual, and when he looked across the square the crossbars of perfectly ordinary windows stood as black against the pale sheen of glass in the dimming light as if they were the crosses of Golgotha." MwQ 729.

328 Musil GW 3: MoE 67. "at a tender age...so that since their childhood, when they had in fact been inseparable, he had hardly seen his sister again..." MwQ 731.

329 Musil GW 3: MoE 725, emphasis mine. "The moment Agathe got on the train...something happened that bore every resemblance to a sudden rupture, and the two fragments into which the moment of departure exploded flew as far apart as if they had never belonged together." MwQ 788.

330 Musil GW 3: MoE 725. "At this moment...she made the decision never to return, and her mind became agitated like a heart that realizes suddenly that it has escaped a danger of which it had been wholly unaware." MwQ 788.

331 Musil GW 3: MoE 758. "No European any longer scourges himself, smears himself with ashes, cuts out his tongue, really takes part in things or totally withdraws from society, swoons with passion, breaks people on the wheel or impales them, but everyone sometimes feels the need to do so..." MwQ 824.

332 Bynam, Caroline Walker. Fragmentation and Redemption (New York: Zone, 1992) 188. "In their statistical study of Saints, Weinstein and Bell have pointed out that, although women were fewer than one in five of those canonized and revered as saints between 1000 and 1700, they were over half of those in whose lives patient suffering of illness was a major element of sanctity. Ernst Benz, Richard Kieckhefer and Elizabeth Petroff have also pointed out the prominence of illness — as theme and as fact— in women's spirituality. Some visionary women (such as Julian of Norwich) prayed for disease as a gift from God; some (such as Lidwina of Schiedam) at first desired to be cured. But, whatever the cause of disease or the saint's initial reaction to it, many medieval women — for example, Serafina of San Gimignano, Villana de' Botti, Margaret of Ypres, Dorothy of Montau, Gertrude of Helfta and Alpaïs of Cudot — made physical and mental anguish an opportunity for their own salvation and that of others."

333 Musil GW 3: MoE 725. "That the grownup's world had no power over her..." MwQ 788.

334 "The jolting of the taxi that was driving them over badly paved streets prevented a conversation..." "Agathe when she can't talk to Ulrich". MwQ 788.

335 Musil GW 3: MoE 730. But now, for no particular reason, an infinite horror slowly came over her: Hagauer had actually been there with her, in the flesh!" MwQ 793-4.

336 Musil GW 3: MoE 732. "Agathe turned her face away from Ulrich, whom she had been watching, and stared out the window." MwQ 795.

337 Tobin, Frank, "Mechthild von Magdeburg and Meister Eckhart: Points of Comparison," Meister Eckhart and the Beguine Mystics, ed. Bernard McGinn (New York: Continuum, 1997) 49-50.

338 Tobin 49.

339 Musil GW 3: MoE 732. "She was no longer sitting upright but had let herself slide down into the cab's musty-smelling upholstery; it was easier to look out the window in this position, and she remained in this ungraceful posture, in which she was rudely jolted and shaken to the very bowels. This body of hers, being tossed about like a bundle of rags, gave her an uncanny feeling, for it was the only thing she owned...Men were a complement to one's body, but they were no spiritual fulfillment; one took them as they took oneself. Her body told her that in only a few years it would begin to lose its beauty, which meant losing the feelings that, because they arise directly out of its self-assurance, can only barely be expressed in words or thoughts. Then it would all be over, without anything having ever been there." MwQ 795-6.

340 Musil GW 3: MoE 736.

341 Musil GW 3: MoE 737. "She...saw a somber, barren landscape before her whose sadness harmonized with her own. When she turned around she said: 'It's a place to kill oneself,' and

smiles. "The emptiness in my head could melt with sweet peace into the emptiness of this view!...So now I wish you would tell me, for God's sake, tell me at long last, in which moments does something in life strike us as necessary?" MwQ 800-801.

342 Musil GW 3: MoE 737.. "'When one turns over in bed!' Ulrich said gruffly...and then all at once you've turned over! One really should say you've been turned over.'" Emphasis mine

343 Musil GW 3: MoE 741. "Es ist so einfach, Tatkraft zu haben, und so schwierig, einen Tatsinn zu suchen!" /"It's so simple to have the energy to act, and so hard to make sense of it." MwQ 805.

