The Times of Their Lives: Queer and Female Modernism, 1910-1934

by

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to those individuals who have empowered me throughout my education and without whose love and support I could not have succeeded: my closest friends Tae Ho, Gina, Kira, Greg, Ángel, Hannah, Andrea, and Alessio; my fellow graduate students Emily and Mary; my advisors, Scott, Tyler, Kerstin, and Andreas; my mentors Hartmut, Kyle, Ervin, Karishma, Nicole, and Ronit; my dog, Helen; partners past and present, Jimmy and Isaiah; my brother Michael; and my parents, David and Maria.

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Abstract

Time, sexuality, and subjectivity have been central to traditional understandings of modernism. In particular, women and queers are frequently positioned in these scholarly accounts as objects and symbols of these concepts rather than as agential subjects who also exert force on them with their own intentions, experiences, and perspectives. Addressing this scholarly limitation, this dissertation examines early twentieth-century German-language modernist literature of queer and female authors to explore the relationships between sexuality, time, and subjectivity during an era of unprecedented freedom and opportunities for these groups. It investigates how these three factors interact with each other and the role of the individual therewithin. Informed by queer and feminist theories, Frankfurt School philosophy, and literary theory, I undertake close readings of literary fiction as well as essays, letters, and diaries by Robert Musil, Annemarie Schwarzenbach, Klaus Mann, Siegfried Kracauer, and Marieluise Fleißer to examine how individuals negotiate, shape, and are shaped by the dynamics between temporality and sexuality in fashioning themselves as subjects. The dissertation contributes to a new turn in queering German Studies as well as bringing the much-neglected German-language context to the Anglo-French-dominated fields of queer and feminist studies.

Chapter 1 provides a theoretical and methodological introduction to the dissertation, defining the major terms of the study, while also situating the interventions it makes within German Studies, women's studies, and queer studies. Chapter 2 reads Robert Musil's *Die Vollendung der Liebe* as a text commandeered by the exuberant sexuality of its female

protagonist. I show how the text narrativizes shifts in modern notions of temporality, subjectivity, and sexuality, revealing them as interconnected processes, while also illustrating their limitations, particularly as a male author writing about and through a female character. Chapter 3 draws on the figure of the *Augenblick* to interpret Annemarie Schwarzenbach's *Eine Frau zu sehen* as an account of lesbian utopia, a first-person narrative of a woman's anticipation of a liberatory subjectivity through erotic fulfillment. I focus on how the protagonist's desire comes to commander the writing of narrative and of self in a way that critiques contemporary queer theoretical debates around visibility, hope, and anti-futurity. Chapter 4 undertakes a comparative reading of Klaus Mann's *Der fromme Tanz* and Siegfried Kracauer's *Georg,* two Weimar-era novels that diverge in their use of queer pasts and queer presents, respectively, as sites to envision transgenerational forms of subjectivity and community. By foregrounding friendship as the relationship through which queer subjectivity can be birthed, it intervenes in the overwhelming emphasis on sex and romance in queer studies of time. Chapter 5 concludes with Marieluise Fleißer's *Mehlreisende Frieda Geier,* explicating how shifting non-simultaneities of temporal discourses and systems interact with volatile notions of gender to influence individuals, their subjectivities, and their social worlds in ways both liberating and threatening.

The dissertation makes the case for the specificity of literature as a medium and its role as a partner with its readers in making meaning and making worlds and in which we can see most clearly the pleasures, potentials, and pitfalls of queer and female lives and cultures—and better comprehend and thus bend these entwined phenomena that continue to exert power over the lives of the sexually marginalized.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

In the twenty-first century, women and queers have been the preferred, contested objects of the politics of time. Right-wing politicians, activists, and intellectuals wield retrospective temporalities to advance their ideological projects. Heeding the reactionary call to "Make America Great Again," American conservatives seek to actualize the mythologized postwar world of hegemonic heterosexuality and patriarchal values, a central element of which is the re-subjugation of women and queers. Donald Trump's warnings to the "suburban housewives" of America about a wave of racialized "low-income" crime if he loses reelection speaks to the right-wing's imaginary about women and time, betraying an anachronistic and inaccurate notion of (white) women as uniformly suburban mothers, wives, and homemakers protected by a benevolent white, patriarchal system.[1] Along with its drive to abolish the right to safe and legal abortion in the United States, right-wing discourses of time seek to undo the women's movement, turning back the clock to a time before feminism revolutionized Western societies and began to normalize women as free, autonomous subjects. This entanglement of women, their subjectivities, and the past—and, in its emphasis on reproduction and motherhood, specifically women as sexual objects under male aegis—has been advanced across the globe. In countries such as Poland and Russia, the right claims to battle an "LGBT ideology" deemed dangerous to

[1] John Fritze, David Jackson, and Michael Collins, "Critics slam Trump 'suburban housewife' tweet as racist, sexist 'dog scream' play for white voters," *USA Today,* August 12, 2020, https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2020/08/12/trump-critics-see-tweet-the-suburban-housewife-sexist-racist/3348444001/.

their purportedly eternal traditions, and the Alternative für Deutschland, Germany's premier Neo-Nazi party, campaigns with the slogan "Make Germany Safe Again," often linking the purported vulnerability of German white women's bodies—rendered helpless objects of male attention, either malign or purportedly beneficial—to the rapacious sexualities of Muslim and brown or black men.[2]

The left, conversely, has assumed the futurity of "progressiveness," deriding their political and cultural antagonists as backward and endowing pro-LGBTQ+ and feminist politics with the cachet of forward thinking. This logic is perhaps nowhere clearer that in the rhetoric surrounding same-sex marriage in the United States. President Barack Obama famously described his change in stance from opposing same-sex marriage early in his political career to openly supporting it by 2012 as an "evolution."[3] The word choice here is telling, as it implies a forward movement from a retrograde to a more enlightened viewpoint. His temporal politics is twofold: Obama attaches the prestige of the future to pro-queer beliefs, having arrived at the right conclusion after a period of transformation, while casting his opponents as troglodytes—which, of course, they are—or as being "on the wrong side of history." We see the same sentiment in the refrain many repeated during the legalization of same-sex marriage across the country: "welcome to the 21st century"—the idea being that the nation was somehow held back or stuck in the past against the irrevocable progression of time toward sexual modernity.[4] For the left, support of women's and LGBTQ+ rights means to be correctly in time, to keep pace with

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[2] Alternative für Deutschland Landesverband Berlin - AfD Berlin, Facebook photo, September 11, 2017, https://prospect.org/power/european-far-right-finds-inspiration-trump/.

[3] Ben Smith, "Obama Defends His Legacy: 'These Are The Kinds Of Things You Learn,'" *Buzzfeed News,* February 11, 2015, https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/bensmith/buzzfeed-news-interview-president-obama#.kwrmO53v8D/.

[4] Nancy Goldstein, "The Nation: Welcome to the 21st Century, New York," *NPR,* June 27, 2011, https://www.npr.org/2011/06/27/137442893/the-nation-welcome-to-the-21st-century-new-york/.

the relentless march of society toward greater freedom and equality. Indeed, in this discursive world, to be queer or an avowed feminist are subjectivities worn as badges of temporal honor, indicating one's belonging to subject positions and a community of morally virtuous, forward-facing, progressive (sexual) politics and time.

These contemporary debates about women and queers are shot through with issues of temporality, its varying directions, velocities, politics, and values. As we see in the examples above, for those explicitly and principally marked by sex—as queers and women are, in divergent and overlapping ways—to discuss sexuality is to discuss temporality; to inquire into their place in time is to also delve into their subjectivities.[5] We see that these imbrications of sexuality and time inflect both high politics and personal lives, the social and the individual subject. As illustrated in the following chapters, these dynamics are myriad in their variation, shaped by the unique historical contexts of each case and the situation of each individual. Across their differences, however, these entanglements of time and sexuality raise important questions as to the nature of their relationships with each other, to their role in the formation of women's and queers' subjectivities, and to the agency (or lack thereof) of subjects to understand, intervene in, and control these dynamics. Although one must admit that all subjects are to some degree shaped by time and sex—this is a key contention of the dissertation—it is precisely because of their being made to figure as sexually different first and foremost—queers as not heterosexual, women as not men—and are so worked over in their subjectivities by the temporalities attached to their sexual conspicuity that they call for a closer examination. To study the position of women and queers in this tripartite imbrication of time, sexuality, and subjectivity is to walk a promising methodological, intellectually fecund path toward answering the following questions:

[5] Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso, 2009), 101.

What exactly are the relationships between time, sexuality, and subjectivity in modern Western societies and cultures? How do they arise and of what are they composed? What roles does the individual play in its emergence as a subject within this dynamic?

The processes by which temporality and sexuality condition each other—how rhythms, actions, and emotions of erotic desires mold time and how discourses, conceptions, and practices of time inflect sexuality—and interact with the subject are not unique to today. Resulting from sociocultural, economic, medial, and political developments that have operated since the onset of modernity in the nineteenth century, I argue that we cannot fully understood them without studying a literature rich in their explication: the early twentieth-century German-language modernism of women and queers.[6] My project, *The Times of Their Lives: Queer and Female Modernism, 1910-1934,* analyzes modernist literature in which women and queers are not passive objects of temporal-sexual discourses, debates, and forces but are rather centered as agential subjects therein. Through close readings of literary fiction as well as essays, letters, and diaries by Robert Musil, Annemarie Schwarzenbach, Klaus Mann, Siegfried Kracauer, and Marieluise Fleißer, I examine how individuals negotiate, shape, and are shaped by the dynamics between temporality and sexuality in fashioning themselves as subjects. As we will see, issues of gender, class, geography, religion, war and violence, media and technology, and science and psychology greatly impact in multiple and multifaceted ways these interactions between time, sexuality, and the subject on the written page. In doing so, I demonstrate how queer and female subjects emerge and move within these imbrications, generating spaces of self-determination within fictional literature against the pressures of coercive social forces, discourses, and

[6] I am well aware that "queer" is a historical anachronism with regards to early twentieth-century Germany. I use the term here and throughout the dissertation to generally refer to individuals who are sexually and romantically attracted to the same sex. When appropriate, I use the language of the era in my analyses.

historical-political actors, while also recognizing the limits of their autonomy as socially embedded subjects. Indeed, it is specifically through the medium of literature and its role as a partner with its readers in making meaning and making worlds that we can see most clearly the pleasures, potentials, and pitfalls of queer and female modernist lives and cultures.

By excavating pivotal moments in the modern history of temporality and sexuality as entwined phenomena, one that continues to exert power in the lives of the sexually marginalized today, the dissertation operates on a dual track. First, it is dedicated to the recovery and interpretation of overlooked, understudied, or forgotten female and queer texts, voices, and perspectives that are key to understanding these processes and issues. It thereby contributes to a new turn in queer German studies away from queering the canonical (and mostly male and straight) masters and turning to actual queer and female authors and characters. Second, the dissertation investigates a broader modern entanglement of sex, time, and subjectivity. Proceeding from the supposition that "an understanding of virtually any aspect of modern Western culture must be, not merely incomplete, but damaged in its central substance to the degree" that it does not consider sex and sexuality, it establishes the paramount importance of this trifecta for understanding the multifarious forms that modernity and its cultures have taken across the West.[7] As such, it challenges canonical and now hackneyed conceptualizations of subjectivity and temporality in modernist studies, adding much-needed new life to these discussions by drawing on a previously untapped well of groundbreaking queer and feminist thinking about these concepts in literary fiction. Alternately, my project brings the neglected German context to a queer and feminist studies dominated by Anglo-American-French theorists, texts, and cultures, offering underexplored alternative approaches to contested terms of

[7] Eve Kosofsky-Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 1.

normativity, subjectivity, and desire.

My project enters a German modernist studies that, even considering the impressive growth in attention given to authors outside the traditional, mid-century canon, is still highbrow, heterosexual, and male in its focus and values. Situated within the burgeoning subfield of queer German studies as well as within a longer tradition of feminist and women-oriented scholarly inquiry, it takes succor and inspiration from this decades-long scholarship on literature, highbrow and lowbrow, modernist and melodramatic, by and about German-speaking women.[8] Although women's and feminist studies have become institutionalized components of German Studies—though this is not to deny their still relatively minor status in the field and the increasing vulnerability of women's studies in academia at large—we cannot say the same about queer German studies or literature, especially regarding texts not written by already canonized (and primarily heterosexual) men like Robert Musil, Franz Kafka, or Alfred Döblin. Judging from the near universal absence of queer authors and texts in monographs, anthologies and compendia, and literary histories not specifically about queerness and of queer-themed courses in German programs, it seems that German Studies has been more welcoming to queer theoretical approaches than to queers themselves.[9] There exists a cottage industry of "queering" the heterosexual classics (Goethe, Schiller, Nietzsche, Musil, and Kafka, to name a few), and the term "queer" has been stretched out and bleached of actual queerness in its now common usage

[8] Both below and in the individual chapters, I intensively engage with many scholars of queer and feminist German studies. For now, it suffices to acknowledge the pioneering work of Rita Felski, Kerstin Barndt, Kathleen Canning, Sabina Becker, Katherina von Ankum, Marita Keilson-Lauritz, Jennifer Evans, Robert Tobin, Katie Sutton, Kyle Frackman, and Laurie Marhoefer, among others.

[9] In the authoritative compendia and literary histories about German-language literary modernism published by leading houses in Germany—Reclam, Fischer Verlag, C.H. Beck, among others—queers are only represented by icons Stefan George and Thomas Mann, both of whom were never publicly "out" and thus can be assimilated into a heterosexual canon with plausible deniability of their sexualities, or Else Lasker-Schüler and her Expressionist poetry (rather than her explicitly queer and gender-bending prose).

to "invert" or "subvert" any normative meaning. Yet the field remains homophobically ignorant of the hundreds of novels, novellas, chapbooks, short stories, newspapers, magazines, and other publications written by and for queers throughout the German-speaking world since the early nineteenth century. The call over twenty years ago by Christoph Lorey and John Plews to "queer the German canon" by including queers themselves has yet to be heard.[10]

Few scholarly works have been published that take this queer German-language literary universe as its main or sole concern. Wolfgang Popp's study of homosexuality and literary fiction in the twentieth century and Stefan Müller's overview of literary representations of male homosexuality during the Weimar Republic provide valuable, if cursory overviews, but their analyses remain at the level of content and of historical import, glossing over issues of form, literary discourses, and the specificity of literary fiction as a genre.[11] The dearth of sophisticated literary analysis of queer German-language fiction is exemplified by the two most recent attempts. James W. Jones's *"We of the Third Sex": Literary Representations of Homosexuality in Wilhelmine Germany* (1990) is very much of its time, taking a single-mindedly Foucauldian approach to a literature he bluntly describes as arising in response to the "medicalization of homosexuality."[12] Equipped with psychological and medical theories of homosexuality, Jones argues that the role of homosexual fiction was to digest and "diffuse" expert discourse in ways

[10] Christoph Lorey and John Plews, "Defying Sights in German Literature and Culture: An Introduction to Queering the Canon," *Queering the Canon: Defying Sights in German Literature and Culture,* eds. Christoph Lorey and John Plews (Columbia: Camden House, 1998), xix.

[11] See Wolfgang Popp, *Männerliebe: Homosexualität und Literatur* (Stuttgart: Metzler Verlag, 1992), and Stefan Müller, *Ach, nur'n bisschen Liebe: männliche Homosexualität in den Romanen deutschsprachiger Autoren in der Zwischenkriegszeit 1919 bis 1939* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2011).

[12] James W. Jones, *"We of the Third Sex": Literary Representations of Homosexuality in Wilhelmine Germany* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 1.

more accessible and popular for a lay audience.[13] Reflecting the development of scholarship on (homo)sexuality over the last three decades, James Patrick Wilper's *Reconsidering the Emergence of the Gay Novel in English and German* (2016) casts a wider net in his comparative study, examining medical and scientific discourses and theories of homosexuality alongside their aesthetic, classical, philosophical, and religious counterparts. He departs from Jones in persuasively asserting that literary fiction has its own power to shape and develop gay identities, but in doing so he remains for the most part wedded to the usual suspects—Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig* (1912) and E. M. Forster's *Maurice* (1913/14), for example.[14] As is almost always the case, these monographs exclude forms of non-male queerness: even rarer are analyses of German-language female homosexual, lesbian, or queer fiction, especially within the context of modernism. A lone exemplar is Sally Patterson Tubach's valuable yet dated dissertation from 1980, which analyzes depictions of female homoeroticism from the eighteenth to the end of the twentieth century. Combining interpretations of individual texts with a concern for historical contexts, she offers a schematic overview of patterns, motifs, and shared characteristics in German-language lesbian fiction, attesting to the continuity of queer female culture across historical caesuras and tantalizingly suggesting alternative ways of telling the story of German (literary) history.[15]

These predecessors point to the dire need for sustained and supported research into queer literary pasts and the rich payoff they promise for retelling commonplace narratives of German

[13] Ibid., 201.

[14] James Patrick Wilper, *Reconsidering the Emergence of the Gay Novel in English and German* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2016), 2.

[15] Sally Patterson Tubach, *Female Homoeroticism in German Literature and Culture*, diss. (University of California, Berkeley, 1980).

cultural history. The authors studied here grapple with questions of aesthetics, form, identity, and agency that continue to beguile and spur literary studies and feminist and queer thought today. Yet they approach these questions with at times different, alien, or even, to our current sensibilities, unsavory concepts, methods, discourses, and affects. In their examples we capture the possibilities and past futures of modern ways of life being proposed, explored, and lived, many of whose legacies promise to revitalize and significantly inform our conversations today. This gift of an ambivalent family resemblance between them and us, then and now, generates fodder to advance contemporary scholarship and intellectual discourse. Through queer and female subjects' entanglement with time and sexuality, we acquire the insights and tools for new directions in German Studies, modernism studies, and queer and women's studies—insights and tools also crucial to bend the arc of our own modernity away from resurgent fascism and its very real imperilment of the sexually marginalized.

One may expect here a brief historical overview of the modernity of German-speaking Central Europe. Rather than regaling readers with the canonical narrative of this modernity as a series of technological, social, economic, political, and cultural breaks from a benighted pre- or early-modern past, however, one of my aims with this dissertation is to disrupt such a story. While Baudelaire may have defined modernity by the trio of the "transitory, the fugitive, the contingent," and Marx and Engels may have diagnosed it as an era in which "all that is solid melts into air," a key contribution of my readings of queer and female authors to the scholarship of modernity and modernism is to re-emphasize that these alternately celebrated and bemoaned ruptures were not simply for the nihilistic pleasure of melting things; after the disintegration comes re-integration. My dissertation seeks to restore the balance in the lopsided relationship between novelty and stasis in modernist scholarship and the overevaluation of the former over

the latter in definitions and discussions of modernist literature. Although I am by no means the first to offer this take on modernity—countless modernists such as Walter Benjamin, Hermann Broch, and Thomas Mann readily recognized the tense dialectic between the new and the old as a cornerstone of their period (as well as the self-conscious reflection thereon)—it remains a fact that needs to be repeated, for, as I explain below, both our major understandings of modernism and the neoliberal academy at large remain enthralled by Ezra Pound's dictum to constantly "make it new," a criterion that often feels—especially as a young scholar in the dying days of German Studies—to be the only one that can endow our work with any sort of recognition and institutional support. As I introduce here and further lay out in my chapters, the modernity and modernism of women and queers—and particularly in the German-language context—was composed of both innovation and revolution *and* steadiness and tradition. Rather than replace one tired story of ruptures with another, more glamorous history gleaned from the cultures of queers and women, I trace the interplays between continuity and discontinuity and follow both cultural clean sweeps and stubborn lingering. I find that alongside the desire to break from oppressive pasts and embrace the tantalizing fruits of new political, social, and cultural liberties to fashion themselves as modern individuals, the subjects examined here also exhibit a strong desire for the firm, the clear, and the enduring. These modernists must be seen as performing a balancing act between at times cooperating, at times contradictory forces, between "our desire to be rooted in a stable and coherent personal and social past, and our insatiable desire for growth"—a growth the counteracts the allure of constancy but which also feeds the wellspring of that very desire to remain in place.[16] Having finally arrived on the historical scene, newly assertive female and queer subjects would also like to stay. Their modernity, their modernism, is

[16] Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 35.

to be found in the back and forth between the need for the comforts of coherency and consistency and the exhilarating joy awaiting them in modern life's possibilities.

For the purposes of this dissertation, I define below the concepts of modernity and modernism, temporality, and subjectivity and situate my use of them within relevant scholarship. I preview how these concepts intersect with each other in my readings of queer and female modernism and how these readings push forward these conceptual and methodological discussions. I thank the reader for their patience and for trusting the introduction to unfold at its own pace; while some readers may wish for an immediate elaboration of methodology and definition of terms on the very first pages, my more extended, leisurely approach allows for these entangled concepts and their scholarly histories to build upon and inform each other on their own time in ways necessary and revealing for my analyses in the individual chapters.

Modernism and Modernity: Between Minimalism, Maximalism, and Multiplication

What is the "modernism of women and queers"? What is its relationship to "modernism" more generally? What counts as "modernist"? And how does "modernism" and its potential subspecies relate to time, sexuality, and subjectivity? To answer these questions, I must note that definitions and theories of modernism also often function as definitions and theories of modernity and vice versa, for they are mutually constitutive phenomena. It will allow me to better explain this dissertation's terminology, methodological-theoretical foundation, and position within scholarship by treating both threads as one yarn.

To begin, we must admit the obvious: there is not and cannot be one definitive, singular definition or theory of modernism. For those writers and intellectuals we now commonly classify as "modernist," no such unifying label or self-designation existed, while scholarly attempts to

smooth out the wrinkles of such a diverse, complex cultural phenomenon end up undermining their own aim, unwittingly exposing the deep grooves of difference between creators and texts. These forays to define modernism can be approximately divided into two big-tent groupings: first, what I call a minimalist-restrictive understanding of modernism and, second, a maximalist-expansive understanding. Below, I offer overviews of both, highlighting key interlocutors and critiquing each as I see fit to then offer my own terminology for this dissertation.

The minimalist-restrictive understanding of modernism is synonymous with what is now commonly referred to as canonical high modernism as first demarcated by mid-century literary critics. Associated in the English-speaking world with New Critics such as T. S. Eliot and Clement Greenberg and in the German with Marxist thinkers like Theodor Adorno and Georg Lukács, for these critical traditions, modernism circled around a handful of key aesthetic and political principles. These included: (1) a valorization of the autonomy of art, which holds an adversarial and critical stance toward bourgeois culture and values; (2) a set of aesthetic attributes such as self-referentiality, irony, ambiguity, and radical experimentation; (3) a critical, self-conscious relationship to and problematization of language; and (4) a rebuke of traditional forms of representation and narration, with an evaluative-normative shift away from description and toward form.[17] Thematically, this modernism focused primarily on individual subjectivity—be it an intense subjectivism or the dethronement of the subject—the instability and relativity of meaning, the fleetingness of time, and figures of modern life like the metropolis, mass media, and the machine.[18] This formal and thematic configuration of a body of literature called

[17] Sean Latham and Gayle Rogers, *Modernism: Evolution of an Idea* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 28; Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 53-4.

[18] Joseph A. Boone, *Libidinal Currents: Sexuality and the Shaping of Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 5.

"modernism" by literary critics, academic departments, and publishers served a gatekeeping function to restrict entrance to a select number and specific kind of author and text: chiefly white, bourgeois, urban, assertively masculine and heterosexual, and prone to heroic self-aggrandizement in the face of a fallen modern world—a rarefied echo chamber of elite male peers across nations and cultures speaking to the same limited sorts of intellectual and personal concerns.[19] Such modernism leaves little place for women, people of color, or queers, and to endorse it is to consent to the notion that such groups have scant to contribute to and are not proper subjects of modernity.

For all the acclaim for a literature unto itself, witheringly ironic toward the vulgarities of quotidian reality, critics nevertheless furiously debated the meaning of modernism for and its relation to the modern world. Following Rita Felski, these debates can be grouped into a sociological and a literary-aesthetic interpretation. Decidedly in the minor key, the sociological interpretation of modernism draws on Marx and Max Weber, viewing modernity as "synonymous with the rise of bureaucracy and capitalism, the unchecked expansion of technology and industrialization, the loss of overarching meaning, and the profound alienation of human beings." Modernism is the beguiled expression of individuals "dwarfed by institutional structures and systems of power, subject to ever greater forms of surveillance and control." While the sociological interpretation of modernism renders the modern world a cold, desolate place, stripped of the vivacious beauty of modern life, the literary-aesthetic interpretation of modernism finds its footing in canonized modernist masterpieces—Rilke, Kafka, Hofmannsthal, Döblin—to depict a modernity of centrifugal chaos and endless dislocation. Here, the individual and his world remain inscrutable and unknowable, defined by "the experience of rupture and

[19] Astradur Eysteinsson, *The Concept of Modernism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 10.

ambiguity rather than order and control." Former values, beliefs, and paradigms of existence are ceaselessly challenged and melted down. Extrapolating from its valued formal-thematic criteria of the fragmentation, instability, and illegibility of text and self, it sees modernity as an alternatingly thrilling and horrifying hodgepodge of possibilities and threats, opportunities, and crises. Reveling in its rebuke of naïve realist literary predecessors, this interpretation of modernism inadvertently crowns itself as a "better" realism for the modern age, offering itself as an "authentic window into the nature and meaning of modern experience" like no other literature or medium.[20]

Taken together, the sociological and literary-aesthetic interpretations of modernism share a profound concern for modernity's transformative repercussions for the subject. Where the former bemoans modernity's flattening effects, reading in modernism an elegy of the subject's loss of autonomy and individuality as an alienated worker or disciplined subject, the latter inherits Baudelaire and Benjamin to invert these developments, looking to redeem the modern subject by aestheticizing the fragmentation of his meaning and coherence.[21] In both, we can observe a notion of the modern subject as a plaything of larger social, cultural, economic, and political forces that push him toward subjugation or dissolution. It is here that one of the main problems with a minimalist-restrictive narrative of modernism lies, namely, its penchant for binaries, its tendency toward one-sidedness in both its source material and outlook on the world. As Marshall Berman charmingly put it, both interpretations forget "the great romance of construction," the "affirmative and life-sustaining force" of individual agency "always

[20] Rita Felski, *Doing Time: Feminist Theory and Postmodern Cultures* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 57-8.

[21] Dilip Paramschwar Gaonkar, "On Alternative Modernities," *Alternative Modernities*, ed. Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 9.

interwoven with assault and revolt" at the core of modern culture.[22] Mirroring the limited scope of humanity that undermines a minimalist-restrictive understanding of modernism as a whole, these two interpretive strains feature glaring absences where the ability and action of the human subject to shape herself and her world should be found, however complicated and attenuated that facility may be. Besides being historically myopic, such views run the risk of rendering modernism as a documentarian of the modern world, reflecting and responding rather than intervening in or shaping its development. Instead, I wish to reimagine modernism and the modernist subject as products *and* producers of their own conditions and of modernity more broadly, encompassing individuals and groups of all kinds—especially women and queers—as part of a complex interplay of individual agency and social forces, personal actions and overarching systems of power.

Indeed, it is in this vein that the minimalist-restrictive understanding of modernism has been extensively critiqued by scholars. As feminists such as Felski and Patrice Petro have argued, these grand narratives are inimical to the sexually marginalized of modernity, "subsum[ing]" them "within a single unilinear logic of history or else position[ing] them outside of modern discourses and institutions in a zone of ahistorical, asymbolic otherness."[23] When they appear in the likes of Mann's Madame Chauchat, Musil's Basini, or Kafka's first-name-only maidens, for instance, they are deployed to serve the narrative or epistemological goals of a male author, narrator, or character, their subjectivities reduced to the needs and desiderata of male desire and male presumptions of sexual difference.[24] Their present absences are filled with an

[22] Berman, *All That Is Solid,* 30.

[23] Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 8.

[24] Patrice Petro, *Joyless Streets: Women and Melodramatic Representation in Weimar Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 68.

aggressive, often masculinist subjectivity and its purported crises under modernity.[25] Indeed, feminist analysis has fatally challenged this invocation of a "crisis" of modernist subjects and literature, correctly revealing it as tautological circle that confuses heuristic and object of study and which captures, if at all, only one experience of modernity by an exclusive class of men—both the studied authors and those studying them—who "only ha[ve] eyes for world-historical Revolutions in politics and world-class Masterpieces in culture."[26] Limited in both method and source base, these traditional models are counterproductive for a sophisticated and insightful exploration of marginalized modernists. As Marsha Meskimmon points out, their exclusion results in part from a masculinist paradigm of aesthetic judgment that renders their art from the start unintelligible, secondary, reductive, failed, or "not modern enough."[27] For a literature celebrated for its experimentation and heterogeneity in form and theme, this notion of modernism ironically remains conservative and homogenous if we attempt to confine it in a stringently closed set of criteria. When we cut the cloth of modernism too tightly, it chafes, its brilliant contrasts dulled.

My project departs from this tradition of German-language modernism by situating women and queers as central subjects, inhabitants, and co-creators of both modernism and of the very modernity under which they have traditionally been reduced to objects of discourse, scrutiny, utilitarian use, and oppression. In doing so, we can discern the extraordinary achievements of the sexually marginalized in redefining and living anew notions of time,

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[25] Ibid., xvii-xviii.

[26] Marshall Berman, *Modernism in the Streets* (London: Verso, 2017), 275. See also Alice A. Jardine, *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 24. For a critique of "crisis" in the study of German modernity, see *Die »Krise« der Weimarer Republik: Zur Kritik eines Deutungsmusters*, eds. Moritz Föllmer and Rüdiger Graf (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2005).

[27] Marsha Meskimmon, *We Weren't Modern Enough: Women Artists and the Limits of German Modernism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 3.

subjectivity, and sexuality in ways that have set the tone for their continued entanglement up through today. Departing from a minimalist-restrictive understanding of modernism that held sway for much of the twentieth century, my dissertation contributes to the ongoing conversation ushered in by what has been termed New Modernist Studies, a movement that since the turn of the millennium has pushed the field toward what I call a maximalist-expansive understanding of modernism. A main feature of this scholarly thrust is the rejection of formalist articles of faith—modernism as the autonomous artwork, formal difficulty, experimentation—for a thorough situating of plural modernist literatures in their various historical, political, and social contexts, especially alongside issues of nation, race, gender, sexuality, print culture, violence, the environment, and technology and media. Once traditional formal and thematic criteria are no longer seen as essential, we open the field up to an exciting array of new texts, voices, experiences, identities, and historical, cultural, and social forces that have shaped modernity around the world.

Sean Latham and Gayle Rogers, chroniclers of this scholarly shift, have aptly described the difference between old and new modernist studies through the figures of the cable and of the magnet. For the minimalist-restrictive understanding, modernism constitutes a "strand entwining cable that weaves together a group of distinct writers and artists around shared aesthetic practices," but like all straight lines, the cable not only organizes and gives meaning but also constricts them and erects barriers to distinguish and separate.[28] The maximalist-expansive understanding views modernism as a "magnet—a critical force field that can be used to pull all of this material into different, often competing or contradictory shapes," inviting all cultural

[28] Latham and Rogers, 7.

expressions and forms that speak to the attraction of modernity.[29] Modernism thus becomes more pragmatic rather than dogmatic, disseminating across time, place, topic, and form. It becomes less a cohesive, delimited "aesthetic project" and more a multifarious, unbounded "cultural force" in hybrid interactions with myriad forms of media and culture.[30] The genius of individual masterpieces is brought down from imperial heights and examined for the ways in which the work emerged from collaborations and conversations across borders between "high" and "low" culture, aesthetic movements and forms, nations, classes, and languages. Alongside a vertical comes a horizontal expansion, inviting more popular voices and works by historically marginalized groups, while also attending to the usual modernist cast with rejuvenated eyes and ears. This hybridity and eclecticism can also be found in methodologies employed under New Modernist Studies. The fertile coupling of queer and feminist theories with more traditional Frankfurt School hermeneutics, and informed by the recent turn to post-critique in literary studies, that constitutes the methodology of my dissertation emblematizes this exciting heterogeneity in current modernist studies.

A hallmark of this maximalist-expansive understanding of modernism is its multiplication and globalization. Part of a larger trend in the academy to decenter the West, the global turn in modernist studies has resulted in the proliferation of multiple, divergent modern*isms* and modernit*ies*. Susan Stanford Friedman, a leading proponent of this turn, has provocatively replaced a nominal definition, which would entail an agreed-upon set of terms and criteria, for a relational definition of "modernism": modernisms appear whenever there are modernities, cultural expressions in moments that "insist upon the Now" and "declare

[29] Ibid., 11.

[30] Eysteinsson, *The Concept of Modernism,* 16.

independence" from tradition in the name of the "New."[31] Modernism and modernity are rendered "planetary phenomen[a] across millennia" that reoccur and disappear and speak to each other across history, often in response to sudden and massive demographic, technological, and military-political transformations.[32] It does away with the well-documented limitations of universalizing traditional definitions of European modernism, allowing us to consider a vast array of other aesthetic-cultural values, creators, and products, and to investigate the ways they inform our current modernities. Indeed, one can view this dilution of "modernism" as the core strength of contemporary modernist studies, becoming more vibrant, rigorous, and nuanced by weakening gatekeeping criteria and jettisoning the perennial question of "But is this really modernist?" to the junk heap of history.[33]

While attractively capacious and intellectually and methodologically stimulating, this relational modernism also threatens to dissipate into nothingness. Comparing the modernisms of Genghis Khan's Mongolian Empire, Renaissance Europe, and early twentieth-century Britain and France, as Stanford Friedman does, the obvious differences between each period run the risk of being effaced under more questionable shades of apparent similarity. A maximalist-expansive understanding raises the dilemma of democratizing modernism yet keeping it a viable concept. How can we expand "modernism" without making it mean anything and everything? It seems to me that modernism cannot be "endlessly multiple" if it is to remain useful for scholars; there should be shared qualities beyond a simple relationship to an effervescently protean modernity.[34]

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[31] Susan Stanford Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity Across Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 33.

[32] Ibid., ix.

[33] Paul K. Saint-Amour, "Weak Theory, Weak Modernism," *Modernism/modernity* 25, no. 3 (2018): 441.

[34] Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Muddle of Modernity," *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 3 (2011): 669.

Even the most generous set of characteristics ultimately must exclude other things to become something. We thus appear to be caught between two impulses: on the one hand, generalizing modernism as a "purely phenomenological response or experiential attitude," and, on the other hand, a stricter view of modernism attached to a demarcated historical-cultural context and specific aesthetic criteria.[35] I do not pretend to have a ready, universally satisfying, and enduring solution to these questions, nor am I interested in offering an original, definitive theory of modernism at large or of queer or female modernisms in particular that would recapitulate the theoretical conundrums presented here. But I do wish to flag this issue and offer my own thoughts on how to work with rather than around it.

My understanding and use of "modernism" proceeds from the simple question: why can we not hold these two aforementioned impulses at once? Unless one is writing a global study of modernism, it seems to me that this dilemma isn't nearly as intractable as some suspect it is. If a study of modernism proceeds from a stance of scholarly humility, limiting itself to a specific time and place and not postulating sweeping narratives, then I believe we can put forth suppositions and shared qualities flexible enough to invite and unite disparate texts and contexts in the service of a persuasive and illuminating explication of modernism's many faces. For the sake of this project, then, I define "modernism" as both an expression of and player in the modern societies of German-speaking Central Europe during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The texts chosen for this study and brought together under the label of "modernism," for all their divergent aesthetic-formal properties and thematic concerns, share as a defining element the incessant transformation of the subject put into motion—in other words, the entanglement of subjectivity in and with time. I trace a modernism defined by an exploration of

[35] Niall Gildea and David Wylot, "The And of Modernism: On New Periodizations," *Modernist Cultures* 14, no. 4 (2019): 464.

subjectivity alongside temporality: it is a literature obsessed with one's ever-changing relationship to oneself as a subject *and* object of modernity upon which one acts in processes of self-cultivation, self-exploration, and self-realization over time. Here, the subject is a creative project, pliable, protean, and the object of one's own agency amidst modulating social, cultural, and temporal forces that at the same time condition it. Following Foucault, this literature embodies a "mode of relating" to both the self and reality: "a voluntary choice […] a way of thinking and feeling; a way, too, of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task."[36] These subjects work on themselves to capture meaning out of the flow of historical and personal time, to fashion something steady and coherent, however temporary and tenuous, before it morphs again into something else. This modernist literature proceeds under the explicit acknowledgement that such a dialectic of change and stasis renders one's subjectivity impermeant, contingent, unfinished during a historical moment when previous organizing temporal orders and paradigms of subjectivity have lost their self-evidence and are up for grabs. This dissertation rethinks German-language modernism as a set of literary attempts to find a way to live with the Janus-faced ambivalences of the joy of creation and the fear of failure, destruction, and death. And as scholars such as Rüdiger Graf, Moritz Föllmer, Jennifer Evans, and Jane Freeland have suggested, the study of sexuality as a key inflection point for temporality and subjectivity is one of the most promising ways to do so.[37]

The modernism of women and queers examined in the following chapters is characterized

[36] Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" *The Essential Foucault*, eds. Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose, trans. Catherine Porter (New York: The New Press, 2003), 48.

[37] Rüdiger Graf, *Die Zukunft der Weimarer Republik* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2008), 13-36; Moritz Föllmer and Rüdiger Graf, "Einleitung: Die Kultur der Krise in der Weimarer Republik," *Die »Krise« der Weimarer Republik: Zur Kritik eines Deutungsmusters* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2005), 9-40; Jennifer Evans and Jane Freeland, "Rethinking Sexual Modernity in Twentieth-century Germany," *Social History* 37, no. 3 (2012): 317.

by literary-narrative practices, aesthetic concerns, styles and moods, and thematic issues that derive from the imbrication of subjectivity and temporality with sexuality. Although each chapter examines an instance of this tripartite entanglement made unique by different historical, sociocultural, geographic, class, and gender contexts, we may speak of an overarching relationship between time, subjectivity, and sexuality present in this literature. These three factors co-exist in ceaseless, multidirectional, and symbiotic relations to each other, one alternately shaping a second as they are simultaneously and reciprocally shaped by and shape the third. For example, one's subjectivity is formed in part by one's sexuality, impacting the way one relates to and considers the self, and this sexuality, in turn, occupies a specific temporality of erotic and romantic desires, affects, emotions, and behaviors. As this entanglement of sexuality and temporality bears upon the subject, the subject then, as an agential being, can exert influence back upon them by the way one conceives, experiences, speaks, and acts in time and through one's sexuality. In such a feedback loop, the subject's intervention changes the face and force of these factors and thereby exerts change on him- or herself. It is these unpredictable, infinite relationships between time, sexuality, and subjectivity that constitute this dissertation's core. What makes this indicative of modernism is the subject's self-conscious commentary and consideration of this dynamic, its dawning realization that one is both subject and object of these forces and that one can turn to literature as medium to reconnoiter, elucidate, negotiate, and shape them and one's place amidst them.

I believe that these three concepts can function as both illuminating heuristics and objects of study because the temporalized-sexualized subject "exists at the intersection of a series of discourse or cultural spheres, each of which is essential for an understanding of modern culture" and functions as "an acute if elusive site for the complexities and contradictions of German

modernities."[38] Indeed, modernism and modernity are arguably fixated by questions of time, sex, and subjectivity. While these concepts have been individually studied at great length, less attention has been given to the sexualities of subjects and of temporalities that are not normatively male and/or heterosexual.[39] This is a glaring error. My dissertation addresses this scholarly gap by turning to women and queer authors and their texts. I bring these by no means mutually exclusive groups together in this study because they are the most worked over and socially and subjectively marked by these three factors in comparison to those whose identities come off as unremarkable in the literal sense of the word: seemingly (and mistakenly) blank, unmarked by time or sex, and thus "normal" and the "default." We find in modernist writings by women and queers that they are acutely aware of their ambivalent status as sexualized subjects, of the opportunities they stood to gain and the dangers they faced as such. Furthermore, in German-speaking Europe the "woman question" emerged side by side with the "sexual question" regarding homosexuals and other sexual "deviants," and debates about sexual difference were "at

[38] Anthony Cascardi, *The Subject of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 2; Geoff Eley, Jennifer Jenkins, and Tracie Matysik, "Introduction," *German Modernities from Wilhelm to Weimar: A Contest of Futures*, eds. Geoff Eley, Jennifer Jenkins, and Tracie Matysik (New York: Bloomsburg, 2016), 7.

[39] For some of the most influential accounts of time and/or subjectivity under modernity and in modernism, see Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (London: Polity Press, 2000), Marshall Berman, *Modernism in the Streets* (London: Verso, 2017), Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht, "Modern, Modernität, Moderne," *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Wörterbuch zur politisch-sozialen Sprache*, *Vol. IV*, eds. Reinhart Koselleck, et al (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1978): 93-131, and Hartmut Rosa, *Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity*, trans. Jonathan Trejo-Mathys (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013). Less common are studies of female and queer subjectivity in modernism, and specifically of their temporalities in modernist literature: see, for example, *Sapphic Modernities: Sexuality, Women, and National Culture*, eds. Laura Doan, et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), Elizabeth English, *Lesbian Modernism: Censorship, Sexuality, and Genre Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), Mary E. Galvin, *Queer Poetics*: *Five Modernist Women Writers* (London: Greenwood Press, 1999), Anne Hermann, *Queering the Moderns: Poses/Portraits/Performances* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), Marianne DeKoven, *Rich and Strange: Gender, History, Modernism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), and Kerstin Barndt, *Sentiment und Sachlichkeit: Der Roman der Neuen Frau in der Weimarer Republik*. (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2003).

the heart of a range of knowledge and social practices" during this period.[40] Marti Lybeck has demonstrated that issues of gender such as female emancipation could not be thought separately from the "double import of sexuality: sexuality as the basis of the heterosexual social order and sexuality as an element in individual subjectivity," and those who practiced and embodied a sexuality outside of this normative order were often discussed in the same breath as the rise of the New Woman.[41] Heather Love has shown that women and queers were painted with a host of distinct temporal signifiers in the early-twentieth-century Europe, designated due to their sexual "otherness" as either "backward" or "hypermodern" and thus inferior and deficient compared to the "standard" temporality embodied by bourgeois, heterosexual men.[42] Of course, these conversations were not limited to those outside these communities: feminist and queer thinkers such as Alice Rühle-Gerstel, Else Hermann, and Magnus Hirschfeld explicitly conceived of themselves as temporalized and sexualized subjects in their attempts to find their place in modern society; due to their increasing visibility in the public sphere, they were read by observers as symbols and subjects of an impending era of sexual modernity.[43] We thus cannot capture in full the nexus of time, sexuality, and subjectivity in modernism without considering queers and women both as individuals and compatriots, for they were thought in tandem as

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[40] Biddy Martin, *Women and Modernity: The Life(styles) of Lou Andreas-Salomé* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 2-3.

[41] Marti Lybeck, *Desiring Emancipation: New Women and Homosexuality in Germany, 1890-1933* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2014), 1.

[42] Heather Love, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 6.

[43] Kerstin Barndt, "Mother, Citizens, and Consumers: Female Readers in Weimar Germany," *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects: Rethinking the Political Culture of Germany in the 1920s*, eds. Kathleen Canning, Kerstin Barndt, and Kristin McGuire (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 105ff. See also Rüdiger Graf, "Anticipating the Future in the Present: 'New Women' and Other Beings of the Future in Weimar Germany." *Central European History* 42, no. 4 (2009): 647.

highly charged, temporalized sexual and sexualized temporal subjects embodying the essence of what their contemporaries thought to be modernity.[44] The modernism of women and queers serves as both a special case to explicate this knot and as an emblematic barometer of a distinct phenomenon.

As the reader will have noticed, I purposefully refer to "the modernism of women and queers" rather than a separatist designation of "queer modernism" or "women's modernism." This latter idea of alternative modernisms, bodies of literature organized around a certain group's defining identity or attribute, has been helpful for scholars to think beyond traditionalist formal criteria and origin stories that have limited modernist studies in the past. For example, much groundbreaking work has been done to posit "queer modernism" as a coherent historical and cultural entity. Love, Brian Glavey, and Penny Farfan, among others, have queried the synonymities between "queer" and canonical modernist concepts like "exile," "alienation," and "indeterminacy" as similar terms of the margins, provocatively asking if "queer modernism" is "simply another name for modernism" itself.[45] Of course, if the two terms are collapsible, then "queer modernism" can refer to everything and nothing in particular, and queer ceases to refer to actual LGBTQ+ individuals and cultures. Furthermore, it draws attention to the vexing identitarian connotations of terms like "queer" or "women." What exactly is queer about "queer modernism," for example? Do we only include texts written by openly queer authors? If so, then we abandon fundamental texts in this tradition like those of Thomas Mann. Or is it any treatment of queerness in any shape or form? That runs the risk of including harmful and prejudicial works

[44] See John C. Fout, "Sexual Politics in Wilhelmine Germany: The Male Gender Crisis, Moral Purity, and Homophobia," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2, no. 3 (1992): 389.

[45] Love, "Introduction: Modernism at Night," *PMLA* 124, no. 3 (2009): 744-5. See also Brian Glavey. "Dazzling Estrangement: Modernism, Queer Ekphrasis, and the Spatial Form of *Nightwood*." *PMLA* 124, no. 3 (2009): 749-763, and Penny Farfan, *Performing Queer Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

that employ queerness as a caricature or for humorous effect. Alongside their problematic boundaries, I am not convinced of the merits of enumerating "alterative modernisms" due to their self-marginalization: does not arguing for separate modernisms reinforce the logic that these are only iterations of a "core" modernism, peripheral fledglings of an established center? After all, queers and women have had a stake in "classical" modernism all along—what would such a corpus be without Proust, Mann, Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, or James Baldwin? While practical to break free of restrictive definitions of modernism, they unwittingly preserve the traditional canon as the measure by which other modernisms are studied and judged. I thus see more disadvantages than advantages in carving out a German-language "women's" or "queer modernism." With "the modernism of women and queers," I do not limit myself to works produced by self-identified women and queers; I admit texts that address issues of gender, femininity, womanhood, and queerness that may have been authored by those outside these groups but which nevertheless have important and substantial things to say about the nexus of time, sexuality, and subjectivity for these groups.

While I am hesitant to spin off minoritizing subsets of modernism, I do see substantial scholarly value in pluralizing and proliferating "modernity" into "modernities." We thereby swerve the concept to examine how numerous modern forces and actors "interact in specific ways under the exigencies of history and politics to produce alternative modernities at different national and cultural sites."[46] If modernity can be understood from a variety of sources and multiply refracted through a plethora of perspectives, then this implicates modernism's relationships to the worlds in which it is created. I treat modernism as a co-creator of its modernities. Unlike older studies of modernism by Perry Anderson or Franco Moretti, for

[46] Gaonkar, "On Alternative Modernities," 17.

example, which interpret modernist literature as a reaction to the forces of a singular modernity, I recognize literature's agency and its ability to "effect change as much as it intersects other domains of change" in the world around it.[47] I view literature as not just a "channel for conveying predetermined meanings"; rather, it "composes and configures those meanings in specific ways," self-reflexively participating in chains of cause and effect that have real impact on reality and on how we see, interpret, and act in the world.[48] That modernism entertains a complex, reciprocal relationship with its modernities means that I embed close readings of fiction within their various historical, social, and cultural contexts, drawing on an array of archival sources and non-fictional texts such as letters, diaries, essays, and newspaper articles in order to show how contemporaneous discussions, discourses, and events condition literature and how literature conditions them. Furthermore, if there are multiple modernities, then there must be multiple expressions thereof. I consider literary works not traditionally considered modernist, texts that diverge from standard formal criteria and aesthetic values to include the melodramatic, the middlebrow, the non-experimental, and which lay outside modernist networks of metropolitan production that have long attracted scholarship. But because the texts I study co-exist with their canonical peers, engaging with similar topics and developments and often sharing avenues of influence, when appropriate I bring my selected works in conversation with them. In doing so, I distance my scholarship from the temptation of caesural historicizations of literature that celebrate classical, highbrow modernism as a clean break from the practices, values, and properties of previous genres like realism or naturalism; nor am I arguing that the modernism of queer and women is chronologically distinct from other modernisms. It is not that one expression

[47] Stanford Friedman, 52.

[48] Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 164.

of modernism comes before or after another but rather coexists with older or different forms of literature, modernist or not. "Laterally associative instead of vertically definitional," this dissertation understands German-language modernism as a "polythetic" family, a class of texts with many but not all properties in common.[49] In doing so, I cast a wider net of richly illuminative works by women and queers that house a trove of insights into the machinations of temporality, sexuality, and subjectivity.

Defining Terms: The Sexuality of Subjectivity and Temporality

Let us now turn to the two other conceptual foundations of this study, their definitions and their connections to sexuality, and their methodological implications for my analysis: subjectivity and temporality.

What is subjectivity? How does it differentiate itself from "the self"? I define the self as the core organizing principle of a person, the bedrock that anchors one's being and allows one to speak of a cohesive "I." Subjectivity is both the process and product through which the self relates to and understands itself in encountering, negotiating, and giving meaning to the world within its historically contingent environment. I treat subjectivity as both "an empirical reality and an analytic category," a way to study how the subject, the site of social governance and of self-assertive creativity, is "at once a product and agent of history."[50] It is a co-production between the world and the individual with ever-shifting relations between these two forces.

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[49] Saint-Amour, "Weak Theory, Weak Modernism," 453; Mark Wollaeger, "Introduction," *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms*, eds. Mark Wollaeger and Matt Eatough (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 12.

[50] João Biehl, Byron J. Good, and Arthur Kleinman, "Introduction: Rethinking Subjectivity," *Subjectivity: Ethnographic Investigations*, eds. João Biehl, Byron J. Good, and Arthur Kleinman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 5, 14.

Although subjectivity cannot be isolated from its social embeddedness, it should not be viewed solely as a process and product of subordination; it is here that I disagree with recent theorizations of subjectivity by philosophers such as Byung-Chul Han, who views the subject as inhabiting a "crisis of freedom" in which one's ostensibly autonomous attempt to craft a subjectivity just engenders more opportunities for "compulsion and constraint" as a target for sociopolitical control.[51] Rather than a determinative plane of coercion that only allows for an illusive aping of individual agency while actually generating a "more efficient kind of subjectivation and subjugation," my notion of subjectivity is inspired by a late Foucauldian view of the subject as one who "cannot remove itself from a network of disciplinary practices," but who can "choose to affirm or reject specific practices as meaningful for the self."[52] I hold dear to a subject who retains its agency but is nonetheless acutely aware of the countervailing winds of subjection around it. In this sense, I speak of subjects achieving degrees of freedom and not liberation. My commitment to a dynamic, multivalent notion of "subjectivity" allows me to focus on the mobility of subjectivity, the shifting processes of becoming a subject and fashioning subjectivities over time. I do not seek to essentialize it by putting forth a grand theory of modernist subjectivity or claiming a uniformity for a modernist "queer" or "female subjectivity" that all my authors pursue. I am more interested in investigating and presenting a cornucopia of distinct models and practices of subjectivities, drawing attention to the ways in which subjectivity can be incoherent, discontinuous, and perplexingly inscrutable alongside the ways it is momentarily or retrospectively coherent, continuous, and lucid. In place of a metaphysics of

[51] Byung-Chul Han. *Psychopolitics: Neoliberalism and New Technologies of* Power, trans. Erik Butler (London: Verso, 2017), 1.

