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The Literary Dream in  
German Central Europe, 1900-1925

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A Selective Study of the Writings of  
Kafka, Kubin, Meyrink, Musil and Schnitzler

**Marya Vrba**

**Thesis submitted to Swansea University in fulfilment of the  
requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Department of Modern Languages  
Swansea University  
2011**

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## Abstract

### The Literary Dream in German Central Europe, 1900-1925: A Selective Study of the Writings of Kafka, Kubin, Meyrink, Musil and Schnitzler

Marya Vrba

This thesis examines the literary dream in selected works by Kafka, Kubin, Meyrink, Musil and Schnitzler, with a particular focus on the redefinition of subjectivity through dreamlife. The introductory chapter contextualises these case studies in the broader field of oneirocriticism, emphasising the dream's ancient role as fictional template and its specific significance in the destabilised environment of German Central Europe during the early twentieth century. Alfred Kubin's *Die andere Seite* (1909), which uses the 'other side' as metaphor for both oneiric and artistic experience, reveals the inherent dualism of the literary dream and its close relationship with creativity. In Robert Musil's *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß* (1906), the protagonist serves as the model for a new type of self-determining subject who draws on the knowledge of dreams and irrationality. Franz Kafka's texts reveal techniques for integrating the dream into fictional worlds that are already dreamlike through the prevalence of (literalised) metaphor and free association. Gustav Meyrink, in *Der Golem* (1915), shares Kafka's interest in concretised metaphor, but also explores the dream's associations with occult practices, used as a defence against the threatening claims of science. Finally, Arthur Schnitzler's literary dreams offer a direct confrontation with psychoanalysis and a dismantling of nineteenth-century ideals of gender and bourgeois love. Overall, it is argued that the literary dreams by these authors hold varied responses to fragmentation of the *Ich* in the face of psychological 'vivisection', theories of relativity, and the collapse of old social orders. The dream, as a nightly 'psychosis', crystallised the pervasive fears of self-loss during this period; however, in its perennial role as micro-narrative, it also provided a site for re-construction of the subject. The incorporation of dreams in fictional lives served as a metonymical guide for the integration of un- and subconscious experience overall.

## Declarations and Statements

### Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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### Statement 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to Jérémie Pichereau, for his unfailing love and devotion, which have made all the difference.



## Abbreviations

- BeK** 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes', by Franz Kafka, in *Kritische Ausgabe der Werke von Franz Kafka*, ed. Gerhard Neumann et al. (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1982–), *Nachgelassene Schriften und Fragmente I*, ed. Malcolm Pasley (1993), pp. 54-171.
- Casanova** *Casanovas Heimfahrt*, by Arthur Schnitzler, in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Reinhard Urbach and Robert O. Weiss (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1961), vol. 2: *Die Erzählenden Schriften*, pp. 231-323.
- DaS** *Die andere Seite: Ein phantastischer Roman mit 52 Abbildungen und einem Plan*, by Alfred Kubin (Munich: Spangenberg, 1990).
- DG** *Der Golem*, by Gustav Meyrink (Furth im Wald; Prague: Vitalis, 2008).
- DS** *Das Schloß*, by Franz Kafka, ed. Malcolm Pasley (1983), in Gerhard Neumann et al. (eds), *Kritische Ausgabe der Werke von Franz Kafka* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1982–).
- Else** *Fräulein Else*, by Arthur Schnitzler, in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Reinhard Urbach and Robert O. Weiss (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1961), vol. 2: *Die Erzählenden Schriften*, pp. 324-80.
- TB-Kafka** *Tagebücher*, by Franz Kafka, ed. Hans-Gerd Koch, Michael Müller and Malcolm Pasley (1990), in *Kritische Ausgabe der Werke von Franz Kafka*, ed. Gerhard Neumann, Jost Schillemeit, Malcolm Pasley, Gerhard Kurz (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1982–).
- TB-Musil** *Tagebücher*, by Robert Musil, ed. Adolf Frisé (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1976).
- TB-Schnitzler** *Tagebuch: 1879-1931*, by Arthur Schnitzler, ed. Werner Welzig et al. (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981-2000).
- TD** *Die Traumdeutung*, by Sigmund Freud, in *Gesammelte Werke chronologisch geordnet*, ed. Anna Freud (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1940-1952), vol. 2/3: *Die Traumdeutung; Über den Traum* (1942), pp. 1-642.
- Törleß** *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß*, by Robert Musil, in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Adolf Frisé (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978), vol. 2: *Prosa und Stücke: Kleine Prosa, Aphorismen, Autobiographisches, Essays und Reden, Kritik* (1978), pp. 7-140.

# Chapter 1

## **Introduction: *Deutung, Dichtung, Dilemma:* Dreams from Babylon to Vienna**

This thesis explores how German-language writers of Central Europe used the literary dream to redefine subjectivity and develop new fictional techniques during the first quarter of the twentieth century. For Alfred Kubin, Robert Musil, Franz Kafka, Gustav Meyrink and Arthur Schnitzler, the dream in literary prose was both an experimental form and the most direct method of exposing the fragmentation of the self, a project both threatening and liberating. These writers were interested in the (im)possibility of reassembling an *Ich* that had been fractured by psychological scrutiny, scientific scepticism and changing social forms. Their fictional dreams offer an ambivalent farewell to the nineteenth century and Romantic literary traditions, as well as a glimpse forwards into an amorphous and anxious future. The Modernist dream was called to bear unprecedented importance as a battleground for the loss, salvation or redefinition of individual subjectivity.

Yet this development was part of an ancient, and ongoing, set of dream discourses that continually re-negotiate the relationship between individual and cosmos.<sup>1</sup> In the world's earliest literature, the dream already appears as a basic experiential mystery, and as a narrative device. Modernist writers, particularly those in the German-speaking world, entered this dialogue bearing the Romantic inheritance of the 'unconscious', *das Unbewusste*, which Freud used to posit an inherent state of conflict in the individual. Each person now contained a powerful 'other side', which lay beyond conscious control and threatened constant intrusion. In the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Freud's ideas germinated alongside critiques of perception and language by thinkers such as Ernst Mach<sup>2</sup> and Fritz Mauthner,<sup>3</sup> creating an intellectual environment of deepest doubt and uncertainty. This destabilisation was

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<sup>1</sup> As Albert Béguin noted, 'Toute époque de la pensée humaine pourrait se définir, de façon suffisamment profonde, par les relations qu'elle établit entre le rêve et la vie éveillée'. Cf. *L'âme romantique et le rêve* (Paris: José Corti, 1967), p. vii.

<sup>2</sup> Ernst Mach, *Die Analyse der Empfindungen und das Verhältnis des Physischen zum Psychischen*. Originally published in 1886.

<sup>3</sup> Fritz Mauthner, *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache*. Originally published in 1901-1902.

mirrored, at the social level, by the discord within a multi-ethnic Empire that could no longer maintain an illusion of integrity. Working in this context, writers refashioned the literary dream to accommodate a splintered sense of self, and they simultaneously used dream experience as a template for new fictional forms.

The case-study approach of this thesis, which focuses on selected works by five authors, is intended to balance the advantages of comparison and in-depth analysis. In the chosen texts, the literary dream appears in many guises: symbolic and literal, brief and expansive, clearly defined and nebulous. But these dream texts are united by recurrent motifs and themes of self-loss and discovery, as well as a constant struggle to ascertain the forms and boundaries of consciousness. One aim of this thesis is to show how the affinities among these texts, at both thematic and structural levels, are a product of the specific intellectual and social forces at work in German-speaking Central Europe between 1900 and 1925. However, these case studies also propose general insights into the functioning of the literary dream as textual technique, and therefore contribute to the interdisciplinary field of ‘oneirocriticism’, which encompasses the ‘polysemous and polyvalent phenomena that bind together dream, language and literature’.<sup>4</sup>

This introductory chapter first outlines a history of dream theory, emphasising the phenomenological traits that have made the dream an enduring conundrum, a source of power, and an adaptable symbol for philosophers and writers alike. This is followed by an examination of the relationship between ‘real’ dreams and literary dreams, in which I propose some formal features that unite the wide variety of fictional dream manifestations. This is complemented, in the final section, by a narrower focus on the intellectual environment of German-speaking Central Europe in the Modernist age – a setting in which the dream seemed to contain the world.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Carol Schreier Rupprecht, ‘Dream, Language, Literature’, in Deirdre Barrett and Patrick McNamara (eds), *The New Science of Dreaming. Volume 3: Cultural and Theoretical Perspectives* (Westport, CT; London: Praeger), pp. 1-34 (p. 3).

## 1. The Dream as Problem and Power

A century ago, Modernist authors were fascinated by the enigma of the dream, and its inherent threat to the idea of a unified self acting out of free will. That enigma is still with us. In fact, no consensus has ever been reached about the nature of dream experience, or the reasons for its occurrence. Twenty-first-century oneirology still struggles to form a definition of the dream, and to solve the puzzle of its meaning and function.

The authors examined in this thesis almost lived long enough to see the beginnings of physiological dream research. Modern sleep science is often considered to start with the 1953 discovery, by the American researchers Nathaniel Kleitman and Eugene Aserinsky, of rapid eye movements (REM) during sleep. This was, at last, physical evidence that the brain is active while the body is dormant, and that ‘sleep’ encompasses various states, with a clear effect on dreaming (which appears to occur predominantly during these REM phases).<sup>5</sup> Since then, investigators have used increasingly advanced techniques, such as brain imaging, to document the physical activity of dreaming. However, technology has not been able to circumvent a basic practical dilemma: the direct experience of dreaming as *qualia* (sensory experience) remains inaccessible to researchers.<sup>6</sup> There remains an enormous qualitative discrepancy between the signals (eye movements or electrode impulses) available to an observer, and the rich visual, sensory and emotional content lived by the dreamer. All that we have to document this content is the dreamer’s own report after waking.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Although dreams are most associated with the REM state, they are also reported by people awakened from non-REM states; however, these dreams are typically shorter and less vivid. The exact nature of the relationship between REM sleep and dreams remains unclear. For summaries of recent research, see *The Neuroscience of Sleep*, ed. Robert Stickgold and Matthew P. Walker (London; Burlington, MA; San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 2009), Section X, ‘Dreaming’ (pp. 295-336).

<sup>6</sup> As Bert States notes, ‘there is no scientifically or philosophically rigorous way to verify that dreaming takes place (in the true subjective sense), because you can never catch the dreamer in the act of dreaming’. Cf. Bert O. States, *Seeing in the Dark: Reflections on Dreams and Dreaming* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 84.

<sup>7</sup> Brain electrodes, which enable more precise observations of the brain, might eventually allow researchers to map out the correspondences between neuronal activity and subjective reports to determine if the neuron firing patterns of dreamers can be ‘read’. See M. Cerf *et al.*, ‘On-line, Voluntary Control of Human Temporal Lobe Neurons’, *Nature*, 467 (2010), 1104-8. It remains to be seen how accurate such readings could be, given the enmeshment of dream content in the dreamer’s overall life experience. Divergences between objective and subjective reports have already been noted, for instance, when EEG scans report sleep states different from those remembered by the

But these subjective accounts are inherently questionable; apart from instances of deliberate lying or omission, it is not clear how individuals reconstitute the contents of their dreams. Norman Malcolm's 1959 book, *Dreaming*, famously provoked a debate about whether dreams could even be considered 'experiences that occur during sleep', or were simply something we seem to remember upon waking.<sup>8</sup> Even if dreams really are experiences that occur during sleep, this means that any dream report is an act of recall, entailing inevitable distortions.

A second phenomenological problem concerns the difficulty of differentiating among dreaming, waking and other forms of mental activity. Mark Blagrove defines dreaming simply 'as the images and thoughts that are experienced during sleep'.<sup>9</sup> Hobson and co-authors claim there is no clear definition, although they propose the description 'mentation during sleep which has most, if not all, of the following formal features: hallucination, delusion, narrative structure, hyperemotionality, and bizarreness'; they use the term 'sleep mentation' for other mental activity during sleep, also arguing that waking consciousness can no longer be considered a single, homogeneous state.<sup>10</sup> Certainly, dreamlike mental activity featuring the elements above also occurs outside of sleep, notably in hallucinations and visions brought on by illness, drug use or (religious) trances. The close relationship between dreaming and 'day-dreaming' was recognised by Freud in 'Der Dichter und das Phantasieren' (1908): 'die nächtlichen Träume [sind] ebensolche Wunscherfüllungen [...] wie die Tagträume, die uns allen so wohl bekannten Phantasien'.<sup>11</sup>

We also remain without a consensus on the meaning and purpose of the dream.<sup>12</sup> Researchers have posited a range of evolutionary functions, such as 'brain

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dreamer. Cf. Inge Strauch and Barbara Meier, *In Search of Dreams: Results of Experimental Dream Research* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996), p. 229.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Daniel C. Dennett, 'Are Dreams Experiences?', in Charles E. M. Dunlop (ed.), *Philosophical Essays on Dreaming* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 227-50.

<sup>9</sup> M. Blagrove, 'Dreaming – Motivated or Meaningless?', *The Psychologist*, 22/ 8 (2009), 680-83 (p. 680).

<sup>10</sup> J.A. Hobson, E.F. Pace-Schott and R. Stickgold, 'A Response to Commentaries on *Dreaming and the Brain*', in E.F. Pace-Schott (ed.), *Sleep and Dreaming: Scientific Advances and Reconsiderations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 231-47 (p. 232).

<sup>11</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'Der Dichter und das Phantasieren', *Gesammelte Werke chronologisch geordnet*, ed. Anna Freud (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1941), vol. 7: *Werke aus den Jahren 1906-1909*, pp. 213-23 (pp. 220-21).

<sup>12</sup> As Mark Blagrove recently noted, the question of whether 'dreaming has a function versus being epiphenomenal, and whether dream content can give insight into cognitions of which we are not

conditioning' (Snyder)<sup>13</sup> and 'threat simulation theory' (Revonsuo),<sup>14</sup> implying that our dreams are a sort of training or rehearsal for waking life. Other mammals also appear to experience dream states, a fact that must be taken into account in any biological theory. Many thinkers have suggested that human dreams, at least, serve special psychological purposes, ranging from the creation or consolidation of memories (Tarnow)<sup>15</sup> and the integration of dissociated thoughts (Hartmann)<sup>16</sup> to the metaphorical completion of emotional 'expectation patterns', lowering stress levels (Griffin and Tyrell).<sup>17</sup> However, other researchers believe the dream has no adaptive function: it is a biological epiphenomenon, a mere reaction to firing synapses.<sup>18</sup> The philosopher Daniel Dennett has described the dreaming mind as an 'insufficiently sceptical question-asker confronted by a random sample of yeses and noes', yielding the volatile metamorphoses found in dreams and hallucinations.<sup>19</sup> Hobson takes an extreme view of dreams as equivalent to psychoses, and as impersonal and non-interpretible phenomena: 'it would appear that our dream amnesia and our dream confabulations are the impersonal necessities of a brain state that is forced on us by our nature'.<sup>20</sup> Such theories necessarily lead away from Freudian hermeneutics. For

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consciously aware, are both unsolved' but he maintains that these questions are 'experimentally tractable'. Cf. Blagrove, 'Dreaming – motivated or meaningless?', p. 683.

<sup>13</sup> Fred Snyder, 'The Phenomenology of Dreaming,' in Leo Madow and Laurence H. Snow (eds), *The Psychodynamic Implications of the Physiological Studies on Dreams* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1970), pp. 124-51.

<sup>14</sup> Antti Revonsuo, *Inner Presence: Consciousness as a Biological Phenomenon* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).

<sup>15</sup> Eugen Tarnow, 'How Dreams And Memory May Be Related', *Neuropsychanalysis*, 5/2 (2003), 177-82.

<sup>16</sup> Ernest Hartmann (not to be confused with the German philosopher Eduard von Hartmann (1842-1906), also cited in this chapter) argues that dreams 'contextualize emotion', 'notice similarities' and produce 'explanatory metaphor', proving particularly useful for processing traumatic memories by reintegrating dissociated thoughts; in this sense they act like psychotherapy without the therapist, by providing a safe place in which to make connections. Cf. Ernest Hartmann, *Dreams and Nightmares: The Origin and Meaning of Dreams* (New York: Basic, 2000), pp. 13, 119.

<sup>17</sup> Joe Griffin and Ivan Tyrell, *Dreaming Reality: How Dreaming Keeps Us Sane or Can Drive Us Mad* (Brighton: HG Publishing, 2006).

<sup>18</sup> Owen Flanagan, 'Deconstructing Dreams: The Spandrels of Sleep', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 92/1 (1995), 5-27.

<sup>19</sup> Daniel Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (Boston; Toronto; London: Little, Brown and Company, 1991), pp. 14-15. This is not far removed from Nietzsche's somatic explanation of dreams, in *Morgenröthe*, as 'Interpretationen unserer Nervenreize während des Schlafens'. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 30 vols (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1975-84), vol. 5: *Morgenröthe. Nachgelassene Fragmente. Anfang 1880 bis Frühjahr 1881* (1971), p. 111.

<sup>20</sup> In this context, Hobson warns again dream 'romancers' who 'charge us money for their code-breaking services'. See J. Allan Hobson, *Dreaming as Delirium: How the Brain goes out of its Mind* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), pp. 77, 124.

Hobson, for instance, psychoanalysis is a ‘literary exercise with no claim to [...] scientific legitimacy’.<sup>21</sup>

Whatever the dream’s ‘original’ purpose, it has achieved an undeniable hermeneutic value. Some have compared it to the Rorschach test (designed by Swiss psychologist Hermann Rorschach, in 1921, to test mental concerns through free association responses to inkblots), although the analogy is flawed in the sense that dream content has endogenous origins and therefore at least some specific import for the individual. Perhaps, considering the range of social and psychological uses of the dream, it is naive to speak of a single purpose, even from a biological viewpoint. The dream offers parallels to the difficulty of defining ‘art’, and of determining its role in human life.<sup>22</sup> The most ancient understandings of both dreams and art were neither physiological nor psychological, but religious. The otherworldly and elusive dream has always dwelt on the threshold of spirituality, a heritage preserved in the popular ‘dream books’ available in any large bookshop, in a tradition going straight back to the ancient Egyptians.<sup>23</sup>

However, the dream’s religious role has always been associated with power and legitimisation – a theme emphasised in Kafka’s treatment of the dream as a place of judgement (discussed in Chapter 4). The Egyptians were already concerned with classifying dreams into ‘good’ and ‘bad’, meaningless and authoritative, to ensure that important dreams were received by important people.<sup>24</sup> This pattern is seen throughout the ancient world, in the earliest available dream texts and commentaries, where the dream is a tool for religious (and political) validation. The gods spoke through dreams, but they only sent meaningful dreams to the chosen. And this raised the question (as Freud and his contemporaries well knew) of who is authorised to interpret the dream, and according to which methods. As Kaltwasser has remarked

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. Hobson, ‘The New Neuropsychology of Sleep: Implications for Psychoanalysis’, in Kelly Bulkeley (ed.), *Dreams: A Reader on Religious, Cultural, and Psychological Dimensions of Dreaming* (New York; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp. 321-32 (p. 330).

<sup>22</sup> As Bert States notes, dreams and art are both manifestations of a need ‘to convert experience into structure’. Cf. States, *Seeing in the Dark*, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Self-guided dream interpretation, partly based on popular tradition, still offers competition to ‘expert’ consultation, as evident from examples such as *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Interpreting Your Dreams* (Eve Marci Pliskin et al., New York: Alpha, 2004) or *Dream Power: How to Use Your Night Dreams to Change Your Life* (Cynthia Richmond, London: Simon & Schuster, 2001).

<sup>24</sup> Norman MacKenzie, *Dreams and Dreaming* (London: Aldus Books, 1965), pp. 26-30.

with respect to dream interpretation in the Bible, 'Hier steht nicht mehr in erster Linie die Kommunikation zwischen Mensch und Gott im Vordergrund, sondern Macht und Einfluß, die sich folglich auch mit dem Traum assoziieren'.<sup>25</sup> An interpreted dream – or better, *Traumdeutung*, to emphasise the inseparability of content and form – was inserted into a text and finalised with great deliberation. The dream-interpretation, more than a narrative device, was a rhetorical and political statement, a sign of direct communication with higher powers, and was meant to enter the historical record as such.<sup>26</sup>

The first literary dreams are considered by many to appear in the ancient Mesopotamian poem, the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (standard Akkadian version from 1300-1000 BC). In this text, both the hero-king Gilgamesh and his wild-man companion, Enkidu, who is created by the gods, receive prophetic dreams that underscore their special status. They deliberately seek such guidance, performing a dream ritual (Tablet 4) that reflects the long-standing tradition of incubation cults in the ancient Near East.<sup>27</sup> Gilgamesh receives several terrifying dreams that are nonetheless interpreted as good omens by Enkidu, thus allowing their quest to proceed.<sup>28</sup>

In the early monotheistic churches, the importance of legitimisation was only intensified by the belief in a single source of divine authority. Biblical dreams became bound up with the problem of God's authorship: 'In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; Then [God] openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction' (Job 33:15-16). It has been argued that the ambiguous and inscrutable dreams of antiquity were replaced by more easily interpreted dreams in the Bible due to the emergent belief in a just God

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<sup>25</sup> Nadja Kaltwasser, *Zwischen Traum und Alptraum: Studien zur französischen und deutschen Literatur des frühen 20. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Deutscher Universitäts-Verlag [dissertation], 2000), p. 25.

<sup>26</sup> Beat Näf notes that, although dream reports are problematic historical documents, their pervasiveness in the records of antiquity turns them into important research objects for historians. Herodotus, the 'father of history', prominently recounts eighteen dreams in his work, mostly dreams of kings. See *Traum und Traumdeutung im Altertum* (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt, 2004), p. 9.

<sup>27</sup> Incubation techniques have been identified in cultures around the world and were widespread in antiquity. According to this method, the dreamer typically sleeps in a sacred place in the hope of receiving insight into specific problems. See J. Donald Hughes, 'Dream Interpretation in Ancient Civilizations', *Dreaming*, 10/1 (2000), 7-18 (p. 7).

<sup>28</sup> Kelly Bulkeley argues that the terrifying and confusing nature of Gilgamesh's dreams is unusual in ancient texts, and signals a threat to the legitimacy of his rule. See *Visions of the Night: Dreams, Religion, and Psychology* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1999), pp. 79-80.



who communicates directly (albeit symbolically) with His believers.<sup>29</sup> In this context, dreaming was also a means of ethnic legitimisation, as when the Joseph of Genesis (in a tale later famously reworked by Thomas Mann in *Joseph und seine Brüder*)<sup>30</sup> is called upon to elucidate the dreams of the Pharaoh, demonstrating that only a Jew could interpret divine messages. In the New Testament, prophetic dreams continue to play an important role. Among many other instances, Pontius Pilate's wife warns him against the crucifixion of Christ: 'Have nothing to do with that innocent man, because in a dream last night, I suffered much on account of him' (Matthew 27:19). And some centuries later, dreams were also central to the founding of Islam. The Koran purportedly contains the transcription of Mohammed's dreamed instructions from God, and dream interpretation has a long Islamic tradition.<sup>31</sup>

Eventually, however, the Christian church, like Islam, developed a wary position towards dreams. The ancient classification system of 'good' and 'bad', false and true, became a distinction between dreams from God (or angels) and those from the devil (or demons). By the Middle Ages, the dream was a focus of distrust, a battleground for the dreamer's soul.<sup>32</sup> Dreams were threateningly sexual, and laden with astrological and divinatory associations.<sup>33</sup> Just as significant, their universal accessibility was a potential menace to the sole authority of the church, although it was still possible for important figures to receive 'true' prophetic dreams (for instance, Pope Innocent III's dream of St. Francis of Assisi supporting the church).<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> J. Stephen Russell, *The English Dream Vision: Anatomy of a Form* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1988), p. 29.

<sup>30</sup> Pharaoh dreams of seven fat cows devoured by seven lean cows, and seven full ears of corn devoured by withered ears; this is interpreted to mean that years of famine shall follow the years of plenty (Genesis 41:1-39). Joseph refuses personal authority, claiming that his interpretation comes from God (41:16), yet it results in a transfer of power to Joseph, who is placed in charge of administering Egypt. Thomas Mann's version makes Pharaoh's dreams into *Angstträume* ('Pharaoh fuhr as dem Schlaf in Schweiß und Sorge') and greatly expands the search for the correct dream interpretation, emphasising the superficiality and incompetence of Egypt's *Traumgelehrte*. Cf. pp. 114-32 in *Joseph der Ernährer* (1983), vol. 4 of *Joseph und seine Brüder*, in Thomas Mann, *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelbänden*, ed. Peter de Mendelssohn (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1980-1986).

<sup>31</sup> As Marcia Hermansen notes, Islam has always granted a key role to dreams as 'reflecting both spiritual and real-world truth and in establishing the connection of everyday reality to another dimension often referred to as the *ghaib*, the absent or unseen realm'. Cf. 'Dreams and Dreaming in Islam', in Bulkeley (ed.), *Dreams*, pp. 73-91 (pp. 73-74).

<sup>32</sup> Susan Parman, *Dream and Culture: An Anthropological Study of the Western Intellectual Tradition* (New York; Westport; London: Praeger, 1991), p. 27.

<sup>33</sup> Constance B. Hieatt, *The Realism of Dream Visions: The Poetic Exploitation of the Dream-Experience in Chaucer and his Contemporaries* (The Hague; Paris: Mouton & Co., 1967), p. 23.

<sup>34</sup> See Jacques Le Goff, *Saint Francis of Assisi* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 33.

To accommodate this ambivalence, medieval thinkers needed elaborate dream classification schema built on the eclectic heritage of European Christianity. By the fourteenth century, most systems featured five gradations:<sup>35</sup>

1. *insomnium*, nightmare or troubled dream;
2. *visium*, apparition or hallucination;
3. *somnium*, ordinary or enigmatic dream;
4. *oraculum*, oracular or prophetic dream;
5. *visio*, prophetic vision or visionary dream.

The ancient Greeks (as, for example, in the *Odyssey*, Book 19) recognised a dual scheme, of dreams that came through the ‘gates of horn’ (prophetic messages from the gods) and the ‘gates of ivory’ (deceptive, meaningless dreams). But Plato and Aristotle initiated the rationalistic approach to the dream as a natural occurrence. As MacKenzie notes, the ‘division between oneiromancy as a mystical or magic system and the serious treatment of dreams really begins in classical Greece, and [...] our own separation of dream attitudes into the popular and the scientific stems from this period’.<sup>36</sup> Aristotle was radical in his dry assessment of the dream as a physical phenomenon, a mere ‘presentation based on the movement of sense impressions’; moreover, he believed that ‘most [so-called prophetic] dreams are [...] to be classed as mere coincidences’.<sup>37</sup> He has therefore been considered a progenitor of physiological and biological dream theories, both during the Enlightenment and in modern neurology. Plato, meanwhile, anticipated psychoanalysis by writing, in *The Republic*, about the ‘bestial, savage’ desires (including sexual desire for a mother) that can emerge in the dream.<sup>38</sup> In China, dreams were also an early philosophical theme. The philosopher Chuang-tzu of the fourth century BC famously observed that, upon awakening from a dream of being a butterfly, he could not be certain that he was not, in fact, a butterfly dreaming that he was a man.<sup>39</sup> The same problem was

<sup>35</sup> Hieatt, *The Realism of Dream Visions*, p. 27.

<sup>36</sup> MacKenzie, *Dreams and Dreaming*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>37</sup> Aristotle, *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), pp. 625, 627.

<sup>38</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Tom Griffith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 285-86.

<sup>39</sup> The anthropological psychologist Detlev von Uslar argues that the dream, while experienced, does indeed constitute a separate phenomenological world, and only becomes a ‘dream’ upon waking: ‘Solange wir träumen ist der Traum die Welt.’ See *Leib, Welt, Seele: Höhepunkte in der Geschichte*

addressed by Descartes's 'Dream Argument' in the *Méditations Métaphysiques*, as a way of warning against the reliability of sensory information.<sup>40</sup> This epistemological quandary, which later inspired Raymond Queneau's 1965 novel *Les fleurs bleues*, therefore long anticipated the Modernist destabilisation of the self.

In medieval Christian Europe, however, oneiric philosophy stagnated in the grip of orthodoxy and church control. Ancient dream texts only began to resurface during the Renaissance. Artemidor's *Oneirocritica* (second century AD) was notably printed in Greek in 1518, then translated into Latin (1535), German (1540), French (1546) and English (1563). But for centuries, literature played a dominant role in keeping the *Traumdiskurs* alive in Europe. In the relatively anonymous fiction of the Middle Ages, the dream vision was abstracted into metaphors and moralising allegories. The transition from sleeping to waking was seen to symbolise the path from 'heresy to orthodoxy, sin to salvation, evil to good'.<sup>41</sup> Dream visions could be apocalyptic, as in the Middle English *Piers Plowman*, or chivalric, as in the French *Roman de la Rose*, but they generally adhered to a conventional form, often including a dream-guide and the revelation of hidden knowledge. More idiosyncratic treatments emerged along with new narrative and dramatic forms in the Renaissance and Baroque, from authors such as Shakespeare (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, among other plays), Rabelais (*Pantagruel*), Grimmelshausen (*Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus Teutsch*) and Pedro Calderón de la Barca, whose allegorical play, *La vida es sueño* (1635), was to have a strong impact on nineteenth-century German-language writers, inspiring Goethe, Grillparzer (*Der Traum, ein Leben*, 1834) and Wagner (*Tristan und Isolde*).

Towards the end of this period, oneirology finally received new impetus from Descartes, whose interest in mental operations heralded a new fascination with consciousness during the Enlightenment. Descartes assigned dreams to the body, and thus to the potentially misleading sensory world. In the 'Dream Argument' of *Méditations Métaphysiques*, he concedes the interpenetration of dreaming and waking consciousness: 'Je vois si manifestement qu'il n'y a point d'indices

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*der philosophischen Psychologie: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005), p. 157.

<sup>40</sup> *Méditations Métaphysiques* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1979), p. 69.

<sup>41</sup> Parman, *Dream and Culture*, p. 50.

concluants, ni de marques assez certaines par où l'on puisse distinguer nettement la veille d'avec le sommeil'.<sup>42</sup> There is also evidence that Descartes's philosophical mission was inspired by a series of three dreams he recorded in 1619.<sup>43</sup> The dream-as-revelation was in any case an established generic device, also exploited, for instance, by Johannes Kepler to advance his thoughts on the moon in *Dream or Lunar Astronomy* (written in 1609 and printed in 1634).<sup>44</sup> But the personal nature of Descartes's recorded dreams indicated that he saw them as a 'guide to personal experience'.<sup>45</sup> Descartes's view of the dream as *internal* phenomenon was an important prerequisite for modern dream conceptions.

However, in the immediate aftermath of the Cartesian revolution, the philosophical implications of dreaming were neglected in the shadow of human Reason. During the Enlightenment, the dream was often ignored or dismissed as banal and irrelevant, a failure to achieve full awareness. As in the writings of Aristotle, the loss of the dream's supernatural connotations also extinguished its authority. Diderot's *Encyclopédie* (1751-1772) notes 'il faut espérer que notre mort nous élèvera à un état où la suite de nos idées continuellement claire & perceptible ne sera plus entrecoupée d'aucun sommeil, ni même d'aucun songe'.<sup>46</sup> The dream was, at worst, an active threat to the Enlightenment individual, who was defined by conscious development and self-determination. As Rüdiger Görner has written, '[a]us der Sicht der

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<sup>42</sup> Descartes, *Méditations Métaphysiques*, p. 69.

<sup>43</sup> Descartes's dreams are recorded in Adrien Baillet's *La Vie de Monsieur Descartes* (Paris: D. Horthemal, 1691) on the basis of lost early notebooks. Leibniz's transcriptions of these same diaries contain only a brief reference to the dreams, leading Richard Watson, among others, to suspect an element of invention on Baillet's part. (See Richard Watson, *Cogito, Ergo Sum: The Life of René Descartes* (Boston: David R. Godine, 2007), p. 132). Freud, asked to interpret one of Descartes's dreams, was wary of doing so (only a French copy of his reply exists). The dream appeared to him 'un rêve d'en haut', closer to a vision, with 'un contenu à forme abstraite, poétique ou symbolique', unsuitable for interpretation. Cf. Sigmund Freud, 'Lettre à Maxime Leroy sur quelques rêves de Descartes' [1925], *Revue française de psychanalyse*, 45/1 (1981), 5-7.

<sup>44</sup> Other famous reported cases of revelatory dreams or dreamlike states include August Kekulé's vision of the benzene molecule structure (ca. 1862), Dmitri Mendeleev's dream of the periodic table (1869) and Robert Louis Stevenson's dream of plot elements for *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1885). Such anecdotes also form part of the 'incubatory' tradition of creativity, where revealed visions emerge from long internal reflection. Cf. Blagrove, M., 'Dreams as a Reflection of our Waking Concerns and Abilities: A Critique of the Problem-solving Paradigm in Dream Research', *Dreaming*, 2 (1992), 205-19.

<sup>45</sup> Kenton Kroker, *The Sleep of Others and the Transformations of Sleep Research* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), p. 52.

<sup>46</sup> Cited in Manfred Engel, 'The Dream in Eighteenth-Century Encyclopaedias', in Bernard Dieterle and Manfred Engel (eds), *The Dream and the Enlightenment / Le Rêve et les Lumières* (Paris: Champion, 2003), pp. 21-52 (p. 32).

Aufklärung bedeutete der Reifeprozess des Menschen, daß er aus seinen Träumen gerissen werden müsse.<sup>47</sup>

It was therefore unsurprising that the Romantics adopted the dream as a central symbol in their reaction against Enlightenment ideals.<sup>48</sup> Interest in 'Unreason' and altered states of consciousness was already apparent in the second half of the eighteenth century. One of the earliest influences on Romanticism came from Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), who used the dream in its most ancient form, as a means of religious legitimisation, claiming that his dreams drove him to write a reformist doctrine of the Christian church (and showing that the church's fear of dream-based rebellion was well-founded). Swedenborg's dream diaries revealed the vital importance he attached to oneiric experience. The diaries marked the beginning of his conversion from naturalist to spiritualist, a move considered a sign of madness by contemporaries. Swedenborg's dream reports were therefore of twofold significance: on the one hand, as an early example of dream analysis by a scientifically trained mind, and on the other hand, as a guidepost for the mystical inward turn of Romanticism.<sup>49</sup>

Romantic writers soon openly reclaimed the dream as a source of knowledge about the self, and a conduit to the spiritual realm. In so doing, they not only drew on ancient and medieval dream theories, but also forged a new conception of the dream that was to lay the foundation for later psychological theories. Laurence Porter argues that the Romantics transcended the mechanistic/religious dichotomy to create a more nuanced idea of the dream, which anticipated psychoanalytic theory by regarding the dream as a 'distinct, autonomous mental process [...] derived both from personal memory traces (Freud) and from a repository of the inherited

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<sup>47</sup> Rüdiger Görner, 'Lichtenberg oder der Traum in der Aufklärung', in Hanne Castein and Rüdiger Görner (eds), *Dream Images in German, Austrian and Swiss Literature and Culture* (Munich: iudicium, 2002), pp. 55-63 (p. 55).

<sup>48</sup> The dream's power in this context is evident from the indignant contemporary reactions to Kleist's *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* (1809-1810) in which the Prince confuses dreaming and waking, with disastrous results. Sentenced to death, but pardoned at the end of the play, he asks incredulously, 'Nein, sagt! Ist es ein Traum?'. He is answered, 'Ein Traum, was sonst?', emphasising that even princes are subject to the dreamlike confusion of existence. Heinrich von Kleist, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe in vier Bänden*, ed. Ilse-Marie Bart and Hinrich C. Seeba (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1987), vol. 2: *Dramen 1808-1811*, p. 644.

<sup>49</sup> See Lynn Rosellen Wilkinson, *The Dream of an Absolute Language: Emanuel Swedenborg and French Literary Culture* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996), pp. 69-70.

collective wisdom of humanity (Jung)', and subject to a hidden but intelligible ordered system.<sup>50</sup> This perspective created a natural bond, for the Romantics, between dreaming and *Dichtung*, causing August Wilhelm Schlegel to describe *Dichtung* as 'ein freiwilliges und waches Träumen',<sup>51</sup> and Jean-Paul to argue, inversely, that '[d]er Traum ist unwillkürliche Dichtkunst'.<sup>52</sup> This was both an aesthetic observation and a philosophical position. The Romantics, like the rationalists before them, saw the dream as coming from within, but they also reinstated its mystical and legitimising powers. Authority and divinity shifted inwards.<sup>53</sup> In response, the literary dream blossomed across Europe during the nineteenth century. It was incorporated into Gothic and detective novels as a means of exploring the tensions between scientific investigation and supernatural belief, and as a way to reveal hidden social stresses.<sup>54</sup> It also became a pervasive trope in the psychological novels of Russia.<sup>55</sup> In France, key proponents of the literary dream included Charles Nodier and Gérard de Nerval, whose *Aurélia* (1855) famously opens with the declaration '[l]e Rêve est une seconde vie'.<sup>56</sup>

However, the German-speaking world soon acquired a pre-eminent role in the philosophy and science of dreams. Many of the earliest and/or most influential thinkers wrote in German. Their emphasis on the dream's interiority contrasted, to some extent, with the pragmatic, empirical tendencies of the English-speaking world.<sup>57</sup> German-language interest in the idea of the 'unconscious' can be traced

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<sup>50</sup> Laurence M. Porter, *The Literary Dream in French Romanticism: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1979), pp. 1-2.

<sup>51</sup> August Wilhelm Schlegel, *Die Kunstlehre* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1963), p. 283.

<sup>52</sup> Johann Paul Friedrich Richter, *Jean Paul. Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Norbert Miller (Munich; Vienna: Carl Hanser, 1959-1963), vol. 4: *Kleinere erzählende Schriften* (1962), p. 978.

<sup>53</sup> In *L'âme romantique et le rêve*, Albert Béguin emphasises the 'aventures spirituelles' (cf. pp. xiii, 5, 395) of the Romantic involvement with dreams, writing that 'les romantiques admettent tous que la vie obscure est en incessante communication avec une autre réalité, plus vaste, antérieure et supérieure à la vie individuelle' (p. xvi).

<sup>54</sup> Ronald R. Thomas particularly discusses this in the context of British detective fiction in *Dreams of Authority: Freud and the Fictions of the Unconscious* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1990), cf. pp. 4-5. Dreams also make an appearance in the early detective fiction of other languages, for example in E.T.A. Hoffmann's 'Das Fräulein von Scuderi' (1819) and in Balzac's *L'Auberge rouge* (1831).

<sup>55</sup> See Michael R. Katz, *Dreams and the Unconscious in Nineteenth-Century Russian Fiction* (Hannover; London: University Press of New England, 1984).

<sup>56</sup> Gérard de Nerval, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Albert Béguin and Jean Richer (Paris: Gallimard, 1960-1961), vol. 1, p. 359.

<sup>57</sup> MacKenzie argues that, while the German tradition saw the dream as a key to man's personality, the English were more prosaically interested in what it said about waking consciousness or the state of

back to the eighteenth century. The first generally recognised mention of *Unbewußtseyn* appeared in German, in the *Philosophische Aphorismen* (1776) of Ernst Platner, an intellectual heir to Leibniz.<sup>58</sup> But as noted earlier, the interest in consciousness (particularly starting with Descartes) had already laid the groundwork for interest in the unconscious. The dream was initially marginalised because it appeared to lie beyond the field of study. But as the investigation of consciousness rapidly grew to accommodate the varieties and anomalies of awareness, it also began to absorb hypnosis and dream states until, by Freud's time, the dream had migrated to the centre of psychological study.

In the German-speaking world, this shift in scientific appreciation of the dream also occurred towards the end of the Enlightenment. Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742-1799), later admired by Freud and Wittgenstein, promoted interest in the systematic, rational study of dreams, in part through his voluminous journals (*Sudelbücher*) containing insightful dream analyses that linked oneiric experience to waking life.<sup>59</sup> This was the beginning of a modern tradition of documented self-scrutiny, in the detailed journals of individuals who increasingly treated their own subconscious life as an object of study (and publication), later culminating in the prolific published journals and dream records of authors such as Musil and Schnitzler in the early twentieth century. Meanwhile, the counter-Enlightenment produced a philosophy that could better accommodate the dream. The *Sturm und Drang* philosopher Johann Georg Hamann (1730-1788), a champion of emotions and self-knowledge, in turn influenced Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803), who explicitly associated dreams with literary production. Praising Shakespeare as an example to German writers, he reflects on the capacity of both dream and author to dictate the rules of time and space: 'Hast du nie gefühlt, wie im Traum dir Ort und Zeit schwinden? [...] wäre es nicht eben jedes Genies, jedes Dichters, und des dramatischen Dichters insonderheit erste und einzige Pflicht, dich in einen solchen Traum zu setzen?'<sup>60</sup> This

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health. This dual perspective, he claims, 'continues in modern research into dreams'. MacKenzie, *Dreams and Dreaming*, pp. 91, 97.

<sup>58</sup> Angus Nicholls and Martin Liebscher, 'Introduction: Thinking the Unconscious', in Angus Nicholls and Martin Liebscher (eds), *Thinking the Unconscious: Nineteenth-Century German Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 1-25 (p. 9).

<sup>59</sup> See C. Tomlinson, 'G. C. Lichtenberg: Dreams, Jokes, and the Unconscious in Eighteenth-Century Germany', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 40/3 (1992), 761-99.

<sup>60</sup> Johann Gottfried Herder, *Werke*, vol. 1, ed. Wolfgang Pross (Munich; Vienna: Carl Hanser, 1984), p. 544.

example demonstrates the growing importance of literary dreams to the global *Traumdiskurs*, as part of the evidence available to investigators of the human mind, and more particularly as a privileged locus for studying the overlapping mechanisms of artistic creation and the subconscious.<sup>61</sup> Herder's comments are part of a tradition of psycho-literary criticism passed down directly to Freud and his contemporaries at the start of the twentieth century.

In fact, throughout the nineteenth century, the medical, philosophical and literary discourses about dreams never entirely diverged, despite increasing specialisation. This dialogue also included voices from the borders between the occult and science (still evident in the works of Gustav Meyrink, as I discuss in Chapter 5). The Austrian physician Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815) developed theories of 'animal magnetism' later used as the basis for hypnosis. Taking over from the religious healers that had dominated Christian Europe, this was the beginning of renewed secular attempts to intervene in the psyche, on the basis of ancient medical ideas. Mesmer famously declared that the success of a celebrated Catholic exorcist was based on animal magnetism rather than the removal of evil spirits.<sup>62</sup> Although the 'material fluids' of Mesmer's theories were no more measurable than Christian demons, the new metaphor removed God from the relationship between therapist and patient. This set the stage for a century of increasing secular experimentation on the unconscious through direct manipulation, leading up to and including the development of psychoanalysis from elements of the hypnosis techniques passed on by Freud's mentor, Jean-Martin Charcot. Indeed, the majority of texts examined in this thesis continue to thematise hypnosis, as a dangerous form of psychic manipulation straddling the border between science and spirit.

Another early investigator of animal magnetism, the German physician and naturalist Gotthilf Heinrich von Schubert (1780-1860), became influential in the development

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<sup>61</sup> In the third act of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*, Hans Sachs declares dreams to be the foundation of the poet's work: 'Mein Freund, das grad' ist Dichters Werk,/ daß er sein Träumen deut' und merk'./ Glaub mir, des Menschen wahrster Wahn/ wird ihm im Traume aufgethan: all' Dichtkunst und Poeterei/ ist nichts als Wahrtraum-Deuterei.' Nietzsche also notes the connection in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. Cf. *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Colli and Montinari, vol. 3/1: *Die Geburt der Tragödie. Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen I-III* (1972), p. 22.

<sup>62</sup> Robin Waterfield, *Hidden Depths: The Story of Hypnosis* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 73.



of dream psychology thanks to the intellectual impact of his major work, *Die Symbolik des Traumes* (1814), consulted by E.T.A. Hoffmann, Freud and Jung.<sup>63</sup> It combines insights gained from Herder (Schubert's private tutor) with ideas drawn from animal magnetism and Schubert's own mysticism to posit the existence of an originary spiritual world that is unveiled through the symbolism of dreams. Schubert's contribution to the dream-discourse, which stimulated the Romantics through its fusion of natural science and poetry, was itself influenced by the literature of the early German Romantics, and particularly the 'poeticization' of the world promoted by Novalis.<sup>64</sup>

A more rigorous medical investigator of the dream was the German physician Carl Gustav Carus (1789-1869), whom Jung later credited with establishing the unconscious as the foundation of the psyche. Carus's major work, *Psyche: Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Seele* (1846), opens with the striking message, 'Der Schlüssel zur Erkenntnis vom bewußtem Seelenleben liegt in der Region des Unbewußtseins'.<sup>65</sup> This is a complete inversion of Enlightenment priorities. But now the emphasis on the unconscious is coming from a man of science, an empirical medical researcher who made important contributions to zoology, entomology and gynaecology.<sup>66</sup> Carus's work highlights the increasing amalgamation of Romantic and Enlightenment insights in the growth of modern psychology. This trend also influenced literary writers: Dostoevsky, for instance, whose mastery of psychology was admired by Nietzsche, was so impressed by *Psyche* that he planned to translate it.<sup>67</sup> Literature and medicine became intertwined in the dream discourse.

The philosopher Eduard von Hartmann (1842-1906), in his major work *Die Philosophie des Unbewußten* (1869), subsequently promoted the naturalistic investigation of dream phenomena in the interests of philosophy. He was influenced

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<sup>63</sup> Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert, *Die Symbolik des Traumes* [1814] (Bamberg: Kunz, 1821).

<sup>64</sup> Stefan Egenberger, 'Kierkegaard's Reading of Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert's Philosophy of Nature', in Jon Bartley Stewart (ed.), *Kierkegaard and his German Contemporaries* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 293-308 (p. 295).

<sup>65</sup> Carl Gustav Carus, *Psyche: Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Seele* (Pforzheim: Flammer und Hoffmann, 1846), p. 1.

<sup>66</sup> Matthew Bell, 'Carl Gustav Carus and the Science of the Unconscious', in Nicholls and Liebscher (eds), *Thinking the Unconscious*, pp. 156-72 (pp. 156-57).

<sup>67</sup> Cf. George Gibian, 'C. G. Carus' *Psyche* and Dostoevsky', *American Slavic and East European Review*, 14/3 (1955), 371-82.

by Schopenhauer, whose emphasis on the superficiality of consciousness, and the unconscious nature of the will, has been viewed as laying the foundations for Freud's 'metapsychology'.<sup>68</sup> Hartmann also read – and publicly feuded with – Nietzsche, whose attention to instincts and drives has similarly been viewed as a formative factor in the emergence of *Tiefenpsychologie*.<sup>69</sup> Nietzsche addressed dreaming directly in *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* (1872), where it is associated with the Apollonian principle, as offering both a template and an allegory for humankind's drive to create (visual) forms: 'Der schöne Schein der Traumwelten, in deren Erzeugung jeder Mensch voller Künstler ist, ist die Voraussetzung aller bildenden Kunst, ja auch, wie wir sehen werden, einer wichtigen Hälfte der Poesie'.<sup>70</sup> The dream, identified with light, clarity and prophesy, therefore stands in opposition to Dionysian *Rausch*, linked to 'Wirklichkeit', dissolution of the individual, intoxication and mystical sensations of unity.<sup>71</sup> This conception intriguingly confounds the dream's own associations with *Rausch* in the history of dream discourse, where it has often been viewed as a source of confusion, darkness, self-loss and haunting by memories and ghosts (as opposed to the prophetic quality of the Apollonian dream). As noted by Monika Schmitz-Emans, the Romantics considered the dream, along with madness and somnambulism, to form part of the 'Nachtseite' of existence.<sup>72</sup> The nightmarish aspects of the Romantic dream are captured in Goya's etching *El sueño de la razón produce monstruos* (c. 1797), which portrays an artist with bowed head, accosted by owls and bats. The work's title is

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<sup>68</sup> See Sebastian Gardner, 'Schopenhauer, Will and the Unconscious', in Christopher Janaway (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 375-42 (p. 376).

<sup>69</sup> According to Jacob Golomb, Nietzsche primarily used psychology as a technique for reactivating and attaining 'positive power' – a project that required a deeper understanding of unconscious operations. See 'Nietzsche's New Psychology', in Jacob Golomb, Weaver Santaniello and Ronald Lehrer (eds), *Nietzsche and Depth Psychology* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1999), pp. 1-22. For more on the fraught relationship between Nietzsche and Hartmann, see Anthony K. Jensen, 'The Rogue of All Rogues: Nietzsche's Presentation of Eduard von Hartmann's *Philosophie des Unbewussten* and Hartmann's Response to Nietzsche', *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 32 (2006), 41-61.

<sup>70</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie. Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen I-III*, p. 22. Nietzsche later suggested that, in practice, the dream is often a failed artwork: 'gewöhnlich ist der Traum eine Pflücker-Arbeit' (*Werke*, vol. 4/3: *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches II* (1967), p. 277). Nietzsche's views on the dream in his overall oeuvre are complex, and reference several dream discourses. As Assoun notes, the dream, for Nietzsche, fulfils the 'double fonction de principe esthétique (écho du principe apollinien) et de principe psychologique (manifestation du monde intérieur): sous ces deux instances, il est au coeur de l'expérience humaine'. Paul-Laurent Assoun, *Freud et Nietzsche* (Paris: Presse Universitaires de France, 1980), p. 204.

<sup>71</sup> Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, pp. 23-25.

<sup>72</sup> Monika Schmitz-Emans, 'Night-sides of Existence: Madness, Dreams, etc.', in Gerald Ernest Paul Gillespie, Manfred Engel and Bernard Dieterle (eds), *Romantic Prose Fiction* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2008), pp. 139-67 (p. 139).

ambiguous, and can be read as embracing or decrying the suppression of Enlightenment Reason, but in either case it associates the dream with darkness and turmoil. Freud later also embraced the ‘darker’ side of the dream, which he saw as pervaded with memory traces and impenetrable shadowy zones: ‘Jeder Traum,’ he wrote, ‘hat mindestens eine Stelle, an welcher er unergründlich ist, gleichsam einen Nabel, durch den er mit dem Unerkannten zusammenhängt’.<sup>73</sup> While ‘Apollonian’ aspects of the dream, namely meaningfulness and legibility, are of course important prerequisites for psychoanalysis, it is nonetheless the dream’s obscurity that calls for the guiding light of an analyst.

In tracing the intellectual path leading to Freud, from Hamann, Herder and Schubert, to Schopenhauer, Carus, Nietzsche and Hartmann, it is possible to see how the emerging discipline of psychology gradually asserted its claim over the unconscious, transcending the Rationalist/Romantic dichotomy. It pursued the Romantic interest in dreams and dreamlike states, but placed these phenomena under the empirical microscope inherited from the Enlightenment, and replaced spiritual causality with scientific principles, thus preparing the way for psychoanalysis many years in advance. Freud’s *Die Traumdeutung* (1899) was a complex synthesis of Judeo-Christian traditions, Romanticism and scientific developments, which invented a twentieth-century shaman, an ‘initiate in the mystic order [who is] able to travel to the forbidden regions of mind and culture’.<sup>74</sup> Freud inherited the Cartesian and Kantian emphasis on the subject’s spontaneous activity (as opposed to the passivity characterising the dreamers of antiquity).<sup>75</sup> But by institutionalising the unconscious, he also firmly established a *self in conflict*. Discord was now an innate psychic state.

In the opening chapter of *Die Traumdeutung*, ‘Die wissenschaftliche Literatur der Traumprobleme’, Freud salutes Aristotle for first challenging the divine origins of dreams, thus paving the way for naturalistic examination (TD 2-3). But although Freud excised religious elements from his approach, it was nonetheless based on

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<sup>73</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Gesammelte Werke chronologisch geordnet*, ed. Anna Freud (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1940-1952), vol. 2/3: *Die Traumdeutung; Über den Traum* (1942), pp. 1-642 (p. 116). *Die Traumdeutung* is referenced as TD.

<sup>74</sup> Parman, *Dream and Culture*, pp. 92, 104.

<sup>75</sup> Stéphane Moses, ‘The Cultural Index of Freud’s Interpretation of Dreams’, in David Shulman and Guy G. Stroumsa (eds), *Dream Cultures: Explorations in the Comparative History of Dreaming* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 303-14 (pp. 303-4, 307).

belief in the meaningfulness of the dream. Even when stripped of supernatural connotations, the dream was useful because of what it could reveal about the structures of the human mind. For Freud, dreams are unfulfilled wishes that arrive in the form of messages partly concealed or distorted by the mind's suppressive mechanisms, summarised in the metaphor of the 'censor'.<sup>76</sup> This creates a discrepancy between manifest and latent content, between appearances and hidden truths. Only a skilled interpreter-psychiatrist can 'translate' the dream's symbolic meaning into words.

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) affirmed the value of wish fulfilment theory. Like Freud, he also saw the self as divided, arguing that there are 'two personalities within the same individual'.<sup>77</sup> However, he differed by insisting that dreams were more than tools for free association, and that manifest dream content had its own logic and meaning. Jung shifted away from the focus on pathological symptoms in dreams, which he instead viewed as mental balancing mechanisms. The apparent bizarreness of the dream is not due to a distorting censor, as in Freud, but to the unfamiliarity of its symbolic language, capable of transcending time and the individual. Jung argued that some symbols are 'collective representations', or 'archetypes', that emanate from primeval dreams and creative fantasies. The main purpose of dreams is to retrieve a "recollection" of the prehistoric, as well as the infantile world, right down to the level of the most primitive instinct'.<sup>78</sup> In this context, Jung accepted the ancient belief in dreams as tools of prognostication, a tendency that aligned him with the Romantic tradition. He was wary of scientific epistemology overall, lamenting that 'our present lives are dominated by the goddess Reason, who is our greatest and

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<sup>76</sup> In *Jenseits des Lustprinzips* (1920), Freud admits the existence of dreams not based on wish fulfilment, namely those that relive trauma through a repetition compulsion (*Wiederholungszwang*), 'im Interesse der psychischen Bindung traumatischer Eindrücke'. Freud, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 8: *Werke aus den Jahren 1920-1924* (1940), p. 33. However, he again asserts that anxiety dreams and dreams of punishment are wish dreams based on repressed guilt. Adolf Grünbaum, a vocal critic of Freud's wish fulfilment theories, argues that Freud merely transformed the pre-existing idea that some dreams were wish fulfilments into a universal law, which was never adequately explained by 'sundry wish *contravening* and distressing manifest dream contents (e.g. anxiety dreams)'. Adolf Grünbaum, *The Foundations of Psychoanalysis: A Philosophical Critique* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 219.

<sup>77</sup> Carl Gustav Jung, *Man and His Symbols* (New York: Laurel, 1964), p. 5. Jung saw this divide as natural (i.e. non-pathological); however, he also thought that the split was exacerbated in modern man, who had lost the capacity to communicate with all parts of the psyche.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 89.

most tragic illusion'.<sup>79</sup> Jung's re-appropriation of mystical elements, returning to the originary religious aspect of the dream, paralleled the approaches of occultist writers in the early twentieth century, who used fiction to express the fears associated with scientific scrutiny, as I discuss further in Chapter 5, on Meyrink.

## 2. The Dream as Story and Text

The dream's universality has been debated ever since the emergence of anthropology during the nineteenth century, when psychologists began to read anthropological literature in order to compare the dreams of 'primitive' and 'modern' peoples.<sup>80</sup> Do we all dream alike? By now it has been demonstrated that dreaming arises from basic biological functions, and it is recognised and valued in cultures around the world. The universal aspects of dream experience are used to justify quantitative interpretations, which analyse large numbers of dreams, concordance-like, according to coding systems (perhaps most notably the Hall/Van de Castle system).<sup>81</sup> This method has been objected to by anthropologists who see the dream's meaning as inherently context-bound and culturally shaped.<sup>82</sup>

Jung thought that the 'primitive' unconscious revealed man's true mental state, which had only been distorted by civilisation: 'Primitive man was much more governed by his instincts than his "rational" modern descendants [...] In this civilizing process, we have increasingly divided our consciousness from the deeper instinctive strata of the human psyche'.<sup>83</sup> This is not far removed from Nietzsche's claim that 'wir Alle gleichen im Traume [dem] Wilden [...] im Schlaf und Traum machen wir das Pensum früheren Menschenthums noch einmal durch'.<sup>84</sup> Freud, also interested in the question of whether dream experiences are influenced by social and

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., pp. 82, 91.

<sup>80</sup> See Barbara Tedlock, 'The New Anthropology of Dreaming', in Bulkeley (ed.), *Dreams*, pp. 249-84 (pp. 249-50).

<sup>81</sup> See G. William Domhoff and Calvin Springer Hall, *Finding Meaning in Dreams: A Quantitative Approach* (New York: Springer, 1996), pp. 2-3.

<sup>82</sup> As Tedlock notes, cultural anthropologists study dream theories and interpretation systems as 'complex psychodynamic communicative events'. See Tedlock, 'The New Anthropology of Dreaming', pp. 250, 260.

<sup>83</sup> *Man and his Symbols*, p. 36.

<sup>84</sup> Nietzsche, *Werke*, vol. 4/2: *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches I; Nachgelassene Fragmente* (1967), p. 28.

cultural identity, refers the reader of *Die Traumdeutung* to the works of the anthropologist E.B. Tylor and the sociologist Herbert Spencer, regarding the dream beliefs of ‘primitive’ peoples.<sup>85</sup> Nonetheless, Freud’s approach was ultimately based on a universalising impulse, through his reduction of the dream to the function of wish fulfilment.<sup>86</sup>

However, even if the dream is considered ‘eine anthropologische Konstante, [...] einen objektivbaren Phänotyp der menschlichen Psyche’,<sup>87</sup> its social, intellectual and religious contextualisation cannot be avoided. Not every culture relies on the conventional Western differentiation of dreams and waking using a ‘simple oppositional dichotomy of real versus unreal’.<sup>88</sup> Nor do all cultures share the assumption that dreaming is the ‘most private and personal of modes’; in fact, the dream has often been considered a shared social experience, ‘highly objectified, even capable of appearing in the consciousness of disparate subjects’.<sup>89</sup> The anthropologist Roger Lohmann identifies several types of cultural dream theory: ‘nonsense’ theory, ‘discernment’ theory (dreams are more truthful than waking life), ‘message’ theory (dreams are communications), ‘generative’ theory (dreams contribute to the manifestation of events), ‘soul travel’ theory (the dreamer’s soul wanders outside the body), and ‘visitation’ theory (dreams appear as ‘spiritual visitations to a stationary dreamer’).<sup>90</sup> Versions of all these discourses are invoked by the texts I examine, with a particular emphasis on the dream’s revelatory and communicative powers. The more ‘magical’ varieties, such as soul-wandering and visitation, are major themes in Meyrink’s *Der Golem*, demonstrating the persistence of folk theories alongside scientific and authoritative-hermeneutic approaches such as psychoanalysis.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> *Die Traumdeutung*, p. 2.

<sup>86</sup> The ‘modern narrowing of dreaming to a single paradigmatic type begins with Freud’. Cf. Harry T. Hunt, *The Multiplicity of Dreams: Memory, Imagination, and Consciousness* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 90.

<sup>87</sup> Richard Wilhelm Berger, *Der träumende Held: Untersuchungen zum Traum in der Literatur* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), p. 10.

<sup>88</sup> Barbara Tedlock, ‘Dreaming and Dream Research’, in Barbara Tedlock (ed.), *Dreaming: Anthropological and Psychological Interpretations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 1-30 (p. 1).

<sup>89</sup> David Shulman and Guy G. Stroumsa, ‘Introduction’, in Shulman and Stroumsa, *Dream Cultures*, pp. 3-13 (p. 4).

<sup>90</sup> Roger Ivar Lohmann, ‘Dreams and Ethnography’, in Barrett and McNamara (eds), *The New Science of Dreaming*, pp. 35-69 (pp. 41-43).

<sup>91</sup> Freud himself was careful to sidestep debates about the reality of telepathy, for instance, in ‘diesen Zeiten, die so voll sind von Interesse für sogenannt okkulten Phänomene’. See ‘Traum und Telepathie’ in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 8: *Werke aus den Jahren 1920-1924*, p. 166.

These cultural factors add complexity to the philosophical dilemmas of dream reporting, and further obscure attempts to assess the universality or relativity of oneiric experience. Because dream content is inevitably filtered through culturally determined narrative forms, the study of dream narratives ‘must be closely related to the study of storytelling, oral history, discourse, and linguistics’.<sup>92</sup> A dream’s message cannot be separated from its medium. Content and form are merged. In a sense, the telling of the dream is everything. The quantitative dream researchers Domhoff and Hall, noting that only reported dreams have an ‘objective, or public, existence’, analyse dream narratives as disembodied texts, like stories or plays, categorised by their ‘characters’, settings, social interactions, etc.<sup>93</sup> Such strategies parallel the New Criticism approach to literary texts as self-contained aesthetic objects.<sup>94</sup> Although the removal of the specific dream ‘author’ may be objected to on grounds of anthropological or psychodynamic decontextualisation, it serves to illuminate underlying mental structures revealed in dreams.

The dream has been called an ‘Ur-form’ for basic cognitive capacities, including narrative, metaphor, and the ‘metaphysical questioning of the reality of our lives – the idea, known to all peoples in all times, that in some basic sense life *is* like a dream’.<sup>95</sup> Nietzsche also proposed that dreams were at the root of metaphysics and conditioned the duality of thought itself: ‘Im Traume glaubte der Mensch in den Zeitaltern roher uranfänglicher Cultur eine zweite reale Welt kennen zu lernen; hier ist der Ursprung aller Metaphysik. Ohne den Traum hätte man keinen Anlass zu einer Scheidung der Welt gefunden’.<sup>96</sup> More specifically, it has been speculated that the dream represents an essential storytelling model, or as Bert States describes it, the ‘ur-form’ of fiction.<sup>97</sup> Sartre wrote that the dream ‘est vécu comme fiction’ and must

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<sup>92</sup> Lohmann, ‘Dreams and Ethnography’, p. 53.

<sup>93</sup> Domhoff and Hall, *Finding Meaning in Dreams*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>94</sup> Milton Kramer, *The Dream Experience: A Systematic Exploration* (New York; London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 158-59.

<sup>95</sup> Hunt, *The Multiplicity of Dreams*, p. 214.

<sup>96</sup> *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches I*, p. 23.

<sup>97</sup> Bert O. States, *Dreaming and Storytelling* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 70. The dream researchers Strauch and Meier (*In Search of Dreams*, p. 37), extending the metaphor of the dream as ‘drama’, even suggest that its form may adhere to genre conventions, which they dichotomise into ‘classical drama, developing with logical continuity’, and ‘modern stage play [...proceeding...] in an associative manner, characterized by undefined location, time and participants, as well as by changes in constellations and perspectives’.

be considered as such; it interests us in the way that stories and novels interest us.<sup>98</sup> The case for a special, even originary, relationship between dreaming and storytelling is strengthened by the dream's immediate appearance in the literary experiments of antiquity, such as *Gilgamesh*, where it acts as a recurrent fictional device: both a story-within-a-story and a plot motor for the larger narrative.

The connection between dreams and narration is complicated when dreams are written down. Recent research has shown that written dream reports lack the spontaneity of oral reports, while featuring greater coherence and narrative structure.<sup>99</sup> The act of writing down the dream immediately enhances its story-like elements. However, much may also be lost in the process, through the decision to omit, condense, and eliminate ambiguity. The artificiality of a dream text is likely to be even greater where it is meant to play an important social role. Writing and dreaming magnify each other's effects as tools of authority. Where dreams are used for spiritual and political legitimisation, as in antiquity, this judgement is concretised and immortalised in the text. Ancient dream texts were conscious and artificial creations, recorded 'in a form so stereotyped that it is clear that the dream has been edited to a conventional pattern'.<sup>100</sup> They were deliberately inserted in the text to fulfil specific narrative functions.<sup>101</sup>

Artificiality is indeed one of the most obvious elements distinguishing the literary dream from 'real' dreams. While a literary dream may, of course, be based on a dream that has actually occurred, it is likely to have a clearer structure and semantic design than a real dream.<sup>102</sup> The literary dream is forced by the discrete, linear nature of language to unpack and contextualise the dream's symbolic elements in a process that is inevitably interpretive. While the content of a real-life dream sits uncertainly amid the vast 'context' of the dreamer's life, a literary dream is pre-supplied with a specific and finite background. Artificiality also entails abstraction: as if in reaction to the phenomenological messiness of the dream (its variety and fragmentation), text forms may become rigid. Historically, the literary dream has often been a calculated

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<sup>98</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'imaginaire: Psychologie phénoménologique de l'imagination* (Paris: Gallimard, 1940), p. 306.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Strauch and Meier, *In Search of Dreams*, p. 34.

<sup>100</sup> MacKenzie, *Dreams and Dreaming*, p. 33.

<sup>101</sup> Berger, *Der träumende Held*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>102</sup> Manfred Engel, 'Literatur-/Kulturgeschichte des Traumes', p. 30.



construction, an allegory or rhetorical gesture, in some cases solidifying into a genre-like form, such as the medieval dream vision. Even more abstractly, the dream-as-idea has passed into European languages in its secondary meaning of a hope or wish (as in Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech in 1963). The need for conceptualisation is part of the literary dream's public nature. While most real-life dreams remain private experiences, the literary dream is collective property, subject to analysis and objectification, passed through generations. Rather than depicting experiential reality, it often plays to its audience. As Peter Brown notes, the dream has many innate advantages as a fictional tool: among other things, it can appeal to the shared interpretive interests of readers, it can accommodate incongruous material and engage visual memory, it can be a means of disavowing responsibility, and it can provide access to an alternative mode (such as allegory) that may be less restrictive.<sup>103</sup>

Because of the diversity of dream genres and experiences, I want to argue in what follows that the literary dream should primarily be identified in terms of its formal features, rather than its various manifestations (e.g. as a sleep event, a vivid day-dream, a hallucination or trance). Literary dreams, under these terms, are not always explicitly labelled as such, nor is it always clear whether the dreamer is asleep. Such ambiguity is in fact a key tool in the fictional texts I examine. What is clear in each case is a change in the state of consciousness, characterised by the following formal elements:

1) *Delimitation*: A literary dream is delimited formally and temporally, or even spatially, where it is represented by a 'dreamland'. The limits of the dream define its power as an alternative phenomenological world. Clear boundaries between dreaming and waking stress the definite nature of 'reality', while ambiguous boundaries imbue the entire text with ontological uncertainty. Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis, on Meyrink and Kafka, particularly explore the destabilisation caused by porous dream boundaries.

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<sup>103</sup> Peter Brown (ed.), *Reading Dreams: The Interpretation of Dreams from Chaucer to Shakespeare* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 25.

2) *Duality*: As an alternative reality, the dream always implies a dual structure. It is a ‘Gegenwelt’,<sup>104</sup> standing for the quotidian ‘other’ of every individual.<sup>105</sup> The dichotomy may also be portrayed metaphorically, as for instance in Schnitzler’s *Traumnovelle* (see Chapter 6), which explores the opposition between rational, formal ‘daytime’ selves, and imaginative, impulsive ‘nighttime’ selves.

3) *Marked/unmarked structure*: A literary dream may be subordinate or dominant to its framework. In many cases, the dream remains a brief, embedded, secondary text. However, in works based on a dream-as-life analogy, or in which the dream fulfils a crucial plot function, this dichotomy can be reversed. In the texts considered in this thesis, the ‘dark side’ largely becomes the point of reference, while ‘reality’ becomes vulnerable and referential.<sup>106</sup> The dream (at least temporarily) succeeds in overwhelming waking life.

4) *Alternative rules for reality*: The content of a dream is governed by modes that distinguish it from the other reality of the dual structure. The dream allows events and relationships that would be impossible beyond its boundaries. These shifts are depicted allegorically, for instance, in the alternative rules of distorted time, space and identity in Kubin’s dream-world (see Chapter 2). The dream offers an excursion to a realm of fantasy more permissive to both author and dreaming character, independent of the level of realism in the waking narrative.

5) *Single focus of perception*: The ‘Dream Self’ serves as the experiential reference point crossing the border from one reality system to the other, no matter what transformations this process may cause in his or her identity.<sup>107</sup> The dream contains an inherent challenge to the self by eliminating or reducing self-awareness, resulting in a ‘metacognitive deficit’, a lack of *Zustandsklarheit*.<sup>108</sup> In the following chapters, I

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<sup>104</sup> Joachim Kalka, ‘Der Halbschlaf: Poetik einer ungewissen Zone’, *Neue Rundschau*, 113/3 (2002), 16-27 (p. 16).

<sup>105</sup> Engel, ‘Literatur-/Kulturgeschichte des Traumes’, p. 24.

<sup>106</sup> On the privileging of the ‘dark side’ in Austrian literature around 1900, see Lorna Martens, *Shadow Lines: Austrian Literature from Freud to Kafka* (Lincoln, NE; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), p. 2.

<sup>107</sup> The concept of the ‘Dream Self’ is used by researchers Strauch and Meier to label the special instance of identity occurring in the dream. Cf. *In Search of Dreams*, p. 36.

<sup>108</sup> Windt and Metzinger note that ‘dreamers only have a weakly developed first-person perspective [...] in technical terms, the dreamer lacks a phenomenal model of the intentionality relation (PMIR) –

note how authors try to capture the elusive moment of boundary-crossing, both from the inside (Schnitzler's stream-of-consciousness technique in *Fräulein Else*) and the outside (Musil's observational technique in *Törleß*).

This set of features makes the literary dream into a unique narrative tool, allowing the author to experiment with varying textual rules, and to realise encounters and scenarios that would be impossible in the external narrative reality. These new rules can only be recognised as alternative to the extent that they are delimited in a marked/unmarked dual structure, and introduced by a single focus of consciousness that serves as a boundary-crossing guide into the other reality. In many fictional texts, this tool may only play a minor role or serve as a simple framing device, perhaps in the 'normal' context of a sleep event occurring at night. However, for the authors and texts examined here, the manipulation of boundaries, rules and dilemmas associated with the (literary) dream is a crucial part of its value. The dream is problematised, and its uses as a narrative tool are stretched, distorted or exaggerated, both as a textual experiment, and as a way of addressing epistemological concerns.

The dream can therefore appear in a variety of manifestations. It may, of course, occur as a dream event (temporally defined), but also as a space, as in Kubin's Dream Realm or Meyrink's dreamlike Jewish quarter in Prague. The dream may even take the form of a physical symbol, animate or inanimate, which somehow provides access to the alternative reality. This may be an object, such as Novalis's *blaue Blume*, or a character, sometimes a *Doppelgänger* figure (the dreamer's self as it exists on the 'other side' of the dream reality), a theme explored more closely in Chapter 5. The degree of the dreamer's wakefulness often remains unclear. In cases of ambiguity, mental health may be questioned: 'Am I dreaming or going mad?' In this context, the state of *Halbschlaf* (sometimes *Halbtraum*) takes on a crucial role as border zone between dreaming and waking, 'eine Zone der Verwirrung und paradoxen Überwachheit, des Hinüberchangierens in die andere Welt'.<sup>109</sup> It offers a special type of perception, '[ein inneres] Sehen [...] das weder wacher Gedanke ist

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she is unable to consciously experience her own relationship to her current phenomenological world'. Cf. Jennifer Michelle Windt and Thomas Metzinger, 'The Philosophy of Dreaming and Self-Consciousness: What Happens to the Experiential Subject during the Dream State?', in Barrett and McNamara (eds), *The New Science of Dreaming*, pp. 193-247 (pp. 205, 207-8).

<sup>109</sup> Kalka, *Der Halbschlaf*, p. 16.

noch Symbolsprache des Traumes', in many cases portrayed as essential for communication between these areas.<sup>110</sup> Before the dream, it prepares the mind and introduces thematic material. Afterwards, it serves to consolidate the intuitive *Erkenntnis* gained from the dream. Where it occurs, it is significant as a description of cognitive processes (particularly in Musil's and Schnitzler's texts) and as a fictional tool for blurring the boundary between worlds, destabilising the reader's sense of reality and introducing an element of the uncanny (as I note with regard to Meyrink's novel in Chapter 5).<sup>111</sup>

In the atmosphere of phenomenological uncertainty created by these fluctuations, a key role is played by the dreamer, 'by definition alone, solitary, separated from social activity'.<sup>112</sup> The dreamer is a special kind of philosophical subject. Confronted with his or her own mind, acting beyond conscious control, the dreamer illustrates self-referential experience. The author's choice of dreamer and point of view is therefore of particular importance. A dreamer whose dreams are reported in full from an omniscient perspective becomes the most vulnerable and intimately exposed character possible. Readers are granted access to mental processes over which the dreamer has no mastery, and may not even remember. However, when the dreamer tells a dream to other characters, the layer of conscious interpretation is reinserted, along with the capacity for misrepresentation. Narration means that the dream becomes a shared, social event. As in real life, the recounting of the dream is a revelatory moment, when unconscious material is translated into the 'language' of consciousness, exposing a self that is otherwise inaccessible.<sup>113</sup> The moment of narration is part of the dream's 'afterlife', when its validity and meaning can be debated.<sup>114</sup>

Because of the dream's exploration of experienced and narrated subjectivity, it can be a powerful vehicle for gender conceptions. Freud stressed the sexuality of the

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<sup>110</sup> Pfothenhauer and Schneider, *Halbschlafbilder*, p. 2.

<sup>111</sup> In the work of E.T.A. Hoffmann, the Romantic master of the uncanny, half-sleep is a common trope that is not always clearly differentiated from dreams themselves, as noted by Pfothenhauer and Schneider: 'Es ereignet sich sozusagen im Vorhof des Traums einem Zustand des Delirierens, in welchem das Bewußtsein noch nicht ganz ausgeschaltet ist.' *Halbschlafbilder*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>112</sup> Brown, *Reading Dreams*, p. 28.

<sup>113</sup> Thomas, *Dreams of Authority*, p. 11.

<sup>114</sup> Brown, *Reading Dreams*, p. 2.

female unconscious, while allowing more room for ambition and worldly concerns in men,<sup>115</sup> which led him to interpret women's dreams differently; for instance: 'Wenn eine Frauensperson vom Fallen träumt, so hat das wohl regelmäßig einen sexuellen Sinn'.<sup>116</sup> Research into the gendered aspects of dreaming continues today, offering mixed evidence for the presence of differences.<sup>117</sup> However, like cultural variations, the gendered aspects of dream narratives are inseparable from social context. In real life, received stereotypes may affect the way a dream is reported and even experienced (although this is harder to verify), and this possibility applies equally to literary dreams.<sup>118</sup>

In the texts examined in this thesis, female dreams are only directly depicted in the work of Arthur Schnitzler, who shared Freud's interest in 'penetrating' the (sexualised) female psyche, but who also transcended gendered stereotypes through dreams, particularly in Albertine's dream in *Traumnovelle*, discussed in Chapter 6. The other authors included here largely ignore women's inner life, and thereby reveal their affinities with the culture of eroticised male-centrism popularised by Otto Weininger, who, in *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903), denigrated women while celebrating the androgynous nature of the male subject: 'Der Mann, als Mikrokosmos, ist beides, zusammengesetzt aus höherem und niederem Leben, aus metaphysisch Existentem und Wesenlosem, aus Form und Materie: das Weib ist

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<sup>115</sup> 'Beim jungen Weib herrschen die erotischen Wünsche fast ausschließend, den sein Ehrgeiz wird in der Regel vom Liebestreben aufgezehrt; beim jungen Mann sind neben den erotischen die eigensüchtigen und ehrgeizigen Wünsche vordringlich genug'. 'Der Dichter und Phantasieren', p. 217.