344 Musil GW 3: MoE 742. " 'When I saw you before, standing on the rampart,' he added in an undertone, 'I suddenly had a wild urge to do something! I don't know why. I really have done some rash things sometimes. The magic lay in the fact that when it was over, there was something more besides me. Sometimes I'm inclined to think that a person could be happy even as a result of a crime, because it gives him a certain ballast and perhaps keeps him on a steadier course.'" MwQ 806.

345 Musil GW 3: MoE 774.. "'You're not the true man of action'" MwQ 841.

346 Musil GW 3: MoE 772. "Ulrich turned away, awakened as abruptly and palpably from his memories as if he had bumped against some solid edge. There was something here he was not yet ready to think about." MwQ 839.

347 Musil GW 3: MoE 793. "the 'incident,' as he euphemistically called what had happened in his last few hours with Agathe, only a few days after their deep discussion." MwQ 861.

348 Musil GW 3: MoE 823. '...unlimited generosity in giving or the urge to mortify the flesh, have already almost entirely disappeared; and where they are still practices they are practiced by fools, cranks, or bloodless prigs." MwQ 895.

349 Musil GW 3: MoE 824. "...a pretext to screen out a prospect that frightened him a good deal more. For his sister's conduct, which certainly did not pass muster objectively, exerted a remarkable fascination as soon as one dreamed along with it; for then all the controversies and indecisions vanished, and one was left with the impression of a passionate, affirmative virtue lusting for action, which could easily seem, compared with its lifeless daily counterpart, to be some kind of ancient vice." MwQ 895-6.

350 Musil GW 3: MoE 797.

351 Musil GW 3: MoE 797-8. "She was doing this just as she had the other day when she took her father's medals from his reluctant hand to exchange them for the imitations, and at this moment he loved her in spite of her lack of principle, with the remarkable feeling that it was his own thoughts that had gone from him to her and were now returning from her to him, poorer in deliberation but with the balsamic scent of freedom about them like a creation of the wild." MwQ 867.

352 cf. also Hoffmannsthal 104, "Gespräch über Gedichte" (1903) wherein almost the same language is used to describe the mystical nature of metaphor: "Darum ist Symbol das Element der Poesie, und darum setzt die Poesie niemals eine Sache für eine andere..."

353 Musil GW 8: Essays und Reden 1237.. "Something is never compared to something else—as two different and separate things, which they remain in the comparison—for, even if this sometimes does happen, and one thing is said to be like another, it seems at that very moment to have already *been* the other since primordial times." Precision & Soul 245.

354 Musil GW 8: Essays und Reden 1235. "Not only hardly a poem, but hardly a line or a word sinks below the level of the others, and one has the same experience through the entire sequence of books." Precision and Soul 243.

355 Musil GW 8: Essays und Reden 1235. "...this jewellike stillness within a movement that never pauses...an expansive openness: its condition endures like an elevated pause." Precision and Soul 243.

356 Musil Precision and Soul 243.

357 Wagner-Egelhaaf 18.

358 Musil GW 6: Prosa und Stücke 410. "Bärli: Das muß ein Ende haben!
Alpha: Sagen Sie mir, warum muß es ein Ende haben? Sehen Sie diese Bürste an; sie hat zwei Enden. Nein, sie hat überhaupt so viele Enden wie Haare. Zählen Sie ihre Enden. ..."

359 James, Henry, quoted in Hayles, N. Catherine, ed. Chaos and Order (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1991) 86.

360 Hofmannsthal 293 "Der Dichter und diese Zeit". "The times are losing their synthesis".

361 Hofmannsthal 287. "They wanted to flee the fragmented condition of the world and found more fragments. They found all of the elements of existence laid bare: the mechanics of spirit, bodily conditions, the ambivalent relationships of existence, everything lying desolate as if it were a pile of materials for the building of a house. They found in these books the same atomization, corrosion of the human in his elements, the disintegration of everything which together made up higher humanness, and they had wanted to look in a magic mirror wherein the ruins might look back at them as if the ruins were something built, or the dead like something living, or the fallen like something eternally blossoming." Translation mine.

362 Hofmannsthal 294. "The written word [is a] struggle, a chaos, that wants to give birth to itself in those whose eyes lean eagerly towards the books and in those who have created the books." Translation mine.