[52] Ibid., 1; Tracie Matysik, "Beyond Freedom: A Return to Subjectivity in the History of Sexuality," *After* The History of Sexuality: *German Genealogies with and Beyond Foucault*, eds. Scott Spector and Helmut Puff (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 186.

modernist subjectivity, I offer a phenomenology, deploying and explicating subjectivity as a way to make the world knowable for the studied and for those who study them.[53]

What my authors do have in common is their exploration of subjectivity's entanglement with sexuality, reflecting a broader trend in early twentieth-century Central Europe to consider sexuality as an "important ontological category to ruminations of self and society."[54] As Dagmar Herzog and Harry Oosterhuis have argued, modern notions of sexuality arose in tandem with modern notions of the subject. This process entailed the "individualization and psychologization" of sex as the basis for understanding one's self and others as subjects.[55] In this sense, I understand sexual modernity to be "generative" of the modern subject.[56] Yet unlike most accounts, I trace this entwinement of subjectivity and sexuality not through juridical, medical, and scientific debates, discourses, and texts but rather through literature, making the case for modernist literary fiction as an important site for the emergence of modern subjectivities and in particular those of women and queers. In particular, I emphasize how women and queers explored subjectivity through the prisms of their unique sexual and gender differences in ways both exhilaratingly promising and flinchingly violent. While potentially revolutionary for those historically criminalized or marginalized for their erotic desires, we also observe how sexual

[53] This idea of subjectivity is inspired by the studied authors themselves, who turn against nineteenth-century positivism to reassert the human subject as central to knowing the world. I avoid the limitations of Husserl's phenomenology, which falls into the old bourgeois fantasy of a subject transcendental to history and social forces, by foregrounding these very factors and demonstrating how my subjects are conscious of their enmeshment in the social world.

[54] Jennifer Evans, "Introduction: Why Queer German History?" *German History* 34, no. 3 (2016): 375. See also Tracie Matysik, *Reforming the Moral Subject: Ethics and Sexuality in Central Europe, 1890-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 2-9.

[55] Harry Oosterhuis, *Stepchildren of Nature: Krafft-Ebing, Psychiatry, and the Making of Sexual Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 7. See also Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe: A Twentieth-Century History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1-4, 6-41.

[56] Evans and Freeland, "Rethinking Sexual Modernity," 327.

modernity is not an unqualified, absolute good, operating at times as an instrument of coercion when wielded against women and queers for being "the "wrong kind" of sexual subject. By historicizing sexual subjectivity, we retain it as a protean and unfinished concept that allows us to capture the joys, vicissitudes, and vexations of what it meant to be modern for women and queers.

My dissertation holds the supposition that sexual desire, whether promising or inhibiting, is productive for the subject. Even when its indeterminacy, illegibility, and instability may disrupt the subject, I show how it can be harnessed by the individual as a generative force to compose something new, however ambiguous or provisional it may be. Confronted with its capriciousness, it would be foolish to try to pin desire down as either "an instrument of totalizing powers" or a "wildcard that deconstruct[s] those very efforts to totalize their effects," to name the interpretative ends of the spectrum of feminist and queer theoretical explorations of sex and subjectivity—it is neither and both.[57] In particular, queer theory has been dominated by a sustained assault on the subject by those wielding erotic desire as their weapon of choice in what has come to be known as the anti-social thesis. Most influentially advanced by Lacanian theorists Leo Bersani and Lee Edelman, it sees desire as gleefully corrosive to the very possibility of subjectivity, the force *par excellence* of antinormativity, deconstruction, and negativity.[58] I engage this literature at length in the Schwarzenbach chapter and Mann and Kracauer chapter. For now, it suffices to say that I intervene in these discussions by challenging this deeply ahistorical thesis with detailed close readings of historical expressions of vibrantly multifaceted sexual subjectivities. For many queers and women, sexual desires were nothing but polyvalent

[57] Boone, *Libidinal Currents,* 3.

[58] See Leo Bersani's *Homos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995) and Lee Edelman's *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

and multipurpose, and I look to the ways in which these figures wield the instability of their sexualities to break free from certain normative constraints to their subjecthood and to formulate new forms, structures, and norms of subjectivity.

Of course, it is the central contention of this dissertation that sexuality and its implications for subjectivity cannot be thought without time. I understand "time" and "temporality" broadly and use them interchangeably. When invoked, I alternately refer to abstract conceptions or regimes of time, temporal consciousnesses, experiential velocities, and the lifeworlds created by them. Time is not a passive or settled background against which lives play out but rather a "carrier of significance," a "form through which we define the content of relations between the Self and the Other" and a prime category to "conceptualize relationships between us…and our objects."[59] Time is an active participant in the construction of the subject as well as a moldable entity upon which subjects exert their own will and which can be utilized to understand and shape one's subjectivity and place in the world. As such, I am interested in the human rather than cosmic or geological experience of time as expressed in modernist literature. It is their very location in literature that makes the temporalities under study here distinctly human, for they become human to the extent that they are "organized after the manner of a narrative," the ability to bestow coherence and meaning on to the passage of time.[60] That is not to say that I neglect the broader social, economic, historical, and political temporal environments that surround and impact individuals and their own negotiations of time; the temporalities that the works and their protagonists encounter, consider, formulate, or reject reside in constant

[59] Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), ix, 28.

[60] Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, Vol. I,*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 3.

conflict with societal and historical regimes of temporality. Understanding modernity to be indelibly crisscrossed by a constellation of myriad temporalities, it follows that sexuality is analogously fraught by the issue of time. As I demonstrate in my chapters, sexuality was crucial to theorizing time in German-language modernities and modernism. We see this play out, for example, in the antagonisms between certain normative forms of femininity during the Weimar Republic being coded as "modern" or "backward" and individual women's struggles to find their place within that shifting order. Through these conflicts between individual and social temporalities, we capture how people come to know and form themselves qua subjects in and across time.

My analyses delve into modernist literary fiction to explicate temporalities specific to certain individuals, groups, or settings marked by sexuality in early twentieth-century German-speaking Central Europe. While the study of time in modernism has been a decades-long endeavor with innumerable publications, it is marked by a neglect of the issues of gender and sexuality.[61] I attend to the temporalities of characters, scenarios, and their diegetic worlds in the analyzed works, tracing how they come to interact with sexuality and the self to birth distinct subjectivities, while also teasing out what these specific cases can tell us about the sheer abundancy of modernity's temporal universe. My attention to this moment's proliferation of temporalities in often contradictory and discordant coexistence reflects simple historical reality—there never was and can never be a definitive "woman's" or "queer time," or "modern time" for that matter—and seeks to disrupt the popularity of grand temporal narratives in studies of modernity and, perhaps more surprisingly, in studies of time and sexuality in queer studies.

[61] For recent studies of temporality in modern German society and literature, see *Time in German Literature and Culture, 1900-2015: Between Acceleration and Slowness*, eds. Anne Fuchs et al (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2016), Aleida Assmann, *Ist die Zeit aus den Fugen? Aufstieg und Fall des Zeitregimes der Modern* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2013), and Lucian Hölscher, *Die Entdeckung der Zukunft* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2016).

While provoking thought experiments, I reject the coarse generality of accounts of modernity's time as liquid and unmoored, or rigidly regimented, or nostalgic and elegiac, or presentist and fleeting, or utopic and future-oriented.[62] Similarly, I push back against the theoretical orthodoxy that in order for temporality to be queer, it should be interruptive and deconstructive, a "point of resistance" to "chrononormative" models of time based on the cycles of reproduction, or as hopelessly utopic, of queerness always being a receding point in the futural horizon.[63] It does not serve us well to be seduced by ahistorical tales of modernity and its cultural forms as characterized by singular paradigms, movements, or regimes of time. By attending to marginalized forms of sexuality, I reveal a temporal cornucopia in modernist literature: linear, unidirectional, interrupted, cyclical, forward- and backward- and laterally-facing and -moving. Modernism is temporally fractured, and we must resist unified frameworks and refrain from crowning certain expressions of sexual temporality or temporal narratives as "good" or "bad" or "genuine," instead remaining open to the harmonies and conflicts of time that make this literature worthy of our time.

Reading Post-Critically and Other Methodological Concerns

Before concluding, I would like to reflect on my methodology. This will help readers better understand how I approach my source material—which aspects of the text I emphasize and

[62] See, for example, Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (London: Polity Press, 2000); Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987); Michael W. Clune, "Time and Aesthetics," *Time and Literature*, ed. Thomas M. Allen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018): 17-30; Karl Heinz Bohrer, *Plötzlichkeit: Zum Augenblick des ästhetischen Scheins* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1981), and Peter Bürger, *The Decline of Modernism,* trans. Nicholas Walker (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992).

[63] For the former, see Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Jack Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005); and Edelman. For the latter, see José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009).

elevate; the treatment of characters as subjects; the relationship between text and world—and why I chose modernist literary fiction as my primary source base.

Over the last few years, there has been a growing call in literary studies for a reassessment of critique and its hermeneutics of suspicion in favor of "post-critique." Rita Felski, along with others such as Sharon Marcus and Stephen Best, have taken critique to task for its "spirit of skeptical questioning or outright condemnation, an emphasis on its [the text's] precarious position vis-à-vis overbearing and oppressive social forces, the claim to be engaged in some kind of radical intellectual and/or political work, and the assumption that whatever is not critical must therefore be uncritical."[64] In place of critique's hostility to the literary work, they seek to "de-essentialize" this dominant suspicious reading to create space for a broader set of methods, modes of argumentation, and affects we bring to and draw from literature.[65] It requires a recalibration of interpretative aims—what literature means, how it makes that meaning, and why it matters—while rebalancing the authoritative weight between critic and text, viewing the latter as I do as a co-producer of meaning in partnership with the reader, working with the latter to answer the questions one brings to the text. Literature is not solely an instrument of others' use but a collaborator—with its own degrees and forms of agency—for writers and readers alike to craft meaning and make worlds. Rather than working like a morose film noir detective against the text to ferret out its "hidden causes, determining conditions, and noxious motives," I handle the text akin to what Paul Ricoeur calls a "hermeneutics of restoration" and Eve Sedgwick "reparative reading," with equal doses of critical distance and skepticism as well as an eagerness

[64] Felski, *The Limits of Critique,* 2. See Sharon Marcus and Stephen Best, "Surface Reading: An Introduction," *Representations* 108, no. 1 (2009): 1-21.

[65] Felski, *The Limits of Critique,* 2.

to share "moments of wonder, reverence, exaltation, epiphany, or joy" with the text.[66] Thinking generously and imaginatively with my sources, I push back against the notion of the text as a site where "apparent meaning and actual meaning fail to coincide, words disguise rather than disclose"—the methodological analogue to my rebuke of a modernist subject commonly defined as a stranger to itself.[67] Similar to how I trace the ways in which temporality and sexuality are productive forces for modernist subjects, I practice an interpretation that seeks to strengthen rather than diminish the text, interested in what literature can enable, make possible, and call into life for its handlers and the world in which it resides—be it sexualities, temporalities, subjectivities, communities, relationships—rather than what it undermines. I treat literary fiction as a font of potential imaginaries ready to be taken up and actualized in partnership with its reader and not just a tool to demystify illusions about reality. I flip the focus of analysis from the "de" prefix—literature's ability to "demystify, destabilize, denaturalize"—to the "re" prefix: literature's power to "recontextualize, reconfigure, or recharge" the reader and the world.[68]

Reading post-critically does not mean that I overlook with Pollyannish sunshine the problematic aspects and politics of texts; quite the contrary, these difficult issues continue to influence the readings I perform and I spill much ink on the ways in which entanglements of time, sexuality, and subjectivity can be coercive, oppressive, and violent.[69] Nor in my faith in literature's creative powers do I ignore its limitations as a medium or its respective historical

[66] Ibid., 12, 32.

[67] Ibid., 32.

[68] Ibid., 17.

[69] For a discussion of post-critique within queer studies, see Robyn Wiegman and Elizabeth A. Wilson, "Introduction: Antinormativity's Queer Conventions," *differences* 26, no. 1 (2015): 1-25, and Wiegman, "Eve's Triangles, or Queer Studies beside Itself," *differences* 26, no. 1 (2015): 48-73.

contexts; my analyses rely on thick descriptions and sustained conversations with contemporaneous interlocuters to make their key points and interventions. The point of post-critique is that there are multiple ways of being critical readers. After four decades of theoretical critique, with its increasingly ritualized modes of argumentation, speech, and affect, the time is ripe for a wider array of interpretative options. As part of this dissatisfaction with negative critique, its specific brand of hermeneutics, and its gloomy worldview, my project also resonates with the recent eudaimonic turn in the humanities. Derived from the ancient Greek, this movement takes umbrage with the dominance of negative affect and bleak concerns in literary and cultural interpretation and pivots to what constitutes the good life and human flourishing for different people in different historical moments.[70] While still sensitive to incidences of hurt, sadness, or violence that reside in these texts, I also emphasize the pleasant aspects of human life presented here, the morsels of love, optimism, creativity, and play that constitute the emergence of queer and female subjectivities in German-speaking modernity.

If an objective of this dissertation is to locate and explicate attempts at the good life envisioned, set in writing, and lived by queers and women during the early twentieth century, then why structure each chapter around works of modernist fiction? Why not foreground instead more popular forms of print culture, for example, and the archival records of real people living good lives? In short, because of the specific and unique faculties of literary fiction. Literature is a space for testing the limits of current structures and paradigms and for creating new ways of being through its freedom from the exigences of daily life and its power of imagination such freedom unleashes. Literary discourse, due to its degree of removal from the logic of the "real

[70] James O. Pawleski and D. J. Moores, "Introduction: What is the Eudaimonic Turn? and The Eudaimonic Turn in Literary Studies," *The Eudaiomnic Turn: Well-Being in Literary Studies,* eds. James O. Pawleski and D. J. Moores (Vancouver: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2013), 1-63.

world," preserves a realm for real autonomy and self-determination, especially for the marginalized and oppressed in society. It takes out of direct description—"this is the way things are"—and brings to an inventive language "aspects, qualities, and values of reality" that are seemingly most resistant to change—and then goes about changing them on the page.[71] By confronting the obstacles of reality through literature, as writer, reader, or both, one can reshape and re-articulate oneself and one's world; for the women and queers in this study, this means seizing the chance to radically reimagine what it would mean to be a subject of their own designs. Literary narrative "refigure[s] our historical condition," ready to be taken up and inspire real material change.[72] In this regard, modernism does not hold special powers of expressing or reflecting the world around it; I am not making a claim for it to be a "better" realism of modernity. While this general function of literary fiction is not exclusive to modernism, I have chosen to focus primarily on modernist literature because of its distinction as a body of literature unique in its overdetermination by and incisive, self-reflective ability to elucidate the terms that structure this dissertation—time, subjectivity, sexuality—and their entangled dynamics in ways that other genres, styles, and forms of literature and other media do not. The modernism of women and queers is the literature that engages this imbrication most thoroughly, self-reflexively, and, for us today, most relevantly. It is the literature in which the reader is most taxingly challenged to reflect on her position in the world as an indelibly temporalized and sexualized subject.

Chapter 2 begins this study by excavating the emergence of modern forms of subjectivity, temporality, and subjectivity at the dawn of the twentieth century. I explicate this development

[71] Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, Vol. I,* trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), xi.

[72] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, Vol. III,* 3.

through Robert Musil's 1911 novella, *Die Vollendung der Liebe.* It is the story of Claudine, a bourgeois Viennese housewife who sleeps with an unknown man in order to perfect her love for her husband. Through the novella's notoriously cryptic style and abundance of metaphors, I argue that Musil wields Claudine's exuberant sexuality to dismantle the idea of the expressivist subject dominant during the nineteenth century. I trace how Claudine's increasingly imperious erotic desire begins to articulate a new notion of subjectivity, which I call the "subjectivity of the next step." Predicated on gendered, circular temporalities and modes of narration conditioned by the rhythms of her sex drive, it is a processual subjectivity analogized in stochastic "steps" or situational complexes of thoughts, feelings, sensations, and external influences that come and go. A figure of contingent possibility, each step, until taken, remains undecided toward a plethora of potential paths, analogous to the capricious, abrupt movements of one's desires. These multidirectional urges of Claudine's eroticism function as a narrative agent in their own right, structuring the text's pace, rhythm, and moods, with its twists and turns, steering it in time laterally, back and forth, and in circles. It is a narration that breaks from the narrator's *Entfalten* of causally linked, unfolding events and descriptions in favor of what Musil calls a process of *Einfalten,* commandeering the text to incessantly circle, knead, and rework Claudine's subjectivity toward its ostensible liberation from narrative and male authority. For all its potential, however, the novella shies away from the ultimate consequences of this literary-sexual unboundedness. The narrator reasserts his control in the end by hastily retreating into a standard narration of *Entfalten* and retying Claudine to a stabilized notion of subjectivity vis-à-vis her husband. I begin with Musil for this very reason: on the one hand, his text narrativizes the tectonic shifts in modern notions of temporality, subjectivity, and sexuality, revealing them as imbricated processes, while on the other hand he illustrates the limitations of these shifts,

particularly as an outsider exploring the significance of this imbrication for the sexually marginalized. Rather than a woman's path toward self-fashioning as a free subject, we have a sexualized woman ultimately reduced to an object of modernism's epistemic exploits. Thus, alongside serving as a seismograph, Musil is also a foil to the other works examined in the dissertation, an author who is unable to escape the bounds of a patriarchal imaginary. And as the only prewar text, it reminds us that this tripartite imbrication is not unique to the Weimar Republic but rather is a fundamental aspect of twentieth-century modernity.

Chapter 3 jumps forward to the heyday of the Weimar Republic to examine a queer woman's experience of these intertwined phenomena in Annemarie Schwarzenbach's 1929 novella *Eine Frau zu sehen.* A Swiss author, journalist, and photographer famous during her time for her androgynous, open lesbianism and friendship with the Mann family, Schwarzenbach did not publish this text during her lifetime; rediscovered in 2008, this chapter offers one of its first studies. A first-person narrative of a young woman's whirlwind romance with an older woman at their Alpine hotel, the novella is a rare ego-document from this period of a queer woman's powerful desire and erotic fulfillment. Drawing on Ernst Bloch's theory of utopia, I argue that the novella's narrator, in writing her sexuality, accesses pre-illuminations or "Vor-Scheine" of an anticipatory queer subjecthood not yet possible in her inhospitable present but apprehensible on the horizon of an unforeclosed future. The discrepancy between her presentiment of queerness and a homophobic reality, borrowings of a better future in the insufficiency of the present, sparks the flame that feeds the text's utopic consciousness. In an era in which open presentations of queerness could be dangerous, I make the case for queer eroticism as a formal rather than representational phenomenon, locatable in a style marked by non-verbal diegetic cues, elisions, gaps, and outright silences. This appears in the recurring figure of the *Augenblick,* both as a

temporal figure and as the exchange of erotic glances between the lovers. Entwining time and sexual desire, it becomes in Schwarzenbach's hands a dialectic meeting place of disruption and continuity, time and eternity, the profane and the transcendental, produced by its embeddedness within her pulsating desire. Her insatiable series of erotic *Augenblicke* culminates in narrative blind spots of non-depiction at the very instance when the reader expects representations of their sexual union. But like all blind spots, though they represent nothing, they signify, gesturing to the not-yet-conscious future of her queerness. Placed next to Musil, my reading of Schwarzenbach offers a counter-narrative, highlighting the possibilities that this imbrication of time, sexuality, and subjectivity can spark for (queer) women in their own hands and serving their own purposes. Against the anti-social strain of queer theory, it makes a case for hope and the utopian; in doing so, I also critique the vogue for a naïve politics of visibility and representation in current queer activism.

If the preceding chapters focus on the subjectivities, temporalities, and sexualities within the context of romantic relationships, Chapter 4 brings together Klaus Mann's novel *Der fromme Tanz* (1926) and Siegfried Kracauer's novel *Georg* (1934/1973) to fathom the imbrication of these three concepts within the expansive fold of queer male friendships. An undertheorized mode of relationality in queer and critical theories, friendship as portrayed in these semi-autobiographical and openly queer novels, I argue, opens the door to provocative attempts at conceiving a robust, affirmative sense of queer subjectivity beyond the theoretical shibboleths of scholarship on queer subjects and time as preferably disruptive, non-normative, and discontinuous. A bildungsroman of a young struggling artist in 1920s Berlin, *Der fromme Tanz* posits a spiritual friendship between past exemplars of queer culture—ranging from Socrates in Plato's *Symposium* to Oscar Wilde—and its protagonist through the act of reading. Here, queer

temporality takes the form of a present of contemporaneity through the written word: who is included in this present depends not on one's historical position but one's "being" in the same time of the reader, of being read by him. I interpret how out of this ecumenical present arises an outline of queer subjectivity based on the mutual cultivation of loving friends, and which redeems the idea of reproduction as a cultural rather than biological act. While Mann arrives at a queer present through friends from the past, Kracauer's *Georg* follows the titular protagonist on his quest for transcendental meaning through his erotic friendship with his pupil Fred. I analyze how Kracauer conjures forth the temporality of this friendship as a timeless present, a sacred temporal realm transcending the everyday world, brimming with immanent meaning and which promises to culminate in a dual subjectivity shared by friends in the total union of selves. As Georg's vision confronts the unknowability of the friend and founders on the ambivalence between one's autonomy and the assimilation of the self into the other, I show how Kracauer comes to consider subjectivity itself as a product of incomplete relations, an ethical practice to accept difference as a way of life. Though tonally and formally distinct from each other, both novels enact metaphysical melodramas of queerness in uniting their theoretical exploration of friendship with depictions of their protagonists' sentimental experience of such relationships. Together, these two novels offer an alternative narrative to the traditional story of the "crisis" of the male subject, demonstrating how queer male subjects eagerly took advantage of the shifting temporal, sexual, and subjective tectonics in German society to reimagine queer subjectivity. I also argue for these authors' continued relevance to thinkers today in their anticipating—by several decades—recent treatments of queer friendship by theorists such as Foucault and Heather Love.

Chapter 5 concludes the dissertation with Marieluise Fleißer's *Mehlreisende Frieda*

Geier. Roman vom Rauchen, Sporteln, Lieben und Verkaufen (1931). Inviting Ernst Bloch's notion of "Ungleichzeitigkeit" into dialogue with the novel, I interpret how it portrays the process in which shifting non-simultaneities of temporal discourses and systems interact with notions of gender to decisively influence individuals, their subjectivities, and their social worlds in ways both liberating and threatening. Extrapolating from the story of the relationship between Frieda Geier and Gustl Amricht, a local swimming star in Ingolstadt, I read Frieda, Gustl, and their relationship as both sites and cipher for larger societal conflicts; they function as a battlefield upon which antagonistic actors, modes of time, gender, and their shifting normative values arise, make claims, and compete. Whereas Gustl, transitioning from the prototype of the Weimar "neuer Mann" as self-made athlete to traditional shopkeeper and back to celebrated town hero, is imbued at the end of the novel with futurity in his embodiment of a communal, violent masculinity presaging Nazism, Frieda, representative of an individualist "neue Frau" that falls out of time by the end of the story and the Republic, is shorn of her futurity, physically threatened, and run out of town and narrative. The text, ironizing this turn of events, leaves us with a disturbing depiction of the real implications for misfitting gendered subjects within time. I work with the text's innovative doubled narrative voice, one that combines elements of "Neue Sachlichkeit" irony, coldness, and distance with what Fleißer called a feminine, "mitbeteiligt" closeness to her characters, to illustrate how these ostensibly intangible concepts like "time" or "subjectivity" are not purely abstract fields in and through which we reside but rather dynamic agents in shaping our subjectivities; as such, each shifting in one prompts change in the other, calling forth new subject positions and temporal-social constellations. In Fleißer's novel, the personal negotiation of time and gender under modernity appears ambivalent, indeterminate, and, in extreme moments, downright hazardous.

Bookended by chapters that showcase both the limitations and potentials for the sexually marginalized to create their own temporalities, subjectivities, and sexualities and thereby free themselves, the dissertation portraits a specific and special moment of modernity that offered unprecedented possibilities for women and queers to explore complex projects of the self before the rise of National Socialism. Although gesturing to this cataclysmic future—in which all these authors would be driven into exile, poverty, or cultural oblivion by the coming fascist tide—these chapters should not be read under the shadow of 1933. Written either directly before World War I or in the twilight years of the Weimar Republic, they point to a counter history of German-speaking modernity, away from the violent, masculinist account of trench warfare, failed revolution, street battles between paramilitaries, and an all-male cast of bumbling politicians and toward one of the self-emancipation of the marginalized actually living at the heart of what it meant to be modern. Begun at the beginning of the Trump presidency and finished in the months following the 2020 presidential election, the studies I offer of the hope and desperation of women and queers, their dogged attempts to conceive of modern selves and modern worlds against pervasive hostility, are dazzling for what they tell us about both their and our own unsettled modernities one hundred years apart—that even in the enveloping darkness, glimmers of visions and audacious attempts at freedom, happiness, and the good life still and always will exist.

Chapter 2 – Modernity's Voids: Subjectivity, Gendered Time, and Female Sexuality in Robert Musil's *Die Vollendung der Liebe* (1911)

Robert Musil had given himself a task. Confronted by the infidelity of his soon-to-be wife, Martha Marcovaldi, the Austrian author had begun to write a story based on the incident in January 1909.[73] The work appeared at first a deceptively "angenehme" affair, but it quickly came to frustrate its author.[74] Striving to render this event with sharp intellectual precision, Musil was frustrated by "sonderbare, wunderbare, verstörte Menschen" like Martha, who could betray so unexpectedly not only her fiancé but also what Musil had taken to be her essential attribute, namely, his loving partner.[75] He came to realize that his literary endeavor was something grander than a mere coping mechanism for his perplexity; rather, and more strangely, it was to explore "im Problem des Ehebruchs das weitere des Selbstverrats."[76] Conflating garden-variety adultery

[73] Multiple studies of *Die Vollendung der Liebe* have traced its inspiration to Martha's sexual counter with her ex-fiancé, Martin Cohn. Karl Corino reads the novella as a "spiritualization" of the "fertige Fabeln" of Musil's life (*Robert Musils* Vereiningungen, [Munich: W. Fink, 1974], 46-7); in his biography of Musil, Corino sees in the novella's protagonist, Claudine, an "Abbild" of Martha (*Robert Musil: Eine Biographie* [Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2003], 346-7). J. M. Coetzee views the novella as Musil's "attempt to explore his own feelings of jealousy" that ends in "an effort to take over the woman's sexual experience" ("On the Edge of Revelation," *The New York Review of Books*, 18 December, 1986). I address the gender politics of the novella below. Silvia Bonaccio and Philip Payne consider the novella an obsessive "reconstruction" of Martha's infidelity, amassing the "evidence" of what had led her to this action and abstracting it in the figure of Claudine to transform the incident into something positive ("Musil's 'Die Vollendung der Liebe': Experience Analyzed and Reconstituted," *A Companion to the Works of Robert Musil*, eds. Philip Payne and Silvia Bonaccio [Rochester: Camden House, 2007], 181).

[74] Robert Musil, *Tagebücher, Vol. I*, ed. Adolf Frisé (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1976), 213. Subsequently cited as TB1.

[75] Robert Musil, *Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 2*, ed. Adolf Frisé (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 2000), 1319. Subsequently cited as GW2.

[76] Musil, GW2, 972.

with the betrayal of his wife's self, and thereby unsavorily predicating her self-identity on her fidelity to her husband, he saw his mission in thinking "zu Ende" such a situation through literary prose.[77] His attempt to do so, the novella *Die Vollendung der Liebe*, was published with its companion piece, *Die Versuchung der stillen Veronika*, in 1911 as *Vereinigungen* and was greeted with confused and negative reviews, judged as a failed experiment with its skeletal plot, nearly indecipherable metaphors, and saturated psychologism.[78]

These reviewers' harsh evaluations of Musil's novella are an indictment of their own prejudices and the conservative literary culture they inhabited rather than of the texts themselves. Reviewers found alleged literary and moral failures in the novella's perceived lack of authorial control, both linguistically in the ostentatiously distended and obscure metaphors that threaten to escape readerly comprehension and explode the coherency of the plotline and thematically in the actions of the novella's adulterous female protagonist, which go unpunished and at times are valorized by the narrator. This uneasy balancing act between Musil's alleged abdication of authorial authority and the novella's status as a literary and sexual outlier, on the one hand, and his patriarchal motive in trying to understand and thus control the archetype of the adulterous woman, his own wife, on the other, is, in fact, its most fascinating quality. It is within this tension that Musil explores exuberant female sexuality and the possibility of a liberatory subjectivity that emerges thereout, a direct challenge to the ideal of a unified, coherent, and agential subject itself. He does so by following with aching acuity the intricate webs of the rapidly fluctuating thoughts, feelings, and emotions of a bourgeois housewife, Claudine, who

[77] Musil, TB1, 220.

[78] See Michiko Mae, *Motivation und Liebe: Zum Strukturprinzip der Vereinigung bei Robert Musil* (Munich: W. Fink Verlag, 1988), 63-76. I have chosen to focus my analysis solely on *Die Vollendung der Liebe* because it was one of the very few works to which the author returned until the end of his life, and it had a lasting influence on his thinking and writing on subjectivity, sex, and time; see Musil, GW2, 950, 969. Furthermore, it has been routinely neglected in the majority of studies of Musil's work or of *Vereinigungen*.

travels to rural Austria to visit her daughter and, while away from home, has sex with a stranger in order to perfect her love for her husband. Claudine offered Musil a vessel to follow his fascination with that sudden glimpse, in the moment of Martha's infidelity, of the discontinuity and arbitrariness of the subject: if it were true that she loved Robert, then what did her adulterous affair mean? What relationship exists between act and meaning, cause and effect, and how does it precipitate on the constitution of one's subjectivity? Musil sought to explore this revelatory flash by turning, like Thomas Mann and Arthur Schnitzler, to moments of socially "aberrant" sexuality; since sexuality was seen as polymorphous, vagarious, and non-causal, it offered a way to a modern subject parallelly observed to be protean, contingent, and out of one's control.[79]

Although the precipitating event was Martha's infidelity, Musil had already begun to grapple with this bewildering nexus of subjectivity and sexuality in his debut, *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß* (1906). There, he depicted the confusions of an adolescent cadet who, through the homoerotic and sadomasochistic torture of a classmate, perceives the existence of a split in himself between two realities: an external, his subjectivity, and an internal, a deeper, more meaningful core, or his self.[80] With Claudine, Musil continues his use of characters as "Grenzfälle" in "Grenzsituationen" to denaturalize the structural components of conventional life and explore possibilities of existence beyond them, including this rift in what had been taken to be a unified subject.[81]

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[79] See Michael Trask, *Cruising Modernism: Class and Sexuality in American Literature and Social Thought* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 4-10.

[80] For the purpose of this chapter, I understand the self to be the core organizing principle of a person, the cohesive bedrock that anchors her being—her thoughts, feelings, perceptions, actions, etc.—and allows her to speak of and as a meaningful "I." Subjectivity is both the process and product through which an individual encounters, structures, and imbues meaning to social identity, contingency, cultural forms, and socioeconomic and political conditions around that "I"—in other words, the activity of and the interface between the self and world.

[81] For a deeper examination and defense of Musil's thoughts on these advantages, see his essay "Das Unanständige und Kranke in der Kunst" (1911) in Musil, GW2, esp. 979-983.

This use of a central character to explore the limits of subjectivity has received growing attention in Musil scholarship. Stefan Jonsson explicates what he calls the "Musilian subject" as one who "cannot be defined in terms of an intrinsic disposition."[82] He shows how Musil breaks with the expressivist paradigm of subjectivity dominant in the nineteenth century, which posited that the individual possessed an unalterable essence, and instead "conceptualizes subjectivity as a processual phenomenon, moving toward subject positions" rather than exclusively inhabiting them—subjectivity "as lack."[83] Kai Evers traces a similar anti-essentialism in Musil's writing on violence, arguing that his characters' penchant for intense physical violence in *Törleß* and *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, for example, reveals subjectivity to be noncausal and malleable, adaptable "to any situation without losing its sense of continuity and normality."[84] This subjective and ethical void that many of Musil's characters exhibit is the main subject of Patrizia McBride's study of the Musilian ethical subject. McBride sees this modern subject, robbed of its "traditional metaphysical braces" such as God and bourgeois notions of the essential self, as a "black hole for language and thought," a "void, an unrepresentable idea."[85] She persuasively illustrates how Musil attempts to raise this insight "to the level of ordinary experience and turn it into a principle of conduct" in his fiction. All three authors correctly contend that Musil does not lament this hollow subject, instead viewing it as a creative opportunity to sketch new models of subjectivity, yet their studies also contain gaps and limitations. Jonsson identifies Musil's break

[82] Stefan Jonsson, *Subject Without Nation: Robert Musil and the History of Modern Identity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 8.

[83] Ibid., 8-9.

[84] Evers, *Violent Modernists: The Aesthetics of Destruction in Twentieth-Century German Literature* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2013), 69.

[85] McBride, *The Void of Ethics: Robert Musil and the Experience of Modernity* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2006), 4-5.

with the expressivist paradigm and his embrace of this subjective lack in the 1920s, partially in response to the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; Evers and McBride also adhere to this timeline. I argue that this break comes much earlier: Musil's rebuke of this paradigm is present and already developing by at least 1910, the year he begins composing *Die Vollendung der Liebe.* Their neglect of Musil's earlier works, which feature a much more diverse cast of characters with regards to sexuality and gender, has the effect of constricting their focus to the male characters of Musil's magnum opus. In doing so, Jonsson, Evers, and McBride privilege masculinity and male sexuality as Musil's main tool to challenge older models of subjectivity. Emphasizing traditionally masculine-coded phenomena like physical and sexual violence and the disinterested pleasure of intellectual contemplation in the figures of Moosbrugger and Ulrich, for instance, in their accounts it is men who access these startling insights into the Musilian subject. All three neglect one of Musil's most forceful subversions of the expressivist paradigm precisely in the figure that this paradigm celebrated as its primary symbol: the highly feminine bourgeois housewife that is Claudine. Musil's erotically non-normative women like Claudine, who wield their unruly sexualities to dismantle the traditional subject and unlock its truer truths, are key explorers of the other models of subjectivity and realms of human existence that Musil sought throughout his oeuvre; to overlook their place in his work must leave incomplete any account of Musilian subjectivity.

I argue that *Die Vollendung der Liebe* presents both a step forward and a step backward in Musil's investigation of the modern subject. Through Claudine's seemingly paradoxical quest to perfect her love by seeking it beyond her husband, a peculiar notion of subjectivity emerges, which I call the "subjectivity of the next step," predicated on non-linear, circular temporalities and modes of narration. It is a processual subjectivity, one analogized in stochastic "steps" or

situational complexes of internal elements—thoughts, feelings, and sensations—and external influences, each contingent and non-causal, that momentarily constitute the subject; a figure of unbounded possibility, each step, until taken, remains undecided toward a plethora of potential paths in a multitude of directions. My usage of "step" is metaphorical and should not be mistaken for the linearity and causality that Musil discards. Rather than signifying a logical, unidirectional straight line or an accumulative, *Bilding*-esque life project, I instead would like the "step" to suggest the multidirectional and unpredictable impulses of Claudine's peripatetic erotic desire in which this subjectivity arises, its capricious to-and-fro as it weaves the narration within its twists and turns, moving in time laterally, back and forth, and in circles. Entangled in the knots of Claudine's sexual-temporal complex, I contend that the narration breaks from the forward-driving, linear *Entfalten* of causally linked events and direct descriptions, generating instead an exuberance of multidirectional metaphors that decelerate narrating time to, in a process of *Einfalten,* incessantly circle, knead, and rework each "step" in Claudine's subjectivity. Key to a Musilian literary precision, these innumerable foldings-in of time produce a critical mass of insights about the modern subject as protean, fungible, and contingent.

While few would disagree with a reading of Musil that highlights a subject without essential attribute or core, such scholarship tends to ignore issues of gender*,* a category, which, I demonstrate, is indispensable to Musil's critique of the modern subject. Attending to issues of gender and specifically female sexuality allows me to reveal both the radical potential and the limits of her creator's lifelong study of subjectivity. With this intervention I build on the work of feminist scholars in establishing that the figure of "Woman" was central to early twentieth-century discussions around and theories of subjectivity—for contemporaries of the "woman

question," the latter could not and were not thought and debated without the former.[86] On the one hand, I show how the imbrication of female sexuality and temporality generates the modernist text and modernist subject as a dual project defined by the vicissitudes of erotic desire. Attempting to the horizon of such desire's infinite possibility, the text and subject appear unbounded and liberated in the "Entwertung alles Kausalen," striving for a "Zustand" constituted by the proliferation of simultaneous possibilities.[87] In doing so, I view Musil as challenging notions of subjectivity founded on an insuperable, singular line between one's self and one's subjectivity. This chapter draws out a countermodel in the text, one that posits a fundamental void between self and subjectivity most visible in moments of inflamed erotic desire and makes the case that this void is not to be lamented but instead can be wielded to generate new and liberatory forms and practices of subjectivity and temporality.

On the other hand, I illustrate how Musil retreats from the implications of this literary and subjective unboundedness, that is to say, its bursting of the bounds of narrating "Woman" as a cultural text and social subject. His inability to think of Claudine outside of the patriarchal equation of ownership, in which her adultery, her injury of a man's claim on a woman, is tantamount to the betrayal of her subjectivity and which must be twisted in meaning to serve their marriage, disrupts the otherwise liberatory implications of this imbrication of sexuality, time, and subjectivity. At the very moment in which Claudine has sex with another man and enters the emptiness of that void, the narrator reasserts control through the very tools of his protagonist's impending freedom. I explain how the narrator retools the subjectivity of the next step to take a step back, so to speak, from the radical potential for liberation from subjectivation

[86] See Biddy Martin, *Women and Modernity: The Life(styles) of Lou Andreas-Salomé* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 141-2.

[87] Robert Musil, *Briefe*, *1901-1942*, ed. Adolf Frisé (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1981), 332.

in that void between self and subjectivity, reinstating a linear, causal temporality that binds the two anew. Musil's push beyond conventional subjectivity runs aground on the very condition that conduces his critique, namely, a woman's freewheeling sexuality; faced with the prospect of her autonomy, the narrator sends Claudine back to her husband as a happy housewife shorn of her adulterous avidity, an object rather than a subject of investigation. We find that the accumulation of centuries of impossibilities that governed the lives of women cannot be jettisoned by metaphor alone. The problematic that blunts the novella's daring critique of subjectivity is how a female subject can live possibility without also living its impossibilities.

Discovering the Void: Breaking Free of Linear Time and Subjectivity

Die Vollendung der Liebe begins *in media res* with a conversation between an unnamed husband and wife. The wife, who will be subsequently identified as Claudine, unsuccessfully implores her husband to travel with her to visit her daughter Lilli at her boarding school, thereby establishing the conceit of the plot: Claudine's solo journey to her daughter in the Austrian countryside. Rather than a satirical depiction of the dysfunctions of bourgeois marriage, this opening—and the novella in general, unlike Musil's more famous works—is bereft of irony or humor; it is saturated with an earnest solemnity that signals the seriousness of the novella's remit and emphasizes the couple's unity, symbolized by its hermetically sealed milieu. Their warmly lit sitting room is isolated by window blinds, which, like a pair of "herabgelassener Lider," "verbargen […] den Glanz des Zimmers" and provide a physical barrier between their enchanted interior and the evening darkness outside.[88] Spatial interiors are linked to emotional interiority—the vivacious brightness of the room mirrors their lively love for each other, allowing no

[88] Robert Musil, *Die Vollendung der Liebe*, in GW2, 156. All further citations will be in parentheses.

interlopers—and create a setting in which this couple's relationship, and Claudine's love specifically, undergoes its first troubling examination.

Unlike the majority of the novella, these opening pages proceed with a relatively cold and lifeless minimalist prose to figuralize the couple's intense connection as an inert, rigid entity; reminiscent of Cubist art of the same period, their united interiority is geometrically exteriorized. As Claudine serves her husband tea, the scene freezes in place. Her body stops and builds a "steifen Winkel" with his body (156). Despite their physical apartness, their affection for one another—a "Strebe aus härtestem Metall" spans the distance between them and "stützte sich auf ihre Herzgruben"—transforms them "zu einer Einheit, die man fast mit den Sinnen empfinden konnte" (156). Just as their interiority is solidified by a vocabulary of metallic hardness, the temporality of the scene also congeals. On this acutely palpable feeling between Claudine and her husband

> hing, wie an einer leise zitternden Achse, das ganze Zimmer und dann an den beiden Menschen, auf die sie sich stützt: Die Gegenstände hielten umher den Atem an, das Licht an der Wand erstarrte zu goldenen Spitzen…es schwieg alles und wartete und war ihretwegen da;...die Zeit, die wie ein endlos glitzernder Faden durch die Welt läuft, schien mitten durch dieses Zimmer zu gehen und schien mitten durch diese Menschen zu gehen und schien plötzlich einzuhalten und steif zu werden, ganz steif und still und glitzernd,..und die Gegenstände rückten ein wenig aneinander. Es war jenes Stillstehen und dann leise Senken, wie wenn sich plötzlich Flächen ordnen und ein Kristall sich bildet (156-7).

A solipsistic scene, the external world manifests itself under the blanket of the couple's outwardly emanating stasis; hence the triple "schien" and other semantic units that subordinate the objective world to their own subjectivities—the tangible and intangible, personal perception and physical objects, pause in unison. The pieces of furniture hold their breath as if to await the next delayed moment as the previously playful light ossifies into "goldenen Spitzen." Time itself changes states and solidifies. As it penetrates the husband and wife sitting motionless in unison,

it abruptly stops and stiffens like rapidly freezing water. Enveloped by a language of rigid materiality, time is repeatedly described as "steif" and "still," a glittering layer of newly frozen ice. Indeed, the narrator compares Claudine and her husband's state to the formation of a crystal, a very slow geological process of formerly labile material coalescing into an extremely rigid solid under immense pressure. The figure of the crystal functions as both an apt condensation of this scene and as a motif referring back to both the couple's elementally durable union as well as the woman's firm identity as this man's wife.

These geological moments of harmony would seem to attest to the couple's perfection, of a seamless connection between two souls. Yet, this union entails a lack of movement, of the vitality of life itself, and Claudine quickly comes to feel its danger as a crystal-lined cage. The unbendable unidirectionality of time and the scene's narrative perspective would seem to prohibit Claudine's movement beyond the confines of marriage, for the couple's relationship is repeatedly constructed in images of compacted entities sealed off from the world. Claudine perceives that she and her husband are surrounded by a "Gefühl der Kälte von allen Seiten" except for the one, "wo sie aneinanderlehnten, sich entlasteten, deckten, wie zwei wunderbar aneinandergepasste Hälften, die, zusammengefügt, ihre Grenze nach außen verringern" (159).[89] This cold and antisocial state of being, the unmoving and isolated existence of this housewife holds the danger for Claudine of becoming what Musil decried as a realm of stultifying normalcy, one "aus dem Zustand des Lebens in die Welt des Totens."[90] Her life threatens to undergo a "Versteinerung," "tot" like a "Skelett."[91] Her exposure to warmth would seem to only

[89] This simile alludes to the origin myth of mankind found in Aristophanes's speech in Plato's *Symposium.*

[90] Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften,* ed. Adolf Frisé (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1987), 1424.

[91] Musil, GW2, 1051.

be side-by-side with her husband, suggesting that Claudine's access to life itself is predicated on her marriage, specifically the presence of a man who complements and completes her as a wife. The suspicion that the inflexibility that envelops her normal life, rather than the completing component toward a perfect union, is actually limiting haunts her with the intimation that something else exists beyond it, a more dynamic life. Hence the several instances of hardly perceptible, hesitant movement in place that disrupts the couple's crystalline unity in in this passage. Claudine's imagines her union with her husband as that of "zwei Schwärme kleiner Schmetterlinge" flying and mixing but not dissolving into each other, while feeing "eine zärtliche Bewegtheit, etwas ganz Leichtes" rumbling among the "leise zitternde Achse" that binds them (156). There is life and animation under this scene's iced-over surfaces, suggesting a subcutaneous potential for things to move, to change their shape, for things to be different than the way they seem to be. The passage of time trembles anew beneath encrusted bourgeois interiority. So certain is this setting and, by extension, Claudine's subjectivity, not.

This nascent discord begins to realize itself as diegetic movement resumes. Following the moment of the couple's crystallization, "[d]ie Frau setzte den Tee ab, ihre Hand legte sich auf den Tisch," and their bodies begin to shift away from each other. Now broken, the tranquil enchantment of their communion dissipates. As Oliver Simons has observed, this arresting and restarting, materialization and melting of time often heralds in Musil's fiction a paramount shift in the subject, and Claudine intimates that her subjectivity may not be reducible to the union with her husband.[92] Attempting to put this feeling to words, Claudine suddenly recalls a moment a few nights ago, when she and her husband had been having sex and she had apprehended that "etwas zwischen uns war" (159). Their crystalline unity intruded on by an unknown interloper,

[92] Oliver Simons, *Raumgeschichten: Topographien der Moderne in Philosophie, Wissenschaft und Literatur* (Munich: W. Fink, 2007), 292-305.

she struggles to clarify to herself and communicate to her husband what has come between them, for she quickly surmises that while her husband continues to believe to be united with her during intercourse, she is taken aback by her recognition of this cleft in what she calls her "Wirklichkeit" (159). As she explains, in one reality—the physical reality of two bodies copulating—"ich war dir ja nah in Wirklichkeit," but "wie ein undeutlicher Schatten war es zugleich, als könnte ich fern von dir und ohne dich sein" (159). Here it is important to belabor the point that Claudine's intimation of a divide between two realities is embedded in her sexuality. While the collapse of the unified, coherent subject is a well-trodden modernist narrative, it is rarely told through a female protagonist who is a sexual subject and not the object of male desire. Her sexuality sparks an awareness of alternatives to her status quo, a turn signaled in the narrative language as well. Claudine's speech transitions from a nervously rambling string of indicative clauses, primarily descriptive of her past feelings and aiming for the verisimilitude of recall, to something more exploratory and tentative. Finding recourse in simile, she compares her awareness of this gap to a shadow and grasps for the subjunctive to communicate the experience as if she *could* be far away and without him. The "könnte" holds open the possibility of inhabiting two different places and times at once. Time and being—and Claudine's being in time, her temporal subjectivity—is now plural.

This perceived duality of reality rebukes the linear, unidirectional time materialized in the opening passage in favor of a "Gefühl" that "es stehen manchmal alle Dinge plötzlich zweimal da," as Claudine describes it to her husband (159). Its attribution as a feeling is important here: for Musil, a "Gefühl" is composed of "komplexe Zustände und Vorgänge," in which "[e]motionales, sensorielles, motorisches, intellektuelles" rub up against and intermix with each other; a synthesis of the spiritual, the psychic, and the physical, it implicates all major elements

of her subjectivity.[93] The duality she apprehends, split, as McBride puts it, between "two incommensurable states of mind," opens up a void not only in her perception of the external world but also within herself.[94] She intimates that her subjectivity is being gradually opened up toward other modes and models. Against the rigidness of the opening passage emerge alternatives, the necessity of her present being as a wife brought into question. She imagines grabbing her husband and traveling with him into her inner core, the expected sexual-romantic melting of two into one—or not. For at the same time, she flatly asserts that she could theoretically *not* do that, instead pushing him away, simply because "es möglich gewesen war" (159). The possibility of choice cracks the amber encasement of Claudine's existence. Against that first subjective-temporal singularity arises a more mobile motivational logic—rather than "if this, then necessarily that," we have "if this, then I *could* do this or that or neither or both in any order that pleases me."

Claudine's growing suspicion that there is a disconnect not only between herself and her husband but also within herself leads her to a conversation she had had with her husband about a character in a novel they are reading together, a "Kranker" by the name of G., who seduces and abuses children and young women.[95] She is beguiled by the lack of causal reasoning between his crimes and his smile as he watches his victims suffer. Assuming an error between his action and reaction, she asks her husband: "'Wie mag ein solcher Mensch wie dieser G. sich wohl selbst sehen?'" (157). Claudine, rather than condemning his lack of remorse, is engrossed in the man's

[93] Musil, GW2, 1302. In this sense, Musil's notion of *Gefühl* operates like a *Gestaltbegriff*. For an overview of *Gestalttheorie* and its Viennese context and influence, see Simons, *Raumgeschichten,* 181-189.

[94] McBride, *The Void of Ethics,* 19.

[95] An early incarnation of Moosbrugger in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*. G. can be classified as a member of a "Literatur des Verbrechens" that became popular in German-speaking societies around 1900, see Arne Höcker, *Epistemologie des Extremen: Lustmord in Kriminologie und Literatur* (Munich: W. Fink Verlag, 2012), 150.

internal workings, how he perceives and understands himself across what appears to her to be a logical gap. If G. "'meint gut zu handeln,'" as Claudine deduces from his smile, yet the result of that act is something criminal—if sexual crimes are *a priori* immoral and criminal, regardless of effect—it seems a causal explanation does not work here (157). What does this dissymmetry mean for his self and the way he sees himself, his subjectivity? As Charles Taylor argues, in Western cultures "[s]elfhood and the good, or in another way selfhood and morality, turn out to be inextricably intertwined themes."[96] The absence of a readily discernible or accountable system of goodness in G. shocks Claudine's moral complacency and, more significantly, speaks to her growing awareness of the incoherency of subjectivity. In this regard it is telling that the couple doesn't pathologize G. and is instead more interested in surveying the "Möglichkeitsbedingungen seiner Existenz."[97] Suggesting that G.'s crimes cannot be understood with a set of standards predicated on structures of causality and universal moral applicability, she confronts the question: What happens to the subject when its conventional paradigms prove to be lacking?[98]

In G., Claudine witnesses a startling discrepancy between what she sees as his subjectivity as a criminal and what she deduces to be taking place in his self, between his crimes and his pleasure. G. captivates Claudine precisely because he exists as a subject not based on a "Scheinkausalität" between his self and subjectivity. He parallels her premonition of a

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[96] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 3.

[97] Höcker, *Epistemologie,* 193.

[98] Musil consistently criticized overly legalistic, rigid, and universal moral codes, considering them crude and imprecise in evaluating actual individual lives. This disapproval stems from his demand for precision and analytical nuance that respected the singularity, complexity, and contingency of each human, aspects which conventional moral codes too hastily and inexactly erase in their quest for unambiguity and repeatability. See Musil, GW2, 981, 1093, 1370.

discordance within herself while having sex with her husband, between her subjectivity as a faithful housewife and her deeply personal feeling of disconnection from her husband, prompting her to pursue the implications of this unsettling discovery within her otherwise happy marriage.[99] She has a hitherto inexplicable "Bewusstsein" that "[h]inter allen Verknüpfungen der wirklichen Erlebnisse" traipses "etwas unaufgefunden," a "verborgene Wesenheit ihres Lebens," which she "nie noch ergriffen hatte" (161). In a moment of intense sexual intimacy with her husband, Claudine stumbles upon a "Zweiteilung," which had previously been hidden by "Kompromisse" with the demands of our quotidian lives.[100] This insight disturbs the numbing tranquility of time and shatters its concomitant crystalline coherence of her subjectivity in the novella's opening passage. As Claudine and her husband leave the *Geborgenheit* of their marital co-existence at tea and ready for bed, they raise the blinds and open their windows; the external world is let into the diegesis, and the protagonists once again move within the narrative. They become almost physically aware of this minute yet significant shift in their relationship and in Claudine's understanding of herself therein. Lying in bed, their union throbs "schmerzhaft" and "empfindlich" to the "kleinste Unsicherheit" germinating in their relationship (159-160). What once possessed the steeliness of a metal rod may collapse at the slightest provocation. Claudine sits on the edge of possibility, of a subjectivity liberated from continuity, coherency, and linear temporality, carried away by "ein Gefühl wie nach allen vier Weiten des Himmels" (160). Daring in its expansiveness, her slumber paradoxically portends the beginning of her momentous exploration of the modern subject.