<sup>116</sup> *Die Traumdeutung*, p. 208.

<sup>117</sup> For a recent review of research on the gendered aspects of dreaming, see Amy Blume-Marcovici, 'Gender Differences in Dreams: Applications to Dream Work With Male Clients', *Dreaming*, 20/3 (2010), 199-210. Blume-Marcovici notes that, in many regards, no significant differences have been identified (pp. 199-200), although it appears that men recall fewer dreams, and their dreams are more aggressive and populated by more male characters – an aspect that Blume-Marcovici suggests may reveal suppression of the Jungian anima (pp. 207-8). Meanwhile, Kahn and Hobson argue that there is no evidence for major emotional differences between men's and women's dreams, and speculate 'that learned gender differences are not accessible to the dreaming brain'. See Kahn, David and Hobson, 'Stereotypical Gender-Based Emotions Are Not Detectable in Dream Reports', *Dreaming*, 12/4, (2002), 209-22 (p. 221). Strauch and Meier conclude that 'the dream world of both sexes does not differ basically' (*In Search of Dreams*, p. 239).

<sup>118</sup> For instance, in a study of Buddhist dream narratives, Serinity Young notes how the dream becomes a tool of power, offering 'a safe way [for women] to protest male authority over their lives'. However, this power is subject to ultimate male control through interpretation and the capacity to deny the validity of women's dreams. Men's dreams, meanwhile, feature terrifying female images that are used, Young argues, 'to conquer a fear of female power'. See Serinity Young, 'Buddhist Dream Experience: The Role of Interpretation, Ritual, and Gender', in Bulkeley (ed.), *Dreams*, pp. 9-28 (pp. 17-19).

nichts, es ist nur Materie'.<sup>119</sup> In the context of this thesis, it appears that the dream can represent the 'gestation' of inner knowledge within the male body, as emphasised by the idea of the dream as *Seelenschwängerung* in Meyrink's *Der Golem*, discussed in Chapter 5. The dream offers a way for men to embrace the inner 'dream woman', also apparent in the frequency of hermaphroditic symbolism. Several of the texts – and the dreams they portray – are almost entirely populated by male characters, and the theme of homoeroticism is strong. As noted in Chapter 4, on Kafka, this homoeroticism can be understood both literally, and as an indication that the female-other has been narcissistically replaced by the female-self. The embrace of dream-life is intertwined with the accommodation of a more complex masculine sexuality, in exploration of the 'eroticised homosociality' noted by Mark Anderson.<sup>120</sup> Where female characters do appear in these texts, they tend to fall into a conventional dichotomy of the pure or promiscuous (also emphasised by Weininger's dyad of 'die absolute Mutter und die absolute Dirne'<sup>121</sup>) and fail to display the active self-determination so prized, and sought after, by the male protagonists, in part through their dream-life. In Kubin's novel, for instance, the narrator's wife cannot survive in the dream-world, proving, by extension, that she is unsuited to an artistic calling.

Against this background, it would be worthwhile to extend future research to a parallel examination of literary dreams by female authors to see if, and how, these patterns are repeated or refuted. A promising case, published slightly earlier, is Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach's story 'Ihr Traum: Erlebnis eines Malers' (1893), in which a male artist finds inspiration in a beautiful old woman ('das Urbild einer schönen Greisin'), who, perhaps in a state of dementia, lives a 'Traumleben' of confusion about the living and the dead. The artist, in his own state of half-sleep, receives a vision in which this woman inspires him to create a great work of art.<sup>122</sup> Numerous dreams are also found in the works of Lou Andreas-Salomé, who eventually became

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<sup>119</sup> Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter: Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung* [1903] (Munich: Matthes & Seitz, 1980), p. 393.

<sup>120</sup> Mark M. Anderson, 'Kafka, Homosexuality and the Aesthetics of "Male Culture"', in Ritchie Robertson and Edward Timms (eds), *Gender and Politics in Austrian Fiction, Austrian Studies*, 7 (1996), 79-99 (85).

<sup>121</sup> Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, p. 287.

<sup>122</sup> Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, 'Ihr Traum: Erlebnis eines Malers' [1893], in *Gesammelte Werke in drei Bänden*, vol. 3: *Erzählungen. Autobiographische Schriften*, ed. Johannes Klein (Munich: Winkler, 1958), pp. 75-101 (pp. 80, 94, 96).

a psychoanalyst. An intriguing instance of gendered dreaming occurs, for instance, in her story 'Fenitschka' (1898), in which the eponymous protagonist dreams of being a 'grisette', provoking an angry response from her male admirer, Max, who sees this as a sign of 'Selbsterniedrigung'.<sup>123</sup> This thesis does not include an in-depth analysis of these texts, but I mention them in order to highlight the importance of gender in dreams, both for sexual identity and for notions of subjectivity based on subconscious experience. The dreams considered in the following chapters suggest a threat to male selfhood, which, however, provoked a creative response through experimentation with complex sexual identities. Stereotypes of gender were beginning to shift, as illustrated by the male and female dreams contained in Schnitzler's late novellas. As I discuss in the next section, the dream had become a key tool for the Modernist subversion of certainty.

### 3. The Modernist Literary Dream at the Collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire

This thesis hypothesises that a fundamental shift occurred in the literary dream during Modernism, with special forms emerging in German-language works at the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. One aim is to show how literary dreams by Kubin, Kafka, Musil, Meyrink and Schnitzler can be used as a map of changing subjectivity in the early twentieth century. The texts reveal an *Ich* perilously fragmented by (self-)scrutiny and the new awareness of inner rebellion. To accommodate an unconscious that had swollen to enormous and overwhelming proportions, the self had to change, relinquishing its claims to unity and rationality. The literary dream, as a major site of negotiation in this process, discarded its traditional forms and became a medium of experimentation, both linguistic and philosophical, in the search for new and hybrid ways of being and communicating.

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<sup>123</sup> Cf. Lou Andreas-Salomé, *Fenitschka; Eine Ausschweifung* [1898], ed. Ernst Pfeiffer (Frankfurt am Main; Berlin; Vienna: Ullstein, 1983), p. 62. Fenia treats the dream as a place of (self)-assessment: 'Im Traum taxieren wir uns anders, — uns und die Dinge, — verworren und wirr vielleicht, aber doch so ganz naiv' (p. 62). Max also has a dream of Fenia as desirable but dominating and rejecting. He remains uncertain whether this dream is the 'Ursache, oder die Wirkung' of his amorous feelings for her (p. 52). The dream therefore plays a role in the construction of femininity through gendered imagination in this text, as described, for example, by Brigid Haines, in 'Lou-Andreas-Salomé's *Fenitschka*: A Feminist Reading', *German Life and Letters*, 44 (1991), 416-25.

### 3.1 The Romantic Inheritance

To understand the Modernist approach, one must first look back to the Romantic dream, accepted as a direct inheritance by many writers of the early twentieth century. It was the Romantics who first set out to discover the self through unconscious material. If the literary dream had hitherto offered a window onto religious beliefs and systems of authority, the Romantics made it into a mirror, an index of self-realisation. *Das Unbewusste*, by nature elusive, found its most concrete manifestation and symbol in the dream, which also acted synecdochally as its 'via regia'. This was the site of direct visitations from the unconscious, that *other* self.

However, in the Romanticism of the German-speaking world, that other self is still closely related to the divine. Dreams and dream references – abundant, sometimes pervasive – often take the form of a transcendent vision, 'ein schöner Traum', associated with ecstasy, blissful union, knowledge and awareness. It is sometimes unclear whether the 'dream' is a nocturnal dream, a day-dream, or just a moment of wishful thinking. As Pfothenhauer and Schneider note, the major interest in half-sleep states around 1900 was preceded by a similar wave of fascination a century earlier.<sup>124</sup> In the Romantic view, the ambiguity of dream experience was not necessarily problematic, as the dream's most important function was symbolic. A passage from E.T.A. Hoffmann's story 'Doge und Dogaresse' (1819) shows how the Romantic dream has a habit of slipping into the text as a reminder of the sublime:

[...] dann kam der Traum und goß, mir in lindem Säuseln die heiße Stirn fächernd, alle Seligkeit irgendeines glücklichen Moments, in dem mir die ewige Macht die Wonne des Himmels ahnen ließ und dessen Bewußtsein tief in meiner Seele ruht, in mein Inneres. Jetzt ruhe ich auf weichen Kissen, und keine Arbeit verzehrt meine Kraft, aber erwache ich aus dem Traum oder kommt mir wachend das Bewußtsein jenes Moments in den Sinn, so fühle ich, daß mein armes verlassenes Dasein mir ja ebenso wie damals eine drückende Bürde ist, die abzuwerfen ich trachten möchte.<sup>125</sup>

This dream's associations with blessedness and beauty are typical, along with the sense of refuge that it offers from the waking world. But the opposite could also be true of Romantic dreams, which might act as vehicles of horror and unease.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. Pfothenhauer and Schneider, *Halbschlafbilder*, p. 2.

<sup>125</sup> Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann, *Sämtliche Werke in sechs Bänden*, ed. Hartmut Steinecke and Wulf Segebrecht (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985-2004), vol 4: *Die Serapionsbrüde*, ed. Wulf Segebrecht (2001), p. 450.



Hoffmann, later a favourite of many Modernist writers, was a master of blurred boundaries between waking, dreaming and day-dreams, a technique intended to disconcert the reader with a sense of the uncanny, or 'das Unheimliche', famously analysed by Freud in his study of the same name (1919). Romantic nightmares often appear as warnings, like the evil auguries of antiquity, and are associated with ugliness and foreboding, in direct contrast to the dream cited above. Romantic dreams thus largely fall into categories of the blissful or horrible, echoing the old Christian distinction between angelic and demonic dreams. This was an adaptation of the past that did not excise spirituality but interiorised it. As Porter writes, the Romantic dream put the dreamer in touch with the 'wisdom of the collective unconscious, the supernatural order, or both', but it was also based on a 'call to self-definition'.<sup>126</sup> Even where dreams took a menacing or grotesque form, they were still meaningful messages from the spiritual realm, now coming from *within*. Perhaps the most famous example of such internal-mystical communication is the dream of the *blaue Blume* in Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802). The parents of Heinrich, the dreamer, reject the legitimacy of his dream. His mother dismisses it as a minor physical pathology: 'du hast dich gewiß auf den Rücken gelegt, oder beim Abendsegen fremde Gedanken gehabt'.<sup>127</sup> His father cites the folk aphorism 'Träume sind Schäume', and claims that dreams have lost their original power: 'Die Zeiten sind nicht mehr, wo zu den Träumen göttliche Gesichte sich gesellten'.<sup>128</sup> Both parents are proponents of a 'nonsense' theory of dreaming. But Heinrich's dream is precisely meant to represent a rebirth of mystical experience. The refusal of his parents' Enlightenment-era interpretations is intended as an explicit contribution to the ongoing *Traumdiskurs*.<sup>129</sup>

Longer dreams in Romantic texts sometimes reveal an ambivalence that foreshadows the Modernist approach. A notable example is found in Ludwig Tieck's late Romantic novella *Des Lebens Überfluß* (1839).<sup>130</sup> The tale of a young couple who has eloped into poverty, it blossoms into full Romantic idealism in an impossibly

<sup>126</sup> Porter, *The Literary Dream in French Romanticism*, pp. 17, 29.

<sup>127</sup> Novalis, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, in *Werke in einem Band*, ed. Hans-Dietrich Dahnke and Rudolf Walbiner (Berlin; Weimar: Aufbau, 1984), pp.111-262 (p. 114).

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> Engel, 'Literatur-/Kulturgeschichte des Traumes', p. 29.

<sup>130</sup> Ludwig Tieck, 'Des Lebens Überfluß', pp. 883-932 in *Werke in einem Band*, ed. Peter Plett (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1967).

happy ending, where all wrongs are righted and Heinrich and Klara are restored to wealth and social standing. Yet the dream at its heart – in which Heinrich dreams that they are both sold as objects at auction, and finally condemned to execution – is a darkly symbolic and fluctuating anxiety dream worthy of Freudian analysis.<sup>131</sup> The dream also anticipates Schnitzler's persistent theme of (marital) jealousy in dreams, and associated questions of personal responsibility, addressed in greater depth in Chapter 6.

In *Des Lebens Überfluss*, the discourse *about* the dream, in the dialogue between Heinrich and Klara, is just as important and revelatory. It shows that the Romantic approach to dreams, far from ignorant of nuances, could instead choose to evade dream analysis through an appeal to mysticism. Heinrich recognises the varieties of dream experience:

Die Träume sind auch sehr verschiedener Art. [...] Denn diese wundersam komplizierte Mischung unsers Wesens von Materie und Geist, von Tier und Engel lässt in allen Funktionen so unendlich verschiedene Nuancen zu, dass über dergleichen sich am wenigsten etwas Allgemeines sagen last. (906)

He also admits the darker moral possibilities raised by the dream: 'Wir sind oft grausam, lügenhaft, feige im Traum, ja ausgemacht niederträchtig, wir morden ein unschuldiges Kind mit Freuden und sind doch überzeugt, dass alles dies unsrer wahren Natur fremd und widerwärtig sei' (906). However, after he has finished narrating his dream, which leaves the young couple so 'nachdenklich', they both agree that it would be wiser not to probe any further into its mysteries. Heinrich says,

Zerquetsche die leuchtende, süßduftende Blume, und der Schleim in deiner Hand ist weder Blume noch Natur. Aus der göttlichen Schlafbetäubung, in welche Natur und Dasein uns einwiegen, aus diesem Poesieschlummer sollen wir nicht erwachen wollen, im Wahn, jenseit die Wahrheit zu finden. (913)

The flower in this passage is analogous to Novalis's *blaue Blume*, which also appears in a dream. The message is clearly that mystical experience, through dreams, would

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<sup>131</sup> The theme of witnessing one's own execution is also found in the drug-induced dream of the 'Marche au supplice' in Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* (1830).

be destroyed by over-inquisitive analysis. The concept of *Poesieschlummer* brilliantly marries the sacred duality of *Dichtung* and *Traum*, to be protected at any cost from human *Wissensgier*. This theory of ‘Schonung’, it has been noted, is based on ‘bezeichnenderweise romantische Kernvorstellungen’.<sup>132</sup>

The Romantics thus adopted and adapted the religious-visionary dream, an ancient tradition implicitly recognisable to readers and providing a ready-made template for dream narrative. But this conventionalising framework was already straining to contain the complexity and implications of real dream content. The path from the Romantic dream to the Modernist dream was marked by a crucial reversal of the relationship between form and content. In the past, dream material had been forced into the outlines of a chosen narrative mode. But with the increasing focus on the individual, the specific content of real dreams was becoming more interesting in its own right. The Modernists, inheriting the tension between form and content, finally overthrew the balance and looked to the dream as a template for new narrative forms, a process eventually carried to great extremes by the Surrealists. However, the experiment was daring, because it required an unprecedented embrace of the bizarreness and fragmentation of dreams, implying a parallel acceptance, or at least recognition, of the chaos of the self. Since ancient times, dreams that were too irregular or disjointed had been dismissed as meaningless or pathological, unworthy of interpretation.<sup>133</sup> Later, Enlightenment sceptics used such evidence to dismiss the dream altogether. The Romantics, reviving the tradition of the dream-vision, sought to reconcile aesthetics with bizarreness through an appeal to mysticism and fairy-tale. However, the Modernists, inheriting the accumulated debris of these traditions, were born into a scientific era that demanded sharper empirical awareness of dream content, and consequently, new literary forms to accommodate that content. The authors examined in this thesis – writing at the threshold of the avant-garde

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<sup>132</sup> Manfred Mittermeyer, ‘Der Zerfall des Ichs im romantischen Märchen’, in Eduard Beutner and Ulrike Tanzer (eds), *Literatur als Geschichte des Ich* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2000), pp. 77-94 (p. 88).

<sup>133</sup> This ancient belief is clearly documented, for instance, in Artemidorus’s theories of dream divination from the second century A.D., in which he separates ‘allegorical’ and ‘symbolic’ dreams from the category of ‘meaningless dreams that come from overeating or other indulgences’; cf. Peter T. Struck, *Birth of the Symbol: Ancient Readers at the Limits of their Texts* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 183.

movements after the First World War – engaged in experimental dismantling of the nineteenth-century dream-vision forms weakened by psychological scrutiny.

### 3.2 Freud and the Creative Processes of Dreaming

The new psychiatric disciplines were born of the same interest in the subconscious that stimulated the creation of Romantic literary dreams. But as the nineteenth century progressed, the positivist methods for scrutinising the mind became more penetrative and physically manipulative, as the use of drugs, hypnosis, behavioural experiments and lunatic asylums was institutionalised. While the body was dissected, the ‘self’ was vivisected. At the end of the century, positivist and Romantic trends intersected in the form of Sigmund Freud – sceptic, man of science, and the recipient of a literary heritage. *Die Traumdeutung* has often been considered a hybrid literary work in itself, and Freud has been labelled a repressed artist or novelist. Sarah Kofman, for instance, argued that Freud, as an ‘[a]uteur de roman [...] reconnaît l’être pour le moins, puisqu’il va jusqu’à comparer les constructions analytiques aux délires de ses patients’.<sup>134</sup> Freud was intellectually attracted to fiction-writers, as evidenced by his *doppelgängerisch* feelings towards Arthur Schnitzler (see Chapter 6), and his life-project overlapped with that of literature: as Patrick Mahony demonstrated in *Freud as a Writer* (1982), Freud’s language, style and rhetoric were essential to his impact.<sup>135</sup> This was reflected in Freud’s receipt, in 1930, of the Goethe Prize, a celebrated German literary award, bestowed on him as a sort of lifetime achievement distinction, which he considered the climax of his public life.<sup>136</sup>

Freud drew overtly on literary dreams as a source of research material in his study ‘Der Wahn und die Träume in W. Jensens *Gradiva*’ (1907), the psychoanalytic analysis of a short novel containing several dreams. Here, he admitted the importance of fiction-writers as co-researchers: ‘Wertvolle Bundesgenossen sind aber die Dichter und ihr Zeugnis ist hoch anzuschlagen [...] In der Seelenkunde gar sind sie uns Alltagsmenschen weit voraus, weil sie da aus Quellen schöpfen, welche

<sup>134</sup> Sarah Kofman, *Quatre romans analytiques* (Paris: Galilée, 1974), p. 14. For more on the label of repressed artist, see Lesley Chamberlain, *The Secret Artist: A Close Reading of Sigmund Freud* (London: Quartet, 2000).

<sup>135</sup> Patrick Mahony, *Freud as a Writer* (Boston: International Universities Press, 1982), p. 180.

<sup>136</sup> See Graham Frankland, *Freud’s Literary Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 180.

wir noch nicht für die Wissenschaft erschlossen haben'.<sup>137</sup> But Freud's tendency to emphasise the neurotic symptoms found in dreams was paralleled by his belief that literary writers shared a close affinity with the neurotic, as he explored in 'Der Dichter und das Phantasieren'.<sup>138</sup> If one considers, as I propose, that the dream offers an alternative model of creativity, opposed to conscious creativity, then Freud's role also resembles that of literary critic. The author, in this case, is replaced in many important ways by Freud's 'censor', the metaphor for an alternative agency responsible for shaping and structuring the raw dream material. The author's fictional toolkit is replaced by the censor's distortive dream-work: operations such as symbolic condensation (*Verdichtung*) and visual representation, affective displacement and inversion (*Verschiebung* and *Umkehrung*), and most especially, secondary elaboration (*sekundäre Bearbeitung*).

Freud's thoughts on *die Traumarbeit* and *sekundäre Bearbeitung* (revealing terms in themselves) provide the most insightful glimpse into his tense relationship with creative processes, in his role as analyst/critic. According to Freud, the dream-work, a process specific to dream-life and characteristic of it, is responsible for transforming unconscious thoughts into dream-content (*Trauminhalt*), and is entirely different from waking thought, 'etwas davon qualitativ völlig Verschiedenes und darum zunächst nicht mit [dem wachen Denken] vergleichbar' (TD 511). But secondary elaboration, the fourth and last major distortive operation discussed by Freud, is located at the borders of waking thought, not far removed from the state of *Halbschlaf*. It is the process whereby the dream-work fills in the dream's narrative gaps, so that 'der Traum den Anschein der Absurdität und Zusammenhangslosigkeit verliert und sich dem Vorbilde eines verständlichen Erlebnisses annähert' (TD 494). Freud and the authors he references are not sure when this process occurs, leading Freud to posit the existence of the 'pre-conscious' (*das Vorbewusste*). In effect, this discussion anticipates the debate, still ongoing, about whether dreams really occur in sleep or are invented by our minds as we wake up. 'Secondary elaboration' is Freud's concession that dreams are probably a combination of both processes, but this conflation of content and form seems to disturb him.

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<sup>137</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'Der Wahn und die Träume in W. Jensen's *Gradiva*', in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 7: *Werke aus den Jahren 1917-1920* (1947), pp. 31-128 (p. 33).

<sup>138</sup> Freud, 'Der Dichter und das Phantasieren', pp. 220-21.

The processes of secondary elaboration – the (pre)conscious mind’s capacity for making dreams into narrative – can be viewed as the most novelistic aspect of the dream: synthetic, constructive and creative. But for Freud, it is problematic, a tool of obstruction and obfuscation, offering false meanings. In places, his critique of secondary elaboration reads like a damning literary review: ‘die Bemühung ist nicht jedesmal vom vollen Erfolge gekrönt [...] wir stehen wie hilflos einem sinnlosen Haufen von Inhaltsbrocken gegenüber’ (TD 494-95). Secondary elaboration is a poor artist, he seems to say, but in fact he is also in competition with this process from an interpretive perspective: ‘Es sind das Träume, die sozusagen schon einmal gedeutet worden sind, ehe wir sie im Wachen der Deutung unterziehen’ (TD 494). Although this whole discussion is couched in abstract terms, it is really pitting Freud against his patient. The ‘censor’ metaphor puts the reader on guard against himself, against his own faulty and deceptive processes of secondary elaboration and his own private attempts at dream-fiction.<sup>139</sup>

Freud’s parallel ambivalence about artistic creation emerges in this same chapter of *Die Traumdeutung*, where he associates secondary elaboration with day-dreams, and by connection, with fiction-writers. For Freud, day-dreams are the intermediary between dreams and waking creativity (‘Wie die Träume sind sie Wunscherfüllungen; wie die Träume basieren sie zum guten Teil auf den Eindrücken infantiler Erlebnisse; wie die Träume erfreuen sie sich eines gewissen Nachlasses der Zensur für ihre Schöpfungen’, TD 496), and as such, they are the special domain of poets and writers, as he explicitly thematises in ‘Der Dichter und das Phantasieren’. Freud admires the writerly contribution in this domain (‘Dem unbeirrten Scharfblick der Dichter ist die Bedeutung des Tagtraums nicht entgangen’, TD 495) but this praise is ambivalent considering Freud’s understanding of day-dreams. For in day-dreams, secondary elaboration is allowed to run free: ‘In der ‘sekundären Bearbeitung’ [...] finden wir dieselbe Tätigkeit wieder, die sich bei der Schöpfung der Tagträume ungehemmt von anderen Einflüssen äußern darf’ (TD 496). Day-

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<sup>139</sup> As Heidi Gidion notes, the emphasis on *latent* meaning in psychoanalysis is a major point of incompatibility with the literary approach to dreams and their interpretation: ‘Für den Künstler ist das Manifeste die Form, und deren Gestaltung gilt die ganze Aufmerksamkeit von Autoren als Formkünstlern’. Cf. Heidi Gidion, *Phantastische Nächte: Traumerfahrungen in Poesie und Prosa* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), p. 16.

dreams, or *Tagesphantasien*, also complicate dream interpretation because they have a way of inserting themselves into dreams as a pre-existing structure, or 'Fassade' (TD 497). And finally, as Freud notes in 'Der Dichter und Phantasieren', day-dreams are closely related to the pathological: 'Das Überwuchern und Übermächtigwerden der Phantasien stellt die Bedingungen für den Verfall in Neurose oder Psychose her'.<sup>140</sup> This position was carried to even greater extremes by some of Freud's contemporaries, notably his erstwhile protégé Wilhelm Stekel, in works such as *Die Träume der Dichter: Eine vergleichende Untersuchung der unbewußten Triebkräfte bei Dichtern, Neurotikern und Verbrechern* (1912). Freud did praise writers for their special ability to transform fantasy into an aesthetically palatable product; the true *ars poetica*, he believes, lies in conquering the repulsion (*Abstoßung*) that is the normal reaction to private day-dreams.<sup>141</sup> But, overall, he seems uneasy with the creative agency of others. A reading of 'Der Wahn und die Träume in W. Jensens *Gradiva*' reveals the text 'lying' passively before him, the ultimate docile patient of psychoanalysis. In a mode anticipating Roland Barthes, Freud is even eager to excise the idea of the author, to be free from the 'Schädigungen, die mit der Aufnahme des künstlichen Einheitsbegriffes "der Dichter" verbunden sind'.<sup>142</sup>

In this context, Freud's writer contemporaries were often wary of his theories, because their deeply personal attempts to *create* were threatened by the abstracting, pre-deconstructionist project of psychoanalysis. Nonetheless, writers were also ambivalent and fascinated, often well-read in the new sciences of the mind, as the ideas of *Tiefenpsychologie* successfully penetrated the general social worldview. Later, Jung offered an approach that coexisted more easily with fiction, due to his greater interest in manifest dream content and in the dream's value as a tool of positive self-determination. He was inspired by the use of psychic symbolism in the works of Gustav Meyrink and others (see Chapter 5), and his own insights greatly influenced Hermann Hesse. However, he also emphasised the universal and the anonymous in both dreams and literature, arguing that myths 'go back to the

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<sup>140</sup> 'Der Dichter und Phantasieren', p. 218.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.

<sup>142</sup> 'Gradiva', p. 34.

primitive storyteller and his dreams, to men moved by the stirring of their fantasies'.<sup>143</sup>

### 3.3 Modernism and Oneiric Experience

Freud's aesthetics of 'transience, flux, fragmentation and incompleteness' have been viewed as symptomatic of the emerging modernity of the twentieth century.<sup>144</sup> Even before *Die Traumdeutung*, the fascination with hysteria (an illness resembling a waking dream) revealed the growing awareness of fractured personality. The heightened sense of subjectivity inherited from the Romantics became a hyper-subjectivity; the voracious self-as-observer threatened to dismember the self-as-object. Scientists and writers alike were increasingly interested in the machinery and mechanisms of perception, as the self became inseparable from anatomy. The Romantics' fears of lost integrity and the violation of sacred boundaries were realised. As Ferguson writes, the modern world offers no more possibility of the 'soul establishing contact with a transcendental realm of ultimate meaning and significance. Meaning begins and ends in the body, from which there is no escape into any more liberated domain'.<sup>145</sup> Arguably, however, the writers of Freud's period *did* replace this 'transcendental realm' – with the appropriately mysterious, albeit menacing, idea of the unconscious, perhaps better metaphorised as an *underground* realm. As before, this 'other' realm offering partial release from the body was most potently represented by dreams. Simultaneously, however, the dream was also a testing ground for the anomalies of perception. Through its distortions, it cast light on the possibilities and limitations of the human mind more generally.

One of the sensory mysteries most fascinating to Modernists was the discrepancy between objective time and experienced time, the fluctuations of 'time in the mind' versus the monotony of time by the clock, leading them to experiment, in their works, with a new, dreamlike 'temporal autonomy'.<sup>146</sup> A famous example is Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, which opens at the very border between waking and

<sup>143</sup> *Man and his Symbols*, p. 78.

<sup>144</sup> Harvie Ferguson, *The Lure of Dreams: Sigmund Freud and the Construction of Modernity* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 50.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>146</sup> Randall Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992), pp. 83, 124.



sleeping: 'Parfois, à peine ma bougie éteinte, mes yeux se fermaient si vite que je n'avais pas le temps de me dire: "Je m'endors." Et, une demi-heure après, la pensée qu'il était temps de chercher le sommeil m'éveillait'.<sup>147</sup> As already recognised by Herder, the dream is a place where time can be almost limitlessly distorted.<sup>148</sup> In this way, it offers a model for more general conclusions about the plastic nature of subjective time. But this relativism also leads to isolation: if every person's experience of time is as unique as her dreams – if perception itself is idiosyncratic – then the individual is essentially trapped in her own bubble of experience. As demonstrated in the following chapters, this results in a marked tendency towards narcissism, even solipsism, in many Modernist texts, as the fictional dreamer begins to suspect that the waking world is as much her 'creation' as are her dreams.

This crisis of perception was also inseparable from the crisis of expression that provoked Modernist authors to unprecedented formal experimentation. Scepticism, even despair, about the possibilities of communicating individual experience was intermingled with playfulness and liberation from old forms. In this context, the dream was both a symbol of frustration (underlining the essential ineffability of experience) *and* a source of creative solutions, new ways of expressing experience through bizarreness, imagery, fantasy, temporal and spatial fluctuations, and literalised metaphors.<sup>149</sup> In *A Dream Play* (1901), August Strindberg used the oneiric template to establish a form – or anti-form – with infinitely enhanced possibilities. He writes in his author's note, 'Everything can happen, everything is possible and probable. Time and place do not exist; the imagination spins, weaving new patterns on a flimsy basis of reality: a mixture of memories, experiences, free associations, absurdities and improvisations'.<sup>150</sup> Decades later, such experimentation culminated in James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939), his 'book of the dark', which the author

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<sup>147</sup> Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu*, ed. Jean-Yves Tadié, 4 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1987-1989), vol. 1: *Du côté de chez Swann* (1987), p. 3.

<sup>148</sup> Herder, *Werke*, vol. 1, p. 544.

<sup>149</sup> Harry Hunt argues that bizarreness may even be one of the dream's most story-like features, because it 'introduces the unexpected into the dream narrative', inciting the dreamer to respond. See *The Multiplicity of Dreams*, p. 166.

<sup>150</sup> August Strindberg, 'Author's Note', trans. Charlotte Barslund, in Caryl Churchill (ed.), *A Dream Play* (London: Nick Hern Books, 2005), p. 33.

himself described as suiting the ‘aesthetic’ of the dream, and as an attempt to capture the essence of nocturnal experience.<sup>151</sup>

### 3.4 Dreams at the End of the Austro-Hungarian Empire

There were a number of reasons why the declining and disintegrating Austro-Hungarian Empire was such fertile ground for literary dreams. It was not only the home of dream interpretation; it also produced some of the most incisive and influential theorists on the twin crises of perception and communication. On the former front, the physicist and philosopher Ernst Mach proposed, in *Die Analyse der Empfindungen und das Verhältnis des Physischen zum Psychischen* (1886), that only sensations, or *Sinnesempfindungen*, are real – a viewpoint mirroring the perspective of literary Impressionism, where space, time and reality itself can only be perceived through the flow of impressions in real-time, eluding objective analysis.<sup>152</sup> Mach himself recognised the implications for consciousness: ‘wo kein Gegensatz besteht,’ he wrote, ‘ist die Unterscheidung von Traum und Wachen, Schein und Wirklichkeit ganz müßig und wertlos’.<sup>153</sup> The old problematic opposition between waking and dreaming dissolves into a monistic mass of sensory input. The flaws identified in Mach’s philosophy by many commentators did not necessarily thwart its intellectual potency, as I discuss in Chapter 3, on Robert Musil, who wrote his doctoral dissertation on Mach and subsequently appeared to pursue Machian themes of perception in his fiction.

Meanwhile, if Mach, by reducing empirical data to relativistic impressions, seemed to be undermining his own scientific mission (a discrepancy noted by Musil and others), then his approach found a resonant echo in the critique of language by fellow-Austrian Fritz Mauthner, particularly in *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache* (1901-1902), focused on themes that would later occupy yet another Austrian, Ludwig Wittgenstein. Mauthner placed further constraints on the philosophy of

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<sup>151</sup> Cf. John Bishop, *Joyce’s Book of the Dark: Finnegans Wake* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), p. 6. The nocturnal and dreamlike elements of *Ulysses* are also relevant, for instance in the Nighttown episode.

<sup>152</sup> See Marlies Kronegger, *Literary Impressionism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1973), p. 48.

<sup>153</sup> Ernst Mach, *Die Analyse der Empfindungen und das Verhältnis des Physischen zum Psychischen* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991), p. 9.

sensualism by arguing that our senses are contingent *Zufallssinne*: we can never escape their arbitrary confines, according to Mauthner.<sup>154</sup> In parallel, he promoted a profound scepticism regarding the expressive and communicative powers of language, in a rejection that also seemed to perversely invalidate the entire project of philosophy (although never reducing Mauthner to the silence that would seem the only logical response to his realisations). In the literary world, this challenge to perception and language found almost simultaneous expression in Hofmannsthal's 'Chandos Brief' (1902), which documents the fragmentation of the self in a state resembling *Halbtraum*: 'Es zerfiel mir alles in Teile, die Teile wieder in Teile und nichts mehr ließ sich mit einem Begriff umspannen'.<sup>155</sup> As a companion to Mauthner's work, the 'Brief' thematises the futility of language while paradoxically illustrating its power, in part through recourse to a more concrete, and thus metaphorical, 'language of things' ('eine Sprache, in welcher die stummen Dinge zuweilen zu mir sprechen').<sup>156</sup> As I particularly discuss in Chapters 3-5, a language of 'things' – concrete symbols – is also the foundation of dream language.

The interactions between these discourses were noted and interpreted in real time by Hermann Bahr, who wrote '[wir werden] erkennen, daß das Element unseres Lebens nicht die Wahrheit ist, sondern die Illusion'.<sup>157</sup> The culture of *Illusion* encompassed an atmosphere of aestheticism and a hypocritical tension between public formality and private licentiousness. These aspects were crystallised in Vienna, but hardly confined there. A dreamlike sense of absurdity and confusion could be said to hover over the entire multicultural and multilingual Empire, which macrocosmically mirrored the confusion of identity within the individual. The struggle between languages and ethnicities was particularly acute in the Czech-speaking lands, which figure prominently in several works included in this thesis. Prague was home to Kafka, of course, and (for a long time) to Meyrink, but the Czech lands were also the birthplace of Freud, Mauthner, Mach, Rilke, Musil and Kubin, who all developed a

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<sup>154</sup> See Andreas Berlage, *Empfindung, Ich und Sprache um 1900: Ernst Mach, Hermann Bahr und Fritz Mauthner im Zusammenhang* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994), pp. 141, 64.

<sup>155</sup> Hugo von Hofmannsthal, 'Ein Brief', in *Gesammelte Werke in zehn Einzelbänden* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1979), vol. 7: *Erzählungen, Erfundene Gespräche und Briefe, Reisen*, pp. 461-72 (p. 466).

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 472.

<sup>157</sup> Hermann Bahr, *Dialog vom Tragischen* [1904], in Gotthart Wunberg (ed.), *Die Wiener Moderne: Literatur, Kunst und Musik zwischen 1890 und 1910* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1981), p. 148.

keen awareness of (ethno-)linguistic tensions. William Johnston argued that, while Budapest was pervaded by politics, and Vienna by aestheticism, Bohemia (and Prague in particular) was dominated by the special tensions of its Czech-German-Jewish strife, resulting in a tendency among Prague Germans to ‘excogitate visions of world destruction’, expressed in the *Angst*-ridden works of authors such as Kafka, Meyrink, Werfel and Brod.<sup>158</sup>

By the turn of the century, ethnic tensions had worsened. Vienna was subject to anti-Semitic violence, as documented in Schnitzler’s *Jugend in Wien*.<sup>159</sup> In Prague, Czech street signs were put up in place of German ones, the Charles University split into language-based factions, and disputes led to violent riots.<sup>160</sup> This atmosphere of frustration and barely submerged violence is captured in Rilke’s ‘Zwei Prager Geschichten’ of 1899. But the rebellion of Czechs and other ethnic groups was increasingly dissociated from the holistic and Romantic elements of nationalism. By the early twentieth century, revolt was about shedding minority status and gaining the full right of participation in modernity, as an autonomous subject, in an *international* context. One consequence was increased movement and collaboration among the intellectuals in regional capitals, including Prague, Vienna, Berlin and Munich.<sup>161</sup> The relationship between individual and society became more abstract than ever. Members of the already abstract ‘nation’ were now replaced by a universe of interchangeable subjects. Inversely, the individual, subjected to more intensive scrutiny, became an independent microcosm with an inner geography charted in great detail. The dream simultaneously represented the most private and idiosyncratic domain of the individual *and* a phenomenon open to all individuals, offering an imagistic language that transcended political identity.

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<sup>158</sup> William M. Johnston, *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History, 1848-1938* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1972), p. 270.

<sup>159</sup> Arthur Schnitzler, *Jugend in Wien: Eine Autobiographie*, ed. Therese Nickl and Heinrich Schnitzler (Vienna: Molden, 1968), p. 158.

<sup>160</sup> Cf. Peter Horwath, ‘The Erosion of “Gemeinschaft”’: German Writers of Prague, 1890-1924’, *German Studies Review*, 4/1 (1981), 9-37.

<sup>161</sup> As Katherine David-Fox notes, from the 1890s onwards, the young Modernist intellectuals of Prague increasingly looked to Vienna, which came to represent a ‘freer and more open atmosphere and a conduit to the great world outside Bohemia’. Cf. Katherine David-Fox, ‘Prague-Vienna, Prague-Berlin: The Hidden Geography of Czech Modernism’, *Slavic Review*, 59/4 (2000), 735-60 (p. 748).

The Imperial government meanwhile insisted on maintaining the illusion of unity and stability. This suppressive strategy may well have contributed to the interest in dreams, as a symbol of the private and the forbidden. The hypocrisy of the dichotomy between public, 'daytime' life and private, 'nighttime' life was later ridiculed in Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (1930-1933), while the government's pervasive manipulation was given a dark comic treatment in Jaroslav Hašek's *The Good Soldier Švejk* (1923). Sexuality was driven underground. Girls of good family were shielded to an extreme extent (preparing them to become Freud's neurotic subjects), while young men were encouraged to experiment with lower-class women, creating a gendered dichotomy and a bifurcated female identity that opposed sheltered virginity and sexual availability.<sup>162</sup> Catholic institutions, in league with the state and its conservative posture, participated in various waves of anti-Semitic feeling. The result, overall, was a society struggling to suppress its violent and erotic urges, much like a Freudian dreamer. And as in a dream, these urges emerged nonetheless, in oblique and creative forms, some of them disturbing. In this context, the dream was attractive to writers precisely because it served as a reminder of the 'dark and unilluminable' aspects of human nature, constantly threatening to intrude into the supposed rationality of daily life.<sup>163</sup>

The case studies in this thesis are partly meant as a contribution to the larger study of literary dreams, with the intention of illustrating the general dream features posited earlier in this chapter. However, just as the experience and narration of real-life dreams is culturally determined, literary dreams also arise from a specific context. The German-language writers considered here wrote against the background of Central Europe – ever multicultural, multilingual and politicised – at a time when its destabilisation proved extraordinarily fruitful in artistic and intellectual terms. It was no coincidence that the fragmenting Austro-Hungarian Empire became a centre for the study of the fragmenting self: the growing pressure on unsustainable conventions was experienced by individuals and governments alike. Austria and the Czech lands, caught between the Germanic and the Slavic worlds, between east and west, radiated doubt, radical scepticism and curiosity, particularly regarding the human mind, the reality of 'self', and the capacity for free will and control over irrational impulses.

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<sup>162</sup> Johnston, *The Austrian Mind*, pp. 117-19.

<sup>163</sup> Martens, *Shadow Lines*, pp. 1-4.

The socio-political import of this was presciently recognised by literary authors: pre-war texts such as Musil's *Törleß* and Kubin's *Die andere Seite* warn of the innate capacity for violence and (self-)destruction contained in psychological drives. The loss of belief in a unified, self-determining *Ich* can be seen as a major cause behind the 'Zerfall der Werte' described by Hermann Broch in the final novel of his trilogy, *Die Schlafwandler*.<sup>164</sup>

The scope of this thesis unfortunately forces me to omit a great deal of fascinating dream material from 'Austrian' authors such as Hofmannsthal, Beer-Hoffmann, Rilke and Broch, as well as other German-language authors from the same period, notably Thomas Mann and Hermann Hesse. The eclectic sampling included here is intended to represent the wide range of experimentation with the literary dream. Musil's introspective farewell to the *Bildungsroman* in *Törleß* may seem far removed from the wild fantasy of Meyrink's occult/cult classic *Der Golem*, and yet both works were – and remain – active and complementary participants in the *Traumdiskurs*. This variety is an index of unprecedented fictional diversity. The following chapters investigate the authors' efforts to cross over to the 'other side' using the dream's own language. The qualities of real-life dreams that seem antithetical to narrative (the lack of a beginning or end, the instability of identities, the volatile connections between images and ideas) are eagerly incorporated and sometimes made into guiding principles. More than experimentation, this is an attempt to trace the very structures of the mind through the 'ur-form' of storytelling. In the century since the publication of these texts, ever more intrusive neurological research has continued to dismantle the idea of self. But despite technological advances, the riddle of the dream's meaning and definition remains unsolved. The writers examined in this thesis were engaged with the same dilemmas, and their exploration of the fictional possibilities offered by dream experience remains a living contribution.

The order of chapters is intended to form a thematic dialogue. In Chapter 2, the allegorical structure of Kubin's *Die andere Seite* (in which an unnamed narrator travels to a Dream Realm) provides a useful introduction to the dualism underlying

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<sup>164</sup> Hermann Broch, *Gesammelte Werke* (Zurich: Rhein, 1959), vol. 2: *Die Schlafwandler: Eine Romantrilogie*.

the dream, as well as its associated neo-Romantic symbolism and the relationship of dreaming to art and creativity, particularly in the context of Expressionism and Decadence. Musil's *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß*, which follows in Chapter 3, contrasts entirely with Kubin's fantastic mode, yet offers striking correspondences. In both texts, the protagonists travel to and from a liminal zone associated with dreams. Kubin and Musil share a fascination with dual systems and the crossing of borders, in search of the 'die andere Seite' / 'den anderen Zustand'. And both texts emphasise the dream's ability to confer power and authority. However, in contrast to the (Expressionistic) surrender of the self celebrated in Kubin's novel, Musil's text promotes a vision of self-mastery through internal synthesis, in part through the embrace of a metaphorical language influenced by dreams.

The themes of duality, metaphor and mastery/surrender are further pursued in Chapter 4, which focuses on three of Kafka's works: the early novella 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes', the short story 'Ein Traum', and the final novel, *Das Schloß*. The selection is intended to explore the range of Kafka's methods for integrating the literary dream into writing that is already dreamlike in the pervasiveness of its (literalised) metaphors and metonymical free association. Immersion in *das Traumhafte* is equally characteristic of Meyrink's *Der Golem* (Chapter 5), which also shares with Kafka's texts an interest in the power of dreams to deliver (spiritual) judgement, as well as a hypostatising approach to symbols and language. These aspects are partly related to the authors' common interest in Jewish mysticism. In Meyrink's text, however, this is only part of a tapestry of occult traditions in which the dream regains its associations with magic, telepathy and prophesy, offered as defence against the destabilising claims of twentieth-century science. In response, the final chapter turns to Arthur Schnitzler, physician and sceptic, whose work includes a direct literary confrontation with psychoanalysis, which it partly absorbs and partly rejects. In an examination of three late novellas, *Casanovas Heimfahrt*, *Fräulein Else* and *Traumnovelle*, the final chapter focuses on Schnitzler's dismantling of nineteenth-century ideals of heroism, gender, and bourgeois love through the medium of dream.

## Chapter 2

### The Realm of Dreams in Alfred Kubin's *Die andere Seite*

The illustrated novel *Die andere Seite: Ein phantastischer Roman* (1909) is the only major work of fiction by the artist Alfred Kubin (1877-1959).<sup>1</sup> Although Kubin, unlike the other authors in this study, was not a writer first and foremost, his work (both visual and literary) offers a useful approach to the role of dreams in the search for new expressive possibilities at the beginning of the twentieth century. *Die andere Seite* portrays the dream as a large-scale spatial metaphor – a *Traumreich* or ‘Dream Realm’ – that also functions metonymically, as a gateway to the processes of creative imagination. The novel draws on the ‘nightmarish’ aspects of traditional Romantic symbolism, but it is also an expressionistically hybrid work, which marries word and image, and stands ambiguously at the crossroads of several genres, including the fantastic, the Decadent and the apocalyptic. This chapter analyses Kubin’s narrative as a rite of passage, through the medium of the dream, to the world of *Phantasie* that it represents. In the Dream Realm, imagination takes concrete form, as the complex creation of an androgynous oneiric demiurge. The novel’s thematisation of dualism (and its synthesis) is typical of the bifurcated worldview that co-exists with dreams in many of the texts considered in this thesis.

#### 1. *Die andere Seite* as Artistic Crossroads

*Die andere Seite* is an ambiguous work, susceptible to diverse interpretations. This is partially a result of its simple, but symbolically dense, three-part structure. In the first part, an unnamed narrator journeys (with his wife) to a *Traumreich* created and governed by his former school friend, Claus Patera. The second and longest part relates the narrator’s three-year sojourn in the dreamland, where his wife eventually dies. The final part describes the battle between Patera and his great *Widersacher*, ‘the American’ Herkules Bell, and the Realm’s collapse (*Untergang*), in a series of

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred Kubin, *Die andere Seite: Ein phantastischer Roman mit 52 Abbildungen und einem Plan* (Munich: Spangenberg, 1990). This is a reprint of the first edition of 1909. Referenced as DaS.



apocalyptic visions. A brief interpretive epilogue recounts the narrator's fate on returning to Europe.

The anonymous narrator, a 'Zeichner und Illustrator' around thirty years of age (DaS 2), functions as the 'single focus of perception' in this novel. His coherent first-person voice serves as the thread guiding the reader in and out of the dream-world (in contrast to the amorphous, vaguely identified *Ich* of *Der Golem*, discussed in Chapter 5). In this case, the narrator is also an alter ego for Kubin himself. The novel constitutes a global synthesis of themes, images and symbols recurrent in Kubin's visual oeuvre and partly drawn from autobiographical sources, as Kubin himself attested. The artist's early life up to the composition of *Die andere Seite* was marked by traumas that generated several underlying artistic motifs. One major theme was the intermingling of (maternal) female sexuality and death. Kubin (who was born in Litoměřice, Bohemia, but soon moved with his family to Salzburg) lost his mother in childhood and later attempted suicide at her grave, in 1896. His father's second wife (Kubin's aunt – his mother's sister) soon died in childbirth. Kubin also claimed to have been seduced by a pregnant older woman in his adolescence. His early artwork is already pervaded by motifs of maternal mortality and (sexual) perversity, in drawings such as *Die Fruchtbarkeit* (1901-1902), which portrays the pregnant woman as victim of her own fatally swelling body.<sup>2</sup> Later female presences also brought death and illness: the fiancée of Kubin's youth, Emmy Bayer, died unexpectedly of typhoid fever in 1903, and the woman he later married, Hedwig Gründler (sister to the writer Oscar A. H. Schmitz) suffered from lifelong health problems and addictions. In *Die andere Seite*, Kubin's nuptial experiences resurface in the figure of the narrator's sickly wife, whose death provokes both grief and personal transformation. In Kubin's visual work, the fusion of feminine sexuality and death is often more directly necrophiliac, for instance in drawings such as *Der Kuss* (1903), portraying an act of cunnilingus on a female corpse.<sup>3</sup>

Kubin's artistic treatment of masculinity was influenced by the tense relationship with a domineering father (who was, in a doubly Kafkaesque turn, an imperial land

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<sup>2</sup> Reprinted in Annagrete Hoberg (ed.), *Alfred Kubin: Drawings, 1897-1909* (Munich; London; New York: Prestel, 2008), p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> Reprinted in Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, p. 156.

surveyor). The father-son theme also appears early in Kubin's drawings, such as *Vater und Sohn* (c. 1900, showing the younger man 'milking' his father's long white hair for gold coins) and writing experiments, such as the lost fragment 'Der Sohn als Weltenwanderer' from around the same period.<sup>4</sup> Kubin was deeply affected by his father's death in 1907: he wrote *Die andere Seite* in the wake of that event and dedicated it to his father's memory. In this context, Renate Neuhäuser argues that the novel can be read as a translation of Kubin's father complex to a higher social plane where the paternal figure becomes a totalitarian master, both feared and adored; the 'Autoritätsfixiertheit' of the dreamland inhabitants is thus symptomatic of developmental crisis, of the relinquishment of individual freedom in obedience to a 'Führerfigur'.<sup>5</sup> Kubin's drawings do frequently portray male figures as rulers, but their authority is often undermined by lifelessness, such as in the drawing *Der tote Kaiser* (1902-1904), depicting a shrunken Napoleonic death-mask, or *Der letzte König* (c. 1902) in which a skeletal king reigns over cloaked and anonymous subjects.<sup>6</sup>

Kubin himself realised the importance of *Die andere Seite* as a means of integrating his artistic vision. He described the work as a crucial turning point, standing at the 'Wendepunkt einer seelischen Entwicklung'.<sup>7</sup> Having abandoned his early art studies in Munich (1899), Kubin developed an idiosyncratic and darkly fantastic style (influenced by forerunners such as Goya, Klinger and Brueghel), particularly in pen and ink drawings, watercolours and lithographs, often assembled into thematic series. He made an impact at his first solo exhibition in Berlin (1901-1902), where his contemporaries were already shocked by the depictions of torture and perverse eroticism.<sup>8</sup> But during the period of the novel's composition, several years later, Kubin seems to have entered a new intellectual and artistic phase. Gabriele van Zon, for instance, argues that his style suddenly displays greater fragmentation and linear freedom, paralleling that of the novel's narrator, who invents 'ein seltsames

<sup>4</sup> See Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, p. 15. *Vater und Sohn* is reprinted on page 127.

<sup>5</sup> Renate Neuhäuser, *Aspekte des Politischen bei Kubin und Kafka: Eine Deutung der Romane 'Die andere Seite' und 'Das Schloss'* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1998), p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Reprinted in Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, pp. 163 and 175.

<sup>7</sup> Alfred Kubin, *Aus meinem Leben: Gesammelte Prosa mit 73 Zeichnungen*, ed. Ulrich Riemerschmidt (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1974), p. 41.

<sup>8</sup> Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, p. 22.

Liniensystem. Ein fragmentarischer Stil, mehr geschrieben als gezeichnet'.<sup>9</sup> The writing process in any case helped to break Kubin's artistic block. He embarked on a period of renewed popularity and activity, enhanced by his association, from 1911, with the influential Expressionist group *Der blaue Reiter*, whose members included Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc.

Kubin always kept one foot in the literary world. He devoted much of his professional life to illustrations (particularly after writing *Die andere Seite*), and his choice of authors to illustrate – including Edgar Allan Poe, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Dostoevsky, and Gérard de Nerval – was based on his own literary preferences and influences. Kubin produced numerous shorter texts throughout his life, including autobiographical works and brief fictions, but never anything as well-known as *Die andere Seite*, which deeply impressed his contemporaries, both artists (such as Kandinsky) and writers (including Stefan Zweig and Franz Kafka).<sup>10</sup> Kubin maintained a range of literary acquaintances, including Meyrink and Kafka. His relationship with Meyrink was partly a creative association: some of the drawings included in *Die andere Seite* were originally intended for Meyrink's *Der Golem* (which Meyrink was too slow in producing) and it seems possible that the opening chapters of *Der Golem*, with their depiction of a disintegrating cityscape, could have influenced the design of Kubin's dreamland capital, Perle. In turn, many have noted that *Die andere Seite* anticipates Kafka's *Das Schloß*, particularly through its portrayal of a looming, otherworldly castle that hides an elusive, omnipotent force.<sup>11</sup> Kubin met Kafka, along with other members of the *Prager Kreis*, through Max Brod during a 1911 trip to Prague. Kafka's diaries contain several references to Kubin, whom he describes with both irritation and respect: 'Im Anhören seiner vielen Geschichten kann man vergessen, was er wert ist. Plötzlich wird man daran erinnert und erschrickt'.<sup>12</sup> Kubin, for his part, recommended the books of the 'seltsamen Menschen' Franz Kafka to Hermann Hesse, even if he found most of the smaller

<sup>9</sup> Gabriele van Zon, *Word and Picture: A Study of the Double Talent in Alfred Kubin and Fritz von Herzmanovsky-Orlando* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), p. 45.

<sup>10</sup> Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, p. 35.

<sup>11</sup> See, for instance, Andreas Geyer, "'...perhaps I am a writer...': Alfred Kubin as Literary Figure", in Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, pp. 69-93 (p. 88).

<sup>12</sup> Franz Kafka, *Tagebücher (Kritische Ausgabe)*, ed. Hans-Gerd Koch, Michael Müller and Malcolm Pasley (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1990), p. 26 (30.IX.11).

works ‘nicht rein geformt’.<sup>13</sup> Kubin was also sufficiently interested in Kafka’s work to illustrate *Ein Landarzt*.<sup>14</sup>

As a visual artist, Kubin has been considered a forerunner of Surrealism, but he is largely viewed in the context of Expressionism, for the characteristic use of distortions to communicate (violent) emotions and to project a subjective vision of the world. Among Expressionists, a *Doppelbegabung* was not unusual, because of their interest in discovering new and hybrid forms. Arnold Schoenberg, Oskar Kokoschka, August Strindberg, Wassily Kandinsky, and Kubin’s friend Fritz Herzmanovsky-Orlando were among the many artists active in two or more media. In this context, Kubin’s novel has also been deemed an example of literary Expressionism, defined here in the broad sense, by the principle of content determining form, so that writing rules and elements may be distorted in the author’s effort to depict emotional life, rather than to describe external reality.<sup>15</sup> Walter Sokel has called *Die andere Seite* one of the earliest Expressionist or ‘quasi-Expressionist’ novels, although, by his definition, none of the authors in this thesis can be considered Expressionists at the level of language.<sup>16</sup> Kubin, Kafka and Meyrink largely avoided techniques of parataxis, ellipsis and syntactic distortion, and instead experimented with Expressionistic innovations at the level of narrative form and structure.<sup>17</sup>

Such formal distortions were deliberately rebellious. Expressionism in the visual arts was partly a reaction against the French Impressionism of the late nineteenth century, which prioritised the accurate portrayal of sense impressions, and thus the subject’s direct perceptual relationship to the external world – an emphasis also underlying ‘Impressionist’ literature, of which Arthur Schnitzler, for instance, has been considered a proponent (see Chapter 6). This literary application of ‘Expressionist’

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<sup>13</sup> ‘*Ausserhalb des Tages und des Schwindels*’. Hermann Hesse – Alfred Kubin: *Briefwechsel, 1928-1952*, ed. Volker Michels (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2008), p. 30.

<sup>14</sup> See Franz Kafka, *Ein Landarzt. Mit Zeichnungen von Alfred Kubin* (Vienna: Karolinger, 1997). The drawings originally appeared in 1932.

<sup>15</sup> J.A. Cuddon (ed.), *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (London: Penguin, 1999), p. 297. See also Jürgen Berners, *Der Untergang des Traumreiches: Utopie, Phantastik und Traum in Alfred Kubin’s Roman ‘Die andere Seite’* (Wetzlar: Phantastische Bibliothek, 1998), p. 52.

<sup>16</sup> Walter Sokel, ‘The Prose of German Expressionism’, in Neil H. Donahue (ed.), *A Companion to the Literature of German Expressionism* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005), pp. 69-88 (pp. 80-81).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

and 'Impressionist' labels originating in the visual arts is metaphorical and ambiguous at best, but it was a dichotomy recognised by contemporary critics, who used it to debate the relationship between art and social change. A case in point is Hermann Bahr's 1916 essay *Expressionismus*, which describes Impressionism ('das letzte Wort der klassischen Kunst') as a form of passivity; the vital Expressionist, on the other hand, is portrayed as an active and uninhibited participant in the battle of the new century: 'der Expressionist reißt den Mund der Menschheit wieder auf'.<sup>18</sup> Bahr's view, echoed by contemporaries, draws genealogical lines between Impressionism and the Naturalist tradition, and between Expressionism and the Romantic tradition, in an opposition that also overlaps, to some extent, with Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian principles. The Expressionists were particularly drawn to the Nietzschean idea of the Dionysian, in part through its popularisation by writer and philosopher Salomo Friedlaender (1871-1946), also known as 'Mynona', who promoted Nietzschean vitalism and the 'natural man' as a solution to the human condition.<sup>19</sup> The 'natural man' was a direct forerunner of the Expressionist New Man, the emancipated individual capable of revolutionising humanity.<sup>20</sup> Kubin was well-acquainted with these intellectual trends. He corresponded extensively with Friedlaender and their artistic interests overlapped, as indicated by the title of Friedlaender's fictional work *Der Schöpfer: Phantasie* (1920) for which Kubin provided illustrations.<sup>21</sup> Kubin himself glorified Nietzsche: 'Er ist wirklich – *unser* Christus!', he declared, in an association that points to the Zarathustrian elements of his dreamland's ruler, Patera.<sup>22</sup>

The Expressionist rebellion and its theoretical 'opposite' in Impressionism were always parallel symptoms of unstable modern subjectivity faced with the twin crises of perception and (linguistic) expression. The dream problematises and transcends this dichotomy, because it is *both perception and creation at once*, an automatic juxtaposition of form and content. Of course, it can be approached from either

<sup>18</sup> Hermann Bahr, *Expressionismus* (Munich: Delphin, 1920), pp. 92, 113.

<sup>19</sup> Seth Taylor, *Left-wing Nietzscheans: The Politics of German Expressionism, 1910-1920* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990), p. 118.

<sup>20</sup> Stephen Eric Bronner and Douglas Kellner, *Passion and Rebellion: The Expressionist Heritage* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1983), p. 166.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Briefwechsel [zwischen] Salomo Friedländer/Mynona [und] Alfred Kubin*, ed. Hartmut Geerken and Sigrid Hauff (Vienna; Linz: Edition Neue Texte, 1986), and Salomo Friedlaender, *Der Schöpfer: Phantasie. Mit 18 Federzeichnungen von Alfred Kubin* (Munich: Kurt Wolff, 1920).

<sup>22</sup> Kubin, *Aus meinem Leben*, p. 52.

direction. Musil and Schnitzler, for instance, prioritise the comparison of oneiric and waking perception, as well as the knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) to be gained from the dream and its interpretation. More 'Expressionistic' authors, however, such as Kubin, Meyrink and Kafka, accentuate the proactive, originary and creative aspects of the dream, which may therefore function as a metaphor for creativity itself. This approach allows the dream to dominate artistic form and structure, as described by Strindberg in his introduction to *A Dream Play*: 'the imagination spins, weaving new patterns on a flimsy basis of reality: a mixture of memories, experiences, free associations, absurdities and improvisations'.<sup>23</sup> The dream – where the dreamer is both playwright and spectator – reveals the essential interconnectedness of perception and expression. This inseparability, fundamental to *Die andere Seite*, was explicitly recognised by Kubin, who wrote 'dass der "Schöpfer" des Traumes und sein "Geschöpf", das Traumgebilde, irgendwie in identischem Zusammenhang stehen, tritt in träumendem Zustand besonders deutlich hervor'.<sup>24</sup>

Texts such as *Die andere Seite*, where waking and dreaming interpenetrate, also fall under the heading of the 'fantastic', here understood broadly as the literary zone of encounter between the real and the unreal, where the 'zweispältige ontologische Natur des Traumes' has always made it into a privileged medium.<sup>25</sup> Kubin's own subtitle defines the novel as a 'phantastischer Roman', and it has been analysed as such, notably by Peter Cersowsky in a 1989 study of Kafka, Kubin and Meyrink as authors of fantastic literature in the tradition of the 'schwarze Romantik' stretching back to E.T.A. Hoffmann and Edgar Allan Poe.<sup>26</sup> Following Walter Sokel, Cersowsky argues that certain Expressionist authors, including Kubin, Kafka, Meyrink and 'Mynona' (Friedlaender), produced 'phantastische Allegorien'.<sup>27</sup> This constitutes a contradiction in terms of Todorov's classic definition of the fantastic in *Introduction à la littérature fantastique* (1970), which considers allegory an *adjacent*

<sup>23</sup> August Strindberg, 'Author's Note', trans. Charlotte Barslund, in Caryl Churchill (ed.), *A Dream Play* (London: Nick Hern Books, 2005), p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Alfred Kubin, 'Über mein Traumerleben', in *Aus meiner Werkstatt: Gesammelte Prosa mit 71 Abbildungen*, ed. Ulrich Riemerschmidt (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1973), pp. 7-10 (p. 7).

<sup>25</sup> Erik Hauser, *Der Traum in der phantastischen Literatur* (Passau: EDFC, 2005), p. 34.

<sup>26</sup> Peter Cersowsky, *Phantastische Literatur im ersten Viertel des 20. Jahrhunderts: Untersuchungen zum Strukturwandel des Genres, seinen geistesgeschichtlichen Voraussetzungen und zur Tradition der 'schwarzen Romantik' insbesondere bei Gustav Meyrink, Alfred Kubin und Franz Kafka* (Munich: Fink, 1989).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 67.

genre, in which the explicitness of the double meaning eliminates the fundamental uncertainty associated with the fantastic.<sup>28</sup> For Cersowsky, however, that argument is refuted by the existence of *Die andere Seite* as a fantastic allegory, in which the element of fantastic uncertainty occurs in the tension between reality and unreality, while the allegorical element is associated not with the dream (which is part of the fantastic complex) but with the opposition between Patera and Herkules Bell.<sup>29</sup>

This latter conflict has also been key to the novel's reception as a Decadent text, indeed as one of the 'Hauptwerke der literarischen Décadence', according to Andreas Geyer.<sup>30</sup> Patera, in this context, is the god of death, and the dreamland is simultaneously a realm of dream and death that exemplifies two basic Decadent equations: *Traum = Wirklichkeit* and *Leben = Sterben*.<sup>31</sup> Michael Koseler has also discussed *Die andere Seite* as a depiction of the 'sterbende Stadt', inhabited by a largely childless and mentally unstable population with distinctly Decadent characteristics: 'der Traumstädter [lebt], sein Ich kultivierend und ständing nach neuen Reizen suchend, "nur in Stimmungen"'.<sup>32</sup> This deathliness has also been linked to the novel's status as apocalyptic text, although its ambiguity again complicates interpretation, for it is never clear whether the collapse of the Dream Realm (as a symbol of refuge from modernity and rational civilisation) is to be regretted or celebrated.<sup>33</sup> Jon Hughes, again noting this underlying ambivalence, and the text's grounding in structures of conflict, argues that it offers a satirical critique of modernity.<sup>34</sup> Its ambivalence in any case serves to explain the text's striking amalgamation of (seemingly opposed) Decadent and Expressionist tropes, particularly in the encounter between the regressive Patera and the progressive Herkules Bell.

<sup>28</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction à la littérature fantastique* (Paris: Seuil, 1970), pp. 68-69.

<sup>29</sup> Cersowsky, *Phantastische Literatur*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>30</sup> Andreas Geyer, *Träumer auf Lebenszeit: Alfred Kubin als Literat* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1995), p. 94.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>32</sup> Michael Koseler, 'Die sterbende Stadt: Décadence und Apokalypse in Alfred Kubins Roman *Die andere Seite*', in Johann Lachinger (ed.), *Magische Nachtgesichte: Alfred Kubin und die phantastische Literatur seiner Zeit* (Linz: Residenz, 1995), pp. 45-56 (p. 50).

<sup>33</sup> See Claudia Gerhards, *Apokalypse und Moderne: Alfred Kubins 'Die andere Seite' und Ernst Jüngers Frühwerk* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1999), pp. 51, 59-60.

<sup>34</sup> As Hughes writes, 'Ambivalence and paradox are at the heart of this unusual novel's account of a world that, like the one in which Kubin was writing, is balanced precariously on the brink of collapse.' Cf. Jon Hughes, 'Modernity and Ambivalence in Alfred Kubin's *Die andere Seite*', *Austrian Studies*, 15 (2007), 80-95 (p. 81).

Depending on whether *Die andere Seite* is viewed from the perspective of Expressionism, Decadence, the fantastic or satire, its ostensible symbolic core – the dream – also assumes varying roles, for instance as an alternative expressive medium or as a metaphor for unreality or death. Taking the validity of the above interpretations into account, it is nonetheless worthwhile to consider Kubin's relationship to the dream proper as a source of creative insight, and as a gateway to the dangerous but fertile powers of the imagination. Kubin's art, both visual and literary, was pervaded by his own dream life. A very early drawing from around 1897, dedicated to his sister, bears the inscription 'Das Leben ist ein Traum! Träume glücklich!'.<sup>35</sup> Kubin wrote explicitly about the importance of dreams in his life and work, particularly in the 1922 essay 'Über mein Traumerleben', where he declares again 'Das Leben ist ein Traum! Nichts scheint mir zutreffender wie dieses altbekannte Gleichnis!', and he explains not only that his waking life is suffused by 'das Traumhafte', but also that many of his drawings strive to capture his dreams ('meine Träume festzuhalten').<sup>36</sup> Elsewhere he claimed that dreams did not necessarily provide content, but instead acted (expressionistically) as a structuring principle: 'Träume hatten direkt nur ganz selten Anteil an meinen Werken, sie sind aber gleichsam in ihrer Art der Struktur den Bildvorstellungen oft stark verwandt'.<sup>37</sup> His works were at any rate immediately understood by his audience as dreamlike messages, born of 'wild dreams and fantasies', according to a 1903 review that was much appreciated by Kubin.<sup>38</sup> The bizarre dream landscape of the 1908 drawing *Traumgroteske* seems to show that, in the period immediately preceding *Die andere Seite*, Kubin was already attempting to 'capture' dream material in more than a metaphorical sense.<sup>39</sup>

Kubin's dream-centred novel was soon adopted as a psychological specimen, reviewed, for instance, in 1912 in Freud's journal *Imago* (founded earlier that year), where it is interpreted (by Hanns Sachs) as a work of psychoanalytical self-therapy

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<sup>35</sup> Reprinted in Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, p. 12.

<sup>36</sup> Kubin, *Aus meiner Werkstatt*, p. 7.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>38</sup> Georg Hermann, 'Ein Maler des Unsichtbaren', *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, 34 (1903), cited in Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, p. 24.

<sup>39</sup> Reprinted in Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, p. 194.



directed at Kubin's father complex.<sup>40</sup> Kubin himself, however, generally rejected psychoanalysis, with which he was well-acquainted through his brother-in-law, Oscar A. H. Schmitz, a long-time student of psychology. For Kubin, psychoanalysis failed as an interpretive approach precisely because it stripped dream symbolism of its condensed, ambiguous, metaphorical power: 'lassen wir lieber ihre echte, ungebrochene Symbolkraft bestehen', he wrote; 'Ich halte die unmittelbare schöpferische Vision für weit stärker und tragender als ihre weitschweifige Analyse.'<sup>41</sup>

For Kubin, the dream-world was indeed powerful, but often fearful and oppressive, as depicted in the drawing *Böser Traum* (c. 1901) where the dream appears in personified form as a cloaked, death-like figure, reaching out to grasp the screaming head of a dreamer who resembles one of Kubin's frequently depicted torture victims.<sup>42</sup>



*Böser Traum* (c. 1901)

Reprinted in *Alfred Kubin: Zeichnungen*, ed. Erwin Mitsch (Salzburg: Welz, 1967), p. 11.

In this context, Kubin's idea of 'dreams' extended to dreamlike perception in waking life: 'Traum' is a metonym for 'Phantasie'. From youth, Kubin was familiar with the dangers of immersion in fantasies. Following an unsuccessful stint in the Austrian army, he was briefly hospitalised in a mental institution, where his overpowered imagination carried him into psychosis: 'Die eingebildete Idee, ich sei ein

<sup>40</sup> See Eoin Bourke, 'Horses, Eyes and Putrefaction: Three Obsessions in Alfred Kubin's Early Art and Prose', in Jeffrey Morrison and Florian Krobb (eds), *Text into Image, Image into Text: Proceedings of the Interdisciplinary Bicentenary Conference held at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth (the National University of Ireland) in September 1995* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 1995), 127-38 (p. 132). This work cites Hanns Sachs's review: 'Die andere Seite – ein phantastischer Roman mit 52 Zeichnungen von Alfred Kubin' in *Imago*, I (1912), 197-204.

<sup>41</sup> Kubin, *Aus meiner Werkstatt*, p. 8.

<sup>42</sup> Reprinted in *Alfred Kubin: Zeichnungen*, ed. Erwin Mitsch (Salzburg: Welz, 1967), p. 11.

bourbonischer Prinz, der auf der Insel Borneo residiere, unterjochte die Vorstellung meines wahren Lebensverhältnisses'.<sup>43</sup> It seems possible that the other mental patients Kubin observed in the hospital were later to serve as inspiration for the inhabitants of his *Traumreich*: 'Dabei beobachtete natürlich auch ich, und zwar sehr genau, all die jammervollen Kranken, Sterbenden, Selbstmörder'.<sup>44</sup> But just as important, Kubin's psychosis presaged the fate of his narrator, who returns from the Dream Realm without the capacity to distinguish dream-life from waking life.

Kubin in fact never lost the sense that he was in danger of slipping into a private dream-world, as evident from his diaries of the 1920s: 'Ich erfasste es, bemerkte es, fühlte es – dass ich *tiefer* in das Traumhafte der Welt eingedrungen – Es wird mich einstens ganz verschlingen'.<sup>45</sup> But submersion in imagination was also the source of creative power, of the 'Arbeitsdelirium' that inspired both Kubin and his narrator in *Die andere Seite*. The novel can thus be read as the description of a rite of passage – a journey to and from a creative liminal zone – in which the retrieval of imaginative material from the dream-world becomes the artist's trial of initiation.

## 2. There and Back Again: *Die andere Seite* as Rite of Passage

Kubin wrote *Die andere Seite* in the midst of personal upheaval: his father's death in 1907 had provoked depression and an artistic crisis, which Kubin tried to flee by travelling to Italy in the autumn of 1908 with his friend Herzmanovsky-Orlando, a fellow Austrian writer and artist. By the time he returned, Kubin was still incapable of drawing, but possessed by 'Arbeitsdrang' nonetheless, he turned to writing as a means to relieve it: 'Und nun strömten mir die Ideen in Überfülle zu, peitschten mich Tag und Nacht zur Arbeit'.<sup>46</sup> He produced the novel in a mere twelve weeks, working in a frenetic, dreamlike state.<sup>47</sup> During the following four weeks, he

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<sup>43</sup> Kubin *Aus meinem Leben*, p. 20.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Tagebuch*, 3.III.26. Original in the Kubin Archives (Munich). Cited in Geyer, *Träumer auf Lebenszeit*, p. 107.

<sup>46</sup> Alfred Kubin, *Dämonen und Nachtgesichte: Eine Autobiographie mit 24 Bildern* (Munich: Piper, 1959), p. 40.

<sup>47</sup> The novel's phase of production, as described by Kubin, can be seen as a quasi-dream-state – a semi-psychotic or 'oneiroid' state, as noted by Berners, *Der Untergang des Traumreiches*, pp. 66-67,

furnished the story with illustrations, in part incorporating drawings intended for Meyrink's *Der Golem* (which would not finally be published until several years later, in 1914-1915, with illustrations by Hugo Steiner-Prag).<sup>48</sup> For Kubin, this rapidly materialised work maintained lifelong significance as a synthesis of his thought and artistic motifs in a single cosmological vision; it was, he wrote, a 'Weltanschauung' born of 'Schicksal'.<sup>49</sup>

The novel's vision is inseparable from its clear, symmetrical structure, summarised by Philip Rhein as a progression in the narrator's state of consciousness:<sup>50</sup>

| Sections (13 total) | Mental state  | Illustrations (51 total) |
|---------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Sections 1-6        | Early dream state                                   | 25 illustrations         |
| Section 7           | Unique perceptual experience - moment of revelation | 1 illustration           |
| Sections 8-13       | Deterioration of the dream                          | 25 illustrations         |

The arc, or rising-and-falling shape, created by this progression can be broadly viewed in terms of a liminal structure, as described by the French ethnographer Arnold van Gennep in *Les rites de passage*, which appeared in 1909, the same year as *Die andere Seite*.<sup>51</sup> The German-born van Gennep, who relocated to France at a young age, is recognised as a founder of French folklore studies. His work on rites of passage influenced Joseph Campbell, who saw the tripartite structure of *separation-initiation-return* as the basis of the hero's journey: 'A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder [separation]: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won [initiation]: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his

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citing Walter Winkler, 'Das Oneiroid: Zur Psychose Alfred Kubins', *Archiv für Psychiatrie und Nervenkrankheiten* (1948), 136-67 (p. 144).

<sup>48</sup> In 1952, Kubin issued a new set of illustrations for *Die andere Seite* (cf. Zon, *Word and Picture*, p. 4) but in this thesis I consider only the original drawings from the 1909 edition.

<sup>49</sup> Letter to Herbert Lange (30.I.44) cited in Annaliese Hewig, *Phantastische Wirklichkeit: Interpretationsstudie zu Alfred Kubins 'Die andere Seite'* (Munich: Fink, 1967), p. 86.

<sup>50</sup> Phillip H. Rhein, 'Towards a Poetics: An Analysis of Alfred Kubin's "Die andere Seite"', *South Atlantic Review*, 53/2 (1988), 93-109 (p. 97).

<sup>51</sup> Arnold van Gennep, *Les rites de passage* [1909] (Paris: Picard, 1981).

fellow man [return]'.<sup>52</sup> The journey of the narrator-(anti-)hero in *Die andere Seite* can be understood as a Decadent version of this process, in which victory becomes destruction (in the *Untergang*) and the survivor returns bearing delusion and deathliness. The ambivalence of Kubin's text means that loss and triumph are intertwined: the narrator's final isolation and submersion in the dreamlike are in fact the dark prizes of his quest. The rite-of-passage structure also occurs a second time, embedded within the dream-world, when the narrator is drawn to the Dream Realm's native Asian inhabitants, 'die Blauäugigen' (who exhibit marked characteristics of liminal personae) and has the dream-within-a-dream at the heart of the text (Section 7 above).