363 Musil GW 5: MoE 1524.

364 Kermode, Frank, A Sense of an Ending (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1968).

365 Kermode 101.

366 Musil GW 4: MoE 1094. "...something similar had happened with the feelings of time: that flowing ribbon, the rolling staircase with its uncanny incidental association with death, seemed at many moments to stand still and at many others to flow on without any associations at all. In the

space of one single outward instant it might have disappeared into itself, without a trace of whether it had stopped for an hour or a minute." MwQ 1190.

367 Musil GW 3: MoE 869.

368 Musil GW 4: MoE 11088-9. "Denn das Wort schneidet nicht in solchem Zustand, und die Frucht bleibt am Ast, ob man sie gleich schon im Mund meint: das ist wohl das erste Geheimnis der taghellen Mystik."

369 Musil GW 5: MoE 1660-61. "...that our desires aim not at making one person out of two but, on the contrary, at escaping from our prison, our oneness, to become two in a union, but preferably twelve, a thousand, incredibly many, rather, to slip out of ourselves as in a dream, to drink life brewed to the boiling point, to be carried out of ourselves or whatever, for I can't express it very well; then the world contains as much lust as strangeness, as much tenderness as activity, and is not an opium haze but rather an intoxication of the blood, an orgasm of battle, and the only mistake we could make would be to forget the (lustful contact of) lust of strangeness and imagine doing all sorts of things by dividing up the hurricane of love into scanty creeks flowing back and forth between two people..." MwQ 1460.

370 Musil GW 5: MoE 1673. "My love, all movement in life comes from the evil and the brutal; goodness dozes off. Is a drop of some fragrance; but every hour is the same hole and yawning child of death, which has to be filled up with heavy ballast'." MwQ 1472.

371 Musil GW 5: MoE 1656. "Agathe looked up, frightened. She looked for Ulrich out there, but found him in the center of her heart. She did not see his form leaning out in the night, wrapped in starlight, but it was not his form, only its shining, ephemeral husk; and she saw the stars and the shadows without understanding that they were far away." MwQ 1456.

372 Musil GW 3: MoE 899. "Er sah sie an seiner Stelle im Bett liegen".

373 Musil Nachlaß: 2/01/002 L 33 Grenzerlebnisse. "He pressed himself against her so full of love and goodness so that he was entirely united with her. She looked at herself and at him in herself. The body became light and began to tremble...I become from him like a feather that exists without all strength and flies in the wind, carried. Swimming in him like a fish in the water or a bird in the air..." Translation mine.

374 Musil GW 5: MoE 1500. "Her brother's body nestled so lovably and indulgently against her that she rested in him; as he in her, nothing stirred in her, not even now the beautiful desire." MwQ 1422.

375 GW 5: MoE 1502. "the not-yet-ended dream that apparently wanted to have no end." MwQ 1424.

376 Musil GW 5: MoE 1660. "All at once Ulrich was startled, and thought he saw in the great brightness that the secret of love was precisely this, that lovers are not one." MwQ 1459.

377 Musil GW 3: MoE 801. "Do you realize...that we shall be entering into the Millennium?"

‘What’s that?’

‘We’ve talked so much about the love that isn’t a stream flowing towards its goal but a state of being like the ocean. Now tell me honestly: When they told you in school that the angels in heaven did nothing but bask in the presence of the Lord and sing His praises, were you able to imagine this blissful state of doing nothing and thinking nothing?’

‘I always thought it must be rather boring, which is certainly due to my imperfection’ was Agathe’s answer.” MwQ 870-1.

378 Swedenborg, quoted in GW 4: MoE 1203. “‘And since the Angels are not able to conceive of time, they also have a different idea of eternity than earthly people do; they understand by it an infinite state, not an infinite time.’” MwQ 1311.

379 Had Kermode made this jump, he might not have glibly stated (in A Sense of an Ending 128) that Musil “fails” in his “attempt to join fiction and reality”.

380 Kermode 71.

381 Kermode 71-2.

382 Musil GW 3: MoE 875-6. “‘Perhaps the content of the Millennium is merely the burgeoning of this energy, which at first shows itself in two people, until it grows into a resounding universal communion.’” MwQ 950-1.

383 Novalis Werke in einem Band (Berlin: Aufbau, 1984) 272.

384 Novalis 273.

385 Musil GW 4: MoE 1240. . “Spring and fall, speech and nature’s silence, and the magic of life and death too, mingled in this picture; hearts seemed to stop, removed from their breast to join the silent procession through the air.” MwQ 1327.