[99] Of course, their acts are not equivalent, only that Claudine's association with G.'s crimes foreshadows her break from bourgeois respectability and the kind of gendered subjectivity associated with it.

[100] Musil, GW2, 1143.

Metaphoric *Einfalten:* Toward a Temporality and Subjectivity of the Next Step

Having fallen asleep with the presentiment of wide-open spaces, the narrative resumes with Claudine traveling to visit her daughter at her boarding school in the Austrian countryside. Jolted out of her geologically rigid existence quite literally by the train she is riding and by the palpitating sensation of a yawning void both around and within her, Claudine can no longer rely on the clarity and continuity of bourgeois life. It is no coincidence that only now does the narrator properly name the protagonist as Claudine, indicating the birth of a new, autonomous subject. Her physical journey propels her to face the unexplored, unbounded expanses of a new subject position increasingly defined by the (re)emergence of her exuberant sexuality and its entangled, unruly, and multidirectional temporalities.

Alongside a name we receive key details about Claudine's past. Lilli, her daughter, is not the offspring of her current husband but rather of a sexual encounter with a dentist, the description of which suggests was rape. Although the victim of an unscrupulous professional, the narrator problematically wishes for us to view this case as emblematic of a defining pattern of Claudine's past, one of a certain sexual promiscuity of "Selbstaufopferung" toward the demands of men and "volle[r] Willenslosigkeit" toward her own sexual desires (160). As Claudine waits for her train, the narration of her surroundings is interspersed by these erotic recollections. It is not simply that the narrator, in conventional realist fashion, pauses the flow of the diegetic present to regale the reader with the protagonist's past from an external and omniscient position so as to provide background and motivation for the current scene. Significantly, her "damalige Leben [lief] in das jetzige hinen," interrupting and tearing the fabric of Claudine's present as it abruptly reappears as an unexpectedly immediate and coequal companion to the diegetic present (161). The memories of her youthful sexuality acquire autonomy and motion, compared to a

running brook or "Bach," in which "rauschte dieses Treiben einer unglücklichen, alltäglichen, untreuen Frau von ihr fort und sie hatte doch nur das Gefühl, reglos und in Gedanken daran zu sitzen" (160-1). Rather than manipulating them in or assimilating them for her present, Claudine situates herself as a spectator to her own past, a moviegoer of the estranged self who watches in stillness the flow of these sundered events. It is this lack of sequential tissue between temporal realms—that the past is a paler anterior to the present, and that each present gradually and interminably recedes into the past—the *Nebeneinander* rather than *Nacheinander* of present and past, which holds her interest. For by arising in the present, these bubbles of the past disrupt the linear line of time and confront her with the disturbing idea that not only are relationships with her husband and to herself fraught with dissonance but time itself, and the temporal underpinnings of her subjectivity, is discontinuous and multiple. Not merely opening up, time is being (re)produced by her sexuality.

Her sexual past permeates an increasingly sexual present. As Claudine boards her train, she is enveloped by a crowd of fellow travelers who push and shove her, their rough caresses an arousing "Demütigung," which, echoing the affective patterns of her erotic past, "an jenen beinahe vergessenen Lebensabschnitt erinnerte" (161). Peering out of the train window, she views the external world through lenses tinted by the highly sexualized hues of this reemergent chapter of her life. Nature comes to exist of phallic and vaginal figures: telephone poles stand "wie auf dem Kopf mit hunderten gespreizter Beinchen," suggesting both a profusion of penises and the image of an upside-down woman, her clothes tipped back and her legs spread to reveal her genitalia (163). Upon these hermaphroditic legs hang "tausende kleiner Glöckchen von Wasser," which Claudine watches as they "fielen, liefen, blitzten und glizerten" like sexual discharge. Dripping with excitement, the base of the panorama is composed of fields of

"dunkelbraunen Furchen," laden with those prodigious emissions dripping from the poles above them (163). This cascade of sexual imagery not only attenuates the boundaries between her past and present—these two realms are less chastely lying side-by-side than increasingly entering each other—but also her idea of herself, her subjectivity. "Verloren" amidst this mutual penetration of temporal realms, "sie konnte sich auch nicht auf sich besinnen" (162). Who she has hitherto been begins to thaw under the heat of this accumulating erotic charge. Just like "[d]as Aufgelockerte, Tauende der Natur draußen," her former existence deliquesces away, "als hätte sich ein Druck von Claudine gehoben" (163). Completing the trajectory of the opening scene, the glacial pressure of who she has considered herself to be in marriage recedes in favor of a new suppleness and unboundedness of being; she jumps at the idea that she is "einmal offen […] wie wenn Wände sich auftun," freed from a subjectivity, "deren man sich nie anders als geschlossen entsinnt"—an epiphany, "als hätte es heimlich etwas lange Geschlossenes in ihr zersprengt" (163-4).

It must come as no surprise, then, that this detonation of Claudine's prior subjectivity is narrated with an explosion of metaphors and metaphoric images. Her subjectivity increasingly resembling a void between a crumbling older model based on continuity and causality and an inchoate usurper, metaphor steps in to narrate her relation to and understanding of herself as a subject within this unprecedented gap, un- and remaking the protagonist. The narration breaks with the monogamy of the opening scene, its indicative statements and one-to-one logic—in writing an "is" statement, one makes a claim, even for just that moment, that the world is singularly so—and instead embraces an adultery of perspectives, metaphor's freewheeling, polyamorous associations. Indeed, Musil's fiction is shot through with metaphoric workarounds to get at what resists representation in conventional language or in its novelty is beyond the pale

of direct statement.[101] Like the concurrent scientific research into the unreliability and instability of perception and visual fields, of which Musil the trained psychologist would have been well aware, Musil the author embarks on a practice of writing that takes to heart the fallibility of the individual to describe and capture reality; a multitude of metaphorical forays emerges to circumscribe the subject's increasingly shaky grasp on both the external world and one's own interiority.[102] This is particularly the case with sex. Because sexuality is unruly and idiosyncratic and resists its parsing into clear categories of meaning and transparent depiction, a cacophony of metaphors is unleashed, circling around the erotic sensations in Claudine's interiority to thereby illuminate and comprehend them in the project of gradually assembling as individual tiles the mosaic of her new subjectivity. This use of metaphor prohibits a single, authoritative point of view in the story or toward its protagonist; a distinctive angle or direction from which the narrative can be definitively unfolded does not exist.[103] In forsaking singular description, metaphor gives itself the function of playful "discovery," laying the groundwork for another world to arise corresponding to "other possibilities of existence, to possibilities that would be most deeply" Claudine's.[104] Charged as "psychische Konstituenten der Personen," Claudine rewrites and remakes herself in metaphor, "sich in ihnen umschreibt."[105] Such an approach

[101] According to one persistent scholar, *Die Vollendung der Liebe* contains 337 similes or metaphors (roughly nine per page) and over 1,500 instances of "uncertain" or "speculative" language, such as the subjunctive mood, verbs of subjective perception ("fühlen," "scheinen," "empfinden," "spüren," etc.), and adjectives and adverbs of uncertainty like "fast," "beinahe," and "vielleicht"; see Jürgen Schröder, "Am Grenzwert der Sprache: Zu Robert Musils Vereinigungen," *Euphorion* 60 (1966): 311.

[102] For a historical and theoretical study of this research, see Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: Of Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990).

[103] Musil, *Briefe,* 88.

[104] Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multidisciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language,* trans. Robert Czerny (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 247, 229.

[105] Musil, *Briefe*, 87.

distinguishes a particularly Musilian precision or "Weg der kleinsten Schritte" comprised of innumerable partial attempts to grasp a whole, in which every slight alteration in metaphoric description, every new iteration of an analogy contributes to elucidating a subjectivity that comes into being through the act of narration for the narrator, reader, and character alike.[106] The final product is a "Gewebe von Bedeutung," out of whose tissue Claudine will emerge: "der erzählte Mensch…ist in diesen Bildern."[107]

Musil's metaphoric poetics works to re-inscribe possibility into the permanence of written language and the unidirectionality of narrative unfolding, to more precisely render the "gewisse individuelle Wahrheit" of an individual like Claudine as a life of consistent flux, simultaneity, and multidirectionality.[108] Although, as Nietzsche reminds us, all language is riddled with metaphors, dead or alive, Musil invests metaphor as the "gleitende Logik der Seele" with the faith that it can simultaneously elucidate and preserve the complex, fluctuating relations of each "Menschen zu sich"—subjectivity—in literature.[109] By bringing incongruous things together to develop new meaning from impertinent linkages, the novella departs from what literary scholar Moritz Baßler argues is the metonymic operation of classically realist texts, like those of Stifter—what Musil calls a "Monotonie der Tatsachen"—for a metaphoric operation, which bursts standard frames of reference and thereby reanimates language with multiple co-existing meanings.[110] If the former can be pithily summarized under the aegis of *sein*, then its

[106] Musil, GW2, 972.

[107] Musil, *Briefe* 84, 87.

[108] Musil, TB1, 214.

[109] Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften,* 593.

[110] Moritz Baßler, *Deutsche Erzählprosa, 1850-1950: Eine Geschichte literarischer Verfahren* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2015), 22-25; Musil, GW2, 1027.

opposite sits squarely under that of *wäre,* a realm founded on the rule of exception, not of exclusion. This conditional tense is a mode of contingency, and in its deployment Musil wants to entertain the idea of a simultaneity of options in order "den inneren Menschen [zu] erfinden" as a being of possibility; it serves as a tool to narrate synchronicity in a form—written narration—that fundamentally relies on diachronicity.[111] In placing it in the service of narrating Claudine's subjective revolution, Musil equates its proliferation with that of her nascent subjectivity: as the narration accumulates a critical mass of metaphoric turns, Claudine emerges.

Undermining the certainty of language's referentiality, Musil's "literary epistemology of the possible" sensitizes Claudine to an alternative realm of existence, to be different in myriad ways at the same time.[112] In his idea of a temporality of non-causal *Nebeneinander* of differences, a stochastic simultaneity of relations, Musil is clearly influenced by Ernst Mach. Mach, widely read in *fin-de-siècle* literary circles, argued that individual existence is comprised of an accumulation of randomly experienced sensations and perceptions.[113] As many of Vienna's authors keenly felt, Mach's provocation harbored radical repercussions for literary representation. If the subject is no more than a "complex bundle of elements" with no notions of a stable, logical order, an intrinsic essence, or a progressive development underlying it—the basic assumption of both the expressivist paradigm of subjectivity and its ally, the concept of *Bildung*—how can one write the subject? Mach refutes causality and necessity as principles of subjectivity, lambasting them as "primitive" and positing instead a notion of functional or "mutual relations of simultaneity": two things affect each other continuously and simultaneously

[111] Musil, GW2, 1029.

[112] Elisabeth Strowick, "Literature and the Sense of Possibility: A Brief Introduction," *MLN* 125, no. 3 (2010): 505.

[113] Ernst Mach, *The Analysis of Sensations and the Relation of the Physical to the Psychical*, trans. C. M. Williams (New York: Dover Publications, 1959), 4-24.

rather than sequentially in a relation of dependence to each other.[114] As Judith Ryan has argued, Musil took inspiration from this challenge to bourgeois subjectivity to experiment with forms of language like metaphor to capture these relations of simultaneity in a subject predicated on "nichts Kausales [und] nichts Mechanisches," here instantiated in a female protagonist for whom *Gleichnis* is "eine Realität."[115]

If the Musilian subject and narration operate according to relations of simultaneity and non-causality, then the sequential boundaries between past, present, and future are also scrambled, placed side-by-side. We have seen how the erotic metaphors of Claudine's train ride saturate the diegetic present with her past. Although at the time of their occurrence they struck Claudine as inconsequential, these experiences now signify the what-could-have-been of the past's unrealized possibilities. As co-equals, these undeveloped past futures nudge into her present, revealing her current life as a wife as equally "von dem Bewusstsein einer bloßen Tatsächlichkeit, fast seines Zufalls befallen" as these occurrences of her past (164). As her train ride comes to an end, Claudine startles herself with the fancy that her current existence and its alternatives are only separated in the present by the "Haariß des Zufalls"; rather than dead and disposed, these pasts are all around her in the present.[116] She concludes that

> es [...] noch eine andere, ferne Art des Lebens für sie bestimmt sein [müsste]. Es war das vielleicht nur die Form eines Gedankens, die von früher in ihr zurückgeblieben war, nicht ein wirklich gemeinter Gedanke, sondern nur ein Gefühl, wie es ihn einst begleitet haben mochte, eine leere, unaufhörliche Bewegung des Spähens und Hinaussehens, die—zurückweichend und nie zu erfüllend—ihren Inhalt längst verloren hatte und wie die Öffnung eines dunklen Gangs in ihren Träumen lag (164).

[114] Ibid., 89-92.

[115] Judith Ryan, *The Vanishing Subject: Early Psychology and Literary Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 1-5, 218-223; Musil, GW2, 972; Musil, *Briefe* 34.

[116] Musil, *Briefe,* 34.

Although the reader is pelted by elusive allusions to a sexual past, besides her encounter with her daughter's biological father we never find out what exactly she has forgotten or forsaken in marrying her husband. What exactly are these paths not taken? If they are so significant as to scramble her perception of time and her subjectivity, why are they left undescribed? We are confronted with curiously empty memories. They are ghoul-like in their hollowness, all scare and no substance, fated never to be redeemed in the present and all the more haunting for it. It is their function and not their content, their disruptive effects on the temporal substrate of her subjectivity, that counts for Claudine. They herald possibility itself, an opening up of past and present toward each other and the ways in which she can inhabit both and wield such a diffuse temporal order in the elucidation of her subjectivity. After all, she does not wish to replace her everyday life with her husband with that of another—as the novella's title attests, her quest is to perfect her love for him. It is the form of possibility, the possibility of possibility itself, which Claudine holds dear. If not progressive, unidirectional, or sequential, what is this sexual temporality that comes to be in the narrative through metaphor?

Claudine gives us a clue as she disembarks from the train and travels by sled to a hotel in the small rural town where her daughter's boarding school is located. Her male neighbor, a *Ministerialrat,* quickly piques her interest, for he compares the delicacy of the snowbanks around them to the daintiness of women's lingerie. Although she does not know who he is, she quickly senses that he desires her. His winking eye, the inflection of his voice, and his body language remind her of previous escapades, and "ihre Vergangenheit erschien ihr mit einem Mal wie ein unvollkommener Ausdruck von etwas, das erst geschehen musste" (167). Her past enters her consciousness as something that still must happen, the future bending backward and folding into the past, implying that this time—"erst"—it would be a more perfect expression of what had

eluded her in past moments of sexual intercourse. Claudine's body fills "mit einer leisen, fast unterwürfigen Sinnlichkeit" at the idea of sleeping with this man, and as her musings on the train are now touched with the concrete potential to become physical reality in his arms, a "Schein" stands "hell über ihrer Vergangenheit […] es war ein wunderbares Zukunftsgefühl" (170-1). The future is lured into a ménage à trois by the past with the present. In her sexual fantasy, the three temporal realms draw closer; the past does not exactly foreshadow or become the future; rather, it covers itself with the feel of the future within the diegetic present, blurring all three's boundaries in a muddied erotic circle.

Provoked by these flashes of possible sex, Claudine is unable to sleep once she arrives at the hotel. She awakens in the middle of the night, startled by the pressure of her desire. In a reversal of the opening scene, Claudine finds herself alone in a room, which feels restrictive like a "Käfig" (171). No longer an idyll of bourgeois *Gemütlichkeit* with her beloved, her surroundings separate her from the sleeping bodies of "fremde Menschen," from whom she senses pulsating erotic energy; increasingly aroused by all the potential sexual partners around her, she longs to scream "wie Katzen schreien vor Angst und Begierde" (171-2). Terror and desire—and disgust. Turning to the *Ministerialrat* in her mind's eye, she feels "Ekel" at the thought of his body on hers (172). If not an object of her own attraction, he is to serve as a randomly selected erotic conduit between her past and future, a tool to pursue the folding in of time and its capability for accessing an alternative subjectivity (172). She shudders at the thought of lying with him, yet "gerade da, gerade zugleich mit diesem Abscheu," she feels, "wie in einer zweiten, tieferen Ebene, [...] ein Schwindeln, vielleicht eine Ahnung von menschlicher Unsicherheit, vielleicht ein Bangen vor sich" (172). Dizzying it is to stand on the edge of one's subjectivity, and to look down into the uncertain abyss at its limits. As she stands alone in her

room, “nackt, ausgezogen, [ihrer] selbst entkleidet,” she loses not her sense of self, her “Ich,” per se—at no point does she disassociate from herself, from the ego that organizes her existence—but rather, the force of her erotic desire strips her previous subjectivity, the ways in which she had understood, organized, and related to herself (173). Set in motion by the disenchanted sex scene with her husband, she intuits that this siren call of her sexual desire—the tantalizing brutality of the word “Sodomie” ricochets in her thoughts as she imagines what she will do with the *Ministerialrat* (180)—will deliver the feared and coveted final crack to shatter her subjectivity and propel her toward that internal void and the threshold of a new mode of existence.

In its place Claudine perceives herself as “ein absonderliches Loch im Finstern, im Gegenwärtigen erschien ihr Umriss,” a hollow structure—or, positively inverted, a surplus of potentiality within vacated space (174). This space of freedom feeds on the specific temporality of this narrative moment. Though the narrative of course continues to literally proceed—written words continue to follow each other—the narrated time loses its forward propulsion. As the voluptuous pleasure Claudine takes in her arousal engulfs her being and the narrative itself, our protagonist stands motionlessly overwhelmed in her room. Equally immobile, “die Zeit lag reglos, von unsichtbaren Quellen gespeist, wie ein uferloser See ohne Mündung und Abfluss um sie” (173). The use of water imagery distinguishes this placidness from the claustrophobic inertia of the opening scene.[117] Whereas time in the latter congeals with crystalline rigidity, frozen within the four walls of their living room that symbolizes Claudine’s own bounded situation, here we have a harmony of movement and stasis. Water may appear “reglos” on its surface, but it is continually sourced by invisible springs, implying a seamless, ceaseless cycle of mobility

[117] For an extensive analysis of water imagery in *Die Vollendung der Liebe,* see Wilhelm Braun, “Die Wassermetapher in *Die Vollendung der Liebe,*” *Colloquia Germanica* 10 (1976): 237-246.

and rest. Time moves in place, fluid yet pacific. A temporality akin to the physics of water captures Claudine's external immobility and internal commotion, breaking down the tripartite sequence of time into an "uferloser" time, a time flowing nowhere and everywhere. Just like on a serene surface, upon which objects may float without direction or the exertion of energy, yet underneath exists hidden currents of energy, so too Claudine. Physically immobile but enraptured by the sexual revolutions within her soul, she witnesses her erotic memories rise to the surface and float on by, "als ob in diesem abgesonderten Zimmer ihr Leben in sich selbst zurückliefe," the continual mixing of temporal currents (173-4). "Ohne Mündung und Abfluss," no beginning or end, time folds in upon itself (173). While disconcerting, these morsels of the past do not repeat themselves like the unprocessed in psychoanalytic theories of trauma; rather, time recirculates itself. Time, far from being inert or constricted, is actually dynamically stationary.

As in theme, so in form. Musil's ever-distending proliferation of metaphoric imagery aims for a highly precise apprehension of the soul through a multitude of forays toward and around this single object. They stall the motor of a forward-facing, action-driven plot, crowding out the narration of events in favor of the description of a single moment or sensation; in doing so, they enlarge narrating over narrated time and exacerbate the impression of deceleration and immobility. For example, here is paragraph-length sentence churning and returning with the determination of her concupiscence to drive at the void she senses in herself at night in her hotel room:

> [U]nd da kam es jetzt plötzlich von dort über sie—wie einstens diese schreckliche Wehrlosigkeit ihres Daseins hinter den Träumen, fern, unfassbar, im Imaginären, noch ein zweites Mal lebte—eine Verheißung, ein Sehnsuchtsschimmer, eine niemals gefühlte Weichheit, ein Ichgefühl, das—von der fürchterlichen Unwiderruflichkeit ihres Schicksals nackt, ausgezogen, seiner selbst entkleidet—während es taumelnd nach immer tieferen Entkräftungen verlangte, sie dabei seltsam wie der in sie verirrte, mit

> zielloser Zärtlichkeit seine Vollendung suchende Teil einer Liebe verwirrte, für die es in der Sprache des Tags und des harten, aufrechten Ganges noch kein Wort gab (173-4).

The subject of this passage is a domineering "es" that casts its glow over Claudine and to which an intricate chain of descriptors and modifiers are appended in order to elucidate something for which there is no singular word or concept. At first, it is compared to a familiar feeling of defenselessness and then to something unimaginable, which is followed by a series of nounal equivalences—a promise, a shimmer of passion, a flash of tenderness—and a final comparison to a confused bit of her love looking for perfection. This passage's dogged pursuit of precision almost tips over into his opposite, nearly collapsing into incomprehensibility under its weighty ambition. It is an ambition rooted in the need to work the same spot in the text—and in Claudine—over and over again, not in compulsive repetition but each time with a novel flourish to better understand what is at hand. As Musil observes, his novellas "entfalten nicht, sie falten ein"; they are "eine Dichtung, keine Erzählung."[118] In forgoing the traditional folding-out of a narrative for a non-linear folding-in, he constructs his narrative like the kneading of dough so as to create an appropriate thickness of his "Dichtung." With this recursive technique each turn of the fold works metastasizes *Gleichnisse*, each generating a sliver of meaning in an accumulative process so as to achieve a critical mass of insight and thus spark an epiphany about Claudine's subjectivity. A "verbal equivalent of montage or cubist effect," this passage's erratic syntax and discombobulated through line conduces a "linguistic density" to "create simultaneity…in one synchronic structure."[119]

These circumlocutions are part of a narrative process of *Einfalten* comprised of indirect,

[118] Musil, GW2, 350.
[119] Thomas E. Yingling, *Hart Crane and the Homosexual Text: New Thresholds, New Anatomies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 115.

circuitous roundabouts, a process of "Umschreibung" or "Rundherumschreibung," which sit at the core of Musil's effort to inscribe simultaneous possibility into the narrative and Claudine's life.[120] For such a method the goal is not to aim directly and plainly at the singular core of a thing, for "die Wahrheit liegt [...] nicht in der Mitte, sondern rundherum wie in Sack, der mit jeder neuen Meinung, die man hineinstopft, seine Form ändert, aber immer fester wird."[121] With each additional metaphoric description or comparison or linkage, the target gradually and unpredictably morphs into sharper being, without a final idea or ideal concept in which the pursuit would teleologically culminate. Achieving an acuter precision in these oblique encirclements than he would shooting for the center, Musil follows a slower yet more subtle approach, which he alternately called the "Weg der kleinsten Schritte" and the "Weg allmählichsten, unmerklichsten Übergangs."[122] It is a conscientious dragging of the feet, finely registering in its narrative languor each delicate movement of each stirring of Claudine's interior, a methodically gradual, circular route laden with descriptive riches. This kind of narration draws out a spectrum of minute quivers in one's interiority that normally remain below the surface of attention amidst the flurry of everyday life. A specific kind of poetic *Erkentnnis*, it raises one by one life's seemingly marginal ephemera out of obscurity and folds them into language and thereby into a "Gewebe der Bedeutungen."[123] In doing so, Musil stakes a claim that this literary capture of the "unerschöpflich[e]" "Kombinatorik" of Claudine's interior reveals truer truths

[120] Musil, GW2, 1300.

[121] Ibid., 1075.

[122] Ibid., 972.

[123] Musil, *Briefe*, 84.

about the fundamentals of existence like subjectivity and time.[124]

Increasingly recursive, both time and the narrative fold in on themselves, proceeding with one another in circular fashion in and around Claudine. In attempting to elucidate an alternative understanding of subjectivity through female sexuality and its temporal affiliates, we can position Musil's novella within a broader discourse around 1900 concerning female-coded temporalities. Prominent psychological, philosophical, and feminist texts of the time located the relationship of time and the figure of the woman in cyclicality and non-linearity.[125] The case studies of female hysterics conducted by Sigmund Freud and Josef Breuer, for example, often traced the etiology of their patients' "pathologies" to disturbances of linear time, such as the return of repressed, un-abreacted memories and inhibited sexual progression. When irregular time haunts the patient, as in the case of Dora. Freud diagnoses her "inability to give an ordered history of [her] life" as central to her affliction, that is, the inability to order the self in a logic of causal, cumulative progression as foundational to the expressivist paradigm of subjectivity.[126] While not restricted to women, it is significant that Freud built these foundational texts upon women's perceived temporal errancy, associating the "other" sex with interruptions in "healthy" linear time. Concurrently, another Viennese intellectual, Otto Weininger, published a treatise on time's relation to women.[127] One of the most widely discussed figures of the decade regarding

[124] Musil, GW2, 1302. See also Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 41.

[125] Silvia Bovenschen, *Die imaginierte Weiblichkeit: exemplarische Untersuchungen zu kulturgeschichtlichen und literarischen Präsentationsformen des Weiblichen* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1979), 27.

[126] Sigmund Freud, *Dora: An Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1963), 10-11.

[127] For an introduction to his work and reception, see Jacques Le Rider and Norbert Lesser, eds, *Otto Weininger: Werk und Wirkung* (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1984). Musil was familiar with Weininger's work, as evidenced by his early diaries (Musil, *TB* 138ff).

gender and sexuality, in *Über die letzten Dinge* (1904) Weininger divides time into two types of movement, one unidirectional and directed at the realization of the future—what he deems to be the proper "Einsinnigkeit" of time—and the other a repetitive, "rückläufige, drehende Bewegungsform."[128] The former is the voluntarist expression of Man, striving for self-realization in the future of his own creation. The latter belongs to Woman. This backward-oriented time distinguishes itself through its circular movement, which is deemed "vor allem die Bewegung der Prostituierten."[129] Weininger considers it unethical because of its predetermination, the tyranny of repetition that prohibits one's willful generation of a future, of life.[130] As such, Weininger claims this female temporality proves that women have no capacity for "Entwicklung," a key term of subjectivity for the *Bildungsbürgertum.*[131] The fundamental problem at the heart of female time, then, is that it is "nicht gerichtet"; instead, it flitters and flounders and fails to move straight toward the future. [132]

Against this backdrop of misogynist theories of temporality, Musil's novella stands out in *not* developing an essentialist or definitive theory of gendered time. Harnessing female sexuality and its temporalities for its narrative-epistemological advantages in exploring modern subjectivity, he unwittingly undertakes a positive transvaluation of a pathologized "female" time. In this regard, he is closer to Lou Andreas-Salomé, whose essay "Der Mensch als Weib" (1899) challenges the assumption of woman's inferiority by emphasizing their temporal freedom. For

[128] Otto Weininger, "Über die Einsinnigkeit der Zeit." *Über die letzten Dinge* (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1918), 102.

[129] Ibid., 97-98.

[130] It is not difficult to perceive here a *sui generis* mania to erase Man's origins in the birthing Woman.

[131] Ibid., 98-100, 106-107.

[132] Ibid.

Andreas-Salomé, women inhabit a harmonious circle of life. While men live "vorwärtsdringend," women are characterized by a "Wiederholung von sich selbst."[133] Unlike Weininger, the circularity of women's temporal lifeworlds is not a sign of inferiority. Like Musil, because Woman does not embody "die vorwärtsstrebende, sich immer feiner und weiter zerspaltende Linie," she is a free being of unconstrained potentiality, at liberty to "expand outward in all directions" and an embodiment of "multiplicity and possibility" that exceeds the limited "order of the masculine, the logical, the linear."[134] Claudine's similarly constituted temporality belies the myth of a male-coded modernity as properly of "teleology, linear and prospective unfolding; time as departure, progression, and arrival."[135] Against the "Gegensatzkonstruktion von weiblicher Statik […] und männlicher Dynamik, die die historischen Momente von Fortschritt und leidvoller Entfremdung in sich birgt," she troubles hierarchized developmental paradigms of modernity and the modern (and gendered) subject.[136] It is one's potential to inhabit a meandering temporality that blurs temporal demarcations and recursively folds in on itself that holds the key to what Musil views as a more precise and even, perhaps, truer existence as a subject under modernity.

It is in moments of intense desire and pleasure that Claudine inhabits such a temporality and, concomitantly, where her estrangement from her old subjectivity becomes most apparent. As day dawns following that erotically revelatory night alone in her hotel room, she finds herself

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[133] Lou Andreas-Salomé, "Der Mensch als Weib," *Die Erotik: Vier Aufsätze*, ed. Ernst Pfeiffer (Frankfurt: Ullstein, 1992), 10, 14.

[134] Ibid., 27; Martin, *Women and Modernity,* 150, 159-160.

[135] Julia Kristeva, "Women's Time," *Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology*, eds. Nannerl O. Keohane, Michelle Z. Rosaldo, and Barbara C. Gelpi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 34-35.

[136] Bovenschen, *Die imaginierte Weiblichkeit*, 27.

drenched in sexual anticipation aimed at the *Ministerialrat*. The banal actions of doing her toilette to make herself more attractive feels "wie ein Feuer [...] wie eine brennend bittere Flüssigkeit" that singes off her former understanding of herself (176). Cleansed of this clouding sediment, a "quälender Reiz, eine dehnende Lust des Gehirns" pushes her toward "etwas wie eine dünne gläserne Scheibe" within herself (178). As if her own spectator, she perceives through this transparent threshold the simultaneous presence of the potential lives she could have led and the different subjective iterations of "Claudine" she could have been. Each past future side-by-side in the present, she sees the faces of the men she has encountered in her life, jolted by the thought that she "vielleicht selbst mit solchen Menschen leben [könnte]" (178). In this "Zustand der Liebe" she glimpses what Musil would later call the *andere Zustand*, an alternative "Welt" of being in which there is "weder Zweck noch Ursache" and in place of causal relationships and linearly sequential time "tritt ein geheimnisvoll schwellendes und ebbendes Zusammenfließen unseres Wesens mit dem der Dingen und anderen Menschen."[137] She admits the arbitrariness of her own subjectivity both in particular and in general, a product of random steps taken, rather than something essential, indivisible, or permanent.

It is this divide between one's self, one's most basic sense of "I," and one's subjectivity, one's understanding of and relation to the self as mediated by social and cultural forces, that Claudine grasps as the true condition of human existence. To better comprehend this realization, she begins with a spatial analogy. "Man geht täglich zwischen bestimmten Menschen," she muses,

> oder durch eine Landschaft, eine Stadt, ein Haus und diese Landschaft oder diese Menschen gehen immer mit, täglich, bei jedem Schritt, bei jedem Gedanken, ohne Widerstand. Aber einmal bleiben sie plötzlich mit einem leisen Ruck stehen und stehen ganz unbegreiflich starr und still, losgelöst, in einem fremden, hartnäckigen Gefühl. Und wenn man auf sich zurücksieht, steht ein Fremder bei ihnen. Dann hat man eine

[137] Musil, GW2, 1144.

> Vergangenheit. Aber was ist das? fragte sich Claudine und fand plötzlich nicht, was sich geändert haben konnte (178).

Here, the narrative shifts from the highly subjecticized language of the preceding sentences, focused on her eroticism, to a more sober style. Personal pronouns have been replaced by "man." Accompanying this depersonalization is a switch from the hitherto dominant past tense to the gnomic present, lending the passage the air of a generalizable thought experiment. The narrator starts by positing a series of presuppositions—normally, one interacts with the accoutrements of daily life without issue—which are then disturbed by a variable introduced into the formula—as one continues, life's trappings suddenly stand still and separate themselves from the individual, appearing in the distance as an embodied strangeness—and ends with an unexpected result: one now has an alienated past. Claudine finds here that an arrest in the linear flow of time, that is, the perseverance of the past and its emergence as a separate entity as one continues forward, is not only intertwined with that startling gap between self and subjectivity but also conduces it. She is befuddled by this rip in her temporal-subjective texture. If the "Vergangenheit, die einst so nah um sie gewesen war wie ihr eigener Leib," detaches and becomes "fremd," then what becomes of her? (179). At first glance, she believes that nothing has changed, for is this not the way that time passes? Adhering to the hoary understanding of the subject as gradually developmental, one cannot become a complete personality if a biography isn't cultivated. Yet, her confusion gives the lie to this facile solution; the extent that the past is "losgelöst" from the present, that it becomes another entity even, threatens the unity of the subject. Its intractable void prompts Claudine to then consider that "man selbst sei es, der sich geändert habe": the past seems so distant because she has grown so drastically over the course of time and is no longer the same as she once was (179). However, this reason is also unconvincing. Conveyed in the hypothetical

subjunctive, her answer does not carry the same authoritative weight as the indicative statements of the described transformation itself and its simplicity triggers within her a "sonderbaren Widerstand" (179). Besides, she already knows too well that the past is not past simply because one ages and grows, as seen in its forceful reemergence in her present throughout the novella. Rather, the terms of her experiment are mistaken. Reversing the conditions of her original equation, what if, she hypothesizes, this disconnect is actually par for the course, fundamental to the individual itself?

An epiphany strikes Claudine, flashing the discovery that the correlation between the self and one's subjectivity must be provisional and functional, not incontrovertible and causal; as the gap she intimates throughout the novella suggests, their identity is no assured thing. I view her breakthrough as the radical highpoint of the novel—the moment when Claudine and her sexuality threaten to break free from the confines of subjectivity and its narrating language—and the point at which Musil's critique of subjectivity loses steam, frightened at its centrifugal potential and retreating to reassert control over its unruly protagonist. It does so by tracing what I call the subjectivity of the next step. As Claudine expounds on this gap, it

> ...fiel ihr ein, wie das ist, wenn man manchmal etwas in der Ferne sieht, fremd, und dann geht man hin und an einer gewissen Stelle tritt es in den Kreis des eigenen Lebens, aber der Platz, wo man früher war, ist jetzt so eigentümlich leer, oder man braucht sich bloß vorzustellen, gestern habe ich dies oder jenes getan: irgendeine Sekunde ist immer wie ein Abgrund, vor dem ein kranker, fremder, verblassender Mensch zurückbleibt, man denkt bloß nicht daran (179)

The figure of the step comprises the building block of this subjectivity. From where one is standing, one sees something unknown in the distance: this is the destination of the next step, and in the expanse covered between here and there lies a gap. One takes the step and reaches that spot, and the "etwas" that had been seen from afar is now in reach, operable for one's

subjectivity and assimilated as its latest instantiation. When one looks to where one previously was, however, it appears empty. Rather than a meaningful and strong connection between there and here, then and now, one observes a lack; what one has become in taking that step estranges itself from the step before. It does not follow that the past is hollowed of meaning or forgotten—Claudine isn't granted the memory of a goldfish—but rather that there exists no necessary relationship between each step. The one before appears foreign and etiolated because it does not condition the present. Indeed, the "Abgrund" between steps attests to the fact that the subject cannot be understood as a "Continuum" but rather "stets nur etwas Singuläres," a series of provisionally connected points.[138] The obvious cavities between each step alerts Claudine that subjectivity does not exist as a coherent manifestation of a stable essence or an accumulative unfolding of the self. As Musil remarks, the appropriate question the subject should ask himself is "wo bin ich?" rather than "was bin ich?", for "[e]s handelt sich nicht um […] ein Schicksal, sondern einfach um eine Situation."[139] While it may seem that we live discursively, as a flowing life narrative from beginning to end, Claudine approaches the idea that we as subjects are instead composed in a "sprunghaft" fashion out of singular situational points; we think ourselves "scheinbar kontinuierlich," whereas we are in fact "diskontinuierlich."[140] While each step temporarily stiches the subject together by upholding an illusion of continuity—she tries not to think of the abyss below as she crosses it—this willful ignorance of the ad hoc nature of subjectivity conceals the fact that it is merely "a group of functional dependencies," makeshift

[138] Musil, TB1, 117.

[139] Musil, GW2, 1375.

[140] Ibid.

and not "inviolable in its defined substantiality."[141] Again, it is her subjectivity that is processual and protean, moving in a myriad of possible directions and changes—"er ändert sich"—while her innermost sense of self remains sufficiently stable to anchor an "I": "er ändert nicht *sich*." Claudine comprehends that her life has always been marked by "diesem unverstehbaren, unaufhörlichen Treubruch" between subjectivity and self in which she "in jedem Augenblick von sich selbst loslöst" in this interminable process of estrangement and creation (179). Her actions transcend banal adultery in attaining to the moral and ontological qualities of subjectivity.

Another way to understand the subjectivity of the next step is to think of it in terms of film. During his psychology studies prior to writing the novella, Musil compares this "Täuschung" of continuity between subjectivity and the self to the operation of a "Kinematograph," an early version of the film projector.[142] Early film functioned by accelerating minutely different single images to such a speed as to create the impression of seamless motion when projected onto a screen. The illusive continuity of images can, of course, be interrupted by decelerating to the extent in which the gaps between each image become perceptible, thereby revealing the discontinuity behind the complete movie. As Christoph Hoffmann has argued, these early apparatuses mirrored and reinforced the techniques of self-observation practiced by psychologist Carl Stumpf and his associates at the University of Berlin, like his student Musil, in which precedence was given to the gaps in one's perception, to the unnoticed singularities of a self ordinarily experienced as a continuous current.[143] Musil's early protagonists, such as

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[141] Robert Musil, *On Mach's Theories,* trans. Kevin Mulligan (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1982), 50.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Christoph Hoffmann, "'Heilige Empfängnis' im Kino: Zu Robert Musils *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß* (1906)," *Der Entzug der Bilder: Visuelle Realitäten*, eds. Michael Metzel and Hertha Wolf (Munich: W. Fink Verlag, 1994), 198ff.

Claudine and Törleß, employ this mode of psychological self-scrutiny to plumb the depths of their subjectivity. Indeed, what I have identified as Musil's poetic-temporal principle of "einfalten" exhibits a resemblance to the cyclical movement of the projector reel. Narrating such self-observation like the functioning of a cinematograph, Musil can slow down the pace of the story by recursively kneading masses of doughy descriptive language to obtain a more precise picture of an individual's interiority, sputtering the flow of one's life to reveal its constitutive gaps. The continuity of subjectivity in itself and with the self proves to be a product of culturally privileged forms of perception that value continuity and coherency, while discontinuity appears to be the deeper, truer "Attribut des Ich."[144]

Accordingly, Claudine experiences herself as "nur ein Zufälliges zu sein," enfolded by a "wechselbare Hülle von Zufall und Tatsache" (179). The originary rigidity of the crystal, its geological necessity, has been replaced by an interchangeable encasing of accidental facts coming together to form her subjectivity. What may appear to be a nihilistic formulation of the subject devoid of definitive and durable attributes and cohered only by a thin tissue of arbitrariness I read positively as a subjectivity held open—and together—by a commitment to possibility. Rather than *ohne Eigenschaften*, I interpret Claudine as an early figure embodying what Musil would call a "Möglichkeitssinn," that is, a subject of unrealized possibilities who possesses the ability, "alles, was ebensogut sein könnte, zu denken und das, was ist, nicht wichtiger zu nehmen als das, was nicht ist."[145] Its anti-humanist appearance is deceiving: the tenuous connections within one's subjectivity and between subjectivity and self are the

[144] Ibid.

[145] Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften,* 16; see also Mark M. Freed, "Musil's Ontology of the Present: Lessons on the Hermeneutics of Modernity," *Modernism/modernity* 24, no. 2 (2017): 322.

precondition of meaning's proliferation. It is a deeply humane conception of the subject, striving against constraints toward the rich potentiality of life in all possible forms; it is the desire to swim, freely, "in einem Strom von niemals Wirklichem" (179-80).

For Musil, this mode of subjectivity acknowledges its contingent relation to the self. Rather than interpret the novellas of *Vereinigungen* as part of Musil's lifelong striving for a sort of mystical monism, as some scholars have done, I read them as early attempts to delineate a subject constituted by lacks and gaps and suited for the turmoil of a modernist period acceleratingly tenuous in its hold on former organizing certainties.[146] Indeed, the composition of *Die Vollendung der Liebe* tracks a shift in Musil's thinking away from what he called, drawing on Swedish feminist Ellen Key, "Lebenskunst" or "Seelenkultur"—notice the progressive, cultivating implications of both "Kunst" and "Kultur" for subjectivity as a lifelong project—which can be viewed as part of a broader expressivist paradigm of subjectivity, in which one's subjectivity, and in particular its manifestation as words, actions, and appearances, sincerely expresses an authentic self as the culmination of a perfect emanation of one's soul.[147] Departing from this paradigm, we see Musil here moving toward a "kompliziertere moralische Mathematik."[148] With Claudine he registers a "metaphysischem Krach," the emptiness left behind by the "Explosion" of the "Nichtdeckung von Ideologie und praktischem Leben" in

[146] See, for example, Thomas Harrison, "The Essayistic Novel and Mode of Life: Robert Musil's *The Man without Qualities*," *Republic of Letters* 4, no. 1 (2014): n.p.

[147] Musil, TB1, 154, 161. This paradigm can be traced back to the developments of Romanticism in Germany and France, especially in the works of Rousseau, Herder, Goethe, and Schiller, as well as in Kant's moral philosophy; see M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), 21-27, and Taylor, *Sources of the Self,* 357-390. By the late nineteenth century, authors and intellectual began to challenge this paradigm in the face of technological modernization, aesthetic experimentation and events like the *Sprachkrise* in Viennese modernism, and scientific advances, such as Mach's psychology and Darwinian evolution. For an overview of this history in the German context, see Jonsson, *Subject Without Nation*, 25-59.

[148] Musil, GW2, 1080.

Claudine's experience.[149] The novella treats this emergent gap between subject and self as an "Aufgabe" to work through the various possibilities of this new subject: "was sein könnte, als eine Teillösung dessen, was sein soll."[150] Musil finds himself in good company with other modernists such as Nietzsche, Hofmannsthal, and Kafka, who also exercised a skepticism toward the presumed lucidity of the self and its ability to express itself as a subject. Musil's intervention distinguishes itself, however, from those of his peers in its positive valuation of this subjective reality. He avoids falling into a crisis of the subject, instead questioning the relations between subjectivity and self to push beyond old paradigms.

Confronted with a subjectivity shattering "in hundert Möglichkeiten," whose connection with the self is neither permanent nor inevitable, the manner in which Claudine is narrated becomes noticeably panicky in the face of its radical implications for the self's freedom outside of the imperative to figure as a subject in language (179). Riding high on her sexual metaphors, Claudine threatens to burst the horizon of narrative language itself as she approaches the threshold of this alternative realm of being. What this promised land entails cannot be fully expressed, for Claudine feels it to reside "unter dem Bereich der Worte" (181).[151] Standing at the edge of this subjective-narrative void without the bearings of language to hold her, in this yearned-for moment in which she is to enter a state of simultaneity of possibility we are told that she feels to be in freefall, that the crystalline security of the opening passage "mit einmal es [das

[149] Musil, GW2, 1357.

[150] Ibid., 1357, 970.

[151] As Lyotard reminds us, Claudine's fervidness to obtain "other realities" is characteristic of much modernist cultures and of modernity itself (Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Regis Durand [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984], 77). That this reality of being lies past the pale of aesthetic representation and even language makes modernism the art of the "unpresentable" *par excellence*, struggling to make visible that what is unperceivable and resorting to "negative presentation" of abstraction and formlessness (78-9).

Leben] wieder nicht mehr trüge" (179). The previous vocabulary of exhilarating liberation is replaced with the trepidation of losing control. The "Lust" she felt for this freedom now fades, pale and "traurig" (179). Up until this point, sex has been tantalizing in its epistemological and poetic potency to bend narration to probe the subject and its temporal substrates. And yet, as Claudine prepares to sleep with the *Ministerialrat*, the narrator cottons on to the dangers of her unbridled sexuality, counterbalancing his exploration of its power with an attempt to now control it. In seeking love beyond her husband, the original structuring conceit for both story and subject, the narrator balks at the radical question posed by Claudine: if love can be found outside of the marital union, if the subjectivity for which it stands has been shown to be actually comprised of gaps, what then holds the subject—and a couple's union—together? If the self is set free, what will prevent Claudine's unbounded sexuality and its metaphoric exuberance from concomitantly liquidating the narrative, from liberating her from the narrator's (and Musil's) patriarchal dominion across time, subjectivity, and language?

Repairing the Void: The Metaphor of the Line and the Limits of Musil's Critique

Musil's answer is yet another analogy. Awaking on the final day of her journey, Claudine resolves to have sex with the *Ministerialrat.* She seeks him with alacrity, desperate to attain the shattering of subjectivity that she believes their encounter heralds. She approaches him, and while partaking in a chain of flirtatious suggestions, once again her sexual desires are distracted to ponder what exactly makes the "Zufälligkeit" of subjectivity seem coherent and inseparable from individual selves, "als ob es fest zu ihnen gehörte" (184). Interrupting their imminent consummation, the narrator diverts Claudine to attempt a last-ditch balancing act between avoiding, on the one hand, the reification of the subject as something continuous and identical

with the self—the expressivist paradigm's sin—by acknowledging its constitutive gaps, and, on the other, the aforementioned risk discarding subjectivation altogether. To do so, he embraces the analogy of a line that holds together the self and subjectivity in a workably coherent and functionally unified entity:

> Der große, durch die Jahre geflochtene Gefühlszusammenhang ihres Daseins wurde dahinter in der Ferne einen Augenblick lang kahl für sich bemerkbar, fast wertlos. Sie dachte, man gräbt eine Linie ein, irgendeine bloß zusammenhängende Linie, um sich an sich selbst zwischen dem stumm davonragenden Dastehen der Dinge zu halten; das ist unser Leben; etwas wie wenn man ohne Aufhören spricht und sich vortäuscht, dass jedes Wort zum vorherigen gehört und das nächste fordert, weil man fürchtet, im Augenblick des abreißenden Schweigens irgendwie unvorstellbar zu taumeln und von der Stille aufgelöst zu werden; aber es ist nur Angst, nur Schwäche vor der schrecklich auseinanderklaffenden Zufälligkeit alles dessen, was man tut (185).

The components of Claudine's life are braided into a coherent composition by a connective line, which holds together each random step as one crosses its constitutive voids. This line is created by the individual herself: rather than essential or natural, it is a functional fiction to hold the self to a subjectivity, to bestow some sense of order to their otherwise contingent confluence. What results is a provisional identity between subject and self. Emphasizing the mutual reliance of subjectivity and narrating language, Claudine compares this connective tissue to the fear one has of silence. The rapid tumult of words erupting from a speaker's mouth fools oneself into believing that each is a necessary outcome of the one before and precedent for the one after, mandated in an interminable chain. Linear temporality is restored here, frantic in its forward propulsion from one word to the next. The return of a more dogmatic—and male-coded—temporality, shorn of the circular playfulness of female-coded erotic time, endows the speaking subject with uninterrupted consistency, feeding the illusion of its substantial coherence and linguistic transparency by concealing the gaps in between each word. How far we've come from the exhilarating inexpressibility of Claudine's alternative realm in only a couple of pages! This

volubility assuages the fear of language's limits, in which falling into silence threatens to dissolve the subject and set the self free; without it, each isolated word resounds in the empty void around it, attesting to the arbitrariness of being. Approaching a workaround for the destabilizing insights of the subjectivity of the next step, the novella acknowledges the utilitarian value in acting as if there were some sort of causal order to one's subjectivity, even while tacitly accepting its hole-ridden nature. An act of willpower, "es kommt bloß darauf an, dass ein Punkt des Lebens sich ohne Lücke an den anderen reiht" so that the individual "Zufall" of the disparate elements of one's life "wurde [...] wirklich und dann hält man es fest" (187-8). This fantasy of firmness, of the concrete reality of subjectivity, is important, as we see, to continue the articulation of the self qua subject. Rejecting the radical principle of *Einfalten* for the comfort of *Entfalten,* one keeps narrating a story of the self to instill order and, ultimately, control.

While critical of models that posit a necessary relationship between self and subjectivity, Musil does not completely discard the functional value of such an idea, taking a step back, so to speak, from the unsettling potentiality of the subjectivity of the next step. Indeed, he fears that one loses the "Anschluss an das gewöhnliche Verhalten" of life and devolves into "krankhafter Form" if residing too long in that other realm of being of the liberated self.[152] It is this ambivalence between necessity and possibility, continuity and randomness, that confronts us with the limitations of Musil's critique of the modern subject, which Claudine, in the novella's final scene, experiences as she has sex with the *Ministerialrat*. Delivering a bizarrely philosophical precoital monologue—one would be mistaken to judge Musil a master of the sex scene—she reemploys the metaphor of the line to express the titillating frisson she experiences in dallying on the threshold to that alternate realm of a liberated self. "'Es ist sonderbar, dass es nur

[152] Musil, GW2,1154.

eine Linie ist, die man zu überschreiten braucht,'" Claudine contemplates with her partner (193). To transgress that line, all she must do is have sex with him; she "'möchte Sie küssen,'" she tells him, in order to take a leap over that threshold and, leaping back, then "'sehen'" what its effects on her have been (193). Is she still the same, that is, does she retain her subjectivity? Or does such an act penetrate more deeply, liberating her until she transforms into an ethereal "ganz dünner Rauch...und dann nur eine Melodie […] über eine Leere"? (193).

No. This final transgressive sexual act, the culmination of her erotic yearnings, loses its radical horizon of possibility. For a narrator disarmingly frank in naming as sodomy Claudine's desire und unsparing in pushing the reader to grasp the gaps at the heart of human existence, he is unforthcoming in the depiction of her adultery. The reader is given no detail or information about what actually takes place between Claudine and the *Ministerialrat*, rapidly seeking refuge instead in abstractions and the stifling language of marital love. Relegated to a few sentences on the final page of the novella—gone are the reams of indolent, page-long metaphors—her initial "Schaudern" of "Wollust" are directly canalized into the sudden flash of a "Vorstellung von ihrer Liebe […] wie für alle da sein können und doch nur wie für einen" (193-4). The climax of the story presumably meant to coincide with the throes of her own climax—though the jury is out as to whether she does orgasm; after all, is Claudine's pleasure really the aim of this story?—she believes to have achieved a "Vollendung" of "eine[r] große[n], ganz rein sie enthaltende Liebe" promised in the title (191). It is a peculiar love in that it ultimately reconfirms the supremacy of Claudine's marriage and the privileged position of her husband—it is "doch" for one man alone—even when in the arms of another. Singularity instead of simultaneity, the narrative entertaining of possibility comes to an end. The actual contingency of her carnality here, that it is for all, which, taken to its extreme, would condone promiscuity as both an appropriate pathway

to and manifestation of the self's liberation from subjectivation in both senses of the word, is cast in the shadows by the blinding light of her marital love. Here, love opposes sexuality. Love binds and orders, sex shatters and frees. Bookended by a departure from and return to her husband, Claudine's story begs the reader to question if she has ever truly left him.

What at first glance appears to be an opening for a woman's sexual and subjective freedom recedes into something less threatening to the prerogatives of her husband and the norms of a patriarchal society. Bizarrely, her stumbling upon the insight of the arbitrariness of desire and the contingency of subjectivity does not lead her to question or lose faith in the ideal of romantic bourgeois marriage; on the contrary, we encounter a strengthening of her devotion to her husband as well as a purer distillation of subjectivity as a housewife. In the figure of this connective line, the narrator perverts the power of metaphor: metaphor, which once paved a path of possibility for Claudine, now reties her bristling self to her subjectivity—and to her subjection as a sexual and epistemological object. This abrupt turn suggests a functional proximity between the narrator and the patriarchal figures haunting the text, the husband and Musil himself, a binding mechanism against the woman—Claudine and Martha—who threatens to escape the temporal-subjective-linguistic order they represent. Amidst an tidy and rushed conclusion, the tide of her emancipation as an autonomous sexual subject ebbs in the face of her role as a tool for a male narrator and author to probe the depths of—and reassure the fragility of their own—subjectivities.