Van Gennep's ideas, particularly concerning the liminal state, were later elaborated by the interpretive anthropologist Victor Turner, who described initiates during the liminal phase as 'betwixt and between', in a condition of limbo characterised by segregation, abasement, indeterminate sexuality and trials.<sup>53</sup> Liminal personae, or threshold people, are inherently ambiguous, and their state is frequently connected to 'death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon'; liminal figures, such as neophytes in initiation rites, are without status markers or clothing, in fact frequently stripped of their property, and must typically exhibit passive, humble and obedient behaviour.<sup>54</sup> According to Turner, liminal personae co-exist in a state of *communitas*, a homogeneous and unstructured society contrasting with the differentiated and hierarchical status system of everyday life.<sup>55</sup> All of these aspects are present in Kubin's dream-world and its inhabitants, which also leads me to consider the book's dreamer-narrator as an initiate whose journey through the *Traumreich* is a rite of passage, a stage of preparation for a new level of knowledge and artistic awareness.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2008), p. 23.

<sup>53</sup> Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 95.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>56</sup> The liminality of the dream is also inherent in its status as hybrid or border state between waking and deathlike sleep, as already recognised by the ancient Egyptians, who often saw the dream as 'arising not from within the individual but from a liminal zone between the living and the dead'. Cf. Kasia Szpakowska, 'Through the Looking Glass: Dreams in Ancient Egypt', in Kelly Bulkeley (ed.), *Dreams: A Reader on Religious, Cultural, and Psychological Dimensions of Dreaming* (New York; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp. 29-43 (p. 38).

According to this interpretation, the first ‘initiator’ in the novel is a dreamland representative, Mr Gautsch, who arrives at the narrator’s home during twilight, in the month of November – an atmosphere already laden with temporal and seasonal liminality. Twilight and autumn are also signs of entry into the Romantic *Nachtseite* (or the ‘schwarze Romantik’, according to Cersowsky), associated not only with dreams, but also with madness, somnambulism and visionary experience.<sup>57</sup> The narrator, offered a place of residence in the Dream Realm, reacts with mingled amusement and fear, and is only finally overcome by the *image* of Claus Patera, which holds an inexplicable fascination for him and an inexplicable terror for his wife. ‘An das Bild glauben Sie aber wohl?’ asks Gautsch (DaS 8). The opening scenes thus immediately highlight the importance of visuality, and the iconic quality of the image, in Kubin’s novel, where Patera is often equated with his representation, as a ‘Wachsmaske’ (106), a ‘Wachspuppenkopf’ (303) or a ‘Götterbildnis’ (329). Like the frequent portrayals of dead and artificial rulers in Kubin’s visual work, this sends the message that authority, like art, is a game of appearances and symbolism; power is enthroned in its own image.<sup>58</sup> The contrasting reactions of the narrator and his wife are therefore like differing statements of faith, and an early indication that only the narrator has accepted the ‘call’ – *Der Ruf* – the title of the novel’s first section.

The narrator, thus persuaded, travels eastwards to the dreamland with his reluctant wife. This orientalisng journey towards the exotic, the unknown and the mystical coincides with the reader’s journey from realism to fantasy. The narrator’s ironic, pragmatic tone, juxtaposed with ever stranger landscapes, creates a sense of ambiguous unease typical of the fantastic realism that Kubin absorbed from favourite Romantic authors such as E.T.A. Hoffmann and Edgar Allan Poe.<sup>59</sup> But the gradual and fluid transition finally comes to a separation threshold – a point of no return –

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<sup>57</sup> Monika Schmitz-Emans, ‘Night-sides of Existence: Madness, Dreams, etc.’, in Gerald Ernest Paul Gillespie, Manfred Engel and Bernard Dieterle (eds), *Romantic Prose Fiction* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2008), pp. 139-67 (p. 139).

<sup>58</sup> Another drawing, *Der liebe Gott* (c. 1900; reprinted in Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, p. 40), illustrates the absurd power of the religious image/idol in a manner anticipating Patera: the drawing shows a parody of the Christian God, depicted as an enormous scarecrow with broom-arms and hollow eyes (like the eyes in Kubin’s drawing of Patera, DaS 335). Streams of tiny human figures nonetheless approach him in mass pilgrimage. In front of the god Kubin has even inserted a small temple similar to the clock-tower in which Patera is worshipped.

<sup>59</sup> Hewig, *Phantastische Wirklichkeit*, p. 121.

when the couple reaches the Dream Realm's boundary wall, at midnight (an obvious liminal hour for a border-crossing). The wall can only be accessed through a door and tunnel, which metaphorically separate the dream from reality by a frightening and oppressive no-man's zone. Passing through it, the wife correctly prophesies, 'Nie mehr komme ich da heraus' (DaS 47). The narrator is also oppressed: his breathing and heartbeat stagnate in the dark and claustrophobic tunnel, which simultaneously resembles sleep, death, and the birth canal. When the couple finally emerges 'on the other side', they arrive in profound darkness, and are rushed to a waiting train (by a *Grenzwächter* figure with a lantern) for their journey even deeper into the interior, to the capital city of 'Perle'. Although the origin of the city's name remains unclear, it may well stand for the crystallisation of creation out of the wet, uterine and unformed substance of the swampy (oyster-like) dreamland.

The next section of the novel introduces the couple's new life in the liminal dream-world. Like neophytes, they are stripped of property (DaS 42), including their new clothing, modern books, and most notably their camera and binoculars (visual apparatus and symbols of technology). In the dreamland, they may wear only clothing from the 1860s or earlier, in accordance with Patera's wishes that nothing in the Realm – whether apparel, architecture or art – must post-date that decade (16). Thus, like Turner's neophyte, they are subject to a homogenising dress code: 'Man will doch nicht auffallen!' the narrator is warned (42). Otherwise, the dreamland initially appears to resemble their European home: the architecture is European, and German is the main language. The narrator finds a house and a job as graphic artist, just as in his former life. But it soon becomes evident that this surface similarity is illusory. The dreamland society is non-functional and irrational, based on 'ewig schwindelhaftes Gebaren' and jokes; the value of money is arbitrary (70-71) and the bureaucratic system (as in Kafka) is labyrinthine and absurd (74-78). Social hierarchies are therefore nullified, as in a system of *communitas*. The sense of entropy is exacerbated by the dreary indeterminacy of the dreamland's climate and atmosphere: without seasons and bathed in a permanent twilight, trapped in a perpetual liminal mode. The sun, moon and stars never shine, and the Realm's colour palette is a restrained spectrum of brown, grey and green, identified as Patera's colours (95). This monotonous environment (also reminiscent of the *Trübheit* of Prague in Meyrink's *Der Golem*) is a deliberate product of Patera's desire for visual

‘Harmonie’ (56). The emphasis on earth colours and homogeneity can also be seen as a retreat from modernity, into Romantic melancholy and the originary harmony of nature. These features furthermore symbolise the ‘otherness’ of the dream experience (i.e., its ‘alternative rules for reality’).

The dreamland inhabitants, although they behave erratically, are united by a constant awareness of Patera’s omnipotence: ‘man fühlte eine starke Hand [...] Es war das grosse Schicksal, das über uns allen wachte’ (71). Total obedience and humility, further liminal traits noted by Turner, are key to the Realm’s religious life, in which the main ritual, performed daily (DaS 85-89), requires each person to enter a small chamber at the base of the clock tower, where the sole task is to stare at the wall and say ‘Herr, hier stehe ich vor Dir!’ before going out again. It is an act of pure self-submission, which the narrator soon finds compulsive: like the rest of the population, he has fallen under the spell of *der grosse Uhrbann*. The obsession with time in this ritual is symptomatic of Modernist texts, where clocks are often a source of anxiety, a violation of subjective temporal experience.<sup>60</sup> Here, the ritual demonstrates Patera’s ‘absorption’ of the Realm’s inhabitants through the recalibration of their internal clocks to his own, just as the hypnotist traditionally used a pocket watch to subdue his subjects. The presence, during the rite, of flowing water (one of Patera’s key motifs) also has a trancelike effect that points to Patera’s role as a *Massenhypnotiseur*. Kubin’s fascination with hypnosis can be traced to his youth, when, in spite of initial scepticism, he claimed to be successfully hypnotised by a local performer (‘[der Mann] hatte mich nach einigen Minuten vollständig unter seinen Willen gebracht’); after this, he was soon overcome by ‘eine dumpfe Lebensunlust’ that preceded his suicide attempt.<sup>61</sup> Under Patera’s hypnotic control, the dreamlanders are subject to a similar loss of self-control and *Lebensfreude*. As noted in following chapters, the tensions surrounding hypnosis are reiterated, to a greater or lesser extent, by all of the authors examined in this thesis. Hypnosis stands for the fear of external manipulation in the subject’s dream-life, and particularly the fear that the appropriation of the subconscious and the theft of free will may transform the subject into a golem figure.

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<sup>60</sup> Cf. Randall Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992), p. 83.

<sup>61</sup> Kubin, *Aus meinem Leben*, p. 17.

The narrator's wife, who only entered the Dream Realm with reluctance, increasingly suffers from this oppressive atmosphere, and grows ill. The narrator, in an effort to help her, tries to contact Patera, but is repeatedly frustrated in this quest, in a manner anticipating *Das Schloß*. He finally succeeds in meeting Patera during a nocturnal visit that resembles a dream within a dream (DaS 140-44). Here, the narrator again comes under Patera's compulsive, hypnotic power, as if 'im Traume befangen' (140). The palace building resembles an enormous labyrinth, at the 'end' of which is located Patera's bedchamber, bathed in a liminal twilight, where the recumbent ruler hovers between dreaming and waking. His appearance is again iconic, described as resembling that of a Greek god (142), but it soon assumes many forms, 'chamäleonartig', like the rapid visual transformations of a dream. The narrator begs Patera to help his wife, but in vain. In a later encounter, Patera says 'Ich habe geholfen' (DaS 243) as if to indicate that death itself was the manner of his assistance. It seems that the wife must be eliminated from the relationship between the two creators – the artist-narrator and his lord and mentor, the *Weltschöpfer* Patera. As evident from her failure to adapt to the dream-world, she is not among the chosen. In the narrator's words, she has a 'reale, gesunde Natur', completely unsuited to the dream-world (166), whose rightful inhabitants are characterised by abnormality, whether mental illness ('Neurasthenie'), criminality or some other trait ('Akrobaten, politische Flüchtlinge', 61-62) marking them as 'other'.

After his wife's death, the narrator, although grieving, seduces – or is seduced by – Melitta Lampenbogen, an adulterous *femme fatale*, and enters a depression (154-62). However, this depression soon develops into a state of meditative celibacy and devotion to artistic work. The narrator has finally achieved the state of solipsistic creativity proper to life in the dreamland, in which 'der Träumer [glaubt] an nichts als an den Traum, – an seinen Traum' (5). Unburdened by others (with the apparent 'help' of Patera) he is free to pursue his artistic dream. He signals his growing preparedness as an initiate by his attraction to the blue-eyed natives living on the *other side* of the bridge, in the 'Vorstadt', a zone of exaggerated liminal



*communitas*.<sup>62</sup> The natives remain anonymous, and are homogenised by their dress ('mattorange gelbe Tücher') and shaved heads (172), giving them the appearance of (Asian) monks. They are 'von deutlich mongolischem Typus' (172), as also revealed by Kubin's drawing (311), but their blue eyes and lighter skin (13) give them a hybrid and indeterminate status. They are silent, and differences of age, rank, sex, and individuality have been effaced among them: '[sie] waren durchgehends alte Leute, die Paar Frauen unter ihnen waren kaum zu unterscheiden; Haltung, Kleidung und Gesichtsausdruck glichen sich' (172). These natives, who seem to have established a system of static 'normative' *communitas*, to use Turner's phrase,<sup>63</sup> become the narrator's models and guides.

The narrator now reaches the novel's climax and centre, divided into two parts: 'Die Klärung der Erkenntnis' and 'Die Verwirrung des Traumes' – the first written in the prose of consciousness, and the second in the poetic language of a dream. In 'Die Klärung der Erkenntnis' (175-79), the narrator at last accepts his place in the Dream Realm by assuming the attitude of contemplative detachment typical of its blue-eyed natives. He feels he is in a state of cosmic communion in which 'der Mensch als Einzelwesen aufgehört' (179). This section, emphasising clarity and *Erkenntnis* (as both perception and knowledge) is Impressionistic in the narrator's rediscovery of passive contemplation and sensory experience: 'ich versuchte jetzt Steine, Blumen, Tiere und Menschen stundenlang gesammelt zu betrachten. Dabei wurde mein Auge geschärft, so wie es Geruch und Gehör schon waren' (176). The monistic, synaesthetic nature of his perception also has an Impressionistic quality: 'Farben, Düfte, Töne und Geschmacksempfindungen waren für mich austauschbar' (176). This change in perception results in a Machian disintegration of the self, as the narrator finds that 'mein Ich aus unzähligen "Ichs" zusammengesetzt war' (177). The idea of creativity in this section is cosmic: the narrator is a passive witness of Patera's *Einbildungskraft*, the force that creates the world (176).

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<sup>62</sup> Kubin's *Vorstadt*, a communal village filled with nearly indistinguishable Asian inhabitants, forms a contrast to Vienna's stereotyped *Vorstadt* topos, with its distinctive class connotations: a world 'der Zuwanderer, Proletarier und städtischen Parias'; cf. Wolfgang Maderthaler and Lutz Musner, *Die Anarchie der Vorstadt: Das andere Wien um 1900* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1999), p. 9. In Kubin's world, these social elements are included within the city itself, in the international motley of the 'französisches Viertel', while the *Vorstadt* is realigned with Romantic visions of nature and harmony, in a sense making the *Vor-stadt* a temporal concept – a 'pre-city'.

<sup>63</sup> Turner, *The Ritual Process*, p. 132

But in the section that follows – ‘Die Verwirrung des Traumes’ (179-83) – the narrator himself becomes a creator again, through the medium of the dream (although the narrator admits his dream is ‘weniger großartig’ than the cosmic vision, DaS 179). In contrast to the previous Apollonian/Impressionistic passage, this section – the novel’s only true dream-within-a-dream – offers a fantastic, bizarre and distinctly Expressionistic (or even Surrealist) reinterpretation of the narrator’s situation. The dream ‘recreates’ the dreamland: the dreamer-narrator finds himself on the riverbank, gazing across the river with longing at the *Vorstadt* (home of the blue-eyed natives), in an atmosphere of ‘Gewirr’ and ‘Gewimmel’. When the miller (a murderous character known from the ‘real’ dream-world) threatens to push him into the river, the narrator flees to the *other side*, to a bank strewn with discarded clocks and watches of all sizes, in a reference, perhaps, to the relativity of time, or as a sign that the dreamer has thrown off the control of the hypnotist. Shapes and identities, already unstable in Patera’s dreamland, are even more so here. A series of grotesque figures appear in continuous and fluid metamorphosis, growing into hybrid (liminal) forms reminiscent of the bizarre, amalgamated creatures in Kubin’s own artwork. Some of these forms are portrayed in the illustration that accompanies the dream, in which the dreamer himself appears in the lower right-hand corner, apparently a detached observer of his fantastic creation.



*Die Verwirrung des Traumes* (1909)

Reprinted in *Die andere Seite: Ein phantastischer Roman mit 52 Abbildungen und einem Plan* (Munich: Spangenberg, 1990), p. 181.

The narrator's dream terminates as a full-fledged *Angsttraum* when he is engulfed in a mussel's flesh, as if being swallowed into the vagina/womb of his own mind.<sup>64</sup> Dashes are prominent in this final sentence, as if to symbolise the ineffability of the dream-death experience within the mussel: '[...] in ihrem Innern zitterten gelatineartige Massen – – – – – ich erwachte.–' (183). This final re-absorption into the 'Gelatinemasse des Unsinnigen' represents 'die Abseite' of the structure of 'Klärung' in the preceding section.<sup>65</sup> It also reiterates the symbolism of gelatinous flesh implied by the name of the capital city, Perle.

In a style also apparent in other texts (cf. Törleß's dream in Chapter 3 and Else's dream in Chapter 6), the narration is concrete and imagistic, stripped of analysis and abstraction. Although the dream has no clear narrative structure, it contains recurring elements, particularly the murderous miller (who reappears, only to die, become transparent, and lay the eggs of snails that immediately begin to eat his corpse) and the *Vorstadt*, which is mentioned again at the end of the dream as a vanishing and still unattainable vision ('In der Ferne verschwand die Vorstadt in einem Gespinst violett schimmernder Fäden', p. 183). This image of the appealing but inaccessible *Vorstadt*, associated with *Sehnsucht* and the colour violet, is a lingering Romantic motif in a dream otherwise dominated by uncertainty and destabilisation: *Verwirrungen, Überraschung, Unbehaglichkeit, Verblüffung, Furcht*. A Freudian perspective can be applied, not only to the sexual symbolism of the dream's ending, but also to the 'Tagesreste' (day-residue) of the *Vorstadt*, the miller, the timepieces, and the mussel itself, all brought forth from the narrator's memory. The flow of images can be understood in terms of free association, such as when a fat old man develops rows of nipples, turns into a living wind instrument and begins to dance (his abnormally large *Oberkörper* synecdochally calls forth the images of *Brustwarzen/Lungen*, in turn leading to the metaphor of a *Harmonika* and its associations with *Tanz*). Overall, the dream exemplifies the power of Freudian symbolic condensation (*Verdichtung*), bringing together major symbols and interrelationships in the space of a few paragraphs.

<sup>64</sup> Death as the inversion of birth is explicitly portrayed in Kubin's 1901-1902 drawing *Todessprung* (reprinted in Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, p. 23) which shows a tiny male figure leaping into a colossal vagina. Presumably Kubin was already familiar with Gustave Courbet's *L'origine du monde* of 1866.

<sup>65</sup> Jutta Prasse, 'Die Klärung der Erkenntnis – Die Verwirrung des Traumes: Die Arbeit (auf) der anderen Seite', in Peter Assmann (ed.), *Die andere Seite der Wirklichkeit: Ein Symposium zu Aspekten des Unheimlichen, Phantastischen und Fiktionalen* (Salzburg: Residenz, 1995), pp. 79-90 (p. 87).

This seventh section, *Die Vorstadt*, which contains the parallel *Erkenntnis* and *Verwirrung* chapters, is the culmination of the narrator's personal liminal experience. Immediately upon termination of the dream-within-a-dream, the novel's arc begins its downward motion in 'Der Untergang des Traumreiches'. As the dream deteriorates, it also propels the narrator towards the exit of his liminal journey. If the first half of the novel describes integration and self-realisation, the second half thematises disintegration and the loss of identity, as emphasised by a change in narrative strategy: the narrator's thoughts and inner development now move to the background, as he is distanced from the increasingly bizarre and disturbing events around him, an indifference that he explains as a means of survival: 'Meine Gefühllosigkeit war der Schutz meiner Natur' (DaS 244). Like Turner's neophyte, he is being reduced to raw matter, his individuality erased. The 'Untergang' resembles the apocalyptic chaos of Aschenbach's dream in Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig*, where the protagonist finally succumbs to the Dionysian aspects of his personality (represented by 'der fremde Gott') in a perversely celebrant, Decadent vision, also described as an 'Untergang'.<sup>66</sup> As in Kubin's vision, the *Untergang* presents a wild mass of life – 'Menschen, Tiere, Schwarm, eine tobende Rotte' – disintegrating into swamp-like homogeneity: '[eine] grenzenlose Vermischung', 'auf zerwühltem Moosgrund'.<sup>67</sup>

Although the Dream Realm has always appeared unstable, the catalyst for its collapse is the arrival of Patera's great 'Widersacher', Herkules Bell. This canned-beef millionaire is often simply referred to as 'der Amerikaner', underlining his role as antithesis to the novel's orientalist aspect. Bell seeks to overthrow the Dream Realm by winning over its inhabitants. Like Patera, he is of superhuman power and ambitions, but otherwise an opposite: if Patera represents the past, the subconscious, and Europe/East, then Bell represents the future and progress, the force of conscious thought, and America/West as the New World. He warns the dreamlanders that they have lost their 'Verstand' (200) and that they must be particularly careful during sleep, when Patera's power is most dangerous (201). Bell, however, is no

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<sup>66</sup> Thomas Mann, *Der Tod in Venedig*, in *Frühe Erzählungen* (1981), *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelbänden*, ed. Peter de Mendelssohn (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1980-1986), pp. 559-641 (pp. 630-31).

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

compassionate liberator, and his arrival provokes devastation. The dreamland society falls into chaos and social disharmony. The economy is destabilised by Bell's money. Perverse sexuality, violence and mass suicide overwhelm the population. Social dissolution is mirrored by physical disintegration, as buildings (which have a personified character throughout the novel) fall into ruin and become uninhabitable. Even time seems to function differently, as night and day – always poorly defined in the Dream Realm – now become indistinguishable (258).

The speed of disintegration accelerates into a full apocalyptic vision in the section 'Die Hölle' (211-314), where the 'Untergang des Traumreiches' is finally completed. This process represents the 'dark side' of liminality, in which the self must be 'reduced or ground down to a uniform condition' before it can be remade; as Turner notes, apocalyptic mythologies are often accompanied by social structures resembling *communitas*.<sup>68</sup> Danger erodes social distinctions and imposes a *communitas* of fear. The vision of violence in this novel was later praised as a prescient prediction of war and social collapse. Kubin's fellow (apocalyptic) writer, the conservative revolutionary Ernst Jünger, wrote that 'Kubin erkennt am Untergang der bürgerlichen Welt, an dem wir tätig und leidend teilnehmen, die Zeichen der organischen Zerstörung'.<sup>69</sup>

As the novel's second half progresses, however, the battle between Patera and Bell becomes increasingly abstract, and it can therefore also be seen to symbolise changes in the narrator's consciousness. The narrator, considering suicide by drowning in the midst of the apocalypse, suddenly feels 'dass mir etwas ungeheuer Grosses jetzt vorstehen müsse [...] *es war wie im Traum!*' (307). The dreamland begins to self-destruct. A whirlpool in the river ingests the landscape, reiterating the symbolism of the re-consuming vagina and the anti-birth seen earlier in the narrator's dream, where he is absorbed into the mussel's flesh. The rest of humanity disappears into 'den Schoss der Erde' with a final 'Massengeschrei' (DaS 313) before leaving the narrator alone in nature, at night, where he hears thunder, 'als stürmten unsichtbar die

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<sup>68</sup> Turner, *The Ritual Process*, pp. 153-54.

<sup>69</sup> Ernst Jünger, 'Die Staubdämonen', in *Ernst Jünger; Alfred Kubin. Eine Begegnung* (Frankfurt: Ullstein, 1975), p. 117. Cited in Geyer, *Träumer auf Lebenszeit*, p. 93.

apokalyptischen Reiter daher' (314), signalling that the battle between Patera and Bell will now continue at an allegorical level.

In 'Visionen' (315-22), another dreamlike passage ('Schließ ich vielleicht?' wonders the narrator, p. 315), Patera and Bell reappear as divine figures. In a manner imitating the distortions of the dream in 'Die Verwirrung des Traumes', they undergo wild and fluid transformations. Their monstrous proportions accentuate their cosmic (and allegorical) status, while their mutable forms illustrate their amorphous nature, their capacity for infinite manifestations, even as a single hybrid entity: 'Patera und der Amerikaner verkrallten sich zu einer unförmlicher Masse' (320). By its climax, their battle has been abstracted to an astronomical level: the opponents become 'Meteore' and the world, in the process of anti-creation, is reduced to raw matter – 'zu einem unteilbaren, wässrigen, leuchtenden Schleim' (321). The narrator's sense of self also dissipates: 'ich hatte mich vergessen, ich selbst ging auf in diesen Welten'; 'Ich gehörte dazu und erfasste alles mit namelosen Kräften'; and finally, 'Ich wusste nichts mehr' (322). This is the final loss of self-definition within the liminal process.

Upon awakening from these visions, the narrator is ready to complete his initiation through a reincorporation rite, in the form of Patera's funeral ('Der Tod Pateras', DaS 322-29). The end of the liminal period is signalled by the re-appearance of the sun: the dream-world twilight is over. The imagery of rebirth associated with the dawn is reiterated in the site of Patera's death, in a womblike mountain cave ('Felsensaal', 325) resembling a dimly lit, pillared temple, where the 'Blauäugige' are in attendance to perform the rite of passage. When Patera retreats into a deeper cavern to wage his 'Todeskampf', the light is extinguished completely, enhancing the symbolism of transition. When the death chamber is opened, a scene of destruction and a bluish light (reminiscent of the transcendent blue of Novalis's *blaue Blume*) surround a white-haired corpse, which the narrator describes as 'von einer unbeschreiblichen Schönheit'; Patera has regained his iconic value, 'gleich einem Götterbildnis der antiken Welt' (329). The narrator is the last person to remain with the corpse, underlining the special relationship between them. In Patera's death – and in the loss of his immortal, divine status – the narrator himself is reborn. At this

crossroads, the dying god passes on some of his power to the initiate, who ascends to a higher level of consciousness.

After this ritual scene, the narrator can at last return 'home', to the other world. However, his new (socially threatening) status is signalled by his confinement to a 'Heilanstalt', a final place of liminal transition. In the epilogue (337-39), the narrator explains that his mental illness is characterised by difficulty in escaping from the dream state, and thus from the anonymity of the liminal experience ('die Träume wollten meinen Geist überwuchern. Ich verlor in ihnen meine Identität', DaS 337). But he has also gained visionary powers – his dreams have become the receptacles of a deep memory (like Jung's 'racial' memory) inherited from ancestors, animals and the most basic elements of creation: 'im bloßen bewussten Himmeldämmern in Urelementen' (337). Patera has bequeathed him not only a permanent internal dreamland, but also a Decadent passion for death and decline: 'Ich liebte [den Tod] ekstatisch [...] Bezeichnend für diese Zeit ist eine Vorliebe für halbwelke Blumen' (338). However, the narrator concedes the presence of an equally powerful life force, a 'Widersacher, der Leben wollte', and amplifies the dualism of the entire work with the final, aphoristic line '*Der Demiurg ist ein Zwitter*' (339). The invocation of the demiurge can be seen as an interpretive key to the text. Kubin's (demi-)god is the divinity associated with physical shaping and crafting. This metaphor suggests that the dreamland has functioned as a place of initiation into a religion of artisans, existing in and through their creations, for whom divinity is represented by the 'subordinate' god, the universe's physical maker, who is also – by his involvement with the *material* of the world – inevitably implicated in the processes of death and deterioration. For this reason, the dream-world cannot be understood in purely ideational terms. Just as the concrete image and form of Patera constitute his power, the demiurge's dream-world is meaningless without its topography.

### 3. Dream Topography in *Die andere Seite*

*Die andere Seite* depicts the dream as a 'space' with ambiguous allegorical connotations, containing heavenly elements (transcendence through the attainment of

(*Selbst*)*Erkenntnis*) within a hellish Decadent vision of decline and destruction. Kubin's transformation of the dream into landscape recalls the early Romantics' innovative use of the 'allegorisch-symbolische Traumlandschaft' studied by Gerburg Garmann.<sup>70</sup> In the work of Ludwig Tieck, for instance, 'Landschaft wird zum unendlichen Stimmungsraum [...] zum Ort der träumerischen Aufschließung des Seins'.<sup>71</sup> Kubin reverses the terms of this metaphor, by concretising the dream. The world he creates has been called a 'negative utopia', which unites the 'ingredients and topoi of an idyll', in the tradition of Virgil and Adalbert Stifter, but which in fact illustrates the 'impossibility of creating such an idyll'.<sup>72</sup>

But in this context the dream itself is also an object of metaphorical exploration, through its transformation into topography and the expansion of its temporal dimensions. Concretisation grants substance and weight to the intangible, thus inverting the unmarked/marked structure of consciousness/sub-consciousness and real/unreal: the dream takes on a solid reality, while the external, conscious world is reduced to an insubstantial and inaccessible shadow. The spatialised dream also becomes independent of the dreamer, who must seek an entrance into a pre-existing dream-world, and must decide to enter. He cannot disavow responsibility as might an ordinary dreamer, subject to the dream 'against his will'. Although *Die andere Seite* underscores the compelling aspects of Patera's power, the narrator nonetheless *chooses* to answer the 'Ruf'. He does so against the protestations of his wife, and later feels culpable and regretful: 'Hätte ich damals [...] auch nur ein wenig gehänt, welche Schicksale mir daraus erwachsen würden, so wäre ich der Aufforderung nicht gefolgt und wäre wahrscheinlich heute ein anderer Mensch' (DaS 19). By making the dream into a concrete location, accessed voluntarily, Kubin stresses the tension between conscious self-determination and loss-of-self in the compelling atmosphere of the subconscious.

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<sup>70</sup> Gerburg Garmann, *Die Traumlandschaften Ludwig Tiecks: Traumreise und Individuationsprozeß aus romantischer Perspektive* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1989), p. 50.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Klaus Albrecht Schröder, 'Alfred Kubin; or, The Cruelty of Images', in Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, pp. 41-53 (pp. 47-48).



Kubin emphasises the importance of topography (and the image) by including a map with the text, even making it a part of the subtitle, 'mit 52 Abbildungen und einem Plan'.



*Situationsplan der Stadt Perle (1909)*

Reprinted in *Die andere Seite: Ein phantastischer Roman mit 52 Abbildungen und einem Plan* (Munich: Spangenberg, 1990).

The map shows the capital city, Perle, cut off from the surrounding countryside by mountains, swampland and the river. It is relatively detailed, with forty-three numbered labels showing the location of the post office, bank, etc. The narrator claims that the map is included to permit 'eine genauere Orientierung', which he deems necessary to understand the events of his story (58). However, the locations depicted on the map do not all carry symbolic meaning, and spatial movement within the text remains far vaguer than promised by the map's level of detail. Beyond orienting the reader, the map functions, at a deeper level, as a statement of concreteness that undermines any purely allegorical interpretation of the dream-world. The map's superfluous details are important precisely because they do *not*

bear symbolic weight, and therefore enhance the reality and physicality of the Dream Realm. The tension between concrete specificity (as promoted by the map) and the vagueness of the dream-world's lived topography is also part of the story itself, as when the narrator, arriving in Perle, tries in vain to obtain a *Stadtplan* (DaS 71).

The narrator does use the map, however, to describe the socio-topography of Perle, which is divided into four *Stadtviertel* (cf. 58): the 'Bahnhofviertel', containing the bleak administrative buildings and archives; the 'Gartenstadt', where the wealthy live; the 'Lange Gasse' of the merchants and middle classes; and finally 'das französische Viertel', 'eine verrufene Gegend' where the non-German ethnicities reside ('Romanen, Slaven und Juden'). The *Stadtplan* presents a distorted microcosm of Central European society. Perle could have been based on many real-life prototypes, such as Vienna, Salzburg, Prague, or Kubin's birthplace of Litoměřice in Bohemia (among others).<sup>73</sup> However, it seems likely that the dream city represents a distillation of Kubin's urban experiences. Its features – social, political and topographical – are over-determined, drawing on archetypes that were of keen symbolic resonance for Central European authors of the early twentieth century. The topography of *Die andere Seite* is echoed in the Prague of Meyrink's *Der Golem* and in the village of Kafka's *Das Schloß*. The essential elements – the river (and bridge), the dominating castle, the labyrinthine streets and social subdivisions – both mirror and create a psycho-topography of confrontation: the natural versus the artificial, the dominant versus the dominated, and the individual versus the collective. The city and the dream are apt metaphors for each other because both are animated by enigmatic systems and forces. Patera, and the authorities in *Der Golem* and *Das Schloß*, all have something in common with Freud's forbidding but elusive 'censor', which forms the dream out of a negative tissue of suppressive techniques. The mystery and complexity of this hidden order also result in dreamlike qualities of spontaneity and creative juxtaposition. In the city, the 'free associations' of dream-life recur in the surprising and incongruous encounters of a heterogeneous social world, in which the

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<sup>73</sup> Cf. Geyer, *Träumer auf Lebenszeit*, p. 110.

individual is free to play many roles. It has been argued that the true subject of Modernist texts is precisely the ‘fractured nature of the Modernist city as dream’.<sup>74</sup>

Kubin’s *Perle*, although not synonymous with a real-life model, is nonetheless situated in time and space. Embedded in Asia, it is an outpost of Central European life, peopled largely with German-speakers and equipped with stereotypical topoi: the theatre, the coffeehouse, the bureaucratic archives; and towering above all of them, Patera’s castle. However, this world is frozen in time. Patera has ordered that buildings, clothing and artwork must not post-date the 1860s, firmly fixing the Dream Realm in the pre-Modernist era. The narrator is forewarned that the very ‘Hauptgedanke’ of the dreamland is Patera’s ‘Widerwillen gegen [...] *alles Fortschrittliche*’ (DaS 4). The removal of the narrator’s technological apparatus (camera and binoculars) upon arriving further symbolises Patera’s goal of creating a refuge from modernity, prefiguring the curious anachronism of the village in *Das Schloß*, and the nostalgic yearning for the vanished Prague ghetto in *Der Golem*. Kubin, who retired to a castle in Zwickeltdt, Austria, for much of his later life, personally embraced a philosophy of regression that contrasted with the progressive ethos of the Expressionist search for a New Man.

In Kubin’s novel, the dreamland (said to cover 3000 square kilometres; cf. DaS 3) also offers a rural vision. The capital city of *Perle* is further cut off from the outside world by its surrounding countryside, which remains a vague and menacing no-man’s land, unilluminated by any map. When the narrator and his wife first arrive, a nocturnal train journey cloaks that landscape in obscurity. Later, however, the narrator accompanies his ailing wife to the countryside in the hope of restoring her health. They travel by horse-drawn carriage, passing through regions with leather-clad populations who uphold the dreamland’s original traditions: ‘hier hatten sich die seltsamen mystischen Gebräuche entwickelt, heir wurden sie noch genau befolgt und festgehalten’ (135). They then, however, enter a wilderness enclosing mountains of iron, which exude dangerous magnetic impulses and an electricity that makes the narrator’s hair stand on end (136). His wife finds the rural atmosphere even more

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<sup>74</sup> Scott McCracken, ‘Voyages by Teashop: An Urban Geography of Modernism’, in Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (eds), *Geographies of Modernism: Literatures, Cultures, Spaces* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2005), pp. 86-98 (p. 97).

oppressive than the urban. She refuses to go on, and is near death by the time they return to the city (105).<sup>75</sup> The countryside, instead of offering health and rejuvenation, proves a source of illness and death in the dreamland. Its inhospitableness is emphasised by its inorganic composition, dominated by metal and electricity instead of vegetation and fresh air. The rural population is depicted using Romantic clichés of the homogeneous *Volk* upholding ancient tradition, but the natural world of which they are a part offers no refuge. Kubin's topography can here be linked to Romantic forerunners who used the mineral, in rural settings, to stress the deathly and ghostly aspects of nature, as in Tieck's 'Der Runenberg', or E.T.A. Hoffmann's 'Die Bergwerke zu Falun'.<sup>76</sup> By stripping his landscape of vegetation, Kubin again chooses to emphasise the 'nightmarish' and Decadent side of his Romantic dream inheritance.<sup>77</sup>

Kubin's differentiation of dreaming/waking is both symbolically and literally ambiguous, in keeping with the novel's uncanny atmosphere. The map included with the story fails to illuminate not only this rural topography, but also the dream-world's boundaries, which remain oppressively vague for narrator and reader alike. The city of Perle is separated from the 'real' (European) world by at least three layers: the vast spaces of Eurasia, the boundary wall enclosing the Realm, and finally, the indistinct terrain of the dream-countryside. The border wall itself, through its symbolism of death and re-birth, implies a sharp and final transition, while the ambiguous spaces on either side serve as disorienting zones that isolate the dream city, essentially making it an island. Communication with the outside world is

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<sup>75</sup> Germann notes that, in Romantic 'Traumreisen', experiences in the mountains symbolise 'eine Apokalypse im Sinne einer absoluten psychischen Desorientierung'. Cf. Garmann, *Die Traumlandschaften Ludwig Tiecks*, p. 222. Kubin concretises this disorientation as illness and death.

<sup>76</sup> The protagonist's dream in 'Die Bergwerke zu Falun' (1819) exemplifies the Romantic intertwining of plants / stones, fertility / death, and the ecstasy / horror of the dream: 'wie kräuselnde Wogen erhoben sich aus dem Boden wunderbare Blumen und Pflanzen von blinkendem Metall'. The dreamer awakens in 'Wonne und Entsetzen'. Cf. E.T.A. Hoffmann, 'Die Bergwerke zu Falun', in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 4: *Die Serapionsbrüder*, ed. Wulf Segebrecht (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2001), pp. 208-40 (pp. 216-18).

<sup>77</sup> Kubin's dream-world in this sense contrasts with Hans Castorp's dream of life, youth, health and order in *Der Zauberberg* (in the chapter 'Schnee'). In that dream, the 'Sonnenleute' dwell in a world of verdant vegetation: 'Ah, die vielen Bäume! Ah, das lebendige Klima der Lebendigen!' The dream's message of vitalistic warning, urging Castorp to 'wake up' from the Decadent apathy of the sanatorium, even takes aphoristic form: '*Der Mensch soll um der Güte und Liebe willen dem Tode keine Herrschaft einräumen über seine Gedanken*'. The paradox of the dream urging Castorp to awakening signals the coexistence of contrasting dream discourses: dream as enlightenment and dream as *Rausch*. Cf. Thomas Mann, *Der Zauberberg* (1981), in *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelbänden*, ed. Peter de Mendelssohn, pp. 685, 689, 694-95.

impossible: the narrator does not succeed in leaving, or even in sending a letter to Europe (84). Near the story's end, the boundary is only breached by Patera's rival and equal, Herkules Bell, who, arriving at the 'Kanzlei des Grenzwächters des Traumreiches' (226), finds an old, bearded man, fast asleep. Bell kills the sleeper and escapes into the exterior, unnoticed by the 'Grenzaufseher, echte Söhne des Archivs' (300), implying that, all along, the dream-world's boundary defences were actually as weak and decrepit as its administrative system. Power has again proved a game of appearances.

Another crucial set of boundaries is found *within* the dream-world: Perle is also cut off from its surroundings by water – both by the swamplands to the east, and by the engulfing curve of the River Negro, which separates it from the importantly symbolic *Vorstadt* of the blue-eyed natives. In the texts examined in this thesis, water is a frequent dream trope, often appearing in the form of a river, and often associated with death (by drowning). The narrator of *Die andere Seite* also considers suicide by drowning in the river, and the dream-world itself eventually 'drowns' in its own re-consuming swamp – a fate anticipated in Kubin's 1903 drawing *Untergang*, which shows a desolate landscape and a swamp-like body of water from which emerges a pair of skeletal hands, the last signs of the drowning victim.<sup>78</sup> In this deathly form, water is portrayed as feminine and maternal: the holy swamp of Kubin's dreamland is referred to as the *Sumpfmutter* (DaS 294). It is the place where all things are created. Death by drowning symbolises re-absorption into the amniotic fluid of the womb, into a homogeneous, anonymous and unstructured medium. Freud indeed saw water dreams as symbolic of prenatal experience, and dreams of drowning – by the process of inversion, or *Umkehrung* – as dreams of rebirth.<sup>79</sup> This relationship between the fluid, the maternal and death is also captured in Kubin's drawing *Der Urschlamm*, which depicts a pregnant female figure at the edge of a macabre swamp.<sup>80</sup> As in the drawing's title, mud and slime signify both fertility and dissolution for Kubin. In this context, water (and by extension, swamps and mud) is a symbol of creativity, representative of 'l'imagination matérielle', in the words of

<sup>78</sup> Reprinted in Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, p. 46.

<sup>79</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Die Traumdeutung*, in *Gesammelte Werke chronologisch geordnet*, ed. Anna Freud (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1940-1952), vol. 2/3: *Die Traumdeutung; Über den Traum* (1942), pp. 1-642 (pp. 404-7).

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Mitsch (ed.), *Zeichnungen*, pp. 15, 47.

philosopher Gaston Bachelard.<sup>81</sup> It is the medium in which creation and disintegration meet, where structures are dissolved into the raw matter of new structures, cancelling the dichotomy of life and death. The pervasiveness of water in Patera's realm, and the presence of flowing water in his religious clock tower, are signs of his close association with creative processes.

The river, as a special type of water symbol, appears frequently in literary dreams and their framing texts, where it carries all the weight of aquatic symbolism in general, but also acts as a natural boundary, a dividing line, between two opposed realms of experience. In the Dream Realm, the River Negro separates the dream city from the more rural setting of the blue-eyed natives, who may only be reached via a single bridge, crossed ever more frequently by the narrator in the pages preceding 'Die Klärung der Erkenntnis'/'Die Verwirrung des Traumes'. The river-boundary serves to protect an even deeper level of knowledge, a more profound state of liminality. These chapters *on the other side* of the river act as the 'navel' of the text. Their originary quality is emphasised both by their central location within the novel, and by the pervasive presence of water, creating an intertwined structure of text and landscape.

The humble, communal dwellings of the *Vorstadt* beyond the river – and indeed the sense of monastic *communitas* overall – contrast with the social heterogeneity of the European Perle, and its baroque, complex architecture. The buildings of the dream capital have been imported by Patera. Herkules Bell claims they are irretrievably corrupt: 'Es ist fast keines darunter, das nicht von Verbrechen, Blut und Gemeinheit besudelt worden wäre' (200). The houses are anthropomorphised, capable of changing moods ('Laune') and forming 'families' from street to street; for the narrator, they represent 'die starken, wirklichen Individuen', which overpower their human inhabitants (80). The houses are also connected by a second, subterranean topography that is even more obscure and sinister. The narrator's investigations take him to underground ducts connecting disparate locations, through a world of darkness inhabited by terrifying spectres (117). This latent, nightmarish topography (and the threatening personification of architecture overall) makes Perle, like the

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<sup>81</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *L'eau et les rêves* (Paris: José Corti, 1942), p. 12.

Prague ghetto of *Der Golem*, into a site of urban mystification and menace that imitates the obscurity of unconscious experience. In both cases, the dream(like) city holds the accumulated clutter and debris of memory traces. Kubin's narrator immediately senses the familiarity of the houses (53), and his own house appears to him 'wie aus Kindertagen' (66).<sup>82</sup> But the most prominent building in Perle is Patera's *Palast*. Tellingly marked by figure '1' on the map, it menaces the entire dream city from its mountainous position: 'Über der ganzen Stadt gleichsam hängend und sie beherrschend erhob sich ein monströser Bau in ungeschlachter Größe' (58-61). As in *Das Schloß*, the city (or village) can only be reached by a bridge over the river that encircles it, forming a closed world which gravitates around the looming and monstrous source of unique, mysterious power. In both cases, the power which the castle represents appears bizarre, dehumanising and impenetrable. Both protagonists struggle to meet the authority figures responsible for their fates, and the difficulty of their quest is suggested by the labyrinthine quality of the castle (cf. DaS 140-41).

A further disorienting characteristic of the dream-world is its distortion of time, space and form, true to the 'volatility of metamorphosis' typical of dreaming and hallucinatory states.<sup>83</sup> The narrator ostensibly spends three years in the Dream Realm, but time seems to fluctuate. Forms and identities are also malleable. Patera's amorphousness resurfaces in other characters, such as the narrator's servant, who terrifies the couple by her transformation ('Nach ein paar Wochen hätte ich geschworen, unter den alten Röcken stecke jetzt eine andere Person', DaS 101). The dreamland's temporal and structural laws (expressionistically) collapse in the apocalyptic section, when clocks stand still, day and night become indistinguishable, and the landscape begins to consume itself (thus paralleling the distortions and the theme of self-consumption in 'Die Verwirrung des Traumes').

During the apocalypse, social structures dissolve into a monstrous *communitas* of perverse sexuality, blood-thirst, violated taboos and illness. This movement is imitated in the collapse of the anthropomorphised houses, who speak together in an

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<sup>82</sup> Freud considered that a sense of *déjà vu* in dreams was a reference to maternal genitalia, to the first and ultimate *Heimat*; cf. Freud, *Die Traumdeutung*, p. 404.

<sup>83</sup> Daniel Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (Boston; Toronto; London: Little, Brown and Company, 1991), pp. 13-15.

‘unverständliche, dunkle Häusersprache’ (313). In the final, cosmic stages, the landscape becomes a playground of divine destruction: ‘Mit den ungeheuren Füßen schob [Patera] die Strassen auseinander’ (316). By the time the narrator is found, unconscious, in the mountainside, the dream-world has been reduced to ‘ein weites, weites Trümmerfeld; Schutthaufen, Morast, Ziegelbrocken – der gigantische Müllhaufen einer Stadt’ (246). The sky has cleared; the dreary weather breaks as soon as the dreamland is reduced to raw matter again, so that the cycle of creation can recommence. The narrator is now also free to travel back to Europe *via Tashkent*, a geographical detail that serves to return the reader to waking reality (334). Yet, upon the narrator’s arrival in the *Heilanstalt*, he finds he cannot escape the Dream Realm: ‘In der Heilanstalt musste ich immer wieder dem Zauber der gewaltigen Schauspiele, die ich erlebte, nachsinnen [...] Die Wirklichkeit schien mir eine widerwärtige Karikatur auf den Traumstaat’ (DaS 337-38). By keeping the dream-world alive in his mind, he has indeed become Patera’s heir, forced to forever recognise the oneiric interplay of creation and destruction. ‘Die wirkliche Hölle,’ he says, ‘liegt darin, dass sich dies widersprechende Doppelspiel in uns fortsetzt’ (339).

#### 4. The ‘Other Side’: Dualisms in the Dream-World

The circular nature of Kubin’s vision – the endless cycle of creation that begins and ends in raw matter – is bisected by an equally strong dualism. This combination of the circular and the linear is best captured in the pendulum, one of the novel’s master metaphors. Symbolically, the pendulum (perhaps also suggested to Kubin by Poe’s ‘The Pit and the Pendulum’) is part of the time complex surrounding the clock (or the hypnotist’s pendulating watch) associated with Patera’s religion. But the pendular movement also serves the text as a structuring principle, falling to the ‘centre’, its balance point, twice in the novel. This first occurs at the end of the second half, when the bereaved narrator has learned the art of balance from the blue-eyed natives. In the ‘Erklärung der Erkenntnis’ he says, ‘Ich fühlte mich abstrakt, als schwankender Gleichgewichtspunkt von Kräften’ (177). The second balance point comes at the end of the apocalypse (a destructive ‘swing’ of the pendulum, in contrast to the creative ‘swing’ of the first half), when the dream-world has finally been destroyed: ‘Auf das



Gebären folgte ein Drang nach einem Mittelpunkt – und im Nu war er erreicht [...] In klaren, regelmässigen Schwingungen versank das All in einen Punkt' (322). This merging of duality with the circular can also be linked to Nietzsche's idea of the eternal return, as noted by Clemens Brunn: in the pendulum motif, 'jede Entwicklung wird durch die "ewige Wiederkehr" ihrer Umkehrung zurückgenommen'.<sup>84</sup>

The title *Die andere Seite* (in fact first proposed by Kubin's brother-in-law, Oscar A. H. Schmitz),<sup>85</sup> simultaneously captures two features of the (literary) dream: its inherent duality, and its tension between marked and unmarked forms. The 'andere' should normally refer to a marked structure, to an 'other' in relation to a pre-existing 'this'. However, *Die andere Seite* would seem to confirm Lorna Martens's theory that Austrian writers of Kubin's period reversed this structure, making the 'other', the unknown, into the more dominant force.<sup>86</sup> 'This' side – the real, the waking, the external – is barely explored in *Die andere Seite*; it primarily serves a framing function with little analysis or description.<sup>87</sup> The dream thus consumes and dominates reality. But for Kubin the dream itself is complex. Like the idea of the 'other side', it can hold many binary sets, drawn from Kubin's metaphorical worldview. Here, for instance, is a list of dualities reproduced from Kubin's diaries by Hewig, and meant to represent the 'Gesetz des Pendels der Seele':<sup>88</sup>

|             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| Einsicht    | Schöpfung     |
| Abstrakt    | Natur         |
| Gedanke     | Vision        |
| Ausdruck    | Eindruck      |
| Oberdeutsch | Niederdeutsch |
| Nord        | Süd           |
| Ost         | West          |
| Graphisch   | Malerisch     |

<sup>84</sup> Clemens Brunn, *Der Ausweg ins Unwirkliche: Fiktion und Weltmodell bei Paul Scheerbart und Alfred Kubin* (Hamburg: Igel, 2010), p. 321.

<sup>85</sup> See Geyer, "...perhaps I am a writer...", in Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>86</sup> Lorna Martens, *Shadow Lines: Austrian Literature from Freud to Kafka* (Lincoln, NE; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), p. 2.

<sup>87</sup> In response to the novel, Kandinsky complained to Kubin in a letter: 'Wie können Sie denn nur *eine* Seite des 'Lebens' *fühlen*? [...] warum sehen Sie nur *die andere Seite*?' Cited in Hewig, *Phantastische Wirklichkeit*, p. 11.

<sup>88</sup> Hewig, *Phantastische Wirklichkeit*, p. 110.

|                |           |
|----------------|-----------|
| Geist          | Gefühl    |
| Apollon        | Dionys    |
| Konstruktion   | Wurf      |
| Durchführung   | Skizze    |
| Dürer          | Rembrandt |
| Hell           | Dunkel    |
| Sachlichkeit   | Stimmung  |
| Aufgewühltheit | Harmonie  |

This list of oppositions notably contains no direct reference to dreams, sleeping or consciousness (not to mention life/death). The oppositions of *Apollon/Dionys*, *Hell/Dunkel*, *Sachlichkeit/Stimmung* are conventional, but other pairings in the list (which I do not assume definitively capture Kubin's thought) are more surprising, such as the inclusion of *Aufgewühltheit* with the Apollonian, or the placement of *Ausdruck* and *Eindruck* in columns that confound the expected Impressionist/Expressionist dichotomy. Overall, the right-hand column appears more closely associated with Patera, as indicated by *Vision*, *Dunkel*, *Stimmung*, *Harmonie* and *Schöpfung* – all terms explicitly associated with him in the novel. This is somewhat paradoxical, for the dream-world itself, as an expression of artistic form, as a visual structure arising out of chaos, fulfils the role of the Apollonian dream according to Nietzsche's *Geburt der Tragödie*.<sup>89</sup> However, Kubin's Decadent sensibility is attracted to the decline of this dream-world, to its disintegration into Dionysian *Rausch*. The dream within a dream is labelled 'Verwirrung', and contrasts with the Apollonian 'Klärung' of the meditative state. Meanwhile, Herkules Bell is associated with Apollonian elements of lucidity, fire and 'enlightenment', but he is not a creator, as Patera is. It therefore becomes impossible to associate either of Kubin's columns with the dream-world in a straightforward way. Nor does it seem a coincidence that neither column refers to the dream/waking and death/life oppositions, which are revealed, in the novel, to exist at a higher level of abstraction, capable of accommodating several layers of duality. The dream-world – the world of creation – is a battleground, and merging ground, for many sets of oppositions.

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<sup>89</sup> Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, p. 23-25.

Kubin's obsession with dualisms is typical of the authors considered in this thesis, who were united by a *Zeitgeist* of internal division. The deep split is evident in Nietzsche's Apollonian/Dionysian dyad, and in the essential inner conflict proposed by psychoanalysis, in terms such as conscious/unconscious and manifest/latent. In this context, Austrian writers seem to have been particularly receptive to dual structures, possibly as a result of the declining Empire's pervasive opposition of appearance/reality, public/private, *Schein/Sein*.<sup>90</sup> In the texts I examine, the sense of inner disconnect lends urgency to metaphors of battle and marriage, depicting the rupture or merger of separate halves. The (im)possibility of internal reconciliation is notably the theme, for instance, of Kafka's early novella 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes', discussed in Chapter 4, but it is also the basis of the cosmic war described by Kubin in *Die andere Seite* – a 'total war' between competing aspects of the self.

For Kubin and his fellow Expressionists, who were intensely self-focused, interest in the fragmented self also more specifically meant an interest in the fragmented *artist*, where internal opposition could be expressed through the conflict, and marriage, of art forms. As van Zon argues, Kubin's visual and verbal *Doppelbegabung* was a means of exploring the duality of life, and indeed all matter, through contrasting media.<sup>91</sup> Kubin was in this regard influenced by the 'total artist' Max Klinger (whose artwork also drew direct inspiration from dreams), and particularly Klinger's book *Malerei und Zeichnung* (1891), which praises the flexible nature of the graphic arts as opposed to painting (a reference to Klinger's ideas can be detected in the opposition *Graphisch/Malerisch* in the diary entry above), and also – in a synthesising impulse that must have been appealing to Kubin – calls for a 'Gesamtwirken aller bildenden Künste'.<sup>92</sup>

The dream plays a malleable role in the context of competing dual terms. As noted earlier, it is endowed with an inherent duality, based on the opposition between waking and sleeping (or diurnal and nocturnal) realities, and it is therefore a useful tool for framing dichotomies. However, its metaphorical substance is vague enough to be interpreted in differing, and potentially contradictory, ways. A good example is

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<sup>90</sup> Cf. Martens, *Shadow Lines*, p. 6.

<sup>91</sup> Zon, *Word and Picture*, p. 8.

<sup>92</sup> See Walter Frisch, *German Modernism: Music and the Arts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 93-94.

the dream's relationship to time. During the period when these texts were written, rapid social change created a sharp tension between past and future, between the end of the 'long nineteenth century' and the shock of modernity anticipating and accompanying the First World War. The dream was used to play both metaphorical roles, acting as a vehicle either of memory or prophesy. From a Freudian perspective, it was past-oriented and laden with memory debris. This approach is clearly present in Kubin's dream-world, which is saturated with familiarity, cluttered with rubbish and old buildings, and even subject to a prohibition on modernity. On the other hand, there is a prophetic element to the novel's description of totalitarian society, mass destruction, racial ghettoization and international warfare, for which it was later admired. As Klaus Albrecht Schröder argues, the 'cruelty of images' in Kubin's novel is not only autobiographical, but also a 'clairvoyant diagnosis of an era' on the eve of World War I.<sup>93</sup> Ernst Jünger seized upon the prophetic aspect of Kubin's work to reemploy it as a metaphor for the decline of the Weimar Republic.<sup>94</sup>

In *Die andere Seite*, past and future are also represented by the Decadent and vitalist figures of Patera and Bell. At the end of the novel, as the narrator recovers from his obsession with death, he admits the existence of the other half, the 'Widersacher, der Leben wollte' (338-39). The name Herkules Bell carries associations of awakening and super-human victory. In some ways, he can be seen as a variation on the Expressionist New Man influenced by Nietzsche's *Übermensch*.<sup>95</sup> His vitalist qualities are evident from his extreme physical robustness, and indeed his ultimate survival, in contrast to Patera: 'Der Amerikaner lebt heute noch und ihn kennt alle Welt' (335). Bell issues a proclamation (199-202) urging the dreamland inhabitants to wilfully throw off their 'Massenhypnose', and to avoid sleep, when Patera's power is strongest; he also warns the dreamlanders that they are missing the world's

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<sup>93</sup> Schröder, 'Alfred Kubin; or, The Cruelty of Images', in Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, p. 47.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Olaf Peters, 'Demons of Dust: Alfred Kubin between Viennese Modernism and Conservative Revolution', in Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, pp. 107-21 (p. 115). Geyer notes that Jünger called Kubin's novel the greatest achievement of fantastic literature since E.T.A. Hoffmann, and it appears to have influenced the dream passages of Jünger's *Das abenteuerliche Herz*. See Andreas Geyer, "'Angriffe des Wunderbaren auf die Welt der Tatsachen": Annäherungen an das Phantastische im Werk von Ernst Jünger', in Winfried Freund, Johann Lachinger and Clemens Ruthner (eds), *Der Demiurg ist ein Zwitter: Alfred Kubin und die deutschsprachige Phantastik* (Munich: Fink, 1999), pp. 241-58 (pp. 246-47).

<sup>95</sup> Ernst Schürer, 'Provocation and Proclamation, Vision and Imagery: Expressionist Drama between German Idealism and Modernity,' in Donahue (ed.), *A Companion to the Literature of German Expressionism*, pp. 231-54 (p. 238).

progress: ‘Die grosse Welt da draussen hat einen Riesenschritt dem Lichte der Zukunft entgegen getan! [...] Keinen Anteil habt ihr an den herrlichen Erfindungen unserer neuen Zeit, den zahllosen Erfindungen, welche Ordnung und Glück verbreiten’ (201-202). In contrast to Patera’s watery symbols, Bell is associated with fire (for instance, in his pipes and cigars), which both illuminates (as in the ‘Licht der Zukunft’, above) and destroys. In part, this is a reiteration of traditional symbolism relating fire, light and ‘Geist’ to the masculine, while the feminine is associated with ‘dem Dunklen, Feuchten, Triebhaften’.<sup>96</sup> The fire motif is also related to Bell’s diabolical qualities. The ‘Amerikaner’ – described as having ‘ein scharfes, diabolisches Profil’(192) – calls on the dreamland inhabitants to join his satanic association, and to become ‘Söhne Luzifers’ (DaS 202), again invoking the theme of light as a demonic force. Bell indeed proves a force for destruction, in the corrupting and destabilising power of his money, and in his murderous ambition to conquer Patera at any price. The novel’s narrator, although claiming indifference, is clearly more sympathetic to the martyred dreamer Patera (and to the Decadent vision overall). In the fatalism of Kubin’s apocalyptic vision, attempts at science or progressivism are portrayed as futile and absurd.<sup>97</sup>

In this view, Bell’s vitalistic traits are inseparable from his Americanism. The values he represents – dynamism, ambition, progressivism – also contrast with the orientalisising traits of the dream-world’s native Asian inhabitants, ‘die Blauäugigen’, in their passivity, quietism and homogeneity. Kubin depicted Asian settings frequently in his artwork, in drawings such as *Aus China* (1900-1901) and *Massenmord an der Chinesischen Mauer* (1932) (which admittedly depict scenes of Kubinesque violence not in keeping with the peacefulness of the natives in *Die andere Seite*).<sup>98</sup> Kubin also studied Eastern worldviews intensively.<sup>99</sup> ‘Der reinste buddhistische Mönch steckt in mir’, he wrote to his friend, Herzmanovsky-Orlando.<sup>100</sup> In 1916, he experienced a ten-day ‘crisis’, when – in another case of fantastic psychosis – he plunged into the ‘gefährlicher Zaubergarten’ of Buddhistic

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 231.

<sup>97</sup> During the Realm’s collapse, two sisters with progressive ideas try to solve food shortages by scientific means, but are lynched by the ungrateful mob (DaS 258).

<sup>98</sup> Reprinted in Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, pp. 108-109.

<sup>99</sup> Geyer, “...perhaps I am a writer...”, in Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, p. 86.

<sup>100</sup> Brunn, *Der Ausweg ins Unwirkliche*, p. 243.

teachings.<sup>101</sup> He later wrote that the Chinese *Tao Te Ching* had become ‘eine Hauptkomponente meiner seit Jahren ausgebildeten Philosophie’.<sup>102</sup> It is possible to interpret the novel through dualisms present in Asian religions. For instance, a Taoist reading, according to Geyer, might describe Patera and Bell as yin and yang symbols.<sup>103</sup> The Ganesh-like drawing included at the beginning of ‘Die Erklärung der Erkenntnis’ could be a reference to Hindu mythology, where Patera=Shiva, Bell=Vishnu and the natives=Brahma.<sup>104</sup> The downfall of the dream-world could also be associated with the periodic cosmic destruction described by Hindu mythology (again echoing Nietzsche’s eternal return).<sup>105</sup> In this context, Kubin was influenced by Schopenhauer, and particularly, according to Brunn, by his ideas of asceticism as a means of salvation.<sup>106</sup> The narrator’s new, redemptive phase of creative self-exploration is accompanied by interest in the ascetic, liminal community of the blue-eyed natives, from whom he learns impassiveness and ‘Abgeklärtheit’ (133). The ‘Blauäugige’ – whose physical features are a synthesis of Asian and European traits – display a homogeneity and serenity that symbolise the transcendence of dual oppositions, ‘die Verkörperung des vollkommensten Gleichgewichts’ (DaS 174). In Taoist terms they are, as Geyer points out, the personification of the ‘eternal, all-embracing principle: the *taiji*’.<sup>107</sup>

During the time the narrator spends with the natives, he claims that he has at last understood the dream-world as an expression of Patera’s mind: ‘der Meister’, Patera, ‘steckte wirklich hinter allem’ and acts as the ‘Lenker von fast 65000 Träumern’, who are at the mercy of his ‘Stimmungen’ (173) and even his epileptic attacks, manifested in the dreaded ‘Klaps’ (120). The Dream Realm turns out to be a direct manifestation of psychic content on a large scale. But within the opposition between east and west, Patera and the dreamland occupy an odd, indeterminate status. Their hybridity can be extended to Europe itself, as a place caught between America and Asia, clinging precariously to its past and seeking refuge, in the Orient, from the forces of modernity. The analogy can be further narrowed to the geographical

<sup>101</sup> Kubin, *Aus meinem Leben*, pp. 54 et seq.

<sup>102</sup> Letter from Kubin to Irene Haberle (10.XI.18), cited in Geyer, *Träumer auf Lebenszeit*, p. 154.

<sup>103</sup> Geyer, *Träumer auf Lebenszeit*, pp. 155-56.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Brunn, *Der Ausweg ins Unwirkliche*, p. 243.

<sup>107</sup> Geyer, “...perhaps I am a writer...”, in Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, p. 86.

ambiguity of Central Europe, lying on the West's eastern frontier, caught between competing forces. As the narrator passes through Budapest on the way to Perle, he already notices 'ein leichter asiatischer Einschlag' (31). As he crosses the Black Sea, he gazes back to the west with longing ('.....Europa.....!') but is pleased to pass through Russia, which he describes with an orientalisising tone that also contains an element of self-identification: 'Ja, Rußland! Das war so ein Land nach meinem Geschmack: gross, üppig, unkultiviert [...ich] freute mich der paar Tropfen Slavenblutes, die auch in mir kreisen' (33).<sup>108</sup> But even after travelling further, the narrator emphasises the fluidity of boundaries between east and west (at the historic crossroads of Merv, he sees a plethora of nationalities: 'Georgier, Griechen, Juden, Russen [...] auch Deutsche waren da', DaS 35). He relies on the pre-conceptions of his German-speaking readership: 'Wie orientalische Städte aussehen, setze ich als bekannt voraus', he glibly notes, 'Es ist genau so wie bei uns, nur orientalisches' (39). He then crosses the border into a dream-world where things are also 'genau wie uns', but dreamlike.<sup>109</sup>

The ambiguous status of Patera and his dream-world in the east/west opposition is matched by his hybrid gender. Herkules Bell's function is clearly penetrative, dominating and masculine, as evinced by his transformation into 'ein über alle Möglichkeit grossen Phallus' (321) during the vision of his cosmic battle with Patera. Yet Patera is also associated with the masculine, not least by his *pater*-like name and the labels of 'Herr' and 'Meister' so often applied to him. Patera's death, mourned by the narrator, offers an analogy to the death of Kubin's father, to whom the novel is dedicated. However, Patera also displays feminine traits. His name is softened by its feminised ending, and the word 'patera' refers to a dish used in religious rites, which, in Freudian terms, could be considered symbolic of female sexuality, like Patera's overall association with the earth and landscape. A 'feminine' aspect is evident in his static, reclining attitudes (in contrast to Bell's constant movement) and his association with beauty; his very corpse is described as being 'von einer unbeschreiblichen Schönheit' (329). Patera succeeds in supplanting the women in the

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<sup>108</sup> Eva Kolářová claims that Kubin associated the element of 'Phantasie' in his life and artwork with his Slavic heritage. Cf. 'Alfred Kubins Beziehungen zu Böhmen', in Winfried Freund, Johann Lachinger and Clemens Ruthner (eds), *Der Demiurg ist ein Zwitter*, pp. 75-86 (p. 75).

<sup>109</sup> The merging of east and west in an atmosphere of the dreamlike is also evident in the Slavic characters, Pribislav Hippe and Mme Chauchat, who so fascinate Hans Castorp in *Der Zauberberg*.

narrator's life. In this sense, he also takes on the libidinous maternal role in an Oedipus complex, where Bell represents the father figure in his inimical, intrusive and hostile guise.

*Die andere Seite* seeks to illustrate the inseparability of gendered forces, both literal and metaphorical, in keeping with Kubin's 'synthesizing gaze'.<sup>110</sup> This is most plainly symbolised by the amalgamation of Bell and Patera during the final cosmic 'Vision' ('Patera und der Amerikaner verkrallten sich zu einer unförmlichen Masse, der Amerikaner war gänzlich in Patera hineingewachsen', DaS 320), and it is the main message of the novel's concluding aphorism, '*Der Demiurg ist ein Zwitter*'. As noted in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the hermaphroditic impulse can be linked to the influence of Otto Weininger, whom Kubin once called 'der grösste Mensch dieses Jahrhunderts'.<sup>111</sup> In *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903) Weininger asserts the permanent ambisexuality of the (male) subject, who contains both male elements (activity, productivity, consciousness, morality, logical) and female elements (passivity, un-productivity, unconsciousness, amorality, lack of logic – referential and negative traits that he associates by extension with the Jews, as a 'feminine' race). Patera's complex, protean identity is revealed in his dramatic metamorphoses ('Blitzschnell glich dieses Antlitz nacheinander einem Jüngling – einer Frau – einem Kind – und einem Greis', DaS 142), which Neuhäuser sees as an illustration of Weininger's 'Universalgenie', '[das] alles in sich trägt und deshalb alles kennt, alles versteht, alles weiss'.<sup>112</sup> The Asian and Greek associations of the sexually hybrid Patera can also be found in Weininger, who wrote that 'die Ahnung dieser Bisexualität [...] ist uralte. Vielleicht ist sie chinesischen Mythen nicht fremd gewesen; jedenfalls war sie im Griechentum äußerst lebendig'.<sup>113</sup>

For Weininger's contemporaries, gender became another means of metaphorising internal bifurcation, linked to Freudian ideas by the pairing of man/consciousness and woman/unconsciousness. As Weininger wrote, 'die Frau hat kein originelles, sondern ein ihr vom Manne verliehenes Bewusstsein, sie lebt unbewusst, der Mann

<sup>110</sup> Peter Assmann, 'Artistic Sources for Another Modernism: Alfred Kubin and his Visual Work', in Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, pp. 54-67 (p. 55).

<sup>111</sup> Letter to Fritz Herzmanovsky-Orlando (8.X.03), cited in Geyer, *Träumer auf Lebenszeit*, p. 39.

<sup>112</sup> Neuhäuser, *Aspekte des Politischen bei Kubin und Kafka*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>113</sup> Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter: Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung* [1903] (Munich: Matthes & Seitz, 1980), p. 13.



bewusst'.<sup>114</sup> If female consciousness thus existed by the grace of male principles (as Eve was made from Adam's rib), the male subject was also crucially accepting his feminine/unconscious aspects (also re-conceptualised in Jung's idea of the *anima*). The hermaphroditic figure reappears in several texts studied in this thesis, particularly in Meyrink, where it represents a vision of mystical union not unlike Kubin's, but also in the ambiguous sexuality of Basini in *Törleß*. The hermaphrodite and the dream share an inherent liminality: the dream, as the place where the conscious self directly meets the unconscious, corresponds to the meeting of genders in the hermaphrodite (and to the indeterminate sexuality of Turner's liminal neophyte). The narrator's embrace of his own creativity (or 'Genie' in Weininger's terms), as part of his growing association with the blue-eyed natives, includes his abandonment of sexuality, after separation from the stereotyped figures of his wife (*femme fragile*) and the adulterous Melitta Lampenbogen (*femme fatale*).<sup>115</sup> In relinquishing sexuality, the narrator makes room for fertile creative activities, and for the adoration of Patera, the representative of genius, who contains within him mother and father, friend and bride.<sup>116</sup>

The hermaphrodite as metaphor for creativity offers an interpretive key to *Die andere Seite*. Kubin's visual artwork portrayed his own creativity in these terms, even during the period pre-dating his reception of Weininger, for instance in the drawings *Mein Dämon* (1899-1900) and *Mondschein* (1901-1902), each showing the artist flanked by two sexually ambiguous, contrastive figures.<sup>117</sup> In this context, Patera, the ultimate *Schöpfer*, has successfully merged the competing forces, both horizontal (male-female) and vertical (conscious-subconscious), and has more generally synthesised life and death, creation and destruction, as symbolised by his watery, womb-like dreamland, which is both fertile and morbid. Kubin's narrator, an initiate into Patera's artistic religion, is himself an artist who (re)discovers his own creativity in the search for 'unmittelbar neue Formgebilde' (DaS 166). This work synthesises not only Klinger's dichotomy of the *Malerisch/Zeichnerisch*, but also seeks to merge words and images in 'ein seltsames Liniensystem. Ein

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Geyer, *Träumer auf Lebenszeit*, p. 141.

<sup>116</sup> Kubin himself associated marriage and regular sexual activity with the abatement of his early fervid visions, as noted in Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>117</sup> Reprinted in Hoberg (ed.), *Drawings*, pp. 19 and 43.

fragmentarischer Stil, mehr geschrieben wie gezeichnet, drückte es wie ein empfindliches meteorologisches Instrument die geringsten Schwankungen meiner Lebensstimmungen aus' (166).<sup>118</sup> The narrator develops this 'Psychographik' – a means of (expressionistically) projecting his own psychic content – while leading what he describes as a 'Zwitterleben', which can be understood as referring to a double existence, generally, or to the embrace of hermaphroditic self-sufficiency.

In 'Die Klärung der Erkenntnis', the narrator claims to have realised that '[d]ie Welt ist Einbildungskraft, *Einbildung – Kraft*' (176). The world itself is created from the power of fantasy, in which the play of opposites is essential, returning to the motif of the pendulum: '[Patera] wollte alles zugleich, die Sache – und ihre Gegenteil, die Welt – und das Nichts. Dadurch pendelten seine Geschöpfe so hin und her' (178). This fundamental opposition between the world (creation) and nothingness, as an expansion of the life-death dichotomy, is also echoed in the dream-within-a-dream, where the narrator briefly plays Patera's role as creator. He (re)creates the Dream Realm in bizarre miniature, in which the interplay of creation and disintegration is incessant: no sooner has an image been summoned into existence than it begins to disintegrate into another form. The murderous miller is subject to death himself, and his corpse gives birth to forms that begin to consume him. At the end of the dream, the observing narrator-creator is (re)absorbed into his own creation, the mussel symbolising both fertility and death, coincident with Patera's *Sumpfmutter*.

The narrator (the individual) and Patera (the cosmic force) are both dreamers and creators equally. Since ancient times, dreaming and creativity have been metonymically associated with 'inspiration', the animating breath, or similar culturally determined ideas. As discussed in the preceding chapter, this source was considered divine, anonymous and external in antiquity, and was only gradually relocated to the mind, where it became psychological, idiosyncratic and endogenous. By the early twentieth century, this had placed the idea of creative inspiration under

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<sup>118</sup> This new form of writing plays a role similar to calligraphy in E.T.A. Hoffmann's 'Der goldne Topf' (1814). That novella's hero, Anselmus, who delights in producing 'kalligraphisch[e] Meisterstücke', is guided to a parallel plane of reality by the magic of visually aesthetic writing that combines the values of art and knowledge. Cf. E.T.A. Hoffmann, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2/1: *Fantasiestücke in Calliot's Manier. Werke 1814*, pp. 229-322 (p. 243). It is possible that Kubin's invented writing system was also inspired by calligraphy, given the oriental themes and setting of his novel.

strain. In psychoanalysis, the emphasis on systematisation and pathology often yielded a reductive, or even dismissive, view of creativity that was unacceptable to many working artists, Kubin included. *Die andere Seite* can be seen as an alternative attempt to reconcile personal and divine inspiration by creating a new, more appropriate deity: a complex (demi-)god even more human than the Christian deity, because more closely associated with the material world, death and dreaming.

In this context, the dream-world itself – the world of creation – also becomes a hybrid of heaven and hell. The dreamer-creators for whom it is designed require a different kind of paradise, one that includes death and destruction as prerequisites for new creation. The dream-world's instability, darkness and irrationality are inhospitable for most people, 'reale, gesunde Naturen', like the narrator's wife. However, those who participate in artistic creation, inhabiting the dream-side of life, must embrace ambiguity and mortality. (Heavenly) transcendence is inverted, becoming a hellish descent in the Dream Realm's *Untergang*, which is ambiguous in apocalyptic terms precisely because its negativity is also positive.<sup>119</sup> This is reflected again in the dreamland's hybrid spiritual topography, for instance in its mountains, which, instead of offering a transcendent refuge, resemble the barren and fiery wastes of hell. Patera's burial in the mountainside is another amalgamation of the celestial and the subterranean. Patera is not resurrected, and does not ascend, as Christ does. In this Decadent inversion, death itself is the means of transfiguration. For Kubin, the dream metaphorically and literally becomes the meeting place of the heavenly and the demonic, which traditionally divided the dream in Christian discourse. For the narrator-creator, spiritual and artistic consummation are attained at the moment of perfect synthesis, the lowest point of the pendulum's passage, where duality is nullified in the relief of a temporary monism, as occurs during the final destruction of the dream-world: 'In klaren, regelmässigen Schwingungen versank das All in einen Punkt' (DaS 322). The monistic principle is reiterated in the possibility, voiced by the narrator at the end of the novel, that the blue-eyed natives – the ultimate representatives of balance and synthesis – were 'die wirklichen Herren, die

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<sup>119</sup> Cf. Gerhards, *Apokalypse und Moderne*, pp. 51, 59-60, on the ambiguity of Kubin's apocalyptic vision. Victor Turner (*The Ritual Process*, p. 54) notes that in societies based on 'apocalyptic communitas', liminal rites are often associated with 'divine catastrophes and crises, such as the slaying or self-immolation of important deities for the good of the human community' – a phenomenon indeed manifested in Patera's Christ-like martyrdom.

durch magische Kräfte eine leblose Paterapuppe galvanisierten und das Traumreich nach Gefallen schufen und vergehen ließen' (335).<sup>120</sup>

In the epilogue, the narrator claims that he has learned the lessons of his initiation into a dualistic *Weltanschauung* in which the underlying structure of duality is more important than its specific terms: 'Die abstossenden und anziehenden Kräfte, die Pole der Erde mit ihren Strömungen, die Wechsel der Jahreszeiten, Tag und Nacht, schwarz und weiss – das sind Kämpfe' (339). These oppositions are inherent in the world because they arise from the very anatomy of the demiurge, who also pre-determines the binary structures of our minds, the 'widersprechendes Doppelspiel' in each of us (339). For the artist, at least, this 'hell' is inseparable from heaven; to love life is to love death; to create is to destroy. The novel's theme can be reduced to a synthesis of (re)generative and degenerative principles, in which the dream's allegorical and metonymical power results from its uniquely synthesising nature. It is the site where the conscious meets the unconscious, the creator meets his inventions, and the material body meets the *Geist*, in the construction of worlds that disintegrate as rapidly as they are formed, eliminating the distinction between creation and destruction.