386 Musil GW 4: MoE 1214-1215.

387 Novalis 259-60.

388 Musil GW 5: MoE 1869. . “Life is an enduring oscillation between desire and satiety. If one has done something for a while, one will want the opposite. (Thus it must go: feelings demand dogma but can bear none.) This goes for the drives but also for the higher activities. Is there an enduring condition? Apparently only the “other condition” can give content to the period of creation and destruction... (worth noting that creation and destruction are the same thing, which Agathe complains to Ulrich about.)” Translation mine.

389 Musil MwQ 938. “From Koniatowski’s critique of Daniell’s theorem to the fall of man. From the fall of man to the emotional riddle posed by a man’s sister.”

390 Musil GW 3: MoE 864 . “like a down-to-earth sensation of hunger...”/ “which are met with in every corner of the city, have a great deal to tell us.” MwQ 938.

391 “‘Have you ever worn anything so flattering yet so durable as Topinam silk stockings?’ ... He turned away, and, a few steps farther along, looked into the window of a bookshop. ‘The Great Author’s Latest Work,’ said a cardboard sign beside a row of fifteen copies of the same book..” MwQ 938.

392 “...he didn’t know why. Perhaps it was because she cared so much about Koniatowski’s criticism of Kneppler. Perhaps he felt like talking to her about literature, about which she knew nothing.” MwQ 940.

393 Musil GW 5: MoE 1904 “Writing books, thus suicide, thus going to war.” Translation mine.

394 Musil GW 3: MoE 868 “He suddenly realized that what he was getting at could best be defined, without much ado, as the futile actuality or the eternal momentariness of literature. Does it lead to anything? Literature is either a tremendous detour from experience to experience, ending back where it came from, or an epitome of sensations that leads to nothing at all definite. ‘A puddle,’ he now thought, ‘has often made a stronger impression of depth on someone than the ocean, for the simple reason that we have more occasion to experience puddles than oceans.’” MwQ 943.

395 “the rolling locale that enclosed him and that had been created with T-square and compass” MwQ 946.

396 Musil GW 3: MoE 872. “...peering out from the body of modern transportation and still an involuntary part of it, lit on a stone column that had been standing beside this roadway since the period of the Baroque, so that the engineered comfort of this calculated artifact, unconsciously taken for granted, suddenly clashed with the passion erupting from the statue’s antiquated pose, which suggested something not unlike a petrified bellyache. The effect of this optical collision was to powerfully confirm the ideas which Ulrich had just been trying to escape. Could anything have illustrated life’s confusion more clearly than this chance spectacle? Without taking sides with either the Now or the Then in matters of taste as one usually does when faced with such a juxtaposition, he felt his mind abandoned by both sides without an instant’s hesitation, and saw in it only the great demonstration of a problem that is at bottom a moral problem. He could not doubt that the transience of what is regarded as style, culture, the will of the time, or the spirit of an era, for which it is admired, was a moral weakness. For in the great scale of the ages this instability means exactly what it would mean on the smaller scale of personal life: to have developed one’s potential one-sidedly, to have dissipated it in extravagant exaggerations, never taking the measure of one’s own will, never achieving a complete form, and in the disjointed passions doing now this, now that. Even the so-called succession or progress of the ages seems to him to be only another term for the fact that none of these experiments ever reach the point where they could all meet and move on together toward a comprehensive understanding that would at last offer a basis for a coherent development, a lasting enjoyment, and that seriousness of great beauty of which nowadays hardly more than a shadow occasionally drifts across our life.” MwQ 946.

397 Musil GW 3: MoE 872-73. “He felt as if he were coming out of a cellar.” MwQ 947.

398 Musil GW 3: MoE 873. “The streets were screeching with gaiety and filled with unseasonal warmth like a summer day. ...Everything was expansive and out in the sun. Ulrich stopped at almost every shop window. Those tiny bottles in so many colors, stoppered scents, countless variants of nail scissors—what quantities of genius there were even in a hairdresser’s window! A glove shop: what connections, what inventions, before a goat’s skin is drawn up on a lady’s hand and the animal’s pelt has become more refined than her own! ... One’s attention, a bright and

narrow beam, glided over a flower garden of fruits, gemstones, fabrics, forms and allurements whose gently persuasive eyes were opened in all the colors of the rainbow.... Ulrich's glance was even enchanted by the pale-golden beer seen in passing through the plate-glass windows of a restaurant, on tablecloths so white that they formed blue patches at the edges of shadows...." MwQ 947-8)

399 Musil GW 3: MoE 874. ("In sum, what it more or less came to was that Ulrich believed in the 'Fall of Man' and in 'Original Sin.' That is, he was inclined to think that at some time in the past, man's basic attitude had undergone a fundamental change that must have been roughly comparable to the moment when a lover regains his sobriety; he may then see the whole truth, but something greater has been torn to shreds, and the truth appears everywhere as a mere fragment left over and patched up again." MwQ 949.