In concluding, let us consider the ambivalence of the novella's two thrusts—between the boundlessness of desire and the potential to liberate the self from subjectivity, on the one hand, and the re-imposition of male narrative and social control at the prospect of such freedom, on the other—for they epitomize Musil's role as both an exemplar and foil for the other inhabitants of

this dissertation and for modernism more generally. Of course, studies of temporality and of subjectivity in modernism are no novelty, and sex, especially female sexuality, is a common trope from Hofmannsthal and Proust to Woolf and Joyce to unsettle bourgeois notions of perception, identity, and narration.[153] But my reading of *Die Vollendung der Liebe* offers an original investigation into the imbrication of these three factors—time, sex, and subjectivity—in modernist fiction from the standpoint of more marginal erotic desires and identities, such as of a promiscuous housewife. If we survey the denizens of canonical German modernism, from Schnitzler's Fräulein Else to Mann's Clawdia Chauchat, Musil stands out for the potential—if not the enduring reality—of modernist literature to create spaces of self-determination for sexually "aberrant" subjects like Claudine. With his mixture of nuance and uncommon sympathy for society's amative misfits, we can wring from Musil compelling interpretations that emphasize the positive, constructive effects of modernity's disorienting, centrifugal effects on the non-normative subject. That this potential is ultimately blunted does not entirely foreclose its value. His project emblematizes a key tension of modernity informing my readings of the otherwise queer and female authors studied in this project: the exhilarating push and pull between the possible and the real, theory and practice, individual will and social forces, life and history—all playing out in the drama of an individual's joys and tribulations. Inversely, these limitations usefully situate him as a foil to the other modernists included here. That he is unable or unwilling to push his critique far enough toward the actual emancipation of his subjects raises

[153] For studies of time, see, for example Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983); *Time in German Literature and Culture, 190-2015: Between Acceleration and Slowness*, eds. Anne Fuchs, et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2016); and *Critical Time in Modern German Literature and Culture*, ed. Dirk Göttsche (New York: Peter Lang, 2016). For studies of subjectivity, see Anthony Cascardi, *The Subject of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Ryan, *The Vanishing Subject;* and Tracie Matysik, *Reforming the Moral Subject: Ethics and Sexuality in Central Europe, 1890-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

the intriguing proposition that aesthetic experimentation like in *Die Vollendung der Liebe* does not equal experimentation in practices of subjectivity or politics. As we will see in my other chapters, formally conventional texts can provoke more revolutionary challenges to the status quo, thereby recasting what it means to be modernist beyond canonical aesthetic criteria.

Indeed, Musil's self-conscious focus on experimental form ironically estranges the text from Claudine. Her final entrapment in the narrator's analogy of the line, returning her to her husband and restoring order, indicates that her role is of an object and not a subject of modernism. Musil is not interested in exploring a subjectivity of and for the modern woman. He cares less for her individual fate than what her case, the raw facts of her life, can do to explore the ontological and literary-aesthetic conundrums at the heart of the text. Emptying her of the weightiness of an individual life, it is a novella in which form—as practiced by a male narrator and author—claims to know more than its content, that is, more than the woman whose life it is ostensibly portraying. In this regard, Musil the modernist proceeds par for the course. As Rita Felski persuasively argues, the "heroes" of modernist literature and modernity are typically men or "symbols…of masculinity."[154] When women are featured, they are treated as sexual, aesthetic, or epistemological objects of male character development and philosophical inquiry rather than agential persons with full and deep subjectivities. In this regard, Musil remains wedded to the conceptualization and representation of (sexual) women as non-rational, "libidinal, inexpressible, or aesthetic," and the narrator rarely reports Claudine's direct speech, instead granting the authority of the male voice to a woman's seemingly scattered and vague feelings, perceptions, and intimations.[155] Musil's narrator perpetuates the problematic habit of male professionals

[154] Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 1-2.

[155] Ibid., 6-7.

speaking about and on behalf of women and their sexuality.

It is at these crossroads of male narrator and female protagonist that my reading of Musil can push Felski's argument forward by considering how our author also unwittingly troubles these very modernist traditions that he upholds. Indeed, the very notion of a strong and singular male narrating subject in this novella comes up for scrutiny, for one must acknowledge that such boundaries between subject and object, narrator and Claudine, are not as clear as Felski generalizes them to be. While some have argued that the narrator espouses Claudine's consciousness in good faith, employing the less certain subjunctive mood to not disturb Claudine's own voice, it is closer to the mark to propose that the voices of these two figures share an unsettling proximity and an often undifferentiable texture, making it difficult to attribute certain thoughts, exclamations, metaphors, and images to one or the other.[156] Dorrit Cohn argues that the narrator, in primarily relaying Claudine's interiority through psycho-narration and "psycho-analogies," breaks the "monologic techniques" of realist narration by bringing in other discourses and perspectives outside his limited purview and intent, inducing "a fusion between the narrating and the figural consciousness."[157] Although I do not share Cohn's idea of a fusion of two consciousnesses, their intimacy would suggest a challenge to any hard lines of demarcation between subjectivities. Musil does indeed blur subjective boundaries, collaterally de-essentializing the female subject in striving for a de-essentialization of all subjects. Though inaccurate to describe Musil as a feminist liberationist *avant la lettre,* his distaste for essentialist notions of "Woman" or femininity surely does stand out from peers like Weininger; Musil, in an

[156] See Allen Thiher, *Understanding Robert Musil* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), 87, and Albrecht Schöne, "Zum Gebrauch des Konjunktivs bei Robert Musil," *Euphorion: Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte* 55 (1961): 197.

[157] Cohn, *Transparent Minds*, 41, 44.

essay on the *Neue Frau*, posits in alignment with contemporary feminists a figure of the woman as a discursive construct loaded with competing cultural and social desiderata.[158] These points of sympathy and touch suggest a certain point of dilution between the Claudine and the narrator, perhaps an effeminization of the latter, as implied by its panicky tidying up and reaffirming of old social roles on the final pages of the story.

Nevertheless, in ultimately subordinating Claudine to the prerogatives of male figures both within and beyond the diegesis, Musil leaves social institutions untouched and uses a subject marginalized by her gender and sexuality to entrench the very institutions that make her marginal. While a more trusting reading would commend Musil for depicting a woman who, for the most part, breaks with domestic bourgeois femininity by way of her striking eroticism, one generally cherished by the narrator—until the conclusion—for its epistemological payoff, one cannot ignore his prurient interest in portraying female sexuality in a manner more attuned to male fantasy than female sexual agency; after all, throughout the novella Claudine feels disgust rather than pleasure at the thought of sleeping with a stranger. She is at home in modern culture's often violent experimentation—be it the buxom muses of *Jugendstil*, the distortions of Cubism, or the murderous froth of Expressionism—through and upon the female body. Despite what I read to be Musil's sincere interest in a life predicated on the freedom of unbounded possibility, the text ultimately falls into the trap of that with which it seeks to do away: how can one live life's possibilities without also living its impossibilities? Floundering on this question, it relapses into an idealization—and, yes, re-essentialization—of the (female) subject as one founded on possibilities that remain unfulfilled, that would moreover be nearly impossible within the empirical realities of women like Claudine. If a woman were to adopt a subjectivity as outlined

[158] See Musil, GW2, 1193.

in the novella, what would that perform, personally and politically? It is difficult to extrapolate a pathway for a woman to begin to realize the liberating potentiality therein, particularly if it does little to fight for real emancipation. Musil's inability or unwillingness to fully cross the line to liberation in the final pages of the novella, to seriously consider the sociopolitical implications of this project, suggests the limits of a subjectivity of and through the marginalized under the real conditions of an unequal and unjust society.

Chapter 3 – The Erotics of Hope: Annemarie Schwarzenbach's *Eine Frau zu sehen* (1929) and the Utopia of Queer Female Subjectivity

"Utopisch ist ein Bewusstsein, das sich mit dem umgebenden 'Sein' nicht in Deckung befindet."

Karl Mannheim, *Ideologie und Utopie*

Hope is a controversial thing for a queer woman to have. At heart concepts of the future and of difference, hope and its sibling utopia have been subject to contentious debate in queer theoretical circles. Since at least the 2000s, an influential chorus of voices has argued for their insufficiency and sirenic danger for queers. Embracing negativity and an anti-social, anti-identitarian stance, scholars such as Leo Bersani, Lee Edelman, and Jack Halberstam have rebuked a hopeful vision of and approach to queer culture and politics they associate with incremental progress, which seeks "redemption" of its objects in service of the good and of a better future.[159] Bersani, reevaluating the sameness of homosexual desire, calls for the "devalorizing of difference"; the presentness of queer desire, or "homoness," is enough, he argues, for a liberatory mode of being beyond the normative subjectivation implicit in ideologies of difference like those of hope and utopian thinking.[160] Edelman renounces what he calls an

[159] Ben Nichols, *Same Old: Queer Theory, Literature and the Politics of Sameness* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 23.

[160] Leo Bersani, *Homos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 7, 10.

ideology of "reproductive futurism," a form of social organization, political logic, and knowledge production that positions the potential "Child" as the be-all and end-all of life, thereby sacrificing the pleasures and needs of the present for an utopian investment in future generations.[161] Hope is something to be affirmatively resisted, which, as the Trojan Horse of heteronormativity, transports pernicious futurism into our queer present and limits what we can imagine and enact in the now.[162] Halberstam similarly rejects the future in favor of the "time at hand," celebrating distinctly queer ways of inhabiting time against heterosexual patterns of sexuality and life so as to create "new life narratives" in the present; instead of far-away utopias, Halberstam argues for an attenuated hope attuned to the already here.[163]

These antagonists of hope usefully bring our attention to the political and epistemological value of negative affects like shame and abjection, the subversive possibilities of "queer" to deconstruct normative notions of identity and subjectivity, and the abundance of the present. Yet, in its anti-utopian, anti-futural zeal, much of this theory lacks a vision of what should come next, tending to neuter with its polemical rhetoric any sort of dreaming or action one could undertake and often leading us to a critical and political dead end. After having slain the normative subject and its hopeful investment in the future, now what? What use does this abstract murder have for actual queer subjects, many of whom lead already precarious existences and draw strength and resilience from hoping for a different future?[164] These questions have guided a more recent turn

[161] Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 2-3.

[162] Ibid., 4.

[163] Jack Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 1-2.

[164] See Mari Ruti, *The Ethics of Opting Out: Queer Theory's Defiant Subjects* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 9.

in queer thought plumbing the potential of hopefulness and utopianism for queer temporality and subjectivity in particular. Michael Snediker's project on queer optimism makes a case for positive affects to revise the caricature of hope as a Pollyannaish investment in a distant future or a handmaiden of heteronormativity and instead as an affective mode to critically investigate but still productively inhabit happiness and joy and thereby access positive forms of queer meaning making.[165] Ben Nichols has put forward the idea of queer theory's "paradoxical gay-aversiveness," in that it resists and sometimes denigrates forms of hopeful thinking that imbue everyday gay existence and offer individuals invaluable refuges from the stress of living in a hostile society.[166] Perhaps most influentially, José Esteban Muñoz dazzlingly inverts the terms of queer negativity to illustrate the promise of queer hope, positing "queerness" itself as a utopian concept always on the horizon, a romantic "ideality" leading us out of the desert of the arid present to the fecund plains of the future.[167] Together with Snediker and Nichols, Muñoz cautions us from discarding key components of queer existence like hope before queers have secured legitimacy and security in society; it is counterproductive, if not downright cruel, to disarm queers of hope when the queer present is in so many ways insufficient, dark, and awful. Their interventions reveal the limitations of a queer thought that condemns us for our desire to transform self and society into something better. Is a world without a sense of hope or of the utopian desirable for us queers?

I commence with these queries into hope and utopia to reconsider the role they play in

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[165] Michael D. Snediker, *Queer Optimism: Lyric Personhood and Other Felicitous Persuasions* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 1-17.

[166] Nichols, *Same Old,* 6.

[167] José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 1. I return to Muñoz length later in this chapter, probing the intersections of his writing with my reading of Schwarzenbach.

queer temporalities and subjectivities as phenomena intertwined with a third: queer erotics. If queer negativity views hope as heteronormatively futural and the antithesis of queer desire's shattering jouissance in the here-and-now, that is, as asexual or anti-erotic, then queer optimism tends to efface the actual experience and mechanics of queer eroticism as a practice, situating queer sexuality as an abstract either anterior or posterior to hope—as its condition of possibility or as its improved outcome in the form of better sex—but rarely within and constitutive of hope itself. This chapter delves into this gap, elucidating the queer erotics of hope and its utopian analogue and exploring its conduciveness to queer subjectivity. I do so by turning to a novella by Swiss author Annemarie Schwarzenbach, *Eine Frau zu sehen.* Written in December 1929, discovered in 2007 at the *Schweizerisches Literaturarchiv* and published in 2008, it is set in the ski town of M. in the Swiss Alps and begins with an unnamed female first-person narrator enraptured by the momentary glimpse of an attractive woman at her hotel, Ena Bernstein.[168] Consumed by this intense attraction, the narrator endeavors to meet with Ena, whose inaccessibility only further inflames her desire. After the narrator is finally invited to Ena's room to spend the night together, this pivotal scene remains undepicted and the story resumes with the narrator ruminating on the meaning of her postcoital bliss. After her father forces her to leave the hotel in response to rumors of her budding queer sexuality, she returns to find her beloved, and the story ends with yet another undepicted climax as the narrator rushes into Ena's room for a final rendezvous. This happy ending—what Alexis Schwarzenbach, her great-nephew, has

[168] Because of its recent discovery, there exist no published analyses of the text. It is mentioned in passing in Sabine Rohlf, "Neue Frauen und feminine Dichter—Annemarie Schwarzenbachs Figuren im Spannungsfeld zeitgenössischer Geschlechterkonstruktionen," *Annemarie Schwarzenbach: Werk, Wirkung, Kontext,* ed. Mirella Carbone (Bielefeld: Aisthesis: 2010), 165-188, and is studied in two unpublished dissertations: in Hannah O'Connor, *Sapphic Spectres: Lesbian Gothic in Interwar German Narratives*, diss. Cardiff University, 2014, and Nadine Bachmann, *"Gender fluidity": Die Identitätskrise als Aufbrechen der Geschlechterrollen in Annemarie Schwarzenbachs "Flucht nach oben,"* diss. University of Waterloo, 2009. I engage with this limited secondary literature in my reading below.

described as a "sorgfältig durchkomponierten und in keiner Weise verschleierten Coming-out-Text"—stands in stark contrast to both her other explicitly queer works like *Freunde um Bernhard* or *Pariser Novelle*, in which queer protagonists suffer from existential loneliness and toxic love or hostile social settings, and to more popular works of lesbian fiction of the 1920s, such as Radclyffe Hall's infamously gloomy *The Well of Loneliness.*[169] Here, the narrator is driven by a powerful sense of hope synonymous with her intense erotic desire to be with Ena, fitting for what is likely the first instance of a lesbian narrator in German. If Schwarzenbach's oeuvre is best known for portraying a melancholy generation in crisis, *Eine Frau zu sehen* is remarkable in its successful quest for human connection.

I argue that the erotics of hope is to be found in the novella's first-person narration, in which our narrator writes herself anew as a queer subject through the protean rhythms and movements of her erotic desire for another woman. In narrating herself as inseparable from her desire, she accesses pre-illuminations or *Vor-Scheine* of an anticipatory queer utopia in the form of sexual communion with Ena. What emerges from the narrator's relentless and eventually fulfilled hope of being with her beloved is a "utopisch[es] Bewusstsein," to quote Karl Mannheim, of a potential form of queer subjectivity not yet possible in her inhospitable present but borrowed from an apprehensible, unforeclosed—and undisclosed, because unrepresented—futural horizon.[170] Schwarzenbach thus escapes the dangers of what hope's queer adversaries diagnose as its ultimate calcifying transition from open potentiality to stolid being in its fulfillment by refusing to depict what these moments of queer utopia with Ena are. The narrator remains a subject of pure hope, a being of protean desire that points beyond the structuring

[169] Alexis Schwarzenbach, "Nachwort," *Eine Frau zu sehen* (Zürich: Klein & Aber, 2008), 74-5.

[170] Quoted in Karl Heinz Bohrer, *Plötzlichkeit: Zum Augenblick des ästhetischen Scheins* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1981), 203.

binaries of theoretical discourse between utopian deferment and presentist myopia.

In what follows, I demonstrate how the novella conducts its imbricated narration of hope, desire, and subjectivity through the temporality of sequential, erotic *Augenblicke* around the figure of Ena. I take advantage of the term's dual meanings, tracing how the narrator's desire is constituted and impelled by recurring meetings of the eyes between these two women and by a pronounced erotic sensibility of momentariness, fleetingness, and suddenness. With the Romantics of the early nineteenth century and continuing through the modernists of the early twentieth, the *Augenblick* has functioned as an epiphanic or revelatory moment; as such, it harbored a feel for the utopian as a momentary glimpse of the totality of meaning or a burst of insight transcending quotidian knowledge, for example. By examining its role as the fuel for the narrator's erotic desire, however, I queer this canonical figure by drawing it down from its status outside the time and existence of the everyday and re-embedding it in the texture of a woman's insatiable physical lust; I thereby expand what is conventionally understood as a singular experience to a sequence of several *Augenblicke* that come together to form a *Dauerzustand* of hope. As the narrator encounters Ena in one moment, she immediately hungers for the next, and this concatenation of erotic *Augenblicke* accumulates and culminates in non-depiction at the very instance when the reader expects representation of their sexual union; a metaphor of vision becomes blind to the thing it desires the most. But like all blind spots, though void of discernible content, they are nonetheless perceptible due to the rupture between expectation and reality, representation and signification. They represent nothing, yet they signify to the narrator and the reader alike that open utopian element, the "noch nicht bewusst" future of her queer subjectivity.[171] In the fulfillment of its hope in the sexual union of the narrator with Ena, the

[171] Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung, Vol. I.* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985), 131.

narrative's representational hollow preserves the openness of "new relational modes" and "new ways of being" for queer women.[172] Inverting Western culture's tradition of lesbian *invisibility,* the novella births the paradoxical *visibility* of a protean queer female subjectivity.

Though not utopian in the classical or generic sense—no schematic plan of a perfect society or subjecthood in the tradition of Thomas More or the *Staatsroman*—the novella is imbued with utopia as a "Bewusstseinsform," a cognitive and affective outlook that transforms one's relation to the self and the world.[173] Following Ernst Bloch, the traces of utopia are to be found in the narrator's daily awareness of the insufficiency of her present when without Ena and in the hope of the desiring subject to rectify that lack in the pursuit of a better, fulfilled future. Adopting a Blochian notion of the utopian allows me to bring a concept traditionally informed by larger societal and structural issues or messianic redemption to the level of the individual, drawing out its power to inspire novel, open-ended understandings of the self—new subjectivities—as well as of one's relations with others—new socialities—especially for two queer women in an age of overt oppression. Along with offering an original perspective on the erotics of hope, this chapter broadens our understanding of the range of queer thought and action during the early twentieth century and on the page of German-language modernism. Furthermore, the narrator's exuberant desire and its utopian narrative also raise questions about the politics of individual longing. Rather than a narcissistic navel-gazing that confuses personal

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[172] Michel Foucault, "Friendship as a Way of Life," *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews*, *1961-1984*. trans. John Johnston, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (New York: Semiotext(e), 1996), 310; Leo Bersani, "Sociality and Sexuality," *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 4 (2000): 641.

[173] Rüidger Graf, "Die Mentalisierung des Nirgendwo und die Transformation der Gesellschaft: Der theoretische Utopiediskurs in Deutschland 1900-1933," *Utopie und politische Herrschaft im Europa der Zwischenkriegszeit*, ed. Wolfgang Hardtwig (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2003), 145-6. As Monika Shafi perceptively notes, these traditional utopias are often only marginally better for women, "da das patriarchalische Gesetz dort weiterhin die gesellschaftliche Ordnung bestimmt" (*Utopische Entwürfe in der Literatur der Frauen* [Bern: Peter Lang, 1990], 11).

transformation for more proper forms of collective politics, I propose that this erotic desire offers the tantalizing prospect of a subjectivity and politics founded on the question "Who do I want to be?" rather than "What am I?" In exchanging the language of immutable ontology for that of agile, protean desire, the narrator enacts a new "emancipatory political culture" and landscape of radical freedom that begins to take shape in the fashioning of her erotic subjectivity of hope.[174] Against the backdrop of the violent reality of 1930s Europe and the impending dashing of much queer existence by fascism, Schwarzenbach challenges us to consider the lived realities and utopian potentials of queer modernism, its unforeclosed pastness and its undisclosed futures.

Situating Schwarzenbach: Biography, History, and Culture

Annemarie Schwarzenbach was born in 1908 as the daughter of one of Switzerland's richest textile manufacturers and most prestigious military families. A published journalist by the age of seventeen and author at twenty-one with a completed history dissertation at the Universität Zürich at twenty-three, Schwarzenbach was financially and intellectually well-suited to take advantage of the avantgarde scenes in Zurich, Paris, and Berlin, where she spent most of the period from 1929-1933, and of the unprecedented liberties and recognition won by women and female artists during the Weimar Republic.[175] In her feuilleton essays, travel reports, and film and book reviews from the 1920s and early 1930s, there is a pronounced, overarching search for life's "Sinn" in her treatments of varied topics from youth culture and Soviet literature to the dangers of a rising fascism and the utopian search for an "ehrfürchtige" love as the foundation of

[174] Wendy Brown, "Wounded Attachments." *Political Theory* 21, no. 3 (1993): 406.

[175] For an overview of female authors and literary production during the Weimar Republic as well as the social, political, economic, and cultural issues, factors, and concepts at play in female authorship during this period, see Walter Fähnders and Helga Karrenbrock, eds., *Autorinnen der Weimarer Republik* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2003).

a new, pan-European community; this ecumenical notion of love frequently rose to the status of a "neuen Gott," which would provide meaning and form to an entire generation.[176] Like the protagonists in Nietzsche's philosophy, which was influential for young Schwarzenbach, her characters are lonely individuals seeking the breakthrough to self-determination in a corrupted world. She published her first novel *Freunde um Bernhard* in 1931 and the *Lyrische Novelle* in 1933. Both are semi-autobiographical and lyrical, stylistically in tune with the early work of Klaus Mann in their portentous tone, treacly naiveté, and reverential stance toward "die Jugend"—decidedly *unsachlich* writing produced in Berlin, the capital of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, full of pathos and urgency— while thematically resembling Erich Kästner's *Fabian* in their depiction of frustrated artists in Europe's metropolises as they desultorily search for aesthetic expression and meaning for their anomic lives. Like both these men as well as prose by Marieluise Fleißer and Vicki Baum, Schwarzenbach portrays cities and urban public spaces as settings inhospitable to their inhabitants' desires (an irony, since cities like Berlin were exactly the right spaces for queer congregation and Schwarzenbach's own queer desires). Tepidly reviewed by few publications, Schwarzenbach's fledgling literary career was cut short after leaving Nazi Germany in 1933. Faced with an increasingly conservative environment, Schwarzenbach turned to photojournalism and travel fiction, undertaking extended expeditions until her death in 1942 to Russia, Afghanistan, Persia, Turkey, the Belgian Congo, and the southern United States. Like so many of her female colleagues of the period, she quickly fell into obscurity in the postwar era, only to be rediscovered in the late 1980s by feminist scholars and Swiss publishing houses, which have since reissued her previously published fiction as well as unpublished material from

[176] Annemarie Schwarzenbach, "Stellung der Jugend," *Insel Europa: Ausgewählte Reportagen und Feuilletons, 1930-1942*, ed. Roger Perret (Basel: Lenos Verlag, 2005), 12. See also Roger Perret, "'Im Netz der Schicksalswege': Annemarie Schwarzenbach im Banne von Familie, Flucht und Politik." *Insel Europa: Ausgewählte Reportagen und Feuilletons, 1930-1942*, ed. Roger Perret (Basel: Lenos Verlag, 2005), 277-287.

her archive.[177]

Attempts to reconstruct the intellectual-literary life of this author have been hindered by her mutilated archive: her diaries, personal ephemera, and all but a few of her letters were destroyed after her death by her mother, which limits how much of her non-fictional output and personal life scholars can consider and integrate in a study of her fiction. Ironically, this gap has had the opposite effect on a substantial portion of Schwarzenbach scholarship, which often remains reductively biographical and recycles a voyeuristic "Schwarzenbach-Mythos" around her queerness, morphine addiction, depression, and famed beauty to read her fictional work as thinly veiled autobiography.[178] As is often the case, this sexist habit has the effect of dismissing literature by women as trivially self-representational, isolating their art from its wider cultural context and deeming it unworthy of the scholarly attention afforded to a male canon due to its presumed lack of autonomy and its quotidian, rather than world-historical or high conceptual, concerns.[179] Since the mid-2000s, scholars have increasingly undertaken sophisticated literary and cultural criticism of Schwarzenbach's fiction, journalism, and photography from a diverse set of fields, methodologies, and concerns that attest to the richness of her oeuvre. They have

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[177] This biographical sketch draws from Areti Georgiadou, *Das Leben zerfetzt sich mir in tausend Stücke: Annemarie Schwarzenbach* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1995), and Alexis Schwarzenbach, *Auf der Schwelle des Fremden: Das Leben der Annemarie Schwarzenbach* (Munich: Collection Rolf Heyne, 2008).

[178] Walter Fähnders, "Zwischen Biografik und Werkanalyse: Die Schwarzenbach-Rezeption seit den 90er Jahren," *Annemarie Schwarzenbach: Werk, Wirkung, Kontext,* ed. Mirella Carbone (Bielefeld: Aisthesis: 2010), 33. Because of the relative dearth of Schwarzenbach scholarship, the early examples of this trend have proven to be influential in setting the tone for subsequent study. Examples include: Charles Linsmayer, "Nachwort," in *Das glückliche Tal* (Frauenfeld: Huber, 1987): 121-208; Cornelia Uhlenhaut, "'Das ist das Geheimnis: ich weiß nicht, was außerhalb von mir existiert': Zum autobiographischen Schreiben Annemarie Schwarzenbachs," in *Geschriebenes Leben: Autobiographik von Frauen* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1995): 266-277; Zygmunt Mielczarek, "Annemarie Schwarzenbach: Aufbruch, Droge und Homoerotik als Freisein und Alternanz," in *Vivat Helvetia: Die Herausforderung einer nationalen Identität* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998): 201-210; Anne-Marie Heintz-Gresser, "Die Rolle des Schreibens/der Schrift für Annemarie Schwarzenbach," in *Runa*, no. 28 (1999/2000): 255-262.

[179] Cf. Bettina Hendler, "Texte ohne Gewicht: Zum literaturwissenschaftlichen Umgang mit Annemarie Schwarzenbach," *Erinnern und Wiederentdecken: Tabuisierung und Enttabuisierung der männlichen und weiblichen Homosexualität in Wissenschaft und Kritik*, eds. Dirck Linck, et al. (Berlin: Verlag rosa Winkel, 1999), 386-88; Fähnders, "Zwischen Biografik und Werkanalyse," 21.

done much to elucidate her place within the networks of 1920s and 1930s German literature and culture, interrogating the influence of Nietzsche on her early fiction, for example, and examining her oeuvre with regards to the *Neue Frau,* Swiss lesbian communities, post-colonial and critical race studies, surrealism, *Exilliteratur,* and *Heimat,* to name a few.[180]

Throughout her life, Schwarzenbach considered Klaus and Erika Mann her closest friends, and indeed her early fiction contains characters based on the Mann siblings and shares affective hallmarks—alienation, loneliness, spiritual homelessness, naive innocence—with Klaus Mann's fiction and others associated with the "Jugend" of the 1920s.[181] Through this circle she befriended authors such as Thomas Mann and Erich Maria Remarque, while also reading Jean Cocteau, Marcel Proust, and André Gide, the doyennes of early-twentieth-century queer literature.[182] After 1933, her style diverged from the politicized circle of exiled authors and artists around the Mann family: while actively supporting the efforts of anti-fascists, she remained in her work dedicated to more philosophical concerns, gossamer prose, and fragile protagonists in an age of no-nonsense "Kampfschriften" and "ichstarken antifaschistischen

[180] See the contributions in *inside out: textorientierte Erkundungen des Werks von Annemarie Schwarzenbach,* eds. Sofie Decock and Uta Schaffers (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2008) as well as Ulrike Böhmer and Ilse Kokula, *Die Welt gehört uns doch! Zusammenschluss lesbischer Frauen in der Schweiz der 30er Jahre* (Zürich: Schriftenreihe Verein Feministische Wissenschaft, 1991); Sabine Rohlf, "'Und ich lerne eine neue Sprache': Geschlechtliche Ambiguität und literarische Grenzgänge im Texten der Schweizer Autorin Annemarie Schwarzenbach," in *Vergessene Stimmen: Eine andere Moderne*, ed. Potsdamer Studien zur Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung (Potsdam: Blow Up, 2004), 38-53; Simone Wichor. "Zwischen Literatur Und Journalismus. Die Reportagen Und Feuilletons Von Annemarie Schwarzenbach (1908—1942)," *Zeitschrift Für Germanistik*, Neue Folge, 22, no. 3 (2012): 664-67; and Leena Eilittä. ""This Can Only Come to a Bad End': Annemarie Schwarzenbach's Critique of National Socialism in Her Reports and Photography from Europe," *Women in German Yearbook* 26, no. 1 (2010): 97-116.

[181] The two accounts regarding Schwarzenbach's involvement in this circle are Uta Fleischmann, *Wir werden es schon zuwege bringen, das Leben": Annemarie Schwarzenbach an Erika und Klaus Mann: Briefe 1930-1942* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1993), and Elke Nicolai's monograph *"Wohin es uns treibt…": Die literarische Generationsgruppe Klaus Manns 1924-1933. Ihre Essayistik und Erzählprosa* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1998.)

[182] Roger Perret, "Nachwort: Ernst, Würde und Glück des Daseins." *Lyrische Novelle* (Basel: Lenos Verlag, 1988), 128.

Akteuren."[183] Schwarzenbach's continuation of such an aesthetic into the 1930s and 1940s draws upon her deep affinity for the aristocratic-aesthetic ideals of Stefan George, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and Rainer Maria Rilke, sharing a preference for formal elegance and lyrical language over lucid narrative action as well as for disaffected young people ruminating on their own metaphysical conditions. Indeed, her *Pariser Novelle* (1929) and *Das Wunder des Baums* (1942) engage with canonically modernist issues such as the (im)possibility of representation and *Sprachkrise* as well as the role of sexuality in literature and its effects on language and depiction.[184] Aesthetically more in common with *fin-de-siècle* Vienna than 1930s Berlin, her fiction developed in distinction from the contemporary *Neue Sachlichkeit* in its lyricism, effusive metaphors, and highly introspective protagonists and rejection of the notion of the author as a rational "Literaturproduzent" of "Gebrauchsliteratur."[185] In her style, which Wolfgang Koeppen christened "beschwingter Melancholie," we may view the beginnings of a new, post-*Sachlichkeit* aesthetic that was cut short by 1933.[186]

Similarly, Schwarzenbach offers productive intersections with and divergences from the crop of successful women authors in the Weimar Republic. The *Neue Frau*—both mass-media

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[183] Walter Fähnders and Sabine Rohlf, "Einleitung," *Annemarie Schwarzenbach: Analysen und Erstdrucke*, eds. Walter Fähnders and Sabine Rohlf (Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2005), 13. The important exile journal *Die Sammlung* was Schwarzenbach's idea and was supported by her financial contributions.

[184] Walter Fähnders, "Die literarischen Anfänge von Annemarie Schwarzenbach," *Annemarie Schwarzenbach: Analysen und Erstdrucke*, eds. Walter Fähnders and Sabine Rohlf (Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2005), 46-50; Tina D'Agostini, "'Opposition zur hellen Welthälfte der Tatsaschen': Annemarie Schwarzenbachs 'Schatten,'" *Annemarie Schwarzenbach: Analysen und Erstdrucke*, eds. Walter Fähnders and Sabine Rohlf (Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2005), 123-125; Sofie Decock and Uta Schaffers, "Einleitung: Neue Wege zu Annemarie Schwarzenbach," *inside out: textorientierte Erkundungen des Werks von Annemarie Schwarzenbach,* eds. Sofie Decock and Uta Schaffers (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2008), 11.

[185] Sabina Becker, "'… zu den Problemen der Realität zugelassen': Autorinnen der Neuen Sachlichkeit." *Autorinnen der Weimarer Republik*, eds. Walter Fähnders and Helga Karrenbrock (Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2003), 187; Fähnders, "Die literarischen Anfänge," 50.

[186] Fähnders, "Die literarischen Anfänge," 52.

commodity and self-fashioned subject—rose to overdetermined heights in the aftermath of World War I due to the increased visibility of women in previously male-dominated branches of industry and new legal rights under the democratic constitution as well as rapidly fluctuating sexual mores and the assertion by women of their rights to and in the public sphere.[187] The familiar figure of clever, ambitious, and scrappy "tatkräftige 'Neue Frauen,'" like Irmgard Keun's Gilgi or Vicki Baum's Helene Willfüer are, however, absent in Schwarzenbach's prose.[188] Although her work reportedly impressed Keun, who admiringly compared her talent to that of Gabriele Tergit, in comparison to the harried lives led by the *Neue Frauen* in Keun's and Marieluise Fleißer's novels, Schwarzenbach's characters lead lives of leisurely contemplation, elevated above economic struggle and the need for social emancipation.[189] And while Schwarzenbach shared with her female colleagues a desire to portray women's attempts at an autonomous female identity, especially as a sexual subject, perhaps the most paramount concern of this modern literature by women—the reconciliation of a woman's personal and love lives with her professional life, especially in the low-wage and rationalizing sectors of the service economy, and how to reformulate gender roles and relations with men—is also absent.[190] It may be that the majority of Schwarzenbach's characters are queer and homosocial, but one should not discount the financial security and elite upbringing enjoyed by both herself and her fictional

[187] For thorough overviews, see Barbara Drescher, "Die 'Neue Frau,'" *Autorinnen der Weimarer Republik*, eds. Walter Fähnders and Helga Karrenbrock (Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2003), 163-186, and Grossmann, "Girlkultur or Thoroughly Rationalized Female: A New Woman in Weimar Germany?" *Women in Culture and Politics: A Century of Change*, ed. Judith Friedlander (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1986), 62-80.

[188] Fähnders and Rohlf, "Einleitung," 8.

[189] Perret, "Nachwort," 128.

[190] See Kerstin Barndt, *Sentiment und Sachlichkeit: Der Roman der Neuen Frau in der Weimarer Republik* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2003), 11-12, and Drescher, "Die 'Neue Frau,'" 177.

creations—though unlike similarly wealthy (and now canonically modernist) sapphic sisters such as Virginia Woolf, her fiction does not revolve around the daily and domestic lives of women like Mrs. Dalloway nor inhabit the entangled minds and emotions of bourgeois family like in *To the Lighthouse.* Indeed, Schwarzenbach's George-inspired adherence to a notion of the author as an expositor of eternal wisdom high above the struggles of workaday existence suggests an alternative notion and practice of female authorship, one outside the binary opposition proposed by Erika Mann, for instance, in her 1931 article "Frau und Buch" between obsolete female authors who autobiographically "beichten" and the modern ones who, self-distanced, shorn of subjectivity, and *sachlich*, "berichten" about the world around them.[191]

Schwarzenbach has a similarly ambiguous relationship with the blossoming of lesbian subcultures and a largely Anglo-American lesbian modernism during the first third of the twentieth century with the likes of Woolf, Djuna Barnes, and Gertrude Stein, as well as with the contemporary German homosexual emancipation movement. Due to her mother's destruction of her daughter's papers, it is here that archival evidence is most scant. For example, it is unknown if Schwarzenbach read or knew any of these lesbian peers; while a student at the Sorbonne in 1929 and a frequent visitor to Paris, we do not know if she had contact with the vibrant lesbian community of the Left Bank described so evocatively by Shari Benstock.[192] Although connections are unknown, like Barnes, Renée Vivien, and other members of this Parisian hotbed, many of Schwarzenbach's characters, including the narrator of this novella, are affluent and enjoy high social standing, which speaks to the then popular imagination of homosexuality as indigenous to the upper classes, an impression inflamed in the early twentieth century by

[191] Erika Mann, "Frau und Buch." In: *Bubikopf - Aufbruch in den Zwanzigern: Texte von Frauen*, ed. Anna Rheinsberg (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1988), 12.

[192] See Shari Benstock, *Women of the Left Bank, Paris 1900-1940* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).

homosexual scandals in Germany, Britain, and Austria.[193] Their elite status allowed them the time, opportunity, and protection to probe same-sex female desire with frankness and to pioneer new aesthetics and subjectivities for the modern queer woman.[194] About her few years in Berlin in the early 1930s we do know that Schwarzenbach established a circle of openly queer and feminist female culture makers, such as the photographer Marianne Breslauer, memoirist Ruth Landorff-York, set designer Mopsa Sternheim, actress Therese Giehse. and cabaret artist Erika Mann, among others.[195] Although nestled in this sapphic niche, there is little documented evidence of her contact with the broader lesbian subculture of Berlin. Alongside her confirmed attendance at the premiere of the 1931 film *Mädchen in Uniform*, an iconic touchstone for lesbian audiences, we can only speculate that she frequented locales such as the famous lesbian club Maly & Igel or read Berlin's lesbian newspapers and the thirty or so lesbian novels published during the Weimar Republic.[196] Perhaps tellingly, her fiction was never reviewed in any homosexual publication.[197] Residing in Berlin during the heyday of the homosexual emancipation movement, Schwarzenbach seems to have had through Klaus Mann only indirect

[193] Above all, those of Oscar Wilde and the Harden-Eulenburg Affair. See Norman Domeier, *Der Eulenburg-Skandal: Eine politische Kulturgeschichte des Kaiserreichs* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2010), 742, 757, and Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "Homosexualität, aristokratische Kultur und Weltpolitik: Die Herausforderung des wilhelminischen Establishments durch Maximilian Harden 1906–1908," *Große Prozesse: Recht und Gerechtigkeit in der Geschichte*, ed. Uwe Schultz (Munich: Beck, 2001), 284.

[194] For an overview of the sapphic and the modern, see *Sapphic Modernities: Sexuality, Women, and National Culture,* eds. Laura Doan, et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

[195] We may speculate that this clique may have served as inspiration for the notorious group of lesbian artists and muses as depicted in Erich Kästner's *Fabian.*

[196] Georgiadou, *Das Leben zerfetzt,* 98.

[197] Madeleine Marti, "Literatur von lesbischen Autorinnen in den dreißiger Jahren: Annemarie Schwarzenbach and Laura Fredy Thoma." *Und schrieb und schrieb wie ein Tiger aus dem Busch: Über Schriftstellerinnen in der deutschsprachigen Schweiz,* eds. Elisabeth Ryter, et al (Zurich: Limmat Verlag, 1994), 151-2, 155, 169; Doris Claus, "Wenn die Freundin mit der Freundin lila Veilchen schenkt: Zum Selbstverständnis lesbischer Frauen am Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts," *Lulu, Lilith, Mona Lisa...Frauenbilder der Jahrhundertwende*, ed. Irmgard Roeblin (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1989), 23-4; Schwarzenbach, *Auf der Schwelle,* 76.

contact with its main organizations like Magnus Hirschfeld's Institut für Sexualwissenschaft. This biographical uncertainty between starkly contoured personal identities and opaque institutional belonging finds expression in her fiction. Works such as *Freunde um Bernhard,* her cycle of *Pariser* novellas*,* and, as we shall see, *Eine Frau zu sehen,* all feature easily identifiable queer characters who are publicly affirmative in their non-normative desires, but they eschew any and all classificatory labels concerning sexuality or gender identity and do not draw upon popular sexological discourses to explain the queerness, as in, for example, the lesbian classic *The Well of Loneliness* (1928)—a book Schwarzenbach read and whose influence we can glimpse in the gloomy attitude many of her characters have toward the prospect of romantic fulfillment.[198]

The Erotics of Hope and the Queer *Augenblick:* Toward a Utopia of (In)visible Subjectivity

In *Eine Frau zu sehen*, Schwarzenbach crafts an erotics of hope in the recurring *Augenblick,* a figure of fleeting time and the literal meeting of lovers' eyes and bodies that, in moments of erotic communion, points toward the utopia of queer subjectivity. The *Augenblick* facilitates the erotics of hope in a series of brief, interlocked, and primarily visual encounters between the narrator and Ena. Infused with her ceaseless desire for Ena, the fulfillment of one sexually charged *Augenblick* sparks the hope and desire for another, each rendezvous functioning as the site for the unfolding of both the narrator's queer subjectivity and the narrative itself as they propel it from one scene to the next. The opening sentence introduces this envelopment of time, vision, and hopeful desire:

> Eine Frau zu sehen: nur eine Sekunde lang, nur im kurzen Raum eines Blickes, um sie dann wieder zu verlieren, irgendwo im Dunkel eines Ganges, hinter einer Türe, die ich

[198] Schwarzenbach, "Nachwort," 76.

> nicht öffnen darf—aber eine Frau zu sehen, und im selben Augenblick zu fühlen, dass auch sie mich gesehen hat, dass ihre Augen fragend an mir hängen, als müssten wir uns begegnen auf der Schwelle des fremden, dieser dunkeln und schwermütigen Grenze des Bewusstseins…ja, in dieser Sekunde zu fühlen, wie auch sie stockt, beinahe schmerzhaft unterbrochen im Gang der Gedanken, als zögen sich ihre Nerven zusammen, von meinen berührt (5-6).[199]

This cascade of impressions, emotions, and leaps of faith begins with the narrator's first glimpse of an unknown woman, whose sudden appearance in her field of vision captivates her interest. The abruptness of her appearance is emphasized by the repetition of its fleetingness, first "nur eine Sekunde lang" and then immediately "im kurzen Raum eines Blickes." The latter phrase signals the temporal element of the visual and the visual element of the temporal in the text, and thus when the narrator's sight of the woman is blocked by the impassable door behind which she disappears, so ends an ephemeral moment as well as the premature foreclosure of (visual) connection. Lost in the anonymity of the hotel, the symbolic door prematurely forecloses the narrator's infatuation, admitting the possibility of the failure to fulfill inherent to all desire and the negative flipside of hope, predicated as they are on the uncertain acknowledgement and willingness of the desired to reciprocate and exacerbated in the risky game of recognition played by illicit queer desire; as D. A. Miller reminds us, the "most salient index to male homosexuality"—and arguably female as well, as seen in this story—is the tellingly "queer" way in which people of the same sex look at each other.[200] This scission in vision, then, can be read as a pruning of the incipient queer tendrils reaching out for the other woman, deadheading the chance of their mutual recognition and union suggested in their shared *Augenblick*. And yet, immediately following this first retreat, the slashing dash wipes away the narrator's doubt as she

[199] Parenthetical citations refer to Annemarie Schwarzenbach, *Eine Frau zu sehen* (Zürich: Kein & Aber, 2008).

[200] D. A. Miller, "Anal Rope," *Representations* 32 (1990): 124.

intuits that, yes, her *Blick* and thereby her desire *has* been returned: she feels that the woman saw her "im selben Augenblick," at the same moment as well as united in the meeting of the eyes. In the residue of her gaze, she senses that the woman has also been affected by the sight of the narrator as the narrator has been by her. In this moment, an inkling of touch is established between the women, almost physical in its intensity as captured by jolting verbs of disruption—"stocken," "zusammenziehen"—and the use of the subjunctive in describing the woman's nerves as if touched by the narrator's own. Orchestrated in its unfolding by the back-and-forth of darting eyes and breathless emotional commotion, carried on the ebb and flow of hope and despair, this originary encounter signals the importance of the *Augenblick*.

"Augenblick" appears with telling frequency throughout the text, particularly in scenes with or about Ena. When a friendly guest at the hotel, Direktor Boheim, tells the narrator her beloved's name and key information about her rumored lesbianism, he also gives her a photograph of Ena. She recognizes "augenblicklich" Ena's facial features and "zuckte […] einen Moment zurück," shocked both by the surprise possession of a miniature likeness and the effect it has on her (13). Mirroring the startled nerves she imagines Ena having in their first meeting of the eyes, it is the narrator this time who is jolted by this vision of Ena. The *Augenblick*'s increasingly erotic charge becomes all too clear during the narrator's next encounter with Ena. Coming after an interlude narrated in the preterite tense—the reader now discovers that the opening passage was a retrospective retelling of this impending scene—the narrative turns to an accelerated present tense that breathlessly strings together a series of independent clauses, emphasizing the scene's emotional urgency and growing sense of hope that her desire for Ena may indeed be fulfilled. Escaping a party in the hotel lobby, she is joined inside an elevator by another woman. The narrative decelerates in response as the narrator meticulously relays her

sensory perception of the woman and, importantly, the movement of each other's eyes. "Einen Augenblick dringt Wärme und Geräusch hinein, ich hebe die Augen, eine Frau steht mir gegenüber," she tells us, commenting on her stylish androgyny à la the lesbian-coded *Garçonne* of 1920s popular culture, her "dunkel, männlich herb aus dem Gesicht gekämmte[s] Haar" (8). "[I]ch erstaune," she writes, "vor der schönen und leuchtenden Kraft ihres Blickes, und nun begegnen wir uns, eine Sekunde lang" (8). Their meeting of the eyes unleashes "unwiderstehlich den Drang, mich ihr zu nähern," as her body is filled with the "Sehnsucht und Aufforderung [...] dem ungeheuren Unbekannten zu folgen" (9). Here, the literal *Augenblick* is elevated to its higher meaning for the narrator: it is not just a cursory meeting of eyes between strangers sharing an elevator nor a neutral temporal unit but rather a tantalizingly erotic experience tingling with lustful premonition, eliciting spellbound temptation to follow desire's fulfillment. Sexualized and queered, Schwarzenbach's *Augenblick* distinguishes itself by "no longer operat[ing] at or by a distance," neither transcending the fleshy reality of her present nor terrifically sublime as for the Romantics and her modernist peers. Instead, it "capture[s] and overwhelm[s] the beholder's body consciousness" and bends it back toward her own body as an eroticized being, saturating the narrator's experience of time and self with the hope of her desire and grounding her in the concupiscence of her body.[201]

On the precipice of hope's transformation into reality, compelled by Ena's beauty and their shared *Augenblick*, the narrator fails to act. The long, single sentence that encapsulates this entire scene is again abruptly cut off by a dash—and she falls into passivity: "Ich senke die Augen und trete einen Schritt zurück," and a few moments later Ena leaves the elevator "mit einer kaum wahrnehmbaren Neigung des Kopfes […] an mir vorüber" (9). Yet, as we have seen

[201] Miller, "Anal Rope," 125.

in the opening passage, she intuits a deeper meaning in this brief meeting, projecting a tentative connection between the two women toward something better than this frustrated encounter, "als müssten wir uns begegnen auf der Schwelle des fremden, dieser dunkeln und schwermütigen Grenze des Bewusstseins…" (5). Their *Augenblick* points the narrator to an opaque crossing of a threshold between, on the one side, desire's failure to actually connect and, on the other side, its still apprehensible future fulfillment—in other words, a line between reality and another world of desirous hope, between two consciousnesses straddling here and there, now and then. She is driven by erotic potential, which would transcend this threshold and render an incipient hope reality. The mystical tones of this liminal state, together with the blunt fact of their union's non-representation and dissipation into ellipsis, suggests that the fulfillment of their erotic coming together is, following Ernst Bloch, "noch nicht bewusst," her hope, the hint of novel queer relations with the other and the self already "einwirk[end]" on some deeply interior part of her being, yet beyond the bounds of the narrator's representational capacity or willingness.[202] Her "Sehnsucht" exists "ungeklärt und nicht in Worte zu fassen," even though her desire's psychophysical manifestation is, "wegen der übermäßigen Anziehung, die sich seit jener ersten Begegnung im Lift stündlich wiederholte," palpable as it "verheerend in mir Raum ergriff" (15-16). This silence about what comes after hope stands in stark contrast to the physicality and descriptive acuity afforded to dancing heterosexual couples in a scene directly prior to the narrator and Ena's first encounter. The substitution of ellipses and dashes for detail was, as Karla Jay has noted, common among lesbian modernist writers such as Woolf and Natalie Barney "to signify lesboeroticism that could not be blatant," while for Shari Benstock the purpose of such punctual blanks is to "denote [the] absence (of the phallic signifier)" in sexual relations between

[202] Ernst Bloch, "Über das noch nicht bewusste Wissen," *Die weißen Blätter* 1, no. 8 (1919): 355.

women.[203] While the target and texture of her desire are unequivocally articulated, it remains all hope and no substance, an electric charge without application, its future form a blind spot, its contours traceable but what it delineates not-yet-here. Rather than self-censorship, I see this representational gap deriving from the—for the narrator—unprecedentedness of a queerly sexualized subjectivity portended by Ena.[204] A utopic knot of potentiality gesturing toward a dawning queer horizon, this first experience of love for another woman is for the narrator, as in many lesbian texts, "the revelation of an unknown, unsuspected world."[205] This blind spot, then, is a symptom of the narrator's personal history and the driving spark for her exploration of an inchoate queer erotic subjectivity.

This hovering between frustration and fulfillment returns several days later. Ena approaches the narrator, places her hand on her shoulder, and begins to speak, her "Stimme nun ganz nahe […] herb und warm, und deren freundliche Worte mir gehörten" (48-9). But before she can respond, the narrator is pulled away by a telephone call from her father, who, having heard that she is in the company of lesbians, orders that she come home. Confronted with the reassertion of patriarchal authority over female sexuality, the narrator loses "augenblicklich" her

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[203] Karla Jay, "Lesbian Modernism: [Trans]Forming the (C)Anon," *Professions of Desire: Lesbian and Gay Studies in Literature,* eds. George E. Haggerty and Bonnie Zimmerman (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1995), 78; Shari Benstock, "Expatriate Sapphic Modernism: Entering Literary History," *Lesbian Texts and Contexts: Radical Revisions*, eds. Karla Jay and Joanne Glasgow (New York: New York University Press, 1990), 191-2. It is a cunning technique, removing the direct representation of lesbian erotics to avoid censorship and condemnation, yet still signifying this illicit desire for the reader in the know. As sly a workaround as it may be, it still partakes in what Annemarie Jagose has identified as the "persistent rhetorical figuration of lesbianism as unrepresentable, invisible, and impossible," perhaps the most classic tool in the toolbox of lesbian oppression; I return to this issue below. See Annemarie Jagose, *Inconsequence: Lesbian Representation and the Logic of Sexual Sequence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 2, and Annemarie Jagose, *Lesbian Utopics* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 165.

[204] Nor do I not think that Schwarzenbach preempts deconstructionist approaches to sexuality, gender, and language by self-reflexively unmasking the inability to conceive of the lesbian in a phallogocentric order. See below for my critique of this position regarding the novella.

[205] Elaine Marks, "Lesbian Intertextuality," *Homosexualities and French Literature: Cultural Contexts/Critical Texts*, eds. George Stambolian and Elaine Marks (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 361-2.