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<sup>120</sup> The idea of Patera as lifeless puppet-ruler resonates with the depictions of dead or artificial (male) authorities in Kubin's artwork, as mentioned earlier, but it also overlaps with the golem idea in Meyrink's novel, where collective fears and wishes accumulate in a single, hypostatized being whose power is largely iconic.

## Chapter 3

### Seeing with the 'Other Eyes': Dream States in Robert Musil's *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß*

*Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß* (1906),<sup>1</sup> the first novel by Robert Musil (1880-1942), is a study in self-observation, in which the protagonist uses his 'confusions' to form a new understanding of selfhood. A major aspect of this process concerns the subjective incorporation of oneiric experience alongside rational, 'waking' thought. Musil pursues an approach of systematic investigation, making Törleß into the observer and analyst of his own dream(like) states, which he seeks to validate through experiments of sight, sensation and language. The resulting complex *Ich* integrates dream consciousness into a functional model of perception and communication, with access to a metaphorical language transcending the linguistic. The redefined self becomes ethically reliant on the guidance of dreams, imagination and private sensory experience in place of external or conventional moral systems.

The literary dream appears in two guises in *Törleß*. First, a dream event at the centre of the text proves a crucial turning point in the protagonist's development. This event dramatises the functioning of the dream and its potential for providing transformative insights. Second, the idea of the dream also pervades the novel as a metonym for an 'other' state of consciousness based on sensations and intuition, which requires metaphor to be communicated. This dream consciousness lacks clear boundaries and threatens to compete with rational consciousness at all times. A major part of Törleß's struggle to gain a coherent sense of selfhood therefore consists in the attempt to elucidate such boundaries.

This chapter begins by outlining Musil's relation to evolving contemporary theories of perception and epistemology, where the dream crystallises doubts about the validity of self and rationality. The second section examines the role and content of

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Musil, *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß* [1906], *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Adolf Frisé, 2 vols (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978), vol. 2: *Prosa und Stücke: Kleine Prosa, Aphorismen, Autobiographisches, Essays und Reden, Kritik* (1978), pp. 7-140. Referenced as *Törleß*.

the novel's central dream event as a narrative tool, as well as the overarching dream trope used to symbolise non-rational consciousness. The final section relates to Törleß's construction of a new subjectivity that incorporates the insightfulness and fluidity of the oneiric in its approach to perception, language and ethics.

### 1. Perception and Dreaming in the Intellectual Background of *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß*

The events of *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß* take place at an Austrian military boarding school (in the Czech lands) closely resembling the institutions attended by Musil as a youth. The reader accompanies the protagonist through his initial homesickness, his emotional attachment to a young prince, and his clandestine visits to a local prostitute, Božena. The novel's main action, however, begins when two of Törleß's newly acquired friends, Reiting and Beineberg, draw him into a scheme to secretly punish their classmate Basini, who has been caught stealing money. Their punishment consists of physical, sexual and psychological abuse, mostly performed in a room hidden deep inside the school building. Basini endures it all, even his final public humiliation before the class. Törleß, although he becomes sexually involved with Basini himself, mostly plays the role of passive (if enthralled) observer. These sensual experiences are paralleled by his intellectual struggles in mathematics and philosophy. Eventually, his observations and discoveries lead him to withdraw from the Basini affair, and from the school itself, with a new-found sense of self-possession.

Interpreters of the novel have explored its function as a *Bildungsroman*, calling it 'the first and formative chapter in the crisis' of that tradition (Webber)<sup>2</sup> and identifying it as an end-point of the 'expressivist' subjectivity that had dominated European thought ever since Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (Jonsson).<sup>3</sup> But *Törleß* also extends beyond its adolescent context to a broader social critique. Tim Mehigan argues, for instance, that Musil chose a school milieu because the

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Webber, 'Reality as Pretext: Robert Musil, *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß*', in David Midgley (ed.), *The German Novel in the Twentieth Century: Beyond Realism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), pp. 30-44 (p. 30).

<sup>3</sup> Stefan Jonsson, *Subject without Nation: Robert Musil and the History of Modern Identity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 38.

unripe personalities of schoolchildren were exceptionally well-suited to demonstrate the ‘confusions’ of his contemporaries.<sup>4</sup> Musil belonged to the ‘generation of 1905’, as David Luft refers to it, consisting of the cohort born between 1870 and 1890, whose members sought to fashion a culture appropriate to modern, technological life, but also ‘reawakened to the positive value of the unconscious, sexuality, and dreamlife’, all considered sources of creativity.<sup>5</sup> Musil, thanks to his training in science and engineering, and his later involvement in the philosophical and psychological circles of Berlin, became a uniquely capable interpreter of this tense parallel interest in technology and dream-life.<sup>6</sup>

Musil’s diaries expose his intellectual concerns during the period when he was conceiving, writing and revising *Törleß*, and looking back on its 1906 publication. This was a time of intense change, as Musil made the transition from engineer to man of letters. He began work on *Törleß* in Stuttgart, where he was employed as a technical assistant, and finished it in Berlin, where he had already commenced studies in philosophy and psychology, so the novel lies at the intersection of two worlds of thought. Musil was coming of age intellectually at a time when the problematics of subjectivity were gaining importance even for the natural sciences, and he acquired a keen interest in current scientific problems of perception.<sup>7</sup> In a diary entry he reflected that time and space are not *a priori* categories, and he compared the non-discursive (‘sprungweise’) nature of human thought to the functioning of cinema, remarking that ‘die Fähigkeit des Aufmerkens, des sich denken Fühlens [ist] die Wurzel aller cogito ergo sum=Erkenntnistheorie’.<sup>8</sup>

The title Musil gave to one of his earliest diaries, ‘das Nachtbuch des monsieur le vivisecteur’, reveals how the lyrical and the analytical coexisted and competed

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<sup>4</sup> Tim Mehigan, *Robert Musil* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 2001), pp. 19-20.

<sup>5</sup> David S. Luft, *Robert Musil and the Crisis of European Culture, 1880-1942* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> As J.P. Payne notes, ‘Musil’s works are marked, to a degree unusual in a creative writer, by his scientific training; they are rooted in unusually acute and extensive observation of himself and others’. J.P. Payne, “‘Geist’ recording “Seele”: The Life of the Mind as Reproduced in Robert Musil’s Works’, *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 32 (1996), 70-82 (p. 70).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Sybille Deutsch, *Der Philosoph als Dichter: Robert Musils Theorie des Erzählens* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 1993), p. 32.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Musil, *Tagebücher*, ed. Adolf Frisé (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1976), p. 117. Hereafter referred to as TB-Musil.

within him (TB-Musil 1).<sup>9</sup> Musil wished not only to record all of his thoughts on ‘die Wissenschaft vom Menschen’ (TB-Musil 137) but also to apprentice himself to Romanticism and mysticism (TB-Musil 139). Musil’s ‘critical, separating, fragmenting’ mode thus contrasted with the embrace of a romantically influenced mysticism,<sup>10</sup> which in his case was largely non-theological, secular and ‘innerweltlich’.<sup>11</sup> This mysticism, later resurrected in ‘der andere Zustand’ of *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*,<sup>12</sup> represents the impulse towards unity in Musil’s thought, described by Dietmar Goltschnigg as ‘[eine] Einswerdung [...] als Einheit von Ich und Welt, als Verschmelzung von Ich und Du sowie als Vereinigung von Ich und Du in den Dingen’.<sup>13</sup> This state of union (also captured in the title of Musil’s *Vereinigungen* stories of 1911) in which ‘die Grenzen von Zeit und Raum ihre Gültigkeit verlieren’, is thus also dreamlike in its loss of structure and self, and its inherent ineffability.<sup>14</sup> For Musil, this was not a means of escape from (self)-exploration, but instead another potential path to knowledge, another way of both perceiving and grasping the world as an intuitive whole. In Musil’s work, the intertwining of *das Traumhafte* with the ‘other state’ is part of the project of creating a new epistemology, open to a wider range of consciousness.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The idea of *monsieur le vivisecteur* may well be drawn from Nietzsche, who particularly thematises psychological ‘vivisection’ in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (1886) and *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (1887).

<sup>10</sup> Genese Grill, ‘The “Other” Musil: Robert Musil and Mysticism’, in Philip Payne, Graham Bartram and Galin Tihanov (eds), *A Companion to the Works of Robert Musil* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2007), pp. 333-54 (p. 354).

<sup>11</sup> Elisabeth Albertsen, *Zur Dialektik von Ratio und Mystik im Werk Robert Musils* (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1968), p. 71. The essential dualism of Musil’s thought has been variously labelled. J.P. Payne, for instance, notes Musil’s attention to the continuum of ‘Seele’ (mental functions beyond the reach of the individual) and ‘Geist’ (‘active’ thought); cf. Payne, “‘Geist’ recording “Seele””, p. 72. Commentators have also seized upon the pair of terms in Ulrich’s proposal, in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, to establish a ‘Generalsekretariat der Genauigkeit und Seele’ (*Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, vol. 2 of the *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Adolf Frisé, 2 vols (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978), p. 583). See, for instance, Klaus Mackowiak, *Genauigkeit und Seele: Robert Musils Kunstauffassung als Kritik der instrumentellen Vernunft* (Marburg: Tectum, 1995).

<sup>12</sup> Philip Payne describes ‘der andere Zustand’ as a ‘mental state in which the selfhood of the individual merges with the universe as a whole’. Cf. Philip Payne, ‘Robert Musil’s Diaries: Medium between Life and Literature’, in Payne, Bartram and Tihanov (eds), *A Companion to the Works of Robert Musil*, pp. 87-116 (p. 108).

<sup>13</sup> Dietmar Goltschnigg, *Mystische Tradition im Roman Robert Musils: Martin Bubers ‘Ekstatische Konfessionen’ im ‘Mann ohne Eigenschaften’* (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiehm, 1974), p. 119.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 124, 146.

<sup>15</sup> The epistemological value of Musil’s mysticism is noted by Roland Kroemer: ‘Musil fragt sich, ob angeblich mystische Erlebnisse tatsächlich einen Blick hinter die empirische Welt ermöglichen oder letztlich nicht durch psychische und physiologische Prozesse, die nicht spiritistisch, sondern wissenschaftlich zu erklären sind’. Roland Kroemer, *Ein endloser Knoten? Robert Musils*



Philosophy served the young Musil as a sometime solution to the tension between scientific interests and writerly ambitions, although he was not entirely satisfied with the compromise this entailed, describing philosophy as a ‘Denkgebiet zwischen Wissenschaft und Dichtung [...] wobei es weder die Vorzüge der einen noch der anderen teilt’ (TB-Musil 174). In this domain, Nietzsche was a lifelong influence on Musil, as he was for Kubin. However, Musil criticised the philosopher for failing to put his theories into application: ‘er spricht von lauter Möglichkeiten, lauter Combinationen [...] Er zeigt uns alle Wege auf denen unser Gehirn arbeiten kann, aber er betritt keinen’ (TB-Musil 19). Musil was also influenced by Emerson, in part because the latter was able to connect his theories of a transcendental over-soul with a positive view of progress and technology.<sup>16</sup> In both thinkers Musil perceived an affinity with his own blend of incisiveness and soulfulness.

Musil’s interests again overlapped in the theme of his doctoral thesis, on the work of physicist and philosopher Ernst Mach. As a scientist, Mach had an abiding interest in human perception, including inner ear functioning and the effects of visual illusions. As a philosopher, he promoted a version of phenomenalism acknowledging only the reality of sensations (‘Empfindungen’).<sup>17</sup> Mach’s work was committed to rediscovery of the ‘independent’ physical world, to replace older, idealistic metaphysics influenced by Kant.<sup>18</sup> Mach greatly interested writers in Viennese cultural circles around the turn of the century, including Hofmannsthal, Hermann Bahr and Otto Weininger, due to his provocative attack on the *Ich*. He dared to declare that the sense of a unified ‘self’ was a mere illusion of convenience arising from the combination of sensory impressions. ‘Nicht das Ich ist das Primäre, sondern die Elemente (Empfindungen). Die Elemente bilden das Ich’; ‘Das Ich ist unrettbar’, as he wrote in *Die Analyse der Empfindungen und das Verhältnis des Physischen zum Psychischen* (1886).<sup>19</sup> Mach acknowledged the dream’s role in exposing this

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‘Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß’ im Spiegel soziologischer, psychoanalytischer und philosophischer Diskurse (Munich: Fink, 2004), p. 121.

<sup>16</sup> Karl Corino, *Robert Musil: Eine Biographie* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2003), p. 136.

<sup>17</sup> Goltschnigg also links Musil’s mystical conceptions to his study of Mach’s functionalism, and its criticism of the ‘physikalische Begriffe’ of time and space. Goltschnigg, *Mystische Tradition im Roman Robert Musils*, p. 124.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Mehigan, *Robert Musil*, p. 79.

<sup>19</sup> Ernst Mach, *Die Analyse der Empfindungen und das Verhältnis des Physischen zum Psychischen* [1886] (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991), pp. 20, 19. Mach, although bringing



fiction: 'das Ich im Traume [kann] sehr verschwommen, verdoppelt sein, oder ganz fehlen', thus destroying the mirage of the self's 'scheinbare Beständigkeit'.<sup>20</sup>

When Musil encountered Mach's work in the first years of the twentieth century, it seemed to speak to his own theories: 'Machs populär wissenschaftliche Vorlesungen fielen mir heute zur rechten Zeit in die Hand, um mir das Vorhandensein einer vorwiegend verständlichen [sic] Existenz von trotzdem hoher Bedeutung zu erweisen. Schließlich habe ich ja daran nie gezweifelt' (TB-Musil 20). In his thesis, however, Musil is ultimately critical of Mach's ideas, arguing that he did not succeed in providing 'eine eindeutige Lösung, einen voll befriedigenden Standpunkt für künftige Lösungen'.<sup>21</sup> Mach, according to Musil, contradicts himself because he denies necessity in nature even as he assumes its existence as the basis for his research. Nonetheless, the ideas in Musil's thesis, and particularly its concern with human 'Sinnesempfindungen', filter into his literary works. As Jacqueline Magnou argues, the Machian influence on *Törleß* is found in the creation of a world essentially constituted of sensations, and in the difficulty of defining a self with its own independent existence.<sup>22</sup> To some extent, *Törleß* may be seen as Musil's true thesis on Mach, his most assiduous test of the philosopher's ideas.<sup>23</sup>

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the weight of his scientific authority to this subject, was not the only one to posit such ideas. In *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, first published in the same year, Nietzsche also undermines the Cartesian *Ich* and its activities: 'ein Gedanke kommt, wenn "er" will, und nicht wenn "ich" will; so dass es eine Fälschung des Thatbestandes ist, zu sagen: das Subjekt "ich" ist die Bedingung des Prädikats "denke". Es denkt: aber dass dies "es" gerade jenes alte berühmte "Ich" sei, ist, milde geredet, nur eine Annahme, eine Behauptung, vor Allem keine "unmittelbare Gewissheit"'. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 30 vols (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1975-1984), vol. 6/2: *Jenseits von Gut und Böse; Zur Genealogie der Moral* (1968), pp. 24-25. A recent version of this theory comes from the biological dream researcher Hobson: 'consciousness varies, continuously and gradually, through an infinite range of levels [...] as the simple result of the processing that is going on in our brains and the data that is being outwardly sensed and tapped from within'. Cf. J. Allan Hobson, *Dreaming as Delirium: How the Brain goes out of its Mind* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), p. 204.

<sup>20</sup> Ernst Mach, *Die Analyse der Empfindungen*, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Musil, *Beitrag zur Beurteilung der Lehren Machs; und, Studien zur Technik und Psychotechnik* [1908] (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1980), p. 134.

<sup>22</sup> Jacqueline Magnou, *Robert Musil: de 'Törless' à 'Noces', ou, Le vertige du moi* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1995), p. 105.

<sup>23</sup> See Yvon Desportes, 'Vergleichende Untersuchung eines Stils und einer Philosophie: Ein Werk Musils aus der Sicht Machs', in Renate Heydebrand (ed.), *Robert Musil* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1982), pp. 281-95 (p. 94). Hofmannsthal, who also attended Mach's courses (at the University of Vienna) similarly 'began to see the fractured self as a problem that must be overcome'. See Judith Ryan, *The Vanishing Subject: Early Psychology and Literary Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 115.

In this context, perception was the common denominator of Musil's interests, not only in Mach and philosophy, but also in psychology. Musil's patented invention from his years as a technical assistant was a gyroscopic apparatus intended for use in psychological experiments. Musil's interest in psychology is also evident from the reading notes in his diary, on books such as *Die geistige Entwicklung im Thierreich* or an article from the *Zeitschrift für Psychologie und Physiologie der Sinnesorgane* (TB-Musil 13). Musil describes psychology as a discipline that had developed 'sehr exakte indirekte Methoden, mittels derer sie [in] sonst ganz der Beobachtung unzugängliche Vorgänge bloßlegt [sic], – eine Art von Gehirnspiegeln' (TB-Musil 150). Meanwhile, although Freud's 1905 text *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie* appeared at almost the same time as *Törleß*, there is no decisive evidence that Musil knew Freud's work when he wrote his first novel. Numerous interpreters have nonetheless undertaken psychoanalytic readings, in part influenced by Musil's later documented, ambiguous relationship to psychoanalysis.<sup>24</sup> Annie Reniers, however, argues that the text of *Törleß* betrays no Freudian influence whatsoever, and that Musil and Freud subscribed to fundamentally differing conceptions of 'Seele'.<sup>25</sup> It certainly seems that Musil, as a psychology student, was likely to have been acquainted with theories arising from, or related to, the budding field of psychoanalysis.<sup>26</sup> But Freudian ideas were only part of the story, particularly considering Musil's exposure to the new *Gestalt* psychology, founded in 1889, which was heavily influenced by his thesis supervisor, Carl Stumpf, director of the Berlin Institute of Psychology. Indeed, for Philip Payne, Musil's vision of human behaviour is 'not susceptible to the kind of detective work that the psychoanalyst carries out', but instead – echoing Musil's mystical epistemology – 'works through *Gestalten*, complex patterns that can more readily be grasped intuitively as a whole when they have been studied over time'.<sup>27</sup> In this chapter, I note connections to Freudian ideas, but I do not propose a Freudian reading.

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<sup>24</sup> Karl Corino describes Musil's ambivalence towards psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic interpretation as a lifelong 'Kampf um Selbstbehauptung'. Cf. 'Ödipus oder Orest? Robert Musil und die Psychoanalyse', in Uwe Baur and Dietmar Goltschnigg (eds), *Vom 'Törleß' zum 'Mann ohne Eigenschaften'* (Wilhelm Fink: Munich, 1973), pp. 123-235 (p. 126).

<sup>25</sup> Annie Reniers, "'Törleß": Freudsche Verwirrungen?', in Karl Dinklage, Elisabeth Albertsen and Karl Corino (eds), *Robert Musil: Studien zu seinem Werk* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1970), pp. 26-39 (p. 36).

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Kroemer, *Ein endloser Knoten?*, p. 76.

<sup>27</sup> Philip Payne, 'Introduction', in Payne, Bartram and Tihanov (eds), *A Companion to the Works of Robert Musil*, pp. 1-52 (p. 17). Corino also argues that Gestalt psychology had a deep impact on

In any case, Musil did not conflate the projects of psychology and literature: his vision of the writerly calling excluded ‘jeden Gedanken an “psychologisches” Verstehen, Erfassen u. dgl.’, as, for Musil, psychology belonged to ‘das ratioide Gebiet’, concerned with determining fixed rules, while the writer, on the contrary, is interested in diversity, in that which is ‘unberechenbar mannigfaltig’.<sup>28</sup> However, Musil’s ideas of subjectivity were informed by theories of the unconscious, as evident from diary notes, for instance, on the work of Eduard von Hartmann, author of *Philosophie des Unbewußten* (1869). Although agreeing with Hartmann’s emphasis on the unconscious in artistic production, Musil argues that his division between ‘Traum Bewußtsein’ and ‘wache[s] Bewußtsein’ goes too far, ‘denn auch die Perception eines wissenschaftlichen Gedankens geschieht genau so wie die des Kunstwerks’ (TB-Musil 36). For Musil, artistic and scientific cognition share much common ground. In other places, Musil labelled the basic dualistic terms of consciousness differently, proposing that the ‘unpsychologischen oder doch voreiligen bewußt-unbewußt’ opposition should be replaced with ‘überlegt-unüberlegt (– in eigentlichem Sinne, halbscheit etwa dem ersteren Begriffpaare und dem : logisch-alogisch)’ (TB-Musil 138). Sometimes he seems hesitant to label the unconscious at all: ‘Die Bilanz zwischen Bewußtem und Unbewußtem in korrektem Sinne muß notwendigerweise einmal gezogen werden, und es wäre möglich daß das Resultat (wenn man den Anteil des überlegenden, konstanten Faktors gegen **das Andere** in uns hält) ein überraschendes sei’ (TB-Musil 139, emphasis mine).<sup>29</sup> Altogether these reflections, closely related to the tension between *Ratio* and *Mystik*, reveal a dualist worldview and an interest in defining and synthesising the two ‘sides’ of the mind to create a coherent self, a stubborn *Rettung* of the *Ich* after all.

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Musil’s work, both in individual passages and in the ‘Gestalt’ conception of *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*; cf. Corino, *Robert Musil*, pp. 227, 229.

<sup>28</sup> Robert Musil, ‘Skizze der Erkenntnis des Dichters’ (1918), *Prosa und Stücke*, pp. 1025-30 (p. 1029).

<sup>29</sup> ‘Das Andere’ is related not only to ‘der andere Zustand’ but also to the ‘es’ that pervades *Törleß*, otherwise described by Freij as ‘[e]in transzendierendes Etwas’; cf. Lars Freij, ‘Türlosigkeit’: *Robert Musils ‘Törleß’ in Mikroanalysen mit Ausblicken auf andere Texte des Dichters* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1972), pp. 40-41. The pervasive ‘es’ of *Törleß* anticipates Freud’s later conceptual use of ‘das Es’, borrowed from the German doctor Georg Wilhelm Groddeck, who first employed it in 1916 (cf. Jaap Bos, ‘On the Origin of the Id (*Das Es*)’, *International Review of Psychoanalysis*, 19 (1992), 433-43). However, it also echoes Nietzsche’s ‘es’, previously cited, in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (pp. 24-25): ‘Es denkt’ instead of ‘Ich denke’.

In this context, Musil included the dream among the perceptual phenomena subject to scrutiny. He recorded some of his own dreams (as well as invented fictional dreams) in his diaries, and made note of how he experienced them, during and after the event. He remarks, for instance, that the fluctuation of identity in dreams resembles a perceptual pathology: ‘Man träumt von der Geliebten. Sie sieht ganz anders aus [...] Sie tut Dinge, welche die Andere nie tun würde. Dieser Nichtidentität bleibt man sich fortwährend bewußt. Dennoch ist man – eine Ähnlichkeit mit Pathologischem – gezwungen, das Traumbild für sie zu halten’ (TB-Musil 103). In many places, the dream appears to stand for the ‘other’ mode of thought, and allows this mode to express a positive value, instead of defining it in a referential or negative way, as ‘other’, *unconscious* or *alogical*. ‘Traum’ in this sense becomes synecdochal: the dream event is a subclass of dream consciousness, so that the dream-as-idea can be used to refer both to itself and to this larger category of experience.

*Törleß* can be read as an effort to transcend the opposition between rational/logical/conscious thought and dream thought as they coexist in human cognition. The novel is a crystallisation of Musil’s interests through the medium of literature. He continued to be torn between philosophical and artistic callings: ‘Mein Begriff von Philosoph ist anspruchsvoller geworden; er reißt das sich an, was ich bisher als das Wesentliche am Künstler ansah’ (TB-Musil 149-50). *Törleß* was an attempt at philosophy in new form – an experiment in narrating perception that framed Musil’s hypotheses concretely, much as he accused Nietzsche of failing to do.<sup>30</sup> As Musil wrote in his doctoral thesis, ‘Die Zeiten sind vorbei, wo das Bild der Welt in Urzeugung dem Haupte des Philosophen entsprang’.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, he explicitly conceptualised the writer’s task as the experimental generation of new possibilities for subjectivity: ‘Die Aufgabe ist: immer neue Lösungen, Zusammenhänge, Konstellationen, Variable zu entdecken, Prototypen von

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<sup>30</sup> As Kroemer argues, ‘die erzählte Geschichte [ist] keineswegs vom philosophischen Subtext zu trennen’. The Basini ‘case’ acts as a catalyst for Törleß’s confusions, and as ‘Illustration und Exemplifizierung der behandelten philosophischen Fragen’. Cf. Kroemer, *Ein endloser Knoten?*, p. 13. On Musil’s quest to create philosophy in new form, see also Johannes Loebenstein, ‘Das Problem der Erkenntnis in Musils künstlerischem Werk’, in Karl Dinklage (ed.), *Robert Musil: Leben, Werk, Wirkung* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1960), pp. 77-131 (p. 78).

<sup>31</sup> Musil, *Beitrag zur Beurteilung der Lehren Machs*, p. 15.

Geschehensabläufen hinzustellen, lockende Vorbilder, wie man Mensch sein kann, den inneren Menschen *erfinden*'.<sup>32</sup>

In this task, Musil and his contemporaries had to incorporate the scientific interest in dreaming, which contributed to a disoriented sense of perception and a communication crisis, posing further threats to the beleaguered concept of self. The dream, as the psychosis known to all, condenses the fears surrounding the unreliability of *Vernunft*, and the fragility of the ego. If, in this context, the dream is generally important for literature because it serves as a prism or tool to reflect the concerns of a time period (in its role as mini-story or ur-narrative), it acquired even greater importance for Western literature with the exploration of individual *Innerlichkeit* provoked by the Romantics. In this earliest text, Musil, like the other authors in this thesis, was concerned with refashioning subjects and forms inherited from Romanticism, and particularly, in this case, with applying new analytical theories to older visions of the self. If the Romantics had shaped the literary dream to *reflect* their view of experience, now the phenomenologically studied dream served literature as a potential *model* for experience, thus becoming crucial in determining whether the Romantic *Ich* could survive and/or be transformed.<sup>33</sup>

The previous chapter explored Kubin's more Expressionistic approach to the literary dream in *Die andere Seite*, which (particularly in the passage 'Die Verwirrung des Traumes') exposes the dream's bizarreness and chaos: the ur-narrative becomes anti-narrative, providing an analogy for the rest of experience. *Törleß*, meanwhile, seeks to penetrate its protagonist's psychic life and to directly convey experiences of violent emotion and perceptual disorientation, replacing conventional narrative modes in the search for a new kind of subjectivity. However, the authorial voice continually pulls away to observe Törleß from a detached perspective, and Törleß himself is keen to gain distance from his emotions in order to analyse them, largely in order to determine the boundaries and qualitative differences among states of consciousness. Although this proves a frustrating task, complicated by the

<sup>32</sup> Musil, 'Skizze der Erkenntnis des Dichters', *Prosa und Stücke*, p. 1029.

<sup>33</sup> Elisabeth Stopp notes the affinity of *Törleß* with Romantic forerunners: 'Wie die Romantiker, und unter ihnen besonders Tieck, machte Musils Törleß den Versuch, zwei sich widerstreitende Bewußtseins Ebenen im übermäßig grellen Licht der Analyse, dem eine ausschweifende, ja schauerliche Phantasie die Waage hielt, in Einklang zu bringen'. Cf. Elisabeth Stopp, 'Musils "Törleß": Inhalt und Form', in Heydebrand (ed.), *Robert Musil*, pp. 207-49 (p. 243).

amorphous and intrusive nature of dreamlike cognition, Törleß insists on maintaining distinctions.<sup>34</sup> So, although Kubin and Musil confront a similar enigma of otherness – *die andere Seite / der andere Zustand* – and although both authors are interested in the synthesis of dualities, Kubin advocates surrender of the self (captured symbolically in his narrator's submission to the self-consuming dream-world), while Törleß never abandons his pursuit of self-mastery through analysis. Kubin's narrator ends in a state of dream-sickness, broken and hospitalized, while Törleß, although equally committed to his dream-life, exits the novel in a state of arrogant self-possession.

Musil, like Törleß, never relinquished his attitude of systematic investigation, which partly explains his avowed distaste for Expressionism as a movement devoid of revolutionary power, due to its failure, in Musil's view, to generate new ideas.<sup>35</sup> In *Törleß*, Musil's alternative is to experiment with a character model permitting *analytical observation* of the dreamlike, as opposed to an Expressionistic *participatory experience*.<sup>36</sup> By insisting on semantic clarity and choosing a self-reflective hero, Musil, not unlike Schnitzler, is interested in contrasting subjective and objective experience, and thus addressing the problems of relativity implicated in the dream's 'splitting' of the self. Drawing impetus from the *Bildungsroman*

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<sup>34</sup> As he declares to his teachers: 'Ich weiß: die Dinge sind die Dinge und werden es wohl immer bleiben; und ich werde sie wohl immer bald so, bald so ansehen. Bald mit den Augen des Verstandes, bald mit den anderen .... Und ich werde nicht mehr versuchen, dies miteinander zu vergleichen' (*Törleß* 138).

<sup>35</sup> Musil's 1922 essay 'Symptomen-Theater I' explains his simultaneous rejection of Impressionism and Expressionism: 'Es gab weder der Impressionismus, noch der Expressionismus Ideen [...] der letztere schuf keine einzige neue Idee, er war daher auch keine Ideenkunst, was er sein wollte, sondern eine ideenlose'. For Musil, Expressionism had corrupted ('verdorben') the very idea of 'Geist'. Cf. 'Symptomen-Theater I' [1922], in Musil, *Prosa und Stücke*, pp. 1094-1103 (pp. 1097-98). Nevertheless, as Elisabeth Stopp notes, Musil's first novel displays both Expressionistic and Impressionistic elements, as well as aspects of Decadence, 'in seinem Kult des Ästhetizismus als seiner Lebensform, seiner Analyse extreme subtiler intellektueller und emotionaler Nuancen, seiner Evokation erotischer Perversion und eines geistig-nervlichen Grenzzustandes'. Cf. Stopp, 'Musils "Törleß": Inhalt und Form', p. 241.

<sup>36</sup> *Törleß* offers a good example for Lisa Zunshine's argument that the novel form functions as 'cognitive experiment', and that fiction in general is useful for 'trying on' mental states. Cf. Lisa Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006), pp. 22, 17. In this context, Musil's experimental depiction of subjective experience in socially deviant cases (in the sadomasochism of *Törleß*, and later in the murderous Moosbrugger character of *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*) parallels Schnitzler's literary case studies of psycho- and/or socio-pathology (as in *Fräulein Else*, discussed in Chapter 6). The work of both authors provoked scandal due to the authors' willingness to 'inhabit' the consciousness of apparently amoral or immoral characters. In Moosbrugger, as in *Törleß*, this is associated with the dreamlike: 'Ulrich fiel irgendwie ein: wenn die Menschheit als Ganzes träumen könnte, müßte Moosbrugger entstehen' (*Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 76).

tradition, *Törleß* is still concerned with self-development and the absorption of knowledge, represented synecdochally by Kant and mathematics, but its protagonist now also implicitly tests the more recent challenges to selfhood put forward by Machian science and depth psychology. The sufferings/*Leiden* of Werther are replaced by an epistemological dilemma of confusions/*Verwirrungen*. Musil's solution is not surrender, but the (re)construction of a more complex self, containing parallel modes of thought, yet capable of deciding and acting as a unified subject. Törleß's attempts to understand the meaning and function of dreaming must be understood in this context.

## 2. The Dream Event and Dream Consciousness

### 2.1 The Dream of Kant

The sole clearly defined dream event in *Törleß* occurs at a critical point. Shortly before his dream, Törleß has two striking encounters, sensual and intellectual in nature, respectively. First, he is party to the initial torture session in the secret room, where he shocks himself by becoming sexually aroused. The second, intellectual encounter is an unsatisfying interview with his maths teacher, in which Törleß tries to comprehend the phenomenon of the imaginary number that becomes the novel's master metaphor. Törleß is fascinated by the idea that something 'imaginary' can be used as a bridge between different aspects of reality: the 'solid' numbers 'hängen miteinander durch etwas zusammen, das es gar nicht gibt. Ist das nicht wie eine Brücke, von den nur Anfangs- und Endpfeiler vorhanden sind und die man dennoch so sicher überschreitet, als ob sie ganz dastünde?' (74).<sup>37</sup>

The maths teacher, to Törleß's frustration, considers this a purely mathematical concern, and insists that he has no authority to intervene in '[das] Übersinnlich[e], jenseits der strengen Grenzen des Verstands Liegend[e]' (76-77).<sup>38</sup> However,

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<sup>37</sup> As John J. White noted, the imaginary number becomes 'something outside [Törleß's] consciously controllable image of the world', creating 'open conflict with the former superego' and symbolising 'the seeds of antirationalism' already within him. Cf. John J. White, 'Mathematical Imagery in Musil's *Young Törleß* and Zamyatin's *We*', *Comparative Literature*, 18/1 (1966), 71-78 (p. 74).

<sup>38</sup> For Musil, as for Törleß, mathematics was far from dry and pragmatic. On the contrary, it was subjective ('nicht zweckbedacht, sondern unökonomisch und leidenschaftlich') and transcendental



noticing that the boy is in search of more general understanding, he lends him a volume of Kant. In accepting the book, Törleß feels he is confronting a part of the adult world from which he has always been excluded, but which may now help him to found a new identity. On this basis, he decides to burn all of his poetic work (reflecting Musil's own conflict between literature and philosophy). Törleß is therefore bewildered and disappointed when he finds Kant's text to be filled with incomprehensible parentheses and footnotes, causing him to abandon the book (80).<sup>39</sup>

On the evening of the dream, Törleß is initially too agitated to sleep, recalling an argument with Beineberg about imaginary numbers and Basini. His thoughts gradually become more dreamlike (84), punctuated by ellipses and question marks ('ja oder nein?... ja oder nein?'), indicating that he has reached the very borders of the communicable. A series of metaphors is needed to describe the experience: 'wie das Rollen eines Eisenbahnzuges, wie das Nicken von Blumen an zu hohen Stengeln, wie das Klopfen eines Hammers'. At last, Törleß dissociates from his conscious self as he imagines his own head nodding in sleepiness (84). The entry into the dream state is signalled by a sensory transition: 'Endlich schwieg alles in Törleß. Vor seinen Augen war nur eine weite, schwarze Fläche, die sich kreisrund nach allen Seiten hin ausdehnte' (84). The insistent analytical voice within him has subsided, giving way to powers of visual symbolisation.

Against this black mental background, Törleß observes five different 'characters' appear in sequence (84-85). They seem not to notice his presence, as if he were invisible or an 'outside' observer. The dream is narrated in *erlebte Rede*, inhabiting Törleß's consciousness, and, as if to emphasise the fragility of language in this imagistic environment, its description is broken by more ellipses and dashes, more hesitations: 'Da kamen ... weit vom Rande her ... zwei kleine, wackelnde Figürchen – quer über den Tisch.' These first figures, it seems, are his parents, so small that he feels nothing for them, and they immediately disappear again ('[a]uf der anderen

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('[der Mathematiker] dient der Wahrheit, daß heißt seinem Schicksal, und nicht dessen Zweck'), as emphasised in Musil's 1913 essay 'Der mathematische Mensch'; cf. *Prosa und Stücke*, pp. 1004-8.

<sup>39</sup> Musil's diaries betray his own ambivalent stance towards Kant, mingling admiration with rejection. For example, he notes in 1902, 'Ich habe Kant nicht zu Ende gelesen, aber ich lebe beruhigt weiter und fürchte nicht vor Scham sterben zu müssen, daß ein Anderer bereits die Welt restlos erfaßte' (TB-Musil 12).

Seite'). A second pair arrives. Beineberg is apparently walking backwards past them, taking steps twice the length of his body, but he also vanishes ('hinter die Kante'; the phonetic association with 'Kant' seems already to point Törleß in the direction of the dream's final *Erkenntnis*). Törleß now recognises one member of the second pair as the maths master, but he fails to identify the last person; as in Musil's diary dreams, identity is elusive. Törleß watches the two men carry a huge book in which they appear to be seeking an answer. Crucially, Törleß overhears the very words used by his teacher, in language that recalls Törleß's earlier, frustrated experience of reading Kant's text, with its many footnotes. The teacher uses a formal language that is also circular and meaningless, drawing endless chains of empty reference: 'wenn dem so sein soll, finden wir das Richtige auf Seite zwölf. Seite zwölf verweist uns weiter an Seite zweiundfünfzig'. The two seekers appear to have an intimate relationship, with this 'other man' stroking the teacher's cheeks.<sup>40</sup> Törleß still struggles to recognise the final figure, and only knows who it is when he awakens suddenly with a cry of 'Kant!' (85). He thus ends his dream with a word, an act of naming, immediately smiling to himself in the realisation that he has been dreaming.

The dream structure:

Black background  
 2 figures (mother/father)  
 Beineberg interspersed  
 2 figures (maths teacher and Kant: mathematics/philosophy) → book

The two pairs of figures in Törleß's dream represent two sets of oppositions: mother vs. father and mathematics (science) vs. philosophy. Interspersed between them, the elusive Beineberg seems to be transcending physical laws in his strange manner of motion. Most of the dream focuses on the second dialogue between the maths teacher and Kant, who appear to be looking for a 'correct answer' (perhaps on behalf of Törleß himself) but fail to provide one.

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<sup>40</sup> The element of homoeroticism in this dream has parallels with K.'s dream in *Das Schloß*, discussed in the next chapter. In both dreams, eroticism symbolises complicity with power, reflecting the eroticised power relations in the novels overall.

The dream is over, but it is followed by an important postlude: an intermediate state between dreaming and waking that provides Törleß with fertile insights as he lies in the dark (85-87). Musil portrays this condition of *Halbschlaf* as particularly conducive to understanding. Like the other authors in this thesis, he is interested in the power of half-sleep to enable ‘[ein inneres] Sehen [...] das weder wacher Gedanke ist noch Symbolsprache des Traumes’.<sup>41</sup> As a template for seeing with the ‘other eyes’, *Halbschlaf* creates a state in which *Erkenntnis* from the subconscious can be brought into dialogue with conscious reflections.<sup>42</sup> While in this state, Törleß wishes the dream with Kant had lasted longer so he could speak with the philosopher. He remembers how a dream helped him in the past, by presenting the subjects of a history exam so vividly that he achieved an excellent mark. As the dream retreats, Törleß wonders, ‘Konnte er denn auch nur *etwas* aus diesem Buche ersehen, das die Lösung aller Rätsel enthalten sollte? Und sein Sieg?’ (86). This dream book, of course, is the apparition of Kant’s text, earlier rejected by Törleß.

Instead of directly answering these questions, Törleß remains suspended in dreamlike consciousness, where he ‘physically’ recalls the memory of his childhood longing to be a girl. He begins to form answers through a synthesis of memory, sensory impressions and intellectual dilemmas.<sup>43</sup> A dream figure – presumably Kant – re-enters his thoughts, but is now referred to with an air of contempt: ‘Dieses wutzlige kleine Männchen, von dem er geträumt hatte, wie gierig es die Seiten unter den Fingern jagte!’ (87). Törleß suddenly feels that he has an internal defence against such ‘gescheite Männchen’, based on something in his ‘Sinnlichkeit’, something ‘das ihm keiner zu nehmen vermochte, das auch keiner nachzumachen vermochte, etwas, das ihn wie eine höchste, versteckste Mauer gegen alle fremde Klugheit schützte’ (87). In this moment, Törleß feels triumphant, but – following a pattern that recurs in several literary dreams in this thesis (notably in *Das Schloß* and *Casanovas*

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. Helmut Pfotenhauer and Sabine Schneider, *Nicht völlig Wachen und nicht ganz ein Traum: Halbschlafbilder in der Literatur* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2006), p. 2. Peter-André Alt describes the similar importance of *Halbschlaf* states for Kafka in *Franz Kafka: Der ewige Sohn. Eine Biographie* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2008), pp. 312-17.

<sup>42</sup> In his diaries, Musil described how he blended dreaming and waking in devising the story *Tonka* (1924) ‘Eine Linie : Das Traumhafte im wirklichen Leben [...] Eine “kritische Zustands”mischung von Träumen u Wachen, Vergangenen u Gegenwärtigen aus der heraus erzählt wird’ (TB-Musil 185).

<sup>43</sup> Pfotenhauer and Schneider have also noted the synthesising function particular to the state of half-sleep: ‘In der Betrachtung der Halbschlafbilder geht es unverstellt wie nirgends sonst um die spezifisch synthetisierende, im Verworrenen, Uneindeutigen konfigurierende Leistung der imaginativen Bewußtseinsabsenzen’. Cf. *Halbschlafbilder*, p. 71.

*Heimfahrt*) – triumph rapidly turns to anxiety: the *Männchen* grows into a giant, and Törleß again experiences ‘der Schmerz darüber, daß er noch immer vor einem verschlossenen Tore stehen müsse’ (87). Alluding, perhaps, to the significance of the name Törleß, this passage symbolises the protagonist’s frustration at being barred from transcendental knowledge.<sup>44</sup> Kant, in the dream and in the half-dream, represents power, authority and an intellectual rival (with parallels to other dream-figures, notably Brügel in K.’s dream in *Das Schloß*, but also Patera in *Die andere Seite*, and Voltaire in *Casanovas Heimfahrt*).

Törleß wakes into *Halbschlaf* a few times, submerged in a subconscious ‘Wärme’ that he feels is indistinctly associated with Basini, before he finally falls into a sleep that is ‘fest und traumlos’ (87), resembling the sleep of escape sought by Kafka’s K. and Schnitzler’s Casanova. With this new *dreamless* sleep, the entire dream segment is at an end, and there is a pause in the narration. But the dream’s interpretive role is not over yet; Musil soon shows how the insights gained from it are to affect Törleß. Upon waking, Törleß immediately struggles to understand his nocturnal dream thoughts – ‘halb gedacht und halb geträumt’ – with relation to Basini, and by the end of the day, he has begun to write again: ‘Ich fühle,’ he writes in his first line, ‘etwas in mir und weiß nicht recht, was es ist’ (88). He perceives that his involvement with Kant is at an end, because the dream has stripped the aura of authority from the philosophical text. Now Törleß is convinced, instead, that he will independently solve the ‘Rätsel’ before him (92). This is an epistemological turning point. Having rejected external *Erkenntnis*, Törleß resolves to find his own solutions by fully attending to the Basini ‘case’, for he has realised – in the post-dream state of *Halbschlaf* – that the key to knowledge lies in his own sexuality and sensuality.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> The association of the name ‘Törleß’ with doors and gates has been discussed by several commentators, notably Lars Freij, who argues that ‘Törleß’ could be a distortion of ‘türlos’, directly connected with the novel’s pervasive symbolism of *Türe* and *Tore*. As he notes, ‘[d]ie Wortgruppe ‘TÜR/TOR/Torweg/Pforte’ spielt eine wichtige Rolle, wo es gilt, Törless’ Suche nach einem Zugang zu einem extraordinären Erleben zu schildern’ (Freij, ‘*Türlosigkeit*’, p. 118). Lynda Hoffmann argues, on the other hand, that ‘[n]icht das Fehlen von Toren oder Türen macht [Törleß] Eigenart aus, sondern gerade sein Bemühen, diese zu erkennen und zu durchschreiten’; cf. Lynda Hoffmann, ‘Hinter verschlossenen Türen: Ist Törleß wirklich “türlos”?’ *Musil-Forum*, 15 (1989), 5-17 (p. 15).

<sup>45</sup> As Andrew Webber has noted, ‘any consideration of Musil’s central thematic, aesthetic or philosophical preoccupations must remain incomplete if it ignores the constitutive function of sexuality’: Andrew Webber, *Sexuality and the Sense of Self in the Works of Georg Trakl and Robert Musil* (London: MHRA, 1990), p. 2. Andreas Kramer argues that Törleß’s linguistic frustrations are intertwined with his impressions of desire. Basini, as Törleß’s *Doppelgänger* and ‘Spiegelbild’, symbolises the intersection of these domains. Cf. Andreas Kramer, ‘Invisible Chains: Language and

After the dream, the stage is set for the novel's second half, in which Törleß must construct an original epistemology based on observation and experimentation.

The two parts of the dream segment – the dream and the state of *Halbschlaf* – reveal Törleß's subconscious treatment of key relationships in the novel's preceding pages. Building on Magnou's argument that *Törleß* can be read as a series of encounters,<sup>46</sup> the dream event constitutes a special type of encounter, the only direct confrontation between Törleß and his unconscious. The *Halbschlaf* state is the initial processing of this meeting, sparking an internal dialogue that will extend into Törleß's waking life and influence his decisions. The close juxtaposition of these varieties of (sub)consciousness reveals the different kinds of knowledge they can provide.

What kind of special information is gained from the dream event itself? Musil, through Törleß, grants explicit revelatory power to dreams: Törleß has already known the experience of receiving answers through dreams. But the dream in this novel shows that the maths teacher and Kant do *not* have the answer, and in fact share Törleß's confusions. In subsequently rejecting their authority, Törleß takes an important step towards the conclusions he will present to his professors at the end of the novel. The dream encourages him to reflect on his own nature and to search for independent solutions. Musil's insertion of a single dream event at this central site is not only an effective narrative device, but also an epistemological statement: among the varieties of consciousness experienced by Törleß, the dream is a special case. It presents a 'scene' created by Törleß without his conscious control. Although Törleß cannot voluntarily access the dream-world, its message comes to *him* at the very moment in which he most needs insight.

Törleß's dream, by its relative sparseness and clarity, signals a break with the emotional dream of Romanticism. Instead, it offers an intellectual and perceptual

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Desire in Musil's *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß*, *London German Studies*, 6 (1998), 287-314 (pp. 304-10). Finally, Matthias Luserke-Jaqui also stresses the importance of Törleß's sexuality, as part of Musil's contribution to 'a long sequence of attempts to write a discourse on desire', commencing with Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*. Cf. Matthias Luserke-Jaqui, 'Die *Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß*: Adolescent Sexuality, the Authoritarian Mindset, and the Limits of Language', in Payne, Bartram and Tihanov (eds), *A Companion to the Works of Robert Musil*, pp. 151-74 (p. 173).

<sup>46</sup> Magnou, *Robert Musil*, pp. 39-40.

experience.<sup>47</sup> In this sense, it also contrasts with the Expressionistic ‘Verwirrung’ of the dream in *Die andere Seite*. The characters in Törleß’s dream appear distinctly and in sequence against a black background, and the main emphasis is on the intellectual figures, Kant and the maths teacher, in their search for knowledge. The dream quite literally focuses on the idea of ‘Erkenntnis,’ as Törleß struggles to recognise the dream-actors, and finally awakens with the insight of Kant’s name. Törleß’s dream, detached and observant, is far more ‘Apollonian’, in a Nietzschean sense, than Törleß’s dreamlike waking experience. Particularly where Törleß participates in sensual experiments in waking life, he is instead enveloped by a sense of Dionysian *Rausch*: ‘ganz von Gefühlen umrauscht’, or capitivated by a ‘berauschende Verlockung’, in which his powers of *Erkenntnis* are eroded (‘er kannte sich selber nicht mehr’, *Törleß* 111). In Musil’s novel, as in Kubin’s, the ‘dream’ appears in both guises – as illumination and as darkness, as form and as entropy.

The raw material of Törleß’s Kant dream can only be claimed as meaningful when processed and brought into dialogue with other ideas during the *Halbschlaf* phase. Here, Törleß intertwines elements from his dream – his parents, Beineberg, the intellectual struggles related to numbers and Kant’s book – with memories and reflections on his own sexuality, ultimately leading back to Basini, in a germinating fusion of rational and sensual knowledge. This is, in some ways, an extension of Freud’s secondary elaboration, the interpretive work performed by *das Vorbewusste*.<sup>48</sup> In *Törleß*, however, this process extends beyond the dream’s

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<sup>47</sup> Some recent research indicates that dreams, contrary to common assumption, are largely dominated by perceptual concerns, rather than emotion. See Inge Strauch and Barbara Meier, *In Search of Dreams: Results of Experimental Dream Research* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996), p. 79.

<sup>48</sup> In *Die Traumdeutung*, Freud briefly addresses the processing of abstract material in the context of secondary elaboration, by reference to the work of Herbert Silberer on the transformation of abstract thoughts into visions while ‘in Zuständen von Müdigkeit und Schlaftrunkenheit’, even citing Silberer’s contemplation, in such a state, of a philosophical problem involving Kant and Schopenhauer. Freud remains cool, however, towards this ‘funktionales Phänomen’ because he considers, disapprovingly, that it resuscitates ‘die alte Neigung zur abstrakt-symbolisch Deutung der Träume’. Cf. Sigmund Freud, *Die Traumdeutung*, in *Gesammelte Werke chronologisch geordnet*, ed. Anna Freud (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1940-1952), vol. 2/3: *Die Traumdeutung; Über den Traum* (1942), pp. 1-642 (pp. 507-9). This example demonstrates Freud’s wariness towards self-analysis on the part of dreamers, and towards the intermingling of dreaming and waking thought outside the context of psychoanalytic therapy – a wariness also evident in ‘Der Dichter und das Phantasieren’, where he emphasises the neurotic aspects of day-dreams. Cf. Sigmund Freud, ‘Der Dichter und das Phantasieren’, in *Gesammelte Werke chronologisch geordnet*, vol. 7: *Werke aus den Jahren 1906-1909*, pp. 213-23 (pp. 220-21).

immediate aftermath into a more general self-analysis not dissimilar to the workings of *das Mittelbewusste* posited by Schnitzler (see Chapter 6). In this sense, both Musil and Schnitzler strive to determine the source of self-knowledge and personal morality in the interplay of dream symbolism and conscious analysis in the state of *Halbschlaf*.

## 2.2 Dream Consciousness and the ‘Other Eyes’

*Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß* also uses the dream in a second, symbolic sense, to refer to non-rational consciousness, the loss of conscious control and the synthesis or cross-pollination of ideas. Oneiric liminality is built into the story structure, which functions as a symmetrical set of brackets, beginning with Törleß’s arrival at the school (when his mother takes leave of him at the station) and ending with his departure (when his mother comes to retrieve him). This parallels the departure-and-return structure of *Die andere Seite*. Musil’s protagonist, like Kubin’s narrator, arrives by train in a strange, distant, isolated land of ‘traurige Farben’ and ‘durch den Dunst ermüdete Licht’, which gives both objects and people ‘etwas Gleichgültiges, Lebloses, Mechanisches’ (*Törleß* 7).<sup>49</sup> If, in *Die andere Seite*, the dream becomes a landscape, in *Törleß*, the landscape becomes like a dream. The military school itself is an ideal liminal setting, in which the initiates are dressed homogeneously and subject to codes of obedience and *communitas*, while symbolically associated, by Musil, with darkness and bisexuality.<sup>50</sup> The dreamlike aspects of this liminal experience are also emphasised upon Törleß’s departure from the school, when he immediately begins to forget the names of his classmates, just as a dream begins to vanish the moment it is over. In the novel’s final passages, Törleß makes the dream analogy explicit:

So wie man eben am Morgen sieht, wenn die ersten reinen Sonnenstrahlen den Angstschweiß getrocknet haben [...] Er wußte nun Tag und Nacht zu scheiden; – er hatte es eigentlich immer gewußt, und nur ein schwerer Traum war verwischend über diese

<sup>49</sup> Volker Schlöndorff’s film version, *Der junge Törleß*, also emphasises the melancholy and dullness of the landscape around the school, but it portrays village life in greater detail, thus shifting the emphasis away from Törleß’s solipsistic perspective and heightening the element of social critique.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 95.

Grenzen hingeflutet, und er schämte sich dieser Verwirrung: aber die Erinnerung, daß es anders sein kann, daß es feine, leicht verlöschbare Grenzen rings um den Menschen gibt, daß fiebernde Träume um die Seele schleichen, die festen Mauern zernagen und unheimliche Gassen aufreißen, – auch diese Erinnerung hatte sich tief in ihn gesenkt und strahlte blasse Schattern aus. (139-40)<sup>51</sup>

Throughout the novel, 'Traum Bewusstsein' is particularly associated with certain persons, locations and perceptual states. The two characters who most strongly draw Törleß into the dream-world are the prostitute, Božena, and Basini himself, connected not only by the similarity of their names, but also by their erotic relationship with Törleß. Their 'fallen' nature symbolically links them to both the social *underworld* and to the *subconscious*. When Törleß hears that Basini has been labelled a thief, he thinks:

Und wieder verknüpfte sich das irgendwie mit Božena [...] diese tiefe Erniedrigung, diese Selbstaufgabe, dieses von den schweren, blasen, giftigen Blättern der Schande Bedecktwerden, das wie ein unkörperliches, fernes Spiegelbild durch seine Träume gezogen war (46)

Basini provokes both excitement and anxiety in Törleß, who finds that he can only become 'vernünftig' again when he avoids the dream-aura of the other boy: 'des Befremden wich und wurde Tag um Tag unwirklicher, wie Spuren eines Traumes, die sich in der realen, festen, sonnenbeschiedenen Welt nicht behaupten können' (51). However, when Basini climbs into his bed at night, Törleß is unable to refuse the other boy's advances, despite internal resistance. His hands draw Basini closer 'wie im Traum' (107) and at the height of his excitement, he 'awakens' briefly from

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<sup>51</sup> The tone of this passage – of safe reawakening after 'ein schwerer Traum' – resembles the sentiments at the end of Schnitzler's *Traumnovelle* (discussed in Chapter 6) where, at daybreak, Albertine insists on gratitude 'daß wir aus allen Abenteuern heil davongekommen sind – aus den wirklichen und aus den geträumten [...] Nun sind wir wohl erwacht [...] für lange'. Cf. Schnitzler, Arthur, *Traumnovelle*, in *Gesammelte Werke in sechs Bänden*, ed. Reinhard Urbach and Robert O. Weiss (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1961-1977), vol. 2: *Die Erzählenden Schriften* (1970), pp. 434-504 (p. 503). These conclusions to *Traumnovelle* and *Törleß* reveal the compartmentalising synthesis favoured by both authors, where – at least in 'strong' characters – the conscious self may temporarily gain control over subconscious impulses. The endings also point to traces of Enlightenment thought in these writers, where 'awakening' is equated with positive self-mastery, also echoed in Hans Castorp's call to awakening in *Der Zauberberg*: 'daß ich mich aus meinem Schlaf und Traum reiße, von denen ich natürlich weiß, daß sie meinem jungen Leben im höchsten Grad gefährlich sind... Auf, auf! Die Augen auf!' Cf. Thomas Mann, *Der Zauberberg* (1981), in *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelbänden*, ed. Peter de Mendelssohn, p. 695.



this dreamlike loss of self, desperately thinking, ‘Das bin nicht ich!...nicht ich!...Morgen erst wieder werde ich es sein! (107-8).

A second mode of access to the dream-world is through particular locations – also linked to Božena and Basini – which provide a visual framework for the oneiric. The first of these, the house where Božena works, lies in the woods outside the school, and may only be visited illicitly, at night, by crossing a bridge over a river that runs ‘schwarz und träge’ (26). Once again, the river marks a psycho-topographical boundary offering passage to the ‘other’ part of the self, associated both with nocturnal/dream consciousness and with erotic experience.<sup>52</sup> An even more crucial dream-locus is the secret room used for experiments on Basini. Besides invoking an aura of eroticism, through its innermost and hidden nature, this windowless room also creates a permanent nighttime, where no sunlight can penetrate.<sup>53</sup> A sleeping area has been arranged, a revolver hangs on the wall, and the walls themselves are covered in blood-red canvas, lending an element of (erotic) violence in keeping with the acts performed on Basini. The room’s inherently liminal aspect arises from its womb/tomb symbolism (also present in Patera’s cave in *Die andere Seite*).<sup>54</sup> This ‘Versteck’ also resembles the room without doors in *Der Golem*, which acts as the site of terrifying existential self-confrontation.<sup>55</sup> In Musil’s text, Törleß’s self-confrontation is part of a social confrontation that also grants the room a theatrical aspect: the boys can only arrive at their hiding place by passing through a collection of old stage scenery, and the room’s darkness, prop-like objects and improvised staging area, where Basini ‘appears’ for his spectators, create a self-conscious and dramatic atmosphere.

The novel documents Törleß’s perceptual fluctuations as he traverses this multi-textured world. He is often found ‘mehr in Träumen als in Überlegungen’ (53), or

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<sup>52</sup> For more on the novel’s psycho-topography, see Kroemer (*Ein endloser Knoten?*, p. 115) who provides a map of place, character, symbolism and theoretical affinities. His map associates ‘Freud’ with Božena’s house and the school *Schlafsaal*, although this is a debatable interpretation considering the uncertainty of Musil’s links to Freudian theory, as mentioned earlier.

<sup>53</sup> As Hannah Hickman notes, the novel makes subtle use of light and darkness to thematise the centrality of perception. Cf. Hannah Hickman, *Robert Musil and the Culture of Vienna* (London; Sydney: Croom Helm, 1984), p. 46

<sup>54</sup> Freud argued that ‘Zimmer im Traume sind zumeist Frauenzimmer, die Schilderung ihrer verschiedenen Eingänge und Ausgänge macht an dieser Auslegung gerade nicht irre’ (TD 359).

<sup>55</sup> Gustav Meyrink, *Der Golem* (Furth im Wald; Prague: Vitalis, 2008), p. 117.

running through his memories 'wie zwischen Wachen und Träumen' (63). Dreaming and waking thoughts form a dual system, as symbolically captured in the novel's first image of parallel train tracks, each mirrored by an exhaust line on the ground, 'wie ein schmutziger Schatten' (7). The idea of co-existing realities is also implied in the novel's master metaphor of 'imaginary' (versus 'real') numbers. The social life of the school (as representative of Austro-Hungarian society more generally), is divided into contradictory realms of the official and the private, the (morally) proper and the forbidden. It even sustains two separate justice systems, governed by the professors and pupils. In this world of dichotomies, Törleß is perhaps most 'confused', however, by his *inner* disunion, at cognitive and emotional levels. He achieves a sense of equanimity only at the end of the novel:

Ich kann es nicht anders sagen, als daß ich die Dinge in zweierlei Gestalt sehe. Alle Dinge; auch die Gedanken [...] in mir war ein zweites, das dies alles nicht mit den Augen des Verstandes ansah [...] ich werde [die Dinge] wohl immer bald so, bald so ansehen. Bald mit den Augen des Verstandes, bald mit den anderen....Und ich werde nicht mehr versuchen, dies miteinander zu vergleichen.... (137-38)

Törleß speaks of a 'second life of things' associated with darkness, secrecy, imagination, and ineffability (137) – all characteristics linked to dreaming. His refusal to compare this existence with 'waking' life, and thus, by extension, with the rules governing everyday social conduct, implies entrapment between irreconcilable sets of constraints, making it inevitable that the individual will commit violations.<sup>56</sup> Because these competing realms also exist *within* Törleß, they affect the very manner in which he sees the world: 'Bald mit den Augen des Verstandes, bald mit den anderen'.

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<sup>56</sup> As Lorna Martens notes, duality remained Musil's 'overriding preoccupation and major theme [...] He became convinced that the coexistence of irreconcilable opposites was a fundamental given of human existence'. Cf. Lorna Martens, *Shadow Lines: Austrian Literature from Freud to Kafka* (Lincoln, NE; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), p. 17.

### 3. Törleß's Oneiric Confusions

Törleß represents an experimental model for a new subjectivity, a project later continued in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*. Musil's fascination with subjectivity can be gleaned from his early diary entries, where he contrasts the Cartesian *Ich* – 'die gewisse augenblickliche Einheit' – with the complex *Ich* of the mystics (TB-Musil 138) and speculates that consciousness is partly responsible for shaping the unconscious (TB-Musil 139). He is interested in saving Mach's unsalvageable *Ich* through a process of deliberate synthesis, rebuilding the self out of its multiple *Sinnesempfindungen*.<sup>57</sup> His work is both vivisection and its opposite: he deconstructs Törleß only in order to reconstruct him.

In this context, the dream offers both threat and opportunity. On the one hand, as Mach recognised, it appears to tear the fabric of selfhood irreparably, by fragmenting consciousness, calling sensory perception into question, and undermining the conscious will of the subject. But Musil's aim is to stitch the self back together precisely where these tears occur, which helps explain his decision to insert a dream at the turning point of a novel about self-determination. A major challenge in *Törleß* is to show how dream states – including those that penetrate into waking life – can be usefully integrated in a new version of the self. But it is a complex undertaking because it affects the basic rules of perception, the means of communication, and the subject's power to act as an autonomous and ethical agent.

#### 3.1 The Frustrated Observer: *Erkenntnis* in Dream States

Törleß's confusions are largely epistemological in nature, based in part on his realisation that the complexity and idiosyncrasy of perception is not well-reflected in the utilitarian parameters of work, social status and education. The protagonist's young age and lack of adult preconceptions make it possible to witness the

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<sup>57</sup> In this sense, Musil's approach, through Törleß, bears a resemblance to that of Proust's narrator in *Le Temps retrouvé*, where, as noted by Duncan Large, 'Proust's narrator's text-interpretation model for our engagement with the world takes him beyond any dualistic, subjective idealist paradigm, for he recognizes that there is a "real world", even if it is in a sense created by one's own multiple perspectives "on" it'. The sense of self (re)assembled by both narrators is a 'complicated self' that is 'not a transcendent abstraction, but a bodily effect'. Cf. Duncan Large, *Nietzsche and Proust: A Comparative Study* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 161.

development of self-awareness at first hand, as Törleß becomes an empiricist engaged in auto-experimentation. He justifies his actions through a need for self-referential knowledge, in order to understand ‘ein Vorgang in meinem Gehirn’ (132). His interest in others – such as his fascination with Basini’s thoughts – is ultimately referred back to him: he wants to know how he perceives *others’* perceptions.

These interests are already evident in Törleß’s early encounters with a young prince, a sort of proto-Basini, whom he observes with ‘psychological pleasure’ (11). In his later dealings with Basini, and even during the most intense experiences, Törleß remains preoccupied with (self-)perception. As the other boys strip and beat their captive, Törleß observes the light, flecks of dust, a spider’s web, and eventually his own sexual arousal; ‘Er dachte an nichts und war doch innerlich vollauf beschäftigt. Dabei beobachtete er sich selbst’ (70). He becomes fascinated by a lamp that looks to him like an eye (symbolic of perception as a whole). ‘Ist das nicht wie ein Auge?’ he asks the others, who do not understand him, but Törleß feels *Schadenfreude* at the thought that he is absorbing these events more fully than his companions (71). His detachment, puzzling to his peers and morally dubious in this context, nonetheless allows him a special clarity of perception.<sup>58</sup>

This detachment is also dreamlike. In these instances, Törleß’s subconscious seems to have seized control of his impressions. As in a dream, this perceptual boundary-crossing poses a threat to the self. The instability of identity in the wake of the dream state is evident, for example, from Törleß’s confused sense of gender in the *Halbschlaf* section. A dreamlike loss of self occurs whenever Törleß’s sexuality is stimulated, most especially in his relations with Basini, when he desperately thinks ‘Das bin nicht ich!’ (107-8). Musil aims to show that *Sinnesempfindungen* cannot be separated from *Sinnlichkeit*, that perceptual epistemology cannot ignore bodily desire.<sup>59</sup> Törleß, open to this manner of ‘seeing’ with the ‘other eyes’, feels that he in fact perceives time, space and identities differently than others do, in a way that

<sup>58</sup> Schlöndorff notes that his film uses visual details, or ‘inserts’, to capture ‘Musils sezierende[r] Blick’. Cf. Volker Schlöndorff, *Licht, Schatten und Bewegung* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 2008), p. 161.

<sup>59</sup> Musil’s interest in bodily knowledge as part of self-formation has been noted by Filippo Smerilli: ‘Der auf Wahrnehmungen reagierende Körper kann das Bewusstsein, die rational bestimmte Persönlichkeit überwältigen und selbst zum handelnden Subjekt werden’. Cf. Filippo Smerilli, *Moderne – Sprache – Körper: Analysen zum Verhältnis von Körpererfahrung und Sprachkritik in erzählenden Texten Robert Musils* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2009), p. 54.

cannot be clearly measured or even compared with the ‘eyes of reason’. Fears of going mad are eventually replaced with pride in his difference, confirmed by Törleß’s arrogant demeanour towards his teachers and by the novel’s final dreamlike (and undeniably Oedipal) words, ‘er prüfte den leise parfümierten Geruch, der aus der Taille seiner Mutter aufstieg’ (140). The verb ‘prüfen’, here, indicates that Törleß has not abandoned his analytical investigations, but has focused his attention on the life of the senses, the hidden, forbidden, erotic dream-world.

If Törleß’s dream consciousness pertains to all that is officially ‘invisible’, suppressed, ignored or prohibited, it also has a positive – indeed a productive – value in its germination of ideas through the creative power of metaphor. I have already noted how Törleß’s *Halbschlaf* combines visions of Kant with sensual childhood memories in order to fertilise thoughts about Basini. This alternative mode of dreamlike perception is also expressed in the imaginary number metaphor. While the maths teacher insists on its purely mathematical function, Törleß (reformulating the role of mathematics as universal language) instinctively grasps the power of this idea when applied to thought in general.<sup>60</sup> An imagined thing may be used to gain information about a real thing. Knowledge can be gleaned indirectly, by comparing relationships. And it is precisely this creative, metaphorical thinking, belonging to dream consciousness, that Törleß finds lacking in his discussion partners, whether Beineberg or his teachers. As he claims, ‘es gibt tote und lebendige Gedanken. Ein Gedanke [...] wird erst in dem Momente lebendig, da etwas, das nicht mehr Denken, nicht mehr logisch ist, zu ihm hinzutritt’ (136-37). The distinction between ‘living’ and ‘dead’ thoughts highlights the special qualities of knowledge available through dreams.<sup>61</sup> An opposition exists between the objective and *zielgerichtet* knowledge offered by rational, ‘waking’ consciousness, and the metaphorical, symbolic, hermeneutic information arising from irrational or dreamlike consciousness. Törleß grasps that the second mode is also essential to human nature. It is not merely

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<sup>60</sup> As Mehigan points out, the imaginary number model makes it possible to envision that ‘die Imagination [wäre] durchaus in der Lage, Zustände intuitiv vorzustellen, die für den bloßen Tatsachenverstand nicht erreichbar sind’. Cf. Mehigan, *Robert Musil*, p. 25.

<sup>61</sup> The close relationship between dreams and metaphor has been noted by psychiatrist Ernest Hartmann, who argues that ‘the dream connects, or brings closer together, subsystems of the memory nets, revealing similarities that the dreamer may not previously have noticed. Dreams do this by taking the form of pictured metaphor’, also described as ‘explanatory metaphor’. Cf. Ernest Hartmann, *Dreams and Nightmares: The Origin and Meaning of Dreams* (New York: Basic, 2000), pp. 95-96, 99.

irrational and *immeasurable*, i.e., not only negatively defined, but is considered to have its own positive uses. In particular, *interpretation* can only be achieved by 'living' thoughts; 'dead' thoughts remain 'gleichgültig' (136).<sup>62</sup>

Törleß's night dream and its interpretation show how *Erkenntnis* is gained through oneiric experience. The figures in Törleß's dream represent crystallised sets of ideas, here allowed to appear together on the same 'stage'. The dream reveals Törleß's true assessment of those ideas. He can immediately register his current indifference towards the tiny figures of his parents and all that they represent. His fascination and disbelief vis-à-vis Beineberg are captured in the latter's strange manner of motion, walking backwards with supernaturally long steps. In the most important part of the dream, the densely symbolic scene featuring the maths teacher, Kant, and the giant book, Törleß confronts the epistemology of authority. The book – representing officially sanctioned Knowledge – seems too heavy for the men seeking its solutions. Their dialogue consists of meaningless references. Törleß, a mere observer in the dream, begins to analyse its meaning immediately upon awakening. Recalling his own memories and sexuality, and the sensibility they represent, he begins to validate his rejection of Kant. The great philosopher now becomes a 'Männchen', implying both conceptual impotence and a mechanical mode of knowledge (manikin). Törleß now judges Kant, and all the authority figures that he stands for, to be his perceptual inferiors, because they do not recognise the value of sensual, metaphoric (and thus *dichterisch*) *Erkenntnis*.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> For Musil, according to the 1913 essay 'Analyse und Synthese', the mode of *dichterische Analyse* ('gar kein rationales, sondern [...] ein emotio-rationales und senti-mentales Denken') relies on metaphor: 'Denn jedes Gleichnis ist eine ungewollte Analyse. Und man versteht eine Erscheinung, indem man erkennt, wie sie entsteht oder wie sie zusammengesetzt ist, verwandt, verbindbar mit andren ist'. Cf. Musil, *Prosa und Stücke*, pp. 1008-9 (p. 1008). In *Törleß*, Lars Freij claims to have identified '425 bildkräftige Vergleiche und Metaphern [...] Von diesen sind viele zu kühnen Bildkomplexen aus- und zusammengebaut'; cf. Freij, 'Türlosigkeit', p. 66. For more on Musil's use of metaphor, see Jörg Kühne, *Das Gleichnis: Studien zur inneren Form von Robert Musils Roman 'Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften'* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1968); and Ulrich Schelling, 'Das analogische Denken bei Robert Musil', in Dinklage, Albertsen and Corino (eds), *Robert Musil*, pp. 170-99.

<sup>63</sup> Karl-Heinz Götze argues that this dream betrays Musil's own aspirations of competition with Kant: 'Nur die literarische Form des Traumberichts macht es möglich, diesen Größenwahn, der Kant, die "Gottheit" des Denkens im 20. Jahrhundert zu werden, die Welt rastlos zu erfassen, als realisiert vorzustellen, ohne lächerlich zu wirken'. Cf. Karl-Heinz Götze, "'Halb gedacht und halb geträumt': Der Traum in Musils *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß*", *Cahiers d'Etudes Germaniques*, 33 (1997), 119-35 (p. 134).

However, Törleß's perceptual idiosyncrasies become threatening where they extend into his social life, affecting his interactions with parents, peers and professors. As in Schopenhauer's famous assertion, 'der Traum [ist] ein kurzer Wahnsinn, der Wahnsinn [...] ein langer Traum', the dream(like) is here associated with psychosis.<sup>64</sup> Kant himself drew a connection between dream experience and solipsistic mental 'confusion' in *Träume eines Geistersehers, erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik* (1766), where he notes that, in 'Wahnsinn' as in dreams, 'der verworrene Mensch bloße Gegenstände seiner Einbildung außer sich versetzt, und als wirklich vor ihm gegenwärtige Dinge ansieht'.<sup>65</sup> While the (literary) dream is bracketed from waking life by the natural boundaries of sleep, the waking dream (like the literary 'dreamlike', discussed further in the next chapter) can invade consciousness in fluid, complex and subtle ways. In *Törleß*, it is described as coming upon him 'wie eine Tollheit' (64). The maths teacher claims Törleß has the temperament of an 'hysteric' (138), and Törleß himself worries, 'Ich muß krank sein, – wahnsinnig!' (88); 'Die Welt ist für mich voll lautloser Stimmen : ich bin daher ein Seher oder ein Halluzinierter?' (89). Nonetheless, he discovers through his dream and its aftermath that this *Tollheit* may be a fruitful source of creativity and *Erkenntnis*.<sup>66</sup> It is a general law, he finally decides, that we contain within us 'etwas [...] das stärker, größer, schöner, leidenschaftlicher, dunkler ist als wir', over which we have little power (92).

However, Törleß only manages to internally re-appropriate this 'etwas' by searching for the boundaries between his modes of thought, and by a compartmentalising compromise, at the end of the story, not to confuse or compare them.<sup>67</sup> He is eager to understand when, how and why he shifts from one perceptual mode to another, a transition reflected in the extensive symbolism of *Türen* and *Tore*:

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<sup>64</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *Werke in zehn Bänden*, ed. Arthur Hübscher (Zurich: Diogenes, 1977), vol. 7, p. 254. The association is still present today, particularly among biological researchers. As Hobson writes, '[d]reaming is not like a psychosis, it is a psychosis. It's just a healthy one'. Cf. Hobson, *Dreaming as Delirium*, p. 77.

<sup>65</sup> Immanuel Kant, 'Träume eines Geistersehers, erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik', in *Werke in sechs Bänden*, ed. Wilhelm Weischedel (Wiesbaden: Insel, 1956-1964), vol. 1: *Vorkritische Schriften bis 1768* (1960), pp. 923-89 (p. 956).

<sup>66</sup> David Luft goes so far as to argue that Musil wanted to assert the 'positive value and situational determination of psychosis'. Cf. Luft, *Robert Musil and the Crisis of European Culture*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>67</sup> As Lorna Martens notes, Törleß's attempt to grasp the nature of the irrational leads to a study of the 'mechanisms that govern the relation of rational and irrational, in particular the – equally inscrutable – point of transition between them'. Cf. Martens, *Shadow Lines*, p. 8.

Dann war es auch möglich, daß von der hellen täglichen Welt, die er bisher allein gekannt hatte, ein Tor zu einer anderen, dumpfen, brandenden, leidenschaftlichen, nackten, vernichtenden führe [...] Und die Frage bleibe nur: wie ist es möglich? Was geschieht in solchem Augenblick? (46-47)

Whenever Törleß thinks he has located a boundary, he cannot grasp it: the dreamlike loss of conscious control usurps the boundary itself. The 'Scheidelinie' between events and his observing *Ich*, between his emotions and his 'innermost self', retreats like the mirage of a horizon (25). These elusive transitions are experienced in a nearly physical, mechanical way: 'ein Gefühl, wie es im Körperlichen etwa den kaum merkbaren Muskelempfindungen entspricht, die das Einstellen des Blickes begleiten' (105).<sup>68</sup>

Törleß's efforts to integrate diverse modes of thought are part of Musil's attempt to salvage the self in light of new ideas about perception, but the self he manages to save comes at the cost of greater complexity. It is a self that exists transcendent of, and non-identical with, the conscious mind (as already recognised by the Romantics), but which now cannot even be dominated by the conscious mind. Rationality, still valid and useful, becomes subordinate to a larger selfhood under irrational control and subject to fluctuation. At the end of the novel, Törleß does not choose the mode of perception that corresponds to his true 'nature', but instead recognises the necessary coexistence of these different modes, even though his teachers wish he would choose a single perspective (135-36). Törleß is both excited and frightened by his waking dreams, and their deviation from received discourses, but his final acceptance of their necessity is captured in the mathematical metaphor. The imaginary number, although measureless and non-existent within the real-number system, is indispensable for the progress of mathematics. In the same way, Törleß comes to see dreamlike irrationality as an ungraspable yet essential aspect of the perceiving self, necessary for ultimate understanding (even if it is not to be confused with objective and rational thought).

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<sup>68</sup> Recent neuroscientific research seems to verify that conscious states are indivisible. The individual cannot split awareness among 'mutually incoherent scenes or objects'. Cf. Gerald M. Edelman and Giulio Tononi, *Consciousness: How Matter Becomes Imagination* (London: Penguin, 2000), pp. 20, 25.