400 Musil GW 3: MoE 877. "He could see her body beneath her dress like a big white fish just under the surface of the water. He felt the male urge to harpoon the fish and watch it flap and struggle, and there was in this as much repugnance as desire." MwQ 952.

401 Musil GW 3: MoE 878. "This love, which makes itself felt everywhere in company with the cruelty of modern life, could truly be called the sisterly love of an age that has no room for brotherly love..." MwQ 953.

402 Musil GW 3: MoE 878. "Ulrich glanced at his watch: he had been strolling along only fifteen minutes, and no more than forty-five had passed since he left the Palais Leinsdorf. Bonadea said: 'I'm not free today.'" Ulrich thought: 'How long, by comparison, is a whole day, a year, not to mention a resolution for a lifetime!' It was beyond calculation." MwQ 953.

403 Nicholas of Cusa 64.

404 Bynum, Caroline Walker. Holy Feast, Holy Fast (Berkeley: U of Cal P, 1987) 33.

405 Musil GW 4: MoE 1471. "But his success was a remarkable one: the more this enabled him to drive his arousal from the point of threatened breach, the more it gathered in his whole body, until his body seemed to shine inside... And with a horrifying clarity for which there are no words, he was reminded of that grimly edifying experience which, in his adolescence, had warned him once and for all against the power of the emotions. Lindner felt punished by a bitter self-contempt when he had to think that what at the time had clothed itself with devilish cunning in the appearance of God was now emerging in his mature years as common lust of the flesh..." MwQ 1506.

406 Musil GW 4: MoE 1230 "Somehow one has the feeling of being on a beach. Small insects hum. The air bears a hundred meadow scents. Thoughts and feelings stroll busily hand in hand. But before one's eyes lies the unanswering desert of the sea, and what is important on the shore loses itself in the monotonous motion of the endless view. She was thinking how all true still lifes can arouse this happy, insatiable sadness. The longer you look at them, the clearer it becomes that the things they depict seem to stand on the colorful shore of life, their eyes filled with monstrous things, their tongues paralyzed." MwQ 1324.

407 Musil GW 4: MoE 1060 "After the shortest time the silence gave the impression of having lasted hours." MwQ 1152.

408 Musil GW 4: MoE 1417. "It seemed that the last word could never be spoken, for every end was a beginning, and every final result the start of a new opening, so that every second shone like the rising sun but at the same time carried with it the peaceful passing of the setting sun." MwQ 1710.

409 Musil GW 2: MoE 662. "almost half of the year he had taken off to think was gone..." MwQ 722.

410 Musil GW 4: MoE 1082. "...and Agathe was in the act of bending over her foot with all the concentration that pulling on a thin silk stocking demands. Ulrich was standing at her back. He saw her head, her neck, her shoulders, and this nearly naked back; her body was curved over her raised knee, slightly to one side, and the tension of this process rounded three folds on her neck, which shot slender and merry through her clear skin like three arrows: the charming physicality of this painting, born of the momentarily spreading stillness, seemed to have lost its frame and passed so abruptly and directly into Ulrich's body that he moved from the spot and, neither with the involuntariness of a banner being unfurled by the wind nor exactly with deliberate reflection, crept closer on tiptoe, surprised the bent-over figure, and with gentle ferocity bit into one of these arrows, while his arm closed tightly around his sister." MwQ 1176.

411 Musil GW 4: MoE 1082. "But when Agathe got over her fright, and felt herself not so much flying through the air as rather resting in it, suddenly liberated into weightlessness and directed instead by the gentle force of the gradually decelerating motion, it brought about one of those accidents beyond human control, in which she seemed to herself strangely soothed, indeed carried away from all earthly unrest; with a movement changing the balance of her body that she could never have repeated, she also brushed away the last silken thread of compulsion, turned in falling to her brother, continues, so to speak, her rise as she fell, until she lay, sinking down, as a cloud of happiness in his arms." MwQ 1177.