"letzten Mut, so offensichtlich war damit kundgegeben, dass ich Unmögliches erzwingen wolle" (49). Tipped over the threshold toward the side of failure, "von nahezu hoffnungsloser Traurigkeit ergriffen" (49), the erotic promise of this second encounter with Ena, its "künftiges, erst heraufkommendes" *Bewusstsein* of their togetherness, appears to come to end as something "Unmögliches."[206] And yet, as the narrator leaves the telephone booth, "schob mir einer jener freundlichen Zufälle eine letzte Möglichkeit zu": the two women enter and leave the elevator together and

> [n]och einmal ergriff mich der Drang, mich ihr zu nähern, mit solcher Gewalt, dass ich die Augen niederschlug und unwillkürlich meinen Schritt anhielt. Sie blieb stehen und wandte mir ihr Gesicht zu. Ich wusste, dass ich nun meine letzte Möglichkeit preisgab, und mit äußerster Überwindung zu ihr aufsehend fragte ich, ob ich diesen Abend zu ihr kommen dürfe. Sie zögerte einen Augenblick, sie sei bei Frau Boheim—dann aber sagte sie entschlossen, ich sollte nach dem Essen kommen […]—und fuhr mit der Hand kurz über mein Haar— (50-1).

Again, the twin hallmarks of vision and time in the narrator's articulation of her desire appear in this passage, propelling a reversal of fortune to their first instance of sensual physical contact: an almost motherly stroking of the hair. This dynamic between the two women partakes in what Elaine Marks has termed the "Sappho model," in which a younger protagonist, often without a mother, pursues a relationship with an older woman characterized by erotic ambiguity, i.e., arguably maternal signs of physical affection such as holding hands, and set in a remote location—in our case, a grand hotel—isolated from the "real" world.[207] As part of this "lesbian fairy tale," the older woman often inhabits a position of social authority, be it due to her

[206] Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, *Vol. I,* 131.

[207] Marks, "Lesbian Intertextuality," 356-8. In *Eine Frau zu sehen,* the only depicted kiss is a desexualized and motherly embrace between the narrator and another older lesbian, Anna Barnowska, who encourages the former to follow her passion for Ena.

profession, her elite social status, or her age.[208] Indeed, throughout Schwarzenbach's early fiction, the love interests of Schwarzenbach's rather young protagonists are often given elements of the motherly, blurring the line between lover and parental guiding figure.[209] With almost child-like devotion to the face of the mother, meticulous attention is given to the movements of each other's eyes, when they sink and when they rise, when they turn to and from one another, thereby weaving a web of desiring connection between them. Although Ena hesitates for an "Augenblick," it is left to the reader to assume that they abscond to her room after dinner, for the scene ends again with that suggestively coy dash and a break in the text. These orthographic disruptions preclude the representation of their presumably romantic-sexual night together, while leaving the reader to ponder on the events and ramifications of what we are not privy to "see" depicted on the page.

The representational void at this first climax—in both senses of the word—is remarkable within the context of what has brought us to this moment: the minutely documented exchange of glances. Indeed, it is here that Schwarzenbach's notion of the *Augenblick* both resembles and departs with the broader modernist usage of this motif in at least two aspects. Although she too endowed the *Augenblick* with a now familiar *Steigerung* toward novel forms of existence, the affects here are not those, for example, of awe, terror, or the sublime—affects that leave behind the physical body—but rather of fleshy eroticism.[210] The *Augenblick* heightens the narrator's

[208] Ibid., 358.

[209] The narrator in *Eine Frau zu sehen*, for example, is said by Boheim to be around eighteen years old, and a few pages prior to this passage she daydreams about her mother, "deren Hand mir die feuchten Haare aus der Stirne strich" (45).

[210] For studies of the *Augenblick* in German literature and intellectual history, see Bohrer, *Plötzlichkeit,* Matthew Carlin, "In the Blink of an Eye: The Augenblick of Sudden Change and Transformative Learning in Lukács and Benjamin," *Culture, Theory, and Critique* 51, no. 3 (2010): 239-256; Anna Czajka, *Poetik und Ästhetik des Augenblicks: Studien zu einer neuen Literaturauffassung auf der Grundlage von Ernst Blochs literarischem und*

sensitivity to her own body and its queer desire for Ena, centering this motif as distinctly erotic. Infused with constant waves of hope that propel the story forward, moreover, Schwarzenbach magnetizes a series of otherwise distinct moments into a chain of interlocked *Augenblicke.* In a recursive movement, the temporal-erotic entanglement of the diegetic *Augenblicke* between the narrator and Ena folds back onto the formal narration of these moments itself. Instead of the singularity and isolation of the more canonical *Augenblick*, here a dialectic of the *Augenblick* as a meeting place of disruption and continuity, time and eternity, arises. Each *Augenblick* is by definition brief and transitory, and it must necessarily end; we see this in passages depicting those fleeting, frustrated encounters between the two women. Conversely, the narrator's erotic desire possesses a cavernous appetite and indomitable hope: one moment of contact, rather than satiating, only makes her want another and the next. Because Schwarzenbach implants the *Augenblick* into this desire's forward-moving hope for something more and better, the ending of one moment with Ena lays the conditions for the following one. As we see in the stickiness of Ena's gaze, for example, as it lingers on the narrator from their first meeting to the retrospective opening passage, one *Augenblick's* momentary erotic charge attracts, clings to, and enters another, and once it is found and passed through, it too must end as continuity again leads to ephemerality, and the dialectic proceeds. The *Augenblick's* emergence holds its own negation, and it must continue infinitely because there is no repose: Schwarzenbach understands that desire is a temporal phenomenon, not an ontological state of lack. This has the effect of producing the future: these moments sustain the narrator's longing and fuel further articulation of her queerness and continue the narration. As the two women repeatedly see and recognize each other seeing each other, the narrator realizes her visual power to "author perception," to establish personal as

literaturästhetischem Werk (Berlin: Dunker & Bumblot, 2006); and Bruno Hillebrand, *Ästhetik des Augenblicks: Der Dichter als Überwinder der Zeit von Goethe bis heute* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999).

well as narrative connections, to spark flames of passion and unfold the self.[211] This doubled unfolding—of erotics and of *Erzählung,* an entanglement scholars have identified as characteristic of lesbian modernism more generally—becomes inseparable as the same elaboration of a narrating, desirous subject.[212]

In sum, the narrator composes and is composed of a chain of linked, sequential *Augenblicke* of hopeful erotic intensity that come together and form a stream of queer time. It is a sequential rather than repetitive temporality, for each *Augenblick* of desire is not a repetition of the same but rather a sequence of interrelated events building upon each other toward the fulfillment of desire. It is a parallel universe of time running alongside—but sometimes intersecting in moments of (hostile) touch with—what Elizabeth Freeman describes as "chrononormativity."[213] Schwarzenbach's choice of setting in a remote hotel in the Swiss Alps deracinates the narrator from these norms, what Thomas Mann called the world of the "Flachland" in *Der Zauberberg,* another famous exploration of time set at a luxury Alpine establishment; this displacement enables a distinctively queer, erotic temporal consciousness to emerge.[214] Indeed, as an object of fascination for writers and theorists of the Weimar Republic from Vicki Baum to Siegfried Kracauer, the hotel functioned as both the paradigmatic setting

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[211] Marilyn Fyre, *Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory* (Trumansburg, New York: The Crossing Press, 1983), 172.

[212] Joanne Winning argues for the importance of the pronounced relationship between writing and (self-)identity for lesbian modernists, whose "protagonists come to writing at the same time as they come to resolutions and understandings about their sexual desire and identity" ("Lesbian Modernism: Writing in and beyond the Closet," *The Cambridge Companion to Gay and Lesbian Writing*, ed. Hugh Stevens [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011], 57-8).

[213] Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 3.

[214] Cf. Charlotte Bates, "Hotel Histories: Modern Tourists, Modern Nomads and the Culture of Hotel- Consciousness," *Literature and History* 12 (2003): 67-70.

and cipher for accessing modernity's temporalities.[215] And as Foucault comments, heterotopias like hotels are "often linked to slices in time which is to say that they open onto what might be termed…heterochronies…when men [or women, D.D.] arrive at a story of absolute break with their traditional time."[216] The spatial setting of the novella conduces a subversion of normative temporality, here in the form of the traditional *Augenblick,* queering and eroticizing the figure as a sequence of hope toward the horizon of a not-yet-here utopian subjectivity.

In the West, lesbian sexuality has historically been understood sequentially. As Annemarie Jagose has stressed, this lesbian temporal alterity accommodates both emancipatory and coercive impulses. Residing outside chrononormativity can be an opportunity for both creative agency and for oppression, casting the queer as deficient and deviant. Jagose argues that Western ideologies of modern sexuality have "produce[d] the lesbian as the figure most comprehensively worked over by sequence."[217] Within a sexual paradigm ushered in by sexology that privileges heterosexuality as originary and natural, the lesbian is cast as doubly secondary in this logic of sequence as both imitating "more primary forms of sexual organization" and, unlike male homosexuality, lacking the intelligibility of the phallus.[218] She becomes the quintessential problem of sexual origins and outcomes: because heterosexuality is posited as primary and self-evident, mythologically coming before one feels or acts upon this desire, any deviant sexuality, in order to be identified, is seen in the reverse: according to this logic, one is presumed heterosexual until one feels or acts upon same-sex desires, and the

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[215] See Siegfried Kracauer "Die Hotelhalle, "*Das Ornament der Masse* (Frankfurt; Suhrkamp, 1977), 157-170, and Marc Katz, "The Hotel Kracauer," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 11, no. 2 (1999): 134-152.

[216] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 26.

[217] Jagose, *Inconsequence,* ix.

[218] Ibid., ix-x.

thereby resulting queer identity is secondary, coming sequentially after desire and action. Within this paradigm, then, lesbianism is deemed "artificial" due to its being "retrospectively assembled from…behaviors and affects."[219] And because the lesbian ironically operates as the threatening mirror image of the reality that all sexual identity is sequential, it is considered absurd, repressed and damned to invisibility in order to shore up this myth of originary or inherent heterosexuality.[220]

As a resident of this discursive environment, it is not surprising that our narrator registers her desire's sequentiality. It is remarkable, however, how she harnesses it to productively queer that very sequentiality through the *Augenblick*. Her pairing of this sexual-temporal figuration with the *Augenblick* inverts the ontological weakness of the sequential lesbian, for her sequentiality becomes a key ingredient in that temporality that, as I show below, propels her toward erotic union with Ena and a utopic queer subjectivity. As Freeman notes, queer temporalities are often "visible in forms of interruption" that resist a specific modern "temporal order."[221] Studies of lesbian temporality in modernist fiction have followed this theoretical path to identify "lesbian time" as disruptive of and resisting "normative time, which is often caught up in ideologies of linearity and futurity" based on biological reproduction.[222] Yet in its confluence with lesbian sequentiality, Schwarzenbach's use of the *Augenblick* challenges the queer theoretical investment in time as fragmentary and disruptive, demonstrating that queer time, as much as it deconstructs, can construct arcs of connection and continuity. When we look beyond

[219] Ibid., ix-xi.

[220] Ibid.

[221] Freeman, *Time Binds,* xxii.

[222] Melody Catherine Jonet, *A Queer Recurrence: Sexuality, Gender, and Lesbian Temporality, 1892-2007,* diss. Perdue University, 2007, 2-6.

the Anglo-American and late-twentieth-century focus of queer theory, we recognize that queer conceptions and experiences of time take many forms, inflected by specific histories, cultures, social positionings, and identities, especially those of class, gender, and sexuality, among others.[223] We are not served by a Manichean divide between "bad" (hetero)normative time, which always seems to be linear, unidirectional, and futural, and "good" queer time, non-linear, disruptive, and focused on the present or past. My reading of Schwarzenbach intervenes to move past this binary by rendering visible a queer modernist temporality that transforms conventional ideas of the isolated, disruptive *Augenblick* as an erotic sequence of hope toward a utopic future. Exploring this overlooked German contexts, we find that, more broadly, for both feminists and homosexual intellectuals of the early twentieth-century, such as the German-Jewish lawyer Else Herrmann or the activists around Magnus Hirschfeld, the "future"—at a moment of newly achieved or incipient emancipation—was the precious center of their envisioning new identities and politics, not something to be disparaged and discarded.[224]

This sequence of erotic *Augenblicke* structures temporality in the novella from one encounter with Ena to the next. This exuberant desire commandeers both content and form. As seen in the opening passage, the narrator often refrains from the standard epic past tense of literary fiction, a tense that demarcates a closed, bygone instance, in favor of a nimble present tense that lends the text a sense of urgency and immediacy. It grants the diegetic present a lingering quality, the effect of one event or moment extending to the whole sequence and to the remainder of the story. It creates the effect of experiencing the narrator's desire in real time, as if

[223] Cf. Rita Felski, *Doing Time: Feminist Theory and Postmodern Cultures* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 3, 61-70.

[224] See Else Herrmann, *So ist die Neue Frau* (Hellerau: Avalun-Verlag, 1929), and Magnus Hirschfeld, *Die Homosexualität des Mannes und des Weibes* (Berlin: Verlag Louis Marcus, 1914).

the narrator is relaying and the reader experiencing this romance as it unfolds, its next *Augenblick* unbeknownst to both. In doing so, the first-person narration of her desire also entails the narrating of herself as an emerging sexual subject, emerging in tandem with its very articulation on the page. When the text concerns itself with Ena or the narrator's desire for her, we have seen how her use of present tense is compounded by an anti-paratactic syntax adept in its deployment of commas and dashes to further the sensation of narrated time as a desiring torrent in live time without break. Although creating the sensation of speed in what is narrated, this stylistic choice decelerates narrating time as the time spent narrating surpasses the actual length of the narrated encounters between Ena and the narrator. The "bebende" narrative voice is of desire at its limits, its velocity and intensity and blurring of temporal markers (24). "Die Tage sind voll heimlicher Spannung," she writes awaiting Ena, and "die Nächte vergehen in einer Glut der Erwartung, die einem Brande gleicht" (23). This "Erschütterung" of her psychic and physical states "jagt" her "Blut schneller, atemloser durch die Adern, man hört sein Pochen in der Stille des Zimmers, ein Rauschen ist in den Schläfen, und die Hände zittern auf der Decke" (23-4). Conversely, expanses of time not related to Ena are skipped, irrelevant for the narrator, "sie waren mühelos geworden und hatten keinen Anteil an meinen Gedanken" (28). These empty expanses of time become something that she believes "nicht mehr ertragen zu können [...] als fliehe das Leben in diesen Stunden vor mir" (24). She is in a heightened state of arousal and hopeful expectation of what is to come, "als hätten sich alle Stunden des Wartens zusammengedrängt" to culminate in the next *Augenblick* with Ena (30). Almost delirious, her senses are "als wären die Organe im Fieber geschärft," while she feels herself "preisgegeben einer stillen und doch zutiefst aufrührerischen Verwirrung, die zuerst den Körper ergreift wie Krankheit" (23). Her language emphasizes riotous passion as it seizes her body, controlling her

perception of time and usurping her narrating authority to lead the writing of the text and its subject-narrator.

One could interpret what the narrator herself calls a "Verwirrung" and a "Krankheit" as a symptom of internalized homophobia, the anxiety of being confronted with her own illicit desire. Indeed, one of the few analyses of these lines reads the narrator's "sick" fascination with Ena as a form of haunting, a trope that navigates the double trap between a "shameful" desire that won't fade and the despair of foiled desire.[225] Such an interpretation builds upon Terry Castle's influential study of the apparitional lesbian, a commonplace literary figure more spectral than physically present and whose desire is represented more through its spiritual effects on the protagonist than through its physicality and actualization. This etherealization of the lesbian—"elusive, vaporous, difficult to spot" though "she is there, in plain view"—serves to replace forbidden female-female desire with a haunting desire stemming from the thwarted potential of a romantic and sexual union in a social reality that refuses to recognize female same-sex attraction.[226] Our narrator, I argue, is not "ghosted," made "impalpable" and "misted over" into "evaporation," as described by Castle.[227] When Ena and the narrator do encounter each other, great emphasis is given on their physicality—their roving eyes, fleeting touch, clothing, hair—while the narrator's erotic desire is exuberantly centered in its physical reality. *Eine Frau zu sehen* does indeed contain the hallmark "kiss that doesn't happen" in the sense of its non-depiction, a reticence that may speak to, if not a lack of imagination of two women in bed, then to society's fear of that imagination and to an author's unwillingness to expose the drama of

[225] O'Connor, *Sapphic Spectres*, 18-22, 100-101.

[226] Terry Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 2.

[227] Ibid., 28.

consummated lesbian desire to the censorious, prurient scrutiny of a hostile society. However, my analysis differs from that of Castle in drawing out the productive tension for the emergence of a utopic queer subjectivity between diegetic visibility, or what our narrator perceives and feels, and this kiss's extra-diegetic invisibility, or what the reader is not given to see.

The erotic fulfillment of the narrator's hope to be with Ena is anticlimactically unrepresented, excised from the text by the recurrent dash and narrative break. Weeks after their first sexual encounter, during which the narrator and Ena have no further contact, they again serendipitously meet in the elevator of their hotel. Gripped by "die strahlende Kraft ihrer Augen," the narrator is overcome, "als müsse ich aufschluchzen in einer qualvollen Seligkeit" (64-5). Before she has time to compose herself, "waren wir, ich weiß nicht wie, in ihrem Zimmer angelangt—" (65). Proceeding from the clarity of Ena's powerfully suggestive *Blick* to a non-portrayal dashed off and blocked by the closed doors of her bedroom, the text ends in unrepresented union. Rather than a direct description of what happens between them and what this means for the narrator's self-understanding, we get before and between these moments the triumphant symbolism of nature and light, signifying rather than representing what the text hints at with its dashes: a queer future and subjectivity. They are the faint but gradually discernable outlines of what David Halperin calls an "uncatalogued erotic feeling" and "way of life," a queer erotic counter-conduct that anticipates what Foucault would describe as the potential of homosexuals to wield the open-endedness of their desire, unchained by social norms, to invent new modes of relation—and new ways of speaking about them—beyond the capacity of conventional discourse to capture and portray them.[228]

Leaving the hotel and taking to the pristine Alpine setting to marinate in her stew of post-

[228] David Halperin, "Queer Love," *Critical Inquiry* 45 (2019): 418. See Foucault, "Friendship as a Way of Life," 308-12.

coital feelings and thoughts, the narrator draws our attention to the dazzling purity and perfection of the natural world around her as a manifestation of the glory of her erotic experience: the splendor of the rising sun, winged like her desire, casting its rays across an unbounded landscape, a symbol of the liberating effects this romance has on her self-understanding as a queer subject. The unbridled mountaintop daylight enraptures the narrator, who sits "mehrere Stunden vor einer Hütte in der Sonne" and luxuriates in its "beinahe sommerlichen Strahlen" just as eagerly as in Ena's *Blicke* (29). She ruminates on what has happened and realizes that she is finally "glücklich," fleeing out of the "Dunkelheit" of her loneliness with the "Mut" of love (52). The narrator become more self-reflective as she enters a dream sequence, turning within to the realm of the not-yet-conscious. Here, she finds an enchanted idyll that surpasses the Alpine landscapes in which she had taken comfort and delight.[229] "Da tanzt eine Welt von Farben und Lichtern," where the "verzauberte Sonne" beatifies her passion for Ena in a "Schein um das Haupt einer Heiligen" (53). In her dreams of "Bilder der sonnenbeschienenen Schneelandschaft, mit welcher sich Enas Bild in unmerklicher Harmonie vermischte," she is illuminated by the sun's beams, as if "allen Glanz der Schneefelder in mich gedrängt [hätte]"; like the nervous energy of hope that pulsates through her body during shared *Blicke* with Ena, she is "ganz von Wärme durchflossen," suggesting sexual arousal and ecstasy (55, 53).

While this association of natural beauty and light with her queer desire defangs the shame stemming from society's denigration of homosexuality, the narrator is nonetheless plagued by the idea of her desire's artificiality, that it "ist nur Zauber gewesen," a deceitful mirage or

[229] Differentiating himself from Freud, Bloch saw dreams as supplying the scattered raw material of one's "needs, wants, and wishes" that were to be fulfilled in lived life. In this sense, then, dreams are not a repository for the unconscious grounded in the past, of that which was once known or experienced but later repressed, but rather that which produces something new, unforeseeable, and future-oriented or "vorbewusst." For Bloch's own explanation of where he diverges from psychoanalysis and his notion of dreams, see "Über das noch nicht bewusste Wissen," 355-359, and *Das Prinzip Hoffnung,* 131-2.

artificial play of light "wie Projektionen eines Scheinwerfers" (53). Rather than the naturalness of a mountain sun, she wonders, what if her desire is like the crude product and confusion of a mechanical light associated with the superficiality and inauthenticity of urban modernity? If so, her intense feelings would be nothing more than an illusion that would disappear at the flick of a hand: "Wende ihn, und sie verschwinden" (53). The idyllic mountain landscape threatens to be unveiled as a phantasmagoria created by the clever manipulation of man, implying that the narrator's queerness could also be a misunderstanding or an aberration: when moved away from shining down upon the narrator, what she has taken to be her authentic desire and nascent subjectivity would be made insignificant and unreal. Confronted with the prejudicial tradition of lesbian invisibility and its counterfeit relation to an "original" heterosexuality as discussed above, this moment of existential doubt is assuaged by a soothing voice that speaks directly to the narrator:

> Weine doch nicht [...] Was weißt du denn, wie viel von unserer Welt, die Du lieb hast, Projektionen eines größeren Scheinwerfers sind. Abhängig bist du von Licht und Schatten wie ein Günstling von der Laune seines Herrn [...] Es ist irgendwo ein großes Licht, es strahlt in den Augen gütiger Menschen wie aus reinen vollendeten Kunstwerken: Es ist unverlierbar, weil es in Dir ist wie in allen Menschen. Du sollst es aber nicht verdrängen durch Deine Angst und Hast, kleine Spiele zu ergreifen, und durch Deine Feigheit, den dunklen Plätzen auszuweichen. Das Licht ist ja viel größer und viel reiner: Wende Dich ihm zu (53-4).

Beseeching the narrator to embrace the "light," this passage at first seems to be an insipid self-help mantra of universal equality, stating that all people are imbued by this light, that is, by love. Because this light is universal and implied to be therefore good, she must not turn away in fear of its shadows and dark places. As the voice itself asks, doesn't she know how much of the world is made up of these illusive projections? You are no different from anyone else who loves, the voice says. Yet, interestingly, it is here where the text runs into a contradiction. If what much of

the world experiences as love and desire is just a product of a deceptive light that shines into the eyes of each person, thereby creating the illusory content of what one sees and feels, how do we reconcile this suspicion and the narrator's previous assertion of her desire for Ena through the symbolics of natural light? How can this desire be both the product of an artificial spotlight and of a light "wie aus reinen vollendeten Kunstwerken," a pure and perfect creation? Furthermore, the question arises as to how the narrator is to even discern this illumination arising from the sublimity of the natural world or the perfection of art: how are these individuals, whose eyes are inundated with light, capable of seeing anything at all? Would not projecting a beam of light into the eye lead to blindness? Would not this light, like that from and of a perfect artwork—that is, an individual's idea of herself as an object, as an aesthetic construct, as a subject—result in those very blind spots that characterize the two pivotal scenes of queer communion in this story?

It seems to me that Schwarzenbach suggests that love's illumination, the white heat of its fulfillment, allows her narrator to see that she herself is the source and producer of that very light. It is the payoff of fulfilled hope, the flash of oneself as a nascent queer subject stemming from the climax of a sequence of erotic *Augenblicke*, but, as the analogy of light above implies, a flash that then turns in on itself and blinds the queer subject to its full, future realization because it exceeds the realm of possibility of the present. Hence the inability to be fully represented in the present. It is this present absence that deserves the moniker of a specifically *utopian* queer subjectivity. In sexual bliss the narrator comes to apprehend its liminal presence, its anticipatory heralding of a "better condition" of life for this queer woman, yet the specific depiction and dimensions of this subjectivity remain "noch nicht bewusst."[230] Indeed, it is as if this desire, the primary object of a narration unable to fully bring it under its representational jurisdiction,

[230] Bloch, "Art and Utopia," *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature*: *Selected Essays*, trans. Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), 105.

operates autonomously from the narrator; or to be more precise, the narrative object perhaps controls and supersedes its narrating subject: "Das Objekt überwältigt [den Dichter] und macht ihn zum tönenden Instrument" of its own expression, as Schwarzenbach explains her craft.[231] Her desire commandeers the narrative, propelling the narrator from *Augenblick* to *Augenblick* and thus unfolding itself in writing its ceaseless drive toward Ena. In this form of writing, narration and literary representation become less an issue of authorial resolve and more of a vehicle for her hopeful eroticism leading the pen to write itself a future subject constituted of fulfilled queer desire. A self-narrating desire develops the narrator as a sexual subject straddling that "Schwelle des fremden, dieser dunkeln und schwermütigen Grenze des Bewusstseins" beyond direct (self-)representation in the present, aiming instead for the horizon of a "longing" that pushes the striving queer to "feel that this world is not enough."[232] These epiphanies, paradoxically blinded by their promises' own intensity, speak to what Bloch invoked as the "Dunkel des gerade gelebten Augenblicks," whose futural "Inhalt" remains "wesenhaft unsichtbar."[233] While its substance remains presently more or less invisible, its gesture toward an "unbekannte Zukunft" stands out as apprehensible, rendering a moment of frustrated introspection as a Blochian "Vor-Schein."[234] The *Vor-Schein* allows the narrator to obtain a hold, however tenuous, on the transformative potential of these non-depicted climaxes as a utopic, yet still inchoate, queer subjectivity. The narrator's urge to turn toward the "Licht" of love, even though blinding in the present, can be understood as an appeal to embrace this utopic direction

[231] Schwarzenbach, "Georg Trakl," in: *Mitteilungen aus dem Brenner-Archiv* (2004): n.p.

[232] Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 1.

[233] Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, 338.

[234] Jack Zipes, "Introduction: Toward a Realization of Anticipatory Illumination," *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature*: *Selected Essays*, trans. Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), xxiii.

sparked by the illuminating *Schein*, to grasp the loose strands of light pointing to this queer horizon.

José Esteban Muñoz has adopted Bloch's notion of art as a site of utopia, claiming for the aesthetic the utopian capacity to serve as a meeting place between the individual and a specifically queer potential way of being. In being drawn by her desire toward the "forward-dawning futurity" of her queerness, we can read the narrator's non-representation of her communion with Ena not as the inability to envision a transformed world, nor an attempt to dodge the dangers of a homophobic society—though the latter may be a secondary motive—but, like the narrator's metaphoric dream sequence, rather as a movement in a utopic direction that allows the subject to feel beyond her present and preempt "future social relations."[235] The narrator intuits, as Muñoz asserts, that queerness itself is never completely "here": it is already always an "ideality," rendering it a tantalizing prospect on the utopic horizon.[236] So while the shape of the narrator's queer subjectivity intimated under the illumination of her erotic hopefulness remains not-yet-conscious, the *anticipation* of a queer mode of existence is profoundly felt as she begins to decipher its traces around her, traces that belong simultaneously to the present and the future. In this liminal state, her queerness operates as a "utopian formation based on an economy of desire" open toward an undisclosed queer future.[237] The "utopische Überschuss" of this future found in the narrator's "Vision der Liebe" shines brightly in the present to the point of narrative blindness, a form of utopian feeling that Monika Shafi helpfully terms a "Utopie von unten" based in one's emotions and the reality of everyday life common in

[235] Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia,* 1.

[236] Ibid., 1.

[237] Ibid., 26.

twentieth-century utopias dreamt by women.[238] A schematic description of a utopic queer subjectivity in the vein of classical utopian texts is indeed missing, but as Bloch reminds us, this is simply utopia's upshot, that what makes it attractive; after all, the literal meaning of "utopia"—"no-place"—should remind us not to invest too much in casting its image, for it is perpetual longing for a future beyond the barriers of the present, a "should-be" rather than a "must be." In their non-depiction, the novella's epiphanies remain open as to what utopia could mean for a queer female subject in the rapidly changing conditions and unknown trajectories of Weimar society.

I read Schwarzenbach as turning a lack of representation into a powerful tool to explore queer female sexuality and subjectivity in ways unprecedented for the narrator and in modernist literature more generally. My reading serves as a counterpoint to theories of lesbian invisibility as a tool of both oppression and postmodernist liberation. As explained above, Castle and other scholars have documented the difficulty both for us to see the lesbian on her own terms and for the lesbian to see herself and her sisters in cultural and historical narratives, a "'ghostly effect'" that renders her "out of sight, out of mind."[239] Indeed, scholars of German lesbian literature like Sally Patterson Tubach have identified absence and invisibility as a major constellation for female same-sex desire in this literature. Nevertheless, the lesbian is a tenacious figure, for her erasure functions as a felt absence, a "'recognition through negation'" that makes apprehensible the lesbian figure.[240] Jagose, in her two studies of lesbian subjectivity, arrives at a similar if not more critical conclusion. She identifies a tradition in which Western culture produces the lesbian

[238] Bloch, "Über das noch nicht bewusste Wissen," 361-2; Shafi, *Utopische Entwürfe,* 12-13.

[239] Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian*, 2; Patterson Tubach, *Female Homoeroticism,* 9-10.

[240] Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian*, 60.

as a "negative image," disruptive to the symbolic order and cultural logics of patriarchal gender and sexuality.[241] She is made to fall "outside sexuality's visual field," yet she still registers as a problematic black hole of meaning in a phallocentric order of desire; as such, Jagose's lesbian is similar to Castle's in her status as a "presence that can't be seen."[242] Diverging from Castle's recuperative study, however, Jagose intriguingly qualifies contemporary condemnations of this invisibility, maintaining that since lesbian invisibility and visibility are effectively "synonymous" in this sexual-social logic, we cannot rectify the former through the latter; the goal is to not make the lesbian visible as our sole mission, but rather to see her liminal visuality as a source of possibility to subvert this erotic order from the inside.[243] Furthermore, she critiques strains of lesbian-feminist and queer theories influenced by postmodernists like Monique Wittig and Luce Irigaray that eulogize the lesbian's unintelligibility and unspeakability as a revolutionary otherness. Viewed as disrupting "dominant understandings of gender and sexuality," these theorists place the lesbian in a utopian "elsewhere" beyond homophobic-misogynistic culture and a violent phallogocentrism that can only understand "woman" in relation to and as a tool of authorization for "man's" dominance.[244] As such, the lesbian comes to occupy a very different kind of "utopic" space than the one in which I am interested, the lesbian as an essentialized transgressive figure outside of the discursive and material universe in which actual queer women exist.[245] As Jagose helpfully lays out for us, if Castle and likeminded critics

[241] Jagose, *Inconsequence,* 2.

[242] Ibid., 3.

[243] Ibid., 7.

[244] Jagose, *Lesbian Utopics*, 1-2. For a concise overview of this thinking, see de Lauretis, "Sexual Indifference and Lesbian Representation," *Theater Journal* 40 (May 1988): 155-159, 165-167.

[245] Ibid., 2-5.

battle the lesbian's ghostly dissipation, thinkers like Wittig and Irigaray take it to the opposite extreme, celebrating the lesbian's liberating etherealization.

While Castle's historical study is a necessary historical recovery and historiographical intervention, and Jagose's critique of the reification of the lesbian as too abstractly subversive offers a much-needed coolant to theoretical exuberance, my reading of Schwarzenbach allows us to capture a third away between the major positions around visibility, sexual subjectivity, and queerness and utopia. As Jagose reminds us, pure visibility is in itself not an inherent good: its value is dependent on the normative conditions in which something is seen or made to be seen or, for the lesbian, made invisible; after all, crystal-clear visibility can invite harm in a homophobic society. Schwarzenbach's queered erotic *Augenblick* trades on this polyvalence of vision. The narrator is remarkable in openly speaking her desire for another woman without euphemism or self-loathing; she practices her queer affection in plain sight. Rather than the enforced silence in Castle's narrative or the defiant muteness of lesbians' defiance to signify in a phallologocentric order, Schwarzenbach and her fellow sapphists during the Weimar era were extraordinarily voluble. As Marti Lybeck has documented, these women fervently discussed in both publications and amongst themselves in the vibrant network of lesbian institutions in Berlin the forms queer female lives could take, particularly as an explicitly sexual subject.[246] These forays into new queer subjectivities were understood as inextricably individual and social: as can be expected in a period in which queer women had "few models for imagining how love might organize the practicalities of 1920s life," they explored the different ways they could relate to the self and each other vis-à-vis queer desire.[247] Relating to each other went hand and hand with the

[246] Lybeck, *Desiring Emancipation: New Women and Homosexuality in Germany, 1890-1933* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2014), 1.

[247] Ibid., 179, 185.

individual "claiming of sexual subjectivity," a thrilling yet fraught endeavor at the fore of German lesbian subcultures of the 1920s and 1930s.[248] Our novella's intense engagement with her erotic desire, its implications for her own subjectivity, and its entanglement with Ena must be seen against the backdrop of both this dense discursive network linking queer sexuality, subjecthood, and sociality, and within the context of a larger trend during the Weimar Republic to consider sexuality as key to understanding the modern (wo)man and world.[249] The narrator's utopian striving for queer subjectivity can be situated as one "thought experiment" among many during this unprecedent moment in queer history.[250] Taking a step back from theoretical argumentation based primarily or purely upon other theory to consider the actual articulations of queer women can help us to achieve more nuanced and cogent thinking about queer female lives and experiences.

Performing an intense dance of the eyes that continues to feed and facilitate her desirous pursuit of Ena, that the narrator's desire's primary visual basis and function leads to invisibility at the very moment in which we, as inheritors of a taxonomic discourse of sexuality, would expect to "discover" female homosexuality as practiced in a sex act disrupts the haunting sequentiality that Jagose identifies above as diminishing female queerness as secondary or artificial. Rather than establishing the narrator's lesbian identity by voyeuristically catching her *in flagrante delicto*, we instead are directed to follow her own articulation of her desire on her

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[248] Ibid., 4, 13.

[249] For the latter, see George Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: Fertig, 1985); Atina Grossmann, "'New Woman and the Rationalization of Sexuality in Weimar Germany,'" *Powers of Desires: The Politics of Sexuality*, eds, Christine Stansell, et al. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983. 153-71); and Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe: A Twentieth-Century History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[250] Lybeck, *Desiring Emancipation,* 14.

own terms. The text disrupts the modern reader's almost instinctual usurpation of the role of sexual identifier from the narrator through the collection and interpretation of signs—the narrator reaffirms her agency to define, or not define, herself as a queer sexual subject. By withdrawing these scenes from narrative description, the narrator arrests the cultural impulse to "conflat[e]…vision and knowledge" in figuring and thus objectifying queer female sexuality, thereby preserving the narrator's interiority as a space of unsettled possibility.[251] Moreover, on the level of reception, this technique prods the reader to contemplate the meaning of this absence beyond a currently in vogue yet limited politics of representation. My reading of Schwarzenbach, then, cautiously makes the case that, in sympathetic hands, *invisibility* can be affirming and fruitful for the lesbian subject.

Schwarzenbach's visual ambivalence in the service of a utopic queer subjectivity sets the stage for an intervention in contemporary theorizing about queer utopia and the position of hope therein. Grounded in the fleshy reality of the narrator's erotic hope, the utopic in the novella does not lend itself to that abstruse radicality criticized by Jagose. Alternately, one would be hard-pressed to see our narrator's version of utopia in the crosshairs Edelman's and Halberstam's takedown of queer utopia. Rather, the utopic impulse in Schwarzenbach's novella escapes the double bind set by these two lines of critique. In refraining from laying out a schematic idealized future in the form of explicit narrative representation, the narrator avoids the sacrifice of the present, its actions, pleasures, and desires, blunting the tendency of a lurch forward to efface the here and the now by instead capturing in the present shimmering glimpses of what may come to pass. Moreover, the narrator's sense of hope is so erotically charged, so rooted in the physicality of her glances and laden with desire for another female body, that is resists attempts to have it

[251] Jagose, *Inconsequence*, 1.

float away into deconstructionist heaven. Her desire is firmly embodied and present, and she ultimately gets what she wants: sex and union with Ena. We thus have here a different kind of queer utopic desire, in which traces of the *Vor-Schein* flicker across the horizon and provide the "desiring subject of the present with signposts" on the way "to new ways of self-fashioning" the queer subject and "refashioning" the world around her in her image.[252] Schwarzenbach's text claims a more operable yet still dashing vision of queer hope as an erotic way of life. Together with Ena, our narrator inhabits the present not in the service but under the sign of a utopically queer future of liberated subjectivity and, more quotidianly, of "better relations within the social that include better sex and more pleasure."[253]

Conclusion: Hope, Desire, and Queer Modernist Utopia

Schwarzenbach's first-person narrator in *Eine Frau zu sehen* is a unique figure in the author's oeuvre, the broader corpus of lesbian fiction, and in European modernism more generally. The biographical approach to her work, based on a mythological story of the author's tragic life and her prose as a collection of accordingly melancholic "Bilder der Einsamkeit, des Leidens und der Fremdheit," must be qualified with the addition of this novel, which centers human connection and ends on a thrilling note.[254] And while the typical profile of a Schwarzenbach character is an *Alleingänger* estranged from meaningful (love) relations, such as the narrator in *Lyrische Novelle* and the group of queer companions in *Freunde um Bernhard,* we see that it is not the sole subject

[252] Caitríona Ni Dhúill, "Engendering the Future: Bloch's Utopian Philosophy in Dialogue with Gender Theory," *The Privatization of Hope: Ernst Bloch and the Future of Utopia*, ed. Peter Thompson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 144, 154.

[253] Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia,* 30.

[254] Georgiadou, *Das Leben zerfetzt,* 109.

of her writing. Indeed, the palpable physicality and sparkling eroticism in this text prompts us to reconsider scholarship that has interpreted queerness in Schwarzenbach's body of work in a minor tone: as examples of subjective "self-shatter[ing]"; of a destabilizing crisis caused by the haunting of unfulfilled desire; or of a disinterested "'multi-sexuality'" that virtuously scatters taxonomic categories as a form of self-defense.[255] The introduction of this newly discovered novella into the small yet steadily growing body of Schwarzenbach scholarship offers a different hue of queerness, one which, although eschewing specific identitarian labels, does not forsake from the outset the possibility of a cohesive queer subjectivity. Here, queer erotics and its brand of hope ecstatically sketch and anticipate a future for an affirmative, positive queer subjectivity—a rare example of female "homosexuelle Selbstvergewisserung" in early-twentieth-century literature.[256] Indeed, the openness and descriptive transparency with which this text is written, the luxuriating attention given to a frank discussion of the narrator's doggedly hopeful desire for another woman, their ultimate sexual union, and the impending shape of a utopic queer future, stands in contrast to the reticence of much of her Anglo-American contemporaries writing in Paris, Bloomsbury, and Greenwich Village. Schwarzenbach offers a unique contribution to the history and literature of women-desiring women with her idiosyncratic reworking of traditional German cultural tropes like the *Augenblick* to sidestep cultural taboos in ways others like Woolf could or did not. My reading of this novella excavates an understudied author out from the provincialism of German-language queer literature—which has been ignored, at scholars' detriment, by the English-language focus of queer scholarship—to offer Schwarzenbach's unique and novel expression of lesbian desire, one which challenges many of our shibboleths

[255] O'Connor, *Sapphic Spectres*, 28, 100; Bachmann, "*Gender fluidity*," iii, 98.

[256] Hendler, "Texte ohne Gewicht," 389

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around key concepts in queer literary culture and thought such as subjectivity, hope, and time.

This chapter works to queer modernism and modernist studies, drawing attention to queer modernists like Schwarzenbach as well as revealing the queerness of these literary contexts. While the first is necessary, it is not sufficient; without queering modernism itself, we are in danger of perpetuating a "tokenistic enterprise" that treats the inclusion of the historically marginalized as icing on a completed canonical cake.[257] Schwarzenbach's experience of modernity as a queer woman indelibly informs her practice as a writer in ways that differ from those of her male modernist influences like George or Hofmannsthal; they may have lived "*at* the same time," but not necessarily "*in* the same time," engaging uniquely with the general phenomena of modernity that imprints on all modernism.[258] Indeed, one of the major interventions of this chapter has been to rethink a central aspect of modernism: its notion of fragmentary, disoriented subjectivity in crisis. Of course, many practitioners and theorists of modernism, from Benjamin to Döblin, Musil to Brecht, did genuinely perceive their own subjectivities to be at a watershed moment and helped spread the discourse of "crisis" as a hallmark of the modernist subject. It may seem too obvious to state, but it needs repeating that this was not the sole experience of or perspective on subjectivity during the early twentieth century. As both this chapter and dissertation demonstrates, modernism was immensely fertile in thinking new ways to formulate, figure, and (re)construct the subject in a myriad ways beyond that of disintegration or crisis. This is especially true for modernity's outsiders turned insiders during the Weimar Republic, those women, queers, and other marginalized groups who finally began to achieve forms of legal and social emancipation and reveled in the freedom to fashion

[257] Winning, "Lesbian Sexuality," 229-230.

[258] Felski, *Doing Time*, 3, 23, 61.

themselves as—and demand the acknowledgement of being—fully fledged subjects for the first time in history. If anything, the crisis of the male bourgeois subject was perhaps a necessary event in its destabilizing and denaturalizing of past "truths" about the subject, thereby conducing the liberating possibility to be a subject outside traditional contexts. Schwarzenbach's novella grants us a compelling example of queered modernist tropes and aesthetics employed not to bemoan or proactively fragment the self as a reflection on the presumed situation of modern man. Rather, like her female colleagues during the Weimar Republic—Keun, Fleißer, Baum—Schwarzenbach does not abandon the subject, instead intimating new forms for an emergent queer female subject, a world historical event in itself.

Although *Eine Frau zu sehen* never saw the light of day at the time of its composition, its rediscovery eighty years later presents us the affective and anticipatory value of "negative"—in the sense of unrepresentable or ultimately unknowable—imaginaries of queer female pasts and past futures. Written unknowingly in the final years of Weimar's freedoms and on the precipice of a violent caesura that would annihilate much of this queer blossoming in a few years' time, we can view Schwarzenbach's novella as a herald from the past of what an alternative German modernity could have been, a claim on the future powered by the hopeful drive for erotic and subjective fulfillment. While the utopia glimpsed on these pages may not have had determinate effects on social reality, it guides us to the intangibilities of historical queer intimate life, its indomitable hopes, and, through the alterity of that very past in comparison to today's ways of living and thinking, to our own open futures. Critics such as Fredric Jameson may lambast this notion of utopianism as an effete "fancy" for "life-style fantasies" too immaterial and limited by the personal to be transformative in a more "proper"—read: aggressively masculinist—sense.[259]

[259] Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (London: Verso, 2005), 218.

Critiqued for its too heavy reliance on issues of identity and individual interiority, would it not do better to consider this a source rather than pitfall of utopianism's political power? Rather than woefully lacking material substance, Schwarzenbach's erotic hope yearns for a queer world that will materialize through the fleshy body of another human being; it is the difference between ultimate immateriality and a not-yet-material utopia.[260] As Jameson himself admits, the utopia practiced by our narrator brings "inventiveness and ingenuity to bear on a tangle of problems" confronting her as a social subject caught between the agency of her desire, the incorrigibility of her hope, and society's inhospitability to her desired future.[261] Although these problems may remain "seemingly as unresolvable individually as they are inseparable in the first place," this does not invalidate this form of utopia's power to "forecast…political and empirical possibilities"[262] The narration of her desire's fulfillment toward a glimpse of a queer future "can, in its own right, be political, as well as serving as a potentially revolutionary metaphor for politics as a whole."[263] In other words, it is precisely the erotics of her hope that holds the potential and acts as a model for utopian politics.

Understood as such, the narrator's "fancy" does not "only" react to the small problems of a personal present; she sails past them on her stream of queered *Augenblicke* to begin to taste the fruits of this utopian endeavor: glimpses into the queer future when consummating her desire with Ena. Moving beyond the present's limitations, she intimates a dawning queer subjectivity,

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[260] See Nishant Shahani, "The Future Is Queer Stuff: Critical Utopianism and Its Discontents," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 19, no. 4 (2013): 546-8.

[261] Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*, 218.

[262] Ibid., 227.

[263] B. Ruby Rich, "Mädchen in Uniform: From Repressive Tolerance to Erotic Liberation," *Jump Cut* 24, no. 25 (1981): n.p.

both individual and social, personal and political, that, drawing on Wendy Brown, trades on the fluidity of desire to destabilize and transform the ontology of the present. Understood as an "(ongoing) genealogy of desire," such an envisioned subject remains fruitfully unfinished, unwilling to impose an end station or teleological certainty upon desire's journey.[264] It replaces the question of being—"what am I?"—with that of becoming: "Who do I want to be?" If queer subjectivity is ultimately an ideality, not-yet-here, what this subject desires above all else is, as Schwarzenbach herself wrote, "das Unerreichbare zu versuchen, das Unmögliche für möglich zu halten!"[265] It is to hold the openness of the future, of possibility, without, in doing so, foreclosing it. Extrapolating from the personal significance of this project for the narrator, her story reminds us that an ultimately unknowable part of the social and political labor undertaken by early-twentieth-century homosexuals in inventing themselves and their unprecedented life-worlds was personal, private, and sometimes fictional or even "unmöglich." While some may critique such longing dreams from the critical perspectives and privileges of the present for being overly abstract or theoretically naive, we must interpret them fairly within their historical and personal contexts, while also refraining from unfair retrospective readings of exhilarating utopianism in our accounts of the hothouse imaginary that was the Weimar Republic in the face of its impending demise. Utopia is a fickle thing, latent as it is with the potential to be and not-be, yet in this liminal state it holds the power to expose and explode the daily bleakness of our insufficient and incomplete modernities.

[264] Brown, "Wounded Attachments," 407.

[265] Schwarzenbach, "Stellung der Jugend," 11.

Chapter 4 – Friends with Benefits: Queer Friendship, Time, and Subjectivity in Klaus Mann's *Der fromme Tanz* (1926) and Siegfried Kracauer's *Georg* (1934)

Do queers have a friend in time? A key concept for queer thought on relationality and the potential of queer desire to spark new ways of life, friendship is markedly absent from the recent bloom of scholarship on queer temporality. In works as distinct in tone, method, and conclusion as those by Lee Edelman, Jack Halberstam, Elizabeth Freeman, and José Esteban Muñoz, friendship has been neglected in the identification, study, and evaluation of queer conceptions, uses, and experiences of time in favor of more explicit romantic and sexual arrangements, from the quick fuck with an anonymous trick to lifelong monogamous coupling. Edelman, in his highly influential study of time and the death drive, rejects what he calls "reproductive futurism," a temporal-ideological order that renders "unthinkable" social forms, relationships, and subjectivities outside of heteronormative romantic, sexual, and familial structures.[266] Through the figure of the Child and the biological succession of generations, Edelman argues, this order posits the future as the only permissible temporal goal and political value to the detriment of those, such as queers, who are excluded by their desire for non-reproductive practices and relationships. The role of queerness, then, is to resist this order by rebuking the reproductive future and embracing the death drive: the queer "comes to figure the bar to every realization of

[266] Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 2.

futurity, the resistance…to every social structure or form."[267] Written directly after the highpoint of the AIDS epidemic, Edelman riffs on the potentially lethal jouissance of queer male orgasm, its "corrosive enjoyment," to "cut the thread of futurity" and thereby negate this reality and its normative temporalities, social forms, and subjectivities.[268]

As one of the first and most widely read accounts of queer temporality, Edelman set many of the terms for this bourgeoning subfield. His identification of sexual jouissance with a political project opposed to heteronormative temporalities and relationships has influenced subsequent scholars to focus on the most intense expressions of queer sexuality and its ability to disrupt this complex. This scholarship has raised important questions about alternative forms of queer temporality and existence beyond normative assimilationism and progressivist reformism, while also elucidating the role negative affects such as abjectness, shame, and anger play in queer time. For Halberstam, queer time is the "perverse turn away" from the dominant social narrative that maps out a path from childhood to marriage to child-rearing and, finally, to death.[269] He instead roots queer time in the "immaturity" of adolescence, a moment of emotional and sexual extremes and the fluidity of the self. Refusing to "grow up" and adopt temporal and subjective consistency or coherency, queerness opposes "institutions of the family, heterosexuality, and reproduction" and their "repro-time" to then open up "new life narratives and alternative relations to time and space."[270] Halberstam's focus on an oppositional strawman

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[267] Ibid., 4.

[268] Ibid., 30.

[269] Elizabeth Freeman, "Theorizing Queer Temporalities: A Roundtable Discussion," email discussion with Carolyn Dinshaw, Lee Edelman, Roderick A. Ferguson, Carla Freccero, Judith Halberstam, Annemarie Jagose, Christopher Nealon, and Nguyen Tan Hoang, *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 13, no. 2-3 (2007): 182.

[270] Jack Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 1-2, 5.

of essentialized heterosexual reproduction gestures to the central position that sex holds in the study of queer time. In discarding reproductive time, queer temporality for these theorists promises instead a turn to the present. Similarly, Freeman militates against "chrononormativity," or "the use of time to organize individual human bodies toward maximum productivity," be it for capitalist accumulation or biological reproduction.[271] Modernist in their valorization of fragmentation and interruption, queer temporalities are "points of resistance to this temporal order," which views itself as "seamless, unified, and forward moving."[272] By jamming the unilinear movement of time, its endless growth and generation, queer time "propose[s] other possibilities for living" in time, in particular the residue of lingering pasts in the present.[273] While Muñoz departs from queer negativity and reclaims the future for queers, going so far as to contend that queerness itself is an ideality, an item of hopeful futurity "not yet here," friendship merits nary a mention in his study.[274] The romanticism of his remarkable analysis of positive queer affects such as hope and euphoria also tends to attach itself to the exuberant yearnings of romantic love and erotic consummation rather than the seemingly more muted desires, emotions, and acts of friendship.

For all their perspicacity, explorations of queer time have nevertheless become limited in scope and predictable in conclusion. Concepts, practices, and experiences of queer temporality that aren't interruptive, discontinuous, non-linear, or anti-progressive remain undertheorized.

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[271] Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 3.

[272] Ibid., xxii.

[273] Ibid., xxii; 8-9.

[274] José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 1. I deal at length with his theory of queer utopia in Chapter 2.

Their attack against what Muñoz archly describes as an "autonaturalizing…straight time" sets up a hollow behemoth built upon a biological-sexual essentialism—as if all heterosexuals have children or live this way, as if no queers do—and which clouds out the very real and varied queer affiliations with less radically rebellious forms of time, relationality, and subjectivity.[275] As theorist Mari Ruti has observed, this thought emphasizes unbridled, non-reproductive queer sexuality above other forms of sociality or desire because eros is viewed as "one of the most anti-normative forces under the sun."[276] Although the focus on an explosive, queer eros as the prerequisite of queer temporality mustn't necessarily exclude other relationships like queer friendship, which can and often does include a sexual element, compared to the dazzling drama of erotic ecstasy the seemingly humdrum everydayness of friendship disappears in its shadows in these studies. All too alluring in its oppositional garb, this sexual fixation constricts the kinds of temporality deemed worthy of study or politically redeemable, and the queer temporalities deemed proper are usually just imitations of erotic desire itself, capricious, fleeting, chaotic, and eruptive rather than stable, continuous, or coherent. And because temporality is one of the building blocks of the subject, this impoverished temporal landscape inflicts a myopia onto the examination of queer subjectivities.

What, then, is the place of friendship in queer temporality? What species of temporality inhabit queer friendship, and what notions and experiences of time does friendship itself conduce? What can friendship look like and mean between queer individuals? And what forms of queer subjectivity arise thereout? To explore these questions, I turn to Klaus Mann's *Der fromme Tanz* (1926) and Siegfried Kracauer's *Georg* (1934/1973), two explicitly queer Weimar-

[275] Ibid., 22.