However, a major source of Törleß's confusions in this regard stem from the problem of authority: if it is indeed possible to perceive the same circumstances in different ways, then which mode of perception is to be considered authoritative? What kinds of knowledge are valid, according to whom?<sup>69</sup> In Törleß's dream, he is confronted successively, and in generally the same order, with all four sources of authority so far encountered: his parents, his peers (represented by Beineberg), his teachers (represented by his maths teacher), and the knowledge tradition (represented by Kant and the book).<sup>70</sup> These four sources extend in outward spokes from Törleß, from the most intimate, familial level to the most abstract and theoretical. Coming after the real-life encounters, Törleß's dream is an attempt to weigh up the relative authority of these sources. None seem to satisfy him. His parents are small, indifferent figures. Beineberg is walking backwards, as if to symbolise the opposite of progress. Both the maths teacher and Kant are at a loss.

In Törleß's interview with the maths teacher, the latter may well understand Törleß's meaning, but refuses to accommodate him by reason of authoritative constraints: 'Ich bin eigentlich nicht recht befugt, da einzugreifen, es gehört nicht zu meinem Gegenstande' (76-77). The maths teacher's *Gegenstand* is rational thought, a delimited field of study, objective measurements; he represents 'der Mensch mit dem festen Punkte *a*, der rationale Mensch auf ratioïdem Gebiet', described by Musil as the opposite of the *Dichter*.<sup>71</sup> The maths teacher can only offer the guidance of a yet more powerful authority, in Kant's book. Törleß has high expectations for enlightenment from Kant, whom he understands to be 'das letzte Wort' in philosophy (78). The boy's destruction of his own poetry as an act of preparatory submission to Kant's authority adds weight to his subsequent disillusionment. However, Törleß is only able to affirm his rejection of Kant through the dream and *Halbschlaf*, where he also finds comfort in a re-valorisation of his own metaphoric, sensual and *dichterisch* understanding. He is suddenly aware of internal defences against 'fremde Klugheit'

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<sup>69</sup> As noted in the introductory chapter, questions of authority and its validation have always been bound up with the dream, starting with pre-Christian and biblical divine dreams of legitimation. In Musil's (post-)Nietzschean worldview, philosophy has succeeded religion, and Kant is the king to be dethroned through an appeal to inner wisdom in the dream.

<sup>70</sup> Götze describes this dream as 'eine symbolische Verdichtung des Erzählverlaufs', cf. "Halb gedacht und halb geträumt", p. 124.

<sup>71</sup> Musil, 'Skizze der Erkenntnis des Dichters', *Prosa und Stücke*, p. 1026.

(87), and he turns to Basini, or rather to his own (sensual) perception of Basini, as an epistemological experiment. The rejection of official wisdom opens the novel's second half, which focuses on Törleß's private and forbidden investigations with Reiting and Beineberg. But as Törleß eventually observes, even these companions, despite their disobedience to authority, are beholden to conventional discourses of power, and he rejects their superiority, as well: 'Ich hatte einmal vor dir [Reiting] und Beineberg Respekt, jetzt sehe ich aber, was ihr gegen mich seid' (126). Even his mother, that most intimate authority, who retrieves him from the school at the end, does not find the 'überreizten und verwirrten jungen Mann' that she expected, but is instead struck by his 'kühle Gelassenheit' (140). In this inverted version of the *Bildungsroman*, Törleß's maturity is achieved through a rejection of social order in favour of confident idiosyncrasy.

The dream, as an endogenous phenomenon, represents Törleß's own authority. On the day following his dream, Törleß buys a notebook and attempts to record his thoughts under the ambitious title *De natura hominum* (88), where, of course, Törleß himself acts as the model for 'human nature'. He thus reverses the destruction of his writings before the dream, and offers his own alternative to Kant's apparently useless text. Authorship becomes the concrete re-appropriation of authority. From now on, Törleß will record the results of his own investigations, which depend on an epistemology of the dreamlike. However, this approach, as Törleß rediscovers in his writing, is frustrated by a wall of ineffability.

### 3.2 The Frustrated Message: Dreams and the Ineffable

Törleß's perceptual disorientation is accompanied by linguistic 'confusions'. Because his perceptions are idiosyncratic, and fall beyond the conventional parameters for communicating experience, he struggles to find a language capable of expressing them. In this respect, *Törleß* is partly a writer's coming-of-age story, documenting the struggle to master words, but its significance extends to the problems of communication more generally, particularly in the construction of selfhood. As Jerry Varsava notes, 'Törleß's incipient self-awareness is the product of his increasing sensitivity to language and its limits or, more succinctly, of his

progression towards an ontology of the inexpressible'.<sup>72</sup> Törleß is heir to the *Sprachkrise* most famously captured in Hofmannsthal's 'Ein Brief' (1902), a crisis leading not to the renunciation of language, but to more radical attempts to circumvent its confines.<sup>73</sup> As noted in the introductory chapter, the dream has a special connection to language problems: as an experience that cannot be witnessed by external observers, it puts language to the test (along with the linguistic capacities of any individual dreamer) and exposes the limits of expression. The difficulty of making the dream communicable through words was one of the greatest faced by Freud. His literary contemporaries shared this problem, along with the broader challenge of describing dreamlike subjectivity. As Martens writes, 'the duality *language/the inexpressible* is a logical extension of the duality *reason/the irrational*'.<sup>74</sup>

In *Törleß*, the theme of ineffability is emphasised from the outset by an epigraph from Maeterlinck: 'Sobald wir etwas aussprechen, entwerten wir es seltsam', it begins (7). Musil, through Törleß, is keen to answer Maeterlinck's challenge. As Tim Mehigan argues, this very failure on the part of language to fulfil its promise of transmitting truth is the 'radikale Erkenntnis' that catalyses Törleß's confusions.<sup>75</sup> From the beginning, Törleß engages in confused attempts to describe his dreamlike impressions to others. His difficulties with expression are highlighted by the ellipses in his statements. Newly arrived at the school, he writes frequent letters home ('er lebte nur in diesen Briefen', 8), but his parents fail to recognise, in his letters, 'das Symptom einer bestimmten seelischen Entwicklung' (10). Törleß later makes a special effort to communicate with Beineberg, in whom he senses shared psychological interests, but he discovers that the latter has little taste for figurative and sensual thought. In addition, much of Törleß's fascination with Basini concerns the desire to make Basini explain his subjective experiences. Törleß is intrigued to see whether Basini experiences the same mental and perceptual processes as he does. In his frustration, he also begins to torment Basini, but not physically, as the others

<sup>72</sup> Jerry A. Varsava, 'Törleß at the Limits of Language', *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies*, 20/3 (1984), 188-204 (pp. 188-89).

<sup>73</sup> As described by Sabine Schneider, the language crisis did not produce a 'Poetik des Schweigens', but instead 'eine literarisch äußerst produktive und semiotisch folgenreiche Poetologie des inneren Sehens'. Cf. Pfothenhauer and Schneider, *Halbschlafbilder*, pp. 105-6.

<sup>74</sup> Martens, *Shadow Lines*, p. 211.

<sup>75</sup> Mehigan, *Robert Musil*, p. 112.

do: 'Ja, ich quäle dich. Aber nicht darum ist es mir; ich will nur eines wissen: [...] Was vollzieht sich in dir? [...] Verstehst du mich denn gar nicht? Näher erklären kann ich's dir nicht; du mußt mir selbst sagen...!' (104). Basini, however, is overwhelmed by the attempt to express the incommunicable, and breaks down, capable only of repeating, 'ich weiß nicht, was du willst; ich kann dir nichts erklären' (104). Törleß is barred from the boy's mind by the locked door of language.

Törleß's words fail him even privately, as evidenced by the difficulty of writing *De natura hominum*. Törleß hopes to gain clarity by writing down the history of his *Sinnlichkeit*, 'Faktum für Faktum', but discovers that he can only proceed messily, 'hastig und ohne mehr auf die Form zu achten' (88). However, through metaphor, Törleß is at least able to express the problem of inexpressibility itself: 'Ich bin in der Aufregung eines Menschen, der einem Gelähmten die Worte von den Verzerrungen des Mundes ablesen soll und es nicht zuwege bringt' (89). Törleß, distracted by the presence of Basini, is soon lost again in dreamlike and sensual visions, which yield a rich series of insights and analogies, but which interrupt the writing process. At the end, he manages to record only a few lines: 'Hastig, mit der Geschwindigkeit der Angst, griff er nach der Feder und notierte sich einige Zeilen über seine Entdeckung' (92).

However, if Törleß's success is limited in this first, tentative attempt to reclaim language, he demonstrates greater fluency in his final statement to the teachers before leaving the school. The effort is again difficult: 'Sie müssen sich deutlicher ausdrücken, mein lieber Törleß', complains one of the teachers, and Törleß himself feels 'daß er schlecht gesprochen hatte' (134-35). But Törleß now recognises the difficulty of making his metaphorical insights understood in conversation,<sup>76</sup> so he turns to the supermetaphor of the imaginary number – the metaphor symbolising metaphoricity itself – to explain his approach: 'wir können mit unserem Denken allein nicht hinüberkommen, sondern bedürfen einer anderen, innerlichen Gewißheit, die uns gewissermaßen hinüberträgt' (135). Just as important, he admits the inefficacy of words for an essential aspect of himself: 'Es gibt etwas Dunkles in mir [...] ein Leben, das sich nicht in Worten ausdrückt und das doch mein Leben ist'

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<sup>76</sup> Lothar Huber notes that Törleß and his teachers use fundamentally conflicting modes of language. Cf. 'Robert Musils Törleß und die Krise der Sprache', *Sprachkunst*, 4/1-2 (1973), 91-99 (p. 96).

(137). By thus redefining his self-concept to include its 'wordless' element, he paradoxically strips the ineffable of some part of its destructive power, allowing it to coexist with the rational/objective/linguistic self. In this context, dreams and the dreamlike, 'die festen Mauern zernagen und unheimliche Gassen aufreißen', and which demonstrate the 'leicht verlöschbare Grenzen rings um den Menschen' (140), can facilitate communication through the very amorphousness and intrusiveness that make them so threatening. If conventional language is insufficient, dream language offers an alternative operating 'above' the language of words, where ideas or whole sets of ideas (supermetaphors) refer to each other.<sup>77</sup> As George Lakoff argues, metaphors are not 'mere words'; the unconscious mind employs a *conceptual* language that can take form either in words (through linguistic metaphor) or in the symbolism of dreams, according to a 'grammar of the unconscious'.<sup>78</sup>

From this perspective, the insufficiency of words offers a justification of fiction itself, in spite of, or in response to, Maeterlinck's warning. In *Törleß*, literature is presented as a conceptual project, rather than a purely linguistic one. Words themselves may be inadequate, but the scenes or representations they create, and the webs of reference among them, yield a form of communication that qualitatively resembles the communication of dreams and the subconscious.<sup>79</sup> Both the dream and literature offer sites of resolution, through metaphor, of problems that cannot be expressed in words. The next chapter discusses Kafka's much more sceptical, although equally thorough, preoccupation with the dream-language of metaphor. Kafka's approach is radical because it calls even the efficacy of metaphor into question. In comparison, Musil's first novel remains a quite earnest attempt to show what *can* be communicated through oneiric, figurative language.

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<sup>77</sup> Magnou similarly argues that metaphor takes on a fundamental role for Musil because it creates a language beyond ('au-delà') the crisis of the self. Magnou, *Robert Musil*, p. 16.

<sup>78</sup> George Lakoff, 'How Metaphor Structures Dreams: The Theory of Conceptual Metaphor Applied to Dream Analysis', in Kelly Bulkeley (ed.), *Dreams: A Reader on Religious, Cultural, and Psychological Dimensions of Dreaming* (New York; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp. 265-84 (pp. 265, 268, 275).

<sup>79</sup> As Sybille Deutsch argues, Musil did not confront the language crisis at the level of 'Wortsuche', as the Expressionists did, but at the level of 'assoziative, geistig-mystische Bildersprache'. He avoided the Expressionistic 'Verarmung der sprachlichen Vielfalt als Ausdruck des Protestes' in favour of 'assoziativer Sprachreichtum als Ausdruck der Überlegenheit gegenüber der technisch-rational determinierten Umwelt'. Cf. Deutsch, *Der Philosoph als Dichter*, p. 25.

### 3.3 The Frustrated Participant: Free Will and Ethics

As I have argued, dreams and dreamlike states destabilise the self's capacity for both perception and communication (input and output). The isolating and disorienting effects of idiosyncratic experience, culminating in the dream, also threaten social interaction. In the dream, there are no witnesses; nor can we act as witness to the dreams of others.<sup>80</sup> The self can only be defined via a self-referential loop. In his own dream of Kant, Törleß barely 'exists', except as a disembodied observer, and he awakens with the frustration of not having spoken to Kant himself.<sup>81</sup> The dream comes and goes as it pleases, as a representative of that 'stärker, größer, schöner, leidenschaftlicher, dunkler' part of our selves that Törleß strives to incorporate (*Törleß* 92). This necessarily poses a threat to the sense of free will and self-determination, a threat frequently represented, by the authors in this thesis, through theatrical tropes.<sup>82</sup> In the case of *Törleß*, this is underscored by the choice of epigraph from a playwright, Maeterlinck, who was particularly occupied with the marionette-like qualities of dramatic personae and the overwhelming power of fate.<sup>83</sup> The first descriptions in *Törleß* point in this direction: 'Gegenstände und Menschen hatten etwas Gleichgültiges, Lebloses, Mechanisches an sich, als seien sie aus der Szene eines Puppentheaters genommen' (7). The secret room where torturous experiments are performed on Basini stands as the centrepiece of this theatrical topography. A dramatic aspect is even present in Törleß's dream, where the 'characters' appear against a black, stage-like backdrop. Illusion – in the imaginary number, metaphor, art, or the dream – offers a heightened and purer version of reality.

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<sup>80</sup> Törleß at one point watches Basini sleep: 'Er sah ganz so aus, als ob er angenehm träumte' (p. 97). This scene demonstrates the impenetrability of Basini's mind, and its own dream-life, to Törleß's aggressive curiosity.

<sup>81</sup> Törleß's passiveness in his own dream accords with recent findings on the relative lack of agency in children's dreams, where they often become the observers of interactions among other dream characters. See Strauch and Meier, *In Search of Dreams*, p. 194.

<sup>82</sup> In *Die andere Seite*, for instance, the dreamland inhabitants experience their lives as ongoing theatre: 'Was brauchen wir in Perle ein Theater? Wir haben selbst Theater genug!' Cf. Alfred Kubin, *Die andere Seite: Ein phantastischer Roman mit 52 Abbildungen und einem Plan* [1909] (Munich: Spangenberg, 1990), p. 88.

<sup>83</sup> As Patrick McGuinness notes, Maeterlinck was interested in 'the (figurative) replacement of the actor with shadows, shadowiness, evanescence, puppet-like helplessness'. Cf. Patrick McGuinness, *Maurice Maeterlinck and the Making of Modern Theatre* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 118.

In the allegory of the dream-world as theatre production, free will is removed because each person is only playing a 'role'. But what role does Törleß play? On the one hand, he seems to offer a general model of subjectivity and mental processes (thus the title of his text, *De natura hominum*). On the other hand, his extraordinariness is often stressed, not least by Törleß himself, who feels 'als ob ich einen Sinn mehr hätte als die Anderen' (89). This impression arises gradually from Törleß's self-comparison with peers, and his realisation that they do not perceive shared experiences in the same way. Törleß's school class is described as 'ein kleiner Staat für sich', in which Reiting and Beineberg are forceful figures (41), later famously described by Musil as 'die heutigen Diktatoren *in nucleo*' (TB-Musil 914). They are both obsessed with power. Reiting, who emulates Napoleon, is essentially a tyrant intent on physical domination, while Beineberg, the mystic, seeks the internal and spiritual subjugation of others. Basini, caught between them, is the masochistic and sacrificial object. In Beineberg's opinion, he is dispensable because he is insignificant – 'eine leere, zufällige Form' (59).<sup>84</sup>

'Was ist das für eine besondere Eigenschaft, die ich besitze?' Törleß asks himself (91) – a striking question from a forerunner to Ulrich, the man *without* qualities. Törleß's companions, unsure of his status, treat him alternately as a younger apprentice and as a 'geheimer Generalstabschef' (41). However, Musil, keen to illuminate the nature of his protagonist, leaps forward in time (somewhat incongruously) to describe Törleß's adult self: 'eine ästhetisch-intellektuelle Natur', whose sole concern is the intensification of his mental abilities (111-12). An interpretation of Törleß as aesthete makes him as socially determined as his peers. David Turner followed this line in his assessment of Törleß as the 'characteristic representative of the aesthetic man': self-centred, irresponsible, and immune to moral categories.<sup>85</sup> This view is supported by Törleß's obsessive self-reference, his exploitation of Basini for investigative purposes, and his chronic distraction by the

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<sup>84</sup> Törleß and Beineberg share an interest in consciousness, but Beineberg aims for control through hypnosis. In a sense, Törleß's dream and Basini's hypnotised state are opposites. In the dream, consciousness may be lost, but a deeper sense of self is fostered by communication from within. Basini, on the other hand, is rendered helpless and malleable by a state that has more in common with death, as Beineberg notes during his experiment: 'Das Sterben ist uns nicht so fremd, wie du meinst; wir sterben täglich – im tiefen, traumlosen Schläfe' (p. 120).

<sup>85</sup> David Turner, 'The Evasions of the Aesthete Törleß', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 10 (1974), 19-44 (p. 22).

visual. However, Musil's description also suggests that Törleß's nature is qualitatively different from that of his role-bound and power-hungry peers, particularly through Törleß's focus on personal development, 'das Wachstum der Seele' (111). From this perspective, Törleß is characterised by autonomy, by his refusal to play a single prescribed role, although he tests various roles in passing. The need for Törleß to develop independence and faith in his own perspective remains a key theme throughout the novel. When Törleß writes letters to his parents out of homesickness, they fail to recognise, in his emotional outbursts, 'der erste mißglückte Versuch des jungen, auf sich selbst gestellten Menschen [...] die Kräfte des Inneren zu entfalten' (10). Törleß, discontented and in search of support, becomes involved with his brutal classmates due to his 'Unselbstständigkeit' (12) and his utter lack of 'Charakter'. Initially, his sensations are externally motivated; he is like a 'Schauspieler' in need of a role (13). The novel then documents Törleß's increasing autonomy through his validation of inner guidance. His defiance of the teachers is matched in importance by his eventual split from Reiting and Beineberg, and the sensibilities they represent: 'was *ihr* jetzt treibt, ist nichts als eine gedankenlose, öde, ekelhafte Quälerei!' he tells them (125).

As noted earlier, Törleß's dream is the turning point, when he begins to reject external authority in favour of intuitive self-determination, and to reclaim the value of his dreamlike states of consciousness. This inward turn, however, also means a rejection of ready-made moral systems. The hypocritical morality prevalent in the 'mini-state' of the school ultimately allows Reiting and Beineberg to get away with their transgressions, betraying the privileges of power beneath the veneer of decorum imposed by the professors. Basini, as the vulnerable 'other', represents the great ethical challenge and proving ground of the boys' philosophies. He is the object of physical and social domination, erotic desire and, on the part of Törleß, aesthetic consideration. Basini is described as coquettishly attractive, but mentally and morally inferior (50–51), and as having a highly feminine body (98). Together with the prostitute, Božena, he symbolises femininity, seductiveness, vulnerability and inscrutability. As mentioned, Törleß associates these two characters, and these characteristics, with the sensuality and fantasy of his dreamlife. He notes that dreamlike consciousness affects his perception of persons, who appear to him as 'Figuren' in a dream, as 'lifeless things' (89). In this context, he solipsistically



objectifies Basini as a focus of aesthetic and perceptual study.<sup>86</sup> Basini excites Törleß through physical beauty (110-11), but even more intensely through the mental enigma that he represents. Unlike Reiting and Beineberg, Törleß is not interested in domination or sexuality for its own sake, but in the 'Rätsel' of Basini's mind (125). He is only relieved from this obsession when he comes to understand Basini's impersonal significance as a supermetaphorical figure whose meaning shifts with context. In a sense, Basini himself acts as the 'Tor' to the other side, to the fertile realm of dreams and metaphor.

Törleß is eager to understand the nuances of experience that escape generic moral systems. That is one reason why he wants to hear Basini's subjective account. 'Ich will dich nur zwingen', claims Törleß, as he interrogates Basini, 'selbst die volle Wahrheit zu sagen. Vielleicht in deinem Interesse' (99). By forcing Basini to speak, Törleß is indeed acting cruelly, yet his appeal for disclosure is also part of his insistence on 'Wahrsein' as a basic ethical requirement.<sup>87</sup> Törleß, incredulous at the humiliations to which Basini submits, imagines that the tortured boy must have lost himself to fragmentation: 'Was vollzieht sich in dir? Zerspringt etwas in dir? Sag! Jäh wie ein Glas, das plötzlich in tausend Splitter geht, bevor sich noch ein Sprung gezeigt hat?' (104). For Törleß, the need to find out what Basini is thinking is not a matter of compassion; it is a perceptual need, a missing link in his epistemology. But it can also be viewed as a sort of de-objectification. A key moment in Törleß's understanding of the 'other' comes with his realisation of a certain sameness between himself and Basini. It occurs to Törleß that he would feel similarly if he were in Basini's position: 'mein Gefühl meiner selbst würde genau so einfach und von allem Fragwürdigen entfernt sein wie das sein' (105). This realisation makes him feel 'einen ganz intimen, leisen, aber weit tiefer als Moral an das innerste Gleichgewicht rührenden Schmerz' (105). Perhaps inspired by this budding empathy, Törleß urges Basini to escape the cycle of torture.

Törleß has no moral system as such, but he has a 'sense' of morality quite literally informed by his senses (such as the 'Schmerz' he feels with relation to Basini). It is a

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<sup>86</sup> For Törleß, 'der Mensch Basini [war] nicht mehr als ein stellvertretendes und vorläufiges Ziel dieses Verlangens' (*Törleß* 109).

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Loebenstein, 'Das Problem der Erkenntnis in Musils künstlerischem Werk', in Karl Dinklage (ed.), *Robert Musil*, p. 77.

morality that accommodates the irrational and the idiosyncratic.<sup>88</sup> Unlike conventional moral codes, it cannot offer fixed rules, and indeed refuses them, out of respect for the fluidity and contingency of life, and the needs of personal growth, ‘das Wachstum der Seele’.<sup>89</sup> It is a problematic morality, because it erects no clear ethical guidelines. It is based less on *Mitleid* than on a *Mitgefühl* that is largely epistemological and motivated by curiosity.<sup>90</sup> It is telling that Schlöndorff’s filmic treatment, *Der junge Törleß*, is compelled to make Törleß’s moral stance clearer, notably by changing his final speech into a rejection of torture. This shifts the entire emphasis of the story away from epistemology and towards ethical problems.<sup>91</sup> However, as Patrizia McBride notes, Musil’s conception of ethics was in fact inseparable from his epistemology, which held that moral conduct must be guided by empirical and inductive investigation.<sup>92</sup> As Ritchie Robertson argues, Musil sought to avoid ‘feigning an empathy that could only be spurious’, instead approaching ‘other psycho-physical states in a provisional, hypothetical manner, which combines feeling and understanding’.<sup>93</sup> In this context, the dream can, and does, constitute a moral event, by its power to illustrate the demands of inner integrity, in this case through scepticism towards received knowledge. For Törleß, the dream of Kant offers a seed of truth that eventually blossoms into self-determination and the potential for an autonomous ethics.

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<sup>88</sup> As Mehigan describes it, ‘Musils Moralkonzeption sieht eine mögliche Übereinstimmung zwischen rationalem und nichtrationalem Denken. Gemeint ist eine Moral, die die Eigentümlichkeit individuellen Lebens ebenso berücksichtigt wie die Notwendigkeit, innere Gefühlszustände möglichst exakt zu verstehen’. Cf. Mehigan, *Robert Musil*, p. 128.

<sup>89</sup> Marie-Louise Roth notes that Musil’s marriage of aesthetics and ethics stands in contrast to ‘einer erstarrten, normierten, äußeren Moral, die einem autoritären vorgesetzten System oder Gesetz unterworfen ist und der Erfahrung des Lebens widerspricht’; cf. Marie-Louise Roth, *Robert Musil: Ethik und Ästhetik: Zum theoretischen Werk des Dichters* (Munich: Paul List, 1972), p. 91.

<sup>90</sup> Törleß’s egotistical curiosity can be compared to the callous inquisitiveness (the ‘therapeutic nihilism’) attributed to the Viennese medical establishment by some contemporaries, as I also mention in Chapter 6 of this thesis. In both cases, the emphasis is on understanding the source and nature of the pathology, rather than its cure. Cf. Mark Luprecht, *What People Call Pessimism: Sigmund Freud, Arthur Schnitzler and Nineteenth-Century Controversy at the University of Vienna Medical School* (Riverside, CA: Ariadne Press, 1991), p. 146.

<sup>91</sup> For Schlöndorff, the novel explores the boundary between good and evil: ‘Törleß, *Monsieur le Vivisecteur*, analysiert sich und erkennt, dass die Grenze [zwischen dem Guten und dem Bösen] unscharf ist’. The practices of torture, and Törleß’s complicit participation through observation, remind Schlöndorff of the Nazi period, raising the question, ‘Wie war das möglich?’. Schlöndorff justifies his politicisation of the story through Musil’s own claim that Beineberg and Reiting represented ‘die heutigen Diktatoren *in nucleo*’ (TB-Musil 914). Cf. Schlöndorff, *Licht, Schatten und Bewegung*, pp. 160-61.

<sup>92</sup> Patrizia McBride, *The Void of Ethics: Robert Musil and the Experience of Modernity* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2006), p. 60.

<sup>93</sup> Ritchie Robertson, ‘Austrian Prose Fiction, 1918-45’, in Katrin Kohl and Ritchie Robertson (eds), *A History of Austrian Literature, 1918-2000* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2006), pp. 53-74 (p. 57).

## Chapter 4

### ‘Schreckliche Wahrheiten’: Dreams in the Writings of Franz Kafka

The dreamlike work of Franz Kafka (1883-1924) offers an opportunity for examining the relationship between dream and text at structural and thematic levels extending beyond the bounds of the literary dream proper. The first part of this chapter considers the characteristics of the dreamlike text, drawing on Freud’s theories about dream-work processes to explore the oneiric superimposition of metaphor and metonym in Kafka’s writings, which I also link to Freudian themes of anxiety, guilt and eroticism. I then discuss Kafka’s struggles to develop an effective dreamlike narrative style through experiments with a fragmented voice and structured dream segments in the unfinished novella ‘Beschreibung eines Kampfes’ (1904-1911),<sup>1</sup> arguing that this represented an early attempt, later abandoned, to combine external observation with internal dream experience through first-person narrative. The value of oneiric epistemology is then further considered in an analysis of the short story ‘Ein Traum’ (1920),<sup>2</sup> where I focus on the power of dream-writing, which merges the abstract and concrete elements of language into a form that Kafka associates with transcendence and immortality. Finally, I discuss the ‘darker’ side of the dream in Kafka’s writings, where it appears as a potentially harrowing zone of disillusionment and anxiety lurking between the opposed realms of work and sleep, in a theme central to Kafka’s last novel, *Das Schloß* ([1922] 1926).<sup>3</sup> Overall, I argue that both the transcendent and torturous aspects of Kafka’s dream conception informed the development of his singularly dreamlike creations, in which the continuous battles of the unconscious form a subtext that overwhelms the textual surface.

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<sup>1</sup> Franz Kafka, ‘Beschreibung eines Kampfes’, pp. 54-171 in *Nachgelassene Schriften und Fragmente I*, ed. Malcolm Pasley (1993), in *Kritische Ausgabe der Werke von Franz Kafka*, ed. Gerhard Neumann *et al.* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1982–). ‘Fassung A’ of the novella was composed between 1904 and 1907, although only portions of it were published. Kafka worked on the second version, ‘Fassung B’, from 1909-1911, but it was never completed. A related fragment from 1911(?) is included in the *Kritische Ausgabe*. Referenced as BeK.

<sup>2</sup> Franz Kafka, ‘Ein Traum’, pp. 295-98 in *Drucke zu Lebzeiten*, ed. Wolf Kittler, Hans-Gerhard Koch and Gerhard Neumann (1994), in Gerhard Neumann *et al.* (eds), *Kritische Ausgabe*.

<sup>3</sup> Franz Kafka, *Das Schloß*, ed. Malcolm Pasley (1983), in Gerhard Neumann *et al.* (eds), *Kritische Ausgabe*. Referenced as DS.

## 1. *Der Traum und das Traumhafte*

Kafka's diaries include numerous dream entries, which demonstrate his appreciation for the knowledge offered by oneiric experience, and also elucidate the relationship between his personal dream-life and the dreamlike aspects of his literary production. As with the other writers discussed in this thesis, it is not clear how much Kafka's own dreams directly influenced his writings, whether consciously or unconsciously. The dream entry of 11 September 1912, a crucial time for Kafka, notably includes a description of the New York harbour that can be read as an anticipation of *Der Verschollene*.<sup>4</sup> Other clear correspondences are difficult to identify, but the recorded dreams certainly feature affective and thematic material recognisable from Kafka's literary work. His father appears a number of times, always as a dominating presence (see TB-Kafka 6.V.12, 19.IV.16, 21.IX.17).<sup>5</sup> Other recurring motifs include theatres and spectators (9.XI.11, 19.XI.11, 20.XI.11, 10.VI.17), battles and wars (20.IV.16, 10.XI.17), highlighting the prominence of antagonism and judgement. Many dream entries are striking for the level of physical and visual detail they record, demonstrating that the precision of Kafka's writing style was matched by a vivid subconscious. Encountering a prostitute in a dream, for instance, Kafka describes her back as 'zu meinem Schrecken mit großen siegellackroten Kreisen mit erblässenden Rändern und dazwischen versprengten roten Spritzern bedeckt' (TB-Kafka 9.X.11). This anticipates the various eroticised wounds that appear throughout Kafka's oeuvre, notably in 'Ein Landarzt'.<sup>6</sup> Kafka also discussed his dreams with others, for instance in a letter to Felice in December 1912, where he discloses his belief in the dream's revelatory but torturous power: 'Ich habe mich gleich nach dem Erwachen trotz starken Widerstandes bemüht, sie zu vergessen, denn es waren schreckliche Wahrheiten aufdringlich und überdeutlich in ihnen, so wie sie in dem mattern Tagesleben niemals zum Durchbruch kommen können'.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Jørgen Egebak, 'Die fictive Wahrheit des Traumes: Strategien in Franz Kafkas "Durchbruchstexten"', in Kurt Krolop and Hans-Dieter Zimmermann (eds), *Kafka und Prag* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1994), pp. 113-31 (p. 114).

<sup>5</sup> Franz Kafka, *Tagebücher*, ed. Hans-Gerd Koch, Michael Müller and Malcolm Pasley (1990), in Gerhard Neumann et al. (ed.), *Kritische Ausgabe*. Referenced as TB-Kafka.

<sup>6</sup> Franz Kafka, 'Ein Landarzt', pp. 252-61 in *Drucke zu Lebzeiten*.

<sup>7</sup> Franz Kafka, *Briefe 1900-1912*, ed. Hans-Gerd Koch (1999), in *Kritische Ausgabe der Werke von Franz Kafka*, ed. Gerhard Neumann et al., p. 308.

For much of his life, Kafka's dreams competed with his writing for the precious hours of the night. The intermingling of those activities perhaps contributed to the dreamlike aspects of his writing, which has been described as 'transposed in a stream of semi-consciousness'.<sup>8</sup> The most celebrated of these nocturnal sessions was the night (22-23 September 1912) that produced the 'breakthrough' story, 'Das Urteil', during an experience that Kafka compared to giving birth. He described it as 'eine regelrechte Geburt mit Schmutz und Schleim bedeckt' (the element of slime here echoing the symbolism of Kubin's Dream Realm) and he compared it to being carried along in a watery medium ('wie ich in einem Gewässer vorwärtskam', TB-Kafka 23.IX.12), as if newly born himself.<sup>9</sup> This description anticipates the watery element in 'Ein Traum' (discussed later), where the narrator glides along 'wie auf einem reißenden Wasser' ('Ein Traum' 295). Kafka identified this flowing, compulsive state with true literary production: 'Nur so kann geschrieben werden [...] mit solcher vollständigen Öffnung des Leibes und der Seele' (TB-Kafka 23.IX.12).<sup>10</sup> In the case of 'Das Urteil', the watery motif is key both to the story's genesis and to its internal resolution, through the drowning of its protagonist. This double interpretation of water – associated with both fertility and danger – is echoed in other dream texts in this study, not only in 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes', discussed below, but also in the creative/destructive imagery of Kubin's dream-world, and in Schnitzler's *Casanova* dream, where Venetian canals first transport the dreamer, then devour him. The watery or fluid consciousness of the dream thus implies a loss of self that can be both positive and negative.

Kafka famously associated his own writing with *das Traumhafte* in a diary entry of 1914: 'Der Sinn für die Darstellung meines traumhaften innern Lebens hat alles andere ins Nebensächliche gerückt' (6.VIII.14), and it has remained among the most frequent metaphors applied to his work.<sup>11</sup> Many commentators have echoed the spirit

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Patrick Bridgwater, *Kafka, Gothic and Fairytale* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2003), p. 62.

<sup>9</sup> As Julian Preece notes, the writing of 'Das Urteil' has acquired a legendary status that should not distract from Kafka's prior writing experience and publishing success. Cf. Julian Preece, 'The Letters and Diaries', in Julian Preece (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Kafka* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 111-30 (p. 125).

<sup>10</sup> Elsewhere (in discussion with Rudolf Steiner) Kafka also described experiences of literary production as 'hellseherische Zustände' (TB-Kafka 28.III.11).

<sup>11</sup> Sophie von Glinski, *Imaginationsprozesse: Verfahren phantastischen Erzählens in Franz Kafkas Frühwerk* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), p. 5.

of Todorov's claim that Kafka's 'monde tout entier obéit à une logique onirique sinon cauchemardesque'.<sup>12</sup> Adorno argued, 'wie Kafka zu dem Traum sich verhält, soll der Leser zu Kafka sich verhalten' – namely, by paying attention to the details.<sup>13</sup> Some psychological readings apply dream interpretation rigorously to Kafka's works, considering them as direct textual approximations of dream experience.<sup>14</sup> However, Kafka's writings include relatively few true literary dreams (in contrast to Schnitzler, another favourite of dream analysts), so it is worth distinguishing, here, between *der Traum* and *das Traumhafte*. Manfred Engel usefully notes that literary dream phenomena can be divided into three major traditions: 1) the rhetorical dream, 'vor allem in Traumsatiren, Traumparabeln, Traumallegorien, Traumreisen und Traumutopien', where the dream acts as framework, and need not be authentically dreamlike; 2) the literary dream proper, and 3) dreamlike writing, or 'die traumhafte Darstellung', featuring 'Schreibweisen, die dem Traum abgeschaut sind [...] bestimmend für Textteile oder ganze Texte, die nicht mehr ausdrücklich als Traum markiert sind'.<sup>15</sup> In this context, structural aspects form the main contrast between the literary dream and dreamlike writing. As argued in the introductory chapter, the effect of a literary dream is largely a function of how it is differentiated from its 'waking' context both structurally ('delimitation') and by content ('alternative rules for reality'), and therefore by the extent of its contrast with the frame-text. In theory, the literary dream-as-structure relies on the separation and comparison of differing states of consciousness, while the dream-as-style thrives on the lack of clear boundaries.<sup>16</sup> In practice, there is a continuum between these two uses, depending on the clarity or blurriness of boundaries chosen by the author. This was a game particularly exploited by Modernist authors, who saw these limits as potentially porous or illusory. The traditions listed above therefore are not mutually exclusive. As demonstrated by Kubin's *Die andere Seite*, and to some extent Kafka's

<sup>12</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction à la littérature fantastique* (Paris: Seuil, 1970), p. 181.

<sup>13</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, 'Aufzeichnungen zu Kafka', in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 10/1: *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (1997), pp. 254-87 (p. 258).

<sup>14</sup> See, for instance, Bridgwater, *Kafka, Gothic and Fairytale*, p. 68: 'Kafka's work represents one of the closest approximations to dreaming ever achieved in fiction'.

<sup>15</sup> Manfred Engel, 'Literatur-/Kulturgeschichte des Traumes', in Hanne Castein and Rüdiger Görner (eds), *Dream Images in German, Austrian and Swiss Literature and Culture* (Munich: iudicium, 2002), pp. 13-31 (pp. 26-27).

<sup>16</sup> In a dreamlike style, such as Adorno saw in Kafka, the lack of boundaries eliminates both 'reality' and the dream itself: 'Weil alles ausgeschieden ist, was nicht dem Traum und seiner prälogischen Logik gleiche, ist der Traum selber ausgeschieden'; cf. Adorno 'Aufzeichnungen zu Kafka', in *Gesammelte Schriften*, p. 258. However, the texts studied in this chapter should remind us that Kafka did to some extent distinguish between dreams and (dreamlike) 'reality'.

‘Beschreibung eines Kampfes’, all three may be employed within the same text.

If Kafka’s dreamlike writing contains relatively few clearly defined literary dreams, this does not mean that the degree of dreamlikeness is homogeneous across his oeuvre. It is misleading, I think, to say that Kafka’s novels are ‘literary dreams’.<sup>17</sup> His ‘true’ dream texts (many of which are discussed in this chapter) are all brief, symbolically dense, formally isolated in some way, and particularly marked by the dissolution of time structures, such as the alternation between night and day.<sup>18</sup> In these dream texts, it is possible to identify elements of oneiric ‘logic’ and thematic material that indeed penetrate Kafka’s overall oeuvre, producing its dreamlike qualities. The difference between *der Traum* and *das Traumhafte* in his writing is partly a question of degree – of the relative density of the dreamlike in any given text. However, Kafka was well aware of these subtleties, and experimented with the boundaries and intensities of dream material. Certain texts, such as ‘Das Urteil’ and ‘Ein Landarzt’, seem to be carefully balanced on the precise boundary of the dream and the dreamlike.

It is possible, however, to be more specific about the characteristics of dream experience that result in a dreamlike narrative style. The general scientific description of the dream cited in the opening chapter of this thesis proposes the features ‘hallucination’, ‘delusion’, and ‘bizarreness’ as characteristic of dream experience.<sup>19</sup> These all refer to the violation of rational expectations. In terms of bizarreness, Kafka’s work has been noted for its frequent ‘confusion of time-space relations’, considered a typical feature of dreams.<sup>20</sup> In this regard, the blurry distinction between the dreamlike and the fantastic is a function of context and interpretation. Todorov claims that the bizarreness of Kafka’s work exceeds the

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<sup>17</sup> Bridgwater, *Kafka, Gothic and Fairytale*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>18</sup> This leads me not to consider ‘Die Verwandlung’, which takes place over a long period of days and nights, as a dream in itself, as indeed we are warned: ‘Es war kein Traum’. Cf. *Drucke zu Lebzeiten*, pp. 113-200 (p. 115). Joachim Kalka, however, considers that ‘Gergor Samsas Schwierigkeiten, das Bett zu verlassen’ could point to an interpretation of ‘Die Verwandlung’ as a *Halbschlaf* story; cf. Kalka, Joachim, ‘Der Halbschlaf: Poetik einer ungewissen Zone’, *Neue Rundschau*, 113/3 (2002), 16-27 (p. 17).

<sup>19</sup> J.A. Hobson, E.F. Pace-Schott and R. Stickgold, ‘A Response to Commentaries on *Dreaming and the Brain*’, in E.F. Pace-Schott (ed.), *Sleep and Dreaming: Scientific Advances and Reconsiderations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 231-47 (p. 232).

<sup>20</sup> Richard T. Gray et al., *A Franz Kafka Encyclopedia* (Westport, CT; London: Greenwood Press, 2005), p. 269.

inherent ambiguity of the fantastic genre: 'Chez Kafka, l'évènement surnaturel ne provoque plus d'hésitation car le monde décrit est tout entier bizarre'.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, one of the most striking features in Kafka's texts is the protagonists' lack of surprise in the face of the unexpected.<sup>22</sup> They respond to their environment with the naturalness and acceptance of the dreamer. This attitude, combined with the focus on inner mental activity in Kafka's work, points to an interpretation of its 'bizarreness' in the context of dream, subconsciousness and hallucination, rather than the fantastic. From that perspective, it does indeed preserve a sense of ambiguity, in the tension between waking and dreaming, and can therefore be associated (like the idea of dreamlike writing overall) with Freud's conception of the uncanny, in which the familiar ('das Vertraute') mingles threateningly with the unexpected, becoming 'unheimlich' and 'schreckhaft'.<sup>23</sup> The bizarreness of Kafka's work can also be viewed as resulting from an Expressionistic tendency to alter qualities of time, space and identity as an aesthetic expression of emotion – a tendency most noticeable in the hallucinatory early work of 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes'.<sup>24</sup> Finally, the 'absurdity' of the dreamlike can serve a literary function in itself, particularly where it counterbalances a vision of the rational, unified self. Ionesco, for instance, claimed Kafka as an inspiration who showed that 'chacun peut devenir un monster'.<sup>25</sup>

Freud, however, who rejected the absurdity of dream material ('[Der Traum ist] nicht sinnlos, nicht absurd, setzt nicht voraus, daß ein Teil unseres Vorstellungsschatzes schläft, während ein anderer zu erwachen beginnt'),<sup>26</sup> still offers a most rewarding basis for detailed dream interpretations of Kafka's texts, although I do not propose to

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<sup>21</sup> Todorov, *Introduction à la littérature fantastique*, p. 181.

<sup>22</sup> As Heidi Gidion writes: 'Die markanteste Eigenheit vor allen anderen scheint mir die Abwesenheit jeglicher Verwunderung über Ereignisse zu sein, die allem Gewohnten widersprechen'. Cf. Heidi Gidion, *Phantastische Nächte: Traumerfahrungen in Poesie und Prosa* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), p. 166.

<sup>23</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'Das Unheimliche', in *Gesammelte Werke chronologisch geordnet*, ed. Anna Freud (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1947), vol. 12: *Werke aus den Jahren 1917-1920*, pp. 227-78.

<sup>24</sup> Expressionist aspects have particularly been identified in Kafka's early writings, for instance in 'their descriptions of space, where one is struck by a playful and improvisational quality totally inconsistent with realism. The boundaries between persons, objects, and places become uncertain'. Cf. Jack Murray, *The Landscapes of Alienation: Ideological Subversion in Kafka, Céline, and Onetti* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 110.

<sup>25</sup> Eugène Ionesco and Claude Bonnefoy, *Entre la vie et le rêve: Entretiens avec Claude Bonnefoy* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), p. 42.

<sup>26</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Die Traumdeutung*, in *Gesammelte Werke chronologisch geordnet*, ed. Anna Freud (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1940-1952), vol. 2/3: *Die Traumdeutung; Über den Traum* (1942), pp. 1-642 (p. 127). Referenced as TD.



accept psychoanalytic theories in full here. For Freud, dreams do not present the same system of logical relationships as waking thought; like an art form, the dream is constrained by its material.<sup>27</sup> In its ‘Rücksicht auf Darstellbarkeit’, the dream must therefore resort to special means of representation, particularly a) visual depiction through condensed symbols (‘[der Traum] gibt logischen Zusammenhang wieder als Gleichzeitigkeit’) and b) through relationships of association by contiguity (‘Sooft [der Traum] zwei Elemente nahe beieinander zeigt, bürgt er für einen besonders innigen Zusammenhang zwischen ihren Entsprechenden in den Traumgedanken’, TD 319). In this context, Freud takes pains to emphasise separately the key operations of condensation (*Verdichtung*) and displacement (*Verschiebung*): ‘die beiden Werkmeister, deren Tätigkeit wir die Gestaltung des Traumes hauptsächlich zuschreiben dürfen’ (TD 313). Their effects offer a way of explaining manifestations of the ‘bizarre’ in dreamlike writing through reference to the special grammar of dreams.

Following Lacan, condensation and displacement can be understood as metaphorical and metonymic processes, respectively.<sup>28</sup> The operation of dream condensation is most obviously reflected in the brevity and symbolic density of dreams. Most true literary dreams (like the dream reports cited by Freud) are highly concise, but eligible for deep exegesis. Condensation involves processes of metaphoricity (‘Ähnlichkeit, Übereinstimmung, Berührung, das “Gleichwie”’, TD 324), which transcend the level of discrete metaphor, due to the density and over-determination of symbolic material: ‘die Traumelemente [werden gebildet] aus der ganzen Masse der Traumgedanken [...und...] jedes von ihnen [erscheint] in bezug auf die Traumgedanken mehrfach determiniert’ (TD 290). *Verdichtung* also explains the dream’s formation of ‘Mischpersonen’, such as Irma herself in Freud’s famous ‘dream of Irma’s injection’, which he uses as a specimen to introduce the technique of dream interpretation.<sup>29</sup> In this dream, says Freud, ‘Irma wird zur Vertreterin dieser

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 317: ‘Es muß am psychischen Material liegen, in dem der Traum gearbeitet ist, wenn ihm diese Ausdrucksfähigkeit abgeht. In einer ähnlichen Beschränkung befinden sich ja die darstellenden Künste, Malerei und Plastik im Vergleich zur Poesie, die sich der Rede bedienen kann.’

<sup>28</sup> Jacques Lacan, *Le champ Freudien* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), p. 835. Harry Hunt has also argued for the likelihood that ‘metonymic wordplay is the actual cognitive basis of Freud’s mechanism of displacement’. Cf. Hunt, *The Multiplicity of Dreams*, pp. 107-8.

<sup>29</sup> Freud explains the dream of Irma’s injection as revealing his wish to deflect responsibility for medical error: ‘Von der Verantwortung für Irmas Befinden spricht der Traum mich frei, indem er dasselbe auf andere Momente (gleich eine ganze Reihe von Begründungen) zurückführt [...] sein

anderen, bei der Verdichtungsarbeit hingeopferten Personen, indem ich an ihr all das vorgehen lasse, was mich Zug für Zug an diese Personen erinnert' (TD 299). Inversely, due to the dream's 'egoistic' nature, the dreamer's self may be projected onto others (TD 327-28), which is one way of interpreting the diffuse identity of Kafka's protagonists, particularly, for instance, in 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes'.

Freud called his second dream-work operation, displacement (*Verschiebung*), 'das wesentliche Stück der Traumarbeit' (TD 313). In the first instance, it is the process in which the dream, for purposes of psychic protection, distracts the dreamer from its true subject matter. It is 'eine Übertragung und Verschiebung der psychischen Intensitäten', creating a split between the manifest 'Trauminhalt' and the latent 'Traumgedanken'; this process, claims Freud, is one of the main reasons for distortion (*Entstellung*) in the dream (TD 313-14). This operation finds an analogy in the ease with which Kafka's protagonists are chronically 'distracted' by immediate or practical concerns in the midst of extraordinary events (for instance, why Gregor Samsa worries about getting to work on time) and inversely, why they are suddenly confronted with extraordinary events in the midst of the commonplace (for instance, the revelation of Georg Bendemann's death sentence reflects *Traumgedanken* that have been lurking beneath the surface all along). Of course, one problem with this part of Freud's theory is that it depends on an interpreter to decide which aspects of the dream are significant and which are 'minderwärtig'. A more verifiable operation is found in the *second* kind of displacement that Freud proposes, essentially the transposition of words into images, where 'ein farbloser und abstrakter Ausdruck des Traumgedankens gegen einen bildlichen und konkreten eingetauscht wird' (TD 344-45). This process, which Freud argues is particularly responsible for the fantastic absurdity of dreams, has the double effect of making ideas both easier to represent (*darstellungsfähig*) and richer in associations, 'denn die konkreten Termini sind in jeder Sprache ihrer Entwicklung zufolge anknüpfungsreicher als die begrifflichen' (TD 345).<sup>30</sup> Such verbal displacement involving the reunion of words with their

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Inhalt ist also eine Wunscherfüllung, sein Motiv ein Wunsch' (TD 123). Freud does not emphasise the obvious gendered eroticism of this dream, in which Irma is the female object among male competitors, and the syringe, as well as Irma's open mouth, can be read as sexual symbols. On this topic, see Stephen Frosh, *Sexual Difference: Masculinity and Psychoanalysis* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 56-58.

<sup>30</sup> The first of the dreams Kafka describes to Felice in his letter of 7-8 December 1912 (both of the dreams concern her) observes the dream's genesis in literalised language: 'Der erste [Traum] knüpfte

original, concrete meanings has variously been described as literalised metaphor, counter-metaphor or counter-metamorphosis.<sup>31</sup> In another variation, Stanley Corngold argues that these processes reveal Kafka's fundamental objection to metaphor. The *Ungeziefer* of *Die Verwandlung*, in Corngold's argument, represents an attack on metaphor itself.<sup>32</sup> Kafka's suspicion of metaphor is obvious from his own assertion, '[d]ie Metaphern sind eines in dem Vielen, was mich am Schreiben verzweifelt läßt', because they render writing 'unselbstständig' (TB-Kafka 6.XII.21). However, as David Constantine points out, this did not mean that Kafka could escape metaphor, as the 'only way of knowing'.<sup>33</sup> Kafka's renunciation of metaphor instead made it into the 'basis of his narrative art'.<sup>34</sup>

In fact, Kafka's writing seems perfectly poised to exploit the overlap, in language, of metonymy and metaphor. As noted by linguist Günter Radden, there exists a 'metonymy-metaphor continuum with unclear or fuzzy cases in between'.<sup>35</sup> Kafka's 'counter-metaphors' seem to inhabit this blurry zone. In Kafka's *Ungeziefer*, which is equal parts word and image, these metonymic (verbal) and metaphoric (visual) processes can no longer be untangled. In Kafka's writing, as in dreams, metaphors are hard to pin down because the condensing and displacing processes are continuously and simultaneously in effect (a reason why the dream also offers a useful model for the simultaneity of creation and destruction in *Die andere Seite*). As these processes accelerate, the dreamlike quality of the text is magnified. In a recorded dream, or a text meant to resemble a dream, they may intensify to the point of replacing plot and identity. The usual chronological and causal structure of narrative (on the horizontal plane) is replaced by the contiguous movement of

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an Deine Bemerkung an, daß Ihr direkt aus dem Bureau telegraphieren könnt. Ich konnte also aus meinem Zimmer auch direkt telegraphieren, der Apparat stand sogar neben meinem Bett'; cf. *Briefe: 1900-1912*, p. 308.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Bridgwater, *Kafka, Gothic and Fairytale*, p. 67 (counter-metaphor) and Walter Sokel, *The Myth of Power and the Self: Essays on Franz Kafka* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2002), p. 36 (counter-metamorphosis).

<sup>32</sup> Stanley Corngold, *Franz Kafka: The Necessity of Form* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 55, 67.

<sup>33</sup> David Constantine, 'Kafka's Writing and our Reading', in Julian Preece (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Kafka*, pp. 9-24 (p. 23).

<sup>34</sup> Martin Greenberg, *The Terror of Art: Kafka and Modern Literature* (New York; London: Basic, 1968), pp. 11-12.

<sup>35</sup> According to Radden, '[m]etonymy-based metaphor is a mapping involving two conceptual domains which are grounded in, or can be traced back to, one conceptual domain'. Cf. Günter Radden, 'How Metonymic are Metaphors?', in Antonio Barcelona (ed.), *Metaphor and Metonymy at the Crossroads: A Cognitive Perspective* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), pp. 93-108 (p. 93).

metonymy (chains of association). Meanwhile, identity (on the vertical plane) – whether of self, others, or things – is replaced by the synthesising function of metaphoric processes (condensed symbols). At this level, the distinction between nouns and verbs breaks down, producing a fluidity of association that can also account for the ‘aquatic’ nature of dream experience. This creates difficulties of textual interpretation, because the two processes compete for interpretive priority. Motifs and characters barely have time to act as symbols, suggesting abstraction, before the associative chains of reference draw the reader back into the concrete experience of the dream. Each dream element is both phenomenal and semiotic at the same time. ‘True’ dream texts are therefore always brief, because their rates of metamorphosis are rapid, and their symbolic meaning highly condensed. However, in Kafka’s work, this oneiric grammar is also expanded and diffused over much longer texts in a way that continues to complicate interpretation.<sup>36</sup> To use an example given by Ritchie Robertson, Kafka’s *Castle* is ‘neither an emblem nor a cipher’.<sup>37</sup> It is clearly metaphoric (standing for ‘das Unzerstörbare’, in Robertson’s view), but it is *also* real and phenomenal: ‘As with the *Ding an sich*, we can be certain of the Castle’s existence’.<sup>38</sup> The *Castle* is suspended in the midst of a fluctuation between thing and idea. The novel, *Das Schloß*, is not a literary dream, but it has borrowed some of the dream’s associative logic.

Kafka’s work thus broadly applies an oneiric epistemology to reveal (inter)relationships existing at both abstract and concrete levels. The device of ‘In der Strafkolonie’ is not just a symbol of power, but also the actual mechanism of enforcement; the story is about the relationships between this device and its victims/operators. Similarly, Kafka’s idea of the ‘Trial’ represents both a pattern of psychological self-persecution and a reflection of power relationships in the real world. The self/world dichotomy dissolves to reveal an underlying and recurrent structure. Kafka is not alone, among the authors in this thesis, in his experimentation with the value of oneiric epistemology. The preceding chapter examined the dream in

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<sup>36</sup> This can be related to Edward Timms’s notion of the ‘expanded metaphors’ underlying Kafka’s fiction. Cf. Edward Timms, ‘Kafka’s Expanded Metaphors’, in J. P. Stern and J. J. White (eds), *Paths and Labyrinths: Nine Papers from a Kafka Symposium* (London: Institute of Germanic Studies, 1985), pp. 66-79.

<sup>37</sup> Ritchie Robertson, *Kafka: Judaism, Politics, and Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 236.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 239-40.

Musil's *Törleß* as a privileged medium for metaphoric communication capable of transcending the linguistic. Meyrink's *Der Golem*, discussed in the next chapter, attempts the hypostatisation, or reification, of metaphor into material or corporeal elements that can play a concrete role in the story action. All of these approaches treat dream 'language' as an alternative mode of understanding used to extract new types of meaning from the narrative. In texts where dreams are clearly marked and isolated, oneiric logic is compared with waking logic, particularly in Musil's and Schnitzler's works. Kafka also experimented with this comparison, although most of his oeuvre incorporates dream elements of condensation and displacement that imply an infiltration of the conscious by the unconscious.

Kafka's work has also been considered dreamlike through its reference to Freudian affect and themes. His writings are frequently compared to nightmares due to their infectious aura of anxiety.<sup>39</sup> In this sense, Kafka's characters are not unlike permanent residents of Kubin's uncanny and ominous Dream Realm. An atmosphere of paranoia emanates from the dreamlike instability of scenarios and identities, and the projection of hostile intent onto both persons and landscapes.<sup>40</sup> From a Freudian perspective, such anxiety is not what it seems. According to the argument, in *Die Traumdeutung*, that all dreams are wish fulfilments, *Angsträume* are explained as the result of subverted libidinal energy.<sup>41</sup> This is not the only possible approach, of course (Schnitzler, for instance, did not treat all anxiety dreams as wish dreams, as discussed in Chapter 6), but for Freud, one of the strongest sources of repressed desire (and thus anxiety) is the sense of guilt. In *Die Traumdeutung*, the role of guilt is immediately evident in the dream of Irma's injection, which Freud interprets as a dream about his own wish to be absolved of guilt for Irma's continuing illness (TD 125-26). A major basis of guilt (particularly for 'Die Träume vom Tod teurer Personen', listed under Freud's 'typische Träume', TD 254) originated in Freud's

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<sup>39</sup> Harold Bloom describes Kafka's readers as engulfed by the 'nightmare' of his works, which '[leave] no independence of view or action, no possibility of escape or control'. Harold Bloom, *Franz Kafka* (New York: Infobase, 2010), p. 29.

<sup>40</sup> This is evident, for example, in the menacing atmosphere of *Der Heizer*, where others are never quite as they seem: 'Bei Tage sah dieser Slowake genug unschuldig aus, aber kaum war die Nacht gekommen, erhob er sich von Zeit zu Zeit von seinem Lager und sah traurig zu Karls Koffer hinüber'; Kafka, 'Der Heizer', in *Drucke zu Lebzeiten*, pp. 63-112 (p. 74).

<sup>41</sup> 'Der Traum ist die (verkleidete) Erfüllung eines (unterdrückten, verdrängten) Wunsches' (TD 166). 'Angsträume [sind] Träume sexuellen Inhalts [...] deren zugehörige Libido eine Verwandlung in Angst erfahren hat' (TD 167).

view of the father-son relationship as an ambiguous mixture of admiration, fear and hostility. This led him to theorise the Oedipus complex, and increasingly to emphasise the tragic consequences of the guilt it inspired.<sup>42</sup>

The dense coincidence of all these elements in 'Das Urteil' has led to its frequent association with the Freudian dreamlike – a link supported by Kafka's own admission that, while writing the story, he had been having 'Gedanken an Freud natürlich' (TB-Kafka 23.IX.12).<sup>43</sup> The Oedipal aspect of the power struggle between Georg and his father is evident from their competing claims over the memory of the dead mother and over her replacement, Georg's fiancée Frieda Brandenfeld (her name resembling that of Kafka's fiancée, Felice Bauer, and anticipating that of Frieda in *Das Schloß*). In this context, Georg's submission to his father's death sentence can be viewed as the introjection of paternal authority into Georg's own punishing super-ego. Georg's manner of death, by drowning in the river, can be seen as symbolising his failure to cross to the 'other side' of maturity: for Freud, dreams of swimming were regressive, referring either to bed-wetting or to the desire to return to the womb ('schwimmen = Urinfülle = Aufenthalt des Ungeborenen', TD 408). The river in which Georg drowns is not unlike the river of social (and/or sexual) life flowing perpendicularly above, 'ein geradezu unendlicher Verkehr',<sup>44</sup> which has also succeeded in submerging him. The story's Oedipal element is further accentuated by implied phallic symbolism ('mein Vater ist noch immer ein Riese'),<sup>45</sup> and the use of concrete symbolic imagery to illustrate conflict, in accordance with Freud's principle of *Darstellbarkeit*. Georg's attempt to put his father to bed – to 'cover him up' (the theme of burial also found in 'Ein Traum', discussed below) – and thus to reverse their relationship of authority, is emphasised, for instance, by the image of his father's soiled, and therefore infantile, underwear. Meanwhile, the egoistic and *doppelgängerisch* projection of the dream here takes the form of the solitary 'friend' in Petersburg, who, according to the principle of metaphorical-metonymical coincidence, may be understood as both real and unreal. The element of self-projection adds a sense of violation to the father's appropriation of Georg's

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<sup>42</sup> See Herman Westerink, who considers that the sense of guilt (describing the 'tension between bodily instinctual drives and morality') forms the very basis of Freud's work. Cf. *A Dark Trace: Sigmund Freud on the Sense of Guilt* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2009), pp. 297-98.

<sup>43</sup> Kafka, 'Das Urteil', pp. 41-62 in *Drucke zu Lebzeiten*.

<sup>44</sup> *Drucke zu Lebzeiten*, p. 61.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

friend, and particularly the claim that the friend prefers to read the father's letters, symbolic of writing overall: 'deine Briefe zerknüllt er ungelesen in der linken Hand, während er in der Rechten meine Briefe zum Lesen sich vorhält!'.<sup>46</sup>

Freudian themes of eroticism, nudity and guilt are also evident in 'Ein Landarzt', another text subjected to numerous psychoanalytic readings. Among Kafka's stories, this is indeed one of those which comes closest to pure dream by virtue of its brevity, symbolic density, accelerated metamorphoses and unfettered temporality. The country doctor's erotic fears and wishes are split between his servant Rosa (wounded by the groom who competes for possession of her), and the doctor's young male patient whose (vaginally symbolic) wound is also 'Rosa' (in colour), thus neatly illustrating Freud's principle of verbal displacement. The doctor's forced display of public nudity is another common Freudian motif (the 'Verlegenheitsstraum der Nacktheit' is mentioned under Freud's 'typical dreams', TD 247). And like Freud himself in the Irma dream, the doctor is concerned with absolving himself from the guilt of his inefficacy, in this case by suggesting that the miracles expected of him properly belong to the spiritual realm: 'Den alten Glauben haben sie verloren; der Pfarrer sitzt zu Hause und zerpft die Meßgewänder, eines nach dem andern; aber der Arzt soll alles leisten mit seiner zarten chirurgischen Hand'.<sup>47</sup> This has been compared with similar sentiments expressed by Kafka (in a letter to Milena Jesenská) as a general critique of psychoanalytic therapy: '[Ich] sehe in dem therapeutischen Teil der Psychoanalyse einen hilflosen Irrtum. Alle diese angeblichen Krankheiten, so traurig sie auch aussehen, sind Glaubenstatsachen'.<sup>48</sup>

The correspondences between *Die Traumdeutung* and the aforementioned stories, among others, have led to conjecture about Freud's influence on Kafka. Karen Campbell (following Peter Beicken and Hartmut Binder), argues, 'to the extent that "Ein Landarzt" reflects on the question of its own origins in *Die Traumdeutung*, it makes the denial of any intellectual rapprochement between Kafka and Freud [...]

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>47</sup> *Drucke zu Lebzeiten*, p. 259.

<sup>48</sup> Franz Kafka, *Briefe an Milena*, ed. Jürgen Born and Michael Müller (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2002), p. 292.

untenable'.<sup>49</sup> Claims of direct influence are difficult to verify, however, given the paucity of evidence for the level and detail of Kafka's interest in Freud.<sup>50</sup> Kafka's possible adoption (conscious or not) of specific Freudian motifs and ideas will probably remain a matter of speculation. Interpreters may be both stimulated and led astray by the vast quantity of themes, details and possible connections in *Die Traumdeutung*, not to mention Freud's other works. On a broader level, Kafka's texts do repeatedly display a range of effects that Freud described for dreams, in terms of affect, thematic material and oneiric 'language' expressed in condensation, displacement and visual representation. Yet Kafka was an obsessive self-observer, capable of deducing subconscious mechanisms independently from his own dreams and fluctuating states of consciousness. For all of the authors in this thesis, self-scrutiny offered a potential means of liberation, by validating private experience beyond the webs of social constraint. Psychoanalysis, through its institutionalising and universalising impetus, posed the threat of a new determinism.<sup>51</sup> Even Schnitzler, Freud's fellow doctor, distanced himself from the latter on grounds of his 'Determinismus'.<sup>52</sup> In this context, the figure of the country doctor, whether or not influenced by Freud (or even based upon him, as suggested by Marson and Leopold in 1964)<sup>53</sup> acts to subvert the authoritative claims of the medical domain, in line with

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<sup>49</sup> Karen J. Campbell, 'Dreams of Interpretation: On the Sources of Kafka's "Landarzt"', *The German Quarterly*, 60/3 (1987), 420-31 (p. 429).

<sup>50</sup> Kafka would at least have been acquainted with psychoanalysis through conversations with Max Brod and others, for it was as much a 'kulturelle Erscheinung' as a medical discovery; cf. Hartmut Binder, *Motiv und Gestaltung bei Franz Kafka* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1987), pp. 97-98. However, Ritchie Robertson argues, '[o]ne should not exaggerate his interest: there were no books by Freud in his personal library, and he was scathing about the therapeutic aims of psychoanalysis'. Cf. Ritchie Robertson, 'In Search of the Historical Kafka: A Selective Review of Research, 1980-92', *Modern Language Review*, 89/1 (1994), 107-37 (p. 118).

<sup>51</sup> Kafka was demonstrably affected by the *cause célèbre* of his acquaintance Otto Gross, an anarchist ex-Freudian psychiatrist whose own father, Hanns Gross – one of Kafka's legal professors – had him committed to a mental institution in 1913. Gross became a symbol of the intergenerational conflict between fathers and sons that emerged as a major Expressionist theme. Mark Anderson proposes that *Der Proceß* arose from Kafka's preoccupation with the Otto Gross affair, with the association he drew between his own father and Hanns Gross, and by extension, with the entire patriarchal legal system that Hanns Gross represented. Cf. Mark M. Anderson, *Kafka's Clothes: Ornament and Aestheticism in the Habsburg Fin-de-siècle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 153-54. From this perspective, Kafka's understanding of psychoanalysis must also be considered in the context of its collusion with repressive legal mechanisms.

<sup>52</sup> Mark Luprecht, *What People Call Pessimism: Sigmund Freud, Arthur Schnitzler and Nineteenth-Century Controversy at the University of Vienna Medical School* (Riverside, CA: Ariadne Press, 1991), p. 146.

<sup>53</sup> Eric Marson and Keith Leopold claimed that '[n]ot only are the form and technique [of 'Ein Landarzt'] a conscious application of Freudian principles but the content is a subtly disguised depiction of Kafka's view of the origins of psychoanalysis, of Freud the man, of various aspects of psychoanalytical processes and, above all, of the futility and ineffectiveness of psychoanalytical



Kafka's critique of all authority. But the theme of (disillusioning) existential truth obtained through dreams appears to have much older roots, dating back to Kafka's first published work.

## 2. Dialogues of a Divided Self in 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes'

'Beschreibung eines Kampfes' (1904-1911) contains some of Kafka's earliest experiments with the incorporation of oneiric experience in his writing. The novella was never published in full during Kafka's lifetime, but parts of it appeared as two 'Gespräche' in the journal *Hyperion* in 1909, as his literary debut. The work was indeed a *Kampf* for the writer. He stubbornly returned to it over the course of several years, producing an incomplete version 'B' from 1909-1911, and a related fragment around 1911. Ultimately, he rejected the story, and was opposed to its publication, although he finally allowed Max Brod to keep the manuscript.<sup>54</sup> Brod and others evidently saw value in this work, which, after all, was responsible for introducing Kafka to the literary world. Commentators generally agree that while the work is 'immature', it already unveils much of Kafka's major thematic material.<sup>55</sup> The juxtaposition of dreaming and waking is already essential to this novella, but the two realms have not yet fused into *das Traumhafte*. Instead, Kafka here experiments with a compartmentalised portrayal of consciousness that he later largely abandoned. The anomalies of 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes' therefore cannot be explained in terms of immaturity alone. Among the aspects that differentiate it from much of Kafka's oeuvre are its intermediate, novella-sized scope, its specific references to the Prague landscape, and a somewhat more 'musical' language, even embellished by a poetic epigraph in version A.<sup>56</sup> However, this chapter will focus on two of the novella's major formal idiosyncrasies with relevance for the literary dream: its bracketed

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therapy'. Cf. 'Kafka, Freud, and "Ein Landarzt"', *The German Quarterly*, 37/2 (1964), 146-60 (p. 160).

<sup>54</sup> Franz Unseld, *Franz Kafka: A Writer's Life* (Riverside, CA: Ariadne, 1994), p. 26.

<sup>55</sup> As one author puts it, the novella is 'stylistically uneven, immature at the level of ideas, and therefore artistically inferior to Kafka's later works'; cf. Leena Eilittä, *Approaches to Personal Identity in Kafka's Short Fiction: Freud, Darwin, Kierkegaard* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1999), p. 38. But as Ernst Pawel notes, the novella contains, 'in an as yet inchoate form, many of the themes of his later work'. Ernst Pawel, *The Nightmare of Reason: A Life of Franz Kafka* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1984), p. 160.

<sup>56</sup> Anderson, *Kafka's Clothes*, p. 36.

structure of departure-and-return, and its repeated splitting of the narrative voice.

First, like the novels of Kubin (in particular), Meyrink and Musil, the existent version A of ‘Beschreibung eines Kampfes’ describes a departure-and-return structure surrounding a central, liminal dream-world. Like *Die andere Seite* – another *Traumreise* – the story is embedded in its landscape, here the specific landscape of Prague.<sup>57</sup> A narrator and his ‘acquaintance’ (*Bekannter*) meet at a night-time party and proceed on a journey to the summit of the *Laurenziberg* (today Petřín Hill). However, as they cross the bridge over the *Moldau* (Vltava) river, the narrator enters a series of ‘Belustigungen’, thematically linked to the dreamlike and also reminiscent of a fantastic dream experience. The dream journey of ‘Beschreibung eines Kampfes’ already fuses the rhetorical and the literal in typical Kafkaesque manner. The novella’s structure, however, is atypical in its use of specifically labelled sections:

I

II Belustigungen oder Beweis dessen, dass es unmöglich ist, zu leben

1 Ritt

2 Spaziergang

3 Der Dicke

a Ansprache an die Landschaft

b Begonnenes Gespräch mit dem Beter

c Geschichte des Beters

d Fortgesetztes Gespräch zwischen dem Dicken und dem Beter

4 Untergang des Dicken

III

Note the three levels of categorisation (I, 1, a), which make the work into a set of embedded brackets. Only the outermost set (I and III) is untitled. The overall

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<sup>57</sup> As Alfred Thomas notes, for Kafka and his contemporary Czech writers, Prague ‘mediate[d] between reality and dream [...and was] increasingly experienced as a space of alienation and indifference’; in this novella, Petřín Hill/*Laurenziberg* ‘becomes a site of personal liberation from the constricting contours of the city’, symbolising transcendence and *Selbstfindung*. Cf. Alfred Thomas, *Prague Palimpsest: Writing, Memory, and the City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), p. 86. In a diary entry of 15.II.20, Kafka reminisced about his youthful reveries on the *Laurenziberg*, where he formulated the wish to gain, and communicate, a view of life ‘als ein Nichts, als ein Traum, als ein Schweben’.

structure can be interpreted as a dream within a dream within a dream, where each 'world' is separate and subject to different laws. The story's oneiric themes are emphasised from the beginning, in the nocturnal setting and the recurrent motif of sleep. The housemaid who initially leads the acquaintances to the door, bearing her light, can be seen as another *Grenzwächter* character (not unlike the lantern-bearing figure who meets Kubin's narrator at the entrance to the Dream Realm). The opening section also contains dreamlike fluctuations of intimacy and violence between the 'acquaintances'.<sup>58</sup> The dissolving self meanwhile bleeds into the landscape, as the narrator begins to personify his surroundings: 'Und lieb war es da vom Mond, daß er auch mich beschien' (BeK 69). However, the moment of transition occurs when the acquaintances reach the bridge. As in 'Das Urteil', composed soon after this novella was finally abandoned, the (Vltava) river acts as a symbolic boundary associated with the dream.<sup>59</sup> The dreamlike bizarreness of the narrator's behaviour increases noticeably as he approaches the water, but he does not enter the *Belustigungen* until he is upon the bridge, where – at the start of the second story framework – he leaps onto his acquaintance's shoulders: 'Schon sprang ich mit ungewohnter Geschicklichkeit meinem Bekannten auf die Schultern' (72). As in a classic literary dream, the reader is immediately confronted with a new set of fantastic rules. The tension with 'reality' dissolves into a hallucinatory atmosphere, as the factual location of Prague melts away. The landscape now becomes a (dream) creation – 'eine noch unfertige Gegend' (72-73) – arising from the narrator himself.

In ii (*Spaziergang*), the narrator abandons the silent, animal-like acquaintance and engages in dialogue directly with the landscape, as if to symbolise the experience of contented, solitary artistic production. A new conversation partner arrives in the form of a Buddha-like 'fat man' (*der Dicke*), whose oriental quality anticipates Kubin's

<sup>58</sup> For instance, in the sentence 'Kaum waren wir ins Freie getreten, als ich offenbar in große Munterkeit gerieth' (BeK 57) the odd use of 'offenbar' shows that the narrator has begun to 'split', or to externalise his perspective. See James Rolleston, *Kafka's Narrative Theater* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1974), p. 6.

<sup>59</sup> The narrator reflects on the river as a boundary of *Sehnsucht* separating two halves of life: 'Einmal saß ich auf einer Bank am Ufer eines Flusses am Abend in verrenkter Haltung. Ich sah [...] die wolkenhaften Berge des andern Ufers' (BeK 63-64). 'Die wolkenhaften Berge' here remind us of the *Vorstadt* that appears on the far river-bank in the literary dream of *Die andere Seite*, as a Romantic vision of the unattainable: 'In der Ferne verschwand die Vorstadt in einem Gespinst violett schimmernder Fäden' (DaS 183). A similar image again occurs within the *Belustigungen*: 'Der Fluß war breit und seine kleinen lauten Wellen waren beschienen. Auch am andern Ufer waren Wiesen, die dann in Gestrüch übergiengen, hinter dem man in großer Fernsicht helle Obstalleen sah, die zu grünen Hügeln führten' (BeK 76-77).

contemplative 'Blauäugige'.<sup>60</sup> In following sections the narrative voice, the *Ich*, is passed from one character to the next: first to the fat man, then to the 'supplicant' (*Beter*), and then back in the other direction, in a cyclical dialogue of violence, attraction and intertwined identity based on the dialogic/combatative principle. *Geschichte des Beters* (c), which contains the innermost 'world' of the liminal journey, parallels the outermost world: the *Ich* appears again at a nocturnal party, as if reliving his waking experience in the context of a dream. Here, however, after failing to please the female guests (symbolising sexual inadequacy) and failing to play the piano (artistic inadequacy) he is ejected by the male host, with a stern, patriarchal 'Nun ist es genug' (101). Exiled into the dark streets, he seeks a conversation partner, but can only find a drunk, whom he engages in a nonsensical dialogue. This tragic-comic moment at the heart of the dream anticipates the literary dream in *Das Schloß*, discussed later. Both dreams convey a message of disillusionment, when the feared and desired 'other' is unmasked as chimerical and absurd, leaving the protagonist with a sense of unfulfilled solitude and futility.

The section *Fortgesetztes Gespräch zwischen dem Dicken und dem Beter* begins the journey back through the concentric circles of the dream, returning to the conversation between the fat man and the supplicant, which offers further evidence that we are still in a dream: 'Es ist Nacht und niemand wird mir morgen vorhalten, was ich jetzt sagen könnte, denn es kann ja im Schlaf gesprochen sein' (110). In section 4 – *Untergang des Dicken* – the narrator again becomes an unlabelled *Ich* and the fat man drowns in the river, re-emphasising the centrality of the fluvial motif. This *Untergang* features striking correspondences with the *Untergang* of the Dream Realm in Kubin's *Die andere Seite*: in both cases, the dream disintegrates amid the chaos of all-consuming water, in a symbolic dramatisation of anti-birth. And here again, as in Kubin, spatial relationships are distorted in the disintegration stage, as the narrator's fluctuating shape and identity become intertwined with the dream landscape: 'Aber meine Beine, doch meine unmöglichen Beine lagen über den bewaldeten Bergen und beschatteten die dörflichen Thäler. Sie wuchsen, sie wuchsen!' (112).

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<sup>60</sup> 'Dick' also seems to be a reference to the acquaintance, who is described as having '[ein] dickes Gesicht' (BeK 115).