412 "Up to this point everything had taken place as playfully and jokingly as much that had gone before, and even if it was tinged with the colors of love, it was only with the actually shy intention of concealing love's unwonted dangerous nature beneath such cheerfully intimate dress." MwQ 1176-7.

413 "...a painting, which for the hand that invades the frame to grasp it is nothing but a ridiculous painted surface." MwQ 1177.

414 Musil GW 4: MoE 1082-83 "...a second nature, which, with the greatest tenderness, paralyzed their limbs and at the same time ensnared them with an inexpressible sensitivity." MwQ 1177.

415 "The technical resonance of his voice in the instrument and the connection to the world that had been established had not sobered Ulrich in the slightest..." MwQ 1178.

416 Musil GW 4: MoE 1084. "...and they felt an ineffable warning that had nothing to do with the commandments of morality." MwQ 1178.

417 Musil GW 4: MoE 1085. "And Agathe breathed a deep sigh of relief. It did not matter what it meant; evidently it meant: and why don't you know a magic charm against its separating us at the last moment?" MwQ 1180)

418 Musil GW 4: MoE 1086. "Strange images now arose in his mind: Agathe behind bars. Or fearfully motioning to him from a growing distance, torn from him by the sundering power of alien fists. Then again he was not only the one who was powerless and dismissed, but also the one who did this... Perhaps these were the eternal images of the doubts of love, merely consumed in the average life..." MwQ 1180-1.

419 " 'Tonight you'll sleep as impatiently as before the start of a great outing!'" MwQ 1182.

420 Musil GW 4: MoE 1424

421 Musil GW 4: MoE 1088. MwQ 1183.

422 Musil GW 4: MoE 1096. "The desire that could not find expression had again sunk back within the body, filling it with a tenderness as indefinable as one of the last days of autumn or the first days of spring... It seemed that through their conversations and their continence, through their expectation and its provisional limits, they had become sensitive to the barriers reality places before the emotions, and now perceived together the double-sided nature of life, which dampens every higher aspiration with a lower one." MwQ 1192-3.

423 Musil GW 1: MoE 12 ("He had been ticking off on his stopwatch the passing cars, trucks, trolleys, and pedestrians, whose faces were washed out by the distance, timing everything whirling past that he could catch in the net of his eyes." MwQ 6.

424 Musil GW 5: MoE 1505 "If they looked at each other, their eyes, in sweet torment, could not draw back from the sight they saw, and sank as in a wall of flowers without striking bottom. 'What might the clocks be doing now?' suddenly occurred to Agathe, and reminded her of the small idiotic second hand of Ulrich's watch, with its precise forward motions along its narrow circle; the watch was in the pocket under the bottommost rib, as if it were where reason's last place of salvation lay, and Agathe yearned to draw it out." MwQ 1399.

425 Musil GW 4: MoE 1094 "' He doesn't want this to become just another love story,' she thought, and added: 'that's not my inclination either.' And immediately thereafter she thought: 'He will love no other woman after me, for this is no longer a love story; it is the very last love story there can be!' And she added: 'We will be something like the Last Mohicans of love!'" MwQ 1190.

426 Musil GW 6: Prosa und Stücke 450. " But love between two important people is no mere private event— it is their total relation to the world!" Translation mine.

427 Musil GW 5: MoE 1653 "In comparison with the enormous tension that had gone before, it was nothing. And afterward there was a conspiratorial happiness in every detail, and at the moment when their resistance wavered and melted Ulrich said: It also makes sense not to resist; we have to get this behind us so that this tension doesn't debase what we have before us." MwQ 1452.

428 Musil GW 5: MoE 1656 "Stood as on a high balcony, interwoven with each other and with the unutterable like two lovers who, the next instant, will plunge into the emptiness. Plunged. And the emptiness supported them. The instant lasted; it did not sink and did not rise." MwQ 1455.

429 Musil GW 5: MoE 1666 "It's quite simple[...] the imagination is stimulated only by what one does not yet possess or no longer has [...] And how stupid all our ideals would be, since every

ideal, if one takes it seriously, contradicts every other ideal [...] As if their sense did not lie precisely in the impossibility of carrying them out, which ignites the soul!" MwQ 1465.