[276] Mari Ruti, *The Ethics of Opting Out: Queer Theory's Defiant Subjects* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 23.

era novels that foreground divergent notions of queer friendship as sites for inspiring queer temporalities and subjectivities. I have chosen these understudied works of fiction to contribute to contemporary discussions about queer relationality, temporality, and subjectivity because they portray provocative attempts at conceiving a robust, affirmative sense of queer sociality and subjectivity beyond the lambasted future precisely through that relationship ignored by theorists: friendship. I argue that queer friendship operates as a medium for "re-creating the social…not in the name of the future" but during and in the name of the present, for better lives and a more pleasant social reality for those striving for it in the here and now rather than for far-off generations.[277]

A bildungsroman of a young struggling artist in 1920s Berlin, *Der fromme Tanz* posits a spiritual friendship between past exemplars of queer culture—ranging from Socrates in Plato's *Symposium* to Oscar Wilde—and its protagonist Andreas Magnus through the act of reading. Here, queer temporality takes the form of a present of contemporaneity through the written word: who is included in this present depends not on one's historical position but one's being in the same time of the reader, of being read by him. In synchronically binding queer affiliations across time and space, the novel instantiates the present as a temporal realm structured and saturated by these webs of intellectual inspiration and affective spiritual touch across generations and genres; the time of the present is shaped by the desires and emotions between queer men, be they aesthetic, intellectual, or homoerotic. Out of this ecumenical present arises an outline of queer subjectivity based on the mutual cultivation of friends, and which redeems the idea of reproduction as a cultural rather than biological act predicated on cultural creativity. While Mann arrives at a queer present through friends from the past, Kracauer's *Georg* follows the titular

[277] Freeman, "Theorizing Queer Temporalities," 188.

protagonist on his quest for transcendental meaning through his erotic friendship with a teenager, Fred. I analyze how Kracauer conjures forth the temporality of this friendship as a timeless present, a sacred temporal realm transcending the everyday world, brimming with immanent meaning and which promises to culminate in a dual subjectivity shared by friends in the total union of selves. As Georg's vision confronts the unknowability of the friend and founders on the ambivalence between one's autonomy and the assimilation of the self into the other, however, I bring Kracauer's earlier essay on friendship to bear on the novel to show how he comes to consider subjectivity itself as a product of incomplete relations, an ethical practice to accept difference as a way of life. Though tonally and formally distant from each other, both novels enact metaphysical melodramas of queerness in uniting their theoretical exploration of friendship with depictions of their protagonists' sentimental and affective experience of such relationships.

As we will come to see, both Mann and Kracauer draw on historical discourses and models of same-sex friendship, such as the heroic friendship of antiquity or the Renaissance ideal of an emotionally intense friendship of two identical selves. Partaking in centuries-old traditions, these explorations of friendship nevertheless tie friendship to core concerns of European modernity: the nature and structure of time, the limits of knowledge, and the role of sexuality in forming the subject. And although Western discourses on friendship have traditionally been all-male affairs, what makes Mann's and Kracauer's explorations of friendship significant is that they deal with *queer* male friendships, in which queer sexuality and romance are not excluded or sublimated but embraced as integral to friendship. Since Aristotle, friendship has been positioned as the opposite of sex or romance, valorized for its perceived stability, placidness, and duration against the others' vicissitudes, emotional effervescence, and fleetingness; unlike eros, which can be consummated, friendship has historically been idealized

as endless and non-teleological. Due to shifts in ideas about gender and sexuality, however, the early twentieth century was a moment of unprecedented openness for probing concepts and practices of friendship, up for grabs within "a range of erotic, sexual, and platonic possibilities."[278] The relatively unstructured state in which friendship found itself allows Mann and Kracauer to each bring queerness and its attendant desires to the fore and grants them the freedom to fathom out through friendship new ways of relating to time, to others, and to the self. Inverting both the classical antagonism of friendship versus eros and contemporary queer theoretical fascination with queer desire's disruptive powers, they emphasize how queer friendship as a hybrid formulation of the erotic and the friendly conduces meaningful relationships, temporalities, and subjectivities in the strong sense. In doing so, they anticipate by several decades more recent treatments of queer friendship by theorists such as Foucault and Heather Love, who similarly turn to friendship as the basis for inventing robust, sustainable ways of being.[279] These novels harness queer desires of all kinds between friends as the grounds for and medium through which to create and inhabit new temporalities and subjectivities for the modern homosexual.

In almost all European philosophical and aesthetic engagements with friendship since the ancient Greeks, "friendship" has meant male friendship. Idealized as the meeting point of free individuals, it has often functioned as the "primal scene for thinking of ethics, politics, and the possibility of community"; valued above more supposedly utilitarian arrangements like

[278] Peter M. Nardi, *Gay Men's Friendships: Invincible Communities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 31.

[279] See Michel Foucault, "Friendship as a Way of Life," *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews*, *1961-1984*, trans. John Johnston, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (New York: Semiotext(e), 1996): 308-312, and Heather Love, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

reproductive marriage or relationships with those considered inferior, such as women or people below one's social class, friendship was elevated as a medium to generate knowledge and organize the human world.[280] Yet as historians of friendship such as Andreas Kraß and Alan Bray have documented, the nature, function, and boundaries of male friendship are an unstable mixture of centuries-old constants and fluid novelties, shaped in particular by each era's opinion of same-sex erotic desire and what forms of emotional and physical intimacy between men are acceptable. Beginning with Aristotle, friendship was between two free male citizens of equivalent rank, the dialectical meeting between the self and the "other self" in a space "as free from the machinations of power as it is from the shocks of desire."[281] During antiquity, friendship was a moral relationship in which the shared virtues of both friends took center stage.[282] Drawn to the good mirrored in each other, this virtuous, egalitarian friendship exemplified an ideal organization of the community, in which individuals enter in harmonious relationships based on "entire agreement of inclinations, pursuits, and sentiments," as Cicero defined it, forming a "complete union of feeling on all subjects" with "a second self."[283] This notion of the *Wesensähnlichkeit* of friends mutates throughout subsequent centuries. In the early modern period, friendship loses its status as the ideal metaphor for social organization and instead becomes a private issue, the unique bond between two individuals.[284] For Michel de

[280] Gerhard Richter, "Siegfried Kracauer and the Folds of Friendship," *The German Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (1997): 233. See also Andreas Kraß, *Ein Herz und eine Seele: Geschichte der Männerfreundschaft* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer Verlag, 2016), 23-4.

[281] Love, *Feeling Backward,* 77.

[282] Kraß, *Ein Herz,* 24.

[283] Cicero, *On Friendship and On Old Age,* trans. Cyrus R. Edmonds (New York: Translation Publishing Company, 1922), 11-17, 36.

[284] Kraß, *Ein Herz,* 25; Alan Bray, *The Friend* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 2.

Montaigne, it is the "correspondence" of distinct "manners…and inclinations" that begets friendship, a relationship with "no business or traffic with anything but itself."[285] Their affection a "general and universal fire" of "constant and steady heat," the friends' souls "mingle and melt into one piece."[286] Like for Aristotle, friendship blossoms between equals, which allows a more perfect union of "one soul in two bodies."[287] Although careful to distance himself from the "Grecian license, justly abhorred by our manners," that is, pederasty, Montaigne's friendship is, to the modern reader, tinged with homoeroticism: it "seizes" the friend's "whole will," and he "plunge[s]" and "lose[s]" himself in the other, "giv[ing] himself so entirely to his friend that he has nothing left to contribute to others."[288] We see in this early modern text a move away from the public sphere, an interest in friendship itself and what it can do for the two individuals, as well as increasing anxiety around intimacy between men.

By the late nineteenth century and the rise of the human sciences and modern sexual categories like "homosexual," friendship became increasingly psychologized and fraught with subconscious desires and impulses.[289] In a dual movement, friendship was extended to relations between men and women—primarily in the form of companionate marriage, which could also happily integrate sexuality—whereas same-sex friendship now had to be more tightly delineated vis-à-vis the fear of homosexual contamination.[290] This sexual specter stalking male friendships,

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[285] Michel de Montaigne, "Of Friendship," *Works, Vol. I,* trans. W. Hazlitt, ed. O. W. Wright (Boston: Houghton, Osgood, and Co., 1879), 267, 269.

[286] Ibid., 268, 271.

[287] Ibid., 275.

[288] Ibid., 269-76.

[289] Kraß, *Ein Herz,* 26.

[290] Ibid., 29-31, 63.

what Niklas Luhmann calls in his study of love a "Störproblem" and "heimliche Hypothek," also registers itself in the ambiguous semantics of this relationship.[291] Take, for example, the German "Freund." Most commonly referring to a platonic friend, it also, in a queer context, can include myriad forms of relationships marked by romance and/or eros, from a sexual partner to an intense brotherly connection or a conventional romantic coupling. Indeed, as I define and use the term "friend" in this chapter, it is a relationship that isn't just romance/sex or platonic friendship but rather both and neither. Friendship can incorporate elements of romance and sexuality but does not have to, nor is it definitionally defined by them, as romantic or sexual relationships logically are. Queer friendship's blurred lines, rather than a conceptual weakness, is its strength, for it allows us to capture a broader range of same-sex queer relationships outside a heteronormative dichotomy of friend-lover, enhancing our sensitivity to the shades of the sexual or amatory present in many queer friendships—after all, many queer men have at one point been attracted to or have slept with men they now consider their friends. Recent research into the friendships of queer men has given consideration to these hybrid relationships, which tend to combine aspects of the familial, the romantic, and the erotic in creative formations dependent on specific cultural and historical conditions.[292] For example, Edmund White, the Balzac of modern gay life, has repeatedly described in his autobiographical fiction and cultural criticism the immense importance ascribed to friendship by gay men as an alternative site of non-biological

[291] Niklas Luhmann, *Liebe als Passion: Zur Codiering von Intimität* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982), 104, 147.

[292] As this chapter focuses on male friendships, I do not have the space to sufficiently attend to the considerable scholarship on queer female friendships. See, for example, Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: William Morrow, 1981), Terry Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), and Love, *Feeling Backward.*

kinship, intimacy, and belonging.[293] Alongside Foucault, both men have celebrated queer friendship as an occasion for revolutionary self-fashioning and worldmaking, arguing for its potential to rethink the basic terms and forms of human sociality and identity. Sociologists have seconded these claims for friendship's significance for queer men. Peter M. Nardi has found that the allure and power of friendship among queer men lies in its power to "reproduce relationships of a different order and with the potential for developing political communities of identity."[294] Similarly, Nick Rumens finds that friendships between queer men utilize friendship as a "practice of freedom" to "reimagine the possibilities for developing relationalities that resist heteronormative discourses on adult relationships."[295] In sum, discussions of queer friendships have valorized their freedom to mix at will different relational models and discourses and the ability to spark new forms of identity and community.

This pivot in thinking friendship through queerness is primarily a product of the American gay-liberation era of the 1970s and the dissemination of queer theory since the 1990s. It may seem like a rather recent phenomenon with little purchase on queer friendships of the more distant past and in different historical-cultural contexts. Yet, when one turns to queer friendships during Weimar Germany, we encounter unprecedented literary engagements with the issue that, in the works of Mann and Kracauer, not only anticipate much of this contemporary scholarship but also offer us novel vistas onto the possibilities and pitfalls of friendship for queer lives beyond the imaginary of our times. It is this richness of dream and emotion that I excavate and analyze below.

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[293] See White's essays "The Joys of Gay Life" and "Straight Women, Gay Men" in his collection *The Burning Library,* ed. David Bergman (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1994).

[294] Nardi, *Gay Men's Friendships*, 23.

[295] Nick Rumens, *Queer Company: The Role and Meaning of Friendship in Gay Men's Work Lives* (London: Routledge, 2016), 18, 40.

Published at the age of 19 by Gebrüder Enoch Verlag in 1926, Mann's debut novel *Der fromme Tanz* portrays the young artist Andreas as he flees the stifling home of his father for Berlin, endeavoring in *Bildungsroman* fashion to ascertain the meaning of his life within society. A double of the author, Andreas works as a *chanteur* in a louche cabaret and samples the electric bounty of Weimar Berlin, finding a home in the city's bohemian demimonde. The reader is introduced to his ragtag group of openly queer artist friends, with whom he explores the queer underworld and its bars, clubs, and parties. On one such excursion, Andreas meets the ostensibly heterosexual Niels, a seductive catchall for Mann's most treasured attributes in his male characters: childlike, naïve, mirthful, recklessly energetic. The two quickly become friends, but Andreas struggles to balance their friendship with his erotic attraction and budding love. Tormented by his inability to possess Niels as a romantic or sexual partner, the two eventually part ways, only to be reunited in the conclusion of the novel at a Dadaist party in Paris, where Andreas makes peace with his unrequited love and allows Niels to leave his life for good.

Written as a conventional third-person narrative, the novel bears the mark of a self-seriously earnest first publication by a writer just beginning to find his voice; it begins with the author asking his readers "um Entschuldigung" for its "Wirrnis" and "Verwirrung" (9).[296] Formally, it is marked by the confused fruits of Mann's precocious reading, mixing the Symbolist penchant of Stefan George and Paul Verlaine for erotic mysticism—he repeatedly compares his love to a "Frommheit" as well as to the Catholic devotion of Mary—with Decadent aestheticism's inverted moral codes and glee in embracing the artificial, ugly, and unnatural—all

[296] Parenthetical citations in this section refer to Klaus Mann *Der fromme Tanz* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 2004).

under the domineering sign of his father Thomas's literary star, whose *Der Tod in Venedig* Klaus studied devotedly. Laden with the accumulation of forty years of European literary culture, it tries to balance its avant-garde influences with a more lowbrow, melodramatic style: characters feel strongly and seem to be constantly committing suicide, running away, exploding with strong emotion, jerking from ecstasy to deep despair within a single paragraph. The uninspired formal characteristics of Mann's first novel stand out ever more clearly when one considers the weighty issues it addresses. Coming of age during World War I, the November Revolution, and the chaotic early years of the Weimar Republic, Mann renders these events and their epochal sociocultural and political effects in his fiction, targeting the spiritual and metaphysical conditions of his modernity. He situates his characters in a world in which its once "infallible" values, morals, and principles are now "failed and fumbled."[297] "[R]atlos" within a "Labyrinth" (44-5), he garbs himself in the mantle of a generational spokesperson, claiming the novel to be a response to his cohort's "Ins-Ungewisse-Getriebenwerden" and what he deems its most urgent, resonating "Frage," "Wohin—wohin?"[298] Like in his earliest works, the play *Anja and Esther* (1925) and the short stories in *Vor dem Leben* (1925), he wants nothing less than for his novel to serve as the guiding "Lied" to which his generation may march in reimagining the modern individual, one who, although cut off from the certainties of a fading bourgeois age, achieves renewal through an ethos of free love, faith, a "mood of reconstruction" and "a future."[299]

Reviewers of *Der fromme Tanz* across the political spectrum, from the rightist *Die schöne Literatur* and bourgeois-liberal papers such as *Die neue Rundschau* and *Die literarische Welt* to

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[297] Klaus Mann, *The Turning Point* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1944), 72.

[298] Klaus Mann, "Fragment von der Jugend," *Aufsätze, Reden, Kritik: Die Neuen Eltern: 1924-1933,* ed. Uwe Naumann (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1992), 63-4.

[299] Ibid., 62; Mann, *The Turning Point,* 88.

more leftist organs like *Die Weltbühne,* responded with mixed reactions to Mann's ambitions.[300] Whereas the liberal press read the book as an evocative account of the times from the perspective of the young, reviewers further left and right balked at a homosexual prescribing a future for Germany rooted in his experience of same-sex love. The Marxist essayist Erich Mühsam, for example, decried the effete decadence of the bourgeois youth depicted in the novel, while right-wing critics attacked the novel's "perverse" sexuality and mocked its "unhealthy" pretenses to represent a generation.[301] Conversely, homosexual publications such as *Das Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* and *Der Eigene* greeted the novel as groundbreaking: the latter praised its open depiction of homoeroticism, while the prominent sexologist and civil rights leader Magnus Hirschfeld commended it for its contribution to a "Sensibilisierung der Öffentlichkeit für homoerotisches Verhalten."[302] Establishing Mann's reputation as the most famous homosexual author of his times, the novel may not have been the first openly queer German-language novel, but its erotic frankness and the celebrity of its author's name compelled its readers to grapple with issues of same-sex desire and the position of homosexuality within German society and culture.[303]

Current Mann scholarship, although less homophobic than its predecessors, has similarly

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[300] Alison Ford, *Klaus Mann and the Weimar Republic: Literary Tradition and Experimentation in His Prose, 1924-1933*, diss. University of Nottingham, 1999, 93; Samuel Clowes Huneke, "The Reception of Homosexuality in Klaus Mann's Weimar Era Works," *Monatshefte* 105, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 92-4.

[301] See Gerhard Härle, *Männerweiblichkeit: Zur Homosexualität bei Klaus und Thomas Mann* (Frankfurt: Athenäum Verlag, 1988), 97-8, and Fredric Kroll, *Klaus-Mann-Schriftenreihe, Vol. 2 - 1906-1927: Unordnung und früher Ruhm* (Wiesbaden: Blahek, 1977), 129.

[302] Quoted in Nicole Schaenzler, *Klaus Mann als Erzähler: Studien zu seinen Romanen* Der fromme Tanz *und* Der Vulkan (Hamburg: Igel Verlag, 1995), 81. See also Huneke, "The Reception," 92-5.

[303] See Fredric Kroll, "'Das Letzte halte ich stets zurück': Sexualität und Sprachlosigkeit bei Klaus Mann," *Erkenntniswunsch und Diskretion: Erotik in biographisher und autobiographishcer Literatur*, eds. Gerhard Härle, Maria Kalveram, and Wolfgang Popp (Berlin: Männerschwarm Verlag, 1992), 375.

dismissed this novel. Because of its stilted, uneven prose, kitschy sentimentality, and formal conventionality, attributes at odds with postwar literary studies' thoroughly highbrow sensibilities and modernist values, scholars have tended to instead focus on Mann's post-1933 texts, which, according to the homophobic syllogism in which queerness equals immaturity and solipsism, are deemed more adult and universal for tackling the dangers of fascism and the cultural politics of 1930s Europe. The few scholars who have studied *Der fromme Tanz* are primarily interested in what the novel has to say about "die Jugend" and generational discourses during Weimer Germany,[304] its place within German literary traditions,[305] the notion of *Sprachkrise,*[306] and the oedipal dynamics between Klaus and his father.[307] Nevertheless, a subset of this scholarship does indeed address the novel's queerness, examining the various figures and discourses of male homosexuality present in the novel, ranging from the religious and classical to the sexological and psychoanalytic.[308] Historical work has also been done on the reception of the novel's homosexuality in contemporaneous reviews and among the organizations that

[304] See Bogdal, Klaus-Michael Bogdal, "Der zögernde Prinz: Klaus Mann und die 'Junge Generation,'" *Jugend: Psychologie – Literatur – Geschichte,* eds. Klaus-Michael Bogdal, et al. (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2001), 303-321, and Ralph Winter, "'Wir sind eine Generation': Generationalität und ihre Inszenierung bei Klaus Mann," *Auf der Suche nach einem Weg: Neue Forschungen zu Leben und Werk Klaus Mann*, eds. Wiebke Amthor and Irmela von der Lühe (Frankfurt: Lang, 2008), 49-59.

[305] See Ford, *Klaus Mann and the Weimar Republic,* and Fredric Kroll, "Ist Klaus Mann ein 'moderner' Autor?" *Auf der Suche nach einem Weg: Neue Forschungen zu Leben und Werk Klaus Mann,* eds. Wiebke Amthor, et al. (Frankfurt: Lang, 2008), 25-34.

[306] See Kroll, "'Das Letzte halte ich stets zurück.'"

[307] See Rick Chamberlin, "Coming out of His Father's Closet: Klaus Mann's 'Der fromme Tanz' as an Anti-'Tod in Venedig,'" in *Monatshefte* 97, no. 4. (2005), 615-627.

[308] See Gert Mattenklott, "Die Wunde Homosexualität bei Klaus Mann," *Nach links gewendet: über neuere Literatur*. (Berlin: Argument-Verlag, 1980), 12-21; Stefan Müller, *Ach, nur'n bisschen Liebe: männliche Homosexualität in den Romanen deutschsprachiger Autoren in der Zwischenkriegszeit 1919 bis 1939* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2011), and Stefan Zynda, *Sexualität bei Klaus Mann*, (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1991).

comprised the Weimar-era homosexual emancipation movement.[309] For all its commendable efforts to remove Mann's novel from its imposed closet, this scholarship remains theoretically undernourished, declining to engage with queer theory or recent turns in queer studies, such as the temporal turn. Furthermore, for all their interest in the representations of male homosexuality in the novel, these studies do not pay attention to the forms that queerness takes in the novel beyond sex or romance. This chapter intervenes in this scholarship to shed light on a broader expanse of queerness in Mann's novel.

It is Mann's explicit centering of (his own) homosexuality that captured critical attention, and which continues to distinguish the novel as a text brimming with fascinating treatments of queerness, time, relationality, and subjectivity. After all, the organizing conceit of the story is Andreas's unrequited love for his friend Niels, who coquettishly leads him on and yet deflects his advances.[310] Increasingly frustrated as the beloved refuses to return his affection, Andreas sinks to a new level of agony toward the midpoint of the novel as Niels has sex with a female friend before his disbelieving eyes. As if in "einem schweren Traum," he sits and watches, confronted by how "einsam" life is, "die Hände—wie tot im Schoss," deeply "erschüttert" (133-4). Recognizing that he will never be with Niels romantically or sexually and thus seeking consolation, Andreas utters a prayer to absolve him of this dead-end desire, rendering his love for Niels spiritual, if not religious.[311] A Pauline shock, Andreas undergoes a change of heart as

[309] See Huneke, "The Reception."

[310] Andreas's exploration of queer love is part of a bourgeoning literary exploration of same-sex love during the Weimar Republic, ranging from affirmative novels like Bruno Vogel's *Alf* (1929) and incisive thematizations of romantic pain in Stefan Zweig's *Verwirrungen der Gefühle* (1927) to critical treatises such as Thomas Mann's "Über die Ehe" (1924), as well as of a longer and popular tradition of theorizing romantic love since the late eighteenth century; for an overview of this longer, primarily heterosexual tradition, see Kevin Kopelson, *Loves Litany: The Writing of Modern Homoerotics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 2-6.

[311] Of course, in emphasizing the spiritual aspects of his love, Andreas etherealizes his queerness in a long cultural tradition of displacing the queer sexual object behind spiritualized or aestheticized, and thus body-less, figures like

he correctively realizes that traditional relationship models will not suffice here. Reflecting on his failed attempts as well as his own rejected suitors, he admits, "[e]s kommt aufs Geliebt*werden* nicht an"; if he cannot possess Niels as a loving partner, then another model of affection and relationality between two men is necessary to step in where romantic love has failed (105-6). Rather than a romantic-erotic coupling, Andreas begins to probe friendship to structure his relationships with men and as the basis for community, including the possibility of a queer friendship that can combine elements of the amatory and erotic without devolving into one or the other. If he can unlock this "Geheimnis," the "süße Lied" of friendship, then, Andreas intuits, he can reimagine not only his relation to others but also to himself (141). Upon queer friendship rests the potential for a new subjectivity.

Andreas develops a Platonic model of queer friendship that draws heavily from Socrates and Diotima's speech in the *Symposium*, a text Mann read intensively as a teenager.[312] Plato's discourse on love has for centuries been the privileged point of origin for much Western queer male explorations of love and friendship. As the most "consistent" and "convincing" ancient text to celebrate same-sex desire, it held central importance for German-speaking queer intellectuals of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, such as the Swiss classicist Heinrich Hössli or in the myriad articles by pseudonymous authors that cite Plato in *Der Eigene* and *Das Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen*; according to literary historian Marita Keilson-Lauritz, Plato is the

God. This maneuver has a double function, serving to extend the relevance and thus prestige of the artwork by not alienating heterosexual readers as well as protecting the queer artist behind a veil of reasonable doubt. For an examination of this phenomenon among early-twentieth-century homosexual authors, see Marita Keilson-Lauritz, *Die Geschichte der eigenen Geschichte: Literatur und Literaturkritik in den Anfängen der Schwulenbewegung am Beispiel des* Jahrbuchs für sexuelle Zwischenstufen *und der Zeitschrift* Der Eigene (Berlin: Verlag rosa Winkel, 1997), esp. 13-20, 214-268.

[312] Stefan Zynda, *Sexualität bei Klaus Mann* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1991), 9.

second-most cited figure (after Oscar Wilde) in the queer literature of this time.[313] Mann was no exception to this trend: in a letter to a beau from 1936, he asks: "Hast Du niemals die Griechen gelesen—ich meine Plato?", referencing the *Symposium* as a way to explain his attraction.[314] While the speeches in Plato's text have traditionally been analyzed in terms of romantic love, I leverage the semantic and conceptual ambiguity of "Freund" to view Socrates and Diotima's speech as a unique dialogue on the nature of queer friendship as a form of love. Mann shares with Plato a belief in the potential of the affection between adult men to generate new ways to understand and relate to the self and the world. As Mann rarely wrote explicitly or directly about friendship, it is necessary to offer a reading of the *Symposium*'s model of male friendship to add heft to the small morsels present in the novel.

Like Andreas, the discussants in the *Symposium* begin their exploration of male friendship with the nature of this love and the role each friend should play in this relationship. Debating what exactly one loves in loving a person, Socrates explains that it is the love for "what is beautiful" in the friend.[315] To search for and bask in its presence is its proper remit, the motivating force behind friendship. In doing so, the friend acts in "harmony with the divine," whose ideal Forms—be it Wisdom, Beauty, or Virtue—are embodied in the profane splendor of the other friend.[316] Unlike psychoanalytic models of desire, here the friend's desire for the beauty of the other is not one of lack seeking fulfillment but rather of positive recognition of the divine

[313] Gregory Woods, *A History of Gay Literature: The Male Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 19-21; Keilson-Lauritz, *Die Geschichte der eigenen Geschichte,* 277-290.

[314] Klaus Mann, *Briefe und Antworten: 1922-1949*, ed. Martin Gregor-Dellin (Munich: Ellermann-Verlag, 1987), 257.

[315] Plato, *Symposium,* trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff (Indianapolis: Hacket Publishing Company, Inc., 1989), 49.

[316] Ibid., 53.

on earth; it covets not fleshy beauty per se—it is not solely or purely erotic excitement—but the access this beauty provides to the godly Forms. What may in part be a spark of physical lust for the friend's attractive body is, like Mann's depiction of Andreas's love for Niels, mediated by spiritual and intellectual concerns about the self, shifting from earthly beauty to ideals such as wisdom, which, ensouled and transmogrified in the friend, can be accessed for oneself. The beautiful body is not the true object of friendship but rather Beauty itself, which is just one side of the divinely Good. It is what Mann calls the "Verleibung des Gottes" and the "Vergottung des Leibes," a reciprocal process most intensely experienced in friendship, and which can "verändern" each friend in his deepest sense of self.[317] To desire a man and enter into friendship with him is to guide oneself toward a higher state of existence: a queer art of life as a mode of philosophizing and philosophizing as the lifeforce of queer male sociality.[318]

In loving the other, the friend examines his life against the flashes of divine recognition. Once he embarks on this self-work, he ascends a chain of realization toward true Beauty, Virtue, and Wisdom: over ever higher and broader steps, the love for the male friend becomes a conduit to the sublimity of Platonic Forms. What exactly does this model of friendship entail? It is, firstly, expansive, spreading from one friend's body—"body" is to be understood not just literally but as the residence of the Forms—to "all beautiful bodies," that is, to multiple friends.[319] In his omnivorous delight in all manifestations of beauty, the friend weaves webs of multiple, intersecting friendships, sewing together individual pairings into a broader communal fabric of multisided encounter and connection on his way toward a more universal and absolute

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[317] Klaus Mann, "Heute und Morgen. Zur Situation des jungen geistigen Europas," *Aufsätze, Reden, Kritik: Die Neuen Eltern: 1924-1933,* ed. Uwe Naumann (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1992), 141; Klaus Mann, "Körpersinn," *Aufsätze, Reden, Kritik: Die Neuen Eltern: 1924*-1933, ed. Uwe Naumann (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1992), 190.

[318] See David Halperin, *100 Years of Homosexuality* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 127.

[319] Plato, *Symposium*, 59.

notion of Beauty. Socrates commends this replicative form of polyamorous friendships, for to institute loving, imbricated relations of friendship with many men will allow one to come closer to Wisdom. Secondly, the higher the friend ascends, the more spiritual and intellectual his love for his friends becomes. He leaps "from beautiful bodies to beautiful customs" and then "from customs to learning beautiful things," hopping across increasingly abstract concepts until he finally "arrives at the end of his lesson, which is learning of this very Beauty."[320] Friendship is productive, inspiring new wisdom, knowledge, and culture. Furthermore, the repetition of "learning" and "lesson" implies a form of pedagogy, a transformative work of and upon the self. Friendship is not only socially and culturally reproductive: situating the self as a moldable object, it transforms the self and the way it understands and relates to itself. Thus, thirdly, it generates subjectivity. Friendship is fulfilled when the friend practices an "exercise of oneself in the activity of thought" so as to transform in a manner virtuous and become an ethical subject guided by the ideal Forms.[321] Male friendship for Plato and, ultimately, for Mann functions as an "occasion to re-open affective and relational virtualities," that is, to envision and practice ways of forming and relating to the self and to others within friendships that strive for the real *and* ideal, the profane *and* transcendental.[322] Friendship, in other words, "mobilizes correspondences" between the current reality of one's life and a spiritual goal, the distance between them bridged by the labor of and within friendship.[323] Through friendship, one's life will have acquired a new, higher purpose and meaning.

Drawing heavily on this Platonic friendship, Andreas's imagines queer friendship as a

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[320] Plato, *Symposium*, 59.

[321] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. II*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 9.

[322] Foucault, "Friendship," 311.

[323] Leo Bersani, "Sociality and Sexuality," *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 4 (2000), 651.

relationship not with actual bodies but mediated through his reading of queer literary predecessors. Rejected and abandoned by Niels, he must come to terms with his unrequited love, rethinking and morphing it into the starting point for an affirmative form of friendship between men. Rather than a nostalgic "*Rück*entwicklung zum Goldenen Zeitalter," his turn to the ancients is a "*Hinauf*entwicklung."[324] Andreas draws a line of affinity from the ancient Greeks to modern Germany, placing himself within an intergenerational queer literary tradition, sparking spiritual friendships with past figures, and bringing them into his readerly here and now; he picks up the threads of an older tradition and continues its development through his reading of more recent contemporaries. In doing so, he conjures up an elastic, expansive present, a genealogy of and through friendship that moves synchronically rather than diachronically, connecting all members of this band of friends within a boundless duration of the now. I interpret this kind of friendship and its temporality as the site for cultural-spiritual (re)production, the font of new queer relationships, subjectivities, and communities.

Whom does Andreas read, and how does he relate to them as friends? It is remarkable that the texts mentioned and depicted to the reader in the act of their being read by Andreas are authored by homosexual men, most of whom would have also been known to the contemporary reader as either openly queer or at least suspiciously homoerotic: Walt Whitman, Stefan George, Herman Bang, Paul Verlaine, and Oscar Wilde.[325] Utilizing the intensely affective language of early modern friendships of Montaigne as well as the Romantics, Andreas describes these "Dichter" as those, "die Andreas am meisten liebte," the men "mit denen er sich am innigsten verbunden fühlte" (174). That Andreas feels the deepest connections with these individuals

[324] Klaus Mann, "Wie wollen wir unsere Zukunft?" *Aufsätze, Reden, Kritik: Die Neuen Eltern: 1924-1933*, ed. Uwe Naumann (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1992), 316-17. Italics in original.

[325] These are, of course, the same authors who were definingly influential for Mann himself as an author.

implies, following the logic of this older model of friendship, that they enter a friendship of identity, sharing the same values and virtues. Andreas raptures in Whitman's "ekstatischen Prosagesängen" about the "Leib, den elektrischen," finding an expression for his own love for the beauty of the (male) body, which in Platonic form relays its lovers to the beauty of higher-order concepts and guides the unfolding of the self as a subject of friendly love (170). George, with his "aristokratisch erlesenen Kreise" and "wundersamstes Liebeslieder," offers Andreas a model of aesthetic transcendence at the altar of male beauty into the highest realms of cultural fertility, suggesting a notion of friendship as the site for intellectual and spiritual creation (171). Bang teaches Andreas that he must "den geliebten Körper lieben mit der hoffnungslos-inbrünstigen Liebe," a reminder of friendship's non-possessive love divergent from that of romantic or sexual union that facilitates the friend's deeper connection to the meaning his "Leben selbst" (173). In both Verlaine's poetry and Wilde's prose, Andreas finds redemption for his previous suffering in loving the unattainable Niels, learning to reinterpret his affection as not a failed love but rather as a generative feeling which, in these authors, inspired beautiful works of art and wisdom; queer love is prized for its fecundity and epistemological tenacity, as starting points of possibility rather than of frustrating dead-ends or sterility. Andreas's reading refashions traditional notions and practices of male friendship within an explicitly queer context that embraces the productivity of same-sex desirous elements. Similar to contemporaries like the masculinist proto-fascists Adolf Brand or Hans Blüher, who posited same-sex friendships as a key "ontological category to ruminations of self and society," Mann—to starkly different political ends—partakes in a "classicizing response" to the issue of homosexuality and to the interpretation of homoerotic bonds as the basis for conceiving novel subjectivities and

communities.[326] In these passages, he delineates elements of a queer friendship that is actively conscious of being "an heir to a spiritual tradition that one has the responsibility of maintaining."[327] In his reading, Andreas ties together threads of the queer past to weave the present; these bygone authors become his contemporary friends, present and active spirits in his reflection, self-understanding, and self-unfolding as a queer subject.

For a text concerned with the spark of novel queer subjectivities, Mann perhaps befuddles the reader with his fusty literary touchpoints. In a decade replete with queer modernists undertaking radical artistic experimentation such as the expatriate Anglo-American lesbians around Gertrude Stein in Paris, many of whom he was aware, Mann remains in the bourgeois nineteenth century. This feature of his novel did not go unnoticed by his critics. The influential publisher Samuel Fischer considered Mann's earlier works like *Der fromme Tanz* to be out of time in its content and form compared to the modernity of his other books like *Treffpunkt im Unendlichen* (1932), which he described as the author's "erstes richtiges Buch" with "modernen" structures, style, and forms of expression.[328] Erich Mühsam concurred, disparaging the novel's cultural-literary tastes and references as anti-revolutionary and thus anti-modern: having forgone the radical energies of the political and cultural transformations of "die gärende, flutende, grundstürzende Gegenwart," Mann represented a "stagnierende Greisentum," an unnaturally

[326] Jennifer Evans, "Introduction: Why Queer German History?" *German History* 34, no. 3 (2016): 375. For an excellent analysis of masculinism in German homosexual thought, see Andrew Hewitt, *Homosexuality, Fascism, and the Modernist Imaginary* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 79-129. During the 1920s, Mann exhibited scant interest in the homosexual politics of his time, and he never affiliated himself with any organization; see Harry Oosterhuis, "The Dubious Magic of Male Beauty: Politics and Homoeroticism in the Lives and Works of Thomas and Klaus Mann," *Queering the Canon: Defying Sights in German Literature and Culture*, eds. Christoph Lorey and John Plews (Columbia: Camden House, 1998), 182, 197.

[327] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality,* 27.

[328] Quoted in Kroll, "Ist Klaus Mann ein 'moderner' Autor?", 28-29.

aged and etiolated "Rudiment erledigter Kultur" who "hineinschnarcht" into the future.[329] That the novel should appear to be the faded remnants of a dead culture is, of course, rooted in Mühsam's orthodox Marxist perspective on cultural progression; Mann's decadent reverence of the past is an easy target. But what Mann's critics miss is that the modernity of his novel does not lie in its aesthetic attributes—in this regard, Fischer and Mühsam are more right than wrong—but in its entanglement of time and same-sex friendship in the birthing of new forms of queer subjectivity. This nexus troubles notions of what his contemporaries and some scholars today consider to be "modern," like formal experimentation, linguistic difficulty, and the disintegration of the narrating "I." Rather than signaling modernity through style, Mann does so through by developing a new "Richtung," or what he defines as a temporal direction vis-à-vis his place in cultural history between an older generation of literary touchstones and an unknown future; it is by finding the right temporal *Richtung* that one can develop a new way of life.[330] In turning to authors, forms of culture, and literary expressions of previous centuries, Mann shows how the past resonates in modernity. As he writes in several essays from the late 1920s, the influence of these predecessors is inescapable; in a rebuttal of his critics, he points out that despite the immense change since the war, past cultures "bestimmen die Landschaft unseres geistigen Lebensraumes, ob wir darüber Bescheid wissen oder nicht."[331] Queerness, and queer ways of reading and relating to others, contains alternative temporalities and timelines of modernity. For Mann, elements of queer modernity stretch back into the past century and even

[329] Quoted in Ford, *Klaus Mann and the Weimar Republic,* 120.

[330] Klaus Mann, "Nachwort zur Anthologie jüngster Lyrik," *Aufsätze, Reden, Kritik: Die Neuen Eltern: 1924-1933*, ed. Uwe Naumann (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1992), 119-20. See also Mann, "Heute und Morgen," 133-4.

[331] Mann, "Woher wir kommen – und wohn wir müssen," *Aufsätze, Reden, Kritik: Die Neuen Eltern: 1924-1933*, ed. Uwe Naumann (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1992), 324.

into Greek antiquity, rewriting the timeline of German modernity and reminding us that "modern" is an arbitrary, wandering term dependent on the contexts and intentions of those wielding it.

What makes Andreas's notion of friendship remarkable in comparison to both his classical heritage and his contemporaries is that it describes virtual friendships, cultural-spiritual affinities not between two physically present bodies but instead spanning historical time and place to unite two individuals, dead or alive, in the form of their aesthetic expression in the present of the reader. By reading, these bygone authors are brought into his present and become his temporal coequals as they generate together with their friend the reader forms of queer community and subjectivity in a continuum of same-sex touch extending back into the nineteenth century and, ultimately, Greek antiquity. In orchestrating Andreas's "personal life as literary and cultural history," the novel participate in what literary scholar Christopher Nealon has called "affect-genealogy," a trans-temporal affective bond between "members" of an alternative community beyond more normative forms of belonging such as family or romantic coupling who "cannot see one another but feel nonetheless the uniting bond of their emotion."[332] The affect here is the yearning amity of friendship, which queers the very idea of genealogy in that it is not interested in biological ancestors or the past per se; it is a genealogy peculiarly flattened out across an instantiated synchronic plane of present time. In what Aleida Assmann has termed "the present as contemporaneity," the past is co-existent with the present.[333] Through the bonds of friendship, Andreas consciously "synchronizes" figures and discourses of the past with his own

[332] Chamberlin, "Coming out," 615; Christopher Nealon, "Affect-Genealogy: Feeling and Affiliation in Willa Cather," *American Literature* 69, no. 1 (1997): 10.

[333] Aleida Assmann, "How Long does the Present Last? Seven Approaches to a Fleeting Phenomenon," *Time in German Literature and Culture, 1900-2015: Between Acceleration and Slowness*, eds. Anne Fuchs and Jonathan Long (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2016), 49.

temporal now, creating a "dialogic" present comprised of crisscrossing friendships.[334] The heterogenous present that Andreas weaves from the thread of myriad friendships between himself and his interlocuters is shaped and supported by the inspiration, attraction, and love between men. Indeed, the almost voluntarist nature of this present suggests its ability to self-replicate in variations on a basic theme. If the queer temporality practiced by Andreas is centered and organized by the individual reader, then it can be taken up and actualized by other readers in a similar fashion—particularly readers of Andreas's story itself. Drawing from his example as to how to imagine and form relationships and community with past queers, the reader can simultaneously inhabit multiple presents at once in an interconnected web that ultimately links all those involved. As I read, interpret, and then write about Andreas, thereby inserting myself into this lineage of queer interlocuters, the novel secures its own reproduction in the minds of its readers, propagating its notions of queerness, reading, and friendship into the future, and ensuring that Andreas's queer genealogy of the present endures, perhaps infinitely. It is here that the radical creativity of Mann's muddling of the present resides. By showing that the present is always already intertwined with the past and future, this queer places a spanner in the "progressive logic" of capitalist modernity as well as in a politics of homosexuality as a liberal, rationalist project of gradual reform.[335]

Adopting certain aspects of the past as contemporary is the foundation for canonization and the broader phenomenon of cultural memory. By holding up past authors and works of literature as valuable and worthy of continued study for the present, "a shared legacy of values and references is built that can be claimed" across time and space "to serve the purpose of self-

[334] Ibid., 49-50.

[335] Freeman, *Time Binds,* 8-9.

reflection, affirming shared convictions and goals."[336] The novel's depiction of Andreas's reading offers its own readers continuity and a simultaneity of discourse, functioning as a cultural-spiritual "Gedächtnis" of queer practices of the self and of social relations, of traditions, norms, and values to be activated in and for the reader's present.[337] Of course, in extending the present to encompass what has come before, the reader reworks that very legacy he wishes to adopt in an act of cultural translation. In harkening back to these older exemplars, Mann instantiates the very canon from which he draws and in which he situates himself.[338] Part of a broader movement to establish a homosexual canon, Mann and other bourgeois intellectuals such as Hirschfeld and Karl Heinrich Ulrichs accorded paramount significance to this cultural corpus for the self-fashioning of modern homosexuals. For Mann, his literary interlocuters serve as steppingstones to future queer imaginaries and practices: to "weitergehen" from "da, wo er [the author] aufhörte, immer zu ihm zurückschauend, immer hängend an ihm," he re-interprets and thereby reshapes them.[339] The seemingly "out of timeness" of Mann's queer imagination is a way to take the material of the past and shape it for one's own needs, to use it to open and live potential worlds. Andreas's quest for friendship collapses the real temporal distance and difference between himself and his authors, the historical caesuras between then and now, embracing them as contemporaries with whom he can elaborate his own queerness.

Queer theorists like Love, who have studied the ambivalences and intricacies of queer

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[336] Assmann, "How Long," 50-1.

[337] Keilson-Lauritz, "Der schwule Kanon hinter der Tapete," 178.

[338] Going back to history to describe and transcend the present was a common feature in Mann's fiction, particularly in his two other overtly queer novels, *Alexander: Roman der Utopie* (1929) and *Symphonie Pathétique* (1935). For an analysis of this topic in these two novels, see Wolfgang Popp, *Männerliebe: Homosexualität und Literatur* (Stuttgart: Metzler Verlag, 1992), 280-5.

[339] Mann, "Fragment von der Jugend," 68.

affect and the yearning for the past in modernist authors such as Willa Cather, have tended to highlight the ways in which idealized notions of classical friendship as the unity of two souls effaces other affective realities, such as the ways "impossibility, disconnection, and loss" can mark the relationship.[340] Love pushes back against the use of friendship in queer studies as a "stabilizing" force to present "legible and generally appealing" images of queer intimacy and subjectivity without accounting for "the trouble and unease that are at the heart of friendship," which she centers in her study of queer backwardness.[341] Although her close readings of queer modernist texts certainly do reveal the negative undersides of friendship, its limitations, discomforts, and erasures, especially when directed toward the past, I disagree with Love's contention that studies of queer relationality tend to overemphasize the positive, coherent, and legible—if anything, queer studies since the 1990s has been transformed by a turn to negativity, what has been called the anti-social strain of queer thought. As I've laid out in the introduction, I wish to counter this negativity by emphasizing the positive, productive aspects of Mann's exploration of queer friendship and its concomitant temporality for the creation of queer subjectivity.

The processes of reading, interpretation, canonization, and cultural memory which Andreas undertakes in *Der fromme Tanz* are not only part of larger literary or temporal phenomena—they are also part of a project that (re)produces the self and the other as subjects of friendship. I interpret the novel's queer friendship as a type of reproductive act through which queer men inspire and create others—and thereby themselves in the reciprocal motions of the

[340] Love, *Feeling Backward,* 75.

[341] Ibid., 79-80.

relationship—that are intellectually and socially similar.[342] As Mann only very meagerly delineates the substance of this queer subjectivity of friendship, to flesh out our understanding of it more fully we must turn again to the *Symposium,* the silent interlocutor of the novel. Queer (re)production of the self takes center stage in Diotima's ladder of ascension from beautiful body to Wisdom and Virtue. Each of us is "pregnant" in our souls, she explains, harboring the desire to "give birth" in and to "something beautiful," be it a work of art or philosophy.[343] What brings us into labor is friendship with beautiful men: coming "into contact with someone beautiful" and loving him sparks the recognition of Beauty itself, unleashing the journey upwards toward the Forms.[344] Setting into motion a chain of reproduction, the perennially fertile beholder of beauty transcends sexual lust and "gives birth to many gloriously beautiful ideas and theories."[345] A poignant allegory for human creativity, of both the self and of culture, Plato queers the pairings, processes, and temporality of reproduction and community, rendering them non-biological.[346] Most basically, it is the friendship between two men that serves as the cauldron of conception rather than a heterosexual arrangement. Moreover, both friends mutually help fashion each other: two individuals come together, drawn by the perceived beauty found in each, and as they interact and mingle their souls, they inspire each other toward aesthetic goals, understood both as a project of the self and of culture; subsequently, each friend initiates friendships with other men, repeating the process in ever expanding degrees. "[N]ot acquisitive" of one friend by the other

[342] See Nardi, *Gay Men's Friendships,* 7.

[343] Plato, *Symposium*, 53.

[344] Ibid., 57.

[345] Ibid., 57-8.

[346] Of course, it also eliminates women. In a very misogynistic society, in which ancient Greeks considered women spiritually inferior to men, (pro)creative men embody and disembody the female role; see Halperin, *100 Years*, 139.

but freely creative with each other, this queer friendship is conceptive not only of *philosophia* but also of new relations to the self and the other.[347] The chain through the beauty of one to the beauty of All weaves perpetual threads of friendship between individuals young and old, past and future, creating in the apprehension of beauty a community of enlightened friends in a shared present. What one friend inspires the other to (pro)create—such as an enlightening idea, a beautiful artwork, or himself as a queer subject—transcends their relation, potentially affecting another and thus bringing them into contact with a whole cast of creators, regardless of their point in time or space. As generations inspire and are inspired by each other, a spiritual family of affection is sired, stretching both backward in inherited traditions and forward in a reproduction that "goes on forever" and achieves "immortality."[348] This spiritual immortality obviates temporal difference, for this friendship "always is and neither comes to be nor passes away, neither waxes nor wanes"—for how could it, when the reproductive thread between these men has no distinct or necessary beginning or end, sedimenting upon itself endless layers of spiritual-cultural co-existence?[349] Friendship is not the purview of two individuals isolated socially or temporally but rather a communal relationship, serving as the basis for broader social organization. Queer subjectivity for Mann must thus be understood as a relationship to the self within the social sphere, a group effort mediated by the continuous presence of innumerable others. Across generations, a society of friends communes.

Returning to where we began this chapter, Mann's ideas of queer friendship, temporality, and subjectivity don't give much to excite current queer political sensibilities; it is tempting to

[347] Halperin, *100 Years,* 130.

[348] Plato, *Symposium,* 54.

[349] Ibid., 58.

dismiss the novel as naive, amateurish, elitist, and epigonal, all of which would be accurate to a degree. Disconcertingly, Mann's temporal and cultural vision is entirely male, bourgeois, and European, and he unquestioningly replicates the historical exclusion of women. That being said, I am less interested in the political value of the kind of queerness that Mann propagates. Rather, I am interested in pursuing the structures and avenues of thinking it offers for queer temporality and subjectivity as well as the ways it intervenes in normative systems of sexuality, aesthetics, and history. Mann challenges us to consider queer timelines of the *longue durée* of century-old discourses and traditions that persist across historical and theoretical disruptions or transformations, as well as the crucial, lingering role of the irrational, the spiritual, and the aesthetic in formulating the homosexual amidst more "modern" sexological, medical, or juridical discourses and models. It reminds us that the past can be a rich resource with which to fashion oneself as a queer subject, acquire a sense of meaning for one's non-normative sexuality, or ground oneself in community and a sense of something greater than one's singular life. Continuity and its normative baggage can of course be dreadfully stifling, but it can also be galvanizing in unpredictable ways. We should treat with seriousness the appeal of continuity and the pleasure of being part of a tradition for queer individuals and groups and be cognizant that the often heroic-ecstatic postures of queer rupture or dissolution can be as liberating to some as alienating and negatively disruptive to others. A beneficially deflating addition to the exuberance of this strain of queer thought, the novel reminds us of the importance of bringing neglected German-language literature, history, and ideas to the overwhelming Anglo-French orientation of queer theory and queer studies. In doing so, Mann forcefully raises the point that not all that is queer must be or is purely antinormative or deconstructive—as political actors, queers inevitably break with certain norms and simultaneously validate others. For those excluded from positions

of power, the desire to "construct meaningful wholes," for "unity…order, and meaning," does not necessarily make one a handmaiden of oppression or a quisling of normativity.[350] In offering alternatives to some of the key theoretical commitments of queer studies, *Der fromme Tanz* embodies in its idiosyncratic imagining of queer friendship, temporality, and subjectivity the very plurality of queerness, its fertility for the unending (re)production of new ways of life.

For scholars of sexuality, many of whom have emphasized modern medicine, psychiatry, and the juridical apparatus in tracing the emergence of "homosexuality" as an entity, perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of Mann's novel is its blithe exclusion of these discursive fields. Mann instead raises a figure of the homosexual as a literary-aesthetic subject in an ostensibly sexological and psychoanalytic era. What scholarship has routinely emphasized as the major forcefields of sexuality during the early twentieth century—the human and life sciences, law, the state—is absent from Mann's discussion of queer friendship and subjectivity, drawing our attention to the overlooked importance of literary, aesthetic, and spiritual notions of homosexuality popular during this period.[351] Scholars such as Marita Keilson-Lauritz and Robert Tobin have only recently begun to unearth this vast humanistic legacy of the history of homosexuality in Germany.[352] Mann and other influential homosexual intellectuals such as Hirschfeld, Ulrichs,

[350] Brian Glavey, "Dazzling Estrangement: Modernism, Queer Ekphrasis, and the Spatial Form of *Nightwood*," *PMLA* 124, no. 3 (2009): 750-1.

[351] See Hewitt, *Homosexuality,* 80, and Kopelson, *Loves Litany,* 1-12, for examinations of this scholarly neglect of humanistic homosexuality.