In the last section (III), we finally return to the outermost story frame, where the original conversation partners (the narrator and his acquaintance) appear again, now at the summit of the *Laurenziberg*. Their conversation ends in discord under the weight of social obligations – chiefly involving women – that are destined to separate them, perhaps anticipating Kafka's own failed betrothals. The A version of the novella concludes with a description of an alienating and broken landscape: 'Eine Laterne nahe an der Mauer oben brannte und legte den Schatten der Stämme über Weg und weißen Schnee, während der Schatten des vielfältigen Astwerkes umgebogen wie zerbrochen auf dem Abhang lag' (120).<sup>61</sup> This reflects the significance of topography throughout the novella, as a map of psychological development: the downward motion of the *Untergang* (drowning in the river), at the end of the *Belustigungen*, illustrates the failure, in psychological terms, of the acquaintances' ascent to the hilltop. The subtitle of the *Belustigungen* – 'Beweis dessen, dass es unmöglich ist, zu leben' – thus highlights the interpretive function of the internal, bracketed sections, which use symbolic dream language to dramatise the subtext of the acquaintances' relationship.

Kafka's decision to demarcate the *Belustigungen* of the A version so clearly is a function of their extreme fantasy and fragmentation. They far surpass the dream-like, and more closely resemble a series of direct *Traumaufzeichnungen*. The connection between the degree of bizarreness and the requirement of structure is further emphasised if one examines the changes Kafka made in the B version. In that text, the Expressionistic passages featuring *der Dicke* are excised entirely, allowing Kafka to streamline the structure. In its surviving form, B retains a delimited sequence – [unlabelled], I, II, III, IV – in which the transition to a more fantastic scenario still occurs when the narrator leaps onto his acquaintance's shoulders at the start of I (p. 140). Overall, however, the elimination of the fat man coincides with a stylistic simplification and condensation of the text, also apparent in the removal of the introductory poem and descriptive titles. The significance of the fat man's *Untergang* in version A is illuminated by its apparent replacement, in B, with a

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<sup>61</sup> The similar imagery that occurs earlier in the novella has also been published as the aphoristic fragment, 'Die Bäume' (*Betrachtung*, 1913).

simple account of the farewell between the acquaintances.<sup>62</sup>

Meanwhile, however, in the middle part (III) of B, the fat man section is replaced by a new dream passage that lends greater thematic and narrative coherence to the entire text. The section begins, 'Ich schlief und fuhr mit meinem ganzen Wesen in den ersten Traum hinein'; although the narrator claims to flee, 'dem Schlaf und dem Traum entflohn – in die Dörfer meiner Heimat zurück' (145), the following hallucinatory section in his 'Heimat' appears as yet another dream. This vision adds substance to the overall narrative by inventing a (rural) background for the narrator, and by thematising, through contrast, the urban experience (of Prague) that appears in the surrounding text.<sup>63</sup> 'Ich strebte zu der Stadt im Süden hin', says the narrator, although he has been warned, in his village, that the city contains 'Narren' who do not sleep: 'Dort sind Leute! Denkt Euch, die schlafen nicht!' (150). Sleeplessness, rejected by the villagers, appears as an urban experience associated with non-conformity and (in the rest of the novella) with eroticism and self-discovery. The dream of the village, replacing the very different hallucinations of the fat man in A, demonstrates Kafka's determination, in this novella, to portray psychological truth through dream states. This is made explicit in B through further thematisation of the dream: 'Und so lief ich durch den in seiner Tiefe gerissenen Traum und kehrte wie gerettet [...] zurück' (145).<sup>64</sup>

The two surviving versions of 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes' demonstrate Kafka's persevering attempts to juxtapose waking with dreaming, where oneiric experience is used as an interpretive guide to waking consciousness. The B version betrays Kafka's dissatisfaction with the compartmentalised portrayal of different mental states. 'Das Urteil' solves this problem by superimposing these modes, so that dream

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<sup>62</sup> The connection is highlighted through the use of similar text preceding both events: 'Dann traten wir aus dem Gang unter den Himmel. Einige zerstoßene Wölkchen blies mein Freund weg, so daß sich jetzt die ununterbrochene Fläche der Sterne uns darbot. Mein Freund gieng mühsam' (A version, p. 111). In A, this text is immediately following by *Untergang des Dicken*. In B, it is immediately followed by the simple farewell between the acquaintances (pp. 168-69).

<sup>63</sup> This *Heimat* dream thus resembles Kafka's much later confrontation of urban and rural identity in *Das Schloß*, where, as Elizabeth Boa notes, K.'s search for *Heimat* in the village is part of the attempt to 'explore the possibility of grounding autonomous selfhood through community'. Cf. Elizabeth Boa, 'The Castle', in Preece, *The Cambridge Companion to Kafka*, pp. 61-79 (p. 62).

<sup>64</sup> The importance of sleep to this story is also evident from the related text fragment of 1911(?), in which the narrator attempts to keep his acquaintance from falling asleep (*Nachgelassene Schriften und Fragmente I*, pp. 70-71).

experience becomes the ever-present subtext of waking experience. But the new dreamlike narrative style could only be adopted after Kafka had abandoned the efforts in 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes' to marry first-person narrative with a dualist vision of the self. The challenge of depicting split consciousness is inherent in the dream, and particularly problematic for the first-person voice, as also demonstrated by Meyrink's difficult *Golem* text. In 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes', as well as in Meyrink's novel, the problem is essentially solved by a *Doppelgänger* technique, where the transition between states of consciousness involves the transfer of consciousness between different representatives of the self.<sup>65</sup> In 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes', this takes the form of a series of dialogues between an 'ich' and an 'other' who represent the principle of antithesis later to recur throughout Kafka's work. Kafka's diaries and letters are pervaded by similar 'Spaltungsphantasien'.<sup>66</sup> This was related, in part, to the division of his life between the daytime world of the office, and the nighttime world of writing. But Kafka also associated the experience of self-bifurcation with dreaming ('Neben mir schlafe ich förmlich, während ich selbst mit Träumen mich herumschlagen muß', TB-Kafka 2.X.11), and with the act of writing itself, where the writer performs both parts of a self-reflexive dialogue ('Ich kann wieder ein Zwiegespräch mit mir führen', TB-Kafka 15.VIII.14).

In 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes', the 'acquaintance' and his various manifestations must be understood both as 'other' and as a projection of the self. In the first instance, the *Bekannter*, as other, is undeniably an object of desire. In a homoerotic reading, the pattern of seduction between the two male conversation partners can be viewed against the background of the homosexual elements in Kafka's diaries and fictional symbolism.<sup>67</sup> The text's eroticism can also be understood as part of Kafka's

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<sup>65</sup> Gerhard Kurz, *Traum-Schrecken: Kafkas literarische Existenzanalyse* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1980), p. 30. In this context, 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes' may reflect Kafka's reading of Dostoevsky's *The Double* (1846). On Kafka's ambiguous reception of Dostoevsky's writings, see W. J. Dodd, *Kafka and Dostoevsky: The Shaping of Influence* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave, 1992).

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Gerald Bär, *Das Motiv des Doppelgängers als Spaltungsphantasie in der Literatur und im deutschen Stummfilm* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2005), p. 345.

<sup>67</sup> Mark Anderson argues that, while it is unlikely that Kafka was a practising homosexual who merely 'translated' his biographical experience into 'coded literary form', he simultaneously enjoyed and feared his homoerotic tendencies. On the one hand, they were an accepted part of the 'eroticised homosociality' of German youth culture; on the other hand, fears about homosexuality were expressed through its association, in Kafka's work and diaries, with violence, and often battle (as suggested by the titular metaphor of 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes'). Cf. Mark M. Anderson, 'Kafka, Homosexuality and the Aesthetics of "Male Culture"', in Ritchie Robertson and Edward Timms (eds), *Gender and Politics in Austrian Fiction, Austrian Studies*, 7 (1996), 79-99 (pp. 80, 85, 87-89).

playful de-essentialisation of gender.<sup>68</sup> The narrator (an early example of Kafka's recurrent bachelor figure) also seems jealous of the acquaintance's heterosexual successes and apparently well-established relationship with a female sweetheart.

It soon becomes apparent, in this context, that it is impossible to separate (homo)eroticism from the narcissistic impulse in Kafka's work, and in particular his own internal *Kampf*, of which he famously wrote to Felice, 'Daß zwei in mir kämpfen, weißt Du' (1.X.17). He admitted that the terms of that inner battle were not clear even to him: 'zeitweilig wechseln sie die Masken, das verwirrt den verwirrten Kampf noch mehr'.<sup>69</sup> In 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes', the *Bekannter* is both an object of desire and a projection of the self.<sup>70</sup> In version A, this is made evident by the transfer of the first-person narrative voice from one 'character' to the next within the dreamer's imagination. In the B version, however, Kafka abandoned this fragmented technique in favour of a continuous *Ich*, who identifiably experiences the dream of the central (III) section. This unifying tendency illustrates Kafka's progress towards the integration of oneiric and waking experience within a single subject. The eventual adoption of *erlebte Rede* techniques for much of his major work can be seen as a way of both observing *and* inhabiting the subject, of documenting both *Schein* and *Sein*.<sup>71</sup> The interpenetrating subject and object of 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes' represents an early attempt to achieve this by different means, ultimately rejected. It was not, however, the last time that Kafka experimented with the medium of dream as a source of revelation.

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<sup>68</sup> Cf. Dagmar C. G. Lorenz, 'Kafka and Gender', in Julian Preece (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Kafka*, pp. 169-88 (p. 186).

<sup>69</sup> Franz Kafka, *Briefe. April 1914-1917*, ed. Hans-Gerd Koch (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2005), p. 332-33.

<sup>70</sup> Here, the bifurcated narrator can be seen as exemplifying Freud's theory that the dream must always feature both sides of an antithetical relationship: 'Die Alternative "Entweder-Oder" kann der Traum überhaupt nicht ausdrücken; er pflegt die Glieder derselben wie gleichberechtigt in einen Zusammenhang aufzunehmen' (TD 321). Freud also links the idea of inversion in dreams to homosexuality: 'Es ist ferner bemerkenswert, wie häufig die Umkehrung gerade in Träumen gebraucht wird, die von verdrängten homosexuellen Regungen eingegeben sind' (TD 332).

<sup>71</sup> Walter Sokel sees the *Ich* in this novella as 'das reine Ich', opposed to 'das Fassade-Ich' represented by the acquaintance, as reflected in the superficiality of the word 'Bekannter'. Walter Sokel, *Franz Kafka: Tragik und Ironie: Zur Struktur seiner Kunst* (Munich: Langen, 1964), p. 39.



### 3. Dream Writing and the Transcendent Death in 'Ein Traum'

If Kafka rejected 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes', the opposite seemed true of his very short story 'Ein Traum' (1920), published no fewer than four times during his life. The relationship of 'Ein Traum' to *Der Proceß* is unclear: they share a protagonist, Josef K., and are connected by the theme of death (through self-destruction) as a form of release. However, 'Ein Traum' does not appear in the novel's manuscript and also differs through its use of a third-person omniscient perspective.<sup>72</sup> Kafka was in any case willing to publish it in isolated form, as an explicitly labelled dream 'capsule'. If this story lacks the tragic aspect of the other dream sequences examined here, in fact ending in an ecstatic mood, this may be due to its isolated form. The dream is clearly enclosed by opening and closing text: 'Josef K. träumte [...] Entzückt von diesem Anblick erwachte er' ('Ein Traum' 295, 298). However, it otherwise entirely lacks an external frame. Although told we are in a dream, we have no reality with which to compare its contents, or to measure the truth of the dream's revelations against waking existence. The presence of an 'other', external, waking world is merely implied. However, the rapidity of the story's oneiric flux is instantly apparent. The narrator glides along 'wie auf einem reißenden Wasser in unerschütterlich schwebender Haltung' ('Ein Traum' 295). Josef K. encounters two men holding a gravestone in the air, and a third man whom he immediately recognises as a 'Künstler'. This is the tombstone inscriber – an artist-writer in the most literal sense of writing. The letters he forms are initially perfect and golden, but their quality soon declines, symbolising the failure of artistic powers. The artist cannot complete his work because the person for whom the grave is intended – Josef K. – is present and observing. Only when K. recognises his error and voluntarily enters the grave can the written letters of his name appear above him, racing across the stone with flourishes, as if by magic, and much to his

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<sup>72</sup> Cf. Beda Allemann, Diethelm Kaiser and Nikolaus Lohse, *Zeit und Geschichte im Werk Kafkas* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1998), p. 77.

enchantment.<sup>73</sup>

In this text, the uncanny intimacy between Josef K. and the artist, evident in their immediate mutual recognition, points to another *Doppelgänger* effect. Landscape is also important again. This time the topographical focal point is the *Grabhügel* itself, which – like the hilltop of ‘Beschreibung eines Kampfes’, or the Castle of *Das Schloß* – exerts an attraction that is both compelling (‘Dieser Grabhügel übte fast eine Verlockung auf ihn’) and elusive (‘Manchmal aber sah er den Grabhügel kaum, er wurde ihm verdeckt durch Fahnen’) (296). This literary dream, lacking an external frame, inverts not only night/day (it explicitly takes place during the daytime), but also death/life, for Josef K.’s burial occurs in the same instant that the dreamer wakes up.<sup>74</sup> The dream-world has an independent topography and narrative, such that a return to the waking world – of which we know nothing here – becomes a leap into the void. Kafka joins Kubin, Meyrink and Schnitzler in the portrayal of dreams that end in death. The dream-death offers an obvious metaphor for mortality, but also destabilises the idea of a unified self, through the possibility of multiple deaths. Upon waking, the dreamer survives the destruction of a dreaming persona that, only a moment earlier, was experienced as eternal.<sup>75</sup> Inversely, death is potentially re-symbolised as a moment of transition (or *Verwandlung*) rather than finality. A dream-death invites the idea that our real-life death might also be an awakening. However, in this story, the transition is never completed. The nature of the dreamer’s awakening is not revealed. We remain frozen at the border, where death itself appears as a culminating moment of triumph. This death-dream seems to be a true wish fulfilment in the Freudian sense, paralleling the final scene of Schnitzler’s

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<sup>73</sup> The name Josef has an obvious association with dreams through the biblical Joseph, interpreter of Pharaoh’s dreams (Genesis 41). The name is also important for Freud in *Die Traumdeutung*, both for biblical and personal reasons: ‘Es wird aufgefallen sein, daß der Name Josef eine so große Rolle in meinen Träumen spielt (siehe den Onkeltraum). Hinter den Personen, die so heißen, kann sich mein Ich im Traume besonders leicht verbergen, denn Josef hieß auch der aus der Bibel bekannte Traumdeuter’ (TD 488).

<sup>74</sup> The inversions of ‘Ein Traum’ in some ways resemble the waking dream that Kafka experienced when writing ‘Das Urteil’: upon finishing a story of death, at dawn, he found himself lying wide awake in bed, still ecstatic: ‘Vormittag im Bett. Die immer klaren Augen’ (TB-Kafka 23.IX.12).

<sup>75</sup> As Lorna Martens notes, part of the paradox of the dream is that it creates an illusion of ‘ideal unity’ and ‘eternity’ that seems powerful in contrast to the transitoriness of waking existence. Lorna Martens, *Shadow Lines: Austrian Literature from Freud to Kafka* (Lincoln, NE; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), pp. 137–38. In Eastern religions, the sense of death and rebirth in the experience of dream-awakening is used to symbolise the transitoriness of a single lifetime in the great cycle of rebirth; cf. Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty, *Dreams, Illusion, and Other Realities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 214.

*Fräulein Else* (discussed in Chapter 6). In both cases, the wish for death as a moment of triumph can also be read as a wish for rebirth. For Josef K., this is a rebirth through art.

The specific means of death in this story are significant. Burial implies a merging with the landscape, which represents both the material of the dreamer's creation and the potential substance of rebirth: even as he is buried, K. continues to gaze upwards from these 'undurchdringliche Tiefe' (298). Patera's death scene in *Die andere Seite* also uses the motif of burial (in the mountainside) to symbolise a return to womblike substance. And Josef K.'s death, like that of Patera, represents an act of self-sacrifice. This major theme, particularly starting with 'Das Urteil', also underlies Kafka's novels: Karl's exile, Josef K.'s death, and K.'s struggle unto exhaustion are all forms of martyrdom. But in each case, the protagonist's 'choices' are constrained by overwhelming forces, calling into doubt the idea of free will. The dream, because of its compelling and involuntary nature, is a useful tool for raising doubts about free will, both directly and metaphorically. The choice of a dream setting for 'Ein Traum' serves to emphasise the irresistible nature of personal destiny. In his dream, Josef K. initially wants to go for a walk, but soon finds himself floating along 'wie auf einem reißenden Wasser' (295). At the grave site, everything seems prepared for his arrival, and the grave itself exercises a seductive effect (*Verlockung*) appropriate to the erotic description of the burial itself ('ein großes Loch, in das K., von einer sanften Strömung auf den Rücken gedreht, versank', 298). However, although this fate seems to await K. specifically, he also plays a role in accepting it – first, by leaping off the moving pathway before he bypasses his goal, the grave site, and then by willingly submitting to the grave. His compliant and joyful attitude, and the welcoming atmosphere of the dream, contrast sharply with the bitter tone of the death scene in *Der Proceß*, where Josef K. cannot summon the strength to deliberately end his own life. 'Ein Traum' would seem to offer an alternative, ideal vision of voluntary death. However, it is a dream from which the dreamer *wakes up*, 'entzückt'. There is no such indication in *Der Proceß*, where Josef K. vanishes with a final impression of shamefulness.

At the end of *Der Proceß*, Josef K.'s death is attended by two men, but in 'Ein Traum', the two men erecting the gravestone are joined by the third figure of the

artist. He is an inhabitant of the dream-world, while Josef K. is an intruder. The artist's alter ego, the named person (Josef K.), must not be allowed to interfere, to observe, or even to exist in the dream-world where the artist performs his work. The artist's shabby dress and 'gewöhnlicher Bleistift' disguise his rich artistic powers: 'Jeder Buchstabe erschien rein und schön, tief geritzt und in vollkommenem Gold' (297). These letters, along with the pencil itself, are obvious metonyms for the occupation of writing, but by virtue of their strong visual aesthetic, they also symbolise art more generally. Like the inscribed tablets of the Old Testament, this tangible, three-dimensional and permanent writing ('tief geritzt') also represents the hypostatisation of spiritual law. As in the Jewish mystical tradition of veneration for the Hebrew alphabet, it seems to reflect an ancient belief in the power contained in the act of writing itself, even in the formation of individual letters.<sup>76</sup> As discussed in Chapter 5, this theme also surfaces in the golem legend, particularly in the tradition which claims that the golem is animated by the letters EMETH (truth, God) and deactivated by removing a single letter, yielding METH (death).<sup>77</sup> This view of the binding power of writing perhaps explains the artist's difficulty in forming the letters of Josef K.'s name before the latter has submitted to the decision of death.

In *Der Golem*, the hallucinatory climax scene also features inscribed, golden hieroglyphic letters; their transcription into Hebrew accompanies Penarth's fateful and binding decision to follow the 'path of life' (see Chapter 5). The very word hieroglyph, 'sacred carving', contains the notions of holiness and permanence associated with the letters written in these texts. Freud (like Schubert nearly a hundred years earlier in *Die Symbolik des Traumes*, 1814)<sup>78</sup> used the metaphor of the hieroglyph to describe the mode of dream interpretation, as a type of translation between two fundamentally different semiotic systems. Specifically, dream content had to be translated from its original 'Bilderschrift' into the 'Sprache der Traumgedanken' (TD 283-84). The concreteness and visual aestheticism of hieroglyphs are also reminiscent of the hybrid 'Psychographik' created by Kubin's

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Maureen Bloom, *Jewish Mysticism and Magic: An Anthropological Perspective* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 32-33.

<sup>77</sup> John Neubauer, 'How Did the Golem get to Prague?', in Marcel Cornis-Pope and John Neubauer (eds), *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe: Junctures and Disjunctures in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Vol. IV: Types and Stereotypes* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2010), pp. 296-307 (p. 298).

<sup>78</sup> Gotthilf Heinrich von Schubert, *Die Symbolik des Traumes* [1814] (Bamberg: Kunz, 1821), p. 45.

narrator at the height of his artistic activity, when he invents ‘ein seltsames Liniensystem. Ein fragmentarischer Stil, mehr geschrieben wie gezeichnet’ (DaS 166). In all of these instances, the act of writing becomes as significant as its product, and meaning is shared by the visual, linguistic and even physical aspects of the message. In this sense, the hieroglyph aptly symbolises the coincidence of metaphoric and metonymic processes that I earlier posited as typical of dreamlike writing.<sup>79</sup>

As pseudo-hieroglyphs (sacred carvings), the letters formed on Josef K.’s gravestone capture the fusion of the abstract and the concrete in the language of the dream, and also the power of writing to convey the authority of (spiritual) law. Josef K.’s fate is fulfilled in the writing that appears above him as soon as he has submitted. Giving up his life, he is born again in the letters of his name. The writing in ‘Ein Traum’ has obvious affinities, in this sense, with the inscriptions created by the *Apparat* of ‘In der Strafkolonie’.<sup>80</sup> The words used to describe the machine’s text, *Schrift* and *Inschrift*, emphasise its alphabetic and scriptural aspects. The name of the machine part responsible for the inscriptions – the *Zeichner* – captures their hybrid visual/lexical nature (like the ‘Zeichner’ who is Kubin’s narrator, and invents the new written-drawn art form). The *Apparat* in ‘In der Strafkolonie’ produces both art and message (“‘Es ist sehr kunstvoll”, sagte der Reisende ausweichend, ‘aber ich kann es nicht entziffern.’”).<sup>81</sup> The worst of its punishment is contained in the artistic flourishes (*Zieraten*), just like the *Zieraten* that appear above Josef K.’s head in ‘Ein Traum’. The end of ‘In der Strafkolonie’ also features a grave, namely that of the dead *Kommandant*, with an inscription prophesying his return.<sup>82</sup> In this way, both stories combine the ‘Einheit von Schrift und Tod, von Ekstase und Thanatos’ noted by Peter-André Alt.<sup>83</sup>

The dream in ‘Ein Traum’ is both revelatory and consummating. Although brief, it

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<sup>79</sup> As noted in Chapter 2, calligraphy can also fulfil the function of magic or dreamlike writing, through its amalgamation of visual aesthetics and linguistic knowledge. This fusion is behind the power of calligraphy, for instance, in E.T.A. Hoffmann’s ‘Der goldne Topf’ (1814).

<sup>80</sup> Franz Kafka, ‘In der Strafkolonie’, pp. 201-248 in *Drucke zu Lebzeiten*.

<sup>81</sup> *Drucke zu Lebzeiten*, p. 217.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 247-48.

<sup>83</sup> Peter-André Alt, *Der Schlaf der Vernunft: Literatur und Traum in der Kulturgeschichte der Neuzeit* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2002), p. 486.

convinces Josef K. of the necessity of self-sacrifice for art's sake, and it also allows him to experience the rapture (*Entzückung*) of that sacrificial transformation. It therefore reflects Kafka's most positive view of the dream as a source of transcendence. This is particularly captured, for instance, in a significant dream in Kafka's diary, where he describes the coming of an unspecified 'Strafe', also described as 'Auflösung' and 'Erlösung': 'Das Glück bestand darin, daß die Strafe kam und ich sie so frei, überzeugt und glücklich willkommen hieß, ein Anblick, der die Götter rühren mußte, auch diese Rührung der Götter empfand ich fast bis zu Tränen' (TB-Kafka 20.X.21). However, as suggested by the more sinister conclusion of 'In der Strafkolonie' – in which the officer shows 'kein *Zeichen* der versprochenen Erlösung'<sup>84</sup> (emphasis mine) – dreams also represented a source of torment for Kafka. As he wrote in an entry following the transcendent entry above: 'Schlaflos, fast gänzlich; von Träumen geplagt, so wie wenn sie in mich, in ein widerwilliges Material eingekratzt würden' (3.II.22). As the machine in the Penal Colony writes upon the body, the dream engraves its message into the imprisoned mind. This darker vision of the dream as a danger lurking in sleep is taken up again in Kafka's last novel.

#### 4. No-man's Land: The Dream in *Das Schloß*

'Sonntag, den 19. Juni 10 geschlafen aufgewacht, geschlafen, aufgewacht, elendes Leben' (19.VI.10). This diary entry sums up Kafka's life-long struggle with insomnia, in which dreams, while sometimes offering temporary transcendence, were more often a troubling obstacle in the quest to achieve the relief of sleep. In *Das Schloß* – a text containing one of Kafka's rare, concrete literary dreams – the theme of sleep emerges on the first page. K. crosses the bridge (again to the *other side* of a river) to reach the village, late in the evening. He cannot see the Castle hidden in the mist and darkness, and gazes into 'die scheinbare Leere' (DS 7). By the next paragraph, he is already occupied with finding somewhere to sleep ('Dann gieng er ein Nachtlager suchen', 7). The landlord at the inn, upset by K.'s late and unexpected arrival, nonetheless allows him to sleep on the floor. But no sooner has K. fallen

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<sup>84</sup> *Drucke zu Lebzeiten*, p. 245.

asleep than he is reawakened, and becomes indignant: 'Und man muß die Erlaubnis zum Übernachten haben?', he asks (8). On this first night, he finally manages to sleep ('er hatte endlich Ruhe. Er schlief tief', 13), but from then on his intense preoccupation with the Castle quest means that he gets little rest. K. is suffering from extreme weariness by the time he succeeds in gaining admittance to the chambers of the Castle secretaries at night, the time of 'die Nachtverhöre' (DS 412), a phrase suggesting the torture of sleep deprivation. K. accidentally enters the room of Secretary Bürigel (who is attempting to sleep) and sits down on the bed, lured by the temptation it offers. K. is by now so weary that he has become obsessed with sleep, and finds it impossible to absorb the significance of Bürigel's words: 'es [war] schwer, etwas anderes als die eigene Müdigkeit gerecht zu beurteilen' (409).

Bürigel, meanwhile, is also deprived of sleep and rendered vulnerable and human by his bed-bound status. Just as weariness strips K. of his urgency and interest in penetrating the Castle's secrets, the bedroom setting strips Bürigel of his authoritative status. Both K. and the Castle officials are afflicted by chronic exhaustion that hinders their activities. When K. first observes Klamm, he is asleep, although in a posture of apparent wakefulness. Frieda explains, 'die Herren schlafen sehr viel, das kann man kaum verstehen. Übrigens, wenn er nicht so viel schlief, wie könnte er diese Leute ertragen?' (65-66). The officials' need for sleep burdens them with a shameful vulnerability that must be hidden from outsiders. As the landlady explains, 'am Morgen, kurz nach dem Schlaf, [sind die Herren] zu schamhaft, zu verletzlich [...] um sich fremden Blicken aussetzen zu können' (445). K.'s unscheduled appearance in Bürigel's bedchamber is therefore an unwitting exploitation of the Castle's main weakness, the human chink in its inhuman armour. Bürigel complains that the problem with night interrogations is the impossibility of maintaining the official nature of proceedings: 'Man ist unwillkürlich geneigt, in der Nacht die Dinge von einem mehr privaten Gesichtspunkt zu beurteilen [...] scheint sich manchmal ein sonderbarer, ganz und gar unpassender Austausch der Personen zu vollziehen' (412). In K.'s case, the impromptu interview in/on Bürigel's bed, with its intimate and erotic connotations, stands in supreme contrast to the Castle's hitherto forbidding and anonymous impenetrability.

But at the very moment of this unprecedented intimacy, K. succumbs to weariness,

and falls into 'eine[n] halben Schlummer'. He ceases to see Bürgel as an official, but instead 'nur wie irgendetwas, das ihn am Schlafen hinderte' (413). Throughout this section, K. remains in a borderland state between waking awareness of his quest and the great undifferentiated ocean of sleep capable of (temporarily) annihilating that quest. His consciousness fluctuates, along with his priorities. K.'s dream emerges as a no-man's land between these two worlds – a place in which he loses consciousness of his surroundings, but not of his existential position. As he crosses into this liminal realm, he at first feels a sense of liberation from conscious concerns ('das lästige Bewußtsein war geschwunden, er fühlte sich frei', 415) leading to an initial mood of triumph in the dream: 'es war ihm, als sei ihm damit ein großer Sieg gelungen und schon war auch eine Gesellschaft da es zu feiern und er oder auch jemand anderer hob das Champagnerglas zu Ehren des Sieges' (415). This dream – like the dream in Schnitzler's *Casanovas Heimfahrt*, discussed in Chapter 6 – unfolds in reverse emotional order, beginning with the triumph of a fulfilled wish, and disintegrating into the dysphoria of an anxiety dream.

The dream immediately takes up the theme of the external quest – the ongoing battle with the Castle – in the form of a secretary resembling a nude Greek god.<sup>85</sup> The battle in this dream is reminiscent of the adversarial pairings in 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes', where the narrator also temporarily overwhelms his acquaintance, by leaping onto his back. In both instances, the once-threatening 'other' suddenly appears weak and even comical. 'War es überhaupt ein Kampf?' wonders the dreaming K.; 'Es gab kein ernstliches Hindernis' (416). The opponent disappears altogether: 'Und schließlich war er fort; K. war allein in einem großen Raum, kampfbereit drehte er sich herum und suchte den Gegner, es war aber niemand mehr da, auch die Gesellschaft hatte sich verlaufen, nur das Champagnerglas lag zerbrochen auf der Erde' (416). The broken champagne glass, as a symbol of disillusionment, is the reverse of the celebratory champagne glass at the dream's beginning. The symbolic message – that K. is battling a non-existent opponent, and therefore waging a meaningless quest – carries the danger of ridicule, disorientation and isolation (symbolised by the large, empty room). The opponent's vanishing does

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<sup>85</sup> This image of the Greek god resembles Patera, the master of the dream-world in Kubin's *Die andere Seite*. As Mark Anderson notes, Greek themes, associated with 'Greek love', were embraced by the culture of erotically charged male friendships in Kafka's milieu. Cf. Anderson, 'Kafka, Homosexuality and the Aesthetics of "Male Culture"', pp. 81, 84.



not fill K. with the relief one might expect, for it implies that the elusive prize behind the opponent (as represented, initially, by the Castle hidden in mists) does not exist either. It becomes apparent how much K. has relied on his seemingly oppressive quest.

At the end of the dream, K.'s immediate association of Bürgel with the Greek god implies that he has grasped the dream's import. But Bürgel, like his symbolic representative, offers no opposition, instead explaining that someone in K.'s unusual situation, having accosted a Castle official at night, 'alles beherrschen kann und dafür nichts anderes zu tun hat, als ihre Bitte irgendwie vorzubringen, für welche die Erfüllung schon bereit ist' (424). K., as if applying his dream's message to interpret this defencelessness, now loses interest in Bürgel's offer to disclose the Castle's secrets. Instead, he yields to his physical needs and falls asleep, 'diesmal ohne Traum und Störung' (419). In this state, he is seen only from Bürgel's perspective, as a slumping body without consciousness: 'K. schlief, abgeschlossen gegen alles, was geschah. Sein Kopf [...] war im Schlaf abgeglitten und hing nun frei, langsam tiefer sinkend' (424). The use of 'frei' points to the liberating effects of this sleep, while 'abgeschlossen' would seem to indicate that K. himself has now become an impenetrable *Schloß*. From this point on, through to the novel's end, K. seems to have relinquished his combative drive. In the first instance, he is most concerned with making up for lost rest, and retires to the inn for over twelve hours of dreamless sleep, waking up at the beginning of the final chapter, 'endlich einmal ausgeschlafen' (452). In the final passages, sleep no longer plays a central role, but neither does the quest to reach Klamm or further penetrate the Castle.

If we are to believe Max Brod, Kafka once indicated that K. was to die literally worn out by his struggle and, on his deathbed, to be granted partial satisfaction by being conditionally permitted to live in the village.<sup>86</sup> This ending emphasises the novel's theme of bodily weariness as an obstacle to the pursuit of ideals. It also invokes the motif of the bed, one of the most frequent in Kafka's work. The bed is the place of Gregor Samsa's metamorphosis and confinement, the place of Josef K.'s initial arrest in *Der Proceß*, and the place where Georg Bendemann attempts to lay his father to

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<sup>86</sup> Max Brod, 'Nachwort zur ersten Ausgabe 1926 von Kafkas *Das Schloß*', in Max Brod (ed.), *Das Schloß* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1968), pp. 347-54.

rest, so to speak. The bed sometimes has erotic connotations, as in the case of the patient's bed in 'Ein Landarzt', the stoker's bed in 'Der Heizer', and in the Bürgel scene itself. It is also associated with death, dramatically symbolised by the 'Bett' that forms part of the apparatus in 'In der Strafkolonie' (also with erotic connotations contained in the penetrative nature of the machine). While the bed is linked with mortality and bodily weakness, it also carries the positive values of release and emancipation. Just as Josef K. is not unhappy to be laid in his grave at the end of 'Ein Traum', there is an element of relief in Gregor Samsa's bed-ridden exemption from his duties.

Duty is in fact often represented, in Kafka's work, by the need to wake up at a specific time, in keeping with Modernist fears of mechanised temporality. The condemned man's crime in 'In der Strafkolonie' consists of his failure to wake up on the hour, every hour, to salute the door of the *Hauptmann*, in an act of arbitrary and absurd obedience. Similarly, the country doctor is fatefully called to his duties by the 'Nachtglocke',<sup>87</sup> and Gregor Samsa frets over the crime of oversleeping: 'Sollte der Wecker nicht geläutet haben? Man sah vom Bett aus, daß er auf vier Uhr richtig eingestellt war; gewiß hatte er auch geläutet'.<sup>88</sup> Excessive sleep is associated with the sins of laziness and disobedience, as reflected by the requirement of early waking in religious teachings and in prisons, hospitals and factories.<sup>89</sup> The rigidity of mechanical and official time contrasts with the watery, dreamlike flow of creative time. The clock, in this context, becomes the ultimate symbol of arbitrary, everyday tyranny.<sup>90</sup> To remain asleep, or at least in bed, is a defiance of duty.

In *Das Schloß*, sleep still occupies this role: K.'s insistence on sleeping in the inn without official permission is a statement of anarchic self-determination. However, this last novel also reveals a shift in emphasis, as sleep is increasingly identified not

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<sup>87</sup> Campbell ('Dreams of Interpretation: On the Sources of Kafka's "Landarzt"', p. 425) argues that the 'Nachtglocke' of 'Ein Landarzt' is a play on Freud's 'Weckerträume', in which external dream stimuli affect the dream content. In Kafka's text, the consequences of responding to the clock are portentous: 'Betrogen! Betrogen! Einmal dem Fehlläuten der Nachtglocke gefolgt – es ist niemals gutzumachen' (*Drucke zu Lebzeiten*, p. 261).

<sup>88</sup> Kafka, *Drucke zu Lebzeiten*, p. 118.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Lodewijk Brunt and Brigitte Steger, 'Introduction', in Lodewijk Brunt and Brigitte Steger (eds), *Worlds of Sleep* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2008), pp. 9-30 (p. 20).

<sup>90</sup> The juxtaposition of the clock and water in Patera's clock-tower in *Die andere Seite* thus symbolises the fusion of tyranny and creativity within Patera himself.

with indolence and defiance, but with weakness and shame. Bürgel, instead of forbidding K. to sleep, consoles him pityingly for his fallibility: ‘Nein, Sie müssen sich wegen Ihrer Schläfrigkeit nicht entschuldigen, warum denn? Die Leibeskräfte reichen nur bis zu einer gewissen Grenze’ (DS 425). Sleep now appears as humiliation, also reflected in the furtiveness and embarrassment of the sleeping Castle officials. It has less to do with crime and more to do with the fear of corporeal imperfection, and the failure to perform ‘work’. K. himself is most frustrated by the limitations posed from within: ‘aber warum konnte er, der geglaubt hatte, sich auf seinen Körper verlassen zu können, und der ohne diese Überzeugung sich gar nicht auf den Weg gemacht hätte, warum konnte er einige schlechte und eine schlaflose Nacht nicht ertragen[?]’ (429). K. concludes that others are better able to bear sleep deprivation because their weariness is of a different kind – ‘die Müdigkeit inmitten glücklicher Arbeit’ (430) – which implies that K.’s work is *not* ‘glückliche Arbeit’, and is also somehow incompatible with bodily needs. Kafka’s diary entry of 3 February 1922, concerned with a weakness (‘Schwäche’) in himself that he finds hard to describe, also describes insomnia as a potential means of liberation from that weakness: ‘Wenn nicht die Schlaflosigkeit sich einmischt und mit ihrer nächtlich-täglichen Arbeit alles niederbricht, was hindert, und den Weg freilegt’ (TB-Kafka 3.II.22). Insomnia performs its own counter-‘Arbeit’ capable of overcoming human weakness. K.’s feelings towards sleep are similarly ambiguous, divided between the desire for rest and the desire to continue his quest, which is in fact the quest of establishing his ‘work’ as *Landvermesser*. The bed, which once offered a refuge from unwanted duties, now also stands for the bodily failure to achieve life’s work. K.’s surrender to the need for rest during the Bürgel scene is an admission of mortality.

In the context of that surrender, the clearly defined literary dream in Bürgel’s chamber plays a decisive role, because it apparently offers the insight that allows K. to relinquish his quest.<sup>91</sup> However, the value of this relinquishment remains ambiguous. On the one hand, the dream seems to offer a timely warning against the pursuit of a fruitless – in fact, non-existent – ideal. On the other hand, K.’s admission

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<sup>91</sup> As Karoline Krauss notes, the dream in Bürgel’s chamber ‘may be regarded structurally as the climax of the text, since it presents the culmination point of K.’s relation to the Castle’. Cf. Karoline Krauss, *Kafka’s K. versus the Castle: The Self and the Other* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), pp. 60-61.

that his weariness has harmed him ('geschadet', 429) points to his feelings of failure. At the very least, sleep has prevented K. (and the reader) from knowing whether Bürgel in fact had useful knowledge to provide. K.'s resignation after the dream appears to stem not from defeat itself, but from a realisation that defeat is inevitable. The secret knowledge offered by the Castle may indeed exist, and yet remain essentially unattainable for mortal, imperfect, exhaustible humans. The dream, in this context, is a bittersweet *Erlösung*: by disillusioning K., it also strips him of his life-drive.

While Kafka's portrayal of sleep, rest and beds shifted over time, the dream remained a no-man's land between the adversarial territories of life. Dreams could indeed provide insight and experiences of (spiritual) transcendence. Kafka's careful recording of dreams in his diary indicates the value they had for him as sources of self-knowledge. But dreams were also the demons that held him back from rest. 'Ich kann nicht schlafen,' he writes in his diary, 'Nur Träume kein Schlaf' (TB-Kafka 21.VII.13). Kafka, like K., longed for *dreamless* sleep – 'ohne Traum und Störung'; 'tiefer Schlaf' (DS 419) – allowing for the dissolution of internal antitheses.<sup>92</sup> K.'s dream – much like the 'dream' of 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes' – is combative, disillusioning and literally painful. It offers neither the satisfaction of work nor the release of sleep. However, it is decisive, confronting K. with a vision of futility and solitude that shapes the rest of his actions. Kafka's decision to illustrate the novel's turning point through the medium of dream reflects his life-long respect for the formidable power of oneiric knowledge.

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<sup>92</sup> Pfothenhauer and Schneider refer to Kafka's recurrent state of *Halbschlaf* as a 'psychische[s] Gefängnis'. See Helmut Pfothenhauer and Sabine Schneider, *Nicht völlig Wachen und nicht ganz ein Traum: Halbschlafbilder in der Literatur* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2006), p. 4.

## Chapter 5

### ***Traumstoff: Dream as Material and Medium in Gustav Meyrink's *Der Golem****

The prolific author and translator Gustav Meyrink (1868-1932) is now primarily remembered for his 1915 novel *Der Golem*, here examined in the context of the literary dream.<sup>1</sup> Meyrink's interest in dreaming and altered states of consciousness was part of his fascination with occult teachings and practices. That fascination informed his fiction, producing an unusual blend of anecdote and esoteric didacticism, sometimes specifically intended to warn his readers of the dangers of experimentation with altered consciousness.<sup>2</sup> Meyrink's work, written with an eye to entertainment and sensationalism, does not attain the literary calibre of most texts considered in this thesis. Paul Raabe thought *Der Golem* was the only good book Meyrink ever wrote, and it was indeed the only work to achieve the fame so desired by its author.<sup>3</sup> The novel nonetheless offers a rather challenging reading experience due to its fragmented narrative mode and certain distasteful stereotypes of Jews and women. However, like the 'cult' hit *Die andere Seite*, *Der Golem* has survived and continues to fascinate through its vivid symbolic evocation of fears associated with modernity, as well as its dark glamourisation of Prague. Meyrink's novel is useful in this thesis because it invokes the occult theories that were in constant competition with scientific explanations (including explanations of dream experience), and because it thematises the Jewish mystical traditions exploited by both Jewish and non-Jewish writers during this period.<sup>4</sup> In *Der Golem*, Jewish material is incorporated loosely and imaginatively along with elements of Buddhism, Hinduism and other religious or occult influences to explore the potential magic powers of sleep and dreaming.

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<sup>1</sup> Gustav Meyrink, *Der Golem* (Furth im Wald; Prague: Vitalis, 2008). Referenced as DG. The novel was first published in 1913-1914 in serial form in *Die weissen Blätter*, and in book form in 1915.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. Boyd, 'Gustav Meyrink and the Evolution of the Literary Vampire: From Feared Bloodsucker to Esoteric Phenomenon', *Neophilologus*, 90/4 (2006), 601-20 (p. 616).

<sup>3</sup> Paul Raabe, *The Era of German Expressionism* (New York: Overlook, 1974), p. 278.

<sup>4</sup> Meyrink apparently had Jewish ancestry on his mother's side. Cf. Gary Lachman, *A Dark Muse: A History of the Occult* (New York: Basic, 2005), p. 208.

The facts of Meyrink's personal life remain shrouded in anecdote and (often deliberate) mystery, but it seems clear that his biography left a thematic imprint on his fiction. Born in Vienna as Gustav Meyer, the illegitimate son of a baron and an actress, Meyrink moved to Prague in 1883.<sup>5</sup> The city was his home for twenty years and deeply marked his literary output, providing the setting for *Der Golem* and other works, such as the novel *Walpurgisnacht* (1917). Although he spent the end of his life in Bavaria, Meyrink's name has become closely linked to Prague in no small part due to *Der Golem*. Prague was the site of the great turning point in Meyrink's life (at least as he recounted it): at the age of twenty-four, on the point of committing suicide by pistol, he was surprised by a pamphlet, slipped under his door, entitled 'Über das Leben nach dem Tode'. Meyrink henceforth believed that a force he called 'der Lotse' was guiding his life. This 'Pilot' (which Meyrink also called 'der Vermummte')<sup>6</sup> represented a conflation of fate and psyche, like a magical version of Freud's unconscious. The *Meyrinkiana* archive collection at the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* in Munich contains a fragment by Meyrink, 'Der Traum als Lotse', suggesting that he associated this force with dream experience.<sup>7</sup> Urged on by the Pilot, Meyrink gave up his suicidal plans and set out to study the literature and traditions of the occult, personally experimenting with Kabbalistic teachings, mysticisms of all kinds, Eastern traditions (particularly yoga), alchemy, drug use and sleep deprivation. However, he retained a sceptical streak that caused him to reject fraudulent spiritualists, the Theosophy movement, and others.<sup>8</sup>

Meyrink's enthusiastic occult studies were conducted in parallel with his writing, and therefore provided a great part of his fictional material. His first publications were

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<sup>5</sup> He only officially changed his name to the more unusual pen-name Meyrink (related to an older spelling of the family name) in 1917. Cf. Florian Marzin, *Okkultismus und Phantastik in den Romanen Gustav Meyrinks* (Berlin: Blaue Eule, 1986), p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Meyrink's *Lotse/Vermummter* bears a resemblance to 'der vermummte Herr' who appears at the end of Franz Wedekind's *Frühlings Erwachen* (1891), and who convinces the character Melchior not to imitate his friend's suicide (also by shooting). Whether or not Meyrink was in this case directly influenced by Wedekind (who was an acquaintance and contributor to Meyrink's short-lived periodical *Der liebe Augustin*), both 'Vermummte' represent personified *Schicksal*. 'Ich erschließe dir die Welt', says Wedekind's *vermummter Herr*, 'Ich führe dich unter Menschen. Ich gebe dir Gelegenheit, deinen Horizont in der fabelhaftesten Weise zu erweitern'. Frank Wedekind, *Werke in Zwei Bänden*, vol. 1: *Gedichte und Lieder, Prosa, 'Frühlings Erwachen' und die Lulu-Dramen* (Munich: Winkler, 1990), p. 545.

<sup>7</sup> Meyrink, Gustav, *Nachlass: Autobiographische Entwürfe*, 'Der Lotse', BSB Meyrinkiana VII.1.

<sup>8</sup> Meyrink ultimately became critical of the self-titled Rosicrucian sect he followed for thirteen years, after he claimed that its yoga practices caused a 'disease of the spine'. Cf. Mike Mitchell, *Vivo: The Life of Gustav Meyrink* (Sawtry, Cambs: Dedalus, 2008), p. 68.

satirical pieces in the *Simplicissimus* magazine, starting with 'Der heiße Soldat' in 1903. This story recounts a case of spontaneous human combustion (a 'hotly' debated phenomenon at least since it appeared in Dickens's *Bleak House*) and the inability of doctors to comprehend it. The story already displays typical Meyrinkian themes, particularly the rejection of scientific and medical orthodoxy in the interpretation of supernatural events. Meyrink's explanatory impetus was parascientific. His metaphysical speculations were based on references to an alternative set of 'experts' with monistic and mystical tendencies typical of the occult.<sup>9</sup> As Meyrink wrote in 'Das Wachsfigurenkabinett', another early story (1907), '[d]as Leben des Menschen ist etwas anderes, als wir denken [...] es setzt sich aus mehreren magnetischen Strömungen zusammen, die teils innerhalb, teils außerhalb des Körpers kreisen'; this was an explanation, he argued, that 'unsere Gelehrten' could in no way understand.<sup>10</sup>

For Meyrink, sleep was a powerful source of magic. As he wrote in the essay 'Magie im Tiefschlaf', '[w]enn der irdische Mensch die Augen schließt, schlägt sie der jenseitige Mensch auf'.<sup>11</sup> From the start, Meyrink's tales demonstrate his interest in dreaming and related states of consciousness, as exemplified by the early dream story, 'Das Fieber' (1908), in which a man awakens from a feverish dream of condemnation only to receive an unintelligible prescription from a doctor, as if to underscore medicine's failure to grasp or respond to the deeper significance of dream.<sup>12</sup> The story also reveals Meyrink's interest in the dream as a source of spiritual truth, a theme he continued to exploit in his novelistic work after *Der Golem*, most notably in *Der weiße Dominikaner* (1921).

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Leon Surette, *The Birth of Modernism: Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats, and the Occult* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Gustav Meyrink, *Des Deutschen Spiessers Wunderhorn: Gesammelte Novellen* (Munich: Langen und Müller, 1970), p. 122. Meyrink's interest in 'magnetische Strömungen' is part of a long tradition dating back at least to the *magnétisme animal* of Franz Mesmer (1734-1815). 'Mesmerism' contributed to the beginnings of dynamic psychiatry (cf. Henri Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic, 1981), p. 53) and the hybrid medical-spiritual practices of hypnosis pervasive in nineteenth-century literature (cf. Ingrid Kollak, *Literatur und Hypnose: Der Mesmerismus und sein Einfluss auf die Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1997), p. 206). These themes persist in the work of the authors I examine. Meyrink, among the least sceptical, seems interested in reclaiming hypnosis for spiritual purposes, while discrediting its medical abuse.

<sup>11</sup> Gustav Meyrink, *Das Haus zur letzten Latern: Nachgelassenes und Verstreutes*, ed. Eduard Frank (Munich: Langen Müller, 1973), p. 275.

<sup>12</sup> Meyrink, *Des Deutschen Spiessers Wunderhorn*, pp. 247-53.

It is unclear when Meyrink began work on *Der Golem*, his first novel. He initially mentioned the project in a 1907 letter to Alfred Kubin.<sup>13</sup> Kubin was commissioned to supply illustrations for *Der Golem*, but, impatient with Meyrink's slow writing pace, he eventually used them for his own novel, *Die andere Seite* (1909).<sup>14</sup> The two works may well have influenced each other. Certainly it seems conceivable that Kubin's dreary, disintegrating dream-world, peopled with criminals and ghosts, could have received inspiration from Meyrink's Jewish ghetto in *Der Golem* (which may itself have been influenced by Dickens's London in *Bleak House*).<sup>15</sup> When *Der Golem* was published at last, with the now-famous illustrations by Hugo Steiner-Prag, it was the great success Meyrink had hoped for. With the aid of an aggressive advertising campaign, 145,000 copies were sold within two years.<sup>16</sup> *Der Golem* launched the second half of Meyrink's literary career, as he turned away from satiric short stories to novels, with *Das grüne Gesicht* (1916) and *Walpurgisnacht* (1917) following shortly.

In the essay 'Die Verwandlung des Blutes', Meyrink describes the awakening of his clairvoyant faculties, 'die Fähigkeit des innern Sehens [...] der erste Einschnitt in mein Schicksal, das mich [...] aus einem Kaufmann zum Schriftsteller machte'.<sup>17</sup> This experience of altered perception parallels the 'awakening' of the protagonist in *Der Golem*. 'Die Verwandlung des Blutes' also reports on Meyrink's experiments with sleeping and dreaming. He claims that sleep permits 'ein "Austreten" aus dem Leibe, zumindest ein Fernwirken ohne körperlichen Kontakt'.<sup>18</sup> In his sleep, he travels to a friend's house to make a knocking sound with a walking stick, and he sends his reflection to his fiancée in Prague to deliver an urgent message. Meyrink believes that dreams can transmit powerful messages, but he warns that meaningful

<sup>13</sup> Mitchell, *Vivo*, p. 133.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Thomas Le Blanc and Bettina Twrsnick, *Traumreich und Nachtseite: Die deutschsprachige Phantastik zwischen Décadence und Faschismus* (Wetzlar: Förderkreis Phantastik in Wetzlar, 1995), p. 72.

<sup>15</sup> Meyrink translated sixteen volumes of Dickens during the years he was working on *Der Golem*, so Dickens's London was likely to have been fresh in his mind; cf. Mitchell, *Vivo*, p. 123. On the relationship between Dickens's London and Meyrink's Prague, see also Peter Cersowsky, *Phantastische Literatur im ersten Viertel des 20. Jahrhunderts: Untersuchungen zum Strukturwandel des Genres, seinen geistesgeschichtlichen Voraussetzungen und zur Tradition der 'schwarzen Romantik' insbesondere bei Gustav Meyrink, Alfred Kubin und Franz Kafka* (Munich: Fink, 1989), p. 35.

<sup>16</sup> Mitchell, *Vivo*, p. 141.

<sup>17</sup> Gustav Meyrink, *Fledermäuse: Erzählungen, Fragmente, Aufsätze*, ed. Eduard Frank (Frankfurt am Main; Berlin: Ullstein, 2000), pp. 211.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248.



dreaming is a learned technique: 'Träume wie Visionen sind zwecklos und sinnlos, wenn man nicht lernt, sie so zu erziehen, dass sie uns zum Führer werden'.<sup>19</sup> With practice and persistence, he claims, anyone can learn to receive communications from 'der Vermummte', largely communicated through symbols. However, figures who speak with clear words in dreams are to be mistrusted, because they might represent a specious 'mediumistischer Vorgang'; to be legitimate, words spoken in dreams must be spoken *as if by oneself*, because 'der Vermummte' is really one's own *Doppelgänger*.<sup>20</sup>

For Meyrink, the dream shares blurry borders with neighbouring altered states, such as those induced by spiritual exercises, intoxication and magic, and he explored such problematics of (sub)consciousness from every angle in his fiction.<sup>21</sup> Given his scepticism towards science, and medical experts in particular, it is not surprising that he was an opponent of Freudian analysis. Cersowsky notes that Meyrink's 'Schwarzes Notizbuch' in the *Meyrinkiana* in Munich contains plans for a parody of Freudian theory, and the fragment of Meyrink's unfinished novel, *Das Haus des Alchimisten*, also takes shots at Freudian psychology ('die Forscher auf diesem Gebiet [glauben] gar nicht an eine Seele').<sup>22</sup>

Meyrinkian conceptions of the dream share a more sympathetic link with Jung's theories. For Jung, the symbols of individuation in dreams depict the crystallising process of a new 'Persönlichkeitszentrum', the self understood as the totality of the psyche, embracing both the conscious and unconscious.<sup>23</sup> Archetypal symbols are part of a collective unconscious with 'Inhalte und Verhaltensweisen, welche überall und in allen Individuen cum grano salis die gleichen sind'.<sup>24</sup> Jung was specifically interested in Meyrink's work, and particularly in *Der Golem*, which he used as a

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 274.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> In *Der weiße Dominikaner*, Meyrink writes that 'Traum' is only an inadequate name for the whole range of human experiences during sleep. Cf. Gustav Meyrink, *Der weiße Dominikaner: Aus dem Tagebuch eines Unsichtbaren* (Munich: Langen Müller, 1981), p. 42.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Cersowsky, *Phantastische Literatur im ersten Viertel des 20. Jahrhunderts*, p. 282. Such attacks on Freud have been countered by Bruno Bettelheim, who argues that the notion of 'Seele' is in fact at the heart of Freud's work. Cf. Bruno Bettelheim, *Freud and Man's Soul* (London: Hogarth, 1983), p. 71.

<sup>23</sup> Carl Gustav Jung, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 12: *Psychologie und Alchemie* (Olten; Freiburg im Breisgau: Walter, 1972), p. 59.

<sup>24</sup> Jung, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 9/1: *Die Archetypen und das Kollektive Unbewusste* (Olten; Freiburg im Breisgau: Walter, 1976), p. 13.

reference for dream analysis in *Psychologie und Alchimie*. He mentions Meyrink's golem as an example of the 'zauberische[r] Dämon', 'dem man fast regelmäßig bei Projektionen kollektiv unbewußter Inhalte begegnet'.<sup>25</sup> 'Natürlich hat Meyrink das nicht von mir erfahren', Jung claims, 'sondern es frei aus seinem Unbewußten herausgebildet, indem er einem ähnlichen Gefühl Bild und Wort verlieh, wie es die Patientin auf mich projiziert hatte'.<sup>26</sup> In Jung's view, *Der Golem* was a narrative illustration of his own theories of self-development and individuation. Alchemy played a special role for both authors as an allegory for the perfecting of the self. Meyrink and Jung also revived the notion of the prophetic dream (in contrast to the past-oriented Freudian dream), although Jung described this function as merely 'prospective' or anticipatory.<sup>27</sup> Both authors believed that telepathy influenced dreams.<sup>28</sup> Although these parascientific ideas conflicted with the analytical Freudian approach then in the ascendancy, they were an equally powerful force in Modernist Central Europe. Occultists were critically engaged with the new wave of scientific explanations that destabilised traditional epistemologies and beliefs. Occult counter-remedies soothed the modern psyche by re-asserting the idea of personal destiny. As described by Corinna Treitel, occultism in the German-speaking world helped to combat the anonymity of the modern self through 'self-focused salvation', and occultist techniques and practices, such as dowsing, were to some extent accepted as alternative forms of preventive medicine.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Jung, 'Über die Psychologie des Unbewussten', in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 7: *Zwei Schriften über Analytische Psychologie* (Zurich; Stuttgart: Rascher, 1964), pp. 1-130 (p. 105).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Jung wrote that the prospective function of dream is due to 'eine im Umbewußten auftretende Antizipation zukünftiger bewußter Leistungen, etwa wie eine Vorübung oder wie eine Vorausskizzierung ein im Voraus entworfener Plan'. Cf. Jung, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 8: *Die Dynamik des Unbewussten* (Zurich; Stuttgart: Rascher, 1967), p. 291.

<sup>28</sup> Jung remarked, '[d]ie allgemeine Tatsache dieses Phänomens [Telepathie] ist heutzutage nicht mehr zu bezweifeln' (ibid., p. 298). He was not alone in this belief. As Norman MacKenzie reports, at the end of the nineteenth century, the British Society for Psychical Research examined hundreds of 'telepathic' or 'prophetic' dreams (published in a volume entitled *Phantasms of the Living*), although it concluded that the evidence was not decisive; cf. MacKenzie, *Dreams and Dreaming*, p. 136. Freud, perhaps to avoid alienating part of his readership, refused to take sides in the telepathy debate ('ich habe kein Urteil, ich weiß nichts darüber'), but he was obviously sceptical, claiming that, in twenty-seven years as an analyst, he had never witnessed a true telepathic dream in his patients. Cf. 'Traum und Telepathie' in *Gesammelte Werke chronologisch geordnet*, ed. Anna Freud (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1940-1952), vol. 8: *Werke aus den Jahren 1920-1924* (1940), pp. 167, 191.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Corinna Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), pp. 133-34.

*Der Golem* captures this struggle between old and new, between ancient and modern institutions. This tension is most concretely symbolised by the eponymous golem and by the story's setting, the Prague Jewish ghetto, which appears as Meyrink imagined it existed before its destruction by the forces of modernity.<sup>30</sup> As in Kubin's *Traumreich*, frozen in the 1860s, the dream-world dwells in the past. But *Der Golem* was also a validation of Meyrink's nascent spiritual calling, and it promotes ideas and practices he saw as most conducive to personal development. In this context, he uses the dream not only as a vehicle for symbolic content, but also as a structuring principle for the entire novel, in another manifestation of *life-as-dream*.

### 1. The Dream Structure of *Der Golem*

*Der Golem* is essentially reducible to a framework narrative and an embedded narrative, another variation on the departure-and-return structure in Kubin's *Die andere Seite* and Musil's *Törleß*. In this case, the narrator 'departs' into the past, to the Prague of thirty-three years earlier, which acts as a vaguely defined liminal zone. The embedded narrative is fragmented and temporally indistinct, but the dream framework is rather tightly scripted. The opening of the dream occupies the first full chapter, 'Schlaf', and extends into two short segments at the ends of chapters two and three. The dream does not end until the transition between the penultimate and final chapters, where it is followed by a postlude describing the meeting of the two narrators (or narrator-halves). There is no prelude to the dream, however: the first chapter opens directly into the narrator's fading consciousness. He is lying in bed, in a semi-conscious state here described as 'Halbtraum': 'Ich schlafe nicht und wache nicht, und im Halbtraum vermischt sich in meiner Seele Erlebtes mit Gelesenem und Gehörtem, wie Ströme von verschiedener Farbe und Klarheit zusammenfließen' (DG 9). As in the drowsy consciousness of Törleß and K. before and after their dreams, *Halbschlaf* here functions as a zone of revelation, an opportunity for 'inner sight' and

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<sup>30</sup> As Richard Burton notes, the twentieth-century literary romanticisation of Prague's Jewish ghetto was largely the work of non-Jewish writers, particularly headed by the *Jung-Prag* school and Paul Leppin. By conflating the old Jewish ghetto with the slum district it became after the withdrawal of the Jewish population, these writers distortively identified Jewishness with 'crime, prostitution and squalor'. Cf. Richard Burton, *Prague: A Cultural and Literary History* (Oxford: Signal, 2003), pp. 65-66.

the imagination of ‘das Unfaßliche’.<sup>31</sup> Meyrink, by opening the novel in this state, highlights the psychic import of his story, and releases it from the confines of rational explanation.

The narrator has just been reading a Buddhistic parable about a stone that resembles a lump of fat (‘der Stein, der aussah wie ein Stück Fett’, DG 9). Beyond its symbolic connotations, this peculiar stone acts as a structural key in the dream framework, linking the layers of consciousness together and signalling the transition into, and out of, the dream-world. In the first chapter, the stone reveals the growing plasticity of perception as the narrator falls asleep: ‘Und das Bild von dem Stein [...] wächst ins Ungeheuerliche in meinem Hirn’ (9). In a leap of free association, the dreamer finds he is walking along a dry riverbed, picking up smooth pebbles, which seem to ‘come alive’. As in ‘Beschreibung eines Kampfes’ and *Die andere Seite*, the river represents a site of return to deepest subconsciousness. While the narrator moves in and out of his dream, he struggles to retain a sense of volition and control: ‘Langsam beginnt sich meiner ein unerträgliches Gefühl von Hilflosigkeit zu bemächtigen’ (11). He is disturbed by a persistent inner voice with a will of its own (‘eine eigensinnige Stimme in meinem Innern [...] es ist von der Stimme nicht loszukommen’, DG 10). This voice, reminiscent of the disembodied voice in ‘Beschreibung eines Kampfes’, could be interpreted as the subconscious, or even ‘der Vermummte’. In any case, these ‘confusions’, to borrow Musil’s description, cause the framework narrator’s identity to break down:

Ich weiß nur, mein Körper liegt schlafend im Bett, und meine Sinne sind losgetrennt und nicht mehr an ihn gebunden. –

Wer ist jetzt ‘ich’, will ich plötzlich fragen, da besinne ich mich, daß ich doch kein Organ mehr besitze, mit dem ich Fragen stellen könnte; dann fürchte ich, die dumme Stimme werde wieder aufwachen und von neuem das endlose Verhör über den Stein und das Fett beginnen.

Und so wende ich mich ab. (11)

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<sup>31</sup> Helmut Pfotenhauer and Sabine Schneider, *Nicht völlig Wachen und nicht ganz ein Traum: Halbschlafbilder in der Literatur* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2006), p. 2. Joachim Kalka calls this novel the ‘größt[e] Halbschlafphantasie unserer Literatur, [der] Halbschlafroman par excellence’. Joachim Kalka, ‘Der Halbschlaf: Poetik einer ungewissen Zone’, *Neue Rundschau*, 113/3 (2002), 16-27 (p. 19).

In the enigmatic final sentence of the first chapter – ‘Und so wende ich mich ab’ – the narrator seems to give up the struggle of self-definition. Chapter two, ‘Tag’, opens directly in the embedded dream narrative: ‘Da stand ich plötzlich in einem düsteren Hofe’ (12). The word ‘plötzlich’ conveys the uncanny immediacy of the dream experience. However, it is now unclear what this ‘ich’ represents, and where it is located. The chapter title ‘Tag’ is a deliberate inversion of the dream framework, emphasising the reality and substance of this dreamed setting vis-à-vis the fragmentary nighttime world of the framework narrator. But Meyrink further destabilises the reader by returning to the sleepy narrator and his elusive stone at the end of the second and third chapters, where he ambiguously declares, ‘ich weiß, daß [die Stimme] aus dem Reiche des Schlafes stammt. Aber was ich erlebt, das war wirkliches Leben’ (30).

The *Ich* is now taken over by one Athanasius Pernath, who inhabits it for most of the novel. The framework narrator vanishes until the transition between the penultimate and final chapters, when Pernath falls to his apparent death, and the *Ich* of the framework narrator awakens, returning to the original metaphor of the stone:

Ich falle. Mein Bewußtsein erlischt. Noch im Sturz greife ich nach dem Fenstersims, aber ich gleite ab. Kein Halt: der Stein ist glatt. Glatt wie ein Stück Fett. (DG 291)

**[Chapter 20: Schluß]**

‘--- wie ein Stück Fett!’ Das ist der Stein, der aussieht wie ein Stück Fett. Die Worte gellen mir noch in den Ohren. Dann richte ich mich auf und muß mich besinnen, wo ich bin. (DG 292)

The dream framework is thus clearly demarcated at the formal level and includes typical dream phenomena, such as time and space distortion, free association, and the loss of identity and volition. But Meyrink plays with the inherent ambiguity of the oneiric device: is the whole embedded narrative actually a dream? Are the framework narrator and Athanasius Pernath one and the same? As in ‘Beschreibung eines Kampfes’, the problematics of dream phenomenology are built into the narrative technique. Both experimental texts explore how the discrete identity of the narrating *Ich* is violated by the transition across boundaries of waking/sleeping or reality/fantasy. Meyrink introduces further ambiguity by suggesting that the

framework narrator has mistakenly appropriated Pernath's hat: 'ich glaube vor langer, langer Zeit habe ich einmal irgendwo meinen Hut verwechselt [...] Und ich sah in den fremden Hut hinein [...] dort hatte es gestanden in goldenen Papierbuchstaben auf dem weißen Futter: ATHANASIUS PERNATH' (DG 21).

*Der Golem's* dream framework – and particularly its liminal structure of departure and return – also has obvious parallels with Kubin's *Die andere Seite*. However, Kubin's narrator journeys forwards through space and time with an intact consciousness, in essence remaining the only stable point in a fluctuating environment. Meyrink's narrator travels backwards in time, within the same space (Prague), and into a different identity. By the fourth chapter, the *Ich* has settled into the perspective of Pernath, a gem-cutter of middle years who lives and works in a small room in the Jewish ghetto. Pernath suffers from amnesia, and little information is revealed about his past. The embedded plot mostly concerns Pernath's personal transformation. This is largely accomplished through intimate encounters with the spirit realm, whose representatives include the golem itself and a headless spectre called the *Habal Garmin*.<sup>32</sup>

Pernath falls in love with two women, Angelina – wealthy, adulterous, sexual – and Mirjam – a poor, chaste Jewess. As in the pairing of the wife and Melitta Lampenbogen in *Die andere Seite*, these are symbolic figures, standing for the conventional dichotomy of the pure and the sensual. Pernath's eventual union with Mirjam represents a triumph of spirit over matter, and an emphasis on Jewish rather than Christian tradition. The tension between materiality and spirituality also underlies the conflict between the pious archivist Hillel (Mirjam's father and Pernath's spiritual guide) and the vicious junk dealer, Aaron Wassertrum, who is eventually brought down by the vengeance of his bastard son (the impoverished student, Charousek) but not before implicating Pernath in an obscure murder mystery that eventually results in his imprisonment.<sup>33</sup> These events are narrated in a

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<sup>32</sup> According to Madame Blavatsky's 1918 *Theosophical Glossary*, the 'Habal de Garmin' is the 'Resurrection Body [...] the "Spirit of the Bones" referred to in the Vision of Ezekiel about the clothing of the dry bones with life'. H.P. Blavatsky and G.R.S. Mead, *Theosophical Glossary* (Whitefish: Kessinger, 2003), p. 121.

<sup>33</sup> The depiction of imprisonment in this novel may well be influenced by Meyrink's own experiences of imprisonment for banking fraud in 1902. Pernath's ordeal emphasises the (Kafkaesque)

fragmentary narrative style that could result from Meyrink's previous experience as a short story writer, and his love of anecdote. Jan Christoph Meister claims to have isolated no fewer than fifteen discrete narratives embedded in the plot.<sup>34</sup> Some are far-fetched subplots, but others contain key information, such as the background of the golem legend (DG 50-51). The poor cohesion of the novel's storylines, whether deliberate or not, only accentuates the dreamlike quality of Pernath's adventures.<sup>35</sup>

Shortly after his release from prison, Pernath's house catches fire, and as he apparently falls to his death from the window, he loses consciousness (DG 291). This is the end of the 'dream' and the return to the original narrative. The final postlude-chapter, 'Schluß', relates how the framework narrator (still without a clear identity of his own) attempts to make contact with his dream-world, thirty-three years after Pernath's time. The Prague ghetto has been destroyed and rebuilt in the intervening years, but many dream characters appear to have existed in reality, although their identity is vague. The novel ends with a fantastic scene in which the framework narrator ascends the *Hradschin* in Prague to find Pernath and Mirjam joined in mystical union, living in a house decorated by the signs of Osiris, the hermaphrodite of Egyptian legend. The narrator sees his own likeness in Pernath's face: '*Mir ist, als sähe ich mich im Spiegel, so ähnlich ist sein Gesicht dem meinigen*' (302). The two narrators finally have the chance to exchange their hats. In typical Meyrinkian fashion, the novel's last words are a comic twist, as Pernath's servant apologises: '[Pernath] wolle nur hoffen, daß [sein Hut] Ihnen keine Kopfschmerzen verursacht habe' (302).

It is an appropriately enigmatic conclusion to a story with an indeterminate status: was it all a dream? Upon 'waking up', the framework narrator wonders, 'Habe ich das alles nur geträumt? Nein! So träumt man nicht' (292). But while searching the labyrinth of Prague, he exclaims, 'Nicht annähernd so habe ich [die Hahnpaßgasse]

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arbitrariness and cruelty of the justice system, for instance when he cannot be immediately released, even when proved innocent, because his name begins with the letter 'P' (DG 278).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Jan Christoph Meister, *Hypostasierung – Die Logik mythischen Denkens im Werk Gustav Meyrinks nach 1907: Eine Studie zur erkenntnistheoretischen Problematik eines phantastischen Oeuvres* (Frankfurt am Main; New York: Peter Lang, 1987), p. 27.

<sup>35</sup> The fragmented narration strains the boundaries of the novel genre itself. From *Der Golem's* earliest reception, there have been conflicting views about its status as a novel or a 'visionäres Buch'; cf. Meister, *Hypostasierung*, p. 17.

im Traum gesehen!' (293). The answer to this riddle affects the entire text: if the framework narrator has 'merely' dreamed the embedded narrative, then its characters and events are purely psychic productions. This interpretation seems refuted, however, by the physical evidence of the hat and by the final meeting of the two narrators, albeit in a dreamlike scene.

In his classic work on fantastic literature, Todorov argues that the genre of the fantastic is defined precisely by an ambiguity '[qui] se maintient jusqu'à la fin de l'aventure: réalité ou rêve? vérité ou illusion? [...] Le fantastique, c'est l'hésitation éprouvée par un être qui ne connaît que les lois naturelles, face à un événement en apparence surnaturel'.<sup>36</sup> From this perspective, *Der Golem's* embedded narrative cannot be confidently interpreted as dream or not-dream. Thomas Wörtche, following this line of approach, has described *Der Golem* as a fundamentally fantastic text pervaded by 'rigorose Unschlüssigkeit' – a deliberate and thorough avoidance of resolution, which leads to 'hésitation' in the Todorovian sense, and rules out systematic interpretations.<sup>37</sup>

However, I would argue that Meyrink's deliberate ambiguity is also an ontological statement about the blurry borders of mental states. Dream interpretation must in this case extend beyond conventional psychology to incorporate the author's alternative belief system. As an adherent of occult teachings, Meyrink considered dream travel a feasible reality. The 'fantastic' element of his work must to some extent be understood literally. Specifically, the dream experience in this novel can be described as a form of *ibbur*, a Kabbalistic variety of soul transmigration resembling impregnation.<sup>38</sup> In *Der Golem*, 'Ibbur' is the name of a book the golem brings to Pernath, inciting a vision of 'Seelenschwängerung'. *Ibbur* can therefore serve as an explanatory framework for the entire structure and action of the novel, with Pernath's hat serving as a means of transmission. This aspect has been discussed in detail by

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<sup>36</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction à la littérature fantastique* (Paris: Seuil, 1970), p. 29.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Thomas Wörtche, *Phantastik und Unschlüssigkeit: Zum strukturellen Kriterium eines Genres: Untersuchungen an Texten von Hanns Heinz Ewers und Gustav Meyrink* (Meitingen: Corian, 1987), pp. 185, 215-16.

<sup>38</sup> DovBer Pinson, *Reincarnation and Judaism: The Journey of the Soul* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1999), p. 108.



Christine Krolick.<sup>39</sup> In the context of this thesis, *ibbur* highlights the gendered dimension of dreaming. In nearly all of the texts examined (with the exception of those by Schnitzler, discussed in the next chapter), the dream is received by a male protagonist, whose subconscious is capable of ‘giving birth’ to new insights either through dreams or *Halbschlaf*. The male dreamer, ‘feminised’ by his passivity, becomes a hermaphroditic being. As in Otto Weininger’s *Geschlecht und Charakter*, the essentialised female principle is welcomed into a newly androgynous self-concept, where it is associated with mystical transcendence and creativity.<sup>40</sup>

## 2. The Guidance of Visions

Todorov, in a description that could also apply to the dreamer, compared the narrators of fantastic literature to children, psychotics and persons in drug-induced states, who do not fully grasp their own subjecthood, and who experience a sense of suspended time and shifting space.<sup>41</sup> The embedded narrative of *Der Golem*, despite the insistence on its substance and reality, features many of these ‘psychotic’ or dreamlike aspects. Time distortion is noticeable immediately: ‘als ob ich ein Jahrhundert lang als Gemmenschneider in diesem Hause gewohnt hätte, immer gleich alt und ohne jemals ein Kind gewesen zu sein’ (DG 89). The plot’s chronology is disjointed, with chapters opening in new and loosely contextualised settings, and with little to indicate the passage of time or the relationship between events. This confusion is mirrored spatially in the ghetto’s jumbled and elusive topography, which contains hidden passages and a legendary room without doors. The dreary monotony of the *Judenstadt* – immediately striking the narrator with ‘das quälend Eintönige’ (DG 12) – is reminiscent both of the Dream Realm in Kubin’s novel, and the opening scene in Musil’s *Törleß*. The ghetto and Kubin’s *Perle* are also dominated by the old and the obsolete, captured in the dishevelled, rotting and

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<sup>39</sup> As described by Krolick, the novel’s use of *ibbur* ‘alludes to the direct and temporary assisting of the soul of the sleeping man by the spirit of Pernath. The man appears to reach in less than an hour, the state which required Pernath to spend years of suffering and slow development to achieve’. Christine Margaret Krolick, *The Esoteric Traditions in the Novels of Gustav Meyrink* [PhD dissertation] (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1983), p. 148.

<sup>40</sup> Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter: Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung* [1903] (Munich: Matthes & Seitz, 1980).

<sup>41</sup> Todorov, *Introduction à la littérature fantastique*, pp. 121-24.

personified houses: 'die mißfarbigen Häuser, die da vor meinen Augen wie verdrossene alte Tiere im Regen nebeneinander hockten [...] Unter dem trüben Himmel sahen sie aus, als lägen sie im Schlaf' (DG 32).

Pernath, as narrator, passes through mental fluctuations that test his senses and identity. He frequently loses consciousness or otherwise becomes paralysed or insensible, and he believes his memory has been erased through hypnosis (DG 63). Perception is a constant theme. The narrator's struggle, like that of Törleß, is largely an epistemological one, provoked by destabilisation of the perceiving self.<sup>42</sup> By becoming aware of constant cognitive flux, both Törleß and Pernath are led to question their senses and to feel the threat of madness through disintegration of the self. But, as noted in the earlier chapter, Törleß aims to master his confusions and reintegrate them into an empirically based, navigable worldview. Meyrink, on the other hand, expressionistically enlarges his narrator's disorientation into an allegory for the obscurity and intransigency of the subconscious. Its approach of fractured narration stresses these elements even more strongly than Kubin's allegory. The diffuse subjectivity of its narrator perhaps most closely resembles the 'split' protagonist of 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes'.<sup>43</sup> However, Meyrink, with his belief in hidden meanings, remains optimistic that enlightenment can be gained through self-relinquishment, in contrast to Musil's self-mastery. As noted by Marie-Hélène Huet, *Der Golem* portrays knowledge as elusive, but it is also 'dominated by the conviction that a higher meaning gives sense to the commonest details of everyday life'.<sup>44</sup>

Beyond the general dreamlikeness of Pernath's story, several segments qualify as double-embedded literary dreams, a technique also seen in Kubin's 'Die Verwirrung des Traumes' and in Kafka's 'Gespräche' in 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes'. The

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<sup>42</sup> As Meister notes, 'Der Rahmen [...] thematisiert [das Wahrnehmungsproblem] bereits implizit in seinem Handlungsverlauf'. Meister, *Hypostasierung*, p. 49.