430 Musil GW 5: MoE 1662 "If this infinitude of water and sky is pitilessly open? Then one might almost believe that beauty is something that secretly negates, something incomplete and incompletable, a happiness without purpose, without sense. But what if it lacks everything? Then beauty is a torture, something to laugh and cry over, a tickling to make one roll around in the sand, with Apollo's arrow in one's side. ... Hatred of beauty. Sense of urgent sexual desire: to destroy beauty." MwQ 1461.

431 Musil GW 5: MoE 1672-3. "There is no such thing as love between two people alone!" MwQ 1471.

432 Musil GW 5: MoE 1668. "Any trick will do for the soul to keep itself fruitful." MwQ 1466.

433 Musil GW 5: MoE 1672. "Fearful violence of repetition, fearful godhead! Attraction of emptiness, always sucking in like the funnel of a whirlpool whose walls yield. Kiss me, and I will bite gently and harder and harder and wilder and wilder, even more drunken, more greedy for blood, listening into your lips for the plea for mercy, climbing down the ravine of pain until at the end we are hanging in the vertical wall and are afraid of ourselves." MwQ 1471.

434 Musil GW 5: MoE 1672 "Within a few minutes concentrated flight through bliss and death, ending, renewed, bodies swinging like howling bells. But at the end one knows: it was only a profound Fall into a world in which it drifts downward on a hundred steps of repetition. Agathe moaned: You will leave me!" MwQ 1471.

435 Musil GW 5: MoE 1673 "It's a longing, something that's missing; the form is there, only the matter is missing. Then some bank official or professor comes along, and this little beastie slowly fills up the emptiness that was stretched out like an evening sky." MwQ 1472.

436 Musil GW 5: MoE 1933 "One would really have to be a counterfeiter (spy); if one didn't have the practical energy (talent) for it one just goes to war." Translation mine.

437 Musil GW 5: MoE 1932 "War is the same as "other condition," but (viable) mixed with evil." Translation mine.

438 Musil GW 5: MoE 1903 "Ultimate refuge sex and war, but sex lasts for one night, the war evidently for a month, etc." MwQ 1756.

439 Musil's drafts are not, however, to be read chronologically, and it is unclear where, if anywhere, these draft incidents are to be read in Musil's narrative.

440 Musil GW 4: MoE 1385. "Ulrich is in despair...but he feels that Agathe has chosen the right course by anticipating the inevitable." Translation mine.

441 Musil GW 5: MoE 1902. "All lines lead to the war". MwQ 1755.

442 Musil GW 5: MoE 1902 "Finally life becomes essential, affirmative, nothing is lacking, one takes oneself seriously, life doesn't flow into emptiness, one has a conviction, a belief." Translation mine.

443 See "Ein Soldat erzählt" Musil TB II, Anhang, 997-1001, as well as his fictionalized account in his short story, "Die Amsel".

444 Musil GW 5: MoE 1941 "During my work on it and under my hand this book has become a historical novel; it takes place twenty-five years ago! It has always been a contemporary novel developed out of the past, but now the span and tension are very great; but still, what lies beneath the surface, which is one of the chief objects of representation, does not need to be laid significantly deeper." MwQ 1767.

445 Musil GW 7: Kleine Prosa, Aphorismen, Autobiographisches 958 "I can't go any further." Translation mine.

446 Musil GW 7: Kleine Prosa, Aphorismen, Autobiographisches 952 "That I write an afterword in the middle of my work, which is not completed with this volume, and call it my testament is no accident, but rather fulfils the expectation of the name I am forced to give to it. For unless something unexpected occurs I will not be in a position to finish this work." Translation mine.

447 Musil GW 7: Kleine Prosa, Aphorismen, Autobiographisches 955. "There are writers who are struck by one subject matter. They feel: with this or with none; it is like love at first sight. The relationship of R.M. to his subject matter is a hesitant one. He has many different ones with him at once and keeps them with him after the first hours of love are over or even if there never were any. He trades parts of them recklessly with other parts. Many partial themes wander and never come to expression in any book. Obviously he deems the external to be more or less irrelevant." Translation mine.

448 Musil GW 5: MoE 1943 "Ulrich's Afterword, conclusion... The Ulrich of today grown older, who experiences the Second World War, and on the basis of these experiences writes an epilogue to his story and my book" MwQ 1770.

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