[352] Keilson-Lauritz's *Die Geschichte der eigenen Geschichte,* even after nearly twenty years, is still the authoritative—and only—comprehensive study of the importance of literary fiction and aesthetics for the formation of a concept of homosexuality in the German context. Robert Tobin's *Peripheral Desires: The German Discovery of Sex* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015) also turns to this history by bringing it into conversation with concurrent sexological and psychiatric efforts to define homosexuality.

and Brand accorded paramount significance to literary fiction, which they considered "die ältere Schwester der Sexualwissenschaft" for its role in illuming the depths of the soul and offering rich examples with which the homosexual could know himself, understand his desire, and form an affirmative queer subjectivity.[353] Indeed, unlike psychiatric or juridical efforts to define same-sex desire and articulate sexual identities, it is striking that these concurrent literary attempts were exclusively undertaken by homosexual men themselves, for themselves.[354] These efforts toward a usable canon for the modern homosexual as the foundation for his subjectivity and identity as a member of a larger community attest to the value these men placed on literary study and *Belletristik* in particular. When also taking into consideration the explosion in openly queer literary publications during this period, including both fiction and criticism ranging from John Henry Mackay's *Der Puppenjunge* (1926) and Bruno Vogel's *Alf* (1929) to the voluminous book reviews and critical essays in *Der Eigene, Die Freundschaft,* and *Das Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen*, literary discourses of homosexuality represent an autonomous set of tools for queer men to build an affirmative sense of self and society amidst often hostile interventions by the sciences and other exogenous actors. Harkening back to the wealth of queer literature, Klaus, Andreas, and not a few of their contemporaries sought and created partners out of their predecessors, shaping into being a homoerotic Western cultural heritage and situating themselves in it as its latest guarantors to birth new forms of queer self-fashioning and worldmaking.

The dearth of attention given in scholarship to discourses and conceptual frameworks

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[353] Quoted in Keilson-Lauritz, "Der schwule Kanon hinter der Tapete oder: Die eigene Literaturgeschichte als Provokation," *Erinnern und Wiederentdecken: Tabuisierung und Enttabuisierung der männlichen und weiblichen Homosexualität in Wissenschaft und Kritik*, ed. Dirck Linck, et al. (Berlin: Verlag rosa Winkel, 1999), 178.

[354] Alongside Hirschfeld, Ulrichs, and Brand, see also Heinrich Hössli's *Eros, Die Männerliebe der Griechen, ihre Beziehungen zur Geschichte, Erziehung, Literatur und Gesetzgebung aller Zeiten* (1836), Elisar von Kupffer's *Lieblingminne und Freundesliebe in der Weltliteratur* (1899/1900), and Herbert Lewandowski's *Das Sexualproblem in der modernen Literatur und Kunst* (1927).

about homosexuality beyond the trifecta of medicine, psychiatry, and law can perhaps explain the limited band of imagination of many queer theorists regarding time and subjectivity, especially since their source base remains limited to Anglo-American and French canonical realist and modernist literature and to the high Theory of the late twentieth century. Turning to the German context and to novels outside of this literary pantheon like Siegfried Kracauer's *Georg,* we encounter forms of queer life strange to our current scholarly sensibilities, reaping the benefits of turning to alternative sources for rethinking the possibilities of queer temporality, relationality, and subjectivity.

Kracauer began writing his second novel, *Georg*, after the publication of his widely reviewed novelistic debut, *Ginster* (1928). Partially published in 1929 in the *Frankfurter Zeitung,* the novel was only finished in Parisian exile in 1934; it remained unpublished until 1973, even though enthusiastic readers like Thomas Mann had tried to place the novel with a publisher in the 1930s.[355] Set in the years 1920-1928, *Georg* takes its cue from Kracauer's intellectual trajectory and journalistic career, tracing his journey from vitalism during and after World War I to his reception of Kierkegaard and Marx and, finally, the fusion of the two in pursuit of a materialist existentialism by the early 1930s in his feuilleton pieces for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and the sociological study *Die Angestellten* (1930).[356] The novel follows the titular protagonist, a twenty-something tutor and journalist for the Frankfurt-based bourgeois newspaper *Der Morgenbote*, on his quest to find transcendental meaning to anchor his existence

[355] Theodor W. Adorno and Siegfried Kracauer, *Briefwechsel, 1923-1966,* ed. Wolfgang Schopf (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2008), 318.

[356] The changing titles of the book speak to these intellectual shifts: originally titled *Gesellschaft 1920*, it then was briefly renamed *Das träge Herz* before becoming *Georg*. This shift speaks to the intellectual context of its origins—hence the concern for social conditions (Marx) and forces as well as individual subjectivism (Kierkegaard). Some have classified *Georg* as an *Angestelltenroman,* which isn't exactly right, as journalists were not considered *Angestellten*, nor does the novel focus on the lives of white-collar workers.

in mercurial Weimar society. Often adopting Georg's idiom and perspective, the narrative follows his attempts to find this meaning in his homoerotic friendship with his pupil Fred (based on Adorno). As their relationship breaks down, the novel depicts Georg's frantic flirtation with a cacophony of ideologies from Catholicism to Marxism, all of which ultimately fail to adequately replace the role Georg's friendship with Fred played as a point of existential orientation. An ironic retelling of the *Entwicklungs*- and *Bildungsroman*, *Georg* follows in the tradition of Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* and Flaubert's *L'Éducation sentimentale* in asking if the individual is to find his bedrock of meaning in himself or in his relations with others, that is, in society—and if a successful search is even possible under modernity.

Scholars such as Dirk Oschmann and Gerhard Richter have argued that the central problem in *Georg* is the relationship, and its meaning, between self and other, between subjectivity and society; as such, *Georg* stands alongside other contemporary queries into this complex knot such as Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* and Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz.*[357] Although Richter has persuasively shown that Kracauer was one of the foremost theorists of friendship of his time, representing the through-line connecting the divergent philosophical underpinnings of his early and late works, little attention has been given to it: there are only two published articles that deal with the topic.[358] Similarly, the novel itself has rarely been studied at length. And with the sole exception of Johannes von Moltke's short review of Kracauer's romantic correspondence with Adorno, the scholarship that does exist has routinely ignored or minimized the explicit queerness of the central characters and relationship in

[357] Dirk Oschmann, *Auszug aus der Innerlichkeit: das Literarische Werk Siegfried Kracauers* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1999), 259-60; Richter, "Siegfried Kracauer,"233. It is also a major theme in *Ginster* as well as in his few *Erzählungen: "*Das Fest im Frühling" (1907), "Die Gnade" (1913), and "Der Gast" (1926).

[358] Richter, "Siegfried Kracauer," 233.

Georg.[359] I both build upon and challenge their work by writing from within the queerness at the heart of the novel, arguing that the queer friendship between Georg and Fred is indispensable to Kracauer's thinking about relationality, the self, and society, thereby queering his position in critical theory. I illustrate how this queer friendship strives for the union of two individuals—through which they conduce a notion of a timeless presence as the setting for a diffuse, dual subjectivity to emerge, one that is at its core relational, communal, and non-individual—but which appears to be an impossible task, foundering upon the ultimate illegibility and unknowability of the self and other. Out of this ostensible failure, I argue, Kracauer offers an ethics of incomplete friendship that not only tolerates but thrives on difference, imperfectability, and inconclusiveness, those maligned attributes of Weimar modernity that so many of his contemporaries, be it the Communists or the National Socialists, sought to overturn.

The novel begins by establishing Georg as a character of uncertainty, insecurity, and fear, a weak personality with no convictions, who jitters in a state of perpetual indecisiveness on the sidelines of world historical events. At a salon of the leftist bourgeoisie dedicated to the topic of revolution, for example, Georg remains mute. Unsure as to whether he agrees with the guests' political statements, he simply "folgte äußerlich ihrem Beispiel," meekly nodding when deemed appropriate (8).[360] He is ashamed that he hasn't given much thought to the rights of workers, and "so sehr er sich jetzt bemühte" to join his peers' enthusiasm about a new Weimar order, "es

[359] See von Moltke, "Teddie and Friedl: Theodor W. Adorno, Siegfried Kracauer, and the Erotics of Friendship," *Criticism* 51, no. 4 (2009): 683-94. Michael Winkler's and Dirk Niefanger's now dated articles on Kracauer's fiction reduce *Georg's* queerness to a few throw-away lines, as just one minor variety of "outsiderness" common to the author's works; see Winkler, "Über Siegfried Kracauers Roman *Ginster,* mit einer Coda zu *Georg*," *Siegfried Kracauer: Neue Interpretationen,* eds. Michael Kessler et al. (Tübingen: Stauffenburg Colloquium, 1990), 297-306, and Niefanger, "Transparenz und Maske: Außenseiterkonzeptionen in Siegfried Kracauers erzählender Prosa," in *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft* 38 (1994), 253-282.

[360] All parenthetical citations in this portion of the chapter refer to Siegfried Kracauer, *Georg* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2013).

wollte ihm nicht gelingen, und er wurde nur immer trauriger," sinking further into dejected passivity (9). Comparing his situation to sitting "in einem Kahn […], der steuerlos hin und her getrieben wurde," he is lost, not knowing what he believes or where he belongs (10-11). This absence of a strong sense of self goes hand in hand with the intensely felt lack of a *Halt* or bedrock of meaning upon which to ground himself. A wishy-washy, unmoored subject, he appears to come directly from the casting call for the hero in Lukács's theory of the novel, the "Held" of which Kracauer describes as "das problematische Individuum," who "die zum Chaos zerfallene Welt auf der Suche nach dem Sinn durchstreift."[361] Georg attempts to locate this sense of existential meaning in the external world, in the hectic surroundings and multiplicity of metropolitan life as well as the explosive diversity of philosophical thinking and ideological endeavors that characterized this period. He talks to strangers and little-known acquaintances about seemingly promising topics like left-wing social programs, only to be confronted with misunderstanding and confusion, a miasma of "Nebel" behind which meaning "verschwamm" (10). Deterred from apprehending meaning or a solid world view, our protagonist lacks form, both his own and his ability to provide it to the external world. Georg constantly feels himself "abseits" from reality, from "real" meaning (32). His being in the world does not guarantee, and in fact seems to hinder, the formation of a meaningful, robust subjectivity, political-ideological or otherwise.

Georg's relationship with his pupil Fred appears to be the exact antidote to his hapless position in a world in which, to use David Frisby's evocative elocution for Weimar critical

[361] Siegfried Kracauer, "Georg von Lukács' Romantheorie," *Werke, Vol. 5.1 Essays, Feuilletons, Rezensionen*, ed. Inka Mülder-Bach (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2011), 284.

theory's driving impetus, "identity of existence and meaning has been lost."[362] Kracauer presents a friendship that promises a deep, existential knowledge about the self, generative of subjectivity: for the friends, this meaning no longer needs to be found in a hostile external world or invented by oneself but rather meaning seems to be a *sui generis* product of their union. The process by which a meaningful, robust subjectivity is produced is through the friends' erotic bond, which, rather than a distraction from or complication of a "purer" friendship, serves as a path to ever greater intimacy between the two men, to ever more intense explorations of friendship and subjectivity. From the start, Georg and Fred's "Freundschaft," as Georg repeatedly calls it, includes physical sexuality (93). At first sight, the boy fills Georg with "eine[r] wunderbare Wärme," his "Knabenfigur war eine Verlockung" that sparks the prickling of desire (22). As they flirt with each other, Georg's attraction grows, and they spend their time playing erotic games with their "vier Hosenbeine, die sich rund und groß wölbten," suggesting male arousal as they lay "eng vereint" (25). Fred's "Hüftengegend […] dehnte sich vor Georg," the boy's erection, that "Schwellen" in his "schlanken Knabenumriss," "erregte" Georg, and his desire leaves him "fieberned" as they love each other "von Gesicht zu Gesicht […] und nicht nur die Hüften" (52).[363] In comparison to Mann's abstract practice of friendship in *Der fromme Tanz,* Georg and Fred's friendship incorporates sexual aspects into their relationship, suggesting again that one of the promises of this queer friendship is to rethink relations by breaking free of the strict divisions of different forms of relations and out of this hybridity engender new relationalities to others and the self. Because the protagonist and narrator never label their desires

[362] David Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity: Theories of Modernity in the Works of Simmel, Kracauer, and Benjamin* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), 116.

[363] The original manuscript contained more explicit language about the sexual nature of their friendship but was edited out before publication. See Oschmann, *Auszug*, 241.

or acts or bring them into contact with discourses of homosexuality, the novel presents queerness not as an issue of identity—what am I as a homosexual?—but rather asks: what relations to the self and to the other can one achieve via homosexuality? In other words, queer friendship has two major functions in Kracauer's novel: first, it entails a system of relations with the self and other formed by erotic desires, affects, and practices, and, second, out of these relations a form of subjectivity will arise that is relational, a product of the negotiation between a self and another—a subjectivity that is a dynamic, endlessly unfolding flux mediated by an erotic attachment to a friend.

We see this dual process unfold in the increasing intimacy of Georg and Fred's friendship. When together, they seek to seal themselves off from the outside world, rechristening the spaces in which they meet as a "schattiges Waldplätzchen" or a "Schlupfwinkel für Verfolgte" (25).[364] Against the interference of outsiders like Fred's mother they are "verbündet[e]" outlaws, seeking refuge in a hideout in which "er und Fred ganz allein aufeinander angewiesen waren" (23-4). The narrator compares the room to an "Indianerzelt," invoking the image of the open plains of the American West and its mythically uninhabited, unworked expanses, in which the only community is that of these two pioneers. These repeated invocations of rugged isolation *zu zweit* assert their "Gemeinschaft" as a social unit unto itself, usurping the role of external society, with its chaotic mixture of revolution and the distracting banality of everyday life in the modern metropolis, of "Aufstände, Straßen, Eisenbahnen, Regen, Büros" (28). Their friendship's dismissal of the outside world partakes in a classical, heroic ideal

[364] Of course, one could read their proclivity for privacy as a precaution taken against the criminalization of sodomy in 1920s Germany or against their eyebrow-raising ten-year age difference—Fred is fourteen, Georg twenty-four—a recognition of their outsider status as homosexual or even pederastic lovers; see Niefanger, "Transparenz und Maske," for an analysis of the novel through the figure of the "Außenseiter." The narrative's transparency regarding the characters' sexual acts and their declarations of love, however, would seem to point toward another explanation.

of male friendship, from Gilgamesh and Enkidu onward, that releases the friends from the tediousness of everyday life (and releases men from the perceived nuisances of women); as an antidote to ordinary life, friendship allows two individuals to fully attend to each other and the development of their selves as nascent subjects of this relationship. In its intensity of both erotic and spiritual connection, their community of two is superior to the seemingly superficial attempts at coming together or finding a sense of belonging and meaning that Georg sees around him. How pitiful, he thinks with the new-found confidence of friendship, "[d]ie Menschen forderten jetzt überall Gemeinschaften" with their calls for renewing society without realizing that, in comparison to the ideal community of two that emerges in a "Beziehung wie der seinen," such utopian dreams must "zergehen"; their demands "lag weit da draußen und ging Georg nichts an," for it is Fred "in dem er die Welt besaß" (28, 197). Within the history of friendship, this articulation is noteworthy. Rather than partake in the civic mindedness of Greek friendship, for example—or Mann's own networks of transtemporal friends—Georg and Fred's friendship is anti-public, eschewing bonds to other potential friends. Encompassing "die ganze Seele des Menschen," both the self and the other are mutually and simultaneously housed in each other within the bounds of their friendship, constructing a "Heimat" for the two friends that, like the shelter of the tent, relieves them, as Kracauer eulogizes in an early essay on friendship, of their modern "Obdachlosigkeit," that lack of immanent meaning for and of the self.[365]

Isolated from the comings and goings of the world around them, Georg and Fred also detach themselves from the movement of its time and instantiate through their friendship their own temporal realm of a timeless, enduring, and sprawling present. When they are together, they "gossen die letzten Tage aus und schütteten ihre Inhalte solange durcheinander, bis aus den zwei

[365] Siegfried Kracauer, "Über die Freundschaft," *Werke, Vol. 5.1 Essays, Feuilletons, Rezensionen*, ed. Inka Mülder-Bach (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2011), 40-1, 54.

Leben ein einziges wurde" (52). Time undergoes a change of state. Each temporal unit of the discrete day deliquesces into a fluid feeding into one temporal pond in and of the present, liquifying in the process any solid demarcations between the past and the future. Here, I read "Leben" to mean more than its conventional usage as the totality of one's experiences, memories, interests, and sensations, namely, as the temporal trajectory of one's time of being alive. Under the heat of intense friendship, the skeletal support that time provides to one's life, its linear progression, melts down to release and reassemble their temporal and subjective constituents as a single alloy. As such, queer friendship functions as a relation that paradoxically dissolves relations of time to create a unified temporal state, a bathing pool of time for two, so to speak, in which past, present and future—and the elements of two individuals attached to them—intersperse and blend. Friendship conduces a temporality shorn of demarcations and of structure itself. Fred and Georg "sehen sich an,"

> [i]hre Gesichte wachsen unaufhaltsam, sind groß wie der Himmel, verschwinden eins in dem andern. "Sieh, Georg, ich weiß nicht, was es ist, ich bin ja noch so jung…" "Nichts ist—" "Ich möchte mein ganzes Leben mit dir zusammen bleiben, Georg". Immer wieder küssen sie sich. So komisch mit den rasierten Wangen. Sie reden in einem fort, ernst, dummes Zeug, durcheinander (30).

Time changes gears. The narrative, hitherto told in the preterite form, that ideal tense to denote a break in time and to mark its passage, switches to the present tense. Using the present tense implies a uniform standard being, a lack of change, no before and no after. It is a world in which all is in its correct place, where everything and everyone belongs, a state of being for which, in a remarkably religious or even messianic formulation, we must not wait, for it is already here "im Grunde der Zeit, inmitten der Zeit."[366] The temporality of friendship shows

[366] Johann Kreuzer, "Augenblick und Zeitraum: Zur Antinomie geschichtlicher Zeit," *Siegfried Kracauer: Neue Interpretationen*, eds. Michael Kessler and Thomas Y. Levin (Tübingen: Stauffenburg Colloquium, 1990), 169.

itself not as a series of disconnected dots or repetitive moments but rather as timeless, enduring, perhaps even as eternal. Presentness-as-eternity: it is this temporality that undergirds their practice of queer friendship. As Kracauer himself exclaims in a letter to Adorno, friendship has an "ewige Dauer," and it is "immer Gegenwart, lebendige Gegenwart" within it.[367] The addition of "lebendig" to the description of this kind of present is important, for it reminds us that it is not a timeless present because it is dead, a sickly pool devoid of movement. Rather, the present of friendship is vibrant and animated, a present in which "die Liebe waltet"; amidst the effervescent passions of erotic friendship, the friends enter into an intercourse of two souls to find "Existenz, Einfachheit, Halt und Bedeutung."[368] In this sense, we see similarities to modernist notions of the present as a "full time," which, for intellectuals as varied as Viktor Schlovsky, Virginia Woolf, and Walter Benjamin, broadly entailed moments in which the passage of time is halted, the present is prolonged, and time is lived emphatically, loaded with movement and meaning.[369]

During these heightened moments, the notion of an unbounded present precipitates onto the subjectivities of the friends, parallelly effecting a breakdown of the boundaries between individuals and a mingling of otherwise two separate entities out of which a new subjectivity arises. In the passage above, Fred and Georg's faces, bodies, and words disappear and mix together. The desire of their friendship pierces alterity, be it between self and other or past and present, and it draws these differences out and into one another: in the back and forth between confusion and clarity, the formerly distinct mix "durcheinander" and then "zusammenbleiben,"

Although outside the scope of this study, the influence of Kracauer's engagement with the writings of Buber, Rosenzweig, and Benjamin on theology and Jewish messianic time is here impossible to miss.

[367] Adorno and Kracauer, *Briefwechsel,* 9.

[368] Ibid., 10.

[369] See Assmann, "How Long." 45-6.

becoming the substance of something emergent of and for the two of them. Georg's drive to create a world unto himself and Fred is the flipside of the wish to diminish the distance between them, removing obstacles and other people that may come between them so as to facilitate the complete openness of their souls to one another—a compulsion at odds with what scholars like Helmut Lethen have identified as a "culture of distance" in Weimar Germany, such as in *Neue Sachlichkeit.*[370]

While Georg, in his friendship with Fred, wishes to efface the difference and distance between Fred and himself, Georg's intimate interactions with women erect barriers between individuals and suggest not a birth of new subjectivity but the nullification of the subject itself. That Georg's relationship with another man is seen to be a panacea for his spiritual torments, while that with a woman only exacerbates them, underscores the gendered dynamics of Kracauer's ideas about friendship, problematically continuing the legacy of classical friendship as an all-male affair. We see this most clearly as Georg pursues an acquaintance, Beate, who is depicted as a disorienting flirt, foiling his attempts to strike a deep connection with her à la Fred and to thereby instantiate the sort of fundamental, enduring meaning he seeks therein. One evening, she invites Georg to her apartment, where she undresses in front of him and tries on her costume for Fasching, the carnival holiday of unsettled social codes and existential ambiguity. As Georg watches her transformation from ordinary student to Harlequin, her in-between status, "ein Gemisch aus Junge und Mädchen," "reizte […] ihn" (213). Like with Fred, his moment with Beate starts with the prickles of lust and then with the dissolving of a previous individuality, here represented by the breakdown in gendered signifiers. He is both bewildered and aroused by her contradictions and uncertainty, for her "männlichen Bestandteile" betray "eine ausgebrochene

[370] See Helmut Lethen, *Cool Conduct: The Culture of Distance in Weimar Germany*, trans. Don Reneau (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), ix.

Angriffslust," while her costume's female components such as the large "Halskrause" resemble "einer fürsorglichen Höhle, in die man sich vor gefährlichen Angreifern zurückziehen konnte" (213). Beate-as-Harlequin's hermaphroditism contains a disjointed yet compelling mix of elements, simultaneously drawing him in with the temptation of safe refuge and disconcerting him with the potential of attack. Depicted as a siren, she tempts Georg to view this moment as the beginning of a familiar process by which two souls dismantle their boundaries and their disparate contents would mix into something else. As he gets closer to Beate, ready to make his move on her, she suddenly disappears into a large mirror; Georg is unsure if he is looking at the real individual or simply a reflection of her. Reduced to a mere surface image without depth or content, her sudden distance and inaccessibility disturb him:

> Beate [war] bereits in der Halskrause verschwunden, die sich sofort hinter ihr schloß und keine Öffnung mehr bot. Georg war ausgesperrt. Betäubt sah er sich nach der Flüchtigen um, bis er zuletzt entdeckte, dass sie sich in den Spiegel gerettet hatte, in dem sie unnahbar für ihn geworden war [...] Es war, als habe sich alles Leben, das sie enthielt, in ihr Ebenbild ergossen, und sie selber sei zum Spiegelbild der kostümierten Erscheinung im Spiegel verblasst. [...] Plötzlich zerrann sie in Nichts. (213-14).

Georg finds himself locked out from Beate, who hides herself in her costume and then flees into the mirror. She becomes inapproachable and emptied of life until she fades into nothingness. Georg's confusion at having been mistaken about what his relationship with Beate could herald is reflected in the narrative itself. His tumultuous mélange of anxiety, confusion, and desperation to understand colors this passage. Compared to the cooler, slower, and paratactic description of his union with Fred, here the speed of the narration begins to perceptively accelerate, and clauses and sentences become increasingly intertwined, stringed along by a series of commas mirroring the zigzagging of Georg's thoughts and emotions. Whereas Fred has given Georg a languid pool of placid timelessness, an isolated haven away from the external chaos of Weimar Germany, here

that tumult comes inside. Time, rather than a benevolent climate to foster the birth of subjectivity, is transformed into a hostile factor, speeding out of control in its rapidity and unpredictability. This passage troubles common interpretations of the novel as a tale of agoraphobia, of Georg's need to create distance between himself and a frightening social reality; we see here that our protagonist wants nothing more than to come close to others, to reach out to Beate so as to know her—and himself.[371] And although Georg tries to grasp Beate as he has grasped Fred, this scenario is not temporally conducive to the sort of slow, generative communion he has experienced with the latter. His relationship with Beate is substantially different from his same-sex friendship, inhibitive rather than productive of subjectivity. Rather than dissolve in order to mix and mate with the other, she vanishes into the mirror and distances herself from Georg. She is reduced first to an image and then to nothingness; the female subject is flattened and scattered, nothing more than a missed chance for the male protagonist's own development.

Readings of Kracauer have tended to emphasize these destructive impulses. For example, some have argued that he seeks to theorize the "dismantled subject," a figure who can thrive with a "minimalist subjectivity" amidst the uncontrollable ideological and social powers during the Weimar Republic, adaptive to the "fluid social contexts and unstable nature" of this society.[372] Confronted with individuals like Beate, such a subjectivity would indeed seem equipped to adapt to the perceived inconsistency, illegibility, and existential chaos of Weimar life. However, this interpretation loses its powers of persuasion when we turn to the novel's overlooked queerness.

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[371] Anthony Vidler, "Agoraphobia: Spatial Estrangement in Georg Simmel and Siegfried Kracauer," *New German Critique* 54 (1991): 40f.

[372] Harry T. Craver, "Dismantling the Subject: Concepts of the Individual in the Weimar Writings of Siegfried Kracauer and Gottfried Benn," *New German Critique* 43, no. 1 (2016): 4-5, 20.

In comparison to Georg's heterosexual escapades, queerness offers a robust, positive, and strongly articulated subjectivity. With Fred, Georg believes to have successfully achieved a "Subjekt-Objekt-Verschmelzung," the melting of boundaries between self and other and the coalescing of body and soul; it is a notion of friendship already invoked in Kracauer's early essays on friendship from the late 1910s and still at play in the 1934 novel.[373] Borrowing the language of early modern friendship in Montaigne and his intense invocations of emotional communion, Kracauer envisions friendship as a relation in which "er [the friend] gehört mir zu eigen und mein Einfluss erstreckt sich bis zu den Wurzeln seines Daseins."[374] As the influence of one friend intertwines in the other, markers of individuality lose importance as new forms of self-understanding and self-relation emerge, achieving a diffuse co-mingling, a protean soup of subjectivity out of which the subject of friendship is engendered. For example, Georg plays down the decade-wide age gap between himself and Fred as something "nur zahlenmäßig vorhanden," for "in Wirklichkeit gab es keinen Abstand" between them (22-3). Instead of the divisions and distances in Beate's scene, Fred is surrounded by a vocabulary of mergers, bringing together different metaphors for friendly union. Alongside the imagery of intertwining roots growing into each other to form one entity, Georg "verschmolz mit Fred" (28). Alongside the flowing together of liquid souls, Kracauer describes this experience as one of "Begriffenwerden" by the friend, of being taken inside the other as an "Aufgehobensein in einer fremden Seele."[375] The escalating force of this vocabulary points to the utmost desire for one's former subjectivity to be sublated by and within the friend, stripped of contour and structure so

[373] Oschmann, *Auszug,* 37.

[374] Kracauer, "Über die Freundschaft," 54.

[375] Ibid.

that out of this complete transparency of the self in the other one acquires a novel "Bewusstsein," a unique consciousness that cannot be parsed by the origins of its substance and which I interpret as the foundation for a subjectivity of friendship.[376] This back-and-forth of transgression between the self and the other, of finding a home within the friend and welcoming him in yourself in turn, is not a violation to be feared or avoided; rather, one is "affirmed" in a "redoubling, not a reduction" of the self."[377] Indeed, this nascent consciousness will bring order and coherence, a "Zusammenhang," to the "mannigfachen Inhalte der Seele," that is, forming it into a subjectivity; in effect, friendship "fullt so das Spaltengewirr aus, das sich in jedem Menschen findet," creating a subjectivity that is imbued with the immanent meaning Georg acutely misses.[378] This subjectivity must be "thought as the configuration of its relation," for only a queer friendship "schenkt den Menschen Schätze, die sie allein nur schwerlich hätten erlangen können."[379] It is through the framework of friendship that Georg acquires a richer subjectivity, one that may redeem Georg's seemingly congenital anomie and confusion.

For all of its utopian potential to heal the rifts of the modern individual by birthing a more whole and richer subject—curiously heralding aspects of traditional bourgeois interiority: cohesive instead of fragmented, scrutable instead of illegible—Kracauer's queer friendship is not as tidy a solution as it may first appear. If the self is to be "aufgehoben" in the other, then it would seem to obviate any distinction between these two entities. We would be unable to meaningly differentiate between a "self" and an "other," since they would be like two trees sharing a root network, visibly yet deceptively distinct aboveground in arising from an

[376] Ibid., 48.

[377] Richter, "Siegfried Kracauer," 238.

[378] Kracauer, "Über die Freundschaft," 46.

[379] Richter, "Siegfried Kracauer," 234; Kracauer, "Über die Freundschaft," 55.

indistinguishably common, underground origin. There remains an ambiguity in how Kracauer speaks about the machinations of friendship, already evident in the several different metaphors used to describe the meeting of two souls: are they mingling liquids, intertwined roots, or spiritual vessels filled with the souls of the friends? Although the desired end effect may be the same in inspiring a new relational, diffuse form of subjectivity, these processes are not reducible to each other; each raises the question about the issue of remnants, of how total the integration of two souls is to be. And then there is the quite practical issue of Georg remaining a distinct and individual character throughout the novel—it is not as if, after his union with Fred, the narration radically shifts in perspective or technique to adapt to the challenge of narrating a dual subjectivity. It is amidst this ambivalence of unity and autonomy that the pitfalls of Georg's friendship become visible.

In effect, this ambivalence results from the ambiguity of Georg and Fred's friendship. Although the novel only refers to their relationship as a "Freundschaft," it is evident that Georg harbors an unruly mix of friendly, erotic, and romantic feelings for Fred, none of which can be seamlessly reduced to the other two. And while one of the main aims of this chapter is to expand our notion of (queer) friendship to allow for these protean, unpredictable hybrids, it also true that Kracauer struggled to reconcile these at times contradictory components. Part of the promise of queer friendship, the inclusion of erotic and romantic elements in Georg and Fred's relationship muddles the waters as to how this friendship is to function and be understood, for love and friendship have for Kracauer two irreconcilable ways of relating the self to the other. They differ in the encounter of two individuals and the interpenetration of their two souls; as a result, the homoerotic friendship found in the novel exists as a disharmonic relationship, emblematic of Western thinking about male friendship, whose component tensions cannot be cleanly

resolved.[380]

In Kracauer's first attempt to construct a theory of friendship, the essay "Über die Freundschaft" (1918)—written in the tradition of Cicero and Montaigne as a monument to a dead friend—he differentiates friendship from romantic love based on their connective tissue, the former a "Verbindung" of two individuals who remain autonomous in contradistinction to the latter's "Verschmelzung."[381] As illustrated above in its multifarious vocabulary, we encounter both these models in the novel. Kracauer wavers as to what exactly friendship entails and how different its passions are from those of romantic love. He admits that lovers are also friends, that the "Liebesbedürfnis begreift schließlich von selber die Freundschaft in sich," yet he vacillates in describing it as a process of "vereinter Entwicklung […] freier, unabhängiger Menschen" and the will "zur Einheit zu verschmelzen."[382] On the one hand, then, friendship "signals a caesura in the continuity of the self," for it invites the total unity of two beings as diffuse liquids.[383] On the other hand, friendship can also be seen as the connection of relatively autonomous individuals and the "gradual unfolding of one's being-together in time."[384] It is the latter that Kracauer circles around, attaching to this process of friendly growth in tandem a contemplative,

[380] Niklas Luhmann and Andreas Kraß have traced the fine line between homosociality and homosexuality in Western discourses on male-male friendship from antiquity to the twentieth century, concluding that the potential of queerness has haunted the imaginary of friendship since at least the Middle Ages. See Luhmann, *Liebe,* 102-145, and Krass, *Ein Herz,* 17-80.

[381] Kracauer, "Über die Freundschaft," 40, 41, 43.

[382] Ibid., 50, 58. The desire to unite with the friend, to come together as "ein Herz und eine Seele," can be traced back to the mystical notions of friendship in medieval stories of *Herzensfreunde,* and even further to Aristophanes's famous speech in the *Symposium.* Perhaps the best-known example in this tradition is Montaigne's essay, where friendship possesses the entire soul of the friend and an identity exists between other and self, "he and I." See Kraß, *Ein Herz,* 37-48.

[383] Richter, "Siegfried Kracauer," 238.

[384] Ibid., 237.

paradoxically distanced communion, a "Beisichselbstverweilen."[385] With this evocative term, Kracauer speaks to the sensation that even amidst the throes of passionate friendship one feels "verloren, wie ein Kind, das von der Nabelschnur grad abgezwackt ist."[386] Friendship brings two individuals closer together, but it also prompts a pensive introspection rather than a total habitation of the other; in propelling one toward another, friendship also turns one inward, preserving a frisson of difference rather than complete identity between friends. In trying to contain within friendship these opposing forces of full fusion and a more tenuous, distanced connection of individuals remaining with themselves, Kracauer allows us to glimpse a subjectivity of friendship that, in its self-contradictory relationality, is inexorably accompanied by otherness. Encountering the insurmountable difference between self and other, this subject is confronted by the ultimate disunity or alterity of himself: the subject, as a product of friendship that falls short of complete union or comprehension, is itself not utterly whole or knowable.

With the realization that the friend remains in the final instance incomprehensible and inaccessible, Georg and Fred's relationship, and thus the possibility of a subjectivity immanent with absolute and total meaning, founders and falls apart. While Georg himself refuses to accept this truth and pushes for that "Verschmelzung" with Fred, the latter pulls back and seeks a more conventional friendship within the bounds of acceptable homosociality. Georg "liebte ihn so," but Fred "blieb aus," pulling back from his intimacy in order "endlich einmal frei zu leben" (34, 128). As Fred matures and becomes romantically involved with women, his scorned partner realizes "[d]ass es mit dem täglichen Zusammensein einmal ein Ende haben werde" (30). The more Georg "in ihn [Fred] drang"— carnally and metaphorically—the more Fred resists his

[385] Kracauer, "Über die Freundschaft," 44.

[386] Adorno and Kracauer, *Briefwechsel,* 11.

penetration. Where Georg once sought to find clarity of meaning he now finds a secret, inaccessible realm, haunted by the suspicion that something "musste […] dahinter stecken, und er kam nicht dahinter" (93). Yet rather than reading this outcome as a failure of this model of friendship, I view it as positively distinguishing Kracauer's project from other canonical theories of friendship. In openly allowing for the queerness of male friendship and exploring its unclear boundaries with sex and romance, *Georg* insists on a practice of friendship that acknowledges its complexity and contradictoriness, its redemptive promise despite, and perhaps because of, its incompleteness, incoherence, and unreachability. It challenges us, as Richter rightly notes, to consider friendship "as a site of relation that is constituted not by an essential roundedness or closed set of presuppositions, but rather by the very movements through which it defies or exceeds comprehension."[387] Georg's example provides an ethics of friendship that strives to tolerate difference both between the self and other and within oneself. It is a form of relation that molds us as subjects who can live with and benefit from the clarity of recognition that completeness, totality, and perfection of meaning are ever-receding horizons that cannot be met.

Unlike Mann's notions of queer friendship and subjectivity, what holds Kracauer's friends together is not their mutual inspiration or shared metaphysical ideals but rather their common experience of the illegibility of the relations that structure their friendship and their subjectivities: the community of two that is friendship is the experience of being exposed, through the friend, to the finitude of meaning. Kracauer draws our attention to the points of trouble, uneasiness, and imperfectability inherent in friendship, portraying it as a not infallible arrangement. Indeed, it is Kracauer's insight into the limits of friendship and self-knowing that reveals the commonalities between these two authors. Brought together with *Der fromme Tanz*,

[387] Richter, "Siegfried Kracauer," 241.

Kracauer's novel highlights the superficiality and at times naively insouciant easiness of the former's friendship, for they both do not portray how the subjectivities invoked by queer friendship would actually look or feel; in Mann, and to a lesser but still present extent in Kracauer, friendship is curiously empty, a hollow scaffold of sorts, leaving it to the reader to take up the deceptively smooth veneer of this proposed relationship and to extrapolate it onto the unruly mass of queer life. All form and little substance, we are shown and given models of how friendship would function, how two men are to relate to each other and to their selves within this arrangement, but both novels avoid imagining the tangible future of these friendships and, most tellingly, of its friends: Mann's novel ends with Andreas literally driving off into the Mediterranean sunset, conjuring up in highly elliptic language the redemption of his generation through the benediction of friendship, while Georg disavows Fred and disappears as an anonymous atom into the crowds of Berlin's urban masses. As Andreas develops a system of friendship as a result of his unrequited affection for another, and Georg divines the union of two friends with a man who ultimately rejects him, neither character attains the ideal friendship or subjectivity glimpsed in their most hieratic moments.

These novels' preference for representing frameworks of friendship instead of the substance of friends should be read not as a failure but as a liberating reformulation of friendship away from a union of entities, of full, whole subjects and toward an idea of friendship as a network of relations, its empty subjectivity not a lack but a tabula rasa to be inscribed upon in the future of such relations. Following Foucault's eponymous interview, the novels offer "friendship as a way of life," a medium through which more ethical relations to the self, the other, and the world can be cultivated and practiced. Embedded within such a constellation, the queerness of these relations, the mix of romance, eroticism, and friendly affection that both Andreas and

Georg bring together, deflects us from being caught up in the question of "what or who am I as a friend?"—the question upon which Kracauer stumbles, for example, in his contradictory juggling of divergent models of union—and instead asks us, "[w]hat relations, through homosexuality, can be established, invented, multiplied, and modulated?"[388] As my readings demonstrate, we are led astray when we wield friendship as a tool to "discover in oneself the truth" of the self; these novels suggest that friendship is better suited to reimagine the world and one's position in it as a network of unpredictably and infinitely creative routes of relation.[389] Because of the historical novelty of such hybrid queer friendships that do not blanch at but instead celebrate the erotic desires within them, friends must invent the vocabulary, the values, and the forms of such otherwise formless relationships—their blank subjectivities await to be created through the acts of friendship as processual phenomena. Bringing together individuals' multiple axes of difference, from age and historical time to geography and cultural background, queerness in these otherwise rather dissimilar friendships depicted by Mann and Kracauer fuels their common project to escape the binary of a fleeting sexual encounter or a seamless union of two lovers. Friendship is both something less and something more, something much grander: the possibility with which to create new, "polymorphic, varied, and individually modulated" relations to time, subjectivity, and world-making.[390] To "be" the subject of queer friendship, that is, to "be" a queer friend, is not to adopt the solidity of an identity and its accordant traits, to ground oneself within a substantial state of being, but rather to "re-open affective and relational virtualities," to reside within the endless becoming of possibility and make that possibility visible and

[388] Foucault, "Friendship as a Way of Life," 308.

[389] Ibid.

[390] Ibid., 311-12.

habitable.[391]

As I have shown in this chapter and throughout my dissertation, the marginality and alterity of queerness or of being a woman under a highly patriarchal society can birth new relations, not only to each other, but to ourselves, to time, and to desire of all forms. In each chapter I have endeavored to draw out the tenacious productivity of varied relations—romantic, sexual, and friendly—to serve as vectors of queer and female worldmaking, the site of their transformative imaginaries and utopian politics, be it the housewife seeking sex with an anonymous man to perfect her understanding of love or the young lesbian grasping for the unrepresentable future promised in her yearning for another woman. Approaching these understudied texts across the distance of nearly a century, it seems that I have adopted a model analogous to Mann's own chains of transhistorical cultural inspiration, communing with my predecessors to work with them in my readings of their texts to generate new knowledge, both of the past and for my own time, within the unbounded temporal realm of the present-as-dissertation. By drawing these voices out of their submerged pasts, their dreams transgress historical caesuras and the destruction of war and political-social persecution that inimically threatened many of these authors, their texts, and what they represented. The persistence across time of the questions they asked—so similar to ours concerning identity, culture, and the politics of change—collide with the idiosyncrasy of their answers and their adaptation of modernist forms, tropes, and techniques, a cultural alterity from their own contemporaries and ourselves in the twenty-first century. In attending to their concerns and their universes of ideas and affects, we stand to benefit from rethinking the contours of German modernist societies, cultures, and literatures, while also reaping the rewards of this long, rich heritage to reimagine our own

[391] Ibid., 311.

present and challenge the doxa of our thinking around queerness, gender, temporality, and subjectivity. The very existence of our futures resides in this heritage, for within its unexcavated past we find its undetonated potential, which, with the right attention and approach, are waiting to explode our present.

Chapter 5 – "In der Zwickmühle der Zeit": Marieluise Fleißer's *Mehlreisende Frieda Geier* (1931) and the Non-Simultaneities of Gendered Subjectivity

In *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (1935), Ernst Bloch elaborated the concept of "Ungleichzeitigkeit," a temporal-sociocultural dissonance between different classes, social groups, and individuals who inhabit, embody, and move in differing temporal layers and their accordant mentalities; while they physically exist in the same present, they do not reside "im selben Jetzt."[392] As these temporal frameworks and those that live within them diverge, the tensions between them become increasingly untenable, leading to personal and social strife. Writing after the National Socialist rise to power, Bloch postulates that these contradictions were emblematic and explanatory for the course which the Weimar Republic took, its exhilarating promise and tragic end. In subsequent scholarship, these thoughts have been expanded to encompass a broader history of German modernity and modern culture. Perry Anderson and Fredric Jameson identify in pre-Nazi Germany an "incomplete" and "uneven" penetration of urban modernity, producing an "indeterminate" present state caught between the "still usable classical past" and "the still unpredictable political future."[393] Detlev Peukert likewise characterizes this period—which he considers paradigmatic for the "Krisenzeit der klassischen

[392] Ernst Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1962), 104. A version of this chapter appears as "In der Zwickmühle der Zeit: Marieluise Fleißer's *Mehlreisende Frieda Geier* (1931) and the Non-Simultaneities of Gendered Subjectivity," *The German Quarterly* 94, no. 4 (Fall 2020): 466-483.

[393] Fredric Jameson, "The End of Temporality," *Critical Inquiry* 29, no. 4 (Summer 2003): 600; Perry Anderson, "Modernity and Revolution," *New Left Review*, no. 144 (Mar-April 1984): 105.

Moderne" in the West—by the contradictions between various temporalities, temporal consciousnesses, experiential velocities, and the conflicting lifeworlds created by them.[394]

Denizens of the 1920s and 1930s experienced this temporal discordance in their daily lives and sense of self, particularly in and through gender. Robert Musil, for example, tracked the emergence of new types of men and women as confused temporal beings, transitionary figures unsure of their footing and nature.[395] The Dadaist Richard Huelsenbeck remarked that the modern period was the first to produce a "Frauentypus, den man als eine besondere Schöpfung der Zeit empfand," who "existiert zwar noch in großen Umrissen" and lingered, following Kerstin Barndt, between old and new in a "status nascendi."[396] Else Herrmann identified types of women according to their temporal positioning, such as the "Frau von gestern" dedicated to her progeny or "die Frau von heute" living for her own present.[397] As Herrmann and others like Alice Rühle-Gerstel observed, women in particular struggled to navigate the temporal disharmonies between the new opportunities of emancipation and the legacy of a still-appealing "Frauenschicksal" as housewife and mother.[398] Alongside a perception of residing in a period of epochal transition after World War One, these voices attest to the ways in which a societal phenomenon of non-simultaneity became uniquely fraught when impacted by gender. In moments of disharmony between older and newer ways of defining the self, they reveal how

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[394] Detlev J. K. Peukert, *Die Weimarer Republik. Krisenjahre der klassischen Moderne* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1987), 11.

[395] Robert Musil, "Die Frau gestern und morgen," *Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 2,* ed. Adolf Frisé (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 2000), 1193.

[396] Richard Huelsenbeck, "Bejahung der modernen Frau," *Die Frau von morgen, wie wir sie wünschen*, ed. Friedrich M. Huebner (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1929), 18; Kerstin Barndt, *Sentiment und Sachlichkeit. Der Roman der Neuen Frau in der Weimarer Republik* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2003), 9.

[397] Else Herrmann, *So ist die neue Frau* (Hellerau: Avalun, 1929), 32-43.

[398] Alice Rühle-Gerstel, "Zurück zur guten alten Zeit?" *Die literarische Welt* 9, no. 4 (January 27, 1933): 5.

temporality and gender form a nexus that shapes our subjectivity. With one foot in the past and one marching toward a future of unprecedented possibilities and, for women, legal and social liberties, Weimar subjects were ambivalently caught between history and novelty, continuity and rupture, with intense ramifications for their subjectivities.

Usefully revealing the dynamic imbrication of time, the social, history, and personal experience, I bring Bloch's notion of "Ungleichzeitigkeit" into dialogue with *Mehlreisende Frieda Geier. Roman vom Rauchen, Sporteln, Lieben und Verkaufen* (1931) by Marieluise Fleißer (1901–1974).[399] Fleißer, a native of the small Bavarian city Ingolstadt, was well-known during the Weimar Republic, having made her name with two provocative plays, *Fegefeuer in Ingolstadt* (1926) and *Pioniere in Ingolstadt* (1929), as well as a collection of short stories, *Ein Pfund Orangen* (1929). Working closely with Bertolt Brecht and Lion Feuchtwanger, Fleißer's oeuvre depicts the mundane lives of and hardscrabble relationships between the young men and women of the provincial petite bourgeoisie, mixing melodramatic conventions with a "Neue Sachlichkeit" style to effect biting social criticism. Her first novel, *Mehlreisende Frieda Geier,* follows the failed relationship between Frieda Geier, a traveling flour saleswoman, and Gustl Amricht, a local swimming star in Ingolstadt.

I interpret how the novel portrays the process in which shifting non-simultaneities interact and fuse with notions of gender to decisively influence individuals, their subjectivities,

[399] There exist two studies of Fleißer that apply Bloch's notion of "Ungleichzeitigkeit." W. Schmitz remains with Bloch on a macroeconomic-historical level and reads the novel as a "Zeitroman" about the pathologies of the province vis-à-vis modernization and the rise of Nazism, whereas my argument expands the concept horizontally to issues of gender and vertically to the level of the individual. Barbara Naumann, conversely, does attend to the personal but in a stiflingly biographical manner that interprets Fleißer's writing as a reflection of her discordant life between traditional Bavaria and avant-garde Berlin. See W. Schmitz, "…hier ist Amerika oder nirgends. Die negative Erlösung in Marieluise Fleißers Roman *Eine Zierde für den Verein*," *Text +Kritik*, no. 64 (1979): 61–73, and Barbara Naumann, "'Hergefegt vor einem unwirtlichen Wind'. Marieluise Fleißers Scheitern an Berlin," *Triumph und Scheitern in der Metropole. Zur Rolle der Weiblichkeit in der Geschichte Berlins*, eds. Sigrun Anselm and Barbara Beck (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1987), 157–80.

and their social worlds in ways both liberating and threatening. Extrapolating from the personal consequences of these frictions for one couple's story, I read Frieda, Gustl, and their relationship as both sites and cipher for larger societal conflicts; they function as a battlefield upon which antagonistic actors, modes of time, gender, and their shifting normative values arise, make claims, and compete. Whereas Gustl, transitioning from the prototype of the Weimar "neuer Mann" as self-made athlete to traditional shopkeeper and back to celebrated town hero, is imbued at the end of the novel with futurity in his embodiment of a communal, violent masculinity, Frieda, representative of the individualist "neue Frau" and perhaps the most prominent medial figure of Weimar modernity, is shorn of her futurity, physically threatened, and run out of town and narrative.

The text, ironizing and criticizing this turn of events, leaves us with a disturbing depiction of the real implications for gendered subjects of intangible concepts like time. My reading, following Elizabeth Grosz and Julia Kristeva, illustrates how such a concept is not an abstract environment in which we reside but rather a dynamic agent in shaping our subjectivities; as such, each shifting in one prompts change in the other, calling forth new subject positions and temporal-social constellations.[400] In Fleißer's novel, the personal negotiation of time and gender appears ambivalent, indeterminate, and, in extreme moments, downright hazardous. I work with its innovative doubled narrative voice, one that combines elements of "Neue Sachlichkeit" irony, coldness, and distance with what she called a feminine, "mitbeteiligt" closeness to her characters, to argue for the novel's incisive insight into these antagonistic temporal and gendered structures

[400] Elizabeth Grosz, *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 181; Julia Kristeva, Women's Time," *Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology*, eds. Nannerl O. Keohane, Michelle Z. Rosaldo, and Barbara C. Gelpi (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981), 36.

of subjectivity under Weimar modernity.[401]

Mehlreisende Frieda Geier is structured in two halves, corresponding to the rise and fall of Frieda and Gustl's relationship. When they first meet, both are presented as emblematic figures of the new, gendered subjectivities of Weimar modernity. Frieda typifies the "neue Frau," breaking with models of passive femininity, androgynous with shortly-cropped hair and men's leather jackets, and shoes fashionable in the metropolis, while her assertive, almost masculine bearing and scanning, "kalte […] Blicke" (30) intimidate the men of her hometown.[402] Frieda inverts patriarchal positions of power by treating the men in her life as a "Mittel zu einem anderen Zweck" (32)—her sexual pleasure, happiness, and independence—manipulating their trite expectations when she dons traditional Bavarian costume to appear as a "schwaches Weib" (31) to win orders for her business. Her sexual openness with Gustl and refusal to lose her "schöne Selbständigkeit" (191) in marriage confirm Frieda's wariness in preserving her independence, encapsulated in her worldly-wise tenet, "[d]ie Männer muss man zugrunde richten, sonst richten sie einen selber zugrunde" (86). Looking like she's ready to dance the "Shimmy" (27) at all times, her appearance and attitude signify the modern, urban culture of Berlin, one of amusement associated with both unbridled female sexuality and (erotic) autonomy—Berlin as the "Hure Babylon"—and the America of the Roaring Twenties, land of the modern woman *par excellence.*[403] Frieda's self-fashioning positions her as a "vermittelndes

[401] Marieluise Fleißer, "Der Heinrich Kleist der Novellen," *Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 4,* ed. Günther Rühle (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1989), 407.

[402] Parenthetical citations refer to Marieluise Fleißer, *Mehlreisende Frieda Geier. Roman vom Rauchen, Sporteln, Lieben und Verkaufen* (Berlin: Kiepenheuer, 1931).

[403] Sigrun Anselm, "Emanzipation und Tradition in den 20er Jahren," *Triumph und Scheitern in der Metropole. Zur Rolle der Weiblichkeit in der Geschichte Berlins*, eds. by Sigrun Anselm and Barbara Beck (Berlin, Dietrich Reimer, 1987), 256.

Wesen" of modernity with one foot in the modern metropolis and the other in sleepy, small-town Bavaria.[404] Her outlier status within a traditional setting expresses the ambivalent prospects of modernity vis-à-vis a threatened, cherished past for some and promises of a bright, radical future for others.

For his part, Gustl is presented as the heroic swimmer, a figure prominent in Weimar mass culture and heralded by Fleißer as the "Repräsentant des modernen Zeitgefühls."[405] Contemporaries found in the athlete a "neuer Typ" and "eins der bemerkenswertesten Phänomene des modernen Lebens," the cutting-edge development of the ideal, vital postwar man in whom "etwas von dem Nerv der Zeit selber zu spüren ist."[406] In the wake of the humiliation of masculinity resulting from defeat in World War One, male athletes figured as a rejuvenation of the German nation through their powerful physical performances and embodiment of a "modern" attitude of efficiency, rationalization, and optimization. The athlete was held up in the press as "nichts anderes als der sichtbare Exponent einer geistigen Neugruppierung."[407] As such, Gustl's subjectivity and social reputation are grounded in the symbolic, steely power of his muscular body. He has trained himself to be both physically and emotionally independent, having written off earthly delights such as "Seitensprünge" with women so as to fully dedicate himself to the perfecting of his body and skills (37). When he does fall for Frieda, he is both flummoxed by and attracted to her self-possession and resistance to traditional gender expectations, while she is

[404] Kerstin Barndt, "'Engel oder Megäre'. Figuration einer ‚Neuen Frau' bei Marieluise Fleißer und Irmgard Keun," *Reflexive Naivität. Zum Werk Marieluise Fleißer*, eds, Maria E. Müller and Ulrike Vedder (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2000), 32.

[405] Marieluise Fleißer, "Sportgeist und Zeitkunst," *Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 2,* ed. Günther Rühle (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1994), 317.