<sup>43</sup> Meyrink's embrace of 'confusion' is related to the Expressionistic desire noted by Sokel to eliminate 'the opposition between the self and external reality, between subject and object, between inside and outside'. Walter Sokel, 'The Prose of German Expressionism', in Neil H. Donahue (ed.), *A Companion to the Literature of German Expressionism* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005), pp. 69-88 (p. 85). However, some argue against labelling Meyrink an Expressionist. As Mitchell notes, while Meyrink joined the Expressionists in rejecting 'the bourgeoisie and the materialism of the modern world' he differed from them in his use of 'comic grotesque satire and his espousal of the supernatural horror story', as well as his interest in esoteric religion. Cf. Mitchell, *Vivo*, p. 150.

<sup>44</sup> Marie-Hélène Huet, *Monstrous Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 247.

dream-within-a-dream is a significant ontological statement in itself. It automatically transcends the dualism of waking/dreaming and admits the possibility of an infinitely layered consciousness, producing a sense of perceptual vertigo. In *Der Golem*, the embedded dreams also serve to illustrate the importance of sleep and dreaming for the communication of special (largely symbolic) information.

At least four major passages deserve brief attention as literary dreams. The first of these, marking the beginning of Pernath's spiritual journey – the actual moment of *Seelenschwängerung* – occurs in the third chapter ('I'), before Pernath and the framework narrator have fully diverged. The narrator is followed into his room by a mysterious and anonymous figure (later identified as the golem) who presents a book opened to the chapter 'Ibbur'. Taking the book in his hands, Pernath falls into a dream state: 'Das Buch sprach zu mir, wie der Traum spricht, klarer nur und viel deutlicher [...] Worte strömten aus einem unsichtbaren Munde, wurden lebendig und kamen auf mich zu' (DG 24). Words become personified and transformed into images, speaking in the visual and metaphorical language of dreams (DG 24-26). Two figures stand out, as they will reappear in later visions: a gigantic, naked woman with a pulse 'wie ein Erdbeben' and a man and woman merged into a hermaphrodite. The female figure has been interpreted by Krolick as 'the Great Earth Mother, a symbol of the overwhelming power of the material world, which is the starting point of [Pernath's] path'.<sup>45</sup> However, the figure's threatening aura also recalls the menacing 'Sumpfmutter', symbol of the re-consuming womb, in *Die andere Seite*. The androgynous figure, as in Kubin, represents mystical unity, wholeness, and an ultimate spiritual destination. Pernath's vision here ends with the 'awakening' signal, '[i]ch blickte auf' (DG 27), and the realisation that the mysterious visitor (the golem) has disappeared.

A second vision occurs in the chapter 'Wach', where Pernath receives reassurance and guidance from the archivist Hillel, who acts as a benevolent, spiritual hypnotist. The chapter title is explained by Hillel's declaration, '[e]s gibt nur ein wahres Wachsein und das ist das, dem du dich jetzt näherst' (DG 85). He draws Pernath into a state of *Halbschlaf* that is portrayed as a moment of special clarity and insight, in

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<sup>45</sup> Krolick, *The Esoteric Traditions in the Novels of Gustav Meyrink*, p. 78.

which Pernath is capable of discovering intuitive solutions to problems that had previously eluded him:

Ich legte mich zu Bett und wollte schlafen, aber der Schlummer kam nicht, und ich geriet stattdessen in einen sonderbaren Zustand, der weder Träumen war, noch Wachen, noch Schlafen. [...] Nie vorher in meinem Leben wäre ich imstande gewesen, so scharf und präzise zu denken wie eben jetzt [...] waren es Ideen oder Gefühle, sah ich mich jetzt plötzlich als Herr und König im eigenen Reich. (DG 87)

Pernath, like Kubin's narrator in 'Die Klärung der Erkenntnis', or Törleß in half-sleep, can only receive certain types of *Erkenntnis* while in a state of hybrid consciousness, where some self-awareness is retained, but the mind is open to dreamlike communications. This state is associated with detail and clarity, in contrast to the fluid darkness of the full dream (as Kubin makes explicit through his pairing of 'Klärung' and 'Verwirrung'). In this case, Pernath's sense of being 'Herr und König im eigenen Reich' indicates not a loss, but a reappropriation of selfhood. At the end of this passage, the book *Ibbur* from the previous vision reappears to Pernath and he again sees the symbols representing the starting point (birth) and end point (reproduction/immortality) of his journey: 'der eine, der das erzene Weib bedeutete, mit dem Pulsschlag, mächtig, gleich einem Erdbeben, – der andere in unendlicher Ferne: der Hermaphrodit auf dem Thron von Perlmutter, auf dem Haupte die Krone aus rotem Holz' (DG 91). Hillel passes his hand over Pernath's eyes, causing him to fall asleep.

A third vision, although poorly marked as a dream, must be included due to its psychic importance. In the chapter 'Spuk', Pernath journeys to the legendary 'room without doors' said to be the golem's dwelling place in the ghetto. This room bears a resemblance to the enclosed spaces of self-confrontation found in other texts, such as the windowless 'Versteck' in *Törleß*, the underground duct in *Die andere Seite* (where the narrator meets a terrifying spectre), and the confinement of Bürgel's bed-chamber in *Das Schloß*. In each case, the restrictive atmosphere highlights the impossibility of escape from internal conflict, although the 'other' part of the self is presented in various ways. In this passage of *Der Golem*, Meyrink underlines the psycho-symbolic significance of the room in a manner that Freud could hardly have rejected:

man hatte Hypnose angewandt, hatte das – ‘Zimmer’ verschlossen, das die Verbindung zu jenen Gemächern meines Gehirns bildete [...] Gelänge es mir auch, den Eingang in jenes verschlossene ‘Zimmer’ zu erzwingen, müßte ich nicht abermals den Gespenstern, die man darein gebannt, in die Hände fallen?! (63-64)

As in Freudian psycho-topography, this inner room, with its ‘ghosts’, is dominated by the past and by memory. Pernath, after passing through dark underground passageways representing the corridors of the subconscious, finds the room covered in repulsive dust and ‘Gerümpel’, symbolising the clutter of his repressed recollections. There he finds a pack of tarot cards and is particularly drawn to the Juggler (*Pagad*) card, which resembles him. After dressing in decayed clothing found in a corner, the increasingly frightened Pernath has a vision of the Juggler staring at him from across the room: ‘Stunden und Stunden kauerte ich da – [...] Und er drüben: ich selbst [...] So starrten wir uns in die Augen – einer das gräßliche Spiegelbild des andern’ (117). Finally, as morning dawns, Pernath wins this ‘fight for his life’ and pockets the Juggler card. Returning through the subterranean passages, he is overwhelmed by memories (‘eine Flutwelle von Erinnerungen’, DG 119) indicating that he has recaptured his psychic patrimony. However, when he emerges into the streets of Prague, still wearing the clothing he found in the room, he is mistaken for the golem and chased by a screaming mob. This seems to suggest that the memories Pernath has reappropriated may be dangerous and socially threatening.

Pernath faces another developmental test, this time prophetic, during a fourth vision, in the crisis chapter ‘Angst’. Here, Pernath, alone and sleepless in his room, is overcome by dreamlike hallucinations and loss of control. Rendered ‘kraftlos’, he encounters a headless being who offers him a handful of seeds (*Körner*), using symbolism that again points to Pernath’s feminisation as (dream) recipient and site of gestation. As Pernath closes his eyes to receive internal guidance, he sees an endless procession of human figures, his own ancestors, the last of whom bears the face of the golem. When Pernath opens his eyes, two circles of alien beings surround him, robed in bluish-violet and reddish-black. Pernath strikes the outstretched hand of the phantom so that the seeds roll away over the floor, causing the red figures to disappear. The bluish figures remain, displaying golden hieroglyphs and each holding one of the seeds. An inscription appears on Pernath’s own breast and he falls

into a 'tiefen, traumlosen Schlaf' (167), like the dreamless sleep of escape finally achieved by K. in *Das Schloß* and by Schnitzler's *Casanova*. The chapter comes to a close.

This particular passage was used by Jung, in his work on dream symbolism in *Psychologie und Alchemie*, to help interpret a patient's dream. Jung compares the seeds in this vision to the *aurum philosophicum*, philosopher's gold, difficult to recognise and easy to reject due to its commonplace appearance.<sup>46</sup> However, in Meyrink's novel we later learn that Pernath's choice – to knock the seeds from the hand of the phantom – is part of his journey on the 'Weg des Lebens'. These four visions indeed act as a progressive series of dream messages guiding Pernath along his path. They are interspersed with the plot, but can be read independently from it, as if they together formed a separate, symbolic text. Beneath the confusing intrigues of the main narrative, this dream-dialogue provides stability and coherence through the repetition of key symbols. The visions are, to be sure, poorly integrated from the perspective of character motivation: they end abruptly, without demonstrating their direct effects on Pernath's actions. However, through repetition and interspersal they gradually form the novel's hermeneutic background, focused on the opposition between the Path of Life and the Path of Death. This echoes the dualism of Life and Death in the epilogue of *Die andere Seite*, as well as the struggle, in Schnitzler's *Traumnovelle*, of Fridolin's divided love for a dead and a living woman. These decadent and vitalist impulses compete to view the dream as either a repository of decaying memory material, or as a stimulating, prophetic call to action. Meyrink's visions incorporate both aspects, implying that the dream allows for communication with both past and future selves, and is part of both the Path of Life and the Path of Death.

In this context, the novel's last scene, in the dream 'postlude' – where the framework narrator discovers Pernath and Mirjam living in immortal union on the *Hradschin* – can be considered the final vision of the series, although now viewed from the framework narrator's perspective and not specifically marked as an altered state of consciousness (unless the narrator's crossing of the river to reach the *Hradschin* is

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<sup>46</sup> Jung, *Psychologie und Alchemie*, p. 103.

interpreted in allegorical terms). Here, Pernath realises the hermaphroditic union that was the destination point of his dream visions.<sup>47</sup> Structurally, this is also the moment when the embedded dream (the past) joins the external dream frame (the future) to form an overarching message directed at both dreamers, the narrator and Pernath.

### 3. Incarnate Dreams: The Golem, the Double and Material Spirit

The golem legend, based on the tale of an artificial being created from earth and brought to life through a magical combination of letters, can be traced into the antiquity of Jewish tradition, but it has existed in numerous forms over time. Between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, it became connected with the famous Rabbi Löw of Prague (ca. 1520-1609). By the time Meyrink wrote his first novel, the legend of the Prague golem had been collected and published as folk literature by nineteenth-century authors such as Leopold Weisel (1804-1873) and Franz Klutschak (1814-1886).<sup>48</sup> One version (in which the golem becomes the protector of the Prague ghetto) is dramatised in Paul Wegener's 1920 film *Der Golem: Wie er in die Welt kam*, often incorrectly associated with Meyrink's novel. Meyrink's version is an original and fantastic re-interpretation of a symbolic figure that had already been revived in various guises.<sup>49</sup>

*Der Golem* recounts the details of the golem story through Pernath's puppeteer friend, Zwakh. He describes the golem as destructive, capable of breaking into a rampage when the rabbi forgets to remove the magic word from its mouth. The golem is a deformed creation: 'Es sei aber doch kein richtiger Mensch daraus geworden und nur ein dumpfes, halbbewußtes Vegetieren habe ihn belebt' (50). Apart from this brief report on popular legend, the golem figure is given no historical

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<sup>47</sup> Jung also referred to the last of scene *Der Golem* in analysing the dreams of a young patient; he associates the hermaphrodite with the wholeness of 'der platonische all-runde Mensch'. Cf. Jung, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol 22: *Traumanalyse: nach Aufzeichnungen der Seminare 1928-1930* (Olten/Freiburg im Breisgau: Walter, 1991), pp. 319, 547, 638.

<sup>48</sup> For a detailed discussion, see Hillel J. Kieval, 'Pursuing the Golem of Prague: Jewish Culture and the Invention of a Tradition', *Modern Judaism*, 17/1 (1997), 1-20.

<sup>49</sup> Gershom Scholem was repulsed by Meyrink's distortion of the golem figure (Meyrink invited him to interpret passages of *Der Golem* in 1921). This provoked Scholem, according to Thomas Sparr, to engage in 'rettende Kritik' of the Jewish legend; cf. Thomas Sparr, 'Gershom Scholom und die moderne Literatur', *The Germanic Review*, 72 (1997), 42-56 (pp. 44-45).

grounding. It instead generally represents the threat of the deathless, 'irgend etwas, was nicht sterben kann' (DG 51). As a monster figure, keeping company with Frankenstein and Dracula, it is both repulsive and attractive, capable of expressing 'aggression, domination, and inversion [...] in a clearly delimited and permanently liminal space'.<sup>50</sup> The golem can be either a positive or a negative force, depending on whether a particular tale emphasises the dangerous hubris of man playing god (the golem runs amok) or the golem's potential to protect the Jewish race. Meyrink's golem partakes of this ambiguity and this social heritage. It is common cultural property, shared by the whole *Stadtviertel*, but it is also 'eine geistige Epidemie'. As noted by Boyd in a commentary on Meyrink's vampire figures, Meyrink was adept at transforming pre-existing monsters through the lens of modern occultism.<sup>51</sup> In the story 'Der Kardinal Napellus', for instance, Meyrink uses a vampiric figure to illustrate a psychic threat to students of yoga, 'a mind-body-soul divide that results in schizophrenia'.<sup>52</sup> This provides a clue to Meyrink's *Umwandlung* of the golem, namely its transposition to the plane of individual psychic development. His golem is shared by the ghetto in a *personalised* way. It appears to individuals as an intimate manifestation, 'ein Stück ihres eignen Innern' (DG 59).

This last point underlies the frequent interpretation of Meyrink's golem as a Modernist version of the *Doppelgänger*. As Andrew Webber argues, Meyrink revived the *Doppelgänger* as 'a sort of Freudian mystery of self-discovery' based on Hoffmannesque effects, where the *Doppelgänger* combines 'the totemic powers of a mystical cult figure with the symptomatic features of the Freudian unconscious'.<sup>53</sup> Webber sees Meyrink's golem as a 'universal *Doppelgänger*, not so much a mirror-man as a mirage [...] a projection of a photographic or filmic negative', which 'drives its host to psychic crisis in order to lead him to self-recognition'.<sup>54</sup> This interpretation is supported by various depictions of the golem in the novel: 'Er ist wie ein Negativ, eine unsichtbare Hohlform, erkannte ich, deren Linien ich nicht

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<sup>50</sup> Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (ed.), *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Minneapolis, MN; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 17.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Boyd, 'Gustav Meyrink and the Evolution of the Literary Vampire', p. 616.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 615.

<sup>53</sup> Andrew J. Webber, *The Doppelgänger: Double Visions in German Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 352.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 353-54.



erfassen kann – in die ich selber hineinschlüpfen muß, wenn ich mir ihrer Gestalt und ihres Ausdrucks im eigenen Ich bewußt werden will’ (DG 29).

Nonetheless, the golem’s status as *Doppelgänger* is far from straightforward in *Der Golem*. In keeping with the principle of ‘rigorose Unschlüssigkeit’, Meyrink offers vague and varying explanations for the golem phenomenon: it is described as ‘eine geistige Epidemie’ that periodically breaks out in the ghetto (55); ‘ein seelisches Kunstwerk, ohne innewohnendes Bewußtsein’ (56); ‘eine seelische Explosion, die unser Traumbewußtsein ans Tageslicht peitscht’ (56); ‘eine unsichtbare Intelligenz’ hiding in darkness (56); ‘die Erweckung des Toten durch das innerste Geistesleben’ (86); and as a metaphor for the entire ghetto (33). Moreover, Meyrink’s golem does not fulfil the typical *Doppelgänger* requirement of resembling its double, Pernath. If anything, Meyrink takes pains to distinguish them, emphasising the golem’s clean-shaven appearance and Pernath’s beard. The golem is described as ‘ein vollkommen fremder Mensch, bartlos, von gelber Gesichtsfarbe und mongolischem Typus’ (53) while Pernath resembles ‘ein altfranzösischer Edelmann mit seiner schlanken Gestalt und dem Spitzbart’ (62). The golem appears to other people besides Pernath (55)<sup>55</sup> and the *Doppelgänger* appears in forms other than the golem – for instance, as the tarot juggler (*Pagad*) who, with his beard, more clearly fulfils the visual function of Pernath’s double. A *Doppelgänger* also appears as a *Pierrot* in Pernath’s dream of the book *Ibbur*: ‘[der Pierrot] [p]flanzt sich vor mich hin und blickt in mein Gesicht hinein, als sei es ein Spiegel’ (DG 26).<sup>56</sup>

The *Doppelgänger* relationship is particularly complicated by the fact that the framework narrator and the embedded narrator, Pernath, are also a doubled pair: ‘Mir ist, als sähe ich mich im Spiegel, so ähnlich ist sein Gesicht dem meinigen’, says the narrator of Pernath in the last scene (DG 302). Christof Forderer points out that ‘dieser zweite Doppelgänger [ist] ein Doppelgänger des Doppelgängers – eine Konstellation, die der weit über die Bewußtseinsgrenze hinausgestaffelten

<sup>55</sup> The *Doppelgänger* idea is also invoked by the character Charousek: ‘Als hätte mein Doppelgänger neben ihm gestanden’ (DG 43), as if to imply that every person has a *Doppelgänger*.

<sup>56</sup> The stock character of the *Pierrot*, puppet-like in appearance and doomed to a repetitive fate, is another ambivalent life form. Like the golem, he inhabits the border zone between vitality and mere animation.

Beschaffenheit des Selbst in Meyrinks Konzeption entspricht'.<sup>57</sup> Meyrink's golem(s) and *Doppelgänger(s)* are global tropes, explored from many angles, in parallel with his malleable use of the dream.

Literary doubles and dreams have much in common: both result in fundamental identity displacement, violating the sense of a unified self. Both are strikingly visual phenomena. And both destabilise the narrating *Ich* through the autonomy and unpredictably of their effects. The dreamer or original does not control them; rather, the 'other' state or entity takes control, proving powerful, compelling and irresistible. But the double and the dream address this problematic from opposite, or inverted, positions: if the dream is the experience *from within* of the living loss of self, then the encounter with the double represents this experience *from without*. Although the *Doppelgänger* is the more symbolic of the two phenomena, both carry the dread and fascination of a non-death that is nonetheless an erasure of the autonomous *Ich*.

As Forderer also notes, by the time *Der Golem* appeared, the *Doppelgänger* could cease being a hostile power, because the multidimensional and largely unconscious modern self turned it into a means of self-discovery, 'Ausdruck einer erwachten Wahrnehmungsfähigkeit für sich in seiner – noch unheimlichen – Andersheit'.<sup>58</sup> In this context, Meyrink's simultaneous exploration of the golem trope, with its own connotations, traditions and symbolism, is a complicating factor, multiplying the doubling aspect. Meyrink's double of a double – the hall of mirrors created by the golem, Pernath and the framework narrator – also finds an analogy in the experience of the dreaming self. Jean-Daniel Gollut notes, as I also have in previous chapters, that dream experience creates an automatic double perspective: 'Dans le théâtre onirique, le moi occupe aussi bien la position du spectateur que celle de l'acteur'.<sup>59</sup> However, as he goes on to argue, dreaming in fact requires a *triplication* of the self: beneath the formal first-person identity, there are at least three 'hypostases' of the subject – *I recount that I dreamt that I was*.<sup>60</sup> The third instance of the self is related to Freud's operation of secondary elaboration, in which the dreamer's preconscious

<sup>57</sup> Christoph Forderer, *Ich-Eklipsen: Doppelgänger in der Literatur seit 1800* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1999), p.189.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>59</sup> Jean-Daniel Gollut, *Conter les rêves: La narration de l'expérience onirique dans les oeuvres de la modernité* (Paris: J. Corti, 1993), p. 206.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

begins to interpret and reshape the dream's contents. But the moment of triplication is also the moment of narration, whether in an oral dream story or a work of fiction. The dream is re-constituted in this narrative 'afterlife', where its meaning and legitimacy are questioned.<sup>61</sup> Meyrink's framework narrator represents this tripling instance, as both the narrating dreamer and the third *Doppelgänger*.

This same structure is mirrored – now from an outside perspective – in the character of Laponder, Pernath's fellow prisoner, who is imprisoned for *Lustmord*. He is 'glattrasiert wie ein Schauspieler' and 'sah fast aus wie eine chinesische Buddhastatue aus Rosenquarz, mit seiner faltenlosen, durchsichtigen Haut' (257), an appearance reminiscent of both the golem and the blue-eyed natives of Kubin's Dream Realm. Laponder claims to have awoken one morning to the discovery that 'die Träume wurden zu Gewißheit – zu apodiktischer, beweiskräftiger Gewißheit [...] das Leben des Tages wurde zum Traum' (DG 271). He explains that he has a different kind of *Traumleben* from other people: 'ich träume nie,' he says, 'ich wandere' (DG 265). He engages in dream practices closely resembling those Meyrink claimed to perform in 'Die Verwandlung des Blutes'. He has the capacity for channelling other persons in his sleep (through him Pernath is able to communicate with Mirjam, Hillel and Charousek), and also appears to leave his body, 'dreaming', for instance, of a room in which Mirjam is sleeping. The belief in psychic *Schlafwandeln*, and in the power to travel and communicate through dreams, has historically been common in cultures around the world.<sup>62</sup> In this context, however, it can also be understood symbolically. As in Hermann Broch's *Die Schlafwandler* (1930-1932), sleepwalking can act as a metaphor for fate: 'der Weg der Sehnsucht und der Freiheit ist unendlich und niemals ausschreitbar, ist schmal und abseitig wie der des Schlafwandlers'.<sup>63</sup> For Broch, this is partly a negative metaphor, standing for lack of self-awareness, a 'state of unrealised potential' and the failure to achieve autonomy.<sup>64</sup> Meyrink, on the other hand, seems to celebrate the

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Brown, *Reading Dreams*, p. 42.

<sup>62</sup> MacKenzie notes that the belief in 'soul-wandering' during sleep, particularly prevalent in Hinduism, Buddhism and other Asian religions, often makes others reluctant to wake the dreamer. Cf. MacKenzie, *Dreams and Dreaming*, pp. 57, 102.

<sup>63</sup> Hermann Broch, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 2: *Die Schlafwandler: Eine Romantrilogie* (Zurich: Rhein, 1959), p. 104.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Robert Halsall, 'The Individual and the Epoch: Hermann Broch's *Die Schlafwandler* as a Historical Novel', in Osman Durrani and Julian Preece (eds), *Reisende durch Zeit und Raum: Der deutschsprachige historische Roman* (New York; Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), pp. 227-42 (p. 238).

loss of self inherent in 'sleepwalking'. Through the character of Laponder, he promotes the relinquishment of free will in favour of a mystical determinism that will paradoxically re-establish the self.

In Laponder, dreaming and doubling are one and the same, combining the loss of self from within and without. And by telling his dreams to Pernath, Laponder also becomes the third self, the narrating dreamer. Because Laponder and Pernath are presented as complementary spiritual peers – on the 'Path of Death' and the 'Path of Life', respectively – Laponder can be seen as crystallising and reflecting the loss of self experienced by the triad of the narrator/Pernath/double-golem. Dreaming, or at least a particular kind of enlightened spiritual dreaming, is represented not merely as an analogy, but as a *technique* for swapping bodies and identities. In order to speak with sleeping people, Pernath recalls, '[man dürfe] die Fragen nicht ins Ohr stellen [...] sondern gegen das Nervengeflecht in der Magengrube' (262-63). Meyrink is interested in the mechanics of dream telepathy, a matter he later pursued in detail in *Der weiße Dominikaner* (1921), where the character Christopher Taubenschlag is also a 'sleep-wanderer'.

Laponder claims that the key to sleep-wandering is to become aware, while asleep, of one's 'Ichgestalt' – the 'skin' of one's identity (DG 271-72). In a process parallel to Jung's theory of individuation, the *Ich* must be transcended but also reclaimed, or as Laponder solipsistically declares, 'das Warten auf das Königwerden des eigenen "Ichs" ist das Warten auf den Messias' (DG 272). The Kabbalistic practice of *ibbur* makes it possible to account for the interpenetration of identities in a sort of shared soul that does not, however, negate individual identity. After the dream, the dreamer must return to a separate existence and fate. In this case, Pernath leads the way towards immortality and mystical union with the beloved, but the framework narrator cannot enter the gates of the edenic garden in the last scene. By inhabiting Pernath, he has only been shown the path that he must now independently pursue. He must return Pernath's hat and find his own way to immortality.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> This interpretation may explain the frequent references to Enoch ('Henoch'), who must return to the physical world after glimpsing the spirit world. Cf. Krolick, *The Esoteric Traditions in the Novels of Gustav Meyrink*, p. 148.

In *Der Golem*, the difficulty of distinguishing the 'Ichgestalt' is amplified by Pernath's amnesia. He is only clearly identified by his career as gem-cutter (*Gemmenschneider*). This occupation has conventional Jewish associations. It is also naturally aligned with the stone motif that threads throughout the novel. But it is above all an artistic profession (paralleling that of the graphic artist narrator in *Die andere Seite*). Pernath's sometime lover, Angelina, claims she has heard '[s]ie seien der größte Künstler, der feinste Gemmenschneider, den es heute gibt, wenn nicht einer der größten, die je gelebt haben' (DG 193).<sup>66</sup> Pernath's commission from the golem is to mend ('ausbessern') the book *Ibbur*, which represents both an artistic and a psychological task. Consequently, Pernath's spiritual development is also one of creative revelation in which, for instance, he abandons 'den irrigen Grundsatz der Maler, man müsse die äußere Natur studieren, um künstlerisch schaffen zu können' and instead adopts a distinctly Expressionistic and dreamlike perspective: 'das wahre Sehenkönnen [ist] hinter geschlossenen Lidern, das sofort erlischt, wenn man die Augen aufschlägt' (DG 150).

Beyond Pernath's artistic occupation and history of mental illness, we learn little about his biography. Pernath himself seems like a filmic negative or 'eine unsichtbare Hohlform' (DG 29). Meyrink's use of the *Doppelgänger* figure thus inverts the phenomenon by having us inhabit the double, *the other side*, the 'dark area'. This is emphasised after Pernath's first meeting with the *Doppelgänger*-golem, when he is irresistibly seized by the desire to *become* the other. Although unable to recall the stranger's appearance, he is guided by physical memory: 'Meine Haut, meine Muskeln, mein Körper erinnerten sich plötzlich, ohne es dem Gehirn zu verraten' (DG 28). Only then can he recall the stranger's/his own appearance: 'Ich trug ein fremdes, bartloses Gesicht mit hervorstehenden Backenknochen und schaute aus schrägstehenden Augen' (DG 28). The narrator must lose himself in order to

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<sup>66</sup> Pernath bears resemblance to the goldsmith Cardillac, 'der geschickteste Goldarbeiter in Paris', in E.T.A. Hoffmann's 'Das Fräulein von Scuderi'. Cf. E.T.A. Hoffman, 'Das Fräulein von Scuderi', in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 4: *Die Serapionsbrüder*, ed. Wulf Segebrecht (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2001), pp. 780-855 (p. 799). In both texts, jewelry – occupying the ambiguous zone between money and art – is used to explore the tension between material and spiritual values. While Hoffmann warns against the dangers of covetousness, Meyrink (although also cautioning against 'die Gier nach Gold', DG 145) makes gold and jewelry into symbols of truth and value associated with the virtuous Mirjam and her father ('immer trug er das Gewand des Hohenpriesters: die goldene Tafel des Moses mit den 12 Steinen darin auf der Brust', DG 153). The 'Goldmachergasse' acts as portal to the spiritual realm, and the statue of the hermaphroditic god at the end of the story is depicted with a golden head and a throne of mother-of-pearl (DG 301).

meet his double, just as the dreamer must lose the self to inhabit the dream. Both have serious implications for free will and volition. Pernath cannot control his own actions here. He has become an embodied dream, imitating the framework narrator's submission to the 'Hilflosigkeit' of his dream state (DG 11). The problem of volition is reiterated throughout the text, in the question of whether living creatures are only 'Papierfetzen' caught in an 'ein unsichtbarer, unbegreiflicher 'Wind' (DG 49) or perhaps animated by 'einem unsichtbaren magnetischen Strom' (DG 45).

The theme of missing or lost free will is implicit both in the dream and in the figure of the golem. The basic fascination of the golem tale lies in the creation of a being that is animate but without volition – a human in all but this crucial aspect, with both useful and destructive consequences. In Meyrink's vision, the golem is a frightening but revelatory monster. Both Pernath and his spiritual peer, Laponder – whose dream wanderings are also involuntary – choose to surrender to their assigned fates. The renunciation of will is responsible for the *Lustmord* committed by Laponder, who claims he had no choice: 'Irgend etwas, dessen Vorhandensein in mir ich nie geahnt hatte, wachte auf und war stärker als ich' (269), thus echoing Törleß's discovery of the 'etwas' that is 'stärker, größer, schöner, leidenschaftlicher [...] als wir' (*Törleß* 92).

In fact, Meyrink's characters are not entirely without choice, but it is confined to moments of acute responsibility and unfathomable consequences. In *Der Golem*, this is clearest during the climactic dreamlike meeting with the ghostly *Habal Garmin*, who offers both Pernath and Laponder the handful of seeds (*Körner*) representing magical powers. Pernath feels a great burden of responsibility at this moment ('eine ungeheure Verantwortung [...] die weit hinausging über alles Irdische', DG 164) but he does not understand the nature of his choice. Nonetheless, his decision will determine a path that he must follow irrevocably, just as Laponder must follow his Path of Death, and other characters (Charousek, Mirjam and Hillel) must pursue their own destinies.

*Willenlosigkeit* and individual powerlessness are also thematised by the numerous marionettes and wax dolls that appear in *Der Golem*, acting as small-scale golems scattered throughout the text. The themes of puppets and theatricality, also found in

Musil's and Kubin's novels, recall Kleist's essay 'Über das Marionettentheater' (1810), which anticipated Modernist fears about the loss of free will and *Geist* through mechanisation and, more symbolically, the effects of hypnosis (found side-by-side with the marionette motif in both Meyrink and Musil).<sup>67</sup> In Meyrink's text, the introduction of the puppet has a further layer of association with the golem figure itself, and with the idea of humanity's usurpation of God's creative role in the shaping of matter and life. The theme of puppets is also closely linked with Prague, a city generally obsessed with 'puppets, dolls, automata and related simulacra of the human', in part due to its long tradition of martyred bodies.<sup>68</sup> One of Pernath's friends is a 'Marionettenspieler' by profession. Another friend carves a doll of the golem which Pernath temporarily inhabits (in the chapter 'Punsch'), in a variation on his 'habitation' of the life-sized golem in an earlier chapter ('I'). As a doll, Pernath remains conscious, but powerless: 'Ich war es selber geworden und lag auf Vrieslanders Schoß und spähte umher [...] eine fremde Hand bewegte meinen Schädel' (65). When the golem doll/Pernath is thrown out the window, Pernath emerges from the dream-doubling, and is told by his friends that he has 'fest geschlafen' (65).

Besides dramatising the theme of powerlessness and invoking the original golem legend, this scene also highlights a typical Meyrinkian technique of objectification, which is here extended to render dream states tangible. Despite the inherent emphasis on bodily form in *Doppelgängers*, they are often physically elusive, fleeting, or phantom-like. However, Meyrink's scenes with the golem emphasise physicality, consistent with the theme of materiality in the golem legend. The intelligence that allows Pernath to become the golem is a physical intelligence: 'Meine Haut, meine Muskeln, mein Körper erinnerten sich' (DG 28). This accords with the novel's vision of the golem as a 'Phantasie- oder Gedankenbild' that had to be 'thought alive' by the rabbi before it was 'clothed' in its physical form, and which now returns out of hunger for a new material body: 'vom Triebe nach stofflichem Leben gequält' (DG 58).

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<sup>67</sup> Heinrich von Kleist, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe in vier Bänden*, vol. 2: *Dramen 1808-1811*, ed. Ilse-Marie Bart and Hinrich C. Seeba (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1987).

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Burton, *Prague*, p. 202.

Meyrink's golem – at once ghostly and corporeal – is representative of Meyrink's distinctive transcendence of the spirit/matter dichotomy. Just as the spectre of the *Habal Garmin* represents the clothing of dry bones with life, Hillel says that all things on earth are eternal symbols clothed in dust (DG 86). Spirit is primary ('Alles, was zur Form geronnen ist, war vorher ein Gespenst', DG 86) but it *requires* physical form for its effective participation in the world. For Meyrink, it is the astral ('siderisch') body, contained within the physical body, which is capable of travelling during sleep.<sup>69</sup> This philosophy is also the basis for Meyrink's literary techniques of reification – his insertion of 'symbols clothed in dust' – in which physicality and ideas cannot be disentangled. Meister has usefully analysed Meyrink's uses of *Hypostasierung* (also *Vergegenständlichung* and *Verdinglichung*). He argues that hypostatisation characterises the epistemology of mystical thought, which is used as the logical paradigm of *Der Golem* at the levels of both form and content.<sup>70</sup> It is therefore not only a key attribute of the golem, but also the method of resolution for the entire novel. When the narrative voice at last returns to the framework story, the restored, unified existence of the narrator is embedded in a world, 'in der das vormals Imaginierte zum Konkreten hypostasiert ist – der geträumte Körper des Ich-Erzählers zum Körper des Athanasius Pernath, der assoziierte Stein zur steinernen Stufe –, das keinerlei metaphorische Bedeutungsfunktion mehr besitzt'.<sup>71</sup>

This displacement of metaphor is in line with Todorov's denial of allegory in 'fantastic' literature. However, Meyrink's hypostatizing techniques do also retain a symbolic aspect, as part of his belief that ideas can take physical form. For instance, although Meyrink embraced the metaphorical meaning of alchemy as a process of self-development, this did not prevent him from claiming that he tried to turn faeces to gold.<sup>72</sup> For Meyrink, the metaphysical and the physical are interdependent. His concretised symbols offer an alternative to allegory, which, as Meister argues, can only superficially be described as 'fantastic'.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Krolick, *The Esoteric Traditions in the Novels of Gustav Meyrink*, p. 70.

<sup>70</sup> Meister, *Hypostasierung*, pp. xvii, 82-83, 135.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Mitchell, *Vivo*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>73</sup> Meister, *Hypostasierung*, p. 58.



The golem is a trope particularly well-suited for Meyrinkian hypostatisation, but the novel also includes other instances of concretisation and literalisation. One example is Pernath's hat, which Jung analysed in symbolic terms as 'ein Hervortreten des Unbewußten' and as an archetypal sign: it is '[der Hut] eines Unsterblichen, eines Zeitlosen [...] der sich vom einmaligen, sozusagen zufälligen Individuum unterscheidet'.<sup>74</sup> The hat, however, is also a *bodily* symbol, meant to be worn. It must literally be handed back at the end of the story. Pernath's hat is a tangible – and apparently necessary – medium for his 'impregnation' of the narrator's soul, and the book *Ibbur* serves the same purpose in the golem's 'impregnation' of Pernath. The idea of impregnation itself reveals Meyrink's fascination with matter-brought-to-life. This is invoked again by the seeds offered to Pernath by the *Habal Garmin*.

Similar themes are connected with the stone that resembles flesh. The importance of this stone is evident from Meyrink's original title for the novel, *Der Stein der Tiefe*.<sup>75</sup> Meyrink here chooses a Buddhist symbol of incarnation over counterparts in Christian thought. But in the alchemical tradition, as well, the philosopher's stone is a quintessential emblem of the tension between symbolic meaning and material phenomena. *Der Golem* opens with the narrator dreaming of stones, but in his dream he picks up the stones, emphasising their tangibility. Pernath's work as gem-cutter is based on the manipulation of stones. Finally, the transition from the embedded narrative back to the framework narrative underlines the physicality *and* corporeality of the stone: 'Noch im Sturz greife ich nach dem Fenstersims, aber ich gleite ab. Kein Halt: der Stein ist glatt. Glatt wie ein Stück Fett' (291). The narrator cannot 'grasp' the stone, whether symbolically or literally.

Hypostatisation is useful for understanding Meyrink's treatment of the dream trope as a whole. *Ibbur*, impregnation of the soul, makes the dream into an instance of incarnation, a means of embodiment. And inversely, the dream becomes part of the world: the framework narrator, upon waking, can interact with the landscape and characters of his dream. As Meyrink reports in 'Die Verwandlung des Blutes', dream visits are a physical process. One needs objects, such as a walking stick to strike or a

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<sup>74</sup> Jung, *Psychologie und Alchemie*, p. 67.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Mohammed Qasim, *Gustav Meyrink: Eine monographische Untersuchung* (Stuttgart: Heinz, 1981), p. 131.

mirrored surface to appear in. Sleep is literally ‘ein “Austreten” aus dem Leibe’. The dream as physical experience has a special role to play in the exchange of knowledge.

#### 4. Dream as Medium

Like the other authors in this thesis, Meyrink uses dreams as a means of communication, particularly for special types of symbolic *Erkenntnis* that can only be attained in altered states of consciousness.<sup>76</sup> Meyrink’s emphasis on physicality does not exclude metaphor – ‘die geheime Sprache der Formen’ (DG 56) – which plays an important role in dream knowledge. For Meyrink, metaphors can be powerful and even dangerous: ‘Gleichnisse [...] die man nicht versteht, und die einen, wenn sie später unerwartet sichtbar werden, so tieferschrecken können wie die Dinge von ungewohnter Form, auf die plötzlich ein greller Lichtstreif fällt’ (DG 45). A metaphor underlies the novel’s first sentence, where the narrator, entering a dreamlike state, compares the moonlight to a stone (later in the novel, in another instance of hypostatisation, Pernath the gem-cutter works with ‘Mondstein’: DG 132). The novel’s opening parable about the Buddha compares Gautama the ascetic to the stone, and the subsequent dream sequence builds this fragment into a psychological metaphor: ‘ruhelos nach jenem Stein suchend, der mich quält – der irgendwo verborgen im Schutte meiner Erinnerung liegen muß und aussieht wie ein Stück Fett’ (DG 10).

As I have discussed in previous chapters, metaphoricity is often an answer to problems of ineffability. It offers a potential means for circumventing the poverty of literal language when expressing dream insights. This theme also recurs in *Der Golem*. At the end of the dream sequence in the first chapter, the narrator loses the power of language: ‘da besinne ich mich, daß ich doch kein Organ mehr besitze, mit dem ich Fragen stellen könnte’ (DG 11). Loss of speech, associated with loss of power, is symbolised by one version of the golem legend, in which the monster is

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<sup>76</sup> In *Der weiße Dominikaner*, Meyrink also stresses the necessity of dreams for attaining wisdom: ‘Träumen lernen ist [...] der Weisheit erste Stufe’ (Meyrink, *Der weisse Dominikaner*, p. 57).

animated by placing a magic word in its mouth and turned back into raw material by removing that word.<sup>77</sup> Meyrink apparently has this version in mind when one of his characters reports that the golem lives through the power of a magic 'Zettel' between his teeth, which attracts cosmic energy (50-51). Pernath himself is made to feel the golem's linguistic/physical paralysis when he is 'attacked' by the golem at the end of the chapter 'Nacht':

Ich will rufen und kann nicht. Kalte Finger greifen mir in den Mund und biegen mir die Zunge nach unten [...] Ich kann die Finger nicht sehen, weiß, daß sie unsichtbar sind, und doch empfinde ich sie wie etwas Körperliches. Und klar steht es in meinem Bewußtsein: sie gehören zu der gespenstischen Hand, die mir in meinem Zimmer in der Hahnpaßgasse das Buch 'Ibbur' gegeben haben. (DG 82)

The paralysis in this passage affects Pernath whenever he encounters the golem, along with the uneasy combination of elusiveness ('unsichtbar', 'gespenstisch') and tangibility ('etwas Körperliches') that is also characteristic of the book *Ibbur*. This book is written in Hebrew, which Pernath cannot understand.<sup>78</sup> Like the Bible and other holy texts, it represents the paradox of idea as form, spirit as object. Pernath's initial dream vision inspired by the book deliberately mingles imagination and corporeality. The book speaks to him, 'wie der Traum spricht', and even loses its tangible form ('Das war kein Buch mehr, das zu mir sprach. Das war eine Stimme', DG 26). Language also plays a role in Pernath's vision of the *Habal Garmin*, in which his dream(like) state causes him to deconstruct language into its pre-semantic elements: 'Ich fing an, mir Worte vorzusagen, wie sie mir gerade auf die Zunge kamen: 'Prinz', 'Baum', 'Kind', 'Buch' – und sie krampfhaft zu wiederholen, bis sie plötzlich als sinnlose, schreckhafte Laute aus barbarischer Vorzeit nackt mir gegenüberstanden' (DG 162). As in Törleß's dream, in which he struggles to find the name 'Kant', the oneiric state described by Meyrink problematizes the use of words as labels, as distinct signifiers. This is also the experience described in Hofmannsthal's *Chandos* letter: 'Es zerfiel mir alles in Teile, die Teile wieder in

<sup>77</sup> Neubauer, 'How Did the Golem get to Prague?', p. 298.

<sup>78</sup> The fascination with the (il)legibility of Hebrew writing, particularly with relation to questions of memory and justice, is also evident in the admonishing Hebrew inscription of Annette Droste-Hülshoff's story 'Die Judenbuche' (1842): 'Wenn du dich diesem Orte nahest, so wird es dir ergehen, wie du mir gethan hast'. Annette Droste-Hülshoff, 'Die Judenbuche: Ein Sittengemälde aus dem gebirgichten Westfalen' [1842], in *Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, vol. 5/1: *Prosa*, ed. Walter Hugel (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1978), pp. 1-42 (p. 42).

Teile und nichts mehr ließ sich mit einem Begriff umspannen. Die einzelnen Worte schwammen um mich [...]'.<sup>79</sup>

Where words break down, letters – even smaller ‘Teile’ – may themselves become a source of fascination, as in *Der Golem* (‘P–r–i–n–z? – B–u–ch?’), p. 162) and in Kafka’s ‘Ein Traum’, discussed earlier. In Meyrink’s case (and perhaps also in Kafka’s) this may be associated with the incorporation of Kabbalistic principles to reconceptualise writing as a series of discrete symbols to be decoded.<sup>80</sup> However, as I argued in the previous chapter, this method of ‘seeing’ language is also related to the dream’s emphasis on concrete and visual representation. Pernath learns ‘Buchstaben zu empfinden, sie nicht nur mit den Augen in Büchern zu lesen’ (DG 109). Both the concrete and symbolic aspects of letters are emphasised. The letter ‘I’ on the cover of the book *Ibbur* is later replaced by the letter ‘A’, presumably for Athanasius. In the scene of the magic seeds, the blue-clad figures surrounding Pernath speak a foreign language and wear golden hieroglyphs on their breasts. As noted earlier, hieroglyphs straddle the border between abstract form and meaningful image. When Pernath cannot read them, Latin characters appear on his own breast (‘CHABRAT ZEREH AUR BOCHER’) before changing back into the illegible signs.<sup>81</sup> This symbolises the revelatory dream-translation of the mysterious ‘language of forms’. Pernath must learn to communicate with himself through a language transcending words; he must establish an internal interpreter (‘Dolmetsch’) to translate, ‘sich mit dem eigenen Innern durch klare Sprache zu verständigen’ (DG 109).

Both the book vision and the seed vision are altered states in which the symbolic messages and transactions remain largely obscure to Pernath as he experiences them. He can only claim the *Erkenntnis* from these encounters with the help of two guides and interpreters: the Jewish archivist, Hillel (a father figure) in the first part of the novel, and the convicted murderer and fellow prisoner, Laponder (a brother figure)

<sup>79</sup> Hofmannsthal, ‘Ein Brief’, p. 466.

<sup>80</sup> On the alternative model of language offered by the Kabbalah, Harold Bloom notes, ‘Kabbalah is a theory of writing [...] that denies the absolute distinction between writing and inspired speech’, and offers a ‘portrayal of the mind-in-creation’ that is inherently poetic. Cf. Harold Bloom, *Kabbalah and Criticism* (New York; London: Continuum, 2005), p. 25.

<sup>81</sup> CHABRAT ZEREH AUR BOCHER is a reference to the Hebrew name for the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, of which Meyrink was a member, along with many other literary figures, such as Yeats and Bram Stoker. Cf. Ellic Howe, *Magicians of the Golden Dawn: A Documentary History of a Magical Order, 1887-1923* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1972), p. 10.

towards the novel's end. The first of these interpretive sessions occurs in the chapter 'Wach', where Hillel, acting as 'mystical analyst', helps Pernath to decipher the meaning of the book *Ibbur* and its golem messenger.<sup>82</sup> Hillel explains that the golem symbolises 'die Erweckung des Toten durch das innerste Geistesleben' and that Pernath, by reading the book *Ibbur*, has indeed been impregnated by the 'Geist des Lebens' (DG 86).

However, Hillel's verbal explanations do not suffice to impart these insights. He must guide Pernath into a hypnotic state, which also fulfils a didactic function. Hillel aims to 'awaken' Pernath, to show him 'das wahre Wachsein' (DG 85). In the state of *Halbschlaf* thus invoked, Pernath is granted 'Erkenntnisse seltsamster Art'. Like Kubin's narrator or the dreaming Törleß, he has attained a state of clarity that reveals creative solutions to his problems: 'Rechenexempel, die ich früher nur mit Ächzen und auf dem Papier hätte bewältigen können, fügten sich mir mit einem Mal im Kopf spielend zum Resultat' (DG 88). Once again, formal and physical aspects are emphasised ('Ziffern, Formen, Gegenstände oder Farben') and language is re-evaluated: 'was ich "auswendig" gelernt, "erfaßte" ich mit einem Schlag als mein "Eigen"tum' (DG 88). In this episode, Pernath learns to 'think with his eyes' as a way of seeing meaning through the forms of symbols: 'Jede Form, die Du siehst, denkst Du mit dem Auge', says Hillel (DG 86). The final message of the vision is contained in the reappearance of key symbols – the book *Ibbur*, the earth-woman and the enthroned hermaphrodite. Hillel's words have become visually and physically accessible to Pernath by being translated through the dream medium.

Pernath also has no understanding of the choice he must make in the vision of the magic seeds, but Laponder appears near the novel's end to help decipher its meaning. Laponder complements Hillel's earlier instruction and assists Pernath in transcending his existential dilemma, guiding him towards the end of the dream. 'Sie müssen es teilweise symbolisch auffassen, was Sie erlebt haben', says Laponder (268). The apparition of the headless phantom is itself a symbol, to which the key is found in sleep: 'der Schlüssel liegt einzig und allein darin, daß man sich seiner "Ichgestalt", sozusagen seiner Haut, im Schlaf bewußt wird, – die schmale Ritze findet, durch die

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<sup>82</sup> Webber, *The Doppelgänger*, p. 146.

sich das Bewußtsein zwängt zwischen Wachsein und Tiefschlaf' (DG 271-72). Most important, Laponder explains that this 'skin' of the *Ichgestalt* clothes multiple selves, so that the individual encompasses a complex, inherited identity: 'Ihre Seele ist noch zusammengesetzt aus vielen "Ichen" – so, wie ein Ameisenstaat aus vielen Ameisen; Sie tragen die seelischen Reste vieler tausend Vorfahren in sich' (DG 268). Laponder himself illustrates this multiplicity, as well as the communicative power of dreaming, through his ability to channel other people and to 'wander' out of his body in dreams, much as Meyrink claimed to do in 'Die Verwandlung des Blutes'.

The dream as portrayed in *Der Golem* promotes deep interpersonal communication, making it possible to obtain valuable symbolic information *through* other people who are gifted dreamers. The dream is the medium for a special type of teaching in which the mentor penetrates the mind of the learner to directly impart figurative knowledge. Only through such intimate intervention can the initiate proceed along the path of individual destiny. As illustrated in the overarching novel structure, where Pernath himself becomes the framework narrator's mentor and teacher, the dream is a moment of differentiation from the self, a mental liminal space in which the conventional *Ich* ceases to exist and the dreamer's personality is open to influence and reshaping.

The scene in which Pernath visits the 'room without doors' and faces his personal *Doppelgänger* is the book's most private moment, clearly symbolic of the subconscious: 'der seltsame, von Zeit zu Zeit immer wiederkehrende Traum, ich sei in ein Haus mit einer Flucht mir unzugänglicher Gemächer gesperrt' (DG 63). But at the end of this passage, when Pernath emerges into the streets in the guise of the golem, he is pursued by a violent crowd. His subconsciousness has become part of social life. The question of identity consequently acquires a more participative aspect in this novel. It appears that oneiric communication with others is *necessary* to achieve self-realisation. Hillel induces a dream state to help Pernath gain clarity of perception, and Laponder dreams on Pernath's behalf in order to communicate visions of symbolic importance. Pernath temporarily 'inhabits' the golem, while Pernath himself is inhabited by the framework narrator. This view of the dream as a means of mental, spiritual and even corporeal interpenetration is an occultist method

for resolving the *qualia* problem faced by phenomenologists and dream researchers: the dilemma of being unable to directly access the oneiric lives of others.

In *Der Golem*, bodily and sensory experience is exchanged not only among individuals, but throughout social groups. The dream is a true collective experience. In another instance of *Hypostasierung*, the dream ‘occupies’ the Prague ghetto. As noted earlier, Meyrink’s *Judenstadt* and Kubin’s *Traumreich* share (perhaps not coincidentally) a dreary and dreamlike atmosphere of melancholy inhabitants (‘Im ganzen Ghetto wohnt niemand, der fröhlich lachen könnte’, DG 20) and rotting and personified houses (‘man spülte nichts von dem tückischen, feindseligen Leben, das zuweilen von ihnen ausstrahlt’, DG 32).<sup>83</sup> The inhabitants of both these cities share a communal dreamlife in which the inner experience of individuals is never wholly private.<sup>84</sup>

However, while Kubin’s world is cut off from the ‘outside’, Meyrink’s ghetto is interactively embedded in the larger social reality of Prague. The two worlds coexist uneasily. The Christian student Charousek, Aaron Wassertrum’s unlawful son, forms a bridge between the worlds, as does Pernath himself. Although there is no evidence that Pernath is Jewish, his personal connection to the golem itself (as well as to Hillel and Mirjam) links him with Jewish tradition. As in the original legend, the golem is both an expression of group distress and a sign of shared destiny. Pernath imagines that, just as the golem returns to clay when the formula is removed from its mouth, all of the people living in the ghetto would fall lifeless (‘entseelt in einem Augenblick zusammenfallen’) the moment some part of their mind is erased (DG 33). In the episode in which Pernath visits the room without doors, he also imagines his subterranean journey as forming part of the greater psycho-topography

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<sup>83</sup> The idea of the Prague Jewish quarter as a sombre dream-world pervaded by powerful memories is also reflected in Kafka’s words according to Janouch: ‘In uns leben noch immer die dunklen Winkel, geheimnisvollen Gänge, blinden Fenster, schmutzigen Höfe, lärmenden Kneipen und verschlossenen Gasthäuser [...] Die ungesunde alte Judenstadt in uns ist viel wirklicher als die hygienische Stadt in uns. Wachend gehen wir durch einen Traum: selbst nur ein Spuk vergangener Zeiten’. Gustav Janouch, *Gespräche mit Kafka: Erinnerungen und Aufzeichnungen* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1951), p. 42.

<sup>84</sup> The sense of a collective unconscious shared through dreams is also expressed in Hans Castorp’s dream in *Der Zauberberg*, which brings Castorp to realise, ‘[m]an träumt nicht nur aus eigener Seele [...] man träumt anonym und gemeinsam, wenn auch auf eigene Art. Die große Seele, von der du nur ein Teilchen, träumt wohl mal durch dich, auf deine Art, von Dingen, die sie heimlich immer träumt’. Cf. Mann, *Der Zauberberg*, p. 692.

of Prague: ‘die halbe Stadt stand doch seit unvordenklichen Zeiten auf solchen unterirdischen Läuften, und die Bewohner Prags hatten von jeher triftigen Grund, das Tageslicht zu scheuen’ (DG 110). This passage suggests that Pernath’s repressed memories are echoed on a larger scale by the repressed historical memory of the entire community. Landscape and dream cannot be disentangled. As an incarnated symbol of the unconscious, the golem in his mysterious room literally inhabits the ghetto, and plays the role of *Doppelgänger* to every person.<sup>85</sup>

The existence of the ghetto’s group psyche is emphasised by the puppeteer character Zwakh, who brags that no one has more ‘erlebte und ererbte Erinnerungen an das periodische Auftauchen des Golem [...] als gerade ich!’ (DG 51). This concept of inherited or ancestral memories (‘ererbte Erinnerungen’), and the framework narrator’s capacity for time travel and intergenerational communication in dreams, reflect Hillel’s claim that memory and knowledge are the same (‘Wissen und Erinnerung sind dasselbe’, DG 87). As an epistemological argument, this is a Platonist anticipation of Jung’s theories of the collective unconscious and archetypal symbols. Both authors take exception to the modern Western idea of the dream as the most private kind of experience.

This social aspect partly differentiates the Meyrinkian dream from others examined in this thesis. *Törleß* portrays dream communication as self-communication, inherently personal and secret. Kubin, like Meyrink, explores the possibility of ‘shared’ dreaming, but in the context of a fantastic realm under the hypnotic control of a single mind (Patera); in his world, the dream is powerful and creative, but also antisocial and destructive. In *Der Golem*, however, dreams are connective instead of isolating, circumventing the usual oneiric solipsism. A dreamer’s visions, and his subconscious experiences overall, become an object of social interpretation and even participation. Meyrink’s dream-world is here among us, separated from waking life by the thinnest of boundaries.

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<sup>85</sup> As Alfred Thomas notes, the Prague *Judenstadt* acts almost as the main protagonist of this novel: a ‘site of presence and absence, memory and forgetting, a palimpsest of semilegible letters and hieroglyphs’. Alfred Thomas, *Prague Palimpsest: Writing, Memory, and the City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), p. 51.



## Chapter 6

### The Powerful Mirror of Dream in Three Novellas by Arthur Schnitzler

In Schnitzler's early story 'Frühlingsnacht im Seziersaal' (1880) a medical student on his way home from a dance pays a nocturnal visit to the dissecting room, where he dreams of the *Anatomiediener's* daughter, Christine, and wakes up to find that he is fascinated with her. The story shows that the teenage Schnitzler was already captivated by the trinity of 'Liebe, Spiel und Tod'.<sup>1</sup> Frederick Beharriell even famously claimed that this story anticipated Freudian dream theory.<sup>2</sup> Just as important, the story reveals Schnitzler's interest in the way dreams *interfere* with life and its relationships. Dreams in his works both *reflect* reality, by acting as a mirror of the hidden self and its wishes, and also *create* reality, by inciting the dreamer to curiosity, love, aggression or self-destruction in waking life. For this reason, they are not merely an individual concern. They exert a potent, invisible influence over all social relations. One of Schnitzler's most valuable literary (and psychological) contributions was to intertwine the dream with social critique, transcending the solipsistic emphasis on self-perception evident in the other dream texts analysed so far. He perfected this technique in his late works, as exemplified by the three novellas considered in this chapter: *Casanovas Heimfahrt* (1918), *Fräulein Else* (1924) and *Traumnovelle* (1926).

#### 1. Schnitzler's Analyst Within

Arthur Schnitzler (1862-1931) treated the literary dream as an art form in itself, experimenting with its narrative uses over several decades of creative work. These experiments were informed and enriched through observation of his own dreams, which filled hundreds of pages in the diaries he kept from 1879 to 1931.<sup>3</sup> In addition

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Renate Wagner, *Wie ein weites Land: Arthur Schnitzler und seine Zeit* (Vienna: Amalthea, 2006), pp. 38-39.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick J. Beharriell, 'Schnitzler's Anticipation of Freud's Dream Theory', *Monatshefte*, 45 (1953), 81-89.

<sup>3</sup> Arthur Schnitzler, *Tagebuch: 1879-1931*, ed. Werner Welzig *et al.*, 10 vols (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981-2000). Referenced as TB-Schnitzler.

to illuminating possible biographical connections, the diaries also confirm that Schnitzler, like the other authors in this study, filtered his conception of dreaming, and his approach to literary dreams, through his extra-literary interests: in this case, his training as a physician. If Meyrink saw the dream through the eyes of an occultist, and Kubin from an artist's perspective, then Schnitzler contributed a specifically medical gaze, with closest parallels to Musil's scientific-technological approach.

In *Jugend in Wien* (1920), Schnitzler notes that, as a child, he already kept an Egyptian dream book alongside his poetic efforts.<sup>4</sup> But an interest in dreams and poetry was not entirely welcome in the ambitious bourgeois atmosphere of Schnitzler's upbringing, where 'die Meinung der Welt höher gewertet wurde als die Selbsterkenntnis'.<sup>5</sup> His father, a prominent laryngologist and quintessential (Jewish) *pater familias*, embodied conventional social success much like the fathers of Musil, Kubin and Kafka. His mother remains nearly invisible in the autobiography; Schnitzler claims that, 'in all ihrer hausfraulichen Tüchtigkeit und Übergeschäftigkeit', she moulded herself to her husband's life 'bis zur Selbstentäußerung'.<sup>6</sup> This first model of feminine self-denial may well have stimulated Schnitzler's literary curiosity about the private lives and dreams of women. In any case, the young Schnitzler began by following in his father's footsteps and was torn, like Musil, between *wissenschaftlich* and literary ambitions. For both writers, the tension proved fruitful: scientific training exposed them to the most modern epistemological concerns, and contributed to a literary style of precise observation and description. In Schnitzler's case, the medical profession also supplied a great deal of material. Schnitzler, a working doctor by 1886, wrote numerous medical reviews anticipating his future fictional interests in hypnotism, telepathy and psychotherapy.<sup>7</sup> His first literary publications appeared in Viennese periodicals towards the end of the 1880s, and he was associated with the literary stars of the *Jung-Wien* group that met in Vienna's Café Griensteidl from 1890 until 1897.

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<sup>4</sup> Arthur Schnitzler, *Jugend in Wien: Eine Autobiographie*, ed. Therese Nickl and Heinrich Schnitzler (Vienna: Molden, 1968), p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>7</sup> He contributed to both the *Wiener Medizinische Rundschau* and the *Internationale klinische Rundschau*, of which he was briefly editor.

The themes of ‘Liebe, Spiel und Tod’ in private life, already evident in ‘Frühlingsnacht im Sezierraum’, continued to pervade Schnitzler’s work until his death in 1931, notwithstanding a World War and the collapse of an Empire. As a writer Schnitzler never truly engaged with the post-1914 world.<sup>8</sup> Instead, like Musil, he pursued an obsessive post-mortem analysis of the *fin-de-siècle* society that had produced the new, destabilised and dissatisfied *Ich* of his generation. He was interested in exploring the implications of this subjectivity for perception, self-determination and (moral) interactions with others. For Schnitzler, the ‘other’ was often ‘woman’. Schnitzler based his female characters on the traits of present and former lovers and acquaintances, taking each woman’s story as a means of exploring particular social and moral dilemmas.<sup>9</sup> The autobiographical basis of his work can be confirmed through the published diaries. These form a vast collection that Schnitzler intended as a public document, and for which he made even greater provision than for his own funeral.<sup>10</sup> His diary (like Musil’s) was in itself a Modernist project. It was an exploration of the dismantled self by a believer in the scientific rigor of documentation, who also considered that his private life offered a revelatory testimony of an era.

The diaries give insights into Schnitzler’s relationship with Freud, which has been the subject of special scrutiny ever since the publication (in 1955) of Freud’s 1922 birthday letter to Schnitzler. The letter contains an admission (which appears to Freud almost as ‘zu intim’) that he has so far avoided direct contact with Schnitzler out of ‘Doppelgängerscheu’:

So habe ich den Eindruck gewonnen, daß Sie durch Intuition – eigentlich aber in Folge feiner Selbstwahrnehmung – alles das wissen, was ich in mühseliger Arbeit an anderen Menschen aufgedeckt habe. Ja ich glaube, im Grunde Ihres Wesens sind sie ein psychologischer Tiefenforscher [...].<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Martin Swales, ‘Schnitzler Revisited’, in Ian Foster and Florian Krobb (eds), *Arthur Schnitzler: Zeitgenossenchaften/Contemporaneities* (Bern; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2002), pp. 19-31 (p. 30).

<sup>9</sup> Renate Wagner, *Frauen um Arthur Schnitzler* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1983), p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> Andrew C. Wisely, *Schnitzler and Twentieth-Century Criticism* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2004), pp. 145, 156.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Sigmund Freud: Briefe an Arthur Schnitzler’, ed. Heinrich Schnitzler, *Die Neue Rundschau*, 66 (1955), 95-106 (p. 97).

Schnitzler and Freud met formally thereafter, at Freud's invitation. Schnitzler described Freud as 'sehr herzlich'; Freud gave him a new edition of his *Vorlesungen*, and they took a late-evening walk together to discuss ageing and dying (TB-Schnitzler 16.VI.22). But Schnitzler, ever a proud and independent thinker, refused the temptation of self-disclosure: 'ich verspüre eine gewisse Lust, über allerlei Untiefen meines Schaffens (und Daseins) mich mit ihm zu unterhalten – was ich aber lieber unterlassen will' (TB-Schnitzler 16.VIII.22). Largely due to his reluctance, the two men never established a close relationship.<sup>12</sup>

Part of the difficulty of analysing the mutual influences between Freud and Schnitzler arises from the sheer over-determination of their shared social and intellectual milieu. They had in common their generation, their Jewish-Austrian patriarchal upbringing (both coming from families that partly originated outside Austria), and overlapping interests in medicine and art. They were trained under some of the same professors in the same medical domains. As a practising doctor, Schnitzler had direct access to the scientific and psychiatric dilemmas that also stimulated Freud, and he later kept up-to-date with developing theories, remaining in personal contact with thinkers such as Lou Andreas-Salomé and Theodor Reik.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, Schnitzler maintained a constant scepticism towards the field of psychiatry in general. When Reik, one of Freud's first students, wrote an entire volume on *Schnitzler als Psycholog*, in 1913 (dedicated to Freud),<sup>14</sup> Schnitzler touchily responded by reminding Reik that he, Schnitzler, knew more about his own unconscious than Reik did; furthermore, he wrote, 'nach dem Dunkel der Seele gehen mehr Wege [...] als die Psychoanalytiker sich träumen (und traumdeuten) lassen'.<sup>15</sup> However, against this background, it seems clear that Schnitzler read Freud's works with special attention and respect. He read *Die Traumdeutung* in 1900, well before the surge in Freud's popularity (in the journal entry of 29.III.00, Schnitzler already analyses a dream using Freudian theory) and he continued to

<sup>12</sup> Wisely, *Schnitzler and Twentieth-Century Criticism*, p. 138.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Ulrich Weinzierl, *Arthur Schnitzler: Lieben, Träumen, Sterben* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1994), pp. 89-130.

<sup>14</sup> Theodor Reik, *Arthur Schnitzler als Psycholog* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1993).

<sup>15</sup> Arthur Schnitzler, *Briefe: 1913-1931*, ed. Peter Michael Braunwarth (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1984), pp. 35-36. Schnitzler also reacted with special vehemence to the works of Wilhelm Stekel, author of *Die Träume der Dichter. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung der unbewußten Triebkräfte bei Dichtern, Neurotikern und Verbrechern* (Wiesbaden: J.F. Bergmann, 1912), referring to him as a 'Größenwahnsinniger und Schwadronneur' (TB-Schnitzler 19.III.18).

follow Freud's publications. Tellingly, he even dreamed of Freud (trying to help him cope with the death of his daughter, cf. TB-Schnitzler 4.X.28).

However, it is equally clear that Schnitzler was never prepared to accept Freudian thought as a whole, and questioned the 'Determination' and the 'monomanisches' aspect that he perceived in some of Freud's views on dream symbolism (TB-Schnitzler 16.VIII.22). The intellectual tension between the two men was based on important differences of opinion regarding repressed urges, Eros and death, and the relationship of conscious to subconscious thought processes. In his birthday letter, Freud wrote that what united them was their 'Determinismus' and 'Skepsis - was die Leute Pessimismus heißen', but Mark Luprecht argues that Freud generally overestimated both his own scepticism and Schnitzler's determinism.<sup>16</sup> This would seem to be the logical consequence, or symptom, of the fork in the path where Freud chose science and Schnitzler turned to art. Freud's project required an element of determinism for the creation of new systems and theories. Schnitzler, however, was wary of any hint of dogma or systematisation.<sup>17</sup> As a writer he was interested in the implications of deterministic thinking, but ultimately he had to reject determinism as a mortal threat to the potency and autonomy of the creative self, and to the very concept of responsibility implied in free will.<sup>18</sup>

Schnitzler's confidence in his intellectual autonomy had a basis in his own medical and psychological experience. Like the young Freud, he had actively experimented with hypnosis. His only independent essay was 'Über funktionelle Aphonie und deren Behandlung durch Hypnose und Suggestion'.<sup>19</sup> As I have mentioned earlier, it is striking to note how frequently hypnosis and hypnotic states appear alongside the dream in the works included in this thesis. To some extent, hypnosis can be considered an externally guided dream. It is a potential means for the frustrated

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<sup>16</sup> Mark Luprecht, *What People Call Pessimism: Sigmund Freud, Arthur Schnitzler and Nineteenth-Century Controversy at the University of Vienna Medical School* (Riverside, CA: Ariadne Press, 1991), p. 146.

<sup>17</sup> Schnitzler's *Aphorismen und Betrachtungen* (*Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 3, 1967) opens with the statement 'Dieses Buch will keine Systeme, keine Weltanschauungen, keine Erledigungen bringen' (p. 7).

<sup>18</sup> 'Ohne die Annahme eines freien Willens wären wir genötigt, alle unsere ethischen Begriffe von Schuld und Sühne, Güte und Bösheit, Bedeutung und Nichtigkeit aufzugeben [...] Jede Idee der Verantwortung wäre aus der Welt geschafft'. Schnitzler, *Aphorismen und Betrachtungen*, p. 30.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Arthur Schnitzler, *Medizinische Schriften*, ed. Horst Thomé (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1988).

observer to circumvent the elusiveness of the other's dream experience, and to finally access and control the foreign subconscious. Hypnosis therefore crystallises the ethical dilemmas associated with the 'therapeutic nihilism' of the Second Viennese Medical School, well documented by Mark Luprecht.<sup>20</sup> This concerned the basic uncertainty about whether new medical techniques actually helped patients or merely served the inquisitiveness of the physician, who might, at worst, act abusively. In *Törleß*, the hypnosis of Basini is portrayed as an act of sadomasochistic torture. Musil unveils the potential violence of hypnosis, as a form of psychic rape in which the male gaze penetrates the depths of the female, or feminised, mind. The theme of abuse also appears in *Der Golem*, which suggests that Pernath's life memories have been erased through the medical sorcery of hypnosis. And in *Die andere Seite*, the totalitarian ruler, Patera, is presented as a *Massenhypnotiseur*, capable of manipulating and destroying his pliant subjects through direct psychic control.

Schnitzler introduced hypnosis into several early works, and also thematised the potential for abuse. In the famous first scene of *Anatol* (1893), for instance, the protagonist hypnotises his lover in order to find out if she has been unfaithful, but some inner compunction prevents him from posing the question. As a physician, Schnitzler turned away from hypnosis after his early medical experiments. Although fascinated by the intimate power he wielded over his subjects, he was also disturbed by the damage it apparently caused them: 'gerade meine interessantesten Medien [wurden] durch die Wiederholung der Versuche nicht nur in ihrer Willenskraft, sondern auch in ihrer körperlichen Gesundheit geschädigt'.<sup>21</sup> Freud, who trained under the famous hypnosis expert Charcot, also shifted towards alternative techniques for accessing the subconscious, including dream interpretation. In many ways, his new free association methods resembled an adaptation of hypnosis. In *Die Traumdeutung* he wrote, '[w]ie man sieht, handelt es sich darum, einen psychischen Zustand herzustellen, der mit dem vor dem Einschlafen (und sicherlich auch mit dem hypnotischen) eine gewisse Analogie in der Verteilung der psychischen Energie (der beweglichen Aufmerksamkeit) gemein hat'.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. Luprecht, *What People Call Pessimism*.

<sup>21</sup> Schnitzler, *Jugend in Wien*, p. 319.

<sup>22</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Die Traumdeutung*, in *Gesammelte Werke chronologisch geordnet*, ed. Anna Freud (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1940-1952), vol. 2/3: *Die Traumdeutung; Über den Traum* (1942), pp. 1-642 (p. 106). Referenced as TD.

But despite the similarities with hypnosis, Freud's move towards dream interpretation around 1900 was a methodological shift with serious interpretive implications. During hypnosis, the subject ostensibly comes under the control of the hypnotist's gaze and will; in a sense, the hypnotist appropriates the lines of communication between the subject's conscious and unconscious. In the case of dream interpretation, however, the subject is the only person able to narrate the dream in the first place. She is inescapably the author of her own dream narrative, and interpretive control must be negotiated between subject and psychoanalyst, paralleling the tension between author and critic in textual analysis. Dream interpretation is therefore a subtler form of psychic penetration, although in Freud's original model it was still largely dominated by the (male) analyst's gaze.

Schnitzler's extensive *Traumaufzeichnungen* in the diaries (and his irritable response to Theodor Reik) show that he felt authorised to act as his own analyst. This was part of his anti-deterministic reassertion of the dreamer-creator's interpretive control, which was both epistemological (the dreamer knows best) and ethical (the dreamer is responsible).<sup>23</sup> The *Traumaufzeichnungen* are frequently (not always) accompanied by interpretative comments. Sometimes Schnitzler explicitly suggests a Freudian perspective, although without confirming his acceptance (for example, 'Die Freud-Schule könnte dies als einen verkappten Selbstmordwunschtraum deuten', 9.IV.13). At other places in the diary dreams, 'Freudian' effects can be naturally observed. For instance, Schnitzler's conflation of his son Heinrich and his brother Julius (cf. 6.I.23 and 26.I.23) exemplifies the Freudian *Mischfigur*, a type of *Verdichtung*, or dream condensation. Examples of wish fulfilment, displacement, sexual symbolism and 'day-residue' (*Tagesreste*) can also be identified. As Michaela Perlmann notes, the dream entries became more frequent when Schnitzler was reading dream theory material, for instance during his reception of Freud's works in 1900, 1903/04 and 1911, and during his interactions with Reik in 1912/13; the high point for dream

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<sup>23</sup> Even quantitative dream researchers admit that the study of dream texts by 'outside judges' is not always ideal, as 'it is the dreamer, after all, who has the most direct access to all aspects of the dream experience'. Cf. Inge Strauch and Barbara Meier, *In Search of Dreams: Results of Experimental Dream Research* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996), p. 50.

entries was 1922/23, when he was working on *Fräulein Else* und *Traumnovelle*.<sup>24</sup> Schnitzler's own fictional work sometimes penetrated his dream life. All three of the main texts examined here, for instance, made appearances in his dreams. Inversely, it seems likely that Schnitzler's writing drew on themes and motifs from his own dream-life, although he did not transpose whole dreams to his fiction.

The dreams recorded in the diary illuminate the differences between Schnitzlerian and Freudian psychological theories. For instance, Schnitzler, unlike Freud, never dismissed physical stimuli as a source of dream material, nor did he agree with the idea that all dreams had infantile roots or were based purely on sexual drives.<sup>25</sup> Just as importantly, Schnitzler and Freud employed differing metaphorical models of the psyche. Freud's early conception was largely dualistic, setting *das Bewusste* against *das Unbewusste*. He did describe a preconscious, *das Vorbewusste*, but labelled it a different type of unconscious ('Es gibt also zweierlei Unbewußtes') and argued that it acted 'wie ein Schirm zwischen dem System Ubw und dem Bewußtsein' (TD 619-20).

Schnitzler, on the other hand, introduced the concept of *Mittelbewusstsein*, or the middle conscious, into his diary in 1915, and elaborated the idea in later years. This notion involves a shift of emphasis that is already evident linguistically: compared to the screen-like *preconscious*, acting as a thin border to protect the unconscious, *Mittelbewusstsein* implies a positive central space within a full three-tiered model. Schnitzler felt the Freudian approach neglected this crucial middle layer, which he described as follows:

Es ist das ungeheuerste Gebiet des Seelen- und Geisteslebens; von da aus steigen die Elemente ununterbrochen ins Bewußte auf oder sinken ins Unbewußte hinab. Das Mittelbewußtsein steht ununterbrochen zur Verfügung [...] verhält sich zum Unterbewußtsein wie der Schlummer zum Scheintod [...] Die Psychoanalyse wirkt viel öfter auf das Mittelbewußtsein als (wie sie glaubt) auf das Unterbewußtsein.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Michaela L. Perlmann, *Der Traum in der literarischen Moderne: Untersuchungen zum Werk Arthur Schnitzlers* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1987), pp. 24-25.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>26</sup> Arthur Schnitzler, 'Über Psychoanalyse', ed. Reinhard Urbach, in *Protokolle*, 2 (1976), pp. 277-84 (p. 283).



Freud later partly covered this gap with the three-layered model of the *Es/Ich/Über-Ich* in *Jenseits des Lustprinzips* (1920) and *Das Ich und das Es* (1923). However, Schnitzler regarded this trilogy as a clever but artificial metaphor, and adhered to his belief in a psychologically functioning middle conscious. For Schnitzler, this mental region, which he also labelled *das Halbbewusste*, was central to the writer's task: 'Die Begrenzungen zwischen Bewußtem, Halbbewußtem und Unbewußtem so scharf zu ziehen, als es überhaupt möglich ist, darin wird die Kunst des Dichters vor allem bestehen'.<sup>27</sup> This zone represents a variety of *Halbschlaf* that is closer to waking thought, but which also offers the 'Plastizität der Wünsche' found in half-sleep.<sup>28</sup> Schnitzler's texts often carefully follow the middle conscious of a single character, detailing his or her psychic reactions. Middle consciousness acts as the site of ethical and self-determining responsibility, where characters must confront their own subconscious material *without* the help of a Freudian analyst-interpreter-guide. This aspect is crucial to Schnitzler's use of social critique, because, as noted by Felix Tweraser, 'for Schnitzler, the fracture of the ego and the consequential inability of the individual to engage in socially responsible activity are functions of a fundamental imbalance in the *Mittelbewusstsein*'.<sup>29</sup>

Freud and Schnitzler did agree on the unconscious nature of the dream. For Schnitzler, middle consciousness is asleep in the dream.<sup>30</sup> However, dream *interpretation*, which is inherently linguistic, takes place in middle consciousness. Schnitzler's literary dreams are therefore like evidence presented simultaneously to the reader and the dreaming character. This allows the reader to evaluate the character's talents of self-analysis independently. Does the character remember or repress the dream material? How honest and incisive is the interpretation? And how does this interpretation affect his or her actions? The dream represents an epistemological opportunity for which the dreamer alone can take responsibility, acting through middle consciousness.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> *Aphorismen und Betrachtungen*, p. 455.

<sup>28</sup> Joachim Kalka, 'Der Halbschlaf: Poetik einer ungewissen Zone', *Neue Rundschau*, 113/3 (2002), 16-27 (p. 16).

<sup>29</sup> Felix Tweraser, 'Schnitzler's Turn to Prose Fiction: The Depiction of Consciousness in Selected Narratives', in Dagmar C. G. Lorenz (ed.), *A Companion to the Works of Arthur Schnitzler* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2003), pp. 149-86 (p. 153).

<sup>30</sup> *Aphorismen und Betrachtungen*, p. 74.

<sup>31</sup> Karin Tebben, in a reading of 'Die Toten Schweigen' (1897) as dream text, similarly argues that the text's protagonist, Emma, is called to resolve her untenable situation (and thus to admit her infidelity)

Schnitzler's early literary dreams touched on the borders of para-science, including telepathy ('Das Tagebuch der Redegonda') and prophesy ('Die Weissagung'), thus entering the same territory covered by Meyrink.<sup>32</sup> Although Schnitzler, not surprisingly, remained a sceptic in this regard, his *Medizinische Schriften* confirm that such topics were then still seriously debated by the scientific community. Meanwhile, Schnitzler's exploration of wish fulfilment in dreams certainly predated Freud, as in 'Frühlingsnacht im Seziersaal'. But Perlmann has argued that a dramatic change took place in Schnitzler's literary dreams with the 1900 text *Frau Berta Garlan*.<sup>33</sup> In Berta Garlan's dream, Schnitzler introduces the widow's erotic wishes (her yearning for a long-lost lover) before she has yet gained conscious awareness of them. This dream features all the essential aspects of Freud's *Traumdeutung*: distortion, condensation, displacement, the metaphorical representation of abstract concepts, symbolism and secondary elaboration, leading Perlmann to speculate that it might represent the only direct fictional reaction to Freud around 1900.<sup>34</sup> As she notes, this type of literary dream requires great analytical interest from the reader, who is called upon to form an independent picture of the character's psychic status and motivation: 'Was für den Träumer selbst wirr und unverständlich bleibt [...] liegt als ein ausgedehntes Ganzes vor dem Leser'.<sup>35</sup> This interplay of subjective and objective viewpoints creates a particularly complex text.

Although 'Freudian' effects can also be identified in Schnitzler's later writings, he diverged from Freud over time, as his own ideas solidified and he continued to experiment with the literary dream. Overall, he seemed unwilling to accept the limited range of dream motivations in Freudian theory, and preferred to look beyond

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by heeding her dream insights: 'Schnitzler [stellt] das Subjekt in eine Entscheidungssituation, in der es die Möglichkeiten seines Handelns durchdenkt und sinnvoll beurteilt – im Traum, der die Wahrheit der Gefühle greifbar macht im Bild'. Tebben also notes the importance, in this process, of the 'Mittelbewusstsein, das mit Unbewusstem angereichert ins Bewusstsein dringt'. Cf. Karin Tebben, "'Traum wird Leben, Leben Traum': Arthur Schnitzler's *Die Toten Schweigen* (1897)", in Matthias Luserke-Jaqui and Rosmarie Zeller (eds), *Musil-Forum*, 27 (2003), 103-118 (pp. 116-17).

<sup>32</sup> In Schnitzler's work, the supernatural aspects of these techniques overlap with, and are increasingly replaced by, a more naturalistic emphasis on intuition and internal motivations. Theodor Alexander notes, for instance, that *Fräulein Else* still contains traces of 'telepathy', but it is used to demonstrate 'how an emotionally distraught person may feel he has certain telepathic powers'. Cf. Theodor W. Alexander, 'From the Scientific to the Supernatural in Schnitzler', *The South Central Bulletin*, 31/4 (1971), 164-67 (p. 167).

<sup>33</sup> Perlmann, *Der Traum in der literarischen Moderne*, pp. 105, 107.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 106-7.

infantile roots, sexual fantasies and even the basic assumption of dreaming as wish fulfilment. Rather, as Perlmann argues, by the time Schnitzler wrote *Casanovas Heimfahrt*, during the First World War, he was more interested in the *failed* wish dream, which turns into a nightmare or *Angsttraum*.<sup>36</sup> The case studies in this chapter come from this mature and independent period, when Schnitzler's literary dreams had acquired greater powers of social critique.

## 2. *Casanova: The Dream of a Narcissist*

*Casanovas Heimfahrt* recounts the imagined last seduction of an aging, exiled Casanova.<sup>37</sup> He tricks the virtuous young Marcolina into bed by concealing his identity, then kills her lover, Lorenzi, in a naked duel and flees to Venice, where death at last catches up with him. As so often in Schnitzler's work, it is feasible to speculate on a biographical link, given the similar ages of the author and protagonist in this case, and their shared history of sexual conquest. Schnitzler's choice of this historical material during the war years seems, on the surface, to avoid pressing social themes. However, Schnitzler's unit of measurement was the individual, and where he depicted social concerns, these were filtered through psychology. The Casanova figure, by way of his quasi-legendary status and his idealised historical setting, demands an even more allegorical reading than would be appropriate for most of Schnitzler's earlier prose. Taking Casanova as a symbol, the novella can be read as a timely portrayal of decline, destruction and death: a defeated farewell to an entire social world. Casanova never succeeds in coming 'home' to Venice, because he discovers that the Venice of his youth – a world of brilliance and seductive splendour – has vanished forever, like the Vienna of Schnitzler's youth. In this light, the fear of aging that is one of the novella's main themes also represents a fear of social decline. The violence of war, and the battle between old and new, are symbolised by the fencing duel that concludes the novella's main action.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 163-64.

<sup>37</sup> Arthur Schnitzler, *Casanovas Heimfahrt*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Reinhard Urbach and Robert O. Weiss (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1961), vol. 2: *Die Erzählenden Schriften*, pp. 231-323. Referenced as *Casanova*.

<sup>38</sup> Schnitzler's diary reveals the juxtaposition of the Casanova material with wartime concerns during this period, even in Schnitzler's dreams. See, for example, the entry of 10.I.15.

Encountered against the backdrop of the author's earlier works, Casanova emerges as the archetype of a long-standing Schnitzlerian character. In his previous incarnations, such as Anatol, or, in more nuanced form, as Georg in *Der Weg ins Freie*, he is depicted as the quintessential Viennese *Lebemann* and seducer, representative of the 'Impressionist generation'. In Schnitzler's earlier work, this figure stands at the border of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, on the threshold of Modernism, as he hesitates between hero and anti-hero status. He is dashing, witty and attractive, but also hypocritical, petty and morally dubious – and as such, representative of his society. It is therefore crucial and telling when he crosses over into full anti-hero status in *Casanovas Heimfahrt*, where he is unveiled as heartless, violent and decrepit. Casanova's condemnation comes not through failure (for Casanova insists on 'winning', by seducing and killing, at any cost) but through a growing self-awareness of physical and moral ugliness, leading to disillusionment with the self.

Anatol (light-hearted), Georg (ambivalent) and Casanova (cruel) are all united by their narcissism – by an egocentrism bordering on amorality, rather than immorality.<sup>39</sup> Fascination with this trait was part of the intellectual inheritance of the *fin-de-siècle* generation. The popularity of the narcissism idea emerged alongside interest in dreams at the end of the nineteenth century, with works such as Gide's *Traité du Narcisse* (1891) and Oscar Wilde's *Dorian Gray* (1891).<sup>40</sup> The English sexologist Havelock Ellis (whom Schnitzler also read) was the first to use the term 'narcissus-like', and the concept was current in German-speaking psychological circles (Paul Näcke, Otto Rank) long before Freud published his 1914 essay 'Zur Einführung des Narzissmus'. In that essay, Freud posits the existence of two types of narcissism. Primary narcissism is a natural part of the child's development, but its

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<sup>39</sup> The (im)morality of Schnitzler's work has been much debated, not least in the context of various obscenity-related court cases. *Casanovas Heimfahrt* was the subject of such a case in the US in 1924. Martin Swales, however, argued that Schnitzler was in fact 'a profound and genuine moralist', albeit mostly in a critical sense, interested in exposing the 'utter triviality, the repetitive, mechanical quality of the lives of the characters involved'. Cf. Martin Swales, 'Arthur Schnitzler as a Moralist', *Modern Language Review*, 62/3 (1967), 462-75 (pp. 470-71).

<sup>40</sup> As Michael Kane notes, several of Hofmannsthal's works (such as *Der Tod des Tizian*, 1892, and *Das Märchen der 672. Nacht*, 1895) are also concerned with the death of Narcissus-like figures, 'in an attempt to overcome the very aestheticism and Decadence with which [Hofmannsthal] is associated'. Cf. Michael Kane, *Modern Men: Mapping Masculinity in English and German literature, 1880-1930* (London: Continuum, 1999), p. 72. See, in particular, Part II, Chapter 5, 'The Deaths of Narcissus: Hofmannsthal', pp. 71-85.

secondary form is a pathological manifestation in adults who withdraw their libido from external objects, making them incapable of love. Freud associates narcissism not only with children, but also with 'primitive' peoples and women, and claims that we naturally become more narcissistic when ill, and when sleeping and dreaming:

Ähnlich wie die Krankheit bedeutet auch der Schlafzustand ein narzißtisches Zurückziehen der Libidopositionen auf die eigene Person, des genaueren, auf den einen Wunsch zu schlafen. Der Egoismus der Träume fügt sich wohl in diesen Zusammenhang ein. In beiden Fällen sehen wir, wenn auch nichts anderes, Beispiele von Veränderungen der Libidoverteilung infolge von Ichveränderung.<sup>41</sup>

Freud also writes in *Die Traumdeutung* that 'Träume sind absolut egoistisch' and that other people who appear in dreams are projections of the dreamer's self (TD 327-28). In 'Der Dichter und das Phantasieren', he associates the new 'psychological' writing with a particularly egoistic position: 'Noch in vielen der sogenannten psychologischen Romane ist mir aufgefallen, daß nur eine Person, wiederum der Held, von innen geschildert wird; in ihrer Seele sitzt gleichsam der Dichter und schaut die anderen Personen von außen an'.<sup>42</sup>

Increased narcissism can be seen as an inevitable result of the intense self-observation required by the new psychology, in particular psychoanalysis.<sup>43</sup> The microcosm of the self became a vast universe to be explored. The new gaze might have been deep, but it was narrow: to an unprecedented extent, the individual psyche swelled up and blotted out the social domain. The knowledge gains from intensive self-scrutiny were many, but came at the risk of a subjectivist psychosis, in which external reality would be filtered entirely through the individual's mind. In this context, Freud's published analyses of his own dreams, like the diaries left behind by Schnitzler and Musil, are also a hallmark of the narcissistic age: all three men used

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<sup>41</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'Zur Einführung des Narcissmus', in *Gesammelte Werke chronologisch geordnet*, ed. Anna Freud (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1946), vol. 10: *Werke aus den Jahren 1913-1917*, pp. 138-70 (p. 149).

<sup>42</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'Der Dichter und das Phantasieren', in *Gesammelte Werke chronologisch geordnet*, ed. Anna Freud (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1941), vol. 7: *Werke aus den Jahren 1906-1909*, pp. 213-23 (pp. 220-21).

<sup>43</sup> Peter Heller argues that Freud himself, despite his 'self-critical awareness of narcissism', nonetheless participated, 'as creator of his own quasi-mythical stature', in the phenomenon of 'collective narcissism' surrounding him. Cf. "'Narcissism" in Thomas Mann's Goethe Novel', in Jeffrey Adams and Eric Williams (eds), *Mimetic Desire: Essays on Narcissism in German Literature from Romanticism to Post-Modernism* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 1995), pp. 119-42 (p. 122).

their own minds as a testing ground for hypotheses about the human psyche, to revolutionary effect. Schnitzler's literary approach was uniquely suited to exploring this phenomenon. As Bruce Thompson argues, his main characters are 'isolated figures, preoccupied with private emotions, and the world depicted is a limited one, perceived from their own narrow, tortured viewpoint'.<sup>44</sup> In much of Schnitzler's oeuvre, this is part of a project of self-discovery and personal productivity, akin to Törleß's investigation of processes in his brain. The idea of narcissism can be positively associated with creativity and eroticism, as in Lou Andreas-Salomé's essay 'Narzissmus als Doppelrichtung', which appeared in *Imago* in 1921 (vol. 7.4, pp. 361-86).<sup>45</sup> However, Schnitzler's later work, in particular, began to explore the negative moral and social consequences of a narcissistic worldview.<sup>46</sup>

*Casanovas Heimfahrt* is particularly useful for illuminating the close but uneasy relationship between narcissism and dreaming, two parallel *Hauptthemen* of the early twentieth century. Superficially, the interest in dreaming seems merely another aspect of the reflexivity underlying psychoanalysis and literary Modernism. However, because the dream belongs to a self that is not coincident with the ego, it acts as a narcissistic threat.<sup>47</sup> The narcissist is fascinated by the dreams he produces, but terrified by their autonomy. The dream's unpredictability and ruthlessness in exposing the fears and desires denied by the ego means that it can act as substitute for an external or higher power capable of passing judgement (a function also stressed in Kafka's works). The Freudian dream censor can be seen as a way of circumventing this narcissistic threat, but Schnitzler, like Jung and others, believed

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<sup>44</sup> Bruce Thompson, *Schnitzler's Vienna: Image of a Society* (London; New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 32.

<sup>45</sup> See Karla Schultz on Salomé's vision of a productive, libidinous narcissism that is not bound up with Freud's ideas of 'bad' self-love in women. Cf. 'In Defense of Narcissus: Lou Andreas-Salomé and Julia Kristeva', *The German Quarterly*, 67/2 (1994), 185-96.

<sup>46</sup> The value and the limits of narcissism are also addressed in Rilke's 'Narziss' poems (1913). Cf. Rainer Maria Rilke, *Werke*, vol. 2: *Gedichte: 1910 bis 1926*, ed. Manfred Engel and Ulrich Fülleborn (Frankfurt am Main/Leipzig: Insel, 1996), pp. 55-56. Erika Nelson argues that Rilke's 'image of Narcissus encompassed his own doubt and fear as to the true essence of art', particularly fears of superficiality and one-sidedness. See Erika M. Nelson, *Reading Rilke's Orphic Identity* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005), pp. 152-53.

<sup>47</sup> As Bert O. States notes, 'the ego may be better thought of as an *audience* to the dream than as its instigator'. Cf. *Seeing in the Dark: Reflections on Dreams and Dreaming* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 22.

that more attention should be paid to the ‘manifest’ dream contents, that is, to the dream’s direct and unequivocal message.<sup>48</sup>

For the narcissistic character, then, the best metaphor for the dream is the mirror. The dream is the inescapable mirror *within*, capable of delivering a damning self-judgement. *Casanovas Heimfahrt* makes this comparison explicit by including a mirror scene. Casanova’s greatest fear is age, an insult that he feels is beneath him: ‘Und da ich Casanova bin, warum sollte an mir das klägliche Gesetz nicht zuschanden werden, dem andre unterworfen sind und das Altern heißt!’ (*Casanova* 305). But the mirror shows him the old man he has become (‘ein bleiches, altes Gesicht’) and causes a spasm of self-mockery, reducing him, in ‘selbstquälerischer Lust’ (274), to childlike behaviour that could suggest a regression to infantile roots.<sup>49</sup>

But Casanova also faces mirrors in human form. Another, potentially more flattering mirror, is presented by his former lover Amalia, who, although scorned by Casanova, is still in love with him and therefore retains an idealised image of his youth and desirability: ‘Ich sehe dich,’ she tells him, ‘wie du damals warst. Wie ich dich seither immer, auch in meinen Träumen, sah’ (247-48). The first dream described in the novella is Amalia’s dream about Casanova, which she recounts publicly, at his request. On the surface, this dream reflects her idealised vision, as if specifically intended to please her listener, but read more closely, it reveals traces of mockery, insight and forewarning, apparently unperceived by Casanova.

Amalia’s dream (*Casanova* 277-78) depicts Casanova dressed in brilliant white and gold ‘Staatsgewand’, wearing an expensive watch (symbol of time and aging) and arriving, almost godlike, in a carriage driven by six horses. Casanova appears, she says, ‘jung, ganz jung, noch jünger, als Sie damals gewesen sind’. Meanwhile, his

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<sup>48</sup> Wisely, *Schnitzler and Twentieth-Century Criticism*, p. 140.

<sup>49</sup> In *Also sprach Zarathustra*, Zarathustra dreams of a mirror in which he sees a horrifying reflection of himself: ‘als ich in den Spiegel schaute, da schrie ich auf, und mein Herz war erschüttert: denn nicht mich sahe ich darin, sondern eines Teufels Fratze und Hohnlachen’. He takes the dream as a sign and warning (‘Zeichen und Mahnung’) that his teachings have been distorted. Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 30 vols (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1975-1984), vol. 4/1: *Also sprach Zarathustra: Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen* [1883-1885] (1968), pp. 101-2.

young rival Lorenzi is depicted as old and impoverished: 'Ein alter, bettelhaft aussehender Mann'. But notes of anxiety can be distinguished: 'die Pferde scheuten und [rasten] mit dem Wagen [davon]. Nun hörte ich ein Geschrei aus Nebengassen, wie von Menschen, die sich zu retten suchen'. The dream-Casanova enters an imposing building that Amalia describes as a *Spielhaus* (gambling being one of Schnitzler's favourite fate motifs). Casanova climbs ever higher in the building, as if to symbolise his social success, but he interacts with non-existent people: 'von überall grüßten Sie herunter und sprachen mit Menschen, die hinter Ihnen standen, aber doch eigentlich gar nicht da waren'. This suggests the madness and isolation of self-obsession.

Perhaps most tellingly, Amalia does not *finish* her dream story: she ends with the image of Lorenzi pursuing Casanova up the stairs, in an anticipation of their confrontation at the end of the novella. Amalia claims to have forgotten the rest of her dream. It is impossible to know if she truly forgets (which would indicate repression, according to Freud) or simply decides to leave it out. Her account illustrates the mystery and elusiveness of the narrated dream. Casanova, however, is merely disappointed, because he thinks that a dream should be told like a good story, with an aesthetic and interpretive value supplied by the narrator: 'an ihrer Stelle hätte er [...] der Erzählung eine Abrundung, einen Sinn zu geben versucht', and so he impatiently supplies the interpretation himself: 'Wie der Traum doch alles verkehrt. – Ich – als reicher Mann und Lorenzi als Bettler und alter Mann' (278). This interpretation is based on *Umkehrung*, in Freudian terms,<sup>50</sup> but it fails to recognise the signs of collapse and illusion in Amalia's account. Casanova's arrogance makes him insensitive to these nuances.

This narrated dream is soon complemented by Casanova's own dream (*Casanova* 308-10), which occurs in Marcolina's bed, immediately after Casanova's conquest but before his true identity has been revealed to her. The entry to his dream is subtle, being immediately preceded by a description of his ecstatic, half-dreaming state, in which he believes he has attained an immortal mystical union with

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<sup>50</sup> As Freud describes it, '[d]ie Umkehrung, Verwandlung ins Gegenteil [...ist...] eines der beliebtesten, der vielseitigsten Verwendung fähigen Darstellungsmittel der Traumarbeit'. He believed that homosexual urges were frequently betrayed by this operation (TD 332).



Marcolina. This state of union, not unlike that depicted more symbolically between Pernath and Miriam in *Der Golem*, here propels Casanova into narcissistic delirium: ‘War an diesen Lippen nicht Leben und Sterben, Zeit und Ewigkeit eines? War er nicht ein Gott –? Jugend und Alter nur eine Fabel, von Menschen erfunden?’ (307).

Casanova cannot, of course, abide the anonymity of this experience: ‘er träumte davon, daß Marcolina selbst, bebend, gebannt, erlöst ihm seinen Namen entgegenflüstern würde’ (308). This ‘träumte’ is Schnitzler’s hint that we are slipping into Casanova’s subconscious. The true transition is betrayed, however, by the verb forms:

er träumte davon, daß Marcolina selbst, bebend, gebannt, erlöst ihm seinen Namen entgegenflüstern würde [...] dann wollte er sie mit sich nehmen, sofort, in dieser selben Stunde noch [...] Er **glitt** mit ihr durch geheimnisvolle schmale Kanäle, zwischen Palästen hin, in deren Schatten er nun wieder heimisch war (308, emphasis mine)

This passage corresponds to Freud’s claim in *Die Traumdeutung* that the transition to the indicative mood is a regular law of dreaming.<sup>51</sup> This pattern is also noted by Perlmann for *Berta Garlan*.<sup>52</sup>

In an echo of Amalia’s earlier narrated dream, Casanova arrives at a mighty building, symbol of social power, again a sort of *Spielhaus*. In a moment of triumph, Casanova defeats the Venetian senators at the gambling table: ‘Er gewann, er gewann alles Gold, das auf dem Tische lag, das war aber zu wenig; die Senatoren [...] waren Bettler, sie krochen in Lumpen um ihn her, sie küßten ihm die Hände’. But in this moment he realises that Marcolina has vanished, and the entire dream mood changes from triumph to anxiety, from a rising to a falling action (as rapidly as the dream of K. in *Das Schloß*). Casanova suddenly realises that the senator’s gambling is about judgement: ‘daß es nicht Karten waren, sondern Angeklagte, Verbrecher und Unschuldige, um deren Schicksal es ging’. In vain he seeks his lover throughout Venice, ferried by a treacherous masked gondolier (who is later revealed to represent

<sup>51</sup> ‘Der Traum verdrängt den Optativ und ersetzt ihn durch ein simples Präsens’ (TD 539). The ‘Optativ’, although not the correct linguistic term, is here used by Freud in the sense of a conditional mood.

<sup>52</sup> Perlmann, *Der Traum in der literarischen Moderne*, p. 101.

Lorenzi). Venice now appears unfamiliar and overwhelming: ‘was für eine Riesenstadt war Venedig in diesen fünfundzwanzig Jahren geworden!’ He discovers that Marcolina has gone over to his intellectual rival, Voltaire. Humiliated, he is forced to swim in the canal and begins to float out to the anonymous and featureless sea, where his dream ends in drowning:

Und er schwamm davon [...] es wurde kalt und immer kälter, er trieb im offenen Meer [...] kein Schiff ringsum, seine schwere goldgestickte Gewandung zog ihn nach unten; er versuchte sich ihrer zu entledigen, doch es war unmöglich, da er sein Manuskript in der Hand hielt, das er Herrn Voltaire überreichen mußte, – er bekam Wasser in den Mund, in die Nase, Todesangst überfiel ihn, er griff um sich, er röchelte, er schrie und öffnete mühselig die Augen. (309-10)

This deathly sea, as symbol of the re-devouring womb, is reminiscent of the *Sumpfmutter* in Kubin’s *Die andere Seite*. Casanova’s death also recalls the Fat Man’s drowning in ‘Beschreibung eines Kampfes’.<sup>53</sup> Here, Casanova is submerged by his heavy clothing and his manuscript, symbols of material and intellectual vanity. The dream, which began like a transcendent Romantic vision, in a moment of mystical union with the beloved, has now deteriorated into an anxiety dream, anticipating Casanova’s downfall. It is precisely this dream structure, of bliss disintegrating into anxiety, which captures the retreat of the ‘long’ nineteenth century in Schnitzler’s work.<sup>54</sup> The larger, overwhelming Venice of Casanova’s dream emits the turmoil and anxiety of a twentieth-century city. The mystical lover and the *Heimat* drown along with Casanova’s illusion of the triumphant, conquering self.

Both dreams in this text, by Amalia and Casanova, serve to interrupt Casanova’s otherwise omnipotent waking voice. But if Casanova fails to heed the warning of Amalia’s dream, he cannot escape his own. Upon waking in physical terror, in full contrast to his previous ecstasy, Casanova finds that his greatest fear has indeed come true: he has ‘lost’ his lover, who – as honest a mirror as his own dreams – has

<sup>53</sup> Schnitzler objected to the Freudian interpretation of ‘Wasser- und Badträume’ as birth dreams, or at least he believed that it did not apply in all cases; cf. TB-Schnitzler 7.VII.22. The water in Casanova’s dream certainly seems to play a more deathly role, perhaps as anti-birth (as in Kubin’s novel).

<sup>54</sup> Freud himself described the demise of the Romantic dream: ‘Aussprüche, wie die von Schubert, daß der Traum eine Befreiung des Geistes von der Gewalt der äußeren Natur sei, eine Loslösung der Seele von den Fesseln der Sinnlichkeit [...] welche sämtlich den Traum als einen Aufschwung des Seelenlebens zu einer höheren Stufe darstellen, erscheinen uns heute kaum begreiflich; sie werden in der Gegenwart auch nur bei Mystikern und Frömmern wiederholt’ (TD 66).

recognised and rejected him, not out of fear, but out of disgust: ‘Und was er in Marcolinens Blick las, war [...] das Wort, das ihm von allen das furchtbarste war, da es sein endgültiges Urteil sprach: Alter Mann’ (310). Fleeing from this scene of judgement and humiliation, Casanova is intercepted by Marcolina’s young lover, Lorenzi, who challenges him to a nude fencing match, in a sexually charged twist on the duelling theme so important in Schnitzler’s work as symbolic of old social honour codes. In a moment of delayed dream interpretation, Casanova realises that the gondolier from his dream was really Lorenzi, his rival. The duel is not only a scene of blatant phallic symbolism, but also a metaphoric conflict between youth and age: ‘Eine Fabel ist Jugend und Alter, dachte er...Bin ich nicht ein Gott? Wir beide nicht Götter?’ (313). Casanova’s triumph over Lorenzi is tinged with eroticism: “‘Glücklicher’, sagte er vor sich hin, und, wie in traumhafter Benommenheit, küßte er den Ermordeten auf die Stirn’. This scene, along with its aura of *das Traumhafte*, joins the numerous eroticised battles between men encountered in other texts, particularly in ‘Beschreibung eines Kampfes’, *Das Schloß*, *Die andere Seite*, and *Törleß*.

This conflict is followed by the novella’s dénouement, in which Casanova undertakes his final *Heimfahrt* (to Venice and death) in an ongoing dreamlike mode. He falls into a deep sleep (‘in den tiefsten Schlaf seines Lebens’, p. 317) in which the lines between reality and dream begin to blur, and his impressions are flooded with *Umkehrungen*, inverting victor and vanquished:

So floß später die Erinnerung dieser zwei Tage und Nächte mit dem Traum zusammen, den er in Marcolinens Bett geträumt, und auch der Zweikampf der zwei nackten Menschen auf einem grünen Rasen im Frühsonnenschein gehörte irgendwie zu diesem Traum, in dem er manchmal in einer rätselhaften Weise nicht Casanova, sondern Lorenzi, nicht der Sieger, sondern der Gefallene, nicht der Entfliehende, sondern der Tote war, um dessen blassen Jünglingsleib einsamer Morgenwind spielte; und beide, er selbst und Lorenzi, waren nicht wirklicher als die Senatoren in den roten Purpurmänteln. (317-18)

Here Casanova is interpreting his experiences and dream insights through the medium of his *Mittelbewusstsein*, in the guise of the familiar *Halbtraum*. His ‘homecoming’ proves to him, as anticipated in the dream, that the Venice of his youth no longer exists. He learns that the young generation is given to new intrigues,

meeting as 'Freidenker und Umstürzler' in the cafés, and they hardly seem to recognise Casanova's name (321-22). Venice itself, like Meyrink's Prague or Kubin's Perle, appears as another version of the mournful *Traumstadt*: 'Der Himmel war trüb; Dunst lag auf den Lagunen; es roch nach faulem Wasser [...] Häuser rückten auseinander, wuchsen in die Höhe; Schiffe, größere und kleinere, tauchten aus dem Nebel' (CH 318). After a nocturnal walk through the city, '[m]it einer Art von schlafwandlerischer Sicherheit', he falls into bed 'um nach fünfundzwanzig Jahren der Verbannung den ersten, so lang ersehnten Heimatschlaf zu tun, der endlich, bei anbrechendem Morgen, traumlos und dumpf, sich des alten Abenteurers erbarmte' (322-23). As for K. in *Das Schloß*, the dreamless *Heimatschlaf* at last provides relief from the incessant war with his own psyche.

The problems of self-centred perception explored in *Casanova* are clearly echoed in the other works examined, where the (anti)heroes all feature narcissistic traits. That is, in Freudian terms, they have an exclusive libidinal attachment to their own person and *Schicksal*, most tellingly revealed through their inability to love. In *Die andere Seite*, after the elimination of the narrator's wife, he free-falls into reflexive isolation, eventually projecting his desires onto the monster-God Patera, the ultimate symbol of (creative) narcissism, and possibly a product of his own imagination. In *Der Golem*, love is never consummated except at the level of mystic symbolism, where narcissistic tendencies are again represented (as in Kubin) by the telling trope of the hermaphrodite. In Musil, meanwhile, all three torturers unabashedly objectify Basini, and Törleß's feelings rarely surpass curiosity about how others affect *him*. Finally, Kafka's writings, particularly 'Beschreibung eines Kampfes', describe how solipsism can develop into pathological self-torture. Kafka is also perhaps closest to Schnitzler in his conception of dreaming as a mirroring threat to the narcissistic self, for whom the only hope of escape is into dreamless sleep.

### 3. *Fräulein Else*: The Dream of a Victim

Schnitzler complemented his persistent interest in the dominant, narcissistic Casanova archetype by an equal fascination with (female) social victims, often the victims of these very seducers and dominators. Tellingly, these characters dream differently. As Perlmann notes, the anxiety dream of the Schnitzlerian seducer finds a counterpart in the erotic wish dream of the young woman.<sup>55</sup> In this context, Casanova can be usefully compared to one of Schnitzler's most famous female victim models, *Fräulein Else* (1924).<sup>56</sup> Schnitzler wrote this novella some years after *Casanovas Heimfahrt*, during the period when he was also working on *Traumnovelle* and recorded an unusually large number of dreams in his diary. During this last stage of Schnitzler's literary career, after the 'execution' of the pure Casanova type, his female characters gain in richness and complexity as if in compensation. Schnitzler's famous 'süßes Mädel' – the charming, sexually available but unmarriageable young woman from the *Vorstadt* – is increasingly replaced by more nuanced characters, as women's social position is viewed from 'within'.<sup>57</sup> His last novel, *Therese: Chronik eines Frauenlebens* (1928), is wholly concerned with the social and psychological plight of a female character.<sup>58</sup>

In perfect counterbalance to the perspective of Casanova, the powerful older seducer who forces sexual relations upon a young woman, *Fräulein Else* gives the victim's perspective in a similar interaction. The nineteen-year-old Else, staying at a resort in the Italian Alps, is faced with the dilemma of whether to expose herself, naked, to the gaze of the wealthy older Dorsday in exchange for paying off her father's gambling debts. The tortured decision, of whether to save her father by sacrificing her honour

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<sup>55</sup> Perlmann, *Der Traum in der literarischen Moderne*, p. 131.

<sup>56</sup> Schnitzler, Arthur, *Fräulein Else*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 2: *Die Erzählenden Schriften*, pp. 324-80. Referenced as *Else*.

<sup>57</sup> As Stephanie Catani notes, 'das süße Mädel' herself had offered an alternative to the dichotomy of the dominating *femme fatale* and the 'consumptive' *femme fragile* (stereotypically represented in Kubin's *Die andere Seite*). Cf. Stephanie Catani, *Das fiktive Geschlecht: Weiblichkeit in anthropologischen Entwürfen und literarischen Texten zwischen 1885 und 1925* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005), p. 110.

<sup>58</sup> Judith Ryan describes *Therese* as Schnitzler's 'declaration of final secession from empiricist psychology and his call for a more socially embedded psychology'. Cf. Judith Ryan, *The Vanishing Subject: Early Psychology and Literary Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 137.

and integrity, is also complicated by suppressed erotic feelings for her cousin Paul. The pressure overwhelms her already fragile psyche, driving her to a psychotic breakdown and public exposure of her nude body in the music salon of the resort, with Dorsday also present. In this way, she fulfils his demand but denies him private access to her. Then Else, having taken an overdose of veronal, faints and falls into an apparently fatal coma (it is not clear whether or not she dies).<sup>59</sup>

This protagonist, like Casanova, is also self-obsessed, although her narcissism is of an innocent and immature type. Her moral dilemma drives her into psychosis, placing her on the long list of mentally disturbed characters carefully depicted by Schnitzler.<sup>60</sup> *Else* also features a brief mirror scene, but in this case it highlights the bases of a psychotic split in Else's personality: 'Guten Abend, schönstes Fräulein im Spiegel, behalten Sie mich in gutem Angedenken, auf Wiedersehen' (*Else* 337). In contrast to Casanova, Else is vulnerable, confused and unresourceful. While he is proactive and aggressive, Else is socially passive and self-destructive. Casanova's complete indifference to the fate of others contrasts with Else's moral quandary of self-sacrifice for her father's sake. Both novellas end with the (apparent) death of the protagonist, but Else's death is explicitly depicted as a social crime: 'Alle sind sie Mörder [...] Alle haben sie mich gemordet [...] Sie hat sich selber umgebracht, werden sie sagen. Ihr habt mich umgebracht, Ihr Alle, Ihr Alle!' (378). In contrast, Casanova's final major act is murder itself.

Else's dream in the novella (*Else* 352-53) – which, like Casanova's dream, anticipates her (possible) death – enters subtly into her constantly fluctuating consciousness. Else is alone in the woods, reflecting on her crisis, and the opening of her dream is marked by the awareness of her own wish for death. The transition to the dream is again apparent from the verb forms, and from the break-down of syntax into imagistic fragments:

Wer wird Weinen, wenn ich tot bin? O, wie schön wäre das tot zu sein.  
Aufgebahrt liege ich im Salon, die Kerzen brennen. Lange Kerzen. Zwölf

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<sup>59</sup> At the time Schnitzler wrote *Else*, he could not know, of course, that his own daughter, Lili, would later commit suicide as a teenage bride (in 1928).

<sup>60</sup> On Schnitzler's portrayal of mental illness, see Robert O. Weiss, 'The Psychoses in the Works of Arthur Schnitzler', *The German Quarterly*, 41/3 (1968), 377-400.

lange Kerzen. Unten steht schon der Leichenwagen. Vor dem Haustor stehen Leute. Wie alt war sie denn? Erst neunzehn. Wirklich erst neunzehn? (emphasis mine)

Else dreams of how the people at her funeral will talk about her after her death.<sup>61</sup> When she stands up from her bier to look out the window, she sees women in swimsuits, which she declares to be ‘unanständig’. She in turn defends herself against imagined accusations of nudity: ‘Sie bilden sich ein, ich bin nackt. Wie dumm sie sind. Ich habe ja schwarze Trauerkleider an, weil ich tot bin.’ Else finds that her bier has departed and she must go to the graveyard on foot (her independent journey perhaps symbolising suicide). She meets a matador, who wants to kiss her hand, in an example of Freudian *Verschiebung*, or displacement, of sexual tension onto seemingly harmless content. The sexual symbolism persists when Else searches in vain for the graveyard and realises that she is instead in a park where there might be snakes. She weakly denies her fears, and wakes up at the bite of a snake, symbolising loss of sexual innocence: ‘Vor den Schlangen habe ich keine Angst. Wenn mich nur keine in den Fuß beißt. O weh.’

This dream symbolically tells Else’s story in reverse order: death, nudity, erotic threat. Freud also noted such effects of chronological reversal in dreams: ‘Neben der inhaltlichen Umkehrung ist die zeitliche nicht zu übersehen’ (TD 333). Else’s dream ‘wishes’, of exhibitionism and self-destruction, shall soon be fulfilled, almost simultaneously, when she exposes her naked body and falls into the drug-induced coma.

The end of Else’s dream is clearly marked: ‘O Gott, wo war ich denn? [...] Was hab ich denn geträumt? Ich glaube ich war schon tot. Und keine Sorgen habe ich gehabt und mir nicht den Kopf zerbrechen müssen’ (353-54), and a little later: ‘Was habe ich denn nur geträumt? Von einem Matador? Was war denn das für ein Matador?’ (354).<sup>62</sup> Her middle conscious struggles to make sense of the insights from her

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<sup>61</sup> The motif of attendance at one’s own funeral also appears in Schnitzler’s early diary dreams, cf. 30.VI.97.

<sup>62</sup> According to Lorenzo Belletinni, the matador is an overdetermined erotic figure encompassing both Dorsday and Paul, the threat and the potential saviour. See ‘Freud’s Contribution to Arthur Schnitzler’s Prose Style’, *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature*, 61/2 (2007), 11-27.

dream. Forgetfulness represents the powerful forces of repression. Else nonetheless retains the message that death would mean liberation from her dilemmas.

In Else's final approach to (apparent) death, she enters another dream-vision, amid the fluctuations of her drugged consciousness:<sup>63</sup>

Was ist denn das? Ein ganzer Chor? Und Orgel auch? Ich singe mit. Was ist es denn für ein Lied? Alle singen mit. Die Wälder auch und die Berge und die Sterne. Nie habe ich etwas so Schönes gehört. Noch nie habe ich eine so helle Nacht gesehen. Gib mir die Hand, Papa. Wir fliegen zusammen. So schön ist die Welt, wenn man fliegen kann. (381)

Death is indeed pictured here as a form of release. In contrast to Casanova's anxious dream-death by drowning, Else's vision adheres to the Romantic, transcendent model, complete with religious symbolism and nature motifs. Casanova is submerged, but Else ascends to the sky. The act of 'flying together' symbolises sexual union, also present in *Traumnovelle*, discussed below. The death-dream therefore unveils Else's female Oedipal complex quite explicitly, again resorting to the *Verdichtung* of the kissed hand as sexual euphemism. Finally, before death, Else's middle conscious fades away almost entirely into an erotically tinged subconscious impression of flight, sleep and dreams:

Sie rufen von so weit! Was wollt Ihr denn? Nicht wecken. Ich schlafe ja so gut. Morgen früh. Ich träume und fliege. Ich fliege ... fliege ... fliege ... schlafe und träume ... und fliege ... nicht wecken ... morgen früh ...  
'El ...'  
Ich fliege ... ich träume ... ich schlafe ... ich traue ... traue – ich flie.....  
(381)

Parataxis and ellipses (also found in Törleß's dream(like) states, cf. Chapter 3) here illustrate the disintegration of Else's conscious, linguistic faculties. Nonetheless, her last full word is 'ich', in a final reclaiming of a fragile and fragmented self, so different from Casanova's vital, insistent ego. Both novellas, using different narrative techniques, explore the dreams of extreme characters who embody specific types. The differing form and content of their dreams suggests that, for Schnitzler,

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<sup>63</sup> This idea – that a young woman's death might resemble a beautiful and blessedly ignorant dream – is also the source of Professor Bernhardi's troubles when he tries to convince a priest not to interrupt a patient's ecstatic delusions in the death phase.



personality structure shapes oneiric experience both psychologically and symbolically. The suppressed material that escapes in dreams is determined by a character's special fears and desires. This interest in contrastive psychology also underlies *Traumnovelle*, composed at the same time.

*Fräulein Else* is also differentiated from *Casanova* in the use of interior monologue to depict Else's perspective throughout the novella. *Else* is one of two *Monolognovellen* by Schnitzler; the other, *Leutnant Gustl* (1900), is written from a male perspective. The stream-of-consciousness technique can be seen as another way of exploring the workings of *Mittelbewusstsein*. Although Schnitzler generally used *erlebte Rede* for this purpose, as in *Casanova* or *Traumnovelle*, the stream-of-consciousness experiments permitted a more microscopic examination of insights, suppressions, decisions, and the eventual acceptance or refusal of responsibility. Both *Gustl* and *Else* have a shameful secret that makes them turn inwards, where the interior monologue highlights psychological struggles so intricate and revealing (particularly in the 'details') that Schnitzler decides to omit the interference of a narrating voice.

However, *Fräulein Else* shows the difficulties of combining stream-of-consciousness narration with the literary dream. After all, the dream implies *lack-of-consciousness*. Interior monologue makes the dream boundaries hard to locate, and the dream-text itself comes to resemble an inchoate oral report. Its portrayal is necessarily somewhat artificial, because dreams, largely image-based, are not translated into language as they happen; there is no 'monologue'. Else's interpretive exclamations and her repeated use of 'ich' during the dream seem inauthentic. However, it is possible to argue that the subtle, semi-conscious mental processes described by the waking monologue are also *pre-linguistic*. From this perspective, the entire stream-of-consciousness technique is only a useful artifice, a tool for describing subjective *qualia* that are inherently inaccessible. It could be argued that Schnitzler, in this context, uses *Else* to show the proximity of psychotic consciousness and dreaming. Her dream can be read as a sort of 'lucid dream' bordering on hallucination.

Although this text immerses the reader in Else's consciousness, it becomes apparent that she herself suffers from a *Selbstlosigkeit* resulting from her objectification by the

male gaze, and from her own adoption of that perspective. This is evident from her narcissistic identification with her own body (as an erotic object, a corpse, an image of beauty in the mirror),<sup>64</sup> which points to narcissism's links with both psychosis and dreaming, in the 'splitting' of identity entailed by all three phenomena. Else's consciousness is already dreamlike due to its 'metacognitive deficit', or lack of *Zustandsklarheit*; her first-person perspective is poorly defined, and she has difficulty in 'consciously experience[ing] her own relationship to her current phenomenological world'.<sup>65</sup> Like *Leutnant Gustl*, this novella particularly depicts the porousness of boundaries between waking and dreaming in states of extreme psychological distress.

As a victim character, Else draws greater attention to themes of morality and self-sacrifice than the other dream-protagonists examined so far. The link between self-sacrifice and femininity undoubtedly has cultural roots. However, Schnitzler's female characters do not all dream alike: the dreams of Else and Albertine (discussed below) reveal entirely different personality structures and wishes. They also respond differently to their dreams. Else, perhaps the 'weakest' character considered in this thesis, experiences tremendous difficulty in grasping the insights provided by her dreams. The reader comes away from her dream with a feeling of greater insight into her psyche than she herself possesses. No less than the other characters, she has received warning of her fate, but she appears unable to understand the language of her subconscious. Her ongoing mystification may arguably be compared to that of Kafka's characters: in both cases, consciousness is already so dreamlike that the dream's message risks being lost like a voice in the wind.

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<sup>64</sup> On Else's narcissistic qualities and body-obsession, see Bettina Rabelhofer, *Symptom, Sexualität, Trauma: Kohärenzlinien des Ästhetischen um 1900* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2006), pp. 211-12.

<sup>65</sup> These are all characteristics of the dreaming self as described by Jennifer Michelle Windt and Thomas Metzinger in 'The Philosophy of Dreaming and Self-Consciousness: What Happens to the Experiential Subject during the Dream State?', in Deirdre Barrett and Patrick McNamara (eds) *The New Science of Dreaming. Volume 3: Cultural and Theoretical Perspectives* (Westport, CT; London: Praeger), pp. 193-247 (pp. 205, 207-8).

#### 4. *Traumnovelle*: The Dreams of Others

Near the beginning of *Traumnovelle* (1926),<sup>66</sup> the spouses Fridolin and Albertine reveal to each other past erotic fantasies about strangers, provoking mutual jealousy. The novella follows their separate paths of self-exploration and jealous revenge, contrasting Fridolin's nocturnal adventures outside the house with Albertine's vivid dreams in the marriage bed. They are reunited at the story's end, but stripped of their illusions and uncertain of their future. In this work, the monomaniacal voices of extreme and isolated characters such as Else and Casanova are replaced by the nuanced study of a relationship. Schnitzler, after helping to kill off the Romantic hero and heroine, next turned to the bourgeois love ideal.<sup>67</sup>

*Doppelnovelle* was the novella's telling original title. This 'doubling' refers to a confrontation on multiple levels. In terms of social thematics, the public and private realms of Viennese life are depicted as an opposition between day and night. The *Nachtseite* is introduced by the masked ball that Fridolin and Albertine attend near the story's beginning, where they briefly appear 'outside' of their conventional roles. Fridolin has a foot firmly in both worlds: his professional activities are part of the public realm, yet he is aware that he is never far from a forbidden and secret (erotic) underworld. He is not surprised, for instance, when a patient's daughter reveals her desire for him at her father's deathbed. Yet, Fridolin's adventures eventually prove that the hidden, sexual world is darker and more treacherous than even he suspected. His infiltration of a nocturnal masked orgy in a suburban villa leads him to more serious forms of social play. Fridolin's forbidden presence there is soon discovered, and he is only saved at the last moment by a nameless woman who 'sacrifices' herself to the other men at the ball so that Fridolin can escape harm. His simultaneous excitement and alarm at the dangerous perversion of the night-world he

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<sup>66</sup> Arthur Schnitzler, *Traumnovelle*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 2: *Die Erzählenden Schriften*, pp. 434-504.

<sup>67</sup> As W. G. Sebald noted, Schnitzler's work 'entstand auf dem Punkt, an dem der bürgerliche Begriff von der Liebe ins Stadium der Dissolution einzutreten begann'. Cf. *Die Beschreibung des Unglücks: Zur österreichischen Literatur von Stifter bis Handke* (Salzburg; Vienna: Residenz, 1985), p. 39. The recent return to Schnitzler's material in Stanley Kubrick's 1999 film *Eyes Wide Shut*, inspired by *Traumnovelle*, indicates that this dissolution remains far from complete.

has discovered can be seen to symbolise the unexpected power of the unconscious, both compelling and overwhelming.

The 'Doppelnovelle' is also based on a gendered dualism, particularly that of husband and wife. While working on this novella, Schnitzler continued to suffer from his own painful divorce, in 1921, after two decades of marriage. But his fascination with matrimony had much earlier roots. As described in *Jugend in Wien*, his own parents' polarised relationship was virtually a caricature of conservative bourgeois marriage. Early on, Schnitzler tried his hand at an unfinished piece entitled 'Das Mysterium der Ehe'.<sup>68</sup> Part of this mystery was presumably the survival (or failure) of marriage under social pressures, and against the constant temptation of the forbidden (later personally familiar to Schnitzler from his numerous affairs with married women). Schnitzler soon conceived the idea of exploring the justification of adultery, under certain circumstances, based on 'Eifersucht wegen eines Traums'; this became part of the impetus for the 1899 play, *Der Schleier der Beatrice*.<sup>69</sup> *Traumnovelle* was a return to this theme.<sup>70</sup> As in the early story 'Frühlingsnacht im Sezierraum', Schnitzler remained interested in the dream's direct power over waking life and (sexual) relationships.

On the surface, the gender duality of *Traumnovelle* is based on the traditional bourgeois model. Fridolin, as a busy doctor, breadwinner and womaniser, is often out of the house. Albertine is the passive, cloistered housewife, who remains indoors with the child and servants. Like Casanova and Else, they are social opposites. However, *Traumnovelle* seeks to explode and reverse the cliché of their relationship. While Casanova and Else are extreme (gendered) personalities amplified to the borders of allegory, Fridolin and Albertine are instead characterised by ambiguity, nuance and role reversal that does not easily separate them into 'strong' and 'weak' characters.

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<sup>68</sup> Schnitzler, *Jugend in Wien*, p. 269.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>70</sup> As noted in Chapter 1, Schnitzler's theme of (marital) jealousy in dreams, and associated questions of personal responsibility, is anticipated in Ludwig Tieck's late Romantic novella *Des Lebens Überfluss* (1839).

Fridolin is a post-Casanova Impressionist hero. On the one hand, he retains the stereotypical traits of the seducer: he is portrayed as charming and desirable, but also self-centred and frequently indifferent to the suffering of others. However, unlike Anatol, Georg or Casanova, he has already assumed responsibility for a wife and child, and distances himself from social games – for instance, from duelling, Schnitzler’s typical motif of male competition: ‘Soll ich mich mit einem betrunkenen Studenten herstellen, ich, ein Mann von fünfunddreißig Jahren, praktischer Arzt, verheiratet, Vater eines Kindes!’ (*Traumnovelle* 448). As a doctor, Fridolin also represents another Schnitzlerian archetype, invoking the problems of therapeutic nihilism that are the medical version of the narcissistic dilemma: does the doctor act on behalf of others, or to satisfy his own curiosity and need for power? He straddles the border of light and darkness, responsibility and exploitation.

If Fridolin is therefore a more nuanced version of the narcissistic protagonist, his wife Albertine is also not a simple social victim, even if she suffers her husband’s infidelity and her own entrapment. Albertine’s character appears self-confident and open, as symbolised by her posture of sleeping with her arms flung behind her head. Her self-awareness is demonstrated by the assurance and authority with which she describes her own dreams and fantasies. She is psychologically resourceful, implicitly relaying her knowledge of her husband’s double life by laying his mask on the pillow beside her. While Fridolin’s perspective dominates the main text, through Schnitzler’s use of *erlebte Rede*, this is eventually counterbalanced by Albertine’s dream tale. Although Fridolin is superficially the ‘stronger’ character, his proactive plans for sexual revenge prove fruitless, whereas Albertine’s dream succeeds in devastating him.

Unlike most of the dreams examined in this thesis, Albertine’s long narrated dream is also an interaction between speaker and listener. She inhabits the ‘third’ dreaming self, the role of the storyteller-dreamer.<sup>71</sup> Her narration must be assumed to include an element of pre-interpretation, calculated to affect her listener, whether or not she is conscious of it. In this case, the interaction reveals the rift of incomprehension and

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<sup>71</sup> On the triplication of the dreaming self, see the previous Chapter 5, and Jean-Daniel Gollut, *Contre les rêves: La narration de l’expérience onirique dans les oeuvres de la modernité* (Paris: J. Corti, 1993), p. 206.

near-enmity between husband and wife. The scene begins when Fridolin arrives home to find his wife asleep with a strange expression ('ein Antlitz, das Fridolin nicht kannte'), laughing in her sleep. When he wakes her up, she appears first confused, then horrified: 'Ein Ausdruck der Abwehr, der Furcht, ja des Entsetzens trat in ihr Auge' (474). She admits she has been dreaming and Fridolin convinces her to tell the dream.

Albertine's dream (*Traumnovelle* 476-80) commences with another vision of mystical union, in which flight is again used as a symbol for erotic relations, as in *Else*. The transcendent, Romantic qualities of the dream are accentuated by its natural, edenic setting:

Wir zwei aber, du und ich, wir schwebten, nein, wir flogen über die Nebel hin, und ich dachte: Dies ist also unsere Hochzeitsreise. Bald aber flogen wir nicht mehr, wir gingen einen Waldweg hin, den zur Elisabethhöhe, und plötzlich befanden wir uns sehr hoch im Gebirge [...] (476)

The dream lovers' fall from innocence occurs when they discover their clothes have disappeared, much to Albertine's shame. In an inversion of the guilt for original sin, Fridolin here bears the responsibility: 'Du [Fridolin] aber im Bewußtsein deiner Schuld stürztest davon, nackt wie du warst, um hinabzusteigen und uns Gewänder zu verschaffen'. He departs on a quest to a 'phantastische Stadt', representative of the social world, which here intriguingly resembles Kubin's *Perle*: 'Nicht orientalisches, auch nicht eigentlich altdeutsch, und doch bald das eine, bald das andere, jedenfalls eine längst und für immer versunkene Stadt'.

Albertine, relieved by his departure, remains in the transcendent setting, enjoying her solitude. A man emerges, resembling a figure from her erotic memories, which so incited Fridolin's jealousy at the novella's beginning. As if comparing the two men, Albertine simultaneously sees Fridolin rushing through the crowded city, collecting goods for her in a yellow handbag, perhaps symbolising his role as provider.<sup>72</sup> Meanwhile Albertine's dream-suitors reappears to her repeatedly ('zwei oder drei

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<sup>72</sup> A dream recorded in Schnitzler's diary in October 1922 also features a yellow travelling bag. In parentheses Schnitzler includes a psychoanalytic interpretation: travelling bags refer to women, and the bag that he loses symbolises his former wife, Olga (TB-Schnitzler 21.X.22).

oder hundertmal') as a generalised *Verführer*, an essentialised Other ('Es war immer derselbe und immer ein anderer'), until they at last fall into an embrace.

Here Albertine, like Amalia, stops telling her dream, and Fridolin must urge her to continue. Albertine protests that they are about to cross over into the ineffable: 'Es ist nicht so leicht', says Albertine, 'In Worten lassen sich diese Dinge eigentlich kaum ausdrücken'. But she attempts to describe the boundlessness of her dream-world: 'mir war, als erlebte ich unzählige Tage und Nächte, es gab weder Zeit noch Raum'. The embrace with her lover turns into a mass sexual orgy (vaguely reminiscent of the apocalyptic *Untergang* scenes in *Die andere Seite*) in which she no longer feels her previous shame, but instead an ecstasy of liberation: 'so gibt es gewiß nichts in unserer bewußten Existenz, das der Gelöstheit, der Freiheit, dem Glück gleichkommt, das ich nun in diesem Traum empfand'. She has thus returned to a state of mystical transcendence, but this time without Fridolin.

Meanwhile, the dream-Fridolin has been seized by soldiers and religious officials, and is to be executed, naked once again. Albertine appears indifferent: 'Ich wußte es ohne Mitleid, ohne Schauer, ganz von fern'. A regal woman appears – 'die Fürstin des Landes' – who has the power to pardon Fridolin if he agrees to become her lover. But he refuses, as if fated to remain eternally faithful to Albertine. He is transported to a hellish underground region, where the Princess reappears, here in the form of a girl from Fridolin's own erotic memories (another Freudian *Mischfigur*). Fridolin again refuses her, and is condemned to crucifixion in the very field where Albertine lies in the arms of her lover(s). Albertine observes with interest, 'aber ohne jedes Mitgefühl'. They both begin to 'float' (*schweben*), but miss each other: 'doch plötzlich entschwanden wir einander, und ich wußte: wir waren aneinander vorbeigeflogen', symbolising their failure to re-attain an erotic union. Albertine's last dream thought is her wish that Fridolin should hear her scornful laughter during his crucifixion: 'Das war das Lachen, Fridolin – mit dem ich erwacht bin'.

Even the dream, like a micro-reflection of the *Doppelnovelle*, pursues a double 'storyline' for the two characters. It is a dream of separation, of fates divided. Fridolin's storyline has a falling motion, literally represented by his descent, first to the worldly, purgatorial city, and then to the hellish zone. His motion repeats the

pattern of Casanova's dream: the disintegration of Romantic transcendence into judgement, loss and death. Albertine's narrative, however, is triumphant. An openly aggressive *Wunschtraum*, it preserves the transcendent quality of its opening; Albertine literally remains 'above' in the dream topography, but with other lovers. Her dream story proves an effective form of revenge, leaving the demoralised Fridolin with the feeling that his own waking experiences are 'lächerlicher und nichtiger' (480). Albertine has revealed herself through the dream to be 'treulos, grausam und verräterisch'. Fridolin believes, in this moment, that he hates her more than he has ever loved her (481).

Fridolin's determination to carry out his own revenge in waking life proves fruitless sexually, but he seeks solace in the self-sacrifice of the mysterious female stranger on his behalf. This unnamed woman is not only symbolic of the immortal mystical partner (like Marcolina in Casanova's dream), but she here also absorbs the role of female social victim, in turn amplifying Fridolin's narcissistic tendencies. The self-sacrifices of this *Fremde* contrast with Albertine's refusal to be dominated. In Albertine's dream, the unnamed woman is represented by the 'Fürstin', as if to indicate that Albertine was intuitively (almost telepathically) aware of this most secret aspect of Fridolin's experiences. But in Albertine's dream – as in Amalia's dream – all is reversed. The dream is essentially an illustration of *Umkehrung*: Albertine is unfaithful, indifferent, liberated and sexually fulfilled. Fridolin, on the other hand, is guilty, faithful, humiliated and condemned. He sacrifices himself on a woman's behalf (Albertine), and not the other way around.

This contrast highlights a third important doubling: the opposition of *das Traumhafte* and *der Traum*. The dreamlike world of (nocturnal) Vienna – with its mix of public/private, expected/unexpected, duty/prohibition – is the setting for Fridolin's adventures and attempts at revenge. This is the world of the *Halbtraum*, interpreted through Fridolin's middle conscious. Albertine, on the other hand, is mostly only revealed through the tales she tells of her inner life, her dreams and fantasies. Schnitzler uses his married couple to compare the literary dream and the *Leben-als-Traum*. Both experiences allow the 'dreamer' to enter into contact with suppressed sexuality and desires, to temporarily escape the confines of marriage. Yet Albertine's experience unexpectedly proves the more potent. Although she has altered nothing in



her real circumstances, she nonetheless achieves a transcendence, liberation and revenge – a true fulfilment of her wishes – that is glimpsed but never accessible in Fridolin's dreamlike adventures. Albertine's visions appear absolutely real to her while in the dream, whereas Fridolin is plagued by doubts about the reality of his experiences.

All of this serves to upset the expected balance of the (traditional) relationship and undermines, to ironic effect, the self-assured tone that Fridolin takes in his own mind. At the end of the novella, when Fridolin finally tells Albertine the story of his dreamlike erotic adventures, in an effort to counter her own dream story, his tale does not appear to provoke the same jealous devastation. On the contrary, Albertine is comforting and maternal, while Fridolin appears submissive and childlike, asking his wife, 'Was sollen wir tun, Albertine?' (503). Schnitzler ultimately gives Albertine the voice of authority, the right of interpretation. But Fridolin cannot help adding the admonition, 'kein Traum ist völlig Traum'. This reproach underlines Schnitzler's thematisation of responsibility in the context of the dream. His repeated fictional juxtaposition of dreaming and adultery hinges on the philosophical question: how responsible are we for our dreams? As Nietzsche wrote, '[i]n Allem wollt ihr verantwortlich sein! Nur nicht für eure Träume! [...] Nichts ist mehr euer Eigen, als eure Träume!'<sup>73</sup> Freud, on the other hand, carefully suggested that dreams should be released from ethical responsibility: 'Meine Gedanken haben diese Seite des Traumproblems nicht weiter verfolgt. [...] Ich meine also, am besten gibt man die Träume frei. Es erscheint dann ungerechtfertigt, wenn die Menschen sich sträuben, die Verantwortung für die Immoralität ihrer Träume zu übernehmen' (TD 625).

However, Schnitzler's notion of middle consciousness potentially makes dream responsibility feasible by allowing access to subconscious impulses, and therefore some measure of control. The middle conscious is the psychic zone 'where the key to responsible, autonomous action lives'.<sup>74</sup> Dreams perhaps reveal the wishes and drives that have been allowed to run wild in this zone, through neglect or ignorance.

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<sup>73</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 30 vols (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1975-84), vol. 5: *Morgenröthe. Nachgelassene Fragmente. Anfang 1880 bis Frühjahr 1881* (1971), p. 115.

<sup>74</sup> Tweraser, 'Schnitzler's Turn to Prose Fiction', p. 152.

Just as Casanova's dream mirrors his suppressed fears and vulnerabilities, Albertine's dream is a reflection of her sexual and aggressive desires, in the form of betrayal and murder. But Albertine's dream also addresses the problem of Fridolin's responsibility. In another instance of *Umkehrung*, the dream-Fridolin assumes the guilt for the couple's fall from happiness and sets off to make amends, even to the extreme of his (apparently self-endorsed) crucifixion. This contrasts with the real Fridolin's ambivalent morality, revealed both in his actions and in the workings of his middle conscious. Schnitzler once wrote that 'Sachlichkeit, Mut und Verantwortungsgefühl' were the only 'absolute' virtues,<sup>75</sup> but these are precisely the areas where Fridolin seems weak, as dramatically underlined by his acceptance of a stranger's self-sacrifice on his behalf.

This mysterious woman who saves Fridolin embodies a final doubling in the *Doppelnovelle*: that of Eros and death, among the most persistent of all Schnitzlerian themes. This recalls the opposition of (re)productive and destructive forces previously noted in the works of Kubin (Patera versus Bell) and Meyrink (the Path of Life versus the Path of Death). At the time *Traumnovelle* was composed, Schnitzler was familiar with Freud's version of this opposition, which Freud himself described in his 1922 birthday letter to Schnitzler: 'In einer kleinen Schrift vom J. 1920, "Jenseits des Lustprinzips", habe ich versucht, den Eros und den Todestrieb als die Urkräfte aufzuzeigen, deren Gegenspiel alle Rätsel des Lebens beherrscht'.<sup>76</sup> Of course, by this time, Schnitzler had long explored such themes in his fiction. He did not entirely agree with Freud's *Todestrieb* as a counterweight to the libido. Instead, he believed that externally directed aggression ('das Bedürfnis, Übles zu tun, Schmerz zu geben') was a stronger force than masochism,<sup>77</sup> although this assertion seems challenged by Schnitzler's numerous suicidal characters.<sup>78</sup> As the foremost Impressionist 'poet of death',<sup>79</sup> Schnitzler in any case saw destructive forces as overwhelming the power of love: 'Der Genius des Hasses auf Erden ist vielleicht

<sup>75</sup> *Aphorismen und Betrachtungen*, p. 48.

<sup>76</sup> 'Sigmund Freud: Briefe an Arthur Schnitzler', p. 97.

<sup>77</sup> Schnitzler, 'Über Psychoanalyse', p. 98.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Eva Kuttner, 'Suicide as Performance in Dr. Schnitzler's Prose', in Dagmar C. G. Lorenz (ed.), *A Companion to the Works of Arthur Schnitzler* (Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2003), pp. 325-45.

<sup>79</sup> William M. Johnston, *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History, 1848-1938* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1972), p. 171.

noch Gewaltiger als der Genius der Liebe'.<sup>80</sup> His literary dreams, including those examined here, are consequently marked at least as strongly by death as by sexuality.

In *Traumnovelle*, the two themes are brought into direct necrophiliac confrontation when Fridolin visits the morgue (499-501) to see the nude corpse of a woman whom he believes to be the mysterious stranger, the other half of his unconsummated mystical union. This juxtaposition recalls the morgue setting of 'Frühlingsnacht im Sezierraum', written nearly forty-five years earlier. Fridolin, apparently nervous ('mit einer Scheu, die ihm, dem Arzt, sonst fremd war') searches the corpse's face for an answer, but 'es war ein völlig nichtiges, leeres, es war ein totes Antlitz'. Her body has also lost its secrets: 'er sah, wie von einem dunklen, nun geheimnis- und sinnlos gewordenen Schatten aus wohlgeformte Schenkel sich gleichgültig öffneten'. When he takes the corpse's hand, he feels a hint of communion – 'ja ihm war, als irrte unter den halbgeschlossenen Lidern ein ferner, farbloser Blick nach dem seinen' – but soon the impression fades, and he washes his hands, 'sorgfältig mit Lysol und Seife' (501). The once mysterious woman, whoever she may be, is now lost in the impenetrable *dreamless* sleep. Unlike Albertine, she no longer contains a dangerous but intriguing wilderness of wishes and dreams.

The focus on relationships in *Traumnovelle* fills a thematic gap in the texts so far considered, which are largely concerned with the mental lives of isolated characters. An element of isolation is inherent in the dream experience, as a private phenomenon. The solipsism of the dream was indeed part of its appeal to a self-obsessed generation. The dreamers in most of these texts fail to sustain waking relationships. In *Die andere Seite*, the protagonist's marriage is terminated by *the dream*. In *Der Golem*, the narrator's relationships belong to someone else's dreams. Törleß leaves his school behind without a single lasting friendship. Kafka's characters are forever abandoning loyalties (and brides) in a quest for reconciliation with the self. Against this background, Schnitzler's exploration of the interactions between dreams and relationships constitutes a shift.

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<sup>80</sup> *Aphorismen und Betrachtungen*, p. 52.

*Traumnovelle* was also one of Schnitzler's last works – the latest work overall in this study – and perhaps even he could not have written it at an earlier date. The moment when Albertine tells Fridolin her dream is a point of no return that changes both characters. Unlike the case of Amalia's dream in *Casanova*, Albertine here agrees to full disclosure and Fridolin consents to listen. The characters must somehow live together in the knowledge that they each (and by extension, each person) contains a narcissistic dream-universe, mostly hidden, but terribly potent. Albertine, like Casanova, holds up the dream mirror, but this time she shows Fridolin what she sees. At some level, Albertine is the Other rendered triumphant, living, powerful, and Fridolin is the humbled Self, who brings the reader along with him. The beautiful female stranger represents the Other of a dying age. Mystical and idealised, the Other of Fridolin's narcissistic dreams, she must perish along with Casanova. Her appearance as a corpse at the end of the novella parallels Casanova's aging physique: the ideal is stripped of perfection and confronted with physicality. Fridolin is forced to relinquish his dream lover just as he must relinquish her within Albertine's dream. Most important, Schnitzler's refusal to end the novella with tragedy or marital separation suggests that a new reality must be inaugurated.

## Conclusions

The dream's intimate association with fiction may essentially be explained by its status as micro-story, often embedded within a larger narrative. Although the literary dream has appeared in a great variety of manifestations across time and cultures, its use always implies a recurrent set of textual and philosophical problems. In the introductory chapter of this thesis, I posited five basic features of the literary dream: it is delimited from its surroundings; it creates a dual system within the text; it is part of a marked/unmarked structure; it features alternative rules for reality; and it is based on a single focus of perception (the dreamer). The texts I have examined, by Kubin, Musil, Kafka, Meyrink and Schnitzler, show how flexible these features became in the sceptical and experimental atmosphere of German Central Europe during the Modernist period.

In all of these texts, the dream introduces a strong element of dualism, by representing the metaphysical possibility of an 'other' world/side/state, with alternative rules and modes of operation. This duality creates a fruitful tension around the 'single focus of perception' constituted by the dreamer, who struggles to maintain a concrete sense of self while crossing the border in either direction. All five authors build on the ancient metaphor of *life-as-dream*, and its transformation into literary techniques of the uncanny by Romantic forerunners. They all furthermore use the dream as a metonym for unconscious processes that had achieved new power at the beginning of the twentieth century, as the findings of depth psychology became part of public debate. The key role played by topography in many of these texts shows that the dream had also become intertwined, for these authors, with the specific lived experience of Central European cities, landscapes and institutions.

However, the authors vary in their use of delimitation and marked/unmarked structures, that is, the extent to which the dream is 'cut off' from its textual surroundings and the extent to which it dominates those surroundings. These are authorial choices with direct philosophical implications. In texts with highly porous dream boundaries (Meyrink and Kafka) or heavily dominated by the dream-world

(Kubin and Kafka), the only possible reactions seem to be doomed struggle or ecstatic surrender to the dream. In contrast, the texts from Musil and Schnitzler include literary dreams that are still partly constrained by the walls of waking and sleeping, and both authors are interested in closely studying the boundary zones (of half-sleep and middle consciousness) in the search for new, synthesising concepts of subjectivity and self-mastery.

The first case study in this thesis perhaps most strongly thematises the boundaries of the dream, in Alfred Kubin's novel *Die andere Seite*. By setting up the dream as a large-scale allegory, Kubin exploits one of its key fictional uses as a 'space' of fantasy, a zone of the unexpected and the impossible. He employs this technique to emphasise the dream's importance for *Phantasie*, in effect asserting that there is a special relationship between the artist and his dreams, which serve as the source of creative inspiration. Nightmares are included in this vision. By stressing the 'demonic' aspects of the dream inherited from both Christian and Romantic tradition, Kubin makes a (Decadent) attempt to claim the artistic value of the dark and destructive impulses revealed in dreams. His dreamland demiurge, Patera, is fully a product of German Central Europe in the age of Otto Weininger, when 'Genie' was considered the capacity to fuse apparently irreconcilable dichotomies, symbolised by the figure of the hermaphrodite. But Kubin's Dream Realm is also a strong statement of reversal, which makes the 'marked' structure of the dream – the 'other' side, the *unconscious* – into a dominant and all-consuming force.

In that context, Robert Musil's *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß*, the second case study in this thesis, makes an intriguing comparison, because it explores similar themes using entirely different techniques – of psychological realism – leading to different existential conclusions. Törleß, like Kubin's protagonist, undertakes a journey to a liminal zone, where he confronts the power of sub- and unconscious experience, the 'other' mode of being. However, Musil's writing sustains an attitude of detachment towards the protagonist's 'confusions'. The novel employs subtle narrative strategies to observe Törleß's mental fluctuations without becoming entangled in them, thus illustrating by example the model of psychological self-mastery that Musil is proposing. The dream and the dreamlike may intrude on consciousness at any time. However, as illustrated by Törleß's lucid and instructive

dream of Kant, oneiric experience can prove helpful if the dreamer is attuned to its metaphoric language, which – much like the supermetaphor of the ‘imaginary number’ – functions as an invisible bridge between separate concepts. *Törleß* constitutes a counter-argument to Ernst Mach’s assertion that the self had become unsalvageable after splintering into a collection of *Sinnesempfindungen*. Musil, through Törleß, aims to show that an *Ich* composed of sensory impressions is in fact a viable possibility, although it demands complexity and vigilance. The dream is a special kind of *Empfindung*, particularly threatening to selfhood through its affinity with psychosis, yet capable of acting as a vehicle of *Erkenntnis*. Musil only partly resolves the question of how to shape moral conduct from the fluid and libidinous urges of dreamlike consciousness, at most suggesting that empathy can arise from a close attention to emotions. But *Törleß* remains a positive portrayal of self-assertion and the potential benevolence of dreams.

In contrast, the works by Kafka discussed in Chapter 4 depict the dream as a revealing but torturous no-man’s land caught between the worlds of waking/life and sleep/death. Kafka’s oeuvre highlights the difficulties of interpretation that arise from a dreamlike narrative style. I have argued that his most dreamlike writing occurs where metaphoric and metonymic processes overlap densely, in imitation of the fluid metamorphoses that occur in the dream’s symbolic language. In ‘Beschreibung eines Kampfes’, the dream grants the freedom to create fantastic landscapes and laws that symbolically play out the narcissistic-erotic relationship with a projected ‘other’. In ‘Ein Traum’, Josef K. also meets a projected version of himself, this time in the form of an artistic alter ego who inhabits the dream-world. The artist communicates through a special form of engraved, aestheticised writing that illustrates the fusion of concrete and abstract meaning in dream language, also described by Freud’s operations of *Verdichtung* and *Verschiebung* in the dream-work. However, as portrayed symbolically in ‘In der Strafkolonie’, and more directly in Kafka’s diary writings about dreams, the reception of oneiric messages can also be experienced as punishment and torment. In *Das Schloß*, Kafka’s protagonist struggles to fully inhabit either the realm of work or the opposed realm of sleep. The dream, which allows him neither triumph nor release, is again revealed as a place of inescapable judgement, a site of the inner *Gericht*.

The confusions of the ‘dreamlike’ also recur in Gustav Meyrink’s novel *Der Golem*. This work is characterised by exceptionally blurry boundaries between waking and dreaming, leading to a fusion of metaphoric and literal functions similar to that found in some of Kafka’s texts. In *Der Golem*, this synthesis takes on a further physical aspect through the explanation of dreaming as ‘soul impregnation’ – as the inhabitation of the dreamer’s mind and body by a foreign, guiding consciousness. In contrast to Kubin’s spatial allegory, Meyrink’s corporeal metaphor can to some extent be understood literally, as part of the occult beliefs in constant competition with scientific explanations in German Central Europe during the early twentieth century. This element of ‘hypostatisation’ also has the effect of calling forth the dream’s correspondences with the *Doppelgänger*: as I argue in Chapter 5, the dream and the *Doppelgänger* represent complementary ways of experiencing the ‘other’ self, from *within* and from *without*. This connection may well explain Meyrink’s association of the dream and the golem figure, which similarly embodies the fears surrounding the loss of consciousness and free will. These various externalised selves – the dream-inseminator, the double, the golem – create an existential hall of mirrors that eventually dissolves the self into its social background, past and future. The Jewish ghetto of Prague comes to serve as a symbol and site of collective dream experience, drawing on a sea of unconscious Jungian archetypes that are responsible for guiding individual fate.

Meyrink’s occult mysticism forms an instructive contrast to Schnitzler’s sceptical and analytical gaze, explored in the final chapter. Schnitzler, like Musil, was interested in a complex synthesis of conscious and unconscious aspects that did not require total self-surrender. Part of his answer was to conceive of a ‘middle conscious’ capable of negotiating that boundary, thus allowing dream insights and intuition to inform (moral) decisions. In Schnitzlerian dreams, temporary transcendence is still possible, but constantly threatens to disintegrate into nightmarish anxiety. Fears are just as important as wishes, and aggression can trump love. Dreams are messages to be interpreted, as they are for Freud, but Schnitzler passes the interpretive and moral responsibility back to the dreamer. His dreams function as mirrors of the inner psyche, simultaneously challenging the dreamer and the reader to interpretation of the unconscious material. The ‘type’ of character, and the type of suppressed psychic content, determine the nature of the dream. In



*Casanovas Heimfahrt* and *Fräulein Else*, the eponymous characters are extreme types, representing narcissistic and victim roles respectively, along with opposed psychological forces: aggression versus self-destructiveness, 'strong' versus 'weak' libido, denial versus acknowledgment of moral responsibility. However, *Traumnovelle* shows that such categories were not always neatly defined for Schnitzler. Fridolin and Albertine are complex characters who experiment with these oppositions. By looking into the dream mirror together, by acting as co-analysts, they re-admit the possibility of others' hidden dream-worlds, and use the power of real dreams to undermine the illusion of the life-as-dream.

In all of the texts examined in this thesis, the dream is both a direct presence and a symbolic one. The two uses are not always in harmony, which suggests the latent co-existence of competing dream discourses. In general, this involves a tension between ideas of the dream as Apollonian or Dionysian, 'light' or 'dark', illuminating or obscuring. Each author seeks a different synthesis. Kubin, for instance, associates the dream with both artistic creation (the emergence of forms) and 'Verwirrung' (entropy). In Musil's novel, dreamlike experience, using the dream as metonym, is associated with *Rausch*, while the dream-as-event appears relatively lucid and cerebral. This is not necessarily a contradiction, because the dream changes quality depending on its form, and particularly the strength of its boundaries. The classic dream event is neatly contained by borders of sleep and waking, while *dreamlike* experience may relentlessly pervade consciousness, until it threatens to consume the dreamer. If, as Adorno wrote, '[z]wischen "es träumte mir" und "ich träumte" liegen die Weltalter',<sup>1</sup> then the authors considered in this thesis were facing the powerful reassertion of an 'es' whose nature is still debated today.

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<sup>1</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflexionen aus dem beschädigten Leben* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993), p. 122.

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