[406] Frank Thiess, "Die Geistigen und der Sport," *Die neue Rundschau* 38, no. 1 (1927), 295; Hermann Kasack, "Sport als Lebensgefühl," *Die Weltbühne* 24, no. 41 (1929): 558.

[407] Thiess, "Die Geistigen," 303.

erotically drawn to his physical prowess and what it signifies: an overhauled postwar masculinity and subjectivity and a general societal *esprit* of action and vitality.

What is at first depicted as a harmonious simultaneity of these two paragons of Weimar subjectivity—modern, soberly cool toward the facts of life, and individualistic—begins in the second half of the novel to increasingly diverge as Gustl gives up his sports career and opens up a tobacco shop to prepare for his proposal of marriage. Signaled by a literal narrative restart that repeats verbatim the opening pages of the novel and thus emphasizes the two possible trajectories of subjecthood they could follow, Gustl inaugurates this turning point by abandoning a subjectivity of self-improvement and self-reliance.[408] He remakes himself as a paterfamilias predicated on traditional gender relations, the stability of social customs, and the subordination of women—a still-existent "past" seemingly incongruous with the present age of female emancipation. Instead of ruthlessly training his body, Gustl, his "Knie so weich" (8), now slavishly awaits his customers from dawn until dusk. No longer the athlete-hero aflush with that verve that fascinated Weimar observers and Frieda herself, he is subordinated to serving his customers with "Frömmigkeit" and "Ehrerbietung" (9). Enveloped by this Christian vocabulary of self-sacrifice, the mismatch between the narrator's hyperbolic-hagiographic description of a banal moment in the day of a small business satirizes Gustl's earnestness as a shopkeeper. This move distances the reader from him, alerting us to critically scrutinize this new phase in Gustl's life.

It is here in the opening scene and its recapitulation—they depict the same moment in the diegesis—that we can develop most clearly how the text's formal properties and specifically

[408] Like Nietzsche's "ewige Wiederkehr," this narrative intervention suggests Frieda's ultimate fate was always already there from the beginning. Her efforts to create herself as an emancipated woman must halt before the inextricable knots of the ambivalent gender-temporal dynamics of Weimar society—she cannot escape the social conditioning of her subjectivity as a modern woman in a patriarchal system, regardless of how much she wills it.

Fleißer's innovative narrative doublings, these seemingly contradictory combinations of distance and nearness, "erlebte Rede" and authorial narration, irony and sincerity, lend the novel its incisive social commentary about time, gender, and subjectivity.

> Dies ist der vierte Tag, seitdem Gustl Amricht, Genußmittel, aus frommem Eigensinn seinen eigenen Laden am Bitteren Stein aufgemacht hat. Vergangen sind die drei bangen Tage, in denen kein Christenmensch über seine Schwelle trat. Gustl Amricht steht hinter dem Ladentisch in seinem Sonntagsanzug mit weichen Knien. […] Die Knie sind hinter dem Ladentisch versteckt; sichtbar ist nur die obere Gegend des Sonntagsanzuges und auf dem eisernen kleinen Kopf sein rechtschaffenes Lächeln. Gustl lächelt rechtschaffen von sieben Uhr morgens bis sieben Uhr abends und steht dabei auf ein und demselben Fleck der atemlosen Erwartung. […] Sind denn die Menschen wahnsinnig, dass sie nicht eintreten, um sich anlächeln zu lassen? Besitzen sie die Schamlosigkeit, überhaupt nie einzutreten, mit keiner flüchtigen Miene? [...] Mag denn sein Eifer hinausstrahlen ins All, in dem nichts verlorengeht! (7–9)

The novel begins with a jumble of perspectives and registers. What initially appears to be a conventional third-person narrator is qualified in several steps. The deictic "Dies" dilutes the distanced omniscience of the narrator, implying a common reference of understanding between text, Gustl, and reader. Through the deployment of adjectives and folksy nouns that betray a deeper familiarity with Gustl's emotional state and personal idiom—"bang," "Christenmensch," "weich"—as well as questions that mimic his anxiety, the narration nears free indirect speech. Yet it is a speech that grows increasingly ironic toward Gustl's self-righteous efforts to fashion himself as a shopkeeper, linked to the awakening of a masculine subjectivity divergent from that of the modern athlete. In the next fragment, we receive a sardonic description of Gustl standing at the ready: his "eisernen kleinen Kopf" suggests a hardheadedness unfit for the bigger demands of the job, while the repetition of "rechtschaffenes Lächeln" highlights the ridiculousness of his pose. The irony here, however, is produced not through the explicit judgments of an authorial third-person narrator but rather immanently through a manipulation of the characters themselves. What makes Gustl an object of irony is the (self-)exaggeration of otherwise positive virtues

espoused by him: conscientiousness, diligence, and solicitousness. While it is not contemptuous to greet customers with a smile, it surely is so if one does not cease from morning to night. The same applies to the next round of questions (origin uncertain: are they a reproduction of Gustl's thoughts? An adaptation via "erlebte Rede"? The narrator's own?). It is reasonable to ask why customers stay away; what makes this question risible is asking why they do not come to be smiled at by a maniacal Gustl. This repeated distension of sensible and genuine desires, fears, and emotions reaches its culmination in this scene's final sentence. An unidentified apostrophe implores an unknown audience that Gustl's "Eifer" may radiate out and touch all corners of the universe so that he may finally earn a few marks. These moments of bathos and hyperbole satirize Gustl's idea of himself as a self-made man. The narrator adopts Gustl's consciousness in masquerade, serving a complex irony that mockingly unravels his new subjectivity, done subtly as if unwittingly targeting himself.

Formally representative of the text, scholars of Fleißer such as Sabina Becker have called this narrative process a "subjektiver Bericht," mixing the proximity of "erlebte Rede" with the distance of "sachliche Berichtsform" to portray the characters.[409] A provocative idea, it fleshes out what others have observed as paradoxical of Fleißer's narrator insofar as it is both authorial—neither a character nor involved in the narrated events—and non-authorial in adopting figures' perspectives and opinions.[410] Indeed, I find it apposite to view this mixture of near and far, partiality and omniscience, as a crucial component of what Fleißer described as a

[409] Sabina Becker, "'Hier ist nicht Amerika'. Marieluise Fleißers *Mehlreisende Frieda Geier. Roman vom Rauchen, Sporteln, Lieben und Verkaufen*," *Neue Sachlichkeit im Roman. Neue Interpretationen zum Roman der Weimarer Republik*, eds. Sabina Becker and Christoph Weiß (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1995), 229.

[410] See Johannes Süßmann, "Zeitroman, mimetisch. Textvergleiche, Verfahren und Status von Marieluise Fleißers *Mehlreisende Frieda Geier*," *Literatur und Leben. Stationen weiblichen Schreibens im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Christa Bürger (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1996), 77.

"mitbeteiligt" narrator. Coined in a short study of one of her favorite authors, Heinrich von Kleist, she praises this narrative voice for balancing a critical capacity in moments of immediacy and intimacy as it adopts the "Schicksal" and "den ganzen unmittelbaren Ablauf von Empfindungen" of a character.[411] This interplay is key to Fleißer's distinctive style. The narrator can provide "einen sachlichen und auffallend umfassenden Bericht" of the story, for it does not *become* the characters in its masquerade and thereby retains an element of narrative objectivity.[412] Nevertheless, the narrator's "Teilnahme an seinen Personen" is not "eine von außen betrachtende" but rather "eine sehr mitbeteiligte, von innen nachspürende," which "sich ihrer Muskelgefühle bemächtigt."[413] Like a costume in a masquerade, the narrator takes on a character's apperceptive covering, a form of habitation so to speak, in order to artfully juxtapose his or her thoughts, feelings, and actions to generate moments of social criticism without, however, identifying as the character or being engulfed by his or her partiality.

The text's language further facilitates this critical effect by harmonizing the ambiguities of Fleißer's doubled narrative voice. There is little difference in the manner of speaking between it and the characters—the former imitating the latter's demotic vocabulary, colloquial style, and laconic delivery. This mimicry is furthered by a frequent absence of firm indicators of speech, which blurs the text's various registers and voices; it thereby lends the text a preternatural reality effect. Yet this ostensibly naïve mode of speaking is deceiving; it is in fact "ein Verfahren der Komplexitätssteigerung" that adds heft to the text's irony.[414] Its seemingly authentic language

[411] Fleißer, "Der Heinrich Kleist," 405.

[412] Ibid., 406.

[413] Ibid., 407.

[414] Maria E. Müller and Ulrike Vedder. "Reflexive Naivität. Zur Einleitung," *Reflexive Naivität. Zum Werk Marieluise Fleißer*, eds. Maria E. Müller and Ulrike Vedder (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2000), 10.

actually undermines itself by facilitating the aforementioned process of juxtaposition, caustic to its own very "realness." What purports to a reality effect is in fact a constructed language akin to Brecht's "Verfremdungseffekt." Like the narrative voice it serves, Fleißer's language garbs itself in masquerade, self-aware and citational in a manner far from the desired authenticity of a naturalist reproduction of working-class idiom, for example, or the posed, smarmy meanness of colloquialisms in the work of contemporaries like Erich Kästner.

This socio-critical element at the core of Fleißer's narrative allows us to situate the novel in relation to "Neue Sachlichkeit." This cultural mentality entailed a sober outlook toward the hard facts of life, pragmatic, sober, and oriented to the present world as well as invested in the future, with an echo of a better world implied in the blank focus on the flawed underbelly of society. Its Janus-faced nature manifested itself in what Martin Lindner calls "kathartische Reduktion," a critical "Bestandsaufnahme" of society that corrodes its sedimented, outdated myths and shibboleths to reveal the "true" (and thus potentially better) face of life.[415] In this sense, I view Fleißer's doubled narrative voice at home in both "Neue Sachlichkeit" and a longer modernist tradition since at least Nietzsche, as well as among the popular "Lebensreform" movements of the period, which strove for a life stripped of bourgeois convention.

Yet, these kinships have crucial differences mediated by gender, underscoring Fleißer's unique literary position. Her ideal of a "mitbeteiligt" narration trades in traditional notions of femininity: physical and emotional intimacy, a powerful sense of empathy, the attenuation of removed contemplation. This narrative "Teilnahme," one that "geht ihnen [the characters] mitschwingend von innen nach," is akin to what she considered the "dramatische Empfinden bei

[415] Martin Lindner, *Leben in der Krise. Zeitromane der neuen Sachlichkeit und die intellektuelle Mentalität der klassischen Moderne* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1994, 159-162.

den Frauen."[416] For Fleißer, the "Spezialbegabung" of writing women lies in their faculty to see "bis in die Einzelheiten" of their characters, "gewissermaßen vollständig um den Menschen herum[zu]geh[en]," with a specific "Witterung für menschliche Eigenheiten."[417] This willingness to touch her characters, even if to criticize them, differentiates Fleißer from what has been seen as the masculinity of "Neue Sachlichkeit" in its hard "Teilnahmslosigkeit" against the "verweichlichenden Tendenzen" of modern civilization.[418] Rather than the strategic management of emotions through what Helmut Lethen famously called "Verhaltenslehre der Kälte," Fleißer is at her incisive best in those "warm," emotionally vivacious moments of (inter)personal feelings, in which Frieda and especially Gustl are confronted with the bankruptcy of their beliefs in a voluntarist subject unveiled as a socialized product of gender-temporal complexes rather than pure self-determination.[419]

This revelation becomes increasingly potent as the novel progresses past our protagonists' initial simultaneity. The first major indication of their discord occurs as Gustl and Frieda return home from a trip to Nuremburg, clumsily grappling with the nature of their relationship after having slept together for the first time. Frieda despairs at Gustl's discomfort in her post-coital presence. He feels trapped, "als hinge er an einem Strick," at the thought that he has awoken in Frieda the "falsche Hoffnung" of marriage (85). However, in attempting to distance himself by using once more the formal "Sie" to address Frieda, he reveals his ignorance of her real intentions and their mutual miscommunication. She is stung by his panic, for being

[416] Fleißer, "Der Heinrich Kleist," 407; Marieluise Fleißer, "Das dramatische Empfinden bei den Frauen," *Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 4*, ed. Günther Rühle (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1989), 409.

[417] Fleißer, "Das dramatische Empfinden," 409.

[418] Ulrike Baureithel, "Kollektivneurose moderner Männer. Die Neue Sachlichkeit als Symptom des männlichen Identitätsverlusts – sozialpyschologische Aspekte einer literarischen Strömung," *Germanica* 9 (1991): 4.

[419] Helmut Lethen, *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1994), 4.

made to suffer the consequences of his cowardice: "Auf irgendeine Weise tragen sie es einem nach, wenn man sich ihnen hingegeben hat," she darkly intuits (84). Composing herself, she is icily dogged in staking her grounds against Gustl's machinations:

> Nein, Frieda ist ohne Verständnis für seine Zwangslage geschaffen. [...] Was sie von ihm will, fragt Gustl weich wie Wachs. [...] "Alles oder gar nichts", sagt Frieda langsam. Eine Wucht steht hinter ihren Worten, der große Zug. […] Der Pfeil fliegt. Dann hängt er zitternd in seinem Bewusstsein an einem schmerzenden Häkchen. Die Stelle bleibt fortan wund. "Aber ich kann keine Frau heiraten, die kein Vermögen hat". "Von Heiraten ist nicht die Rede". […] Sie weiß selbst nicht, was daraus werden soll. Jedenfalls kommt er ihr nicht so leicht weg. Sie hat sich an keinen weggeworfen, der sie wie eine Bagatelle behandelt, sie nicht! […] Erst jetzt habe ich ihn ganz zu mir herübergezogen denkt Frieda Geier. Sie grämt sich nicht mehr. Wenn es mir nicht mehr passt, kann ich ja jederzeit wieder ausspringen, denkt Gustl. (87–89)

In this duel of wills, Frieda exudes unbending dignity as an erotic agent. Associated with the hardness of force—"Wucht," "schonungslos," a sharp "Pfeil"—against Gustl's waxiness, she parries his maneuvering, setting the terms of her autonomy and claiming a right to respect and happiness, amorous or otherwise: either they negotiate an egalitarian relationship or they part ways. Yet, amidst Frieda's righteousness we glimpse ironic shadows and slivers of doubt, a reminder of the orchestrating narrator's own subjectivity. One of the rare scenes in which Frieda's subjectivity is a subject of this narrative masquerade, her and Gustl's final, contradictory thoughts are juxtaposed by the narrator, alluding to the shaky grounds upon which their senses of self and other stand. While she thinks she has drawn him over to her side, he comforts himself with the prospect of jumping ship if things become unpleasant. This suggested simultaneity heightens the comic irony of incongruity in a moment where one, or at least Frieda, believes to be in concordance with the other. Frieda, confident in her powers of judgment and control regarding men, is perhaps less apt than she thinks. Frieda and Gustl do not understand each other and, more importantly, they cannot set the terms of their lives and those around them

by the singular force of their individual wills alone, foreboding the violent disharmonies that follow in the novel.

Gustl's metamorphosis from athlete to shopkeeper continues this trajectory, the servile figure that he cuts at odds with what Fleißer identified as the "Wesentliche" of the modern man: the "Sportgeist, eine bestimmte Kampfeinstellung des Lebensgefühls."[420] He is cast from his position at the "Spitze des heutigen Zeitgefühls" and marked as unmodern and out-of-time by his social world.[421] Preoccupied with his relationship and business obligations, his fighting spirit fades, appearing "müde" in the eyes of a "junge Generation" of swimmers (158–59). His athletic decline culminates in his shocking defeat by an amateur competitor, stripping him of that "Nimbus des Stars" constitutive of his self-understanding (162). The attributes that had previously defined him are inverted: modern to has-been, young to old, winner to loser, and authority figure to mockery. These coverings of his former subjectivity are shorn from his being like those of an "Zwiebelschößling": as "[e]ine Haut nach der anderen [ab]fiel," Gustl "merkt es erst, als sie ihm fehlen" (317); ultimately, "[e]ine Leere ist bei ihm entstanden" (166). Adopting his own rustic language, the text's irony eviscerates away the layers of his subjectivity, both its personal instantiation and as a paradigm. Predicated on the individual's drive to forge one's ideal self against all obstacles, be it "natürlichen Körperwiderstandes" or the desiccated life forms "eines zurückliegenden Zeitgefühls," Fleißer esteemed this way of being as the spirit of modernity itself.[422] It is a voluntarist, almost parthenogenetic concept of the subject, a creation of the self with little to no fertilization by external factors. Gustl's athletic defeat, then, implicates

[420] Fleißer, "Sportgeist," 317.

[421] Ibid.

[422] Ibid., 317-19.

the very foundation of this subjectivity, revealing the determining importance of external social factors. The onion metaphor exposes the violence inflicted on the subject by a temporal normativity inflected by maleness when its prized attributes of youth and strength are withdrawn by a community disinclined to acknowledge him as such. The fallibility of Gustl-as-athlete instigates frantic temporal-gender revolutions to fill this void, increasingly hostile to Frieda.

As Gustl tries to redeem his loss of social status and identity by adopting the ostensibly no-longer-new subjectivities of a traditional shopkeeper and male family figure, he blames Frieda for his shortcomings. This shock forces her to see him "plötzlich in anderer Beleuchtung": "War der Sport nicht jene Eigenschaft, die eine tiefe Unzufriedenheit zwischen ihnen überbrückte?" (167), she asks herself, wondering how their relationship can continue with this yawning subjective-temporal divide between them, one that Frieda already intimates as dangerously incompatible with her own modernity as a New Woman. She seems to have a inchoate sense of the deeper meaning this pivotal scene holds for her now-threatened subjectivity. "Plötzlich geht ihr ein Licht auf, warum Größen dieser Art nie ganz nach oben kommen": they are a phony type of "Helden, die nur dann etwas wagen, solange die Anlagen dafür günstig sind […] von der stärksten Art ist sie nicht" (168). Frieda sees Gustl's fall on the one hand as a failure of willpower; on the other, her disbelief at the insufficiency of Gustl's prowess attests to an acknowledgement that there are other, more determinate factors at play. Confirming her fears, Gustl admits that he no longer has what it takes to be "Nurmi," the Finnish Olympic star and one of the most famous representatives of this modern subjectivity during the 1920s; instead, he settles for becoming a "Fachmann und nicht mehr" (167). Although he may choose which manifestations of male subjectivity he leaves or embraces, thereby preserving an element of agency, his choices are conditioned by the shifting societal tectonics of time and

gender.

Accordingly, Frieda and Gustl's personal differences take on an existential, social flavor as they come to represent differing temporal-political camps. As Gustl adopts seemingly old-fashioned forms of male subjectivity founded upon his superiority over woman-as-wife, "[s]o gering macht er sich in ihren Augen" (170–71). Frieda's previous image of him as the archetype of the modern athlete, premised on the equality of individuals, no longer matches his unwillingness to understand Frieda outside of the two mythical roles he grants women—"Engel" or "Megäre" (70)—and is equally hostile to her feminism, its accent on what observers claimed as the battlefield for emancipated women in the late 1920s: "die Beziehungen der Geschlechter" and "die erotische Freiheit."[423] In an essay from 1933, Fleißer agreed, detecting the "wahre Kampf […] um die persönliche Würde der schaffenden Frau" as being fought "zwischen den Allernächsten" in romantic relationships.[424] In this context, Frieda fights for a comradely relationship, where women live side by side with their partners as "Freie an Stelle der Fron des Sklaven."[425] Her aim is idealized in the figure of America. "In Amerika helfen Männer und Frauen auch zusammen," she explains; Gustl's response: "Hier ist nicht Amerika" (191). He cannot project himself into Frieda's imagined world, represented by her freedom, mobility, and autonomy—elements commonly associated in Weimar with the United States as an "imaginativ aufgeladenen Topos" of possibility, not only a symbol for economic or technological progress

[423] Frank Thiess, "Krise der neuen Freiheit." *Die Frau von morgen, wie wir sie wünschen*, ed. Friedrich M. Huebner (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann), 172.

[424] Marieluise Fleißer, "Jahrhundert – gedrittelt," *Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 4,* ed. Günther Rühle (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 427-8.

[425] Ibid., 428.

but also the "Geburtsort" of the modern woman herself.[426] "America," then, functions as a key ingredient in the construction of Frieda's subjectivity, for it combines issues of gender and time with the myth of the New World as a space of unbridled individuality in ways that bestow on her modernity and futurity against Gustl's pastness: in this historical moment, to "envision […] America involved imagining modernity."[427]

If Frieda's vision of modern female subjectivity leaves no place for Gustl as "Friedas Patriarch"—and it surely does not—he believes he will have failed as a man (140). Frieda resists his attempts to expropriate her savings and labor for his business, which would make him her superior in work and love. Threatening her with beatings and confronted with the obstinacy of whom he now calls "Luzifers Tochter" (192), Gustl realizes he needs a different woman who will acquiesce to his "Recht" over her (213). Seeing herself as a "weiblicher Pionier"—an allusion to her American fascination and its mythic ethos of possibility and self-actualization in the spirit of "the Wild West"—Frieda asks herself: "Was nützt der Frau alle eigene Entwicklung, wenn sie letzten Endes auf die patriarchalischen Methoden einer Lebensgemeinschaft angewiesen bleibt, die eine rückläufige Bewegung bei ihr erzwingen?" (212). She reaches the conclusion that against his "primitiven Lehrsatz […] Weib ist Weib" she must end their relationship, for they are a "zu ungleiches Paar" (214). Here, I would like to emphasize the temporal connotations of "ungleich," of being temporally unequal or dissimilar, or not of or at the same time. This word highlights the "Ungleichzeitigkeit" that has arisen between their divergent subjectivities. In embracing America, Frieda starkly distinguishes herself from Gustl's

[426] Eckhard Schumacher, "Am Anfang war Amerika. Die Utopie der 'Neuen Welt' in der deutschsprachigen Literatur des frühen Jahrhunderts," *Am Anfang war… Ursprungsfiguren und Anfangskonstruktionen der Moderne*, eds. Inka Mülder-Bach and Eckhard Schumacher (Munich: W. Fink, 2008), 260-3.

[427] Mary Nolan, "Imagining America, Modernizing Germany," *Dancing on the Volcano: Essays on the Culture of the Weimar Republic*, eds. Stephen Brockmann and Thomas W. Kniesche (Columbia: Camden House, 1994), 74.

reactionary challenge. Moreover, the narrator's use of descriptors such as "primitiv" for Gustl's beliefs, "Pionier" for Frieda's ideals, and "rückläufig" for the threat of a patriarchal life serves to sharpen the discordant directions each character follows: the woman as a metonym for the fulfillment of Enlightenment modernity—*liberté, égalité, fraternité*—while the man is seemingly sliding backward toward a retrograde communal traditionalism (138). It is an issue of both inhabiting different temporalities and moving differently through time. An "Ungleichzeitigkeit" has arisen between the lovers due to both personal decisions and societal influences, following the contemporaneous pattern as to who and where is the modern: the New Woman and America.

Indeed, turning to the chapter directly prior to the narrative restart, in which an overview of Ingolstadt and the sorry state of its citizenry is given, we can develop more explicitly the connection between uneven layers of geography, time, gender, and subjectivity on a personal and societal level, mirroring the microcosm of the couple's relationship. Like our protagonists, the "Mystik" of the old world and the new of "Amerika liegen dicht nebeneinander" (24) in this city, with medieval churches competing with flashing advertisements. The historic old town, with its Catholic traditions and ancient architecture, has been similarly overshadowed by new working-class districts and factories. The physical manifestations of different eras and their dissimilar worldviews inhabit the same place, concretizing the abstract dissonances that imbue the lives of the city's residents. Important here is that individual stories are not singled out. Rather, the view is of an aggregate population whose members are molded *en masse* by the same socioeconomic forces; their influential, even determinate force is granted superiority over the futile efforts of the individual. Industrious citizens, they strive in vain against the inflationary loss of their "Vermögen," while their children, educated as white-collar professionals, cannot establish themselves as bourgeois subjects due to a lack of employment opportunities (178–79). It is a city

in which the economy is in severe crisis, caught between old market structures and the disruption of industrial rationalization. Zombie-like in its position between two times, the city, "aus den Voraussetzungen des Mittelalters entstanden," is one "die nicht leben und nicht sterben kann" (180), caught in an untenable and corrosive "Zwickmühle" of discordant times.[428]

These drastic developments, of course, are a double-edged sword. As Bloch observes, "Ungleichzeitigkeiten" can both inflame social tensions and serve as spaces of potential transformation. They have brought opportunities with it, such as an evolution of labor and its gender politics that provides Frieda her sustenance and hard-won freedom. But these socioeconomic transitions, linked as they are by both contemporaries and the narrator to the emancipation of women and the reordering of relations between the sexes, also compound a sense of severe disorientation for people like Gustl who try to ground themselves in the stability of traditional patterns of life and work. As these various non-simultaneities are exacerbated, what they have known to be "true," their "Erfahrungsraum," becomes increasingly detached from and insufficient for explaining the present and near future, their "Erwartungshorizont."[429] This divergence is felt on multiple levels, leading to strife within the self and the social body. The narrator paints a picture of men and women increasingly desperate for clarity and foundation, drawing a line from these larger socioeconomic-temporal shifts to the fraught relationship between our protagonists. Gustl and the restless townspeople, sharpening their knives against Frieda—that now suspect embodiment of a disenchanted modernity made responsible for these dizzying changes—fall prey to thoughts that "an Anarchie und Verbrechen streifen" (180). As such, Gustl's and Frieda's personal journeys become harbingers for larger societal and political

[428] Fleißer, "Jahrhundert," 427.

[429] Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988), 350-2.

trends in late Weimar.

This descriptive interlude marks the moment of shifting normative value invested in certain socio-temporal figures narratively and within the social world of the novel. Frieda's modernity and futurity as a New Woman, previously heralded by the narrator as a "Pionier" and by Gustl in his attraction to her, loses its cachet in the eyes of her ex-partner and the community. Those dislocating processes of modernization and resultant convulsions at the nexus of time and gender transform the protagonists' identities, both in how they are perceived by others and how they understand themselves. For Frieda, this process is ambiguous: it is striking how constant her subjectivity and its progressive temporality remain throughout the story. While her character remains the same, it is German society as represented by Gustl that moves on in ways anathema to her. Taking place between 1926 and 1928, the zenith and tail end of Weimar's fascination with radically autonomous "Neue Fraulichkeit," the novel attests to what contemporaneous feminists like Rühle-Gerstel shrewdly noticed: by the end of the 1920s, the New Woman, both as medial image-ideal and lived reality, had stalled and become "müde," unable to "erobern" the masses, and thus "mit leiser, trotzig versteckter Enttäuschung" she fell "in die Reihen der Rückwärtsgewandten," delegated to the past as newer, more conservative ideals of femininity and gender relations are socially esteemed at the expense of Frieda's now "old" model of subjectivity.[430]

The other side of this coin can be seen in Gustl's return to athletic prowess and his violent reintegration into an increasingly masculinist community. Admitting that he and Frieda inhabit "eben zwei Welten," he vows two things post-breakup: first, that he will become a new person and, second, that Frieda will carry the costs for his metamorphosis; on both counts, he

[430] Rühle-Gerstel, "Zurück," 5. Fleißer states in a letter that the novel captures the years 1926–28; see *Marieluise Fleißer. Briefwechsel 1925–1974,* ed. Günther Rühle (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2001), 598.

succeeds (276). Gustl reinvents himself in affinity with the natural world—forests, meadows, water—his "wahre Adam" emerging now that he is rid of Frieda (295). The new Gustl embraces an idea of "natural" or "organic" masculinity opposed to the intellectuality and artificiality of civilization as represented by Frieda-as-woman, a telling inversion of the traditional notion of "woman" as a natural antidote to the alienation of masculine rationality and civilization. Emphasizing this reversed gender dichotomy, Gustl, in one particularly abhorrent case, endeavors to assert his biological power over Frieda by acquainting her with "die natürlichen Machtmittel des Mannes," that is, by unsuccessfully trying to impregnate her without her consent and thus reduce her to pure physicality, a vessel for man's virile authority (279). We should not understand this return to an Edenic maleness, however, as an archaism per se; tied as it is to modern sports culture, I view it as retooled to figure the emergence of a different form of modern male existence—one misogynist and violent and, importantly, naturally part of a unified community. Manically rededicated to swimming "um die Wunde in seinem Selbstbewusstsein zu heilen," he reaches new heights of success (316). Celebrated by his townspeople, Gustl's rebirth occurs in tandem with his rehabilitation into his sports club and the community. This second coming of athletic subjectivity is different. Whereas the first iteration's strong sense of individuality is explicit, its markers of self-generation are missing in this second instance. Rather, he heals his wound of subjectivity by his incorporation into the social entities of his swimming club and the town as an inexorably social being, the townsfolk's support for Gustl in his feud with Frieda filling the emptiness he once felt. Together, they demonize her as a "Hexe" (279), who had bewitched their hero, and push her out of the community, now "in Verruf gekommen" and an outsider deemed "vogelfrei" (310). In the end, her "crimes" against Gustl are interpreted as against the social body.

In the face of such a dramatic turning of the tables, Frieda vanishes from the narrative. She leaves Ingolstadt to save her livelihood and her life from a ruined reputation and vigilante violence; the last glimpse of our heroine we receive is of a defiant "Frauensperson" with a pure "Blick der Verachtung" for her former friends and business partners (305–06). Frieda and her status as the ultra-modern New Woman in a conservative milieu, the "unbewusste Bereiterin der Entwicklung im Alltagskleid," is pushed out of town and story against the pressures of an incompatible model of (masculine) social subjectivity (311). Although she retains her conviction of superiority over the frantic jerking of the collapsing voluntarist myth, she must reflect on what she has always already intuited: her drive to live an emancipated female subjectivity must halt before the eternal "Vorurteil" of her environment—that is, the determinate role played by social forces in shaping the subject (311). Frieda, striving to lead "den fortschreitenden Weg ins Dickicht der vorgefassten Meinungen," ultimately pays the price for her obdurate individuality (311). Her unbending dedication to modern womanhood places her in a position to suffer the vicissitudes of shifting social-temporal coordinates. The cachet of a desired future now attaches itself to Gustl as an explicitly social subject: "Er ist so berauscht von der Wiederkehr des besseren Selbst" resulting from renewed social legitimation—"Jetzt findet er sich wieder zurecht" (295). His type of masculine subjecthood is integrable into the community. Indeed, it draws its power from being of this "Volkskörper" and its future, while Frieda's female subjectivity figures as their opposite, an undesirable "Fremdkörper."[431]

The structuring non-simultaneity between the two protagonists is reversed as Gustl now functions as the herald of modernity, laden with the semantics of futurity and reinvested with high social standing. Indeed, this outlook reaches its risible apotheosis in the drunken melee

[431] Ulrike Vedder, "'Keine Sportperson'? Marieluise Fleißer und der Sportgeist," *Frauen in der Literaturwissenschaft, Rundbrief 47: Sport und Kult* (1996): 61.

between Gustl, his sports club, and the masons' guild that closes the novel. As the two groups of men bash each other at a local bar, Gustl emerges victorious and, spitting out the four front teeth he has lost, he smiles and exclaims, "Schön war's doch," and then orders a "Siegerrunde" for his own men and their opponents, some of whom he wishes to now recruit for his club after their show of belligerent masculinity (342). Violence, rather than deepening the fault lines of animosity, helps to "integrate men into the larger male community" and to "restore a man's bruised self-esteem."[432] This is especially so when this violence arises vis-à-vis the feared woman—in this case: Frieda—in a world of unsettling gender developments as brought to light by Klaus Theweleit's *Männerphantasien*. Gustl's exultant comeback—an entirely male affair: for Gustl, "[a]lles, was Weib heißt, hat er verschworen" (316)—and the text's ironic yet grave placement of his subjectivity within this absurd moment of communal unity is shown to be hardly a solo achievement of the deliberate, determined self. Rather, it is one molded by external social validation and the normative investment of value in a resurgent masculinity. After all, the battle has a communal origin: sensitive to the whispering crowd around them, many of whom had just come from the club's latest public extravaganza, Gustl and his teammates pick up the circulating rumor that "es heute noch was gibt" between his team and the masons' guild; the men become increasingly "kribbelig," eager to perform the finale to their afternoon athletic performances (337). This last act proceeds in front of a large audience of titillated townsfolk, who hurry from person to person to "verkünden" that the men are beating each other (340–41). We depart from a scene laid out "wie in einem Lazarett" as the teammates tend to each other with ripped bits of clothing, "mit dem sie die diversen Löcher vernageln," a fitting image for the

[432] Dirk Schumann, "Political Violence, Contested Public Space, and Reasserted Masculinity in Weimar Germany," *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects: Rethinking the Political Culture of Germany in the 1920s*, eds. Kathleen Canning, Kerstin Barndt, and Kristin McGuire (New York: Berghahn, 2010), 247-8.

healing of social wounds and the harmonizing of dissonances in a cohesive community now rid of irritants like Frieda (342).

This show of joyful brotherly reconciliation, coming as it does on the heel of Gustl's latest reinvention, is the culmination of a successful campaign to subordinate and excise female subjectivity as represented by Frieda—urban, rationalized, egalitarian modernity for and of the individual—on behalf of a new, male, communal identity of the provinces, a re-subjugation of those "outsiders" that Peter Gay termed the "insiders" of Weimar culture.[433] As such, Gustl's subjectivity is a social irredentism of the masculine, reclaiming its supremacy and social "territory." Though reactionary, Gustl, rather than the pathological last breath of an outdated patriarchy, is a dangerous novelty, a strain of male modernity stimulated by the modernization undergone by its female counterpart. Fleißer's novel is invaluable for understanding individuals' negotiations of potent social forces and their impact on one's self at the experiential levels of the body, sex, love, and labor.

My reading thus illustrates how time interfaces with gender to work as a prime agent in subject formation. Analyzing the dynamics of these forces as embodied in our protagonists, we capture a richer understanding of abstract theories of time, subjectivity, and modernity by investigating them in their historical-cultural and lived textures. Indeed, the crisscrossing of our protagonists' selves with larger social forces demonstrates how the quotidian, intimate aspects of their lives are inseparable from global questions about gendered identities, their placement in society, and their shifting normative worth. As such, gender and its temporal conflicts charge the individual with political meaning and can spark societal change because they determine one's potential for speaking, acting, and living in a time and place; Frieda's banishment, her enforced

[433] Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), vi, xiv.

narrative silence, thus speaks volumes.

By centering sexual and temporal difference as an analytic as well as an object of study, we approach the Weimar Republic anew. Joining Walter Benjamin, who identified the "Überzeugung, dass man in der Provinz Erfahrungen macht, die es mit dem großen Leben der Metropolen aufnehmen können" as one of the most important aspects of Fleißer's fiction, her work captures Weimar's overlooked cartography—social, aesthetic, and earthly— undergoing epochal transformation.[434] As illustrated above, hybrid texts such as *Mehlreisende Frieda Geier* work within and push forward in new (and gendered) directions canonically modern styles and techniques like "Neue Sachlichkeit" or "erlebte Rede," prompting us to view modernist culture from alternative, illuminating angles and otherwise overlooked perspectives and places. The effectiveness of this aesthetic innovation is particularly telling in the novel's negotiation of modern individuality. On the one hand, the ordeals of Frieda and Gustl indicate that individuality was not a dead letter in Weimar. While many intellectuals and authors of the 1920s diagnosed the obsolescence of an alienated, anomic individuality, large swaths of the population took little notice of these pessimistic proclamations.[435] This was especially true for newly emancipated women, for whom the idea of individuality promised unprecedented avenues for self-actualization; in an age of mass politics and collective utopias, women such as Frieda were hardly eager to sacrifice their self-determination for the sake of the family, the nation, or the

[434] Walter Benjamin, "Echt Ingolstädter Originalnovellen," *Materialien zum Leben und Schreiben der Marieluise Fleißer,* ed. Günther Rühle (Frankfurt Suhrkamp, 1973), 140. See Kathleen Canning, "Introduction," *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects: Rethinking the Political Culture of Germany in the 1920s*, eds. Kathleen Canning, Kerstin Barndt, and Kristin McGuire (New York: Berghahn, 2010), 19.

[435] See Moritz Föllmer, *Individuality and Modernity in Berlin: Self and Society from Weimar to the Wall* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1-18.

"Volk."[436] On the other hand, the novel's masquerading, corrosively ironic treatment of voluntarist subjectivity is part of a paradigmatic turn in the twentieth century to more structural understandings of the individual as a contested site and partial product of social forces. With varying degrees of success dependent upon their temporal-gender positionings, Frieda and Gustl negotiate this swinging pendulum between agency and impotency. My reading lays bare one of the novel's most profound insights: "das Ich als verdichteten gesellschaftlichen Ort"—the modern subject as a co-creation by one's willpower and social forces, exposing the power and limitations of both.[437]

Against the backdrop of this novel's constitutive ambiguity, what to make of the harsh clarity of Frieda's fate? After its publication, Fleißer read the novel pessimistically, as a premonition of that "kleinbürgerlichen Nationalsozialismus" that she would come to experience as a leftist New Woman "out of time" after her Weimar heyday.[438] Rather than casting the novel and its titular protagonist as role models for the modern woman, it would do better to take them as frosty depictions of the "Mühen und die Ambivalenz der kleinen Schritte" undertaken by women to define themselves in a volatile era.[439] Fleißer offers us a clear-headed critique of the modern woman's situation instead of feminist utopia, and frustrations instead of redemption. Through a focus on subjectivity and its temporalities, it operates as an "Art Messinstrument" for the "Ungleichzeitigkeiten" that come to determine to a substantial degree life—and especially

[436] See Moritz Föllmer, "Auf der Suche nach dem eigenen Leben. Junge Frauen und Individualität in der Weimarer Republik," *Die »Krise« der Weimarer Republik. Zur Kritik eines Deutungsmusters*, eds. by Moritz Föllmer and Rüdiger Graf (Frankfurt: Campus, 2005), 287-8.

[437] Susanne Komfort-Hein, "Physiognomie der Moderne zwischen Metropole und Provinz," *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 23, no. 1 (2009): 48.

[438] Fleißer, *Briefwechsel,* 597.

[439] Barndt, "Engel oder Megäre," 25.

women's lives—during this period.[440] The novel aims to unearth the resultant "Ungerechtigkeit im Alltäglichen"; the melting method of her writing discloses "was anders sein müsste" without, however, providing the cure to these societal and personal "Verletzungen," leaving it to her readers to draw conclusions and act upon these insights.[441] This gritty commitment to the pains and pleasures of young, ordinary women reminds us that they, as individuals and as a group, do not fade away in histories of late Weimar often dominated by male warriors in the streets and scheming politicians in the Reichstag.[442] We come away with the conviction of how the gendered and particularly female subject figured as a fundamental fulcrum of contention in these dangerous moments of European modernity—histories of which we would be wise to heed, as women and sexual minorities are once again caught in the crossfire of a masculine reassertion in our own troubled century.

[440] Komfort-Hein, "Physiognomie der Moderne," 63.

[441] Marieluise Fleißer, "Schreiben—für wen?" *Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 4*, ed. Günther Rühle (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 522.

[442] See Kathleen Canning, "Women and the Politics of Gender," *Weimar Germany*, ed. by Anthony McElligott, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 168.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

This dissertation has argued that the confluence of sex and time is fundamental to the construction of the modern subject and in particular for women and queer subjects. Because these two groups are overdetermined by their sexual "otherness"—not heterosexual and/or not men—they serve as illustrative emblems of a broad modern process as well as special cases in their own right that merit closer inspection in order to answer the questions that have guided this study: What are the relationships between time, sexuality, and subjectivity in the modern West and particularly in German-speaking Central Europe? How do they interact with each other and impact upon the subject? And what roles can the subject itself play within this dynamic? In turning to the modernist prose of queer and female authors, I demonstrated how queer and female subjects emerge amidst forces of time and sex not as mere objects but as complex agents who negotiate, shape, and are shaped by the interplay of these forces. Literature serves as a complicated space in which individuals experience varying degrees of self-determination, at times resisting and harnessing external social forces, discourses, and actors for their own designs as well as confronting the limitations of their autonomy as subjects embedded within overarching networks of time and sex. To study the position of women and queers within this tripartite entanglement in modernist literature is to follow new methodological, theoretical, and historical pathways in the study of these three concepts, which are central to major debates in and the self-understandings of modernist, queer, and feminist studies.

I have chosen to focus on modernist literature because it is uniquely shot through and

deeply, self-reflexively engaged with time, sex, and subjectivity in ways that other literatures are not. The works studied here are the ones in which the reader is most provoked to contemplate their subject position in the world amidst these three forces and most encouraged to work with the text as a partner to make meaning and fathom out the pleasures, potentials, and pitfalls of being a woman and being queer under modernity. Literature has been treated here as a medium for probing reality and experimenting with alternative ways of being in the world, a space removed from the exigencies of everyday life and "the way things are," a refuge for the creativity of imagination and language to refigure that reality. It helps us to re-articulate and reshape ourselves and our worlds; this is especially true of marginalized groups, who turn to the page as a chance to seize authorial authority and invent themselves anew out of their own volition, opportunities not automatically granted to them in their social realities. Not only a source of entertainment and pleasure or a site of essayistic cogitation and philosophizing, literature, by questioning the established and mapping out the possible, can catalyze material change in the lives of its readers and writers.

Most fundamentally, the dissertation has made the case for expanding the German-language modernist literary canon to authors and texts hitherto ignored or neglected due to their perceived insufficiency or illegibility when read against mid-century criteria consolidated under the term "high modernism." Historically limited to primarily male and heterosexual voices, I have built upon the work of feminist literary studies and the recent turn in New Modernist Studies to bring to these traditional aesthetic concerns other modes of modern expression, such as the popular and middle-brow, the melodramatic and sentimental, and the narratively realist. As I have shown in each of the chapters, what allows me to congregate together these disparate texts and their formal heterogeneity and include them as "modernist" is their deep engagement

with the core topics and concepts of modern life: the metropolis, media, gender and sexuality, desire, the relationship between subject and society, and time, to only name a few. It is not simply their reflection of modernity that makes these texts modernist; rather, the central point is that they co-create as much as they are created by modernity. Modernism is not just a better realism of modern times but both its parent and child. By turning to more obscure or minor texts, then, and interpreting their engagement with these core issues of modern life, the dissertation challenges their conventional conceptualizations and rejuvenates the conversation around them by introducing the untapped well of queer and feminist thinking present in this literature. And more basically, I have sought to retell canonical narratives, timelines, and histories of modernist cultures and societies—the very idea of who and what counts as "modern" is up for question. I let the aesthetic texts themselves do this theorizing: by undertaking close readings of literary fiction, I have nurtured a theory in the vernacular in which non-traditional texts, discourses, vocabularies, and genres generate insights to then intervene in debates between more normatively theoretical texts and literary forms. In particular, I bring this theorizing from below to bear on the scholarship, methodologies, and concepts of German modernist studies as well as of queer and feminist studies.

By foregrounding overlooked and understudied texts, the dissertation stands at the forefront of a new turn in German studies away from queering the canonical masters—the vast majority of whom were not queer nor wrote about queer topics—and embracing actual queer voices, experiences, and perspectives. Rather than using deconstructionist methods to unearth the ambiguously (and debatably present) queer traces in the blatantly non-queer, working closely with openly queer texts as partners in the co-creation of meaning allows us to retell the story of modernist literatures, cultures, and histories. We see this in Schwarzenbach's queering of the

concept of the *Augenblick,* for example, a major concept in modern German-language literature. Swerving its traditional meaning as a special unit of transcendent or epiphanic time isolated from one's quotidian life in the works of the Romantics as well modernists like Musil and Hofmannsthal, in the hands of the lesbian protagonist-narrator it becomes a dialectic of continuity and rupture whose mechanism and pace are dictated by the volatile rhythms of her intense erotic desire for another woman. By "lowering" the *Augenblick* and tethering it to the physical, fleshy reality of an otherwise unnamed, ordinary young woman, Schwarzenbach reveals a new terrain of modernist temporalities embedded in the deceptively mundane social reality of undistinguished individuals; we can trace the times of modernity, its structures and experiences, not only through world-historical, abstract systems of time, such as those of capitalism or communism, but also through the unique, relatively minor experiences—though by no means trivial—of the desirous individual subject.

The fertility of queerness to rethink key tenets of modernism is not limited to its constituent times: as my readings of Mann and Kracauer show us, it can also propose new timelines for understanding modernism as an historical event, while also reformulating the subject of that history. For Mann, his intergenerational links of friendship reveal elements of (queer) modernity that stretch back into the past century and even into Greek antiquity, rewriting German modernity as something that is composed of as much of the past as of the present and reminding us that "modern" is an ambiguous, arbitrary, and a wandering term dependent on the contexts and intentions of those wielding it. What is "modern" is what is rendered contemporary for the individual's needs and desires—Platonic ethics can be as modern as the automobile. Alongside Mann, Kracauer took advantage of the crumbling tectonics of the modern subject to reimagine it through the promise of friendship: rather than bemoan the fall of the sovereign

bourgeois subject-as-individual under the now hackneyed refrain of the "crisis of the subject," he seizes the moment as an opportunity to birth another kind of subjectivity that is interpersonal, social, and predicated on the protean waves of same-sex affection, be it friendly, familial, or amative—seen from a different angle, this purported crisis was also the springtime of queer subject formation. Queerness, and queer ways of relating to others and the self, then, can transform the ways we tell the stories of modernism and modernity.

My reevaluation of modernism lends itself to an equally important reconsideration of queer and feminist studies, fields dominated by late-twentieth-century, Anglo-American-French theorists, texts, and cultures and generally ignorant of the German-language context—an irony, as much of the conceptual armature of these fields can trace its origins to German-language thinkers, be it Hirschfeld, Marx, Freud, or Heidegger. Amidst the recent bloom of research into queer temporalities as anti-normative, disruptive, fragmentary, non-linear, and anti-futural, the texts under study here challenge this emergent orthodoxy by centering concepts and experiences of time that exist and act differently. My analyses of Schwarzenbach, Mann, and Kracauer tease out temporalities that reject some norms, like unilinear progressivism or an attachment to biological reproduction, and enact others, be it bourgeois notions of self-cultivation or the constructive powers of love. Against the influential anti-social strain of queer thought, they present temporalities that move in all directions, forward and back, future-oriented and decadently dwelling in the past, that nevertheless endeavor to establish, however tenuous and temporary, lines of connection, continuity, and coherence as the infrastructure for a robust, positively defined subjectivity. Queerness does not have to be radically and unceasingly corrosive of all normative constants for it to be meaningful and politically kosher. These chapters argue for a more generous and capacious palate of queer thinking that takes seriously and fairly

forms of queer life beyond ivory tower radicality—a queer theory that, however paradoxical this may sound, is not inimical to the ways many queers live their lives amidst tradition, continuity, and certain norms that are all too often judged to be problematic by major theorists in the field. Conversely, Musil and Fleißer show us that strivings of subjects to define and construct their own selves and worlds is not always as clear-cut a process as one could assume. Their female protagonists' attempts to delineate their own gendered forms of time as a way to emancipate their subjecthood from patriarchal society and men's control over their bodies do not result in the desired or planned-for outcomes. Musil's Claudine approaches the cusp of liberation through an exuberant sexuality that, through its capriciousness and appetite, threatens to explode the temporal structure and linguistic capabilities of her narrative, yet is pulled back under the male narrator's control through the very tool of her freedom, that is, her sexuality, which is bended to serve the purposes of her marriage. Fleißer's Frieda Geier similarly pushes against the boundaries of her society's expectations about what a modern woman can be, yet when her much-vaunted futurity as a *Neue Frau* becomes dangerous to male authority, her temporal currency is stripped from her, and she is literally run out of the narrative by a revanchist masculinism aiming to restore conservative forms of femininity as the latest face of modernity. Their stories raise important questions about agency, intention, and effect in thinking about women's bodies and subjectivities, while also serving as a tempering counterpoint to the utopianism of their queer contemporaries.

The questions asked in this dissertation regarding the intersections of time, sex, and subjectivity, as well as these forces' duality as sources of liberation and coercion, remain pertinent today—indeed, the processes unearthed here are the direct antecedents of current cultural and political battles for the lives of sexualized subjects, points of not-so-distant historical

knowledge necessary to understand today's dynamics and to counter the reactionary forces of renascent fascism. We see this nowhere more clearly than in the concerted war against transgender youth throughout Republican America. Numerous Republican-led state legislatures have passed laws prohibiting transgender minors from accessing medical treatment, be it hormone treatment or puberty blockers, as well as medical professionals and parents from providing such care. The professed aim is to save children and their futures from their decisions in the present to transition: it is a multipronged attempt to control the temporality of transgender and queer individuals not only in the present but for the rest of their lives, as transitioning becomes harder and more cost-prohibitive the older one gets. In Arkansas, for example, one state senator argued that such a law is needed to "protect children from making mistakes that they will have a very difficult time coming back from."[443] In Texas, another Republican state official similarly defended his actions by invoking children "who have not reached the maturity to understand what is being proposed nor the impact on them in perpetuity," falsely asserting that forms of care like puberty blockers are "not reversible" and "life transformational and life changing."[444] Seeing themselves as crusaders against nefarious parents and doctors who wish to "rob them [children] of their a future," the backers of such efforts weld the sexualized time of transgender individuals to their bodies, believing that if they can stop transgender bodies from arising, they can also impede the emergence of transgender subjectivities—it is nothing less than an albeit theoretically misguided attempt at genocide against the transgender community. Such

[443] Samantha Schmidt, "Arkansas passes bill restricting access to medical treatments for transgender children," *The Washington Post,* March 29, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2021/03/29/arkansas-passes-bill-restricting-access-medical-treatments-transgender-children/.

[444] Dan Avery, "Texas bill could send parents to prison for providing gender-affirming care," *NBC News,* April 14, 2021, https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/texas-bill-could-send-parents-prison-providing-gender-affirming-care-n1264060.

laws strive to control present and future subjects by controlling their sexualized bodies. As in my close readings of the coercive powers of time, sex, and temporality in early twentieth-century Germany, we see an startingly similar dynamic playing out in contemporary America, with conservative forces setting the terms for the kinds of people who are allowed to define time, with pain and subjugation as the intended consequences of this exclusion. When the enemies of queers and women call the temporal shots, then the fate of their very subjecthood hangs precariously in the balance.

At the same time as transgender America is forced into a state of emergency, other, more affirming combinations of these three forces are generating queer reclamations of time: just as issues of time and sex can be mobilized against queer people, they can also harness this nexus for their self-assertion and self-actualization. In June 2021, The New-York Historical Society announced plans to found the American L.G.B.T.Q+ Museum. A project to "record this history, integrate it and celebrate it before we lose it," it stakes a claim for queers as historical, temporalized subjects, as sexualized subjects in a positive, constructive tone—not as targets of weaponized time but as agential individuals in their own right, staking a claim for themselves in the past, present, and the future.[445] Unlike efforts in Arkansas, Texas, and other states to preclude a queer future, this museum puts the powers of temporality squarely into the hands of queers themselves as the vehicle of their liberation and joyous celebration of their subjectivities. As Mann wove strands of friendship between his present and his predecessors through the act of reading, generating original forms of transhistorical connection and subjectivity, so too does this museum work with the tools of memorialization to co-create with its visitors new visions, forms, and practices of queer life. As a hundred years ago, so today: caught between the promises and

[445] Laura Zornosa, "The Oldest Museum in New York Is Expanding," *The New York Times,* June 30, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/30/arts/design/new-york-historical-society-lgbtq-museum.html.

perils of time, sex, and subjectivity, the tenuous position within this entanglement as both objects and subjects is the fundamental mark of what it means to be queer and a woman in the modern West.

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